



YWCA CANBERRA

MEDIA RELEASE

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YOUNG WOMEN CALL ON THE PM TO LEAD CHANGE ON GENDER EQUALITY

23 November 2014: Eighty per cent of young women, aged 15-30, do not believe gender equality exists in Australia, according to the latest *She Speaks* survey.

The nation-wide survey of 1643 young women, conducted by YWCA Australia and the Institute for Social Science Research at The University of Queensland, explored young women's attitudes to and experiences of leadership.

In good news for the future of Australia, 71 per cent of respondents said they want to be leaders in the future. And 58 per cent already consider themselves to be leaders in their family, school, community or workplace.

Yet the perceptions of gender equality from Australia's young women are grim. Eighty-eight per cent recorded that women experience discrimination in Australia, while a significant 79 per cent felt that gender-based stereotypes affected their day-to-day life.

When asked to nominate the main issues affecting women in their community, the three that emerged were: gender-based stereotyping (79 per cent), violence (73 per cent), and sexist attitudes and beliefs (71 per cent).

The *She Speaks* responses highlight the need for leadership on the issue of gender equality from our political leaders, and YWCA Canberra is calling on PM Tony Abbott to take a strong stand on gender equality.

"There is a very clear message coming through in these survey results: young women still feel that gender inequality is the biggest barrier to them achieving their leadership aspirations," YWCA Canberra Executive Director Frances Crimmins said.

"YWCA Canberra is committed to providing programs that address gender inequality and empower women to pursue leadership roles.

“Our Y Aspire program for primary-school aged girls builds confidence at this critical, formative time in their lives.

“Our Relationship Things program for boys and girls in high school goes beyond sex education to teach about respectful, healthy relationships.

“And our *She Leads* women’s leadership pathway, which includes a Diploma of Management, provides programs to increase the skills and confidence of women to pursue leadership roles,” Ms Crimmins said.

Key statistics from the *She Speaks* 2014 survey:

- 71% want to be leaders in the future
- 80% do not believe that equality has yet been achieved
- 79% felt that gender-based stereotypes affect their day-to-day life
- 30% felt unable to seek help when experiencing violence in their relationship
- 30% felt they were unable to identify problematic behaviours in relationships
- 34% say they have received uninvited and unwanted indecent and/or sexually explicit texts/phone calls/messages
- 64% believe age appropriate respectful relationships education in primary school would effectively reduce violence against women and girls.

- ENDS -

Frances Crimmins and YWCA Canberra President - and woman under 30 - Kate Chipperfield are available for interview.

Media contact: Karan Gabriel 0429 210 881

About YWCA Canberra: YWCA Canberra is a feminist, not-for-profit community organisation that has been providing community services and representing women’s issues in the Canberra community since its establishment in 1929. YWCA Canberra employs more than 350 staff across the ACT, and delivers 30 quality programs in children’s services, community development, housing, youth services, women’s leadership, advocacy, and training. Represented in 122 countries, the YWCA has a global reach of 25 million women and girls. As part of this international movement, YWCA Canberra works for a world where reconciliation, justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment are promoted and sustained through women’s leadership. For more information visit: www.ywca-canberra.org.au

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