

ELECTION 2010

WHAT'S IN IT FOR WOMEN?

An analysis of policies affecting women



Equality Rights Alliance
Women's Voices for Gender Equality

Women in Australia are demanding the 2010 Federal Election makes changes towards gender equality. Are Australia's major political parties responding to this call for change?

- Closing the gender wage gap.
- Increasing representation of women on boards and in leadership positions.
- Improving services to reduce the barriers to women's workforce participation.
- Stopping violence against women.
- Housing which is accessible and affordable for all women at all stages of their lives.
- Appropriate health services for all women across Australia.
- Strong laws protecting against the discrimination frequently experienced by many women.

These are just some of the necessary changes we need to address the inequalities many women in Australia face. Women in Australia have unique life situations and experiences – and policy and programs need to respond to this diversity, particularly for women with disabilities, immigrant and refugee women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, young and older women, rural and remote women.

The topics presented here summarises a range of policy and program recommendations to advance gender equality in Australia. Information has been gathered from the election platforms of a variety of women's and community organisations. More information on how to access these election platforms is available below.

The following table indicates how well the policies and statements of the Australia Labor Party, the Coalition and the Greens respond to and meet these recommendations. Equality Rights Alliance has considered policy positions made in the run up to the 2010 Federal Election as well as statements and announcements made during the election campaign. We welcome feedback on our analysis and invite all parties to provide more public information to further explain their policy positions.

How well do the policies of Australia's major political parties advance gender equality?

POLICY ANALYSIS EXPLANATION

- A comprehensive, funded policy responding to the issue and meeting the recommendation has been announced.
- A policy position has been announced, moderately meeting the recommendations. Detailed funding or implementation commitments may still be forthcoming.
- A policy statement has been made on the issue, somewhat meeting the recommendations. Detailed policy, funding or implementation commitments may still be forthcoming.
- Policy does not yet meet these recommendations.

	The Australian Labor Party	Coalition (Liberal Party and The Nationals)	The Greens
Pay equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to reduce the gender wage gap Commitment to meet the recommendations in the House of Representatives Report 'Making it Fair' Commitment to fair work conditions and equal pay for community sector workers 			
Stop violence against women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate and long term funding for a National Plan of Action to eliminate violence against women 			
Commitment to implement a National Women's Health Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing adequate funding for full implementation of the policy 			
Women and education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term strategies for women's Vocational and Educational Training Programs to promote and support women into non-traditional trades and professions in Australia 			
Paid parental leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully costed and comprehensively funded Paid parental leave to be flexible and extended to 6 months Inclusion of a government funded superannuation scheme Inclusion of a paternity leave component 			
Superannuation policy to make the system more appropriate for the different work-life balancing patterns of women's employment			
Women's leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targets of at least 40% representation of women on government, not for profit, private sector and national sporting boards Greater support for young women as leaders 			
Stronger laws to promote and protect gender equality and address systemic sex discrimination			
Enforced regulations to promote healthy body images			
Changes to midwifery services care to ensure Australian midwives are able to work as practitioners in their own right, including access to appropriate indemnity insurance			
Comprehensive and long-term programs for childcare to deliver quality, accessible and affordable services			
Development of a cohesive national sport policy for women, covering grass roots to elite participation			

	The Australian Labor Party	Coalition (Liberal Party and The Nationals)	The Greens
De-couple funding of care services for school age children from the funding for services for preschool children (0–5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improvements to Out of School Hours and Vacation Care programs, particularly addressing needs of 8–15 year olds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Flexible, accessible and funded programs to support women experiencing or transitioning from homelessness	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Levels of income support payments for women are adequate for long-term living on benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Commitment to address inequities in access to affordable housing experienced by many women	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Compulsory Income Management schemes shifted to voluntary programs, coupled with improved service delivery and support for disadvantaged individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Ensure safety first in Family Law with commitment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove presumption of shared parental responsibility where violence and abuse is present Remove cost penalties for false allegations Screen all cases entering the family law system for presence of violence or abuse 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A comprehensive study to examine the gender issues of transport, private and public, and transport infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commitment to improve data collection disaggregated by gender, age, race, location and disability so that programs can better respond to specific needs of particular women	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
A Human Rights Act for Australia which will bring domestic laws in line with Australia's international obligations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Support and committed funding for UNWomen, the new United Nation's composite entity for gender equality and women's empowerment	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommit to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially Millennium Development Goal 5 Improve Maternal Health (MDG5), the least likely to be achieved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

What's next?

Women are 50% of the population. Yet the issues that affect women are not usually key topics in election announcements.

So let's demand a better response for women from our political leaders! Start by getting yourself more informed. The following organisations have detailed election policy recommendations to advance gender equality in Australia:

- Equality Rights Alliance www.era.org.au
- UNIFEM Australia www.unifem.org.au
- Women's Electoral Lobby Australia www.wel.org.au
- Australian Reproductive Health Alliance www.arha.org.au
- YWCA Australia www.ywca.org.au
- Australian Centre for Leadership for Women www.leadershipforwomen.com.au
- National Council for Single Mothers and Their Children www.ncsmc.org.au
- Australian Womensport and Recreation Association www.australianwomensport.com.au

In June 2010 Sex Discrimination Commissioner Liz Broderick launched a Gender Equality Blueprint 2010, identifying specific actions that need to be taken over the next term of government to progress gender equality in Australia. The Gender Equality Blueprint outlines recommendations in five priority areas which significantly affect both the public and private lives of women and men:

- Balancing paid work and family and caring responsibilities
- Ensuring women's lifetime economic security
- Promoting women in leadership
- Preventing violence against women and sexual harassment
- Strengthening national gender equality laws, agencies and monitoring

Find out who is standing as a candidate in your local electorate and ask what they will do to improve gender equality in Australia. If their parties' policies don't address issues affecting women, raise your concerns. Let's make gender equality count in the 2010 federal election!

EQUALITY RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Equality Rights Alliance (formerly known as WomenSpeak) is Australia's largest network advocating for women's equality, women's leadership and recognition of women's diversity. We bring together over 50 organisations with an interest in advancing women's equality. Our members are non government organisations, not for profits and social enterprises with a focus on the impact of policy or service delivery on women.

In the lead up to the 2010 federal election, Equality Rights Alliance outlined detailed policy recommendations in key areas affecting women in Australia. These policy recommendations are accompanied by information sheets on 15 topics. Visit www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au to download our Election Platform; Journey to Gender Equality and copies of our information sheets.

Equality Rights Alliance is one of six National Women's Alliances, managed by the YWCA Australia with funding from the Australian Government Office for Women.

For more information about Equality Rights Alliance www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au

T 02 6230 5152

E era@ywca.org.au

PO Box 1022 Dickson ACT 2602

Authorised by Kathy Richards, Equality Rights Alliance, Level 5, 161 London Circuit Canberra ACT 2602.

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