

Media Release

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BRING BACK THE WOMEN'S BUDGET

Women in Super (WIS) today voiced its disappointment that the Government had not reinstated the women's budget which would allow proper analysis of the impact of the budget on women. WIS is concerned by the lack of measures aimed at combating inequality and will be looking carefully at the gender implications of the 2017 budget for women's retirement outcomes.

WIS Executive Officer, Sandra Buckley said the effect public policies have on women differs markedly to men and the budget fails to take measures to close the gender super gap and the gender pay gap. These gaps are the results of the structural barriers faced by women and will not close unless concerted efforts are made by the government to do so. It is disappointing that the Government has not taken the opportunity to implement any of the recommendations from the Senate Inquiry into women's economic security in retirement. Namely, improving tax concessions for lower paid workers (predominantly women), the removal of the \$450 monthly threshold for compulsory super to be paid and introducing superannuation for those with caring responsibilities or the self-employed.

"A gender responsive budget would enable greater understanding of the impact of policies and is essential if we are serious about closing the gender pay and super gaps so current and future generations of Australian women do not continue to earn less than men and retire with half the superannuation savings of men." Ms Buckley said. "We need to ensure that Government spending is targeted towards improving women's retirement outcomes including extending participation to those who for decades have been locked out of the superannuation system."

Housing is a key factor leading to poverty in retirement for many women – particularly those who have little superannuation savings. WIS will examine budget proposals but notes the proposal to allow saving for a first home deposit within superannuation while helping some Australians to save quicker for a house deposit, will not benefit the millions of Australians who are living from week to week nor the fastest growing group of homeless – women over 65 years. Half the female workforce earns less than \$37,000pa and in the unlikely situation that these women can save for a housing deposit there would be minimal or no tax advantage to doing so through superannuation – indeed depending on the operation of the LISTO with respect to these payments, they could be disadvantaged. WIS would prefer to see policies targeted to removing the structural barriers rather than creating new ones that further entrench the divide between those who can afford to make voluntary contributions and those who cannot simply because they work in traditionally low-paid but essential industries such as aged care, child care, retail and hospitality or have lower incomes due to caring.

The move to allow those over 65 years to contribute \$300,000 of the proceeds from the sale of the family home also needed to be closely examined to identify the cost and gender impact of



the policy. WIS would welcome further policy work from the Government to address affordable and social housing and a more secure and affordable rental market.

WIS Chair and National Spokesperson, Cate Wood said that the focus for superannuation should be on improving equity, increasing the superannuation guarantee to 12% and developing the best possible retirement products.

Women in Super is a national advocacy and networking group for women employed in the superannuation and wider financial services industries, and advocates on behalf of its members and women generally to improve women's retirement prospects and access to superannuation.

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