

*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.*

## **MARCH - APRIL NEWS UPDATE 2009**

### **S4W April Meeting Melbourne**

In preparation for the transition to the new Alliance model to be handed down by Minister Plibersek at the end of April, S4W members met for a face to face meeting in Melbourne earlier this month where a new structure was determined to strengthen our framework, governance, and operating principles in readiness for the tendering process. To enable the new structure to be formed, nominations were called for all positions in the new structure. We are very pleased to announce Kate Gunn, as Chair of S4W. Kate is President of National Foundation of Australian Women (NFAW) and has over 20 years of business experience in the private sector.

We are fortunate to have someone of Kate's calibre to enhance S4W collective vision, and thus build our capacity to enable fuller participation by all women in and through democratic processes.

Other positions filled: Kay Morrison (BPW) Deputy Chair, Samiro Douglas (WIRE) Treasurer, Roselyne Anderson (AWE) and Elaine Butler (WAVE) general members of our Management Group.

The Alliances will meet with the OfW in Sydney on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May to discuss the new model, following which, each Alliance is expected to work on their transition plans to put to the Minister by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2009

### **New Member Organization.**

We welcome a new member to S4W – Council of Small Business of Australia (COSBOA). Judith van Unen, Director and Deputy Chair of COSBOA will represent the organization. Judith as some may remember, when President of BPWA, initiated the Security4Women Secretariat some eight years ago. COSBOA is the peak advocacy body for more than 2 million small businesses in Australia. There are many current and emerging issues pursued by both of our organizations that intersect and we believe will be well served by this collaboration.

### **OfW Staff changes.**

Tracy Mackay Deputy Branch Manager OfW has been seconded to act in the Children’s Policy area as Branch Manager for the next four months. Stephanie Gates

and Sally Moyle, at the OfW will remain the Alliances consistent contacts. We welcome back Julia Burns to the OfW after being away due to health reasons. Julia will join us in Sydney at the OfW/Alliances meeting to discuss the new model.

### **National roundtable- Women's Health Policy**

Dalma Jacobs (AFUW) representing S4W and Marie Coleman (NFAW) recently participated in a Roundtable of women's health experts hosted by the Department of Health and Ageing to kickstart development of a new National Women's Health policy. At this gathering the discussion paper *New National Women's Health Policy: Consultation Discussion Paper 2009* was launched to encourage discussions between the Government, key women's health groups, welfare groups and the Australian public on the make-up of a new National Women's Health policy. The issues paper "Development of a New National Women's Health Policy" was released and is worth reading. Access it at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-women-consult-disc-paper>

### **Submission 2010-11 National Health Survey**

The Government is now seeking submissions during the next few months to the new national policy from the Roundtable participants and as well are encouraging other organizations, such as health service providers or advocacy groups, to make submissions. Inclusion of Women Health Indicators and Risk Factors in these submissions will be essential.

A Gender Data Working Group has been established by representatives from the four National Women's Alliances to put together a submission towards this Policy. Consequently, further submissions will be developed and they welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the ABS's 2010-11 National Health Survey (NHS) and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS).

### **Equality in Politics.**

#### **A record high for women in Parliament.**

According to the latest analysis undertaken by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), a record number of women now hold seats in parliament following elections and renewals that took place in 54 countries in 2008. On average, women hold 18.3% of the seats across all chambers of parliament. This represents a 60% increase in the number of women parliamentarians since 1995. Also, for the first time, 15% of parliamentary chambers in 32 countries have reached 30% or more women members.

At the other end of the spectrum, however, one quarter of all parliamentary chambers have less than 10% women members. According to IPU's publication *Equality in Politics*, the greatest obstacles to women's entry into politics are prejudice and cultural perceptions about the role of women, together with a lack of financial resources. Yet, once they do become involved, women bring different views, talents and perspectives to politics. For more information, see:

Women in Parliament in 2008 - The Year in Perspective:

<http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmn08-e.pdf>

Equality in Politics – A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments:

<http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/equality08-e.pdf>

## **Women & retirement Incomes/Taxation**

### **Inquiries and Consultations:**

Since our November meeting S4W members have continued working on submissions:

- The *Henry Inquiry* into Australia's Future Taxation System (Retirement incomes) first submission completed (27 February)
- Further submissions and advocacy supporting Paid Parental Leave
- Australia's Future Taxation System second submission ( due 30 April).

See current consultation process and background paper at:

<http://www.nfaw.org/background/>

NFAW and WomenSpeak are currently leading this consultation process with assistance from S4W. AFUW has endorsed both of these submissions and copies have been distributed to their networks.

Member organisations are being encouraged to make separate submissions to this part of the review and to participate in the consultations conducted. See Speech: Ken Henry - Confidence in the Operation of the Tax System - 13/3/2009

<http://taxreview.treasury.gov.au/content/Content.aspx?doc=html/speeches/03.htm>

## **CEDAW**

Australia's accession to the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) came into effect March 2009.

### **Input to CEDAW Shadow Report**

CEDAW National workshops in February and March have now been completed and were a great success. Many enthusiastic participants have gathered some excellent material to include in the NGO Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee.

Work has now commenced on the preparation of this report and S4W members have been involved in teleconferences with WomenSpeak members to plan the progression of this work. Dalma Jacobs member of the Advisory Group attended the CEDAW workshop in Brisbane as well several AFUW members have attended these workshops at locations in all States/Territories. S4W members involved on the Advisory Group are: Elaine Butler, Sandy Cook and Dalma Jacobs.

Members who expressed interests in the workshops are being encouraged to continue to make submissions on the "Issues Sheets". Links to the government report, NGO Reports, the Issues Sheet and workshop materials can now be found on the YWCA website at: <http://www.ywca.org.au/policy/cedaw.php>.

## **S4W Data Working Group**

The Australian Government's Combined 6th and 7th CEDAW Report released in Oct-Dec 2008, contains a Section on data collection. In Section 2.39 it states that "The Australian Government is currently undertaking a gender indicators 'stock take' to identify gaps in the availability and accessibility of sex disaggregated data, including data for indigenous Australians, people with disability, and people from low socioeconomic and rural and remote backgrounds". The Data Working Group is discussing how they can provide input to this 'stock take'.

## **CSW53**

Minister Tanya Plibersek attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 53 held in New York earlier this year and delivered Australia's Country Statement. Downloads of this is available from her website.

<http://www.tanyaplibersek.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/tanyaplibersek.nsf>

The final draft of the Agreed Conclusions on the theme of CSW53 "**The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS**" was approved by consensus at the United Nations Headquarters.

In addition, the Commission of the 54th session was elected. They include delegates from Italy, Latin America, Japan, Senegal and Armenia. The theme of the 54<sup>th</sup> session will be the implementation of the Beijing Platform on the occasion of its 15th anniversary.

[www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm)

## **International Women's Day**

International Women's Day Event in Geneva this year Addressed the Global Economic Situation and Gender Equality. Speakers at the International Women's Day even, co-organized by the Geneva NGO Committee on the Status of Women and the UN NGO Liaison Office in Geneva, called for creative solutions to meet both the challenges of the unprecedented global crisis and to advance gender equality.

## **Employer of choice award.**

Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek, speaking at the Employer of Choice Awards congratulated the successful organisations which this year received the Employer of Choice for Women citation for creating workplaces that encourage women to contribute their full potential.

The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) released the names of the 111 organisations that had met stringent criteria to show that they were improving outcomes for women.

“These 111 organisations recognise the challenges women face in the workplace and are responding,” Ms Plibersek said. “Addressing inequities in the workplace is not just the right thing to do - it also makes business sense.

“I hope that Employer of Choice for Women organisations will inspire and encourage other businesses to promote diversity and create female-friendly conditions.

“I’m really pleased that the number of organisations on the EOWA 2009 Employer of Choice for Women citation list has increased over the past year as we know many organisations are doing it tough the current global economic climate.”

Ms Plibersek said Australia has made advancements towards women and men better sharing life at work and home, yet women still face challenges in being fully valued in the workplace.

“Significant improvements in gender equality require a shift in attitude from the entire community, including businesses, and that’s why these awards are so important,” Ms Plibersek said.

For a full list of the Employer of Choice organisations please go to [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)

## COMING EVENTS

### **The 2009 National Small Business Summit - June 2009**

The Sebel Albert Park - Melbourne

Tuesday 9th - Opening Dinner

Wednesday 10th - One Day Summit

Each year COSBOA holds the National Small Business Summit attracting small business, heads of Government and interested suppliers to the major forum to discuss the issues affecting Small Business in Australia. Past summits have featured the Prime Minister as the Keynote Speaker along with the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister for Small Business and many other influential decision makers. Among past guests have been Graeme Samuel of the ACCC, Michael D'Ascenzo CEO of the Australian Tax Office.

COSBOA sees the National Small Business Summit as the prime opportunity for Small Business to discuss and influence small business issues at the Federal Government level. We encourage all small business associations and their members to attend and ensure the interests of your members are protected.

### **Sixth National Australian Women's Health Conference**

Hobart, Tasmania 18-21 May 2010 Abstracts are now open. **Link:**

<http://www.awhn.org.au/>

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