



**Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Women's Affairs
Minister for Community Services**

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Message of Support from the Hon Mary Wooldridge, Minister for Women's Affairs

International Women's Day is a day to reflect on the enormous progress that has been made to improve the status of women in Australia. It also serves to remind us that the quest for women's equality is not over and that action is still required in a number of areas.

This year's theme for International Women's Day is Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment. Economic empowerment is contingent on many factors, including women's access to education and skills development; employment and career progression; leadership opportunities; and to arrangements that enable both women and men to balance work and caring responsibilities.

The workplace is a critical setting for women's economic empowerment and I trust that today's event, which focuses on men and women working alongside each other in workplaces, will enable you to discuss the organisational benefits of having women actively engaged at all levels in the workplace.

I was pleased to hear that proceeds from today's event will support a project that is directed at educating men about family violence. The social and economic impact of family violence on women and their children is profound. Economic empowerment cannot be achieved unless the fundamental right of women and their children to live free from all forms of violence is upheld. We all have a responsibility to challenge and change the attitudes and behaviours which contribute to violence against women and children.

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