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Business Achievement Awards 2002
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Welcome to our second national EOWA Business Achievement Awards – our first in Melbourne!

When I look around the room I see friends and colleagues. I feel reaffirmed and re-energised as the leader of a unique Australian Centre of Excellence on advancing women and business.

And I thank you - for without your vision, without your support, without your creative commitment to change EOWA would not survive. It may sound dramatic but there is no other way that we can inspire action without having positive relationships with our core clientele – all of you !! Congratulations!

When I reflect on the time since our inaugural awards last year I feel exhilaration at the success of our last awards, and proud to be well on the way to EOWA becoming the Australian centre of excellence on women in the workplace issues and solutions.

So...what is this centre of excellence? Well...it's the foundation for our relationship building with our key stakeholders.

Now...from everything I have read and seen as a leader I am committed to the idea of relationship building, as Margaret Wheatley says about discovering order in the chaotic world

"What is critical is the relationship created between 2 or more elements. Systems influence individuals, and individuals call forth systems. It is the relationship that evokes the present reality. Which potential becomes real depends on the people, the events and the moment."
From Margaret Wheatley in "Leadership & the New Science"

It's because of EOWA's uniqueness – we are fashionable and yet we are not! – people give us lip service, state they are 100% behind us and yet do absolutely nothing. Its very difficult to be authentic in this climate because of the complex factors involved. Hence my understanding - that relationships are the key to overcoming these factors. Over the past 3 years I've been working with my staff to build a unique agency that adds value in every

interaction we have with our clients and I have been building relationships with our clients to work together creatively to achieve a raising of awareness and action to deliver.

For example:

- ❑ We have our highly successful and accessible “leading the way” workshops for a wide range of industries
- ❑ We have our new highly interactive and informative website and tools – just waiting to assist you!
- ❑ We are not paper driven – the shorter your report the better
- ❑ We have a wealth of practical case material from Australian employers
- ❑ We have conducted the first ever Australian international women in leadership census - the results will be launched on 26th November
- ❑ And finally we have an increasing number of positive working relationships with industry and academia

Which creates the core of our centre of excellence.

Peter Drucker, the father of management wrote:-

“The talk you hear about adapting to change is not just stupid it's dangerous.

The only way to manage change is to create it.

By the time you catch up to change the competition is ahead of you.”

That’s what we are doing at EOWA. We are challenging the status quo and taking risks. We have to create inclusive workplace cultures for all people. So the significance of the fish in the bowl is that culture is invisible to the people who fit the culture - like water is to a fish - but toxic to those who don’t fit the culture.

I feel privileged to be in a room with Australian leaders of like minds who are leading the way. You understand what’s to be gained from creating inclusive workplace cultures – and you understand that women equal profits.

So I encourage you to be opportunists – when you are confronted with an industry leader who has absolutely no idea about this stuff tell them - please. We need to be courageous, take risks, network and share our successes.

EOWA’s vision is to enable Australian working women to reach their potential in the workplace. This is a quantum shift from where we are now in the majority of Australian

businesses - however its achievable as we are seeing here today. The evidence is right here in this room!!

Let's celebrate our achievements and re energise ourselves for the unique challenge – we are forging a new frontier – it hasn't been done before and as with all frontiers there's a mixture of emotion - surprise, fear, elation, curiosity, and disappointment. But if we have the support of each other – and the support of honest, transparent relationships we can't help but make significant progress.

Once again congratulations and thank you!