



MEDIA

CALL TO REMOVE WOMEN'S WORKFORCE BARRIERS

The National Women's Alliance¹ has called on Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments to reduce the systemic barriers to women with family responsibilities who wish to enter or return to the workforce.

The organisations have released a report prepared by the National Foundation for Australian Women, which consulted women across Australia and heard first hand of the difficulties they face trying to enter the workforce.

In the light of the report findings, the Alliance is calling for all levels of government to review their social inclusion strategies.

"The national Social Inclusion agenda currently fails to ensure a gender analysis which would highlight the specific disadvantages women face at regional levels," said Marie Coleman, National Foundation for Australian Women.

"All agencies should ensure that there is better analysis of government statistical data by gender," she says.

"The report shows that VET and TAFE programs need to be re-balanced, to ensure that training programs are financially and physically accessible to women wanting to return to work, and provide appropriate work-training linkages. Too many women are being put through repeated, different short-term training programs, without being placed into actual on-going work.

"Women who have been out of the workforce caring for older or disabled family members need access to appropriate re-training," Ms Coleman said.

¹ Australian Women's Coalition, National Rural Women's Coalition, Security for Women, WomenSpeak Alliance

The report shows that

- there is a complete failure to adequately address the needs for care of school age children before and after school and during school vacations. Care for children under school age is expensive, and some waiting lists are excessively long
- the needs of women with a disability, and of women who are refugees or migrants are not adequately met by support services, training programs, and English language programs
- the needs of indigenous women seeking to enter the workforce are not adequately addressed by training programs
- there is inadequate provision of respite and on-going care services for people with disabilities, which would enable their carers to enter training and in due course the workforce
- the problems of inappropriate or inadequate public transport are a barrier to women seeking to work in cities. There is a dearth of public transport in regional and rural Australia.

The report “***Barriers to Women’s Employment: Women and Recession Project***” was released at Parliament House, Canberra today. It is based on consultations in regional and capital cities with women, following on the earlier release of The Australia Institute Report on the Impacts of the Recession on Women. A short DVD of interviews with women on their experiences of child care, produced by the WomenSpeak Alliance was released at the same time.

Marie Coleman is available for interview. Mobile 041 4483067

9 February 2010

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