

“FYi FEMALE, YOUNG + INDEPENDENT” BOOKLET

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MRS VAN DE KLASHORST (Minister for Women's Interests) [9.04 am]: Last weekend the Government launched an information package which will help fulfil one of the aims of the Government's two-year plan for women; financial independence for women. The publication called “FYi female, young + independent”, is aimed at teenagers and women in their early adult years who are starting out in life. This is a particularly important resource as research carried out in the United States has shown that 90 per cent of all women will have to take care of themselves economically to some extent. Furthermore, it has been said that women who do not start preparing for their economic future by the age of 16, play a lifelong game of catch-up.

The guide, and eight accompanying supplements, contain financial facts, tips and hundreds of suggestions on starting out in the world. The chapters are on learning, employment, self-employment, career advancement, managing money, investment, community involvement, balancing work and life, relationships and finance.

Education is seen as the first important step towards economic security with excellent opportunities for well-educated young women who now compete equally with men for higher paid skilled jobs.

Employment includes the traditional areas in which most women are employed such as retail, health and community services, property and business services, and education. There is also the issue of balancing work and family commitments.

Self-employment is particularly important for women who make-up 36 per cent of business operators which is expected to increase to 50 per cent in the near future. A 1997 survey found that young women saw financial security as giving them safety, choice and a voice. Of those surveyed, 56 per cent measured success and accomplishment in terms of owning their own business.

Career advancement is seen as preparing for a series of jobs and occupations rather than a job for life, with the skills and experience gained at one job being used to obtain further opportunities.

Managing money includes budgeting and managing debt while investment looks at saving, investment, superannuation and making a will.

Community involvement considers the advantages of voluntary work in terms of developing contacts and acquiring skills. Balancing work and life includes job sharing, home-based work, flexitime, reduced hours, career breaks and leave options.

Finally, relationships and finance explores the financial precautions that need to be taken when entering a relationship.

The guide has many contacts of government and non-government organisations where further information is available.

“FYi female, young + independent” will be sent to schools, university, youth groups and libraries. It is available from the parenting information centres around the State and the Women's Policy Office, which spent a year developing the publication. The office will develop a similar resource on health and wellbeing for young women.

I commend the guide to the House and table a copy of “FYi female, young + independent”.

[See paper No 545.]