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Strategies to increase the uptake of teleworking opportunities for rural/remote women

1. Relevant state and Commonwealth government departments eg DCITA, DAFF outsource a number of suitable (at a range of levels – not only administrative) positions to rural teleworkers to trial the concept, research issues, positives and promote to private industry. There can be wins for government as well as employees. Eg Office of Rural Communities model in Queensland 1997. Seek written agreement or legislation whereby X number of teleworking positions/department have to be outsourced to rural teleworkers by a certain date.
2. That there be funds provided to establish a national rural teleworking organisation to link rural teleworkers (currently isolated, with little support, not many of them) to:
 - advocate on behalf of
 - promote this way of this way of working - including through a targeted media campaign
 - to encourage and support research
 - evaluate performance
 - encourage best prac methods or operating
 - link to training
 - link to employers
3. Establish a body to act an employment agency to seek and manage work contracts for rural teleworkers eg Teletask (former NTN funded rural teleworking project) or an enhanced model.
4. That there be an **increased focus** in the work of the ATAC on telework in **rural** and **remote** regions including the opportunities teleworking provides for employees and employers. FAAW would like to make the point that there are added benefits for rural and remote workers as regards teleworking because:
 - Teleworking can provide career opportunities even pathways in areas for rural workers where there are few employment opportunities
 - there may be spin off employment benefits eg childcare for teleworker, computer maintenance
 - the benefit of increased skills and professional development created through employment
 - extra income being spent in rural towns
 - some employers can benefit from being seen to have a strong rural presence eg Government departments, businesses who wish to be seen to be servicing the bush eg Telstra
 - Other benefits to rural towns – eg increased knowledge/skills of residents (capacity building)
5. FAAW will assist ATAC to promote teleworking via our web site and newsletters.

6. Link teleworking opportunities to drought assistance schemes – ie as a positive drought strategy (social as well as economic benefits). Off farm income is often vital to economic sustainability of farms (especially during drought) and many farming women have tertiary qualifications and good project management and other skills. Governments could outsource or coordinate the outsourcing of work to farmers as a positive drought strategy.
7. Have rural women's representation on ATAC.
8. Profile successful rural teleworkers through media, newsletters and at conferences.
9. Recommend that ATAC link with relevant universities who have done research (or may) on rural teleworking as a way to promote research into this area and promotion of the concept generally to a potential workforce. Eg Queensland University of technology and Charles Sturt University.
10. Links to TAFE and training providers – to teach people how to telework, manage teleworkers and deal with challenges, networks etc.
11. Recommend that ATAC link with FAW as a link to other national and state rural women's organizations in order to "spread the word".

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