

MEDIA RELEASE

13 November 2012

Women's organisations call on Productivity Commission for review of organisation and funding of childcare

Today economic Security4Women (eS4W) called for a root and branch review of the organisation and finance of childcare; a necessity if we are to increase the participation of women in paid work.

Marie Coleman, AO, asked the Commonwealth Government to ask the Productivity Commission to explore current childcare arrangements, with particular attention to out of school hours care that includes before and after school care and vacation/holiday care.

"We also need to pay attention to age appropriate supervision and care. Working parents also need to be confident that their children, from ages 10 to 17 years, are safe and happy during the hours those parents are required to work and to travel to and from that work".

"The Productivity Commission needs to investigate the intersection of the cost and availability of childcare with tax and transfer rates that together have an impact on women's participation in the workforce and their contribution to the national economy," Ms Coleman (eS4W member) said. These ideas were supported by John Daley, Grattan Institute CEO, whose recent Gamechangers report reinforced the impact that increasing women's workforce participation would have on our economy.

Ms Coleman was speaking at an event today, hosted by eS4W, that brought together women's organisations, academics, welfare organisations, unions and business people to consider the 'wicked problem' of insecure work: casual work that does not enjoy the protection of the National Employment Standards.

"Although 'work and family' balance is often cited as a benefit of increased flexibility, job insecurity affects women's capacity to manage care responsibilities and undermines claims for decent jobs that enable work- life balance. Importantly, fluctuating incomes from insecure employment also undermine women's capacity to achieve economic autonomy", stated Kimberly James, eS4W's Executive Officer.

"Women are over represented in insecure work and many (but not all) do so in order to juggle their unpaid care work with their paid work. Many women are looking for more hours of work and regular hours of work. To date, insecure employment has drawn little recognition as a major factor affecting the economic well-being of women. If the lack of affordable, available and age appropriate childcare forces women into insecure work then this review must happen sooner rather than later.

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