

Conclusion



Women in NSW 2012 introduces a wealth of information about NSW women, past and present. It shows many areas where the degree of social change has been impressive. For example, it was not until 1987 that a woman from NSW was elected to the Senate; today, women make up 42 percent of Senators representing NSW.

There are also many areas where progress has stalled, gains have been reversed or inequality between different groups of women is profound.

The government sees this first and subsequent *Women in NSW* reports as the starting point for debates about how social and political changes might affect women and men (in all their diversity), and what considerations therefore need to be incorporated into policy-making. It is hoped that the reports will similarly assist business, educators, and those in all areas of community life to think about the distinctive design and implementation of initiatives to make them suitable for both sexes.

If, as *Women in NSW 2012* reveals, 82 percent of mature age women now rely on government benefits in retirement, and women approaching retirement age have \$29,000 less than men in their superannuation accounts, what does this mean for NSW aged care, health and housing services in the future?

Alternatively, if women from some non-English speaking countries are missing out on the buoyant job market that is driving higher workforce participation among Australian-born women, what might this mean for training and employment services?

And why have reports by Aboriginal women of domestic violence assaults declined in recent years? Does this reflect a downward trend in the incidence of violence, or does it point to issues affecting women's willingness to go to the police?

These and many other questions raised by *Women in NSW 2012* need thoughtful reflection and discussion.

The report makes clear that almost any issue, from use of technology to urban planning to sports funding, has a gender dimension which, if overlooked, may hamper the realisation of the outcomes that government, business and the community are trying to achieve.

Most importantly, *Women in NSW 2012* is an invitation to everyone to take part in the project of addressing gender equality.