

The year in review

Communities

KEY OUTCOME

Safe, inclusive, participatory and economically developed communities in which women are full and equal participants.

| CHALLENGE | ACHIEVEMENT | STRATEGY 03/04 |
|--|---|---|
| To encourage regional NSW women to participate in the information age. | Increased awareness of IT issues and small business potential with women in regional NSW through the <i>IT is a Woman's World</i> round table forum with over 80 participants, and wider broadcast audience. | Community Technology Centres all indicated that they would like to run the event again, and will continue to build relationships with the women who participated. |
| To address the under-representation of women in IT. | Conducted a pilot study in association with two co-operating public sector agencies and supported E-Summer schools targeting over 100 girls. | Continue to fund an IT component of E Summer Schools and IT Women of the Future Award |
| To address wide-ranging issues of concern to women. | The Women's Grants Program distributed \$1 million to community-based organisations. | Continue to fund projects that strengthen women's equity, access and participation in their communities. |
| To address issues of isolation and lack of opportunities for women in disadvantaged communities. | Consulted with service providers and identified networks, partnerships and strategies to support women's community leadership | Develop, document and deliver effective strategies, interventions and resources to support women's community leadership, using existing structures, partnerships and resources. |
| To provide personal development and career choice support to girls in high school. | Targetting over 2,000 girls and linking them to local mentors. | Build on the <i>Girl \$avvy</i> Program with support from private/public partnerships. |
| To increase the number of women nominating for the 2004 NSW local government elections. | Launched the <i>Hands Up for Women in Council</i> information kit for newly elected councillors, established the 2004 Local Government Election Campaign Group, evaluated the <i>10 Point Plan for Supporting Women Councillors in NSW</i> and prepared for further roll out of the initiative. | The campaign group will encourage the development of local strategies to facilitate an increase in women's nominations for election. |
| To better understand the contexts and drivers of existing strategies to increase women's workplace participation and progress. | Conducted case-study research in leading Australian organisations. | Distribute research findings to public and private sector organisations to inform future strategies. Hold seminars. |

The year in review

Services

KEY OUTCOME

Ensure services are appropriate to women and girls.

| CHALLENGE | ACHIEVEMENT | STRATEGY 03/04 |
|--|---|---|
| To identify key issues for NSW women in small business. | <i>Published Women in NSW – a statistical profile</i> , hosted by the <i>Women in Small Business</i> round table and completed research into their information needs. | Community Technology Centres all indicated that they would like to run the event again, and will continue to build relationships with the women who participated. |
| To address the status and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. | Established the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Unit and completed the first draft of the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Plan</i> . | Deliver on the plan by implementing partnerships, strategy, camps and leadership programs in more than 12 communities. |
| To build capacity and improve outcomes through collaborative partnerships. | Undertook <i>Women on Wheels 2</i> | Build on networks established by <i>Women on Wheels 2</i> to develop partnerships in the North Coast and the New England region. |
| To identify women's needs and preferences for the delivery of government information. | Researched and published the <i>Women's Information Needs</i> study. | Continue to promote the findings to the NSW Government and community sectors. |
| To identify the range and scope of Government services and policies for women and girls. | Publication of the NSW Government Action Plan for Women 2002–2004 | Review the range of Government services and policies and work with agencies to improve services for women and girls. |



The year in review

Research & policy development

KEY OUTCOME

Develop learning communities by using an evidence based approach to policy research and evaluation.

| CHALLENGE | ACHIEVEMENT | STRATEGY 03/04 |
|--|--|---|
| To develop a more integrated and coordinated pool of knowledge on domestic violence. | Initiated the <i>Knowledge Pools – Domestic Violence</i> project. | Use the project as a model of an electronic forum in development of a public sector electronic community. |
| To identify issues faced by women in unpaid roles in the community. | Release findings on research into women in formal volunteering roles. | Use the research to direct policy and intervention programs. |
| To effectively communicate the range of government services available to carers, most of whom are women. | Initiated the <i>Reaching Isolated Carers Linkage</i> project. | Produce a research report in December 2003. |
| To improve the balance between employees' work and home commitments in industries that operate around the clock. | Produced guidelines for the female dominated area of residential care. | Promote the guidelines to the aged care industry and other industries that operate around the clock. |
| To provide a comprehensive picture of the status of women in key areas. | Released two profiles on health and education, and training and transition to work. | Develop a profile of women and work. |
| To demonstrate the effectiveness of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity initiatives. | Carried out interviews ranging from chief executive officers to those women intended to benefit from these strategies. | Promote the findings in the public and private sectors. |



The year in review

Organisational excellence

KEY OUTCOME

An efficient, effective and fiscally responsible department.

| CHALLENGE | ACHIEVEMENT | STRATEGY 03/04 |
|--|--|---|
| To establish best practice human resource standards and processes. | Started development of competency standards. | Use the standards to guide personal development plans and career development. |
| To establish an information base to facilitate employee selection, career development and training. | Started development of an integrated set of job profiles. | Use the profiles to facilitate employee selection, career development and training. |
| To achieve a safe and healthy workplace. | Trained first aid officers, established emergency evacuation procedures, and reviewed work station design. | Continue to ensure a safe and healthy workplace. |
| To ensure compliance with the <i>State Records Act 1998</i> . | Started a comprehensive review of records. | Continue to ensure compliance with record keeping procedures. |
| To meet agreed response timeframes for services to the Minister and other government agencies as well as general correspondence. | Carried out 83.6% of these services within agreed timeframes. | Continue to carry out services within agreed timeframes. |



KEY OUTCOME

Safe, inclusive, participatory and economically developed communities in which women are full and equal participants.

The department consults widely with communities across NSW to develop strategies that address local issues and needs. This consultation resulted in several published action plans and two major partnership projects with Aboriginal communities.

Training was supported in areas ranging from information technology, small business management and board and committee membership skills, to equity programs such as the increasingly successful *Girl\$avvy* program, designed to promote empowerment and independence among young women.

The Action Plan for Women 2002–2004 was updated and made available both printed and electronically. The department produced the *Statistical Profile of Women* which is updated biannually and provides data on key topics to guide policy development.

WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN AND LEAD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The *Women on Wheels 2* tour extended this successful program to the north coast, New England and northern tablelands regions of NSW. Now in its second year the tour once again delivered against its objectives to improve access to government information and services, build partnership networks between government and non-government agencies, help develop local solutions to local issues, and better understand the issues. The aim is to inform program and policy development for women in rural and regional NSW.

The tour gave the more than 30 NSW Government and community agencies that participated the opportunity to meet women in their own environment and build a better understanding of their needs. The team travelled in a State Transit Authority bus loaded with information materials to distribute and held some 140 events in approximately 60 towns, involving 2,000 women.

Nearly 40 staff from the Department for Women and the Premier's Council for Women, as well as more than 70 staff from partnering organisations, took part.

In October 2003, the *Women on Wheels 3* tour will visit towns in the southwest slopes, the Snowy/Monaro region and the far south coast of NSW.

The department also consulted with approximately 60 service providers from Nowra, Canterbury–Bankstown, Auburn and Bathurst (Kelso) to address isolation and lack of life opportunities for women in disadvantaged

communities. As a result, effective strategies and interventions were identified to support women's community leadership, using existing structures, partnerships and resources.

In December 2002, under a partnership with the NSW Department of State and Regional Development and the Illawarra and South East Regional Coordination Management Group, the department launched *Women's Vision – Economic and Cultural Development for Ulladulla*. The publication was developed in consultation with the women of Ulladulla and provides action plans to achieve the women's vision to 2007.

Customised training and development programs on information technology in 2002/03 included the CTC@NSW which aimed to encourage women in regional NSW women to participate in the information age. The department also hosted *IT is a Woman's World* that brought together a panel of diverse women with skills and expertise in information technology and was broadcast to 21 Community Technology Centres around NSW.

In another initiative to build women's business skills, 10 participants from the Macarthur region of Western Sydney attended workshops, developed in partnership with the Department of Commerce and the Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre. The graduates who reported high levels of satisfaction can use their certificates of accreditation to access further business studies through TAFE and other accredited business studies providers.

In partnership with Emerge Australia, the department also

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conducted a micro-enterprise development program in Redfern to encourage Indigenous women to participate and achieve leadership within their community. As a result, training materials were developed, pathways to developing an enterprise were identified, and a directory of services, courses, and information on organisations that assist women developing an enterprise were published. A case study of the project was also developed.

The department continues to address the needs of Aboriginal women through partnership projects that involve consultation and training, including an inaugural gathering for participants in the Boggabilla Toomelah Aboriginal women's partnership project to discuss issues of concern to them, their families and communities and build support for one another. This cultural, spiritual and kinship camp was aimed at building women's capacity to develop strategies to better manage difficult issues such as domestic and family violence, child sexual abuse, other abuse and substance abuse within their communities that are experiencing significant social and economic challenges. Empowering Aboriginal women to take responsibility for building a strong healthy and safe community is a major focus.

In 2003/04, the North Western Plains Aboriginal Women's partnership project will bring together Aboriginal women in their communities to address issues such as child abuse, family violence and substance abuse. The objective of these gatherings is to encourage women to recognise that

working together along Aboriginal cultural guidelines is more beneficial than waiting for government agencies to fix their community problems.

As part of its commitment to women disadvantaged through cultural and linguistic diversity, the department raised the profile of women living and working in Macarthur, Western Sydney through a photographic exhibition that illustrated the diversity of backgrounds, skills and abilities of nursing graduates in managing the transition from home to the workplace.

Women in newly arrived refugee communities will benefit from a partnership project with the Centre for Refugee Research (UNSW) which will produce an educational kit on domestic violence and how to deal with it.

Strategies to develop the professional status of women continued by building on the department's earlier *Getting More Women on Board* initiatives, which successfully encouraged government agencies to increase women's participation in public sector decision-making to 50 per cent. One key priority is to increase awareness among influential people about the need for more women to occupy senior levels of management and board and committee positions. Another *Getting More Women on Board* forums will be held in partnership with the Premiers Department in September 2003.

At a local government level, the department committed to increasing the number of women nominating for the 2004 NSW local government elections through establishment of the 2004 Local Government Election Campaign Group. This group aims to facilitate local council participation, and encourage development of local strategies to facilitate an increase in women's nominations for election. In October 2002, Premier Bob Carr launched the *Hands Up for Women in Council* information kit for women interested in standing for local government, as well as those newly elected.

The department also completed and evaluated a one-year pilot of the *10 Point Plan for Supporting Women Councillors in NSW*. This best practice model that promotes inclusive, participatory, flexible and democratic processes, as well as supporting equity in community representation, is being distributed to NSW local councils.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IS EMBEDDED IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AT LOCAL, REGIONAL AND STATE LEVELS

The *Girls\$avvy* program, designed to inspire, motivate and educate young women about the importance of being



Communities

economically empowered and financially independent was launched in 2002/03. A total of 970 women and 138 women mentors attended 16 workshops between November and June. The department will extend the program in 2003/04 by conducting up to 30 workshops with more than 2,000 young women and some 300 women mentors.

In 2003/04, the department will develop the *Lucy* program to focus young women's attention on the impact of their work choices on their financial future, quality of life, decision-making and leadership opportunities.

In response to a request from Condell Park High School at Bankstown in Sydney, where girls represent only 25 per cent of students, the department produced a girl's conference for the students, their mothers and aunts, as well as facilitating a *Girl\$avvy* workshop. In 2003/04 the department will help the school hold an arts festival to bring together the 250 girls and their female relatives to focus on themselves and build their self-esteem.

GENDER EQUITY AND EQUITY BETWEEN COMMUNITIES IS EVIDENT

As inequity can manifest itself in many ways, the department has developed a range of initiatives to tackle the issue. These include increasing women's information technology skills, researching gender relations in

development of public policy, and establishing initiatives to address social and economic inequity affecting Indigenous women.

To address under-representation in the public sector of women working in information technology, the department explored ways to attract, train and mobilise women into this field in their current agency. Results of this project will inform broader research and the department will conduct a series of seminars on the findings.

Under Australian Research Council funding of \$303,886, the department is examining how gender relations affect the development of public policy and the operation of public sector agencies. The project entails mapping men and women by occupation, income and conditions of employment, interviewing public sector workers about gender relations, analysing how gender relations are reflected in policy development, and identifying gender equity success stories. This research, which will inform development of strategies to improve gender awareness and inclusiveness in public policy, is being undertaken in association with Western Sydney University, Premier's Department, the Office of Industrial Relations, the Department of Education and Training, Health, the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment, and Sydney Water.

WOMEN ON WHEELS TOUR HEADS NORTH

Women on Wheels 2 tour travelled throughout the north coast, New England and northern tablelands region.

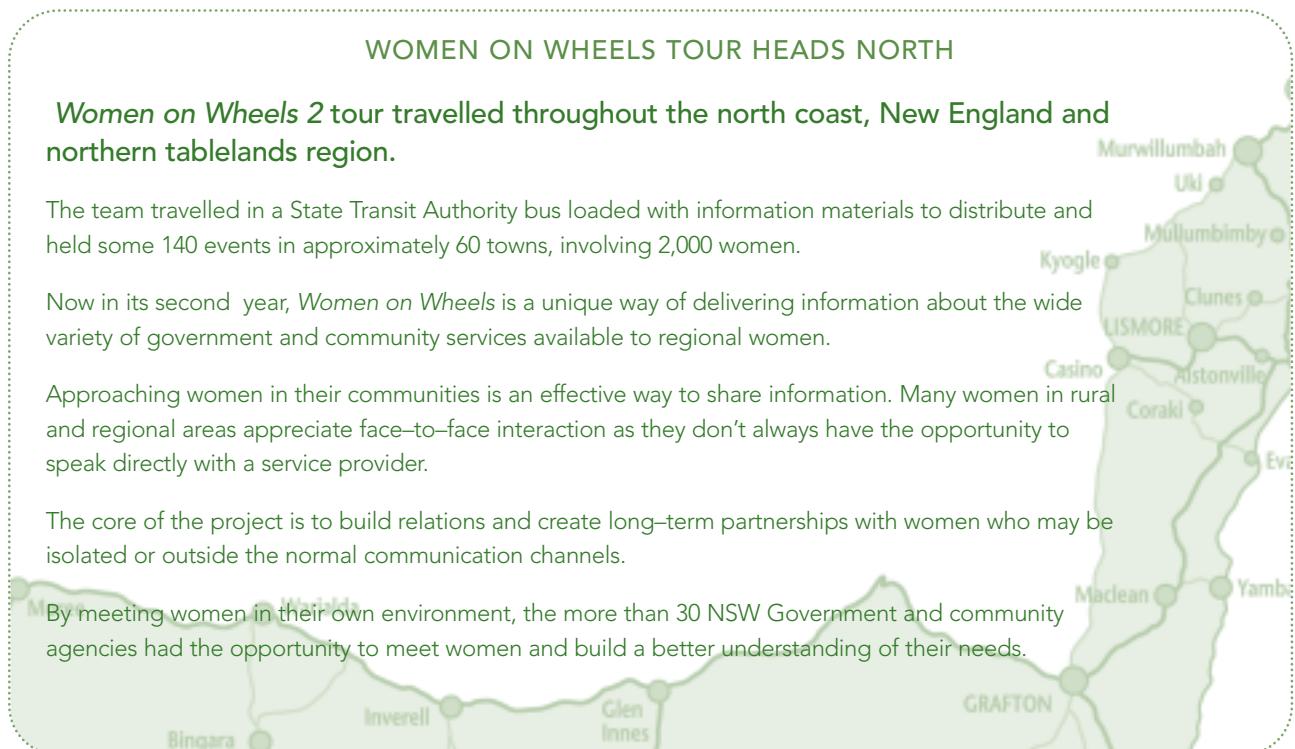
The team travelled in a State Transit Authority bus loaded with information materials to distribute and held some 140 events in approximately 60 towns, involving 2,000 women.

Now in its second year, *Women on Wheels* is a unique way of delivering information about the wide variety of government and community services available to regional women.

Approaching women in their communities is an effective way to share information. Many women in rural and regional areas appreciate face-to-face interaction as they don't always have the opportunity to speak directly with a service provider.

The core of the project is to build relations and create long-term partnerships with women who may be isolated or outside the normal communication channels.

By meeting women in their own environment, the more than 30 NSW Government and community agencies had the opportunity to meet women and build a better understanding of their needs.



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The department's commitment to overcoming the social and economic inequity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider population led to establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Unit and participation in the development in 2002/03 of *Two-Ways Together – Partnerships: A new Way of Doing Business with Aboriginal People Plan of Action*.

ALL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS ARE INFORMED BY PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES THAT INCLUDE WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

The activities of the Premier's Council for Women includes consultation with key stakeholders such as women's organisations, agencies and community members, and representation at community forums and interagency consultative groups.

In 2002/03, the Council visited the Albury, Broken Hill, Cobar, Cooma, Maitland, Queanbeyan, Shoalhaven, Southern Highlands and Tweed regions, holding meetings and activities to engage with women. Activities included a *Leading the Way* workshop with girls from local high schools, a business women's dinner, a consultative discussion at the local council for women in the community, local women's groups and service providers,

and meetings with Aboriginal women's organisations.

The Premier's Council for Women also ran *Leading the Way* events and worked with young women on an information technology project at the East Hills Girls Technology High School and a mentoring project with Blacktown Girls High School.

As well as updating the *NSW Action Plan for Women 2002–2004*, the department collected and collated information from 90 NSW Government agencies on over 500 policies, projects, programs and services for women. This information will continue to be used to inform the department's decision-making.

To increase women's participation and representation in the workplace, the department conducted case-study research in leading Australian organisations. The research findings will be distributed among public and private sector organisations to inform future strategies. A seminar series is also planned.

To ensure its strategies are effective, the department also consulted with communities on issues relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, including the Brewarrina Women's Forum and the Boggabillia Toomelah women's camp.



HANDS UP FOR WOMEN IN LOCAL COUNCIL

Women are under-represented at all levels of government and make up only 26 per cent of current NSW local councillors.

A practical tool to change this imbalance is the *Hands Up for Women in Council* participation kit which was developed by the department and is designed to encourage greater participation by women in local government.

Launched by Premier Bob Carr in October 2002, the kit gives practical advice and information for women considering standing for election, as well as those who are newly elected.

It equips them with case studies and resources to give them the best possible start.

The kit moves from making the decision to run for council, becoming a candidate, and the role of a councillor. The kit also addresses the practical areas of a council's operation as well as managing public and private life to sustain oneself over the long haul.

The aim of the kit which was updated in 2003, is to help local government better reflect the ethnic, gender and cultural diversity of its citizens.

KEY OUTCOME

Services are appropriate for women and girls.

The department's commitment to appropriate and relevant service delivery for the women of NSW was reaffirmed in 2003/03 through its support for several research projects and the establishment of significant collaborative partnerships.

Activity on the department's websites increased by nearly 72 per cent as women increasingly turned to the department's website and the *Women's Gateway* website for community information and services for women. The total number of calls to the Women's Information and Referral Service in 2002/03 increased by a modest 6 per cent.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR ARE STRENGTHENED, GIVING WOMEN AND GIRLS ACCESS TO SERVICES DESIGNED FOR THEM

The *Women's Gateway*, hosted by the department, provides electronic access to a range of information to support women, capturing information on almost 4,000 women's services and providing links to more than 200 relevant sites. Visitor numbers to both the department and gateway sites increased in 2002/03, with over 120,000 visits to www.women.nsw.gov.au and over 86,000 visits to www.womens.gateway.nsw.gov.au.

A \$100,000 study into women's needs and preferences for the delivery of government information was managed by the department on behalf of the Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers for Women. The *Women's Information Needs* study report continued to be promoted to the NSW Government and community sectors to support an integrated approach to information delivery for women.

Another important initiative that started in 2002/03 was examining employment services for women with a visual impairment to fill the gap in data on this area and to identify why the government benchmark of employment for this group is rarely achieved. It will draw on women's previous experiences in the job market to illustrate their needs.

Three initiatives for women in the workforce were supported by the department through the *Women in Small Business* project, including:

- o publication of *Women in NSW – A statistical profile*
- o hosting the *Women in Small Business* round table with the Minister for Small Business and 30 key political and industrial stakeholders

- o completion of research into the information needs of small business that inform policies and programs developed by the department, the Office of Industrial Relations, and WorkCover.

The \$100,000 annual funding of the NSW Working Women's Centre which provides industrial relations and employment-related issues advisory services to women without industrial representation or support continued to receive the department's financial support. During 2002/03, the Centre conducted 30 information sessions, responded to 1,600 telephone queries and managed an average of 20 new cases each quarter.

To better meet the needs of women associated with the juvenile and criminal justice systems, the department identified, analysed and developed strategies to enable the Department of Juvenile Justice to work more effectively with young women.

Initiatives that built on earlier research to improve women's access to diversionary alternatives to full-time custody in the criminal justice system included the department's *Diversionary Options for Women Project – Phase 2*, and continuing to work with key government stakeholders to overcome barriers to their participation in diversionary programs. This project responds to the marked increase of women in correctional institutions, most of whom are serving sentences of less than 12 months or are on remand.

A partnership was established with the Attorney-Generals' Department and the Legal Aid Commission to conduct the *Orange Interim Court Support* project that provides volunteer support for women seeking Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders. Under the project, an advisory committee was formed, volunteers were trained and reporting processes were established.

Services

The first draft of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Plan* which was completed in 2002/03 documents community and government initiatives that address the status and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and sets them within the strategies of the *NSW Aboriginal Affairs Plan*. The plan was developed by the department's newly formed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Unit.

The Women's Information and Referral Service provides a free and confidential telephone information and referral service for women in NSW and border town areas, giving information on issues affecting women and referrals to government and community organisations. The service can arrange a telephone interpreter for callers whose first language is not English. Hearing and speech impaired women are able to contact the service on the telephone typewriter.

The service's database is constantly updated with information on more than 4,200 services. Statistics show queries cover a wide range of topics including family law, health, violence against women, housing, employment and support services. Of these topics, legal issues especially in the area of family law appear the most sought after, making up 12 per cent of the total number of referrals.

The total number of calls in 2002/03 increased by 6 per cent. Most calls were completed immediately, and approximately 55 per cent of callers requiring a referral were provided with two or more services. Requests for publications fell by 37 per cent as traffic to information on departmental and *Women's Gateway* websites steadily increased.

REASON FOR CALLING

| Reason for calling | 2002/03 | | 2001/02 | |
|---|------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| | Frequency ¹ | Percentage | Frequency ¹ | Percentage |
| Referral | 4,843 | 50.8 | 8,548 | 58.9 |
| Department publications | 371 | 3.9 | 589 | 4.1 |
| Hung up | 643 | 6.9 | 50 | 6.5 |
| Phone number or addresses | 357 | 3.8 | 697 | 4.8 |
| Department grants | 181 | 2.0 | 384 | 2.6 |
| Information – general | 60 | 0.6 | 216 | 1.5 |
| Information on department/ Women's Information and Referral Service | 114 | 1.2 | 300 | 2.1 |
| Other publications | 26 | 1.1 | 160 | 1.1 |
| Other | 2,628 | 27.6 | 1,598 | 11.0 |
| Information on events | 95 | 1.0 | 189 | 1.3 |
| Information on statistics/research | 40 | 0.4 | 143 | 1.0 |
| Support needed | 108 | 1.1 | 110 | 0.8 |
| Complaint | 8 | 0.1 | 15 | 0.1 |
| Compliment/thanks | 4 | 0.04 | 11 | 0.1 |
| Abusive | 3 | 0.03 | 46 | 0.3 |
| Total number of calls | 9,533 | | 9,005 | |
| Total number of all referrals (can be more than one referral) | 7,811 | | n/a | |

1. Can be more than one reason for ringing.

2. The increase in the number of calls in the Other category is because the Women's Information and Referral Service took reception calls for the department for all 2002/03, whereas 2001/02 was a six month period.

BREAKDOWN OF CALLS TO WOMEN'S INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE

| | 2002/2003 | 2001/02 | 2000/01 | 1999/00 | 1998/99 |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total number of contacts and calls | 9,533 | 9,005 | 7,373 | 9,167 | 8,427 |
| First time callers | 59% | 62% | 78.7% | 70.9% | 75.7% |
| Callers from culturally diverse backgrounds | 12% | 16% | 10% | 5.3% | 7% |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander callers | 2% | 3% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 1.3% |
| Callers from Sydney metropolitan area | 38% | 47% | 63% | 63.7% | No data |
| Callers ringing on their own behalf | 61% | 60% | 73% | 66% | 71.9% |
| Calls referred by non-government agencies | 2% | 5.8% | 6.5% | 13.8% | 11.6% |
| Phone book prompted calls | 32% | 39.5% | 51% | 45.5% | 53% |
| Department publications prompted calls | 3% | 3.6% | 4.3% | 6% | 15% |
| Enquiries answered by staff | 62% | 53% | 39% | 46.5% | 45.8% |
| Enquiries on the Women's Grants Program | 2% | 0.02% | 3% | 14.7% | 7.5% |

GIRL\$AVVY SUPPORTS YOUNG WOMEN

***Girl\$avvy* is guiding young women on assuming responsibility for their own futures by introducing them to the concepts of economic empowerment and financial independence.**

The initiative responds to statistics showing only 16 per cent of Australian families consist of the 'husband at work and stay at home wife'.

The young women work with local business and professional women mentors on innovative, interactive activities. The day takes place in a business setting, the girls dress in business clothes, and interact in a

professional environment. There are no lectures, instead the program involves the young women in a board game that challenges them to make a business work. The program also includes how to build a budget, and gives guidance on good business behaviour and appropriate dress and grooming.



Participants have responded enthusiastically:

"Women can do anything and everything. It's a great learning experience." Erin.

"I loved meeting the mentors. It motivated me to work hard to get what I deserve." Sara.

"It was a great day. Lots of fun!" Melissa.

Research & policy development

KEY OUTCOME

Learning communities with an evidence-based approach.

Women's employment opportunities and conditions were a key area of focus in the 2002/03 research program, as were issues faced by women working in unpaid roles.

The department also demonstrated its commitment to improved social outcomes through increasingly effective collaboration on several research projects with academia, other government agencies and community groups.

COLLABORATIVE AND POLICY RELEVANT RESEARCH THAT CONTRIBUTES TO SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

The NSW Government's priority to increase collaboration between agencies to deliver better community services reached a significant milestone in 2002/03 through several projects to overcome structural or other barriers, while contributing to social justice for women.

The *Knowledge Pools – Domestic Violence Project* is designed to provide a more integrated and coordinated pooling of knowledge on domestic violence and will be the first of many electronic forums that demonstrate the effectiveness of a collaborative approach to knowledge accumulation and advancement on specific topics. It will provide the model for development of a public sector electronic community using web-based technology.

This project has the support of the Human Services Senior Officer's Group on Family and Domestic Violence and has been allocated \$250,000 under the connect.nsw capital funding program.

Another key two-year research project involved agencies across NSW working together to identify issues faced by women in unpaid roles in the community. In 2002/03, the department released the findings on this research into women in formal volunteering roles in south western Sydney and central western NSW. As a result of this research, the department has developed a comprehensive profile of women volunteers which will help prevent dangerous or exploitative practices, and will inform policy, intervention programs and decisions relating to pathways to and from volunteering. The department conducted this research in partnership with the University of Western Sydney, the University of Technology Sydney, the Premier's Department and the NSW Council of Social Services, with the support of Australian Research Council funding.

As almost 73 per cent of people who identify themselves as primary carers in NSW are women, the needs of carers

were also considered a priority in the 2002/03 research program. The *Reaching Isolated Carers Linkage* project, due to be completed in December 2003, will identify carers, many of whom may not identify themselves as such, and seek ways to communicate effectively the range of government services available to them. More generally, this research will provide insights into reaching and supporting geographically and socially isolated women. The project involves collaboration between several agencies, including the Social Policy Research Centre of the University of NSW, and the departments of Health, Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care, and Carers NSW. It is funded by the Australian Research Council's linkages program.

In considering the anticipated employment growth within the IT sector, the growing computer literacy gender-divide, and the workforce inequities this promotes, the department embarked on several initiatives to address the issue of women's under-representation in this sector.

The *Girls IT Choices* research project examined gender differences in attitudes towards IT subjects and jobs, and considered factors influencing information technology choices in secondary schools. The research, conducted in two schools with the assistance of the Department of Education and Training, will inform a proposed State-wide study on the issue of girls' participation in IT.

A total of \$10,000 in sponsorship was provided by the department for the Western Sydney *IT Woman of the Future Award* that, together with the *IT Start Up Award*, was launched by The Hon Diane Beamer MP in May 2003. These awards aim to address the shortfall in women's participation in the IT industry, and to promote innovation and foster entrepreneurship in western Sydney. Award winners receive a trophy, cash and are offered a mentoring program through the Western Sydney IT Cluster.

Following innovative summer e-camps in 2002, involving Year 9–11 students in Walgett and Mt Druitt, the

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department provided a further \$50,000 to encourage girls from disadvantaged backgrounds across NSW to explore career options in traditionally male-dominated areas, such as information and communication technology, horticulture and automotives. This joint NSW Government and industry initiative provided free summer school training and resources in the areas of tourism, hospitality and visual arts for 485 students, 46 per cent girls.

Research into women and homelessness continued in 2002/03 with the development of case studies that applied the guiding principles outlined in the 2001/02 reference paper. The case studies include the *Inner City Homelessness project* and focus on sex and race-based discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families seeking to access the private rental market in western Sydney.

To increase understanding of the relationship between young women's physical activity, their sense of wellbeing and motivation to continue physical activity, the department with the Department of Sport and Recreation and Wollongong University are undertaking research to develop a model that will engage young women in a physical activity program that enhances their emotional wellbeing and physical competency.

STRENGTHENING OF SPECIAL INTEREST COMMUNITIES IN THE AREAS OF GENDER ANALYSIS, LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURAL DIVERSITY, YOUTH, ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN, AND SAFETY FOR WOMEN

The newly established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Unit in the department is developing an issues paper on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's employment, within its Jobs for Women strategy. This paper will provide up-to-date data and policy on women's employment opportunities and experiences.

Other important projects in 2002/03 included:

- o continuation of *Kids Relate*, a curriculum based violence prevention and health relationships program
- o work on securing funding for research into factors associated with pregnant and parenting teenagers and the support needs of pregnant and parenting school students
- o undertaking initial research and a feasibility study into

establishing catering businesses, supported by skills and food handling training, as well as identifying business opportunities for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in western Sydney.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTED BY EVIDENCE-BASED EVALUATION

Following research with the Office of Industrial Relations into the female-dominated area of residential aged care, the department will launch late in 2003 the project findings and a set of guidelines for rostering in aged care facilities. These rostering guidelines, designed to improve the balance between employees' work and home commitments, will be promoted throughout the aged care industry, and to other industries that operate around the clock.

Two profiles on health and education, and training and transition to work were completed in 2002, as part of the *Women in NSW – A statistical profile* which aims to provide a comprehensive picture of women's status over recent years and is grouped under key topics of importance to women. Drawing on a range of data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other official sources, the profiles are available on the department's website. They provide an essential resource for policy makers and the community in general, as they identify how women are faring and areas of persistent disadvantage. The department is currently working on a profile of statistics on women and work.

Research was conducted for the life events section of the *Women's Gateway*. Funded by the now Office of Best Practice, IT and Corporate Services, this project involves focus groups and interviews with women and service providers on pregnancy, returning to work and leaving your partner. The objective is to work through the way women in these situations search for information and provide information online about services available.

Another important research project uses a case-study approach to provide accounts about the introduction, implementation and evaluation of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity strategies in leading Australian organisations. Focussing on in-depth interviews with key personnel, ranging from the chief executive officer to those women intended to benefit from these strategies, the research provides ground-breaking evidence about the drivers behind these organisational change initiatives, the factors associated with successful implementation, and the range of indicators used to evaluate the strategies.

Research & policy development



WOMEN'S INFORMATION NEEDS IDENTIFIED

A major report, released in 2002/03, on women's information needs and information-seeking behaviours will help government better target information delivery to women.

The project was led by the department and involved women's advisers from Australian State, Territory and Commonwealth governments, as well as advisers from New Zealand.

The project involved a telephone survey and interviews, as well as production of an annotated bibliography on women's information needs and information-seeking behaviours.

The phone survey of 756 women reported that most turned to government for information about common issues, such as education and training, health, income support and community services. The internet was the second most popular source, reflecting women's lower levels of access to information online, especially older women.

In-depth interviews with 40 women from a variety of backgrounds showed that women play a major role as information-seekers, regardless of the type of household. What emerged strongly from the interviews is that women's information needs are enormously varied and largely reflect their life-cycle and changing social, economic, health, family and personal circumstances.



Organisational excellence

OUTCOME

An efficient, effective and fiscally responsible department.

Development started in 2002/03 on competency standards that will provide the basis for best practice human resource standards and processes. To streamline employee selection, career development and training, an integrated set of job profiles were introduced.

A comprehensive review of the capture, storage and maintenance of all records, knowledge and information commenced and administration and management of the \$1 million Women's Grants Program was improved.

INFORMED, TRAINED AND CONFIDENT STAFF

All 55 staff continued to be encouraged to undertake further studies for professional and personal development through the provision of study leave opportunities and by negotiating development plans with individual officers to ensure career plans are supported while the department's professional services are maintained.

Staff development was supported formally and informally and included opportunities to attend accredited courses, conferences and seminars. Additionally, officers were provided with opportunities to address international, national and state conferences. Training is carried out inhouse, on the job and through mentoring.

Work commenced on development of a set of competency standards which will form the basis of personal development plans, guide career development, underpin job related selection criteria, and provide the framework for best practice human resource standards and processes.

An integrated set of job profiles covering all the work currently required of the department's employees was in the final stage of development at the end of 2002/03. This will ensure a streamlined and flexible information base is available to facilitate employee selection, career development and training. The profiles will also be used to improve job grading and remuneration practices.

The Occupational Health and Safety Workplace Committee continued its active role in ensuring staff understand the importance of occupational health and safety and emphasising obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The committee meets regularly to resolve issues and promote better and safer work practises. During 2002/03, occupational health and safety initiatives included:

- o appointment and training of two first aid officers
- o establishment of emergency evacuation procedures and regular practice of these, including the introduction of an electronic alarm system for the notification of emergencies
- o resolving problems with maintaining air conditioning temperatures
- o review of workstations and addressing ergonomic and other issues by providing an information and educational program at staff meetings by the Occupational Health and Safety Committee
- o testing the microwave oven.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS RESULT IN THE EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES WITHIN BUDGET

The *Women on Wheels 2* outreach program and the *Girl\$avy* project were two major areas of expenditure of funds allocated to the department's projects. The *Women on Wheels 2* budget was boosted through the commitment of funds by several government agencies.

As part of its commitment to the government's shared corporate services strategy, the department has a service agreement with the Central Corporate Services Unit of the Department of Commerce to provide human resource and payroll, finance, and information technology services.

The new position of Grants Project Officer for the \$1 million Women's Grants Program provided both administrative and management expertise and ensured the satisfactory completion of previously unfinished grants from prior funding rounds.

Organisational excellence

The sum of \$320,000 was allocated to consultancies and contractors in the areas of financial management, information technology, management services and training during 2002/03. This included the establishment of the competency standards and job profiles which provide best practice human resource standards and processes, and development of a new database for the Women's Information and Referral Service.

To ensure compliance with the *State Records Act 1998*, the department started in 2002/03 a comprehensive review of the capture, storage and maintenance of all records, knowledge and information.

The Minister for Women was provided high quality and timely advice on a wide range of issues that impact women. Monthly statistical reports from the Women's Information and Referral Service and usage reports from

the departmental and Women's Gateway websites contributed to this advice.

A range of other services were provided by the department to the Minister and other government agencies, including the preparation of Ministerial letters, Cabinet submissions, parliamentary questions, house notes, speech notes and briefings.

A total of 83.6 per cent of these services were carried out within the agreed response timeframe.

The department continued to ensure an alignment of all services and programs to the agency's core business, with an emphasis on all projects targeting women living in regional and rural New South Wales, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women and young women.



Organisational excellence

ACTION PLAN FOR WOMEN

An Action Plan for Women from 2002 to 2004 was developed by the department and released in November 2002. The plan is based on information the department collected from a wide range of government agencies about their activities and commitments.

The plan is grounded on the principles of equity, access, rights and participation. It provides an overview of progress and developments in the key areas of families and communities, violence and safety, work, access to justice and equality before the law, power, decision-making and leadership, education and training, and health.

As well as containing initiatives designed to meet women's needs, the plan considers how government agencies take women into account when delivering core services.

The action plan is based on many partnerships between government agencies, private sector enterprises, non-government organisations and unions, as well as academic and research organisations.

These partnerships harness resources needed for important initiatives while building new relationships and understanding that further strengthen the capacity of communities for creative and practical problem solving.

Supporting the action plan are several specially targeted plans and actions for women:

- o in information and communication technologies
- o in rural and regional areas
- o who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- o from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART

