

# Queensland Budget | 2024 – 2025

## Advance women's equality

Women and girls make up more than 50 per cent of Queensland's population. However, gender inequality persists, and it impacts women's safety, health, wellbeing and prosperity.

The Queensland *Gender Equality Report Cards 2022* and the 2023–24 Queensland State Budget *Women's Budget Statement* highlight continuing gender inequality across the state. For example, in Queensland:<sup>1,2</sup>

- women earn an average of 15.6 per cent less than men. Only 17.5 per cent of chief executives and managing directors are women
- workers in female-dominated industries tend to be paid less than workers in male-dominated industries
- on average, women have lower superannuation balances than men. In every age group, women are more likely than men to have no superannuation coverage
- only 27.1 per cent of women feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark, compared to 60.6 per cent of men
- 87.1 per cent of sexual offence victims are women, and 59.9 per cent of all reported victims of an offence against the person identified as female
- women account for 69.1 per cent of all alleged victims of elder abuse according to the *Elder Abuse Helpline*.

The Queensland Government has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to advancing women's equality in Queensland. In recent years, major steps forward have included: continuing to implement recommendations from the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, establishing the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27* (QWS), implementing gender responsive budgeting, and committing to develop the *Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2023–2032*. This document outlines further opportunities for the Queensland Government to advance women's equality in the 2024–2025 Queensland Budget.

Several QCROSS priorities for the 2024–25 Queensland Budget include recommendations that will have positive gender impacts, such as our call for increased investment in housing. This paper outlines additional measures which will also contribute to advancing gender equality in Queensland.

As a priority, the 2024–2025 Queensland Budget should:

<sup>1</sup> Queensland Government. (2023). *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27, Gender Equality Report Cards 2022*, p 6. ('*Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27*') <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/d625123a-7c71-4835-a53b-62ec1dc5ef90/2022-gender-equality-report-cards.pdf?ETag=2848aa13295a86689a76b8b78fcf29fd>

<sup>2</sup> State of Queensland (Queensland Treasury). *Women's Budget Statement, Queensland Budget 2023–24*. ('*Women's Budget Statement, Queensland Budget 2023–24*') [https://budget.qld.gov.au/files/Budget\\_2023-24\\_Queensland\\_Womens\\_Budget\\_Statement.pdf](https://budget.qld.gov.au/files/Budget_2023-24_Queensland_Womens_Budget_Statement.pdf)

## 1. Expand gender responsive budgeting

Every policy initiative in the budget has the potential to impact men and women differently, even if the policy is designed to be gender neutral. 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.”<sup>3</sup> For example, gender responsive budgeting can help to identify large infrastructure projects that could be leveraged to increase women’s access to employment in the construction industry.

The consequence of not applying a gender lens to policy decisions is that some policies may inadvertently widen gender gaps that the government is striving to close. This is highlighted by the [qCOSS gender impact analysis of the Queensland Budget 2021-2022](#). One of the measures assessed in that paper was aimed to address pressure in the health system. The paper noted positive gender impacts including the expanded availability of healthcare services, and the generation of job opportunities in the female-concentrated healthcare sector. However, the paper also explained that the “...overall gender gap in earnings across the State workforce will widen if female employment increases in a sector which is lower paid... this effect can be mitigated if expansions in employment are accompanied by an increase in wage rates in the healthcare sector.”<sup>4</sup>

The QWS included a commitment to enhance gender aware budgeting approaches and ensure gender impacts are considered in policy and decision-making. Gender aware budgeting processes were adopted in the development of the 2023-24 budget, and the *Women’s Budget Statement* noted that further work will be undertaken for implementation in future budgets.<sup>5</sup> As part of this commitment to expand gender responsive budgeting, the Queensland Government should:

- Invest in capacity building of Queensland Government staff to raise awareness and understanding, as well as funding resources to support the practical implementation of gender responsive budgeting across the whole of the Queensland Government.
- Provide expanded detail and analysis on how the application of a gender lens to all government spending informs and shapes the 2024-25 budget, particularly in relation to major areas of expenditure. For example, measures developed in connection with the 2032 Olympic Games, and the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan.
- Integrate an intersectional lens into gender policy impact analysis, including an expanded focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, migrant and refugee women, women living with a disability, women who identify with the LGBTIQ+ community, single mothers, and women from low socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Expand disaggregated government data collection, analysis and publication by gender to support further insights on gender equality. This will further support the annual budget process, as well as other departmental reporting and analysis throughout the year. For example, the *Women’s Budget Statement* could provide better information about women and girls who experience intersectionality. QWS Gender Equality Report Cards could further expand upon data insights in relation to First Nations women and women with diverse backgrounds and experiences. The Department of Housing could publish data disaggregated by gender and age in relation to government managed tenancies, the social housing register, and allocations to community housing.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Leonora Risse. (2021). *Gender Responsive Budgeting for Queensland: A gender impact analysis of the state Budget 2021-22*. Queensland Council of Social Service. <https://www.qcoss.org.au/publication/report-gender-impact-analysis-of-the-qld-budget-2021-2022/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Women’s Budget Statement, Queensland Budget 2023-24*. V2 (02.2024)

## 2. Further embed gender equality principles and practices in the Queensland Procurement Policy

Under the QWS, the Queensland Government committed to using its purchasing power to drive increased gender equality in the private sector. With billions of dollars spent on goods and services each year and the 2032 Olympics spend underway, this commitment presents the Queensland Government with an opportunity to significantly influence women's employment and economic outcomes.

The *Queensland Procurement Policy* (QPP) and the *Queensland Procurement Strategy* (QPS) were both updated in 2023. The QPS explains that the Queensland Government's functional maturity in procurement is on track to achieve a "leading" status by 2027, with the next status level described as "excellence".<sup>6</sup> The QPP advances a range of the government's economic, social and environmental commitments. Key measures for advancing gender equality under the QPP include mechanisms to consider workplace policies and practices aimed at ending domestic and family violence as part of supplier evaluation and selection; and mechanisms to enable targeted procurement from women-owned and/or women-led businesses. The Queensland Government's goal of demonstrating leadership in procurement presents opportunities to further expand and embed gender equality principles and practices into government procurement policies.

As per the QCOSS interjurisdictional review of Gender equality in government procurement policy, it is recommended that the Queensland Government:<sup>7</sup>

- expressly embed gender equality principles, and include an explicit commitment to advance gender equality through procurement, within both the QPS and the QPP. This commitment should be coupled with clear targets and the implementation of additional gender responsive procurement measures at the pre-tender, tender, and post-tender stages. These measures should be particularly targeted to major areas of spending, such as spending in connection with the 2032 Olympic Games in Brisbane.
- generate awareness of gender-responsive procurement measures among procurement staff.
- establish a gender responsive procurement strategy with an incremental implementation plan.
- consider what opportunities the 2032 Olympic Games offers for advancing gender equality, such as the Women into Construction project established for the 2012 London Olympics.

<sup>6</sup> State of Queensland (Department of energy and Public Works). (2023). *Queensland Procurement Strategy 2023*, p 15. [https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0022/367024/queensland-procurement-strategy-2023.pdf](https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/367024/queensland-procurement-strategy-2023.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Queensland Council of Social Service. (2023). *Gender Equality in Government Procurement Policy, an interjurisdictional review*.

### 3. Further funding for the continued implementation of Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce recommendations

The previous two state budgets have featured substantial investment to implement recommendations from the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (WSJT) *Hear Her Voice Reports One and Two*. This has been coupled with an ambitious legislative reform agenda.

The Queensland Government must continue to build on this momentum. The next major steps forward should reflect thorough engagement with the Office of the Independent Implementation Supervisor in the continued implementation of the WSJT recommendations.

### 4. Increase funding for domestic, family and sexual violence services

Against a backdrop of the housing and cost-of-living crises, QCOSS members have emphasised the increasing demand for assistance and increased complexity of need demonstrated by women and children who are experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV).

Community organisations in Queensland have stressed that current levels of funding are not commensurate with demand for services and do not enable a sustainable operating environment. A significant uplift in funding is needed to facilitate trauma-informed, culturally safe, community-led service provision for all DFSV services across Queensland. This must also include:

- an investment in primary prevention programs
- an investment into community-controlled organisations across Queensland. Research indicates that domestic and family violence (DFV) is a major driver for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families involvement in the child protection system.<sup>8</sup> Funding is required to enable community-controlled organisations (particularly those in regional and remote areas of the state) to design culturally appropriate responses that focus on addressing DFV.

DFSV service providers navigate immensely challenging circumstances every day. They are deeply concerned for the wellbeing of their highly feminised workforce and the communities they serve due to the impacts of the current funding environment. It is vital to ensure government funding will sustainably support DFSV service providers to deliver the best possible outcome to Queensland communities as well as retain and support their workforce.

### 5. Increase funding for women's health services

QCOSS welcomes the development of the upcoming *Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2023-2032* (the 'Strategy'). QCOSS members have consistently raised concerns about fundamental access to healthcare, including mental health support and allied health services. These services are an essential element of the holistic wrap-around assistance needed to achieve good outcomes for communities and service users. These concerns are particularly pronounced among community organisations operating in regional and remote areas of Queensland.

It is vital to ensure that the Strategy is supported by bold funding commitments.

<sup>8</sup> Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited. (2023). *You can't pour from an empty cup: Strengthening our service and systems responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who experience domestic and family violence*. <https://anrowsdev.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/RP.20.04-Morgan-RR2-Service-System-Approaches.2.pdf>