**Election 2019 – Vocational education and training**

# Why is this an issue for women?

* Women earn less than men. [The full-time total remuneration gender pay gap based on WGEA data is 22.4 %, meaning men working full-time earn nearly $26,527 a year more than women working full-time](https://wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/gender-pay-gap-statistics.pdf).
* Increased access and support for women and girls in post-school education is critical to ensuring a diverse range of career choices and opportunities for decent work. OECD figures (March 2018) show: *Education correlates with wages, and less-educated women generally* [*earn less*](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EAG_EARNINGS) *than both highly-educated women and less-educated men. Childcare fees further reduce the attractiveness of labour force participation, and for many less-educated women with low wages* [*it does not always pay*](http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/Childcare_2015_EN_20170802.xlsx) *(or pay much) to be in work.*
* Vocational education and training plays an important role in building skills and capabilities for the workforce and in driving economic productivity. A comprehensive and coherent workforce framework -- underpinned by a full assessment of Australia’s long-term labour market needs—is required to assist VET in meeting industry and community requirements.
* The importance of VET educational qualifications and opportunities needs to be better understood by school leavers in assessing career progression. The sex stereotyped nature of girls’ and women’s VET participation is not leading to improved labour market outcomes and thus to enhanced future economic security with adequate superannuation. It is also important to take account of the fact that women from specific (and often overlapping) sub-groups do not participate in VET in the same way as women generally. Indigenous women, women with a disability and women from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE) experience VET differently; they do not achieve higher award level training at the same rate and do not attain program completion at the same level as women generally.
* Research ([Simon and Clarke, 2016](http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ET-02-2016-0022)) has identified the need for a range of support mechanisms to ensure successful take-up of careers through apprenticeships for women and girls. This support includes career advice and development whilst at school, and mentoring, role models and network organisations in relevant industry areas. The specific needs of women and girls in undertaking apprenticeships and other training in rural and remote communities should also be taken into account through appropriate curriculum, funding and support mechanisms. Governments need to make these opportunities available and sustainable.

**Election commitments**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Full implementation | Partial implementation | No or negative response |

The table below sets out how fully parties’ current election commitments address NFAW recommendations:

|  |
| --- |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** |
| Budget allocations to support vocational and training opportunities for women and girls, particularly in skills shortage areas. |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
|  | There are a number of new programs in the Budget arising from the expert review that may have some benefit to women and girls, including the new foundation skills package, a National Careers Institute and Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians. There is a strong focus on supporting training in skills shortage areas but not specifically for women and girls. |  |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** |
| Increased funding for VET overall. |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
|  | The Budget contained a $525m investment in vocational education and training. Only $54.2m of this allocation is new money over five years and the majority ($463m) in part from reallocating **Skilling Australians Fund** money unspent because Queensland and Victoria did not sign up to the scheme. |  |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** |
| Funding for and recognition of TAFE as public provider with primary responsibility for a range of programs for women and girls. Women’s and girls’ diverse needs should be explicit in all VET policy, with all VET related legislation being accompanied by a women’s impact statement to ensure that the rights of women are adequately addressed |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
|  | TAFE is not specifically recognised in the budget papers, and there is no consideration of a women’s impact statement. |  |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** |
| A federal unit focused on access and social inclusion in vocational and adult education. |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
|  | $48.3m has been allocated to set up a National Skills Commission, but if the recommendations of the expert review are to be followed, then the role of the new Commission will focus on forecasting labour market demands for skills and allocating funding to the states and territories. There is no indication that there will be any focus on access and social inclusion. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| OTHER ELECTION COMMITMENTS |
| Commitment | **Party** | **Comments** |
|  | Choose an item. |  |
|  | Choose an item. |  |
|  | Choose an item. |  |
|  | Choose an item. |  |

Authorised by Kate Gunn, Sydney.