

Presented at the FIG Working Week 2016,
May 2-6, 2016 in Christchurch, New Zealand

Building a balanced gender workforce in a land management organisation – a case study of Gender Equity work in DELWP Victoria, Australia

Leonie Newnham
Manager Diversity Programs and Innovation
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Victoria, Australia



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Why does having a balanced and diverse workforce matter ?

- More closely mirror our client base – the people of Victoria. A diverse workforce better reflects the community we serve.
- Improve service delivery, performance and innovation via a diversity in thinking and perspectives.
- Have an inclusive and fair workplace .
- Costs if we don't use our talented women to their full potential.
- Wellbeing improves as all people feel able to contribute to the mission and operation of the organisation.
- Drive a change in perception of the traditionally undervalued 'soft' skills that women bring to positions of leadership.



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Pressure for changes

Victorian Government social reform agenda to make the community more inclusive and equitable.

- Rowena Allen appointed as *Victoria's* first *Gender and Sexuality Commissioner*
- Gender Equity on Government Boards - in a first for the water industry in 2016 more than 50 per cent of new board members and eight out of 19 board chairs are women.
- Response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence – new initiatives to improve safety for women and children announced in the May Budget.
- *Victorian Gender Equality* Strategy Consultation Paper out for comment.

Commonwealth Government - Gender Equality Agency

- Set reporting requirements for commercial organisations
- *Gender equality* strategy for *Australian Government agencies*

Private sector

- Performance and profit improvements to their business
- Able to attract more talented people



What is DEWLP?

A State Government Department in Victoria Australia

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning creates liveable, inclusive and sustainable communities that support jobs and growth in Victoria.

We recognise the link between the built and natural environment in the quality of our lives, and work to accommodate population growth while maintaining world class liveability and protecting our heritage for future generations.

DELWP is committed to great efficiency and transparency in government, and to making Victoria a stronger, fairer and better place to live and work.

See more at: <http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au>



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Commitment to change - messages from the top

Diversity and Inclusion connecting us all – January 2016

‘Diversity enables us to learn from each other, grow our understanding and find new ways of doing things.

This year I am very focused on embracing diversity at DELWP to reflect the communities we serve – together we can make our organisation one that is inclusive and equitable for everyone.

Have a think about how we can all be a part of diversity and inclusion at DELWP.’

What we have done?

2015/
16

- DELWP established in 2015
- Diversity and Inclusion Council formed in 2016 to oversee and develop Diversity and Inclusion Strategy including a Gender Equity Action Plan
- 50/50 gender split in Direct Reports to Secretary- 45% women in broader executive group
- All roles flexible
- Gender Equity specialist engaged
- Focus areas action:
 - Re-established our women's networking groups
 - Bespoke development program for DELWP women's leadership training
 - Supporting affinity groups – Parents & Carers' Network, LGBTI group, Young Professional's Network

2014

- DEPI's Senior Executive Group (SEG) agreed to a set of actions including:
 - A target of 50% of senior leadership positions be held by women (starting point 34%)
 - Recruitment & restructure processes reviewed
 - Use of Leadership and Succession Review to identify and fast track high potential women
 - Pilot of unconscious bias workshops
 - Development programs for women established as part of ongoing offering
- The Secretary communicated issues and pledged to address them

2012/
13

- Outcomes from CEDA research initiated targeted action in DSE
 - Gender Equity survey action outcomes implemented
 - Development programs for women established (including My Mentor pilot)
 - Data and reporting refined

DELWP Gender Equity Action Plan

IMPROVING OUR SYSTEMS

Fundamental to delivering a more equitable workplace is to ensure an organisation's systems and approaches support women and men to have equitable access to meaningful and successful careers.

LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Organisations will only become more equitable if leaders are showing the way. Role modelling behaviour and using their organisation position to advocate for women is critical to build a more gender balance workplace.

DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Targeted development can help women to achieve their potential. It can also help leaders and all staff develop the capability and knowledge to build a more inclusive workplace.

FLEXIBILITY FIRST

At DELWP we are building a culture where working flexibly is becoming business as usual. We want to be able to attract and retain great staff, and we know that flexibility is increasingly important to current and future employees.

STORYTELLING

We recognise the importance of storytelling in developing an open and inclusive culture. It's important we share and celebrate successes and use our communication channels to support our people in creating a great place to work.

GOVERNANCE & MEASUREMENT

"What gets measured gets done' is an old adage, but one that is important when we think about the changes required to improve gender equity. It's important for us to measure progress and understand where we need to focus our attention.

ACTING AGAINST DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

We know there is a strong link between gender inequality and domestic violence. We also know that some of our people will be impacted by domestic and family violence while working with us. We are focused on opening up the conversations about violence and supporting our people whenever we can.

What we have in place.

Male Champions of Change

Governance

- **Diversity Council**
- **Senior Women's Group**

Development and Advocacy

- **Flexible Working** (Expert panel discussion)
- **Women in Leadership Development Programs** (My Mentor, DELWP program, ANZOG Program)
- **Women's Network** (Supporting women to establish local/relevant networks)
- **Unconscious Bias program**
- **Gender Equity Coaching** (For our senior leaders)

Systems

- **Flexible Working Support** (Toolkit, Training, Success Stories shared)
- **Policies and Processes** (Promotions, Recruitment and Talent Management, Reporting and Metrics)
- **Communication approach** (Secretary Announcements, Use of Yammer, Focus on sharing stories)

Family Violence



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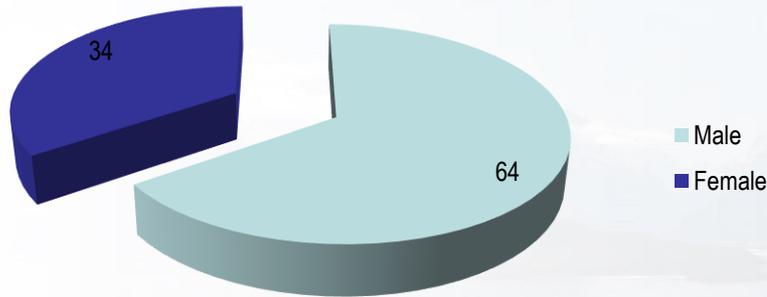
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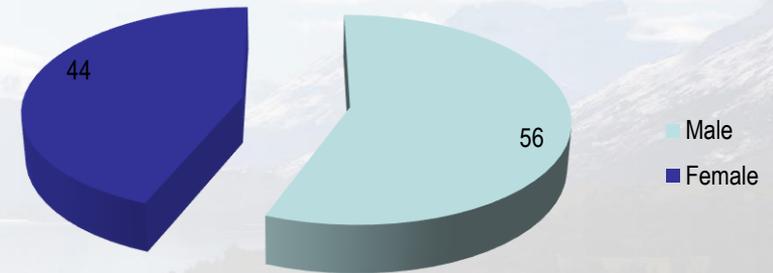
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Change in Percentage of Women in Executive Positions 2014 - 2016

Executive Level -2014



Executive Level -2016



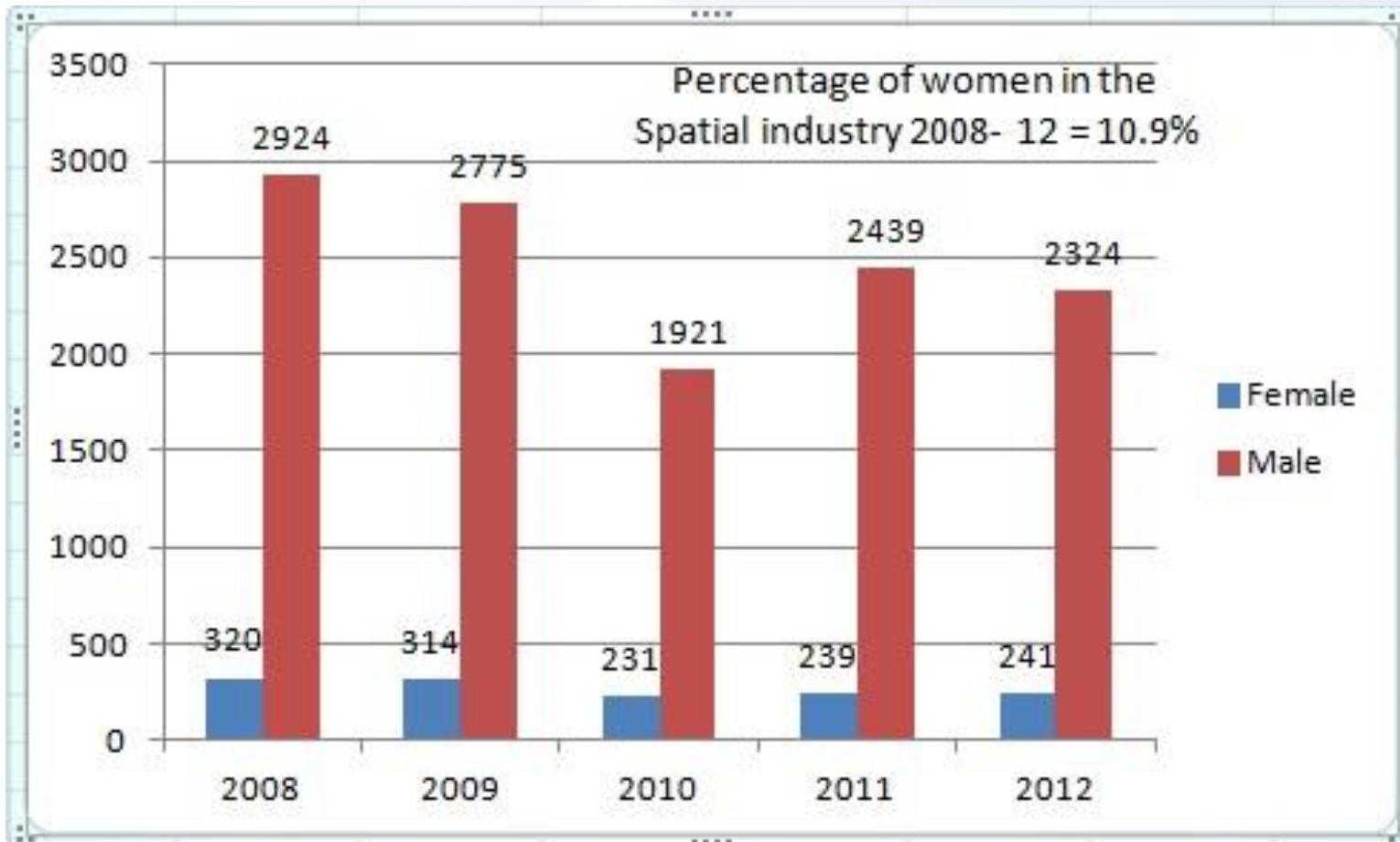


Other initiatives that affect DELWP's operations

- Goal for equal gender representation on Government Boards- In a first for the water industry in 2016 more than 50 per cent of new board members and eight out of 19 board chairs are women.
- Women in Fire and Emergency Management Positions – Initiative aiming to increase the participation of women in fire and emergency leadership roles and better value the diversity of skills and experience within DELWP. Now expanded to the sector.
- Women in Spatial forums with SSSI – hold regular events as a means to engage women in surveying and spatial sciences. (Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute)
- FIG Working Group 1.2 Women in Surveying – Collecting data internationally for the study of women in surveying with co-chairs Robyn McCutcheon (Australia) and Winnie Shiu (Hong Kong)



Women in the SSSI in Australia and New Zealand - 2012





Common barriers found in research about gender equity

- Women have fewer role models and sponsors than men and less developed networks
- Women face barriers in accessing training and release for field work
- Women face higher career penalties for caring for families than men, feeling isolated during maternity leave and not supported on their return to work
- They work in cultures with large numbers of men, where men are seen to dominate meetings and stereotype the abilities of women
- There are simply more men in senior roles, leaving senior women isolated and often overlooked
- Few respondents know of any gender equity initiatives, and leadership training for women was sometimes inaccessible.



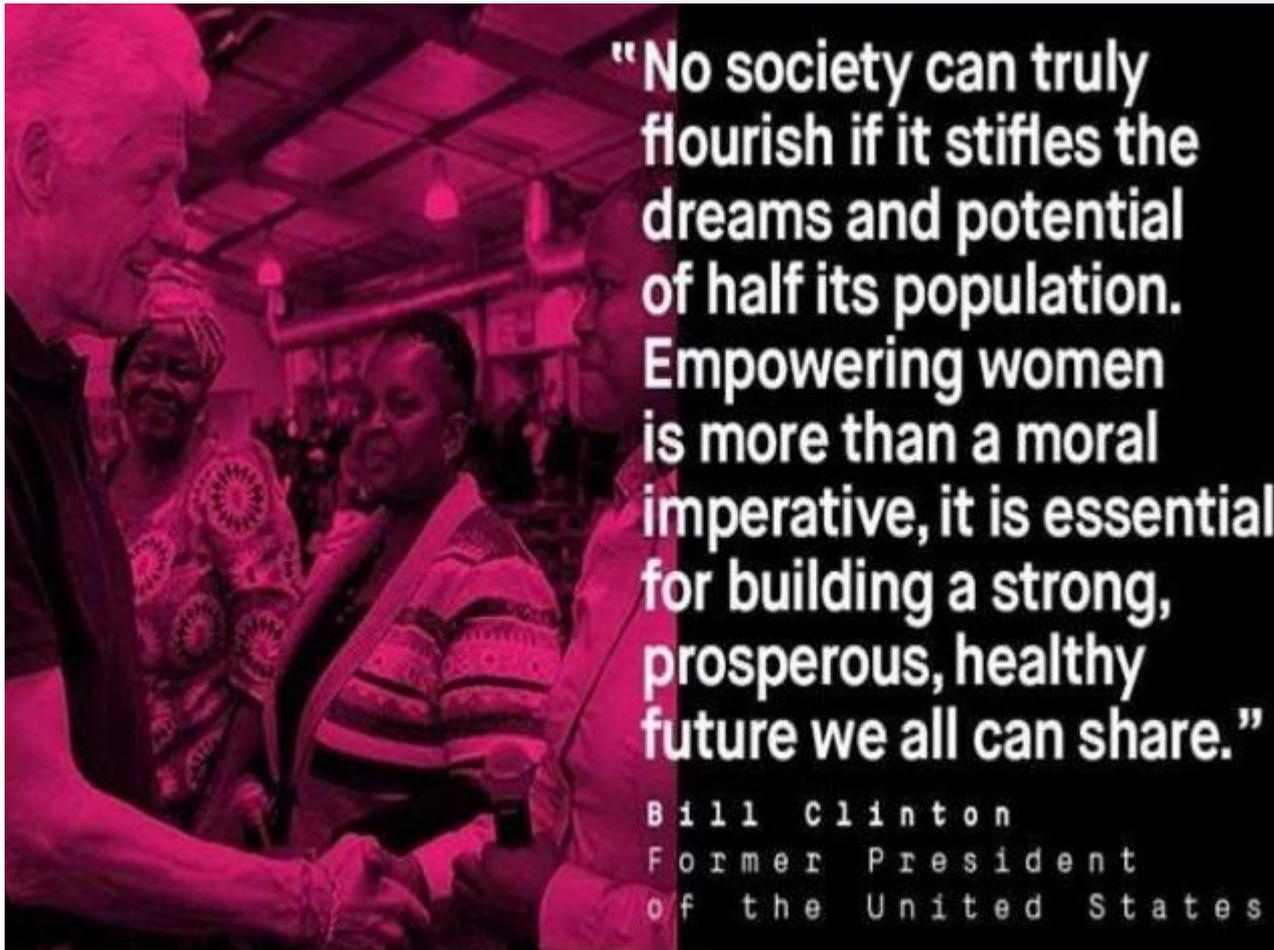
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He for She – UN Women Solidarity Movement for Gender Equality



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What can you do?

- Find out about what is happening to women in your organization or industry.
- We can start by completing the survey being put out by Working Group 1.2 on Women in Surveying
- Get some information and facts and figures.
- Work out what action you or your organization can take to address any inequality.
- Connect in with others doing similar work or organisations that can assist – in Australia we have the Diversity Council of Australia that provides lots of supports for members.
- It doesn't have to be a perfect plan – just start the change and keep building on what you do.



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Disclaimer and Contact Details

This presentation is based on my interpretation of the work undertaken by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and does not intend to represent the views of the Department.

Leonie Newnham
Manager Diversity Programs and Innovation
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
5/8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne. 3002
Victoria. Australia

Leonie.newnham@delwp.vic.gov.au



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