



**SECURITY4WOMEN**

**STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING  
DIVERSE WOMEN**

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**Prepared by: Maria Rickert & Associates**

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For more information please go to:

S4W Website: [www.security4women.org.au](http://www.security4women.org.au)

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# SECURITY4WOMEN: STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING DIVERSE WOMEN

## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report is commissioned by *Security4Women* (S4W). The brief states that

*Security4Women seek to explore how they can engage women who are currently not engaged with women's organisations. The purpose for engaging such women is to share skills, build capacity and generally support these women. This may be achieved through sharing membership with other networking groups<sup>1</sup>.*

It identifies the following groups of women to engage with:

- Young women entering the workforce
- Mums in the mortgage belt
- Women working in low-skilled, casual and part-time jobs
- Older women who have left the workforce.

This report proposes a range of strategies to *Security4Women*, by which to engage with these groups of women and assist them to have their interests represented in public policy advocacy in Australia. Strategies are discussed in the context of engaging diverse women and in building capacity for networking and support for these groups. To this aim a proposed broad *Strategic Plan: Security4Women Engaging Diverse Women* for implementation is provided.

This report also includes a list of some suggested women's organisations and large non-profit peak bodies and umbrella organisations, as well as sample regional networks for consideration by *Security4Women* for future cooperation (Attachment A). As well as that, a simple implementation plan template is attached (Attachment B). A bibliography is provided to guide and inform further work in the field of engaging diverse women, including disadvantaged women.

The implementation of these strategies will enable *Security4Women* to harness more fully the voices and interests of diverse Australian women in order to provide well informed input into national policy.

Effective strategies for engaging diverse women will demonstrate the following characteristics: -

- Be designed holistically and tailored to the needs of specific and diverse groups of women in a wide range of circumstances
- Be coordinated and integrated – whole of government, inter-sectoral and coordinated approach
- Recognise and build on the strengths and leadership of women and their families and communities
- Deliver measurable and tangible outcomes
- Be sustained and socially and ecologically sustainable
- Be cost effective
- Demonstrate rigorous built-in monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> Security4Women, *Lessons Learned Report* (Oct 2009), Office for Women, FaHCSIA

The engagement strategies proposed in this report are guided by the above characteristics. Realistically strategies may not be able to display all of these features when first implemented. Instead, they need to evolve on a continuum to develop and improve towards achieving these characteristics and targets.

In the interest of maximising impact from strategies implemented with limited resources, a set of holistically designed engagement strategies are proposed. In engaging women from diverse backgrounds living in a range of circumstances, there will be overlaps and cross-benefits, which will enhance the broad capacities for women's engagement. Sison's (2009) examination of diverse cultural communities in Australia in public relations contributes to the discussion on adapting and fine-tuning engagement strategies to individuals in diverse and fast changing cultural contexts<sup>2</sup>.

Engagement strategies are designed for the identified groups of women, but could well provide models for engaging further disenfranchised groups.

The *Strategic Plan* below outlines specific steps in engagement. It attempts to address the tension between the national focus of *Security4Women* and the need for local and place-based engagement with women from diverse backgrounds. An **aggregated networking model** of engagement is proposed, by which *Security4Women* utilises current member organisations to access members' networks and links to channel information and elicit women's feedback.

In addition, new strategic links could be made with **large peak bodies and women's organisations** and **online communication hubs** for dissemination of *Security4Women* information and for eliciting women's feedback. *Security4Women* could link into existing large networks of local social services by utilising key websites, such as ACOSS, NCOSS, education departments, careers advisers' networks, TAFE and Community Colleges, sports clubs, National Craft Network, local council women's association, and so forth.

Engagement strategies can grow over time from information exchange to building **women's networks and communities** in Australia. Overseas initiatives can provide models of networking between national bodies and local services to engage women locally in larger networks. For example, the UK Young Foundation's initiative of the *Future Communities*, while developed in the context of new housing, could inspire women's communities in Australia<sup>3</sup>.

The implementation of the proposed strategies as part of the *Strategic Plan* would result in broader and deeper women's engagement and would further strengthen the role of *Security4Women* as a conduit between Australian women and Government policy.

It is in this context that the following suggestions for specific strategies for the identified groups of women have been developed.

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<sup>2</sup> Sison, M. D. (2009). *Whose cultural values? Exploring public relations' approaches to understanding audiences*. Prism 6(2): [http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism\\_on-line\\_journ.html](http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism_on-line_journ.html)

<sup>3</sup> *Future Communities is a new consortium of local authorities and national bodies exploring how large-scale provision of new housing can create communities that work in the long term*. Retrieved on 18 Jan 2010 from

<http://www.youngfoundation.org/local-innovation/events/future-communities-launch>

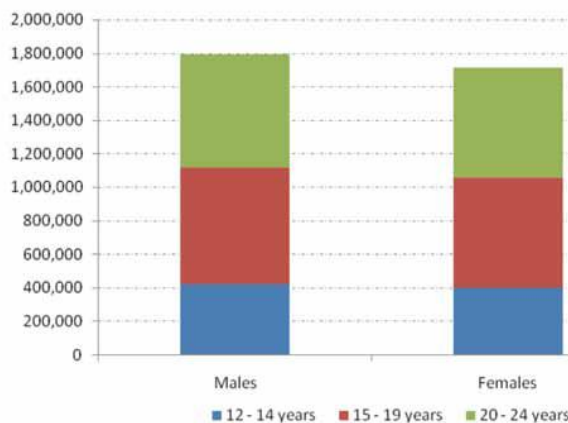
## STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING DIVERSE WOMEN

This section outlines the characteristics of the four key groups of women: young women in transition to the workforce, mothers in the mortgage belt, women in low-paid, low-skilled jobs and older women. Disadvantaged women are also briefly discussed. Engagement strategies and innovative practice examples are proposed, which can serve as models for engaging further groups of women.

### Engaging young women in transition to the workforce

#### *Characteristics*

While young women are slightly underrepresented in the age group of their peers, there are about 1.7 million young women in Australia, many of whom are facing the transition from education to work.



**Figure 1: Number of young men and women 12–14 years, 15–19 years, and 20–24 years in Australia,** (Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Page 25 <sup>4</sup>)

The above ABS data defines young people as 15 to 24 year olds. In this report a young women's cohort of up to 28 years of age is considered.

There is still considerable pay inequity between Australian women and men, which appears to be perpetuated by gender stereotyped career pathways of young women<sup>5</sup>.

Young women face additional challenges. For example, the recent Australian Youth Report highlights that fact that young women also carry a larger burden of domestic

<sup>4</sup> Muir, K, Mullan, K, Powell, A, Flaxman, S, Thompson, S, Griffiths, M (Oct 2009), *The State of Australia's Young People: a Report on the social, economic, health and family life of young people.* Report for Office For Youth, DEEWR, Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW, page 25, Retrieved on 23 Dec 2009 from <http://www.youth.gov.au/Documents/YoungPeopleReport.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Cassells, R, Miranti, R, Nepal, B and Tanton, R, (April 2009), *She works hard for her money,* AMP/NATSEM, Income and Wealth Report 22, Retrieved on 20 Dec 09 from [http://www.canberra.edu.au/centres/natsem/publications?sq\\_content\\_src=%2BdXJsPW0dHAIM0EIMkYIMkZ6aWJvLndpbi5jYW5iZXJyYS5lZHUuYXUIMkZuYXRzZW0IMkZpbmRleC5waHAIM0Ztb2RIJTNEcHVibGJjYXRpb24IMjZwdWJsaWNhdGlvbiUzRDExNzMmYmYwxsPTE%3D](http://www.canberra.edu.au/centres/natsem/publications?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPW0dHAIM0EIMkYIMkZ6aWJvLndpbi5jYW5iZXJyYS5lZHUuYXUIMkZuYXRzZW0IMkZpbmRleC5waHAIM0Ztb2RIJTNEcHVibGJjYXRpb24IMjZwdWJsaWNhdGlvbiUzRDExNzMmYmYwxsPTE%3D)

responsibilities compared with young men, especially those young women, who are not in education or employment:

*The gender division is stark for 20–24-year-olds not working or studying, with females spending 53 hours per week on domestic work and care, compared to only 9 hours for their male counterparts<sup>6</sup>.*

The gap in income earnings widens, as women move into their 20s and older. Many young women in Australia are experiencing barriers in transition from school, VET training or university to employment. There appears to be a lack of quality careers information and networks<sup>7</sup>. Careers advice and public media is often based on gendered perspectives, which many young women may not relate to well nor recognize.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that young women don't like to be labelled or targeted as a cohort with an assumed set of shared attributes. Instead they like to be seen as individuals with diverse and changing needs and aspirations. Research suggests however, that there are still gendered patterns of preference and choice for VET subjects and careers by young women<sup>8</sup>.

The discussion around needs and aspirations of Generation Y, broadly defined as young people from about aged 15 to early 30s highlights that this generation is highly adaptable, values relationships and achievements, but is not necessarily interested in power, status and rigid structures<sup>9</sup>. Engagement strategies for young women need to take account of this.

#### *Engagement strategies*

Little research data could be found on how best to engage young women. Instead, young people are often treated as one relatively homogenous group.

A UK based study on engaging young people could be useful in the Australian context, even though no specific data by gender are provided<sup>10</sup>. The study concludes that messages directed to young people need to avoid talking down to them, key messages need to leave the ownership with young people, e.g. *'It's up to you'*, *'You make the decision'*. The study findings show that young people are looking to having fun, making friends and meeting people. Engagement strategies for young women will be most effective, if they provide such opportunities.

The research also stresses the need to include a wide range of media, such as magazines, blogs, text messaging. Information delivered via the web and mobile technologies is pivotal, and needs to be interactive, creative, and the design modern

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<sup>6</sup> Muir, K, et al, as above, p 41

<sup>7</sup> McCarthy, M (2005) *Transitions and Choices: Young Women in TAFE NSW (a discussion paper)* TAFE Women's Programs Unit NSW Department of Education and Training

<sup>8</sup> Security4Women (April 2005) *Getting Real- Young Women and Girls, Working Futures, VET and VET in Schools*, Retrieved on 20 Dec 2009 from

[http://www.wave.org.au/images/documents/getting%20real\\_executive%20summary.pdf](http://www.wave.org.au/images/documents/getting%20real_executive%20summary.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Lighthouse Corporate Coaching (Oct 2005) *Engaging Generation Y*, Retrieved on 10 Dec 2009 from [www.lighthousecc.com.au](http://www.lighthousecc.com.au) and

<http://www.marketpartners.com.au/uploads/PDF/EngagingGeneration.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Department of Children, Schools and Family, (Aug 2009). *Attitudinal barriers to engaging young people in positive activities, Literature and Communications Review*, EdComms, Research Report DCSF-RR 140(Aug 2009), P52, retrieved on 8 Dec 2009 from

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR140.pdf>.

and constantly updated. Any communications targeting young women should be visually exciting, challenging and free of charge. One of the 2009 Australian Youth Report findings relate to the different use of the Internet by young women and men. The report found that young women spend more time on the computer interacting with friends using free social software and interactive Internet sites<sup>11</sup>. Interactive and inclusively designed quizzes and postings on Facebook, MySpace, twitter, Flickr, YouTube and text messages to mobile phones are suggested strategies for communicating with young women. In order to keep the currency and relevance of future *S4W* communication strategies with young women, it is important to note emerging developments in the use of technology tools<sup>12</sup>.

It is proposed that engagement strategies for young women are focused on issues of relevance to them and take place particularly during times of transition or difficulty. The time of transition from education to work is a critical time in the lives of young women, where support and engagement can make a significant difference. A number of strategies could be considered to broaden young women's career aspirations. High quality, evidence based and timely careers advice can have a significant impact on career choices of young women. By providing evidence based short chunks of information on women in employment and careers, *Security4Women* could strengthen the links with its member organisations, in particular with the Association of Women Educators (AWE), Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE) and the Australian Federation of University Women (AFUW) to engage young women on open days, career fairs and with schools careers advisers.

Other topics for engagement may include peer relationships, issues arising from casualised and low paid work, body image and self-esteem. Women in the slightly older age group are facing choices around balancing work and family and moving to independent living arrangements.

It is suggested that young women are more inclined to seek out open networks and online communities, rather than becoming members in a structured women's organisation. Longer-term strategies to engage young women could include the use and/or creation of young women's online communication hubs which provide interactive opportunities, feedback options ('have your say') and the opportunity to network with other young women, more experienced older women and *Security4Women*. Examples of this kind of engagement are listed below. In this example, there are cross-benefits with older women supporting and engaging younger women. It is suggested that young women's engagement be a high priority for *Security4Women*.

#### *Engagement models and examples*

Some of Australia's large non-profits organisations focus initiatives on young women during the time of transition from education to work, for example the YWCA's BigBrotherBigSister program,<sup>13</sup>. Engagement strategies could target particular

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<sup>11</sup> Muir, K, et al, as above, Page 64

<sup>12</sup> Please note the recent report by New Media Consortium (Dec 2009), *Emerging Technologies in Australia- the Horizon Report* provides an Australian perspective on the four emerging technologies, web video, collaborative web tools, mobiles using broadband and mash-ups used by Australian learning organisations to enhance learning and teaching. Retrieved on 18 Jan 2010 from <http://www.apo.org.au/video/emerging-technologies-australia-horizon-report>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ywca.org.au/>, retrieved on 12 Dec 2009 and <http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au>, retrieved on 12 Dec 2009

groups of young women, such as young mothers, Indigenous young women or young women with mental health issues, for example TAFE NSW conducted *Babes with Babes*, a support program for teenage mothers, which resulted in young women's engagement with other educational activities, local services and networks<sup>14</sup>. Linking to such support programs may lead to young women engaging with women's networks and organisations. Other avenues for engagement could be mentoring programs, which are currently delivered by a range of organisations through the National Youth Mentoring Partnership<sup>15</sup>.

Online information exchange hubs and blogs have shown to be effective strategies for engaging young women into women's networks around focus areas, such as career, music and identity. Examples are *Damsels in Success*, a website where younger and older women share their experiences with jobs and careers and share in an active network<sup>16</sup>.

## Engaging mothers in mortgage belt areas

### *Characteristics*

Mothers in mortgage belt areas may experience a degree of isolation and alienation, when being confined to the roles as homemaker and caregiver. While some women may experience financial hardship and difficulties in mortgage payments, and increasingly so with the economic downturn, others may find that perceived lack of their skills, confidence and networks are the key challenges faced. In addition, women in the mortgage belt are negotiating a range of strengths and challenges, relating to dual or sole parenting, culturally and linguistically diversity, and varied levels of physical abilities, health issues and digital and social literacies.

### *Engagement strategies*

Any strategies to engage this group of women need to be able to reach out to women. *Security4Women* may be able to act as a catalyst by starting e-conversations with women's organisations, other non-profit organisations, local government agencies, women's sports associations and community groups and creating a shared focus on key issues. In this facilitative role *Security4Women* may be able to encourage these organisations and groups to elicit direct feedback from mothers in the mortgage belts about their support needs, for example by providing mini-survey tools, web-based feedback options or by creating a hotline facility for a limited period of time.

Effective engagement strategies for this group need to take a community building approach and need to be place-based and customised to the diverse communities and backgrounds of the specific groups of women. The strategies provide an opportunity for mothers in the mortgage belt to express their concerns and support

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<sup>14</sup> TAFE NSW-Hunter Institute, *Babes with Babes*, retrieved on 20 Dec from <http://nswtox.com/>

<sup>15</sup> Australian Youth Mentoring Networks, *Mentoring Matters, The state of play of AYMN registered mentoring programs – National Survey Findings 2009*

<sup>16</sup> A large range of online networks of young women exist, for example <http://www.damselsinsuccess.com/blogs/default.aspx>  
[http://careerencouragement.typepad.com/the\\_career\\_encouragement\\_/2009/01/advice-for-young-women-.html](http://careerencouragement.typepad.com/the_career_encouragement_/2009/01/advice-for-young-women-.html)  
<http://youngwomenmisbehavin.com/>

needs to inform national policy-making. They will also encourage local community capacities for support and networking.

Simple means could be used to start this process, for example, flyers and notices may be located in Women's Information Services<sup>17</sup>, local childcare centres, schools, community centres, health and fitness centres, churches, general practitioners, local craft guilds and associations<sup>18</sup>, Local Government Women's Associations, local council, local non-government agencies, local TAFE and Community Colleges, Women's Sport Clubs and local shopping centres. In addition, editorials and advertising in local papers could be effective ways to reach this group of women, also articles in women's magazines. Women from non-English speaking and culturally diverse backgrounds may be reached through the ethnic networks and media, such as Ethnic Associations, community radio broadcasting and newspapers.

In addition, online tools, women's websites and networks, such as Women's Resources Online<sup>19</sup>, could be utilised to post information and elicit feedback from this group of women. Online communities could be one of the ways, by which mothers in mortgage belt areas engage with other women.

By strengthening existing links and partnerships, generating discussions on ways of providing effective support for this group of women with women's organisations, not-for-profit and government agencies, S4W can take a pivotal role in ensuring mothers in the mortgage belt are able to have their voices heard and adequate support and networks are being developed. This in turn would create opportunities for mothers in the mortgage belt to engage with women's organisations.

#### *Engagement models and examples*

Encouraging women in the mortgage belt to attend Community College or TAFE courses, which are women only and tailored to their needs could lead to further engagement of women. For example, a TAFE NSW painting and decorating women's Outreach course, which was run in the Illawarra region of NSW, resulted in graduates' involvement in their communities. Similarly, a customised TAFE NSW training program, Work Wise Women Certificate IV in Information Technology support, which involved women in Northern Sydney, led to women's involvement in local business and employment<sup>20</sup>. Linking with local women's sports club through the networks of the Australian Womensport and Recreation Association and with the state-based Local Government Women's Associations could be other effective ways of engaging women in the mortgage belt. Programs designed to build women's digital literacy skills may be one of the effective ways of linking women with online networks and resources. Linking into existing networks of women and the S4W membership, such as WAVE could provide avenues to reach out to and engage with these women.

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<sup>17</sup> Women's Information Services are based in States and Territories and provide ready access to women's networks and services.

<sup>18</sup> Directory of craft guilds and associations, Retrieved on 25 Jan 2010 from <http://www.craftaustralia.org.au/networks/taag>

<sup>19</sup> Western Australian website, *Women's Resources Online*, Retrieved on 25 Jan 2010 from [http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/Communities/Women/Womens\\_Information\\_Service.htm](http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/Communities/Women/Womens_Information_Service.htm)

<sup>20</sup> TAFE NSW- Illawarra Institute, Work Opportunities for Women (WOW), Painting and Decorating Programs, and TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute, Work Wise Women Certificate IV in Information Technology Support, as described in TAFE NSW (Nov 2008), *Social Inclusion in Action - Case studies from TAFE NSW*, unpublished draft

## Engaging women, who are in low-skilled, casualised and part-time work

### *Characteristics*

In the gender segregated Australian labour market, women in low skilled, casualised and part-time work are experiencing particular difficulty. In his study *Who is missing out?* Davidson identifies women and sole parents in low-income earning jobs as groups particularly affected by poverty<sup>21</sup>. Masterman-Smith and Pocock's research sheds light on the difficulties and the constant financial struggles that women in low-skilled, casual jobs are faced with; it also shows the resilience and courage of women in the face of adversity<sup>22</sup>. Many women in this situation are finding it very difficult to juggle work, low pay and family commitments and are consequently suffering from stress and health problems.

### *Engagement strategies*

Engagement strategies for women in low skilled, casualised &/or part time work must take into account the pressure of work and time on them. Strategies need to meet their need for support and for improved work stability.

Security4Women could work closely with the relevant member organisations, such as the Working Women's Centres and National Association of Women in Construction to encourage information and support for this group of women. Similarly, S4W could strengthen any links with Worker's Support and Legal Aid agencies, with industry bodies and agencies, such as the Australian Council of Trade Union and the Australian Industry Group to focus on issues relevant to women workers. These may include secure, flexible and family friendly working condition, maternity pay and workplace and affordable childcare. To achieve family friendly work practices, employer incentives could help, such as the *Employer of Choice for Women Award*, which is provided by the Commonwealth Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. Women may be engaged in their places of work, in childcare centres, schools, health centres, community centres and shopping centres. S4W could make links to this group of women through the networks of the Australian Local Government Women's Association, the Australian Craft Network and the Australian Womensport and Recreation Association.

### *Engagement models and examples*

Security4Women may be able to encourage and link into workplace-based initiatives to support this group of women, such mentoring or skills training programs.

Security4Women may start e-conversations with women and key stakeholders as mentioned above to build support for this group of women. This may lead women in this group to further online engagement in women's networks and communities.

Successful strategies for engaging this group of women workers can be drawn from past and existing skills programs, such as the Workplace English Language and

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<sup>21</sup> Davidson, Peter (2008) *Who is missing out? Hardship among low income earners in Australia*, Strawberry Hills: ACOSS. Retrieved on 10 Dec 2009 from <http://www.acoss.org.au/Publications.aspx?displayID=1&subjectID=8>

<sup>22</sup> Masterman-Smith, H & Pocock, B (2008) *Living Low Paid – the dark side of Prosperous Australia*. Melbourne: Allen & Unwin Publishers

Literacy (WELL) Program for clothing, textile and footwear outworkers, conducted by the Clothing, Textile and Footwear Union of Australia<sup>23</sup>.

## **Engaging older women who have left the workforce**

### *Characteristics*

Older women no longer in the paid workforce, and who have also often raised a family, have a wealth of experiences and skills to offer to the community. They might however, experience isolation and a sense of lack of purpose and societal status. This group of women has already a degree of engagement with women's organisations, for example through VIEW Clubs, Country Women's Association, Rural Women's Association. Some may also connect with volunteering organisations.

### *Engagement strategies*

*Security4Women* could increase the scope and depth of older women's engagement by deepening the partnerships with relevant member organisations and creating stronger links with larger not-for-profit organisations, Volunteering Australia, Council of the Ageing (COTA), local community groups, churches, community centres, health and fitness centres, general practitioners, ethnic associations, TAFE and Community Colleges and University of the Third Age. *Security4Women* could utilise its existing membership to reach the member's networks for disseminating information and encouraging feedback. Existing educational programs and social events that are attended by this group of women could be used as a way to further engage women. These may include linking to events and activities at the community education colleges, the craft guilds and associations and local health and recreation centres. Life experience and a mature approach of older women may provide the motivation to support and engage younger women. Providing digital literacy skills to older women would facilitate their ability to engage with younger women in online networks and communities.

### *Engagement models and examples*

Existing women's organisations, their membership and activities, such as the Voices and Interests of Women (VIEW) Clubs of The Smith Family provide an excellent example of engaging women of this age group. As in this case, flow-on effects of engaging older women can be engagement of younger women and members of the communities through mentoring, support and fundraising activities.

## **Engaging other disadvantaged groups of women**

While this report focuses on the above four groups, many of the outlined strategies and models of engagement can be utilised for other groups of women, including disadvantaged women.

Strategies to engage marginalised groups of women, such as Indigenous women, women with a disability, homeless women, recently arrived migrants and refugees, sole mothers, women in custody, need to reach out to women through their existing and wide-ranging local community networks and places. These may include informal

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<sup>23</sup> *Grouping Together To Learn*, WELL Case study, Retrieved on 18 Jan 2010 from [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/WorkplaceEnglishLanguageandLiteracy/Documents/bw\\_tcfua\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/WorkplaceEnglishLanguageandLiteracy/Documents/bw_tcfua_pdf.pdf)

and culturally appropriate communication strategies, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, community health centres, and Refugee Associations. S4W could also link with WomenSpeak in such ventures.

Women living in Australian suburbs with high-risk levels of job vulnerability may experience financial and social difficulties, especially in times of economic instability<sup>24</sup>. According to Flanagan and Mitchell those in low-skilled, casual and part-time employment will be most vulnerable to losing their incomes in economic downturn. If mothers in casual, part-time and/or low-skilled jobs in order to meet mortgage or rent payments lose their jobs, these women and their families experience serious financial hardship. In addition they may face other difficulties with mounting pressures on the family, such as transport problems, domestic violence, health problems or parenting issues. In many instances there are limited local support services available. The pressures of making ends meet on a daily basis can lead to them being isolated and women may find it difficult to engage in broader networks and with women's organisations<sup>25</sup>.

Rural and isolated women are recognised as a group who may not be able to readily access social services and networks, including women's organisations. The 2007 National Women's Summit identified a range of issues for diverse rural women. The *Government Response to the national Rural Women's Summit* is addressing issues women in rural locations, such as Indigenous women, young and older women<sup>26</sup>. The diversity of rural women calls for a diversity of engagement strategies for women, for example, strategies to support Indigenous communities impact on Indigenous women of all ages and in urban and rural remote locations.

Engagement strategies for these groups could be investigated further in future *Security4Women* research. Finally, as it is outside the terms of this brief, and given their far-reaching and urgent needs, and diversity of contexts and groups, a specific plan should be developed for engaging further with indigenous women, utilising existing S4W member networks, and local/national relevant bodies and individuals as a matter of urgency.

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<sup>24</sup> Flanagan, Michael & Mitchell, William (Oct 2009), *Dynamic tracking of the Employment Vulnerability Index against Centrelink labour market payment data*, Working Paper 09-01, Centre of Full Employment and Equity, Newcastle University

<sup>25</sup> Goodwin, S. (2006). Working from the outside in: NSW women's advisory committees. In D. Brennan, L. Chappell (Ed.), *"No Fit Place for Women"? Women in NSW Politics 1856-2006* (Vol. 1, pp. 178–199), Sydney: UNSW Press

<sup>26</sup> *Government Response to National Rural Women's Summit Report 2009*, retrieved on 14 Dec 2009 from <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/general/hrws/Pages/default.aspx>

## **STRATEGIC PLAN: Security4Women engaging diverse women**

The proposed *Security4Women* strategies in the *Strategic Plan* below are targeted to different levels of engagement from providing information, to eliciting feedback to further engagement.

The proposed *Strategic Plan* is based on the previous discussion of the broad characteristics of effective engagement strategies and the four priority groups of women. While the strategies focus on engaging the four priority groups of women, the examples and models provided can also be utilised for engaging other groups of women. Within the four groups, young women are seen as a priority group.

An attempt was made to balance the national focus of *Security4Women* and the need for local and place-based engagement with women from diverse backgrounds. The strategies are based on literature evidence and good practice examples and are designed to provide a starting point and a basis for evolving development of women's engagement. *Security4Women* may encourage - through member organisations and their networks, the adaptation of the *S4W* information material in terms of language, content, look and feel to make these culturally appropriate for the specific group of women addressed.

It is important to note that engagement will be multi-layered and multi-faceted and should aim to build capacities around women's engagement. For example, the engagement of older women may lead to supporting and engaging younger women. It therefore cannot be measured simply by increased membership.

It is proposed that an **evaluation framework be developed** by S4W in a future phase of the work, which takes account of the multiple factors impacting on outcomes of engagement strategies.

**STRATEGIC PLAN: SECURITY4WOMEN ENGAGING DIVERSE WOMEN**

<b>GROUPS OF WOMEN ⇒</b>  <b>S4W ACTIONS ↓</b>	<b>YOUNG WOMEN</b>	<b>MOTHERS IN MORTGAGE BELT</b>	<b>WOMEN WORKERS IN LOW-SKILLED LOW-PAID AND CASUAL JOBS</b>	<b>OLDER WOMEN WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE</b>
<b>KEY ISSUES for WOMEN</b>	Transition to studies and work  Career and life planning  Health issues  Isolation  Peer relationships  Work Early pregnancy Self esteem and body image Financial literacy	Isolation  Limited access to networks and services  Family and parenting issues  Carer responsibilities  Self esteem  Cultural alienation  Digital literacy  Perceived lack of skills	Financial difficulties and hardship  Shift work, maternity leave, job security and job safety  Juggling work and family duties  Affordable childcare  Health  Affordable housing  Isolation and limited Access to networks and resources	Isolation and limited access to networks and resources  Superannuation and pension issues  Health  Lack of societal status and self esteem  Wanting to contribute to society  Digital literacy
<b>S4W INFORMATION STRATEGIES</b>	Disseminate S4W information via:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce information flyers for download and distribution by community and place based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce information flyers for distribution by community and work based agencies,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce information flyers for download and distribution by community and place</li> </ul>

<b>GROUPS OF WOMEN ⇒</b> <hr/> <b>S4W ACTIONS ↓</b>	<b>YOUNG WOMEN</b>	<b>MOTHERS IN MORTGAGE BELT</b>	<b>WOMEN WORKERS IN LOW-SKILLED LOW-PAID AND CASUAL JOBS</b>	<b>OLDER WOMEN WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE</b>
	<p>Mobile technologies Eg MySpace, Facebook, twitter, Flickr and YouTube, mobile phones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard copy Eg youth and women's magazines, notice boards in youth and community centres, sports clubs etc</li> <li>• Networks Such as youth and women's organisations, clubs and social activities for sport, music, art, social gatherings. Support services for homeless and unemployed youth, for drug abuse and mental health.</li> </ul>	<p>sites, services and programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create email distribution lists to identified 'hot spots' for communication links, ie, key people, community services, places and programs, eg women's organisations, health and fitness centres, schools, childcare centres, TAFE and Community Colleges, craft guilds and associations, English classes, ethnic Associations</li> <li>• Post S4W information on key websites and networks.</li> </ul>	<p>eg childcare, community health services, women's industry networks, employer bodies, legal aid centres and unions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create email distribution lists to women and key stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>based sites, services and programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create email distribution lists to key people community services, places and programs, women's organisations, community centres, community elders, health and recreation centres, craft guilds and associations, TAFE and Community Colleges, University of the Third Age, local community agencies, ethnic Associations, Indigenous Land Councils and communities.</li> </ul>
<b>ELICIT FEEDBACK AND DEVELOP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place quizzes, short surveys,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elicit feedback via local agencies and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elicit feedback via local and work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elicit feedback via existing members</li> </ul>

<b>GROUPS OF WOMEN ⇒</b> <hr/> <b>S4W ACTIONS ↓</b>	<b>YOUNG WOMEN</b>	<b>MOTHERS IN MORTGAGE BELT</b>	<b>WOMEN WORKERS IN LOW-SKILLED LOW-PAID AND CASUAL JOBS</b>	<b>OLDER WOMEN WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE</b>
<b>FURTHER ENGAGEMENT</b>	<p>online polls etc on key websites and in young women's magazines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage on-line involvement via wikis, open data, blogs, social networks etc</li> <li>• Link to or create online hubs, networks and communities for young women with links to S4W website</li> </ul>	<p>programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create hotline for feedback</li> <li>• Conduct interviews and conversation circles on key topics</li> <li>• Create links to online hubs, networks and communities to engage women</li> </ul>	<p>based communication channels, agencies and networks. Communication strategies may include "Have your say" sites, short surveys, phone interviews, conversation circles, short-term phone hotlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create place-based and online networks and communities of support for women working in low paid casual jobs with work based and community agencies, unions, health, housing and family support</li> </ul>	<p>and women's networks, e.g. Country Women's Association, VIEW clubs, Church and social groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities to 'leave your comments', and short surveys for distribution by S4W member organisations</li> <li>• Lobby for digital literacy skills programs for older women, so that they can engage with younger women in online networks and communities.</li> </ul>

GROUPS OF WOMEN ⇒ <hr/> S4W ACTIONS ↓	YOUNG WOMEN	MOTHERS IN MORTGAGE BELT	WOMEN WORKERS IN LOW-SKILLED LOW-PAID AND CASUAL JOBS	OLDER WOMEN WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE
			services	
<b>UTILISE AND DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH MEMBERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate S4W information to members for distribution to their networks</li> <li>Encourage regular feedback on key issues and strategies from S4W member organisations and their youth networks and initiatives</li> <li>Encourage dialogue and interaction between S4W member organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate S4W information to members for distribution to their networks</li> <li>Encourage regular feedback on key issues and strategies from key stakeholders and S4W member organisations on this group of women</li> <li>Facilitate interaction between member organisations to achieve information exchange on topics relevant to this group of women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate S4W information to members for distribution to their networks</li> <li>Encourage regular feedback on key issues and suggested strategies from key stakeholders and S4W member organisations</li> <li>Facilitate interaction between member organisations to achieve information exchange on topics relevant to this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore further collaboration around key issues, e.g. superannuation, health, adult learning, digital literacy.</li> <li>Support and expand existing community initiatives e.g. volunteering, mentoring, carer support</li> <li>Encourage older women to support and engage younger women.</li> <li>Facilitate dialogue and interaction between S4W</li> </ul>

GROUPS OF WOMEN ⇒ <hr/> S4W ACTIONS ↓	YOUNG WOMEN	MOTHERS IN MORTGAGE BELT	WOMEN WORKERS IN LOW-SKILLED LOW-PAID AND CASUAL JOBS	OLDER WOMEN WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a S4W e-newsletter email distribution</li> </ul>		group of women.	member organisations
<b>INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT POLICY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence for cross section of gender and youth issues in government initiatives, e.g. Youth Forum,</li> <li>• Lobby for consultations with young women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence for gender perspectives in government initiatives, e.g. Health Reforms, National Mental Health Plan</li> <li>• Lobby for consultations with diverse group of women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence for issues around childcare, pay equity and work/life balance to inform government initiatives, e.g. on paid maternity leave</li> <li>• Lobby for consultations with low-skilled and low-paid women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence for gender and age perspectives in government initiatives</li> <li>• Lobby for consultations with older women</li> </ul>
<b>ENGAGE NEW ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise umbrella organisations and online hubs to channel S4W information and women's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise umbrella organisations to reach their networks, such as Women's Information Services in the States and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to Women's Information Services in the States and Territories, also peak industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise umbrella organisations to reach their networks, such as ACOSS, Australian Local Government</li> </ul>

GROUPS OF WOMEN ⇒ <hr/> S4W ACTIONS ↓	YOUNG WOMEN	MOTHERS IN MORTGAGE BELT	WOMEN WORKERS IN LOW-SKILLED LOW-PAID AND CASUAL JOBS	OLDER WOMEN WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE
	<p>feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link in with existing services, programs, networks and meeting places for young women, such as High Schools, TAFE colleges, universities, careers advisers, youth services, employment agencies, Centrelink, social and sports clubs.</li> <li>• Create or link into existing online hubs, blogs to encourage young women's online networks and</li> </ul>	<p>Territories, ACOSS, Australian Local Government Women's Association, Australian Local Government Association, TAFE Colleges and Community Colleges, Australian Womensport and Recreation Association and peak non-profit organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and strengthen links with existing local community based social services and programs, Local Government Women's</li> </ul>	<p>bodies and workplace agencies, such as Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Council of Trade Unions, Australian Industry Group and EOWA;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create links also to NGOs, such as Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, Legal Aid Centres and Australian Human Rights Commission;</li> <li>• Create communication</li> </ul>	<p>Women's Association, Australian Local Government Association, TAFE Colleges and Community Colleges, Council of the Aging (COTA) and peak non-profit organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link with local and regional networks, e.g., Women's Information Services in the States and Territories, church groups, social clubs, neighbourhood centres, state-based COTA branches, Local Government Women's Associations in States and</li> </ul>

<b>GROUPS OF WOMEN ⇒</b> <hr/> <b>S4W ACTIONS ↓</b>	<b>YOUNG WOMEN</b>	<b>MOTHERS IN MORTGAGE BELT</b>	<b>WOMEN WORKERS IN LOW-SKILLED LOW-PAID AND CASUAL JOBS</b>	<b>OLDER WOMEN WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE</b>
	communities.	<p>Associations in States and Territories, local councils and government agencies and community groups and civil society networks through email distribution and interactive website for resources and information sharing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create or link into existing online hubs, blogs to encourage women's online networks and communities</li> </ul>	<p>channels with local work and community-based social services, women's organisations, working women's Centres, schools, childcare centres, local government and community groups and civil society networks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create or link into existing online hubs, blogs to encourage working women's online networks and communities</li> </ul>	<p>Territories, local councils, regional networks, such as the RRR Women's Network, ethnic Associations.</p>

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

*Security4Women* is well positioned to represent the voices and interests of diverse Australian women and to provide advice and input into national policy development. Building on *Security4Women*'s broad membership base and its strong links to the Australian Government, this report proposed strategies to further strengthen *Security4Women*'s engagement with diverse women.

The discussion in this report focused on the four identified groups of women: young women, mothers living in the mortgage belt, women workers in low skilled, low paid jobs and women who left the workforce. Young women were identified as a priority group for engagement. Based on a desktop review, the report investigated current Australian and overseas research on effective engagement strategies of diverse women and compiled an extensive bibliography. It outlined some of the key issues for each of these groups and suggested in the *Strategic Plan* steps to undertake in order to engage diverse women. In addition, research and anecdotal evidence was provided in highlighting innovative engagement models and examples. Many of these models can be applied or adapted for engagement of other groups of women, including disadvantaged women.

While for many young women interactive web-based and mobile communication strategies are found to be most effective, for other groups of women, community based and local approaches to engagement were considered most appropriate. In addition, workplace links were suggested for women in low-paid casual jobs, who are resource and time poor. In turn, the identified issues for these groups of women may inform *Security4Women* policy priorities and the domains of influence on Australian government policy.

Negotiating the tension of working as a small organisation with a national focus and engaging diverse women in local and place-based settings was found to be one of the key challenges. An aggregated model of engagement, by which *Security4Women* accesses the member organisations' networks, was suggested, as well as a deepening of partnerships with current member organisations and encouraging interactions between member organisations. To broaden women's engagement with *Security4Women*, a whole range of new organisations, places and programs were identified. The report found there to be promising potential for further women's engagement by *Security4Women* by linking into and encouraging online hubs, open women's networks and communities. Cross-benefits for engagement capacities can be achieved by encouraging older women in member organisations to support and engage young women.

Engagement strategies for disadvantaged and marginalised groups were beyond the scope of this report, but were briefly discussed and relevant research has been included into the bibliography. The engagement of disadvantaged women and especially indigenous women warrants further *Security4Women* investigation in the future.

Finally, it is proposed to develop in the near future an integrated evaluation framework to measure complex and inter-faced outcomes of *Security4Women* implementation of the *Strategic Plan* for engagement.

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<http://youngwomenmisbehavin.com/>

## ATTACHMENT A

### Organisations to consider for further Security4Women cooperation

#### *National Peak Bodies*

Australian Local Government Association

<http://www.alga.asn.au/about/>

Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)

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

Australian Human Rights Commission

<http://www.hreoc.gov.au/>

Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia

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

Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)

<http://www.actu.asn.au/>

Australian Industry Group

<http://www.aigroup.asn.au/>

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

<http://www.acci.asn.au/>

Australian Sports Commission

<http://www.ausport.gov.au/>

Council of the Aging (COTA) (also represented in States and Territories)

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

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<http://www.craftaustralia.org.au/networks/taag>

International Working Group on Women & Sport (Representation in Australia)

<http://www.iwg-gti.org/index.php?id=11>

University of the Third Age

<http://u3amelbcity.org.au/>

Volunteering Australia

<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>

## ***National Women's Organisations***<sup>27</sup>

[Australian Church Women](#)

Australian Local Government Women's Association  
[http://www.algwa.net.au/html/s01\\_home/home.asp](http://www.algwa.net.au/html/s01_home/home.asp)

[Australian National Committee on Refugee Women \(ANCORW\)](#)

[Australian Reproductive Health Alliance](#)

[Australian Women's Health Network](#)

Australian Womensport and Recreation Association  
<http://www.australianwomensport.com.au/>

[Catholic Women's League of Australia Inc.](#)

[Country Women's Association of Australia](#)

[Guides Australia](#)

[National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence \(NASASV\)](#)

[National Council of Single Mothers & Their Children](#)

[National Council of Women of Australia](#)

[National Rural Women's Coalition \(NRWC\)](#)

Older Women's Network (OWN) Australia

[Project Respect](#) (supporting trafficked women)

[SCOPE](#)

SCOPE is an all-Australian Women's Community Service Club

[Sisters Inside](#)

Sisters Inside Inc. is an independent community organisation, which exists to advocate for the human rights of women in the criminal justice system.

[Union of Australian Women](#)

[United Muslim Women's Association](#)

[Women's Action Alliance](#)

[WomenSpeak Network](#)

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<sup>27</sup> Selected examples only; not including those organisations that are already S4W Alliance members

[YWCA of Australia](#)

### **State and regional networks**

Ethnic women's groups, for example in NSW  
Muslim Women Association, Arncliffe,  
Australian Vietnamese Buddhist Women's Association, Cabramatta,  
Ethiopian Women's Association

NSW Rural Women's Network  
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn>

Rural, Remote and Regional (RRR) Women's Network in WA  
<http://www.rrr.wa.gov.au/>

#### *Women's Information Services in the States and Territories:*

NSW Women's Information and Referral Service,  
<http://www.women.nsw.gov.au/referral/wirs.htm>

ACT Women information and Referral Centre,  
[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/women/womens\\_information\\_and\\_referral\\_centre](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/women/womens_information_and_referral_centre)

Victorian Wire, <http://www.wire.org.au/>,

South Australian Women's Information Service,  
<http://wis.sa.gov.au/index.php?section=789>

Queensland Women's Infolink  
<http://www.women.qld.gov.au/about-us/infolink/>

Western Australian Women's Resources Online  
[http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/Communities/Women/Womens\\_Information\\_Service.htm](http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/Communities/Women/Womens_Information_Service.htm)

[Women Tasmania - Information and Referral Service - Hobart](#) ↗

[Women's Information Service - Women's Policy Office - Perth](#) ↗

[Women's Information and Referral Centre - Cairns](#) ↗

Women's Information Centre - Alice Springs  
[wicalice.ths@nt.gov.au](mailto:wicalice.ths@nt.gov.au)

## ATTACHMENT B

### Security4women Engagement Implementation Plan (Template)

For... (e.g. Young women)

ENGAGEMENT WITH... (e.g. young women)	ACTION STEPS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	HOW? – RESOURCES NEEDED	BY WHEN?	PLANNED OUTCOMES	RESULTS
DISSEMINATE S4W INFORMATION						
ELICIT FEEDBACK AND DEVELOP FURTHER ENGAGEMENT						
UTILISE AND DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH MEMBER ORG'S						
INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT POLICIES						
ENGAGE NEW ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS						