



Women Members Survey 2008: A Thematic Analysis

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Executive Summary

An online survey of 678 women in the Australian IT industry was undertaken by ACS-W to better understand the experiences, needs and challenges of women members and to identify strategies that ACS could consider to address women's issues.

Whilst some women were satisfied with their remuneration and career, a number of women reported that they faced a number of challenges within the IT industry. These challenges included:

- The IT industry appearing to value the contribution of men more highly. With men being perceived as more reliable and knowledgeable and more technically able.
- Receiving fewer opportunities, promotions and some receiving less remuneration than male colleagues for the same work.
- Often working additional unpaid hours, struggling to achieve work-life balance and experiencing difficulties re-entering the IT industry after a period away.

Women who faced additional challenges included new graduates and migrants trying to enter the industry, and older women.

Members recommended that ACW-S consider developing:

- Accessible and affordable training opportunities using a range of delivery formats (eg face-to-face seminars, short courses, webcasts, videoconferencing, online modules or podcasts)
- Mentorship programs and advice from successful women in IT
- Networking opportunities focused on women
- Positive role models of successful women in IT
- Strong advocacy to employers to promote women's contribution and issues, and to increase flexible work practices and meaningful part-time or flexible work opportunities
- Supports for women trying to enter or re-enter the IT industry or those seeking career advancement
- Advertising job opportunities (especially part time and flexible work)
- More partnerships and undertaking further research.

This report and the ACS Women Members Survey

This report is one of a set of two reports that present the findings of the recent Australian Computer Society (ACS) Women Members Survey. Report 1 provides a summary of the metric analysis and this report (Thematic Analysis) provides a brief summary of the thematic findings and includes a selection of quotes from members.

ACS Women Members Survey

The ACS Women Members Survey was commissioned by the ACS-W and developed into an online format by Dolphin Software. The broad aims of this survey were to:

1. Understand the experiences, challenges and needs of women members, and
2. Identify possible policies or strategies that could be implemented by ACS to address any issues that arose.

The survey was uploaded onto the ACS website for female members to complete from 14 May - 3 June 2008. The survey consisted of 35 questions that explored members' demographics, qualifications and ACS membership, time in the ICT industry, roles and asked participants to identify the factors that influence their career choices and remuneration. The women were also asked to describe the challenges they face in the industry and what support ACS could provide to address these challenges.

A bouquet of a dozen red roses from the Roses Only's signature collection was offered as an incentive to the first 25 and last ten women to complete the survey. An outline of the members who completed the survey and a brief summary of the qualitative findings of this survey is now presented.

Members

Age, qualifications and residence

This survey had a good response rate, with 678 women completing the survey. This represents 28% of the female ACS membership. As shown in Report 1, 22% of the 678 women who participated in this survey 22% were aged under 30 years, 23% were 30-39 years, 29% were aged 40-50 years and the remaining 27% were aged over 50 years. Fourteen percent of the women were aged 55 years or over. One in five of the participants were not Australian citizens. The states that were most highly represented were NSW ($n = 186$, 27%) and VIC ($n = 184$, 27%), followed by QLD ($n = 111$, 16%), WA ($n = 66$, 10%), ACT ($n = 59$, 9%), SA ($n = 51$, 8%) and Tasmania ($n = 19$, 3%). There was one participant from NT.

All women, except one were employed in Australia. The overwhelming majority of women resided in cities. The participants were well-qualified with half of the women holding post graduate qualifications. Twenty eight percent had a Masters degree (28%), 16% had completed a post-graduate degree/diplomas (16%) and six per cent held a doctorate qualification (6%).

An undergraduate degree, diploma or certificate was the highest qualification for 48% of the women and a small number were completing a degree at the time or had a Year 12 qualification. A third of the participants had an industry/vendor qualification. There were over 25 different vendor/industry qualifications reported. The most frequently reported were associated with Prince, Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), Microsoft, Project Management and Oracle.

Time in the IT industry, employment status and ACS membership

The women who completed this survey had considerable IT experience. A third of the women had been in the IT industry for 11-20 years, 28% had been in the industry for 6-10 years and 24% had over 21 years experience. Women who were new to industry (2 years or less) consisted of 17% of the total group.

As shown in Table 10 (Report 1), most women were in ongoing employment with 65% in full time employment (65%) and 7% in part time positions. The remaining women were contracted (7%), full time students (5%), self employed or a proprietor/director (4%), unemployed (3%) or retired (2%). A. The women who responded “Other” were on maternity leave, in between jobs, in casual employment, studying part time or involved in a combination of work/study.

Of the members who were employed, most (88%) did not work paid overtime and the rest (12%) worked two or more hours paid overtime per week. However, the numbers working unpaid overtime were higher, with over half (55%) of women working three or more additional hours per week (See Tables 22-24, Report 1). A third reported working around one or more days (5 - <10 hours) per week without pay. Of the 59 women who reported working in excess of 10 hours unpaid overtime per week, about a third ($n = 20$) were working 20 or more unpaid hours each week.

As shown in Table 11 (Report 1), approximately 40% of women were in consulting and technical roles (26%) or education and training (17%). The remaining participants were in government or defence (20%); finance, telecommunications or mining (14%); and, research and development (3%). The women who responded using the 'Other' option were self employed consultants, or working in health, energy, engineering, legal services, compensation, human resources, tourism, software development and vendor, transport, publishing, identity management, automated fare collection, manufacturing, advertising or marketing. The mean number of years the women had held their current position was 4 years (Range <2 years - 32 years).

Over half of the women who participated in this survey had been an ACS member for less than five years. However, many women had been long-standing ACS members with nearly a quarter of the participants reporting 5-14 years of ACS membership. The remaining 22% of participants had been ACS members for in excess of 15 years, with 25 women reporting that they had been members for 30 or more years (see Table 1, Report 1).

What are the experiences, challenges and needs of women in the Australian IT industry?

This survey found that some women in the Australian IT industry receive less remuneration for equivalent work, fewer opportunities for challenging work and promotion and, less recognition. The factors that members thought contributed to these inequities included; the predominance of males in IT; traditional views of gender; the high value placed on men within the industry; and, differences between men and women in their approach to salary negotiations.

Remuneration

Whilst 70% of the women reported that they receive equal remuneration (see Q18 in Report 1), the remainder did not believe they have access to the same level of remuneration as their male colleagues. To illustrate, women reported that:

“Equivalent male salaries average 20% higher for same level and output of work.”

“A male member of my team who reports to me is on a higher salary level.”

“I have 25 staff reporting to me. I oversee all operational ICT in this company of 60 sites, 240 servers and 1500+ end users. My last performance review rated me as “Exceeding Expectations” however my salary is less than a male colleague who looks after one database and one staff.”

“I took over from the previous IT manager (3 years ago) and I am still payed at least \$10,000 less than he was at the time of leaving.”

“There is a girl in our IT Department who has not had a pay review in 6 years. However her male colleagues have all had pay reviews, pay increases and offers of other forms of remuneration.”

“When the AWAs were handed out, the men were given more money and more perks by the national manager.”

Gender differences were reported to influence salary negotiation process. It was reported that women were more reluctant to ask for a salary increase, whereas male employees were perceived to be more proactive. To illustrate:

“Women are not so skilled in salary/packaging negotiations and not as confident in their abilities.”

“Women aren’t as aggressive as men in negotiations.”

“I know from my own experience that I have struggled to negotiate sufficient salary increases. I have performed the same role as my male colleague and then taken over his position without any increased in salary or the position to negotiate it.”

Opportunities, recognition and value

Most of the women in this survey reported that the Australian IT industry is predominantly male and this is reflected in the workplace culture and senior management positions. For example,

“Very male dominated workforce- most of the senior executive, board and senior managers are male.”

“All males except two in a staff of about forty are in a management role. The remainder are female staff “assistants” except one who is a manager.”

“Women are not holding major positions in many organizations.”

“Promotions are more likely to go to males.”

As a result of the gender imbalance and the predominantly male culture many women reported not receiving the same opportunities, promotions and recognition as their male counterparts and feeling less valued. For example, one member who had worked overseas in a senior management role stated that:

“I found it very difficult to get a job of a similar caliber-whether this was from being away too long or being female I am not sure, but the end result was taking a demotion to middle management. It was, however, curious that I was runner-up to a male for five different senior management IT jobs (after a long process with multiple interviews for each position).”

Other members commented that:

“I feel I have to work harder and achieve better results to earn the same amount as guys.”

“Women are often overlooked in terms of promotion, career advancement and PD and their starting salary is less...”

“It is still a boys club, all decisions are made over a beer to which women are not invited.”

“Stuck in a small company where the ‘established employees’ cling to their job titles and won’t let me help them by sharing my previous work experience and knowledge...As a result I have to do mind-numbing boring tasks while watch ‘them’ make huge mistakes that could easily be fixed if only they’d listen to me and respected me.”

“It has become a challenge-to gain recognition, and to make a worthwhile, meaningful career.”

Some women believed that some organizations and managers perceive men to be more valuable, reliable and knowledgeable and more technically competent. Members reported that male managers frequently gave the more challenging and interesting work to male colleagues. As a result of these opportunities, male colleagues were more likely to receive a pay rise or promotion.

Furthermore, male colleagues were reported to participate more in out of work social events (after work drinks and golf games etc.) and that career decisions are sometimes made during these events.

However, female colleagues were not always invited or were unable to attend because of their caregiving demands. Some women believe this works against them in their career.

Members reported:

“Next roles are via networks (boys network appears strong as does drinks after work). Women over 40 who have child responsibilities have fewer chances to network and gain prospects for next work options. I am a single mother and very rarely is this catered for.”

“It is still a boys network. All decisions are made after a beer to which women are not invited. So less work opportunity and learning opportunities.”

Women reported that they did not always feel that their work and contribution is recognized and valued and this had reduced some member’s job satisfaction. To illustrate,

“No matter how intelligent or smart women are, we are always considered more naive in front of men and paid less.”

“I often feel patronized and do not get the same recognition for my work as my male colleagues. Customers might tell my boss that I’m ‘a genius’ but my boss will play it down and tell them not to call me that, and he does it in front of me, putting me down even further. To my knowledge I have never seen him do that to my male colleagues.”

“I am not particularly driven by money and would like to see more career options. What I am concerned about is what the money represents ie. You pay more for something you value more. I know it is not that simple and my boss assures me that he sees me working at a higher standard than the guys, but it is not reflected in my salary.”

“While women may be remunerated the same as men for the same work, clearly, women are not afforded the same opportunities as men-so inequity exists, albeit less blatant than has been the case previously.”

Traditional perceptions of women were thought to influence some management decisions. These were focused on the perception that women are less reliable as they may leave to have children, may require more time off to care for family members and that men are seen as the ‘main breadwinners’ so should receive higher remuneration. Some members reported that:

“I feel I have to try harder and achieve better results to earn the same as the guys. I try to be undeterred by their office bullying... just because I am both a female and mother for which seems to be another means of attack against me, even though I do not take off any more time than anyone else in my team.”

“Typically the women in the last two organizations I have worked at have not had the same opportunities as the men. There also seems to be some thought that men need more money.”

“There is an underlying belief that men are better at the technical jobs than women. People (especially older men) express surprise if I am going to undertake supervision of a technical operation instead of a man.”

Some women who have worked in the IT industry in other countries observed that this appears to be unique to the Australian IT industry. For example:

“I am trapped until I get my permanent visa and can find a decent employer, on my own terms. I don’t believe women are treated equally in the workplace in Australia. I have previously worked in Europe and never encountered such condescending attitudes to women.”

“Australian workplace is not as aggressive as American workplaces. There is not equal treatment in terms of women at the helm. When women are at the helm or appear to be smarter than their male counterparts (who happen to be Australian) there is a difference in treatment in terms of promotion and opportunities for growth.”

“Being an immigrant the start of my career was not easy...I understand that women generally get paid less than male colleagues on same/similar job, but a number of other countries provide better tax benefits to working women.”

Other challenges

In addition to issues raised above, the women reported that they faced other challenges. These included juggling their work-life balance and maintaining their knowledge and skills. Older women, migrants and new graduates were identified as facing additional challenges.

- **Juggling career, work and life demands**

Many women reported that their greatest challenge in their career is managing their work-life balance. In particular, juggling the long hours (sometimes unpaid) expected in some roles with their out-of-work commitments (family, child care etc). For some, project work can pose particular issues. Comments included:

“Balancing a good lifestyle. I like the challenges and like to achieve at work which is often at the expense of personal health and family time.”

“I need to learn to say NO, and limit the number of hours I work.”

“I had an 11 yr break while I got my five kids into school and I have never recovered my career since then. Also in the 15 years while my kids have been at school I have chosen jobs that gave me flexibility...and that is a career killer. Now I'm too old. I chose this, so I'm not having a whinge, but it is the way it is for women...in the end you have to choose.”

“Just finding enough hours in the day to do everything...as a contract PM I find it hard to take a holiday. I have not had a holiday in 4.5 years and have had the one contract... If someone else is put in charge and then they may not need me so lately I have just been doing less hours per week to try and catch up with the things at home. Even as a permanent it was still hard to get leave...Even giving 6 months notice...I would have to reschedule my leave because of an urgent project.”

In addition to maintaining a home, caring for children and extended family, many women had other responsibilities outside of work. These included; volunteering, leadership roles in community organizations, studying, maintaining a farm, positions on Boards, involvement in sport, assisting in a family business, and, tutoring.

If women wanted to take a more balanced approach to their work and family life, they indicated that there were insufficient opportunities for challenging part-time, job sharing or flexible work. To illustrate,

“When I do start a family I don't see how I could stay in IT, as the work tends to require resources who are 100% available. There are not many opportunities for working 2-3 days a week.”

- **Maintaining knowledge and skills**

Women reported finding it difficult to maintain their knowledge and skills in a rapidly changing industry. For some women, being able to attend training opportunities was an issue as the cost of training was sometimes 'prohibitive' and for others the additional child care costs was an issue. A small number of women found the experience of attending training daunting. For example, one participant said *"I found most seminars that I attended daunting because in every instance there were less than 1% female attendees."*

- **Older women, new graduates and migrant women**

Women in this survey reported that female graduates, older women and migrants experienced additional challenges in the IT industry. New graduates experienced difficulties in gaining employment as employers want extra knowledge and experience. But they need employment in the industry to gain this experience so it becomes a 'Catch 22' situation. To illustrate:

"I have completed my Masters degree...I wish to work in my field but the job requirements are more than the degree courses... they want extra knowledge and experience. If nobody gives us a chance to work, how can we gain experience?"

"Currently it is finding a job, due to my lack of experience. It is hard, especially when experience is so highly valued in the IT industry."

Ageism was reported to be an issue as there is a perception that the IT industry is a young person's industry and that older women face additional challenges. To illustrate:

"The major challenge is growing older. Twenty years ago I publicly stated that ageism was more of an issue than gender in the ICT industry. So lack of employment opportunities is a major issue."

"Despite having managed agile development teams four years ago, I have been passed over as "too senior" to manage such teams again (it was a successful project at the time) I am now doing more junior work than I was five years ago."

"My age. Older women are not wanted."

"Being 40+ and in a young industry of mostly 20-30 year old men."

"After 30 years in corporate life, most as a senior manager, I want a challenging job, but with flexibility...along with organisations who do not discriminate against the 50+ age group!"

"As an over 50s woman – I would like to see more acceptance of 'older' workers- both males and females...personally I would like to work until I am 65 as I have less pressures now than when I was bringing up my children and working."

I believe there is a grey ceiling...During job interviews in particular, as soon as the much younger males see a grey haired women enter the room, it no longer matters how capable you are, you will not be considered seriously for the job."

"Starting a job at an older age than most graduates and having a disability (although it does not impede my work too much)."

Women who had immigrated to Australia reported that they had found it hard to get into the industry. To illustrate:

“As a migrant I attained my qualifications, experiences and skills outside of this country. It was quite difficult to get into the industry despite my qualifications. After 5 years I still struggle to comprehend this industry.”

“Having recently migrated to Australia, I feel victimized for not having Australian work experience.”

- **Interpersonal conflict**

A small number of women reported having interpersonal conflict in the workplace, with some describing situations of being verbally harassed by work colleagues and one stating that she had been sexually harassed within the workplace. This finding concurs with the results of Question 32 with approximately 40% of the women reporting they did not believe they had good conflict resolution skills. There may be scope for some focused interventions in this area.

Career breaks and factors that influence career movement

As presented in Report 1, half of the women reported having had an unpaid break in their employment. The most common reasons for this break were childcare (52%), undertaking study (37%), being unemployed (30%) or having a change in career (22%). In addition, participants reported that they had used this unpaid break to; travel, relocate overseas, complete a novel, as break between contracts or employment, retrenchment, to receive treatment for an illness or work as a volunteer. Approximately a third of the women reported having had a paid break (see Table 31 and 31a). The main reasons for paid leave were personal leave (40%), child rearing (39%), study (27%) and carer duties (11%). Others included long service leave, annual leave, and caring for a dependent and one employer had provided paid leave so the woman could accompany her husband overseas to complete his studies.

Some members believed that the break did not have an adverse effect on their career or had improved it. For example members stated:

“Finished my Masters and got a better job!”

“Improved - as I made major changes in direction!”

However, this was not the experience of many participants. Women returning from maternity leave described not being given back their positions, or returning to a part-time position that was menial. Other women experienced that their career had ‘gone backwards’ and for some this was still their experience many years after the break.

For others the break resulted in them not being abreast of changes in IT knowledge and skills and/or receiving a reduction in salary. These women reported that the break had:

“Killed it stone dead. Was part time for 15 years and whatever people may say, part timers are not counted as serious employees.”

“Dramatically affected my career options...Before I left to have a family I had been elevated rapidly to management by merit-based promotion. Upon my return after a 5 year break all I could hope for ...were long hours in the city at the bottom of the pile or local unskilled retail work: so much for all that early investment in building a career! I am back studying now, hoping this investment will help my future prospects at work.”

“It left me behind in the latest technical and software skills in IT. I struggled to catch up and it caused problems with my teaching...”

“I got a promotion just before I found out I was pregnant. I was off work for 6 months after having my baby and when I returned I was not given my position back.”

“The first time I re-entered the workforce it was on 50% less salary.”

As presented in Table 26 and 27 (Report 1) the top four factors that these members reported would most be most influential in their next career move were increased remuneration (20%), more challenging work (19%), more opportunities for promotion (12%) and more flexible hours (12%). Others include proximity to home, (or opportunity or work from home) and ability to combine work and study.

What could ACS-W provide to address these issues?

Some women were unsure of what ACS-W could do and a small number reported that they were well supported at work, but the overwhelming majority believed that there was an important role that ACS-W could play to address some of these challenges. The most frequently recommended strategies for the ACS-W to consider were to:

1. Provide affordable training at different times and using range of delivery formats. These could include face-to-face seminars, short courses, webcasts, videoconferencing, online modules or podcasts. In particular training that focused on:
 - (a) Negotiating, conflict resolution and assertion in the workplace,
 - (b) ICT programs and new developments (online or face to face), and
 - (c) ICT management, emerging issues and general business topics.

Some single mothers asked if ACS would consider providing child care when training and events are being organized, as paying for additional child care can be a barrier to attending.

2. Develop mentorship programs, career development opportunities and provide advice from successful women in IT. Some experienced participants suggested that they would be happy to provide mentorship and support. For example:

“A mentoring program which could be implemented inside the workplace or outside the workplace would greatly assist career development opportunities...and allowing someone else to bounce an idea.”

“A mentoring program, more networking functions for women specifically, advice from successful women in IT. There are WIT (Women in IT) events. But they are expensive for people on their own who can't get their business to pay for them to go, if ACS could do something affordable that would be great.”

“Career advancement advice and strategies for women who often have to balance carer/child rearing roles with paid work in the Australian context.”

“I'd be interested in going to a seminar to hear women talk about the interesting careers that they have had. I'd like to be inspired by stories of successful women.”

“I'm past needing support! Happy to make myself available as an advisor.”

3. Encourage employers to create more flexible, family friendly workplaces such as child care, maternity leave and opportunities for part time or job sharing roles. In addition, increasing respect for gender differences and creating guidelines for merit promotions were noted. As one women commented:

“Improve and enhance women’s struggle in the industry and also promote child care and maternity leave and pay in companies.”

4. Create networking opportunities that were focused on women in IT e.g. online and face-to-face events. As illustrated in these comments:

“Provide opportunities for networking and socializing; promote ICT careers for women and career issues affecting women such as work-life balance, maternity leave, equal pay and opportunities.”

“Perhaps having more online events or more in rural NSW.”

“I can not travel to Brisbane to participate in any events.... Could access some form of recording of certain events/talks (for example pod casting).”

5. Become a strong advocate for women’s issues by ensuring employers understand and address women’s concerns in the industry. Lobbying for equal pay status, the extent of unpaid overtime and its adverse effects on work/life balance were considered to be important. Members also wanted ACS to disseminate research, promote female student intake and develop graduate programs focused on women. As described by these two women:

“ACS-W can... 1) educate bosses that women deserve equal remuneration, 2) work from home guidelines and advice, 3) provide mentoring and advice to women in how to negotiate pay 4) advice on what is reasonable remuneration for different roles and responsibilities....”

“Promote issues with respect to acceptance of remote work amongst employers to assist with greater flexible working hours (even though technology is available, the workplace is not as accepting).”

Female members also want positive action, as one participant said:

“My biggest problem is that everyone is saying ‘women are not treated equally.’ Can we stop the whingeing and start saying things like ‘if this happens in your company, this is what you can do.’”

6. Create positive role models that promote the contribution of women in the IT industry was thought to be very useful strategy.

“Encourage girls that this is the right career for them. Get rid of the ‘geeky’ male IT image.”

“I have moved out of ICT due to the lack of people-focused IT strategy in technology teams. It would be useful to actively position ICT as a positive choice for women-similar strategies to the recent women in engineering focus that Engineering Australia took to this issue-the way in which women focus on the social benefits aspects of their profession.”

“Have photos of women in the ACS material-particularly the new member’s pack.”

“We need to promote the particular skills that women can bring to the industry (ie we are different) but we can celebrate this rather than try and force ourselves to become one of the boys.”

One member suggested that the ACS create an awards program to recognize the contribution, and achievements of women with nominations from work colleagues and confirmation through an interview process.

7. Advertise job opportunities (especially part-time or flexible work) and ‘family friendly’ employers on the ACS website was also recommended. The suggestions included:

“A database of flexible employers who offer part-time technically skilled positions.”

“Liaise with ICT companies to seek projects which offer women opportunities to participate in a voluntary manner.”

8. Developing more corporate, national and global partnerships. A member suggested that ACS-W could create a global consortium for “women that want to make a difference.” Seeking a partner to develop a research grant to support research into women in IT was also suggested. Another requested that ACS could approach ICT companies for projects that women could volunteer to conduct and this would provide more learning and growth that some women lack in their current workplace.

Whilst this report has focused on the responses of the majority of participants, it must be remembered that not all women were dissatisfied or thought there was a role for ACS-W in addressing these issues. Some of these members commented:

“Can’t see how ACS can assist at all. My current company has policies for flexible and remote working, additional unpaid leave each year using your sick leave to care for sick children/parents and career breaks. They also have a diversification policy that is inclusive of women.”

“I think it is not too bad right now for women in the workplace.”

“My company has recently kicked off a Women’s network to help increase exposure to issues facing women and others in the workforce...”

Conclusions

This survey of 678 women found that whilst 70% of women believed that they receive equivalent pay as their male colleagues for the equivalent work and some were satisfied in their current workplace and role, it was not true for all women. A number of women reported facing challenges in the workplace, including; inequities in remuneration; fewer opportunities; less recognition within the workplace; difficulties maintaining their work-life balance; and, problems in maintaining their knowledge and skills. Older women, new graduates and migrant women were identified as facing additional challenges.

Whilst a comprehensive literature review was not included in this project, the results of this survey concur with the findings of recent Australian¹ and international² studies. As a result, there appears to be growing consensus that these issues need to be addressed to ensure the ongoing recruitment, retention and contribution of women in the IT industry. However, these issues are complex and are likely to need a multi-prong approach from government, corporations, professional bodies and the women and men who work in the IT industry.

The majority of members believed that ACS-W had an important role to play in; providing affordable and accessible training; developing and promoting successful and flexible working arrangements; enhancing networking focused at women; developing partnerships, creating positive images of women in IT; mentoring and, developing initiatives targeted at new graduates, migrants, care-giving mothers and older women, as these groups were reported to face additional challenges. There was also strong interest in ACS disseminating the results of this survey and acting on the results.

This research could form the basis for future work by ACS. To expand on these findings it may be useful to:

- Conduct a broader survey to include non-ACS women members as this would allow for more representation of the industry as a whole.
- Seek men's (particularly those in managerial roles) views on these issues.
- Undertake research in IT and other industries that exemplify 'best practice' in addressing women's issues and implementation of successful flexible work options.

¹ APSEMA (2007). *Women in the professions survey report*.

² Hewlett, S., Luce, C., Servon, L., Sherbin, L., Shiller, P., Sosnovich, E., & Sumberg, K. (2008). *The Athena factor: Reversing the brain drain in science, engineering and technology*. Harvard Business Review: Research Report.

- Support a campaign to encourage IT industries to qualify and apply for the 'Employer of Choice for Women'. This acknowledges organisations that recognise and advance their female workforce and allows them to promote themselves as an 'Employer of Choice for Women.'

The high response rate to this survey and the findings provide evidence that the mission and policy direction of the ACS-W is very relevant. The ACS-W policy states that "*The ACS has an obligation to the Australian community to bring about economic, social and intellectual benefits through higher participation of women in ICT.*" There is still much to be done to advance the role and value of women in the IT industry. The ACS-W is well-positioned to play a pivotal role in this important endeavour.

"The company that helps give women control over their own lives and helps them with the things that are not working for them, by providing more flexibility, more networking opportunities, a better work environment and more challenging work, will see more women stay. It's not a compliance issue; it's not a diversity issue, and it's not a social responsibility issue. Yes, it's the right thing to do, but it's also the strategic thing to do for Westpac."

David Morgan

Westpac CEO,

(EOWA website,

http://www.eowa.gov.au/EOWA_Employer_Of_Choice_For_Women.asp)