



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18
of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of States parties

Australia*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing. For the initial report submitted by the Government of Australia, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.40, considered by the Committee at its seventh session. For the second periodic report submitted by the Government of Australia, see CEDAW/C/AUL/2, considered by the Committee at its thirteenth session. For the third periodic report submitted by the Government of Australia, see CEDAW/C/AUL/3, considered by the Committee at its seventeenth session.



Australian Government

**Australia's Combined
Fourth and Fifth Reports
to the United Nations on the**

***Convention on the Elimination of all forms
of Discrimination Against Women***

June 2003

Australia's Combined 4th and 5th Reports
to the United Nations
on the
Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination
Against Women

Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women
June 2003

Australia's Combined 4th and 5th Reports to the United Nations on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

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GLOSSARY

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AFFA	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIJA	Australian Institute of Judicial Administration
AIRC	Australian Industrial Relations Commission
ANR	Annual National Report on Schooling in Australia
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APS	Australian Public Service
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ATSILS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services
AWAG	Aboriginal Women's Advocacy Group
AWSAC	Aboriginal Women's Statewide Advisory Council Inc. (SA)
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BCNA	Breast Cancer Network Australia
CanBAS	Canberra Business Advisory Service
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination
CROC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSHA	Commonwealth State Housing Agreement
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DIR	Department of Industrial Relations
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DSP	Disability Support Pension
EdNA	Education Network Australia
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ESL	English as a Second Language
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FPA	Family Planning Association
GP	General Practitioner
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
IA	Intensive Assistance
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies

IHL	International Humanitarian Law
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IWD	International Women's Day
IYV	International Year for Volunteers
JSCI	Job Seeker Classification Instrument
JST	Job Search Training
LNWDA	Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MEF	Malaita Eagle Force
MINCO	Commonwealth/State Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women
NAP	National Action Plan on Human Rights
NCP	National Crime Prevention
NICSA	National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault
NEIS	New Enterprise Incentive Scheme
NSW	New South Wales
NES	non-English speaking
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NT	Northern Territory
NWDP	National Women's Development Program
OFLC	Office of Film and Literature Classification
OSW	Office of the Status of Women
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PADV	Partnerships Against Domestic Violence
PELS	Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme
PHOFAs	Public Health Outcome Funding Agreements
QLD	Queensland
QPS	Queensland Public Service
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme
SDA	Sex Discrimination Act
SIWNET	Solomon Islands Women's Information Network
TAS	Tasmania
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TIS	Translating and Interpreter Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UTS	University of Technology Sydney

VET Vocational Education and Training
VIC Victoria
VIP Volunteers In Policing
WA Western Australia
WHO World Health Organisation
WRA Workplace Relations Act
WWDA Women With Disabilities Australia

INTRODUCTION

1. Australia signed the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in July 1980 and ratified in July 1983. It has provided three periodic reports to the Committee, most recently in June 1997. This Combined Fourth and Fifth Report takes into account the findings of the Commonwealth Government's review of Australia's engagement in the UN treaty committee system. It also highlights significant activities and major initiatives undertaken from June 1997 to June 2003 to further improve and progress the status of women, as well as plans for future activities. The report includes only major legislative, policy and programme changes for the reporting period and is not intended to act as an update of every aspect of previous reports.

2. Since it became a signatory to CEDAW, Australia has developed a range of mechanisms for promoting the rights enshrined within this Convention. At the forefront are the mechanisms and ideals provided by the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. The criminal justice system, the legal system and cultural attitudes, among others, are also utilised for the implementation and enforcement of the rights enshrined in CEDAW. Executive responsibility for the status of women in the Commonwealth Government lies with the Prime Minister who is aided by the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women. Senator the Hon. Kay Patterson holds this position, as well as holding the position of Minister for Family and Community Services. Her predecessor, Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone, held both positions from 30 January 2001 to 29 September 2003.

3. Policy advice to the Government on issues relevant to women is provided by the Office of the Status of Women (OSW), which is a division of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. OSW also initiates, coordinates and administers government policies and programmes or projects designed to raise the status of women, advises the Government on matters relevant to women and provides relevant information to, and about women. To ensure the momentum for advancing the status of women is maintained, OSW's focus is on three broad policy areas as a priority. These are: women's employment and economic security; women and public life, with particular emphasis on the involvement of women in leadership and decision-making; and women and the law, with particular emphasis on the elimination of violence against women. OSW also retains primary responsibility for Australia's participation in international women's activities.

4. OSW funds national women's organisations to provide National Secretariat services on behalf of women in Australia. The role of the National Secretariats is to:

- work collaboratively to provide informed and representative advice to government on policy issues, development and implementation relevant to the diverse views and circumstances of women;
- represent the diverse views of women through consultation with the women's sector, their own constituencies and other groups and organisations relevant to women's concerns;
- act as a conduit for the exchange of information between government and the women's sector;
- undertake specific policy analysis on individual areas of organisational expertise and concern; and
- undertake and maintain effective governance structures to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of national secretariats.

Preparation and Structure of the Report

5. OSW has compiled Australia's Combined Fourth and Fifth Reports on the CEDAW. The report is an assessment of Australia's performance including policies, programmes and activities. Australia's report highlights a number of recent Australian best practices, focussing on the review period from June 1997 to June 2003.

Consultation with State and Territory Governments

6. Australia has a federal constitutional system in which legislative, executive and judicial powers are shared or distributed between the Commonwealth Government and six States – New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia – and two geographically internal self-governing territories – the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. For the purposes of this report, the two self-governing territories may be regarded as standing substantially in the same position as the States. As the State and Territory Governments are responsible for many of the government activities that give effect to the Convention, the Commonwealth Government consulted State and Territory Governments in the preparation of this report. OSW would like to thank State and Territory Women's Offices for their input to Australia's response.

7. Further information about Australia's political structure and general legal framework within which human rights are protected is available in Australia's *Core Document* (United Nations document HRI/CORE/1).

BACKGROUND

Frameworks to advance the status of women in Australia

8. Australia has a comprehensive range of social, economic, political and legal frameworks that seek to advance the status of women and eliminate discrimination and violence against women and girls. These are outlined in detail in *Australia's Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000)*. The report contains comprehensive information on significant legislation, institutions and programmes for women. At the Commonwealth level, the key measures include:

- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*;
- *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1997*;
- *Workplace Relations Act 1996*;
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission;
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency;
- Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women and the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women;
- Parliamentary Advisory Group on Women;
- *Australia's Beijing Plus Five Action Plan 2000-2005*;
- *Women's NGO Programme*; and
- *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence*.

9. Four new national initiatives were established in 2001:

- *National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault*;
- *National Women's Development Programme*;
- *National Women's Leadership Programme*, including:
 - *Honouring Women* initiative; and
 - Indigenous Women's Advisory Group;
- *Informed Choices for Women*, including the establishment of:
 - a national women's conference, *Australian Women Speak*;
 - a women's data warehouse, www.windowonwomen.gov.au; and
 - a women's portal, www.women.gov.au.

10. A wide range of legislation has been created, and a number of initiatives have been established to advance the status of women across all jurisdictions. Information on these measures is covered in this periodic report.

Progress since Australia's last periodic report

11. There have been major advancements in the status of women in Australia since the third progress report was completed.

12. Women and girls have made steady progress in their participation in education, training and employment, and in decision-making and leadership. In some of these areas, women have had major gains. Some examples include:

- a 380 per cent increase in New Apprenticeships for women between 1995 and 2001;
- a general upward trend in the labour force participation rate of all women (15 years and over), which was 67.5 per cent in March 2003;
- women made up 56.6 per cent of higher education students commencing an undergraduate qualification in 2002 and 48.6 per cent of post-graduate students;
- women comprised 34 per cent of Commonwealth Board positions in 2003;
- women made up 30.9 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Regional Councillors in June 2003;
- women comprised 26.5 per cent of Federal parliamentarians in March 2003;
- life expectancy at birth continued to increase, with girls born between 1999-2001 having a life expectancy of 82.4 years, an increase from 81.1 years in 1994-1996;
- significant decreases in the number of deaths resulting from breast cancer. In 2001 there were 21.3 deaths per 100,000 females, compared to 25 deaths per 100,000 females in 1996; and
- significant decreases in the number of deaths resulting from cervical cancer, with a 50 per cent reduction in the last ten years.

13. Australia is widely regarded as a world leader in its efforts to tackle domestic violence. The Prime Minister's *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* initiative has implemented a wide range of measures aimed at early intervention and prevention, as well as the improvement and expansion of services for victims, including children. This initiative has achieved an effective and committed collaboration of State and Territory Governments through the Commonwealth Government leadership, with consequent significant developments in policy approaches to violence against women. Addressing domestic and family violence in Indigenous communities is a major element of the initiative. See Articles 14 and 16 for more information.

14. At the same time, there are some areas where progress has been slower and new challenges have emerged for some women. The key areas where the Commonwealth Government is continuing to focus its efforts include:

- family/domestic violence and sexual assault against women and girls;
- the concentration of women in some fields/sectors/occupations in education, training and labour markets such as hospitality, nursing and retail; and
- the under-representation of women in high level decision-making, particularly in political and judicial systems.

15. As with many countries, women in Australia are not well represented in a number of occupations and sectors of the labour market, such as building, engineering and some areas of computer science. There have been however, gradual improvements for women in several 'non-traditional' fields, for example, in 1999 female graduates in medicine outnumbered men for the first time. In addition, Australia recognises that the situation varies for some groups of women. For example, there are important challenges ahead for tackling the disadvantages faced by Indigenous women.

16. Statistical data and information on the changing status of women in Australia is provided in Appendix A.

Australia's reservations to CEDAW

17. At the time the Convention entered into force for Australia in 1983, the Commonwealth Government advised that it was not in a position to take the measures required by Article 11(2)(b) to introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits throughout Australia. The Commonwealth Government also advised that it did not accept the application of the Convention in so far as it would require the rescission of the Australian Defence Force policy that excludes women from being employed in combat units.

18. In relation to reservations to conventions, Australia aims to:

- limit the extent of any reservations to CEDAW;
- formulate any such reservations as narrowly and precisely as possible; and
- if appropriate regularly review reservations with a view to withdrawing them.

19. The removal of reservations to any international treaty is subject to Australia's domestic treaties process. This requires extensive consultation with State and Territory Governments, and the community and the agreement of both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament.

20. See Article 11 for more information on Australia's two reservations to CEDAW.

ARTICLES 1-3: Definition of discrimination against women, obligations to eliminate discrimination, the development and advancement of women

21. Australia maintains an extensive framework of anti-discrimination legislation, strategies and programmes at Commonwealth, State and Territory levels to advance and protect the rights of women. Since Australia's last report, institutional machineries for women have been maintained and strengthened to support women's human rights. Specialised women's machineries operate across all levels of government to report and advise on issues relating to the status of women and to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of government policies and programmes for women.

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

22. Australia is currently drafting its second *National Action Plan on Human Rights* (NAP). Australia's first NAP was prepared in 1994 following the adoption of Australia's proposal at the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights that all countries prepare a NAP. It was updated in 1995 and in 1996-97. The NAP outlines Australia's approach to the protection of human rights in Australia, across the range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

23. Australia believes that the most lasting and meaningful way to protect human rights and to reduce, and hopefully eliminate, discriminatory attitudes is by educating the community about individual rights and responsibilities, so as to encourage tolerance and respect. The Attorney-General hosts a twice-yearly NGO Forum on domestic Human Rights matters. Over 60 peak interest groups and other interested representatives are invited to attend the forums. The NGO forum provides an important opportunity for community organisations to discuss domestic human rights issues and developments with the Attorney-General and government officers, gives the Government an opportunity to receive views and suggestions from interested parties, and promotes constructive dialogue.

24. See Australia's *Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000)* for information on: *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*; *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*; *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*; *Review of Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986*.

Human Rights And Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)

25. HREOC released a *CEDAW Information Package* on International Women's Day 2001. The package aims to educate women in Australia about the human rights parameters of their lives and the lives of other women around the world. It also seeks to assist women in working to promote and secure human rights and to raise community awareness of women's human rights.

26. In June 2001, the Government announced the appointment of Ms Pru Goward as the Sex Discrimination Commissioner. Ms Goward brings expertise in issues concerning women in business, government and the media to this important position. She was formerly the National Director of the Australian Property Institute and from 1997 to 1999, was the First Assistant Secretary of the Office of the Status of Women (OSW).

Commonwealth Office of the Status Of Women

27. In 2001, the then Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, Senator the Hon. Amanda Vanstone, launched a new strategic plan entitled *Working for Women – Strategic Directions 2001-2003*. The plan provides a framework for OSW to strengthen partnerships between government, the professions, industry and women’s groups, and identifies key goal areas: economic self-sufficiency and security for women throughout their lives; the achievement of optimal status; the elimination of violence; and the maintenance of good health and wellbeing throughout women’s lives.

28. OSW convened the first Government sponsored National Women’s conference, *Australian Women Speak* in August 2001. The conference brought women, community organisations, women in government and commerce and academics together from all over Australia to share knowledge and experience and celebrate diversity through plenaries and workshops. In 2003, the Second *Australian Women Speak* conference built on the success of the inaugural conference. Over 400 delegates from all over Australia attended the conference. The themes included: *The Trailblazers: From Suffrage to the 21st Century*, *Working Women & Health*, and *Women in Business*. The conference celebrated both the centenary of the first occasion that most Australian women were entitled to vote (16 December 1903) and the achievements of Australian women. The conference provided valuable insights into successful strategies for other potential achievers.

Women’s Parliamentary Advisory Group

29. From May-July 2001, the Group facilitated a series of State and Territory forums with migrant and refugee women and their representative organisations. The forums helped to inform future policy directions for women from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Mainstreaming gender issues

30. During 2001-2003, OSW developed a package of information resources (checklists and guides) and established a *Gender Mainstreaming Help Line* service for government agencies to assist them in integrating gender into their policies, programmes and services. In 2001, the Government provided funding to the National Women’s Rights Action Network Australia to produce gender mainstreaming materials and pilot training to community groups. Mainstream non-government organisations will be encouraged to integrate gender concerns into their work.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

31. Since 1995, all State and Territory governments have continued to support and strengthen women’s institutional machineries to monitor and address discrimination against women.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

32. One of the objectives of the *Discrimination Act 1991* is to “to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the equality of men and women.” The legislation sets out what is meant by unlawful discrimination, the areas of life where discrimination is unlawful, and provides mechanisms to make and resolve complaints of discrimination. Other ACT legislation is regularly scrutinised for its

impact on women, and the Discrimination Commissioner draws attention to laws or proposed laws which are inconsistent with the *Discrimination Act 1991*. The Discrimination Commissioner and the ACT Human Rights Office provide a wide range of education and awareness programmes for the whole ACT community on discrimination issues. All services are free of charge and aim to inform people of the rights and responsibilities under anti-discrimination law.

33. In November 2001, the ACT Government established a Legislative Assembly Select Committee on the Status of Women. The Committee released a report in November 2002. The report examined a range of issues on the status of women including the differential impact on women, prevention of violence and safety for women, and targeted support for women.

NEW SOUTH WALES

34. Since 1995, the NSW Government has established a number of action plans to protect women from discrimination and support women's full participation in the community. The principles of equity, access, rights and participation underpin the *Action Plan for Women 2000-2002*, providing a solid foundation for focus on women with the least access to social and economic resources. The Plan also reflects the commitments made in the *Platform for Action* adopted at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and endorsed at the Beijing Plus Five Conference in 2000, to promote further progress on achieving Australia's commitments under CEDAW. The Plan addresses a range of key concerns and needs for women including paid and unpaid work; health and housing; violence and safety; decision-making and leadership; justice and civil legal equality; access to information; childcare; and education and training.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

35. In 2001, the Northern Territory Chief Minister, the Hon Clare Martin MLA, became the first woman to lead a Northern Territory Government, and retains portfolio responsibility for women's policy. The Minister for Health and Community Service, the Hon Jane Aagaard MLA, also assists the Chief Minister on women's policy.

36. The Office of Women's Policy, the Government's lead agency for women, has primary responsibility for: connecting women with government policy planning; creating pathways into decision-making so that women have a clear voice in planning and service delivery on issues important to them; coordinating and reporting across the Northern Territory Public Sector on policy, programme and service outcomes for women; and making information widely available to women through a range of information strategies and technologies. The Office's priorities have been determined as a result of specific and ongoing consultations with women. The priorities are: leadership; economic independence and the market place; education, training and careers; public and private safety; and lifestyle and wellbeing. An Interdepartmental Women's Policy roundtable is advancing agency programme responses to government commitments for women, and an Indigenous Women's Policy roundtable is being formed in 2002–2003 to progress across-government planning.

37. The Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner administers the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1992* and performs complaint resolution and education functions to promote equality of opportunity by protecting persons from discrimination and sexual harassment.

38. The Government established an *Aboriginal Interpreter and Translator Service* to improve access by Indigenous people, particularly in the areas of health and legal services. The Service is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments.

QUEENSLAND

39. The Office for Women is working with key stakeholders to develop an *Agenda for Women and Girls in Queensland*. The Agenda will: identify the key issues and emerging trends that will impact on Queensland women over the next three to five years; articulate a vision for Queensland women and girls; and identify a range of strategies to address the emerging issues and to achieve the Agenda's vision.

40. The *Women and Girls in the Smart State – Annual Action Plan 2001-2002*, identifies a range of strategies being undertaken by departments to improve outcomes for women and girls in Queensland and to ensure that they contribute to, and benefit from, living in Queensland. The *Annual Action Plan 2002-2003* will report on progress and highlight new strategies and initiatives for women and girls.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

41. The *Status of Women Programme*, coordinated by South Australia's Office for the Status of Women, works to ensure women achieve full and equal participation in all sectors of society. The Women's Advisory Council consults women across the state and advises the Government on programmes and policies relevant to women. The Women's Information Service provides free information, support, and referral to women across the state. Further details are available in the *2000-2001 Women's Statement* at <http://www.wis.sa.gov.au>.

42. Following a review of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, a bill amending the Act has been introduced into the Legislative Council. The bill prohibits discrimination on the basis of the characteristics of a person's relatives, and on the ground of potential pregnancy. It prohibits direct discrimination on the ground of caring duties for relative/s, and on the grounds of the identity of a person's spouse or former spouse. It also prohibits discrimination in provision of goods, services or accommodation on the grounds of association with a child, including the responsibility to breastfeed a child. The bill removes the general immunity of employers from liability for sexual harassment committed by their employees. Instead, employers will be liable unless they can show they took reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in their workplace.

VICTORIA

43. In 2000, the Victorian Government developed a three-year forward plan for women, entitled *Valuing Victoria's Women: Forward Plan 2000-2003*. The Plan addresses four key themes: representation and equity; education, work and economic independence; health, wellbeing and community strengthening; and justice and safety. The Office of Women's Policy will monitor implementation of the Plan and produce yearly updates on key achievements, new initiatives and performance measures. The *First Update Report 2001*, provides details of key achievements over the preceding year, and new strategies to be implemented in coming years. It also provides updated information available on the current status of women in relation to the four themes of the Plan.

44. The *Equal Opportunity (Breast-feeding) Act 2000* prohibits discrimination against breast-feeding mothers. In addition, the *Equal Opportunity (Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation) Bill 2000* is currently under consideration. The bill would prohibit discrimination on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

45. The Equal Opportunity Commission administers the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*. The Act precludes discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy, race, religious or political conviction, impairment, age, gender history, and family responsibility in certain areas including employment, accommodation, and education.

46. The Office for Women's Policy has responsibility for facilitating women's participation in all aspects of society. The Western Australian Government's priority areas for women include: opportunity; fairness in the workplace; fairness in law; fairness in family care; safety and community issues; seniors; and fairness in health. These themes were explored at the Women's Convention 2002. Goals and priorities were identified and will be progressed by the Office through community engagement forums during the next 18 months. The Women's Advisory Council will play a key role in the identification of priorities and the development of indicators of progress. The Council will provide advice on women's issues including development of goals, strategies and indicators as well as track and report on progress and achievements in reaching goals.

ARTICLE 4: Acceleration of equality between men and women

47. Women have achieved parity with men across a number of key areas in Australian society, like completion of Year 12 at school, and entry into universities, including in areas such as law and medicine. There has been a steady improvement in a number of areas where women are under-represented such as apprenticeships and traineeships, non-traditional fields of study and leadership and decision-making.

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

48. The Government supports a combination of gender mainstreaming and gender specific measures to accelerate equality for women. The Government's approach has been to support educative measures aimed at changing stereotypical attitudes that impede equality for women, as well as initiatives focused on specific outcomes. The Government believes this is the most effective vehicle for increasing equality between men and women, rather than the setting of quotas or targets.

49. In 2000, OSW developed Australia's *Beijing Plus Five Action Plan 2001 – 2005* to take forward the outcomes of the UN Special Session of the General Assembly on Women (Beijing Plus Five), in close consultation with women in the community and other key stakeholders. The *Action Plan* uses the Beijing Plus Five *Outcomes Document* to build on existing work and encourage new, innovative initiatives, like partnerships between governments, communities, the media, businesses and women's groups.

50. Further information on these and other related initiatives including the reporting and monitoring of outcomes for women are outlined under Articles 7, 8 and 10.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

51. In November 2001, the Government established an ACT Office for Women that reports directly to the Chief Minister. The Office has a key role in providing strategic policy advice to government on issues of concern to women, and in coordinating and monitoring government initiatives that impact on women. All cabinet submissions are routinely forwarded to the Office for Women for consideration. The Government is committed to increasing women's representation on decision-making bodies and has set a target of 50 per cent representation of women on government boards and committees.

52. The *Discrimination Act 1991* contains provisions that permit the taking of special measures in order to ensure equality of opportunity or in order to meet the special needs of women. In addition, the Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding and on status as a parent or carer.

NEW SOUTH WALES

53. In 1995, the Government established the Department for Women, the key agency for developing, coordinating and reporting on policies, programmes and services for women. It reports directly to the Minister for Women and provides assistance to government agencies and other organisations on women's policy. The Government is working towards ensuring 50 per cent of all new appointments to public sector boards and committees are women. In addition, the Government funds a wide range of programmes and services that specifically target women. An ongoing initiative of the NSW TAFE Access Educational Services in the Department of Education and Training has been the revision and accreditation of a range of women-only courses (see Article 10).

NORTHERN TERRITORY

54. From 2001, the Chief Minister and Minister for Women's Policy has identified the necessity of a stronger reporting framework to make information on outcomes relating to NT women publicly available each year. The Office of Women's Policy will assist by investigating and reporting to Government on the applicability of a whole-of-government gender analysis approach for policy development in the NT Public Service.

55. The Chief Minister initiated a new system to improve the percentage of women appointed to public sector boards, authorities and committees. Cabinet Submissions and Ministerial Briefings that concern appointments to these bodies are now required to include an analysis of current members by gender and an action plan aimed at increasing the number of women over time, where women comprise less than 50 per cent of the membership. Action plans will be monitored.

56. The *NT Women's Register* has been strengthened and promoted, an Indigenous Women's Directory included and a mentoring scheme offered to women who are appointed to boards and committees. New information will be produced for women appointed to boards and committees, including a paper on women and leadership in the NT during the 2002-03 financial year.

57. The Government has been engaging with Indigenous people to establish new priorities of importance to Indigenous women. Indigenous women are keen to have greater input into community based and broader government programme planning and evaluation in a whole-of-community context. Specific policy priorities identified by Indigenous women include: stronger leadership and decision-making roles; improved health and access to related services; higher levels of education, employment and training leading to job creation and prospects for promotion; improved economic development and capacity building skills; prevention of family violence and sexual assault; initiatives to prevent alcohol, drug and other substance abuse; protection of children and the elimination of child abuse; better access to services; improved housing and infrastructure; stronger measures to bring about equity and equal opportunity; and access to flexible working arrangements that reflect cultural and other responsibilities.

QUEENSLAND

58. The *Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Act 1992* promotes equal employment opportunity programmes in the Queensland Public Service (QPS). Under the Act, targets are set to improve women's

representation on statutory boards and in middle and upper level positions. Female representation in the senior ranks has steadily increased since its introduction. The sector wide targets established for the year 2000 were all met. As at June 2001, women comprised 56.2 per cent of QPS, 26 per cent of senior officer positions and 17.2 per cent of senior executive service positions (compared to 22.1 per cent of senior positions and 14.9 per cent of senior executive service positions in June 1998).

59. The *Local Government Act 1993* and the Local Government Regulation were amended in November 1999 to strengthen local Government EEO reporting requirements. Councils are required to provide detailed reports on initiatives to address discrimination and harassment as well as consultation processes with equity target groups including women.

VICTORIA

60. The Victorian Office of Women's Policy provides strategic policy advice to government on issues of concern to women, works collaboratively across government and with the community and monitors specific initiatives. The Office provides information to the women of Victoria, and consults with women on issues of concern to them.

61. The Government has developed *Valuing Victoria's Women: Forward Plan 2000-2003*, which provides details of strategies that are being implemented to meet the Government's policy objectives in improving women's lives. The Premier and the Minister for Women's Affairs host an annual *Victorian Women's Summit*. In addition, regular forums on issues of concern are conducted through the *Women's Consultative Forum Programme*.

62. The Government is committed to increasing women's representation through the setting of targets for women's participation on Government boards and committees. Government has endorsed a continuous improvement approach to increase the representation of women on government boards and committees with a target of 40 per cent representation for appointments made in 2001-2002, working towards a longer term goal of 50 per cent. The Office will monitor the progress towards the achievements of the targets through an annual board data collection and reporting process. At June 2001, women represented 36 per cent of positions on Government boards and committees.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

63. The *Public Sector Management Act 1995* allows the Premier of South Australia to establish equal employment opportunity programmes in the public sector, which allow special measures to provide temporary employment, training and development opportunities to disadvantaged groups of the community and the public sector workforce. These programmes are designed to assist participants to effectively compete for further employment on the basis of merit.

64. The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs has established two Indigenous women's committees, the Aboriginal Women's Statewide Advisory Council Inc. (AWSAC) and the Aboriginal Women's Advocacy Group (AWAG). AWSAC, comprising 15 Indigenous women, works in consultation with the Indigenous community, and in an advisory capacity to government and non-government agencies on

matters related to Indigenous women. AWAG acts on behalf of AWSAC in its quest to become a self-determined and self managed council of Indigenous women.

65. Transport SA conducts leadership and management training programmes for women. This has resulted in the formation of *Women in Transport*, a committee of women employees elected for a two-year period. The group looks at issues such as networking, work and families, training and development. Key goals are aimed at ensuring an inclusive approach to policy development and service delivery by fostering an environment which provides women with the opportunity to be involved in decision-making. Recent achievements include: a study exploring ways to ensure more inclusive practices at the middle management level, and development programmes including career development, balancing work and personal life, and programmes for rural employees.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

66. An equity and diversity plan for the Western Australian public sector workforce for the period 2001–2005 includes the development of long term and interim benchmark indicators in priority areas. For example, representation of women in the Senior Executive Service is projected to increase to 30 per cent by 2005. The Government has an ongoing commitment to improving the gender balance on government boards and committees. The Government has stipulated that all Cabinet submissions concerning appointments to boards and committees which are made up of less than 50 per cent women will be required to outline an action plan to increase this representation.

ARTICLE 5: Sex roles and stereotyping

67. Since Australia's last report, governments around Australia have continued to support initiatives to tackle gender stereotypes that prevent women from reaching their full potential in Australian society.

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

Beijing Plus Five Action Plan 2001-2005

68. The elimination of harmful gender stereotypes is a priority area of the Commonwealth Government's *Beijing Plus Five Action Plan 2001-2005*. OSW has conducted roundtables with government departments on the Action Plan, including on the elimination of gender stereotypes.

Portrayal of women in the media

69. Individuals in the community can register their concerns about the portrayal of women in the media by lodging a complaint with the Australian Broadcasting Authority, the Australian Advertising Bureau or the Australian Press Council.

70. Videos which depict actual sexual activity between consenting adults are classified in the 'X' category under legislation. These videos are restricted to adults aged 18 years or over. Since September 2000, no violence at all has been permitted in this category. 'X'-rated videos are required to carry a warning label about the possible harmful effects on children of sexually explicit material. This follows the Censorship Minister's tightening of content restrictions for the 'X' classification to reflect broad community concerns.

71. Substantial progress has been made by Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, and industry bodies to address public concerns about the portrayal of violence in the electronic media. High-level violence material has been classified 'Refused Classification'. A review of the guidelines was conducted in 2002 to ensure that they continue to reflect community standards and that issues related to convergence of media into new forms of digital recording are addressed. In 1999, the Government established a regulatory framework for online content, which includes amendments to existing legislation made by the *Broadcasting Services Amendment (Online Services) Act 1999*. The framework is based on the principle that what is illegal offline should be illegal online. Since January 2000, any person has been able to complain to the Australian Broadcasting Authority about prohibited online content.

Violence in schools

72. In 1994, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training Report on Violence in Australian Schools investigated the nature, impact and incidence of violence in schools. The report covered aspects of violence including bullying, violence based on gender and race, and ethnic violence. In response, the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs invited States and Territories to work with the Commonwealth to develop a shared national approach to addressing violence in Australian schools.

73. Bullying in schools continues to be an area of considerable concern to the community, as it impacts on the physical and psychological health, educational attainment, and social development of students. Bullying was identified as a risk factor in the 1999 *National Crime Prevention Program* research report *Pathways to Prevention* as being associated with antisocial and criminal behaviour.

74. The Government has commissioned a project under its *National Crime Prevention Program* to identify strategies in Australia and overseas that have been successfully employed to prevent and reduce the incidence of bullying in primary and pre-schools. The second stage of the project will resource materials for parents, carers and teachers of pre-school and early primary school children.

Positive portrayal of women's work

75. Between 1997-2001, several initiatives were undertaken to formally recognise the contributions of women's war work. These include: the Sculpture Garden of the Australian War Memorial to commemorate the war effort of women on the home front; the Australian Servicewomen's Memorial commemorating women who suffered and died in the defence of Australia; and the Australian Service Nurses' National Memorial.

76. *A wealth of women: Australian women's lives from 1788 to the present* was published in 2001. The book contains positive depictions of the challenges, opportunities and contributions of women – from many different backgrounds – to Australian history and society. Many of the stories focus on women's work in the private sphere, both in the home and the community.

Role of men and boys

77. A key aspect of Australia's *Beijing Plus Five Action Plan 2001-2005* is to eliminate stereotypical attitudes and behaviours, and encourage men and boys to become actively involved in advancing gender equality. An important focus of this work is to encourage men and boys to take greater responsibility for changing harmful attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls. OSW has worked with influential male leaders in seeking broader support among men for taking this forward. The role of men and boys was an important theme of the inaugural *Australian Women Speak* national conference in August 2001.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

78. Issues of access and equity, valuing the contributions of girls and women, and the critical analysis of gender perspectives are embedded in ACT Government school curricula. This is supported by the *ACT Gender Equity Strategy for Schools* and the mandatory *Across Curriculum Perspectives*, which include gender equity.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

79. The Office of Women's Policy is located in the Community Engagement Division of the Department of the Chief Minister. The primary role of the Office is to assist the Government to advance the economic and social standing of Territory women and preserve and enhance their lifestyle. The Office initiates, coordinates, implements and reports on 'whole-of-government' responses to policy priorities for women and recognises the diversity of women and the importance of bringing their priorities into government deliberations.

80. In March 2002, a new programme was established to recognise and honour women. The *Tribute to Northern Territory Women* introduces new, permanent and accessible features which includes: the construction of a pathway in Darwin's Damoe-Ra Park near Parliament House; a portable exhibit which, when not travelling throughout the regions, will be located with the Alice Springs National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame; and a special collection of posters to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD), with a new poster released each year (each carrying the names of the women being inducted to the *Tribute* each year). The programme will showcase the talents of Territory women artists. The nomination process opened on IWD in March 2002 and the Chief Minister announces inductees on IWD each year.

81. The Women's Advisory Council to the Chief Minister introduced *Media Awards* in 2001 to encourage journalists and broadcasters to more accurately reflect the reality of Territory women's lives and their achievements.

82. *Achievers and Champions* is one of the Office's key programmes. The programme aims to promote greater recognition and encourage public acknowledgement of women's economic and social contributions to the development of the NT.

QUEENSLAND

83. Education Queensland continues to implement policies and programmes in schools designed to: develop attitudes of respect and tolerance; address gender and cultural equity in schools; and ensure girls are provided with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to pursue equal opportunity in the paid workforce, the family and in public life. The Government has also undertaken a range of initiatives to break down barriers to employment for women in non-traditional areas and, increase the number of women participants in emerging industries.

84. The Office for Women, in conjunction with the National Women's Media Centre, has updated and produced an educational kit entitled *Breaking the Mould: Beyond Media Images*. The kit, launched in November 2001, helps promote critical analysis of the portrayal of women in the media and includes information on how to lodge a complaint about media portrayals of women. The Office also developed the *Honouring Indigenous Women's Poster* which promotes and acknowledges the contributions of Indigenous women who have achieved in a variety of fields. It celebrates and values the diversity of leadership styles provided by Indigenous women working within their own communities and in the community at large.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

85. The Government funds a range of initiatives to formally recognise and present positive images of the contributions of women to SA. Some of these included: the *Modern Australian Women: Paintings and Prints 1925-1945* exhibition (November 2000-February 2001) which showcased the work of many women artists; continued funding to support *Vitalstatistix* – Australia’s only feminist theatre company, and the *War Brides Exhibition* (Migration Museum, 2000).

TASMANIA

86. In 2000, the Government reviewed legislation relating to the classification of restricted Category 1 and 2 publications, to move towards adopting the OFLC classification system. The Government believes that a sound balance needs to be provided between permitting individuals to read or view what they choose, and the legitimate role of government to implement strategies to prevent the proliferation of pornographic material, and specifically material that depicts sexual violence that demeans women, and which culturally may underpin gender based violence.

VICTORIA

87. In March 2000, the Minister for Women’s Affairs established the Portrayal of Women Advisory Committee to examine the portrayal of women in outdoor advertising. The Committee’s report, entitled *The Portrayal of Women in Outdoor Advertising*, outlines several recommendations to improve the representation of women in outdoor advertising. In response to these, the Government will: implement *Gender Portrayal Advertising Guidelines* for all government departments, statutory authorities, and agencies’ advertising, media and public relations campaigns; distribute the guidelines to key industry stakeholders and encourage a benchmark for best practice in their industry; and pursue a collaborative and coordinated national approach on the portrayal of women in advertising and the issue of complaints.

ARTICLE 6: Suppression of the exploitation of women

88. Australia regards the trafficking and sexual slavery of women and girls as a form of violence against women and a fundamental violation of women's human rights. See also Article 16 for information on initiatives to combat sexual assault and domestic violence.

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

89. Australia recognises that people smuggling and trafficking in persons are transnational activities requiring concerted efforts by the international community to overcome them. The Government will continue to work closely and cooperatively with other countries, particularly our regional partners, to fight this heinous trade. The Government works actively in the international arena to promote effective responses, for example:

- Australia was actively involved in negotiating the United Nations *Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* and the three *Optional Protocols*.
- Australia is a signatory to: the *Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*; the *Protocol against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*; and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*.
- In April 1999, the Minister for Immigration participated in the International Migration Symposium in Bangkok. The *Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration* adopted by the symposium called on participating countries to work cooperatively on initiatives to combat irregular migration and people smuggling.
- In February 2002 and April 2003, Australia co-hosted, with Indonesia, the Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. Statements issued by the co-chairs at the conclusion of the conferences have called on regional countries to work together cooperatively to combat transnational crime, especially people smuggling and trafficking persons.
- Australia's HREOC is represented on the *Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions*. The Forum comprises members of independent national human rights commissions and Australia was the secretariat of the Forum for three years. In 1999, the Forum established a network of trafficking focal points.
- Australia enacted legislation to deal with crimes associated with trafficking in persons such as sex slavery and sexual servitude, with heavy penalties for those found guilty of such activities. The Australian Federal Police established the Transnational Sexual Offences team to investigate these offences.
- Australia signed the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC) on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography* (December 2001) and the *Optional Protocol to CROC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict* (October 2002).

90. In 1999, the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) produced a research report on people smuggling and trafficking in Australia, identifying the key issues and the Commonwealth Government's

response. The report, entitled *Human smuggling and trafficking: an overview of the response at the federal level*, is available at: www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/24.

91. In April 2003, the Minister for Justice and Customs established a review committee comprising officials from relevant government agencies to examine the problem of trafficking in Australia. The committee examined the effectiveness of current responses to trafficking in Australia and considered options for maximising Australia's approaches to the prevention of trafficking, prosecution of trafficking offences and support for trafficked victims. Options formulated by the committee to improve measures to combat trafficking are being considered by the Government.

92. In July 2003, the Australasian Police Ministers Council (APMC) announced a cooperative approach through the development of a Law Enforcement National Plan of Action to combat trafficking in women for sexual servitude. In developing the Plan, the APMC agreed that all jurisdictions would review their legislation on sexual servitude and other offences related to trafficking and examine their current intelligence and information sharing practices. In addition, the States and Territories conducted their own scoping studies in 2003 to determine the extent of the problem. The Australian Crime Commission also gathers intelligence on the issue of trafficking of women. This information informs the development of the Law Enforcement National Plan of Action.

Support for community organisations

93. The Government funds community organisations dealing with sexual exploitation such as Child Wise Australia. In 1999, Child Wise undertook the *Child Wise Tourism* project (funded by AusAID) to develop and implement training programmes in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines. The project focused on: awareness raising; gaining support from the tourism sector and government authorities to prevent child sexual exploitation; and establishing a framework for action to address the detection and prevention of child sexual exploitation.

94. In 2000, as part of the *National Crime Prevention Program*, the Government provided further funding to Child Wise to produce and distribute: a revised and updated *Australian Laws for Travellers* brochure; an educational video to inform the public of child sexual assault both in Australia and overseas; *Child Wise Tourism* training materials and workshops for the travel industry; and six editions of its newsletter.

Sexual exploitation of children

95. Since 1995, the Government has supported a wide range of initiatives to protect children's human rights and prevent their sexual exploitation.

- Australia signed the World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children *Declaration and Agenda for Action* in 1996.
- Australia actively participated in the negotiation of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography* and signed the Optional Protocol in New York on 18 December 2001. The Optional Protocol came into force on 18 January 2002.

- Australia supports the work of the United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography which has focused on the commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people.
- In 2000, Australia developed a national action plan to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. *Australia's National Plan of Action Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children* was developed following extensive consultations and research into the nature and extent of the problem in Australia. The Plan documents case studies and existing government strategies in the areas of prostitution/sex for favours, pornography, trafficking and sex tourism and identifies challenges requiring further action.

Sexual servitude

96. In 1999, the Government introduced the *Criminal Code Amendment (Slavery and Sexual Servitude) Act 1999*, which criminalises sexual servitude. The provisions are aimed at those whose conduct causes another to enter into, or continue to exist in, a state of sexual servitude. The provisions also cover those who engage in business involving the sexual servitude of others or engage in deceptive conduct to induce another person into sexual servitude. These provisions are enacted to fulfil, in part, Australia's international obligations with regard to offences against humanity.

Sexual assault

97. In May 2001, the Government announced \$16.5 million funding over four years for the development and implementation of a *National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault*. Led by OSW, the initiative has established partnerships to develop, test, and implement strategies to address the incidence of sexual assault in the community. These include campaigns to promote community awareness, sharing approaches to combat sexual assault and promote best practice, and funding a range of projects on sexual assault.

98. The initiative has four key objectives: promote cultural change in attitudes and behaviours to reduce the incidence of sexual assault; identify and address the immediate and long-term impacts of sexual assault on women, and the social and financial costs to the community; establish a consistent and coordinated framework for sexual assault reduction, prevention and interventions across all levels of government and the wider community; to develop an information strategy to: facilitate access to national, policy-relevant data to inform strategies to more effectively prevent and respond to sexual assault; and establish a comprehensive evidence base incorporating both research and practice.

United Nations Global Programme Against Trafficking In Human Beings

99. The AIC is taking part in the United Nations Global Programme Against Trafficking In Human Beings which was established in 1999. Its aim is to better enable governments and the international community to respond to human smuggling and trafficking. Key features include: policy-oriented research and targeted technical cooperation; the collection of data and information on different routes for people smuggling and trafficking; establishment of a global inventory of best practices used in addressing smuggling and trafficking; and the implementation of 'demonstration projects' in selected countries.

100. The AIC is providing research expertise for the Coalition Against Trafficking in Human Beings in the Philippines. The project is expected to serve as a model for future United Nations projects on people smuggling and trafficking. The AIC undertook a review of literature on smuggling and trafficking from the Philippines and the Asian region and a research paper, entitled *Rapid assessment: smuggling and trafficking from the Philippines*, available at: www.aic.gov.au/research/traffick/index/html.

Australia's overseas aid programme

101. Australia's international aid programme provides support to help 'source' countries tackle primary causes of trafficking and sexual exploitation and better assist victims. Since 1995, several projects have addressed the root causes of disadvantage and provided direct assistance to groups at risk of being trafficked. Education and economic development projects have targeted poverty and low educational levels – factors that make women, children and young people vulnerable to being trafficked.

102. Australia currently supports six anti-trafficking projects in South East Asia as part of a broader package of Australian development assistance worth approximately \$24 million over six years. The projects provide support for the return and reintegration of trafficked victims, particularly women and children; training of law enforcement officers on appropriate treatment of trafficking victims; promotion of more effective government and non-government interventions; research on vulnerable groups affected by trafficking, and training to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry. Australia works through the *United Nations Development Programme*, International Organisation for Migration and *End Child Prostitution and Trafficking* to deliver these projects.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

103. In 2001, the ACT Government amended the *Crimes Act 1900* to enact offences of sexual servitude and deceptive recruiting for sexual services. The sexual servitude offence targets people who, by use of force or a threat, effectively deny the worker the freedom to stop providing the sexual services or to leave the place where the services are being provided. The amendments also make it an offence to deceive another person about the fact that they are being recruited for sex work.

104. The *Prostitution Act 1992* regulates prostitution in the ACT. The objectives of the Act are to safeguard public health, to promote the welfare and safety of prostitutes, to protect the social and physical environment of the community by controlling the location of brothels, and to protect children from exploitation in relation to prostitution.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

105. The *Criminal Code Amendment Act No4 2002* prohibits servitude and trafficking in persons for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The *Prostitution Regulation Act*, amended in 2000, provides procedural changes necessary for more efficient administration of the prostitution regulation legislation. The changes abolished the Escort Agency Licensing Board and transferred its functions and powers to the Northern Territory Licensing Commission; reduced documentation required by the industry to register; and enables an appeal against a decision of the Commission to be lodged with the registrar of the local court, rather than to the Director of Licensing within the Department subsequent to a tribunal hearing. The substance of the provision providing the machinery for appeals has not been changed.

QUEENSLAND

106. As part of an ongoing commitment to respond to the *Forde Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions* (1999), the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000* established the Commission for Children and Young People. The Act: provides the Commission with both ombudsman and advocacy functions; embraces many of the principles of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*; and promotes and protects the rights, interests, and well-being of all children and young people.

107. The *Prostitution Act 1999* regulates prostitution in Queensland. The objectives of the Act are to safeguard public health, promote the welfare and safety of prostitutes, protect the social and physical environment of the community by controlling the location of brothels, and protect children from exploitation in relation to prostitution. Under the Act, a person must not make another person continue to provide prostitution through intimidation or harassment, the use or threat of injury or damage to property of the person or anyone else, or make a false representation or use any false pretence or other fraudulent means.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

108. The *Criminal Law Consolidation (Sexual Servitude) Amendment Act 2000*, aims to stop people forcing others to enter or to stay in the commercial sex industry. The Act makes it an offence to force or unduly influence a person to provide or continue to provide commercial sexual services. It is also an offence to offer someone employment knowing, but not disclosing to them, that they will be required to provide commercial sexual services as part of the job, and that their continued employment depends on their doing so.

TASMANIA

109. In 2000, the Government appointed a Commissioner for Children to promote the human rights of children. The Commissioner can make recommendations to the Government in relation to proposed legislative changes in order to protect the rights of children, including legal reform of the sex industry. Tasmania is currently reviewing its laws in relation to regulation of the sex industry, to provide a regulatory framework designed to promote optimal public health outcomes, increased safety for workers and legal protection for children.

VICTORIA

110. The *Prostitution Control (Amendment) Act 1999* expanded the definition of sexual services to include lap dancing and peep shows. The *Prostitution Control (Planning) Act 2000* improves enforcement activity against illegal brothels. In 2003, amendments to the *Prostitution Control Act 1994* (following the release of the final report of the Attorney General's Street Prostitution Advisory Group) created a new offence related to child sex tourism and amended the *Travel Agents Act 1986* to provide for the disqualification of licensed travel agents who are convicted of offences against that provision or the similar provisions contained in the Commonwealth *Crimes Act 1914*.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

111. The Government is committed to pursuing policy commitments on sexual assault and crime prevention. To encourage across-government collaboration and ensure meaningful participation in the Commonwealth/State Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women (MINCO) National Women's Safety Taskforce, the Minister for Women's Interests has established an Inter-departmental Committee on Sexual Assault. It will provide a report and recommendations to the Government on options to address sexual assault. WA laws dealing with prostitution are being reviewed. A 'Green Bill' is being drafted and will be made available for public comment on prostitution law reform.

ARTICLE 7: Political and public life

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

112. Increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making, including politics, is a major Commonwealth Government priority. Since 1996, the Government has increased its activities to maximise the number of women appointed on merit to senior positions of power and decision-making. Generally, measures have not relied on prescription or compulsory quotas, but on identifying and promoting the considerable talent pool of Australian women. Australian women are selected on their merits to the highest levels and have not relied on special treatment strategies.

113. Today there are more women than ever before in Australian politics at the national, state and local levels. In 2003, more than 26.5 per cent of federal parliamentarians are women – more than double the international average. In State and Territory parliaments, women make up 29 per cent of members and approximately 30 per cent of elected positions in local government. In recent years, four State and Territory Governments have been led by women (ACT, VIC, WA and the NT) and three (NSW, TAS and the NT) have had women Opposition Leaders. A woman is also the current Deputy Opposition Leader at the Commonwealth level.

114. The representation of Indigenous women on ATSIC Regional Councils has increased to a record 30.9 per cent (compared to 23.2 per cent in 1996 – see below). In 2003, 34 per cent of the candidates for the ATSIC Regional Council elections were women. One of the eighteen Commissioners on the ATSIC Board, which is responsible for Indigenous issues at the national level, is a woman.

115. Women in Australia are also well represented in other key leadership and decision-making positions. In 2003, women in Australia occupied 34 per cent of Commonwealth controlled senior positions on government boards. In 2002, 56.4 per cent of those employed permanently in the Australian Public Service were women and 28.4 per cent of those employed permanently in the Senior Executive Service were women. In addition, women are increasing their representation in senior leadership positions in Australia's foreign service, albeit from a low base (see Article 8).

National women's conference

116. In 2001, the Government hosted the *Australian Women Speak Conference* as a key consultation mechanism with Australian women. Themes were based on the four priority areas of the strategic plan for OSW. Around 700 women attended the Conference. Programme development was enhanced by direct consultations with women's NGOs, Indigenous women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and private and public sector organisations. In 2003, a second conference was held celebrating both the centenary of the first occasion that most Australian women were entitled to vote (16 December 1903) and the achievements of Australian women.

Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Regional Councils

117. ATSIC Regional Councils are responsible for making decisions about, and reporting on, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues at the regional level. Prior to the 1999 and 2000 ATSIC regional elections, the National Media and Marketing Office of ATSIC developed and implemented an information and awareness campaign aimed at encouraging Indigenous women to participate in the elections. The campaign incorporated a range of measures to ensure an increase in the participation of Indigenous women, including the special Women Information Officers in each State and Territory to inform Indigenous women about the Regional Council elections, and funding community meetings that targeted Indigenous women.

Regional Women's Advisory Council

118. In recognition of the need to strengthen the voice of women in the decision-making process, the Government established the Regional Women's Advisory Council in 1999. The nine council members are appointed by, and report to, the Minister for Transport and Regional Services. The women members provide a perspective on regional, rural and remote issues. The Council plays an important role in giving women greater access to Government decision-making processes.

119. The Council commissioned an action research project, involving one community from each state and from the Northern Territory, from June 2000 to September 2001. The research focused on the views and perspectives of regional women and examined those attitudes, behaviours and skills that help communities work with change to achieve positive outcomes. The research findings will provide a basis for promoting best practice in communities, and for advising the Government on ways to encourage a positive response to change. The final report on the project, *The success factors – managing change in regional and rural Australia*, was launched in September 2001.

120. A publication profiling some of regional Australia's women leaders and community builders publication, *Women taking action – making a difference in regional and rural Australia*, has been produced in conjunction with the Regional Women's Advisory Council action research project. The publication was launched in September 2001. Further information about the Regional Women's Advisory Council is available at www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/rwac/index.htm.

121. To further develop rural women's leadership, a national rural women's secretariat was established in 2002 (see paras 129/130, National Women's Development Programme).

National Disability Advisory Council

122. The National Disability Advisory Council, established in 1996, acts as a reference group to the Minister for Family and Community Services. The Council provides advice on disability related issues and ensures consultation takes place between the Government and consumers, carers, families and service providers within the disability sector. The Council has fifteen members, nine of whom are women.

Interim National Indigenous Disability Network

123. On 3 December 1999, the Minister for Family and Community Services and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs jointly announced the formation of a working party to provide advice to the Government on establishing a National Indigenous Disability Network. The working party released a report outlining strong support for the establishment of a National Indigenous Disability Network. The role of the Network is to identify a preferred network structure; and raise the pertinent issues facing Indigenous people with a disability. One of the areas identified is the importance of women's disability issues in Indigenous communities.

Support for community organisations

124. The *National Secretariat Programme* provides funding to a number of NGOs to contribute to Government policies affecting Australian families and communities, carry information between the Government and the community on social policy issues, and represent constituents' views.

125. Between 2001-02, FaCS provided \$120,000 funding to support the Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), the peak organisation for women with disabilities in Australia. WWDA is a federating body of individuals and networks in each state and territory and is made up of women with disabilities and associated organisations. WWDA seeks to ensure opportunities in all works of life for all women with disabilities. It aims to increase awareness of, and address issues faced by women with disabilities in the community. It links women with disabilities from around Australia, providing opportunities to identify and discuss issues of common concern.

National Women's Leadership Strategy

126. Building on earlier initiatives aimed at encouraging women's participation in a range of leadership and decision-making activities, the Government funded a *National Women's Leadership Strategy*. Some of the key features of the Strategy include: the development of *Appoint Women*, an enhanced executive search service for Commonwealth board nominations, developing strong links and partnerships with private enterprise and work on sectors where women are significantly under-represented; leadership training initiatives targeting women who have limited access to traditional leadership pathways and networks (for example, young women and Indigenous women) and the recognition of non-traditional leadership roles (for example, experience in the informal sector or community-based leadership positions) through formal accreditation; and the promotion of positive recognition of women's non-elite leadership.

127. The strategy is also reframing concepts of leadership to adequately recognise women's contribution to all spheres of social and economic life, including as leaders at community levels and their participation in a broad range of paid and unpaid activities. The Commonwealth Government, together with State and Territory Governments, will work collaboratively to: gain broad acceptance and recognition of the diversity and complexity of women's leadership roles and capacities; identify and address the common and important barriers to women's participation as leaders, including discrimination associated with gender; and support women in their choices to participate in community and national life as leaders.

128. Another aspect of the strategy is a partnership project with the Australian Local Government Association and the Australian Local Government Women's Association. The project conducted a needs analysis to develop women's leadership in local government and developed a framework for promoting and supporting women in local government.

National Women's Development Programme

129. The *National Women's Development Programme* supports women's NGOs. The programme aims: to support broadly representative, effective and viable national women's NGOs that contribute actively to government policies and strategies affecting women; and to enable a diverse range of women's views to be regarded in government policy consideration.

130. In 2001-02, the Government set aside \$5.6 million over four years for the *National Women's Development Programme*. The funding provides the opportunity to expand, strengthen and enhance the status and position of women in Australia through:

- *National Secretariats*. OSW funds four national women's organisations to provide National Secretariat services on behalf of Australian women. The funding is expanding and strengthening the role and effectiveness of national secretariat organisations relevant to, and supportive of, the diversity of women and women's organisations throughout the community.
- *Targeted Projects and Capacity Building Projects*. This comprises: up to \$60,000 for significant projects and research which contribute to policy issues and development; and once-only funding of up to \$25,000 for projects which strengthen organisational capacity to represent their constituents and to contribute to, and participate in, mainstream policy issues and development.
- *Training and Mentoring*. Funding was provided for training and mentoring activities building on women's community and organisational capacity.

Women in the public sector

131. The Government has funded various initiatives aimed at developing women's capacity to enter senior positions in the Australian Public Service. The *Senior Women in Management Programme* has been offered annually in various formats since 1988 and over 300 participants have completed the programme. It is a unique management development programme designed to significantly enhance the skills and abilities of high achieving APS senior women managers to meet the challenges facing public administration.

132. In addition, core leadership skills have been developed for senior executives in the Australian Public Service – the Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework. The model is currently being extended to middle-level managers. This Framework aims to achieve high performance leadership and will assist women through clearly defining the criteria for open and competitive selection and performance management of senior executives. Another key initiative is a series of training films for both the public and private sectors on leadership and teamwork in the workplace called the *Australian Management Series*. Gender issues are a focus of the films, which were launched in May 2000.

Young women leaders

133. A pilot scheme was developed to increase the participation of young people on government boards and committees. A register of young people was established by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. This project has helped raise the profile of young women and men with expertise and experience that is relevant to board decision-making processes. See: www.thesource.gov.au/text/speak_out.

Women in non-traditional industries

134. Government departments and NGOs are working to increase women's participation in decision-making in traditionally male-dominated industries. The Women's Industry Network Seafood Community launched a 'Best Practice Kit' aimed at promoting leadership and decision-making roles in what has been a traditionally male dominated industry. The kit, funded under the 2000-01 *National Women's Non-Government Organisations Funding Programme*, is an updateable resource, with tips on professional development, support and mentoring.

Single parents

135. The National Council of Single Mothers and their Children organisation received funding for a number of projects including the *Sole Parent Proud* and *Single Mothers Working Strategies Network Australia* projects. These projects established networks for single parent families in regional, rural and remote areas provided mentoring, friendship and training in leadership and decision-making activities.

Women with breast cancer

136. The Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) received \$25,000 in 2000-01 through the *National Women's NGO Funding Programme* to develop a strategy to increase representation of women with breast cancer in policy decision-making. Under this project a national strategy is being developed that increases the representation of women with breast cancer as effective consumer representatives in all areas of decision-making about the disease. The project is identifying and recruiting consumer representatives, identifying training needs and investigating options for ongoing funding for women consumers in breast cancer decision-making. The Department of Health and Aged Care is providing BCNA with a further \$45,000 to implement this strategy by selecting and training consumer representatives and to increase consumer representation on decision-making committees and organisations.

Older women

137. The Older Women's Network received funding of \$25,000 in 2000-01 through the *National Women's NGO Funding Programme* for a project on older women and community leadership roles. The valuable contribution made by older women to the Australian community is recognised under this project that is facilitating more inclusive communities. The project involves a literature search on models for supportive neighbourhoods and communities relevant to older women, including cross cultural issues. It also involves focus groups and workshops with older women to identify grassroots suggestions for supporting older women in maintaining a positive self-image and healthy lifestyle, and in developing their potential for community, (including volunteer) leadership roles.

138. The Government has made significant progress in developing national legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of age. The *Age Discrimination Bill 2003*, which was introduced into the Parliament in June 2003, will protect Australians of all ages, including older women, from age discrimination in a range of areas of public life.

139. In October 2001, the Government launched its *Crime Prevention for Seniors: A Guide to Personal and Financial Safety* publication. The booklet is designed to provide information on crime prevention for older Australians in a positive manner that will not engender fear among its readers. The topics covered in the publication include: general safety issues, including safety in the street and in the car and public transport; personal banking; scams; staying safe with computer technology; and interpersonal relationships. The publication was developed with the assistance of the Council on the Ageing and the Older Women's Network.

Indigenous women

140. The Government announced a minimum of \$20 million funding in January 2001 (under the *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy*) for projects based on principles established at the Indigenous roundtable in 2000. Projects, as part of this initiative, specifically target young Indigenous people through building their leadership skills and increasing awareness of Indigenous culture and family. In addition, eight Indigenous Australian women – one from each State and Territory – received OSW scholarships to attend the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre's *Leadership Development Programme* certificate level course in 2001. Further information is available at: www.aiatsis.gov.au/ailec. The Indigenous Women's Advisory Group to OSW, established under the *National Women's Leadership* initiative, provides leadership and advice on Indigenous women's issues.

Rural women

141. The Government offers a range of opportunities to specifically enhance the leadership skills of women in regional and rural areas. State and Territory Rural Women's Award winners attended a national leadership seminar in March 2001 and also received bursaries to help develop their management, business or leadership skills. The Government also funds an annual scholarship for one mature age rural woman to participate in the Australian Rural Leadership Programme. Further information about the Rural Women's Award is available at www.ruralwomensaward.gov.au.

142. The Government funded the *Missed Opportunities - Harnessing the Potential of Women in Australian Agriculture* project that aimed to increase rural women's participation in decision-making. The project assessed the economic contribution of rural women, and identified and implemented strategies to increase rural women's participation in decision-making. Some of the key outcomes included: better recognition and service to women clients and members of the 'case study' organisations, and increased use of their skills, leading to economic and other improvements in organisational performance; a better understanding of which strategies for increasing women's participation are most likely to succeed; and improved understanding by governments and other organisations of the current impediments to women's participation in mainstream decision-making, which will enable organisations to develop initiatives to overcome these barriers, thus improving the quality and relevance of policies and programmes.

Recognition of women in leadership

143. The Government is addressing the under-nomination of women for honours and awards through a range of strategies. For example, to encourage better recognition of the achievements and contributions of women, on 25 January 2001 the Prime Minister launched a national Network of Ambassadors for the Recognition of Women as part of an *Honouring Women* initiative at the Australia Day Awards. This initiative is part of a broad government strategy aimed at increasing nominations for women for the range of honours and awards available in Australia. This network of 30 distinguished 'Ambassadors' comprises high profile women from diverse backgrounds around Australia. Ambassadors use their public engagements throughout the year to encourage the nomination of women from communities and raise awareness about the achievements of Australian women.

144. The Government is a sponsor of the annual *Telstra Business Women's Awards*. This prestigious national programme is designed to recognise and reward the outstanding achievements of women from all sectors and levels of enterprise. The Awards have also been instrumental in raising broader community awareness of the vital contribution that women make to the Australian economy. The Government has recently initiated a 'Commonwealth Government Private Sector Award' for employees or part-owners of businesses with fewer than 100 staff as part of the Telstra awards. Women play a particularly important role in this sector, where they currently account for 35 per cent of Australia's 1.3 million small business operators. In 1999, State and Territory Women's Offices sponsored the inaugural *Telstra Young Business Woman Awards* in each State and Territory. Further information about the *Telstra Business Women's Awards* is available at www.telstra.com.au/tbwa.

145. In 2001, each issue of the OSW's *Women's News* profiled women volunteers in areas consistent with the monthly themes of the *International Year for Volunteers* (IYV). These volunteers were identified by volunteer organisations in each State and Territory. To recognise and commend the efforts of all volunteers during the IYV, OSW compiled a publication on women volunteers, *Action Women*, which was launched in 2002. The publication covered a broad range of volunteer contributions, detailed profiles of volunteers, and included an historical perspective of women volunteering in Australia.

146. The *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy* helps people involved in volunteer work to build their skills through development activities and training. These measures will assist many women who comprise a major proportion of volunteer workers in Australia.

Australia's international aid programme

147. Australia's aid programme provides support to a wide range of women's NGOs including the Vietnam Women's Union, the Lao Women's Union, women's NGOs in the Philippines through the Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Programme and women's NGOs in the Pacific. See also Article 8.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

148. The Government is committed to ensuring that there are opportunities for women to make an equal contribution to public life. A target of 50 per cent representation of women on government boards and committees has been set and to support this the Office for Women maintains a Register of Women who are interested in serving on government boards and committees.

NEW SOUTH WALES

149. The Government established a Women's Advisory Committee and Strategic Plan in 1998 to increase participation of women on Reserve Trust Boards. The NSW Department for Women's Public Sector Boards and Committees project aims to increase the percentage of women appointed to boards and committees and to increase the percentage of women nominated.

150. The Government aims to increase the number of women decision makers in the sport and recreation industry through performance agreements with all funded organisations and the *Women in Sport and Recreation Administration Scholarship Programme*.

151. NSW has several programmes to support rural women's leadership. For example, NSW Agriculture is providing older women with affordable workshops on understanding how decisions are made within government, and the NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network jointly ran a leadership training pilot programme for women in isolated communities.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

152. The Chief Minister, the Hon Clare Martin MLA, is the first woman to lead a NT Government, and retains the portfolio responsibility for Women's Policy. Four of the thirteen NT Government members of Parliament are women including one Indigenous woman. In total, seven (28 per cent) of the members of the Legislative Assembly are women, the highest proportion of female politicians in Australia. Women are strongly represented in local government and tend to serve for longer terms than the national average. Women comprise 38 per cent of municipal councillors, 41 per cent of whom have served for more than one term, including 23 per cent who have served for two or more terms. Women comprise 43 per cent of mayors and shire presidents in the NT.

153. The Women's Advisory Council to the Chief Minister provides a direct communication link between women and the Government. It reports directly, and is responsible to, the Chief Minister. Members meet throughout the year to identify, discuss and plan responses to various issues of concern and interest to women; formulate comprehensive and representative advice to the Government and determine strategies to assist women to become more actively involved in government processes. The Women's Advisory Council celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2003.

154. The Chief Minister's roundtable of *Young Territorians* provides young people with innovative opportunities to express their views directly to the Government. In 2002 the roundtable had a female chair

and deputy chair. Young women on the roundtable have been involved in projects relating to young women's sexual health, illicit drugs and Ausyouth (a forward agenda for Australian youth development).

155. New information will be produced for women appointed to boards and committees including a paper on women and leadership in the NT during the 2002-03 financial year.

QUEENSLAND

156. Women have been appointed to a range of key leadership positions, often for the first time, in fields such as the judiciary, the public service, and politics. Women represent 28 per cent of local government councillors, 18 per cent of local government mayors, 37 per cent of all Queensland State Parliamentarians and hold 5 of 19 Cabinet positions. They also hold 7 out of 24 Supreme Court judge positions and comprise 21 per cent of magistrates including 2 of 3 Indigenous magistrates.

157. Women currently occupy 32.2 per cent of Queensland Government board positions. This compares with 23 per cent in 1998, and 21.9 per cent in 1995. Strategies to increase representation included the development of a *Register of Women* and a *Register of Indigenous Women*, and the distribution of new registration forms and information sheets on *Preparing an Effective Resume* and *What's Involved in being on a Government Board* to key industry organisations, unions and community organisations.

158. Initiatives to increase the representation of Indigenous women in government and community leadership positions include: the *Meeting Challenges, Making Choices* strategy which aims to prioritise the appointment of Indigenous women in decision-making roles in Cape York Indigenous communities; the *Moving Into Management and Senior Management Programme* for Indigenous public servants; and the *Ten-Year Partnership*, which includes a skills development programme designed to specifically address the needs of Indigenous women and girls in the areas of leadership, decision-making, strategic planning and management skills, and enterprise development.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

159. Female members make up over a quarter of the membership (27.5 per cent) of the SA Parliament. Women represent 29.8 per cent (14 of the 47 members) of the Lower House (House of Assembly) and 22.7 per cent (5 of the 22 members) of the Upper House (Legislative Council).

160. Women's contribution to decision-making is a key priority of the Government which has a goal of 50 per cent representation of women on government boards and committees. Currently, SA has the highest level of representation of women on government boards and committees of any state of Australia (33.4 per cent).

161. The Office for the Status of Women maintains a Women's Register of over 450 names and provides candidates to Ministers, government agencies, the community, and private sectors. It also conducts regular executive searches to seek out qualified women to fill upcoming vacancies. An executive search to identify women of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds suitable for appointment to boards and committees is currently being conducted in partnership with the Division of Multicultural Affairs.

162. Wide-ranging initiatives have been undertaken across government to further advance women's access to employment in promotional positions. For example, the Department of Treasury and Finance's corporate strategy, *Achieving Balance*, has sought to achieve gender balance in the workforce, increased participation of women in higher classification positions and a more flexible work environment which benefits all staff regardless of gender. Culture change, career progress, and support for women underpin the strategy.

163. The *Leadership SA* initiative of the Commissioner for Public Employment provides scholarships for *Public Sector Management Act 1995* staff to attend leadership and management development programmes, and 56 per cent of these have been awarded to women. Women from the public and private sector participated in the *Women Leading Change* programme, developed for women at senior management level who wish to lead change in their organisations.

TASMANIA

164. The Tasmanian *Women's Register* aims to increase women's participation on government boards, committees and authorities. Over the last two years a number of strategies have been developed, including an increased focus on recruiting women in non-traditional areas, additional requirements placed on boards with less than 25 per cent female representation, continuation of the early warning system, quarterly reporting to Cabinet, and closer liaison with government departments to increase their awareness of women's representation on boards and committees. Women Tasmania has formed a partnership with the Australian Institute of Company Directors to provide a one-day course for new directors on boards and committees.

165. In 2000, Women Tasmania and the Local Government Office presented workshops for women that aimed to increase the number of women, particularly young women, participating in local government. A publication drawn largely from material delivered at the workshops is nearing completion. Since the workshops, a need was identified by elected women councillors for further education and training about strategies and processes that can be utilised in local government and in other leadership roles.

VICTORIA

166. A register of women, the *VicWomen Directory*, has a listing of over fifteen hundred women interested in, and available for, board appointments. Government departments are encouraged to consult the Directory when making recommendations for new appointments and reappointments. A register will also be developed and promoted to increase the representation of Indigenous women on boards, in particular justice related boards, committees and tribunals. The *Women in Agriculture and Resource Management Register* recognises the competencies developed by rural women seeking appointment to decision-making bodies.

167. The *Annual Women's Summit* is a major commitment of the Government to raise the Government's awareness of the issues and concerns affecting women's lives and to allow women direct access to the decision-making processes of government. The inaugural Victorian Women's Summit, *Growing the Whole of the State: Issues for Rural and Regional Women*, in May 2000, was attended by over 200 women from diverse organisations and backgrounds. The Second Annual Women's Summit – *Supporting*

Women's Community Leadership, held July 2001, was attended by over 180 women. The 2002 Summit focused on women, work and family issues.

168. A series of *Women's Consultative Forums* has been established to allow the Minister for Women's Affairs and other Ministers, to have the opportunity to hear directly about specific issues from women. Six forums have been held in the last two years including *Fostering Links and Leadership: A forum for women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities* attended by 125 women, and *Our Voices: Strengthening the Future Vision for Indigenous Women* attended by 130 women.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

169. Carol Martin, MLA for the Kimberley, was elected to the WA Legislative Assembly in 2001. This was the first time an Indigenous woman had been elected to any Australian parliament.

170. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet maintains a register of people who have expressed an interest in being on a government board or committee. The register and method of selection of candidates from it, has recently been under review. One of the aims of the review was to examine ways of attracting a greater number and more diverse range of women to the register, thus enabling a larger representation of women on government boards and committees. Women comprise 30 per cent of the members of government boards and committees. Women also: comprise 24 per cent of members of the WA Parliament; comprise 28.5 per cent of WA Cabinet; account for 24 per cent of Local Government councillors; and 19 per cent of senior WA State Public Service positions.

ARTICLE 8: International representation and participation

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

171. Since 1995, the Government has participated in a wide range of international fora which have provided increased opportunities for women to participate in political and public life. These have included the Sixth Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Womens Affairs (New Delhi, 2000); the 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, and 47th sessions of the United States Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 1996-2001); the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation meetings (1995-2002); the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Women (Beijing Plus Five, New York, 2000); and the United Nations World Conference Against Racism (Durban, 2001). The Australian Government delegations to WCAR and APEC included representation from women and both forums included a strong gender focus.

Women in Australia's foreign service

172. Women's participation in the foreign service has increased steadily between 1994 and 2002. As at May 2002, women comprised 46.6 per cent of Australia's foreign service compared to 42 per cent in 1994. The representation of women as heads of missions and posts increased from 3 per cent in 1991 to almost 15 per cent in 2001. In 2003, there were 12 women serving in these positions. In addition, women in Australia have participated in peace keeping operations overseas (such as Bougainville). For more information see Australia's overseas aid programme, from para 182. Women in Australia are encouraged to apply for foreign service appointments and recruitment is based on merit and equal employment opportunity/workplace diversity selection processes.

Women's participation in international activities

173. In July 1999, Australian women's NGOs hosted a regional NGO preparatory conference in the lead-up to Beijing Plus Five. Over 100 women's NGO representatives from Australia and the Pacific region attended. In September and October 1999, the Government conducted consultations to inform and seek input from State and Territory Governments, women's NGOs and the community about CEDAW and Beijing Plus Five.

174. The Government has undertaken several measures to enhance the involvement of women's NGOs in international activities. These have included:

- in the lead up to Beijing Plus Five, OSW established partnerships with NGOs to help inform and encourage women's involvement. Key initiatives included workshops, lobby training to assist effective NGO participation in the United Nations environment, the funding of an NGO Coordinator to act as the focal point to disseminate information and liaison between NGOs and the Government, and financial assistance for women's NGO representatives to attend the 44th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and Beijing Plus Five;
- women's NGO representatives have been included on the Australian Delegation to the 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th and 47th sessions of the CSW and Beijing Plus Five; and
- several representatives from women's NGOs have participated on the APEC Women's Leaders Network (Australia) and attended APEC meetings at New Zealand, the Philippines, Brunei and China.

Beijing Plus Five

175. In September 1999, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women met with the All China Women's Federation, the peak national women's organisation in China, to exchange information on the implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action*.

176. The Government sent a very strong delegation to the *Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly – Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century* (Beijing Plus Five). The Australian Delegation was led by Senator Newman (then Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women), and included Ms Penny Wensley (then Australia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations), Ms Susan Halliday (then HREOC's Sex Discrimination Commissioner), Ms Jane Halton (then Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet), Ms Rosemary Calder (then First Assistant Secretary, OSW) and NGO representatives.

177. OSW developed Australia's *Beijing Plus Five Action Plan 2001-2005* to take forward the Government's commitments to advance the outcomes from Beijing Plus Five in Australia. OSW consulted women's NGOs and other key stakeholders on the Plan. The Action Plan identifies key areas to build on existing policies and progress new ways to improve outcomes for women through collaboration between agencies, governments, the community, business and the media.

Women on trade delegations

178. Women hold key positions in the Office of Trade Negotiations in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and are well represented on delegations to negotiations, including at the World Trade Organization. Australia was the Chair of the APEC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration from January 2001 to December 2002.

National Committee on Human Rights Education

179. The Government has provided seed funding and an additional grant to the National Committee on Human Rights Education. The Committee comprises NGO, media and business representatives, and women are well represented on the Committee. The Committee's objectives include assessing the existing needs of the Australian community in relation to human rights education and developing strategies to deliver human rights education to meet those needs. This initiative is part of Australia's commitment to the United Nations Decade on Human Rights Education.

OECD Working Party on Gender Equality

180. Since 1995, Australia has actively participated in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Working Party on Gender Equality. The purpose of the working party is to seek to ensure that the full potential of women as contributors to, and beneficiaries of, the development process can be promoted and supported through the work of the DAC and through its Member countries. This aims to improve the status of women and assist the total development effort.

International humanitarian law

181. Australia has hosted or been involved with regional conferences on international humanitarian law for representatives of government, military forces, NGOs, academics, and the general community. Women have been well represented at these forums. In February 1999, Australia hosted a conference to commemorate the centenary of the first Hague Peace Conference. In addition, the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Department of Defence are represented on the Australian Red Cross' International Humanitarian Law Committee. The Committee serves as a forum for the exchange of information and views on international humanitarian law issues (including issues such as women and war). The Committee provides a valuable opportunity for Departments to inform themselves of developments in the area of IHL as well as the different initiatives that the Red Cross undertakes to promote an understanding and awareness of the principles of IHL.

Australia's international aid programme

182. Australia provides strong support for international efforts to ensure that women are actively involved in peace-building and conflict resolution.

183. Australia provided support for the Bougainville peace process in Papua New Guinea, where a strong feature of the negotiations towards a settlement has been the participation at all meetings and conferences of women from Bougainville. Women were instrumental in the initial phase of the peace process in promoting the idea of a negotiated settlement and a ceasefire.

184. Women, both formally through their involvement with the Bougainville Peace Congress and informally through the position they hold in Bougainville society, have been instrumental in sustaining the efforts for a final settlement to the conflict. Women have also been very active in the organisation of counselling and advisory services to combatants as well as other members of Bougainville society as they adjust to the post-conflict environment.

185. The Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNDWA) in Bougainville is being supported by Australia's aid programme in order to strengthen the ability of women, communities, community leaders and LNDWA trainers to address violence in Bougainville communities, including violence against women. The project will provide workshops on the negative effects of locally brewed alcohol, how to address violence, disseminate information about women's rights, counselling and basic legal advice and training in strategic and project planning.

186. Australia is strongly supporting East Timorese women through its aid programme. In East Timor, Australia is providing support for psycho-social recovery of East Timorese who have suffered due to the recent conflict. Support is being provided for a project aimed at building the capacity of East Timorese to initiate community-based primary mental health services through intensive training in mental health and through the establishment of a network of primary care and community mental health services across the country. To date, trainees have been 50:50 men and women, and training modules have incorporated issues relating to domestic violence.

187. Australia is supporting the Solomon Islands Women's Information Network (SIWNET) for six months of Women's Development Radio Spots under SIWNET's *Women and Information for Peace Project*. This is a 30 to 60 second programme broadcast three times daily at peak hours by the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation. Through this programme SIWNET is informing and educating women on certain sensitive issues especially for peace resolution. Australia has also provided assistance to the Solomon Islands Women for Unity, Peace and Prosperity. This assistance has supported reconciliation and negotiation between the warring militant parties, Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) and Isatambu Freedom Movement. The funds provided covered transport costs to enable women to travel safely behind the checkpoints and into bush areas, as well as paying for food for traditional and customary exchanges necessary for reconciliation.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

QUEENSLAND

188. Women hold Deputy Commissioner positions in three of the ten Government Trade and Investment Offices in key overseas export and investment attraction markets for Queensland. Women also hold three of the Director positions in these offices.

189. A number of teleconferences were hosted by the Government in order to consult with NGOs regarding the Beijing Plus Five Review process. At least twenty-five NGOs were involved including those representing Indigenous women, women with disabilities and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

190. Queensland women were well represented during CSW and the Beijing Plus Five Review meeting in New York in 2000. There was an NGO representative and an Office for Women representative on the official Commonwealth Government delegation to the Beijing Plus Five meeting.

191. IWD celebrations have been supported by the Government over the past eleven years. The Calendar of Events is distributed in hard copy and is also accessible on the web site. Over 275 IWD celebrations across Queensland were registered on the Office for Women's Internet Calendar of Events during 2002, and over 320,000 resources were distributed to organisations and community groups.

TASMANIA

192. The Government is committed to the implementation of United Nations Human Rights instruments pertaining to the rights of women. Women Tasmania has initiated a government and non-Government Beijing Platform of Action working group to examine the recommendations of the United Nations and to pursue strategies in line with the platform to advance progress of Tasmanian women.

ARTICLE 9: Nationality

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

193. Australia's citizenship law and policy does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origins or property. Australia's immigration programme does not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender or ethnicity. People of any country can be considered for migration to Australia under set selection criteria in categories designed to meet Australia's economic, social and humanitarian requirements.

Humanitarian Programme

194. Australia has a *Humanitarian Programme* for refugees and others with humanitarian needs. The 2001-2002 *Humanitarian Programme* was set at 13,645 places (including 1,645 places carried over from 2000-01) with a notional allocation of 7,345 places for the offshore resettlement component and the remainder to be used onshore. Australia operates a global, non-discriminatory resettlement programme offshore to help those who are in greatest need and for whom resettlement in Australia is the only durable solution. Under this programme, Australia resettles some of the world's most needy refugees and provides protection to people in Australia who engage our protection obligations.

195. Under the *Humanitarian Programme* there is a specific visa category called 'Woman at Risk' that applies to women who are without a male relative and who are in danger of victimisation, harassment or serious abuse because of their gender. 3,134 visas of this category were granted from the beginning of the 1995/96 financial year to 30 June 2002.

196. All immigration officers must participate in an *Overseas Training Programme* before they commence work at an overseas mission. The programme includes a component on interviewing techniques which addresses gender issues.

197. Applications for protection visas are considered on a case by case basis in accordance with the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, as amended by the *1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*. Protection visa applications made by women are also determined by reference to *Gender Guidelines* to assist decision-makers in assessing claims by persons who apply for protection visas in Australia or for offshore Humanitarian visas outside Australia. The purpose of the *Gender Guidelines* is to ensure that applications are dealt with effectively and sensitively. Guidelines and strategies for approaching gender-related issues have been developed and are currently being reviewed.

198. Australian law accepts that women in a particular society, or a subset of women in a particular society, may be found, on the facts of the case and country information, to be a particular social group. Protection visa decisions are made by utilising country based and gender specific information. It is not appropriate or consistent with Australian and international law to adopt a generalised approach to determine whether women are a particular social group or whether specific claims of gender based discrimination necessarily constitute grounds for refugee status.

199. On 29 August 2000, the Government announced a review of the interpretation and implementation of the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, as amended by the *1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*. The Government has publicly expressed its commitment to the Convention and the international protection system. The review is seeking to ensure that protection is provided under the Convention to those persons whom signatory states intended be protected, in order to preserve the integrity of the international protection system and Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Programme.

200. The Government has actively participated in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Global Consultations on International Protection to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Refugee Convention. The Global Consultations were completed following discussions on the Protection of Refugee Women and Refugee Children.

201. Australia is also actively involved in the development of UNHCR's Agenda for Protection, the principal outcome from the Global Consultations process. The draft Agenda for Protection incorporates the issues arising from the final Global Consultations meeting on the protection needs of refugee women and children.

202. In June 2001, the Government provided funding to the UNHCR for a book on women refugees. Entitled *Refugee Women*, the book contains 39 portraits of refugee women. The portraits reflect the life stories of women that have been scarred by some of the worst persecution, discrimination and intolerance witnessed in the twentieth century. Each of the stories illustrates the human spirit's power to transcend adversity.

Migrant women on bridging visas and domestic violence

203. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs is a member of the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV) Task Force*. Coordinated by OSW, the PADV Taskforce identifies opportunities for strategic collaboration between and within governments, to enhance knowledge, inform policy, develop good practice and find better ways of preventing and responding to domestic violence. The Department is examining ways of improving outcomes for migrant women such as faster assessment times for migration applications, ensuring that the domestic violence system adequately responds to their needs and introducing measures aimed at reducing the incidence of domestic violence.

Migrant women, income support and domestic violence

204. In December 2000, the PADV Taskforce established a working group to progress the issue of migrant women, domestic violence and income support. The working group includes representatives from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Family and Community Services. A joint paper on *Migrant Women, Income Support and Domestic Violence* was developed by this working group to summarise and clarify the issues and was presented at the Ministerial Council in 2001. The group is developing strategies to address the issue.

Marriage and migration

205. In 1998, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs updated the English version of the booklet, *Marrying and migrating: you have to work at it*. The booklet assists couples in making informed choices about the decision to marry someone from another culture, and provides information on issues to consider before migration. The book and accompanying video are available in English, Arabic, Mandarin, Thai, Vietnamese, Russian and Tagalog.

Detention

206. Australian domestic law provides for the mandatory detention of unlawful non-citizens in mainland Australia. The Residential Housing Project, which commenced on 7 August 2001, enables up to 25 volunteer women and children at any one time, to live in family-style accommodation away from the Woomera Immigration Reception and Processing Centre. In 2001-02, approximately 100 women and children participated in the trial of alternative detention arrangements in the Woomera township. Participants are able to regularly visit family members at the Centre. An evaluation of the project highlighted the benefits of the arrangement and a number of recommendations are under consideration.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

QUEENSLAND

207. The Government has worked hard to ensure that education, training and employment opportunities for women improve. In 2001, 78.1 per cent of young women completed Year 12 compared with 27.9 per cent in 1972, and 55 per cent of university students were women compared with 47.8 per cent in 1988.

208. A key component of the new *Workforce Diversity and Equity Programme* is the *Women's Strategy: Strategic Plan for the Employment and Career Management of Women in Education Queensland 2002 – 2005*. This strategy has set a target for women to represent 41.1 per cent of senior leadership positions in larger state schools by 2005.

209. Education Queensland has been active in the implementation of the *National Action Plan for the Education of Girls* and the *National Gender Equity Framework*. The *National Framework* identifies a range of priority areas for action and is linked to national reporting processes. Gender equality policies include: Gender Equity in Education; Gender Equity in Sport; Gender and Cultural Equity; Equity and Learning Technology Project; and Equity and Literacy Programme. Other key initiatives include: the *Partners for Success* strategy, which aims to improve education and employment outcomes for Indigenous girls; extending senior secondary subject choices available to girls in rural and remote areas through the *Virtual Schooling Service*; and the *Pregnant and Parenting Students Policy*, which aims to increase completion rates of pregnant and/or parenting students.

210. The *Young Pregnant and Parenting Women at Risk of Violence: Schooling Support and Healthy Relationships* developed and trialed a peer training and peer support model. The initiative was found to be effective in reducing young women's vulnerability to violence and enhancing their participation in educational and training opportunities.

211. *Moving Ahead* is a post-school services programme that assists women with a severe disability and the women caring for them. The young women train for independent living, find work through pre-vocational skill development, find and use recreational facilities and attend to their personal grooming needs.

212. A CD Rom promoting information and communication technology (ICT) careers for women has been developed. The Department of Employment and Training has developed and distributed to all TAFE Institutes an online mentoring programme to provide skills to support women and women students in ICT in TAFE. A new project is currently underway to identify key initiatives and implementation strategies to increase female participation in ICT training.

ARTICLE 10: Education

National goals for schooling

213. In 1999, Australia established a new set of *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* as *The Adelaide Declaration*. The goals are student centred, focussing on the learning outcomes of students rather than the strategies and processes of education providers (governments, school systems and schools) and reflect the significant social, economic, technological and educational change which has occurred over the past decade. They are inclusive in approach, aimed at improving educational outcomes of all students, reflecting the capacity of all children to learn and the right of all young people to success in learning. The statement of goals provides that:

‘Schooling should be socially just, so that students’ outcomes from schooling are free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students’ socio-economic background or geographic location.’

214. Education Ministers established a taskforce charged with the development of key performance measures to form the basis for nationally comparable reporting on student outcomes in key areas of schooling covered by the goals. The taskforce was also directed to identify areas of schooling where it may be appropriate to establish national targets or benchmarks. To date, benchmarks have been established for two areas - literacy and numeracy. Achievement data is reported by State and Territory, by gender and, where available, by Indigenous status, language background other than English, socio-economic background and geographic location.

215. Nationally consistent definitions of sub-groups are required in order to measure progress towards the equity goals of the *National Goals* and report on the achievement of student population sub-groups. This is an area of some complexity in Australia, with its multiplicity of education providers and variation between them in definitions of equity target groups. Work is being undertaken to arrive at nationally agreed definitions of sub-groups such as socio-economically disadvantaged students, students from language backgrounds other than English, Indigenous students, students from rural or remote locations, and students with disabilities.

216. The Commonwealth, State and Territory Government, and non-government school authorities report on developments in school education each year through the *Annual National Report on Schooling in Australia (ANR)*. The *National Goals for Schooling* provide the framework for reporting on student achievement and for public accountability by schools and school systems. Besides publishing a range of statistical data on students and schools and expenditure on schooling, the *ANR* reports progress towards the *National Goals*, concentrating on priority areas identified by Ministers – currently literacy, numeracy, science, information technology, vocational education and training in schools, student participation, and retention in, and completion of, schooling.

217. Achievement data are reported by State and Territory, and by gender and include, where available, data for the equity target groups. Year 12 subject participation data are disaggregated by gender and grouped into eight nationally recognised key learning areas. School education authorities are specifically

asked to provide data on the participation of girls in mathematics, science and technology and of boys in the humanities.

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

Pregnant adolescents

218. The Government commissioned research into the education, training and employment needs of pregnant adolescents. The report, entitled *Pregnant Futures, Barriers to employment, education and training amongst pregnant and parenting adolescents*, was published in 1996.

219. The Government's inquiry, *Pregnant and Productive: it's a right not a privilege to work while pregnant*, into pregnancy and work, included an examination of the experiences and barriers facing pregnant adolescents, including harassment and difficulties associated with completing school or training. The Government has supported the majority of the report's recommendations. Of particular benefit to pregnant women are the recommendations that there be: development and distribution of Pregnancy Guidelines (these were released in April 2001); amendments to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* in relation to breastfeeding; clarification on questions about pregnancy and family responsibilities asked during job interviews, and information gathered from medical examinations during recruitment (in progress); and public information campaigns that will be undertaken to raise awareness including information on occupational health and safety.

220. The Association of Women Educators received grant funding in 2000-01 (*National Women's NGO Funding Programme*) to undertake work on pregnancy, parenting and school completion. This was the second phase of a project examining the impact of pregnancy and parenting on girls at school in order to improve their chances of completing their education and subsequent life outcomes. Outputs included case studies, benchmarked best practice, and guidelines for school communities in supporting girls and young women to complete their secondary education.

Educational performance of males and females

221. In 2000, the Government released a research paper into female participation in the Information Technology industry entitled *Women in IT - what are the barriers?* The paper examines why women constitute only 20 per cent of employment in the industry. The research showed that school-age girls demonstrate high levels of computer literacy but that this does not translate into interest in computing as a career. The paper identifies strategies to increase the number of women in the industry. The report is available at: <http://www.detya.gov.au/iae/analysis/womeninit.htm>.

222. In 2000, the Government released a report entitled *Factors influencing the educational performance of both males and females in school and their initial destinations after leaving school*. The research found that more young women than men complete the final years of school and the average girl in school performs better than the average boy. Women are also better represented in higher education. However, because of a variety of factors women still have inferior labour market outcomes. The research indicates that differences in performance need to be examined according to differences both between and within gender groups.

Vocational education and training (VET)

223. A *National Women's VET Strategy* (1996) sets out the national direction for governments, industry, and training providers to consistently address the needs of women in policy making, planning, resourcing, implementing and monitoring VET. An evaluation was considered by the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs in July 2001. The evaluation sets out future directions to facilitate long-term sustainable improvements for women in VET. A range of measures have been undertaken to increase Indigenous men's and women's participation in VET including: the *Indigenous Support Funding Programme* to fund universities to support students; the *Indigenous Researchers Development Scheme*; the *Partners in a Learning Culture, Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 1999 – 2000*; and *A Bridge to the Future: Australia's National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 1998-2003*.

224. Regular monitoring is undertaken to ensure that women are able to benefit from the New Apprenticeship reforms. Incentives in the form of payments and other support are available for employers who employ women apprentices in non-traditional areas.

Higher education

225. The *Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme* (PELS) provides further opportunities for women and others undertaking higher degrees by coursework, both in acquiring new skills and in upgrading their existing qualifications. PELS commenced in 2002 and provides an income-contingent loan for eligible students enrolled in fee-paying postgraduate non-research courses. While women's participation in postgraduate education is increasing, female undergraduates are less likely to go on to higher degrees than male undergraduates. It is anticipated that PELS will lead to an increased number of women going on to postgraduate study.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

226. An ACT strategy was developed to implement the national framework *Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools*. The strategy assists schools to develop annual action plans to analyse and address gender issues. Professional development and training for teachers promotes gender-sensitive education. Vocational education and work experience programmes include analysis of gender perspectives and non-traditional work patterns.

227. The initiative *Reaching their Potential - Women and Girls in Vocational Education and Training in the ACT 2001-2003* supports women in enhancing their opportunities in gaining access to continuing education, training and paid work.

NEW SOUTH WALES

228. NSW has revised and accredited a range of women-only courses. The initiative addresses the barriers confronted by women in further education and to increase women's access to successful

participation in VET. *Changes and Choices Phase 2 (1999-2000)* is a new action plan for women to continue action to improve participation and outcomes for women in VET. The plan builds on the *NSW Action Plan for Women in Vocational Education and Training Changes and Choices 1997-1998*, a blueprint for women's vocational education and training. The project *Jobs for the Girls: the Realities for Young Women* developed an employment-related magazine for young women entering the workforce and a conference targeting educators. The magazine is being distributed through schools, TAFEs and community networks. A new information strategy has been developed to encourage young women to enter the information technology industry and undertake information technology training at TAFE.

229. The proportion of girls studying information technology as part of their Higher School Certificate is being increased by developing a comprehensive statewide marketing strategy. The strategy aims to increase girls' awareness of career options in the information technology industry.

230. A new guide for assessing and valuing women's skills has been developed to help women make links between existing skills, interest, abilities, and vocational education and training choices. The booklet will highlight examples of career prospects and related remuneration.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

231. Female retention rates in secondary education remain consistently higher than male retention rates. Female enrolments in higher education are higher than those of male enrolments. However, these enrolments remain heavily concentrated in the fields of business, education and health while males continue to dominate in the technology fields. Male enrolments dominate in the vocational sector.

232. The Government, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, is providing incentives as diverse as the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cadetships* and the *Farmbis Programme*. The Cadetships enable public sector agencies to sponsor undergraduate students to attend university and provide employment during vacations. Female students take up this opportunity at a slightly higher rate than male students. *Farmbis* provides assistance to enhance the business management skills of primary producers through education and training projects and women have been identified as a target for extra action under this programme.

233. Indigenous women comprise 5 of the 13 member *Learning Lessons* Steering Committee that oversees the implementation of the Government's *Indigenous Education Strategy*. An Indigenous woman also fills 1 of the 2 co-chair positions. In 2002, women were awarded 61 per cent of the Higher Education Scholarships based on academic merit.

QUEENSLAND

234. Queensland has been active in the implementation of the *National Action Plan for the Education of Girls* and the *National Gender Equity Framework*. The *National Framework* identifies a range of priority areas for action and is linked to national reporting processes. Gender equality policies include: *Gender Equity in Education; Gender Equity in Sport; Gender and Cultural Equity; Equity and Learning Technology Project; and Equity and Literacy Programme*.

235. The *Educational Outcomes Study of 1996/7* explored the differences between girls and boys in years 10, 11 and 12 regarding the connections between attitudes/experience and curriculum participation/performance. In addition, two initiatives were targeted at young pregnant women: the *Education's Pregnant and Parenting Students Policy* promotes equitable and active participation in secondary education by school-aged pregnant young women and young parents; and a project to develop a model to identify and support young pregnant and parenting women who are at risk of violence and/or dropping out of school.

236. *Moving Ahead* is a post school services programme that assists women with a severe disability and the women caring for them. The young women train for independent living, find work through pre-vocational skill development, find and use recreational facilities and attend to their personal grooming needs.

237. An implementation plan was developed for the *National Women's Vocational Education and Training Strategy*. It included the *Wider Opportunities for Women Programme* which informs schools and the community of the options available in supporting the VET intentions of women and girls. It aims to have a positive influence on the educational and employment outcomes for females and to increase the number of women in VET.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

238. Vocational bridging courses with English as a Second Language (ESL), support and job-search support for non-English speaking background women have been established. This work is in aged-care and hairdressing and has been very successful in assisting migrant women to gain employment in these areas. Without these special programmes of support, these areas of employment would not be open to them. ESL services include childcare, security, flexible learning and timetabling at various locations. *City West Programme* is an ESL women only class. Most of the women are Muslim and are unwilling to attend mixed classes. Students, who are recently arrived refugees, are able to leave their young children while they attend classes.

239. The *Home Tutor Programme* allows people, who are usually women with young families or elderly people, to learn English in their homes. This is done through volunteers trained in the programme. The programme is an accredited training course.

240. In 2000, a *Women's Education Programme for Aboriginal Education* was developed. The position of a woman Aboriginal Student Support Officer is one of only two such positions in the State. Individual class attendance times are flexible to accommodate students needs in dealing with family issues.

241. University scholarships are offered to encourage and support women to undertake civil engineering studies. The Sylvia Birdseye Scholarship offers financial support over a four-year degree and provides work experience.

TASMANIA

242. Women's access courses assist women who have been out of the workforce for a significant time to return to study and/or employment. Women's Training Consultants promote women's access and participation in VET including staff development in gender-inclusive training.

243. The *Implementation Plan for Women* has been developed to implement the *National Women's VET Strategy*. The State Steering Committee is responsible for identifying key areas of need, including women in information technology, and assisting in the development and implementation of strategies. Case management is being trialed for people from groups with special needs (including women) as they progress through VET. The *East Coast Pilot Project Training Brokerage for Rural Women 1997/1998* aimed to assist women to access information about courses they were interested in. Following the project, there was a 57 per cent increase in female enrolments in VET courses.

244. The *Women's Development Small Grants Programme* was established in 2000 to provide small grants to women's organisations. Many of these provide education, training and capacity building for women in unaddressed areas of need. Several initiatives have been established to meet the information and training needs of women and girls, including a *Network of Women's Information Rooms* in regional areas, and mentoring and capacity building programmes for women, with some initiatives specifically targeting girls and young women. Other group based competency development initiatives have also been facilitated for women in mid-life.

VICTORIA

245. Specific strategies to meet the educational and training needs of older women, Indigenous women, rural women, and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are being implemented by the Government. The promotion of women's participation in non-traditional trades through the provision of information and facilitation of partnership projects and public education will also be undertaken. Strategies include: lifelong learning initiatives for women promoted through ongoing support for the University of the Third Age; investigation of the needs of older learners to develop an older learners policy; professional development activities to better support Indigenous women in TAFE; building 2 Indigenous Training Centres to address the needs of local communities including the needs of Indigenous women; and a review of the provision of gender education and development of policy advice and curriculum strategies to support schools to provide gender equity in education will be undertaken.

246. A two-year pilot study, entitled *Reaching Out to Our Rural Community*, will be undertaken by the University of the Third Age. The results of this study will be used to develop educational programmes that meet the needs of women in rural and regional areas.

247. A *Gender Education Strategy* for Victorian schools will develop innovative learning and teaching practices for particular groups of girls and boys in schools. Data from schools and current research on gender education issues is being collected and analysed to inform the development of the Strategy.

ARTICLE 11: Employment

248. OECD *Employment Outlook 2001* ranked Australia as 4th out of 18 countries in relation to encouraging the higher participation of mothers in paid employment through the provision of a family friendly environment. Australia scored highest in the area of firms providing flexible work time arrangements.

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

Equal pay for women - *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*

249. The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 aims to promote equal employment and eliminate discrimination. The Act requires private sector companies, unions, non-government schools, higher education institutions and community organisations (that have 100 or more people) to establish a workplace program to remove barriers to women entering and advancing in their organisation. The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency is a statutory authority responsible for administering the Act, and through education it assists organisations to achieve equal opportunity for women.

250. In 1997, a workplace manual was developed to help remove sex-based pay discrimination. The manual contains considerable detail on job evaluation as a means of comprehensively analysing pay and skills at the workplace and identifying any pay discrimination. The manual also provides advice on how to conduct job evaluations that are free of gender bias.

251. HREOC produced the *Equal Pay Handbook* which was designed to assist employers to meet their obligations under Federal industrial and anti-discrimination legislation. It is also relevant to employees, equity practitioners and unions. The handbook contains essential equal remuneration principles, explanatory material, case law, case studies and an equal remuneration audit methodology. It is intended to contribute to an understanding of pay equity and the implementation of equal remuneration in the workplace.

Pregnancy discrimination

252. In 1998, the Government referred to HREOC, a national inquiry into discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and potential pregnancy, and the management of pregnancy in the workplace. The report of the inquiry (entitled *Pregnant and Productive: It's a right not a privilege to work while pregnant*) was tabled in Parliament in 1999. The Government's response to the report put forward practical and concrete steps to remove workplace discrimination against pregnant and potentially pregnant women. These included:

- amendments to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (SDA) to: clarify that discrimination on the ground of breastfeeding is prohibited; ensure that there is no confusion about the prohibition on asking questions at job interviews about pregnancy or potential pregnancy; and to ensure that information gathered from medical examinations about pregnancy is not used for discriminatory purposes. The *Sex*

Discrimination Act Amendment (Pregnancy and Work) Bill 2002 was introduced into the Parliament in 2002, and is expected to pass through Parliament in 2003;

- a public information campaign to raise awareness of, and inform employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities regarding pregnancy and potential pregnancy in the workplace;
- the development of pregnancy guidelines by HREOC's Sex Discrimination Commissioner in April 2001 to provide practical guidance and advice on compliance with the SDA and to assist employees, employers, other workplace participants, trade unions, and employer organisations in understanding parties' rights and responsibilities relating to pregnancy and potential pregnancy;
- the development and distribution by the Government in April 2002 of a booklet entitled "Working your way through pregnancy" to raise awareness about rights and responsibilities concerning pregnancy and potential pregnancy issues in the workplace.

Maternity leave

253. The Parental Leave Test Case in 1990 provided an award entitlement to 52 weeks unpaid parental leave, to be shared by parents if desired, for permanent employees who have 12 months continuous service with their employer. The *Workplace Relations Act 1996* provides a legislated minimum entitlement to 52 weeks unpaid parental leave for permanent employees on the same basis. In May 2001, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission established a new Parental Leave Case standard. This extended unpaid parental leave to casual employees who have been employed by an employer on a regular and systematic basis for several periods of employment, or an ongoing period of employment during a period of at least 12 months, and who have a reasonable expectation of ongoing employment. These new provisions will be inserted into federal awards on application by the award parties on an award-by-award basis. The decision recognised, however, that there may be some awards or industries for which the new parental leave standard is not appropriate and set out a process for parties wishing to diverge from the new standard.

254. Some employees including Commonwealth and State and Territory Government employees and some private sector employees have access to paid maternity leave as a condition of their employment (through awards and/or workplace agreements). It is estimated that currently 38 per cent of Australian women workers, including 54 per cent of permanent employees, have access to paid maternity leave. The duration of leave varies, but the average length is 7 weeks.

255. In August 2001, the HREOC Sex Discrimination Commissioner announced an investigation of the options available for implementing a national paid maternity leave scheme in Australia. After releasing an interim discussion paper in April 2002, the Commissioner conducted consultations with peak employer associations, unions and other interested stakeholders to seek their views on a paid maternity leave scheme, including cost and implementation issues. A final report was released in December 2002 and is currently under consideration by the Government.

Childcare

256. The Government is committed to the provision of affordable, flexible and accessible child care services and has committed a record allocation of around \$8.0 billion to child care over the four years

2002-2003 to 2005-06. This is assisting women and their families to access and choose child care that meets their needs and balance work and family responsibilities.

257. The Child Care Benefit, introduced in July 2000, has improved assistance with the costs of child care for low and middle-income families, and provides families with greater choice in the type of child care used. Families on the lowest incomes receive the highest rate of assistance when using Commonwealth approved child care services. The Child Care Benefit is calculated on income, the number of children in care, the number of hours of care used, and the type of care used. Between June 2001 and September 2002, there was an approximate 10% increase in the number of children using child care, mainly in outside school hours care.

258. The Government has placed further emphasis on quality child care through the introduction of more rigorous requirements that services must meet in order to continue to receive government funding. In 2003, a quality assurance system for outside school hours was introduced, while a revised Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for long day care centres commenced in January 2002, and Family Day Care Quality Assurance commenced in July 2001.

259. Funding is provided for flexible child care services that meet the diverse needs of women and their families. The introduction of in-home child care in 2001 is targeted to families who otherwise may not have been able to access mainstream care. This initiative can benefit women and their families working shifts or non-standard hours, parents or children who are regularly ill or have a disability, or who live in rural and regional areas.

260. All eligible families can get up to 20 hours of Child Care Benefit a week for a variety of reasons – respite, development care for children whose parents are not in the workforce, and volunteer work. Families using work, study, or training related care can get up to 50 hours a week.

261. Additional funding is also being provided to encourage the establishment of child care centres in rural areas where there is a recognised need. For the first time, subsidies previously available only to community based providers are now available to private providers. This will provide direct support for rural and regional economies, in employment and social contact.

262. Mobile child care services visit remote areas around Australia to provide occasional care, school holiday care, playgroups, story telling, games and toy library services. They also provide broader information and support to parents and in many cases are a link to other parents living in similar situations. Recently, mobile services have been established which provide regular long day care sessions in community venues when visiting several small rural communities each week.

263. The *Child Care Access Hotline* was established in 1997 to help parents with their child care needs. The hotline provides parents with information about child care services in their local area, types of child care available, quality issues and government financial assistance with the cost of child care. Various child care options - such as centre-based long day care, family day care, outside school hours and occasional care - are explained so that parents can make informed choices. Interpreter services are also available through the hotline.

Women working in non-traditional areas

264. Since 1995, the Government has undertaken a wide range of initiatives to increase women's entry and retention in non-traditional areas of employment. For example:

- the *Special Equity Measures Programme* (1995-1999) funded projects to improve women's access to training in areas of non-traditional employment. These included several projects to promote non-traditional occupations as career options for young women and the provision of training through the *Special Preparatory Courses for Women*;
- the *Women in the Australian Defence Force* report (1997) examined women's employment in the defence force and identified strategies to further enhance recruitment and careers for women;
- the *Women in submarines* booklet (1998) was designed to assist in addressing issues raised in the Submarine Integration Study in relation to women serving in the Collins Class submarines. It also covered women in the Royal Australian Navy in general;
- the Australasian Council of Women in Policing received funding to produce a guide (*Fitting In or Standing Out?*) for women entering the police profession;
- the Women in Engineering Committee received funding (1999) to produce *Engineering a Better Workplace (Valuing Diversity and Engendering a Culture of Inclusivity)*, a resource kit for engineering managers and women engineers;
- several projects (1997-1998) developed strategies and resources to improve access to training in the metals, engineering and constructions industries;
- a research project (1998) examined barriers to women's participation in apprenticeships in non-traditional areas and developed new models to increase their entry and retention.

Women and trade

265. Australia took on the position of Chair of the APEC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration (AGGI) in January 2001. AGGI was established to implement the *Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC*. Australia played a key role in the *Framework's* development and managed several of its key priority areas. AGGI was disbanded in late 2002 in accordance with its mandate. The Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN), as proposed by AGGI and endorsed by Senior Officials in May 2002, was implemented in 2003 as an internal arrangement to maintain gender resources and to support the continued integration and consideration of gender issues within APEC. Delegates from Australia attended the first GFPN meeting in May 2003 where the GFPN Terms of Reference, the Workplan Template and GFPN Roles and Responsibilities were developed.

266. Australia's *APEC Women Leaders' Network* was established in 1996 to promote women's increased participation in APEC and trade. In 2001, OSW worked to expand and enhance the role and capacity of the Network. Some of the Network's key objectives include: to promote greater awareness among Australian business women of trade opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region and facilitate increased contacts and trade for women; to raise awareness of the contribution of Australian women to the economy and trading in the region; to provide role models for businesswomen; and support mentoring opportunities for women.

Women's unremunerated work

267. The second national Survey of Voluntary Work was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics during 2000. Information was collected from people aged 18 years and over about voluntary work they had performed in the previous twelve months. A Time Use Survey was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1995 and published in 1996. The survey is expected to be repeated in 2005/2006. Four one year Time Use Research Fellowships have been funded to encourage and support original research using time use data from a gender perspective. Time use surveys are one of the best sources for information about unpaid work because of its quantity, its nature, and its distribution by gender and by social and economic factors. They are also the only reliable basis for estimating the monetary value of unpaid work. The Fellowships are designed to help overcome some of the barriers in using such complex data by providing researchers with the time and the access to the necessary support services to develop expertise in the analysis of time use data.

268. Australia participated in an OECD study to review estimations of unpaid work and the methodologies used in OECD countries. A review of the different national approaches was contained in the *Household production in OECD countries: data sources and measurement methods*.

Working women's centres

269. The Government provides funds for working women's centres in most States and Territories to help women understand their workplace rights and obligations and to access the benefits of the federal workplace relations system. The centres provide information and help with workplace issues, particularly for women who might have difficulty obtaining such assistance because of language, remoteness or other reasons.

Indigenous women

270. *Job Network* is a national network of nearly 200 private, community and government organisations that find jobs for unemployed people. Many of the organisations specialise in tailoring services to job seekers facing particular disadvantage, including women and Indigenous Australians. Between July 2001 and March 2002, over 9,100 Indigenous job seekers were placed in employment by *Job Network*. Almost 17,000 Indigenous job seekers commenced Intensive Assistance, a 21 per cent improvement on the same period for the previous year. Nearly 3,400 Intensive Assistance interim outcomes (generally representing 13 consecutive weeks of employment) were for Indigenous job seekers, a 93 per cent improvement on the number for the same period the previous year.

271. The *Indigenous Employment Programme* has effectively doubled the funding available for Indigenous specific programmes. It includes a range of initiatives such as: Wage Assistance; the *Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment Project*, *Structured Training and Employment Projects* and the *National Indigenous Cadetship Project*.

272. The *Business Development Programme* offers support to Indigenous Australians through assistance with the development of business plans and other services, providing grants and loans for small business enterprises, presenting small business workshops, and offering access to business facilitators for advice and mentoring.

273. The *Indigenous Small Business Fund* provides support for the development and expansion of Indigenous businesses and enterprises. The fund aims to enhance business prospects by supporting skills, development programmes, mentoring, networking, advisory services and market development (including export opportunities).

274. See also: *Australia's Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000) and Australia's Report on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination*.

Sole parents

275. The Government is very supportive of the valuable contribution made by parents in caring for and bringing up their children, and provides both financial assistance and support services for families. It recognises the special needs of single parents and targets extra assistance for these parents. Rates of Parenting Payment are higher and income tests more generous for single than partnered parents. In addition, lone parents are eligible for supplementary benefits.

276. The *Jobs, Education and Training Programme* provides assistance with skill development and the entry or re-entry of sole parents (and some other carers) to the workforce. The programme recognises that there are a number of barriers that can affect the ability of sole parents to join the paid workforce. It assesses and helps people overcome these barriers by providing structured assistance which includes the development of a plan to achieve labour market readiness, access to education, training and employment assistance, referrals to government and community services and child care assistance. In May 2001, the Government announced an investment of around \$250 million in increased support for Parenting Payment customers to help them prepare to return to work through a new initiative, *Helping Parents Return to Work*. This is in recognition of the difficulties many parents face returning to work after long periods on income support.

277. In 1999-2000, the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children received funding to undertake projects to assist single parent families and raise community awareness about their valuable contributions. Organisations around Australia developed promotional activities about single parent families' contributions to society. Measures to assist single parent families included: mentoring, leadership training, and development of practical strategies for information exchange and increased utilisation of work and educational opportunities at the local level.

AUSTRALIAN RESERVATIONS

Maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits

278. Since 1995, the Government has introduced legislative reforms and initiatives that relate to maternity leave. Women in Australia have access to a range of income support mechanisms, depending upon their circumstances. These include means tested social security benefits, and the *Maternity Allowance* (introduced in 1995), which is paid to families who are eligible for *Family Tax Benefit*, regardless of the woman's workforce participation prior to the birth of the baby. This payment assists with the direct and indirect costs associated with the birth of a child, and is designed to help compensate for income foregone as a result of the birth. In 2001, the Government also introduced the Baby Bonus, which enables parents

to claim up to one-fifth of the tax payable on their income earned in the year prior to the birth of their child (minimum and maximum entitlements apply) each year for up to five years. This payment is made in recognition of the loss of income that generally follows the arrival of a family's first child. Other forms of government funded assistance are also available to women in paid and unpaid work (for example, *Family Tax Benefit* and *Parenting Payment*).

279. The Australian approach is to provide conditions of employment through industrial awards and workplace agreements. This is in contrast to the situation overseas where paid maternity leave is provided through insurance schemes where contributions are made, usually by employees, employers and government. International insurance provisions are not comparable to the Australian social security arrangements.

280. See also paragraph 253 'Maternity leave'.

Women's employment in combat and combat-related duties

281. Australian Defence Force policy (1992) permits women in Australia to serve in all Australian Defence Force units except direct combat units. In 1997, the *Women in the Australian Defence Force* report examined women's employment in the defence force and identified strategies to further enhance recruitment and careers for women. In 1998, Australia conducted a review into the employment of women in combat and combat related positions. In 2000, Australia withdrew its CEDAW reservation on women's employment in combat related duties, so that women in Australia are able to serve in a number of combat related roles, like on 'C Class' submarines and F111 fighter jets. Australia's reservation on women's employment in combat units (such as infantry and armoured units) remains in force. The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* exempts the Australian Defence Forces from the operation of the Act so far as it relates to women being prohibited from serving in combat duties which are defined by the Sex Discrimination Regulations as 'duties requiring a person to commit, or participate directly in the commission of, an act of violence against an adversary in time of war.'

282. In 2000, the Department of Defence established a project team to examine and develop gender neutral employment competencies for combat employment categories. The competencies are to be developed before bringing forward proposals to open up further employment categories to women. The Department of Defence is currently preparing a report for the Defence Chiefs of Staff Committee.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

283. BusinessACT provides support and assistance to Canberra businesses, including women in business, and is committed to helping business grow locally, nationally and internationally. In particular, BusinessACT sponsors The Chamber of Women in Business and gives particular attention to business women in the provision of services and products offered through the ACT Government funded Canberra Business Advisory Service (CanBAS) – www.business.act.gov.au.

284. The *Equity and Diversity Framework for the ACT Public Service* provides a framework under which agencies can build and develop policies and plans for active future development of Equal Employment Opportunity. The Framework supports measures to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage and maternity, and ensures their right to work. It also incorporates local, national and international legislation and can be found at: www.psm.act.gov.au/psmg/corpstrat.htm.

285. The *Work and Life Balance Policy* (2001) established a ‘whole of government’ framework for government agencies to support balancing work and life in the public sector. The policy builds on the significant work already done in the ACT Public Service to provide flexible and responsive work practices for employees, including: personal leave which may be used for caring purposes; paid maternity leave; flexible working hours (including formal flextime schemes); parental and adoption leave; access to part time work and job sharing; and access to home based work. Individual government agencies are in the process of developing their own work and life balance plans.

NEW SOUTH WALES

286. The *Action Plan for Women* works to maximise the interests of women in microeconomic reform, including principles and methods for gender analysis of social programmes policy by Government Trading Enterprises. In June 2000, the NSW Industrial Relations Commission made a new *Equal Remuneration and Other Conditions* principle, that enables unions to seek variations to awards by establishing that the rates in an award are undervalued on a gender basis.

287. Models of good practice in work and family arrangements were developed, including the *Work and Family Strategy - Working Families, Working Futures* (1997,1998,1999). The Department for Women has worked closely with the Women’s Equity Bureau of the Department of Industrial Relations to review and refocus the *Work and Family Strategy*. The Strategy was released in 2001.

288. A *Jobs for Women Strategy* is being developed. It comprises: background information on employment trends and issues for women; an overview of the Government’s approach and activities on jobs for women (based on the Government’s employment policies and information collected from the Audit of Government Achievements for Women); the Department for Women’s initiatives around the State on jobs for women (including regional development and small business); and information technology initiatives (for business, for young women, and in the community sector).

289. A project was funded to build networks and increase awareness of employment rights amongst Vietnamese clothing outworkers. Work on the *Clothing Outworkers Strategy* has been ongoing. Some key new government measures to address exploitation of clothing outworkers announced in 2001 include: ensuring clothing retailers and manufacturers sign up to relevant industry codes of conduct within twelve months; establishing the Ethical Clothing Trades Council to make recommendations for additional areas to be covered by a mandatory code and reporting publicly on compliance; introducing legislation to ensure outworkers can recover unpaid remuneration from suppliers in the clothing production chain; tightening provisions in the *Industrial Relations Act 1996* on deeming of outworkers as employees to give additional protection; and retraining and reskilling outworkers to improve their access to other employment opportunities.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

290. The Government is strongly committed to supporting women who wish to take up opportunities to enter and remain in the workplace. A range of programmes and incentives are available to undertake training and study both within and external to the workplace. An emerging trend in the graduate entry programme is the increasing number of women employed as graduate trainees in previously male dominated areas. Of the 16 graduate trainees currently employed by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, for instance, 9 are women with backgrounds in science, architecture and civil engineering.

291. As an employer, the Government is committed to enhancing employees' ability to function in the workplace while balancing family and community responsibilities. In 2003, approximately 730 public sector employees (representing approximately 6 per cent of the permanent workforce) accessed flexible work options, with women in the majority. These options include part-time employment, home-based work, flexible working hours and job-sharing opportunities. Several agencies have established internal women's committees to act as advisory groups to senior management to ensure that issues affecting female employees are taken into account. Maternity leave provisions in the public sector are among the best within Australia public sectors. The terms and conditions apply to all female public sector employees and provide for paid leave for 12 weeks, followed by either 12 months or 6 year extended leave options.

292. Recognising that access to affordable, high quality child care is a significant issue for women in the workplace, the Government increased the weekly child care subsidy by \$7.50 per child. This brings the subsidy per child over 2 years to \$20.20, and to \$27.37 per child under 2 years.

QUEENSLAND

293. A wide range of measures have been introduced to support women's employment. Paid maternity leave of 6 weeks was introduced in 1996 for women working in the Queensland public sector. The *Women's Working Service* has been in operation since 1996 to provide information and referral for women on work related issues such as pay and conditions, superannuation, employment and training opportunities, childcare services, harassment and discrimination in the workplace and facilitates re-entry into the workforce.

294. The *Child Care Strategic Plan 2000 – 2005* is a 'whole of government' strategy that identifies a vision, priorities and directions for childcare. The *Child Care Hubs Strategy* is part of the Strategic Plan and responds to the express need of parents for improved access to services. The hubs focus on the provision of childcare and early childhood services, and may also include family support services, parenting support, child health services, community activities and education services.

295. A Work and Family Unit was established by the Department of Industrial Relations in July 2001. The Unit has responsibility for promoting the benefits of introducing family friendly work arrangements into Queensland workplaces. A Ministerial Taskforce on Women and Family was established in November 2001 to: review Queensland and Commonwealth legislation; examine the contents and recommendations of relevant reports, submissions and surveys; and develop a family friendly action plan. The Taskforce released an issues paper, held consultation forums with stakeholders and is expected to report to the Minister on a family friendly action plan for Queensland. A three-year partnership

arrangement was established between the Government and the University of Queensland to conduct a pilot programme to evaluate family friendly initiatives in workplaces. The Work and Family Awards are held annually to recognise family-friendly employers.

296. The Government introduced a work and family package giving casual employees access to unpaid parental, carer's and bereavement leave. This initiative will ensure freedom from discrimination for casual workers because of their family responsibilities.

297. The Workplace Bullying Taskforce was established in June 2001 to develop strategies to prevent bullying in the workplace. The Taskforce held forums around the State and invited verbal and written submissions from individuals and public and private organisations. The *Creating Safe and Fair Workplaces: Strategies to Address Workplace Harassment in Queensland* report was presented to the Government in April 2002.

298. The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission 2001 report, *Worth Valuing: a Report of the Pay Equity Inquiry* made recommendations including amendments to the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* and a draft equal remuneration principle for consideration. All the recommendations of the Queensland *Pay Equity Inquiry* were adopted and these came into force on 1 May 2002. Recommendations included: ensuring that awards and collective and individual agreements provide for equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal or comparable value; that for equal remuneration matters, "remuneration" has the meaning of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention (which includes pay rates and extends to other emoluments made by the employer); and that a full bench of the Commission make a general ruling at least once a year about a Queensland minimum wage for all employees (including those not covered by an industrial instrument).

299. An application for an Equal Remuneration principle consistent with that proposed by the Pay Equity Inquiry was made by the Queensland Council of Unions and adopted by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission on 29 April 2002, by consent of all the parties. It is expected that a pay equity claim under the principle will be made shortly. The first two cases to be lodged by the Queensland Council of Unions will be made initially on behalf of dental assistants and then librarians.

300. A *Code of Practice* was introduced in 2000 on employment and outwork obligations to protect outworkers from exploitation in the textile and footwear industries. Government agencies are requested to ensure their suppliers are observing the employment laws and suppliers are required to complete documentation to this effect.

301. Since 1996, programmes under the *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiative* have provided assistance for those either seeking to re-enter the workforce or to access more structured vocational training or further education. Target groups include women who are geographically isolated, those from Indigenous and ethnic backgrounds, women from rural areas, and women with specific access needs. Programmes include: *Community Jobs Plan*; *Community Employment Assistance Programme*; *Back to Work Programme*; *Get Set for Work Programme*; and *Experience Pays Programme*. *Wider Opportunities for Women* aims to heighten the knowledge of female students, parents, educators and employers about the opportunities, options and pathways provided through VET. The programme promotes to employers the advantages of employing females in non-traditional occupations. Programmes are being implemented

under the *IT&T Skills in the Smart State* strategy to address women's under-representation in Information Technology industries.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

302. Under the *Public Sector Management Act 1995*, agencies must ensure that employees are afforded equal opportunities to secure promotion and advancement in their employment. The proportion of women employed in the South Australian public sector has increased steadily since June 1985. At June 2000, women comprised 62.1 per cent of the public sector workforce. Women's representation varies significantly between employee types and continues to reflect traditional employment patterns for men and women. Programmes have been established to specifically provide women with employment opportunities in non-traditional occupational areas, development opportunities and leadership training.

303. The Commissioner for Public Employment established a *Strategic Human Resource Management Framework* which provides guidance to agencies on appropriate human resource policies and practices. The Framework reflects longstanding requirements for equity and equal opportunity and recognises that the diversity of the public sector is a major asset. The Government endorsed a *Managing Diversity* approach which requires all agencies to ensure that their activities acknowledge and provide for diversity. The Commissioner issued an initiative, *People Mean Business - Managing Diversity in the South Australian Public Sector* targeting executives and senior managers. Modules to facilitate implementation include *Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities* and *Introducing Flexible Working Arrangements*.

304. Conditions of employment for public sector employees are being reviewed to enable employees to achieve a balance between work and life. Enterprise agreements currently enable employees to access sick leave for the care of family members. The Commissioner is reviewing other leave entitlements to assist employees to meet their individual needs and responsibilities. Many enterprise agreements now include 2 weeks paid maternity leave, in addition to the existing entitlement to 52 weeks unpaid parental leave.

305. The Commissioner issued a determination on *Voluntary Flexible Working Arrangements* which requires agencies to implement flexible working arrangements, which can include purchased leave, flexible hours, compressed weeks, part time and job share, and working from home. These arrangements are designed to make the public sector more family-friendly.

306. Work and family practices are promoted through a variety of promotional activities which aim to raise awareness of benefits for the workplace. The *Balancing Work and Family* booklet was reprinted in 2000 and distributed widely. The number of enterprise agreements with family friendly provisions has increased steadily. The *Work and Family Programme* provides assistance to Transport SA employees when balancing their work and family lives. Initiatives include flexible working options for employees with family responsibilities, a Vacation Care programme for children and a referral service which is available to employees who require family support.

307. In 1995, Augusta Zadow became the first female Inspector of Factories in South Australia. She played a crucial role in securing better working conditions for employees in factories, particularly for women and minors. In recognition of her pioneering work, an annual award formally recognises

excellence in addressing and/or implementing health and safety solutions in the workplace. A special award is offered for any demonstrated improvement in health and safety that provides particular outcomes for women in the workplace.

308. WorkCover Corporation is committed to ensuring that its services are delivered in an accessible and equitable manner to all South Australians. The Corporation has an *Access and Equity Programme* which has a focus on women, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, and Indigenous people. It meets regularly with key organisations that represent these four target groups. Forty organisations make up the focus groups that are the consultative structures for working collaboratively with each sector.

309. The Women's Sector Focus Group comprises the Office for the Status of Women, the Working Women's Centre, the United Trades and Labour Council, Business SA, Office of the Employee Ombudsman, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and WorkCover Corporation Access & Equity Consultants. The Group held a workshop during *Health and Safety Week 1999*. *Workplace Bullying and Harassment* was launched for the *Workplace Health and Safety Training Resource Kit*. The workshop provided a forum for information exchange on issues relating to women and occupational health and safety and injury management. In 2000, the Group organised a *Forum for Advocates* on workplace bullying and harassment.

310. The Working Women's Centre obtained a grant to pilot a project with employers and group training schemes. The pilot aims to develop, implement and evaluate policies, procedures and workplace systems to appropriately address bullying and harassment at work.

311. The *Women in Industry Programme* provides a network for women currently working in the manufacturing industry. Network members undertake speaking engagements at schools to encourage young women to consider manufacturing as a career option.

312. The Department for Industry and Trade, in conjunction with the Asia-Pacific Business Council for Women Inc. held an *E-Commerce for Business Women* workshop in June 2001. The workshop provided information on business transformation utilising new technologies and networking opportunities for women in business. A network has been established to encourage women to participate in small business training.

313. A series of financial checklists have been produced on obtaining finance, superannuation and budgeting. Several of these are specifically for women such as *Considerations for Women in the Event of a Death* and *Financial Issues to Consider at the End of a Relationship*. The *More Than Pin Money – Issues of Women's Financial Independence* report was released in 1999.

314. The Working Women's Centre provides free and confidential services to women experiencing problems at work such as dismissal, redundancy, harassment, employment conditions and workers' compensation. The Centre recently released a comprehensive response to workplace bullying.

TASMANIA

315. A report entitled *Women in Small Business - A Tasmanian Perspective 1996* was produced by the Tasmanian Women's Consultative Council as its major consultative project for 1995-96. The Council consulted with Tasmanian women owners of small businesses in order to gather data on the numbers and types of businesses that women operate in Tasmania; the issues and concerns of women operating small businesses; and the factors in successful small businesses. The report recommended that the Government sponsor the development of local networks for women in small business. Subsequently in 1997, the Women into Self Employment network was launched. By the end of 1997, 14 groups had been established, involving approximately 2000 business women state wide.

316. A programme has been established which targets women operating small businesses or in key management roles in small businesses. The programme provides: a mentoring service for women in business; promotion of role models for women in business; flexible and accessible services which support rural business women; access to financial and business management training; support and promotion of women's networks; assistance in the formative stages of business development; and access to training in business management for women operating or in key management roles in small businesses. The programme reflects the recommendations of the Women in Small Business report, which addressed the low usage rates of government business assistance services by women in small business, and identified a need for coordination of business assistance services; and easier access to business assistance services for owners/operators of small businesses.

317. The Working Women's Centre provides assistance to women in Tasmania who are seeking work and also to those who are already in the workforce. Some of the specific problems that it addresses are related to: enterprise bargaining, job security, rights and entitlements at work, flexible working arrangements, employment discrimination, entry and re-entry into the workforce, child care, superannuation and self-employment.

VICTORIA

318. The Government is committed to enhancing women's economic independence across all stages of life, including women's equal pay for work of equal value, and to ensuring that their economic position after retirement is safeguarded. The Government will seek to promote adequate superannuation for women as an important aspect of economic independence. The Government also recognises that women contribute and participate in both the paid and unpaid workforce. A project regarding the contribution made by women to society and the economy through their unpaid and volunteer work in the community will be undertaken to assist the broader community to recognise and value this contribution.

319. The Victorian Equal Opportunity legislation protects women from discrimination at work, sexual harassment in the workplace, and discrimination in the provision of goods and services.

320. A number of initiatives directed at working women include: a *Women's Resource Policy Unit* established within the Department of State and Regional Development; a *Women in Business Mentoring Pilot Programme*; *Rural Women's Business Entrepreneur Support Scheme*; and a home-based business strategy. *The Work and Family Report: Business versus Bath-time* was released in October 2000. The report examines: the types of family-friendly policies and practices which are available in public and

private industry sectors, and issues facing women (and men) in the workplace when accessing an organisation's family-friendly policies. The report is available from the Office of Women's Policy web site at www.women.vic.gov.au

321. A project on measures to assist women to balance work, family and life commitments is currently being undertaken by the Office of Women's Policy. Work and family issues was the focus of the Third Annual Victorian Women's Summit that was held in July 2002.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

322. The Government is currently addressing some of the severe disadvantages experienced by women in relation to pay and employment conditions. Emphasis in new industrial relations legislation currently before Parliament is on collective bargaining rather than individual bargaining which will assist women to negotiate more favourable employment agreements. The legislation includes a new principle of 'equal remuneration for men and women, for work of equal value'. State wage provisions are also changing to allow the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission to vary the Federal wage fixing principles. This will assist with the establishment of an equal remuneration principle as part of the 2003 state wage case. The Government is also supporting and promoting paid parental leave within the WA public sector and a national scheme covering all women.

ARTICLE 12: Equality in access to health care

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

323. The Government provides leadership and coordination of national population health initiatives. Funding for some of the population health activity is provided to the States and Territories by the Commonwealth through the Public Health Outcome Funding Agreements (PHOFAs). These Agreements allow flexible arrangements with States and Territories and facilitate integration and coordination at the service delivery level, including a range of women's health services.

324. One of the programmes covered by the PHOFAs is the *National Women's Health Programme*, which identifies seven priority health issues for women. These include: reproductive health and sexuality; health of ageing women (including menopause); women's emotional and mental health; violence against women; occupational health and safety; the health needs of women as carers; and the health effects of sex role stereotyping. Other programmes covered by the PHOFAs are: *BreastScreen Australia*; the *National Cervical Screening Programme*; the *National Education Programme on Female Genital Mutilation*; *Alternative Birthing Services*; the *National Drug Strategy*; and the *National HIV/AIDS Strategy*. (These are discussed in further detail below.)

Life expectancy and mortality

325. Most Australian women can expect to live relatively long and healthy lives. Life expectancy at birth in Australia was 82.4 years for females, compared to 77 years for males (data for 1999-2001), although this is not uniform across population groups.

326. The leading causes of mortality for Australian women are cardiovascular disease and cancer. These have been identified for priority action under the *National Health Priority Areas Initiative*, which seeks to focus health policy on those areas that are known to contribute significantly to the burden of disease in Australia and for which there is potential for health gain.

Cardiovascular disease

327. Cardiovascular disease is one of six National Health Priority areas and is being addressed through the *National Health Priority Areas Initiative*. The work being undertaken through this initiative encompasses the care continuum including prevention, early intervention, best practice care and rehabilitation. Actions will particularly focus on populations from lower socio-economic groups, Indigenous peoples, and rural communities. A National Centre for Monitoring Cardiovascular Disease has been established to report on trends in cardiovascular disease mortality, investigate risk factors and report on strategies to reduce mortality from cardiovascular disease in Australia.

Cancer

328. Eight cancers have been targeted for priority action under the *National Health Priority Areas Initiative*, including breast cancer and cervical cancer.

329. Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death among women in Australia and since 1995, the Government has continued to provide substantial funding for breast cancer screening, research and support services. In addition, there has been a pronounced decline in the number of deaths from breast cancer as a result of research and screening programmes. Australia's national screening programme, *BreastScreen Australia*, aims to achieve significant reductions in mortality and morbidity from breast cancer through early detection of the disease. *BreastScreen Australia* provides free screening and assessment services at two-yearly intervals to women aged 50-69. Women over 40 and over 70 years are also eligible for screening. Screening services are provided in a manner that is acceptable to women in the target age group, and are conducted in accessible, non-threatening and comfortable environments. Approximately 57,000 women are screened across Australia each month. The population of women over 50 who undergo screening every two years have a 50 per cent reduced risk of dying from breast cancer.

330. The *Strengthening Support for Women with Breast Cancer* initiative was introduced in 1999 to fund specialised support services (over four years) for women diagnosed with breast cancer. The programme targets women in regional areas who face barriers to accessing treatment options and support services due to geographic isolation.

331. The National Breast Cancer Centre was established in 1995 to improve breast cancer control by analysing research, developing a national monitoring system, developing and disseminating clinical guidelines on the treatment of breast cancer, and providing accessible information about breast cancer. The Centre aims to foster an evidence based approach to the diagnosis, treatment and support of women with breast cancer, ensuring that research findings are rapidly translated into practice.

332. The *National Cervical Screening Programme* seeks to reduce morbidity and mortality from cervical cancer by biennial screening of all at risk women aged between 18 and 70 years. The national coordinated approach seeks to integrate all elements of the cervical screening programme including recruitment, Pap smear taking and reporting, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up procedures. Recruitment strategies for the programme include national media campaigns supported by activities in the States and Territories, working in partnership with general practitioners, Indigenous health strategies, multilingual campaigns and working with female nurse practitioners and other health workers to ensure that all women in the target group can access the programme.

333. In 2001, the Government committed further funding to provide incentives for general practitioners to increase the rates of participation in the *National Cervical Screening Programme*. This initiative targets older women in rural and remote areas and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, who have participated in the programme at lower rates and have higher morbidity and mortality from cervical cancer.

334. In 2000, the Government provided funding to support the development of research into ovarian cancer. The funding will be used both to raise public support for ovarian cancer research and to sponsor collaborative scientific research to develop an effective early detection test. Additional funding for ovarian cancer research has been allocated through the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Nutrition

335. The national public health nutrition strategy, *Eat Well Australia 2000-2010*, was endorsed by Health Ministers in August 2001. It aims to improve the nutrition of Australians and focuses on maternal and child nutrition and vulnerable groups especially Indigenous Australians, people of low socio-economic status, and people living in rural and remote areas.

336. Since 1995, several initiatives have been funded to improve the nutrition of women. A national strategy promoting and supporting breastfeeding was funded between 1996 and 2001. The *National Child Nutrition Programme* running from 2000 to 2004 aims to improve the diets of children aged 0-12 and pregnant women, especially Indigenous, rural and remote and socio-economically disadvantaged women. In addition, a number of healthy eating guidelines have been produced that are especially relevant to women such as: the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*; *Dietary Guidelines for Australians*; *Dietary Guidelines for Children & Adolescents*; and *Dietary Guidelines for Older Australians*. The guidelines are promoted and disseminated widely to health professionals and the wider community.

Family planning

337. The Government provides leadership and coordination of national population health initiatives. Funding for some of the population health activity is provided to the States and Territories by the Commonwealth through the Public Health Outcome Funding Agreements. These Agreements allow flexible arrangements with States and Territories and facilitate integration and coordination at the service delivery level, including a range of women's health services. Other population health activity is funded directly from the Commonwealth including to community and non-government organisations. For sexual and reproductive health, \$16.3 million per annum is provided directly to non-government agencies under the Family Planning Programme and indirectly to family planning agencies under the Public Health Outcome Funding Agreements.

338. Under the *Family Planning Programme*, the Government contributes funding to specialist non-government organisations to provide a comprehensive range of information, education, professional training, counselling and clinical services in sexual and reproductive health to the Australian community. Family planning organisations located around Australia provide a range of clinical services by doctors and nurses in sexual and reproductive health. These services include advice and prescription/fitting of a range of contraception options, pregnancy testing, vasectomies and counselling services. These organisations also provide accredited and non-accredited training for doctors and nurses, community education, library services and telephone services.

339. Further choice is offered through the Australian Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church which administers the Natural Family Planning Programme, providing services in 130 centres located across Australia. Training and accreditation for teachers of natural family planning are obtained through the Australian Council of Natural Family Planning or the Ovulation Method Research and Reference Centre of Australia. Another avenue available for many Australian men and women is to visit private general practitioners for sexual and reproductive health advice and prescription of contraceptives. These services are eligible for rebate under Medicare. Modern contraception is available and affordable for all Australians.

340. The Government recognises the need to provide safe, affordable and easily accessible family planning services to minimise abortion rates. The legal status of abortion in Australia is governed by State and Territory laws. In general, women in Australia have access to abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy when a medical practitioner is satisfied that the continuation of the pregnancy will result in physical or mental harm to the woman. The consent of the woman is required in all cases. Some States and Territories also require the consent of two physicians or that abortion is performed in prescribed hospitals only. Women who are financially disadvantaged have equal access to termination of pregnancy services.

Female genital mutilation

341. The Government provides funding to States and Territories for educational activities to prevent the practice of FGM in Australia and to assist those women and girls who have undergone the practice. The Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has developed a booklet, *Female Genital Mutilation: Information for Australian Health Professionals*, for medical practitioners and health professionals providing services to women and girls who have undergone or are at risk of female genital mutilation. The College has also developed related curriculum materials.

Sterilisation of women/girls with disabilities

342. The Government recognises that illegal sterilisation is an extremely serious matter which constitutes a violation of women's human rights. Under Australian law, non-therapeutic sterilisation of an intellectually disabled minor cannot be authorised without a court order.

343. In 1997, HREOC commissioned a report examining the legal, medical and social issues surrounding the sterilisation of girls and young women with a disability in Australia. The report identified a number of possible ways to protect the human rights and well-being of girls with a disability.

344. In November 1998, the Government amended the *Medicare Benefits Schedule* to draw medical practitioners' attention to the illegality of performing procedures resulting in the sterilisation of a minor without the consent of the Family Court of Australia, or a court or tribunal with the appropriate jurisdiction, unless the sterilisation occurred as an unavoidable consequence of surgery carried out to treat malfunction or disease.

345. In March 2000, a motion was passed in the Senate that called on the Government to: conduct a review of the legal, ethical and human rights mechanisms in place, or needed, to protect the rights and interests of the reproductive health of women with intellectual and other disabilities; and commission research on the practice, effect and implications of the sterilisation of women with intellectual and other disabilities. The then Minister for Family and Community Services, Jocelyn Newman, undertook to report to the Senate on the issues raised in this motion. The final report, entitled *Sterilisation of Women and Young Girls with an Intellectual Disability*, was tabled in the Senate on 6 December 2000. The report covered background issues, provided recent statistics on sterilisation procedures, and detailed a cross-departmental response to the Senate's calls for the above review and research.

346. The Attorney-General approved revised *Commonwealth Priorities and Guidelines for Legal Assistance in Respect of Matters Arising Under Commonwealth Law*, which came into effect on 1 July 2000. The Guidelines reflect the Government's policy of encouraging parents to act lawfully by seeking a court order for special medical procedures, such as sterilisation, by making legal aid more accessible and clarifying who is eligible. The Guidelines also provide that legal assistance should be granted for the separate representation of a child in any court case relating to special medical procedures such as sterilisation. The means test is not applied in such cases, and a Legal Aid Commission must not try to recover any of the costs for the child's representative from the child's parents, whether they are legally assisted or not. In addition, legal aid must be provided to the parents of a child in any court case relating to special medical procedures (including sterilisation), where the parents meet the means test.

347. The Attorney-General wrote to Australian medical colleges and associations to inform them of the law and procedure surrounding the non-therapeutic sterilisation of minors with an intellectual disability. An open version of this letter was provided to selected Australian medical journals for publication and has been posted on the Internet.

348. In April 2001, HREOC released a report it had commissioned titled *The Sterilisation of Girls and Young Women: Issues and Progress*. The report analysed court and tribunal files and provided information concerning the services and support programmes provided to children and families who applied for sterilisation procedures. The report found that since 1997, 'there appears to have been marked progress in the area of disability service providers' education and skills development relating to menstrual management programmes and parent education'. Special Medical Procedure Protocols have been developed for the Family Court in Queensland and Victoria, and are currently being negotiated in both NSW and South Australia. These protocols seek to ensure collaboration between the court and other key agencies in order that sterilisation applications proceed to court only after less invasive alternatives have been considered.

349. The Attorney-General's Department consulted the Family Court and Federal Magistrates Service whether procedures relating to sterilisation applications could be simplified. Family Planning Organisations in most States and Territories offer sex education tailored for the special needs of children with disabilities. These included one-on-one consultations; workshops for people with an intellectual disability, their parents or guardians, doctors, nurses, other health professionals, teachers, or disability workers; and information/fact sheets. The issues covered included menstrual management advice; alternative contraception options; the necessity for safe sex practices (regardless of sterilisation); legal processes (for example, obtaining consent to or seeking authorisation for sterilisations); and referrals.

350. In October 2001, the Attorney-General's Department convened a forum which focussed on the recommendations made in the 2001 HREOC report to identify options for action on the issue of non-therapeutic sterilisation of intellectually disabled minors. Forum participants included representatives from State and Territory Government departments, the Family Court, the Federal Magistrates Service, OSW, the Office of Disability in the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Health and Aged Care, and the co-author of the report. Topics covered included education and information strategies, jurisdictional issues and options, review of the Medicare Benefits Schedule, and methods of data collection. Action is underway to progress the outcomes of the forum.

351. A report by Women With Disabilities (Australia), funded by OSW outlining research on the sterilisation and reproductive health of women and girls with disabilities was released in October 2001.

HIV/AIDS

352. All Australian governments and the community and health sectors recognise the importance of working to stem the incidence of HIV/AIDS in women. In 2001, the annual number of new diagnoses of HIV in Australia was 774, of which 94 were women. Cumulative to the end of 2001 there have been 1,349 new diagnoses of HIV in women in Australia.

Mental health

353. Through the *National Mental Health Strategy*, the Government and State and Territory Governments have jointly endorsed a national framework for mental health reform. The Strategy aims to promote the mental health of the Australian community, reduce the impact of mental disorders and assure the rights of people with mental illness. It includes a focus on the particular mental health requirements of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Indigenous people, remote and rural people, older people, women, children and adolescents.

Depression

354. Depression, including postnatal depression, is a leading cause of illness and disability among women, and is a priority under the *National Mental Health Strategy*. The *National Depression Initiative*, launched in March 2000, aims to promote community awareness and understanding of depression, promote professional training and development, and support research into prevention, treatment and management approaches. The work of the *National Depression Initiative* is now being carried forward. This takes its direction from the *National Action Plan for Depression* but is set up as an independent company that can work in new, collaborative ways and set a clear national direction for depression-related activity.

Eating disorders

355. Eating disorders are a health issue of particular concern for young women. The *National Mental Health Strategy* recognises eating disorders as an important area for development and research. In 1997, the Government provided funding to publish the proceedings of the first Australasian body image and eating disorders conference. The report, *Challenge the Body Culture: an Exploration of Body Image and Disordered Eating Issues*, was completed in 1998. Funding was provided under the *National Mental Health Strategy* to produce a book, *The Encultured Body: Policy Implications of Disordered Eating*, published in 2000, which is intended as a resource for people working in the area of body image and eating disorders.

Youth suicide

356. While suicide is not a major cause of death of Australian women, it is a significant problem and issue for many women. Suicide is a significant cause of death for females in the younger age groups (12-24

years) and females have had higher hospitalisation rates for self-inflicted injuries than their male counterparts over a number of years. In addition, youth suicide is a major issue for families.

357. In May 1997, the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Community Affairs released a report on *Aspects of Youth Suicide*. The report addressed issues such as the prevalence of suicide in rural areas and amongst Indigenous people, the increased rate of suicides, unemployment, family stress, access to firearms and the need for additional mental health and counselling services.

358. From 1995 to 1999, the Government funded and administered the *National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy*. The Strategy aimed to prevent premature death from suicide among young people, to reduce rates of injury, self-harm and suicidal behaviour, and to enhance resilience among young people, their families and communities. Funding was allocated to national demonstration projects to develop, trial and evaluate 'best practice' approaches to suicide prevention for groups of young people at the highest risk and to integrate these into youth suicide prevention services and support for parents. The Strategy also provided funding for rural and remote counselling services.

359. In 1999, the national *Fighting Suicide Strategy* was funded to build on the *National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy*, including continued funding for the community-based tele-counselling services Kids Help Line and Lifeline. A priority area for action under the strategy is support for rural and remote Indigenous communities that have a high incidence of suicide. A web-based service, *Reach Out!*, was established to assist young people going through difficult times (www.reachout.asn.au/home.asp).

Smoking

360. Australia's *National Tobacco Strategy 1999 to 2002-03* recognises that certain groups are at particular risk of harm from tobacco, including Indigenous people, young people, and pregnant women and their partners. It specifically seeks to address the issue of smoking and pregnancy by developing best practice guidelines regarding smoking and pregnancy for health professionals and identifying and developing strategies to overcome the factors that may prevent pregnant women from accessing nicotine replacement therapies.

Alcohol

361. Australia has developed a *National Alcohol Strategy* to provide national direction for minimising the consequences of alcohol-related harm. The *National Alcohol Strategy* forms part of national action that has been under way for a number of years to reduce the harm caused by drugs in Australia, including mortality, morbidity and violence (including domestic violence). It contains strategies for high risk groups such as young people, Indigenous people and pregnant women.

Illicit drugs

362. Under the *National Illicit Drugs Strategy*, funding has been allocated for the *Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Programme*. Women, and women with children are identified as priority groups under this programme. Funding is being provided for 133 non-government services across Australia, of which 22 services target women and/or women with children. These services provide a range

of education, counselling, rehabilitation and other types of support to women and families affected by illicit drug use. In the May 2002 Budget, \$61.6 million was allocated to continue the *NGO Treatment Grants Programme*.

363. Other key initiatives include: the Council of Australian Governments Agreed Measures for Drugs in Schools; the National Framework for Protocols for Managing the Possession, Use and/or Distribution of Illicit and Other Unsanctioned Drugs in Schools. Key measures currently being progressed under this initiative include *Local School-Community Drug Summits* and the *School Drug Education Information*; the National School Drug Education Strategy; a community education and information strategy comprising two key components: a strategy to meet the needs of parents, carers and the broader community and to enhance parents' and carers' skills in communicating with children about illicit drugs to deter the initiation or continuation; and targeted strategies to reach youth.

Women in sport

364. The Government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Australian women by encouraging the involvement of all women in sport, recreation and physical activity. See Article 13 on Australia's policy on women in sport and the issue of pregnant women in sport.

National Health and Medical Research Council

365. The National Health and Medical Research Council is funded to undertake a wide range of medical research aimed at improving the health of all Australians. In 1999, the Government announced a significant funding boost for health and medical research over the next six years. The Council has provided funding for numerous research projects in women's health. In 1999, for example, it provided funding for 135 research projects and training grants specifically related to women's health. This research covered a number of identified high priority areas in women's health including breast cancer and physical activity. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Agenda Working Group within the Council targets health research relevant to the specific needs of Indigenous people.

Longitudinal study on women's health

366. The *Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health*, known as the Women's Health Australia Study, commenced in June 1995 as an initiative of the *National Women's Health Policy*. About 40,000 women are involved in the study, which follows their individual experience of health and wellbeing while considering social, economic and psychosocial factors that influence health, and how to address health needs. The study is designed to run for at least 20 years. Results of analyses are published and provide guidance for health policy and programme development.

Jean Hailes Foundation

367. The Government began funding the Jean Hailes Foundation in 1997 to support the Foundation's integrated model of improving women's health in Australia. The aim of the Foundation is to link clinical practice and research with community and professional education so that knowledge gained from innovative research is translated into strategies that will help prevent illness, improve treatment and enhance well being for women. Menopause, hormone replacement therapy, cardiovascular disease in

women, pre-menstrual syndrome and osteoporosis are some of the areas of education and research conducted by the Foundation. The Foundation conducts a national education programme comprising evening community seminars and one day training programmes for general practitioners.

Women in leadership and decision-making

368. Australia hosted the World Health Organisation Centre for Health Development (WHO Kobe Centre) Second International Meeting on Women and Health. The meeting was held in Canberra in April 2001 and attended by more than 50 women academics, health practitioners, policy makers and government officials from 16 countries. The meeting focused on maximising women's capacities and leadership in the health system, and produced a statement calling for governments to support leadership development for women and to facilitate the integration of women's perspectives into decision-making at all levels.

369. In 2000 and 2001, OSW funded several non-government organisations to undertake projects aimed at increasing women's input into decision-making in the health sector. The Breast Cancer Network of Australia was funded to develop a national strategy to increase the representation of women with breast cancer as effective consumer representatives in policy and decision-making about the disease. The Older Women's Network was funded to undertake a project to investigate ways to empower older women to participate in decision-making in their communities and to support older women in maintaining a positive self image and healthy lifestyle.

Indigenous women

370. The Government is providing funding to improve Indigenous peoples' access to comprehensive primary health care services. This provides for coordinated clinical care, population health, and health promotion activities including screening, antenatal services and maternal and child health, to facilitate illness prevention, early interventions and effective illness management. Efforts to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity among Indigenous women have included the establishment of culturally appropriate birthing centres (which also provide prenatal care), antenatal care programmes, the training of Indigenous health workers, and a network of community-controlled primary health care services at the local level.

371. The Jean Hailes Foundation is working with Indigenous leaders in Victoria and Western Australia to research health concerns for Indigenous women living in remote communities. Research topics include the prevalence of menstrual disorders and polycystic ovarian syndrome in Indigenous women, and an educational approach to the prevention and management of diabetes among Indigenous women. An education programme called *You gotta look after yourself* has been developed with Indigenous women in the Kimberly region of Western Australia. Resources produced by the programme include two booklets and a video, which present culturally relevant health information focusing on the benefits of healthy diet and lifestyle patterns.

372. See also: *Australia's Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000)* and *Australia's Report on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*.

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

373. Family Planning Organisations, as part of their public education work, undertake community outreach for culturally diverse communities. Working Women's Health Incorporated is funded by the *Family Planning Programme* to provide health promotion activity in sexual and reproductive health for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and who work in factories or are industry outworkers in Victoria.

374. The *Women's Health Australia* study, which aims to identify those factors that promote and those that reduce good health for women, has completed two sub-studies of smaller cohorts of women from the Philippines and newly arrived immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics.

Women in rural and regional areas

375. There are a range of programmes and initiatives across the health portfolio with relevance to women in rural and remote areas. The *Rural Women's General Practitioner Service*, formally launched in March 2000, aims to improve access to primary and secondary health services for women in rural Australia who currently have little or no access to a female general practitioner. In the 2001-02 Budget, further funding was provided to improve access to medical services for patients in rural areas by providing support for general practices to employ practice nurses.

376. Additionally, there are a number of programmes and initiatives designed to provide rural women with improved access to primary and secondary health services by supporting the rural nursing workforce. These include: the *Australian Remote and Rural Scholarship Scheme*; support provided to the Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia for first-line emergency care courses to remote area nurses and the provision of crisis counselling for isolated health workers and their families through the Bush Crisis Line; and the *National Rural and Remote Midwifery Up-skilling Programme*. In the 2001-02 Budget, the Government provided funding for four years to improve access to undergraduate nursing education for rural and regional students.

Older women

377. In the 1999-00 Budget, the Government put in place the *Enhanced Primary Care Package* designed to assist people with complex care needs (many of whom are older Australians) by supporting: earlier identification of health problems for older Australians through rebates for annual health assessments; GP involvement in planning care with other medical and non-medical care providers by offering Medicare rebates for care planning and case conferencing, and developing professional education to help GPs put them into practice; further trials of care coordination and more integrated approaches to providing services to test new improved approaches to care; programmes to enable people with chronic conditions to get information about their condition and to share experiences with others who have similar conditions; and further research and development into new uses of information technology to support improved care through the exchange of data between health care providers.

378. A *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia* is being developed to provide a long-term, 'whole-of-government' approach to the ageing of the population. The Strategy will develop four major themes:

independence and self-provision; world class care; attitude, lifestyle and community support; and healthy ageing. It will provide a framework to address the issues of an ageing population into the future.

379. As noted in Article 7, the Government has developed new legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of age. The legislation balances the need to eliminate unfair discrimination on the basis of age with the need to ensure sufficient flexibility to allow for situations where age requirements have particular policy significance. To achieve this balance, the Government has consulted a wide range of business and community organisations, including those representing older women.

Women with disabilities

380. Women With Disabilities Australia was allocated funding through the *National Women's NGO Funding Programme* in 2000-01 to conduct a project on sterilisation and reproductive health of women with disabilities.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

381. The terms of reference of the ACT Legislative Assembly Select Committee on the Status of Women specifically include a review of the differential impact of government programmes on women's 'access to support of healthy lifestyles'. This Committee reported on its findings in November 2002.

382. The Government continues to provide health and well being services for women. These include: *Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Programmes*; services for migrant women through the Migrant Health Service; prevention and education programme on female genital mutilation; *Canberra Midwifery Programme*; *Women's Words*, an affordable non-crisis counselling service for women by women; Canberra Rape Crisis Centre; Indigenous community development, support and education on sexual assault; Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care; *Aboriginal Midwifery Access Programme* and alternative birthing options for Indigenous women; *Well Babies Programme*, a health promotion and prevention programme targeting socially disadvantaged women; and Women's Health Service, a community development and support service for women affected by violence. The Government also purchases services from non-government organisations including: the Women's Centre for Health Matters – community information and resource centre; Family Planning ACT, sexual and reproductive health services; Karinya House for Mothers and Babies (support and short term accommodation for homeless women); and young mothers group.

NEW SOUTH WALES

383. The *Action Plan for Women (2000 - 2002)* addresses women's health and quality of life, within the framework of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. NSW Health funds services through the *National Women's Health Programme*, and has developed the *NSW Strategic Framework to Advance the Health of Women* which provides guiding principles for women's health policy and practice that all health workers can use. The Framework focuses on incorporating a gendered approach to health, working in collaboration with others to address the social determinants of health, advancing research on women's

health experience and applying a health outcomes approach. NSW Health also ensures that health information and services reach women from non-English speaking backgrounds.

384. The *Framework for Maternity Services 2000* provides a five-year framework to ensure maternity services are flexible and responsive to all women. Additional funding has been provided to improve obstetric, maternal and child health services across NSW. To improve the health of Indigenous women and their babies, six Area Health Services will be working on community based outreach programmes to increase Indigenous women's attendance at antenatal care, improve identification and management of high risk pregnancies and strengthen support for teenage mothers.

385. FPA Health, an organisation funded by Commonwealth and NSW Governments, provides women with current information on HIV/AIDS. Fact sheets, training of women's health workers and educational and support networks have been provided. The fact sheets have been translated into six community languages (Arabic, Thai, Khmer, Vietnamese, Spanish and Chinese) to provide women from non-English speaking backgrounds with relevant and culturally sensitive information.

386. An information paper was produced on depression and risk taking behaviour among young women. An overview of government and community activity to address some of these issues was provided, including approaches to prevent poor body image and disordered eating.

387. Women are identified as a target group in *Simply Active Everyday: A plan to promote physical activity in NSW 1998-2002*. In addition, the *NSW State Plan for Women in Sport and Recreation 1999-2002* aims to improve the participation of women and girls in sport, recreation and physical activity at all levels and in all capacities.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

388. Women employed as Indigenous health workers, nurses, allied health staff and doctors play a significant role in the provision of primary health care service delivery to remote Indigenous communities. Some centres' health workers have worked with Indigenous organisations to ensure that women have access to their traditional birthing and post-natal practices within hospitals. A pilot 'shared care' programme between Katherine Hospital and a local Aboriginal Health Service has been instituted.

389. In Darwin, two houses have been made available as a Hospital Accommodation Service. These are in close proximity to hospitals and provide affordable short-term accommodation for women and their families from rural and remote areas. The houses can be accessed by those with sick children, with partners in hospital, those requiring assessment and/or procedures, or women awaiting the birth of their baby.

390. Free mammogram screening and assessment centres have been established for Territory women over the age of 50 years, and a mobile screening unit makes annual visits to some major centres for the early detection of breast cancer.

QUEENSLAND

391. Health services for women and girls are provided across the government, non-government and private sectors, including general practitioners to address a range of reproductive health issues including management of menstruation, fertility, safe sex practices, contraception, abortion, infertility, childbirth, breast feeding, sexually transmitted diseases, diseases of the reproductive organs and menopause.

392. The *Queensland Health Strategic Plan 2000-2010* identifies Queensland Health's mission as Helping People to Better Health and Well-Being. Gender-based approaches are an integral part of this task in the three strategic priority areas: Addressing the Burden of Disease, Improving Indigenous Health and Balancing Our Investment in Health.

393. Queensland Health is increasingly focusing on innovative services and approaches for children and young people and their families. Some of these initiatives include: the *Domestic Violence Initiative* which aims to enhance the capacity of the health system to provide more accurate diagnosis and appropriate response to women and children who experience domestic violence; the *Early Intervention for Safe and Healthy Families Initiative* which integrates the *Domestic Violence Initiative* with the *Family CARE Home Visiting Programme*; the *Young Parents Support Programme* which provides services, including home visits, for young pregnant women identified at risk of domestic violence or abuse; the *Positive Parenting Programme* (Triple P), which aims to provide more specific health care, guidance and support for families with children with behavioural problems; and the *Health Promoting Schools* programme which aims to create environments that support the health and welfare of the whole school community.

394. Queensland Health funds eight Women's Health Centres and two networks (Older Women's and Queensland Women's Health Networks) to implement the *National Women's Health Programme*. Other key projects to improve women's health and access to services include: the *BreastScreen Queensland Programme*; the *Queensland Indigenous Women's Cervical Screening Strategy* and the *Queensland Cervical Screening Programme*; the *Women's Reproductive Health Programme* which assists women to have a level of control and choice over their reproductive health; the *Self-Health for Queensland Workers in the Sex Industry Programme*, introduced in 1997 to assist in the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections to sex workers, their clients and partners; the *Mental Health Community Organisation Funding Programme* which targets women through the Post Natal Disorders Support Group, the Post Natal Distress Support Group, Eating Disorders Association Resource Centre and the Centre for Women's Action on Eating Issues; the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Policy*; the *Multicultural Health Policy* and the *Language Services Policy* which facilitate access to health information and health services by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and the *Ten-Year Hospital and Health Services Building Plan* which will ensure the updating of women's health services.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

395. The Government has supported a range of initiatives to address the health needs of women, and is currently developing a women's health and wellbeing policy to identify current issues in women's health and strategies to address them. Some key measures include:

- community based health services specifically for women in metropolitan and country areas, and for non-government organisations working to advance women's health;

- a range of services responding to the needs of women affected by domestic violence including women's shelters, support services, crisis counselling and community prevention strategies. The *Out of Sight, Not Out of Mind* project, which addresses the impact of violence on mental health status, and the *Safe Living in Aboriginal Communities* project have both been funded as part of the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* initiative;
- the Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service provides direct services to women who have been sexually assaulted, training and resources for agencies and workers statewide, and coordinates policy, planning and service delivery on rape and sexual assault;
- the *SA Breast Screening Service* and the *SA Cervix Screening Programme* aims to reduce mortality from cancer among women;
- a specialised Pregnancy Advisory Centre provides safe, high quality, accessible services to women who have unplanned pregnancies;
- the *Midwifery Skills Enhancement Project* aimed at Indigenous and rural women, provides safe, viable and responsive community based maternity care by giving women access to continuous care by a trained midwife before, during and after the birth of the baby; and
- access to public, private and community housing rental assistance for women most in need.

396. Strategies are in place to redress health status inequalities and specific health needs of Indigenous women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, low income women and women in remote or isolated areas, among others.

TASMANIA

397. The Government supports an active Women's Health Programme which incorporates: women's health policy and planning; the Women's Health Access Programme that provides information services, midlife services and cancer screening promotion, and encourages the development of infrastructures to support women's health issues; grants and monitoring of service agreements for women's health services and projects operating in the non-government sector including the Hobart Women's Health Centre; Commonwealth-funded initiatives such as the National Education Programme for Female Genital Mutilation and the Alternative Birthing Services Programme; development of collaborative relationships with other agencies working in related areas and involvement in projects relevant to women's health priorities such as those funded through the Commonwealth *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence Programme*; and development of a new Women's Health and Wellbeing Plan in consultation with women and women's health services.

398. Examples of specific projects undertaken as part of the *Women's Health Programme* include: a peer education project with women from the Sudanese community; an Older Women's project exploring issues around rurality and isolation; a breastfeeding promotion project with young women in the North West; 'Well Women's' clinics in rural areas; the *Maternity Services and Outcomes Review*; the '*Alternative Stories to Violence*' project; the *Women, Mental Health and Domestic Violence* project; older women and sexuality workshops; a women with disabilities scoping project; internet training sessions for older women; a *Women's Health Travelling Roadshow*; the *Women in Prisons* project; and the *Young Women and Self-Harm* project.

VICTORIA

399. The Government has developed a *Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy*. The Strategy is based on a social model of health and will incorporate a life cycle and health gain approach. Indigenous women, lesbians, women in prison and women released from prison, women with disabilities, and working women were particularly identified as having limited access to previous consultations and have been the subject of extensive community consultation. Further consultation across the state was held in developing the Strategy. Other initiatives include: a review of programme guidelines for Women's Health Services to clarify the role between local, regional and statewide services, and to highlight their role in health promotion, early intervention and education; two-yearly breast screens for the target group of women aged 50-69; funding for programmes in schools covering issues of healthy eating, drug use and reproductive health for girls; and a *Maternity Services Programme* to improve access and continuity of care and support to women and families, and provision of additional and culturally appropriate support to Indigenous women.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

400. From 1999-2001, the Women's Policy Office worked with the Department of Health on across-government strategies to improve women's access to health services. Initiatives included: increased access to health services for disadvantaged women; a free call service for rural women; recruitment strategies to increase breast and cervical cancer screening rates; support for women in their care giving roles; financial support for respite care services; improved nutrition strategies for Indigenous women and low income women; promotion of healthy lifestyle choices; addressing mental health needs; and improving information and advice through tele-call, tele-health and other electronic mediums.

401. The Government also provides support for: upgrading the major women's and children's hospitals; home visiting support to families with babies and young children; community based counselling services to women, with a special focus on post-natal depression; a *Health Improvement Programme* focusing on public health and health promotion; better mental health strategies with a special focus on the mental health needs of young people; facilitating birthing choices for women including access to midwifery services; and breast feeding clinics. In response to a report by the Health Administrative Review Committee, a working party has been formed to examine obstetric services across the state. The working party is looking at problems in country hospitals and clinics, and how the health system can better support doctors and patients living in rural, regional and remote areas. In addition, abortion laws are due for automatic review. The *Acts Amendment (Abortion) Act 1998* was introduced as a private member's bill and passed on the basis of a conscience vote.

402. The Government recognises that Indigenous men and women suffer the worst health of any identifiable group in Australia and has committed to a range of improvements to health services. These include: improved cultural appropriateness; public health programmes particularly targeting the high rates of smoking amongst Indigenous women and men; and expansion of community based health initiatives to be undertaken in partnership with Indigenous communities.

ARTICLE 13: Social and economic benefits

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

Welfare reform

403. In 1999, the Government established a review of the social support system and appointed a special Reference Group to investigate how welfare dependency could be reduced among working age people and how the system could better engage people in active social and economic participation. The Reference Group consulted widely across Australia and reported back to the Government that the social support system needed to more actively engage people through social and economic participation. It is expected that women will be major beneficiaries under welfare reform. The implementation of the key principles of the reform (individual service delivery; simpler income support; better financial incentives and assistance; mutual obligation and social partnerships) will assist women to engage in social and economic participation. Women will also benefit from the strengthening of Australia's urban and regional communities and in the reduction of welfare dependence and the number of jobless people and families.

404. Women, including parents, were participants in the Welfare Reform Pilots funded in 2000 in response to the *Interim Report on Welfare Reform*. The pilots were aimed to test ways to link people more effectively with available services, and encourage them to make the most of opportunities for economic and social participation. The results of the pilots are being used to inform ongoing policy development for welfare reform.

405. The *Australians Working Together* package was launched in 2001. It provides strengthened support for disadvantaged people. The package will provide more encouragement, support and initiatives for all Australians of working age to take part in Australia's social and economic life, to get a job, to gain new skills, and to be involved in the community. Some of the measures address the particular needs of women such as: helping parents to return to work; better employment services; an initiative that encourages people on income support to take up casual or temporary employment; and initiatives for mature age workers. The initiative commenced on 1 July 2002.

Support for families

406. Since 1995, levels of assistance for families have been increased in areas such as child care, health, education, family relationship support and youth issues.

407. Family Tax Benefit payments help families with the cost of raising children. The new family assistance system, introduced in July 2000, provided around \$2 billion in extra assistance and offered more choice in delivery methods to families. Approximately \$11 billion per year is delivered in Family Tax Benefit payments to families, representing about one fifth of overall social security outlays by the Government. Over 90 per cent of Australian families with dependent children receive this assistance. Family Tax Benefit Part B gives extra assistance to families with one main income earner including sole parents, the majority of whom are women. Income tests have been relaxed to allow families to keep more of each dollar they earn.

408. A *Maternity Allowance* is paid to families who are eligible for *Family Tax Benefit Part A*, regardless of the woman's workforce participation prior to the birth of the baby. It assists with the direct and indirect costs associated with the birth of a child.

409. The *Parenting Payment*, introduced in March 1998 and with expenditure at \$5.3 billion in 2000-2001, is the main payment for primary carers of children. It is paid to the main carer of children in a couple or lone parent family. The initiative provides recipients with income support, helps them to balance work and caring responsibilities, and provides an opportunity for greater financial independence. The vast majority of *Parenting Payment* recipients are women (92 per cent in 2000).

410. Other measures to assist *Parenting Payment* recipients to re-enter the workforce or to improve their participation in income-producing activities are the *Jobs, Education and Training Programme (JET)*, the *Pensioner Education Supplement* and *Education Entry Payment* and for sole parents, the *Employment Entry Payment*. These are available for targeted groups within the *Parenting Payment* population to assist with their education costs or costs of entry to the workforce.

411. The *Child Support Scheme* is a set of statutory arrangements that aim to ensure that parents share in the costs of supporting their children according to their capacity, and that adequate support is available to all children not living with both parents.

412. The *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy*, introduced in 2000, established new partnerships to strengthen families and communities, which enhances the economic independence of many women with families. Key measures to support the strategy are: the *Stronger Families Fund* to encourage communities to develop new and better ways to strengthen families; the *Early Intervention, Parenting and Family Relationship Initiative* to provide services and activities such as parenting support, playgroups, marriage and relationship education, and parenting skills training; a package of measures to improve families' ability to access and choose child care that meets their needs; a national *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children* to develop government policy on early childhood and effective early intervention and prevention strategies in the areas of health, education, child care and family support; and a *National Skills Programme for Volunteers* to provide skills development opportunities for volunteers, particularly those working in the community services sector. The programme includes grants to organisations for training for volunteers, many of whom are women. Volunteers will be able to gain specific skills training such as counselling, working with people with disabilities, interviewing techniques and financial management, which will lead to increased employment opportunities. Further, the leadership initiative of the Strategy is intended to identify and support emerging and non-traditional leaders in local communities. Many of the individuals supported under this initiative will be women.

Assistance for widows, widowers and veterans

413. From March 1998, the *War Widows' and Widowers' Pension* was benchmarked to 25 per cent of Male Total Average Weekly Earnings. This measure helps protect the living standards and ensure the financial security of war widows. The *Residential Care Development Scheme* assists ex-service and community based organisations to help veterans and their widow(er)s access high quality residential aged care services and community care packages, address gaps in service delivery and complement available services.

Assistance for carers

414. Women are the major beneficiaries of the *Australian Government's Staying at Home – Care and Support for Older Australians* package. The package includes reforms to income support for carers, with eligibility for the *Carer Allowance* being widened. This builds on the 29 per cent increase in the rate of benefit that was introduced on 1 July 1998. To complement this measure, respite support has been extended to carers of young people with disabilities, who are unable to access existing State respite care or assistance provided under Commonwealth initiatives, and who have a short term or immediate need for respite support.

Assistance for people with disabilities

415. The Government announced plans to change the Disability Support Pension (DSP) eligibility rules as part of the 2002-03 Federal Budget. Subject to the passage of legislation, people applying for DSP on or after 1 July 2003 will need to meet new eligibility rules. People who can work 15 hours or more a week at full award wages with help such as rehabilitation or employment assistance will no longer be eligible for DSP. Most will qualify for an alternative payment and will be given the support they need to find employment. A participation plan will be developed for this group that will take their individual needs into account, including the barriers they face as a result of their disability. The new rules will not apply to people who are receiving DSP before 1 July 2003 or people who claim DSP before this date. Extra funding for more places in services will support changes to the DSP rules. Up to 73,000 new places in rehabilitation, disability employment, Job Network, education, training and the *Personal Support Programme* will be available to help more women with disabilities to develop their skills and move into work.

416. The Government will substantially increase spending on the *Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement* to help State and Territory Governments provide services such as accommodation for people with severe and profound disabilities. These measures will assist more women with disabilities into employment and provide more support for women with disabilities with high needs.

Premarriage counselling

417. In June 1999, the Prime Minister announced that a pre-marriage scheme would be piloted in three areas around Australia. The aim of the pilot was to encourage engaged couples to participate in pre-marriage education and specifically to provide participants with an understanding of the key factors that contribute to strong relationships and to teach skills that will assist in resolving relationship problems that may arise. The pilot was made up in two parts: the provision of a voucher for pre-marriage education for couples in the pilot areas; and the provision of a relationship kit designed for those who either could not or did not wish to attend face-to-face services.

418. An evaluation of the pilot was undertaken and in general terms, it was found that while both the voucher and kit of the pilot were well received it appears that the kit is a more effective instrument for educating couples, as well as being more cost effective. The kit was launched in June 2002 and is available nationally.

Family separation and financial security

419. The Government recognises that many women experience financial difficulties after separation. A number of government measures are expected to assist this group of women. For example, initiatives were introduced in the 1999-2000 budget to address family separation and its consequences and to focus on family reunion and counselling. This includes the establishment of a national network of *Link-Up* centres and counselling and related services. Several of these measures provide information and advice to women on income support and other financial matters with a view to ensuring their economic security.

420. Amendments made to the *Family Law Act 1975* in 2000 enable couples to make binding financial agreements before or during marriage about how their property or financial resources are to be dealt in the advent of marriage breakdown. The amendments also enable parties to a former marriage after their divorce to make a binding financial agreement dealing with their property or financial resources. These agreements are only binding if the parties have been provided with independent legal advice about them prior to their conclusion. The agreements may, in specified circumstances, be set aside by the courts, which also grant contractual remedies and relief in relation to the agreements.

Superannuation and divorce

421. Part VIII B of the *Family Law Act 1975*, passed in June 2001, allows divorcing couples to split their superannuation in the same way as other assets. The legislation fundamentally reforms the way in which superannuation is treated upon marital breakdown by giving separating couples the ability to divide their superannuation by agreement, or when they are unable to agree, by court order. Such agreements and orders will be binding on superannuation fund trustees. This will improve the long-term financial security of each member of a separated couple.

Housing assistance

422. The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) is the Government's principal strategy to address housing needs of low-income people who do not have access to home ownership or face difficulties in the private rental market. The Commonwealth Government will provide funding to the States and Territories over the four-year term of the 1999 CSHA. The Commonwealth is committed to another CSHA, to commence in July 2003, which is currently being negotiated with States and Territories. The main recipients under the CSHA are those affected by discrimination in housing markets, in particular Indigenous people, women, single parents and their children, young people, people with a disability, people with a mental illness, and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

423. The Australian, State and Territory Governments spend approximately \$285 million each year on the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme (SAAP)*. SAAP is a programme shared between governments that provides transitional support and accommodation to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, many of whom are women escaping domestic violence. Some 283 women's refuges are funded through the programme. The SAAP IV Bilateral Agreement has been negotiated with States and Territories from 1 July 2000. This Agreement included an extra \$15 million per annum recurrent growth funding for the life of the Agreement to 2005.

424. SAAP provides related support services such as counselling, information and referral to deal with the problems which lead to homelessness and assist clients to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. The 2000-01 SAAP Data report found that 33 per cent of SAAP funding was for agencies that targeted single women and women escaping domestic violence, and that 54 per cent of SAAP clients were women, 20 per cent of whom were Indigenous women.

Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce

425. The Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce released its report, *Footprints To The Future* in 2001. This comprehensive report looks at ways to improve the support provided to young people during their transition to independence, and to strengthen pathways for young people who do not, or are not likely to, go straight from school to further education and training or full-time employment. Recommendations were made on the scope and direction of a *Youth Pathways Action Plan* to improve outcomes for all young people by strengthening existing pathways, improving early intervention assistance, helping those in crisis situations to quickly move out of them and strengthening families' and the community's capacity to help young people. The report recognised that the Government was already doing a great deal through its reform agenda to maximise young people's opportunities. Singled out as being particularly important were the Commonwealth/State and Territory agreed National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century, the Vocational Education and Transition in Schools Framework, the Prime Minister's Community and Business Partnership and the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. It acknowledged that the Commonwealth's National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy would do much to address low literacy and numeracy in Indigenous communities.

Employment assistance

426. *Job Network*, established in 1996, is a national network of around 200 private, community and government organisations that specialise in finding jobs for unemployed people, particularly those who are, or are at risk of becoming, long-term unemployed.

427. Under Job Network, job seekers have a wide choice of organisations to help them find a job. Among those organisations that successfully tendered to provide employment services are a number of organisations who are experienced in providing assistance targeted to women and sole parents. There are five main Job Network measures. Job Matching, Job Search Training (JST) and Intensive Assistance (IA) assist most registered unemployed people. The other two Job Network measures are the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS), for those interested in self-employment, and Project Contracting, for people after seasonal work. Eligibility for the different services is determined by the use of the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) which measures the relative level of potential difficulty an individual will have in gaining work. All registered unemployed are eligible for Job Matching services and the more disadvantaged job seekers are referred to JST or IA.

Support for new arrivals

428. The Government is providing funding under the *Community Settlement Services Scheme* and *Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy* for organisations to undertake projects many of which have a specific focus on settlement issues for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Most of the funding is used for the employment of welfare or social workers providing casework,

counselling, information and referral services to migrant and refugee or humanitarian entrants, including women from various target communities. Funding is also provided for project based activities addressing particular women's settlement issues.

429. The *Women at Risk Programme* provides Australian resettlement for refugee women and women 'of concern' to the UNHCR and their dependents, who are in dangerous or vulnerable situations because of the breakdown of traditional support mechanisms. This initiative provides assistance to women who have been tortured, sexually assaulted or otherwise traumatised and are in particular need of settlement assistance.

Women in sport leadership

430. In April 2001, the Prime Minister announced an unprecedented ten-year plan for Australian sport, titled *Backing Australia's Sporting Ability – A More Active Australia*. The plan is accompanied by an additional investment by the Government of \$161.6 million in Australian sport, bringing total funding for the four-year period from 1 July 2001 to \$547 million. The plan specifically targets increased participation in grass roots sport, and will ensure that all Australians regardless of culture, gender, race, capability, or age have an opportunity to be part of a *More Active Australia*. Through the expansion of the Active Australia initiative, managed by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), focus will be placed on increasing the quality and quantity of women's participation in sport and physical activity.

431. Australia's national policy and plan for women and girls in sport and physical activity was revised. The revised policy, *Active Women*, launched in September 1999, includes practical strategies that support the full involvement of all women and girls in sport, recreation and physical activity in Australia. It highlights the important contribution of women to leadership and management positions in sport and provides practical examples of encouraging women into these positions. The policy is available at www.activeaustralia.org/women.

432. From 1996 to 1998, the ASC managed a national women in leadership and management project. The aim of the project was to determine strategies that would increase the participation of women in leadership and management in sport, and to provide women with support programmes to help them advance in the sport industry. A key strategy arising from the project was the implementation of a facilitated mentoring programme, *Mentor as Anything!* throughout Australia. This programme provides a formal mechanism and infrastructure to enable mentoring relationships for women to occur.

433. The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games marked the centenary of women's participation in the Olympic Games. Several projects were funded to commemorate this significant event and to highlight the contribution and achievements of women in sport, including: a commemorative educational kit, based on a CD ROM *An Olympic Journey: the Story of Women at the Olympic Games*; a women's sports scholarship exchange initiated between Australia and France; and the joint hosting with the French Government of a commemorative function on 20 May 2000.

Harassment-Free Sport Strategy

434. The *Harassment-free Sport Strategy* aims to: decrease harassment, abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour in sport; increase tolerance, respect and safety and to facilitate more welcoming environments in sport for all people, particularly women, Indigenous people and people with a disability. The Strategy encompasses several new measures designed to meet the diverse needs of the sport industry and the general community. Eight Harassment-free Sport Strategy resource documents were launched in 2001. The Government, through the Strategy, took a lead role in developing ground-breaking guidelines to address homophobia and sexuality discrimination in sport. The guidelines were released in August 2001 with the aim to provide the sport industry with guidance on preventing and dealing with homophobic behaviours and sexuality discrimination. Additional measures around policy, education and training commenced in 2001-2002.

Pregnancy and sport

435. The ASC convened a Pregnancy and Sport Forum in August 2001 to debate issues regarding the participation of pregnant athletes in sport. The Forum was widely attended by experts from medicine, law, insurance and ethics, sporting organisations, athletes and HREOC. The Forum discussed a wide range of issues relating to the discrimination of pregnant athletes and possible future actions. Following the Forum, the ASC established a working party to discuss issues further and revise its guidelines on *Pregnancy, Sport and the Law* (1996). The guidelines, based on the conclusions of the Forum, were released in May 2002.

Indigenous women in sport

436. The ASC's *Indigenous Sport Programme*, in conjunction with the Women's Sport Unit, set up a reference group in 2001 to consult with on all matters relating to Indigenous women in sport. The group comprises a representative from each State and Territory within the sport and recreation industry as well as community members who have a vested interest in Indigenous women in sport. The group is currently working on a workshop that will be a professional development opportunity for women to receive training in Harassment Contact Officer in Sport, Protective Behaviours and Cross Cultural Awareness. It is anticipated that these courses will help to raise issues, which may lead to solutions for increasing Indigenous women's participation in sport.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

437. The ACT Legislative Assembly Select Committee inquiry into the Status of Women will investigate and report on programmes to enhance women's participation in areas of social and economic life.

438. The Government is currently developing a *Plan for Canberra*. The major components of this plan will include a Social Plan, an Economic White Paper and a Canberra Spatial Plan. Social infrastructure and economic issues will be addressed, including the particular needs of women. The draft social priorities portion of the plan is available at: http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/Documents/Social_Plan.pdf

NEW SOUTH WALES

439. The *Action Plan for Women (2000 - 2002)* addresses issues surrounding women's family and community life, within the framework of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. The *Families First Programme* is a support network for families raising children, designed to help families raise healthy, well adjusted children and to enhance parenting skills. It targets families with very young children, offering services early in a child's development to prevent long term problems. The *Early Childhood Services Policy*, launched in October 2000, views children's services as part of an integrated network of support for children, families, and communities. A Childcare Planning Advisory Group, established since 1998, supported the development of the *Early Childhood Policy for New South Wales*.

440. The Government provides housing assistance to low income people. Two thirds of new leases are held by women. A *Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme* provides resources for community organisations to assist women in disadvantaged communities to develop skills and identify support. The *Partnership Against Homelessness* aims to improve services for homeless people and break the cycle of homelessness. A project is being developed to improve service delivery to young Indigenous women leaving jail and juvenile detention centres.

441. The Department of Housing and the Aboriginal Housing Office have a number of strategies to improve the quality of life of public, community and Indigenous housing tenants. Both agencies actively support the increased participation of their tenants in decisions which impact on their lives (eg. through financial and other support for state and local tenants groups). Women are key participants and beneficiaries. Women tenants may also join various Tenant Employment Projects to develop work skills.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

442. The Government has highlighted the critical importance of balancing economic and social policies, and of sound financial management. Policy priorities are: economic development and job creation; education and employment; Indigenous affairs; health; justice; and crime prevention. A community engagement approach is being introduced by the Government to involve the wider community in policy and decision-making, particularly at an early stage.

443. The Offices of Women's Policy, Youth Affairs, Ethnic Affairs, and Senior Territorians are now located in the Division of Community Engagement in the Department of the Chief Minister to strengthen planning. Each unit will retain a specific focus while taking advantage of the benefits of having a stronger and combined presence. Their broad charter is to ensure that policies and mainstream programmes directly address the equity issues that relate to each of these groups.

444. In 2000-2001, the Government supported 14 key events for women in business that were attended by more than 1,000 women. Many of the events were organised through the Women in Business network in partnership with the private sector and business women's associations and included activities programmed for *October Business Month* in Alice Springs and Darwin. *The Northern Territory Women in Business Report* and *Employing staff in the NT - a handy guide for small business* were published with the assistance of the network.

445. Government agencies promote local and national awards that acknowledge and enhance women's activities in the market place. These include: the *Chief Minister's Study Award for Women*; the *Tribute to Northern Territory Women*; the *Chief Minister's Innovation Award* (which celebrates women who have excelled in the successful implementation of innovative solutions and thinking in business); the *Darwin Young Business and Professional Women's Award* (which promotes the vital contribution of young people); the *Telstra Business Women of the Year Awards* and the *Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Rural Women's Award* (which facilitates networking for rural women and supports the activities of the NT Women in Business network). The NT Tourist Commission is a significant supporter and sponsor of the *NT Brolga Awards for Tourism Excellence*, in which businesses run by women continue to feature strongly.

446. The Government provides support for low income families. The *Bond Assistance Programme* provides a no-interest loan as a bond, or in some cases as a bond or rent in advance, with single women with dependants constituting approximately 40 per cent of recipients. *HomeNorth* provides opportunities for low to middle income earners, with a brief to provide assistance to first home owners in the private market and assistance to public housing tenants for the purchase of their public housing dwellings. In the last financial year, 43 per cent of first home buyers, and 35 per cent of public housing purchasers were women. A project is being undertaken to identify the financial planning and information needs of 18-25 year olds.

447. Sponsorship and support by Arts NT provides significant benefits to female artists and contributes to a more positive portrayal of women in public life, arts and culture. Approximately 51 per cent of the people involved in the arts and cultural sector are women. Women are emerging and establishing livelihoods as successful and sought after arts practitioners. Indigenous female artists who lead the field include Dorothy Napangardi, Alice Nampitjinpa, Bessie Liddle, Kathleen Wallace, Peggy Napangardi Jones, Nancy McDinney, Kitty Kantilla and Banduk Marika. Other successful practitioners include visual and graphic artists, playwrights and actors, potters and singers, while female writers won the majority of awards in the 2001 NT Literary Awards.

QUEENSLAND

448. The *Putting Families First (2000)* strategy is the first step in the development of the Government's long-term *Family Policy*. It is designed to give children the best start by valuing and supporting the nurturing role of families, and creating safe, supportive communities for families. A number of support services have been established for women across the State. These include: the employment of youth and family support workers; projects in locations where youth are 'at risk' due to personal and family difficulties; financial support to families caring for people with a disability; and the *Parents' Place Programme* providing information regarding choices about social and emotional aspects of parenting.

449. A range of measures were undertaken by the Government to ensure affordable and appropriate housing for women during the past five years. These include:

- Queensland Health's *Home and Community Care Programme* provides basic maintenance and support for clients who are frail, or aged people with a disability, and their carers, to enable them to retain some independence at home. The programme benefits women as they are the main beneficiaries of aged care services;

- *Home Assist/Secure Programme* assists women and men with a disability and seniors to remain safely in their homes through improved home security and safety measures; and
- *Tenant Participation Programme* encourages women tenants to contribute to local policy for public rental housing.

450. A report on older women and finance entitled *Too Busy, Too Tired, Too Hard* was commissioned in 2002 by the Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' League with funding from the Government. The Government has now funded the League to produce training modules that address issues identified in the report. A booklet entitled *A Guide to retiring – planning your lifestyle* and an associated website have been produced by the Department of Families.

451. Four Indigenous healing centres have been established in three Aboriginal communities and one Torres Strait Islander community. Indigenous women, children and men of all generations are able to access these healing centres which work to prevent violence, deal with trauma, and support people whose lives are marred by violence. Through this initiative, the Government aims to support communities to heal themselves, by providing local solutions to their specific problems.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

452. Following on from *The Brighton Declaration* (an international set of principles formulated in 1994 as a guide to increasing the involvement of women in sport at all levels) and *The Windhoek Call for Action* (a declaration acknowledging the need for greater cooperation and coordination between agencies and organisations responsible for women's and girls' issues, and seeking further development of equal opportunities for women and girls to participate fully in sport, recreation and physical activity) the State and Commonwealth Governments have developed a National Policy for *Women in Sport and Recreation*. This policy is supported by a strategy document, which includes case studies and examples of best practice that can be used by service deliverers. The policy provides a reference point for each State and Territory to work towards common goals, and enables Sport and Recreation Associations to be able to measure their achievements against national performance measures.

453. In coaching and management positions men still outnumber women, but there are many strategies in place to overcome this imbalance. A *National Mentoring Programme* has been established for both female coaches and administrators, and there are significant scholarships available to women to enable them to attain higher coaching accreditation.

454. Through Arts SA, the Government has continued to be involved in a range of significant arts initiatives and major cultural projects to advance the position and profile of women. Funding has been provided to *Vitalstatistix*, a women's theatre company dedicated to performing women's work on a national basis. In addition, several of the State's major cultural institutions have undertaken projects focused on women and their role in the arts and community. For example, the Migration Museum presented a major exhibition, *War Brides: Our Stories*, in 2000. This exhibition brought together members of the Legacy War Brides Group, including women from the United Kingdom, the Middle East, Japan and the USA, and allowed them to tell the history of their unique experiences and role in South Australia's history.

455. The Passenger Transport Board has put in place a policy and guidelines for a *Code of Conduct for Outdoor Advertising* to ensure targeted groups, including women, are not demeaned. This means that all companies who wish to tender for the right to advertise on Government buses, bus shelters or publications must adhere to the Code.

TASMANIA

456. In recognition that poverty is a major determinant of poor health status, the Government funds a range of programmes in low income areas that are aimed at increasing the social and economic capacity of individuals and communities. The Government has entered into partnership agreements with local government authorities to build up local infrastructure and support.

457. Women Tasmania has a number of programmes and project initiatives targeted at women from economically disadvantaged groups and regional areas including:

- *Women's Development Small Grants* programme which provides small grants to women's groups to assist with projects aimed to meet identified local needs;
- *Women's Development Programme* which aims to build the capacity of women in the community, and in particular women from disadvantaged and rural communities, to identify and access available services, and to mobilise resources to solve shared problems; and the
- *Women in Decision Making and Leadership Programme* which includes leadership training and mentoring programmes for young women from disadvantaged areas.

458. Women Tasmania is also addressing issues for women from lower socio-economic and disadvantaged regions as part of *Local Government Partnership Agreements*.

459. The Government is developing a *Strategic Action Plan for Women* which will include an expanded community out-reach and development programme aimed at meeting the needs of women from regional, rural and isolated regions of Tasmania, and specifically women from low-income and socially disadvantaged groups and regions.

460. Family Child and Youth Health Service is a government, community-based service providing universal and targeted prevention/early intervention services to children, young people and their families. The types of service activities include support, information, physical assessments, health promotion, 24-hour telephone service for parents, parenting centre services for parents requiring additional support, and a youth health service, including two Youth Health Centres.

VICTORIA

461. The Government believes that women's full participation in society cannot be achieved unless their economic independence is assured across all stages of life. This includes ensuring that women receive equal pay for work of equal value, and that their economic position after retirement is safeguarded. A key focus of the Government is community strengthening which refers to developing or acquiring skills, tools, and resources to identify and respond to community needs. This process aims to strengthen neighbourhoods so that individuals and local groups can exercise some control over their own lives.

462. Initiatives to achieve social and economic independence include: an additional 70 Neighbourhood houses funded to enable 15 hours of house coordination per week; the production of a newsletter to promote the benefits of superannuation to women; a *Women's Housing Policy* will be developed; and a peak representative body for women's housing will be established to provide the framework for responding to the diverse housing needs of women and their children. A *Victorian Homelessness Strategy* has been developed which aims to deliver a comprehensive and coordinated response to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness by implementing a range of preventative and early intervention initiatives, as well as improving the current operations of the service system.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

463. Western Australia initiated a government/non-government Poverty Taskforce during the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996). Women were identified as a priority target group for the Taskforce. A major report was prepared by the Taskforce together with a government response. Strategies developed include: funding for research into key areas including community attitudes to poverty; a Churchill Fellowship on a poverty issue; a community forum on what the community can do; and a forum giving feedback on the research findings.

464. The Government has signalled its commitment to the development of a planned, strategic approach to the development and implementation of gender initiatives across government policy. A State Strategic plan is being developed. This plan will provide a high level framework and be underpinned by a range of indicators against which progress will be measured. The annual Women's Progress Report will feed into the State Strategic Plan.

ARTICLE 14: Rural women

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

Regional Women's Advisory Council

465. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon John Anderson, MP, established the nine member *Regional Women's Advisory Council* in September 1999. Council members were appointed for a two-year term. Members of the Council are women living and working in regional, rural or remote areas, with expertise in key issues facing regional areas, and the capacity to make a significant contribution to problem solving and consultation. The Council's role is to provide a conduit for the views and perspectives of women in regional and rural Australia on social and economic development issues. The Council, through the Minister, also provides input to government decision-making to ensure that the views of women in regional areas are taken into account in the development of policies and programmes for regional Australia.

466. The Council is part of the Government's strategy to provide a voice for women in regional, rural and remote Australia. The Council conducted an action research project focused on women's perspectives and examined women's attitudes, behaviours, and skills that help communities work with change to achieve positive outcomes. The findings provided a basis for promoting best practice in communities, and for advising the Government on ways to encourage a positive response to change. The final report was published in September 2001.

Regional and Rural Women's Roundtable

467. In June 1999, the Minister for Transport and Regional Services hosted the Regional and Rural Women's roundtable at Parliament House. Thirty-four women from diverse backgrounds, representing all States and Territories from regional, rural and remote Australia participated. The objective was to identify key issues of concern to regional and rural women and their communities. As a result, five key areas of concern were identified: telecommunications; building social capital and social cohesion; economic and business development; service provision including health, child care, transport, counselling and banking; and skill building and training. Participants explored these issues and provided recommendations from the roundtable to the Minister.

National Plan for Women in Agriculture and Resource Management

468. In 1998, the Commonwealth-State Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management published *A Vision for Change: National Plan for Women in Agriculture and Resource Management*. The Plan contains principles, strategies and best practice case studies to assist organisations to better support the roles of women in agriculture and resource management. The Plan was endorsed by 115 public, private and community organisations and provides the framework for individual State and Territory action plans. The *Women as Clients Strategy*, which is part of the Plan, aims to ensure that the needs of regional women are considered in the policy development process.

Economic security and sustainability

469. A wide range of initiatives have been introduced since 1995 to support the employment and economic security of rural women and families, and the economic sustainability of rural communities. The *Farm Family Restart Scheme*, introduced in 1997, is the key programme for delivering improved welfare support to the farm sector, as well as adjustment assistance for farmers who wish to exit the industry. The Scheme incorporates several key features: access to income support; professional advice on the future viability of their business; and career counselling where appropriate. Access to re-establishment grants was also available during the first two years of the programme.

470. *Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payments*, established in 1998, aims to help meet family living costs associated with severe drought and other events that are beyond the scope of normal risk management, for eligible farmers in declared exceptional circumstances. These payments provide income support, including partner allowance where applicable, and eligibility for payments also qualifies farm families for special access to a *Health Care Card* and *Family Payments*.

471. The *Rural Transactions Centres Programme* was introduced in 1999 to help small rural communities establish centres that provide access to transaction services such as banking, post, phone, fax, *Medicare Easyclaim*, education and training. Thirty four centres have been established. It is envisaged that a number of services in a single centre will enhance the viability of the centres and make them self-sustaining financially. The initiative will help put services back, and introduce new services, into smaller rural towns.

472. The *Regional Forums Australia Programme* was established in 1999 to foster the building of partnerships between business, community and governments to improve the economic viability of rural communities.

473. Substantial funding (\$14.5 million) has been allocated to the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal to help provide a viable social and economic future for regional, rural and remote communities. The Foundation aims to encourage innovative collaboration between business, community and government in philanthropic endeavours that will boost the economic and social stocks of regional Australia. The Foundation has three key areas of operation: rural capacity building, information and research, and seeding grants for development projects. The focus will be on economic development, job creation, and stimulating regional and rural renewal. The Foundation has conducted forums for community foundations to help create the momentum for growth and produced the *Community Foundations Kit for Australian Communities* to assist communities to plan and build their own community foundation.

474. The *Regional Solutions Programme* is designed to help regional and rural communities find local solutions to local challenges. The initiative is based on flexibility and the belief that the 'one size fits all' approach is not the answer for capacity building in regional Australia. Communities receive funding to put into action development projects that will lead to stronger local economies and improved access to services. The programme primarily aims to work with rural and regional communities facing economic challenges, a declining population due to industry restructuring, a lack of development opportunities, or high levels of unemployment and social disadvantage. The programme is a direct result of the *Regional Australia Summit* and builds on the successful *Rural Communities Programme* and the *Rural Plan*

initiative. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate a contribution to the project, either financial or in-kind, and to seek support from other sources, such as State and local governments and the private sector.

475. One of the key aims of the *Agriculture Advancing Australia* package is to increase women's participation in rural industries, particularly in leadership and decision-making. It includes leadership training for women, increased partnerships with women to address rural industries issues and the development of a strategy for the recognition and participation of youth in portfolio industries.

Education and training

476. The Education Network Australia (EdNA) is a national framework established to coordinate the use of interactive computer networks across the educational sectors. A key objective is to improve access to information technology by all Australians, regardless of geographic location. EdNA provides information about education and training opportunities, and also facilitates the flexible delivery of courses. Women living in rural areas will benefit from the service delivered through EdNA.

Rural women's participation in decision-making

477. In 1996, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia (AFFA) established the *Balance* database of women with experience and expertise in rural areas to encourage more appointments of women to departmental boards and committees. AFFA also participated in the OSW *Executive Search Pilot Programme* to 'head-hunt' suitable women for positions on Commonwealth boards.

478. In 1999, the Government established an annual national scholarship for a mature age rural woman to participate in the *Australian Rural Leadership Programme*. The programme is an 18 month course with 1 scholarship candidate per course. To date, 4 women have completed the programme.

Health

479. Since 1995, a broad range of initiatives have been introduced to ensure the best health care is available to everyone no matter where they live, both through the Government's programmes and the substantial support it provides to States and Territories.

480. The *Rural Women's GP Service*, launched in March 2000, aims to improve access to primary and secondary health services for rural women who have little or no access to a female general practitioner. The service recognises that some women prefer to receive health services from a female doctor.

481. Several programmes that support the rural health workforce also provide benefits to women, for example, the *National Rural and Remote Midwifery Upskilling Programme*. This programme assists States and Territories in better planning and provision of midwifery services, and in overcoming a major obstacle to retaining rural obstetric services in the medium to long term. The programme invests in the maintenance of midwifery skills and enables rural women to deliver babies as close to their families as possible.

482. The *Regional Health Strategy: More Doctors, Better Services* was introduced in 2000. The Strategy comprises an extensive and integrated package of measures designed to provide more doctors and better health services in rural areas, at a cost of more than \$550 million over four years. Many of the initiatives will help increase access to health care services for women in rural Australia.

Violence

483. The Government *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV)* initiative funds demonstration projects that pilot new approaches for rural and remote areas and Indigenous family violence. See Article 16 for more information on these projects.

484. PADV has undertaken research which has identified domestic violence as a significant issue for rural and remote areas. Problems for victims are exacerbated by isolation and lack of ready access to support and services. Recognising the specific barriers people in rural and remote areas face, PADV has funded a range of projects aimed at improving service provision to all family members affected by domestic violence, assisting women and children escape violent situations and testing models for more effective early intervention and prevention.

485. The needs of Indigenous people affected by family violence in rural and remote areas are a specific focus of a number of the initiatives, which include providing better protection for Indigenous women in remote areas, advocating for better responses of mainstream services to the needs of Indigenous women and children affected by family violence, identifying holistic models for community responses to family violence, and testing behaviour change programmes for perpetrators.

486. The *National Crime Prevention Programme* has domestic violence as one of its priority areas for identifying innovative and practical ways of reducing crime. A key initiative is a pilot project in a rural community working with adolescents to prevent violence in their current and future relationships. Evaluation of the project shows a positive impact on the students' understanding of the unacceptability of violence and that the project could be implemented in other areas where there is community interest in the prevention of domestic violence. The programme has released the report of a major national study commissioned to examine the nature and extent of violence in Indigenous communities.

487. The *Rural and Remote Domestic Violence Initiative* (funded by the Commonwealth Government and administered by State and Territory Governments through the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme*) pilots new approaches for women and children who are subjected to violence in rural and isolated communities. The measure aims to increase access and referral to support services and advice on matters such as housing, finance and legal matters.

488. Family violence prevention units provide culturally appropriate legal advice to clients on family violence issues, counselling for victims, and their partners, and community education. They are located in NT (Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine), QLD (Cairns, Mt Isa), WA (Fitzroy Crossing, Geraldton), SA (Kalgoorlie, Port Augusta), and NSW (Kempsey, Moree, Walgett).

Access to the legal system

489. The Federal Magistrates Service provides a quicker and cost effective forum for a range of Commonwealth matters. This service particularly benefits women, who are often the less resourced party when marriage breaks down, by providing a low cost option for dealing with family disputes. It also provides a low cost forum for women seeking to enforce their rights under anti-discrimination law. The service operates in every capital city in Australia, has a permanent presence in several regional communities and undertakes extensive circuits to regional and rural locations.

490. In June 2001, an advice and information line *Australian Law Online* was established on family law and child support matters. It aims to provide a confidential telephone information and website service that assists people who lack access to face-to-face services. Rural communities are assisted through an enhanced telephone legal advice service.

491. In 2000, the Government further expanded the *Commonwealth Community Legal Services Programme*. This included the establishment of five new regional community legal services and an extension of outreach services provided from Darwin. This increase was on top of six newly established regional community legal services and clinical legal education initiatives announced in 1999.

492. The National Women's Justice Coalition received funding in 2000 (under the *National Women's NGO Funding Programme*) for a project to boost policy input on legal issues relating to women in regional, rural and remote communities by: facilitating the flow of information to and from legal networks and the Government; increasing awareness of how law and access to services impacts on rural women; and providing mechanisms for ongoing sharing of information and experience to promote effective solutions.

Access to telecommunications

493. *Networking the Nation* was established in 1997 to assist the economic and social development of regional, rural and remote Australia. The programme allows rural women to take advantage of improved communications, on-line training, up-to-date commodities information, worldwide marketing opportunities and the ability to work from home. Projects that are benefiting rural women include:

- the *Australian Virtual Centre for Women and the Law* project, managed by the National Women's Justice Coalition, involves stimulating the use of a wide range of online discussion groups and associated services by a progressively increasing range of disadvantaged groups, including a particular focus on women. There are approximately 5,000 participants, including 600 community organisations, using almost 170 e-mail groups created and supported through the project;
- the *Queensland Rural Women's Network BridgIT* project which will provide IT and Internet training and support to rural women and their families; and
- *Women's Justice Network* pilot which aims to provide legal information, advice and referral to women in southwest Queensland. It comprises a network of community organisations and legal advice services connected through computer video conferencing facilities and a legal information database.

Juvenile Diversion Scheme and Aboriginal Interpreter Service

494. In March 2000, the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory announced the provision of Commonwealth funding (\$20 million) to the NT for a juvenile pre-court diversion scheme and a jointly funded Indigenous interpreter service. An agreement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory Governments came into effect on 1 September 2000. The aim of the agreement is to divert juveniles from the criminal justice system and to alleviate the language barriers faced by Indigenous persons. The Commonwealth funding is for: the purchase and provision of community-based diversionary programmes in urban, rural and remote communities; a Juvenile Diversion Unit in the NT Police Service that administers the diversion process and which conducts victim-offender conferencing and other programmes; a jointly funded *Aboriginal Interpreter Service* (funding in the first year for training of interpreters and recurrent funding for training).

495. Coordinated through the Juvenile Diversion Unit, NT Police are diverting juveniles who have been apprehended for offences, at the pre-court stage, by way of warnings, cautions or referrals to diversionary programmes and conferencing. At the end of the first year of the Agreement: 1,215 juvenile apprehension cases had been offered diversion, mainly by way of verbal or written warnings; this equates to 78 per cent of all juvenile apprehension cases (1,548 cases in total); and overall court appearances by juveniles were reduced by 31 per cent when compared to the preceding year.

496. The *Aboriginal Interpreter Service* (based in the Territory's Office of Aboriginal Development) maintains a register of Indigenous languages interpreters and offers a central booking service for government and non-government agencies across the Territory that require on-site Indigenous languages interpreters. Under the agreement, government health and legal services, as well as Indigenous legal services, also receive funding to purchase interpreter services. Regional and rural areas will directly benefit from both the juvenile diversion scheme and the Indigenous interpreter service.

Recognition of rural women's contributions

497. In 1997, the Government commissioned a ground-breaking applied research project, *Missed Opportunities: Harnessing the Potential of Women in Australian Agriculture*. The project measured women's financial contribution to the rural economy and trialed strategies to increase rural organisations' recognition and valuing of women as customers, board members and decision-makers. This work quantified for the first time the dollar contributions rural women make to farm businesses and their communities.

498. The *National Awards for Innovation in Local Government* foster and acknowledge innovation and leading practice in local government. The awards identify and reward local government bodies, associations and other collaborating organisations who are developing and implementing innovative, resourceful practices that improve local government outcomes and help build sustainable Australian communities. Award categories cover areas where there are high concentrations of women such as health services, aged care and community services.

499. On *World Rural Women's Day* 1999, the Government launched an initiative for women from regional and rural areas. The *Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's Rural Women's Award* is designed to recognise and encourage the vital contribution women make to rural Australia. The

Award builds on the success of the previous Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) Radio's *Australian Rural Woman of the Year Award* and is open to all women involved in agriculture, natural resource management and related service industries.

500. The Award comprises seven state and territory winners. Each winner receives a bursary of up to \$20,000 that may be used for activities that build their management, business or leadership skills, for example, a study tour or formal education. State and Territory winners, and runners-up also attended a national leadership seminar in March 2002 that provided them with leadership and management training, media and presentation skills and networking opportunities.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

NEW SOUTH WALES

501. The *Action Plan for Women (2000 - 2002)* addresses the needs of women living in rural and regional areas, within the framework of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. The special needs and concerns of rural and isolated women are also identified in other key policy documents such as the Programme of Action for Women in TAFE 1997-2000.

502. NSW Agriculture's Advisory Group in partnership with the Rural Women's Network have coordinated *Making a Difference: an Action Plan for NSW Women in Agriculture and Resource Management*. The Plan aims to increase women's participation in decision-making, improve the recognition of women as clients of industry and government, and increase the participation of women in the rural sector.

503. Two partnership projects have been funded under the *Women's Grants Programme*. The UTS Shopfront (at the University of Technology Sydney) is designing a framework for sustainable economic, social, environmental and cultural development for women in three remote and regional communities. The Central West Regional Council of Adult and Community Education's *Building Women's Employment Opportunities* project will develop a gender informed model for an integrated and coordinated community based approach to employment and business development, targeting three communities. The model will be used to deliver employment outcomes for women in these communities, and assess the transferability of the strategies to other communities of similar character in regional NSW.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

504. In March 2000, the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory announced the provision of Commonwealth funding (\$20 million) for a juvenile pre-court diversion scheme and a jointly funded Indigenous interpreter service. An agreement came into effect on 1 September 2000 which aims to divert juveniles from the criminal justice system and to alleviate the language barriers faced by Indigenous persons. For more detail see paragraphs 494-496.

505. A community engagement model is being introduced by the Government to involve the wider community in policy and decision-making. This has been created to: inject community ideas and

contingency advice into government planning and services; involve the community in a different and more meaningful and democratic dialogue with government; and open government processes to scrutiny by the community and stakeholders. This approach includes: arrangements for Parliament to sit in Alice Springs for the first time in 2003; the introduction of Community Cabinet (with meetings taking place in Darwin suburbs, major towns and rural and remote localities throughout the NT); and Ministers making themselves available to meet with members of the community around Community Cabinet meetings.

506. The Government has been engaging with Indigenous people in all regions during 2001-02 to establish new priorities of importance to Indigenous women in all aspects of community and Territory life. NT Indigenous women are keen to forge a stronger and more vocal role, and to have greater input into community based and broader NT programme planning and evaluation in a whole-of-community context. Specific policy priorities identified by Indigenous women across all NT regions include: stronger leadership and decision-making roles; improved health and access to related services; higher levels of education, employment and training leading to job creation and prospects for promotion; improved economic development and capacity building skills; prevention of family violence and sexual assault, and the protection of victims and their families; measures to stop alcohol, drug and other substance abuse; protection of children and the elimination of child abuse; better access to services; improved housing and infrastructure; stronger measures to bring about equity and equal opportunity; and access to flexible working arrangements that reflect cultural and other responsibilities.

507. The Government, in partnership with Commonwealth Government agencies is providing incentives as diverse as the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cadetships* and the *Farmbis Programme*. The Cadetships enable public sector agencies to sponsor undergraduate students to attend university and provide employment during vacations. Female students take up this opportunity at a slightly higher rate than do male students. *Farmbis* provides assistance to enhance the business management skills of primary producers through education and training projects and women have been identified as a target for extra action under this programme.

QUEENSLAND

508. Women and Leadership was the focus of the Office for Women's 2001-02 *Assisting Rural Women's Grants* programme which aimed to enhance women's capacity to participate in a broad spectrum of leadership and decision-making roles. This programme was part of the *Assisting Rural Women's Strategy*, which aimed to improve the quality of life of women living in regional, rural and remote Queensland through the provision of information, education and training.

509. The Office for Women established a partnership with the Queensland Rural Women's Network to extend Internet access and training to women around the State through the *BridgIT* programme.

510. The Department of Primary Industries has a number of strategies to progress women in leadership. These include: sponsorships for ten women working in agricultural industries to attend the Third Rural Women's Congress in Spain in October 2002; training and skills development through the *Building Rural Leaders* programme and scholarships to attend the Company Directors Course; publication of a *Vision for Change – Women Working for the Future of Rural Queensland* and *Getting Women on Board: a guide to nominating, selecting and appointing women to rural industry boards and committees* which offers support and practical ideas for women, industry organisations and government agencies in promoting

women in leadership and decision-making roles; celebration of World Rural Women's Day; the *Ministerial Advisory Committee for Women in Agriculture and Resource Management* to provide practical support to the Minister in improving the diversity of decision-making through the active involvement of women and young people; participation in the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation; and a Rural Women's Award to celebrate women's achievements and encourage more women to become involved in their community, industry and business.

511. Services to assist women in rural and remote areas include: the *Mobile Women's Health Service*, which is a network of 13 nurses and 4 Indigenous Women's Health Workers that provide preventative women's health services to women living in rural and remote areas of Queensland; the *Rural and Remote Women's Health Programme*, administered by the Royal Flying Doctor Service that provides female General Practitioners to visit women in rural and remote areas, and works in collaboration with the *Mobile Women's Health Service* to target under-screened women for breast and cervical cancer screening; and the *Indigenous Women's Cervical Screening Strategy (2000-2004)* which aims to reduce the mortality rates for cervical cancer in Indigenous women.

512. A wide range of initiatives has been funded to increase opportunities for rural and regional women to participate in leadership positions and to influence government policy. These include: Community Cabinet meetings which are conducted throughout Queensland to provide rural Queenslanders including women with direct access to the Government; 16 Community Outreach Forums were held by the Office for Women from 1998 to 2000 to increase opportunities for women and girls across the State to work in partnership with the Government; and the Queensland Rural Ministerial Advisory Council, which facilitates improved participation by rural and remote communities in government decision-making. The Council provides advice to the Government on rural and remote issues. 9 of the Council's 24 members are women. In addition, Regional Communities Forums are held quarterly to provide people who live in regional Queensland with input into the Government's policy development and decision-making processes (women comprise 71 of the total 155 Forum members).

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

513. A review of employment conditions for public sector employees in regional areas is being undertaken by the Commissioner for Public Employment with a view to developing strategies to attract, retain and support employees in these areas. The review is addressing issues related to the needs and responsibilities of women employees and family members of employees.

514. The Women's Development Group in the Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA was established to address the status of women within the organisation by conducting studies to identify issues for women in the organisation. This included a study to develop guidelines and training to improve the understanding and skills needed to deliver services to female clients.

515. In 1996, the SA Rural Network was established to bring together rural community organisations and individuals. The network has a key role in the development of sustainable rural communities by providing the opportunity for information sharing. It provides a forum for rural people to discuss rural issues and the opportunity to raise self-esteem through personal development and education. The Government supports the *Rural Women's Gathering* (first held in 1996) which provides networking opportunities, skill

development and support to rural women. The gatherings are held in regional areas each year and run by regional groups of rural women.

516. *Shaping the Future: SA Rural Women's Developing Leaders Course* is held every 2 years. 25 rural women from across the State attend the residential course. The course aims to encourage and provide rural women with the skills, motivation and information to seek an active role in addressing current and future issues affecting rural communities.

TASMANIA

517. Women Tasmania is developing a *Strategic Action Plan* to address the needs of rural women. The *Women's Development Programme*, established in 1999, aims to provide community outreach and development to women living in regional, rural and isolated regions. Women Tasmania is further expanding its outreach to these regions, and is implementing several projects including the *Women's Information Network* that establishes a number of Women's Resource rooms attached to local community facilities throughout regional Tasmania. Staffed by trained volunteers, these rooms will offer information to women on a range of issues, and provide a meeting place where women can work together on projects designed to meet identified local needs.

518. The Tasmanian Partnerships Against Domestic Violence Inter-Departmental Committee has developed a proposal for a domestic violence training delivery model that will establish best practice in training for rural health professionals.

519. The *Older Women's Project* has been a major initiative in the north west of the state, which is predominantly rural. The project has identified significant issues affecting the health and wellbeing of older women and is working with local government, businesses, service providers and older women's groups to implement recommendations arising from consultations.

520. The *Women's Midlife Service* provides outreach health and wellbeing programmes to women in rural communities throughout Tasmania, in response to identified needs.

521. The *Adopt-a-Rural-Practice* project has been operating through Divisions of General Practice and funded through the Cancer Screening and Control Service. The project provides female general practitioners locums to all-male medical practices in rural areas.

522. Telehealth and videoconferencing facilities have been introduced to most rural areas of the state and are increasingly being used for diagnosis, training and support for rural health workers.

VICTORIA

523. The Government has developed a number of initiatives that aim to address the needs of rural women. These include: the Rural Women's Network and related website; the *Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Rural Women's Award* which recognises women with a strong positive vision for the future of agriculture production, resource management or supporting industries, and supports them to develop and plan their projects; *Rural Women's Leadership Bursary Programme*; *Promoting Diversity*:

Rural Women in Business and Decision Making Project to improve business and leadership opportunities for women by identifying emerging issues, conducting research, and identifying good practice; a *Women in Agriculture and Resource Management Register*; a *Rural Women's Business and Leadership Training Directory*; the *Networking the Nation Project* which will link the majority of rural Adult and Community Education providers and increase access by women and girls to technology; *Rural Women's Business Entrepreneur Support Scheme*; and new family violence services to assist Indigenous women and their families in rural areas.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

524. To ensure the voices of Indigenous women in rural and remote areas are heard, the Office for Women's Policy embarked on an extensive consultation with Indigenous women in 2002. This has seen the Aboriginal Liaison Coordinator travel 18,200 kilometres from Albany in the Great Southern region to Wyndham in the Kimberley to conduct approximately 50 meetings and speak with more than 600 Aboriginal women in some of the most inaccessible communities in Australia. The consultation is a key component of the Office's *Aboriginal Women's Strategy 2002/2003* and is designed to inform future policy and programme development. Information gathered will also form the WA component of a *National Action Plan on Women and Reconciliation*.

525. Other initiatives for rural and remote area women include: the *Rural, Remote and Regional Network* which brings together women in rural, remote and regional areas to recognise, promote and expand the contribution they make to their communities; and a conference for women in agriculture involving and showcasing the diversity of women in agriculture across WA.

ARTICLE 15: Equality before the law and in civil matters

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

Equality Before the Law

526. In 1994, in response to a reference from the Attorney-General, the Australian Law Reform Commission produced a report on discrimination against women in the legal system, entitled *Equality Before the Law: Justice for Women*. Several of the report's recommendations have been implemented, including strengthening the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* through the *Sex Discrimination Amendment Act 1995*, and addressing violence against women through the *Family Law Amendment Act 1995* and the Government's PADV initiative.

527. In addition, the recommendations for a *National Women's Justice Strategy* and a national network of Women's Legal Services, with specialist units for Indigenous women, were adopted. The national network is comprised of 11 specialist women's legal services, the majority of which have specialist units for Indigenous women. Rural women have access to legal services through *Rural Women Outreach Programmes*.

528. The *National Women's Justice Strategy* has been a long-term project involving the Government and Women's Legal Services working together to enhance the operation and service delivery outcomes of Women's Legal Services, and to establish best practice measures.

Review of legislation

529. The Government has been active in reviewing legislation, including instruments of particular significance to women. The national women's machineries are active participants in the reform process. Recent examples include:

- reforms to the treatment of superannuation retirement savings on marital breakdown. This resolved a ten-year deadlock to improve access to retirement savings by non-working spouses and provides more flexible financial options in the event of marital breakdown;
- the introduction of a reform package to the family law system that aims to assist separating parents to identify and focus on the best interests of their child(ren), and to promote dispute resolution services such as counselling and mediation rather than litigation, wherever appropriate. In 1999, the Government announced funding for an increase in counselling and mediation services, an expansion of children's contact services, and an advice and information line on family law and child support matters. In 2002 the Government announced funding for regional dispute resolution services, conciliation counselling services and legal aid commissions to help people sort family law disputes out themselves rather than going to court. In 2003 the Government announced ongoing funding for all family relationships services programs and expanded a pilot to assist people with contact order breaches into a national program;
- legislation to allow couples to make binding financial agreements about their property before marriage, during marriage or after separation. Where marriages break down, binding financial agreements will enable people to resolve their disputes out of court. The measure includes the

safeguard that before a couple may make an agreement, each person must obtain independent legal advice about the effect of the agreement on their rights, and whether or not it is fair and reasonable, and to their advantage or prudent to make it;

- the introduction of offences of slavery, sexual servitude and deceptive recruiting for sexual services. These offences criminalise some of the most serious forms of exploitation associated with trafficking in persons. The Government intends to introduce additional trafficking in persons offences during 2004. Australia also has child sex tourism offences, applying to Australian citizens and residents who engage in sexual activity with children while overseas; and
- the Model Criminal Code project that provides uniform national criminal laws for adoption by all States and Territories.

Education and reform of the judiciary

530. The Government is committed to ensuring that all members of the Australian judiciary can access education programmes that increase their awareness of community attitudes and of the impact of their decisions on women. Judicial education programmes are being funded by the Government, through the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA). The first gender awareness conference developed by the AIJA was held in October 1995. Since then the Government has funded several educational programmes to identify and address gender bias in the legal system.

531. In July 2001, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General agreed in principle to establish a national judicial college, to provide professional development for judges, masters and magistrates. They recommended this include programmes to broaden judicial officers' understanding of diversity in society and to help them acquire skills to deal with that diversity. The National Judicial College of Australia is expected to commence courses late 2003.

Legal assistance

532. The Government provided \$114.6 million in 2001/2002 in legal aid funding for Commonwealth law matters. Commonwealth legal aid is provided mainly for Family Law matters. Agreements between the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments or between the Commonwealth and Legal Aid Commissions provide that 'protecting the safety of a child or spouse who is at risk is to be accorded the highest priority in making grants of aid in family law'. State and Territory Legal Aid Commissions provide legal assistance to people unable to afford private legal services, who meet means and merit tests to pursue legal proceedings. Under Commonwealth Legal Aid Guidelines, victims of violence who seek protection pursuant to an order under the *Family Law Act 1995* can receive Commonwealth-funded legal aid. Moreover the guidelines provide for assistance in urgent family law matters to seek an interim order or injunction where the applicant's safety is at risk. Legal Aid Commissions can treat as a priority family law matters where there is, or is a likelihood of, domestic violence. Guidance for Legal Aid Commissions in relation to the handling of domestic violence considerations is provided, to ensure consistency of treatment for domestic violence matters.

533. In 1999, the Government allocated additional funding over four years for legal aid. This increased funding has been distributed more equitably among the States and Territories than in previous years using a needs-based planning model. This brings greater national equity to legal aid funding arrangements.

Commonwealth Community Legal Services Programme

534. The *Commonwealth Community Legal Services Programme* funds Women's Legal Services to provide legal advice and referral services for women. Some Women's Legal Services receive special funding to provide specialist legal services for Indigenous women in their communities. Since 1995, a number of new Community Legal Services have been established in high need regional centres and the outreach service from Darwin has been enhanced. The programme also enhances access to legal advice and referral services for women in rural areas. Some funding is allocated to generalist community legal services to operate rural outreach projects. Community Legal Services undertake legal education on issues of particular concern to women, including Family Law matters, violence against women, discrimination and employment. A consultancy project was commissioned in 1998 to improve administration and service delivery in Women's Legal Services. The consultants conducted site visits to all Women's Legal Services and subsequently produced the "*Women's Legal Services Enhancement Project Kit*".

Family Law Pathways initiative

535. In May 2000, the Government established the *Family Law Pathways Advisory Group* to consider ways to achieve better outcomes for family members, particularly children, following the end of a marriage or relationship. The Advisory Group brought together service providers, experts in family law, academics, and representatives from Government to provide expert guidance and make recommendations to Government.

536. The Advisory Group's report, *Out of the Maze – Pathways for the Future for Families Experiencing Separation*, was released in August 2001. The report makes a series of recommendations aimed at improving support for family members and better coordinating family law services. The Government is considering the report's recommendations.

Federal Magistrates Service

537. The Government established the Federal Magistrates Service in 2000 as a quicker and cost effective forum for a range of Commonwealth matters. This particularly benefits women by providing a low cost option in family law disputes. It also provides a low cost forum for women seeking to enforce their rights under anti-discrimination law. The Service operates in every capital city in Australia and some regional cities.

Law by telecommunications

538. Australian Law Online, a website and telephone hotline assisting Australians to solve their legal problems, was launched in June 2001. It provides a gateway to legal information and assistance such as counselling, mediation and other forms of dispute resolution.

Children's contact service

539. 35 children's contact services have been established across Australia, including in rural, remote and urban fringe areas, to help children stay in contact with both parents following a separation or divorce. The service provides a safe and non-threatening venue for children to have supervised contact with their

non-resident parents, or for transfer of children from one parent to another occur. The programme was established in May 1997 and expanded in June 1999. A 1999 evaluation of these services, *Contact Services in Australia: Research and Evaluation Project*, found that they reduce anxiety in children, build better child/parent relationships, reduce parental conflict and assist compliance with contact orders and child support responsibilities.

Indigenous women

540. The Government has improved the quality and accessibility of legal services available to Indigenous women through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS). In recent years, ATSILS have ensured that private sector legal representation is made available to Indigenous women in cases of conflict of interest with other clients. The Government, through ATSIC, funds 12 Family Violence Prevention Legal Units to provide culturally appropriate legal advice to clients on family violence issues, counselling for victims and their partners, and community education. Additional funds are provided to the Commonwealth's specialist Women's Legal Services to address the particular legal services needs of Indigenous women in their community.

Women from a non-English speaking background

541. The *Translating and Interpreting Service* (TIS) provides a national 24 hour telephone interpreting service. Special national facilities allow a three-way conversation between the two parties to the telephone call, who are assisted by a TIS interpreter. Other services include face-to-face interpreting and a limited document translation service for settlement purposes.

542. TIS's non-English speaking female clients may access female interpreters if they wish, particularly in sensitive areas such as reproductive health, torture and trauma and domestic violence. 60 per cent of TIS's professional interpreters are women. As a free community service, the Government provides:

- telephone interpreting to individuals wishing to speak with government or certain community organisations;
- limited face-to-face interpreting to individuals, medical practitioners, and some community organisations on migrant settlement-related matters where telephone interpreting is considered inappropriate; and
- extract translations of certain personal documents for migrants/refugees who are Australian permanent residents/citizens during their first two years of residence in Australia.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

543. As part of an ongoing commitment to ensure that ACT legislation meets the needs of women, the Government is conducting a review of the ACT's protection order legislation.

NEW SOUTH WALES

544. The NSW Legal Aid Commission holds regular community legal education workshops for older women, Indigenous women, and women from non-English speaking backgrounds. It has also produced and widely marketed a brochure *Are You Applying for an Apprehended Violence Order?* that explains the process in plain English. The Commission manages funding to Community Legal Centres through the joint States/Commonwealth *Community Legal Services Funding Programme*.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

545. In 2001, the *Criminal Code*, the *Juvenile Justice Act* and the *Sentencing Act* were substantially amended to make a very clear distinction between property crimes and crimes against persons, and to repeal the mandatory sentencing regime for property offences. The legislative regime for sexual and violent assaults committed by adults has been retained. The *Police Administration Amendment Bill*, introduced in 2001 provides police with more efficient process to bring alleged offenders to court. There is acknowledged provision for Victim Impact Statements within the *Sentencing Act* and the *Juvenile Justice Act* that may contain a statement of the victim's wishes in respect of sentencing. In 2001 the definition of the offence of stalking was widened to include stalking by use of the computer, a criminal activity which is becoming more common.

546. The legislative amendments are an essential part of the new "whole of government" approach to crime prevention in NT. These provide broad links to policies including the Domestic Violence Strategy and the Aboriginal Family Violence Strategy and create better partnerships with Indigenous people and to better support families in difficulty. A new Office of Crime Prevention (in the Department of Justice) administers programmes (\$6.7 million programme over four years) including the *Community Crime Prevention Grants*. This enables community groups to apply and put forward plans to prevent crime and the establishment of Regional Crime Prevention Councils.

QUEENSLAND

547. A review of all Queensland legislation to detect and address both direct and indirect forms of discrimination against women, resulted in legislative and other reforms during 1999/ 2000. An *Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill* was introduced in 2001, inserting racial and religious vilification provisions into the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*. The *Queensland Industrial Relations Act 1999* ensures equal remuneration for men and women, and recognises industrial rights for people in same-sex relationships. It has also introduced unpaid maternity leave provision for long term casual employees. The stalking amendment is discussed in Article 6 and the domestic violence amendments are discussed in Article 16.

548. The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) is reviewing industrial awards to ensure that they are non-discriminatory. DIR is also addressing the increasing casualisation of the workforce, which has a significant impact on women, by using the award review process to examine provisions in awards. These include the definition of casual employment, arrangements for converting casuals to permanent status, appropriate training provisions, and career progression.

549. *Women's Legal Aid* provides legal advice, information and representation, as well as working to increase women's access to legal aid services. It administers the *Brisbane Court Assistance* programme operating in the Brisbane Magistrates Court and is also responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of the *Violence Against Women Strategy*. The Women's Justice Network aims to increase rural and Indigenous women's access to legal advice and Legal Aid Queensland services through video-conferencing.

550. A number of initiatives were undertaken to promote equality before the law for Indigenous women. The *Integrated Indigenous Strategy* was developed to assist Indigenous women who have been the victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and other assaults by increasing their access to specialist legal services. A handbook entitled *Aboriginal English in the Courts* was published to help court officers communicate with speakers of Aboriginal English.

551. In August 2002, a Murri court will be set up in Brisbane to handle guilty pleas by Indigenous adults. The main objects of the Murri court are to: divert people away from sentences of imprisonment where there is another appropriate sentence, and so reduce the over-representation of Indigenous people in the prison system; reduce the failure-to-appear rate where imprisonment is imposed because accused people don't turn up for court or sentencing; and decrease the rates at which court orders are breached. The elders will assist by informing magistrates about cultural issues, and may advise on what is believed the most appropriate sentence or of any conditions that should be placed on a person's sentence.

552. Strategies to meet the needs of female offenders have been outlined in the Department of Correctional Services' *In Their Own Right: A five year framework for meeting the needs of female offenders 2001 –2006*, which is based on the learnings of the department's *Profile of Female Offenders Under Community and Custodial Supervision in Queensland* report.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

553. The *Evidence (Confidential Communications) Amendment Act 1998* provides a regime to regulate the use of rape and sexual assault counselling records as evidence in Court. Under the Act, structured judicial discretion will determine whether or not the defence should have access to sexual assault counselling notes and whether they should be admitted as evidence.

TASMANIA

554. In the mid 1990s, a Tasmanian woman won a case of 'sexually transmitted debt' against a Tasmanian finance provider. For the first time, in any court decision, reference was made to 'sexually transmitted debt' and the way in which women as wives, are vulnerable when banks and finance providers generally do not recognise their independent rights to financial information and advice, rather than seeing them as adjuncts of their husbands.

555. The *Sex Discrimination Act 1994* introduced family responsibilities or carers' responsibilities as a ground of discrimination. This ground is now incorporated into the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998*. Tasmania has the highest number of claims of discrimination under this ground, indicating that women in Tasmania are accessing this right through legislation.

VICTORIA

556. The Government is implementing the strategies to improve women's experience of the legal system. These include a review of training offered to magistrates, judges and judicial support staff to address issues of gender and cross-cultural sensitivity; and a review of the provision and adequacy of legal representation to the Indigenous community with particular concern given to women and their specific need relating to family violence and children's rights.

557. The *Victims of Crime Assistance (Amendment) Act 2000* restores compensation for pain and suffering to victims of crime. The legislation provides for new entitlements for primary, secondary and related victims of crimes committed after 1 July 2000, and will have direct impact on women who are victims of crime.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

558. The *Acts Amendment (Gay Law Reform) Act* was proclaimed on 17 May 2002. The Act ensures that all Western Australians are equal under the law, regardless of sexual orientation.

ARTICLE 16: Womens' rights within marriage and family life

COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

Equality in marriage and family law

559. There are no longer any areas of discrimination between men and women with respect to the areas outlined in Article 16.1. The marriage of children is unlawful in Australia. In Australia, family relations are governed by civil law and women are treated equally to men under these laws. In addition, the family law system has undergone substantial reforms since 1995 to provide alternative pathways to the court system when desired by both parties. The Government supports the equal treatment of women in the family, both in the law and in practice. The Government believes men should share equal responsibility for parenting and caring.

Full and free consent to marry

560. Marriage in Australia is regulated by the *Marriage Act 1961* and applies to men and women without distinction. Normally marriage is not permissible unless the parties to the prospective marriage have attained the age of 18 years of age. In exceptional circumstances, where one party to a proposed marriage is under the age of 18 years and has already turned 16 years, the court may grant approval to that person being married to a specific person over the age of 18 years.

Support for families

561. While the conventional nuclear family is the most prominent family form (in line with trends in other Western countries), the Government supports and respects choices made by Australians in defining their own families. It recognises the many ways in which families create and conduct their lives, inclusively honouring differences of race, ethnicity, culture and religion, and promoting self-sufficiency and social responsibility. The Australian Institute of Family Studies undertakes research into the nature, needs, and diversity of families, providing a wealth of data to assist the development of equitable family policies.

562. Commonwealth legislation provides protection and support for various types of families in Australia (such as single parents, de facto parents and homosexual couples) and, in general, they have access to a wide range of financial and other forms of assistance.

563. The *Sex Discrimination Amendment Bill (No 1) 2000* passed the House of Representatives in April 2001 and was introduced in the Senate but lapsed when Parliament was prorogued for the November 2001 federal election. The aim of the bill is to allow the States and Territories to elect to limit access to artificial reproductive technology services to married or de facto couples. A new bill containing the same measures (*The Sex Discrimination Amendment Bill 2002*) was introduced to Federal Parliament in 2002.

Marriage and relationship education

564. The Government allocated further funding in 1996 over three years to the *Marriage /Relationship Education Programme*. This is a preventative programme focusing on providing information and skills to foster positive, stable relationships.

Access to property

565. The Government supports the principles of equal access and capacity of men and women to property in marriages and de facto marriages. In Australia, the Commonwealth has the power to make laws with respect to legal marriages. Law in relation to de facto marriages is within the jurisdiction of the States and Territories.

566. Parties to a legal marriage may make binding financial agreements about their property before their marriage, during their marriage and after separation. See article 13 for more information.

Marital rape

567. Rape in marriage is a criminal offence in all State and Territory legislation. In 2001, the Government established the *National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault*. A key element of the Strategy is a national community education campaign, which will seek to raise community awareness and change attitudes to help combat sexual assault, including rape in marriage.

Child abuse and neglect

568. The *National Prevention Strategy for Child Abuse and Neglect* is in response to the United Nations World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. Key stakeholders work to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect, youth homelessness and domestic violence, with substantial funding provided to parenting education.

Crime prevention

569. The *National Crime Prevention Programme* (previously the *National Campaign Against Violence and Crime*), launched in 1997, aims to identify and promote innovative ways of reducing and preventing crime and fear of crime. It includes both research and practical initiatives including national pilot projects, local prevention activities, and communication and training initiatives.

570. The *National Campaign Against Violence and Crime* was originally funded for \$13 million over three years. In 1999-2000, the Government provided a further \$21 million over four years to build upon the successes of the first phase of the programme. Priority issues include property crime; private sector crime and public safety; domestic and family violence and violence in Indigenous communities. A significant proportion of *National Crime Prevention Programme* funding is for early intervention initiatives with young people and their families under the *Youth Crime and Families Strategy*.

Gun control

571. In December 2002, the Council of Australian Governments agreed on a national approach to restrict the availability and use of handguns, particularly concealable weapons. The agreement will result in a major reduction in the number of handguns in the community and will significantly strengthen controls over access to handguns. See also *Australia's Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000)*.

Domestic violence

572. In November 1997 Australian heads of Government agreed to work together under PADV to prevent domestic violence across Australia. The initiative is intended to develop innovative, preventative approaches and test best practice, incorporating co-operative work at Commonwealth, State and Territory level. Total Commonwealth spending on PADV will be more than \$50 million over the 1997-98 to 2002-03 period.

573. The priority areas for phase 1 of PADV were: helping adults to break patterns of violence; helping children and young people to break the cycle of violence between generations; working with the community to educate against violence; protection of people at risk; information and best practice on what works in responding to and preventing domestic violence; and helping people in rural and remote communities.

574. PADV has funded more than 100 projects to address the needs of a wide range of people. National projects include: community education; national competency standards for workers dealing with those affected by domestic violence; information for women with disabilities; and the effect of domestic violence on older women. A range of educational and information materials have been produced to inform the community, service providers, teachers and young people on domestic violence.

575. Building on the achievements of PADV, the Government committed a further \$25 million in the 1999-2000 Budget for a second phase of the initiative to run from 1999 to 2003. This includes the following activities:

- community leadership measures: to tap into the potential of churches, charities and other institutions to play a more powerful leadership role advocating against domestic violence;
- community education: a broad national community awareness campaign to focus on key issues such as the harm done to children by domestic violence and the need for perpetrators to take responsibility for their violence;
- Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse: information on domestic violence and best practice outcomes will be disseminated, complementing the drive to forge better links at policy and local service delivery levels;
- children affected by domestic violence: a focus on prevention and early intervention work to improve the wellbeing of children who witness domestic violence.
- perpetrators of domestic violence: will build on the outcomes of the national forum on programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence and provide assistance with infrastructure support, such as standards development and evaluation; and

- the implementation of practical, grassroots projects to strengthen Indigenous community efforts to address family violence.

576. The current major initiatives for PADV include addressing the impact of domestic violence on children; strengthening programmes to ensure that perpetrators of domestic violence put an end to the violence; and community education for mainstream, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

577. The needs of Indigenous people affected by family violence in rural and remote areas are a specific focus of a number of the initiatives, which include providing better mainstream services to the needs of Indigenous women and children affected by family violence, identifying holistic models for community responses to family violence, and testing behaviour change programmes for perpetrators. A grants programme provides funding to grassroots Indigenous community based organisations to devise and implement their own solutions to family violence.

578. A key initiative is a pilot project in a rural community working with adolescents to prevent violence in their current and future relationships. Evaluation of the project shows a positive impact on the students' understanding of the unacceptability of violence and that the project may be implemented in other areas.

579. The *National Indigenous Family Violence Grants Programme* was established in 2001 to help local Indigenous communities take action to reduce family violence. Grant recipients will also be assisted by a mentoring team which will provide advice on project management, self-documentation and self-evaluation.

580. A national Indigenous family violence community awareness campaign, called *Walking into Doors*, was run in April 2001. The campaign featured Indigenous musicians talking and singing about the experience of violence in their lives and those of Indigenous families. A series of workshops allowed community members to interact with service providers and start discussions about addressing violence in their communities.

581. In November 1997, the Prime Minister launched *Business Against Domestic Violence* to enable corporate Australia to work with their employees and the community to address and prevent domestic violence. Some key achievements of *Business Against Domestic Violence* include: Western Mining Corporation Resources Ltd provided \$50,000 to an Indigenous health services corporation in Kalgoorlie to undertake a comprehensive domestic violence community awareness programme in the goldfields region of Western Australia; in December 1999, the Westfield Foundation donated \$45,500 to Centacare Newcastle to fund camps for boys aged between 7 and 15 years who have experienced domestic violence, physical or sexual abuse or who have demonstrated extreme acting out or violent behaviour; McDonalds Family Restaurants Community Awareness Project comprised McDonalds developing tray mats with a message for families affected by domestic violence about how to get assistance.

582. In 2001, *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence – a Business Approach* began raising awareness of domestic violence in the workplace. This approach will seek to raise employers' awareness of the economic and social costs associated with domestic violence. Recent initiatives include an information

package for employers and a business ‘think tank’ to provide information to employers and encourage them to promote supportive measures in their workplace.

National Women’s Safety Taskforce

583. A Ministerial Council *National Women’s Safety Taskforce* was established in June 2002 to address the issues of sexual assault, domestic violence and individual family violence. The Taskforce will: identify opportunities for strategic collaboration between all jurisdictions to enhance knowledge and develop good practice; promote the sharing of knowledge and the dissemination of information on preventing and responding to sexual assault, domestic violence and individual family violence; develop a framework to facilitate and support collaborative policy approaches and initiatives; and report annually through the Ministerial Council on the Status of Women to Heads of Government.

Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

584. The Government has been working with State and Territory Governments through the Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs to address Indigenous family violence. *See Australia’s Report on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.*

Crisis payment

585. From 1 July 1999, a one-off payment was introduced through the social security system to assist people who are in financial hardship and a crisis situation. This particularly assists women who have been forced to leave their place of residence and establish a new home due to domestic violence.

Australian Institute of Criminology

586. The Government commissioned the AIC to conduct research on people at risk of committing violence. In April 1997, the AIC released the *Indicators of Aggressive Behaviour report*. The report examined ways to assist groups most at risk from the portrayal of violence.

Model Criminal Codes

587. The Government has placed sexual assault, domestic violence, slavery and sexual servitude as priorities for a ‘best practice’ model criminal code for Australian jurisdictions. For information on important criminal codes in areas affecting women, see *Australia’s Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000)*.

588. In recent times there has been increased awareness of ‘stalking’ – harassing, threatening and intimidating a person by engaging in various types of repetitive menacing conduct. With the recent proliferation of internet and related technologies concerns have been raised about their use by intended stalkers. The model criminal code report *Damage and Computer Offences* creates general offences concerning the misuse of computers and unauthorised access of computer data. This includes the offence of unauthorised access with intention to create a serious offence. A potential stalker who misuses computer systems and data with the intention of stalking another person may have an increased ability to

locate confidential data concerning the intended victim. These laws will complement existing anti-stalking laws.

DNA – sex crimes

589. Recent developments in DNA technology offer considerable scope for improved rates of solving and deterring particularly violent crimes, including rape. A wider variety of incredibly minute samples, including saliva and semen, can now be analysed to build a DNA profile. Such samples will be readily available from rape and sexual assault victims. The Government contributed \$50 million as part of its initiative to establish a national DNA law enforcement database. The database is intended to help combat crimes against women. Nearly all Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments have enacted legislation which provides police across Australia with powers to take DNA samples from known serious offenders or those suspected of committing serious offences and store DNA information on the national database. These profiles will be available for matching against crime scene DNA samples. This should provide a strong deterrent against re-offending and assist in focusing rape investigations.

STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

590. Specific legislation has been in place to protect victims of domestic violence since 1986. Legislative reforms aimed at providing greater protection to victims include: automatic cancellation or suspension of a firearms licence where a Protection Order or Interim Protection Order exists and enabling police to seize ammunition and firearms licences in such circumstances; requiring that bail for a person accused of a domestic violence offence only be granted where the accused does not represent a substantial risk to the safety of an alleged victim or an associated person; removing limitations on the types of restrictions which could be included in protection orders; and ensuring that a Protection Order can be obtained at any time including when a court is not sitting.

591. The Domestic Violence Prevention Council provides advice on domestic violence policy and programme development. The Council has representation from the government and non-government sectors and reports to the ACT Attorney-General.

592. The *Family Violence Intervention Programme*, a coordinated community and criminal justice response to family violence, was funded by the Commonwealth Government from 1998 to 2001 under PADV, and has since been funded by the ACT Government. It involves both government and non-government agencies and aims to maximise safety and protection for victims, and provides for offender accountability and rehabilitation. Some key initiatives include: specialised training of police; appointment of a dedicated Family Violence Prosecutor and Family Violence Magistrate; establishment of a separate Family Violence list at the Magistrates Court; development of protocols between agencies in relation to family violence policies and procedures; a mandated perpetrator education programme. The programme has led to notable improvements in policing and prosecution including: more coordinated and pro-active approaches particularly in regard to victim safety issues; a significant increase in the number of family violence cases finalised through early guilty pleas (reducing trauma to victims); and improved efficiency and consistency in the way that the courts deal with family violence cases.

593. The project, *Preventing Violence Against Women With Disabilities*, was 1 of 4 national winners in the Australian Violence Prevention Awards 1999. This project was developed in response to needs identified by Women With Disabilities Australia, which contributed its expertise to the development and implementation of the project.

NEW SOUTH WALES

594. The Government is implementing a state-wide 'whole of government' *Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women* to develop and promote prevention strategies and improve access to services. The Strategy uses regional partnerships, a prevention focus, and a broad definition of violence. Other measures include: improved law and processes relating to Apprehended Violence Orders; *Resources for Teaching Against Violence* (1996) on bullying, domestic violence, sex based harassment, dispute resolution and violence against homosexual men and women; a *Community Benefit Fund* which provides grants to assist women victims of violence; *Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Programme* which provides support, legal representation, information and referral from local courts; training for health and community workers in responding to abuse of older people and people with disabilities and carers; and the NSW Witness Assistance Service which has 14 professional staff to assist victims and prosecution witnesses (it has an Indigenous Project Officer to raise cultural awareness and address needs of Indigenous victims/witnesses including domestic violence).

595. The Government is committed to continued implementation of the NSW *Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women*. The scheme empowers women experiencing domestic violence to more effectively use the legal system. There will be continued work on preventing and responding to abuse of older people, people with disabilities and carers, including policy materials for preventing and reducing abuse and assault in disability services.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

596. The Government has a strong crime prevention policy framework, including the *Domestic Violence Strategy and the Aboriginal Family Violence Strategy*. The Government instigated a review of these strategies with a view to strengthening them. In 2002, funding (\$1.08 million) was allocated to specialist programmes including: legal services based in Darwin and Alice Springs; domestic violence and sexual assault counsellors in regional areas; domestic violence community education campaigns; and the implementation of the *Aboriginal Family Violence Strategy*. Government agencies contribute approximately an additional \$3 million for initiatives that advance the objectives of the strategies including Police Domestic Violence Units, crisis accommodation, safe houses and safe rooms, night patrols and training for workers in this field.

597. Examples of other key initiatives to address crimes particularly affecting women include: piloting the first known training programme for Indigenous family violence offenders and their families; a Crisis Chat Line providing support and information on issues relating to young people and domestic/family violence and sexual assault; extension of the range of domestic and family violence and sexual assault related programmes to offenders in correctional and juvenile detention centres; expansion and strengthening of legislative provisions regarding domestic violence restraining orders within the *Domestic Violence Act* including allowing senior police to make or apply for interim restraining orders; media campaigns aimed at behaviour change; establishment of protocols between police, health workers and community council

members; domestic violence and sexual assault data collection projects; and new public housing options for domestic and family violence victims. National awards have been given to programmes under the *Domestic Violence Strategy*.

598. The Indigenous Family Violence Reference Group provided the Government Substance Abuse Inquiry with submissions on Indigenous women's issues and concerns, the impact on individuals, families and communities and the inter-relationship between drug-abuse and health and wellbeing. The Inquiry will report to Government in 2003.

599. Research into sexual assault is being coordinated to provide advice to the Government on the development of a new Sexual Assault Strategy in 2002-03. An increase in reporting of drug facilitated sexual assault is being addressed in a programme that is bringing government and non-government agencies together to develop a community education programme to inform women. It will also develop recommendations for amendments to current legislation to take account of drink spiking offences. Young women aged 18-30 years are the focus of the Young Women's Sexual Health project to provide information about healthy sexual practices.

QUEENSLAND

600. During the past five years, the Government has pursued a wide range of legislative and programme responses to lessen the incidence of violence against women and children in the community. Some of these initiatives include:

- policy frameworks: *Safe Families – Safer Communities; Domestic and Family Violence Accommodation and Related Support Service System Development Strategy 2002; Coordinating Efforts to Address Violence against Women Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2002-2005; Inter-agency Guidelines for Responding to Adult Victims of Sexual Assault;*
- Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Centre: evidence based research, community education and evaluation specific to domestic and family violence;
- *Domestic and Family Violence Access and Support Service*: women's crisis telephone information, support and referral service, a men's information, support and referral service, and a secondary consultation service for workers in isolated areas;
- *Elder Abuse Prevention Initiative*: address abuse against older people, of whom 70 per cent are women;
- *Cape York Justice Study*: a strategy to reduce breaches of the law, alcohol and substance abuse and protect members of the community, particularly women, children and the aged, from violence. The Government's response to the study, *Meeting Challenges, Making Choices* was released in April 2002;
- Legal Aid Queensland's *Integrated Indigenous Strategy 2000*: increase access by Indigenous women and their families to specialist legal services including assistance for Indigenous women experiencing sexual assault or domestic and/or family violence;
- *Crime Prevention Strategy*: focuses on the causes of crime, and incorporates an understanding of the different experiences of men and women as both perpetrators and victims of crime, and implementation of gender appropriate crime prevention initiatives;
- Domestic Violence Unit (through Legal Aid Queensland): specialist domestic violence information, advice and representation predominantly to women;

- Queensland Police Service: development of referral networks and preventative strategies for dealing with the problems of domestic violence and the training of police in domestic violence legislation, policy and procedures;
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Taskforce on Violence Report*: 123 recommendations made. *The Next Step*, produced as a response to the report, is a strategy to meet immediate needs and help communities and government make long term plans through the *Towards a Queensland Government and Aboriginal and Islander Ten Year Partnership*.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

601. The Government has undertaken many initiatives, both operational and legislative, to combat domestic violence. The *Domestic Violence Act 1994* was strengthened in 1999 and includes: provisions to allow restraining orders to be made where a person reasonably fears an act of domestic violence will be committed; and provisions requiring a defendant to obtain leave of the Court before applying for a variation or revocation of a restraining order. The Government has also implemented: *The Way It Is* report (an audit report of services for adults who have experienced rape or sexual assault in SA country areas over the past 12 months and a series of 25 recommendations); and the *Rape Prevention Project* (1998/99), an integrated health promotion, harm minimisation and crime prevention strategies.

602. During 2000/2001, emphasis has been given to developing a strategic and planned approach to domestic violence prevention. Several strategies have been undertaken through the Crime Prevention Unit such as: Ministerial Forum for the Prevention of Domestic Violence; development and implementation of the State Collaborative Approach; and development of the costed *Strategic Pathways for Stopping Violent Behaviour Programs in South Australia*.

603. Pilot programmes are currently being run in two Magistrates Courts for people charged with domestic violence offences. The *Northern Violence Intervention Programme* has been developed to respond to the needs of families affected by domestic violence in the area covered by the Elizabeth Magistrates Court. The service focuses on a model that includes police, a specially designated Domestic Violence Court and a VIP (interagency) team consisting of separate workers for men, women and children, a Corrections officer and a coordinator.

TASMANIA

604. The Government is committed to improving the safety of women through a range of initiatives that focus on the issues of sexual assault and rape, domestic violence, and community safety. The key components of the Government's *Making Women Safe* policy are: developing programmes to assist women to feel safe in their homes and communities; ensuring an integrated service delivery response to domestic violence; developing more responsive police and legal procedures; providing more information to the community about where to get help and counselling; and, assisting consultation and cooperation between bureaucrats, service providers and community groups by re-establishing an advisory structure.

605. A proposal to establish a 'whole of government' and a Women and Safety community policy/advisory structure that will lead and coordinate government and community responses to sexual assault, domestic violence, and other significant issues is currently being considered by the Government. The proposed advisory structure will provide a mechanism for acknowledging and addressing the needs of

child, male and female victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. It will also facilitate a coordinated, 'whole-of-government' approach to policy development and service delivery.

606. A number of Tasmanian projects have been funded under PADV programme 1997-2001. Some of these include: the Domestic Violence Integrated Information Project; Domestic Violence Training Delivery Model for Rural Health Professionals Project; Indigenous Family Violence Project; and *Pathways and Turning Points: How Women Survive Violent Partners Project*.

607. The Government has conducted *Community Safety Surveys* using qualitative research methods to assess fear of crime in public spaces incorporating focus groups and interviews. A survey examining community attitudes to police, fear of crime and victimisation was also conducted.

VICTORIA

608. The Government is committed to the development of the Women's Safety Strategy providing a coordinated 'whole of government' response to violence against women. The Government released two key papers in 2002: *Key Directions in Women's Safety: A coordinated approach to reducing violence against women*; and *Taking Responsibility: A Framework for developing best practice in programs for men who use violence towards family members*. The papers will underpin the Women's Safety Strategy due for completion in 2003. The Government is committed to the development of an *Indigenous Family Violence Strategy* for Victoria and is working in partnership with Indigenous communities to develop the Strategy. A Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce has been appointed and has commenced consultations with Indigenous communities.

609. New funding has been provided to improve and increase housing and support options available for women in situations of family violence and enhance the capacity of local communities to prevent and respond to violence against women.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

610. The extent of domestic violence and sexual assault among Indigenous communities is an overriding safety issue concerning the Government. The Premier announced an *Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities*, chaired by Magistrate Sue Gordon and due to report in 2003. The Minister for Women's Interests established a Family Violence Coordinating Committee to develop strategic directions for services. The Committee will report to the Cabinet Standing Committee on Social Policy and will take into account the outcomes from the Gordon Inquiry. Other initiatives include the 1999/2001 *Two-Year Plan for Women* and the Action Plan on family and domestic violence. A further phase of the plan will place special emphasis on Indigenous family violence.

611. The *Freedom From Fear Campaign Against Domestic Violence* (1998) is a long term, community education initiative focusing primarily on perpetrators and men at risk of perpetrating domestic violence. The campaign calls upon men to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to seek help to change. The *Men's Domestic Violence Helpline* provides information, counselling and referral into men's behaviour change programmes. The *Aboriginal Family Violence Training Programme* will be delivered by community organisations in seventeen locations. It will promote understanding of Indigenous family violence and build networks between Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers.

About the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

The Convention defines discrimination against women as “... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:

- to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life - including the right to vote and to stand for election - as well as education, health and employment. States parties agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Convention is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women.

Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations.

Department for the Advancement of Women, United Nations, June 2003

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw

Statistical Appendix to Australia's CEDAW Report 2003

THE COMMONWEALTH

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force (as at August) – seasonally adjusted series	53.3	52.6	53.4	53.2	54.8	55.8	55.7	N/A
Female unemployment rate	7.6	8	7.6	7.1	6.5	6.5	6.1	N/A
% small business operators who are women*	N/A	34.8	N/A	32.6	N/A	33	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	599.4	626.9	653.1	675.7	710.9	\$751.10	\$789.40	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	719.8	753.6	784.3	796.2	848.3	\$888.30	\$929.10	N/A
Leadership								
% Commonwealth public sector board members who are women	31.5	30.7	30.3	30.9	32.8	33.6	33.9	N/A
% private sector board members who are women	4	N/A	7.6	8.3	10	10	9	N/A
% State/Territory Parliamentarians who are women (as at 31 December)	19.1	19.8	19.9	21.7	22.4	25.4	27	N/A
% Commonwealth Parliamentarians who are women (as at 31 December)	19.2	21	25.4	24.6	25	28.3	27	N/A
% Local Government members who are women	N/A	24.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	Less than 30%	Less than 30%	Less than 30%
% Commonwealth Government Honours received by women	31.3	30.1	28.9	30.1	32.5	33.8	32.6	35.5
Living Arrangements								
One parent families with dependent children under 15 – female head (% of all families with dependent children under 15)	16.3	17.7	19.5	19.3	18.6	19.5	19.8	N/A

One parent families with dependent children under 15 – male head (% of all families with dependent children under 15)	2	2.3	2	1.9	2.3	2.3	2.9	N/A
Education / training								
Year 12 apparent retention rate for women	77	77.8	77.7	78.5	78.7	79.1	80.7	N/A
% higher education students (total students) who are women	55.1	55.2	55.5	55.9	55.2	55	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women	47.6	48.1	48.5	49	49.2	48.7	N/A	N/A
% apprentices/trainees (total apprentices/trainees) who are women	18.8	21.5	25.8	32.1	32.5	34.4	36.1	N/A
Health								
Incidence of affective disorders (includes depression) in women	N/A	7.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	5.50%	N/A	N/A
Incidence of affective disorders (includes depression) in men	N/A	4.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.40%	N/A	N/A
Incidence of screening for cervical cancer (1995)	80.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	57.2	N/A	N/A
Incidence of screening for breast cancer (mammogram only)	34.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	35.6	N/A	N/A
Deaths per 100,000 women from cervical cancer	2.9	37	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A
Deaths per 100,000 population from female breast cancer	25	24	23	22	N/A	21.3	N/A	N/A
Violence								
% women who have experienced domestic violence reporting to police	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
% women who have experienced domestic violence	2.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
% women who have experienced sexual assault reporting to police	14.9	N/A	33	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
% women who have experienced sexual assault**	1.9	N/A	0.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	79.4	77.5	76.6	74.5	81.6	87.1	90.6	N/A

* Uses definition from Small Business in Australia (ABS Catalogue

No. 1321.0)

** Australian Bureau of Statistics Recorded Crime 4510.0. Please note that the majority of sexual assault victims are women.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force (as at August) – seasonally adjusted series	64.6	64.8	64.7	65.9	68.6	65.2	68.2	N/A
% small business operators who are women	N/A	35.2	N/A	38.5	N/A	34.7	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	699.2	735.5	774.6	783.7	832.2	\$866.80	\$912.70	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	852.4	859.1	924.2	899.4	992.1	\$1,021.80	\$1,058.30	N/A
Leadership								
% State/Territory Parliamentarians who are women	35.3	35.3	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	35.3	41.2
Education / training								
Year 12 apparent retention rate for women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	91.2	89.1	N/A
% higher education students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	51.6	51.6	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	48	47.2	N/A	N/A
% apprentices/trainees (total apprentices/trainees) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	31.8	22.8	36.3	N/A
Violence								
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	37.6	35.7	27.9	30.4	31.5	56.1	55.6	N/A

NEW SOUTH WALES

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force August, seasonally adjusted series	51.6	50.6	51.2	51.2	53.5	55.2	54.1	N/A
% small business operators who are women	N/A	33.6	N/A	30	N/A	30.9	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	627.8	653.6	679	704.5	729.2	\$781.30	\$813.20	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	764.6	780.5	810.9	840.5	901.3	\$957.30	\$976.70	N/A
Leadership								
% State/Territory Parliamentarians who are women	20.6	19.9	19.9	19.3	20	20.9	20.4	26.7
Education / training								
Year 12 apparent retention rate for women	75	75.5	75.2	75.4	N/A	73.7	75.1	N/A
% higher education students (total students) who are women	N/A	54	54.5	55	54.6	54.8	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	51.7	51.7	51.2	50.9	N/A	N/A
% apprentices/trainees (total apprentices/trainees) who are women	20.5	22.6	22.5	26.8	29.4	32.1	33.1	N/A
Violence								
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	81.2	74.3	71.1	69.2	92.4	95.3	97.2	N/A

NORTHERN TERRITORY

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force (as at August) – seasonally adjusted series	63.9	63.9	62.1	67.6	60.3	68.2	67.9	N/A
% small business operators who are women	N/A	36.7	N/A	28.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	723.5	763.5	788.4	816.6	857.4	\$740.00	\$788.70	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$874.90	\$903.30	N/A
Leadership								
% State/Territory Parliamentarians who are women	16	12	12	12	16	28	28	28
Education/ training								
Year 12 apparent retention rate for women (from Year 7/8 to Year 12)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	57.9	57.1	N/A
% higher education students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	63	65	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	46	46.9	N/A	N/A
% apprentices/trainees (total apprentices/trainees) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	33.4	33.9	33.4	N/A
Violence								
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	154.5	143.9	123.7	85.1	117.2	144.1	155.9	N/A

QUEENSLAND

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force (as at August) – seasonally adjusted series	54.4	54.8	55	55.2	56.6	57.4	57.5	N/A
% of small business operators who are women	N/A	38.3	N/A	36.4	N/A	35.7	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	569.8	591.2	613.5	631.7	670.4	\$711.60	\$747.90	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	665.6	702.6	742.9	740.3	795.1	\$812.40	\$851.80	N/A
Leadership								
% State / Territory Parliamentarians who are women	14.6	14.6	15.7	18	19.1	37	34.8	37.1
Education / Training								
Year 12 apparent retention rate for women	75.4	76.7	78	77.9	78	83.2	85.5	N/A
% higher education students (total students) who are women	56	57	57	57	55.1	54.7	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women (2000 is preliminary)	50	50	49	48	48.8	48.7	N/A	N/A
% apprentices / trainees (total apprentices / trainees) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	32.4	33.5	33.8	N/A
Violence								
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	90.9	98.1	100.9	101.2	102.8	112.6	127.8	N/A

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force (as at August) – seasonally adjusted series	52.7	51.5	50	51	51.9	51.8	52.4	N/A
% small business operators who are women	N/A	36.90%	N/A	34.80%	N/A	35.4	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	562.4	583.7	623.5	631.2	667.7	\$714.50	\$757.20	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	666.7	703.9	737.5	742.7	791.6	\$832.60	\$829.90	N/A
Leadership								
% State/Territory Parliamentarians who are women	21.7	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	13.4	31.9
Education / training								
Year 7/8-12 apparent retention rate for women	71.8	74.1	72.4	72.9	74.6	72.5	72.6	N/A
Year 10-12 apparent retention rate for women	75.7	77.9	76.2	76.2	77.3		N/A	
% higher education students (total students) who are women	55.5	55.6 (b)	55.7	56.7	55.1	57.2	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women	52.4	45.7	50.5	52.5	48.8	50.3	N/A	N/A
% apprentices/trainees (total apprentices/trainees) who are women	30	32.1	40.1	42.4	34.7	33.5	35.1	N/A
Violence								
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	92.1	82.3	88.1	88.4	97.8	104.4	106.8	N/A

TASMANIA

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force (as at August) – seasonally adjusted series	49.4	47.9	49.7	48.6	50.7	50.3	50.7	N/A
% small business operators who are women	N/A	33.1	N/A	34.6	N/A	36	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	556.3	583.9	613.4	619.1	645.4	\$701.10	\$748.90	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	666.9	717.6	732.5	749.7	784.2	\$789.20	\$841.60	N/A
Leadership								
% State/Territory Parliamentarians who are women	18.5	24.1	20.5	27.5		27.5	26.6	37.1
Education/ training								
Year 12 apparent retention rate for women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	73.9	79.4	N/A
% higher education students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	52.1	50.7	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	45.9	43.9	N/A	N/A
% apprentices/trainees (total apprentices/trainees) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	40.6	41.2	42.1	N/A
Violence								
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	34.1	41.8	45.8	42.1	41.2	43.7	50.7	N/A

VICTORIA

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force (as at August) – seasonally adjusted series	53.1	52.4	54.6	53.1	54.5	55.1	56	N/A
% small business operators who are women	N/A	32.30%	N/A	32.20%	N/A	31.7	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	588	625.8	650.2	685.2	724.1	\$749.10	\$799.00	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	697.6	754.2	770.9	772.3	813.1	\$853.80	\$938.20	N/A
Leadership								
% State/Territory Parliamentarians who are women	18.2	24.1	19.7	25	25.8	25.8	40	30.3
Education / training								
Year 12 apparent retention rate for women***	86	87.3	86.9	86.7	87.7	86.7	88.7	N/A
% higher education students (total students) who are women****	54.9	54.5	54.5	54.7	54.5	54.1	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women	45.2	44.8	45.5	46.9	47.8	46.7	N/A	N/A
% apprentices/trainees (total apprentices/trainees) who are women	18.5	21.1	26.4	33.5	35.6	37.4	41	N/A
Violence								
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	61.4	64.1	64.2	59.5	51.9	54.3	54.3	N/A

***Derived from the August Census years 10-12. This is a lower but more accurate figure than the February census.

****Includes all students such as overseas and interstate which is slightly lower than Victorian-only students.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labour force								
Female participation rate in the labour force (as at August) – seasonally adjusted series	56.7	55.2	56.8	56.4	57.4	58.1	57.5	N/A
% small business operators who are women	N/A	36	N/A	32.9	N/A	34.5	N/A	N/A
Female full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	582.2	604.7	627.7	637.5	687.2	\$722.00	\$746.90	N/A
Male full time adult ordinary time average weekly earnings – August quarter original series (\$AUD)	748.5	776.4	818.1	832.6	878.7	\$911.60	\$953.00	N/A
Leadership								
% State/Territory Parliamentarians who are women	18.7	22	22	22	22	24.1	28.6	25.3
Education / training								
Year 12 apparent retention rate for women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	77.3	78.3	N/A
% higher education students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	56.8	56.7	N/A	N/A
% VET students (total students) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	47.4	46.3	N/A	N/A
% apprentices/trainees (total apprentices/trainees) who are women	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	26.6	28.3	26	N/A
Violence								
Rate per 100,000 persons of reported sexual assault	99.5	89.6	82.7	83.6	81.2	88.6	84	N/A