



SHIRE of AUGUSTA  
MARGARET RIVER

draft

# Women in Leadership Program

2009 – 2011



**Adopted by Council**

Prepared by Vicky Small, Manager Customer & Information Services, 2009

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# Women in Leadership Program

## Statement of Intent



The Shire of Augusta-Margaret River supports an inclusive workplace where employee differences in areas like gender, age, culture, disability and lifestyle choice are valued.

Workplace diversity is not just about doing the right thing; it's about valuing and leveraging people's unique attributes. We want to create a level playing field so that every employee can fully contribute and achieve.

A key component of a diverse workforce is enabling our females to fully contribute, achieve outstanding business results, and build successful careers at AMRSC.

Organisations that are employers of choice for women have access to a larger talent pool, are well positioned to represent the needs of customers and communities, and understand the direct link between a higher proportion of women in top management and increased success.

Currently, AMRSC's managers and executives do not reflect the diversity of our internal population and customer base - particularly in terms of gender and cultural diversity. This limits diversity in decision making which reduces our capacity to reflect the interests, concerns and needs of our community.

AMRSC's aim is to be a better local government through increased numbers of women in executive decision making positions. This will be achieved through attracting, developing, promoting and retaining senior women.

## Introduction

The Women in Leadership Program is a new initiative of the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River and its intent is to advance the representation of women in decision making roles within the organisation. The program is in response to a number of key documents which highlight the under representation of women in management roles within the Local Government sector across the country.

At a national level only 51 CEO positions across Australia are filled by women. In Western Australia there are 139 local governments with only 8 women in Chief Executive Officer positions (5%) (October 2008). Further statistics indicate that in December 2007, women represented less than 30% of the total number of councillors across Australia.

In response to this low representation there is a commitment across Australia to a number of initiatives. These include:

- **The WA Advisory Committee on Women in Local Government** ‘Women in Local Government: Towards a Strong and Sustainable Sector 2009 – 2012’ working paper
- **The Year of Women in Local Government 2010** coordinated by Local Government Mangers Australia
- **The Australian Local Government Women’s Association** ‘50:50 Vision: A National Program for Gender Equity in Local Government
- **Women in Local Government Award:** National Awards for Local Government,

In developing this program and following best practise principles, the ANZ Bank was researched as a leader in improving gender equality. In 2009 ANZ was recognised as an Employer of Choice for Women by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) for the sixth consecutive year. This document has been prepared with reference to the ANZ organisation’s initiative to increase women in leadership accessed from [www.anz.com](http://www.anz.com).

## Background

### **2008 EOWA Australian Census of Women in Leadership**

The *EOWA 2008 Australian Census of Women in Leadership* released October 2008 reveals that the number of women on boards and in executive management positions has declined since 2006, and in some cases reverted to pre-2004 levels. Australia now trails the USA, UK, South Africa and New Zealand.

Women who *do* make it to executive roles are overwhelmingly clustered in support roles that don't provide access to the profit-and-loss or direct client services that are widely considered essential for rising to the top. The encouraging increase of women in line management roles observed from 2003 to 2006 (4.7% compared to 7.4%) has reversed and declined to pre-2004 levels (5.9%). This trend was also reported in the 2007 US Census.

The EOWA Director, Anna McPhee, said "Everyone from business leaders, employers, educators, parents, men and women, should be concerned about this chronic waste of female talent".

"The dearth of women at the top levels of business is the result of fewer opportunities, hostile cultures and outdated work practices that haven't kept pace with women's increased education levels, experience and ambition to be among the people influencing Australia's future".

### **Women in Local Government: towards a Strong and Sustainable Sector 2009 - 2012**

The purpose of this working paper is to guide the work of the Advisory Committee on Women in Local Government. The Advisory Committee provides advice to the Minister for Local Government on ways of encouraging and assisting women to seek employment and progress their careers in the local government sector in Western Australia.

The document sets out a number of strategies which aim to:

- Encourage and support initiatives which enable women to achieve high level management and decision making positions in the sector;
- Bring about culture change and processes which maximise opportunities for women and men in the sector; and to

- Develop the governance and service provision capability of the sector at the time of heightened demand for greater sustainability in local government operations, high community expectations of management accountability and substantial opportunities for providing additional infrastructure in local communities.

### **The Year of Women in Local Government 2010**

In February 2008, the LGMA National board adopted a national strategy to advance women in local government into senior management positions. A key strategy platform is the development and promotion of a Year of Women in Local Government in 2010.

The Year of Women in Local Government will be designed to meet the following objectives:

- Raise the awareness of the need to increase the participation of women in local government, particularly management;
- Encourage councils to establish targets to:
  - Increase the participation of local government women in decision making roles;
  - Increase the participation of local government women in management and leadership training
- Encourage councils to adopt modern HR practices; and
- Establish more flexible ways of working

The Year of Women in Local Government program will consist of a range of events and activities.

### **50:50 Vision: A National Program for Gender Equity in Local Government**

The National Framework for Women in Local Government was developed in 2001. A review of the National Framework was documented in *The Way Forward*, released in May 2007. 50:50 Vision, released April 2009, is the next phase in implementing the National Framework for Women in Local Government.

*The Way Forward* incorporated a Statement of Commitment for adoption by all stakeholders and suggested implementation of a 'Gender Matters' program that might comprise:

- A self assessment checklist to enable councils to measure their progress in implementing the National Framework
- Graded recognition for Councils that have put in place some or all of the strategies in the checklist and can demonstrate effective implementation
- Visits to councils by peer review panels organised by ALGWA and/or local government associations/professional institutes to verify progress being made
- Awards for high achieving councils either as a separate scheme or as part of an existing awards program

Work on a feasibility study for the program is underway following on from ALGWA receiving an Australian Government grant.

### Women in Local Government Award

The Federal Government believes that the government sector has a leadership role to play in terms of the opportunities offered to women from regional and rural Australia. Under the National Awards for Local Government, The Women in Local Government award recognises local governments that demonstrate a commitment to providing opportunities for rural and regional women in decision-making and management.

## Our Current Position

### Organisational Demographics

EMPLOYEE HEAD COUNT				
PERSON CHARACTERISTICS	AMRSC	% of total persons in AMRSC	AMRSC	Australia
Total persons	167		10 353	
Males	108	64.6%	50.4%	49.4%
Females	59	35.3%	49.6%	50.6%
Indigenous persons (comprises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)	1	0.5%	0.9%	2.3%

Comparing our employee head count to the 2006 Census (held on 8th August 2006), the organisation is above the local government region and national percentage for males but below the local government region and national percentage for females and indigenous persons.

<b>WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT AMRSC</b>				
POSITION	Total Men and Women	# Women	% Women	% Women in LG
Council	7	3	42%	27.3%
CEO	1	-	-	-
Directors	3	-	-	20%
Managers	8	1	12.5%	-

<b>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</b>				
MAIN RESPONSES IN SELECTED REGION	Male	Female	Total	% respondents AMRSC
Total persons	108	59	167	
Total respondents	73	55	128	76.6%
Australia	54	41	95	74.2%
England	8	3	11	8.6%
New Zealand	2	3	5	3.9%
Scotland	-	-	-	-
Germany	1		1	0.78%
US of A	3		3	2.3%
<b>Countries not listed on ABS Country of Birth for region</b>				
South Africa	3	1	4	3.1%
Malaysia		1	1	0.78%
Ireland	1		1	0.78%
Sweden		1	1	0.78%
Vietnam		1	1	0.78%
Netherlands		1	1	0.78%

Note; these figures are indicative only as statistics of 100% of head count is unknown.

While the % respondents for Australia is slightly lower than the national average, the other regions are higher in countries listed on the ABS Country of Birth statistics for the region, with the exception of Scotland which had no respondents from AMRSC.

## Community Demographics

PERSON CHARACTERISTICS				
PERSON CHARACTERISTICS	Selected Region	% of total persons in Region	Australia	% of total persons in Australia
Total persons (excluding overseas visitors)	10,353	-	19,855,288	-
Males	5,222	50.4%	9,799,252	49.4%
Females	5,131	49.6%	10,056,036	50.6%
Indigenous persons (comprises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)	92	0.9%	455,031	2.3%

In the 2006 Census (held on 8th August 2006), there were 10,353 persons usually resident in Augusta-Margaret River (S) (Local Government Area): 50.4% were males and 49.6% were females. Of the total population in Augusta-Margaret River (S) (Local Government Area) 0.9% were Indigenous persons, compared with 2.3% Indigenous persons in Australia.

COUNTRY OF BIRTH				
MAIN RESPONSES IN SELECTED REGION	Selected Region	% of total persons in Region	Australia	% of total persons in Australia
Australia	7,762	75.0%	14,072,944	70.9%
England	776	7.5%	856,939	4.3%
New Zealand	260	2.5%	389,463	2.0%
Scotland	83	0.8%	130,204	0.7%
Germany	73	0.7%	106,525	0.5%
US of A	58	0.6%	61,720	0.3%

In the 2006 Census, 75.0% of persons usually resident in Augusta-Margaret River (S) (Local Government Area) stated they were born in Australia. Other common responses within Augusta-Margaret River (S) (Local Government Area) were: England 7.5%, New Zealand 2.5%, Scotland 0.8%, Germany 0.7% and United States of America 0.6%.

# Women in Leadership Program



Strategies 2009 – 2011

## The Future

AMRSC is committed to removing bias, providing female career progression, and ensuring there is a broad range of support tools and networks to help women. This document outlines the strategies we will use to help us achieve this.

The term the 'glass ceiling' has come to describe the limited advancement of women and minority groups because of an unofficial, invisible barrier. More recently the inability for women to move upwards has been coined 'the sticky floor' as women need to first progress up towards the glass ceiling before they can break through it. Women are often 'stuck' below the decision making level in traditionally female roles such as administration, customer service, childcare, library services.

In an endeavor to move females in the organisation off the sticky floor and foster greater participation of female councilors and staff in decision making roles we have committed to the following Strategies:

- **Valuing the difference** through developing a culture that embraces gender equity
- **Removing the barriers** by removing bias and valuing work-life needs
- **Bridging the divide** by supporting our women in their career aspirations.

The Strategies are broken down into Targets, Actions and KPIs and assigned responsibility within the organisation to ensure we move forward. The Women in Leadership program will be reviewed in 2011 following on from internal surveys and outcomes from the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government

Note: The 'sticky floor' was discussed by Lyn Russell, CEO, Wagga Wagga City Council, 2009 in her address **Climbing Up the Ladder** at the 2009 LGMA Women in Local Government Conference, Perth.

# Valuing the Difference

Our focus is on developing a culture that embraces gender equity

Target	Action	KPI	Responsible Officer
Gender equity barriers removed in the local government sector	Acknowledge, endorse and implement the National Framework for Women in Local Government	AMRSC commitment to the Framework registered on the ALGWA website	Governance
An Increase in future employees who value gender equity	Acknowledge, endorse and implement the AMRSC 'Women in Leadership Program' which includes a Statement of Intent	AMRSC commitment to gender equity is promoted on Council's website	CEO
An increase in female participation in our local government.	Educate our community on the importance and benefits of having women in decision making roles and the importance of gender equity.	Current information is regularly distributed through the Community Update  Prospective Councillor presentations held	Governance
An Organisation culture that values gender equity	Develop 'Valuing the Difference' training program for all our people	100% councillors and staff trained in gender equity	HR
Managers who are committed to the business case for diversity	Develop management skills in managing diversity, flexibility and identifying female talent	There are consequences for management not 'walking the talk'	HR
Organisational accountability in improving gender equity	Gather data, track and report on gender equity outcomes	'Bridging the Divide' gender equity report included in the Annual Report	HR

# Removing the Barriers



Our focus is on removing bias and valuing work-life needs

Target	Action	KPI	Responsible Officer
An organisation with no gender equity barriers	Undertake a survey of female councillors and staff on gender equity	Survey results circulated to staff and Women in Leadership Program reviewed to include relevant strategies	WLN
A large pool of potential councillor candidates	Review Council allowances considering diverse councillor needs eg childminding reimbursement	All allowances reviewed	CEO
A large pool of recruitment candidates	Develop gender-neutral advertising guidelines	100% employment advertisements meet the standard we have set	HR
A healthy and effective organisation that reflects the demographics of our community	Aim for one competitive woman to be on the shortlist for every role  Include one female representative on each interview Selection Panel	25% year 1 50% year 2 75% year 3  Female representation on 100% of all Selection Panels	HR
Employment conditions that recognise equal pay for equal work	Review staff establishment system and remove barriers that prevent equality in salary	Salary system assessment criteria reviewed	HR
A flexible workplace with 21 <sup>st</sup> century people policies and practices	Develop a diverse range of options for flexible ways of working	Procedures developed for flexible work options	HR

# Bridging the Divide

Our focus is on supporting our women in their career aspirations

Target	Action	KPI	Responsible Officer
Councillors who work effectively in their role	Provide an induction package for all new councillors	100% councillors inducted	CEO
Raised cultural awareness of the Women in Leadership Program	Review employee induction program to address gender equity issues	100% new employees inducted	HR
Females with improved career opportunities	Introduce transparent processes for reviewing an individual's career potential and learning opportunities	5% of female employees identified for career progression	Managers
Females with increased leadership skills	Training plans will include a Womens Development component	100% access for females to training such as 'Springboard'	Managers
Females with increased leadership capability	Identify relief leadership roles or decision making opportunities for females	5% increase in female representation on Committees and relieving	Managers
Females with increased confidence	Identify internal and external mentors/buddy's and link to emerging leaders	Mentoring program established	WLN
Females with increased business knowledge	Establish a Women's Network Group	Women's network Group MoU endorsed by management	HR
An increase in emerging female leaders	Develop a Women's Leadership Scholarship program on \$/\$ basis	Scholarship awarded annually	HR
Participation in the Year of Women in Local Government 2010	Provide opportunities for staff to participate	Registrations for events	HR

## Further Reading

- Department of Local Government and Regional Development, WA *'Women in Local Government'*  
[www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/LocalGovt/WomenInLG](http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/LocalGovt/WomenInLG)
- Department of Local Government and Regional Development, WA *'Women in Local Government: Towards a Strong and Sustainable Sector 2009-2012'* Working Paper, April 2009
- Australian Local Government Women's Association Inc *'The Way Forward'* Review of the National Framework for Women in Local Government, May 2007
- Australian Local Government Women's Association Inc *'50:50 Vision'* A National Program for Gender Equity in Local Government, April 2009.
- Local Government Managers Australia *'Women in Local Government National Strategy'*  
[http://www.lgma.org.au/category/women\\_in\\_local\\_government\\_4](http://www.lgma.org.au/category/women_in_local_government_4)
- Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, *'Women in Local Government Award'*  
[http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/local/awards/files/FINAL-Women\\_in\\_Local\\_Government\\_Award.pdf](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/local/awards/files/FINAL-Women_in_Local_Government_Award.pdf)
- Australian Government Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, *'EOWA 2008 Australian Census of Women in Leadership'* research conducted by Macquarie University
- ANZ Bank, *'Corporate Responsibility', 'Banking on Women', 'Stereotyping, Leadership and Career Development'* [www.anz.com](http://www.anz.com)
- Department for Communities, WA, Women's Resources Online, <http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/Communities/Women/>
- Department of Agriculture and Food, RRR Network for Rural, remote and regional women in Western Australia, <http://www.rrr.wa.gov.au/>
- Workplace Training Advisory Council, The Australian Women and Leadership Forum, <http://www.womensforum.com.au/server/index.html>
- Springboard Womens Development Program, <http://spsp4323.staging-zeus.netregistry.net/jml154/>