



MEDIA RELEASE

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Increased waiting periods to keep women out of work

The Harmony Alliance has today expressed concern at the Government's announcement that it will seek to increase waiting periods to three years before new migrants can access many welfare payments, and introduce a three-year waiting period to access Family Tax Benefit, Paid Parental Leave and Carer Allowance.

The Chair of the Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change, Ms Maria Dimopoulos has today noted that these cuts are directed at the most vulnerable, and will disproportionately affect women.

"The Government should be advocating for the rights of women and their economic empowerment", said Ms Dimopoulos, "these actions appear to contradict that position."

"We should be supporting women from migrant backgrounds to enter and stay in the workforce and Paid Parental Leave is a significant investment in that" said Ms Dimopoulos.

Government data shows that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experience an 11.9 per cent workforce participation gap when compared with all Australian women. This jumps to 23.1 per cent when compared to all Australian men.

"We know that diversity—both ethnic and gender—in the workplace boosts performance. We know that women's participation in the workforce improves living standards for individuals and families, and that access to Paid Parental Leave is critical for keeping women in work."

"It makes economic sense to ensure these women are able to continue contributing to our multicultural nation."

For media enquiries contact Iona Roy – 02 6162 0361 or 0437 294 133

The Harmony Alliance is one of the six National Women's Alliances funded by the Australian Government to promote the views of all Australian women, to ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes. Our purpose is to provide a national inclusive and informed voice on the multiplicity of issues impacting on experiences and outcomes of migrant and refugee women, and to enable opportunities for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to directly engage in driving positive change.