

Output Group 2 – Social Policy Advice and Coordination

Price of Outputs	\$14.0m	Cost of Outputs	\$13.0m
Appropriations	\$13.0m		
Administered Expenses	\$10.6m		

Group Outputs

Output Group 2	Social policy advice and coordination
Output 2.1	Social Policy
Output 2.2	Women's Policy

Description

As of 30 June 2002, Output Group 2 comprised two outputs and functionally consisted of:

- Social Policy Division
- Office of the Status of Women.

Output Group 2 is managed by the Executive Coordinator (Social Policy Group).

The outputs for Output Group 2 include policy advice on:

- social policy issues, including income support, indigenous policy, health and community services, veterans' affairs, housing, employment, education and training, immigration and multicultural affairs, and families, youth and ageing
- women's issues, including effective domestic violence prevention programmes.

Administered items

Output 2.1 had no administered items on which to report in the 2001–02 financial year.

The report on the Output 2.2 administered item – women's programmes – begins on page 35.

Output 2.1 – Social Policy

Output 2.1 Social Policy	Performance indicators
<p>Policy development and advice to government on social policy issues, including health, community services, education, employment, immigration, indigenous policy, income support and families, including for presentation of the Government's decisions in these areas.</p>	<p>Quality: The degree of satisfaction of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Office and the departmental Executive, as expressed through formal and informal feedback mechanisms, with the quality and timeliness of policy advice and the achievement of key tasks.</p> <p>Cost of Outputs – \$5.0m</p>

Qualitative assessment

Methodology

During 2001–02, the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Office, the Secretary and the departmental Executive provided regular feedback on Output 2.1. Feedback was provided through regular meetings and formal discussions. Formal individual performance reviews in the context of the department's performance appraisal framework provided further feedback.

Feedback

Output 2.1 was assessed as having provided effective and timely advice, briefing and support on health, community services, income support, immigration, indigenous, education, families, and employment policy issues.

Key results

The Social Policy Division continued to focus on key outputs and outcomes, particularly in relation to unauthorised arrivals, developments in human cloning and research involving embryos, continuing welfare reform, early childhood issues and indigenous policy initiatives arising from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting held in 2002. The division participated in many issue-specific task forces and made significant contributions to the development of interdepartmental, cross-sectoral collaborative processes.

The division manages its outputs through the following four branches, the key results of which are outlined below:

- Health and Community Services Branch
- Income Support Branch
- Employment, Families and Indigenous Policy Branch
- Education and Immigration Branch.

Health and community services policy

The Health and Community Services Branch continued its key role in the area of health policy, particularly regarding the development of policies on human cloning and research involving

embryos. The branch worked closely with the Department of Health and Ageing in the lead-up to COAG and subsequent development of nationally consistent legislation to prohibit human cloning and provide a nationally consistent approach to research involving embryos, for further consideration by COAG. Other health policy issues also involved significant contributions from the branch, including assessing options for improving the pharmaceutical benefits scheme and preparing for the renegotiation of the Australian health care agreements.

We maintained our involvement in the area of community services policy, playing an important oversight role during the renegotiation of the Commonwealth–State–Territory Disability Agreement.

We also worked cooperatively with staff of other government departments and internal units of the department in developing approaches to issues regarding medical indemnity insurance.

Family and income support policy

The Families and Income Support Branch continued to provide policy advice on key social policy issues related to families, children and youth affairs. The branch assisted in the development of the Government's response to the Family Law Pathways Advisory Group's final report and provided secretariat support to the interdepartmental task force, chaired by the department, convened for this purpose. The branch also participated in a range of other interdepartmental committees such as:

- committees established in the lead-up to the World Congress on Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children and the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children
- a cross-agency task force examining childhood development, health and wellbeing strategies, with particular emphasis on early childhood intervention and prevention strategies.

The branch played a key role in the development of policy on income support issues and worked closely with the Departments of Family and Community Services and Employment and Workplace Relations in the development of the second stage of the Government's welfare reform agenda. That work focused on initiatives to recognise and improve the work capacity of people with disabilities, as announced in the 2002–03 Budget, and the development of a public discussion paper on a simplified payment system.

Social housing issues relate closely to the branch's income support work. We continued to work towards improved social housing outcomes by participating in an interdepartmental committee preparing the Commonwealth's negotiating position for the next Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement.

The branch provided policy advice and briefing to the Prime Minister's Office on issues of concern to the veteran population, including by liaising with the Department of Veterans' Affairs on budget initiatives and matters relevant to the current independent review of veterans' entitlements.

In late June 2002 responsibility for family policy was transferred from the Families and Income Support Branch to the new Employment, Families and Indigenous Policy Branch.

Employment and indigenous policy

The Employment and Indigenous Policy Branch provided advice and information to the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Office and the departmental Executive on a broad range of issues related to indigenous affairs. This included coordinating the Commonwealth's input to a progress report on implementing the reconciliation framework agreed to by COAG in November 2000.

To underpin governments' commitment to reconciliation and to drive future work, the April 2002 COAG meeting agreed to trial a whole-of-governments cooperative approach in up to 10 communities or regions. The branch worked with state and territory governments to determine the locations and nature of those initiatives. The branch also worked with the Commonwealth task force established in the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to oversee the implementation of the initiative. The branch commenced work with the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, following a COAG decision to produce a regular report against key indicators of indigenous disadvantage.

The branch also provided advice and information to the Prime Minister and Prime Minister's Office on issues related to employment services, including advice on arrangements for the third Job Network contract, due to commence in 2003, and on the development of the role of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership.

Also of relevance to the branch's employment policy responsibilities was the secretariat support it provided to the Welfare Reform Consultative Forum, which was established in December 2000 to advise the Government on its response to the *Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform*, known as the McClure Report. The forum is jointly chaired by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Minister for Family and Community Services and consists of representatives of the welfare sector, the employment services industry, employers and government. During 2001–02 the forum provided advice to the Government on its continuing agenda for welfare reform following the release of the Australians Working Together package in the 2001–02 Budget.

Education and immigration policy

Much of the Education and Immigration Branch's focus over the period 2001–02 involved support for the Government's unauthorised boat arrivals strategy. This involved working closely with other agencies to strengthen surveillance and interception arrangements; introduce new visa arrangements for unauthorised arrivals processed offshore; and establish and operate asylum claims processing facilities offshore. Additionally the branch provided advice and briefing to the Prime Minister on strategies to build regional cooperation against people smuggling.

The branch worked closely with other areas of the department on issues concerning education, research and innovation, including the implementation and monitoring of the initiatives announced in the 2001 *Backing Australia's Ability* package. The branch also contributed to developing the Government's parameters for higher education reform.

Output 2.2 – Women’s Policy

Output 2.2 Women’s Policy	Performance indicators
Research and advice to government and assistance in coordination, communication and consultation on a range of issues affecting women.	<i>Quality:</i> Degree of satisfaction of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister’s Office, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, and the departmental Executive, as expressed through formal and informal feedback mechanisms, with the quality and timeliness of advice and the achievement of key tasks.
Administration of specific domestic violence programmes.	Feedback from non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders concerning consultation and communication processes. Quantity and diversity of public information materials and activities disseminated. Cost of Outputs – \$7.9

Qualitative assessment

Methodology

During 2001–02, the Prime Minister’s Senior Adviser (Women’s Affairs), the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women and her advisers, and the Executive Coordinator of the Social Policy Group provided regular feedback on Output 2.2. Feedback was provided through regular meetings and formal discussions. Formal individual performance reviews in the context of the department’s performance appraisal framework provided further feedback.

The Office of the Status of Women (OSW) met regularly on current policy issues with relevant stakeholders representing women and women’s organisations. OSW received regular feedback in relation to domestic violence programmes through a national consultative mechanism and from relevant stakeholders.

Feedback

Output 2.2 was assessed as having provided effective and timely advice, briefing and support on a range of issues affecting women.

Key results

Briefing and coordination

OSW provided briefing submissions to the Prime Minister and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, and coordinated responses to ministerial correspondence, parliamentary questions on notice and correspondence received directly from key stakeholders including non-government organisations (NGOs) and the general public. The ministerial briefings and draft responses were commended by ministerial staff as being very useful. OSW provided

secretariat support for the Ministerial Conference of Women's Ministers and associated meetings of advisers and officials held during the year. OSW also prepared the Women's Budget Statement 2002–03. OSW received and responded to an average of 50 telephone calls and 50 emails per week via the OSW general information phone line, (02) 6271 5722, and email address (women@pmc.gov.au).

Legal policy

OSW provided advice and conducted research on the legal system; welfare reform; bills to amend the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the *Family Law Act 1975*; the Family Law Pathways Advisory Group; the Government's response to the report *Managing justice: a review of the federal civil justice system*; and Australia's National Action Plan on Human Rights.

International issues

OSW continued to actively participate in integrating gender considerations into the work of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, through the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration, which Australia currently chairs. The aim of the group's work is to increase women's involvement in APEC activities and ensure that both men and women benefit from APEC's work.

OSW also coordinated Australia's observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and provided information to the United Nations regarding gender issues in Australia. OSW was the lead Australian agency at the Forty-sixth Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York in March 2002. The session focused on the themes of poverty eradication and environmental management.

Women's health and wellbeing

To develop policy information and advice on women's health and wellbeing, in 2001–02 OSW focused on establishing a strong evidence base, developing strategic alliances and establishing best practice models in identified priority areas. Some areas of work included women's transitions out of homelessness, violence against young women, and reproductive health.

In July 2001 a Commonwealth, state and territory working party was established to explore issues affecting women's sense of their body image and to consider strategies to promote positive body image.

OSW publications

OSW produced more than 100 publications during the year, including books, brochures, postcards, newsletters, bulletins and reports. Highlights included the monthly publication of *Women's NEWS*, the release of the first edition of *Focus on Women*, and the publication of *State and Territory Consultations with Migrant and Refugee Women*.

OSW also produced and launched the Centenary of Federation women's history book entitled *Wealth of Women*. The book was launched by Dr Colleen McCullough and Senator the Hon. Amanda Vanstone in September 2001. To honour women during the International Year of

Volunteers, OSW published *Action Women: volunteers shaping the person, shaping Australia*, released in March 2002.

OSW finalised the second edition of *Women in Australia* for publication. The major theme for the publication is women living in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia. The annual comprehensive guide to Commonwealth government initiatives for women, *Women 2002*, was in its final stages of completion at 30 June 2002.

To celebrate International Women’s Day 2002 and the launch of Centenary of Women’s Suffrage celebrations, ‘e-cards’ (electronic greeting cards) were designed and sent to all Commonwealth, state and territory women parliamentarians, staff of Commonwealth departments and NGOs.

OSW websites

The redeveloped OSW website <www.osw.dpmc.gov.au> was launched in August 2001. The website was accessed on average 7,122 times per month during 2001–02.

The Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV) website <www.padv.dpmc.gov.au> was accessed, on average, 4,817 times per month.

Administered items

Women’s programmes

Administered item	Performance indicators
Women’s programmes	<p><i>Quality:</i> Extent to which feedback from stakeholders, researchers and the general public indicates that awareness raising and other activities have been effective in reducing domestic and family violence.</p> <p>Results of external evaluations of funded activities.</p> <p>Administered Expenses – \$10.6m</p>

Qualitative assessment

Methodology

During 2001–02, the Prime Minister’s Senior Adviser (Women’s Affairs), the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women and her advisers, and the Executive Coordinator of the Social Policy Group provided regular feedback on women’s programmes administered under Output 2.2. Feedback was provided through regular meetings and formal discussions.

OSW also met with individual stakeholders and the representatives of peak organisations and service providers through a number of project management and consultative forums.

Feedback

OSW received positive feedback from NGO representatives, academics, specialist service providers and representatives of peak bodies.

Our ongoing evaluation of the PADV initiative indicated a positive community response. OSW received positive feedback from members of the PADV task force and Commonwealth, state and territory Ministers about the success of the PADV initiative.

The Honouring Women initiative continued to gain considerable positive feedback through its promotion by 28 high-profile women acting as ambassadors for the initiative.

The capacity building workshops OSW conducted for women's NGOs were reported to be most productive, with some organisations subsequently experiencing success in obtaining Commonwealth funding for the first time.

OSW received positive feedback from participants at the national women's conference Australian Women Speak, held in August 2001. The workshops held with women's organisations during the conference were also very well received.

Key results***Partnerships Against Domestic Violence***

The \$50 million PADV initiative was established in 1998 by the Commonwealth Government, in cooperation with state and territory governments, to find better ways of preventing and responding to domestic violence.

Phase two of the initiative began in 1999–2000 with the granting of \$25 million to June 2004.

During 2001–02 a major evaluation of the initiative approached finalisation. The initial major findings of the evaluation were as follows:

- a whole-of-government approach is critical to successfully addressing domestic violence
- disseminating information about best practice, trends and research on a national level is important and valuable to all sectors of the community
- work on indigenous family violence requires the close involvement of indigenous communities and organisations to develop an integrated approach
- women and children who are forced to leave their homes because of domestic violence suffer the most, because of the poverty resulting from a lack of income and homelessness
- the role of schools is critical to the wellbeing of children living with domestic violence, as school represents stability in children's lives.

In the second phase of the \$6 million Indigenous Family Violence Grants Programme, \$2.7 million was awarded to 36 community organisations for grassroots projects to develop new approaches to addressing and preventing family violence.

The following three major PADV projects benefiting children commenced in 2002:

- scoping, mapping and documenting existing services for children living with domestic violence
- developing a strength based practice framework and related training for professionals working with children living with domestic violence
- developing response strategies and best practice guidelines for work with children experiencing and/or witnessing domestic violence.

The following six projects were undertaken to focus on people who perpetrate domestic violence:

- a comparative assessment of good practice interventions for men who perpetrate domestic violence
- an audit and review of parallel and integrated programmes
- a project to improve women's safety
- an audit of existing training programmes
- the development of national competency standards
- a project examining indigenous approaches to addressing domestic violence in towns and cities.

The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse – funded under phase two of PADV and based at the University of New South Wales – continued to provide useful research and information. The clearinghouse produced quarterly newsletters containing information on developments in policy and practice. A series of six issues papers was also published, covering in-depth research on, for example, criminal justice intervention; indigenous family violence; and the economic costs of domestic violence. As of 30 June 2002, the mailing list stood at 3,477.

A successful national forum, *Across the Lifespan: violence throughout the lives of women and girls*, was held in Perth in December 2001 and was attended by some 200 stakeholders. Findings from innovative PADV projects and the associated national work with women and girls affected by domestic violence were presented.

National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault

In the 2001–02 Budget, funding of \$16.5 million was allocated to the National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault, to help eliminate sexual assault and to build on the substantial achievements of PADV. The initiative will foster the development of an Australian culture that will not tolerate violence.

OSW commissioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics to investigate how existing sexual assault data could be better used, and to identify future data needs. The Australian Institute of Criminology was commissioned to undertake the Australian component of the *International Violence Against Women Survey* and to work on data related to sexual assault.

Informed Choices for Australian Women

The Informed Choices for Australian Women initiative provided funding of \$5.5 million for OSW to develop a women's information strategy. This includes the development of a women's data warehouse and the development of a women's internet portal.

The women's data warehouse will give Government and the community easy online access to the latest available statistical information about women. The women's data warehouse design and architecture required intensive development by OSW and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Data on a number of important and topical issues for women – including labour force, superannuation and census data – will be available for the launch in late 2002.

The women's internet portal will provide a single point of access to all government online services and information relevant to women. OSW sought tenders and chose a supplier for the development of a women's internet portal during 2001–02. An interim site is available at <www.women.gov.au> for the purpose of gathering input into the portal's development.

Women in leadership and decision making

OSW also continued to participate in a range of projects encouraging greater participation by women in decision making.

As mentioned above, OSW hosted the conference Australian Women Speak, held in Canberra in August 2001. Over 690 delegates attended the conference. A second national women's conference will be held early in 2003.

OSW upgraded its register of women, *Appoint Women*, for the purposes of better assisting portfolios to appoint highly skilled women to Commonwealth boards and bodies. At 30 June 2002, women held 33.8 per cent of Commonwealth board positions, up from 31.7 per cent in December 1996.

The YWCA's Spirit of Leadership Programme was delivered in five regional locations to disadvantaged young women aged between 16 and 25 years. The programme is designed to assist participants to understand the links between values, beliefs and actions relating to personal leadership. Two pilots were completed in May and June 2001, supported by funding from OSW.

Funding was also provided to the REACH Foundation in Victoria to undertake an evaluation of the services it provides to young people at risk, including school programmes, youth days, camps and seminars. The evaluation showed that the programme had a 93 per cent retention rate.

OSW – together with the Australian Local Government Women's Association, the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services and the Australian Local Government Association – developed a strategy to help increase women's participation and decision making in local government. A booklet titled *National Framework for Women in Local Government*, outlining the strategy, was funded by OSW and distributed to all local governments.

A national Women's Indigenous Advisory Group was established to provide advice to OSW. The 12-member advisory group consists of women selected for their individual skills, expertise and knowledge of indigenous issues and participation in their local community. The group met during 2001–02 and identified priorities for attention by the group in line with the OSW goal areas. These included options for developing better ways of consulting with and informing indigenous women and communities about issues affecting women.

Women's Development Programme

The 2001–02 Budget provided \$7.6 million to fund a range of programmes to assist women's development.

In 2001–02 OSW trained a number of facilitators to conduct regional workshops to strengthen the organisational capacities of women's organisations. The 15 workshops delivered across regional Australia were very well received. The workshops built on those delivered in capital cities during 2000–01.

OSW developed a programme, including events and activities, to commemorate the Centenary of Women's Suffrage. The programme included a launch by the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, commissioning of a major artwork and development of a range of memorabilia and publications for national distribution.

Also during 2001–02, nine women's organisations received grants for specific projects, as shown in table 4, Grants to women's non-government organisations. A mentoring support programme was also offered to organisations which indicated that they needed support and advice in preparing funding proposals.

Table 4 Grants to women's non-government organisations

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Project Goals</i>
Older Women's Network	\$25,000	To conduct workshops and discussions to assist older women to recognise the skills they have and how those skills can be utilised in women's organisations, particularly the Older Women's Network
Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA)	\$25,000	To provide training for registered BCNA consumer representatives to help them develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to become effective breast cancer issues advocates and consumer representatives, and to increase the pool of potential BCNA consumer representatives
National Association of Women in Construction	\$15,000	To develop and launch a website for the association
National Council of Single Mothers and their Children	\$25,000	To compile a web based collection of capacity building resources for organisations and individual women wanting to know more about the 'how' of community development
National Foundation for Australian Women	\$60,000	To include Australian woman recipients of Imperial Honours in the Australian Archives Project – the work involves converting paper records to electronic form
National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence	\$53,200	To increase access to services against sexual assault, with a particular focus on indigenous communities
National Network of Indigenous Women's Legal Services	\$60,000	To improve indigenous women's contribution to public policy
National Women's Justice Coalition	\$30,000	To conduct community workshops in the lead-up to a national conference celebrating the centenary of women's right to vote in federal elections
Guides Australia	\$30,000	To support activities focusing on young women's self development, leadership abilities and outdoor skills