



12/10/10

Questions for Senator Cash:

Will your Coalition support the changes to the Sex Discrimination Act that are being put forward that will extend its powers?

Will you support the establishment of a new Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, which implements some aspects of the Brennan human rights review?

Will you oppose the cut in the Child Care Tax Rebate that was part of your policy during the election campaign?

Will you support the quota of 40 % for government Boards?

Will you support the principles of equal pay in the community service award case, currently in front of the Fair Work tribunal?

From Eva Cox

An emerging issue for women is the restrictions that Courts place on their location of residence when there are issues of the father's access to children after separation. This can cause women in rural areas great disadvantage because of lower

employment prospects and access for their older children to tertiary education. One woman is restricted from moving more than 30km from her current town. Another could not move 110 km away despite having housing and employment there, and agreeing to drive her children to her ex-partner for his access visits. Both men were violent towards their partners. Women have told us they feel trapped.

What can the Federal Government do to address this situation where women are paying the penalty for their ex-partner's violence?

From Susie Reid, Executive Officer, Women's Health Goulburn North East

My question is about childcare and is a huge concern to many carers in this industry:

Regarding 3-5 year old ratio in childcare :

I am aware of the ratio changes in this age group being implemented in 2016 (6 years away ...) but my concern is that the staff in the 3-5 year old room are always alone with any amount of children regardless of ratio. I feel that this is a huge responsibility and is causing a lot of stress.

Eg. if there is a serious incidence in the room concerning a child or staff member, you have no second witness to what happened. If a staff member is falsely accused of something eg. smacking a child - this can lead to unfair dismissal, court case etc. These are just a couple of examples of what could happen. All other age groups have 2 or more staff members in the room.

From Pia Pedersen

Do you plan to be a strong, feminist voice who speaks out on issues affecting women, including:

- the sexual objectification of women in media and advertising

- the prevalence of violence against women in Australia
- the pervasiveness of violence supportive attitudes and behaviours?

Health is determined by a range of factors. The Office for the Status of Women is in the unique position of sitting across a number of departments that impact on the health of women in Australia such as housing, education, transport etc. How do you plan to address the social determinants of health? Are you committed to implementing meaningful joined-up action across government departments to improve women's health?

Will you consider adopting a gender equity approach to legislation and policy to ensure the impact on women is taken into account? This would require tools such as a gender responsiveness framework, like the Victorian DHS Gender and Diversity Lens, and legislating gender equity requirements. For example, in the UK in 2007, the Sex Discrimination Act was amended to introduce a gender equality scheme which included a statutory duty on public authorities to 'promote equality' (see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_066068).

From Women's Health Victoria

Next year is 100 years of women's organised global protest of misogyny i.e..

International Women's Day is 100 in March 2011 - when will Australian employers be held accountable for women being paid unequally for equal work or does this require a class action by women for backpay?

Australian women demand legal safe free on demand abortion - when can we expect the decriminalisation of abortion nationwide and inclusion of the service on Medicare?

Australia is a secular nation - when will law supersede lore - eg. when will opening a session of parliament with a christian rite be stopped?

Susanne Martain

Australian Women's Intra Network

Australian women are not truly equal before after under in or at law.

For example - when a survivor of sexual assault

1. has the courage to report it to the police
2. it is recorded by the police
3. it is investigated by the police
4. if charges are laid and stick
5. if a court date is set and met

Then on the survivor's day in court the survivor is defined as a 'witness' and hence is by default legally represented by the DPP i.e. the state which says it must not be biased - whereas the usually male alleged perpetrator's legal representation is working in their client's best interests - therefore the survivor -usually a female - is not equally represented before after under in or at law.

If men think they have much less than half a chance of sexual assault being reported and much less than half a chance of it ending up in court - but much more than half a chance of getting off it does go to court - perhaps this goes some way to explaining the ongoing extremely low conviction rate and unacceptably high incident rate of men's sexual violence in our country today.

It is grim indeed that statistically the place where our women and children are most at risk of men's sexual and diverse forms of violence is in their own home and amongst their family and friends.

What will you do about this?

Reclaim the Night Australia

International women's day Australia has been taken over by Unifem supported and generously funded by the government

- all without a word to the grassroots women who have provided the IWD national function for 15 years now

- the international gear campaign for a new UN women's body called UNWomen is supposed to work with civil society organisations not take them over

- is this a trend coming or will you review the situation and correct this outrage?

International Women's Day Australia