Issue No 410

September 2011

WEL-Informed

The Newsletter of Women's Electoral Lobby NSW

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Notice of WELNSW 1 and 11

Annual General

Meeting

WELNSW Annual General Meeting for 2011

To be held on Sunday 25th September

10am to 12 noon

66 Albion Street, Surry Hills

ALL WELCOME

WOMEN ON BOARDS - SOME PROGRESS BUT STILL A LONG WAY TO GO!

Some new statistics on the number of women on the boards of the larger listed Australian companies indicate that some progress has been made in the last couple of years.

The stand out indicator is, according to a recent publication by the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), that 2010 and 2011 to date has seen a dramatic increase in the number of female director appointments to the boards of ASX200 companies: 25% and 28.9% respectively, in comparison to 5% in 2009 and 8% in 2008 and 2007.

That is really good news.

We should however keep in mind that at August 2011, women still only make up 12.7% of the total membership of ASX200 boards. This is up from 10.7% in December 2010 and 8.3% from 2008 to January 2010.

It seems that the larger the company, the more likely it is that they appoint a female director. As at July 2011, 20.3% of ASX20 company board directors are female, while women make up 17.6% of ASX50 and 16.1% of ASX100 company boards.

We have to question how much of this is tokenism at play. It is interesting to note from the AICD figures, for example, that while 65% of the top 200 companies have at least one female director, only 23% have 2 or more and 4.5% have three or more. And of course this means that 70 of our top 200 companies have no women at all on their boards. Again, size matters: all our top 20 companies have at least one female director, 75% have two or more while 25% have 3 or more.

Are we seeing a real shift here and the likelihood of an ongoing upward trend in female participation on company boards?

The AICD believes its programs such as its Chairmen's Mentoring Program are taking effect, and they may be right. This month, the Institute

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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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ABN 50 242 525 012

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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.

Deadline for contributions to the next edition 20 October. There is no newsletter in December.

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Editorial/mailout team: WELNSW Communications Group, Josefa Green, Anne Barber, Jozefa Sobski, Anna Logan, Lorraine Slade

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.

FLUID OR FICKLE: THE YOUTH VOTE

As an electoral lobby group, WEL needs to be aware and informed about voting intentions and new modes of political participation. Polls and party focus groups are the most valued sources of advice to parties and governments on voting intentions, even allowing for criticism of them for their methodology, sampling techniques and sometimes, the partiality of questions.

The "Youth Vote" is particularly important because the patterns established early may be those which shape practice long into the future. In WEL's recent efforts to renew its organisational practice and policies to address the concerns and predilections of younger women voters, we have tapped into social media and tried to give our website relevance, immediacy and currency. Our young Executive members have provided valuable insights into the priorities and interests of their generation and its mode of participation.

The efficacy of these approaches needs to be constantly evaluated and wherever possible, underpinned by evidence and research.

We were heartened therefore by a recent literature review and statistical analysis undertaken by the Whitlam Institute at the University of Western Sydney as part of its *Imagining a New Democracy Project* funded by the Foundation for Young Australians.

The literature provided some interesting insights into the generational shift away from traditional forms of political participation. One finding reported in the Executive Summary of the literature review was that internationally, there is "increased engagement in issue, or cause-based participation." Another predictable trend is the transformation of participation by the internet and new media..."individuals are able to come together in new communities of interest and wide, shallow networks, to blog, deliberate and campaign online, beyond geographical borders."

Reaching a broader group of women is always one of WEL's aims, but the Australian findings point to the need for a repertoire of strategies. Important for WEL, was a study highlighted of young people's civic knowledge and beliefs extracted by Mellor et al, 2002 from IEA data that: "Females are more likely to demonstrate social movement citizenship...positive attitudes towards migrants." The study claimed that "students do not value conventional forms of political participation." There is more and it repays close reading.

In the statistical analysis conducted by Dr Ron Brooker of the Newspoll Quarterly Data from 1996-2010, one conclusion drawn was that "gender matters", that is, "young women tend to more consistently...support progressive parties". Another conclusion was that young people are strongly *values-driven* and their attachment is to issues rather than traditional political organisations. This may seem to some as fickleness, but the more positive and hopeful view is that it is fluidity. (For the detailed analysis with gender breakdowns see: **Youth Federal Election Voting Intentions: A Statistical and Graphical Analysis. 1996-2010.**)

WEL's political practice and policy development process needs to be informed by the reported trends which suggest the very fluid nature of the youth vote. Being values-driven, young people will shop around for the proposal or policy which

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UNBALANCED POWER

A trawl through the website of the Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile group) does not reveal much except that it is rarely updated and supplies minimal information. The list of policies is elaborated only by further lists. So, if you check **Pro-Life**, you get: No Euthanasia and Abortion to remain illegal, among other one-liners.

The CDP and the action-packed **Shooters and Fishers**, however, hold the balance of power in the NSW Upper House. Rev. Nile has already demonstrated through his tactics on the "atheistic, secular humanist, philosophical relativism Bill" – Ethics Classes Repeal Bill – that he is willing to damage the government's core objectives if his agenda is not respected and accommodated. The Premier, Barry O'Farrell has allowed the introduction of this Bill on the basis that there will be a conscience vote for Coalition MP's. The Bill was introduced in early August.

Rev Nile has a list of bills he plans to introduce into the Upper House. He wants to repeal the Same Sex Couples Adoption Amendment Act and introduce new amendments to the Crimes Amendment Act. Among these is the Destruction of Child in Utero – Zoe's Law and Pre-Natal Termination. The bill to watch more particularly is the Pregnancy Termination (Mandatory Counselling) which aims to require women considering terminating a viable pregnancy to undergo counselling and to view an ultra-sound of the unborn child.

WEL NSW has made Reproductive Rights one of its priority issues during this current NSW parliamentary term. Our <u>Position Statement</u> on this issue is explicit. We recommend the decriminalization of abortion in NSW to protect women and their reproductive rights.

The **Shooters and Fishers Party** policies contain no reference to reproductive rights or abortion. They are opposed to ethics classes and want shooting and fishing to become part of public school "cultural activities". They want a review of the Safe Injecting Room in Kings Cross and the removal of trial Homophobic Education program in NSW schools. They ask also for a review of speed zones, a better deal for pensioners and a return of access to fireworks for responsible citizens!! There are many nods to the natural environment in this odd amalgam. They criticise the "nanny" state and the city-centric bias of government agencies that have damaged our children's opportunities for outdoor activities and normal risk-taking.

No doubt, as has always been the case for most parties, political opportunities will be seized and will determine the way these cross-benchers vote on issues. They will demand, too, concessions from government in return for their support of its program.

The O'Farrell government is still in its teething stage. How it deals with the Upper House will truly test its credentials for integrity and honest, open, transparent government.

Jozefa Sobski

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CONVENOR'S REPORT - WEL'S WINTER

In the past months WEL Executive members have represented us at a number of conferences. In July Anna Dawson attended the Equality Law Conference held in Melbourne. The conference was run by the Human Rights Legal Resource Centre. It focused on the consolidation of the four anti-discrimination acts announced by the Government last year.

Gabe Kavanagh, Chaity Danquah, Eva Cox and Jozefa Sobski participated in the NOWSA conference, organised by young feminists to engage and activate women. This included presenting a workshop on political lobbying.

In late June, Sarah Brasch (WEL ACT) and I represented WEL at the annual Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) Face-to-Face Meeting in Canberra. WEL NSW Executive member Gabe Kavanagh was also present as a member of the ERA Young Women's Advisory Group. About 30 women from ERA's 54 members attended from all over Australia, including several from regional and rural areas.

The meeting included strategic planning for the year to come and updates on the three ERA priority issues. The priority issues are: affordable housing, which is a particular concern for older women many of whom will not own their own homes by the time they retire; consolidation of the federal anti-discrimination acts; and Income Management, as the government intends to extend it to five pilot communities throughout Australia (Bankstown NSW, Logan and Rockhampton QLD, Shepparton VIC and Playford SA). We then, in delegations of three, lobbied members of Federal Parliament on these issues in about 30 meetings with politicians from all parties and both Houses.

As part of its priority work ERA has been conducting research to document women's experience of Income Management in the Northern Territory. Last week ERA launched the <u>report</u>. This report gives the first independent insight into how women have been affected by Income Management.

Pay Equity has been another focus for WEL over the last months. Final submissions for the social and community service workers Equal Pay case were due to Fair Work Australia in July and hearings have been taking place during August. WEL Australia collaborated with Women's Equality Think Tank and National Pay Equity Coalition for the women's organisations' final submission.

Equal Pay Day is coming up next month on 1^{st} September. It marks the additional time after the end of the financial year that women have to work to earn the equivalent to men's earnings in the financial year.

In August WEL met with The Rape Crisis Centre to discuss ways to improve the justice system in relation to sexual assault cases and what role we could play in this work. We will keep you informed of the work being done on this issue.

Melanie Fernandez Convenor

Remember to keep up to date by checking out our website, E-Update, Facebook and Twitter. If you want to get active get in contact with us and let us know what you are interested in working on.

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RAMPANT MISOGYNY

While we celebrate the recent findings of the first major report by UN Women: **2011-2012 Progress of the World's Women: Pursuit of Justice**, with Australia now having a total of 67 female parliamentarians out of 226 available seats, the misogyny which is evident in the public "shock jock" and media criticism of Julia Gillard and her government, needs also to be exposed and condemned. It is rampant and blatant. (See www.unwomen.org)

Tony Abbott's very aggressive political style in attacking the government's policies and programs plays to this misogynist gallery and constituency. Mike Carlton in a piece in the SMH (23-24/07/11) calls some of the vicious commentary "airborne filth" and names Alan Jones as one of the major perpetrators. But, Jones is so unreconstructed that you expect nothing more or less from him. His vituperation goes with his manic style. He clearly has deep problems with women in leadership roles. He has attacked Clover Moore, among others, and he never spared Amanda Vanstone in her day.

Legitimate political criticism is part of a healthy robust democracy, but rude intemperate attacks on the person, including our first female Prime Minister should be called for what they are even if they only derive from a deep conervatism about women's proper role in society. Misogyny, however, is hatred of women. Mr Abbott and his Coalition colleagues should be in the chorus condemning it and taking care not to give it any fuel at all.

The UN Women report is based largely on country contributions and case studies of positive change and progress in advancing gender equality. Australia seems progressive and very advanced in equality for women and we are among the few countries with a female leader. Beneath the cultural surface here, and perhaps elsewhere, lurk sections of the community for whom female leadership threatens male power and needs to be undermined. Julia Gillard is struggling to make her mark. How much is this due to her remaining calm and civil in the face of relentless, populist and simple-minded attack? We need to consider how we might best support her while remaining independent and mindful of the need for constructive criticism of policies.

Jozefa Sobski

As at 30th June, 2010 there were 7.24 million females (52%) and 6.71 million males (48%) enrolled to vote in Federal elections. The 18-24 years old comprised 10.4% and the 25-34 years old comprised 15.4% of the national total of 13.961 million.

FLUID OR FICKLE?: THE YOUTH VOTE

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"best fits" their values. Their lack of organisational allegiance and their issues orientation does suggest also that WEL has the potential as a non-party political, independent group to capture voters' attention and capitalise on these trends among the voters aged 15-35 years which are the subject of these studies. (Google the **Whitlam Institute** website to download the full reports.)

Jozefa Sobski

WOMEN ON BOARDS—SOME PROGRESS BUT STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

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launched a publication, *Tomorrow's boards: Creating balanced and effective boards*, bringing together information on board composition, research supporting the link between diversity and improved corporate performance and practical guidance on how to select the best directors.

The AIDC argues against mandatory quotas for women directors. In my view the jury is out on the need for this. Clearly what is needed is deep cultural change in the boardroom and in the way companies are managed – but more drastic interventions may be needed if the current positive trends are not sustained.

Information on the AICD's recent publication and its diversity initiatives is at: www.companydirectors.com.au.

Josefa Green

NOWSA CONFERENCE 2011

The Network of Women Students Australia (NOWSA) was established in 1987, founded on ideals of creating a grassroots, autonomous network concerned with issues that impact women and women students. NOWSA provides a platform for women's organising across universities and in the wider community through resource, skill and knowledge sharing both in conference and through web branches of the network. This year NOWSA was hosted at UNSW. The conference kicked off with opening speaker Eve Cox. Eva spoke passionately about taking some essential lessons from the collective structures of Aboriginal communities in their collective approach to organisation and decision-making. She also spoke about changing the cultural mindsets of Australians as a pathway to true equality for Australian women. Gabe Kavanagh also spoke on the first day discussing how to engage more young women in the feminist movement and Penny O'Donnell and Rosarela Meza shocked all participants with the rate of gender-based murders in South America.

The second day also continued with a host of engaging speakers, with Natalie Lang from Australian Services Union, Kate Minter of UnionsNSW and Tish Sparkle and Zahra Stardust of Scarlet Alliance. Nina Funnell of NSW Rape Crisis and Gabriella Hewison, speakers from WAAC, ACON and Australian Domestic Violence Clearinghouse all made up the eclectic group of speakers who spoke during the week. WEL NSW also held a workshop on effective lobbying. This was run by executive members Jozefa Sobski and Charity Danquah. The workshop started off on shaky grounds with only two people registered for the workshop; however as the workshop commenced we ended up having 11 young women attend. They were eager, politically conscious young women who were ready to challenge assumptions and to voice their own opinions, some were already campaigning and lobbying on their campuses. Who ever said that young women were not engaged! We maybe small in number, but we are just as dedicated as any generation.

Kimberley Lowe and Charity Danquah

Turn to page 10 for some advertisements you will never see again!

More to come in future editions of WEL-Informed!

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WELA will be working in the next months on the following three areas of critical importance to women:

Fair Work Australia Equal Remuneration Case

The Equal Remuneration case is now entering its last stages. The application for an equal remuneration order in the social and community services industry was originally lodged with Fair Work Australia in March 2011 by several unions. A further conference of all participants will be held before Commissioner Smith on Wednesday 21 September in Melbourne and the full bench will be holding 3 days of hearings on 24, 25 and 26 October.

In late July, National Pay Equity Coalition, Women's Equity Think Tank and the Women's Electoral Lobby jointly made a further submission on the six questions on which Fair Work Australia invited views. It submitted that there are gender considerations affecting the valuation of all aspects of work in this industry, including the nature of the work itself, the funding models adopted by governments for the industry, the supply of and demand for labour, the value put on employee credentials, and the access of employees to wage increases through enterprise bargaining. You can read the submission through a link from our home page at: www.wel.org.au.

Our thanks to Philippa Hall from the National Pay Equity Coalition for her work on the July submission.

Disabilities, Mental Health and Aged Care

There have been key announcements in the past couple of weeks which are outlined in brief below. WEL will be working with Equality Rights Alliance members to push for full consideration of the needs of women and girls.

Disabilities

On 19 August the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed on the need for major reform of disability services in Australia through a National Disability Insurance Scheme. This follows the release of the Productivity Commission's final report into Disability Care and Support last week.

Productivity Commission's vision is for a system to provide individuals with the support they need over the course of their lifetime and that reform of disability services needs to be financially sustainable. You can read its report on: www.pc.qov.au.

The COAG agreement means governments and the community can take the next step on the road to reforming disability services.

Mental health

COAG is to develop a National Partnership Agreement on Mental Health to help address major gaps in the mental health system. A \$2.2 billion mental health package was announced in the 2011-12 Federal Budget.

Through this new partnership the Commonwealth will provide \$200 million over five years to the States and Territories to help address service gaps in accommodation and emergency department planning. COAG is to develop a 10-year

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WELA will be working in the next months on three areas of critical importance to women.

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roadmap for mental health reform.

Aged Care

On 8 August the Government released the 2011 Productivity Commission Report, *Caring for Older Australians*.

The report provides analysis of the aged care sector and detailed proposals for aged care reform. The Government is developing its response to the report's recommendations guided by four overarching principles:

Every older Australian has earned the right to be able to access quality care and support that is appropriate to their needs, when they need it.

Older Australians deserve greater choice and control over their care arrangements than the system currently provides.

Funding arrangements for aged care need to be sustainable and fair, both for older Australians and for the broader community.

Older Australians deserve to receive quality care from an appropriately skilled workforce.

The consultation phase on the report includes Minister Butler talking with the broader community and consultations with industry stakeholders through their peak bodies, the National Aged Care Alliance and the Ageing Consultative Committee.

There are several other policy issues we are involved in – please check the WELA website at: www.wel.org.au.

40th Anniversary of WEL in 2012

The National Coordinating Committee of WEL (NCC) is very keen to celebrate this landmark in a way which balances honouring the past with looking forward to future activism.

Some ideas on the table are:

- A history of women's experiences as WEL activists, one which records their achievements and captures the sense of fun and engagement felt by those involved. Perhaps in interview form?
- A 'report card' on the position of women in Australia to draw on available information and statistics to provide a current picture of how women are faring, and identify statistical targets and the policies required to address them
- Celebratory dinners (State based) where projects can be launched or reported on.

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There are several
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www.wel.org.au.

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- Developing a 'feminism 101' module which could be taken to schools,
 NGOs etc. We may be able to apply for a grant to undertake this.
- The idea of a national feminist conference as part of the 40th birthday has been discussed. One suggestion is that a National Conference be held in Jan 2013. The National Coordinating Committee of WEL is generally of the view that we do not have the resources to run a National Conference.
- A recent meeting of Vic WEL liked the scorecard idea and discussed a celebratory dinner in Vic and a 'webinar' targeting younger women.

Melanie Fernandez is convening the WELA Working Group planning for the Anniversary Celebrations. Please send your ideas /comments to Mel at: melaniefer-nandez1@gmail.com

WEL Capacity Building

With the aim of building our lobbying capability, WELA and WEL NSW are in the process of hiring a coordinator. We hope to have engaged someone by the end of September. The person will working with the WELA National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) and the NSW WEL Executive, and in co-ordination with volunteers to:

- Review and enhance internet based lobbying tools, especially websites & online social networking, as well as the WEL NSW newsletter.
- Organise 40th Anniversary program.
- Build relationship with other social advocacy organisations.
- Assist in establishment of groups in NT, TAS and Queensland
- Co-ordinate a lobbying campaign as determined by WEL executive decision.
- Manage WELA constitutional change process.

On the last matter, Barbara Coddington from WEL WA has prepared a report on amendments we need to make to update our Constitution. These will be considered over the next couple of months.

WEL Australia Website

The WELA website is looking great and is updated weekly. Thank you all very much for your contributions, especially Laura McLean and Charity Danquah. We welcome contributions to the website by members – if you are interested, please contact Laura on: lauramaclea@gmail.com.

Building a WEL presence in Queensland

We are currently considering a visit to Brisbane to encourage and offer support to several women interested in setting up a Queensland WEL group. This is being planned for September so that the new WEL Qld group can prepare for next State election, which must be held on or before 16 June 2012. Anyone in

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Melanie Fernandez is convening the WELA Working Group planning for the Anniversary Celebrations. Please send your ideas / comments to Mel at: melaniefernandez1@gmail.com

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Queensland interested in being involved should contact Helen on: helen.lorange@bigpond.com.

Next Meetings

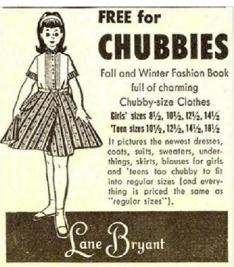
The next NCC teleconference will be held at 11 am on Sunday 11 Sept. Please let Elizabeth Kentwell <u>kentwell@aapt.net.au</u> know if you want a copy of the agenda. To join in the teleconference use **Teleconference link** 1800 200 232, code is 2610.

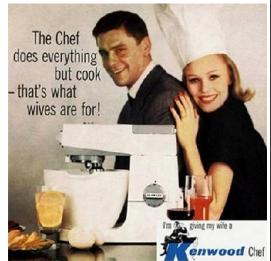
The WELA AGM will be held in Canberra this year at 11 am Sunday 30 October 2011. The NCC will be in Canberra for a 2 day meeting on 29-30 October. We look forward to dinner with ACT based WEL members on Saturday 29 October. ACT based NCC members Elizabeth Kentwell , Sarah Brasch and Deb Poulton will keep us posted.

Helen L'Orange Chair, National Coordinating Committee (NCC)

SOME ADVERTISEMENTS YOU WILL NEVER SEE AGAIN!!







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2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF WELNSW

WELNSW will be holding its 2011 Annual General Meeting on Sunday, 25th September at 66 Albion Street, Surry Hills, commencing at 10am.

Refreshments will be served. All welcome.

Please RSVP to the WEL office (phone or fax) on (02) 9212 4374, or email wel@welnsw.org.au.

Accelerating Gender Equality Summit Monday, September 5th at the University of Sydney

In January 2011, the most significant step towards gender equality in history was made with the formation of UN Women, a global champion for women and girls established to accelerate progress on meeting their rights.

The Accelerating Gender Equality Summit will be held on the first day of the global National Committees Meeting that will include representatives from over eighteen countries as well as representatives from UN Women Headquarters and Regional Offices.

The Accelerating Gender Equality Summit will bring together civil society, representatives of the federal and state government, the corporate sector and those interested in gender equality to discuss how UN Women will be central to accelerating gender equality and how we can all support the newly formed organisation.

Confirmed Speakers

- Lakshmi Puri—Assistant-Secretary-General, UN Women
- Moni Pizani—Regional Program Director, East and South East Asia, UN Women
- Elizabeth Broderick—Sex Discrimination Commissioner
- Julie Newton-Howes. Executive Director, CARE Australia
- Jo Crawford—Research and Policy Advisor, IWDA

Details

Date Monday 5 September

Time Registrations from 9am, 10am start, 5pm Welcome Reception
Venue The Refectory, Holme Building, Science Road, University of Sydney
Cost \$50 invididual / \$25 concession (includes meals and welcome reception)

Register at http://www.unwomen.org.au/summit

An interesting article about media reaction to Julie Gillard - http://www.indaily.com.au/?iid=50549&sr=0#folio=007

Next WEL

meeting

Wednesday 7 September

6.30pm at 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.

Renewal—If a renewal form is enclosed with your newsletter or included with your email copy, then your membership is now due. We encourage you to renew your membership of WEL as your ongoing support is important to us.

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

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.'

WEL NSW Executive

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

Kavanagh

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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: wel@welnsw.org.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