

**S4W Project Proposal - "Talking about Work"  
Stage 2 consultation for the Australian Government Office for Women**

**Project Aims**

Security4Women (S4W) has designed "Talking about Work" to;

- determine what the key issues surrounding work for women are,
- clarify what women want to know,
- explore what services would assist them and
- identify what skills they want to develop to assist them in dealing with the world of work now and in the future.

**Background**

In 2003 Security4Women asked Australian women to identify the key issues for women in relation to their lifelong economic wellbeing. Key issues for the 3000 women respondents identified at that time included work arrangements that help balance family and other responsibilities, equality of male and female wages and salaries and equal access to secure well paid jobs.

In 2006 S4W undertook a similar survey, part of which asked women to revisit the 22 issues identified in 2003 and indicate their relevance now. Of the 1,000+ responses work related issues, including equality of male and female wages and salaries, equal access to secure well paid jobs, work arrangements that help balance family/other responsibilities and no sex discrimination in employment practices were again rated as highly relevant to women's lifelong economic well being. Other issues including violence, financial literacy, health and caring responsibilities identified as highly relevant in the most recent survey also have an impact on work for women.

The prevalence of work related issues in both these surveys led S4W to develop "Talking about Work". This project is designed to identify the key issues for different women surrounding work and uncover what women need to assist them to effectively address these issues.

**Methodology**

Security4Women have identified that work related issues are a high priority for women in two significant surveys and through the What Women Want workshops in late 2005. S4W want to progress this by illuminating the diverse issues for women around paid work and identifying some strategies to assist them to address the issues. It is therefore suggested that it is necessary to talk to women at some length, in a relatively unstructured format to obtain qualitative in depth responses.

Talking to women in small groups is considered appropriate as this will maximise the number of participants in the project. It is also hoped that group discussion may enhance the quality of the responses. Small group interviews (or focus groups) will generally involve between 8 and 10 participants who will be asked by the facilitator to discuss in some depth a small number of questions about paid work. It is our view that the small group interviews will encourage participants to elaborate on the reasons behind their issues or opinions and also to reflect and refine their own position. The participant's responses will be recorded and analysed.

The participants will be a broad cross section of Australian women from mainstream to marginalised women with different geographical distribution, income levels, age groups, occupations, cultural and religious backgrounds, education levels and varied connectedness to community and organisations. S4W aim to conduct 25 focus groups for this project. 20 focus groups will be conducted initially and the participant's demographic data reviewed. The remaining five focus groups will target particular individuals who may not be adequately represented in the first 20 groups.

**Initial contacts for access to focus group participants**

Employees/Casuals - Working Women's Centres (NT, TAS, SA, QLD)  
Indigenous women - Waltja Women's Council (Central Australia)  
Refugees and recent migrants - Ecumenical Migration Centre (VIC)

Business and Professional Women - BPWA, WIMBN, APESMA (National)  
 Women in Non traditional areas - NAWIC (VIC, TAS, NSW, QLD, SA))  
 Women in Science/IT - WISENET/APESMA  
 Women in retail/shop assistants - BPWA, Shop Assistants Union  
 Piece/Home workers - Asian Women at Work, Fairwear  
 Community workers - Cook Islands woman, playgroup (VIC)  
 Women with Disabilities - WWDA (National)  
 Young women - YWCA, NAWIC (National)  
 Micro/small business woman (Alex; Judith)  
 Young single mothers (Judith)  
 Low ses women - The Smith Family (Learning for life program) (National)  
 Muslim Women - Muslim Women's Group/VIEW Clubs (NSW)  
 Remote and Indigenous women - AWE in Weipa and other remote groups QLD  
 Older women - VIEW Clubs, AFUW  
 Women in education and training - WAVE

Each of S4W's member organisations will be approached to provide participant's that represent the diversity of their membership for relevant focus groups. Member organisations will also contribute suggestions for other organisations, groups or individual women to participate in focus groups.

The four National Women's Secretariats have agreed to review their proposed Stage 2 projects, particularly the women who will be participating, to ensure there is limited overlap. Where overlap is likely to occur they will work together to identify alternative women or networks to target. They will also review any opportunities to coordinate their efforts where the topic and methodology allows.

### Key Questions

1. Why do you work?
2. What are the key issues surrounding paid work for you?
  - a. Are there specific barriers and disincentives confronting you in obtaining and retaining the type and amount of work you would like?
  - b. Are there particular things that have helped you obtain and retain the type and amount of work you like?
2. What do you need to know to better inform you about these issues?
  - a. What kind of format/s would you like to receive this information in?
  - b. What are your preferred locations to access such information?
3. What sort of services would assist you in obtaining and retaining work?
4. What skills would you like to develop to assist you in obtaining and retaining work?
  - a. How do you think you could develop those skills?
  - b. What assistance do you need to develop those skills?
5. What would you like to see happen about the issues you raise?
  - a. Generally?
  - b. Individually (for yourself)

### Demographic data

Age groups  
 Main language spoken at home  
 Are you in work? (paid/unpaid)  
 What are you doing/what are your jobs?

### Project Timeframe

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Focus Group planning   | July 31     |
| Focus Groups conducted | Aug-Sept 15 |
| Collation of data      | Oct 15      |
| Draft report due       | Oct 31      |
| Mtg w OfW              | Nov 8       |
| Final report due       | Nov 30      |