

Will Minister Cash commit to Working Women?

Three Working Women's Centres working at the front line of gender equality and employment are at imminent risk of closure.

The Federal Government is refusing to commit to ongoing funding for the National Working Women's Centres (NWWC) in QLD, SA and the NT, after defunding the three Centres at Christmas this year. The Centres are calling on Minister Cash (Minister for Women and for Workplace Relations) for ongoing support. Without NWWC vulnerable women workers will have nowhere to go for free and confidential specialist advice on industrial issues such as sexual harassment, workplace discrimination, bullying and unfair dismissal. Minister Cash has informed NWWC that they will be eligible to competitively tender for services in 2017 but this type of approach often sees small and specialist services unsuccessful when competing against larger more generalist organisations. The tender process will likely result in an overall net loss of services to working women.

The Centres provided over 9,000 specialist advisory services to women in the past year and demand continues to be high for women facing discrimination, unfair dismissal and other workplace injustices.

Today NWWC announce a new website (<http://www.wwc.org.au/savethewwcs>) where people can express their support to continue the Centres' important work, representing the needs of the most vulnerable women workers.

'The NWWC are calling on Minister Cash to commit to the continued funding of the Working Women's Centre model that has a proven track record over more than 22 years' says Kerriann Dear, Queensland Director.

"The direct relevance of services which address gender inequality could easily be lost and women can be more reluctant to approach services that are not women specific if they think that their matter will not be handled with sensitivity" says Rachael Uebergang, NT Co-Director.

The Hon. Brendan O'Connor (Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations) and Senator Clare Moore (Shadow Minister for Women) have recognised the importance of the work of the NWWC's and recently announced an ALP commitment of \$3.8 million for NWWC.

NWWC have been contacted by many women all over the country who wish to provide support to keep the centres open. "Our new website is announced today where community members and stakeholders can show their support for the continuation of NWWC", says Sandra Dann, South Australia Director.

Enquiries:

- **Darwin** - Anna Davis (Co-Director), 0405 184 501 or Rachael Uebergang (Co-Director), 0434 338 900.
- **Adelaide** – Sandra Dann (Director), 0409 693 286
- **Brisbane** – Kerrriann Dear (Director), 0401 519 566

National Working Women's Centres

- The Working Women's Centre in SA has been funded since 1979 and in the NT and QLD since 1994.
- NWWC support the most vulnerable women workers by providing information, advice, representation and support on a wide range of workplace issues including: sexual harassment, domestic violence, discrimination, unfair dismissal, pay and conditions and occupational health and safety.
- Services are free and confidential.
- In the last financial year NWWC provided 9,000 contacts with women.
- For more information visit www.ntwwc.com.au, <http://www.wwcsa.org.au/>, <http://wwq.org.au/>