

24 November 2009



YWCA Victoria commends the Productivity Commission on the Report on the Contribution of the Not for Profit Sector and welcomes the opportunity to respond.

YWCA Victoria is a not for profit organisation which has its key focus on improving the lives of women by ending inequality. Formed in Melbourne in 1882 YWCA Victoria has a rich history of women working for women, social justice and equality. The YWCA is a global membership organisation that provides outreach services to 25 million women and girls in 125 countries across the world. Operating out of six sites across Victoria, YWCA community services are delivered through three program priority areas - housing, mentoring and community strengthening programs.

YWCA Victoria supports the Victorian Council of Social Services submission, however would like to comment on support for paid workforce development.

YWCA Victoria asserts that whilst the report comprehensively describes the not-for-profit workforce and the challenges of training, retention, pay rate and volunteering, there was no reference or analysis in the report of the highly feminised nature of the workforce and the implications of this.

Women undertake the responsibility of both paid and unpaid caring work, which both impedes their workforce engagement and, owing to the lower wages for community work, impinges on their earning capacity. In 2006, it was reported that 87 per cent of social and community sector workers were women. YWCA Victoria considers that it is important to recognise that the not-for-profit sector has a higher rate of casualisation and part time work when compared with other industries. This can be useful in the short term for women with caring responsibilities however, does little to challenge the gendered expectations around who provides caring labour.

In regards to paid workforce development, YWCA Victoria notes that any increase in award wages must be met with a corresponding increase in funding from the Government and other funders including corporate and philanthropic partners, to ensure service standards remain high.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rosemary Hehir'.

Rosemary Hehir
CEO
YWCA Victoria

YWCA Victoria 141 Leicester Street Carlton Victoria 3053 T: 03) 8341 8700 F: 03) 9349 3633 E: ywca@ywca.net www.ywca.net