

2. Expand the Program's support through one or more of the following measures:

a. Increase staffing through such innovations as - an additional full lectureship in Women's Studies; - several new half lectureships, shared between Women's Studies and, for example, English or Art History; or - all future appointments in the Faculty of Arts to require expertise in women or gender.

b. Increase the number of Women's Studies courses ("Women in...") taught regularly in the Departments (thus relieving the pressure on the Program staff to provide most or all of the major).

c. Have the administration of the Program recognised as a half-time job with teaching load adjusted accordingly.

d. Have the Women's Studies Advisory Committee formally constituted as the administrative authority for the Program, with the Convenership rotated among members of the Committee and teaching loads adjusted appropriately.

3. Phase out the Women's Studies Program, with staff reverting to their disciplines of origin, hopefully still teaching about women but under Departmental constraints.

In broad outline, those options constituted three alternative strategies: hang in, go for broke, or close up shop. Calling up final reserves of energy, Program staff decided to go for broke.

Meetings were held to discuss the problems and options, and with the enthusiastic support of postgraduate, undergraduate, and former students, and the encouragement of sympathetic staff, two major submissions were prepared, one addressed to the ANU Council, the other to the Vice-Chancellor. Each asked for a substantial upgrading of the Program's resources: to establish either an independent University-wide Women's Studies research and teaching unit, or to appoint a Chair and additional senior teaching staff in the existing Program.

Both submissions disappeared into the black hole of bureaucracy. Timing was apparently bad though it is hard to imagine what would constitute good timing. The entire University administration was (and continues to be) fully occupied with the really big questions of amalgamation, splitting and clawback; innovative (or any) planning at a somewhat lower level of management was put on permanent hold, except for cost cutting. All that emerged were a few informal and avuncular chats in which senior academic administrators recounted stories of their own difficulties. Thoughtful and detailed submission did not, apparently, warrant detailed written responses. On another front, students mounted a national campaign soliciting expressions of support which were forthcoming throughout the year. Some individuals received placatory replies, whose assurances were overtaken by economic events later in the year. The overall outcome of the campaign was to increase the Program's visibility to the administration's razor gang, which resulted in the Program being substantially cut back.

The half-time Program secretary was redeployed. The Dean decided to close the Resource Unit on Women and Gender making it unlikely that there will be any detectable increase in department-based cognate units. The Dean implied that if either of the Program's lecturers were to resign, the post might not be filled. Colleagues are understandably reluctant to take on administrative responsibility for Women's Studies in addition to depart-

mental tasks. Further, recent appointments to the Faculty (for example, in English, Philosophy and Drama) have ignored competence or interest in gender/women/feminist theory as a selection criterion. There is no reason to anticipate a change in any of these circumstances. There has been no formal move to abolish Women's Studies at ANU. Instead it is being whittled away by a series of uncoordinated, relatively minor economic decisions.

Moral

The structural decline of Women's Studies at the ANU is not simply a story of having to tighten belts in hard times. Nor is it an example of redundancy since, in terms of students numbers, intellectual vitality, and community interaction, Women's Studies is well ahead of many traditional arts departments. Rather, it is about a Program consistently, even in good times, being denied the wherewithal to develop on its own terms and to be treated equally with traditional academic areas. Women's Studies has been tolerated, expressions of approval have been voiced, its services have been exploited; but the concrete manifestations of legitimacy have been withheld. Women's Studies has always been a luxury and an anomaly, not integrated into the University's formal structures and processes. It has been constituted as marginal, its vulnerability is systemic. If there is a redundancy in this story, it is the administrative structure which divides the teaching universe into Disciplines and Others, and consigns the Others to a nether world of administrative dependency and intellectual invisibility.

In the old days, there used to be vigorous debates among practitioners about whether Women's Studies should establish itself in the community sector or institutionalise itself in tertiary education; about whether, in the institutions, it should be a ghetto of core courses or integrated into existing courses; and whether it should concentrate on undergraduate or graduate programs. In the event, all the options were taken. Particular programs developed an organisation that was not so much a choice as an adaptation to existing circumstances.

The story of the Program at ANU indicates that institutions organised on traditional department/faculty lines are structurally inhospitable to interdisciplinary programs, intellectually hostile to new, transdisciplinary knowledges, and politically resistant to educational reform. In the face of this, it is hard to say whether there can be such a thing as an effective model for Women's Studies in traditional universities, without major changes to those traditions. But it is exactly such changes that are crucial if the humanities and social sciences are to survive the demands for national accountability and for scholarship to serve market forces. The alternative is the ANU model of Women's Studies in the Arts Faculty: an anomaly within a redundancy.

Notes

1. That discomfort grew to such proportions that in 1988 Human Sciences requested a transfer to the Science Faculty and its staff were relocated to the traditional departments. Like Women's Studies, it has lost its intellectual and functional visibility.

The Women's Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean: Political and ethical considerations

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Introduction

The Women's Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean was established in May 1990. The Centre brings together the teaching and research interests and expertise of women across disciplines to investigate issues and disseminate information of specific relevance and benefit to women.

The Centre creates a forum for research initiatives and consultancy work across a wide range of educational, social, historical, cultural, political and economic issues pertaining to women.

- The objectives of the Centre are
- to contribute to the understanding of problems in industry, the community and government pertaining to women - particularly in western Sydney;
 - to undertake research and consultancy work on the needs, and for the benefit, of women;
 - to contribute to the development and transmission of knowledge;
 - to create a database of information relating to women's issues;
 - to promote the interchange of information between women's organisations in western Sydney and nationally;
 - to contribute towards policy decisions pertaining to women;
 - to promote links with other university women's organisations;
 - to promote links and the interchange of information with trade unions and industry.

This paper raises political and ethical issues related to the establishment and continuing operation of the Centre. Trends in higher education and local factors which require consideration and negotiation in achieving funding for the Centre will be outlined. Problems and successes faced by the Management Committee in its first year of operation will also be addressed and a brief description of current project being undertaken will be provided.

Background

The Women's Research Centre was born within the political and economic climate of radical restructuring in higher education advocated in the Federal Government's White Paper (Dawkins, 1988). This context of restructuring is crucial in understanding the Centre's creation and rationale within a new university since it identifies the imperative to establish a research focus within the newly created universities.

The White Paper on Higher Education (Dawkins, 1988) advocated, inter alia, that the higher education sector be restructured to eliminate the binary system of universities and colleges of advanced education. The document 'encouraged' the amalgamation of existing institutions into larger and, in theory, more efficient institutions so that they could become part of the Unified National System funded predominantly by the Federal Government.

Colleges of advanced education were established in the mid-

1970s to provide vocational training for students destined to move directly into business and industry. Staff were employed by these colleges on the basis of their ability to teach the necessary vocational skills and knowledge. There was no stated intention that the academic staff of such institutions should undertake pure or even applied research on the scale that existed in universities of the period.

Although a certain amount of research was conducted by college academics, the institutions themselves were neither acknowledged as research institutions nor were they funded for research. The absence of a research tradition within the former college sector led to considerable concern among college academics when the higher education sector underwent significant restructuring during 1989 and 1990. Such problems were highlighted during and after the transformation of colleges into universities as staff attempted to develop research skills and gain research funding in order to meet changed criteria for selection and promotion.

As part of the higher education restructure, the former colleges of advanced education - Nepean CAE, Hawkesbury Agricultural College and Macarthur Institute of Higher Education - came together in a network member configuration to form the University of Western Sydney. The establishment of the University meant that considerable attention and effort were required in the area of research to bring it into line with the range of activities in, and compete for funds against, existing universities. Moreover, the White Paper made it clear that universities were expected to attract significant proportions of research funding from the private sector and that they could no longer expect the Federal Government to fully finance the whole higher education operation in Australia.

This history, then, set the parameters within which research centres such as the Women's Research Centre were established: the change in focus from teaching to research in former CAEs; and the expectation that universities would attract funding from outside sources.

In response to pressure embodied in the White Paper, the University of Western Sydney, Nepean (UWS, Nepean), established in January 1989, set up a number of programmes to encourage research activity. These included internally funded research seed grants, conference scholarships, visiting fellowships and research centres. The Women's Research Centre is the youngest centre, established in May 1990 as the third research centre. The Centre for Industrial Research & Technology (attached directly to the Faculty of Science & Technology) and the Communication, Health and Education Research Centre (attached directly to the Faculty of Health Studies) were established in 1989. Each Centre receives funding from UWS, Nepean of \$12,500 per year for three years after which they are expected to become self-funding. In contrast to the other two Centres, and reflecting the inherently inter-disciplinary focus of research within women's studies, the Women's Research Centre is not attached to a particular faculty. This situation constitutes one of the great strengths, but also one

of the structural weaknesses, for the Centre as will be discussed below.

Establishing a women's research centre

The impetus for the Women's Research Centre arose from the inaugural *Australian Women's Studies Association* conference held at the South Australian College of Advanced Education in Adelaide, 1989. A Women's Studies Research Group was formed at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean to formulate a proposal for a women's research centre, with advice and help from Dr Gretchen Poiner of the Women's Research Unit, University of Sydney and other academic experts in Women's Studies in Australia and overseas. Professor Jillian Maling, the Chief Executive Officer of the University of Western Sydney, Nepean lent formal support to the Centre's establishment.

A significant feature of the research group, and of the current management team of the Centre, is the fact that it draws its membership from both academic and general staff. This acknowledges the fundamental co-occurrence and centrality of women's interests and signals that the Centre will operate for the benefit of, and be accessible to, women staff regardless of their position within the organisation. This means that issues pertinent to general as well as academic women staff were, and continue to be, represented by the objectives of the centre in the form of research initiatives and participation at events held by the Centre.

The Affirmative Action needs of academic women are well documented (Gale 1980; Cass et al 1983; Gale & Lindemann 1989; Allen, 1990), but those of general staff women are under-researched and comparatively under-represented within Equal Employment Opportunity debates and initiatives. The women working on the proposal for the establishment of a Centre were acutely aware of the overlap of interests between a women's research centre and the practice and principles of Equal Employment Opportunity, and the benefits to be gained from fusing such interests within the institution.

During the process of producing the proposal for the Women's Research Centre, the research group questioned the philosophy underlying the White Paper both in terms of its instrumental approach to education and in terms of the pressure placed on tertiary institutions to 'sell' their products to the external public and private sectors. Entering the fray for external research funding in an educational climate sustained by a system of economic rationalism is a difficult challenge during a period of economic recession, particularly if the 'products' on offer are the needs of social groups who are or have been disadvantaged by that very system.

The pursuit of the advancement of knowledge within women's studies, and researching the needs of social groups who have been persistently undervalued by the dominant economic system, is frequently at odds with research outcomes which would be of interest and benefit to potential private funders. The research group debated the ideological costs of generating and accepting funds from organisations that either fail to promote or are opposed to the interests of women. Being driven by the principles of representing and supporting the needs of women, the research group was aware that its choices in competing for funding from external sources would be limited.

This is not, of course, a problem limited to the humanities and social sciences. A research centre pursuing environmental science, for example, may also question the appropriateness of funding from companies that consistently pollute the environment. Nevertheless, it may be acknowledged that the ethical dilemmas are increased by certain aspects of private enterprise who are forced by monetary economics to define efficiency in terms of profits alone. Already these issues are being vigorously debated among academics. A recent article in *Education Now* in the Sydney Morning Herald pointed out that:

The Federation of Australian University Staff Associations (FAUSA)

is receiving a steady stream of complaints from academics acting as consultants that their integrity is being compromised by companies which demand research results tailored to their purposes, and want suppressed those which are inconvenient + there are also cases where + commissioning companies have instructed their consultants not to make any critical remarks about the company or its products (Susskind, 1991)

The Women's Research Group, acknowledging these difficulties, nevertheless felt that the importance of encouraging and supporting both research by women and research into women's issues was sufficient justification for the pursuit of a centre of excellence within the University. Recent studies have indicated that, not only do women undertake funded research less frequently than their male academic colleagues (Poiner 1990) but that research undertaken by women has not even remained stable over the last decade. It has actually declined (Mares quoting Gale 1989). The Women's Research Group felt that failure to compete for research funding from the public and private sectors by setting up a Women's Research Centre would exacerbate the already precarious position of women's research.

A number of factors were operating at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean which increased the likelihood of such a centre being supported and internally funded. It was in a climate of growth that UWS, Nepean set itself the goal of establishing a number of internally-funded research centres. In addition, the Chief Executive Officer supported the concept of a women's research centre which would provide a forum for investigating the needs of women in the socio-economically disadvantaged region of western Sydney. The recommendation to close the Women's Research Unit at the University of Sydney had, at the time, just been endorsed by that University's Senate which left UWS Nepean's Women's Research Centre as the only one in New South Wales. Recently, however, a highly successful Women's Studies Centre has been established at the University of Sydney as a teaching and research forum.

UWS, Nepean approved the Women's Research Centre in May 1990. The proposal for funding the Centre specified that the Director be elected from among members of the management committee. However, at its first meeting the committee, in fact, elected Co-Directors. The consequent co-operative mode of working has been one of the strengths of the Centre since not only is the onerous task of operating the Centre shared but ideas can be tested, reports and papers compiled jointly and speaking engagements covered by at least one of the Directors. It is also indicative of the Centre's objective of serving the interests of all women, that one Director is an academic, and one a general, staff member.

Inclusion of academic and general staff women in all facets of the Centre's operation reflects its underlying philosophy that there is a shared experience of oppression among all women. It is imperative that the Centre promotes the interests of women from varying backgrounds and social groups within the University and the community. We need to take care not succumb to the imposition, from within or outside the University, of artificial divisions among women.

The Centre's management committee has representation from each Faculty, from students and from general staff. In the submission made to the institution's research management committee, the Women's Research Group proposed that the Centre's management committee be restricted to women staff as an affirmative action strategy. The research management committee meeting at which the decision was made to officially endorse the proposal for the Women's Research Centre was instructive. Only one woman was present at the meeting and forced to vigorously defend the proposal in competition with other research centre submissions. The proposal was queried for proposing control of a centre by women only. Ignoring the affirmative action issues, it was claimed that the presence of men on the management committee of a women's research centre would lend kudos to the

centre, given that the academic environment is 'a man's world'. The principle that a centre should be directed and staffed by the social group that it represents has, however, been endorsed by the University in its Triennium Submission to the Department of Employment, Education and Training for the establishment of a Centre for Aboriginal Research and Education Studies.

Giving control of research centres to the social groups who provide the focus of the research constitute affirmative action strategies in line with state and federal equal employment opportunity and affirmative action legislation. For those of us who belong to disadvantaged groups, and who have frequently been the object of, or invisibilised by, research, there is a deeper political meaning in being able to control our own centre. Having the ability to determine the type of studies that serve our needs as a cultural group and which are therefore in our interests is an empowering research practice to be encouraged.

The Centre promotes collaborative research between established and beginning researchers in order to transmit skills as an essential part of staff development. Co-operative rather than competitive relations are qualities to be highly valued in new universities where expertise in research needs to be conveyed to academics entering the field of research for the first time.

One of the major strengths of the Women's Research Centre is its unique position in the institution to represent research interests of women across all faculties, as well as general staff, reflecting its intrinsically inter-disciplinary focus and the rich academic input into selected research projects that reflect the objectives of the Centre. Despite a social science and humanities emphasis, reflecting the forefront of research within women's studies internationally, the Centre draws its research expertise, motivation and support from across the institution including Commerce, Visual & Performing Arts, Health Studies and Science & Technology, including the Department of Electrical Engineering (represented by Dr Jo Tibbitts who, in conjunction with the Women's Research Centre, is organising a national seminar in September 1991 on Women in Engineering).

The price paid for this strong cross-disciplinary base has been the problem of lack of research and administrative infrastructural funding: a situation generally being experienced by the new universities. Input to the Women's Research Centre from across the faculties has been at the price of exclusion at the crucial level of maintenance and administrative infrastructural support which is vital to a newly formed centre. As the Centre is not seen within the institution to 'belong' to a single faculty, no faculty is willing to expend its sparse budget resources on the Centre's activities. The Centre has not been allocated an office or equipment. Basic needs such as photocopying and printing are provided to research centres attached to other faculties, but such resources are not available to the Women's Research Centre.

The maintenance and success of the Women's Research Centre, upon which the institution is building its research reputation, depends on the excessive voluntary labour of the Co-Directors (with no relief of teaching and administrative duties) and the management committee. The research centres are expected to generate their own funding to support administrative and promotional costs. A small starting budget of \$12,500 is, however, prohibitive to the development of a sound public relations and promotions strategy for the generation of sufficient funding in the establishment of a new centre.

Despite these difficulties, miracles have happened. In 1990, the skin-care company Nutri-metics, donated \$25,000 to the Women's Research Centre. Nutri-metics serves clients in the western Sydney region and recognises the need to support initiatives that serve the needs of women in this most rapidly expanding suburban region of Australia. IBM and Parramatta City Council sponsored a day event held in November 1990: *Women on the Move: A Day of Women, Sport and Physical Activity*. Computer Lighthouse has donated a computer to the Centre. The Women's Research

Centre has employed a part-time publicity/promotions officer to generate funding from outside sources, including private businesses in Sydney and western Sydney. Within the first ever round of offers of Australian Research Council Small Grants to the University, the Women's Research Centre was awarded one of only two grants to UWS, Nepean, a grant to conduct *The Western Sydney Women's Oral History Project*. (A brief description of current projects is set out in Appendix A.)

Through contacts with local women's organisations and the media as well as research, the Centre has rapidly generated publicity in the western Sydney region and has earned a reputation for supporting initiatives in the areas of women's health, women's participation in sport and recreation, the history of women's experiences during the region's period of suburbanisation, women and trade union activity, women's conditions of employment and leisure, the educational needs of girls and gender distinctive youth cultural practices in the west. The Centre has approximately one hundred paid-up members from western Sydney, New South Wales and interstate who make an input into, and are kept informed about, the Centre's activities by a regular newsletter.

Western Sydney as the context for research into women's issues

Western Sydney is a socio-economically disadvantaged region which has the largest and most rapidly expanding population in Australia. It has a proportionately high indigenous population, a high immigrant population, a predominantly working class population, high unemployment rates among young people, poor health services, housing and working conditions and recreational facilities for women and minority groups, and an excessively high crime rate. The underdevelopment of skills among the population has fundamental implications for the development of the region.

The Department of Employment, Education and Training has identified the important theme of equity and access in this region. The Australia Council has gathered data on artistic and cultural activity to provide the New South Wales Ministry for the Arts and local Councils in western Sydney with information for future cultural development and planning in the region (Chesterman & Schwager 1990). Despite statistical and cultural evidence that western Sydney is a socially and economically depressed region, it is an area with great potential for women, for training and industry, for recreation and tourism. Documented evidence the world over demonstrates, however, that women and children tend to bear the burden of social deprivation suffered by single and dual parent families through lack of jobs, poor housing and welfare provision. Recent research evidence demonstrates that women have a higher rate of mortality in western Sydney than anywhere else in Australia. Age, race, location, family status, housing, health services, access to facilities, diet, pollution, level and type of recreation activity and other factors are significant determinants of such statistical signs of deprivation.

For the first time, the region has a University to serve its educational and research needs. Promoting the interchange of information between members of the local community, local industry, unions, policy-makers, policy-providers and the university is vital to the objective of serving the economic, social, health and cultural needs of the region. Western Sydney has been defined by politicians and academics as the 'western Sydney corridor'. Local residents, the Women's Research Centre and other organisations and centres located in this region constantly have to emphasise that this 'corridor' happens to be the home for many culturally vibrant communities.

Partly because of its socio-economic disadvantage and partly because of its geographic distance from the centre of Sydney, the western Sydney region and its communities are poorly researched and understood. In attempting to collect basic data about women in the region for various research projects, members of the Women's Research Centre have discovered the paucity of information

relating to women in western Sydney.

While the Australian Bureau of Statistics has just released a new publication *About Women* (ABS, 1991) which provides a detailed index to information about women generally, it still does not specifically address the issue of women within western Sydney. Some organisations located in the region, such as WESTIR, do collect and maintain data of relevance and importance to the local communities. However, even here data specifically identifying women's position is lacking. The Women's Research Centre, then, regards the collection and dissemination of basic statistical and other qualitative information about women in western Sydney as one of its major contributions to organisations in the surrounding local communities.

Attracting funding from public and private sources for women's research

The Commonwealth government provides 95% of research funding for higher education research (Lowe, 1987 in Poiner 1990). Only 2.2% of research and experimental development in higher education institutions is funded by the private sector (ABS, 1986 quoted in Poiner 1990). Of the 95% of government funding of research in higher education, only 30% is received by the social sciences and humanities (Lowe, 1987 in Poiner 1990).

It is clear that in the current climate of higher education, the humanities and social sciences are disadvantaged in the hierarchy of public research funding areas in which science and technology are prioritised. In addition, women's studies and women's research is given a low status within the humanities and social sciences. New fields of study, and particularly interdisciplinary fields, are frequently not given credit for being at the forefront of social enquiry.

Part of the difficulty is that women are absent from or in the minority in those arenas where such priorities are made. Experts in women's issues are needed on all key committees and panels of the Australian Research Council and other public funding bodies to match the numbers of experts representing science and technology.

The quality of life of women as the nation's paid labourers and unpaid workers, as the caretakers of the emotional and physical needs of the nation's young, elderly, disabled and infirm have implications for the state of the nation's economy and are sound qualitative arguments for funding research into women's issues.

Generating funds for research and consultancies from the private sector is even more difficult. Not only is the research centre competing to attract funding during an economic recession, but it is also faced with ethical dilemmas in deciding whether to accept funding from certain organisations that oppose - or at the very least, don't support - the aims and objectives of the centre. We would not be prepared to accept funding from companies that manufacture products which are detrimental to women's or the nation's health, such as cigarette companies. In less extreme or obvious cases, however, it could be argued that sponsorship from certain companies that have traditionally opposed the promotion of women's issues may lead to the raising of the consciousness of those companies about such issues. Nevertheless, we need to guard against the situation where organisations assert that their products/services serve women's needs and interests simply because the Women's Research Centre has accepted funding from that company.

The Centre has already been confronted with the dilemma of having to decide whether to accept sponsorship from companies who disapprove of the views of speakers invited to the sponsored event. Accepting sponsorship can, on occasion, lead directly to censorship of debate about research into certain issues (SMH). The Centre has therefore been forced to make a decision to remain financially small in order not to compromise the objective of representing and supporting women's needs and to prevent the perversion of knowledge. Having a voice in the local and national

community, sharing research skills in the institution, attracting public and private funds for research and maintaining intellectual integrity are not necessarily contradictory. But an arms length policy is essential for research that may lead to the development of policies and practices for the improvement of social relations rather than simply improvements in entrepreneurial practices.

This can be achieved by directing substantial public funds into new fields of study, new research centres and new universities so that they do not become the slaves of enterprise philosophy alone.

APPENDIX A

Research being conducted by the Women's Research Centre

The Western Sydney Women's Oral History Project

The aims of the project are to investigate and analyse women's experiences of, and reactions to, the processes of social and cultural change and community dislocation resulting from the suburbanisation of the western Sydney region during the 1950s and 1960s. The project is examining women's experiences of stability and change in their environment, childhood and adolescence, education, sexual mores, politics, marriage, employment, domestic and childcare duties, family life, community life, leisure and recreation during this period.

Women have faced particular problems specific to their gender in the suburbanisation of western nations. It is not clear whether the rapid suburbanisation of western Sydney led to improved conditions for women through the transition from physical and social isolation to the creation of communities and facilities in shopping, health and childcare or led to the breakdown of extended kinship networks. The data collected for this project will make a major contribution to the understanding of the lives of women during a specific historical period and phenomenon that remains undocumented and undefined, and to policy-makers, future research and socio-cultural analysis by acting as a vital data source.

The Women, Employment and Trade Union Participation in Western Sydney Project

is seeking funding from unions and the ARC to examine how women's disadvantage manifests itself in one of Australia's fastest growing, most socio-economically disadvantaged regions. Women's position in the workforce is less favourable than men's on a range of factors including income, participation in full-time work, access to superannuation, and recognition of domestic responsibilities. The outcomes of the study will be set against national data from the *Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey* and recommendations framed to enable unions and employers to develop policies and strategies to address women's inequitable position in the workforce.

The study is examining women's workforce participation in private sector organisations in western Sydney; conditions of employment of particular relevance to women in such organisations; the extent of women's trade union participation, involvement as workplace delegates, and/or participation as paid officials. Within specified organisations the project is investigating reasons why women join or do not join unions, the roles women take within unions, the issues women believe unions should be addressing, the issues that unions currently handle effectively, the conditions of employment and other work-related benefits women believe are essential for their satisfactory position in paid and unpaid work. The project will identify strategies required by women, unions, and employers to create the context and preconditions to enable women to compete equally with men in the paid workforce.

Oral History of Women Trade Unionists: The War Years

At the outbreak of war in 1939 Australian women were called upon to move out of the home and into the factories and workshops to take over jobs vacated by men who went to war. Despite doing men's work, under the same conditions and at least as competently as men, women were paid only between 54% and 90% of male wages.

Working conditions for women, who were also expected to support and care for their families, were often difficult and demanding. Under these conditions, women workers began to organise and demand better wages, working conditions and other work-related benefits, such as child-care. Organisation of, and agitation by, women workers produced many women who became strong unionists, including delegates, organisers and paid officials.

The Women's Research Centre intends to undertake a research project on the oral history of women unionists during the Second World War: a time of extremely high employment for women. These trade unionists would be approximately 75 to 80 years of age and unless their experiences are documented soon they will be lost. This facet of women's history will then become invisible as much of women's history has become invisible.

Social Change in the Public and Private Sectors: Dual Perspectives on Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action

EEO and affirmative action programmes, backed by legislation, constitute a major avenue for improving women's position in paid employment. The overt aim of EEO and affirmative action is to eliminate existing discrimination and counter the effects of past discrimination. If women are to participate in the Australian workforce on an equal basis with men then such programmes need to be effectively monitored.

This project is designed to examine the extent to which EEO and affirmative action programmes are being successfully implemented in the public, private and higher education sectors in Australia. Formal reporting mechanisms do not always reflect actual practices in gauging the effectiveness of these programmes. Therefore, Affirmative Action Co-ordinators and Affirmative Action Officers will be interviewed to examine factors which assist or inhibit effective management and implementation of the programmes. Outcomes of the study will provide a detailed picture of the effectiveness of affirmative action in public and private sector organisations from the perspective of those who have greatest responsibility for its implementation.

Public and Private Images of Women in Western Sydney in the 1950s

This project is designed to investigate visual representation of women during the decade of the 1950s in the context of Australian suburbanisation by documenting, analysing and comparing national, public and regional private pictorial images of women in western Sydney during the region's period of rapid suburbanisation. Selected public visual representations of women in *The Australian Women's Weekly* are compared with private, local amateur photographs of women within family album collections owned by women currently in their 50s and 60s who have lived in western Sydney during the region's rapid suburbanisation. This is the first research project in Australia to undertake a systematic comparison between public and private pictorial images of women in the 1950s.

Contemporary Youth Cultural Practices in Western Sydney

This project is designed to investigate, document and analyse contemporary youth cultural practice in western Sydney. The aim is to analyse non-traditional art forms and meanings of contemporary practice during the crucial transitional phase of youth aged 15 to 19 years. This study will fill a void by addressing youth centred definitions of their everyday cultural practice. The ways in which young people define their cultural practices, how they create suburban youth identities, how they relate their lifestyles and cultural codes and self-defined rules to the wider community are issues to be addressed in the spatial context of the expanding western Sydney region. Forms of body adornment, cultural performance, cultural artefacts and language will be studied in the context of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, leisure and location.

General Staff Women in Higher Education

This project will investigate the position of women on general staff in New South Wales universities through an analysis of the 1990 EEO Survey data generated by the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment and an examination of Annual Reports on EEO and Affirmative Action. Analysis of the data will be undertaken within the broader national framework of award restructuring which is being held out as a vital opportunity to create career paths for women and improve their employment opportunities and conditions in the paid workforce. Special attention will be paid to a comparative analysis of women's position in those universities which have, and those which have not, completed the clerical/keyboard integration exercise.

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