

*When one good person stands up,
good people will follow and good
things will happen*

▼ COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH RE

WOMEN IN POLITICS

SHOWING THE WAY IN 2010

 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Supporting the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government



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MESSAGE FROM THE ALGA PRESIDENT

The 2010 Year of Women in Local Government is the culmination of two decades of research into the under-representation of women in local government. Despite the fact that this has long been apparent, the percentage of female representation at both elected and senior management positions has changed little over the past 20 years.

The number of women serving as elected councillors today in 2010 remains at around 27 per cent, while only 20 per cent of senior council managers and 5 per cent of chief executive officers are women. These levels are too low.

As the level of government closest to the community, it is important that councils reflect the communities they serve. The more representative councils are at the elected and senior management levels, the better and more relevant will be the quality of our decision-making.

I would like to recognise Local Government Managers Australia and the Australian Local Government Women's Association for their investment in the Year of Women in Local Government. It has been an initiative that the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) strongly supports.

Federal and state governments have put their weight behind the Year of Women in Local Government. The federal Minister for Local Government, the Hon Anthony Albanese,

launched the initiative on 20 January 2010, announcing that the Rudd Government would provide \$490,000 for a range of practical projects to help improve the participation of women in local government. The Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon Tanya Plibersek, has remarked that she is proud to be serving in a government which boasts more women in senior parliamentary positions than any state or territory government. Like the Minister, I'm also proud to be a member of a government—the City of Monash in Melbourne—which is doing well on this score too, with five of our eleven councillors being women. However, there is always room for improvement.

The \$490,000 funding provided by the Australian Government will improve data collection, allow for an audit of the status and role of women across councils, a scholarship program for senior women developed by the Australian Centre for Excellence for Local Government and the identification of strategies to promote gender equity in councils.

As a sector, we need to do more to promote greater participation by women in senior decision-making processes and political life. At the federal level, Australia now has its first female Governor-General and we are very pleased that Her Excellency has lent her personal support to the Year of Women in Local Government as its Patron, and to this publication by contributing the foreword.

Looking to the states and territories, Australia's largest state—New South Wales—not only has a female Governor, but a female Premier and Deputy Premier as well. And Queensland also has both a female Governor and Premier.

It is essential that Australians strive to achieve greater participation by women in political life and at all levels of government. I'm pleased to say that in local government, councils across the country are committed to this goal and are involved in a range of practical initiatives and approaches with this goal in mind. Many have lent their financial support to these initiatives and indeed to the Year of Women in Local Government.

ALGA has produced this publication so that the stories and experiences of the outstanding women profiled here will encourage further change and help to lift the participation rates of women in local government. We hope that women who may have considered pursuing a career in local government, or getting involved in politics at the local level—whether as an elected representative or not—will be inspired to do just that after reading this publication.

I look forward to seeing more women across Australia become involved in political life, so that governments can better reflect the communities they serve. I hope that everyone currently involved in local government across the country will play a part in encouraging this greater participation.

Geoff Lake

GEOFF LAKE

PRESIDENT, AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION



FOREWORD

The Governor-General, Ms Quentin Bryce AC



Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Foreword

*by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia*

*to Australian Local Government Association's
Women in Politics publication in celebration of 2010 Year of
Women in Local Government*

I will always feel grateful for my involvement in the Australian women's movement of the 1970s. It taught me the finest values of justice, equality, inclusiveness, and the dignity and worth of every human being. It ensured that I would remain alert to women's vast and growing achievements, and to our progress towards women's equal participation in society.

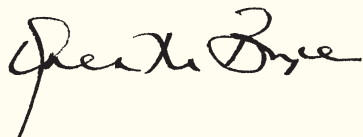
In 1903, Australian women were the first in the world to stand as candidates for the national parliament. Forty years later, Dame Enid Lyons addressed the House of Representatives as its first woman member. She was firm and unapologetic in highlighting women's distinctive capacity to contribute fully and broadly to the political agenda by virtue of the differences in perspective and understanding their gender and experiences offered.

Sixty seven years on, the arguments in favour of gender balance are back in full strength across the nation, and so is the evidence of the tangible benefits that diversity brings.

Australia tops world figures with women holding 15% of mayoral positions and 26% of local council seats. We ought to be both proud and determined to improve. In my experience, women and men everywhere are asking the questions afresh: how can we share family responsibilities equitably; how can we work flexibly and feel professionally fulfilled; and how can we model the success of doing it differently and better.

Women in Politics is an important and timely marker of women's progress in local government representation and political participation; and, through historical viewpoints and personal stories, it provides valuable insights into how we might encourage women now and in the future to make a contribution in this vital democratic arena.

As patron of the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government, I am delighted to endorse this publication, and to express my greatest praise and support for the work of the Australian Local Government Association, your women pioneers and leaders, and your members across the country whose commitment and efforts encourage our civic engagement and sense of responsibility.


3-5-2010



OVERVIEW

Women comprise just over 50 per cent of Australia's population.¹ Women are an integral part of all our communities and they contribute at all levels. But in politics including at the local government level, they are under-represented. Only 27.3 per cent of councillors are women. The situation is worse in senior management roles in councils, where women fill only 20 per cent of the positions. This situation is worse again at the chief executive level in councils, where only 5 per cent of CEOs and general managers are women.

Research by the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology, Sydney, indicates that there is a lower proportion of women working in local government than in other levels of government. Local government needs to reflect the full diversity of its population and to utilise the skills and energy of everyone in the community.

Local government is a major employer in Australia, providing around 178,000 jobs, which is nearly 10 per cent of the public sector.² Employees include engineers, health inspectors, building surveyors, youth workers and librarians.

1969 was the year of the Commonwealth Council of Arbitration Commission's historic decision for equal pay for equal work. This decision affected 18 per cent of women workers, mostly teachers and nurses. The second Federal case, in 1972, established the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and this was extended through all awards, eventually putting an end to separate male and female award rates.

Narrowing the gender professional and pay gap has been a long battle, which continues to the present. Winning the equal pay decision in 1969 and the equal pay for work of equal value in 1972 were landmark victories, and it's worth recalling that both decisions were strongly resisted by many employers.

The Year of Women in Local Government is an opportunity to raise awareness of and improve the current gender imbalance, to encourage women to stand as councillors, to help build women's capacity for senior positions, as well as to highlight the wonderful array of positive achievements that women are already contributing to local government.

Improving the gender balance in local government—and through this, local government's representative and inclusive nature—will not happen overnight, but the Year of Women in Local Government is a strong beginning to major positive change in this area. 2010 marks the International Year of Women in Local Government and is the first time since Federation that 'women' in any category of government or politics are being formally celebrated in a national campaign.

The primary focus of the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government is to raise awareness and promote the need for increased participation of women, both in executive and elected roles within councils across Australia. The campaign will highlight the various programs that can help achieve this, and is endorsed by the Australian Government.³ Official sponsorship opportunities have also been taken up by more than 60 councils and organisations

1 ABS Cat No 3201.0 *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, June 2009* (males totalled 10,660,917 and females totalled 10,770,864).

2 ABS Cat No 6248.0.55.002 *Employment and Earnings, Public Sector, Australia 2008–09*

3 The 2010 Year of Women in Local Government is endorsed by the Australian Government through the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and the Office of Women and Ministers Albanese and Plibersek have provided significant encouragement and support for the campaign.

as at March 2010, adding over \$65,000 to the campaign funding. Australian Government funding will support:

- ALGWA's 50:50 Vision: Council for Gender Equity program (developed with the University of Technology, Sydney) under which councils and shires will be audited on the status and participation of women in leadership roles (\$250,000 for three years);
- Scholarship funding to enable senior women in local government to participate in the new executive leadership program being developed by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government and the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (\$100,000);
- Improved collection of data and reporting on the status of women in the local government sector (\$100,000); and
- A 2010 Management Challenge to be conducted by the LGMA, which will enable around 130 councils to identify strategies to promote gender equity in their councils (\$40,000).

The 2010 Year of Women in Local Government is also supported by the states and territories across Australia through new or complementary initiatives such as:

- the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter which is designed to achieve equity, invite diversity and support active citizenship of women;
- the New South Wales Minister's Awards for Women in Local Government;
- the Queensland Government's Women in Local Government Professional Development Bursary and Year of Women in Local Government workshops;
- the establishment in Western Australia of the Advisory Committee on Women in Local Government;

- the Tasmanian *WomenCan* campaign designed to attract more women to stand for local government elections;
- the support of the South Australian Government for the Women in Local Government Strategy being developed by the Local Government Association of South Australia;
- the Northern Territory's first progress report of Building on Our Strengths: A Framework for Action for Women in the Northern Territory 2008–2012 (released February 2010); and
- the Australian Capital Territory's Women Plan 2010–15 which identifies priority areas for the ACT to achieve progress for women under the economic, social and environmental areas.

The support of all levels of government for women in local government is further underpinned by the recent agreement of the Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council to support the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government and progress participation of women in local government through its Women in Local Government Strategy 2009–12. The Tasmanian Government was instrumental in initiating the national strategic project.

The campaign has already received significant attention. Many organisations and individuals have reported on the campaign in their newsletters and other publications. In particular we acknowledge the support of all the contributors to this booklet, particularly Her Excellency the Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce AC, who is the official patron of the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government.

There is much that can be achieved and highlighted during the Year of Women in Local Government.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR FEMALE POLITICAL PIONEERS

1894

Women get the vote in South Australia, which was one of the first places in the world to give women this right

1903

Vida Goldstein was the first woman to run for the Senate (although she was unsuccessful)

1919

Grace Benny was the first woman elected to local government in Australia—Brighton Council (now Holdfast Bay) in South Australia

1921

Edith Cowan was the first woman to enter any Australian Parliament when she was elected to the Western Australian Legislative Assembly

1937

Lilian Fowler became Australia's first female Mayor in Newtown Municipal Council, New South Wales

1894

1903

1919



1921

EDITH COWAN
www.NationalLibraryOfAustralia.pic-an02351616

1937

1989

1990

1991

1995

1996

1989

Rosemary Follett AO was elected as the first Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory, making her the first woman to become head of government in Australia

1990

Carmen Lawrence became Premier of Western Australia and in the same year **Joan Kirner** became Premier of Victoria

1991

The Honourable Dame Roma Mitchell was the first female Governor of an Australian State, South Australia

1995

Natasha Jessica Stott-Despoja was the youngest woman ever to become a member of the Australian Parliament, at the age of 26

1996

Margaret Reid was the first woman elected as President of the Senate

1943

Dame Enid Lyons was the first woman to enter the House of Representatives

Dorothy Tangney was the first woman to be elected to the Senate and the longest serving female member in an Australian Parliament, with a record 25 years and nine months

1949

Petronel White was the first female to represent a capital city council in Australia when she was elected Alderman for the Hamilton ward of the Brisbane City Council

Annabelle Rankin was the first female Whip in federal Parliament, and the first woman to be given a federal Ministry as Minister for Housing (1966)

1974

Alderman Joy Cummings was the first female Lord Mayor (Newcastle City Council, New South Wales)

1983

Wendy Chapman was the first female Lord Mayor of a capital city (Adelaide City Council, South Australia)

1986

Mrs Joan Child MP was the first woman to be Speaker of the House of Representatives

Janine Haines was the first woman to lead an Australian political party when she was elected leader of the Australian Democrats



1943

DAME ENID LYONS
IMAGE: National Archives of Australia: SP1011/1_3062

1949

1974

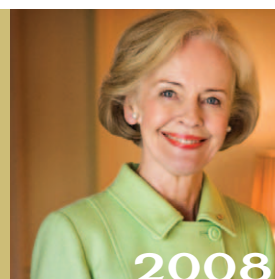
1983

1986



2001

2007



2008



2009

2010

2001

Carol Martin was the first Indigenous woman elected to any Parliament in Australia when she became the Member for Kimberley in the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia

2007

The Honourable Julia Gillard MP became the first Australian female Deputy Prime Minister

2008

Her Excellency, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, became Australia's first female Governor-General

2009

Anna Maria Bligh became the first woman to be elected as Premier in an Australian State (Queensland)

2010

Kelly Vincent, who uses a wheelchair and is 21 years of age, was elected to the Legislative Council in South Australia

LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS



AUSTRALIAN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the peak organisation representing Australia's 565 Councils. ALGA's membership comprises the State and Territory Local Government Associations around Australia as well as the ACT Government. ALGA's Board is in turn comprised of representatives of each of those member associations who are nominated to serve on the ALGA Board.

The following snapshots are those of the women who currently occupy ALGA Board positions, or senior management positions in their local government association. Their inclusion in this booklet is testimony to the many great things that women are achieving in local government in 2010.

This booklet was initiated, compiled and written by the women of ALGA.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP



Councillor Genia McCaffery

PRESIDENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION NSW (LGSA)

Cr Genia McCaffery holds a Bachelor of Economics degree (Honours) in government from the University of Sydney.

Cr McCaffery was elected as full-time Mayor of North Sydney in 1995 and was re-elected in 1999, 2004 and 2008. As Mayor, Cr McCaffery is committed to managing development within North Sydney, responsible financial management of Council, protecting the environment, and maintaining strong community involvement in local government.

In October 2004, Cr McCaffery was elected President of the NSW Local Government Association for a two-year term. Cr McCaffery was re-elected as President in 2006 and again in 2008. She has identified planning, natural resource management and infrastructure investment as the key issues to address during her term as President. Cr McCaffery has been a member of the Local Government Executive since 1998. She is on the Board of the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority, the NSW Environment Protection Authority and the NSW Environmental Trust.



Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis

MAYOR, CITY OF MARION

PRESIDENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA (LGASA)

Mayor Lewis was first elected as Mayor of the City of Marion in 2000 and was re-elected in 2003 and 2006.

As a passionate supporter of reform in local government, Mayor Lewis has served the LGA State Executive Committee since 2001, the LGA's Metropolitan Local Government Group and was elected Vice President of the LGA in 2006. She has been a member of the LGA's Financial Sustainability Advisory Committee since its formation as well as the LGA Governance Advisory Committee and was elected President of the LGA in 2009.

Mayor Lewis has a strong interest in health promotion and community development.



Mayor Nancy Joy Baluch AM

MAYOR, CITY OF PORT AUGUSTA
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA (LGASA)

Joy Baluch has presided over Port Augusta for 23 years as Mayor, after serving a previous 11 years as a Councillor (1970 to 1981). She is perhaps one of the best known political figures in South Australia and has a significant national reputation. Her passion for her community and the economic and regional development of the Upper Spencer resulted in her being awarded the Order of Australia AM in 2007.

Mayor Baluch is the immediate Past President of the Local Government Association of South Australia, having served for 15 years on the executive, including 13 years as Vice-President. Mayor Baluch is a leader who commands respect and who calls a spade a spade and who carries out her Mayoral and LGASA Presidential roles with pride, passion and utmost dedication.



Kerry Moir

ALDERMAN, DARWIN CITY COUNCIL
PRESIDENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHERN
TERRITORY (LGANT)

Kerry Moir hails from Adelaide and has lived in Darwin for 41 years, after moving there with her husband Bill to teach at Darwin High School. In 1990 Kerry won a Nuffield Foundation Scholarship to undertake an MA by research at London University and spent a year learning how to live in a foreign environment. On her return, Kerry took up various appointments in the human relations field, culminating in her current appointment as Director of the International Unit in the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Kerry was elected to Darwin City Council in 1992. Since then she has served on and chaired various technical, community and corporate services committees and has been a member of the Disability Access Committee for a number of years.



Deirdre E. Flint OAM

MAYOR, CENTRAL HIGHLANDS COUNCIL
VICE PRESIDENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA (LGAT)

Deirdre Flint was elected to the Central Highlands Council in 1996 and subsequently elected Mayor in 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

As a Member of the General Management Committee of the Local Government Association of Tasmania since 2000, Deirdre represents the eight Southern Rural Councils with populations of less than 20,000. Deirdre has been a member of the Premier's Local Government Council since its inception, and is the Local Government representative on the Building Appeals Board since 2001. She was a recipient of the Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day 2010 Awards.

Deirdre is also the Local Government representative on the Inaugural State Steering Committee for a five year plan for Positive Ageing and was the Local Government representative on the Rural Doctors Workforce Committee since 2004 (Committee completed its tasks in 2006).



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



Ricky Burges

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (WALGA)

Ricky joined WALGA in February 2000. Prior to joining WALGA, she was the Director General of the Department for Culture and the Arts, Chief Executive Officer of Perth Zoo and a Director of Human Resources at the WA Tourism Commission. Ricky has a Masters in Leadership and Management from the Curtin University of Technology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Development.

Ricky sits on the ROADS Foundation, the McCusker Foundation for Alzheimer's Disease Research, the Indigenous Implementation Board, the Local Government Insurance Board and various local government committees and boards. Ricky is past President of the Australian Institute of Management and the Board of the Art Gallery of Western Australia. She was the Western Australian Businesswoman of the Year in 1997 and was awarded a Public Service Medal in 2007.



Wendy Campana

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH
AUSTRALIA (LGASA)

Wendy Campana has an extensive background in public sector management, organisational development, education and training, industrial relations, intergovernmental relations and governance and political lobbying.

In her role as Executive Director of the LGASA Wendy has overseen a recent study of 'Local Government Current and Potential Role in Water Management and Conservation' by the SA Centre for Economic Studies which helped inform the LGASA's Water Security Strategy. Under her guidance, the LGASA also manages a subsidy fund for the development of new Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) in SA country towns and recently was instrumental in obtaining \$20 million in Australian Government funding to upgrade over 60 existing CWMS to water recycling standards. Wendy is also currently a member of the SA Stormwater Management Authority.



STATE AND TERRITORY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS: A SNAPSHOT

State and Territory Local Government Associations are working hard to encourage and promote the work of women in local government, and to support and encourage women to participate in local government.

Here is a snapshot of what's happening in each state.

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)

Victoria is involved in a variety of activities to promote and encourage women in local government, ranging from state government agencies, local government through to community organisations. State-wide projects include those undertaken by the Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC), which is a non-party political coalition of local government and community organisations, such as the Victorian Women's Trust and YWCA, which was established in the late 1990s to strive for equal participation of women and men in local government in Victoria. In 2003 the WPILGC developed a Local Government Women's Charter, supported by the then Victorian Minister for Local Government and state local government organisations. The Charter enshrines three principles—gender equity, diversity and active citizenship. In 2010 councils will be encouraged to re-state their commitment to these principles, and to develop 3x3 action plans: three action items for each of the three principles. Advice and resource materials have also been created to assist women in the community to consider running for council, such as *A Gender Agenda*, and *Now You're A Councillor*.

Local Government Association of NSW and Shires Association of NSW (LGSA)

In New South Wales the LGSA, Australian Local Government Women's Association NSW and Local Government Managers Association NSW have agreed a Women's Charter which enshrines equal rights, opportunities and supports increased participation of women. The Associations are gold partners in the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government. A policy statement on women encapsulates the vision of the LGSA and an award was established in 2008 to recognise the achievements of women in local government. In 2010 six women received Women in Local Government Awards and were recognised in a ceremony in the NSW State Parliament on 8 March 2010. For the past two years, the LGSA has also developed a Women's Mentoring program for councillors and is progressing its implementation.

Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA)

Across the State of Western Australia, 139 local councils are involved in a wide variety of events and activities celebrating and honouring women's contribution to local government. The Local Government Managers Australia, Western Australian branch has taken a leadership role in coordinating activities and WALGA is working to support and assist their efforts. The WALGA Conference 2010 will feature women as keynote speakers and draw on the theme of women in local government. In June 2010, Local Government Managers Australia's two-day conference celebrates Women in local government with guest speakers and topics focusing on women working in the sector.

Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)

Women in local government in Queensland are well supported by a strong and active local branch of the Australian Local Government Women's Association, with their upcoming Annual Conference currently being organised. The LGAQ is represented on the Minister's Women in Local Government Group (WILG) under Chair Betty Kiernan. In this current term of office 11 mayors and three chief executive officers are women. Across Queensland 35 per cent of all elected officials are women. The LGAQ supports women in local government by providing bursaries for individuals to undertake formal qualifications—diplomas in Local Government, Planning and Health and Environment—where over 80 per cent of graduates are women, some of whom have been promoted or are undertaking study at university. LGAQ frequently addresses national and international forums, focusing on opportunities for the workforce, and creating career paths for women; and is currently undertaking surveys into the 'added value' qualifications of women.

Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA)

In South Australia, a Women in Local Government Joint Working Group was set up in 2007 to determine key issues regarding the under-representation of women in local government. After intensive consultation with stakeholders, a Women in Local Government Strategy containing a broad range of activities in the areas of promotion and mentoring, flexible work practices, attraction and retention, and training and development has been developed

to guide future initiatives in this area. Two resources have also been produced—*Step This Way: Women at work in Local Government in South Australia* and *Taking Up the Challenge: An Information Kit for women interested in standing as a candidate in council elections in South Australia*. The 'Encouraging Women's Participation in Local Government Elections Group' is currently meeting to update materials for women election candidates in the 2010 local government elections. The Women in Local Government Strategy includes the Women on the Move webpage available on the LGASA website to provide easy access to the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government information and a calendar of South Australian events, as well as links to other resources for women. South Australian councils have been working hard to address the under-representation of women both as council members and in senior staff positions through the provision of conferences, seminars, training, mentoring and positive reinforcement.

Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT)


In Tasmania, the LGAT lent its support to an Australian Local Government Women's Association cocktail event which was held at the LGAT Annual Local Government Conference in May 2010. The LGAT is supporting Tasmania's Ambassador for the Year of Women in Local Government through a coordinated advertising feature for the *Sunday Tasmanian*. This highlights the objectives of the Year of Women in Local Government and further activities planned for this year and into the future. The LGAT is working with the state government on the Premier's Local Government Project to

increase the number of women standing for local government elections in Tasmania. The *WomenCan* pre-election program is focused on attracting and supporting women candidates to local government. Two female members of LGAT's general management committee championed the initiative—Mayor Lyn Laycock (Devonport) and Mayor Deirdre Flint (Central Highlands).

Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT)

In the Northern Territory, an International Women's Day march, hosted by the Darwin City Council, the United Nations Association of Australia NT and the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory was strongly supported and included the Northern Territory 2010 Women in Local Government Ambassador Pam Robinson OAM. The Northern Territory's other Ambassador for the Year of Women in Local Government, Sandra Cannon, is addressing a number of human resource forums across the Territory during 2010, focusing on how to attract more women to local government and ALGWA in the Northern Territory.





The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP

MINISTER FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The decisions we make as a community are better when we use all the information, all the life experience and all the talent our nation has to offer.

My earliest political memory is sitting on my dad's lap watching Gough and Margaret Whitlam walking off a jet, onto the tarmac, and me pointing to the television and saying, 'That's Gough Whitlam, isn't it? He's a good man'. I would have been three or four.

My parents, who emigrated from Slovenia in the 1950s, influenced my political outlook profoundly. Their compassion, hard work and sense of obligation to their neighbours and their community are traits I try to bring to my job every day.

Although politics is a demanding career, the level of difficulty is matched with the degree of reward. There aren't many jobs where you get to see your actions make a real difference to the lives of people every day. That's true of the day-to-day constituent work helping individuals, and also of the long term, big picture policy development and implementation. At the moment, for example, the Government has embarked on a massive program of building social housing and unrolling new homelessness services. Meeting people who are housed because of decisions the Australian Government has made is phenomenally rewarding.

A lot of women ask me questions about how I manage work and family, and what it's like to work in a pretty male-dominated area. Obviously there are challenges at times, but I've never expected anything that's really worth doing in life to be easy. I've certainly never

believed that the fact that there are hurdles to overcome is a reason not to try. My advice to women considering a career in politics would definitely be to give it a go. Why wouldn't you want to be a part of changing our country for the better?

The participation of women in Australian political life has been hard won and shouldn't be taken for granted. The decisions we make as a community are better when we use all the information, all the life experience and all the talent our nation has to offer.

Without the involvement of women as voters, as advisers, lobbying for change, and of course, as elected representatives, we wouldn't have seen such fundamental achievements as changes to domestic violence and sexual assault laws, equal pay legislation, family law and no-fault divorce and, most recently, paid maternity leave.

That applies at the local government level, too. Maureen Oliver, a mother of eight and councillor on South Sydney council many years ago, championed changes to footpaths in inner city Sydney for prams and wheelchairs. It was because of her persistence that ramps have become a standard feature in the streets of Sydney. That change wouldn't have been made but for the persistence and life experience of a mother of eight who got tired of levering those heavy prams up and down from footpaths.

Of course each of us brings our own life experiences and perspectives to the decisions we make in public life. That's why it's important to have women and men; young and old; a variety of professional, cultural and religious backgrounds and views. The more diverse our parliament, the better we represent the whole of the Australian community.



The days of women not being represented in the corridors of power are behind us, thanks to the enormous effort over generations of many inspirational women here in Australia and around the world.

In Australia, women account for 30 per cent of all parliamentarians. The number in the House of Representatives alone has increased from 23 in 1996 to 41 in 2010. We have a Deputy Prime Minister, a Governor-General and a Deputy Leader of the Opposition who are all women. In six of our eight States and Territories, a woman has served as Premier or Chief Minister. In the judiciary, three out of our seven High Court Justices are women.

While Australia and Australians have accomplished much since South Australia first enshrined (white) women's right to vote in 1894, substantive gender equality has not yet been won. We've still got more to achieve.

In the *Global Gender Gap Report* (2009) Australia sits at number one for women's educational achievement, yet we are only number 50 when it comes to women's labour force participation. Australia is still missing out on potential women leaders.

In local government, women are underrepresented in management and in elected positions. 51 per cent of local government employees are women, yet only 20 per cent of senior managers are women and only five per cent of chief executives or general managers are women. And only 30 per cent of elected representatives in local government are women.

That's why this year, the Year of Women in Local Government, is so important. It's about recognising organisational and structural barriers that prevent us from recognising women as leaders and decision-makers in the community. When we're only tapping into 50 per cent of the talent, we're short-changing ourselves and our communities.

Never before to my knowledge has a sector of government come together so unanimously to change its gender imbalance.

Engaging men in these discussions is crucial as it is important that issues of social and economic inclusion are not seen as women's issues alone. Gender equity benefits us all. I know that through the Year of Women in Local Government both men and women will be able to participate in this discussion and achieve the better gender balance we all want.

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young

GREENS SENATOR FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ELECTED 2007, ENTERED PARLIAMENT JUNE 2008

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
PRESIDENT, STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
FORMER CAMPAIGN MANAGER, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

I owe a lot to the women, on all sides of politics, who came before me, women who paved the way for people like me. And now my daughter and her generation will grow up believing it is normal to have women and men of all ages and backgrounds in the Parliament.

As a student I had spent a number of years involved in community activism, supporting the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees, because of my belief that Australians should be more compassionate towards vulnerable people. I then went to work for Amnesty International as a Campaign Manager.

What prompted me to take the next step and enter politics was the Howard Government's scare campaign over asylum-seekers coming to Australia. The tragedy of the *Tampa* and the Government's infamous sloganeering—'we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come'—made things clear for me. As a passionate defender of human rights, I have always believed that justice and fairness must be the linchpin for Australia's domestic and foreign policy—regardless of what pollsters tell us. I had to get involved.

I really think the most memorable moment for me was when I was being sworn in to the Senate. I turned around and my daughter Kora was up in the Public Gallery. I waved at her and she waved back at me. I remember being struck during that moment about how far we have come in politics, that I as a young woman

and a young mother was entering Parliament—and yet how far we still have to go for future generations.

I owe a lot to the women, on all sides of politics, who came before me, women who paved the way for people like me. And now my daughter and her generation will grow up believing it is normal to have women and men of all ages and backgrounds in the Parliament. I hope by the time she's old enough to think about what she wants to do that there are no barriers left for women in leadership roles, whether that be in the workplace, as CEOs, or board directors of our top companies, or in public life.

I think that there are inherent obstacles of perception that have to be dealt with. The fact that I am a young woman in politics, I think challenges other people more than it does me. The reality however is that this perception exists and needs to be countered, and that is done by working hard, by knowing your stuff, and by being true to your word.

It's rarely acknowledged but there is definitely a different standard by which women in politics and leadership continue to be judged. And while it is not fair or legitimate, there is a constant feeling of having to put in 150 per cent effort in order to prove yourself. In any case it's vital that women should be there in Parliament.

We need diversity in Parliament, and that applies equally if we are talking about State or Local politics. With a diversity of representatives, you have a diversity of ideas and opinions, and a better understanding of the various different groups in the community.



The task of balancing family life and work is a constant juggling act. In fact, I don't really believe there is such a thing as work-life balance, it is a constant moving feast—some days you get it right, and some days you don't. I know I am very lucky to have supportive family and friends around me. To be realistic, you can't always do everything (at home and work) and you can't beat yourself up about it.

The one thing to say is that I don't think that politicians are in some way special in this sense. It's a juggling act for everybody—whether you are a politician, or a teacher or something else. Whatever you do, having a family and a job is difficult, that's life. Being honest about where people around you can be of most help is essential.

For me, it really started with having good teachers. In high school I had teachers who were totally supportive of me, and they fed my desire to research my opinions and to stand up for what I believed in.

I have also had very supportive family, friends and work colleagues who have been there from the beginning. It's a combination of having family who support you no matter how tough it gets, friends who are always prepared to be honest with you, and work colleagues who are happy to share the load and experience.

I think the key thing is that I never turn an opportunity down. That's the key thing that has got me to where I am—whether it was the opportunity to join the boards of organisations, or be the spokesperson for various groups and get involved in a variety of community activities.

These were voluntary positions and incredibly valuable in allowing me to develop networks, hone skills and gain experience working within the community. Taking on voluntary roles and doing community work can seem a small opportunity but can open so many doors—you might be surprised where it leads.

The development of networks is also critical—I strongly believe in not burning bridges: you never know where you may meet or need to work with people further down the line.

Mrs Kay Hull MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR RIVERINA
CHIEF WHIP, NATIONAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA, PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

I believe it is my place in life to fight for the people who do not necessarily have the voice or the means to do so for themselves.

'I entered politics to represent the issues of local people. I wanted to ensure that firstly as a Councillor for Wagga Wagga and then as Federal Member for Riverina, my region prospered and continued to provide the benefits to the nation that it had done in the past.'

Having recently announced that she will not be contesting the next Federal Election, Kay's motivation behind this was, after 12 years in the Federal Parliament, to stand aside and let a new, fresh and energised person take over the role.

Kay has been in politics now for 20 years (eight years on Wagga Wagga City Council and 12 years as the Member for Riverina) so there have been many significant moments.

'I have introduced significant reforms for the disability sector, which I am extremely proud of. I was instrumental in the Howard Government's decision not to proceed with the Snowy Hydro sale. I have lobbied successfully for major funding for the Riverina which has secured our local economy.

'I have been an active member of numerous House of Representatives Standing Committees and Joint Statutory Committees. As chair of the House of Representatives Family and Community Affairs Committee from 2003–08, I administered two monumental inquiries.

'The first was the inquiry into substance abuse in Australian communities. A report was handed down by the committee titled *Road to Recovery*.

The second was the inquiry into child custody arrangements in the event of family separation. The Committee handed down their report *Every Picture Tells a Story* that has seen significant changes in the Family Law Act and the Child Support Act.

'I have become involved with the issue of HIV/AIDS both here in Australia and internationally. In 2008 I was appointed to the IPU Taskforce on HIV-AIDS. This in itself has been a major milestone in my career and allows me to make significant contributions to those affected by this terrible disease.

'In 2008 I attended the UN National Assembly on HIV-AIDS in New York. I believe that most countries, including Australia, are showing a lack of political leadership when it comes to the prevention and management of HIV-AIDS.

'I have stated in Parliament that Australia has an opportunity to lead the world in HIV management and to suggest greater implementation of new and emerging programs and I have put pressure on the Australian Government to develop a national and international plan of action for those people who are survivors of rape and child trafficking in our Asia Pacific region.

'I think my major accomplishment is that I can say, at the end of my political career, I have always put my constituents first and foremost, and I have never regretted my decision to turn down the offers of personal advancements within the Parliamentary process, so that I could use my voice in the best interests of the Riverina people.



'I was the first Nationals woman in the state of New South Wales (the largest state in Australia) to be elected to the Federal Parliament. Most people believed I would not succeed in being pre-selected as a candidate because the Nationals were most definitely viewed as the stereotypical 'Boys Club' and I was a woman!

'Yet, I never, ever considered that I would be overlooked because of my gender.

'Many preselectors thought I could not overcome the cultural boundaries in the Riverina electorate either. It has a strong multicultural presence of Italian and Indian voters in one key voting sector and a huge agricultural influence within the nation. Yet I was able to convince them to select me!

'The National Parliamentary members accepted me warmly into the party room, and I have been given a strong voice at the table.

'Whilst in Government I crossed the floor on the sale of Telstra, which at the time was unheard of. That was monumental in my career. I walked alone for many years after I did this, but eventually I regained my standing. I believe I overcame this because I just kept on doing my job—representing my constituents. I never faltered in this, and I think that eventually earned me the respect from my colleagues I still have to this day.

'Whilst I have turned down offers to become a Minister and declined a nomination for the Leadership role in our Party, I represent my constituents and I have slept well at night knowing I can always make my decisions based on what is in their best interests.

'For women to succeed in politics, just as in any field, I believe you need to have strong family support. You need to have your family right behind you, all of the time and you need to include them in the decisions you make about your career.

'Once you are in politics, remember to work with your other female colleagues, and not compete against them. I find it extraordinary that women in politics often compete against each other instead of providing support and reinforcement.

'I have to say how lucky I am to have the family that I do. Their unconditional love and support given to me over the years has been incredible. Without their sacrifices and understanding, I could not have managed to commit myself so entirely to my work and I am eternally grateful.

'I think I have managed to balance work and family, by always giving 100 per cent. When I am at work, I give it my all, and when I am with my family, I make sure I am giving them 100 per cent of my time. I make every moment count.

'My husband Graeme has been particularly supportive throughout my career. He is my best friend and confidante. His humour and unforgiving honesty have always been my rock.'



Senator Helen Kroger

SENATOR FOR VICTORIA, AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT
LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

Helen firmly believes that small business operators have a major role to play in economic recovery—as the lifeblood of many local economies, small businesses must be afforded the opportunity to grow and develop with minimal government red tape.

Helen Kroger has been representing the state of Victoria as a Liberal member of the Australian Senate since July 2008. As the Victorian state President of the Liberal Party from 2003 to 2006, Helen oversaw the rebuilding of the Liberal Party after the 2002 state election.

A long serving Liberal, Helen joined the Liberal party when she was 16 and in the 1970s she played an active role in the Young Liberals. In 2003 she became President of the Victorian branch of the Liberal Party of Australia and Federal Vice President of the Liberal Party of Australia. Helen was recently announced as Federal Patron of the Women's Council of the Liberal Party. Helen has been appointed to the Senate Legislative and General Purpose Standing, Legislative and References Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee and the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit.

Helen was educated at Cato Methodist Ladies College and studied Economics at Monash University. She has also completed various courses at the Australian Institute of Management, including Women in Management and Effective Leadership.

Senator Kroger has been an active member of the community over a number of years, including as a delegate to the International Women's Democrat Union Convention and represented the Australian Parliament at the 2009 International Democrat Union and Asia Pacific Democrat Union Meeting.

Helen has a keen interest in the welfare of our communities' most vulnerable. As a co-convenor of Parliamentarians Against Child Abuse and Neglect (PACAN), she has been able to advance these interests. Re-established in October 2008, PACAN aims to increase awareness of, and take positive action in, eliminating the serious issue of child abuse and neglect. Senator Kroger believes that Parliamentarians have a responsibility to work towards zero tolerance in regard to any activity that is abusive or neglectful, and against the best interests of children. PACAN supports the important work of The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), as well as other organisations and individuals who work in this area.



Helen has an abiding interest in the area of education and has for some time had concerns that secondary and tertiary institutions have been compromised by political correctness. As an advocate for choice, Helen has on many occasions spoken in the Senate about giving more power to parents in the important decision of choosing a school for their children. Senator Kroger has publicly advocated for a voucher based education system which would attach the annual budget per student to each individual child. Basically explained, if a school is doing a good job and attracting students, the money needed to educate those children will follow them to that institution. If another school does a disservice to its students through consistent and chronic underperformance, families will rush their children to the exits.

As a former small business owner, Helen understands first-hand the joys and difficulties of this endeavour. Given recent worldwide economic circumstances, Helen firmly believes that small business operators have a major part to play in economic recovery. The lifeblood of many local economies, small businesses must be afforded the opportunity to grow and develop with minimal government red tape.

Helen is the mother of two boys and considers family as the most significant part of her life. She has said on a number of occasions in the Senate that the reason for her getting up in the morning is for her two sons who continue to challenge and inspire her. Senator Kroger is acutely aware that time for leisure within family life is severely diminishing and, with this, the time for strengthening the bonds within the family will also diminish. As a legislator, Senator Kroger believes that the impact of economic decisions on the family unit must be considered in all public policy decisions.

In February 2010, Senator Kroger suffered injuries from a dog whilst trying to break up a fight between a neighbour's dog with her two dogs. Whilst the attack received significant public attention, she believes there are many in the community who suffer far greater trauma, and she remains committed to ensuring that the safety and well-being of all is paramount in the determination of all public policy.

Senator the Hon Jan McLucas

FORMER COUNCILLOR OF CAIRNS CITY COUNCIL
DIP TEACH

For me, 'politics' is about community—being in the Senate has been a continuation of my community politics.

For me, 'politics' is about community and no better did I learn that than in local government. My early activity included being part of stopping a uranium mine and saving a heritage house in Charters Towers. With two wins, I thought that 'changing the world' was pretty fun, but being in rural Queensland in the 1980s, I hesitated to join the Australian Labor Party, preferring to work with organisations that either were established or were being set up. However, I eventually realised that being in the Party would prove to be a vehicle for further policy change.

I was elected to the Cairns City council in 1995, after door-knocking about 85 per cent of my Division. Taking good notes at each household gave me a list of jobs that had to be delivered. With two retirement centres, a church used by a youth group on Friday nights, the Country Women's Association and mainly elderly residents, the case was clear. A traffic count showed—from memory—600+ movements per day. So we closed off the street—and I think every one of those 600+ rang me up to abuse me. But all the elderly residents of the street were very pleased.

Good government reflects the diversity of the population. When I was in council, I was the only councillor who was an active parent—my daughter was in pre-school. An experienced councillor at one meeting expressed surprise at the ease of traffic on the morning of the council meeting and requested a report into why. It was one of those 'duh' moments—it was the first day of school holidays! That's one reason all sorts of us should be in all sorts of governments!

Long-distance parenting—particularly as a sole parent is a real challenge. Good support from people who you absolutely trust is essential, as is learning not to ask 'what did you do today?' because the answer is always—'nothing much'.

My garden is my haven. Watching plants grow and fulfil my desire and their potential is just wonderful. Being away from it is a challenge. But composting is just fantastic!

Being in the Senate has been a continuation of my community politics. I chaired the Community Affairs Committee, which reported on the Forgotten [now Remembered] Australians and was instrumental in the recent apology to the many who were institutionalised as children. This event has provided much solace to many.




In fact, the Senate committee system provides a wonderful entrée into Australia's democracy for the population, which on many occasions, has informed the legislative process and policy development more generally.

The Senate Inquiry into Aged Care focused, in part, on the many younger people with disabilities who live in residential aged care. The result was a commitment through COAG of funds to build more appropriate residential facilities for people with disabilities.

The gender split in the Senate is far more positive than the House of Representatives. Women make up 35 per cent of the Senate and 44 per cent of the ALP Caucus are women. Affirmative action rules introduced into the Party at the state/territory and federal levels have resulted in real changes in the number of women who are preselected, then elected. As a result, the tenor and culture of the Parliament is changing. We now have a childcare centre to serve the 3,000+ workers in Parliament House when in session!

As positive as I am about the changes to the makeup of Parliament, I do recognise that there are barriers that still exist. I recall when I initially put my name forward for election to the council a male Party member suggested that I should not be preselected because my husband was well paid. Women politicians have to continue to prove themselves—to break stereotypes that still exist. But the diversity of women in the Parliament will continue to underline the reality that we are not homogenous and we bring a range of experiences and views to an issue.

My advice to women contemplating a future in politics—just do it! And stay grounded. While much of the policy debate is conducted at a very high level, for me it is often women who can enunciate those discussions in terms of real people living real lives.



Kristina Keneally

PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES

I have always been about challenging the status quo and advocating for change.

Like 40 per cent of the people who live in her electorate, Kristina Keneally was born overseas.

The grand-daughter of a Brisbane barmaid, Keneally's family had a long association with Australia, and Kristina herself often dreamed of coming here as a child.

The opportunity to do so came after she met her Australian husband-to-be, Ben Keneally, at World Youth Day in Poland in 1991. They fell in love and Kristina moved to Sydney in 1994 to be with him. They married in 1996 and Kristina became an Australian citizen in 2000.

Kristina did not set out for a life in politics and her early career reflected this.

Her initial ambitions were in academic theology and as a result she holds a BA in Political Science (Hons) and an MA in Religious Studies.

But during the birth and early years of her children, Kristina came to re-assess her career—wanting to do something more practical to help people in her community.

'I have always been about challenging the status quo and advocating for change.

'Academia does achieve this of course, but I came to realise that the changes I might be able to achieve in a whole life of research, might still take a long time to deliver practical improvements to people's lives.

She worked as NSW Youth Coordinator for the Society of St Vincent de Paul, and considered options such as training for policing or social work, when politics 'found her'.

'I was approached to consider running for pre-selection in my local seat, and while I had never aimed to do this, I thought, "well this is it—this is the chance to get more done."

Kristina was elected to Parliament on 22 March 2003.

In 2007, she became Minister for Ageing and Minister for Disability Services and delivered Stronger Together, the largest increase in disability services in the history of NSW. In 2008, Kristina was the NSW Government Spokesperson for World Youth Day, helping to successfully deliver Sydney's biggest global event after the Olympics. She was then appointed Minister for Planning, where she was able to bring a personal focus on the importance of urban renewal and integrating transport and land use planning—to create jobs closer to where people live.

In December 2009 Kristina was sworn in as NSW's first female Premier. On becoming Premier she immediately brought her urban renewal focus to bear on transport planning—delivering the first fully integrated Transport and Land Use Plan in NSW.



Her position as Premier meant that Kristina also found herself with the additional responsibility as Chair of the Council of Australian Federation—the body of Premiers and First Ministers from across Australia.

This coincided with one of the more significant federal/state reform processes of our time, the National Health and Hospitals Reform.

Kristina took a consultative approach which earned the praise and respect of fellow Premiers while securing a highly successful outcome for her State.

‘Good politics is no longer about tough decisions, it’s about smart decisions. Decisions that are made after listening to communities and then making the most-practical call.

‘I believe the old combative politics are dying. Nobody is interested in politicians taking a position simply because it’s theirs.

‘They do want to see an adversarial system, but one in which the adversary is around the content of policy, not simple politics.’

Ben and Kristina have two sons, Daniel (11 years old) and Brendan (9 years old).

Like all parents, they face the challenge of balancing work and family life.

‘I’m often described as “Premier and mother of two”. This is fine because I am both those things. But I also think it would be nice if men were more often described as the fathers of two, or whatever it is that they are.

‘In many ways my challenges are no different to any other parent. It requires careful diary management, and, if you’re lucky enough, the great support of your partner and family.


‘But obviously it also requires choices, and sometimes those choices are hard. Feminism told us that we could have it all—but no one does. If you want to have a career and a family, you will need to make choices and some of those will be difficult.’

Kristina’s elevation to Premier attracted interest in her gender, but this has rapidly been replaced by a focus on her policies and delivery—something that she welcomes.

‘A female Premier is something new and different, and I think the media is often driven by the necessity to make someone different from the norm. I don’t think there’s anything particularly wrong with that. It’s part of how media coverage and political discussion happens.

‘But I think Australians are getting quite used to seeing women in positions of leadership, be it in the corporate or the political world.

‘And at the end of the day I don’t want to be judged because I’m male or female. I want to be judged on what I and my Government deliver for the state.’



Councillor Joyce Crombie

AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2010

If I can do it—you can do it!

I am descended from the Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi people, who were mainly based in the Simpson Desert area and around the Diamantina River system.

I was educated at the Birdsville State School in Queensland, and when I was 15, I left to start work on Davenport Downs station as a domestic. Staying in Queensland, I then moved to Monkira Station, and in 1968 I married my husband. We erected fences around the Diamantina Shire, and various other places, including Alexandria Station in the Northern Territory. I taught our three children through correspondence school while working on the fence lines. Then we moved to Boulia, again in Queensland.

After my marriage broke down, I moved to Birdsville with the kids. I juggled three jobs to support them and pay for their boarding school education. I cleaned houses during the day and waited on tables at the Birdsville Hotel at night, and I managed the Birdsville Caravan Park for the Diamantina Shire Council.

After the children had finished their schooling, I had the opportunity to move about more often. Some time after that, I became the proud grandmother of the first of my seven grandchildren. It was when I lived with my daughter in Brisbane that I found a job in a child care centre. And now I am a great-grandmother.

After some time I'd had enough of city living, and I moved to far north Queensland, and when I moved to Bedourie, I found that there was a shortage of housing there. I founded the Bedourie Aboriginal Corporation to help to solve this problem. I have been the President of the Bedourie Aboriginal Corporation for the past 13 years. I was nominated for a Citizen of the Year Award in 1998.

Currently, I am in my fifth term as a councillor at Diamantina Shire. I've had many different jobs and some were an eye-opener.

When I managed the caravan park, the tourists who stayed there came to see the Birdsville Races. It was really good because I met a huge variety of people, and they wanted to know about Indigenous culture. Sometimes I'd sit down by the camp fire and tell them stories about my people.



After all my different jobs, I'm proud of my achievements in local government. I believe in working for women's issues, such as improved health for women in the far west of Queensland. The Shire has two towns, each with fewer than 150 people, but that shouldn't mean that health delivery is worse than in other places, like the east coast or places with big populations.

My advice to young women is to just do it! Get in there and do it. Stand for Council, or work for the council, put your voice across, make yourself heard in whatever way you can. It makes you feel stronger, and gives you power.

And you've got to try to push aside those barriers. The barriers are there, but you have to persevere. Look at me: only a female, and Indigenous too, but I could get some power that way—to make things better for people! I was very motivated. If you're shy, you have to push that shyness aside and jump in there. And to make a difference in Indigenous health—I love it! If I can do it, you can do it. Be a spokeswoman.



Councillor Rose Jackson

WAVERLEY COUNCIL, NEW SOUTH WALES

I firmly believe that the future belongs to those who are willing to work hard for what they believe in.

I grew up in Waverley, being brought home as a newborn to my parents' tiny one-bedroom flat and I've been there ever since. Spending my childhood in Waverley has given me a real passion for the Waverley community. I've always been interested in the role the local council can play in improving and protecting residents' way of life. I watched my parents and their neighbours struggle against the 'Bondi Monster'—over-development in Bondi Beach—and it made me passionate about being a representative who was a strong community voice.

I am proud and privileged to serve as a local councillor on Waverley Council, representing residents of the Lawson Ward which includes Bondi Junction, Queens Park, Charing Cross and parts of Bronte.

My role as a councillor involves overseeing the governance of Waverley Council, a body representing around 40,000 residents with a budget of just under \$90 million. In this role I act as a liaison between the residents and the council staff, and organise local campaigns on issues of importance to residents. Being a local councillor involves being a voice for residents, a community campaigner, an advocate and an effective communicator in council meetings.

My passion for the Waverley community, combined with my belief that the future belongs to those who are willing to work hard for what they believe in, led to me to put my hand up as a candidate for Waverley Council.

My priorities include the local issues that impact on residents' lives such as over-development and public transport, as well as noise and anti-social behaviour from pubs/clubs. However, I am also interested in the role local councils can play in our broader political landscape—as testing grounds for new democratic models, as key stakeholders in the climate change debate and as facilitators of social change.

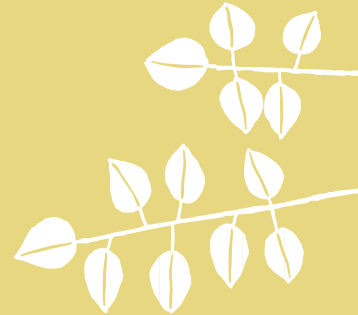
Local councillors need to think and act locally, but we need to understand the broader context in which our decisions fit.

The politics of local government, like all politics, I suspect, can be frustrating, and it is easy to be disillusioned, however, if you want to change lives and influence the shape of our future then politics is the only game in town!

Being a student representative taught me the extraordinary power ordinary people have when they work together for something they are passionate about

In 2005 I was President of the University of Sydney Students' Representative Council (SRC). A campaigning and advocacy body, the council represents the University's 40,000 undergraduate students. During 2005, the SRC campaigned against the introduction of voluntary student unionism (VSU). Through coalition-building, student rallies, and broad engagement we were able to convince the student body to mobilise for our cause.

Through these experiences I discovered that the key to successful coalition building was creating a framework of shared values and allowing each group to pursue their own interests within



that structure. It wasn't important to the Rugby Club that the Drama Society had a rehearsal space, but when we could agree that funding for the student experience was important to all of us in different ways, the whole campaign came together. We succeeded in delaying the implementation of the legislation for six months, saving student organisations hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Many of the skills I learnt in campaigning for a quality student experience have been useful to my work on council. I discovered that a broad range of very different people, who seemingly have nothing in common, can be motivated to work together if they share values but accept their differences. Just like student sports stars and drama buffs, residents and pub owners might not see eye-to-eye on lots of things but when they can find a common purpose, like stopping drunken anti-social behaviour, it is amazing what creative solutions they can craft together.

As the National President for the National Union of Students (NUS) in 2006 I represented 600,000 university students and just over 30 campus student organisations.

As President I coordinated student organisations to negotiate directly with universities around the unfavourable federal legislation (VSU) and ensure their long term financial stability. NUS almost gave me more direct 'political' experience, which was an invaluable lesson for my time on council. Because of my work in NUS, I was bored of the political games that characterise a lot of local governments before I had even been elected to council.

The Howard Government was extremely hostile to the higher education system and student representatives in particular, but far from being intimidated, students campaigned together to win quality, accessible, affordable higher education for all Australians. We may have lost a few battles, but I think we won the war.

Being politically active in my local community has made me passionate about being a strong voice for a better future.

As Campaign Director in the 2007 ALP campaign for the Federal electorate of Wentworth, I worked full time for three months coordinating all aspects of the campaign. It was exciting and inspiring being involved in the 2007 Federal Election for Labor, particularly in my local community, but it was also a demanding period.

On-the-ground Labor campaigns in the 2007 election had the advantage of a clear and powerful message for change, but the daily logistical management could often be far less coherent. Despite the challenges we faced on the campaign trail in Wentworth, I look back on that time with a real fondness.

I have never believed in fate or destiny because I've never liked the idea that I don't have a say in the type of future I will live in. You are only destined to have a future you don't control if you aren't active in the present. The thing I enjoy most about being a councillor is the sensation of being constantly involved in having a say in the future of my community. In trying to be a passionate voice for a better future, I hope to create the type of world I really want to live in, not just one fate happens to hand to me.

Councillor Yvonne Jennings

AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2010

Be out there in the deep water, ready for the waves: you may get one that gives you the ride of your life.

Someone said 'Life is a beach'—well, on the beach of life, you can choose to sit on the sand or in the safe shallows or take the plunge to risk the deep water ... Come on in girls—give it a go!

I have lived for most of my life in Swan Hill Victoria. I attended Bendigo Teachers' College and taught for a year in Port Welshpool. I returned to Swan Hill to marry an earthmoving contractor and farmer. In the 1980s, after seven bad seasons out of nine, we lost everything. So, necessity being the mother of invention, we created our farm machinery business, called Murray Mallee Machinery. I have been blessed with two daughters and two sons and now Dutch and Thai son-in-law, Canadian and Aussie daughters-in-law and three beautiful grandchildren.

In 2005 I was elected to council and was returned in 2008 with huge community support. Being re-elected was important as there were projects to complete. I had left work to care for my very ill husband and council gave me a welcome interest outside of home. Working with my son in the business is an enjoyable challenge.

Some of the achievements I'm proud of are winning the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Woman Award of the Year Winner 2006 for Victoria; helping set up and maintain the Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program, which is still going 13 years on; and chairing the Community Cultural Development project 'Walls at Lake Boga'. In 12 years there has been no graffiti on the walls because of the

feeling here of community ownership. We call it the Story Wall. The installation is comprised of glass mosaic walls three metres high and nine and seven metres long. Each side presents a history—there's pre-irrigation and post-irrigation, European culture and Aboriginal culture. If you engage people in a community situation, whatever issues arise, you can use art to explore them and work them through.

As a member of the Swan Hill Business and Professional Women's Group, I learnt to confidently take on public positions and I was honoured to be successfully nominated by this group to run in the Queen's Baton Relay for the Commonwealth Games.

I have served as Chair of Swan Hill and District Rural Women for a period of ten years, during which time we convened a number of major initiatives including the Women on Farms gathering and a series of multi-skilled workshops and forums for rural women. We were also instrumental in securing the resources and preparing women from our region to travel to attend the Third and Fourth World Rural Women's Congress in Spain and South Africa.

I felt honoured when the Chief Executive Officer of Swan Hill Rural City Council nominated me for the Year of Women in Local Government Ambassador role, and for me, this was a natural progression from facilitating the Step Out, Aspire and Reflect with Support (SOARS) Women's Leadership program. It is really exciting to see the progression of what we have been working on for many years, that is, to see women and youth achieve their potential, and the Ambassador program is a positive step towards this progression. The Ambassador program was open to both men and women,



and I know that it is not possible for women to achieve their potential without the support of good men at home and in the community.

Democracy is about inclusion and diversity. I like influencing decisions and having the opportunity to support women and youth into their full potential. Women can have a voice, be listened to and get some achievements under their belt, and this is empowering. I believe that by empowering rural women, women will do the same to their families, farms and communities, many times over, and also empower other women to create new opportunities and strengthen their rural communities and the primary industries upon which they are based.

As for ambition, I am ambitious for things outside myself: my community, the land, the arts and other people. Women take longer to get their skates on, usually child rearing can take a chunk out of your life, but then you must stop putting others first all the time and put yourself first for a change—and then paradoxically you can help others more by doing that.

Just be yourself, and have a go. A bit of success will give you confidence, and then you can do some more.

There is a difference between the way women and men work, think and act. Men in my experience tend to exercise power over people. Women exercise power through networking, negotiating, persuading and cooperating and are better able to handle change. There is a clear and distinct difference in the way men who work well with women speak, act, acknowledge and affirm.

A famous surfer said, 'Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly.' That's the way to do it—don't take yourself too seriously. Women find it easier than men to laugh at themselves.

We need many more able, confident women working in women's ways to balance out the culture based on men's ways of working which we have inherited. Be courageous enough to be out there in the deep water, ready for the waves: you may get one that gives you the ride of your life.

If you've been gifted with the skills or experience you should be out there giving it a go. Anyone can get into the water—come on in girls—give it a go!

When I was elected, a dear friend gave me an ugly, gaudy mobile phone stand: an orange, plastic hand with a fluoro feather boa type bracelet. It sits in front of me in the chamber. There is this wall of silence but it was broken finally after four and a half years with a 'What's with the hand thing?' comment.

The hand thing is to remind me that I am a woman, working in women's ways and that is okay. When I get tired of morphing into men's ways of working to achieve good outcomes and it all gets too much I breathe out gently to fluff up the feathers, and if I get really upset, I could perhaps bend the fingers down, one by one, until there's only one left standing up!

I never planned any of my life; I was like a serendipitous surfer perched on a board, waiting in the water, waiting for the right wave to come along. And when it did, I went with it!

Clower Moore MP

LORD MAYOR OF SYDNEY

I came to see it as a tide in the affairs of women which taken at the flood could lead to challenge and exciting opportunities.

The C40 major cities movement brings a hundred mayors from around the world to address global warming. At my first conference in New York, former President Bill Clinton said that what he liked about mayors was that ... 'they get up each morning and do things.' It's what I like about local government: the immediacy and the ability to act, albeit with limited budgets.

I came into local government as a mother at home with two small children looking for nothing more than to improve my neighbourhood environment and services in an older run-down part of inner Sydney. I talked with neighbours, formed a community group and wrote to and met local and state politicians.

The early eighties saw a re-evaluation of inner city living, especially amongst working couples and young families, and a corresponding interest in the neighbourhood-building potential of local government. At the time, North Sydney's Mayor Ted Mack had forged a model of representation based on local consultation and information, and his swapping the mayoral Mercedes for a community bus challenged the prevailing political culture by underlining the essential service focus of public life.

I stood for the local council in 1980 and was elected. I had no power, but I had a forum to speak out and sometimes have my issues reported. I loved the involvement and the opportunity. The next year my council was amalgamated into the City of Sydney and my responsibilities and interest extended to a bigger arena.

My second term at Sydney City saw the number of women in local government increase. We were still called 'aldermen' and at Town Hall multiple women's toilets had to be hurriedly partitioned off. At local government conferences I met women who were bemused as lone females on councils, some in an aggressively male domain. It was at this time and for this reason I served a term on the NSW Local Government Women's Association.

The predominant civic issues then were protection of residential areas from through traffic, improving amenities such as parks and playgrounds, greening our neighbourhoods and stopping the massacring of street trees. Heritage was emerging as important to the city constituency both in the residential areas and the CBD and the surge of development was broadly contentious. Council proposed development levies for low income housing, and inner city freeways and the excising of significant renewal areas from council control were areas of conflict with the State.

When in 1987 the City of Sydney was sacked, I was shocked by the political bullying particularly of a global city government, by the State, and I was resentful of the ongoing failure of political will to grant constitutional recognition to local government.

The next year (1988) I stood for and won the State Seat of Bligh in the NSW Parliament, and between 1991 and 1995, together with my Independent colleagues (and former mayors) John Hatton and Dr Peter MacDonald, we used the balance of power in the NSW Legislative Assembly to force a Charter for Reform resulting in four year fixed terms, a stronger Freedom of Information Act, whistleblower



legislation, an independent Legal Services Commissioner, strengthened independence of the judiciary and parliamentary scrutiny of department and statutory authorities. We also achieved the culture-changing Royal Commission into corruption in the NSW Police Service.

I am now serving my sixth term as an Independent in the NSW Parliament in a seat which now includes the Sydney Central Business District and which has been renamed Sydney.

While my contact and involvement with councils continued as part of my state representational work, I never envisaged a return to local government. When in 2004 the State dissolved two councils including the City and annexed part of another to form a bigger Sydney Local Government Area, I was approached to stand as Lord Mayor and to head a team of community independents. I initially said no, but to misquote Shakespeare, I came to see it as a tide in the affairs of women which taken at the flood could lead to challenge and exciting opportunities.

I was supported by the enlarged city constituency and my team was given the numbers to govern. I became only the second woman to be Lord Mayor of Sydney and the first to be popularly elected. My team and I were re-elected with increased majorities in 2008.

Our 'City of Villages' platform focuses on the communities that comprise the enlarged Local Government Area and recognises their unique characteristics.

To establish a framework for action and in consultation with city communities and urban experts, the City of Sydney developed

Sustainable Sydney 2030 which is a long-term program for environmental, economic, social and cultural progress with particular focus on sustainability, promoting alternative energies and resource conservation and recycling. The plan overlaps lines of responsibility with State and Federal governments such as our city transport proposals, to provide a holistic view of city needs, and to serve as a lobbying tool for partnerships and hopefully action. In response to urban consolidation and increasing residential densities, parks and foreshores are being renewed and expanded, and award-winning public facilities are promoting design excellence and sustainability.

In addition, progressive solutions are sought to address complex city problems, particularly homelessness.

As Lord Mayor I chair Council Committees, the Central Sydney Planning Committee, the Festival of Sydney, and in 2009 I was chair of the Lord Mayors' Capital Cities Forum.

I donate my Lord Mayoral fees via a trust to city-based groups, such as those for youth services and training, drug rehabilitation, and Indigenous mentoring. To date more than \$830,000 has been distributed as a result.

Councillor Elizabeth Re

AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR FOR THE YEAR OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2010
JP. B.SC. DIP.EDU

When one good person stands up, good people will follow and good things will happen.

I was raised in the local government atmosphere of caring about the neighbourhood and I have always been a community advocate, believing in people. I am committed to improving the status of women, the safety of children and improving the community's environment.

One of my goals for my local government area in Western Australia is the development of the Stirling City Centre to be one of the most liveable, sustainable centres in Australia.

It is disturbing to think that 51 per cent of Australia's population are women and yet women only occupy 1 per cent of all the top jobs. Women need to mentor and support women more to make a difference and help us stabilise the economy.

I have never had a female mentor, maybe because there were no women ahead of me as I was trying to gain my professional standing. However, I did have some good men who gave me good advice and I guess one of the yard sticks I learnt was to see what sort of a family man they were. The men that were good to their wives and great with their kids usually gave good advice and didn't appear to be intimidated or annoyed by the fact that women were coming into their field of expertise. This I learnt the hard way after I had been burnt by many after I trusted them and believed in them.

When I first started in local government, after just turning 21 years old, the boss gave me an hour-long lecture on, 'You are a woman'. He explained that it is important I realise that I am different from the other employees and that if I

ever want to keep my job then I should never go out with anyone I work with. I never did go out with anyone I worked with. and I believe, in hindsight, it was good advice, as I have over the years seen some fantastic women go down because of their relationships with male colleagues.

While studying at Curtin University, I had to go and visit a piggery to see if there were any issues with pesticides. I put on a pair of overalls over my dress and pulled on the wellington boots and went out taking water samples. When I got back to the council, the boss came out to meet me and asked who had given me permission to take off my dress and look like a boy! I remember just saying that I did it because it was practical. The local government wrote a letter to my supervisor at university saying if they have to take females on for the practical experience then the females had to look like females in keeping with the local government policy on what attire was appropriate.

I left local government as an employee because it was not a very family friendly place to work and I completed my degree in teaching by correspondence. My passion for local government and my active role in the community led me back into local government to try and make a difference in the provision of services and consultation and also encourage more women to work in this area. I was elected as the seventh female councillor in the City of Stirling's 138 year history, with 72 per cent of the primary vote. During my five years as a Councillor I have pushed through many changes such as shade sails over playgrounds, etc.

Then, with a very long and messy marriage break up, I took up the position of teaching in a



high school. The school principal was not very supportive of women or of mothers working, never mind sole parents.

In the second week after I started teaching in 1993 one of my sons caught chicken pox, so I had two weeks off work, and then returned to work for a week. As these things go, my second son then caught the chicken pox, so I was off for another two weeks (amongst the groans of the male dominated science and maths unit). With only four weeks of the term remaining, I was summoned to the Principal's office for a chat over where my priorities lay—my family or the school?

The following week was madness as I tried to catch up on everything. Shortly after there was a terrible accident at school and one of the students was killed. That was it, as the sole supporter of my young children, when all the choices and the fears came into my head of where my life was heading. I chose my children and have never taught in a school again.

Some of the challenges and milestones of my working history are as follows:

- In 1978, I was appointed to the City of Nedlands as the first woman health Inspector and then subsequently at other councils.
- In 1979, I was appointed to the position of Principal Health and Building Inspector to the Shire of Gnowangerup. I was the first woman appointed to this position in any local government in Western Australia and one of the first in Australia to be given such a role.
- In 1982, I was appointed to the position of health meat inspector in State Government. I was the first woman to be gazetted as a

health/meat inspector in the Government of Western Australia. Through this position I again worked with local government providing advice and was responsible for the appeals process and wrote the local government health guidelines which are still in use today.

- In 1984–87, I was engaged in relief work for the remote Shire of Ashburton in Tom Price, while I raised my family. During this time I was concerned that there were limited facilities for women and children. We formed a group of residents to raise funds to establish the Ninitirri Centre in 1986. The centre provided family support, day care, a toy library and the ability to access training and educational courses. This centre is still in operation today.
- In 2002 I was one of the conveners of the Women's Interest Network Group of the State Health Department of WA to assist and mentor the approximately 20,000 women who were employed in the Health Department at that time.

Being elected to male-dominated boards such as the City of Stirling and the Royal Automotive Club was an experience and saw the provision of many services to the community such as a footpath around a park that the community had been asking for, for over twenty years.

Many people do not understand that local government is such a valuable and fantastic place to work as local government is involved in parks, recreation, community planning and really helping make a difference to people's daily life. No other organisations can say they do all that!

*Lisa Scaffidi*

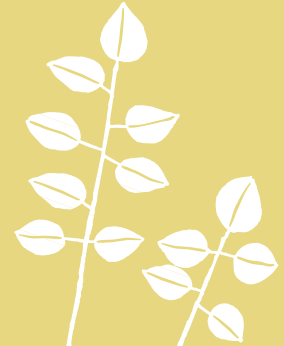
LORD MAYOR, CITY OF PERTH

From the moment she was elected in October 2007, Lisa Scaffidi has brought a new energy and passion to the role of Lord Mayor not previously seen before. She is often described as 'a breath of fresh air' probably more for the fact that she is open to new ideas and very keen to promote Perth as a liveable city that is realising a new sense of itself.

As the first female Lord Mayor for the City of Perth, Lisa is a Perth-born and very proud Western Australian. Lisa brings a positive energy to her role. She brings her enthusiasm to whatever she does, whether it is chairing a council meeting, participating in committees, representing the City at the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, attending sister city events or being President of the World Energy Cities Partnership. Lisa is comfortable talking on a business level or simply meeting the many wonderful citizens who go to make up the vibrant city of Perth, with its multicultural diversity and the only Australian city in the same (longitudinal) time zone as 40 per cent of the world's population to the north.


Lisa's career background commenced with her graduation as a dental therapist but she soon realised she needed to be more involved in communicating with people and over the years she has developed professionally with various roles that paved a clear path to enabling her to achieve the position of Lord Mayor. In the past 20 years she has held some key roles in the private sector. The role she held for ten years immediately prior to becoming Lord Mayor, as the State Director for CEDA—the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (an apolitical macro-economic think-tank) she admits, gave her the greatest awareness and realisation that she should have a go in a more political environment and her opinion, words and actions could make a difference.

As a businesswoman and community leader, Lisa served for seven years as a Councillor. Lisa worked closely with all City of Perth precincts to keep the city moving progressively. Lisa is seen as being balanced and fair, and she works against divisive politics.



While not defining herself by the role of Lord Mayor, Lisa takes the position very seriously. She often describes the role as being an Ambassadorial role for the city and one she undertakes as though it were a full time job. She often works seven days a week, sometimes ten hours a day, and has put the same energy into the position since being sworn into office.

Lisa believes Perth is at a critically important time in its development. As the western gateway capital of the Australian continent and as a city of global significance, Perth is realising a new sense of itself. Lisa wants only the very best for Perth and is fully committed to representing Perth at every opportunity.



Wendy Harmer

Wendy Harmer is an author, broadcaster, performer, public speaker, charity campaigner, and devoted football fan. One of Australia's favourite comedians, she is a woman to be reckoned with.

The acerbic, punchy Wendy Harmer has forged a career as a trailblazer for female comedians on stage, television and radio, including being the first woman to host a TV comedy show (*The Big Gig* in 1989). That was only four years after Harmer had performed her first stand-up gig, aged 29, following a 12-year career as a journalist. Eight of those years were spent reporting on Local Government in Melbourne back in the 70's and 80's and Wendy has seen extraordinary change in that time and since then.

At work at Melbourne's *Sun News-Pictorial*, Harmer says she was always being told 'stop being such a smart-arse, this is a newspaper, not a satirical magazine'. She swapped to a four-day a week job on a local paper, to develop her comedy career. 'They just thought I had absolute rocks in my head,' says Harmer of her *Sun* colleagues. 'For years I'd pop in to say hello and they'd say "have you come for your job back?"' When Harmer became one of Australia's highest-paid entertainers as co-host of the top-rating breakfast show on Sydney's 2Day FM, they stopped asking.

But Wendy says her biggest break came before 2Day FM when she was performing at the Melbourne comedy venue The Last Laugh. John Clarke asked her to join a new writing group that went on to become *The Gillies Report* (on ABC TV in 1984–85).

Wendy enjoyed huge popularity leading Sydney radio station 2Day FM's top-rating breakfast Show for 11 years, winning 84 of the 88 ratings surveys for that period.

Wendy then came up with an idea about a fairy in a park. This became Pearlle the park fairy, and this children's book series has sold more than 400,000 copies in Australia and internationally since the first title *Pearlie in the Park* was published in 2003. A stage show of the books adapted by Wendy played at the Seymour Centre in Sydney and toured regional NSW in 2005 and then nationally in 2007. The animated television series based on Wendy's Pearlle books, co-produced by Sticky Pictures and Canadian broadcaster Nelvana, premiered on Network Ten in October 2009 and is now airing internationally in 11 countries. Wendy developed the series as Creative Producer and has written many of its episodes.



Wendy is also the author of seven books for adults, including her bestselling novel *Farewell my Ovaries*, *Love and Punishment* and *Nagging for Beginners*, a how-to guide for women. Her latest novel *Roadside Sisters* was published in April 2009, and her first teen novel *I Lost my Mobile at the Mall* was published in November 2009.

Stuff, a four-part television documentary series which Wendy produced, wrote and presented, premiered on ABC TV in March 2008. In late 2008 Wendy and Angela Catterns recorded a 16 part podcasting series for ABC Radio Local called *Is it Just Me?* which returned for a second season in 2009. Together they debate and discuss their observations and conclusions on everyday life. The podcasts are currently available for download from the ABC Radio Local website. Wendy and Angela were an on-air sensation when they teamed up for breakfast on ABC702 Summer.

Wendy and her husband Brendan have two young children and live on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Wendy believes in the importance of local activism, including protecting her suburb's beachfront: 'In some ways that's more productive. Community groups are the greatest resource that politics has.'

WOMEN IN POLITICS

GOOD PEOPLE SHOULD STAND UP

Minister the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP highlights the importance of women in politics, not the least of which is to tap into 50 per cent of the nation's talent.

The purpose of the book is to share experiences and highlight the importance of standing up—in particular for women to stand up and participate in politics, and more specifically, in local government.

The stories told in this publication provide an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of women in politics in Australia. Their stories highlight a number of recurring themes—Good people who are prepared to stand up should:

- Keep focused on outcomes and what the community needs
- Recognise organisational and structural barriers
- Find a mentor
- Build coalitions and networks
- Don't compete with female colleagues—collaborate with them
- Focus on smart decisions—not necessarily tough decisions
- Be confident
- Remember, it should be normal to have women and men of all ages and backgrounds in politics
- Keep things in perspective and try to find the right work/life balance
- Have a go—just do it!



WOMEN
IN POLITICS



A large grid of small dots on a white background, intended for writing or drawing.

WOMEN IN POLITICS
SHOWING THE WAY IN 2010

