

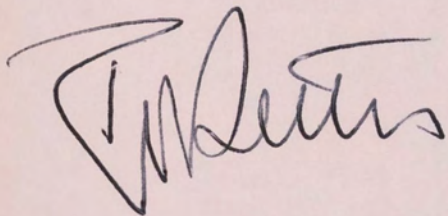
**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**CABINET DECISION**  
**No. 7210**

---

Submission No: 6130

Title: **INFORMATION PAPER - THE WOMEN'S STRATEGY**

Cabinet noted the information and, subject to further consideration of comments from Ministers, approved tabling in the Legislative Assembly together with the Ministerial Statement.



**R.A.SETTER**  
Secretary to Cabinet

28 February 1992

---

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CONFIDENTIAL

FOR CABINET

SUBMISSION No: 6130 .....

Title:	INFORMATION PAPER THE WOMEN'S STRATEGY,
Minister	The Chief Minister,
Purpose:	Cabinet Information Papers - for public release as a community discussion paper.
Relation to existing policy:	It is not a policy document, but complements Government policy.
Timing/ legislative priority:	Urgent.
Announcement of decision, tabling, etc:	February / March 1992 Legislative Assembly Sittings.
Action re- quired before announcement:	N/A
Staffing implications, numbers and costs, etc:	N/A
Total cost:	N/A

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Department/Authority: LAW

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION NO.

TITLE: INFORMATION PAPER  
THE WOMEN'S STRATEGY

---

COMMENTS:

There appear to be no constitutional or legal barriers to the proposal.

The proposal does not raise any consumer implications.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The Submission does not appear to raise any additional resource implications at this point in time.

---

*J* SIGNED: John Flynn  
DESIGNATION: A/Secretary, Department of Law  
DATE: 20 February 1992

CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Department/Authority. OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION NO.

TITLE: INFORMATION PAPER - NT WOMEN'S STRATEGY

.....  
.....

**COMMENTS:**

This Office supports the content of the information paper for Cabinet.

SIGNED: *Margaret P. Ryan*  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

DATE: 21/2/92

**CONFIDENTIAL**



## NORTHERN TERRITORY TREASURY

Our Ref: 920263  
Your Ref:

Director of the  
Office of Women's Affairs  
Department of the Chief Minister  
GPO Box 4396  
DARWIN NT 0801

**RE: THE WOMEN'S STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER**

In a letter dated 18 February 1992, the Secretary Department of the Chief Minister invited Treasury to provide a comment to you re the NT Women's Strategy Discussion Paper.

The brief comment appended below is in the style of a Cabinet Submission blue comment:

It is noted there are no financial or policy implications contained in the paper.

Tabling in the Legislative Assembly is supported.

K B Clarke  
Deputy Under Treasurer (Finance)

2 / February 1992

**CONFIRMATION** ✓

**FAX SENT** 21/2/92

Telephone: (089) 89 5511  
Facsimile: (089) 89 6150  
Telex: NTREAS AA85541  
Location: AMP Building  
Cnr Cavenagh and Knuckey Streets  
DARWIN NT

Address all correspondence to:  
The Under Treasurer  
NT Treasury  
GPO Box 1974  
DARWIN NT 0801

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1 -

## RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that Cabinet note the information contained within this submission for tabling in the Legislative Assembly together with the Ministerial Statement.

## BACKGROUND

1. In October 1990 the Chief Minister announced in a press release that a comprehensive new strategy for women in the Territory would be developed by women themselves.

2. The Office of Women's Affairs in the Department of the Chief Minister and the Women's Advisory Council, began a series of consultations with women in order to develop the strategy.

3. Consultations were held with women throughout the Northern Territory in urban and rural areas with a special culturally appropriate consultative process for Aboriginal women.

4. The discussion paper is now complete and is ready for community discussion. Special consultations will be held with regard to the discussion paper with women of non-English speaking background and women with disabilities who have not been consulted as yet.

5. There are no financial or policy implications to this paper.

6. The final paper "The Northern Territory Strategy for Women" will be finalised by June 1992.

## CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUES

1. In times of recession, cut backs and change it is difficult to keep the vision for what can lie ahead.

CONFIDENTIAL

2. This paper provides for women a background in what has been achieved, and some direction for the future.

3. While providing background and future vision the paper makes no promises, whether financial, political or policy direction.

4. The paper covers all aspects of women's lives in an ordered and structured manner. Areas covered include:

- Inter-government Relations
  - International obligations
  - National Liaison
  
- Economic Framework
  - Women's economic self-sufficiency
  - Paid labour
  - Public sector employment for women
  - Women as entrepreneurs
  - Micro economic reform
  - Unpaid labour
  - Economic consequences of marital breakdown
  
- Social Framework
  - Women's lives in the nineties
  - Government machinery
  - Health and well being
  - Information services
  - Substance abuse
  - Education and Training
  - Housing and Crisis Accommodation
  - Safety and personal freedom

CONFIDENTIAL

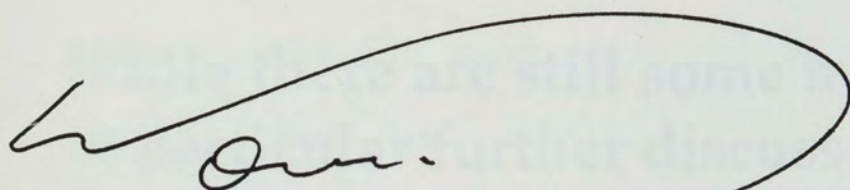
- 3 -

- Counselling services
  - Women in remote areas
  - Sport and leisure
  - Special needs
- The Legal Framework
    - Participation of women in decision making
    - The Territory
    - The Judiciary
  - Framework for the Future.
    - Leadership
    - The information society
    - Industries of the future
    - The new executive

OPTIONS ARE THAT CABINET:

- (i) adopts the discussion paper in full, tables it in the Legislative Assembly, together with the Ministerial Statement, for release for community discussion;
- (ii) adopts the discussion paper in part, indicating what is unacceptable;
- (iii) rejects the discussion paper.

Option (i) is the preferred option.



MARSHALL PERRON

CONFIDENTIAL



NORTHERN TERRITORY WOMEN'S  
STRATEGY  
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members would be aware that in October 1990 I announced the Government's intention to draw up a strategy for women.

As a result, the Office of Women's Affairs in my Department have worked together with the Women's Advisory Council to consult with Territory women on their concerns and government priorities for the future.

Consultation meetings, advertised through the media, by letter and word of mouth, were held in Alice Springs, Yulara, the Darwin rural area and Darwin itself, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Tennant Creek.

Aboriginal women constitute 11 per cent of our population and there were consultations with Aboriginal women in Katherine, Borroloola and 13 other small communities.

While there are still some meetings yet to be held, in particular further discussions with women with disabilities and from ethnic communities, the process has gone a long way to establishing the main areas of concern to Territory women.

Broadly these are health, education and training, housing, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, child care, counselling and information issues.

This year the Northern Territory will host the third conference of Commonwealth/State Ministers on the Status of Women.

It is therefore an appropriate time to look at the situation of women in the Territory and assess some of the achievements since Self-Government.

Mr Speaker, statistics show that a little more than 42 per cent of the Northern Territory's wage and salary earners are women. The participation of women in the workforce is 62 per cent - 10 per cent higher than the national average.

While this is encouraging it is still true that women generally hold less well paid, less secure and less skilled jobs than their male counterparts.

This situation is steadily improving. The school leaving age for girls is rising and of those Territorians with formal qualifications, a little more than 40 per cent with tertiary degrees, 56.5 per cent of those with diplomas and 54.5 per cent with other qualifications are women.

The average weekly earnings of Territory women are the highest in Australia, 15 per cent above the national average. The Northern Territory also records the smallest gap between male and female rates of pay.

In our fastest expanding industry, tourism, women are well represented at senior levels. The most recent figures available show that women occupy 38 per cent of management positions in the industry.

There has been a significant increase in the number of women at the more senior levels in the Northern Territory Public Service with 14 per cent of executive level jobs being held by women. This compares favourably with the just 12.6 per cent of women in senior levels of the Commonwealth Public Service.

The Territory Government led Australia in establishing "Women in Management" courses in 1984, and since then has undertaken a number of training initiatives to improve management skills, confidence and opportunities for women in the public service.

The Office of Women's Affairs has established a register of women available and suitable for appointments to statutory boards and advisory bodies. In this way it is hoped to increase

women's participation in decision making at senior levels.

While there are, to the misfortune of this House, only two women in this Legislative Assembly, women are taking a bigger role in local politics.

34 per cent of those elected to local government councils and 39 per cent of those elected to community government councils are women.

The effort to create employment in small remote communities is never easy. For Aboriginal women in such communities the main opportunities are currently in teaching and health worker programs while the main effort is undertaken by the Department of Education providing training in areas identified by the communities themselves. The biggest demand is in the areas of arts and crafts, clothing, clerical and small business managements skills.

A significant statistic for the Northern Territory is that one parent families are more common here, 19 per cent of families compared with a national average of just under 15 per cent. Of these more than 80 per cent are single mother families.

This reality puts extra pressure on the Government to provide child care. Members would be aware that since Self-Government child

care centres have been established in new subdivisions as they are developed.

The trend today is towards child care in the workplace and while there are some such centres, a notable example being the two facilities at the Northern Territory University at Darwin and Casuarina, the Government will be studying the means of meeting this area of demand in the future.

When one considers that the national estimate is that a new mother undertakes some 56 hours a week of unpaid work, it is clear why women see child care as an essential service.

Similarly since women invariably undertake the work caring for aged or disabled family members, another concern was the need for respite care facilities.

This is a particular problem in Aboriginal communities and while some communities have successful programs for the care of the aged in place, this is another area for further attention.

The Minister for Health and Community Services will be making a statement on a Northern Territory Women's Health Policy during this debate. However, I will raise a couple of areas

mentioned in the discussion paper concerning health issues.

A current need is to balance the requirements of different groups in preventative medicine.

The Commonwealth has put forward a grant for mammography screening. Our dilemma is that while there is considerable support amongst women for increased mammography services, the incidence of breast cancer in the Territory is low compared with the rest of Australia. Contrasted with this the Northern Territory has the highest incidence of cervical cancer in Australia.

Since these priorities arise from women from different backgrounds we will need to balance these preventative priorities fairly in order to best serve Territory women within the limited resources available.

The Government will seek to provide both access to mammography services while planning for implementation of the National Cervical Cancer Prevention Program.

The Territory Government will continue to provide information services to women in both Darwin and Alice Springs through community health centres while information for women in remote communities will be improved through

the reintroduction of Medmail, a health promotion and education service.

Mr Speaker, the House is aware of the initiatives that the Government has taken in combating the problems of alcohol abuse in the Territory. The consultations with women showed alcohol abuse to be a matter of critical concern, particularly among Aboriginal women.

The vulnerability of women to violent and sexual assault and the fact that many women no longer feel able to walk about their community in safety, is a major problem both to women and the government.

I believe the measures currently being adopted by the Government to counter alcohol abuse, with bipartisan support in this House, will, over time, help alleviate the situation.

There are also our other initiatives to better ensure women's safety. The Territory Government is proud of its recently introduced domestic violence legislation. The Office of Women's Affairs is working with Aboriginal communities to confront the problem of what is known in such communities as "family fighting".

During the consultations a number of women called for more intensive police training in

handling domestic violence. In fact, the Northern Territory Police recently commissioned a report through the North Australian Research Unit on the effect of the new domestic violence legislation on the lives of Aboriginal women.

Police recruits receive 20 hours of training in relation to domestic violence and there are inservice seminars for police officers and police aides.

Related to alcohol abuse is the demand for crisis accommodation, in particular funding for refuge centres. There are currently six refuge centres in the Territory and recent initiatives have included an Aboriginal women's shelter in Darwin's northern suburb, new premises for the Alice Springs refuge and flats and houses for halfway house and short to medium term accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

There is a steady improvement in the number of women who have established control over their own housing needs. Nearly 40 per cent of public housing tenancies in the Territory are held by women, and about the same proportion receive rent relief.



Since the introduction of the Home North Scheme in September last year 26 per cent of applicants have been single women.

Mr Speaker, I have highlighted some of the areas of concern expressed during the consultation process and recorded in this discussion paper.

The next stage will be for the discussion paper to be sent out to women's groups and individual women for further response.

The challenge now is to be innovative. Territory women historically have been pioneers; self-sufficient, resourceful and adaptable. They live here because the Territory has something to offer them in terms of lifestyle and opportunities - and they stay because the Territory is a place where the special needs of women are recognised and, wherever possible, acted upon.

Government has a crucial role to play, but it will never achieve equality for women in isolation. Our endeavour involves many different jurisdictions, many interest groups - in fact all of society in some way or another.

It is important that women have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and creative talents in this process but we should all realise that

throwing money at a problem is not always the best approach.

My Government believes that the question of equality applies to every field of human activity - political, economic, social, cultural and legal. The situation of women is affected by the structures and systems of home and family, education and health care: by social attitudes and by those of political and public life.

No Government can provide all the answers to the many questions that these recurring issues raise. We can however show leadership and direction.

I commend the discussion paper to this House and look forward to constructive debate from Honourable Members on the many issues that are raised within it.

INTRODUCTION 1

1. BACKGROUND 4

- 1.1 Philosophical Commitment 4
- 1.2 Women's Strategy Consultations 4
  - 1.2.1 Announcement 4
  - 1.2.2 Program of Women's Strategy Consultations 5
  - 1.2.3 The Consultative Process 5
  - 1.2.4 Outcomes of the Consultative Process 6

**NORTHERN TERRITORY  
WOMEN'S STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The UN Convention 5
- 2.2 The Sex Discrimination Act 9
- 2.3 The Affirmative (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 10
- 2.4 Northern Territory Equal Opportunity Legislation 10
- 2.5 ILO Conventions 11
- 2.6 National Policies 11
- 2.7 Endorsement of National Policies 12
- 2.8 Representation on National Committees 12

***A DISCUSSION PAPER***

3. THE ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK 13

- 3.1 Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency 13
- 3.2 Paid Labour: Participation of Women in the Labour Force 14
  - 3.2.1 New Technologies 15
  - 3.2.2 Gender Segregation in the Workplace 16
  - 3.2.3 Earnings 16
- 3.3 Status of Women in Public Sector Employment 17
  - 3.3.1 Discriminative Provisions 17
  - 3.3.2 Equal Opportunity Initiatives 17
  - 3.3.3 Aboriginal Women's Employment 19
  - 3.3.4 Sexual Harassment 19
  - 3.3.5 Superannuation 19
  - 3.3.6 Maternity Leave and Parental Leave Provisions 20
  - 3.3.7 Child Care 20
- 3.4 Women as Entrepreneurs 21

**MARCH 1992**

PRODUCED BY THE OFFICE OF WOMENS AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

- 3.5.1 Enterprise Bargaining 23
- 3.5.2 Safety of Workplace Charges 23

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. BACKGROUND</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Philosophical Commitment	4
1.2 Women's Strategy Consultations	4
1.2.1 Announcement	4
1.2.2 Program of Women's Strategy Consultations	5
1.2.3 The Consultative Process	5
1.2.4 Outcomes of the Consultative Process	6
<b>2. INTER GOVERNMENT RELATIONS</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 International Obligations	8
2.2 The UN Convention	8
2.3 The Sex Discrimination Act	9
2.4 The Affirmative (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act	10
2.5 Northern Territory Equal Opportunity Legislation	10
2.6 ILO Convention 156	11
2.7 National Liaison	11
2.8 Endorsement of National Policies	12
2.9 Representation on National Committees	12
<b>3. THE ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency	13
3.2 Paid Labour: Participation of Women in the Labour Force	14
3.2.1 New Technologies	15
3.2.2 Gender Segregation in the Workforce	16
3.2.3 Earnings	16
3.3 Status of Women in Public Sector Employment	17
3.3.1 Discrimination Provisions	17
3.3.2 Equal Opportunity Initiatives	17
3.3.3 Aboriginal Women's Employment	19
3.3.4 Sexual Harassment	19
3.3.5 Superannuation	19
3.3.6 Maternity Leave and Parental Leave Provisions	20
3.3.7 Child Care	20
3.4 Women as Entrepreneurs	22
3.5 Micro Economic Reform	22
3.5.1 Award Restructuring	23
3.5.2 Enterprise Bargaining	23
3.5.3 Benefits of Workplace Change	23
3.5.4 Challenges for Management and Benefits for Women	24

3.6	Unpaid Labour	26
	3.6.1 Unpaid Labour in the Home	26
	3.6.2 Recognition for Unpaid Work	27
3.7	Women and Poverty	28
3.8	The Economic Consequences of Marriage Breakdown	29
	3.8.1 How Family Property Law Could Contribute to Equality Principles	29
	3.8.2 Tests of a Fair and Equal Law	29
	3.8.3 Recognising Equality of Contribution	30
<b>4.</b>	<b>THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1	Women's Lives in the Nineties	31
4.2	Government Machinery	31
4.3	Health and Well Being	32
	4.3.1 Women's Health Policy	33
	4.3.2 Health Funding Cuts	34
	4.3.3 Respite Care	34
	4.3.4 Cost of Travel for Medical Treatment	35
	4.3.5 Gynaecological and Obstetric Care	35
	4.3.6 Plan for Prevention of Cervical Cancer	35
	4.3.7 Aboriginal Women's Health and Well being	36
	4.3.8 Mammography Screening	37
	4.3.9 Birthing Services Review	39
4.4	Information Services	40
4.5	Substance Abuse	41
4.6	Education and Training	42
	4.6.1 Core Curriculum	43
	4.6.2 Career Options for Women	43
	4.6.3 Chief Ministers Task Force on the Education of Girls	43
	4.6.4 Tradeswomen on the Move	44
	4.6.5 NT Education and Training Authority	44
	4.6.6 TAFE	44
	4.6.7 NT University	46
	4.6.8 NT Women's Fellowship	46
	4.6.9 Aboriginal Women and Education	46
	4.6.10 School of the Air	47
4.7	Housing and Crisis Accommodation	47
4.8	Safety, Personal Freedom and Freedom from all Forms of Violence	49
4.9	Domestic Violence	50
	4.9.1 Violence and Aboriginal Women	51
	4.9.2 Family Violence and Alcohol	52
	4.9.3 Violence and non Aboriginal Women	53
	4.9.4 Police Training	54
	4.9.5 Programs for Violent Men	54
4.10	Counselling Services	54
4.11	Women in Remote Areas	55
	4.11.1 The Report on Women Living in Remote Areas	55

4.11.2	The Study of the Health and Welfare Needs of Women Living in Remote Areas	56
4.11.3	Young Women	56
4.11.4	Transport	56
4.11.5	Living in Tourism Centres	57
4.12	Sport and Leisure	57
4.13	Women from Special Needs Groups	59
<b>5.</b>	<b>THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>60</b>
5.1	Women's Views on the Law	60
5.2	Constitutional Development	61
5.3	Criminal Legislation	61
5.3.1	Domestic Violence	61
5.3.2	The Married Persons (Equality of Status) Act	62
5.3.3	De Facto Relationships Legislation	62
5.3.4	Prostitution Legislation	63
5.3.5	Proposed Reforms	63
<b>6.</b>	<b>THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>65</b>
6.1	Participation of Women in Power Structures and Decision Making	65
6.1.1	Women's Register	65
6.2	The Territory Situation	65
6.3	The Judicial Situation	66
<b>7.</b>	<b>FRAME WORK FOR THE FUTURE</b>	<b>67</b>
7.1	The New Style of Leadership	67
7.2	The Information Society	69
7.3	Well-educated Workforce - Higher Expectations	70
7.4	Industries of the Future	70
7.5	Management to Leadership	71
7.6	The New Executive - More like a Woman?	72
7.7	Challenges for Leaders in the 1990s	72
7.8	Recruiting the Labour Force in the 1990s	73
7.9	Child Care	73
7.9.1	Employer Sponsored Child Care	73
7.10	Eldercare	74
7.11	Leave Policies	74
7.12	Emerging Themes	75
7.13	Global Environmental Concerns	75
7.14	Global Political Role Models	76
7.15	Conclusion	76
	Acknowledgements	78
	Footnotes	79
	Bibliography	84
	Attachment 1 Northern Territory Social and Economic Indicators	88
	Attachment 2 Commonwealth, State, Territory Standing committees	91

## INTRODUCTION

Moving towards the year 2000, it is time to reflect and review the status of women in the Northern Territory since self-government was achieved in 1978. During the past 14 years the Government has been active in establishing the structures, policies and programs to enhance the status of women living in the Territory. This has been as a result of lobbying, requests and advice of Territory women themselves. It is also the commitment of government to ensure that planning reflects priorities identified by Territory women. This machinery has been designed to suit our unique culture and circumstances. Overall, many measures introduced have benefited women both directly and indirectly.

To mark the new decade, the Chief Minister announced in October 1990, the Government's intention to consult with Territory women on planning a strategy. These consultations were planned as part of the process of developing a comprehensive statement - a means of enabling Territory women to redefine and prioritise the areas in which the government should be acting. The consultations, organised jointly by the Office of Women's Affairs within the Department of the Chief Minister and the Women's Advisory Council, were an opportunity for all Territory women to contribute their thoughts and ideas to future development.

Consultations have now taken place with women throughout the Territory, from mining towns, tourist centres, pastoral properties, regional centres, rural areas and the larger centres of Darwin and Alice Springs. A separate program of consultations with Aboriginal women was arranged through Ms Eileen Cummings, Aboriginal Liaison Officer with the Office of Women's Affairs. She conducted consultations and visited women in 16 Aboriginal communities from all over the Northern Territory. A great deal of information about Territory women's interests and concerns has been gained.

After extensive consultation, it is interesting and perhaps not surprising that recurring themes emerge - health, housing, education and training, TAFE, violence against women, child care, counselling services, the impact of alcohol abuse, information services, isolation, the unpaid work of carers, women's role in sustaining the economy, employment, superannuation, career paths and the environment.

This Discussion Paper is the second stage in the process of developing a strategy for women in the Northern Territory. It will be widely circulated and sent for response to all women's organisations, to individual women and in particular to the women who spent their time attending the initial consultations and writing letters and submissions. It is a vital part of the process of identifying and prioritising issues which are of importance to Territory women's lives during the nineties.

As we move towards a new century it is time to examine what has been achieved for women in the Northern Territory over the past 14 years since self-government. This Discussion Paper does that. It outlines what exists at present and looks into the future touching on the issues which are emerging as the most important for women and therefore for all of our society. This discussion paper clusters issues within six broad headings:

- Inter-Government Relations
- The Economic Framework
- The Social Framework
- The Legal Framework
- The Political Framework
- Framework for the Future

The interdependent nature of these headings is acknowledged. As economic, social, technological and political conditions change so do the needs of women. As some issues are dealt with, new priorities emerge. The evolving role of modern women demands flexible, responsive approaches. Where people live, how they think, the way they eat, drink, work, spend their leisure time, and obtain information in the Territory has all changed since self-government in 1978. Yet much remains the same, it is still true that women generally hold less well paid, less secure and less skilled jobs than their male counterparts.

What is now being more clearly articulated, is that most women have very different life patterns to men today. Women who have children need to take time away from paid employment to rear and care for their young children, this results in a broken career path. On the positive side this has meant that they have had to become more flexible and creative in managing their life



paths. But on the negative side it can mean that many no longer have a disposable income, and when they try to return to the paid workforce, they often find that their skills have been superseded. This can result in loss of confidence. Today most women take on a dual role - that of working in the paid workforce and that of unpaid carer and home maker, this double load affects family life, leading to increasing stress levels for the modern woman.

The challenge is to find new directions and strategies to tackle these issues, which are appropriate for the Territory. Government has a role to play, but cannot alone achieve equality for women. This endeavour involves many different jurisdictions, many interest groups - in fact all of society. Importantly women have an opportunity to contribute their ideas and creative talents in this process. Throwing money at a problem is not always the best approach and often does not solve it. There is a need for innovative approaches which are less reliant upon economic resources.

Territory women historically have been pioneers; they are self-sufficient, resourceful and adaptable. They are here because the Territory has something to offer in terms of lifestyle and opportunities and they have stayed. The Territory can provide them with a chance to get a new and different perspective on life and is a place where ideas are welcomed and things are flexible and adaptable.

Women are affected by the structures and systems that governments encourage for home and family, education and health care; by social attitudes: and by opportunity in political and public life. No government can provide all the answers to the many questions that these recurring issues raise, but in partnership with men and women, it can show leadership and direction. It is important to look to our own communities, to our own families, friends and work peers for ideas and new ways to approach these issues. We look forward to your response.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 PHILOSOPHIC COMMITMENT**

The Government is committed to equality of opportunity for all Territory women. The Government's approach is that all policies are developed both with an awareness of their impact on women and families, and to ensure that women are given the opportunity to contribute to the future development of the Northern Territory. (1)

The Government has demonstrated this commitment by developing a comprehensive range of policies which give new opportunities for women in employment, child care, education, health, housing, information services, equal opportunity programs, leisure and sporting activities, and legislative reform in the areas of Domestic Violence, De Facto Relationships, Prostitution, Married Persons (Equality of Status) Act and the proposed Equal Opportunity Legislation to be presented to the Legislative Assembly in early 1992.

The Government continues to support policies that enhance the status of all women in the Territory. Policies have been designed to provide greater options to enable women to make choices regarding their future according to their own needs and circumstances - whether they choose a career at home, in the paid work-force or both. (2)

### **1.2 WOMEN'S STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS**

#### **1.2.1 Announcement**

In October 1990 the Chief Minister announced that

*"..... the Office of Women's Affairs and the Women's Advisory Council... implement a community consultation program designed to ensure that Government planning adequately reflects the priorities identified by women in the community."(3)*

### **1.2.2 Program of Women's Strategy Consultations**

It was the aim of the Office of Women's Affairs and Women's Advisory Council to involve women across the Territory. Over the course of six months every effort was made to involve as many women as possible. Consultations in each centre were preceded by: radio and press advertising, letters of invitation to individuals and groups and personal networking through local Women's Advisory Council members.

54% of Territorians live outside Darwin and a comprehensive program was arranged in mining towns, tourist centres and Aboriginal communities. Consultations were held in the following centres: Alice Springs, Yulara, Darwin Rural Area, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Darwin.

Aboriginal people comprise nearly one quarter of the Territory population with Aboriginal women being 11% of the population. The process was designed to ensure that Aboriginal women were consulted in a way that enabled them to participate fully. A separate program was developed by the Aboriginal Liaison Officer in the Office of Women's Affairs, who conducted these consultations with Aboriginal women and visited Katherine, Borroloola, Kalano, Bulman, Jilmingkin, Mataranka, Hodgson Downs, Bringuna, Lajamanu, Kalkaringi, Dagaragu, Nauiyu Nambiyu, Peppimenarti, Nguiu, Milikapiti, and Minjilang.

### **1.2.3 The Consultative Process**

For some people, public meetings are not a comfortable forum in which to air issues that may have very personal implications, but at the same time, public meetings attract the valuable input of people whose high level of involvement in the areas may mean that their views are well known.

Some groups of women, such as women of non-English speaking backgrounds and women with disabilities were not well represented. It is planned to have a special program of discussions with women with

disabilities and from Ethnic communities during 1992 as part of the second stage .

What was also clear was that in times of serious recession, women tend to focus on the day to day, bread and butter issues of survival, reflecting the economic climate of the 1990's. Although women participated actively and constructively, there was also a degree of cynicism about the process and its outcome. In the words of one Territory woman: "We're tired of people holding meetings and identifying problems, but not doing anything about them."

Only the Darwin discussions were held after the report of the Estimates Review Committee (ERC) was released. In Darwin there was considerable reluctance to pursue the consultation process in the light of that report. Darwin women will have a second chance to respond to this discussion paper. These feelings notwithstanding, Territory women contributed willingly, giving their time and speaking out to enable a picture to be created of their lives and the issues that concern them.

#### **1.2.4 Outcomes of the Consultation Process**

As mentioned in the introduction it is perhaps not remarkable that, even with such diversity, the concerns of Territory women were similar everywhere. Although during a number of consultations, important matters were raised that were specific to a particular region or town, there were also a number of issues that clearly are common across the Territory. These can be categorised as follows: health, education and training, housing, violence against women, effects of alcohol, child care, counselling services and information. These issues will be discussed within the paper.

## 2. INTER GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

During the first decade of self government, women throughout Australia were active in lobbying successive Federal governments for change in the status of women in Australia. Territory women were active in this process.

It is now 16 years since International Women's Year, a year in which Territory women along with women around the world celebrated, and identified issues of concern to them. It was committed women who realized that their physical, social, or legal status required significant change and it was during this year that plans were made to improve the status of women for the future.

1985 marked the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. During this year governments reviewed their achievements over the previous decade in raising the status of women. Australia sent a delegation to the End of Decade World Conference in Nairobi, which was held to review the achievements of the decade and to devise strategies to ensure that progress continues. At that conference Australia endorsed, without reservation, the main document, 'Forward Looking Strategies', which sets out a plan of action for carrying progress for women through to the year 2000. The conference challenged governments to have adequate, comprehensive and coherent national women's policies, which will abolish all obstacles to the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of society by the year 2000.

The Australian Federal Government took up this challenge by developing a National Agenda for Women to provide an integrated plan for Government action to improve further the status of women towards the year 2000. A consultation process for the development of this National Agenda for Women occurred throughout Australia.

The Government was represented by three women at the World Forum for women from non-government organisations concurrently held in Nairobi, to mark the end of the decade. Mrs June Tuzewski, former convenor of the Women's Advisory Council, and Ms Christine Charalambous, representing women from non-English speaking backgrounds, and Ms Ngarrawu Mununggurr, representing women from Aboriginal communities.

## 2.1 INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Australia continues international work through bilateral and multilateral channels to promote the advancement of the status of women and equal involvement at all levels and in all areas of international co-operation and peace making processes. The Northern Territory as part of the Federal system of government, is party to the Federal Government's international obligations and co-operation.

Australia is currently a member of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Working Party on the Role of Women in the Economy.

In 1985 Canada initiated the first ever meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs at which Australia attended. That meeting opened the way for the development of a Plan of Action to integrate women's concerns in the activities of the Commonwealth in all areas, from economic planning to scholarship and training programs. These meetings are held every three years. Australia presented a paper on Domestic Violence at the Ottawa meeting held in 1990.

## 2.2 THE UN CONVENTION

In 1983 with the agreement of State and Territory governments, Australia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which came into effect in August 1983. This is the major United Nations treaty concerning the rights of women. Through 30 articles the Convention sets out in legally binding form internationally accepted principles and measures to achieve equal rights for women everywhere.

The Convention calls for equal rights for women, regardless of their marital status, in all fields - political, economic, social, cultural and civil. In addition to calling for national legislation to ban discrimination, other measures provide for equal rights in political and public life: equal access to education and the same choice of curricula; non-discrimination in employment and pay; and guarantee of job security in the event of marriage and maternity. The Convention underlines the equal responsibilities of men and women in the

context of family life. It stresses the social services needed - especially child care facilities - for combining family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in family life.

Additional Articles of the Convention call for non-discriminatory health services, including services related to family planning; and legal status identical to that of men, with States parties agreeing that all contracts and other private instruments that restrict the legal capacity of women "shall be deemed null and void". Special attention is given to the problems of rural women.

The Convention sets up machinery for the international supervision of the obligations accepted by States (countries). A committee of experts, elected by States parties and serving in a personal capacity, considers progress made. Australia participates as a member of the United Nations Commission on the Status Of Women. A distinguished Australian - Justice Elizabeth Evatt, as an independent expert, chairs the committee which monitors the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The Government contributed to Australia's CEDAW Report submitted to the United Nations Secretary General in October 1986. A supplementary appended report was considered in 1988. The Government has recently contributed to the second updated report which was submitted for consideration in 1992 .

In Australia the legislative response to the United Nations Convention was to proclaim the Sex Discrimination Act in 1984 and the Affirmative Action (Equality for Women) Act in 1986.

### **2.3 THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT**

The Sex Discrimination Act proscribes discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status or pregnancy in the areas of employment, education, accommodation, the provision of goods, facilities and services, the disposal of land, the activities of certain clubs and the way in which federal laws and programs are administered. The Sex Discrimination Act also contains

provisions prohibiting discrimination involving sexual harassment in employment and education.

## **2.4 THE AFFIRMATIVE (EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN) ACT**

The Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act came into operation on 1 October 1986. The Act applies to private sector organisations with more than 100 employees and all higher education institutions. The Act requires relevant employers to develop affirmative action programs designed to eliminate discrimination against women in employment and to promote equal opportunity for women. Affirmative action programs are based on a systematic and planned approach to the identification of existing structural barriers which prevent or inhibit women from fully and equally participating in the workforce. The Act also requires employers to report annually to the Affirmative Action Agency which is responsible for administering the Act.

In 1989/90 the Office of Equal Opportunity assisted the Affirmative Action Agency organize and run seminars for the Northern Territory University and Territory businesses covered by Commonwealth Affirmative Action Legislation.

## **2.5 NORTHERN TERRITORY EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LEGISLATION**

In 1990 the Country Liberal Government tabled a Community Discussion Paper on Equal Opportunity Legislation and announced its intention to introduce legislation. A working party was set up to consult with the community and respond to the Discussion Paper.

In October 1991 the Minister for Employment and Training the Honourable Shane Stone, MLA, announced that Equal Opportunity Legislation is to be presented to the Legislative Assembly in 1992. After tabling, the draft Bill will be available for public comment.

The proposed legislation, while taking account of comparative Commonwealth and State legislation, will reflect the Territory's philosophy, policies and community preferences. In developing legislation for the



Northern Territory, consideration will be given to national developments including age, disability and impairment, workers with family responsibilities and HIV/AIDS. The Legislation will be administered by the establishment of an Independent Northern Territory Commissioner, with administrative staff. Complaint resolution will be through the conciliation model.

## **2.6 ILO CONVENTION 156**

In March 1990, with the agreement of State and Territory governments, the Federal Government announced the ratification of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 156 which focuses on workers with family responsibilities. This convention came into effect in March 1991. The ILO recognises that work and family responsibilities are often difficult to balance and that conflict between the two roles affects women in particular. Convention 156 consists of 19 Articles, which outline measures to address the problems experienced by workers with family responsibilities.

By ratifying ILO Convention 156, the Australian Government has made it a national policy aimed to enable workers with family responsibilities to engage in employment without discrimination and to try to minimise the conflict between these dual roles.

As with CEDAW, Australia will be required to report regularly to the ILO on progress in implementing the Convention. The Office of the Status of Women has announced a program to educate workers, unions and employers about their rights and responsibilities in relation to the Convention.

## **2.7 NATIONAL LIAISON**

These international commitments have resulted in the development and implementation of many national policies and programs. During this period the Northern Territory Government has actively liaised with both Federal and State governments and participated collectively in the development and endorsement of these policies.

Throughout the past decade the Government has participated in many consultations, forums, task forces, conferences and meetings on these issues, both locally and at a national level.

In 1991 the first Commonwealth/State Ministers Conference on the Status of Women was held in Canberra. This conference is to be held annually and the third meeting will be hosted by the Northern Territory in mid 1992.

## **2.8 ENDORSEMENT OF NATIONAL POLICIES**

The Government has endorsed the following policies -

- . The National Policy on the Education of Girls
- . The National Women's Health Policy
- . A National Plan of Action for Women and TAFE

The Northern Territory Government is contributing to the Australian Women's Employment Strategy through the Office Of Equal Opportunity. This policy is specifically aimed at improving the status of women in the workforce.

## **2.9 REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL COMMITTEES**

Since self government the Territory has been represented on many Commonwealth, State, Territory Standing Committees, these are detailed in attachment 2.

### **3. THE ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

Women have always been active participants in national and international economic systems, but their acquired assets and their compensation for work performed have not reflected their contributions, both in the paid workforce and through non-wage work. Recognition of, and compensation for, their labour is an important issue for many women. During the 1980s and increasingly in the 1990s, key protagonists in the Australian economy are recognising the importance of women's contribution, indeed of the economic imperative to capitalise on their skills and capacities. The Government recognises that women's experiences, circumstances and expectations are central to the economic and social development of the Territory.

Encouraging a mix of economies is another step on the way to economic security. Business both large and small, government, and non-wage activities like volunteer services and household work, all have a role in the Territory's economic future. A diverse economy helps to cushion the tough times.

As at February 1992, there are 237 pastoral properties throughout the Territory, both large and small. In many cases women contribute to the book keeping and accounting needed to run the properties efficiently and keep them economically viable. Often women act as a sounding board for planning and management decisions and entertain many visitors. In some cases women are joint or outright owners of properties, but in many cases women work in businesses owned wholly or partly, by their spouse or partners. These women invest an average of 40 hours a week for the property or station in addition to performing the majority of domestic and family duties, including supervision of their childrens' education. As with other women who work in family small businesses they are not entitled to any of the fringe benefits received by other workers, such as unemployment benefits, parental leave or training programs, because they are married to the owners of the business in which they work. Few women working with their spouses are legal co-owners of the business.

The shift for women to self-sufficiency from economic dependence is occurring in the following fronts -

- moving in greater numbers within the paid workforce;
- assuming ownership and management of their own businesses;
- recognition is being gained for unpaid labour, such as working in the home, doing housework, as carers, or as volunteers;
- participation in family businesses is acknowledged more frequently; and
- income-support systems for women temporarily or permanently unable to generate an adequate level of income to provide the basic necessities of life are in place.

### **3.2 PAID LABOUR: PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE**

In May 1991, 26 300 females were employed as wage and salary earners in the Northern Territory, and accounted for 42.2% of all employed wage and salary earners. (4) The proportion of the female population which is working is the second highest in Australia, due largely to our more youthful population. In 1991, the female participation rate averaged 62% compared to 52% for Australia. (5)

Such statistics would seem to indicate that women are progressing rapidly toward economic self-sufficiency. However most jobs filled by women are still at the lowest-paid levels, are temporary, part-time, and unskilled.(6)

The following reasons are suggested for why married women are participating in increasing numbers in the paid work force:

- The high cost of living means that many couples need two incomes to secure their desired standard of living.

- Access to contraception has given women control over their fertility. With women having only one or two children, the time spent rearing small children is shorter, enabling women to embark on other activities.
- The dramatic rise in divorce has meant that many women are sole breadwinners for their children and need to be economically independent.
- Higher educational achievement for girls has resulted in increasing expectations and women looking for further challenges.
- The aspirations of the women's movement has brought about greater awareness of women's rights and a greater desire for independence. (7)

### **3.2.1 New Technologies**

Over the last decade technology and industrial engineering have reduced the market for, or entirely eliminated many employment positions (e.g., bank tellers), and created new types of work (e.g., word processing). Many new labour force entrants are women returning to the workplace, or entering for the first time, after caring for a family at home. The number of jobs calling for higher education or refined technical skills is increasing. Training and education must respond to the rapidly changing requirements of the workplace. Women and men can now anticipate two, three and even four career changes in a lifetime. Because women are often the last to be hired and the first to be let go if a country or company's economic situation or technological basis changes, women's job security is threatened.

While women have had some success in ascending the organizational ladder and penetrating new job sectors, there are still barriers to vertical and horizontal mobility in the work place. Inaccurate or restrictive job descriptions, job stereo-typing and prejudice, inadequate child care services, and the exclusion of women, either directly or indirectly, from certain kinds of work all are factors affecting women's economic self sufficiency. Aboriginal, immigrant and disabled women are severely disadvantaged in the workplace.

### 3.2.2 Gender Segregation in the Workforce

Australia has one of the most gender segregated workforces in the industrialised world. 51% of women work in only two occupational groups, clerks and sales people and personnel services. (8) "Women are more likely to be in low paid jobs, without recognised qualifications and training, and working on a part-time basis. Around 85% of women workers are concentrated in five main industries: community services (health, education, museum and library services), wholesale and retail trade, finance, property and business services, and recreation, personal and other services, which have historically employed a high proportion of women." (9)

The Australian paid work force also exhibits a high degree of horizontal sex segregation where both men and women work in the same occupation but where males occupy primary positions and women the less important, less rewarding positions.(10)

### 3.2.3 Earnings

In August 1991, the average weekly earnings of females in the Northern Territory at \$444.60 were the highest in Australia, and over 15% above the national average of \$384.10. The Northern Territory has the smallest gap between male and female earnings with females earning 71.8% of male average weekly earnings compared to 66.8% for Australia. (11) But it is estimated that the cost of living in the Northern Territory is 5.3% higher than the national average. The household expenditure review revealed that in 1988/89 the average weekly household expenditure was \$502.71, in comparison to \$529.19 in the Territory. (12)

The 1986 Census highlighted that as a proportion of all Australian families with dependent children, one parent families were most prevalent in the Northern Territory - 19% compared to a national average of 14.9%. Over 80% of one parent families were lone mother families, while the Northern Territory had the highest proportion of one parent families which were lone father families 18%. (13) In 1986,

over 60% of one parent families were in the lowest income quintile for all families with dependent children. (14)

### 3.3 STATUS OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Many of the best jobs held by women are in the public sector, where benefits such as superannuation are helping to reduce the wage gap. But the worldwide trend is for reducing the size of the public sector in favour of encouraging the private sector. Governments commitment to overall reduction of public sector employment both nationally and internationally, will affect women.

Within the Northern Territory Public Service in 1991, women were employed in 52% of all positions, being predominantly represented in lower and middle level administrative positions. There has been a significant increase in the number of women in the more senior levels since self-government in 1978. Currently, 14% of all executive levels in the service are held by women (15), which compares favourably to 12.6% of women who are in the Senior Executive Service of the Commonwealth Public Service. (16)

#### 3.3.1 Discrimination Provisions

The Northern Territory Public Service Act, Section 14 (3) precludes unjustified discrimination on the following grounds:

- . race
- . colour
- . descent
- . national or ethnic background
- . creed
- . sex
- . marital status
- . political conviction
- . security record

#### 3.3.2 Equal Opportunity Initiatives

The Office of Equal Opportunity, located within the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, promotes equal opportunity in employment and

in the delivery of goods and services in both the public and private sector.

To facilitate the policy of Equal Opportunity, the Public Service Commissioner has introduced a program of equal opportunity management planning throughout the public sector. Guidelines for departments and authorities for the development of Equal Opportunity Management Plans have been produced by the Office of Equal Opportunity. Four departments were involved in a pilot program as a forerunner to full implementation in the public sector. The number of departments and authorities currently developing similar programs increased significantly in the last six months of 1991.

During 1989, a survey was conducted of all employees in the Northern Territory Public Service and Statutory Authorities to provide benchmark data on issues related to equal opportunity principles and practices. This information is utilised by departments in the development of the equal opportunity management plans required by Government policy.

Research was carried out in 1991 into women's employment issues within the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory. The focus of the research was upon the problems encountered by the Commission in retaining female rangers in the service. The research found that direct and indirect discrimination significantly contributed to the attrition rate amongst female rangers. The report's recommendations have been accepted by management and will be the basis of an affirmative action strategy to be implemented by the Commission.

In 1984 the Government was the first in Australia to conduct "Women in Management" courses for women in middle management through the Public service Commissioners Office .

Since 1989 three major training initiatives designed to improve the opportunities for women in the workforce have been undertaken. "Management Skills for Women Programs" aim to improve career paths for women in management; "Women at Work Programs" for women in the AO1-AO5 levels are aimed at increasing confidence and



self esteem; "Women-New Horizons" is designed to enhance opportunities for women re-entering the workforce.

### **3.3.3 Aboriginal Women's Employment**

The demand for employment by Aboriginal women is steadily increasing. Women are making significant contributions to their communities through their involvement in teaching and health worker programs. However concepts of employment, careers and personal advancement are not easily compatible with traditional Aboriginal culture. These concepts are particularly irrelevant in those communities where little paid work is available, and where there is greater emphasis on the acquisition of skills contributing to the viability of the community as a whole. The employment and training division of the Department of Education provides employment training for Aboriginal people, based on needs identified by communities. The majority of courses requested by women are in the areas of arts and crafts, garment construction and clerical skills and small business management.

### **3.3.4 Sexual Harassment**

In 1988 sexual harassment guidelines were circulated to assist managers of departments and instrumentalities in the public service, to prevent and deal with cases of sexual harassment. The Office of Equal Opportunity provides seminars on elimination of sexual harassment for community, employer and employee groups and students in TAFE and secondary schools.

### **3.3.5 Superannuation**

Provisions under the Government and Public Authorities Superannuation Scheme are beneficial to women. The scheme is available to people in part-time employment, and given the preference often shown by women for part-time work, they are no longer disadvantaged by the scheme. In addition the portability provisions of the scheme allow former members to regain access to employer financed benefits, if they rejoin the scheme within 12 months. This is an advantage to women who have traditionally moved in and out of employment.

### **3.3.6 Maternity Leave and Parental Leave Provisions**

The particular needs of women in the workforce have been recognised and are being accommodated. For example, temporary interruptions for child-bearing and child-rearing (an average leave of three years) may be necessary. An employee of the Northern Territory Public Service is eligible for maternity leave provided that she has completed at least 12 months service prior to commencing leave. There are two types of maternity leave available depending on when the employee commenced. Both provide a mandatory period of twelve weeks paid leave. Both also provide that an employee may access accrued leave credits during that time.

If women are to be equal players in the labour force, the joint parenting responsibility of mothers and fathers must be reinforced. An eligible Northern Territory Public Servant may apply for parental leave which provides for a period of unpaid leave incorporating a mandatory period of twelve weeks and ending on the child's sixth birthday. Parental leave may also be used for adoption purposes. When both parents are eligible for parental leave, they may apply for alternating periods of leave.

### **3.3.7 Child Care**

Women need access to quality child care provided either in the community or at the work place. The Government has recognised the significant need for child care facilities and since 1978 has had an ongoing commitment to establishing child care centres in new subdivisions as they are developed. A Government subsidy of 20% of salary costs is provided to all child care centres. Occasional care is offered where possible, within the constraints of the Territory/Commonwealth funding framework. This enables women who are full time home makers with young children to have respite. Women who live in remote areas and travel to regional centres have the opportunity to take advantage of occasional care places.

During the strategy consultations, women made it clear that they regard the availability of sufficient, appropriate and affordable child care as essential to their ability to participate fully in the life of their communities, both within and outside the paid workforce. Whenever

the subject of child care was raised, there was an accompanying concern about the scarcity of places, and lack of choice as to type. In particular, women raised the need for child care facilities at educational institutions and in the workplace.

In some regional centres the issue raised was of the difficulties being encountered in training people to meet the requirement that child care workers be qualified from January 1992. This could mean that qualified people will have to be employed from outside the community in some centres. While appreciating the philosophy behind the new requirement, some women attributed the difficulty they were having locally in meeting the deadline to problems within the TAFE system.

Many also spoke of the prohibitive cost of child care. This often results in women choosing not to work, as the difference between salary and child care makes it uneconomic. High cost also means that women are prevented from undertaking a range of other activities in their communities. Further, they said that the 'backyard' child care was a cheaper alternative but did not always offer care of an appropriately high standard.

Other difficulties raised during the consultations were insufficient family day care places, lack of facilities for children under three, and lack of overnight child care which presented particular difficulties for shiftworkers. But the experience in some states where 24 hour child care facilities have been established for shiftworkers, is that this type of child care is not always utilised. Shiftworkers prefer to make their own family arrangements after 6.00pm, or to use Family Day Care which is readily available in the Territory.

In recent years a great deal of effort has been made by the Federal and some State governments in Australia to encourage employers to provide child care for their employees. The National Women's Consultative Council has recently published a discussion paper on Employer Sponsored Child Care, which looks at models which have evolved for employer provision, and analyse some of their key implications for employees, employers and the community in general. This type of provision of child care is discussed in "Framework for the

Future". The second part of the paper looks at what is known about the child care needs of shiftworkers and what has been provided and the difficulties which have arisen. (17)

### 3.4 WOMEN AS ENTREPRENEURS

An important area of economic growth is the increase of entrepreneurial enterprise among women. At the forefront of the rise in numbers of small businesses have been women initiating commercial ventures, often with little business training or experience and with little or no financial assistance. On closer examination entry into their own businesses may be because of unfair or unhappy experiences in the paid workforce. Some women in their own businesses must work exceptionally long hours for returns that are significantly lower than those of salaried workers.

Of the 2.5 million people working in small businesses in Australia in 1989-90, more than one million or 40% were women. In large businesses, women represent about 44% of total employment. (18) During 1989-90 it is estimated that there were about 736 000 people self-employed in Australia. Women comprise nearly one-third of all self-employed people. (19)

The number of Australian women in small businesses dispels the commonly held myth that women as a group are generally risk-avoiders rather than risk-takers. Major changes in the attitudes and systems of banks and other venture capitalists is necessary if the potential of this development is to be realised. Family law reforms are urgently required which will provide women with stronger collateral.

What is clear is that more research needs to be done on the position of women in the private sector and in particular women in small business in the Northern Territory.

### 3.5 MICRO-ECONOMIC REFORM

*"Much has been said about the need to reform industrial practice in Australia in order to make the country competitive with its trading partners. It is said that Australian industry is relatively inefficient, unproductive and unprofitable when compared with other countries that are competing for the same world*

markets.".. *"Little is spoken of the restrictive practices of our so-called trading partners or the impact of globalisation within multinational corporations. It is further asserted that the reasons for this relative ineffectiveness are structural - that is, they have to do with the way in which our industry is organised. It is not just that Australia has high wages, or short working weeks, or too many holidays, or too many benefits; though all of these may be contributory. The problem seems to be that the structures which we have used to organise our work effort are no longer working effectively. Now with the emphasis on restructuring the workplace, competing in terms of productivity and quality, the terms "award restructuring" and "enterprise bargaining" are the buzz words of the 90s ... but what do they mean and how can women benefit?"(20)*

### **3.5.1 Award Restructuring**

Essentially award restructuring means taking an existing industrial award and completely rewriting it to bring pay rates, working conditions, training requirements and career paths into line with industry's need for a workforce that is better trained, more efficient and able to adapt rapidly to technological and economic change.

### **3.5.2 Enterprise Bargaining**

Enterprise bargaining involves negotiations between management and unions at the workplace level rather than at a centralised national level. It relates to the organisation of work and employment conditions to meet the needs of particular enterprises and their workers. As presently framed, enterprise agreements produced must be consistent with the overall national wage policy and framework. A simple analogy is that Award Restructuring is the first step and Enterprise Bargaining is another stage in the process toward a new reformed workplace.

### **3.5.3 Benefits of Workplace Change**

The reality is that major workplace change is being embarked upon by companies for the following reasons -

- to give the companies a better chance to survive in a very difficult economic situation;

- to increase opportunities for profit, productivity and quality improvements;
- to improve competitiveness both in domestic and international markets;
- to give the opportunities for innovative approaches to work processes and patterns, shift structures and work practices and to address work and family issues;
- to enable companies to plan for better utilisation of capital investment;
- to open the door to gainsharing and development of other practices based on mutual trust between management and the workforce in the medium term; and
- to give companies the opportunity to link their affirmative action policy to workplace reform. This opens and develops the role of women in manufacturing. (21)

#### **3.5.4 Challenges for Management and benefits for women**

Of necessity now, negotiations are no longer the sole province of the Industrial Relations Commission. There is a need for better "teamwork" in management structures. Managers and shopfloor operators are responsible for understanding issues and taking action, instead of taking directions - they are leading. The speed with which moves need to be made and the broad impact of the changes mean that the breadth of knowledge is usually only held by managers and their workers.

For example management needs to take into account changes in the external environment such as increased participation of women in the workforce; the implications of dual-income families to work patterns; child care and the care of elderly members of families. It is the line managers who show an understanding of these emerging family issues. Line managers deal with the increasing emergence of multi-ethnic groups in our workforce. They are familiar with the need to shape the values and culture of an organisation in order that people

from diverse cultural backgrounds can be part of the new training and career paths under award restructuring.

*"As industry undergoes major restructuring and demographic changes restrict the supply of skilled workers, it is predicted that work patterns and better opportunities could benefit women in particular, because women represent a huge largely untapped resource of under-utilised skills and education." (22)*

The restructuring process requires the removal of traditional boundaries, training opportunities and the removal of traditional boundaries and barriers which previously excluded women.

At Self-Government, the industrial relation function was withheld from the Territory. This is an overall Commonwealth Government responsibility. Award restructuring, which affects Territory women, is being carried out by Territory employers and unions under the auspices of the Federal legislation and the Federal Industrial Relations Commission. On Statehood the Government will claim the power to determine the appropriate industrial relations system to be instituted.

Enterprise bargaining has the potential to introduce greater flexibility into the workplace in areas such as flexible working hours, part-time employment and job sharing. On the other hand, warnings have been expressed regarding the capacity of enterprise bargaining to protect conditions for women, particularly maternity or parental leave, part-time provisions, flexible working hours, child care and pay equity.

Vivian Griffin, Industrial Officer with the Queensland Nurses Union, warns,

*"I believe that the reality is that women do not have industrial strength in the workplace, and that therefore industrial tribunals represent the major industrial venue for economic equity for women. Further, that the current thrust for enterprise bargaining is a recipe for economic inequity for women workers."*

Women need training in confidence building and negotiating skills in order to represent themselves in negotiations. (23)

### 3.6 UNPAID LABOUR

Today the right of women to compete on equal terms with men in the labour market, is rarely questioned. But it is important to recognise the complex nature of women's involvement in paid work given that they continue to bear most responsibility for children, as Michael Bittman's work - "Juggling Time, How Australian Families Use Time" verifies. It raises many issues for families and those who would like to make it easier for women and men to successfully combine their jobs and their family responsibilities.

#### 3.6.1 Unpaid Labour In The Home

The Pilot Time Use Survey conducted in 1987 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on how householders spend their time showed that, regardless of income, education, social background, employment or age, women do more unpaid work than men. On average, women do approximately 36 hours a week of unpaid work, while men on average do less than half that amount. When a woman gets married she increases her unpaid work by almost 60%. On average, a new mother's hours of unpaid work increases by 91%, to nearly 56 hours a week. (24)

Despite the increasing use of dishwashers, microwave ovens and automatic washing machines, Australians spend about the same time in the kitchen and the laundry as they did in 1974. Shopping, child care and other house duties required more labour in 1987 than in 1974. (25) This unpaid work is in addition to work in the labour force, which is underpaid. Furthermore, these additional responsibilities in the home may, in fact, reduce the ability of women to secure higher paying jobs demanding longer hours.

All family members have a role to play in sharing the load of unpaid work in the home. Most workers have family responsibilities. How we balance and manage these responsibilities is crucial to us as individuals, and to our families, workplaces and community. Recognising the unpaid work done within families is an important step



in raising the status of women and men who work in the home. It also highlights the pressures women face especially in trying to combine paid work and family responsibilities. (26)

If we do not address the issue of women's double load, such pressure and stress will take its toll by affecting the quality of family life, women's health and well being, their employment opportunities and social choices and therefore the quality of life of our community as a whole.

### **3.6.2 Recognition for unpaid work**

As full-time carers and homemakers, women develop excellent management and negotiating skills, handle budgets and devise operationally efficient work models. Coupled with experience in the voluntary sector, many women exhibit skills and adaptability which are valued in the paid workforce. The difficulty is that these skills are rarely recognised by employers as they fail to credit unpaid experience. Women also generally fail to recognise these talents and experience as marketable skills and don't know how to sell them.

During the consultations many women pointed out the need for society and government to acknowledge the significant social role played by women as voluntary carers, as well as the considerable savings to the community. As one woman put it:

*These women (carers) put their lives on hold, and sometimes they're still on hold ten years later".*

This unpaid work, which is so important to families, and which underpins the economy, takes up a considerable amount of time and energy. As discussed Australians spend about the same number of hours on unpaid work as they do in paid work, and housework produces the equivalent of about half the official value of the national economy. Despite its significance, unpaid work in the household sector is not counted as part of the national economy. (27)

### 3.7 WOMEN AND POVERTY

A disturbing economic (and social) trend is the increasing number of women who are falling below a minimum acceptable standard of living - the so-called poverty line. Economic and social changes in the past 25 years have put enormous pressures on the middle class, with many members of society finding they are unable to provide the basic necessities of life for themselves and their dependents. These new poor join the ranks of those who have been poor, often for several generations. Unfortunately, the majority of the poverty-stricken are women, the phenomenon therefore has become known as the "feminisation of poverty". As discussed, families headed by women are more likely to be poor than families headed by men.

Changes in family composition, in particular an increase in the formation of sole parent families, is a trend that has been observed in almost all Western and Northern European countries, including the United Kingdom, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. (28) In Australia there has been an increase in the proportion of sole parents families from about 9% of all families with dependent children in the mid-1970's to 14.9% in 1986. (29) The 1986 Census states there were approximately 349 900 single parent families, of which 80% were headed by a woman. (30) The majority (almost 90%) were formed following a marriage or a marriage-like relationship, that is following separation, divorce or widowhood. In 1985 there were approximately 441 000 children in sole parent families reliant on social security. If children whose parents are in receipt of family income supplement are included, then nearly 855 000 children, almost one-fifth of dependent children are living in families reliant on social security or in receipt of incomes low enough to be eligible for family income supplement. (31)

The cycle of poverty keeps some women, particularly sole mothers, out of the workforce and living in a state of perpetual disadvantage. Unequal pay for work of equal value, lack of economic recognition for work done in the home, and marriage breakdown are only a few of the factors that perpetuate this situation. Another significant factor that can permanently affect a woman's economic position is the time and energy expended on child-bearing and child-rearing, which reduce the time available for paid work in the labour force.

Costs associated with goods and services, especially in the areas of housing, drugs and health care, give rise to further economic hardships. The marketplace fails to recognise the needs of women, often those who are least able to pay who are faced with higher prices on items such as food, health products, and transportation.

### **3.8 THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF MARRIAGE BREAKDOWN**

Marriage breakdown can cause irreversible economic disadvantage for a woman. Within one year of separation, a woman's household income usually plummets, while a man's disposable funds increase. However reform of matrimonial property law could contribute to the improvement of women's economic status.

#### **3.8.1 How Family Property Law could contribute to Equality Principles**

Elizabeth Evatt in the 1991 Anne Conlon Memorial Lecture "Valuing Women's Work" argues that Family Law can address two problems which have not been adequately dealt with in the economy or in the law. The first is to give proper value to women's unpaid work the second is to ensure that the impact of marriage on the financial independence and access to resources of each party is properly accounted for. (32)

#### **3.8.2 Tests of a fair and equal Law**

Justice Evatt argues that the Family Law Act be subjected to the following tests:

- it should recognise that the marriage relationship is a partnership, in which each party's contribution is of equal worth, and it should encourage and expect each party to accept equal responsibility for all aspects of their married life;
- it should displace the concept of dependence with principles which compensate for the effects of marriage on a person's financial status and standard of living;

- . it should ensure that parties share equally the provision they have made for future security; and
- . it should give clear guidance to the parties about their rights and obligations. (33)

### **3.8.3 Recognising Equality of Contribution**

The Family Law Act does not say how contributions of different kinds are to be weighed against each other, or indicate whether the homemaker's contribution should rank equally with financial contribution. Currently assessment of equality of the contribution of each spouse is left to the individual judge's discretion.

In 1987 the Law Reform Commission recommended that:

'a rule of equal sharing of all parties' property should be introduced as a starting point in the determination of their respective shares. The property would be valued at the time of division, and would include the value of a spouse's benefit in a superannuation scheme. The Court could depart from Equality where it was just to do so either because of past events or post-divorce circumstances.(34)

These issues are discussed in a lecture by Elizabeth Evatt former Chief Justice of The Family Law Court and currently the President of the Australian Law Reform Commission given in 1991 "Valuing Women's Work - Women, Equality and Family Law Reform.

## **4. THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK**

It is difficult to separate completely the social framework from the economic. Central to the economic and social development of the Territory are women. Since 1978 Government machinery has been established to assist policy development and service delivery to the following areas: health and well-being, information services, substance abuse - alcohol, education and retraining, housing and crisis accommodation, safety - personal freedom and freedom from all forms of violence, counselling services, women in remote areas and special needs groups including Aboriginal Women and Women from Non-English Speaking backgrounds (NESB). These issues are discussed within the social framework.

### **4.1 WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE NINETIES**

Today the traditional family of one working parent (the father), one parent at home full time (the mother) and their children living at home is now the case in only 30% of homes with dependent children in Australia. (34) In addition to this family type are the single-parent family, the blended family, childless couples, singles or shared singles, multi-generation extended families with aged parents at home and numerous other combinations. The increase in married women's participation in the workforce has meant an increase in two-earner families and has brought many other changes to family lifestyle.

Policy makers must be aware of the changing life patterns of women as they relate to the family unit, and social programs must recognise the diversity of family models to ensure equal treatment of women. Often there is a "reality gap", the difference between services provided by traditional institutions and the real life requirements of women. Women are more likely to be the clients of Commonwealth-State funded programs since they are the largest consumers of health, housing and community services.

### **4.2 GOVERNMENT MACHINERY**

As discussed the Country Liberal Government's approach is that all policies are developed with an awareness of their impact on women and families. To that end, the Government has established the following:

- The Office of Women's Affairs, located within the Department of the Chief Minister, was established in 1983. The role of the office is to comment and advise the Chief Minister and Cabinet on all policy matters which are of particular relevance to women. The Office also carries out research, develops policy and co-ordinates and monitors the implementation of policy.
- Women's Information Centres were established in Darwin and Alice Springs in 1984 within the Department of Health and Community Services. These services provide a confidential service to women and to serve as a contact point for ideas and concerns. An ERC decision is to provide the women's information component through the new integrated community health centre model. Discussion of the proposed service is in the Women's Health Policy Document.
- The Women's Advisory Council was established in 1983 to advise the Chief Minister and Government on issues of importance to women. The community based council consists of 14 women who represent the regional spread and ethnic make up of the Territory population. Members are appointed for a two year term, and advertisements are placed in the press inviting women to apply for appointment. The Council undertakes a comprehensive work program including regional meetings and consultations, preparation of submissions, a research program and produces publications for women.
- The Office of Equal Opportunity is located within the Public Service Commissioner's Office. It promotes equal opportunity in employment and in the delivery of and access to services in both the public and private spheres. The work of this office has been discussed earlier in this paper under Equal Opportunity Initiatives.

### **4.3 HEALTH AND WELL BEING**

Territory women along with their Australian counterparts, on average, live longer and healthier lives than those of previous generations, due to developments in medical science, improved nutrition and hygiene, and other factors. It is recognised that this is not the case for Aboriginal women whose health problems are discussed later in this framework. At the same time

modern advances have created new health problems, for example - substance abuse brought on by stress. A number of factors combine to increase the stress level on women in a stress-ridden society, thereby jeopardizing their emotional health. Social isolation and lack of recognition of domestic and other labour performed can impose a severe psychological burden on women in and outside the home.

#### **4.3.1 Women's Health Policy**

Health is a major area of importance to women and their families. The Government recognises the significance of health services for the well-being of the community at large. Community Health Centres in the Territory offer many programs aimed at promoting the health and well being of Territory women. Major issues being addressed include:

- . reproductive health
- . conditions associated with ageing
- . mental health
- . preventive health strategies
- . violence against women
- . occupational health and safety
- . food and nutrition information
- . chronic illness and pain
- . drug use

In February 1990, a working party was established by the Minister for Health and Community Services to develop a women's health services discussion paper. This paper was part of the development of a Northern Territory Women's Health Policy.

The Women's Health Policy, adopted by the Government in February 1992, is designed "To improve significantly the health and well being of Northern Territory women by identifying and responding to their specific and unique health needs."

During the strategy consultations a number of women called for the establishment of a separate unit within the Department of Health and Community Services to oversee the policy. Many expressed a wish to see the needs of Aboriginal women fully addressed within the

Women's Health Policy, including the realisation of the Congress Alukra birthing centre. These matters are addressed in the Policy.

#### **4.3.2 Health Funding Cuts**

During the strategy consultations women in all Territory centres were anxious about the possible reduction in health services due to funding cuts. Concern was expressed that some programs may be under threat as a result of the proposed new Commonwealth-State financial arrangements; in particular the Home and Community Care program where funds allocated for respite care were seen as very limited.

#### **4.3.3 Respite Care**

Women questioned whether funding cuts would affect the provision of respite care, for example, in the home care area. Some centres identified a significant reduction in hours available for meal provision and home nursing.

Women pointed to the increasing need for family members, invariably women, to take on the job of full-time carer for a frail aged or disabled family member. In America this care is called eldercare and is discussed in "Framework for the Future". Respite care was regarded as a critical necessity, but it was reported that there was a shortage of respite care facilities all over the Territory. The need was also identified for emergency relief for carers where a personal crisis such as illness prevents them from temporarily providing care.

The point was made, that in the course of assessing respite care, an examination should be carried out into the types and appropriateness of respite care available and required, as the needs of those cared for can vary greatly. In these discussions a need was indicated for accessible information about all aspects of voluntary and respite care.

Aboriginal women expressed the problem of care of their aged in communities where there are no resident health workers. The women at Bringun, for example, said the weekly health service was insufficient for the care of some elderly residents. This community, and others, would like to see the establishment of an aged care program, but lack



the resources to undertake the task unaided. Other communities have successful programs for the aged already in place.

The issue of recognition of the significant role played by women as voluntary carers has already been discussed in this paper. Provision of respite care is an area which could receive more attention.

#### **4.3.4 Cost of Travel for Medical Treatment**

The strategy consultations revealed that for women living in remote areas, travel to major Territory centres for medical treatment, and accommodation costs associated with the treatment, were identified as a significant burden. Many said the Patients Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS) specifically as requiring re-examination as to its effectiveness as a cost-relief system. Others raised the lack of low cost accommodation in the Territory centres where treatment of isolated patients was regularly carried out. It was pointed out that in many cases where women or children were the patients, they had to take all their children with them because there was no one to look after their children at home. This needs to be taken into account by the health authorities.

#### **4.3.5 Gynaecological and Obstetric Care**

Again in strategy consultations reproductive health was an issue for women who live in remote areas in particular. They do not have, or have limited, access to medical specialists. Many pointed out that in their isolated communities there are only male doctors, and that some are neglecting their reproductive health through a reluctance to consult a male doctor for gynaecological procedures. This was expressed most strongly by Aboriginal women.

Realising the difficulty of attracting doctors to isolated and remote communities, some women asked why nursing sisters attached to medical practices should not be trained to undertake procedures such as cervical smears and breast examination.

#### **4.3.6 Plan for prevention of cervical cancer**

The Australian Health Ministers had accepted the recommendations of the Cervical Cancer Screening Evaluation Steering Committee -

"Cervical Cancer Screening in Australia : options for change". The National policy provides guidelines on which women need screening and how often pap smears should be taken:

- Routine screening with pap smears every 2 years for women who have no symptoms or history suggestive of cervical pathology.
- All women who have been sexually active to have pap smears.

To be effective in preventing cervical cancer such a program must contain:

- improved strategies to ensure all women have regular Pap smears (especially elderly, ethnic and Aboriginal women);
- comprehensive reminder systems for women who are due for pap smears; and
- quality assurance measures at all stages in screening for the prevention of cervical cancer and management of women with abnormal smears.

The Northern Territory has the highest incidence of cervical cancer in Australia. A Working Group has been established in Darwin by the Department of Health and Community Services to develop a plan and strategy for implementing the National Cervical Cancer Prevention Program. A similar group is to be established in Alice Springs to work in conjunction with the Darwin group. There will be wide consultations with community groups on the formulation of this plan.

#### **4.3.7 Aboriginal Women's Health and Well being**

The strategy consultations revealed that Aboriginal women on the communities are very conscious of the need to monitor their health and in particular their reproductive health. They are aware of the high incidence in Aboriginal women of deaths from cervical cancer. Some were extremely shy about this subject and had difficulty taking the discussions any further. Others were happy to talk about it. While

acknowledging the necessity for screening, the women said there was still considerable resistance to screening procedures in some areas, because of cultural traditions relating to "women's business".

They stressed the need for sensitivity, and said knowledge of women's business was imperative to health practitioners carrying out screening programs. Further, screening and examination must be carried out by female doctors, nurses and health workers. It was also felt to be important that adequate notice of screening programs be given to communities, so that there would be time for discussion among the women's groups to prepare them before the health workers arrived. The women also stressed that funding for a comprehensive and ongoing screening program was essential.

#### **4.3.8 Mammography Screening**

Breast cancer is a major women's health issue in Australia. Australian statistics show that more than 5 000 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed each year and one in 15 women will develop the disease before the age of 75. Each year over 2 300 Australian women die from it. (36)

In March 1990 the Government was given a grant of \$400 000 from the Commonwealth to purchase a mobile mammography unit. In accepting the money, the Government requested flexibility in interpreting the guidelines for providing services because of its unique geographic and demographic characteristics. A grant of \$40 000 was offered by the Commonwealth to the Government to undertake a feasibility study on the introduction of mammography screening in the Northern Territory. The Feasibility Study on Northern Territory Participation in the National Program For Early Detection of Breast Cancer was released in September 1991. (37)

This study discusses the fact that while breast cancer is a major women's health issue in Australia, the Northern Territory has low incidence compared with the rest of Australia. However it is suspected that the low incidence of breast cancer for non-Aboriginal women in the Territory may be artificially low due to women travelling interstate for investigation and treatment. The life expectancy of Aboriginal

women (20 years less than non-Aborigines) denies them the opportunity of reaching the age of high risk for breast cancer. For Aboriginal women, deaths from cervical and lung cancer are more than twice that of breast cancer. (38)

Mammography is used as a diagnostic aid and also as a screening tool. Diagnostic mammography, rebatable under Medicare when referred by a medical practitioner, is available in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine. There is a significant difference in the concept and philosophy of diagnostic and screening mammography. Diagnostic mammography is used for women with symptoms of breast disease or family history of breast cancer and is one component of the diagnostic process. On the other hand screening mammography is for healthy women without symptoms who are invited by health professionals to undergo a screening test. Screening mammography demands extremely high standards in every respect of the process, particularly with respect to staff expertise. Without an expert team there is potential to cause more harm than benefit. (39)

Studies overseas have shown that after five years of screening with mammography, breast cancer deaths can be reduced by approximately 30% in women aged 50 years and over. As yet there is no evidence of benefit to women under 50 years of age. While mammography has the ability to detect non-palpable breast cancers, it does not detect all non-palpable breast cancers.

Critical issues to be addressed before introducing mammography screening in the Northern Territory include: the number of women in the target age group and their geographic distribution; skills required of staff to implement the program; and the appropriateness and acceptability of the program to the women for whom it is intended. In the Territory, the total number of women eligible to participate in the program is less than in most of the Australian pilot programs. Economies of scale could not be achieved; furthermore, the dispersion of the population over such a vast area would substantially increase costs. The Territory does not currently have staff with the specialised expertise to implement mammography screening so investment in professional education and recruitment would be needed. While

mammography screening may be appropriate for non-Aboriginal women, other health issues are of much higher priority for Aboriginal women.(40)

The government has received responses to this study from women and women's groups. The strategy consultations were carried out before this study, and understandably there was considerable confusion expressed about the status of the mammography screening program, about which many women had heard but few had information. Nonetheless, women identified the need for regular screening as a cornerstone of preventive health care and supported a program which would make this possible.

Because of the complex issues related to introducing a mammography screening program which is suitable for the unique circumstances in the Territory, new options are under consideration, including a two pronged approach to deal with the differing requirements of the urban and rural populations. The possibility of contracting the services of either the Queensland or Western Australian Breast Screening Programs, to provide co-ordination unit services and staff for a program for urban women is being looked at.

For rural and remote women, the possibility of combining the breast and cervical programs into a general women's health education-sceneing program is an option.

#### **4.3.9 Birthing Services Review**

In 1991 the Women's Advisory Council prepared a major submission on Birthing services in the Territory. As a result, a Review of Birthing Services in Northern Territory public and private hospital and non-hospital institutions is to be carried out early in 1992. The Review will take into account the needs of groups requiring special consideration, for example, Aboriginal, NESB women, adolescents, women residing in remote areas and economically disadvantaged women.

A discussion paper will be prepared on issues associated with current practices relating to birthing, models of service delivery, the role of service providers, financial and legislative issues. This will be

circulated widely throughout the Territory for response and a comprehensive program of consultations is planned. Submissions will be forwarded to a task force and recommendations will be prioritised in a final report which will develop strategies for implementation.

#### 4.4 INFORMATION SERVICES

One of the most consistent threads running through all the consultations was the call for more high quality information services. Women frequently spoke of the frustration and expense of having to make numerous telephone or personal calls to a series of agencies to get the information they wanted. Time and again, women said they needed a centralised, one-stop information service.

One community called for women to 'closely guard' information services for women such as the Women's Information Centres, since, as one put it: Information is power.

Many said of their communities that what was needed was not just information about services, but about community activities and the community itself. A woman in a rural community said:

*"There are probably women here who need services our community can provide, but we don't know about them and if they - as opposed to their husbands - haven't got a car, we never see them."*

As mentioned earlier, the Darwin consultation was the only one to post-date the ERC report. Darwin women at that consultation strongly opposed the closure of the Women's Information Centre.

The Darwin and Alice Springs Women's Information Centres have provided a co-ordinated service delivery to assist Territory women to access appropriate information, referral, support and counselling. These centres have also offered seminars, self-help groups, meeting space and library materials on a variety of relevant issues. Services will continue to be available through integrated community health centres which will provide women's information.

Women's Information Resource staff will provide in-service education to service deliverers, rural nurses and other agencies to ensure that information is given accurately and non-judgementally. They will maintain a relevant, comprehensive and accurate information system and collect statistics to assist in the development and evaluation of women's services.

Rural and isolated women's access to information will be further improved with the re-introduction of Medmail, a health promotion and education service for women in remote areas. (41)

Information technology will be an important method for addressing the issues of productivity and innovation which are central to micro-economic reform. Women's role in the information society is discussed in the framework for the future.

The Government funds the publication of a Women's Resource Directory to promote access by women to services and facilities which are available. The Directory which is currently being updated and reprinted through the Office of Women's Affairs provides particular support to women and families new to the Territory.

#### **4.5 SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Alcohol was raised as a matter of critical concern by all groups of Aboriginal women. The women of Alice Springs also regarded alcohol as a major problem in their community. Many believed that there are an excessive number of liquor outlets in the town. Some believed that there is a correlation between easy availability of alcohol and consumption, and called for a reduction in the number of outlets.

A number of women made a connection between public drunkenness and safety for women and as it related to the reputation of the town. The need for alcohol rehabilitation facilities was widely regarded as essential to the improvement of alcohol problems in a community. Funding for rehabilitation and also for co-dependency programs was regarded as vital.

The Alice Springs women also passed the following unanimous recommendations:

- that alcohol education be introduced into the education system; and
- that women be represented on the Northern Territory Liquor Commission.

In November 1991 the Chief Minister announced the government was introducing a wide ranging program of alcohol reform. The target is to bring levels of alcohol-related harm in the Territory back to the national average by the year 2000, reducing alcohol-related road fatalities by 43%, other alcohol-related accidents by 56%, alcohol-related crime by 54% and per capita alcohol consumption by 40%. He released a three prong strategy to reduce the level of alcohol abuse, educating the population on the dangers of alcohol, toughening controls on availability, and expanding treatment and rehabilitation services. (42)

#### **4.6 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The socio-economic status of families and households is largely dependent on the educational level, labour force status and income of their members. Education is an important indicator of social and economic status. Like the rest of Australia, the majority of females in the Northern Territory left school between the ages of 15 and 16 years. But the school leaving age is now rising, given an increasing proportion of the population completing year 12. This has more than doubled to almost 60%. Of the proportion of the Northern Territory population who hold formal qualifications, 40.6% of those with a tertiary degree, 56.5% of those with a diploma, and 54.5% of those with other qualifications are female. (43)

The implementation of the four objectives set out in the National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools is ongoing in nature. The two objectives of raising awareness of the needs of girls, and development of gender inclusive curriculum are currently a major focus. The remaining objectives of equitable resource allocation and provision of a supportive school environment, need to be further addressed if equal access to education is to occur in practice for all girls, at all levels of schooling.



#### **4.6.1 Core Curriculum**

The introduction of Core Curriculum in years 1 to 10 has made a significant contribution to the quality of education offered in Northern Territory schools. In time it is anticipated that the influence of Core Curriculum will contribute to the breaking down of stereotyped attitudes and traditional barriers regarding "male and female" subjects and careers. This should broaden employment opportunities for young women and enhance their participation in society.

Core subjects which are taken by all primary school students include English, Maths, Science, Social and Cultural Education, Visual and Performing Arts and Health and Physical Education. All junior secondary level students must also study Home Economics, Technical Studies, Commercial studies and Career Education. Computer Education is also taught across the curriculum.

#### **4.6.2 Career options for women**

Since 1985 a number of programs have been Government funded to encourage girls and their parents to make informed decisions about their career options. Such programs have included full day seminars related to careers in the Trades, Science, Technology and Business. Teacher inservice courses with a focus on gender issues, particularly in respect to the National Policy for the Education of Girls, have also contributed to raising school and community awareness of girls educational needs. The University has provided career counselling to young women in high schools, the general community and enrolled students for a number of years.

#### **4.6.3 Chief Ministers Task Force on the Education of Girls**

In 1986 the Chief Minister's Task Force for the Education of Girls was established to encourage increased co-ordination between relevant Departments and Agencies for the successful implementation of initiatives related to education and training. The Task Force which was in existence for two years produced posters and community displays as well as providing policy advice to the Government.

#### **4.6.4 Tradeswomen on the Move**

During 1990 the Northern Territory Government and the Commonwealth Government co-funded "Tradeswomen on the Move" as a 6 months pilot project. The aim of the project, which operates in Darwin and Alice Springs regions, is to encourage girls to consider non traditional trade career paths and to promote a supportive environment for girls who choose this option. This program involves girls in years seven and eight, including those from distance education, urban Aboriginal and multicultural settings. The program employs trades women from non-traditional areas to run school-based workshops, industry forums and wider community activities. The program for 1992 has commenced and is focusing on girls and tradeswomen in remote areas of all regions of the Northern Territory.

#### **4.6.5. Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority**

The Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority Act has provided for the establishment of the Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority. This legislation impacts on the provision of education services for men and women in the Northern Territory.

The Education Act is non discriminatory in nature and is reinforced by Education Department policies, which are formulated to provide equal access to education. The Authority has four councils established which target specific issues.

The Employment and Training Needs Planning Advisory Council, created under Section 18(b) of the legislation, has a major role in planning training and employment opportunities for groups under represented in employment and in particular women. In addition, a Women's Planning Needs Advisory Committee, representative of private and public sector interests had been established to provide information specific to women's employment and training needs.

#### **4.6.6 TAFE**

A National Plan of Action for Women in TAFE has been developed and was launched in 1991. This plan is designed to increase women's access to and participation in all TAFE programs. The Northern Territory Women and TAFE Committee developed a Northern Territory

Strategy for implementation of the National Plan, which was accepted by the TAFE Advisory Council in early 1991. The Women in TAFE Committee now operates as an informal network, not a committee.

A current major policy document is the National Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Report (Finn) which has significant implications for both the secondary and post compulsory education and training systems. The VEETAC Women's Standing Committee in its formal response to this report in principle, identified a number of issues of particular relevance to girls and women.

Not surprisingly the TAFE system is widely regarded by women consulted as the chief and (in principle) most accessible means of training and retraining for women. This was felt to apply particularly to those wishing to enter or re-enter the paid workforce. As one woman put it:

*"Training is one of the most important strategies for women's economic independence."*

It was clear, however, that women now see a number of barriers in the way of accessing TAFE courses. The most often-named of those barriers was cost. As TAFE plays such a significant role to acquire or upgrade skills, it was felt that women, as an economically disadvantaged group, were particularly disadvantaged by the introduction of a user-pays system. Associated costs such as child care, books and transport were already regarded as onerous. Most believed that fees will make TAFE courses out of the question because other necessities for family life are seen as a higher priority.

Transport was seen as a difficulty, either because of isolation or because of poor public transport. Isolated women also felt disadvantaged by the TAFE system. Where colleges existed in isolated areas, it was remarked that courses tended to be limited either to trade or recreational courses, or both. It was felt that clerical or other skills training areas of interest to women were not regarded as a priority.

It was also believed that it was very important that there be short courses for women returning to work, in self-esteem and social work skills. It was said that for many entering or re-entering the paid workforce at a mature age can be extremely intimidating, and that training should specifically address that issue.

#### **4.6.7 Northern Territory University**

The Northern Territory University was established in 1989, and in 1991 there were 2 153 full-time students, 4 628 part-time students and 476 external students enrolled in higher education and TAFE courses. The Equal Opportunity Unit established advises management on equal opportunity issues and monitors the University's progress. The University has an Affirmative Action Management Plan and is reviewing all policy to eliminate any barriers to the participation of women in all facets of employment and education at the University. Women held 31% of the academic positions in 1991. The University has child care centres on both campuses which caters for children of staff and students.

#### **4.6.8 Northern Territory Women's Fellowship Award**

The Government sponsors the Northern Territory Women's Fellowship Award, granted annually for interstate or overseas travel to undertake study, research or work experience on a project or in an area which will make a contribution to improving the status of women in the Northern Territory.

#### **4.6.9 Aboriginal Women and Education**

The Territory's unique Bachelor College has won national recognition for its remote area Teacher Education Program, and the number of aboriginal teacher education graduates has increased from 5 to 20 a year.

Aboriginal women consulted identified a range of problems associated with education. These related mostly to their children, rather than to themselves. They regard it as critical that the children receive the best education possible, but see a number of barriers. They see difficulties facing children who wish to proceed to high school. In the remote areas, children who have to live away from their communities in major

centres are subject to a number of pressures that make successful study practices difficult. Additional pressures occur when young people are away at times when they should be undertaking a significant cultural role on their communities. For all these reasons, the women would like to see high schools in some of the remote centres, such as Yulara, and culturally-appropriate programs developed within the correspondence school system.

As far as adult education is concerned, the one area of need identified was training in basic organisational and administrative skills, in order that they may run their own councils and other agencies as efficiently as possible. In particular, communities that specialise in production of arts and crafts expressed the need for courses relating to small business management.

The Government continues to participate in joint funding with the Commonwealth of 37 Aboriginal Women's Resource Centres. Such centres play an important part in the life of the community, sometimes being used as a meeting place or a community centre to provide meals, child care, aged care and recreational and educational activities.

#### **4.6.10 School Of The Air**

As well as its educational function, the School of the Air provides women in remote areas a support network to those participating and supervising. It was pointed out that the School of the Air currently holds conferences for mothers and governesses of students, but that attendance can be a financial burden. Women involved with School suggested that funding be provided to help relieve this burden, and to make some course of study available to isolated women.

### **4.7 HOUSING AND CRISIS ACCOMMODATION**

Underpinning the many discussions that took place about housing was the tacit acknowledgement that women often have specific and different housing needs that have to be specifically and differently addressed. Many are of low or dependent income status and are therefore disadvantaged in the housing market. Many women, often with children, are displaced from their homes

through violence or other trauma and are faced with finding crisis accommodation and then new, long-term housing with limited resources.

In some areas the housing situation was described as critical. The crisis referred largely to the waiting time for public housing (described in some cases as 'indefinite'), and also for private rental accommodation. In one instance, it was reported that the average stay at the town's refuge was five to six months, and that there were numerous cases of women and children camping on friends' floors. They were concerned about 'out-of-turn' housing allocations.

Women everywhere cited crisis accommodation as a crucial issue. Where a refuge existed, it was invariably described as stretched beyond capacity. In centres with no refuge, the need for one was seen as essential. Everywhere, funding for refuges was regarded as a matter of urgency.

Cost was also seen as a major factor, particularly for women forced to seek accommodation in the private rental market. Rental prices were seen as high in relation to the standard of accommodation offered. Although women can apply for rent relief to offset accommodation costs in the private rental market.

The women of Yulara and Jabiru also raised difficulties that relate to the singular nature of their communities, where there is a direct relationship between the major employer and the available housing. For these women, the adequacy of and criteria for housing were issues, as well as the lack of crisis accommodation where in some instances, they said there were houses allocated for other purposes standing empty.

Yet as a group, women benefit from the Northern Territory Public Housing Program. Currently, 38.6% of public housing tenancies in the Northern Territory are held by women, either with or without dependents, as sole tenants. In addition, 40.5% of those in receipt of rent relief whilst awaiting public housing are single women with or without dependents. (44)

The Northern Territory Government provides home ownership assistance equitably to women and men. Assistance in the way of low interest loans is provided through the Home North portfolio of schemes. Since its introduction

in September 1991, 236 applications to purchase homes have been made. This includes 61 single women or just over 26% of all applicants. Of particular note is the Government's policy of waiving its requirement that applicants for home purchase assistance must not have previously owned a dwelling in the Northern Territory in cases of marital breakdown. In this situation further and additional assistance is available to separated and divorced persons to re-establish a home. (45)

Crisis accommodation is fully funded under the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement. In addition to six refuges throughout the Northern Territory, new initiatives include an Aboriginal women's shelter in Darwin's northern suburbs, and new premises for the Alice Springs refuge. Four flats have been provided as half-way house accommodation for two of the women's refuges. In addition, four three-bedroom houses have been approved in principle as short to medium term accommodation for women and their children who have escaped domestic violence.

Common to all women in Aboriginal communities was a desire for adequate and appropriate housing. Many said that the houses that had been built were quite inappropriate, and that this contributed to the poor maintenance record on some communities.

The smaller and more remote communities do not have access to the Homemaker Service which provides training in essential skills relating to European-style dwellings. It is believed that the housing situation would be greatly ameliorated if their women's committees or resource centres were able to provide this service on the communities. At present only very large organisations such as Tangentyere are funded to provide the Homemaker program.

The Commonwealth State Women's Housing Issues Working Party has undertaken a national project to assess the provision of public housing.

#### **4.8 SAFETY, PERSONAL FREEDOM AND FREEDOM FROM ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE**

The trend of violence against women, either in fact or in pornographic representation, creates a general climate of fear among women. Women's

personal freedom is constantly restricted by historical barriers, which go far beyond issues of choice in reproduction. Values and attitudes in matters of personal behaviour and public expression are reinforced by biased research that does not acknowledge the special nature of women, or how they might differ from men in philosophy and action. At the individual level women must be able to control their own destinies. They must be able to secure their own physical safety, and be assured of equality in exercising personal freedom in all aspects of their lives.

During consultations the vulnerability of women to violent assault, including sexual assault, emerged as a major concern throughout the Territory. Many expressed their sadness at no longer feeling able to walk about their town in safety. While most acknowledged that major attitudinal and societal changes need to take place before this situation improves, a number suggested that women take short-term measures themselves, such as undertaking self-defence courses. Others felt that such solutions, while practical, perpetuated the tendency of women to take responsibility for the unacceptable behaviour of others.

#### **4.9 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Major legislative reforms in domestic violence introduced by the Government are outlined in the legal framework. This innovative legislation is unique in Australia and a comprehensive education program has been introduced by the Government. In 1989 a three month public awareness campaign was launched throughout Territory media outlets. Government funds have been allocated to the provision of a post-crisis counselling service, as well as training seminars for counsellors working in regional areas. Pamphlets on the new legislation have been printed and distributed in 8 community languages - Vietnamese, Greek, Italian, Indonesian, Portuguese, Chinese, Talalog (Philipino) and Thai.

The Women's Advisory Council produced a video "It's a Crime" on Domestic Violence, explaining the new legislation. An informative package was designed to accompany the video. Both were widely circulated throughout the Territory as part of the community education campaign. In 1990 a Domestic Violence Task Force was convened by the Office of Women's Affairs to monitor the implementation of the domestic violence legislation. The



task force had a core of interested parties who had been involved in the development of the Domestic Violence legislation, including representatives from voluntary and statutory agencies. The Chief Minister in a statement to the press encouraged people to come forward with their comments on the effectiveness of the legislation during its first 12 months of operation. The following issues were considered:

- The effectiveness of the new legislative provisions and services provided by Government departments and agencies in preventing domestic violence and in protecting family members affected by domestic violence.
- The Government's domestic violence education program, with particular reference to the public education focus of the national three year program.
- Establishment of a data base and indicators relevant to evaluation of the domestic violence program.
- Feedback from individual women regarding their experiences, positive and negative, with the legislation and/or Court system, to ascertain whether the legislation provided sufficient protection for women affected by domestic violence.
- Educating participants in the legal system regarding the needs of women seeking legislative/Court intervention into their domestic violence situations, for example, in the first instance, magistrates and then other members of the judiciary.
- Development of training and support programs for service-delivery providers in the area of domestic violence e.g. refuge workers, counsellors, courthouse staff, police etc.

A report with the findings and recommendations of this task force will be released during 1992.

#### **4.9.1 Violence and Aboriginal Women**

It should be noted that the new legislation covers spouses under Aboriginal law. Aboriginal strategies for enforcement of Orders to

Keep the Peace have been developed. These groups are collating statistical data over a 12 month period to evaluate the effectiveness of the legislation. The Aboriginal Project Officer in the Office of Women's Affairs regularly visits Aboriginal Communities and, with the help of a locally-produced video, discusses the issues of "Family Fighting" - the Aboriginal description of domestic violence.

A special study by Ms Audrey Bolger was commissioned by the Northern Territory Police through the North Australian Research Unit, to look at the effect of the domestic violence legislation on the lives of Aboriginal women. This comprehensive study released in 1990, covered the entire Northern Territory and focussed on the needs of remote as well as urban areas. Issues raised by this report continue to be addressed in a positive way by the Northern Territory Police.

#### **4.9.2 Family Violence and Alcohol**

Not surprisingly the consultations revealed that one of the strongest messages from Aboriginal women about violence is that they are no longer prepared to put up with it. For too long, they say, they have accepted beatings as their lot, but no more. In particular, they are not prepared to accept the spurious excuse of 'culturally-inherent' violence as a reason for systematic bashings.

Aboriginal women draw a direct correlation between excessive alcohol consumption and family violence, and therefore see the solutions as interconnected. They said communities as a whole, and in particular the women, are committed to stopping violence. Communities now acknowledge the problem, and are accepting responsibility for it. All communities face difficulties with alcohol and violence to varying degrees. Even on dry communities, alcohol is often consumed away from the community, and drinkers return to their families drunk. Regardless of the extent of the problem on individual communities, however, all are endeavouring to address the problem directly, some by setting up programs to deal with alcohol abuse.

Communities wish to use their own laws to deal with these problems, but feel both Aboriginal and European law can complement each other effectively. In the Daly region, for example, the police officer has

begun sessions, at the request of the community, on family violence and the relevant legislation.

The women feel that there is more willingness on communities to talk openly about this subject, and that this is a major part of the struggle to combat it. Nonetheless, they feel there is a need for greater education about the domestic violence legislation, and for more resources to be made available for alcohol (and drug) dependency programs.

#### **4.9.3 Violence and non-Aboriginal Women**

The substance of women's concerns about domestic violence revealed during the consultation process were related largely to the administration of the domestic violence legislation. Many said that they had welcomed the new legislation, but were increasingly disillusioned by its apparent ineffectiveness:

*"Basically, nothing has changed."*

This comment from an Alice Springs woman encapsulates the disappointment expressed.

In particular, women reported that police were tending not to avail themselves of the 'ouster' provision, but were adhering to the traditional solution of removing women and sometimes children from the family home, leaving the perpetrator in possession. Comments were also made about the level of police sensitivity in these circumstances.

A number said they had realised there would be a settling-in period for police after the introduction of the new legislation, but that this should now be over. The women called for further and more intensive police training, with particular emphasis on the practical implications of enforcing the legislation. They also stressed that it was vital that police understood the dynamics of violent relationships, saying that this understanding would greatly assist the way police were able to deal with both survivors and perpetrators.

#### **4.9.4 Police Training**

Recruits receive 20 one hour periods of training in relation to domestic violence. Of this, 12 periods consist of theory which includes the causes and nature of domestic violence, the behaviour of people in crisis situations, relevant legislation, solutions to the problem and police procedures for handling such situations. The remaining periods of training are utilised by providing practical situations using local actors in role-plays to enable recruits to demonstrate their ability to handle domestic violence problems.

In-service training seminars are conducted as required to provide an update for operational personnel. Police aides have recently received a one-day training program, which consisted of a theory and practical segment. It is planned to expand this in future training programs.

#### **4.9.5 Programs for violent men.**

Mental health services in Darwin operate a special program for sexual offenders which has been in existence for 12 months. There is ongoing review of this program. Face to face counselling for violent men is offered by Crisis Line.

### **4.10 COUNSELLING SERVICES**

Counselling is provided by Welfare Offices located in all urban centres within the Northern Territory. Remote area teams include welfare officers who counsel in domestic violence situations. Within welfare services, Aboriginal community workers are employed and interpreters used as required. The Alice Springs Centres provides information and advice to women and Women's Shelters also provide information and advice in domestic crisis. Counselling is offered through organisations such as Crisis Line in Darwin and Alice Springs, Marriage Guidance, Family Support Workers, Employees Assistance Scheme, Family Court Counselling, social workers within the Department of Health and Community Services, including the Sexual Assault Referral Centres, church organisations and a range of ethnic welfare workers who are attached to ethnic organisations. Private psychologists offer a range of counselling services throughout the Territory.

Despite these services, throughout the strategy consultations a need was identified for the establishment of, or improvement to, counselling services in communities all over the Territory. Once again, women in isolated and remote communities in particular felt the need for readily accessible, quality counselling. They pointed out the irony of communities in most need of counselling being least well served.

In some areas that have visiting counsellors, the point was made that where there was no choice, quality was critical. In small communities, women mentioned insensitive location of counselling services, and said that some people were deterred from attending because of a perceived lack of privacy. This, they indicated, could lead not only to more serious problems for individuals later, but a potential cost to the community that may have been averted through early intervention.

In one community where there was a social worker but no counselling service, the women said that the social worker was (extremely) overstretched, and not always available (nor mandated) to respond to after-hours calls.

Many said that members of the community often assisted women in crisis, especially through violence. There was the inevitable privacy problem that flows, despite every care, from a community response to crisis situations in the absence of a formal agency. The point was also made that in any case women in such situations require professional help.

A number commented on the need for financial counselling for individuals, families and community groups. Many said this was particularly important for women in refuges. Access to genetic and grief counselling was also regarded as important.

#### **4.11 WOMEN IN REMOTE AREAS**

##### **4.11.1 The Report on Women Living in Remote Areas**

In 1985 the Women's Advisory Council commissioned a study on the lives and needs of women who live in the remote areas of the Northern Territory, to identify the ways in which the circumstances of their life differ, and to the extent to which Government services recognise and meet their needs. The results of this study are contained in the Report on Women Living in Remote Areas (WIRA Report, Lazarus, 1986).

For the purposes of this study the geographic location of the survey was defined as those who lived at least 5 hours by road from the nearest centre of shops and services, or on land leased by a company or on independent, non-urban Aboriginal settlements.

The WIRA report has made a useful contribution to the Government's appreciation of the experiences and needs of Territory women in remote areas.

#### **4.11.2 The Study of the Health and Welfare Needs of Women Living in Remote Areas**

In 1991 The Women's Advisory Council considered that isolated women in the Territory are a minority group, whose health needs are worthy of further investigation. It commissioned a second study to identify the needs of women and children coming into town for health and welfare services, in line with recommendations of the WIRA Report (Lazarus, 1986). This "Study of the Health and Welfare Needs of Women Living In Remote Areas of the Northern Territory" was released in November 1991. A working party has been convened by the council to work on strategies to implement the recommendations.

#### **4.11.3 Young Women**

Lack of activities for young people, and appropriate community premises in which to hold them, particularly in isolated communities was identified as an issue.

In a number of small and isolated communities, women told of inadequate buildings and a lack of co-ordinated programs for young people, for whom entertainment was extremely limited. School holidays posed an additional problem. A number suggested that a multi-purpose community centre could provide facilities for youth, women, and agencies such as counselling services.

#### **4.11.4 Transport**

Transport emerged as another issue to rural and isolated women. Many pointed out that they tended to suffer more where public transport was poor, as their husbands frequently took the family car to

work. This isolated women further within their communities, where often neighbours were not within walking distance.

Women in a community specialising in tourism said that local residents were disadvantaged through tour operators giving preferential treatment in transport bookings to visitors, and regarding the requirements of locals as of low priority.

#### **4.11.5 Living in Tourism Centres**

Many women from these towns said they often felt that the towns existed for visitors, not residents. In some cases the shops stocked goods pitched only at visitors. Aboriginal women in particular commented that apart from the inappropriateness of available clothes, the size range was insufficient. As mentioned above, some also perceived inequities in the provision of transport services. One woman summed up the feelings of many in saying she often felt like a second-class citizen in her own town.

### **4.12 SPORT AND LEISURE**

The Territory government encourages the equal participation of women in all sport and leisure activities, and demonstrates this through the support it provides to respective organisations, women's sports such as netball, softball, hockey, and basketball have equal access with traditional male sports to Government funding.

It is appreciated that women face many difficulties in becoming involved or maintaining their participation in sport. It is also recognised that sport has a positive influence on women's health and sense of well being. There is a place for "catch-up" programs, education strategies and community awareness activities to encourage participation on an equal basis with men.

Sports education for females in the Territory is being supported through the AUSSIE SPORTS program and the Girls in Physical Activity Program. Government funded sports education programs pick up issues specifically relevant to women's participation. Examples of these programs include: a seminar to address the issue of sport and the law, including a topic on the participation of women who are pregnant; a seminar on the media including

consideration of "paternalistic" reports; courses for coaches and sports trainers including sessions on physiological characteristics and subsequent implications for participants. These sessions assist course participants to appreciate the rights of women in sport.

As with all sectors of society, the importance of role models should not be underestimated. A number of Northern Territory women assist to demonstrate that there is an active position for women in sport and leisure and that they are very capable of fulfilling these roles. Such women include the President of Northline Speedway, Manager of Marrara Hockey Complex, the Coach-in-residence for hockey, committee members of Equestrian Associations, the Sailing Club and NT Rifles, umpires with Australian Rules football and administrators for many other sports.

Recognition through the annual Government sponsored sports awards is given to both senior and junior female athletes. The criteria for the award are the same for both males and females, hence their performance is considered on an equal basis. In 1988, the Sportsman of the Year award was won by a woman.

There continues to be a demand in the Territory for sport and leisure facilities to provide adequate services so that families can participate on an equal basis. The availability of appropriate child minding facilities at sport-leisure centres is still an issue in some places. The lack of such services limits many women's opportunities to participate, when responsibility for the care of the children is not shared. Again this is an area where there is a need for more research and analysis into the levels of funding allocated through government sources and through sponsorship, to women's sport in the Northern Territory. As discussed in the section on "young women", an area is the limited leisure facilities and programs available in many remote communities. More consideration needs to be given to culturally and geographically appropriate activities and resources. While the employment of community recreation officers goes some way towards addressing the issue, often these officers devote more time and resources to mens sport; more attention should be given to the needs of young women in remote communities and the development of sport and recreation activities.



#### 4.13 WOMEN FROM SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

The Northern Territory is indebted to the contribution made by immigrants to its society through the past 100 years, particularly from China, Italy and Greece. There are over 50 ethnic groups living in the Northern Territory in a relatively harmonious multicultural society.

As discussed in the introduction to this paper, the consultations did not reflect the special needs of women from non-English speaking backgrounds. The views of this important segment of the community will be specifically canvassed during the next round of consultations.

Sometimes it is difficult to select smaller groups for special attention, but nevertheless injustice and intolerance do exist in our society, and special efforts must be made to ensure that equality status for these women is achieved.

In addition to economic inequities confronted by many immigrants and disabled women, these same groups may also face social isolation, cultural alienation, systemic discrimination, and outright prejudice. Special attention must therefore be given to the interests of immigrant and disabled women throughout the Territory.

#### 5.1 WOMEN'S VIEW ON THE LAW

Access to appropriate legal advice was seen by many women during the consultations as difficult. The legal aid system was regarded by most as the only affordable avenue, and there was a perception that budgetary constraints were causing the NT Legal Aid Commission to scale-down services offered by the former regional agency.

The expense of court action to the law disadvantaged as being through the Family Law system. Frequently mentioned difficulties were the low number of lawyers willing to take Family Law Legal Aid cases, and the consequent waiting time for cases, creating an appointment system which was a barrier to

## 5. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Legal System is the cornerstone of the framework of government. New legislation and legal reforms are necessary to achieve equality in our society. A range of criminal legislation and other legal reforms have had a significant impact on the lives of Territory women. Recent legislative reforms in the areas of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Prostitution and De Facto Relationships must be monitored to ensure that application and enforcement serve the interests of women and protect their rights. Trends should continue to be set for policy making in the criminal justice area.

Pornography has far-reaching legal, ethical, and social implications. As long as women are portrayed as sex objects or victims of torture and mutilation, their worth and abilities will continue to be under valued. New strategies need to be developed to tackle the increase of pornography. Dr Jocelyne Scutt a lawyer says that by the year 2001,

*"Hopefully prostitution as a 'profession' for women will go into abeyance. With women having access to interesting and well paid jobs, there should be no need to engage in this allegedly well paid but in reality exploitative industry". (46)*

Development of the legal issues related to the new reproductive technologies, such as artificial insemination by donor, and invitro fertilization, must be considered in light of their impact on Territory women.

### 5.1 WOMEN'S VIEW ON THE LAW

Access to appropriate legal advice was seen by many women during the consultations as difficult. The legal aid system was regarded by most as the only affordable avenue, and there was a perception that budgetary constraints were causing the NT Legal Aid Commission to scale down services offered by the former federal agency.

The exposure of most women to the law was regarded as being through the Family Law system. Frequently-mentioned difficulties were the few numbers of lawyers willing to take Family Law Legal Aid cases, and the consequent waiting time for clients seeking an appointment. It was also a concern that

Legal Aid is not available for representation on mental health matters. A new Community Legal Service has opened recently in Darwin which is offering legal advice. The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission in Darwin offers legal information on the telephone between 9.30 and 11.30 am each morning.

## 5.2 CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A long term aim is for the Northern Territory to become a State. In 1987 the Legislative Assembly established a Select Committee on Constitutional Development for the purpose of making recommendations to the Assembly for a constitution for the Northern Territory.

In February 1988 the Northern Territory Women's Advisory Council made a submission on issues it considered important for constitutional development including representation on a constitutional convention, that the Constitution be written in non sexist language, that it contain a preamble establishing basic human rights and that it legally enshrine major principles of equal status for women. In August 1988 the Select Committee conducted public hearings throughout the Territory. With the Office of Equal Opportunity, the Northern Territory Women's Advisory Council presented an oral submission reiterating these recommendations.

## 5.3 CRIMINAL LEGISLATION

In addition to constitutional issues, there is a range of criminal legislation that directly affects the status of women in the Territory.

### 5.3.1 Domestic Violence

Significant moves have been made to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in the community as discussed in the Social Framework. In 1989 legislative amendments to the Northern Territory Justices Act, Police Administration Act and the Bail Act were introduced to provide increased protection for the victims of violence in the home, the great majority of whom are women. The main features of the legislation are:

- restraining orders with the power of arrest attached for breach;

- the person making the application to be either a member of the police force or a victim spouse;
- telephone orders;
- police to have the power of entry where there is belief on reasonable grounds that someone is suffering or has suffered personal injury, or a breach of an order, or a breach of the peace has occurred; and
- police to have the power to take the offender away from the home to the nearest police station or other appropriate place for no more than 4 hours for the purpose of making an application for a telephone order, and legislative changes have been made in the following areas.

### **5.3.2 The Married Persons (Equality of Status) Act**

The Married Persons (Equality of Status) Act was passed by the Legislative Assembly in November 1989. The new Act repeals the Married Women's Property Act 1883 (which the Northern Territory inherited from South Australia) and various other provisions in legislation which relate to the legal capacity of women. The legal status of married women in the Northern Territory is now separate from and equal to that of married men.

### **5.3.3 De Facto Relationships Legislation**

In response to the fact that the Northern Territory has the highest proportion of couples living in de facto relationships at 14.5%, more than twice the national average (47); the Northern Territory Law Reform Committee prepared a report with a number of recommendations on reform of the law regarding couples. The report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in 1988. In 1991 the Legislative Assembly passed the De Facto Relationships Act. This Act effects significant reforms in the area of de facto relationships law. It provides a strictly legal solution to legal problems that arise following the termination of de facto Relationships. It provides a much needed mechanism for the just resolution of property disputes, and modifies

the present law regarding maintenance, where the law causes injustice and takes into account the role of women as carers.

In 1991 the Government introduced the De Facto Relationships (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 1991 and the Administration and Probate Amendment (De Facto Relationships) Bill 1991. These Bills were passed and commenced on 1st January 1992 and complement the De Facto Relationship Act.

#### **5.3.4 Prostitution Legislation**

In 1990 the Government tabled a draft Prostitution Regulation Bill, a draft Criminal Code Amendment Bill and a draft Summary Offences Amendment. The draft bills were widely circulated and many women's groups responded with comments. Under existing Northern Territory regulation prostitution itself is not an offence, but related activities such as soliciting, living off the earnings of prostitution, ownership and management of brothels, exploitation and procuring are. The legislation currently before the Assembly is innovative and unique in Australia. It:

- formalises and provides a legislative basis for the current and informal arrangement between the Police and the prostitution industry;
- makes a concerted effort to head off any potential infiltration of the industry by organised crime; and
- reduces exploitation within the industry, particularly with respect to juveniles.

#### **5.3.5 Proposed reforms**

The Department of Law is conducting a general review of sentencing legislation during 1992. Within the review, consideration is being given to the appropriateness of sentencing provisions for sexual assault and rape. A discussion paper is being prepared by the department of Law on "Laws relating to Sexual Assault" which will be distributed for comment early in 1992.

As discussed in Intergovernmental Relations, the Government has announced the introduction of a draft Equal Opportunity Bill to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly in 1992.

The participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels of government is an important political imperative. The goal for the future is to exert real influence on the political scene and the public agenda. Women's issues have been factors in changing the balance of political power. The shift in power has manifested itself in electoral politics, the media, and cultural milieu, with women acting collectively as producers, workers, and consumers to ensure their opportunities and equal rights.

## 6.1 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION MAKING

Growing numbers of women are entering organized politics as candidates, advisors, party organizers, and party workers. Political parties are giving increased recognition to the importance of the women's vote. As legislators, cabinet ministers, governors and mayors, women politicians throughout the world have won elections and appointments they would have lost only a decade or two ago.

### 6.1.1 Women's Register

To support the Government's policy of increasing women's participation in decision making, the Office of Women's Affairs established a register to record names and details of women available for appointment to statutory boards and advisory bodies. Inclusion on the register is available to all women. In 1985 a survey was undertaken by the Office of Equal Opportunity to establish the percentage of women appointed to Northern Territory statutory boards and authorities, a similar survey needs to be undertaken again to assess what progress women have made.

## 6.2 THE TERRITORY SITUATION

The Northern Territory has a mixed record in regard to women representatives in Parliament. In 1976 there were four women out of a total of 13 members in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. During the last decade although there has been a marginal increase in the number of

## **6 THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK**

The participation of women in power structures and decision making processes at all levels of government is an important political imperative. The goal for the future is to exert real influence on the political scene and the public agenda. Women's issues have been factors in changing the balance of political power. This shift in power has manifested itself in electoral politics, the media, and cultural milieu, with women acting collectively as producers, workers, and consumers to ensure their opportunities and equal rights.

### **6.1 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION MAKING**

Growing numbers of women are entering organized politics as candidates, advisors, party organizers, and party workers. Political parties are giving increased recognition to the importance of the women's vote. As legislators, cabinet ministers, governors and mayors, women politicians throughout the world have won elections and appointments they would have lost only a decade or two ago.

#### **6.1.1 Women's Register**

To support the Government's policy of increasing women's participation in decision making, the Office of Women's Affairs established a register to record names and details of women available for appointment to statutory boards and advisory bodies. Inclusion on the register is available to all women. In 1986 a survey was undertaken by the Office of Equal Opportunity to establish the percentage of women appointed to Northern Territory statutory boards and authorities, a similar survey needs to be undertaken again to assess what progress women have made.

### **6.2 THE TERRITORY SITUATION**

The Northern Territory has a mixed record in regard to women representatives in Parliament. In 1976 there were four women out of a total of 19 members in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. During the last decade although there has been a marginal increase in the number of

women gaining party pre-selection there are only two women currently in the Legislative assembly.

A significant contribution is made by women through their positions as senior aides and advisors to Ministers, 31% of these positions being held by women.

Within Local Government women play an increasingly active role. Of the six municipalities in the Northern Territory, women make up 34% of those elected to councils.

At the Community Government level, women represent 39% of those elected to councils. Community government, established under the Local Government Act, is a type of local government designed to meet the needs of smaller and more remote communities within the Northern Territory.

### 6.3 JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

There are no women Judges in the Territory. The total number of Magistrates in the Northern Territory is nine, two are female including the Northern Territory Chief Magistrate.

## 7.1 THE NEW STYLE OF LEADERSHIP

In discussing the status of women in business, "Management 2000" published in 1980 by Muesel and Lardner, predict that in the future, in a great many leadership will come from women. After two decades of quality marketing, gaining experience, and being frustrated with job discrimination, women are on the verge of change. Older, wiser, more numerous, and well experienced in the latest advancing industries like computers, finance, and advertising, women are ready to break through the glass ceiling. The business revolution has begun from the top.

Perhaps an indication of women's frustration with the establishment and of the changing political climate in Australia is that during 1981 the Australian Federal Parliamentary Committee on Women's Progress through the House of



## 7. FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

This paper has been undertaken in a time of deep economic recession in Australia. The Northern Territory has also been severely affected. Notwithstanding, recessions are part of the economic cycle and one of the legacies of the recession is that concerns to rein in costs and minimise risks are likely to remain with us in the years ahead. It has been suggested that the 1990s will be the most challenging decade society has yet confronted. The important message for women, as well as their male colleagues, is to begin preparing for the future today. The major themes of the 1990s - technological change, compressed product cycles, (accelerated change) and global competition - require leaders to scan the global environment and organise the internal tasks, while remaining politically and market sensitive. (48) The average Australian entering the work force today will change careers - not jobs, several times and will be unemployed at least once.

Although predicting the future is a risky business, the forward thinking of several prominent people including John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, social forecasters and authors of the successful book "Megatrends" first published a decade ago, Dr Jocelyn Scutt, lawyer and prominent women's rights champion and Jacqueline Huie market researcher are some of the people whose predictions have been drawn on to develop the discussion in this framework.

### 7.1 THE NEW STYLE OF LEADERSHIP

In discussing the status of women in business, "Megatrends 2000" published in 1990 by Naisbitt and Aburdene, predict that in the future, to a great extent, leadership will come from women. After two decades of quietly preparing, gaining experience, and being frustrated with the Establishment, women are on the verge of change. Older, wiser, more numerous, and well represented in the fastest advancing industries like computers, finance, and advertising, women are ready to break through the 'glass ceiling', the invisible barrier that has kept them from the top.

Perhaps an indication of women's frustration with the establishment and of the changing political climate in Australia is that during 1991 the Australian Federal Parliamentary Committee process, through its House of

Representatives Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, instituted an inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia. Through this inquiry the committee co-sponsored, with the Office of Status of Women of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, a series of seminars relating to the inquiry's specific terms of reference.

In July 1991 a seminar was held on "Recognition of Women in Australia". Evidence to the Committee suggests that women wish to be recognised for a myriad of achievements and for an ever changing contribution to society, a theme alluded to by the former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke at the seminar.

*"Recognition of Australian women, their concerns, their achievements and the obstacles that they still face in the pursuit of equality must evolve as the position and aspirations of women change." (49).*

Evidence to the Seminar discussed how recognition is intrinsically tied to the notions of visibility and value and many submissions struggled with the question of how, as a society, Australians ascribe value. There was generally consensus that value and consequent status tended to be traditionally associated with monetary worth. Hence voluntary work and unpaid work involved in caring for families, children or elderly have less value than paid work. (50) As Margaret Timpson, immediate past-president of the Business and Professional Women's Association expounded,

*"Not only do women do more of the unpaid work, but also women know that this work is not valued and we live in a society that values everything in money terms whether we like it or not". (51)*

A discussion paper has been prepared on the issues raised at this seminar, which deals with options which could result in granting more appropriate recognition for women, possible options for legislative change and necessary social action.

Part of the terms of reference for the inquiry was to examine the Australian Honours System. In 1990 Senator Margaret Reynolds released a report she had commissioned on analysing women's representation in the Order of

Australia. The report shows that women are not under represented on the basis of nominations received, but rather women are not being nominated in equal numbers to men. In other words, Australian men are three times more likely to be nominated than women. (52)

Making a nomination is not a difficult process. It is important that Territory women's organisations put in more nominations, so that Territory women have a better chance to receive recognition on a more equitable basis.

The findings of this comprehensive inquiry are an important part of the process of women advancing in Australia and are an indication of the progress women are making into the new decade.

## 7.2 THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

The next decade will consolidate the current post-industrial society as an information economy and the way information is received and used will change vastly during the 1990's. In this economy the new wealth is knowledge and information in itself will be a strategic resource through the use of technologies combining computers, laser disks and telecommunications. But Arthur Cordell says:

*"... a hallmark of an information economy is that information can have value, depending on who accesses it, when access takes place, and the form in which the information is accessed".(53)*

As discussed women dominate the information-service sector. The jobs of people in information, service, finance, commuter, biotechnology, and health care sectors are not performed on an assembly line and cannot be managed as if they were. It is almost impossible to supervise information work where people are paid for their knowledge.

Ensuring women are involved in the "techno-economic paradigm" is crucial to women's equal participation in the social transformation which will occur and result in women being at the forefront of the information enriched and not the information poor as in the past. Consideration needs to be given to the impact of information technology in the context of micro-economic reform and how

women obtain the skills required for the new production concepts and work patterns required by reform.

### **7.3 WELL-EDUCATED WORKFORCE - HIGHER EXPECTATIONS**

Well educated people have more options. Two decades ago only 26% of female students remained in high school to year twelve. Today it is 70% and rising. Since 1970, the year twelve population has more than doubled. (53) Today young executives of both sexes have greater expectations - "have skills will travel" is the motto and personal growth is the most important criteria for job satisfaction. Megatrends suggests that paradoxically, people who are difficult to supervise and free to leave for other jobs, people who think for themselves, who question authority are the best source of information and only hope for achieving organisational goals. (55)

In Australia twenty years ago women who worked as executives, lawyers or doctors were decidedly in the minority. In 1990 the workplace is a different place. Today equal numbers of men and women are enrolling and graduating in law degrees, and women comprise 45% of medical students. (56) The number of girls studying sciences and maths has soared over the past twenty years. In 1990, girls accounted for 65% of enrolments in senior biology, 43% of enrolments in chemistry and 29% enrolments in physics. Although boys have consistently outnumbered girls by 2 to 1 in specialised or advanced maths, the proportion of girls taking these subjects has increased to 39%. (57) This is a dramatic increase in these professions, where because men so dominated them women had to build from a base close to zero. Women will soon reach a critical mass in the professions and will no longer be taken as a minority .

Within the Tourism Industry women are now well represented in senior or executive positions. In 1987 female management represented 38% of all management positions. (58)

### **7.4 INDUSTRIES OF THE FUTURE**

Naisbitt and Aburdene argue that women advance fastest in the "Cutting-edge industries" either because there was no time to establish the old rules or they didn't apply because the game had changed so much. (58) Phyllis

Swersky, executive vice-president and chief financial officer of Artificial Intelligence Corporation, an American software maker for IBM main frames comments:

*"Both as an employee and as an employer, I've found that gender is irrelevant. When a company is rushing into the future as we have been, management uses talent, any available talent much more eagerly". (60)*

Today in the information/service sector women hold supervisory positions earlier and progress into management, preparing the way for the most talented to become leaders.

The Northern Territory is in a similar situation to some of these companies. As discussed in attachment 1, since Self Government the Northern Territory population has increased from 110 000 to 158 800. After being ruled from Canberra for most of this century, the Territory's inheritance was substandard health, education and transport services. Its primary and secondary industries were under developed, and manufacturing was non existent. Since 1978 the balanced mix of economic and social development has almost doubled the job opportunities in the Territory workforce, providing many opportunities for fast growth and the opportunity for both men and women to lead the way both in the private and public sectors.

## **7.5 MANAGEMENT TO LEADERSHIP**

Naisbitt and Aburdene predict that as the nineties progress, conventional wisdom will concede that women and men function equally well as leaders, and women will achieve leadership positions denied them in past. The traditional hierarchical management approach once needed in order to control an enterprise is no longer appropriate. The dominant principal of organisation has shifted from management to leadership, which is needed to bring out the best in people and to respond quickly to change. This new leadership is democratic yet demanding, it respects people and encourages self-management, autonomous teams, and entrepreneurial units. Values well developed in women such as vision, honesty, ethics, commitment, independence, shared power, and responsibility are part of this new approach. (61)

## **7.6 THE NEW EXECUTIVE ARCHETYPE - MORE LIKE A WOMEN?**

The new corporate archetype both male and female will be a self developer, who values independence, and seeks to balance work with other priorities like family and recreation. Corporations cannot and should not be relied on to take care of people, therefore security lies in personal skills. Leaders will need to inspire a new generation of self-developers who balance different priorities in their lives. The tendency - often attributed to women - to want to balance the top priorities of career and family (along with other personal interests) is generational not gender-specific. (62)

## **7.7 CHALLENGES FOR LEADERS IN THE 1990'S**

A challenge for leaders in the 1990s is to encourage the new, better educated worker to be more entrepreneurial, self-managing and oriented toward lifelong learning. Women who have these skills and are motivated to accomplish tasks, who are flexible and can look for new ways to achieve them, will be sought after for employment. Employers' concerns of the boom years and how they will attract and keep staff in areas of shortage have been transformed for the present time into concerns about how they should shed staff in areas of over employment. Hopefully the economic climate will change as the decade advances. Understandably the most flexible workers will have the type of skills which are sought after by discerning employers.

Naisbitt and Aburdene predict that there will be labour shortages during the 1990s and that leaders and managers will have to find new untapped groups of workers to replace the dwindling labour supply. They along with others suggest that retirees and mothers are the two untapped groups where new workers of the 1990s will be found. These workers are known to favour part time employment and job sharing. In Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Britain, part-time workers now represent more than 20% of the workforce. In the US they represent 17.4 % of the workforce. (63) More work needs to be done on making part time work more easily available for women through the Northern Territory Public Service .

## **7.8 RECRUITING THE LABOUR FORCE IN THE 1990'S**

Corporations and governments will also need to be more flexible in the work arrangements they offer their employees, for example part time, job sharing, contract work, and home work arrangements will increasingly be part of the overall plans in which employees select different benefits according to their needs. Subsidised child care, maternity leave and flexible time will be essential and many women will be able to shop around for the best arrangements to suit their particular circumstances at that time.

## **7.9 CHILD CARE**

In the 1990's child care will be accepted as an employee benefit.

### **7.9.1 Employer Sponsored Child Care**

In 1991 the National Women's Consultative Council commissioned a discussion paper on Employer Sponsored Child Care, part of which explores the idea of joint ventures between employers and community based child care centres. This is where employers can purchase places within an existing community child care centre (say one third), or fund places for their own employees as part of a new community-based centre. The employer funds the capital cost of its places and pays an operational subsidy to provide its employees with access to a specified number of places, normally for a specified number of years.

Management is essentially community-based with employer participation, ensuring that parents have a chance to have significant influence on the care their children receive. Employees who leave their employer have the chance of access to a community based place in the same centre.

For many employers, co-operative arrangements can overcome the problem of location . A city based employer or one with dispersed worksites could participate in co-operative arrangements in a number of locations to suit the needs of a larger number of employees. These arrangements cater for small employers and offer larger ones the opportunity to test the water with a small number of places for their employees rather than launch into a centre of their own. It also allows

parents to use child care based where they live rather than where they are employed and enables their children grow up in their own communities. (64)

## 7.10 ELDERCARE

Now that business and society are mastering the challenge of child care, Megatrends predict that we are one step closer to confronting the next great care-giving task of the 1990's - eldercare. The need to examine respite care and how it is being provided in the Northern Territory has been discussed earlier in this paper. Eldercare affects a wider segment of the population than child care. A report by the Bureau of National Affairs, a private research group in Washington, DC. "Employers and Eldercare: A New Benefit Coming for Age" says that almost one-third of all working adults in America are responsible for providing some care for an elderly person. Three quarters of those who care for the elderly in a family are women and at least half are still raising their own family. In 1990 Stride Rite, a shoe company in Massachusetts, opened a joint centre for 55 children and 24 older folks. This model may be a consideration in the future in Australia as the population ages. (65)

Dr Jocelyne Scutt women's advocate and lawyer recommends:

*"Childcare, care of children with impairments, and the aged, by people in paid employment, should be recognised by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. (66)*

## 7.11 LEAVE POLICIES

Successful companies will need to have organisational flexibility to deal with the whole concept of the balance between work and family life discussed in relation to ILO 156. Leave policies will need to be more creative to keep seasoned employees, who would otherwise have to be replaced from a dwindling labour supply. Grants of unpaid leave with benefits of up to three years to give people time to care for children or sick relatives or to pursue 'once in a life time' personal opportunities are a consideration.



The Northern Territory Public Sector provides that an employee may apply for leave without pay for a variety of purposes.

## 7.12 EMERGING THEMES

One theme which emerges is that women in the 1990s who want to reach the top, need to set their sights higher, re-examine their goals and revise them upward. The average age of a senior executive in America is about 51. Regina Herzlinger of the Harvard Business School points out, it takes thirty five years of business experience to sit in the CEO's chair. For most women this requires a new set of skills. The people skills of middle management, where women may have a slight advantage are not enough at the top. Those skills must be coupled with extensive knowledge about the external environment in which government and business exist. (67)

Innovation is another theme that is necessary for the future. Innovation must come from women who can, through redefinition of the real needs of people, and by converting existing knowledge or developing totally new responses, propose radically different solutions to the problems of the nineties. (68)

Silvia Gold, past President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, says vigilance will be needed during the 1990s:

*"Vigilance in recognising new threats to the social, economic, and legal status of women; vigilance in identifying emerging sources of division or discrimination; vigilance in preserving physical and intellectual well being; vigilance in protecting loved ones, and community and social institutions; and vigilance in ensuring a climate of fairness and harmony in society." (69)*

## 7.13 GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Young people will ensure that the groundswell of concern for the global state of the environment will continue. Economics, development and the environment and how they fit together will have to be profoundly and substantially re-thought so that we have Ecologically Sustainable Development, that is wealth creation without the ongoing cost to our ecosystem. Young women consumers connect products with the environment

and animal life. Jacqueline Huie market researcher predicts that the new society based on anti-consumer principles, is all about ideas, culture and well being, rather than technology, power and volume. She says

*"Lifestyles will be simpler, there will be more work but less income and less tax revenue. The well of the welfare state will be a lot dryer." (70)*

#### **7.14 GLOBAL POLITICAL ROLE MODELS**

The political goals of women have been discussed in the political framework. Globally during the past two decades, women have achieved unprecedented prominence in politics. The most visible women leaders, those who serve as prime ministers or heads of state, have carved out their own identities. None of them are male imitations, each is her 'own woman', with a highly personal leadership style. Recent examples are Corazon Aquino in the Philippines, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Edith Cresson in France, Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Gro Harlem Bruntland in Norway. Many other women serve as cabinet ministers and leaders of opposition parties. For the first time in Australia there are currently two women premiers - Dr Carmen Lawrence in Western Australia and Joan Kirner in Victoria. Women in other spheres of work who wish there were more role models, can draw strength from these women leaders whose domain spans the complex affairs of entire countries, rather than single organisations.

#### **7.15 CONCLUSION**

The Northern Territory does not operate in isolation, it is a vital part of the Asia Pacific Rim, the fastest growing and most dynamic part of the world today. It is part of a global economy and can be affected by the trends and changes that may occur in other regions. Indonesia with a population of over 180 million is the nearest neighbour. A close relationship has developed between the two countries an indication of this is the Memorandum of Understanding between the Indonesian Government and the Northern Territory Government.

There is no question that Northern Territory society has changed significantly in the period since 1978. The discussion paper looks at initiatives for women

since self government and reports on the women's strategy consultations carried out during 1991. It discusses some of the important issues facing Australian society and therefore Territorians and particularly Territory women as this decade progresses. Although it does not provide answers, in raising the issues it offers a chance for debate.

In our rapidly changing society, new needs will arise. Action that is appropriate today may become obsolete tomorrow; new approaches may be needed. Territory women need to build room for the pace of accelerated change into their own lives and those of their families .

Territory women have shown their worth . They will be the first to respond to the challenges this decade will produce. They should be well placed to enter the 21st century with optimism and strength. They have made their mark over the past 150 years and have had the courage to be at the forefront of societal changes. The pioneering spirit still exists and is part of the attraction of the lifestyle here. A glance at the recently reprinted "Women's Register 1948-88" is just one illustration of the vital role of Territory women during this period.

Territory women have the courage to move ahead despite past set backs; courage to face the critics and to fight on behalf of those who do not have the resources, wisdom to acknowledge past errors and to fight for future change. This discussion paper is an opportunity to respond and to prioritise the most important issues.

## Acknowledgements

There have been many publications, reports and documents used in this discussion paper. In particular acknowledgement is given to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women's publication Fine Balances: Equal Status For Women in Canada in the 1990s, published in March 1987. Acknowledgement of two reports held by the Office of Women's Affairs in Darwin - the Submission to the House of Representatives Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs Inquiry into Equal Status for Australian Women, 1990 and The Northern Territory Women's Strategy "New Directions for the Future", July 1991 is also given.

The Office of Women's Affairs would like to thank all the people who have supplied information, usually at short notice.

**Footnotes**

1. Country Liberal Party 1990 Election, WOMEN'S PLAN. (Summary)
2. Ibid
3. Press Release issued by the Chief Minister on 4.10.90
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) March 1991, Catalogue 6248.0
5. ABS, Catalogue 6202.0
6. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women , Women and Employment, a Discussion Paper, prepared by the Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, October 1991, page 4
7. Ibid, page 7.
8. ABS, 1986 Census
9. ABS, June 1991, Catalogue 6248.0
10. Women and Employment op. cit . page 9
- 11 ABS, August 1991,Catalogue 6302
- 12.ABS, Weekly Household Expenditure Review ,1988/89
- 13.ABS, Australian One Parent Families, ABS Catalogue 2511.0, page 4
- 14.Ibid, page 15
- 15.The Annual Report of the Department of Labour and Administrative Services and the Public Service Commissioners Office, 1989/90

16. Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin B. 1990/91. Publication of the Department of Finance
17. National Women's Consultative Council, Employer Sponsored Child care - A Discussion Paper, researched and written by Jenny Adam, September 1991 (Advance copy)
18. ABS catalogue no.1321, Small Business in Australia 1990., page 17
19. Ibid.,, page 23
20. Duffy Katherine, speech "Enterprise Bargaining and its Implications for Women" November 1991
21. Ibid
22. Ibid
23. Women and Employment, op. cit. page 34/35
24. Bittman Michael, Juggling Time - How Australian Families Use Time, A Report on the Secondary Analysis of the 1987 Pilot Survey of Time Use, Prepared for the Office of the Status of Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, May, 1991, page 3
25. Ibid, page 9.
26. Ibid, page 23
27. Evatt Elizabeth, Valuing Women's Work - Women, Equality and Family Law Reform, NSW Women's Advisory Council, Anne Conlon Memorial Lecture, 19th July 1991, page 2
28. Cass Bettina, The Social Security Review, Background/Discussion Paper No.1, The Case for Review of Aspects of the Australian Social Security System, June 1986, page 5
29. ABS Australian One Parent Families. op. cit., page 4

30. Ibid, page 1
31. Op.cit., page 5
32. Evatt E., op.cit., page 4/5
33. Ibid, page 5
34. Ibid, pages 6-8
35. ABS, Australian Families and Households, Census 86, Catalogue No. 2506.0, page 28
36. Feasibility Study Northern Territory Participation in the National Program for Early Detection of Breast Cancer, Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services, September 1991, page 1
37. Ibid, page 1
38. Ibid, page 2
39. Ibid, page 2
40. Ibid, page 3
41. Northern Territory Women's Health Policy, Department of Health and Community Services, February 1992
42. Press release by the Chief Minister announcing reforms on Alcohol on 8.11.91. An Executive Summary - "Living with Alcohol in the N.T." is available from the Alcohol Policy Unit in the Department of the Chief Minister
43. ABS, 1986 Census
44. Northern Territory Department of Lands and Housing, 1991 In House Survey (Jan - Nov)

45. Department of Lands and Housing, Home North Statistics
46. Scutt Dr Jocelyne, quoted by Alan Hardie in the article Forward Thinking in January edition of The Australian Way magazine , page 14
47. ABS "Australian One Parent Families" op.cit., page 10
48. Naisbitt J., Aburdene P., Megatrends 2000, Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd, London, 1990, page 213
49. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women, Recognition for Women in Australia - A Discussion Paper, prepared by the Office of the Status of Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, December 1991, page 1
50. Ibid, page 1/2
51. Ibid, page 2
52. Reynolds(Senator) Margaret, Women and the Order of Australia, a Report, Canberra , September 1990
53. Cordell, Arthur J. Preparing the Challenges of the New Media, the Futurist March-April, 1991
54. Connolly A. and Cribb J., Women may run clever country, The Australian 10.2.92
55. Naisbitt J. and Aburdene P., op.cit., page 201
56. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women , Women and Employment, a Discussion Paper, op.cit., page 11/12
57. Connolly A., op.cit.



58. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women , Women and Employment, a Discussion Paper, op.cit., page 16
59. Naisbitt J. and Aburdene P., op. cit., page 203
60. Ibid, page 204
61. Ibid, page 196
62. Ibid, page 200
63. Ibid, page 212
64. National Women's Consultative Council, Employer Sponsored Child Care, op. cit.
65. Naisbitt J. and Aburdene P., op.cit., page 211
66. Scutt Jocelyne Dr., op. cit., page 14
67. Ibid, page 213
68. Fine Balances: Equal Status For Women in Canada In The 1990s, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, March 1987, page 4
69. Ibid, page 4
70. Huie Jacqueline quoted in Alan Hardie in the article Forward Thinking in January edition of The Australian Way magazine , page 14

**Bibliography**

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) March 1991, Catalogue 6248.0

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Catalogue 6202.0

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 1986 Census

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), June 1991, Catalogue 6248.0

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), August 1991, Catalogue 6302

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Weekly Household Expenditure Survey 1988/89, Catalogues 6530 0, 6533 0.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Australian One Parent Families, ABS Catalogue 2511.0,

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Australian Families and Households, Census 86, Catalogue No. 2506.0,

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) catalogue no.1321, Small Business in Australia 1990.,

Bittman Michael, Juggling Time - How Australian Families Use Time, A Report on the Secondary Analysis of the 1987 Pilot Survey of Time Use, Prepared for the Office of the Status of Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Commonwealth of Australia, May, 1991.

Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, March 1987, Fine Balances: Equal Status For Women in Canada In The 1990s.

Cass Bettina, The Social Security Review, Background/Discussion Paper No.1, The Case for Review of Aspects of the Australian Social Security System, June 1986.

Commonwealth Government, Department of Finance - Australian Public Statistical Bulletin B 1990/91

Country Liberal Party 1990 Election, WOMEN'S PLAN. (Summary)

Duffy Katherine, Speech "Enterprise Bargaining and its Implications for Women" November 1991

Evatt Elizabeth, Valuing Women's Work - Women, Equality and Family Law Reform, NSW Women's Advisory Council, Anne Conlon Memorial Lecture, 19th July 1991.

Naisbitt J., Aburdene P., Megatrends 2000, Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd, London, 1990.

Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services, September 1991, Feasibility Study Northern Territory Participation in the National Program for Early Detection of Breast Cancer, .

Northern Territory, Department of Health and Community Services, February 1992, Northern Territory Women's Health Policy

Northern Territory Department of Labour and Administrative Services and the Public Service Commissioners Office, 1989/90 Annual Report.

Northern Territory Department of Lands and Housing, 1991 In House Survey (Jan - Nov)

National Women's Consultative Council, Employer Sponsored Child care - A Discussion Paper, researched and written by Jenny Adam, September 1991 (Advance copy)

National Women's Consultative Council, International Labour Organisation Convention 156 - Workers with Family Responsibilities, Commonwealth of Australia, 1990.

Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women - Report of Australia, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1986.

Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, National Agenda For Women - Mid-Term Implementation Report on the 1988-92 Five-Year Action Plans, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, August 1990.

Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Selected Findings from Juggling Time How Australian Families Use Time, Commonwealth of Australia 1991.

Office of The Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, . The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women , Women and Employment.- Official Hansard Report, 1991.

Office of The Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, . The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women , Women and Employment, a Discussion Paper. October 1991.

Office of the Status of Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women, Recognition for Women in Australia - , Official Hansard Report, July 1991.

Office of the Status of Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Australian Women, Recognition for Women in Australia - , A Discussion Paper, , December 1991.

Department of Employment and Training, Women's Bureau, Australian Women's Employment Strategy, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988.

Department of Employment, Education and Training, Women and TAFE - A National Plan of Action, Canberra 1991.

Reynolds Margaret (Senator), Women and the Order of Australia, a Report, Canberra , September 1990

Ronalds Chris, Principles of Affirmative Action and Anti-Discrimination Legislation, Monograph No.1 Affirmative Action Agency, Ambassador Press.

### Press

Press release by the Chief Minister announcing reforms on Alcohol on 8.11.91. An Executive Summary - "Living with Alcohol in the N.T." is available from the Alcohol Policy Unit in the Department of the Chief Minister

Cordell, Arthur J. Preparing the Challenges of the New Media, the Futurist March-April, 1991

Connolly A. and Cribb J., Women may run clever country, The Australian 10.2.92

Hardie Alan, Forward Thinking in January edition of The Australian Way magazine.

### Housing

Nearly 9 000 dwellings have been built by the Government since 1978 at a cost of more than \$1.5 billion. More than \$1 billion of this came directly from the Territory Government, with the remainder from Commonwealth housing programs. This has resulted in the lowest waiting times for public housing in Australia.

### Education

A range of educational opportunities have been put in place, up to and including a fully-fledged University. Today there are well over 40 000 students attending government and non-government schools, tertiary

## Attachment 1 Northern Territory Social and Economic Indicators

### **Since Self Government 1978 -1992**

In 1978 under the Northern Territory (Self Government) Act and associated legislation, the Northern Territory was established with separate political, representative and administrative institutions, with its own powers to levy taxation and its own system of courts. There is no doubt that the Territory has changed significantly since 1978 and is a different place today . GDP has increased from \$876 million to \$3 799 million.

### **Population**

The Northern Territory female population has expanded significantly since self-government from 50 700 in 1978 to 76 300 in 1991. Today, females account for 48% of the Territory's population which is 158 800. The population is diverse with 23% of the population Aboriginal, and over 50 ethnic groups living here. Given the Territory's younger population base, nearly 75% of females are under the age of 40, compared with a national figure of 61%. The average age in the Northern Territory is 27 years compared to 34 years elsewhere. Almost half of the Northern Territory female population reside in Darwin/Palmerston, 15% or 11 000 in Alice Springs, 3.3% or 2 500 in Katherine, 2.2% or 1 600 in Tennant Creek, 2.2% or 1 600 in Nhulunbuy, and 30% or 22 000 in other areas.

### **Housing**

Nearly 8 000 dwellings have been built by the Government since 1978 at a cost of more than \$1.5 billion. More than \$1 billion of this came directly from the Territory Government, with the remainder from Commonwealth housing programs. This has resulted in the lowest waiting times for public housing in Australia.

### **Education**

A range of educational opportunities have been put in place, up to and including a fully-fledged University. Today, there are well over 40 000 students attending government and non-government schools, Northern

Territory University or TAFEs across the Territory. At self government fewer than 650 Territorians were in training as apprentices. Now almost 1300 Territorians are pursuing careers as apprentices.

### **Land and Conservation**

Land tenure and its administration was confused before Self-Government. Land was held under a variety of leases, all with different conditions, these have been revised, replaced and privatised. The Northern Territory Conservation Commission now manages a total of 4.2 million hectares in 86 national parks, reserves, nature parks and conservation areas. High priority has been given to environmental protection and management .

### **Transport and Communications**

Without a rail network or regular coastal shipping service, Territorians rely almost entirely on our road network for food and household goods, for trade and commerce, and ready access to the rest of the country. Road transport makes up 2.8% of production costs of Northern Territory industry and 4.4% of the cost of household consumption, compared to 1.3% and 1.9% respectively for Australia. The Country Liberal Government with Commonwealth support, committed itself to building all-weather highways to the three neighbouring states, and continues to build and maintain a 28 500 km road network including 5 700 km of seal - now a \$3 billion asset, a 15% increase since 1978.

### **Primary Industry**

Improved transport and marketing services, along with reforms in land tenure, have helped primary producers almost double the value of their product to \$190 million in 1990. This figure includes cattle and buffalo, cropping, fruit and vegetables, and seafoods.

### **Minerals, Gas and Oil**

Since Self Government the total value of all mineral production, including oil and gas, has increased significantly, from \$501 million in 1978 to over \$2 200 million in 1990. Just 12 years ago, the production figure for oil and gas was

zero and by the end of 1990 it exceeded \$1 000 million. The mining industry has been the cornerstone of the Territory economy since 1978, and most of it is exported. Since 1978, the mining industry has contributed about \$139 million directly in Territory taxation and about \$170 million in royalty payments to Aboriginal people.

### **Local Government**

In 1978, the Northern Territory had only four local government councils in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Now sixteen community councils and six municipal councils are established across the Territory in communities ranging from Wallace Rockhole in the south to Milikapiti on Melville Island. Thirty nine more communities are in various stages of considering their own local government schemes.

### **Tourism**

Tourism is one of the Territory's most important and fastest growing industries. In 1978 the visitor industry generated around \$100 million in today's dollars and employed 1200 Territorians. Today it employs 6 700 people directly and thousands more indirectly, and earns \$415 million.

### **Exports**

Northern Territory trade has grown strongly, and in 1990/91 the increase in the value of Territory exports was the highest in Australia, mainly due to increased exports of minerals, oil and gas. In per capita terms, the Northern Territory exported \$11 575 in 1990/91, compared to \$3 026 for Australia.

Information was taken from the publication Budget Paper No. 6 Northern Territory Economy 1991.



**Attachment 2 Commonwealth, State , Territory Standing Committees.**

The Standing Committee of Federal, State and Territory Women's Advisors, established in 1982. The Northern Territory was represented formerly by the Women's Adviser to the Chief Minister and since 1988 by the Director of the Office Of Women's Affairs.

The Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council subcommittee on Women and Health (AHMAC) established in 1987. The Northern Territory has been represented on this committee by a senior officer from the Department of Health and Community Services.

The National Committee on Violence established in 1988 for 12 months as a result of a joint agreement between the Prime Minister, the State Premiers and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. Mr Michael Palmer, Commissioner of the Northern Territory Police, represented the Northern Territory.

The Commonwealth, State and Territory Task force on Domestic Violence, established in 1987 to advise the Federal Government on its education campaign aimed at a long term reduction in the incidence of domestic violence in the country. The Director of the Office of Women's Affairs (1986-90) represented the Northern Territory.

The National Committee on Violence Against Women established by the Minister assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Wendy Fatin, in 1991. The Northern Territory Government is represented by Ms Eileen Cummings, Aboriginal Project Officer, Office of Women's Affairs, Department of the Chief Minister.

The Commonwealth, State and Territories Women's Advisory Committee for women from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) now called the National NESB Women's Council, established in 1989. The Director of the Office of Ethnic Affairs - Ms Jenny Medwell - represents the Northern Territory on this committee.

The National Women's Forum convened by the National Women's Consultative Council as a twice yearly forum. This is attended by all Conveners and Executive Officers of the respective State/Territory Women's Advisory Councils.

The Commonwealth, State and Territories Women's Housing Issues Working Party. The Northern Territory is represented by a senior policy adviser from the Department of Lands and Housing.

The Commonwealth, State and Territory Departments of Labour Advisory Committee (DOLAC) established a Working Party on Women and the Labour Force in 1984. The Northern Territory is represented by the Office of Equal Opportunity on this working party.

The Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Women's Standing Committee (VEETACWSC) has representatives from the Commonwealth, States and Territories and was established in 1991 as discussed. This committee is chaired by Ms Kath Phelan, Deputy Secretary Post-School Education and Training, Northern Territory Department of Education.