



**National Council of Women Australia**  
**Report to the Committee on the Elimination of all**  
**Forms of Discrimination Against Women Regarding**  
**the Review of Australia's Progress Under the**  
**Convention**

**July 2018**

## Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ARTICLE 1-3 OVERALL APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ARTICLE 7 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN - PARTICPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS AND THE JUDICIARY.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ARTICLE 7 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN - - PARTICPATION OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ARTICLE 13 - ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS – HOUSING INVISIBLE VICTIMS: OLDER WOMEN IN THE HOUSING CRISIS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ARTICLE 17 - VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.....</b>	<b>11</b>

## INTRODUCTION

National Council of Women Australia is a national non-government umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives, which seeks to raise the awareness of women and girls to their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to encourage the participation of women in all aspects of community life. NCW Australia works to improve conditions for women and their families, especially the most vulnerable.

**Our Vision:** Equity and security for all

**Our values:** Integrity, Leadership, Advocacy and Representation

**Patron:** Lady Cosgrove, wife of the Governor General of Australia

We have been in operation for 122 years in Australia and a member of the International Council of Women (ICW), the world's oldest international women's organisation. NCWA is also a member of the Asia Pacific Regional Council of ICW.

Each state and territory, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory have their own National Council of Women (NCW) that has an executive, members, affiliated and associate members. These NCWs come together to form the National Council of Women Australia. NCWA is self-funding and receives no on-going funds from the Australian Government to undertake its work.

## ARTICLE 1-3 OVERALL APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY - STEROTYPES AND HARMFUL PRACTICES

The Australian workforce is highly segregated by gender and female-dominated industries – such as aged care, child care and health and community services – have been historically undervalued.<sup>[1]</sup> Australian women are over-represented as part-time workers in low-paid industries and in insecure work and continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles in the private and public sectors.<sup>[2]</sup>

More than half of women aged 18 or older have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime.<sup>[3]</sup>

More than one in three Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime and one in two experienced sexual harassment.<sup>[4]</sup>

On average, women spend 64 % of their working week performing unpaid care work.<sup>[5]</sup> They spend almost twice as many hours performing such work each week compared to men.<sup>[6]</sup>

It is estimated that violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy \$22 billion in 2015-16.<sup>[7]</sup>

Pornography's influence is pervasive. It presents women in stereotypic roles and unrealistic expectations of sexual relationships.

- 30 % of internet traffic is about pornography
- 90 % of boys and 60 percent of girls have seen pornography online
- 10 % viewed it daily and 63 percent weekly. The average age of first access is 12.3 years
- Pornography is a \$24.9 bill US / year industry
- Gonzo porn (violence and rough sex emphasised) is now 95%<sup>[8]</sup>

### **Australia should:**

- **Change cultural attitudes towards women through a community education program, legislation and an extensive media campaign similar to that used to change attitudes towards smoking;**
- **Develop legal and regulatory avenues to existing legislation regarding online pornography;**
- **Provide education for children and young people with programs such as Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping out against gender-based violence**
- **Instigate changes to policy measures including child protection, children's online safety, education and law enforcement regarding sexual harassment**
- **Review current policies on and responses to allegations of sexual abuse perpetrated by children within schools and the training on children protection matters provided to individuals employed in, or preparing for employment in, roles that could involve children**
- **Better promote the Office of the eSafety Commissioner's Iparent website to provide the necessary education and resources for teachers and parents.**

<sup>1</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, Women in male-dominated industries: A toolkit of strategies (2013), p

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4125.0 – Gender Indicators, Summary – Economic Security (September 2017);

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4906.0 – Personal Safety, Australia, 2016, Experience of Sexual Harassment (2017)

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4906.0 – Personal Safety, Australia – Key findings (2016).

<sup>4</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Gender pay gap statistics (February 2018)

<sup>6</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Unpaid care work and the labour market(November 2016)

<sup>7</sup> KPMG, The Cost of Violence against Women and their Children in Australia (May 2016)

<sup>8</sup> Crabbe M., Reality and Risk Paper at the National Council of Women Australia Conference 2017

## ARTICLE 7 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN - PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS AND THE JUDICIARY

Across all levels of State and Federal government and in other areas of public life, women continue to be underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles.

Federal Government (September 2017)	State/Territory Governments (September 2017)
29% of Federal parliamentarians in the House of Representatives were women. This is an increase of 2% since January 2016. <sup>1</sup>	33% of State/Territory parliamentarians were women. This proportion has not shown much improvement since 2007. <sup>2</sup>
Women made up 33% of the Senate, which is the lowest proportion that has been recorded in the last decade. <sup>3</sup>	35% of State/Territory government ministers were women. This is a 7% increase since 2007. <sup>4</sup>
23% of Federal government cabinet ministers were women. <sup>5</sup>	

Women remain underrepresented as both Commonwealth and State judges. In 2017, only 24% of Federal Court Judges were women.<sup>6</sup> On a State level, there were 131 male Justices and 42 female Justices across all Supreme Court and Court of Appeal jurisdictions.<sup>7</sup>

These barriers are exacerbated for women with disabilities, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Questioning (LGBTIQ) women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. *Source: Kingsford Legal Centre*

### Australia should:

- **Support the development of a reliable evidence base on which the experiences of groups of women that are underrepresented in leadership and decision-making is utilised to inform effective programs and policies.**
- **Implement gender targets to increase the number of women in parliament.**
- **Implement targets for women’s participation on government boards and committees for all publicly-funded bodies, and for the appointment of Justices on State and Commonwealth courts.**

## ARTICLE 7 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN - PARTICPATION OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

### Women in leadership and top management positions

While women's leadership positions are slowly increasing, the vast majority of senior roles are still dominated by men. Women's representation declines with seniority. However, the representation of women across all manager categories has slowly grown consistently since 2013-14.<sup>8</sup>

2016-17	16.5%
2015-16	16.3%
2014-15	15.4%
2013-14	15.7%

There is a lower proportion of women in manager positions, female chairs and female governing body/board members in the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) 200 than in non-ASX 200 organisations. The greatest disparities are found for governing body/board chairs and CEOs.<sup>9</sup>

Women made up 16.3% of CEO positions in 2015-2016.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly a quarter (24.7%) of the ASX 200 has a gender target set for their boards, compared to just 17.7% of non-ASX 200 organisations. One in 10 (9.6%) ASX 200 boards do not have any women, 6 compared to 38.0% of non-ASX 200 organisations.<sup>11</sup>

Only 71.5% of organisations have an overall gender equality strategy, 0.9 increase over the past 12 months.<sup>12</sup>

There has been a significant increase in support for employee experiencing domestic violence with more organisations having a formal policy and/or strategy up 3.8% to 43.1% over the last year. Over eight in 10 (81.9%) employers offered other forms of support, especially flexible working arrangements (61.0%), access to unpaid leave (59.6%) and referral to appropriate domestic violence support services for expert advice (34.9%).<sup>12</sup>

### **Australia should:**

- **Set a target of 50% of women on Government boards by 2020 and a National goal of 30% women on all boards by 2020. (Canada has a National Goal of 30% Women on Boards by 2019)<sup>13</sup>**
- **Invest in additional board scholarships for women including initiatives that will help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other culturally and linguistically diverse women and women working in the disability sector.**
- **Increase the promotion of the Government's BoardLinks program so that more Australian women are provided opportunities to be considered for Australian Government board positions.**
- **Set a target of 100% for organisations that employ more than 500 people to have a gender equality strategy by 2020**

- **Set a target of 100% for organisations that employ more than 500 people to have a strategy by 2020 for employee experiencing domestic violence.**
- **Require organisations that employ more than 500 people to report annually on these statistics**

1. Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in National Parliaments - World Classification* (1 April 2018) <<http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>>.
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Gender Indicators, Australia' (Publication No 4125.0, September 2017) table 13.4.
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Gender Indicators, Australia' (Publication No 4125.0, September 2017) table 13.3.
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Gender Indicators, Australia' (Publication No 4125.0, September 2017) table 13.4.
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Gender Indicators, Australia' (Publication No 4125.0, September 2017) table 13.3.
6. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Gender Indicators, Australia' (Publication No 4125.0, September 2017) table 13.3.
7. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Gender Indicators, Australia' (Publication No 4125.0, September 2017) table 13.7
8. Workplace Gender Equality Agency- Australian Gender Equality scorecard :Key finding from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2014 -2015Reporting Data (2015)
9. Workplace Gender Equality Agency – Gender Equality in ASX 200 organisations 2016
10. Workplace Gender Equality Agency - Australian Gender Equality scorecard :Key finding from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2014 -2015Reporting Data (2016)
11. Workplace Gender Equality Agency – Gender Equality in ASX 200 organisations 2016
12. Australia's gender equality scorecard Key findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2016-17, reporting data November 2017
13. Government of Canada's Advisory Council for Promoting Women on Boards ,Good for Business: A Plan to Promote the Participation of More Women on Canadian Boards (June 2014) cited by Catalyst, Quick Take: Statistical Overview of Women in the Workplace (August 2017).



## ARTICLE 13 - ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS – HOUSING INVISIBLE VICTIMS: OLDER WOMEN IN THE HOUSING CRISIS

Single older women represent the fastest growing group among the homeless in Australia, where 17 percent of homeless people are aged 55 or over.<sup>1</sup>

680,000 Australian women aged 45 and over who are single and do not or will not own their home by retirement age due to inadequate options for affordable, secure, accessible housing are the result of systemic gender inequities, low wages, little or no superannuation savings, job loss, relationship breakdowns, acquiring an illness or disability, family violence, any one of these life shocks can lead to homelessness.<sup>2</sup>

More females than males presented homeless in 2016–17. The number of females presenting homeless in 2016–17 (57,547) has overtaken the number of males (54,169) (up from 39,876 and 42,519 in 2012–13, respectively).

Between 2012–13 and 2016–17 there has been a small increase each year in people over 45 years from 18% (or nearly 45,000) in 2012–13 to 1 in 5 clients (20%, or over 58,000) in 2016–17.<sup>3</sup>

People 65 and over are the fastest growing group: The number of people aged 65 and over increased from nearly 6,000 in 2012–13, over 8,000 in 2016–17. **The average annual growth rate was higher for Indigenous peoples aged over 65, than non-Indigenous clients (18% each year compared with 11%, respectively).**<sup>4</sup>

In 2015-2016 the average Australian woman was reaching retirement with an average of \$113,660 less superannuation than the average male.<sup>5</sup> As a result, women are more likely to experience poverty in their retirement years and be far more reliant on the Age Pension.<sup>6</sup>

Currently 220,000 women miss out on \$125,000 of superannuation contributions as they do not meet the \$450.00 monthly threshold (before tax) from one employer. Many women work more than one part-time job.<sup>7</sup>

Average lower earnings, time out of the workforce and longer life expectancy are just some of the reasons women are on the backfoot when it comes to superannuation.

Two in five clients of housing and similar services who were homeless had experienced domestic and family violence.<sup>8</sup>

### Australia should:

- **Increase the capital funding in the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement with State and territory Governments to increase the supply of new homes and improve outcomes for all Australians across the housing spectrum, particularly those most in need, very often women.**
- **Encourage State and Territory Governments to invest in a broader supply of housing options, eg shared housing**
- **Ensure the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement has dedicated homelessness funding with a focus on people affected by domestic violence**

- **Address the superannuation imbalance. Remove the \$450 monthly threshold to pay superannuation from one employer and include superannuation in the government parental leave payment (as happens with any other type of leave)**
- **Implement tax reform to reduce investment pressure on the housing market; and**
- **Ensure sufficient coverage of the Remote Housing Partnership Agreement to include Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland.**

1. Aged Care Guide <https://www.agedcareguide.com.au>
2. Leemhuis Penny from Older Women Lost (OWLS), conference paper at National Council of Women Australia, midterm conference 2017
3. MyHealthyCommunities: Health risk factors in 2014–15 Web report | Last updated: 07 Jun 2018 | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
4. MyHealthyCommunities: Health risk factors in 2014–15 Web report | Last updated: 07 Jun 2018 | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
5. Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia Ltd., Superannuation account balances by age and gender (October 2017) p 5.
6. R Tanton, Y Vidyattama, J McNamara, Q Ngu Vu & A Harding, Old Single and Poor: Using Microsimulation and Microdata to Analyse Poverty and the Impact of Policy Change Among Older Australians (2008) p 15.
7. Women in Super <http://www.womeninsuper.com.au/content/the-facts-about-women-and-super/gjumzs>
8. The specialist homelessness services 2016–17 web report is the sixth annual report from the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

## ARTICLE 17 - VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is rampant in Australia. This includes physical, emotional, psychological, sexual violence, social, economic abuse, and stalking, including technologically-facilitated stalking and abuse.

- On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner, according to the most recent analysis of homicide statistics in Australia.<sup>1</sup>
- One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence, since the age of 15.<sup>2</sup>
- One in five Australian women has experienced sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>
- One in four Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.<sup>2</sup>
- One in four Australian women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.<sup>3</sup>
- Of those women who experience violence, more than half have children in their care.<sup>4</sup>
- Violence against women is not limited to the home or intimate relationships. Every year in Australia, over 300,000 women experience violence – often sexual violence – from someone other than a partner.<sup>5</sup>
- Eight out of ten women aged 18 to 24 were harassed on the street in the past year.<sup>6</sup>
- Young women (18 – 24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.<sup>7</sup>
- There is growing evidence that women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence.<sup>8</sup>
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience violence at higher rates than non-Indigenous women.<sup>9</sup>

### Australia should:

- **Change cultural attitudes towards women through a community education program, legislation and media campaign similar to that which was undertaken to change attitudes towards smoking**
- **Provide education for children and young people with programs such as Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping out against gender-based violence**
- **Challenging and addressing social norms around drinking culture**
- **Establishment of a specialist domestic violence court and provide training to strengthen knowledge in matters concerning domestic and family violence for all family law professionals including judicial officers and court officials.**
- **Perpetrators to be evicted from the family home, especially where children are living so they can maintain their schooling and friendship circles.**
- **Better Indigenous community funded support for housing and services, particularly in remote communities.**
- **Reduce Court delay and multiple adjournments and strengthen cross application and re-hearing processes where there is a history of the perpetrator applying for re-hearings, cross applications and appeals**
- **Ensure children's safety is always at the forefront when dealing with family and domestic violence**

1. Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) 2017. The 2017 National Homicide Monitoring Program report by the AIC showed that over a 2-year period from 2012/13 to 2013/14, there were 99 female victims of intimate partner homicide. Women continue to be over-represented as victims of intimate partner homicide, accounting for 79% of all intimate partner homicides.
2. Cox, P. (2015) Violence against women: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey 2012, Horizons Research Report, Issue 1, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), Sydney; and Woodlock, D., Healey, L., Howe, K., McGuire, M., Geddes, V. and Granek, S. (2014).
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2012.
4. National Crime Prevention (2001) Young people and domestic violence: National research on young people's attitudes and experiences of domestic violence, Crime Prevention Branch, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Canberra; and Cox (2015), see note 2.
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) Personal Safety,
6. Johnson, M. and Bennett, E. (2015) Everyday sexism: Australian women's experiences of street harassment, The Australia Institute, Canberra.
7. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) Personal Safety
8. Cox, P. (2015), see note 2; and Woodlock, D., Healey, L., Howe, K., McGuire, M., Geddes, V. and Granek, S. (2014), see note 2.
9. Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage: Key indicators 2016, Productivity Commission, Canberra,