

COVID 19 – SENATE COMMITTEE

OPENING REMARKS

We welcome the opportunity to address the COVID-19 Senate Committee. Our opening comments are:

The challenge of achieving economic security for women and full gender equality across a range of key indicators remains. In some areas, there has been moderate progress, while others show stagnation or a reversal in equality measures. We have addressed this in our 2020 updated White Paper on Defining what Economic Security means to women living in Australia and includes analysis of how the shock effects of COVID-19 are impacting women. Recommendations and areas that need further reform are identified and it is presented to spark conversation and to prompt those who make policy in these areas to act

In terms of specific reforms we need progressive policy changes to achieve:

- **The narrowing of the Gender Pay Gap**
- **The narrowing of the Superannuation Gap**
- **Increased workforce participation by providing affordable and accessible childcare**
- **Recognition of unpaid care work**

eS4W continues liaising with policy makers who can address these recommendations and facilitate subsequent and timely reforms, aimed at addressing women's economic and financial wellbeing and we encourage all advocacy and other groups to use the growing pool of data on gender inequality issues to advocate for reform."

eS4W acknowledges that many of the recommendations are expensive for the Federal and State and Territory budgets. The cost of not acting may, however, be in both the short and longer terms higher than the actual cost of new policies. We also note that the recommendations are broad in nature and will require a series of steps to fully implement.