



WAVE in 2019/20

As a WAVE member you're part of a national network that advocates on behalf of women and girls in adult and vocational education and training. Your membership lends strength to our advocacy.

WAVE was involved in a number of national and international activities in 2019/20, partnering with a range of groups, and seeking to ensure that government policy in relation to adult and vocational education during COVID-19, addressed the needs of women and girls.

Sue Salthouse

WAVE, along with the women's and disabilities networks, has been most saddened by the loss of our long time Executive member, Sue Salthouse. Sue was an amazing activist, with a warm sense of humour, who will be missed by many. We are planning two projects in memory of Sue, with a particular focus on women and disabilities.

The first is in WA, where a 'Young Women with Disability Employment Network WA' will be trialled through a project officer and support of our WA members.

The second is the OctoberVET webinar, as outlined below.

Forum/Webinar.

WAVE had a forum planned for April this year at the time of the AVETRA conference. It was entitled: *More than just women in hardhats: understanding the wide role of VET for the careers of Australian women.*

We had a great range of speakers lined up: Lizzie Knight, Ann-Marie Bathmaker, Sue Webb, Jane Newton, Karen O'Reilly-Briggs, Deb Parker, Michelle Circelli and Kira Clarke. The forum was to be held at the VET Development Centre, and we also had sponsorship from the Australian Apprenticeships and Traineeships Information Service (AATIS). However like many other events this year, we had to postpone ours due to COVID-19.

We are now in the process of developing a webinar entitled: *Women learning, women working: how disability and gender shape training and careers opportunities.* It is an interactive OctoberVET event to be held on 29 October 1.30 – 3.30 pm (AEDT), with speakers including Lizzie Knight, Jen Cousins, Karen O'Reilly-Briggs, Michelle Circelli and Kira Clarke.

We are charging \$20 to help raise funds for a grant in memory of our WAVE colleague, Sue Salthouse, who sadly passed away earlier this year. We are launching a

grant in her memory that will be awarded at the AVETRA conference 2021 to a practitioner/researcher to support research on ‘gender and disability’.

Thanks to Kira Clarke for her work on both of these events.

WAVE event at NCVET conference

WAVE was planning an event at the proposed NCVET conference in Perth this year. It was also cancelled but we hope to partner with NCVET in future events.

Research Proposal

WAVE Executive members Jan and Elaine worked on a research proposal for a partnership grant from the National Careers Institute. The objectives of the partnership grants are:

- Improve the quality of, and access to careers information and advice
- Build an evidence-base for best practice career development
- Demonstrate the value of career development
- Increase knowledge and create greater awareness of career paths and career information

Results of the grant are expected in November.

Lobbying

WAVE members continue to lobby around issues relating to women and girls and adult education. The lobbying involves letter writing, submissions and visits to MPs. Our stated demands include:

- * Access to a strong, national public vocational education and training system
- * Career advice, counselling & targeted support to undertake accredited training for viable, well-paid and decent jobs
- * Technical & trade training in all areas of skill shortages, emergent occupations and industries
- * Training provision that is high quality, affordable, inclusive and relevant for the diversity of all Australian women

We also continue to make the point that Australia has signed up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and therefore all governments in Australia are obliged to meet these commitments to gender, education and decent work.

Gender Lens on the Budget 2020/21

WAVE was again involved in analysing the impact of the 2019/20 Federal Budget on women and girls in vocational education and training. The full ‘Gender Lens on the Budget’ report will be on the WAVE website. The report made the following comments on the budget:

In the current economic circumstances resulting from the COVID 19 pandemic impacting disproportionately on women with the loss of jobs in hospitality, retail, arts and tourism, the government’s vocational education and training measures fail to reflect a real understanding

of the need for reforms to VET policy and programs and a more targeted approach to funding to increase women's participation in a greater diversity of vocational fields of study. Women's concentration in certain industries has made them exceptionally vulnerable to job losses at this time.

Submissions

WAVE contributed to a number of submissions through the year, including through the National Women's Alliances. We also collaborated with Gender Equity Victoria and the Gender Equity Accredited Training Project from Women's Health Victoria on two submissions. One to the Skills for Victoria Review and another to the Productivity Commission's review of the National Training Agreement.

We made the following recommendations in relation to a new National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development:

a. Develop a strategic framework for women in VET with a clear set of priorities and targets with performance accountability mechanisms. We recommend that these align with the Australian Government's gender equity and prevention of violence policies and support the reform required to transform the Australian workforce in a post-COVID-19 environment.

The targets need to be based on a framework of long-term reform of inequality through the Australian VET sector and include:

- Targets for both retention and recruitment of women in male dominated VET courses *and* targets for retention and recruitment of men in female dominated VET courses
- An improved method for assessing skill shortages in the Australian workforce that, takes into account the prevalence of gender stereotypes and norms in Australian workforces
- A national approach to identify the barriers and enablers to women's participation in VET including in traineeships and apprenticeships, identifying what can be done to address the barriers and replicate enablers across the VET sector. (For instance, funding to support contextualisation of training package qualifications, or skills sets to enable better work opportunities.)
- An evaluation of the outcomes of VET policy from an equity perspective, including use of gender-disaggregated data. Collect, analyse and publish performance and outcome data on women's participation in VET, that include trends over time that are disaggregated by gender, and what steps have been taken to address shortcomings.

Include a requirement for the Australian VET system to address gender inequality by:

- Reforming VET funding models and policy that impact women's engagement and completion (retention rates),
- Improve VET funding to ensure funded training providers hold workforce expertise, facilities and services that are appropriate for the provision of gender equitable VET with structures and practices that support gender equality in VET and the VET Sector

Full submissions can be found here: <https://whv.org.au/our-focus/gender-equity>

International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD), celebrated on 8 March, commemorates women's achievements – socially, economically, culturally and politically. This year the theme for International Women's Day was: *I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights*. WAVE encourages involvement of our members.

COVID-19 has raised concerns with WAVE members and many other women's groups that equal rights have been under attack with all governments having developed a tunnelled focus on economic growth at any cost.

International matters

WAVE continues to work with ASPBAE and a range of other international groups, including the Women's Major Group. We comment on position papers and provide information for submissions and meetings, either as part of the Australian Coalition for Education and Development (ACED) or as a separate organisation.

Members of the WAVE Executive provided feedback on the Position Paper to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of The Fourth World Conference on Women and The Beijing Declaration and Platform For Action (1995). The Joint Position Paper was from Disabled People's Organisations Australia (DPO Australia) and the National Women's Alliances.

Members of the WAVE Executive provided technical inputs into the ACFID Education Community of Practice (CoP) to inform submission by NGOs to the Australian Governments Aid Review.

WAVE endorsed a statement from the Women Major Group, which highlighted the need to: Invest in the Care Economy for a Just, Green, Feminist Covid-19 Response and Recovery

We wrote up a position paper for the National Consultation on ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly, and were asked about current concerns, and the effects of COVID-19 in our sector. We said that contemporary issues included:

1. *The lack of value accorded to education per se & to educators as experts*
 - a. *Education is increasingly viewed primarily as an economic lever.*
2. *Learners are viewed mostly as an homogenous group, in national policy terms.*
 - i. *There are no national policies that focus on gender & social inclusion in VET, gender in compulsory education, & few if any other overarching GEDSI policies in education broadly.*
 - ii. *This increases as learners age/move through or between education sectors.*
 - iii. *Negligible value or recognition is accorded to lifelong learning & ALE*
3. *The increasing defunding & privatisation of education & training in all sectors*
 - a. *'Pathways' is a prevalent discourse in education & training, but funding &/or support diminish after a first qualification, especially in VET. This is inexplicable given the rapidly changing needs of society and the economy.*
 - b. *Funding cuts to VET (& TAFE) & Higher education are ongoing, increasing the vulnerability of the public provision of accessible quality affordable education & training for all.*

4. *The increasing influence of (big) industry in the development of national education policy*
 - a. *While industry has long been considered a key stakeholder of education policy, this influence is increasing.*
 - i. *National inquiries are increasingly narrow in their focus & TOR, with the expert committees overseeing them dominated by key industry bodies & persons.*
 1. *Educators are rarely if ever included as key members of such special purpose/designated groups.*
 - ii. *Even while Inquiries are underway, rapid 'thought bubble' policy changes that have major implications are made prior to completion of major Inquiries (e.g. Productivity Commission³), let alone their findings.*
5. *Education & training funding & governance are shared between the Federal Government & State/Territory Governments.*
 - a. *This increases the complexity of policy work & funding regimes.*
6. *It is well recognised that the national VET system in Australia is not fit for purpose*

Apart from the above, we post and share international news, comments and posts related to education and training, work and of course gender issues on our Facebook page. Our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/womeninadultandvocationaleducation/>) can also be accessed through our website (<http://wave.org.au/wave/>) where information is regularly updated.

Thanks to Elaine and Jan for their work on international issues.

WAVE representation on economic security 4 women (eS4W)

WAVE is represented on eS4W by Jan Edwards and Linda Simon, with Elaine Butler as an alternate.

WAVE representation on Equality Rights Alliance (ERA)

WAVE is represented by a number of our members on ERA's various groups, including Elaine Butler, Jen Walsh, Sue Thompson and Linda Simon. Demmi Paris was a member of the ERA Steering committee for part of the year.

Partnerships

WAVE is represented on and/or collaborates with a number of organisations both to ensure our points of view are heard and included at strategic points related to the *Education 2030 Agenda*

- WAVE is a member of Asia South Pacific Association for Basic & Adult Education (ASPBAE)¹ – a regional association of more than 200 organisations & individuals that operates from grassroots to government and high-level global echelons, thus linking us into our wider region and globally. Information is shared regularly.

¹ <http://www.aspbae.org>

- WAVE is a member of the Women’s Major Group (WMG)² and of NGO CSW³. We share their communications, endorse relevant documents and submissions, and contribute information relating to our interests, thus sharing on a global level.
- As a CSO (civil Society Organisation) we are also a member of the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM)⁴ – “APRCEM is a civil society platform aimed to enable stronger cross constituency coordination and ensure that voices of all sub-regions of Asia Pacific are heard in intergovernmental processes in regional and global level. The platform is initiated, owned and driven by the CSOs, and has been set up under the auspices of UN-ESCAP and seeks to engage with UN agencies and Member States on the Post-2015 as well as other development related issues/processes.”

Newsletters

WAVE communicates with a large range of members through our Newsletters – three this year, as well as regular posts on social media. Contributions are always welcome.

WAVE AGM and Executive meeting

The WAVE AGM this year will be held online on 16 October.

Thanks to WAVE Executive members for their work over the year on behalf of all WAVE members.

Public Officer – Elinor Buckley
National Secretary – Robyn Woolley
National Treasurer - Annette Bonnici
WAVE Ambassador – Elaine Butler
WAVE Executive member – Jan Edwards
State and Territory Convenors
ACT – Sue Salthouse and Marinda Burger
Queensland – Jane Newton
Victoria – Kira Clarke and Demmi Paris
Western Australia – Sue Thompson and Sarah Leftwich
Northern Territory – Raelke Grimmer
NSW – Cecilia Blackwell and Terri Quinlan
Tasmania – Rebecca Gray

WAVE Resources

WAVE has developed:

- * a flyer about WAVE, its organisation and its work
- * a membership card to be handed out at events
- * a postcard outlining our main aims for these two years.

² For information about the Women’s Major Group see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/women> and <http://www.womenmajorgroup.org>

³ For information about NGO CSW see: <https://www.ngocsw.org>

⁴ See: See: <http://www.asiapacificrcem.org>

We send Newsletters to our wider group of members 4-5 times a year. To join WAVE and receive our Newsletters, go to the website www.wave.org.au/wave/

Website

Our website continues to be a great resource and focus of interest. We plan to redevelop the website over the next couple of months. Thanks to Simon.

Social Media

Thanks to Kira, Elaine and Jan for their work around social media.

Linda Simon – National Convenor
10 October 2020