



National Women's Alliances



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Vision for the Alliances

The Australian Government has a vision for a reinvigorated women's movement in which the voices of women, particularly those from marginalised and disadvantaged groups, are heard in addressing policy issues that affect women.

Inequality between men and women remains a challenge in Australia. It shapes and limits women's ability to contribute to Australian society. The repercussions of gender inequality mean that Australian women and men, their families, communities and Australia as a whole are disadvantaged.

In March 2010 the Australian Government funded six National Women's Alliances to take the lead in ensuring that the voices of as many women as possible are heard, especially those who in the past have found it difficult to engage in advocacy and decision making.

The Alliances

The National Women's Alliances are made up of a mix of sector-based and issues-based women's groups each with a distinct focus and a strong capacity for networking and advocacy activities.

The issues-based Alliances are:

- economic Security 4 Women
- Equality Rights Alliance
- Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

The sector-based Alliances are:

- National Rural Women's Coalition and Network
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
- Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance

The six Alliances are funded \$200,000 per year for 2010 - 2013.

The role of the Alliances is twofold:

- bring together women's organisations and individuals from across Australia to share information, identify issues that affect them, and identify solutions, and;
- engage actively with the Australian Government on policy issues as part of a better more informed and representative dialogue between women and government.

Further information on the Alliances can be found at:

http://fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/equal/Pages/engaging_womens_org.aspx

The Role of Office for Women

The Office for Women administer the funding for the National Women's Alliances program and support capacity building for the Alliances, including:

- Hosting annual forums for the Alliances
- Managing a program of training and capacity building for the Alliances
- Managing an annual review of Alliances work and the Program

The Office for Women also provides support to Alliances to be in contact with other areas of Government who may have a role in the content of Alliances work.

economic Security 4 Women (eS4W)

economic Security 4 Women focuses on the promotion of lifelong economic wellbeing for women. They believe that economic wellbeing and financial security are essential ingredients to achieving equality for women and will enable women of all ages to have an equal place in society. Through advocacy and lobbying activities they aim to change policies which continue to have a negative impact on the long term economic security of all women.

Activities in 2011-12

1. Economic Wellbeing

- Advocate for Government to include women and girls in 'skills connect – connecting skills to jobs' initiative, by:
 - Promoting recommendations from eS4W's Viable Work Report.
 - Advocating the need for education and training of secondary school aged girls so they select non-traditional careers.

2. The Australian Care Economy

- Lobby the ABS to undertake regular Time Use Surveys in the same year as the Census of Population and Housing and to regularly produce satellite accounts in line with the International System of National Accounts.
- Develop:
 - A comprehensive set of estimates of the economic value of Care Work in Australia as a percentage of GDP.
 - Relevant policy recommendations for future advocacy work.
 - A 'Data Analysis Framework' outlining required data sets as well as a 'data proxy' methodology.
- Advocate for flexible working conditions, in particular access to leave when required, flex-time, time in lieu and the ability to change start and finish times throughout the Australian workforce.

3. Pay and Gender Workforce Equity

- Development of an online pay equity kit for small to medium size enterprises.
- Promotion of broad education and awareness of the issues around equal pay.

4. Collaboration Project – Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

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The collaboration project will focus on:

- Stakeholder consultation through a survey on the National Rural Women's Network.
- Informing the Office for Women of the key issues for rural women around these issues.
- Making a presentation to the Office of Women of the information and case studies supporting selected recommendations following consultations with rural women.

5. Collaboration Project – 2012-13 Federal Budget

- Host training workshops for Alliance member organisations on the Federal Budget processes and advocacy
- Prepare a submission for the 2012-13 Federal Budget.
- Advocate for the Federal Budget to respond to a maximum of 3 key issues affecting women, with an overarching recommendation for improved gender response budgeting in the Federal Budget.
- Provide a gender analysis of the Federal Budget.

6. Special Policy Project – Women's Voices from the Flood Plains

- Produce a report detailing gendered approaches that address the economic empowerment needs of women from rural flood zones.

Contact Information

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Equality Rights Alliance (ERA)

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) is Australia's largest network of organisations with an interest in advancing women's equality. ERA has a focus on gender equality, women's leadership and women's diversity, including bringing young women's voices to policy and decision making. To advance gender equality, ERA adopts a human rights framework and advocates for adherence to international human rights principles.

Activities in 2011-12

1. Housing Policy to meet the needs of women

- Build an online resources hub to share current information on accessible, affordable housing and women's housing security through ERA's website.
- Work with stakeholders in the housing sector to ensure that recommendations for affordable housing include a focus on accessible housing as well as a gender focus.
- Convene a roundtable with key stakeholders to advance recommendations in the ERA *National Affordable Housing Framework* as a follow up to ERA's February 2011 roundtable on women's housing security.

2. Women's Equality in Laws

- Maintain a detailed watching brief on the progress of the Governments anti-discrimination law consolidation project.
- In preparation for release of draft bill, promote advocacy resources on key recommendations to strengthen and improve anti-discrimination protections for women, in particular women from diverse life situations and backgrounds.

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5. Special Policy Project – Feminism and the 21st Century: Young Women and new technology

The young Women's Advisory Group of ERA have developed the online space Settle Petal – www.settlepetal.org.au for young feminists.

- The aim of the website is to:
 - Assess the impact of new technologies on young women.
 - Pilot an online activism campaign.
 - Pilot an exhibition on 'what's next for the women's movement'.

Contact Information

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Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AIRWA)

The Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AIRWA) is focused on lifting the status of Immigrant and Refugee Women through a unified and national front, raising awareness of their issues and advocating for change on behalf of this culturally and linguistically diverse group of women.

Activities in 2011-12

1. Responding to emerging issues affecting immigrant and refugee women

- Maintain a detailed watching brief on issues affecting immigrant and refugee women.
- Engage directly with Government on those issues pertinent to immigrant and refugee women including lobbying, attending meetings and getting questions up in parliament.
- Maintain a strong web presence and social networking scheme.

2. Leadership Training

- Delivery of the Young Immigrant and Refugee Women Professional Training Program
 - Delivery of the Leadership training module to Young Women of CALD background in each State and Territory.
 - Development and delivery of a train the trainer module across all States and Territories.
 - Write a policy on training young immigrant and refugee women – informed by AIRWA's training pilot programs.
 - Development of a sustainable mentoring program.

3. Migrant women and employment

- Lobby and advocate to Government Ministers and Departments about the needs of immigrant and refugee women in the areas of employment, education and training.
- Development of a policy on women in precarious employment for AIRWA and their members.
- Advocate/ lobby for the signing and endorsement of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families.
- Provide support and training materials to further Asian Women at Work's project 'Voices of immigrant women workers in precarious employment'.
 - Develop training materials suited to the needs of immigrant and refugee women in precarious employment.
 - Help Asian Women at Work to run a trial training program for women in precarious employment.
- Research and write a paper examining migrant and refugee women who are disengaged from the labour force and often labelled 'discouraged workers'.

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- Provide a gender analysis of the Federal Budget.

6. Collaboration Project – Immigrant and Refugee Women and Domestic Violence

- Write a background paper on domestic violence and immigrant and refugee women which can be used to inform future policy documents and advocacy avenues.

7. Special Policy Project – Walk in Her Shoes

- AIRWA are working to produce an online and print media campaign aimed at showing Australia how difficult it is to be submerged in a foreign culture, and to be accepted in it.

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National Rural Women's Coalition and Network (NRWCN)

Representing over 250,000 rural, regional and remote Australian women, their families, communities and associated networks, the National Rural Women's Coalition and Network (NRWCN) is the national peak body for six national rural women's organisations,

Australian Local Government Women's Association

- Australian Women in Agriculture
- Country Women's Association of Australian
- Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women
- National Rural Health Alliance
- Women's Industry Network Seafood Community, and
- Two rural Indigenous women *representing a range of rural, indigenous women*
- Rural Doctors Association of Australia - Female Doctor's Group as *associate member*

Throughout rural, regional and remote Australia, NRWCN is recognised as the prime voice for rural women, their ideas and concerns. NRWCN's coverage includes Indigenous women, young women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds, women on the land, in rural and regional towns, professional and business women, socially isolated women, and community volunteers. Through its working relationships with other organisations, NRWCN aims to ensure the rural perspective is accurately reflected in all emerging Federal Government policies.

Activities in 2011-12

1. Expanding communication between rural, regional and remote women and the government

NRWCN will do this by increasing real time discussions capacity about issues and solutions, and the connection of more women living and working in rural, regional and remote Australian through the ongoing development of the National Rural Women's Network. The NRWN is a social media network and a network of established organisations based in rural Australia. Recently, NRWCN has joined with state Rural Women's Networks to give them a national exposure and ability to share information.

2. Rural Health

NRWCN has undertaken a survey of rural women through an online survey and webinars to develop for government, a proposal of ways to increase the accessibility of health services for women living in rural, regional and remote areas. This will be followed up with a meeting with the Minister for Health to present evidence of the inequities in the provision of health services in rural, regional and remote areas.

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The collaboration project will:

- Hold stakeholder consultations with rural women through a survey through the National Rural Women's Network and through the networks of all 6 national women's alliances. A proposal will be presented to the Office for Women with case studies to inform the development of the federal government paper to take to CSW 2012.

Collaboration Project – 2012-13 Federal Budgets

- Alliances will work together to host training workshops for Alliance member organisations on the Federal Budget processes and advocacy
- An outcome of these workshops will be to p
 - prepare a submission for the 2012-13 Federal Budget.
 - advocate for the Federal Budget to respond to a maximum of 3 key issues affecting women, with an overarching recommendation for improved gender response budgeting in the Federal Budget.
- Following the announcement of the 2012 budget, the Alliances will provide a gender analysis of the Federal Budget.

5. Special Policy Projects

NRWCN are involved in two Special Policy Projects in 2011/ 2012.

The first project will develop a program to work with groups of women in rural communities at risk of, or recovering from, disaster.

The program will facilitate women's awareness of potential disasters and support them to prepare. It will aim to connect participants together, to build a network for ongoing support, encouragement and community resilience and to develop and share strategies for ensuring that their community is as well prepared to face community disasters, as possible. .

A manual and toolkit will be developed for the program and then trialled in rural Victoria and rural Queensland.

For the second project NRWCN are working with AWAVA and the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (CQU University) to empower rural women to lead their communities in the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

- This work includes:

- Development of toolkit and guide to help implement the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children at a community level.
- Host capacity building activities to help women engage their communities in the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

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National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA)

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA) is a newly established national group aimed at empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to make strong, strategic and effective policy advocacy interventions into issues affecting them and their communities. Working closely with its members NATSIWA will bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's voices to both priority issues for the Australian Government and to emerging and hidden issues that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their communities are facing.

Activities in 2011-12

1. Public and Political Participation on emerging issues regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women to participate in the review of the Australian Constitution to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Prepare a report highlighting the issues addressed/ not addressed by Government relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in the CEDAW report and provide the report to CEDAW and the Office for Women.

2. Human Rights – Violence against Women and Child Protection

- Conduct a survey and consult with families and key Government and NGO stakeholders in regards to the reunification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with their families.
- Produce a report for Government and non-government stakeholders identifying the issues of reunification and making recommendations on how to improve the reunification process.
- Produce a report card on how Government is delivering strategy 3.3 of the National Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children.

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5. Special Policy Project – Superannuation issues for Indigenous women

- Consultation with Indigenous women, government and industry bodies on superannuation issues affecting indigenous women.

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Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)

The key area of focus for the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) are addressing violence against women in order to ensure that all women and children are able to live free from all forms of violence and abuse. AWAVA recognises that gender violence is both a consequence and cause of gender inequity in all sectors of society that must be addressed by promoting women's empowerment.

Activities in 2011-12

1. Lack of clear conduit between government policy makers and grassroots organisations and other services that work with women who have or may experience violence

- Support and promote the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children by:
 - Supporting community engagement activities.
 - Providing information to support community organisations to actively work with the plan.
 - Advocating and lobbying to Government and other relevant stakeholders on policy issues relating to the prevention and reduction of violence against women.

2. Lead and foster best practice regarding violence against women both in the region and internationally

- Develop a sustainable framework for international participation and associated consultation mechanisms.
- Participate in CSW56 side events on violence in rural and regional Australia.
- Engage with the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking.
- Invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to Australia.

3. Lack of gender analysis on public understanding about violence against women

- Develop key position papers, factsheets and media backgrounding kits on topics such as Domestic and Family Violence, Sexual Violence and other high priority issues.
- Engage with AWAVA members to ensure that AWAVA is truly representative of its members and the wider community and that they have an effective mechanism to highlight emerging issues in the sector.
- Provide the community with educational resources, particularly for school-aged children that puts violence into the context of gender and equal rights via the Australian Women's Timeline.

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6. Special Policy Project – Empowering rural women to lead their communities in the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

AWAVA are working with NRWCN to:

- Develop a toolkit and guide to help implement the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children at a community level.
- Host capacity building activities to help women engage their communities in the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

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November 2011