

## AEU Women can take ACTION:

Contact your union's Women's Officer to find out about activities in your state/territory.

### ACT

Robin Ballantyne,  
(02) 6272 7900.



### NT

Susan Stanaway,  
(08) 8948 5399.

### SA

Correna Haythorpe,  
(08) 8272 1399.



### VIC

Barbara Jennings,  
(03) 9417 2822.

### NSW (NSWTF)

Siobhan Callan,  
(02) 9217 2100.

### QLD (QTU)

Leah Mertens,  
(07) 3512 9000.

### TAS

Roz Madsen,  
(03) 6234 9500.

### WA (SSTUWA)

Bronwyn Croghan,  
(08) 9325 5311.

- For more information about major political parties' Federal Election policies for women;
- To find more about how the Federal Government's work laws affect women; and
- For other material about the AEU's public education campaign

go to: <http://www.aefederal.org.au/E07/election.html>

- To get more involved with the community campaign for better rights at work;

go to: <http://www.yourrightsatwork.com.au>

Please circulate this and other flyers to your colleagues, friends, and families.

Keep the conversations happening, they are critical!



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120 Clarendon Street, Southbank, Victoria, 3006

# Unlike the Howard Government, voting women are looking to the future...



## This Government's record on women: education and work

Key legislation and policies have affected women.  
As educators, workers and carers, it is worth  
remembering what the Howard Government  
thinks about You!

## Education

The 2007 Federal Budget delivered private schools a \$1.7 billion increase over the next 5 years to rise to \$7.5 billion, while public schools will receive only \$300 million to rise to \$3.4 billion.

If the Howard Government was really worried about outcomes for Australian students in public schools, they would not again reduce the share of federal funding for public education. Public schools educate nearly 70% of students yet they receive only 35% of federal funding.

In response to a recent question, Howard finally revealed how he really regards public education, expressing opposition to a wholesale voucher approach to school education funding *only* because vouchers:

“undermined the fundamental value and strength of public education as the *safety net* and guarantor of a *reasonable* quality education in this country.”  
(PM, John Howard, Queensland Media Club, 23/04/2007)

In the crusade to improve (some) boys' reduced literacy attainment, the Howard Government claimed more male teachers were needed and so the Sex Discrimination Act (again) needed to be changed to allow scholarships for male, above female, teachers.

No evidence has yet been produced to support the claim that teacher gender impacts the quality of learning. Yet, a major finding of one recent study was “that boys and girls are no more or less motivated and engaged in classes taught by females than they are in classes taught by males.”

(Martin, A. & Marsh, H. 2007, p19)

A well resourced public education system *would* make a difference to student learning outcomes to enable greater student contact, learning support and manageable workloads. The Government has instead attacked the professionalism of women teachers and has been grossly stereotypical in the process:

“Male teachers do make a difference when educating students, particularly boys. They can reach out to boys in a way that female teachers cannot....Boys form a totally different relationship with male teachers than they do with female teachers. Male teachers tend to tolerate more and be able to accommodate more boyish behaviour. Male teachers tend to teach differently from females. They tend to be able to use more colourful language, more jokes etc...”

(Senator Johnson WA LIB, 12/05/2004)



“...it's extremely important that we get young people, and young blokes especially, into primary schools teaching our kids so they can pick up a footy and get out there and kick it around with the boys and the girls.”

(Brendan Nelson, Education Minister, Doorstop, 18/06/2004)

## Workchoices

The Howard Government claimed their work laws would not cut workers pay.



ABS statistics\* released February 28 show working women on Individual Contracts (AWAs) earn less than women on Collective Agreements – \$2.30 less an hour for full timers, \$3.70 less per hour for part timers and \$4.70 less per hour for casuals.

\*(ABS 6306.0 Table 20 - Methods of Setting Pay, p.33)

“Julia Gillard claims that AWAs are bad for women. She is wrong....Many women have entered into AWAs in industries such as retail and hospitality where wages growth has been muted. It is well understood that these industries pay less per hour than other sectors. 53.2 per cent of retail trade employees are women. 57.8 per cent of accommodation, cafes and restaurants employees are women.”

(Employment & Workplace Relations Minister, Joe Hockey, 28/02/2007)

Australia's workplaces are heavily characterised by gender segregation and the pay gap between men and women is because in general we value men's work and not women's. The Government's new work laws have been shown to impact low paid workers, so it is no surprise that research (Peetz & Preston 2007) is now proving that *WorkChoices* is creating more inequality.

## Welfare to Work

Any job is better than no job, no matter how impossible the demands.

“It is to be expected that when a worker gets a job after a long time out of the workforce on welfare their initial wages may well be lower but we are proud that they have an opportunity to work,”

(Employment & Workplace Relations Minister, Joe Hockey, 28/02/2007)

The Howard Government's welfare changes for many single parents and people with disabilities means they must find work for 15 hours per week or more and will be moved from their current payment to the *Newstart Allowance* (meaning less income, harsher income tests and less ability to undertake further study).

Government requirements for people on *Newstart* mean that (after childcare, transport, housing costs or tax) parents must accept a job if they just are \$25 p/w better off.

With the work and family balance hard enough for part-time workers, one study\*\* shows the effective penalty on sole parents is that “they would be, in effect, working for just \$1.66 an hour.”

\*\**(National Association of Community Legal Centres, 2006)*

For the harshness of the laws, Howard shows cruel irony in his understanding of sole parent's employment needs:

“Many women who are sole parents have gone through very bruising marriage or relationship breakdowns. Their self esteem is often low and its important to recognise from their own point of view, the socialising benefits of returning to the workforce in circumstances where they feel they can look after their children, do justice to them and also develop some friendships and some social connections of their own is tremendously important.”

(PM John Howard, 24/06/2005, Address to Liberal Party Federal Women's Council)