

# Leading Issues Journal

July 2002 Issue

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### **Address to Emily's List Dinner Labor Women's National Conference, April 26, 2002, Canberra by Dr Carmen Lawrence**

**MP**

In May 2002, the ALP Women's Conference unanimously passed the following motion on the weekend.

This motion was passed with acclamation:

"The National Labor Women's Conference 2002 calls on the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party to fundamentally reconsider its policy in relation to refugees and asylum seekers.

In particular, we call on the ALP to develop a policy on asylum seekers and refugees that is compassionate and humanitarian, and:

- Advocates an environment in which the policy of the ALP promotes the cause of social justice;
- Ensures that we meet our international obligations in a manner that allows us to be proud of our commitment to the global community;
- Reaffirms our commitment to fundamental human rights and to the dignity and worth of every human being and their inherent right to respect;
- Recognises that vast inequities in the global community and our obligations to further the correction of these inequalities.

This Conference, therefore, proposes that, in finalising its Population and Immigration and Asylum Seekers policy, the Labor Party accepts the following addition on alternatives to the current asylum seeker policy:

1. Change the current system of mandatory detention so that all asylum seekers are to be released after the initial processing of health and security checks, unless they pose a proven security risk or a real risk of absconding. Priority for release is to be given to children, women and families. Asylum seekers are to be housed in more appropriate settings whilst their claims for asylum are being processed.
2. Abolish Temporary Protection Visas.
3. Return detention centres to public management and, therefore, public scrutiny.
4. Set the Labor Party's new asylum seeker policy in the context of a new, fully developed Population and Immigration policy.
5. Initial screening of all asylum seekers to identify and support torture and trauma victims in accordance with UNHCR guidelines.
6. Repeal legislation excising parts of Australia from Australia's migration zone.

7. Establishing fast-track processing options, using resources, and excluding aid money, currently directed toward the “Pacific Solution” and detention.
8. End the “Pacific Solution” and enter the multilateral negotiations with Indonesia and source countries to develop more workable offshore programs.
9. De-couple the onshore and offshore programs.
10. Re-evaluate the special humanitarian program in conjunction with the family reunion program to ensure a system of equity whereby all places go to those most in need and all refugees currently resident in Australia have access to family reunion rights.
11. Conduct a Review, mostly to re-evaluate the total number of refugee places, including the consideration of a flexible quota to take account of overseas crises.
12. Provide access to education, housing and health services in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
13. Initiate a program of public awareness about the plight of the refugees, combined with a recognition of the outstanding contribution past refugees have made."

A separate motion was agreed:

"That regional detention centres such as Woomera and Curtin be immediately closed and that there be no centres in remote areas ever again."

#### Speech by

#### **Carmen Lawrence to Emily's List**

**Address to Emily's List Dinner Labor Women's National Conference, April 26, 2002, Canberra.**

**By Dr Carmen Lawrence MP, Shadow Minister for Reconciliation, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the Arts, and Status of Women Federal Member for Fremantle**

Emily's list was founded to achieve two major goals:

to work to get more progressive Labour women into politics, and to provide support – financial, information, networks etc- to assist them

By definition these goals are focused on the status of women – on equity, choice and so on. We have deliberately avoided more general – and potentially contentious - issues.

At one level, Emily's List is succeeding – we are getting more progressive women into Parliaments around the country and keeping them there.

But what do we expect of them? Is theirs a unique voice?

I am often asked, “Will having more women make a difference to our Parliamentary system?”

Indeed, it is often argued that women can make a unique contribution - that women's historical and continuing subordination gives them "privileged access to the truth.”

Some say that women are more likely to understand the problems they face.

Australian research shows that women are seen as more likely to be in touch with the needs and interests of the average person.

Many women have pressed their claims for greater representation on the basis that they see themselves as bringing new qualities to the political stage.

They have argued, that since women's exclusion has arisen in part from conventions that distinguish between the public and private, women will bring these issues to the foreground of public debate, eg. concern for the young, sick, old and disabled, the removal of discrimination based on status and the grounding of the abstractions of economic or foreign policy in more compassionate understanding of people's daily lives.

Others have held out the promise that women will radicalise the very practices of democracy: that they will cut through the "pomposity" of male rhetoric, subvert unnecessary hierarchies, open up decision making to those who were once the objects of policy and ensure a more responsive and open system.

There is hope that when a sufficient number of women is elected, their "critical mass" will produce a qualitative change in political life- women will no longer be forced to "adapt to their surroundings, conforming to the existing rules of the game"; that they will bring a more sceptical viewpoint to the assessment of our political institutions and practices.

Change is seen as inevitably flowing from the different experiences and sensibilities of women

While women, as outsiders and newcomers, may well be in the best position to see what is needed, I would argue that the mere presence of women will not be sufficient. We need to articulate a detailed agenda for reform based on an analysis of the deficiencies in our policies and in our political system.

We need to ask ourselves - why we got involved in politics, why we joined the ALP or why we support it.

I'm sure, like you, I did not get involved in politics simply to be a loyal foot soldier for the ALP no matter what it stood for or what it did.

I'm sure we did not agree to abandon our principles and passions.

It is certainly reasonable to ask for the majority views to be reflected in policy and strategy.... But are they?

The Party should be, after all, what its members agree it to be... But is it?

And in any case, should we always abide by the majority decisions without demur?

Are there occasions when dissent is the only honourable course?

Have women fought so hard to become involved to be engulfed by the lowest common denominator of decision-making, by the dealmakers and fixers, by those who regard themselves as hard-headed realists and the rest, presumably as softheaded idealists?

We are at risk of being overwhelmed by those who're obsessed with process and not principle, for whom open and energetic debate is said to indicate division and to be avoided at all cost.

By those who fear the community and would rather follow it, with fingers in the air to see which way the wind's blowing rather than taking a lead and bringing out the best in us. The alternative is the Howard mode, as Peter Carey put it of "feeding on the worst."

I believe we are at a critical juncture in Australia's history and that of the ALP. We are in disputed territory where all transformation occurs. A lot of the certainties of the past are under challenge - it takes brave souls to ride the boundaries and dispute the certainties of Howard's brave new world.

We need progressive women who:

Oppose and argue against equating our well-being solely with the acquisition of more and more material possessions, although for those who genuinely have little this may be important.

As Mungo MacCallum writes entertainingly about the discovery of the “aspirational” voter,

“Of course, all voters are aspiration in that they aspire towards something, on most cases, a better life for themselves and their children. But today’s commentators are talking about someone with narrower goals. This key inhabitant of marginal seats is assumed to have (wrongly, I think) only one real aspiration: to gain as much as possible as quickly as possible and to hell with everyone else. He is uninterested in community and contemptuous of altruism; if he had a theme song, it would be that of the old working-class favourite, “The working class can kiss my arse, I’ve got the foreman’s job at last,” performed with immense gust and not a trace of irony. The aspirational voter is in fact the old Up-You-Jack punter a couple of steps further up the ladder.”

We need progressive women who:

Assert that inequality, not just poverty, does matter; that it corrodes the sense of commitment we have to one another; that it makes us uneasy; that it produces social problems and poor outcomes in health and education.

Resist the push toward individual solutions for all our social and economic problems; who argue persuasively for the adoption of solutions which narrow the gaps between us; which, “shock, horror”, redistribute wealth.

Are not afraid to stand against what are said to be majority views on Indigenous Australians and on asylum seekers; who affirm decent human rights standards. And who are prepared to say unequivocally why we do so – it’s not about process but about principle.

Who recognise that part of our task should be to bring the Australian community with us; not to treat them as incapable of changing their views and of being terminally bigoted. If people hear their leaders telling them that it’s OK to be racially intolerant – as Howard has often done- they may well be encouraged to do so. Howard has often signalled in code that bigotry is natural, that it is not only expected, but accepted.

Who also understand just how determined Howard is to remake Australia in his own image.

If we are to develop good policies, consistent with our claim to be progressive, we need to start with a set of values, yes, of ideals, to which we aspire as political activists.

They should not be for decoration, the detachable preamble to our policy documents. Rather, they should underpin everything we do – and they should not be abandoned at the faintest whiff of grapeshot.

Yes, there will always be a need to compromise and sometimes we will get it wrong (and I’ve done both), but I know that there are many people on the left of the political spectrum (not the ALP) who are feeling rudderless, even abandoned by our Party.

This is not just some pathetic nostalgia, or baby boomers being totally unrealistic or lacking in pragmatism; it is, I believe, born of a genuine desire to do better.

Many of those most vocal in expressing their discontent are indeed the young – and we are losing a great many of them.

I’m sure none of you got involved in politics just to play the game, satisfied with being in power to oversee incremental change; to aspire to modest gains, barely distinguishable from those which might be achieved by our political opponents.

I know we are constantly told that when it comes to the economy and the role of government – there is no alternative.

There are alternatives.

I believe we should at least explore an alternative intellectual framework which gives

due weight to the distribution of wealth and work, which advocates environmentally sustainable growth, which encompasses the special circumstances of our Indigenous people, which rebalances the shares going to wages and profits; which improves working conditions, which sees that the huge gaps between the wealthy developed world and the desperately poor billions is not sustainable – or just.

There are alternatives – one size need not fit all.

Progressive women need too to reignite enthusiasm for the protection of human rights; to affirm basic decency in our policies for Indigenous people and asylum seekers.

We need to repudiate prejudice and hatefulness wherever it occurs.

Part of good policy development should be based not only on values and the collection of evidence, statistics and information, but, fundamentally, on an understanding of the experiences and circumstances of those for whom policy is developed.

We should not enmesh ourselves in abstract issues and deflect attention from individual experience.

Understanding begins with sympathy – recognition of the shared human condition.

We need to employ empathic imagination- how would I feel? What would I do in these circumstances?

We need to piece together the circumstances of people's lives; to infer the intentions behind their actions from our general store of knowledge about human motivations and responses.

We should not fall for the propagandist's three-card trick, which as Aldous Huxley put it is to "make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human."

We need to remind ourselves in framing our policies that luck, rather than virtue, is one of the great determinants of life. H.G. Wells and his socialist friends began their influential Declaration of Rights with the observation that "since a man comes into the world through no fault of his own"... and they might have added and with no choice over where and in what circumstances...

I believe we need to revive Labor's position as a champion of Human Rights – we were energetic in framing the original U.N. declaration and influential beyond our size in pulling others with us.

This is all the more important because as Mungo MacCallum put it so vividly in his essay "Girt by Sea",

"Having discarded politeness, the Howard mob now seeks to promote a sort of Forrest Gumpish ignorance and the national ideal."

Add to that a big dollop of meanness.

Of all nations, we should be in an ideal position as a people to understand and empathise with those who come to our shores:

Some of us are descended former convicts who were extruded from their homelands and abandoned;

Many of us are the grandchildren and great grandchildren of the Irish, exiled by oppression and starvation;

Many of us are the children and grandchildren of the post-war refugees who were fleeing loss and persecution.

It doesn't take a giant leap of the imagination to understand the self destructive and irrational behaviour of those who are detained in remote, dehumanising camps in remote locations; people who are held without the support of family, with no knowledge of their likely fates; without hope.

And all this after fleeing destruction, persecution and trauma;

The responses of depression, frustration, anger and destructiveness of self and others are all predictable – and most of us would do the same in comparable conditions. Through hunger strikes and self harm many of these people are actually trying to maintain a modicum of control – albeit perversely- over their own loves. They are also resisting the exercise of absolute power over their lives. To deal with these issues – and the many others we face as a nation - we need progressive women, brave women, women of purpose and passion. We need you.

### **The Women's Constitutional Convention 2002 Trust the Women Convention 11-13 June 2002**

The 100 year anniversary of the Commonwealth Franchise Act, that gave most Australian women the right to vote and stand in federal elections, was marked on 12 June 2002. But this was an incomplete centenary because the Franchise Act denied the right to vote federally to 'aboriginal native[s] of Australia, Africa, Asia or the Islands of the Pacific except New Zealand' unless covered under Section 41.

The Trust the Women Convention held in Canberra from 11-13 June 2002 celebrated 100 years of Women's Suffrage and 40 years of Indigenous Women's Suffrage.

The 2002 Convention aimed to:

- • Review the social and political concerns of contemporary women
- • Raise awareness of political and governmental processes
- • Identify opportunities for women with diverse views to feed into constitutional reform
- • Explore the importance of women's vote, and
- • Promote women's civic participation at a local, state and national level.

"One of the main themes of the Trust the Women Convention was how long some of the things that need to be done are going to take. Women left the Convention with much food for thought about the role of Australian women in the social, political and constitutional future of our country. The need for continuing work, at so many levels, passes from each generation of women to the next. And, while we look back to what has been achieved - much more importantly - we must also find the ways forward." (Judy Harrison, NWJC, Trust the Women National Bulletin)

**To link to the Papers presented at the Convention's Website see:**

**<http://www.wcc2002.asn.au> or**

**<http://www.wcc2002.asn.au/program/index.htm>**

**Women at Work: The Next Decade**

**By Avril Henry, National Director Human Resources, Clayton Utz**

Avril Henry begins her Paper by looking at the past in the attempt to make some projections into the future on how work is likely to be in the next decade for women. She recaps the last 25 years pointing out that although there has been a dramatic shift in the way society perceives the role of women and the opportunities available, women are still perceived as the main carers for the family and home. They must somehow as they have been doing so since the Industrial Revolution, balance their working life, their home life, their family and their career. Henry canvases a barage of interesting statistics that reveal the changes status of women in Australia.

"Just 25 years ago, only 40% of married women were in the paid workforce compared with 52% in the late 90s. ...A 1960 Gallup poll found that 78% of people believed that married women with children should stay home full-time, only 18% believed a married woman should be "allowed" to work. In 1972, 82% of women with dependent children under the age of 14 stayed home full-time, by 1992 this figure had dropped to 31%, and by the late 1990s, only 26% of women with children under the age of 14 stayed home full-time. In fact, by the early to mid 1990's, 59% of two-parent families had both parents working full-time."

Despite the advances of the last two to three decades, Avril Henry points out that recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that women still do more than double the amount of housework that their male partners do. This is not unique to Australia.

"Discrimination today is far more covert than 25 years ago, but it still exists. So women are often frustrated at work, frustrated at home and are left wondering whether it is all worth it. The promises of the women's movement of a better life and greater independence seem distant after a 12-hour day at the office, picking up the kids from child care, preparing dinner for four or more, and coping with a pile of washing and ironing."

Her Paper poses some very interesting responses that are based on the emerging statistical patterns over the last 25 years to some key questions: "Is now a better time to be a woman than 50 years ago?" "What does the future hold for working women? What is it likely to be like in the next decade?"

Stating that the present system is neither fair nor as efficient as it might be, Avril Henry proposes that "to make it better, governments, employers and individuals need to rethink their roles. Governments need to seek incentives to make it easier for women to work - tax reform or better public services (e.g. subsidised community based child care); employers need to research, develop and implement innovative and flexible work practices to attract, retain and reward good employees, and individuals. Need to question traditional sex divisions of labour, both at work and at home."

She concludes by presenting some promising statistics of the what is being done at Clayton Utz to restore an equitable balance for women in the workplace.

And in the future, will this balance be not just about equity but parity as well? Avril

Henry responds in the negative with the hope that "with luck, their choices will be wider and their lives more civilised than today." .

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## **WOMEN AT WORK: The Next Decade**

**By Avril Henry**

### **WOMEN AT WORK: The Next Decade**

**By Avril Henry, National Director Human Resources, Clayton Utz**

**Presented at the Women Leading in Australia Conference 12 March 2002  
organised by Synergy Plus Training**

I'd like to commence this session with a quote from Nelson Mandela, to set the scene for where I see women in the workforce in the next decade:

“It is what we make of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.”

But let's start by looking at what's happened in the past, it is often said that history is the greatest predictor of the future. If we look at the past , we can attempt to make some projections into the future, so that what we can contemplate is how work is likely to be and how it could be in the next decade for women. As we can all well imagine each of these scenarios will give a completely different result.

Over the last 25 years there has been a dramatic shift in the way society perceives the role of women and the opportunities available. However, women are still perceived as the main carers for the family and home, even in the most liberal cultures. So they must somehow balance their working life, their home life , their family and their career. Women have been performing the balancing act since the industrial revolution, when lower class women began working in factories and offices out of economic necessity.

Just 25 years ago, only 40% of married women were in the paid workforce compared with 52% in the late 90s. Up until the early 1970's, financial reasons were the main reasons women worked. However, as women wanted more independence and freedom, work was seen as a path to achieve this, and hence, women began working for the fulfilment of a career as well as the economic benefit, which is reflected in current statistics.

But women were still expected to manage the household as well, a job that has been considered full time itself. And so the balancing act became the norm for many Australian women. Media images portrayed the mother as the pivotal role in the family and housework became loaded with emotional content. The cleaner your home, the more you loved your family. This placed additional pressure on working women, already feeling guilty about working, and many women felt they had to do even more to live up to the stereotypes.



The concept of equal pay for equal work was novel, having only been legislated a few years before (but in some industries is still not a reality in the 90's), and the idea of comparable worth would have been laughable. So women were segregated into a small number of occupations and on the whole, earning less than males. In some industries, such as banking and teaching, women were still forced to resign when they got married, with the justification that doing this meant more jobs for young people.

Child care places were few and far between 25 years ago. Women who worked full time had to wait until their children were at school before going back to work, or rely on family and neighbours to care for them. Many women felt pressure from their mothers or mothers-in-law not to go back to work because they believed they were not being good mothers. Not only did women have to deal with their jobs and the home, but also with the disapproval of their family and friends. A 1960 Gallup poll found that 78% of people believed that married women with children should stay home full-time, only 18% believed a married woman should be "allowed" to work. In 1972, 82% of women with dependent children under the age of 14 stayed home full-time, by 1992 this figure had dropped to 31%, and by the late 1990s, only 26% of women with children under the age of 14 stayed home full-time. In fact, by the early to mid 1990's, 59% of two-parent families had both parents working full-time.

These statistics alone indicate that there has been a change in attitude over the last 20 - 30 years, but while the situation for women is quite different to what it was, many issues still remain. Support networks for women are declining with globalisation, increasing mobility in the work place and changes in family structures. Today 30 % of first time marriages, and 40% of second marriages result in divorce, increasing the number of single parent families, most of which are headed up by women, 69% of whom work full-time. Approximately 43% of full-time jobs, and 75% of part-time jobs are occupied by women. This means that child care is a more critical issue today than it was 20 years ago. While organisations are beginning to realise the value of providing child care to staff in order to retain some of their best people, the Australian government in recent years changed its tax incentives which encouraged organisations to provide child care, resulting in many companies withdrawing the limited child care support they had introduced. As at the end of the 1990's, only 6% of Australian companies provided child care. In the late 80's and 90's organisations started introducing flexible work practices such as job sharing, home based work and part-time work which allow women to better combine work and family. These practices would allow women to continue their careers while still being able to participate to a greater degree in the care of their children.

However, despite the advances of the last two to three decades, things are still far from rosy. Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that women still do more than double the amount of housework that their male partners do. Men have still not embraced their share of housework as women have moved into paid employment. This is not unique to Australia, men everywhere still do less than their fair share of housework and child care, even if their wives work full-time. One would expect that reducing domestic labour would be important in designing prototypes for the "technology house" of the future, but this is not true, since most of these designs are being created by men rather than women. Male designers from

Honeywell designed automatic light switches, that way “a housewife entering a room with her hands full of wet clothes would not have to put them down to turn on the lights!!!” In the US, they proposed a washing machine which would signal via the TV screen when the washing was ready to be hung out or moved to the tumble dryer - hardly major labour and time savers! When a female inventor, Frances Gabe, was asked to design a labour saving device, she said she'd include a closet in which clothes were laundered where they hung, and a dishwasher cupboard in which dirty crockery is washed, dried and stored - ready for use !!!

Recent statistics reveal that in corporate Australia, women now make up 8% of senior executive positions, 15% of senior managerial positions, 24% of middle managers, and 35% of junior managers. However, they occupy less than 3% of board positions. Similarly, in Germany, a recent survey of the 70,000 largest companies showed that women's share of top executive and board positions was only 1 - 3 %. In the USA, which is generally thought to be a decade or more ahead of Europe and Australia on such matters, women hold about 10% of the board seats of Fortune 500 companies - still low, but better than it was.

Women in politics, throughout the world, have come a surprisingly long way in a short time. At the beginning of this century few countries had universal suffrage for men, let alone women. The USA, Germany, Britain and the Nordic countries gave women the vote in the 1920's, but France and Italy waited until 1944 and 1945 respectively, Greece 1952 and Portugal, not until 1976!!!! Even in politics women are given the “soft” portfolios, such as health, education, social affairs and culture, rarely are they given foreign affairs, finance and justice - these invariably go to men. Finland is the only country where at some point every single portfolio has been held by a woman. Women prime ministers (such as Margaret Thatcher) are as rare as hen's teeth. Women in federal government in Australia hold approximately 30% of senate positions, and women in NSW government hold 33% of Legislative Council positions.

The hope must be that the example of women in top political posts will eventually rub off on the business world, but there is little sign of it anywhere in the world, let alone Australia. In Britain, at Marks and Spencer, a large British retailer noted for its enlightened policies, the female ranks thin markedly towards the top. Women make 85% of overall staff, 60% of middle managers, 30% of senior managers, but still has only ONE female executive director. An annual survey of Fortune 500 companies in the USA by Catalyst, a New York-based research organisation, found that women only occupy 3% of CEO, President and Chairman positions. Immediately on the brighter side though: 83% of the Fortune 500 now have at least one woman on the board, and 30% of them two or more. As you might expect, women directors are more likely to be found in industries such as cosmetics, food services, airlines and computer software, rather than say engineering or construction.

Discrimination today is far more covert than 25 years ago, but it still exists. So women are often frustrated at work, frustrated at home and are left wondering whether it is all worth it. The promises of the women's movement of a better life and greater independence seem distant after a 12-hour day at the office, picking up the kids from child care, preparing dinner for four or more, and coping with a pile of washing and ironing.

Is now a better time to be a woman than 50 years ago? In many ways, the answer has to be “yes”. Women everywhere in the “rich” world have got the same legal rights as men: to vote, to work, to do as they please. They have equal access to education at all levels, and mostly make full use of it. If they are working, they are protected (up to a point) by equal opportunities legislation. Sexual harassment at work has significantly diminished, and is being more effectively curtailed, if only because of the risk of legal fees, damages and bad publicity. But the most effective instrument for changing attitudes has been women’s mass exodus from home to the workplace, being “just a housewife” now a thing of the past.

What does the future hold for working women? What is it likely to be like in the next decade??

Women are doing better than they were throughout the rich world, and more of them are reaching middle management, but as we can see they are not about to storm the world’s boardrooms or parliaments. At the top of the “power ladder”, their numbers are still small. Count the silk scarves at any conference for senior management, search for handbags at summit meetings, hunt the lady professors in the senior common room, or comb the lists of law firms for missing evidence of feminisation. Further down the ranks, take a good look at the pay cheque, Women all over the world, on average are paid less than men - typically 20-30% less for similar kinds of work. Lower pay usually means lower or no benefits and a smaller retirement fund. Thanks to equal pay and EEO legislation in many countries, the pay gap has got smaller and the discrimination less blatant, but we note that neither has disappeared.

Many women will continue to bang their heads against the glass or mahogany ceiling, but more and more of them are deciding that their heads would be better employed on something more constructive such as establishing their own businesses. Interestingly, approximately 40% of the over 800,000 small businesses in Australia are owned and operated by women, many of whom are from a Non English speaking background, who have a higher success rate than men in small business. Compared with the rigidity of corporate life, the flexibility of self-employment seems to offer a solution to many working women’s greatest problem: reconciling career and family.

In the first decade of this century, some 20 % of women will choose to have no children, and a further 20% will have only one child, but this will not diminish their family responsibilities. On the contrary, they will simply change. Australia has an aging population, with more than 47% of the population over the age of 45 by 2005. This will require greater focus on elder care responsibilities. Women will continue to be better educated at the secondary, tertiary and post graduate level, and increasingly statistics are revealing more girls completing high school than boys; nearly 50% of many tertiary qualified graduates are women, and up to 30% of all MBA graduates.

Yet sooner or later any discussion on women’s progress in the workplace seems to lead to the same inevitable phase:

“They (women) have come a long way, but they still have a long way to go.”

Looking at the evidence presented thus far, it is impossible to disagree. By going out

to work whatever their family circumstances, women in rich countries are pioneering a new dual-earner family model. But the world around them was designed for the traditional model of male breadwinner, female homemaker and child-carer. That traditional model lives on in hundreds of millions of heads world-wide, female as well as male, and still governs many dreams and aspirations. Model and reality are so far apart that one wonders how we make this work. In Australia alone, at the current rate of change, it is projected that it will take more than 170 years before there are as many women in senior management and decision-making roles as men!!!!

The first thing to do is recognise that we cannot turn back the clock. Modern economics could not function without women, and few women would want to give up working. If women have been prepared to work as hard as they have for decades despite the obstacles placed before them, both consciously and unknowingly, despite the overt and covert discrimination, then they will continue to work until forced to stop. But the present system is neither fair nor as efficient as it might be. To make it better, governments, employers and individuals need to rethink their roles. Governments need to seek incentives to make it easier for women to work - tax reform or better public services (e.g. subsidised community based child care); employers need to research, develop and implement innovative and flexible work practices to attract, retain and reward good employees, and individuals. Need to question traditional sex divisions of labour, both at work and at home.

Women's march into the labour market has had a profound effect on men too, not so much because it has increased competition, but because they are often the other half of a dual-income couple. Unless they take on a more equitable share of the domestic burden, they will find home a less peaceful place than they might have hoped. There is some evidence that "Generation X", the 18 - 32 year-olds are recognising this, and Generation Y already believe it.

So what are we doing at Clayton Utz?

	Male	Female
Total Staff	40%	60%
All legal Staff	49%	51%
Legal Graduates	50%	50%
Senior Associates	56%	44%
Partners	85%	15%

- Focusing on merit based recruitment, selection, assessment, promotion and reward
- Introduction of a formal performance management strategy and processes
- Introduction of performance based market-linked remuneration
- Introduction of national, consistent HR policies including flexible policies, and family friendly and health initiatives
- So when women make up 50% of the work force in the next decade, will they also hold 50% of the top jobs, earn the same as men and share the child care and housework equally with men???? Certainly not then, and perhaps never. But, with luck, their choices will be wider and their lives more civilised than today.

To leave you on a lighter note, I'd like to share with you a quote by the Australian physician and author, Sandra Cabot:

**“Real women don’t have flushes, they have power surges”**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- "Australian Social Trends"; Australian Bureau of Statistics; 1995
- "Working Life"; Probert, B; 1989; McPhee Gribble
- "The Business Case for EEO and Diversity"; Avril Henry; Westpac Banking Corporation; 15 February 1996
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- "Women, Work and Family: The Balancing Act"; Avril Henry; National Council of Women NSW, Inc, 100 Year Anniversary Dinner; 26 June 1996
- "Women and Work"; The Economist; 18 July 1998
- "Facts & Figures, Private Sector"; Affirmative Action Agency; 1998

Source: Women Leading in Australia Conference 12 March 2002 Conference organised by Synergy Plus Training

#### **Women Leaders on the Environment, Final Conclusions from the Meeting at Helsinki, Finland 7-8 March 2002**

Women ministers of the environment and representatives from 19 countries, as well as women leaders of 28 international governmental and non-governmental organisations working for sustainable development met in Helsinki on 7-8 March, 2002. The meeting of Women Leaders on the Environment was organised under the auspices of the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL) and IUCN - The World Conservation Union, and hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Finland. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Satu Hassi, Minister of the Environment and of Development Cooperation, Finland, and Ms. Rejoice T. Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa.

The Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL), based at Harvard University in Boston, is a network of former and present Head of States from all over the world. The founding chair is the former Prime-Minister of Iceland, Mrs. Finnbogadottir and the chair is former Prime-Minister of Canada, Mrs. Campbell. The Council's primary task is to promote women's leadership roles in different sectors of the society in different parts of the world.

The Council has organized similar kinds of meetings to the world's women ministers of finance and to the women ministers of trade. This was the first one for female environment ministers and other leaders engaged in sustainable development. The actual preparations for the meeting began in September 2001. The invitation was sent to all female environment ministers of the world, which was last autumn 38. Half of them, 19, attended which was quite a good result. One of the invitees was the Minister of Australia, Mrs Amanda Vanstone, but she could not unfortunately participate.

The web-site for CWWL is: <http://www.womenworldleaders.org/>

### **Women Leaders on the Environment**

#### **FINAL CONCLUSIONS Meeting of Women Leaders on the Environment at Helsinki, Finland on 7-8 March 2002**

Women ministers of the environment and representatives from 19 countries, as well as women leaders of 28 international governmental and non-governmental organisations working for sustainable development met in Helsinki on 7-8 March, 2002. The meeting of Women Leaders on the Environment was organised under the auspices of the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL) and IUCN - The World Conservation Union, and hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Finland. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Satu Hassi, Minister of the Environment and of Development Cooperation, Finland, and Ms. Rejoice T. Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa.

The meeting recognised that ten years ago, governments committed themselves to the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, and while much work has begun, the full hope and promise of the integration of social, economic and environmental policies have yet to be wholly realised. Women bring a unique voice to the challenges and opportunities of sustainable development. Their experience, their participation and their leadership are crucial to the success of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Johannesburg offers an opportunity to strengthen the world's commitment to a sustainable development that is fair and equitable for all, and to reaffirm countries' common but differentiated responsibilities towards that end.

The elimination of global poverty and the promotion of sustainable development are essential to a fair and equitable world. The current patterns of consumption and production are among the major causes of the degradation of the Earth's resources. If the present trends in poverty growth, population expansion and the production and consumption patterns continue, the negative impacts on natural resource, environment and health will only grow worse. And women, who represent a majority of the world's poor, will continue to suffer disproportionately.

Among the greatest environmental challenges the world faces are the climate change, the lack of access to water and to renewable energy, and the ongoing degradation of natural resources. Improvements in these areas are essential to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Creation of international and national environment which is conducive to sustainable

development is important for the realisation of gender equality and the elimination of poverty and hunger. We must devise approaches that make it possible to secure for all the benefits of globalisation, of economic growth and a healthy, sustainable environment while recognising and preserving the strength of indigenous and local communities.

Meeting these challenges requires the full participation of and partnership between all. It requires equitable access to information and transparency in the decision-making processes as well as action to prevent negative gender specific impacts. We need to continue the development of measurable indicators to follow the progress.

Promotion of dialogue and understanding among cultures and civilisations is important, and we stress the key role that women play in preventing conflict and maintaining peace as a prerequisite for sustainable development.

We commit ourselves to the values, principles and targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration especially with regard to globalisation, the eradication of poverty, the protection of the environment and the promotion of gender equality. We work towards reaching these commitments and form a network of women environment ministers to that end.

**To ensure sustainability of economic activities, we must urge governments to:**

- Promote policy co-ordination, coherence and cooperation among the economic, environmental and social institutions at the local, national, regional and global levels and enhance women's full and equal participation in environmental, social and economic decision-making, including trade and investment policies;
- Ensure that fiscal, trade and investment policies do not have adverse effects on the livelihoods, health and food security of the poor, especially women and children, and utilise gender-sensitive sustainability assessments of these policies;
- Enhance the use of economic instruments, market incentives and policies to internalise external environmental costs and benefits, in particular to ensure equitable payment for ecological services; identify and reduce, with the aim of phasing out, subsidies which are environmentally harmful;
- Increase the flow of official development assistance and create an enabling environment to increase the flow of foreign direct investments to developing countries, and urge governments and business to take into account not only the economic and financial but also the development, social, gender and environmental implications of their undertaking;
- Provide financial, technological, technical and capacity-building support, in particular for women;
- Provide incentives for cleaner and more energy- and resource-efficient production methods; and promote corporate social and environmental responsibility and accountability;
- Monitor closely how privatisation of environmental goods and services affect women and local communities.

**To enhance public information and consumer awareness, we must:**

- Ensure that the principal consumer rights, such as access to essential goods, health and safety, information and education, are attainable especially by women, who make the daily choices in fulfilling the needs of their families, and raise public awareness on the role of women in sustainable production and consumption patterns;
- Provide consumers with information on the environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions, of processes and products, and promote public disclosure of environmental data and impacts;
- Develop appropriate regulations and product standards to ensure the health and safety of consumers; enhance a more effective involvement of the developing countries in the international standard setting organisations;
- Support women's consumer initiatives by promoting recycling facilities, organic food marketing, product information and labelling, including labelling of toxic chemicals and pesticides in a language and symbols that are understood by consumers, regardless of age and level of literacy;

**To promote equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources, we must:**

- Establish and strengthen effective, transparent and predictable national and international frameworks related to the access to genetic resources and to the equitable sharing of benefits from their use, taking into account the protection of collective ownership, traditional knowledge and the practices of indigenous peoples and local communities;
- Enhance the capacity of developing countries to strengthen their institutional and legislative structures regarding access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to deal with the opportunities and risks rising from genetically modified organisms; in order to minimise the risks, continue scientific research on these opportunities and risks;
- Promote the establishment of true participatory mechanisms for the involvement of indigenous and local communities, especially women, in decision-making processes related to the protection and sustainable use of natural resources; expand participatory research programmes to explore and record women's indigenous knowledge and their specific ways of owning, using and maintaining diverse natural resources, and ensure that women hold ownership over that knowledge;
- Ratify, implement and enforce existing international agreements, and enhance closer cooperation and co-ordination between international organisations working on issues concerning the protection of, the access to and the sharing of benefits from genetic resources;
- Clarify the relations between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other international conventions, inter alia, with regard to the appropriation and use of women's knowledge of and control over the natural resources.
- To develop poverty eradication policies which empower and enable the poor to achieve sustainable livelihoods while protecting natural resources, we must:
- Integrate the gender and environment perspectives into international instruments and national development strategies and programmes (e.g. PRSPs) aimed at promoting growth and reducing poverty;
- Design and implement participatory policies to enable poor people, especially



- women, to have a voice in developing solutions for a more sustainable use of natural resources, and ensure adequate financial and technical resources for implementing programmes and projects oriented to enhance gender equity;
- Support policies, awareness building and investments to reduce environmental and health risks due to lack of access to safe water and sanitation, and due to indoor and outdoor air pollution; give special attention to HIV/AIDS as a multisectoral development issue, particularly in Africa, and to curb HIV/AIDS, make funds and medicines accessible to both women and men;
  - Ensure equal rights, access to and control by women and men over natural resources, including land tenure; provide technical and financial assistance to reduce vulnerability to environmental change and natural disasters, to support sustainable livelihoods, agriculture and fisheries, while ensuring food security and the nutritional status of people living in poverty, especially girls and women;
  - Support debt relief measures in the least developed countries and the efforts of these countries to enhance sustainable development including poverty reduction with funds released from debt relief according to the priorities deemed relevant in their circumstances.
  - Develop integrated approaches to improve equal access by women and men to shelter and basic services, and to combat unsustainable trends in urban development;
  - Promote policies to increase formal education, including vocational training, in order to reduce the gender gap.

**To ensure that both women and men are able to participate fully in decision-making and the implementation of sustainable development, we must:**

- Integrate gender equity policies and procedural rules into the work for sustainable development; develop policies, legislation and strategies towards gender balance in environmental protection and in the distribution of its benefits; these can include the application of quotas and the genuine participation of women in planning, decision-making and assessment bodies, affirmative action programmes, awareness raising, evaluation of the gender balance in sustainable development institutions, and guidance of women towards careers as decision-makers in sustainable development.
- Design and support programmes that contribute to capacity building for, and promote increased participation of, women in decision-making at all levels;
- Encourage the media, corporate and international, to disseminate messages to promote gender equity and sustainable development;
- Collect, develop and utilise at all levels sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and promote research on gender-specific experiences, roles and impacts of economic, social and environmental activities;
- Include a gender perspective in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development on indicators; consider setting up a consistent and comparable reporting methodology within the UN system to follow-up the advancement of women in decision-making positions in sustainable development worldwide.

**We pledge**

We women, pledge for a world that honours the inherent strength in a cultural diversity and that includes love, equity, solidarity, responsibility, sharing and respect as common principles. We need an ethic that reaches for a better quality of life, rather than for accumulation of wealth.

We work for a partnership for peace and sustainable development, reconciliation of the powers of the mind, of science and technology with peace of the heart and the spirit of nature and creation.

## **Apartheid in the Holy Land By Desmond Tutu**

**Guardian, Monday April 29, 2002**

Desmond Tutu is the former Archbishop of Cape Town and chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This address was given at a conference on Ending the Occupation held in Boston, Massachusetts on 29 April 2002.

His plea for peace between the people of Israel and Palestine is based on justice, human rights and his faith in God.

"We should put out a clarion call to the government of the people of Israel, to the Palestinian people and say: peace is possible, peace based on justice is possible. We will do all we can to assist you to achieve this peace, because it is God's dream, and you will be able to live amicably together as sisters and brothers."

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4403427,00.html>

**This address by Desmond Tutu was given at a conference on Ending the Occupation held in Boston, Massachusetts, earlier this month. It reflects his own impressions and conclusions formulated during his visits to Palestine**

## **Educational Attainment and Labour Market Outcomes Symposium Factors affecting boys and their status in relation to girls**

The symposium Educational Attainment and Labour Market Outcomes: Factors affecting boys and their status in relation to girls was conducted by the Australian Institute of Political Science and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEST). Around one hundred participants and presenters were invited to attend the symposium. They were chosen on the basis of their expertise, experience and interest in boys' education and represented a wide range of perspectives and views on the topic.

This article by Michael Gallagher reports is an overview of the Symposium. Whilst focusing on the educational performance and attainment of males, and on the broader labour market outcomes and the pedagogy of educating males, the Symposium also

examined the empirical evidence of the differences and similarities in the educational performance of boys and girls in school, in TAFE, and universities, and how these differences and similarities have changed over time.

Professor Robert Gilbert described "how an understanding of 'the culture of masculinity' was crucial to understanding how boys respond to school and their educational achievements. Such a focus provides insights into how boys define and position themselves. People's ideas of what it means to be a successful male determines their expectations of boys and the sorts of experiences that are provided for them." One of the possible areas for future action include, "Raising the quality of teaching would involve helping teachers to improve their understanding of what does and does not motivate boys. This may prove different from the factors that motivate girls. It would involve helping teachers to improve the range of activities and techniques that they use. Such activities and techniques may need to be more varied and differently structured for boys than for girls."

**To view this overview of the Symposium and link to the Full Report see:**

### **Educational Attainment and Labour Market Outcomes**

#### **Second Generation Australians**

**Report for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, April 2002**

The main objectives of this study are to examine the social, economic and demographic outcomes of second generation Australians, to compare them by their parents' national or ethnic origins and with their peers who are either first or third or more generations.

Among the socioeconomic and demographic outcomes examined in the study are educational attainment, employment, occupational status, language shift and family formation patterns. The study also explores the issue of intergenerational mobility by examining whether the second generation's outcomes are related to their parents' socioeconomic background.

The Report was prepared by Siew-Ean Khoo, Peter McDonald and Dimi Giorgas, Australian Centre for Population Research, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University; and Bob Birrell, Centre for Population and Urban Research.

#### **Educational Attainment and Labour Market Outcomes**

### **Educational Attainment and Labour Market Outcomes**

#### **Factors affecting boys and their status in relation to girls**

- - Dimensions of the problem

- Differences between genders
- Factors associated with gender differences
- Possible interventions
- Possible areas for future action
- Further Research

## **Overview of Symposium**

**Mr Michael Gallagher,**

Division Head, Higher Education Division, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs

For some time there has been concern expressed about the educational performance of males in relation to females. The symposium was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs and organized by the Australian Institute of Political Science to provide an opportunity to examine such concerns. As well as a focus on the educational performance and attainment of males the symposium also covered broader labour market outcomes and the pedagogy of educating males.

Around one hundred participants and presenters were invited to attend the symposium. They were chosen on the basis of their expertise, experience and interest in boys' education and represented a wide range of perspectives and views on the topic.

One of the main purposes of the symposium was to examine the empirical evidence of the differences and similarities in the educational performance of boys and girls in school, in TAFE and universities and how these differences and similarities have changed over time.

The symposium was also asked to examine how the educational performance of males and females impacts on their ability to gain employment and the nature of that employment. Given the significant changes that have occurred in recent times it was also important to examine the implications of structural changes in the labour market on the prospects of young men and women.

A major purpose of the symposium was to consider whether there were any special challenges involved in the education of boys and to focus on boys and their needs rather than on a comparison between boys and girls. Participants were also asked to consider the relationship between boys' educational performance, their labour market outcomes and life opportunities and their experiences once they have completed their education.

## **Dimensions of the problem**

The symposium was opened by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Training

and Youth Affairs, the Hon Dr David Kemp. In his opening address, the Minister encapsulated the issue for participants when he remarked that, although problems experienced by boys were not unique to them, it was clear that boys were not doing as well as they should and according to a number of benchmarks they were doing poorly relative to girls. He highlighted the need to understand the underlying issues that pertain to boys that adversely affect their educational outcomes, to examine ways of dealing with these issues, to suggest some answers to the problems faced by boys and to develop some testable hypotheses that can be followed through with future research.

A wide range of issues, opinions and evidence was presented at the symposium. One overarching notion that clearly emerged was the importance of balance when dealing with this topic. Understanding the issues involved in the education of boys requires an understanding of complex behaviour during the period when young people are going through their most rapid development. It also requires an understanding of the far-reaching transitions affecting the fundamental structures of our social life and an acknowledgement that the key elements that provide people with identity and meaning, such as family and work, have changed radically.

The discussion at the symposium covered both the implications of such changes for the motivations, expectations and capabilities of young people and for the organisation of education and training institutions. More than ever before, both individuals within schools and schools within society must adapt to an environment of rapid social change.

The discussion at the symposium focussed on the importance of meeting the needs of boys as well as girls rather than on replacing the 'girls' agenda' with a 'boys' agenda'. The concerns about sexism and discrimination against women that were raised quite properly some 25 years ago now need to be widened to ask some questions about boys. It was felt that if these questions were dealt with properly then outcomes for girls would also be enhanced.

## **Differences between genders**

Speakers at the symposium described gender differences in educational participation and retention, educational experiences, the range of courses undertaken and other activities in which young people engage. They also indicated that there were differences in educational success, literacy outcomes, to some degree numeracy outcomes, information technology, tertiary education rankings and in wider outcomes in terms of a sense of worth and personal esteem. Gender differences were also identified in labour market participation and success that appeared inversely related to differences in education.

It was pointed out during the course of the symposium that factors such as race, Aboriginality, socio-economic status or class and rurality have a significant impact on educational performance and participation. In fact, it appears that differences within a gender group are greater than the differences between gender groups.

Nonetheless, the gender gap is significant, particularly, in the crucial area of writing performance, which is such a critical foundation for lifelong education. Its importance was illustrated by the results of a survey of employers that indicated that their greatest concern was with the inadequate written communication skills of graduates.

### **Factors associated with gender differences**

Mr Robert Horne identified sociological, physiological and pedagogical factors as being associated with gender differences to which Professor Faith Trent added perceptual factors. Professor Jane Kenway described a number of sociological factors such as the profound changes in the labour market; the global emergence of a knowledge economy; changes to family structures, family responsibilities, family behaviours and relationships; the emergence of individualism and material values; and the increased numbers of young people going on to upper secondary and tertiary education which has exposed gender differences in performance and destinations.

There was some discussion at the symposium of the significance of physiological gender differences such as different patterns of physical maturation and hormonal influences. There was also some discussion about factors such as nutrition, health, drugs, lifestyle choices that interact with performance.

Professor Faith Trent's research indicated that the some boys felt they were not being treated fairly, causing a degree of resentment and disquiet.

Professor Robert Gilbert pointed out that there are no outcome measures which show a dichotomy between the performance of boys and girls. Rather, distributions for the same outcome measures for boys and girls significantly overlap. It is the mean values for boys and girls that are different. This indicates that boys are not all the same and do not necessarily have difficulties with school. He suggested that attempts to address the problems in the education of boys must not act against the interests of any boys or girls.

Gilbert described how an understanding of 'the culture of masculinity' was crucial to understanding how boys respond to school and their educational achievements. Such a focus provides insights into how boys define and position themselves. People's ideas of what it means to be a successful male determines their expectations of boys and the sorts of experiences that are provided for them. Boys' beliefs about masculinity influence their willingness to participate in the activities of their school and their attitudes to teachers, subjects, and what is considered worth knowing.

Gilbert went on to suggest that given the overlap between boys and girls on school outcome measures, the educational problems of boys could be first tackled by promoting good teaching practices and addressing the curriculum so that the range of interests and learning styles of all students could be accommodated. Separate strategies for teaching boys may be appropriate in some cases, although it needed to be recognised that such strategies would not necessarily suit all boys. Furthermore,

boys needed to be assisted to reflect on the restrictive effects of narrow views of what it means to be male; such as stereotypical subject choices, a rejection of reading and other forms of literacy, devaluing of educational achievements and disruptive school behaviours.

Other speakers also commented on pedagogical factors affecting some gender differences. It was generally felt that good teachers make a critical difference. Participants suggested that varied, practical, experientially based learning was more appropriate for some boys than passive, verbal tasks and the teacher-talk method of classroom management and activity which still seem to persist. It was felt that there was some tension between what schools offer and what students actually want to do and between the curriculum and the skills and understandings that students required.

The issue of sport was given some prominence in the symposium but there was some ambivalence about its contribution to boys' education. While sport was seen as a way to widen students' experiences, to enable them to achieve success outside the academic sphere and 'let off some steam', it was not necessarily seen as providing appropriate role models. On the other hand, one of the more successful interventions has been in Queensland where rugby league training camps have been deliberately used to attract Indigenous boys into school and to keep them there.

Professor Bruce Chapman pointed out that private returns to education are relatively high for girls. A possible explanation consistent with this is that boys are able to find at least some employment at lower levels of education attainment whereas girls don't have as many employment options. This partly explains why girls remain at school longer. Rather than focus on gender differences in participation rates and retention to Year 12 the focus should be on young people who are potentially at risk. The real emerging social problem is the young people who are entering the labour market, or in a school system just before they go into the labour market, who have inadequate self-esteem or an inadequate set of understandings and skills.

Another point put forward at the symposium that seems to explain some gender differences is the insecurity about identity that some people, especially adolescent males, experience as a result of the ambiguity resulting from rapid change. It seems that this insecurity reveals itself in a variety of behaviours.

### **Possible interventions**

Concern focused on a small group of young men, largely from low socio-economic status backgrounds, rural and isolated locations or from Indigenous backgrounds likely to leave school early and not take up apprenticeships, traineeships, or employment. Participants were also concerned about those boys who stayed on at school but who were clearly disaffected with the school environment and at risk of not making successful transitions to further education or employment. Students' conceptualisation of masculinity, teachers' approach to teaching and learning, the school environment and other factors were identified as having an effect on boys' performance at school. The changing nature of the labour market was found to have a

major influence on post-school pathways. There was particular concern about the apparent decline in the reading skills of boys and their lower levels of literacy overall compared to girls.

A number of Commonwealth Government initiatives address some of the concerns raised about the educational outcomes of males although not specifically directed toward them. They include efforts: to improve the literacy skills of all students; to provide support for students at risk of leaving school early, especially Indigenous students and those from rural areas; to develop career pathways for the majority of students who do not go on to university; and to improve teacher quality.

A critical point identified by Dr Ken Rowe from his research was that good teaching improves the performance of boys. Qualitative research shows that boys value competence, genuine caring and honesty in teachers, and that the teachers actually made a difference to the performance of boys.

The discussion on possible interventions raised a number of fundamental questions.

When should the interventions occur? Is intervention best at the pre-schooling, early schooling, middle schooling or later schooling stages?

Where should interventions occur? Should there be more VET in schools? Should post-school VET provide a more rounded education? Should the setting of schools be broadened so they can have more flexible interactions with the community and the world of work or should the interventions focus on the home? Or should interventions cover all of the above?

A question that was an undertone in the discussions at the symposium was — to what extent should these interventions be gender specific? Would gender inclusive interventions that deal with educational disadvantage on a case-by-case or needs basis be a better approach?

### **Possible areas for future action**

From the discussion at the symposium it seems that there are three main areas where intervention may be particularly desirable:

- Raising the quality of teaching and curricula
- Developing a better understanding of boys; and
- Addressing school climate factors

Raising the quality of teaching would involve helping teachers to improve their understanding of what does and does not motivate boys. This may prove different from the factors that motivate girls. It would involve helping teachers to improve the range of activities and techniques that they use. Such activities and techniques may need to be more varied and differently structured for boys than for girls. It would also involve helping teachers improve the feedback that they get from their students. It was



felt that teachers needed assistance to understand the appropriateness of the curriculum in terms of where the boys are coming from and what their aspirations are.

A better understanding of boys needs to be developed while avoiding stereotyping which can lead to a polarisation of the differences between boys and girls. Likewise, it is important to avoid both 'problematizing' boys and romanticising them. A focus on understanding boys should lead to a better understanding of which boys are at greatest risk.

Addressing the school climate is an important issue. It appears the dominant learning experience still involves passive sitting and listening to people as it did a hundred years ago or more. This approach has persisted and seems increasingly inappropriate. The conformity of behaviour expected of students in school settings and the formality of schooling seem somewhat out of step with some of the changes in social mores and general social behaviour. Changing the school climate is not an uncontroversial proposition as there are clearly some people, parents particularly, who are voting with their feet for more disciplined environments, but it is a debate that needs to be had.

A better understanding of boys and improvements in the teaching and the learning environment and the school climate should lead to better outcomes for boys, especially those most at risk.

## **Further Research**

There are a wide range of issues and questions arising from the symposium that it would be valuable to investigate. For example:

- How can good teaching be identified and validated with a view to developing good models and measures? Dr Ken Rowe's research shows students identify good teachers as caring, challenging and respecting. Professor Faith Trent added that the students want teachers to be competent. It should be possible to identify dimensions of good teaching on this basis and develop an instrument to measure their achievement and link this to performance management. This issue is worth serious investigation.
- What are the forms of professional teacher development and preparation that need greatest attention with a view to improving good teaching practice?
- What are the characteristics of adult learning environments — there are quite a few models around Australia — senior high schools, multi-sector precincts, TAFE colleges and other settings which could be investigated to see how they could work for adolescents. The VET in schools approach offers an opportunity for a more adult learning environment. An inventory of good practices would be valuable.
- It seems that boys are making narrower subject choices and they are not making them on a lot of evidence. A more serious study is needed into how boys make subject choices, when they make them, with what information, who influences them. What are boys' expectations at different stages on leaving school? What do they expect to be doing, why do they see themselves doing

that?

- What impacts do different modes of student assessment have on boys' performance relative to girls? Does a particular mix of written and verbal assessment impact on boys' performance?
- How do peer influences operate on boys and what strategies are available for helping individuals aspire beyond the lowest common denominator expectations of the peer group? Should we more explicitly address in the curriculum issues of gender for both boys and girls?
- How do young people discriminate in their access to and use of information and knowledge? What are the changing forms of educational readiness of students coming into schools at different ages, given the access they have in the home to web based information?
- What are the reasons for boys' suspension and exclusion from schools? It seems that they have a higher incidence of it — why? And what are the factors that are giving rise to it? Where do they go?
- To what extent are positive male role models important to the motivation and achievement of boys? Do boys perform differently in boys-only and co-ed schools? How do boys relate to male teachers compared to female teachers?

Research on such questions would be valuable because it would provide information needed for the development of evidence-based policy on gender issues. The symposium provides a solid foundation for future work on this important topic.

Source:

Author: Michael Gallagher

Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)

Source: Dept of Immigration & Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs

## **Wanted: Women willing to run the nation**

**By Robin Gerber**

*Robin Gerber, a senior fellow at the Academy of Leadership, University of Maryland*

"When will we have a woman president?" asks Robin Gerber projecting her thoughts towards the 2004 USA Presidential race. Why don't women play the political game? Where are the women candidates?

"Barriers to women running for the presidency — media bias, party and donor indifference, voter unease — won't go away by waiting. Voter confidence will rise as more women showcase their political power. Donors will appear if women repeatedly ask for help in cracking the final glass ceiling. Political parties will come around as

women prove they can compete. The media will give women serious coverage when their candidacies are the rule, not an exception."

With the answer that "not until women line up at the starting gate and run," will the USA have a woman president, Gerber's reflections poignantly challenge us all with a valid consideration.

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The starting gun for the 2004 presidential race has already gone off, and the list of challengers to George W. Bush reads like a page out of Baby Names for Boys : Al, Dick, Joe, John, John, Tom.

Where are the women? The men certainly aren't waiting around, so why are the women?

Barriers to women running for the presidency — media bias, party and donor indifference, voter unease — won't go away by waiting. Voter confidence will rise as more women showcase their political power. Donors will appear if women repeatedly ask for help in cracking the final glass ceiling. Political parties will come around as women prove they can compete. The media will give women serious coverage when their candidacies are the rule, not an exception.

Few women have been major party candidates for president. Then-senator Margaret Chase Smith, R-Maine, was the first in 1964. Shirley Chisholm, D-N.Y., ran in 1972. Rep. Pat Schroeder, D-Colo., tried in 1988, and Republican Elizabeth Dole briefly entered the ring in 1999.

**Losing isn't all bad**

Perhaps women don't believe they have a real shot at winning. That hasn't stopped men, who make long-shot bids because:

- **Few things are more unpredictable than politics.**

Previously little-known governors who became president, such as Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, subscribed to the idea that you never know what's going to happen until you get into the ring. Al Gore and George W. Bush are overly familiar with this principle.

- **A losing effort builds national prominence for future endeavors, in politics and**

**out.**

Ronald Reagan lost the Republican nomination to Gerald Ford in 1976 and Al Gore flamed out in 1988, but both came back smarter, stronger and better known. GOP candidate Alan Keyes finished at the bottom of the political heap in 1996 and 2000, but he's at the top of his game this year hosting his own MSNBC talk show.

• **Presidential candidates' ideas get national attention.**

Think Ralph Nader promoting the rights of consumers in 2000, or Ross Perot and his charts on taxes and economics in 1992.

Women have more reasons to risk a run than just self-interest. They need to show that women political leaders are up to the top job, and they need to inspire younger women looking for leadership models. Women also need to fulfill the promise of democracy: rule by all the people, not just half.

**From personal experience**

There are important gender differences in leadership. Studies by the Rutgers Center for American Women and Politics and others indicate that women elected to state and national offices both sponsor and pay greater attention to more legislation about issues they personally know about: child support enforcement, childcare, women's health, domestic violence, pay equity, pension reform.

Women's more collaborative and consensus-oriented leadership styles can be effective. But we'll never know how these differences translate into power in the presidency if women leaders don't aim at the White House.

Many women out there would be terrific candidates:

• **Democrats** — Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California has a great base and lots of experience. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York could credibly break her vow not to run, arguing we need women in the mix. New Hampshire Gov. Jeanne Shaheen could say a governor has a better chance. Rep. Marcy Kaptur of Ohio already has floated the idea of running.

• **Republicans** — Christine Todd Whitman, EPA administrator and former governor of New Jersey, or National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice could try to go from frequent visits in the Oval Office to full-time residence.

• **New to politics** — Retired Army Lt. General Claudia Kennedy and former astronaut Mae Jemison are among several never-elected women who polls show Americans consider capable of leading their country.

There's an inviolate rule of the political game: You can't win if you don't play. So the answer to "when will we have a women president?" is pretty easy: not until women line up at the starting gate and run.

*Robin Gerber, a senior fellow at the Academy of Leadership, University of Maryland, is the author of Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way, to be released in the fall.*

Source: USA Today News

## **Case Studies of Organisations With Established Learning Cultures**

This study was conducted by a team of researchers from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) with funding provided by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

This Study explores how the concept of a learning culture or a commitment to learning is currently understood by Australian organisations. It investigated the approaches and strategies that organisations, which claimed to be on a trajectory to achieving a learning culture, had used to establish and maintain such a culture within their enterprises.

One of its findings was "that the development and maintenance of a learning culture is a response to organisational needs for enhanced production or service provision rather than a more specific response to policy initiatives related to skill formation." While some organisations adopt an education program approach, others are more aligned to new ways of working and often provide more opportunities for employees to make decisions collaboratively and to learn from each other. With the emergence of organisations increasingly using buy-in of workplace employee training programs, if they provided opportunities for diversity in approach, the authors point out that it is important to avoid a 'one size fits all' approach especially one that primarily promotes a training classroom model of employee development.

To view this Study see: **[Organisations With Established Learning Cultures](#)**

## **Best USA Distance Learning Graduate Schools Guide, Business and Management, 2002**

This Guide featuring the best accredited, business-related, distance learning graduate schools operating in the USA today includes profiles of 158 graduate programs that offer post-baccalaureate distance learning master degrees, doctorates and advanced career certificates in business, management and administration; a directory to 99 accredited distance-learning MBAs (Master of Business Administration degrees); FAQs on accreditation and distance learning graduate degrees, including information on how to avoid online degree mills; and FAQs on financial aid for distance learning graduate schools. The publication is available for download after registering, for free, with the site.

To view this Guide see:

**<http://www.geteducated.com/eddies/downloadform.htm>**

Source: EdNA

## **Universities Online, a Survey of Online Education and Services in**

## **Australia**

This study was commissioned by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) in order to ascertain the extent of online education in Australian universities. This survey was designed as a first stage of enquiry into the ways in which universities are employing the Internet, in teaching and learning and services that support university education. Data was collected from 40 out of the 43 universities in Australia between August and December 2001.

The survey report found that the majority of Australian universities are now offering fully online courses, with more than half of all university units containing an online component and about 90% of universities offering online access to their library catalogue and online journals and publications. It is not anticipated that all courses in Australia will become fully online, but the trend revealed in this study is that all universities are already involved in online education to some extent. It is evident that all university students in future will need to use the Internet as a regular part of their university studies, even if only to download lecture notes or to access the library catalogue.

The main findings of the survey into online courses, units and services as at December 2001 are presented at:

Source: EdNA

## **Project - USEFUL BOX**

By Deirdre Knight, Project Officer for the Useful Box

The Useful Box Project, funded by the Office of the Status of Women, is a web based tool for capacity building for single mother and other similar organisations and individuals such as older women, partnered women and women who want to know more about the 'how' of community development.

The Useful Box will be launched during June and the team are keen to receive further contributions for inclusion. The project aims to foster community participation and increase collective and individual skills, a number of areas will be addressed:

- policy development - reviewing existing policy and updating to reflect current issues,
- forming a group - covers all aspects from purpose, to process and function activities, membership, venue, childcare, governance issues, incorporation, developing leadership skills, funding, how to lobby and using the media effectively.
- producing a press pack - relevant statistics, positive photographic images, personal stories, contact information.
- relationship resources - information on family matters including repartnering, parenting, contact arrangements, ex-partners and other extended family members, conflict resolution, reading lists and reviews.
- employment issues - identifying supports and barriers to workforce

participation including training and education, childcare, family friendly work practices, job networks and links to other useful sites.

- income support - links to Centrelink information, barter trade schemes, information on superannuation
- the legal system - links to the Family Law sites, legal service commissions, mediation and relationships sites, and community wisdom, information on the criminal justice system including restraining orders and dealing with assaults.
- mentoring - list of established women's organisations and individuals prepared to offer a mentoring and supportive role to single mother organisations and groups, other organisations prepared to offer training in leadership and other roles and organisations prepared to participate in an internship scheme or secondment arrangement
- relaxation and fun tips, tricks, strategies and resources from women juggling work, parenting, study and training.

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