# Investing In Equality 2025–26

## A gender analysis of the South Australian Budget 2025–26



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Human Services acknowledges Aboriginal peoples as the state’s first peoples and nations and recognises them as the traditional owners, occupants and ongoing custodians of the lands and waters in South Australia. We further pay our respects to their Elders past and present and recognise the vital role they play in supporting their communities.

We further acknowledge and respect the leadership and profound commitment of Aboriginal women in improving the lives of their communities, and those of the broader South Australian community, through their tireless advocacy. Aboriginal women leaders play an important role in advancing the interests of girls and women through generously sharing wisdom and culture and through their continued advocacy over years, decades and lifetimes.

## A message from the Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence

The Hon Katrine Hildyard MP

*The 2025–26 Budget continues South Australia’s investment in the health, safety, and economic wellbeing of women and* aligns with thefoundational *Women’s Equality Blueprint 2023–2026.*

The South Australian Government recognises that urgent action is required to address inequality and domestic, family and sexual violence in South Australia.

The South Australian Government remains deeply committed to helping support and empower women and girls to safely, equally and actively participate in every aspect of life and in our economy, and our budget reflects this.

The upcoming release of the findings of the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence provides an opportunity for South Australia to embrace and drive change. As we await the findings, we continue to invest in supporting and empowering survivors and specialist domestic, family and sexual violence programs while preparing for a whole-of-government, whole-of-sector and whole-of-community response.

Building on the previous [Investing in Equality](https://officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/womens-policy/investing-in-equality) document and the foundational [Women’s Equality Blueprint 2023–2026](https://officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/womens-policy/sa-womens-equality-blueprint), this overview outlines the key elements of the 2025–26 Budget that will benefit women and girls in South Australia.

Recognising that women’s participation is key to our economic growth, work is also being advanced to support more women into roles in traditionally male-dominated industries. This work complements our efforts to tackle the gender pay gap.

This overview builds upon the foundation of government effort to date and forges the path ahead to progressing a safer, fairer and more equal society – an equal future that benefits all.

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## Introduction

### Purpose

Investing in Equality is an overview and analysis of 2025–26 budget measures through a gendered lens. There is a primary focus on women and girls, with acknowledgement that measures have different impacts across genders.

This document explains the key funding across eight areas of the Budget that connect to the Blueprint’s four priority areas of safety and security, leadership and participation, economic wellbeing and health.

The 2025–26 Budget is focused on securing South Australia’s future, in the short, medium and longer term, and also responds to recent challenges faced by our community.

### Vision

South Australia is a fair and inclusive state in which women and girls can equally, actively and safely participate in the economy and all aspects of community life.

**Quick Statistic: South Australian population**

Women and girls make up 50.7% of the South Australian population.[[1]](#endnote-2)

**Quick Statistic: Health problems**

56% of women in Australia aged 15 and over have one or more common chronic conditions, the top three being: mental and behavioural (25%), back problems (19%) and arthritis (17%).[[2]](#endnote-3)

**Quick Statistic: Gender pay gap**

The gender pay gap in South Australia is 10.1%, compared to 11.9% nationally. [[3]](#endnote-4)

### Areas covered

1. Community Safety
2. Preventing domestic, family and sexual violence
3. Housing and homelessness
4. Health
5. Economic participation
6. Early childhood services and support
7. Cost of living
8. Whyalla

## Community Safety

### Why is this important for women and girls?

Women have a right to feel and be safe in their homes and in the community and be empowered to thrive in all aspects of their lives. 39% of women have experienced violence since the age of 15, including 22% who experienced sexual violence and 31% who experienced physical violence.[[4]](#endnote-5)

The consequences of violence against women are personal, societal, and economic, and are far-reaching. Women experience violence in their homes, in their workplaces, and in the community. Governments have a key role to play in prevention, early intervention, and response, recovery and healing, to keep women safe in all aspects of their lives, however, women’s safety is everyone’s responsibility.

**Quick Statistic: Physical or sexual violence**

39% of women have experience violence since the age of 15, including 22% who experienced sexual violence and 31% who experienced physical violence.[[5]](#endnote-6)

**Quick Statistics: Safety on public transport**

Almost one fifth of women in South Australia feel unsafe when travelling on public transport after dark.[[6]](#endnote-7)

Nationally, one third of women over 18 with disability felt unsafe travelling on public transport alone after dark.[[7]](#endnote-8)

### Contributing 2025–26 budget measures

* $9.6 million over four years to improve safety and security on the bus network, including upgrading CCTV systems and increasing the number of transit compliance officers available to respond to incidents.
* $4.3 million over four years to continue: Return to Country in Coober Pedy, youth transport and outreach in Whyalla, and night transport for remote visitors in Adelaide.
* $172 million over four years for additional sworn police officers to support the demand for frontline police.
* $29.6 million over three years for the expansion of the successful Police Security Officer model into regional areas.
* $6.8 million over four years for prison security enhancements, to reduce contraband in prisons and increase the safety of staff, prisoners, and community.

### Impact for women and girls

The budget measures will improve safety in a number of parts of the community, with women benefiting in particular from increased safety measures.

Women and girls are disproportionately reliant on public transport due to lower car ownership, caregiving responsibilities, and part-time or shift-based employment.[[8]](#endnote-9) They experience a “personal safety burden” on public transport, including emotional, cognitive, and financial costs of avoiding harassment.[[9]](#endnote-10) The presence of trained staff and visible surveillance significantly increases women’s sense of safety and reduces incidents of harassment.[[10]](#endnote-11)

Aboriginal women and girls from remote communities often face cultural and safety challenges in regional and urban areas. Funding to continue Return to Country safe transport options and assertive outreach in Coober Pedy, Whyalla and Adelaide for remote Aboriginal visitors can provide culturally safe support, reduce homelessness and vulnerability to violence and support wellbeing.

Additional prison security will keep incarcerated women safe. Investment to reduce contraband may benefit women and girls, especially those with histories of trauma (98%)[[11]](#endnote-12) and mental health diagnosis (65%)[[12]](#endnote-13) by reducing harm and coercion, supporting recovery and rehabilitation.

## Domestic, family and sexual violence

### Why is this Important for women and girls?

The impact of domestic, family and sexual violence is overwhelmingly felt by women. On a national level, 1 in 4 women (27%) experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15.[[13]](#endnote-14) Domestic and family violence often co-occurs with abuse against children, either through witnessing violence or direct abuse by the perpetrator.[[14]](#endnote-15)

Community attitudes continue to perpetuate stereotypes and blame women for violence. The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey found that more than a third of respondents incorrectly believed women use false domestic violence claims in custody cases.[[15]](#endnote-16)

Tackling domestic, family and sexual violence is a whole-of-community responsibility. Women experiencing domestic and family violence frequently need to take time off from work, or even change jobs, and lose approximately $3,180 a year in salary (9.1%).[[16]](#endnote-17)

**Quick Statistics: Domestic, family and sexual violence**

In South Australia, 13,747 family and domestic abuse-related offences were reported or became known to South Australia police (SAPOL) as of 30 April 2025,[[17]](#endnote-18) an increase of 28.4% from the same time in 2023 (10,705).[[18]](#endnote-19)

In South Australia, as of 30 April 2025, 2,453 sexual assault and related offences were reported or became known to SAPOL,[[19]](#endnote-20) a 2.3% increase from the same time in 2023 (2,396).[[20]](#endnote-21)

Women experiencing domestic and family violence frequently need to take time off from work, or even change jobs, and lose approximately $3,180 a year in salary (9.1%).[[21]](#endnote-22)

### Contributing 2025–26 budget measures

* $3.5 million over two years to continue resourcing to support implementation of the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021-30 Schedule under the Federation Funding Agreement - Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other, and to coordinate a whole-of-government response to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence.
* $2.0 million over two years for the continuation of Northern and Southern Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Prevention and Recovery Hubs.
* $85.1 million over four years to support children and young people in and out of home care and $2.0 million over two years to increase staffing of the Child Abuse Report Line, and $2.0 million per year to continuously monitor notifications for worker screening.

### Continued government investment

* Ongoing funding for the Domestic Violence Crisis Line — an additional $880,000 per annum in funding will go to the Domestic Violence Crisis Line to boost staffing levels and enhance the helpline’s capacity to respond to calls outside business hours.
* Approximately $200,000 per annum ongoing will also go towards supporting an additional 120 people to access the Personal Protection App. This app, which provides a direct link to SAPOL via a 24-hour monitored security centre, is a vital tool for individuals at risk of domestic, family and sexual violence.
* Continuing investment in crucial domestic, family and sexual violence services — legal support, housing support, regional safety hubs, and culturally safe responses.

### Impact for women and girls

Women are disproportionately impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence. The Budget measures will support prevention, early intervention and healing for women, empowering them and increasing their safety. This in turn supports women to support their children to heal from direct and indirect harm and trauma. Support for women and their children is vital to healing, alongside interventions to hold perpetrators to account.

The government’s investment will ensure continuity of support for women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence, with round-the-clock access through the Domestic Violence Crisis Line and specialised supports through the Hubs. In 2024, the SA Domestic Violence Crisis Line received an average of 3,069 calls per month, which is up from 2,600 in 2023.

The findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence represent a rare opportunity to take a whole-of-government, whole-of-sector and whole-of-community approach to tackling domestic, family and sexual violence and respond holistically, using the foundations of evidence and lived experience.

## Housing and Homelessness

### Why is this important for women and girls?

Housing is foundational to everyone’s safety and security, and ability to engage in employment, community, and recreation.Women face additional barriers to housing, due to the gender gap in wages, superannuation and savings. This leads to lower rental affordability and increased time needed to save for a deposit.[[22]](#endnote-23)

In Australia, women make up 55% of occupants in social housing programs.[[23]](#endnote-24) Older single women on low incomes are particularly vulnerable to housing stress and homelessness.[[24]](#endnote-25) The 2025 CoreLogic Women and Property survey found 44% of women rate home ownership as extremely important, compared to 33.5% of men, but report affordability as a key challenge.[[25]](#endnote-26)

Domestic, family and sexual violence is also the leading cause of homelessness for women — 45% of all women and girls seeking homelessness assistance identify domestic, family and sexual violence as a cause.[[26]](#endnote-27)

**Quick Statistics: Homelessness**

45% of all women and girls seeking homelessness assistance identify family and domestic violence as a cause.[[27]](#endnote-28)

In South Australia, women account for 59% of homelessness clients.[[28]](#endnote-29)

In Australia, women make up 55% of occupants in social housing programs.[[29]](#endnote-30)

### Contributing 2025–26 budget measures

* $552.4 million to directly support the construction of around 2,935 homes to facilitate increased access to home ownership, including:
	+ $135.1 million for Round 2 of the Commonwealth Government Housing Australia Future Fund to support the delivery of South Australia’s notional allocation of 2,000 dwellings nationally.
	+ 100 properties under construction as part of the current Affordable Housing Initiative allocated to a rent-to-buy affordable housing initiative.
	+ $374.8 million to deliver housing developments across two key areas: Playford Alive East (1,300 dwellings); and Southwark Master Plan (1,300 dwellings).
	+ $30.5 million to deliver the Onkaparinga Heights site to market, which is expected to provide at least 2,000 residential housing lots.
	+ $12.0 million in 2025–26 to continue delivering property and tenancy management services for selected Aboriginal communities.
* Continued investment in the National Agreement for Social Housing and Homelessness, including support for women and their children experiencing Domestic, Family Violence (DFV).

### Impact for women and girls

Stable and secure housing is fundamental to women’s ability to participate in society. With women facing financial barriers to renting and home ownership, affordable housing will help to, reduce housing stress and increase opportunities for home ownership. Home ownership has a positive impact on an individual’s financial stability later in life, particularly for people with limited superannuation. Older women in particular are facing significant housing stress and are increasingly at risk of homelessness.[[30]](#endnote-31)

Continued investment in the National Agreement for Social Housing and Homelessness supports continuity of service and supports for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. In South Australia, women account for 59% of homelessness clients,[[31]](#endnote-32) with the continued investment having a strong positive impact on women. 51% of the participants in the Commonwealth Government’s Home Guarantee Scheme were women.[[32]](#endnote-33)

## Health

### Why is this important for women and girls?

Positive mental and physical health is vital for the wellbeing of women and girls. Women have a longer life expectancy than men but lose more years to ill health.[[33]](#endnote-34) Women are also at a greater risk than men of developing a mental illness.[[34]](#endnote-35) In South Australia, 41.5% of young people have high body dissatisfaction.[[35]](#endnote-36) Across the country, 67% of people with an eating disorder are women and girls over 5 years of age.[[36]](#endnote-37)

One in four women are likely to experience cancer in their lifetime, with the most common cancers being breast (28.5%), colorectal (9.8%), and lung (9.5%).[[37]](#endnote-38) Nationally, only just over half the eligible population of women have undertaken breast cancer screening.[[38]](#endnote-39)

Women continue to experience barriers to health support, with 26% of women waiting longer than they felt was acceptable to get a GP appointment, and 4.3% of women delaying seeing a GP due to the cost.[[39]](#endnote-40) Additional barriers exist for women with disability, including financial barriers, as well as a lack of specialised understanding by the mainstream health system, that contributes to a significant gap in health outcomes for people with disability.[[40]](#endnote-41)

**Quick Statistic: Body Dissatisfaction**

In South Australia, 41.5% of young people have high body dissatisfaction.[[41]](#endnote-42)

**Quick Statistic: Eating disorders**

Nationally, 67% of people with an eating disorder are women and girls over 5 years of age.[[42]](#endnote-43)

**Quick Statistics: Accessing a GP**

26% of women waited longer than they felt was acceptable to get a GP appointment.

4.3% of women delayed seeing a GP due to the cost.[[43]](#endnote-44)

**Quick Statistic: Cancer**

One in four women are likely to experience cancer in their lifetime: the most common cancers being breast (28.5%), colorectal (9.8%), and lung (9.5%).[[44]](#endnote-45)

### Contributing 2025–26 budget measures

* $2.2 million over three years to expand the scope of conditions that community pharmacies can manage, including shingles, psoriasis and other skin conditions, ear infections, and wound management.
* $13.9 million over five years to support and expand the Mental Health Co-Responder Program which pairs a mental health clinician with police response to mental health callouts.
* $77 million in Commonwealth funding over five years to support the establishment of a statewide cancer network for prevention, early detection, and care.
* $3.8 million over four years to continue work associated with the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the findings of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.
* $1.5 million over four years to implement the Embrace children and young people body image programs across South Australia to reduce the risk of mental illness and eating disorders, and to increase participation in sport and learning.
* $42.9 million over four years to support older people who are, or are at risk of becoming, long stay hospital patients. This initiative is funded by the Commonwealth Government.
* $300,000 in 2025-26 to install more than 140 dispensers in bathrooms to provide TAFE SA students with access to free period products.

### Continued government investment

* $3.2 billion to build the new Women’s and Children’s Hospital.
* Continued investment of $5 million over four years to support youth mental health services, including an expansion of child and adolescent virtual urgent care services and mental health workshops, and to support carers and families of those with eating disorders.
* Continued investment in expansion of childhood parenting groups delivered through the Child and Family Health Service from 2025–26.

### Impact for women and girls

The health-related Budget measures together contribute to reducing barriers to access for medical assessment and treatment and will have a positive impact on women who would otherwise struggle to access a GP and may delay treatment due to time and cost. Additional pharmacy support will improve access for women to treat conditions in a timely and cost-effective manner. Expanding the scope of conditions that community pharmacies can manage benefits women and girls by improving access to affordable, timely healthcare for common conditions like urinary tract infections (UTIs) that disproportionately affect women (1 in 2 women will experience a UTI in their lifetime).

Investments in mental health services will support treatment and healing for women and girls, particularly in recovering from eating disorders including reducing the risk of eating disorders through body image programs and healing through youth mental health services. With women experiencing higher levels of body dissatisfaction, this work is vital to improving the wellbeing of girls, setting them up for better mental and physical health as adults.

The Mental Health Co-Responder Program will continue to provide a mental health pathway for women experiencing mental health crises, reducing the potential for traumatisation that may occur through police responses.[[45]](#endnote-46) Evidence demonstrates that this program lowers the use of force and restraints, minimises distressing, gendered interventions, and facilitates more compassionate, voluntary care pathways.[[46]](#endnote-47)

The Budget also outlines additional support at the national level. Once established, the Cancer Statewide Clinical Network will provide strategic guidance and advice to improve outcomes for all South Australians affected by cancer. The network will be focused on being person-centred, compassionate and equitable, with a focus on collaboration and safety. With one in four women likely to experience cancer in their lifetime,[[47]](#endnote-48) a coordinated, person-centred and more equitable response will have a positive impact on treatment and recovery for women.

Additional support to continue the work of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability will contribute to increasing safety and support for women with disability, who experience higher rates of violence than people without disability.[[48]](#endnote-49)

## Economic participation

### Why is this important for women and girls?

Women’s economic participation is vital for their economic security, and to strengthening and diversifying the state’s economy. Women’s workforce participation rate has increased from 59.1% in 2022 to 59.8% in 2025, compared with a slight decrease for men from 67.5% to 67.3% over the same period.[[49]](#endnote-50) However, South Australian women’s underemployment (wanting to work more hours than they do but being unable to) rate (8.9%) is significantly higher than men’s (5.1%).[[50]](#endnote-51)

In South Australia, 40% of all small business owners are women.[[51]](#endnote-52) Nationally, 41.6% of small businesses are owned by women.[[52]](#endnote-53) However, lack of access to capital is a barrier to growth for women-led businesses, with almost half identifying additional barriers to accessing capital, and 82% believing gender negatively affected their ability to raise venture capital funding.[[53]](#endnote-54)

### Contributing 2025–26 budget measures

* $3.2 million over four years to expand the Small Business Strategy for small and family business owners to accelerate growth, profitability and access to new markets.
* $28 million within the Digital Investment Fund to establish an Artificial Intelligence Program to improve efficiency and reduce the administrative burden for healthcare, allied health, social work, law and financial areas of the public sector.
* $50 million initial funding to establish a South Australian Venture Capital Fund to provide early equity capital to support growth into national and global markets.

### Continued government investment

* Continued investment in Women in Business programs — supporting entrepreneurial women business owners to expand their leadership and business skills.
* Continued investment in Fearless Innovator Grants Round 2 — assisting women to access capital to grow their business into a national and global enterprise.
* Extension of Fee Free TAFE from 2024, with 15 000 places available in South Australia over three years.

### Impact for women and girls

Halving the labour force participation gap between men and women would increase Australia’s annual GDP by $60 billion in just ten years.[[54]](#endnote-55) The continued investment in support for small businesses, and targeted support for women business owners, will contribute to closing this gap. The Venture Capital Fund will give more women the opportunity to grow their businesses into national and global markets.

The Artificial Intelligence Program may streamline administrative work in a number of women-dominated sectors of the public sector, including allied health and social work, providing workers with more time to work with clients and have a positive impact on women in these industries.

The extension of Fee Free TAFE will provide further support for women to pursue trades, including in traditionally male-dominated industries. International research has shown that tertiary education leads to higher employment rates, particularly for women.[[55]](#endnote-56) Historically, women have had fewer opportunities to pursue technical trades, with most apprenticeships offered only to boys and men until the 1970s.[[56]](#endnote-57) Fee Free TAFE lowers the financial barrier to entry and contributes to encouraging women to undertake further study. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2025, 58.5% of Fee Free TAFE enrolments were from women.

**Quick Statistic: Workforce participation**

Women’s workforce participation rate has increased from 59.1% in 2022 to 59.8% in 2025, compared with a slight decrease for men from 67.5% to 67.3% over the same period.[[57]](#endnote-58)

**Quick Statistic: Underemployment**

However, South Australian women’s underemployment (wanting to work more hours than they do but being unable to) rate (8.9%) is significantly higher than men’s (5.1%).[[58]](#endnote-59)

**Quick Statistic: Business ownership**

In South Australia, 40% of business owners are women. [[59]](#endnote-60)

**Quick Statistic: Fee Free Training**

Between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2025, 58.5% of Fee Free TAFE enrolments were from women.

## Early childhood services and support

### Why is this important for women and girls?

Investment in early childhood care is vital to supporting women’s economic participation.Women spend on average 8.8 hours a week on caring for children (compared to the 4.5 hours on average men spend).[[60]](#endnote-61) In the first five years of parenting their first child, women’s earnings are reduced by 55% on average, while men’s earnings remain unaffected during that same time.[[61]](#endnote-62)

Research indicates that universal early childhood education and care benefits women in particular. Flexible and affordable childcare provides time and space for women to increase their engagement in work or study.[[62]](#endnote-63) This includes women being able to return to previous roles or further their careers.[[63]](#endnote-64) Between 2009 and 2021, Australia saw a notable increase in workforce participation from 65% to 75% of women with children under 15, attributable particularly to women with children aged 0–4, with the increase in available childcare.[[64]](#endnote-65)

**Quick Statistics: Childcare**

Women spend on average 8.8 hours a week on caring for children (compared to the 4.5 hours on average men spend).[[65]](#endnote-66)

In the first five years of parenting their first child, women’s earnings are reduced by 55% on average, while men’s earnings remain unaffected during that same time.[[66]](#endnote-67)

Childcare is still the largest barrier to women’s workforce participation, with 25% citing childcare as the main barrier, and 56% of women with children under 15 citing it as the main barrier.[[67]](#endnote-68)

### Contributing 2025–26 budget measures

* $27.7 million over four years to accelerate the rollout of 3-year-old preschool in a long day care setting.
* $178 million to expand the low-interest school loans scheme to support early childhood infrastructure projects
* $70 million (including $44 million beyond 2028-29) to construct a new 460 place Birth to Year 6 school in northern metropolitan Adelaide
* $40 million over four years to improve the amenity of existing school and preschool infrastructure
* $3 million over two years for the continuation of current preschool out of hours care trials at up to 20 sites across South Australia.

### Impact for women and girls

The continued investments into early childhood care and education will enhance women’s economic participation. Longer days and increased out of hours care will provide an opportunity for women to increase their work or study hours. The Government has committed to invest $1.9 billion into early childhood services from 2024–25 to 2032–33, providing additional support for women in caring for their children. Childcare is still the largest barrier to women’s participation, with 25% citing childcare as the main barrier, and 56% of women with children under 15 citing it as the main barrier.[[68]](#endnote-69)

The opportunities for women’s increased economic participation through expanded childcare are personal, societal, and economic. Improved childcare and early childhood education is important and positive for children and for parents, providing more opportunities for learning and development for children and increased economic potential for women.

## Cost of Living

### Why is this important for women and girls?

Women are more likely to be severely impacted by increases in cost of living. The gender pay gap and associated rates of superannuation mean that price increases disproportionately impact women. Women often experience the ‘motherhood penalty’, where their earnings decline significantly after having children.[[69]](#endnote-70) Women’s median super balance is around 25% lower than for men leading up to retirement age.[[70]](#endnote-71)

Cost of living impacts families in particular, due to the additional costs of childcare and schooling. One-parent families are overwhelmingly headed by single mothers (78%).[[71]](#endnote-72)

**Quick Statistic: One-parent families**

 One-parent families are overwhelmingly headed by single mothers (78%).[[72]](#endnote-73)

**Quick Statistic: Superannuation**

Women’s median super balance is around 25% lower than for men leading up to retirement age.[[73]](#endnote-74)

### Contributing 2025–26 budget measures

* $96 million over four years to continue providing $200 reduction of materials and services charges for parents and caregivers
* $20.7 million over four years to permanently reduce student metroCARD 28-day passes to $10 in 2025–26 (from $28.60).

### Impact for women and girls

With women being disproportionately impacted by the cost of living and often bearing the cost of paying for children’s education, the Budget measures will have a positive impact on women. Over the past four budgets, the South Australian Government has invested almost $1 billion in cost of living relief. Women managing their household budgets have benefited from concessions and reduced ongoing costs.

## Supporting Whyalla

### Why is this important for women and girls?

Women make up 49.8% of the population of Whyalla.[[74]](#endnote-75) The Whyalla Steelworks employs 1,100 workers and supports more than 2,000 indirectly.[[75]](#endnote-76) The State Government is investing in the future of Whyalla, with a suite of initiatives to protect the operation of the steelworks and for the local people and economy. As almost half the population, it’s important that women in Whyalla are supported to remain and thrive as we move to a new era with the steelworks.

**Quick Statistic: Whyalla population**

Women make up 49.8% of the population of Whyalla.[[76]](#endnote-77)

### Contributing 2025–26 budget measures

* $7 million over two years to support small local businesses in Whyalla impacted by the administration of the steelworks, including for businesses experiencing reductions in turnover
* $7.6 million over three years to support the Whyalla workforce impacted by the steelworks, including the establishment of a jobs and skills hub, training and career transition supports
* $2 million over two years to support the local community, including mental health and family support services.

### Impact for women and girls

The State Government is partnering with the Commonwealth Government on a $2.4 billion package to secure the long-term future of the Whyalla Steelworks, support local jobs, and encourage investment in Australian-made iron and steel.

$7.6 million of our commitment will help workers and apprentices who have lost employment with the steelworks, or supply chain companies, find alternative career pathways, including access to free career counselling and training opportunities. The funding also supports the establishment of the Spencer Gulf Jobs and Skills Hub, which offers workforce development programs designed to connect retrenched workers, as well as disadvantaged or disengaged community members, to local education, training, and career opportunities. The Hub will include work readiness support for people who have been out of the workforce for extended periods, including women who have been on parental leave. The Hub will also establish programs introducing women into trade and operator roles.

With women generally earning less and supporting households, community support is vital to ensuring they are supported during this period of uncertainty. Investment in local mental health and family support services are critical for women who carry the burden of unpaid care (including household work and care for children or other relatives)[[77]](#endnote-78) and are more likely to have anxiety-related conditions, which may be exacerbated by economic uncertainty[[78]](#endnote-79).

The Whyalla funding is also supporting women-led businesses. To date, funding provided through the Business Creditor Assistance Scheme includes more than $7.1 million to 18 businesses owned fully or partially by women. The Small Local Business Support Grant has funded 23 businesses owned fully or partially by women in the amount of $230,000.

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