

Including Gender

An APS Guide to Gender Analysis and
Gender Impact Assessment
2024-25 Budget

Office for Women



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Including Gender: An APS Guide to Gender Analysis and Gender Impact Assessments

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How to use this guide

The APS Guide to Gender Analysis and Gender Impact Assessment (the Guide) provides information to assist Australian Public Service (APS) policy makers developing a Cabinet Submission or New Policy Proposal in fulfilling gender analysis requirements set by Government.

This Guide is divided into four parts to assist policy makers to better understand what gender analysis and Gender Impact Assessment entails, and to align policy development with the Government's priority of advancing gender equality.

- [Part 1](#) explains the importance of gender analysis.
- [Part 2](#) explains what gender analysis is, as well as when and how it is conducted.
- [Part 3](#) provides instructions for completing a Gender Analysis Summary.
- [Part 4](#) provides instructions for completing a Gender Impact Assessment.

A [Quick Reference Guide](#) to gender analysis is on page 3.

For any questions about the use of this guide and its contents please contact the Office for Women (OFW) at GIA@pmc.gov.au.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) at a glance

GRB is a core government commitment to drive gender equality and give decision makers information about the gendered impacts of Budget proposals.

Gender responsive budgeting weaves consideration of gender impact through the Budget process and is a key way governments can identify and fund measures that close gender gaps and avoid measures that inadvertently exacerbate gender inequality.

It applies across the Budget process and is the responsibility of all departments as set out in the Cabinet Handbook and Budget Process Operational Rules.

GRB requires all proposals to undertake gender analysis and provide a Gender Analysis Summary in the Cabinet Submission or New Policy Proposal.

Proposals that meet key criteria are also required to include a Gender Impact Assessment.

Gender analysis should be targeted and proportional to the impact and scale of investment.

A quick guide to gender analysis follows this section.

Quick guide to terminology

Gender analysis is critical to the policy development process, and includes conducting research, interrogating data and considering the different ways a policy may impact people based on gender. A gender analysis should be *targeted and proportional*, ensuring that the effort in conducting an analysis is proportional to the potential impact, value and scope of the policy. In practice, this requires initial gender analysis to surface gendered impacts of a proposal, to be summarised in the *Gender Analysis Summary*, and – where it meets the criteria – a *Gender Impact Assessment* which more comprehensively identifies policy responses and actions to address any impact identified.

Gender Analysis Summary is a requirement for all Cabinet Submissions and New Policy Proposals (NPPs). A Gender Analysis Summary gives an overview of the gender analysis. It aims to inform decision makers whether a proposal will have a gendered impact and what this might be. The Gender Analysis Summary must be included in the relevant section in the Impacts Table.

Gender Impact Assessment must be attached to the associated Cabinet Submission for each proposal that meets the criteria. A Gender Impact Assessment will usually require a more detailed analysis. It aims to inform decision makers of the gendered impact a policy is expected to have and where a significant gender impact is identified, includes concrete actions to improve the impact on gender equality.

Quick Reference Guide to gender analysis

Agencies are responsible for self-assessing the level of gender analysis their policies require. This quick reference guide is to assist policy makers to determine the level of gender analysis required and how this analysis should be incorporated in the relevant Cabinet Submission or New Policy Proposal.

Conduct gender analysis to understand potential gender impact

Refer to [Part 2](#) of the Guide for information on a gender analysis.

Gender analysis must be undertaken for all Cabinet Submissions and New Policy Proposals (NPP) as a gender responsive budgeting requirement.

Does the NPP or Cabinet Submission meet one or more of the following criteria?

Refer to [Appendix A](#) of the Guide for information on the criteria.

Gender equality: The proposal has a significant positive or negative impact on gender equality

Cohorts: The proposal affects people who can be typically disadvantaged

Workforce: The proposal relates to a gender segregated industry

Partnership: The proposal establishes a National Partnership Agreement (or like agreement)

Value: The proposal's value is \$250 million or more over the forward estimates.

- If no: Completing the Gender Analysis Summary is sufficient
- If yes: You must complete a Gender Impact Assessment and summarise the outcomes of this in the Gender Analysis Summary

Remember, gender analysis is targeted and proportional. The level of detail and depth of gender analysis should be proportional to the value, scope and impact of the proposal.

Complete a Gender Impact Assessment

Refer to [Part 4](#) of the Guide for information on Gender Impact Assessment

If the gender analysis confirmed the proposal has limited or no gender equality impacts, it may be appropriate to complete only sections 1 and 2 of the Gender Impact Assessment Template. Completing sections 3 and 4 are optional for these proposals. If sections 3 and 4 are not completed for these proposals they should be marked as 'N/A'. They should not be deleted.

Conduct a detailed gender analysis to explore the gender equality impacts. This may include considering responses and actions to improve gender equality.

Fill out the Gender Impact Assessment Template to demonstrate the gender equality impacts, evidence used to substantiate these impacts, and consider policy responses and actions to advance gender equality, within the scope of the existing policy authority.

Attach the Gender Impact Assessment Template for lodgment with the Cabinet Submission, in addition to completing the Gender Analysis Summary.

Remember, where a Cabinet Submission has more than one NPP, a Gender Impact Assessment Template must be completed for every NPP that meets any of the five criteria.

Complete the Gender Analysis Summary

Refer to [Part 3](#) of the Guide for information on Gender Analysis Summary.

Fill out the Gender Analysis Summary (3-5 sentences) to demonstrate the gender equality impact at a high level. The Gender Analysis Summary must be included in the relevant section in the Impacts Table.

1: Why include gender?

1.1 Addressing inequalities and improving outcomes

'Women's equality is at the heart of what we do as a Government. It is essential for strengthening our economy, our society and our nation.' - 2023-24 Women's Budget Statement

The Australian Government has committed to putting gender equality at the heart of policy and decision making, and making women's economic equality a central economic imperative. This requires policy which acknowledges and addresses inequality.

While Australia has made significant gains towards gender equality, inequality still exists in a range of areas across people's lives. These existing inequalities, as well as ongoing norms and attitudes that can drive inequality, mean that even when a policy seems gender neutral it can still impact people differently, or disproportionately, based on their gender. This means policies can have unintended consequences, exacerbate or perpetuate existing inequality or fail to achieve their intended outcomes.

Exploring data and evidence can reveal these impacts. For example, a government policy which provides additional financial support for the construction industry to support economic growth may appear to have no gender impact on the surface. However, data may reveal that the construction industry is male dominated, so any benefits provided to the construction workforce would disproportionately benefit men.

What is gender?

The language used to refer to gender is important. Sex and gender are commonly used interchangeably, including in legislation.

Sex refers to sex characteristics while gender is about social and cultural difference in identity, expression and experience.

A person's sex and gender may not necessarily be the same. Some people may identify as a different gender to their birth sex and some people may identify as neither exclusively male nor female (gender non-binary) ([ABS](#), The Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables, 2020).

1.2 Gender inequality intersects with other forms of inequality

Not all people will be impacted by policies in the same way because of their gender. Gender inequality is experienced differently by different people. It can be compounded by other social factors and identities including characteristics or circumstances of age, disability, race, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation. These inequalities can result in overlapping and interdependent discrimination or disadvantage for a person or community.

An intersectional approach (see [Glossary](#)) recognises that a person's experience of exclusion or disadvantage is shaped by the interaction of multiple circumstances and characteristics. It also provides insight into the systemic and cultural causes of inequality, which then provide the basis for solutions. An intersectional approach enables the complexity of people's experiences of discrimination and disadvantage to be understood, for example, through disaggregated data that highlights differences of experiences which can then be addressed.

Collection of data that captures a wide range of a person or community's circumstances and characteristics is a priority for an intersectional approach to gender analysis. Stakeholder feedback and qualitative evidence are also valuable and can inform gender analysis, particularly where data is limited.

Why is the use of intersectional data important?

Data analysis should go beyond looking at just gender in aggregate, as gendered experiences vary by many factors including socio-economic status, geography and age, which intersect with gender. Different characteristics and backgrounds, such as migration status, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, cultural background and First Nations status may also interact with gender (and with each other), the combination of which may mean that people experience and are affected by policies in different ways. For this reason, it is critical, throughout the policy making process, to consider the needs of different cohorts within gender data and evidence where possible.

Using data to support intersectional gender analysis in practice

The use of appropriately disaggregated data helps to draw out evidence to support an intersectional approach to gender analysis. The use of such data gives us a clearer picture of how different characteristics affect people throughout their lives, including any inequalities or gaps between different groups.

For example, housing costs as a proportion of disposable income have increased over the last 20 years, with women experiencing disproportionate impacts of high housing costs due to the gender pay and earning gaps, the high proportion of single parent households headed by women, and family and domestic violence. These housing challenges are particularly acute for older women and women fleeing violence who are more vulnerable to homelessness, First Nations women (39 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander renting householders were in rental stress¹), women with disabilities (11.2 per cent of Australians with disability are living in unaffordable housing²), and single mothers (who experienced homelessness and marginal housing at almost four times the national average³).

¹ Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices): Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report (2020).

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022) People with disability in Australia 2022, catalogue number DIS 72, AIHW, Australian Government.

³ www.csmc.org.au/2023/11/21/csmc-launches-report-on-largest-survey-of-single-mothers/

2: Gender analysis

2.1 What is gender analysis?

Gender analysis is critical to the policy development process and includes conducting research, interrogating data and considering the different ways a policy may impact people based on gender. It aims to improve gender equality by identifying and analysing the impacts and risks of policies, thoroughly considering options which can improve the policy's impact on gender equality, and supporting the development of risk mitigation.

Why conduct gender analysis?

Gender analysis provides a foundation for ensuring policies address the needs of all people, so that policy making supports an equitable and inclusive society. It ensures transparency by giving decision makers information, supported by data and evidence, on who a policy impacts, how it impacts them and how these impacts affect gender equality.

Policies that are developed without consideration of gender, or which are considered 'gender-neutral' or 'gender-blind' policies, assume that gender is not a factor in how a particular issue affects people. However, existing inequality as well as gender norms and stereotypes can mean policy changes – which may appear gender neutral – can have disproportionate or different impacts on people because of their gender.

How a policy supports or hinders gender equality may not be immediately obvious in some policies. This Guide helps policy makers undertake gender analysis to uncover differing impacts and unintended consequences, including those that can inadvertently lead to discrimination and exacerbate inequality.

Gender analysis is required to support gender responsive budgeting (refer to [How to use this guide](#)) which is a key way the Government can make decisions that help close gender gaps and avoid worsening inequality.

Understanding the gendered impacts of policy can help achieve gender equality

A gender analysis can provide new perspectives on a policy problem and is a way to illuminate options or develop solutions that both meet the primary goals of the policy and help advance gender equality. It enables policy makers to have a more comprehensive understanding of how impacts may differ based on gender. This supports good policy development by allowing policy makers to propose options that improve gender equality, often leading to better overall outcomes for Australia. Good quality gender analysis can help make sure the Government's policies and decisions work for the whole community – this is the ultimate aim of gender responsive budgeting.

2.2 How to conduct gender analysis

The key objective of gender analysis is to determine whether a policy has a gendered impact and what that impact is. Gender analysis requires policy makers to reflect on the direct and indirect impacts of the proposed policy based on its impact on gender equality.

Gender analysis should be a standard part of effective policy design. Gender analysis is *most impactful* when incorporated from the beginning of policy design, as it helps inform the policy design from the outset. When undertaken later in the process, gender analysis will still help surface impacts and possible unintended consequences that can be addressed in the design and implementation. Overall, the earlier analysis is undertaken, the easier – and more effective – it will be to design policy that has gender equality benefits.

What is a gendered impact?

A policy may have a gendered impact if it has different or disproportionate impacts based on gender. A gendered impact may occur because of gender norms or biological differences. For instance, Australia's superannuation system helps people accrue retirement income based on the amount of time they spend in paid employment. Men and women are paid superannuation at the same rate, but on average, women accrue less superannuation. This is the result of multiple factors such as how women on average earn less than men and are more likely to be primary carers. The combination of these factors means they typically spend less time in paid employment which reduces their opportunity to accrue superannuation.

A disproportionate gendered impact may occur because of existing inequalities or patterns of behaviour. For instance, 79.9 per cent of single parents in Australia are women ([ABS, Labour Force Status of Families](#)). This means that while women and men receive the same rate of Parenting Payment, a change in the rate or eligibility will have a disproportionate impact on women.

Where a policy maker identifies that a policy has a gendered impact, consider whether this is a positive or negative impact on gender equality. To do this, consider current circumstances of inequality, both broadly and specifically to the policy area.

The significance of a gendered impact is a judgment call based on data and evidence, as well as a proposal's policy context and objectives.

A gender impact is likely to be significant if it increases or limits:

- access to resources for one gender compared with others (through income, payments, taxation, superannuation), and/or
- access to opportunities for one gender compared with others (including workforce participation, education, training, health programs, leadership, public office).

The proposal may have a significant impact on gender equality if it relates to:

- family and domestic violence and wellbeing, including online safety, and/or
- unpaid care or household work, and/or
- attitudes or stereotypes about gender, and/or
- addressing gender discrimination or advancing gender equality.

The need for gender-disaggregated data

Finding high-quality gender disaggregated data and evidence is a good starting point to identify a proposal's gendered components. Using gender disaggregated data will strengthen analysis and provide evidence for the impacts of policies. Basing policy in evidence is fundamental to good policy development, and will ensure that your gender analysis has been well considered. Appendix B contains links to a range of useful data sources.

Where gender disaggregated data is not available, policy makers can infer the likely gendered impact using other data. Policy makers can also use qualitative data including research, expert analysis, stakeholder feedback or consultation to understand the gendered impacts of a policy. It is also worth considering whether material relating to states and territories might be appropriate to use where nation-wide information is not available.

The first step to conducting any analysis is to identify whether any gender disaggregated data or other forms of evidence, as outlined above, is available. This research should be used to inform the gender analysis and should be referenced in the Gender Analysis Summary.

Step-by-step process for using evidence and data to inform gender analysis

Note the steps outlined are an iterative process.

Step 1: Define the policy problem and data needed

Articulate the issue that the policy intends to address.

Identify credible data, particularly gender disaggregated data, available on the policy problem. Data may be from government and non-government sources.

- Ensure data is relevant, timely and accurate. Refer to the [ABS Data Quality Framework](#) for guidance on good quality data.

Identify any data gaps. Gaps may be due to lack of gender/sex disaggregated data, or more broadly unavailable and incomplete data, including lack of timeliness, accuracy, quality or granularity of the data.

- Acknowledge any limitations associated with the data being referenced. Where quality disaggregated data does not exist, consider how this data can be collected in the future.

What if there are limited data sources?

Lack of data does not suggest the lack of a policy problem, especially where stakeholders or subject matter experts have highlighted one. While quantitative data is important to quantify the impacts of policy, policy makers should look for other ways to understand the full extent of the issue.

Qualitative data such as feedback or other observations from stakeholders, subject matter experts or service providers is important evidence and should be considered alongside quantitative data where available. For example, a service-delivery program that does not collect gender disaggregated data can rely on feedback from service recipients and providers to show the experiences of the people the program targets. This feedback could highlight gendered impacts where different people have different experiences with the services. Policy makers should also consider how data (both qualitative and quantitative) can be collected as part of policy implementation and evaluation, and how this will enrich and expand the evidence base in future.

Step 2: Access the data

Data can be accessed through a variety of means, including through open data, customisable data and non-published data. Policy makers can contact specific data teams across departments/agencies to identify and access relevant non-published data.

- Ensure the data is well organised, accessible to review, and comes from reputable sources. Include the source of data and format the reference to align with the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).
- Include a mix of qualitative and quantitative data where possible. See [Appendix B](#) for examples.

Step 3: Analyse the data

Use data disaggregated by gender, sex and other intersectional factors. Observe patterns or relationships in the data and provide logical and plausible explanations for observations.

Consider any potential biases or limitations associated with the way the data is analysed, collected or presented.

If needed, seek feedback from peers or experts in the field to review and validate draft analysis. Refer to the [ABS Standard for Sex and Gender](#) for further guidance.

Step 4: Assess the policy impact on gender equality

Consider what the data and evidence shows about the current state of gender equality in the policy area.

Consider if the policy proposed includes, or should include, any initiatives that would improve gender equality or address any gender-data gaps within that policy area.

Targeted and proportional analysis

Gender analysis should be targeted and proportional to the scope, value and impact of the proposal. For instance, if a significant gender impact is not clearly emerging in the initial exploration of the data, and this can be demonstrated, then it may be appropriate to end the analysis at this point. This will focus the analysis and direct policy development to where there is likely to be a significant impact, without placing undue burden on policy makers. Using gender disaggregated data helps to uncover these impacts. It is important that departments' efforts are targeted to proposals with the greatest potential to improve gender equality in response to either existing inequalities or likely exacerbation of inequalities arising from proposals.

2.3 Determining the level of gender analysis required

All Cabinet Submissions and NPPs must include a Gender Analysis Summary – including when a Gender Impact Assessment is also required. The Gender Analysis Summary provides information to decision makers about whether the policy proposal has a gendered impact or not, and what that impact is.

A Gender Analysis Summary provides an overview of the gender analysis. Completing a Gender Analysis Summary can help policy makers determine whether a proposal meets the criteria for completing a Gender Impact Assessment (refer to [Part 4](#)).

A Gender Impact Assessment must be completed if the proposal meets one or more of the following criteria:

- The proposal has a significant positive or negative impact on gender equality
- The proposal targets cohorts of people who can typically be disadvantaged
- The proposal relates to a gender segregated industry
- The proposal establishes a National Partnership Agreement (or like agreement)
- The total value of the proposal is \$250 million or more over the forward estimates.

Each department is responsible for self-assessing whether their proposal meets the criteria for a Gender Impact Assessment.

All revenue, savings and expenditure proposals must be assessed against the criteria to determine if a Gender Impact Assessment is required. Further detail on application of the criteria is at [Appendix A](#).

What does this mean in practice?

All proposals require some level of gender analysis, which should be targeted and proportional and draw on evidence. A Gender Analysis Summary should provide an overview of the gender analysis, and is required for all proposals.

Proposals that meet one or more of the Gender Impact Assessment criteria are *also* required to complete and attach a Gender Impact Assessment to the proposal. A Gender Impact Assessment will generally rely on a more thorough gender analysis. However, some proposals will meet one or more criteria but initial gender analysis will show that there is not a significant gender impact. These proposals do not require deeper analysis and can attach an abbreviated Gender Impact Assessment.

The Gender Impact Assessment aims to provide policy makers with more detailed gender analysis, including on how a policy can avoid, ameliorate or address negative impacts. A Gender Impact Assessment can also identify concrete actions to advance gender equality.

All gender analysis should use and cite data or evidence in support of the assessment. If data or evidence is not available, the analysis should show ways to improve data availability.

Gender equality in universal systems

Systems, programs or services may be designed to be equally accessible to everyone, that is, to be universal. However, that does not mean that all people will benefit from them in the same way. Equal access does not always mean equitable access. Different people may access programs or services in different ways based on their gender and/or other characteristics, and to a greater or lesser extent than other people or groups. There may also be gendered barriers to different people accessing the program or service.

For example, although public transport is available for everyone, women are more likely than men to use public transport to travel to work⁴. In the health sector, services like diagnostic imaging and blood tests are available to everyone, but may be used more frequently by women for example, for antenatal care. Digital mental health services are more likely to be used by women, who have stronger health-seeking behaviours⁵. These differences in usage need to be taken into account when assessing whether a proposal is likely to have a positive, negative or neutral impact on gender equality, and analysis should include available data and evidence, including qualitative evidence from stakeholders and users.

If the impact is not known or data is not available, a proposal should outline how gender disaggregated data can be collected to understand gendered impacts over time.

⁴ [ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021](#)

⁵ [Independent evaluation of supported digital mental health services – Phase 2 final report | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, 2022](#)

3: Gender Analysis Summary

3.1 Completing a Gender Analysis Summary

All Cabinet Submissions and New Policy Proposals (NPPs) must be informed by gender analysis and include a Gender Analysis Summary. The Gender Analysis Summary must be included in the relevant section in the Impacts Table.

Policy makers are encouraged to analyse and demonstrate consideration of gender throughout the policy proposal to provide a robust summary of gendered impacts. The NPP template requires a clear and concise high-level summary, usually 3-5 sentences, which demonstrates whether the policy has a gendered impact, what that impact is, and how the policy affects gender equality, drawn from the gender analysis conducted on the NPP.

Gender analysis (refer to [Part 2](#)) captured in an NPP should also be applied and reflected in the Cabinet Submission. The Gender Analysis Summary for a Cabinet Submission with multiple NPPs should reflect the analysis for the Cabinet Submission as a whole.

When preparing a Gender Analysis Summary consider:

- Are there existing gender inequalities related to the policy area? Such as inequalities in participation, responsibilities or distribution/access to resources.
- Does the proposed policy:
 - Provide equitable access to services?
 - Promote participation of all people equally in decision making?
 - Perpetuate or prevent gender based violence, including addressing risks of violence, and ensuring appropriate and trauma informed support/interactions with victim-survivors and/or perpetrators?
 - Address or challenge gender stereotypes or roles?
- Are there gender norms or attitudes that may impact patterns of behaviour in the policy area?
 - If yes, is it anticipated that this may lead to the policy having a different or disproportionate impact based on gender?
 - What will that impact be? Will it have a positive or negative impact on gender equality?
- What gender disaggregated data, evidence or insights are available (refer to [Appendix B](#) for suggested data sources)? Are there intersectional data, evidence or insights (refer to [Part 1.2](#))?
- Do stakeholders identify or raise gender impacts?
- Can demographic data, evidence and insights, e.g. family composition, household types, income level, be used to infer the gender impact of a proposal?

The first sentence of the Gender Analysis Summary outlines whether the policy, on balance:

- improves gender equality
- has no impacts on gender equality
- negatively impacts gender equality.

Additionally, the Gender Analysis Summary should capture the findings from each step of the gender analysis, such as:

- any gendered context to the policy issue
- available and relevant gender disaggregated data and evidence
- differential impacts on different groups (e.g. First Nations people, people with disability, people living in rural or regional areas, people of low socio-economic status, etc.)
- whether stakeholders identify a gender dimension to the issue
- clearly outlining any gendered impacts of the policy.

In a Gender Analysis Summary

Do

- Ensure analysis is targeted and proportional
- Draw on relevant data and evidence where available, including stakeholder feedback and expert analysis
- Reflect how intersectional factors may compound gendered impacts
- Ensure any gendered impacts of the policy are transparent to decision makers
- Reflect how gender norms and patterns, for instance around caring responsibilities, may influence access and outcomes

Don't

- Record a nil or neutral impact without explanation
- Reflect assumptions that gendered impacts are broadly the same for all women or make generalisations such as "all women" or "particularly women"
- Assume that equal access to a program or service results in equal outcomes

Example Gender Analysis Summary content

Positive impact

This proposal has a positive impact on gender equality. This proposal mandates the payment of superannuation with wages on a fortnightly basis and will improve the super balances of low income people, who are more likely to be women. It will address the misalignment of superannuation and wages which leads to one in five women being underpaid superannuation. People who are young or on lower incomes are more likely to be affected by underpaid superannuation and women are more likely to be represented in these groups. Modelling of the impact of underpaid superannuation in female dominated industries shows that it can result in an enrolled nurse having \$44,000 less super at retirement, a personal assistant having \$37,000 less super, and an aged care worker having \$35,000 less super.

No or neutral impact

This proposal has a neutral impact on gender equality as it seeks funding to upgrade an existing ICT service delivered by Government to members of the public. The proposal will result in client information being held on a secure cloud, rather than within an existing server, but will not affect clients' experiences of the service or service centre staff experience – including staff experience in updating client information.

The proposal will maintain existing and best practice levels of protection for customer information for all people, regardless of gender.

The department administering the ICT program has close to a gender balance in both the ICT and service delivery workforce affected by the proposal. Women make up 45 per cent of the ICT workforce and 51 per cent of the service delivery workforce.

Negative impact

This proposal has been assessed as having a negative or uneven impact on gender equality. While the policy has not been designed to have a gender bias, existing workforce imbalances mean the impact of this proposal will be uneven. The existing workforce is made up of X% men and Y% women. As the proposal will provide resources to the existing male-dominated workforce, the benefits will flow mostly to men, which may aggravate the gender pay gap, or slow its closing.

The provision of resources to the existing workforce is necessary and urgent to smoothly transition from old industries into emerging industries. The negative/uneven impact of this proposal will be mitigated with the accompanying proposal (X refers). The accompanying proposal will provide targeted support for women to participate in new industries, to prevent replication of a gender segregated workforce.

4: Gender Impact Assessment

4.1 What is a Gender Impact Assessment?

A Gender Impact Assessment provides decision makers with a transparent and clear understanding of the gendered impacts of the policy proposal. It also outlines where gender analysis has been used to inform the policy design to deliver better gender equality outcomes.

Remember the principle of targeted and proportional analysis

The level of detail and depth of the Gender Impact Assessment should be proportional to the scope, value and impact of the policy proposal.

A Gender Impact Assessment may include consideration of policy options and actions to improve gender equality, for example, where the gender analysis shows a clear gendered impact.

Gender Impact Assessment is required for *all* proposals that meet one or more of the criteria. However, where the gender analysis for proposals that meet the criteria show no significant gender impact, an abbreviated Gender Impact Assessment can be completed. The template provides direction for an abbreviated approach.

A Gender Impact Assessment is a key mechanism for enabling gender responsive budgeting (refer to [How to use this guide](#)). Proposals that meet one or more of the Gender Impact Assessment criteria (refer to [Appendix A](#)) must complete the Gender Impact Assessment Template, in addition to a Gender Analysis Summary (refer to [Part 3](#)).

A Gender Impact Assessment usually requires a more detailed gender analysis than what is needed to complete a Gender Analysis Summary, especially to identify how a policy can avoid, ameliorate or address negative impacts.

A Gender Impact Assessment can also include concrete actions that result from changing or adapting a policy proposal so that it improves gender equality. Concrete actions may include amending the policy design or including targets, implementation milestones or progress commitments (within the parameters of the policy authority). For example, improving the collection of gender disaggregated data or commissioning new research or consultation on gendered impacts. For the purposes of gender responsive budgeting, a Gender Impact Assessment provides transparency and assurance to decision makers that proposals with the greatest potential to influence gender equality have carefully considered – and where appropriate, responded to – gendered impacts.

When preparing a Gender Impact Assessment, further analysis is likely to be needed - consider:

- Can gender equality be incorporated through implementation including via diverse representation in decision making and consultation, a focus on achieving gender equality in terms of reference or inclusion of gender equality outcomes, for example in a grant opportunity or research guidelines?
- What is the mechanism for course correction if the policy intervention contributes to gender inequality?
- Are there levers to improve access to resources, services or any other opportunities created by the proposal?
 - Are these levers being used to deliver meaningful outcomes?
- Can gender equality be considered as a priority in negotiating mandates, government strategy, procurement arrangements, grant guidelines, draft legislation or reform proposals?
- Are there opportunities to design gender equitable leadership teams, governance arrangements, consultations or co-design? Can explicit expertise in gender equality/diversity be included in selection criteria?
- Can the evidence base and research available be improved and built to inform gender impact, including collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data and evidence?

Steps for a Gender Impact Assessment:

1. Assess whether the proposal meets any of the criteria. You can use findings of the gender analysis to understand whether the proposal has a gendered impact.
 - If this analysis shows minimal to no impacts on gender equality, it may be appropriate to move to step four to complete the Gender Impact Assessment Template. This acknowledges the need for effort to be proportional to the value, scope and impact of the proposal.
2. Consider any policy responses to the gender analysis and available options to change, adapt or redesign the proposal to improve gender equality or to address risks to gender equality.
3. Consider concrete actions to support gender equality, for example methods to monitor and evaluate progress (e.g. targets, implementation milestones or progress commitments).
4. Complete the Gender Impact Assessment Template available at www.pmc.gov.au/resources/gender-impact-assessment-template and attach it to the Cabinet Submission. Remember, where a Cabinet Submission has more than one NPP, a Gender Impact Assessment Template must be completed for every NPP that meets any of the five criteria.

In a Gender Impact Assessment

Do

- Use quality gender disaggregated data, evidence or insights to design policy options that improve gender equality and cite the data. If data is not available, clearly articulate this evidence gap and outline how it may be addressed.
- Take a proportional approach to analysis for the Gender Impact Assessment.
- Focus on progress, whether it is a big leap forward or an incremental step towards gender equality.
- Identify future, tangible and focused steps towards improving gender equality.
- Remember a Gender Impact Assessment applies to expenditure, revenue and savings measures.
- Contact the Office for Women for any questions via GIA@pmc.gov.au.

Don't

- Assume the policy has nothing to do with gender equality – gender analysis is a way to surface gendered impacts and Gender Impact Assessment is a way to unpack the details and consider changes or actions to improve gender equality.
- Assume universal programs or systems are gender neutral.
- Worry if there are no obvious policy options at this stage. The Gender Impact Assessment Template can record reasons why changes were not made and identify future options – there is also room to include progress commitments.
- Delete any section of the Gender Impact Assessment Template (apart from the guidance text).

Hint: If the gender analysis shows limited or no gender impact, further analysis may not be required. If so, this should be set out in sections 1 and 2 of the Gender Impact Assessment Template. Completing sections 3 and 4 is optional in this case.

4.2 Completing a Gender Impact Assessment

The Gender Impact Assessment Template helps guide policy makers and support decision makers by ensuring that Gender Impact Assessments are consistent in their approach and include sufficient information to support decision making.

The completed Gender Impact Assessment Template must be included as an attachment to the Cabinet Submission when circulated for each stage of consultation (Exposure Draft, Coordination Final and Final) as it is a key source of information for decision makers.

Important Information about a Gender Impact Assessment

Departments are responsible for assessing Cabinet Submissions and NPPs against the criteria to identify if a Gender Impact Assessment is required (see [Appendix A](#)).

Where a Cabinet Submission or NPP meets the criteria outlined in Part 2.3, a Gender Impact Assessment *and* a Gender Analysis Summary must be completed.

The Gender Impact Assessment Template

The Gender Impact Assessment Template has the following sections and guidance questions to assist policy makers to undertake a gender analysis and complete the Gender Impact Assessment Template. The Template is available at www.pmc.gov.au/resources/gender-impact-assessment-template.

Criteria Checkbox

In this initial section of the Template, tick all criteria that apply to the proposal.

1. Outcomes of the Gender Impact Assessment

In this section of the Template, provide a high-level overview of the Gender Impact Assessment outcome. This section should be included as the Gender Analysis Summary in the NPP.

Guidance questions:

Does the proposal have a gendered impact and what is the nature of that impact (is it a positive, negative or neutral impact)? Include gender disaggregated data, research evidence and/or stakeholder views to support the identified impact.

Has this proposal been designed or adapted so that it contributes to gender equality? Or does the policy create risks for gender equality and what mitigations have been included?

How will the gender equality outcomes be measured? Are there targets, implementation milestones or progress commitments?

Hint: If the gender analysis shows limited or no gender impact, further analysis may not be required. If so, this should be set out in sections 1 and 2 of the Gender Impact Assessment Template. Completing sections 3 and 4 is optional in this case.

2. Findings of the gender analysis

In this section, provide findings from the gender analysis to inform assessment of gender equality impacts.

Guidance questions:

1. Will the proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impact on gender equality? What is this impact?
 - If the proposal presents multiple options with different gendered impacts, detail these.
 - If the proposal has no gendered impact, explain how this conclusion was reached.
2. What are the key findings of the gender analysis conducted for this proposal? Include any stakeholder consultations undertaken.
3. What were the key data and evidence sources (including quantitative and/or qualitative)? Note if data availability has limited the analysis.

Gender analysis should consider how economic and social factors, characteristics and circumstances, including age, disability, socioeconomic status, geographic location, First Nations status, migration

status, cultural, language and religious background, and sexual orientation and gender identity can compound or intersect with people's experience of gender inequality.

3. Policy responses to the gender analysis

In this section detail how the gender analysis has informed the policy development process; include any adaptations or mitigations made to the proposal to advance gender equality.

Guidance questions:

1. Was the proposal originally intended to positively impact gender equality or was the proposal changed or adapted in order to improve gender equality?
 - If yes, explain how.
2. If the proposal was found to have a negative impact on gender equality or to worsen existing inequalities:
 - Is it possible to mitigate these impacts? Are any steps proposed or recommended to mitigate these impacts?
 - If not, why not?

4. Actions to support gender equality

In this section identify any concrete actions to support gender equality included in the policy design, implementation and monitoring stages.

Guidance questions:

1. How will the gender equality commitments of the proposal be implemented?
2. How will the monitoring and evaluation plan incorporate reporting and analysis of gender equality outcomes or other gender-related aspects of the proposal?
3. Where the gender analysis has identified a neutral or negative impact and there are limited or no options to improve gender equality within the scope and authority of the proposal, are there other actions that could be taken to support gender equality the next time this proposal is considered by decision makers? For example:
 - Improving gender disaggregated data, monitoring outcomes, stakeholder engagement to identify issues.
 - Revisiting the assessment at a later date (for example, when the process is more mature or when there is more data at a future review point)?
 - Investing through a separate program.

Example responses to the Gender Impact Assessment Template

Include clear and specific targets, implementation milestones and/or progress commitments, using the table provided (below).

The table includes examples of the types of targets, implementation milestones and/or progress commitments that could be considered.

<i>Commitment to gender equality</i>	<i>Increase employment opportunities for women in Early Childhood Education and Care</i>
<i>How this will be achieved</i>	<i>Targets for increased workforce participation.</i>
<i>Risks and mitigation</i>	<i>Risk – Lack of uplift in rural and remote areas. Mitigation – Targeted support to regional and remote services in a variety of measures.</i>
<i>Timeframe for implementing action towards gender equality</i>	<i>Five per cent increase over five years of rural women in the workforce.</i>
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	<i>Surveys of the workforce, students, providers and other key stakeholders will be undertaken to determine the benefits of the targets and provide a baseline understanding of the workforce and their particular circumstances.</i>
<i>Commitment to gender equality</i>	<i>Build evidence base of the effects endometriosis has on women in Australia</i>
<i>How this will be achieved</i>	<i>Improved data collection on the number of women affected, ages and underlying health concerns and research the impacts of endometriosis on productivity and barriers to diagnosis.</i>
<i>Risks and mitigation</i>	<i>Risk – Lack of funding available for research and data collection. Mitigation – grant funding available to target researching endometriosis with identified outcomes (for example the cost of lost productivity to economy).</i>
<i>Timeframe for implementing action towards gender equality</i>	<i>In two years the grants will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- Establish a viable way to collect data on diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis.</i> <i>- The research and data reported will be used by Governments to target funding models.</i>
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	<i>Yearly review of grant funding to determine if the grant outcomes are being reached and to review any issues with the grant guidelines. Publish research and data publicly each year.</i>

<i>Commitment to gender equality</i>	<i>Gender equality will be included in the Terms of Reference of the Board.</i>
<i>How this will be achieved</i>	<i>Selection criteria for the board will include experience with gender equality/diversity.</i> <i>The board must be at least 40 per cent women.</i> <i>The board's Terms of Reference will direct it to consider gender equality in the exercise of its duties.</i>
<i>Risks and mitigation</i>	<i>Risk – Lack of appropriate candidates applying for the position who meet the criteria, poorly designed selection criteria and processes.</i> <i>Mitigation – Consultation with peak bodies and community groups to canvas for applicants, purposefully designed selection process.</i>
<i>Timeframe for implementing action towards gender equality</i>	<i>By 2025, the board has a gender representation of at least 40 per cent women.</i> <i>Board decisions and reporting reflect consideration of gender equality, such as annual reports, meeting minutes or work plans.</i>
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	<i>Provide a report to the Minister on gender representation of candidates at each stage of the selection process.</i> <i>Gender equality clear in the work plan and reporting framework.</i>
<i>Commitment to gender equality</i>	<i>Expanding gender disaggregated data collection to understand how energy costs affects lower-income earners, who are disproportionately women</i>
<i>How this will be achieved</i>	<i>This will be achieved through conducting surveys and consultations with energy retailers and peak body groups.</i>
<i>Risks and mitigation</i>	<i>Risk – There is limited existing data of how women may experience disadvantage from rising energy costs and limited ability to ensure policies are targeted to address those inequalities.</i> <i>Mitigation – Collect data on women's experiences of rising energy costs and engagement with relevant Government programs.</i>
<i>Timeframe for implementing action towards gender equality</i>	<i>Over the four years of the proposal, collect sufficient gender disaggregated data to determine if the fund targets the intended cohorts, and to identify opportunities to improve access to subsidies for lower-income women.</i>
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	<i>Annual reports to the Minister of disaggregated data to illustrate progress findings of the data collection being conducted, including identification of any difficulties and limitations with the data collection.</i>

Appendix A: Using criteria to determine level of gender analysis required

Lodging the Gender Impact Assessment Template

Where a Cabinet Submission has more than one NPP, a Gender Impact Assessment Template must be completed for every NPP that meets any of the five criteria. Where a Cabinet Submission does not have an NPP and meets any of the five criteria, a Gender Impact Assessment Template must be completed and lodged with the Cabinet Submission.

All Gender Impact Assessment Templates must be included as an attachment to the Cabinet Submission when circulated for each stage of consultation (Exposure Draft, Coordination Final and Final).

All New Policy Proposals (NPPs) that meet one or more of the five criteria below require a Gender Impact Assessment.

The five criteria can be considered by policy makers in any order.

Each department is responsible for self-assessing if a Gender Impact Assessment is required. The criteria apply to revenue, savings and expenditure proposals.

1. **Gender Equality:** The proposal has a significant positive or negative impact on gender equality

To understand whether the proposal has a significant positive or negative impact on gender equality, consider if it significantly increases or limits:

- access to resources for one gender compared with others (through income, payments, taxation, superannuation), and/or
- access to opportunities for one gender compared with others (including education, training, work, health programs, leadership, public office).

The proposal would likely have a significant impact on gender equality if it relates to:

- family and domestic violence and wellbeing, including online safety, and/or
- unpaid care or household work, and/or
- attitudes or stereotypes about gender, and/or
- addressing gender discrimination or advancing gender equality.

Everyone has the right to live free from gender-based discrimination and be treated with respect. Policy makers have an obligation to ensure policies and programs are not discriminatory, while recognising the unique challenges that people may face across different stages of life based on their gender.

Some proposals may appear to have neutral gender impacts. Agencies must consider whether a proposal has concealed impacts on gender that can inadvertently worsen outcomes for gender equality.

2. Cohorts: The proposal targets cohorts of people who can be typically disadvantaged

The cohorts criteria captures proposals that impact or interact with a cohort (or cohorts) of people on the basis that they may have specific needs or experience discrimination, marginalisation, vulnerability and/or disadvantage, and need targeted programs or support. These overlapping characteristics or circumstances often compound the level of gender inequality a person experiences.

Understanding how the intersections between a person's multiple characteristics and circumstances impact their life course is critical for achieving gender equality.

These cohorts, depending on the nature of the proposal, may include but are not limited to:

- First Nations peoples and communities; and/or
- People who are culturally and/or racially diverse; and/or
- People who are visa holders, or new residents/citizens; and/or
- Young people; and/or
- Older people; and/or
- People living with disability; and/or
- People who identify as LGBTQIA+; and/or
- People living in regional or remote areas; and/or
- People who experience socio-economic disadvantage.

Impacts on a cohort may include changes in access to programs and services, education and training, or employment opportunities. People from these cohorts may face compounding inequalities where inequalities intersect with gender.

3. Workforce: The proposal relates to a gender segregated industry

The workforce criteria applies where a proposal impacts or interacts with a gender segregated industry (or industries).

An industry is gender segregated where one gender comprises 60 per cent or more of the workforce. This definition is employed by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

Australian industries are generally classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\)](#).

The features of an industry include, but are not limited to:

- Paid work such as full-time, part-time and casual employees, apprenticeships and traineeships;
- Unpaid work such as volunteering, internships and work experience placements;
- Pathways to employment including education and training; and

- Government actors, companies, organisations, industry bodies, education and training organisations.

Impacts to an industry may include a policy, funding, legislation, program or service which affects changes to wages, types of work, programs and services, education, training, qualifications, standards, or number of employment opportunities.

4. Partnership: The proposal establishes a National Partnership Agreement (or like agreement)

The partnership criteria covers proposals that establish a Federation Funding Agreement, National Agreement, Intergovernmental Agreement or like agreement.

This includes proposals that agree to establish a negotiating mandate to enter into an agreement in the future, and bespoke funding arrangement with governments.

The criteria does not apply to grants or procurement.

5. Value: The total value of the proposal is \$250 million or more over the forward estimates

The value criteria includes expenditure, savings, revenue, and balance sheet proposals with financial impacts of \$250 million or more over the forward estimates or the duration of the proposal.

The \$250 million threshold applies to proposals regardless of whether the proposal has been offset; it does not have an impact on underlying cash; it is a balance sheet proposal; its net impact on underlying cash is less than \$250 million taking into savings or efficiencies brought forward in the same proposal. If the funding being sought by a proposal is equal to or greater than \$250 million, a Gender Impact Assessment is required.

If the financial implications of the proposal are concentrated beyond the forward estimates, and the proposal has an impact of over \$250 million, a Gender Impact Assessment should also be considered to ensure decision makers are fully informed about the gender equality impacts.

For example, this includes where there are material changes in costs beyond the forward estimates, or the policy commences later in, or beyond, the forward estimates.

Where there are alternative cost options, the value criteria applies if one of the options meets the value threshold.

Appendix B: Useful links and data sources

Contact the relevant areas of the departments or agencies, to identify and analyse this data and determine its relevance to each policy item. Highly disaggregated data can be sensitive, and the [Office for the National Data Commissioner](#) has guidance on how to safely share data, including using five [Data Sharing Principles](#) as a risk management framework.

- Gendered key facts products: The Office for Women has developed key fact sheets that include gender-disaggregated data across a number of policy areas. These are a useful starting point for finding data and can be accessed by contacting OFW-Evidence@pmc.gov.au.
- [Status of Women Report Card](#): The Government released a Status of Women Report Card on International Women's Day 2023 (8 March 2023) to provide a picture of what life looks like for women in Australia. The data shows the challenges women and girls in Australia face across key areas of life; in education, economic outcomes, health, safety and wellbeing, housing, and gender norms.
- [Women's Budget Statement 23-34](#): The Women's Budget Statement is available on the Treasury Budget Website and provides a summary and analysis of the key initiatives relating to women and gender equality.
- [Cabinet Handbook \(15th edition\)](#): Processes in the [Cabinet Handbook](#) give effect to the Government's commitment to gender equality by elevating consideration of gender equality in policy design and decision making through gender responsive budgeting.
- [Australian Government Data](#): Includes data on [benefit and payment recipient demographics, taxation data 2020-21](#) and more. Searches can be conducted by department.
- [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(AIHW\): Research and data](#): Various publications including on differences including distinct health and welfare needs and concerns related to their gender and biological sex [men and women](#).
- [Australian Institute of Family Studies \(AIFS\) Research](#): Various publications, research, as well as facts and figures relating to family, including on early childhood education and care, Child Care Subsidy and young people
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) [data products](#) including the [Data Explorer](#): WGEA data is from non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees. Organisations report annually on six gender equality indicators including gender composition of the workforce and governing bodies, equal remuneration between men and women, availability of flexible working arrangements, and prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination.
- [ATO taxation statistics](#): Summary statistics as well as detailed data from tax returns. Individual classifications by sex include average and median income, net tax and superannuation account balance.
- [Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia \(HILDA\) Survey](#): A longitudinal study of Australian households that collects a broad range of information. Provides valuable insight into labour market and economic outcomes, family dynamics and gender roles.

- [National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey \(NCAS\)](#): A national population survey of Australians' understanding of violence against women, their attitudes towards it, what influences their attitudes, and if there has been a change over time. It also gauges attitudes to gender equality and people's preparedness to intervene when witnessing violence or disrespect towards women.
- [Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety \(ANROWS\)](#): Research and resources concerning violence against women and their children, and its impacts across Australia's economy, community, people's health and wellbeing.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Sources

- [Gender Indicators](#): Provides a summary of existing sex disaggregated data in six domains: economic security; education; health; work and family balance; safety and justice; democracy, governance and citizenship.
- [Personal Safety Survey](#): Collects information from men and women aged 18 years and over about the nature and extent of violence experienced since the age of 15 (Last conducted in 2016).
- [Labour Force](#): Provides employment and unemployment numbers, hours worked, and participation and unemployment rates by sex. Employment numbers included by full-time or part-time.
- [Labour Force, Detailed](#): Provides detailed monthly and quarterly labour force survey data by sex, but includes other characteristics such as marital status, age, location (capital city or state), country of birth, hours worked and duration of job search. These are available broken down by industry (based on Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC)) and occupation (based on Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)).
- [Average Weekly Earnings](#): Provides average weekly earnings by characteristics such as sex, sector, industry, and state/territory.
- [Employee Earnings and Hours](#): Provides detailed statistics on the composition and distribution of employee earnings, hours paid for and the methods used to set employees' pay. Data disaggregation for various groups of employees including by sex, industry, occupation and pay setting method is available.
- [Time Use](#): Measures and compares the volume of paid and unpaid work (including caregiving responsibilities) by sex and other characteristics.
- [Census](#): Allows for cross-classification of sex with a broad range of characteristics such as children, social marital status, Indigeneity, language spoken at home, relationship in household and unpaid care and work. Important source of geographically disaggregated data
- [Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas \(SEIFA\) Australia](#): Ranks areas according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage using Census data.

Glossary

Gender: Gender is a social and cultural concept. It is about social and cultural differences in identity, expression and experience as a man, woman or non-binary person. Non-binary is an umbrella term describing gender identities that are not exclusively male or female ([ABS, Standard for Sex Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables, 2020](#)).

Gender analysis: The overarching process to assess/consider/investigate how a policy proposal might impact people in different ways based on gender.

Gender Analysis Summary: A short description of the gender analysis in the New Policy Proposal (NPP) and the Cabinet Submission. The Gender Analysis Summary makes the potential gendered impact transparent in the decision making process.

Gender Impact Assessment: A Gender Impact Assessment provides more detail on the gendered impacts and responses. A Gender Impact Assessment ensures that policy makers have detail on gender impacts, as well as any policy responses and commitments to improve gender equality outcomes. A Gender Impact Assessment is required for proposals that meet certain criteria, and is completed using the [Gender Impact Assessment Template](#).

Gender disaggregated data: Gender Disaggregated Data refers to data that is broken down by gender. This gives us a clearer picture of how women, men, and gender diverse people experience their lives, including any inequalities and gaps between these groups. Population data can be collected or presented as an aggregate (an undifferentiated whole). Differences between groups of people are hidden when this data is not broken down or 'disaggregated' to reveal those groups.

Gender responsive budgeting: Gender responsive budgeting weaves consideration of gender impact through the budget process and is a key way governments can identify and fund measures that close gender gaps and avoid measures that inadvertently exacerbate gender inequality. It helps shine a light on the distributional impacts of government actions so that decision makers can make choices based on the best information available about how potential budget measures support gender equality along with other priorities like boosting economic growth.

Intersectionality: Intersectional analysis can provide insights into the causes of inequalities through the identification of compounding and interlocking advantages and disadvantages faced by diverse communities. The term 'intersectionality' was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how race and gender interact to shape black women's employment experiences in the United States. It refers to the interconnected nature of different characteristics and circumstances such as race, income, class, disability, sexuality and gender as they apply to a given individual or group. These characteristics and circumstances overlap and create an interdependent system of discrimination or disadvantage. Intersectionality is sometimes applied to acknowledge both the ways in which intersecting identities can lead to the suffering of oppression and discrimination but that can also enrich individual's lives ([UNICEF; scholarship by Crenshaw, OECD Gender budgeting and intersectionality](#)).

Office for Women (OFW): A division within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. OFW works across government to place women and gender equality at the centre of policy and decision making, including through gender responsive budgeting and gender impact analysis.

Sex: A person's sex is based upon their sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. While typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy, a person's reported sex can change over the course of their lifetime and may differ from their sex recorded at birth ([ABS, Standard for Sex Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables, 2020](#)).