

**OPENING STATEMENT**

Senate Estimates, 24 October 2023

Deputy Secretary Padma Raman, Office for Women

Thank you, Senators.

I'm pleased to provide you with a brief update on recent changes to the Office for Women. These changes arise from the Government's commitment to embed gender considerations in all public policy.

The Office for Women is dedicated to providing gender advice and delivering policies and programs for the Prime Minister and the Minister for Women. We work across government to place women and gender equality at the centre of policy and decision-making through gender-responsive budgeting and gender impact analysis. We will contribute to realising the Government's equality priorities through leading the development of the National Strategy to achieve Gender Equality.

The recent mandatory requirement for all Cabinet Submissions and New Policy Proposals to have a gender

analysis — and, where certain criteria are met, more comprehensive gender impact assessments — fundamentally changes our role.

Placing gender at the heart of all government decision-making requires building capacity in the public service and for the Office for Women to be a centre of excellence. The appointment of a Deputy Secretary and a First Assistant Secretary will enable the Office for Women to deliver on the Government's commitment to gender equality

My role as Deputy Secretary also includes responsibility for the Jenkins Report Implementation Team, which is leading the Government's efforts to make parliamentary workplaces safe and respectful.

I bring to this role a career-long interest and commitment to addressing women's disadvantage. In senior leadership roles at the Victorian Law Reform Commission, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and Australia's National Research

Organisation for Women's Safety, I have contributed to law and social policy reform on a range of social policy issues affecting women. This includes sexual assault, family violence and defences to homicide. *sexual harassment*

First Assistant Secretary Megan Leahy also brings a wealth of public sector expertise to her role. Megan has served as an adviser to a previous Minister for Women, and in senior positions within PM&C, the Office for Women, and in women's safety policy in the Department of Social Services.

As a migrant woman, I have experienced discrimination. I believe that getting policy and practice right for the most marginalised serves the whole population. With my colleagues in the Office for Women, we will seek to deliver for all marginalised women — *♀ marginalised ♀* they will be front of mind in all our work. Together, we will strive to accelerate change towards substantive gender equality and making women's lives better.

My team and I look forward to answering your questions.