1993

Women in leadership program 1993: public lecture series

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Edith Cowan University

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Public Lecture Series
Women in Leadership Program 1993

Edited by Pauline Carroll

Edith Cowan University
Acknowledgements

The Women in Leadership Program is an exciting development initiative that over a three year period has contributed to a shift in attitudes towards leadership and the role of women in organisations.

Through the generous funding support of the Commonwealth Staff Development Fund, the goodwill of staff and the commitment of women, Edith Cowan University has been able to develop both a conceptual framework and development process for achieving organisational change.

It is hoped the Women in Leadership Program will provide direction and a path for others who are seeking to build equitable and productive workplaces.

A major aspect of the Women in Leadership Program is the Public Lecture Series. This initiative brings together women and men from across the community to listen to leading women representing a wide range of interests and perspectives.

We extend our appreciation for the contribution these women have made to broadening our understanding of the links between women and leadership.

Jacquie Hutchinson
Deputy Director
Division of Human Resource Management
September, 1994
SPEAKER PROFILES AND ABSTRACTS

1: CHANGING GENDER AND AGENDA!
   Lecture 1
   Ms Eva Cox

2: WOMEN AND PSYCHIATRY: STRUGGLES,
   STRIVINGS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
   Lecture 2
   Dr Suzanne Dobson

3: POSITIVE THINKING FOR WOMEN LEADERS
   Lecture 3
   Ms Lesley Borowitzka

4: POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS
   Lecture 4
   Ms Isabelle Adams

5: ALONE: THE NETWORKS DO NOT FIT
   Lecture 5
   Professor Fay Gale

6: EQUITIES AND ENTERPRISE BARGAINING
   Lecture 6
   Ms Jennie George
Speaker Profiles and Abstracts

MARIE FINLAY AND DEBORAH PEARSON - Inside, Outside, Over There

Marie Finlay and Deborah Pearson performed a paper titled Inside, Outside, Over There. Through a combination of story and commentary the lecture explored the dimensions of the role of strategist.

Marie Finlay and Deborah Pearson from the Training and Development Group are consultants to the Women in Leadership Program at Edith Cowan University and were facilitators of collegial groups run in 1992.

Marie Finlay (B. Ed., Dip. Tch.) is a teacher, storyteller and consultant who has worked with system-wide change in organisations, and with education and community groups across a range of training programs.

Deborah Pearson (B.Sc., Dip. Tch) is a consultant, trainer and storyteller working with organisations, teams and individuals to develop their direction and plans for the future, to build relationships externally and within organisations, and to develop interpersonal skills.

Deborah is currently working with manager development programs in a variety of organisations and consults with individuals and collegial groups to develop work roles.

As their paper was essentially an oral performance and for copyright reasons it has been decided not to print it.

LECTURE ONE

EVA COX - Leading the Way

Eva Cox contends that the decade of greed, the dominance of a particular set of economic precepts built on individualism and the pursuit of smaller public sectors in Anglophone countries have left an unfortunate legacy of divided and directionless societies.

Underlying this contention is a conviction about the limitations men suffer as a consequence of their knowledge and experiences.

This lecture explores the need for a paradigm shift in both the content and process of public policy. Policy and politics now deal primarily with what are defined as public issues and within this there is another hierarchy which sets economy high and community services down low. Too often ignored are the private spheres, the areas of community, family, personal relationships, pleasure, environment, culture, sharing, giving and being: in fact most of what we really live for.

So it is time, Eva Cox believes, that women had a go... to bring new perspectives. It is time women had a turn at leading the way!

Eva Cox was born in Vienna in 1938, three weeks before Hitler took over and rendered her, and many others, stateless because of religion, race and political beliefs. Eva Cox became a refugee. She was refused access to a drum, aged 3, because they were for boys and triangles were for girls. These early experiences seem to have affected her world view and she has been a committed feminist and irrepressible agent for social change ever since.

Eva Cox runs her own social research and training group in Sydney, teaches social policy at university and is a regular media commentator. She graduated from UNSW with honours in sociology, and has published widely and eclectically on issues such as skills, unpaid work, child care, migration, economics, child protection, social security, employment and ageing.
LECTURE TWO

DR SUZANNE DOBSON - Women and Psychiatry - Struggles, Strivings and Social Justice

This lecture will explore why mental illness is diagnosed more often in women and whether women are managed differently as psychiatric patients. The lives and struggles of women have impact on psychiatry, particularly life experiences such as domestic violence and sexual assault, childhood abuse, single parenthood.

Does psychiatry have a role in promoting social justice, particularly for women and children, to help empower them to have more choices and fulfilment?

Women, as psychiatrists, are showing increasing leadership and prominence in the profession, having a strong and powerful voice, particularly on ethical issues and speaking on behalf of their patients and women.

Dr Suzanne Dobson is the Chair of the WA Branch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the first woman to hold this position. She is a consultant psychiatrist, now in full time private practice. Her clinical work is mainly in the area of long-term individual psychotherapy and is concerned with issues of early childhood trauma, particularly women's. She also teaches and supervises trainee psychiatrists.

She was a member of the previous Government's Taskforce on Psychiatric Services for Children and Adolescents and has been a member of the Psychologists' Registration Board of Western Australia.

LECTURE THREE

DR LESLEY BOROWITZKA - Positive Thinking for Women in Leadership

A successful leader must have a positive attitude towards work and life. A positive attitude means recognising and enjoying one's current advantages and looking forward with confidence for more. However, there are some special challenges faced by women in maintaining a positive attitude that include:

- the “glass ceiling” and subtle discrimination in the workplace.
- housework and child care remaining a woman's responsibility no matter what leadership role she holds in the workplace.
- understanding that there is no “right time” for a woman to have a baby.

In this lecture Leslie Borowitzka explores ways in which women can cope with these challenges, while maintaining a positive attitude to undertaking leadership roles. She also highlights the possibilities of applying the very strong communication skills and approaches to creativity possessed by women to complement the activities of scientific and engineering based work and companies.

Lesley Borowitzka trained as a microbiologist and leads a small scientific company which started as a research team and now produces and exports products containing vitamin beta-carotene.

LECTURE FOUR

ISABELLE ADAMS - Powerful Partnerships

Women as leaders must develop powerful partnerships with others. Powerful in this sense means partnerships which are ‘extremely effective or efficient in action’ and go beyond those that stay within the bounds of rhetoric and theory.

The barriers that Aboriginal women face in developing powerful partnerships with others are multiple and include:

- low recognition and value of their contribution to the Aboriginal and Australian society.
- negative attitudes, beliefs and behaviours exhibited by themselves and by others towards them.
- systematic discrimination against them.

In this lecture, Isabelle Adams comments on why these barriers for Aboriginal women exist and how
they are enforced. She also explores possible strategies to overcome them positively, and highlights the benefits of powerful partnerships with Aboriginal women for both men and women.

Isabelle Adams has for many years been active in the area of education with particular expertise in early childhood and the education of Aborigines and women.

Isabelle is currently a District Superintendent with the Western Australian Ministry of Education and a member of a number of State and Commonwealth policy and advisory bodies.

LECTURE FIVE

PROFESSOR FAY GALE - Alone the Networks Do Not Fit

Leadership in any organisation depends to a large degree on networks. No leader can make decisions without accurate and reliable information. A large proportion of the requisite information comes via various networks and membership of these networks is largely based on social linkages. As a result, a woman leader is often placed in the lonely, isolating and vulnerable position of needing to make decisions, and take leadership initiatives without the reliable knowledge base available to men in comparable positions.

Furthermore, at senior levels, both the day to day management and the long-term strategic planning depend upon the collegiality of the middle level managers who have to access to primary sources of knowledge essential for decision-making and corporate planning. Again a woman in senior management is largely isolated from such networks for the many reasons identified by earlier speakers in this series of lectures. Women attempt to develop alternative networks for support and personal survival. But such networks are often counter-productive. They, in fact, tend to isolate women even more from the male information networks essential for senior leadership in today’s male structured world.

How do we break through that information barrier?

Professor Gale is Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia, a post she has held since January, 1990. When appointed, she became the second woman Vice-Chancellor of an Australian University.

Professor Gale’s research interests have focused on heritage issues including Aboriginal art sites, tourism and National Parks, and on social justice for Aboriginal people and the position of Aboriginal women. She has also carried out extensive research into youth crime and juvenile justice. These interests have led to an active involvement in the wider community.

LECTURE SIX

MS JENNIE GEORGE - Equity and Enterprise Bargaining

This paper will outline developments in the wage fixing system and their impact on women.

As Australia moves to a greater focus on workplace bargaining, safeguards that provide both flexibility and fairness, need to be built in to protect women’s interests.

The presentation will outline ACTU strategies and explain the key features of the new industrial relations reform package.

Jennie George is Assistant Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

A trained secondary teacher, Ms George has a long and influential history with the Australian trade union movement. Elected as a full time union official with the NSW Teachers’ Federation in 1973 she subsequently held the positions of General Secretary and President of the NSW Teachers’ Federation.

At the national level, Ms George was Acting President and Deputy President of the Australian Teachers’ Federation, before being the first woman elected to the ACTU Executive in 1983 and to the position of Vice President ACTU in 1987.

In July 1989 she took up the position of Assistant National Director of the Trade Union Training Authority and in March 1991 became the Acting National Director of TUTA.
Changing Gender and Agenda!

EVA COX
Changing Gender and Agenda!

The end of the second millennium of the Christian era is not much of an advertisement for the prevailing Western models of growth and progress. The particular legacies of Northern European man - English speaking subtype - are not impressive.

Australia, Britain and the USA have become more unequal and divided societies over the past decade and a half: we have more unemployment, more poverty, more inequality of wealth, more pollution and more social divisions. The world, post the downfall of the communist bloc, has more civil and most uncivil wars. Bosnia stands to shame us all, and pollution and destruction of the physical environment, as well as the social world, continue.

We have had more than a decade where homo economicus, economic man, has been held up as a hero and where making money, cheating on taxes and conspicuous consumption have been the publicly sanctioned aspirations. In WA, Alan Bond walks free, having lost hundreds of millions and is a potent symbol of the mess that men have made.

The last decade was not only male, as were countless decades before, but was marked by a peculiar brand of machismo. The problem was that economics became the discipline of public discourse, and, as one of the most masculine (phallocentric), was particularly prone to error.

We had a particular problem in Australia which combined belief in economic dogma with the mateship syndrome. This involved valorising a peculiar brand of consensus politics which discouraged any form of dissent. This was recently clearly illustrated in the documentary ‘Labor In Power’, which showed clearly the limitations of the political agenda.

So, what I want to propose is that women take on a major share of the responsibility of leadership. We need to offer alternate models of government and public service, and even of commerce and business to those in current vogue. Women have been complaining for a long time about the way men run things, and maybe it’s time for us to take the lead.

Let me be clear about two issues. I am not talking about the Carmen Lawrence - Joan Kirner syndrome - the “women in when political parties are losing” model. Women should not be sacrificial lambs, given the power only as it fades, or allowed to do a form of political house cleaning, to hand it back to the boys spic and span. I am talking about a genuine change of process by which we change both gender and agenda.

This leads to my second point. Women are not going to make a difference to leadership because of genes or hormones. We are just as capable as men of both good and evil, though we have rarely had the power to demonstrate either. We also can produce corporate cowgirls, but they tend to be caught and imprisoned for long periods, and we too have had leaders such as Maggie Thatcher who outdid many male leaders in her single minded pursuit of certain ideological policies. There are two other conservative women leaders, newly elected, but it is unlikely Turkey and Canada will lead us to women-centred policies.

What I want to offer today is an alternate view of community, based on the basic concept that we are all linked to each other, not individuals competing with each other. This means that we need to preserve what we have in common, the links that bind us and the common wealth. We need to develop forms of social policies and leadership that value accepting responsibility for each other and for the future as our first priority.

Leadership under such a system will not be easy, particularly as I also believe that we are looking at a social and political form to both validate the group and protect difference and dissent. Theories which take as a basis, not one but two somewhat contradictory constructs, have tended to lose out to simpler forms of explanation. This is easier on theorists but simplicity fails to adequately explain complex societies.

We need to recognise the centrality of linkages because we need to sense our belonging. This, I suspect, is one of our basic needs. As humans we see ourselves reflected in others and identify our commonalities. However, we are human creators of complex societies and culture so we also need to recognise the differences we derive from these cultures.
We are thinking beings who make changes to our physical and social environment. We can deliberately choose to create and destroy others; we have developed complex written and oral cultures which record and validate certain types of behaviour. In moving from the less intrusive social systems of hunter gatherers to the complexities of post industrial societies, we have given ourselves power over both micro and macro changes.

Lore and tradition, and kin relationships, work in small societies where face to face contacts are frequent enough to sustain familiar relationships. However, mobile mass societies require us to move from assumptions that others/the group will decide through lore and tradition what is good or bad. Group decisions, without face to face relationships can lead to fascist or stalinist systems or those run as fundamental theocracies where individual rights are lost.

So the new social theories integrate the group and individual as existing in an ongoing and healthy tension, where links and dissent are both validated. This allows us to develop a singular ability to take ethical stances and argue for ends we want to achieve. Only in validating this as a part of social structure can we hope to mediate and control the power for change we possess.

Gender ascription is part of the necessity of validating difference. In structuralist models of society, the tribal concept subjugates the individual to the group needs, and tends to allocate gender roles and enforce them. The question is how to retain belonging, and sharing responsibility with others, without oppressive conformity. Group process may lead to a static society, unless dissent and difference are allowed and legitimated.

Therefore we need to bring in some of the best aspects of liberalism, the validation of dissent and protection of individual rights and obligations. This puts the responsibility on each of us to act ethically and protect others where necessary, as otherwise we damage the group.

This alternative is a lateral set of theories, which lack the simplicity of markets or marxism. These theories recognise the complexity of human society and the need to create systems which can match our power to create and destroy. Only by reflecting this tension between individual and group, can we develop a basic understanding of the contradictions we operate within.

This does require the ability to deal with ambiguity. It allows for developing ways to move slowly towards a world in which we can all belong and share the resources, a world where we recognise the strengths of our ties to others but, at the same time, remember that preservation of linkages does not translate to affirmation of the supremacy of the group.

This is all very abstract, so I want to illustrate the thesis with reference to women as leaders and the current Australian political culture. The start for this is the Hawke years in power and the concept of consensus. The process of consensus seems to have too often become group think.

So if labour politicians got it so wrong, who is going to put together the next phase of social developments? To make this decision, I suggest we take a look at some of the reasons that might explain why they stuffed it up so badly. How did they manage to create chaos and pessimism out of the promises of development and progress?

When process overcomes content, differing views are not listened to and evaluated but defined as problems to be overcome. So the person offering the differing views is courted or squashed as a part of the process of achieving harmony.

The dynamics of consensus politics work from an assumption that there is a necessary equation between the best answer and that which achieves agreement. By emphasising process, it negates dissenting voices. The opposition is seen as problem, the opposer as spoiler, and approval, belonging, and rewards are used to create conformity to an agreeable norm. This, too often, becomes Group think as lemmings agree to absurd proposals.

One suspects that the confusion between consensus and group think has been part of the serious problems faced by Australia’s governing bodies over the past decade or so. The Keating and Hawke models combined for a while to create a synergy of content and process. Keating’s content and Hawke’s process allowed few alternative views to be heard.

The result was a more than usual convergence of ideas, so called, amongst those that ruled us. They drew comfort from their numbers and therefore had little patience with differing voices. This showed
particularly in the economic prescriptions and allied policies on big business which showed grown men making very childish mistakes.

This is a process which encourages mistakes, and one which needs examination because it can give rise to serial errors which can lead to a disaster. The ‘market-forces debates’ or non-debates of the past two decades have moved us from the idea of the common good and our responsibility as citizens to a decade of greed. This has certainly done little to ensure that the world has a better chance of survival, or that the political and social gains of the last two centuries are able to continue.

The ethic of care and the common good are concepts which have been lost from the public policy agendas. There have been cutbacks to the size and function of the public sector so tax on the rich could be reduced. The social fabric tears when the gap between the haves and have-nots becomes too wide, and when the dispossessed become Other and outsiders.

Those in power are often motivated by pure self-interest and greed, and they want to limit the power of the state to interfere with what they would see as ‘natural’ urges to compete, and win. They epitomise some of the worse aspects of stereotypical capitalism, masculinity and power. Somehow they have turned vice into virtue, and by owning the media, promoted a decade of claiming greed is good!

While they are not representative of all men, they work in a male culture where some of the worst aspects of western defined masculinity have become the norm. Their base assumption is that all humans are driven by self interest and competition and they see this as valid and the engine of progress.

Starting at the beginning again, imagine if human beings were as capable of good as of evil, as able to absorb ideas of the virtues of altruism as of greed? What if we are a Tabula Rasa, a clean sheet, onto which the society inscribes its values? If we look at the ways in which societies define status, we can identify those in which giving is as much about status as owning. The Potlatch of North America, the Big Men of New Guinea are a couple of examples.

Closer to home, in the home even, there are other examples of sanctions and rewards which validate giving rather than taking. The socialisation of women is often quite different to men, and the responsibilities of care we are left with would not work if this was not the way we saw our roles and played them.

Rather than seeing the home and private sphere as the subsidiary one, the support system which allows the warrior to go forth and fight, we could turn the process upside down. We could work from the assumption that Man started getting it badly wrong somewhere around the time of the industrial revolution.

Instead of using the increased production capacities to reinforce the interdependence of human beings and look at ways of increasing living standards for all, Man tried to break down the links. He removed himself from the household and from the responsibility of care for others and went to work. The household and community where life went on became devalued as a sphere for women.

At this time, he invented social and economic theories which seemed to explain the public world of work, and ignored what happened elsewhere. Civilisation did catch up and the worse excesses of the eighteenth and nineteenth century were mediated by pressure for reform, on the part of some men and women uncomfortable with the society they were part of.

The growth of the state over the last century was a sign that we were becoming more aware of the links that constituted society. There was, and always will be, a tension between what we want as individuals and what we want as people who are linked indivisibly to others. The balance swings but generally we still seemed to be in a meliorist society. This seems to have stopped short. Hugh Mackay’s research, and ours, shows a deep anxiety and pessimism. People feel alienated, anxious and are looking for scapegoats. There is something going very wrong and people are bunkering, going ‘tribal’ and finding places to belong as they feel less cared for and caring towards the wider society.

I think it is no coincidence that social unease (disease) occurs when the common centre concepts break down. The past two centuries have presented us with major changes from micro to mass societies and we have lost the sense of belonging that comes from knowing our links. These have been replaced by the links we vote for, appoint and establish as anchor points. The societies we belong to need to be created by the common threads and by the provision of an inclusive set of institutions and services.
So, back to genders and agendas. My original title was “Boy, you blew it!”. My reason for this was that we need to recognise the limitations men in power suffer as a consequence of their knowledge and experiences as threatening to civilisation as we once knew it and hoped it would progress.

Those in power over the past couple of decades have made a fine mess of the parts of the world with which we mainly come into contact. The decade of greed, the dominance of a particular set of economic precepts built on individualism and the pursuit of smaller public sectors in anglophone countries has left an unfortunate legacy of divided societies and a sense of loss of direction.

What I want to propose is that the integration of women at the most senior levels in sufficient numbers to make a difference will seriously challenge existing male stratagems and paradigms. The introduction of difference in the form of experiences of women in our allocated roles and alternative socialisation will force a change in leadership culture. For one, it would force an institutional culture that could cope willy nilly with change.

The particular set of precepts which made it possible for western civilisation to develop its peculiar modernist pressure for progress has now run out of puff. These precepts stressed a particular model of individualism which fitted into a society based on contract, on urban living, industrial and colonial enterprises. Man progressed by competing and ruling class women were an attachment, left at home to provide unpaid services and comfort.

The last two centuries of development of the modern industrial state produced two models: capitalism which when mitigated by democracy and opposition managed to create a mixed economy, and communism, which without democracy, managed to create Stalinism. Both of these acknowledge that the purpose of life is no more than the creation of individual satisfaction, though they disagree on how this should be done.

We need a paradigm shift in both the content and process of public policy. Policy and politics now deal primarily with what are defined as public issues and within this there is another hierarchy which sets economy high and community services down low. Ignored too often are the areas of community, family, personal relationships, pleasure, environment, culture, sharing, giving and being; in fact most of what we really live for.

These are in the private sphere, unless traded goods and services, and are seen as having low or no priority when political decisions are made. This ranking is gendered because these private areas are also women’s domain. We take responsibilities for the nurture and care of others, for relationships and the home and for community activities.

What I want to raise is the possibility of moving towards a future which is more concerned with people, not bottom lines of accounts; where social issues and goals are given the main attention, and economic means are seen as just one of the ways of achieving these; where quality of life is not seen as just material wealth but relationships, public goods. To do this we need new ideas, creative energy, ability to see past the present limited barriers and a commitment to passing onto our children a more optimistic future than the present.

So it is time women had a go... not just any women but those of us who are prepared to question the received wisdom and look for other solutions. This seems to be one of the strengths of a feminist perspective, that we are looking through our experiences at alternatives which the presently blinkered cannot see. We won’t necessarily agree on what to do, or even what we want, but we will bring new perspectives, and it is about time we had a turn at leading the way!

What women may offer, at least in the initial phases, are views and processes which come from the roles western man allocated for us, and a capacity to deal with a less macho set of social prescriptions. We don’t have to admit the mistakes are ours before we institute change.

We need to have another look at what constitutes citizenship, and look at including not only what is deemed to be public but what is private as well. We can develop new economic theories based on co-operative not competitive scenarios.

There needs to be new models of the economy and society which take account of paid and unpaid work, of relationship development as skill, and the ethic of mutual care. We need to develop ways of maintaining the social fabric, of validating the commonalities, yet recognising differences and creating the climate of encouraging creative new ideas.

There is some good economic sense in pooling resources and using community rating principles to allocate costs. There are arguments about reducing the costs and risks to individuals and therefore spread-
ing the burdens more equitably. There are social arguments about taking responsibility for others as part of our citizen obligations. There is an assumption that giving to the stranger without judgement of their worth, but just their need, is a basic tenet of our common humanity.

We need the provision of services to be delivered on the basis of need not user pays and charity. We want to know that we can access these as a right and not because we pass a victim graduation test. We want to be accepted on a basis of citizenship, not feel that our rights derive from either our pocket or our poverty. We object to being excluded from anything because we are either too rich or too poor.

The republican debate may offer us opportunities to look again at the form and content of the future we want. We need to decide how far we want to go with changes. There are issues of a Bill of Rights, of changes to the constitution which would make it a statement of both the rights and responsibilities that accrue to us as citizens.

The Keneally/Horne republic, and that of many others actively involved so far, seem primarily to reflect a particularly macho male OZ working class view. While not a celtic papist plot, there is enough of an odour of unreconstructed Catholic boyhoods about it to make me recognise a particular sweaty masculinity redolent of the Australian Labor movement.

This was further confirmed by the idiotic choice by the Australian Republican Movement of Blinky Bill as their symbol. A cartoon koala in overalls enshrines permanently the concept of an ocker image of Australia. They even used the fact that 'he' had gone to war in a slouch hat as further affirmation of 'his' suitability!

The calls for a republic seem to be limited to those areas which males always considered the right choice of issues. It is about sport and international relationships and some aspects of culture. But there is little sign of a gentler broader culture which would include some of the areas pushed for under feminism.

If we are being asked to give up the only woman we have had, or are likely to have, as head of state we want better than a simple trade for a local male. (I know she only got the job because she had no brothers, but we are short of women in power!)

The scripts of our lives mould us and our politics, but the changes we need are along the lines given by another Irish Australian. Paul Keating talks inclusion which means sharing all our pasts in the making of the new republic and we need to be part of that debate.

We also need to ensure that identity politics do not create in-groups and out-groups. Almost all out-groups (those on the margins, minorities who are basically not part of the dominant male, heterosexual, Anglo ruling culture) have taken part in a process of defining differences and creating subcultures. Groups seek to define who belongs and who does not, and often define the in-group by excluding the out-group. The politics of coalitions and social movements often ignore or reject common ground in favour of difference, but we need both.

Part of this quest for difference comes from a very legitimate need to redefine the world according to the realities seen by those who are not part of the mainstream. Many dark-haired, dark-skinned children have wept because they could never achieve the blondness that seemed to be beauty. In Australia the persecution of the 'different' in sexuality, in race, in culture add bitter edges to the dominant cultures.

There are however, more acceptable faces of tribalism which I still find uncomfortable. These reproduce more politely, but quite clearly, the splintering of movements. The enemy becomes each other and the powerful groups remain barely challenged.

So we need to develop alternatives (for which as yet we have no names), which allow us to find common cause and mutual respect.

To do this we need to take a much firmer approach to being in power and seizing the agenda. So far, we are too polite to push our way in, waiting to be invited, waiting for men to recognise our skills and qualities. We see the rough and tumble of political and administrative bear pits - the language, the long hours, the aggression and the costs to quality of life. Rather than change it, we move off into our comfort zones and leave men to theirs. This leaves us often frustrated by their decisions, angry at being ignored, but safe. Women wait for others to speak, often resenting the tall poppies, the articulate, those seen as powerful and public figures.

I come back to the proposal I began with in this paper. Women need to take over because the world men are now making is not safe for the future. We need to change the culture of leadership to one more
accepting of alternatives and new ideas, more aware of private lives and issues, more concerned with care than profit. We do not all need to do it, but we need to support the women who do take it on.

More than that, women need to look at developing alternatives; to create the policies we see as appropriate through our experiences and concern. We have to provide a range of pink prints or yellow ones, maybe, which are neither male nor female, but pick the best from both sets of experiences. And we need to make sure our ideas are heard, not just our criticisms. We are too often silent and silenced.

If you think I am taking this too far, I would like to give you a small example from a current debate. With Helen Leonard, I completed a piece of research into women’s use of phones last year which looked at their role in supporting the social infrastructure. We looked at the way women use telephones to manage the complexities of community and lives. Our research was qualitative and looked at the networks and support that telephones create. This form of communication is not a second best version of old face to face relationships, it is in itself a creator of communities, of links across distances. Links which women need to respond to the multiple demands on them as carers and household managers. We recorded the familiar practical aspects of being able to live alone yet summon support and help when needed, of maintaining relationships over distance, and of seeking advice and information. Without these, many additional costs would accrue to the community.

But we also recorded a range of other relationships women maintain and develop on phones. These are what we called single thread communities, where people share one problem or interest and phones allow them to maintain an uni-dimensional and useful contact. There are necessary, distant relationships women manage to have when obligation suggests contact but proximity causes strain. There are others where women need the safety of invisibility. We documented the diverse ways in which use of phones at work made the dual roles of women as breadwinners and child carers workable and sustainable.

The research documented this in a professional sociological report which also explored the public policy aspects of the findings. The report included suggestions that these findings, together with the demographic and workforce changes under way, made a national, socially aware, telecommunications policy very necessary.

The Telecom Optus debate is raging in the eastern States as Canberra and Sydney are balloted to make a choice. The debate is almost entirely price driven, and we attempted to raise the social issues and their implications for the ballot. We wanted to suggest that offering Optus the most profitable routes undermined Telecom’s ability to deliver community services.

When we attempted to raise this and other social issues and their implications for the ballot, the union ignored us, Telecom’s ad agency ignored us, and ABC-TV refused to put me on the Four Corners debate. Austel ruled our material as biased, and the media, with a few honourable exceptions, gave plenty of space to others and none to us. This is a hot issue, the material we had was good, and I am a known and competent media performer. Yet I was ignored on this issue, though I am often sought to talk about sexist fudges.

So this brings me to my final point - women need to broaden the current feminist agendas. Public debate is gendered with women, particularly feminists, being seen as appropriate authorities on rape, domestic violence and sexism.Men rarely talk about these. Women are not sought as experts in economics, unemployment, science and so forth. And women tend to play into the stereotype by concentrating on what are defined as ‘Women’s Issues’.

So I end with a plea. To become leaders, women need to change as well as men. We need to become better risk takers, to deal with the bear pits and work out how to change them. There needs to be more women who are willing to develop expertise in non-traditional areas, and more women offering themselves for top positions in elections. As we move in, we also give men, who object to the current framework, alternatives they can follow.

Finally, there needs to be a feminist agenda for many things; feminist social security; Medicare; agriculture and trade; industrial policy; the full spectrum of policy areas - for business, the community and unions.

So far we have moved in the community - but we need more.
LECTURE TWO

Women and Psychiatry-Struggles, Strivings and Social Justice

DR SUZANNE DOBSON
Women and Psychiatry - Struggles, Strivings and Social Justice

I am really pleased to have the opportunity to be here and be part of this lecture series that is acknowledging the leadership of women. It is gratifying for me, as a psychiatrist, to talk of the issues that are important professionally and personally. I come from a profession with a long history of males being predominant as providers and women as the consumers of service.

Women present to psychiatrists and are diagnosed with psychiatric disorder twice as commonly as men. Tonight, I'd like to explore some of the reasons mental illness is diagnosed more often in women and whether women are managed differently as psychiatric patients. Also, how the lives and struggles of women have an impact on psychiatry, particularly their life experiences such as domestic violence and sexual assault, childhood abuse and single parenthood. This raises the question, does psychiatry have a role in promoting social justice, particularly for women and children, to help empower them to have more choices and fulfilment?

I'd like then to tell you about the role of women as psychiatrists, how we are showing increasing leadership and prominence in the profession, particularly on ethical issues, speaking on behalf of our patients and women as a whole; about some of the experiences of women in psychiatry in Australia and New Zealand and about some personal experiences in my role as Chair of the Branch of the College in W.A.

Psychiatry is often seen only in the province of mental illness and its management. I'd like to take a broader and more positive view of psychiatry being involved in the promotion and maintenance of mental health and mental health as a state of well being, not just being free of psychiatric disorder, just as physical health is more than being illness free.

Important issues in one's mental health are:

Contentment, life satisfaction, supportive and satisfying relationships - in families or otherwise, the work environment - paid or unpaid, issues of social justice, equal opportunity, safety. As are education and awareness and, as an essential basis for health, our physical and material needs which are issues with us much more during times of significant stress. Mental health is very much about the importance of living in a socially just society, with the strength to protect the rights of the disadvantaged and vulnerable, and the power to provide active support and caring.

The concept of invulnerability in relation to mental illness is a relatively new one in medicine and psychiatry. Psychiatry and medicine have often concentrated, in the past, mainly out of necessity, in secondary and tertiary prevention, the management of illness and its complications. Primary prevention, the concentration on the factors that cause illness, has been relatively ignored by clinicians.

Dr. Michael Rutter, a renowned British child psychiatrist, introduced the concept of invulnerability, especially related to children. He looked at what it is that protects a child from mental illness, a very important question. He has found many relevant factors - genetic, constitution and temperament, race, gender, family order - which are not really amenable to change. More recently, however, he has been finding positive factors in experience that can provide invulnerability to mental disorder. These protective factors are:

- Life experience
- Relationships
- Social support
- Employment
- Education
- Models of: success, safety, self respect
- Social justice/equal opportunity

Promoting Social Justice
• Intervention: self-help, mental health professions
• The home experiences
• Parenting styles
• The school environment
• The importance of even one supportive, caring relationship If this is not provided by parents it might be a grandparent, teacher, child-care worker or health professional.
• The absence of added adversity by further trauma, deprivation or abuse if there has been early vulnerability.

There is much evidence that resilience in women is strengthened and helped by attachments and support, the opportunity to express the feelings of distress, and to take action, especially by self-help. This is often part of what the mental health professions attempt to provide.

As a psychiatrist, I know much more about vulnerability factors and special needs of women in their interaction with psychiatry. Knowledge of vulnerability factors is also useful for protection and prevention before disorder or dysfunction is evident. However, it is at the coal-face where most intervention is done.

This leads me to look at the impact of gender stereotypes, the difference in incidence of psychiatric disorders, how these may come about and the gender differences in management and intervention. These issues are very important in protecting women’s mental health and well-being.

Overall, women are 65% of all psychiatric patients, those both presenting to psychiatrists and with diagnosed psychiatric disorders. It is quite clear that diagnosed psychiatric illness is much more common in women. In many surveys the ratio of women declared as psychiatric patients is often up to 4 to 1, but in community surveys there is less difference, with a ratio being less than 2 to 1. There have been several explanations to account for these differences:

• Firstly, that women’s attitudes to complaints of distress are quite different to those of men.
  Women complain more but also ask for help more readily.
• The second possibility is that women do have more psychiatric illnesses.
• The third is that there is more psychiatric illness in women diagnosed by doctors and psychiatrists due to their different attitudes toward men and women. This is also related to the issue that women are more likely to be referred to doctors and specialists and are more likely to complain.

There are many biological factors that relate specifically to women, including childbirth, menstruation, menopause, contraception, termination of pregnancy, hysterectomy, mastectomy and more recently the issue of infertility, being broadened by the introduction of the I.V.F. programs. There are also issues of very different and often very traumatic life events such as rape, incest, assault - especially within a marriage or relationship; child-bearing and issues of social support - with single parenthood, poverty, unemployment and social isolation, often being major issues for women. Stereotypes of women have affected their role as a patient and client. Fabricant in 1974, found in his study that male therapists and male patients agreed that the majority of women can be fulfilled by the wife and mother role alone, whereas, female therapists and clients disagreed with this conclusion.

The husband and wife team of the Bovermans did a study in 1970 of 46 males and 36 female psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers to investigate their different attitudes towards men and women. This is now regarded as a classic study.

A sex role stereotype questionnaire consisting of 122 items was given to actively functioning clinicians with instructions to describe a healthy, mature, socially competent

• Adult (sex unspecified)
• A man
• A woman
I list below the clinical judgements about the mental health characteristics of males and females which Bovermans uncovered.

**HEALTHY MAN**
- aggressive
- independent
- hides emotions
- objective
- not easily influenced
- dominant
- likes maths & science
- active
- not excitable
- logical
- worldly
- decisive
- a leader
- confident
- ambitious
- not conceived about appearance
- not talkative
- blunt
- loud
- dislikes literature & art
- secure
- not aware of others' feelings
- direct

**HEALTHY WOMAN**
- not at all aggressive
- dependant
- very emotional
- very subjective
- very easily influenced
- submissive
- dislikes
- passive
- excitable
- illogical
- not adventurous
- indecisive
- not a leader
- not self-confident
- not ambitious
- conceited
- talkative
- tactful
- quiet
- enjoys
- insecure
- very aware
- sneaky

Overall, the clinicians believed that healthy women differ from healthy men or healthy adults in being more submissive, less dependant, less adventurous, more excitable in minor crises, more likely to have their feelings hurt, more emotional, more conceited about their appearance, less objective and more illogical. It is important to note that these views were expressed by both men and women clinicians of various professional groups.

The findings were summed up as:
- Healthy man - healthy person.
- Healthy woman - unhealthy person.

The Bovermans concluded, and I quote:

“For a woman to be healthy from an adjustment point of view, she must admit to and accept the behavioural norms of her sex, even though these behaviours are generally less socially desirable and considered to be less healthy than the generalised competent mature male. Acceptance of an adjustment notion of health then places women in a conflicting position of having to decide whether to exhibit those positive characteristics desirable for men and adults, and thus have their femininity questioned, or behave in the prescribed second class adult status.”

Brodsky and Hare-Mustin, two American women psychologists, in their review of the literature of sex bias in clinicians, found in 26 studies that 20 showed clear sex bias, with women being seen in an inferior role to men. But positively for psychiatrists, Leichner and Kalin in 1981, showed both psychiatrists and psychiatric residents (trainees) showed less traditional attitudes. There were increased feminist views, especially in women psychiatrists.
However, the data from many sources on incidence and prevalence of mental illness leads one to conclude that mental illness is much more common in women.

In outpatient clinics in Western Australia, Canada and the United States, women comprise 60% of general hospital and private hospital inpatients and 40% of public mental hospital patients. Overall, women have longer lengths of stay in hospital with the same psychiatric diagnosis when compared to men. Women have more frequent admissions, while men have more frequent involuntary admissions.

WHY IS MENTAL ILLNESS MORE COMMON IN WOMEN?

Problems labelled as psychiatric (Briscoe)
Men - personality disorders, drugs, alcohol, aggression (Dohrenwends)
Marriage - vulnerability factor for women (Briscoe)
Life events - rape, incest, marital violence, marital conflict (Weissman & Klerman)
Specific biological propensity (Tonks)
Menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, abortion, menopause, hysterectomy
Depression? learned helplessness (Seligman)
Social situation (Brown)

Gove & Tudor, who have studied this rather extensively, have stated that the difference in incidence reflects real sex differences - that there is a true increased incidence of mental illness in women. It has been shown that the high rates of poor mental health consistently found among young women are not an artefact of response bias or of differences in the behaviour of the sexes. They feel the evidence suggests that the higher rates of mental illness among women are due primarily to their gender and marital roles.

Hovitz and Briscoe have found that women are more than twice as likely as men to label their problems as psychiatric and discuss them with their family, friends, co-workers and professionals.

Phillips and Segal also agree that women will seek help more often for psychiatric illness. Men are less likely to discuss their problems and when they enter psychiatric treatment it is usually coercive and often the problem, by the time it is noticed, is more severe. This may also relate to the evidence of higher incidence of completed suicide in men. For men, not being able to acknowledge their distress earlier and effectively, can have tragic consequences, as we so often see, so very sadly, in the media with so many murder-suicides being reported.

It has been noted that men have a higher incidence of personality disorders, drug abuse and aggressive behaviour. The Dohrenwends have seen this as the equivalent of depression and anxiety in women. Looked at this way, the apparent difference in mental illness disappears. Gove and Tudor strongly disagree and feel that personality related disorders among men are not the functional equivalent of distress or mental disorganisation amongst women.

There is also the very large issue of women’s roles and it has been noted quite clearly that the marital status and working role of women significantly affect their rates of mental illness. Briscoe has noticed the highest incidence of mental illness is in married women. The next most vulnerable group is single men, then single women and then married men. She states that marriage is a vulnerability factor for women for mental disorder and a protective factor for men. The issue of employment has also been a protective factor for women and the incidence of mental illness in married men is equal to that of working wives. Briscoe feels women need jobs as men need wives. In her usual provocative way, Germaine Greer had an interesting response. She feels women need husbands as fish need bicycles!

The dilemmas and conflicts of marriage, family relationships, reproduction, child-rearing, divorce, single parenthood, ageing, education and employment may produce an increased vulnerability to mental illness in women. Sexual assault, incest and marital violence are increasing developmental crises for many women.

The incidence of depression, both depressive illness and adjustment disorders or reactive depression,
is twice as frequent in women as in men, and 20 - 30% of women will have a severe episode of depression in their lifetime. The greatest rise in incidence is in young women. Biological, endocrine and genetic factors are not sufficient explanation for this difference.

Weissman and Klerman in 1977, showed in their studies that women show a true increased incidence in depression and that this was not just a case of increased complaints. They also noted that there was an increase of life events prior to the onset of episodes and that marital discord was the most common life event six months prior to the onset of depression.

In the aetiology of depression for women, Seligman’s concept of learned helplessness may be relevant. Expectations of powerlessness and of the inability to control one’s destiny, whether this be real or perceived, can prevent effective action on one’s own behalf. That is, one learns to be and to feel helpless.

Brown has also looked at the incidence of depression in working class women in Camberwell, a socially deprived area of London, and has found that there has been a five-fold increase in the incidence of depression compared to middle class women. She named four factors that are predisposing:

- the loss of a mother before the age of eleven
- the absence of a current close confidante
- more than three young children at home
- no employment

Straus, in 1976, found that in 50% of American families there is substantial violence occurring. 10% of all girls have sexual encounters with a relative and 1% are sexually abused by their father. The figures in Western Australia released by the Child Abuse Task force, chaired by Dr. Carmen Lawrence in 1985, show that one in four women are sexually abused by the time they are sixteen and one in eleven boys.

Domestic violence is another significant problem. Dr Joan Lawrence, a recent President of the College of Psychiatrists, has shown in her studies that domestic violence affects one in six couples per year, that in accident and emergency departments of general hospitals one in four women present with the effects of domestic violence and reporting is even higher if it is specifically asked for. In 80% of murders of women, the perpetrator is known to the woman. It is very sad and of great concern that the most dangerous place for a woman and child to be is in their own home.

These problems are significant as often it is difficult for a woman to leave a marriage as she is denied equal opportunity, educationally, vocationally and economically and child care facilities. So, much of all this data relates to social problems and inequity for women and children. Later, I will talk of the importance of social justice, not only in its own right but also as an important factor in mental health, particularly for women.

There are significant sex differences, not only in the incidence and presentation of mental illness but also in its management. Women are viewed and managed quite differently to their male counterparts.

Sherman in 1980 stated, and I quote: “Sex role discrepant behaviours are judged more maladjusted. Anger is labelled as pathological rather than understood as a consequence of a devalued position.” Clinicians can often label - he is assertive, she is castrating and difficult.

Histories of incest and sexual assault can be seen as a fantasised wish by some therapists and sexual exploitation of women patients by male doctors and therapists is alarmingly frequent.

Adelaide psychiatrist, Cherrie Galletty is one of the women psychiatrists in Australia to have published in this area and in her paper in the College Journal just a few months ago, she looks at the broad issues of sexual relationships between psychiatrists and their patients. She writes:

“Trust is an important part of the psychiatrist/patient relationship. Patients can expect that, within reason, their needs are the primary concern of the relationship and that the psychiatrist’s interaction with them is intended to achieve progress towards the goals of therapy. Sexual involvement within a therapeutic relationship is known to be very destructive.”
Surveys have shown that 90% of patients who have been sexually involved with a previous therapist have suffered ill-effects including depression, emotional disturbance, impaired social adjustment, suicidal feelings and behaviour and increased use of drugs. 11% were hospitalised and 1% have died by suicide.

In the United States the ‘therapist/patient sex syndrome’ has now been described and is characterised by ambivalence, guilt, emptiness and isolation, sexual confusion, mistrust, emotional inability, cognitive dysfunction, suppressed rage and suicidality. The sexually exploiting psychiatrist, like the incestuous parent, has a duty to care for the patient but misuses this power to impose a sexual relationship. These patients, in common with incest victims, tend to feel very ashamed, blame themselves and protect the abuser by concealing the relationship.

Whilst this sexual involvement occurs within a privileged, very private relationship because of its unethical nature and destructive effects, it is the concern of the profession as a whole. However, the position that is sometimes taken, and one I strongly disagree with, is that women who enter therapy are fully responsible for their behaviour. This would at least require that we educate the female public so they may choose the kind of therapeutic relationship they wish to receive and pay for, before a transference relationship obscures their objectivity.

There are also significant gender differences in psychotropic drug use and prescribing as found by Cooperstock in 1978. The prescribing rates of female and male psychiatrists are quite different. (33% of male psychiatrists prescribe medication to women making office visits compared to 17% of women psychiatrists.)

Disorders that are seen as sex congruent, such as anxiety and depression are certainly well serviced if not over-serviced and over-diagnosed in women. Those disorders that are difficult for us all to acknowledge and that do not fit in with the perceived role of women such as alcoholism and drug abuse and the violence placed upon women, are often under-serviced or ignored in women.

It is very relevant to the practice of psychotherapy to understand why women do get mentally ill more often than men, how they present and the differences in their treatment. Are psychotherapists gender biased? Recent research has indicated a moderating of any such stereotyping behaviour. It seems the problem may be less that of gender bias than the lack of information or mis-information about women's problems.

Sherman and others have found gender bias and lack of information to be highly correlated. Other studies have found that female therapists hold more liberal attitudes toward women than male therapists, who may be ignorant of important aspects of female psychology. The female patient, for example, may be struggling with her fear of success, yet the therapist may be totally unaware of the conflict, seeing her in a more traditional role. Psychosomatic reactions such as sexual dysfunction, infertility, spontaneous abortion or amenorrhoea may be seen only as pathological, without awareness of the protective features of these reactions in preserving both the equilibrium of the individual and her relationship. Uninformed or mis-informed, the therapist may mishandle questions of emotional changes accompanying the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, childbirth and the menopause.

Many studies have shown that women are seen longer in psychotherapy than men. Abramovitz et al showed male therapists saw female patients for a longer time than male patients but female therapists do not see male patients longer than female patients.

Fabricant in 1974, reported that female patients were in therapy more than twice as long as male patients. In terms of the gender of the therapist, some studies have found that the outcome is best when the therapist and the client are of the same gender.

In 1979, Orlinsky and Howard did a review of the literature and compared outcomes for male and female therapists. They wanted to look at the question of what there is about being a man or a woman that could have an effect on outcome. The social, cultural and psychological concomitants of gender, for them, constituted the real focus of interest. On their outcome measures, comparable to those found in most published research, those women who most clearly benefit from having a female therapist were single women and especially young single women. Women with families did about as well with male as female therapists in overall improvement, but nearly double the number of women seeing women therapists improved, considerably more than those seeing male therapists.

In 1986, Carol Nadelson, a recent President of the American Psychiatric Association, in her review of psychotherapy and women states that a number of researchers suggest that the gender composition of the
therapist-patient dyad influences patient satisfaction more than the ultimate outcome.

Therapist experience seems to be an important variable, more experienced therapists having better therapeutic results. Senior therapists show fewer gender effects than more junior therapists, regardless of their gender. Younger, unmarried and less experienced patients and therapists were vulnerable to gender related feelings and stereotypes.

Carol Nadelson's overall conclusion is and I quote:

"The outcome of treatment, if it is long-term and insight directed is less affected by the therapist's sex, than by the therapist's training, experience, personality and self-awareness. With some patients in shorter forms of psychotherapy or with therapists who are less experienced and skilled, such factors can be powerful enough to substantially affect outcome ... most salient is the need to remind ourselves to be open and unaffected by unfounded myth-limiting stereotypes."

Phillips and Segal show evidence that women are more open, motivated and active in their collaboration with their therapists, are more likely to admit psychological problems and have higher expectations of the outcome. They suggest that perhaps women, in general, present themselves in a manner that is more acceptable to therapists. The fact that higher numbers of women enter and continue individual psychotherapy and that therapists have been found to recommend more frequent individual therapy sessions for woman than men, despite the fact that these women were not seen as less adjusted or more in need of therapy may be related to this greater acceptability.

THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The goals of mental health professionals are, through their intervention, to promote and nurture resilience and self respect, that is to empower people to recover their own health. There are many important issues as to how this intervention should occur. The important starting point in the provision of such intervention is to acknowledge the rights of us all to have our health care needs addressed with competence and respect.

Many nations including Australia have undertaken to have specific national mental health policies and there also have been international health policies. The Australian Mental Health Policy and Plan has only been introduced recently and I would like to quote from the introduction to it:

"Mental disorder is prevalent, extensive, affects all ages and social groups and is associated with chronic and often major disability, handicap and invalidism through symptoms which disrupt the capacity for satisfying family and personal relationships and enjoyment of work and leisure. Costs associated with in-patient facilities, psychotropic drug usage, social security benefits and loss of work are significant. The problems that people with mental disorder experience are common across the nation. Responsibilities for providing treatment, rehabilitation and support services to mentally ill people are shared among the States, Territory and Commonwealth Governments, Non-Government Organisations and the Private sector."

The Policy also stresses the roles and responsibilities of us all and I quote:

"It is important for all Australian residents to understand that many features of society feed in to mental health problems and bear directly on the incidence of such things as family violence, anxiety and its expression, family breakdown, juvenile crime and substance abuse. The protection and promotion of mental health should be a matter of compelling priority for every individual and community in Australia."

The Policy has also made clear the rights of those suffering mental health problems and I'll list some of them:
• The right to respect for individual human worth, dignity and privacy.
• The right, equal to other citizens, to health care, income maintenance, education, employment, housing, transport, legal services, equitable health and other insurance and leisure appropriate to one’s age.
• The right to timely and high quality treatment.
• The right to interact with health care providers, particularly in decision making regarding treatment, care and rehabilitation.
• The right to mechanisms of complaint and redress.
• The right to advocacy.
• The right to have one’s cultural background and gender taken into consideration in the provision of mental health services.
• The right to contribute and participate as far as possible in the development of mental health policy and provision of mental health care.
• The right to live, work and participate in the community to the full extent of one’s capabilities without discrimination.

The Policy also recognises that positive mental health is dependant on individual, group and environmental factors working together. It identified risk factors affecting individuals and the community as a whole and further states:

“The individual has the right to be assisted to achieve satisfying and productive patterns of living through programs for the promotion of mental health. The individual has the right to protection from negative influence on mental health or factors which increase the risk of developing mental health problems or mental disorders including poverty, exploitation and other major adverse social influence.”

The General Assembly of the World Psychiatric Association approved ethical guidelines for psychiatrists in 1980, now called the “Declaration of Hawaii”. I would like to read you some of these guidelines.

• The aim of the psychiatrist is to treat mental illness and to promote mental health to the best of his or her ability, consistent with accepted scientific knowledge and ethical principles. The psychiatrist shall serve the best interests of the patient and also be concerned for the common good and just allocation of health resources.
• Every psychiatrist should offer to the patient, the best available therapy consistent with his or her knowledge and if accepted must treat him or her with the solicitude and respect due to the dignity of all human beings.
• The psychiatrist aspires to a therapeutic relationship that is founded on mutual agreement. At its optimum, it requires trust, confidentiality, cooperation and mutual responsibility.

The psychiatrist must never use his or her professional privilege to violate the dignity or human rights of any individual or group and should never let inappropriate personal desires, feelings, prejudices or beliefs interfere with the treatment.

We also now have in existence Human Rights Commissions and legislation concerning anti-discrimination and equal opportunity. But legislation is not enough. It certainly is important to have rights addressed and known but provisions for action must be there and the funds for their enactment must also be made available. We must also use our own power to ensure both governments and the professions adhere to these rights and responsibilities.

I believe strongly in the role of psychiatrists as advocates for those who are mentally ill and also for the promotion of social justice. As a profession we must protect and maintain the ideals and values of social justice, and use our strength and power to protect those who are disadvantaged, who do not have equal opportunity in our society and who are perceived as different or as a threat and as such are discriminated against.
All of us can work towards this at many levels, especially in our work places and our families, and in our intimate and close relationships. As a profession, we can work at the community, national and international level.

It is a time in our history when there are many great challenges facing us. Probably the greatest is the maintenance of world and national peace. Many of the issues that we are trying to deal with as a world society I see as metaphors for what happens in smaller communities and with individuals, especially in the areas of resolution of conflict.

In our nation and in our local communities there is much to be concerned about and a great need for more justice and compassion to those disadvantaged, in minority groups or as seen as different:

- Our children who still suffer, too often, from profound deprivation and abuse.
- Our adolescents, and especially our boys, who are now being seen as violent and dangerous criminals and as such are being scapegoated and persecuted by us, rather than seen as the victims of dire social situations and despair.
- Women against whom there is still much discrimination and whose homes are still the most dangerous places to be.
- Our unemployed, the homeless, the poor, the uneducated, the socially and geographically isolated, and too often our elderly, other minority cultural groups and especially our own Aboriginal people.
- Those who have different sexual orientations.
- Those who are ill, especially with an illness about which we make moral judgments in fear and ignorance, and against which we show quite active discrimination. This is true of the illness of AIDS, affecting a group of people often isolated from society already. It is such a devastating illness that it deserves our greatest compassion and support, and our concern is particularly relevant to sufferers who are also mentally ill.

I would now like to look at the role of women as psychiatrists. In Australia and New Zealand, the numbers of women in medical schools and graduating as doctors is now just over 50%. It is still very unusual for women to specialise and in some specialties there are still no women at all. The specialties involve a minimum of five years further training and this often presents women with difficult decisions about whether to have children, to defer having children or to have no children and to continue in their career.

The two specialties that have a significant number of women practitioners are paediatrics and psychiatry, and this is not surprising. In psychiatry 20% of all specialists are now women, and pleasingly, in training 50% are women.

Over the last ten years, three out of the five College bi-national Presidents have been women but it is only very recently that women have started to have some significant representation in wider leadership both as Chairs of Branches and on Federal Council, which is the representative body for policy and maintaining ethical and clinical standards for the whole of psychiatry in Australia and New Zealand. Council is a body of twenty seven psychiatrists representing all the States and a central Executive.

When I was elected to Council three years ago, the number of women had ranged always between one and three. I made it four and now Council has eight women members and, since 1992, three Branches are chaired by women, New Zealand, South Australia and Western Australia.

In Western Australia, in 1992, not only did we have the first woman Chair, we had our first woman Chair of the Ethics Committee and our first woman Director of Postgraduate Education. It is pleasing to see our profession is making senior appointments no longer based on gender or age or seniority. However, this has not been the usual history in medicine and changes in psychiatry have been quite recent.

Many of these changes have come about from the themes of two of our National Congresses. In 1985, the National Congress held in Hobart, Tasmania, was about social issues and particularly women’s issues, but these issues were not discussed again until 1990, where the theme of the Congress was ‘The Resilience of Women Under Adversity’. I am pleased to say this Congress was held in Perth, Western Australia, and it is particularly since this time that women have been able to have an increasingly important leadership role in the College.
Dr Carolyn Quadrio, who is a very prominent psychiatrist now residing in New South Wales but a former West Australian, has had a lot of concern about the role of women in psychiatry and discusses these issues in detail in her article published in our College Journal in 1990 titled, ‘Women in Australian and New Zealand Psychiatry - The Fat Lady Sings.’

She was concerned that gender disadvantage within professions significantly affects the development of women doctors, resulting in morbidity and less than optimal development. She argued that women in medicine and science are:

• More conservative and have more conservative attitudes than those in the arts and humanities.
• Are less likely to perceive discrimination.
• When they do experience difficulties such as lack of promotion women are more prone to global attribution, that is, to perceive their problem as due to personal inadequacy rather than to perceive their disadvantaged position.

Her concern, also, is that medical training fosters an attitude that idealises technical and scientific management perhaps to the detriment of the clinical human encounter. For example, she sees that the workaholic lifestyle which is presented as a model for students as part of the process of becoming a physician - the denial of weakness, the driving hardness and the de-humanisation - leads to dread, dependency and debilitation.

Female doctors who combine career and marriage and child-bearing suffer considerable role strain and, like women in other careers, are generally responsible for 80% of the house work and child-care, especially during the period of maximal career development. Ione Fett, in her Australian survey of doctors, found that women doctors performed almost as much domestic work as the non-medical wives of their male colleagues.

Lorraine Dennerstein, another prominent Australian psychiatrist, confirmed this in her survey of medical graduates from the University of Melbourne, adding that only 6% of male doctors participated in child-care. The reporting of parental involvement of male professionals is a new trend and reflects change in social expectations. Men are now more often expected to and more often report an interest in contributing to child-care. This may presage some incipient role strain for men as they expand traditional work-centred adjustments to incorporate more involvement with their families. As they do, men may begin to share some of the anxiety and guilt which women have traditionally experienced in relation to their professional development. An interesting finding reports that male psychiatrists with children actually work more hours than those without children.

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Australia, Fay Gayle, has identified another source of role strain in academic women. She states that, in addition to their professional and family responsibilities, academic women are called upon to do much of the political housework which is constantly required to ensure equitable conditions for women.

In both the United States and Australia, despite equal productivity, women in medicine and in academe take up to twice as long to make promotional moves. The constant efforts towards affirmative action which are required to redress these problems constitute much of this political housework to which Fay Gayle refers and I quote:

“Women are being asked to do more in the area of affirmative action and this takes them out of research and therefore out of promotions and as a result, enthusiasm is running out or we are being double booked and drying up”.

The paucity of female role models during their medical and psychiatric education also creates serious developmental problems for the women in training and adversely affects men as well, according to Carolyn Quadrio. Perpetuation of sex role stereotypes, with men in positions of power and women in subordinate positions not only impairs the self esteem but also the aspirations and the performance of women. This has been an important issue in our Branch, with only a small group of women consultants. However, over the last few years, there has been the formation of a Women in Psychiatry Network in Australia and New Zealand, to provide both discussion and support for consultants and also to trainee psychiatrists. This group is currently very active. Quadrio also discusses the difficulties of women in leadership roles and the lack of models of female leadership.
A prominent leader and the first woman President of the American Psychiatric Association, to whom I have referred previously, Carol Nadelson, did have concerns after completing her term of office and she comments on the progress made by women. (Or rather, the lack of progress she felt had been made.) She draws attention to the following:

- Women's opinions spark negative and resistant responses.
- The lack of peer support and of mentors and models.
- Women must cope with their own and others' resistance.
- A sense of intractability of male orientations and culture in professional fields.

Dr. Soloman, also a prominent American psychiatrist, wrote an editorial in the American Journal of Psychiatry on the reluctance of men to accept women as peers and on the barriers to female achievement.

However, if we look at the Australian and New Zealand scene in recent times, three women have been elected to the position of President of our College. This is one of the more encouraging developments in Australian and New Zealand psychiatry, and reflects an increasing recognition of the place of women as leaders in the profession.

Beverley Raphael, a past President of the College of Psychiatrists, in a paper addressing the issues of women physicians in leadership roles, referred to the great need to redress the imbalance. It is hoped that Beverley Raphael's recommendations and her own personal example, and that of women who are now becoming leaders of the College, will encourage the opening up of more leadership positions for women.

Carolyn Quadrio warns, however, that whilst their function as role models is crucial for women psychiatrists, yet with regard to more affirmative action on behalf of fellow women colleagues, women in leadership positions are in a double bind. She states:

"If they ignore women's issues they may be accused of being identified with a patriarchal organisation. If they advocate on behalf of women they are likely to be accused of chauvinism."

I feel a lot of these concerns are now being addressed by both very prominent and successful women leaders in psychiatry who have been supported both by their female and male colleagues. They have been able to make a significant contribution in the areas of advocacy for patients and social justice as well as providing models of leadership.

Women psychiatrist in leadership positions have made very strong stands on the issue of ethical standards in our profession. The whole procedure of receiving and dealing with ethical complaints was reviewed by the College in 1992 and in the Western Australian branch also. Of course, there has been some resistance to the psychiatrists who are bringing complaints more out into the open. It has been very painful for our profession to acknowledge these defects. I feel proud that we have been able to start to do this more openly and this is what will maintain our profession's integrity and trustworthiness.

Another concern of Carolyn Quadrio has been the frequency with which a professional woman will find herself the sole female in a group or in a leadership role. I certainly found it a very odd experience myself, being elected the first woman Chair of the W.A. Branch, to find that I was Chairing an all male and fairly senior committee. Fortunately, I was able to co-opt another female colleague very early on.

It is very important for a woman, particularly in a leadership role not to place herself in an isolated position but to have the support of both female and male colleagues, to be able to be effective and make a real difference in her role.

The issue of numbers and representation is a vital one and I'd like to tell you an experience at my first general Council Meeting of the College that illustrated this very clearly for me. It was as though there is a threshold from where women become visible after being perceived as invisible.

At my first Council Meeting in 1990, there were three other women psychiatrists one, the current President, another, the immediate Past President and the other, the Chair of the New South Wales branch, all very successful and highly respected women. So, I came in as the fourth woman and I was significantly younger than the rest.

Joan Lawrence, the immediate Past President, caught me just before morning tea to let me know that the toilets were 'unisex'. The meeting was in a very formal environment and I thought, well I had better just take it gracefully despite feeling a little bit strange in such a situation. Interestingly, by lunch time, there
seemed to be a new awareness and embarrassment on the part of many of the male psychiatrists. From that afternoon, we women psychiatrists were given our own toilets nearest to the meeting room and the men, very gallantly, decided to go downstairs. This for me, was a very clear example of the difference that numbers can make. It was not until there were four women psychiatrists at a Council Meeting that women were seen visibly in ways they are in general society.

Often, some of these issues can be handled with humour. I am particularly aware of the difficulty of language and, as you would be aware, language is a very important issue in psychiatry. The College interestingly had a motion, five or six years previously, that anyone who Chaired a committee would be titled Chairman whether they were a man or woman. This was interesting also, in the context that, at the time, we had a woman President and a woman President Elect. So, being slightly mischievous, I stirred the waters when I became Chair of the branch stating that I would not be called Chairman and we had several months in the Branch when people would just address me variously as Chairperson, Madam President, Madam Chairman and one colleague even called me Chair Lady. Finally, I think we all felt more comfortable with the term Chair. While it has made for some interesting humour and fun in letters and after dinner speeches, it was also important.

Other phrases that have been frequent in the College were the terms manpower - we now talk of workforce, and motherhood statements - we now talk of parenthood statements.

Carolyn Quadrio sums up a lot of what I have been saying:

"These observations provide cogent support for the desirability of promoting female participation in medicine and psychiatry, not on the current basis of women competing and emulating masculine standards which simply increases the numbers of women but on the basis of introducing more of the feminine ethos and actually modifying the nature of profession”.

I'd like now to give you some hints that may be helpful for women as leaders.

- Don’t accept limiting stereotypes. Certainly the strength of this lecture series is that it provides a range of women in various leadership roles.
- Believe in yourself. Sometimes you may feel out on a limb so make sure other people believe in you too.
- Dare to be different. It’s surprising how satisfying and creative this can be, particularly when it is done with humour and grace.
- Stir things up a little, but make sure you do it safely and with support.
- And, a final helpful hint from Lucy of Peanuts fame, a woman who has enjoyed her status as a “boss” and “psychiatrist”.

“A woman’s place is in control,” she states, and I would add, “of herself and her life”.

All these things can be risky exciting, fulfilling, challenging, frustrating, tiring and scary but I do think they can enable us to make a real difference.

I'd like to end with a beautiful and touching poem by A. A. Milne who has told us of Winnie the Pooh and his dear friends, the anxious Piglet, the depressed Ee Aw and the angry Tigger, which, in a sense, says it all.
There was a Dormouse who lived in a bed
Of Delphiniums (blue) and Geraniums (red),
And all the day long he’d a wonderful view
Of Geraniums (red) and Delphiniums (blue).
A Doctor came hurrying round and he said,
“Tut tut, I am sorry to find you in bed.
Just say ‘ninety nine’ while I look at your chest...
Don’t you find that Chrysanthemums answer the best?”
The Dormouse looked round at the view and replied
(When he’d said ‘ninety nine’) that he’d tried and he’d tried,
And much the most answering things that he knew
Were Geraniums (red) and Delphiniums (blue).

The Doctor stood frowning and shaking his head,
And he took up his shiny silk hat as he said:
“What the patient requires is a change,” and he went
To see some Chrysanthemum people in Kent.
The Dormouse lay there and he gazed at the view
Of Geraniums (red) and Delphiniums (blue)
And he knew there was nothing he wanted instead
Of Delphiniums (blue) and Geraniums (red).
The Doctor came back and, to show what he meant,
He had brought some Chrysanthemum cuttings from Kent.
“Now these,” he remarked, “give a much better view
Than Geraniums (red) and Delphiniums (blue).”
They took out their spades and they dug up the bed
Of Delphiniums (blue) and Geraniums (red),
And they planted Chrysanthemums (yellow and white).
“And now,” said the Doctor, “We’ll soon have you right.”

The Dormouse looked out, and he said with a sigh:
“I suppose all these people know better than I.
It was silly perhaps, but I did like the view
Of geraniums (red) and Delphiniums (blue).”
The Doctor came round and examined his chest,
And ordered him Nourishment, Tonics and Rest.
“How very effective”, he said as he shook
The thermometer, “all these Chrysanthemums look!”
The Dormouse turned over to shut out the sight
Of endless Chrysanthemums (yellow and white).
“How lovely,” he thought, “to be back in a bed
Of Delphiniums (blue) and Geraniums (red).”
The Doctor said, “Tut! It’s another attack!”
And ordered him Milk and Massage-of-the-back,
And Freedom from worry and Drives-in-the-car
And murmured “How sweet your Chrysanthemums are!”
The Dormouse lay there with his paws to his eyes,
And imagined himself such a pleasant surprise:
"I'll pretend the Chrysanthemums turn to a bed
Of Delphiniums (blue) and Geraniums (red)!
"
The Doctor next morning was rubbing his hands,
And saying "There's nobody quite understands
These cases as I do! The cure has begun!
How fresh the Chrysanthemums look in the sun!"
The Dormouse lay happy, his eyes were so tight
He could see no Chrysanthemums, yellow and white.
And all that he felt at the back of his head
Were Delphiniums (blue) and Geraniums (red). ©
LECTURE THREE

Positive Thinking for Women Leaders

LESLEY BOROWITZKA
Positive Thinking for Women Leaders

I believe that the only successful leaders, male or female, are positive thinkers. By positive thinking, I mean appreciating present blessings and looking forward, with confidence, to more.

Positive thinking is essential to get the most from work and life. There is good medical evidence of the power of positive thinking in overcoming diseases and improving fitness.

Imagination works in a positive mind. Negative attitudes, or apathy, drain away energy, health and imagination, and, even worse, are contagious. Gatherings of people with negative attitudes rarely build anything new. Think of grievance committees, many protest groups; imagination, creativity, fun, are not there.

Positive thinking must be realistic and practical, otherwise constructive work cannot be achieved. But throughout, the eyes should be on a vision, a dream. Ideas will come to a positive mind. Even a sad or apathetic mind-frame can be clocked into positive mode with practice - often forcing yourself to smile is enough.

Be aware that positive thinkers can drive some colleagues crazy! Positive thinking can be irritating, challenging, noisy, uncomfortable to those about you.

Many women are more thin-skinned, perhaps more sensitive than male colleagues, caring more about what people think and being hurt by knocking. We must keep on the positive track.

Where do my ideas come from?

My work is as manager of a small scientific company. I have enjoyed a career as researcher and more recently in marketing, production and administration. My knowledge of leadership was not learned from my university training in microbiology, but in the best possible way from working with, and learning from, good colleagues (on-the-job-training). As a result, my lecture is “tow-powered”, relating some ideas and observations that have worked for one person in science and business.

OBJECTIVES OF A LEADER

In order to succeed, a leader’s objectives must be the same as those of the organisation he or she works for. It is important to understand that the main objective of every business is to make an adequate return for its shareholders. All other objectives are peripheral or supportive of this prime objective.

The work of government organisations is not familiar to me, but I presume each has a simple objective such as to provide a specific service to the public, with supporting objectives.

Since the leader’s objectives must be the same as those of the organisation, the leader’s prime objectives are not:

• to improve the status and welfare of women in the company.
• to get more women into the boardroom.
• to gain maternity leave, flexible working hours for staff members.
• to reform the traditional male thinking of our Asian customers about women’s roles.
• to display one’s attitudes to the environment, stereotyped business dress etc to all.

All of the above are worthy, but lesser objectives.

A leader may address them, but only in the context of supporting the prime objective. For example, it may be possible to demonstrate that retention of trained female staff, through flexible hours and maternity leave, may be more cost-effective than training new staff; and that cost reductions will contribute to increased profitability.

Often, the first woman in a senior position will be tempted, even expected, to elevate the importance of the peripheral objectives at the cost of the principal objective.

I believe the best way to further the cause and improve the status of women as managers and leaders is to succeed. This means to concentrate all efforts on getting the best return to shareholders. I believe that this success will be followed by attainment of the peripheral objectives.
I do appreciate the hard work and battles fought to give women the opportunities we have, to do most things. I would not be here but for these tough and focused predecessors. Now, however, I think women need a period of consolidation and growth, a time to quietly perform excellently as leaders and managers.

**Some Advantages of Women as Leaders**

There are dangers and even insults in generalisations, but following are several to boost our positive thinking. As mothers and daughters and wives we have different experiences from men, and some, I believe, can contribute strongly to good leadership.

1. **Sensitivity, Compromise, Negotiation, Peacemaking.**
   These skills are learnt from the normal juggling necessary to keep families peaceful and together. Compromise, negotiation and peacemaking are learnt and practised, generally by the women in family and community activities. They translate very well to company leadership where they are greatly needed, I feel they are urgently needed in domestic and international politics, too.

2. **Pig-headed, dogged persistence.**
   The fact that two-year-olds eventually eat their dinners, teenage rooms do get tidied and family outings and gatherings do take place in the face of apathy and tardiness, are tributes to the persistence of women. Negotiation, compromise, swallowing of ego and sneaky behaviour all contribute to the success, but persistence is the key.
   Persistence and perspiration are likewise most important factors in succeeding as a leader. Have you heard “genius is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration”?

3. **Practicality, “Making-do”.**
   Women are usually good at performing miracles on zero budget. Finding a cheaper, simpler way,... patching something together to see if it works... “making-do”. We’ve learned to make a small start on what seems an enormous, daunting task: a patchwork quilt, a house in shambles after a flood. We can improvise when we don’t have the right tools or resources. Isn’t it wonderful how scissors can also be screwdrivers, chisels etc? We’ve learnt to clean up after ourselves as we work, because we know no-one else will.
   All these skills are well suited to running a small business, and should also be appropriate for large businesses (when they wake up to themselves!)
   More than half of Australia’s new small businesses are being started by women. These women are not afraid of starting small, with no support staff, and few resources; they’re prepared to do the dirty work themselves.
   Before your positive thinking carries you away up into the clouds, I must also point out some of the special challenges there are, to positive thinking women leaders.

**Some Challenges to Women as Leaders**

To help you to meet these challenges in a positive way, it is important to acknowledge that life is not fair and never will be. We must not get into a knot about this. There is danger in focusing on unfairness and grievances. It takes time and energy, distracts you from the principal objective and drains your positive thinking. Self-pity can be a real trap. However, it is important also to identify the unfairness and problems so we can seek realistic and positive solutions. I have listed three particularly female “challenges”:

1. **Subtle discrimination against any Minority Group. (Also seen as “glass ceilings”)**
   Expect to have to work harder, and better, than many of your male colleagues, and to get little recognition for it. I have observed this to apply to other minority groups too.
   I remember a great cartoon from the Bulletin, showing an all-male-but-one boardroom, with the chairman saying “excellent suggestion Ms Smith, maybe one of these gentlemen would like to make it”.

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Consider Ginger Rogers, the dancing partner of the famous Fred Astaire: her fame is less, but she danced it all, backwards, in high heels!

Consider successful political women, Margaret Thatcher, Bronwyn Bishop, tougher and stronger and harder working than most of their colleagues.

The answer is to grit your teeth, do the work well, gain the experience and get better and better. It is useful to point out, with humour if you can manage it, what you are achieving to colleagues and superiors. However, confronting and “bitching” or “nagging” truly gets you nowhere. When you get tired of the lack of recognition, consider a change to a smaller company or department. In a smaller organisation, people are most often judged on their performance and skills and their contribution to the organisation is more clearly visible. It should be so in large organisations, too, but is often not so; this is why large organisations will eventually become extinct.

Presumably, when we are no longer a minority, this discrimination will be less. Let us use our experience of it to understand and help overcome the problems encountered by other minority groups.

2. Housework and Child Care are Mainly the Woman’s Responsibility.

Be aware that you may rise to a heady position of power at work, but you will still be the one organising child care, chauffeuring children and being the ultimate source of blame if the household runs out of tomato sauce or toilet paper. This is not fair, of course.

Having an extra X instead of Y chromosome, and boobs qualifies us automatically as the best person to use a vacuum cleaner, washing machine and to change nappies. This is a scientific mystery and is also not fair.

The cost of child care is not considered a legitimate business expense although:

* over 50% of mothers work outside the home, many through economic necessity.
* these mothers cannot go to work (or attend seminars, lectures, or travel on business trips) without child care.
* motherhood, producing the next generation of taxpayers, is an economic necessity for Australia.

It also assures the continuity of the human race, not an insignificant role.

Lack of recognition of child care costs as a cost of doing business is not fair. Expect to spend more than half of your salary and make sure you get the best child care possible. Expect any subsidised or government assisted schemes to impose rules and timetables which do not provide the flexibility that leaders need. In general, the cheaper the child care, the less flexible in terms of starting and finishing time, day length, holidays and attention to particular needs of each child.

I have found that it is worth paying a lot, and having the reassurance that your child is well cared for, and there will not be a major drama if your meeting runs late, or you'll be away on a business trip during the holidays, or you must attend a breakfast seminar.

In summary, smile and do your 80% fair share of child care, housework; grit your teeth and smile when the politicians tell you how much they are doing for you and your family, and how they understand.

3. There is no Right Time in your Career to have a Baby.

Whenever you have your baby or babies, it is the wrong time in your career and the wrong time for your organisation.

It severely dents your credibility as a manager and more so, as a leader. It looks a lot like a leader deserting her team, and disregarding the principal objective of increasing shareholders’ returns. It can badly inconvenience co-workers, customers. Strategically it is not a wise career move - it is often perceived as a physical and mental weakness and creates an opportunity for ambitious underlings. Absence removes you from the day-to-day information and contacts necessary for proper leadership.
In spite of all of this, motherhood is a great privilege, an important and unique facet of humanity and life, and not be missed! SO DO IT!

Accept that this decision ties you in to years of compromises between work and family, over-commitments of time and energy and feeling tired....

In deciding to have a baby, a leader is still responsible for the organisation and its prime objective and for her team. She has the responsibility to reduce the impact of this decision on organisation and team by:

- not demanding maternity leave “rights” if they damage the organisation and disrupt the team.
- arranging for the organisation’s work to continue with minimal disruption. Part-time work, work from home, training a successor, continuing to see specific customers are examples of positive ways of damage reduction.

If you are good at your job, all is negotiable!

Be prepared for the difficulties:

- watching others doing your job, leading your group, even for a short time, is hard.
- colleagues, shareholders, superiors, customers, will all regard you with some suspicion and less seriously, before and after the birth of your baby.
- lack of sleep and extra duties will make you very tired, and it is hard to be positive when you are tired!
- expect your career to stall (at best) or go into reverse (more wisely) for several years, in spite of the best intentions of your organisation and yourself.

There is no easy answer to this problem. Enjoy your baby, your family and what work you can manage! Don’t get bitter and twisted when you see others do your job (or some of it) and make changes. Don’t let the tiredness sap your enjoyment of life, and your positive thinking. Recognise tiredness as the cause of many fears, problems and worries, then try to dismiss them.

Being a mother is an experience which changes your life forever, enriching and complicating it miraculously. It gives a basic and true perspective on being human. It keeps us from developing ego problems, keeps feet on the ground, and maintains our human perspective. In spite of the short-term difficulties of blending babies with leading organisations, the long-term benefits of the changed perspective and increased humanity of the leader, I believe, must benefit the team and the organisation.

**SUMMARY**

Women and women’s experiences have a lot to contribute to leadership of organisations, and achieving the objectives of organisations.

It is important that we consolidate the advances made for women, which have given us the opportunities as leaders and managers. The way to consolidate is to succeed, for example, to lead the company which gives a good return to its shareholders.

Successful leadership requires the creativity, problem solving and motivation of workers which comes from positive thinking. It is important that women do not get sidetracked by issues of unfairness, and protest, draining energy and resources from the more important goal of success. Danger lurks in some groups focusing on “women’s issues” where grievances and protests can stifle imagination and ideas. It’s very easy and dangerous to start believing your own propaganda. Better to keep feet on the ground, keep your sense of humour - look forward to greater successes.

Good luck, and have fun!
LECTURE FOUR

Powerful Partnerships

MS ISABELLE ADAMS
I wish to thank the Women in Leadership Management Committee for the invitation to be the guest lecturer tonight.

It is fitting in the International Year of Indigenous People for me to be speaking on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who will be included whenever I refer to Aboriginal women in the body of my talk.

In keeping with a tradition instigated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people this year, I would like to thank the Noongar people who are the original inhabitants of this area for the privilege of speaking on their country.

I also thank you all for giving your time and energy to attend this lecture and I hope it impacts on you in some positive way.

Since each of you will respond individually to the words that I speak, please remember that I am only the catalyst and the messenger, and that the feelings and energies which may be evoked inside of you are reflections of your own experiences, attitudes and beliefs, for which you have responsibility.

My purpose in this talk is to stimulate your thinking and response by calling the issues, as I perceive them, with regard to Powerful Partnerships and Aboriginal Women.

**INTRODUCTION**

Raine Eisler author of *The Chalice and the Blade* (1987) describes two basic types of societies - dominator or partnership.

"The dominator model", she says, 'is based on ranking, backed by fear or force. The partnership model is a way to structure human relationships based on linking, rather than force or fear.'

Eisler argues that 'if we are ever to have a truly pluralistic society, where people’s differences are freely expressed, celebrated and utilised for everyone’s benefit, it must begin with a partnership between women and men.' I agree with these perspectives put forward by Eisler and would add two more. One is that partnerships must also be between women themselves. And the other is that partnerships should be powerful in the sense that they are ‘effective and efficient in action’, and members in the partnership have the ‘ability or capacity to do something’. In essence, powerful partnerships between women themselves and between women and men, I believe, will assist the transformation of an imperfect world which is based on the domination of the male sex and its values and power, to a better world. This new world has a new reality, a new social order or paradigm where women and men of all groups share power and equality.

For this reason, the development of powerful partnerships with others is essential for the development of women as leaders in the 1990’s and beyond. This is also the situation for Aboriginal women.

However, the barriers that Aboriginal women face in developing powerful partnerships with others are multiple and are probably well known to many of you.

**BARRIERS FOR ABORIGINAL WOMEN**

Before I comment on some of these, let me set in context the situation of Aboriginal women and Aboriginal people generally in the Australian society.

It is well acknowledged that currently Australian society is based on what Eisler terms the ‘dominator model’. In this society Aboriginal people, more than any other group, are the ‘dominated’ group. How has this come about and what does it mean?
The domination of Aboriginal people has been achieved through what Sargent (1993) advocates is ‘victim socialisation’. Aborigines, since colonisation, have been treated as a subordinate group and have learnt through actual experiences how to be a people of inferior status and how to behave according to the expectations of them as Blacks.

Many Aborigines are constantly reminded, through their everyday experiences in Australian society that greater deference in Blacks, in comparison to Whites and other groups, is expected. This means that their appropriate behaviour is viewed to be passivity, resignation or giving in, readiness to wait and be snubbed, conciliation or compromise, and listening but not speaking.

Overall, Aborigines have been subjected to social control which seems based on two premises. One is that Aborigines should be defined as a subordinate and inferior group who need to be divided and oppressed or managed for the good of Australian society as a whole. The other is that Aboriginal individuals who do not conform to the norms established by the dominant White and other groups must be either made to conform or else be legitimately excluded so as to prevent their influence on others.

The present day indicators of this continual domination of Aboriginal culture and people by Whites and other groups are numerous. For example, Sargent contends there are generations of urban Aborigines who have grown up without knowing Aboriginal values and traditions, and who have been successfully indoctrinated to see the values of White and other Australians as superior to their own.

As well, as argued by Choo (1900), the dispossession of their land and their culture, together with years of long-term systemic structural oppression, cultural invasion, abuse, racism and degradation have resulted in Aboriginal people being the most deprived in Australian society. They emerge as the most disadvantaged group on a range of social indicators including health, housing, education, employment, income and criminal justice.

In comparison to their percentage of the total Australian population, ie less than 3%, Aboriginal people represent the greater percentage of social welfare recipients, unemployed, uneducated and incarcerated. A majority of Aboriginal people are impoverished both as individuals and as community members and still suffer a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness.

In her consultations with Aboriginal people, Choo found that their poverty has many dimensions which are spoken of in terms of:
- The loss of their children from their families and community.
- The resulting loss of identity, loss of spiritual and cultural heritage, and loss of contact with the land.
- The loss of dignity and self-respect through oppression over the years.
- The lack of access to a reliable supply of good clean water, food and other essential services in many Aboriginal communities.
- Alcoholism of Aboriginal people contributing to the incidence of physical and sexual abuse of children.
- The increasing incidence of sexually transmitted disease (STD) among their people, especially their children.
- The very poor health of the children which affects their long-term chances.
- The incarceration of their children in institutions and prisons.
- Chronic homelessness which affects the health and education of their children.
- The negative effects of all these on access to employment and income which keeps the communities and their children in poverty.

In addition to these indicators, Aboriginal people who are not impoverished and who meet the criteria set by the ‘mainstream’ culture, are viewed as not fitting the ‘image’ of an Aboriginal person and are ostracised as ‘deviants’. Any attempts by these people to express discontent with the status quo and to work for social change, either as individuals or a group, are thwarted and policies/procedures are adopted to enable them to be managed and controlled by the dominant groups.

This scenario of domination, which has existed for Aborigines over many generations, provides the background to and the reasons for the barriers that exist for Aboriginal women which can prevent them developing powerful partnerships among themselves and with others, both female and male.
Let us reflect briefly on the barriers which I consider to be the more significant ones. Each of these are interrelated and, in my opinion, are of equal significance. They are:

- Low recognition and value of Aboriginal women and their contribution to both Aboriginal and Australian society.
- Negative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours exhibited by Aboriginal women themselves and by others towards them.
- Systemic discrimination against Aboriginal women.

On the adult status ladder of Australian society, Aboriginal women are generally on the lowest rung. From my experience, the male gender is viewed to be more important on this ladder in order from the highest status of Anglo-Celtic, Ethnic, non-Aboriginal Black, and Aboriginal male.

The exceptions to this order, in my opinion, are males, from any group, who demonstrate more female traits and are generally excluded by their male peers. By this I don’t mean those who are homosexual only but rather those males, who may include homosexuals, who understand women, who recognise their value, and who don’t seek to dominate and control them. This group of males is usually on the bottom of the male gender section of the status ladder. The female gender occupies the rungs on the status ladder after the males and, again from my experience, are ranked in order of Anglo-Celtic, Ethnic, non-Aboriginal Black, and Aboriginal. For women, there are few exceptions to this order in Australian society.

Although there are hopeful signs of change, this situation of ranked status means that Aboriginal women’s talents, skills and competencies, which they constantly contribute, mostly without payment, to all areas of Aboriginal and Australian life in terms of health, education, family services and politics, are usually given low recognition and value within both contemporary Aboriginal and Australian society. This is in comparison to men and other groups of women. The results are that, generally, the contributions of Aboriginal women are ignored, taken for granted, or discounted as unimportant, and they, as people, are not afforded status and recognition.

The attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours exhibited by Aboriginal women themselves and by others towards them are, in my view, of major significance to the development of powerful partnerships for Aboriginal women. Currently, from my experience, they tend to be more negative than positive.

Many Aboriginal women have learnt well the lessons of being:

- Dominated by males and other groups of women.
- Second-class citizens in their own communities and country.
- Victims of their environment and the negative attitudes of Australian society.
- Powerless, helpless and disadvantaged.

On the whole, Aboriginal women seem to have a deep-seeded belief that they can’t and don’t deserve to be loved, happy, respected, independent, self-sufficient, successful and powerful.

This belief contributes to the attitude that they are unimportant, unintelligent, cannot become their own person, and do not have rights and entitlements.

In turn, this negative belief and attitude leads to inadequate self-esteem in Aboriginal women, which sometimes manifests itself in behaviours which include extreme leniency, passivity, malice, aggression, substance abuse, promiscuity, and negative manipulation of others.

The outcomes of such behaviour are that Aboriginal women will be perceived to, and will, fluctuate between being treated as everyone’s convenience, being used and abused both physically and sexually, being abusive themselves, being malicious and aggressive, being manipulative and dominating, and being manipulated and controlled by others.

The low status of Aboriginal women and the negative perceptions they have of themselves, and that others have of them, can be attributed in part to the systemic discrimination against them. This discrimination has no doubt emerged from the historical discrimination and domination of Aboriginal people as a whole group since colonisation, and, in my view, has been extended especially for Aboriginal women through the patriarchal nature of the colonial systems and their policies.
It is anthropologically acknowledged that before colonisation, traditional Aboriginal society demonstrated a practical balance of patriarchal and matriarchal influences, and was a society in which both women and men had relatively equal status and importance, even though they had differing roles.

The erosion of this status and importance for Aboriginal women began on the arrival of the first British colonists. This is when the practice of affording Aboriginal men higher status and importance, whether negative or positive, than Aboriginal women, was instigated.

This practice has continued and, over time, has been embedded in the structure of both Aboriginal and mainstream Australian society to the detriment of Aboriginal women throughout the generations. In effect, although perhaps not to the same degree as non-Aboriginal men, Aboriginal men have now established their patriarchal networks within both Aboriginal and Australian society.

These networks generally seek to exclude, manipulate and control Aboriginal women's participation and contribution not only to Aboriginal affairs but also to the affairs of mainstream Australian society.

This exclusion, manipulation and control of Aboriginal women by Aboriginal men has, in my opinion, been thoroughly executed at all levels of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society. It has resulted in the adoption and perpetuation of the strategy by non-Aboriginal male and female groups and in some instances, by Aboriginal women against other Aboriginal women.

This situation, which encompasses the significant barriers Aboriginal women face, is I'm sure you'll all agree, not conducive to the development of powerful partnerships between Aboriginal women and others. So how, you may ask, can the situation be changed for the better?

**STRATEGIES TO REMOVE BARRIERS**

It is my belief that there are three major strategies that will assist the removal of such barriers. They are:

- A change in the mindset of Aboriginal women in terms of how they think about themselves.
- The self-empowerment of Aboriginal women.
- The development of a critical mass of support among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women and men for the recognition and valuing of Aboriginal women and their issues.

A change in the mindset of Aboriginal women in terms of how they think about themselves is absolutely crucial. This means that Aboriginal women must be prepared to examine their negative attitudes and behaviours and the beliefs that underpin them. Then to eliminate them through whatever processes and means are appropriate for this purpose and are available to them.

Many of our negative beliefs about ourselves are embedded in our subconscious mind in the early childhood years, and sometimes we're not aware of their causes. It is important to clear our mind of these negative beliefs so positive ones can be put in to support our thinking about ourselves and others.

The self-empowerment of Aboriginal women means that they must be prepared to move beyond the oppression and victimisation of the past and into the dynamic action of the present and future. It means that they must ask themselves what are they doing with the freedom and power they do possess. Are they using it in a constructive way to help change their situation?

If Aboriginal Women want to be in power positions and to develop powerful partnerships, they must be prepared to reach within themselves to find the positive energy, courage and commitment needed and to be willing to 'go for it', regardless of mistakes and of the criticisms of others.

The development of a critical mass of support among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women and men for the recognition and valuing of Aboriginal women and their issues, in my view, has already started. It has been instigated by the efforts of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women from a diverse range of backgrounds and occupations. These women have tirelessly put in positive, constructive and assertive effort to advance the cause of Aboriginal women within the Aboriginal and mainstream Australian society.
POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL WOMEN

The implementation and successful outcomes of these strategies mean that the possible benefits of powerful partnerships with Aboriginal women are more likely to occur. Let me briefly describe why and how such benefits are possible in my view.

Many Aboriginal women have been or are victims of cultural deprivation, poverty or economic hardship, substance abuse, sexual and physical abuse, and domestic violence. Because they have experienced or are experiencing such demoralisation, Aboriginal women have the experience to become effective social activists and to demonstrate a more powerful assertion of activism with regard to these issues.

It is generally recognised that Aboriginal women are the stalwarts of Aboriginal society, despite the barriers they face, and that they usually have a major responsibility for their children and spouses, their relatives, the youth, the aged, and other members of their community. As such they develop a level of patience, perseverance and persistence that can be a model for others in terms of family and community issues.

Through their home responsibilities and their work Aboriginal women act as service deliverers, counsellors, supporters, interpreters, mediators, advocates, spokespersons and managers for their families and the larger Aboriginal community. Their liaison with their people is invaluable and helps to maintain and promote networks in the Aboriginal and mainstream communities.

Right across Australia, Aboriginal women live, work and maintain links with their people and communities at the grass roots level. As such, they are aware of the many issues concerning women and the critical needs of children, youth and the aged. They have the knowledge to identify social problems for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and to give suggestions on how to solve them.

Generally, Aboriginal women have an innate affinity with the environment and a sense of spirituality which is part of their indigenous ancestry. This allows them to be more intuitive and sensitive to the psychic vibrations that surround us. As well, Aboriginal women are more likely than other groups of women to accept and operate with a balance of female and male energies and traits. Consequently, in my opinion, they have the capacity to become effective healers of relationships between women and women, women and men, and even men and men.

CONCLUSION

In a world where people are yearning to create policies that are socially liberal and financially responsible, and programs which really empower people to become independent of government resources and handouts, powerful partnerships with Aboriginal women seem crucial.

They have obtained, often under pressure, and without support, life skills, competencies, knowledge, and experience in a relatively hostile ‘man’s world’. Others, both women and men, can link in with these positive strengths of Aboriginal women to develop a new social agenda that can help to transform Australian society for the benefit of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

When this occurs, the possibility of Australian society changing from being a ‘dominator’ to a ‘partnership’ society may become a reality. The challenge for all of us, as leaders in our own spheres, will be to contribute to, and participate in, the process that will achieve this outcome. This is the essence of powerful partnerships.

Thank you for your attention.
REFERENCES


LECTURE FIVE

Alone:
The Networks Do Not Fit

PROFESSOR FAY GALE
As educationalists we work in a culture in which the concept of women in leadership seems new. But we must remind ourselves that it is not really a new concept at all. After all, women throughout history, have managed families, have managed budgets, and have managed a number of community groups. Women have always been called upon for all the major dispute resolution processes in the family, the community and elsewhere. So, we are well aware that women have enormous leadership skills. They just do not happen to be recognised as leaders. They are told they are mediating or they are playing the “mother role”, their rightful place in society, rather than taking on enormously important leadership roles.

A colleague of mine, an anthropologist, Diane Bell, described the traditional woman’s role when she was working in the Northern Territory from a definition she was given by one of the men she was working with.

Ken: "Women should be feeders, breeders and follow-the-leaders. This has always been seen as a classic definition of what our role should be. So, when we talk about actually being leaders it is clearly a reversal of the accepted norm. The definition women should be feeders, breeders and follow the-leaders is very much a male societal inherited cultural bias that we have to live with.

If we consider leadership as a function of merit then we quite clearly should have fifty-fifty males-females in every role, because we know that intelligence has nothing whatsoever to do with gender. And yet we obviously are nowhere near achieving this balance.

Figure 1. (see appendix) shows the proportion of women in the various levels in universities in Australia. We are all pretty familiar with these figures: at the senior levels, women form a small percentage and, at the junior levels, they form just what they should do: fifty-fifty. But only at the very junior levels.

We can see a very gradual change and we hear a lot of boasting about improvement in women’s representation, but the improvement is relatively small when we look at it over a period of time. We are still a long way off getting to what any of us would consider as reasonable until we get to that fifty-fifty position.

I use the university situation because that is the one I know best and it is often a reflection of wider society. If we cannot manage to do it in what we consider to be an enlightened, intelligent and, as they keep saying, totally unprejudiced environment, then it is very hard to expect anyone else in our society to do it.

We have been told, and certainly I have been told every time I have tried to do something different, that it is only a matter of time. Well, there has been not much change in thirty years. There has been some change, but there is pretty clear evidence that the improvement of the position of women is now plateauing out and that indeed there is considerable resistance growing to it.

Universities now say they appoint entirely on merit because they use selection criteria, but I think we have to get further than that to understand what “merit” means and how we arrive at our selection criteria. Inevitably, while they are determined by the past, by the traditions of the past and by virtually all-male appointments committees, as indeed they must be in our system because of the numbers game, then the selection criteria themselves will not be right and nor will the system that brings people in. The selection criteria continue to be based on historic values and historic methods.

Every time it is argued that we appoint only on merit, but, as I have pointed out, if this were the case we would have fifty-fifty males and females in all of the senior areas. The concept that we appoint only on merit, which we hear over and over again, is clearly a subjective, culturally weighted concept. Merit is a subjective concept. It is not really measurable in any objective way, in spite of the fact that we like to think it is, and I think one of the things that most taxes me is how can we redefine merit in a way which is much more objective? It is inevitably patriachally defined and it is inevitably historically defined, because these are the only measures we have and they are the only ways that society has ever dealt with merit.

We have to come at new ways of defining merit, as we will never get away from the argument that we must appoint on merit. I think that one of the problems about this, and one women particularly face, is the
problem of networks. It is the people who are in the network who define what merit is. If we look at the process of staff selection, we see we rely heavily on referees' reports or assessors' reports. So it is defining who is in that network, who will be included as assessors or referees, which makes the difference. By and large, women applicants are not in those networks and do not get assessors who will speak for them. So we have a real problem with the very gender-based nature of the academic networks. Unfortunately, this is also true in many other areas.

An American colleague of mine said, when she became the President of an American college, “I can still remember, as a Deputy Chair of the Department, the Chairman saying to me, about an appointment that we were pursuing, ‘Oh, please don’t appoint a woman. They make such difficult colleagues.’ When I began to laugh, he said that thing which I am sure you have had said to you: ‘Oh, don’t worry, I don’t think of you as a woman’.”

When she said this, I remembered a situation not so long ago when I was Head of Department. I was chairing a meeting where we were appointing a member of staff. There happened to be an exceptionally good woman applicant whom I had encouraged to apply. On the basis of the selection criteria this woman was clearly ahead of the male applicants. I sat in this room with all men on the staff and I pointed out the superiority of the woman, at which one of the men said “We have got too many **** women in this place now”.

This is the sort of battle that is very hard to fight and it is very difficult to win any long-term gains. But periodically I do get cheered up and think things are getting better, albeit slowly.

One of my role models is a woman called Ellen Semple. She was a geographer, and as a student I read her life history and was enormously impressed. Ellen Semple died before I was born. She was born in 1863 and she went to Vassar College, a women’s college in the States. When she graduated she had read the works of a German geographer called Ratzel who was a professor at Leipzig and she was determined that she wanted to go and study with him. So she learnt German, went to Germany and studied at Leipzig. It so happened that at that university, along with all other universities of the time, except for the women’s colleges, women were not allowed in. Ellen Semple was not even allowed into the lecture theatre because she was a woman. Ratzel, most impressed with the doggedness of this woman who would cross the Atlantic, learn German and come to an all male university having been told she was not allowed to apply, left the door ajar and Ellen Semple sat outside in the passage and listened to the lectures.

The geography being taught depended on what went up on the board, which Semple could not see from her seat in the passage. At the end of the course she was not allowed to sit the exam because she was never officially enrolled. However Ratzel let her sit the exam anyway, and, it is reported that unofficially, she topped all 500 boys in the class. She could not, however, take out a degree.

She went back to the States and applied for a number of jobs, none of which she got. She was invited to give lectures and she became one of the most popular geographers of the time, having an enormous influence on the whole philosophy of the discipline in North America and later in the United Kingdom. She was offered her first job at age fifty-eight in a small private university. She died two years later.

This story is, of course, history, but it echoes into the present. In my generation, I remember two science students, a male and a female. She topped the year in third year and got the medal, he came second. He is now professor and she is a laboratory technician. This is the kind of history that we have come to accept as part of women’s role.

There is a saying that you will have heard quite often “Behind every successful woman is a man trying to hold her back”. We know the kinds of cultural problems that we face. There is a prevailing view that women get promoted on their female advantages or their female wiles. I quite often get letters from people in the community that are not terribly flattering. They are from men and they even sign their names, which staggers me. I was talking to my daughter about it at the weekend, and I actually showed her some of these letters which I usually throw in the bin. She said: “Mum, you should keep these. One day I would like to publish them because I don’t think people will realise what you go through. They won’t understand it”.

I will read you a bit of this letter. It happens to be related to promotion of women.
"Your actions, and the statement that you will give women more promotions smacks of racism and unprofessional conduct. You mean that the women staff at UWA do not have the credentials to be promoted or are unwilling to apply for promotion, so now you decree that they will be given preferential treatment. Why should one group of individuals be given preferential treatment because of their inability to compete effectively in the marketplace? You reached your position of VC on your own merits - or did you indeed? As a graduate of UWA I was once willing to represent it as one of the finest Universities in Australia. That is no longer the case, for me. Back off totally before you destroy it."

Appointments to senior academic positions in the University go through extensive search procedures. We do advertise, but the real work is done via the search procedure. But a search procedure inevitably results in men coming up because search means going through the networks and the networks have got to be, because of their historic nature, male networks. Then, because women seldom turn up on the male networks, selection panels will always sit around the table and say: "There are no suitably qualified women". The very nature of what we call a search procedure must lead through the networks that exist and these networks will seldom include women.

There are many reasons for this. Women tend to lack international referees as they have not been so mobile because they have been tied to family responsibilities. Of course, family responsibilities does not mean family at all. Family responsibilities means mother's and women's responsibilities. Only very rarely do we actually mean "family", though that is the term we always use. Women are rarely as mobile as men: women usually follow their husbands on their career route around the world, but men rarely follow their wives.

International referees are essential for most of these positions and publications in international journals are considered to be absolutely essential. But you do not get to publish in an international journal unless you have been with the editors and socialised with them, because publishing is also based on knowing people and knowing how the system works.

For all these reasons, women are very limited in developing the sort of networks that are needed. So many of the things that develop networks are the drinks after work, the weekend on the golf course, the kind of extracurricular activities that mothers cannot engage in. I used to feel enormously frustrated by this when I always had to go home to young children and my male colleagues went off for a drink, knowing quite well that that was where most of the real action took place and that was where careers were often determined.

Modern communication has made the male networks even stronger. Email and fax machines have made it easier to develop networks and to maintain them, and unless women are plugged in electronically it will be more difficult for us to break in. The world is getting tougher. Some of that increasing toughness is of our own making because we have often not pushed ourselves as we might. But some of it is not of our own making. The faster the increase in technology, the more difficult it will be for women, because if you take ten years out to have kids, like I did, it is harder to get back when technology is changing rapidly than it is when it is moving slowly. So the problems women face in breaking into these male networks are enormous. We must realise how essential these networks are and how they prevent the merit principle from being as objective as we would like it to be.

You may have read recently about Oxford University's attempt to create fifteen associate professorships for women. The University had declared that it was about to create fifteen new promotional positions of professor which led to an enormous uproar on campus. Many women argued that if they were to create fifteen new positions, as there were no women at the senior levels, inevitably they would be filled by fifteen men and that would mean another decade of blocking. After a great deal of protests, the women managed to have the fifteen new professorships cancelled and fifteen associate professorships introduced instead, believing there was more chance to get women in at that level than there was at the senior level.

Hannah Holben-Gray has just retired as President of the University of Chicago, and was one of the earliest women to be appointed as a President. Hannah Gray said:

"When I arrived at Harvard it was the first year that women were allowed to sit in the main reading room in the Widener Library. Throughout my entire time at Harvard, first as a student, and later as
a member of the faculty, I was not able to enter the undergraduate Lamont Library and I was not allowed to look at the reserve books, on my own reserve bookshelf, because only men were allowed to enter the Lamont Library... Women were not meant to go in through the front door of the faculty club. My department, when I was a faculty member, met in the club so I adopted the expedient of going through the front door when I was going to a department meeting - nobody ever dared to make a scene about this - and the rest of the time I would go in through the back door.”

I think we have to look at what going through the back door has meant. We need to work out ways whereby we can always go through the front door. I think that is probably the biggest struggle for us.

By the way, the American Presidents of Universities and Colleges in the States have just had a meeting of women presidents because they now have sufficient numbers to actually conduct such a meeting. They invited me, but unfortunately I could not go. I understand it was a very exciting occasion, because, for the first time, women presidents had almost reached a critical mass. It is not a big number, but it is bigger than ones or twos, and it is certainly bigger than anything we see elsewhere.

In respect of general academic appointments in the States, numbers of women rose relatively steeply in the seventies and early eighties, then plateaued out and are now starting to decline. I think Australia will soon be facing the same situation. We have plateaued and I think we could well be facing a decline. Facing a decline because jobs become more difficult, facing a decline because the University sector has reached a point of final growth. Indeed, as I have been told regularly over the last few weeks, there will be no more growth. Once you get to that stage and you get more competition, you get less chance for women to be appointed.

Of course, women do talk about networks a lot. But, I believe, the kinds of networks that we as women develop are supportive networks, friendship networks, people to unburden ourselves to. These are not necessarily the kind of networks that progress us in a professional sense. In fact, I think they are often counterproductive. Friendship networks are not the kind that give you information. I believe the information we need is passed around in the kind of network that our women’s networks just do not produce. Women’s networks do not give access to the knowledge, they do not give access to the introductions to the people who edit the journals or who invite keynote speakers or who pays for fares to go to conferences or any of those kinds of things. They tend often to be more of the friendship, support networks which we need, but which, because there are so few women around, do not have the knowledge base needed to get on. We can see the importance of networks to men, but women are actually producing networks which are counterproductive, not in an emotional sense, but in a professional sense.

The problem is that women actually need male networks. We need the kinds of networks that give us the information, the knowledge networks. But plugging into these male networks leaves no time for any other networks. I think that this is partly a problem that women face. It is impossible when you have young children. Then as they grow more independent there is a gap and it is necessary to go all out to catch up to the males, to work double speed.

We understand that knowledge is power, we know that we have to break into those kinds of knowledge roles, we know that those networks are very strong and entry to them is very tightly controlled, as tightly controlled as any club ever was.

It is a difficult kind of problem. I have talked about being alone, and I believe that often you cannot afford to have the comfortable friendships. You really have to break through into another type of network analysis because we can be so often hoodwinked that the sort of knowledge that we get from our female friends is good. Well, it may be good, but it is not the sort of knowledge that gives us the broad spectrum and the broad networks that we need to make real changes for women.

I have enormous confidence in women’s ability to make these changes. All of the areas that are now talked about in management: enterprise bargaining, conflict resolution, lean management structures, teamwork, all the kinds of things that are in staff development manuals, all of this is really looking at training men to have the skills that women already have.
It seems to me that, even in economic terms, we are wasting an enormous amount of time on arguments about developing skills for men when women have already developed them. You cannot help but be fairly good at conflict resolution if you have brought up kids. It may not be the classic textbook way of learning it but you sure learn it.

There are a number of these sorts of things that make me sad to think that we have so many women of ability in the community already trained, maybe not having degrees in conflict resolution or enterprise bargaining or industrial management or other things, but who already have the skills, whilst we are now spending money on training men to have those skills because the industrial scene has changed dramatically.

We also know that women are stronger, fitter and live longer than men. We have a longer life-span, we can afford to take time out to have children then return to the work-force and we will still have more energy than men of the equivalent age. Simply because, physiologically, women are stronger and do live longer. We know that we are not getting the best leadership, even in rational terms, until we have at least a fifty-fifty proportion of men and women. At the University of Western Australia, in the faculties where entry is very competitive, such as Medicine and Law, just as many girls as boys gain entry. On straight intelligence, women often do marginally better. We must recognise therefore that in the senior levels we are not using the best brains in the country. This is a tragic waste of our most important resource: people. We must break through the traditional and powerful historic networks that the men have developed over time.

Unless we join the kinds of networks that are going to help us succeed, then we are not doing the right thing for Australia and we are not doing the right thing for the world. We must change the way we define merit by bringing more women into the selection process, by providing women with the opportunities to break through the existing structural and cultural barriers and join the race as equal partners with men. Only in this way will we be able to realise the full potential of our human resource, and best serve the interests of our nation.

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Female Academics Higher Education Series Report No 18, August 1993, Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Figure 1: Proportion of Academic Staff Who Are Female by Current Duties Level, 1988-1992
LECTURE SIX

Equity and Enterprise Bargaining

MS JENNIE GEORGE
**Enterprise bargaining is now a part of Australia’s formal industrial relations framework. The system involves negotiations between employers and unions of industrial agreements which are intended to achieve productivity and efficiency improvement in return for wage increase and other benefits.**

Many commentators who deal with the impact of enterprise bargaining on women workers, warn of the dangers of decentralising bargaining to the enterprise level. They point out, quite correctly, that women in Australia have done far better under a centralised system of wage fixing than, for example, women in America and Japan. And, in our own region, data from contracts drawn up under the New Zealand, Employment Contracts Act, point to a widening of the wages’ gap as a result of the shift to a deregulated system.

The ACTU and the unions campaigned against the Coalition’s industrial relations policy at the last election because we were extremely concerned about the impact of deregulation of the labour market and the wages’ system on working people, and women in particular.

However, we need to bear in mind that the system of Enterprise Bargaining that now exists is fundamentally different to other models, in that the system will continue, under the present Federal Government:

- To be underpinned by Awards.
- To provide access to conciliation and arbitration.
- To secure wage increases at the enterprise level.
- To be supported by legislative provisions which will strengthen the right to equal pay.

In order for women to be protected and to gain benefits from Enterprise Bargaining, it is necessary to take into account their different patterns of labour force participation, employment status, pay and conditions and their level of involvement in unions and in the bargaining process.

**PARTICULAR FEATURES OF WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT**

- Women represent 32% of all full-time workers and 76% of all part-time workers. It is necessary to take into account the possibility that the interests and priorities of full-time workers may take precedence over those of part-time, casual and contract workers.
- Women in general are located in industry sectors (such as retail and clerical) that traditionally have displayed less industrial bargaining power, and within enterprises women are often occupationally segregated.
- Pay inequity, particularly in the overaward area means that women begin from a more unequal position, both in regard to earnings and work related benefits.
- Women are less represented than men in unions, both as officials and members.
- Women’s family responsibilities will often inhibit them from attending union meetings, consultative and negotiating forums - so often they lack adequate negotiating experience.
- Women employed in public sector areas such as health/education, in the personal services sector and in small business, will find it more difficult to access wage increases based upon traditional productivity measures, such as measurable outputs.
- The employers’ attraction to the idea of ‘labour flexibility’ could result in long term structural disadvantages for women. Greater ‘flexibility’ in the deployment of human resources, commonly referred to as ‘numerical flexibility’ could entrench a dual labour market. That is, a core labour force employed on a permanent and secure basis supplemented, as and when required, by a casual, temporary, part-time or contract labour force, dominated, of course, by women and other disadvantaged groups.
The challenge then, for all parties involved, is to develop strategies which recognise these factors, so that the potentially adverse effects on women workers are minimised. At the same time, it is necessary to think creatively and to use Enterprise Bargaining as a means of redressing pay inequity and giving due recognition to issues of particular importance to women, such as a better integration of work and family life.

I would like, now, to turn to the strategies being pursued by the ACTU at the 'institutional' level which we hope will both protect and enhance women's prospects under Enterprise Bargaining.

**ACTU STRATEGIES**

- Enterprise Bargaining will be underpinned by the Award system which has been the major vehicle for reducing pay inequity, particularly in the period of Award Restructuring, through such mechanisms as Minimum Rates Adjustments, the introduction of skill-based career paths, and the re-evaluation of women's skills.
- The success of the award system in progressing pay equity can be seen in the chart below.

**AVERAGE WEEKLY AWARD RATES OF PAY**

**RATIO OF MALE AND FEMALE AWARDS 1977 TO 1992**

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- There has also been an improvement in female average weekly after tax earnings (AWATE) relative to males, especially since the late 1980's.
- Unions will continue to have access to conciliation and arbitration in the Award area and this will continue to be the vehicle for test cases such as occurred with maternity and parental leave.
- Productivity improvements need to be broadly defined as in the Federal Australian Public Service Agreement. It is not just a question of focusing on output and cost indicators, but in many areas of women's employment, human resource indicators (such as safety performance, labour turnover) and quality indicators (customer satisfaction) should be the appropriate benchmarks.

- Recognising the difficulties of enterprise bargaining in some sectors, unions will attempt to negotiate industry-wide framework agreements eg. in contract cleaning, and in other areas such as education, attempt to negotiate a national framework which would then be implemented by State jurisdictions. The impossibility of bargaining on a school by school or hospital by hospital basis is evident and clearly inequitable. So, in these sectors, the system of 'paid rates awards' will continue to have pre-eminence in wage movements.
- The 'no disadvantage' test for Enterprise Agreements will remain in force, which ensures that award wages and conditions are not undermined and benefits like maternity/parental leave are not traded off.
- Part of our overall strategy recognises the need for "safety net" adjustments by arbitration for all workers who are unable to secure wage increases through direct workplace bargaining.
• The ACTU supports the recent amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act (January 13, 1993) which allow for the lodging of individual and union complaints of discrimination (both direct/indirect) in new awards and Enterprise Agreements.

• In the recent period we have obtained Government commitment to legislate for a range of conditions drawing on International Labour Organisation Conventions, in the following areas:
  • Minimum award wages through the use of common rule (where workers do not have access to compulsory arbitration).
  • Equal pay for work of equal value.
  • Protection against unfair dismissal.
  • Unpaid parental leave in accordance with the existing standard.

These strategies will have positive ramifications for women in the workforce, particularly in States like Victoria, where the State Award system has been abolished, as has access to a compulsory arbitration.

According to the Victorian Commissioner for Equal Opportunity the number of “inquiries and complaints about employment-related discrimination has gone up ‘significantly’ in that State - by 40% in 12 months.”

According to Ms Raynor:

"Some of the enquiries showed that some did not understand the concept of freedom of contract.... Other workers called to complain, variously, that they had been threatened with dismissal if they nominated their union as their bargaining agent (an offence under the Employee Relations Act) or for inviting union representatives to visit the workplace to discuss the negotiation process, or that they were simply handed employment contracts with terms that they considered to be far below their current conditions, and invited to accept them or accept dismissal. We received many calls from workers who had enjoyed shift or weekend work that suited their family responsibilities, but were now required to work at any time, including over school and Christmas holidays and we have received several complaints of indirect discrimination from such workers, most of them women. We received many calls from distressed and confused people."

Furthermore, according to M. Raynor:

"...77% of employment complaints were made by women. 40% of complaints against employment bodies were made by women. 91% of complaints of victimisation were made by women. About 30% of the complaints were about actual or threatened dismissal or refusal to employ someone, mostly (about 80%) made by people who described themselves as “Australian” - which probably means no more than that non-English speaking people (NESB) and migrant or Aboriginal Victorians do not complain, not that they are free from discrimination at work."

The changes relating to equal pay are significant and another milestone in our long campaign for justice and pay equity. In summary these changes, (if accepted by Parliament) will mean:

• A requirement for the Commission to perform its functions “in a way which eliminates or avoids discrimination on the basis of sex and race in the areas of pay and opportunities at the workplace”.

• The Commission will be able to make orders to ensure the application of equal pay for work of equal value as per the ILO Convention.

• For the first time this will include reference to overaward payments.

• Individuals will be able to make applications.

The powers of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission will be significantly enhanced in dealing with complaints about the discriminatory operation of an Award, agreement or overaward/benefit. This is particularly important in the area of overawards, where the gender gap is still substantial, as the chart indicates.

The ACTU is developing its own Enterprise Agreement database in order to monitor enterprise bargaining. Quarterly reports to affiliates will focus on movements
in wages, but will also provide a thematic analysis report. This database will be unique, to the extent that in addition to overall workers covered in agreements, a gender component will be added. There will be two approaches to analysis. Weighted mean wage rises will be presented by gender, and agreements will be grouped into "mainly men" "mainly women" and "mixed". This will enable comparisons between these three groups to be undertaken and will assist the ACTU, unions and interested groups to be well alerted to developing trends. It will also allow for public statements to be based on hard evidence rather than what is often untested generalisations.

**WOMEN AT THE ENTERPRISE LEVEL**

Alongside these strategies, the ACTU is encouraging all unions to use the opportunities available in Enterprise Bargaining to address inequities and to introduce policies of particular value to women workers. It is through the Enterprise Bargaining process that policies integrating work and family life have been given a much needed impetus. Issues such as parental leave, career breaks, special family leave, child care and permanent part-time work are being picked up in many sectors, especially in major finance sector agreements. The ACTU has produced a resource document comprising "best practice" in this area.

The Trade Union Training Authority is running courses on Enterprise Bargaining and is incorporating issues of concern to women workers as well as providing courses in negotiation and advocacy. Their training packages on consultative committees, job design/work organisation and workplace bargaining are widely used.

As indicated earlier, the new provisions in the Sex Discrimination Act provides an opportunity to challenge discriminatory provisions in enterprise agreements, and the powers of the Commission are likely to be strengthened in this regard in the near future. But the provisions of the Affirmative Action Act can also be used in a way which ensures that discrimination does not occur at the point of negotiation. The vast majority of employers are now meeting the legislative requirement to report on their affirmative action programs. However, to date, there has been little evidence that affirmative action programs are being linked either to award restructuring or to enterprise bargaining.

Issues that are raised in the context of affirmative action, such as the concentration of women in certain occupations and classifications and their access to training and career paths which would bring higher remuneration, cannot be adequately addressed unless changes are made to employment practices at the enterprise level.

In most cases, unfortunately, affirmative action programs continue to be managed in isolation from the structures established for enterprise bargaining and the people involved in the implementation of the program are too often unaware of the issues or processes of industrial negotiation, or indeed what the links might be with affirmative action. It will clearly be in the interests of women to link affirmative action consultation with the enterprise bargaining process. As long as they remain separate, the objectives of neither will be adequately met.

The ACTU Women's Committee plays a very active role in terms of policy development and assessing the effects of wages policy on women and I have appended an Equity and Enterprise Bargaining checklist prepared by the Committee containing practical proposals and measures that need to be considered in the process of Enterprise Bargaining. (See Appendices 1 and 2).

I want to conclude by saying that the ACTU recognises some of the inherent difficulties for women in the new industrial relations system of Enterprise Bargaining, but also some positive gains that can be and are being made. The outcomes depend a great deal on the level of awareness about these issues of unions and their officials. It is true that women continue to be under-represented at all levels of the union movement, but change is occurring, and it is change for the better. At our recent Congress, for example, a rule change was adopted which will ensure 50% female representation on the ACTU Executive by 1999. There are few other significant bodies or parties that can point to similar success.

The ACTU strategies that I have outlined today, I believe, are a testimony to the fact that women's interests are not being overlooked as we move to a more devolved system of wage fixing. And I can assure you that the Women's Committee, which was instrumental in incorporating a gender component in our database on Enterprise Agreements, will be extremely vigilant in monitoring outcomes, and in recommending appropriate policy and strategies to defend and extend the interests of working women.
Appendix 1

EQUITY AND ENTERPRISE BARGAINING CHECKLIST
SUGGESTIONS FROM ACTU WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

GETTING PREPARED

- Ensure women are involved when the union consults members.
- Call meetings for times women can attend. Make sure part-timers and shift workers are included.
- Consider teleconferencing for workers in remote areas.
- Find out where women work and what their problems are.
- Ask members about their work and family responsibilities. See if there are claims to be included as a result.
- Raise with members the particular problems faced by women, eg. unequal access to training, overtime, discrimination. Make sure the claim addresses these.
- Talk about work organisation, career paths, discuss the undervaluing of women’s skills.
- Make a commitment to members that equity issues will be included in the union’s claim.
- Make sure union communications are in plain English and also translated into other appropriate languages.

WHAT IS IN THE CLAIM

- Proposals to change work organisation are a chance to develop careers for women and break down the ‘ghettos’ of women’s work.
- The claim can include some flexibilities of value to women, such as access to flexitime, permanent part-time work, different working patterns. But be careful not build in ‘flexibilities’ which in fact limit women’s access.
- Most women work in service occupations where productivity measurement is difficult. The following issues may be relevant productivity initiatives which may assist women workers:
  - Redesigning of work practices to ensure better use of skills.
  - Reduction of supervision.
  - Eliminating discrimination in access to jobs, promotions, training, information.
  - Implementing affirmative action programs.
  - Providing jobs with more variety and training.
  - Redesign of heavy or repetitive work.
  - Greater team work.
  - Better dispute and grievance processes.
  - Improving quality in service.
  - Increasing occupational health and safety and decreasing workplace accidents.
  - Updating technology.
- Productivity measurement should not be at an individual level. Measure total output of the team or organisation if measuring at all.
- Do not trade off conditions which make it possible for women to work eg.:
  - Maternity and special leave.
  - Penalty rates.
  - Child care.
  - Hours which are predictable and meet family needs.
- Include benefits for workers with family responsibilities eg. leave to care for sick dependants.
- Formalise informal arrangements and practices of benefit to workers.
• When developing competency standards, appropriately value women’s skills which often hold the job together eg. communications, team work, co-ordination, juggling several tasks, etc.
• Look at reclassifications, aligning Over Award payments and other benefits to eliminate pay differentials.
• Pay increases should change the base rate, not be by way of “one-off” or discretionary allowances.
• Increases should apply to all workers in the organisation eg. clerical as well as production.
• Consider flat dollar increases which help lower paid workers.
• Build in a training program for all employees.
• Do not build in unnecessary qualifications requirements.

THE NEGOTIATIONS
• Before negotiations start, get agreement on:
  - Paid time for negotiations, and for negotiators to prepare.
  - Paid time for training negotiators.
  - Paid time for report back.
  - Meetings at times women can attend.
  - Child care if meetings are after hours.
• Include women and representatives of all workplace groups in the Single Bargaining Unit.
• Report back regularly to all members, and ensure the proposal can be modified in response to feedback.
• Vary meeting times and locations to include women. If necessary, provide reports in other languages.
• Have women conduct some of the meetings.
• Make sure there is time to consider and discuss information, prior to voting.

IS IT A GOOD DEAL?
• Don’t treat the benefits for women as peripheral or expendable.
• Measure your result against your claim.
• Be sure that the benefits are equally available to all workers.
• Have you improved the jobs/training/career paths for women?
• Is there recognition of the needs of workers with families?
Appendix 2

WORK AND FAMILY ISSUES - GUIDELINES FOR ENTERPRISE BARGAINING UNION CHECKLIST

MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVE
• Ensure that the parental leave standard is included in any agreement or award. Ensure distribution of information on parental leave to employees.
• Ensure that the option of permanent part-time work is available for employees after maternity or parental leave. Introduce maternity/parental leave networks, counselling etc and ensure there is a maternity/parental leave policy in the enterprise’s superannuation scheme(s). Where possible, negotiate a period of paid maternity and paternity leave.

CAREER BREAKS/EXTENDED LEAVE
• Ensure there is provision for extended leave or career breaks.

SPECIAL FAMILY LEAVE
• Ensure there is a provision for leave or time off for family reasons eg to care for a sick child.

CHILD CARE
Investigate the child care needs of employees. Establish an appropriate form for employer supported child care either on behalf of the enterprise, or as a joint venture with other employers eg:
• Single employer child care centre
• Joint venture child care centre
• Purchase of places in existing centre
• Provision of land for child care centre
• Sponsorship of family day care scheme
• Provision of out of school care
• Vacation care scheme
• Child care referral service
• Contribution to employees’ child care fees

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS
• Ensure that there is a provision for permanent part-time work for those employees who need it, and reduce or eliminate casual part-time work, as per ACTU guidelines.
• Introduce a provision for job sharing if appropriate, provide maximum flexibility in the employee’s choice of working hours, rosters or shifts.

WORKING FROM HOME
• Introduce a ‘working from home’ provision if appropriate.

OTHER OPTIONS
Introduce an affirmative action clause. Introduce a ‘relocation’ policy if appropriate. Develop educational and other programs to meet the needs of workers with family responsibilities.
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