

Powerful Women



A photographic exhibition capturing the diversity and strength of 30 powerful women in Australia.

UNIFEM Australia

The United Nations Development Fund for Women is the women's fund at the United Nations. Created in 1976, UNIFEM works to promote women's empowerment, human rights and gender equality around the world.

UNIFEM Australia is a non-government organisation that raises public awareness for UNIFEM on gender development issues and raises funds to support UNIFEM projects internationally.

This Exhibition celebrates UNIFEM's 30th anniversary and International Women's Day. It is supported by the Australian Government through the Women's Leadership and Development Program.

Yann Le Berre

Originally from Paris, Yann Le Berre was brought up by his mother, a photographer herself, and a film retoucher by trade. After finishing his studies, he joined the French press industry as a photo engraver where he worked for a variety of newspapers and magazines. Always drawn to photography, he started snapping his friends and discovered his passion. Yann has worked as a photographer for the last 15 years and Powerful Women is his second major exhibition.

www.unifem.org.au

Powerful Women

Christine Anu



Christine Anu, is a multi-ARIA award winner and her signature tune 'My Island Home' will resonate in the hearts of Australians for all time.

From very humble beginnings in the Torres Strait in far North Queensland, Christine worked hard to establish a successful and varied career in singing, dancing and acting. Studying dance at NAISDA in Sydney, Christine was spotted as a talent with more to offer than just dance and was asked to perform backing vocals with Neil Murray and the Rainmakers.

A solo singing career then became the new focus and Christine was soon offered a record deal with Mushroom Records. Christine made her recording debut on the Paul Kelly single 'Last Train'.

Christine then made a deeper foray into the land of theatre and film, appearing in her first feature film 'Dating the Enemy', and in David Atkins' production of 'Little Shop of Horrors' at The Enmore Theatre. Later, she won the highly-sought role of Mimi in the musical 'Rent'. Christine has also starred in the feature films 'Moulin Rouge' and 'The Matrix Reloaded'.

Full of inspiration after the birth of her baby daughter in 2002, Christine went straight back to the recording studio to release her third album, '45 Degrees'. Last September, long-time friend, David Hawkins, devised and directed a show around Christine's life and career. 'Intimate and Deadly' opened at Kabarett Voltaire at The Seymour Centre to critical acclaim. More recently, Christine released her first acoustic album titled 'Acoustically'.

Christine's many awards include four Deadly Awards, two ARIAs for 'Stylin Up', an APRA Award for Song of the Year for 'My Island Home', and a Green Room Award for Best Actress in a musical for Mimi in 'Rent'.

Christine has two children, her son Kuiam and daughter Zipporah.

Powerful Women

Sallyanne Atkinson



In the course of her career, Sallyanne Atkinson achieved eminence in many areas of business and government, particularly in her areas of special interest, the Environment and the Arts.

Born in Sydney during World War II, Sallyanne spent her childhood between Northern Ireland where her father was born, Sri Lanka, where the family lived, and the Gold Coast, where they settled.

With a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Queensland, Sallyanne started off her career as a journalist for newspapers, radio and television. After marriage and five children, Sallyanne went on to hold a variety of government positions including Research Assistant to Defence Minister Jim Killen, Lord Mayor of Brisbane City Council, Australia's Senior Trade Commissioner to Paris, Chairman of Queensland Tourism and Deputy Mayor of the Athletes Village at the Sydney Olympics.

Today, in addition to being a grandmother of twelve, Sallyanne is a company director and the Queensland Government's Special Representative to South East Asia.

Powerful Women



Simone Bartley

Simone's career in communication spans 20 years and has led her to work in Australia London/EMEA and Asia. During that time she has gathered extensive experience on a variety of global and local brands. Examples include Toyota, Lexus, Hewlett Packard, Sony, Motorola, NRMA, Foxtel and Guinness and not for profit organisations such as the UN, UNIFEM, AWARE and WWF.

Simone has worked for two of the world's most highly awarded creative agencies including OMON and Saatchi & Saatchi. Simone's fascination with innovation and ideas in communication has meant she has been heavily involved in pioneering new areas of the business.

During 2001-2005 Simone was based in Singapore as CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi. Whilst in Asia Simone put her energy to the benefit of the communication industry. She played a pivotal role as Vice-Chairman of the IAS and Chaired the Ethics in Business for the AFA. She was also a big supporter of AWARE and their efforts for White Ribbon Day.

In 2006 Simone returned to Saatchi & Saatchi Australia as the Chief Executive Officer and has led the agency to win more new business in Australia than any other agency in the past year. She now sits on the Saatchi & Saatchi Global Executive Board and continues her support for violence against women through UNIFEM Australia.

Simone is also on the board of the Asia Pacific Business Coalition for HIV/AIDS.

Powerful Women

Larissa Behrendt



Professor Larissa Behrendt is Professor of Law and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney. She is also the Director of Ngija, the National Institute of Indigenous Law, Policy and Practice.

Larissa graduated from the University of NSW Law School in 1992 and has since graduated from Harvard Law School with a Master of Laws and a Doctorate of Laws. She has worked as a practicing lawyer in the areas of Aboriginal and claims and family law, and has taught at the University of NSW and Australian National University. In 2002, she was the co-winner of the inaugural Neville Bonner national Teaching Award.

Larissa is admitted to the NSW and ACT Supreme Courts and is a Judicial Member of the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, Equal Opportunity Division and a Judicial Member and Alternate Chair of the Serious Offenders Review Council.

She has spent time working in Canada and at the United Nations with First Nations organisations and is currently undertaking research on Indigenous governance and policy issues. Larissa is currently sitting on the boards of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre and the Australian Council of Social Services and is a fellow of the Australian Social Sciences Academy.

Larissa has had published books and articles on property law, indigenous rights, dispute resolution and Aboriginal women's issues. She is a regular columnist in the National Indigenous Times. Her book, 'Achieving Social Justice: Indigenous Rights and Australia's Future' was published in 2003 and she won the 2002 David Unaipon Award for her novel Home. Larissa is a Director of the Sydney Writer's Festival, a board member of the Museum of Contemporary Art and a Director of the Bangarra Dance Theatre. She was recently appointed Chair of the newly formed National Indigenous Television Ltd.

Powerful Women

Julie Bishop



Julie Bishop was born and educated in South Australia, and after completing a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Adelaide in 1978, she practised law and became a partner of an Adelaide law firm. In 1983 Julie moved to Perth and practised as a commercial litigation solicitor. She became a partner of Clayton Utz in 1985, and managing partner in 1994. In 1996 Julie attended Harvard Business School, completing the Advanced Management Program for Senior Managers.

Before entering Parliament, Julie was Managing Partner of national law firm Clayton Utz in Western Australia. She held a number of positions including Chair of the Western Australia Town Planning Appeals Tribunal, member of Murdoch University Senate, the board of the Anglican Schools Commission and Director of SBS (TV and Radio) Corporation.

Julie was elected to the House of Representatives as the Member for Curtin in 1998 and re-elected in the 2001 and 2004 elections. On 27 January 2006 Julie was appointed to the Cabinet, as Minister for Education, Science and Training and as the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues. Prior to this, Julie was Minister for the Ageing.

Within her ministerial capacity Julie has served on a number of parliamentary and policy committees. Specifically, Julie has been Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, Chair of the Government Trade and Foreign Affairs Policy Committee, Secretary of the Treasury and Finance Policy Committee, a member of the Government Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and the Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs, as well as a number of other Government policy committees.

Powerful Women

The Hon Dr Meredith Burgmann



Growing up on Sydney's North Shore, Dr Meredith Burgmann was born into a conservative family. The conservative way of life ended when Meredith became a radical protestor in the Anti-Vietnam movement and later the anti-apartheid movement. As an active protestor in these areas Meredith was frequently arrested. Meredith later channeled all her efforts into two issues: the women's movement and the early environment movement.

Meredith earned both a Bachelor of Arts (English and Government) and MA (Foreign Policy) from Sydney University and a PhD (Industrial Relations) from Macquarie University. The topic of Meredith's doctorate thesis was Jack Munday and the Greenbans. Meredith has been an Academic at Macquarie University and President of the Academics Union in NSW.

Meredith was elected to the NSW Legislative Council in 1991 and was elected President in 1999. Meredith retired from the NSW Parliament as the March 2007 elections. She found her 8 years as President of the legislative Council unusual but enjoyable. Another job Meredith enjoyed was organizing the "Ernie Awards" which are satirical trophies awarded annually to the men who make the most sexist remarks during the year. Since her retirement she has written a book on the ernies including some of the most outrageous winners.

Meredith's interests are the Sydney Swans and equal pay.

Powerful Women

The Hon Linda Burney



Linda Burney is a member for the Wiradjuri nation and the first Aboriginal woman to be elected into the NSW Parliament for the seat of Canterbury in 2003. Linda is the Minister for Fair Trading and Minister for volunteering. Prior to her election to the Parliament, she was Director General for the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Linda has chaired and served on boards and committees at state and national levels including ATSIC National Social Justice Task Force, Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) of Australia, National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, NSW State Reconciliation Committee, NSW Board of Studies, NSW Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, NSW Advisory Committee for the International Year of Volunteers 2001, Anti-Discrimination Board and NSW Board of Studies. Linda was on the Board of Directors of Tranby Aboriginal College and Patron of Boomalli Aboriginal Artist Co-operative.

She represented Australia in meetings of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations and was involved in World Indigenous Peoples' Conferences: Education (1990, 1993, 1996).

Currently Linda is Convenor of the Natural Resources Advisory Council, NSW Inaugural Ambassador for Reconciliation, Chair of the Native Vegetation Assistance subcommittee of the Environmental Trust, Member of the Board of Trustees University of Western Sydney, Patron of Myall Creek Memorial Trust, and Chairperson of the Michael Riley Foundation.

Linda's work has been recognised with the Centenary Medal, an Honorary Doctorate from Charles Sturt University, named one of ten "True Leaders" of Australia by the Australian Financial Review's inaugural BOSS magazine, Lipton's Australian Women's Quality Award, a NSW TAFE Medal and the NSW Department of School Education Director General Award for Outstanding Service to Public Schools.

Powerful Women

Marie Coleman



Marie Coleman (PSM) was brought up with the knowledge that girls can do anything, so long as they don't assume they can have everything at once.

Brought up in rural NSW during the Great Depression, Marie moved from one small community to another with her father (who worked for the railways) and her mother (who became a fashion buyer and company director).

Educated in the NSW public school system and at the University of Sydney, Marie worked as a journalist, a public relations consultant, a social worker, a teacher, and a script writer before being invited to become an adviser and administrator for the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972. Marie went on to be the first woman to head a Commonwealth Government agency, the first woman to head any government agency.

While working for the Commonwealth, Marie held a number of senior positions in various areas of social and health policy. She also represented Australia in delegations to the United Nations, ESCAP and the OECD.

Since her retirement, Marie has chaired various panels for the Government of the ACT. She has also worked with the Australian Reproductive Health Foundation, which she helped establish in 1995, and the National Foundation for Australian Women (NFAW) to support changes in public policy on reproductive health issues. In addition, Marie has helped NFAW to establish the Australian Women's Archives project and their social policy program.

Since 2005, Marie has convened a consortium of around 60 national women's organisations in the "*What Women Want*" project, that monitors, researches and assesses the distributional impacts on women of income security changes, setting of benchmarks on women's wages and conditions, and the impacts of the Industrial Relations changes on vulnerable workers.

Marie has three daughters and three grandchildren.

Powerful Women

Stella Cornelius



Helena Cornelius and Dr Stella Cornelius (AO, OBE) founded 'The Conflict Resolution Network' in 1986 that aims to create a conflict-resolving community in a culture of peace and social justice.

Its origins lie in the Peace and Conflict Resolution Program of United Nations Association of Australia founded by Stella in 1973. Three generations of women work in the network's core: long-term peace activist Dr Stella Cornelius, her daughter professional psychologist Helena Cornelius and Helena's daughter media advisor Estella Cornelius.

Helena and Stella Cornelius through the Conflict Resolution Network have initiated many programs and projects, always in Conflict Resolving mode. Possibly the most well known of these has been Media Peace Awards, presented annually in recognition of the vital role the media can play in the peaceful and creative resolution of conflict.

A constant is their campaign to eliminate involuntary unemployment. Their 1982 Campaign for Ministries or Departments of Peace is enjoying renewed upsurge of support world wide; hopefully the result will be equal opportunity for the peacemakers whose voice will be heard in the highest levels of decision making. Their latest initiative is the well-received launch of a new expanded edition of the basic text of the Network, the book 'Everyone can Win'.

Although the work of the Network is very demanding, both women have wide interests. Helena, mother of three young adult children, grandmother of one 15-month-old, is also an accomplished artist whose exhibited work has been much admired.

Stella is a social activist who maintains a constant interest in world affairs and is mentor to the many who pursue the path of peace and conflict resolution, social justice and human rights. She is one of the "1000 Women for Peace" who were jointly nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Powerful Women

Elizabeth Cox



Elizabeth Cox was born and raised in the industrial suburbs of Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s, an era that exposed her to Australian multiculturalism, class issues and challenge. Her school was subjected to arson three times and it was a struggle to gain admission to university. Her parents were instrumental in her development, championing multiculturalism, the removal of class barriers and opportunities for all citizens. They taught her that girls can do anything.

After completing an Arts degree at Melbourne University in 1972, Elizabeth travelled to Papua New Guinea (PNG). She took a volunteer position in a remote community near the Sepik River and spent the next 10 years resourcing an extremely difficult resettlement process, training rural youth and women's leaders.

After completing post graduate studies in Gender and Development, Elizabeth returned to work in PNG and across the Pacific Region. More recently she has worked with government, the UN, AusAID, with Save the Children and OXFAM. Her areas of expertise are gender and development, human rights, ending violence against women, sexual health and rights in a changing society and the context of AIDS.

After 34 years of local, national and regional work in the Pacific, Elizabeth has taken up the post of Regional Programme Director with UNIFEM Pacific, and currently heads the sub-regional office in Suva Fiji.

Powerful Women

Elizabeth Evatt



Elizabeth Evatt graduated in law at the University of Sydney in 1955. She studied at Harvard for her LLM, and practised law in Australia and in England. In 1973 she was appointed as a Deputy President of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. From 1974 to 1977 she chaired the Royal Commission on Human Relationships.

Elizabeth was the first Chief Judge of the Family Court of Australia from 1976 to 1988 and then became President of the Australian Law Reform Commission until 1993. She was a part time Commissioner of the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission from 1995 to 1998.

From 1984 to 1992, Elizabeth was a member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and chaired that Committee from 1989 to 1991. She was a member of the UN Human Rights Committee (1993-2000) and a Judge of the World Bank Administrative Tribunal (1998-2006).

Among other activities, Elizabeth was Chancellor of the University of Newcastle (1988-1994), and conducted a Review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 for the Australian Government (1995-996).

She is now a Commissioner of the International Commission of Jurists and undertakes human rights projects with that organisation.

Her other current interests include her grandchildren, music, cycling, and travel.

Powerful Women

Mem Fox



Mem Fox has had a busy dual career as both a teacher at Flinders University in Adelaide and a writer of wildly successful picture books for young children and non-fiction books.

She is probably best known for her first, multi-million-selling picture book, 'Possum Magic', published in 1983. Since then Mem has written another 29 picture books, most of which are still in print in Australia and the US. Her latest book is 'A Particular Cow', illustrated by Terry Denton.

Mem was born in Melbourne, raised in Zimbabwe and later moved to London to attend drama school before returning to Australia. She attended various universities in Australia and has been married longer than any of her friends. She and her husband have a daughter Chloe, who is still the centre of their world.

Mem travels extensively in her mission to persuade parents, carers, teachers and librarians to read out loud to the young children in their lives for at least ten minutes a day, everyday in their first five years of life. Her parent book, 'Reading Magic: how your child can learn to read before school and other read aloud miracles', encapsulates her life's work.

Over the years Mem has received many honours and awards from Australian government and other institutions for her contribution to the cultural life of Australia, in spite of the fact that she lies about her real hair colour, much prefers cooking and gardening to writing, and would dearly love to lie around and do nothing at all.

Powerful Women

Hazel Hawke



Hazel Hawke has been an active contributor and leader in areas relating to community, family, social justice and disadvantage, the environment and the arts.

While perhaps achieving greatest prominence during the period of her ex-husband's Prime Ministership, Hazel has always worked independently and been "involved".

Hazel Masterson was born in Perth in 1929. She was educated at Mt Hawthorn State School and Perth Central Girl's School. She attained an Associate Diploma of Pianoforte in 1945.

In 1956 she married. The Hawkes lived in Melbourne from 1958-1983 where Hazel raised three children, then worked at the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne, as a volunteer in the Action Resource Centre for Low Income People and then employed in the Social Issues and Research Department from 1975-1979.

She gained a Diploma of Welfare Studies from the Caulfield Institute, Melbourne in 1982.

Hazel lived in the Prime Minister's Lodge from March 1983 to December 1991, actively pursuing her interests and lending support to causes spanning a broad spectrum of Australian issues.

In January 1992, the Hawkes moved to Sydney to live and in December of that year, her autobiography, 'My Own Life', was published. She was divorced in 1995. She continued her active involvement in Australian community life for as long as she was able.

She is most recently known for having "come out" with Alzheimer's disease, and for advocating for increased understanding, dignity, support and research for people living with dementia.

She lives at home, closely supported by family, and although quite affected by now with Alzheimer's, remains her inimitably cheerful and positive self, and still plays the piano!

Powerful Women

Sue Gordon



At the age of four, Dr Sue Gordon, AM, was taken away from her mother as part of a government policy relating to part-Aboriginal children. It was another 30 years before Sue Gordon's family found her.

Sue's varied career included being a soldier, Commissioner of Aboriginal Planning in Western Australia, Magistrate of the Children's Court of WA, ATSIC Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Indigenous Council. She has also held a number of administrative positions and working for 14 years in the Pilbara WA with Aboriginal people.

Sue was the first Aboriginal person in Western Australia to head a government agency when she was appointed Commissioner of Aboriginal Planning in WA. In 1988, Sue was appointed a Magistrate of the Children's Court of Western Australia; the first Aboriginal magistrate in that state.

One of the first appointed ATSIC Commissioners, Sue has sat on various boards and committees around Australia. In 2002 Sue was the Chairperson of the 'Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (the Gordon Inquiry)'. In 2004 Sue was appointed as Chairperson of the National Indigenous Council (NIC) and in 2006 she was appointed as a Member of the Council of the Order of Australia.

Sue earned a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Western Australia (UWA) and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by the UWA for her services to the community and Aboriginal people. In 1993 Sue was awarded an Order of Australia for her work with Aboriginal people and the community. Sue was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2003.

Sue has traveled extensively and is a frequent guest speaker on children's court issues and the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Powerful Women

Sue Ismiel



In the early 1990s, Sue Ismiel was a married mother of three young daughters and working as a medical records keeper in a Sydney hospital. Her primary goal was to provide a loving environment for her young family.

In an effort to create a natural hair removal product for her daughter Natalie, who suffered from sensitive skin, Sue developed 'Nad's Natural Hair Removal Gel'. Named after her oldest daughter Nadine, this pleasantly scented green goo, concocted from products in her kitchen and tested on her husband's legs, became the most popular natural hair removal product in Australia. Like her many products, Sue is all about solving people's problems lovingly, but effectively.

Nad's has enjoyed great success around the world and Sue has received numerous awards including Entrepreneur of the Year Award (2002), Bulletin's Business Star of the Year Award (2002), Finalist for the Veuve Clicquot Award (2005) and being inducted into the Australian Businesswoman's Hall of Fame (2000).

As well as a successful businesswoman, Sue is a passionate philanthropist and is actively and financially involved in many children's charities. She has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Jean Hail Foundation, to fund an important world-first study known. This study, known as the 'Sue Ismiel International study into Women's Health' and Hormones, was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2005.

Two of Sue's daughters, Nadine and Natalie, now work in the family business. Nadine combines study for her Masters of Herbal Medicine with her role as head of Research and Development for the company. Her younger sister, Natalie, is a marketing graduate and Assistant Brand Manager for Nad's. The youngest daughter, Naomi, is a graphic designer and a graduate of the Billy Blue School of Design.

Powerful Women

Gail Kelly



Gail Kelly (DipEd, BA, MBA, SF Fin) was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Westpac Banking Corporation in 2007.

Prior to this she was the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the St George Group for five years. She came to St George from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

She is a Director of St George Bank's funds administration subsidiary, Asgard Wealth Solutions and a Governor of the Bank's charitable arm, the St George Foundation. Gail is also a Director of Melbourne Business School Limited and a member of the Financial Services Advisory Council.

Gail began her career as a teacher in Rhodesia after studying Latin and Modern History at University before making the move to banking in 1980. She migrated to Australia in 1997 after holding a number of senior management positions with one of South Africa's major banks, Nedcor.

Gail is married with four children. Outside of the office, she enjoys watching sport and reading when time permits.

Powerful Women

Dorothy McRae-McMahon



Reverend Dorothy McRae-McMahon was born in Zeehan, Tasmania in 1934, but has lived for more than half her life in Sydney. She has worked to end the White Australia Policy, for peace and disarmament, against apartheid and racism in general, for equality for women, and lesbian and gay rights.

Dorothy was the first woman to be the minister of a church in the City of Sydney, the Pitt Street Uniting Church and then became National Director for Mission of the Uniting Church. She was Moderator of the World Council of Churches Assembly Worship Committee, the first woman to hold that position.

She has been recognised by the community in the following awards: Jubilee Medal from the Queen for work with women in NSW (1977), Australian Government Peace Award (1986), Australian Human Rights Medal (1988), and an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Macquarie University for work with minorities and her contribution to the spiritual life of the community (1992).

In her retirement, Dorothy writes liturgy for churches in six countries, has recently had her fourteenth book published and co-edits the South Sydney Herald.

Powerful Women

Voula Messimeri-Kianidis



Voula Messimeri-Kianidis was raised in a small rural village in central Greece, by her paternal grandmother, while her parents were in Germany as guest workers. Her grandmother was widowed during World War II, raising five children and subsequently a large number of grandchildren, with strength and determination, helping her family to overcome abject poverty and the trauma of war. She remains Voula's strongest and enduring role model.

Reunited, Voula and her family migrated to Australia when she was thirteen with her two younger brothers. Settling in Melbourne Victoria, her parents worked in the manufacturing industry, like many others in the mass migration period. They chose Australia, following other family members who declared the country welcoming to migrants, prosperous and peaceful; a good place to settle and educate children.

Voula, following this dream, learned English, went on to complete tertiary education and has been working in the community services sector for nearly twenty five years. She lives in Melbourne with her husband, son and daughter.

She has a strong commitment to social justice and considers multiculturalism as a cornerstone for a successful and harmonious society, for all Australians.

Elected in late 2005 as Chair of the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA), Voula became the first woman to occupy this national leadership position, championing FECCA's core role as an advocate for access and equity, community harmony, the celebration of diversity, human rights and the promotion of multiculturalism.

Among the issues Voula seeks to highlight through her community involvements, are the needs of migrants and refugees with a particular emphasis on women, believing that timely innovative and flexible settlement programs are the key, entry point to full civic and economic engagement by people newly arrived to Australia.

Powerful Women

Christine Nixon



Christine Nixon commenced duty as Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police on 23 April 2001, after serving the NSW Police Force from 1972.

She is the current CEO of Victoria Police, an organisation of 13,900 staff and an annual budget of \$1.2 billion operating out of 550 work locations, including 330 police stations, throughout the state.

Ms Nixon is the Chair of the Australian Police Professional Standards Council, member of the Australian Crime Commission, and board of the Australian Institute of Police Management.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Macquarie University, a MBA from Harvard and a DipLabLaw from Sydney University. She has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by the University of Wollongong.

Powerful Women

Ibasi Ohide



Ibasi Ohide was born in Sudan in 1982. At the age of ten, she fled Sudan with her family to Uganda where they lived as refugees for five years until they settled Australia in 1997.

Since moving to Australia, Ibasi's work has made an invaluable contribution to the lives of many in our refugee and migrant communities. In Ibasi's own words:

"I am very passionate about social justice issues and issues affecting women, children and young people. I live each day with hope for others who are unable to see hope."

At 24, Ibasi already has extensive experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse background and refugee communities in Australia and overseas. Her varied roles with mainstream and refugee agencies have included Project Officer with Centrelink's Multicultural Services Branch, Community Development and Information Officer with the African Communities Council, Community Settlement Service Scheme worker with the Youth Action and Policy Association and Assistant Officer with UNHCR in Uganda.

She holds a Bachelor of Community Welfare (International Social Development) from the University of Western Sydney.

In 2006 Ibasi was the winner of Austcare's Paul Cullen Humanitarian Award for her services to refugees in camps in Uganda.

Powerful Women

Margaret Olley



Margaret Olley, AC, is regarded as Australia's most important 20th century interior and still life painter. Her career spans more than 50 years and her ability to capture the beauty and harmony in familiar, everyday objects has won her a place among Australia's finest artists.

Margaret first came to public attention as the beguiling subject of Dobell's winning Archibald portrait in 1948. She is known for her friendships with important Australian artists including William Dobell, Russell Drysdale, Donald Friend and Jeffrey Smart.

She has held at least one exhibition per year since 1948 at galleries across Australia. Her work is represented at galleries including the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of NSW, the Art Gallery of WA, the National Gallery of Victoria, The QLD Art Gallery, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, in addition to regional galleries, tertiary and municipal collections. Her numerous art prizes include the Johnsonian Club Art Prize, Redcliffe Art Prize, Helena Rubinstein Portrait Prize, Redcliffe Art Prize, Bendigo Art Prize and Finney's Centenary Art Prize. She has four honorary doctorates from Macquarie University (1991), University of Queensland (1999), University of Sydney (2000) and Griffith University (2006).

Life Governor of the Art Gallery of NSW from 1992, Margaret in 2006 was appointed Companion of the Order of Australia in 2006 and has been declared one of Australia's Living National Treasures.

In 1990, Margaret established the "Margaret Hannah Olley Art Trust" to purchase works for public collections. In 1997 her work was the subject of a major retrospective organised by the Art Gallery of NSW.

Today, Margaret lives in Sydney. Two years after celebrating her eightieth birthday, a biography by Meg Stewart titled 'Far From A Still Life' was published in 2005.

Powerful Women

Kerryn Phelps



Professor Kerryn Phelps is Adjunct Professor at Sydney University in the Faculty of Medicine in the Schools of Public Health and General Practice. She has been a familiar face to many Australians over the last twenty years, appearing regularly on television, radio and in numerous publications.

Currently the health writer for the Australian Women's Weekly, Professor Phelps also provides political commentary for Medical Observer Magazine. She is a regular commentator on general practice, public health, medical politics and human rights issues. In 2007 Professor Phelps joins Channel Nine's "Catch Up" as a weekly visiting medical presenter.

In May 2000 Professor Phelps became the first ever woman to be elected as Federal President of the AMA. During her Presidency she reached a resolution to the Medical Indemnity crisis and was instrumental in changing the government's approach to the Australian medical workforce. She recently completed a review of the NSW Cancer Council and is currently on their Board.

Aside from practising as a GP in Sydney, Professor Phelps lectures at Sydney University, consultants to various Corporations, sits on several boards and has established a state of the art multi-disciplinary health clinic Surry Hills. She is extremely involved in integrative health and is on the Advisory Board of the Australian Integrative Medicine Association.

In 2003 she was awarded the Centenary Medal for services to Health and Medicine.

Powerful Women

Leah Purcell



Cultural activist, creative artist and Artistic Director of Bungabura Productions, Leah Purcell was born in Murgon, QLD and is a proud Goa, Gunggari, Wakka Wakka Murri woman.

Leah's performances cover theatre ('The Marriage of Figaro', 'Nowhere', 'The Vagina Monologues', 'Low', 'Bran Nue Dae'), TV ('Love My Way', 'Fallen Angels' won her an AFI nomination, 'Police Rescue') and film ('Jindabyne', 'The Proposition', 'Somersault', 'Lantana'). In 1997, Leah co-wrote and performed her one-woman play 'Box the Pony' in London and across Australia, winning Best Play/Drama in the QLD and NSW Premiers' Literary Awards. 2002 saw her publish the best-seller 'Black Chicks Talking' of the award winning documentary and stage-play of the same name. Directing her first play 'Howie the Rookie' to critical acclaim for Kooemba Jdarra Indigenous Performing Arts (2006); she will also direct 'Seven Deadly Gins' for them in 2008.

Recognition of her work includes: Green Room Award for Best Actress (2004), Deadly Award for Best Actress for her role as Dr Condoleezza Rice in 'Stuff Happens' (2005), nomination for Helpmann Award Best Actress (2006), Eisenhower Foundation Eisenhower Fellowship (2004), an Honorary Master of Music Theatre by the University of Central QLD in 2002.

Leah is currently a member of the National (National Aboriginal Day of Ceremony (NAIDOC) Committee, Ambassador for the Australian Republican Movement, Patron of the Australian Children's Music Foundation, Patron of the Yalari Indigenous Scholarships Foundation, Ambassador for Birrung Gallery (World Vision), Patron for Indigi Readers and one of the inaugural Ambassadors for Reconciliation. She has recently been appointed the Resident Artistic Director of ACPA (Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts) in Brisbane.

Leah and her husband Bain Stewart have one daughter, Amanda. Life lessons are: *"Always try to achieve your goals - JUST HAVE A GO! Be proud of anything you do in life. Help someone less fortunate than yourself. Experience something different in your life, get out of your comfort zone. Make sure you're kind to yourself."*

Powerful Women

Mahboba Rawi



Mahboba Rawi founded 'Mahboba's Promise' in 1996 in response to the poverty and tragedy that Afghanistan's people have suffered over the past two decades. Mahboba is living proof that one courageous person can make a difference.

After fleeing the Soviet expansion in her home country in 1984, Mahboba lived for two years in a Pakistan refugee camp. As a teenager she married before moving to Australia where she settled into the Australian way of life.

In Australia, further tragedy touched her life in 1992 when she lost her son in a drowning accident at Kiama's blowhole on the south coast of NSW.

Despite personal hardship, Mahboba began to raise money and awareness among the Australian community for the plight of Afghan orphans living in refugee camps. Her vision for the Afghan people has crystallised in the form of *Mahboba's Promise*, a non-profit organisation dedicated to directly improving the lives of the widows and orphans of Afghanistan. In Mahboba's own words:

"My work has been with the widows and orphans of Afghanistan. I am particularly happy with the schools that we have built for girls. Educating girls makes such a difference in a community and it changes men's attitudes too."

I had a phone call from one of my orphans the other day - it was such a surprise - it made me think, I have been doing this work for nearly ten years and now some little boy I picked off the street is calling to tell me about his job. It made me happy to think about him, but then I feel sad as there are still so many little boys living on the streets and barely existing.

I love Australia, it is such a beautiful land. I hope that we can live here in harmony and not be divided. We all hold the same things important – kindness, generosity, helping the needy, tolerance – so surely we can all live together with respect."

Powerful Women

Susan Ryan



During the course of her distinguished parliamentary career, Susan Ryan, AO, became the first woman to hold a Cabinet post in a federal Labor Government.

Whilst serving the Hawke Government as Minister for Education (1983-1987) and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women (1983-1988), Susan pioneered extensive anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation and policies for women, including the landmark Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) and the Affirmative Action Act 1986 (Cth). In 1990, Susan was awarded the Order of Australia for services to the Australian Parliament.

Susan's political autobiography *Catching the Waves* was published in 1999, and in 2003 she co-edited 'The Hawke Government A Critical Retrospective'.

In recognition of the fact that Australia is the only western democracy without a law protecting human rights, Susan instigated the New Matilda's community campaign for a Human Rights Act for Australia in 2005. Susan now chairs the national campaign committee, conducts public forums on the proposed bill and advocates its adoption to members of Parliament from all parties.

Today, Susan is a regular contributor in the media on issues relating to finance, politics, education, women's employment and income. Since 2000, she has been President of the Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees and is currently a Pro-Chancellor and member of Council of the University of New South Wales.

Susan has two adult children and is an enthusiastic grandmother to her 5 year old grandson.

Powerful Women

Louise Sauvage



In 1990, at the young age of 16, Louise Sauvage, OAM, embarked on what is now considered one of the greatest sporting careers the world has ever seen. In that year Louise represented Australia at the World Championships in Holland and broke the World Record for the 100m event, winning a Gold Medal for her efforts. Since then, Louise has changed the perception of elite athletes with a disability and more importantly, has educated and raised public awareness and acceptance of disabilities in general.

Louise's illustrious career achievements include World Records in every distance from 100m to 5000m, victories in some of the world's most prestigious road races such as the Boston, Los Angeles, Honolulu and Berlin marathons. Louise represented Australia at four Paralympic Games, three Olympic Games in the 800m Women's Wheelchair Demonstration Race, the Commonwealth Games and the World Championships.

Worldwide recognition of Louise's achievements include being named Australian Female Athlete of the Year, World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability, four times Australian Paralympian of the Year, twice International Female Wheelchair Athlete of the Year and a recent induction into the NSW Hall of Champions.

In 2000 she established the 'Louise Sauvage "Aspire to be a Champion" Foundation', providing financial support for junior and developing athletes to enable them to compete and perform in their chosen sport. In establishing this foundation, Louise noted:

"Sport has given me so many opportunities and a lifetime of memories. The Foundation enables me to give just a little bit back and hopefully contribute in a small way to assisting future Australian Champions".

Retiring from the international sporting stage in 2004, Louise is now a National Development Coach with the NSW Institute of Sport's Wheelchair Track and Road Program.

Powerful Women

Ann Sherry



Ann Sherry was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of Carnival Australia in July 2007.

Prior to this, as Chief Executive Officer of Westpac New Zealand, Ann spent the last four years working in a country where women really *are* in charge. With women occupying the positions of Prime Minister, Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament and Chief Justice it is clear that women in New Zealand have not only scaled the heights of power, they have taken up residence.

On both sides of the Tasman, Ann has achieved some significant firsts in the world of banking. Her appointment as CEO of the Bank of Melbourne made her the first female head of an Australian banking operation. As CEO of Westpac New Zealand, she is also the first female to lead a major bank in New Zealand.

Within Australia, Ann has had a varied career that has encompassed unions, government and the private sector. Ann was First Assistant Secretary of the Office of the Status of Women in Canberra. Within this role, Ann advised the Prime Minister on policies and programs to improve the status of women in Australia. Ann was also Australia's representative to the United Nations forums on human rights and women's rights.

In 2003 Ann was awarded a Centenary Medal by the Australian Government for her work on providing banking services to disadvantaged communities.

Away from work, Ann enjoys the great outdoors, reading, film and collecting art. She also finds peace in her family's rural property, where they have built a solar-powered, eco-friendly home. Among the more exotic of Ann's outdoor adventures was a recent trip to the mountains of Rwanda to see the endangered gorillas. Ann refuses to confirm or deny whether this close encounter with the great apes armed her with new insights for managing the men with whom she works in what's traditionally been an aggressive, ultra-competitive industry.

Powerful Women

Fiona Stanley



Professor Fiona Stanley, AC, is a child health researcher and advocate for improving the health and well-being of children and families. Named Australian of the Year in 2003, Professor Stanley is the Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Perth and Executive Director of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. She is Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Western Australia.

While she trained and worked as a medical doctor, her move into research was prompted by a desire to prevent, rather than simply treat, many of the recurring conditions that she saw in children, particularly from disadvantaged environments.

Professor Stanley's research career has involved establishing a number of comprehensive data bases that track maternal and child health. This has enabled her and her Institute colleagues to look at the causes and prevention of birth defects and major neurological disorders particularly the cerebral palsies and neural tube defects. This research has resulted in a world-first campaign to encourage women to take the vitamin folate prior to pregnancy.

With a commitment to improving health as a means to improving social justice, her team has been unpacking many of the social and economic influences that impact so strongly on child health and development. Professor Stanley is passionate about improving the life chances of Aboriginal people and stands strongly for reconciliation.

Professor Stanley serves on the Prime Ministers Science, Engineering and Innovation Council and is UNICEF's Australian Ambassador for Early Child Development.

Professor Stanley is married to Professor Geoffrey Shellam and together they have two adult daughters. To relax she enjoys swimming, bushwalking and reading biographies.

Powerful Women

Kirsty Sword-Gusmão



Kirsty Sword-Gusmão grew up in Melbourne and Bendigo and attended Melbourne University where she completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours), majoring in Indonesian and Italian, and a Diploma of Education.

In 1991 Kirsty joined the Refugee Studies Program at Oxford University and travelled to East Timor as the Researcher for the Yorkshire Television documentary film '*In Cold Blood: The massacre of East Timor*'.

From 1992 to 1996, Kirsty lived and worked as a teacher and human rights campaigner in Jakarta, Indonesia. During this time her work for the East Timorese independence cause intensified and brought her into contact with the independence leader, Xanana Gusmão, who was serving a 20-year sentence in a Jakarta jail and whom she married in July 2000.

She has lived in East Timor since October 1999 and is the founder and chairwoman of the Alola Foundation which she established in 2001 to address the needs of East Timorese women and their families.

The Alola's programs have expanded rapidly and have been in great demand since the crisis began in East Timor in April 2006. Current programs include the Friendships Schools Project, linking schools in Australia with schools in East Timor, the Maternal and Child Health program which works to reduce the maternal and child mortality rates by promoting good health for women and their communities and the Women's Resource Centre where staff provide resources, information and referral services to women and their families, particularly in the areas of domestic violence, maternal and child health and accessing humanitarian assistance.

Powerful Women

Judith Whitworth



Professor Judith Whitworth is currently the Director of the John Curtin School of Medical Research, Convenor of the Australian National University's College of Medicine and Health Sciences and Howard Florey Professor of Medical Research. She also heads the High Blood Pressure Research Unit. Professor Whitworth is an Ambassador for Canberra and an Ambassador for Women. She was Telstra ACT Business Woman of the Year in 2002 and ACT Australian of the Year in 2004.

Professor Whitworth graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1967 with a Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery. She earned an MD in 1974, four years later a PhD and in obtained a DSc in 1992. In 2004 the University of Sydney awarded her an MD (Honoris Causa) and she was awarded an MD (Honoris Causa) by the University of NSW in 2005.

The Professor is a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She has practiced medicine, undertaken extensive research in Australia and overseas. Professor Whitworth has chaired the Medical Research Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia and is a past President of the Australian Society for Medical Research. She is currently the chair of the WHO Global Advisory Committee on Health Research (2004-2007) and a member of the Foundation Council of the Global Forum for Health Research.

Her previous appointments include Australia's Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer and Professor of Medicine at St George Hospital, University of New South Wales.

Professor Whitworth was made a Companion in the Order of Australia in 2001 for service to the advancement of academic medicine and as a major contributor to research policy and medical research administration in Australia and internationally.

Her interests include skiing, reading, watching cricket and rugby and walking the dogs.

Powerful Women

Lisa Wilkinson



Lisa Wilkinson is one of Australia's most successful, innovative magazine editors and co-host of Channel Seven's top-rating Weekend Sunrise TV programme.

At 21, Lisa became the youngest ever editor of a national women's magazine in Australia. Appointed as editor of Dolly, she almost tripled the magazine's circulation during her four year career.

At the invitation of Kerry Packer, Lisa then became editor of Cleo, and set new records by increasing circulation by more than 50% and guiding Cleo to the position of No1 selling women's lifestyle magazine, per capita, in the world. She also became Cleo's International Editor In Chief, running editions in New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

On radio, she spent two years co-hosting drive with Doug Mulray on 2WSFM, while on television Lisa made her mark with six years as a panellist on Beauty & The Beast, hosting The Morning Shift on Channel 7 during the year of the Sydney Olympics, and now, co-hosting Weekend Sunrise with Andrew O'Keefe.

Lisa now runs her own international magazine consultancy business, with many of her initiatives leading to major industry awards around the world.

Lisa is married to fellow journalist, author, radio broadcaster and former Wallaby, Peter FitzSimons. Together they have three young children.