

Women on jobs frontline

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Business, defence leaders join task force to boost post-COVID employment

THE Young Australian of the Year, a defence industry leader and business founders are among those joining a peak body advising the state government on how to get more women into work and leadership positions.

Six new members have been appointed to the Premier's Council for Women and tasked with focusing on women's economic security as the state recovers from pandemic shutdowns.

Young Australian of the Year Isobel Marshall is among the new faces, announced today, who join existing members of the council, which was first convened in 2002.

It has advised government on gender equality and women's safety, and now Premier Steven Marshall wants the revamped 11-member panel to have "an increased focus" on improving women's economic security and opportunities in the COVID-19 recovery phase.

Women make up about two-thirds of the state's parttime workforce, including in sectors such as hospitality and the arts, which were badly affected by pandemic job losses.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that by January 2021, there were more men back in jobs than when lockdown measures were imposed in March 2020

– but 17,000 female job losses had not been recovered.

Human Services Minister Michelle Lensink said the council would help to “drill down into each of the sectors (of SA's economy) to see who's been disadvantaged and why”.

It would also contribute to a soon-to-be-released Women's Leadership and Economic Security Strategy for the next four years, Ms Lensink said.

Ms Marshall, 22, founded social enterprise TABOO with schoolmate Eloise Hall to ensure all women and girls have access to pads and tampons.

“Everything that TABOO is about is identifying a key barrier that stops women ... from participating in school, work and community life,” she said.

New council chairwoman Fiona Dorman is a trained scientist, business founder and president of the National Council of Women SA.

She said the “very diverse” group would “try and be creative about how we bring women into (economic and community) participation”.

The new faces replace outgoing council members Miriam Silva, the previous chairwoman and a multicultural leader, Flinders University Associate Professor Lorna Hallahan, gender equality consultant Anna Lee, Volunteering SA & NT chief Evelyn O'Loughlin, BHP Olympic Dam asset president Laura Tyler and Adnyamathanha woman and public servant Vicky Welgraven.

Remaining members include Women's Safety Services chief Maria Hagias, Wilderness School Principal Jane Danvers, nursing graduate and migrant advocate Shingi Mapuvire, Department of Premier and Cabinet Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation executive director Nerida Saunders and financial planning business founder Michelle Veitch.