

## WOMEN ON THE MOVE

# 1997 GRACE VAUGHAN MEMORIAL LECTURE

*We are pleased to reproduce the following edited version of the 1997 Grace Vaughan Memorial Lecture, presented on 13 May by Professor Fay Gale, Vice Chancellor of the University of WA.*

Grace Vaughan was most certainly a woman on the move. She was a woman of great energy who not only kept moving, but took her friends, her colleagues, her world along with her - with her enthusiasm, her dynamism and her gutsy determination to achieve a better world.

Grace Vaughan was definitely a mover and a shaker, she believed passionately in justice for all, in greater opportunities for the disadvantaged. She was a political activist, committed to the goal of greater social justice. It is no surprise that the last paper she presented to the general meeting of the Australian Association of Social Workers before her death was entitled "Politics or Perish".

Grace has been an inspiration to all who knew her, and her memory and her work lives on. *She* was a woman on the move, and there is no question that throughout her life, she moved forward, and through her work, our society moved forward with her.

But then women have always been the movers, and arguably, the shakers. We do have to ask the question: in which direction are we moving? Certainly, as a group, we are moving all over the place! The pathways we choose and those available to us are diverse and holistic in that they encompass all life's experiences. In career terms, this means, as you all know, that there are stops and starts, diversions and concentrations.

And because for many of us our personal and professional lives are so closely enmeshed, each is enriched by the other. This produces tensions but also results in exciting initiatives and innovation.

The experience of raising a family is a privilege in terms of learning about inter-personal relationships, egos, time management and so on. Parenting teaches us to be managers, to deal with disputes and to negotiate, arbitrate and facilitate. Men have had much less experience in these areas than women.

In a recent study carried out by Millicent Poole (Vice-Chancellor elect of Edith Cowan University) and Janice Langan-Fox, entitled *Australian women and careers*, three career life paths for women were identified. There were the so-called "superwomen" who got into the career fast-track and did all the additional work involved with raising children as well, there were the women with no children who allocated more of their time to a career, and there were the women who shifted their focus away from a career to spend more time with their children. In Millicent Poole's words: "*Women need to have choices and not feel inadequate if they go against societal norms*".<sup>1</sup>

And indeed it is the societal norms that all women since (and before) the suffragettes have been fighting to break down. But then long before the suffragettes, in fact through recorded history, women have always been the movers, the community facilitators, the ones who got things done, even if they have never received the recognition for it. Feminist scholarship is changing the way we view our world, and in particular, showing how the distinctions perceived between men and women are primarily socially constructed. A feminist interpretation of history revolves around

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families and domestic events, such as weddings, births and funerals. It provides us with an illuminating alternative to the traditional men's history based on wars and kings.

Feminist scholarship is continually uncovering lost or hidden stories about women. Scholars at this University, for example, have looked at the history of the English Royal Court of Henry II, between 1196-1250. It appears that in these times it was very common for women to enter litigation in the Royal Courts. While wealthy women continued such litigation in later centuries, historians have not always seen them as active participants.

In Australia, of course, we need look no further than to the Aboriginal women who are the movers and the shakers in their communities, if not the nominal leaders. My own research has uncovered countless examples of the strength and solidarity of Aboriginal women in enormously different situations. The status of women, the importance of women in maintaining law and order, and the central role of land in their retention of that position are often underestimated by many. We cannot assume that Aboriginal society either was in the past or will be in the future one in which real power and status are determined by sex.

Why is it that today it is so often Aboriginal women who convey an impression of strength and resoluteness, yet white history portrays them as weak and completely dominated by Aboriginal men? Have the women changed dramatically since white settlement or has non-Aboriginal Australia just got it wrong? After all, in Aboriginal history, in the dreaming, the women have very powerful roles to play.

My earliest experience of this paradox relates to the Aboriginal women at Point McLeay in South Australia. I first visited Point McLeay as a 15 year old schoolgirl spending the holidays with my aunt on a nearby property. At the time I was struck by several of the women with whom my aunt talked. They seemed so outgoing, so much in command, so intelligent and so thirsty for knowledge of the outside world and of the city in particular. The women were concerned with broad issues of freedom, equality, the validity of Christianity for their situation, the right to employment or social benefits.

I gathered from my uncle that these issues seemed less important to men, that they concentrated on getting work and money to buy cigarettes and alcohol which was prohibited at the time.

I was impressed by the strength of character and the independence of these women. It was only later when I read the work of 19<sup>th</sup> century recorders that I found it impossible to reconcile two very different views. In the words of George Taplin, the first missionary to the station, in 1859:

*The women are real slaves and are bartered continually, and so much below the brute are they that ... few husbands expect constancy in their wives, but many actually encourage and command the reverse.*<sup>2</sup>

This description seemed worlds apart from the women I knew.

Was it just that I saw them differently as a woman, or had Aboriginal women changed since Europeans arrived? Or had early recorders like Taplin simply got it wrong.

The Darwinian theory of 'a scale of evolution' and the 'survival of the fittest' permitted even the most liberal of colonisers to justify the European settlement and the usurpation of Aboriginal lands, and even the genocide of the original occupants, in the name of science. It is perhaps not surprising that a belief in the evolutionary superiority of Europeans also led to an assumption amongst extremists that Aboriginal women were barely human.

**B**ut history has proven this view totally wrong. Aboriginal women, frustrated by the selective grooming of their men, eventually took steps to organise themselves. In Adelaide it was a group of Aboriginal women who set up the first community centre. They acquired a building, raised grants and appointed the first social worker to a solely Aboriginal organisation. From this beginning they established what was to become the Legal Rights movement in South Australia.

It was a women's group in Adelaide that led to the first successful land rights movement in Australia with the passing of the establishment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust in 1966.

It was a city-based women's group that established the land rights support meetings to assist in the traditional land claims of the Pitjantjatjara people in Central Australia. Not surprisingly, it was a woman from the south of the State who became the first qualified Aboriginal lawyer in South Australia.

Aboriginal women have exhibited a tenacity and tolerance that would surprise a number of non-Aboriginal feminists.

Aboriginal women are the stalwarts of their society, and usually have the major responsibility for their children and spouses, their relatives, and their elders. As such they develop an extremely high level of patience, perseverance and persistence. Aboriginal women act as service deliverers, counsellors, supporters, interpreters, mediators, advocates, spokespersons and managers for their families and their communities.

Aboriginal women have been instrumental in tackling the problems of alcoholism and petrol sniffing in their communities. A very recent example of this can be found in the communities around Curtin Springs, in central Australia. After a decade of wrangling, the women have secured agreement from the roadhouse proprietor to curb sales of alcohol to their communities. According to the proprietor, years of litigation have prolonged the agony and delayed an outcome. "If

I could have spoken to the women years ago, we could have eliminated this business”, he claims. “But we were not allowed to sit down and talk because we had to go through the lawyers”. And in the words of Zita Antonios, the Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner who mediated the case: “*The women of the NPY\* Women’s Council have a lot to teach the people at the Harvard School of Business*”.<sup>3</sup> (\* Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara.)

Throughout history, and across the globe, women’s contributions to society have been overlooked. Rona Chadwick surely had this fact in mind when she drew this. Women are particularly invisible in the fields of medicine, science and engineering. Some of you may remember an article in Saturday’s West Australian last month: “Great Inventions: That’s Women’s Work!”. The inventions attributed to men, which were actually the work of women listed in that article included such diverse gems as liquid paper, the DNA Molecule, the brown paper bag, and calculus. To quote another, directly:

*Mention smallpox and its cure and most people think of Edward Jenner and vaccination. Much has been made of how Dr Jenner, 47, a London surgeon, became aware that people who contracted cowpox were later safe from smallpox.*

*In May 1796, or so the story went, he took the daring step of extracting the cowpox infection from young dairymaid Sara Nelmes and injected it into eight-year-old James Phipps.*

*As expected, the boy contracted cowpox. On July 1, Dr Jenner injected him with smallpox but he did not succumb to the dreaded disease. Dr Jenner had apparently achieved a medical miracle.*

*In 1802 the Government awarded him £10,000 - a fortune in today’s terms - to continue his research. In addition, Dr Jenner entered the history books.*

*But, in all this, the truth was short-changed. In fact, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu established the scientific basis for this procedure 80 years earlier. In 1717 Lady Mary and her husband, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, travelled Turkey. While she was living there she noticed that the villagers were deliberately infecting each other with smallpox serum applied directly to an opened vein.*

*They became ill for two or three days, recovered within a week or so, and were subsequently immune from the disease itself. In a letter to a friend, Lady Montagu referred to this practice as “ingrafting”.*

*When she returned to England she had her own daughter inoculated against smallpox, then the Princess of Wales followed suit with her daughters.*

*The medical fraternity vehemently opposed the practice (they stood to lose consultation fees from attending smallpox patients). However, the procedure of variolation*

*(inoculation with a live virus) became popular and the death rate from smallpox fell from 30 per cent to 2 per cent. Her book, “Plain Account of the Inoculating of the Small-Pox by a Turkish Merchant”, did much to add to public knowledge of the disease. She died in 1762.*<sup>4</sup>

This story is typical of the many tales of women’s invisible contributions to human kind.

Of course there is another side to this equation. There are many women who have been very visible throughout history. But what are the public perceptions of the most prominent women of our time? Madonna and Mae West are icons of the ‘damned whore’ stereotype. And yet these women both managed to turn around the ‘damned whore’ stigma, and to derive real power from their image as strong, feisty women; women who used their sexuality to their own advantage, remaining in total control of the process.

Despite these examples, the traditional Judaeo-Christian notion that all women were either good or evil, with the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene being the prototypes of each kind, persists today.

The ‘damned whore’ stereotype came to Australia with the First Fleet. Anne Summers, in her book “Damned Whores and God’s Police” quoted the journals and letters of Lt Ralph Clark of the First Fleet:

*[The] damned whores the moment that the[y] got below fel a fighting amongst one a nother and Capt Meridith order the Sergt. not to part them but to let them fight it out.*<sup>5</sup>

**D**oes this stereotype persist in contemporary society? If we look at the status of the prostitute today, it is evident that the ‘damned whores’ label is still all too relevant. Men buy sexual services from women, as a simple business transaction. But we have to ask ourselves the question: who really gets used under “user pays”?

A recent study by Jan Jordon, Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Criminology, Victoria University of Wellington, looked at this issue. She concluded that money earned in prostitution seldom comes without a price. There are health costs, including increased vulnerability to rape and physical violence; there is the risk of exploitation from unscrupulous parlour owners, pimps, or police; there is also the long-term emotional impact of years of distancing and dissociation in order to limit the intrusion of clients into the woman’s personal, private sphere.

As one prostitute explained:

*When you’re on the game, you alienate yourself from everyone else ... Your clients never know the real you, your friends and family never know the whore. By your silence you actually buy into the stereotype of what a prostitute is - a split personality, a shameful person who dares not speak her name.*<sup>6</sup>

This, then, is the legacy of the stereotype. Women are paying

the price for men's pleasure with their self esteem and their safety. The stigma attached to prostitution ensures that although the client may hand over the dollars, he is definitely not the only one who pays. We call this the "user pays" system, but the irony is, the men believe they are the users and the payers, when the women are also being used, and also paying the price for it.

Let us look then at the areas in which women are achieving positive recognition in Australia today. A glance at the Order of Australia awards for 1995 shows us that 63% of the women who were honoured, received their award for community service. On the other hand, relatively few women received awards in the categories of public life; business, commerce and law; and primary industries, science and technology (12%, 8% and 9% respectively).<sup>7</sup>

Another useful indicator is the numbers of women as members of boards. In a survey completed in 1995, women represented 4% of all board members, 1% of executive directors and 5% of non-executive directors. The number of women on boards has been at this level for several years.<sup>8</sup>

So the recognition is still heavily community based: women going about doing good deeds to help their families and their wider communities. Perhaps we are all god's police after all!

But then we have to ask ourselves why community work is so undervalued in our society, why it is seen as second fiddle to the 'real' work of business, industry and government. A community is the sum of its parts, with each contributing to the other to create a healthy, productive society. Is it merely a coincidence that the areas in which women predominantly receive recognition are the areas which have less status, less value attached to them? I think not!

My good friend and mentor, Dame Roma Mitchell, summed up her views on women's status in 1984 with these words:

*I have no doubt that had I been asked ... years ago whether affirmative action for women was necessary or desirable I would have replied in the negative.*

*I, like my contemporaries, was conditioned to there being obstacles to the appointment of women to high positions but believed that, given time, such obstacles would vanish.*

*I no longer believe this.*

*I now think that, in order to give equality of opportunity to women, it is not sufficient just to remove any bars to their appointment to particular positions. It is necessary to make their access to the top positions in the work force real, not theoretical.<sup>9</sup>*

Let us look at my own field: higher education. There has been some publicity lately surrounding the fact that there are now six female vice-chancellors (or vice-chancellors elect), out of a total of thirty-seven in Australia. This is a three hundred per cent increase since the time I became Vice-Chancellor at UWA, when it was just myself and Di Yerbury.

Universities are leaders in the community, and we must provide role models in this regard, so yes, I am delighted that the gender balance is swinging in the right direction at senior management level.

But there is still a huge imbalance in the numbers and employment status of senior academic women in universities across the country, and unless this can be redressed, the increase in women in senior management will be unsustainable.

Recent data show that only 27% of tenured academic staff are women, and more significantly, women comprise only 13% of academic staff at the levels of associate professor and professor.<sup>10</sup>

Another significant example of gender disparity can be found in the career choices of young women. If we look at women's participation in the fields of study which lead to higher starting salaries, a very clear message comes through. In 1995, in Australia, only 26% of the female students graduated from the 'top ten' top earning areas, compared with 42% of the men. Engineering was the fourth highest earning field, and this attracted 20% of the male students, but only 3% of the female students.<sup>11</sup>

The Poole and Langan-Fox study I referred to earlier tackles this issue. Poole has identified many factors which influence young women's career achievement: motivation, support from family and, later, husbands, education policy and family-friendly work environments. Sound career advice, also was highlighted as crucial, particularly for girls and young women. This is not always a given.

**W**omen's careers are more complex than men's because of the greater number of choices and pathways they face in education and employment. Dr Mamphela Ramphele, a black South African woman who also happens to be Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, highlights the different experiences between men and women with these words:

*For most men a choice of career is a separate exercise from the important task of identifying a life partner. Their wives are often people they meet whilst pursuing the career of their choice. Social pressures on most women, however, often make them subordinate their career choices to the need to become desirable as a prospective marriage partner. Young women have almost to position themselves strategically to enter upon the role of a supporting spouse.<sup>12</sup>*

There must be strategies in the workplace in response to these complex pathways, these realities faced by all women. Strategies which can be employed to

keep women on the move. For example, at the University of Western Australia we have put in place a number of initiatives aimed at redressing the imbalance in women's participation, for both staff and students.

We have recently set up a job sharing register, to assist women who prefer or need to work part-time, to allow for family responsibilities. This initiative is part of our strategy to create a family friendly culture for all our staff.

The University also runs a highly successful and extremely popular programme on Leadership Development for Women. This programme offers networking opportunities for women across campus as well as a formal mentor scheme. This scheme links women with a senior colleague who provides support, counselling and career advice. Originally the scheme involved only women mentoring women, but it has now been extended to include male mentors, which is a real step forward, as it gives the men a real appreciation of the challenges facing their female colleagues. The programme also runs a core programme of leadership training activities and information sessions to assist women to understand the structures which both enable and obstruct career progression.

We are running a popular inter-disciplinary Masters programme in Women's Studies. And we have established and are currently hosting the joint Centre for Research for Women, which has been successful in attracting research funding for projects in areas affecting women. The Centre has also established a database of feminist researchers in this Western Australia, and has enabled a great deal of networking and cross-fertilisation between researchers across the State. Most importantly, it has raised the profile and status of women's research.

For students, we run the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) project, which encourages prospective female students to consider science and engineering as options. It presents young women with strong and positive role models in science and engineering, and provides support, information and networking to prospective female students. This programme has had considerable success, although the numbers of women in Science and Engineering is still frustratingly low.

On the policy side, we have put in place a number of initiatives which assist academic women in achieving their potential, including a revamp of the promotion and tenure procedures. We have put more emphasis on teaching experience and research potential, rather than concentrating on research experience, which women often lack due to interrupted career paths.

Measures such as this require challenge the traditional approach to the definition merit in academia. But they are essential if women are to participate on an equal footing with men. Changing the culture to allow us to redefine merit is no easy task, but it is possible, using sound argument, logical reasoning, and a decent dose of courage and determination!

Certainly there is a great deal more to be done. Where do we go from here? Women must keep moving, and we must keep

moving all over the place! We have achieved a great deal, but the momentum must continue. Or as Judy Horacek would say: we have to watch out for "fin de shark"!

We must encourage and support each other. Without this, policies and mechanisms to facilitate women's career movements and choices are useless.

Grace Vaughan believed fervently in justice for all. Justice for women means equal participation, and equal opportunities.

In her name, we must continue her fight, and for the sake of our daughters we must ensure that women do keep moving, that we will forever be described as 'women on the move'.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Drury B. "Where girls go", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 April 1997, p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Gale F. "Roles revisited: the women of southern South Australia" in Brock P. (ed), *Women Rites and Sites*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Rowbotham J. "Last drinks at Curtin Springs", in *The Australian*, 11 February, 1997, p.11.

<sup>4</sup> Jeans P. "Great inventions? That's women's work", *The West Australian*, 12 April 1997, Big Weekend, pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Summers A. *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Penguin, Victoria, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Jordan J. "User pays: why men buy sex", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1997, pp 55-71.

<sup>7</sup> Townsend K, McLennan W. *Australian Women's Year Book 1995*, ABS Cat no. 4142.0, Office of the Status of Women, 1995, p. 133.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* p. 130.

<sup>9</sup> Dame Roma Mitchell, 1984.

<sup>10</sup> 1996 DEETYA comparative staff dataset.

<sup>11</sup> Guthrie B. *Graduate starting salaries 1995*, Graduate Careers Council of Australia, 1996, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Ramphele M. *A life*, David Philip, Claremont, South Africa, 1995, p.72.

Contributed by Maria Harries

## Counter-Oppressive Workshop

"Counter-oppressive practice is seen as liberating, empowering and fulfilling."

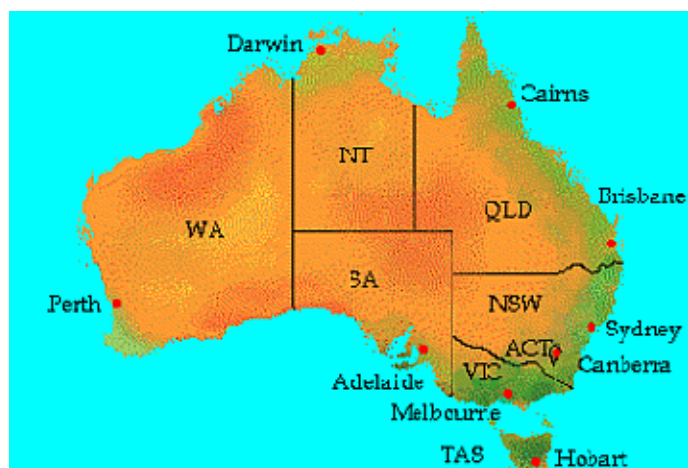
Mallinson, *Issues in Social Work Education*, 1995.

The Recent Graduates Subcommittee invite all recent graduates interested in developing a "liberating, empowering and fulfilling practice" and exploring the links between these ideals and our work to a workshop to be held on Saturday the 5 July 1997.

Please contact Petrina Butcher 9378 2522 (W), 9271 5588 (H) or Luke Hays 9334.3695 (W), 9382 4160 (H) for further details.

# Net Watch

In this issue we are looking at the IPS Employee Assistance web site [http://www.eap.com.au/], a Sydney based employee assistance program (EAP). EAPs are a mechanism for employers to provide workplace based counselling and related services for their employees. Each contractual arrangement between employer and EAP provider means services can be tailored to the specifics of the workplace. Some years ago there was a strong emphasis in EAPs on providing services to employees with alcohol and other drug problems. However, the contemporary EAP service provides a comprehensive service to assist employees over a wide range of family and marital problems utilising the skills of social workers and psychologists.



The IPS site is a good example of the options offered by EAPs, such as downloadable publications and a regular newsletter. A helpful feature offered by the site is an Australia-wide index to providers with formal relationships with IPS (eg INDRAD in WA) through a map.

The following excerpt from the site (*Links to web sites*) give members an understanding of the useful information available through the IPS site.

## Ed

### Links to web sites

This page contains links to interesting web sites and pages. The information is divided into the following categories each with the top ten links - EAP related; psychology; education & training; alcohol & other drugs and general interest.

#### EAP related

- **Network of EAP Providers of Australasia.** Australia's leading group of EAP providers. Links to all their pages and lots of resources.
- **IPS Employee Assistance.** Huge site, Australia's first psychology & EAP related Web site. Download conference papers, articles, newsletters and more.
- **Interlock Queensland.** Queensland's leading EAP provider. Lots of good EAP information.
- **The EAP Directory.** The EAP Directory is maintained by DataLink of Onalaska, Texas.
- **Family Resources Online.** Excellent resources for families & those working with them.
- **Dr.Saito's Home on the Web.** This page from Japan has a wealth of resources related to Mental Health Mental Health
- **Net Mental Health Net.** The largest, most comprehensive guide to mental health online, featuring over 6,000 individual resources.
- **The On-Line Doctor.** Very useful resource - just like an on-line house call. Lots of good information.

- **Drug Testing FAQ** (Anti Bladder Cops !) This is the site you saw Tony Buon from IPS interviewed about on Australian TV and CNN.

#### Psychology

- **Psychology.** Take a test, read an article, find out something new
- **American Psychological Society.** Good home page with lots of information & links.
- **Australian Gestalt Journal.** Currently under construction
- **Behavior OnLine.** Aspires to be the premier World Wide Web gathering place for mental health professionals and applied behavioural scientists—a place where professionals of every discipline can feel at home.

- **Australian Psychological Society.** The Australian Psychological Society Limited (APS), formed in 1966, is the premier body which represents the interests of the science and profession of Psychology nationwide.
- **Institute of Psychiatry (UK).** You can visit the Institute library or go straight to the Mental Health page. You may also search this site.
- **Alzheimer Web Home Page.** The aim of the Alzheimer Web is to provide a resource for researchers in the field of Alzheimer's disease and for the people who have an interest in research developments.
- **TLC Group** Publications for Transition, Loss, and Change
- **Survivors Home Page.** This page is dedicated to all survivors of sexual abuse and rape. One of the purposes of this page is to let you know that you are NOT alone!
- **Take A Psych Test On-Line Now!** The Keirsey Temperament Sorter by David Keirsey is a personality test which scores results according to the Myers-Briggs system.
- **Great Psychology List Of Lists.** This is an index to Internet resources relevant to research in cognitive science and psychology. It will be maintained in parallel in The Data Archive at the University of Essex, UK, and in the Stanford Psychology Department.

### Education & training

- **ABS.** The Australian Bureau of Statistics is Australia's official statistical organisation.
- **Australian Society For Educational Technology.** ASET is the national organisation for people with professional interests in educational technology. These pages will inform you about our society and its activities.
- **Australian Training Information.** TRAIN is a new service which simplifies the maze of information on vocational education and training.
- **Campus Review.** The journal of record for Higher Education in Australia.
- **ERIC** Pages Search ERIC ON-Line From Here! Federal Budget All the details you probably don't want!
- **The Web & Teaching** Good site devoted to this important topic
- **NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training.** Official policies and good links IPS Training Services Australia's leading workplace consultancy - check it out.
- **World Bank.** The education site to end all sites!

### Alcohol & other drugs

- **Alcoholics Anonymous.** This Web Page is created and maintained by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.
- **Booze Buster.** Take The Test The BoozeBuster on-line drinking test is based on World Health Organisation principles, and is completely anonymous. Take the anonymous WHO on-line drinking test to determine if you are at risk.
- **CEIDA Drug Links (Australia).** DrugLinks is your connection to the world of alcohol and other drugs information provided by the Centre for Education and Information on Drugs and Alcohol (CEIDA), Australia.

- **International Council on Alcohol and Addictions.** ICAA is one of the longest established international organisations working to reduce and prevent the harmful effects of the use of alcohol and other drugs. You will find NEWS and EVENTS, information about HOW TO JOIN ICAA, its history, activities, publications and services, recent documents relevant to alcohol and other drug problems and links to key Web Sites around the world.
- **New Zealand Treatment Centre.** Hanmer Springs, New Zealand Services Available: Primary Treatment - Five Weeks, 12 Step, Full Medical Support The Queen Mary Experience - Three Months Extended Care
- **Australian Drug Foundation.** The Australian Drug Foundation (ADF) is an independent, non-profit organisation working to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug problems in the community
- **Addiction Research Foundation.** The Addiction Research Foundation develops and makes available knowledge and programs that can be used to reduce the problems caused by the abuse of alcohol and other drugs in Ontario.
- The **Web of Addictions** is dedicated to providing accurate information about alcohol and other drug addictions.
- **United Nations International Drug Control Program.** The United Nations agency responsible for coordinating activities relating to the international control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

### General interest

- **WinZip Download Site.** Get yourself a free trial copy of this excellent Windows archiving tool.
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## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT AGED CARE STRUCTURAL REFORM PACKAGES

The aged care structural reform package, introduced by the Minister for Family Services, the Hon Judi Moylan, MP was introduced on 10 February 1997, and will be implemented from 1 July. The Government has considered the Funding and other Implementation Issues Working Group's report and the representations of industry, consumer and carer groups to bring about measures which:

- ensure that access to residential aged care will be based on needs, not means;
- ensure entry contributions, called accommodation bonds will bring substantial capital investment and improvement to the quality of nursing home accommodation;
- introduce effective and fair income testings to allow residents to make a fair and reasonable contribution to their daily living costs.

The government recognises that past funding was inefficient and outdated, dementia care had too little support, people who entered hostels were forced to move to a nursing home if their care needs changed, couples were forced to separate.

### SINGLE CLASSIFICATION INSTRUMENT AND TRANSITION ARRANGEMENT

Under the reforms, the five categories nursing home Resident Classification Instrument and the four categories hostel Personal Care Assessment Instrument will be merged into a new Single Classification Instrument. This will ensure that residents are funded according to their care needs no matter what type of facility they are in, and will allow facilities to continue to meet the residents' changing needs.

The SCI includes new questions on dementia needs to ensure better funding for this type of resident. All residents entering care after July first will be classified under SCI.

### ACCOMMODATION BONDS

From 1 July 1997, all certified aged care facilities may charge accommodation bonds to new residents who can afford to pay. The accommodation bond is a bond arranged between the resident and the facility which keeps the bond until the resident leaves. The money raised from the bonds will be used to upgrade the facility.

Concessional residents will not have to pay the bond. Each aged care facility must take a set proportion of people who cannot afford to pay a bond, people will not have to pay before they get a place, and nobody will be forced to sell their home. People must be left with a minimum of \$22,500, or \$45,000 for a couple. When the resident leaves, the bond is refunded to the resident of their estate, less an amount of \$2,600 a year for up to 5 years (a maximum of \$13,000). People will not pay twice if they move, the bond from the first facility will be rolled over.

Residents on respite will not pay an accommodation bond.

People can pay the accommodation bond as a lump sum or as an equivalent fortnightly, weekly payment, or a combination of both. Regular payment option includes a component for interest that the home could have earned on an equivalent lump sum.

### INCOME TESTING

Changes applied from 1 July 1997:

- All residents will pay a basic daily fee of \$21.10 a day for pensioners, \$26.40 for non pensioners.
- Part pensioners and non-pensioners will pay an additional income-tested fee of 25 cents per dollar income above \$49 per week (\$86 for married couples). Fees for married residents will be assessed on half of the couple's combined income.
- Pensioner residents will no longer receive rent assistance, but their fees will be reduced accordingly.

### PLANNING AND BED NUMBER

Under the Aged Care Structural Reform Package the residential care planning ratio will be 100 places per 1,000 people who are 70 years and older. The ratio will comprise 90 residential places and 10 community aged care packages. The Government now insures that 1 place in every 90 will be earmarked for residential respite care. An additional \$36.7 million over 4 years was provided in the 1996/97 Budget to boost access to respite care services in the community. A network of regional carer respite centres will start operating through 1997 to service people needing respite care.

Community respite options include:

- a network of day care centres which provide respite on half or full day basis;
- an *in home* respite service is available in some areas; and
- home care and personal care services providing respite in the home.

Eligibility for respite care is determined by the local Aged Care Assessment Team, which assesses people as needing residential care before referring for respite.

Carer Resource Centres will provide support and information for carers of frail old people. The Home and Community Care Program will continue to support the frail aged to remain in the community.

### OTHER CHANGES TO FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

Funded hospital leave will continue to be unlimited for residents of aged care facilities. All residents will now be entitled to 52 days of paid social leave per year. The Government now funds the cost of enteral feeding and continuous oxygen.

Extra Service Arrangements Scheme provides higher level services for residents who pay additional charges, builds on the previous exempt program and offers more flexibility and better deals for residents.

## CERTIFICATION- ACCREDITATION

A new quality assurance system is introduced, based on strict accreditation from 1 January 1998. To be accredited, all residential aged care facilities will need to be assessed against an agreed set of accreditation standards. Facilities which do not meet accreditation requirements will not receive Commonwealth funding.

Aged Care Standards Agency, an independent body will commence operating on January 1, 1998 to certify aged care facilities. Certification will apply until the facility achieves accreditation, or until the end of the transition period for the introduction of accreditation arrangements.

*Submitted by Thuan Nicholls, Royal Perth Hospital.*

## Letters

The Editor  
The West Australian

Dear Editor

Another drug related death and another tragedy. While having the deepest sympathy for the Walton family on the tragic death of their daughter Skye, it is concerning that the hunt to blame someone ends in the scapegoating of welfare professionals.

The social workers involved do not for reasons of professional ethics have the opportunity, nor should they, to tell their story. Of necessity the only story in such cases is that proffered by those most tragically affected, politicians and spokespersons for the bureaucracy.

Working with young people, their estranged families and their, at times, difficult behaviours, is a very delicate, distressing and heartbreaking job, made even harder by such things as the availability of drugs and a socio-political environment that is more concerned with free markets, economic gain and profits, than it is with human issues and relationships. As long as we predicate our service ethic on a market place society and not on a relationship society, we will find a growth in human tragedy and a burgeoning of social problems.

Social workers over the last decade have not only been faced with greater, and at times, insoluble problems produced by the market place, they have also suffered from a scarcity of resources, the constant change and restructure of their workplaces, the vagaries of politicians and the constant threat of increasing corporatisation. Social problems cannot be solved by either economic means or by market and organisational reforms. Contemporary issues of relationships, family problems, social dislocation, unemployment and crime need social solutions.

Whenever we feel pain or anguish we seek to blame and scapegoat. Surely a more productive outcome is to learn by our mistakes and to stop repeating the errors of history.

Yours sincerely

Brian Wooller  
Branch President  
23 May 1997

*Continued on page 11*

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEND THE STATE CONFERENCE FREE?

If you'd like to attend this year's State Conference and you're a remote practitioner, the AASW/WA Branch might have an offer you can't refuse.

As part of its support to remote practitioners to help them comply with the Association's new CPE requirements, the WA Branch has decided to support a member of the WA Branch who is a remote practitioner to attend this year's State Conference.

The conference will be held in Perth August 19 - 21, 1997 at the Novotel Langley Hotel. As you would have seen in the program, this year's conference promises to be a very important and worth while event.

In order to be considered, an applicant must be:

- a member of the WA Branch of the AASW
- work in a remote setting
- would otherwise be unable to attend the conference

Applicants who wish to be considered should provide a short submission to the selection committee of no longer than 2 pages outlining how attendance at the conference would benefit themselves, their clients and their agency. It should also include a strategy of how they would disseminate the information acquired at the conference to their region or community when they return from the conference.

The person chosen will have their conference registration paid including the conference dinner and receive a return economy class air fare to Perth. The person will be billeted with an AASW member in Perth during their stay. Transport to and from the airport and assistance to get to the conference venue will be provided.

Submissions should be sent to;

**Dr. Barbara Meddin**  
**Selection Committee, AASW (WA Branch)**  
**PO Box 198 West Perth 6872**

**or**  
**by Fax to (08) 9444.5410**  
**no later than**  
**Friday, June 27, 1997.**

The State Conference, as an AASW sponsored activity, accrues double CPE points.

Mr Neville Barber  
Legal Administration  
Health Department of Western Australia

Dear Mr Barber

It has come to the attention of the AASW (WA) Mental Health Subcommittee that social workers are not considered to be mental health practitioners under the terms of the Mental Health Act (1996) unless "from time to time" determined to be so by the Chief Psychiatrist (Section 19(2)) in which case the said Act also stipulates that the Chief Psychiatrist may "revoke or amend this determination" (Section 19(3)).

I seek your advice about the reasons for social workers having restricted access to mental health practitioner status. Members of the Mental Health Subcommittee of the AASW (WA Branch) have speculated about the reasons for their exclusion and have raised the following matters:

- social workers are acknowledged in the Mental Health Taskforce Report, the State Mental Health Plan and the National Mental Health Strategy as key members of mental health teams - the others being nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists
- all social workers have completed university degrees of at least four years duration - which is at least equivalent as a qualification undertaken by other members of the team (excluding psychiatrists and psychologists)
- mental health education is an important element of social work professional training.

The feature that most distinguishes social work from other practitioners in the mental health team is their lack of registration as a profession. If this is the reason for not accepting them as mental health practitioners, this poses us with a paradox viz:

- social work has not been accepted for registration because members of that profession were deemed to be unlikely to be able to 'cause harm' in any of their work
- on the other hand, it seems that they may not be acceptable as mental health practitioners in the absence of registration because they could cause harm.

Whilst we are not necessarily arguing here for registration for social workers, the professional association has developed a professional model of self regulation - it would be helpful to understand the reasons for exclusion of social workers as mental health practitioners.

We would also appreciate your advice on what criteria might be used by the Chief Psychiatrist to determine that a *degree* or *another qualification* "is a recognised qualification" (Section 19:2)

Members of the Mental Health Subcommittee would be pleased to meet with you to discuss these matters.

Yours sincerely

Brian Wooller  
President (WA Branch)  
18 April 1997

Mr Brian Wooller  
President, WA Branch

Dear Mr Wooller

Thank you for your letter dated 18 April 1997.

It is correct that under the Mental Health Act 1996 (the Act), there needs to be a determination by the Chief Psychiatrist that a degree in social work awarded by an Australian university is a recognised qualification for the purposes of being a mental health practitioner under the Act.

This provision is not intended to be a "restriction" on social workers practising as mental health practitioners under the Act. It merely reflects that social workers are not a registered profession, and that therefore there is not a registration board which has responsibility for ensuring that appropriate academic and professional standards are maintained.

Your letter goes on to say "it would be helpful to understand the reasons for exclusion of social workers as mental health practitioners". I reiterate that the provisions do not imply an exclusion of social workers as mental health practitioners. I advise that the Chief Psychiatrist is very likely to accept that a degree awarded by an Australian university upon the completion of a course in social work is a recognised qualification for the purposes of the section.

Should you have any further queries regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9222 4069.

Yours sincerely  
Neville Barber  
A/ Manager, Legal Administration Branch  
Health Department of Western Australia  
28 April 1997

Dr George Lipton  
Chief Psychiatrist  
Mental Health Division  
Health Department of Western Australia

Dear Dr Lipton

I refer to the document *Confidentiality in mental health settings* and, in particular, to the reference of Page 6 of that document to students.

In your reference to students, you indicate that "*students do not have a legitimate therapeutic need to know confidential information*". You further state that "*A Student to whom access is given should specifically be made aware that the information is to remain strictly confidential*".

Members of this Association have expressed some concern that these statements appear to assume that students visit workplaces briefly and have an observer status there. Whilst we would agree wholeheartedly that patient information should be respected and their confidentiality protected, a social work student usually becomes a member of a therapeutic team for a considerable length of time. This requires that they sit in case discussions, participate in clinical reviews, and are privy to much confidential information.

It is a general policy in agencies undertaking responsibilities for 'field education' that students abide by the agency and the profession's Code of Ethics. Confidentiality is a key ethical principle in the AASW Code of Ethics. It is also general practice that students are identified as

such and that they only have access to patients and to information about them, on the understanding that their status is understood.

Social work students are not on 'work experience placements' or on 'brief site visits'. For such students, your proposals on confidentiality are entirely appropriate. However, for longer term students their learning requires that they do participate fully in team work and that, in doing so, they abide by organisational and professional Codes of Ethics. Any such student could well be in a vexed position if they were only allowed access to information with a patient's consent.

In summary, the AASW (WA) Mental Health Sub-Committee applauds the development of this policy document but argues that it may be important to distinguish between types of students before placing such restrictions on them.

It may well be appropriate that the contractual arrangement with the student could be the defining element in terms of their right of access to information. In other words, those students who become team members under supervision, are bound by the same ethical constraints as any staff member, other students who are visiting would be subject to the restrictions you appropriately identify.

Yours sincerely

Brian Wooller  
Branch President  
18 April 1997

The Editor  
The West Australian

Dear Editor

The current attempt by the Court Government to introduce punitive and archaic legislation to control industrial relations is not only abhorrent, it is unacceptable in a democratic society.

It is interesting that Mr Kierath, the responsible Minister, upon his return from Asia, made it clear that much of the workplace control he is attempting to obtain, is about real reduction in wages. It is disappointing that an elected representative of the people would so denigrate the very people he should be representing.

It is probably a rather pious hope that Mr Kierath would be supportive of improved conditions, including wages, a better standard of living and a fairer distribution of wealth for Western Australians.

The Government's disregard for democratic process, convention and principle, is evident in pushing through this Bill, holding back Mr Lightfoots' taking up of his Senate position and gagging debate in the Legislative Assembly.

It is also sad to see that Mr Kierath can only see the election of governments within a strictly party based system, as the only form of democracy. Mr Kierath this may be news to you, but other institutions within our society also constitute part of the democratic society. Unions, universities, schools both public and private are but some of the important institutions within a free and democratic society. Indeed, if it wasn't for the activities of unions, we would probably be a race of serfs bending to the dictate and will of a ruling class, represented in today's world by the likes of you.

Is it too much to ask Mr Kierath, that you look at your community, try to understand people's aspirations, and govern as you should, for the people, not for your own ideologically driven ends.

Yours sincerely

Brian E. Wooller  
Branch President  
5 May 1997

## Stress soars for social workers

by Olga Craig

Serviceman, social workers, teachers and linguists have emerged as the biggest sufferers of rising stress in the 1990s. A study comparing the stress levels of 104 occupations shows that these are among the jobs where workers have experienced the sharpest increases in worries about their workloads, deadline pressures, job security and responsibility.

More than 60% of the occupations now have higher stress levels than 12 years ago, according to the research of Professor Cary Cooper, of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, published in a Sunday Times special section.

In the 1980s, Cooper said, many suffered from self-induced stress borne of the enterprise culture; but in the 1990s, its upward surge is caused by lack of job security, downsizing, longer working hours and larger workloads.

"An assumption has been created that working longer means working more efficiently," he said. "But, in fact, all it leads to is health problems. Downsizing simply pushes more work on to an already overburdened staff."

"Increasingly autocratic managers who tend to manage by punishment rather than reward or praise are in danger of destroying Britain's economic success as more of their staff fall victim to stress. The trend, too, towards short-term contracts simply worsens the problem. How do companies expect commitment from people they don't commit to?"

A growing disrespect for authority has meant public perceptions of teachers, police and social workers - three of the most stressful jobs - have fallen sharply, said Cooper. "Their status is seen as lower because innovations such as patients' charters encourage people to question performance and competence."

In the armed forces, redundancies flowing from reviews of the defence budget are seen as contributing to stress levels. Teachers cite lack of job security as well as increasing indiscipline among pupils.

Linguists also join the ranks of those in pressured jobs. According to their professional bodies, the reason is the breaking down of trade barriers and the increasing number of languages they must master.

Although experts estimate that industry has about 270,000 employees absent every day because of stress-related illnesses, there are jobs that will not set the blood pressure soaring. Among them are nature conservancy, horticulture and forestry. (*Originally published in The Sunday Times, 18 May 1997.*)

Contributed by John de Jongh.