

# Motivation: getting started



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Women who become active in decision making have usually got there because they are driven by some kind of passion, desire, dream or vision.

## Ask yourself: what motivates me?

- Ambition—you want to make a difference, reverse a decision, effect change or further a career.
- Role models—you're inspired by people you have met.
- Self-interest—it's your street, suburb, children, neighbours, parents or peers who will be affected if you don't take action.
- Rage—you're furious that others are doing nothing, and you want to channel that energy to good effect.
- Social justice—you can see that others are in need, and feel you have to see they get the right kind of help. You want to help your community or people less well off than you.
- Social life—you enjoy the social aspects of community involvement.
- Competence—incompetence, stupidity and ineptness are a personal affront and you know you can do better.
- Equality—belief that it's time women had a say and were given a go.
- Boredom—you like to be busy and involved.
- Conscience and karma—you want to look back on your life and say, 'I contributed', or 'In my own way, large or small, I made a difference'.
- Money—it's financially rewarding or will be one day.

- Career—it will help you get a job later, look good on your CV and enable you to make good contacts.
- Stubbornness—you will try anything and just about everything, but you will not give up no matter how long it takes.

Sometimes it takes time to effect change, so any combination of these reasons can sustain you through the years of hard work and the challenges and obstacles that inevitably crop up.

*'I have four children and I started to feel angry because my two teenage daughters, who were so committed and doing well at sport (hockey, softball) at regional and state level, weren't getting any media coverage; while their brothers, who were not as successful, were getting lots of coverage (football, cricket).*

*'I wrote to the editors of the local newspapers about their failure to cover women's sport. That led me to also being asked to write some articles on women's issues, which attracted some very sexist responses. I was also very active in my children's sporting activities and clubs, and then my youngest daughter was offered a scholarship with Riverina Academy of Sport (RAS). My first introduction to the organisation was as a parent.*

*'Eventually I was asked by the Riverina Regional Director of the Department of Sport and Recreation to become involved on the RAS Board. I stood for election as an independent because I saw it as an opportunity to see that girls were given the same opportunities as boys in sport, and I was interested in young people having the opportunity to achieve excellence in sport.'*

Judy Galloway

*'It changes. I think people evolve in much the same way as development agencies have evolved. You start off with a concern about particular social conditions. I started off being really concerned about Aboriginal children and wanted to actually do something for them using a hands on approach. But that is a paternalistic approach. More than that, it is a very patronising approach in many ways.*

*'You know the old adage: "Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach him how to fish, feed him for life". I would take that one step further now. I think you go from giving the fish, to teaching how to fish, but then you find that out there in the big world there are all these sharks around and it doesn't matter how well someone can fish. They still get clobbered; and so you then become angry with the system, and in some ways it is that anger that keeps you going, because you are determined to change the system. I think that is where most of us are at the moment—fighting the paradigm that is keeping the distribution of the world's resources unfair, and increasingly becoming more and more unfair. If we are going to survive we've got to turn that around.'*

Judy Henderson



*'First of all, as an immigrant into the Australian community you don't know the network, so my natural interest was to see what the current situation was regarding the Chinese network and community services. At that time, ethnic organisations, like the Australian Chinese Community Association, were more or less excluded from government funding regimes. You must remember—that was a different era. Consequently, I felt obligated to advocate on their behalf.*

*'I was working at the time as a social worker with the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, and through my casework I came into contact with the tragedies of people who, through physical disability or lack of family support, found themselves in a culturally alien nursing environment. They felt utterly alienated because of the difference of habits, and they felt abandoned because they felt the environment was so strange. They were totally left to their own resources, and naturally, if you cannot speak, you cannot eat the food and your sense of desolation is aggravated. This was the impetus for becoming involved with the Australian Nursing Home Foundation.'*

Angeline Oyang

*'The sorts of positions I have held have revolved around legal aid, domestic violence, and other issues involving a social justice agenda—social justice meaning that there are things that are wrong and need fixing. So it is about social justice, social change ... For me, it has been effecting change from the inside ... You can do it that way or you can do it in other ways. There are different forms of activism, and I suppose when I think about it, mine has been through the established processes ... but that has certainly been the driving force.'*

Clare Petre