



informed

Issue 397

October 2009

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Annual Reclaim the Night rally—7pm on Friday 30th October in Victoria Park, Sydney

Next WELNSW Meeting Monday 2nd November at 6pm, WEL offices 66 Albion Street Surry Hills

REPORTING ON EQUAL PAY DAY

***From Kerry Lovering
Convenor, WEL Victoria —
written on 3 September 2009***

WEL Victoria delivered the Equal Pay messages with red roses (real and fake) to all Female Victorian politicians—ie 9 MPs, 3 Senators and 40 State members.

We delivered real roses to Julia Gillard's office [to-day] as she is in India [until tomorrow]. We had to wait until Victorian State politician Tim Holding was found alive [on Wednesday]--not appropriate to give red roses while he was missing.

The Minister for Women's Affairs Maxine Morand has floated the idea of quotas in boards and this has aroused angst but may result in some progress. As *The Age*

pointed out it would be quite reasonable to have females as 50% of candidates for election to boards at AGMs. If shareholders rejected them OK but it gives a window of opportunity.

This is an area where the Corporations Act might be appropriately changed.

It is very important to get women to the top of business enterprises as well as in parliament.

There are quite a few women at the top areas of the bureaucracy and lots in academia Heather Ridout and Sharan Burrows are doing a great job but we need many more of them influencing business and governments.

The Equal Pay Alliance is a good start.

And from Elizabeth Kentwell, WEL ACT

Well done Victoria! We handed over live red roses and a copy of the postcard with a handwritten message for our four ACT federal polities - much easier than for the Victorian women! People seem to have at least a basic understanding of the issue, so hopefully this will remind them that action is still needed.

I also spoke to Penny Wong's adviser during the day at a UNIFEM event. It wasn't appropriate to give roses at that time, so concentrated on getting the message across verbally.

WEL NSW Inc is a member of WEL Australia and is dedicated to creating a society where women's participation and potential are unrestricted, acknowledged and respected, where women and men share equally in society's responsibilities and rewards.

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All members are invited and encouraged to contribute or comment. Ideas, comments, articles or clippings from other media all gratefully accepted. Content may be edited.

The editor(s) happily read emails sent to welnsw@comcen.com.au and hard copy articles or letters can be posted to the WEL office.

Deadlines for contributions to the next edition: 13 January 2010. There is no newsletter in December.

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Editor for this edition: Lorraine Slade, Advice/Mailout Team: Anne Barber, Josefa Green.

Join the national WEL email list, email your name, email address and your WEL group (eg NSW) to owner-wel-members@lists.nwjc.org.au

DISCLAIMER

Views expressed in WEL-Informed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect WEL policy. Unsigned material, apart from inserts, is by the WEL-Informed editorial team.

MORE REPORTING ON EQUAL PAY DAY



From Sue Hammond, WEL Victoria

In Melbourne about 100 women unionists had a breakfast and we all wore red and then led the rally on Health and Safety which had been organised months ago.

And from Eva Cox, WEL NSW

Thanks for that! we handed out lots of the post cards in an ad hoc manner and distributed them to our membership for sending on. I went to a meeting on Equal pay at Sydney Uni and handed them out there. People liked them, so hopefully they posted them on!

NATIONAL CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS - WOMEN AND RECESSION PROJECT—SEPTEMBER UPDATE

The Australia Institute Report, The Impact of the Recession on Women, was launched by ACTU President Sharan Burrow on August 24 at the World Congress of the International Industrial Relations Association, and generated a high level of public and media interest.

The Commonwealth Minister for Women, The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP has placed the TAI Report and its revelations about women's hidden unemployment on the agenda for the October meeting of the Council of Commonwealth and State Ministers for Women.

The four national alliances of

women's organisations, together with the National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW), are supporting a program during October-November of consultation workshops on the report in all capital cities and several regional cities.

Each of the Alliances, together with the NFAW is contributing to the costs of the project.

The objective of these workshops is to generate a further national report, which will illuminate the statistical material with the lived experiences of women as they seek to overcome the obstacles preventing them from ac-

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cessing the work they seek.

The consultations will identify the specific obstacles associated with access to re-training and to age-appropriate child care for the women.

Marie Coleman, Chair of the NFAW Social Policy Committee, will facilitate the consultation workshops. WomenSpeak will send a project officer to provide support at each event, and to assist in preparation of individual summaries of consultations, as well as the writing of the consolidated national report.

It is hoped that a national report can be launched and provided to State and Commonwealth Governments, with recommendations for policy changes, in early December.

The schedule for the workshops is below, with an indication of the key organising entities in each instance.

In addition, Senator Claire Moore (Lab. Qld) has offered to host a cross-Party meeting in Parliament House Canberra, on 28 October to offer Parliamentarians an opportunity to learn more about the issues.

David Richardson, author of the first TAI report will speak, and will release a second, supplementary piece of research which will address the potential benefits of Government investment in the women who are the hidden unemployed.

Schedule of Consultations:

29 September, Broken Hill -
Women on Boards, NFAW, National Rural Women's Alliance -
Broken Hill Enterprise Development Centre

20 October, Brisbane -
Australian Federation of University Women (Qld), Queensland Working Women's Service -
Queensland Office of Women

21 October, Cairns
Cairns Women's Network -
Office of Sen. Jan McLucas

26 October, Darwin
Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory Working Women's Centre,
N.T Women's Policy -
TBC

11 November, Perth -
Business and Professional Women's Association (WA) -
West Australian Office for Women

13 November, Adelaide -
South Australian office for Women -
S.A Working Women's Centre

8 November, Sydney
Women and Work Research Group,
UniSyd, others TBC

23 November, Melbourne -
RMIT University, Social Research -
Victorian Office for Women WIRE

24 November, Hobart -
UnionsTas -
Tasmanian Office for Women.

?? Canberra
TBC

Marie Coleman
Chair
NFAW Social Policy Committee
17 September 2009

NATIONAL
FOUNDATION
FOR AUSTRALIAN
WOMEN

REVIEW OF AUSTRALIA'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAWS

Press Release
Canberra
22 September 2009

Speaking at the inaugural Ministerial Council on Family Violence, Attorney-General Robert McClelland, and Minister for the Status of Women Tanya Plibersek, today launched a valuable report addressing domestic violence laws.

The report, *'Domestic Violence Laws in Australia'*, provides an overview of Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand legislation and will be used to develop the Rudd Government's *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women*.

Nearly one in three Australian women experience physical violence and nearly one in five experience sexual violence over their lifetime.

The Australian Government's position on violence against women is one of zero tolerance.

Laws must be strong enough to hold perpetrators to account and offer justice and safety for victims and their families.

The Report, prepared by the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) for the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, finds significant differences in:

- maximum penalties for contravening a domestic violence order;

- approaches to counselling and rehabilitation programs; and
- police obligations to take action where domestic violence is suspected.

The report also provides an analysis of overlaps and potential gaps between the *Family Law Act 1975* and State and Territory domestic violence protection orders, providing a valuable basis for the Australian and New South Wales Law Reform Commissions' inquiry into the interaction of domestic violence laws which was a key recommendation of the National Council's *'Time for Action'* report.

It also examines the registration process for domestic violence protection orders and 'portability' between jurisdictions, a critical issue for women fleeing domestic violence. This will be an important input as the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) considers options for a national register of protection orders to better protect victims.

Sexual assault, domestic and family violence have serious and often devastating consequences for victims, their extended families and the community.

Through the development of a *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women*, the Rudd Government remains committed to providing national leadership on this critical issue.

Sexual assault, domestic and family violence have serious and often devastating consequences for victims, their extended families and the community.

MAKING PINK THE NEW BLACK

5 October 2009,
Sydney Morning Herald (Business)

Corporate governance must address the issue of more women in the boardroom, writes, Ann-Maree Moodie.

Boards of directors that fail to address gender imbalance should be sanctioned by the ASX on the basis that their composition fails to allow them to adequately discharge their responsibilities, a senior company director has recommended.

The former CEO of Australian Airlines, Andrea Staines, says the guidelines for good corporate governance should be the basis for listed companies to address the issue of more women in the boardroom.

Staines said the ASX's Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations could be used to "make companies think more" about selecting new directors and planning for succession in the boardroom.

"Academic research repeatedly shows that diversity improves performance," said Staines, a director of Australian Rail Track Corporation and Gladstone Ports Corporation.

"So perhaps a way to improve gender balance in the boardroom is for Principle 2 of the ASX guidelines to make a point about creating a board with a diverse composition."

Principle 2, titled "Structure the Board to Add Value" encourages ASX-listed companies to "have a board of effective composition, size and commitment to adequately discharge its responsibilities and duties".

"If you don't comply with the Prin-

inciples as a public company you have to explain why not. Perhaps then companies would have to think about it more and have to comment in a 'if not, why not' format."

Staines was speaking after last month's Diversity on Boards Conference in Sydney organised by Women on Boards, a not-for-profit organisation that promotes increased numbers of women on Australian boards in all sectors: listed, private and not-for-profit organisations.

Compared with countries like Norway, where the Government has mandated that listed company boards have a composition of at least 40 per cent women, the number of women directors on ASX 200 company boards is just 8.3 per cent, down from 8.7 per cent the previous year.

Australia rates poorly compared with other Western nations. In the United States 15.2 per cent of listed company board seats are held by women, in Britain 11.5 per cent and Europe 9.7 per cent.

The comments made by Staines follow a report published in August by the Corporations and Markets Advisory Committee, the organisation that advises the Federal Government on corporate law matters.

The report, commissioned by the former corporate law minister Nick Sherry, concluded directors of public companies come from a "relatively limited pool" and are often "drawn from the ranks of other boards and senior corporate executives".

CAMAC urged the ASX Corporate

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Australia rates poorly compared with other Western nations. In the United States 15.2 per cent of listed company board seats are held by women, in Britain 11.5 per cent and Europe 9.7 per cent.

SOLE PARENTS COP IT AGAIN

Murdoch's tabloid style broadsheet, *The Australian*, last week was doing over welfare recipients again with its favourite source of so called bad news stories, the Centre for Independent Studies. The news story headline was *Single Parents fleeing Welfare*, followed by *Motivate those on hand-outs* in Jessica Brown's opinion piece, setting the scene for another bit of welfare bashing. The article starts with the following 'Single parents have dropped off welfare in droves since the Howard government forced them to look for work once their children start school' claiming a 100,000 drop in recipients of the parenting payment single since the welfare to work program imposed both a drop in income and an obligation to find part time work since 2006.

The Howard changes fed assumptions that sole parents needed to be forced to look for part time work, and caused considerable distress to a sample of sole parents we surveyed at the time. Some were forced to give up current jobs and study to meet strict criteria and others had their payments cut as they were shifted from parenting payment to the lower paying Newstart. Most reported that their families were feeling more stress and little benefit even when they found some low level part time work. Any serious evaluation of the program would need to look at more serious outcomes than

whether there were fewer claimants for a particular payment.

Even claiming some significance for the drop is dicey. Many of the former recipients are quite likely to have been moved onto the lower level Newstart payment; others would have gone to carer or disability payments to cover their children's particular needs or their own limiting conditions. In fact, disability payments for women have risen over the same time, while men's have not suggesting that some have just transferred. The figures for Parenting payment show a sharp drop of about 10,000 recipients for each age groups from 8 up, when the transfer to Newstart occurs.

However, the reforms occurred at the same time as unemployment was dropping. This suggests that the positive result achieved was not simply due to PP recipients being shuffled from one payment to another but instead moving off welfare altogether. Lending weight to this conclusion is ABS data showing that the overall proportion of sole parents who are jobless has been dropping for quite some time (from 56% in 1996 to 47% in 2006). While it is not possible from the available data to conclude that the 2006 reforms *caused* the drop in PP recipients, the positive change

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This suggests that the positive result achieved was not simply due to PP recipients being shuffled from one payment to another but instead moving off welfare altogether.

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since the introduction of the reforms is marked.

The Centre for Independent Studies 'What's Next for Welfare-to-Work?' report, is in its own admissions a bit of a beat up, but unfortunately those who only read headlines won't know it.

The Howard government angered welfare groups in 2006 when it began forcing unemployed parents to start searching for work once their youngest child started school.

New applicants for parenting payment (PP) lose the welfare benefit once their youngest child turned eight, if they were a single parent, or when the child turned six if they were partnered.

Those already receiving a parenting payment had to start looking for paid part-time work of at least 15 hours a week once their youngest child turned seven.

Eva Cox
WELNSW

MAKING PINK THE NEW BLACK

(Continued from page 5)

Governance Council, which authored the corporate governance principles, to develop guidelines to boost the representation of women.

"There is a lot we can do through Women on Boards and the Australian Institute of Company Directors to ensure we can get the broadest list of names put forward for positions on boards," Staines said.

"But if we were to encourage the ASX to include a recommendation about gender diversity on boards it might be another way to highlight the need for boards to conduct a broader search for new directors."

Her comments reflect the findings of my book for the AICD, *The Twenty First Century Board: Selection, Performance and Succession* in which

board directors "played the game of who do you know?" when selecting new directors.

One way to augment this practice is through greater use of board search firms. "There are very few boards that attempt to fill a CEO role just by who they knew," Staines said. "I can't think of a company that wouldn't go to a search firm."

Before launching her career as a professional company director, Staines was the CEO of the Qantas subsidiary Australian Airlines, which was launched in 2002. The airline closed in 2006 when Qantas launched Jetstar International.

Before this Staines held corporate finance roles with Qantas and American Airlines. Among her qualifications is an MBA in Finance from the University of

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According to research published in the academic journal *Organisational Dynamics* last year, there is "a correlation between the presence of a 'critical mass' of at least three women in a corporation's management team, and its organisational and financial performance".

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Michigan.

Staines is adamant that women who aspire to roles as senior executives and company directors gain "line experience" during their career.

Among the factors Staines considered for her board career was her profile, the competition for board seats in the industries she was interested in, and when vacancies were likely to occur. With many boards adopting the practice of "three terms of three years" for board tenure, openings are always limited. Her first board role, with Gladstone Ports Corporation, was offered on her departure from Australian Airlines.

She was also appointed to the board of Australian Rail Track Corporation in 2006, but the board of the listed childcare company Early Learning Services took another three years. In between, she took positions on not-for-profit boards including the Brisbane Royal Children's Hospital Foundation.

Patience is therefore critical. "I've been methodical and that's a reflection of my personality," she said.

"Positions on boards only become available rarely because, unlike an executive role, the position doesn't have to be filled immediately unless the board can't meet its quorum. So the urgency to fill a position isn't there, and there is a long gestation period.

"Then when a position does become available, it has to be the right position for you and for the company. If the board has done a skills gap analysis, you might not be able to fill the gap they're looking for.

"Or they may be looking for someone with industry knowledge that you don't have. And then you have to decide that it's the right fit for you. Does the board suit culturally? Is the company financially stable?"

It is a continuous process that is unlike looking for a regular job. Most company directors look to build a portfolio of boards, so the process of marketing yourself never stops. Maintaining your confidence during such a long drawn out process can be hard. "When things don't happen quickly, you have to be careful you don't say to yourself 'I'm a failure, and I need to move on and do something else'," Staines said. Her advice to women planning a board career is to network actively because visibility is critical to getting

your name on a shortlist of potential new directors to be considered by a board's nomination committee.

That means approaching search firms, networking with company chairmen and non-executive directors and those people who influence boards such as heads of institutional banks.

Despite her passionate belief that the gender balance on boards is important, Staines disagrees with recent academic research suggesting that when a board reaches "critical mass" - three or more female board members - it is guaranteed to improve board performance.

According to research published in the academic journal *Organisational Dynamics* last year, there is "a correlation between the presence of a 'critical mass' of at least three women in a corporation's management team, and its organisational and financial performance".

A female director was quoted in the article as saying: "The stage with one woman is the 'invisibility phase'. The stage with two women is the 'conspiracy phase': if the women sit next to each other, if they go to the ladies room together, the guys wonder what the women are up to. Three women are the mainstream - it is normal to have women in the room and those questions go away."

The researchers said that there were three reasons why numbers made a difference. Firstly, "multiple women help break the stereotypes that solo women are subjected to". A critical mass of women helps "change the all-male communication dynamic" is the second reason. And thirdly, research on influence and conformity in groups indicates that "three may be somewhat of a 'magic number' in group dynamics which suggests that having three women may be particularly beneficial for creating change".

"I'm not sure I agree with the research, based on my personal experience," Staines said. "I think it depends on the board and on the personality of the men sitting around the board table."

Ann-Maree Moodie is the managing director of The Boardroom Consulting Group. She is a governance scholar and writer and a media commentator on boardroom issues.

EVENTS TO CELEBRATE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT

*Press Release
Australian Human Rights Commission
2 October 2009*

Earlier this year the Australian Human Rights Commission launched a web site to mark the 25th anniversary of the federal Sex Discrimination Act http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/sda_25/index.html.

Today, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, is participating in two events that celebrate the anniversary of this important piece of human rights legislation.

Commissioner Broderick will deliver a speech entitled, 'Sex Discrimination over the Lifecycle' at the Sex Discrimination Act Silver Anniversary conference organised by Prof Margaret Thornton at the Australian National University. The Commissioner's paper considers the effectiveness of the Act in addressing the daily experiences of gender inequality in the lives of women. Sex discrimination is most commonly understood as individual incidents that impact on a woman during her life.

Life events such as entering the workforce, pregnancy, returning to work, balancing work and caring responsibilities and retirement are

all 'trigger' points for individual experiences of sex discrimination. Yet this discrimination in individual life events can shape sub-subsequent opportunities, choices and outcomes for women, and accumulate as serious disadvantage later in life.

The 'lifecycle' approach to sex discrimination advocated in Commissioner Broderick's paper has the potential to change the way law reformers, policy-makers and individual women think about sex discrimination. For further information about the conference, visit http://law.anu.edu.au/coast/events/Sex_Discrim/conference.htm.

Commissioner Broderick has also been interviewed by the Sydney Morning Herald for a commemorative slideshow on sex discrimination over the past 25 years. The slide show can be viewed online at <http://www.smh.com.au/multimedia/national/sex-discrimination-shakeup/20091001-gek6.html>.

Sex discrimination is most commonly understood as individual incidents that impact on a woman during her life.

INVITATION from the Reclaim the Night Organising Collective to the annual Reclaim the Night (RTN) rally and festival that will occur on Friday the 30th of October at 7pm in Victoria Park, Sydney.

RTN is an annual women's protest, which was first held in Australia in 1978. It developed out of the need for women to challenge all forms of violence perpetrated against them and the culture that permits this violence.

This year the central demand of Reclaim the Night is to "End Violence in the Home, on the Streets, at School and at Work." Violence affects women in all areas of their lives; there is nowhere they can feel ownership of a space or immunity from the sexual, physical and other types of violence that society permits. The Collective is demanding a real response to violence against women, as statistics like 1% conviction rates for sexual offenders demonstrates the complete lack of an adequate response thus far.

INVITATION to two Dymphna Cusack plays on Wednesday 11 November, 5.30 for 6.00pm to 7.30pm in the Metcalfe Auditorium, Macquarie Street Wing of the NSW State Library of NSW. The actors include Shane Porteous and Duncan Wass, and Claire Jones and Julie Herbert; all professionals.

The Library serves nice wine and ribbon sandwiches beforehand, so be there at 5.30.

Marilla North
The Producer

Cost: \$15 (Friends), \$20 (seniors), \$22, includes light refreshments

Enjoy dramatised readings by professional actors of two works addressing issues still relevant today.

Plays by Dymphna Cusack (1902–1981)

His Honour Comes to Tea (1933)

A drawing room comedy with a distinctly feminist edge. Judge Belair's hypocritical treatment of the women in society divorce cases is wittily exposed.

The Banner (1937)

A world premiere of Dymphna's suffrage play. Julie sews the banner 'Equal pay for equal work' while her sister Lallie's tragic fate unfolds.

Produced by Marilla North and directed by Claire Jones. Cast includes New Theatre veteran Julie Herbert and members of the Blue Mountains' Weatherboard Theatre Company.

BOOKINGS: Tel 9273 1770



connected

The Hon. Michael Kirby is launching a new resource on the lesbian and gay experience of dementia. LGBT ageing is a neglected area of service provision and social policy. This will be a good chance to find out what is happening in this area if you are interested. ACON coordinates a working party on the issue if you want more information.

The launch will be held on the evening of 19 November (7pm to 9pm) at the Rex Convention Centre, 50-58 Macleay Street, Potts Point.

Bookings are essential— further enquiries and registration -
Deb Gavan

Manager, Community Services phone 02 9206 2121—email DGavan@acon.org.au
RSVP by 13 November

INVITATION to IWSA Annual General Meeting and

Forum: 25 years of Sex Discrimination Act

Guest Speaker: Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, Sex Discrimination Commissioner

The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association (IWSA) invites you to the IWSA Annual General Meeting and Forum on the 23rd of November 2009, Monday, from 10:00 am - 1:30 pm at the Jubilee Hall, Parramatta Town Hall, Church Street Mall, Parramatta.

Commissioner Broderick will focus on the topic "Women balancing parenting and paid work" including how the Australian Human Rights Commission assists women in asserting their work rights while balancing their parenting responsibilities to that of their paid work.

Please confirm your participation by 16 November 2009, email:
women@speakout.org.au or ring Emina on (02) 9635 8022.

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

A special welcome to new members, and many thanks to all members who renewed their membership in the past month, and especially to those who gave so generously to WEL.

Consider a Bequest to WEL NSW

A bequest enables you to perpetuate your ideas and make a difference far into the future. Please remember WEL in your will.

The following wording is recommended:

I bequeath the sum of (amount written in words and figures) free of all debts, duties and taxes, to the Women's Electoral Lobby (NSW) Inc (ABN 50 242 525 012) for its general purposes, and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Women's Electoral Lobby (NSW) Inc shall be complete discharge to my executors for this gift, and that my executor shall not be bound to see to the application of it.

If '**RENEWAL**' is stamped in your newsletter and/or a renewal form is enclosed or attached to your email copy, your membership renewal is now due. Please renew your membership of WEL NSW

Don't forget to let WEL know if you change address.

WEL Executive Meeting

Monday

2 November

At 6pm

**66 Albion St
Surry Hills**

ALL WELCOME

WEL NSW Executive

Convenor: Jozefa Sobski
Treasurer: Tabitha Ponnambalam
Members: Josefa Green, Helen L'Orange,
Eva Cox, Melanie Fernandez, Gabe
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To join WEL NSW

Download a membership form from
<http://welnsw.org.au> or phone (02 9212
4374) for a membership package

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AUSTRALIA