



Australian Women's Coalition Inc

National Human Rights Consultation Secretariat
Attorney-General's Department
Central Office
Robert Garran Offices
National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600

Australian Women's Coalition activities relating to the National Human Rights Review

Australian Women's Coalition

The Australian Women's Coalition (AWC) is one of four Alliances funded through the Australian Government Office for Women, drawing together women's organisations to work cooperatively to establish priorities for women and to increase communication between Government and the women of Australia. AWC consists of 19 member organisations representing a broad and diverse cross-section of Australian women. Member organisations are listed at attachment A.

AWC member involvement in the human rights consultation process

AWC has actively encouraged its member organisations to participate in the national human rights consultation forums. In addition, a number of AWC's member organisations have submitted or are planning to make written submissions to the consultation by the closing date of 15 June 2009. To date these include: Catholic Women's League Australia, National Council of Women of Australia, Soroptimist Australia, UNIFEM Australia and ZONTA International (District 24).

Several of our member organisations also recently provided endorsement of the submission coordinated by WomenSpeak. These included the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, Australian Federation of Medical Women Inc, Conflict Resolving Women's Network Australia Inc, National Council of Jewish Women in Australia, VIEW Clubs of Australia, Australian Church Women, Salvation Army, Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association Australia Inc and, Muslim Women's National Network Australia Inc.

Future involvement in the human rights review process

AWC is keen to stay involved in the human rights review process as it evolves and would welcome opportunities to comment and consult with our membership on future, specific legislative reviews as they affect the women of Australia.

The AWC Executive recognises and values the diversity of views represented in our membership and feels that these disparate views should be heard at all levels of Government decision-making affecting women. Forthcoming reviews in which AWC plans to be involved include the Government's recently announced review of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace and Agency (EOWA) and its underlying legislation (EOWW Act).

Current AWC priorities

AWC is currently preparing a submission on the New National Women's Health Policy (NWHP). The submission, due at the end of June 2009, will draw on clinical and social evidence relating to access and equity in women's health policy nationally. It will also draw on the diverse views of AWC member organisations collected at a national consultation forum held on 16-17 May 2009.

In addition, AWC recently presented to the Office for Women (OFW) an Interim Report of AWC's findings relating to the need for a nationally consistent, gender-responsive, approach to the needs of women and girls who come into contact with the justice system. Two of the recommendations in that report are particularly relevant to the current human rights review, namely that the Australian Government:

- ensure State/Territory responses to the National Homelessness Strategy address the unique needs of women and girls who are at risk of becoming or have been involved with the criminal justice system
- recognise the significance of abuse and neglect in the life histories of 'criminalised' women and girls by making them a priority population group in implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

AWC's final report on the health and welfare issues affecting young women and girls in this context is due for completion in October 2009. AWC will welcome future opportunities to discuss the findings with other relevant Departments in the context of human rights legislative changes as these evolve.

Dr Gabrielle Casper
President
Australian Women's Coalition Inc

10 June 2009

ATTACHMENT A

AWC MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

The Australian Women's Coalition (AWC) is an entity comprising a number of national women's non-government organisations. The current members are:

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement www.alrm.org.au

Australian Church Women www.acwnational.org.au

Australian Bosnian Women's Cultural Association Inc www.speakout.org.au/abwca04-05.htm

Australian Federation of Medical Women www.afmw.org.au

Australian Local Government Women's Association www.algwa.com.au

Catholic Women's League Australia cwlanational@bigpond.com

Conflict Resolving Women's Network Australia Inc robyn@gaspari.com.au

Council on the Ageing Australia www.cota.org.au

Girl Guides Australia Inc www.girlguides.org.au

Hindu Women's Association of Australia www.hinducouncil.com.au/hinduwomencouncil.html

Mothers Union Australia www.mu.org.au

Muslim Women's National Network Australia Inc www.mwnna.org.au

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Limited www.ncjwa.org.au

National Council of Women Australia Inc www.ncwa.org.au

Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association Australia Inc. www.ppseawa.org.au

Soroptimist International www.siswp.org

The Salvation Army www.salvationarmy.org.au

UNIFEM Australia Incorporated www.unifem.org.au

VIEW Clubs of Australia www.thesmithfamily.com.au link to VIEW

Zonta International District 24 and District 23 www.zonta.org.au