

Election 2019 – Infrastructure

WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE FOR WOMEN?

- Infrastructure is an important determinant of women’s economic success and wellbeing. Women interact with and are impacted by infrastructure such as roads and other public facilities in ways different to men. This is because women have extra care giving responsibilities children, and increasingly, elders. Access to public transport that is child and elder friendly, located close to infrastructure women use regularly, with reduced travel times (noting women’s lower available free time) are important considerations in the planning process. In addition, women more often work part-time (therefore interacting with public infrastructure at different times to men). Consideration of these varied patterns of use, and their intersections, is important for all users.
- In the infrastructure industry, women are underrepresented in the design and implementation of infrastructure strategies and plans, and in infrastructure construction. Women are also significantly underrepresented in the related supply chain workforce. This has two impacts - where women are employed in the sector it is in the lower qualified or non-skilled roles further reinforcing the gender pay gap. Secondly Australian women perceive public places as unsafe, scoring the lowest ratings in all the OECD. This perception means women are likely to limit their engagement in public spaces in locations or at times they perceive as unsafe. Including greater numbers of women in the infrastructure planning phase would help to identify and design out factors that create this impression.
- The city deals provide significant infrastructure spending for planning community infrastructure projects in Adelaide, Geelong and Hobart and regional deals in Albury-Wodonga, Barkley and Hinkler. Without explicit recognition of women’s inclusion in these projects, women’s differing needs in relation to urban infrastructure – to feel safe when interacting in public space, to access infrastructure at the same rate as men - will be ignored. The objectives of the plan “productive and liveable cities” will not be achieved.
- The budget net operating and capital expense reporting treats spending on infrastructure as an investment, even when the financial returns are implausible, and spending on social infrastructure, such as child or aged care, as a cost. That is, male-dominated industries are an investment; female-dominated industries are a cost—even while the tax receipts from women in the caring workforce are cited in the prediction of a surplus.

ELECTION COMMITMENTS

The table below sets out how fully parties' current election commitments address NFAW recommendations: Full implementation Partial implementation No or negative response

NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Infrastructure investment contracts should be required to consider the needs of women in the planning and implementation phase.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Infrastructure investment contracts should support greater participation of women at all levels in the infrastructure sector and its supply chain.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS

OTHER ELECTION COMMITMENTS		
Commitment	Party	Comments
	Choose an item.	
	Choose an item.	
	Choose an item.	

Authorised by Kate Gunn, Sydney.