



## MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 20 November

### **Migrant and refugee women must be supported to participate in the workforce**

The Harmony Alliance has today welcomed a series of measures announced by the Minister for Women, the Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP, in the inaugural Women's Economic Security Statement. The Alliance has, however, noted the need for an additional focus on the circumstances of women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

The Chair of Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change, Ms Maria Dimopoulos, welcomed policies aimed at increasing women's workforce participation including increased flexibility in the Parental Leave Pay system, reinstating the Time Use Survey, and additional funding for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

"I'm pleased to see policy measures that consider the economic impact of the disproportionate caring roles played by women" said Ms Dimopoulos. "In implementation, it will be important to consider the complex additional demands and barriers that many women from migrant and refugee backgrounds face."

Research by McKinsey and Company shows that diversity in the workplace improves performance. Gender diverse companies are 15 per cent more likely to perform better than their peers, increasing to 35 per cent for ethnically diverse companies. However, women from migrant and refugee backgrounds continue to face higher unemployment rates and lower labour force participation rates than non-migrant women.

"The valuable skills that women from migrant and refugee backgrounds bring to the workplace often do not receive the recognition they deserve" noted Ms Dimopoulos. "Data must be disaggregated and programs tailored, in order to ensure that women from migrant and refugee backgrounds are included at the core of these reforms."

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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.