



FINDING SOLUTIONS

National Council of Women Australia

TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Canberra ACT
17-19 OCTOBER 2018



National Council of Women Australia (NCWA)

Finding Solutions Triennial Conference Report

This is the report of the National Council of Women Australia (NCWA) triennial conference, held 17,18,19 October 2018. The NCWA is a national non-government umbrella organisation and our vision is equity and security for all. NCWA has celebrated 120 years of operation and is a member of International Council of Women (ICW), the world's oldest international women's organisation, and the Asia Pacific Regional Council of ICW.

The conference brought together delegates from all Constituent Councils across Australia and other interested participants as it was open to the public. Sessions were held, to prepare resolutions to submit to Government, a training and development session for the National Council of Women and a day and a half general conference.

Four main areas of focus

1. Economic security for women
2. Housing
3. Politics / boards / senior positions
4. Cultural change – community, attitudes, values

Speakers included some of Australia's leading experts in the field, including the Minister for Women, other Members of Federal Parliament, academics and practitioners.

In addition to the Triennial Conference, training for the National Council of Young Women of Australia was held and the first NCWA awards were presented to acknowledge and recognise NCW women for their selfless work and contribution as change makers and positive role models. There were three awards:

- Encouragement Award - awarded to Erin Cunningham;
- Senior Service Award - awarded to Michelle Pedersen; and
- the NCWA Woman of the Year - awarded to Doreen Todd.

These were presented by our Patron, Lady Cosgrove. Congratulations to the winners for their outstanding contribution not only to NCWA but to make Australia a better place for women.

A big thank you to NCWA sponsors for their support as without it we would not have been able to hold the conference in the manner we did or produce the conference report. Thank you to our major sponsor the Commonwealth Bank and also the University of Canberra. Our thanks also go to the Rotary Club of Hall and Benji Perryman for their generous support. Another big thank you to the NCWA conference subcommittee, Robyn Nolan, Yvonne Robson, Margaret Findlater- Smith, Angela Diamond, Melissa Keatley who gave up many hours to ensure the success of the conference.

My three-year term as NCWA President has flown and while we have achieved many things there is still much to do. NCWA needs to continue to build on the work of our past sisters, standing on their shoulders to look to the future and work together. There is the opportunity to engage with the National Council of Young Women to fashion and build it in a way that works for all. When we work together and support each other we can continue to grow and raise our voice to influence and improve the lives of women, families and the community. It is both our privilege and duty to do so.

For me, it has been a great privilege and honour to be President of the NCWA for the last three years. It has been a wonderful opportunity to continue with the women's march to achieve equity and security for all.

I am deeply appreciative of all the work done by the board in their own councils as well as being on the National board. My thanks to you all. In particular, thank you to Julie Morris as Past President who has provided invaluable support to me over the three years. Thank you also to Yvonne Robson for her ongoing support, sense of humour and infectious laughter. Thank you to Robyn Nolan who has been incredibly supportive since her election as President NCW WA and NCWA President elect.

I am delighted to hand the NCWA Presidency baton to Robyn Nolan, who I know is dedicated and committed to work to improve the lives of women. I know the future of NCWA is in safe hands.

Yours sincerely
Barbara



Barbara Baikie
President NCWA 2015 – 2018



Robyn Nolan
President NCWA 2018 – 2021

Thanks to:

Barbie Robinson, Writing with Light - Photo credits throughout the report:

Dolores Cummins - Speaker Notes

Suzanne Howarth for compiling list of solutions.

NCWA Triennial Conference - Notes

Wednesday 17 October 2018

The Conference began with a rare face to face board meeting, followed by lunch. We were then joined by NCWA delegates from Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT. NCWA President Barbara Baikie declared the conference open, followed by a session on resolutions. There were fourteen resolutions presented and voted on. The resolutions that were successful were acted on by the Incoming NCWA President Robyn Nolan and sent to the relevant minister. A presentation followed on Intersectionality by NCYWA members by Jeanette Wong (NSW), Melissa Keatley (Vic), and Diya John (Vic). Please see in Attachment 1.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is defined as a group of people who experience multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, race, age, class, ability, language, sexual orientation and ethnicity. Statistics show that one fifth of women experience violence. The figures are higher for women aged 18-24 years of age and also higher for racially diverse women.

Understanding culture is central to the issue of intersectionality. For example, women may experience equality in their workplace but are considered inferior to men in their own culture. Therefore, culture is a complex structure. It comprises different norms, practices and inequalities.

Intersectionality is good in theory but not always great in practice. Hilary Clinton drew attention to how multiple forms of inequalities impact the way women experience daily life. Flaws were highlighted by the University of Arizona where the face of intersectionality was represented by a white male. The UK uses six strands in their policy making i.e. gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion and disability.

Tips for taking action in the intersectionality space include;

1. Read, listen, watch
2. Engage
3. Advocate



Working Together Board & NCYWA facilitated session by Genevieve Jacobs

The purpose of this session was to explore ways in which the NCWA & NCYWA could work more effectively together and the resultant benefits of that collaboration. Considerations included the following:

- Benefits of including NCYWA as part of NCWA
- Survival– New perspectives
- Bridging age gap
- Advantages for younger women
- Guides /mentors
- Advocacy
- Communication
- Extended networks
- Voice from grass roots
- Skills
- Tech capacity
- Social media exposure and experience
- Being viewed as central to core business and not just a life line



Suggestions for how the two groups can include each other & make a positive contribution

- Define the purpose of the organisation
- Young women still learning – need mentorship
- Use projects (link advisors and women with shared interests)
- Use advisor model as a model for the mentor program
- International perspective
- Need training ideas for making the link work
- Build relationships and ensure that all have a voice
- Need to be strong as a group
- Step up collectively
- Source venues
- Authority to disrupt
- Working group that actively listens
- Support different opinions
- Be open to change and a variety of opinions

How to move on

- Develop guidelines, shared values & shared sense of purpose
- Establish effective two-way mentoring programme
- Set up global pattern of communication & common language (not just emails)
- Clarify roles/terms
- Review the constitution
- Develop flexibility around meeting times & venues

Sheena Ireland – Director of Specialist in Communications

Communications in Today's World

In order to gain visibility in a crowded market, you must know how to communicate your uniqueness. Only three touch points (TV, radio, newspaper, social media etc) were required to gain you or your organisation visibility. Now fifteen touches are needed to get attention. Values driven conversations gain attention. Understanding your target audience i.e. what are the pain points, values, motivators? What problems are you going to solve for your audience? This builds connections. What channels of communication are you going to use to gain visibility i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram and/or traditional media e.g. newspapers, books, journalist articles, radio or TV? You must be strategic and schedule/ plan messages and content according to audience interest. At present, video content is proving most popular in building relationships and gaining trust. Networking is vital. Developing a professional network not just with your target audience but also with those who influence your audience is needed. Transparent communication is essential to build relations. Collaboration is king.

Dolores Cummins, Managing Director

C3 Leadership Diversity in Leadership

For the first time in history there are four generations in work. In a global workplace, harnessing the skills and strengths of individuals regardless of age, race, creed, gender, ability or religion requires awakened and wise leadership. Leaders need to be self-aware, and empathic with the ability to build healthy, respective relationships founded on mutual trust, respect and transparent communication. Leading diversity is essential to healthy, efficient and effective workplaces. Recent research from Harvard shows that organisations with diversity in their leadership are more successful, have higher profits, lower staff turnover and less absenteeism. Strategies to help lead diversity include the introduction of quotas/targets, role models of inclusion, plus recruitment processes aligned with diversity programs. Leadership training in diversity management and unconscious bias programs is effective in developing leaders.



Ashleigh Streeter- Jones, ACT Women of the Year & Cathi Moore, ACT Senior Women of the Year - Leadership Styles in Volunteer Organisations

Leadership is not a magical formula. People often lead as no one else steps up. It is important to have mentoring to grow and develop. In not-for-profit organisations, volunteering often provides access to a chosen tribe aligned with your values.

A checklist for leadership in voluntary organisations includes the following:

- Be prepared. Often you have to do it yourself!



- Commit to building a shared vision/sense of purpose
- Be accountable to members/clients/community
- Develop your team
- Engage – put the effort into building relationships
 - Bring people in & engage them in the vision
 - Set stretch goals.
- Develop your communication skills.
- Build a balance between work and life otherwise you risk 'burn out'
- Deal with conflict proactively
- Recognise the contribution of all and acknowledge wins
- Clarify the expectations/roles of staff, board and management
- Have governance framework and a process of accountability
- Have fun



Belinda Martin, Training Consultant

– Wisdom Learning Goal Setting

Individuals and organisations need goals. Sometimes these can be big hairy audacious goals. Barriers to goal setting include lack of planning, time, motivation, prioritisation or finance. These barriers often lead to procrastination.

A growth mindset versus a fixed mindset is needed in goal setting. There are six steps to developing a growth mindset;

1. Continuous learning
2. Perseverance
3. Embrace the challenge
4. Embrace failure (it leads to success)
5. Be open to feedback
6. Celebrate others

Smart goals help you succeed. These are goals that are; specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.



The NCWA Public Conference

Thursday 18 October 2018



The conference MC was Genevieve Jacobs, who kept everyone on track and on time. Thank you to Genevieve for your wonderful contribution to the success of the conference.

The NCWA triennial conference was opened by the Hon. Kelly O' Dwyer MP Minister for Women

Minister O'Dwyer outlined some challenges for women – violence, economic constraints particularly women over 55 where homelessness is a reality. How can women live their best life with these constraints? Violence against women and children statistics are shocking in Australia (only small percentage report violence to police therefore huge hidden figures).



At COAG summit 2018, it discussed practical solutions e.g. Government 4th action plan to reduce violence. Using data now to focus action, e.g. 1800 respect set up for domestic violence help line. Measurements for home safety units established to help homeless. E-platform now set up to address digital abuse e.g. sharing intimate photos on social media. Respectful relationships and gender equality campaign was established. The aim is to prevent violence before it starts.

New national housing and homelessness services set up for older women in 2018 (over 55 rates of homelessness for women has skyrocketed). Achieving gender equality which empowers women with greater control and with financial security. There are more choices for working women now in affordable child care, choices for savings and superannuation - which leads to financial security. ParentsNext program gives pathways to employment for women with children under 6 with long term welfare dependencies. Older women being helped to work for as long as they want. Mature women face unique challenges in finding work. Skills and opportunities are needed to help transition back to workforce. A new career transition program e.g. restart wage program also aimed to help older women. There are more women working in Australia now than ever before.

Trish Bergin

– Office for Women

Her focus was on economic security for women.

The gender pay gap is at a low of 14.2%, but still significant and contributes to financial insecurity. Decreasing the gap could add \$60 million to GDP.

Statistics show the following:

- More women are more highly educated.
- More young women in workforce.
- More women in lower paid roles.
- Health care employs most women – but has highest pay gap i.e. 25% 42% difference between male and female with superannuation balance.
- Gendered shift in employment by industry sector.
- Care services will increase in the future, but women provide bulk of unpaid care and also care in low paid and low skilled work.
- Tacit knowledge not valued as highly as codified skills e.g. engineering, construction skills.
- Must include both genders in the equation e.g. 50% of millennium men reported feeling overlooked.



Scott Rankin, CEO

– BIG hART

Scott covered a range of issues including isolation, limited choices and lack of education that lead to poverty and violence. Government needs to address inherited poverty. Generational poverty that is difficult to climb out of and difficult to thrive in. Change making requires cultural shift and legislation shift. Culture is an unfolding national narrative. It is an issue of justice and is a powerful agent that binds us together, enables us to thrive or demonizes those excluded from our collective story. Therefore, we must be careful about how to use it.



Young women when seen for who they are, when their story is told, their sense of agency becomes more powerful. We need to understand our stories e.g. Ophelia – was robbed of her agency in Shakespeare. She was portrayed as a victim and powerless. These are our cultural stories that send messages about women's valency. The BIG hART Project works with young disadvantaged women to skill them to make positive change through mentoring program, education and professional development. It enables them to have a voice, to tell their story and be heard. It's harder to hurt someone when you know their story. These programs deliver generational change and helps young women build bright futures.

Cultural inclusion is urgent as it saves lives (e.g. suicide rates increasing). It enables people to thrive. Therefore, demanding legislation for change by government and those in power is an imperative. We have to shift our thinking and culture around blaming the poor for their poverty and know that empowering others helps all. We need more partnerships and collaboration with others.

Libby Lyons

– Gender Equality Agency

<https://www.wgea.gov.au>

Finding the right way forward to close the gender gap is a huge challenge. It still exists despite the rhetoric of denial. We must shatter this myth because the consequences for women last their whole life. Calculating the impact of this gap is the focus of WGEA ([wgea.gov.au](https://www.wgea.gov.au)). The value of the data set established by WBEA is now recognised internationally. Australia is at the forefront of this work. Mandatory reporting in workplaces is one method of identifying and actioning the gap.



There are positive trends emerging in 2018. Overall indicator calculates a \$26K gender pay gap per annum. This starts when you are a graduate and follows you throughout life. One of the results for women is a 42% gap in superannuation on leaving work. This impacts financial security.

We need more women in leadership roles but the current path to leadership is too slow.

#BehindEveryGreatCity The statistics on women are not good. In the workplace women earn less, work more for less, or no money, work in more part time jobs. It requires commitment, action and responsibility from every employer today is required to change this picture. There was some hope in 2017. 37% of organisations did gender pay gap analysis. However only 1 in 5 took action to correct like for like gaps. Only 1 in 20 set targets to reduce the gaps. Less than 40% reported results to the executive. Pay gaps close when leaders see the numbers. Action is critical. Accountability is vital. We also need to change attitudes to parental leave and flexible workplaces. Men's requests to work flexibly were twice as likely to be refused. They are seen to be less committed to their careers, judged negatively by colleagues on requesting or taking parental leave. This is an issue that concerns both men and women. Therefore, we need to work together not separately on this. Ref # Equalfuture.

Catherine Fitzpatrick General Manager Group Customer Relations Commonwealth Bank of Australia

The Commonwealth Bank launched the Women's Financial Wellbeing guide to help manage financial health. The guide maps life events like having children, death of a spouse, divorce or changes in circumstances whilst also considering the potential costs of parental leave or part time work. It aims to help people



manage day to day spending, have rainy day plans and make goals a reality.

Women face unique challenges, they have a longer life expectancy, often are in part time work, have gaps in their career and are more susceptible to abuse etc. We need to start speaking more about money and stop treating it as a taboo subject.

Sally Loane – CEO, Financial Services Council – Superannuation

Financial independence creates choice and gives freedom. Women outperform men consistently in the classroom so how do they end up poorer with higher homeless rates. Superannuation is based on male model of traditional patterns of work. Women need financial advice but only 32% get it. Superannuation is going to be the biggest asset that young women have. Self-funding for retirement is essential. Average super balance for women in 2017 was \$68k. For men it was \$120K. This is not enough to retire on.



Four actions that can be taken to address this situation:

1. Talk about it – have the conversation (e.g. set up digital superfund). Check out the money smart website to see how many funds you have. When starting a new job, choose your own fund.
2. Ditch the rescue fantasy – i.e. a man is not a financial plan
3. Check the pay gap and take action to close it
4. Find employers with good super policies that benefit employees

Sharman Stone – Ambassador for Women and Girls

80% of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade aid budget – i.e. \$4 Billion goes to women and girls.

There are three interconnecting pillars to their work.

1. Empower women into leadership positions wherever they are
2. Economic independence for women
3. Eradicate violence against women.



Achieving economic independence is the biggest challenge. This independence opens choices. It enables women to move away from being 'superwomen' juggling everything – work, home, children, career, aged parents, voluntary roles, etc. etc. In Asia there is a growing demand for low paid, low skilled female workers. 10 million migrants leave villages for cities or other countries. This leads to huge human rights abuses for women and their children.

In Australia there is the opportunity to become best practice for looking after the welfare of migrant women workers in the area of hospitality, aged caring and other low paid work. We can insist that their dependants (children, parents) are tracked and monitored to ensure their wellbeing is also cared for. This can break the chain of intergenerational poverty and modern slavery.

Phyllis Williams, Chair – Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAGG)

HAGG is a community-based organisation in Melbourne focusing on the issues of homeless women in the 50+ age group. Australia needs a national housing initiative appropriate for the aged.

Older homeless women not usually visible as they use alternate short-term solutions which often are equally precarious solutions. For example, they couch surf at friends, sleep on the floor of family/friends' homes.



Often, they contribute to unpaid work in the family/friend of the shared space. They have limited choice and no address.

Older homeless women are not represented as they are invisible. They hide their homeless state due to feelings of shame and embarrassment. Often without super or savings, many suffer elder abuse. This vulnerable group are often swindled out of their pension or meagre savings. For some, language difficulties often compound this problem along with mistrust of public/institutional support. HAGG now have bi lingual service.

The number of homelessness is increasing at an alarming rate particularly for women in their 50s and not their 70s as it was before.

Dr. Skye Saunders – Associate Professor Law - Australian National University

Cultural change is needed to address the challenges facing women. Saunders' book "Whispers from the Bush" refers to research on sexual harassment experienced by people in the outback/remote areas. 73-93 % experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. Research shows this is a complex problem and is not just about power and control over others.



Men model their behaviour on the norms modelled by the previous generation i.e. current behavioural standards are out of whack with law. Sexual harassment is normalised so it goes under the radar. Women are expected to 'fit in' or 'get out'. Often women in these situations develop a tolerance to surviving abuse.

Suggested solutions

The 'Strike-a-Cord' framework is one of the suggested solutions. It invites everyone to play a role in changing culture by appealing to men and women who want to do better and want their values to inform their conversations. The need for skilful and courageous conversations with both men and women is suggested. Together we are stronger. Together we can empower the part of us that wants to act ethically.

Reframe the larrikinism, the cheeky male banter that's often derogatory/damaging to women. There is a need to clarify what sexual harassment is.

Values driven behaviour needs to replace the social norms' i.e. 73-93% sexual harassment in the workplace.

For example, unlearning the old disrespectful language to respectful language and different behavioural expectation of mates by mates.

Women need a new narrative for women i.e. no more tacit condonement of sexual harassment of women. Respectful and dignified workplaces are our right

Kristine Ziwick, Chair – NOW Australia – Enough is Enough

There is a sense of déjà vu as we see the continuous discrimination and sexual harassment against women in 2018, 1/3 people experienced harassment. This has increased in recent years. This abuse affects mental and physical health. The statistics reflect a culture of sexual harassment that is ongoing, common and habitual i.e. not just at the Christmas party.



We need to honour the women of #MeToo. Before this there was a false sense of comfort that sexual abuse was a thing of the past. This is a dangerous assumption. Women's voices, and the courage to go public with their stories have contributed to change. #MeToo galvanised millions of people worldwide to take part in this conversation. Australia's national enquiry into sexual abuse is a world first. #MeToo provided solidarity and security for women to come forward, to be heard and believed. It was the start of acknowledgment of the abuse and the first step in healing. 75% of women who report harassment experience backlash therefore are reluctant to come forward. Until a group of women decided it was time NOW as the public consciousness was there and able to listen rather than dismiss them.

Tina Dixson

– Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

Gender has to be viewed through multiple lenses. In Australia, women stereotyped as white and Australian. Otherwise they are seen as different and separated into race, sex, religion, ability, class etc.

Diversity policy often seen as an additional extra to policy development rather than understanding the abuses of systematised and institutionalised power. Aboriginal women now the biggest group of women being incarcerated.



Intersectionality is complex. e.g. race, sexual orientation etc. These are interacting and overarching factors that contribute to violence against women. These are overarching as opposed to a linear or hierarchical structure of discrimination. We have to aim for diversity equality and inclusion as a norm and abandon one size fits all solution. We also need to be aware of our own relationship to power and privilege.

Troy Roderick, Male “Champions of Change” Institute

- Specialist in Diversity & Inclusion

When considering diversity and inclusion in the workplace, we have to include men part of the problem AND as part of the solution

Men created the system. They benefit from it but are also part of the solution. For example, the male champions of change program in organisations. There are three ingredients in gender inequality

1. Notions of otherness - particularly the multiple dimensions of otherness
2. Covering - hide some part of the self in order to be accepted and not judged (imposter syndrome). 61% cover or hide mental stress, marital problems, financial problems etc.
3. Bias – unconscious and conscious biases



Masculine norms that hold men back from engaging in change or which create barriers to change include:

1. Avoid all things feminine – men judged for subscribing to anything considered feminine
2. Be a winner - attainment of status gains approval of others
3. Show no chinks in the armour – physical toughness, emotional toughness, outward displays of emotion not allowed
4. Be a man's man – mateship, sport, drinking beer, rituals reinforce masculine norms There is a huge price for these cultural norms, e.g. mental health. Six men a day commit suicide compared to two women (8 people suicide each day).

Some of the negative beliefs around men include: they have all the benefit, they don't care, they don't want to change, diversity is women's issue.

This results in men feeling blamed, isolated and ostracised. Men need to be engaged as part of the solution e.g. Therefore, engage men e.g. 'champions of change' and 'targets with teeth' programs. Normalise parental caring roles for men. Bring in flexible work roles and practices. Flexible work places unlock engagement in the workforce.

Examine issues of backlash. (malechampionsofchange.com)

How can women help men;

- Challenge assumptions around men's intentions, abilities and experience
- Recognise that men also experience bias
- Invite men to join workplace initiatives
- Be prepared for men to make mistakes
- Hold accountable those men who want to be involved
- Mentor male colleagues to develop their awareness (need both male and female mentors)

Test assumptions and promote diversity. All the research shows that diversity makes organisations more successful.

Liza Lawrence

– Vice President of NCW-New Zealand.



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**
Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa

Liza outlined some of the work being undertaken in New Zealand. She said NCWNZ is leading the Gender Equal NZ Movement. They are fighting for gender equality because they want all New Zealanders to have the freedom and opportunity to determine their own future. Discrimination can be more subtle than it once was. We see it in our everyday interactions, with subtle gender inequality being revealed in attitudes and assumptions. For some, gender inequality is more obvious. For all of us, the job is not done.

This was followed by a Q&A Session a Panel Discussion Cultural Change with Troy Roderick, Kristine Ziwick and Liza Lawrence, where questions from the attendees were taken. It was agreed that cultural change is not easy to achieve, there are many different pathways to success. However, it takes all of us, individuals, communities, government and media can all play a role.



Conference dinner

Carrie Graf was the NCWA dinner speaker. Carrie entertained us with anecdotes from her time in coaching basketball. Carrie also had a serious message about the need for equality in sport, with equal pay and conditions.

Our patron Lady Cosgrove presented the inaugural NCWA awards to

- Erin Cunningham - Encouragement Award
- Michelle Pedersen - Senior Service Award
- Doreen Todd - the NCWA Woman of the Year



Barbara Baikie, Lady Cosgrove
and Doreen Todd



Michelle Pedersen NCWA Senior
Service Award winner with her mother

Friday 19 October

Senator Jenny McAllister

– Shadow Assistant Minister for Families and Communities

Jenny McAllister noted that NCWA is making a considerable impact in the policy space for issues concerning women and there is quite a lot of work still to be done in this space. There is an appetite and a demand for change in the public domain from both men and women. There is a window now that policies can be acted on and legislated upon to secure change. As a priority, violence against women will be a central agenda for the next Labour government. There are several areas where change can be affected including; shaping the economy, power and education and legislative processes.



A serious sustained coordinated strategy is needed, one that reaches across various communities and industry. The data is compelling. Healthy relationships education will help set new expectations and behaviours that support women. Tackling cultural change and more importantly establishing mechanisms for economic independence for women is key to this work. Labour government is taking measurable steps to close the gender pay gap and provide practical financial support for women experiencing domestic violence. Women often retire in precarious financial situations. Housing is critical and home ownership is critical. \$ 88million is set aside for emergency housing funding for women. Reform suggestions for legal practices and family court processes are also being considered.

Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash

– Minister for Small Business Skills & Vocational Education

Michaelia Cash paid tribute to Barbara Baikie as president of NCWA and said she leaves behind a wonderful legacy.

She also noted the achievements of NCWA and the amazing contribution to women.

Economic empowerment is determined by a woman's ability to participate in the workforce. Women have the right to choices. Issues such as homelessness, domestic violence or childcare are part of the challenge that women face.



Statistics on women in the workforce highlight that 6 million women currently in the workforce. The 20/25 strategy is working towards supporting women to enter the workplace. 3.3 million small business make up 99% of all business in Australia. Many are run by women. Support for women in small business is growing. 34% of women make up all small business. This is a 46% increase over previous years. Technology is helping this. 'Google She Starts' highlighted several women who started up business to meet problems that weren't addressed in the market. The new STEM ambassador Professor Lisa Harvey-Smith is an astrophysicist from Tasmania. Part of her role is to encourage younger women into science subjects. Employers want work ready new people therefore the role of vocational education is vital. The government is committed to creating a truly equal gender culture in Australia.

Bonnie Millen, President

- People with Disability

There are not many people with a disability leading company. More are needed to role model the way for others. Inclusion is therefore very important. Barriers include buildings without appropriate access, lack of information and appropriate housing for women escaping violence, parenting education for women with disabilities. Money by itself is not the answer. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is not always relevant, needed or wanted by all.



There are a number of requirements to help include people with disabilities in the broader society. Changing attitudes, supportive policies of inclusion, education, financial and physical support need to be addressed. The needs are diverse and challenging.

NCWA can advocate to include disabled persons. They can be aware of how they contribute to being part of the solution to include women with disabilities.

Simply asking questions of a person with a disability on how to help or support is a simple strategy to support a person to have a voice and be included.

Sarah Moran, CEO

– Girl Geek Academy

The goal of Girl Geek Academy is to teach 1 million girl geeks to build technology and create start-ups by 2025. They work with women in tech, women in games and women who make. They want to increase representation of women in STEM.



There are four stages of recruitment in a career funnel. These include awareness, education, action and success. Building a highly scalable business in what they refer to as a 'start-up'. These are created not just to identify problems but to solve them. This model starts with the identification of a problem, how many people have that problem and what would they pay to solve that problem.

Skills and key roles include:

- the hacker (coders who make the product work),
- the hipster (brand – makes it look good) and
- the hustler (identifies and makes it successful on the market).

For example, in Girl Geek, the CEO gets and engages the team whilst keeping the cash flowing in the company. Design thinking, algorithmic and systems thinking is needed in all of these roles.

They start with girls in school from age 5 teaching coding. #MissMakesCode is an initiative in schools (running at weekends, afterschool and school holidays) and in the workplace.

Code.org encourages everyone to have a go at learning about coding and tech issues.

Sharon Claydon, MP

– Member for Newcastle

Making good policy is about talking to lots and lots of people to gather and understand their lived experience. With regards to the gender pay gap, there is a profoundly segregated workforce in Australia which contributes to this complex problem.



Women are not doing well in the workforce. They not represented in enterprise bargaining and have little influence. This results in women in lower paid work, overburdened by unpaid caring roles which further impacts their ability to earn money. Culture, lack of policy and other features compound this problem as it sometimes is considered to be in the 'too hard basket'.

Getting rid of the pay secrecy clause is one way to enable us to address the gender pay gap. Valuing unpaid work and superannuation reforms also form part of the policy solutions.

Kirsty Parker, Director - Aboriginal Affairs & Reconciliation SA Government

All of the issues considered by NCWA are also big issues for Aboriginal women. They too want to live dignified lives, be safe, be treated fairly and be included in the conversations of change. For example, they want to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal death rates which is much higher than the national average.



Chilling statistics on life expectancy, mental and physical health and wellbeing, rates of depression build a grim picture. Young Aboriginal men for example recorded zero out of ten on the happiness rating.

Acceptance, pride, achievement and success form part of their wishes.

Culture and kin are their cloaks, their balm and the glue that keeps them here and together. There is a growing 'whispering in the hearts' of those who want to make a difference. NCWA can take meaningful action to free Aboriginal people from their current plight

The biggest challenge is helping people to know Aboriginal people. The 'women's voices' project captures the issues, achievements and strengths to produce a national conversation to advise government on the issues that matter most for Aboriginal women. The 'statement for the heart' (2017) is an invitation to the nation for Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islands/First nations people to have a voice in the form of a dedicated body that provides advice to the parliament on Aboriginal issues. To give this life, there needs to be input and support from the everyday Australian including NCWA. Despite their knot of grief, Aboriginal people are still here. Australia has to do something about their plight and this national crisis.

Suggested Solutions

Throughout the conference there was time for table discussions about the issues raised by the speakers. Here are some of the themes highlighted by the Australian women attending the 2018 NCWA Canberra Conference to guide government and policy makers.

The way forward

- Australian middle-class men and women need to be aware of their privileged position in the current policy settings, including the benefits of parenting.
- Intersectionality of social policy issues is creating new challenges.
- It is important to identify individuals who are the key public policy influencers and for these individuals to acknowledge that we are now working and walking in multiple worlds. Part of this work involves positive role models creating shared understandings for men, women and children.

Cultural change

- A major part of cultural change requires working with schools through the education system.
- Mentoring and advocacy are more important than ever before to resolve partisan issues and influence the development of coherent policy. In this regard, there is a clear leadership and co-ordination role for the NCWA in better connecting the large number of Australian women's groups.
- There is also an opportunity to build on our extensive Trans-Tasman relationships presenting a positive case for younger women balancing senior roles.
- An important aspect of cultural change is to place greater value on volunteer roles and work so as to change the perceptions and stereotypes of care givers.
- Language is a critical aspect of cultural change so as to encourage people to think about achieving greater happiness for all people. This approach will help people think and talk about change in a more positive way rather than in a win lose framework. Speaking from the heart is always the key.
- Cultural change is vital if respectful relationships are to be embedded as the cultural norm.
- Endorsing and extending domestic violence leave is an important step forward which must be considered by both governments and employers.

The NCWA calls on the Federal Government to work the State and Territory governments through COAG to develop and implement a coordinated campaign through education, legislation, media and grass roots community engagement to change attitudes towards women in all aspects of life.

Changing attitudes to disabilities

- There is a need for more data and analysis on the arrangements for people with disabilities as lots of people are falling through the cracks in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- It seems that smaller groups for individuals with disabilities need more support.
- There appears to be an engagement role for the NCW, to facilitate better understanding and adjusting to individual needs.

NCWA calls on the Federal Government to work with State and Territory governments through COAG to ensure desegregated data is collected and undertake a review of the disability sector to better understand it.

Economic security

- There is clear role for Government in the economic security and welfare of people
- Real stories help people to understand what economic security means in practice

The NCWA calls on the Federal Government to ensure economic independence and economic security for women especially for those women needing to escape domestic and family violence.

Gender pay gap

- The data and analysis work of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency is critical.
- There is a need to find a way to better incorporate targets and indicators of the gender pay gap into all government policy

- It is important to legislate to remove pay clause secrecy as this impedes progress on the gender pay gap.
- It is important to consolidate respect for diverse roles, relationships and part time work into any cultural change agenda.
- Social media has an important function in disseminating public understanding of the problem.

The NCWA calls on the Federal Government to work towards the elimination of the Gender Pay gap.

Women's financial well being

- Women are facing a range of Individual and systemic financial well-being challenges
- Women need to be encouraged and educated in relation to financial literacy from a young age so that they develop budgeting and financial management skills.
- A one size fits all approach to financial well-being will not suit everyone.

The NCWA calls on the Federal Government to ensure Financial literacy to be provided through schools and other appropriate institutions.

Women in small business

- All women's and gender policies need to be applicable to small and medium enterprises.
- There is a need for more small business education, particularly in rural areas, and for more development of the one stop shop for small and medium enterprises.
- There needs to be more recognition of culturally and linguistically diverse businesses.

The NCWA calls on the Federal Government to apply a gender lens when reviewing small business needs and developing policies to address their issues.

Superannuation

- Australia needs to share information about our superannuation practices with other countries
- The number of older women with no superannuation is a major problem and the fact that many women are working part time hours and not eligible for superannuation needs to be challenged, and reformed.
- The impact of migration on superannuation is a major issue that needs to be carefully studied.

The NCWA calls on the Federal Government to remove the \$450.00 threshold to ensure that superannuation is paid on every dollar earned.

Housing for women

- The ALP \$88 funding statement positively received but the focus must be on permanent rather than transitional housing solutions.
- Elder abuse and homeless rates for older women is an epidemic.
- The current housing agreements are unclear as to the precise responsibilities of the Commonwealth State and Territory governments.

- There are many complex contractual, financial and legislative issues in relation to retirement village arrangements.
- There needs to be more attention given to connecting private enterprise and local council initiatives.

The NCWA calls on the Federal Government to work the State and Territory governments through COAG to develop and implement a coordinated approach to provide affordable housing particularly for the most marginal groups including older women.

Sexual harassment

- There have been many improvements over the last forty years. The anecdotes of changes in Greece society were insightful.
- Major challenges still exist due power imbalances and the differences between rural and regional settings.

The NCWA calls on the Federal Government consider and implement the findings of the current national inquiry into sexual harassment as a matter of urgency.

General comments for consideration

Reconciliation

- Reducing Aboriginal incarceration rates are a critical and important part of gender equity reforms.
- The Uluru Statement from the Heart has widespread community support

Women's diversity a way forward

- Increasingly, the adaptability of women is seen as a positive advantage. Going forward, many reforms should be considered have a gendered lens not just a gender lens.
- As it has a well-established federal structure there is clear role for the NCWA in working with all levels of government on these critical social policy issues.
- A possible reform will be to make sure there is always a skilled human resource person on boards, committees and councils.
- The changing attitudes to female leadership should be a source of encouragement.
- There is an emerging perception that older people are much more comfortable with these soft policy issues (i.e kindness, respect and caring) whereas younger people spend a lot of time talking about these issues.

Men part of the problem part of the solution

- Social isolation is a major issue for all genders and there is a need to be more of a focus on measures of happiness in a diverse society.
- The escalator story and imagery at the Conference was very powerful. But that said, the stresses on men due to peer group pressure and perceived social norms is huge and often underestimated.
- There is a need to bring men to the table with positive role models and buy in from senior management.

- To some extent, things become easier for men during retirement as their identities are often linked to their work.

Changing attitudes geek academy

- Code training is vital and should be available and accessible by women of all ages.
- Create STEM Ambassadors

Photo Gallery



NCWA delegates from across Australia



NCWQ delegates



NCW WA delegates



NCWV delegates

National Council of Young Women training workshop



The NCWA board at the NCYWA workshop



Conference table discussions and feedback



Speakers and dignitaries



Appendix 1 Resolutions

Twelve resolutions were passed by delegates at the NCWA Triennial Conference. The resolutions have been forwarded to the Federal Government for attention:

Resolution 1:

NCWA urges the Federal Government through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to develop policies which encourage new and different packaging material, the participation of the public in sorting their plastic waste by resin type, the development and expansion of businesses converting plastic waste to a useful product in a manner which safeguards human health and the environment.

Resolution 2:

NCWA urges the Federal Government to work with States and Territories through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to amend existing legislation to:

- Increase the capital funding in the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement with State and Territory Governments to increase the supply of new homes and improve outcomes for all Australians across the housing spectrum, particularly those most in need, very often older women.
- Encourage State and Territory Governments to invest in a broader supply of housing options, eg shared housing
- Ensure the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement has dedicated homelessness funding with a focus on people affected by domestic violence
- Implement tax reform to reduce investment pressure on the housing market: and
- Ensure sufficient coverage of the remote Housing Partnership Agreement to include Western Australia South Australia and Queensland.

Resolution 3:

NCWA urges the Federal Government at the next COAG meeting to review the current gun legislation and in the spirit of the historic 1996 legislation incorporate a strategy for ensuring that all States and Territories adopt uniform gun legislation.

Resolution 4:

NCWA calls on the Federal Government to include a question or set of questions in the next Census of Population and Housing to identify those households in which kinship carers have primary responsibility for children or young people and the carers relationship to that person.

Resolution 5:

NCWA urges the Federal Government through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to strengthen the laws to eliminate the damage of cyberbullying in the society, to bring in and pass legislation to make cyberbullying a criminal offence at the national level where the State and Territory laws are not adequate.

Resolution 6:

NCWA calls on the Federal Government to introduce superannuation reform to:

1. remove the \$450.00 monthly threshold from one employer to ensure everyone in employment receives some superannuation;
2. include superannuation in the government parental leave payment.

Resolution 7:

NCWA urges the Federal Government through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG):

- a. to replace the principle of shared parenting, which currently underlies the Family Law Act with a principle of responsible and protective parenting. All decisions of the Family Courts should therefore accept such principle as the basis for all decisions regarding the “best interests of the child”
- b. to refer to the State Child Protection authorities all matters which report or disclose to the Family Court that children have been abused or neglected and DEFER Family Court proceedings, subject to the findings by the State Protection authorities
- c. where it is the finding of the State Child Protection authority that such reports/disclosures are substantiated, then those matters be properly brought the State/Territory Children’s Courts and Tribunals for their determinations as to whatever actions the State/Territories Children’s Court may deem necessary and within their powers under State/Territory laws.

Resolution 8:

NCWA urges the Federal Government to work with the States and Territories through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to amend existing legislation to provide additional form of safety to women seeking Apprehended Violence orders (AVO). A risk assessment should be conducted at the time of application of the AVO.

Resolution 9:

NCWA urges the Federal Government to maintain and increase investment in holistic and comprehensive respectful relationships education for children of all ages in all Australia schools.

Resolution 10:

NCWA calls on the Federal Government through COAG to encourage the State and Territory Governments to:

1. provide appropriate education for government employees and service providers dealing with sexual abuse of older women
2. remove barriers that exist for an appropriate resolution to curb the growing incidence of sexual violence of older women
3. introduce accreditation of, including criminal history checks, on the staff and management of “Aged Person Units and private retirement facilities
4. introduce compulsory reporting of any incident of sexual abuse in “Aged Person units” and private retirement facilities along the lines of legislation covering Residential Aged Care facilities.

Resolution 11:

NCWA urges the Federal Government to amend existing legislation to increase penalties for employers who fail to invest the correct portion of their employees superannuation.

Resolution 12:

That NCWA records its concern to the Federal Government about the current working of Australian's system of compliance for the Hague Convention: International Parental Child Abduction (IPCA) regime and calls on the Federal Government to

- continue to work for reform of the Hague IPCA system internationally as part of its current review of the Australian Family Law system.

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