

**Women and Vocational Education (WAVE)** joins other women's groups in Australia to demand that the 2010 Federal Election makes a change towards gender equality.

Vocational education and training (VET) offers women the potential to transform their educational, social and economic wellbeing. Vocational education and training in Australia provides skills training to approximately 1.7 million people each year. Of these 47.6% are female and 52.3 % male.

WAVE is concerned about the continuing inequities experienced by many women in work and in the VET sector. Investment in accessible, affordable and relevant education and training for women and girls must be increased. The gap in equitable employment outcomes must be addressed. Vocational training in areas of high skill demand or in the emerging green economy is also essential for women.

Historically the disadvantage faced by women in VET and employment has been addressed through national policy frameworks including the current VET national policy for women, *Women: Shaping our future*. This is due to expire this year.

WAVE seeks Government commitment to implement a new strategic framework for Australian women with a clear set of priorities and targets that take account of their diverse backgrounds, locations, life stages and needs. This framework must be based on gender analyses and set in the context of key initiatives including the forthcoming COAG Reforms, the Education Revolution and the work of the National VET Equity Advisory Committee (NVEAC).

WAVE calls on Government to endorse and enact the following recommendations for change in VET policy and programs to achieve substantive equality between men and women in Australia:

1. make women's learning needs central to all long term VET strategies and policies
2. implement a VET strategic framework for women with clear priorities & accountability mechanisms
3. ensure access to funded relevant training that enhances career pathways for women
4. ensure employment creation programs and employer-based incentive schemes benefit women
5. ensure gender expertise on all national VET equity advisory committees & working groups
6. collect, analyse and publish performance and outcome data that include trends over time and are disaggregated by gender and demographic characteristics.