

MEDIA RELEASE

64 women's organisations say it's time to #BanBlokeBasedBudgets

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA), made up of 64 women's organisations led by YWCA Australia, is calling on the Federal Government to apply gender-responsive budgeting in the leadup to the Federal Budget on 6 October.

ERA's Project Coordinator Romy Listo said that the Federal Budget was fundamental in determining the day-to-day lives of Australians – but that women, especially diverse women, were too frequently left out of the budgeting process.

"The Federal Budget has significant impact on all women's lives – from where we can afford to live, how we access work and education opportunities, and our health and wellbeing," she said.

"And yet, time and time again, decisions in the Budget are made for a mythical, 'average' Australian - an Anglo, cis-hetero and able-bodied man, and so fail to account for the needs of the diverse communities across Australia."

One prime example of this failing is the tampon tax, when menstrual products weren't included in the list of 'essential healthcare' and thus incurred a 10 per cent goods and services tax (GST). It took 18 years of lobbying and campaign by women's organisations before this was removed.

"Now more than ever, we can't wait for yet another Budget to recognise the different and unequal experiences of women," says Ms. Listo.

"Women, especially young women and non-binary young people, have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have been more likely to have lost jobs or hours of work, they are doing more unpaid care and household work, and some are experiencing violence in new and increased ways."

"This Federal Budget sets the roadmap for COVID-19 economic recovery. It has the opportunity to address the existing social inequalities that the pandemic has exacerbated – or it has the opportunity to deepen them. We need the Federal Government to make the right, gender-responsive, budgeting choices."

ERA and YWCA have teamed up to create a video for young people, dedicated to explaining the importance of the Federal Budget. The short explainer video is voiced by Alexandra Hatzivalsamis, a member of YWCA's Young Women's Council.

"Most communication about the Federal Budget is difficult to understand, a deliberate language choice by politicians and economists to exclude young people like myself from this important political process," says Ms. Hatzivalsamis.

"That's why I was so passionate about taking part in this video project. By making the importance of the Federal Budget easy to understand for all people, and particularly engaging for young women and non-binary people, we can begin to encourage everyone to become advocates for the things that matter most to them."

For Ms. Hatzivalsamis, she'd like to see a Federal Budget that addresses the glaring inequities of the policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“While I’ve been lucky enough to be secure in my employment, I know many other young people who have been affected by job losses or cuts in working hours. Many others will be affected by the cut to the JobSeeker rate, which will put them in danger of losing housing and food security.”

“We can, and we must do better in this Federal Budget.”

@ERAAustralia and @YWCAAus are calling for everyone to view and share their Federal Budget explainer video #BanBlokeBasedBudgets, viewable at ywca.org.au.

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About Equality Rights Alliance

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) is Australia’s largest network advocating for women’s equality, women’s leadership and recognition of women’s diversity. We bring together 64 non-government organisations and social enterprises with a focus on the impact of policy or service delivery on women. We are one of six National Women’s Alliances, and are funded by the Commonwealth Government’s Office for Women and led by YWCA Australia

We believe the advancement of women and the achievement of equality are matters of fundamental human rights. We advocate for gender equality, women’s leadership and government policy responses that support women’s diversity. Using a range of methods to consult and engage with women in Australia, we work to bring the voices of women from diverse life situations to policy makers.

About YWCA Australia

YWCA Australia is an evolving intersectional feminist organisation focused on improving gender equality for women, young women and girls. For 140 years, we have challenged the systems, structures and policies that act as barriers to women, especially young women, achieving their full potential.

Our high-impact evidence-based programs and services are inclusive of women in all their diversity and offer support with housing, homelessness, safety, wellbeing and leadership. We aim to positively impact the lives of more than two million women, young women and girls by the end of 2023.

PHONE INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

Romy Listo, Project Coordinator, Equality Rights Alliance

Alexandra Hatzivalsamis, Young Women’s Council Member, YWCA Australia (voiceover artist for the Budget video)

Bobbie Trower, Senior Manager - Advocacy, YWCA Australia

To organise an interview, please contact Amanda Chan on 0433 843 643.