



Women's Electoral Lobby and Australian Education Union
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Women in employment still lag too far behind

The release of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency report on the progress of women in senior positions shows that there is still substantial discrimination against women in the workplace. If this is happening at the upper levels, it is even worse for low paid women who are often overlooked.

The Women's Electoral Lobby and the Australian Education Union today called on both Mark Latham and John Howard to commit to improving the conditions faced by women in low paid employment in the final days of the federal election campaign.

"WEL asks that both parties commit to a national inquiry into women's employment, including how women's work is valued," said WEL spokesperson Eva Cox.

"In every industry, even those where women are the majority of employees, women earn less than men," Ms Cox said.

"This is a national disgrace, and policies to address it should be central to all parties' campaigns.

"The major parties' policies for 'families' do nothing for the hundreds of thousands of women in paid employment who cannot achieve pay equity, have no access to paid maternity leave, and face poverty in their later years, if not sooner."

AEU federal president, Ms Pat Byrne said, "The federal government has simply paid lip service to issues surrounding women's employment.

"Australian women need a federal government genuinely committed to the principle of women's full participation in the workforce by providing real options for work and family flexibilities which meet the needs of women.

"A universal paid maternity leave scheme and access to affordable childcare are critical elements of such flexibility."

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