

WARREN'S VIEW



THEY SAID IT



With partners, we will drive Russia out of our economies, supply chains and airwaves.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne cracks down on Russian "propagandists and purveyors of disinformation"

We have to complete tens of thousands of damage assessments.

SES Commissioner Carlene York as 2500 NSW properties are rendered uninhabitable by floods

We must break the bias

More work is needed to ensure even the most vulnerable women receive the necessary opportunities

On Tuesday, it was International Women's Day. The theme is 'break the bias' and, as women, we want the same things we have always wanted.

A gender equal world, a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. A world that is diverse, equitable and inclusive.

And, in 2022, it's sad that we still have to want these things.

Despite all our advances, there still exists an average weekly pay gap of \$261.50 between men and women in Australia, showing there is still a lot of work to be done to support the economic security of women, as we continue to pioneer against bias culture in the workforce.

To do this, we need to support the safety and economic security of women in Australia and change bias culture in all facets of our lives, including the workplace.

However, while it's great that as women we can challenge these complex barriers, sadly achieving the same outcomes and closing the gender pay gap is even harder for under-represented and vulnerable Australian women.

Women who unfortunately can't celebrate or express the same desires for themselves on International Women's Day.

Young women aged 18-24 in the out-of-home care system are some of the most vulnerable in Australia. After leaving foster care, there are little resources available to these women, who often come from low socio-economic backgrounds and have faced severe trauma.

These women bore the brunt of job losses in Australia due to



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the knock-on effects of Covid and, distressingly, made up 58 per cent of job losses at the end of 2021.

So this International Women's Day, let's not just fight for change for ourselves but instead seek to change the trajectory for vulnerable women who can't fight it for themselves.

This starts with changing our language, supporting financial education for girls from a young age, breaking down the complex barriers and ensuring meaningful employment for all young women.

From a young age, girls are led to believe their financial prospects are less than what is offered to men and that they will have less capabilities in handling their finances when they need to do so.

And these beliefs are formed every day, whether through professional conversations or as stereotypes developed at an early age in schools.

Terms such as 'girls aren't good at maths' or 'dad is in charge of the money' from an early age promulgate the idea finances and managing numbers are a man's job. Naturally, this leads to circumstances where women are financially exploited.

To combat this ongoing generational issue, we need to teach young girls extensive financial literacy skills and stop using common sayings that lead women to believe they aren't capable of managing their money.

We need to foster confidence in young women to stand on their feet and not undermine their capabilities and to know the red flags of financial abuse when they see them.

To start making changes outside of financial education, we can shift the gender bias terminology by removing a few key phrases.

Titles are never gendered for men, so we need to ensure the same for women. Referring to a woman in a



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position of power as a 'female CEO' or 'female business leader' reduces the power and success of that woman, and implies they are still one step below the 'actual CEO' or 'actual leader', as those are titles that stand on their own, reserved for men.

Most of us might think back on our situations growing up and it was assumed knowledge that 'Dad Managed the Money' as he was the 'Breadwinner.'

And while there is nothing wrong with men taking the lead in managing the home finances if this is the best decision for the family, this has created a lifelong dependence many women place on the men in their lives to manage all things money related.

In situations with vulnerable women, however, this can often lead to exploitation such as being underpaid by their employer, being withheld child payments or not knowing

how to adequately manage her own finances. Ensuring all women are educated to manage their own finances from a young age, is critical. And terms like 'breadwinner' need to get left where they belong ... in the bin.

Whether it's in the household or the workforce, 'a woman's job' is a sexist term that thankfully is dissolving more and more from our vocabulary.

However, the sentiment isn't. There are still many vocations in Australia that we subconsciously tether to women.

Professions like teaching and nursing are so dominated by females because we are led to believe from an early age that we are the better carers – and consequently rejected from prestigious senior positions because we are seen as too emotional to survive in the cutthroat man's world.

For vulnerable women, they need to understand they have the freedom to explore any career path and get the adequate training and education to support them in this.

If we're going to close the gender gap, we need to start from the roots and eliminate common phrases that are used in our schools, homes and workplaces that imply a level of inferiority between women and men.

And, most importantly, we can also teach women their value and help them find confidence to stand up for themselves in the face of gender bias and provide them the relevant financial, emotional and literacy skills to help them avoid long-term exploitation.

Let's strive for a world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality. Collectively we can all #BreakTheBias.

Jessica Brown is the founder of Warrior Woman Foundation