

**Inquiry into Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment
(Respect at Work) Bill 2022
Working Women's Centre
Question on Notice**

17/10/2022

Senator Barbara Pocock asked:

Has a proposal been developed by Working Women's Centres, and based on their experience, for a structure and approach to delivering on Recommendation 49?

Answer:

In response to the campaign promise to fund and establish Working Women's Centres across the country, the SA, QLD and NT Working Women's Centres put forward a funding proposal and timetable to the newly elected government to realise recommendation 49. We proposed a three-phased funding plan (strategic, operational and funding) focused on the development of a model of service, values framework and organisational/governance structure that could be consistently applied by Centres across the country. The proposal was based on our collective experience of operating centres since 1979 and reflective of the holistic and unique structure applauded in recommendation 49 of the Respect@Work plan.

Senator Barbara Pocock asked:

How does that structure directly address the discussion in Respect@Work in favour of a community-based, women-centred, effective and holistic, client-centred Working Women's Centre infrastructure?

Answer:

The structure proposed ensured that Working Women's Centres are independent, community-based and women-centred. We proposed that the national body should design a national model (based on operating models), after consultation with stakeholders across the country. This would ensure that Centres across the country were coordinated, well networked and providing a service that is unique but complementary to unions, community legal centres, workplace training operators and women's advocacy services.

Senator Barbara Pocock asked:

What level of resourcing have they proposed, if any, in support of such infrastructure, drawing on the experience of WWCs to date?

Answer:

Our proposal pre-dated the federal budget allocation but essentially it proposed that the government fund a national body to do the above-mentioned work, and increase funding to current operating centres in 21/22. We then suggested that centres be established and funded in 22/23 to have fully operating Centres in every state and territory by the end of 23/24 . We did not go into detail about how that funding should be rolled out as we imagined that a funding model would follow the first phase where the national body had already created a governance and organisational structure.