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*Federal Agent, Kerry Davenport,
ACT Motorcycle Police Officer.*

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The Journal for Women and Policing

Dear Margaret,

I would like to express my gratitude for the Professional perspective article in your September 2002 journal – The Impact of Police Culture on Women and Their Performance in Policing.

The paper presented by Carmel Niland at the First Australasian Women Police Conference in 1996 referred to a study she had undertaken with the Australian Federal Police. Generally speaking her findings showed that women had not been fully accepted by or integrated into the AFP and identified the need for our organisation to change. Reading this article has given me, and others, the opportunity to reflect on how far the AFP has come since that time.

Although we, like other police services, have a way to go, it is pleasing to see the AFP funded more than 100 delegates at the recent Women and Policing Globally conference and, as host jurisdiction, partnered with ACWAP and the IAWP to deliver an international conference that addressed women and policing issues.

The Carmel Niland exercise provided our organisation with a challenge and over the last few years we have seriously addressed these issues. We intend to conduct a similar review in 2005/2006 to measure just how far we have come.

Ann McEvoy
Federal Agent
Worklife Diversity AFP.

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editorial

It's time to deliver the good words again to all our members and others who read our Journal.

A selection of papers presented at the Conference in October are now printed for you our readers to peruse and ponder upon on how we make the difference and if we are not how we can. During the year further papers will be featured enabling all to read and catch up on some session presentations perhaps missed during the conference. If you are impatient and wish to discover the wealth of knowledge before these papers are printed in our magazine they can be found at <http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/policewomen3/>

The commemorative pictorial edition of the journal was received enthusiastically not only in Australia but Internationally. This allows us to expand our network throughout many nations and put extra efforts into extending equity and diversity throughout the global law enforcement workplace.

As you will see, time has brought change. A new feature has been added, the "fella's" are having a say. Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Crime and Director Human Recourses have been interviewed seeking their view on what they think about the present day workforce and the direction it is taking. Not a bad read and now that most women's networks ensure their programs are open to all members of the force and associated agencies, interest and feedback makes a greater impact when addressing workplace or personal issues.

This issue also profiles Alan Malinchak, Chief Investigative Trainer for the FBI. Alan's presentation at our conference was the role of conflict resolution in the workplace and when acquired, a skill that proves most beneficial particularly when needed in the workplace.

Our cover, Federal Agent Kerry Davenport, features a member of the ACT community police in Canberra. The bike she is pictured with is the machine she rides when on duty.

Speak with you next issue,

Marg Rhodes
Editor

Women Celebrate

International Women's Day Celebrations in Melbourne were celebrated with a march. Wednesday March 5, was the day Chief Commissioner Victoria Police Christine Nixon gathered with 150 uniformed and ununiformed women south of Melbourne's Princes Bridge. The 150 women members of Vicpol were to symbolise the 150 years of Victorian Policing. There were six on horseback leading the march to finish in Federation square where a BBQ was set up for the International Women's Day celebrations. Already waiting at this rendezvous was State Minister for Women's Affairs, Ms Mary Delahunty accompanied by a number of her parliamentary colleagues. CCP Nixon and Minister Delahunty donned the cooking aprons marked 'International Women's Day' and prepared the tasty lunch for the complement of personnel gathered



around the BBQ. At the same time a student's peace protest group were demonstrating in the square they also were invited to share in the celebratory feast.

The day was such an enjoyable success for our women and their contribution to community work, Minister Delahunty was heard to inquire "What are we doing next year Jill?" Inspector Jill Wood, Vicpol considering said "How about a march for all the Emergency Services and Defence?" With a swift reply by the minister suggesting the organisation of 2004 march would be in good hands and further more be as great a success, if not better than 2003, the date was set. So make sure you are ready in Victoria for the March 8th International Women's Day march, a date in the diary is all you need and be there.

Australian Federal Police celebrated at Barton College, Canberra, with a dinner and the display of historical achievements by women in the service of law enforcement.

At Melbourne AFP Southern Headquarters, CCP Nixon was the guest speaker at a morning tea hosted by the Women's Network where she spoke of her career and the journey she has travelled to reach her present position.



Ms Nixon gave clear indication of the required managerial skills for those aspiring to move forward with their careers and a brief leadership overview. This allowed queries to be taken from those present and from the feed back, Ms Nixon is a guest who is requested to return. The morning was opened to all members of the AFP, Vicpol personnel, also representatives from Customs, DIMA, ACC and other law enforcement agencies. These networking mornings are arranged to benefit of all serving members of law enforcement agencies and enables these members to consider the value of mentoring, education and career direction.



Fella's have their say ... an Interview Friday the 16th of May, 2003 between Assistant Commissioner Crime, Victoria Police, Simon Overland, Victoria Police Human resources Director, Sanjib Roy, Victoria Police Supt. Sandy Langlands, Serious Crime Investigation Division and Inspector Jill Wood, Victoria Police Women's Liaison officer.

SL to Simon: Simon, can you tell me about your background in policing?

Simon: My background in policing is with Federal Police, I joined at a young age and after completing a tertiary degree I worked in the ACT area, a short period of time in uniform and the equivalent of the Special Operations Group here, then I worked as a Detective in a number of areas, from there I went to Internal Investigation for a period of time. I then worked for the Federal Minister for Justice, who was then Duncan Kerr as an adviser, which was a great experience. I was then promoted to General Manager Finance and People management into a corporate role which was a bit of a change of pace but one that I thought would be interesting to get experience on the corporate side. I was then promoted to the role of chief operating officer (Deputy Commissioner level) for the AFP which was the role I was in immediately to coming here. I spent most of my last year off line as a project manager, Australian Crime Commission Implementation Team. I have a Bachelor of law with first class

honours (ANU) a Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies and a Bachelor of Arts in Administration (University of Canberra).

SL to Sanjib: Sanjib, could you outline a little bit about your background?

Sanjib: As far as education goes I have a Bachelor of Arts (Melbourne) a Master of Economics and Bachelor of Science with Honours (La Trobe) and a Diploma Corporate Director (University of New England/ Corporate Directors Association of Australia) and I am currently developing my own management concepts in my thesis for a philosophy doctorate from RMIT University. I have led teams responsible for significant change in various State Government Departments, commissions and authorities. In the Department of Manufacturing and Industry Development I helped restructure the State Electricity Commission and the Gas and Fuel Corporation. In the Department of transport I worked on the Cain Governments social justice strategy and I still get pleasure from seeing such facilities as disabled parking, low floor trams and community buses.

I was also the CEO of the Metropolitan Ambulance service and Executive officer with the State Department of Human Services.

Sandy to Simon: Simon, how do you think the health of Vic Pol compares to other forces?

Simon: I think Victoria Police is in pretty good shape, certainly from my experience with AFP and experience I have had with other police jurisdictions, QLD in particular I had a lot to do with and I think the organisation in many ways compares very favourably with other organisations. It's funny you know, I've been to just about every



jurisdiction in Australia and they all claim to be the best and I think in some ways that's not always a helpful call to make because it is about reaching your potential and being as good as you can be and there is no end to that.

SL to Sanjib: What do you think about the health of Vic Pol Sanjib.

Sanjib: I don't really have the comparison that Simon has with other police forces but in terms of other organisations what I have to say is that the leadership is very good, it is enabling a leadership. There is a lot of energy and encouragement for greater diversity, what surprises me is that we have so few women, at higher levels, we have the Chief Commissioner, 2 Superintendents and 11 Inspectors out of a total of 320 positions. What we have to do is be looking at attracting the right type of people. In terms of organisational health, the well being of the people, physically, emotionally and psychologically is very important and we need to encourage people to take the time to balance their lives. A person who is happy at home is likely to be happy at work and a person who is happy at work is likely to be happy at home.

Simon: I'd agree, Victoria Police compares very favourably, there are always issues, that's the case with any organisation and there is a real opportunity to do some very exciting things.

Sanjib: The way that I look at this is for any of the strengths we have a corresponding shadow side, and it is a matter of managing that shadow side appropriately, that's the challenge.

Jill to Sanjib: What are the particular values a woman brings to an organisation such as Vic Pol?

Sanjib: I think that generally it brings about a different type of culture Women generally tend to be better at diffusing unnecessary tension and correspondingly a police force with a high representation of women tend to deal with issues of brutality better. This doesn't mean of course men can't do as well, it depends on the quality of the people in the police force.

Jill to Simon: "Would you like to comment on that Simon?"

Simon: I agree with what Sanjib said and I think there is a fundamental issue too, the structures that exist in policing have actively excluded women and the 17.6% of women only highlights that and the lack of women at senior levels, Victoria is not on its own, you look at any jurisdiction in Australia, some are better, some are not and I find this a bit offensive to be honest because I think that there is a fundamental issue of fairness to

be addressed. But, that aside I think there are a whole range of very good business reasons why we do want a more diverse workforce and I include a whole range of difference in that but I think women's issues are foremost because it seems to me that unless we can address those we will never be likely to address some of the other issues. It seems to me that the sort of environment people need to get into, is where we are dealing with ambiguity, very complex environments rapid change. If we have a monolithic and homogenous workforce we are not really conditioned to provide that sort of environment and we do have to improve the diversity of the workforce. In terms of the skills that women in particular bring, I agree with Sanjib that all the evidence supports the analysis that leads to different approaches to problems. Issues like domestic violence, I think also, fundamentally at the risk of generalising, I think there are differences between men and women but it is a matter of celebrating those differences and women with their networking skills, their communication skills, their capacity to engage people is fundamentally important to where we are going as an organisation. And I think women have an enormous amount to offer, from my own experience of women in policing organisations, by and large, if given an opportunity, they don't let you down. That's not universally true but you wouldn't expect it to be.

Jill: That follows on very nicely to my next question, I have spoken to a number of people who like the combination of a man and women working together because they bring two sets of skills and can compliment each other, Sanjib, would you like to comment on that?

Sanjib: Yes, I think one of the good things about having more women in the organisation gives a sense of balance so that generally women can do so many things at one time. They have been mothers and daughters and they have been housewives, they work and they are expected to do about 5 things at once so in that kind of holistic way of seeing the connection between different things and remembering if I did this now what the consequence would be. The future is a very longer term. There are brain surgeons who are women, astronauts who are women and it is shown that type of complex work can be done, and done successfully with men and women partnering each other, and besides, whatever people think about women will be blown out of the water, never to come back, we have a living breathing example of that in our Chief Commissioner.

Jill to Simon: Simon, would you like to comment on that.

Simon: Yes, reflecting on one of my own experiences, when I went to work for Duncan Kerr in his office it was a watershed experience for me in the way that one of the key experiences was working in an office full of women. A woman as senior adviser and coming out of law enforcement that was something I hadn't experienced before and it was just a revelation, it was fantastic. It was a great environment as gender was removed as an issue and what mattered was your capacity to contribute to the smooth and effective running of the office and people were simply accepted on their capacity to contribute to those things. I make the point in law enforcement, that's all that matters and I really don't care about who people are or what they are. Fundamentally it is what they contribute to the organisation, we need to put all that aside and focus on the goals and vision, so I prefer to concentrate on the things that unite rather than the things that divide. I'd like to get to a day where we are not talking about this because it ceases to be an issue.

Sanjib: I have been fortunate that most of my bosses in my career have been women and I have learnt many

things from them and I'm still learning a lot of wonderful things from Christine

Simon: To be honest the reason I am here in Victoria is because of Christine, she is leading this organisation in a really exciting direction, she is an admirable person and an admirable leader and I wanted to work for her.

Sandy to Simon: What is your vision for the future?

Simon: When these types of issues are no longer issues

Sanjib: What I like is working in an organisation like this is. It is a place where things are happening and people are being encouraged to achieve their potential.

Jill to Sandy: As one of our most senior women, would you like to comment on this?

Sandy: I'd mirror what Sanjib and Simon have said, If things had have been different when I joined 31 years ago perhaps the hiccups I faced, (and let me say they have been very minor compared to others), and we were all valued and difference was accepted not challenged, the difficulties people have experienced along the way would not exist.

Equity Confounded? New Managerialism, Organisational Restructuring and Women in Australian Police Services

Jenny Fleming and George Lafferty –
School of Industrial Relations, Griffith University

Introduction

Until the mid-1980s, police services in Australia were structured on authoritarian, quasi-military lines. Recruitment and training were conducted internally, while promotion occurred on the basis of seniority, with little regard for merit or equity. The male-dominated 'cop culture' was notorious in Australia as elsewhere for its insularity and the exclusion of women and minority groups (see Brown 1997). The inclusion of more women police officers, often with higher education qualifications, was at odds with male police officers' perceptions of policing as a male profession. Both senior police management and police unions, which hold almost 100 per cent membership among rank-and-file officers, have a long tradition of opposition to any organisational change or external intervention (Fleming and Lafferty 2000).

However, since that time, several factors have contributed in varying degrees to a change in the ways in which police organisations have been managed. These factors have included: the implementation of equity legislation and campaigns by women in police organisations, the introduction of 'new' management techniques largely derived from the private sector, and Commissions of Inquiry into police misconduct and corruption in Queensland and New South Wales. Focusing primarily on the Queensland Police Service and using the New South Wales Police Service¹ as a comparative example, this paper seeks to evaluate the importance of these respective factors in the achievement of greater equity for women in policing.

The paper argues that EEO legislation and equity campaigns have had a limited impact on furthering the careers of women police officers in these two states, particularly in the face of resistance from many police officers and their unions.² It further indicates that the second factor, new managerial techniques, has been significant, but only in conjunction with the political momentum for change garnered by the respective Commissions of Inquiry in the two states. Following public revelations of widespread misconduct and corruption, these Commissions of Inquiry provided frameworks for reform.

They stipulated accountability and employment diversity (including the need for police organisations to be more representative of the broader community) as integral components of the struggle against misconduct and corruption. These factors, combined with their recommendations for higher education for police officers, substantially improved the employment prospects for women in policing. The paper concludes by discussing how strategies for achieving greater equity such as EEO policies and associated legislation, given the highly distinctive characteristics of police organisations, may not be the most critical factors in achieving more equitable outcomes for women police officers.

Equity: Legislation, Campaigns, Practice

In Australia and internationally, efforts to increase the representation of women in police services have often been located within a context of organisational change and the pursuit of greater

There is an extensive literature on policing internationally, with several academic journals devoted exclusively to policing issues. However, there is a relative dearth of research on gender and police organisations. This paper seeks to contribute to redressing this lack of gender-related policing research, through an examination of employment equity within two Australian police services, Queensland and New South Wales, with specific reference to the impact of public inquiries, new managerial techniques and organisational restructuring. The paper questions the argument that Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) legislation and policies have been significant factors in the advancement of women in policing. While recognising that these have had some beneficial influence, it points to the greater importance in specific jurisdictions of systematic efforts to transform the cultures, work and management practices of police organisations.

¹ The Queensland Police Force (QPF) was renamed the Queensland Police Service (QPS) in 1990 as part of the Fitzgerald Report's recommendations. Also in 1990, the New South Wales Police Force was renamed the New South Wales Police Service. However, the term 'Service' has been removed

recently (in 2002), and the organisation is now referred to simply as the New South Wales Police.

² The role of police unions in advancing gender equity is often minimal. For the attitude of European police unions see Brown (1997): 7.

quality of service (Silvestri 1998). In this respect the wide-ranging implementation, from the mid-1980s onwards, of public sector 'reform' had a limited impact on Australia's police organisations (one Federal, six State and two Territory jurisdictions). As governments sought to achieve cost reductions, increased productivity, efficiency and administrative accountability, a broad range of 'new' management techniques, derived mainly from the private sector, was implemented. While there are many possible criticisms of 'new managerialism' (see Fleming and Lafferty 2000), it should have led, given its ostensible commitment to equity and merit, to at least some erosion of the insular character of police recruitment, training and promotion. However, as this paper will illustrate, several police organisations and police unions have successfully resisted these processes, insulating themselves from the major changes occurring elsewhere in the public sector.

Equity and anti-discrimination initiatives also had limited effects on police organisations. Whereas in the US and UK, equity legislation and policies have prompted stronger integration of female police officers, in Australia, despite comparable legislation and policies, the process has been slower and more piecemeal, varying from state to state (Heidensohn 1998: 220; Prenzler 1998). The capacity of police organisations to evade equity legislation has been remarkable, based on their conservatism, the male dominance inherent in 'cop culture' and the close relationships that police organisations have had historically with state governments (derived largely from the political importance of 'law and order' issues).

Nonetheless, changes in the nature of police work itself have to some extent created a more favourable environment for women in policing, as there has emerged a growing emphasis on community policing and issues such as domestic violence, traditionally downplayed by police. Much of the policing literature has suggested that women are less coercive, more 'virtuous' and have higher ethical standards than their male colleagues. Consequently, women officers are seen as less likely to perpetuate 'cop culture', particularly its more questionable aspects, and more likely to report misconduct by fellow officers (see, for example, Miller and Braswell 1992). A survey conducted in 1996 by Queensland's Criminal Justice Commission found that the policing styles of women officers attracted fewer public complaints. However, the long-term differences between male and female police officers may be considerably less pronounced. Once faced with the reality of daily policing, women officers appear to be as ready as men to accommodate

themselves to the prevailing 'cop culture' and appear to be no more likely to report the misconduct of fellow officers (CJC 1996; Waugh et al 1998).

Women have to some extent been recruited to improve the community's traditional image of police towards a more 'feminine' character, but such measures do not appear to have substantially improved recruitment levels (Berry 1996; Brown 1997, 1998a, 1998b; Heidensohn 1996). Women continue to be severely under-represented in senior policing ranks and police organisations are still a considerable distance from achieving the full integration of women and their complete acceptance by male police officers (Brown 1998, Nicolson 1996). There is a general perception among male police officers that their female colleagues have less physical aptitude for police work. However, recent research (Ffrench and Waugh 1998) has indicated few differences between men and women police officers, while also undermining any belief that women officers are less able to deal with aggressive offenders. Overall, then, equity legislation has not had the impact on police women's recruitment and advancement that it may once have promised. However, women police officers have also been active in seeking to improve their own employment situations.

During the 1990s, concerted campaigns by women police officers to achieve greater equity gained momentum. Important initiatives in this regard included Conferences of Australasian Women Police, the Australasian Council of Women and Policing, and the newsletter of Australasian Women Police, *The Whip* ('Women Here in Policing'). Yet there remains strong evidence of a dual labour market within police organisations. Even those women police officers who have been at the forefront of these campaigns have followed clearly gender-specific career paths, which have seen them working primarily in areas such as neighbourhood watch, child abuse and domestic violence (see, for example, *Police News*, November 1997: 45-46).

These campaigns have also been hindered to some extent by Australia's geography. For example, networking by women police officers is often seen as an important avenue for their professional development. However, networking by Australian women police officers has not yet reached the levels achieved in the United States (Brown 1998: 228). Outside Australia's main urban areas, many police stations have only one woman police officer. Therefore the networking possibilities are severely constrained. This is particularly the case in Queensland, the most decentralised of Australia's mainland states.

Political factors have also impeded networking. Support from senior management for these initiatives has been at times superficial, and there has also been outright hostility from senior male police, male officers and unions (see, for example, Tynan 1998). Yet the prospects for women police officers have improved in recent years, the issue that the paper will now address. It illustrates how the process of police reform and restructuring arising from the Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry in Queensland generated greater momentum for gender equity in the Queensland Police Service.

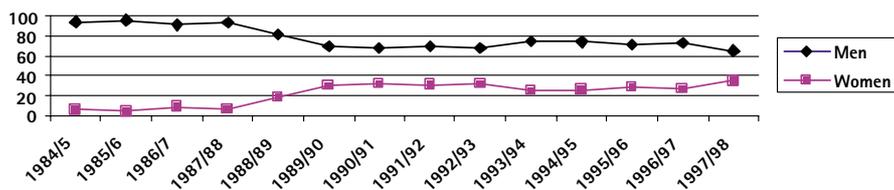
Queensland

Queensland's police service is Australia's third largest numerically (after New South Wales and Victoria) and covers the second largest area geographically (after Western Australia). Despite the introduction of both equity legislation and 'new managerialism' across the public sector, the Queensland Police Force (QPF) remained resistant to external intervention or organisational change. There had, however, been some minor advances in terms of greater equity for women in policing. Ironically, these were facilitated by the authoritarian character of the police hierarchy, which gave individual Police Commissioners extensive powers to either encourage or inhibit change. During the 1970s, under Commissioner Ray Whitrod (1970-1976), the employment of women police flourished – albeit from a very low base. Despite the opposition of both a conservative State government and the Queensland Police Union (QPU), the proportion of women police rose to 8.5 per cent of all officers (Bolen 1997).

This brief era of significant, but limited improvements was brought to a halt when Commissioner Terry Lewis took over. During Lewis's period in charge from 1976 to 1987, the recruitment of women police officers declined. The Commissioner's unusual preoccupation with lesbianism in the Force underpinned his commitment to tighter controls over the entry of women into the QPF, to the extent that he personally interviewed each potential woman recruit, a procedure he did not extend to potential male recruits (Prenzler and Wimshurst 1997:92-97). During Lewis's period as Commissioner, Queensland fell considerably behind

other Australian states, since it lacked a sizeable cohort of potential senior women police officers (see figure 1).³

Figure 1. Queensland police recruits by gender: 1984-1998 (per cent)



The situation changed dramatically, though, with the establishment in 1987 of a Commission of Inquiry, chaired by Tony Fitzgerald QC, following a period of intense media and community pressure on the government to investigate police administration and conduct. One of the Commission's first casualties was Commissioner Terry Lewis himself, forced to resign following revelations of his involvement in systemic corruption, for which he was eventually convicted and jailed. The Commission's Report (the 'Fitzgerald Report'), delivered to Parliament in July 1989, revealed extensive police misconduct and endemic corruption.

The Report identified several main factors that contributed to corruption, misconduct and mismanagement in the QPF: its rigid, over-centralised hierarchical structure, inequitable recruitment, training, performance appraisal and promotion practices, and an insular organisational culture, in which criticism of other police was seen as 'impermissible' (Fitzgerald, 1989: 202). Increasing recruitment and promotion of women police was seen as a priority in addressing these problems. According to the Report, more women police officers would assist the creation of a police service that was more representative of the community and would also bring a wider array of skills to policing. Women were also viewed as important in transforming the culture of Queensland's police service, particularly in eroding a 'police code' that protected officers guilty of misconduct or corruption (Fitzgerald 1989: 200-203, 246).

At the time of the Report, and despite formal equity and anti-discrimination legislation, informal processes of exclusion within the police service had ensured that women police officers comprised only between 5 and 12 per cent of any intake, although women accounted for around 25 per cent of applicants (Fitzgerald 1989: 246). The drop-out rate also tended to be considerably higher among women recruits than among their male

³ all figures are adapted from the following sources. Prenzler and Hayes (2000), plus official documents from the New South Wales and Queensland police services.

counterparts. Prior to the Report, the QPF had introduced a policy to increase the overall proportion of women police officers to 7 per cent, through including a quota of 20 per cent women in each intake. However, the Report rejected a quota system as inflexible, proposing instead the 'removal of past restrictions on the recruitment of women, and placing the emphasis on recruiting the best possible applicants for police service irrespective of sex, race, or religion' (Fitzgerald 1989: 382). During the first half of the 1990s, the proportion of female recruits increased to over 30 per cent, while the proportion of applicants increased only slightly, to around 30 percent (Prenzler 1996; Wimshurst 1995).

One of the most important Fitzgerald recommendations in terms of the achievement of greater gender equity, although not explicitly directed towards women in policing, was the encouragement of higher education for police officers (1989: 246). Followed by the emergence of degree courses in justice administration for police officers, this had significant equity implications, due to the considerably higher levels of tertiary education among women, both before and after the Fitzgerald Inquiry. Even in the 1980s, 40.9 per cent of women police officers (compared to 21 per cent of male officers) had studied at university before entering the QPF (Lidgard 1988).

This difference in educational backgrounds continued into the 1990s. A study of 135 recruits in 1992 (Wimshurst 1995) found that 63.6 per cent of women but only 36.3 per cent of men had undertaken at least some university study. In the case of the Fitzgerald recommendations, the encouragement of more higher education among police officers was seen primarily as a method for improving the calibre of police officers and managers, but it had the associated consequence of strengthening the role of women in policing. As Woodeson (1993) has observed in the United Kingdom, an influx of women from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds, who have chosen to pursue policing as a career, may create tensions with male police officers for whom policing has been one of a limited number of employment options.

The Fitzgerald Report recommendations were given greater momentum by the election of an ALP State government in December 1989. Subsequently, the *Police Service Administration Act 1990* implemented many of Fitzgerald's recommendations, leading to a dramatic increase in the number of women police

recruits and inspector-level appointments (see figure 1). Yet, although there has been a change of official policy and management techniques, there remains considerable resistance to change from many rank-and-file officers, and most importantly their union.

The Queensland Police Union (QPU), registered in 1916, has played a substantial role historically in police decision-making and it has demonstrated little support for either organisational reform or greater equity in recruitment, selection and promotion (Fleming 1995). It remains a bastion of male-dominated 'cop culture'. In the interviews conducted for this paper, the greatest hostility towards women 'in the job' came from older male police officers, usually at the sergeant or senior sergeant level.

Even into the 1990s, the union continued former Commissioner Lewis's efforts to discourage employment of homosexual, particularly lesbian, officers. They sought to legitimate this stance in terms of an ostensible, if confusing concern for the welfare of children. In 1990, the QPU President stated: 'While we realise that generally people's sexual preferences are their own business, we must be sensitive about this issue because of the many parents whose children come into contact with police.' (Bolen and Ramsay 1999:18) In the past ten years, there has been only one woman member of the QPU Executive, and then only for a brief period during 1991-2.

The QPU has also been prepared to portray equity initiatives as managerially driven and hence not worthy of union support. For example, in 1995, the Women's Advisory Group (WAG⁴) was formally established, after women from all sections of the Service had held meetings with the Commissioner, Jim O'Sullivan. The response by the QPU General Secretary, Bob Brummell, was less than supportive:

It is noted from the documentation provided that 'the (WAG) Network is a management strategy' only and subsequently does not have any recognition within this Union. Therefore, it should be noted that the group does not have any authorisation from this Union to act on behalf of or represent any employee covered by this Union (Letter to Acting Assistant Commissioner, 31 July 1995).

The integration of equity initiatives within managerial strategies in the QPS has permitted the QPU to retain its distance from them, by reducing equity initiatives to

4 Male QPU members have referred to the WAG as 'Women against Guys'.

no more than a 'management strategy'. This stance adopted by the union remains a significant barrier to more equitable outcomes for women police officers. The paper now goes on to discuss briefly the path to reform that occurred in New South Wales.

New South Wales

Traditionally, women had a very limited presence in the New South Wales Police Service (NSWPS) – formerly the New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) – and in the 1970s career paths for women police officers were noteworthy for their absence. The introduction of anti-discrimination legislation in NSW in 1977 only served to highlight the extent of resistance in the NSWPS to

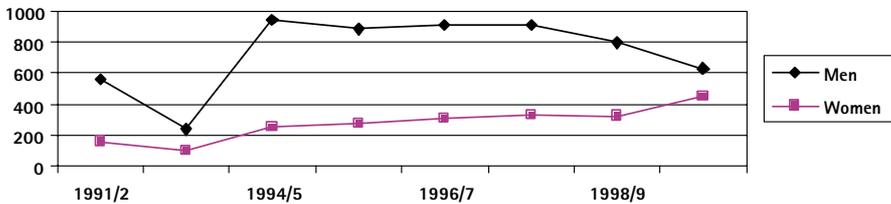
areas of police work'. Although women had a role in 'pacifying' individuals and in 'welfare' type situations, there was no place for them where 'violent confrontation' might be an issue or where 'heavy lifting' was required. Avery espoused the view that the employment of women police officers should be tempered by 'decisions based on solid experience' rather than 'anti-discrimination philosophy' (Avery 1981: 81-84).

A decade later, recruitment of women police officers had increased somewhat, but women continued to occupy a marginal presence in NSW policing. As late as 1991 out of a total of 13,195 police officers in NSW, only 1,475 were women (approximately 11 per cent).

Only 38 of these women were ranked above senior constable and half of all women police officers were at the constable level.⁵ It was not until the mid-1990s, under an ALP State government, that the Wood Commission process established a stronger policy framework, providing mechanisms whereby women could attain higher positions within the NSWPS.

Following public revelations of extensive misconduct and corruption, the Royal Commission into the NSWPS, under Justice Wood, was established in 1994. The Commission's original terms of reference charged it with investigating the 'nature and extent of corruption within the Police Service, particularly of any entrenched or systemic kind' (Wood 1997c A38). In an Interim Report, the Commission proposed a comprehensive program of reform intended to transform the culture and operations of the NSWPS. This program included a 'flatter' management structure designed to achieve greater accountability, the development of managerial skills in line management positions, and strategies to prevent the re-emergence

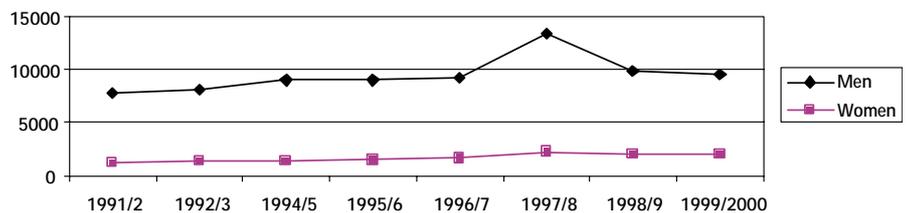
Figure 2. NSW police officers by gender: probationary constables, 1991-2000



women police officers. Its refusal to acknowledge the intent of the Act and its insistence on a quota system for women was challenged in 1980 by two women police applicants. The Service was eventually directed to remove the quota system and to actively encourage women applicants (Nixon 1992). In 1981 the 'marriage bar' was lifted, following a complaint to the Anti-Discrimination Board that an applicant had been rejected on the grounds of her marital status (see Prenzler 1994: 85). However, by 1982 there were still only 307 women police in the NSWPS – a situation that owed much to the position adopted by the Commissioner at the time, John Avery.

This position had been expressed most forcefully in 1981, when Commissioner Avery responded to the anti-discrimination lobby and what he called 'a TV stimulated imagination' about the role of women in policing. He argued that women were neither aggressive nor muscular enough to be 'effective or ... helpful in various

Figure 3. NSW police officers by gender: constables and senior constables 1991-2000



5 In Queensland in the same year, there were a total of 5790 police officers, of whom only 471 were women. Of these the highest ranking officer was an inspector.

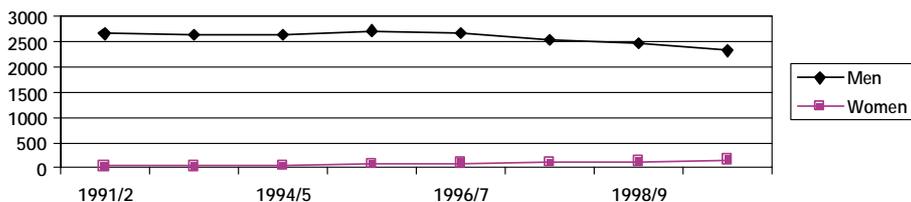
of misconduct and corruption (Wood 1996a). In its 1997 Report, the Wood Commission drew on the Fitzgerald Inquiry recommendations and examples from other police services to make its own recommendations. These had significant implications for women in policing, and included: increasing the minimum age of entry to the police service to 21 years

Conclusion: Strategies and Impediments

This paper has sought, through focusing on the Queensland Police Service and using the New South Wales Police Service as a comparative example, to explore how the distinctive characteristics of police organisations have affected the pursuit of gender equity. Those measures explicitly designed to achieve greater equity may not in practice be the ones that are most significant in the achievement of more equitable employment outcomes. While we would not wish to understate their broader significance, neither general public sector reform nor EEO legislation and campaigns led to significantly improved prospects for women in either of these two police

services. While the public sector in Australia generally has been at the forefront of equity initiatives, police services have been noticeably reluctant to implement such initiatives. The sporadic, uneven nature of the data collected by these police organisations on gender issues (particularly in the case of Queensland) illustrates how gender equity is yet to become a core employment issue in policing. The quasi-military structure of police organisations has also meant that Police Commissioners have been able to occupy a pivotal role in either promoting or opposing equity initiatives.

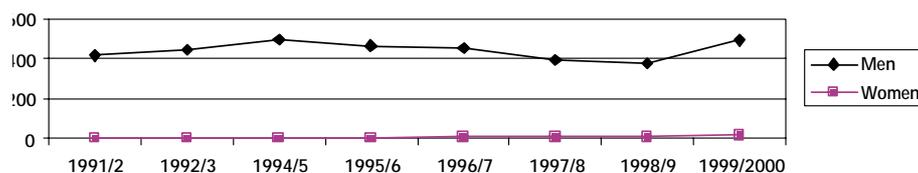
Figure 4. NSW police officers by gender: sergeants and senior sergeants 1991-2000



(women represented a higher proportion of mature-aged applicants); the encouragement of lateral entry from other areas of the public sector; recruitment strategies to achieve greater diversity and the dismantling of 'inappropriate associations' (Wood 1997b: 257-269).

Given the greater incidence of tertiary education among women than men police officers, there emerged an important set of linkages between education, equity and anti-corruption strategies. Such strategies were linked to the erosion of the worst aspects of 'cop culture'. As with Fitzgerald, Wood advocated the attraction of more tertiary-educated officers as a means of transforming police culture. The practical effectiveness of the Wood Commission's recommendations is indicated by a substantial increase in women police recruits, combined with a gradual increase in the numbers of women in more senior positions (see figures 2-5). While there has been a significant increase in the numbers of women at higher levels – for example, a growth from 6 senior officers in 1995/6 to 17 in 1999/2000 – senior women still constitute a tiny minority (just over 3 per cent of senior officers in 1999/2000). It is too early to assess whether or not the considerably increased proportion of women at the probationary level is being translated into a more equitable distribution of positions at higher levels, which would also require a significant transformation of police culture and decision-making.

Figure 5. NSW police officers by gender: senior officers 1991-2000



This paper has further indicated that the establishment of the Royal Commission inquiries in Queensland and NSW dramatically changed the potential for greater equity in the respective police organisations. The Commission reports in the two states were concerned with transforming the internal cultures of these police organisations – in particular, reducing the influence of the traditionally insular, heavily male-dominated 'cop culture'. Both reports concluded that there was a direct association between increasing numbers of women police officers and reducing levels of corruption. Women were identified as a 'target group', whose

recruitment would assist in eliminating the negative aspects of 'cop culture':

Through examining the changing numbers of women at different ranks in Queensland and NSW, this paper has evaluated the effectiveness of different measures in achieving greater equity, including campaigns by women police officers. We would caution, though, against making general conclusions on the basis of these two examples. Indeed, the paper has been concerned to demonstrate the importance of contingent events, such as the establishment of inquiries. There are disparate patterns in the employment and advancement of women police officers across the different states in Australia. Whereas in Queensland and NSW employment strategies and policies have been strongly influenced by the outcomes of corruption inquiries, in South Australia no such inquiries have occurred, and there has been a more consistent pattern of increasing recruitment of women police officers since the late 1970s (Prenzler and Hayes 2000: 25-27; Hopkins 1995: 33-34). The crucial role of corruption inquiries, therefore, has been specific to Queensland and NSW jurisdictions.

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The Kerry Davenport Career Profile

When Kerry left school and worked as a builder's labourer for three years and then joined Australia Post, she worked within that environment for fourteen years two thirds of the time as a motorcycle 'postie'. She remembers thinking to herself, what a great job a Motorcycle cop would have, but never expected or planned for it to happen.

During her last five years with Australia Post, she worked also as a part time, fully qualified Fire Fighter at the Terrigal Fire Station. It was this work that made Kerry realise she needed to consider working in a full time career that was more personally satisfying, rewarding and diverse. So in April 2000 at the age of 35, she left her family and friends, her job and the lovely Terrigal on the NSW Central Coast and moved to the Nations Capital and commenced training with the Australian Federal Police. She graduated on the 18th August 2000 and commenced with the ACT police, in general duties. During February 2001 she successfully completed the four-week Police Motorcycle pursuit course. Since then she has worked as a Police Motorcyclist. During recruit training she drove her class mates mad talking about motorbikes all the time. But as Kerry says and in all honesty, she did not think she believed for a moment that she would ever end up in Traffic, let alone on a police bike.

An all male environment is not a new experience for Kerry, she worked with about thirty guys in the Australia Post team and it wasn't until Kerry's last year at Australia Post that another female joined their group. The Fire Brigade was also a male dominated environment, so when she came to Traffic as a motorcyclist, the fact that it comprised of 98% males didn't cross her mind that it would be any different.



Kerry is very modest about her position as the only second female to hold the position of police motorcyclist in the ACT. Her sergeant Louise Denley holds the honour of being the first. Kerry says "compared to the issues and non conducive encouragement she faced, I've had a dream run."

Kerry believes that if you wish to do something you do it, you don't think about how rare or different it is you just get on with it. Kerry also knows it is only a matter of time before other women find the thrill of motorcycles to hard to resist. As she has been riding bikes for over twenty years, she herself has owned thirty bikes. Kerry acknowledges her supportive parents for her beliefs as they encouraged her in all things, including riding motor bikes.

Kerry doesn't see any issues with her present duty or position and feels most fortunate in having the utmost support from her traffic section peers and all other members in the force.

Kerry's closing words are, "People can achieve anything they want, if they believe in themselves and age or gender should not be a barrier for any person, trying to achieve their goals."

Flirting with the Gender Agenda or the Politics of Equity and Diversity in Policing

Margaret Quirk MLA – Women and Policing Globally Conference
Canberra, October 2002

Flirting with the Gender Agenda

Margaret Quirk MLA

"Modern democratic politicians use words for two main purposes – to simplify and to mystify. They simplify because they cannot describe matters in even half their complexity and expect to be understood or listened to. They use messages: simple one or two-line messages which they hope will work like semaphores as they beat their way through the tangle of political life. These messages take on meaning independent of the complex reality, they become the currency of the debate, the story, in the end they become the reality itself; at least that is the aim. The terms 'setting the agenda', 'agenda-setting' or 'seizing the agenda' in part describe this process."

Don Watson
Recollections of a
Bleeding Heart¹

Introduction

The simple mantra of calling for more women in police services has been a popular one in political circles for many years. Interestingly, it is an objective, which enjoys bipartisan support. However, as the observations of Watson demonstrate this simple agenda obscures a level of complexity and dimensions to the issue, which are not readily appreciated and, more importantly, rarely discussed.

This paper analyses the current status of women's workforce participation and how the factors affecting that participation impact on the goal of integrating more women into the police services.

This discussion in no way diminishes the imperative to remedy a range of matters within policing organisations. These internal barriers to recruitment and selection include cultural impediments, the manner of deployment of women, the absence of role models in senior ranks, working conditions and recruitment.² Of greater focus in the current context however, is the broader policy settings and employment framework, which exists for women in the community more generally.

It is argued that the assertion that greater female workforce participation should automatically translate into greater numbers of women in policing is facile. Similarly it is no longer appropriate to talk in terms of women as a homogeneous group. Women's working lives and experiences are becoming increasingly disparate and varied. Accordingly, responding to this changing work profile requires a variety of targeted responses in the quest to attract more women to policing.

It is also contended that the claim that women enjoy more choice in their working arrangements

is divorced from reality. Until more comprehensive policy settings are implemented no marked improvement will be observed in the levels of representation of women across the ranks in law enforcement.

The Political Discourse of Equity and Diversity

The advocacy for greater levels of representation for women is not limited to policing but relates to a range of endeavours generally considered to be predominantly male be it corporate boards, politics or science to name but a few!

It is not clear why law enforcement is often singled out for attention. The rationale for advocacy for greater representation falls into a number of categories:

- i **ideology:** general feminist notions of equity and fairness;
- ii **empathy:** from other women from cultures similar to law enforcement where they are similarly marginalised;
- iii **solidarity:** as a signal to those women currently experiencing discrimination that they are not alone and there is cause for optimism;
- iv **diversity:** a belief that higher levels of representation of women more accurately reflects the composition of the broader community;³
- v **good management:** this argument has no moral underpinning but is utilitarian asserting that it is good business sense to have the widest pool of talent to choose from;⁴ and finally
- vi **brain versus brawn:** community expectations of what is required of police have changed.

1 Watson (2002) 48.

2 Wilkinson and Froyland (1996).

3 Vanstone (2001).

4 Montano (1999).

The focus has changed to community policing, negotiation, sensitivity to victims, taking domestic violence seriously and being pro-active rather than reactive methodologies. These are all attributes which can be performed equally as well by women as by men. The focus has shifted from brute force.⁵

By and large the political discourse relies on a combination of these. The problem however, is rarely as completely articulated but is reduced to the general catchphrase "*we need more women in policing*". Moreover the appropriate policy response to achieve desired outcomes depends on which of these purposes is operative.

In other words, without undertaking a more sophisticated analysis of the reasons why such outcomes are desirable to us as a community, there is the danger that the wrong policy instruments will be chosen to achieve the objective. This is most obviously demonstrated in the bare assertion that as female workforce participation has increased it could be anticipated that law enforcement will ultimately swell its numbers of women as a beneficiary of this general social trend.

If such an approach were taken, then few affirmative steps would need to be taken to achieve the outcome other than some minor tinkering with the notorious "police culture".

The following discussion suggests that this idea is at best naive and simplistic and at worst mischievous and inimical to the interests of women.

Devaluation and Changing Status of Women's Work

The focus on what was occurring within police services to discourage women joining and remaining has clearly been a valuable exercise. Nevertheless, this has, to some extent, diminished the significance of policy developments impacting on women in the broader community.

In order to fully appreciate the nature of the challenge of integrating more women in policing, it is necessary to more critically assess the current status of women in the workforce in Australia.

In recent years the dominant trend throughout the Western world is for a steady increase in the numbers of women in employment,⁶ such that the number of women employed is converging with the employment rates of males.

In Australia the percentage of women employed has increased from 29% in 1954, to 47% in 1980 and to 61% in 2000 with that for mothers with children less

than five years of age at 45% in 2000.⁷

This trend is attributable to the changing needs and preferences of women to remain in the workforce after marriage.

In particular, the employment rates of mothers with children under six years of age are rising rapidly. The trend is strongest for well-educated mothers and much weaker for women with fewer job opportunities and with more limited prospects.⁸

However, it would be misleading to suppose that these figures equated to gender equality in the workforce. Rather, there is a persistence of problems such as vulnerability to poor wages and conditions, occupational segregation and discrimination.⁹

Moreover, the trends suggest family structures are changing, fertility rates dropping and childbearing delayed followed by a lower level of subsequent child bearing. In Australia, the average age for mothers at first birth is rising which is consistent with the contention that public policy in this country is not as 'family friendly' as is desirable.

These factors are ones, which have been identified as having a nexus with poor public policies in the area of work and family balance. It is contended that in those countries with policies that support parents in the work force there are higher fertility rates.¹⁰

Of particular relevance in assessing the roles of women in the workforce is an analysis of the nature of workforce participation. In recent years forms of participation in paid work have become markedly varied. Participation is now more likely to be punctuated by various interruptions or disruptions including unemployment, phased retirement, life-long learning and care giving responsibilities for elderly, disabled or ill parents, spouses or children.¹¹

For women, parenting generally represents a major change in their participation in paid work. This is evidenced not by permanent withdrawal from the workforce, but rather through temporary withdrawal(s) at the point of childbirth and during the early years of childrearing followed by re-entry (or re-entries).¹²

These changes associated with exit and re-entry, in particular from full-time to part-time and or casual often carry with them a diminution of rights and benefits and deterioration in working conditions.¹³

Women's increased labour force participation is, to a large extent, in the part-time casual labour market. Some argue that such participation is a qualitatively different kind of behaviour to full-time participation.¹⁴ What distinguishes part-timers from full-timers is the

5 Vanstone (2001).

6 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2002) at 23.

7 *ibid.*

8 *ibid.*

9 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2002) at 24.

10 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2002) at 25.

11 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2002) at 27.

12 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2002) at 30.

13 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2002) at 33.

14 Hakim (1993).

qualitatively different work priorities and lower level of non-financial work commitment, which leads to a lower investment in education and training-so-called 'human capital'. The main consequences for these women are that they are typically restricted to low skill jobs and low earnings, which are also the jobs most readily, organised as part-time jobs by employers.

Some have suggested that those women who have pushed up the participation rate, are not the vanguards of change within the labour force, nor are they the catalysts for wider social and political change resulting from women's economic independence. In these circumstances it is said that it would not be expected that those women who work part-time would be change agents partly because their low status gives them little influence, but more importantly because they are far less likely than full-timers to invest effort and attention to this part of their lives.¹⁵

Rather these part-timers, are considered to be just like the full-time home-maker of the 1950's and 1960's – twice as conservative as full-timers in their emphasis on a wife's housekeeping activities taking priority over paid employment outside the home.¹⁶

Whilst this analysis has been regarded as contentious for reasons including the perpetuation of stereotypes, it does assist in emphasising the valid proposition that part-time work may engender different attitudes, commitment and outlooks.

Further in Australia in recent years¹⁷ for the top half of socio-economic status ("SES") neighbourhoods the proportion of women employed increased approximately 16%. For the bottom half of these neighbourhoods the proportion fell by 3%. For the bottom decile the fall was 17.5%. Moreover the probability that a woman would be employed if she lived in the top 5% of SES neighbourhoods was 78% more than if she lived in the lowest 5% of SES areas. From this we can therefore conclude that for half of Australian neighbourhoods the average proportion of women employed in the labour force is less than it was in 1974.¹⁸ This decline is, in part, attributable to the falling off in Australian manufacturing.¹⁹

The traditional form of gender division of labour whereby women have sole responsibility for domestic labour and caring for children and maintaining the home is becoming less universal in Australia. As a consequence it can no longer be contended that Australian women have a shared experience irrespective of social status. Women's experiences are now becoming increasingly differentiated. Increasingly

divergent patterns of paid work among women are associated with increasingly divergent views on the appropriate roles for men and women.²⁰

Detailed qualitative research is emerging which finds that there was remarkably little in the way of common beliefs and aspirations across the different groups but, rather a clear polarisation of views which appear to be directly linked to socio-economic status.²¹

It also discloses a relatively new phenomenon of the two-income household where there is no distinct breadwinner; rather, it comprises two earners. The women in these households take short periods of leave when their children are born but are employed in occupations where there is little question of long career breaks. They take advantage of the results of rapidly increasing levels of education together with the expansion of professional and managerial employment over the last two decades.²²

Gender Division of Domestic Labour

Whilst there is a transformation in the woman's role in these households many note that there is little or no discernible change in the division of domestic labour.²³ What is critical to these women's new working lives is a substantial reliance on paid domestic labour of various kinds as well as the use of community or work-based childcare.

Despite this increased participation in the work force by some women, it appears that men have not correspondingly increased their role in domestic labour. In fact, there seems to be little real shift for men in the assumption of domestic labour tasks and in their own perception as a breadwinner being pivotal to identity.

This lack of change was attributable to the failure on the part of most women surveyed to negotiate with their husbands on the division of housework. This failure is attributed to various cultural and structural factors, but also to women's ambivalence about pressing for change. This ambivalence was associated with the high priority given to home-making and the belief that partners were treating them fairly.²⁴

The emergence of these households is parallel to those where women still intend to give up paid work shortly after marriage or certainly after their children are born and where they rely on the male breadwinner. This is not seen as a matter of choice but as a matter of values and judgement. In their eyes women *should* put their children first by "being there" and they recognise this by putting their own interests second.²⁵

15 *ibid.*

16 *ibid.*

17 For the period 1976-1991.

18 Hunter and Gregory (1996).

19 *ibid.*

20 Probert 1997.

21 Probert and MacDonald (1996).

22 Probert 1997.

23 ABS (1999).

24 Dempsey (1997).

25 Probert 1997.

From these divergent groups we can note that the likelihood that there will be shared experiences in relation to the division of domestic labour is becoming increasingly remote. Arising from these differences emerges some fundamental issues relating to class. In Britain, for example, heavy reliance is being placed upon waged domestic labour with middle class women assuming the role of "the manager" of domestic labour and domestic workers.²⁶

Hence factors such as the limiting or removal of Federal government childcare subsidies is likely to influence women going out to work. The ability to earn more than it costs to work is being threatened and may have some influence on female work force participation in the future.

As noted earlier men have, by and large resisted change. Middle class women with good employment prospects may have got around this but probably at the cost of relatively conservative ideologies of child care and domestic labour.

Women's choices are profoundly constrained not only by the refusal of men to play an equal role in all forms of domestic labour but also by this increasingly polarised world of employment.

Accordingly increasing differentiation in women's working experiences means it is more difficult to talk about "women's interests". It is no longer possible to talk about resolving the issue of conflicting needs by insisting on the importance of choice.

If choices, which women make between work and family, are strongly correlated with their educational experiences and their employment opportunities, then it is essential to recognise that these experiences are becoming more unequal.

Whilst some women's participation is becoming similar to men's, for the majority, work is both qualitatively and quantitatively different. Work force participation and experience is becoming increasingly diverse and therefore the value systems derived from this experience are by no means common.

As noted above part-time employment represents a trade-off for many women, whereby in return for the opportunity to work reduced hours, they tolerate poor conditions. These poor conditions include segregation from full-time jobs, a casual status, and greater levels of unpaid overtime with little access to career training or progression.²⁷

Moreover, in recent years the notion of greater flexibility in working arrangements tends to refer to employer driven demands rather than to implement better balance of work and family demands.

Further those that work full-time are now working longer hours. Average weekly hours for full-time employees have increased by 3.7% hours per week between 1982 and 2000.²⁸ This trend of lengthening full time hours is one peculiar to Australia. It is trite to note that long hours are bad for family relationships, children and the community fabric.²⁹

Finally, it has been found that employer approaches to work/family issues are crucially influenced by the national regulatory framework and the dominant policy orientation at national level.³⁰

Accordingly, policies for taxation and social security and the public problem of caring services such as elder care and childcare need to support citizens in their work and family choices. From a public policy perspective, governments must develop policy that reconciles the demands of employees for more employee-oriented flexibility and security and the interests of employers in maintaining a stable and prosperous enterprise.

In this context however, Australia has adopted a largely passive approach to work/family balance with a strategic policy framework lacking and a weak regulatory regime with little scrutiny of indirect impacts of policies.³¹

Also, the number of households confronting the stresses of balancing work and family is rising significantly. In the early 1990's, 25% of households were coping with these stresses. Now the figure is 50% and still rising.³²

The above trends clearly indicate lengthening hours for many full-time employees, casualisation, degradation of part-time work, work intensification and increasing wage inequality which impact on the quality of life and disproportionately on women. Given this policy framework, how realistic are aspirations of attracting more women to police services in Australia?

"You've never had it so good"

Despite these trends, former Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Amanda Vanstone, now Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women feels confident in asserting that policy settings which provide a combination of jobs growth and welfare payments create more choices for women.³³

"It is a simple fact that women benefit from a strong economy. They have more choice and greater control over their lives. In 2001 the fact that more women are working and more women seeking work demonstrates the effectiveness of the government's economic policies ..."

26 *ibid.*

27 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2002) at 36.

28 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2000) at 37.

29 Pocock (2001) at 30.

30 Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, *et al.* (2002) at 47.

31 *ibid* at 48.

32 *ibid.*

33 Gilchrist (2001).

... This government's commitment to families has been delivered in real dollars, not rhetoric. Family-friendly policies are women-friendly policies. They touch the lives of normal people in a way that a lot of symbolic issues do not."³⁴

From the foregoing discussion one has to be sceptical about this assertion because, after all, these choices are largely illusory.

Nevertheless, this is a view, which Senator Vanstone has held for some time. As early as 1994 she contended that statistics do not indicate the intangible benefits and increasing opportunities available to women.³⁵ She opined in a theme, which was to recur, that the new economy was suited to women's strengths. The notion that women were better team players equipped them to fare well under new economy collaborative management skills. Similarly, the shift of focus from physical superiority to technology was also seen by her as a trend, which advantaged women.

Last year Senator Vanstone claimed that:

*"Factors that contributed to the improved position of women [police] officers include: the changing role of women in the labour force, including increased participation rates of women; changes to stereo-typical sex roles: an evolving legislative and regulatory framework: changes to policies and practices of law enforcement agencies: personnel turnover and reform of the informal occupational culture."*³⁶

She also claimed that changes to government legislation and policies to eliminate discrimination in all guises, has removed many of the obstacles that prevented women from advancement and job opportunities of the past.³⁷

Moreover, she asserts that the introduction of new working arrangements within agencies including the option to work part-time and maternity and family leave give more flexible options so that women can balance their career with family responsibilities.³⁸

It would be churlish not to accept that this has occurred to some extent, however, such measures only realistically give women a choice when there is a critical mass within the agency and that will only occur where the threshold issues, which were discussed earlier are resolved. The Minister for Industrial Relations, Hon Tony Abbott MP, shares his colleague's views. In a recent interview he heralded the greater participation in the workforce by women and attributed it to the deregulated labour market. However, he told the interviewer:

*"I don't know if you can ever expect equal numbers of males and females in all positions. You might find there are always more female nursing administrators and more men who are major-generals in the army. You can't be prescriptive."*³⁹

More recently Minister Abbott has infamously claimed:

*"Voluntary paid maternity leave, yes. Compulsory paid maternity leave, over this Government's dead body, frankly. It just won't happen under this Government."*⁴⁰

We see therefore, that despite an overwhelming number of qualitative indicators that gender inequalities in the workplace are persistent and endemic, the policy responses to this situation are less than comprehensive and considered and the willingness to confront these matters less than open. Some would even contend that there has been no serious attempt by the Federal Government to respond to changing social patterns and encourage employers to accommodate the reality of family life.⁴¹ What policy prescriptions that have been imposed are weighted towards single income families in which the male is breadwinner. Couples with families receive tax benefits as long as one parent (usually the mother) is not in the paid workforce. The benefit is provided irrespective of level of income of the husband and is not affected if he earns extra money. This means the couple are better off if the father works longer hours and the mother stays at home.⁴²

There is some incredulity expressed that the single-income tax rebate should emerge as the most lucrative child benefit available to middle and higher income earners. This creates incentive for women not to work and could be regarded as a substantial loss of human capital for the Australian economy, a substantial loss of tax revenue and an impost on the budget bottom line.⁴³

Whereas, those systems that ostensibly support women in the workforce receive a much lower priority. Childcare benefits, for example, are heavily income-tested, are paid for relatively few children and then only for a short period of time (when children are in child care, usually at the ages of three or four).⁴⁴

Similarly Unions WA Secretary Stephanie Mayman recently observed:

"The Commonwealth spends more than \$16 billion in family support payments. The range of payments is confusing and a number of the payments actively discourage families from making certain choices."

34 Vanstone, Press release March 2001.

35 Vanstone (1994).

36 Vanstone (2001) 122-123.

37 Vanstone (2001) 123.

38 *ibid.*

39 Gome, A. (2001), 55.

40 ABC AM programme September 2002.

41 Gome, A. (2001), 52 quoting Hon. Dr Carmen Lawrence MP.

42 Gome, A. (2001), 55 quoting Professor Peter McDonald (ANU).

43 *ibid.*

44 *ibid.*

Some, such as the baby bonus scheme, are inequitable and regressive. Others such as Family Tax part B discourage female labour force participation.

Managing work in the 21st century requires the development of a new framework of rights and obligations."⁴⁵

Women in Law Enforcement

Despite this greater participation of women in the workforce, this is not reflected in significant gender equality in law enforcement. Whilst there is no question that substantial inroads have been made within law enforcement agencies to ameliorate impediments to greater integration of women within the police, it is clear that addressing these internal issues alone is not enough. Given the very real issues that I've discussed earlier, any special policy prescriptions must be properly targeted. It was also noted earlier that women are not a homogeneous class. Accordingly, any regime aimed at recruitment and retention needs to recognise and accommodate that women's experiences are becoming increasingly diverse.

It is why such programmes as WILES ("Women in Law Enforcement") established in July 1998 are at best reinforcing the status quo and at worst mere window dressing. The stated aims of WILES, which was launched by the then Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Vanstone,⁴⁶ are to encourage women to pursue senior positions in these agencies. Its modus operandi was through a cross-agency mentoring programme.

Such mentoring gives the person mentored reassurance and provides alternative strategies to deal with the issues facing that person. However, because the mentor is from another agency, the extent to which they have a stake in that person's career development and progression may be somewhat more limited. Most significantly is that mentoring is, to some extent, about facilitating coping strategies. Implicit in that is that few changes would be implemented which would improve a women's lot in her home agency.

Moreover, the strategy is, in some respects, focussed on those principally professional women who have the most choices and are in the category for higher levels of workforce participation in any event. This possibly

reflects the backgrounds and predilection of WILES principal proponents.⁴⁷

Anecdotally, as one of a handful of senior women at the National Crime Authority at the time the programme was introduced, I saw little positive impact in WILES. Concurrent with its introduction a number of instances of managerial caprice occurred in the context of female colleagues which made it more difficult for them to balance their work and family commitments and which were not based on sound operational imperatives.

Similarly, I was invited to the launch of WILES in Canberra, which, with airfares and accommodation, would have been equivalent to a significant number of overtime claims by my colleagues. At that time our agency was undergoing major cost cutting measures and many operational plans, including overtime, were shelved despite the investigation being at an important stage. I was placed in an invidious position of being seen to be frittering away scarce resources thereby prejudicing the progress of the investigation! I make this point only to illustrate that any programme aimed at achieving better integration of women within law enforcement agencies should not further isolate and marginalise.

The same observation can be made in other law enforcement agencies in their early attempts at EEO with disproportionate focus on the equality and insufficient on the opportunity.⁴⁸ Some, however, have learnt their lessons and indications are that more sophisticated and holistic approaches are being embraced.⁴⁹

On a positive note, unlike other areas of the workforce, police services are highly unionised. From the perspective of securing family friendly policies, it appears this factor may be of great utility in furthering the objective. This assertion is not an indication of any political predilection on my part, but rather an observation that in those workplaces, which are highly segregated and predominantly staffed by women, there is a much lower level of union membership. There is a clear nexus between diminished work conditions in such segregated workplaces where workers are likely to work on a part-time or casual basis and lower levels of membership of a union.⁵⁰

45 Unknown (2002).

46 Austrac Website www.austrac.gov.au/whole-of-government/wiles.html

47 If one extrapolates from those men currently attracted to policing are drawn from skilled working class backgrounds whereas unskilled and professional least likely to apply see generally Wortley, *et al.*, (1996), accordingly targeting professional women alone may not be fruitful.

48 Research conducted at the AFP in 1995 confirmed that despite the EEO programme having been developed in 1992 and being a requirement

under the Public Service Act, "knowledge about the EEO program was extremely poor through all levels of the service ... Focus groups showed EEO appeared to have been dismissed by management as something we have to do, something politically driven which has nothing to do with good policing, good management or with the corporate goals of the organisation. See Atkins p 3.

49 Bradley (1998) and Miller (1998).

50 Pocock (1997) and Australian Women's Yearbook (1997).

Conclusions

*"We either support women today in their dual role as integral members of the workforce and as bearers of children, or we don't – we tell them to go home – or we support all groups of women, whatever combination of work and family they choose."*⁵¹

The dialogue about greater integration of women into policing has had thoughtful and reflective consideration within the law enforcement circles for some time.⁵²

In the broader arena of politics the objective has been reduced to notions, which, though attractive in their simplicity, fail to address a complex mix of social changes. These changes in female workforce participation require a more comprehensive public policy response and recognition that "women" are not a homogenous group. Women's experiences are becoming increasingly disparate.

It is pleasing that the recent debate on paid maternity leave seems to have reignited the debate on a range of these work and family issues. There is even acknowledgment that existing government policies are less than comprehensive with Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner Pru Goward claiming recently in the context of paid maternity leave but observations equally apposite to the full gamut of work and family issues:

"Amidst the disagreements, myths and concerns we have an important, significant and shaping public debate taking place.

In the end it will bring in the much needed structural changes that will allow women to work and have children.

It is heartening to see discussion of the need for policies and programmes that assist women in Australian families to manage their work and family responsibilities – no matter what their circumstances and choices. Paid maternity leave is a necessary part of supporting family choices.

*The Government has now embarked on the much more challenging and complicated task of addressing work and family comprehensively."*⁵³

If a comprehensive framework of policy is not developed, then there will be adverse implications for attracting and retaining more women in policing. Efforts for recruitment and retention of female police officers at levels to achieve critical mass will be difficult to attain.

Concurrent with addressing this broader public policy framework, law enforcement should continue on the path of inculcating values within their organisational cultures, which will create an open and family friendly environment.

Not only do I look forward to more complete national policy framework addressing these issues in the future but also to a more sophisticated political discourse on the challenges confronting women in law enforcement.

There is still a way to go but clearly goodwill and commitment exists in abundance within political circles. The political challenge is now to ensure that these good intentions are translated into sophisticated public policy responses which deal with the full range of the complexity associated with female workforce participation.

The following interchange at a Parliamentary Estimates Committee is between my colleagues independent MLA Dr Elizabeth Constable and my friend and the WA Minister for Police the Hon. Michelle Roberts MLA (and coincidentally the first female police Minister in Australia) earlier this year. It strikes a salutary note on which to conclude and to observe that on the Western side of the continent we have our work cut out!

Dr Constable: *Of the total number of commissioned officers [in the WA Police Service], how many are women? I ask for that figure as a percentage as well as a number.*

Mrs Roberts: *Progress has been made since last year, as the member for Churchlands is well aware. I am as keen on progress as she is. When I sat opposite, I asked the same questions. We have had a 100 per cent increase in the number of women commissioned officers. This time last year we had one and now we have two.*

Dr Constable: *Well done!*

Mrs Roberts: *Although it might be easy to make light of that, I think it is very important that women are given the opportunity to occupy more senior positions in the Police Service, not just for the good of those women's career paths but also for the good of the community. Given that women make up 52 per cent of the community, there is no reason that they should not be equally represented in all fields of endeavour. The other positive thing about the progress of women in the Western Australia Police Service is that, for the first time, women outnumbered men in a recruitment school. I was very proud of that. I think the figures were 31 women and 30 men.*

51 Goward #1.

52 See for example the scholarly and ample work of Tim Prenzler in the area.

53 Goward #2.

That was certainly a first for Western Australia. I am pleased to be able to report that women are clearly not being deterred from applying to join the Police Service. Clearly, they are making it through the selection process in much greater numbers. I am keen to see them given the opportunity to rise within the ranks in accordance with their capabilities and experience."⁵⁴

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54 WA Legislative Assembly Estimates Committee–Division 47: Police Service page 196/1, 29 May 2002.

The Male Perspective ...

Making a difference ...

Alan Malinchak, Chief Investigative Training Unit – FBI Academy Federal Bureau of Investigation attended the 2002 Global Women's Conference to present for all those attending some expertise in the resolution of conflict in the workplace.

Mr. Malinchak was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, and attended Immaculate Heart of Mary Grade School and Catholic Central High School. In 1968, he enrolled at Wayne State University; however, from 1969 to 1973, he was an Aviation Storekeeper with the United States Navy stationed at Naval Air Station Saufley Field, Pensacola, Florida. He was educated at Pensacola Junior College, Pensacola, Florida; the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida; and Rutgers University, Newark, New Jersey.

Prior to joining the FBI in 1984, he was an Assistant Professor and Director of the Criminal Justice Program at Rapid City for the University of South Dakota, Vermillion, South Dakota; and a tenured Associate Professor and Director of the Criminal Justice Program at St. Thomas Aquinas College, Sparkill, New York. In 1980, he authored *Crime and Gerontology*, Prentice-Hall.

In his 18th year with the FBI, he has served as a Special Agent in the Manassas Resident Agency, Alexandria, Virginia, and in Washington, D.C. His investigative responsibilities included fugitives, homicides, rapes, kidnapping, extortion, and skyjacking.

In February 1992, Alan was promoted to Supervisory Special Agent in the Management Science Unit, FBI Academy, and Administrator of the FBI's National Executive Institute. In 1995, Alan was promoted to Supervisor of the White Collar Crime, Organised Crime, and Drug Squad of the Rochester Resident Agency, Buffalo, New York, Field Office. In 1998, Alan was promoted to Chief, Investigative Training Unit, FBI



*Alan A. Malinchak
Chief, Investigative Training Unit – FBI Academy
Federal Bureau of Investigation*

Academy, Quantico, Virginia. In 2002, Alan served as Acting Chief of Security and Facilities, FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia.

Alan found the Australians a very friendly group and agreed the Conference was very informative, productive and gave all who attended an outlook for individual growth and the ability to apply the knowledge gathered to their work environments.

Areas of Expertise

Personnel, Facility and Communication Security; Leadership; Motivation; Organisational Management; Criminological Theory; Conflict Management; Planning; Program Development, and Evaluation; Research Methodology and Statistical Analysis; No-Body Homicides (U.S. v Russell).

The 3 R's – recruitment, retention and resignation – essential to ensuring the success of women in policing jurisdictions

by Leann Plytus and Debbie Sonin – Victoria Police

The 3 R's, *Recruitment, Retention and Resignation*, are core issues that must be proactively addressed in Policing jurisdictions throughout the world to ensure women in Policing succeed. This paper will provide an overview of the approach Victoria Police has adopted in an attempt to address these issues. The presentation will specifically focus on:

- 1 identifying the processes and strategies implemented to facilitate change;
- 2 our learnings from this experience to date; and
- 3 consideration of the adopted framework to international cultures.

The framework is underpinned by integrating the approach to the 3R's into the strategic planning framework. The Equity and Diversity Unit Strategic Plan places emphasis on addressing the 3R's and acknowledges psycho-social needs, for example the 'work life' balance needs that many women. The consideration of 'work life' balance needs of women is necessary to ensure that once we Recruit our women officers, we Retain them and should they Resign, we learn from these experiences to identify what we need to do differently.

This is a story of our journey, our learning's and our vision for making Victoria Police an employer of choice for all.

Redressing the Gendered and Sexualised Nature of Policing in an Australian Police Service

Susan Harwood – PhD Research Student, Organisational and Labour Studies, UWA Business School, University of Western Australia and
Dr Joan Eveline, Organisational and Labour Studies UWA Business School, University of Western Australia

Improving the Status of Women in Policing

Janet McGrath –
Western Australian Police Service

To improve women's status in the Police Service, several issues need to be addressed, particularly one of retention. Why so many women do not reach their true potential possibly to the executive level, however, opt to go part time or resign instead. The issue of work versus family commitment and the constant juggling of the two will be raised. Employer support via flexible working hours, provision of childcare facilities and paid maternity/paternity leave to name a few.

Attitude of the community and work colleagues towards women in the Police Service will be addressed and possible solutions as to how this can improve.

Introduction

This paper describes the study, begun in 2001, that results from a formal partnership between the University of Western Australia and the WA Police Service (WAP S). Working together for mutual benefit, those two institutions have embarked on an action research project that is proving to be unique in its approach to redressing the problems that arise in gendered workplace cultures. Funding for this project has been provided through a SPIRT grant, Commonwealth research funding that supports the application of practical industry experience, grounded in academic research. The research student and the primary researcher have extensive practical experience in the field, complemented by the considerable theoretical background of the primary researcher. We are now bringing this experience together with our industry partner – WAPS – to produce new knowledges, new understandings of how to redress gendered workplace cultures.

A key goal of our research project, which runs from 2001-2004, is to generate a sustainable change process that continues, *beyond the life of this project*, to bring about measurable changes to the gendered culture of policing. We are seeking changes that will result in the encouragement, promotion and retention of more women in policing.

It needs to be acknowledged at the outset that the Service has been aware for some time of the need for strategies to ensure that its own Diversity policies are devolved throughout the organisation, and to ensure that the different

styles of leadership that women bring to the workplace are evident in policing. However, it was the direct impact of a change in leadership at the top of this police service in 1999 that brought about a change in direction in how to redress the gender imbalance within the organisation.

The new Commissioner, Barry Matthews, made two strategic decisions that are having an immediate impact on the status of women within policing in WA:

- the decision to engage with UWA in this joint project, and
- the establishment of a Women's Advisory Network within the Service, reporting directly to the Commissioner.

Direct support from the Commissioner has been critical to the implementation, progress and acceptance of the SPIRT project. We will show in this paper how that overt support from the top has helped to garner wider support for the project throughout the agency, involving people who would not otherwise have believed that the agency is committed to changing its culture. Support for this project has enabled a fresh focus on human resource initiatives as the means of building better teamwork and responsiveness to diversity.

Early, positive results are raising important questions about the impact of changes in leadership and support on a project of this kind. We describe in our paper how our action research approach engages us in a collaborative effort with strategic groups of key stakeholders. Through the



involvement of these strategic groups, we are building a community of like-minded individuals within the Service, who have a shared definition of 'the problem', and the skills and stewardship to generate first-step solutions through their interventionist pilot projects. Yet we acknowledge that to achieve the broader aim of redressing a gendered workplace culture, succession planning must be built into the research model, to ensure sustainability of outcomes beyond the life of the research, and beyond the contract period of the current leadership.

We are keen, therefore, to explore the question of how best to translate a committed leadership from the top into a community of leaders throughout the organisation. Given the importance of a committed senior leadership, what will happen when the Commissioner completes his term of office? How will the gains made under his stewardship be sustained? Will the community of interventionists lose their focus and their empowerment when some of their own members move on? Such questions have been floated since the commencement of the project, and indeed, have surfaced throughout as people experience empowerment, and question whether the gains made to date will dissipate once there is a change of key players. Finding the answers to those questions is the next challenge for the collaborative research team. Recent research conducted overseas by a member of that team provides us with some important clues as to how we may begin to answer some of these questions.

In what follows, we outline the background and methodology of the study, and follow with some analysis of the reflections of members of this community of like-minded individuals on the benefits and pitfalls of their role as change agents. We conclude by canvassing the questions that are yet to be answered about how to ensure that the experiences of those involved to date can be shared more widely, and long-term, throughout the organisation.

Background

By their very nature male-dominated occupations are notoriously resistant to policies designed to increase female employees of equal organisational rank. The WA Police Service is no exception in this regard. Despite the existence of policies and strategies that have been specifically designed and introduced to address direct discrimination, harassment and sexism in selection, the complement of female sworn officers at the time this study began was appalling, the lowest in Australia.

Our initial investigation found that a number of factors were inhibiting a gender-equitable outcome of policy. Informal and formal rules sponsored various forms of sexism and sexual harassment, women were clustered in the lower ranks and, as a recent public sector review had shown, women's careers are hampered by the limitations of a 'time at rank' promotion system. Moreover, a rigid division of status and benefits between sworn and unsworn personnel accompanied a system in which most women are employed in the unsworn (or less privileged) category.

A key finding from the international research is that the level of anti-women sentiment in an organisation is directly linked to the incidence of discrimination and sex-based harassment. In a report on women in the Canadian Armed Forces, for example, the Ministerial Advisory Board claimed that "zero tolerance" of women was the crucial factor in sexual harassment in the Canadian Forces, and that the cultural belittling of women was the most pervasive and difficult problem to address.¹ In short, sexual harassment, bullying and sexist language are as much the product of a

1 Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces, *Annual Report, 1991-92*, p 18.

masculinist culture as they are the unlawful behaviour of individual men.

Concentrating only on eliminating the individual acts of misbehaviour, therefore, will do little to solve the problem. As a study by Bryson² indicates, equally as necessary is the development of proactive gender equality strategies such as: mentoring; promotion and selection supports; women's networks; mechanisms which give women unhindered access to decision-making and top management; women-identified training procedures for women; and ongoing education on equal opportunity matters for all staff.

In his forthcoming comparative study on Australian Police Services, Prenzler³ notes that the resistance to anti-discrimination laws introduced in Australia during the 1980's has taken different forms in each state, and that:

the incursion of women into traditionally male occupations has been opposed, resisted and undermined wherever it has occurred.

Prenzler further noted that the physical entry test, which largely discriminates against women, was one of the key factors that has put Western Australia behind the progress of other States (scaling the 'wall' – the highest in Australia, is no longer a requirement for female recruits in WA). Developing the spectrum of gender equality strategies therefore, is a necessary step in combating more visible forms of discrimination such as sexual harassment and sexist language.

Our Methodology

Having experience as practitioners and researchers, we knew that a different approach was required; the organisation already had the data – people within the agency knew that WAPS was not travelling well with regard to redressing systemic and systematic harassment and discrimination against sworn and unsworn women. Our approach was to work from within; not to introduce an imposed solution from outside the agency, but to work with change agents – informal and formal leaders – to develop an informed, action-based approach from within.

The particular research methodology that we are using has been developed, applied and evaluated by researchers at the Center for Gender in Organisations,

Simmons College Graduate School of Management, Boston, USA. Their methodology involves working with groups within organisations to facilitate people uncovering, describing and analysing the 'mental models' that underpin their own organisational culture. Senge⁴ describes these 'mental models' as 'deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures of images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action'.

Researchers at the Center argue that the linking of gender equity to strategic organisational objectives creates a critical leverage for change. We are applying this methodology at the Police Service, through a structured research plan that allows for close engagement with designated advisory groups and actions groups. Clearly, the specifics of the WAPS culture must be explored in a way that is different from previous, compliance-based models: the aim of this research methodology is to encourage both men and women to jointly engage in what Dahlerup describes as 'critical acts', promoting a gender-equal institution.

Central to our approach was the understanding that we should begin with identifying the problem, rather than with a solution. As Rao⁵ et al suggest in their account of organisational intervention, 'pre-identified solutions are often wrong or inadequate'. Our approach was to consult widely to determine how people viewed the issue of a police service that failed to retain or attract sufficient women. This consultation formed part of an environmental scan, covering opinion and responses to all policies, procedures and previous research that provided information on how the WAPS projected itself as an equal opportunity employer. With our analysis of that initial consultation in hand the next step was to assemble a group which could effectively define 'the problem', could estimate and analyse the scope of it, and whose members could generate proposals for action that would build ownership of the jointly agreed changes.

To this end, we have been working with a reference group of key stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of the issues, the language and the confidence needed to communicate that understanding to colleagues outside the group; this shared experience is creating the impetus for pilot projects of positive intervention. The group of

2 Bryson, L. (1994) Dealing with a Changing Work Environment: the issue of Sexual Harassment in the ADF, A Report Prepared for the Assistant Chief of Defence Force Personnel, ADF, Canberra.
 3 Prenzler, T. and Ransley, J (2002) Unpublished paper. *Police Reform: Building Integrity*. Sydney: Federation Press (in press for November).
 4 Senge, P. M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline. The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*. Sydney: Random House, p 8.

5 Rao, A. Stuart, R. and Kelleher, D. (1999) *Gender at Work: Organisational Change for Equality*. West Hartford, Conn., Kumarian Press. p 23.
 6 Eden, C. and Huxham, C. (1997) 'Action Research for the Study of Organisations', in Clegg, R. Hardy, C. and Nord, R. (eds) *Handbook of Organisation Studies*. London: Sage, pp 526-542.

employees selected for this project has been formally empowered by their Commissioner to gather data, conduct pilots and make recommendations about what actions need to be implemented to redress the gendered culture that operates within this Service. The group comprises five 'unsworn' members of WAPS' staff, four of whom are women at middle management level, and one relatively senior male manager (who also has responsibility for the overall project from an organisational perspective). The three 'sworn' members comprise one female sergeant, and two male superintendents.

Eden and Huxham's⁶ analysis of Action Research as a methodology for the study of organisations, suggests that this type of methodology, involving and empowering people from within the organisation, provides a richness of insight which may not be gained through other methodologies. Further, they note that while Action Research involves people in discovery about issues that are important to them, it also implies an intent to intervene – to take action based on their discovery.

Dahlerup's⁷ concept of 'critical acts', accentuates this need for intervention from within the organisational culture. However, while her study suggests that support for collective action by women is in itself a critical act in changing the culture, our Action Research methodology involves harnessing the collective action of both men and women in identifying and undertaking 'critical acts'.

This model of empowered employees from different levels of the organisation being involved in decision making about improving processes within the system is one that is very familiar to exponents and practitioners of Quality Management (referred to until the early 1990's as 'TQM'). In their study on Total Quality Management and perceptions of empowerment, Sigler and Pearson⁸ describe empowerment as employee involvement, and purport that empowerment is 'one of the most important principles of TQM'.

In this project we have linked the tools and techniques of Quality Management to our Action Research methodology in the expectation that this qualitative approach would create an environment in which empowerment will flourish. As with Action Research, Quality Management provides a problem-solving methodology that relies on employee involvement within a sound group process model.

The techniques of these approaches attempt to ensure that the root causes of the problem will be identified, and that solutions and remedies will be based on data that is gathered and analysed by those who are affected by both the current state, and the proposed solutions and remedies.

Reflections On The Reference Group and Project Teams' Process

Through the process used to run the Reference Group, we were able to create the links between the development of a community of interventionists and a form of collaborative interaction that Eveline and Booth⁹ have elsewhere called 'companionate leadership'. To generate companionate leadership in this project we used a group process grounded in Quality Management theory, introducing the participants to highly structured yet simple meeting tools and techniques that had a significant and positive impact on each person's capacity to contribute. This in turn enabled us to meet a key goal of the project: to create an environment that would support the generation of a growing community of like-minded staff who could use their shared knowledge, expertise and commitment to change the male-dominated nature of policing.

The UWA/WAPS team designed the Reference Group process very carefully, structuring it to ensure the involvement of all group members, creating a supportive, democratic and mutually respectful community for this project. True to the companionate leadership model there are no passengers, and quite deliberately, no designated leader. Everyone can take the lead, creating a unique environment for these participants where the discourse and interactions are not constrained by their usual cultural norms of gender, rank, age, length of service, status, and locus of power within the organisational hierarchy.

This carefully composed model comprises a number of linked, key elements that are new to this policing environment: ground rules, shared knowledge production, group interface with the external environment and companionate leadership. Our extensive involvement in groups ensured that we were able to create a model that persists beyond a few meetings. There has been a constant and continuous building of a strong group dynamic, unimpeded by the conventional demarcations between leaders and followers.

7 Dahlerup (1988).

8 Sigler, T.H., Pearson, C.M. (2000) 'Creating an Empowering Culture: examining the relationship between organisational culture and perceptions of empowerment', *Journal of Quality Management* 5, 27-52.

9 Eveline, J and Booth, M (2001) 'Companionate Leadership in the Case of Academic Promotions', *Refereed Conference Proceedings, Tenth International Women and Leadership Conference, Fremantle, Western Australia, November, 2001.*

A key component of the work of the Reference Group work was for members to identify projects that would enable them to test out some of their ideas about how to redress the gendered workplace culture of their organisation. The group as a whole signed off on six projects, and then group members determined how they would go about undertaking their particular project.

This movement out beyond the Reference Group has created the opportunity for further deployment of the carefully composed model that we had developed for the main group: the six projects have provided a vehicle for the companionate leadership model to be further deployed, creating a ripple effect across the organisation. Reference group members were able to identify and gather people around their projects who have a commitment to change. We have been able to replicate the culture of the Reference group within their project teams, beginning with the same premise that there needs to be a shared understanding of the 'problem'. Each project links with the overall research topic. The titles of these projects are:

- improving availability and accessibility to training and development for female public service officers;
- mentoring for females as a vehicle for helping women to create new pathways while creating greater understanding of gender issues among their male mentors;
- barriers to women's promotion – perceived or real;
- why do women leave – gathering data on why 120 women have left the organisation over the last five years and what it would take to bring them back;
- women in a goldfish bowl: what happens when women are promoted to previously male-dominated roles?
- how to sell the diversity message to the senior executive group so that they can take it on board and then role model it.

Using the same facilitation tools and techniques of good group process, we have been able to build up a new mini-culture: one that women are a part of, where through shared knowledges and interactive experiences, they have been able to develop a shared language, and stronger networks within and outside of their individual project team groups. Further, the men within some of these groups are participating in a dialogue and exchange of ideas that are not predicated upon the normal power/gender relationships that they experience in their other workplace groups.

These changes in the mini culture are in turn being told in stories to people outside of this project, generating

their interest, and extending the boundaries of the Reference Group process to other groups in the organisation. The companionate leadership model provides a significant counterpoint to the gendered culture of policing.

Although there are some interesting data emerging from the projects, and also from the groups that have formed to progress them, they are not the topic of this paper. Rather, our focus is on the process of the original Reference Group, the developing and devolving practice of companionate leadership, and the questions raised over time about how to sustain the momentum for change once leadership at the top and group memberships change. In the rest of the paper we discuss those developments and questions, drawing mainly on material from a reflexive focus group.

Our formal evaluation of the Reference Group, conducted towards the end of the first year of the project, allowed us to capture some of the qualitative changes in the group dynamics over this period. Using a focus group approach, we were able to document their reflections on what insights and awarenesses had emerged, and to gain some measure of the degree of cohesion within the group. Informal evaluations of some of the project teams to date support these initial findings. We were able to group the responses to our evaluation questions into the following five categories: group process, ground rules, shared knowledge production, group interface with the extended environment and companionate leadership.

Group Process

All members of the Reference Group reported that they found the process of involvement itself 'empowering'. We wanted to investigate what constituted their perceptions of empowerment, and to identify what the group members felt were the contributing factors.

A common factor, we found, was the members' sense of ownership of the group process. All noted that there were significant differences between their interaction in this group compared with their interaction in other, formal and informal meetings and project groups that they had been involved in within WAPS.

Members also felt that the group process, with both its formal and informal elements, contributed significantly towards their ease of interaction with each other, and allowed for a frank and rigorous exchange of ideas. Feedback on group process included comments such as the value of having the meetings facilitated by an outsider; the consistency of the group (having the same people involved over an extended period of time, rather than people leaving and joining); the constant flow of

feedback if they were unable to attend meetings; the learning experience that resulted from this interaction (broadening people's understanding in a non-threatening way of what is a very complex issue – systemic gender discrimination); and, the lack of a hidden agenda (there doesn't appear to be an already decided outcome so feedback is genuinely sought and used).

In this context and for this space and time, hierarchies of command and control could be bracketed, ensuring that 'normal' power relationships did not inhibit the development of the group trust and creativity.

Ground Rules

Change comes not only from the stories shared, but also from the practices deployed – the institution of ground rules has been a powerful agent for change in this group. Having all group members participate in the development of a set of ground rules reinforced the breaking down of hierarchical barriers.

At the outset, one of the senior (sworn) males suggested a new ground rule about rank: that there would be no rank, and no deference paid, within the meeting room. Although some of the women were initially somewhat sceptical that this would work, all readily agreed to try it. The move has subsequently been described as one of the most significant contributing factors to the equal participation and openness experienced between and during team meetings.

Given the gendered, hierarchical culture of policing, this seemingly small gesture on the part of a senior ranking male subverted the normal protocols that would have otherwise had to take place. This allowed those present, including unsworn females and those of a lesser rank, to participate equally in discussion and decision-making, a situation that some reported as particularly unusual for them.

Although implicit relationships of power continue to favour the hierarchical norms of the WAPS, within the Reference Group context the bracketing of rank proved useful. In short, it generated a sense of trust and group purpose. We asked participants to reflect on other forums that they regularly participate in within policing, where perhaps ground rules have not been established, and were told that trust and innovation were usually stifled. However, the mere existence of ground rules does not always provide for the openness achieved within the Reference Group. As indicated in this comment on a woman's experience of other forums, the content of those rules, and the democratic effort of forming them, is equally as important: "Even where ground rules are established, there are problems ... people can be bullied or spoken over, personal opinion becomes fact ..."

Importantly, the process of establishing the Ground Rules brought to the surface issues of paramount importance within a policing culture: questions of confidentiality, trust and hierarchy. By bringing such issues forward for discussion, and naming them, group members were afforded the opportunity to comment on why they were so important to them. Reflecting on this, a member of the Reference Group commented on the lack of barriers: "we talk freely ... trust was established at the beginning ... incorporating it into the ground rules very early in the piece means that you probably achieve more earlier."

In sum, the ground rules established by this group are a reverse image of the rules that Reference Group members work within on a daily basis within the policing culture. They informed us that formal and informal rules of conduct reinforce the hierarchical structure in this organisation. Such rules act to ensure that the views of designated leaders prevail in meeting forums and effectively disempower those whose lack of status within the hierarchy denies them a voice. We were told that in other groups, "higher ranks (always male) and other males automatically hold the floor." Moreover, "there is open belittling of different or challenging ideas and often the person becomes the focus rather than the issue".

Shared Knowledge Production

A key principle underpinning action research is that information and knowledge should be shared. A common response from the group, particularly among the women, was that through their participation in this group, they had access to information about the organisation that would not have been otherwise available to them. Indeed, much of the learning experienced by participants in this group has come from a sharing of information that has been new to some, and has particularly reflected the lack of corporate knowledge of its unsworn members. Again, people have commented on the impact that removing rank has had in this regard: "By removing ranks, there really are no barriers to sharing information ... if we weren't doing this project, we wouldn't have access to this information".

Further, as part of the ongoing work of this group, each group member, as team leader of their own small project, shares with their Reference Group colleagues the knowledges being produced within these projects. This knowledge sharing creates another kind of learning experience that has a significant impact on the outcomes of the overall project, and which is different from the norm that people have experienced in their usual work:

Knowledge to me seems a very apt term – every time I come here my project changes ... that's the beauty of it ... this is so much more dynamic ... getting feedback from all different people.

Other kinds of knowledge sharing has not been so positive, in that there were some depressing surprises for people about the lack of impact of specific policies and practices that they had thought were in place:

We can learn that things are not as advanced as we thought; that the organisation is not as evolved as we thought.

Part of the process of knowledge production occurs when information is brought into the group that challenges the thinking and assumptions of those people with responsibility and ownership for particular organisational policies or practices. A key element of this process is the acceptance and practice of the Ground Rules, which are activated in every group meeting: it is OK to challenge, to be open and honest, and no one voice can dominate. The knowledge is changed as a result of the interaction and becomes a different knowledge as a result of the group's analysis of it. As a result of this shared knowledge production, people with policy responsibility have had to accept that the actions that they had put in place in response to earlier complaints have not changed the behaviours of others outside of this group.

There was also some reflection on what happens to corporate knowledge sometimes when it is let loose in the system:

Answers might be sanitised if things go through the normal channels ... something like this (the work we are doing in the Reference Group) challenges the way the agency looks at things.

For all of the participants in this Reference Group, 'challenging the way the agency looks at things' was in this sense perceived as an empowering experience. The knowledge that became really important was the understanding that the women had of the gendered nature of the culture: that was what was given a privileged position.

Group Interface with the External Environment

What has become evident among the Reference Group members is that they are collectively empowered by each other, and encourage and support each other in their roles outside of this group. Among practitioners who deal with the issue on a daily basis, it is recognised that the problem of discrimination is closeted within a

discourse of minimisation and misinformation. While it became evident on this project that the ability to take the discourse outside of the Reference Group and deploy it in the external environment was intimately related to the power and status of the group member, this organisational power level has become secondary to the personal power that people have claimed as a result of their group interactions.

While the feminine has been positioned as disempowered within this organisation, a concerted effort has been made by the Reference Group to 'undo' this gender dynamic. On a symbolic level, the gendered organisation has been challenged by giving women a place, and then ultimately the voice of the privileged knower, on the Reference Group. At a practical level, senior managers have stepped in to ensure that women at lower levels within the organisation can participate equally in the projects now underway.

An unsworn female member of the group offered her analysis of why it is difficult for her, and other women, to share the knowledge produced inside this group with their colleagues outside, despite the obvious interest that her involvement in this group has generated amongst other unsworn women:

There is a distinct reluctance to get involved in, or be seen to be involved in women's issues because of the negative culture around this by the sworn officers. It seems to be entrenched that to get along with the police officers it is easier to conform, and no-one wants the label of being a man hater.

Observation showed that while empowerment was clearly evident within the Reference Group, outside of the group other women saw some of the female members as empowered, and also therefore threatening. Women participating in this project are challenging the mental models that other men and women, outside of the Reference Group, have about women in this organisation.

At the same time, it has become evident that women participating in the Reference Group, as well as those participating in the project teams, have some fears about their ongoing capacity to circumvent the cultural mores, once the knowledges and experience of the outside research effort are no longer a pressure on the organisation. As we not above, this raises the question of succession management and the Reference Group will need to take this on. In short, the legitimation from outside has been critical to getting this project underway.

Where To From Here? Some questions about Succession Planning

On a recent visit to best practice policing organisations overseas, the PhD research student was able to observe in action that leadership from the top is critical in effecting any real and sustainable positive change to increase the participation of women in policing. However, it also became clear that, in some cases, the original leaders have moved on. How then were the positive changes for women sustained?

In the case of the London Metropolitan Police, where the participation rate for women is 23%, male and female officers interviewed by the research student indicated that, not only had there been strong leadership at the outset, but that the initiatives that were put in place ten years ago to change the culture were role-modelled by all leaders (not just the chief executive). Our male colleagues from the Stockholm Police tell us that sufficient numbers of men were so horrified by survey results indicating that 48% of their female officers had been sexually harassed, that they decided that men needed to show some leadership for other men to follow: they formed their own men's network to address the problem, and have attracted significant funding over the next two years to put their strategic plan into place.

The Gender Agenda, produced by the British Association of Women Police, and presented elsewhere in these conference proceedings, cites many of the same barriers to promotion that are being identified through the SPIRT project in Western Australia. In outlining some of the 'Next Steps' to be taken, the Agenda makes a recommendation that resonates with the community of leaders model cited in this research:

Individuals must constructively challenge and start a dialogue where one is slow to start

These internationally recognised best practices would seem to support the views of those participating in and promoting the SPIRT project. Clearly, the development of a community of interventionists is critical in leading the change process. A review of overseas counterparts would suggest that such a collaborative model is just as important in sustaining that process until it becomes transformative.

As we have demonstrated, the companionate leadership model provides a significant counterpoint to the gendered culture of policing. We now need to ensure that those who have experienced this can

continue to build on the new mini-culture: one that women are a part of, where through shared knowledges and interactive experiences, they have been able to develop a shared language, and stronger networks within and outside of this group. Further, by placing the activities and leadership of this project in a direct reporting line to the Commissioner, people have experienced at first hand the impact of their interventions. Moving outside of the normal bureaucratic processes, that many have been critical of in the past, has provided much of the impetus for their involvement.

Studies have shown that interventions can either reinforce the cultural norms of the organisation, or provide a challenge to those norms. So far, we don't have enough evidence of outcomes of the projects to know to what extent the gender inequality in the WAPS will be challenged or reinforced. These project teams will be presenting interim reports on their progress to date to the Commissioner before the end of this year. Our evidence in the Reference Group shows that it has been a learning forum in the process of producing empowerment for women.

Conclusion

Rather than reflecting the entrenched male culture of WAPS, the Reference Group has turned that male culture into an object of inspection and intervention. For the women in the group the Reference Group offers a respite from the subordinate role of women that is in evidence elsewhere in the Police Service; the bracketing of rank from this group was the most significant contributing factor cited by the women in the focus group session. However, the chances of replicating this gender-equal environment within the WAPS community are highly unlikely, without a dismantling of the rank structure.

For the men in this group, empowerment has come in the form of gaining exposure to the language and form of analysis that the Reference Group developed to understand the entrenched male culture. They have been privy to linguistic and analytical tools that put them ahead of the field, which they used to good effect in addressing their fellow senior officers at executive conferences. While their involvement came at some cost (they spoke of experiencing first hand what it was like to be in a minority group), this was countered by their perceptions of the Reference Group as a forum for information, reflection and insights.

Cynthia Cockburn¹⁰ provides us with some reflection on what can happen without a model of change like that we have called "companionate leadership", when the discourse on positive action for women becomes grounded in discourses between women about fairness to men:

Positive discrimination in favour of individual women is unpopular with women, who feel obscurely that it adds one more unfairness to an unfair organisation. Yet they welcome the idea of transformative change that could improve things, they believe, for both women and men ... for their part, however, most men, even those in top management who are the sponsors of positive action for women, put energy into limiting any extension of the agenda beyond bias-removal, an opening of doors and, at most, some remedial training for women.

While the outcomes of this project so far are promising, what remains to be seen is how sustainable the companionate leadership model will be once the projects develop their own momentum. This new leadership model relies on the breaking down of barriers between sworn and unsworn. What we have in the Reference Group are practices countermanding the normal hierarchies of gender and the sworn/unsworn division. The danger in future interventions and awareness raising is that either one or other of those issues will predominate. We have tapped into people's aspirations about equality, equity and diversity; it now remains to be seen whether the organisation can capitalise on the goodwill that has been generated to date, and transform these aspirations into sustainable and effective positive change.

conference and award dates

International Association of Women Police conference to be held in San Francisco 31 August – 5 September 2003. IAWP website for all information can be found by following the links (www.iawp.org). Airfares are competitive and if you are lucky your Department may contribute to some of the costs. Australian residents can claim costs on their income tax returns.

Also another date to put into your diary:

October 4th 2003 – Hobart Tasmania. Australasian Council of Women and Policing Excellence in Policing Awards Dinner.

A new award has been sponsored by the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University. This award is for anyone in Australia or New Zealand who has an interest in improving policing for women. The winner will have finalised a research paper that explores how policing and law enforcement can be improved for women. The research will be contemporary, original and of publishable quality. This

research may already be published or produced for another purpose, it must however be available for publication by the Australasian Council for Women and Policing on its website and in its journal.

Nominations for the award close Friday 5 September 2003 and awards presented at the dinner in Hobart.

Nomination forms and information can be obtained from Helen McDermott on 0417 231 838 or email helenmcd@ozemail.com.au

Completed nomination forms and a copy of the research should be forwarded by Friday 5 September 2003 to:

Awards Secretariat
Australasian Council Women and Policing,
PO Box 775
Dickson ACT 2602.

Faxed nominations will also be accepted, please contact Helen to make necessary arrangements.

¹⁰ Cockburn, C (1991) In the Way of Women. *Men's Resistance to Sex Equality in Organisations*. MacMillan. p 216.