

Monday, 8 December 2025

Unions welcome expanded support to tackle gender inequality

Australian Unions welcome today's announcement by the Albanese Government of \$28.5 million in funding to extend the Advancing Gender Equality in Gender Segregated Industries program for another two years.

The grant program brings together unions, employers, and the government to support initiatives, such as leadership programs, toolkits for small businesses, and audits and training to improve workplace safety and culture.

Industry segregation accounts for around a quarter of the gender pay gap and limits Australia's workforce participation, particularly in sectors with skills shortages.

The extended funding will address structural barriers that lock women out of jobs in male-dominated industries across Australia – such as transport, energy, mining, defence, construction, maritime, manufacturing and utilities, among many others.

To date, unions through this project have undertaken a wide range of activities, including collecting comprehensive primary data from women workers in gender-segregated industries through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. This rich source of data and insights has been used to develop a thorough understanding of women's experiences in male-dominated industries, informing practical recommendations to improve workplace cultures and safety.

Together, the union projects will engage with women workers across Australia in the targeted industries, as well as engage with and train workplace leaders, including delegates, health and safety representatives, managers, and employer representatives.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President, Michele O'Neil:

"Gender segregation is a handbrake on our economy that accounts for a quarter of Australia's gender pay gap and worsens our skills shortages.

"Addressing our gender-segregated workforce will create safer, fairer workplaces and a stronger economy for both workers and businesses.

"Unions welcome the two-year extension of this funding, and we look forward to working together with employers and the Albanese Government to deliver real, practical support for Australians to enter and thrive in all industries, regardless of their gender.

"Investing in evidence-based projects will harness Australia's economic potential by empowering women to pursue their dream jobs without being locked out by structural barriers."

ENDS

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