

Professor Leonie Still

**Comment on the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency's
2006 Census of Women in Leadership**

The More Things Change, the More They Remain the Same!

It is disappointing that 30 years after the first equity review was held in Australia by the Royal Commission into Public Administration (1976), and 40 years since the removal of the marriage bar (1966) that prevented women from building careers, that women are still underrepresented in decision making positions. Despite a booming economy, the rising education levels of women, their improved credentials by way of work experience and a strong supportive legislative framework that outlaws discrimination at both a State and Federal level, there is still no 'level playing field' for ambitious women who wish to achieve their potential. While many companies are beginning to get the equity message and to take advantage of the 'hidden' talent in their midst, I believe it is time for another national rethink on why there has been so little change in advancing women into responsible positions in recent times. The four censuses conducted by EOWA illustrate the point succinctly and also reveal that any change is marginal at best. It is also interesting to note that Australia lags behind most of the leading Western countries in these matters. This is also disappointing given that Australia was the first country in the world to give women the right to vote and to stand for Parliament. Australia is not supporting its women, a fact that seems likely to reverberate through the generations to come given the current situation.

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