



2012–13 Budget highlights for women

Supporting Working Australians and their Families

This Budget is about spreading the benefits of the mining boom to all corners of our country by delivering much-needed help to families on low and middle incomes.

Boosting assistance to low and middle income families

More than 1.5 million families who receive Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A will receive a boost from 1 July next year. All families that are eligible for FTB Part A will receive an increase:

- Families receiving more than the base rate of FTB Part A with two or more children will receive an extra \$600 a year, or an extra \$300 a year if they have one child.
- Families receiving the base rate of FTB Part A with two or more children will receive an extra \$200 a year, or an extra \$100 a year if they have one child.

Helping parents with the cost of school

Around 1.3 million families will receive a new Schoolkids Bonus to help with the costs of their children's education. Eligible families will be guaranteed payments of \$410 a year for each primary school student and \$820 a year for each high school student.

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA)

The Government has committed an extra \$225.6 million over four years in child care assistance to help unemployed parents, particularly single parents, to enter the workforce.

Over four years, 130,000 parents on eligible income support payments will benefit from the increased investment in the JETCCFA program, which will reduce child care costs for eligible parents engaged in study, training or job-search activities.

Restoring equity to Parenting Payments

Currently, potential Parenting Payment recipients have different entitlements based solely on when they first claimed payment. Removing the grandfathering provisions implemented in 2006 as part of the Welfare to Work Reforms will restore equity to Parenting Payments.

In this Budget, the Government is committing additional funding for professional career counselling to help affected grandfathered parents to transition into work. Affected parents will also be able to benefit from government-subsidised training places under the new \$1.75 billion National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform to obtain a qualification up to their first Certificate III.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Women will be significantly assisted by the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which will benefit women with disability and those who act as carers in the launch locations. The Government is providing \$1 billion over four years for the first stage of an NDIS in up to four launch locations for around 10,000 Australians with significant and permanent disability from July 2013, increasing to around 20,000 Australians from mid-2014.

Building a New Economy

A central component of building a sustainable economy and community is maximising our productive potential through improving the economic participation of all sectors of society. The 2012–13 Budget removes further obstacles and improves incentives for women to benefit from paid work.

Tripling of the tax-free threshold

Households will receive assistance through personal income tax cuts targeted at low and middle income earners, when the Government more than triples the current tax-free threshold from \$6,000 to \$18,200 from 1 July 2012. The increase in the threshold will be particularly significant for the 70 per cent of part-time workers who are women. These tax cuts improve the rewards for work – a woman working part-time earning \$20,000 a year will receive a tax cut of \$600. In combination with the low-income tax offset, the new tax-free threshold means that women who earn up to \$20,542 per year will now pay no tax.

HECS-HELP Benefit for Early Childhood Education Teachers

The Government will expand the HECS-HELP Benefit for early childhood education teachers by broadening the eligibility criteria at a cost of \$7.6 million over four years. This will help to reduce the HECS-HELP debt of those teachers working in regional, remote or high disadvantage areas.

Investing in Experience

The More Help for Mature Age Workers program is being expanded and renamed, to include mature age workers from non-trade occupations across all sectors of the economy, such as child care. The new Investing in Experience (Skills Recognition & Training) program supports the recognition of qualifications for mature age workers at the Certificate III level or above who have relevant skills but no formal qualifications. Eligible employers can claim \$3,000 for a skills assessment and the commencement of any gap training that may be required. A further \$1,000 will be paid on the completion of the gap training by the mature age worker.

The Government will also provide an additional \$35 million over four years to the National Workforce Development Fund to improve the skills of mature age workers, aged 50 years and over, consistent with their workforce development needs.

Living Longer. Living Better.

Ninety per cent of workers in the residential and aged care industry are women. The Government is providing \$1.2 billion over five years to improve the capacity of the aged care sector to attract and retain staff through higher wages, improved career structures, enhanced training and education opportunities, improved career development and workforce planning and better work practices.

Mathematics and science

More girls need to engage with mathematics and science where they have a preference to if they are to enter some of the male-dominated industries such as engineering. The Government is providing \$54 million over four years to improve participation and engagement in the study of mathematics and science at school and university.



Strengthening communities

The Government is working to create a fairer and more inclusive Australia and to support women's voices being heard, both here and abroad.

Working Women's Centres

The Government will provide \$7.1 million over four years to continue its support for Working Women's Centres in South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory, as well as the Employment Law Centre in Western Australia and JobWatch in Victoria. This will assist these organisations to expand their workplace relations education services to disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians who experience difficulties in asserting and exercising their workplace rights.

Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters

The Government will provide \$55.7 million over four years to continue and expand the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY). HIPPY is a two-year home-based parenting and early childhood enrichment program aimed at empowering parents to be their child's first teacher, and can offer parents and carers a supported pathway to employment and local community leadership.

Women's leadership

The Government will provide \$0.4 million over four years to establish the Prime Minister's Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award. One scholarship will be awarded each year to a high achieving female student to undertake postgraduate study overseas in the field of women's leadership.

Support for global organisations

As part of the 2012–13 Budget measure, *Official Development Assistance Expanding Australia's development partnerships with the United Nations*, the Government will provide an additional \$16.5 million over four years to UN Women.

This will mean annual core funding to UN Women will be \$8 million in 2012–2013, increasing to \$20 million by 2015–2016, subject to continued effective performance of this new organisation. Based on current contributions, Australia will become the second highest donor to UN Women in 2015–2016.

This funding will support UN Women's role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and strengthening global efforts to promote gender equality and empower women. On the ground this will mean strengthening women's leadership and participation, preventing violence against women, and expanding access to services for survivors of this violence. It will also ensure that Australia's aid enhances women's economic participation.

