

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 6

Question No: 186

Topic: OfW General Questions

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Cash asked:

In relation to the stated role of the Office for Women, what has the Office done in relation to each of the following:

- a. influence policy, Cabinet and Budget decision-making to ensure women's interests are considered?
- b. provide high level advice to the Minister for the Status of Women?
- c. provide national leadership in reducing violence, in particular the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women?
- d. advise on legislative issues relating to women?
- e. provide the principal focus on consultation between the women's sector and Government?
- f. represent Government at national and international forums on women's issues, such as the United Nations?

Answer:

- a. The Office for Women (OfW) comments on cabinet submissions from a gender equality perspective, maintains the gender panel to assist Departments to engage experts on gender equality, and coordinates and provides policy advice on high priority whole-of-government issues relevant to women, including gender targets on Australian Government boards.
- b. OfW supports the Minister for the Status of Women, focussing particularly on the Government's three priorities for women: improving women's safety, economic independence and leadership opportunities.
- c. OfW has worked with states and territories and the non-government sector to release and implement the COAG-endorsed National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. For details on progress see: <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children/progress-report-to-the-council-of-australian-governments-2010-2012>.
- d. See (a) and (b). Additionally, OfW has policy responsibility for the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, and oversaw the reform process associated with the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* and leading to the new legislation.

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- e. OfW supports consultation between the women's sector and the Government through the six National Women's Alliances, which are currently funded until 30 June 2016. The National Women's Alliances are made up of a mix of sector-based and issues-based women's groups each with a distinct focus and a strong capacity for networking and advocacy activities about issues important to women.

- f. OfW has represented Australia at a range of international forums, including the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting, Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Women and the Economy Forum, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.