



Department for Women

Information Technology (IT) Framework

Department for Women (DFW)

2002

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Information Technology (IT) Framework Department for Women (DFW)

1. Introduction

The Department for Women's IT framework sets out the context and priorities for the Department's work in the area of IT. This is articulated through reference to relevant International Conventions, Government commitments and programs, gendered research/statistics and consultation mechanisms. The framework complements the Department's vision, which is justice and equity for women in NSW.

The Department for Women's resource capabilities and specific expertise means that it is best equipped to add value to certain types of Information Technology projects. These include projects requiring cross agency interaction and those aiming to meet the information needs of women. DFW also has the capacity to resource community based organisations with one off grants to implement IT access and skill development projects for women/girls. Projects are innovative, address a demonstrated need, and have ongoing benefits for women.

The Department monitors and identifies emerging trends in Information Technology, through research, consultation, and interaction with agencies, which have a key role in the area of IT. Projects, which take advantage of new opportunities for women and/or intervene to prevent inequalities, are given priority.

Four overarching corporate objectives guide DFW's work and form the basis for the Department's IT framework. They aim to achieve:

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

- Women participate in and lead sustainable communities;
- Social justice is embedded in planning and development at local, regional and state levels;
- Gender equity and equity between communities is evident; and
- All government activities are informed by principles and approaches that include women and their communities.

Services appropriate to women and girls, where:

- Partnerships with government and private sector agencies are strengthened, so that women and girls have access to services designed for them, such as information, child care, transport, support services, technology, education, corrective services, juvenile justice, legal advice, policing, financial services, business and employment.

Learning communities in which evidence based approach to policy, research and evaluation result in:

- Collaborative and policy relevant research that contributes to social justice for women;
- Strengthening of special interest communities in the areas of gender analysis, local communities in the areas of gender analysis, local economic development, cultural diversity, youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and safety for women; and
- Policy development directed by evidence based evaluation.

An efficient, effective and fiscally responsible department, where:

- Management and operation will result in the expansion and improvement of services within budget, and a higher profile for the Department is achieved by our informed, trained and confident staff.

- To date DFW's Information Technology projects have largely focused on the following areas:
- Using Information Technology as a community strengthening tool (including IT as a tool for advocacy, participatory democracy, creating networks, and accessing information and services);
- Promoting sustainability (creating solutions, which have ongoing benefits for communities after initiatives are implemented and funding ceases. For example projects will ideally have ongoing economic and/or social benefits for local communities);
- Increasing access to the education and employment opportunities of Information Technology;
- Women as users of electronically delivered government information and services;
- Removing the barriers to women's take up of Information Technology; and
- Providing more streamlined and accessible government services.

Using the Framework

Section 2 summarises the key influences underpinning DFW's work in the area of Information Technology, and provides a context for the IT framework. Key influences include, International Conventions and relevant Commonwealth and State Government policies, programs and commitments. Future action in the area of IT should be informed by developments in this area.

Section 3 is a flow chart which illustrates how the key influences outlined in Section 2 inform DFW's corporate goals and in turn the Department's IT initiatives.

Section 4 outlines DFW's corporate goals and lists corresponding key IT outcomes and performance measures under each objective. Future DFW IT initiatives need to support corporate goals, key IT outcomes and apply relevant performance measures to evaluate their effectiveness. In addition this section lists current DFW strategies which are used to achieve key IT outcomes. Examples of IT initiatives are detailed under each strategy. Ideas for future action are also listed, and can be periodically updated.

Attachment 1 provides background research and statistics to further support the direction of DFW's work in the area of IT. Recommendations are made to progress women's/girls' engagement in Information Technology and to ensure that women/girls benefit from developments in the area of IT.

Attachment 2 summarises DFW's IT initiatives under the corporate objectives. This should be updated regularly to ensure that DFW has a current list of IT projects which is available to outside organisations and individuals.

Attachment 3 illustrates how DFW's IT initiatives fit within a number of the key NSW Government IT strategies.

Attachment 4 is the implementation schedule for the IT Framework.

2. The Context

The Department for Women's work in Information Technology is guided by its international obligations under the *Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. It is also informed by NSW and Commonwealth Government policies and strategies, and by current statistics and research. Key influences are listed below.

2.1 International Obligations

2.1.1 Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The Department's overall direction is guided by its international obligations under CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, which sets out strategic objectives for achieving the commitments governments make under CEDAW. These principles underpin the *NSW Government Action Plan for Women*. The specific Beijing objectives related to Information Technology aim to:

- J.1 Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication;
- F.3 Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low income women; and
- B.3 Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.¹

Actions to be taken by Governments (Section J) includes:

Encourage and recognize women's media networks, including electronic networks, and other new technologies of communication, as a means for the dissemination of information and the exchange of views, including at the international level, and support women's groups active in all media work and systems of communication to that end;

Encourage the development of educational and training programmes for women in order to produce information for mass media, including funding experimental efforts, and the use of new technologies of communication, cybernetics space and satellite, whether public or private;

Encourage the use of communications systems, including new technologies, as a means of strengthening women's participation in democratic processes;

Train women to make greater use of information technology for communication and the media, including at an international level;

Support the development of and finance as appropriate, alternative media and the use of all means of communication to disseminate information to and about women and their concerns².

2.2 NSW Government Commitments

2.2.1 *The New South Wales Social Justice Directions Statement* is the other overarching set of principles which informs the Department's work.

Fair Go Fair Share Fair Say outlines the Government's commitment to the interrelated principles of equity, access, participation and rights. It articulates the Government's commitment to ensuring that:

- There is fairness in the distribution of resources;
- Rights are recognised and promoted;

¹ *NSW Government Action Plan for Women 2000* Appendix 2, Department for Women pp.67-68

² www.womenspace.ca/Campaign/Government/sectionJ.html

- People have fairer access to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life; and
- People have opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.
- The statement has a strong focus on:
 - *promoting a more inclusive community* (for example, working on Aboriginal reconciliation and meeting the needs of a diverse community);
 - *caring for families and communities* (for example, integrated and innovative service delivery and strategies, and preventative care);
 - *educating for the future* (for example, gender equity strategies, provision of technology to schools to enhance teaching and learning);
 - *improving the justice system* (for example, improving access to the justice system, reforming the legal system, better fair trading policies); and
 - *creating an environment where everyone can take an active role* (for example, encouraging public debate, dialogue and consultation, and devolved decision making).³

2.2.2 NSW Government Election Commitments

Improving Women's Lives - Labor's plan for women in the 21st century sets out the Government's commitments for women. These include a number of Information Technology initiatives. The most relevant to women/girls are to:

- "Investigate the development of a Women's Information Technology Access Program to encourage women's take up of information and improve women's access to electronically delivered government information and services";
- Implement a "*Computers in Schools Program* and provide 90,000 new computers for schools across NSW, supported by strategies to ensure equitable access for girls"; and
- "Promote Information Technology traineeships to the community. Women seeking retraining to return to the workforce will be specifically targeted."⁴

2.3 NSW and Commonwealth Government IT Strategies

2.3.1 Information Management and Technology Blueprint for NSW: A Well Connected Future

This document, focuses on strategies to create accessible and responsive government services, delivered efficiently and cost-effectively to the community. In accordance with these objectives, the Department is streamlining its internal functions to facilitate more efficient and effective use of resources. Although no reference is made to women as a specific target group, the principles support DFW's aim to address IT access and equity issues for girls/women.⁵

2.3.2 connect.nsw - Government Internet Strategy for NSW

The NSW Government's Internet Strategy leads on from *A Well Connected Future*. It focuses on increasing the online delivery of Government Information and Services, providing training, support and access to IT for communities in rural, regional and metropolitan NSW, and improving interagency communication through IT and tailored electronic service delivery to clients⁶. The four strategies on which *connect.nsw* are based include:

Integrated Government-This strategy provides the internal infrastructure and systems to integrate the operations of State Government and sets up operational links to local and federal governments and the Internet.

Electronic Service Delivery-This strategy will progress the delivery of Government information and services using the Internet. It will result in more efficient use of resources and encourage the creation of new jobs and industries. Private sector parties will be used where appropriate, to deliver services more efficiently to the general public and

³ New South Wales Government, *Fair Go Fair Share Fair Say* New South Wales Social Justice Directions Statement, October 1996

⁴ Carr Labor Government *Improving Women's Lives - Labor's plan for women in the 21st century* 1999

⁵ NSW Department of Public Works and Services: *Information Management and Technology Blueprint for NSW: A Well Connected Future*, Sydney, February 1997

⁶ NSW Government *An Internet Strategy for NSW: connect.nsw*, 1997

NSW businesses.

Electronic Commerce- The strategy will progress NSW purchasing on line. The Government will develop the infrastructure for electronic commerce by introducing the legislative framework to support electronic commerce and by addressing issues such as privacy, integrity and confidentiality of personal information.

Networked Communities-Focusing on rural and regional NSW, the NSW Government will establish and coordinate support services to assist community groups to benefit from IT, and by setting best practice examples through a series of community pilots.

The Department for Women received approximately \$130,000 for development of the Women's Gateway through *connect.nsw* funding. DFW is enhancing the Gateway to include "Life Events" keys which will enable easier access to information

2.3.3 Community Technology Centres @NSW - getting communities online

Jointly funded by the NSW and Commonwealth Government, this initiative will establish more than 60 new Community Technology Centres (CTCs) in regional NSW to give people better access to IT, including the Internet, email, teleconferencing and e-commerce. The \$15 million initiative is part of the NSW Government's aim to assist regional communities develop sustainable Information Technology facilities.⁷

The centres will be technology resource sites for local business, students and the general community. Communities with less than 3000 will be specifically targeted. DFW is interested in forming links with CTCs to facilitate access to and use of IT by women, including Aboriginal populations in regional and remote areas of NSW.

2.3.4 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Skills Action Plan

The NSW Government's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Skills Action Plan, outlines

New South Wales' intentions for increasing ICT skill levels in the State and ongoing programs in the private and public sector.⁸ The Department for Women has contributed to the document and is represented on the Cross Agency Implementation Group to assist with issues related to implementation of the plan. The ten key areas for action are outlined in Appendix 3. The Action Plan includes strategies, which specifically target women and girls. The Department is also represented on the Marketing Sub Committee which provides input on development of the *ICT Skills Community Awareness Campaign*.

2.3.5 NSW Government Computer Re-Use Program

This 12 month Pilot Program is currently under development and when endorsed will offer NSW Government agencies an alternative option for the management of unwanted or obsolete computers outside of going to auction, recycling or sending computers to a licenced landfill facility. A joint initiative between the Office of Information Technology (OIT) within the Department of Information Technology and Management (DITM), and the Premier's Department, the Program will enable excess public sector computer equipment to be donated for community purposes through non profit organisations.

2.3.6 Capacity Building for Non Government Organisations

The Strengthening Communities Unit of the Premier's Department has undertaken the Capacity Building for Non Government Organisations (NGOs) Project which encompasses four key areas, including information technology, fund raising and financial management, management support and organisational development, and managing industry change. Capacity building in Aboriginal NGOs is also given a specific focus. Working Groups developed project proposals and the Information Technology working group aims to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for the IT capacity building of NGOs and present a business case to CEOs for implementation of the Plan.

⁷ Jointly funded by NSW and Commonwealth Governments, *CTC@nsw: getting communities online*, www.oit.nsw.gov.au

⁸ NSW Government, *skilling people for an information society New South Wales Information and Communications Technology Skills Action Plan*, 2000

2.3.7 The Aboriginal ICT Strategy

Is a whole of government initiative, co-ordinated by the Department of Information Technology and Management (DITM), and will inform the Department's future IT partnerships with Aboriginal women. Research will be undertaken to develop a background paper to identify ICT issues and initiatives. A reference group has been established to progress development of the strategy.

2.3.8 Networking Our Futures Strategy

Which seeks to create training, education and employment opportunities for Indigenous people in the ICT sector and encourage the uptake of ICT opportunities, was launched by the Commonwealth Government in September 2001. This is a joint initiative by the Australian Information Industry Association, (AIIA) the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) *Living in Harmony Program*.⁹

The main aim of the initiative is to:

- Increase education, training and employment opportunities by Indigenous people in the ICT sector;
- Generate better understanding, respect and cooperation among people of different cultural backgrounds within the ICT sector;
- Encourage Indigenous people to consider training and employment in the ICT sector;
- Provide greater access to ICT resources within Indigenous communities and for Indigenous people; and
- Increase awareness of the Government's *Living in Harmony Program* within the ICT industry.

2.3.9 Backing Australia's Ability

- (<http://backingaus.innovation.gov.au>) introduced some major initiatives aimed at enhancing local expertise and skills. It contains a range of measures that have the potential to enhance the opportunity for women to participate in ICT education and training:
- Provision of \$151 million over 5 years for an additional 2,000 university places each year (equating to 21,000 new full-time equivalent undergraduate university places over the five years), with priority given to ICT, mathematics and science;
- An additional \$143.5 million over four years to government schools to foster scientific, mathematical and technological skills and develop school based innovation; and
- \$35 million over 5 years to implement a National Innovation Awareness Strategy, including funding for raising the understanding of the importance of science and technology to young people through the *SmartMoves* program (<http://smartmoves.questacon.edu.au>).

2.3.10 W-ith-IT program-ANTA/Industry Scholarship Project

is a nationwide initiative to help women with information technology skills aim higher, and go further in their careers. The W-ith-IT competition is an initiative of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). The competition was organised by the IT&T Industry Training Advisory Body, an industry-government body that promotes information technology and telecommunications training and careers. A list of 2001 scholarship winners is available at: http://www.ittitab.com.au/news_items/news060901/FinalWinnersMediaReleasesAllStates.doc

2.3.11 Cisco Systems Digital Divide Cross Sector Working Group

⁹ Press Release quoting Minister Philip Ruddock, *Strategy Promotes Indigenous Participation in ICT Industry* 18/9/01

The National Office of the Information Economy (NOIE) is participating in a Digital Divide Cross Sector Working Group convened by Cisco Systems and being facilitated by the consulting Group Positive Outcomes. Cisco Systems in Australia (and globally) is involved in a number of initiatives aimed at bridging the Digital Divide. The Working Group is concerned with facilitating cross sector collaboration on discrete projects and creating an ongoing forum for the exchange of ideas and identifying new projects to tackle digital exclusion in Australia. The group has the potential to become an important alliance of government, business and community organisations. Ericsson, IBM, Microsoft and Telstra are members. The community sector has broad representation, including The Inspire Foundation, Technical Aid to the Disabled., Work Ventures and The Smith Family. The Group is trialling for six months the US based Digital Dividend project clearing house (<http://www.digitaldividend.org>) as a mechanism for exchanging information and stimulating project collaboration.

Digital Divide Forum . At a meeting of the Online Council in March 2002, Ministers agreed to establish a Digital Divide Forum of senior Commonwealth, State and Territory officials and representatives of local government to enable all jurisdictions to share information and experience on the development and implementation of digital divide programs. The Forum will provide a report on its work to the Online Council in early 2003. Access and Equity issues will be considered as part of this Forum.

2.3.12 Digital Divide Forum

At a meeting of the Online Council in March 2002, Ministers agreed to establish a Digital Divide Forum of senior Commonwealth, State and Territory officials and representatives of local government to enable all jurisdictions to share information and experience on the development and implementation of digital divide programs. The Forum will provide a report on its work to the Online Council in early 2003. Access and Equity issues will be considered as part of this Forum.

2.3.13 Women.gov.au

is being constructed (<http://www.women.gov.au>) by the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women (OSW), and has been funded from the 2001 Budget of the Commonwealth Government.

2.3.14 The Netspots

online directory of public Internet access facilities such as Internet Cafes, public libraries and other sites is available online (<http://www.noie.gov.au/netspots>) or on free call 1800 222 797. It aims to help people who don't have the Internet at home to locate their nearest public Internet access facility.

2.3.15 Customer Focusses Portals

This framework, co-ordinated by NOIE, will simplify the process of finding the services and information a customer is looking for. It will build upon the Commonwealth Government's existing web presence by adding a related set of websites that present collections of government information and services in ways that are designed around customer groupings and subject matter areas, rather than merely reflecting administrative structures. All portals can be accessed through the central portal [australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au) (<http://www.australia.gov.au>).

2.3.16 New Connections

website (<http://www.newconnections.gov.au>) a *one-stop-shop* regional telecommunications portal which enables access to information on local telecommunications projects and models, funding programs and consumer information. New Connections means that all regional telecommunications projects targeted at women can be easily listed.

2.3.17 IT Skills Hub

(<http://www.itskillshub.com.au>) is a joint government/industry initiative aimed at better matching training courses to identified skills deficiencies in the ICT industry. NOIE and DEST provided \$5m in seed funding for the establishment of the Hub. A number of the Hub's current activities have the potential to enhance female participation in ICT employment, education and training:

- Launch of the Youth Hub and youth portal (<http://youth.itskillshub.com.au>)-designed to attract young people to the ICT industry;
- Initiation of a Structured Workplace Learning program for students entitled *I Can Make IT* –a work experience program; and
- Research into the recruitment behaviour of firms.

The Hub's website features a section entitled *Women in IT* which provides links to other useful sites and research fetures role models of women working in IT

2.3.18 Networking the Nation

The Commonwealth Government's Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund has provided \$250 million over 5 years from 1 July 1997 to support activities and projects designed to meet a range of telecommunications needs in regional, rural and remote Australia. Over the life of the Program NSW will be allocated \$37.4 million. The main aim of the funding is to support projects which:

- Enhance telecommunications infrastructure and services in regional, rural and remote areas;
- Increase access to and promote use of, services available through telecommunications networks in regional, rural and remote areas; or
- Reduce disparities in access to such services and facilities between people in regional, rural or remote areas and those in urban areas.¹⁰
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Projects targeting women only cannot be funded through Networking the Nation.

2.3.19 Online Council Indigenous Action Plan

The Action Plan aims to enhance indigenous people's access to the Information Economy. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to a framework to advance reconciliation and as part of that framework, all Ministerial Councils are required to present Indigenous action plans, performance monitoring strategies and benchmarks to COAG. The National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE) is responsible for the co-ordination of the Online Council's Indigenous Action Plan (OCIAP), which is in the early stages of development.

¹⁰ *Networking the Nation: The Commonwealth Government's Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Guidelines, 1997*

2.3.20 Commonwealth/State Ministers' Conference

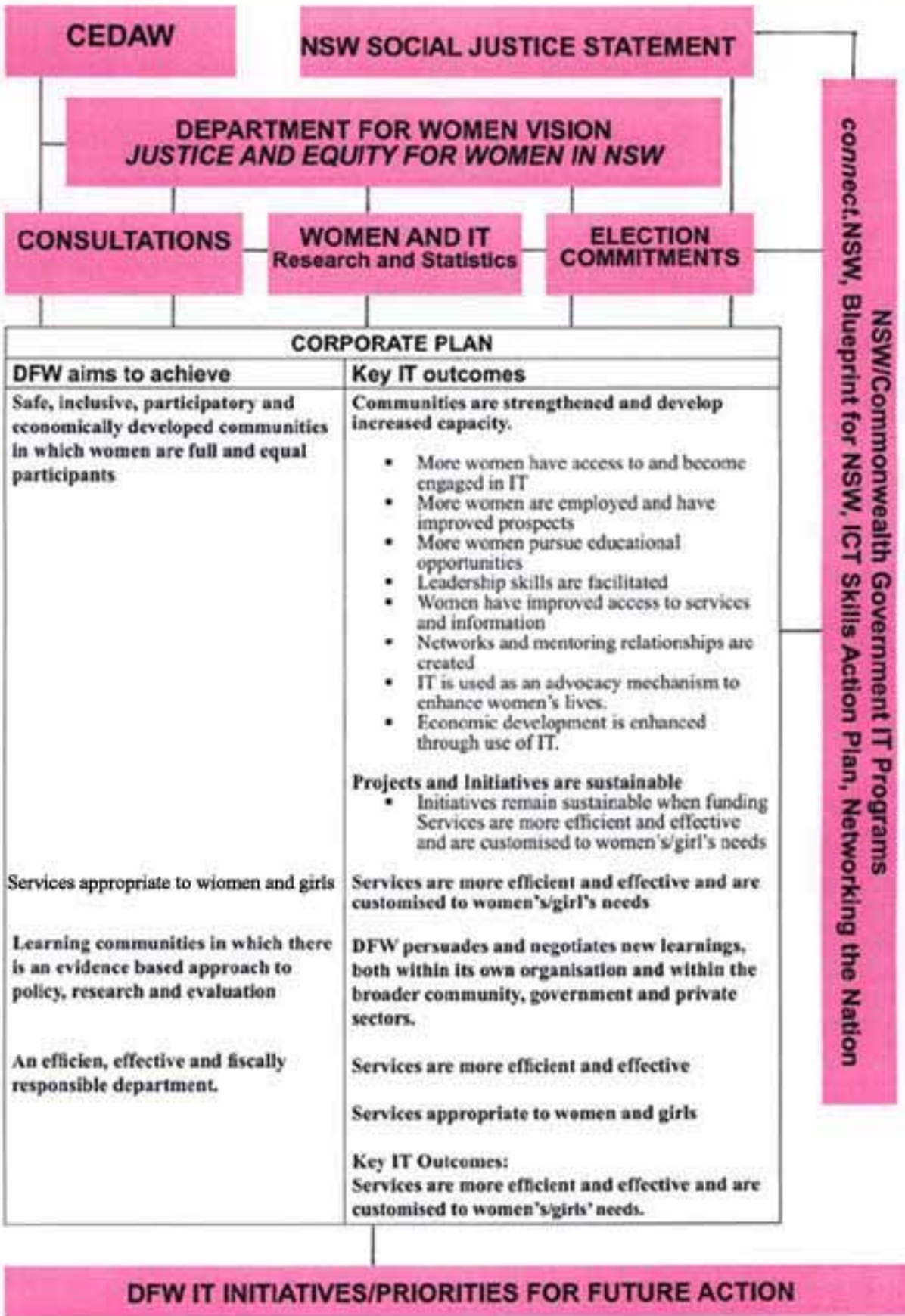
In March 1998 at the Commonwealth/State Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women, the Department for Women proposed that "all relevant jurisdictions consider developing a Women's Information Technology policy to progress issues/policies in relation to women and Information Technology, including access to the Internet". This recommendation was adopted.

The Department for Women's proposal identified a number of high need areas aimed at facilitating women's/girls' access to and use of IT. These remain relevant to DFW's future IT work. Strategies were needed to:

- Assist women's/girls' access to Information Technology and the Internet and take into account specific usage patterns by special needs groups including women from diverse cultural backgrounds, older women, women with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and those from rural and remote areas;
- Provide/promote the training of girls/women in the use of IT and the Internet;
- Counteract negative stereotypes of women in relation to IT, and actively promote women's involvement in this area;
- Increase the availability of affordable, quality Internet sites in locations likely to be accessed by girls/women;
- Promote linkages with key inter-departmental and intergovernmental agencies responsible for technology, industry, communications policy and other significant areas (Harrison:6:1998);
- Encourage technology uptake and utilisation by the women's NGO sector and by women's services. Reasons include co-ordination, more efficient communication, service and output quality enhancement, enhanced efficiency and to promote informed and responsive input to policy (Harrison:6:1998); and
- Take advantage of how women are currently using Information Technology and the Internet to capitalise on existing opportunities, for example telecottaging, home businesses etc.¹¹

¹¹ DFW proposal to the Commonwealth/State Ministers' Conference *Information Technology: Future Strategies*, March 1998

3. Department for Women IT Framework



4. Department for Women Information Technology Framework

The Department for Women's Information Technology objectives and strategies align with the corporate objectives. The table below outlines the corporate goals, specific IT outcomes, corresponding strategies, performance measures and areas for future action. A number of the initiatives fit within more than one objective, where this is the case the project has been listed under the main category only.

A full description of individual IT initiatives are at Attachment 2.

Many of the projects listed below involve partnerships with other government agencies and community based organisations. Corporate sponsorship is also a feature of some projects. The Department for Women aims to achieve:

4.1 Safe, inclusive, participatory and economically developed communities in which women are full and equal participants, where:

- Women participate in and lead sustainable communities;
- Social justice is embedded in planning and development at local, regional and state levels;
- Gender equity and equity between communities is evident; and
- All government activities are informed by principles and approaches that include women and their communities.

Key IT Outcomes	Performance Measures	Strategies	Future Action
Communities are strengthened and develop increased capacity.			
More women have access to and become engaged in IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of Women's Grants funds allocated to IT projects • Number of women trained in IT • Number of women trained as trainers/mentors • Number of new IT access points created • Inclusion of IT in DFW workshops • IT issues addressed in community consultations 	<p>DFW initiates IT projects, which build community capacity and promote sustainability. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Women's Gateway</i> (the Gateway provides client focused, issue based information and resources for women). • <i>Department for Women's Website</i> (provides details on the role and functions of DFW and the Premier's Council for Women (PCW) and up to date information and resources for women). <p>DFW works with other government and community sector agencies to ensure that IT initiatives build community capacity and promote sustainability. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Western Sydney Project (DFW works in partnerships with the Office of Western Sydney to improve women's access to and use of IT). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue funding IT projects through the Women's Grants Program • Use of online facilities and tools to facilitate and develop leadership/mentoring • Exploring sponsorship opportunities • Alternative virtual sources being used to make connections with communities. For example, teleconferencing

More women are employed and have improved prospects within the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women employed or in better jobs as a direct result of IT projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Women's Online Pilot Projects (DFW oversees the management of two community based projects under the <i>Seniors Online Strategy</i>. The 12 month projects funded under the Women's Grants Program in 2001 are located in Western Sydney and the Central Coast) • Women Out West Multimedia Training Pilot Project (Based in Western Sydney, this project was funded through the Women's Grants Program in 2001 and combines digital media training, business studies and work placements). • New England Women Developing Virtual Communities (NEWLinC) (Funded through the Women's Grants Program in 2000, this project employed trainers to provide workshops in networking and building "virtual communities" among rural and remote women). • E Summer Schools (Sponsorship was provided through Women's Grants funds for two e-summer schools in Mt Druitt and Walgett for a 3 week period in January 2002. The aim was to encourage girls' involvement in IT). • V is for Volunteers (Funded through the Women Grants Project in 2001 this project will establish a centrally-based and electronically accessible service to link volunteers to agencies providing skills training). • Internet Café Project-Cranebrook Housing Estate (Funded through the Women's Grants Program in 2000, this project established an Internet Café for isolated and disadvantaged women in a public housing estate). • Internet Access for Women - Rocky Hall Pre School (Funded through the Women's Grants Program in 2000 the project provided internet access and basic computer training for women in small isolated southern rural areas). • Skills Development for Migrant Women (Funded through the Women's Grants Program in 2000 this project targeted women from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new IT interface points, including NGOs and individual champions • Internet/Women's Gateway training for rural and remote communities and using CTCs as a point of contact • Specific IT projects are developed with Aboriginal women in communities in rural and remote regions of NSW. • DFW identifies successful IT Grants Projects/Products and promotes models of best practice (eg <i>Networks4 Networks</i>) • Investigate alternative virtual sources being used to make connections and communicate such as NOISE which is part of Partnerships Against Domestic Violence.
More women pursue educational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women participating in education and training as a direct result of IT projects 		
Leadership skills are facilitated and enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women on boards and committees (based on project localities) 		
Women have improved access to services and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey women to gauge increased access to and awareness of government services/information (before and after project) • 		
Networks and mentoring relationships are created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks and mentoring relationships established through IT projects • Number of women participating on boards and committees 		
IT is used as an advocacy mechanism to enhance women's lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT is used as an advocacy mechanism in projects 		
Economic development is enhanced through the use of IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small businesses are linked to websites 		

<p>Projects and Initiatives are sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives remain sustainable when funding ceases. Solutions are created which have ongoing benefits for the community. Train the Trainer and IT mentoring initiatives for example, achieve this objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women engaged in IT after the project is completed • Communities are able to attract resources to continue activities eg private sponsorship • Networks, links and relationships are maintained beyond the project 		
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4.2 Services appropriate to women and girls, where:

Partnerships with government and private sector agencies are strengthened, so that women and girls have access to services designed for them, such as information, child care, transport, support services, technology, education, corrective services, juvenile justice, legal advice, policing, financial services, business and employment.

Key IT Outcomes	Performance Measures	Strategies	Future Action
<p>Services are more efficient and effective and are customised to women's/girls' needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback received on DFW's website and Gateway enhancements (internal surveys on number of hits, satisfaction levels etc) • The development of the Women's Gateway is linked to the development of other portals • Government IT services and programs reflect the interests of women and girls and enhance access 	<p>DFW works in partnership with community based organisations to develop services, which are efficient and effective and are customised to women's/girls' needs. (For example, <i>Western Sydney IT hub</i>, IT Projects funded through the Women's Grants Program, Women's Information and Referral Service).</p> <p>DFW initiates IT projects, which improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and are customised to better meet women's and girls' needs. For example:</p> <p><i>Women's Gateway</i> and related enhancements (DFW is enhancing the Gateway to include "life event" keys, which will enable easier access to information around significant life events such as pregnancy, separation, and return to work).</p> <p><i>Department for Women's Website</i> (DFW monitors use of the Website to ensure that the site is effective and efficient).</p> <p><i>Automotive Tool Kit: An information guide for women</i> (a DFW initiative, produced with the help of Toyota Australia this online resource provides hints for dealing positively with all aspects of the automotive industry).</p> <p>DFW works in partnership with other government agencies to provide more efficient and effective services, which are customised to women's needs. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Women's Information Needs Project</i> (Funded through the Commonwealth/State Ministers for Women Activities Trust Fund Women, this project is researching women's information needs and information seeking behaviours (including use of the Internet) in relation to government information). • <i>NSW Human Services Intranet</i>. (Provides links and the sharing of information between five Human Service Agencies, including DFW) <p>DFW uses consultations and outreach activities to gain a better understanding of how Information Technology mechanisms might enhance service delivery for women and girls.</p>	

	<p>DFW provides policy advice to the Minister for Women, and to other government agencies, NGOs and private sector organisations in relation to how services might be customised to women's/girls' needs, and delivered more efficiently and effectively through the application of IT. For example through the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Coordination Management Group• Better Service Delivery Initiative	
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4.3 Learning communities in which an evidence based approach to policy, research and evaluation result in:

- Collaborative and policy relevant research that contributes to social justice for women;
- 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; and
- Policy development directed by evidence based evaluation.

Key IT Outcomes	Performance Measures	Strategies	Future Action
<p>DFW persuades and negotiates new learnings, both within its own organisation and within the broader community, government and private sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of staff presenting IT/gender related information/research findings at seminars, conferences and forums etc • Number of research related partnerships DFW is involved in • Gender learning is reflected in whole of government IT initiatives • The percentage of financial resources allocated to research and development • DFW is up to date with emerging technologies • Number of staff trained in IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women's Grants Program funds projects, which have the capacity to undertake IT focused research projects and support women's/girls' uptake of new and emerging technologies. • DFW monitors applications and outcomes from the Women's Grants Program to support the development of future research projects. • DFW staff receive up to date training in the use and application of IT. <p>DFW works in partnership with other government agencies to undertake IT focused research projects, which will inform the development of policy, funding arrangements, service delivery and practice. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Girls IT Choices</i> (DFW is working with the Department of Education and Training on this project which is researching the potential reasons for girls' low participation rate in IT based subjects in several Western Sydney High Schools). • <i>Women and IT</i> (An interagency project team is working with the Attorney-General's Department on this project which targets women in public sector employment to establish how more women can be attracted, trained and placed in IT jobs within their current agency through short term training courses). • <i>Women's Information Needs Project</i> <p>Findings are documented and widely disseminated to contribute to and inform the existing knowledge base. Dissemination occurs through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations at conferences and other forums • Posting information on relevant Websites and the <i>Women's Gateway</i> • Involvement in relevant government, community and private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of the home based work market • DFW scopes and monitors new IT initiatives (and partnership arrangements) in/between the NGO, government and private sectors to identify best practice models which will inform future work.

		<p>committees, forums, and meetings etc.</p> <p>The Department is engaged with the community around IT issues through ongoing debate, consultation and dissemination of information. The Department facilitates, persuades and negotiates new learnings through outreach and consultation.</p> <p>DFW assesses gaps in IT service provision, policy development and practice through the <i>Audit of NSW Government's Achievements for Women</i> (The audit reports on NSW Government agency initiatives which promote the interests of women).</p> <p>DFW provides policy advice to the Minister for Women, other government agencies, NGOs and private sector organisations based on research findings relating to women's/girls' engagement with IT.</p> <p>DFW monitors developments in IT and current research relating to women's/girls' engagement with IT through subscriptions to relevant IT mail lists, magazines, media monitors, and ABS publications etc</p>	
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4.4 An efficient, effective and fiscally responsible department, where:

Management and operation will result in the expansion and improvement of services within budget, and a higher profile for the Department is achieved by our informed, trained and confident staff.

Key IT Outcomes	Performance Measures	Strategies	Future Action
<p>Services are more efficient and effective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from service users on efficiency and effectiveness of IT facilities/services • Improved communication for staff in relation to provision of financial and human resource information between DFW and CCSU. • Availability of staff contact information across CCSU agencies. • Client feedback in relation to accurate, up to date and effective supply of information. • Audit of records system will find that records within agency comply with State Records Authority. • Improvement in the ease of access of information for staff through improved records management. • Reduction of administration costs through online access for purchasing of goods and services. • Staff are trained and have a good working knowledge in management of knowledge and information within the agency. • IT systems become more efficient as a result of student placements. 	<p>The Department works in partnership to deliver services more efficiently and effectively. Initiatives include:</p> <p><i>Central Corporate Services Unit (CCSU) Intranet</i> Allows for the sharing of information through the corporate services provider.</p> <p><i>WIRS</i> DFW staff use WIRS database to inform policy and project planning</p> <p><i>Records Management</i> Use of electronic based record keeping services that comply with State Records Authority standards.</p> <p><i>E-Procurement</i> Online purchasing of goods and services for the Department</p> <p><i>Information and Knowledge Management</i> A strategy encompassing management of electronic and paper documents, such as; the DFW website, databases and filing systems.</p> <p><i>Information Technology Industry Program (ITIPP)</i> DFW has ongoing HSC IT student placements through the ITIPP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information Management and Technology Strategy</i> • (DFW is developing a Strategy, which sets out management of records, electronic data, staff IT training, PCs and WIRS etc.) • <i>Women's Gateway</i> • <i>Department for Women's Website</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively seek out new opportunities to enhance service delivery (through funding programs, and links with other agencies.) • Development of records management to capture information at point of entry using scanners and upgraded software for RecFind. • Whole of government strategy for all agencies to move towards E-Procurement. • Staff restructure which acknowledges the need for improved systems management.

Attachment 1

Women and IT – Factors affecting access and use

Use of and access to Information Technology is influenced by a range of factors, including, sex, occupation, education level, work status, income and geographic location¹. While differences between men and women's/girls' involvement in IT is narrowing in some areas, significant inequities remain.

Recent ABS statistics on the *Use of the Internet by Householders* show that approximately 53% of adult males had accessed the Internet in the 12 months to November 2000. The corresponding figure for adult females was 47%. In the 12 months to February 2000, the figures were 46% for males and 41% for females respectively.²

Statistics for children (aged 5-14 years) show little difference between males and females. In the 12 months to April 2000, 47% of boys and 46% of girls accessed the Internet.³

ABS data indicates that the proportion of Internet users declines with age. During the 12 months to November 2000 the highest proportion of users were in the 18-24 year age range (74%), with the lowest proportion in the 55 years and over bracket (19%).⁴

Older people are the least likely group in society to own a computer or be connected to the Internet. Only 30% of people aged 55 years and over own a home computer⁵ and while statistics indicate that older people are the fastest growing age group among Internet users, their numbers are still low.

This issue is particularly relevant to women, as ABS data indicates that from the 65-69 age bracket, women comprise a higher proportion of the aged population in Australia.⁶

ABS statistics for the 12 months to November 2000 also indicate that adults residing in metropolitan areas were more likely to have accessed the Internet than adults residing outside metropolitan areas (52% compared to 44%), and those with incomes of \$40,000 or more were far more likely to have been Internet users than adults with incomes under \$40,000 (75% compared to 41%).⁷

Recent ABS data is supported by findings from a two year study (beginning January 1997) undertaken by ACNielsen into computer usage in Australia and New Zealand. The study was commissioned by the Commonwealth/State Minister's Conference to inform the Government's work in the area of IT. Results on computer usage in NSW (as at September 1998) indicated that:

- Men continue to have higher rates of both computer ownership and internet usage
- The increase in computer ownership is slower in regional communities
- Internet access is increasing significantly with take-up increasing fastest with metropolitan females (11% March 1997, 25% in September 1998)
- The over 55 age group (particularly women) are the most likely group not to have a computer
- The likelihood of not having a computer is strongly linked to income.⁸

It is important that women have equal access to Information Technology. IT offers "opportunities to affiliate socially and professionally, enrich existing relationships, and provide information as well as support".

Increasingly companies are posting employment information on the Internet and "government bodies, community organisations, and corporations are displacing resources from their ordinary channels of communication into the Internet".⁹

¹ Office of the Status of Women, *Internet and Computer Usage*, ACNielsen-McNair Reports 1997-98

² Australian Bureau of Statistics *Use of the Internet by Householders* November 2000 (8147.0) pp. 3-8

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics *Use of Internet by Householders* November 2000 (8147) extract from National Office for the Information Economy Website www.noie.gov.au/projects/inform...CSOP_

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics *Use of the Internet by Householders* November 2000 (8147.0)

⁵ Draft NSW Government *Seniors Online Business Case* June 2000, p.8

⁶ ACNielsen Net Ratings, 4th Quarter, 1999 as reported in the draft NSW Govt *Seniors Online Business Case* June 00, p.8

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics *Use of the Internet by Householders* November 2000 (8147.0) pp. 3-8

⁸ Office of the Status of Women, *Internet and Computer Usage*, ACNielsen-McNair Reports 1997-98

While women have unequal access to Information Technology, organisations need to ensure that information and services continue to be offered in ways that will not exclude access. Service providers also need to be aware that there may be circumstances where IT is not the most appropriate solution to a problem or issue. Close consultation with stakeholders is needed to prioritise appropriate strategies to meet identified needs.

Recommendation/s:

Research suggest the need for policies and programs, which focus on rural/regional areas and for strategied to be developed that encourgae community access to IT, particularly for older women and those on low incomes. Women need to be consulted to determine if/how IT can address identified needs.

While women have unequal access to Information Technology, information and services should continue to be offered through means that will not exclude access.

Women in the IT Industry – Education

One of the most apparent disparities between males and females in the field of IT is women’s representation within the IT industry.

“There is concern that the number of women in computing is actually declining, and that those still in the industry are in low-end jobs.”¹⁰

Australia’s technology sector is largely male dominated, with women primarily concentrated in non-technical jobs such as marketing, sales, web design and project management. As more business is transacted electronically and over the telephone, more women have been employed in call centers. It’s still unusual to see women working as network engineers, system architects and even less common to find female CEOs.¹¹

Essentially the “harder” the science involved, and the higher the level of management, the fewer women there are.¹²

A study for the Victorian Women’s Trust in 1999 “found that the women who work in the industry rate technology and telecommunications highly for flexibility and career support, but very low when it came to having a family friendly workplace.”¹³

“Depending on how “Information Technology” is defined, the number of women working in the field in Australia is somewhere between 20 per cent and 40 per cent.”¹⁴

Australia is experiencing a significant shortage of IT workers. In late 1998, the ICT industry identified a projected shortage of 180,000 specialist ICT skilled personnel by 2003-2004. If no action is taken to address this trend, forty per cent or 72,000 of the projected short fall will be in NSW.¹⁵

If Australia is to be competitive in a global economic structure founded on ICT developments and expertise in using ICT products, there is a national interest in making sure that both genders are proficient with IT and that these skills are not the province of one gender.¹⁶

⁹ Katz, cited in Kornblum, 1997, IRISS '98 Conference Papers, International Conference: 25-27 March 1998, Bristol, UK <http://www.sosig.ac.uk/iriss/papers/paper55.htm>

¹⁰ Sinclair, J; *Where are the women? In the new economy discrimination is still a problem?* The Age 3/10/2000. Quote by Anne Moffat, Managing Director, Exocat Computer Consulting.

¹¹ Sinclair, J; *Where are the women? In the new economy discrimination is still a problem?* The Age 3/10/2000.

¹² As above. Quote by Theresa Gattung, CEO Telecom New Zealand

¹³ Sinclair, J; *Where are the women? In the new economy discrimination is still a problem?* The Age 3/10/2000 p.7

¹⁴ As above. Quote by Theresa Gattung, CEO Telecom New Zealand p.6

¹⁵ NSW Government, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Skills Action Plan: skilling people for an information society* 2000

¹⁶ Meredyth, D et al; *Real Time Computers, Change and Schools. National sample study of the information technology skills of Australian school students*, Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, October 2000 p.42

The Department for Women supports initiatives, which seek to improve the status of women's workforce participation. The ICT industry offers skilled workers attractive salaries, and as long as women are underrepresented in the industry they are forgoing opportunities to be involved in a growing sector which has high levels of job satisfaction and plenty of employment.¹⁷

ABS 1999 statistics, report women's average weekly earnings in NSW (\$718.50) to be 80% of men's average weekly earnings (\$899.00).¹⁸ The unemployment rate for women in NSW compared to men at this time was also higher (5.8% and 5.5% respectively).¹⁹ In addition, 1998 ABS statistics report more women as being underemployed.²⁰

Links between school education and IT careers

Research indicates that the low number of women in the IT industry is in part attributed to the choice of subjects girls make at school and the type of exposure girls have to IT even before starting formal education.

A study undertaken by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) found sex role stereotyping and culture are major barriers for women entering the IT industry. Australian girls lose interest in IT around the age of 15 or 16. Boring teaching methods and poor teacher knowledge of what the industry can offer are contributing factors.²¹

In New South Wales, Information Technology is rapidly becoming marked as a boy's subject. In 1995 proportionately, there were many more girls studying IT than in 1998. By 1998 boys outnumbered girls by a ratio of more than 2:1 in 2 unit computer studies, where girls' enrolment numbers have actually fallen, and by nearly 5:1 in 3 unit computer studies.²²

The Department for Women is currently involved in an action research project *Girls IT Choices* in partnership with the Department of Education and Training. The project targets secondary school girls in Western Sydney to identify potential reasons for girls low participation rates in IT based subjects.

The project will examine trends and patterns in relation to Board of Studies enrolment data and will conduct a series of interviews with girls in secondary schools, teachers and parents who play a role in the decision making process.

The DETYA study suggests that engagement with computers begins within the home environment where more boys (32%) than girls (23%) are given their own computer²³. Computer games also tend to incorporate masculine themes such as sport, war and crime and would deter the involvement of many girls. Boys are also more likely to take risks while learning to use computers and often acquire basic skills such as programming at home.

Parents and other role models have a major influence on career choice, however if someone in the household has an IT career, the person is likely to be male, leaving few female role models for young girls.

Aboriginal populations are particularly disadvantaged in terms of access to and use of IT. A national study of the IT skills of Australian school students concluded

“if students come from indigenous backgrounds, or are from small schools, especially in rural and isolated areas, they are likely to be more disadvantaged than other students, lacking even the most basic computer skills.”²⁴

¹⁷ Scott (1996), Clarke and Teague (1995) in Neil Anderson; *Technology and Equity Literature Review*, No date

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia*, (6302.0) August 1999

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory*, (62101) November 1999 p.1

²⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Underemployed Workers*, Australia, (6265) September 1998,

²¹ Levy, W; *Why our girls are losing IT at school*. The Canberra Times, 27/3/00 pp.13-14

²² Collins,C; Kenway,J; McLeod, J; *Factors Influencing the Educational Performance of Males and Females in School and Their Initial Destinations After Leaving School*, Deakin University and University of South Australia, July 2000

²³ Levy, W; *Why our girls are losing IT at school*. The Canberra Times, 27/3/00 pp.13-14

²⁴ Meredyth, D et al; *Real Time Computers, Change and Schools, National sample study of the information technology skills of Australian school students*, Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, October 2000 p.42

At the end of 2000, there were about 8000 Indigenous students in tertiary education, of whom 107 were studying computer science.²⁵ The development of ICT skills among Indigenous populations has emerged as a priority for both State and Commonwealth governments. This is evident through the Commonwealth Government's recent launch of the *Networking our Futures Strategy* which seeks to create training, education and employment opportunities for Indigenous people in the ICT sector, and current work underway on the NSW whole of government *Indigenous Information and Communications Technology Strategic Plan*.

Research undertaken for a University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) *Women in Computing Project* indicates... "there is little knowledge in the broader community regarding career options within computer science (Gale et al, 1997, 23).

For young women, this coupled with a stereotypical image of what it is computer scientists do and other influences, such as the lack of support and encouragement both at high school and home leave them disregarding Computer Science as a legitimate and rewarding career choice."²⁶

Links between post school education and IT careers

"Women's participation in post-secondary education in Information Technology and Telecommunications (IT&T) remains at a low level and has not changed significantly over the last five years". "Once in tertiary IT&T courses, women have a success rate comparable to all students, however, women are in general taking lower level IT&T courses, particularly in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector."²⁷

Statistics on the number of women undertaking IT training varies. There is however agreement that the proportion is low. Charles Sturt University reports that while 56 per cent of Australia's university population is female, they represent less than 40 per cent of students in most Information Technology courses, and in some courses it is as low as 25 per cent.²⁸

DETYA suggests that women make up about 19 per cent of IT enrolments in both higher education and vocational training sectors.

Ironically in the DETYA study what female students expressed as the desired attributes of their future careers, such as human interaction and teamwork etc, is actually what the reality of most IT careers is like.²⁹

The most important skills for a career in IT is attention to detail, business acumen and the ability to communicate with end users about their needs.³⁰ These types of skills are typically attributed to women and often cited as the reason for women's success in small business.

²⁵ Minister Philip Ruddock; Press Release *Strategy Promotes Indigenous Participation in ICT Industry* 18/9/01

²⁶ Elliot, A; *Women in(to) Computing Background Paper 1. Women in Computing Project* University of Technology, Sydney, NSW (No date)

²⁷ E. Newmarch, S. Taylor-Steele, A. Cumpston; *Women in IT-What Are the Barriers?* Network of Women in Further Education Conference. Showcase of Strategies for Women in Education on Information Technology Conference Paper. Parliament House. Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs, NSW, 22 March 2000 p.15

²⁸ Grimson, K; *Information Technology: Not just a man's world*, Daily Advertiser Wagga Wagga 30/8/01 p.25

²⁹ Levy, W; *Why our girls are losing IT at school*. The Canberra Times, 27/3/00 pp.13-14

³⁰ Sinclair, J; *Where are the women? In the new economy discrimination is still a problem*. The Age 3/10/2000 p.7

Gender analysis

Beatriz Ruiro (in Kelly, 1985) offers an interesting feminist interpretation of women's representation within the IT industry, claiming that, "in general, women are better represented in technology in semi-industrialised countries than in Western industrialized nations. As well as being less tied to ideological gender identity, this may be because science and technology are more a cultural concern than economic, and therefore more open to less powerful groups in society. It is only when technologies become a central directive force in a country's economy that powerful groups compete for control of their expertise".³¹

Interestingly women were significant innovators in the early days of computer and software development. Their involvement began in the USA during World War II. The electronic computer, the integrated circuit and the Internet all developed out of the American military-industrial complex.³²

Lady Ada Lovelace was the first computer programmer, and Grace Hopper developed COBOL, the first computer programming language. Sr Mary Kenneth Keller was probably the first woman in the US to receive a PhD degree in Computer Science and helped develop the programming language BASIC.³³

In the 1950's Judy Levenson was involved in the initial development work on Whirlwind, the first real-time control computer, and Thelma Estrin designed and developed one of the first analog-to-digital conversion (ADC) systems.

At the end of the war women were forcibly withdrawn from the labour force in an effort to provide men with employment. One consequence over time being, that programming became a male dominated occupation.³⁴

Conclusion - The position for women and girls

The research outlined above suggests that influences affecting girls' engagement with computers starts in the home, and that while girls/women have the requisite skills to succeed in IT they are gradually socialized into choosing other career options. Factors such as peer pressure, stereotyped images of IT, and outdated teaching methods combine to deter girls from studying IT. Socio-economic and geographic disadvantage can further compound the problem. By avoiding careers in IT women are being denied satisfying, well-paid careers.

As Dale Spender (1995, 16) points out computers should be viewed as a source of wealth, power and influence. "Women and indigenous people, and those with few resources cannot afford to be marginalized or excluded from this new medium. To do so will be to risk becoming the information poor. It will be not to count; to be locked out of full participation in society in the same way that illiterate people have been disenfranchised in a print world."³⁵

Recommendation/s:

The research suggests the need for policies and programs which:

- **Identify the reasons for girls' disinterest in/disengagement with IT;**
- **Aim to address these issues and actively engage women in the information and communications technology industry;**
- **Facilitate women's access to the industry's top end jobs;**
- **Facilitate opportunities for girls to access IT work experience and scholarships;**
- **Encourage IT companies to adopt family friendly practices;**
- **Focus on disadvantaged groups, which are least likely to be involved in studying IT, including Aboriginal populations and girls/women in rural and remote communities.**

³¹ (Cockburn, 1993); Barriers for women in Computing. (Expand on footnote)

³² *Women and Computers: the military* <http://ualberta.ca/~nfriesen/582/military.h>

³³ As above, p 9

³⁴ Gurer, 1995 in Barriers for women in Computing. University of Limerick <http://www.ul.ie/~govsoc/barrierstw.htm>

³⁵ Neil Anderson- Technology and Equity Literature review (expand footnote)

How women learn and apply IT

An analysis of how women learn and apply new forms of Information and Communications Technology is necessary to inform the development of government and community sector policies and programs.

Research indicates that women use the Internet as a tool or a means to an end, rather than as a technology to be mastered. They use new technologies most readily when they're seen as personal and connecting media. In this context IT needs to be relevant, and placed in a purposeful context.

Women prefer to learn about Information Technology by; having time for reflection, using diverse ways of learning, good role models, a safe environment and being able to learn in a community.³⁶ IT is best taught to women in a cooperative interactive environment³⁷ where knowledge is demystified, self confidence enhanced, diversity respected, and where course designs are flexible, power is shared, and critical analysis occurs from a gendered perspective³⁸.

The goal of training programs should not be gaining a competency certificate vouching for technological skills but an ability to use services and technology to achieve what the user wants to do³⁹.

ICT training needs to incorporate a holistic approach, which allows women to adapt and use it for specific purposes, and which takes account of the complexities of women's lives and their roles as carers, community leaders, and educators etc. Past approaches have tended to be employment driven⁴⁰.

"Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) offer the potential to overcome limited definitions of community and locality and are already being used by women to access wider resources and organise for advocacy and to challenge structural inequalities and barriers to inclusion". ICTs allow community to be defined as communities of interest and this can have a wide geographic even global spread⁴¹.

The role women have in building community capacity and reducing social exclusion is critical but undervalued. The use of ICT as a tool for empowerment, inclusion and community renewal is therefore of particular relevance for women.

The application of IT in facilitating participatory democracy is of interest to many women/women's organisations, who have been traditionally been left out of policy debates⁴².

A US commercial study of what women want online found that women need their own communities (Resnick and Anderson, 1995).⁴³ Research on linguistic differences between men and women possibly explains one of the reasons for this. Women may find that all female groups provide them with an uninterrupted online voice that is less confrontational and more supportive. Women may feel both safer and more in control in all women groups online.⁴⁴

Research into what women are using the Internet for is interesting. A recent Australian study conducted by AC Nielsen/Consult found that females now dominate many online retail, real estate and some travel sites and that more women bank online than men of the same age. Over 70 per cent of online grocery shopping is done by women.

³⁶ Webb, P and Paquette Frenette, D; University of Montreal <http://womenspace.ca/confer/>

³⁷ Meredyth, D et al; *Real Time Computers, Change and Schools, National sample study of the information technology skills of Australian school students*, Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, October 2000 p.16

³⁸ Webb, P and Paquette Frenette, D University of Montreal <http://womenspace.ca/confer/>

³⁹ Philippa Yelland, *The Age* 29/2/2000 p.16

⁴⁰ *A report on women and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for PAT 15* by Women Connect @CDF 60 Highbury Grove, London N1 2NG, July 1999, p.10

⁴¹ As above, p.13

⁴² Ellen Balka, 1997 <http://www.sfu.ca/~ebalka/intro.htm>

⁴³ Morahan-Martin, J; *Women and Girls Last: Females and the Internet*, International Conference 25-27 March 1998, Bristol, UK, -IRISS '98 Conference Papers p.6 <http://www.sosis.ac.uk/iriss/papers/paper55.htm>

⁴⁴ As above

“But males still have the numbers overall. Of the 2.52 million Australians who shopped online in 2001, the research firm said 53 per cent of them were male.

Last year Australians spent \$3.8 billion online, compared to \$2.9 billion in 2000. Of that \$490 million was spent in December, compared to \$400 million a year earlier.

A Nielsen/Consult analyst Ramin Marzbani, said males spent more of that than women, but that was due to big ticket items like computer hardware. Men also buy more CDs, wine and sports goods online than women. Online banking is starting to reflect the wealth of anecdotal evidence in the offline world-that women do most of the banking and pay the bills.

Women between 20 and 34 are more likely to bank online than their male counterparts but men start to dominate from the age from the age of about 45, according to Mr Marzbani.”⁴⁵

A US study undertaken by Media Metrix in August 2000 also provides a useful insight into girls’/women’s use of the Internet. According to the report, young girls seek out online entertainment, and later, as they prepare for college access educational sites. In the tertiary education years the numbers of women in the 18-24 age bracket reduce slightly, suggesting a preference for offline activities. As women enter the workforce, productivity online becomes important. Those with, or planning families, seek parent and community oriented sites. After this stage, women prefer commerce and financial service sites, which are not necessarily targeted towards women.

Women tend to be more time pressed than men, and seek ease of use and rely on the Web to make their lives more efficient and productive. Men on the other hand, devote time to downloading software and are interested in technology for technology’s sake⁴⁶.

While women use the Internet to make their lives easier, research suggests that women are less inclined than men to have an interest in accessing government information/forms online.⁴⁷ This has significant implications for women as Government is delivering more of its services and information online. If women are not comfortable with accessing this type of material they will become the information poor, and existing areas of disadvantage will be exacerbated.

In the US women now represent just over one-half of the online population, and in Australia the gap is narrowing (almost half the population is female). “As the Internet becomes more of a mainstream medium, women become more critical to the equation in terms of content and e-commerce.”⁴⁸ Industry, government and community organisations need to be cognizant of how and why women are accessing information and services, to capitalise on this growing market and to ensure that service delivery is customised to the needs of women.

Recommendation/s

Research suggests that to be effective, IT training needs to incorporate women’s preferred learning styles. Women use IT as a tool for activities, including networking with communities of place and interest, and advocating for change. Use of IT as a community strengthening/capacity building mechanism is important to women.

Women use the Internet for different purposes, and this will vary depending on involvement in important life events (such as the birth of a child, entry to the workforce etc). To capitalize on women as a growing market and ensure their needs are addressed, service providers and policy makers need to be aware of how women use IT.

⁴⁵ Lowe, S; *Women log in to find nothing’s changed*, Sydney Morning Herald 10.1.02 p.3

⁴⁶ Anne Rickert, and Anya Sacharow, *It’s a Women’s World Wide Web. Women’s Online Behavioural Patterns Across Age Groups and Lifestages*. Media Metrix & Jupiter Communications, August 2000.

⁴⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (8128), 1998.

⁴⁸ Anne Rickert, and Anya Sacharow, *It’s a Women’s World Wide Web. Women’s Online Behavioural Patterns Across Age Groups and Lifestages*. Media Metrix & Jupiter Communications, August 2000.

The impact of IT on women's employment

Developments in IT are also having a significant impact on women's employment. Women's traditional areas of work are in some cases being superseded or dramatically changed through Information and Communications Technology. Telephonists, for example, are being replaced by electronic voice systems; and ATMs etc are reducing the number of front line service staff (many of whom are women).

Women's work conditions are also being affected by ICT. Telecentre/call centre employment has received publicity for poor Occupational Health and Safety standards, related to stress experienced by staff pressured to meet unrealistically high targets. The globalisation of work, including IT functions has had a dramatic impact on women's work.

"Computer networks and globalisation facilitate the export of women's work from the first world to the south. Workers in Korea, China and other "off shore" locations perform data entry and related tasks at greatly deflated wages. In Bangalore, workers fix software problems arising during the business day in the West, and send the results back before the next morning."⁴⁹

It is suggested that this practice reflects what is already happening in the manufacture of computer hardware. Corporations such as Phillips and Motorola have assembly plants in Southeast Asia which use predominately female workforce. Perry and Greber claim that "The low US dollar cost of the electronics revolution" they conclude "is to a large extent a reflection of the ability of multinational companies to exploit Third World labour"⁵⁰.

Telecommuting can also result in managers offering lower wages and fewer benefits to employees. "It reinstates women's confinement to the traditional domestic sphere, and re-privatises paid work along with child-rearing and house-keeping chores.

If properly regulated, on the other hand, telecommuting can offer benefits for women requiring flexible work arrangements. While this has enabled women to more effectively juggle work and family commitments, it is interesting to note how work from home arrangements can impact on men and women differently. For example, research suggests that women telecommuters are three times more likely than men to be interrupted by children⁵¹.

IT skills are now considered a prerequisite for many government, private and community sector positions. Women wanting to return to the workforce, following breaks to care for dependents are finding it increasingly difficult to compete for jobs without retraining in IT.

The increased reliance on ICT in the community presents particular issues for women who already experience the "disadvantage" of having a disability, or not being fluent in English.

⁴⁹ Women and Computers: *The Work-Place and Economy*. <http://www.ualberta.ca/~nfriesen/582/work.htm>

⁵⁰ As above

⁵¹ Reeves, R; *Girls losing the race in go-go world*. The Age 22/8/2000)

Recommendation/s

The impact of ICT on women's employment does not appear to have received much attention, and further research is needed to ensure that women are not disproportionately disadvantaged by new workforce practices, which capitalize on ICT developments.

Women returning to the workforce after career breaks need to access relevant ICT training to facilitate the re-entry process.

Attachment 2

Department for Women Information Technology Initiatives/Partnerships

Detailed below are some of the key IT initiatives that DFW has been involved in since 1998. The list is reasonably comprehensive, and the intention is that all new DFW IT initiatives/partnerships, will be added to the list and reported on regularly.

Although a number of the initiatives could fit within more than one category, they have been listed under the main category only.

Communities of Place and Interest

Western Sydney Project

The Department has an ongoing annual commitment to provide resources (both financial and staff) towards this project in conjunction with other partners, including the Office of Western Sydney. The program comprises several interconnected projects.

- *IT training for community sector organisations.* A pilot of three workshops held in 2000 provided training for 24 community and women's organisations across Western Sydney on the use of IT as an access and equity tool for women. Held in Campbelltown, Fairfield and Mt Druitt, the training identified the issues, training needs and IT infrastructure requirements within the community sector. It scoped the potential of IT to support the work of the community sector and provide training and skill development. The training was provided through Westnet, an IT peak organisation in Western Sydney. The Department is committed to facilitating the development of a training package that builds on this initiative.
- *Incubator* projects in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for women in communities.* The potential of IT to facilitate women's participation, as a community development tool and in community renewal, informs an ongoing consideration of alternative locations and possibilities for IT hubs for women in communities.
- The establishment of a digital arts hub for women working in IT and arts/design is being developed as part of arts development initiatives.
- The potential of ICT incubators with older women and women from diverse cultural backgrounds has been taken up through the Seniors Online Pilot Project for older women from diverse cultural backgrounds in the Auburn-Parramatta-Holroyd-Fairfield region of Western Sydney.
- *Incubator projects provide an IT hub located in a safe community space where women can access IT terminals and computers. The projects are a tool for community development and may be linked with other community programs.

- Workshops on '*Using the Internet as a Business Tool*' were run for women in small business in Western Sydney, as part of the Department's partnership with the Office of Western Sydney and with support from the Department of State and Regional Development. Training in the use of IT for women in small business is part of a scoping exercise on the training needs/workshop program being developed in partnership with the Office of Western Sydney.

IT Women of the West

DFW and the Premier's Council for Women will also provide \$10,000 in sponsorship towards the Western Sydney IT Cluster Start-Up Awards 2002. The aim of the award is to:

- Assist entrepreneurs in Western Sydney to start-up a new business venture;
- Encourage, promote and support research and development, innovation and the commercialisation of new ideas and technologies; and
- Promote innovation and foster entrepreneurship.

DFW's contribution is specifically for an Award for women in IC&T and will encourage the involvement of women entrepreneurs. The Women's Award is for an IT business proposal which is owned and operated by a woman or women.

Older Women Online Strategy

The Department has contributed to the development of this Strategy, which was initiated by the Premier's Department and aims to increase the availability and adoption of communication and IT by older people in NSW. The Department allocated \$100,000 from the Women's Grants Program in 2000-2001 to establish two pilot projects.

Consultations in the two pilot regions have been undertaken to ascertain specific IT needs of the identified target groups, and to develop implementation strategies for each area.

The Council on the Aging NSW (COTA) received \$50,000 to target older women living in retirement villages and caravan parks on the Central Coast. The *Women Online* project aims to provide access/training to assist in the development of advocacy mechanisms and facilitate access to information and services related to identified health issues.

COTA is working in partnership with the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association Inc (ASCCA), and will establish several computer clubs in the Gosford, Wyong region as part of the project.

The Local Community Services Association (LCSA) received \$50,000 to target older women from diverse cultural backgrounds in the Western Sydney region. The *Hands On* project aims to conduct Information Technology training and skills development for older women living in the Auburn-Liverpool-Fairfield-Parramatta-Holroyd areas.

E summer schools

DFW has contributed \$50,000 from the 2001-2002 Women's Grants Program towards two *e summer schools*, for Year 9-11 girls in the Walgett and Mt Druitt areas for 3 weeks during January 2002.

This joint NSW Government and Industry initiative is based on a program implemented in Colorado USA where students were paid for attending IT summer camps in lieu of a summer job. Students were provided with free tuition and resources and received accreditation for successfully completing the course.

The NSW Program targets students from disadvantaged areas of the state and aims to provide them with an ICT learning experience that will encourage further ICT study and hopefully lead to female students choosing to pursue a career in ICT.

V is for Volunteers

The Mudgee Shire Council Volunteers Committee received \$29,154 in 2001-2002 from the Women's Grants Program to establish a centrally-based and electronically accessible service to link volunteers to agencies that provide skills training. The project will identify potential volunteers amongst the shire's isolated communities and enable specific target and interest groups to access these same organisations and volunteer bodies. A

comprehensive database of organisations including the skills, training, services and memberships these organisations offer will be built.

Women Out West Multi Media Training Pilot Project

Metroscreen Ltd received \$89,750 in 2001-2002 from the Women's Grants Program to run the Women Out West Multi Media Training Pilot Project. The Pilot combines digital media training, business studies and work placements in IT companies and organisations working on digital media projects. Training and work placements will be offered to diverse groups of women in Western Sydney over 20 weeks. This project is a partnership between Metroscreen, Hawkesbury Skills, Artsnet, Western Sydney ITEC and Wesley Mission. The project aims to improve employment prospects for the women and provide opportunity to network with other women in IT and companies in Western Sydney employing IT and digital media workers. Skills developed will allow women the opportunity to generate self employment and work from home at hours to suit, or work in IT/digital media companies.

New England Women Developing Virtual Communities (NEWLinC)

In 2000-01 the Armidale Development Board received \$99,840 to employ trainers to develop and run skills workshops in networking and building "virtual communities" among rural/remote women using communications software on the world wide web.

A new dot-com website www.newline.com.au will open the door to employment opportunities and help address the gender imbalance in the IT industry. Women will also be introduced to basic IT tools including email, discussion boards, on-line forums and chat rooms to improve their access to information and services.

The project is a partnership between organisations including New England Institute of TAFE, University of New England, women's organisations across the region and the New England Information Technology Association.

Internet Cafe

Banardos Penrith Children's Family Centre received \$15,071 in 2000-01 for a project involving the establishment of an Internet Café for isolated and disadvantaged women within the Cranebrook Public Housing Estate. The project will establish partnerships with TAFE and local businesses to provide training. Women will gain skills and experience in computers/internet and in café work, and will have access to a community managed Internet Café. To facilitate access and use of the Café by women occasional child care will be available through a local child care centre.

Internet Access for Women

Rocky Hall Pre School Association received \$17,710 in 2000-01 for a project, which will provide Internet access and basic computer training for women in small isolated southern rural areas to enhance skills, knowledge and learning. The project will also provide opportunities to access and utilise information and contacts.

Skills Development for Migrant Women

In 2000-01 the Griffith Adult Learning Association received \$19,980 for a project, which targets women from migrant communities. The project involves recognition and documentation of prior learning, existing skills, training in resume writing, job seeking skills and training in the use of computers and the Internet.

Looking Towards the Future IT and Resources Access

In 1998-99 \$82,915 was provided through the Women's Grants Program to the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association to focus on:

- Establishing a range of information resources such as a self access library and website;
- Training a pool of immigrant and refugee women to become technologically literate on web design and internet usage; and
- Conducting a series of hands-on training workshops with immigrant and refugee women and community workers on usage and new technologies in community based settings in rural and metropolitan areas.

This project was delayed in its start up and was completed in March 2000. The interim evaluation report (as at October 1999), indicated that 97 women from diverse cultural backgrounds were trained on Internet usage in eleven different locations. The 297 applications received for this course, indicates the high demand for this type of training

among the target group. Seven women from diverse cultural backgrounds also completed an accredited course on Basic Web design.

Networks4Networks Project

The Drummoyn Community Centre received \$20,000 from the Women's Grants Program in 1999-00 to develop a model for inter-linking women in the community to build and sustain social networks. The project linked older, socially isolated women from the Inner West with volunteers to provide training on Internet use, social contact and peer support. A training kit on Internet and email skills was created. Further funding is now being sought through the CommunityLink Volunteer Award Program.

One of the important features of the program was its ability to build social support networks for socially isolated women and overcome their fear of IT through personal, one-on-one, self-paced training. The use of volunteer tutors also added a valuable layer to the project, bringing together women in the community who were otherwise unlikely to come into contact with one another.

Wallaga Lake Learning Centre Project

The Eden Merimbula Adult Community Education Inc received \$11,875 in 1999-00 for a project which established a weekly 3-hour computer based language, literacy and numeracy class for Aboriginal women of the Wallaga Lake community, near Bermagui. The program addressed the needs of women aged 18 to 60 receiving either unemployment or pension benefits. A web page and Internet site was developed for the Wallaga Lake community. The program aimed to give the women computer and literacy skills as well as access to other Aboriginal communities and global communication via the Internet.

English for Living Project

The St George and Sutherland Community College Inc. received \$18,690 in 1999-2000 to develop training for women from diverse cultural backgrounds who had little experience of employment success in Australia and who were seeking to enter or re-enter the workplace. The program covered English in Society, Workplace English/Communication, Job Seeking Skills and Information Technology, amongst other related modules. The IT module included topics such as:

- PC fundamentals
- Introduction to Windows
- Introduction to Word Processing
- Introduction to Spreadsheets.

Women of the Land Gathering

At the September 1999 Women of the Land Gathering in Moree, DFW provided funds to set up in association with the Rural Women's Network an Internet awareness program. The project included an Internet Café and workshops on topics such as E-commerce, Teleworking, Computing for Beginners, and Networking.

Women On-Line- *Stories by Women in IT*

This project, was jointly funded by the Department for Women, the Office of Information Technology and the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment (ODEOPE). The booklet showcases the contribution women are making to IT in the NSW Public Sector. *Women On-Line* is the fifth in the *Changing Roles of Women* series. The women in the booklet are developing IT based systems to meet the needs of the NSW community, business and government.

Ettalong Networked Community Pilot Project

The Department for Women was one of the key alliances involved in this project which was an initiative of the Central Coast IT&T Centre. The project's main activities were to:

- provide training in e-commerce for regional small or medium sized enterprises;
- provide IT skills and training for local communities; and
- provide training to establish a group of influential women with the ability to function as program ambassadors and community change agents, and to stimulate network and e-commerce usage in the region.

DFW was invited onto the Steering Committee of this project. Funding was provided through the 1999/2000 *connect.nsw* Capital Funding Program.

Cyberwaves

Cyberwaves was a wellness project for older women living in rural and remote areas. It was a joint project with NSW Health, the Rural Women's Network (Department of Agriculture), Older Women's Network (OWN), ABC Radio and 2WEB Radio Bourke. DFW (Women's Information and Referral Service) was on the Steering Committee. The project focused on using available technologies as a way of providing wellness information to older women living in rural and remote areas.

Cyberwaves produced a number of statewide radio programs with associated fact sheets and CVs, as well as developing an Internet site. Training was provided in 5 locations around the state to give women Internet skills to facilitate access to information.

Women and IT Think Tank

North Sydney TAFE instigated this initiative which also involved the Department for Women, Department of Education and Training (DET), Office of Information Technology (OIT), Office of the Status of Women (OSW), University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Sydney TAFE, and Females in Technology and Telecommunications (FITT). The role of the group is to advise, influence, market, create industry links, identify systemic solutions and develop an umbrella strategy for the role of women in IT. The main outcome of this initiative is that the Think Tank and Wollongong University received a seeding grant to research factors affecting girls' study of IT.

Women's Online Day

(Held during Women on Line Week –27 October-2 November 1999)

In NSW a lunch was held at the Australian Technology Park for women working in IT in the public sector. Organised by the Department for Women, OIT, and ODEOPE the event assisted in addressing barriers to the increased participation of women in the IT industry. The lunch launched a mentoring network/online discussion forum for women and announced the IT publication showcasing women as part of the "Women on the Move" series.

Women and Girls Access Customised Services

Women's Gateway Project

The Women's Gateway, the first population portal online under the connect.nsw. strategy, provides a single website entry point for women to access:

- women's information resources available on existing government and community sites;
- information on NSW women's organisations and services; and
- news, events and FAQ's.

The Women's Gateway website: <http://www.womens.gateway.nsw.gov.au> was launched on 8 March 2001, International Women's Day, and provides women with easy access to issue-based, client-focused information and services. The Department has recently received funds from the Office of Information Technology to enhance the Gateway through the addition of "Life Event" keys, which will allow easier access to information and resources around issues related to pregnancy, separation and return to work.

Department for Women's Website

The Department's Website, which is located at www.women.nsw.gov.au, provides a range of information for women. The major components of the site include:

- Information on the role and functions of the Department for Women;
- Overview and membership of the Premier's Council for Women;
- Provision of information through the Publications and a Noticeboard;
- Details on relevant community events and the Women's Grants Program; and
- *Issues of Importance to Women* (a publication covering topics such as Leadership, Work and the Marketplace).

Analysis for the month of September 2001 indicated 5970 User Sessions and a total of 114,390 Hits to the Server*.¹

* A Hit is considered to be any request for data such as a Web page, bitmap, CGI gateway or file. User Session are tracked per IP Address and must register at least one hit to be registered.

Evidence Based Research, Learning and Development

Commonwealth/State Ministers for Women Activities Trust Fund *Women's Information Needs Project.*

This project is researching women's information needs and information seeking behaviours (including use of the Internet) in relation to government information. It will also investigate government information strategies.

Intended outcomes include, better targeted government information design and delivery, improved access to government information and services for women and improved opportunities for women for participation in social, political and economic life.

On the basis of the research, recommendations will be developed for more effective methods for delivering government information to women which:

- address the needs and preferences women themselves articulate rather than arise from the needs of government agencies to deliver particular information;
- focus particularly on the needs of disadvantaged women, women from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and women from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Increasing women's participation in information technology

Girls IT Choices

The *Girls IT Choices* project targets secondary school girls to identify potential reasons to explain girls' low participation rate in IT based subjects. This exploratory research, being conducted in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training, will examine any gender differences in the range of factors encouraging or discouraging students from choosing IT subjects in two secondary schools in Western Sydney. Students, their parents, teachers, careers advisors, and principals will be surveyed and interviewed.

The ultimate goal of the project will be to develop strategies which are effective in increasing girls' awareness of the IT industry and their participation in IT as a career. A further aim will be to use the findings and methodological approach developed from this study to seek funding to conduct a more comprehensive a state-wide study.

Women and IT

This action project targets women in public sector employment, working out how more women can be attracted, trained and placed in IT jobs within their current agency through short term training courses.

An interagency project team is working with the Attorney-General's Department to work through a series of stages such as identifying IT skill gaps within the organisation, selecting women for bridging training and placing them in IT roles with support.

The model produced by the project will be transferable to other public sector agencies to help them address their IT skill gap as well as women's low participation rate in IT employment.

Anticipated outcomes include:

- Approximately 10 – 15 women will be trained for and placed in IT jobs.
- The interagency project team will document the process, outcomes and insights of the action research.

¹ LifeStart Statistics. Statistics report for www.women.nsw.gov.au Month of September 2001

- A low cost, minimum time, bridging strategy will be developed to enable women make career transitions into the IT sector.
- Completion of a micro level action research project suitable for expansion based on project evaluation.

The common aim of both projects is to help girls and women make the transition into education, training and ideally employment.

The Premier's Council for Women has just completed a report for the Premier which is the result of extensive research and many interviews conducted over the last three months. This paper highlights the reasons why girls are not participating in IT at school or choosing IT careers after leaving school. The report includes 15 recommendations about raising the profile of IT, further training opportunities and the support needed to promote IT as a career for women.

The Premier's Council for Women will also be running a series of workshops over the next two years for girls in Years 9, 10 and 11. These workshops will focus on issues such as leadership, financial planning and careers which will include a heavy emphasis on encouraging girls to undertake IT training which will assist them in any career they might choose, but also to consider IT as a career option.

DFW's IT pilots, including the Older Women Online Projects and the Western Sydney IT Hubs could also fall under this category.

Efficient, Effective and Fiscally Responsible Organisation

NSW Human Services Intranet

The Intranet has been created to provide links and the sharing of information between five human service agencies. This includes DET, NSW Health, the Ageing and Disability Department (ADD), Department of Community Services (DoCS), and the Department of Housing - together with guest agencies, DFW, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Central Corporate Services Unit (CCSU) Intranet

Allows for the sharing of information through the corporate service provider CCSU.

Changes to Records Management

The sharing of information by e-mail rather than paper has streamlined the Department's functions. It is also anticipated that in the future, documents will be able to be scanned and circulated electronically, making for a more efficient communication system.

The Women's Gateway also fits under this category.

Attachment 3

NSW Government IT Initiatives

Information Management and Technology Blueprint for NSW

- **Strategy 1: *Promoting a public sector-wide approach to Information Management and Technology (IM&T).*** This Strategy aims to eliminate costly duplication and introduce a coordinated approach to information management.
 - (DFW's involvement includes: NSW Human Services Intranet, CCSU Intranet)
- **Strategy 2: *Using IM&T to support overall Government outcomes.*** Agencies will take more responsibility for IM&T and adopt measures to integrate IM&T with Government outcomes.
 - (DFW's involvement includes: NSW Human Services Intranet)
- **Strategy 3: *Take advantage of the strategic value of information.*** New technologies will allow government to use its information to better serve the community, by sharing information efficiently among different government agencies.
 - (DFW's involvement includes: Combined Corporate Service Unit (CCSU) Intranet, NSW Human Services Intranet, DFW Website)
- **Strategy 4: *Support customer focused services.*** Service delivery needs to match consumer demand for access to services where and when it suits them.
 - (Most of DFW's initiatives address this objective, including the Women's Gateway Project, Activities Trust Fund *Women's Information Needs Project* and the DFW Website)
- **Strategy 5: *Using IM&T to broaden access to government information and services.*** A public sector –wide IM&T Strategy will enable diverse systems to communicate with each other and open up access to the general public and industry.
 - (DFW's involvement includes: The Women's Gateway Project, DFW Website, Human Services and CCSU Intranets, the Activities Trust Fund *Women's Information Needs Project*, DFW Website, the Seniors Online Pilot Projects)
- **Strategy 6: *Make the Government a smart acquirer of IM&T.*** Government agencies need to cooperate on the standard acquisition of IM&T goods and services to create a market situation, which benefits both industry and government.
 - (DFW uses e-mail and plans to introduce document scanning etc)
- **Strategy 7: *Investing in relevant IM&T skills.*** New skills and training will be required as the general public and public sector adapt to new technologies.
 - (DFW's involvement includes: Western Sydney Project, Seniors Online Pilots, Immigrant Women's Speakout Grant, the Wallaga Lake Learning Centre Project Grant and DFW's staff training in Information and Communications Technology)
- **Strategy 8: *NSW Government to be a competent and confident user of IT&M.*** New technologies should enable Government to develop innovative service delivery.
 - (DFW's involvement includes: DFW Website, Women's Gateway Project)
- **Strategy 9: *Using IM&T to support the development of New South Wales.*** IM&T will be an important tool in the Government's efforts to boost the economic, social and business development of the State.
 - (Most of DFW's initiatives relate to this strategy, including the Western Sydney Project, Networks4Networks Project, Women of the Land Gathering and the Seniors Online Pilot Projects)

The Government's Internet Strategy for NSW *connect.nsw* also provides a framework for DFW's work in the area of IT and builds on the *Information Management Technology Blueprint for NSW*. The four main strategies are outlined below and a connection is made between these objectives and DFW's current IT initiatives.

The Government's Internet Strategy for NSW-*connect.nsw*

Integrated Government

A Government Network Service (Intranet) will be established to provide one-stop-shop service delivery to customers. It will establish services needed to provide electronic service delivery and will promote improved policy development through knowledge sharing between agencies.

(DFW initiatives include Human Service and CCSU Intranets, Interdepartmental email, and the DFW website). The Premier's Department will also be liaising with the Department for Women to ascertain women's information needs in relation Government Access Centres.

Electronic service delivery

A whole-of-government approach to electronic service delivery will improve government effectiveness and reduce costs. Customers will be able to access most government services through a single point of access and ultimately from all three levels of government.

(DFW initiatives include the DFW Website, and the Women's Gateway Project)

Electronic commerce

Exploiting state and regional development by accelerating the take up of electronic commerce in government, the community and private sector.

(DFW does not really engage in e-commerce as a Department, however it may be involved in or fund projects, which promote the use of e-commerce to women in NSW.)

Networked communities

Improving the quality of NSW regional and metropolitan life by establishing networked communities. (Includes people disadvantaged by physical or geographic location, providing training and support and facilitating community access).

(DFW initiatives include the Women's Gateway Project, DFW Website, Western Sydney Project, Seniors Online Pilot Projects, and IT projects funded through the Women's Grants Program)

New South Wales Information and Communications Technology Skills Action Plan

The following actions are the key focus areas, as outlined in the NSW ICT Plan. The Plan was developed with assistance of an ICT Skills Consultative Group, drawn from the ICT Industry, the educational sector and the business community. The Department of Information Technology Management co-ordinated this cross agency initiative.

Action 1. School IT

Establish a School of the Future at the Australian Technology Park (ATP) as a centre for e-learning in partnership with community.

Action 2. Extend IT

Ensure students and teachers have the necessary IT skills to enhance the learning experience in NSW schools and TAFE.

Action 3. Start IT

Increase the number of IT traineeships and cadetships in Public and Private Sectors.

Action 4. Exchange IT

Establish small business IT skills seminars and workshops to exchange skills and IT project support. Involve IT industries, large companies and small businesses.

Action 5. Grow IT

Establish IT Corridors Development Program incorporating urban planning, industry attraction and incentives, education and telecommunications infrastructure to increase access to technology, thereby increasing IT skills levels.

Action 6. Work IT

Develop and implement a statewide plan to enhance take-up of IT careers and IT skills in business.

Action 7. EquallTy

Develop programs targeting women, people from non English speaking backgrounds, indigenous people, the unemployed, people with disabilities and young people.

Strategy 7.6 under Action 7 directly relates to the Department for Women and reads:

Continue to fund DFW's Grants Program, particularly proposals focusing on IT education, training and employment opportunities for girls and women, and developing IT skills in disadvantaged populations.

(DFW reports against this strategy to OIT on a quarterly basis (check))

Action 8. TransITions

Establish a Public Sector IT skills development program.

The Department for Women is a member of the across agency group which is working to implement **Strategy 8.3** as outlined under **Action 8**. It reads:

Establish training of under-represented groups in public sector IT areas. An across agency group is scoping a pilot to reskill women for IT careers in the Public Sector.

Action 9. Getting IT

Develop regional online communities.

Action 10. Coordinate IT

Coordinate and monitor IT skills development across NSW.¹

¹ *skilling people for an information society: New South Wales Information and Communications Technology Skills Action Plan, April 2001, p.7*