

# UNESCAP Questionnaire on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995)

## Table of Contents

<b>Part One: Summary of Overall Achievements and Obstacles (three pages) .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Part Two: Critical Areas of Concern of the Platform for Action (ten pages) .....</b>	<b>6</b>
A Women and Poverty.....	6
B Education and Training of Women .....	6
C Women and Health .....	7
D Violence Against Women .....	8
E Women and Armed Conflict .....	9
F Women and the Economy .....	10
G Women in Power and Decision-Making .....	11
H Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women.....	11
I Human Rights of Women .....	12
J Women and the Media .....	12
K Women and Environment.....	13
L The Girl Child .....	13
<b>Part Three: Focuses on institutional development or those structures and measures countries have put in place to support promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment (four pages).....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Part Four: Remaining Key Challenges and Constraints as well as any plans for future actions and initiatives (three pages).....</b>	<b>20</b>

**Part One: Summary of Overall Achievements and Obstacles (three pages)**

The Australian Government is committed to improving and enriching the lives of women to enable them to participate equally in all aspects of Australian life. From 2004-2009 the Australian Government, along with federal states and territories, has made significant progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. A summary of Australia's overall achievements and obstacles are described in the following section.

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The Australian Government has already made substantial progress in these priority areas through both international and domestic activities. Some of the key recent achievements are summarised below.

### **International Achievements**

Australia actively participates in mechanisms to address gender inequality internationally. Since being sworn in on 3 December 2007 the Australian Government has increased its efforts to engage internationally on women's issues.

Australia reports to the UN Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on measures Australia has taken to comply with its treaty obligations: Australia lodged its 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> CEDAW report on 16 December 2008 and anticipates appearing before the CEDAW Committee in mid 2010.

The Australian Government acceded to the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 4 December 2008. Australia's accession to the Optional Protocol sends a strong message that Australia is serious about promoting gender equality and that Australia is prepared to be judged by international human rights standards. This also gives women in Australia greater opportunity to contest the implementation and application of human rights and provide for greater accountability within Australia for the promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination between men and women.

Australia participates in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and recently sent a delegation, led by the Federal Minister for the Status of Women, to New York to attend the 53<sup>rd</sup>



and women in Australia is widening. There are a number of factors that contribute to pay inequity including women's responsibility for unpaid caring and work; more women working part-time in a long hours culture; occupation and industry segregation, undervaluation of women's work; and women having less access to overtime and over-award payments. The cumulative effect of these factors means that many women struggle to be economically independent over the course of their life. The Australian Government is improving women's economic outcomes through a range of measures. These include initiatives that promote family-friendly working arrangements, the introduction of a new workplace relations system with strengthened equal remuneration provisions and fairer safety net and practical superannuation incentives with improved access to superannuation education. The Government is conducting a broad ranging review of Australia's future tax system which includes equity as a key principle. The Government is also increasing support to apprentices, trainees and higher education students, supporting the Women in Export program through Austrade, and has introduced initiatives that support access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing.

### **Ensuring women's equal place in society**

The Australian Government is committed to promoting and supporting women's leadership in every aspect of Australian society. The Australian Government is strengthening the voice of women through increasing women's leadership opportunities through the AppointWomen database for Government board positions; the national Strategy for Increased participation of women on Boards; Indigenous Leadership Development Program; and the Sports Leadership Grants for Women. The Government also engages and consults with women through National Women's Alliances made up of more than 70 women's organisations which ensures women's voices are heard and the issues that concern women are brought to government and publicly discussed.

Major obstacles experienced in introducing and implementing some of the above mentioned programs and strategies are outlined in more detail in Part Four of this paper which highlights the remaining key challenges and constraints for the Australian Government.

## **Part Two: Critical Areas of Concern of the Platform for Action (ten pages)**

The Australian Government has implemented a range of initiatives to address the critical areas of concern outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action. The following section of this report details specific achievements from 2004-2009.

### **A *Women and Poverty***

The Australian Government has a range of initiatives that provide support services and financial assistance to Australians that seek to prevent poverty and support those in financial hardship. The Australian Government has comprehensive income support and child support systems in place to provide a safety net against poverty for women and their children. The income support and child support systems in Australia recognise that there are times when women are not able to participate fully or partially in the paid workforce due to the substantial economic and social contribution they make through their caring roles or other barriers such as age, disability, or social exclusion.

Australia has a comprehensive family payment system, structured to provide substantial financial assistance to families. The primary family assistance payment is the Family Tax Benefit, delivering around \$16 billion per year in assistance to families.

The Australian Government provides financial assistance to families, older Australians, carers, people with disability and other types of financial assistance to eligible people including, including the War Widow Pension, Service Pension and Crisis Payment (typically natural disaster victims including those victims of the recent Victorian bushfires and Queensland floods).

The Australian Government is committed to long term reform of Australian's pension

2003 for example, 45.6 per cent of women aged between 15 and 64 years reported having a non-school qualification. By May 2007, this had increased to 50.6 percent<sup>5</sup>.

The Australian Government is also working in partnership with state and territory governments to develop a rigorous, first-rate national curriculum for all Australian students from kindergarten to year 12 in the key learning areas of English, mathematics, the sciences and history. To oversee the development of this national curriculum, the Australian Government is establishing a national curriculum board. The national curriculum will provide a clear and explicit agreement about the curriculum essentials all young Australians should have access to, whatever their gender or socioeconomic background, or the location of their school.

Australia has numerous initiatives in place and being developed to increase, promote and facilitate access to and participation in education. This includes education for disadvantaged groups, vocational education and training, apprenticeships and traineeships, scholarships and grants, student income support, teaching staff and educational information on sexual and reproductive health.

### **C      *Women and Health***

The Australian Government recognises that by improving the health of all Australian women, the health of the whole community is improved. In Australia, women generally fare much better than men on many indicators of health and wellbeing, including life expectancy. However, further improvements can be made on several health indicators, particularly for older women, Indigenous women, women from low socioeconomic backgrounds and for women who live in rural and regional areas of Australia. In recognition of these gaps, the Government is developing a National Women's Health Policy (NWHP) that will address the specific health needs of Australian women. The NWHP will focus on prevention, and will be based on the principle that gender is a key determinant of health, and that the experience of being male or female in society affects people's health and how it is managed. In 2009 the Government will undertake consultations with consumers, the community, health service providers, and state and territory governments to make sure that the NWHP builds on the successes of the previous National Women's Health Policy and meets the varied needs of Australian women at all ages. The NWHP is expected to be finalised in 2010.

Current Australian Government initiatives to address women's health needs include:

- In 2007 the Australian Government made a major commitment in the area of maternity reform. The Maternity Services Review is the first step in developing a comprehensive national plan for maternity services in the future, and is considering issues relevant to the full range of services including pregnancy care, birthing, postnatal care and peer and social support for women in the perinatal period.
- Acknowledging the importance of nurses and midwives to the community, the Government appointed a chief nursing and midwifery officer for Australia in June

2008–09, the Australian Government is providing \$55 million over five years to implement a national perinatal depression plan.

- The Australian Government funds a range of family planning organisations and national bodies to promote women's choice and access to sexual and reproductive health services. Medicare ensures that all Australians have access to free or subsidised treatment by eligible health practitioners.
- Breast cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer in women. While the number of women in Australia diagnosed with breast cancer continues to increase, more women are now surviving the illness. Breast cancer is the most common cancer experienced by Indigenous women, but the incidence rate is lower than for the non-Indigenous population. Early detection through population based screening and effective follow-up treatment has been a major contributory factor to breast cancer survival. The Australian and state and territory governments continue to fund BreastScreen Australia (the national population based mammogram screening program) and run awareness raising campaigns.
- The Government funds the *Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health*, a landmark study which started in 1995 to identify trends and provide valuable policy information relating to women's health.
- The Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program addresses the comparatively higher burden of disease of people in rural and remote communities by reducing waiting lists for patients to get treatment. A range of specialists travel to rural and remote locations to provide fertility, sexual health, and general gynaecology and obstetric services. In 2006–07 more than AUD\$970,000 was allocated to these types of services in all states and the Northern Territory. This funding enabled more than 9,100 women in rural, remote and very remote locations to consult with a specialist. The Australian Government also continues to fund the Rural Women's General Practice Service.
- The Healthy Life Program seeks to improve the quality and availability of child and maternal health services, and improve the prevention, early detection and management of chronic disease for Indigenous people.
  - New Directions: An Equal Start in Life for Indigenous Children Program aims to improve the health and education of Indigenous children and their mothers through access to comprehensive mothers and babies services, programs to address rheumatic fever, and accommodation for Indigenous women from remote areas who need to travel to regional centres to give birth.
  - New Directions: Mother and Babies Program aims to improve Indigenous women's access to antenatal and postnatal care; improve Indigenous children's health and early development, and facilitate healthy entry into school for Indigenous children.
- The Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program seeks to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (women /P en and their 3 Tw -13Atld3h1 service





post-conflict reconstruction. As such the Australian Government supports the implementation of Resolution 1325 and is committed to appropriate representation of women in the Australian Defence Force.

#### Women's Representation in the Australian Defence Force

Increasing the number of women in the defence forces and their length of service are priorities under the Australian Government's Department of Defence, *Defence Strategic Workforce Plan 2007-2017*. The Chief of the Defence Force has established an external women's reference group to present alternative and innovative strategies and options to break down current barriers to women joining and continuing to serve in the Australian Defence Force.

#### Peacekeeping

Recognising the vital role of the United Nations peacekeepers in protecting civilians from violence, including sexual violence, the Australian Government is committed to women's representation in peacekeeping missions. Nearly 20 per cent of Australian police personnel involved in peacekeeping missions are women and many hold senior roles within these missions.

### **F Women and the Economy**

In order to improve women's economic security the Australian Government is undertaking a number of initiatives to reduce the gender pay gap, increase women's participation in the workforce and support families to balance workforce participation and caring responsibilities.

#### The gender pay gap

No country has eliminated pay inequities and Australia has done better than most, appearing in the top quartile of OECD states in relation to pay equity. Australia is also generating more equitable pay outcomes than the UK, US, Japan and most OECD states. However, Australia lags behind the Nordic states of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee for Employment and Workplace Relations is conducting an inquiry into pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce. The Committee is expected to report on its findings in the later half of this year.

#### Productivity Commission Inquiry into Paid Parental Leave

In 2008, the Australian Government announced it would ask the Productivity Commission (an independent Australian Government research and advisory body) to examine ways in which the Government could provide improved support to parents with newborn children. The Productivity Commission's final report was provided to the Australian Government in March 2009. The Government is carefully considering the findings of the Inquiry's final report to ensure Australia's family assistance system supports the best interests of children.

## Support for Work and Family

The Australian Government is strongly committed to helping families balance their caring responsibilities and working lives and has introduced initiatives to achieve this objective<sup>6</sup>.

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## **I Human Rights of Women**

The Australian Government recognises the importance of protecting human rights and acknowledges that women and girls experience different forms of discrimination in their lives that may be a direct result of or exacerbated by virtue of their sex.

The Australian Government has a long standing history of commitment to the protection of human rights. The Government recognises that protecting human rights is still a significant challenge for our nation. In the past twelve months the Australian Government has made significant progress in a range of important human rights areas:

- The Australian Prime Minister has announced a zero tolerance policy to violence against women and their children and has appointed a National Council to develop a National Plan of Action. Reducing violence against women and girls is a key priority for the Australian Government.
- The Australian Prime Minister gave a National Apology to the Indigenous people of Australia, apologising for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on Indigenous Australians. The National Apology is a significant step towards reconciliation in Australia.
- In December 2008 the Government welcomed a detailed and comprehensive report by the Senate Committee into the effectiveness of the *Sex Discrimination Act* in eliminating discrimination and promoting gender equality (as described in Part Three of this paper).
- The Government is also committed to the National Human Rights Consultation process, launched on 10 December 2008 by the Attorney-General the Hon Robert McClelland MP. The Consultation is a wide-ranging, national consultation with the Australian comm14.065 -1.15 -0.h tl Tw -22.68 -1.15 Td(es0002 Mrdrst c)uman Rights Consultation

community-based education initiative that seeks to strengthen community relations through a range of funding and information strategies

*Act 1975* (Cth) or relevant state or territory legislation where such legislation exists (i.e. in South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania).

In August 2003, the Standing Committee of Attorney General's (SCAG) considered that a nationally consistent approach to the authorisation procedures required for the lawful sterilisation of minors was appropriate. A Working Group drafted a Model Sterilisation Bill which was released for consultation in September 2006. In response to comments received together with evidence and information gathered relating to this issue, a comprehensive review of the Bill took place.

The review indicated that sterilisations of children with an intellectual disability had declined since the 1997 report - to very low numbers. Evidence also indicated that alternatives to surgical procedures to manage the menstruation and contraceptive needs of women are increasingly available and seem to be successful in the most part. Further, while it was not possible to be definitive due to limitations in the available information, the review concluded that existing processes to authorise sterilisation procedures appeared to be working adequately due to improvements in treatment options and wider community awareness.



## **Legislative framework**

The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status and pregnancy or potential pregnancy in the areas of public life, including in employment and education; providing goods, services and facilities, accommodation and housing; buying or selling land; in clubs; and administering Australian Government laws and programs. The Act also prohibits discrimination on the ground of family responsibilities in relation to termination of employment.

All states and territories have anti-discrimination legislation in addition to the Australian Government's *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. However, any state or territory law or part of a law that is inconsistent with the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* is invalid under section 109 of the Australian Constitution.

The Australian Government is in the process of preparing its response to the December 2008 report by the Senate Committee on the effectiveness of the *Sex Discrimination Act* in eliminating discrimination and promoting gender equality. The Australian Government response will consider all aspects of the detailed and comprehensive recommendations made by the Committee.

## **Government monitoring and advisory agencies**

The Australian Government regularly consults with the Australian community on how to better recognise, protect and promote human rights. As part of the consultation process, the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade host regular meetings with non-government organisations to consult on the Government's domestic and international approach to human rights. In December 2008 the Australian Government committed to the National Human Rights Consultation process with the Australian community on how best to protect the rights and responsibilities of all Australians. The Government believes that the protection of human rights and responsibilities is a question of national importance for all Australians, and for this reason, has committed to undertake an Australia-wide consultation to determine how best to recognise and protect human rights and responsibilities in Australia.

## **Australian Human Rights Commission**

The Australian Human Rights Commission has statutory responsibility for promoting gender equality in Australia. An independent statutory authority established by the Australian Parliament, the Commission meets the criteria for independent human rights institutions set out in the *Paris Principles*. The Commission has jurisdiction to investigate and, when appropriate, conciliate complaints of breaches of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.

In September 2007, the Australian Government appointed a new Sex Discrimination Commissioner. In 2008, the new Commissioner conducted a Listening Tour, travelling around Australia to hear about the experiences of Australia men and women in relation to sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In the *Listening Tour Community Report*, the Commissioner found that sexual harassment continues as a significant problem in workplaces; there is a growing demand for flexible working arrangements to allow workers, both male and female, to balance work and caring responsibilities; women have significantly less economic security in retirement than men; and Australians would benefit significantly from a universal paid maternity leave scheme.



In 2007, the Australian Human Rights Commission reported to the Government on the issues associated with balancing paid work and family responsibilities. The report—*It's about time: Women, men, work and family*—made 45 recommendations for policy and legislative change, mainly in the areas of employment and workplace relations. The report proposed a new framework for meeting paid work and family/carer responsibilities by addressing three central challenges—changes in caring needs and responsibilities across the life cycle, equality between men and women in paid and unpaid work, and valuing care. The report also included a recommendation to introduce a government-funded scheme for paid maternity leave of 14 weeks at the level of the federal minimum wage, and that new legislation should provide protection from discrimination for employees with family and carer responsibilities, and a right to request flexible work arrangements. The Australian Government is currently reviewing a report into paid maternity leave produced by the Productivity Commission. In 2008 the Australian Human Rights Commission also made an extensive submission to the Senate Committee into the effectiveness of the *Sex Discrimination Act* which is currently being considered.

### **Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency**

The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency is a statutory authority located within the Australian Government's Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio. The agency's role is to administer the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* and through regulation and education, influence organisations to achieve equality for women in the workplace. The agency works with employers to improve equal opportunity outcomes for women in the workplace by delivering practical solutions, building strategic partnerships, and leading public debate to increase the rate of change.

Equal opportunity practices are encouraged to ensure women have equal access—based on merit—to employment, promotion, transfers, study leave, training and development, higher duties, and so on. While Australia does not rely on targets or quotas, bodies employing over 100 staff have to report to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency on their compliance with the Act.

In 2006, 99.5 per cent of reporting organisations (2,516 out of 2,529) complied with the Act. The number of non-compliant organisations in 2006 was 13 (0.5 per cent), compared to 14 (0.5 per cent) in 2004–05 and 17 (0.6 per cent) in 2003–04.

### **Office of Work and Family**

In 2008, the Australian Government established the Office of Work and Family in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Priorities for the Office of Work and Family include overseeing the new directions for child care and early childhood education; working with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to make sure workplace relations reforms take account of work and family issues; producing the first annual *Families in Australia: 2008* report, and improving the prP AMCIDns to make

programs. This new approach requires strong partnerships between all levels of government, business and community organisations to address economic and social disadvantage in Australia. Many Australian Government departments are involved in the social inclusion agenda, and a number of them have established Social Inclusion Units to focus on this priority.

The Australian Social Inclusion Board and the Community Response Task Force have been established to involve the community and business sectors at the highest level. The Board sat for the first time in May 2008 and will report each year to the Minister for Social Inclusion.

The Principles for Social Inclusion in Australia have been adopted by the Government to guide an inclusive approach to policy, programs and services. The Social Inclusion Priorities have also been identified as a focus for the government's work, to support groups in the community who may face challenges to social inclusion. A new National Compact, or agreement, is being developed between the government and the not-for-profit sector as a way to develop a new and stronger relationship, based on partnership and respect.

### **Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality**

Australia participated in the development of the *Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–15*. The plan of action is a framework within which Commonwealth nations are contributing to advance gender equality and equity. The plan formed part of the Commonwealth's contribution to the United Nations Beijing+10 Global Review in 2005. It focuses on four critical areas for Australian Government action—gender, democracy, peace and conflict; gender, human rights and law; gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment; and gender and HIV/AIDS.

### **Data collection**

*Women in Australia 2009*, the fifth in the series, published by the Office for Women measures women's progress on several key indicators of gender equity in Australia. It contains sex-disaggregated data and analysis of a wide range of issues affecting women, including population characteristics; family and living arrangements; health, work and economic resources; education and training; safety and crime; and leadership. *Women in Australia 2009* is designed to be a reference for people interested in gender equality, and to underpin future policies, programs and projects that will help women achieve an equal place in society.

The Australian Government is currently undertaking a gender indicators 'stock take' to identify gaps in the availability and accessibility of sex-disaggregated data, including data for Indigenous Australians, people with disability, and people from lower socioeconomic and rural and remote backgrounds.

### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

The Australian Government continues to take account of its obligations under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing Platform for Action) adopted in 1995. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is a set of commitments that all 189 countries at the time took to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

cultural and religious diversity, effectively combat racism and discrimination. The Living in Harmony program aims to promote respect, fairness, inclusion and a sense of belonging for everyone. The program delivers a range of funding and information activities, some of which target the specific needs of women.

**BPFA, paragraph 107(a)**—All Australian women have the right to informal education programs that support and enable them to acquire knowledge and take responsibility for their health. The Diverse Australia Program is an initiative that evolved from the ‘Living in Harmony’ program which was established in 1998. It is primarily a community-based educational initiative for all Australians and aims to address issues of cultural, racial and religious intolerance by promoting respect, fairness, inclusion and a sense of belonging for everyone. The program provides funding, education and information to help organisations create a spirit of inclusiveness and help ensure all Australians including women from different cultural and religious backgrounds are treated fairly regardless of their cultural background or circumstance.

**BPFA, paragraph 124(g)** — The Australian Government has a zero tolerance towards violence against women and the priority is to reduce violence against women in all its forms. In 2008 the Australian Government announced the formation of the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children who are developing a National Plan based on research and an extensive program of consultation with survivors, as well as a range of specialists in the sector. Through the implementation of the National Plan the Australian Government hopes to influence the attitudes and behaviours to enable all Australians to build and enjoy equal, respectful, non-violent relationships that promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes related to violence against women.

**BPFA, paragraph 124(k)**—In a socially cohesive society, it is important that men’s and women’s social and cultural patterns of conduct have no prejudices, customary practices and other practices based on the idea of the inferiority of women or the stereotyping of roles. A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security partnership between a peak Muslim women’s organisation and the Australian Government recently developed a resource to address the misinterpretation and misapplication of Islam. This resource will be distributed through schools, universities, public libraries, government departments and elected officials.

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**Part Four: Remaining Key Challenges and Constraints as well as any plans for future actions and initiatives (three pages)**

The Australian Government has a long history of ensuring women's perspectives, needs and interests are addressed effectively through policy and programs, but like many nations, more is needed to integrate gender equality effectively into government processes. Given that gender inequality is embedded in social arrangements, economic relations and institutions, it is important that the res

Pension Review will investigate measures to strengthen the financial security of seniors, careers and people with disability.

## ***Addressing Indigenous Disadvantage***

Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage is a key Social Inclusion Priority. Indigenous Australians experience considerably poorer outcomes than other Australians on most social-economic indicators including health, housing, education, income and employment, community and family safety and contact with the justice system. The Australian Government has taken a strong leadership role in developing the comprehensive Council of Australia Governments Closing the Gap agenda. A number of initiatives seeking to address the challenges of achieving change include:

- **Indigenous Women's Leadership Program** – support to deliver leadership development training to Indigenous women and men.
- **Indigenous Family Safety Policies** – a range of initiatives to reduce Indigenous family violence
- **Indigenous disadvantage** - In February 2009 the Prime Minister the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP outlined a comprehensive and detailed statement to Parliament on the Australian Government's Closing the Gap strategy.
- **Closing the Gap for Indigenous Australians** – a set of ambitious targets for closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, access to early childhood education, educational attainment and employment outcomes.
- **National Indigenous Reform Agreement** - the National Indigenous Reform Agreement sets out the objectives, outcomes, outputs, performance indicators and performance benchmarks agreed by the Council of Australian Governments.
- **[www.indigenous.gov.au](http://www.indigenous.gov.au)** - the Australian Government maintains an Indigenous Portal which provides resources, contacts, information, and government programs and services for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.
- **The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs** - the Australian Government's lead coordination agency in Indigenous Affairs coordinating a range of programs to assist Indigenous people.
- **Program Reforms** – reforms to the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) and the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) from 1 July 2009 to meet targets of having the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.
- **Emerging Indigenous Entrepreneurs Initiatives** - a flexible program aimed at establishing an economic base from which to build future prosperity in communities where historically employment, self-employment and business opportunities have been limited
- **Australian Employment Covenant** - a private sector initiative with an objective of securing 50 000 sustainable jobs for Indigenous Australians
- **Personalised Learning Plans** – a budget measure to provide professional development support to assist teachers to prepare and maintain Personalised Learning Plans for Indigenous students in every year of schooling up to Year 10.
- **Literacy & Numeracy** - expansion of Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Programs for Underachieving Indigenous students' budget measure to establish an evidence base around:
  - innovative literacy and numeracy projects to contribute to a national menu of best practice; and
  - learning methods that will enable assessment of structured approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy to Indigenous school students.

- **Books In Homes** – an initiative to provide nine free books each year to disadvantaged young people in the Northern Territory and in the Murdi Paaki region of New South Wales
- **Student Accommodation facilities in the Northern Territory** - a contribution of \$28.9 million towards the construction and operation of three new boarding facilities in the Northern Territory for Indigenous secondary students.

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<sup>i</sup> State and territory offices for women are:

- New South Wales: Office for Women, in the Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Victoria: Office of Women's Policy, in the Department of Planning and Community Development
- Queensland: Office for Women, in the Department of Child Safety
- South Australia: Office for Women, in the Attorney-General's Department
- Western Australia: Office for Women's Policy, in the Department for Communities
- Tasmania: Women Tasmania, in the Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Northern Territory: Office of Women's Policy, in the Department of the Chief Minister
- Australian Capital Territory: Office for Women, in the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

<sup>ii</sup> The Cabinet of Australia is a council of senior Australian Government ministers chaired by the Prime Minister. The strictly private Cabinet meetings usually occur once a week to discuss vital issues and formulate policy. Outside of Cabinet, there are a number of junior ministers responsible for specific policy areas, who report directly to senior ministers.