

S4W believes that lifelong economic well being is a high priority for Australian women – it empowers women to make choices and live independently. It enriches all aspects of women’s lives including their education, health, employment, personal safety and financial security over their lifetime.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER UPDATE 2008

CHAIR OF S4W

With regret I have to announce the stepping down from the Chair of Ann McClintock. Ann has given so much of her time and energy to the Network, and was particularly vital in bringing the member organization VIEW to S4W. We have all appreciated her commitment, her reliability and friendless to all. Best wishes Ann in your 2009 adventures.

Sandra Dann – Following the announcement above an invitation went out to members calling for nominations to fill the vacancy of Chair. An online vote was conducted and Sandra Dann, Director of the Working Women’s Centre South Australia was unanimously voted into the position. We thank Sandra for agreeing to take up the position and look forward to working together in the years ahead.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE NATIONALCONSULTATIONS (PPL)

S4W and NFAW have completed their National Consultations on the draft document from the Productivity Commission (PC) on Paid Parental Leave. Marie Coleman head of the Social Policy Committee of NFAW travelled to each State and Territory to roll out a synopsis of the recommendations, gather women’s views, and encourage submissions direct to the PC by women’s organizations.

In Sydney S4W Co-ordinator Elly Buckley and Marie Coleman were joined by the Productivity Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald, and in Melbourne, and Tasmania by Commissioner Angela McRae. Around the other States Ministers have been involved in our consultations

The next steps in the process are the submission of a final report on the findings of the consultations at the end of January 2009 to the Productivity Commission The following stage for the PPL to be successful and implemented is that it has first to be passed through Treasury.

Media releases have been submitted, and individual member organizations are keeping up the pressure on the Government so that this important issue does not get cast aside with the global financial turmoil.

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS & VACATION CARE (OSH&VC)

Furthering the S4W submission on Out of School Hours & Vacation Care the Network Co-ordinator, Elly Buckley and Marie Coleman attended the House of Representatives (HoR) Standing Committee on Pay Equity in November following a

combined submission S4W/NFAW put to the Committee on the issue of Out of School Hours & Vacation Care. The members were informed of the gaps in data and data analysis about how parents make care arrangements for their school aged children, and how this affects the workforce participation of mothers. Samiro Douglas WIRE is to also present to the HoR standing Committee when it sits in Melbourne. The transcript will follow.

Notice of Motion - Regulation of childcare in Australia -from Senator Sarah Hanson-Young. Senator Hanson – Young has given notice that on the next day of sitting she will move that Regulation of childcare in Australia be referred to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee for inquiry and report by March 12 2009. Some of her points include - alternative options and models for the provision of childcare, the role of government at all levels in – funding for community, not-for-profit and independent service providers, and nationally consistent training and qualification requirements for childcare workers.

MINISTER'S SPEECH NOV 2008 - EQUALITY

Minister Plibersek gave a speech at Sydney Institute, Sydney, to mark her twelve months in Government as Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status for Women on the topic “**Women and Men a new conversation about equality**”. The Minister stated that “we are at the beginning of a new era of community discussion around gender equality – we need to discuss openly how both women and men can have a full family life and a career. We need all business leaders to talk about the changes and benefits in their organizations and we need men to speak up and condemn violence against women”

S4W FACE TO FACE BRISBANE and MELBOURNE MEETINGS

Members of S4W met in Brisbane during October and Melbourne in November to discuss activities and government enquiries underway, issues of importance to member organisations, workplans for the future, and the Secretariat review. Working plans and member representation in association with these were agreed upon.

Following the face to face meeting in Melbourne on 19th November with the OfW and the **announcement by the Minister that the Secretariats (to be known as Alliances) would continue** S4W members rethought their working plans for the imminent future. It was agreed that the following issues would be concentrated on:

(a) Focus Group “How to Kit”

S4W will develop a simple focus group kit – a “how to kit” (guidelines and templates) for women and women's organisations to carry out their own qualitative research. This generic kit and guidelines will be available via the web.

(b) Overview of key issues for women

S4W will develop a comprehensive overview of key issues for women (from our collective work over the past 4 years) and policies and actions to progress these issues.

We plan to highlight best practice in key areas of women's economic security, housing and violence, health and education. This would involve establishing an expert group of active academics and practitioners in the field to garner best practice and provide recommendations. The final result will include the production of a report and executive summary of recommendations.

(c) Commission on the Status of Women Resource

S4W has found that many women and women's organizations know very little about CSW. We plan to develop a web resource which encourages women to learn more about CSW by explaining what it is, its relevance and connection to women in Australia and provide links to existing resources and organisations focussed on CSW and ways in which women's organizations can contribute.

(d) Review of the Secretariat Model

S4W will explore key principles and priorities about women engaging with government and suggest a model to progress work on the Minister's 4 key areas. The OfW have planned a roundtable for late February to discuss possible models.

(e) Update S4W website – To take place during December and January 2009.

CSW53

The 53rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be held in New York from 2 – 13th March 2009. Priority theme will be the *equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS*. At that time the Commission will also review progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from the fiftieth session of CSW on "the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels."

The Australian Government for the first time is funding the participation of an expert from the community sector, Caroline Lambert as well as an Indigenous women to attend.

There have been two opportunities to attend a roundtable discussion on the priority theme. One was co-hosted by the OfW in Canberra, and the other, initiated by S4W in Melbourne was an information and sharing afternoon on CSW with the National Women's Secretariats, OfW, experts and invited guests. As many women have highlighted the fact that they know very little about CSW and its importance, S4W are putting together a comprehensive resource which will be available via our website, for downloading and distribution. Currently we are preparing a combined report with WomenSpeak to be forwarded to the OfW on our response to the priority theme and suggestions for the country statement.

CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)

Australia has formally moved to become a party to the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Becoming party to the Optional Protocol demonstrates Australia's commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of women, both at home and abroad." Minister Tanya Plibersek.

Under the Optional Protocol, women in Australia will be able to make a complaint to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women about alleged violation of Australia's obligations under CEDAW. This can only occur after domestic legal options have been exhausted. The protocol also permits a UN investigation process.

The YWCA/WomenSpeak network were successful in obtaining a funding grant to write a CEDAW shadow report. As part of this project Capacity building workshops are planned to be conducted for February/March 2009. Potential "partner" organisations for the CEDAW Project in each city/town where a workshop is scheduled to be held are being called for. The "partner" concept is relatively broad, and basically means agreeing to promote the CEDAW workshop to **their own** network, and if possible committing to send a representative to the workshop.

S4W members who are working on the Advisory group are Sandra Cook, Elaine Butler and Dalma Jacobs.

WOMEN'S RETIREMENT INCOMES

Members of S4W took part in a teleconference to discuss the report prepared for the OfW by the University of Queensland Social Research Centre on the gender impacts of the retirement incomes system and its capacity to produce sufficient retirement incomes for different groups of women.

Women's experiences of paid work and planning for retirement

The Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, has released a new research report- *Women's experiences of paid work and planning for retirement*. The research which was commissioned by the Office for Women is available for free online from our website at http://www.ofw.facsia.gov.au/publications/experiences_planning.htm.

Using data from the Mid 4 survey of the Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health, the research analyses the employment and retirement patterns of Australian women aged 53-58.

The *Women's Experiences of Paid Work and Planning for Retirement* research report finds that:

- Almost a third of mature age women surveyed are working longer hours than they reported in 1996.
- The concept of retirement is problematic for many women with almost half of all employed women reporting uncertainty about when they might retire.
- Approximately one quarter of women surveyed were providing care or assistance to someone due to long-term illness, disability or frailty. These women were less likely to be consistently in the workforce.
- Women's poorer attachment to the labour force in their younger years results in disadvantage in regard to retirement income, particularly for those who are separated and divorced.

These findings suggest present generations of younger women need evidence-based information and advice about financial planning.

The OfW hopes that by working together we can build the financial independence and long-term economic security of all Australian women.

INDIGENOUS GATHERING TOOWOOMBA. – with WomenSpeak Secretariat

Dalma Jacobs our member representing AFUW traveled to Toowoomba to participate in the Indigenous Gathering. Guest speakers included Lillian Holt born in Cherbourg speaking of the message of whiteness in our society through the narrative of her own story; Jo Wilmot from South Australia on the impacts of past policies and practices; Psychology lecturer Majella Albion at the USQ will facilitate the day.

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS.

Congratulations – Diana Abruzzi – representing **International Women’s Federation of Commerce and Industry (IWFCI)** who has been voted Vice President Asian Women’s Entrepreneurial Council. Diana plans to keep us up to date on activities of the Council.

AFUW (Australian Federation of University Women)

- AFUW has continued to work on and/or endorse submissions to the many reviews and governments inquiries.
- AFUW is becoming more involved in **Higher Education Summits and Forums**. An organization called Informa is running a series of high-powered conferences on various Higher Education policy issues. Because AFUW agreed to the use of its logo as a sign of endorsement at no cost to AFUW, it gets one free and further discounts on registrations. Even better, AFUW it now receiving invitations to speak at events. President Jenny Strauss will speak on equity and access issues in April 2009 at the 7th Higher Education Summit in Melbourne. In February 2009 Jacqueline Wilson, Lecturer at the University of Ballarat, will speak on the career difficulties of young academics at the *Higher Education Recruitment and Retention Conference* in Sydney.
- Five AFUW members participated at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Gathering held in Toowoomba on 2 October.
- At the triennial conference in November 2009, the name of AFUW may be changed to Graduate Women Australia

WAVE – (Women in Adult and Vocational Education)

For their latest Spring newsletter please access their website. www.wave.org.au

THE CHAIR & CO-ORDINATOR OF SECURITY4WOMEN THANK OUR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS FOR THE EXCELLENT SUPPORT AND WORK THEY HAVE SHOWN THROUGH THE PAST YEAR.

MAY PEACE AND HAPPINESS BE YOURS.

**Elly Buckley
Co-ordinator
E: ellybuckley@bigpond.com**

www.security4women.com