

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Skills for all Australians? VET needs to be viable for women**

economic Security4Women welcomes the Australian Government's release of *Skills for All Australians* and its focus on reforming skills training across Australia. We agree this is critical for Australia's productivity and economic future. We also welcome the injection of much needed funds.

"The Government, however, must strengthen its focus on women's skill development, training and workforce participation both nationally and at state/territory levels. Without a strong focus on constraints to women's participation the Government's reforms will not succeed in improving the participation of 51% of the population" said, Sandra Cook, Chair of economic Security4Women.

The Government's reform package fails to recognise the gendered profile of Australia's labour force along with lower participation of women in the workforce, the reasons behind these factors and the strategies that are needed to address this important economic issue.

The Government needs to provide the opportunity for women to build skills in emergent and non-traditional occupations, including in engineering, mining, trades and apprenticeships. The Government also needs to work with industry to address industry's failure to attract, retain and upskill women workers in emergent and new industries.

"Our recent research *Viable Work: Career Pathways for Women and Girls* demonstrates that the VET system is not meeting the learning needs of young women, particularly in non-traditional areas. This failure should be a key focus of the government's reform efforts", said Ms Cook. "We recommend that the Government implement a national VET strategic framework for women with clear priorities and accountability mechanisms.

We also call on the Government to promote industry and employment based training programmes aimed at recruiting women into industries with flexible work practices for men and women, to enable caring responsibilities to be met.

The *Viable Work Report* is available at [security4women.org.au/WAVE\\_eS4W\\_ViableWork\\_report-final1.pdf](http://security4women.org.au/WAVE_eS4W_ViableWork_report-final1.pdf)

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