

Leading Issues Journal

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The RIRDC Rural Women's Award recognises and encourages the vital contribution women make to rural Australia. Rural women have a diverse range of skills and talents. They possess a great passion for rural industries, the land and their community. Through creativity and enterprising spirit, they continue to make an outstanding contribution to sustainable agriculture and resource management. The RIRDC Rural Women's Award supports these women who have a strong and positive vision for the future of agriculture - including forestry, fisheries, natural resource management and related service industries. Each State Winner receives \$20,000 to enable them to more fully participate in the future of rural Australia. (Source: Rural Women's Network)

Sir Edward Weary Dunlop AsiaLink Lecture

Delivered by: Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser AC CH Friday 24 November 2000

In August of 1997 I spoke of Australian foreign policy and defence at an Asialink Forum. I was principally concerned that there seemed to be no comprehensive analysis of the needs of Australia's future security as a consequence of the end of the Cold War. Three years on, there is little more sign that such a debate has taken place.

There is recognition that our own region is undergoing "profound strategic change". I see people writing that "it is crucial that in this uncertain situation the United States is kept

involved in the region". In too many quarters this basic assumption is asserted as though it were a self-evident truth, the considerations surrounding it are not mentioned. There has to be a basic underlying assumption that the United States' interest would in important ways be the same as the Australian interest. I suggest that that assumption from Australia's point of view is highly dangerous. We need to ask the questions. We need to examine the past, to see how much the United States has supported us and how much it has not. We need to make an objective assessment of our shared or disparate interest in the future.

Nobody can challenge that the United States as the world's one super-power and major economic power, will have a continuing influence on every country in the world. What one can legitimately ask, however, is whether that interest will coincide sufficiently with Australia's interest to make a close "partnership" the sole determinant of Australian security.

In any relationship between a country as large as the United States and a country like Australia, there will be a major imbalance. The United States is all-powerful; our power is obviously strictly limited.

Any country in international fora will want to get its own way if that is possible. Only the U.S. has the power to achieve it. The extent of American influence is open and pervasive. This has been increasingly so since the end of the Cold War. Where defeat in Vietnam left America without spirit, without confidence, the end of the Cold War left America feeling victorious on every front. American democracy, American military and strategic power and American financial power, had all proved supreme. The recent years of dramatic growth in the United States have underscored American confidence. All the more reason therefore for America to persuade other states that her way is the right way.

There have been some suggestions that in this feeling of supremacy, the United States may again become isolationist and withdraw from the world. I see no sign of that. I do see signs, however, of America more and more determining unilaterally what must happen.

Against this background, there is all the more need for Australia to re-assess her relationships and to look with unemotional eyes at the options that may be opened to us in the future. Because of language and because of historic and cultural associations, it is natural that many people should look to the United States for security. But, as I concluded at the Asialink Seminar three years ago, we may have to come to terms with the fact that our future security depends more on relationships with countries of our own region than it does on the United States. This is a large chasm for many people to jump but it is the reality that faces us.

Let me address the arguments.

We should recall at the outset that the words of the ANZUS Treaty are far less committing, far less binding, than the terms used in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. There the parties agree that an armed attack on one or more of them in Europe or in North America will be considered an attack against them all. Article 4 of the ANZUS Treaty which still sets the terms of our co-operation with the United States, declares that "an attack in the Pacific area on any of the parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it will act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional process." Article 3 talks of the commitment to consult together in the face of danger.

Whatever one may wish to read into the interpretation of the ANZUS Treaty, the words are far less committing than the words of the North Atlantic Treaty.

It is also worth noting that, at the time the Treaty was negotiated, the United States wanted to proceed with the peace settlement with Japan. The Australian government of the day had some leverage because it would not sign the peace treaty until the ANZUS arrangement was negotiated and agreed.

The Cold War was well and flourishing and the Communist regime had taken over in China. ANZUS, in Australian eyes, became much more a protection against Communist attack than a protection against a resurgent Japan.

I have never doubted that, during the time of the Cold War, Australia was right to give precedence to ANZUS and the strategic relationship with the United States. There were a number of leaders throughout Asia that believed that ANZUS helped re-enforce American involvement in the region. While they would not want to say so openly or publicly, they believed that this provided some assurance of American support in times of crisis.

In retrospect however, how much support did we get? How great was the common interest between ourselves and the United States?

The first test of our relationship with the United States came over what was West New Guinea, what is now West Irian. Before 1949 the Labor Government had been sympathetic to the cause of Indonesia. It had assisted in achieving an early settlement of independence by agreement between the Dutch and Indonesia. After the change of government in 1949, the Menzies government adopted a more pro-Dutch stance. It is worth noting that, even at that time in relation to West New Guinea, Australia's press was very much opposed to Indonesia's claims, and the general public would also have been opposed. There were a number of reasons for this. There was a common view that New Guinea as a whole was important for Australia's own strategic security. This had clearly been re-enforced by the war-time battles which had left New Guinea as the last bastion standing in the way of an invasion of Australia.

The Australian government tried to gain American support and sympathy. For a range of reasons, the United States took little notice of the Australian Government's view. Australian foreign policy during the fifties continued to support the Dutch, rather than Indonesia, even though increasingly it was clear that such views would have no support from the United States or Britain. It took a new foreign minister, Barwick, to recognise the reality of the situation. He managed to end Australia's unrealistic policy in relation to what was certain to become West Irian. Indonesia's policy achieved success most speedily after Indonesia gave indications that she may be prepared to launch an invasion of the territory. The success of that approach may have encouraged President Sukharno later to embark upon confrontation with the newly emerging Malaysia.

Australia gave strong military support to Malaya during the Communist insurgency and later to Malaysia during confrontation. Largely due to the expertise of our Ambassador in Jakarta during this uneasy time, Australia was able to maintain good access to the Indonesian Government at the highest levels. Since Britain was regarded as the architect of Malaysia, her relationship deteriorated and was almost non-existent.

Sir Garfield Barwick, Foreign Minister at the time, had wanted to put one or two shots across Indonesia's bows and had suggested in an airport interview that Australian forces in Borneo would be covered under ANZUS. This assurance unfortunately was fairly short-lived and was effectively repudiated by Prime Minister Menzies in the Parliament.

After the Opposition leader, Arthur Calwell, had said that America does not believe that its commitment does include the protection of Australia troops already in Malaya, Prime Minister Menzies suggested that: "The United States of America did not ever withdraw its support for Malaysia. It has approved of Malaysia, and it wants Malaysia to be maintained. But I very well remember America saying to us – I took no exception to it; I thought it was pretty sensible – that when it came to the immediate defence of Malaysia this was perhaps primarily a Commonwealth responsibility."

During this period, the United States kept herself aloof from Australia's concerns and pursued a broader agenda with Indonesia.

The lesson to be drawn from these events over about 15 years is quite simply that the United States did not agree with Australia and gave very little weight to Australia's views. They were, if you like, the first test of whether or not ANZUS would carry with it practical support from the United States. The lesson to be learnt was that that would occur only if the issue coincided with America's own analysis of America's own interests.

Events in Vietnam were unfolding at the same time as confrontation was being waged against Malaysia. The essential decisions to support South Vietnam were taken before I joined Harold Holt's government as Minister for the Army. The question we need to ask ourselves is the extent to which this involvement was influenced by the relatively unhappy state of relations between Washington and Canberra. Events over West New Guinea in particular had disturbed Australia and there is no doubt that the government sought to do all it could to cement American interest in the region.

If there is merit in this analysis, it would seem clear that involvement in Vietnam was derived from two directions. One concerned the perceived merits of the case. The other being designed to lock the U.S. into Asia through South Vietnam.

Up to the end of the Cold War, however rough the road may have been, governments were right to conclude that the ANZUS Treaty be given primacy in our relationship with the United States. There was a deterrent effect, there wasn't a Communist attack on Australia. In today's world, talking of a Communist threat can be regarded as paranoia. We need to remember that the early post war years, the fifties and sixties affairs were quite different.

In Europe, Czechoslovakia and Hungary had been attacked. There was a blockade of Berlin that sought to force Berlin into the Communist zone. In south-East Asia there was a Communist insurrection in Malaya which took ten or twelve years to overcome. Then, in the early/middle sixties there was an attempted Communist PKI coup in Indonesia.

If the attempts to assassinate General Nasution had been successful, the Indonesian army may not have had the leadership and the stamina to overcome that coup. It was a serious matter in a serious time and clearly affected the attitudes, not just of Indonesia but of other countries in the region. These concerns have now slipped into the background.

During these years Australian Defence and Foreign Policy establishments developed very close bilateral relationships with the U.S. We believe we share in information that is not generally made available to others. The facilities at Pine Gap give us a continuous entrée into the highest levels of American intelligence. Military exercises take place between our armed forces. One of the reasons for the forthcoming Defence White Paper is to upgrade our defence equipment so it will continue to be compatible with the latest American equipment. This alone makes joint exercises and joint operations possible.

There is no doubt that these relationships have advantages for Australia. Even here, however, we need a note of caution. In intelligence matters, we are generally told what others believe it is good for us to know. It is not a complete open book. That is the way great powers operate. In earlier times when we may have relied more heavily on Britain, there would also have been an assessment, within their intelligence machinery, of what we should or should not be told.

Do recent events, however, justify us in saying that ANZUS remains the best deterrence against attack on Australia and that America's policies within the theatre are likely to coincide with our national interests? It is becoming more important than ever to analyse the consequences of our American relationship and to measure the costs as well as the benefits.

Everyone would want a constructive American engagement throughout Asia. In his last term of office, President Clinton has sought to promote, as have others, improved relations between North and South Korea. That this is starting to unfold must be regarded as a benefit for the whole region. While the process will be slow, in today's world, we can have some confidence that it will continue. It is too early yet to speak of the end of the Korean problem but at least we can hope that the peninsula is now on track to so improve relationships that the strategic issue will one day be taken off the political agenda.

We can also be thankful that President Clinton managed to take the annual Most Favoured Nation question off the American political agenda and make a permanent decision in relation to China. Now China looks set to achieve full membership of the WTO. This should be a significant benefit for all of us. American Presidential and administrative actions that have helped to make this possible can all be welcomed and applauded. President Clinton's recent initiatives in Vietnam are also very much to be welcomed.

There are other issues, however, that will become urgent and important. At this point it is important to assess how the Cold War itself altered our strategic circumstances?

With the end of the Cold War, the primary need for ANZUS has been taken off the table. There should be more flexibility in Australian policy. We do not need to be quite so close to the United States. We need to assess other options. We can still make some kind of judgment about the effectiveness of the Treaty by turning to particular issues.

During the Asian economic crisis the United States seemed distant. At a critical time the United States Congress was holding up funds for an International Monetary Fund replenishment. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that this was in part the reason for the toughness of IMF conditions in relation to Indonesia. One has only to look at the restraints that the United States Congress seeks to impose on IMF actions. Delay in coming to the assistance of Indonesia swiftly and effectively made the crisis in that country very much worse.

During the Asian economic crisis there was a suggestion from Japan that an Asian Monetary Fund should be established. There would be sufficient resources in the region to make it effective. America made it plain she opposed the proposal. There have been further discussions of this idea in more recent times and I hope Asian countries and Australia ultimately adopt such a proposal.

American influence at the time of the economic crisis was detrimental in the region because of Indonesia and because of delays in providing support.

At the outset, China made it plain that she would maintain the value of her currency. There were many market forecasters who predicted that this would not be possible but the stability and strength of the Chinese currency stabilised the region and may well have been the single most important factor in limiting damage from the crisis. Certainly the United States did not play a major role in the recovery as she would have if South America or Mexico had been involved.

We cannot divorce the economic crisis from events that occurred in Timor. Here again, so far as the United States was concerned, the issues were left to others. America was remote and appeared to be standing back from the difficulties. It was better that the problem was largely handled by countries from within the region but that has its own message for the future.

Events since the end of the Cold War have not created any strong argument for giving the strategic relationship with the United States primacy over other policy objectives. There are, however, events lurking in the background which are likely to bring Australia into direct conflict with American interests.

When we turn to the future, there are two issues which will be on the agenda where America's interests and Australia's will diverge strongly and sharply. One of these is the American search for an Anti Missile Defence System. If this is pursued, it will seriously upset the current nuclear balance. That balance is dependent on the Non Proliferation Treaty. It was meant to be re-enforced by the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It is also dependent upon bilateral negotiations leading to agreements concerning arms reductions between the United States and Russia. This has created a balance. An Anti Missile Defence System for North America would upset that balance.

If the American Secretary of Defence is right in saying the Australia has already agreed to cooperate with Anti-Missile Defence, then a serious disservice has been done to Australia's strategic interests. It is surprising that this announcement of an alleged Australian commitment by the United States Secretary of Defence, in the United States, has attracted so little comment or debate in Australia. Such participation would put us at the front line, not of Australian but of American defence. It would involve much greater danger to Australia than the current use of facilities at Pine Gap or for that matter the North West Cape.

If North America, because for effectiveness Canada could not be excluded from the proposal, were to pursue that track, Russia and China would embark on the acquisition and enhancement of their current nuclear arsenals. Indeed, the consequence of the world's one super-power making herself impregnable from any attack and thus creating an even more unequal status for herself, has caused concern amongst most of America's allies, with the possible exception of this country. In Australia, if United States statements are correct, facilities at Pine Gap would be involved. There is in Europe a great deal of unease at these

unilateral American tendencies. Europe foresees serious consequences in upsetting whatever equilibrium has been reached at the present time.

The European Union decision to establish her own ready reaction force is in reality a decision to remove the European Union from its total dependence on NATO, largely dominated by the United States. The fact that the United States Senate has already rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will only compound the problems raised by the pursuit of Anti Missile Defence. Pursuit of Anti-Missile Defence and rejection of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty are both symptomatic of a preparedness to place America's judgement over all the rest. I am sure both cause great concern.

There is another major fault with current nuclear policy. The Non Proliferation Treaty from its outset has been seriously flawed. There is a vague mention of nuclear disarmament within it but it is clear the current nuclear states do not take such references seriously. Efforts to prevent additional countries acquiring nuclear weapons should have been complemented by deliberate steps leading to nuclear disarmament. Because of this omission, it was unrealistic to expect the most populous country in the world, the largest democracy in the world, with substantial scientific and technical capacities to commit itself in strategic terms to a second class status. Any actions by India were also bound to be mirrored by Pakistan. The failure of non-proliferation in respect to South Asia is a direct consequence of inadequacies in the original Non Proliferation Treaty.

Against this background, if Australia were to allow facilities at Pine Gap to be used as part of the establishment of the forward echelon of Anti-Missile Defence for the United States, it would clearly become, not a tenth-rate target but a first-rate target in the event of hostilities between America and some other country. When we have no control over the policy that might involve America in conflict with other countries, we should be wary of tying ourselves so completely to United States actions. We would have no control and no influence over circumstances that might put us into extreme danger.

The United States already has the capacity to wage war against any part of the world from American territory. If America, or any country, as "the one super-power" could wage war world-wide, and be immune from attack, for that is what the Anti Missile Defence Proposal seeks to achieve, then we could expect that super-power to become more assertive, more dogmatic, more sure that its own way is the right way. We should not go further down that track.

This is one policy and one strategic question in which Australia's own interest would diverge totally from that of the United States. We should not make ourselves hostage to American policy.

There is another issue which may give more than a little reality to these fears – Taiwan.

President Clinton, to his credit, has sought to reassert the balance of the Taiwan Relations Act, albeit in slightly different terms. President Clinton said: "We don't support independence for Taiwan, or two Chinas, or one Taiwan-one China. And we don't believe that Taiwan should be a member in any organization for which statehood is a requirement."

The United States' role, through the Taiwan Relations Act, has been to give Taiwan enough confidence so that she will not be attacked militarily by China but not so much confidence that she would refuse to negotiate with the ultimate objective of re-establishing One China.

There are many who would argue that the balance of the Taiwan Relations Act needs reasserting and that it has moved too far towards giving Taiwan sophisticated weapons which give Taiwan too much confidence. Unofficial Presidential visits from Taiwan to the United States have given encouragement to those in Taiwan who would prefer independence. The Taiwan lobby in the United States is extraordinarily strong, as indeed it is in Australia. The religious right of the Republican Party for their own reasons, would be likely to approve of independence for Taiwan if that is what Taiwan wanted. For quite different reasons, the Democratic Left would be likely to come to the same conclusion. If the issue were to be seriously debated in the United States, it would be a powerful debate, with no certainty as to the outcome.

If American policy ever were to support an independent Taiwan, the outcome would be war between China and America. America would forget her defeat by Vietnam. America would forget that China would have the intrinsic capacity to sustain casualties of an order which the United States could not match. Unless nuclear weapons were used, it is doubtful if America would win such a war. If nuclear weapons were used, everyone would be the loser.

Ultimately, whatever the course or outcome of a war with China, America would withdraw to the United States, to her own hemisphere. If we had supported her, we would be here as an exposed and isolated ex-ally. Any government that took any action that could lead to that outcome would be guilty of a grave dereliction of duty to the Australian people.

We should not seek to overturn the view that Taiwan is part of China. They are two parts of one country. We have all exchanged diplomatic relations with China on that basis. When we did so I believe we had some understanding of the history which led to that being the only practical and possible option.

The Shanghai Communique, signed in President Nixon's time, set out the situation quite clearly. Both parties wanted to reach a conclusion to the problems of separation between the mainland and Taiwan by negotiation. America said that she was opposed to the matter being resolved by force. China, for its part, could not rule out the use of force. If she were to do so, Taiwan would have no incentive to negotiate. China is in the same situation as Mandela was over the use of force by the ANC. If he had renounced force, there would never have been a successful negotiation with the Apartheid Government.

There is a danger that strong human rights advocates might say that because Taiwan is a democracy they have a right to be independent. There is no such right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The other side of the coin, however, is that governments around the world have come to solemn agreements with China in relation to Taiwan and those agreements should not be overturned.

We need to understand that there some countries who have had such a history that it becomes a part of their mindset in unshakeable ways. China was humiliated by former great powers on a number of occasions – by Palmerston over the Opium Wars in the middle of the 19th century; by Britain, France, Germany and the United States in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, China has determined that such humiliations will never occur again.

I suspect that China would allow Taiwan, on reunification, to keep her Parliament, her judicial system, to keep her police and even to keep her military forces. The only thing which Taiwan would certainly have to give up is the right to independent membership of

international bodies for which statehood is a requirement. Taiwan does not have that right now.

What then is the problem in all of this?

Unfortunately there are movements within Taiwan that seek de jure independence. The current President seemed to be of that mind but as a result of reactions since his election, seems to have backtracked to a certain extent.

A while ago I monitored the east coast press in the United States in relation to reporting of matters affecting China. I came to the conclusion that many people in the foreign policy establishment had already made up their mind that China would be the next enemy. That is re-enforced by American criticism of President Clinton's speech at Shanghai University at the end of his last visit. Think tanks and right wing groups were merciless in their criticism of the President.

In addition to that, there was an interesting article in The Bulletin when Maxine McKew was interviewing Paul Dibb, who is recognised as an established Defence Analyst. The article made it plain that he thought that America was looking for a new enemy. The same article spoke of alliances with South Korea, Japan, Australia and the United States – NATO in Asia, Dibb is reported as saying. If such an alliance occurred it would be aimed at China. We should have no part of it.

In the same vein, Tim Fischer wrote in the Australian in June this year. He talked of the increasingly shrill edicts issuing from elements of the military and academic establishment, most notably on the East Coast of the United States. Tim Fischer wrote: "late last year and again during May, Australia was told that it must automatically jump onto the US side in any conflict with China over Taiwan. Furthermore we should mould our defence force in preparation for this and not hesitate in doing so." Later in the same article he wrote: "Finally to the ugly, and I refer to those elements in the United States who demand Australia's commitment over the Taiwan issue. Defence Adviser in Washington, Dick Armitage, said in September last year that "the United States would expect Australia to help out with the dirty work in a conflict with China over Taiwan." In the article it is very clear that Tim Fischer, who was Deputy Prime Minister at the time, disagreed with such views. The fact that he has written in such a way has not had the publicity or the attention that it needs in the Australian environment. It is one of those aspects that those with a cosy defence or strategic relationship at an academic and bureaucratic level seem determined to ignore.

Only this week the U.S. Commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet wrote in our press what we should do for our security. We are not yet a U.S. province. That a U.S. Commander-in-Chief felt able or obliged to make such comments is indicative of the inequality of the relationship.

We need to make sure that when our own Defence Review is being implemented that it is designed to maximise Australia's capacity to meet our own strategic objectives and that it is not designed merely to complement something that may be required of us by the United States. It would be an act of lunacy for Australia to participate in a conflict between China and America over Taiwan. If those demands have been made of us, as Tim Fischer has so clearly enunciated, they have presumably also been made of Japan. I could imagine no venture more foolhardy for either country.

We ought to be persuading America that she must persuade Taiwan that independence can never be an outcome for her future. No matter how long a negotiation takes, they must not believe that America would ever support an independent and separate Taiwan.

We have then two issues running just beneath the surface which could expose the raw nerve of Australian/American differences. Going the American way would be much too high a price to pay for what is left of ANZUS.

ANZUS was meant to provide a country, small in resources, with support in the event of an attack, support from a great power. As I have shown, it is more likely that the United States would call on us to support her in her policies under ANZUS than it would be that we would call on the United States to help protect the territorial integrity of this country. What a perverse outcome that would be. The instrument designed for our protection could lead to our destruction.

The last issue that I would like to mention is a simple one. Can any of us today envisage a situation in which America would respond to a call for help under the terms of the ANZUS Treaty? I say under the terms of the ANZUS Treaty because technically that Treaty, with New Zealand's withdrawal or expulsion is over. The sentiment is meant to continue.

When there have been concerns in our region, the United States has made it plain they didn't really want to be involved, and that includes East Timor. But going back over the years, whether in relation to West Irian, whether in relation to attitudes to Indonesia itself, or to the spread of Communism in Malaya or to confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia, the United States adopted a studied policy of distance and of relative disinterest. ANZUS was a deterrent to Communist attack but that is not on the cards.

There is one other factor which we should remember. In the World War, Britain and Commonwealth countries fought for two years and five months alone against the Axis powers. If Japan had not attacked Pearl Harbour, would America ever have come into the war? There are many who believe that, without that provocation, America would have preserved her neutrality. To leave Britain and her close Commonwealth partners alone for that period against the Axis powers provides a significant warning about too great a reliance on the United States.

I propose we should do three things. We should do what we can to keep the relationship with the United States but we should not depend upon it as though that absolves Australia from responsibility for her own defence. We should not allow the American relationship to blind ourselves to the degree of security which it provides. In particular we should not allow the relationship to drag us into United States arguments over which we have no influence or control.

I saw a comment by a leading academic a while ago who suggested that without ANZUS we would need to double expense expenditure. Even with ANZUS we need to double our defence expenditure because of the uncertainties in our own immediate region, uncertainties in which the United States has little interest.

We and the countries of East and South East Asia all belong to this part of the world. We are all committed. Ultimately, it is our inter-relationships that will provide security. It is the confidence that we have in each other. It will be our capacity to work together to promote peace and harmony within the region. Closer regional relationships should provide the main

thrust of our search for security through this century. We all need to work at it. If growing confidence in ourselves causes us to let the American relationship slip into disuse, we will have succeeded.

Section B: Resources Available for Women

Stepping Stones Kit

A step by step approach to organising workshops that can help you become more involved in your community.

This kit was produced in partnership with NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network and the Central West Regional Council of Adult and Community Education.

The kit is for people interested in organising workshops in their local area such as individuals, community groups or educators and service providers. The Kit has all the material needed to organise your own workshops and is presented in two parts -

Part 1:

21 steps to get your started ~ an action kit for those involved in the planning process; and

Part 2:

Background sheets and worksheets to be used as a guide for your workshops ~ a sample of information, ideas, and examples to get you started.

For a copy of the Kit visit the Rural Women's Network website www.agric.nsw.gov.au/rwn and look under the resources section. Alternatively give Allison a call at the RWN on 02 6391 3620, fax 02 6391 3650 or email: allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au.

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Women in Decision Making Kit

The Women in Decision Making Kit is a resource for women who are interested in becoming involved in decision making or who are already involved on communities and boards in our community. It aims to inspire women everywhere to take an active, creative and visible role in decision making and to share the experiences of women who already participate in decision making.

The kit recognises that every woman will approach decision making in her own way, learning as she goes, and based on her own unique experiences, background and the conditions at the time.

It can be read by individuals who are taking the plunge , or used by organisations who are encouraging their members to become active in decision making in their communities.

In the kit you'll find information about the kinds of decision making bodies and the legal responsibilities they entail, hints on how to get started, some useful qualities and skills of good decision makers, ideas about how to get on a board or committee, what board and committee participation entails, and information about getting support form networks and mentors.

A copy of the Kit is available from the Department for Women's website under Providing Information - Publications www.women.nsw.gov.au/publications/publica2.html alternatively you can call Allison at the Rural Women's Network on on 02 6391 3620, fax 02 6391 3650 or email: allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au.

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The Older Women Out There Wellness Project (*OWOT*)

The Rural Women's Network was approached by NSW Health to develop an innovative project aimed at improving access to wellness information for older women living in rural, regional and remote areas of New South Wales. The *Older Women Out There* wellness project coordinated by NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network and targeting women living in rural and remote communities across New South Wales was the result. Funding was provided by NSW Health under the National Women's Health Program.

Aims of the project

A review of the Rural Women's Network program in 1999 identified health and access to information and services as priority issues for rural women. The *OWOT* project was developed to meet some of these needs with the aims of promoting awareness of wellness in a holistic sense, encouraging rural women to think more positively about being an older woman, presenting information and resources on wellness in a readily accessible format such as the radio and internet, improving older women's access to up-to-date information on wellness, and breaking down some of the barriers which isolate older rural women and limit their access to relevant information and resources.

6 Priority Focus Areas of the Project

Body Image

Every woman is beautiful in her own special way. Body image is about valuing being an older woman and feeling good about who you are - not about how you look. True beauty comes from within.

Older Women & Violence

There are many forms of violence and controlling behaviours which can intimidate and degrade others - women DON'T have to put up with it. There are many services and resources out there which can help women through the tough times.

Taking Charge

Taking charge is about women being in control of their life. Whether it be to do with lifestyle, health or financial matters - basically anything that affects their life and the way they live it.

Managing Change: Grief & Loss

There are many kinds of loss often associated with changes in people's lives - grief is the normal response. And like any other process, grief takes time to work through.

Transport & Technology

Coping with isolation is a major issue for rural women. Isolation can include limited access to services, or friends and family. It is sometimes hard to overcome, but by developing networks women can start to overcome the barriers.

Having a voice

Everyone is unique. Having a voice is about standing up and being counted. It's about women being valued for their experiences and opinions and getting involved in issues that concern them.

The OWOT Radio Program

As part of the OWOT Project ABC Local Radio developed in May 2000 a series of six one hour radio segments incorporating interviews, panels and talkback. Details of the six programs are below:

Program 1 ~ Body Image, 14 May 2000

Cyndi Tebbel, Author of *The Body Snatchers*, Maggie Mellar, Australian Actress Lorraine Dunn, Gentle Exercise Teacher Gwenda Fulford, Newcastle Older Women's Network

Program 2 ~ Older Women and Violence, 21 May 2000

Margaret Sargent, *Older Women Speak up About Violence*, William Findlay, Family and Relationships Counsellor and Coordinator of the *Hey Dad* program Kate Lohse, Women's Health Coordinator, Southern Area Health Service Glenda Brown, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Liaison Officer, Tashe Long, Regional Violence Specialist

Program 3 ~ Taking Charge, 28 May 2000

Beverlee Adams, Teacher, Farmer, Local Council Member and former ABC Rural Woman of the Year, Former member of Rural Women's Network State Advisory Committee, Fran Rowe, Rural Financial Counsellor, Former Community Chair of Rural Women's Network State Advisory Committee, Cyndi Kaplan-Frieman, Author of *Sexy, Sane and Solvent - A Woman's Guide to Femininity and Self-Esteem*, Helen McGowan, Lawyer, Legal Options for Rural Women

Program 4 ~ Managing Change, 4 June 2000

Lyn Sykes, Public Speaker, Communications Counsellor, Fran Spora, Author and Grief Counsellor, Claudia Glasson, Volunteer Counsellor for women with breast cancer, Graduate of Stepping Stones program, Susan Feldman, Alma Unit for Women™s Health at University of Victoria

Program 5 ~ Transport and Technology, 11 June 2000

Nan Bosler, Australian Seniors Computer Club, Mavis Appleyard, Poet Ros Fosky, Rural Development Centre, University of New England. Helen Dempsey, community lobbyist, Gloria Robbins, Internet to the Outback, Computer Skills for Older People, Kaiya Fraser, Women on Walkabout

Program 6 ~ Having a Voice, 18 June 2000

Sonia Muir, Cordinator, Rural Women's Network, Marge Bollinger, Highway Safety Action Group, Robyn Henderson, Director-General, Department for Women, April Fran, NSW Immigrant Women's Speakout Association, Glenda Brown, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Liaison Officer, Sr Carmel Hanson, St Vincent de Paul, Psychologist and justice advocate involved in East Timor refugee effort

Section C: Rural Women's Award 2001

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC)

RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD 2001

The RIRDC Rural Women's Award recognises women's vital contribution to rural Australia and encourages them to have a greater participation in its decision making.

The Award now in its second year is playing a pivotal role in the revitalisation of rural Australia, by capitalising on the talents and skills of rural women and encouraging greater diversity in its leadership and management.

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation is a statutory agency of the Federal Government. Its mission is to make and manage research and development investments on behalf of government and industry for the benefit of the rural sector.

The Award is an initiative of RIRDC in partnership with the Standing Committee for Agriculture and Resource Management Rural Women's Working Group, a national committee of representatives from Commonwealth, State and Territory agriculture and primary industry agencies, who manage the Award at a state level.

RIRDC's 'Missed Opportunities Report-Harnessing the Potential of Women in Australian Agriculture' reveals some startling statistics of women's under-recognition in Australian agriculture.

- The vast proportion of agricultural businesses are family owned with women representing 32% of Australia's farm work-force. More than 70,000 women define themselves as farmers or farm managers. In economic terms, women's contribution amount to at least 28% of the market value of farm output or a gross figure of \$4 billion annually.
- Women contribute to the overall viability of farming enterprises through off-farm work to a total of about \$1.1 billion annually. In recent years it is off-farm work, 81% of which is done by women, which has enabled many farming families to maintain their enterprise and lifestyle.
- Adding together the value of women's on-farm contribution, their off-farm wage income and the value of household, volunteer and community work, women contribute 48% of the total real farm income, worth in 1995-96 almost \$14 billion. But less than 20% of agricultural decision-makers are women. This imbalance reduces the diversity of leadership needed to improve performance of the farm sector, both domestically and in a globally competitive market.

It is well documented that women in agriculture are on average younger and more highly educated than their spouses. They possess strong negotiating, time management, communication, networking and entrepreneurial skills-skills that are crucial for the future of Australian industry in general and the agricultural sector in particular.

The Award's major objective is to increase women's capacity to contribute to agriculture and rural Australia, by providing them with the support and resources to further develop their skills and abilities. (Source: Rural Women's Award)

Winners of the Rural Women's Award:

State:	Winners:
Tasmania	Frances Bender
Victoria	Sharyn Munnerley
New South Wales	Jon-Maree Baker
South Australia	Jeanette Gellard
Queensland	Dianne Gresham
Western Australia	Rhonda Tonkin
Northern Territory	Carmel Wagstaff

The Centre for Leadership for Women would like to congratulate all the Winners and the finalists of the Rural Women's Award.

RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD 2001 TASMANIAN WINNER

Frances Bender

Huon Aquaculture Company

PO Box 1. Dover TAS 7117

Frances with her husband have over the past 12 years worked to develop what has become the largest privately owned Atlantic Salmon farming business in Australia. The Huon Aquaculture Company now employs 80 people and generates gross annual sales of \$20 million.

Frances throughout the years has played an integral role in the development of their business and is presently a Director and Administration, Occupational Health and Safety and Human Resource Manager for the Company. She is also deeply committed to her community and was responsible for the establishment of the Esperance Multi Purpose Health Care Centre at Dover, secured through funding as one of the first two Commonwealth grants for multipurpose centres in Australia. She is also an active member of the Huon Valley Group of Women in Agriculture and a Women in Business group.

Frances vision is to see aquaculture, particularly in Tasmania, continue to prosper and expand as a source of sustainable future employment for rural communities. She sees herself and her company as a model for enhancing employment and training opportunities within regional communities.

Frances believes that with the maturing of the domestic market, exports must provide the key to her industry's future viability and to future employment opportunities for rural communities. She intends to study first hand the markets for salmon products in Japan and

to articulate their customer needs including product specifications and packaging and presentation needs.

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RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD 2001 VICTORIAN WINNER

Sharyn Munnerley

RMB E1852 Mt Egerton VIC 3352

Sharyn owns and operates a rural stockfeed supplies business, which she is set to sell to achieve her ambition, the Australian Calf Rearing Research Centre.

She has spent the past eight years researching all aspects of calf rearing along with extensive trialling of breeds, feeding methods, housing effects and climatic conditions. She has now become an expert in her field and is in strong demand as a consultant to industry while speaking extensively throughout Australia on the subject.

Sharyn believes there are huge opportunities for the dairy and beef cattle industries to turn what has traditionally been regarded as a by product into an economically valuable resource. Her vision is to ensure for her industry a viable and sustainable future by utilising all of its assets and resources.

She believes that correct calf rearing practices will result in not only significantly reduced feeding costs, but more productive heifer replacements and a burgeoning bull beef market.

The Australian Calf Rearing Research Centre, she proposes will offer producers information on best practices and latest technology while also educating the general community. She also proposes to compile a user friendly video and website and conduct lectures and seminars at the centre.

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RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD 2001 NEW SOUTH WALES WINNER

Jon-Maree Baker

'Lynoch' Narrabri NSW 2390

Jon Maree has held the position of Executive Officer of Cotton Consultants Australia since 1997 and is the youngest Director of the Australian Cotton Industry Council. She also owns and operates in partnership with her husband Baker Ag Services and runs a farm specialising in Santa Gertrudis beef cattle and Australian stock horses.

Jon-Maree recently facilitated the first meeting of the Women's Industry Network Cotton,

which resulted in the formation of a working group to progress the establishment of a network for the sharing of information and ideas. Her vision for the cotton industry is one where all members, both male and female, are qualified and equipped to meet the changing demands of government, community and regulators.

She is committed to ensuring women have access to the necessary skills and training to enable them to play a greater role and in turn ensure the cotton industry's future sustainability.

Jon Maree is committed to establishing a pilot course, that offers technical, business and leadership training to women across her industry. She believes there is a real demand for such a course and believes it will be the catalyst to fostering a strong network amongst cotton women, to ensuring women's future involvement and contribution to their industry and to a strategy for women within the industry's overall strategic plan. She also believes the pilot course once developed will have widespread application across other rural industries for the benefit of women across agriculture.

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RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD 2001 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINNER

Jeanette Gellard

PO Box 26 Kingscote

Kangaroo Island SA 5223

Jeanette's current position as Business Adviser with the Kangaroo Island Development Board continues a 12 year career and commitment to agriculture and its human resource.

In partnership with her husband, Jeanette also runs a small farming enterprise on Kangaroo Island, which they are now in the process of developing.

She was the Chair of the Organising Committee to the 2000 SA Women on Farms Gathering on Kangaroo Island, a gathering of some 150 women and partners over three days.

Jeanette is passionate about agriculture and the role rural women play and is excited about the diversity of opportunities it offers to individuals. Her vision is to lift the image of agriculture and to promote the diversity of opportunities it offers to young men and women.

She plans to develop a resource pack for secondary schools and tertiary institutions that outlines the range of employment and business opportunities available in the agricultural sector. She aims to initially trial the packs in a targeted region, such as Kangaroo Island, to test its success before promoting it statewide.

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RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD 2001 QUEENSLAND WINNER

Dianne Gresham

'Anunaka'

1246 Bruce Highway

Kybong via Gympie Queensland 4570

Dianne in partnership with her husband Ray and his parents operate a 200 cow dairy farm outside Gympie on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

She is very active off farm in the dairy industry, as Vice Chairman of the Gympie Branch of the Queensland Dairyfarmers Organisation, Treasurer of Dairy Action, the industry's youth group and has been involved in organising numerous industry conferences and events. She is also an active member of both the Queensland Rural Women's Network and Australian Women in Agriculture.

Di's vision for her industry is to assist producers in developing the skills and knowledge to strategically position their businesses in a rapidly changing environment.

She is the Editor of Dairypage, an online magazine for dairyfarmers and recognised as the most successful dairy website in Australia.

She believes that with the dairy industry undergoing its most unstable and uncertain period for 25 years, that farmers having access to the most reliable and up to date information, will be crucial to the survival of their businesses. Di proposes to undergo intensive training in the field of website development, so that she can develop Dairypage to its full potential, as an interactive and comprehensive information site, so that it becomes a vital tool for farmers in running their businesses.

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RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD 2001 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN

WINNER

Rhonda Tonkin

PO Box 23 Commberdale WA 6512

Rhonda, with her family, owns and operates 15,000 hectares of land in the Shire of Moora of which 4,000 acres is committed to the production of wildflowers.

Rhonda's commitment to the wildflower industry and to sustainable agriculture and regional employment spans 26 years. She is the only person in the industry in Western Australia, to

have vertically integrated her business on a large commercial scale, from production to wholesaling, retailing and value adding and exporting.

Her business currently produces and markets some 400 species of flora, which she wholesales to every Australian state and markets to several exporters in Perth. Her value added products are currently exported to Holland, Germany, Italy, USA and Japan and she is now in the final stages of export negotiations with China and Israel. Her business currently employs 20 people of which 75% are women.

Rhonda's vision is to enhance the wildflower industry's sustainable production through better value adding and more exporting, while at the same time dramatically increasing the opportunities for rural women and for regional tourism.

She holds the strong view that there are too many people counting, consulting and watching and not enough people doing things in Australia and she strives to be a catalyst to increasing opportunities for rural women and increasing agriculture exports and tourism through the wildflower industry.

She plans to undertake a 3 week market research tour of the USA and Europe including Holland and Germany, to better understand the export demand and market requirements for value added wildflower products.

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RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD 2001 NORTHERN TERRITORY WINNER

Carmel Wagstaff

'Brunette Downs Station'

PMB 5 Mt Isa QLD 4825

Carmel has lived and worked on cattle stations in the Barkly Tablelands of Northern Territory for over twenty years.

She is founder and co-ordinator of the nationally accredited Australian Agricultural Company Training Program, one of the country's largest and most successful competency based, on station training programs. The program provides on station training and assessment to over sixty young men and women each year and has been credited for improving the staff retention rate at AACo by 35 percent, while dramatically improving the image of the pastoral industry and its employment opportunities.

Carmel's strong commitment to the pastoral industry's future generation is reflected in the numerous positions she has held, including Barkly Branch Executive, NT State Councillor and Federal Assistant Secretary to the Isolated Children's and Parents Association. She was also a former member of the NT Women's Advisory Council, initiator of the Brunette Women's Day and was winner of the 1998 Chief Minister's Women's Achievement Award.

Her vision for the future of the pastoral industry is to arrest the exodus of youth from the bush and make the bush a place where people desire to live.

Carmel proposes to galvanize the pastoral industry with this common purpose, by bringing together key employers and employment agencies, to workshop ideas and opportunities. The workshop outcomes will then be collated and promoted through various networks including a heavy reliance on relevant websites.

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Source: Rural Women's Award.

<http://www.ruralwomensaward.gov.au/>