



Inquiry into Gender  
Responsive Budgeting

Public Accounts and  
Estimates Committee  
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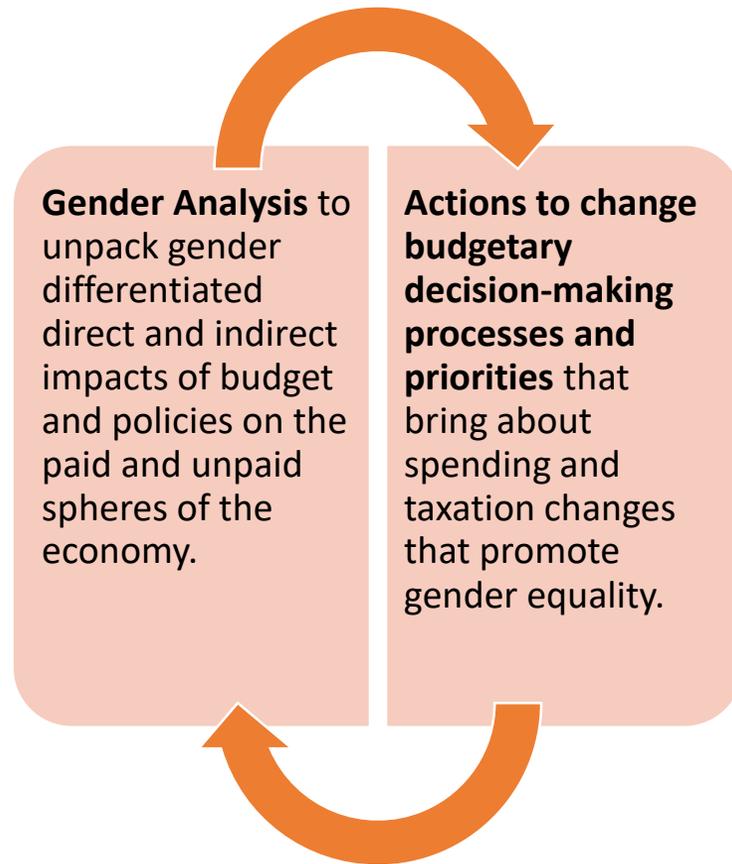
And

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# Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) has an agenda and footprint internationally

- Australia has been influential internationally as a pioneer of GRB but has lost its place.
- Initiatives mushroomed in over 100 countries after the inclusion of GRB in the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action.
- In 2019, 17 OECD central govts undertook GRB (plus 2 preparing).
- Researched, resourced and advocated by many international bodies including OECD, World bank and IMF.
- Currently: Vic and the ACT governments, NFAW gender analysis of the federal budget and Federal Labor Women's Budget Reply.

GRB is a tool for assessing the impact of government budgets on different groups of women and men and for changing policies and budgets to promote greater equality.



*GRB involves weaving gender equality into the budget processes and policy priorities*

**Example: Impact of caring responsibilities on lifetime incomes of different groups of women in Australia**

Analysis

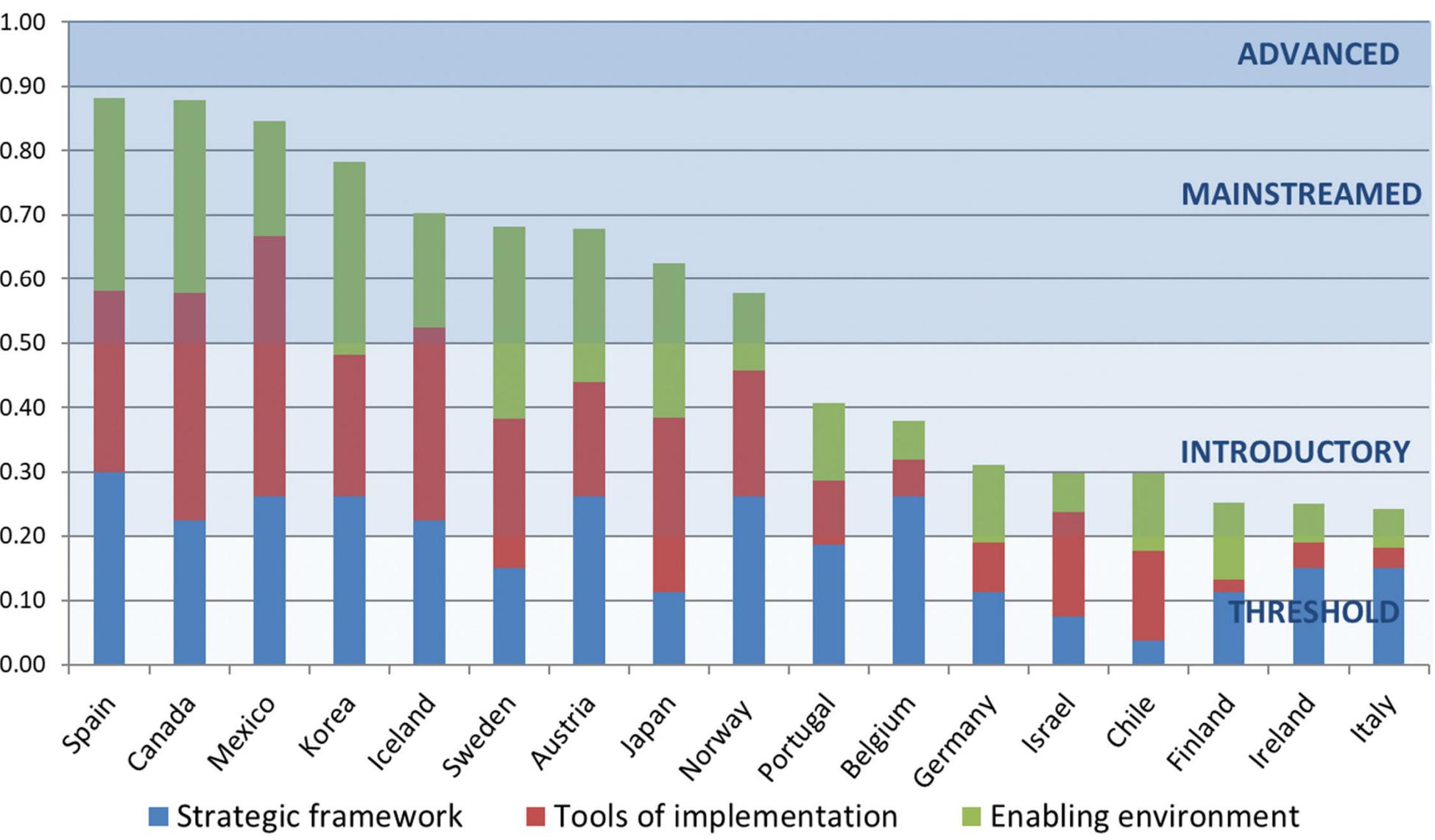
Analysis estimated that a female carer aged 30 years with two or more children and caring for a child with a disability, with an education of secondary school completion or less, would have expected earnings of < \$100K over her working life.

In contrast, a woman with similar characteristics but without primary caring responsibilities earns 4 times that amount over her lifetime.

Action

The analysis contributed to providing a rationale for additional funding in the 2011-12 federal budget for early intervention services for young children with disabilities.

# First pass at a composite indicator on gender budgeting (OECD 2019)



# Why is GRB important?

GRB uses the power of the purse as a lever for change, to be used in conjunction with other means, for achieving the gender equality commitments of a government:

- The Economist (2017) noted that Finance Ministries/Treasuries traditionally treat gender as irrelevant but become concerned with gender gaps when they understand the economic losses they impose.
- GRBs brings into view those issues that are about gender but are frequently overlooked /obscured in conventional analysis and budget decision making, including:
  - unpaid care and domestic work
  - the distribution of resources within and between households
  - the differences in women and men's political and economic participation.
- The IMF (2016) study of 80 countries study found GRB did adjust fiscal policy to counter biases costing the economy, quality of life and women's economic and political empowerment. It posits that GRB is simply good budgeting.

# Lessons from international experiences: Strong strategic framework is central

- High level political commitment (eg Premier, Finance Minister as well as Minister for Women) and a legal framework (eg. GEA) that gives a role to GRB.
- Clarity on an appropriate normative framework (equality/equity approach, human rights approach and well-being framework).
- Strong administrative leadership of Treasury that has expertise in GRB in close cooperation with a well-resourced OfW (eg NZ Treasury's role in developing their expertise for developing the Well-Being budget; framing GRB, budget circular, guidelines, templates, publish results).

# Lessons from international experiences: Effective tools

- Weaving gender perspective at the different stages of the budget process (eg Canadian audit on the quality of analysis and support provided).
- Weaving a *community of practice* by instituting an inter-agency working group (learning by doing, eg Canada setting incentives for improving the work).
- Strengthen the *Gender Equality Budget Statements* so progress can be tracked over time including links to equality priorities, allocations, baseline studies, progress statement, distributional impacts (eg Korea).
- Strong commitment to gender disaggregated data storage and use (eg UK New Deal).

# Lessons from international experiences: Enabling environment

- Resourcing training and mentoring and developing supporting guides (eg Korea, NZ well-being budget). Loss of skills and knowledge in Australia requires new investment in GRB.
- Independent monitoring and reviewing (PS GE Commissioner and Canada's AG 2015 review, Scotland's use of the Human Rights body).
- Strong parliamentary oversight (Austria's budget office, cross party women's caucus, parliamentary inquiries).
- Welcome civil society contributions (eg Scotland's WBG and the government's transformative approach to child care, UK Women's Budget Group involvement in GRB pilots within govt). Government can invest in the role of CSOs in identifying community needs.

# The uphill battle - Rising to the challenge of developing and maintaining the budget as a lever to promote gender equality

- As with any government wide goal (GE) GRB will involve whole of government. This requires robust implementation tools and investment in doing gender analysis and using it to inform policy responses and budget priorities. These understandings and processes need to extend to new challenges (eg environmental disasters).
- How do you progressively develop this work and make it sustainable? (GEA a starting point) Strategies to deal with current under-investment in doing GRB, and politics of resistance?
- Can't shy away from from GRB if you are serious about decreasing the costs of gender inequality and reaping the economic and social benefits of greater equality.