

# Measure For Measure Gender Equality in Australia

Emma Dawson,  
Tanja Kovac,  
& Abigail Lewis

## Summary Document

On Wednesday 4 March, ahead of International Women’s Day, Per Capita will launch a major new report: Measure for Measure: Gender Equality in Australia.

There are many intersecting factors contributing to the gender equality gap in Australia, and various government and non-government agencies engaged in monitoring and addressing them. Yet there is no comprehensive, independent tool by which Australia’s progress towards gender equity is regularly measured.

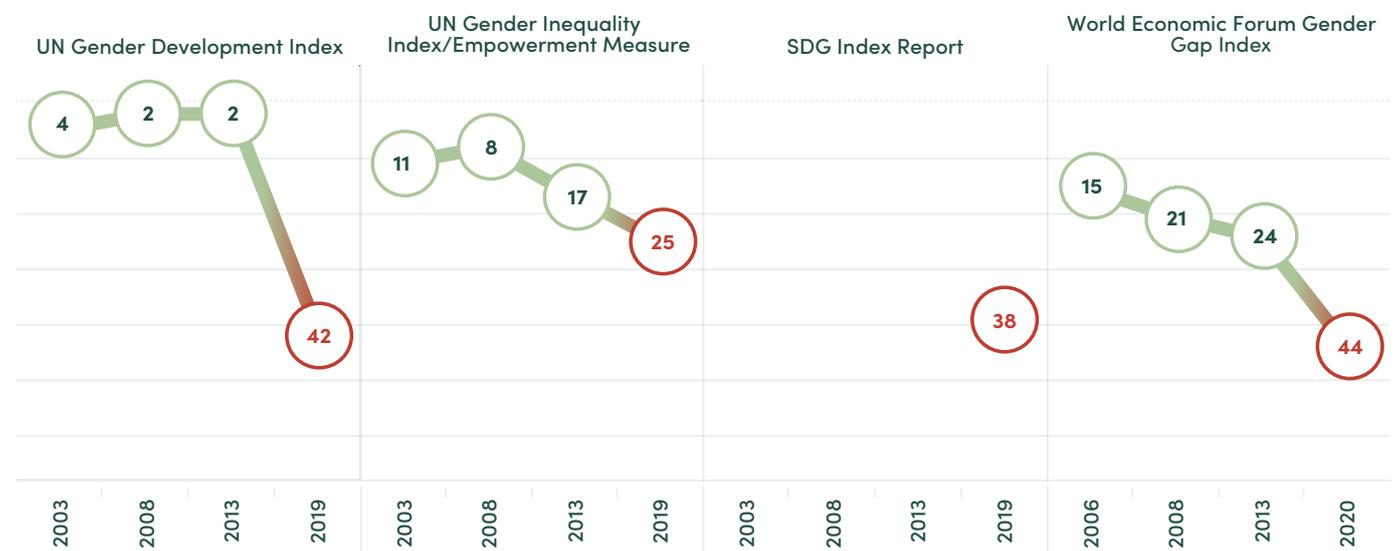
This groundbreaking report tracks the life cycle of Australian women, from early childhood, through education, employment, unpaid work, parenting and care, to retirement and old age, and identifies the points at which they fall behind men in terms of their social and economic power. It investigates the impact of violence on women’s security and wellbeing, and the unequal treatment women receive in our health system; and looks at the way women are represented in our society, and how they fare in leadership roles.

Australia is one of few developed nations that does not actively set targets for gender equality and measure progress towards nationally agreed goals. As a result, we are falling behind – over the last 12 years, Australia has fallen from a rank of 15th to 44th on the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index.

Gendered data matters. Regular, transparent reports on performance against an agreed set of indicators is critical if we are to achieve the goal of gender equality. Without accountability, closing the gender gap in Australia and across the globe will remain merely an aspirational goal, rather than an achievable target.

This report looks at why gender equality in Australia is declining, and calls for a national commitment to arrest that decline. It is intended to provide the foundation for a long-term project to produce a national, comprehensive longitudinal study of the progress towards gender equality in Australia

### Snapshot of Australia’s Current International Gender Equality Performance:



# Gender Equality in Australia Across the Life Course

## Early childhood

What happens to girls in early childhood?



They experience gendered play spaces



They begin gendering appearance



They begin displaying gendered behaviour



They interact with gendered toys

## Education

What happens to girls at school?



They stop studying maths & science

Only 16% of STEM graduates are women



They stop playing sport

<50% of teenage girls participate in sport



They spend three hours a day on social media



Their physical health concerns are ignored



They experience violence

47% of girls feel unsafe walking alone after dark



They experience serious mental health issues

## Employment

What happens to women at work?



They experience a gender pay gap

There remains a gender pay gap of 14%



They experience a motherhood penalty



First Nations women experience unique, complex challenges



They suffer from the rigid structural organisation of work



They work in underpaid feminised industries



Women experience discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace



They receive lower award wages than men



If women live with a disability, they are further disadvantaged

## Unpaid work: parenting and domestic labour

How does unpaid work affect Australian women?



Women shoulder a disproportionate load of unpaid domestic labour

Australian women spend 80.8% more time on unpaid household work each day than men



Women spend much more time actively parenting than their male partners



Women suffer from policy settings that encourage unequal division of unpaid work



Single mothers are doubly penalised

## Retirement and old age

What happens to Australian women in old age?



They are more likely to live in poverty



They retire with significantly less superannuation savings than men

Women in Australia currently retire with 47% less superannuation than men



They are more likely to rely on the age pension



They are more likely to live in housing stress

# Gender Equality in Health, Safety, Representation and Leadership



## Health

What happens to women when they seek healthcare?



Their health concerns may not be acknowledged or recognised



Their experience of pain may be dismissed as trivial



They may be exposed to experimental procedures or devices that are poorly researched and understood



They are at risk of being denied reproductive choice



## Violence Against Women

How do women experience violence in Australia?



They may experience family violence perpetrated by an intimate partner or other family member

39% of homicides in Australia in 2011-12 were domestic homicides



They're at risk of 'stranger violence', such as rape and sexual assault, perpetrated by a non-intimate partner



## Representation

How are women represented in the Australian media?



They are segregated along gender lines by subject matter



They are often stereotyped by media representation



There is an under-representation of female characters on screen



They are under-represented in leading creative roles in film and television

29.8% of characters in Australian films are female



They suffer from "entrenched sexism" in the media's coverage of sport, and reduce their participation in sport due to gendered judgements on their appearance



## Leadership

What is the state of gender equality in leadership?



There have been too few Australian women heads of state

The numbers of women Members of Parliament remains low, but is improving slowly

The proportion of female Parliamentarians has increased from 11.6% to 33.2% over the last three decades



There are modest improvements in the number of female ministers in the Executive



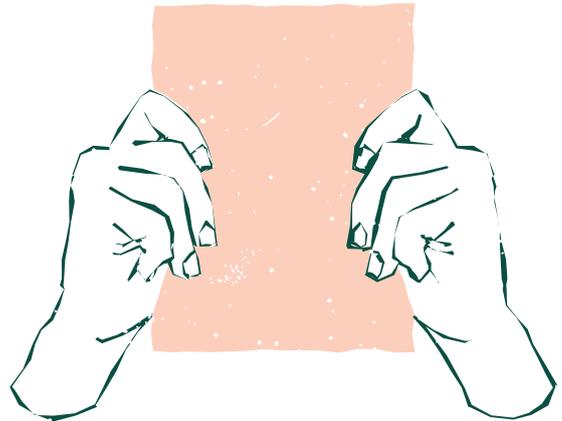
Women dominate junior levels of the public service, but remain underrepresented at the executive level



Australian businesses have a long way to go before achieving gender equality



There are increasing numbers of women in leadership positions in financial institutions and regulators



*Australia's international reporting lacks quantifiable data that can be monitored regularly for progress.*

*The time is now for an annual Australian Gender Equality Report.*

The time is now for an annual Australian Gender Equality Report. Ideally, this should be produced by an agency of government, and we call on the federal government to consider establishing such an agency to undertake this work.

In the meantime, there is considerable expertise amongst civil society institutions, academic bodies and other non-government organisations that can be drawn upon to develop a uniquely Australian set of indicators for assessing our progress towards gender equality and creating the basis for a strong annual report.

We hope our work might represent the start of a process to achieve this. By reviewing existing data and research, we have attempted to reveal a potential framework for the production of an annual analysis of Australia's gender equality performance.

It is the intention of the authors to collaborate with researchers and organisations whose work is referenced in this report, in order to address the gaps in gender analysis that we have identified and which are contributing to unequal outcomes for women.

Our hope is that, in time, an "Australian Gender Equality Dashboard" could be digitised and interactive, to engage Australian men and women in an ongoing discussion about gender equality, and to ensure the challenge of eliminating barriers to women's full participation in society are fully understood.

Ultimately, our goal must be an Australia in which women and girls are able to reach their full potential, and to live lives of equal opportunity to men and boys. Nothing less is good enough.

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If you are interested in joining a coalition of organisations calling for an Australian Gender Equality Dashboard, please contact us at [info@percapita.org.au](mailto:info@percapita.org.au)