

## **Staff Report February 2016**

This report covers the period from December 9<sup>th</sup> until February 15<sup>th</sup>. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

### **1. COLLABORATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

#### **1.1 To build and maintain strategic relationships with politicians, bureaucrats, unions and the community to help us achieve our vision**

- A letter was sent to all MLAs advocating for abortion law reform, in line with the COPm agreement on this issue. (Attached). We understand that the debate will likely be deferred in its entirety to the March sittings.

#### **1.2 To build and maintain our reputation as industry leaders advocating for the rights of women at work and for workplace cultural change**

- Anna did an interview on ABC Alice Springs radio with Nadine Maloney about David Morrison's comments on the gender pay gap
- We have completed a submission for project funding for a Domestic and Family Violence and Workplace Issues Project – the twelve month project (with a built-in evaluation component) aims to assist employers and employees address the issues that arise as domestic violence and employment intersect at the workplace. The project will enable the NTWWC to promote, design and deliver policy support, training and assist in the development of workplace entitlements. This has been sent to the Minister for Women, the Office of Women's Policy and the DV Directorate. Please let us know if you would like a copy of the submission.

### **2. COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

#### **2.1 To establish and implement a clear community education framework**

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### **3. FUNDING**

#### **3.1 To ensure ongoing financial sustainability and viability of the NTWWC**

Regarding funding for the period beyond June 2016:

- We have still not yet received the report or any outcomes from the Fair Work Ombudsman's Review into Community Based Employment Advisory Services (CBEAS) that Price Waterhouse Coopers have undertaken. We have been informed that the Report is with the Minister (Michaelia Cash) and that an outcome should be known in the next few weeks.
- We have been informed that we will be provided with a copy of the report.
- We have been informed that our NT funding will continue after 30 June 2016, and have a meeting scheduled with the Department of Business to discuss this.
- Unfortunately we were not successful in our application for a grant for International Women's Day event from the Office of Women's Policy. This is the first year in 6 that we have not received the grant.

### **4. CULTURAL ACCESSIBILITY**

#### **4.1 To ensure the NTWWC is accessible and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and caters for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's needs**

**4.2 To ensure the NTWWC is accessible and culturally appropriate for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women and caters for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women's needs**

**5. REGIONAL AND REMOTE WORK**

**5.1 To explore opportunities for increasing awareness of and accessibility to the NTWWC in remote communities**

**6. STAFF**

**6.1 To maintain the status of the NTWWC as a model employer and workplace**

- As arranged, Amy Winter has returned to the Centre in a casual ILO position to assist with the gap.
- The myriad of staff leave over the Dec/Jan period was managed smoothly and we thank all staff for making an extra effort over this time.

**6.2 To maximise and maintain our capacity and competency**

During this period staff have attended the following training and development:

- Emotionally Intelligent Communicator
- Webinar – Strategic Planning
- Grace continues in her Cert 3 in Business Administration

**7. GOVERNANCE**

**7.1 A well-functioning, enthusiastic and supported COM.**

**7.2 Effective compliant and transparent risk management.**

- The amended constitution has been lodged and officially accepted
- 6 monthly reports have been submitted on time to the two funding bodies – NT DOB and FWO.

**7.3 Up to date policies and procedures are in place and adhered to.**

**8. SERVICE PROVISION**

**8.1 Maintain the provision of an accessible, ethical and effective service to empower, support and advocate for Northern Territory working women, both individually and at the structural level, within a feminist framework.**



## NT Working Women's Centre

3 February 2016

Dear Honourable Member of Parliament

### **Re: Abortion law reform**

The NT Working Women's Centre (NTWWC) is a community based organization that has provided advice, information and support to the most vulnerable NT working women since 1994. The NTWWC has been funded by the NT Government since 2006 and the Federal Government since 1994.

Recently, the NTWWC Committee of Management made the decision to support the current attempts to reform the NT laws relating to abortion. It is our belief that women's reproductive autonomy goes hand in hand with women's economic security.

As we understand it, the NT law at present prevents the medical termination of pregnancy outside of a hospital. Within the hospital setting, two doctors, including a specialist, must agree that the procedure is needed. This means that women are not able to attend their General Practitioner to obtain a medical termination in an outpatient setting, as is routinely the case in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, WA, SA and ACT.

It is our experience that women's reproductive rights are intrinsically bound up with their economic security and their employment. The implications of the current laws for vulnerable working women include:

- Women requiring a termination who do not live in Darwin or Alice Springs may need to travel hundreds of kilometres to attend hospital. There is a minimum of 3 appointments that are required to organise the procedure. The significant time away from work this requires means, for some women, that the procedure is not an option. This does not include time that also may be required for counselling or recuperation.
- Women are over-represented in low paid, and casualised positions. Many women who do not have access to paid sick leave will be financially unable to afford the time off to organise and attend their appointments.
- Explaining and seeking time off work inevitably impacts on women's employment and many women do not wish to disclose such details to their employer.

- Thus, women not only pay the cost of travel, child care and some doctors' fees, tests and screening fees but also may lose wages.
- Some women may face adverse actions against them as a result of the time taken off work for these reasons. Adverse action includes loss of wages, changed rosters, and termination of employment.
- For many women, particularly those in low paid and insecure work, the decision to terminate a pregnancy is motivated by financial reasons. Women earn less than men, are more likely to be casual, are more likely to have other children to support, and are more likely to have intermittent wages.
- These issues affect marginalised women, young women, and women in rural and remote areas even more.

We seek your support in the following areas of legal reform:

- Remove all references to abortion from the criminal law of the NT
- Allow a general practitioner to manage medical termination of pregnancy outside of a hospital
- Oblige practitioners who have a conscientious objection to termination to inform their patient of this fact and refer them to a practitioner not known to hold such an objection

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Davis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anna Davis

NTWWC Co-Coordinator