



POWER, DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP

equalityfamilies**justice**education**violence**work**safety**power**leadership**training**communities**health

Introduction

To conceptualise issues and develop policies which will affect, directly or indirectly, citizens' lives without taking into account the situations, perspectives and realities of all those who will be affected is no longer credible in today's world. Taking into account gendered perspectives and involving women and men in decision-making processes is part of any democratic framework. Hence democracy, by definition, cannot afford to be gender-blind. It must strive towards equality and representation of women and men in decision-making processes and in the opportunities to achieve both these goals.'

Historically women have been excluded from, or under-represented in the structures of governance and leadership that make up the public and political life of the country. This has meant not only that women have been denied their rights as citizens to have a say in the way their society is run, but also that major decisions in the public, political and economic spheres have been made largely without the benefit of the skills, experiences and input from representatives of half the population.

In the political sphere, women have faced a long battle to achieve access to and adequate representation in the formal structures of party politics, parliament and government. Women in NSW did not have the right to vote until 1902, nor the right to stand for election until 1918 in the Legislative Assembly and 1926 in the Legislative Council. The first woman elected to NSW Parliament was Millicent Preston-Stanley in 1925. Preston-Stanley was only the second woman ever to be elected to an Australian Parliament, and took her seat in the Legislative

Assembly with 89 men. The first woman elected to a State Parliament was Edith Cowan in Western Australia in 1921, and Enid Lyons, the first woman in Commonwealth Parliament was not elected until 1942. While there has been a gradual increase in the number of women in parliament since that time, they are still significantly underrepresented.

In the public sector, women are in the minority in senior and executive positions, and on boards and committees of public sector agencies. As a result, the perspectives of women are underrepresented in public policy and decision-making processes. In the private sector women occupy an even smaller percentage of positions of power and influence at executive level, on boards and committees and in other leadership positions.

The underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making roles and positions of power is a result of a range of obstacles. These barriers to women's greater participation in public life can generally be classified as personal, situational and structural.

Personal barriers include women's self perceptions and confidence about their skills and abilities, insufficient information about organisational structures and processes, a lack of appropriate or recognised experience and a lack of support structures.

Situational factors include meeting-related issues such as timing, lack of flexibility with attendance, lack of child care, and time and cost issues associated with attending meetings and other events of public life.

Structural barriers include the isolation and marginalisation of women as leaders and decision-makers in organisations and

organisational culture, and the impact of traditional beliefs and values about the role of women. Furthermore, the structure of some organisations is incompatible with the communication needs, learning requirements and leadership aspirations of women. Women tend to have more limited access to opportunities in the workplace which often operates with narrow, rigid definitions of 'merit'. The absence of appropriate role models, mentoring and lack of access to training have also been identified as working against women's involvement.

Any attempts to improve women's representation must work to address each of these barriers.

NSW Government policy commitments

- ◆ Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women of non-English speaking background to achieve management positions within sporting organisations.
- ◆ Conduct school leadership courses to encourage female teachers to take on executive roles in schools.
- ◆ Set up a professional rural women's group to help women involved in decision-making roles in their community and provide advice and a source of mentors.
- ◆ Continue to work towards ensuring 50 per cent of all new appointments to public sector boards and committees are women.
- ◆ Encourage bodies outside government to reflect the government's policy and put forward female nominees, or when submitting more than one nominee, ensure that where possible there is a balance between male and female nominees.
- ◆ Aim to substantially increase the number of women appointed as magistrates and judges

- ◆ Continue to support the *Spokeswomen's Program* which has successfully promoted equal employment opportunities for women public sector employees.
- ◆ Maintain the funding commitment to the *Country Web* project. This newsletter is produced three times a year and is distributed free to 20,000 rural subscribers.
- ◆ Implement a number of key recommendations from the *State Plan for Women in Sport and Recreation 1999-2002* including the *NSW Sports Administration Scholarship Program* and the coaching and career development program.

Structure / summary of sub headings

Ensuring women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making

- ◆ Supporting women's full participation in the public service
- ◆ Increasing the numbers of women on boards and committees
- ◆ Increasing the representation of women in positions of public office

Increasing women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership

- ◆ Resourcing and supporting women's organisations
- ◆ Scholarships and awards
- ◆ Increasing the capacity of Aboriginal women to participate in leadership and decision-making
- ◆ Increasing mentoring opportunities for women
- ◆ Increasing the capacity of women to participate in government
- ◆ Training for participation

What we are doing

ENSURING WOMEN'S EQUAL ACCESS TO AND FULL PARTICIPATION IN POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING

Supporting women's full participation in the public service

The NSW Public Sector Spokeswomen's Program supports career development for women in public sector agencies by providing information, encouraging access to training, building a network of women in and across agencies and facilitating a two-way flow of information between women and management.

Spokeswomen are elected by women in their agency for a specific term to:

- ◆ Collect and disseminate information concerning equal opportunity in employment and career development to women in their agency;
- ◆ Work with the agency Women's Liaison Officer to provide advice and information to management on issues relating to women in their agency;
- ◆ Act as a link between the Chief Executive Officer and all women in the agency;
- ◆ Be available to talk with women in situations where they encounter discrimination;
- ◆ Refer women to information sources such as complaint mechanisms, trade union representatives and specific government agencies;

The sector-wide program is coordinated by the Central Coordinating Committee of Spokeswomen, elected by Spokeswomen across the sector at their annual conference.

Women are still underrepresented at the higher levels of the

public service. Of NSW Senior Executive Service (SES) positions 25.7 per cent are held by women (up from 24 per cent in 2001). There has been a decrease of women in the CES between August 2001 and January 2002 from 15 to 13 women.

The Department of Community Services is aiming to improve the capacity of women to participate in management by providing annual sponsorship to encourage and support women staff members to enroll in the NSW Public Sector Management Course.

Increasing the numbers of women on boards and committees

The NSW Government believes that the membership of boards and committees in NSW should reflect the diverse interests of the community as a whole. The government recognises the benefits created by new ideas and different ways of working and decision-making which are afforded by a diverse community. The government is committed to achieving a more equitable representation on government boards and committees of those groups within the community who have historically been under represented, namely women, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Government is committed to increasing the representation of women on boards and committees to reflect the gender balance of our society. Women who sit on boards and committees contribute to the community by putting forward views and opinions that may otherwise be overlooked. In many instances they may balance the interests of more traditional decision-makers with different perspectives gained from their different experiences. Furthermore, positions on boards and

committees are afforded significant status and prestige, and provide their occupants with decision-making powers and a range of opportunities and rewards, both in the way of financial remuneration, and other benefits such as contacts and influence. While there has been steady progress, women are still under-represented on these decision-making bodies.

The reasons for women's under-representation on boards are complex, and include a range of structural, situational and personal factors. It is unlikely, however, that gender equity in public and private sector board membership will be achieved without commitment to change by those in a position to influence the board selection and appointment process.

To ensure better outcomes for women, it is necessary to adopt a strategic process that targets individuals at all levels of the nomination and selection process for boards appointments to ensure better outcomes. These levels include:

- ◆ decision-makers or people of influence such as Ministers, CEOs, board members and major stakeholders.
- ◆ third-party or stakeholder agencies, including professional associations and industry bodies. As these agencies nominate around 45 per cent of candidates on public sector boards and committees they are in a position to significantly influence board appointment figures. They operate externally to government, and are therefore less likely to be influenced by government policy and processes.
- ◆ people influencing the process. Those who manage the selection and appointment process may have some input into the identification of suitable board candidates. These include public sector agency board and committee contact officers; ministerial advisers; government agencies with responsibility

for managing the appointment process and developing relevant policies and guidelines, such as the Information Services Branch of the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (MaPS) Unit of the Premier's Department.

- ◆ women themselves. The likelihood of women putting themselves forward is increased if they are provided with greater encouragement, training and information about the process. For those who are involved, the provision of support to women on boards and committees is essential both to ensure that their experience is a positive one so they are encouraged to stay in public life, and to encourage other women to participate.

The Department for Women and Premier's Department have sought to raise awareness among key decision-makers in the public and private sectors of women's under-representation on government and private sector boards and to engage them in discussions on strategies to address current gender imbalances.

At the *50/50 Seminar* hosted in March 2000 by the Department for Women and the Premier's Department with support from Telstra and the Teleran Group, 29 senior executives from the private and public sectors discussed the under-representation of women at board level, the benefits of diversity to board functioning and performance, and current barriers to women's appointment. Participants committed themselves to working towards 50 per cent representation of women through a range of initiatives – including improving access to the Register for Women, linking existing lists, and providing training and networking opportunities for women.

A follow-up seminar, the *50/50+1 Seminar*, on 22 March 2001 showcased initiatives arising out of the original seminar and report on progress made on commitments. The guest list

from the first seminar was expanded, with a number of new participants attending.

The Premier's Department maintains a database of board members and uses this to monitor the progress of the representation of women on NSW public sector boards. This database shows that there are over 450 public sector/ government boards and committees in NSW with more than 4900 members. As at 30 June 2002 there were 4687 positions on public sector boards and committees in NSW with 1659 or 35 per cent held by women.² In the 2001/2002 financial year there were 705 women appointed to NSW government boards and committees, representing 39.8 per cent of all new appointments. This was an improvement of 2 per cent over 2000/01 when women represented 38 per cent of all appointments made. In the 1999/2000 financial year, there were 866 women appointed to NSW government boards and committees, representing 36 per cent of all new appointments. This was an improvement of 2 per cent over 1998–1999 when women represented 34 per cent of all appointments made.

In Australia when a public company's board meeting comes to order it is still most likely that there will be no women around the table, and when a board is made up of men and women, a female board member will be the only woman there.³

The representation of women on the boards of Australia's publicly listed companies is much lower than that in the public sector. As at March 2001, there were almost 1,300 publicly-listed companies in Australia, representing 7,341 board positions. Just 3.4 per cent of these positions were held by women.⁴ Of these companies, 857 (or 66 per cent) had all-

male boards, while 225 had boards with at least one woman member. None had a majority of women.

The 2002 survey of female board representation by corporate governance advisory firm Boardroom Partners 'Talking at the Table' reported that of the 3474 board positions available in Australia' top 500 listed companies just 186 are held by women (5.35 per cent). Eight women hold three or more seats, double the number in the 2001 survey, and 24 women hold two board positions, up from 15 last year.

This figure is low by international standards. As a comparison, as at January 2001, in the USA 11 per cent of Fortune 500 board seats were held by women, in Canada 6.2 per cent of board members of the top 500 companies were women.⁵

Women had only 8.3 per cent of private sector board positions in 1999 (up from 4 per cent in 1996 according to Korn/Ferry International surveys). Women were 10.3 per cent of non-executive directors in 1999 (up from 4 per cent in 1996); and 1.3 per cent of executive directors (no change from 1996) (Korn/Ferry International Surveys 1996 and 1999).

The Australian Institute of Management (NSW) Survey (May 2000) showed that in large companies, women's share of board positions had fallen from 14 per cent in 1999 to 10 per cent in 2000, and women's share of board positions in small companies had fallen from 21 per cent to 19 per cent.

A forthcoming survey report (Korn/Ferry 2002, Sydney) states that in 2001 women made up 8 per cent of non-executive directors in Australia; 1 per cent of deputy chairs and 4 per cent of chairs. In the top 50 companies in Australia women represent 10 per cent of directors, 0 per cent of deputies, and 7 per cent of chairs. The sample consisted of 400 publicly listed companies in Australia.

More than 25 per cent of non-executive directors are due to retire from Australian boards by 2005. The average age of directors is expected to fall from 55 years to less than 50 in the next 10 to 20 years as boards face increasing shareholder pressure to appraise their performance and diversify the talent at the top. As a result more women should get a look in.⁶

The Premier's Department Register contains details of people interested in being appointed to NSW Government boards. There are 785 women on the Register, and the list is continually updated. Application forms offer applicants the option of making their details available to private sector and non-government organisations as well as Commonwealth and other State Governments. This application form can be downloaded from the Premier's Department website (www.premiers.nsw.gov.au). Community education is being undertaken to promote the Register.

Upcoming vacancies on Government boards and committees are reviewed and Ministers informed via an 'early warning letter' about vacancies on boards where more diversity is necessary. Agencies are encouraged to use the Register, and searches are performed upon request. New appointment forms are examined before going to Cabinet for approval and where diversity on the relevant board is poor, the Premier's Office is notified.

Another initiative of the Department for Women and the Premier's Department, the *Getting More Women on Board Forums* held in June 2000 and June 2001, brought together ministerial and agency staff to discuss issues around women's representation on public sector boards and committees. It was considered important to target these staff as they are often

relied upon by their Ministers to identify possible candidates for appointment when board vacancies arise and to liaise with third party nominating agencies.

The forums were successful in raising awareness among participants of the Government's commitments to gender equity and the Premier's Register. Participants who completed an evaluation of the forums also agreed or strongly agreed that the forums had increased their level of knowledge of strategies to improve women's representation on boards. The forums provided a valuable opportunity for ministerial and agency staff to discuss current approaches and possible new initiatives to encourage the nomination of more women for board positions. The importance of working with third party agencies, which nominate a significant proportion of public sector board positions, was also discussed.

During workshop discussions, a number of innovative strategies were suggested, such as boards holding 'open sessions' to demystify the workings of boards and encourage women to nominate, and approaching alternative sources of candidates, such as universities, or relevant professional bodies, when seeking to identify possible board members.

These strategies were recorded in a summary document distributed both to participants and to Ministerial offices and agencies unable to send a representative to the forum following the event. A survey has since been distributed to past participants, together with other agencies which received a copy of strategies document, to assess to what extent strategies generated have been implemented at an agency level.

Several Departments are working in collaboration with the Premier's Department on specific projects to increase the

number of women on boards and committees. Some of this work has had a particular focus on increasing representation of women from rural and remote NSW.

The *Premier's Reception for Women* in November 2000 introduced CEOs from the public and private sector, (particularly the IT and finance industries), to senior women interested in pursuing opportunities for board appointments. A pamphlet with profiles and contact details of women attending the *Reception* was distributed.

The Department for Women's *Women in Leadership* project has also disseminated information on getting more women on boards and committees at numerous forums, by speaking at women's gatherings and professional women's forums, distributing information pamphlets, and posting information on the Department's website www.women.nsw.gov.au.

Several agencies, such as the Department of Land and Water Conservation, Department of Fair Trading and Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust have focussed on the recruitment process for boards and committees and developed initiatives to increase the numbers of women nominated and appointed.

When recruiting members for the Catchment Management Boards, the Department of Land and Water Conservation highlighted the government's policy on gender equity in its advertisements, in communications with organisations from whom nominations were sought, and in instructions to its Regional Directors. Various women were contacted, including those on the Premier's Register and women involved in the previous Catchment Management Committees, and encouraged to nominate. These measures achieved an overall membership of women on the boards of 29 per cent, an increase of 3 per

cent over the previous Catchment Management Committees.

The DLWC has also developed protocols for future recruitment of members to its boards and committees. The Protocols for the Replacement of Members of Natural Resource Management Boards and Committees, including Protocol 1.1 for Improving Representation of women on Boards and Committees set out strategies for Regional Directors to use to encourage women's nominations for vacant positions and action to retain women on boards and committees.

There are now more women involved in the boards and committees. As at June 2002, the Vegetation Management Committee had 23 per cent women and 4 of the 17 chairs are women. The Water Management Committees have 17 per cent women with 13 of the 33 chairs being women.

The Department of Fair Trading also focussed on improving the recruitment process when it filled positions on its various councils, namely the Fair Trading, Home Building, Motor Trade, Property Services, and Retirement Villages Advisory Councils. Advertisements for these positions included the words: 'in keeping with Government policy, women, people of non-English speaking and Aboriginal backgrounds, and young people with appropriate knowledge and/or experience are particularly encouraged to apply'.

Letters to industry and consumer groups seeking two nominations for appointment to DFT councils included the comment 'in keeping with Government policy in relation to equal gender representation on statutory boards, councils, and committees, at least one women should be nominated for the Minister's consideration'.

The composition of the Department of Fair Trading's Ministerial Advisory Councils is at June 2002 as follows:

Fair Trading Advisory Council	5 women out of 12 members
Home Building Advisory Council	4 women out of 14 members
Motor Trade Advisory Council	6 women out of 14 members
Property Services Advisory Council	6 women out of 12 members
Retirement Villages Advisory Council	7 women out of 14 members
All Councils	28 women out of 63 members (44 per cent women)

The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust recently committed itself to pursuing gender equity in its membership, and has now achieved a gender balance on what was previously a male-dominated Trust. Half of all Trust members are now women, and the Trust is committed to maintaining this balance. Similarly, the Ministry for the Arts has achieved gender equity in the membership of the boards and trusts of NSW cultural institutions. As at June 2002 women held 35 of the 72 positions on boards and trusts of the NSW cultural institutions (49 per cent).

Another strategy used to attempt to increase the numbers of women on boards and committees is to provide training to increase women's capacity to take up such positions. For example, the Department of Education and Training, through

TAFE NSW, the Department for Women and the Rural Women's Network developed accredited training for women interested in election or appointment to boards and committees. A short training course called *Women in Decision-Making, Boards and Committees*, as well as learning materials for distance delivery were developed. The training aims to provide women with information, skills and confidence to assist them with preparation for election or appointment to boards and committees. This training course was piloted in 2001 in the Central West region in Parkes and Orange through the Western Institute of TAFE, and is tailored to the specific needs of rural women. Other TAFEs are now running the course, including in Coonamble and Wellington.

The Department for Women worked with the Rural Lands Protection Board (RLPB) in the lead up to their 2002 elections to encourage more women to nominate for board positions. There are currently 48 RLPBs in NSW with over 380 directors. Only 34 of the current directors are women. The original campaign was run in preparation for the 2001 elections however these elections were postponed to 2002. An information pamphlet with sponsorship from Westpac was distributed and the elections promoted at women's gatherings and events and through relevant networks. This is the first time the pamphlets have overtly targeted women. Importantly child care is now an allowable expense for Board Directors. The 2002 elections were promoted through the Department for Women's Women on Wheels tour to the North Coast and New England regions. Representatives from the local RLPB's were on hand to answer questions. The Department for Women is also working with the State Council to develop an induction manual for women successful in obtaining a place on their local RLPB.

The Community Relations Commission actively sought the membership of women for its Regional Advisory Councils so that the issues pertaining to non English speaking background women in rural and regional areas could be effectively examined and acted upon.

INCREASING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF PUBLIC OFFICE

On re-election in March 1999 the Government pledged to remove existing barriers to the appointment of part-time magistrates, and to seek suitable applicants to work as part-time magistrates. While there is a high representation of women graduating in law, this is not matched by the number of women who hold senior positions within the profession. There have been several occasions where women have been outstanding candidates for vacancies to the magistracy but have been unable to take on a full time appointment because of family responsibilities.

To address this problem, the Attorney General's Department prepared legislation to provide for the appointment of part-time magistrates. The *Local Courts Amendment (Part-Time Magistrates) Act 1999* commenced on 17 December 1999 enabling magistrates to be appointed on a permanent part-time basis. There are currently 4 part time magistrates in the Local Courts in NSW.⁷ The legislation facilitates the appointment of more women to the bench and aims to ensure that the bench is more representative of the community.

Women are 72 out of a total of 308 judicial officers, or 23.4 per cent which is an increase from the position as at 1 June 2000 when women represented 52 out of a total of 279 judicial officers, or 18.6 per cent.⁸

Women have traditionally been underrepresented in local government, though this situation is slowly improving. The Department of Local Government surveys all NSW councils every four years to monitor the representation of women in local government. This survey reveals that the elections for 152 NSW councils held in September 1999 resulted in a 3 per cent increase in the number of women elected, from 23 per cent up to 26 per cent, or 446 women out of a total of 1,696 councilors. Women achieved the most success in elections for Sydney councils where they now make up 35 per cent of councilors (up from 28 per cent in 1995). In the rest of NSW women are 26 per cent of councilors, (up from 20 per cent in 1995).⁹ Women are still underrepresented at mayoral level. At the 1999 local elections women were elected as 25 out of 152 mayors, or 16.4 per cent (up from 13.2 per cent in 1995). Women are 38 out of 152 deputy mayors, or 25 per cent.¹⁰

The highest representation of women in Australian local government is in the Northern Territory (30 per cent), followed by Queensland (28 per cent) and South Australia (27 per cent). In New Zealand 29 per cent of elected members are women (1998 elections). 26 per cent of mayors are women (1998), which is an increase of 6 per cent from 1995.¹¹ In England and Wales women are 27 per cent of local government councilors.¹² The Department for Women's Hands Up for Women in Council project is working to increase the numbers of women on local council for the 2003 Local Government elections.

In NSW, 22.5 per cent of government members are women. (women are 21.8 per cent of ALP members in the Legislative Assembly, and 25 per cent in the Legislative Council). The proportion of women ministers in the NSW Government is 16 per cent. The percentage of women ministers in other Australian states

is as follows: Victoria: 42 per cent, Tasmania: 37.5 per cent, Western Australia 28.6 per cent, Queensland: 27.8 per cent, South Australia: 20 per cent, Northern Territory: 11 per cent.¹³

Women make up 21.6 per cent of elected members of the NSW Parliament. The Legislative Assembly has 20.4 per cent women, or 19 women out of a total of 93. The Legislative Council has 24.4 per cent women, or 10 women out of a total of 41.¹⁴

Women's under-representation in politics continues at the level of national government, and a low number of women at all levels of politics is a worldwide phenomenon.

There are 61 women (or 37 per cent) in Federal Parliament compared with 166 men.

In 10 countries more than 30 per cent of parliamentarians are women, including Sweden, Mozambique and Argentina. However, worldwide only 14 per cent of parliamentarians are women and in 10 countries none are women.¹⁵

INCREASING WOMEN'S CAPACITY TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP

Resourcing and supporting women's organisations

Resourcing and supporting women's organisations and networks is an important way of increasing the capacity of women to participate in public and political life and to access decision-making processes. The Government is undertaking several initiatives of this kind.

NSW Agriculture supports the annual *NSW Women's Gatherings*. These gatherings provide an opportunity for rural women from across the state to come together to learn, network, access training opportunities and share information and experiences. Gatherings have been held in various

locations across NSW: Orange (1993), Gunnedah (1994), Yanco (1995), Cobar (1996), Tocal (1997), Cooma (1998), Moree (1999), Wellington (2000) and Kempsey (2001).

The Gatherings are now managed by community committees with support from NSW Agriculture's *Rural Women's Network* (RWN). The most recent *NSW Women's Gathering* was held in Bourke in September 2002.

The Rural Women's Network Key Contact Database and *Country Web Newsletter* are other means of supporting rural women. The Contact Database is used to find rural women who wish to participate in various meetings, consultations, workshops and decision-making opportunities. The *Country Web Newsletter* provides rural women with access to information and an opportunity to air their views on issues that concern them. Three times a year 20,000 copies of the newsletter are distributed free to rural women and their families. Recent editions have focussed on issues such as The Year of the Outback and Natural Resource Management. There are over 15,000 subscribers on the mailing list, which is an increase of 500 from last year. Many more subscribers are now sourcing the newsletter on the Rural Women's Network internet site (www.agric.nsw.gov.au/rwn) which had 130,000 hits from July 2001–June 2002.

Another initiative focussed on supporting rural women is *Making a Difference: an Action Plan for NSW Women in Agriculture and Resource Management*, coordinated by NSW Agriculture's Advisory Group in partnership with the Rural Women's Network. The Plan aims to increase women's participation in decision-making, improve the recognition of women as clients of industry and government, and increase the participation of women in the rural sector. Initiatives were undertaken in both government and non-government agencies.

The Plan provides feedback on progress and includes new initiatives to increase women's participation through improved recognition, support, training and education. The 2000 Update, and the original Action Plan are available on the Rural Women's Network website www.agric.nsw.gov.au/rwn/resources.

The Department for Women conducts quarterly meetings with peak women's organisations from the community and non-government sector. Meetings are attended by between 25 and 60 representatives, and provide opportunities for networking, information exchange and partnership building. They assist the Department and Premier's Council for Women (PCW) to be informed on current issues of concern to women and develop strategies on issues of mutual concern to the Department, Premier's Council for Women and the women's organisations.

Feedback from organisations indicates that the working relationship between the Department and the peak women's organisations has improved, particularly as a result of the increased number of meetings per year, the improved level of communication about the activities of the Department and the PCW, and the use of expert speakers at meetings. Participation at the meetings has increased by 30 per cent in 2002, up from 15 per cent in 2000.

Organisations attending the meetings have identified several challenges they face, with the most common being inadequate or insecure funding and resources, and, falling membership, particularly among younger women. The Department for Women is considering strategies to address these issues, and a steering committee of women's organisations has been established to advise the Department on the most useful assistance it can provide.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

The provision of scholarships and awards is another means of enabling women to access training and development opportunities which increase their capacity to take on leadership and decision-making roles in their chosen field.

As part of the *NSW State Plan for Women in Sport and Recreation 1999–2002* and the *National Policy for Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity 1999–2002*, the Department of Sport and Recreation administers the *Women's Sports Administration Scholarship Program*. A total of \$100,000 is allocated annually for professional development scholarships for women sports administrators in NSW. These scholarships aim to increase the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions in the sport and recreation industry, with 174 scholarships awarded since 1974.

The scholarships enable recipients either to undertake international travel to attend a relevant working party meeting or conference, or to undertake an intensive residential training program in sports administration and management. These training programs target women in different regional areas each year. In 2000 the program targeted the Hunter and Far West Regions, and in 2001 training targeted women in the Far South Coast and Riverina regions. In 2002 the region targeted was the North Coast and North West. In 2003 the region will be the Central Coast and Sydney. One course each year is specifically for Aboriginal women. Other elements of the program have included the conduct and distribution of research and the establishment of equity projects in a number of sport and recreation organisations.

The *Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award* is coordinated by the Rural

Women's Network with support from NSW Agriculture and financial assistance from the Department for Women, the Department of State and Regional Development, and the Department of Land and Water Conservation.

Consistent with the objectives of the *Action Plan for NSW Women in Agriculture and Resource Management*, the Award aims to promote, recognise and encourage the vital contribution women make to rural Australia, as contributors and participants, leaders and decision-makers and clients of agriculture and natural resource management. Applicants must demonstrate a personal commitment to sustainable agriculture and to the role of rural women in their State or Territory, the potential to achieve and deliver benefits to agriculture, and to provide leadership and impart their skills and knowledge to others.

The winner and two finalists have the opportunity to attend a leadership program which aims to improve their skills and enable them to play a greater role in the future of rural Australia. The 2002 winner of the \$20,000 award is a public relations and communications consultant from Coonabarabran. The winner and finalists also attended a national four day leadership course.

NSW Agriculture offers town scholarships each valued at \$10,000. Applicants are asked to outline how they plan to use their scholarship and will be expected to share their learnings with others on their return. Upon completion of the project recipients are required to submit a written report to NSW Agriculture. The focus is on women from western SNW including women from low socioeconomic, backgrounds, Indigenous women and culturally diverse women. The aim of the scholarship is to support and encourage women living in the western division of NSW who may not otherwise have an

opportunity to travel overseas to undertake a short term study trip aimed at furthering their knowledge and ability to better contribute to their community.

NSW Agriculture also provided \$9000 scholarships for four rural women who are leaders in their community to attend the World Congress of Rural Women in Madrid, Spain.

The Department for Women is leading an initiative to increase the number of women being nominated for, and receiving awards. Women make a substantial contribution to society, industries and their local communities yet continue to represent only a small proportion of awards and honours lists. Of all the people recognized with Australian honours under the order of Australia in 2001, 36.1 per cent were women (186 out of 515) and 34.4 per cent of nominations (278 out of 807) were for women.

The project will promote the need for the contribution of women to be recognized formally through awards and honours as an important means of building women's confidence and pride by the public presentation of role models.

INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF ABORIGINAL WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

A number of agencies are undertaking initiatives to increase the capacity of Aboriginal women to take up decision-making and leadership roles.

As part of the NSW Government's Aboriginal Education Policy, the Department of Education and Training (DET) held the third annual *Aboriginal Education Leadership Conference* in 2000. The conference was attended by 30 Aboriginal teachers from primary and secondary schools and TAFE institutes, 26 of whom were women. The conference aims to increase the

capacity of Aboriginal teachers to take up leadership positions within DET.

This strategy has been highly successful. Three years ago approximately four Aboriginal teachers were in leadership positions. By the end of 2000 twenty leadership positions had been taken up by Aboriginal teachers. While it has only been possible to obtain gendered data for the appointments up to April 2000, women were appointed to 8 of the 12 positions filled by that date. In addition, the first female Aboriginal principal has been recently appointed. The fourth annual Conference will be held in 2001.

The Department of Local Government is addressing the under-representation of Aboriginal people on local councils by undertaking the *Local Government Aboriginal Mentoring Program*. This program provides mentoring and encouragement to Aboriginal people (both men and women) who may wish to stand for election at local government level. The program also provides education and information to address the lack of awareness amongst Aboriginal communities about local government processes and the importance of their input into local councils. The initiative is located in the following areas: Albury, Cessnock, Cobar, Coonamble, Glen Innes, Gosford, Grafton, Inverell, Kempsey, Kyogle, Leichhardt, Lismore, Maclean, Marrickville, Moree Plains, Orange, Severn, and Tumut.

As of 30 June 2000 a total of 33 people had participated in the program. While the proportion of women is unknown, among the six councils visited as part of the evaluation 73 per cent of participants were women. The Department will survey councils annually to obtain a gender breakdown of participants in the program. The program evaluation found significant

support among stakeholders for the program's continuation. It concluded that the program should continue until at least the next local government elections, after which it should be re-evaluated. A guidelines package on the *Aboriginal Mentoring Program* has been prepared by the Department and distributed to councils to assist them with this initiative.

The Department of Community Services is supporting the participation of Aboriginal women staff in the Management Development Program. This program aims to enhance the capacity of Aboriginal women to seek management positions. Priority is given to applicants without tertiary qualifications, and the Department covers the \$4,000 course fee. The Department also encourages participation in the NSW Public Sector Management course, and provides sponsorship for one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff member to enrol each year.

A partnership project between the Department of Women and the women of the Murdi Paaki region aims to provide skills and knowledge so their voices can be heard in the political and economic development and management of their communities.

There is only one woman member of ATSI's Murdi Paaki Regional Council. Women are in most instances over-represented as workers in services and as service providers but seldom equally represented in the governing bodies of these organisations. During the Women on Wheels visit led by the Department for Women to the far west of the state and other consultations, Aboriginal women have identified the need for skill development in managing and monitoring the activities of community projects. The Valuing Women's Voices project will develop locally relevant course content which

identifies historically the strengths of the Aboriginal women on the Murdi Paaki region and the contribution they have made to the pastoral industry. The women have identified skills and knowledge that a strong leader needs to apply. This information will be used to produce a culturally appropriate program which will develop political, service, governance and program management skills in Aboriginal women who want to make a difference to their communities. The project was funded under the 2001 NSW Women's Grants program.

Under its Grants Program, the Department for Women has a partnership project with the Clarence Valley community called 'The Young Women's Project'. Adult women from across seven communities will be trained to lead small groups of young women through an educative process that looks at a range of life skills, including budgeting and money matters, communication, police issues and the emotional costs of early motherhood. The training will be delivered to the Group leaders by a range of professional staff from services including Northern Rivers Area Health Service, Aboriginal Medical Service, Clarence Valley Community Programs Inc and other relevant services. Work from a local Aboriginal Reference Group of Elders across seven communities will enhance the ties in the local Aboriginal communities for young women aged between 12 and 18 years. Other aims include improving the health and well being of women, increasing access to information for young and adult women and making new connections with service providers. Young women will have had the opportunity to explore consequences of decisions and expand their contacts within their communities.

The Premier's Register for Women currently lists 39 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (out of a total of 786 entries)

which is 3 per cent. The visits of the Department for Women as part of the Women on Wheels trip in 2002 caused a significant increase in the number of women applying to be listed on the Register.

INCREASING MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

State and national research indicates that women and girls are under-represented in all aspects of sport, recreation and physical activity, including leadership, management and decision-making positions. Women make up only 34 per cent of board and committee members in Government funded State Sport Organisations.¹⁶

The Department of Sport and Recreation is undertaking an education and information strategy to promote the concept of mentoring as a means of supporting women in and aspiring to sports management and leadership. The project aims to increase awareness of and involvement in mentor programs, improve networking opportunities for women, and increase the number of State Sporting Organisations establishing their own mentor programs.

Ultimately the aim of these initiatives is to increase the number and retention of women in leadership and decision-making positions in the NSW sport and recreation industry. This initiative is part of the *NSW State Plan for Women in Sport and Recreation 1999–2002*. Consultations undertaken by the Ministerial Taskforce for Women in Sport and Recreation in May 2000 in rural NSW reinforce the need to develop establish support networks and systems for women in the sport and recreation industry.

To date the strategy has included publishing and distributing

a promotional brochure and research material on mentoring, conducting information seminars for State Sporting Organisations, and holding training for mentors and those being mentored. Four new mentor facilitators have also been trained. A mentor program for female athletes and coaches has been established at the Illawarra Academy of Sport, and a coach mentor program introduced at the NSW Institute of Sport. To date approximately \$20,000 of funding has been provided for these initiatives.

Further information seminars, mentor training and facilitator training are planned for 2001 to support the delivery of the *Sports Management Development Program* for women.

The Department for Women, through its grants program, is ensuring access to appropriate capacity building and improving advocacy skills by providing young women in Bourke with opportunities to be trained as peer leaders and educators. Peer leadership training programs will be conducted over several weeks and will include training in the areas of self esteem, health and nutrition, participation on committees. The program will include Aboriginal and non Aboriginal young women with the aim of empowering peer leaders to act as role models for other women in the Bourke shire, develop and implement their own solutions to local issues, and develop partnerships between young women, rural services and central agencies to address the needs of young women. A skill development package will be compiled and provided to adult mentors and young adult participants during the program.

INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT

One way the Department for Women is aiming to increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making roles is to increase the capacity of women to be elected to local councils. As part of this strategy the DFW has established a working party to identify the needs of women councilors. The DFW facilitated a workshop on mentoring at the March 2000 Local Government Women's Association conference. Participants identified many issues facing women councilors, including isolation, bullying from other councilors and council staff, and the lack of support mechanisms.

To address these issues, the DFW working party developed a best practice model of support for women councilors, with the aim of encouraging women both to nominate for and to stay in local government once elected. This model is being piloted in four councils in metropolitan, and regional areas.

The Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) nominates councilors to a range of public sector boards and committees. Increasing the number of women councilors will therefore also increase the possible number of women eligible for election to boards and committees.

During 1999 the Department for Women also conducted the *Women in Local Government Media Campaign* encouraging women to stand for election at the 1999 local government elections. This campaign involved metropolitan and regional newspaper advertisements and radio announcements by various women including the then Minister for Women, Faye Lo' Po, and the first woman to be elected to the City of Sydney council, Joan Pilone.

At the 1999 Local Government elections 1,380 out of 4,573 (or 30.2 per cent) of those who stood as candidates were women.¹⁷ The next elections are to be held in September 2003.

TRAINING FOR PARTICIPATION

NSW Agriculture offered a training initiative in 2000, aimed at developing the participation and advocacy skills of older people in rural communities. These *Working the System* Workshops were established in partnership with the Central West Regional Council of Adult and Community Education (ACE) and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) with \$10,000 in funding from an International Year of Older Persons community partnership grant. Workshops were attended by 65 older people in 5 communities across NSW (Port Macquarie, Kiama, Orange, Sydney and Tuggerah Lakes), with approximately two-thirds of participants being women.

The Office of Western Sydney is planning a range of initiatives aimed at increasing women's participation in economic development. In a partnership with the Department for Women the Office is developing a number of strategies in the area of small business, access for women with overseas qualifications, and gender equity in industry and business. While this initiative is still being developed, strategies are likely to include training for women in small business, mentoring programs for women, and strategies to improve access for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to economic development initiatives in the Western Sydney region.

Shaping our Futures Together is a NSW Agriculture initiative and is a two day career and personal development course which aims to build on the diversity of leadership capacity in rural communities by developing rural women's confidence,

action planning skills and establishing support networks. *Shaping Our Futures Together* is FarmBi\$ registered enabling women to claim 75 per cent of costs associated including course fee, child care, accommodation and travel. Courses have been conducted in Tocal, the Hunter and the Far West area. In addition the Rural Women's Network and the department for Women collaborated in June 2002 to deliver segments of the *Shaping Our Futures Together* program as part of the 2002 Women on Wheels tour. The target group for the program is women in rural, remote and regional NSW, with the Far West workshop targeting younger rural women.

A vision for a sustainable future for Ulladulla is being developed through focus groups, workshops, a survey and conversations with stakeholders across the community and is an initiative led by the Department for Women. A cultural development approach to identifying those things/locations and qualities the community values sits alongside the conversations and research. The vision forms the basis for a set of action plans that inform the establishment of partnerships to implement and develop the projects, planning, training, participation and research arising from the working process and vision. At the same time the project will ensure that women's perceptions, experience and knowledge are integrated into existing planning and development initiatives. To date a large number of women have participated in the focus group planning for the vision -in their existing groups and networks, in informal and formal environments, in workshops and through the survey. The project has been funded through the Premier's Department Regional Service Delivery Plan and auspiced through the Illawarra/South East Regional Coordination Management Group. The Department of State and Regional Development is the lead agency in partnership with the Department for

Women. The project developed as an outcome from the Women's Grants Program Partnership project with UTS Shopfront on sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development for women in remote and regional communities. The project has drawn women together across a wide diversity of interests and experiences, is building a strong sense of common purpose and has strengthened a sense of place.

The CEDAW promise

Historically, women have been excluded from, or under-represented in, public and political life. CEDAW calls on governments to address the structural and attitudinal problems that continue to contribute to this type of discrimination against women.

CEDAW Article 7 states that women should be able to vote and stand for election, to participate in government policy processes, to hold public office and to contribute to non-government organisations that are concerned with public and political life.

List of agencies with initiatives in this chapter

- ◆ Department for Women
- ◆ Premier's Department
- ◆ Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust
- ◆ NSW Agriculture
- ◆ Department of Fair Trading
- ◆ Department of Education and Training
- ◆ Department of Sport and Recreation

2002 has seen the participation of 4 local councils in the pilot of the 10 point plan towards best practice in local government, a Department for Women led initiative.

The 2 metropolitan (Parramatta and Waverley) and 2 regional councils (Kempsey and Broken Hill) have been enthusiastic about the benefits of the plan:

'We saw it as contributing to improved processes which help all Councillors.'

'We got involved basically because the Mayor thought it important to encourage more women at all levels of local government (staff, elected Council etc) and thought the project worth supporting. With his support I put a report to Council recommending our involvement.'

'The women on Council all supported it. The male Councillors did too, partly to encourage more women but partly because they felt that the strategies in the 10 point plan would all contribute to better governance and would encourage a more democratic, informed and open Council; all our Councillors are strong supporters of these objectives which are part of our vision statement and Values in our Management Plan.'

- ◆ Department of Land and Water Conservation
- ◆ Department of Local Government
- ◆ Attorney General's Department
- ◆ Ministry for the Arts
- ◆ Department of Community Services
- ◆ Office of Western Sydney
- ◆ Community Relations Commission

Shaping Our Futures Together

In June and July 2002, the Department for Women and the Premiers Council for Women, together with a variety of government agencies and community organizations, visited the North Coast, New England and Northern Tablelands regions in NSW as part of a program of activities called Women on Wheels.

A popular session was the *Shaping Our Futures Together* Workshop which was a snippet of a 2 day skills based training program for rural women. Where possible, a Rural Lands Protection Board representative spoke about the upcoming elections and the role of a Director to encourage more women to nominate.

Shaping Our Futures Together is a course specially designed for women. It includes a wide range of learning activities with an emphasis on having fun while learning together in a supported environment.

Participants learn to:

- ◆ write a personal action plan, identify skills, use visioning and reflection for goal setting as well as share strategies for overcoming obstacles;

- ◆ see themselves more clearly and take steps to improve their self-image;
- ◆ get more balance in their life, use assertiveness skills to get what they want and understand how attitudes and actions can effect them and others;
- ◆ develop ways of recognising and dealing with relationship and communication challenges;
- ◆ form support networks, discover potential mentors and network more effectively.

Participants made the following comments:

'There was a good balance of activities. It was fantastic and very useful.'

'I found talking about self-esteem, self-assessment and networking useful.'

'I enjoyed the input from participants and presenters on overcoming obstacles — what amazing resources.'

'The location really facilitated the networking.'

'I was impressed with goal setting and learning how to say NO!'

1 Karam, Azza, 'Gender and Democracy – Why?', in International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, Stockholm, Sweden, 1998.

2 Premiers Department unpublished data as at 30 June 2002.

3 Sheridan, Alison, 'A View From the Top: women on the boards of public companies', *Corporate Governance*, March 2001, p.2.

4 Sheridan, Alison, 'A View From the Top: women on the boards of public companies', *Corporate Governance*, March 2001, p.2. This figure refers to the 91 per cent of positions where the gender of board members could be identified from Australian Stock Exchange data.

5 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 January 2001.

6 *Australian Financial Review*, 27 September 2002 p 56.

7 Local Courts Civil Registry, unpublished data, as at 30 September 2002.

8 Judicial Commission of NSW, unpublished data. As at 30 September 2002.

9 Department of Local Government website: www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

10 1995 data from Department of Local Government, *Candidates and Councillors 1995: the 1995 survey of local government elected members and candidates*. 1999 data from Department of Local Government website: www.dlg.nsw.gov.au. NB: There are no 1995 statistics available relating to deputy mayors.

11 Department of Internal Affairs Statistics and Local Government New Zealand Elected Member Surveys, Local Government New Zealand website: www.lgnz.co.nz

12 Local Government Association UK.

13 Information Australia, National Guide to Government 46th Edition November 2000–March 2001. Figures have been updated to reflect 2001 elections in Western Australia and Queensland.

14 As at 25 July 2002. Data from NSW Parliament website: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au>

15 Human Development Report 2002, United Nations Development Program, Oxford University Press, 2002.

16 Department of Sport and Recreation.

17 Department of Local Government.