

# PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee



## Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting

Parliament of Victoria  
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

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# Committee membership



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# About the Committee

## Functions

The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee is a joint parliamentary committee constituted under the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* (the Act).

The Committee comprises ten members of Parliament drawn from both Houses of Parliament.

The Committee carries out investigations and reports to Parliament on matters associated with the financial management of the State. Its functions under the Act are to inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on:

- any proposal, matter or thing concerned with public administration or public sector finances
- the annual estimates or receipts and payments and other Budget papers and any supplementary estimates of receipts or payments presented to the Assembly and the Council
- audit priorities for the purposes of the *Audit Act 1994*.

The Committee also has a number of statutory responsibilities in relation to the Office of the Auditor-General and Parliamentary Budget Office.

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This report is available on the Committee's website.

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# Terms of reference

## Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting

The Committee resolved at its meeting on 9 September 2019 to conduct an Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting.

The terms of reference for the Inquiry require the Committee to:

1. Review and seek advice on international and national developments in Gender Responsive Budgeting.
2. Assess the status of the Victorian Public Sector's Gender Responsive Budgeting initiatives and what outcomes have been achieved to date.
3. Consider the current application of developments in Gender Responsive Budgeting for both private and public organisations in Australia and overseas.
4. Investigate the implications of these developments for Victorian and Australian Public Sector accounting and reporting.
5. Review the extent to which the Victorian and Australian Public Sector should be required to publicly report on the positive outcomes and negative impacts of their activities to achieve gender equality.



# Chair's foreword

On behalf of the Victorian Parliament, I am pleased to present the Committee's report for the Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting.

Under the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* the Committee has a role to examine the financial management of the State and identify improvements that can be made for the benefit of the Victorian community.

In September 2019 the Committee resolved to conduct an Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting to examine how it could be used at a State level to ensure that public financial management helps to address inequality—this was of course, before Victoria was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and before the Victorian Government introduced significant Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) practices in the State.

Notwithstanding the extended timeline for this Inquiry and the progress made during this period, this report aims to contribute to the ongoing improvement of our State's budgetary processes to advance gender equality.

To inform the Inquiry, the Committee considered best practice examples of intergovernmental organisations' approaches to GRB and models for GRB implemented by international jurisdictions.

The Committee is grateful to all the international, State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, academics, research institutes, advocacy groups and non-government organisations who contributed to the Inquiry through their submissions and evidence.

This report shows that Victoria has already developed and established several of the key elements of an enduring GRB practice—including the release and implementation of *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* and the passing of gender equality legislation in the form of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. However, there are always opportunities for improvement that could contribute to the continued development and adoption of GRB practices in Victoria.

Using lessons learned from other jurisdictions, the Committee's suggested recommendations focus on how Victoria can improve and drive sustainable gender equality outcomes through GRB. In making its findings and recommendations the Committee's report considers separately the following key elements of designing and implementing GRB: a strong strategic framework; effective tools for implementation; a supportive enabling environment; and effective processes for measuring and reporting on outcomes.

## Chair's foreword

I thank my colleagues on the Committee for their contribution to our work on this Inquiry over the course of this parliamentary term. I also thank the Secretariat team for supporting the Committee's work on this Inquiry and preparing this report.

I commend the report to the Parliament.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Blandthorn', followed by a horizontal line.

**Ms Lizzie Blandthorn MP**  
**Chair**

# Findings and recommendations

## 3 Strategic Framework

**FINDING 1:** The 2016 *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* defined six out of 15 targets and the 2019 *Refreshed Gender Equality Outcomes Framework* did not fully define the remaining nine targets of the Strategy. 20

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The Victorian Government fully define all targets relating to the *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*. 21

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* include details about how the Strategy's targets are linked to the outcomes achieved against departmental gender equality performance measures. 21

**FINDING 2:** The Victorian Government consulted with the *Ministerial Council on Women's Equality* in the development of *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*. 22

**FINDING 3:** Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) relates to tools and practices that can be used to ensure public financial management contributes to gender equality. Private sector organisations have a limited role in the development and implementation of GRB policies and processes in Victoria. 22

**FINDING 4:** To guide the effective application of Gender Responsive Budgeting it is important to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the agencies and public servants involved, as well as the processes that must be followed. 25

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** The *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders involved in Gender Responsive Budgeting and the processes that must be followed. 26

**FINDING 5:** The Victorian Government has legislated equality measures in the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)* and linked gender equality outcomes to budgetary processes via the establishment of a Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit in the Department of Treasury, however, Gender Responsive Budgeting has not been codified in Victorian legislation. 29

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** The Victorian Government, the Department of Treasury and Finance and public administrative institutions provide a high-level commitment to Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) through legislative change, placing requirements on future governments to administer and continue GRB policies and processes. **29**

**FINDING 6:** The implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) would benefit from the input of Victorian Government departments and agencies. The establishment of an inter-agency working group on GRB may facilitate the gathering of these perspectives. **30**

## 4 Tools for implementation

**FINDING 7:** Independent Gender Equality Budget Groups consisting of civil society organisations and gender economic experts within government and the academic sector have played key roles in assisting countries to conduct gender resourcing needs assessments and report on the implications of Government’s spending decisions on advancing gender equality. **34**

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** The Victorian Government consider the establishment of an independent Gender Equality Budget Group to undertake an annual gender equality needs assessment of government initiatives. **34**

**FINDING 8:** Victoria’s Gender Equality Budget Statement provides details of the budget initiatives impacting women and is published annually alongside the State Budget. A gender budget baseline analysis of Victoria’s existing budget initiatives and their contribution to gender equality has not yet been published. **36**

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** The Department of Treasury and Finance set a timeframe to perform and make public a gender budget baseline analysis of all existing expenditure and revenue budget initiatives. The analysis should occur at regular intervals in the future and assess how government funding allocations contribute to gender equality and be used to guide future spending decisions that address gender equality gaps. **36**

**FINDING 9:** The *Victorian 2021–22 Gender Equality Budget Statement* highlighted the State’s investment in post-pandemic recovery, including initiatives to boost women’s economic security and create jobs. **37**

**FINDING 10:** Spending reviews provide significant insight into how government expenditure can be reprioritised for greater efficiency and alignment to policy priorities. The application of a gender dimension in spending reviews can lead to better outcomes that will have a positive impact on gender equality goals. **37**

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** The Department of Treasury and Finance apply a gender dimension in future spending reviews. **38**

**FINDING 11:** An intersectional approach to gender impact assessment of policies, programs and services is practiced in Victoria. These consider experiences of gender inequality shaped by other aspects of identity including Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, and sexual orientation. **44**

**FINDING 12:** The *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic) established reporting mechanisms for actions taken by Victorian public sector bodies in response to gender impact assessments, evaluated against workplace gender equalities, targets and quotas. **44**

**RECOMMENDATION 8:** The Victorian State Budget Papers or Gender Equality Budget Statement include gender impact analysis details for all budget initiatives. **45**

**RECOMMENDATION 9:** Victorian Government departments and agencies publish in their annual reports the gender equality objectives, targets, indicators and other set criteria that result from undertaking gender impact assessments. **45**

**FINDING 13:** The incorporation of a gender perspective in the economic analysis of major investment proposals assists governments to comprehensively assess the gender impact of public spending. **46**

**RECOMMENDATION 10:** The Victorian Government incorporate a gender perspective into the review processes of the High Value High Risk Project Assurance Framework and other economic analysis of major investment proposals. **46**

**RECOMMENDATION 11:** The Victorian Government outline the gender equality impacts of government policies and the overall Budget, including revenue and expenditure initiatives, in its Gender Equality Budget Statement. **51**

**RECOMMENDATION 12:** Victoria’s Gender Equality Budget Statement provide a detailed assessment of the Government’s progress in implementing the budgetary components of the *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*. 51

**RECOMMENDATION 13:** Victoria’s Gender Equality Budget Statement report on the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting and the achievement of gender equality outcomes against objectives, targets and indicators linked to the *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*. 51

## 5 Enabling environment

**FINDING 14:** Independent expert consultative groups with skills in economics, policy and gender can actively and effectively engage government in the Gender Responsive Budgeting process to help increase transparency and accountability and ensure gender responsive practices are thorough. 56

**FINDING 15:** The Department of Treasury and Finance’s gender impact assessment model and tools may benefit from the inclusion of structured engagement or consultation with independent expert groups on Gender Responsive Budgeting. 56

**RECOMMENDATION 14:** The Victorian Government engage with the proposed independent Gender Equality Budget Group to support the design and implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting across the budget cycle. 57

**FINDING 16:** For training in Gender Responsive Budgeting to be effective, it must be tailored to its intended target group with clear objectives across all levels of the public sector. This should include awareness raising initiatives and the provision of ongoing technical assistance. 58

**RECOMMENDATION 15:** The Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit undertake a training needs assessment to obtain information about the level of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) knowledge and skills across the public sector and use the learnings of this assessment to establish a tailored and formalised GRB training plan. 59

**FINDING 17:** The Victorian Government has established the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector and the Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit to perform training and capacity development across the Victorian public sector for the achievement of gender equality outcomes. 61

**RECOMMENDATION 16:** The Department of Treasury and Finance publish quality performance measures in the Victorian State Budget Papers to assess the outcomes of the services provided by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector and the Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit. **61**

**FINDING 18:** The Department of Treasury and Finance is currently developing tools to guide gender impact assessments in budget development, in line with the commitment made in the 2016 *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*. **63**

**FINDING 19:** The work of the United Kingdom's Women's Budget Group provides a strong example of the role an independent expert consultative group can have in providing Gender Responsive Budgeting training and capacity building to public servants. **63**

**FINDING 20:** Once Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) training has been fully implemented, systematic gender audits should occur across the Victorian public sector to assist in assessing the effectiveness of GRB and to identify gaps to inform future training and awareness raising efforts. **64**

**FINDING 21:** An overarching annual training and awareness plan that includes evaluation along with the actions planned for the current year, such as detailed training schedules and their strategic purpose, would assist the Victorian Government to develop the capacity of Victorian public sector staff involved in Gender Responsive Budgeting. **66**

**RECOMMENDATION 17:** The Victorian Government include in *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* a training and capacity development plan for public servants across all departments to raise awareness and facilitate a supportive culture for Gender Responsive Budgeting. **66**

## 6 Measuring and reporting on outcomes

**FINDING 22:** The Department of Treasury and Finance will be undertaking a post-implementation review of Gender Responsive Budgeting processes following completion of the 2021–22 budget cycle. **68**

**RECOMMENDATION 18:** The Department of Treasury and Finance's post-implementation review of Gender Responsive Budgeting processes include information on the extent to which intended outcomes and impacts of policies targeting gender or gender equality have been achieved. **68**

**RECOMMENDATION 19:** The Department of Treasury and Finance publicly release the key findings of their post-implementation review of Gender Responsive Budgeting processes. 68

**FINDING 23:** Best practice international Gender Responsive Budgeting models mandate the collection of sex disaggregated data in legislation. 70

**FINDING 24:** The *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic) legislated the collection of gender disaggregated data by public sector organisations on workplace gender equality. The first round of data is scheduled to be provided to the Gender Equality Commissioner by 31 March 2022 and high-level data about organisations will be made publicly available. 70

**FINDING 25:** The systematic collection of sex disaggregated data should involve regular data collection at national and sub-national levels and be used to measure the impacts of gender equality policies and programs. Data collection should involve the national statistics bureau, include consultation with stakeholders to measure progress and impacts and be managed through a reliable central system. 72

**FINDING 26:** The Government of Canada’s model of gender based analysis informed by disaggregated data that identifies the way in which public policy and programs effect different groups, provides an example of the utility of effective data collection practices. 73

**FINDING 27:** The Victorian Government has commenced significant work on the collection of gender disaggregated data in its 2019 *Gender Equality Baseline Report*. The Report identified that further state-based reporting work is required to effectively monitor improvements in gender equality. 74

**FINDING 28:** The sex and gender disaggregated data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is limited to major national surveys such as the Census and does not provide a state-based breakdown of the data collected. 74

**FINDING 29:** Improving the collection of sex disaggregated data and increasing the ability for this information to be accessed, would assist the Victorian Government to perform analysis of policy impacts on different groups of people and help inform the development of future measures. 75



**RECOMMENDATION 20:** The Victorian Government perform an audit of existing sex disaggregated data to establish a baseline understanding of the gender disaggregated data that is currently available. 75

**RECOMMENDATION 21:** The Victorian Government use the results of the audit of existing sex disaggregated data to develop a sex disaggregated data action plan to address any gaps that are identified. 75

**FINDING 30:** The Austrian performance budgeting framework provides a best practice example of gender equality objectives and indicators being embedded in the annual budget and a formalised mechanism for reporting on equality outcomes. 75

**FINDING 31:** The Canadian Government has established a Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics Hub, within Statistics Canada, that is responsible for providing the data and analysis required to measure Canada's gender equality performance through its Gender Responsive Framework. 76

**RECOMMENDATION 22:** The Victorian Government publish gender equality targets and indicators in the State Budget Papers or Gender Equality Budget Statement and track outcomes in departmental annual reports. 79

**FINDING 32:** The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) has the lead role in implementing Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in Victoria. While the 2020–21 Budget did not include performance measures to assess and evaluate GRB, DTF is currently leading discussions on assessing the impact of the budget on gender equality and establishing a baseline to measure progress. 79

**RECOMMENDATION 23:** The Department of Treasury and Finance include performance measures in the next Budget to assess the progress of the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Victoria and the gender equality outcomes achieved. 79

**FINDING 33:** The inclusion of a gender dimension to performance audits can improve both accountability and compliance around the implementation of gender specific policies and help identify the gender-specific impacts of government programs. 83

**FINDING 34:** A structured audit of Gender Responsive Budgeting systems and processes can provide an independent and objective analysis of the extent to which gender equality measures have been effectively implemented through relevant policies and mechanisms. 85

# Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CAAF	Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGEPS	Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector
DDAP	Disaggregated Data Action Plan
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
DTF	Department of Treasury and Finance
ERA	Equality Rights Alliance
GAA	General Appropriations Act
GAD	Gender and Development
GBA+	Gender Budget Analysis Plus
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEBG	Gender Equality Budget Group
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GenVic	Gender Equality Victoria
GGG	Global Gender Gap
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GIA	Gender Impact Assessment
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GRBU	Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit
GRF	Gender Results Framework
GRPFM	Gender Responsive Public Financial Management
HDI	Human Development Index
HVHR	High Value High Risk
ICC	Investment Coordination Committee
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NFAW	National Foundation of Australian Women
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAEC	Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women

PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program
SDEA	Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association
VAGO	Victorian Auditor-General's Office
WBG	Women's Budget Group
WHV	Women's Health Victoria
WISER	Women in Social and Economic Research, Curtin University



## 1.1 Introduction

Gender equality ensures that all people can contribute fully at home, at work and in public life, free from discrimination because of their gender identity, for the betterment of societies and economies at large.<sup>1</sup> Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a keystone of a prosperous, modern economy that provides sustainable inclusive growth.<sup>2</sup>

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) argues that the persistence of gender gaps—across labour market participation, entrepreneurship, remuneration, representation in public and private senior management positions, health outcomes and education—suggests that disparities have become embedded in how public resources are allocated and used.<sup>3</sup>

People are impacted by government policies differently due to their economic circumstances, educational and workforce opportunities, societal roles, and life paths. Government budgets that do not address these differences can have the inadvertent effect of widening rather than narrowing gender gaps. In light of these insights, the Victorian Government has implemented several Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) initiatives to narrow gender gaps and achieve more equitable outcomes.

Section 14 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 (Vic)* (the Act) sets out the function of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (the Committee) to inquire into and report to the Parliament on ‘any proposal, matter or thing concerned with public administration or public sector finances’.<sup>4</sup> Under the Act, it is the role of the Committee to examine the financial management of the State and identify improvements that can be made for the benefit of the Victorian community.

Through its Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting (the Inquiry), the Committee assesses the progress the Victorian Government has made in GRB and considers what further steps could be taken to promote better outcomes. Drawing on examples of best practice approaches to GRB, the Committee explores ways that the Victorian State budgetary process could be strengthened to sustainably support gender equality goals.

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1 OECD, *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017, p. 3; Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation, *Practice guide to auditing gender equality*, 2016, Ontario, p. 9.

2 OECD, *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017, p. 3.

3 OECD, *Gender Budgeting in OECD Countries*, OECD Journal of Budgeting, Volume 16, Issue 3, Paris, 2017, pp. 3, 33.

4 *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 (Vic)*, s 14.

## 1.2 What is Gender Responsive Budgeting?

GRB is a tool used to ensure that public financial management contributes to gender equality. GRB analyses the impact of a budget on gender equality and provides a process for adapting budgetary decision making and priority setting. GRB can help assess whether policies proposed in a budget will benefit or disadvantage individuals based on their gender and guide reform in the interest of supporting more gender equitable outcomes.

GRB can assist governments to allocate resources fairly and make visible the different circumstances and economic contributions of people as individuals, rather than household units.

GRB achieves this through applying gendered perspectives at all stages of a Government's Budget and financial planning processes. For example, under the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) approach to GRB, the following stages of budget preparation are analysed, with a view to identify critical entry points of gender policies:

1. fiscal policy goal settings including taxes, expenditures and debt
2. preparation of the annual budget and its approval by the legislature
3. control and execution of the approved budget
4. preparation of accounts and financial reports
5. independent oversight and audit of the budget.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.3 Terms of Reference

The Committee resolved at its meeting on 9 September 2019 to conduct an Inquiry into GRB. The terms of reference for the Inquiry required the Committee to:

1. Review and seek advice on international and national developments in GRB.
2. Assess the status of the Victorian Public Sector's GRB initiatives and what outcomes have been achieved to date.
3. Consider the current application of developments in GRB for both private and public organisations in Australia and overseas.
4. Investigate the implications of these developments for Victorian and Australian Public Sector accounting and reporting.
5. Review the extent to which the Victorian and Australian Public Sector should be required to publicly report on the positive outcomes and negative impacts of their activities to achieve gender equality.

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<sup>5</sup> Australian National University Gender Institute, *Submission 21*, received 12 December 2019, pp. 6–7. See Chapter 2 of this report for further information.

## 1.4 Gender equality performance in Australia and Victoria

### 1.4.1 Australia

There are several international tools used to evaluate gender equality performance within countries. As these tools have become more sophisticated,<sup>6</sup> Australia's gender equality performance at the national level has been in decline.

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) collects gendered data across four thematic areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. From 2006 to 2021, Australia's GGGI ranking dropped from 15th to 50th.<sup>7</sup> While Australia rates 1st in the world for the educational attainment of women, it ranks 46th on labour force participation, 68th on wage equality and 125th for earned income.<sup>8</sup>

The UN Gender Development Index (GDI) is produced by sex disaggregating data collected by the UN Development Program through the Human Development Index (HDI). The GDI measures four indicators: life expectancy, years of schooling, means of schooling and gross national income per capita.<sup>9</sup> Australia's GDI score dropped from a high of 4th in 2003 to 42nd in 2019.<sup>10</sup> The GDI also evidenced a \$17,667 gap between the estimated gross national income of Australian women and men in 2019.<sup>11</sup> Per Capita has suggested that an assessment of GDI and HDI data indicates that Australia is a very high performing nation in the development of men, but women are not benefitting from the same world-leading living standards, and employment and leadership opportunities.<sup>12</sup>

The UN Gender Inequality Index (GII) expands the list of indicators in the HDI to include selective gender related data, such as: maternal mortality, adolescent birth rates, parliamentary participation rates, completion of secondary school education and workforce participation.<sup>13</sup> From 2003 to 2019 Australia's GII ranking dropped from

6 Per Capita, *Measure for Measure: Gender Equality in Australia*, <[https://percapita.org.au/our\\_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia](https://percapita.org.au/our_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia)>, Victoria, 2020, p. 11.

7 Per Capita, *Measure for Measure: Gender Equality in Australia*, <[https://percapita.org.au/our\\_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia](https://percapita.org.au/our_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia)>, Victoria, 2020, p. 4; World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2021: Insight Report*, <[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)> March 2021, p. 10.

8 Per Capita, *Measure for Measure: Gender Equality in Australia*, <[https://percapita.org.au/our\\_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia](https://percapita.org.au/our_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia)>, Victoria, 2020, p. 4; World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2021: Insight Report*, <[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)> March 2021, p. 103.

9 Per Capita, *Measure for Measure: Gender Equality in Australia*, <[https://percapita.org.au/our\\_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia](https://percapita.org.au/our_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia)>, Victoria, 2020, p. 13.

10 Ibid, p. 12.

11 Estimation is per capita. Data tables note that data is crudely estimated due to disaggregated income data not being available. United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 2020: Gender Development Index - Table 4*, <[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2020\\_statistical\\_annex\\_table\\_4.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2020_statistical_annex_table_4.pdf)> accessed 30 September 2021. Committee calculation.

12 Per Capita, *Measure for Measure: Gender Equality in Australia*, <[https://percapita.org.au/our\\_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia](https://percapita.org.au/our_work/measure-for-measure-gender-equality-in-australia)>, Victoria, 2020, p. 15.

13 Ibid, p. 119.

11th to 25th.<sup>14</sup> Poor results in women being elected to Parliament and low participation levels of women in the labour force contributed to the low ranking.<sup>15</sup>

Per Capita argues that Australia's national gender equality performance is set against a backdrop lacking sufficient policy, target setting, data monitoring and evaluation to satisfy international commitments and drive excellence.<sup>16</sup> This argument is supported by a 2021 academic study of gender pay gap reporting that used 11 indicators to rank women's pay relative to men in Australia, France, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and the UK.<sup>17</sup> The study found that Australian reporting methods are failing to deliver constructive change as only employers with 100 or more staff are required to provide data to the Commonwealth Workplace Gender Equality Agency. These practices leave a significant portion of the workforce unaccounted for, and unlike the other European nations assessed in the research, Australia (and the UK) do not require companies to work to close their gender pay gap and there is no mandate to implement action plans that lead to specific gender equality outcomes.<sup>18</sup>

## 1.4.2 Victoria

Victoria's state-level gender equality policy is outlined in *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*.<sup>19</sup> The Government's *Gender Equality Outcomes Framework* sets gender equality performance indicators and targets, while the state strategy for data monitoring and evaluation is defined in Victoria's 2019 *Gender Equality Baseline Report*. Data is collected through multiple state and national, government and non-government sources, and gender equality performance is tracked across four indicators, each with two to five measures:

1. Victorians live free from gendered norms, stereotypes, and expectations
2. Victorians are empowered, healthy and safe
3. Victorians have equal access to economic and material security
4. The Government is a leader on gender equality.<sup>20</sup>

The data included in the *Baseline Report* provides a snapshot of the gender equality situation in Victoria as at 24 December 2019. It indicates that Victorian women are more

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.11. See Chapter 6 of this report for further discussion.

<sup>17</sup> Minna Cowper-Coles, Miriam Glennie, Aleida Mendes Borges and Caitlin Schmid, *Bridging the gap? An analysis of gender pay gap reporting in six countries*, October 2021, <<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/giwl/assets/bridging-the-gap-full-report.pdf>> accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Australian National University, *Australia last in global gender pay gap reporting scorecard*, 1 October 2021, <<https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/australia-last-in-global-gender-pay-gap-reporting-scorecard>> accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Victorian Government, *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality#download-the-pdf>>, Melbourne, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Victorian Government, *Gender Equality Baseline Report*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-baseline-report>>, 2019, Melbourne, p. 4.



likely than men to be living on very low incomes, with 14.4% of women (compared to 9.7% of men) earning less than \$299 per week in 2016.<sup>21</sup>

As at August 2019, a considerable gender gap existed in Victorian workforce participation (10%), contributing to the overall gender pay gap.<sup>22</sup> It was reported that for Victorian non-public sector agencies employing more than 100 employees, the gender pay gap was 9.3% in 2018, whereas in the Victorian public sector women were more heavily concentrated in the bottom 5th pay bracket (29% of women compared to 17% of men).<sup>23</sup>

In relation to lifetime economic security, the report noted that women aged between 60 and 64 years are likely to have long-standing financial challenges with a 40% gap in the superannuation savings of women and men. Further, 23% of Australian women retire with no superannuation compared to 13% of men.<sup>24</sup>

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's (DFFH) submission to the Inquiry acknowledges that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities, with women disproportionality impacted in the labour market.<sup>25</sup> The gender pay gap between men and women's full-time average earnings in Australia has persistently been between 9.1% and 13.8% since 2015,<sup>26</sup> whilst the labour force participation gap between Victorian men and women was 9.1% in January 2020.<sup>27</sup>

From June to July 2020 the rate of job loss for Victorian women was almost five times the rate for men (-2.3% for women compared to -0.5% for men) and by October 2020 the number of women out of work reached the highest on record (142,500).<sup>28</sup> In June 2021, labour force participation was 1.3% lower and unemployment was 1.7% higher than in June 2020.<sup>29</sup>

Advising the Committee on the gendered impacts of the pandemic on the labour market from July to October 2021, the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) explained that while the gap between male and female unemployment rates in Victoria had reduced, there were still around 215,000 more employed men than women

21 Ibid, pp. 22, 24.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 3.

26 ABS Average Weekly Earnings -Table 12b, *Seasonally adjusted data for full time adult ordinary time earnings*, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/average-weekly-earnings-australia/latest-release#data-download>>. Cited in Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 3.

27 ABS Labour Force, Australia - Table 5, *Seasonally adjusted data for 'Participation rate'*, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>>. Cited in Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 3.

28 The McKell Institute, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Work in Victoria*, August 2020, <<https://mckellinstitute.org.au/research/articles/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-and-work-in-victoria>> accessed 13 September 2021. Cited in Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 3; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6202.0 Labour Force Australia, Table 5. Labour force status by Sex, Victoria - Trend, Seasonally adjusted and Original, November 2021, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>> accessed 10 January 2022.

29 Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 3.

and around 44,000 more underemployed women than men. DTF also informed the Committee that by September 2021, women were again hardest hit by the impacts of COVID-19, with female employment and participation rates falling more than rates for males between July and September 2021.<sup>30</sup>

DTF noted that the industries which employ a higher proportion of female workers were hit the hardest by pandemic lockdowns, observing that the shift to remote learning for school children and the closure of early childhood education and care services resulted in women disproportionately taking on caring responsibilities which limited their participation in employment opportunities.<sup>31</sup> The over representation of women in part-time, casual and insecure work was also acknowledged, with 46% of employed women in Victoria in part-time roles compared to one in five employed men as at April 2021.<sup>32</sup>

According to DFFH and DTF, the pandemic has undermined the efficacy and timeliness of programs and services and heightened the urgency to apply GRB and policymaking to ensure outcomes for women, men and gender diverse people are measured as part of all Government decision making processes.<sup>33</sup>

## 1.5 Gender Responsive Budgeting in Australia and Victoria

### 1.5.1 Australia

The Australian Government pioneered gender budget analysis and was active in GRB from 1983 to 2013.<sup>34</sup> The defining GRB characteristic of successive governments during this time was the publication of a gender budget statement.<sup>35</sup> At its peak in comprehensiveness, the statement highlighted initiatives that advanced gender equality and included a range of gender equality indicators reporting on progress towards objectives outlined in the *National Agenda for Women*.<sup>36</sup> The statement also provided submissions from departments about how their programs impacted on women and

<sup>30</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 4; Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Rhonda Sharp and Ray Broomhill, *A Case Study of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Australia*, Commonwealth Secretariat, <[https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/episerver-6-files/global/eass/hri/grb\\_papers\\_australia\\_comm-sec-updf\\_final-copy-.pdf](https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/episerver-6-files/global/eass/hri/grb_papers_australia_comm-sec-updf_final-copy-.pdf)> 2013, accessed 1 October 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Rhonda Sharp and Ray Broomhill, *A Case Study of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Australia*, Commonwealth Secretariat, <[https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/episerver-6-files/global/eass/hri/grb\\_papers\\_australia\\_comm-sec-updf\\_final-copy-.pdf](https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/episerver-6-files/global/eass/hri/grb_papers_australia_comm-sec-updf_final-copy-.pdf)> 2013, accessed 1 October 2021, p. 4; Commonwealth Government, *National Agenda for Women: The Commonwealth Government's plan of action for advancing the status of women toward the year 2000*, Canberra, 28 November 1985.

girls, noting detailed budget breakdowns.<sup>37</sup> Revenue raising and taxation was given some coverage, for example, the *1984–85 Women’s Budget Statement* reported that cuts of \$7.60 per week in personal income taxes would benefit approximately 2.6 million taxpaying Australian women.<sup>38</sup>

Between 1983 and 1991 the Australian Government’s GRB model included the following features:

- The chief women’s policy unit was located in the main policy co-ordination department.
- Responsibility for the portfolio on gender equality lay in the Prime Minister’s Department, supported by a woman cabinet minister.
- The establishment of gender focal points in government departments.
- A clear demarcation between the women’s policy and equal employment opportunity functions.
- A focus on gender auditing undertaken by analyses of cabinet submissions and budget outlays.
- Monitoring was by means of a parliamentary committee.
- Financial support for women’s advocacy groups and women’s services.
- Community representation on policy advisory bodies.
- Engagement with intergovernmental agencies to share best practices.<sup>39</sup>

The Australian approach to GRB was exported internationally through intergovernmental organisations such as the OECD and the Commonwealth of Nations.<sup>40</sup>

Gender budget statements of varying style and content were introduced in all Australian states and territories for periods of time between 1985 and 1993.<sup>41</sup>

Currently, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory produce gender budget statements detailing spending measures and initiatives that may benefit women,<sup>42</sup> and have laid the groundwork for GRB through the implementation of gender analysis

37 Rhonda Sharp and Ray Broomhill, *A Case Study of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Australia*, Commonwealth Secretariat, <[https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/epi/server-6-files/global/eass/hri/grb\\_papers\\_australia\\_comm-sec-updf\\_final-copy-.pdf](https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/epi/server-6-files/global/eass/hri/grb_papers_australia_comm-sec-updf_final-copy-.pdf)> 2013, accessed 1 October 2021, p. 5.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid, p. 3.

40 Miranda Stewart, *Why we need a women’s budget statement*, ABC News, 16 March 2016, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-16/stewart-why-we-need-a-womens-budget-statement/7251370>> accessed 1 October 2021.

41 Victorian Government, *Women’s Budget: Part 1 – 30 June 1992*, Women’s Policy Co-ordination Unit, Melbourne, p. 1; Rhonda Sharp and Ray Broomhill, ‘Budgeting for Equality: The Australian Experience’, *Feminist Economics*, February 2002, 8(1), p. 27.

42 Queensland Government, *Budget 2021–22: Investing for Women*, <[https://s3.treasury.qld.gov.au/files/Budget\\_2021-22\\_Budget\\_Statement\\_Women-1.pdf](https://s3.treasury.qld.gov.au/files/Budget_2021-22_Budget_Statement_Women-1.pdf)> accessed 4 October 2021; Australian Capital Territory Government, *ACT Women’s Statement 2020–21*, <[https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/1698950/2020-21-Womens-Budget-Statement.pdf](https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1698950/2020-21-Womens-Budget-Statement.pdf)> accessed 4 October 2021.

of policies, programs and services through the use of associated tools.<sup>43</sup> The ACT *Women's Plan 2016–2026: Second Action Plan 2020–2022* also highlights its aims to: increase the use of gendered analysis in the development of ACT Government Cabinet and Budget submissions; and improve the collection of gender disaggregated data and tracking of outcomes through indicators.<sup>44</sup> Presently, New South Wales also commits to researching GRB approaches, analysing their effectiveness and putting forward options to Government for consideration in its *Women's Strategy 2018–2022: Year Three Action Plan*.<sup>45</sup>

## 1.5.2 Victoria 1986 to 2016

Gender budget statements were published in Victoria from 1986 to 1996. It has been noted that the Victorian version of the Women's Budget surpassed the Australian Government's prototype in terms of its usefulness and thoroughness,<sup>46</sup> with the length of each report ranging from 144 to 301 pages.

The detail and analysis included in the Victorian Women's Budget improved over the years. The first publication in 1986–87 centred on providing a detailed account of the State Budget funding allocated to programs and services that directly and indirectly benefitted women across each government portfolio.<sup>47</sup> By 1988–89, further analysis was provided alongside funding initiatives around the economic status of women in the labour market, childcare, unemployment, average weekly earnings, and information on equal employment.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to budgetary detail and analysis, the 1989–90 statement outlined demographic information on Victorian women and provided data on program uptake and studies evaluating initiatives and services.<sup>49</sup> In preparation for the 1990–91 Women's Budget, all Victorian Government agencies were required to examine the effect of their entire operations on women, not just those operations specifically directed at women,

43 Queensland Government Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Gender Analysis Online, 11 May 2021, <<https://www.justice.qld.gov.au/about-us/services/women-violence-prevention/women/queensland-womens-strategy/applying-gender-lens/gender-analysis-online>> accessed 4 October 2021; Queensland Government Office for Women, *Gender Analysis Toolkit*, 11 May 2021, Brisbane, accessed 4 October 2021; ACT Government, *ACT Women's Action Plan 2016–26: Year Two Reporting – First Action Plan 2017–19* <[https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1447075/Detailed-Year-Two-Reporting.pdf](https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1447075/Detailed-Year-Two-Reporting.pdf)> accessed 12 October 2021, p. 32.

44 ACT Government, *ACT Women's Action Plan 2016–26: Second Action Plan 2020–2022*, <[https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1495521/Second-Action-Plan-2020-22.pdf](https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1495521/Second-Action-Plan-2020-22.pdf)> accessed 12 October 2021, p. 24.

45 NSW Government, *NSW Women's Strategy 2018–2022: Year Three Action Plan to 30 June 2021*, <[https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/813256/203502-NSW-Womens-Strategy-2018-22\\_Year-3-Action-Plan\\_WEB-VERSION.pdf](https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/813256/203502-NSW-Womens-Strategy-2018-22_Year-3-Action-Plan_WEB-VERSION.pdf)> accessed 4 October 2021, p. 31.

46 Marian Sawyer, *Sisters in Suits*, Sydney, 1990, p. 240. Cited in Gender Equity Victoria, *Submission 7*, received 2 December 2019, p. 11.

47 Victorian Government, *Women's Budget Program Victoria 1986–87*, Women's Policy Co-ordination Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Melbourne.

48 Victorian Government, *Women's Budget Victoria 1988–89*, Women's Policy Co-ordination Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Melbourne, pp. 1–4.

49 Victorian Government, *Women's Budget Victoria 1989–90*, Women's Policy Co-ordination Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Melbourne.

and submit evidence of their achievements rather than their intentions.<sup>50</sup> Emphasis was also placed on the collection of disaggregated data for the measurement of achievements against performance indicators identified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the *National Agenda for Women*.<sup>51</sup>

By 1993–94, the statement listed each 45 government entity’s objectives and policies impacting Victorian women, outlined budget allocations and reported on the outputs and outcomes for the previous year.<sup>52</sup> The 1994–95 and 1995–96 statements built on this results focus through the further provision of client profile data, the gender breakdown of each department’s workforce and attention to the effectiveness of programs in advancing the interest of women.<sup>53</sup>

Gender budget statements were not published in Victoria between 1997 and 2016.

### 1.5.3 Victoria 2017 to present

*Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, was developed in 2016 in response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, which found that gender inequality was a key driver of family violence.<sup>54</sup> *Safe and Strong* outlines the Government’s aim to implement GRB practices in Victoria through:

- introducing Gender Equality Budget Statements from the 2017–18 Budget
- introducing gender auditing to government departments in relation to equal pay, recruitment and promotion, leadership development and mentoring, flexible working, and organisational culture
- developing pilot gender impact analysis tools in policy, service delivery and budget development
- developing a gender equality baseline, setting associated targets, and measuring progress against the targets, and
- leveraging purchasing power to influence change.<sup>55</sup>

These initiatives are currently in place and in their submission to the Inquiry, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) highlighted the Government’s commitment

50 Victorian Government, *Women’s Budget 1990–91*, Women’s Policy Co-ordination Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Melbourne, p. 7.

51 Victorian Government, *Women’s Budget 1990–91*, Women’s Policy Co-ordination Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Melbourne, p. 8. These indicators analysed Victoria’s progress in areas of school retention, further education enrolments, educational levels attained, labour force participation, segregation by occupation, employment of women in management and administrative positions, women in Parliament, superannuation coverage, income level according to age groupings for full year and full-time workers, income support benefits, use of childcare, and availability of childcare.

52 Victorian Government, *Victoria Women’s Budget 1993–94*, Office of Women’s Affairs, Department of Justice, Melbourne.

53 Victorian Government, *Victoria Women’s Budget 1994–95*, Office of Women’s Affairs, Department of Justice, Melbourne;

Victorian Government, *Victoria Women’s Budget 1995–96*, Office of Women’s Affairs, Department of Justice, Melbourne.

54 Victorian Government, *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality#download-the-pdf>>, Melbourne, 2016, p. 7.

55 Ibid, pp. 17–18.

to using tools such as GRB to ensure public funds better contribute to gender equality outcomes.<sup>56</sup>

Likewise, DFFH emphasised that the implementation of GRB can ensure that the Victorian State Budget efficiently allocates resources and promotes change in the areas of education, health and infrastructure.<sup>57</sup>

The Victorian Government acknowledged that although elements of GRB have been implemented in Victoria, further enhancements should be considered to address gender inequality and the impact of government investment or savings measures on women's economic security and wellbeing.<sup>58</sup>

The initiatives that are currently in place in Victoria and ways they can be enhanced are examined in more detail in the remaining chapters of this report.

## 1.6 The Committee's approach to the Inquiry

The Committee advertised the Inquiry and called for submissions through its News Alert Service, the Parliament of Victoria website and social media.

The Committee sent over 130 letters to a wide variety of local, national and international stakeholders to inform them of the Inquiry and invite them to prepare a submission and/or participate in public hearings.

The Committee held seven public hearings in 2019, 2020 and 2021 with a total of 44 witnesses across 4 countries.

The evidence the Committee received and considered included:

- formal submissions from DPC and DFFH outlining the actions the Government has taken to embed GRB into its policy and funding decisions
- transcripts of public hearing proceedings attended by State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, international agencies, and a range of expert witnesses
- 35 public submissions from academics and research institutes, advocacy groups and non-government organisations accepted by the Committee.

Details of the submissions received, and public hearings held are set out in Appendix A.

<sup>56</sup> Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 1. The Victorian Government's Office for Women promotes gender equality and women's leadership across the public sector to change attitudes that prevent family violence and violence against women. Following machinery of government changes that came into effect on 1 February 2021, the Office for Women was transferred from operating within the Department of Premier and Cabinet to the newly established Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Submission 20*, received 6 December 2019, p. 8.

## 1.7 Report structure

**Chapter 2** examines best practice examples of intergovernmental organisations' approaches to GRB.

The three overarching elements identified by the OECD as being important for an effective and enduring GRB practice are then assessed in the following chapters:

- **Chapter 3**—Strategic framework;
- **Chapter 4**—Tools for implementation; and
- **Chapter 5**—Enabling environment.

**Chapter 6** discusses the importance of measuring and reporting on outcomes.

**Chapter 7** provides a summary of the overarching findings and recommendations.





## 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 assesses best practice examples of intergovernmental organisations' approaches to Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB).

It considers the GRB frameworks of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program (PEFA).

The Committee's analysis of these frameworks highlights the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and identifies the factors acknowledged as contributing to an enduring GRB practice.

## 2.2 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

As part of its Inquiry, the Committee examined best practice intergovernmental organisations' approaches to GRB. It found the OECD's GRB framework to be the most comprehensive set of initiatives to systematically embed gender considerations throughout the budget cycle.

The *2013 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship* originally set out a multidimensional approach for advancing gender equality as a core principle of modern public governance.<sup>1</sup>

The *2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life* and the *2015 OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality* outlined the role of GRB to progress gender equality through integration of a gender perspective in all phases of the budget cycle and provided a priority checklist for the implementation of GRB.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Education and Employment, and Entrepreneurship*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2013; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015.

2 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 30.

The OECD's 2019 Report *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action* draws on the experiences of member countries to provide insights into how the budget process can develop as a tool to support gender equality goals, arguing that an enduring GRB practice requires:

- **A strong strategic framework** reinforced by political commitment and effective administrative leadership in the central budget authority, to ensure a whole-of-government approach.
- **Effective tools of implementation** across different stages of the budget process, that build on existing budgeting model elements.
- **A supportive enabling environment** that complements the strategic context, allowing the application of gender considerations in programs and policies.<sup>3</sup>

Expanding on these key areas, the OECD's GRB framework proposes a wide-ranging set of guidelines for designing and implementing an effective and sustainable GRB approach (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Gender Responsive Budgeting framework**

<b>Strategic Framework</b>	A coordinated gender equality strategy setting out high-level gender equality priorities and goals		
	A legal framework that embeds GRB in existing budgetary processes		
	Central budget authority guidelines on how to apply GRB, outlining clear institutional roles and responsibilities		
	Structured engagement with civil society on gender equality issues		
	An inter-agency working group on GRB that engages a wide range of stakeholders		
<b>Tools of Implementation</b>	<b>Agenda setting</b>	Gender resourcing needs assessment	
		Gender budget baseline analysis	
		Gender dimension in spending review	
	<b>Policy proofing</b>	Ex ante gender impact assessment of all major budget policies	
		Ex ante gender impact assessment of selected budget policies	
	<b>Structured norms</b>	Gender dimension in performance setting	
		Gender dimension in resource allocation	
	<b>Scrutiny tools</b>	Gender budget statement:	
		• General statement (descriptive)	
		• Progress statement (structured narrative)	
• Gender allocations report (quantitative)			
• Gender incidence analysis of the budget as a whole			
• Gender incidence analysis of specific measures			

<sup>3</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, pp. 3, 22, 28–30.

<b>Tools of Implementation</b> (Continued)	<b>Accountability tools</b>	Ex post gender impact assessment of all major policies
		Ex post gender impact assessment of selected policies
		Gender audit of the budget
		Gender dimension to performance audit
		Audit of gender budgeting systems/processes
<b>Enabling Environment</b>		Training and capacity-development in the public sector on the application of GRB
		Details and instructions on the application of GRB in the annual budget circular
		Structured engagement with civil society or expert/consultative group on the application of GRB
		Routinely available in-depth gender disaggregated data across key areas of the public service
		Sector-specific gender disaggregated data for selected areas of the public service

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Glossary of Key Terms for completing the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey, <<https://www.oecd.org/governance/budgeting/OECD-2018-Budget-Practices-and-Procedures-Glossary-of-key-terms.pdf>> accessed 19 October 2021.

In order to examine which GRB initiatives may be most appropriately implemented within the Victorian context, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this report discuss the applicability of selected tools and measures as they relate to the three overarching elements identified by the OECD: strategic framework; tools for implementation; and enabling environment.

## 2.3 Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program

The PEFA program's supplementary framework for assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management (GRPFM) builds on the work of the OECD and the Fiscal Affairs Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the area of GRB.<sup>4</sup> The GRPFM also incorporates the lessons learned from tests conducted in seven countries.<sup>5</sup>

Like the OECD's GRB framework, the GRPFM provides guidance on how to embed gender aspects across the budget cycle and in public financial management processes, through examples of GRB initiatives implemented in international jurisdictions.<sup>6</sup>

4 Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *PEFA Launches Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 23 January 2020, <<https://www.pefa.org/news/pefa-launches-supplementary-framework-assessing-gender-responsive-public-financial-management>> accessed 20 October 2021; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender budgeting*, <<https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/gender-budgeting.htm>> accessed 20 October 2021; International Monetary Fund, *Gender Budgeting and Gender Equality*, 16 January 2017, <<https://data.imf.org/?sk=AC81946B-43E4-4FF3-84C7-217A6BDE8191>> accessed 20 October 2021.

5 The PEFA GRPFM has been tested in Antigua and Barbuda, Fiji, Haiti, Indonesia, St Lucia, Tonga, and Ukraine. Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *PEFA Launches Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 23 January 2020, <<https://www.pefa.org/news/pefa-launches-supplementary-framework-assessing-gender-responsive-public-financial-management>> accessed 20 October 2021.

6 Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Secretariat, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management: Guidance for Assessment Teams*, January 2020, <[https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG\\_GRPFM\\_FRAMEWORK\\_ENG\\_PAGES\\_200609\\_0.pdf](https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG_GRPFM_FRAMEWORK_ENG_PAGES_200609_0.pdf)> accessed 21 October 2021.

The GRPFM framework has nine indicators which can be applied at the national and subnational level (see Appendix B), and similarly notes a number of factors that contribute to a successful GRB approach:

- A clear legal and conceptual framework and effective institutional arrangements across government.
- Political will and support to achieve change.
- Institutionalisation and integration to enable the embedding of gender considerations throughout the budget cycle.
- Support of development partners to achieve gender equality targets.
- Availability of sex-disaggregated data to identify areas that require reform and determine interventions to address gender inequalities.
- An understanding of how gender operates in different policy domains and the underlying structural causes of inequalities.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the OECD, the GRPFM acknowledges the importance of incorporating an intersectional approach in the application of GRB, through assessment of the extent to which countries' public financial management systems respond to the differing needs of men and women and subgroups within these categories, such as youth, elderly, and people with disabilities.<sup>8</sup>

The GRPFM framework also identifies the opportunity to include analysis of gender impacts in the:

- Economic analyses of feasibility and prefeasibility studies of major investment projects (indicator 2).
- Independent evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery (indicator 8).
- Legislative scrutiny of government policies that ensure equitable and sufficient allocation of funds (indicator 9).<sup>9</sup>

The applicability of these additional measures to the Victorian context is also explored by the Committee in the remaining chapters of this report.

The Committee considers mechanisms for assessing the efficacy of GRB practices to be as important in the development of an enduring GRB practice as a strong strategic

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *PEFA Launches Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 23 January 2020, <<https://www.pefa.org/news/pefa-launches-supplementary-framework-assessing-gender-responsive-public-financial-management>> accessed 20 October 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *PEFA Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management: Global Webinar*, 14 May 2020, <<https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/news/files/PEFA%20GRPFM%20global%20webinar%20v7.pdf>> accessed 20 October 2021, pp. 26–45; Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *GRPFM Framework: Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, <<https://www.pefa.org/gender>> accessed 21 October 2021.

framework, implementation tools, and a supportive enabling environment (as is identified by the OECD). Approaches to the measurement of GRB outcomes in Victoria are assessed separately in Chapter 6 of this report.



# 3 Strategic Framework

## 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 outlines the need for an effective strategic framework to be in place for Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) to be successfully embedded in the Victorian budgetary process. In reaching its findings and recommendations, the Committee assessed international best practice strategic frameworks and the perspectives of a wide variety of stakeholders who provided evidence to the Inquiry.

The Committee found that the Victorian Government has already established the foundations for GRB through:

- the implementation of *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* and consultation with civil society on this strategy
- legislating gender equality measures in the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*
- linking gender equality outcomes to budgetary processes via the establishment of the Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit in the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF).

The Committee's recommendations in this Chapter focus on how the State can further develop and maintain an effective strategic framework for GRB in Victoria and a comprehensive gender equality strategy that sets clear GRB stakeholder roles and responsibilities. Continued political commitment for GRB from the Government and central agencies, along with the institutionalisation of GRB policies and processes are also considered integral to enhancing the sustainability of GRB practices in Victoria.

## 3.2 National and international best practice

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) a strong strategic framework for GRB requires:

- a gender equality strategy with overarching goals that draw on the views of civil society
- guidelines on applying GRB that set out institutional roles and responsibilities
- strong political commitment for GRB through a legislative framework and administrative leadership
- an inter-agency working group on GRB that engages a wide range of stakeholders.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, pp. 7-28.

The following sections of this Chapter examine international best practice approaches to the above elements of effective strategic frameworks for GRB.

### 3.2.1 Gender equality strategy with overarching goals that draw on the views of society

As stated above, the Victorian Government has already established the foundations for GRB. *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* sets out a draft *Outcomes Framework* to deliver gender equality across six settings: education and training; work and economic security; leadership and participation; health, safety and wellbeing; sport and recreation; media, arts and culture.<sup>2</sup> Of the 15 targets outlined in *Safe and Strong*, six that relate to the appointment of women to public and private boards, courts, local government, and the Victorian Public Service executive were fully defined, with the remaining targets stated to be determined by June 2018.<sup>3</sup>

In November 2019, the Victorian Government released a *Refreshed Gender Equality Outcomes Framework* as part of its *Baseline Data Report*, with revised outcomes and indicators.<sup>4</sup> The framework outlined new quantitative and qualitative measures,<sup>5</sup> baseline figures on key gender equality areas,<sup>6</sup> data sources and annual to five-year reporting periods,<sup>7</sup> but did not articulate the remaining nine targets.<sup>8</sup> The Government's December 2019 *Safe and Strong Achievement Report* outlined the completion of 13 out of 29 founding reforms and 19 out of 41 actions,<sup>9</sup> but did not discuss how the progress made related to or acquitted *Safe and Strong's* unarticulated targets.

**FINDING 1:** The 2016 *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* defined six out of 15 targets and the 2019 *Refreshed Gender Equality Outcomes Framework* did not fully define the remaining nine targets of the Strategy.

- 2 Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, Melbourne, Victorian Government, 2016, p. 7.
- 3 Ibid, p. 18. These remaining 9 targets encompass: Participation in learning, education, the economy and society; rewarding Victorian's equitably for their contribution in all aspects of society; eradicating intolerant attitudes and behaviours that do not support gender inequality; expanding diversity of women leaders; increasing the level of safety of Victorians in their homes, communities and workplaces; ensuring that all Victorian's are socially connected and healthy; modelling and promoting a commitment to gender equality in organisations and by key social influencers; the escalation of participation of women in sport and physical activity; and embedding gender equality in all Victorian Government decisions and actions.
- 4 Department of Premier and Cabinet, Submission 20, received 6 December 2019, p. 2; Victorian Government, *Gender impact assessments*, <<https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/gender-impact-assessments>> 31 August 2021, accessed 17 September 2021; Victorian Government, *Gender Equality Baseline Report*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-baseline-report>>, 2019, Melbourne, pp. 4, 6, 10–30.
- 5 Victorian Government, *Gender Equality Baseline Report*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-baseline-report>>, 2019, Melbourne, pp. 4, 6, 10–30. 2 out of 63 measures assessed qualitative data sources (experiences and attitudes). The Governments response to PAEC's 2016–17 Financial and Performance Outcomes report stated that the Outcomes Framework will provide the Victorian Government with both quantitative and qualitative data to promote accountability, inform decision-making, and facilitate organisational learning and continuous improvement.
- 6 Victorian Government, *Safe and Strong Achievement Report*, <<https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/317%20DPC%20Safe%20and%20Strong%20Achievement%20Report%202019%206%20web.pdf>>, Melbourne, 2019, p. 7.
- 7 The Governments response to PAEC's 2016–17 Financial and Performance Outcomes report stated that Reports against the Outcomes Framework will form the basis for annual reporting on progress towards gender equality targets.
- 8 Victorian Government, *Gender Equality Baseline Report*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-baseline-report>>, 2019, Melbourne, pp. 4, 6, 10–30.
- 9 Victorian Government, *Safe and Strong Achievement Report*, <<https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/317%20DPC%20Safe%20and%20Strong%20Achievement%20Report%202019%206%20web.pdf>>, Melbourne, 2019, p. 6.



**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The Victorian Government fully define all targets relating to the *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*.

In their submission to the Inquiry, Australian National University Gender Institute advised that a fully implemented GRB process requires gender equality ‘commitments, targets and indicators to be considered and settled’.<sup>10</sup>

At the public hearings, DTF advised that departmental performance measures will be used to track Victoria’s gender equality outcomes through the budget process.<sup>11</sup> The Committee considers it important that the targets set in *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* be linked to the outcomes achieved against departmental gender equality performance measures.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* include details about how the Strategy’s targets are linked to the outcomes achieved against departmental gender equality performance measures.

Engagement with civil society in the development of a gender equality strategy can be a key element in ensuring the strategy benefits from relevant knowledge and fosters trust in government and its policies.<sup>12</sup>

According to the OECD, an optimal strategic framework for gender equality must include input from civil society and government stakeholders.<sup>13</sup>

In Victoria, two groups provide advice to the Government on gender equality issues:<sup>14</sup>

1. The *Ministerial Council on Women’s Equality* (comprising influential women from media, the private sector, science and technology, sport and recreation, unions and the women’s health sector) provides expert advice to the Minister for Women on *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*.<sup>15</sup>
2. The *Gender Equality Advisory Committee* (co-chaired by Government Members of Parliament and comprised of councillors and council staff, and peak local government association representatives) provides advice to the Ministers for Local Government and Women on the delivery of the Government’s target of 50% female

<sup>10</sup> Australian National University Gender Institute, *Submission 21*, received 12 December 2019, pp. 8–9.

<sup>11</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>12</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp. 8–9.

<sup>14</sup> Engagement with stakeholders and citizens in the process of conducting a gender resourcing needs assessment will be discussed in Section 4.2.1 of this report. Structured engagement with an expert consultative group on the application of GRB in Victoria will be discussed in detail in Section 5.2.1 of this report.

<sup>15</sup> Victorian Government, *Ministerial Council on Women’s Equality*, 3 June 2020, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/ministerial-council-womens-equality>> accessed 10 November 2021; Victorian Government, *Our gender equality strategy*, 30 March 2021, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/our-gender-equality-strategy>> accessed 10 November 2021.

mayors and councillors by 2025, and the implementation of equality measures legislated in the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) and the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic).<sup>16</sup>

**FINDING 2:** The Victorian Government consulted with the *Ministerial Council on Women's Equality* in the development of *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*.

Throughout the course of the Inquiry the Committee considered whether learnings could be drawn from the experiences of private organisations conducting GRB processes. The Committee found that the private sector has little to no part to play in the development of GRB policy and practice in Victoria, as GRB relates to tools that can be used to ensure public financial management contributes to gender equality. Applying a gender lens to budget decisions made by private business is likely to fall under the concept of gender auditing and is not directly linked to GRB conducted by the Government.

**FINDING 3:** Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) relates to tools and practices that can be used to ensure public financial management contributes to gender equality. Private sector organisations have a limited role in the development and implementation of GRB policies and processes in Victoria.

### 3.2.2 Guidelines on applying Gender Responsive Budgeting that set out institutional roles and responsibilities

#### Andalusia, Spain experience

The Autonomous Region of Andalusia is the most populous region of Spain with a population of almost 8.5 million people and an annual budget of around \$62.9 billion in 2021.<sup>17</sup> The Andalusian Government has been at the forefront of GRB since 2003, when a regulatory framework for GRB was set up as part of Law 18/2003. The Law enabled an institutional mechanism to be established to incorporate GRB in the jurisdiction's budgetary process.<sup>18</sup>

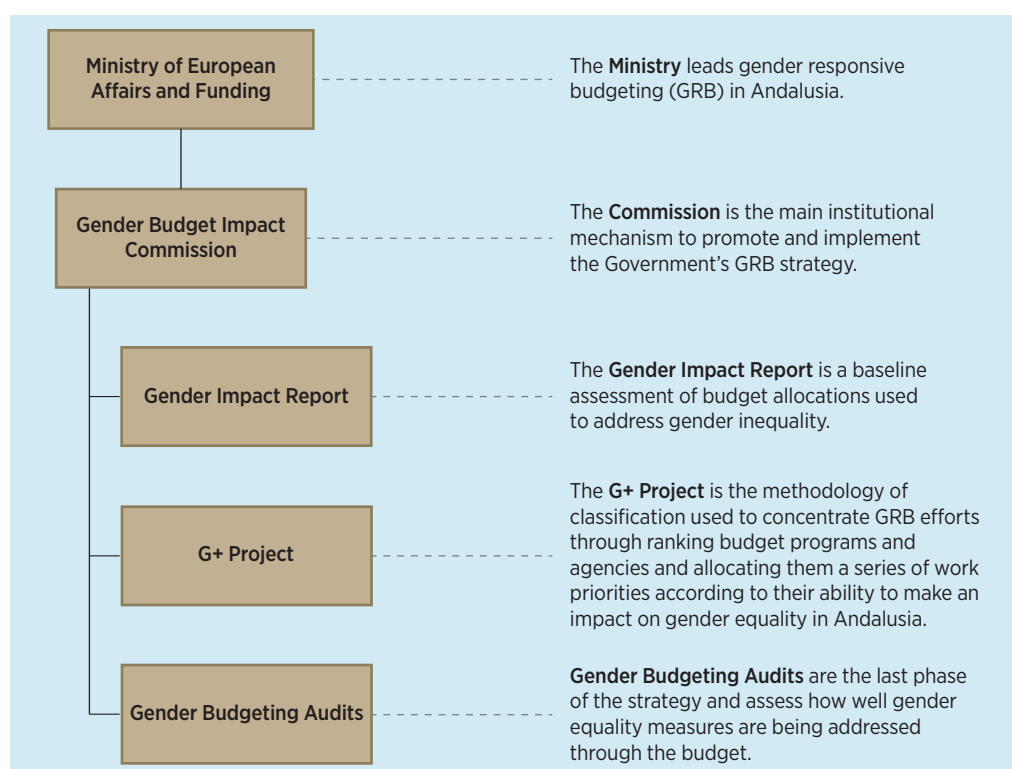
<sup>16</sup> Hon. Daniel Andrews MP, *Gender Equality Advisory Committee Named*, media release, Victorian Government, Melbourne, 22 April 2021; Victorian Government, *Gender Equality in Local Government*, 2021, <<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/gender-equity>> accessed 10 November 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Currency conversion accurate as at 9 November 2021 (EUR 40.188 billion). Gender Impact Commission, *Gender Impact Report of the 2021 Budget of the Autonomous Region of Andalusia*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, pp. 6–15. The ABS reported the population of Victoria in March 2021 was around 6.6 million, with a budget of \$90 billion in 2020–21. Department of Treasury and Finance, *Victorian Budget 2020/21 Overview*, Victoria, 2020, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Gender Budgeting Impact Commission, *Annual Gender Budgeting Audit Plan 2021*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, <[https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/export/drupaljda/Annual%20Gender%20Budgeting%20Audit%20Plan%202021\\_JA.pdf](https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/export/drupaljda/Annual%20Gender%20Budgeting%20Audit%20Plan%202021_JA.pdf)> accessed 17 December 2021, p. 2.

Andalusia's GRB strategy is led by the Ministry of Finance and European Funding.<sup>19</sup> The Ministry aims to identify the inequalities between men and women and develop policy options to enhance equality. Given the leading role the Ministry plays in guiding GRB policies and processes, the Government has a strong coordination and monitoring capability, which is a primary characteristic of the Andalusian model.<sup>20</sup> The strategy, while integrated and comprehensive, is structured in a way that defines clear roles and responsibilities to the agencies and sets out the processes involved.<sup>21</sup> Andalusia's strategic framework and the roles of key stakeholders in their GRB framework are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1** Strategic framework for Gender Responsive Budgeting in Andalusia



Note: The Andalusian Government's experience in performing Gender Budget Audits to measure outcomes are discussed in Chapter 6 of this report.

Source: Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funds, *Gender Responsive Budgeting hearings presentation*, 11 October 2021, pp. 1-4.

<sup>19</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearings presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

At the public hearings the Ministry explained to the Committee that it developed a system to incorporate gender equality in the process of preparing the annual budget, linking budgetary programs to the objectives of the Gender Equality Law of Andalusia.<sup>22</sup> It further outlined:

This progress has occurred since this [linking budgetary programs to the objectives of the Gender Equality Law] became mandatory thanks to the Budget Preparation Orders from 2016 to the present day, and to the continuous training efforts towards gender responsive budgetary planning for the personnel involved in the making of public accounts.<sup>23</sup>

The Ministry establishes an annual whole-of-government work program, detailing all relevant actions and programs in relation to GRB. The strategy also involves a training, awareness, and capacity building element (see Section 5.2.2 of the report for further discussion on training and development).

Andalusia's Gender Budget Impact Commission is an interdepartmental body with equal representation of all regional ministries, plus members of the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia and the Andalusian Women's Institute.<sup>24</sup> At the public hearings the Andalusian Ministry of Finance and European Funds explained to the Committee:

The Gender Impact Commission of the Budget leads, promotes and coordinates the budget and gender strategy in the Andalusian government. It is chaired by the Secretary General of Finance, which ensures this effort is bound to the highest level within the department responsible for public finances. This is one of the characteristics of the Andalusian experience, and what differentiates it from other administrations: the coordination capability and the monitoring of the Gender Responsive Budget sits with the Ministry for Finance and European Funding which ensures the application and development of the budget, the central axis of the administration.<sup>25</sup>

The coordinating function of the Commission is important as it enables the Committee to set GRB policies and guide the application of GRB tools across all regional ministries. The Commission also acts as the anchor from which GRB policies can expand into regional ministries.<sup>26</sup> The Commission provides an example of an inter-agency working group on GRB (see Section 3.2.4 of the report for further discussion about this inter-agency working group).

The Gender Budgeting Impact Commission prepares an annual Gender Impact Report in accordance with relevant legislation that documents the gender impact of the budget and evaluates the resources the Government allocates to promote gender

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Gender Impact Commission, *Gender Impact Report of the 2021 Budget of the Autonomous Region of Andalusia*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearing presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

equality. This report is attached to the annual budget as an appendix and provides instructions to regional ministries, government agencies and public sector bodies on the implementation of GRB.<sup>27</sup>

The G+ Project incorporates gender perspectives into the budget initiatives and policies of the Andalusian Government.<sup>28</sup> The project has a number of objectives and guides the overall approach to GRB, primarily through driving cultural change in organisational values to promote the importance of GRB as a tool for guaranteeing the rights and interests of men and women.<sup>29</sup> It seeks to define a set of analysis tools to identify obstacles to gender equality and how they can be addressed. The project also looks to develop easily applicable strategies to determine the gendered impact of budget programs. Along with driving a participatory approach, the project intends to make GRB a routine exercise within the budgetary process of the Andalusian Government.<sup>30</sup>

Overall, Andalusia's strong institutional framework allows the Government's GRB strategy to be implemented and filtered through the public sector. Among other things, the Andalusian Government's integrated strategic GRB framework has achieved:

- the institutionalisation of gender equality policy in all areas of the budget
- the application of GRB through all budgetary cycles—planning, execution and evaluation
- a cultural change in the public service, with budgetary policies focussed on addressing gender inequalities.<sup>31</sup>

The Committee notes the leading role DTF and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) play in the development of GRB in Victoria.<sup>32</sup> As the GRB process continues to develop in Victoria the Committee considers it important that the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and the actions involved be clearly defined.

**FINDING 4:** To guide the effective application of Gender Responsive Budgeting it is important to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the agencies and public servants involved, as well as the processes that must be followed.

<sup>27</sup> Gender Impact Commission, *Gender Impact Report of the 2021 Budget of the Autonomous Region of Andalusia*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearing presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Finance and Public Administration, *G+ Project: A methodology for using public budgeting to improve gender equality*, Government of Andalusia, 2010, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearings presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, 11 October 2021, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Ms Sandy Pitcher, Secretary, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** The *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders involved in Gender Responsive Budgeting and the processes that must be followed.

### 3.2.3 Political commitment

Political commitment is a key aspect and prerequisite to enabling governments to effectively implement GRB. Active political commitment supports the implementation of GRB policies and practices by providing legitimacy and backing. To ensure success, political commitment must also be accompanied by high-level commitments from public administrative institutions.<sup>33</sup>

Equality Rights Alliance's submission to the Inquiry highlighted that implementing and sustaining GRB is fundamentally dependent on political will.<sup>34</sup> The Alliance also contended that political will is the single most important variable in the success of GRB.<sup>35</sup>

In evidence provided to the Committee by the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, Rhonda Sharp and Ray Broomhill also argued that high-level political commitment—from the ministerial and department head level—is necessary to achieve effective GRB policies and practices.<sup>36</sup>

In their submission to the Inquiry, Women in Social and Economic Research, Curtin University (WiSER) outlined that earlier experiences from Australia have shown the need for political will and leadership to come from coordinating departments, such as the Department of Premier and Cabinet and DTF.<sup>37</sup> Referring to previous Australian experiences, the National Foundation for Australian Women referred to the strength of early Women's Budget Statements as examples that demonstrate a high-level of associated political support.<sup>38</sup>

At the public hearings, the importance of a strong political commitment was further reinforced with references to earlier Australian initiatives. For example, Dr Monica Costa, Visiting Research Fellow at Curtin University told the Committee:

a critical factor in any successful GRB effort has been the support of a high-level political commitment. Australia was a good example when initially the task force secretaries took it on and held the idea. Many of these countries in the OECD—10 of the 17—have taken

<sup>33</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Equality Rights Alliance, *Submission 1*, received 21 November 2019, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Rhonda Sharp and Ray Broomhill, *A Case Study of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Australia*, 2013, Commonwealth Secretariat, <[https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/episerver-6-files/global/eass/hri/grb\\_papers\\_australia\\_comm-sec-updf\\_final-copy-.pdf](https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/episerver-6-files/global/eass/hri/grb_papers_australia_comm-sec-updf_final-copy-.pdf)> accessed 1 November 2021, p. 8, in Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, *Submission 24d*, received 27 January 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Women in Social and Economic Research (WiSER) Curtin University, *Submission 5*, received 1 December 2019, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> National Foundation for Australian Women, *Submission 9*, received 2 December 2019, p. 6.

the step of making a legal framework to embed GRB in either their financial laws or the constitution. Victoria has of course their *Gender Equality Act*, which is a really great start. Maybe there are opportunities to consider how to outline better the links between equality and the budget.<sup>39</sup>

International examples can also provide lessons to the Victorian experience. For instance, the European Union has established a firm commitment to GRB through the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union drive the need for the implementation of GRB in all member states.<sup>40</sup>

Some jurisdictions also have an institutionalised commitment to gender equality and embed GRB through a whole-of-government approach. For example, in Sweden:

The gender equality policy framework is predicated on the approach of Sweden's Feminist Government ... The gender equality commitments program, which includes gender budgeting, is presented to Parliament. This demonstrates a commitment from the Government to Parliament, inviting greater accountability for gender equality commitments.<sup>41</sup>

### The Philippines experience

The Philippines has a long history of GRB, beginning with the establishment of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) in 1992. The World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2021* ranked the Philippines at 17<sup>th</sup> in the world on its gender gap index and also ranked the country second in the East Asia and Pacific index, closely behind New Zealand. Having closed 78% of its overall gender gap, it also boasts the smallest gender gap of the Asian continent by far.<sup>42</sup>

The Philippine Government introduced the Gender and Development (GAD) budget policy in 1995 as the pilot 'Women's Budget' to support the implementation of policies aimed at gender advocacy and a commitment to women's empowerment.<sup>43</sup> Since then the pilot has evolved into a legislative requirement and systemic process aimed at addressing gender equality issues.

The GRB legislative and regulatory framework in the Philippines is anchored in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) which requires all government departments and agencies to allocate a minimum of 5% of their budgets to gender programs, projects and activities.<sup>44</sup> This provision is also supported by the Republic Act 9710: Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), which codifies the Government's commitment to

<sup>39</sup> Dr Monica Costa, Visiting Research Fellow, Curtin University, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 2 March 2020, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender budgeting*, 2021, <<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-budgeting>> accessed 1 November 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Equality Rights Alliance, *Submission 1*, received 21 November 2019, p. 23 (with sources).

<sup>42</sup> World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, Switzerland, 30 March 2021, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> Philippine Commission on Women, *Gender and Development Budget*, Republic of the Philippines (n.d.), <<https://pcw.gov.ph/gad-budget-report>> accessed 25 October 2021.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.



the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>45</sup> The PCW further explained that the Magna Carta is:

actually the bill of rights of women in the Philippines. The Magna Carta provides for interventions for various government agencies and mandated to implement the law, so it identifies what needs to be addressed and what issues need to be addressed per sector, such as, violence against women, issues on health, and issues on peace and security. It concerns the issues of the marginalised sectors, from agriculture to labour and migration.<sup>46</sup>

RA 9710 also requires all government institutions to adopt gender mainstreaming as part of the implementation of the law. The Commission stated:

The Magna Carta fully institutionalised the GAD budget as one of the mechanisms for effective gender mainstreaming in national and local governments and also in foreign-funded programs. It provides that GAD programs addressing gender issues and constraints shall be implemented based on the mandate of government agencies and local government units.<sup>47</sup>

The Philippines builds on its strong legislative framework with several other institutional mechanisms to complement the GAD policy. At the public hearings the PCW outlined the following mechanisms to the Committee:

- establishment of the Gender Focal Point System within each government agency, to lead the implementation of GAD activities
- development of the Gender Mainstreaming Monitoring System, an online portal for the submission of GAD plans and budgets
- incorporation of a gender audit within the national auditing process to help identify gender issues and monitor compliance.<sup>48</sup>

At the public hearings, the PCW told the Committee that the implementation of institutional mechanisms, backed by both political will and commitments from senior officials have effectively enabled GAD budgets and thus GRB. The PCW emphasised that these commitments have also helped ensure that GAD budgets are allocated, monitored and utilised effectively.<sup>49</sup> The PCW told the Committee that while there is further work to be done, the Philippines has been successful in advancing gender equality as a result of its strong legislative framework.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Philippine Commission on Women, *Republic Act 9710: Magna Carta of Women*, Republic of the Philippines, (n.d.), <<https://pcw.gov.ph/republic-act-9710-magna-carta-of-women>> accessed 25 October 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Ms Josephine Khaleen Sasuman, Supervising Gender and Development Specialist, Philippine Commission on Women, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Ms Maria Kristine Josefina G. Balmes, Deputy Executive Director for Operations, Philippine Commission on Women, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>48</sup> Ms Josephine Khaleen Sasuman, Supervising Gender and Development Specialist, Philippine Commission on Women, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Ms Maria Kristine Josefina G. Balmes, Deputy Executive Director for Operations, Philippine Commission on Women, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.



The Philippines experience shows how GRB can be advanced through the introduction of legislative and regulatory requirements around expenditure on GRB programs. The Committee notes the importance of a robust legislative framework in driving GRB reforms.

### Lesson for Victoria

Evidence taken by the Committee shows that a political commitment, usually institutionalised through legislative mechanisms, is a key aspect and prerequisite around the ability of governments to effectively implement GRB.

While the Committee acknowledges the progress made by the Government with the enactment of equality measures in the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)* and the linking of gender equality outcomes to budgetary processes via the establishment of a Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit in the Department of Treasury and Finance (see Section 5.2.2 of the report for further discussion), GRB has not been codified in Victorian legislation.

**FINDING 5:** The Victorian Government has legislated equality measures in the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)* and linked gender equality outcomes to budgetary processes via the establishment of a Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit in the Department of Treasury, however, Gender Responsive Budgeting has not been codified in Victorian legislation.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** The Victorian Government, the Department of Treasury and Finance and public administrative institutions provide a high-level commitment to Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) through legislative change, placing requirements on future governments to administer and continue GRB policies and processes.

## 3.2.4 Inter-agency working group on Gender Responsive Budgeting

The OECD recommends the establishment of an inter-agency working group on GRB that engages a wide range of stakeholders to facilitate coordination of GRB and exchange of good practices.<sup>51</sup>

An example of such a working group is provided by Iceland's Gender Budgeting Committee, led by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in formal co-operation with the Ministry of Welfare. The Committee is represented by all ministries and is responsible for preparing the implementation program for GRB. Further, ministry steering groups are responsible for implementing GRB within each ministry.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 25.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

At the public hearings for the Inquiry the Committee was advised that DTF and DFFH will be working in partnership to lead the implementation of GRB in Victoria, with DTF focusing on the budget cycle and the Office for Women in DFFH working on strategy. It was further explained that both DTF and DFFH will play a role in educating and bringing together other Victorian Government departments to facilitate coordination and understanding of GRB.<sup>53</sup>

**FINDING 6:** The implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) would benefit from the input of Victorian Government departments and agencies. The establishment of an inter-agency working group on GRB may facilitate the gathering of these perspectives.

### 3.3 Implications for Victoria

The Committee's consideration of the evidence received throughout this Inquiry and analysis of international best practice suggests that Victoria would benefit from strengthening its strategic framework for GRB.

The Committee's recommendations made throughout this Chapter are aimed at further clarifying the Victorian Government's gender equality strategy with regard to GRB and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, as well as solidifying political commitment for GRB policies and processes to enhance the sustainability of GRB in Victoria.

<sup>53</sup> Ms Sandy Pitcher, Secretary, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5.

# 4 Tools for implementation

## 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 examines Victoria's current budgeting model along with opportunities to further embed Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) measures that build on existing practices. In reaching its findings and recommendations, the Committee assessed international best practice models and the perspectives of a wide variety of stakeholders who provided evidence to the Inquiry.

The Victorian Government has implemented several gender equality initiatives including a gender equality strategy and gender impact assessments of new policies, programs and services. However, the Committee found that the application of a gender lens to Victoria's budgetary practices is still in the developmental stage.

The Committee has made substantial recommendations in this Chapter to guide best practice implementation of GRB in Victoria. The recommendations aim to improve and drive sustainable gender equality outcomes through constructive stakeholder engagement, effective assessment of current and new spending initiatives, and increasing transparency and accountability in the budget process.

## 4.2 Agenda setting tools

Agenda setting tools are used by governments to identify priority policy areas to direct public resources. The application of a gender lens in agenda setting budgetary processes ensures that public finances are allocated efficiently to effectively achieve gender equality outcomes.

Box 4.1 outlines the agenda setting tools the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) identifies in its GRB framework.

**BOX 4.1: OECD Gender Responsive Budgeting framework agenda setting tools**

**Gender resourcing needs assessment**—a qualitative assessment that includes the views of stakeholders, civil society representatives and citizens, of the extent to which government policies and programs meet gender equality needs, to identify priorities for policy action in the budgetary context. May be undertaken as part of an overarching gender equality strategy, or as a standalone analysis, at line ministry, policy or program level, or on a government-wide basis by a suitably-mandated agency.

**Gender budget baseline analysis**—an analysis periodically conducted by the central budget authority in advance of the budget formulation process to assess how the existing allocation of government expenditures and revenues contribute to gender equality. Information from this analysis can be used to help guide further resource allocation decisions and ensure that the draft budget proposal addresses gender equality gaps where they exist.

**Gender dimension in spending review**—gender equality is included as a distinct aspect of analysis in the context of a comprehensive review. May also include assessment of expenditure reallocation decisions to determine potential for negative impact on gender equality outcomes.

Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Glossary of Key Terms for completing the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey*, <<https://www.oecd.org/governance/budgeting/OECD-2018-Budget-Practices-and-Procedures-Glossary-of-key-terms.pdf>> accessed 19 October 2021; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 31.

**4.2.1 Gender resourcing needs assessment**

The OECD highlights the importance of engaging stakeholders and citizens in the budget process to incorporate critical viewpoints, build trust and achieve diverse policy outcomes that respond to community needs.<sup>1</sup> Consultation undertaken as part of a formal gender resourcing needs assessment involves citizens and advocates as active participants in policy design and debate.<sup>2</sup> The OECD's 2017 review of GRB in OECD countries notes the use of gender resourcing needs assessments as part of the budget process in Austria, Mexico, the Netherlands and Norway.<sup>3</sup>

1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 9.

2 Ibid.

3 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender budgeting in OECD countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017, p. 16.

A further example of gender resourcing needs assessments was provided by the United Kingdom Women’s Budget Group in their submission to the Inquiry. This highlights the Scottish Government’s establishment of the Equality Budget Advisory Group in 2000, which regularly convene civil servants, arms-length government bodies and non-government equalities charities to advise on the links between policy-making and resource allocation, and ways to integrate equality analysis into decision-making.<sup>4</sup> Consultations lead to the production of the *Equality Budget Statement* which has been presented alongside Scotland’s annual Draft Budget since 2017, to make decision making processes and the funding spent on advancing equality more visible.<sup>5</sup> The *Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement 2021–22* articulates the evidentiary links between policy proposals, spending decisions and equality impact assessments, through outlining key existing and emerging risks, policy problems and responses, evidence gaps, evaluation approaches, and summaries of budget commitments to address intersectional inequality.<sup>6</sup>

In evidence to the Committee, KPMG suggested that the Victorian Government carry out a gender equality needs assessment across its current policy settings ‘to identify where the larger gender equality gaps are ... and [use these findings to] form the basis of needs-based budgeting and priorities for future policies’.<sup>7</sup>

Good Shepherd promoted the input of GRB experts and a citizen panel in the analysis of the needs and priorities of women and men, girls and boys with regard to departmental spending proposals.<sup>8</sup> Likewise the National Foundation of Australian Women (NFAW) recommended that civil society groups representing the interests of women be given the opportunity to provide pre-budget submissions early in the budget cycle to ensure their impact on the Budget.<sup>9</sup> Economists, Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse, advised that a comprehensive approach to needs-based budgeting:

provides an avenue for consultation and feedback between the Government and the community to ensure that the Government is constantly aware of where the gaps are in its strategy, averts the risk of complacency, and can respond to changes in economic, demographic and societal circumstances (including potential policy shocks from outside of its jurisdictions such as changes in Federal policy settings). Establishing these consultative feedback loops will ensure that the Victorian Government continues to use budget allocations and policies strategically, effectively, fairly and responsibly to meet the needs of all cohorts of the population.<sup>10</sup>

At the public hearings, Gender Equality Victoria (GenVic) recommended that the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) support the establishment of a Gender Equality Budget Group (GEBG), bringing together civil society organisations,

<sup>4</sup> UK Women’s Budget Group, *Submission 2a*, received 27 November 2019, p. 49.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Scottish Government, *Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement 2021–22*, Edinburgh, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> KPMG, *Submission 32*, received 5 October 2021, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Good Shepherd, *Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting*, 2 March 2020, supplementary evidence received 2 March 2020, pp. 4–5.

<sup>9</sup> National Foundation for Australian Women, *Submission 9*, received 2 December 2019, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 14.

gender economic experts within government and the academic sector to inform the development of GRB in Victoria.<sup>11</sup> The Committee received nine submissions supporting GenVic’s recommendations.<sup>12</sup>

**FINDING 7:** Independent Gender Equality Budget Groups consisting of civil society organisations and gender economic experts within government and the academic sector have played key roles in assisting countries to conduct gender resourcing needs assessments and report on the implications of Government’s spending decisions on advancing gender equality.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** The Victorian Government consider the establishment of an independent Gender Equality Budget Group to undertake an annual gender equality needs assessment of government initiatives.

Structured engagement with a GEBG on the application of GRB in Victoria will be discussed in detail in Section 5.2.1 of this report.

## 4.2.2 Gender budget baseline analysis

Gender equality baseline analysis allows jurisdictions to take stock of the gender impact of existing policies from earlier budgets.<sup>13</sup> This type of analysis is performed in Austria, Iceland, Israel, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden.<sup>14</sup>

In Iceland, GRB was implemented in 2009 following a baseline analysis of existing government initiatives across each of its seventeen ministries. Among these were: the analysis of the transferability of individual tax reductions between members of a couple (Ministry of Finance); research on the status of Icelandic household debt (Ministry for Foreign Affairs); and analysis of the gender breakdown of unemployment benefits and hospital waiting lists (Ministry of Welfare). These baseline analyses highlighted initial orientations for fiscal policy, including waiting lists for cardiac imaging and the availability of retirement home places. Corrective measures were then implemented through the budget to address these inequalities.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Gender Equity Victoria, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting, 25 October 2021, supplementary evidence received 25 October 2021, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Gender Equity Victoria, *Submission 7*, received 2 December 2019, p. 9; Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Submission 31*, received 29 November 2021, p. 2; Women’s Health Victoria, *Submission 3*, received 29 November 2019, p. 2; Women’s Health Goulburn North East, *Submission 10*, received 2 December 2019, p. 4; Wire Women’s Information Referral Exchange, *Submission 11*, received 2 December 2019, p. 3; Victorian Women’s Trust, *Submission 14*, received 2 December 2019, pp. 3–4; Women’s Health West, *Submission 16*, received 2 December 2019, p. 1; Women’s Legal Service, *Submission 17*, received 2 December 2019, pp. 2–3; Wellsprings for Women, *Submission 23*, received 10 January 2020, pp.4–5; Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health, *Submission 24*, received 27 January 2020, pp. 4–5.

<sup>13</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 12; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender budgeting in OECD countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017, pp. 16–17.

<sup>15</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 12.

The Swedish Government also commenced gender equality baseline analysis of existing policies in 2009, with the assessment of how agency and departmental activities could achieve gender equality aims and identify reform opportunities for enhanced outcomes. The process involved the allocation of resources to strategic initiatives and consideration of how gender equality outcomes would be measured.<sup>16</sup>

The Committee received evidence on how a gender analysis of current spending could be developed. The Commonwealth Government's *Intergenerational Report* was noted as an example of such an analysis, in its characterisation of a specialised distributional assessment regularly conducted at intermittent points across several years.<sup>17</sup> It was acknowledged that this approach carries the risk of 'the government lapsing in attention and performance during the years in which the assessment is not conducted'.<sup>18</sup> It was suggested to the Committee that if such an analysis was led by DTF, it would promote quicker adaptation at the departmental level.<sup>19</sup>

The Committee also received evidence about the importance of a gender budget baseline analysis of both expenditure and revenue raising items that encompass policies that have been formulated independent of the government's gender equality goals—to ensure that no assumptions are made about a policy's 'gender neutrality'.<sup>20</sup> The importance of accounting for 'dimensions of intersectionality within the female population' was also highlighted, as well as making the results of a gender budget baseline analysis public to enhance transparency and accountability, encourage discussion in the community, and raise awareness about gender bias in society.<sup>21</sup>

At the public hearings for the Inquiry, the Committee questioned DTF on the gender impact analyses currently being undertaken of existing government budget initiatives. The Committee was advised that high-level analysis of the overall impact of government programs across the economy is performed, with some forecasts broken down according to gender for key data, including unemployment levels between males and females over time. It was also highlighted that the Gender Equality Budget Statement is published annually alongside the Budget providing details of the budget initiatives impacting women.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ms Angela Jackson, Senior Consultant, Equity Economics, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 17 February 2020, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5; Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> Angela Jackson and Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> Ms Angela Jackson, Senior Consultant, Equity Economics, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 17 February 2020, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pp. 13, 18.

<sup>22</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3.

**FINDING 8:** Victoria's Gender Equality Budget Statement provides details of the budget initiatives impacting women and is published annually alongside the State Budget. A gender budget baseline analysis of Victoria's existing budget initiatives and their contribution to gender equality has not yet been published.

The Committee considers it important that DTF perform a gender budget baseline analysis of all existing budget initiatives to assess how government expenditure and revenue allocations contribute to gender equality. This assessment would provide the Government with the evidence required to guide future spending decisions in order to ensure budget proposals address gender equality gaps. The Committee also suggests that further gender budget baseline analysis be performed at set intervals in the future.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** The Department of Treasury and Finance set a timeframe to perform and make public a gender budget baseline analysis of all existing expenditure and revenue budget initiatives. The analysis should occur at regular intervals in the future and assess how government funding allocations contribute to gender equality and be used to guide future spending decisions that address gender equality gaps.

### 4.2.3 Gender dimension in spending reviews

Governments carry out spending reviews to consolidate budgets and reprioritise expenditure to ensure greater efficiencies in spending and alignment to policy priorities. The application of a gender perspective in spending reviews ensures that spending reprioritisation does not exacerbate gender gaps and will have a positive impact on gender equality goals. Spending reviews with a gender dimension have been performed in Korea and Sweden.<sup>23</sup>

The OECD considers that applying a gender dimension in spending reviews is particularly pertinent given evidence shows fiscal consolidation following the global financial crisis targeted sectors in which women were over-represented.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, the gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Victorian labour market are discussed in Section 1.4.2 of this report. DTF stated that consideration of gendered impacts is a consistent part of their approach to policy development and was a component of their decision making processes regarding the pandemic response.<sup>25</sup>

At the public hearings, Women's Health Victoria and the National Office of the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDEA) argued that to date, government's pandemic responses had not appropriately incorporated a gender

<sup>23</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender budgeting in OECD countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 1.



dimension.<sup>26</sup> These bodies also contended that doing so may have resulted in public investments in social infrastructure stimulating employment in female-dominated care industries, having ‘the double benefit of expanding service access to meet increased demand’.<sup>27</sup> In this context, the Committee notes the findings of the OECD’s 2020 report *The Gendered Employment Gains of Investing in Social vs. Physical Infrastructure: Evidence from Simulations across Seven OECD Countries*, which explained:

an investment of 1% of GDP in the care sector would generate more total employment ... [for both women and men] than an identical investment in construction, and women in Australia would gain well over half the new jobs created under the care sector scenario but less than one-third of total new jobs generated if that investment was in construction ... investment in construction increases the gender employment gap while investment in care decreases it.<sup>28</sup>

Looking to the medium to longer term pandemic recovery phase, the Committee sought the views of witnesses as to whether applying a gender lens to public investment was pertinent. SDEA advised that although the State economy has seen some recovery from the pandemic, the persistence of gender gaps means it is important to consider ‘how the economy works ... for ... women and what we need to do to build it back better’.<sup>29</sup>

The *Victorian 2021–22 Gender Equality Budget Statement* highlights the State’s investment in post-pandemic recovery, including initiatives to boost women’s economic security and create jobs.<sup>30</sup> As this publication does not provide detail around decision making processes, it is unclear to the Committee to what extent a gender dimension was incorporated in the Government’s review of spending to respond to the pandemic. The Committee acknowledges, however, that the Government needed to provide a quick response to the pandemic.

**FINDING 9:** The *Victorian 2021–22 Gender Equality Budget Statement* highlighted the State’s investment in post-pandemic recovery, including initiatives to boost women’s economic security and create jobs.

**FINDING 10:** Spending reviews provide significant insight into how government expenditure can be reprioritised for greater efficiency and alignment to policy priorities. The application of a gender dimension in spending reviews can lead to better outcomes that will have a positive impact on gender equality goals.

<sup>26</sup> Ms Misha Barr, Policy and Health Promotion Officer, Women’s Health Victoria, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 2–3; Ms Julia Fox, National Assistant Secretary, Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association Victoria, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ms Misha Barr, Policy and Health Promotion Officer, Women’s Health Victoria, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 2–3.

<sup>28</sup> Ms Julia Fox, National Assistant Secretary, Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association Victoria, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Victorian Government, *Gender Equality Budget Statement 2021–22*, 19 May 2021, <<https://www.budget.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-budget-statement>> accessed 17 November 2021.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** The Department of Treasury and Finance apply a gender dimension in future spending reviews.

### 4.3 Policy proofing tools

Policy proofing tools assist policymakers to identify needs in different policy areas, effectively target resources and ensure that government initiatives do not have any unintended negative impacts.

Box 4.2 sets out the policy proofing tools the OECD identifies in its GRB framework.

#### **BOX 4.2: OECD Gender Responsive Budgeting framework policy proofing tools**

**Ex ante gender impact assessment of all major policies, or selected policies included in the budget**—assessment of budget measures by suitably-qualified government staff, in advance of their inclusion in the budget, to determine their impact on gender equality.

Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Glossary of Key Terms for completing the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey*, <<https://www.oecd.org/governance/budgeting/OECD-2018-Budget-Practices-and-Procedures-Glossary-of-key-terms.pdf>> accessed 19 October 2021.

#### 4.3.1 Ex ante gender impact assessment of all major policies included in the budget

Two thirds of OECD countries that implement GRB conduct gender impact assessments (GIAs) on all major and selected policies,<sup>31</sup> with GIAs most commonly applied ex ante—meaning during the policy formulation and design stages.<sup>32</sup>

An ex ante GIA may be undertaken individually or as part of an existing policy impact assessment framework, and information from this type of assessment helps inform budget managers on whether policy measures are appropriate for inclusion in budget proposals. Ex ante GIA can also comprise assessment of the policy context and identify potential difficulties regarding implementation.<sup>33</sup> According to the OECD, systematic

<sup>31</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Policy Framework for Gender-Sensitive Public Governance*, 27 September 2021, <<https://www.oecd.org/mcm/Policy-Framework-for-Gender-Sensitive-Public-Governance.pdf>> accessed 26 November 2021, p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 114.

use of ex ante GIA may expand the scope of GRB beyond areas where data is available or to areas well known for gender inequalities.<sup>34</sup>

### Andalusia, Spain experience

The Government of Andalusia's Gender Impact Report forms a key part of the region's overall GRB framework. The 2020 Andalusian Budget Gender Impact Report is structured around an analytical framework for integrating the gender perspective into the budget. As explained in the report:

The three main elements of this structure are Reality, Representation and Resources-Results, all of which are analysed on the basis of three temporal dimensions: past, present and future. Among other purposes, the report fulfils the function of providing the managers of public resources with the data they need to make informed decisions about the reality, viewed from a gender perspective.<sup>35</sup>

Table 4.1 outlines the structure and application of the Gender Impact Report, incorporating the main elements and temporal (time related) dimensions of the assessment.

**Table 4.1** Structure of the Gender Impact Report

Chapter	Temporal dimensions applied	Content
Reality	Past	Provides statistical information with a gender perspective around the socio-economic status of men and women in Andalusia.
	Present	
	Future	
Representation	Past	Analyses the gender ratio of groups and individuals who work in the Andalusian public sector and offers options to progress gender equality within the public sector.
	Present	
	Future	
Resources-Results	Past	Examines the resources allocated in the Budget towards GRB policies by portfolio.
	Present	
	Future	

Source: Gender Impact Commission, *Gender Impact Report of the 2021 Budget of the Autonomous Region of Andalusia*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, pp. 5–22.

<sup>34</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender budgeting in OECD countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Gender Impact Commission, *Gender Impact Report of the 2021 Budget of the Autonomous Region of Andalusia*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, p. 4.

## Canada experience

Since 1995 the Government of Canada has been analysing the gender-specific impacts of policies, programs, legislation, and regulations<sup>36</sup> prior to making decisions, to aid in the achievement of gender equality obligations and commitments.<sup>37</sup> In Canada GRB is performed at the national and sub-national level, with the provinces of Alberta, Quebec and British Columbia undertaking GRB practices.<sup>38</sup>

Gender budget analysis plus (GBA+) is the analytical tool used by Canadian departments and agencies to conduct GIAs, enabling the differential impacts of people of all genders to be considered in the policy development process.<sup>39</sup> The 'plus' in GBA+ incorporates an intersectional approach to GIA through consideration of many identity factors like race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability,<sup>40</sup> so that the development, delivery, and evaluation of initiatives are inclusive.<sup>41</sup> GIA is decentralised in Canada, with all departments and agencies having their own GBA+ rules and templates.<sup>42</sup>

The OECD considers GBA+ to be an example of a well-thought through and high-quality GIA process.<sup>43</sup> Further, Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse argue that GBA+ is 'leading the way globally in illustrating ... [an] intersectional approach to GIA'.<sup>44</sup>

The Canadian Auditor-General audited GBA+ in 2009 and 2015.<sup>45</sup> Each audit was followed by the implementation of a GBA+ Action Plan based on audit findings.<sup>46</sup>

36 From 2017 the Treasury Board Secretariat monitored the progress on the integration of GBA+ for targeted regulatory submissions. The Secretariat also took action to better integrate GBA+ in the life-cycle of the federal regulatory development process. Government of Canada, *Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016-2020)*, 2020, <<https://femmes-egalite-genres.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/resources/action-plan-2016-2020.html>> accessed 26 November 2021.

37 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 10; Government of Canada, *Gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)*, 10 March 2020, <<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/departmental-plan-2020-2021/gender-based-analysis-plus.html>> accessed 26 November 2021.

38 Gender Equity Victoria, *Submission 7*, received 2 December 2019, p. 8.

39 Government of Canada, *Gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)*, 10 March 2020, <<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/departmental-plan-2020-2021/gender-based-analysis-plus.html>> accessed 26 November 2021.

40 Ibid.

41 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Submission 29*, received 25 November 2021, p. 1.

42 Rachel Livingston, Office for Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Gender analysis: reflections on the experience of Australia and Canada', paper presented at Australian Gender Economics Workshop 2019, RMIT University, Melbourne, <<https://cpb-ap-se2.wpmucdn.com/sites.rmit.edu.au/dist/a/142/files/2019/02/AGEW2019-Gender-Lensing-Masterclass-Rachel-Livingston-Gender-analysis-Reflections-on-the-experience-of-Australia-and-Canada-Isfrnu.pdf>> accessed 26 November 2021.

43 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 10.

44 Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 11.

45 Rachel Livingston, Office for Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Gender analysis: reflections on the experience of Australia and Canada', paper presented at Australian Gender Economics Workshop 2019, RMIT University, Melbourne, <<https://cpb-ap-se2.wpmucdn.com/sites.rmit.edu.au/dist/a/142/files/2019/02/AGEW2019-Gender-Lensing-Masterclass-Rachel-Livingston-Gender-analysis-Reflections-on-the-experience-of-Australia-and-Canada-Isfrnu.pdf>> accessed 26 November 2021.

46 Ibid.

The 2016–2020 GBA+ Action Plan outlined actions to further implement GBA+ as a rigorous practice across government, including:

- The development and delivery of GBA+ tools and training, the establishment of networks, and the coordination of promotional events and activities.<sup>47</sup>
- The establishment of Memoranda to Cabinet to ensure departments and agencies consider the application of GBA+ in the policy development process.<sup>48</sup>
- The application of GBA+ across all Cabinet submissions, including those related to key government priorities.<sup>49</sup>
- Periodical reporting on the advancement and barriers to the implementation of GBA+ through information gathered in annual progress reports and surveys of all federal departments and agencies.<sup>50</sup>

Since 2017 the Canadian Minister of Finance has set out in the annual budget circular the GBA+ assessments alongside new budget proposals (see Section 5.2.2 of this report for further discussion).<sup>51</sup>

The *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* came into force in 2018 and committed the Government to strengthening their financial administration by ensuring gender and diversity is considered in budgetary decisions through the expertise of the Minister for Women and Gender Equality.<sup>52</sup> Under the Act, the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board must publicly report on the outcomes of GBA+ of all budget measures, tax exemptions and expenditure programs to enhance transparency and accountability.<sup>53</sup> This reporting structure reinforces that responsibility for GRB lays with the Treasury.<sup>54</sup>

The 2021 Canadian Federal Budget published the findings of GBA+ assessments across all funding initiatives, the Budget as a whole and the nation's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan measures.<sup>55</sup> The GBA+ assessment of each budget revenue and expenditure initiative notes at what stage the GIA was undertaken, the expected benefits across gender, income distribution and inter-generation, the relevant gender results framework indicator, and potential negative impacts and efforts to mitigate these.<sup>56</sup>

47 Government of Canada, *Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016–2020)*, <<https://femmes-egalite-genres.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/resources/action-plan-2016-2020.html>> accessed 26 November 2021.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 11.

52 Canadian Gender Budgeting Act S.C. 2018, c. 27, s. 314

53 Ibid.

54 Gender Equity Victoria, *Submission 7*, received 2 December 2019, pp. 7–8.

55 Government of Canada, *Budget 2021: Annex 1 – GBA+ Summary for Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, 2021* <<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/services/publications/economic-fiscal-snapshot/gba-summary-economic-response-plan.html>> accessed 26 November 2021.

56 Government of Canada, *Budget 2021: Annex 5 – Budget 2021 Impacts Report, 2021*, <<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/ann5-en.html>> accessed 26 November 2021; Government of Canada, *Budget 2021 – A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience, 2021*, <<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>> accessed 26 November 2021.

The Canadian Auditor-General is scheduled to table a GBA+ information report in March 2022, following up on the progress made in implementing selected recommendations from the 2015 audit. The report will consider the implications of legislative developments and the introduction of Canada's Gender Results Framework in 2018.<sup>57</sup>

## Victoria

As part of *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, the Government committed to developing and piloting GIA tools in policy, service delivery and budget development.<sup>58</sup> A GIA toolkit, entitled *Guide to Conducting Gender Impact Analysis*, was piloted in 2018 across a number of departments, entities and local councils,<sup>59</sup> providing guidance on the application of a gender lens to policies, programs and services.<sup>60</sup> The pilot identified the key drivers of the gender pay gap in Victoria as: under-representation of women in leadership positions; unavailability of flexible working arrangements' unconducive organisational culture; and factors relating to the return to work following parental leave.<sup>61</sup> Consideration of the pilot's outcomes concluded in the first quarter of 2020.<sup>62</sup>

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic) (the Act) came into effect on 31 March 2021,<sup>63</sup> requiring that public sector bodies, councils, universities, and other defined entities conduct a GIA when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service that will have a direct and significant impact on the public.<sup>64</sup> The Department of Premier and Cabinet advised:

It is intended that by analysing policy and programs through a gender lens, the defined entities can help to create better and fairer outcomes and work to ensure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources.<sup>65</sup>

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's (DFFH) submission to the Inquiry noted that the pilot informed the development of the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector's (CGEPS) best-practice GIA guidance materials and templates for

<sup>57</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Submission 29*, received 25 November 2021, pp. 2-3.

<sup>58</sup> Victorian Government, *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality#download-the-pdf>>, Melbourne, 2016, p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Submission 20*, received 6 December 2019, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Victorian State Government, *A Guide to Conducting Gender Impact Analysis*, <[https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/paec/Inquiry\\_into\\_Gender\\_Responsive\\_Budgeting/Submissions/20a\\_Department\\_of\\_Premier\\_and\\_Cabinet\\_-\\_Attachment\\_A\\_-\\_A\\_Guide\\_to\\_Conducting\\_Gender\\_Impact\\_Analysis.pdf](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/paec/Inquiry_into_Gender_Responsive_Budgeting/Submissions/20a_Department_of_Premier_and_Cabinet_-_Attachment_A_-_A_Guide_to_Conducting_Gender_Impact_Analysis.pdf)>, Melbourne, accessed 10 September 2021.

<sup>61</sup> Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, *Report on the 2019-20 Budget Estimates*, October 2019, p. 45.

<sup>62</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Submission 20*, received 6 December 2019, p. 2; Victorian Government, *Gender impact assessments*, <<https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/gender-impact-assessments>>, 31 August 2021, accessed 17 September 2021.

<sup>63</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Submission 20*, received 6 December 2019, p. 3; *Gender Equality Act* (Vic) s 1(c).

<sup>65</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Submission 20*, received 6 December 2019, p. 5.

implementation of the Act.<sup>66</sup> The finalised GIA materials include the *Gender Impact Assessment Toolkit* and accompanying *Templates and Resources to Support Gender Impact Assessments*.<sup>67</sup>

The Committee received extensive evidence strongly recommending the implementation of an intersectional approach to GIA in Victoria.<sup>68</sup> Jesuit Social Services and Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks highlighted that gender norms, expectations and stereotypes limit the fulfilling and productive participation of all people in public life, including men.<sup>69</sup> Women's Health Victoria stated that applying an intersectional analysis 'ensures that the impacts of other forms of inequality and disadvantage that intersect with gender inequality, such as racism, ableism and homophobia, are considered'.<sup>70</sup>

Professor Jennifer Curtin advised that in New Zealand 'incorporating intersectional perspectives [in GIA], without appearing additive remains a challenge,' stressing the risks for the Crown considering their 'commitments as a partner with Maori under the Treaty of Waitangi'.<sup>71</sup>

The Committee notes that in accordance with the Act, the *Toolkit* provides information to support the application of an intersectional approach to GIA through consideration of:

how end user's experience of gender inequality may be shaped by other aspects of their identity including: Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, and sexual orientation.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, Submission 20, received 6 December 2019, p. 2; Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Submission 27, received 9 September 2021, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, *Gender impact assessment toolkit*, <[https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/DPC%202011%20CGEPS\\_GIA-Toolkit\\_FA-Web\\_0%20%284%29.pdf](https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/DPC%202011%20CGEPS_GIA-Toolkit_FA-Web_0%20%284%29.pdf)> accessed 3 November 2021; Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, *Templates and resources to support gender impact assessments*, <[https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/DPC%202011%20CGEPS\\_GIA-Templates\\_%26\\_Resources\\_FA-Web\\_0.pdf](https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/DPC%202011%20CGEPS_GIA-Templates_%26_Resources_FA-Web_0.pdf)> accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>68</sup> Angela Jackson and Leonora Risse, Submission 18, received 2 December 2019, p. 11; Darebin City Council, Submission 6, received 2 December 2019, pp. 1,4; Gender Equity Victoria, Submission 7, received 2 December 2019, p. 8; Jesuit Social Services, Submission 22, received 13 December 2019; Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, Submission 31, received 29 November 2021, p. 2; Women's Health Victoria, Submission 3, received 29 November 2019, pp. 2, 6-7; Women's Health Goulburn North East, Submission 10, received 2 December 2019, p. 4; Wire Women's Information Referral Exchange, Submission 11, received 2 December 2019, p. 3; Victorian Women's Trust, Submission 14, received 2 December 2019, pp. 3-4; Women's Health West, Submission 16, received 2 December 2019, p. 1; Women's Legal Service, Submission 17, received 2 December 2019, pp. 2-3; Wellsprings for Women, Submission 23, received 10 January 2020, pp. 4-5; Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, Submission 24, received 27 January 2020, pp. 4-5; Soo-Lin Quek, Executive Manager Knowledge, Advocacy and Service Innovation, Centre for Multicultural Youth, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p.3; Matt Tyler, Executive Director, The Men's Project, Jesuit Social Services, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 2-8; Professor Gigi Foster, Director of Education, School of Economics, University of New South Wales, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 16 March 2020, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 1-4, 8.

<sup>69</sup> Matt Tyler, Executive Director, The Men's Project, Jesuit Social Services, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3.; Jesuit Social Services, Submission 22, received 13 December 2019; Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, Submission 31, received 29 November 2021, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Women's Health Victoria, Submission 3, received 29 November 2019, p. 6.

<sup>71</sup> Professor Jennifer Curtin, Submission 15, received 2 December 2021, pp. 1-2.

<sup>72</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, *Gender Impact Assessment Toolkit*, 20 September 2021, <[https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/DPC%202011%20CGEPS\\_GIA-Toolkit\\_FA-Web\\_0%20%284%29.pdf](https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/DPC%202011%20CGEPS_GIA-Toolkit_FA-Web_0%20%284%29.pdf)> accessed 26 November 2021, p. 11.



The *Toolkit* promotes the use of research, consultation and stakeholder engagement to draw intersectional knowledge, perspectives and experiences into the GIA process.<sup>73</sup>

**FINDING 11:** An intersectional approach to gender impact assessment of policies, programs and services is practiced in Victoria. These consider experiences of gender inequality shaped by other aspects of identity including Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

The Committee was advised that DTF is developing the approach departments will take to carry out GIA (see Section 5.2.2 of this report for further discussion).<sup>74</sup> The Committee considers it important that GIA tools are comprised of comprehensive publicly available guidelines for the application of an intersectional assessment of the budget process, drawing on international best practice.

Evidence provided by DTF at the public hearings outlined that initiatives funded in the budget may be included in a Gender Equality Budget information paper and that GIA detail will be included for all budget initiatives.<sup>75</sup>

The Act sets out bi-annual reporting requirements on actions taken in response to GIA, evaluated against workplace gender equality indicators and targets, and quotas set out in regulations.<sup>76</sup> The Act requires that defined entities develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan every four years, including strategies and measures to promote gender equality in the workplace, and report on progress based on the results of a workplace gender audit and the establishment of a baseline position.<sup>77</sup>

The Act also established the role of a Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner to provide education and implementation support, and undertake monitoring, compliance and enforcement functions in relation to Equity Action Plans.<sup>78</sup> The Commissioner was appointed in September 2020 and has the power to analyse, publish and report on the progress made by entities.<sup>79</sup>

**FINDING 12:** The *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic) established reporting mechanisms for actions taken by Victorian public sector bodies in response to gender impact assessments, evaluated against workplace gender equalities, targets and quotas.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>74</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Submission 20*, received 6 December 2019, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Submission 20*, received 6 December 2019, p. 3; Victoria, Legislative Assembly, 27 November 2019, *Gender Equality Bill 2019 Second Reading Speech*, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Gabrielle Williams MP.

<sup>78</sup> Victoria, Legislative Assembly, 27 November 2019, *Gender Equality Bill 2019 Second Reading Speech*, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Gabrielle Williams MP.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.



**RECOMMENDATION 8:** The Victorian State Budget Papers or Gender Equality Budget Statement include gender impact analysis details for all budget initiatives.

At the public hearings, DTF advised that GRB compliance and outcomes will be monitored through the already established departmental performance measure processes.<sup>80</sup> In light of Canada's GBA+ oversight model which includes action plans, audits and legislated reporting mechanisms, the Committee considers that the development of a more comprehensive approach to monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of GIA of the budget in Victoria would be beneficial.

NFAW and KPMG recommended legislative revision to require Victorian government departments and agencies to undertake GIA of their budget annually, giving legislated stability to targets, indicators and other criteria.<sup>81</sup> The NFAW also recommended giving GIA implementation monitoring responsibility to an independent entity—either an established non-governmental organisation or an independent statutory authority.

**RECOMMENDATION 9:** Victorian Government departments and agencies publish in their annual reports the gender equality objectives, targets, indicators and other set criteria that result from undertaking gender impact assessments.

### 4.3.2 Gender perspective in the economic analysis of major investment proposals

#### The Philippines experience

The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) program outlines that as men and women may benefit differently from investment projects, it is important for governments to include a gender perspective in the economic analysis of major investment proposals.<sup>82</sup> Indicator 2 of the PEFA Gender Responsive Public Financial Management Framework (GRPFM) (introduced at Section 2.3 of this report) assesses the extent to which robust appraisal methods of feasibility or prefeasibility studies for major investment projects include analysis of the impacts on gender, conducted in line with national guidelines. The GRPFM also recommends that feasibility results are publicly available and reviewed by an entity other than the proposing entity.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>81</sup> National Foundation for Australian Women, *Submission 9*, received 2 December 2019, p. 8; KPMG, *Submission 32*, received 5 October 2021, p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Secretariat, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management: Guidance for Assessment Teams*, January 2020, <[https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG\\_GRPFM\\_FRAMEWORK\\_ENG\\_PAGES\\_200609\\_0.pdf](https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG_GRPFM_FRAMEWORK_ENG_PAGES_200609_0.pdf)> accessed 21 October 2021, p.49.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p.48.

In the Philippines, analysis of gender aspects in public investment projects commences at the project proposal stage and is then submitted by government agencies to the Investment Coordination Committee (ICC).<sup>84</sup> The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) provides technical and secretariat support to the ICC to evaluate public projects for economic, financial, technical, social, environmental, and institutional viability. As part of the ICC Technical Working Group, the NEDA secretariat assesses socioeconomic aspects of the project and appraises each project for its compliance with existing regulations and alignment with and contribution to the Philippine Development Plan. The ICC Project Evaluation Procedures and Guidelines include information on the ICC's analysis, providing that for conducting social analysis:

Attention should be paid to involving women in the planning and implementation of development projects. Consideration should be given to gender issues at the initial screening stage as well as at the preparation and appraisal stages. Particular attention should be given to gender composition when considering the division of labor, access to and utilization of resources, decision-making processes, distribution of income and benefits, time allocation, and legal status of women and the impact that these factors will have on project success.<sup>85</sup>

The Committee notes that the incorporation of a gender perspective in the economic analysis of major investment proposals may assist the Victorian Government to comprehensively assess the gender impact of public spending. For example, Victoria's high value high risk (HVHR) framework comprises a series of project assurance checks and processes for major infrastructure and communications technology investments to increase the likelihood that these projects will achieve their stated benefits and be delivered successfully.<sup>86</sup> This greater scrutiny could include a gender perspective in the economic analysis of major (HVHR) investment proposals.

**FINDING 13:** The incorporation of a gender perspective in the economic analysis of major investment proposals assists governments to comprehensively assess the gender impact of public spending.

**RECOMMENDATION 10:** The Victorian Government incorporate a gender perspective into the review processes of the High Value High Risk Project Assurance Framework and other economic analysis of major investment proposals.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p.51.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Victoria State Government, *Department of Treasury and Finance, Investment Lifecycle and High Value High Risk Guidelines*, 4 December 2019, <<https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/infrastructure-investment/investment-lifecycle-and-high-value-and-high-risk-guidelines>> accessed 5 January 2022.

## 4.4 Structured norms tools

Structured norms tools are used by governments to ensure their public financial management systems contribute to intended outcomes.

Box 4.3 sets out the structured norms tools the OECD identifies in its GRB framework.

### **BOX 4.3: OECD Gender Responsive Budgeting framework structured norms tools**

**Gender dimension in performance setting**—requirements prescribing a systematic linkage between budget related performance objectives and gender-responsive policies to enable understanding of how budget measures relate to gender equality goals and track progress in relation to gender equality gaps.

**Gender dimension in resource allocation**—requirements prescribing a balanced approach to the distribution of overall resources between men and women.

Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Glossary of Key Terms for completing the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey*, <<https://www.oecd.org/governance/budgeting/OECD-2018-Budget-Practices-and-Procedures-Glossary-of-key-terms.pdf>> accessed 19 October 2021.

These structured norm tools and their application in international jurisdictions and Victoria, are discussed in further detail below.

### 4.4.1 Gender dimension in performance setting

A gender dimension in performance setting refers to the development of a performance framework comprising gender equality targets and indicators aligned to an overarching strategy, that provides information on the extent to which policies and programs are achieving their intended results.<sup>87</sup>

Integrating a gender perspective in performance setting:

- Facilitates an understanding of the budget measures required to achieve gender equality goals.
- Ensures information is collected on the extent to which initiatives are achieving gender equality outcomes.
- Allows stakeholders to track progress.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, pp. 13.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, pp. 13, 29.

The measurement of gender equality outcomes and the use of gender-disaggregated data is discussed further in Chapter 6 of this report.

#### 4.4.2 Gender dimension in resource allocation

Gender informed resource allocation uses the insights obtained through GIAs of proposed budget measures to inform funding allocation decisions, ensuring they contribute to gender equality outcomes.<sup>89</sup>

In their submission to the Inquiry, Women's Health Victoria (WHV) highlighted the importance of GRB being embedded within a gender transformative framework to ensure the allocation of funding contributes to initiatives that 'actively transform the norms, practices and structures that reinforce gender inequality'.<sup>90</sup> According to WHV, measures introduced into the paid parental schemes of Sweden and Norway encouraging fathers to take a more active role in child care and domestic labour provides a positive example of a gender transformative initiative.<sup>91</sup>

To increase accountability and solidify the Government's commitment to achieving transformative gender equality outcomes, resource allocation decisions can be made publicly available.<sup>92</sup> Canada's 2021 GBA+ assessment of budget measures publishes the outcomes of gender-informed resource allocation decisions through identification of the population being targeted by the funding allocations and how resources are allocated across gender, income distribution and inter-generation.<sup>93</sup>

A further example of the incorporation of a gender perspective in resource allocation is provided by the Government of Sweden, which has been annually publishing an appendix to the Budget Bill, entitled *Economic Equality between Women and Men*, since 1988. The appendix:

- provides an analysis of the economic situations of women and men across education, gainful employment, wages, household work and capital income
- shows how gender inequality is expressed in economic terms
- details the distribution of economic resources between the sexes
- presents the outcomes of welfare systems in reducing gender gaps.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 10.

<sup>90</sup> Women's Health Victoria, *Submission 3*, received 29 November 2019, p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, pp. 5-6.

<sup>92</sup> Angela Jackson and Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 10.

<sup>93</sup> Government of Canada, *Budget 2021: Annex 5 - Budget 2021 Impacts Report*, 2021, <<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/anx5-en.html>> accessed 26 November 2021; Government of Canada, *Budget 2021 - A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience*, <<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>> accessed 26 November 2021.

<sup>94</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender Budgeting in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017, p. 15.

A discussed above (at Section 4.3.1 of this report) making information related to budgetary decisions arising from GIAs publicly available, either in the Victorian State Budget Papers, the Gender Equality Budget Statement, or through another reporting mechanism, will increase accountability and solidify the Government's commitment to achieving transformative gender equality outcomes.

## 4.5 Scrutiny tools

Making the practice of GRB open to scrutiny allows information on GRB to be publicly available for systematic oversight and promotes accountability and engagement.<sup>95</sup>

Box 4.4 sets out the scrutiny tools the OECD identifies in its GRB framework.

### **BOX 4.4: OECD Gender Responsive Budgeting framework scrutiny tools**

**Gender budget statement**—A publicly available statement accompanying the annual budget highlighting the measures government has taken to achieve gender equality outcomes, which may include one or more of the following elements:

- General statement (descriptive): a broad narrative statement outlining how the range of measures introduced in the budget are intended to support gender equality priorities and goals.
- Progress statement (structured narrative): a detailed statement outlining the government's progress in supporting and resourcing high-level gender equality priorities and goals, by reference to a standardised and systematic reporting framework, including objectives and indicators (e.g. linked to a gender equality strategy).
- Gender allocations report (quantitative): a report clearly identifying the budgetary resources allocated to gender equality policies and/or allocations that affect women and men differently, to promote transparency and awareness of gender equality linkages.
- Gender impact assessment of specific budget measures, or the budget as a whole: a distributional assessment of how the budget's revenue and expenditure measures affect men and women differently and serve to promote gender equality.

Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Glossary of Key Terms for completing the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey*, <<https://www.oecd.org/governance/budgeting/OECD-2018-Budget-Practices-and-Procedures-Glossary-of-key-terms.pdf>> accessed 19 October 2021.

<sup>95</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 15.

Table 4.1 presents the use of gender budget statement types across OECD countries that have introduced GRB.

**Table 4.2 Gender budget statements across OECD countries that have introduced GRB**

OECD Country	General gender budget statement	Gender allocations report	Gender impact assessment of specific budget measures	Gender equality progress statement	Gender impact assessment of the budget as a whole
Canada	•		•	•	•
Iceland			•		
Japan	•	•			
Korea	•	•	•	•	
Mexico	•	•	•	•	•
Portugal	•	•			
Spain	•	•	•	•	•
Sweden		•	•		
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 17.

Canada's 2021 *Gender, Diversity and Quality of Life Statement* combines four of the five gender budget statement types, using GBA+ to provide detailed demographic data of the nation's progress against key gender equality goals identified in the *Gender Results Framework*. Canada's Statement outlines analysis of resource allocation against gender targets across education and skills, economic and leadership participation, gender-based violence and access to justice, poverty, health and wellbeing.<sup>96</sup> The Committee considers this to be an example of a high quality gender budget statement.

In 2018, the Victorian Government reported on its achievements during the first year of its *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, highlighting the introduction of Gender Equality Budget Statements.<sup>97</sup> In its *2016–17 Financial and Performance Outcomes* report, the Committee noted that the Budget Statement did not include a discussion of the impact of policies and funding initiatives on gender equality outcomes, and recommended the development of metrics to measure the impact of the overall Budget on women and girls aged over 12, and annual performance measures for departments in relation to gender equality.<sup>98</sup>

The Government's response in September 2018 supported these recommendations, stating all future budgets will be required to identify specific budget impacts on gender

<sup>96</sup> Government of Canada, *Budget 2021: Annex 4 – Gender, Diversity, and Quality of Life Statement*, 2021, <<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/anx4-en.html>> accessed 26 November 2021.

<sup>97</sup> Victorian Government, *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy—achievements report year one*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-strategy-achievements-report-year-1-0>>, Melbourne, 2018, p. 1.

<sup>98</sup> Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, *Report on the 2016–17 Financial and Performance Outcomes*, May 2018, p. 72.

equality.<sup>99</sup> The Budget Statements released to date have not included an assessment of the impacts on gender equality of Government policies or the Budget.<sup>100</sup>

In their submission to the Inquiry, the Women in Social Research Network, Curtin University (WiSER) argued that:

the gender equality budget statement in Victoria is primarily a political document, rather than detailed analysis of the impact of the budget on equality using gender-disaggregated indicators and statistics. It[s] role and the process to develop it should be reviewed.<sup>101</sup>

WiSER suggested that the Budget Statement provide a detailed assessment of the Budget's impacts recommending that it 'act as an accountability tool linking the government's interventions with its commitments and recognition of women's needs and rights'.<sup>102</sup>

**RECOMMENDATION 11:** The Victorian Government outline the gender equality impacts of government policies and the overall Budget, including revenue and expenditure initiatives, in its Gender Equality Budget Statement.

In its *2019–20 Budget Estimates* report the Committee found that the Gender Equality Budget Statement presents an opportunity for the Government to update the community on its progress towards implementing the budgetary components of *Safe and Strong*.<sup>103</sup> In light of international best-practice, the Committee also considers the Budget Statement to be an appropriate mechanism for reporting on the overall implementation of GRB in Victoria and the achievement of gender equality outcomes.

**RECOMMENDATION 12:** Victoria's Gender Equality Budget Statement provide a detailed assessment of the Government's progress in implementing the budgetary components of the *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*.

**RECOMMENDATION 13:** Victoria's Gender Equality Budget Statement report on the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting and the achievement of gender equality outcomes against objectives, targets and indicators linked to the *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*.

<sup>99</sup> Government of Victoria, Response to the Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, *Report on the 2016–17 Financial and Performance Outcomes*, 20 September 2018, pp. 3–4.

<sup>100</sup> Department of Treasury and Finance, *Gender Equality Budget Statement: Victorian Budget 19/20*, Melbourne, Victorian Government, 2019; Department of Treasury and Finance, *Gender Equality Budget Statement: Victorian Budget 18/19*, Melbourne, Victorian Government, 2018; Department of Treasury and Finance, *Gender Equality Budget Statement: Victorian Budget 17/18*, Melbourne, Victorian Government, 2017; Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 8.

<sup>101</sup> Women in Social Research Network, Curtin University, *Submission 5*, received 11 December 2019, p. 11.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, *Report on the 2019–20 Budget Estimates*, October 2019, p. 46.

## 4.6 Accountability tools

Box 4.5 sets out the accountability tools the OECD identifies in its GRB framework.

### **BOX 4.5: OECD Gender Responsive Budgeting framework accountability tools**

**Ex post gender impact assessment of all major, or selected, policies**—routine assessment of budget measures following their implementation by suitably-qualified government staff to determine their impact on gender equality.

**Gender audit of the budget**—independent, objective analysis, conducted by a competent authority separate to the central budget authority, of the extent to which gender equality is effectively promoted and/or attained through implemented policies set out in the annual budget.

**Gender dimension to performance audit**—routine performance audit includes an independent, objective analysis, of the extent to which a policy or program contributed to gender equality goals, typically conducted by the Supreme Audit Institution.

**Audit of gender budgeting systems/processes**—independent, objective analysis, typically conducted by the Supreme Audit Institution, of the extent to which budget-related systems and processes are effective in promoting gender equality.

Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Glossary of Key Terms for completing the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey*, <<https://www.oecd.org/governance/budgeting/OECD-2018-Budget-Practices-and-Procedures-Glossary-of-key-terms.pdf>> accessed 19 October 2021.

Ex post (after the fact) assessments, such as GIA, evaluations and audits, analyse the actual impact of government initiatives to determine whether objectives are met, gender equality advanced, and how gaps or discriminatory outcomes can be addressed through amendments. Lessons from these assessments can inform future process improvements and feed into budget decisions to improve the way resource allocation is used to achieve gender quality outcomes. As with ex ante GIA, ex post GIA may be undertaken individually or as part of any wider performance outcomes framework.<sup>104</sup>

The use of accountability tools to measure gender equality outcomes, including ex post GIAs are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>104</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, pp. 34, 54.



# 5 Enabling environment

## 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 assesses the need for a sustainable and supportive enabling environment for Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) to be effective. It examines factors that may encourage the success of GRB in Victoria and considers best practice examples internationally.

To reach its findings and recommendations the Committee assessed evidence and views from a broad range of stakeholders, including governments with well-developed GRB processes and an established expert consultative group.

The Committee found that the most effective elements of a sustainable enabling environment for GRB were to:

- promote awareness of GRB by engaging stakeholders and citizens in the process and
- deliver tailored training to enhance capacity development in the public sector.

## 5.2 National and international best practice

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) the success and quality of GRB practices can be improved by creating a supportive enabling environment.<sup>1</sup> The OECD outlines that a supportive enabling environment should include structured engagement with civil society or expert consultative groups on the application of GRB, and training and capacity development in the public sector as well as instructions on the application of GRB in the annual budget circular.<sup>2</sup>

This Chapter explores best practice examples of enabling environments and considers the OECD GRB framework and recommendations regarding enabling environments.

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1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 35; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 31.

2 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 30. The remaining elements of the OECD supportive enabling environment are discussed at Section 6.1.3 of this report.

## 5.2.1 Engagement with stakeholders and citizens in the Gender Responsive Budgeting process

Engagement with stakeholders and citizens in GRB processes can help increase transparency and accountability and ensure GRB practices are genuine, thorough, and inclusive of a broad range of expertise and perspectives.<sup>3</sup>

There are a number of examples of international jurisdictions in which Governments consult and liaise with stakeholders and citizens around the implementation of GRB. In 2016 over half of OECD countries reported that an expert consultative group advised government on the application of GRB.<sup>4</sup> Further, a number of OECD countries undertake structured dialogue with civil society to assess the impact of GRB, including Mexico, the Netherlands and Israel. Similarly, others specifically request stakeholders provide their view on the impact of gender-related policies, including Austria, the Netherlands, and Iceland.<sup>5</sup>

The Committee took evidence from a range of national and international witnesses about engaging with stakeholders and citizens on the design and implementation of GRB in Victoria. In their submission to the Inquiry, the Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) outlined that civil society groups, like women's movements, have a role in helping to hold the Government to account on policies and funding for GRB initiatives.<sup>6</sup> In the context of increasing transparency, accountability and civil participation, ERA also stated:

GRB can provide a follow-the-money mechanism whereby funding for gender equality can be more easily tracked and governments can be held to account for their gender equality commitments (with sources). In turn, greater accountability and transparency of gender budgeting equips more actors with relevant information and can thus work to increase engagement in gender initiatives across government, parliament and civil society. Further, depending on how GRB is included in the policy process, it can also be a tool to increase citizen governance and participatory budget processes (with sources).<sup>7</sup>

The Women in Social and Economic Research (WiSER) at Curtin University also endorsed the need for the inclusion of civil society in GRB. In their submission to the Inquiry WiSER argued:

Government led gender-responsive budgeting, such as that initiated by the Victorian Government, should be seen as a component of a broader and interconnected strategy of developing budgetary decision-making processes and priorities in order to reduce persistent gender inequalities. Other strategies include active advocacy by civil society

<sup>3</sup> Jesuit Social Services, *Submission 22*, received 13 December 2019, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender Budgeting in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Equality Rights Alliance, *Submission 1*, received 21 November 2019, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11 (with sources).

organisations. Links between government and non-government gender-responsive budgeting work enhance the potential of these initiatives to address gender inequality and produce more equitable outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

Overall there was broad consensus from witnesses that mechanisms to enable participation of stakeholders and citizens in GRB are essential elements for a jurisdiction to achieve an effective and sustainable GRB practice.

The Committee notes that some of the common challenges to civil society participating in the GRB process include: knowledge and access to analysis and policy making processes that make it difficult to distil often complex data and information; and a lack of understanding of the local context. These complexities can likewise impact the ability of civil society organisations to partake in GRB processes, who are often overstretched and unable to dedicate the resources necessary to contribute in this space. National organisations may also not have a comprehensive understanding of the local context, which can be compounded by the need to navigate different levels of government and potentially overlapping mandates, as is the case in Australia.<sup>9</sup>

The OECD outlines the benefits of establishing an expert consultative group that includes representatives from civil society organisations and gender economic experts within government and academia to advise the Government on GRB.<sup>10</sup>

### **Expert consultative group—United Kingdom Women’s Budget Group**

The United Kingdom’s Women’s Budget Group (WBG) provides the most established example of an active expert consultative group participating in structured engagement with government in various aspects and stages of the budget cycle. The WBG has become a widely cited model for guiding the development of GRB and gender analysis of the budget, not just among civil society and academia, but also for governments internationally.<sup>11</sup> The WBG model focuses on how different actors, including civil society organisations, can be involved across the stages of the budget cycle to increase accountability and progress GRB.<sup>12</sup>

The WBG comprises academics, activists, leaders and representatives of non-governmental organisations, trade unionists, and students, with expertise in gender, economics and policy. Many of its members are engaged by intergovernmental and funding agencies, as well as national governments to: provide analysis and expertise; develop tools; and help with the development of appropriate methodologies for the implementation of GRB.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Women in Social and Economic Research (WiSER) Curtin University, *Submission 5*, received 1 December 2019, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Women’s Budget Group, *Submission 2a*, received 27 November 2019, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Sheila Quinn, International Monetary Fund Working Paper, *Europe: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts*, IMF, 2016, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> United Kingdom Women’s Budget Group, *Submission 2*, received 27 November 2019, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Sheila Quinn, International Monetary Fund Working Paper, *Europe: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts*, IMF, 2016, p. 22.

Economists Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse, acknowledged the significant work of the WBG in their submission to the Inquiry, and highlighted the value of utilising the guidance of academics and policy practitioners who possess expertise in successful GRB practices in Australia.<sup>14</sup>

The UK Treasury previously had a Memorandum of Agreement with the WBG and formally sought the group's analysis and advice on relevant policy matters. In response to an OECD questionnaire on *Gender Mainstreaming, Competitiveness and Growth*, the UK Treasury described the WBG as key in their gender consultation processes.<sup>15</sup> While a change in government can affect the access and influence of expert groups, the work of the WBG has continued to be referred to extensively in UK Parliament, highlighting its influence in supporting the implementation of GRB.

In their submission to the Inquiry, the WBG outlined the importance of engaging with stakeholders and citizens in the budget process, stating that expert consultative groups can enhance:

- Research—by providing evidence of the impact of economic policies, including highlighting unexpected impacts.
- Accountability—holding decision makers to account through research, analysis and putting pressure on decision makers.
- Promotion—promote research findings to policy makers and the wider public through campaigning and advocacy work.<sup>16</sup>

**FINDING 14:** Independent expert consultative groups with skills in economics, policy and gender can actively and effectively engage government in the Gender Responsive Budgeting process to help increase transparency and accountability and ensure gender responsive practices are thorough.

## Victoria

The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) informed the Committee that gender perspectives will be considered at every stage of the policy cycle<sup>17</sup> and that DTF's gender impact assessment (GIA) model includes briefings from central agencies to Government (see Figure 5.1).<sup>18</sup>

**FINDING 15:** The Department of Treasury and Finance's gender impact assessment model and tools may benefit from the inclusion of structured engagement or consultation with independent expert groups on Gender Responsive Budgeting.

<sup>14</sup> Angela Jackson and Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Sheila Quinn, International Monetary Fund Working Paper, *Europe: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts*, IMF, 2016, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> United Kingdom Women's Budget Group, *Submission 2a*, received 27 November 2019, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Treasury and Finance, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting, supplementary evidence received, 25 October 2021, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

The Committee's recommendation to support the establishment of an independent expert consultative group, the Gender Equality Budget Group (GEBG), is discussed in Section 4.2.1 of this report. The Committee considers that a GEBG may have the complementary expertise to support the Victorian Government on the design and implementation of GRB in Victoria while incorporating the views of civil society.

**RECOMMENDATION 14:** The Victorian Government engage with the proposed independent Gender Equality Budget Group to support the design and implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting across the budget cycle.

## 5.2.2 Training and capacity development in the application of Gender Responsive Budgeting

Appropriately informed and delivered training and capacity development can be a key factor to increasing awareness towards gender responsive policies throughout the public sector. By 2016 training was made available in over half of the OECD countries that implemented GRB, and over half of these OECD countries had standard implementation guidelines from their respective central budget authority.<sup>19</sup>

Widespread awareness and support are particularly vital when responsibility for GRB is shared across government departments and agencies, as is the case within the Australian and Victorian public sectors.<sup>20</sup> ERA's submission to the Inquiry highlights the European Institute for Gender Equality's explanation that the absence of awareness among individuals involved in GRB efforts can affect its sustainability and reduce meaningful efforts.<sup>21</sup>

The evidence considered by the Committee suggests the key factors outlined below as best practice in capacity development and awareness raising across the public sector.

### Tailored training and awareness raising at all levels

The Committee notes that for public sector training in the application and use of GRB to be effective and sustainable it needs to be tailored and meaningful to its intended audience. Experiences globally have shown that where training has been organised without careful consideration of the purpose and the target group, clarity on the objectives, and a clear sense of follow-up, it has proven to be of limited value for the organisers and participants.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender Budgeting in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Equality Rights Alliance, *Submission 1*, received 21 November 2019, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Debbie Budlender, Diane Elson, Guy Hewitt, Tanni Mukhopadhyay, *Gender Budgets Makes Cents: Understanding Gender Responsive Budgets*, United Kingdom, 2002, <<https://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Gender-Budgets-Make-Cents-Understanding-Gender-Responsive-Budgets.pdf>> accessed 1 November 2021, p. 117.

Economists Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse recommended that for the GRB process to be fully supported and effectively implemented in Victoria, information and international best practice examples should be shared within and across relevant government departments, to educate all staff and promote awareness building.<sup>23</sup>

The Committee acknowledges that for training to be effective it needs to include awareness raising and some discussion of decision making.<sup>24</sup> The Andalusian Government advised the Committee that awareness raising is an important way to provide information on the development of persisting gender inequalities. They explained that highlighting progress made and tools available to those responsible for managing various public policies can assist to progress gender equality through budgetary work.<sup>25</sup>

The Philippines experience further illustrates the necessity of capacity building and awareness raising for public sector staff at all levels. At the public hearings for the Inquiry the Committee was advised that despite longstanding policies, the availability of comprehensive operational guidelines and some success in implementing GRB, public agencies in the Philippines still find it difficult to comply with the mandated 5% Gender and Development (GAD) budget allocation (see Section 3.2.3 of this report for further information).<sup>26</sup>

There have been several studies on the GAD budget policy conducted by the Philippine Government since 2004. A 2018 study found that institutional mechanisms have effectively enabled the GAD budget, including the strong commitment from senior officials and technical officers.<sup>27</sup> However, according to the study, the inability of some departments to meet the 5% allocation could be due to a lack of capacity to identify appropriate activities to address gender issues as well as a broader lack of capacity to conduct gender analysis and prepare GAD plans. The Philippine Commission for Women suggested that this demonstrates the need for more dedicated, intensive and continuous technical assistance.<sup>28</sup>

**FINDING 16:** For training in Gender Responsive Budgeting to be effective, it must be tailored to its intended target group with clear objectives across all levels of the public sector. This should include awareness raising initiatives and the provision of ongoing technical assistance.

<sup>23</sup> Angela Jackson and Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Debbie Budlender, Diane Elson, Guy Hewitt, Tanni Mukhopadhyay, *Gender Budgets Makes Cents: Understanding Gender Responsive Budgets*, United Kingdom, 2002, <<https://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Gender-Budgets-Make-Cents-Understanding-Gender-Responsive-Budgets.pdf>> accessed 1 November 2021, p. 117.

<sup>25</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearings presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ms Maria Kristine Josefina G. Balmes, Deputy Executive Director for Operations, Philippine Commission on Women, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

**RECOMMENDATION 15:** The Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit undertake a training needs assessment to obtain information about the level of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) knowledge and skills across the public sector and use the learnings of this assessment to establish a tailored and formalised GRB training plan.

### Dedicated training department

Gender budgeting experts note that where GRB is led by the Finance Ministry, and gender issues are not typically within the remit of that department, personnel may require guidance in making links between gender and economic policy issues.<sup>29</sup>

Examples of dedicated training departments in OECD countries include:

- The Division for Gender Equality in Sweden that has a well-developed training model which includes provision of ongoing technical support materials and training activities and tailored training for the public sector. The Swedish Government previously established a committee of inquiry to develop gender mainstreaming techniques and to equip government administrators with the tools and methods of gender analysis for mainstreaming and training.<sup>30</sup>
- The Republic of Korea's training model includes a dedicated body for gender training and expertise, in which government officials must attend specific trainings to learn how to prepare a Gender Budgeting Statement. Mandatory annual workshops are held by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family every year to ensure gender impact assessments can be undertaken entirely within government. There are also quality standards on training attendance, recognition and performance incentives.<sup>31</sup>
- In Mexico gender units are in place across the public sector to help train staff in gender policies and develop capacity in relation to GRB. The Mexican Government has administered GRB for over two decades, attributing key achievements in their health sector, including advancements in cervical, ovarian and breast cancers, to their effective training approach.<sup>32</sup>

In Victoria the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (CGEPS) leads the training of public sector staff for implementation of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic). CGEPS has provided guidance materials, resources and training to agencies, including the *Gender Impact Assessment Toolkit* and accompanying *Templates and Resources to Support Gender Impact Assessments*. CGEPS also advised the Committee that it

<sup>29</sup> Debbie Budlender, Diane Elson, Guy Hewitt, Tanni Mukhopadhyay, *Gender Budgets Makes Cents: Understanding Gender Responsive Budgets*, United Kingdom, 2002, <<https://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Gender-Budgets-Make-Cents-Understanding-Gender-Responsive-Budgets.pdf>> accessed 1 November 2021, p. 117.

<sup>30</sup> Equality Rights Alliance, *Submission 1*, received 21 November 2019, p. 4, 29.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Treasury and Finance, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3.



partnered with a panel of expert gender equality providers to roll out initial training, however, it is unclear if this panel has been formalised and engaged on an ongoing basis.<sup>33</sup>

As part of the 2021–22 Budget, the Victorian Government allocated \$1 million over two years (\$514,000 in 2021–22 and \$525,000 in 2022–23) to establish a Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit (GRBU) within the Budget Division of DTF.<sup>34</sup> The Unit aims to:

- proactively promote gender equality as a focus of strategic policy development
- drive GRB across the Victorian public sector to ensure it becomes an embedded way of thinking in the work Government performs
- implement gender impact assessment across government to facilitate measurement of outcomes as part of budget decision-making processes
- provide direct support across Government departments and to central agency staff who work on the budget process, to promote understanding of what is required across the public sector
- lead the development and implementation of capacity building programs across the Victorian public sector to support the preparation of business cases using gender responsive approaches.<sup>35</sup>

The Unit consists of four staff, with three employees specifically recruited to the newly created roles and all holding experience and capability in working with budget policy and processes and economic analysis.<sup>36</sup> As at 4 October 2021, all new staff have been appointed and commenced employment in the Unit.<sup>37</sup>

The Committee was not provided evidence on the extent to which the Unit will provide services across government in consideration of staffing levels and how the Unit's performance will be measured. Ensuring the CGEPS and GRBU are adequately resourced will be important to ensuring they can continue to undertake their work across the public sector. In this context, the Committee notes that following the initial rollout of GIA training to defined entities, CGEPS identified that more training is required noting that requests for additional assistance had been received.<sup>38</sup> The Commission advised the Committee that there are currently 14 staff within CGEPS and that additional resourcing would be required.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 5; Department of Treasury and Finance, Budget and Finance, correspondence, 30 September 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 5; Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Department of Treasury and Finance, Budget and Finance, correspondence, 30 September 2021.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*



**FINDING 17:** The Victorian Government has established the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector and the Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit to perform training and capacity development across the Victorian public sector for the achievement of gender equality outcomes.

**RECOMMENDATION 16:** The Department of Treasury and Finance publish quality performance measures in the Victorian State Budget Papers to assess the outcomes of the services provided by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector and the Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit.

## Guidelines on the application of Gender Responsive Budgeting

The OECD outlines that in addition to training and capacity development, it is useful for governments to provide detailed instructions on the application of GRB in the annual budget circular. The OECD reported that in 2018 over half of the countries who had introduced GRB had an annual budget circular with GRB instructions including Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Korea, Mexico, and Spain.<sup>40</sup> Such instructional documents can increase openness and understanding in relation to GRB through the public sector.<sup>41</sup>

In Sweden a step-by-step guide on how to conduct a gender equality analysis during the budget process has been developed.<sup>42</sup> The Department of Finance in Canada has taken measures to drive improvement in the quality of GBA+’s—Canada’s ex ante (during the policy formulation and design stages) GIA tool—being put forward with budget proposals. This includes highlighting examples of GBA+ that require improvement and publicly committing to publishing GBA+’s of all budget items starting from Budget 2019.<sup>43</sup>

The Committee was advised that the Philippine Commission on Women, the agency assigned to review GAD plans and budgets, has developed guidelines for timelines, submissions and assessment of the annual GAD budget. Their findings show that agencies prefer a streamlined and simple process of submission and review and that tools and guiding documents are helpful in drafting GAD plans and budgets. For example, the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines and the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Plan.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Budgeting and Public Expenditures in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 107

<sup>41</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 31.

<sup>42</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 32.

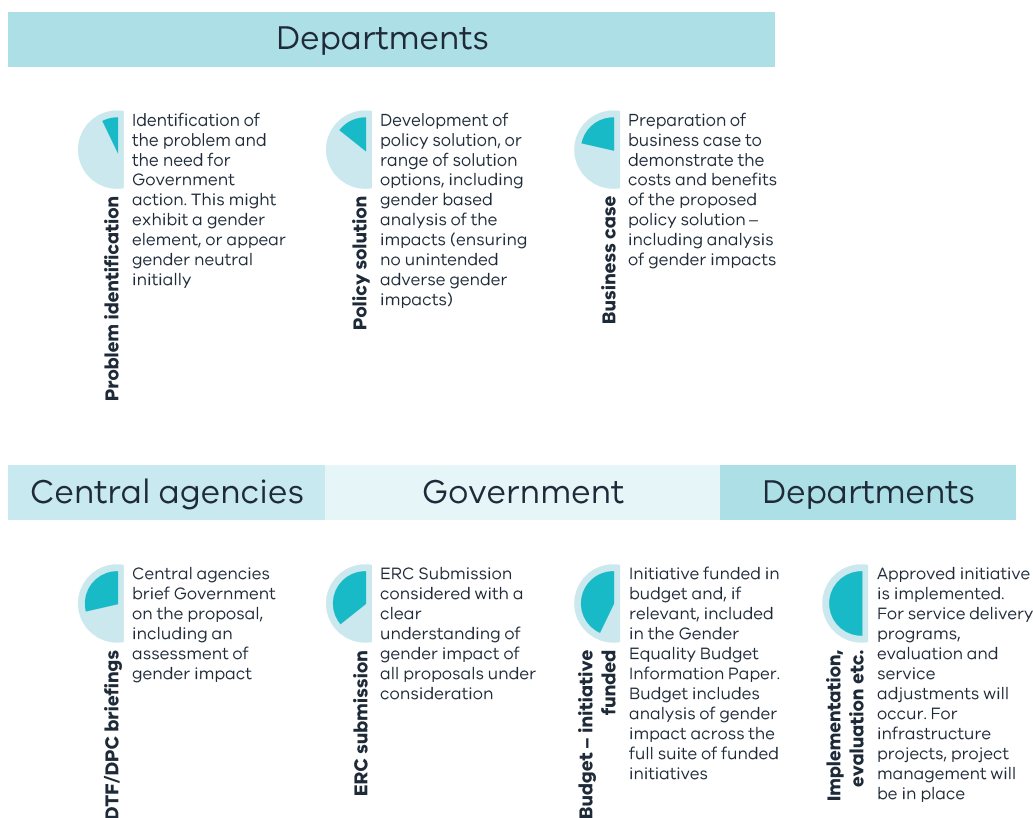
<sup>43</sup> See Section 4.3.1 of this report for further detail on Canada’s GBA+ assessments. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Ms Maria Kristine Josefina G. Balmes, Deputy Executive Director for Operations, Philippine Commission on Women, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4.

The importance of considering gender impacts when setting budget priorities and ensuring that GIA forms part of the development process for new spending proposals was noted by the National Foundation for Australian Women and the Australian National University Gender Institute.<sup>45</sup>

DTF advised the Committee that GIA's will be considered by all Victorian Government departments and agencies at every stage of the policy lifecycle (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Gender impact assessment across the policy lifecycle



Source: Department of Treasury and Finance, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting, 25 October 2021, supplementary evidence received 25 October 2021, p. 4.

The Committee was advised that DTF is working with CGEPS to leverage their work in the area of GIA to consider methodologies and tools that can be applied at different stages of the budget cycle.<sup>46</sup> This includes reviewing and updating existing templates and guidelines for inclusion of GRB and developing information and training materials to support departments in the budget process for 2022–23.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> National Foundation for Australian Women, *Submission 9*, received 2 December 2019, pp. 7–8; Australian National University Gender Institute, *Submission 21*, received 12 December 2019, pp. 8–9.

<sup>46</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2; Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, *Submission 27*, received 9 September 2021, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Department of Treasury and Finance, Budget and Finance, correspondence, 30 September 2021; Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 2, 4.

**FINDING 18:** The Department of Treasury and Finance is currently developing tools to guide gender impact assessments in budget development, in line with the commitment made in the 2016 *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*.

### The role of an expert group

The establishment of the WBG in the UK enabled an independent resource of experts in GRB to support the Treasury's GRB initiatives and capacity building across the whole of government, encouraging greater transparency and accountability.<sup>48</sup>

Annually, in advance of the budget, the WBG produces briefings on a range of policy areas, such as health, education, housing, violence against women and girls, employment and public sector pay, as well as an analysis of the budget and briefings for parliamentarians during debates on the budget in parliament.<sup>49</sup> The WBG participates in regular meetings with the Treasury to review existing and planned policies and programs, consistent with the UK Government's commitments to mainstreaming gender and structured consultation with the greater public in policy formulation.<sup>50</sup>

The WBG's Casebook *Women Count: A Resource for Gender Responsive Budgeting*, provides guidance on how to build capacity in Treasury, across government departments and in civil society both nationally and internationally.<sup>51</sup> The Casebook outlines WBG's key role in providing expert advice and training to public servants and elected officials in performing GRB. The WBG works with Members of Parliament to build capacity in holding local and national government to account with respect to gender issues and women. The WBG also assists civil society organisations to engage with the budget process.<sup>52</sup>

**FINDING 19:** The work of the United Kingdom's Women's Budget Group provides a strong example of the role an independent expert consultative group can have in providing Gender Responsive Budgeting training and capacity building to public servants.

### Gender audits as a tool to measure capacity

The United Nations Women Training Centre argued that for gender equality training to be a tool for transforming institutional attitudes, it must go beyond skills acquisition to 'address the underlying structural dimensions of gender inequality'.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Gender Equity Victoria, *Submission 7*, received 2 December 2019, p. 15.

<sup>49</sup> Women's Budget Group, *Submission 2a*, received 27 November 2019, p. 13.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Gender Equity Victoria, *Submission 7*, received 2 December 2019, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> Women's Budget Group, *Submission 2a*, received 27 November 2019, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> Equality Rights Alliance, *Submission 1*, received 21 November 2019, p. 28.

CGEPS recognised the importance of having DTF's GRB Unit oversee and share their expertise and understanding of the budget process, including to measure impact and provide skill development through specific training for staff that will develop and assess budgets. The Committee heard that CGEPS plans to work with DTF to ensure the consistent collection of data and to identify agencies that require further targeted support to meet their gender impact assessment obligations.<sup>54</sup>

Angela Jackson and Dr Leonora Risse also highlighted that GRB training requires auditing and data collection to inform needs, noting that there are likely to be data gaps across some policy areas, making assessments of impacts by gender not currently possible across the entire public sector.<sup>55</sup> They detail that as a preliminary step, an audit of available data would be required to identify current data gaps. Further, they advise that for GRB to be effective, the Government must be committed to investing funding in the collection and processing of data to identify capability gaps across different policy areas in assessing gender impacts. This could be addressed through training in parallel with other relevant mechanisms, including leadership and engaging with expert groups.<sup>56</sup>

These same conclusions have been drawn by the Philippines Government, where the 2018 study of GRB efforts recommended conducting a gender audit, including analysis of sex-disaggregated data to inform training needs.<sup>57</sup>

**FINDING 20:** Once Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) training has been fully implemented, systematic gender audits should occur across the Victorian public sector to assist in assessing the effectiveness of GRB and to identify gaps to inform future training and awareness raising efforts.

### Andalusia's Gender Responsive Budgeting training and capacity development model

As highlighted throughout this report, elements of the Andalusian GRB strategy have become widely recognised as best practice internationally, due to its evident permeation through all levels of government.<sup>58</sup> The Committee was advised that since the inception of GRB in Andalusia, one of four key elements in its G+ project (outlined at Section 3.2.2 of this report) is to educate and train staff in a constant effort to promote a cultural change in relation to budgeting. This includes strengthening the skills of the responsible technical personnel at different levels of the Government.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Angela Jackson and Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Equality Rights Alliance, *Submission 1*, received 21 November 2019, p. 28.

<sup>58</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearings presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funds, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) specifically acknowledged the training and capacity building efforts of the Andalusian Government in its 2016 paper surveying GRB efforts in Europe, highlighting the leadership role the Ministry of Finance and European Funding has taken. The IMF states that in addition to implementation tools and systems, an organisational change process underpins the shift to GRB in Andalusia with a focus on changing values, priorities and stereotypes and the provision of expert technical assistance.<sup>60</sup>

Included in the GRB Strategy of the Government of Andalusia are GRB training, awareness, and promotional practices.<sup>61</sup> What sets the Andalusian model apart from other administrations examined by the Committee is that its commitment to training and awareness raising is formalised in its annual Gender and Budget Training and Awareness Plans, approved by the Gender Budgeting Impact Commission.<sup>62</sup> The objective of the 2020 training plan was to integrate a gender focus into budgetary policies through a process of raising awareness throughout the administration. Further, this highlighted the importance of the gender-focused budget in correcting inequalities between men and women found in various areas of public policy.<sup>63</sup>

The targeted approach to training and awareness raising in Andalusia aims to ensure those with an important role in GRB (such as the Gender Budgeting Impact Commission and the Gender Equality Units) regularly receive updated and relevant information to help coordinate GRB with the staff responsible in management bodies.<sup>64</sup> One of the plan's main lines of work relates to training in collaboration with the Andalusian Institute of Public Affairs, the institute responsible for training all personnel. This ensures training programs reach all people responsible for, and involved in, the implementation of the Budget and gender strategy in the different management centres of the Andalusian Government.<sup>65</sup>

The gender budgeting awareness-raising actions that aim to reach the whole of the staff of the Andalusian Government were developed through the various channels laid down in the 2020 Awareness-Raising Plan.<sup>66</sup> As part of its annual Awareness-Raising Plan the Andalusian Ministry of Finance established a detailed annual program of work for the strategy of the entire administration. The Secretary General of Finance and the Directorate General for the Budget make a coordinated effort to set up an

<sup>60</sup> Sheila Quinn, International Monetary Fund Working Paper, *Europe: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts*, IMF, 2016, p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearings presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> The Gender Impact Commission of Andalusia promotes and implements the Government's GRB strategy. Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funds, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing presentation, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearings presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funds, *Gender Budgeting Awareness Raising Plan 2021*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, p. 6.

annually assessed work plan to be followed.<sup>67</sup> The Awareness-Raising Plans include an assessment of the previous year's implementation as well as actions to be undertaken during the current year.<sup>68</sup> Evaluation of the 2020 Awareness-Raising Plan shows qualitative and quantitative progress in its objectives of providing information and raising awareness of GRB throughout the Government of Andalusia.

A separate annual training plan is also produced. The 2021 Training Plan includes this evaluation along with the actions planned for the current year, such as detailed training schedules and their strategic purpose, linked back to actions to identify new training needs from the previous year and the budget.<sup>69</sup>

**FINDING 21:** An overarching annual training and awareness plan that includes evaluation along with the actions planned for the current year, such as detailed training schedules and their strategic purpose, would assist the Victorian Government to develop the capacity of Victorian public sector staff involved in Gender Responsive Budgeting.

**RECOMMENDATION 17:** The Victorian Government include in *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* a training and capacity development plan for public servants across all departments to raise awareness and facilitate a supportive culture for Gender Responsive Budgeting.

### 5.3 Implications for Victoria

The Committee's consideration of the evidence received throughout this Inquiry and analysis of international best practice suggests that Victoria would benefit from strengthening the enabling environment for GRB. The Committee's recommendations made throughout this Chapter are aimed at enhancing the work of CGPES and GRBU to further embed awareness of GRB and establish sustainable GRB practices across the Victorian Government.

<sup>67</sup> Ignacio Mendez Cortegano, Secretary General of Finance, Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain, Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting hearings presentation, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funds, *Gender Budgeting Training Plan 2021*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, pp. 4-15.

# 6 Measuring and reporting on outcomes

## 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 examines the need for effective processes around measuring and reporting on the outcomes of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) policies and programs.

The Committee found that while significant work is underway on the collection of gender disaggregated data in Victoria, there are opportunities for improvement in measuring and reporting on outcomes. The Committee assessed national and international best practice models and frameworks to inform recommendations in the Victorian context, covering:

- the collection of more comprehensive sex/gender disaggregation data to inform and identify appropriate mechanisms to measure outcomes
- inclusion of a gender dimension in performance setting, mechanisms for effective funding allocations and the incorporation of gender in performance auditing
- the need for independent evaluations of GRB initiatives and the use of budgeting audits to ensure accountability.

## 6.2 Ex post Gender Responsive Budgeting

The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) program suggests that government reports that outline budget policy implementation should include an assessment and overview of findings of ex post gender impact assessments.<sup>1</sup> To be most effective, ex post assessments should include the extent to which intended outcomes and impacts of policies targeting gender or gender equality have been achieved.<sup>2</sup>

The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) advised that its GRB implementation plan addresses three work streams: measuring and monitoring progress, informing decision-making, and the annual budget process.<sup>3</sup> DTF noted that measuring and monitoring progress is critical to ensuring an overview of impact and success of GRB over time and establishing and measuring a baseline to measure future progress.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 2020, p. 73. Ex post means the assessment is undertaken after the policy formulation stage

2 Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 2020, p. 73.

3 Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

4 Ibid.

DTF informed the Committee that a post-implementation review of GRB processes will be carried out following completion of the 2021–22 budget cycle.<sup>5</sup> The Committee considers it important that the outcomes of this review be made public to inform scrutiny of the Government’s implementation of GRB practices.

**FINDING 22:** The Department of Treasury and Finance will be undertaking a post-implementation review of Gender Responsive Budgeting processes following completion of the 2021–22 budget cycle.

**RECOMMENDATION 18:** The Department of Treasury and Finance’s post-implementation review of Gender Responsive Budgeting processes include information on the extent to which intended outcomes and impacts of policies targeting gender or gender equality have been achieved.

**RECOMMENDATION 19:** The Department of Treasury and Finance publicly release the key findings of their post-implementation review of Gender Responsive Budgeting processes.

### 6.3 Gender disaggregated data

Gender disaggregated data is data that is collected and presented separately on men and women allowing for the measurement of differences in various social and economic dimensions.<sup>6</sup> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) argues that systematic collection of gender disaggregated data supports rigorous gender impact assessments and audits and is pivotal in enabling governments to develop effective gender-sensitive and evidence-based policies.<sup>7</sup>

According to the OECD, as a baseline for established institutional frameworks, gender disaggregated statistics and indicators should support the development, implementation and monitoring of gender-sensitive programs and policies.<sup>8</sup> Sufficient

5 Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 7.

6 The Committee acknowledges the differentiation between sex (at birth) and gender (as a social construct) and that there is a category in addition to women and men that should be represented consistently in either gender or sex disaggregated data. Materials examined by the committee refer to sex and gender interchangeably—this Chapter uses the language referred to in each source and differentiates between sex and gender where relevant. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality - Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 114.

7 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 30.

8 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality - Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 15.



gender disaggregated data to support GRB measures and inform more targeted efforts is also a key element in a supportive enabling environment for GRB which the OECD contends is necessary for an enduring GRB practice (outlined in Chapter 5).<sup>9</sup>

### 6.3.1 Mandating data collection

The OECD and International Monetary Fund (IMF) highlight best practice examples that demonstrate the incorporation of a gender perspective within national and sub-national statistical legislation, including:

- Belgium—2007 legislation mandates the collection and management of sex-disaggregated data to develop gender indicators.<sup>10</sup>
- Iceland—2008 legislation mandates the use of sex disaggregated statistics in all official economic surveys, reports and policymaking.<sup>11</sup>
- Andalusia—2007 legislation mandates the collection and management of sex-disaggregated and gender relevant data.<sup>12</sup>

The Victorian *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires public sector organisations to collect data and report on gender equality in their workplaces in Gender Equality Action Plans.<sup>13</sup> This data must be gender disaggregated and if available, collated about Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation.<sup>14</sup> The first round of workplace gender data was originally scheduled to be provided to the Gender Equality Commissioner on 1 December 2021, however an extension was granted to 31 March 2022 due to the pandemic.<sup>15</sup>

The Commissioner seeks to support the breakdown of structural gender bias that is currently hidden by ‘gender-neutral’ policy processes that fail to consider the experiences of women and gender-diverse people.<sup>16</sup> The Commissioner explained:

when programs, policies, services and budgets that impact women are made without considering women, perhaps because there is the assumption that the consequences will be gender neutral or because a male experience has been used by default to model impacts, then the structural inequalities continue unchallenged.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Sheila Quinn, International Monetary Fund Working Paper, *Europe: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts*, IMF, 2016, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp. 26–28.

<sup>13</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic), Part 4, cl. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

The data collected by the Commissioner will be publicly available so that high-level data about organisations will be searchable to allow for effective public scrutiny.<sup>18</sup>

**FINDING 23:** Best practice international Gender Responsive Budgeting models mandate the collection of sex disaggregated data in legislation.

**FINDING 24:** The *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic) legislated the collection of gender disaggregated data by public sector organisations on workplace gender equality. The first round of data is scheduled to be provided to the Gender Equality Commissioner by 31 March 2022 and high-level data about organisations will be made publicly available.

## 6.4 Gender dimension in performance setting

As discussed in Chapter 4, a gender dimension in performance setting refers to the linking of gender responsive policies and governmental performance budgeting frameworks.<sup>19</sup> In general, performance budgeting involves two key elements:

1. The incorporation of information that measures what governments do and their expected policy impacts into various stages of the budget cycle.
2. The use of this information in budget decision making to better align spending decisions with government priorities and expected performance.<sup>20</sup>

The outputs and outcomes approach to performance budgeting is practiced in Victoria and focuses budget decision making and accountability on:

- outcomes—what influence the government wishes to have on the community by its actions
- outputs—how the government wishes to achieve that influence
- performance measures—how the government and the community know whether the influence is being achieved in an efficient and effective manner.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Glossary of Key Terms for completing the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey*, <<https://www.oecd.org/governance/budgeting/OECD-2018-Budget-Practices-and-Procedures-Glossary-of-key-terms.pdf>> accessed 26 January 2022, p. 5; see Section 4.4.1 of this report for further discussion on this definition.

<sup>20</sup> Rhonda Sharp, *Budgeting for Equity: Gender budgeting initiatives within a framework of performance orientated budgeting*, 2003, <<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Media/Publications/UNIFEM/BudgetingForEquity1stHalf.pdf>> accessed 26 January 2022, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew Chan, Mark Nizette, Lisa La Rance, Charles Broughton and Derek Russell, 'Australia', *OECD Journal of Budgeting*, 2002 vol. 1, issue 4, pp. 35–69, Cited in Rhonda Sharp, *Budgeting for Equity: Gender budgeting initiatives within a framework of performance orientated budgeting*, 2003, <<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Media/Publications/UNIFEM/BudgetingForEquity1stHalf.pdf>> accessed 26 January 2022, p. 28.

According to the United Nations, a gender responsive output and outcomes performance budgeting framework includes gender disaggregated measures of outputs and outcomes and explicit identification of gender equality as an indicator (measure) of performance.<sup>22</sup>

The OECD GRB framework recommends that gender-related performance measures be set across different policy areas to enable outcomes to be measured and to provide points of comparison with international and other benchmarks.<sup>23</sup> This involves the central budget authority identifying gender equality output and outcome indicators, setting targets and incorporating these into relevant budget documentation.<sup>24</sup> More than half of OECD countries that engage in GRB apply a gender perspective in performance setting.<sup>25</sup>

The Committee notes that the effectiveness of gender responsive performance budgeting is contingent on the availability of reliable and comprehensive gender disaggregated data to set evidence-based outcomes and performance measures (see Section 6.3 of this report for further information).<sup>26</sup>

The Austrian and Canadian performance budgeting frameworks provide comprehensive examples of the integration of a gender dimension in performance setting.

#### 6.4.1 Systematic collection of data

The OECD outlines the following key elements to ensure the utility of the systematic collection of gender disaggregated data:

- Regular collection by national and sub-national institutions on the impact of government policies, programs and budgets on gender equality.<sup>27</sup>
- National statistics bureau collection across all sectors in line with gender impact indicators.<sup>28</sup>

22 Rhonda Sharp, *Budgeting for Equity: Gender budgeting initiatives within a framework of performance orientated budgeting*, 2003, <<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Media/Publications/UNIFEM/BudgetingForEquity1stHalf.pdf>> accessed 26 January 2022, pp. 53, 56, 67.

23 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality - Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 33; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Policy Framework for Gender-Sensitive Public Governance*, 27 September 2021, <<https://www.oecd.org/mcm/Policy-Framework-for-Gender-Sensitive-Public-Governance.pdf>> accessed 26 November 2021, p. 51.

24 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality - Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 33

25 Austria, Canada, Chile, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Spain, and Sweden. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 13.

26 Rhonda Sharp, *Budgeting for Equity: Gender budgeting initiatives within a framework of performance orientated budgeting*, 2003, <<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Media/Publications/UNIFEM/BudgetingForEquity1stHalf.pdf>> accessed 26 January 2022, p. 43; Women in Social and Economic Research (WiSER) Curtin University, *Submission 5*, received 1 December 2019, p. 13.

27 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality - Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 20.

28 Ibid, pp. 20, 43.

- Easily accessible data on gender equality and mainstreaming results through a centralised and reliable data management system, with data tracked against national and international targets and benchmarks.<sup>29</sup>
- Regular consultation with stakeholders for collection of gender disaggregated data against gender impact indicators to measure progress.<sup>30</sup>

**FINDING 25:** The systematic collection of sex disaggregated data should involve regular data collection at national and sub-national levels and be used to measure the impacts of gender equality policies and programs. Data collection should involve the national statistics bureau, include consultation with stakeholders to measure progress and impacts and be managed through a reliable central system.

### Canada experience

The Government of Canada has established a best practice model of gender based analysis informed by disaggregated data that identifies the way in which public policy and programs effect different groups.<sup>31</sup> In their submission to the Inquiry, Canada's statistical agency, Statistics Canada outlined that data supports evidence-based policy decisions in Canada through the Government's GRB initiative, GBA+ (introduced at Section 4.3.1 of this report).<sup>32</sup> The Government of Canada highlighted that the success of GBA+ is due to the collection and use of comprehensive gender disaggregated data.<sup>33</sup>

The Canadian Government provides easy public access to the data collected through the Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics Hub, which includes access to research and other products related to gender, diversity and inclusion, in support of the Gender Results Framework (GRF).<sup>34</sup> New topics such as information on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on diverse populations have been added and are updated regularly.<sup>35</sup> Further improvements to increase ease of access to intersectional analysis, disaggregated data and innovative visual tools are forthcoming.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 42–43.

<sup>30</sup> Stakeholders include non-government organisations, women's groups, and service providers. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality - Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 42.

<sup>31</sup> International Monetary Fund, 2017, *Gender Budgeting in G7 Countries*, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> Statistics Canada, *Submission 28*, received 26 November 2021, p. 2.; GBA+ is an analytical process that provides a rigorous method to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. Quantitative and qualitative data is also used to monitor and evaluate GBA+ for its effects on various groups over time.

<sup>33</sup> Statistics Canada, *Submission 28*, received 26 November 2021, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

Statistics Canada is in the process of developing a Disaggregated Data Action Plan (DDAP), aimed to fill data gaps and encourage a culture shift, where data disaggregation becomes standard practice within government.<sup>37</sup> Through the DDAP Statistics Canada intends to enable the disaggregation of large datasets into smaller more meaningful statistics for diverse groups of people to inform more efficient evidence-based policy decisions.<sup>38</sup>

The 2021–22 Canadian Federal Budget allocated \$172 million over five years to Statistics Canada to implement the DDAP.<sup>39</sup>

**FINDING 26:** The Government of Canada’s model of gender based analysis informed by disaggregated data that identifies the way in which public policy and programs effect different groups, provides an example of the utility of effective data collection practices.

## Victoria

Victoria’s *Gender Equality Baseline Report* draws on available data (as of October 2019) to identify gender equality gaps and areas for potential government investment across the next three years. Over 20 data sources were considered to inform the development of the baseline assessment, to measure knowledge, behaviour and service access and progress on economic and social indicators including census and household surveys.<sup>40</sup> The data is being used to set measures across the outcomes and indicators aligned to the implementation of *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*.<sup>41</sup> The Report acknowledges that gender intersects with other factors and that the experience of gender inequality can be impacted where these factors meet.<sup>42</sup>

A progress report on the baseline will be developed in 2022 to track gender equality data from instruments such as the ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021).<sup>43</sup> The Committee notes that the *Gender Equality Baseline Report* acknowledged there is a lack of state-based data in some areas and that gaps have been identified in state-based reporting across all settings. The Report also recognised that significant data development work is required to address these limitations and to ensure that outcome data is valid and reliable.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Victorian Government, *Gender Equality Baseline Report*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-baseline-report>>, 2019, Melbourne, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

**FINDING 27:** The Victorian Government has commenced significant work on the collection of gender disaggregated data in its 2019 *Gender Equality Baseline Report*. The Report identified that further state-based reporting work is required to effectively monitor improvements in gender equality.

The Committee notes that the reliance on national data limits Victoria's ability to effectively monitor gender equality improvements.<sup>45</sup> At the public hearings, the Committee was advised that the ABS works with both the Commonwealth Office for Women and the Treasury on several projects including gender indicators and tracking.<sup>46</sup> Currently the only traditional data sources that provide this level of disaggregation at the Australian national level are the Census and major social surveys.<sup>47</sup> The ABS acknowledged that some of the limitations around data are that often only sex or gender is collected. The Committee notes that the 2021 Census was the first time 'other' was used in collecting gender data.

**FINDING 28:** The sex and gender disaggregated data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is limited to major national surveys such as the Census and does not provide a state-based breakdown of the data collected.

Both DTF and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) advised the Committee that they recognise the need for improvements in data collection to measure gender analysis and impact on different cohorts.<sup>48</sup> DFFH highlighted the need to identify what data and statistics are required across all policy impacts to inform future measures.<sup>49</sup>

In their submission, economists Leonora Risse and Angela Jackson suggested that the Victorian Government may benefit from undertaking a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the currently available data, to identify significant gaps, and then plan and assess the capacity for different data collection agencies to share data.<sup>50</sup> Their view was supported by KPMG who recommended that the Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit within DTF establish a baseline understanding of the gender disaggregated data that is available to government departments to use.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Department of Treasury and Finance, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2. Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Angela Jackson and Leonora Risse, *Submission 18*, received 2 December 2019, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> KPMG, *Submission 32*, received 5 October 2021, p. 11.

The data due to the Gender Equality Commissioner in March 2022 will provide the Victorian Government with further insight into the state of gender equality in the public sector and potentially identify areas for further data collection and investigation.

**FINDING 29:** Improving the collection of sex disaggregated data and increasing the ability for this information to be accessed, would assist the Victorian Government to perform analysis of policy impacts on different groups of people and help inform the development of future measures.

**RECOMMENDATION 20:** The Victorian Government perform an audit of existing sex disaggregated data to establish a baseline understanding of the gender disaggregated data that is currently available.

**RECOMMENDATION 21:** The Victorian Government use the results of the audit of existing sex disaggregated data to develop a sex disaggregated data action plan to address any gaps that are identified.

### Austria experience

In Austria, GRB was introduced as part of the performance budgeting framework codified in the Federal Budget Law of 2013.<sup>52</sup> It requires each chapter within the Annual Budget Statement to have at least one objective and indicator directly addressing gender equality to ensure each line ministry considers how its activities contribute to gender equality outcomes.<sup>53</sup> Gender equality objectives and achieved outcomes are then accounted for in Performance Reports prepared by the Austrian Federal Chancellery.<sup>54</sup>

**FINDING 30:** The Austrian performance budgeting framework provides a best practice example of gender equality objectives and indicators being embedded in the annual budget and a formalised mechanism for reporting on equality outcomes.

<sup>52</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality - Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 33; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 14.

## Canada experience

Since 2018, the Budget of Canada has been guided by the GRF designed through collaborative efforts between Statistics Canada, the Department of Finance, Department for Women and Gender Equality and Global Affairs Canada.<sup>55</sup>

The GRF has six pillars and outlines 43 objectives and indicators under each pillar to identify where change is required to advance gender equality and track performance.<sup>56</sup> Canada's Gender, Diversity and Quality of Life Statement provides a summary of the nation's performance against the GRF.<sup>57</sup> Canada's Budget Impact Report also identifies the GRF pillar that each budget measure advances equality under.<sup>58</sup>

Statistics Canada is responsible for providing the data and analysis required to measure Canada's gender equality performance through the GRF.<sup>59</sup> In their submission to the Inquiry, Statistics Canada noted that due to the magnitude of the task, only data for 36 indicators has been gathered to date, albeit much of this was already held from flagship surveys including the Census of Population, Labour Force Survey and the Vital Statistics Program.<sup>60</sup> It was acknowledged that for the remaining indicators that are yet to be published, further work is required.<sup>61</sup>

**FINDING 31:** The Canadian Government has established a Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics Hub, within Statistics Canada, that is responsible for providing the data and analysis required to measure Canada's gender equality performance through its Gender Responsive Framework.

55 Statistics Canada, *Submission 28*, received 18 November 2021, p. 3.

56 The six pillars are: Education and Skills Development, Economic Participation and Prosperity, Leadership and Democratic Participation, Gender-Based Violence and Access to Justice, Poverty Reduction, Health and Well-Being & Gender Equality around the World. Statistics Canada, *Submission 28*, received 18 November 2021, pp. 4, 7; Government of Canada, Gender Results Framework, <<https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-results-framework/poster-en.pdf>> accessed 26 January 2022.

57 Government of Canada, *Budget 2021: Annex 4 – Gender, Diversity, and Quality of Life Statement*, 2021, <<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/annx4-en.html>> accessed 26 November 2021, pp. 377–404.

58 Government of Canada, *Budget 2021: Annex 5 – Budget 2021 Impacts Report*, 2021, <<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/annx5-en.html>> accessed 26 November 2021; Government of Canada, *Budget 2021 – A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience*, 2021, <<https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>> accessed 26 November 2021, pp. 413–580.

59 Statistics Canada, *Submission 28*, received 18 November 2021, pp. 4–11.

60 Ibid, p. 8.

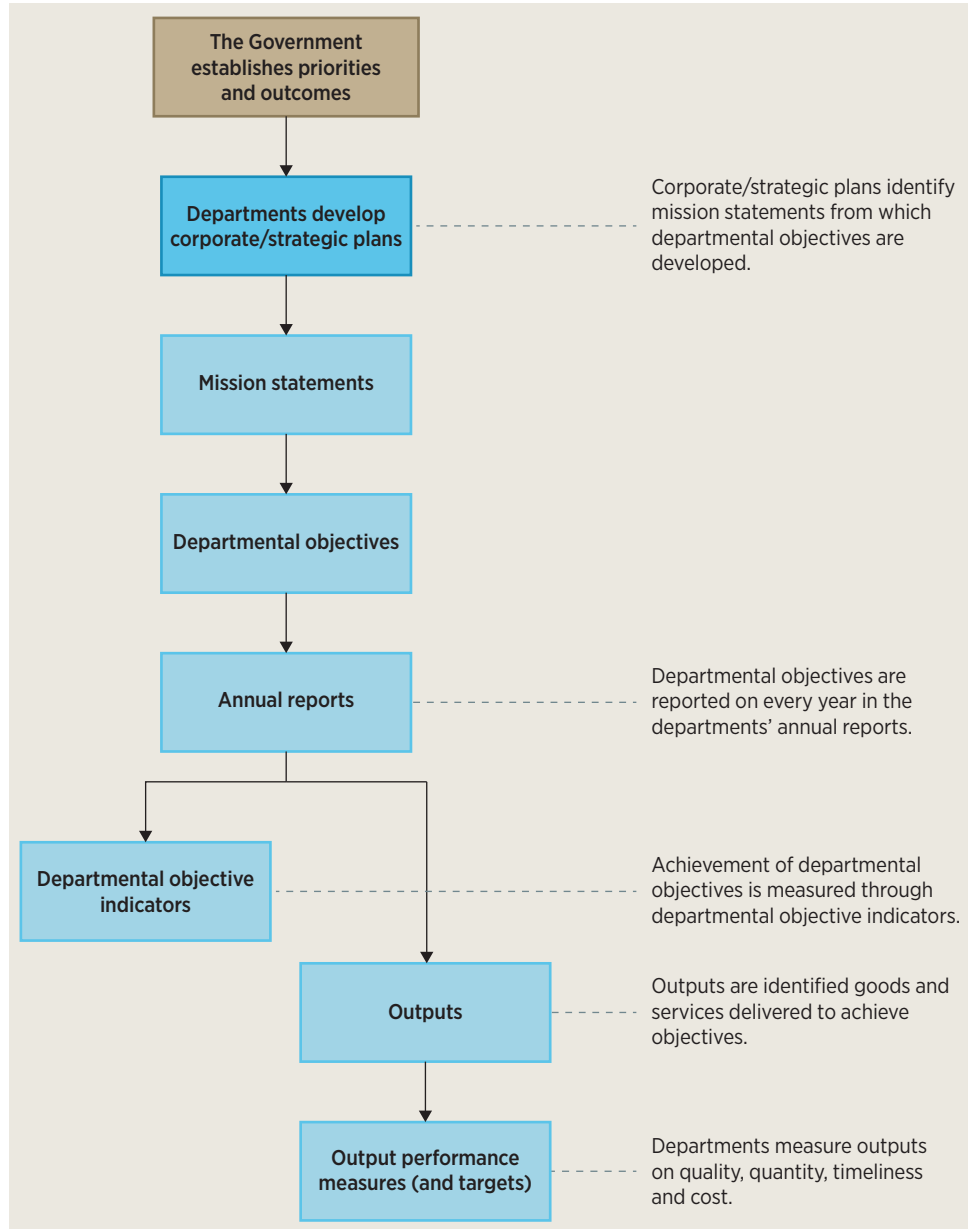
61 Ibid.



### Victoria experience

Victoria’s approach to performance budgeting is set out in the State’s Performance Management Framework. The framework’s components are illustrated in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1** Victoria’s performance management framework



Source: Based on Department of Treasury and Finance, Performance Management Framework for Victorian Government. Cited in Parliament of Victoria, *Report on the 2016-17 Financial and Performance Outcomes*, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, Melbourne, p. 113.

Similar to Canada, Victoria has a Gender Equality Performance Framework external to the Budget that is comprised of:

- *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, setting outcomes, indicators and targets.<sup>62</sup>
- *Refreshed Gender Equality Outcomes Framework*, refining outcomes, indicators, and targets, and outlining baseline figures, data sources and annual to five-year reporting periods.<sup>63</sup>
- The *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*, establishing seven workplace gender equality indicators for public sector organisations, and requirements around workplace gender audits, data collection, progress statements, action plans and reporting.<sup>64</sup>

The *2021–22 Victorian State Budget Papers*, *2021–22 Gender Equality Budget Statement*, and *2020–21 Departmental Annual Reports* do not publish information on the Victorian Government's progress toward achieving gender equality outcomes against targets and indicators outlined in Victoria's Gender Equality Performance Framework.

At the public hearings, DFFH highlighted the importance of setting high level gender equality outcomes and tracking the impact of government intervention on the wider Victorian community.<sup>65</sup>

Professor Jennifer Curtin's submission to the Inquiry states that an effective gender equality strategy should be tied to 'a framework of indicators or results, to enable the tracking of progress towards gender outcomes over the medium term'. Professor Curtin explained:

A results framework provides the requisite evidence for future government investment and has the potential to support a focus on both current and intergenerational gender equality and wellbeing.<sup>66</sup>

KPMG also maintained that the Victorian Government's implementation of a gender equality strategy and allocation of funding to the establishment of GRB makes it necessary to track progress on key measures of gender equality.<sup>67</sup>

The Committee notes that for a gender perspective to be integrated into Victoria's Performance Management Framework, targets and indicators outlined in the State's *Gender Equality Strategy*, *Gender Equality Outcomes Framework* and *Gender Equality*

<sup>62</sup> *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*.

<sup>63</sup> Victorian Government, *Gender Equality Baseline Report*, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-baseline-report>>, 2019, Melbourne.

<sup>64</sup> *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)* s 3, 5(1). Defined entities must make reasonable and material progress in relation to seven indicators across: gender pay equity, gender composition at all levels of the workforce, gender composition of governing bodies, workplace sexual harassment, recruitment and promotion practices, gendered work segregation and access to leave and flexibility. Cited in Dr Niki Vincent, Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, Transcript of evidence, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Sandy Pitcher, Secretary, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, Transcript of evidence, p. 9.

<sup>66</sup> Professor Jennifer Curtin, *Submission 15*, received 2 December 2021, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> KPMG Australia, *Submission 30*, received 29 November 2021, p. 14.

*Act 2020* should be outlined in the State Budget Papers or Gender Equality Budget Statement and outcomes tracked in Departmental Annual Reports.

**RECOMMENDATION 22:** The Victorian Government publish gender equality targets and indicators in the State Budget Papers or Gender Equality Budget Statement and track outcomes in departmental annual reports.

At the public hearings, the Committee sought information on whether performance measures would be developed for the newly established Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit in DTF. In response to a question on notice, the Committee was advised that ‘the 2021–22 Budget did not include specific performance measures for Gender Responsive Budgeting’ and that DTF is leading discussions on assessing the impact of the budget on gender equality and establishing a baseline to measure progress.<sup>68</sup>

**FINDING 32:** The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) has the lead role in implementing Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in Victoria. While the 2020–21 Budget did not include performance measures to assess and evaluate GRB, DTF is currently leading discussions on assessing the impact of the budget on gender equality and establishing a baseline to measure progress.

**RECOMMENDATION 23:** The Department of Treasury and Finance include performance measures in the next Budget to assess the progress of the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting in Victoria and the gender equality outcomes achieved.

## 6.5 Parliamentary scrutiny and oversight of Gender Responsive Budgeting

PEFA highlights the key role parliament plays in exercising scrutiny over the Budget.<sup>69</sup> Indicator 9 of the PEFA Gender Responsive Public Financial Management Framework (GRPFM) assesses the extent to which the Parliament’s scrutiny of budgets and audit reports review the gender impacts of service delivery programs.<sup>70</sup>

Likewise, the OECD notes that the Parliament’s responsibility for publicly holding the Executive Government to account for its policies and their implementation naturally

<sup>68</sup> Sandy Pitcher, Secretary, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Gender Responsive Budgeting hearing, *response to questions on notice*, received 27 October 2021, p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Secretariat, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management: Guidance for Assessment Teams*, January 2020, <[https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG\\_GRPFM\\_FRAMEWORK\\_ENG\\_PAGES\\_200609\\_0.pdf](https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG_GRPFM_FRAMEWORK_ENG_PAGES_200609_0.pdf)> accessed 21 October 2021, pp. 84–85.

<sup>70</sup> Service delivery programs refer to those that provide public resources fully or in part, including education and training, health care, social and community support, policing, road construction and maintenance, agricultural support, water and sanitation. Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Secretariat, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management: Guidance for Assessment Teams*, January 2020, <[https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG\\_GRPFM\\_FRAMEWORK\\_ENG\\_PAGES\\_200609\\_0.pdf](https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG_GRPFM_FRAMEWORK_ENG_PAGES_200609_0.pdf)> accessed 21 October 2021, pp. 82–84.

extends to the scrutiny and oversight of GRB. According to the OECD, effective scrutiny and oversight promotes the integrity, quality and credibility of public financial management systems.<sup>71</sup>

Both the GRPFM and the OECD GRB framework provide examples of the role parliament can play in the scrutiny and oversight of GRB. These are discussed further below.

### 6.5.1 Scrutiny of the budget

The inclusion of a gender perspective in the Parliament's review of budget proposals promotes citizen participation in the policy-making process, ensuring their perspectives and priorities are reflected in government programs and services.<sup>72</sup> This process can include the gathering of evidence from citizens, civil society groups and experts via public hearings and submissions.<sup>73</sup>

For example, the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee scrutinises the Government's Draft Budget and Equality Budget Statement by putting out a public call for written evidence and holding hearings, including with gender equality advocacy groups.<sup>74</sup>

The Committee notes that in Victoria the public hearings for the *Inquiry into the Budget Estimates* take place following the passing of the Appropriation Bills which contain the State's annual spending proposals. This means that the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) does not play an ex-ante role in the assessment of Victorian State Budget spending decisions.

### 6.5.2 Scrutiny of expenditure and performance objectives, measures and indicators

In their submission to the Inquiry, ANU stated that parliamentary oversight and scrutiny of gender equality expenditure and indicators can greatly enhance the effectiveness of GRB.<sup>75</sup>

71 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, pp. 6, 18; Cited in Australian National University Gender Institute, *Submission 21*, received 12 December 2019, p. 17.

72 Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Secretariat, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management: Guidance for Assessment Teams*, January 2020, <[https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG\\_GRPFM\\_FRAMEWORK\\_ENG\\_PAGES\\_200609\\_0.pdf](https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/resources/downloads/WBG_GRPFM_FRAMEWORK_ENG_PAGES_200609_0.pdf)> accessed 21 October 2021, p. 84.

73 Ibid, p. 7.

74 Scottish Parliament, Equalities and Human Rights Committee, *Looking Ahead to the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2018-19: Making the Most of Equalities and Human Rights Levers*, <[https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/EHRIC/2017/12/10/Looking-Ahead-to-the-Scottish-Government-s-Draft-Budget-2018-19--Making-the-Most-of-Equalities-and-Human-Rights-Levers/EHRICS052017R7\(Rev\).pdf](https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/EHRIC/2017/12/10/Looking-Ahead-to-the-Scottish-Government-s-Draft-Budget-2018-19--Making-the-Most-of-Equalities-and-Human-Rights-Levers/EHRICS052017R7(Rev).pdf)> accessed 26 January 2022, Cited in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 18.

75 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, pp. 6, 18; Cited in Australian National University Gender Institute, *Submission 21*, received 12 December 2019, pp. 13-14.

With regard to scrutiny of performance information, Austria provides a best practice example. The Austrian Parliament plays a key role in approving gender equality objectives and indicators and ensuring they are fit for purpose through participation in Budget Committee and Subcommittee debates within the Annual Budget and mid-term expenditure framework.<sup>76</sup>

In Victoria, PAEC reviews government expenditure and performance objectives, measures and indicators annually as part of their *Inquiry into the Budget Estimates* and *Inquiry into the Financial and Performance Outcomes*.<sup>77</sup>

## 6.6 Gender audit of the Budget

According to the OECD, a gender audit of the Budget encompasses an independent and objective analysis by a competent independent authority on the extent to which gender equality is effectively achieved through initiatives set out in the annual budget.<sup>78</sup>

The National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW) supported the legislative expansion of the Victorian Parliamentary Budget Office's (PBO) mandate to include a gender audit of the Budget.

The Committee notes that the Austrian PBO also undertakes a systematic overview of objectives, measures and indicators.<sup>79</sup>

At the public hearings, the Committee asked DTF about the appropriateness of the Victorian PBO undertaking independent analysis of the gender impact of the Budget.<sup>80</sup> The Committee was advised that this would be 'a fundamental change to the role of the PBO' whose mandate is to provide policy costings.<sup>81</sup> DTF considered that the best way to achieve GRB outcomes is to focus on the provision of comprehensive gender impact assessment at every stage of the policy cycle to ensure the Victorian Government has the necessary information for effective decision making. Further, it was explained that the Victorian Government already has post-implementation review processes in place which benefit from the firsthand experience of those involved in policy development.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Dr Helmut Berger, Parliamentary Budget Officer, Austria, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 2-3, 8; Dr Helmut Berger, Parliamentary Budget Officer, Austria, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, supplementary evidence received 11 October 2021, p. 12.

<sup>77</sup> *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* (Vic), s 14(1).

<sup>78</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Glossary of Key Terms for completing the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey*, <<https://www.oecd.org/governance/budgeting/OECD-2018-Budget-Practices-and-Procedures-Glossary-of-key-terms.pdf>> accessed 19 October 2021.

<sup>79</sup> Dr Helmut Berger, Parliamentary Budget Officer, Austria, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Mr David Martine, Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Government, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 25 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

## 6.7 Gender dimension to performance audit

Routine performance audits encompass independent and objective analysis of the extent to which policies or programs achieve their goals. The inclusion of a gender dimension to performance audits aims to identify whether the gendered goals of policies and programs have been achieved.

PEFA's GRPFM highlights the benefits of the inclusion of a gender dimension in performance auditing, stating that:

[Auditor-General] conclusions and recommendations contribute to strengthening accountability, transparency, and impact related to gender equality ... [Auditors-General] contribute to strengthening the impact on gender equality goals when the audit recommendations are accepted and implemented by those charged with governance.<sup>83</sup>

The Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation (CAAF) has conducted extensive research into the need for a gender perspective in performance audits. The CAAF highlights four primary reasons why this is important:

1. To determine the degree of government compliance with national and international commitments to gender equality, including the implementation of national legislation, policy, and action plans.
2. To identify and examine the gender-specific impacts of government programs.
3. To make recommendations that can lead to improvements in the design, implementation, and results of government policy and programming, contributing to better gender equality outcomes.
4. To publish audit reports that raise awareness within and outside governments of gender equality issues and how they affect the lives of citizens. Audit reports can also highlight the successes and challenges of governments in achieving gender equality.<sup>84</sup>

The Committee notes that the importance of a gender dimension in performance audits also relates to their focus on the degree of implementation of government policies, rather than an assessment of the merits of the policies themselves.<sup>85</sup> The Committee assessed several international best practice models around the inclusion of a gender dimension in performance auditing and found the auditing structures of Austria and Canada to provide lessons that can be drawn on for Victoria. These are discussed below.

<sup>83</sup> Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 2020, p. 79.

<sup>84</sup> Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation, *Practice Guide to Auditing Gender Equality*, <<https://www.caaf-fcar.ca/en/gender-equality-concepts-and-context/the-importance-of-auditing-for-gender-equality>>, 2021, accessed 23 January 2022.

<sup>85</sup> Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 2020, p. 79.

### Austria experience

Austria has a well-developed auditing structure effectively equipped to include a gender dimension in performance auditing. The Austrian Court of Auditors, the highest-level audit institution for the Republic, is responsible for both financial and performance audits. Internal guidelines of the Court of Auditors provide that each performance audit should consider several questions of gender equality.<sup>86</sup>

The Court of Auditors has conducted several performance audits which have explicitly involved a gender dimension when evaluating and reporting on the implementation of policy measures. The results have shown the importance auditing has in holding governments to account in the implementation of public policy.<sup>87</sup>

### Canada experience

Like Austria, Canada has a well-developed audit structure that enables effective incorporation of a gender dimension in performance audits. In their submission to the Inquiry, the Canadian Auditor-General's Office highlighted its commitment to incorporating a gender dimension in its audit work, including the examination of the implementation of gender impact analysis (GBA+), the impact of GBA+ on policy and the results of GBA+ on the outcomes delivered for Canadians.<sup>88</sup> The Office also highlighted that it is currently building specialist capacity to aid audit teams in integrating a gender dimension in their work program and developing guidance and tools for auditors.<sup>89</sup>

### Victoria

The Committee considers inclusion of a gender dimension in the Victorian Auditor-General Office's comprehensive performance audit program could provide a unique opportunity to assess the progress of gender equality policies and outcomes. It could also allow for further accountability of the Government and provide for an authoritative measuring mechanism around government compliance with gender related goals, policies and outcomes.

**FINDING 33:** The inclusion of a gender dimension to performance audits can improve both accountability and compliance around the implementation of gender specific policies and help identify the gender-specific impacts of government programs.

<sup>86</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, p. 20.

<sup>87</sup> Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 2020, p. 81.

<sup>88</sup> Office of the Auditor-General of Canada, *Submission 31*, received 26 November 2021, p. 3. See Chapter 4 of this report for further discussion on GBA+.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

## 6.8 Audit of Gender Responsive Budgeting systems and processes

Audits of GRB systems and processes differ from gender performance audits in that they directly assess the efficiency and effectiveness of GRB policies, rather than applying a gender dimension to performance audits more broadly.

Ex post audits of GRB systems and processes provide for an independent and objective analysis of the extent to which gender equality measures have been effectively implemented through relevant policies and mechanisms.<sup>90</sup> The OECD outlines that such audits are typically conducted by the supreme audit institution of the relevant jurisdiction.<sup>91</sup>

The Committee received conclusive evidence highlighting the importance of structured and integrated audits of GRB systems and processes.<sup>92</sup> The Andalusian Government's framework for auditing GRB systems and processes also provides an excellent example of a structured and integrated practice.

### Andalusia experience

As part of its integrated GRB framework, the Andalusian Government conducts Gender Budgeting Audits to ensure that public spending actively contributes to broader gender equality goals.<sup>93</sup> Gender Budgeting Audits form an integral part of the jurisdiction's overall gender budgeting strategy and is the final phase of the process. Gender Budgeting Audits are used as an evaluation tool with a clear empirical and constructive purpose.<sup>94</sup> They aim to improve gender-focussed budgetary practices through a process of continual learning and incorporate an element of Government accountability.<sup>95</sup> At the public hearings, the Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funds (the Ministry) explained that these audit programs assess the degree of integration of strategies around public budgeting.<sup>96</sup>

The general objective of Gender Budgeting Audits is to evaluate the integration of gender into the annual budget as part of the Andalusian Government's GRB strategy.<sup>97</sup> They carry out a process of systematic and documented review concerning the extent to which:

<sup>90</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 34.

<sup>91</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015, p. 37.

<sup>92</sup> KPMG, *Submission 32*, received 5 October 2021, p. 12; Equality Rights Alliance, *Submission 1a*, received 21 November 2019, p. 28; Office of the Auditor-General of Canada, *Submission 31*, received 26 November 2021, p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> Gender Budgeting Impact Commission, *2018 Gender Budgeting Audit Plan*, Government of Andalusia, 2018, p. 6.

<sup>94</sup> Gender Budgeting Impact Commission, *Annual Gender Budgeting Audit Plan 2021*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>96</sup> Regional Ministry of Finance and European Funds, Gender Responsive Budgeting public hearing, Melbourne, 11 October 2021, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> Gender Budgeting Impact Commission, *Annual Gender Budgeting Audit Plan 2021*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, p. 6.



- gendered perspectives have been included in budget planning and the execution of budgetary programs
- relevant methodology has been implemented to enable budget planning with a focus on gender equality.<sup>98</sup>

To fulfil the general objective of the audits, three specific objectives are defined:

- Evaluating whether the budgetary program or body has carried out budgetary planning from a gender perspective, whether it is in line with relevant gender equality mandates, and whether it is reflected in the budget documents.
- Analysing whether budgetary programs allocated to relevant budget initiatives or bodies have incorporated a gender focus.
- Observing the processes developed by the governing body in implementing the methodology, identifying good practice, and making recommendations that advance GRB.<sup>99</sup>

The process concludes with an audit report summarising the key results and conclusions and making recommendations aimed at improving GRB performance.<sup>100</sup>

The Andalusian example highlights the importance of an integrated strategy with a clear, effective and accountable mechanism in which GRB processes and programs are audited.

## Victoria

Drawing on the experiences of Andalusia, Victoria would benefit from an integrated strategy that comprises of structured audits of GRB systems and processes. The Committee considers an independent assessment of the integration of GRB policies, programs and outcomes in the State's budgetary process is key to advancing GRB in Victoria.

Further evidence taken by the Committee highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluation processes throughout the GRB cycle. This includes monitoring of the GRB process to ensure accountability and transparency, as well as external evaluation of the effectiveness of GRB measures in improving gender equality.<sup>101</sup>

**FINDING 34:** A structured audit of Gender Responsive Budgeting systems and processes can provide an independent and objective analysis of the extent to which gender equality measures have been effectively implemented through relevant policies and mechanisms.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Gender Budgeting Impact Commission, *Annual Gender Budgeting Audit Plan 2021*, Government of Andalusia, 2021, p. 6.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>101</sup> Women's Health Victoria, *Submission 3*, received 29 November 2019, p. 8.



# 7 Conclusion

In reaching its conclusions the Committee found that the Government is making sound progress toward the development and implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in Victoria. Several initiatives introduced by the Victorian Government aimed at encouraging gender equality have contributed to the overall development of GRB. In its assessment of the evidence the Committee identified opportunities for further improvement, particularly around an overarching, linked and integrated approach that could benefit the continued development and adoption of GRB practices in Victoria.

In terms of best practice examples of intergovernmental organisations' approaches to GRB and how they apply to Victoria, the Committee found the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) GRB framework to be the most comprehensive. The Committee notes that the three key elements set in the OECD's 2019 Report *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting: A path to action*—a strong strategic framework, effective tools for implementation and a supportive enabling environment—informed the Committee's approach to making its findings and recommendations.

The Committee considered a wide variety of developed and well-functioning GRB models from jurisdictions around the world. While the Committee found that there are opportunities to further align Victoria with international best practice, it also found that the Victorian Government has already developed and established several of the key elements of an enduring GRB practice, including:

- the implementation of *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* and consultation with civil society on this strategy
- legislating gender equality measures in the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*, including gender impact assessments of new policies, programs and services and workplace gender audits
- linking gender equality outcomes to budgetary processes via the establishment of the Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit in the Department of Treasury and Finance.

While the Committee commends these initiatives, it notes the ways in which the Government could further develop and maintain an effective strategic framework for GRB in Victoria. Using lessons learned from other jurisdictions, the Committee highlights the value of a more comprehensive gender equality strategy that sets clear GRB stakeholder roles and responsibilities, along with continued political commitment for GRB from the Government and central agencies, and the institutionalisation of GRB policies and processes.

The Committee made recommendations around improving and driving sustainable gender equality outcomes through constructive stakeholder engagement, effective assessment of current and new spending initiatives, and increasing transparency and accountability in the budget process.

In considering the effective processes around measuring and reporting on the outcomes of GRB policies and programs, the Committee found that significant work is underway on the collection of gender disaggregated data in Victoria. However, there are opportunities for improvement in measuring and reporting on outcomes, specifically relating to the:

- collection of more comprehensive gender disaggregation data to inform and identify appropriate mechanisms to measure outcomes
- inclusion of a gender dimension in performance setting, mechanisms for effective funding allocations and the incorporation of gender in performance auditing
- need for independent evaluations of GRB initiatives in order to effectively bring together the work of the Victorian Government and linked stakeholders.

The Committee notes the importance of an inclusive, integrated and enduring GRB practice. The continued investment in, commitment to and adoption of this type of GRB practice in Victoria will create more opportunities to enhance gender equality and ensure that all people can contribute effectively in all elements of their life, for the betterment of societies and economies at large.

**Adopted by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee  
Parliament of Victoria, East Melbourne  
7 March 2022**

# Appendix A

## About the Inquiry

### A.1 Submissions

1	Equality Rights Alliance
2	UK Women's Budget Group
3	Women's Health Victoria
4	Cardinia Lakes Early Learning Centre
5	Women in Social and Economic Research (WiSER), Curtin University
6	Darebin City Council
7	Gender Equity Victoria
8	Our Watch
9	National Foundation for Australian Women
10	Women's Health Goulburn North East
11	Women's Information Referral Exchange (WIRE)
12	EMILY's List Australia
13	Centre of Policy Studies, Victoria University
14	Victorian Women's Trust
15	Public Policy Institute, University of Auckland
16	Women's Health West
17	Women's Legal Service Victoria
18	Angela Jackson (Equity Economics) and Dr Leonora Risse (RMIT University) – joint submission
19	Australian Women Donors Network
20	Department of Premier and Cabinet
21	Gender Institute, Australian National University
22	Jesuit Social Services
23	Wellsprings for Women
24	Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
25	Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health
26	Victoria Police
27	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
28	Statistics Canada

29	Office of Auditor General Canada
30	KPMG Australia
31	Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks
32	Health and Community Services Union

## A.2 Public hearings

### Monday 25 October 2021

Name	Position	Organisation
David Zago	Program Manager, Household Surveys Branch	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Dr Niki Vincent	Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner	Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector
Kate Berry	Gender Equality Director	Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector
Professor Helen Hodgson	Chair, Social Policy Committee	National Foundation for Australian Women
Dr Kathy McDermott	Social Policy Committee	National Foundation for Australian Women
David Martine	Secretary	Department of Treasury and Finance
Jamie Driscoll	Deputy Secretary, Budget and Finance	Department of Treasury and Finance
Claire Bickell	Director, Financial Frameworks	Department of Treasury and Finance
Kristine Rosary E. Yuzon-Chaves	Executive Director	Philippine Commission on Women
Anita E. Baleda	Chief Gender and Development Specialist	Philippine Commission on Women
Josephine Khaleen Sasuman	Supervising Gender and Development Specialist	Philippine Commission on Women
Avery Silk Arevalo	Senior Gender and Development Specialist	Philippine Commission on Women
Nicole A. Montesines	Gender and Development Specialist II	Philippine Commission on Women

## Monday 21 October 2021

Name	Position	Organisation
Soo-Lin Quek	Executive Manager Knowledge, Advocacy and Service Innovation	Centre for Multicultural Youth
Sobur Dhieu	Policy Intern	Centre for Multicultural Youth
Dianne Hill	Chief Executive Officer	Women's Health Victoria
Mischa Barr	Policy and Health Promotion Officer	Women's Health Victoria
Julia Fox	Assistant National Secretary	Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association Victoria
Katie Biddlestone	Industrial Officer	Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association Victoria
Sandy Pitcher	Secretary	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Brigid Monagle	Deputy Secretary, Fairer Victoria	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Jo Pride	Executive Director, Office for Women & Office for the Prevention of Family Violence	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Tanja Kovac	Chief Executive Officer	Gender Equity Victoria
Jacinta Masters	Manager Advocacy and Sector Development	Gender Equity Victoria
Matt Tyler	Executive Director	The Men's Project, Jesuit Social Services
Dr Helmut Berger	Head	Austrian Parliamentary Budget Office
Ignacio Mendez Cortegano	Secretary General of Finance	Regional Ministry for Finance and European Funding Andalusia, Spain

## Monday 16 March 2020

Name	Position	Organisation
Professor Gigi Foster	Director of Education, School of Economics	University of New South Wales

## Monday 2 March 2020

Name	Position	Organisation
Susan Maury	Senior Research & Evaluation Officer	Good Shepherd
Jeremy Levine	General Manager Service & Strategy Impact	Good Shepherd
Professor Rhonda Sharp	Emeritus Professor, School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy	University of South Australia
Dr Monica Costa	Visiting Research Fellow	Curtin University

**Monday 17 February 2020**

Name	Position	Organisation
Angela Jackson	Senior Consultant	Equity Economics

**Monday 3 February 2020**

Name	Position	Organisation
Associate Professor Janine Dixon	Centre for Policy Studies	Victoria University
Professor Miranda Stewart	Director Tax Studies and the Tax Group	University of Melbourne

**Tuesday 10 December 2019**

Name	Position	Organisation
Brigid Monagle	Deputy Secretary, Fairer Victoria	Department of Premier and Cabinet
Sarah Gruner	Director, Office for Women	Department of Premier and Cabinet
Kym Peake	Secretary	Department of Health and Human Services
Amity Durham	Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Planning Division	Department of Health and Human Services
Marg Burge	Director, People and Culture	Department of Health and Human Services
David Martine	Secretary	Department of Treasury and Finance
Jamie Driscoll	Deputy Secretary, Budget and Finance Division	Department of Treasury and Finance
Gayle Porthouse	Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Government Services Division	Department of Treasury and Finance
Penelope McKay	Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Paul Broderick	Commissioner	State Revenue Office
Paula Thorne	Executive Director, Policy, Advisory and Legal Services	State Revenue Office
Renee Benn	Branch Manager, Land Revenue Branch	State Revenue Office



## Appendix B

# Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program— supplementary framework for assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management

The below table presents the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program's (PEFA) supplementary framework for assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management (GRPFM).

PEFA's GRPFM consists of a set of nine indicators and related assessment activities.

Indicators	Assessment activities
GRPFM—1: gender impact analysis of budget policy proposals	Assesses the extent to which the government prepares an assessment of the gender impacts of new expenditure and revenue policies.
GRPFM—2: gender responsive public investment management	Assesses the extent to which the economic analyses of feasibility or prefeasibility studies for major investment projects include analysis of gender impacts.
GRPFM—3: gender responsive budget circular	Assesses whether budget circular documentation contains requirements for budget agencies to include information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender impacts of new spending proposals and proposed reductions in expenditures</li> <li>• Sex-disaggregated data on results of programs</li> </ul>
GRPFM—4: gender responsive budget proposal documentation	Assesses budget documentation for inclusion of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An overview of government's policy priorities for improving gender equality</li> <li>2. Details of budget measures aimed at strengthening gender equality</li> <li>3. Assessment of the impacts of budget policies on gender equality</li> </ol>
GRPFM—5: sex-disaggregated performance information for service delivery	Assesses the extent to which the executive's annual budget proposal or supporting documentation include sex-disaggregated data on performance for service delivery programs.
GRPFM—6: tracking budget expenditure for gender equality	Assesses the government's capacity to track expenditure for gender equality throughout the budget formulation, execution, and reporting processes.

**Appendix B Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program—supplementary framework for assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management**

B

Indicators	Assessment activities
GRPFM—7: gender responsive reporting	Assesses to what extent the government prepares and publishes annual reports that include information on gender-related expenditure and the impact of budget policies on gender equality, such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A report on gender equality outcomes</li> <li>2. Data on gender-related expenditure</li> <li>3. An assessment of the implementation of budget policies and their impacts on gender equality</li> <li>4. Sex-disaggregated data on budgetary central government employment</li> </ol>
GRPFM—8: evaluation of gender impacts of service delivery	Assesses the extent to which independent evaluations of the efficiency and effectiveness of public services consider gender impact.
GRPFM—9: legislative scrutiny of gender impacts of the budget	Assesses the extent to which the legislature’s budget and audit scrutiny include a review of the government’s policies to understand whether policies equally benefit men and women by ensuring the allocation of sufficient funds.

Source: Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *PEFA Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management: Global Webinar*, 14 May 2020, <<https://www.pefa.org/sites/pefa/files/news/files/PEFA%20GRPFM%20global%20webinar%20v7.pdf>> accessed 20 October 2021, pp. 26–45; Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, *GRPFM Framework: Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, <<https://www.pefa.org/gender>> accessed 21 October 2021.



