

Tassie Councils Leading the Way in Gender Equity

Three Tasmanian councils – Waratah-Wynyard, Devonport and Circular Head received Bronze Awards in the ALGWA 50:50 Vision Councils for Gender Equity Program at the Australian Local Government Women’s Association (ALGWA) national conference, held in late 2010.

With 19 other councils from all states in Australia, they became the first to achieve the Bronze Award and accreditation, and are looking forward to working towards the Silver Award, and then the prestigious Gold Award.

The *50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity Program* is designed specifically to assist councils to identify and address gender equity issues both within their organisations and among their elected representatives and can be accessed by all councils, regardless of their size, location and progress on gender equity. Councils can apply for accreditation at three levels – starting with Bronze and working up to the prestigious, peer reviewed Gold Award. Councils who participate in the program are better able to compete for talent when recruiting, and encourage greater participation of women on councils.

Program Coordinator, Karen Purser, said all three Tasmanian councils had exceptional programs, and commented that smaller, less well resourced councils are often more innovative and determined in their responses to sector-wide issues such as gender equity.

Waratah-Wynyard Council has developed a program called Women’s Business. The program includes the establishment of a supportive forum for women working across Waratah-Wynyard Council to gain professional support, training and mentoring. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research and face-to-face breakfast forums, it will provide women in the workplace with access to targeted professional development; build



(L-R) ALGWA National President, Darriea Turley, Ald Annette Rockliff of Devonport City Council, and Glenys Beauchamp, Acting Secretary, Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government

strong network for female staff to access professional support and mentoring and develop skills in female staff to address real and perceived barriers in the workplace to career path development.

Circular Head Council’s program is called The Human Factor of Gender Equity, and has a range of activities under four key outcome areas:

- Recruitment and selection – best practise models;
- Human resources – work life balance for employees;
- Development and opportunities – skills development, mentoring and coaching; and
- Committee representation – 50:50 for employees and elected members.

Devonport City Council has implemented a Women’s Leadership Project which looks to raise the profile of women in Local Government generally, enhance access to information and resources, and increase organisational accountability in improving gender equity. Within the program there are a range of initiatives, including the provision of information, links to resources and upcoming opportunities on councils new intranet, where staff will be able to access and share gender oriented information and resources.

The awards were presented by Glenys Beauchamp, Acting Secretary, Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government. In congratulating the winning councils, Ms Beauchamp reminded those present that Local Government could not hope to represent the community it serves, or meet future staffing challenges without greater diversity. ♥

Currently, 43% of Tasmanian councils are enrolled in the Councils for Gender Equity Program. Those who aren’t, can sign up by going to www.5050vision.com.au.



(L-R) Pictured at the Awards were ALGWA National President, Darriea Turley, Ctr Cheryl Fuller of Central Coast Council, and Glenys Beauchamp, Acting Secretary, Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government