



Who Cares! A national discussion on care and the economy

As a society Australia has social and moral obligations to ensure fair and equitable treatment, ease of access, and affordable care for those across the diversity of the Care Economy. To those who receive, and provide care, in all its forms from the cradle to grave and inclusive of paid and unpaid work!

Australia has long been associated with a clear understanding of its human rights obligation to all the nation's families and home environments.

Who Cares! national forum was presented by Justice Equality Rights Access (JERA) International in Melbourne over two days, 20th & 21st February 2017, bringing together representatives from academia, government, non-government, not for profit, private providers and community sectors, as well as a visiting delegation of 15 women from Sri Lanka. The delegation was hosted by JERA International to focus on methodologies for enumeration, promotion and strengthening of the social – political landscape for gender equality and women's rights in Sri Lanka.

According to Judith van Unen, Director JERA International "It was most rewarding to see such clear outcomes identified at the conclusion of the forum, resulting from the involvement of so many well qualified and visionary speakers, powerful presentations and robust audience participation and exchange. This was exactly the outcome we wished for. We are grateful to our many inspiring speakers including Marg D'Arcy of EACH, Julie Kun of WIRE and Vicki Stylianou from the Institute of Public Accountants."

"Collaborative engagement at the forum highlighted the need for strengthening of policy positioning, accountability of existing policies, and strategic measures, approaches, and responsibility across the diversity of care and economic issues," said Ms van Unen.

The need for a life course approach to care; ensuring work and employability, life-long dignity and creating fair and equal access to skills development and lifelong opportunities, is a clear mandate for government, families and providers.

Partnering with economic Security4Women (eS4W), as a lead agent across the five National Women's Alliances funded through the Federal Government, will ensure a continued and active engagement with the wider community in the Care sector. Through eS4W, JERA International is committed to assisting raise awareness and interest of the public, and the media to the priorities, problems and issues faced by so many in our society.

Australia needs a professional debate on the themes and priorities identified and unequivocally endorsed at the forum, particularly in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This will result in greater consensus on how to effectively address the Care Economy and related issues.

Additionally the JERA Who Cares! national forum promoted the value, knowledge, expertise and skills that international linkages can bring to advance women's economic empowerment globally, in the context of United Nations SDGs indicators, and the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). It is the ideal platform from which to explore opportunities for transforming strategies, and considering the most effective way of working and providing outcomes to shape future directions, regarding care and the economy.

JERA International is a facilitator of community consultation to magnify the lived experiences, and diversity of voices in achieving social justice and practical outcomes.

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