

WAVE welcomes the Agreed Conclusions from CSW55<sup>1</sup>, and looks forward to working to promote and implement reforms to benefit Australian women and girls, and the wider Australian society. Similarly, WAVE welcomes current initiatives to strengthen and diversify the national training system (VET), to enhance individuals' opportunities for training that links to employment and decent work

In line with CSW 55 Conclusions and international obligations, WAVE seeks:

1. Australian Government commitment to implement education, training and employment policies based on gender analyses, including 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.
2. The new framework must move beyond a gender-neutral stance to be based on gender analyses and be set in the context of COAG Reforms; the Skills Australia proposed reforms and the work of the National VET Equity Advisory Committee (NVEAC).
3. The inter-related gap between VET and inequitable employment outcomes for women also requires urgent attention and structural change.

We call on the Australian Government to:

- make women's learning needs central to all VET strategies and policies, including the National Equity Blueprint. This requires an explicit recognition of women *per se*, to adequately redress issues of intersectionality (indigenous women, women with disabilities, CALD women, low SES women, rural women and so on);
- implement strategies for VET based on gender analyses to inform a training framework able to provide opportunities for women at different stages of their life cycle and appropriate to their needs and circumstances. ensure gender expertise on all national VET equity advisory committees & VET working groups;
- implement a VET strategic framework for women with clear priorities & accountability mechanisms, including linking VET funding arrangements to key performance indicators for women, especially those most disadvantaged (indigenous and disabled women and girls);
- collect, analyse and publish performance and outcome data that include trends over time and are disaggregated by gender and demographic characteristics. Such data will assist in the identification of trends and issues, development of strategies to address these, and ongoing monitoring;
- provide accessible gender sensitive career counseling (including VET in schools) to broaden subject and course selection by girls and women in schools and VET, to enhance career pathways and meaningful employment outcomes for women and girls as well as addressing Australia's gender segmented labour force;
- reinstate and recommit to the value of pre-vocational or 'stepping stone' programs for women returning to work after raising children, caring or from income support;
- develop, implement and monitor programs that promote women into non-traditional trades and professions, with particular attention to addressing preconceived ideas about the capabilities and attributes of women and the workplace cultures and requirements of such trades and professions;
- ensure that employment creation programs and employer based incentives designed in response to skilling Australians for future employment opportunities, for skill shortages, emergent industries and occupations include initiatives that benefit women and girls, and include quotas &/or targets where necessary to address Australia's gender segmented labour force<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> UN Economic and Social Council Commission on the Status of Women Fifty-fifth Session 22 February-4 March *Draft agreed conclusions submitted by the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women on the basis of informal consultations* E/CN.6/2011/L.6 8 March 2011 Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm#agreed>

<sup>2</sup> Of significance here for example is the recent announcement of \$200 million Critical Skills Investment Fund to improve skills in the resources sector – a heavily masculinised sector