



**For Immediate Release, Wednesday 3 July 2024**

**The Albanese Government funds Working Women's Centres across the country.**

Working Women's Centres (WWC) have been funded in every state and territory to assist women who are experiencing sexual harassment, discrimination and other workplace issues.

The Albanese Government has funded established centres (South Australia, Queensland and Northern Territory) and women's legal centres, community legal centres, unions and workers' compensation services to establish centres in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania.

Newly established WWCs are set to commence operations and will shortly provide free and confidential support to women seeking information, support and advice about workplace issues, with a focus on sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

The funding responds to Recommendation 49 of the Respect@Work report which stated:

*Australian governments provide increased and recurrent funding to Working Women's Centres to provide information, advice, and assistance to vulnerable workers who experience sexual harassment.*

The Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins, in her Respect@ Work Report recognised the unique holistic support provided by Working Women's Centres: "We found they were uniquely the most effective, victim-centric model that could deliver support, advice [and] advocacy to women [across a] range of issues in their work."

The established **South Australian, Northern Territory and Queensland WWCs** have been fighting for ongoing and expanded funding for decades and excitingly welcome the expansion of the WWC network.

WWCs provide crucial legal, education and advocacy services to women who are experiencing workplace issues, predominately sexual harassment and discrimination. Legal advice and representation for working women and representation is free, confidential and trauma informed.

Centres will also undertake important work to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace by providing workplace training and community education to assist employers to create safe workplaces.

WWCs have always worked in partnership with the women's movement, trade unions, all levels of government and legal providers to assist women who fall through the cracks. This new funding will strengthen these relationships nationwide.

**Funding**

The already established South Australian, Northern Territory and Queensland WWCs have been funded to expand their services.



The following services have been funded to establish Centres in:

- NSW – Women's Legal Services
- WA – Women's Legal Services in partnership with Circle Green Community Legal Centre
- TAS- Women's Legal Services in partnership with Work Assist Tasmania
- ACT – Women's Legal Services in partnership with Unions ACT.
- VIC – South East Monash Legal in consortium with West Justice, Northern Community Legal Centre and Women's Legal Services.

### **Working Women's Centre Australia (National Body)**

The Albanese Government has also funded the South Australian *Working Women's Centre* to establish the National Body, Working Women's Centre Australia which will lead and coordinate advocacy, research and contributions to policy debates about systemic issues effecting working women.

Abbey Kendall, former Director of the South Australian Working Women's Centre has been appointed the WWC Australia CEO.

### **State and Territory Services**

Media contacts in each state and territory can be contacted to discuss local WWC Centres and their operations.

### **Quotes Attributable to Abbey Kendall, WWC Australia CEO:**

"For 45 years, Working Women's Centres have been a voice for Australian women. This funding is an opportunity to build, extend and expand our impact in all states and territories and improve the lives of Working Women across the country."

"Working Women's centres are an industrial safety net for working women who fall through the cracks. Our holistic model of service has been nationally recognised in the Respect@Work report and this new funding will allow us to reach more women and help create safer workplaces for everyone. "

"The government's investment in Working Women's Centres fosters a more equitable and inclusive society where every woman can thrive. By supporting women in the workforce, we unlock their full potential, driving economic growth and social progress for the benefit of all."

### **Quotes Attributable to Katrina Ironside Women's Legal Services NSW CEO"**

*Women's Legal Service NSW has provided legal services to working women for more than 20 years, enhancing women's economic security and moving the dial on gender equality. We have provided free specialist legal help to working women who have been forced to endure sexual harassment and discrimination at work, as well as undertaking systemic advocacy in support of women's rights at work.*

*We are delighted to have been recognised for this work by being funded to establish the new Working Women's Centre in NSW. The funding will ensure women's safety and economic security as working women. This is the only gender-specific trauma informed service for working women in NSW.*

*We look forward to being able to assist more women to stand up for their right to a safe workplace.*



## **Media Contacts**

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