

In Australia, gender inequality is reflected in many facets of life- unequal outcomes for women in employment, economic security, safety, well-being and decision-making in society.ⁱ Women earn on average 14 per cent less than men, reach retirement age with 42 per cent less in their superannuation balances compared to men, one third of boards and governing bodies in Australia have no women directors, and women are disproportionately the victims of domestic violence, with one woman on average killed by her male partner each week.^{ii,iii}

Data analysis released by QCOSS in March 2021 found that, in Queensland, the economic impact of COVID-19 impacted women more than men, with women more likely to have lost employment or work hours, more likely to report a reduction in household income and more likely to draw down on their superannuation^{iv}.

Gender responsive budgeting approaches budgetary decision making in a way that explicitly addresses gender gaps and advances gender equality. It focuses on how public resources are collected and spent and what their impacts are on gender outcomes.

Gender responsive budgeting in Queensland and the Queensland Government's Women's Economic Statement

Following the state budget each year, the Queensland Government publishes the Women's Economic Statement outlining programs and policies that support women's economic participation. Gender responsive budgeting is different from the Women's Economic Statement. It is based on clearly identified gender equality targets across a range of economic and other indicators. The gender responsive budgeting process then identifies effective interventions for implementing policies and laws that advance gender equality across these identified outcomes and targets.

Gender responsive budgeting is complementary to the Women's Economic Statement and will be useful to analyse how the government's programs and policies across different funding portfolios impact the objectives outlined in the Women's Economic Statement.

A model for gender responsive budgeting in Queensland

The renewal of the Queensland Women's Strategy in 2022 provides a strong opportunity for the Queensland Government to clarify gender equity targets.

Jackson and Risse's (2019)^v submission to the Parliament of Victoria's Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting provides an outline of the steps required to implement gender responsive budgeting. Their recommendations can be adapted to Queensland and are outlined below.

1. Gender-informed resource allocation

Prior to decisions being made, an analysis is conducted that assesses the impact of the proposed budget measures on gender equality goals. This information is then made available to decision-makers.

Such a system would require that relevant Departments assess and report on the impact of any spending or revenue measures on gender equality goals as part of the Budget and Cabinet processes.

Gender-based assessment would ideally account for intersectional issues in gender including impacts of the budget on minority groups, geographical location, socio-economic background and age.

2. Gender-assessed budgets

The next step will be to produce gender assessed budgets which provide an in-depth analysis of the extent to which the budget contributes to meeting gender equity goals.

3. Needs-based gender budgeting

This process will provide an avenue for consultation and feedback between the Government and the community to ensure that the Government is constantly aware of where the gaps are in its strategy.

References

- ⁱ Jackson,A. Risse, L. Submission to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit Review of the Operations of the Parliamentary Budget Office 2019-20 (2020).
- ⁱⁱ Our Watch, Quick facts, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/quick-facts/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ WGEA (Workplace Gender Equity Agency) Workplace Statistics at a glance 2018-19. <https://www.wgea.gov.au/data/fact-sheets/gender-workplace-statistics-at-a-glance>
- ^{iv} QCOSS, COVID-19 impacts on Queenslanders: The unfolding impacts of COVID-19 and how they are distributed among different people, December 2020
- ^v Jackson,A. Risse,L. Submission to the Parliament of Victoria’s Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting (2019)