



# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**equality**families**justice**education**violence**work**safety**power**leadership**training**communities**health

## Introduction

***Changes to the education and training system over recent decades have meant a vast increase in choice and avenues for women and girls to pursue their study and career goals. The education and training system is now more accessible than ever before to women in NSW. There are now multiple pathways for girls between school and education and training including vocational training in schools linked to industry. Women who have experienced barriers to formal education can undertake preliminary courses in community settings, which open up pathways to further training options and employment. The reform and expansion of the traineeship and apprenticeship system has provided training in a wider variety of entry-level occupations for a wider age group.***

Over the same time, women and girls have made major gains in participation and attainment at school and in vocational and higher education. There has been a continuing improvement in participation of young women across the range and level of post-school destinations, particularly in vocational education and training and high prestige university courses such as law and medicine traditionally dominated by men.<sup>1</sup>

However, for some women and girls these achievements have not always meant the same long-term employment and economic outcomes as for men. While women's participation in vocational education and training has improved, some entrenched problems persist, including clustering in fields of study and at lower levels, less employer support for external training, under-representation and low completions rates in apprenticeships and non-traditional areas.<sup>2</sup> Women graduates do not achieve the same outcomes as

men on a range of post course measures. Women graduates from vocational education and training are more likely than men to:

- ◆ take longer to find employment following graduation
- ◆ be employed in lower level jobs which do not reflect qualification levels
- ◆ be in part time employment
- ◆ earn less
- ◆ experience greater periods of unemployment.

Women may be further disadvantaged if they are:

- ◆ from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
  - ◆ an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person
  - ◆ living in a rural or remote area
  - ◆ long term unemployed
  - ◆ in custody
  - ◆ an early school leaver,
- or have –
- ◆ a disability
  - ◆ low functional skills in English
  - ◆ low literacy skills.

The level of disadvantage varies across and within these groups and women who experience more than one type of disadvantage are even less likely to experience equitable access, participation and outcomes. A range of other factors can also affect the level of disadvantage, including social and economic status, level of previous education, attitudes towards education and training, family responsibilities and expectations, access to information about education and training options, levels of confidence and self-esteem.<sup>3</sup>

## Schools

Young women's participation (aged 15–19 years) in NSW schools has steadily increased from 46.7 per cent in 1989 to 51.6 per cent in 2000. These rates exceeded both national women's participation rates and rates for men in NSW over the same period.<sup>4</sup> Apparent retention rates for girls in NSW schools (Years 10 to 12) rose by 35 per cent over the last twenty years, increasing from 40 per cent in 1981 to 75.2 per cent in 2001. The national retention rate for girls was 41.9 per cent in 1981, rising to 80.1 by 2001. Retention rates for boys have remained consistently lower than girls in NSW.<sup>5</sup>

There are major gender differences in educational participation, performance and outcomes from schools. Girls have shown overall better than average performance in English literacy in the early and middle years of schooling and most subjects in year 12. These differences in performance cannot be explained by gender alone and different groups of girls do not enjoy the same level of achievement. Gender must be considered with other factors such as socio-economic status, geographic area, ethnicity and language background and Aboriginality. The most disadvantaged girls are those in poverty and those in remote/isolated rural areas. While there have been dramatic changes in the way students with disabilities or learning difficulties have been accommodated within the education system, there still are many students in need of help.<sup>6</sup> There is also a complex interplay between factors external to schooling, the curriculum and the organisation of schooling itself.<sup>7</sup>

While girls' retention and Year 12 success rates are above those of boys, girls as a group still perform less well in post-school options, in part because girls make less career oriented

HSC choices.<sup>8</sup> The structure of Year 12 assessment privileges some combinations of subjects and certain subjects and can disadvantage girls who select a broad range of subjects that are not necessarily well articulated to each other and may be of low status. That is, girls tend to take subjects in which they show talent and have interest, but which have poorer post-school links to future training and employment. 'Average' boys in contrast, take narrow clusters of high pay-off traditional subjects. Despite doing more poorly in these subjects these boys are possibly making subject selections with potential post-school employment pathways in mind.<sup>9</sup>

- ◆ Higher School Certificate key learning areas for 2002 in which the proportion of girls was below 50 per cent were mathematics (49 per cent), sciences (48 per cent) and technological and applied studies (42 per cent).<sup>10</sup>
  - ◆ Higher School Certificate key learning areas for 2002 in which girls predominated were Languages other than English (68 per cent), Creative Arts (67 per cent), and Personal development health and physical education (63 per cent).<sup>11</sup>
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- ◆ School completion has a marked effect on women's labour force participation in comparison to men's, with the gap widening for women who did not complete their schooling. Across the decade from 1990 to 2000, the labour force participation rates of women who completed high school ranged between 60–66 per cent, while men's participation rate was 81–83 per cent. Women who did not complete high school showed the lowest labour force participation rates of around 50 per cent across the decade, falling substantially below rates for comparable men, 78–83 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

Despite significant improvements in educational achievement among girls generally, there still remains a significant group of young women marginalised from recognised pathways to education, training and employment. Young women who do not go on to complete a higher qualification after school are less likely to secure full-time employment, more likely to be involved in part-time employment and much more likely to be undertaking activities outside the labour market, such as parenting.

There is also evidence that girls' experience of school can be disruptive to their learning. This includes girls being teased for taking non-traditional subjects, sex-based harassment and bullying by boys against girls (and other boys). This can lead to absenteeism, truancy and depression in some girls.<sup>13</sup>

### **Our commitments**

- ◆ Achieve a balance in advancing the educational opportunities of boys and girls.
- ◆ Develop the curriculum at the primary and secondary level to maximise the interests and knowledge of both genders and ensure that learning is not constricted by perceptions that particular subjects are the natural domain of either boys or girls.
- ◆ Continue to upgrade toilet facilities in state primary and secondary schools, with particular attention to improving girls' toilets to meet their specific hygiene and privacy needs.
- ◆ Promote information technology traineeships to the community. Women seeking retraining to return to the workforce will be specifically targeted.
- ◆ Develop a community management training module using distance education to target Aboriginal women.

- ◆ Continue to offer the Career Education for Women course through TAFE institutes, targeting women who have been out of the workforce for some time and are seeking a new career direction.
- ◆ Evaluate the effectiveness of the women's vocational education strategy *Changes and Choices*.
- ◆ Increase the number of women undertaking apprenticeships in NSW.
- ◆ Conduct school leadership courses to encourage women teachers to take on executive roles in schools.

## **Ensuring equal access to education**

### **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SCHOOLS**

A major research project overseen by the Department of Education and Training will investigate the study and work outcomes of students who undertook Higher School Certificate Vocational Education and Training courses. The research study, *VET in Schools and Post-School Destinations* will track students for six years commencing with a sample of 3,000 from the 2002 Higher School Certificate cohort. At the end of the seven years project, substantial information will be provided on issues surrounding vocational education and training in schools, including issues for girls.

### **GIRLS ACCESS MUSIC**

The *Music Education Initiative* for young women is a trial program aimed at improving the gender imbalance in the cohort of Jazz Studies students at the Conservatorium of Music and of women pursuing jazz as a career. This initiative is part of the Ministry for the Arts, Sydney Improvised Music

Association Incorporated cultural grants program for 2002 and provided a series of workshops and music clinics for Year 11 and 12 girls who are considering becoming jazz musicians. The first of two workshops, held in May 2002, was extremely popular with the limited available places being oversubscribed.

### GIRLS ACCESS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Despite significant growth in the IT professions in recent years, women remain under-represented. A number of international and Australian studies have examined factors contributing to girls' under-representation in IT subjects at school, in subsequent tertiary studies and in IT careers. Emerging evidence shows a gender divide of computer literacy, use and participation.

In particular, more boys than girls are taking information technology subjects in the post-compulsory years and in NSW the difference in participation has grown considerably during the 1990s. Girls' low participation in subjects that result in information technology literacy leads to the risk of them becoming members of the information poor, excluded from the information society.

◆ In 2001 young women held 32 per cent (5 634) IT related HSC subject places.<sup>14</sup> In 2002 of all 3 872 HSC entrants taking Software Design and Development 13 per cent (495) were girls. In 2002 of 10 507 HSC entrants taking Information Processes and Technology 36 per cent (3 744) were girls.<sup>15</sup>

In response, there has been a variety of innovative research and programs designed to increase girls' and women's awareness of and access to information technology study and careers.

The *Girls and IT Choices* project was a pilot research initiative of the Department for Women to identify factors contributing to girls' under-representation in Information Technology subjects at school. The ultimate aim is to develop strategies to increase girls' participation in IT education, training and careers. The project conducted an in-depth exploration of issues affecting participation in IT subjects and the IT subject selection process in two secondary schools in Western Sydney. Data on the perspectives and attitudes of students, key school staff and parents was collected through a validated survey questionnaire and interviews. The specific population groups of interest were Year 8 and Year 10 girls and boys who had recently decided on their subjects for the subsequent year of study. Overall, 383 students were surveyed, and 90 were followed-up for one-to-one interview. In addition 14 school staff and 24 parents were interviewed. This project was undertaken with the assistance of the Strategic Research Directorate, Department of Education and Training. The report will be published at [www.women.nsw.gov.au](http://www.women.nsw.gov.au).

The pilot project provided high quality information which will form the basis for a larger study to commence in 2003, subject to funding. Surveys would be conducted on a sample of NSW high schools examining reasons for girls' choices relating to Information Technology subjects.

*E-Summer Schools* provided students with an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning experience which showed that ICT is enjoyable, and encouraged participants to undertake further ICT study. Government school students from Years 9–11 in socio-economically disadvantaged rural and urban areas participated in the e-Summer School program which was designed to meet local student needs. Each course included accredited ICT training, site visits or visits from ICT

specialists, career information and opportunities to have fun and experiment with new technologies. The Department for Women participated in the steering committee and sponsored two schools to participate in the program, one in the Mount Druitt area and the other at Walgett. Of those who attended at Mt Druitt, 47 per cent were girls and 86 per cent of the 15 students at Walgett were Aboriginal girls.

### Digi-girls

**The *Digi-girls* initiative, undertaken by Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE, broadens girls' understanding of Information Technology (IT) career opportunities and the pathways into occupations within the IT industry.**

The expected outcome of these programs is an increase in the number of girls undertaking IT subjects at school and in vocational education and training. The program included presentations from role models, discussion of possible careers in IT, project work in teams, mentoring and student presentations to parents, caregivers and IT workers and teachers. Thirty Year 9 and 10 girls participated in the program in 2002 with a majority reporting they would consider IT as a career and would be discussing their experiences with fellow school students, teachers and family. The program and its outcomes will be documented in a report for distribution throughout TAFE NSW.

The *Explore Your Future* initiative is a taster day of IT based activities for girls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds in Years 9 to 11. The aim of this TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute initiative is to provide the opportunity for young women to explore the diversity and challenges of the IT industry and IT training. Girls are exposed to the capabilities of

computers, and women from the IT industry will discuss their professional experiences and the diversity of opportunities in the industry. A program kit will be developed to assist other TAFE NSW institutes to implement similar programs. The initiative addresses the decline in the proportion of young women undertaking IT subjects in schools and TAFE NSW. The expected outcome is an increase in the number of girls and women undertaking IT subjects at school and TAFE and at higher qualification award levels.

A careers website, *GirlsWork: Work Opportunities for Young Women* is a resource which aims to encourage young women to consider a broader range of career options and to increase young women's awareness and consideration of a broader range of occupations and careers and encourage them to restart or remain in education and training. A further expected outcome is an increase in the number of young women undertaking vocational education and training in a wider range of occupational areas at both school and TAFE.

The intended audience for the website, under development by the Department of Education and Training, is young women aged 14–19 years who are:

- ◆ in school
- ◆ at TAFE
- ◆ considering leaving school or TAFE
- ◆ unemployed or under-employed
- ◆ at risk of disengaging from education and training.

Focus groups were conducted to ensure that the website is attractive, engaging and relevant to its intended audience. A marketing strategy will include the development of teaching resources and promotional materials such as stickers and posters.

The website's main pages include-

- ◆ GirlsWork, which challenges young women to consider the way gender can impact on study, work and career choices.
- ◆ Pathways, which discusses how there are many paths to achieving jobs and careers and encourages young women to explore their options.
- ◆ Work Profiles, which highlights industry areas which young women may not have previously considered. Each section gives information on the kinds of work, salary, and links to further information.
- ◆ Your Stories, which features interviews with young women who have achieved success in their chosen field.
- ◆ Other sections include Ecards, a Quiz, News and Links to help with job searching, career choices, training information and support.

The website will be launched following the development of a similar website aimed at young men.

### CONTINUING EDUCATION

- ◆ Total enrolments for the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector in NSW in 2001 were 379 642. Women accounted for 70.6 per cent of enrolments.<sup>16</sup> Of the women enrolled in ACE in 2001 (267 890), 17.5 per cent were overseas born and 6.8 per cent spoke a language other than English at home.<sup>17</sup>

The *Partnerships in ACE* project aims to increase pathways into further education, training and employment for those outside the formal education system. This initiative of the Board of Adult and Community Education provides funding to the Local

Community Services Association (the peak body for NSW Neighbourhood and Community Centres) to develop practical partnerships between ACE organisations and Neighbourhood or Community Centres with the aim of increasing learning pathways into further education, training and employment for disadvantaged groups. The project targets women, who have limited formal schooling or who are outside the formal training/education system or work force.

During 2002 the *Partnership in ACE* project comprised three components:

- ◆ Professional Development designed to assist representatives of ACE and Neighbourhood Centres to establish and maintain an effective and efficient
- ◆ Life Experience Counts, which assists participants to recognise skills, attitudes and knowledge gained through their life experiences and how these skills are transferable
- ◆ Life Experience Counts Plus Options, which helps to consolidate further training pathways for participants into a mainstream learning environment.

The partnership relationship provides the framework for participants to take their next step into ACE courses. In total, the 2001 project was delivered to 460 participants of whom the majority were women. The Life Experience Counts courses were delivered in 32 locations across NSW.

## Improving women's access to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education

- ❖ Women have shown a substantial increase in the acquisition of post-school qualifications over the past decade in NSW. Women were 47.4 per cent of people with a post-school qualification in NSW in 2001, increasing from 38 per cent in 1990.<sup>18</sup>
- ❖ In 2001, 54.8 per cent of the total of 231,600 students in higher education in NSW were women.<sup>19</sup>
- ❖ In 2001, women held 51.1 per cent of 604,700 publicly funded vocational education and training places in NSW. This represents a 4 per cent increase over the last decade.<sup>20</sup> Of all women vocational education and training students in NSW 7,600 (2.7 per cent) were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders and 12,000 (4.3 per cent) had a disability.<sup>21</sup>

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN

The *TAFE NSW Strategic Directions for Women 2001–2002* policy aims to improve women students' access, participation and outcomes in TAFE NSW. The evaluation of the previous policy, the *NSW State Program of Action for Women in TAFE 1997–2000* indicated that although many significant improvements for women access and participation in vocational education and training have been achieved, more initiatives were required to address under-representation of women in vocational education and training courses in TAFE NSW. The current policy was developed through wide consultation during 2000 and aligns with the *TAFE NSW Strategic Directions 2000–2002*. Operational areas of the Department such as

TAFE NSW institutes, equity units, and educational divisions have committed to undertake activities in response to the policy. The Gender Equity Unit has developed a communication resource to assist institutes to develop local strategies and initiatives.

The policy will:

- ❖ assist women to develop skills which industry needs and ensuring that our training better meets the diverse needs of all women
- ❖ strengthen links with schools, universities, other providers, community organisations and industry to create valued educational and employment pathways for women
- ❖ build on TAFE's leadership in flexible learning by using new technologies and delivery options to meet the diverse needs of women, and encouraging the delivery of training for women in the workplace
- ❖ support the expertise, creativity, innovation and commitment of TAFE staff to improve women students' outcomes.

### COURSES FOR WOMEN

Women-only courses at TAFE aim to increase women's access to vocational education and training at TAFE NSW and to assist women students to develop the skills and confidence required for entry and re-entry into the workforce or further education. The Work Opportunities for Women (WOW) Statement of Attainment and the Career Education and Employment for Women (CEEW) Certificate II course were reviewed and redesigned in 1999 and TAFE NSW institutes began offering the new courses to students from Semester 2, 2000.

The Access Division of TAFE NSW developed an implementation package and resource package for the WOW

course which was launched in 2002. These resources have also been published on the Department's Intranet website for use by course co-coordinators and teachers. The fee-exempt status of WOW courses is an essential factor in supporting women students' participation. Other support factors include flexible timetabling (especially around school hours), flexible venues, distance education and work placements. A range of WOW CEEW courses is offered every year, in areas such as computing, Child Studies, Small Business and Primary Industries Horticulture, Information Technology, Electrotechnology and Child Services. WOW courses are also customised and conducted for specific groups of women including Aboriginal women, young women at risk of disengaging with education and training, women in custody, women with a disability and women from language backgrounds other than English. In 2001, 2609 women students across the state undertook a WOW course at TAFE NSW.

### WOMEN INTO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The *Work Wise Women: Certificate IV in Information Technology (Client Support)* customises a high qualification award level information technology course for women in a women only learning environment. This course was developed by the Information Technology, Arts and Media (ITAM) Division of TAFE NSW and provides a training pathway from lower level access courses through to employment in the IT industry. The ITAM Division also developed a comprehensive resource guide which assists teachers to customise the delivery of the course to women. The course was first offered as a pilot program in 2001 to four groups of women at three TAFE NSW Institutes.

The research project, *Accessibility in online learning for women*

*in VET* will establish current levels of access by women to online learning and identify the needs and barriers of women in on-line learning. Currently there is no concrete data on how women from equity target groups access e-learning.

The findings will provide an information base of information for planning, development and implementation of on-line materials and on-line learning and will inform future strategies for improving the effectiveness of delivery strategies for women. The research will focus on the needs of women learners who are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and women learners with disabilities.

The *E-Learning Resources for Women in VET* initiative aims to address skill needs of women in the new economy and to provide foundation skills to assist women to adapt to new and emerging occupations. The project will involve development of resources including web-links, print based and multi-media learner resources for the Certificate II in Career Education and Employment for Women and the Work Opportunities for Women. Flexible assessment materials will also be included. It is envisaged that appropriate links to websites with a CD Rom version will also be available which will facilitate delivery in community centres and in country regions where internet access may be an issue. The total enrolment statewide for these courses is approximately 4000 students. The need was identified by TAFE NSW Institutes in consultation with community representatives.

A grant funded by the Department for Women involved the establishment of an Internet Café for socially isolated and economically disadvantaged women in western Sydney. The

Internet Café aimed to increase women's knowledge and computer skills through exposure to computers and the Internet in an informal café environment. The project enabled women to use the Internet as a resource for information, communication, bill-paying and job networks. Training was also provided on espresso coffee machines, customer service, and finances and the project established partnerships with TAFE and local businesses to provide training.

A pilot course, *WOW into IT for women with a disability*, aims to address the under-representation of women with a disability in higher qualification award level courses and in IT courses in TAFE NSW. Teacher consultants will provide appropriate support for individual participants including learner support and mentoring during the pilot course. The course will also provide support to:

- ◆ assist with the participants' transition to further IT studies or employment with a focus on traineeship placement
- ◆ create links to key contacts for career transition and continued community support
- ◆ document critical features for success and barriers for women with a disability wishing to enter IT training and employment
- ◆ develop, document and evaluate a model of support for successful transition of women with a disability into IT
- ◆ create a resource list of contacts in the industry and the community.

The *Women in Information Technology Careers* project aims to increase the number of women undertaking higher level vocational educational and IT training in TAFE NSW and subsequent employment in IT and related industries. The project will target women who have completed higher level vocational education and training IT training through the Work Wise

Women Certificate IV, IT (Client Support). The project, undertaken by the Gender Equity Unit, will examine the IT industry, its needs and culture and identify pathways for women into IT and related industries.

Expected outputs of the project are –

- ◆ identification of the barriers that prevent women from accessing IT careers
- ◆ identification of key career pathways for women into IT and related industries
- ◆ establishment of facilitated pathways into employment for women from higher level IT training
- ◆ identification of employment areas for women in IT and related industries.

The expected outcomes are higher numbers of women participating and completing higher qualification award level IT courses and improved employment outcomes for graduates.

As part of the *Explore Your Future*, an information session focussed on *Work Wise Women: Certificate IV, IT (Client Support)* course will be conducted for women and girls who are participating in lower level qualification award TAFE courses and wish to explore higher level courses in IT. The aim of this initiative being conducted at TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute, is to address the decline in the proportion of women undertaking IT subjects in schools and TAFE NSW. Promotion will have a particular focus on women with a disability, ethnic communities and indigenous women. The output of a program kit will assist other TAFE NSW institutes to provide similar programs. The expected outcome of these programs is an increase in the number of girls and women undertaking IT subjects at school and TAFE and at higher qualification award levels.

*Web Broadcasting: Skills for Women* addresses the significant under-representation of women in IT courses. Women students at Northern Sydney Institute undertaking studies in Multimedia, and Work Opportunities for Women were provided with additional support to develop new skills in utilising the latest web broadcasting technologies. The project maximises women students' current production skills and extends them into a new field which will maximise their employment outcomes. The first broadcast was of the Females in Information Technology and Telecommunications function at Parliament House. The pilot broadcast demonstrated that women students were able to acquire web broadcasting quickly, which will also enhance their employment prospects.

#### RURAL INITIATIVES

The *Rural Women Skills Recognition Project* provides skills recognition to farming women who are working on family farms. The project is a joint initiative of the Primary Industries Training Advisory Board, NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network and Access Division and Primary Industries Division of NSW TAFE. As part of this pilot program being offered to women in the New England region, women will enrol in the Certificate IV in Agriculture (Business Management) and will attend a series of workshops in seeking skills recognition.

The *Supporting Women in Maritime VET* courses aims to increase the formal vocational education and training qualifications of women in the maritime industry. Women are under-represented in the maritime field of study and many of those who are working in the industry lack formal qualifications. At the same time, maritime industries in the Port Stephens area have grown significantly over the last decade and have the

potential to provide women with satisfying employment and opportunities for small business. This new course is designed to encourage those working in the charter boat and fishing industries to increase their skill levels and formalise qualifications. The course will be conducted by the TAFE NSW Hunter Institute and will offer students components of the Maritime Services Traineeship which can then be completed through further study and work experience. The expected outcome of this initiative is an increase in women in vocational education and training in the maritime field from May 2002 and improved levels of skill of women workers in the industry. Women students who complete the course will be better qualified for employment within the industry and will have better access to training pathways.

The *Vocational Guidance and Career Planning for Women* program aims to provide a program of accredited training for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds from isolated areas in the Far West NSW region. This initiative is conducted by the Broken Hill Multicultural Women's Resource and Information Centre in conjunction with Far West Regional Council of Adult and Community Education and funded from the Department for Women grants program. The project offered a training course of 2 days per week, over 12 months offering modules and electives in computing, office procedures, resume writing, first aid, aged care and child care. Sixteen women graduated from the first vocational training course in November 2001 and several of the women have found jobs since completing the course.

The *Safe-TAFE* project aims to establish an innovative and systematic approach to fostering a safe learning community at TAFE NSW – Riverina Institute. The expected outcome of this project is the creation of a safer learning environment and

culture leading to enhanced learning experiences and outcomes for women students. The significant output of the project will be the Safe TAFE model (including workshops, procedures and promotional material) which can be implemented across Riverina Institute.

*Women in Viticulture* aims to increase the number of women undertaking vocational education and training in the horticultural and manufacturing aspects of viticulture studies at TAFE NSW. This project addresses the under-representation of women in the horticultural and manufacturing aspects of viticulture courses at TAFE NSW and their under-representation in the industry. The project will be conducted by TAFE NSW – Western Institute, Orange College and will target women who may benefit from the regional development emphasis on viticulture, wine production and wine tourism. A Work Opportunities for Women (WOW) course will provide women with an overview of the viticulture industry and the variety of employment opportunities within this growth industry.

Expected outcomes are:

- ◆ more women participate in viticulture training
- ◆ links with employers are strengthened through work placement
- ◆ WOW graduates enter the industry as trainees or employees or go onto further study
- ◆ a best practice model is developed to inform future programs to encourage women into this growth industry.

The *Moving Horizons Project* aims to promote and market TAFE courses to meet the vocational education and training needs of women and industries in the Hunter region through the provision of a guided tour of TAFE for women. The project aims to address the low participation of women in some Hunter Institute campuses

which have a specific focus on local industries where there is a high representation of men employed. The tour will act as a springboard enabling women them to make better informed choices on selecting courses, gaining more lucrative and satisfying employment and widening career options thus, 'extending the horizon line'. Information on TAFE courses, infrastructure, networks and career options will be provided. The tour will be marketed and promoted across high schools, TAFE campuses and to Indigenous communities.

The *Market Gardening in a Culturally Diverse Society* information strategy aimed to raise awareness of training needs, provide health and community service information and to consult with women to assess community needs. As a follow-up to a pilot program for pesticide training (SMARTtrain AQF3) held during June/July 2001 an Information Day was organised by NSW Agriculture. The Information Day was aimed at women from the Chinese community working on farms around the Sydney Basin and found that women market gardeners are responsible for much of the production in addition to their domestic duties within the family. Women are isolated with limited access to the outside world, most do not drive and have a very small social network. The Information Day was organised in collaboration with Government and non-government organizations and was attended by 250 women along with 20 service providers. The Chinese community now has a better understanding on the use of pesticides and is more informed on training needs and services, and health and community services.

NSW Agriculture's *Year of the Outback* women's overseas study scholarships are being offered to encourage women living in Western NSW to undertake a short-term study trip aimed at furthering their knowledge and ability to better contribute to their community. The Scholarships are valued at

\$10,000 each and are for women including Aboriginal women, women from low socio-economic backgrounds and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### ABORIGINAL WOMEN ACCESS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or non-English speaking backgrounds, or who are young or have a disability, are less likely to complete courses or modules within courses successfully than other Australians.<sup>22</sup>

Two initiatives in the New England area aim to address the low level of retention and completion rates of Indigenous communities in schools and vocational education and training programs, low participation in private enterprise and high levels of unemployment. The first program involves the support of Indigenous employment and business ventures, through the establishment of educational training programs based in Armidale. The initiative involves Indigenous communities, including women, and Community Development Employment Projects to improve skills development and generate community enterprise initiatives. The initiative addresses training needs, including appropriate vocational education and training opportunities to increase local Aboriginal consultancy expertise. An example of this was the establishment of the Certificate IV in Planning and Management with a focus on Indigenous content and delivery.

The second initiative aims to address the under-representation of women of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background in vocational education and training courses, particularly at higher qualification award levels. Culturally appropriate promotional

materials will be produced which outline training pathways from the Community Development Employment Program to TAFE NSW in the New England Region. The project includes a survey of Aboriginal women of various ages in the New England Region to determine the most appropriate method and design for promoting training pathways and to identify the industry areas to be highlighted in the promotional material. The expected outcomes of the project are higher numbers of Aboriginal women undertaking vocational education and training courses and higher numbers of CDEP participants undertaking traineeships.

**A number of courses for Aboriginal women are being developed, aimed at enhancing opportunities for Aboriginal women to access vocational education and training at TAFE NSW and to extend their training pathways and employment options.**

The *Women's Business: Certificate 1 in Information Technology for Aboriginal Women* aims to provide the opportunity for Aboriginal women to study IT in a culturally appropriate context and to extend their employment options in this growth industry. The course, which will include culturally appropriate modules, will be offered to groups of Aboriginal women and will provide the basis of an IT training pathway for Aboriginal women.

The *Career Education and Employment for women* course for Aboriginal Women is being customized with the use of a culturally appropriate Teachers Implementation Guide. The development phase includes consultation with teachers, Aboriginal women and students. The resource is currently being developed by an Aboriginal woman writer and the draft will be completed by the end of Semester One, 2002. The course will be offered as a pilot in Semester Two, 2002. An expected outcome of the project is an increase in the enrolments of Aboriginal women in IT and CEEW courses at TAFE NSW.

### ACCESS FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

The research project, *Women with a Disability in Vocational Education and Training* aims to investigate the needs of women with a disability in TAFE NSW. The research will identify critical success factors and barriers to inform the development of appropriate training and services for women with a disability in TAFE NSW.

The research to be undertaken includes –

- ◆ a review of Australian and international literature and web based resources on women with a disability in vocational education and training (VET)
- ◆ analysis of TAFE enrolment data
- ◆ focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with experts in the field to identify barriers and success factors
- ◆ investigation of recent projects and VET initiatives for women with a disability
- ◆ discussion of key features and recommendations for successful participation and achievement of women with a disability in TAFE NSW.

### ACCESS TO APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

Historically, men have dominated in VET courses through their uptake of apprenticeships. However with the introduction of traineeships in 1985, an option which is more attractive to women, this gap has been narrowing.<sup>23</sup>

The *JumpStart* program, a joint initiative of the NSW Department of Education and Training, NRMA Limited and NRMA Insurance Limited, addresses the declining numbers of young people entering automotive training and employment.

- ◆ In NSW in the first quarter of 2002 (January to March) there were 92,210 people in training as an apprentice or trainee. Of these 31.2 per cent were women, which was slightly under the national participation rate for women of 34.2 per cent.<sup>24</sup>
  - ◆ Trade apprenticeships however continue to show an under-representation of women.
  - ◆ In NSW in 2001, 5,440 women were in training in a trade occupation comprising only 14 per cent of this group. This represents a slight increase from 1995 to 1999 rates which remained constant at 12 per cent over this period. By contrast, there were 25,290 women undertaking traineeships in 2001, comprising 45 per cent of all trainees in NSW. However this proportion has been in decline since 1995, where the proportion of women in traineeships was 58 per cent.<sup>25</sup>
  - ◆ Within the trade occupations, women in NSW are mostly concentrated in hairdressing (3,127), comprising 90 per cent of all hairdressers in training. The second largest concentration of women was in the food trades (1,235) comprising 22 per cent of this group. Within these trades, the majority of women (86 per cent) were training as cooks, with very low representation as bakers/ pastry cooks and in meat trades.<sup>26</sup>
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- ◆ Of all women in traineeships, 80 per cent were in clerical, sales and service work, with almost half training as intermediate clerical, sales and service workers and a further one third training in elementary level occupations. At the intermediate level of traineeship occupations, women are concentrated in child care, special care, personal care and nursing assistants and hospitality workers. At the elementary level women are concentrated in sales assistants and telemarketing jobs.<sup>27</sup>

The project also aims to increase the diversity and skills of workers in the automotive industry. Approximately 40 women have benefited to date from access to this industry specific training. A major element of the JumpStart program is the women-only Certificate 1 automotive pre-vocational course, which provides access for women into training and potential employment in the automotive industry. Successful participants will have the option of articulating into higher level automotive training, gaining an apprenticeship or traineeship or gaining employment in an automotive or related occupation. The two groups currently running at Blacktown and Ultimo colleges of TAFE completed the pre-vocational training in June 2002.

The *Public Sector Traineeship Strategy*, managed by the DET State Training Services Directorate, provides employment and training opportunities for both young and mature women (and men) to undertake traineeships in a range of occupational areas. The cost of training for new entrant trainees is covered through the Apprenticeship and Traineeships Program. Trainees undertake training in such areas including, Business (Office Admin), Community Services, Telecommunications (Call Centres), Tourism, Information Technology, Laboratory Operations, Transport and Distribution and Correctional Practice. In 2001, 741 women were employed as new entrant trainees in the public sector, in a range of occupations. Of these, 308 were employed in rural and regional areas, 67 were ATSI and 7 identified as having a disability. In addition traineeship opportunities were provided to 781 existing women employees in public sector agencies.

## GENDER INCLUSIVE RESOURCES

The *Gender Inclusive Teaching* project is to review and develop gender inclusive teaching resources to assist VET teachers to utilise more gender inclusive techniques in teaching and assessment. This project addresses the under-representation of women participating in VET training in traditionally male vocational areas. Phase one comprised a 'need and demand' study of gender inclusive teaching resources and included focus group sessions with students, teachers, providers of professional development and equity experts. Phase two comprised an implementation plan which includes a national view of available resources, the development of a short professional development course in gender inclusive teaching along with the development of web-based and printed resources. The expected outcome of this project is enhanced teaching and assessment techniques leading to more gender inclusive learning environments and improvements in the participation rate of women in vocational areas traditionally dominated by men.

The *Adult and Community Education (ACE)* participation profiles are a component of an information strategy to assist ACE providers to identify and to address gaps in provision. The initiative is focused on increasing the numbers of women from a range of groups participating in ACE courses and provides relevant data including identifying regions and providers where women with low educational levels and diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are under represented in ACE. The profiles include an analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics postcode and student data, which enables each provider to establish performance indicators and monitor performance levels.

## WORKPLACE TRAINING

The *Textile, Clothing and Footwear Industry Training Strategy Project* has developed a training strategy to assist the industry to adjust to ongoing industry reform and to assist displaced workers to acquire skills for current and future employment. The textile, clothing and footwear industry employs a diverse workforce of over 22 000 people, two thirds of whom are women. Half the textile clothing and footwear workers are from cultural and linguistic backgrounds other than English.

The training strategy has –

- ◆ assisted the TCF industry remain competitive
- ◆ ensured training programs assisted existing workers, outworkers and displaced workers; and
- ◆ ensured training across the industry includes vocational training, English language literacy, workplace training and assessing, and occupational health and safety.

## EVALUATING EQUITY IN WORKPLACE TRAINING

The *Training Package Equity Evaluation* being undertaken by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) assesses whether training packages used by industry are gender and culturally inclusive and whether they take into account the needs of people with a disability, Indigenous people and the diversity within these populations. The need for this equity evaluation arose from recognition that ANTA policies and strategies along with legislative policies, place a responsibility on industry training package developers to ensure that social and physical barriers are removed. There has been little formal input from specific equity groups in the development of industry based training packages. Recommendations made in this report help

pave the way for equitable participation for people from diverse backgrounds (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities, women, people from a language background other than English, youth and people from low socio-economic backgrounds).

## Developing non-discriminatory education and training

### RECOGNITION OF SKILLS

*Vocational Education and Training Pathways for Women with Overseas Qualifications* aims to develop a model of support provision and VET pathway development for women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The project addresses narrow field of study undertaken by these groups of women at TAFE NSW. This collaborative project between the Gender Equity Unit, Multicultural Programs Unit and TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute includes –

- ◆ analysis of TAFE NSW enrolment data
- ◆ focus group discussions and workshops with women from CALD backgrounds who have gained qualifications overseas
- ◆ development of individual training and career plans for participants
- ◆ identification of factors for success in establishing career paths
- ◆ investigation of recent projects and VET initiatives for women from CALD backgrounds
- ◆ development of a summary report for distribution across TAFE NSW.

The expected outcome of the project is increased awareness of VET opportunities and pathways from training to employment of women from CALD backgrounds leading to increased enrolments in higher award qualifications across a broader range of industry areas. The significant output of the project will be individualised career plans to assist women from CALD backgrounds with overseas gained qualifications in their transition into the Australian workforce. The project will also produce a support model which will assist other TAFE NSW institutes to conduct similar programs. The first workshop, an information session called Unlock Your Future was conducted at the Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre and was attended by 13 overseas trained professional women from diverse countries of origin.

An initiative to recognise women's skills is aimed at reviewing and developing resources which assist women to identify their skills and link them to training, work and career choices. Phase one focused on the evaluation of the resource *Women's Skills = Skilled Women: A resource guide for assessing and valuing skills and making career and employment choices*. The evaluation, which was a mix of staff surveys and student focus groups, will inform the development of future skills identification and career planning resources for women. Phase two of the project will commence upon endorsement of the evaluation report recommendations and will include customising new resources for specific groups of women such as Aboriginal women and young women, and developing web-based material. The production of new resources will also be supported by a marketing strategy.

## INITIATIVES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

The *Images of Girls and Occupations* project, a collaborative effort between TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute (NSI) and the Gender Equity Unit, aims to develop tools which assist young women to give broader consideration to possible careers and occupations in which women are significantly under-represented.

A series of focus groups will be conducted with young women in high schools to investigate the links between images of occupations and occupational choices. The results of the focus groups will inform the development of tools which teachers, careers advisors and counsellors can use to explore future education and work lives. A product range will be developed including posters, postcards, electronic images, a teaching and learning guide and a staff development package and will be distributed to schools and TAFE NSW institutes. The expected outcome of the project is an increase in girls' awareness of a wider range of occupations and careers.

The Young Mums of the West aims to document school retention/completion rate for young mothers, and identify ways in which schools are currently providing support. This project, funded through a grant from the Department for Women and auspiced by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Council, investigated the retention rates, support provided, barriers that prevent completion of secondary education and ways of improving educational outcomes for pregnant and parenting students. An information package to inform young women of their rights, entitlements and options will also be made available. The report *Young Mothers of the West* is at [www.wsroc.com.au/wkpg\\_serv.asp](http://www.wsroc.com.au/wkpg_serv.asp).

## Initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

The *Aboriginal women into higher awards* collaborative project aims to develop a model to assist Aboriginal women to undertake vocational education and training at higher qualification award levels. This collaborative initiative between TAFE NSW – South Western Sydney Institute, Tharawal Aboriginal Land Council and the Aboriginal Programs and Department of Education and Training Gender Equity Units aims to address the under-representation of Aboriginal women in higher qualification award level courses in TAFE NSW and the VET sector. Key elements to this project have been consultation and collaboration with the land council, promotion of the project to Aboriginal women, flexible delivery of a Focus on Skills course and support. A number of participants from this course have since enrolled in a Certificate IV, Small Business Enterprise Management course. A project report has been produced which includes a model outlining the key success factors. The model will be distributed to other VET providers and land councils upon endorsement by the Australian National Training Authority, the funding body. The expected outcome of this project is an increase in the number of Aboriginal women undertaking higher qualification award level VET courses which will in turn benefit community development programs.

The Department of Education and Training, Training Industry Programs and Services Unit conducts a program aimed at increasing the number of qualified Aboriginal Education Assistants in schools and to provide further career opportunities for them. Of the 65 trainees who undertook the Australian Qualifications Framework, Certificate III – Aboriginal Education Assistants 56 were women. Thirty two of the 56 women have now completed their training and achieved the Certificate III.

## Promoting lifelong education and training for girls and women

### ACCESS TO IT SKILLS

A statewide initiative, overseen by the Department of Education and Training Skills Development and Workforce Policy Directorate, is aimed at increasing skills for participation and extending computer literacy to groups who may not otherwise have access to it. The program provides free computer training with a focus on attainment of the International Computer Driving Licence, an internationally recognised certificate of basic computer competence. The target populations are mature age workers, regional and rural communities and equity groups. The aim is to reach 10,000 people and 2,953 licenses had been issued by April 2002.

The *English for Living* project aimed to empower unemployed women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in and contribute more fully to Australian society, both economically and socially. The course was conducted by the St George & Sutherland Community College with grant funding from the Department for Women. Modules covered topics including English in Society; Workplace English; Rights, Responsibilities & Services to You; Personal Effectiveness; Presentation Skills; Job Seeking Skills; and Introduction to Information Technology. The course also included a Mentoring scheme in conjunction with the Australian Federation of University Women, Southern Suburbs Group. The women from the English for Living course were paired with retired, university trained professional women who acted as career development advisors and helped with the selection of suitable academic

courses. A trainer's manual and a student manual/workbook were developed as part of this project. Of sixteen women who started the course, ten completed the full 20-week course. Four women found employment before completing the course and two left to continue their English studies at the University of New South Wales.

### **The CEDAW commitment**

CEDAW calls for elimination of discrimination in education and access and equity for women in relation to career and vocational guidance, the same curricula across all subject areas, the same quality of education as men and non-sex stereotyped teaching methods, learning materials and resources. Women should also have equal access to and the opportunity to obtain qualifications across all levels including pre-school, general, vocational, and professional and higher education. The opportunity to benefit from grants, scholarships and from continuing education including adult functional literacy programs should be equally available to women and men. Action should be taken to reduce drop-out rates, as well as to assist early school leavers. Women should have equal access to sport and physical education and to receive information and advice on family planning in education. Women's geographic location should not be a barrier to full participation and outcomes from education and training.

### **NSW government policies**

- ❖ TAFE NSW Strategic Directions 2000–2002
- ❖ TAFE NSW Strategic Directions for Women 2001–2002
- ❖ The NSW Strategic Plan for Vocational Education and Training 2002–2004
- ❖ NSW Department of Education and Training Disability Action Plan 2000–2002
- ❖ NSW VET Framework Supporting People with Disabilities 2002–2005
- ❖ Board of Vocational Education and Training Strategic Plan for VET 2002–2004
- ❖ NSW State Government Strategy: New South Wales Information & Communication Technology Skills Action Plan
- ❖ Board of Adult and Community Education-Communities Learning for the Future – Strategic Directions 2001–2003
- ❖ TAFE NSW Recognition Policy, December 2001
- ❖ Public Sector Traineeship Strategy (formerly known as the 2000 by 2000 Strategy)
- ❖ Adult and Community Education – Communities Learning for the Future Strategic Directions 2001–2003.
- ❖ The Department for Women's Information Technology Strategic Framework
- ❖ Improving Women's Lives, Labour's Plans for women in the 21st century.

## Commonwealth government policies

- ◆ Bridging Pathways: the National Strategy for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training
- ◆ Partners in a Learning Culture: a blueprint for implementing the National Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in vocational education and training.

## List of agencies that have initiatives included in the chapter

- ◆ Department for Women
- ◆ Department of Education and Training
- ◆ Ministry for the Arts
- ◆ NSW Agriculture

- 1 NSW Department of Education and Training submission, 2000, to the House of Representatives Inquiry into the education of boys.
- 2 Butler, E. and Ferrier, F. 2000, *Don't be too polite girls! Women, work and vocational education and training: A critical review of the literature*, National Centre for Vocational Education and Training, South Australia.
- 3 Golding, B., and Volkov, V., 1999, *Regrouping equity*, National workshop on equity research, University of Technology Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training.
- 4 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Schools Australia*, 2000, Catalogue no: 4221.0 and retrospective data.
- 5 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Schools Australia*, 2001, Catalogue no: 4221.0.
- 6 *First Report May 2002 Inquiry into the provision of public education in NSW*.
- 7 Collins, C., Kenway, J., and McLeod, J. 2000, *Factors influencing the educational performance of males and females in school and their initial destinations after leaving school*. Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs.
- 8 Public Education Inquiry 2001, *First Report May 2002 Inquiry into the provision of public education in NSW* [http://www.pub-ed-inquiry.org/reports/final\\_reports/04/index.html](http://www.pub-ed-inquiry.org/reports/final_reports/04/index.html).
- 9 Collins, C., Kenway, J., and McLeod, J., 2000, *Factors influencing the educational performance of males and females in school and their initial destinations after leaving school*. Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs.
- 10 NSW Board of Studies 2002, *HSC subject statistics archives 2002*, NSW Board of Studies [www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).
- 11 NSW Board of Studies 2002, *HSC subject statistics archives 2002*, NSW Board of Studies [www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).
- 12 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001, *Transition from education to work*, 2000 Cat. No. 6227.0 and unpublished data ABS Canberra.
- 13 Collins, C et al, 1996 *Gender and school education*, AGPS, Canberra.
- 14 NSW Board of Studies 2002, *HSC subject statistics archives 2002*, NSW Board of Studies [www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).
- 15 NSW Board of Studies 2002, *HSC subject statistics archives 2002*, NSW Board of Studies [www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).
- 16 Adult and Community Education 2002, *NSW ACE enrolment statistics 2001*, NSW Board of Adult and Community Education [www.bace.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bace.nsw.gov.au).
- 17 Adult and Community Education, 2002, *NSW ACE enrolment statistics 2001*, NSW Board of Adult and Community Education [www.bace.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bace.nsw.gov.au).
- 18 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2002, *Education and work*, 2001 Cat. No. 6227.0, ABS Canberra and retrospective data.
- 19 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian social trends*, 2002, Catalogue no: 4102.0.
- 20 National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research, *Australian vocational education and training statistics 2001*.
- 21 National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research, *Vocational Education and Training statistics 1995–1999*.
- 22 *National workshop on equity*, 1999, Research centre for vocational education and training, University of Technology.
- 23 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian social trends 2000* Catalogue no: 4102.0.
- 24 National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research, 2002 *Vocational education and training statistics: New apprenticeships in-training for NSW 2001*, based on June 2002 estimates.
- 25 National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research, 2002, *Vocational education and training statistics: New apprenticeships in-training for NSW 2001*, based on June 2002 estimates and unpublished data 1995–1999.
- 26 National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research, 1999, *Vocational education and training statistics: New apprenticeships in-training for NSW* and unpublished data 1995–1999.
- 27 National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research, 1999, *Vocational education and training statistics: New apprenticeships in-training for NSW* and unpublished data 1995–1999.