





# *The Journal*

for women and policing

\$5 for non-members

Issue No. 4 Summer 1999

Official Publication of the Australasian Council of Women and Policing Inc.



**Improving the position of  
women in policing**





Flags at the Conference: (L to R) AFP, TASPOL, SAPOL, NTPOL, VICPOL, NSWPOL, WAPOL, PNGPOL, NZPOL, ENP, Aboriginal Community, QPOL

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# The Journal

for women and policing

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Issue No. 4 Summer 1999/2000



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## SPECIAL FOCUS: Improving the Position of Women in Policing

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Due to the difficulties involved in checking sources NO responsibility is accepted for errors or omissions although every effort to vet material is made.

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**Front Cover:** Jurisdictional representatives at the Second Australasian Conference of Women and Policing, July 1999.

This edition of *The Journal* focuses on *improving the position of women in policing*. While the issue (and some of the solutions) might appear relatively straightforward, real progress in this area has been elusive, as is clear from several of the articles in this edition. The second *Brute Force* report published by the Federation of Community Legal Centres of Victoria Inc. in October 1999 observes that there has been virtually no change in the employment position of women police in Victoria since the publication of its first report in 1993. Victoria still has the second lowest percentage of women police of any Australian state or territory (14.4%), a figure that has remained stagnant since 1992, and the same percentage of women at higher ranks as in 1993 (1.8%).

Similarly, a number of the papers in this issue presented at the Second Conference of Australasian Women and Policing in July 1999 observe the lack of real progress in the employment position of women in policing. The first, by Katy Steenstrup from the ACTU makes some general observations about the position of women working in male dominated environments, identifying there are only 'visitors and invaders' in some work places. The second, by Professor Frances Heidensohn and Dr Jennifer Brown contrasts the international experiences of women in policing and makes some insightful observations about the hostile working environment of women in policing. Dr Tim Prenzler's paper attempts to measure the progress across the eight Australian police services, while Margaret Hogan of the Victoria Police Association assesses the potential for discrimination within part-time employment practices within policing. Finally, Jennifer Bradley presents the findings of her own research into women's experience of maternity leave with the Australian Federal Police to examine 'how police services can do it better.' She encourages women not to take 'no' for an answer, reminding us 'Don't be too polite, girls!'

One of the strategies the Council has developed for improving the position of women in policing is to stand back and examine how far we have come, both individually and collectively and to measure our progress. One of the opportunities to do just that will occur during International Women's day on the 8th of March 2000, when the Council will host its Second Annual Australasian Awards dinner at the New South Wales Police Academy at Goulburn. It is a time to hold each other up for applause and recognition for the hard work undertaken by women every day just *surviving* within policing. You can nominate yourself, a colleague, a police or community organization or just someone you really admire – in fact anyone who has made a positive contribution, either as a woman or to improving policing services for women. Contact the Council for a nomination form, but hurry – nominations close Friday 25 February 2000.

*Melinda Tynan*  
Editor

# What's happening with the Council?

### Grant for Council to Help Next Generation

The Australasian Council of Women and Policing has been successful in applying for a grant from the Office of the Status of Women to write, produce and distribute a booklet aimed at women entering policing. The booklet will take a practical and down-to-earth approach to providing resources and advice to women starting in policing. It will be prepared in consultation with women police and agencies and individuals who have conducted research in that field. It would also provide advice on expectations, survival skills and career and mentoring opportunities. The booklet would be couched in clear simple English, utilising illustrations, quotations and cartoons, even though the information itself would be based on occasionally difficult and complex messages.

The booklet would be reproduced in an inexpensive format so that it could be made available to women entering police jurisdictions across Australia.

If you would like to find out more about the booklet or to contribute to it, please contact Jennifer Bradley on 02 6275 7193 or email her on Jennifer.Bradley@afp.gov.au. 📧

### 2002 Conference

Those who attended the Second Australasian Conference of Women and Policing will recall that there was great support for a 2002 conference that would create the Australasian link in the

global network of women police. The idea of holding a joint conference with the International Association of Women Police was presented at the Council's AGM. The IAWP has quite a different focus and charter from the Council and from other groups like the ENP, but there was a very positive feeling at the Conference that if approached with care a joint venture would be a great opportunity to truly have an international conference for women in policing.

The Council has received support for this idea from the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police Mick Palmer. Melinda Tynan, the Secretary of ACWAP applied for and won a scholarship from the IAWP and used it to travel to their 1999 conference and started the negotiations for a joint 2002 conference.

We will soon be establishing a working party for the conference and we encourage everyone who is interested in the conference to contact us. We encourage representatives of the relevant groups and agencies to get involved now in these early stages of the conference so we can all make sure it meets as many people's expectations as possible. Don't wait until the year before the conference and then complain that your group or agency wasn't involved!

We are also keen to hear about ideas for the conference, so if you have a good idea please also contact us. 📧



*President of the Australian Council of Women & Policing, Christine Nixon (left) receives a cheque for \$15,000 from Jo Caldwell, Acting Secretary OSW*

## Memorabilia memorabilia

We still have some of the great merchandise from the conference available. An order form is towards the back of this journal. Hurry! Limited stocks. 📧

## WAPNET

So you still don't know what is going on for women around the world, in Australia and in policing? Have you subscribed to WAPNET? This is the main way the Council can keep you informed and how you can easily share the information you have with other Council members. All you have to do is send a message to majordomo@bitnet.net.au and TYPE ONLY these two words: **subscribe WAPNET** you don't even have to put anything in the subject line of your email message!

Don't complain that you don't know what is going on. Help change policing for women: join and contribute to WAPNET! 📧

## Are you a Member?

Have you joined the Council yet? Make sure you keep up to date with events and news and become involved in the Council's activities by joining. An application form is at the back of the journal. 📧

## Awards – nominate NOW!

The Australasian Council of Women and Policing Inc. is seeking nominations for ten awards for individuals and organisations that have made a significant contribution to improving policing for women in the last twelve months.

Entries close 5pm on Friday 12 February 2000, so get your entry in now! 📧

## International Women's Day Dinner and Award Ceremony

**Wednesday 8th March 2000**

**NSW Police Academy, Goulburn**

The Australasian Council of Women and Policing Inc. will host an International Women's Day dinner at the NSW Police Academy, Goulburn, on Wednesday 8 March 2000. The Council will formally present the Annual Awards at the dinner. Keynote speaker TBA. Contact S/C Melinda Tynan on 02 6258 7498 or Sgt. Wendy Austin on 02 4823 2525 to reserve a place. Tickets \$10 a head. All welcome. 📧

## National Awards for Excellence in Policing – 2000

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### Nominate today!

The Australasian Council of Women and Policing Inc.'s National Awards for Excellence in Policing are an opportunity to publicly acknowledge and reward the achievements of the women and men who are significantly contributing to policing and law enforcement. They will recognise the excellence which is being developing and currently exists in policing. The National Awards for Excellence in Policing will be presented at the Council's Annual Awards Dinner at the NSW Police Academy, Goulburn on 8 March 2000.

### Personal Awards

- Bravery Award
- Bev Lawson Memorial Award
- Most outstanding female leader
- Most outstanding female investigator
- Most outstanding female administrator
- Most outstanding female practitioner

### Organisational Awards

- Best police service employer for women.
- Most women-friendly police union.
- Most significant achievement in advancing the status of women in law enforcement.

### Community Award

Most significant achievement in improving the relationship between women in the community and in law enforcement and policing.

### Excellence in Policing Award

The winners of the individual, organisation and community awards will be judged for the major award: the Excellence in Policing Award.

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To nominate yourself, a colleague, supervisor or organisation:  
Email: [nixolchr@police.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nixolchr@police.nsw.gov.au)  
Fax: (02) 4226 7729  
or Post: ACWAP Awards, PO Box 430, Wollongong East 2520 with 300 words regarding the nomination.

**NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY  
5pm FRIDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2000**



# Brute Force II: The continuing need for affirmative action in the Victoria Police Force

Published by the Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria Inc.  
October 1999

**The first *Brute Force* Report, published in early 1993 by the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) revealed a masculinist culture within the Victoria Police Force which restricted promotional opportunities for women officers and prevailing sexist attitudes within the force that left women in the community, especially as victims of domestic violence and sexual assault poorly served and protected. The 1993 Report recommended the Victoria Police Force increase female participation and commit to affirmative action policies.**

This second report finds there has been no increase in numbers of sworn female officers in Victoria. In fact, of all Australian states and territories, Victoria has the second lowest number of women officers, 14.4%, a figure that has remained stagnant since 1992. Additionally, the number of women at higher ranks failed to improve between 1993-1999, with only 1.8% of all officers at or above the rank of Inspector recorded as female in both years.

The report identifies the key issues within the Victoria Police Force as:

- The continued emphasis on physical agility and strength, despite growing awareness that this is unnecessary;
- Despite instituting an affirmative action policy, Victoria Police fail to recruit and retain women in sufficient numbers;
- Informal barriers to the promotion of women, including insufficient access to relevant experience and limited networking and part-time work opportunities continue to impede the progress of women to higher ranks;
- Sexual harassment continues to be a distressingly widespread problem for female officers, with

35.7% reporting experiencing some form of harassment. The report found there needs to be 'a shift of focus to compliance'.

- The Federation considers the lack of gender balance within the Force has repercussions both internally and in the community generally, especially in relation to the policing of family violence and sexual assault. This was especially felt in rural and regional areas, where the low numbers of women officers mean that victims are often unable to speak to a female officer. The low numbers of women within the force were also seen as being forced to 'adopt male-oriented opinions and behaviour to fit in, thus perpetuating the male culture'.

The report also examines a number of case studies of female Victoria Police officers, including that of Narelle McKenna, who in 1998 was awarded \$125,000 by the Victoria Anti-Discrimination Tribunal after enduring years of discrimination and sexual harassment.

In essence, it appears that there has been little real change within the Victoria Police over the past six years, despite a massive amount of research into the dynamics of gender in policing and extraordinary advances in the position of women in policing in some other Australian jurisdictions (see Prenzler's article in this issue of *The Journal* for further details of the gains made in recruiting women in some jurisdictions during the same period). *Brute Force* makes ten concrete recommendations for the Victoria Police to address the issues raised. The Federation intends to publish its third report into the Victoria Police in 2005. Let's all hope they have some real changes to report by then.

**This second report finds there has been no increase in numbers of sworn female officers in Victoria. In fact, of all Australian states and territories, Victoria has the second lowest number of women officers, 14.4%, a figure that has remained stagnant since 1992.**

# Australasian News – Women's Groups funded

**On 1 October 1999 Senator Jocelyn Newman, the Minister for Family & Community Services, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women announced the funding announced three successful tenderers selected to provide national secretariat services under the National Women's Non-Government Organisations (NGO) Funding Programme.**

They were the National Council of Women of Australia, the YWCA and the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women. The three organisations will each receive \$275,000 until 30 June 2002.

Senator Newman stated that this demonstrated the federal Government's continued funding to women's organisations and that she was very confident that the successful NGOs will deliver excellent value for money in representing the views of all Australian women, including those outside their immediate constituent base.

## BPW Australia

The Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women Inc consists of autonomous affiliated clubs throughout Australia and Members at Large of the Federation. Nationally, each Club is affiliated directly with the Federation which is governed and administered by the Federation Council. BPW annually establishes a number of expert committees to work in specific policy/issue, current committees include: small business; child care; mentoring; industrial relations; superannuation; training; and health.

BPW's aims and objectives are to organise business and professional women in all parts of Australia to attain:

- High standard of service in business and professions
- Stimulate and encourage in women a realisation and acceptance of their responsibilities the community, locally, nationally and internationally
- Encourage women and girls to:
  - acquire occupational training and advanced education
  - use their occupational capacities and intelligence for the advantage of others as
  - well as themselves
- Work for equal opportunities for women in the economic, political, social and cultural life of Australia
- the elevation of the status of women
- the removal of discrimination
- Promote world-wide co-operation between business and professional women of all ages
- To collect and present the views of business and professional women to the public, government, local authorities and business, to the Division and to the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's aims and objectives.
- To promote any other objectives in keeping with the aims which the Club considers desirable.

**Web site:** [www.bpw.com.au](http://www.bpw.com.au)

**Email:** [bpwaust@bpw.com.au](mailto:bpwaust@bpw.com.au)

**Snail mail:** P.O. Box 1267 Swan Hill VIC 3585

**Phone:** 03 5032 0068

**Fax:** 03 5032 0068

## YWCA Australia

The YWCA of Australia is a women's membership movement, nourished by its roots in the Christian Faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values and strengthened by diversity. The Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for growth, leadership and empowerment in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.

Its achievements include:

- Encore – an exercise and support programme for women in the postoperative stage of breast cancer.
- Week Without Violence: Activities associated with the 1998 Week Without Violence were organised in 24 centres throughout rural, regional and metropolitan Australia.
- National diversity audit of programmes, membership and governance, to ensure that we continue to represent and actively involve the diversity of Australian women.
- YGALS represents the national network of young women in the YWCA, and it's work in the areas of young women's recruitment, representation, membership and advocacy is integral to the movement's broader objectives.
- YWCA Ethical Trust: The YWCA contributes the ethical overlay to the Ethical Balanced Investment Trust, providing investors with a well-founded basis for socially responsible investment.
- National Business and Service Networks: Developing three national networks: childcare; community housing; and education and vocational training and the training network is developing a National Mentoring Programme. The travel accommodation network now has a global booking system and website at: [www.ywcatravel.com](http://www.ywcatravel.com).

**Email:** [natoffice@ywca.org.au](mailto:natoffice@ywca.org.au)

**Website:** [www.ywca.org.au](http://www.ywca.org.au)

## National Council of Women of Australia Inc.

The objectives of the National Council of Women of Australia (NCWA) are to promote the advancement of women in all spheres, to empower and inform and to support wherever appropriate. The NCWA is affiliated with the International Council of Women NCWA acts as an advocate on behalf of women by:

- bringing issues of concern before Government Ministers and other decision makers;
- preparing and presenting submissions to Government;
- undertaking research and developing policy documents relevant to the legislative process; and
- acting as a sounding board for Governments on women's issues.

NCWA is currently completing research into the development of Family Friendly Workplace conditions to help achieve a better balance between the demands of work and family. To honour the UN International Year of Older Persons 1999, NCWA is publishing an anthology of women's memories and experiences. Ninety nine entries were received from all over Australia from which thirty-one short pieces and four poems were selected. The

book will be launched later this year as a permanent acknowledgement to the contribution of our older citizens.

Affectionately known as 'Stirrers with Style' the NCWA is the coordinating body for the constituent Councils throughout Australia. Membership of the Councils is made up of affiliated organisations and individual associates. Altogether NCWA represents the views and opinions of over three million women throughout Australia.

NCWA is a non-party political and non-sectarian. The participation of women in all facets of the community life is encouraged. NCWA actively seeks to raise awareness of women to their rights and responsibilities as citizens. It provides an effective link for over 300 organisations where matters of common national interest arise and a strong voice to Government and other authorities both nationally and internationally through its affiliation with the International Council of Women (ICW). ICW has Consultative Category A Status with the United Nations ECOSOC.

**Snail Mail:** 1/210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

**Phone:** 03 9662 9177

**Fax:** 03 9662 9477

**Email:** NCWA@bigpond.com.au

## Tasmania Hosts Women Union Officials Meeting

In March 1999 Inspector Lyn Jones addressed the Women Officials in Police Unions (WOPU) Committee Meeting in her capacity as the Tasmania Police Commissioner, Mr R McCreadie's representative on the Australasian Women in Policing Advisory Committee (AWIPAC).

Inspector Jones also outlined the progress of the state-based Women in Policing Consultative Committee which is currently preparing option papers on child care facilities, salary sacrificing, tertiary studies, scholarships and 3-5 year maternity leave proposals. Tasmania Police was complimented on the partnership approach demonstrated by WOPU, AWIPAC and Consultative members concerning State issues which impact on women in policing.

It was also recognised by other jurisdictions that women in the Tasmania Police Service enjoy excellent support and have ready access to Senior Executive Officers.

At the Tasmania meeting WOPU changed its name to reflect its role within the new Police Federation of Australia, and is now called the Police Federation of Australia Women's Advisory Committee (PFAWAC).

## Focus on Tasmania

### 100 years of policing in Tasmania

### Tasmania Police Centenary Gala Dinner Celebration

On Saturday 13 March 1999 Tasmania Police celebrated 100 years of policing service at a dinner in Hobart. A female police officer was invited to perform the Toast to the Tasmania Police.

Sergeant Fiona Pearce graciously accepted the invitation. Fiona represents the newer generation of policing as she has been able to utilise the police services' flexible work arrangements to mix family and work commitments while progressing through the ranks to Sergeant.



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*The Fourth Meeting of the Women Officials in Police Unions 8-9 March 1999 (now called the Police Federation of Australia Women's Advisory Committee) L-R: Paula Davey (NSW), Helen McDermott (AFP), Janet Mitchell (VIC), Casey Kuipe (NZ), Margaret Hogan (VIC), Karen Robinson (SA), Peta Blood (NSW), Barbara Parfitt (SA), Lukia Serafin (QLD), Elke Pfau (SA), Bernadette Zimmerman (SA), Kate Fitzgerald (TAS), Angela Bradford (TAS), Wendy Brown (NT), Merv Melling (QLD)*



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*Second Conference of Australasian Women and Policing*

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## Selected papers from the First Conference of Australasian Women Police

### Order form

A special edition of *The International Journal of Police Science and Management*, December 1998, with Guest Editorial by Dr Tim Prenzler.

Includes the papers presented to the 1996 Conference by Professor Frances Heidensohn, Dr Jennifer Brown, Dr Tim Prenzler, Margot Ffrench and Linda Waugh, Helen Braithwaite and Neil Brewer, Andrew Ede and Avril Alley, Melinda Tynan, Joanne Dangoume, Jennifer Bradley, Louise Corbett.

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# FEMINIST EXPO 2000

**MARCH 31 – APRIL 2 2000**

**AT THE STATE OF THE ART**

**BALTIMORE CONVENTION CENTRE**

**ON THE INNER HARBOUR IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**

Join thousands of feminists, speakers, celebrities and performers from around the USA and the world to showcase the power of the feminist movement, its ideas and vision for the 21st century. Expo 2000 will bring together feminists from every sector of our communities: media, law, medicine and health care, arts, politics, business, education, public service, trade unions, non-profit services, sports, entertainment, advocacy, religion and philanthropy.

This landmark Convention and innovative Exhibit Hall will feature the fight for women's equality and empowerment, countering the right wing backlash against women's progress, expanding feminism globally, and envisioning a feminist future.

## **Highlights of Feminist Expo 2000:**

- More than 280 national and international co-sponsors – and growing
- Thousands of feminists of all ages
- Four general assemblies
- More than 60 symposia, training sessions and workshops
- Exhibit Hall will showcase hundreds of women's organisations
- Feminist Career Centre with job, networking and internship opportunities
- Delegations from colleges and universities, and women's organisations nationwide
- Delegations from around the world/Spanish and French translation in designated sessions
- High-tech tools for organising women in the next century
- Book signings by your favourite famous feminist authors
- Interactive Online super booths
- More than 250 renowned feminist speakers, entertainers, celebrities and musicians

**Register for  
Feminist Expo 2000  
on the web at [www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)**

Contact the Feminist Majority Foundation by phone (703-522-2214)  
or email ([expo2000@feminist.org](mailto:expo2000@feminist.org)) for hotel and registration information.  
Or check out Feminist Expo 2000 and register online on the web at [www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)



**Produced and Organised by the  
FEMINIST MAJORITY FOUNDATION  
1600 Wilson Blvd, Suite 801, Arlington VA 22209**

# (US) National Center for Women and Policing: 5th Annual Conference & Feminist Expo 2000

### **Broaden your horizons with an international conference ... in the United States**

In March/April 2000 there will be two great conferences in the United States that ACWAP members might like to consider attending. The first the National Centre for Women and Policing's Fifth Annual Leadership Development Conference. The conference theme is *Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century: Opportunities for women Leaders in Law Enforcement*. The conference is being held from 29 March to 2 April 2000 at the Omni Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland. For more information contact the National Centre for Women and Policing on +1 323 651 2532 or fax +1 323 653 2689 or see their website at [www.feminist.org/police/ncwp.html](http://www.feminist.org/police/ncwp.html).

If you attend the Women Police Leadership Development Conference you will also have the opportunity to join over 6,000 participants and hundreds of organisations from around the world at the Feminist Expo 2000. This is the Second Feminist Exposition and is being held at the Baltimore Convention Centre from 31 March to 2 April 2000. The Feminist Expo is available to all Women Police Leadership Development Conference participants at no extra charge. The Feminist Expo will showcase the power of the women's movement, its ideas and visions for the 21st Century as well as the diversity of its work, constituencies and accomplishments. Expo 2000 will offer sessions and workshops on the cutting-edge issues of our timefighting for women's equality and empowerment, expanding feminism globally, promoting gender perspectives on the US's and world budgets and countering the backlash to women's progress.

The Council is currently examining the possibility of attending Expo 2000 as a delegation. If you are interested in participating in the Expo 2000 and would like to be part of the ACWAP delegation please contact the Council as soon as possible.

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### **Europe Network of Policewomen Millenium Conference, Stockholm**

The European Network of Policewomen is holding its Millennium Conference from 10 to 13 September 2000. Unfortunately the timing for this conference is not as convenient for Australian women as it clashes with the Olympics, but other Australasian members of the Council may be able to attend. To find out more contact the ENP at PO Box 1102, NL-3800 BC Amersfoort, The Netherlands, Phone +31 33 4654019, fax +31 33 4654083.



The International Association of Women Police is holding its 2000 Annual Training Conference in Toronto. See the IAWP's website for more information, [www.iawp.org](http://www.iawp.org) or contact IAWP 2000 at 40 College St, Toronto, Ontario, M59 2J3 Canada.



**September 23-27**  
**Hotel Sheraton**

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### **FRENZY: Forensic Sciences and Crime Scene Technology Conference & Exposition, May 10-12 2000**

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# Australasian Council of Women and Policing Inc.

(Incorporated under the Associations Incorporation (ACT) 1991)

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Telephone: 02 6258 7498 Fax: 02 6285 2090 Email: inquiry@auspol-women.asn.au

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Australasian Council of Women & Policing





# Second Australasian Conference of Women and Policing: Improving the position of women in policing

## Visitors and Invaders – Women in a Male Dominated Industry

Katy Steenstrup, ACTU QLD

**Workplaces exist within current community stereotypes and often reflect the actions and habits of the majority of the employees. The more isolated the workplace is geographically or socially from the general community, the more we find workers in those organisations operating in groups and workplaces acting as mini nations complete with customs, history and prejudices.**

This has been particularly obvious in industries such as mining, which is geographically isolated and military occupations, which are socially isolated. When examining issues surrounding women in a male dominated industry it is necessary to examine issues and solutions in a social context. Women are often treated when entering these male dominated workplaces as visitors or invaders. As a sense of ownership in these places are very strong. The majority often feels that any change is disruptive or any criticism on how the organisation has previously operated as threatening.

Workplace constructs are worked around what is considered the norm and anything else than what is currently or previously been the pattern is seen as deviant. Changes to work practices or accommodation are seen as special treatment and not as part of the normal workplace change process. Some when considering changing workplace culture the current inhabitants (citizens) need to be included. As has been identified by numerous authors and studies the role of women in policing and their impact on police culture as been steadily building since women's participation in the services have increased.

This is a similar situation that women in the military or in many other male dominated industry find themselves in small advancements have usually come at high cost to some individuals. Women in policing have a history of persevering and achieving. Women's struggle for admission and recognition was not won overnight and neither will the acceptance of women in the workforce and the necessary changes be achieved overnight. The same dedication to change and support that women exhibited in entering the service will need to be maintained in order to change the Service.

Due to the nature of policing the sorts of changes that will need to be made within the Service and culture will need to reflect the community's expectations as well as Governments and women themselves.

The perception of women as either a Madonna or Whores has a

long history in Australia culture where good girls didn't push themselves forward, waited to be asked and treated as polite visitors in workplaces or support staff or as handmaidens. Where as bad girls invaded workplaces, and demanded to be heard, making either men uncomfortable or women associated with them, feeling uncomfortable with these women. Though a number of women while enjoying the benefits that these women achieved are often silent, afraid that they could be targeted if they voiced their support for these invading women.

Young women, I believe are already in the vanguard of pushing these changes but their approach must be driven by optimism not cynicism. The education standards and the socialisation of young women in our society is putting far more demands on employers and men to not only change their behaviour and workplace structures but to recognise that the inherent differences in women can benefit our economic and social future.

A popular misconception operating within gender change programs assumes the workplace has been constructed without any discriminatory confines This model sees the male workplace as normal and impartial. The characteristics of the workplace are seen as gender neutral, based on the idea that 'equality means the same'.

The first step to cultural and organisational change in a workplace is to recognise the differences and accept that different does not mean second class or inferior.

It is very difficult for young or inexperienced women to take up this fight on their own within a hostile workplace. Other women are intrinsically important in achieving and maintaining change. However, women must beware of the 'myth of sisterhood' (meaning all women will always agree on every topic) males cheerfully point out disputes or differences women have amongst each other and they use this as an excuse to hinder change.

'See they can't agree on what they want.' Other women who worked here didn't have a problem with it' is used as an argument not to alter behaviours reinforcing that there is only one sort of woman or one sort of solution and ignore the reality of men's differences as well.

So how do women personally survive? Well keeping a sense of humour is important. A positive mental attitude can not be underestimated; Style and means of communicating to other

women, to your supervisors and to the other men around you need not take the same form. The conversation you have with colleagues about their behaviour would not be the same as the one you may have with your supervisor. For everything you don't like you should have not just an alternative but a reason why the change should occur.

For every change you want think about how to achieve it, talk to others including males whom might have past experience. The responsibility doesn't rest with women alone. To push this type of change on to the shoulders of the least powerful and least influential is to ignore the resources required to support this process. For management and government to ignore their ultimate responsibility is to ignore their own liability and responsibility to Anti-discrimination Acts, Equal Employment Opportunities legislation.

The Police service must in its recognition of the changing job of policing recognise that the male dominated policing services also need to change. Senior Executives, Police Commissioners, Inspectors and other senior ranking officers must genuinely, sincerely value women and their contribution. In other industries where women have been able to forge ahead, there have been male champions. These business leaders are seen as up front and very visible in their acknowledgement of women's contribution to their organisations.

Employers in the Service must push change downwards but maintain responsibility at the top. Everybody must be accountable for the removal of harassment and discriminatory practices from the workplace. However, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that it happens rests with the Senior Executives. They alone have the vicarious liability of ensuring that they not only promote a safe and equitable workplace, but in their day to day operations they maintain the same standards they expect from lower ranks.

The education of middle ranks cannot be underestimated; services must praise and promote. Develop heroes where innovation is recognised and good behaviour is rewarded. The other message to Senior Executives is don't punitively punish. The risk of not having good procedures is the creation of martyrs. Men who are already feeling threatened by women's involvement in what was traditionally seen, as 'their' workplaces will feel further aggrieved

by punitive attacks against them. Other women may be discouraged from making complaints or endeavouring to influence change if they believe if they will be further punished/persecuted if the grievance procedure does not support and protect them.

That is not to say organisations should do not address discrimination in a positive way, however, grievance procedures and communication strategies must also be equitable and fair when dealing with all staff.

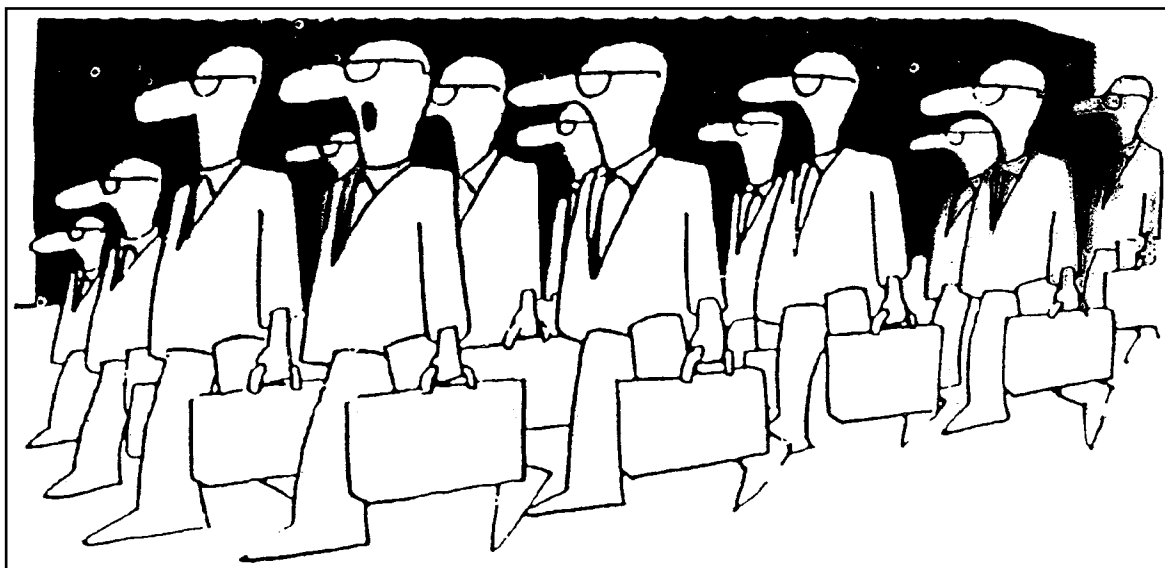
Another important thing employers can do is to keep the change process visible, producing regular reports including economic indicators, social profiling and progress to benchmarks. Encourage the organisation to see itself as a whole not as a single station or a single work unit where women have just been allowed in.

But what is the Government role in this workplace solution? Government is the ultimate employer in Police servicing on behalf of its citizens. If the Government wants a responsive and efficient service then they must ensure Anti-discrimination legislation, Equal Opportunity laws and Industrial laws in police services are met. All Government says that services provide equal employment opportunity for women and deny that they directly discriminate against women and other groups, however by not supporting workplace change they maybe indirectly inhibiting women contribution.

Change doesn't just happen within the senior levels of the services; it starts at the lower levels. Recruitment and selection into the service must be on the basis of merit not on the basis of patronage and discriminatory selection criteria.

Women want the best service for their community; they want to do the best job they can in a very difficult occupation.

While the Australian police service continues to view women as visitors or invaders into a male workplace very little progress can be made. My message to police officers male and female, Government and Unions is get out of the trenches and get on with the job a creating a fair and equitable workplace where an individuals contribution is valued. The police service like the majority of workplaces must accept that women have a right to work. And those women in policing have a right to a safe and healthy workplace.



*'I wonder what the new chap will look like?'*

Source: unknown

# Second Australasian Conference of Women and Policing: Improving the position of women in policing

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## Contrasts in policing; lessons from international comparisons

Dr Jennifer Brown, Department of Psychology, University of Surrey and  
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Goldsmiths College of the University of London  
Brisbane 7-9 July 1999

### Introduction

**'This paper is in two parts. Firstly we discuss aspects of the police occupational culture and argue that this creates a hostile work environment for women who experience sexual harassment and sex discrimination. We propose that this environment is analogous to family situations where violence against women occurs. The ambivalence of policemen in terms of their behaviour towards police women as victims is, in part, carried over into attitudes towards violence towards women victims. Thus in order to deal with women's victimisation attention needs to be drawn to behaviour within the police as well as delivery of services to the public. Secondly we show from our recent international comparative data that discriminatory and harassing behaviour towards policewomen is universal, but that different policing systems result in different levels of reporting.'** Different levels of policewomen's experiences are linked to differences in policy development and practice with respect to women's victimisation. In order to address the latter, attention needs to be given to the attitudes and behaviour that creates the former.

### Paternalistic or patronising

Women are supposed to be caring and nurturant, sympathetic and kind whose role in life is to look after the emotional needs of others. Men stereotypically are strong, decisive and task orientated, qualities that match the profile of a police officer thus for women, policing is sexually atypical employment. Breakwell (1986:71) argues by adopting atypical employment, women fail to conform to gender expectations in job choice and risk suspicion being cast on her femininity. Moreover, if she happens to have a partner and/or children she is even more vulnerable. This is illustrated with ° to the death of journalist

Veronica Guerin. Scotland on Sunday June 22 1998 wrote in a leader

'a year after her death, people are again asking if Guerin cared too much for the glow of journalistic glory. The barely concealed implication is that Guerin jettisoned her family to further a career. It is not an accusation which would be levelled at a man who died in similar circumstance'.

Women police officers are similarly susceptible. At its most tragic injury and death of women officers have invoked headlines such as 'frail blue line' (Heidensohn 1992) after the stabbing of constable Lesley Harrison and 'was this killing ... too terrible a price to pay for equality' in the aftermath of the murder of constable Nina Mackay (Brown and Grover 1998). Such tragic events evoke feelings of protection and paternalism. Somehow the injury or death of a woman is perceived as more serious and tragic than that of a man.

However, at a more mundane level, injury to women officers can evoke a hostile response. One in which women are seen as a liability and confirms prejudices that this is not a suitable job for women.

### *Those bloody women*

An illustration of this can be provided by the experience of a young WPC who was attacked whilst she was checking a shop door at two o'clock in the morning. The armed intruder eventually ran off but not before pushing her to the ground and badly frightening her. [He was later thought to have been a rape suspect]. This is her description of what then happened.

WPC The acting inspector came out, he loathed the female in distress bit and had no sympathy. They called an ambulance as I realised I had hurt my finger. When the sergeant arrived I just burst into tears. I was taken to hospital and treated for the cut finger and bruises. Then I went back to the station. I had to give a statement at the station and was told as a WPC you know all about this and they just left me to it.

**The ambivalence of policemen in terms of their behaviour towards police women as victims is, in part, carried over into attitudes towards violence towards women victims. Thus in order to deal with women's victimisation attention needs to be drawn to behaviour within the police as well as delivery of services to the public.**

**Police marriages are particularly susceptible to domestic violence (Neidig, Russell and Seng 1992). In their study of American police officers, they report higher than population rates in police families and domestic violence was highest if the officer worked a night shift or worked in a drugs unit.**

JB Then what happened.

WPC The next day when I went in the DI called into the CID office and pointed to the DC and said as you know we are very busy with a rape case you can look into this for a week and if you get no result that will be it. Then he said to me I want to speak to you.. In my office.

He had got my statement and said this is not very good, in fact its a load of rubbish. Call yourself a police officer. What can we go on with this. Just one question. Why didn't you catch him. Think about your basic training. I just had a panic attack and got myself signed off sick.. The office gossip was how come she's off for a week for a cut finger.

JB How did you feel about all of this

WPC I felt a sense of failure. I should have done this or that. The police role should have kicked in. I was terrified. I thought I would never be able to go out into the dark again. In my private life I take more precautions. I cant sleep with a window open. As a potential witness I felt useless. I was incredibly small and vulnerable and insignificant. I felt defensive and pathetic. I was made to feel that I had greatly inconvenience them (*CID*) I should stop causing them problems and stop being a child causing trouble.

JB How do you feel about it all now

WPC I was let down by the police. Surely there must be an us and them situation. What about the us. I am bitter about people who did not believe me or who minimalised what happened to me. It affected my career. Every so often it rears its ugly head. It comes up on my appraisal to haunt me. My superintendent wrote on one of my applications as you are aware WPC F has had a series of attachments and avoided working shifts. On my appraisals I have had this incident continually referred to even if only to say it is not causing her a problem as she has put the experience behind her and is dealing with the problem This was some time after it had happened. It has blighted my career. I am that bloody police woman who was attacked. There have been jokes and remarks. The camaraderie is fine but woe betide you if the uniform is turned against you.

### *Wives and mothers*

Police marriages are particularly susceptible to domestic violence (Neidig, Russell and Seng 1992). In their study of American police officers, they report higher than population rates in police families and domestic violence was highest if the officer worked a night shift or worked in a drugs unit.

Glass (1995) documents the account of a British woman police officer

Things were going from bad to worse. He found it very difficult that I was the next rank up. He was obviously the subject of quite a lot of ribbing and good humoured jokes and banter and perhaps the odd malicious jibe. No correspondence that addressed me as sergeant could ever come to the house. I never wore my epaulettes home from work. Nobody at work knew [about the violence] My husband was seen as the all round good egg and snappy dresser. He was a very popular very charismatic

guy who is very, very highly regarded. It was therefore going to be lumped straight at my doorstep that it was my fault that the relationship had broken down

Hostility is also expressed at women who attempt to combine policing and parenting. The following is an account Wendy Austin at the First Australasia Women Police Conference.

'I have had some interesting experiences in policing since becoming a mother. After returning to part time work after the birth of my first child, I went to an incident where a young chap had gone berserk and smashed up his parents' house and seriously assaulted his father. I and a junior male officer stepped forward to take hold of him, at which he began struggling. Other police arrived and a well built young officer said, "Wendy, I'll take him", maneuvered me out the way to physically get him into the back of the police truck. The other officers all left, taking the offender back to the police station. A senior male constable remarked to me after we had got the chap into the back of the truck, "I didn't think you did that sort of thing anymore". I was puzzled for a while and then realized that he was referring to my status as a mother. However, it didn't stop them from leaving me with the victims, organizing medical care, obtaining of statements, charging the offender and all the other cleaning up that mothers are so good at' (Austin 1996)

In Britain, Holdaway and Parker (1998) report that a third of policemen agreed with the statements 'on the average, a woman who stays at home all the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half the time' (compared to 6% of women) 'women officers who leave to have children should not expect a job waiting for them if they come back to work' (compared to 8% of women) and 19% of men agreed with the statement that 'women officers who want to be mothers should not expect a serious career' (compared with 4% of women).

An example from an American respondent to our survey shows similar sentiments.

I had served on our department for 10 years when I felt that 3 years into our marriage it was time to dedicate time and effort to having a baby and expanding our family. When I revealed that I was pregnant I was told by a lieutenant that I could not have my cake and eat it too! Needless to say it made for an uncomfortable 10 months.

Research on women police officers suggest they cope with the paternalistic or patronising attitudes by emphasising either their gender identity or their police identity. Brewer (1991) describes 'Hippolytes' who attempt to retain as much femininity as the bureaucratic regimen permits, who eschew operational duties preferring support roles or retreat to safer gendered tasks such as training and work with victims. They tended to suffer in silence or engaged in avoidance tactics. 'Amazons' on the other hand not only gave as good as they got but competed with the men in



joke telling and swearing. There are costs to policewomen when adopting either style: affronts to their femininity or to their professionalism. It seems to be difficult to retain your femininity and be accepted as a professionally competent police officer.

## **De feminisation and de professionalisation**

One reason why male attitudes remain is their weight of numbers. Whilst the numbers of women officers has risen steadily since the passing of equality legislation they still represent only about 14% of the complement of officers in Australia, United Kingdom and United States (Brown 1998). Research, drawing on the theoretical work of Rosabeth Kanter, details the impact on police women of their relatively small numerical representation (Ott 1989; Martin 1989; Brown 1998; Wertsch 1998; Wimshurst 1995). Kanter's thesis proposes that distortions in the gender balance of organisations has an impact on opportunities for advancement. To prosper organisations require reduction of uncertainties and good communications. In order to maximise these features there is a tendency to appoint similar individuals to senior positions. Thus in organisations, which have been historically male dominated, managers will be appointed who share common features. This sustains male hierarchies, but not through exercise of gender preferences per se but through choice of sameness or 'homosociability'. This process excludes those who are different, such as women, from upward mobility and sets up a cycle of lowered motivation and discouragement which inhibits performance, reduces organisational recognition and limits chances of advancement. Critical to this argument are the relative proportions of men and women in the workplace. Kanter (1977:966) proposes a 'topological ratio' in work groups that suggests that where there is a skew of 80% : 20% then those in the smaller group are seen as seen as tokens and those in the larger group as dominants. Kanter suggests that the highly visible token will attract a disproportionate share of attention and is susceptible to an exaggeration of difference because the small numbers exacerbate the application of social stereotyping. Four types are women are identified: little sisters who are dependent and incompetent; seductress who is an incompetent flirt; iron maiden who is competent but cold and harsh; the mother who looks after men but nags. The generalisations that follow from the application of stereotyping are made to fit the particular individual. These processes lead to job performance pressures in terms of lack of

privacy within the organisation where competence was taken as a measure of the general ability of the person's social category rather than individual achievement. As a consequence tokens may cope by working harder and overachieving or attempting to limit their visibility and avoid risks or controversy. Thus tokens become mistake avoidance sensitive, have an exaggerated fear of failure at important tasks or key events, and worry about retaliation by envious dominant group members. Reactions of policewomen are linked to work performance stress (Parker, Holdaway and Griffin 1998). They propose that both male and female police officers can experience work performance anxiety; that excessive levels can lead to poor mental health; because of skeptical and even hostile attitudes about their capabilities women in policing will experience higher levels of work performance anxiety. The mechanism through which this is mediated is sexual harassment. Thus name calling and suggestive jokes draw attention to gender making women more conscientious in proving that they can carry out all policing tasks. Harassment is 'designed' to de professionalise the woman officer. Their empirical results did indeed show that at excessive levels work performance anxiety is potentially damaging for both men and women officers. One of the contributing features for women was the exposure to harassment. However Parker, Holdaway and Griffin (1998) also found that after controlling for the effect on performance anxiety, harassing behaviours were associated with positive mental health for policemen. They conclude that as gender 'dominants' sexual harassment for men becomes part of a healthy joking culture whereas for women such behaviours serve to heighten pressures relating to job performance.

Dominants in organisations continually assert or reclaim the group solidarity and exaggerate those occupational symbols and values that differentiate them from the tokens. Kanter shows how men in the majority dramatise their feats of drinking and sexual prowess with exaggerated displays of aggression and potency. Here the consequences as shown by Smith and Gray (1983) and later research by Brown 1998, Holdaway and Parker 1998 show that policewomen are subjected to sexual harassment by their male colleagues.

## **Inside attitudes → outside service delivery**

Siegel ( 1992) suggests that sexual harassment is part of the continuum of violence against women and quotes Rier 1991 as follows: 'Sexual

**'Name calling and suggestive jokes draw attention to gender making women more conscientious in proving that they can carry out all policing tasks. Harassment is "designed" to de professionalise the woman officer'**

**It became apparent that women were reluctant to use the available grievance procedures for much the same reason that women did not want to report rape or domestic violence to the police: fear of reprisals; further victimization; lack of sympathy; complaints being trivialized, not being believed.**

harassment ... is the most recent form of victimization of women to be redefined as a social rather than a personal problem, following rape and wife abuse'.

Mezey and Rubenstein (1992) elaborate these ideas by comparing the dynamics operating in the workplace and in the home where violent abuse has occurred. They suggest that work, like home, can be represented as a caring, self-contained unit. Both have hierarchical structures with unwritten rules and codes of conduct, usually defined by the more powerful members. The less powerful members are often passive and dependent performing servicing functions in exchange for care and protection. In many families and workplaces, the most powerful tend to be men. Less powerful members, usually women, especially those who 'cause trouble' tend to be isolated and frequently scapegoated as a mechanism to preserve the power relationships.

Power relationships are an issue in sexual harassment. The harasser is often the women's boss. As employees are dependent on their job for their livelihood, psychological well-being and self-esteem, there seems little option but to stay. Siegal (1992) comments that women are socialized into being the keepers of harmonious relationships. A point also made by Glass (1995) who suggests that women are expected to 'manage' their partner's violence. Glass (1995) documents coping mechanisms of women who elect to stay in abusive domestic relationships: denial in which the victim at first claims no harm was done or that the intention was not to harm; minimalization in which the harm is discounted or trivialized, reform where the woman believes that ultimately their man could be changed.

There is also a disbelief from friends and family that domestic violence could be occurring within one's own circle. This is something that happens to other families who are dysfunctional, chaotic and disorganised. There can be a collusion from other women that seeks to ignore or deny reality. In the light of self blame and shame abused women often display a passivity. Browne (1995) explains this as 'antagonistic co-operation' defined as a situation in which the weaker partner develops a strategy to facilitate survival and obtain leniency. Browne argues (p. 240) that battered women's affective, cognitive and behavioural responses are likely to become distorted because of their intense focus on survival. This is akin to rape trauma syndrome in which an acute disorganization occurs after the attack (Mezey and Taylor 1988). Rape victims also invoke denial and avoidance strategies; 'some [victims] experience an almost

childlike dependence on their attacker and ... victims said that they had thanked their attacker after he had let them go, without clearly understanding why they should have done this.' (Mezey and Taylor 1988 p. 333).

In earlier research (Anderson, Brown and Campbell 1993) we found examples of these strategies evoked by policewomen in coping with their work environment.

minimalization

*A bit jovial banter makes a good shift. If everyone took offence of every thing ever said we would all be paranoid*

Suffering in silence

*I believe over the years I have built up a defence mechanism. To respond only serves to increase the behaviour. If you ignore it for long enough it will go away.*

Relabelling

*Women are not as strong as men but then we are jolly good at turning on the old charm. I like being a girl and enjoy all the perks that go along with it*

Appeasement

*Sexual harassment is part of the police culture. Conformity within the system makes life easier as acceptance into work groups is an important part of survival in the organization*

Denial

*[Anderson, Brown and Campbell's research] gives an inaccurate portrayal of women off i as being weak and naive, undermining our authority and ability to perform police duties... It invites ridicule and does little to enhance the reputation of women officers ... Competent policewomen by their very nature in my experience give as good if not better than they get. I would suggest that those who cannot cope with such situations cannot possibly cope with the harsh realities of police work. Those allegedly forced to resign because of sexual harassment did not obviously possess the desired character traits to become women police officers.*

It became apparent that women were reluctant to use the available grievance procedures for much the same reason that women did not want to report rape or domestic violence to the police: fear of reprisals; further victimization; lack of sympathy; complaints being trivialized, not being believed.

A comment from two American respondents from the recent survey illustrates some of these reactions:

*My recent promotion to sat has left me baffled. Prior to this, I was supported and encouraged by both my coworkers and bosses. Now, working in a different area, I find little if any support from my male co workers. I find that the females in my command would rather let a male tell them what to do (even if wrong) and I find my peers very isolated from each other. I'm puzzled why there is so little support for females from each other on this job. Now that I am not perceived as 'one of the troops had added to my isolation. Perhaps this is just a period of adjustment and I'm sure I'll do just fine but the whole experience has put me off a bit.*

I've worked my way through the hard way. My only possible mentor retired before I could benefit from her. Other females have sabotaged my efforts to succeed.

In the same way that not all women are domestically abused, it is not suggested here that all police women suffer sexual harassment. What is argued is that the organisational structures, gender ratio and male constructed images of police and policing create an environment that has parallels to domestic relationships in which men maintain control by being patronising, violent or paternalistic. The reasons for policemen's reluctance to be drawn into policing violent behaviour perpetrated on women by men lies in attitudes that somehow women deserve it, ask for it or enjoy it. A policewoman as the victim may be 'deserving' in some manner by e.g. the nature or seriousness of her injuries, in which case police officers are sympathetic. But if the victim is undeserving, e.g. a competitor for a promotion or specialist posting, and thus a potential trouble maker then she must be put in her place and the power differential preserved. The persistence of these attitudes provides a measure of explanation about instances of sexual harassment that occur within the police. The structural realities of a male majority in control of resources within the police mirror those in domestic relationships. Women's investment in either job or home can make it difficult to leave, rather some adaptation takes place. In the cost of adapting to the police occupational culture for women can be adaption of a style that minimizes her professionalism or her femininity.

## **Brown's law and Heidensohn's corollary**

The second part of this paper will show that policewomen's victimisation in terms of sex discrimination and sexual harassment is universal. This is Brown's Law. Heidensohn's corollary is that the reported frequency of victimisation depends on the type of police organisation. In order to demonstrate this conceptual analysis done by FH and empirical analysis by JB will be utilised.

## **Types of police organisation**

Attempts to classify law enforcement practices date from early twentieth century. Raymond Fosdick described 'English' and 'Continental' systems and stressed how different they were. In particular, he stressed that the 'English' form derived its power from a popular mandate, based on a community constabulary, later rationalised into the 'New' police of London. He contrasts this

with 'Continental' patterns where the power of autocratic states, such as Prussia from the eighteenth century, requiring the control of crime and disorder. The latter is a military model based on enforcement whilst the former is negotiated by consent and officers are, for the most part, unarmed.

Several modern authors who have tried to develop taxonomies of police systems have followed Fosdick's lead and recognised the English/Continental divide. Bayley, the pioneer in this field, proposed a threefold typology which he described as 'authoritarian, oriental and Anglo Saxon' (1982) forms. The first of these clearly has parallels with the continental form and is characterised as military, while the second, based on Bayley's own research on Japan, emphasises close community ties. Mawby adapted aspects of Bayley's framework to classify early modern police systems and included exported, colonial models. Explorations of colonial policing, most of which have focussed on experiences in former British colonies in what might be termed 'New Commonwealth' countries, Britain introduced not the policing by consent' approach of the home country, but the centralised, more militaristic system which had its prototype in the Royal Irish Constabulary (Broaden, 1987; Emsley, 1997). Ahire in his account of the history of imperial policing in Nigeria points out that

'The RIC provided a model for colonial policing in general, and remained a tower of influence on the organization and development of the police in Nigeria in particular'

and he cites Sir Charles Jeffries, a former senior civil servant in the Colonial Office who also concluded that

'the really effective influence on the development of colonial police forces during the nineteenth century was not that of the police of Great Britain, but that of the Royal Irish Constabulary'. (1952, p. 30)

Most of the research on this topic has considered former British colonies and has for instance explored 'imperial linkage' between the mother country and both states which were 'settled' and 'those' which were 'pacified' for trade purposes. Cole remarks in a review

civilian policing structures were predominant in 'settlement' colonies of North America, Canada and Australia, whilst para-military policing was common in 'pacified' colonies located mainly in Africa, Asia, Central and South America' (Cole, 1999, p. 89)

Australia, New Zealand and to some extent Canada, were 'settler' states, since the occupying power, originally British, brought in a majority population which came eventually to dominate the

indigenous peoples. In these nations, the parallels and shared culture with British policing are notable (Finnane, 1994) despite significant differences. In Queensland for instance, Prenzler argues

‘The frontier situation .. led to the adoption of a relatively intense organisation along the lines of the Irish Constabulary.... The force had all the trappings of the military, and discipline was strictly hierarchical’. (Prenzler, 1997, p. 121)

Indeed this has continued into the late twentieth century with the formation of the Australian Federal Police having been based on advice from British sources and a senior British officer being appointed as the Commissioner for New South Wales in 1996, following a series of scandals and concerns in that force.

We suggest that it is both helpful and instructive to look at the experiences of women in law enforcement around the world through these comparative frames. The first of these we propose to call by the shorthand term of ‘cops’. This is widely recognised as slang for police officers in England and Wales, the USA. This model is one of policing by consent. For the second group of nations and systems we use the title ‘gendarmes’. We apply this term mainly to continental and authoritarian systems which have military forms or origins. We differ from several other authors in retaining a category of colonial systems within our framework. These are borne of often military models, adapted and modernised by a hybridisation of ideas from the US and Britain. We also add a further dimension of transitional states, those that are emerging from totalitarian governments in Eastern Europe and are re-inventing themselves on democratic lines, also influenced by US and UK models of policing.

When we examine specific areas of discrimination, then we can demonstrate differential rates of reporting. Women cops appear to experience greatest discrimination in terms of deployment opportunities and more than in other types of policing face limitations on training opportunities and also are the most likely to report experiencing sexual harassment. However, women from the transitional forces are the most likely to report facing promotion blockage and restricted overtime opportunities. Generally speaking women serving in Western continental forces, the gendarmes are the least likely to report discriminatory experiences. Women serving in forces having a colonial history are more likely to report discrimination than the cops or transitionals but less likely than the gendarmes.

The next stage of research seeks to address the

question about the delivery of services to victimised women within these different policing organisations.

Preliminary indications suggest that cops and colonial types of forces, who have relatively high levels of reported sexual harassment within forces, are at a stage of awareness, often as a result of cause celebre and successful lobbying campaigns. There is a recognition of the problem, and attempts to develop procedures and policies. The Metropolitan Police pioneered a scheme of sexual offences investigations officers (SOIT) and chaperone scheme but evaluations revealed that chaperones were infrequently used and the workload fell disproportionately onto a few officers. The chaperones themselves perceived that their work was given low importance. Nixon (1992) reported that police officers in New South Wales may dismiss complaints of rape through stereotypic thinking and described the introduction of initial response officers to raise awareness and challenge attitudes. Perhaps the most telling indictment of police attitudes was Nixon’s assertion that many police officers would not encourage their daughters to pursue a complaint of rape through the criminal justice system. Transitional police organisations, who have relatively high levels of discrimination, appear still to have fairly primitive notions about the policing of domestic violence. A Russian policewoman writes

With the exception of very serious forms of abuse like homicides violence against women remained largely unnoticed. It was not possible to criticize the treatment of raped or abused women by the police or doctors through the official channels.

In Hungary ‘domestic violence against women is neither the focus of attention of criminal justice, nor in the limelight of social interest’. (Sarkozi 1992)

In the gendarmes, who have relatively lower levels of reported discrimination and lower rates of sexual harassment, policy development and practice is variable with something of a North South divide. Northern European police forces generally being more developed than their Southern European counterparts.

## **Combatting women’s victimisation within the police**

In order to address and prevent discrimination in a police organisation there needs to be a combination of remedial measures in the short term and longer term preventative strategies. We would argue that changing attitudes from within, will have an impact on the quality of commitment, resource allocation and status



attached to the delivery of services to the public. In Britain, the quality of service approach initiated by the police themselves and informed by equal opportunities issues has had an impact on policy formulation and implementation.

In the short terms groups of officers such as women or those from ethnic minorities should be offered support in the event of their being bullied, harassed or thwarted in their career aspirations on grounds of their gender or race. Senior management in the forces need to state a clear and unequivocal policy of fair treatment. This should be followed up by a policy statement and personal letters to staff from the chief officer declaring his commitment to equality of opportunity. There should be a top team whose responsibility it is to implement an equal; opportunities strategy.

In the first instance, there may need to be a research project to discover the nature, frequency and seriousness of any discriminatory problems. This will help to identify targets for action. The strategy should seek to encompass recruitment, promotion and selection for specialist appointments. Routine auditing and monitoring of applications and appointments should provide management information as to whether or not there is a bias in appointments.

The organisation needs to design robust and sensitive grievance procedures should failures of policy or practice result in discriminatory treatment. Training should address equal opportunity issues so as to set standards of acceptable behaviour and enable supervisory staff to manage complaints where this is not achieved.

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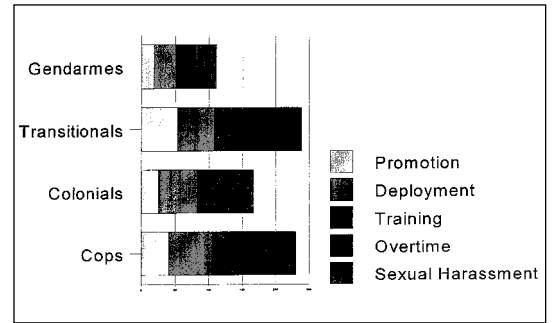
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### Recommendations for combatting discrimination and harassment

1. Promulgation of a written equal opportunities policy
2. Design and implementation of a grievance procedure
3. Guidelines for supervisors in dealing with sexual/racial harassment
4. Confidential support and advice for complainants
5. Training for new recruitments, supervisors and managers
6. Publicity through posters and information leaflets
7. Discipline procedures for breaches of policy or practice
8. Setting of targets for proportional employment of visible minorities
9. Setting of targets for greater employment of women officers
10. Family friendly policies to retain women officers

Cross cultural comparison of levels of reported discrimination

	Promotion	Deployment	Training	Overtime	Sexual Harassment (often/sometimes)
Cops	40%	65%	47%	23%	56%
Colonial	25%	57%	29%	17%	39%
Gendarmes	18%	32%	22%	8%	31%
Transitionals	53%	55%	35%	62%	34%



Type of police organisation	Sex discrimination	Sexual harassment	Women's victimisation
Cops	high	high	Policy developed ambivalent implementation
Colonials	low	high	Policy developed patchy implementation
Transitionals	high	low	Little policy development and negative practice
Gendarmes	low	low	Variable policy development and practice



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# Second Australasian Conference of Women and Policing: Improving the position of women in policing

## Measuring Progress in Gender Equity in Australian Policing

Tim Prenzler, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice,  
Griffith University, Brisbane

Second Conference of Australasian Women and Policing, Brisbane, 7-9 July 1999



This paper reports on a survey of the eight police jurisdictions in Australia regarding key indicators of gender equity. In February 1998 a request was made for data on the number of male and female sworn officers and recruits; as well as gender ratios for recruitment, selection, academy graduation, deployment, promotion, separation, and complaints of sexual harassment and discrimination and their resolution. Data were requested from 1991 to allow for identification of trends. It should be emphasised that this is an aggregate level study designed only to assess the status of women police and identify possible problems *at the aggregate level*. It should also be noted that the paper reports provisional findings used for presentation at the conference. 140 statistical analyses are included. These are being conducted for a more detailed paper currently in preparation. (The author can be contacted by phone on 07 3875 5613 or e-mail at T.Prenzler@mailbox.gu.edu.au.)

Table I reports the same figures by jurisdiction and shows the rate of progress is not consistent across agencies, Western Australia remained behind, with a particularly poor recruitment result of 12% females in 1998. Victoria was the only agency where the number of female officers declined in recent years, albeit slightly, from 13.8% in 1997 to 13.3% in 1998. The number of recruits in Victoria was moderate at 29.3% in 1998. The Northern Territory dropped from a very high percentage of 19.4% female officers in 1994 to 15.8% in 1996 with a resurgence to 17.7% in 1998. New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland stood out with female recruitment rates of 42.6%, 36.0% and 34.8% respectively in 1998. The diversity of trends can be seen in Figure 2, comparing sworn officers in NSW (with the highest increase of 4.6% for the period) the NT (which experienced the greatest reduction overall of -1.7%) and Victoria (which experienced virtually no change at -0.1%) (see also Figure 3).

**Western Australia remained behind, with a particularly poor recruitment result of 12% females in 1998. Victoria was the only agency where the number of female officers declined in recent years, albeit slightly, from 13.8% in 1997 to 13.3% in 1998.**

### The big picture

Figure 1 shows the percentage of female officers and recruits in Australia from 1994 to 1998 (covering the most consistent data). The results support previous findings (Prenzler 1995) of steady but slight increases in the number of female officers in the order of about 0.4% per annum, with the increase driven by the flow through of female recruits at around 30%.

### Deployment

Table 1: Percentages of Female Police and Recruits by Agency, Australia, 1994-98

Agency	Year	Female Officers (%)	Female Recruits (%)
NSW	1994	13.8	42.6
	1995	14.2	41.8
	1996	14.6	41.0
	1997	15.0	40.2
	1998	15.4	39.4
Vic	1994	13.8	29.3
	1995	13.7	29.2
	1996	13.6	29.1
	1997	13.5	29.0
	1998	13.4	28.9
NT	1994	19.4	19.4
	1995	18.5	18.5
	1996	17.6	17.6
	1997	16.7	16.7
	1998	15.8	15.8
SA	1994	36.0	36.0
	1995	35.1	35.1
	1996	34.2	34.2
	1997	33.3	33.3
	1998	32.4	32.4
QLD	1994	34.8	34.8
	1995	33.9	33.9
	1996	33.0	33.0
	1997	32.1	32.1
	1998	31.2	31.2

Figure 1: Female Officers and Recruits, Australia, 1994-98

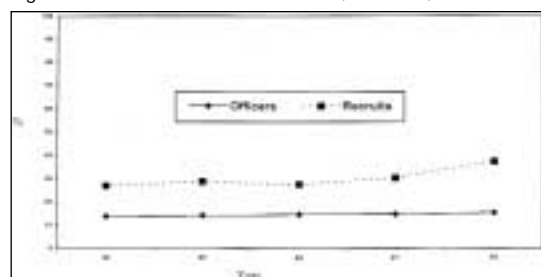
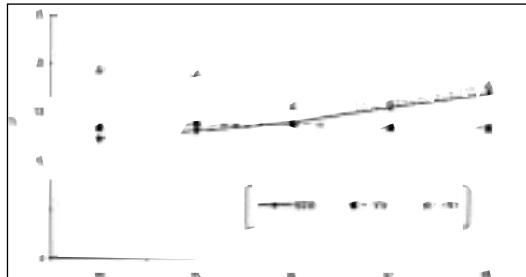
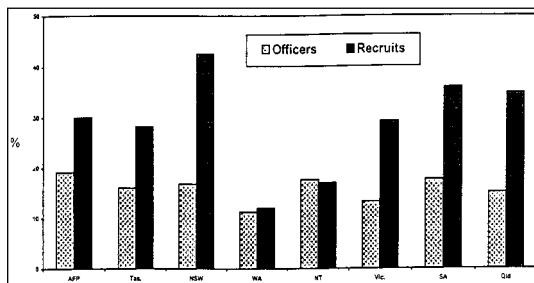


Figure 2: Female Officers, NSW, Vic and NT, 1994-98



This alternative entry was introduced in 1994 to reduce training costs and reduce the large number of trainee constables at the front line. One of the unintended consequences was to reduce the total percentage of all women 'recruits'

Figure 3: Female Officers and Recruits, Australia, 1998



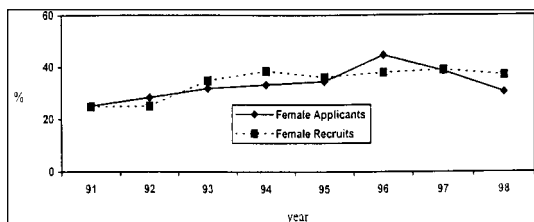
## Deployment

No useful data were provided on deployment. The request was for male/female numbers in 'different sections and specialist units'. The only data supplied coming close to this was from NSW. However, these data included regions and did not cover all officers by function.

## Applicants/Recruits

Only NSW, SA and Qld provided data on applicants and recruits. NSW has a new system whereby applicants first apply to a university-based course and then to the Service after completion. This is different to the traditional direct entry system and is not particularly compatible for comparative purposes. However, it would appear that the tertiary study requirement together with a marketing campaign focused on women has produced the best result in terms of women making up 42.6% of beginning constables – 'recruits' – in 1998. (This might be compared with a figure of 42.3% female 'applicants' to the tertiary training program for a roughly comparable period.) Figure 4, showing female application and recruitment rates from SA, indicates that a basic set of non-discriminatory policies will produce parity in rates. However, the lack of data from the majority of states makes it difficult to assess gender equity in recruitment across or between jurisdictions.

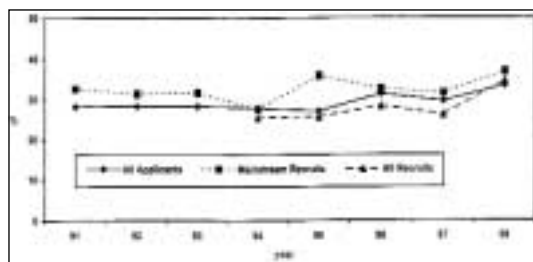
Figure 4: Female Recruits and Applicants, South Australia, 1991-98



Qld provides an interesting example of conflicting policies in recruitment. Figure 5 compares applicants and recruits, with two sets of figures for recruits. The first (top line) is recruits obtained through the normal selection system. This shows that for most of the period covered women were recruited at a higher rate than applied. However,

the second set of figures for recruits (bottom line) combines these mainstream recruits with 'rejoiners' recruited primarily from serving officers in other states. This alternative entry was introduced in 1994 to reduce training costs and reduce the large number of trainee constables at the front line. One of the unintended consequences was to reduce the total percentage of all women 'recruits' (combined 'recruits' and 'rejoiners'). The other point to note in the Qld data is the impact of an obstacle course test on applicants introduced in 1994 and then modified because of the negative impact on women. For an analysis of these changes see Prenzler (1996).

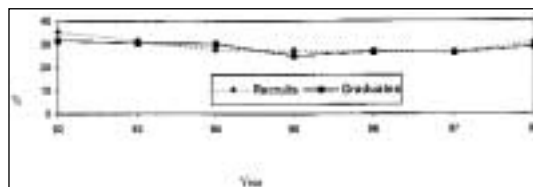
Figure 5: Female Applicants and Recruits, Queensland Police Service, 1991-98



## Recruits/Graduates

Only NSW, SA and Qld provided data on recruits and academy graduates. The results were all similar in showing no apparent problem with attrition of women from the academy in these agencies. Figure 6, for Qld, is typical of this result.

Figure 6: Female Recruits and Academy Graduates, Queensland, 1992-98



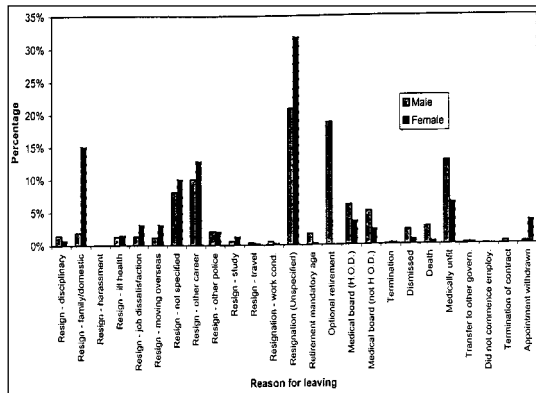
## Separations/Reasons

Data on separations were supplied by NT, WA Qld and NSW. The data suggest that in these agencies women are separating in numbers roughly proportionate to their male colleagues. For example, in the period from 1994 to 1998 in the NT women averaged 17.6% of officers and 17.9% of separations. In WA the figures were 10.2% and 10.9%. For Qld they were 13.4% and 14.4%; and for NSW, 14.3% and 12.8%. However, a breakdown shows that male separations concentrated in the retirement area were offset by female separations by resignation. For example, in the NT, men were 100% of retirees; women were 20.7% of resignations (but 17.6% of total officers). In WA, men were 98.8% of retirees; women were 15.3% of resignations (but 10.2% of



total officers). In Qld, men were 89.9% of retirees; women were 18.6% of resignations (but 13.4% of total of ficers). The most detailed data available from NSW (Figure 7) show that ‘family/domestic’ was a major factor in the female resignation rate where reasons for leaving were specified.

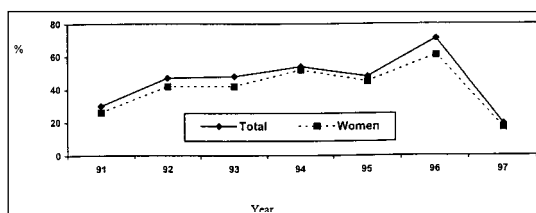
Figure 7: Reasons for Leaving, NSW, 1994-98



## Harassment and Discrimination

Data were also sought on complaints and resolution of grievances. Only NSW and Qld provided data. In NSW, for the period 1991-97, there was a small number of complaints of harassment/discrimination averaging 45 per annum with women making up 90% of complainants; 36% of complaints from women were resolved ‘formally’ and 64% ‘informally’. From a diagnostic perspective, further research would be required to explain the sudden rise in the number of complaints in 1996 and sudden fall in 1997.

Figure 8: Percentages of Harassment/Discrimination Complaints, NSW, 1991-97



The figures in Tables 2 and 3 for Qld show a somewhat similar profile. In retrospect, data should also have been sought regarding satisfaction with the outcome. Both data sets show that some women have sufficient confidence in the system to come forward and make a complaint. Research suggests, however, that about 80% of women police in countries such as Australia claim to have experienced some form of harassment or discrimination (Brown 1998). The latter figure is for any experience in a career in the police, not for one year. Nonetheless, these experiences are typically under-reported.

Table 2: Sexual Harassment Complaints, Queensland

Year	Male to Female	Female to Female	Male to Male	Female to Male	Total
1994	20	0	1	8	29
1995	18	4	1	1	24
1996	11	7	1	1	20
Total	49	11	3	10	73
Percent	67.1	15.1	4.1	13.7	100.0

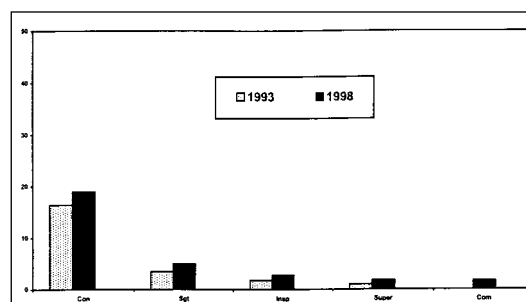
Table 3: Sexual Harassment - Form of Resolution, Queensland

Form of Resolution	1994	1995	1996	Total	Percent
Confidential	4	8	11	23	31.5
Mediation	1	1	1	3	4.1
Advisory	1	1	1	3	4.1
Disciplinary	1	1	1	3	4.1
ATC	1	1	1	3	4.1
Other	1	1	1	3	4.1

## Promotion

A request was made for the number of male and female applications for promotion and the numbers promoted. No agency provided these numbers. In lieu of this, data on rank were aggregated and compared over time. Ranks were collapsed into fewer categories because of different rank structures. The best data only allowed for a comparison over five years between 1993 and 1998 across Australia. These are shown in Figure 9. The results show that women are moving up the ranks, albeit very slowly. For Sergeant and above the average increase was 1.2%. In the same period the number of sworn women increased by 2%. However, it should be kept in mind that five years across combined ranks is not a sufficient time period to cover what might be considered a normal expectation of career progression. The best form of diagnostic evaluation might be done by first comparing M/F numbers in a qualified pool with M/F applications, and then M/F applications with M/F promotions.

Figure 9: Percentages of Females x Rank, Australia, 1993 and 1998



(Note: In the above graph, Constable includes Snr Const.; Sergeant includes Snr. Sgt.; Superintendent includes Commander; and Commissioner includes Deputy and Assistant.)

## Brief Discussion

A major finding of this study is that police agencies are not collecting sufficient information to properly assess issues of gender equity across all aspects of a police career. Interventions to address problems cannot be developed unless there is proper diagnostic research. For example, we could ask the question: ‘Are women still

‘family/domestic’ was a major factor in the female resignation rate where reasons for leaving were specified

Research suggests, however, that about 80% of women police in countries such as Australia claim to have experienced some form of harassment or discrimination (Brown 1998)

**Police agencies are not collecting sufficient information to properly assess issues of gender equity across all aspects of a police career**

concentrated in more traditional areas of female employment and excluded from specialist squads and detective work? At present, no agency appears to be able to answer this question. There is sufficient data available, nonetheless, to make some assessments in some areas. In recruitment and in the number of female officers, the available data show a very mixed performance. A few agencies stand out as high achievers. Some other agencies are notable underachievers. If NSW can recruit women above the 40% mark it is likely that other agencies could do the same if they chose to.

Better information is also needed before any assessment can be made of possible discrimination or lack of appropriate progression in promotion. Data on complaints of harassment and discrimination show women predominate and there is little apparent change over time. Questions remain about the effectiveness of grievance procedures. Although very limited in their scope, data on separations suggest that there is a problem with women dropping out from their careers because of family commitments. More attention might need to be given to retention policies such as flexible employment and rejoining options.

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# Second Australasian Conference of Women and Policing: Improving the position of women in policing

## Equal Opportunity in Part Time Policing

Margaret Hogan, Victoria Police Association



**Jurisdictions, either with part time policing, or about to introduce it, need, to examine any restrictions, requirements or conditions contained in the part time policy or award clause to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.**

The Victoria Police Force, in consultation with The Police Association, introduced Part Time Policing in early 1996. The negotiated policy allowed police members seeking part time policing to lodge an Expression of Interest in part time policing. As part of wage negotiations at the time between The Police Association and the Victoria Police Force, it was agreed that the Force would introduce a minimum of 100 part time policing positions. To be eligible to express an interest in part time policing, members needed to fulfil at least one of three criteria. These were family responsibilities, a disability or impairment and study. The great majority of Expressions of Interest were from women with family responsibilities.

Just prior to the introduction of the policy, the Victoria Police Force added a clause that read; 'Part Time employment will generally apply to sworn members at the rank of Constable and Senior Constable'. This restriction was of concern to The Police Association, and in the Expression of Interest process, a female Sergeant was determined to be not eligible for part time policing because of her rank. It also became clear that, in addition to the stated above restriction according to rank, the Victoria Police Force also added another restriction relative to members who were Detectives. A female Detective with 2 young children and pregnant with her third child expressed an interest in part time policing, but was met with the response that 'detectives cannot work on a part time basis'. The Police Association sought legal advice as to possible unlawful discrimination on the basis of rank and job type exclusion from part time policing. The Sergeant who was denied part time policing did not pursue

her case as one of unlawful discrimination, but the female detective did. I wish to outline the essence of that legal advice and issues/pitfalls to watch when police services implement part time policing.

The issue was whether the Victoria Police Force, by limiting access to part time policing, was engaging in unlawful discrimination in employment. The Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic) makes discrimination in the area of employment unlawful. The Act includes 13 grounds on which it is unlawful to discriminate and includes both direct and indirect discrimination.

### Direct Discrimination

*Direct discrimination occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, someone with an attribute less favourably than the person treats or would treat someone without that attribute, or with a different attribute in the same or similar circumstances.*

### Indirect Discrimination

*Indirect discrimination occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose a requirement, condition or practice*

- (a) *that someone with an attribute does not or cannot comply with; and*
- (b) *that a higher proportion of people without that attribute, or with a different attribute, do or can comply with; and*
- (c) *that is not reasonable.*

The limitation by the Victoria Police Force, firstly as expressly stated in the policy relative to rank, and in the application of the policy relative to job type, had to be analysed in terms of both direct and indirect discrimination. In the case of the exclusion of Detective positions from part time employment (and it should be remembered that there was no express exclusion in the policy; the exclusion arose in the application of the policy once the female detective expressed an interest in part time policing and part time employment was

**'A female Detective with 2 young children and pregnant with her third child expressed an interest in part time policing, but was met with the response that "detectives cannot work on a part time basis".'**



**‘Perhaps the most contentious evidence presented to the Tribunal was that male detectives, during the football season, regularly took full or half days off work on Wednesdays to play in the Victoria Police Football Teams.’**

allocated to members) the Victoria Police Force was *imposing a requirement*. That requirement was that **all** detectives **work full time hours**. Thus, it was determined that the case involved issues of indirect discrimination. Detectives with the status of parent or carer (a ground under the Act) were not able to comply with that requirement for the totality of their careers. Similarly, Detectives *without* the status of parent or carer were *able* to comply with the requirement. The question of whether or not the requirement was *reasonable* raised some very interesting issues, which I will talk of later.

I will now look at each of the above conditions relative to indirect discrimination in more detail.

1 The requirement that all detectives work full time hours. This appeared, on the surface, to be a relatively neutral requirement based on the genuine operational and occupational needs of the Victoria Police Force. The effect, however, of this requirement, was that detectives with the status of parent or carer were unable to comply with this requirement for the totality of their careers in policing.

The female detective in this case has already utilised recreational and long service leave to enable her to cope with the demands of motherhood and settling her young children into school. There were other female detectives who expressed interest in part time policing through this process, but several of them took part time positions that were not detective positions. This meant that they were denied continuity of their careers as detectives, and had to accept a lower salary through loss of allowances. These women accepted these positions without any recourse to the complaint process available under the Equal Opportunity Act.

2 A higher proportion of those without the attribute or with another attribute can or do comply. The majority of detectives are male and are not in the main primary caregivers. Thus, they are able to comply with the requirement to work full time hours for the totality of their careers. No male detectives expressed an interest in part time policing during this process of Expression of Interest and selection of part time employment. Thus, the second criterion of the test to meet the definition of indirect discrimination appeared to have been met.

3 I would now like to turn to the issue of whether the requirement – that all detectives work full time hours – was a reasonable requirement. The Police Association was

aware that at least 3 other police jurisdictions in Australasia had part time policing which allowed detectives to work on a part time basis. These were New Zealand, New South Wales and South Australia. We sought affidavits from female part time detectives in South Australia, and their full time supervisor who was supportive.

We also sought an affidavit from NSW Assistant Commissioner Christine Nixon, who was good enough to supply an affidavit to the effect that detectives in the NSW Police Service operated on a part time basis. In fact, it was at the First Australasian Women and Policing Conference that I recall discussing the issue of the exclusion of detectives from part time policing in Victoria, to which Assistant Commissioner Nixon replied that part time detectives did and could operate successfully. We had evidence from the New Zealand Police regarding detectives who worked in a part time capacity, but we did not seek affidavits from this jurisdiction.

Next we sought to demonstrate that detectives, even those employed on a full time basis, were not always required to work full time hours. We presented to the Anti Discrimination Tribunal evidence that showed that detectives had in the past been granted study leave for one or two days per week. In these instances, the operation of CIB branches was not compromised. Perhaps the most contentious evidence presented to the Tribunal was that male detectives, during the football season, regularly took full or half days off work on Wednesdays to play in the Victoria Police Football Teams. In this case, the team in which male detectives were released from work to participate as either players or spectators was the Eastern Tigers Football Club in suburban Melbourne, the geographical area in which the female detective worked. It was the contention, again, that if detectives were able to work less than full time hours to attend football matches, and their CIB offices did not suffer as a result of the absence, then it was an unreasonable requirement to expect the complainant, and all other detectives with the status of parent or carer, to work full time hours.

The reason for raising the issue of detectives working less than full time hours, by way of study and attendance at football matches was to show that the requirement to work full time hours for detectives was unreasonable, and in fact, *de facto* part time work was already happening. The Victoria Police Force did not



seem to argue the point relative to whether or not the requirement was reasonable; much argument was then taken up relative to whether or not detectives who went to play or watch football actually 'made up' the time spent at the football ground.

The Police Association was of the view, then, that the criteria for satisfying the test of indirect discrimination were met. The case ran for only three days in the Anti Discrimination Tribunal of Victoria. The Victoria Police Force then sought to settle the case. The female detective who lodged the complaint, Detective Senior Constable Debra Robertson, has been successfully working on a part time basis, as a Detective, for around 18 months.

The Victoria Police Force altered its original part time policy in June 1998 to remove restrictions on rank or job type from applying for part time hours. The policy now more

closely reflects the New Zealand model of 'Flexible Employment Option'. The issue of the original exclusion of ranks above Senior Constable could have been similarly run as a case of indirect discrimination. The same argument would apply; that is, that it was a requirement that all ranks above that of Senior Constable work full time hours. Those members of Sergeant rank and above with the status of parent or carer were not able to comply with this requirement. Ranks of Sergeant and above without the status of parent or carer could comply. The issue of reasonableness would have looked at the same issues; that is, other jurisdictions with ranks of Sergeant and above in part time policing, and whether or not ranks of Sergeant and above worked less than full time hours, such as for study purposes, or to play and/or watch football.

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*Issue One – Summer 1999*

*Issue Two – Autumn 1999*

# Second Australasian Conference of Women and Policing: Improving the position of women in policing

## ‘You Can’t Be a Mother and a Police Officer’: How Police Services Can Do It Better



Jennifer Bradley, Manager: Equity and Diversity,  
Australian Federal Police

Paper prepared for the Second Australasian Women and Policing Conference,  
Brisbane 7-9 July 1999

### Introduction

**Combining a career and motherhood is difficult for women in many professions and occupations. In policing, this combination is often considered undesirable – if not impossible – particularly if the woman wants to continue as an operational officer, and even more so if she sees herself as promotable.**

For individual women, poor management of their careers after having children may lead to scaling down of their career aspirations, settling for a different role or even leaving the job altogether. For police services, the results include loss in productivity, higher turnover of staff and the associated increased recruitment and training costs, as well as the loss of competent and experienced officers.

These days young women expect that they will be able to choose work **and** motherhood, not be forced to choose between them. Approximately 78% of Australian women will produce children during their lives. Police services cannot expect to recruit only the 22% who will not.<sup>i</sup>

This paper looks at the experiences of women in the AFP, and what I learned from research when I began to look for ways of doing it better.

### Background to AFP Study of Women after Maternity Leave

In 1997, I undertook a study of women in the AFP who had experienced a return from maternity leave within the last five years. I wanted to know not only how they had been managed on their return, but what had happened to them since. I was particularly interested in their level of satisfaction and what factors had contributed to their assessment of satisfaction or otherwise.

I already knew that some women had difficulties – both in the past and the present – when they wanted to return from maternity leave to a position that enabled them to work day shifts or part time. From discussion and anecdotes, I suspected that these individual problems may have been more widespread and if so, I wanted to get a better feel of their scope and the factors that underlay them.

One factor is that Australian society has changed dramatically over the last 20 years, particularly for women. In 1970, 32% of married women were in the workforce. By 1990, that figure had risen to 53% of all married women and 60% of all mothers with dependent children.<sup>ii</sup> At the same time, females are matriculating at greater rates and graduating from universities in equal numbers with males. These days young women do not expect to have to make a whole of life choice between work and motherhood.

If current AFP recruitment trends are any guide, more women are seeing policing as a suitable career. (The current percentage of AFP police who are female is 19%, but for 1998 and 1999, there has been a stable 37%-38% women in each recruit course.) Their representation in senior levels of policing remains, however, low.<sup>iii</sup>

The **1995 Karpin report** – the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills<sup>iv</sup> – considered that the poor representation of women at senior levels in organisations was a loss of much needed talent. A research report, undertaken for the Task Force, indicated that:

‘3. A family increases men’s work experiences and reduces women’s with subsequent effects on advancement, mediated by access to training and development.’

**‘These days young women do not expect to have to make a whole of life choice between work and motherhood.’**

Of the four barriers identified affecting more women being promoted to senior and executive management ranks, the third is listed as:

‘Work-family practices are in the main, ad hoc and token. Family friendly policies are increasingly important in attracting a quality workforce but are not strongly developed. ... **The linear, continuous model of a career operates not only as the norm but as a measuring device for assessing people’s work commitment** and as such is absurd for the vast majority of women whose work lives are constructed around temporary movements out of the workforce before a permanent return.’ (My emphasis)

‘Women are more likely to put career aspirations on hold as a direct response to the lack of opportunities that are made available to them. However the success of career break schemes in the finance and banking industry and increasingly beyond this industry demonstrates the value of a stance which assumes women’s continuing commitment to their careers.’

**Dr Susan Martin’s** studies of policewomen<sup>v</sup> have illuminated some of the issues of concern to women in policing. She says:

‘Despite great strides in assuring legal equality, in the US the harder issue of how to deal equitably with biological differences between the sexes remains unresolved. Because only women get pregnant, there is no way within our legal framework to treat men and women equally and equitably at the same time.

‘Underlying the American legal framework is the assumption that men and women naturally and biologically occupy different roles in life and that being a worker and a mother are incompatible.’

**Alec Waugh**, District Commander of Wanganui in the New Zealand Police, undertook a case study of policewomen in NZ.<sup>vi</sup> His paper began:

‘The assertion of my paper was that poor policy has characterised women’s position within policing and that gender imbalance is a common problem within the majority of police organisations.’

He surveyed women who had left NZ Pol over a number of years and discovered:

‘Two over-riding points surface from the survey results:

1. An over-riding tension between the police job and family duties
2. Gender discrimination. Put succinctly police-women frequently disengage or resign because they feel dominated and kept down by male attitudes, and the patriarchal nature of the police organisation.’

On the first point, he said:

‘In relation to that tension between the police job and family duties, it is absolutely essential that in any complex organisation like policing, the balance between home and work is vital. If the police workplace can become more family friendly and sensitive to the issues faced by staff who try to manage a career and family, the police organisation will benefit from increased loyalty, reduced absenteeism and higher levels of motivation and morale, balanced people provide a better customer service.’

In his conclusion of what needs to be done, he said:

1. Rethink the concept of the proper policeman.
2. Provide incentives for women to remain or return to police work after childbirth and time out, job sharing and part time work. Real incentives.
3. Provide subsidised childcare or workplace creche facilities. Partnerships with other organisations if these facilities cannot stand alone.
4. Make the police workplace family friendly.’

## **AFP Study of Women after Maternity Leave**

For my study of AFP women I sent out a general query to all staff via the internal electronic mail system with the following questions:

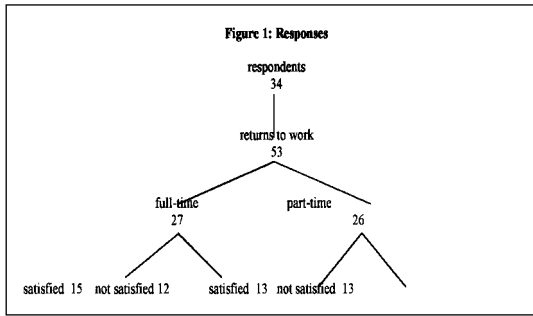
- after maternity leave, did you come back full or part time, and if full time, did you seek a day job?
- where were you deployed?
- if part time, what sort of work did you do?
- did your deployment utilise your existing skills, or was it just a way of working part time?
- what was the effect, if any, on your career development and career aspirations?

There was an additional question for male personnel who had sought or taken parental leave, but the only male respondents were those who wished to provide (positive) comments on the utilisation of women after maternity leave. Comments from these five have been built into the conclusions and recommendations.

There were 34 female respondents, covering 53 periods of maternity leave.

The following figure sets out responses in terms of full and part time returns and also divides these categories into those who were satisfied or not satisfied with what happened to them.





Although almost all respondents provided details of which region (or regions) they returned to, this is not included, as it became apparent that individual regions themselves were not a determinant of satisfaction or non satisfaction. The type of work, however did have an effect and this was clearly shown in the ACT region where shift work and community policing requirements added complications that were not as obvious in other regions.

Below is set out more information on the range of reasons women gave for being satisfied or not satisfied. I decided that inclusion of these comments in the final paper provided insight difficult to obtain from a statistical result. In addition, the comments provided clear indications of the reasons that some returns to work were better than others.

#### a) Reasons for lack of satisfaction

Reasons for non-satisfaction can be set out under the following headings:

- **poor organisation of return**

‘I found out later that the part time agreement was left on a desk in Personnel and was ‘forgotten about’ even though I had been ringing them at least once a week.’

‘Then I had to find my own position when I returned.’

‘Prior to returning to work after the birth of my second child I attempted to find a suitable position through HR. This was an absolute debacle.’

- **lack of support from supervisor or other levels of management**

‘My boss was not particularly understanding or sympathetic about my career/family situation.’

- **attitudes towards or difficulties in having part time work approved**

‘The part time work idea had just begun and was not fully understood by many supervisors, including my boss.’

‘I wanted a part time position, but guess what, in every area of the AFP the work was so critical that they had to have a full time officer!’

‘At that time, there was a mindset by senior

management that part time work was not conducive in an operational area.’

‘I still feel, especially for police women, there is a lingering perception of part time/day work being ‘given’ to women over the men and for those women who take up these positions their commitment to a police career automatically is in question.’

‘Part time not available in an operational area.’

- **negative attitudes towards pregnant or working mothers**

‘I was told from my Superintendent that should I be given a day shift position he would not release me because I shouldn’t be working in the first place.’

‘I found myself being overlooked for overtime and travel because of my new status as a mother. ... I have now changed teams and things have improved. But I still have to constantly remind people that I am able to carry on in my normal investigative capacity, as I have a good support network for childcare.’

‘The reason I left X was that I was an operational police officer who was pregnant and at six months transferred to the Family law squad, because ‘we like to look after our girls, dear.’ My duties were to be the general admin dogsbody.’

‘... It seems that once you have been on mat leave and had a child you are incompetent and prior experience (and your identity and brain!) is lost during that miraculous event.’

‘I explained my position (re family responsibilities) and was told that I could not do shift work because they could not afford to have someone in the area with children because they might need to take sick leave to care for them!!!’

‘If I had got part time work it would not have made a spot of difference to my career because I didn’t have one. The attitude is so negative towards returned mothers (soldiers/battlers may be more appropriate), I found the whole process very depressing and it did very little for my faith in AFP management.’

‘(During the 1980’s) on almost every occasion when I sought promotion or transfer, this “obstacle” has been taken into account. My husband probably wouldn’t like me to do that kind of work OR “had I discussed my aspirations for promotion with my husband?”. On each occasion I was asked “who would look after the child/children if I undertook this new task?”’

‘From my own experience, I can say that people seem to think you have forgotten a lot on maternity leave the same is not true if you decide

‘(During the 1980’s) on almost every occasion when I sought promotion or transfer, this “obstacle” has been taken into account. My husband probably wouldn’t like me to do that kind of work OR “had I discussed my aspirations for promotion with my husband?”. On each occasion I was asked “who would look after the child/children if I undertook this new task?”’

**'I feel that to have a child whilst working in the AFP completely stops and possibly regresses any career development that you may have.'**

to take long service leave and go trekking to an exotic location for five months. '

'His view was that women should be at home with their children so gave me (more leave).'

- ***problems with shifts not matching child care open hours***

'I was offered (job) starting at 7am, which was inappropriate due to day care not opening until 7.30-7.45 ...'

'... baby sitters do not appreciate calls saying you are going to be late, or if unable to get to a phone, not being told, the children will be picked up late.'

- ***having to do mundane work, below capacity, to be allowed part time***

'If I had been working part time, it would not have been an area where I would choose to work ... Personnel informed me there was nothing else available.'

- ***attitudes towards part time workers***

"Part time worker" as defined in the AFP dictionary means; disabled, physically or mentally by child bearing, a demanding woman who wants the AFP to provide for her ...'

'I chased (the part time work proposal paperwork) for a few weeks and was only told that I had been approved I then recommenced duty three weeks later only to be told that a part time position had not been created for me by personnel and that I was at work illegally ... back to HR only to be told that a position could be created if I really wanted to pursue it although it was administratively difficult!'

'... some managers are reluctant to consider the benefits of flexible workplace arrangements and make comments like "she's not getting part time in this region".'

- ***actual or perceived negative effect on career***

'If I had pushed the part time work bandwagon, I would have found myself in what I perceived to be an administrative position with no chance of promotion anyway.'

'I guess that working part time has put my career aspirations on hold.'

'I feel that to have a child whilst working in the AFP completely stops and possibly regresses any career development that you may have.'

'I realise that my career in the AFP has been curtailed because of my new status ... Whilst the AFP remains male dominated in the hierarchy, women will continue to get a raw deal in career development, as family issues are overlooked.'

'Automatically career options are narrowed with

administrative areas providing the best chance of career development.'

'I find that I have been limited in my seeking of "managerial" type jobs because the AFP places a lot of weight on current operational ability. Most operational areas ... do not cater for an 8-4 worker.'

'Stifled my operational career as it was automatically assumed I was "semi-retired".'

#### **b) Reasons for Satisfaction**

On the other hand, respondents mentioned a number of positive aspects:

- ***supportive (and often flexible) bosses***

'I would like to say that I appreciated Superintendent X's effort to try and have me work part time. The offer that he made me was excellent. I could have worked the hours that I wanted and he also took into consideration that I was still feeding. Many of our bosses are not "family friendly" like this.'

'I returned to my (previous) position and was involved in an EB that allowed me to participate in the shift work and operations in return for assisting the Level 4 with the administration of the Branch.'

'In fact, if it weren't for (Superintendent's) support, I doubt very much if I would have picked up my promotion ... 8 months later. In short my return to work was excellent.'

- ***supportive colleagues***

'I further stated that I realised that travel was a large component of (the work) and that having a two year old would limit my availability to leave town, especially at short notice. The management as well as team members were most accommodating to these needs.'

- ***being able to work part time***

'I see working part time as a bonus for me. I can still work and be in touch with the AFP as well as having extended time with my family. I do intend to return to full time work one day down the track.'

'So far my experience of part time work has been positive. My bosses and colleagues are family people and are sympathetic.'

- ***adaptability to family needs***

'Within a couple of months (of commencing the job) my son became quite ill ... I approached management and then fellow team members... As a result I am now working four days a week. (The proposal was agreed to as a two month trial.) At

this stage my work load has not suffered nor has it caused any disturbance to the investigations team.'

'I entered into a EB agreement whereby I work an extra hour on Mondays and Fridays. This, combined with my ADO gives me approximately one day off a fortnight ... (which) enable me to contribute to the childminding needs of my daughter.'

'The agreement to part shifts was a great solution for both my family and my day carer. During this time I was still available to work some shifts where others had called in sick.'

- *positive effects on career*

'In terms of my career development, this has occurred to some extent as I have had a much greater responsibility for policy development etc than before and have had the added responsibility of undertaking the role of team leader for some major policy proposals.'

'Whilst some of these roles (have not) utilised my investigative skills, they are in line with career development for me, given my tertiary studies.'

'Yes, I have to say that my skill level as far as operational policing has dropped, but I have become skilled in other areas ...'

## **Recommendations and Subsequent Actions in the AFP**

The report concluded that, although the AFP had a wide range of 'family friendly' policies and practices, accessing them satisfactorily was dependent on where and for whom a woman worked. Where team leaders and managers were supportive, flexible arrangements could be made, which worked both for the woman and the AFP. Attitudes of managers towards working mothers and/or flexible working patterns were an important inhibitor for many women.

A number of recommendations appeared at the end of the report, focussing on suggestions for better management of maternity leave, placement on return, career planning and several addressing the issue of attitudes. In addition, the paper had two attachments:

- notes for team leads and managers on ways of implementing requests for part time work or other flexible working patterns
- an updated policy on deployment of women during pregnancy, which would form an attachment to the AFP's maternity leave policy.

Some of these recommendations have resulted in action:

- the Commissioner launched an annual Work-Life Award in conjunction with the Australia Day awards in 1999; this has the dual advantage of recognising good management and of giving a message about what is possible and rewarded – nominations in 1999 confirmed the findings of the Maternity Leave Study
- the two attachments were finalised and have now appeared on the AFP's internal web site as policies.

Several other aspects are being included in team leader and manager training and in the development of career planning.

## **Where to Next?**

The problems fall into two categories:

- attitudes
- practicalities of enabling women (and men) to combine parenthood with a career in policing.

The second problem is easier to solve than the first. Although policing is often considered unique, not all aspects are unique. For example, other occupations may also operate on a 24 hour presence, requiring shift work and rostering arrangements.

- **Other occupational examples**

At present some 15-20% of Australian workers are shift workers and this percentage is expected to increase over the next decade. Shifts are increasing in manufacturing industries, in transport, fast food and retail areas as well as the entertainment industry. The largest proportion (33%) in Australia at present is in community services, which covers police, hospital workers, firefighters and ambulance workers.<sup>vii</sup>

If we look at hospital workers,<sup>viii</sup> specifically nurses, they have been using flexible and individually negotiated roster systems for years. Nursing increasingly utilises part time, day shift and, for the private sector, casual workers, to staff their institutions. Moves towards flexible rostering were largely driven by necessity, in that recruitment of nurses became difficult. Most of the flexible arrangements are the result of individual negotiations and may include a defined shift pattern, whereby the nurse works the same set shifts each week. Nurses with extensive experience or specialist skills are often more able to negotiate their own arrangements as market demand for their skills is high.

Even though there has also been an increase in concepts such as day surgery, day (9-5) shifts are still at a premium. This is exacerbated by lack of

**'If we look at hospital workers, specifically nurses, they have been using flexible and individually negotiated roster systems for years. Nursing increasingly utilises part time, day shift and, for the private sector, casual workers, to staff their institutions.'**

**'It would be nice to think that these dinosaurs are all older and will soon retire, but unfortunately that is not so. Some of them are only in their thirties, and, while they might be seen as having limited potential for modern management, certain older managers regard them as sufficiently like themselves to be naturals for promotion. The definition of "succession planning" as "intergenerational cloning" is true in policing, as in many other organisations.'**

child care outside the usual working band hours (8-6), particularly in rural areas, where child care of any kind may be difficult. In metropolitan areas, some hospitals have set up their own on site child care, which provides care applicable to the hours nurses need.

Nursing does have a reasonably high loss of nurses from the workforce following childbirth, although there is a strong trend towards resuming after the baby years are over.

Flexible working patterns, which meet the organisation's needs and those of the parent – particularly to match access to family support or external child care – are a vital first step for policing. Part-time work, individually negotiated shift hours, job sharing, home based work can all be considered, as can longer periods of leave, and sharing the early child care between two parents.

The concept of 'career breaks' has become more common in industries such as the finance sector, whereby women can return after some years absence.

Policing should also be looking at these options:

- career breaks, which would enable women to opt out of work for several years and then return
- utilising women after maternity leave in say, relief pools, whereby they could be on a list to fill in shift and other shortages, returning to permanent full or part time work later.

Having a pool of relief police could assist police services to meet their own staff shortages from time to time, as well as ensuring that police officers could retain their existing skills.

- **Organisational attitudes**

Attitudes towards flexible working patterns still leave much to be desired, as there is strong tendency to see anyone who chooses or needs to work less than full time as not 'serious' about the job and contributing little. We need to challenge those assumptions.

Maintaining a link with one's chosen profession by part time work is, to my mind, proof that someone is serious about a career. Organisations should also remember that males as well as females need access to flexible conditions, and that family needs cover a wider scope than just young children.

The level of productivity of part time workers has frequently been commented upon as being in excess of their paid time at work.

Assumptions about what constitutes a career should also be tackled. It seems to be readily accepted that a career is, as the Karpin report said,

a linear progression. There are two things that need challenging. First that a career is a straight line upwards. Many professions do not see careers this way. Take lawyers and doctors for example. They may work outside those organisations which measure success by steps up a hierarchical ladder, having their success measured by becoming more expert, often in specialised areas. Dentists, psychologists, speech pathologists, therapists, social workers, may fit this model of professionalism.

Secondly, we need to challenge the concept of a career as an unbroken progression. Men do take career breaks – for secondments, for sabbaticals, for further education – all of which are seen as enhancing their skills. It is interesting that women are seen as losing their skills – and sometimes even their brains – when they have children and spend some time rearing them. Turning around this view to see childbirth and rearing as providing additional skills in organising, in time management and most particularly, in dealing with difficult people, would be both more accurate and an advance.

The attitudes that still exist towards women police and working mothers, however, need a direct onslaught. For some managers, advice on how things can work is essential in enabling them to implement flexible policies. Others will accept a change if they are persuaded to trial it and find for themselves that it works. But there are yet others who will not be convinced by such ways. They are firmly convinced that women with children should not be in the workforce, or that policing is a career that cannot be combined with a family that is, if you are a woman – and are prepared to say so. Or that, if you choose to work part time for a period, then you are not serious about promotion.

It would be nice to think that these dinosaurs are all older and will soon retire, but unfortunately that is not so. Some of them are only in their thirties, and, while they might be seen as having limited potential for modern management, certain older managers regard them as sufficiently like themselves to be naturals for promotion. The definition of 'succession planning' as 'intergenerational cloning' is true in policing, as in many other organisations.

An additional attitudinal problem also applies these days. Despite an ageing workforce, and a population which is not only getting older but is active longer, there is a growing tendency for people to 'make it' younger. Chris Sidoti, Discrimination Commissioner, referred to this in his recent paper on age discrimination.



For women, being considered 'too old' can arise from spending their late twenties and/or some of their thirties raising children and trying to maintain their place in the organisation. These are the years when the 'high fliers' start their flight to the top and talent is seen as the province of the young.

- **Changing the present**

If the current situation is to change, it will not happen because police services choose to do h, but because women are prepared to fight to have different career patterns accepted as serious alternatives to the linear route to the top that is currently in vogue. All improvements to women's working lives were the result of women fighting, lobbying and arguing to have them changed. Maternity leave, equal pay, the right to work after marriage, changed only as a result of pressure by women. No individual woman can do it alone. It takes collective action to keep up the pressure and to show organisations and those who oppose change that women have a lot to offer and that organisations, particularly those that serve the community, need women.

- **Individual Action**

Individually, women should not take 'no' as final if they want either a day shift or part time work. Persuade, show the recalcitrant or unimaginative boss how it could work. Don't give up too easily.

Seek assistance from relevant areas in or outside the organisation. If you want to continue your career, show that it means a lot to you. If you have any choice, try to work for good managers.

Remember men are parents too; encourage your male police partner to share the parenting, to take parental leave, periods of part time work and family leave. When men demand to have their own family responsibilities recognised, the attitudes that now apply to mothers will be forced to change.

Women should also tell themselves that they deserve promotion, if they consider they have the skills and knowledge to do a good job. If you see yourself as suitable for higher positions, sooner or later some panel will accept you at your word. Remember that men tend to apply for promotion if they think they might almost meet most of the selection criteria, women tend not to apply until they are certain they meet all the criteria at a high level.

Take a message from *The Women's Power Handbook* by Joan Kirner and Moira Rayner and develop your own sense of power – power to do and be what you want.

*Without power, women 's needs and hopes and plans are always secondary to somebody else 's. That is no way for modern women to live. They need to make their full contribution to society, in every part of their lives. They need to be in a position to be able to make their own choices and to achieve things for themselves.*<sup>ix</sup>

And those of us without children can support others in the workplace with different needs. Any male or female worker could need access to flexible conditions because of illness, or because of a whole range of family needs apart from children.

- **Collective Action**

Women can achieve a lot together, through the workplace, women's networks and unions. We can persuade our police services to adopt and implement appropriate policies. We can develop demands for unions to use workplace agreements to improve the way in which policies and practices affect women's careers and lives.

Through conferences such as this, women's views can be brought to the attention of Commissioners of Police. The Australasian Council for Women and Policing (ACWAP) can pursue issues arising from our roles in police services, or as members of the community. We can follow up the results from the surveys carried out by the Australasian Centre for Policing Research (ACPR) to ensure that issues identified are addressed appropriately.

We can lobby our jurisdictional representatives on the Australasian Women in Policing Advisory Committee (AWIPAC) about the way we would like them to take up issues that concern us.

Don't forget that like-minded men can be valuable allies. And we can look forward to the fact that as numbers of women in policing grow to a 'critical mass' – usually considered at about 20-25% – that 'women's issues' will become policing issues, rather than something that is outside the real concerns of the workplace.

- **Finally ...**

Remember the song written by Glen Tomasetti for the first equal pay case in 1969 which became a theme song for many women unionists over the years:

*Don't be too polite, girls, don't be too polite;  
Show a little fight, girls, show a little fight;  
Don't be fearful of offending in case you get  
the sack;  
Just recognise your value and you won't look  
back.*<sup>x</sup>

**'Individually, women should not take "no" as final if they want either a day shift or part time work. Persuade, show the recalcitrant or unimaginative boss how it could work. Don't give up too easily.'**

## References

<sup>i</sup> Professor Peter McDonald (1998) Contemporary fertility patterns; First data from the 1996 Census *People and Place*, Vol. 6 No. 1, 1998 (page 8).

<sup>ii</sup> Statistics from various Australian Bureau of Statistics Publications.

<sup>iii</sup> Personal statistics prepared from lists of new recruits and the Australian Federal Police data base, as provided for annual reports.

<sup>iv</sup> *Enterprising Nation: Renewing Australia's Managers to meet the Challenges of the Asia-Pacific Century: Report of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills. Research Report: 'Managing for Diversity' by Dr Clare Burton and Carolyn Ryall with the assistance of Christine Todd (pages 765-814). Commonwealth of Australia 1995.*

<sup>v</sup> Susan E. Martin, PhD *Doing Gender, Doing Police Work: an examination of the Barriers to the Integration of Women Officers*, paper presented at the First Australasian Women Police Conference, Sydney, July 1996.

<sup>vi</sup> Alec Waugh, District Commander – Wanganui, New Zealand Police, *Women in Police*. Paper presented at the First Australasian Women Police Conference, Sydney, July 1996.

<sup>vii</sup> From a series of articles on shiftwork, prepared by Associate Professor Drew Dawson, of the University of South Australia, based at the Centre for Sleep Research at the Queens Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide. The research was supported in part by the Department of Industrial Relations (which provided me with the copies) and WorkSafe Australia. (No date on papers).

<sup>viii</sup> The information in this section was supplied to me by telephone and by Email, as a result of a request on an electronic discussion forum, convened by the Department of Employment, Workplace Relation and Small Business, on work and family responsibilities.

<sup>ix</sup> Joan Kirner and Moira Rayner, *The Women's Power Handbook*, Viking/Penguin Books Australia 1999.

<sup>x</sup> Glen Tomasetti, song written for the first equal pay case in the High Court, 1969, taken from my own ABC supplied tape, used for local women and unions radio programs in the 1970s.

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- improve the position of women within policing
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