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Going boldly into the halls of power

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WOMEN'S POLICY ACTION TANK

What is past is not dead; it is not even past. We cut ourselves off from it; we pretend to be strangers. German writer Christa Wolf's maxim exhorts us not only to know as much as we can about our past; but to also understand that our current existence contains so much of our past.

Victoria celebrated the centenary of women's political enfranchisement in 2008. It gave me cause to stop and reflect. Given that women's numbers in our parliaments had only started to grow from the eighties onwards, how, I wondered, had they been 'doing their democratic politics' in the decades before they achieved the right to vote?

The research was revealing. There have been five grand themes in women's public engagement and role in achieving justice and equality. They have protested and resisted; organised and formed associations; advocated reform; used the international stage; and, finally, ventured in larger numbers into state and national politics. Heroes abound, as well as the less-chronicled efforts of thousands upon thousands of women working behind the scenes in pressing for change.

But despite this sustained engagement, contestation, hard slog and commitment to an equality agenda, real progress in terms of macro policy victories has been insufficient. Violence committed in the home is yet to be formally and properly treated as serious crime. We have struggled to get a half-way decent parental leave scheme. A wide gap persists in take-home pay. Childcare is not affordable for many. Retirement incomes for women are substantially less than for men.

As part of our early planning for the Trust's November 2016 event, *Breakthrough; the future is gender equality,* I contacted Richard Denniss, Chief Economist for The Australia Institute, to discuss his Keynote Address for the event. Why has our progress for equality been so pock-marked, so slow and uneven? Richard and I agreed there were two fundamental explanations. The first is that our national policy landscape is a story of decades-long experience of a dominant white, Anglo, male hegemony – seeing the world mainly through the prism of their maleness, culture and experience. The second, and arguably more controversial, is that in this same space of time, women have lacked the necessary sense of entitlement that underpins their demands for the social and economic change they know will yield benefits for all. Perhaps fittingly, the under-representation of women in our government can be linked back to policies that don't work well for women.[1]

Richard's speech[2] acknowledges the sort of work that is inherent in this new, much-needed initiative of Good Shepherd – the publishing of a range of quality thought pieces which analyse government policy using a gender lens, drawing on the deep and rich wisdom embedded in the lived experiences of women. We know the realities. We have the data. We know what is needed.

The challenge is to stride purposely into the halls of power and decision-making, demanding the change we know will work, and presenting decision-makers with policy frames and prescriptions which will make all the difference.

Now is the time to test the mettle of our democratic institutions on the big policy issues – women's economic security and retirement income, women's safety, the justice system, childcare, pay inequity and representation in all facets of power and decision-making.

[1]See, for example, the Opinion piece that ran on 9 March 2017 at News.com.au; 'Kate Ellis shouldn't have had to resign,' by Jamila Rizvi. http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/parenting/kids/kate-ellis-shouldnt-have-had-to-resign/news-story/799410cd2cc826bc9c68064c32e1d767

[2]Richard's address can be viewed at https://www.vwt.org.au/richard-denniss-money-power-freedom/?platform=hootsuite

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Good Shepherd
Australia New Zealand

Policy that supports women to thrive.

SUSAN MAURY
Commissioning Editor, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

In Australia, women are often disadvantaged by government policy. Last year, in partnership with the Power to Persuade, we established the Women's Policy Action Tank, which analyses policy using a gender lens. The Action Tank also considers how multiple identities can further exclude people from effective policy – for example, people in the criminal justice system, Indigenous people, or people experiencing poverty are often further disadvantaged by policy.

In this special issue of Good Policy, we celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Women's Policy Action Tank by highlighting three areas of policy which have particularly detrimental impacts on women. We have taken a dialectical approach, in which two authors approach a topic from different angles. This conversational approach is reflected in the Keynote Conversation which opened our policy forum last year, and is also the approach we are taking with our recently-launched Good Conversations. *(See the News section for more information on these events.)*

On income management, Dr Shelley Bielefeld explains how Indigenous women have been negatively impacted by the BasicsCard. She deconstructs the rationale for expanding income management despite a lack of compelling evidence for positive outcomes, which points to a policy designed to "regulate and control Indigenous women rather than empower them." In a companion article, Dr Elise Klein suggests an alternative – the introduction of a Universal Basic Income. This change in welfare support would eliminate the punitive aspects of the BasicsCard while valuing the unpaid labour that Indigenous women provide to their families and communities.

2016 saw the launch of the Women's Policy Action Tank, in partnership with the Power to Persuade. This included our highly successful policy forum, Putting Women at the Centre, held in August 2016, and a series of policy analyses. This special issue of Good Policy, generously funded by the Fay Marles Sub-Fund of the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust, further explores the issues of Aboriginal women and welfare policies, women and precarious work, and the entanglements of debt for female offenders.

Workforce productivity is examined next, a concept too narrowly constructed to capture the complex nature of 'work' for most women. Dr Fiona MacDonald explains how women working in social services have been negatively impacted by a focus on increased productivity requirements. Efficiency-related pressures rely on competition, worsening work-place conditions and the casualisation of the workforce to achieve a cost saving, but compromises quality service provision, reduces job satisfaction and decreases economic security for women. Complimenting this piece, I explore the negative consequences of precarious work on women's health. Because women provide the majority of unpaid labour at the household level, they are over-represented in precarious employment, which results in physical, psychological, and social detriments and contributes to the feminisation of poverty.

Jacki Holland leads off a discussion on women's experiences of the criminal justice system. While the number of incarcerated women is rising, their offending patterns differ from their male counterparts. For example, the vast majority of women in prison have committed minor, non-violent offenses and have histories of trauma. A strong case is made for taking a therapeutic, rehabilitative approach which also considers the needs of children and other dependents. Dr Christopher Trotter examines the tangled relationship between women offenders and financial insecurity. Research indicates that women who end up in prison are disproportionately dependent on government benefits, and have high levels of debt. Time in prison exacerbates money issues for women, resulting in higher levels of debt and nowhere to live on release. Dr Trotter suggests that improving women's financial security is an important preventative for women's offending.

We are thankful for the financial support provided by the Fay Marles Sub-Fund of the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust to publish this special issue, as well as the experts who have contributed the policy analyses included here. We trust the reading contained herein will provide both insights into how purportedly gender-neutral policy can work against women, and an impetus to work towards social policy that supports everyone to thrive.

Placing women and girls at the centre:

Principles for effective policy[1]

DIMITY FIFER
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As an organisation, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand (GSANZ) has a long heritage and rich culture that has always supported putting women and girls 'at the centre'. Our work is primarily focused on women and girls who are experiencing multiple and complex challenges due to gendered and entrenched disadvantage, including:

1. Indigenous women and girls
2. Women experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, forced marriage or trafficking
3. Women impacted by the justice system
4. Women and children experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, social and economic disadvantage, family violence and abuse
5. Women, young people and children experiencing barriers to education

Putting women and girls 'at the centre' increases our collective impact as we co-create services with our community – services that are relevant and important to those who use them. It allows voices of women and girls to become more involved in our advocacy and campaigns. It aligns GSANZ's areas of focus and specialisation in safety and resilience, economic security, and educational pathways, providing holistic service models within the context of lived experience, while responding to the current and emerging needs of women and girls.

In advancing better policy for women, I want to suggest seven principles which must be understood in order to effect positive change.

1. PERVASIVENESS CAN BLIND

The idea that we don't know what we don't know is akin to the blindness that can exist in the policy world to bias and discrimination. Understanding this, and illuminating the hidden needs, must underpin a gendered approach to policy development. According to black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins, "the very pervasiveness of violence can lead to its invisibility."[2]

2. INTERSECTIONALITY MAGNIFIES DISADVANTAGE

Intersectionality posits that racism, ageism, sexism and homophobia do not act independently, but are interrelated and continuously shaped by one another: the focus is on how they 'mutually construct' one another. When women experience multiple layers of disenfranchisement, they are increasingly likely to experience powerlessness and poverty.

3. LIVED EXPERIENCE IS THE ROOT OF ALL GOOD POLICY

Data illuminated by story underpins information; information underpins knowledge; and knowledge underpins wisdom. Wisdom is to be expressed in good policy. We must seek out multiple 'evidences' of women's lived experiences of the world in order to ensure sound policy responses. This includes hearing the stories and gathering data in socially responsive ways, for example, using social mapping tools.

4. INCORPORATE A SYSTEMS VIEW OF LIFE

Complexity is the norm, and essential to understanding a systems and networked view of life. The issues-based portfolios of government can silo issues in unhelpful ways, and can lead to simplistic analysis that boils down to 'fix the woman' rather than fix the system. It is the gendered world itself that requires problematisation, not simply the exclusion of women or the existence of the male norm.

5. OUTCOMES CAN BE ILLUSORY OR MISLEADING

When measuring women's empowerment, the interdependence of women's economic and social lives must be acknowledged; real change is incremental and not always easily measured. Outcome indicators seek to document the causal chain between interventions and outcomes, but what's most important is often left unmeasured. For example, how does one measure the equal and meaningful participation of women? When do we know that we are effecting changes in socio-cultural norms? How lasting is the change over time? Progress is a process, which is difficult to capture in a time-bound 'outcome.'

6. PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS OUTLAST GOVERNMENTS

People's movements for change have at minimum ten-year horizons – outlasting most governments and providing long-term change. Policy is more than ink on paper or bits and bytes on a screen. It is part of a system of influence and change; politics is power and decision-making, and no one in the system has ultimate power. We need to work with multiple time paths – short, medium and long term, find the balance between change and maintenance, focus on lasting change rather than party politics, and join the dots to benefit all.

7. ONTOLOGY IS REAL

How we do is perhaps even more important than what we do. Our ways of being, doing and knowing reflect the role of ontology in our work by embracing knowledge creation; knowledge management; knowledge communication; knowledge transfer. This is how we draw out the wisdom – moving through data, information, story and knowledge.

Creating better policy for women and girls is complex and multi-faceted. Change occurs in fits and starts across many arenas, and we need to work alongside many different individuals and agencies to change complex systems and disrupt intergenerational disadvantage. At GSANZ, we use principles such as these to guide our approach, broker our relationships and sustain long-term positive change.

[1]This piece is based on the Opening Address given by Dimity Fifer at Putting Women at the Centre: A Policy Forum, held on 16 August 2016 at the Royal College of Surgeons, Melbourne. More information on this event can be accessed at http://www.power-topersuade.org.au/2016-womens-policy-forum

[2]Collins, P.H. (1998). It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation. Hypatia, 13:3, pp. 62-82. Available at http://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2012/SAN237/um/HillCollins_Hypatia-_Intersections.pdf

Income management and Indigenous women

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Recent years have seen an increase in cashless welfare transfers, known in Australia as income management, with racialised and gendered consequences.[1] First introduced as part of the 2007 Northern Territory Emergency Response,[2] income management has since been considerably expanded.[3] Australia now has several income management schemes, and conditions for welfare recipients vary depending upon the income management category to which they are subject.[4]

Since 2010 most income-managed welfare recipients have had at least 50 per cent of their regular social security payments allocated to a government-issued BasicsCard for expenditure on legislatively-defined 'priority needs'.[5] The BasicsCard cannot be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco, pornography or gambling products. This measure applies to social security recipients residing in the Northern Territory and in place-based income management trial areas. They are subject to what the government describes as 'new income management'. Indigenous welfare recipients continuously have been heavily overrepresented under new income management.[6]

Since 2016 welfare recipients in Ceduna, Kununurra and Wyndham have also been subject to income management via the industry-issued Indue cashless welfare debit card as part of a trial of Andrew Forrest's 'Healthy Welfare Card' recommendation.[7] Those subject to the Indue card have 80 per cent of their social security income restricted, with the option of applying to a community panel to have their restricted portion reduced to not less than 50 per cent. The Indue card cannot be used to purchase alcohol or gambling products. Indigenous welfare recipients are also grossly overrepresented under the Indue card.[8]

The government rationale for income management is that it "operates as a tool to support vulnerable individuals and families," and "to stabilise people's circumstances by limiting expenditure of income support payments on excluded items, including alcohol, tobacco, pornography, gambling goods and activities." [9] However, research indicates that income management has led to a range of consequences ostensibly unintended by policymakers. These include an increase in social exclusion, stigma, and difficulty in providing for family needs, whilst also undermining the autonomy and agency of welfare recipients subject to it.[10] Income management has created considerable problems that remain unaddressed and unacknowledged by government policymakers responsible for welfare reform.

Empirical research indicates that Indigenous women are overrepresented in new income management categories, the BasicsCard system, and they are also disproportionately subject to the Indue Card.[11] Significantly, Indigenous women have been portrayed in a negative way in official income management discourse as though they suffer from passivity, incapacity, vulnerability and lack of agency. The needs of Indigenous women have therefore been a central justification for the continuance of income management. This has ramifications in terms of ongoing regulatory interventions into Indigenous women's lives, with adverse consequences for many. For instance, 49 per cent of trial participants subject to the Indue Card have reported that it "made their lives worse," and numerous participants reported running out of money for essential items needed for children.[12]

Through its income management discourse, the government promotes the expansion of bureaucratic control over Indigenous women, ostensibly to 'support' them and their offspring, whether they desire this or not. Examination of income management reports shows that hypocrisy stalks the rhetoric. Touted by government as a necessary form of support and protection for welfare recipients, their families and their communities, income management has instead brought greater difficulties for many of those subject to it, and failed to achieve the policy objectives unilaterally designed and imposed by the government. Evidence shows that income management can create some of the problems policymakers claim it remedies so effectively: for example, while household expenditures remained unchanged, sourcing items became difficult and expensive, managing the budget became highly complex, accessing account balances was not always easy, and cards were at times faulty. Many women reported increases in feeling stress, shame or powerlessness as a result; many women also reported feeling less safe, as crime increased due to scarcity of cash. Yet despite deficiencies in evidence, income management continues to be lauded by leading politicians.

The patriarchal colonial state has often sought to regulate and control Indigenous women rather than empower them. Indigenous women are familiar with the grim realities of benevolent colonial narratives that hinder self-determination. Over a billion dollars has been funnelled into income management, and the government continues to fund this costly policy failure. This fiscally limits other options the government could take to support Indigenous women that may well produce superior outcomes. So long as the government continues to funnel resources towards income management, fewer funds will be available to support alternatives consistent with Indigenous self-determination.

[1]This article contains edited abstracts from Dr Shelley Bielefeld's article, Income Management and Indigenous Women – A New Chapter of Patriarchal Colonial Governance? (2016) University of New South Wales Law Journal, 39:2, pp. 843-878.
[2]via the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Payment Reform) Act 2007 (Cth).
[3]via the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform and Reinstatement of Racial Discrimination Act) Act 2010 (Cth); the Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 2012 (Cth); and the Social Services Legislation Amendment (No. 2) Act 2015 (Cth).
[4]Social Security (Administration) Act 1999 (Cth), sections 123TA-123UGG and 124PF-124PP.
[5]Social Security (Administration) Act 1999 (Cth), section 123TH(1).
[6]Department of Social Services, Income Management Summary Data, https://www.data.gov.au/dataset/income-management-summary-data.
[7]Andrew Forrest, The Forrest Review (Report, Commonwealth of Australia, 2014) pp. 100–8; Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Act 2015 (Cth).
[8]Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Social Justice and Native Title Report 2016. Australian Human Rights Commission, 2016, pp. 91-92.
[9]Explanatory Memorandum, Social Security Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 (Cth) 2.
[10]Shelley Bielefeld (2016). Income Management and Indigenous Women – A New Chapter of Patriarchal Colonial Governance? University of New South Wales Law Journal, 39:2, pp. 843-878.
[11]J. Rob Bray et al. (2014) Evaluating New Income Management in the Northern Territory. Final Evaluation Report. Social Policy Research Centre, September 2014, p. 69. Orima Research (2017). Cashless Debit Card Trial Evaluation: Wave 1 Interim Evaluation Report. Department of Social Services: Canberra.
[12]Orima Research (2017). Cashless Debit Card Trial Evaluation: Wave 1 Interim Evaluation Report. Department of Social Services: Canberra; p. 5.

Indigenous women:
Rethinking economic security

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Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a simple idea: provide every resident (child and adult) of a particular geographic location a regular and unconditional subsistence wage. Scholars, activists, and politicians have argued that UBI has radical potential for societies around the world; from increasing freedom for people to live the lives they value, to the realisation of justice – where the social dividend transfers democratic power back to the citizenry through economic rights. Feminists have also considered UBI as a valuable contribution towards women's economic empowerment; specifically as it is a way to value the work of unwaged productive labour. In many societies women have held the burden of providing economic security for families through unpaid care and domestic work.[1] Whilst care and household productive labour is drastically undervalued, it is extremely important to both domestic and public spheres. Yet these broader definitions of labour and work are limited in Australian employment policy – restricted to merely the involvement in the formal labour market.

Many Indigenous Australians living remotely are also challenged by similar limitations around the definitions of work and labour. Indeed, productive work 'on country' where Indigenous peoples undertake customary (non-market) work for livelihoods is severely undervalued and often not incentivised by government policies.[2] The Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) was a notable exception; it provided an economic base and sufficient flexibility to support diverse Indigenous aspirations and livelihoods. Moreover, Altman (1987) found that CDEP was used to remunerate productive work inside the home – labour generally undertaken by women.[3]

However, CDEP was dismantled in 2004 as part of the neo-assimilations and neo-colonial turn of the Australian settler state. CDEP was replaced by the misnamed Community Development Program (CDP), a work for the dole scheme, which not only disregards diverse Indigenous aspirations of work outside of the formal economy, but also enforces integration into market capitalism, all the while failing to recognise the precarious nature of labour markets in remote Australia.[4] This neo-colonial policy has led to further hardship for Indigenous peoples living remotely.

Many Indigenous women are therefore faced with a double burden. Not only is their reproductive work and labour undervalued as women, they also have to contend with neo-colonial policies implemented by the Australian settler state.[5] Indeed, when faced with the fallout of punitive polices such as income management and sanctions on work for the dole arrangements, many Indigenous women have to fill in the gaps in household income, care and community support.

It is in this context that a UBI may be useful to consider. Specifically, like CDEP, a UBI could:

- Support Indigenous notions of productive labour as the payment is unconditional
- Provide an income floor in precarious and insecure labour markets – especially for people living remotely
- Increase the sense of agency and freedom to live the lives women value
- Appease some outcomes of poverty such as domestic violence and alcoholism through improving economic security

However, UBI is not a panacea. Services such as education, health, social supports and community development initiatives must work alongside economic security, and are therefore still extremely important and need continued support. Yet a consequence of the neo-assimilationist and neo-colonial turn of Indigenous policymaking has seen the dramatic defunding or underfunding of Indigenous -controlled services. One option for rebuilding the Indigenous sector is to make unconditional stakeholder grants available alongside an individual basic income. This will require recognition that it is effective Indigenous grassroots organisations that can address the aspirations and needs of Indigenous people to live the lives they value.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that policy in Australia is part of the settler colonial infrastructure. Primacy must be given to Indigenous peoples making sovereign decisions. Therefore, the uptake of a UBI must come from Indigenous women themselves, and not be enforced by the state or non-Indigenous organisations.

[1]Waring, M. (1999). Counting for Nothing: What men value and what women are worth. Toronto: Toronto University Press.
[2]See Jordan, K. (ed.) (2016). Better than welfare? Work and livelihood for Indigenous Australians after CDEP. Canberra: ANU Press.
[3]Altman, J. (1987). Hunter-Gatherers Today: An Aboriginal Economy in North Australia. Canberra, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.
[4]Sanders, W. (2016). Reframed as welfare: CDEP's fall from favour. Better than Welfare: Work and livelihood for Indigenous Australians after CDEP. K. Jordan. Canberra, ANU Press.
[5]Moreton-Robinson, A. (2009). The Good Indigenous Citizen: Race, War and the Pathology of Patriarchal White Sovereignty. Cultural Studies Review, 15:2, pp. 62-79. ; Watson, I. (2007). Aboriginal Women's Laws and Lives: How might we keep growing the law? Australian Feminist Law Journal, 26, pp. 95-109.

Productivity and pressure:

Social services get an unhealthy squeeze

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Public policy reforms in social services are often directed to increasing productivity and efficiency. Intuitively this seems like a good idea but what does increasing productivity actually mean in practice, who does it benefit and what are the costs? For the social services workforce, comprising mainly women working in generally low-paid direct care and support roles, the costs of the pursuit of productivity improvements can be high.

Workforce or labour productivity refers to the ratio of output (e.g. services provided, goods produced) to labour input (number of workers and hours worked). Increased productivity can be taken to be a measure of worker efficiency and it can be achieved in a variety of ways. For example, one way of driving productivity growth can be by investing in infrastructure and in worker skills. On the other hand, productivity can also be improved by increasing the intensity and speed of work to increase workers' output.

In social services in Australia and elsewhere, the adoption of so-called New Public Management models since the 1990s has seen the spread of performance-based contracts, increased competition and outsourcing of publicly-funded care and other human services. An incessant search for productivity improvements in services has resulted and this has also been driven by a tightening of public funding, even though demands on many services have been growing. In this context, the imperative to maximise employee efficiency can amount to pressures for workers to do more with less time and fewer resources.

Such efficiency-related pressures have implications for care workers' job quality and for service provider organisations. Standardisation of services, breaking down of roles into tightly specified tasks, fragmentation of jobs into time-based tasks and increased performance monitoring all potentially undermine worker autonomy, increase stress and lead to less meaningful and rewarding work. Work intensification increases the likelihood of work spilling over into non-work time and impacting on the ability of workers to combine work and life as they would prefer or need. While the part-time nature of much of this feminised work has been attractive to the mainly female workforce combining work and their own unpaid care responsibilities, increasingly this part-time work is characterised by unpredictability and fragmentation of working time. Tighter specification of jobs around specific tasks and the reduction of 'downtime' have been achieved through increased casualisation of care jobs.

While appearing to increase productivity in the short term, these types of measures are also likely to have deleterious impacts on organisations' recruitment and retention of workers with negative longer-term outcomes for productivity and for the quality of care provided to service users. The relational aspects of care work that underpin care quality are undermined where workers have little autonomy and work is routinised and performed under tight time pressures. With reduced job quality driving higher rates of worker turnover, continuity of care is also undermined.

'Innovation' is now lauded as an important key to high quality service provision in social services.[1] We might hope that this focus – combined with the greater emphasis on user choice – could provide the impetus for finding better ways to organise work for quality care and for quality jobs for care workers. However, if innovation is simply another code for economic efficiency through market mechanisms,[2] this shift may turn out to be simply about cost saving, not quality.

[1]Productivity Commission (2016). Introducing Competition and Informed User Choice into Human Services: Identifying Sectors for Reform. Study Report, Canberra.
[2]https://theconversation.com/is-2017-the-year-to-ditch-the-term-innovation-71483

There are multiple gender divides in the work arena, with the gender pay gap being just one of them. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency reports that the ratio of paid to unpaid work is almost exactly inverse for women and men in Australia. While women work on average 56.4 hours per week, over 64 per cent of those hours are in unpaid work (caring work or household chores), with only 36 per cent of work time in paid employment for an average week. Overall work hours are fewer for men at 55.5 hours, reflecting 64 per cent of weekly work time in paid labour, with only 36 per cent spent in unpaid work.[1]

In other words, for women, paid work needs to fit around their 'full-time' unpaid commitments. There is a disproportionate burden of both care work and household duties that falls to women, despite changes in employment patterns. It should therefore be no surprise that women are far more likely to be in precarious employment – working part-time, casual or contract work – often below their skill level and sacrificing career advancement.[2]

Nearly 70 per cent of part-time workers in Australia are women.[3] This means women's experiences of paid employment are very different to men's, and their outcomes from employment also differ. A stark example is the effects of employment on physical and mental health and well-being. Precarious work contributes to poor physical and mental health outcomes through overwork (when combined with unpaid work into total work hours), conflicting commitments between work and family life, a lack of work-related autonomy, and the stressors that come from the reduced pay of part-time work.

While women, out of necessity, more often seek flexible work arrangements, a significant proportion of flexible positions can also be categorised as precarious – distinguished by lower income, few or no benefits, short-term contracts, and holding little power in the organisational context. Women from low socio-economic

Precarious work and the health cost to women

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backgrounds or who are in the racial or ethnic minority are particularly likely to be employed in precarious, low-status jobs.[4] Precarious employment is now considered a social determinant of (poor) health because of the overwhelming evidence of its detrimental effects. Research consistently demonstrates that job insecurity increases anxiety and depressive symptoms, while temporary employees are at higher risk of exhaustion and use more antidepressants.[5] However, rather than contributing to absenteeism, the nature of precarious work encourages 'presenteeism' – that is, being physically present despite poor health.[6] There are also indications that women are more susceptible to the negative health consequences associated with precarious work.[7]

A lack of autonomy in the workplace is another significant contributor to poor mental and physical health. Self-determination – incorporating competence (feeling capable to achieve a task), autonomy (the ability to self-direct energies and focus), and relatedness (contributing to a social network and being meaningfully supported by others) – is so foundational to human thriving that many researchers consider it a psychological need.[8] Research bears this position out. For example, a meta-analysis of nearly 100 studies on work-related factors correlating to ischaemic[9] heart disease found that the strongest contributor was low decision latitude.[10] Another study found that low job control is predictive of high blood pressure and reported stress levels even outside of work hours, and that this effect is stronger for women.[11] Finally, a study found that women experience higher allostatic loading (chronic stress) than men when holding lower-status roles, but that this effect is mitigated by high decision latitude – autonomy.[12] (It is also noteworthy that high allostatic loading is more likely experienced by women generally[13] but particularly women who belong to ethnic or cultural minorities, with severe consequences to health across the lifespan.[14]) The low-status jobs that women are more likely to fill are both psychologically and physically damaging.

Low status, or powerlessness, in the organisational context means women in precarious work often have little or no control over their work schedules, resulting in conflicts with family-related commitments. HILDA[15] data indicates that work-family conflict is a significant contributor to overall poor mental health, for both women and men.[16] This can be mitigated by giving employees control over their schedules[17] – again, reinforcing the importance of autonomy.

Part-time, precarious and contract work is remunerated at a lower hourly rate compared to full-time work; reduced work hours and (most often) no career pathway further undermine both short-term wages and long-term earnings for women. These factors contribute to the feminisation of poverty. Research indicates that women experience depression at nearly twice the rate of men, and this is partially explained by their reduced socio-economic standing.[18] Additionally, their health-related quality of life is significantly lower to men's, which is mediated in part by their lower socio-economic status.[19] This is alarming.

While the majority of women in paid employment experience precarious work conditions due to the need for flexibility, men are at greater risk for over-work (50+ hours per week),[20] which also has significant negative impacts on health and well-being, including a marked increase in rates of coronary disease[21] and a range of negative psychological and social outcomes.[22] The current method of organising work/life responsibilities is failing everyone.

Policies are reinforcing these unhealthy practices; changing policies to align more closely with current realities and needs will encourage social and cultural changes as well. Recommended policy responses include setting a maximum work-hour week to limit over-work and free up men to be active participants in family life;[23] provide adequate, non-stigmatised welfare support for parents to reduce work hours when needed for family duties – particularly critical for single parents;[24] provide expanded parental leave options;[25] and equalise superannuation contributions.[26] The health implications, particularly for women, of maintaining the status quo is undermining productivity in its truest sense and eroding the well-being of all Australians.

[1]Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Unpaid care work and the labour market: Insight Paper.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Menendez, M., Benach, J., Muntaner, C., Amable, M., & O'Campo, P. (2007). Is precarious employment more damaging to women's health than men's? Social Science & Medicine, 64, pp. 776 – 781.

[5]Benach, J., Vives, A., Amable, M., Vanroelen, C., Tarafa, G., & Muntaner, C. (2014). Precarious Employment: Understanding an Emerging Social Determinant of Health. Annual Review of Public Health, 35, pp. 229 – 253.

[6]Sanderson, K., & Andrews, G. (2006). Common Mental Disorders in the Workforce? Recent Findings from Descriptive and Social Epidemiology. The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 51, pp. 63 – 75.

[7]Callea, A., Urbini, F., & Bucknor, D. (2012). Temporary employment in Italy and its consequences on gender. Gender in Management: An International Journal, 27:6, pp. 380 – 394.

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The national tragedy of female incarceration

JACKI HOLLAND
Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

Many of the women in prison in Australia today have come into contact with the criminal justice system after committing minor, non-violent offences linked to personal circumstances of poverty, hardship and, overwhelmingly, trauma. Their incarceration has little to do with protecting the safety of the public, and will do little to prevent the future perpetration of crimes of a similar nature. The isolation of these women from society may, however, result in a range of negative consequences that extend beyond the primary purposes attributed to imprisonment of punishment, deterrence, rehabilitation, denunciation and/or incapacitation.[1]

In line with trends in many countries worldwide,[2] female imprisonment rates in Australia have been on a dramatic upward trajectory, outpacing growth rates for men. These trends can be attributed, in large part, to the feminisation of poverty and economic marginalisation of women.[3]

Since 2000, the number of women in prison has more than doubled,[4] and the female imprisonment rate has risen from 19 per 100,000 adults to 33 per 100,000.[5] Despite Indigenous Australians comprising only three per cent of the overall Australian population, 34 per cent of female prisoners are Aboriginal women,[6] making Aboriginal women the fastest-growing cohort.[7] These escalating figures are not explained by a corresponding rise in offending rates amongst female Australians.[8] Rather, the above figures are indicative of converging social and legal policies, and enforcement practices[9] that disregard the structural and social causes of women's offending and gendered differences in the experience of poverty, unemployment, compromised mental health, addiction, housing insecurity, violence and abuse.[10] Systemic gender inequities maintain women's vulnerability to these known risk factors for female criminality, and simplistic tough-on-crime responses are ineffective.

In our society generally, women are more prone than men to have insufficient resources to meet their material needs.[11] Women are far more likely to head single parent families;[12] and have caring responsibilities for other family members. These gendered differences in employment leave women susceptible to economic insecurity with reduced capacity to meet the costs of living, much less respond to financial shocks (see, for example, articles by Maury and MacDonald in this issue).[13] Women are also far more likely to have been subject to violence and abuse, particularly from a partner or person known to them.[14] Where women's gendered experiences intersect with other marginalising characteristics such as race, disability, socioeconomic status, or other identities, vulnerability to disadvantage is often increased. The combined effects of disadvantage and victimisation, poverty and trauma increase the risk of women's lives intersecting with the criminal justice system.[15]

The profile of the female prison population is characterised by overrepresentation of such deeply disadvantaged and victimised women, testifying to the need for more effective strategies to prevent and address women's criminality.[16] Mental illness, substance abuse, financial hardship and personal histories involving homelessness are far more prevalent amongst female offenders than their male counterparts.[17] Debt is also a significant issue for female prisoners.[18] Over 85 per cent of female inmates in some Australian jurisdictions are parents of dependent children; most of these head single parent families.[19] Female prisoners exhibit much higher levels of previous trauma and victimisation than men.[20] The vast majority are survivors of sexual, physical and emotional abuse, and most have been subject to multiple forms of abuse.[21] For example, between 57 and 90 per cent have experienced child sexual abuse and other forms of victimisation, 89 per cent have a history of sexual abuse, and as many as 98 per cent have experienced violence.[22] Such trauma can have significant impact on the trajectory of a woman's life and can drive criminality.[23]

For the small numbers of violent and persistent female offenders, prison may be an appropriate and just intervention, but imprisonment and exclusion from the community is not a fitting fix for non-violent criminality where marginalisation, poverty and disadvantage are at the heart of offending behaviour, or where trauma and abuse underlie a woman's trajectory towards offending behaviours. As a sentencing option designed centuries ago in response to poverty and male offending,[24] prison seldom supports women to resolve their personal, social and economic difficulties. For women experiencing such difficulties, who pose no safety risk to others, there is great need for responses and supports quite different to a typical prison environment.

The prison experience is more likely to entrench disadvantage, and, as an environment designed to assert power and control,[25] can be re-traumatising for women with personal histories of victimisation. It can result in detrimental outcomes that are psychological, social and financial – diminishing financial wellbeing, and contributing to poorer health, reduced household resources, loss of employment and loss of housing and belongings. Prison increases the likelihood of family and relationship breakdown.[26] Mental and physical health are detrimentally impacted, with consequent effects upon employability, relationship stability and parenting practices.[27] Women generally respond differently than men to correctional intervention,[28] with factors such as anxiety about the welfare and care of children, and concern about losing the right to spend time with children, disrupting rehabilitation efforts.[29]

Upon release from prison, related legal problems can emerge or resurface, adding to difficulties, inhibiting reintegration[30] or leading to recidivism. This is true of all prisoners, but studies suggest post-release support for women in the areas of housing, health and welfare support is particularly inadequate, resulting in

Women leaving prison and the impacts of debt

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hardship, recidivism, reimprisonment, or even unnatural death.[31] Women who have exited prison are more exposed to financial hardship as a result of debt (see the related article by Trotter, this issue), as they often have sole parental responsibility for dependents, are reliant on welfare services and frequently in critical need of securing housing for their family upon release.[32] For these women, the imperative ought to be to provide alternative pathways away from the criminal justice system and to address the issues which led to their offending behaviour.

Whilst there is inherent appeal in the notion that justice is blind to difference, there is need for addressing structural and systemic issues that accelerate women's interactions with the criminal justice system, compound their difficulties in accessing justice and cause their experience of prison and post-release to be particularly detrimental. The escalating rates of female imprisonment should not be dealt with by justice responses alone, but by systemic policy responses that address the underlying factors contributing to gender inequality. Interventions should incorporate a focus upon women's capacity for independence and long-term financial security, trial justice reinvestment models that can mitigate women's interactions with the criminal justice system, and introduce alternatives to imprisonment. Prison systems themselves should provide informed trauma support for the large numbers of female prisoners who have been victims of violence and abuse. Where the nature of female offending is minor and non-violent, where the offender does not pose a risk to the community, and where the offender has parental responsibilities, community sanctions rather than a tough-on-crime approach should be used as an alternative to imprisonment. These alternatives can mitigate the very particular impacts imprisonment has on women and their families both during and following incarceration periods.

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Over the past several years my colleagues in the Monash Criminal Justice Research Consortium and I have undertaken a number of studies on women offenders. We examined the experiences of 129 women coming out of prison in Victoria in 2004, supported by Corrections Victoria, VACRO and the Australian Research Council.[1] We did a similar project examining the pathways for almost 100 women exiting prison in Victoria in 2011-2013 for Corrections Victoria,[2] and in 2016 we conducted a literature review on best practice with women offenders.[3] We have also produced two edited books[4] on this topic (with Rosemary Sheehan and Gill McIvor) and undertaken two conferences.

One of the reasons for our particular interest in women offenders at this time has been the growth in numbers of women entering the criminal justice system. The number of women in prison in Australia has grown by as much as 50 per cent in the past decade, reflecting a trend across western countries. Numbers of male prisoners have also grown, however, the proportion of women prisoners has been growing consistently for the past two decades. The reasons for this growth are difficult to determine, nevertheless it has led to an increasing interest in the causes of female offending and how it can be addressed.

In our most recent study we identified a number of issues which were related to women returning to prison. Women did better and were less likely to re-enter prison when they had shorter criminal histories, when they were older, when they were less drug-dependent, when they had children in their care following release, when they could access suitable housing, and when they made use of support programs and services including parole supervision. The women also did better if they were able to manage finances and tackle debt. Rather than discussing all of these issues in this short piece, I will focus on finances and debt as it is often an issue which gets little attention when women prisoners are discussed.

In our study, women who reported having debts when they came into prison had much higher rates of return to prison (32 per cent vs 17 per cent). Those who reported a gambling problem before they entered prison were also more likely to return (31 per cent vs 23 per cent). This is consistent with the limited research referred to in the literature review which suggests that debt may be an important factor in re-offending for women.

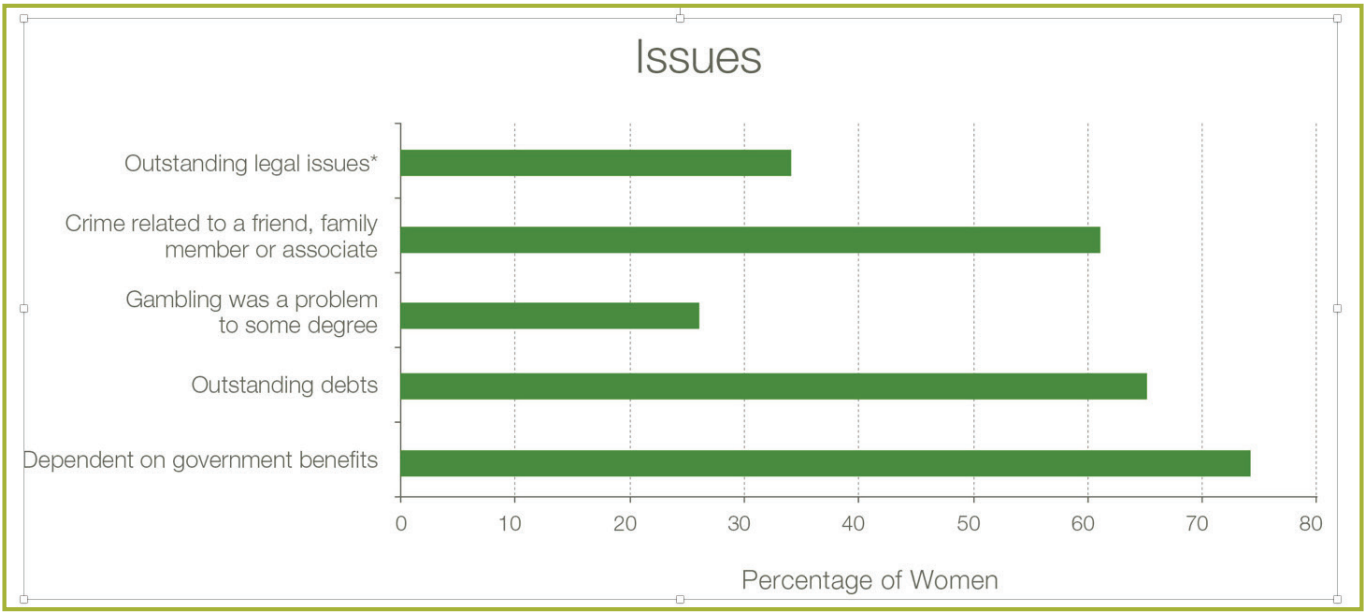
Our report, Women Exiting Prison in Victoria (2016), showed reliance on government benefits and outstanding debt to be highly prevalent factors for the majority of women prior to incarceration. Post-release, 85 per cent of study participants relied on government benefits for income, with a low uptake in paid work over the following year (only 4 women were working at the 12-month mark). Sixty per cent said debt remained a major issue, and 43 per cent said they were not managing financially.

To illuminate the financial difficulties, our report provided case studies on four women, two who returned to prison and two who did not by our 12-month follow-up interview. Jean did not have problems with her finances largely because when she came out of prison she went directly to live with an elderly relative. Social security benefits were sufficient for her to meet her needs without additional income. She was even about to get her driving licence and purchase a car. Toni had debts, but following her release, she was given assistance to go onto a payment plan for her debts. She said at the 12-month interview that her finances were fine and that "Gerry (her partner) is really good with money."

Michelle, on the other hand, had rent and study debts, and was always borrowing money. Her "diet was horrible, I was living off cereal." Leah also was not coping well with her finances when we first saw her after release and she did not think she could "ever pay off her debts."

** From Sheehan et al. (2013), p. 3*

*Figure 1: Self-reported issues experienced by women prior to imprisonment. *Note the high percentages with outstanding debts and reliant on government benefits prior to incarceration.*



It is well established that poverty is a significant risk factor for women's interaction with the criminal justice system, and it has been argued that addressing women's financial exclusion can have a positive impact on reducing reoffending.[5] From our studies, it seems clear also that debt, often accumulated before prison, can provide a stumbling block for rehabilitation – and a significant challenge to resettlement in the community. It is certainly an issue that warrants greater attention by policymakers and service providers. Given the rates at which female prisoners and ex-prisoners report outstanding debts and financial difficulties, there is a strong argument for viewing debt management as a core area of intervention for imprisoned women.

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SUSAN MAURY *continued from page 7.*

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JACKI HOLLAND *continued from page 9.*

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NEWS & UPDATES

FORCED MARRIAGE

The Women's Research, Advocacy and Policy (WRAP) Centre is the research and policy unit of Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand. The WRAP Centre shares knowledge in the wider community to advocate for system change, and drives innovation for programs within our organisation. Our research, policy analysis, public advocacy and evaluations are used to design policies and practice models that promote participation for all in the fullness of life. This section shares some of the diverse and fascinating projects that we've been spending our time on.

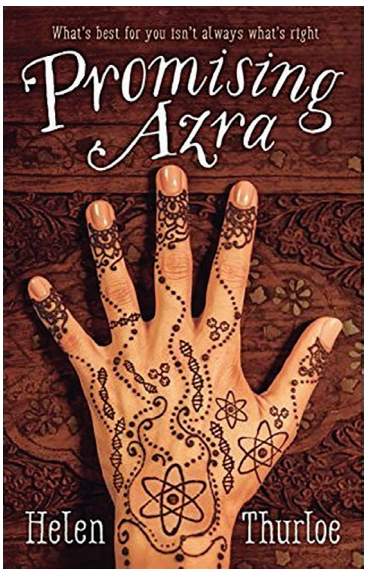
Since the publication of our two research reports on forced marriage in 2012 and 2014, GSANZ has been at the forefront of advocating for increased protection and tailored service responses for women and girls who are coerced, threatened or deceived into marriage.

Examples include:

- Submissions to the Foreign Policy White Paper (Tanya Corrie, February 2017) and the US Department of State 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report (Kathy Landvogt, January 2017)
- Presentation to the CALD sub-committee of the Commission for Children and Young People (Kathy Landvogt, May 2016) and at WIRE Women's Information Seminar Series (Kathy Landvogt, March 2017)
- Paper presented at International Social Service Australia Conference (Kathy Landvogt, April 2016)

Moving forward in our areas of focus

- Participation in the Good Shepherd Asia Pacific Anti-Trafficking Workshop in the Philippines (Kathy Landvogt, October 2016)
- Quoted in the Herald Sun article: Most girls at risk of being married against their will are falling through the gaps (Kathy Landvogt, January 2017)



- Launching of young adult novel Promising Azra by Helen Thurloe (Kathy Landvogt and Yvonne Lay, October 2016)
- Publication of Power to Persuade blog Forced marriage: More than a crime (Kathy Landvogt, October 2016).

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

The WRAP Centre carries on its long-standing research and advocacy work to increase women's and girls' safety and financial security through building a greater understanding of the links between the two. This is reflected in our most recent research report, *Economic Security for Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence: Understanding and Measuring the Impact* (Tanya Corrie, August 2016).

The research demonstrates that survivors of domestic violence experience a range of negative economic outcomes as a consequence of violence, including reduced access to savings and assets, a reduction in financial confidence, lower levels of workforce and education participation, and damage to credit records. When economic abuse has been part of the pattern of violence, financial instability is especially dire. This publication proposes a way to conceptualise economic security and its individual and structural elements as reflected in the literature, and creates indicators, which were trialled with the help of The Australia Institute. This project was funded by the Con Irwin Sub-Fund of the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust.

SUBMISSIONS

- *Violence against women,* on the occasion of the visit by the Special Rapporteur, UN OHCHR (Jacki Holland, Tanya Corrie and Kathy Landvogt, January 2017)
- *Domestic Violence and Gender Inequality* to the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee (Yvonne Lay, April 2016)
- *Gender Equality Strategy for Victoria: Exposing the link between gender inequality and violence* to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victorian Government (Yvonne Lay and Tanya Corrie, March 2016)

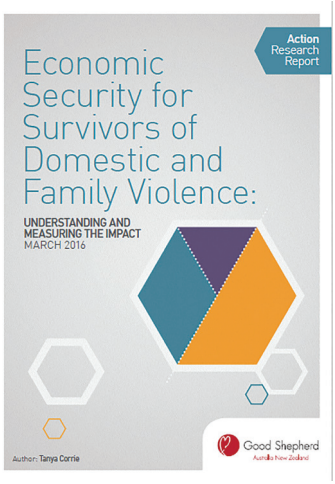
PANEL AND FORUM DISCUSSIONS

- *Domestic and family violence,* hosted by WEstJustice (Tanya Corrie, November 2016)
- *International panel discussion: Financial abuse and women's economic empowerment,* organised by WIRE Women's Information (Tanya Corrie, November 2016)

TRAINING AND SHARING EXPERTISE

In a unique partnership with Catholic Social Services Victoria, the WRAP Centre has supported the creation of a Parish Resource Kit (Yvonne Lay, November 2016), which provides evidence-based information on family violence and how to support people who are seeking assistance. The WRAP Centre also shared its expertise with a range of service providers:

- Training provided to City West Water on identifying family violence (Yvonne Lay and Sally Johnston, December 2016)
- Providing training and creating a guide for the South East Water Hardship Team on the same topic (Yvonne Lay and Fiona Collison, June 2016)
- Advising the Australian Bankers Association on issues pertaining to family violence and debt, including *The use of credit and debt in family violence* (Tanya Corrie, September 2016) and creating a Family violence screening fact sheet (Tanya Corrie and Yvonne Lay, June 2016)



Yvonne Lay also supported the Intersectionality stream at the Prevalent & Preventable Conference organised by the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) and Our Watch, and captured the main themes in a narrated Storify. This was published both by the Women's Policy Action Tank and Uncovered (the University of Melbourne Centre for Advanced Journalism) as Intersectionality: Tackling privilege, colonisation, oppression, and the elimination of violence against all women (October 2016). Yvonne also published Women experiencing domestic violence need expert first contact as a Women's Policy Action Tank blog (June 2016) and Economic security as a pillar for prevention and recovery in Parity, published by the Council to Homeless Persons (May 2016).

CONTINUING RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

With the placement of master's student Juanita McLaren from Victoria University, the WRAP Centre has been able to explore the impacts of Welfare to Work policies from a unique, first-hand perspective. Juanita is a single mother to three boys and has been exploring the policy failings for women and children – and indeed, society as a whole – through her research with other single mothers in the Welfare to Work system by analysing her personal experiences using a policy lens. While the full report of her research is forthcoming, Juanita has published several popular blogs with the Women's Policy Action Tank.

- *When volunteering isn't valued: Welfare to Work and mutual obligation requirements* (March 2017)
- *The feminisation of poverty in Australia.* Summary of and link to Renegade Economists podcast, 3CR (March 2017)
- *Weighing the cost of Welfare to Work implementation* (December 2016)
- *Time to rethink the time policy in Welfare to Work* (October 2016)

FORUMS AND EVENTS

WOMEN'S POLICY ACTION TANK

2016 saw the official inauguration of the Women's Policy Action Tank. A joint initiative of the WRAP Centre and the Power to Persuade, the Action Tank analyses government policy using a gender lens, thus illuminating how policy differentially impacts on women compared to men. This is realised through an annual policy forum, policy analyses published online, and social media commentary. For more information, or to stay up to date on upcoming events, write to us at WomensPolicy@goodshep.org.au or follow us on Twitter @PolicyforWomen

Putting Women at the Centre: A Policy Forum was held in Melbourne in August 2016. Panels included:

- Keynote Conversation: Exploring the need for a gendered approach to policy design and implementation
- Working the spaces of power: Evidence, voice and agency
- The power behind money
- Justice for women

News of the 2017 Forum, scheduled for August in Melbourne, will be available soon.

Nearly 40 policy analysis pieces have been published as blog posts in the past year. Topics vary widely, including flexible work, homelessness, cuts to the Australian aid budget, Welfare to Work, heart disease, Aboriginal women, disaster response, the gender pay gap, older women, family violence, and asbestos exposure, to name but a few. All pieces are available online on the Power to Persuade web site at powertopersuade.org.au/womenspolicy

NEWS & UPDATES

GOOD CONVERSATIONS

The WRAP Centre launched Good Conversations in March this year. The inaugural forum, organised by Tanya Corrie and held in conjunction with Ruby Connection/Westpac and RMIT's Centre for Applied Social Research, was entitled *Child Support Policy and Its Impacts on Women's Economic Security*. The forum was opened by Lois Peeler AM, Executive Director of Worawa Aboriginal College and Victorian Senior Australian of the Year 2017. The conversation was facilitated by Dr Kay Cook, Australian Research Council Future Fellow. Kay was joined by conversationalists Terese Edwards, CEO, National Council for Single Mothers and their Children; Michael Fletcher, Senior Lecturer, Auckland University of Technology; and Emma Smallwood, Family Violence Program Manager, Victoria Legal Aid.

This event was summarised in a blog, co-authored by Kathy Landvogt, Terese Edwards and Kay Cook, titled 7 questions: *Why doesn't child support add up?* (May 2017)

POWER TO PERSUADE

The fifth annual Power to Persuade Symposium was held in August 2016. The WRAP Centre continues to co-sponsor this event in partnership with Dr Gemma Carey from UNSW Canberra. The theme was *Public policy eco-systems: Keeping them open, healthy and sustainable through strategic, multi-level collaboration.*

Panels were:

- Keynote (Mr Andrew Tongue): How do we work with the paradox of concentration of power in parts of government (particularly the centre) and the development of policy networks?
- Who governs our policy eco-systems?
- Connecting institutions and local level action
- What does it take to keep public policy eco-systems healthy?

The 2017 Power to Persuade Symposium will be held on 25th August 2017 in Canberra.

The WRAP Centre also continues to both moderate and write for the Power to Persuade blog. Recent blogs, including for the Women's Policy Action Tank, are

- *Out of the shadows:* What's next in transforming the Victorian family violence sector? (Tanya Corrie, May 2017)
- *Let's get real about measuring service outcomes* (Lanie Stockman, March 2017)
- *A diversion: @RealScientists explores public policy*. Summary of guest curation (Susan Maury, November 2016)
- *One is the loneliest number:* Mitigating the effects of social isolation (Susan Maury, October 2016)
- *As simple as "three words"? Why caution is needed with a 'Pay for Success' approach to ending homelessness* (Lanie Stockman, August 2016)
- *Promoting girls' and women's participation in STEM education and careers* (Peter Ninnes, June 2016)
- *Bold leadership needed for transformational change* (Yvonne Lay, June 2016)
- *Why the Women's Budget Statement needs to be reintroduced* (Yvonne Lay, June 2016)
- *Action and inaction on policy that benefits women* (Susan Maury, June 2016)
- *Stemming the revolving door phenomenon: The importance of strategic advocacy in the community legal sector* (Jacki Holland, June 2016)
- *The 'preferably unheard': Women and the Income Support System* (Tanya Corrie, May 2016)
- *Considering politics of evidence* (Lanie Stockman, April 2016)
- *When policy limits self-efficacy* (Susan Maury, April 2016)

Keynote Conversation from Putting Women at the Centre: A Policy Forum (16 August 2016).

Co-founders of Power to Persuade Kathy Landvogt and Gemma Carey at the Symposium (15 August 2016).

THE WRAP TEAM

The WRAP Centre welcomes several new staff members.

Policy Specialist **Dr Cris Abbu** is our newly-appointed Policy & Advocacy Specialist in New South Wales. Cris has extensive experience in research, data analytics, policy development and evaluation. She has undertaken research on homelessness, mental illness, child abuse and neglect, maternal and child health for Third Sector organisations. She also undertook research and policy reviews/evaluations for NSW Government agencies.

The WRAP team

Louise Monahan, Project Coordinator, is overseeing a collaboration between the WRAP Centre and Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand's client services, focused on responses to children identified on police family violence incident referrals received in the Bayside Peninsula. Louise is a social worker and family therapist with 20 years' experience in service delivery, supervision and leadership roles in both community-based and government organisations.

Helen Forster has recently joined the WRAP Centre as a research assistant. Her role is to support various projects across the team with social policy writing and research. Helen has experience as a research assistant and educator in a tertiary setting. She brings to this role a particular interest in legal studies from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Juanita McClaren is conducting research into how single mothers experience welfare to work, while also supporting the WRAP Centre in events management.

We are pleased to welcome volunteer **Nicholas Curtis**. Nick completed a Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) at Swinburne University of Technology in 2016, and is supporting the WRAP Centre with his research skills.

There have been internal changes within the WRAP Centre as well.

We welcome **Kathy Landvogt** back to her substantive role as Head of the WRAP Centre, after serving as the interim General Manager of Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships. **Yvonne Lay** has been on secondment with Our Watch since the start of 2017, as their Senior Policy Advisor, Intersectionality. **Tanya Corrie** has taken on the new role of Deputy Head of the WRAP Centre, in addition to continuing to hold the Financial Security portfolio. **Jacki Holland** is now overseeing Emerging Focus Areas, while **Susan Maury** is now looking after Educational Pathways.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

GOVERNMENT SUBMISSIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

Payment Difficulties Framework. A response to the Essential Services Commission (Tanya Corrie, November 2016)

Education Data Inquiry. Submission to the Productivity Commission (Lanie Stockman, October 2016)

Submission to Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill, Energy Supplement. (Kathy Landvogt, September 2016)

Inquiry into Human Services. Submission to the Productivity Commission. (Kathy Landvogt, August 2016)

Submission to the New South Wales Inquiry into Child Protection. (Carol Ashmore and Yvonne Lay, July 2016)

Submission to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse. (Kathy Landvogt, July 2016)

Responses to the Essential Services Commission Hardship Guidelines. Consultation. (Tanya Corrie and Sandy Milne, June 2016)

Parent Payments. Consultation with the Department of Education and Training. (2016)

Competition in community services. Consultation organised by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia. (Kathy Landvogt, 31 March 2016)

NEWS & UPDATES

PUBLICATIONS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Fit for purpose? Presentation to the Victorian Evaluation Network. (Lanie Stockman, March 2017)

Financial coaching. Presentation at the Disrupting the Poverty Cycle Conference, EMPath, Boston, US. (Tanya Corrie, October 2016)

Panel member: Innovation starts with us. Victorian Financial Counselling Conference. (Yvonne Lay, September 2016)

Distance travelled: An evaluation of The Waranara Centre. (Lanie Stockman, March 2017). Also presented with Kirsty Rose at Doing School Differently: National Flexible and Inclusive Education Conference (September 2016)

Pledge for Parity: Supporting women in achieving their ambitions. Presentation to Westpac Bank for International Women's Day. (Kathy Landvogt, March 2016)

ARTICLES

- *GSANZ highlights systemic disadvantage for women.* Article in Embrace the World, GSIJPO. (Susan Maury, February 2017)
- Special issue of Parity on Children and Homelessness – Protecting the Most Vulnerable, published by the Council to Homeless Persons. (August 2016)
  - Forced marriage: When the family home is no longer safe. Kathy Landvogt
  - Child and youth homelessness is not just about a lack of housing: A practice view of what needs to change. Yvonne Lay and Ebony Canavan
  - A whole of government policy response needed to address and prevent child and youth homelessness. Yvonne Lay
  - Couch-surfing limbo: 'Your life stops when they say you have to find somewhere else to go'. Shorna Moore and Kathy Landvogt

OTHER

Scams Awareness Campaign. Operated on behalf of Consumer Affairs Victoria. (Jacki Holland, 2016)

Kiribati consultation, in partnership with Caritas Australia. (September 2016 -). Yvonne Lay and Lanie Stockman

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY

Follow us to keep current with social policy news and information about our work.

@GoodAdvocacy

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Questions or comments on this newsletter? We would love to hear from you.

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