



WEL-Informed

The Newsletter of Women's Electoral Lobby NSW

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Next WEL meeting
 Wednesday 2 March
 6.30 pm
 at 66 Albion Street
 Surry Hills
 ALL WELCOME
 RSVP 02 9212 4374

State election forum on gender equality and fairness



NSW State Parliament Theatre
Macquarie Street, Sydney

Thursday 3 March 2011

6pm for 6.30pm start
Panel discussion followed by
supper and networking

Jodi McKay - Minister for Women,
 Minister for Tourism,
 Minister for the Hunter,
 Minister for Science & Medical Research

Pru Goward - Shadow Minister for Women,
 Shadow Minister for Community Services

Cate Faehrmann Greens MP and Spokesperson for Women

**SEATS ARE LIMITED
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL**

This forum is hosted by WELNSW and supported by 13 other NSW women's groups. See page 2 for more information.

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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WEL-Informed, the newsletter of Women's Electoral Lobby NSW, is published 4 times a year and may be received in hardcopy or by email. Subscription is by membership of WEL NSW for individuals (fees vary) or by institution.

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.

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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

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STATE ELECTION FORUM—THURSDAY, 3RD MARCH

2011 marks a major milestone in the women's achievement; a hundred years ago the first ever International Women's Day march was held to demand equal pay for equal work and ever since women around the world have been campaigning for their rights in just about every sphere of society. In spite of how far women have come today, in the 21st century women are still campaigning for equal pay and in NSW a woman can be prosecuted for abortion under the criminal code.

In the lead up to the March state elections WEL NSW will be presenting a state election forum on gender equality and fairness to be held at the NSW state Parliament Theatre, Macquarie Street on the 3rd of March 2011. The forum will provide an opportunity for NSW's diverse collective of women's organisations to come together and to ask the relevant questions

The forum will be supported by 13 other women's organisations including: Older Women's Network, Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, Sole Parents Union, Scarlet Alliance, Women's Abortion Action Campaign, Women's Health NSW, The F Collective, Domestic Violence Coalition, Asian Women at Work, National Pay Equity Coalition, Aboriginal Women Against Violence, WAVE and Women in Prisons.

The forum will be in panel format and comprised of NSW's prominent women politicians including -

- Jody McKay—NSW Minister for Women, Tourism, the Hunter, and Science and Medical Research,
- Pru Goward—Shadow Minister for Women and Community Services, and
- Cate Faehmann, Greens spokesperson for women.

The forum will commence at 6pm for and, because of limited seating, bookings are strictly limited.

Bookings can be made by directly contacting WEL NSW coordinator Kathleen Swinbourne on ph 8086 2858 or on email: Kathleen@wel.org.au or online through the WEL NSW website www.welnsw.org.au.

WEL'S OWN AUSTRALIAN LEGEND



Professor (Germaine) Greer and three other feminist Australian trailblazers - Eva Cox, Elizabeth Evatt and Anne Summers - appear on the stamps after receiving Australian Legends Awards, which are presented each year as part of Australia Day celebrations.

All four women rose to prominence in the 1970s, addressing women's inequality in Australia and overseas through writing, activism, judicial work and advocacy.

Ms Cox, whose Jewish family fled Hitler's tyranny in Austria and arrived in Australia as a "refugee kid", was an early member of the Women's Electoral Lobby and involved in setting up the first federally funded after-school centre in 1973.

She said her story was an example of why governments should not always follow opinion polls.

"I am actually an immigrant and I was a refugee child, and if Australia had followed public opinion polls in 1947 saying 'don't admit Jewish refugees', I wouldn't have made it," she said.
Source : <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/01/20/3117576.htm>

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



The march will commence in Town Hall Square at 12 noon and finish in Martin Place this year where there will be speakers, artists and stalls a-plenty. The memory tent will have information about the 100 years of IWD and the timeline of events for women in the last 100 years of activism.

WEL will be carrying its banner and will have a stall in Martin Place.

We are looking for people to help with both. We will have information to distribute about the upcoming Federal election, WEL's current activity on removing abortion from the criminal code in NSW and promoting the Exhibition on the Centenary of IWD in Parliament House.

Contact the WEL office if you would like to come along and join us.

Telephone 02 9212 4374 or
email welnsw@comcen.com.au

Turn to page 6 to learn of the trials and tribulations of the organisers of the IWD celebrations in Sydney this year

EQUAL PAY: BIG CHANGES NOT SMALL CHANGE!

On the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day, march together for equal pay.

At 12pm on the 12th of March 2011, meet at Town Hall in Sydney City.

What is Equal Pay?

It used to be about getting the same pay for the same job but we changed that in 1972. Now it's about being paid less for jobs that require similar skills because the jobs have traditionally been done by women and as such are undervalued.

So car care workers get paid more than child care workers! As many of the jobs women do are also in services funded by government and deal with needy people, the pay rates lag well behind similar jobs in other industries.

Right now, community workers, 90 per cent of whom are women, have a case before Fair Work Australia to increase their pay. Community work is the classic female-dominated profession.

Who has the power to decide the case?

The organisation that sets the pay rates in this case is Fair Work Australia, however, the Commonwealth and State Governments – Julia Gillard, Kristina Keneally and co – fund the community services that employ these workers. They need to agree to increase funding to cover the wage rises.

So, the Commissioners of Fair Work Australia decide, but in the end, it is the Government that has to say YES! to equal pay.

If we win this case, there are other groups in line to get increases in low paid jobs. Many other jobs dominated by women, like child care, aged care, cleaning, and retail are undervalued and underpaid. So, many employers will fight the decision. Employers First, the employer representative for some community services, already has been fighting the case.

What Anniversary?

1911 was the first time IWD was celebrated internationally. More than one million women and men attended IWD rallies campaigning for women's rights to work, vote, and hold public office and end discrimination.

100 years on, women are still fighting for decent pay and equal rights!

Join the march to
Martin Place for
Equal Pay, and
celebrate 100 years
of the Women's
Movement!

WEL NSW has a
newlook website with
all the latest news
and activities

You can find it at
[http://
welnsw.org.au/](http://welnsw.org.au/)

CONVENOR'S REPORT – MARCH MADNESS

March: the month of the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day *and* the State election. In the lead up WEL has been hard at work.

Representatives from the Executive recently attended very productive meetings with Minister for Women, Jodi McKay, Shadow Minister for Women, Pru Goward, and Greens Spokesperson for Women, Cate Faehrmann. We discussed WEL's current agenda and focus issue – Abortion Law Reform and Pay Equity/ Women at Work. WEL presented recommendations from our NSW State Election Position Statement. The Position Statement focuses on key areas in which women and girls are subject to disadvantage, and identifies specific measures which we recommend the NSW Government adopt to create a fairer society for all NSW residents.

On 3rd March WEL will host the 'Equality Matters' State Election Forum, where Jodi McKay, Pru Goward and Cate Faehrmann will be quizzed on women's policy issues. A diverse collective of women's groups are involved in this forum and it is set to be an interesting and varied discussion.

But the State Election is not the only highlight of the coming month. The Centenary of IWD is a historic event and there are numerous celebrations across the state and throughout the week of 8th March. A couple of the bigger events are the IWD march at 12 Noon on 12th March, which is expected to draw around 1000 supporters, and the Centenary IWD Exhibition at Parliament House, which opens 1st March.

If you would like to be involved in WEL's election campaigning, including an active campaign on Abortion Law Reform and Pay Equity in the lead up to the Election, or help out at the IWD march and stall please get in contact with us.

Remember to keep up to date on Election issues and IWD events with our E-Update, our new and improved website, Facebook and Twitter.

Melanie Fernandez

Don't miss the IWD Centenary Exhibition at Parliament House which opens on 1st March

MEET ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE WELNSW EXECUTIVE



Josefa Green

Josefa began as a WEL activist in the 1970's, involved particularly in equal pay and abortion rights campaigns - issues that still need addressing!. She has been on the WEL NSW Executive since 2005. She worked for many years in policy and management areas of the Federal Public Service, including the Special Broadcasting Service, and subsequently as a management consultant working in the areas of planning and organisational change. She has a BA (History honours), an MBA and a Graduate Diploma in Asian Art.

FOUR STRIKES AND WE ARE STILL IN: CENTENARY OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

As an Australian politician once famously said 'life was not meant to be easy', so it has been for the organisers of IWD in the Sydney CBD this year. Forgive the baseball analogy, but it seemed appropriate

Strike 1: Day of the march and rally. The new Mardi Gras organisers signed a three year deal with Foxtel to televise the Mardi Gras parade and the ONLY day it could be filmed was on Saturday, March 5. Traditionally the IWD march and rally has been held on the Saturday closest to the 8th March (the original day) – which would have meant a clash for IWD with Mardi Gras. Protesting vigorously, the IWD collective moved the date for the march and rally in Sydney to Saturday March 12 in 2011.

Strike 2: Street Banners. These magnificent street banners celebrating IWD which were funded by many individual, organisation and union donations were designed and first hung in 2008. We secured 186 excellent locations, including Macquarie Street, Elizabeth Street and around Town Hall. Over time a process for applying for locations has been implemented and so, despite knowing which locations we wanted – and the dates we wanted them, we waited for the due date. Eventually we were notified that our preferred locations were already taken!!! After probing on our behalf by Cr. Meredith Burgmann, we were told that "Google approached the City six months in advance of their booking regarding the availability of banner poles and are paying 75% of the commercial rate for their hire."

Discovered that GOOGLE were sponsoring the Youtube Symphony event. Obviously in the eyes of the City of Sydney, gaining 75% of the commercial rate for the banner poles overrides the significance of the celebration of the centenary of this important event. Volunteer community groups with little or no budget just cannot compete.

In fairness to the City of Sydney I should mention that the Collective were offered banner poles in other locations in Sydney, but at the cost of \$8,000 to install and dismantle banners – a huge amount of money for the Collective to raise in donations – the Collective decided that the cost was only worth it if the poles were in 'visible' locations. This option was not taken up.

In a diplomatic gesture the City of Sydney have allowed the IWD collective to use six banner poles around the Town Hall the FREE use of these poles for one week – as long as the organisation sponsoring an event doesn't want to use them!!

In an afternote to this story, there was an article in the Sydney Morning Herald: <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/private-sydney/seeing-red-over-poppins-20110218-1azn9.html> on February 26, 2011 by Helen Pitt, expressing outrage at the \$100,000 in kind support provided by the City of Sydney – including banner poles – to bring the musical *Mary Poppins* to Sydney.

Strike 3: St. Andrew's Square. The IWD Collective was advised by the Administration of St. Andrew's that whilst we would be 'permitted' to assemble there for the march in 2011 we would not be allowed to use this space in future years. Adele Horin published an article about this: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/church-tells-womens-march-to-find-new-spot-20110116-19slu.html> which helped to spread the information out through community groups. This year the focus changed from the City of Sydney 'as a courtesy' notifying St. Andrew's about the event, to somehow St. Andrew's having the right to veto events.

This will be a matter for the IWD collective in 2012.

Strike 4: Use of First Fleet Park. First Fleet Park, down at Circular Quay – that little green space between the ferry terminal and the Contemporary Art Gallery – is an excellent location for the end of the IWD march. A straight march down George Street from the Town Hall. I remember this park being used for this event about 7 years ago.

This park is under the control of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and their requirements for the use of this public space is extraordinary. We negotiated our way past the fee required for the use of the park and the fact that we had to pay for one of their employees to supervise the installation and dismantling of stalls. We thought we were clear. We were then told that to protect the grass, there had to be plastic flooring under every stall and in front of the stage. The cost of this flooring would have doubled the expenses of hiring the stalls (already close to \$8,000) and would be more expensive than buying new turf for the area (\$8/square metre).

By the time our protests had wound their way through the bureaucracy and the SHFA relented, we had to make a decision to move the rally to Martin Place.

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FOUR STRIKES AND WE ARE STILL IN:

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The IWD Collective is amazingly exuberant and has thrown themselves into planning this event to appropriately celebrate 100 years of IWD. They have absorbed these disappointments with the main concern that the event is not diminished.

The Collective does need greater public support though and it would seem that without an influential sponsor, the event may be harder to organise in the future.

Anne Barber
Member of WELNSW and IWD Collective

REPORT OF WEL AUSTRALIA (WELA) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The WELA AGM was held 13 Feb 2011. This year, a 2 day face to face meeting of the National Coordinating Committee (WELA Executive) was held in Melbourne in conjunction with the AGM. For the AGM more than 20 women were at Queen's College (UniMelb) and another 7 (mainly from NSW) were on line.

Key points from the AGM and face to face meeting:

- The NCC has been expanded to include members from as many states as possible (NSW members are Melanie Fernandez and Helen L'Orange)
- The Capacity Building Paper (prepared by Josefa Green, Melanie Fernandez and Kerry Lovering) provided a constructive basis for making many decisions about WELA operational issues
- The AGM recorded votes of thanks to Eva Cox (outgoing NCC Chair), Deb Poulton (National Treasurer) and Colin Barnard (Auditor)
- Four Committees have been set up to progress work. These are:

1. Celebration Planning Committee(CPC) Convenor Mel Fernandez (NSW). Other members Barbara Coddington, Fern Smith and Natalie Konyu and Arlie McQueen from Victoria, Felicity Lord from SA. A nominee from each state is to be sought for the CPC and the CPC is to report back (no later than July NCC teleconference and hopefully by May) on costed options as to how to celebrate WEL's 40th birthday in 2012. Its report to NCC should explore funding including state branch contributions and government funding. In considering options the CPC should take into account some element of celebration of the last 40 years, acknowledgement of the successes and achievements of WEL, and forward-looking activities addressing major issues of importance to women. The CPC should also consider the desirable outcomes of any recommended activity and its likely impact on the future, including a sustainable future for WEL and WEL membership.

2. Finance Committee Convenor Sarah Brasch (ACT). It will examine the forward budgeting, management of investments, communication of membership details, reports on paypal system, states' fees payments.

3. Constitution Review Committee Convenor Barbara Coddington (Vic). Other members Cheryl Arnold, Priscilla Todd and other Victorian members (to be advised). The Committee will report back to Oct/Nov NCC with suggested constitutional revisions. Sarah Brasch is exploring validity of email based voting for WELA constitutional change. Elizabeth Kentwell (National Secretary) is compiling and maintaining a list of paid up members.

4. Communications Working Group Convenor Fern Smith (Vic). Other members Laura Maclean and Cheryl Arnold. They will prepare a brief for consideration at the March NCC meeting. The brief will cover

- issues raised in the Capacity Building paper re online presence and other lobbying tools; resourcing
- rebuilding the WELA website; better integration between websites
- WEL's use of on line membership tools , Facebook, Twitter
- the website's ongoing maintenance and presence,

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WELNSW POSITION STATEMENT NSW STATE ELECTION

In NSW many women and girls still suffer from disadvantage and cannot realise their full potential or participate freely in society in the ways men and boys can. There have been recent initiatives designed to address this inequity, but there are still many barriers that women and girls face in this state.

In putting forward this policy statement, WEL NSW has selected key areas in which women and girls are subject to disadvantage, and has identified specific measures which the NSW Government should adopt to create a fairer society for all NSW residents. In many of these key areas WEL encountered great difficulty in analysing the real position of women in NSW. There is a lack of social reporting and available indicators demonstrating differential impact on women and girls.

WEL recommends that Government programs be outcomes driven, with identified achievements and performance measures which clearly show how they affect women and girls in NSW. Accountability and performance measurement should be strengthened, including the use of performance data and gender sensitive indicators.

Other key WEL recommendations include:

- The NSW Government commit to addressing pay equity and the gender pay gap, including committing to funding the outcome of the Australian Services Union Equal Pay Case currently before Fair Work Australia.
- The decriminalisation of abortion in NSW to protect the women of NSW and their reproductive rights.
- The NSW Government introduce targets of 40% of female membership of NSW Government boards and committees and women in 40% of Senior Executive and Chief Executive roles.

WEL's recommendations have resource implications. Our expectation is that additional staff and funds will be made available to departments and agencies to enable the implementation of our proposals.

Melanie Fernandez
Convenor

Abortion law reform

In NSW abortion remains under the criminal code, WEL recommends the decriminalisation of abortion in NSW to protect the women of NSW and their reproductive rights.

Pay Equity

The average weekly ordinary time earnings of women working full-time is 17% less than the earnings of men. WEL recommends the government should publicly support the ASU's application in the equal remuneration case and commit to achieving real pay equity in the NSW public sector.

Women in paid work

Even though women are graduating from TAFE and university in greater numbers than men in a number of areas, this is not translating into women's participation in senior positions in the workplace. WEL recommends the government introduce targets of 40% of female membership (or the underrepresented gender) of NSW Government boards and committees as well as for Senior Executive and Chief Executive roles.

Skills training

Women are less likely than men to have non-school qualifications, and have a number of barriers which make it more difficult to enter or re-enter the workforce. WEL recommends the NSW Government, as part of its State Women's Plan should request the Department of Education and Training to incorporate in its social inclusion plan a TAFE Women's Strategy.

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WELNSW POSITION STATEMENT NSW STATE ELECTION

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Young mothers in education

It is essential that young mothers with babies and young children continue to avail themselves of education and training opportunities with a view to further education or joining the workforce. WEL recommends a statewide Young Mothers Alternative Education Program should be funded through TAFE.

Children's services

Access to adequate children's services for children under school age or out of school hours is essential for parents. WEL recommends strengthening the planning and delivery of services for children in NSW by establishing a high level unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to negotiate with the Commonwealth and COAG as well as make policy, plan and co-ordinate children's services.

Domestic violence

The effects of domestic violence are well known, and the impact of domestic violence continues to reverberate in the lives of victims and their families long after the abuse has ended. WEL recommends indicators measuring the level of domestic violence and safety of women be developed and included in the data set being developed by the ABS for Australian Council of Women Ministers.

Affordable housing

The availability of affordable, suitable and secure housing for all Australians is critical for achieving social justice and cohesion. WEL recommends the NSW Government should commit to sufficient matching subsidies so that NSW receives at least 30% of all future National Rental Affordability Scheme incentives encouraging private investment in affordable housing.

Aged care

Women live longer than men and are generally poorer in retirement. They provide the bulk of informal care given to older Australians, and predominate as both recipients of extended care at home packages and users of residential care. WEL recommends that the specific issues affecting women be identified and managed by planners and managers.

Human rights

Women's rights are human rights. WEL notes the significant impact a statutory human rights act could have on protecting the human rights of all individuals in NSW, including women. WEL recommends the NSW Government conduct a comprehensive inquiry (including community consultation) on how to best protect and promote human rights in NSW and commit to implementing any recommendations of the inquiry.

For a full statement about the issues and WEL's recommendations to improve fairness and equity see our Position Statement at welnsw.org.au/state-election/

THE NSW LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY—A GENDER ANALYSIS

There are 24 women in the NSW Legislative Assembly, out of a total of 93 MLAs. Each party has the following gender balances:

- Labor – 16/50 – 32.0%
- Liberal – 5/24 – 20.9%
- National – 1/13 – 7.7%

THE NSW LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY—A GENDER ANALYSIS

- Independent – 2/6 - 33.3%

There is a large concentration of female MPs representing central Sydney. Eleven out of 24 female MLAs hold seats in that contiguous area which stretches from Parramatta in the west to Willoughby in the north and Heffron in the south. One of these seats is held by independent Clover Moore, and the seats of North Shore and Willoughby are held by Liberals, while the other 8 are all Labor seats. In addition, there are two women Labor MPs in southern Sydney, in Kogarah and Menai, and one more in the Western Sydney seat of Mulgoa. Two other Western Sydney seats, Cabramatta and Penrith, were won by female MPs in 2007, but were replaced by male MPs at by-elections in the current term.

There are also two more female MPs in the Greater Sydney region, one Liberal MP in Hornsby and a Labor MP in Gosford.

Let's limit the analysis to the 34 Labor MPs in Sydney. Labor controls every seat in a region that covers a majority of the territory in Sydney, including everything south of the Harbour and the Hills district, with the exception of Penrith, Vaucluse, Sydney and Cronulla. Excluding the Illawarra seats and Bathurst, which are part of the same contiguous block of Labor seats, there are 34 MPs in this area, making up two thirds of the Labor caucus and the base of their electoral support. In contrast, Labor holds less than one-third (16/58) of the seats outside of this zone. In Sydney, Labor has 11 female MPs and 23 male MPs, which is about the same proportion amongst the entire Labor caucus.

It gets interesting when you divide this area in half, into the 18 westernmost seats and the 17 easternmost seats. In the eastern area, that goes as far west as Auburn, Bankstown and Sutherland, there are actually a majority of women amongst Labor MPs with nine women amongst 17 MPs. Indeed, if you include non-Labor MPs in this area, you have an exactly even split of 10 men and 10 women, remarkable when you consider the overall proportion of women across the state.

When you leave Sydney, the proportions greatly fall, particularly in the north of the state. One of the four seats on the Central Coast is held by a woman. Out of the eight seats in the lower Hunter, two seats are held by women, both seats being in inner Newcastle. There are no women holding seats further north than Wallsend, just outside of Newcastle. The eight Nationals MPs in the area north of Newcastle are all male, as are the three independent MPs.

The seats south of Sydney have much higher representation by women. There are five Labor seats in the Illawarra area, a sixth Labor seat in Monaro and three Liberal seats to the south of Sydney. Out of these, there are two women in Wollongong and Shellharbour, and two women in Goulburn and South Coast. This produces a ratio of 4 women out of nine.

Western NSW is also strongly dominated by men. The two Liberal seats in southern NSW are both held by men, as is the sole Labor seat in Bathurst. There are five Nationals MPs in western NSW, one of whom is a woman. The sole independent MP in this region is also a woman (Dawn Fardell in Dubbo).

Source Gender Balance in NSW Parliament by Ben Raue—July 2, 2009
<http://www.tallyroom.com.au/1613>

EVENING LECTURE: THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS

'The first wave thought the vote would do it, the second that laws and equal opportunities would solve the inequities but we are not there yet, wherever there is. On the one hand, we have made a lot of changes in the last hundred years but now we seem to be stalled. Do we need to rethink again?'

On the centenary of International Women's Day, the History Council of NSW and Macquarie University present this lecture by Eva Cox, well known academic and feminist. (me)

When: Tuesday 8 March 2011, 6.30pm-8.30pm

Where: Museum of Sydney

Cost: \$30.00 general, \$25.00 HHT/HCNSW (sorry about the costs but you get drinks etc!)

RSVP: 02 8239 2211 or www.tickets.hht.net.au

That's the notice for the IWD function. The following is the first few paragraphs at the start of the lecture and the final paragraphs which are intended as a teaser so we can think through the next steps together.

Come to the above lecture, if you can, and join the discussion of a new a-gender. If not email me your ideas!

The next hundred years - draft for comment to eva.cox@uts.edu.au

Serious social change for the better is never easy or fast. Making societies fairer require our shifting both power and resources from those who have too much to those that have too little. While power is neither a zero sum game nor a finite resource, sharing it more equitably requires changing the status of its current controllers. As gender is the basis for some very basic but also intimate power inequities and iniquities, this set of changes or a revolution is likely to take a long time. On that basis, maybe the 100th year of IWD does celebrate multiple waves of changes including the vote for women in many countries, even though most of us had it sooner, increased rights, more paid work, fairer wages, fertility control, education, health care, protection against violence and equal opportunities to ensure that more women were appointed on merit.

Oops! There is the nub of the current problem – who defines merit? So the anniversary is also the time to start thinking about the next 100 years, or hopefully less. I am not very optimistic it will be less because the changes have stalled and we urgently need to do a rethink. Is feminism in its broadest sense still a significant influence for change? Not really! We can influence a few minor changes but as members of the seventies' women's movement and its inheritors, we have had to lower our expectations to small reforms!

Women's liberation wanted to change the basic power structures and now we too often just ask nicely to let some women have bigger shares of the current set up. Even in that strategy, progress has stalled and, in some areas, we are going backwards: in pay, in positions with serious power, and in shifting the way our contributions are valued. Yes, there are more women in top jobs but because they have made it through the current system, they are not going to lead changes. We made a mistake by naively believing more women in leadership positions would make a much bigger difference than it does. Individual successes mean the gaps between women on top and at the bottom have become bigger, but the social and political changes have not (yet) happened.

The last few paragraphs state:

The Politics of Making Changes

It is now time for feminism to lead in rebuilding collective possibilities by reinstating the valuing of social linkages over economic growth. Feminisms need to unite us within our differences by recognising the basic gender power divide has not been reduced but maybe enhances by the machismo of economic models. I am an optimist despite the long years of frustration because we have been able to make some changes. I still believe we can overturn the current dominant structures of power and replace so-called universal (male) values with non gendered ones that include the feminine e.g. care, emotions, relationships, reproduction, ethics and nurture.

We need new big feminist flavoured options for future more civil and egalitarian societies. Rather than just making the

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EVENING LECTURE: THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS

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critique, we need debate on options and ideas.

That means being ready to push the boundaries harder than we have recently, and take on some thinking leadership and recognise that it may mean being more difficult and less nice. If you do not feel comfortable with being personally pushy, and maybe not liked, at least support those who do risk take because we need both ways of doing change and just being nice and polite is too often ineffectual!

So can we work on both the processes and content needed for making feminist changes to the social system in the coming difficult times?

Fairer futures need feminist leadership because many of the current flaws are still deeply masculinity framed and limited. We need futures based on making social connections and collective lives which are both fairer and more ethical and can deal with the coming environmental and social crises. Human societies are capable of both good and evil and it is up to us to make possible and encourage our capacities for being better angels. The feminist versions of lights on the hill should be beacons of hope.

Eva Cox

REPORT OF WEL AUSTRALIA (WELA) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(Continued from page 7)

- website-related training for members, including the NCC working group itself
- national e-news
- internet-related costs.

Elizabeth Kentwell is preparing a duty statement based for a one day a week continuous admin level person for 6-12 months at a cost of \$5-10k. The question of whether such a person should be employed should be a major item for the March NCC agenda in the light of discussions around increasing WEL's advocacy and activism. WA agreed that it would release \$6-8k from WA funds for the web update work, to be finalized by the March NCC meeting

The WELA Working Group is to remain the main mechanism to inform and galvanise activists across Australia. Efforts will be made to ensure that it encompasses as many active members as possible. It will be used to keep people informed, get feedback on issues, draft submissions etc and to ask for volunteers for particular tasks.

A National Policy Issues Schedule is being revised by Sarah Brasch. It will be circulated for WEL members to indicate their interest in contributing to policy development. Many matters are in response to Govt inquiries. There are also many which WELA has identified as important policy issues.

State groups will undertake their planning process, at least once a year, by August. This would be issues driven and therefore cover issues which have local, regional, state, commonwealth/state and national implications. A summary plan will be provided to the NCC before it meets to undertake planning at the national level. (Helen L'Orange to undertake for 2011.)

The NCC will undertake its own planning process (by 30 Oct in 2011) based on this input from state groups and its own outlook analysis. Its main task would be to pull together the issues raised and agree on which require a national co-ordinated response.

Agreed approach to working with other Women's Organisations. Where WELA agrees with them, be closely involved with the ERA /EcSec4Women /OWN/WAVE submissions; attend consultations to ensure that WELA's agenda is also strongly supported by other women's organisations; put in a separate submission from WELA if our view differs greatly from ERA view.

(Continued on page 13)

ELECTING WOMEN INTO THE 'BEAR PIT'

The New South Wales parliament, Australia's oldest, is sometimes referred to as 'the bear pit'. Our so-called pit of democracy gets its less-than-complimentary nickname from a renowned masculine and adversarial political culture.

Professor [Deborah Brennan](#) explores this phenomenon for women. She describes the pit of NSW politics as one of "rough tactics, no holds barred style of debate, and occasional outbreak[s] of fisticuffs."

[Women in the Bear Pit](#) (2006) was written as a conference paper, a precursor to Brennan and [Chappell's](#) *No Fit Place for Women? Women in NSW Politics, 1856-2006*, of the same year. It examines the 83 women who entered the NSW parliament until 2005, and the "experiences, aspirations and priorities they have brought to parliament," by considering their backgrounds and inaugural speeches. The premise of this approach is that inaugural speeches have "special significance for an MP and her supporters." However, new members are generally discouraged from controversial topics or fire branding. The women of NSW parliament have not always followed this advice.

Brennan's paper is filled with pithy quotes and anecdotes from women of the House. She begins with Millicent Preston-Stanley, the first woman to enter parliament in 1925, and a member of the then Nationalist party, precursor to the modern day Liberals. Stanley had been a campaigner on issues like maternal mortality, and President of the Feminist Club in her party. She began her speech with an attack on men in the Chamber who "consider... Parliament is no fit place for women... if it is so it is the most serious indictment which can be lodged against men." Hansard shows that men interjected frequently during the first woman MPs speech.

In the Bear Pit also explores the changing issues and representations of women MPs over time. The presence of racism in politics is highlighted by the late entry of non-Anglo women to the NSW parliament. Brennan highlights these intersectionalities that are important to later MPs such as Linda Burney, elected in 2003 as the first indigenous person in the NSW parliament. Burney described herself in her inaugural speech as "a member of the mighty Wiradjuri Aboriginal nation" as well as a loyal member of the Australian Labor Party and a proud representative of the Canterbury community.

Brennan builds on her fascinating narrative with analytic insight as well. She tabulates the backgrounds and professions of the women Members and the issues of import in their speeches. She notes the professionalisation of politics and the changing work roles of women, as more and more female MPs have professional or political staffing careers. This is spread across both sides of politics, though she notes that the ALP is more often accused of it in the media. *In the Bear Pit* makes a fascinating pre-election read, and essential background for [Ben Raue's analysis](#) of gender in the upcoming state election (see page 9).

Megan Clement-Couzner is a doctoral student at the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy at the University of Western Sydney, and a member of the F and Sydney IWD Collectives. You can find more of her writing at [The Filing Cabinet](#).

Report of WELA Annual General Meeting

(Continued from page 12)

NCC will hold a bimonthly meetings by phone or other means. 2011 meetings will be held at Sunday 11am EST 13 March, 22 May, 10 July, 11 Sept, 30 Oct. State NCC reps will regularly report outcomes back to their state executive. A face to face meeting of the NCC will be held at least once per year with a focus on planning for the year ahead. The next face to face meeting will be held in Canberra on 30 Oct 2011. This will also be the 2010-2011 AGM date (to be confirmed).

In memoriam:

The following were recognised at the AGM as strong women who had contributed enormously to WEL over the years before their deaths in the last year or so:

SA – Eulalie Tapp, Alison Grant, Professor Faye Gale, Anne Bickley, Evelyn Dent and Denise Tsumli.

Vic – Joyce Nicholson, Ruth Shnookal, Vivienne Brophy and Anne Gunter.

Qld – Joan Trewallyn.

NSW – Judy Malcolm.

WA – Megan Sasci, Joan Williams OAM, Barbara Buick AM.

If readers are aware of other WEL women who have passed away in recent times please let us know.

*Prepared by Helen L'Orange
Chair, WELA National Coordinating Committee (NCC)
26 Feb 2011*

A FINAL REMINDER FROM THE IWD COLLECTIVE

Grab your red purse and march this IWD!

Pick up your red purse and join with thousands of others from across the world to march for equal pay. This year, International Women's Day celebrates its 100th anniversary - but it also marks a crucial time for women in their battle for equal pay.

In this country there is still a huge gap - nearly 20 per cent - between what men and women earn for equal work. And since 2005, that gap has become even bigger. Over a lifetime, men may earn \$1 million more than their wives, their sisters, their daughters.

The march begins with wonderful speeches and songs from the traditional place to rally for rights - Town Hall Square - at midday on March 12. We will hear from Sally McManus, the Secretary of the Australian Services Union who are running the Equal Pay Test Case for social and community services, Lina Cabaero from Asian Women at Work and Eva Cox from the Women's Electoral Lobby. Then we'll walk to Martin Place, singing and chanting as we go, where we will hear from a range of great performers.

Why red purses? That's the symbol for equal pay around the world. Grab yours and come march with us as we demand equality for women.

ANNUAL PAMELA DENOON LECTURE—7 MARCH ANU

Sleeping Dragon : The Unfinished Business of Abortion Law Reform in Australia

2011 Pamela Denoon Lecture—Dr Leslie Cannold, Adjunct Fellow, School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Enquiry, University of Melbourne

Presented by The Australian National University

When : Monday 7 March 2011 8 pm to 9pm followed by light refreshments

Where : Manning Clark Lecture Theatre 3, Union Court, Australian National University

Enquiries :

Email pameladenoonlecture@hotmail.com or Telephone 0457 206 887

Entry is by donation. For more information and a copy of the lecture transcript visit www.pameladenoonlecture.net.

In this lecture Dr Leslie Cannold will argue that abortion law reform in Australia is unfinished business. Only in the ACT and Victoria is abortion not a crime. She will discuss why abortion is still a fundamental issue for women and how we can — and must — campaign for change!

Dr Cannold is an author, commentator, ethicist and activist.

Transcripts of the lecture will be available from www.pameladenoonlecture.net within a few days after the lecture

WOW FILM FESTIVAL 2011

17th World of Women: WOW Film Festival " Seeing the world through the eyes of women". Celebrate 100 years anniversary of International Women's Day from March 8th-10th 2011 at Dendy Opera Quays Cinema and Parliament House Theatre with an exciting, diverse showcase of contemporary short films by women filmmakers. WOW Film Festival launches at the City of Sydney Library, Customs House and continues for 3 days at the Dendy Opera Quays with screenings, premieres, filmmaker Q&A's, parties and awards.

Opening Night will commence with drinks 6.15pm followed by the screening of an imaginative selection of Australian Shorts at 7pm. The official WOW Festival Opening After Party will be held at Opera Bar. Short film highlights include Sydney Premiere EMILIA ECKLE directed and starring Alyssa McClelland ("The Bet", "Surviving Georgia") and David Lyons, ("Sea Patrol", "ER"), Sydney premiere and award winning "Red Water Red" directed by Qing Xie, "Not Even a Mouse" a moving drama directed by Actor Zoe Carides ("Death in Brunswick", "Packed to the Rafters", "All Saints") World premiere of "Mad" directed by Meryl Tankard, and Tropfest finalist. "How God Works" directed by Matilda Brown ("Underbelly", "Rake", "Offspring"),

For more information go to www.wift.org/wow, email wowfilmfestival@wiftsw.org.au, or ph 0402 246 601

Official Sponsors for 2011 festival include: Screen Australia, Arts NSW, Office for Women's Policy, Department of Premier & Cabinet, City of Sydney, Dendy Opera Quays, Opera Bar, Panavision, Spectrum Films, Tresscox Lawyers, AFTRS, Metro Screen, Wacom, ARRI Australia, Miller Camera Support, Art Resistance, Videocraft, IndieFlix, Icon Film, Dendy, Village Roadshow, Hopscotch, Corban & Blair, Millie Loves Min, The Photo Studio, JAM Directions, Film Mosaics, Inside Film, Australian Directors Guild, Australian Cinematographers Society, Australian Composers Guild, Australian Editors Guild, Aurora Community Channel, SBS Television.

Next WEL
meeting

Wednesday

2 March

6.30pm
66 Albion St
Sydney

ALL WELCOME

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. Your ongoing support is important to us.

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

WEL NSW Executive

Convenor: Melanie Fernandez
Treasurer: Anne Barber
Members: Josefa Green, Helen L'Orange, Eva Cox, Jozefa Sobski, Charity Danquah, Laura Maclean, Kiriath Masters, Liz May, Anna Dawson, Tabitha Ponnambalam

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Committee Representative (NCC)**
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**Disability, Mental Health, Domestic
Violence and Sexual Assault**
Helen L'Orange 0425 244 935

Health
Gwen Gray 0405 193 584

WEL Australia
email : wel@wel.org.au
website : www.wel.org.au

WEL NSW
email : welnsw@comcen.com.au
website : www.welnsw.org.au

To join WEL NSW

Download a membership form from www.welnsw.org.au or phone (02) 9212 4374 for a membership package.

**IF NOT CLAIMED WITHIN 7 DAYS PLEASE RETURN TO:
WOMEN'S ELECTORAL LOBBY (NSW) Inc
66 ALBION STREET
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010
AUSTRALIA**