



*Support and encouragement for women interested in business and  
development in the South East*

# FINAL REPORT

February 2001

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## Forward

The year 2000 project was the exciting culmination of more than 12 months' work by the Women in Business and Regional Development Committee of women, with excellent support from the South East Area Consultative Committee via Elaine Pollock. We set some very ambitious project outcomes and I am thrilled with the way they have been achieved with Louise Stock as the Network Manager.

For women who are interested in business and development in the South East, we identified a gap in terms of leadership and business skills development, mentoring and networking. The project activities for 2000 aimed to fill this gap and I believe an admirable job was done, partly satisfying that thirst for knowledge, yet stimulating a desire for more!

However, the Women in Business and Regional Development project needs to be a longer term activity in order to realise its full benefits. Hence, the Committee is well into its planning process for a community leadership program and a business mentoring, networking and training program to be delivered in 2001.

We are grateful for the funding support received through the Regional Assistance Programme and look forward to another exciting year of achievements in 2001.

Janet Kentish  
Chairman  
February 2001

*Facilitation skills workshop participants with leader, Rhian Williams (seated, at left)*



*Teamwork wins! Foundation Leadership Program participants walk the tightrope at the Noorla Yo-Long Outdoor Adventure Centre*

## Committee Members



### **Janet Kentish, Chairman**

Jan is a wife, mother and grandmother, a partner in a mixed farming business and is constantly undertaking challenging roles in the governance of her community.

For Jan, the network being established for mentoring, together with the comprehensive training is invaluable. She believes the region will be uplifted as a result.



### **Liz Ballinger, Deputy Chair**

Liz, who was named 1999 SA Enterprising Woman of the Year, is a wife, mother of four adult children and lives on a farm near Wolseley where she manages Teatrick Lavender Estate. She is also a proprietor of the Bordertown Newsagency and a member of Tourism South East.

Liz has found the vibrant networking of Women in Business and Regional Development stimulating and believes it is a necessity as many women in rural areas work in isolation.



### **Maureen Andrews**

Maureen is the Managing Director of Andrews Willson and Associates, a human resources and business management company, which she operates from the family farm at Reedy Creek. She is also a prime lamb producer and operates a vineyard at Mount Benson.

Maureen has appreciated the opportunity to network with other women who are active in business and community. She believes the project has made a significant contribution to encouraging women to develop business ideas and to take up leadership roles, which she finds very gratifying as she is passionate about promoting economic development and jobs growth in our region.



### **Kay Hocking**

Kay is a member of a family farming business with strong interests in community, rural industry and personal development.

For Kay, Women in Business and Regional Development means leadership and inspiration, support and friendship and an innovative commitment to the development of the South East of South Australia.



**Julie Lloyd**

Julie, a grazier at Reedy Creek, is a member of the South Australian Farmers' Federation Livestock Executive Committee and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia. She is passionate about food industries in the South East.

Julie believes the training, networking and mentoring being offered through Women in Business and Regional Development are invaluable to the region's development.



**Janice Nitschke**

Janice is Director of Library and Information Services with the Wattle Range Council and is actively involved in the family farm near Millicent, including native flower production.

She values the role of committee members in sharing their experience to further the expansion of the network and bring on board more women to enhance their community involvement, experiences and knowledge base. Involvement with Women in Business and Regional Development has given Janice friendship, guidance and a focus in both her professional and personal development.



**Elaine Pollock**

As Executive Officer with the South East Area Consultative Committee, Elaine has responsibility for bringing together key business, government and community representatives to identify priorities and opportunities for employment and regional growth.

She sees Women in Business and Regional Development as a key regional network focused on support for women who have a commitment for a strong and vibrant South East.



**Ruth Schubert**

Ruth is Commercial Development Manager with the South East & Onkaparinga Institutes of TAFE, involving strategic management of marketing, and project management of four major organisational change projects under the banner of Partners in Progress - In Practice.

She believes Women in Business and Regional Development provides a forum for innovative women to share ideas, network with other business-minded women and contribute to the development of their community.



**Helen Stock**

Helen is a partner in a grazing property at Lucindale and is a member of the South East Area Consultative Committee and a Board Member of the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women.

She has appreciated the initiatives of Women in Business and Regional Development because Government has shown in a practical way that it recognises the input of women in the region and sees the value of their gaining knowledge and ongoing support to strengthen businesses and the region.



**Nancy Withers**

Nancy is a grazier of beef cattle and sheep and owner/manager of Pomanda Working Kelpie Stud near Naracoorte.

The highlight of 2000 for Nancy was the facilitation skills workshop and launch of Women in Business and Regional Development at Coonawarra. She found the calibre of the women attending the workshop and the palpable enthusiasm of those men and women attending the launch most rewarding.



**Louise Stock, Network Manager**

Louise was employed half-time for the duration of the project and worked with committee members to achieve the objectives set out in the Women in Business and Regional Development Strategic Plan.

Louise is passionate about community development and helping people build the confidence and positive attitude required to achieve their potential. She believes that Women in Business and Regional Development is making a positive difference for many South East women by helping them build skills, confidence and networks.

## Project Background

The concept of networking and skill development for women interested in business and development in the South East SA region came from a group of eleven women who attended a regional development round table in Adelaide in November 1998. They achieved funding through the South East Area Consultative Committee to attend this function.

Following the round table, a number of the women decided to form a group to develop a strategic plan for a project which was aimed at providing the region's women with networking opportunities and skill development.

The vision for Women in Business and Regional Development is:

*Women in Business and Regional Development will be the catalyst for accelerating the level of active participation of the Region's women in promoting economic growth, business prosperity and employment.*

The mission is to:

- *Identify and encourage enthusiastic women who have the potential to stimulate creativity, wealth and business at a community level.*
- *Provide potential leaders with skills, motivation and confidence to identify and promote opportunities for economic development in their communities and in the Region.*
- *Support individual women who wish to establish a new business or to expand an existing business by providing information, advice and opportunities for skills development.*



*Patrick Secker MP launching Women in Business and Regional Development*



*Guests at the official launch of Women in Business and Regional Development at Chardonnay Lodge*

## Project Outcomes – Results, Lessons & Conclusions

The overall objective for the Women in Business and Regional Development project was “to create an environment that encourages entrepreneurial women to transfer a business idea into a new business opportunity whilst encouraging existing businesses to expand”.

The expected outcomes are summarised below, with an outline of the project results in relation to each outcome, lessons learned and conclusions drawn for future activities.

Expected Outcome 1: 200 women throughout the South East have been given the opportunity to develop enterprising skills through attendance at four leadership forums.

This project outcome was achieved through delivery of four business forums, a facilitation skills workshop and a networking dinner. Evaluation questionnaires were distributed at each of these functions.

### Facilitation Workshop

In May 2000, Women in Business and Regional Development jointly hosted a workshop with the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women (FAAW). FAAW had gained funding to deliver three pilot workshops across Australia to help women improve their skills in facilitating public discussion processes and building consensus on divisive issues in the community. The workshop focused on high-level, valuable leadership skills. Women in Business and Regional Development used its local networks to target participants.

Fifteen women attended this pilot workshop and the feedback from participants was extremely enthusiastic. They felt they had gained invaluable skills in bringing communities, families and business partners together to address difficult and divisive issues.

One of the aims of the FAAW funding was to involve local indigenous women in the workshop. There was one indigenous participant at the South East SA workshop.

*Lesson: When targeting indigenous participation in functions (or any other specific group), a written invitation in the mail is not enough. Personal contact should be made to build partnerships, trust and an understanding of the aims of the function.*

This workshop was so well received that Women in Business and Regional Development is planning to deliver it once again in early 2001, using FarmBis and Australian Women in Agriculture funding.

A formal launch of the project was performed by Patrick Secker MP in conjunction with the facilitation workshop. Almost 70 people (many of them men) from all over

the South East attended the launch and subsequent luncheon. Excellent media coverage was received on television, radio and in newspapers.

The positive energy of the facilitation skills workshop and enthusiasm of its participants were widely reflected at the launch, in the media coverage and in subsequent project activities.

*Lesson: An official launch, although requiring effort and funds, is an invaluable way of raising awareness of a new project and instilling a sense of enthusiasm about the project's aims and activities.*

### Business Forums

Four business/entrepreneurship forums were held during 2000 in Bordertown, Robe, Mount Gambier and Naracoorte. This geographic spread enabled women to attend a function in their own district, although some did travel substantial distances due to their interest in the topics covered.

The topics of the forums were:

- Keeping the Balance – Business, Family, Community, Me (Bordertown and Mount Gambier)
  - Where do I want to go?
  - How do I get there?
  - Fitting it all in
  - Getting other people's support
- Got an Idea? Planning the Strategy and Getting the Funding (Robe)
  - Can my idea work?
  - How do I make it happen?
  - Finding the finance
  - Making markets
- Have an Impact – Get that Job, Convince that Committee, Use the Media (Naracoorte)
  - What do I want?
  - Speaking with confidence
  - Presenting yourself – on paper and in person
  - Opening the doors

In addition, each forum included a “story telling” session where five local women told their stories – how they have achieved their goals, how they stay motivated, how they motivate others, what drives them etc. These sessions proved to be a great inspiration to many participants. Comments such as “absolutely brilliant and inspirational”, “excellent, very inspiring” and “extremely interesting to get other perspectives” appeared on many of the evaluation questionnaires.

For the first three forums (Bordertown, Robe and Mount Gambier), participants divided into smaller groups to hear from one or two “story tellers”. Based on participant feedback, the format was changed at the Naracoorte forum so that the

five story tellers spoke to the entire group. This was less disruptive and better received by participants as they heard from all five presenters, rather than only one or two.

*Lesson: If using a "story" or case study format, all participants should have the opportunity to hear all case studies.*

The average attendance at the four forums was 27 women, with a total of 110 women attending. While the initial target for attendance was 50 at each forum, the interactive, workshop style of the functions meant that 25-30 was a much more appropriate number.

The methods used to raise awareness of the forums was a mailout to the Women in Business and Regional Development database (at that time, about 350 names were on the list), as well as newspaper advertising and press releases in each district. As a test, additional funds were expended on newspaper advertising for the Naracoorte forum. This advertising brought an additional 3-5 participants to the forum. A number of participants at the Mount Gambier and Naracoorte forums indicated they attended due to a recommendation from a participant at one of the first two forums.

*Lesson: Word of mouth was the most effective way to gain attendance at the business forums, while advertising and publicity (print and radio) were an important reminder closer to the event. Use of the Women in Business and Regional Development database, a unique resource, was highly effective and an excellent direct marketing tool.*

Charts showing feedback from participants of each session at each forum are at Appendix 1.

The most positive feedback tended to be received for sessions delivered by professional facilitators, demonstrating the value of their experience and skill. There is, therefore, a fine balance between using professionals (who often command substantial fees) and encouraging less experienced people to do presentations and build their skills. At least one of the sessions was inadequately presented and this could have been improved with a better briefing regarding the topic to be covered and the audience.

*Lesson: Detailed, written briefings for guest speakers and presenters, covering the topic, venue, expected style and audience are essential. Nevertheless, the final product remains in the hands of the presenter.*

### Networking Dinner

In June 2000, Women in Business and Regional Development hosted a networking dinner for women at the Naracoorte Town Hall. 103 women attended this function. The guest speaker was Cathy McGowan, President of Australian Women in Agriculture and Chair of the Federal Regional Women's Advisory Council. Cathy spoke about the need for individuals and communities to take control of their futures and discussed ways of doing this, using examples from her life and work.

Displays showcasing the products and services of eleven regional businesses operated by women featured at the dinner. These ranged from book-keeping services to clothing retail and publishing.

42 of the 103 women who attended the dinner completed an evaluation questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is attached.

Based on a score of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent), a rating of a 4 or 5 was given to the dinner by almost 64% of respondents in terms of relevance to regional issues, almost 55% for inspiration, 50% for social contacts and almost 43% for community development.

The most common rating for business development was 3 (35.7%), while 47.6% of respondents rated the dinner either 3 or 4 for its business networking value. The most common ratings for personal development were 3 (35.7%) and 4 (21.4%).

The dinner also served to give Women in Business and Regional Development excellent publicity and seemed to increase awareness of the project's activities.

On the morning of the day the dinner was held, 126 women were booked in to attend, with payment to be made upon registration. During the course of the day, about 10 rang to cancel and the remainder did not turn up. Women in Business and Regional Development was forced to find the funds to pay for these non-attendees as the caterer needed final numbers five days prior.

<p><i>Lesson: All functions, in particular those requiring catering, should be pre-paid and a firm policy on refunds established. Women in Business and Regional Development has since developed a policy that no refund will be made if cancellation occurs within seven days of an event.</i></p>
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## **Conclusions**

This project outcome was achieved, with a total of almost 230 women attending functions hosted by Women in Business and Regional Development which aimed to inspire participants and help them develop their leadership skills. Some valuable lessons, summarised above, were learned throughout this process.

<p><b>Expected Outcome 2:</b> One business network for women has been formally set up with affiliation with the Women's Management Network through SA Employers' Chamber.</p>
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This outcome was not achieved as envisaged in the project application. However, valuable informal networks have been established between many of the women who attended one or more of the Women in Business and Regional Development functions. In particular, a strong network exists between participants of the Foundation Leadership Program. Members of this group have held social functions and all have expressed a strong interest in some ongoing activity in 2001.

A formal network was not established due to concerns about the financial viability of such an organisation. It was felt that the level of membership fee required to

maintain the desired quality of organisation and communication would have discouraged many women from joining.

*Lesson: Financial sustainability is crucial for any organisation and time is required to build financial independence for a new organisation. Longer than 12 months may be required to build the necessary support. This must be carefully considered in any project application.*

Through its project activities in 2000, Women in Business and Regional Development appears to have developed widespread recognition and awareness throughout the South East. No formal awareness surveys have been undertaken, however, Committee members and the Network Manager have found that most women they speak to in their local communities are aware of the project. This “brand image” will be a useful base for the future establishment of a formal network if this continues to be a goal.

This image was built up with the use of a logo (in two different formats):



and slogan:

*Support and encouragement for women interested in  
business and development in the South East.*

The logo and slogan were used at the launch of the project in May, on brochures and on promotional material for all functions held. The Network Manager’s business cards were printed prior to development of the logo, so it was not featured. Letterhead was printed quite late (in about June 2000).

*Lesson: Development of a logo or “brand” for a project at a very early stage is very important to help build recognition and awareness. Although strong awareness has been built for Women in Business and Regional Development, development of the logo would ideally have happened earlier to enable its timely use on business cards, brochures and letterhead.*

The evaluation questionnaire for each Women in Business and Regional Development function asked participants what they were looking for from a network. Almost all respondents indicated strong interest in networking meals (preferably dinners). About two thirds of respondents were interested in specific business forums (similar to the four held in 2000) and an informative newsletter. About one third was interested in industry-specific networks (eg. Women in Retailing etc) and a quarter wanted some form of electronic communication (email discussion group or intranet).

In response to the strong interest in a newsletter, rather than duplicate existing services, Women in Business and Regional Development arranged for all the women on its database to receive The Paper Bark, newsletter of the SA Rural Network. This newsletter aims to be an information conduit between regional communities in SA to provide ideas and contacts for individuals and groups. The Paper Bark also provides a link to many other formal and informal networks for women throughout SA.

When respondents were asked about what topics they would like covered in business forums a fairly clear picture emerged, with the most popular topics being (starting with the most popular):

- marketing
- strategic planning
- gaining funding
- achieving balance (business, family, community etc)
- presentation and media skills
- setting and achieving goals
- budgeting
- mentoring
- working in a team.

This feedback will help the Women in Business and Regional Development Committee shape future activities. Survey details at appendix 3.

### **Conclusions**

Although this outcome was not achieved, in that a formal network has not been established, significant informal networks have been built up and Women in Business and Regional Development has achieved a strong reputation in South East SA.

**Expected Outcome 3: 20 women have participated in a pilot leadership program.**

This project outcome was successfully achieved through the delivery of a pilot Foundation Leadership Program, a pilot Mentoring Program and a pilot Advanced Leadership Program. Delivery of these programs was determined by a tender process, with Adelaide-based organisational psychologists Jacky Dakin and Kathryn McEwen the successful tenderers, based on a range of selection criteria. Participation in the two leadership programs was based on written applications.

#### Foundation Leadership Program

The Foundation Leadership Program was a four-day residential course, held over two sessions of two days each in Millicent. The topics covered in the pilot program were:

##### Stage I

- Issues for women at work
- Leadership today
- Your leadership style
- Your personality style

- Personal confidence
- Promoting yourself
- Projecting a professional image
- Team building – outdoor activities
- How to Network
- Gaining a mentor
- Guidelines for public speaking
- Ensuring balance and wellbeing

#### Stage II

- Regional opportunities for business and community development
- Introduction to strategic planning
- Accessing funds
- Negotiation skills
- Taking risks
- Promoting and marketing your ideas
- Creative problem solving
- Using the media to advantage
- Using the internet
- Personal goal setting

The program comprised a mixture of seminar-style delivery, small group work, personal reflection time and an outdoor team building activity at Noorla Yo-Long, an adventure group learning site just out of Millicent operated by the SA Police Department. Two dinners with talks from successful regional businesswomen were held during the program.

Twenty-two women from all over the South East of diverse backgrounds and ages participated in the pilot Foundation Leadership Program. The feedback on their evaluation questionnaires was extremely positive and all expressed a strong interest in participating in an ongoing learning and support network.

The chart at Appendix 2 shows participants' ratings for each session of the program. Fifteen of the twenty-two women returned an evaluation form.

Since the program, a number of the participants have indicated informally that they have successfully implemented learnings from the course, which is making a difference in their community and business lives. Many of the women commented on the evaluation questionnaires that the course boosted their confidence and all said it provided valuable new skills.

The evaluation questionnaires show that the program met or exceeded the expectations of all participants. Fourteen respondents rated the program overall as "Excellent" and one as "Very Good". The main concern expressed was that some sessions were a little rushed and that one or two lacked focus.

<i>Lesson: Residential programs are an excellent way of building relationships, trust and team spirit within a group, greatly increasing the likelihood of ongoing networking between group members.</i>
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One of the selection criterion for the pilot Foundation Leadership Program was a willingness to become involved in industry and community activities in the South East region. To publicise the program and to provide participants with maximum exposure, a report of the program has been printed for circulation to about 100 organisations around the region which require skilled people to fill board and committee positions. The report includes a profile of each participant, along with information about Women in Business and Regional Development and the Foundation Leadership Program.

#### *Mentoring Program*

In conjunction with the Foundation Leadership Program, an informal pilot Mentoring Program was initiated. Expressions of interest were sought from potential mentors, resulting in a list of a dozen mentors and their areas of skill and interest. The mentors were provided with an information pack about mentoring and what is involved. The mentor list was circulated to the Foundation Leadership Program Participants so they could contact a potential mentor if desired. As a result, three ongoing mentoring relationships have been established.

Many potential mentors were concerned about the time commitment involved in being a mentor and were uncertain about the exact role of a mentor. Some women also lacked the confidence to believe they have sufficient skills and experience to be a mentor.

*Lesson: Potential mentors need to be targeted and provided with formal training and support to increase their confidence and understanding of the role. A more formal matching mechanism for mentors and proteges should result in a higher participation rate in the program. Of course, these activities require significant resources.*

#### *Advanced Leadership Program*

Following the Foundation Leadership Program, a one-day pilot Advanced Leadership Program was held, covering the following topics:

- Motivating yourself and others
- Creative regional marketing
- Managing conflict
- Capitalising on technology
- Gaining board appointments
- Conflict mediation

Twenty-two women participated in this program, eleven of whom had also participated in the Foundation Program. Eighteen of these women completed an evaluation questionnaire. A chart showing their assessment of each session is at Appendix 2. Eleven of the respondents rated the overall program as “Excellent” and seven rated it as “Very Good”. The concerns expressed were similar to the Foundation Program.

*Lesson: It is easy to try to fit too much into a program. Some topics may need to be excluded in order to maintain the quality of the program.*

*Lesson: A reinforcement of the previous lesson about the need to clear, written briefs for session presenters.*

## **Conclusions**

The pilot leadership and mentoring programs of the Women in Business and Regional Development project were highly successful and have been a motivator and confidence-booster for the participants.

As a result of this success, the Women in Business and Regional Development Committee is developing a Community Leadership Program project and some of the pilot leadership participants will be involved in developing this longer-term project because they have learned the immense value in these types of courses.

As indicated above, the vast majority of participants in the pilot leadership programs expressed a strong interest in becoming involved in an ongoing learning and support network. When asked what activities they would like included in a network, the most popular responses were:

- Knowledge about the South East - its attributes, issues and opportunities, including site visits and how to market the region as a whole.
- Case studies of successful women and businesses.
- Informal get-togethers (over a meal) with a guest speaker. Sharing how things are going, what new activities are being tried, what's working and what isn't.
- Small group work/project to consolidate learnings.
- Conflict management.
- Funding opportunities and criteria.

These suggestions will be taken into account in development of the Community Leadership Program.

**Expected Outcome 4: Five new businesses have been initiated.**

This outcome has been substantially achieved. However, it is difficult to isolate one single factor in the establishment of a new business. Generally, a transition phase is required and a number of factors are involved in the final decision.

The Women in Business and Regional Development project achieved the following outcomes:

- contract-based employment was directly provided to two women who are in the process of establishing home-based project management businesses;
- a young woman was referred contract-based employment, which has been a useful stepping stone in her transition to home-based contracting work;
- assisted with the establishment of an information technology training business by a young woman through networking and mentoring;
- assisted with the establishment of an eco-tourism business as a result of some information and referrals received at one of the business forums;
- the Network Manager is aware of at least five women who have business ideas or expansion plans which may become a reality in the future - these women

attended one or more Women in Business and Regional Development functions with the explicit aim of seeking information and support to help evaluate and establish their idea;

- some of the businesses operated by women which were showcased at the Networking Dinner have received a direct benefit in the form of increased sales – an example is Teatrick Lavender Estate.

Many women have business ideas which they never implement due to lack of awareness of where to seek support and information, as well as lack of confidence. The Women in Business and Regional Development project started the process of addressing these barriers, as well as showcasing businesses operated by women at every opportunity. Continued activity is required to build and maintain the momentum.

<p><i>Lesson: Transformation of business ideas into reality takes time and a number of complex factors is involved in the transition. Mentoring is an important way for women to gain support, feedback and confidence throughout this process.</i></p>
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## **Conclusions**

This project outcome has been achieved and, in the longer term, even better results may emerge from the project activities. The Women in Business and Regional Development Committee is planning to develop a formal business mentoring program in 2001, with the aim of helping women transform business ideas into reality.

<p><b>Expected Outcome 5:</b> An effective database is in place where women are actively encouraged to become involved and participate in community and regional development.</p>
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This outcome has been achieved, with Women in Business and Regional Development holding a mailing list comprising almost 500 women throughout the South East. This list was built up by women requesting to be placed on the list, adding all women who attended Women in Business and Regional Development functions and adding women who are known to Committee members or others who have been involved in the project and who may be interested.

Information about all Women in Business and Regional Development functions was sent to the mailing list, along with additional information as appropriate.

At this stage, the database is not interactive. That is, it is not being used to refer women to committee or employment positions or for two-way communication.

The Women in Business and Regional Development Committee is investigating the interest in and feasibility of establishing an email discussion group amongst those who are interested.

In addition, participants in Women in Business and Regional Development functions received information about the State-based Women's Interactive Regional Database

(administered by Primary Industries & Resources SA) and the Balance Database (administered by Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Australia) so they could add their names if desired.

An additional activity conducted in 2000, with the joint aims of raising the profile of women's activities in the South East and growing the mailing list, was a photographic competition called "Images of Women in the South East". Some 20 entries were received and the photos will be used for archival and display purposes. Substantial media coverage was received, with the winning entry being published in at least three regional newspapers.



*Winner of the photographic competition, Deb James planting vines near Padthaway, submitted by Joan Longbottom*



*The two honourable mentions in the photographic competition – Lisa Woodman working at Auspine, Kalangadoo (L) and Liz Ballinger at her Teatrick Lavender Estate, Wolseley (R)*

In late 2000, Women in Business and Regional Development was invited to become involved in two initiatives targeting women in regional areas: Science in the Bush (an initiative of ABC Regional Radio) and an International Women's Day Home-Based

Business Workshop (an initiative of the Home-Based Business Association, delivered through the Regional Development Board network).

These offers are a testament to the excellent reputation built by the Women in Business and Regional Development project. Due to the strong profile of the project, Women in Business and Regional Development was the obvious vehicle for these initiatives and demonstrates the clear value of a group that is focused on regional and business development.

### **Conclusions**

The mailing list is a unique resource and an excellent way of directly contacting the target market for Women in Business and Regional Development. It will continue to be expanded and its role enhanced into the future.



*Photographic competition entrant Desma Jenke of Lucindale*



*Participants deep in thought at the Mount Gambier business forum*



*Lynda Croser, proprietor of Live Life Designs speaking at the Foundation Leadership Program*



*Foundation Leadership Program participants with Senator Jeannie Ferris*

## Recommendations

Below is a summary of recommendations based on the lessons learnt from the Women in Business and Regional Development project. Some are strategic recommendations, applicable to any project (these are listed first) and others are operational, more specifically relevant to future activities of Women in Business and Regional Development.

1. Make financial sustainability a key consideration of any project application which involves establishment of a new organisation. Longer than 12 months may be required to build the necessary support for financial independence.
2. Develop a logo or “brand” for a project at a very early stage to help build recognition and awareness. The logo should be used on brochures, business cards, letterhead, advertisements and all publications.
3. Plan an official launch to kick off a project’s activities, inviting strategic partners and stakeholders as guests and maximising media coverage.
4. When implementing a mentoring program, carefully target mentors and provide them with formal training and support to increase their confidence and understanding of the role. Use a formal matching mechanism for mentors and proteges to encourage a higher participation rate in the program.
5. When targeting indigenous participation in functions (or any other specific group), ensure that personal contact is made to build partnerships, trust and an understanding of the aims of the function.
6. Always prepare detailed, written briefings for guest speakers and presenters, covering the topic, venue, expected style and audience, bearing in mind that the quality of the final product remains in the hands of the presenter.
7. Make pre-payment a condition of attendance at all functions, in particular those requiring catering, and establish a firm policy on refunds. (Women in Business and Regional Development has since developed a policy that no refund will be made if cancellation occurs within seven days of an event.)
8. Use residential programs where feasible as an excellent way of building relationships, trust and team spirit within a group, greatly increasing the likelihood of ongoing networking between group members.
9. Ensure that all participants at workshops or forums have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the function, rather than forcing them to choose between speakers or activities. In addition, carefully design programs so that effective delivery of topics can occur within the timeframe.
10. Maximise use of the unique Women in Business and Regional Development database as a highly effective marketing tool, backed up by advertising and other publicity using all forms of media.

## Summary

Overall, the Women in Business and Regional Development project in 2000 was a great success with useful lessons learnt in the process. A number of activities were held in addition to those envisaged in the initial project application, including the project launch, the facilitation workshop jointly hosted with the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women, the networking dinner and the photographic competition.

Based on the enthusiastic response from the many women who attended project functions, a clear gap is being filled by Women in Business and Regional Development. A number of women have already asked about activities planned in 2001, expressing an interest in attending.

For Women in Business and Regional Development to have its full impact, it must be an ongoing project, as skills development, confidence building, culture change and business establishment and expansion are all long-term activities. To this end, and based on a number of the lessons learnt throughout 2000 project activities, the Women in Business and Regional Development Committee is developing funding submissions for development and delivery of:

1. An ultimately self-sustaining Community Leadership Program, focusing on building skills, knowledge and networks for its participants (women and men).
2. A business mentoring, networking and training program targeted at women with new business ideas or business expansion plans.

If successful, these projects will bring business and employment growth to the South East, as well as community vibrancy and prosperity.

In addition to these major project activities, other functions will be planned such as the facilitation skills workshop mentioned earlier in the report, networking meals and other activities as appropriate.

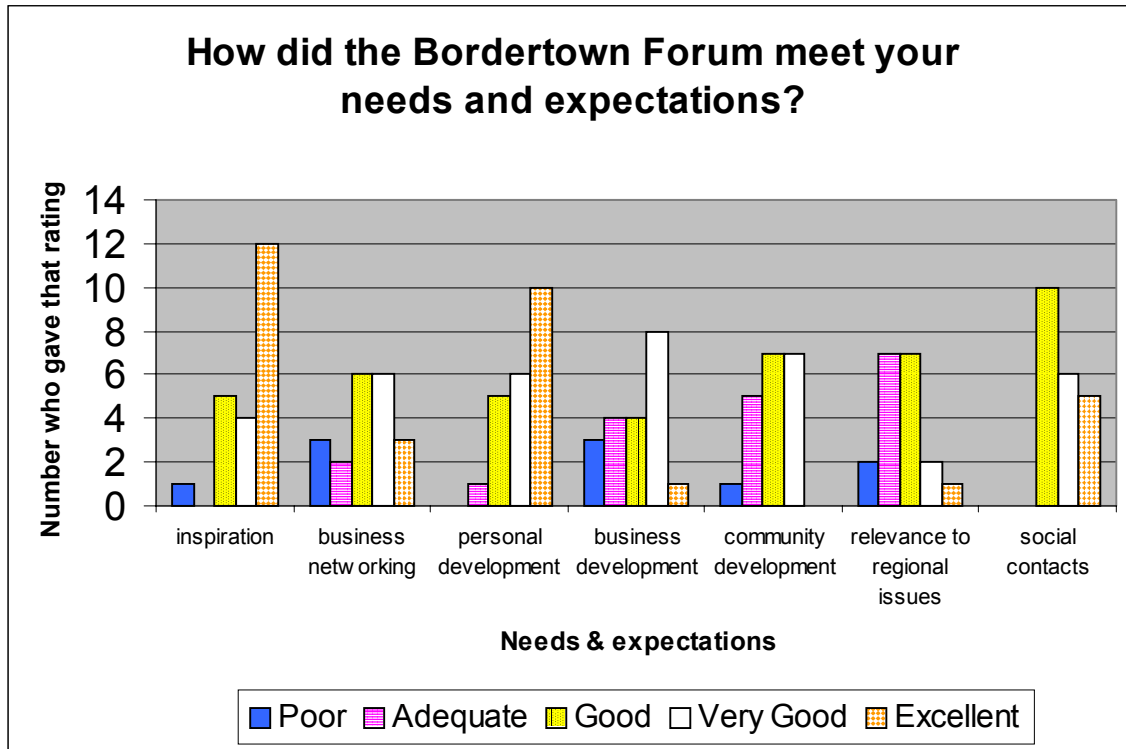
In short, Women in Business and Regional Development will continue to fulfill its role of providing support and encouragement for women interested in business and development in the South East and will continue to work towards its vision:

*Women in Business and Regional Development will be the catalyst for accelerating the level of active participation of the Region's women in promoting economic growth, business prosperity and employment.*

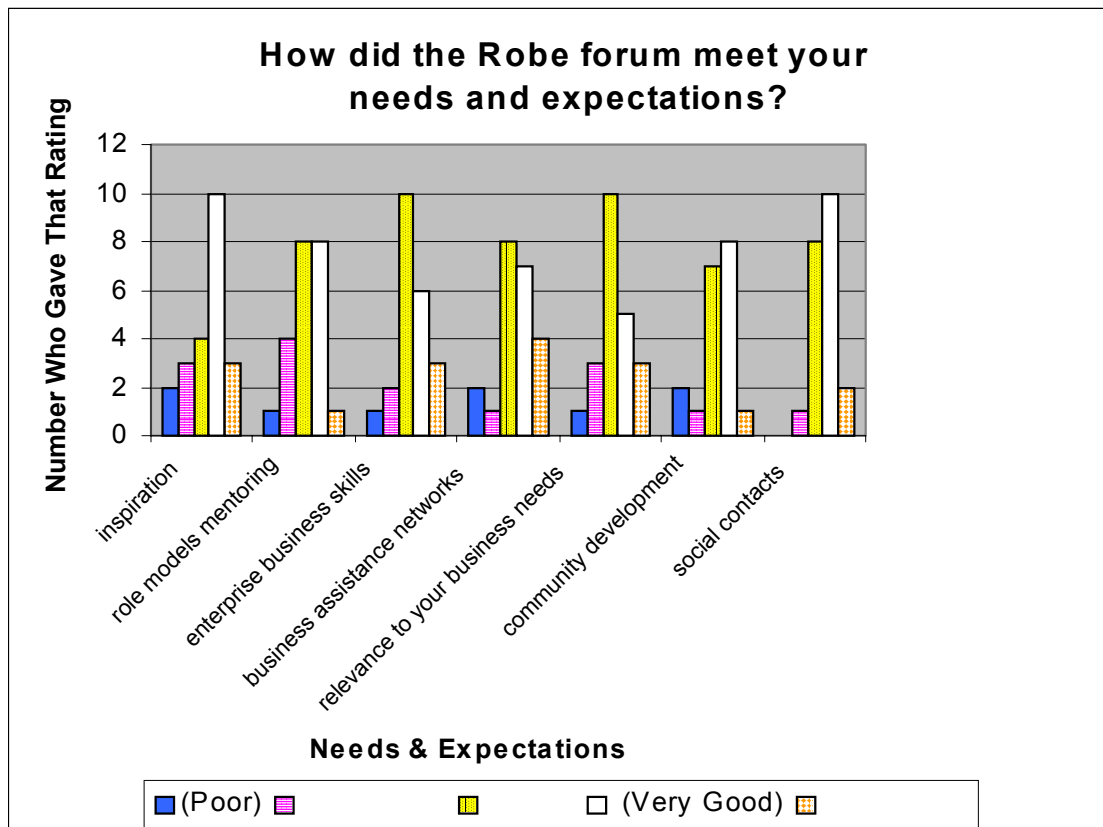
# Appendix 1

Business Forum evaluation charts.

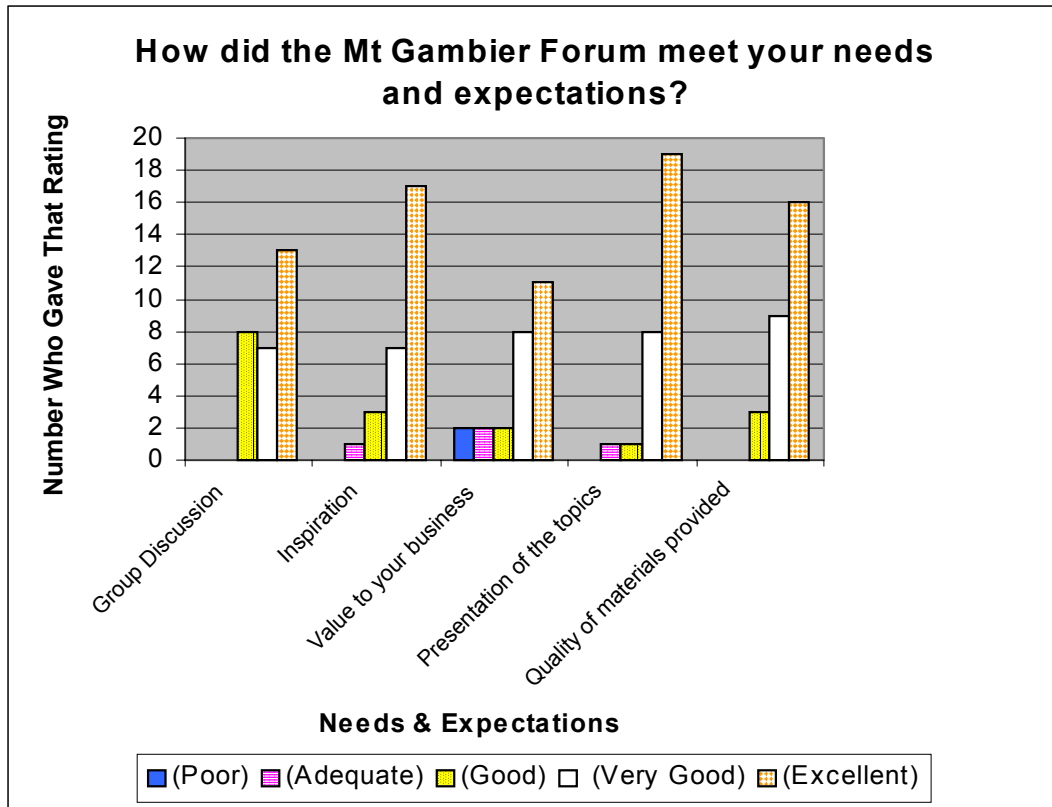
## Appendix 1.1



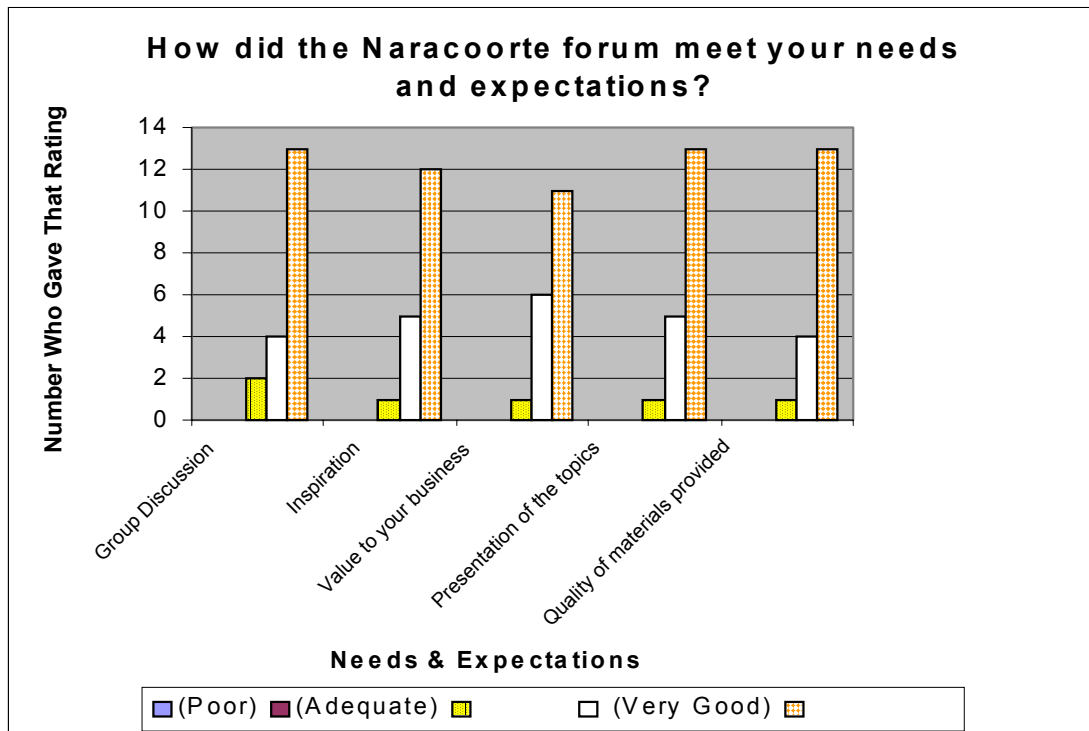
## Appendix 1.2



Appendix 1.3



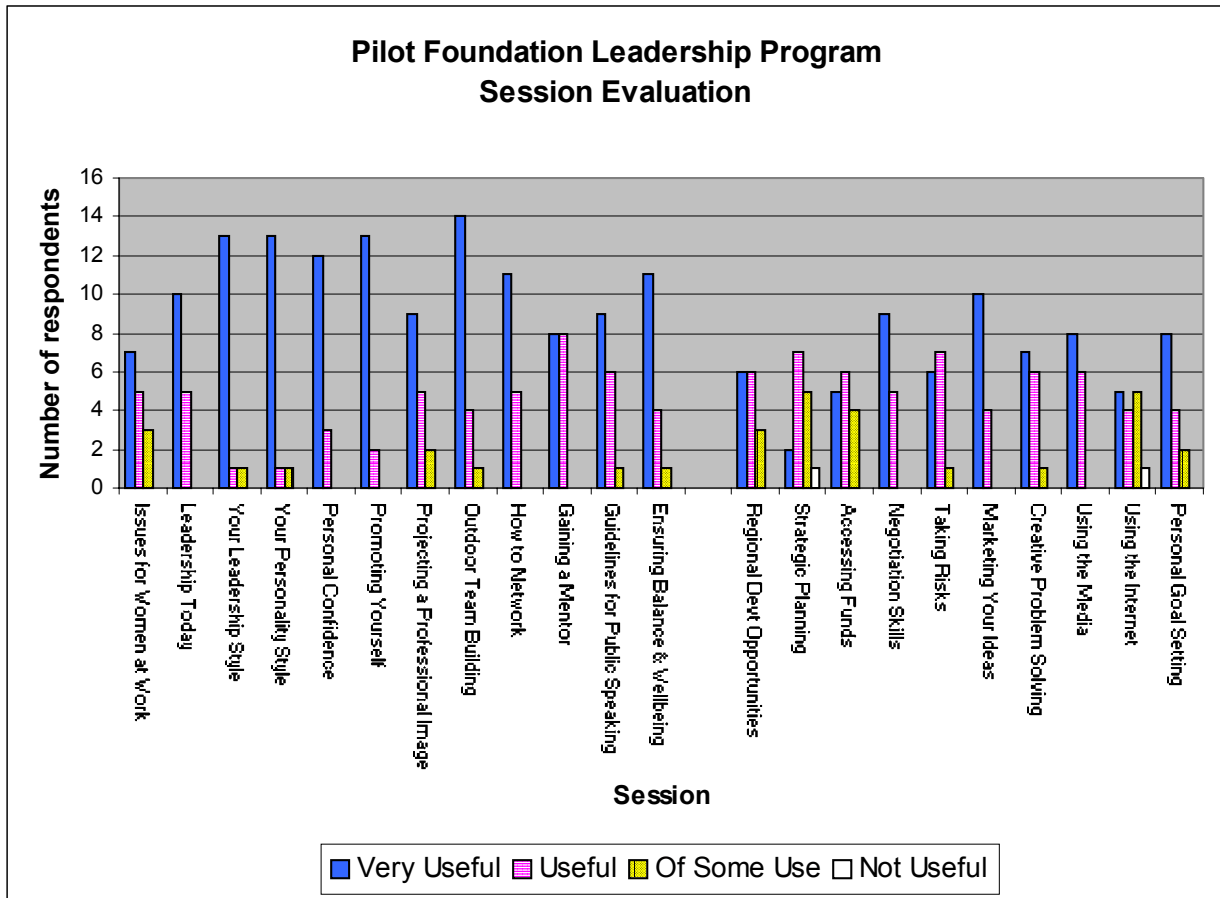
Appendix 1.4



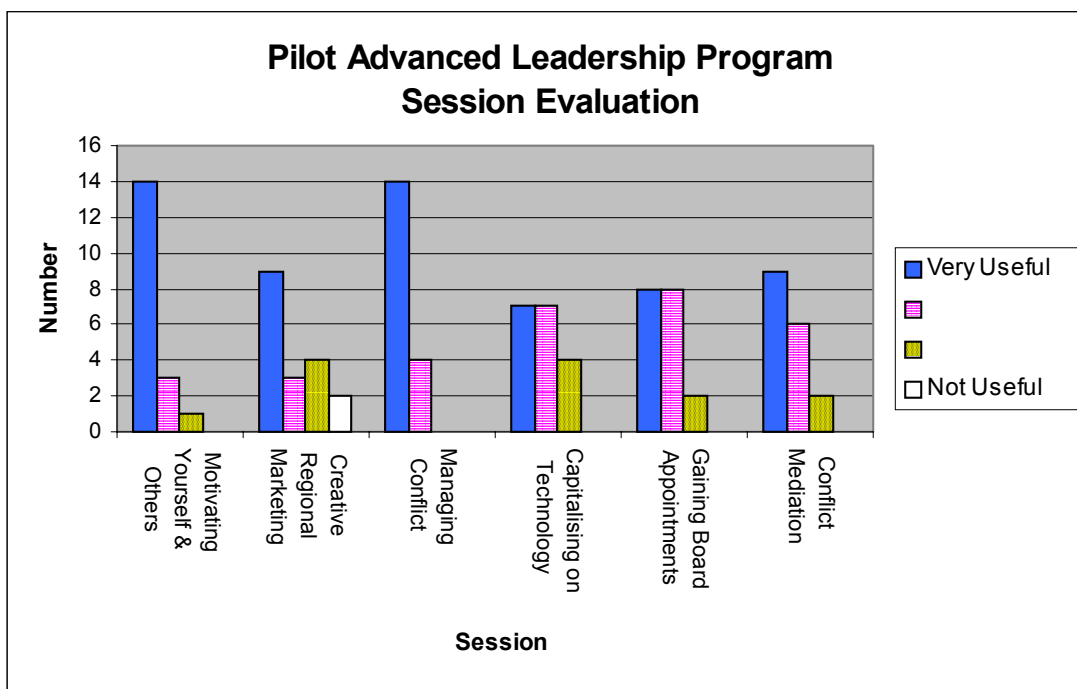
## Appendix 2

Pilot Leadership Program evaluation charts.

### Appendix 2.1



### Appendix 2.2



### Appendix 3

Year 2000 Research Survey Results.

#### Training Needs of Women in Small Business

