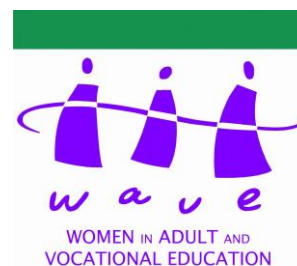


MEDIA RELEASE & STATEMENT

Monday, 12 February 2024



Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE) welcomes new Commissioner for Jobs and Skills Australia and looks forward to new leadership that will address the systemic inequity in Australia's Vocational Skills Policy and Practice.

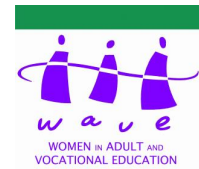
Today, Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE), Australia's only organisation dedicated to advocacy and advancement of equity that includes embedding the Government's commitment to gender equality in our national skills and education system, welcomed the appointment of Professor Barney Glover AO, as the new Chief Commissioner.

"There is so much hope for the future work of Jobs and Skills Australia. WAVE was pleased to provide input into the design of JSA's legislation, particularly to ensure JSA's have a role in addressing inequity. We were also pleased that the inaugural leadership of JSA listened to WAVE and understood the evidence and our concerns about inequity in skills and training" said Kit McMahon National Co-Convenor of WAVE earlier today.

"We look forward to seeing this focus on equity continue under the leadership of Professor Glover AO who has demonstrated during his tenure at Western Sydney University his commitment to equity, inclusion and skills development and we look forward to continuing these important conversations" said McMahon.

WAVE has published many papers and submissions to Government supporting the evidence of persistent inequity in the Australian skills and education system, highlighting that:

- participation in VET skills development and training is gendered both across the type of training that occurs (fee paying, apprenticeship, delivery), the industry segment (construction/aged care) and also, the level of qualification achieved (across the AQF spectrum where higher number of women go into university than VET)
- the experience of VET is gendered with close reading of non-completion data showing that women leave VET learning for "personal reasons" whereas for men, it is because they have achieved the skills or have a job (NCVER *Total VET Student Outcomes 2016-2021, Gender x Main Reason Discontinued Training via VOCSTATS*)
- the outcomes of skills system differ and deliver different returns depending upon gender where more men go into higher paying roles, and women into lower paying, more casualised jobs (ABS *Education and Work Australia, May 2022*)
- the Australian Skills system reflects, reinforces and reproduces our gendered workforce.
- capital investment in VET is gendered whereby higher resources and funding is provided to male dominated skill pathways and less funding and resources to female dominated skills pathways (WAVE *Response to Call for Submission to Terms of Reference for Australian Government Employment White Paper, 27 November 2022*)



- while the gender pay gap in education and training is in favour of women up to the age of 30 (it) “...crosses thereafter as men start to earn more on average than women, resulting in a gender pay gap that touches 20 per cent by the age of 55” (2022 BCEC/WGEA *Gender Equity Insights 2022*, p9)
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) tells us that for the tertiary education sector – the most representative of education organisations delivering skills programs including vocational education and training – that while the majority of employees are women, the majority of those in leadership are male, and the pay gap is 8.4% (WGEA – *Tertiary Education within Education and Training Summary Diagram* of 232,075 employees within 107 organisations of any size. As at 17/08/2022).

“The persistent evidence that we see of inequity requires transformational change,” said Kit McMahon “Australia’s Vocational Skills Policy and Practice needs a strategic plan that not only tackles systemic barriers to equality but also addresses the practical needs of those facing intersectional barriers especially women. This plan should strengthen the VET system for long-lasting change, its policies and practices. Allocating resources to this effort is crucial” said McMahon.

“WAVE is very much looking forward to working with the new Chief Commissioner and continuing to support the important work of Jobs and Skills Australia” closed Kit McMahon

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Further Information

Who is WAVE?

WAVE is a national network of women involved in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and adult education. WAVE provides research, policy advice and advocacy to Australian and State/ Territory Governments on gender equity in skills and adult education policy, and provides input into VET and adult education internationally.

Submission

WAVE’s pre-budget submission to the Australian Government’s for the 2024 Federal Budget “Support for Equitable Vocational and Adult Education: Addressing Inequity in our skills system” can be found on our website here <https://wave.org.au/wave-pre-budget-submission-2024-to-the-australian-government-support-for-equitable-vocational-and-adult-education-addressing-inequity-in-our-skills-system/>