

# A CARING ECONOMY FOR WA

A FUTURE  
FOR ALL OF US



# A CARING ECONOMY ▲

## Investing in our care sectors to improve service delivery and create new jobs

This election we are calling for massive public investment to grow Western Australia's care economy, create jobs and ensure people get the support that meets their needs. For too long the care economy, which includes the education, health, mental health, aged care, social services, disability support and childcare sectors, has been under-resourced and neglected.

Investment in the care economy provides us with a clear pathway for WA to rebuild and recover from the devastating social and economic impacts of Covid-19.

### The Greens will:

- ▲ **Direct new investments into Western Australia's education, aged care, health, mental health and disability services sectors** where there is unmet demand or growing need
- ▲ **Create thousands of feminised, low-carbon jobs in Western Australia**, assisting to reduce gender inequality, close the gender employment gap and boost the economy
- ▲ **Improve access to much needed services and supports** across the care sectors

## INVESTING IN OUR CARE ECONOMY & CREATING LOW-CARBON, FEMINISED JOBS

**During a crisis, Governments often prioritises investment in physical infrastructure like big road projects. However, the evidence shows that investing in caring sectors has greater social and economic benefits for our community.**

We are missing out on thousands of jobs and training opportunities because successive Governments have decided not to invest in them. Instead, we could create so many opportunities for work and a care economy that actually invests in our community – in the disability care, aged care, childcare, social services sectors just to name a few.

Investment in the care economy would provide much needed services and supports, and would create the jobs in Western Australia that we need to get through this pandemic.

**Across Australia, if we invested 2% of GDP in the care sector, we would create 356,812 new jobs and raise the employment rate by 2.3 per cent<sup>1</sup>.** In contrast, the same level of investment in the construction industry only directly creates 74,791 new jobs. Big infrastructure projects alone won't get us through this recession.

Beyond the significant economic benefits, investing in the care economy will ensure we have the workforce needed to deliver essential services like teachers, nurses, and workers in aged care, mental health and disability support.

The Western Australian Council of Social Services predicts that the current care workforce needs to double or even triple by 2030 to meet future demands in health, ageing and disability services in Western Australia<sup>2</sup>.



Investment in the care workforce is also an investment in closing the gender employment gap and will create opportunities for low-carbon jobs.

Throughout the pandemic, women's employment has been disproportionately impacted, contracting 7.4% between February and May 2020 compared to 5.6% for men<sup>3</sup>. However, we can create 14.9 female jobs for every million dollars spent in education and 10.2 female jobs in health care, compared to 0.2 female jobs created for the same investment in construction<sup>4</sup>.

**A strong care economy would enable us to build a fair, inclusive community where everyone in Western Australia has access to the services they need to live a good life.**

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1. WACOSS Budget Submission 2019-20, page 9, available at <https://wacoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/State-Budget-Submission-2019-2020.pdf>

2. WACOSS Budget Submission 2019-20, page 10, available at <https://wacoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/State-Budget-Submission-2019-2020.pdf>

3. Hill, E. 2020. 'Reducing gender inequality and boosting the economy: fiscal policy after COVID-19', Committee for Economic Development Australia, September 2020. <https://www.ceda.com.au/CEDA/media/ResearchCatalogueDocuments/PDFs/CCEP-Labour-inequality-Elizabeth-Hill.pdf>

4. Richardson, D. and R. Denniss, 2020, 'Gender experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown', The Australia Institute, June 2020. <https://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/Gender%20experience%20during%20the%20COVID-19%20lockdown.pdf>