

ACLW'S 2018 LEADING ISSUES JOURNAL



11/1/2018

Editor: Dr Diann Rodgers-Healey

Welcome to ACLW's 2018 Leading Issues Journal.

With drought being a significant worsening hardship in rural Australia this year, in August 2018, ACLW invited rural women to share their experiences of what they were living through and how they were coping with it. I acknowledge the women who wanted to take up this call, but were unable to, given the ongoing challenges facing them. I am honoured to feature **CARLY MARRIOTT'S** writing that reflects on her own experiences and that of other rural women. It echoes their tenacity and courage in such dire record dry conditions. Carly manages Brooks Farms in Barooga NSW, a border town in the Riverina region of New South Wales.

From 12 to 23 March 2018, the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The main theme of CSW62 was: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. **DR PATRICIA HAMILTON** was a member of the official Australian Government delegation to the 2018 UN CSW62 and I am delighted to feature her reflections of what she experienced and the significant outcomes she witnessed.

The narratives around asylum seekers tend to characterise them as a homogenous group and as there is virtually nil reference to refugee LGBTIQ women, there is little advocacy for how to support this minority. **TINA DIXSON AND RENEE DIXSON** are to be commended for establishing The Queer Sisterhood Project. They founded it to champion queer refugee women and to provide them with a space of safety, community and belonging. Their article talks about how the idea began and the significant impact it is making for LGBTIQ refugee women.

With the Royal Commission continuing to highlight incredulous failures in Australia's Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry, questions continue to abound as to how this happened and can public trust ever be restored in the industry. I am pleased to feature **CRIS PARKER'S** article as it shines a beacon of light on a way forward. As Director of The Banking and Finance Oath, Cris discusses how The Oath is striving to build trust and confidence in the industry. Facilitated by The Ethics Centre, this industry-led initiative is attracting much support from industry leaders interested in discussing the morals and ethics of the industry and how trust and confidence can be restored.

Finally, it must be said that 2018 has been a watershed year for revelations about sexual harassment in the workplace, further consolidating the #metoo movement. Findings of the first ever survey of attitudes to work by Australian women aged 16 to 40 by an inter-disciplinary team of researchers from the University of Sydney revealed 1 in 10 working women said they were experiencing sexual harassment in their current jobs. The Women and the Future of Work study Report by Marian Baird, Rae Cooper, Elizabeth Hill, Elspeth Probyn and Ariadne Vromen highlighted women's experience of sexual harassment as being commonplace and a difficult part of their work environment. The national study was based on the results of questionnaires of more than 2100 women and 500 men.

In September 2018, Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins released the results of the Australian Human Rights Commission's report *Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces*. She reflected: *"Sexual harassment is a problem that affects millions of Australians, particularly in our workplaces. One in three people (33%) surveyed told us they have been sexually harassed at work in the last five years. The survey results highlight that this is an issue that affects both women and men. Almost two in five women (39%) and just over one in four men (26%) told us that they have been sexually harassed at work in the past five years. These figures are unacceptable and have increased significantly since the last survey in 2012, which found one in five (21%) people told us they had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the previous five year period. Worryingly, people aged 18 to 29 were more likely than those in any other age groups to tell us they have experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years (45%)."*

More details: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/stories/everyone-s-business-2018-sexual-harassment-survey>

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Dr Patricia Hamilton:

"My 16 days in New York were packed with meetings, discussions and connecting with people from the UN 193 Member States to adopt a document known as the Agreed Conclusions, which set forth commitments for States to address gender justice and human rights issues."

Tina Dixon & Renee Dixon

"Despite all the differences between us in stories, ages, cultures and languages, there was a lot that was shared, understood and unspoken between us all. Those three days showed to us the power of community and peer-led initiatives. As a follow up from the retreat and women's desire to continue building our community, with my partner Renee we started the Queer Sisterhood Project."

Cris Parker

"Taking The Banking and Finance Oath, being accountable for your actions and declaring your integrity is one small but hugely significant way individuals in financial services can embrace it."



Drought.

Carly Marriott Brooks Farms, Barooga NSW

YOU THINK FARMERS, YOU THINK LIVESTOCK, YOU THINK DEATH. BE SURE TO CONSIDER THE MOTHER'S, THE CHILDREN, THE BONE TIRED WOMEN.

We are currently experiencing a drought. Who knows if we are at the beginning, middle or end of it. Every dry day is one day closer to a rainy day or so they say. The nation is aware of the dust blowing around the countryside, they have seen the photos, they have rallied behind fundraisers, they know drought is bad. Sympathy provides some comfort, but empathy from fellow drought affected women keeps you company. Farming women support their businesses with off-farm income, they support their husbands with the right words and they support their children with all of their being. It makes sense then that during a drought, farming women support each other.

In every element of life there is always someone better off than you and there's always someone worse off than you. We grow crops and fatten lambs in the Riverina in Southern NSW just north of the Murray River. We are irrigation farmers so we have the capacity to water crops and pastures because we have invested in infrastructure to do so. Politics aside, we are sometimes allocated water and we sometimes have to knock on the bank manager's door and buy water. We feel the pain of drought, but not as bad as some.

As I write this I know that one third of our crop, that isn't irrigated is about to meet an early, fruitless death. It hasn't grown enough to be baled for hay and we don't have the fences in place to graze it off with stock. We have been busily doing earthworks to increase the amount of crop we can water. It costs us money. We have been stressfully watching the political powers above decide that we will not be allocated any irrigation water. It costs us money. My two year old and six month old are happy and healthy, my husband works relentlessly on the farm and stays optimistic. We are doing OK.

I call a family friend who breeds sheep in Western NSW to discuss Christmas plans. They have nearly 40,000 sheep on their sprawling Western Plains property that relies on an unreliable rainfall. They are smart operators who have farmed in that region for generations. They are currently feeding their ewes and rams hay and grain and any other material that will sustain them. Drought brings out the creative and the resourceful in an already imaginative people. Her days are filled with keeping water and feed up to stock while relentlessly searching the countryside to buy more hay and more grain at exorbitant prices. The crops that they sowed have failed but they will graze some paddocks where possible. Her husband is recovering from a spinal injury and her new grandson is having medical complications that require many trips to Dubbo and Sydney. She says they are doing OK.

I call a mate from university who farms cattle in the New England in Northern NSW to talk rain and babies. Farmers in the New England tend to receive higher rainfalls than most therefore they can carry more livestock than most. But the drought does not discriminate and dry means dry wherever you call home. My mate is thirty weeks pregnant with her second child and has recently gone through succession planning to buy the family farm with her husband. Nothing like debt and a toddler to get you out of bed in the morning. They have been selling off award winning breeding cows at rock bottom prices because they cannot sustain their stocking numbers. Generations of cattle genetics are having their heads cut off at the local abattoirs so that they can make repayments and pay bills. The Weather Channel is predicting rain on the weekend and her thirty week scan of the baby went well. She says they are doing OK.

Eventually, the rain will come and the dust will settle, but in the meantime we are all doing whatever we can to keep our farms and our families alive. The two are both so intertwined you can't imagine one without the other. Raising children and running farms takes a certain level of relentless energy and optimism. Something that farming women use to combat the pain and suffering of drought.

We are all doing OK, because we have to.

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Editor's Note:

Thanks to Rural Women's Network for their support in promoting ACLW's call to rural women to share their stories.



Reflections on the 62nd UN Commission on the Status of Women

Dr Pat Hamilton

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DREAM TO REPRESENT MY COUNTRY ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE – ALBEIT, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE AS A MUSICIAN OR A SPORTS PERSON. CSW62 GAVE ME THAT PRIVILEGE AT A DIFFERENT LEVEL.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. I am deeply grateful to the Australian Government and the Office for Women for selecting me to join the official Australian delegation as one of two non-government civil society people representing and being an advocate for rural women and girls. It was a revelation on how nations negotiate for the rights of women and girls as we contributed to the diverse voices in the discussions concerning the CSW62 priority focus: "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls" and the review theme of "Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women".

The journey on the official Australian Government delegation to the 2018 UN CSW62 from 12 to 23 March at the United Nations in New York, has been an amazing unique experience to listen to the presentations from Ministers, Ambassadors, NGOs and Civil Society on a wide range of topics that impact on women and girls throughout the

world, including land and inheritance rights, politics, access to information technology, education, access to water, reducing isolation, child marriage, the importance of family, violence against women and children. The list is endless as we discussed the realities that rural women and girls face in multiple and competing forms of disadvantage, geographical, cultural, and territorial disparities and the layers of discrimination to be overcome. Now that CSW60 has concluded and we have a set of Agreed Conclusions, am I feeling positive about the outcome?

My 16 days in New York were packed with meetings, discussions and connecting with people from the UN 193 Member States to adopt a document known as the Agreed Conclusions, which set forth commitments for States to address gender justice and human rights issues. It seemed such a daunting task and my thoughts concerning arriving at a final document during the negotiations fluctuated between success and failure as each country has its own development priorities. After more than 100 hours of challenging debate, the negotiators emerged with consensus agreement on every paragraph of the Agreed Conclusions for the first time in 5 years! Thanks to facilitator, Mauricio Carabali Baquero from Columbia – a truly amazing, powerful man. He ensured, through hard work, patience, tenacity, persistence and flexibility, where countries worked together and partnered with other groups, that 'we' arrived at a document that contains recommendations which can lead to tangible benefits for rural women and girls.

"The Agreed Conclusions from CSW62 recognises the importance of lifting rural women and girls out of poverty and in ensuring their human rights. The document expresses concern about the increasing challenges that are exacerbating the disadvantages and inequalities that rural women and girls face – from humanitarian emergencies and armed conflicts to the adverse impacts of climate change. The Agreed Conclusions emphasise that rural women and girls are essential to sustainable development, and their rights and empowerment need to be prioritised. A broad range of concrete next steps and recommendations were outlined in the Agreed Conclusions and this strong outcome provides a roadmap on next steps that governments and the non-government sectors can undertake to support the realisation of rural women's and girls' rights and address their needs." (Australian Government official report June 2018).

The Agreed Conclusions for CSW62 were adopted on Friday 23 March 2018. A copy can be found here: <http://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2018/L.8>

Australian civil society delegate Dr Patricia Hamilton and civil society delegates discussing the progress of the CSW62 Agreed Conclusion negotiations.



Over many decades, I have built on the achievements of many women through observation, listening, learning and then acting. I have learnt much from participating in CSW62 which I will continue to build on and share with colleagues in Australia.

CSW62 has also taught me that 'agreed language' matters. Language is not just semantics. Language has political power and is the lifeline that can transform the way we think and act – especially the intent of how words are delivered.

I have had an unforgettable experience – one to be treasured – and I trust that in some small way, I will continue to make a difference to positively address the specific needs and challenges faced by rural women and girls in accessing services and resources in achieving gender equality.



Building a community where we belong

Tina Dixson & Renee Dixson

THE NARRATIVES AROUND REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA OFTEN FOLLOW SINGULARITIES. REFUGEES ARE PRESENTED AS ONE, A HOMOGENOUS COMMUNITY WITH IDENTICAL NEEDS. THEY ARE PRESENTED AS FLEEING PARTICULAR TYPE OF PERSECUTION, BEING OF PARTICULAR GENDER AND COMING FROM PARTICULAR PARTS OF THE WORLD. ANY DIVERSION FROM THIS 'NORM' PUSHES YOU FURTHER TO THE MARGINS.

Additionally, these single narratives are also impacted by colonisation, which is not only manifested through racist and xenophobic rhetoric, but also dehumanisation of people who are treated as the other. Such dehumanisation works through language, assigning the experience of seeking asylum as an identity that overrides everything else. It also works through removal of people's agency by reducing them to victims without decision making capacity. These single narratives are reinforced through the demand for storytelling. People are expected to retell the stories of violence to justify their right for protection, and importantly to affirm the generosity and hospitality of the hosting nation and display eternal gratitude to it.

In these settings queer people seeking asylum find themselves at the extreme ends. On the one hand, they are excluded from refugee and ethnic communities for not fitting in that 'norm'. On the other, for the general public and sometimes LGBTIQ communities, they are deemed exotic. For them, the demand of storytelling is heightened and comes with an extra condition. Queer refugee storytelling needs to reaffirm the colonial binary that a country of origin is backwards, and the hosting country is civilised, and that civilisation is measured by LGBTIQ rights. The fact is that it is still not possible for many queer refugees to come out even when in Australia and that Homophobia exists, is still denied..

Such narratives around refugees also bear a huge impact on service provision, policies and general advocacy efforts. They silence and further oppress some groups by erasing them from a public discourse and denying them representation.

The Queer Sisterhood Project was founded to challenge these singularities, to champion queer refugee women and to provide them with a space of safety, community and belonging.



In January 2018, I organised a three-day retreat for queer refugee women that was part of my PhD fieldwork. For seven months I worked with a group of seven queer refugee women, and the retreat was our last activity. Women who lived in the ACT, NSW and VIC met all together at the retreat for the first time. Despite all the differences between us in stories, ages, cultures and languages, there was a lot that was shared, understood and unspoken between us all. Those three days showed to us the power of community and peer-led initiatives.

As a follow up from the retreat and women's desire to continue building our community, with my partner Renee we started the Queer Sisterhood Project. It is a peer-run support and advocacy group for queer refugee women.

Currently, the group meets in Sydney on the monthly basis. We are also in the process of expanding our work to



Melbourne. We have an online chat to stay in touch in between meetings and in contact with those who cannot attend.

The main aim is to provide a space where women are understood and respected, where they are driving what will be discussed and how their needs will be met.

We are also engaging in policy and advocacy work. Earlier this year, we've prepared a shadow report on Australia's obligations under the Convention of Elimination of All Forms Discrimination Against Women focusing on the rights of LGBTIQ asylum-seeking and refugee women. We've also contributed to another UN submission focusing on the issues of deprivation of liberty.

However, the biggest achievement is being able to help others, be there for them and say that it will be okay. The other day, talking to Omnia about starting the group in Melbourne, she tells me "I am afraid, but when I think that what we do will help women to avoid what we went through, I am not, anymore". Doing this work, getting to know other women and building our community together, for the first time in Australia it feels like we belong.

To find out more and support Tina and Renee's work, see <http://tinadixson.com.au/queer-sisterhood-project/>

Tina and Renee Dixson have been together for a decade now, not only as a couple but partners in everything they do. When Renee was 21, she established the first in the region LGBTIQ human rights organisation that was providing psychosocial, medical and legal support to the LGBTIQ community. Unfortunately, political landscape and visibility of their work at that time, drove them to seek protection. In Australia, Renee has turned to art as a means of making a change, obtaining justice and healing trauma. In 2016 Renee produced a social art project 'Stories about Hope' that explores concepts of human dignity and strength in stories of people from refugee backgrounds. Currently, Renee is a Research Assistant in the Australian National University. She is also a postgraduate student working with questions of sexuality in the museum and heritage contexts. Tina is a PhD Candidate and activist. Her thesis is focused on the lived experiences of queer refugee women viewed through the lenses of trauma theory and concepts of empowerment.

Photos by Renee Dixson



The Banking & Finance Oath (BFO)

Cris Parker, Director BFO

With the interim report from the Royal Commission into our banking and finance industry fresh off the press, it may seem outdated to refer to the Global Financial Crisis, but the fact is the issues are still primarily the same. After the GFC it was believed the industries' deficiencies could only be corrected by increased regulation and surveillance. However, there were opinions that ethical failure was the cause, rather than regulation.

As the 'aftershocks' of the crisis shook the global economy, a number of leaders of the banking & finance industry and the Ethics Centre in Australia, decided to come together to explore the possibility of developing a new ethical foundation for the industry, in its entirety. The Banking and Finance Oath emerged from hours of discussion; an oath, based loosely on the Hippocratic Oath for doctors - for individuals rather than organisations that can voluntarily be taken. Although an ambitious goal, it emerged from a much-felt need.

The Banking and Finance Oath (BFO) is as relevant today as it was when it was first conceived. Culture, conduct and governance are key building blocks to a healthy financial services system and the essential underpinning principles are fairness and justice. The vision of The BFO is simple but compelling -- a banking and finance industry that meets the community's needs and has its full confidence.

The Oath

Trust is the foundation of my profession.

I will serve all interests in good faith.

I will compete with honour.

I will pursue my ends with ethical restraint.

I will help create a sustainable future.

I will help create a more just society.

I will speak out against wrongdoing and support others who do the same.

I will accept responsibility for my actions.

In these and all other matters;

My word is my bond.

Ethics is a doing word - it should be a verb rather than a noun. The BFO provides an ethical framework which can be applied to an individual's work that complements organisational codes. Taking the Oath doesn't make you ethical and not taking doesn't mean you're not ethical. What it does, is it provides an opportunity to declare your integrity and to be proud of your role in society.

Having the trust of others should be the goal of any individual that cares about their work and for any organisation that wants to establish themselves as a legitimate operator in financial markets.

The public spotlight on behaviour in the banking and finance industry has never been stronger and the results from this scrutiny will no doubt include increased regulation and compliance. Ironically, the more regulation an individual is required to adhere to, the less they need to think when making decisions. Imagine the human body encased by a plaster cast to prevent harm, the muscles start to atrophy. It is the same with quality decision making and this then leads to unthinking practices and behaviour soon becomes 'the way things are done around here' and thus the cycle starts again!

The BFO signatories are publicly listed on a website and can choose to add an insignia to their email sign-offs. **The Oath inspires individuals to consider more deeply when making decisions, to be held accountable by their peers and by the community. It develops a clear and common language around ethics and encourages conversations about ethical issues in the workplace and outside. Importantly it encourages personal accountability.** Mistakes will happen, we are human after all and it is how we respond to those mistakes that shows true character.



The BFO continues to have a positive impact in the industry with many CEO, Chairs and executive teams having taken it, including regulators and the RBA. More and more smaller organisations are becoming 100% committed which means every employee has committed to the Oath. These organisations appear to flourish with The BFO providing an opportunity for an expression of shared values and in turn a commitment to organisational values and purpose - an environment where you can be proud of what you do.

Leadership is displayed at all levels and is not exclusive to Leadership Teams. Taking The Banking and Finance Oath, being accountable for your actions and declaring your integrity is one small but hugely significant way individuals in financial services can embrace it.

For more information see <https://www.thebfo.org/About-us/Background>

Charity Spotlight



FILL A HANDBAG WITH A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NEED

Donate to Share the Dignity's Christmas collection #itsinthebag. You have the power to make life better for a woman or girl experiencing homelessness or poverty this Christmas. Provide pads and tampons, personal hygiene products and everyday luxuries to homeless women, women at risk or women experiencing domestic violence.

It's simple. First of all, choose a handbag in good condition that you no longer use. Then, fill it with items that would make a woman feel special, pop in a thoughtful note or Christmas card and show her someone cares.

You will be able to drop off your donation between **16th November and 2nd December 2018**. Collection points will be announced soon at <https://www.sharethedignity.com.au/christmas-charity/>



Her Place
PAKENHAM LIBRARY
24 OCTOBER – 11 NOVEMBER 2018

SUSAN ALBERTI AC
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DEBORAH LAWRIE FRAeS MAP
HALIMA MOHAMED
PETA SEARLE
KAY SETCHES
SHOHELI SUNJIDA
AUNTY BESS YARRAM

   Her Place Women's Museum Australia is proudly supported by the Victorian Government.
This exhibition has been supported by Casey Cardinia Libraries.

Her Place is a free exhibition that honours the lives and contributions of women throughout Victoria.

Presented for the first time in Pakenham, Victoria, *Her Place* tells the stories of ten women from across Victoria who have contributed to Australian society in a broad range of ways.

It celebrates the work, achievements and historical significance through video interviews, biographical accounts and personal artefacts.

Many of the women featured in the exhibition have been inducted onto the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.

WOMEN PROFILED IN THE EXHIBITION

Susan Alberti AC Businesswoman and philanthropist

Pat Bigham AFSM CFA Volunteer

The Hon Joan Kirner AC Former premier of Victoria

Deborah Lawrie FRAeS Map Australia's first female commercial airline pilot

Val Lang

Halima Mohamed Somali community leader

Peta Searle Assistant Coach, St Kilda Football Club

Kay Setches

Shoheli Sunjida

Aunty Bess Yarram, Noongar Elder, nurse and community justice advocate

More information: <https://herplacemuseum.com>

