



WAVE in 2016

As a WAVE member you're part of a national network that advocates on behalf of women and girls in adult and vocational education and training. Your membership lends strength to our advocacy.

Getting the women's voice heard in 2016 has been hard

The year has seen continued problems in the VET sector, and cuts to government funding of adult education. WAVE has continued to be active in lobbying, making submissions and in communicating with its members. Our range of partnerships grows, particularly at the international level, and we worked with a number of groups in the lead-up to the Federal elections. Our national conference in April 2016 was the biggest ever, with a great range of speakers.

International matters

WAVE actively advocates for and contributes to work that links our interests nationally into global & regional arenas through a number of avenues- and we have again been very busy in this area.

The theme for International Women's Day 2016 was **Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality**. The United Nations observance on 8 March reflected on how to accelerate the 2030 Agenda, building momentum for the effective implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals. It equally focused on new commitments under UN Women's Step It Up initiative, and other existing commitments on gender equality, women's empowerment and women's human rights.

Source: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/international-womens-day>

Most of WAVE's international work fits very neatly under the theme for IWD 2016 that refers specifically to the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ and how they will play out for women and girls (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs>), especially relating to SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all); SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and, to a lesser degree, SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The key document relating to SDG4 that will frame education and so our work nationally, regionally and globally is *Education 2030. Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all*.²

¹ See: UN, 2015, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

² UNESCO et al, 2015, *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all* ED-2016/WS/2 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002432/243278e.pdf>

WAVE is represented on and/or collaborates with a number of organisations both to ensure our points of view are heard and included at strategic points related to the *Education 2030 Agenda*.³ Now this document has been adopted, the immediate challenges and sites of intense high level work and civil society involvement and lobbying include setting the targets & indicators for monitoring and evaluation by all countries (as well as establishing regimes for monitoring and evaluation), along with mobilizing ample resources effectively and ethically; getting agreement and so political commitment then implementing the architecture and mechanisms to coordinate such a complex integrated agenda for all the SDGs – all to be linked with action. In addition to this, the 2016 priority theme for CSW 60 (Commission on the Status of Women)⁴ was ‘Women’s empowerment and its links to sustainable development’ – again another agenda that WAVE contributed to through some of our strategic partnerships.

Partnerships

- WAVE is a member of two of Australia’s National Women’s Alliances (NWAs) - Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) and economic Security4Women (eS4W).⁵ As a representative on the NWA International Engagement Project WAVE has attended education, discussion and planning forums, raised issues relating to SDGs 4, 5 & 8, contributed to the planning process for CSW 60 including submitting a statement from WAVE, commenting on draft statement from the NWAs, and commenting on the CSW 60 zero draft document to ensure the inclusion of education, amongst other activities.
- WAVE extended our contributions by the provision of information including former Agreements such as those of CSW55⁶ directly to Office for Women (OfW), DFAT and other delegates and attendees at CSW 60, as well as circulating copies of our relevant reports.
- WAVE is a member of ACED (Australian Coalition of Education Development) and as such, joined other ACED members (via Skype) a meeting held at RMIT 29th February 2016, in conversation with staff from the Global Partnerships for Education⁷ (GPE) who were visiting Melbourne prior to attending the [World Bank DFAT Conference: Making Education Systems Work](#), 29 Feb - 3 March in Sydney. The delegation included Charles Tapp (Manager, GPE Partnerships and External Relations), April Golden (GPE Donor Relations Officer). As GPE focuses mainly on compulsory (school) education, but is a key global player, WAVE requested that a focus remain on the breadth of Goal 4, on gender, on gender disaggregated data, & especially on access to so called ‘second chance’ education and training. Through

³ For an overview and to download the Education 2030 Report see: <https://efareport.wordpress.com/2015/11/04/education-2030-framework-for-action-lets-get-started/>

⁴ For information about CSW 60 taking place at the UN in New York 14-24th March see <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016>

⁵ ERA: <http://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au>; eS4W: <http://www.security4women.org.au>

⁶ CSW 55 – 2011 Priority theme was ‘**Access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work** For Information see: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm> Agreed Conclusions are available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm#agreed>

⁷ GPE is based in Washington USA, & chaired by Julia Gillard. <http://www.globalpartnership.org>

ACED we are linked to the Global Campaign for Education (GCE)⁸ and again, in turn through GCE, with Global Partnerships in Education (GPE).⁹

- WAVE is a member of Asia South Pacific Association for Basic & Adult Education (ASPBAE)¹⁰ – a regional association of more than 200 organisations & individuals that operates from grassroots to government and high-level global echelons, thus linking us into our wider region and globally. Information is shared regularly.
 - WAVE participated in a regional workshop held in Delhi in October 2015 and attended by 22 countries, with a focus on Gender, Education, Work and Skills. A commitment to the SDGs provided a framing for discussions and around which a shared agenda can be built for advocacy, capacity building and efforts to shape informed policies and practice.
 - WAVE successfully nominated Zulaikha Hussain Shihab as a participant in ASPBAE's 2015 Basic Leadership Development Course that also had a focus on the SDGs, held in Vietnam in November 2015. In 2015 Zulaikha had interned with WAVE around a workplace based project that focused on mapping global/regional/national policy decision-making in relation to gender, education and women in the preparation of the SDGs. Zulaikha produced an Info graphic and also a report (*Gender & Education: Mapping Global/Regional/Local Policy Platforms*. WAVE/RMIT Melbourne Victoria November 2015) graded at high distinction. The documents are available on WAVE's website at: <http://wave.org.au/wave/mapping-globalregionallocal-policy-platforms/>
 - Elaine, as WAVE rep, was appointed Country Representative (Australia) and coordinated ASPBAE consultation with other Australian members that was held at RMIT Melbourne on 12th July, in preparation for ASPBAE's 7th General Assembly (GA) scheduled for November 2016. WAVE is also a voting member for the 7th GA.
 - WAVE member Prof. Terri Seddon will represent Australia at ASPBAE Regional Consultation on Education Privatisation, 29-31 August, Bangkok
- WAVE is a member of the Women's Major Group (WMG)¹¹. We share their communications, endorse relevant documents and submissions, and contribute information relating to our interests, thus sharing on a global level.
- As a CSO (civil Society Organisation) we are also a member of the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM)¹² – “APRCEM is a civil society platform aimed to enable stronger cross constituency coordination and ensure that voices of all sub-regions of Asia Pacific are heard in intergovernmental processes in regional and global level. The platform is initiated, owned and driven by the CSOs, and has been set up under the auspices of UN-ESCAP and seeks to engage with UN agencies and Member States on the Post-2015 as well as other development related issues/processes.” "

Apart from the above, we post and share international news, comments and posts related to education and training, work and of course gender issues on our Facebook page. Our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/womeninadultandvocationaleducation/>) can also

⁸ See: <http://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/>

⁹ See: <http://www.globalpartnership.org>

¹⁰ <http://www.aspbae.org>

¹¹ For information about the Women's Major Group see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/women> and <http://www.womenmajorgroup.org>

¹² See: <http://www.asiapacificrcem.org>

be accessed through our website (<http://wave.org.au/wave/>) where information is regularly updated.

Northern Territory visit

During May this year, the International Graduate Centre of Education (IGCE) at Charles Darwin University, hosted five Indonesia Directors from the PERMAMPU NGO consortium based in various districts of Sumatra, Indonesia. This consortium works to eliminate poverty and strengthen grassroots women's leadership through better engagement with and protection of women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, particularly in rural and urban poor areas. Sue Shore, one of our Northern Territory Convenors, and WAVE Ambassador Elaine Butler helped to organise the visit.

Submissions

WAVE wrote a number of submissions to inquiries over the year, including:

- Parliamentary Inquiry into VET FEE-HELP, where we outlined the impact of aggressive marketing practices and rorting by some private providers, on women and girls. This included some students accruing debts which they would not be able to repay, and yet not having received a quality education. WAVE made a number of recommendations including:

WAVE urges the Government to avoid further 'knee-jerk' policy decisions and to undertake a proper review of the whole tertiary system, including the way income contingent loans could operate to support students rather than organisations that are focused on profit making; and

That TAFE be clearly supported as the quality public provider of VET, and not be implicated in the 'rorts' carried out by only some private providers

Save the Working Women's Centres

WAVE joined the campaign to support the Working Women's Centres to retain their funding so they could continue their work in supporting thousands of vulnerable women. The campaign continues.

WAVE National Conference 2016

This year's WAVE conference was our most successful yet, with over 80 participants, and a great range of speakers and topics. Speakers included Dr Marian Baird, Tess Julian, Sally Thompson, Dr Susana Saffu, Ro Coroneos, Professor Anne Jones, Michelle Circelli, Melinda Lethbridge, Kira Clarke, Dr Anu Mundkur and Elaine Butler. The conference focused on the topics: Issues for Australian women and girls, Working with industry and community, and A new global/local agenda: what might this mean for Australian women?

Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE provided a great venue and support for the day, and as per previous years we joined AVETRA for their pre-conference reception. Kira Clarke

summed up the conference through twitter. Below are a few highlights of the conference recorded through our Newsletter.

Dr Susana Saffu said in her presentation on African Migrant women in the Northern Territory, that: *Australia's and indeed the world's population is growing more diverse as a result of immigration. It is therefore imperative for us to uphold adult education's long-standing tradition and commitment to 'social inclusion' by working towards, and advocating for a more inclusive adult education that focuses on the empowerment of marginalised learners including women and racialised minorities.*

Sally Thompson from the Australian Education Union challenged us all when she said: *In fact I would say that the primary role of feminism at the moment has to be to halt the assault on our public services and institutions because women overwhelmingly pay the price for each new neo-liberal experiment.*

Did you know, said **Dr Anu Mundkur from Flinders University**, *that in more than half the world's countries, female education rates are now similar -- or greater -- than men, **BUT** that women's employment rate is 30 per cent lower than men's, that women face rising job segregation, that the share of women employed in the relatively high-paying industrial sector compared to men, has dropped 20 percentage points since 1990, and that the political representation of women is abysmally under represented at 25 per cent.*

Michelle Circelli from NCVER told us that: *A gender wage gap of 16—18% has persisted in Australia for the past 20 years despite the equal pay decision by the industrial court in 1972. It is well understood that Australia has a highly gender segregated workforce and that many female-dominated industry sectors are poorly paid compared to male-dominated industries; hairdressing, childcare and aged care sectors are prime examples. Even within the same fields of education females generally earn less than males.*

Marian Baird from Sydney University set the scene at the conference, and also challenged us to take up the issues of education and equity as election issues. She outlined the **Gaps at a Glance**

	Males	Females
Labour force participation	78.3%	65.1%
Employed part-time	14.6%	43.8%
Employed part-time with child <5	7.7%	62.2%
Average wage	100%	82%
Without paid leave entitlement	10%	20%
Bachelors Degree	30%	40%

If you would like to read more on our social media, go to:

: <https://storify.com/KiraVClarke/wave-conference-2016>. With thanks to Kira Clarke.

Research

Linda and Annette Bonnici presented a paper at the 9th International Conference on Researching Work and Learning in Singapore in December. The paper drew on three pieces of WAVE research, and was entitled: 'That's no job for a lady: understanding the impact of gender on successful career options'. It opens with the statement: "*Gender inequality is not just about economic empowerment. It is a moral imperative. It is about fairness and equity and includes many political, social and cultural dimensions. It is also a key factor in self-reported well-being and happiness across the world.*" (OECD, 2012, p. 13)

Linda and Annette also presented a paper at the AVETRA conference following the WAVE conference called: 'STEM the tide - *Will the Innovation agenda help achieve gender equality?*' The paper notes how women have been sidelined from the Government's Innovation agenda.

Linda and Kira Clarke's paper 'Apprenticeships should work for women too!' was published this year in the 'Education and Training' journal - <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ET-02-2016-0022>

The Gender Lens

The National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW) released two important documents during the year: the Gender Lens -Budget 2016-2017 www.nfaw.org/?s=gender+lens, a report on the Federal Budget seen through the eyes of what it delivered for women and girls; and a pre-election document comparing the policies of the major parties in relation to women and girls.

WAVE helped to put together the sections on vocational education and training in each case. In the budget paper, we made the point that the VET sector was in crisis, but that there was no money in the budget to help to address this problem. In fact there was reduced funding for ASQA. We continued to raise the needs of programs for women and girls in VET. There were recommendations arising from the Budget report, including that:

21. *The current review of the VET FEE-HELP Scheme involve wide consultation with student organisations, community, industry and respected private and public providers.*

22. *Financial and criminal sanctions against fraudulent VET providers be adequate to restore public confidence in the VET sector and its regulatory framework.*

23. *Any new National Partnership Agreement recognises the role of the major public provider, that is TAFE, as critical to industry, small business, regions and local communities in providing high level training, workforce development as well as foundation skills for disadvantaged learners in all equity groups entering or re-entering the workforce.*

TAFE needs to receive secure and stable funding into the future, and must be restored as the national yardstick for quality vocational education and training.

24. The Government address concerns about its inequitable and discriminatory approach to industry skills training which has the unintended consequence of excluding women because the training priorities are industry driven and the sex segregation is entrenched in many of the industries accorded priority.

25. Funding to the Australian Skill Quality Authority reflect the critical importance of its work in regulating the VET sector and ensuring that all students are protected from unscrupulous private training providers as well as guaranteeing the quality, industry relevance and standard of teaching and learning.

Out of this work came the opportunity to contribute to a blog published by John Menadue called ‘*Pearls and Irritations*’, and Linda Simon continues to write for this blog around current VET issues. WAVE’s role was also acknowledged in Linda’s speech as part of the CEDA launch of their report on vocational education and training; *VET: securing skills for growth*.

WAVE Federal Election Campaign

WAVE wrote to current Federal Members of Parliament, major parties and significant Independents, on the issue of making women and girls in VET and adult education an important election consideration. We asked that female students in VET and adult education were an important focus of the Federal election campaign with a policy that recognised access and equity as a key part of VET’s role and the specific needs of women and girls in regional and remote areas. We again circulated our election postcard.

The postcard says:

Australia’s women and girls expect:

- * *access to a strong, national, public vocational education and training system*
- * *career advice, counselling and targeted support to undertake training for viable, well-paid, tenured jobs*
- * *technical and trade training in all areas of skill shortages, emergent occupations and industries*
- * *training provisions should be high quality, affordable, inclusive and relevant for the diversity of all Australian women*

We had replies from Federal Labor, the Greens and Glen Lazarus Party all supporting gender equity and recognising the current issues around VET and Adult Education. There was no reply from the Coalition Government. However following a representation from Senator George Brandis, Sue Salthouse and Linda Simon met with Officers from the Federal Education Department. We provided them with copies of WAVE research papers and talked about the need to expand apprenticeship opportunities for women and girls, suggesting that supporting women with disabilities would be a good place to start. Despite our follow-up information, we have heard nothing further from the Department.

Following the election we wrote to the Hon Tanya Plibersek, now Shadow Minister for Women and the Hon Karen Andrews, Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills. No replies have yet been received.

WAVE Executive members

There have been changes to WAVE Executive over the year, and we have welcomed Denise Madden (ACT), Angela Dean, Tish Champion (both SA) and Sue Shore (NT). It was great that so many Executive members could attend the WAVE conference, enabling us to catch up the day before or during the conference.

WAVE Executive member Sue Salthouse has been appointed to the Prime Minister's Advisory Panel to Reduce Violence Against Women. WAVE congratulates Sue and supports WWDA who has strongly advocated for the need to ensure women with disabilities are represented on this important national Advisory panel. **See Sue's report on the Susan Ran speech attached.**

Thanks to WAVE Executive members for their work over the year on behalf of all WAVE members.

Public Officer – Elinor Buckley

National Secretary – Robyn Woolley

National Treasurer - Annette Bonnici

Past National Convenor and WAVE Ambassador – Elaine Butler

Rural and Regional Liaison person – Cecilia Blackwell

State and Territory Convenors

ACT – Sue Salthouse and Denise Madden

Northern Territory – Joy Taylor and Sue Shore

Queensland – Jane Newton

South Australia – Angela Dean and Tish Champion

Victoria – Kira Clarke and Demmi Paris

Western Australia – Sue Thompson

WAVE Resources

WAVE has developed:

- * a flier about WAVE, its organisation and its work
- * a membership card to be handed out at events
- * a postcard outlining our main aims for these two years.

Website

Our website continues to be a great resource and focus of interest. Thanks to Joy Taylor, Anne Bowden and Claudia Stamel for their work.

Social Media

Elaine continues to do a great job with Facebook, with help from others including Joy and Jane. Thanks to Kira and others who tweet.

Linda Simon – National Convenor

15 August 2016

SUSAN RYAN VALEDICTORY PRESENTATION TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

6 July 2016

Susan Ryan used her valedictory presentation to the National Press Club (NPC) on 6 July this year to make an impassioned plea to the nation's employers to break down the significant barriers that lock older Australians out of the workforce.

Susan was appointed as Australia's first Age Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in July 2011. In July 2014 relatively soon after the change of government to the Coalition, the incumbent Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, was summarily bundled out of office, and Susan then assumed the role of Disability Discrimination Commissioner as well. This resulted in more than doubling her workload since the major proportion of complaints to the AHRC is from the disabled. Susan was aware that this dual role also placed her on a steep learning curve, because disability politics are a significant factor in understanding the sector, and representation by someone other than a person with disability is an anathema to many in the sector. Nevertheless it is acknowledged that she has been a strong and effective advocate for both the disabled and the aged.

In her talk to the NPC, Susan highlighted that the barriers to employment for both groups are essentially the same. By 2050, the average life expectancy for women will be just short of 100 years, and even with a retirement aged at 70 years, will mean 3-4 decades of post-employment living. Whilst research indicates that employment of older workers would add to the GNP, the reality is that there are relatively few jobs for 55 to 70 year olds.



Susan Ryan with NPC Director, Laurie

In her presentation Susan referred frequently to her recently published report, *Willing to Work* (<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/projects/willing-work-national-inquiry-employment-discrimination-against>). This report is the result of a 15-month comprehensive inquiry into employment discrimination against older Australians and people with disability. Its recommendations make compelling reading, especially for women.

The sheer volume of job-seekers in the aged sector is sobering. They comprise 22% of those enrolled with job search services, compared to 10% of those in the 18-24 year age group. Yet, ageism is systemic in business and government, characterised by isolation in the workplace, denial of promotion, being a primary target for redundancy in any organisational restructure, along with chronic denial of reasonable adjustments such as flexible work hours.

Whereas the general workplace picture is of a tendency to part time casualisation of the workforce, those over 55 years of age find they are consistently offered full time employment or nothing.

Certainly, the choices we make today at a policy level will determine whether we can successfully manage to turn this longevity crisis into an enduring and productive longevity revolution. There is a strong argument that better advocacy within government is necessary and she recommends the appointment of a Minister for Longevity in a cabinet position. Within government there is a real need to set targets for each government department and agency.

She is a strong proponent for reinvigoration and decent funding for the national public VET TAFE sector. A key factor in improving employment outcomes lies with making retraining accessible, including through apprenticeships. She lamented the wastage of resources with \$1.6 billion spent in employment services with minimal positive results. There is a case for redirection of similar funding to appropriate businesses, using Bunnings as an example of a corporation which capitalises on employing semi-retired tradies and using their expertise and preference for part time work to good effect. This good –fit could be mirrored in many small businesses with minimal incentives to the employers. She pointed also to the increasing demand for support workers in the aged care industry. Being realistic, she also injected a note of caution against exploitation of aged workers in any sector.

In her 5 years as the Age Discrimination Commissioner, the right to work has been uppermost in her vision, right along with gender equity in the workplace and in society. Her final gibe was to caution future Attorneys General in making appointments to the AHRC, pointing out that of the 40 commissioners since 1986, gender balance has only been a consideration in recent years.

Susan Ryan has been succeeded by Dr Kay Patterson as Age Discrimination Commissioner, and Alastair McEwin as Disability Discrimination Commissioner.



Susan Ryan with John Lloyd, Australian Public Service Commissioner

My thanks go to Rose Stellino, Relationship Director at Westpac for the ACT and region, a strong advocate for women in the workplace and a social justice champion, for inviting me to her table at the NPC lunch. Sue Salthouse

NOTE of CAUTION – may have got the other person wrong in each photo!