



Australian Federation
of **Medical Women**
the voice of australian medical women

Bridging Leadership Barriers Project

Dr Desiree Yap: AFMW President

On behalf of Dr Jillian Tomlinson

Plastic Surgery Registrar Extraordinaire

Who are AFMW?

- The Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW) was formed in 1927 to promote and develop the formal practice of medicine among women and to improve the health and welfare of all persons but especially women and children in the Australian community.
- It is the only national body that exclusively represents the views of female medical practitioners, and is a non-profit, non-government organisation with affiliated state member bodies.

Acknowledgements

- The Bridging Leadership Barriers project was made possible by a \$89,000 grant from the Australian Government Office For Women's 2007-08 Leadership and Development Program Grants.



- This project was designed and managed by Dr Jillian Tomlinson, a Melbourne surgical trainee who received the Australian Virtual Centre for Leadership for Women's 2009 National Leadership Achievement for Women Award for her work.

Paradox of Medical Privilege

- It's a dilemma
- Medical women can be considered amongst the most privileged educated women in the world but sexism is as pervasive still in medicine as it is all areas of women's lives
- It also affects women doctors occupational health
- It affects patient care

Paradox of Medical Privilege

- Double disappointment when medical women behave more like their male colleagues than like 'women'
- Incorporated into profession then some learn to practice like women
- There is a tension within this
- Within the profession, women struggle to find their humanity in the same way women struggle in all aspects of society
- We can learn and support from each exploring this



Australian Federation
of Medical Women
the voice of Australian medical women

Bridging Leadership Barriers Project 2008-09

FINAL REPORT

30 June 2009

By Dr Jill Tomlinson

AFMW Bridging Leadership Barriers Project Designer and Manager

This document reports on the Australian Federation of Medical Women's Bridging Leadership Barriers Project 2008-09. The project was made possible by a \$89,000 grant from the Australian Government Office For Women's 2007-08 Leadership and Development Programme Grants. AFMW gratefully acknowledges this grant.

afmw.org.au

1

Aim

To empower medical women by fostering communication, networking, mentoring, respect, leadership ability and opportunities among doctors and medical students

Initiatives

- \$15,000 in leadership scholarships to assist medical women to attend the 2008 Medical Women's International Association Western Pacific Regional Congress (MWIA WPRC)
- Leadership and website skills training workshops
- redevelopment of the AFMW website and creation of an online Leadership Portal
- development of a quarterly electronic AFMW newsletter
- creation of the AFMW Leadership Skills Database

Outcomes

The project met all objectives, including:

- improved communication networks among AFMW and its members with effective use of internet technologies and complete redevelopment of the AFMW website
- enhanced opportunities for women in remote areas to communicate with their peers and participate in internet-based training
- enhanced access to medical expertise (via the Leadership Skills Database) to assist AFMW to inform and drive health-policy development and service development
- delivery of leadership and website skills training



**Medical Women's
International Association**
Western Pacific Regional Congress
17-19 October 2008 • Melbourne, Australia

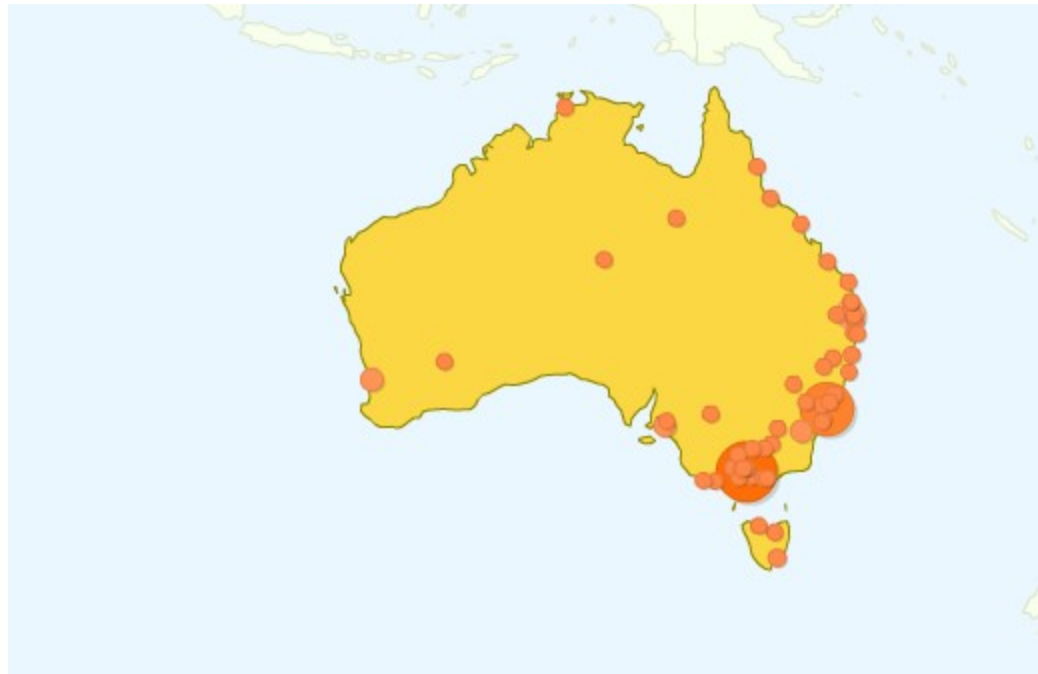


Website training



Leadership Portal: Most viewed articles 2008-09

1. How To Negotiate: A Guide For Women In Medicine
2. Women As Medical Leaders – Opening Doors to Success
3. The Servant Leader
4. UNIFEM Young Women’s Leadership Forum
5. Assertiveness Techniques
6. Open Collections Program – Women In Medicine
7. Stress Management Among Junior Doctors
8. Effective Communication
9. Situational Leadership
10. Maintaining a Work-Life Balance





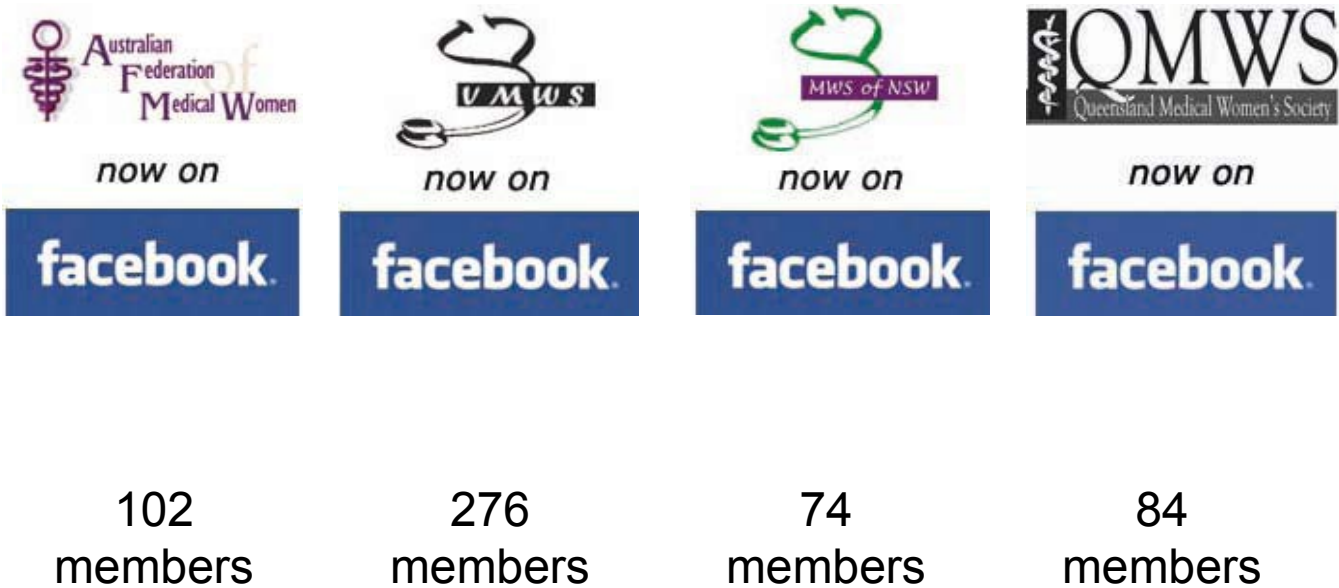
HON accreditation

- In March 2009, the AFMW website gained Health On The Net (HON) Foundation accreditation and recognition.
- Created in 1995, HON is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, accredited to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.
- HON Foundation promotes and guides disseminating useful and reliable online health information, and its appropriate and efficient use.

Website satisfaction survey

“I love visiting the AFMW site to stay updated on upcoming events, as well as some of the inspiring and interesting articles on the site. I enjoy checking out some of the links available on Women’s Organisations to learn more about getting involved in representing women in the medical field and beyond.”

Web 2.0 strategies



E-newsletter

- improves communication within the AFMW, allowing leadership opportunities to be readily promoted and enhancing member participation in project development and policy creation.
- primarily attracts medical women as subscribers, although a more latterly look shows that individuals in government and other Australian medical organisations and websites are now subscribing to receive AFMW news.

The multifaceted Bridging Leadership Barriers project

- Has demonstrated that promoting women's social inclusion and building women's capacity to take on greater leadership responsibilities can contribute to development of public policy and service delivery
- It has also given us the capacity to engage more widely with other health-related groups

The Paradox of Medical Privilege

What she needs is a good route:
An anecdote

Women in Surgery

- ‘According to RACS in 2009, 7.8% of Active Fellows within the 9 specialties are female.
- <http://www.surgeons.org/Content/Navigation>
_Page 51

What about Academia?

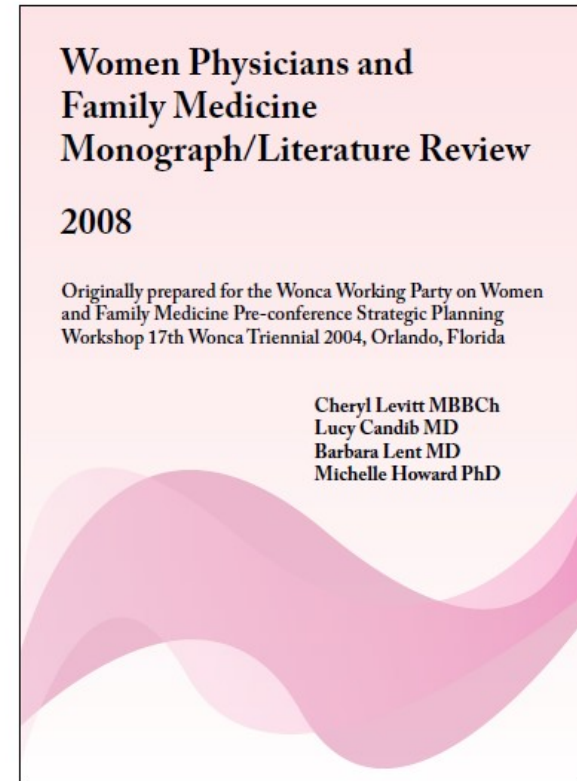
- Monash University in 1979, 50% of the graduates were women, and women have been consistently represented as the top student since the first graduating class.
- Appointments in the Monash Faculty of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences in 2008
 - Level A (most junior): 1132 Women : 586 Men,
 - Level B : 351 Women : 200 Men
 - Level C (senior lecturer) : Women 154 :Men 162,
 - Associate professor level: 38 Women : 79 Men
 - Professor level (most senior academic): 21 Women : 93 Men.
 - If we remove nursing, health sciences and social work from the statistics, the percentage of women in leadership roles in medicine drops even further.

Associate Professor Jan Coles Monash University Medicine Nursing Health Sciences

What about Academia?

Gender Bias in Medical Education and Research

- Medical curriculum is “gendered”: reflects a perspective predominantly focused on the male patients. The bias has occurred in development and propagation of medical curricula and is in textbooks, research, etc.
- In general, there has been an absence in medical curricula of concepts of gender as a determinant of health, an issue which is particularly relevant to women’s health and wellbeing
- However, there has been some encouraging progress in this area



Medical Women and Leadership

STOP PRESS!!!

**THE PIPELINE THEORY
ISN'T WORKING!**

Back to the Paradox

- Compared to others in the women's health world, medical women are perceived as having access to a lot of resources
- However we are in a position where the status quo is vigorously defended using age-old techniques including gendered ones - territories and entitlement
- In many areas of Medicine women are still encountering resistance and hostility
- We like many others earn 0.8: \$1 of men's income

Strategic Alliances

- AFMW would like to collaborate with bodies like AWHN because women doctors ARE more patient centered, adhere better to guidelines, do better complex consultations and have better outcomes Do more prevention/health promotion AND have greater patient satisfaction!
- AFMW would like to collaborate with bodies like AWHN because women doctors in many areas are having their mental and occupational health affected because of the environment they work in

Strategic Alliances

- We could collaborate to help facilitate medical culture change in the areas we have in common which still denigrate women **BECAUSE** women's health is critical to the health of Australia

Thank you!

www.afmw.org.au