

Submission to the *Draft Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-2027*

Meg Webb MLC | 29 April 2022.

Introduction

I welcome the *Draft Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27*, and also welcome the opportunity to provide comment and contribution to this important policy document.

On International Women's Day this year, Tuesday the 8th of March, the Legislative Council unanimously passed a motion moved in my name, calling for the Tasmanian Government to:

- a) develop genuine whole-of-government gender-responsive budgeting processes; and
- b) introduce an analytical Budget Gender Impact Statement as part of the 2022-23 state budget papers.¹

Hence, I particularly welcome the expressed commitment contained in the *Draft Strategy*, and also reiterated by the then-Minister for Women at the time of its public release, for the development of a Tasmanian gender responsive budgeting framework and the release of the first Tasmanian Gender Budget Impact Statement as part of the upcoming 2022-23 State Budget.²

These commitments follow recent repeated calls I have made in the Tasmanian Parliament for action in these specific areas. I note others in the community have also been calling for a clear and specific gender lens to be applied to state legislation, policy and budgetary processes. My 2020-21 Budget Reply speech drew on that work when I placed upon the parliamentary record on the 19th of November 2020 my initial call for a Gender Budget Impact Statement to be included as part of the State Budget Papers.

During the 2020 Budget Estimates Scrutiny Hearings I raised the need for such an initiative with both the then-Premier, the Hon. Peter Gutwein MP, and the then- Minister for Women, the Hon. Sarah Courtney MP, both of whom undertook to investigate the resourcing required to implement a state Gender Budget Impact Statement.³

In September the following year, this call was repeated during my 2021-22 Budget Reply speech, the lack of progress on this matter was again raised with the then Premier and Treasurer, Mr Gutwein MP, during the subsequent Budget Estimates Committee hearings.⁴

Finally, as stated above, International Women's Day, 8 March 2022, saw the Legislative Council vote unanimously in support of a call for the Tasmanian government to develop both a gender budget reporting framework, plus provide for a Gender Budget Impact Statement in the upcoming 2022-23 State Budget.

Therefore, while recognising the *Draft Strategy 2022-27* seeks to build upon the important work underway across a broad range of key areas underway under the previous *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-21*, other than some initial comment on the proposed Goals, Outcomes, and Principles for Implementation, this submission will focus primarily upon the welcome commitment to introduce both a State Budget Gender Impact Statement and a corresponding Tasmanian Gender Responsive Budgeting framework.

¹ See Legislative Council Hansard excerpts for March 2022, contained in Appendix A.

² The Hon. M. Ogilvie, Media Release, *Consultation commences on the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-2027*, 26 March 2022.

³ See Legislative Council Hansard excerpts for November 2020, contained in Appendix A.

⁴ See Legislative Council Hansard excerpts for September 2021, contained in Appendix A.

1. Overview & General Comments on Draft Strategy

The *Draft Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27* (Draft Strategy) seeks to build upon the foundations set, and some gains made, by its predecessor, the *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-21*.

However, 'between' the transition from one Strategy to the next, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, which has impacted severely the gender equality landscape. There is broad and global recognition that the pandemic has had a detrimental and disproportional impact on women internationally and domestically. For example, the World Economic Forum's 2021 *Global Gender Gap Report* saw Australia rated 50th in terms of gender equality, down six places from its previous 2020 ranking.⁵

The 2021 *Global Gender Gap Report* warns that, "gender gaps in both labour participation and income are likely to increase after the COVID-19 crisis," largely due to the disproportionate burden of household and care responsibilities which were already identified as significant contributing factors of these gaps even before the pandemic.⁶ Similarly other negative impacts including reduced access to education, secure housing, support services, and increased risk of violence are already being recorded as disproportionately affecting women, and also gender diverse people, during and since the height of the pandemic. These observations are applicable at the domestic state level as they are nationally and globally.

Despite the Draft Strategy also emphasising the tangible and disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had upon Tasmanian women as reiterated by the findings of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC), any specific mitigating measures to counter the disproportionate impact of the pandemic are minimal.⁷ In fact, the Draft Strategy relies on recycling the two PESRAC-generated initiatives previously announced by the government: the \$100, 000 Increasing women's participation in the building and construction sector initiative, and the Industry Liaison Officer – Women's Workforce Participation.⁸

While the Draft Strategy acknowledges the COVID-19 pandemic, there remains scope for it to go further and clearly state that the strategy's five-year plan will need to address the fact that gender equality has gone backwards, and additional strategic work and effort must be prioritised to provide structural reforms to counter that impact.

Additionally, there may be key policy lessons to be learned from the range of predicted and unforeseen pandemic experience which need to be clearly identified, quantified and incorporated into any plan moving forward. Currently, the Draft Strategy really does not capture the unique challenges and critical dynamic of a post COVID era, nor identify a process by which to do so.

Gender Baseline analysis and gender disaggregated data collation are discussed later in this submission. However, it is worth noting here, that these policy tools should be applied specifically to identifying the range of pandemic caused and/or exacerbated gender-related impacts across the Tasmanian community. It is also important that any such effort acknowledged the role of intersectional discrimination and impacts.

⁵ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report*, MARCH 2021: pg 9.

⁶ Ibid: pg 14.

⁷ *Draft Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27*: pg 9.

⁸ Ibid: pg 20.

Recommendation 1: That the final *Tasmanian Women’s Strategy 2022-27* incorporates a comprehensive community and stakeholder consultation program to identify and detail specific COVID-19 pandemic gender, including intersectional considerations, related impacts, to inform the development of a state-based gender baseline analysis.

1.1 *Beyond the Women on Boards Strategy*

The Draft Strategy emphasises the role and success of the *Women on Boards Strategy 2020-2025*. While this strategy, and the government’s ongoing commitment to its continuation is to be applauded there is scope for that approach to be expanded into other arenas, specifically the Tasmanian State Service.

Nationally, the *Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26: Realising the benefits for all* is described by the Public Service Commissioner as, “... going beyond the business case. It pursues gender equality through a holistic lens to benefit our people, workplaces and service to Government and all Australians.”⁹ As such, it sets out the gender equality goals and strategies designed to ensure the Australian Public Service demonstrates leadership and consistency in this area.

Developing a specific Tasmanian State Service Gender Equality Strategy would be consistent with the Draft Strategy’s stated aims of demonstrating ‘strong governance’ by ‘leading from the top’ to drive cultural change and gender equality. Just as the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy provides leadership and accountability by detailing gender data across senior executive and management streams, as well as other employment levels, the pay parity or pay gap rates, superannuation levels etc, an equivalent Tasmanian State Service Gender Equality Strategy would provide a similar leadership and accountability role.

Recommendation 2: A Tasmanian State Service Gender Equality Strategy, similar to that in place for the Australian Public Service, be developed as a priority, and which should be housed under the auspices of the final *Tasmanian Women’s Strategy 2022-27*.

1.2 *The Draft Strategy’s Goals, Outcomes and Principles for Implementation*

The Draft Strategy sets **three goals** by which to achieve gender equality: cultural change, empowerment, and visibility and awareness.

Additionally, **four Outcome** areas are identified: economic security; leadership and participation; safety; and health and wellbeing.

And finally, the Draft Strategy commits to developing an Implementation Strategy underpinned by **five principles**: strong governance, assess the impact of gender, person-centred design, engagement and evaluate.

Recognising that the goals and outcomes categories will cover a range of related areas, such as secure housing, education access, gender demographics in under-valued work sectors such as aged care, I support the Draft Strategy’s prioritisation of these proposed goals and outcomes.

Although the Draft Strategy notes the Goals are linked, however, it is important the Draft Strategy also clearly acknowledges the potential for and role of intersectional discrimination impacting upon women, girls and gender-diverse Tasmanians.

⁹ *Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26*: pg x.

Without intersectionality being acknowledged, the proposed implementation evaluation framework risks being reductionist, incomplete and distorted. The barriers to health and well-being or economic security experienced by Tasmanian Aboriginal women and girls living in rural areas, may be vastly different to their non-indigenous counterparts, or to migrant women of different religions to mention a few. These factors all need to be identified, measured, addressed, and strategies evaluated in a comprehensive manner.

Recommendation 3: That the final *Tasmanian Women’s Strategy 2022-27* specifically acknowledges the role and impact of intersectional discrimination, and detail best practice policy measures by which it can be identified and addressed; and

Recommendation 4: The government ensures that any gender responsive budgeting framework, including any implementation guidance ‘toolkits’, specifically address intersectional discrimination by detailing identification measures, and benchmark indicators for progress reporting.

While there is broad support for the specified five principles for implementation, there is scope to clarify the transparency surrounding the development and implementation processes. The ‘engagement’ principle must specify the need for cultural nuance and intersectional experiences to be actively sought out, identified and incorporated into the Strategy.

The crucial test for any strategy or policy document’s implementation is the capacity for transparent review and public appraisal. The Draft Strategy states that an Evaluation Framework will be developed, “as a key implementation activity so the Tasmanian Government can measure whether activities are leading to gender equality.”¹⁰ This Evaluation Framework and its results once implemented should be published publicly on a regular basis. A commitment to doing so would be consistent with another underlying implementation principle of ‘strong governance’ specifically that, “transparent and accountable governance will support whole-of-government efforts for achieving gender equality.”¹¹

Recommendation 5: The Draft Strategy’s proposed Evaluation Framework should be published and made available for public consultation on an annual basis.

2. Gender Responsive Budgeting

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines gender budgeting as: ... the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. Given that the budget process is the gateway for resource allocation, as well as a key determinant of the standards and qualities of public policy formulation, it is natural that the budget be considered for its likely impact on gender-responsive public governance. An established definition of gender budgeting refers to ‘a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality’ (Council of Europe, 2009).¹²

¹⁰ *Draft Tasmanian Women’s Strategy 2022-27*: pg 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² OECD, ‘Gender budgeting in OECD countries’, *OECD Journal on Budgeting Volume 2016/3*, 2017: pg 2.

Following a 2016 Gender Budgeting survey, the OECD reported that almost half of its 34 member countries had or intended to introduce gender budgeting practices. (Unfortunately, at that stage, Australia's national gender budget impact statement had ceased, to be later reinstated during the 2021-22 Budget).

Following the conclusion of that OECD survey, the following typology was developed:¹³

Gender budgeting in practice: An OECD typology

[...] the OECD defines gender budgeting as “integrating a clear gender perspective within the overall context of the budgetary process, through the use of special processes and analytical tools, with a view to promoting gender-responsive policies”. As the “budget process” is an annual (or indeed multiannual) event, there are several opportunities across the cycle in which the gender perspective can be brought to bear. This OECD study accordingly classifies gender budgeting interventions by the relevant stage in the process.

(a) *Ex ante* gender budgeting approaches

- **Ex ante** gender impact assessment: Assessing individual budget measures, in advance of their inclusion in the budget, specifically for their impact on gender equality.
- **Gender budget baseline analysis:** An analysis which is periodically conducted to assess how the existing allocation of government expenditures and revenues contributes (or otherwise) to gender equality.
- **Gender needs assessment:** A qualitative assessment, including views and opinions from stakeholders and civil society representatives, of the extent to which government policies and programmes meet gender equality needs, with a view to identifying priorities for policy action in the budgetary context.

(b) Concurrent gender budgeting approaches

- **Gender perspective in performance setting:** Requirements prescribing that a minimum proportion of budget-related performance objectives be linked to gender-responsive policies.
- **Gender perspective in resource allocation:** Requirements prescribing that a minimum proportion of overall budgeted resources be allocated towards gender-responsive policies.
- **Gender-related budget incidence analysis:** The annual budget is accompanied with an official assessment, conducted by the central budget authority (or under its authority) of the budget's overall impact in promoting gender equality, including a gender-disaggregated analysis of specific policy measures (both revenue- and expenditure-related).

(c) *Ex post* gender budgeting approaches

- **Ex post** gender impact assessment: Assessing individual budget measures, after their introduction/ implementation, specifically for their impact on gender equality.
- **Gender audit of the budget:** Independent, objective analysis, conducted by a competent authority different from the central budget authority, of the extent to which gender equality is effectively promoted and/or attained through the policies set out in the **annual budget**.
- **Gender perspective in spending review:** In the context of a national/“comprehensive” spending review, gender is routinely included as a distinct dimension of analysis.

¹³ Ibid: pg7.

The Draft Strategy notes the range of Gender Responsive Budgeting models available for examination when developing a model for Tasmania.

I acknowledge that reviewing currently implemented models is a sensible option, that maximises the ‘tried and true’ experience of other jurisdictions. Further, the government’s commitment as stated in the Draft Strategy, to continual review of any eventual gender responsive budgeting model is also endorsed, on the grounds that there will also be ongoing public consultation and input into those reviews.

Within the context of the stated intent to examine other available models the following recommendations are made:

Recommendations 6:

- a) A Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) model must include a clear definition, an explanation why the eventual proposed model for Tasmania is considered the most suitable over alternative options, and also involve both *ex ante* and *ex post* approaches;
- b) GRB goals and outcomes must also be clearly stated;
- c) Any proposed GRB framework must incorporate measurable benchmark performance indicators, and provide for periodic public consultation and reviews to ensure it is continuing to drive gender equality;
- d) Suitable investment in the development of GRB training guides for public, private, community and local government sectors, and implementation and assessment should also be provided;
- e) Implementation of GRB should be a prerequisite for any applicant to qualify for state-based financial grants.

3. A Tasmanian Gender Budget Impact Statement

The OECD acknowledges, “ *gender budgeting initiatives have been pursued in various forms over many years. Australia pioneered and piloted attempts at gender budgeting from 1984 onwards in response to calls from women’s rights activists.*”¹⁴

As stated previously, I note and welcome the Tasmanian government’s commitment to introducing a Gender Budget Impact Statement with the upcoming 2022-23 State Budget. In recognition of that commitment this submission will not seek to argue the case as to why a Gender Budget Impact Statement is necessary or prosecute the case for its introduction – instead, that is taken as a welcome given.

However, it is worth placing this commitment within a comparative context. As noted previously, despite Australia’s pioneering status in this area, the federal Gender Budget Impact statement fell into abeyance in 2014, but was reinstated in the 2021-22 Federal Budget Papers.

At the subnational level, Victoria has produced a Gender Budget Impact Statement as part of its state budget papers since its introduction in the 1986-87 budget year. Additionally, Victoria has released and implemented its *Safe and Strong: Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, while also passing its *Gender Equality*

¹⁴ Ibid: pg 6.

Act 2020. It also established a Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, as well as a Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit within the Department of Treasury.

Most recently the Victorian Parliamentary Public Accounts and Estimates Committee undertook an inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting which released its report in March this year. This Report presents probably the most current and comprehensive examination of effective GRB models, and instead of reinventing or repeating that work here, I have attached that report as Appendix B to this submission.

The Tasmanian government's stated commitment to produce a Gender Budget Impact Statement also acknowledges that future iterations of this important document will be more fully developed in subsequent budget cycles. However, given the national and Victorian examples, plus the latter jurisdiction's analysis of its respective model's strengths and weaknesses there is scope for the inaugural Tasmanian Gender Budget Impact Statement to benefit from those examples and lay some sound analytical and gender-lens informed foundations.

4. What Should a Tasmanian Gender Responsive Budgeting Process & Tasmanian Gender Budget Impact Statement Look Like?

As stated above the welcome undertakings made within the Draft Strategy that the current Tasmanian Government will be presenting the state's inaugural Gender Budget Impact Statement in the forthcoming 2022-23 Budget, as well as committing to develop a gender responsive budgeting framework negates the need for submissions to this consultation process to prosecute the case for these vital gender equality initiatives.

Hence, instead of arguing the case for these measures this submission will focus upon what best practice GBR and gender impact assessments may look like.

It may be simpler to state what a proposed Gender Responsive Budgeting Framework and/or Gender Budget Impact Statement should **not** look like: it should go without saying, anything that appears to be window-dressing or a collection of the government-of-the-day's budgetary expenditure highlights would fail as a genuine or meaningful gender equality progress statement.

A 2013 case study on gender responsive budgeting commissioned by the Commonwealth government emphasises that an annual Gender Budget Impact Statement is insufficient on its own to drive necessary gender mainstreaming and gender equality. Instead any effective Gender Budget Impact Statement needs to be nested into a wide-ranging approach to policy and budgetary change, such as a gender responsive budgetary framework.¹⁵

Again, I note the Draft Strategy's acknowledgement of the broad range of developed models available to inform a tailor-made Tasmanian GRB process, and the fact that the annual Gender Budget Impact Statement will become more detailed and complex as the impact assessment and evaluation processes mature.¹⁶ Taken at face value this is a logical and understandable approach, rather than delay introducing these vital inclusion and equality tools unnecessarily.

Rather than propose a fully developed model here, this submission will instead emphasise key principles which should underpin any eventual Tasmanian GRB process, including a Gender Budget Impact Statement as one specific element of such a process.

4.1 Clarify Range of Proposed Gender Responsive Budgeting Framework

¹⁵ Sharp, R. and Broomhill, R., *A Case Study of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Australia*, The Commonwealth of Australia, 2013.

¹⁶ Draft *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27*: pg 20.

The Draft Strategy states a ‘toolkit’ will be developed to assist in the implementation of GRB and the application of a ‘gender lens’. According to the Draft Strategy, the development of this toolkit will be broad with all sectors and agencies encouraged to utilise it upon completion.¹⁷

The final Strategy should clarify that implementation of a gender responsive budgeting toolkit will be required by all state agencies. Currently the wording infers its adoption will be optional.

As stated above, as part of its commitment to gender equality, Tasmania should develop a Tasmanian State Service Gender Equality Strategy, along the lines of the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy to add to the state’s current cohort of specific focused strategies. State agencies required to implement a gender lens to its structural operations as well as gender responsive budgeting must be required to publicly report progress against benchmarks.

Further, businesses and organisations in the private or community sectors seeking access to state taxpayer funds via grant or other financial assistance schemes, should also be required to demonstrate implementation of a gender equality toolkit.

As the OECD states, “... there are multiple potential entry-points within the budget cycle, and across the network of institutional actors, for promoting a gender-responsive approach.”¹⁸

This includes the clear articulation and definition of all roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders identified in both the new *Women’s Strategy 2022-27* and any gender responsive budgeting framework developed. This requirement is also emphasised in the recent Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting report.¹⁹

The final Strategy needs to identify clearly all ‘institutional actors’ who have a role to play, as well as recognise the multiple entry points which they will be required to interact within Tasmania’s eventual gender responsive budgetary processes.

Recommendations 7: The final Tasmanian Women’s Strategy 2022-27 should clarify that all state agencies will be required to implement gender responsive budgeting practices, and that these ‘toolkits’ and framework will incorporate annual reporting against measurable benchmark indicators;

Recommendations 8: Business and community sector applicants to state taxpayer funded grants or other financial assistance schemes, should also be required to demonstrate implementation of gender responsible budgeting as applicable to workplace and/or intent of program or activities for which funding is sought.

4.2 Baseline Data and Analysis

Tasmania needs to make up for lost time here. For example, despite Victoria publishing a 2019 Gender Equality Baseline Data report presenting a significant body of gender disaggregated data, the recent Victorian Parliamentary Committee inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting found that more state-based work is

¹⁷ Ibid: pg 19.

¹⁸ OECD, ‘Gender budgeting in OECD countries’, *OECD Journal on Budgeting Volume 2016/3*, 2017: pg 6.

¹⁹ Clearly defined roles and responsibilities is a specific recommendation of the Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee *Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting*, March 2022.

needed as a matter of priority in order to facilitate any effective monitoring of gender equality improvements.

While the methodology for collating, interrogating and maintaining baseline data sets may be informed by GRB processes, rigorous baseline data is fundamental to any meaningful and effective Gender Budget Impact Statement. Despite lagging behind Victoria when it comes to producing Gender Budget Impact Statements, Tasmania is now in a position to benefit from the findings of that jurisdiction's parliamentary review, particularly regarding the need for gender budget baseline analysis to be undertaken and published. The Victorian Inquiry report recommends:

The Department of Treasury and Finance set a timeframe to perform and make public a gender budget baseline analysis of all existing expenditure and revenue budget initiatives. The analysis should occur at regular intervals in the future and assess how government funding allocations contribute to gender equality and be used to guide future spending decisions that address gender equality gaps.²⁰

The need for gender budget baseline analysis is reiterated by the OECD, which advises:

Conduct a gender budget baseline analysis: This analysis is conducted in advance of the budget formulation process to assess how the baseline allocation of government expenditures and revenues impacts gender equality. Information from this analysis can be used to help guide further resource allocation decisions and ensure that the draft budget proposal addresses gender equality gaps where they exist. Such an analysis is usually conducted by the central budget authority (or under its authority).²¹

This baseline analysis and publication recommendation applies to Tasmania. An initial gender budget baseline analysis of Tasmania's existing budget expenditure and savings initiatives and their impact upon, contribution or otherwise, gender equality is clearly the first step in developing an effective gender responsive budgeting framework and the publication of meaningful budget impact statements.

4.3 Gender Disaggregated Data Collection

The OECD, amongst others, also emphasises the need for gender disaggregated data to inform gender responsive budgeting processes, and specifically advises:

Undertake gender needs assessments across different policy areas: Gender needs assessments are qualitative assessments which look in detail at the extent to which existing government policies and programmes meet and affect gender equality needs in a specific policy area. They should also identify priorities for policy action in the budgetary context. In addition to considering gender-disaggregated data available in each policy area, the assessment should take into account views and opinions from key stakeholders including policy practitioners, civil society organisations (particularly those in the field of gender equality) and citizens. These may be conducted at line ministry, policy or programme level, or on a government-wide basis by a suitably-mandated agency.²²

²⁰ Recommendation No. 6. Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee *Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting*, March 2022: pg xii.

²¹ OECD, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality*, website accessed April 2022.

²² Ibid.

Closer to home, the Victorian Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting also reiterates that, “*best practice international Gender Responsive Budgeting models mandate the collection of sex disaggregated data in legislation.*”²³

In 2020 the Victorian Parliament passed the *Gender Equality Act* which requires the Victorian public service to collect data and report on gender equality in their workplaces in Gender Equality Action Plans. This data must be gender disaggregated and if available, collated about Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation. This disaggregated data is then intended to be provided to the Gender Equality Commissioner, and will also be made public, “so that high-level data about organisations will be searchable to allow for effective public scrutiny.”²⁴

The systematic collection of gender disaggregated data is recognised across many authorities involved in developing and/or monitoring GRB processes, as a crucial element for measuring the progress and impacts of gender equality reforms, policies and budgetary programs. In fact, the Victorian Inquiry states, that the effectiveness of gender responsive performance budgeting is contingent on the availability of reliable and comprehensive gender disaggregated data to set evidence-based outcomes and performance measures.²⁵

For Tasmania to develop a systematic and best practice GRB process, including annual Gender Budget Impact Statements, then clearly a commitment to the systematic whole-of-government supported collation of gender disaggregated data will be key. The government, and the final Tasmanian Women’s Strategy may need to consider developing similar Gender Equality legislation as implemented in Victoria to provide the legislative framework to mandate the development of these data sets.

At the least, the government will need to consider the appropriate training and resourcing required to undertake this best practice investment in driving gender equality reforms.

Recommendations 9: The Tasmanian government prioritises establishing a timeframe to undertake and make public a gender budget baseline analysis of all existing expenditure and revenue budget initiatives to underpin the proposed gender responsive budgeting framework and gender budget impact statement, and to ensure periodic evaluation can be measured against benchmark indicators;

Recommendations 10: The Tasmanian government develops and implements a rigorous and systematic gender disaggregated data collection framework;

Recommendations 11: The Tasmanian government investigates the need to legislate for Gender Equality, as undertaken in other jurisdictions.

4.4 Strong Governance: Transparency and Peer-review

The public consultation and stakeholder involvement thus far throughout the different development stages of the Draft Strategy is to be commended.

A similar commitment is required for each stage of the development of both a GRB process, including any baseline data collation and analysis, and the evolving Gender Budget Impact Statement.

²³ Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee *Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting*, March 2022: pg 69.

²⁴ Ibid: pg 70.

²⁵ Ibid: pg 71.

Undertaking peer-reviews of significant policy development and proposals is considered standard and best practice across both the private and public sectors. This additional examination and scrutiny process builds public confidence and ownership in the policy and proposals, as amongst other aspects, a transparent peer-review process can reduce any perception of a particular political ideology, or vested interests, being the determining factors.

The Victorian Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting found that:

“Independent Gender Equality Budget Groups consisting of civil society organisations and gender economic experts within government and the academic sector have played key roles in assisting countries to conduct gender resourcing needs assessments and report on the implications of Government’s spending decisions on advancing gender equality.”

In light of this acknowledgment the Committee went on to recommend:

“The Victorian Government consider the establishment of an independent Gender Equality Budget Group to undertake an annual gender equality needs assessment of government initiatives.”²⁶

The Sharp and Broomhill 2013 commissioned report for the Commonwealth government also advocate for gender responsive independent expertise be used to peer review policy tools such as Budget Statements.²⁷

A possible alternative to the mechanism proposed by the Victorian Inquiry would be the establishment of a Joint House Standing Committee on Gender Equality. This would be consistent with the Draft Strategy’s goals of strong governance, cultural change, as well as the Implementation Principle detailed in the proposed Evaluation Framework, by providing for the Parliament to demonstrate leadership through such a dedicated mechanism to focus on ‘doing its bit’ towards achieving gender equality.

It is also important, as noted by the Draft Strategy, that all Tasmanians ‘do their bit’ in working towards gender equality, and that includes all elected representatives, not just those on the government benches.

The Joint House Standing Committee mechanism would also provide a bipartisan sense of ‘ownership’ of key gender equality policies, while also providing a transparent and accountable mechanism by which stakeholders could be consulted and included in the development and assessment of proposed gender equality reforms, including any proposed GRB processes.

4.5 Cabinet

The Draft Strategy identifies Cabinet as having a ‘strong governance’ role when delivering the plan to achieve gender equality. Amongst other measures Cabinet may take, one direct mechanism would be to amend the Cabinet papers template to include the automatic requirement for a gender equality impact evaluation to be included in any policy, legislative or budgetary matter presented for Cabinet’s consideration.

Integrating a ‘hard-wired’ gender lens into all Cabinet papers via a required gender impact statement attachment will facilitate government taking a proactive approach to gender equality instead of either falling into the trap of presuming gender neutrality as a baseline assumption, or reacting to issues in a piecemeal manner as they emerge. A gender lens-informed consistent and coherent Cabinet approach will guide the formulation of appropriate and effective policy proposals.

²⁶ Recommendation No. 5. Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee *Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting*, March 2022: pg xii.

²⁷ Sharp, R. and Broomhill, R., *A Case Study of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Australia*, The Commonwealth of Australia, 2013.

By amending Cabinet documentation templates to require as routine, gender impact assessments is consistent with both the Draft Strategy's goal of cultural change, as well as demonstrating a 'leading from the top' strong governance model.

4.6 Auditing, training and awareness programs

The final Women's Strategy and eventual GRB framework need to provide for a training and capacity development plan for all government agencies to raise awareness and facilitate a supportive culture for Gender Responsive Budgeting, and the development of an annual Gender Budget Impact Assessment Statement.

The OECD lists the following amongst common pitfalls to avoid when seeking to implement GRB:

- Budget managers do not have the expertise or resources to undertake meaningful gender assessments.
- Gender assessments are not consistently applied across government departments.
- Assuming that the "default" allocation of resources is gender-neutral.²⁸

The government must commit to providing necessary resourcing for agency training and implementation of GRB practices and any 'toolkits' developed.

Further, additional to the Draft Strategy's proposed Evaluation Framework, auditing and reviewing (including publication) of individual Gender Equality plans, strategies and policies must also be appropriately resourced and managed. Public accountability measures such as auditing against baseline data, benchmark indicators, outcomes, outputs and timelines are crucial for driving cultural change, demonstrating strong governance, and ultimately, achieving lasting gender equality.

²⁸ OECD, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality*, website accessed April 2022.

Recommendations 12: The Tasmanian government should recognise the constructive and inclusive role of independent and apolitical peer reviews, and should undertake to ensure the reviewed *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27* is peer reviewed prior its finalisation;

Recommendations 13: The promised Gender Budget Impact Statement to be delivered with the State Budget 2022-23 should also be peer reviewed by an independent gender responsive budgeting expertise group, and the government should also commit to establishing a timeframe for periodic independent peer reviews within the eventual gender responsive budgeting framework;

Recommendations 14: The Tasmanian government should support the establishment of a Joint House Standing Committee on Gender Equality;

Recommendations 15: Cabinet document templates, including discussion papers, policy, legislative and budgetary proposals, should be immediately updated to require an accompanying gender impact assessment, along the same lines of other assessments currently required;

Recommendations 16: The Tasmanian government must commit to providing necessary GRB development, implementation and review resourcing. This should include provision for immediate and ongoing agency training and implementation of GRB framework and practices, disaggregated data collection and baseline analysis, and ongoing reporting; as well as awareness raising programs across the Tasmanian community.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

Former Foreign Affairs Minister, the Hon. Julie Bishop MP, once said, “promoting gender equality is smart economics, and the right thing to do - we cannot transform our world unless the place of women within it is transformed.”²⁹

Further, the Foreign Affairs Department’s Gender Equality statement states:

Gender equality is about equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys. It does not mean that women and men are the same. Gender inequality is a result of unequal power distribution between women and men, exacerbated by ongoing discrimination, weaknesses in laws, policies and institutions, and social relations that normalise inequality.³⁰

At a subnational level, the draft *Women’s Strategy 2022-27* seeks to address current unequal power distribution across the Tasmanian community.

The main new initiatives of any substance proposed by the Draft Strategy are the promised inaugural Gender Budget Impact Statement for the upcoming State Budget 2022-23, and a yet-to-be-developed gender responsive budgeting process and framework. These two substantive commitments are welcome.

However, due to these commitments currently being works-in-progress, this submission is limited to discussing these two critical proposals in a more theoretical manner than analytical. Hence, the emphasis on the need for a commitment by government for ongoing community and stakeholder consultation and inclusion throughout the development processes, as well as the post implementation evaluation stages.

Just as the Draft Strategy sought comment on the proposed Goals, Outcomes and Principles of Implementation, a GRB framework for the state must be developed in close consultation with those who live with gender inequalities and power imbalances on a daily basis. Public consultation must be built into the development processes, implementation plans, and periodic evaluation mechanisms from the macro strategy level, down to the micro level of agency gender equality plans.

Gender inequality was impacting far too many Tasmanians before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, but the disproportionate impact of the pandemic has made the need for a strategic whole-of-government approach to a comprehensive gender equality strategy more urgent than ever. In the absence of specific details regarding key GRB elements of the Draft Strategy, the following recommendations are made in the spirit of the Draft Strategy’s identification of the need for cultural change, inclusion, accountability and strong leadership.

²⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Gender equality and women’s empowerment strategy*, February 2016: pg 1.

³⁰ Ibid: pg 3.

Recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** That the final *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27* incorporates a comprehensive community and stakeholder consultation program to identify and detail specific COVID-19 pandemic gender, including intersectional considerations, related impacts, to inform the development of a state-based gender baseline analysis;
- **Recommendation 2:** A Tasmanian State Service Gender Equality Strategy, similar to that in place for the Australian Public Service, be developed as a priority, and which should be housed under the auspices of the final *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27*;
- **Recommendation 3:** That the final *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27* specifically acknowledges the role and impact of intersectional discrimination, and detail best practice policy measures by which it can be identified and addressed;
- **Recommendation 4:** The government ensures that any gender responsive budgeting framework, including any implementation guidance 'toolkits', specifically address intersectional discrimination by detailing identification measures, and benchmark indicators for progress reporting;
- **Recommendation 5:** The Draft Strategy's proposed Evaluation Framework should be published and made available for public consultation on an annual basis;
- **Recommendations 6:**
 - a) A Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) model must include a clear definition, an explanation why the eventual proposed model for Tasmania is considered the most suitable over alternative options, and also involve both *ex ante* and *ex post* approaches;
 - b) GRB goals and outcomes must also be clearly stated;
 - c) Any proposed GRB framework must incorporate measurable benchmark performance indicators, and provide for periodic public consultation and reviews to ensure it is continuing to drive gender equality;
 - d) Suitable investment in the development of GRB training guides for public, private, community and local government sectors, and implementation and assessment should also be provided;
 - e) Implementation of GRB should be a prerequisite for any applicant to qualify for state-based financial grants;
- **Recommendations 7:** The final *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27* should clarify that all state agencies will be required to implement gender responsive budgeting practices, and that these 'toolkits' and framework will incorporate annual reporting against measurable benchmark indicators;
- **Recommendations 8:** Business and community sector applicants to state taxpayer funded grants or other financial assistance schemes, should also be required to demonstrate implementation of gender responsible budgeting as applicable to workplace and/or intent of program or activities for which funding is sought;
- **Recommendations 9:** The Tasmanian government prioritises establishing a timeframe to undertake and make public a gender budget baseline analysis of all existing expenditure and revenue budget initiatives to underpin the proposed gender responsive budgeting framework and gender budget impact statement, and to ensure periodic evaluation can be measured against benchmark indicators;

- **Recommendations 10:** The Tasmanian government develops and implements a rigorous and systematic gender disaggregated data collection framework;
- **Recommendations 11:** The Tasmanian government investigates the need to legislate for Gender Equality, as undertaken in other jurisdictions;
- **Recommendations 12:** The Tasmanian government should recognise the constructive and inclusive role of independent and apolitical peer reviews, and should undertake to ensure the reviewed *Tasmanian Women’s Strategy 2022-27* is peer reviewed prior its finalisation;
- **Recommendations 13:** The promised Gender Budget Impact Statement to be delivered with the State Budget 2022-23 should also be peer reviewed by an independent gender responsive budgeting expertise group, and the government should also commit to establishing a timeframe for periodic independent peer reviews within the eventual gender responsive budgeting framework;
- **Recommendations 14:** The Tasmanian government should support the establishment of a Joint House Standing Committee on Gender Equality;
- **Recommendations 15:** Cabinet document templates, including discussion papers, policy, legislative and budgetary proposals, should be immediately updated to require an accompanying gender impact assessment, along the same lines of other assessments currently required; and
- **Recommendations 16:** The Tasmanian government must commit to providing necessary GRB development, implementation and review resourcing. This should include provision for immediate and ongoing agency training and implementation of GRB framework and practices, disaggregated data collection and baseline analysis, and ongoing reporting; as well as awareness raising programs across the Tasmanian community.

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Appendix A:

Tasmanian Parliamentary Hansard Compilation – The need for a state-based Gender Responsive Budgeting Process and a Gender Budget Impact Statement, as Raised by Meg Webb MLC

Overview:

The introduction of gender responsive budgeting and a dedicated State Budget Gender Impact Statement has been a key policy reform which I have pursued through the Tasmanian Parliament.

Below is a compilation of some key examples since I first called for this reform during my formal Budget Reply speech in response to the 2020-21 State Budget, and culminating in the March 2022 unanimous Legislative Council vote in favour of my motion calling for the government to progress gender responsive budgeting and deliver a Gender Budget Impact Statement in the 2022-23 State Budget.

Budget Speeches:

2020 Hansard Excerpt: Meg Webb MLC 2020-21 Budget Reply Speech, Thursday 19 November 2020.

“ [...] One of the groups I will particularly mention is Tasmanian women. There is a growing consensus that the pandemic has left women more than men economically disadvantaged through unemployment, underemployment, reduced incomes, increased work insecurity, greater household and family demands and increased risk of family violence. The PESRAC Interim Report acknowledged this, stating -

In many ways, women have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The reasons for this include:

women heavily dominate the industries that are on the ‘frontline’ of the COVID-19 crisis, including health care, social assistance, education, retail and cleaning;

social norms mean women are more likely to take on additional household and caring responsibilities arising due to COVID-19, such as home-schooling and caring for older family members, those with a disability and those who are unwell;

women are over-represented in casual work as well as in industries that are suffering in the crisis, such as accommodation and food services, which makes their re-employment opportunities vulnerable depending how these industries recover; and

a higher proportion of women have lost jobs, compared with men - between March and May, female employment in Tasmania fell by 8 per cent while male employment fell by 6.9 per cent (Figure 4.5). While more women lost full-time employment than men, total employment lost by men and women is broadly the same.

It is also worth noting the impact on women in some other areas, such as education. Australian Bureau of Statistic data released earlier this month revealed a 7 per cent drop in the 2020 number of women enrolled in Australia's tertiary sector, universities and some vocational courses, compared with the 2019 figure. That is a reduction of 86 000 women nationally. For the same period, there was a drop in male enrolment of 21 000 equating to a 2 per cent reduction. This is a highly gendered pandemic. It is evident that the obstacles it presents to women are tangible and significant, and we need to take into account a gendered approach to our recovery and rebuilding. The example I just gave around the tertiary sector in many cases relates to being a federal responsibility, because universities are a federal responsibility. It is an indicative example and has real flow-on ramifications in Tasmania. We need to assess whether the state Government is pulling the appropriate levers in this Budget to address all the worrying components we have identified as being a pink recession, when we are managing and constructing our new normal from this circumstance.

Later the PESRAC interim report says -

The health and community services sector is dominated by female employment, and therefore additional resources that have been deployed into this sector in response to COVID-19 will contribute to potentially creating additional jobs for women.

...

As with all employment, the most effective way to rebuild the sectors that have higher levels of female employment and continue to be adversely impacted will be the unwinding of the COVID-19 suppression measures.

The PESRAC interim report made recommendations specifically in relation to women on page 60, recommendations -

- 47 The State Government should support further industry programs to enhance workplace cultural change and development pipelines for women
- 48 The Tasmanian State Sector should create traineeship pipelines within Government and maintain at least gender parity in recruitment
- 49 Government agencies should embed flexible working arrangements delivered successfully through the COVID-19 suppression period, to support the recruitment and advancement of women in the State Service.

What have we seen in this Budget? The Government would say it acknowledges the disproportional impact and is seeking to address it, but I would say the efforts they have made are fairly lip-service. Getting women into construction - I can only think that when the tool you are willing to use is a hammer, everybody needs to look like a nail. That is unfortunate. We need to remember that, while not bad in and of itself, is not enough. It is certainly not enough to deliver on the PESRAC recommendations, let alone what we could think of beyond those first interim recommendations as being required. It is not just about getting women trained, qualified and technically able to enter an industry, it is also about ensuring that industry is ready, receptive, appropriate and safe for women to enter.

It is a good start to see the Government acknowledging support needs to be provided if we expect women to take up non-traditional employment, that we can assist women into those sectors and begin pioneering a new normal, but to solely rely on that risks appearing tokenistic. It also risks kicking down the road the actual delivery of outcomes for us. It takes a while to get trained up and fed through a pipeline into a non-traditional industry. There are only certain women in our community who are going to find that to be an appropriate and palatable way forward.

I am going to compare that to the New South Wales state budget, which came out this week. That state government announced a \$10 million investment to broadly assist women find employment. The investment it is making provides grants of up to \$5000 to assist women to find work. Women can apply for the grants through Service NSW and be assigned a coordinator to help them return to the workforce. The NSW government will be providing up to \$5000 for training and support, \$500 for text books, up to \$2000 for technology and office equipment, \$3500 for child care, including before- and after-school care, and \$500 for transport. Obviously, there may be more devil in the details warranting close analysis of that commitment in New South Wales, but what we can recognise is New South Wales is seeing more needs to be done than relying solely on a vague wave of a hand at addressing serious and systemic issues when suddenly trying to shoehorn women into traditionally male-heavy and potentially hostile work environments such as building and construction.

The first step to empowerment is self-determination and self-agency. But I do not believe, or so it appears, that women were asked what assistance they need in Tasmania to help inform either this initial sweeping decision that a construction solution is our way forward for the state or how to make that decision work for Tasmanian women, once it was decided.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown into sharp relief our pre-existing structural fault lines, with sharp edges to those fault lines and widening gaps, it also highlighted where we have the opportunity to comprehensively address these challenges, to really pivot Tasmania to a permanently stronger, more equitable footing.

There was an opportunity to really engage with Tasmanian women to see - given the impact of this COVID-19 pandemic circumstance - what would be best, most effective, to provide support going forward. What would work immediately? What would work in the medium- and longer term? It may be our PESRAC process begins to deliver more meat to the bones of that, but if the Government holds back, and so marginally responds to those further potential recommendations, as I believe it has to the ones presented in the interim report, I fear we are still not going to see an appropriate response here.

We know that in encouraging better gender representation in the State Service - particularly into management roles and positions - there was so much work done in recent years to change the culture of the public service around management, recruitment and all those sorts of things. It is not just about women being present. It is about the culture and the environment of an industry becoming receptive to and comfortable and safe for women.

I am concerned we are intending to funnel women into male-dominated industries, as our gesture towards greater support and a gender balance in our response. What are we doing alongside that funnelling that ensures those industries are being transformed to become less hostile work environments, more receptive to women, more appropriate to the needs that a gender-balanced workforce might have within them? I am interested to hear more about that. I have not heard commentary about that accompanying work that would go alongside the pipeline.

I find one of the interesting catchphrases from this Budget, has been about the 'glide path'. When I think about gender in relation to this Budget, and think about what it provides and doesn't provide for women, I wonder whether this Budget is the glide path that Tasmanian women were looking for, and I can't help but think not. What then to do about that? How do we better hold ourselves to account?

Nationally, we know there have been calls for the reinstatement of a federal budget gender impact statement, which had been initially introduced under the Hawke-Keating government, back in the day, but which disappeared under the Abbott-Hockey government.

As we move forward, in this state, and develop Tasmania's 'new normal', I think it would be highly beneficial to have our own state-based gender impact statement accompanying the state budget, and the interim fiscal statement updates. According to national political commentators, gender-responsive budgeting, and I quote -

could make a substantial contribution, documenting the extent to which investment in childcare and other services is more likely to create jobs, and jobs for women, than spending on construction.

Further it is worth noting that -

Almost half of the 37 countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development now have some form of gender budgeting. The former head of the International Monetary Fund has declared it good budgeting.

So today I am calling on the Tasmanian Government to move beyond narrow and tokenistic efforts to support Tasmanian women, and calling on it to start the task by holding itself to account by instituting a gender impact statement on this, and every future budget. That would be a genuine way we could know and have confidence in the fact that we are delivering and are planning for all Tasmanians. [...]"

2021 Hansard Excerpt: Meg Webb MLC 2021-22 Budget Reply Speech, Wednesday, 1 September 2021.

"[...] Gender equality is the fifth Sustainable Development Goal and it is clearly relevant to the Tasmanian community here and now as well as into the future. At the risk of sounding like a stuck record - in fact, I am not going to apologise for reiterating on the public record the necessary work that still needs to be done to address the ongoing and institutionalised challenges faced by Tasmanian women and girls. I place firmly on the record my serious disappointment in the gaping hole that is the missing state budget gender impact statement.

I am truly flabbergasted by this Government's refusal to fill in this blank, given its rhetoric and keenness to be seen as sensitive to the current political and community environment on gender-related matters. This measure, which

is called for by a number of members in this place, is nothing contentious. It does not require a U-turn on policy, nor would it require a separate standalone funded entity. Other jurisdictions produce some form of budget gender impact statements within their budget papers as a matter of routine.

Last year, when responding to the 2020-21 state Budget, I raised as an example the routine Victorian statement and what had been, previous to 2014, the standard federal budget gender impact statement. Since last year's budget session here we have seen the federal government reintroduce its women's budget statement in 2021-22, when it brought down the federal budget in May this year.

I note that during last year's budget Estimates hearings the then minister for Women, Sarah Courtney, did undertake to examine the feasibility of implementing a Tasmanian gender impact budget statement but at this stage nothing appears to be forthcoming on progress on that front. Perhaps the new Minister for Women, a member of this Chamber, will step up to the plate and demonstrate a more active commitment to delivering this standard yet significant tool in progressing gender equity in our decision-making and in our community.

There are some good initiatives and election commitments funded in this Budget relating to Tasmanian women. I highlight the acknowledgement of, and provision for, funding to address period poverty in schools as a practical and effective initiative to support Tasmanian girls. However, there is minimal detail in Budget Paper No. 2, Volume 1 explaining the rather dramatic drop off in funding for outputs such as women's policy across the forward Estimates.

A budget gender impact statement would draw together the proposed, perceived and evaluated impacts of other budget items. It would give us insight into how the Government's proposed competitive tax system initiatives will benefit, or not, Tasmanian women. Similarly, it could look at the expected cost and/or benefits of the proposed new infrastructure investment when evaluated against gender considerations, or show what a gender analysis would tell us about the planned elective surgery blitz funded in this Budget. Are these equitable allocations? The same would go for the education and other health investments and the new renewables, climate and future industries focus.

If the Government wishes its women-friendly rhetoric to have and be recognised as having solid foundations in fact, there is no justifiable reason for the lack of a budget gender impact statement. Fair warning, I will continue to emphasise its absence for as long as I am doing this job in this place. [...]"

Budget Estimate Scrutiny Committee Hearings:

2020 Hansard Excerpt: Legislative Council Estimates Committee A – Meg Webb MLC to the Premier & Treasurer, the Hon. Peter Gutwein MP, Tuesday 24 November 2020.

Ms WEBB – [...] One thing I spoke about in my budget reply speech in this Chamber in recent weeks was to do with a gender equity statement for our budget. Gender impact statements were part of a federal budget process. They're a very common part of budgeting processes in many jurisdictions similar to ours.

There's considerable concern about the impact of this particular pandemic on women or girls in regard to employment, education opportunities, but also increased risks in a range of areas. I note that there are particular things in this budget which are targeted to women. I'm not suggesting that there aren't those things there, and I don't necessarily need to hear about them again. I'm wondering, given that we're challenged by this particular identified concern about impact on women, whether you would consider and commit to introducing as part of your standard budget - even if it's during a recovery period of these next few years - some form of gender impact statement that demonstrates and provides us with confidence that we're effectively addressing that concern and any disproportionate impacts. These measures would sit alongside measures you might be funding or introducing in a complementary fashion and in a more structured way prevents that impact in a broad sense across the whole of government and the whole of budget.

Mr GUTWEIN - I'm happy to take that on notice and seek some advice on what you're suggesting. That sounds like quite a reasonable proposition. You've correctly identified there are significant

measures in the budget to ensure there is a focus on that women and girls can have pathways. I'm happy to get some advice.

Ms WEBB - Thank you for that.

2020 Hansard Excerpt: Legislative Council Estimates Committee A – Meg Webb MLC to the Minister for Women, the Hon. Sarah Courtney MP, Wednesday 25 November 2020.

Ms WEBB - More back to where you started, if we can.

I am going to take you back to where Ruth started with her initial question to you, minister, which was around the concept of a gender lens on policy and a gender impact assessment on policy. To begin there, you would be well aware that it is standard practice in many jurisdictions, in fact it was standard practice in the federal government here until relatively recently, that a gender lens and a gender impact assessment was done, particularly on the budget. It is a very normal thing to do and it is important for effective policy development and effective accountability around policy decision-making.

That is what the member for Murchison was asking you about initially in terms of whether there is a presence of that in this. It is not about how many Cabinet members are around the table who happen to be women or being able to provide a perspective. It is about tangible assessment at a policy development stage, decision-making stage and reporting stage.

We can take it as read that you are not currently staffed as the Minister for Women to have that provided to you and then through you to the broader Cabinet. You are not staff currently -

CHAIR - Is that a question or are you asking a question?

Ms WEBB - I am getting to a question. It would appear from your answer to Drew's question to have provided to you a gender lens statement about policy being considered by Cabinet and the decisions made there or a gender impact statement around the Budget later.

My question is, what resourcing would be required for you as Minister for Women to be provided with those two things? That information, a gender lens assessment of policy to take to Cabinet on all policy and a gender impact statement to be delivered associated with the Budget or further to that mid-year financial reports, but that accountability? I would like to hear from you a commitment to identifying what resourcing would be required to have that provided to you as Minister for Women and then a commitment to advocate for that. I think you would find the Premier receptive to that advocacy. I do not believe the resourcing that would be required would be unrealistically high and it would be a tangible way that you as minister could deliver on that? I am looking for a commitment.

CHAIR - Could the minister answer the question? There are a couple of questions there first and a request for a commitment.

Ms COURTNEY - Without having advice on the resourcing I can't make a commitment.

Ms WEBB - The first commitment was to identify the resourcing required.

Ms COURTNEY - I understand in the Premier's hearing he took on notice some questions around his commitment around this. I am conscious of the preparation of budget papers and preparation of the Budget is resourced through Treasury, not through Communities Tas. We put up a range of budget bids for initiatives. As the Minister for Women, my priority is within an envelope of funding. Noting the fact, we have always had finite resources within Government and scarce resources, because we want to use taxpayer money effectively, our focus has always been within the Communities' portfolio to utilise the funding we have to get the most action and the best outcomes we can in participation and engagement.

I would not want any of the resources I have in this portfolio not doing what they are doing now and that is why I am excited to have additional resourcing for the supporting industries pipeline for women and the additional recruitment will be under way soon to be able to support that.

With regards to a process around the preparation of Budget, my understanding is the Premier took that on notice. I do not want to go to an answer the Premier has already taken on notice to reply back to the Committee.

Ms WEBB - I don't believe he took that particular element I am asking of you on notice. As minister for Family Violence he took it on board to consider a gender impact statement and the value of that in relation to the Budget. That is my understanding of what he took on notice yesterday. What I have asked for from you as the Minister for Women is a commitment to not re-spend or take away from what you are already doing - although in the context of \$3 million-odd over the next little while it probably wouldn't take away a great deal of that - but a commitment to identify the resourcing that would be required, which I think you could do within current resourcing. Identify the resourcing required to do those two things - gender assessments of policy to feed into Cabinet and then a gender impact statement on the Budget; which isn't about forming the budget. It is about assessing the budget once it is formed and being able to make a statement about how it impacts in regards to gender.

It is not about budget formation. It is a piece of policy assessment work that is done separate to that. Will you commit to identifying the resourcing that would be required to provide that as a first step?

Ms COURTNEY - Yes, I will take that on notice.

2021 Hansard Excerpt: Legislative Council Estimates Committee A – Meg Webb MLC to the Premier & Treasurer, the Hon. Peter Gutwein MP, Tuesday 7 September 2021.

Ms WEBB – [...] Premier, regarding this Budget and your portfolio that we're dealing with at the moment. In terms of the output groups and the policy-related line items they contain, can you detail for us whether any policy and/or election initiatives were evaluated for potential gender impact, positive, negative or status-quo of the policy intent? What was the outcome delivery of that within the community?

Secondly, if so, could you provide the detail of the policy and election initiatives for which a gender impact assessment was undertaken and the metrics used? Do you have any detail about gender impact post-implementation and delivery outcomes evaluation metrics that you have in place for those items?

Mr GUTWEIN - No gender impact statement was completed for either election commitments or of any of the initiatives that were brought forward. Obviously, there were initiatives that were focused in terms of outcomes regarding gender. There is a range of initiatives through the Budget that focus on increasing opportunities for women in leadership, other supports, in being able to engage in the economy, but broadly speaking a gender impact statement wasn't completed.

Ms WEBB - I move onto the next one -

CHAIR - Just before you go off that one. Do you have someone in your department, or maybe within Treasury - which may be a question for Treasury - who would have the capacity to actually undertake a gender impact assessment and provide a statement for you? Or do we lack those skills in order to get a formal inclusion in the budget papers next year, perhaps?

Mr GUTWEIN - I know the Minister for Women has made a commitment - she sees its importance. I understand there are others who see the importance of this. It is something I will take advice on. I am not certain whether or not we currently have the necessary skills and resources. Importantly, part of that advice would also be in terms of what the construct and context is and what would actually be included.

CHAIR - The format of a gender impact statement, yes.

Mr GUTWEIN - The format of it, yes.

CHAIR - There are other models around the country and world to look at. The UK does a pretty good job on it.

Mr GUTWEIN - And we will need to draw on .

Ms WEBB - Last year when we spoke to the Minister for Women in Estimates, we asked her and she gave an undertaking to investigate what would be required to provide that - just to look at what would be required - but nothing subsequently emerged in terms of what came of that commitment to look at that. Can you make a commitment for us today to actually investigate what the requirements would be to provide that as part of the next budget and share that with us so we can understand the parameters around those requirements?

Mr GUTWEIN - I thought the Minister for Women had made that commitment.

Ms WEBB - She did last year, the minister who was then -

Mr GUTWEIN - No, no.

CHAIR - No, she answered a question to me in the Chamber.

Ms WEBB - Right. Sorry, my understanding was that commitment given was to look into or advocate for, but I am looking for a commitment to actually tangibly assess what would be required and to share that so we can see that assessment has been made.

Mr GUTWEIN - I am happy to provide a commitment we would conduct that assessment.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. [...]

Parliamentary Debate:

2022 Hansard Excerpt: Legislative Council Debate, Meg Webb MLC's Motion calling for inclusion of a Gender Impact Budget Assessment in the 2022-23 State Budget, Tuesday 8 March 2022.

MOTION

Gender-Responsive Budgeting

[12.44 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I move -

- (1) That the Legislative Council notes:
 - (a) The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Council of Europe defines gender-responsive budgeting as: "Gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality";
 - (b) In 2019, the International Monetary Fund stated, "Gender equity, achieved through gender responsive budgeting, is more than a human rights issue. It's an economic imperative"; and
 - (c) Gender Equity Victoria defines the three key areas of gender budgeting as:

- (i) gender-informed resource allocation whereby individual policy decisions and/or funding allocations take into account the impact of the decision on gender equality;
 - (ii) analysis at the sectorial level of the impact of decisions on gender equality within that sector or industry; and
 - (iii) assessment of the impact of the budget as a whole is subject to some degree of gender analysis.
- (2) That the Legislative Council further notes:
- (a) Australia was recognised as a pioneer and global leader in developing an analytical gender lens to evaluate economic infrastructure and outcomes, by including the nation's first Women's Budget Statement in the 1984- 85 Federal Budget;
 - (b) The national gender budget statement stopped being produced in 2014, but was reinstated by the federal government in the 2021-22 Federal Budget Papers;
 - (c) Victoria has produced a Gender Budget Impact Statement as part of its state budget papers since its introduction in the 1986-87 budget year; and
 - (d) Gender-responsive budgeting would provide another tool within the state legislative and policy framework to facilitate improved economic security for, and economic participation of, Tasmanian women and gender-diverse communities.
- (3) That the Legislative Council calls upon the Tasmanian Government to:
- (a) Develop genuine whole-of-government gender-responsive budgeting processes; and
 - (b) introduce an analytical Budget Gender Impact Statement as part of the 2022-23 state budget papers.

Mr President, this motion focuses upon the role of and the need for gender-responsive budgeting and a gender budget impact assessment - a public policy tool that I and others here have previously called for and raised on many occasions in this place. However, this debate might be the first opportunity provided to this Chamber to formally consider such an initiative and its potential contribution to our state.

As luck would have it, the parliamentary sitting schedule has provided the opportunity to have this important debate today, on 8 March, which is, in fact, International Women's Day, a very appropriate alignment for us to be considering this motion.

Ms Forrest - I note you are wearing all the colours - the violet, white and green: give women the vote. The colours of suffrage.

Ms WEBB - Indeed, I am wearing the suffrage colours with pride today. A very appropriate alignment, Mr President. The 2022 International Women's Day theme here in Australia is #BreakTheBias. This campaign theme is further developed by the International Women's Day organisers on their website as follows:

Imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. A world that's diverse, equitable and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality. Collectively we can all #BreakTheBias.

The campaign then asks us to consider taking responsibility every day for breaking the bias in our communities, workplaces, schools, colleges, universities and communities.

Taking responsibility means taking action. When it comes to breaking the bias in the structures of our governance, it means implementing purposeful, evidence-based, effective initiatives within the mechanics of our policymaking and resource allocation.

We would all agree that we have come a long way in many key aspects of society since the earliest celebration of an International Women's Day, which was in 1911. The pace of progress has certainly picked up since International Women's Day was first celebrated on this particular date by the UN in 1975. Despite this progress, there remain some fundamental aspects where we have simply not come far enough, not yet.

In this regard and within the context of the motion before us, it is useful to revisit and reconsider the original goals behind the establishment of this international day. Its inaugural year as a United Nations celebration, 1975, saw a world conference on women held in Mexico City, from which evolved the UN Decade for Women and a world plan of action agreed to by UN member states. This action plan aimed to eliminate discrimination and promote the status of women globally, and specifically to integrate women into the development process and increase women's involvement in political life.

One specific acknowledgement was the agreement that there needed to be national machinery to advance the equality of women. By the end of that UN Decade for Women, Australia and Canada were recognised as groundbreakers in developing such national machinery. Key to that here in Australia was the pioneering development of gender-responsive budgetary processes in the 1980s. This recognised that any public policy proposals, whether to do with transportation, taxation, education, health services, tariffs or whatever it may be, could not be assumed to be gender-neutral.

It acknowledged that public policy could be better understood in terms of gender impact through a formalised process of review as part of the policy development process overall. A leading Australian academic, Marian Sawer, described it at the 2005 UN expert group meeting on the role of national mechanisms in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, as follows:

Previously [to the 1975 World Conference on Women] public servants had assumed that policies [that would benefit men would also benefit women] a presumption most blatantly displayed in overseas aid policies where development policies targeted at men notoriously increased the workloads of women left behind in the subsistence farming sector.

That is an example that was provided at that time and we have seen an internationally celebrated day, a decade focused on women's equality and the elevation of awareness globally of the need to structurally tackle discrimination experienced by women play out.

However, despite all of that recognition and action, where do we find ourselves in terms of continuing progress? Moving forward or losing ground? It is broadly recognised globally and nationally here, and even locally, that women have been disproportionately affected during COVID-19. Many warned over the last two years that the pandemic risked seeing social cracks and divisions calcify and become entrenched. I note that we are also hearing similar warnings in the context of climate change and its likely equity impacts.

Last year, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report for 2021 assessed areas that included economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and political empowerment. It found the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic the preceding year meant that the time it would take to close the gender gap had increased by 36 years, from the previous projection of 99 years to achieve equality to 135 years hence. Effectively, globally, under COVID-19 in one year, we lost a whole generation of equality.

Let us pause to absorb those figures. By that estimate, gender parity will not only not be seen in our lifetimes but our children will not see it in their lifetimes, nor perhaps their children in theirs when we look at a horizon of 135 years hence. That breaks my heart.

Despite those goals and aspirations of recent decades, some gender-based inequalities remain entrenched, stalling our progress and keeping us vulnerable to not just not progressing but in some cases to going backwards. When it comes to a lack of progress or a vulnerability to losing ground, we have to ask ourselves if it is by design, the result of complacency or continued, misplaced assumptions of gender-neutral public policy. Maybe it is all three to some extent.

Today's International Women's Day theme, #BreakTheBias, demands that we bear witness to and recommit ourselves to tackling those ongoing challenges we have before us in a meaningful way. We are prompted to ask ourselves: Have we the best tools in our toolkit? And are we employing world's best practice when we are seeking to meet this challenge?

There are many ways that the current Government and previous governments of this state have sought to make progress in tackling discrimination faced by Tasmanian women and girls, through structural reform, targeted investment and public education. We can point to a very positive history of action and leadership in this space, and I want to acknowledge the work that has been undertaken by previous and this current state Government towards levelling the gender playing field in that sense.

It must be acknowledged that improvements in equality for Tasmanian girls and women, and also more recently for non-binary identifying members of our community, have not been accidental nor incidental over the years. I acknowledge the work undertaken in the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-2021 and reported in its 2019 progress report. I also acknowledge the Leadership and Participation for Women Action Plan 2021-2023, which, among other things, seeks to ensure the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic upon Tasmanian women are addressed.

Clearly, there have also been gains in women's representation in the private and public sector. This Government can and, I am sure, will note today too the good progress that has been made in appointing women to government board positions and encouraging women's leadership. We have seen a great deal of progress in political leadership in this state, including two female governors of our state and a state parliament where female representation sits well in excess of 50 per cent. Genuine efforts have been made by all governments over the years. It does not undermine any of those achievements or ongoing efforts, to pause, to reflect, and to agree that more can be done and that there are additional government levers which could be pulled, particularly in ensuring our machinery of governance has gender equity built into its design. Policy development and budgetary processes, as the fundamentals of our machinery of governance, are a ripe opportunity for more progress.

Some may ask, what would a gender budget impact assessment and statement do? In a nutshell, a gender budget impact statement is a formal reporting of a gender-responsive budgeting process.

In 2017, the OECD report, *Gender Budgeting in OECD countries*, introduces gender budgeting as:

the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. Given that the budget process is the gateway for resource allocation as well as a key determinant of the standards and qualities of public policy formulation, it is natural that the budget be considered for its likely impact on gender-responsive public governance.

An established definition of gender budgeting [from the Council of Europe 2009] refers to 'a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality'.

This tool, and this description, recognises that every policy initiative in the budget has the potential to impact men, women, and non-binary people differently, even if the policy is intended to be gender-neutral. It further recognises that these unintended consequences can mean that a policy may result, inadvertently, in worsening the gender gaps that government in other ways is striving its best to close.

A 2021 report prepared for the Queensland Council of Social Service, QCOSS, by Dr Leonora Risse, described it thus:

Gender responsive budgeting involves analysing all policy measures to identify the ways in which the policy can either advantage or potentially disadvantage different cohorts of the Queensland population on the basis of gender.

These gender-based differences arise not necessarily by intent, but because of the different industries, different occupations and different roles in the household, organisations and wider community that men and women tend to take throughout their life path.

The QCOSS report then goes on to say:

Gender impact analysis involves asking the following questions and arriving at answers that are informed by data, evidence-based insights, and objective analysis: Who is likely to benefit most from this policy? Who is most at risk of being disadvantaged by, or overlooked by, this policy?

How do particular cohorts of women stand to benefit from, or potentially be disadvantaged by, this policy? In its net effect, is this policy contributing towards closing gender gaps?

While the report applies in the Queensland jurisdiction we can equally recognise it as applying here.

Adopting gender-responsive budgeting and producing a public annual gender budget impact statement would ensure Tasmania's policymakers and legislators are reliably and factually informed on how proposed budgetary measures will impact all Tasmanians. Such an annual piece of governance infrastructure will also ensure key indicators are developed against which actual progress, or regress, can be identified and measured consistently. There will be scope to evaluate and identify any potential policy contradictions or risks of perverse policy outcomes.

Let me provide an example that demonstrates such a risk where we can consider how a gender-responsive approach to policy may have assisted in averting some negative outcomes. I am sure we would all recall that as part of the initial COVID-19 support initiatives, the federal government allowed people whose finances were adversely impacted by COVID-19 to access up to \$10 000 of their superannuation between 20 April to 30 June in 2020 and then a further \$10 000 in the second application period from 1 July to 31 December 2020. Indisputably, many Australians regarded this early access scheme a lifeline during those early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, at the time, concerns were raised by commentators and advocates that the positive and/or negative ramifications of this scheme would be inflicted inequitably across the population due to gender. In particular, it was raised that it held a potential risk for further widening the gender gap in retirement incomes.

A recent report by the Grattan Institute titled, *Women's work: the impact of the COVID crisis on Australian women*, indicates that although the full impacts of that scheme remain unclear and are yet to be fully assessed, the concerns raised were justified. Specifically, the Grattan Institute report highlights the following:

Men had a higher take-up than women across all age cohorts and men withdrew more from their super in dollar terms than women through the scheme but women withdrew a higher proportion of their total savings because of their lower starting balances.

We know that currently women generally have lower superannuation balances than men.

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Resumed from above.

[2.46 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, picking up where we left off prior to lunch we were discussing examples of opportunities for gender analysis of policy with early access to the superannuation scheme at the beginning in the early stages of COVID-19, and some of the gender-related differences in impact that we saw as a result of that scheme. We were noting the Grattan Institute which had reported that women had withdrawn high proportions of their total savings. We know that women generally have lower superannuation balances than men, leading to lower retirement incomes which the Grattan Institute also warned causes, and I quote:

... the increased risk of poverty in retirement for low-income and otherwise vulnerable women, especially single parents and those renting in retirement. There are already more women in poverty and financial stress in retirement than men.

It may be that had the federal Treasury at the time been required to produce a gender impact assessment of the proposed fiscal policy, including those emergency provisions such as the early superannuation access scheme, it is possible that different decisions may have been made. Possibly active monitoring mechanisms may have been put into place as well as additional short, medium or longer term remedial or assistance schemes to mitigate any entrenching or calcification of pre-existing financial gender inequalities.

While we do not know what may have eventuated in an alternative scenario where gender impact assessments were undertaken as a routine element of public policy, we do know that despite the short-term benefits, one outcome from this particular policy decision has seen women who took it up use a higher proportion of their retirement savings and leave themselves at higher risk of falling into poverty by the time they reach retirement age. In fact, another aspect of that same initiative - to continue the example with it which has relevance in terms of the opportunities in a gender

impact assessment process for policy - is the intersection that it had with another issue experienced largely by women, and that is family violence.

We know from local and national research that there was an escalation of family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that a common aspect of family violence is financial abuse and control. At the time the initiative was rolled out consumer groups warned that providing early access to superannuation lump sums would create a new opportunity for financial abuse through perpetrators forcing or coercing partners to make withdrawals and then taking control of that money. In fact, data released recently by the Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees (AIST) just last month has looked at the uptake of that early superannuation access initiative and cross-referenced it with data that we have about the prevalence of the financial abuse during COVID-19. Their estimate is that it is likely about 70 000 Australian women may have been coerced or forced into the early withdrawal of their superannuation through that scheme by an abusive partner. A gender impact analysis of that proposed policy at the time it was being formulated would likely have revealed risks such as these and provided the opportunity at that point to respond to and to mitigate and to attempt to minimise those risks as part of the planning.

Without a structural approach of a gender analysis built into the process we continue then to play catch-up. Instead of being forewarned and forearmed, we are left trying to manage and to fix the negative consequences after the damage has been done. A proactive structural approach is sensible, effective policymaking.

Part (1) of the motion before us lists recent national and sub-national examples of gender budget impact statements. As mentioned, Australia was once recognised as a global pioneer in developing this sort of tool. Hopefully, the re-emergence of the federal Budget Gender Impact Statement for last year's 2021-22 Budget was not a one-off, but will continue as a pattern.

Members may be interested to know that currently the Women in Tasmania website provides information regarding the benefits of gender analysis and gender budget statements. It also discusses and provides details of international models that are in place, including those in place in Canada and the Netherlands, as well as some interstate models, including Queensland and South Australia.

It is rather ironic and it is a distinct shame, in my view, that the state government website cannot yet point us towards our very own Tasmanian gender analysis and responsive budgeting model as a best practice example. In fact, on that side it relies on referring back to the Tasmania Together goals from times past as the main example of the Tasmanian government's commitment to furthering the implementation of gender analysis.

The Women in Tasmania website also details the fact that New Zealand cabinet papers follow a template which includes a gender impact statement. In fact, currently, along with a general legislation impact statement, New Zealand's cabinet document template also includes a requirement for a gender impact statement, a human rights assessment, and a disability impact statement. Unlike most Australian jurisdictions, our trans-Tasman cousins have a culture of proactively releasing cabinet papers, minutes and decisions, so examples of the template that I am referring to here are readily available on the New Zealand Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website.

Let us bookmark for another day a broader discussion of such laudable public transparency and accountability practice from an executive government, such as we see in New Zealand, and return now to the matter at hand.

A gender impact assessment statement applied to policy proposals brought to the Tasmanian Cabinet for consideration and approval would fit really well alongside the current requirement for an economic impact assessment, and would complement an annual state budget gender impact statement.

To recap, the role of budget gender impact statements is to interrogate and test any assumptions of gender neutrality in the policy and budget process in a systematic and formal manner and to report on the findings and any recommendations derived from that examination.

Should a proposal proceed despite there being acknowledged gender impacts, the decision to do so would be done knowingly, and hopefully with additional safeguards and mitigation measures. It will help render the too often invisible ramifications, to be visible for the active consideration of our decision-makers. How can that be anything but a good thing?

Crucially, another fundamental goal of gender-responsive budgeting is to work towards ensuring consistency and cohesion across economic and social policy. Too often, it is realised after the fact, or warnings were deliberately ignored

at the time perhaps, that policies may have perverse outcomes on women or girls or others who identify as non-binary genders.

While nothing is a panacea in a complex, shifting sand environment of public policy, gender-responsive budgeting and gender budget impact statements will at least give pause for decision-makers to double-check whether there are serious contradictions between social and economic policies proposed and our aspirations for positive change when it comes particularly to gender equity.

If we could turn to the text of the motion before us, what I have attempted to provide in section (1), is a series of succinct summaries of the role and the contribution of gender budget reporting. These statements in section (1)(a) and (1)(b) speak for themselves, but are notable for being made, not by any of the perceived usual suspects necessarily or indeed certainly not by radical activist organisations but instead by conservative and pragmatic entities. Nobody could call the OECD or the IMF radical or militant feminist activists, generally. This tells us that gender-responsive budgeting is considered a mainstream responsible budgeting process to the degree that this process not only makes human rights sense, it also makes economic sense.

In section (2) of the motion, I have detailed a quick timeline of key Australian actions at both national and sub-national levels. As outlined, Australia has a track record of utilising this equity tool to some degree. Gender-responsive budgeting and policy impact assessment processes have also been adopted across a range of corporate and NGO organisations, as well as departmental and local government arenas across the nation.

The Queensland Office for Women provides a gender analysis online platform that equips organisations to apply a gender lens to their own activities, which is an incredibly useful tool for the community.

It is interesting to note that the Women in Tasmania website, under the heading, 'Why use gender analysis?', states that 'the use of gender analysis helps planners in being aware of historic and current differences in order to produce more effective gender-inclusive policies and programs for both women and men', as well as pointing to examples nationally and internationally. The site also has a page that outlines a stage-by-stage approach for a typical gender-inclusive model. Our state Government, through that website, clearly expresses the value of this approach for progressing gender equity. What we have there is the knowledge and resources we need to implement this form of national governance machinery.

While both parts (1) and (2) of the motion present statements and factual matters, part (3) could be described as the pointy end, or 'ask'. This component provides the Chamber with the opportunity to send a request to the Government to enshrine gender impact statements as an integral component of this state's legislative and budgetary policy framework.

Some of you may wonder whether the proposed time frame of including such an impact statement in the 2022-23 state Budget is too tight. I do not believe so. This proposal and idea have been raised with Government on many previous occasions by me and others. Indeed, it is pointed to as a best practice process on the Government's own Women in Tasmania website.

The Grattan Institute report I referenced earlier says: 'Governments should make gender analysis part of their budget development processes to reduce the risk of women being overlooked or suffering unforeseen consequences from policy decisions.'

Section (3) of the motion articulates an analytical budget gender impact statement as well as a genuine gender-responsive budgeting process. It may be useful to reiterate what gender-responsive budgeting is not, for the purposes of clarity. It is not unusual to see governments collate any women-specific initiatives and policies into a women's economic statement, or a budget list of matters relating to women, or to highlight how a particular budget invests in programs specific to the needs of women and girls. These sorts of lists, statements and groupings of policy initiatives, while laudable and valuable, are not the same as a gender-responsive budgeting process or an analytical gender budget impact statement. They do not provide the same outcomes that are being called for with those mechanisms.

For example, while welcoming the Queensland Government's 2020-21 Women's Economic Statement, as part of that jurisdiction's state budget process, commentators such as QCOS stressed that this was not a gender impact statement, nor an example of gender-responsive budgeting, laudable as it was to include it.

This is clarified further for us by the UN, which states:

Gender-responsive budgeting is not about creating separate budgets for women, or solely increasing spending on women's programs. Rather gender-responsive budgeting seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. It should be based on in-depth analysis that identifies effective interventions for implementing policies and laws that advance women's rights. It provides tools to assess the different needs and contributions of men and women, and boys and girls within the existing revenues, expenditures and allocations and calls for adjusting budget policies to benefit all groups.

I would add into that 'men and women, boys and girls, and people of other genders or non-binary genders'.

It is also important to note that genuine gender-responsive budgeting and gender budget impact statements must also be an analysis for men and boys, for people of diverse genders.

Parental leave for fathers is an example of a belated policy recognition of an inequitable assumption about caregiving. More broadly, gender-responsive budgeting also facilitates breaking down traditional stereotypes and notions such as masculinity that may constrain men and boys, and redressing some of that. In turn, tackling those stereotypes may help address other systemic social problems, such as violence against women and girls.

Lastly, on this point of what constitutes genuine gender-responsive budgeting, I echo the view of public policy and academic commentators that attempts to provide only self-congratulatory PR-style party political policy highlights packaged up as a gesture towards budget gender impact statements will simply not cut the mustard. Any such eventuality would not be in good faith and would not honour the sentiment and tenor of this motion and its call to action, and certainly would not meet community expectations.

To conclude, I once again revisit today's 2022 International Women's Day campaign, which challenges us to take the necessary action, stating:

Whether deliberate or unconscious, bias makes it difficult for women to move ahead. Knowing that bias exists isn't enough; action is needed to level the playing field.

The current state Government is very open about its intent to be aspirational for our state. Gender budget impact initiatives, as proposed by this motion, are a key tool to delivering on that aspiration in a way that puts gender equality and the advancement of all Tasmanians on an equal footing. This proposal is consistent with state Government objectives in this public policy space, and its stated aims and goals on inclusion and equality.

To borrow QCOSS's assessment of Queensland's efforts at ensuring policy gender equity:

There is immense scope for the Queensland Government to lock in and consolidate the progress it has already made on gender equality initiatives by establishing a formal process of Gender Responsive Budgeting in its policymaking. Taking this step to legislate Gender Responsive Budgeting, and invest in the capacity to undertake this process in subsequent budgets, would not only strengthen the Government's prospects of achieving its gender equality goals - it would also preserve this current Government's legacy ...

That was put forward in relation to Queensland but it would equally apply here in this state to our Government and its legacy. As stated in the Government's Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-2021, 'A person's gender should not be a barrier to opportunity or participation'.

Formally committing to implement gender-responsive budgeting and the provision of a formal budget gender impact statement is consistent with the Government's commitment as stated in that strategy, 'to making Tasmania a state where all people have equal opportunities to participate in Tasmania's social, political, economic and cultural life'.

I also note that one of the welcome recommendations made by the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council in its final report last year was for the Government to adopt the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) as a policy framework. As members may be aware, SDG number 5 is gender equality. Hence, the recommendations detailed in part (3) of this motion would be both consistent with, as well a tangible mechanism

by which to deliver that particular SDG in accordance with the PESRAC recommendation, which we are given to understand the Premier has accepted in full on behalf of his Government.

Mr President, it would be very fitting for this Chamber on International Women's Day to collectively do our bit to #BreakTheBias by taking action that is available to us here and now, by voting for this initiative to call for the establishment of a quality-focused machinery of governance. Such a vote would, in good faith, encourage further action by the Tasmanian Government to deliver Tasmania's own state-based, gender budget impact assessment process and statement. Let us put the building blocks in place to support our aspirations for this state and the people of Tasmania, and vote for meaningful action and structural reform. I commend the motion to the House.

[3.07 p.m.]

Motion passed the Legislative Council unanimously.

Appendix B:

Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, *Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting*, March 2022.

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/paec/function/980-paec/inquiry-into-gender-responsive-budgeting>.
