Beyond stereotypes: an exploratory profile of Australian women mayors

Christine Ryan
Queensland University of Technology

Barbara Pini
Queensland University of Technology

Kerry A. Brown
Queensland University of Technology, kerry.brown@scu.edu.au

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Christine Ryan
School of Accountancy
Faculty of Business
Queensland University of Technology
GPO Box 2434
BRISBANE QLD 4000
AUSTRALIA
Ph:  
Fax:  
Email: cm.ryan@qut.edu.au

Barbara Pini
School of Management
Faculty of Business
Queensland University of Technology
GPO Box 2434
BRISBANE QLD 4000
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 3864 9262
Fax: 3864 1766
Email: b.pini@qut.edu.au

Kerry Brown
School of Management
Faculty of Business
Queensland University of Technology
GPO Box 2434
BRISBANE QLD 4000
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 3864 5313
Fax: 3864 1313
Email: ka.brown@qut.edu.au

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Beyond stereotypes: An exploratory profile of Australian women mayors

SUMMARY

While women continue to be under-represented in local government, their level of participation in senior positions has increased markedly over the past two decades. However, little is known about these political actors. This study addresses this gap in the literature by drawing on interviews with nineteen women mayors who held office in the Australian state of Queensland during the period 2000-2004. The paper uses Sinclair, Bowman and Strahan’s (1987) typology of women local government leaders, to analyse the current position of women mayors in Australia. The paper finds that the profiles of women in these positions has markedly changed over the last 15 years. The paper concludes there is a need to focus on dismantling the stereotypes and implement well-designed and considered strategies to develop women leaders if the local government sector is to remain robust and viable in these changing social and economic times.
INTRODUCTION
Local government commenced in the Australian state of Queensland just prior to the then colony’s separation from New South Wales in 1859 (see Tucker, 1995). It was, however, not until 1920 that women in Queensland first gained the right to stand for local government, including the office of mayor. Dr. Ellen Kent-Hughes subsequently became the state’s first woman councillor when she was elected in the shire of Kingaroy in 1925. It was another fifty years before the first woman was elected a mayor when Nell E. Robinson became the mayor of Toowoomba in 1967. Since this time, the number of women councillors in Queensland has increased substantially, (see Appendix 1).

The increase of women in local government in Queensland has been mirrored in other western democracies (Barry et al 2004). Unfortunately, however, this increased participation by women has not resulted in an equivalent increase in scholarship about the subject of gender and local government (Neyland and Tucker, 1996; Whip and Fletcher, 1999; MacManus and Bullock, 1995). Much of the existing literature on the subject is dated and is concerned with debates around stereotyping in relation to women mayors, particularly in relation to their age and education levels. Several of the earlier surveys reflected the perception of women councillors in local government as being middle-aged and poorly educated homemakers (see Glezer, 1980; Hollis, 1987). An early but significant Australian study of women councillors undertaken by Sinclair et al (1987: 55-57) suggested, however, that this stereotype may be somewhat erroneous, or was at least changing. They identified five women councillor archetypes: the ‘girl guide’ or ‘maternal feminist’ (typically an older woman, possibly a farmer’s wife and most common in rural shires); the ‘committee woman’ (middle aged and not in paid work); the ‘[political] party woman’ (no particular age and has had her entre into local government through a party political branch); the ‘modern or super mother’ (younger, better educated and still rearing children, who has often spent time away from the area doing training, and is more prevalent in urban areas) and the ‘career activist’ (in her thirties, motivated and unlikely to stay in local government very long, using it as the stepping stone for another career not necessarily into politics). This typology suggests that the profile of women in local government may be different from the stereotype portrayed in the literature. As the authors note, the latter two categories are representative of ‘new types of women entering local government’ in that they have been influenced by both education and a career and have broad aspirations about the roles they seek to play in their lives (Sinclair et al 1987: 56).

Given that considerable time has elapsed since the publication of Getting the Numbers: Women in Local Government (Sinclair et al 1987), and indeed, a greater proportion of women than ever before are involved as local government representatives, it is apposite to revisit the typology outlined above. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine the categorisation of women in local government proposed by Sinclair and her colleagues and assess its analytical usefulness. In short, the paper aims to assess the extent to which the contemporary Australian woman mayor is similar to her historical counterpart in terms of demographic profile and political aspirations. To do so, the paper draws on data from interviews with nineteen women mayors elected to represent Queensland in the period 2000-2004. Before presenting the findings from this exploratory study, the following sections provide some contextual information about Queensland local government, and give an overview of the research methodology.

CONTEXT
Yule (2000) has made the salient observation that if we are to advance women’s position in local government we need to know more about ‘the complexities of the conditions under which women’s entry into and progress in government is facilitated or inhibited’. Such
knowledge requires contextualising the experiences of women in local government. This may require examining the specifics of geographic location as non-metropolitan women may experience more challenges in seeking office than urban women (Dempsey 1992); or the dominance of party politics in a local government environment as strong party affiliations may marginalise women candidates (Sinclair et al 1987). While these issues will be explored throughout the paper, of particular contextual importance to this study is the fact that the mayoral electoral system as well as the roles of mayors in Queensland differs from some other Australian states as well as from some other international environments.

In Queensland, as well as Western Australia and South Australia, all mayors are popularly elected directly to the position by the public (Tucker, 1995). This situation differs from Victoria, Tasmania, the Northern Territory, and some local government authorities of New South Wales, where mayors are elected by Council members from amongst their own numbers; they serve one term and then step down from the position. As such, these mayors perform a largely ceremonial role, and do not carry responsibility for community leadership over and above that of an ordinary Council member (LGF, 2003). In contrast, those directly elected as Queensland mayors perform a managerial function acting as leaders of Councils. As Neylan and Tucker (1996) argue, in this role mayors are high profile political and community leaders in their own right. In the German context, Wollmann (2000; 2002) has argued a similar case. That is, that the introduction of a system of ‘direct democracy’ whereby the population now directly elects their mayor has given those holding the position greater institutional strength, power and influence. This emphasizes the importance of studying this newly emerging political force.

METHODOLOGY
Interviews were used as the most appropriate method to gain an in-depth picture of women in local government, and to understand their experiences and perceptions of their work (Kvale, 1996). An interview schedule was developed with themes and questions, but there was sufficient flexibility to enable interviewers to pursue unanticipated areas of investigation and to adjust the line of inquiry to contextualise participants’ responses (Rossman and Rallis, 1998).

As many as possible of the nineteen interviews were conducted on local government premises; however, because of distance and timetabling problems, approximately half were conducted by telephone. Interview times averaged one hour. To ensure accuracy, all interviews were taped (with interviewees’ permission) and transcribed in full. The analysis process was similar to that undertaken by Welsh (2002) who conducted interviews to study women in local government in the United Kingdom. That is, the qualitative software package NVivo (QSR, 2002) was used to code data around different characteristics of women mayors, as well as to quantify aspects of the data; however, careful reading and interrogation of the full interview texts was also undertaken to ensure greater reliability.

PROFILE OF WOMEN MAYORS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
The following sections of the paper examine aspects of the stereotypical image of women mayors that has been presented in the prior literature, and examines other characteristics that assist in creating a broader picture and understanding of these women leaders.

Demographic perspectives
Geographical location

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1 As executive mayors, women in this sample were responsible for shires which vary markedly in terms of physical size, population size and revenue base. As one example, the council budgets for which they were responsible ranged from just under $2 million to nearly $200 million (ALGIS Directory, 2003).
Of the nineteen women mayors in Queensland in the period 2000-04, seven represented urban constituencies while the remaining twelve were located in rural shires. There was, however, a higher percentage of women amongst urban mayors (28%) compared with rural mayors (12%) (Table 1).

This, according to one rural mayor, was due to the prevalence of traditional gender attitudes in rural communities. She explained that she had experienced little resistance as a woman councillor, but there was less acceptance once she decided to stand for the leadership position of mayor. She explained:

This is a very conservative town. The mayor is always seen a little bit differently. I suppose as a councillor you’re seen as one of eight so it wasn’t so bad to put you in as a councillor. They could live with that—having a strong woman there. But to run for mayor—that was different.

The greater difficulties faced by women in assuming positions of local government leadership in rural than in urban areas is supported in the literature (see for example, Bourke and Luloff, 1997; Bochel et al, 2003). Dempsey’s (1992) seminal seventeen year study of the rural community ‘Small Town’ detailed in his book A Man’s Town, clearly illustrates the difficulties experienced by rural women mayors. He identifies the existence of an entrenched patriarchal hegemony as a prevailing feature of the town’s rural ideology, and details the way in which this is reinforced in public leadership where women typically are accepted only in peripheral roles. Thus women who challenge the status quo are shunned and sanctioned by other townspeople.

Age
Almost all of the respondents in this cohort were 50 years or older. None of the mayors was under the age of 40, and only three were aged between 40 and 50 years. As Table 2 demonstrates, a higher percentage of rural mayors was over 55 years, but there were more younger women amongst urban mayors. The fact that the urban mayors are younger may be due to a range of factors including the increased access to childcare in urban areas, the higher degree of conservatism in rural areas which would favour involvement by more senior and established residents, as well as the tendency of younger people to move to urban areas for education and employment (Table 2).

The middle age of the population of women mayors in this study corresponds with international surveys of women in local government which reported that women local councillors are most likely to be middle-aged (Hollis, 1987; Wilford et al, 1993). However, Sinclair et al (1987) found that women were younger than their male counterparts. Importantly, the age at which the women in this study were elected as councillors was comparatively young: eight were elected while in their thirties; seven were elected in their forties and four were elected in their fifties.

Educational level
In terms of educational level, eight of the nineteen (42%) women mayors only had equivalent to 3 years of secondary schooling or less. As these women were typically older, this is reflective of Queensland’s history of a comparatively small secondary school population prior to the 1970s (ABS Census, 2001), especially in rural areas. In contrast, though, seven women (nearly 37%) had tertiary qualifications, and another was currently undertaking tertiary study. The younger women were all in this group (Table 3).

The seven respondents who had a tertiary education were positive about the benefits this experience had for their mayoral role. This was not only about knowledge gained, as explained by one participant who was the first elected mayor in her shire to possess tertiary qualifications, but about the facilitation of a much stronger relationship between the local university and businesses and the council, which had led to a range of positive economic, social, development and relational outcomes.
The fact that over a third of the mayors were tertiary educated suggests that previous representations of women in local government as poorly educated no longer apply (see Glezer, 1980; Hollis, 1987). Whip and Fletcher’s (1999) comparative analysis of characteristics of Australian women councillors in 1982 and 1993 further substantiates this claim—respondents in the second cohort were typically better qualified than those in the first cohort surveyed.

**Family Commitments**

The literature on women and local government representation is somewhat contradictory in relation to family commitments. On one hand, the disproportionate responsibility which women as a group typically have for domestic and childcare work is said to be a significant constraint to their participation in public life (Hills, 1982; Wilson, 2003). On the other hand, the fact that women are better represented in local government than at state or federal levels is considered to be indicative that local government is more ‘family friendly’ than the latter (Neylan and Tucker, 1996; Drage, 2001). As Tremblay (1996: 34) argues, aspiring women politicians find the local government sector more appealing than state or federal politics, and that it ‘harmonise[s] public and private obligations, notably by reducing distances between home and work and absences from the family.’

These two themes were evident in the mayoral interviews. All but three of the women mayors had children, and while these children were now all adults or teenagers, this was not the case when the women were first elected to council (Table 4). One mayor, for example, recalled that when first elected her children were one, four and six. This participant, and other mayors whose children were under ten when they were first elected, recalled a number of occasions when they had to deal with conflicting mayoral and familial demands by juggling meeting times, putting children to bed on the floor during meetings and relying on child-minders. This result endorses the findings of Barry et al (2004) who argue that there are gender differences in respect to the way in which politicians organise their life. Men ‘compartmentalise’ their paid employment and domestic duties, while women balanced their roles with little separation between them, taking the major responsibility for the domestic tasks.

These Queensland women mayors maintained that they had been attracted to local government as it gave them the opportunity to serve the community and at the same time to keep meeting family responsibilities. Thus, local government was perceived as a more family-friendly political environment than state and federal government.

**Life before the Mayoral Role**

**Background in Shire**

Interviews included a range of questions about the mayors’ background, including the length of time they had lived in the shire they now represented. Of the rural mayors, 41% had grown up in the shire which they now represented, compared with 28% of urban mayors. This contrast may suggest a range of factors including increased mobility and in-migration in urban areas, a greater conservatism in rural areas, and a preference in rural areas for candidates who have an extensive background and long-term links in the district.

Bristow (1980: 79) found in the UK that women were more likely to achieve success in local government elections when their own social profile corresponded with that of constituents in their electorate. For a number of rural-based mayors, it was important to be considered local and to have a well-known family name. One rural mayor, for example, reflected on her success in being elected to office saying, ‘I’ve lived here all my life. I was born and bred on a farm here, I rode horses to school. My dad and grandfather farmed the land.’ Studies of leadership in farming organisations have demonstrated the critical importance of familial background and longevity in the region for electoral success (Pini, 2002). Clearly, similar factors apply for success in mayoral elections in rural local
governments. This may be problematic for rural women seeking election to local government as Bochel et al (2003) reports that rural women typically move to the place of residence of their husband and so are less likely to be able to draw on family background.

**Occupation prior to becoming mayor**

Prior to entering local government either as a mayor or a councillor most participants had been engaged in paid work, largely in small businesses or in professional work (Table 5).

Regardless of type of occupation, the women were clear about the range of skills and knowledge they considered important for local government work, including ‘a capacity for empathy and to listen’ (a former nurse), ‘skills in financial management’ (a former small business operator), and ‘a capacity to organise and to delegate’ (a former teacher).

Earlier literature on women in local government, stereotypes women councillors as ‘housewives’ (Glezer, 1980; Bristow, 1980; Hollis, 1987). In terms of their occupational backgrounds, the position of these women mayors challenges this stereotype. Almost all of these women in local government were in paid employment prior to election and this aspect supports the finding of Whip and Fletcher (1999). In this respect, these women further reflect the broader population from which they are drawn in that women today are highly likely to work outside the home.

**Council experience prior to becoming mayor**

Seventeen of the nineteen participants interviewed had served on the council before standing for, and being elected to, the position of mayor (Table 6). Beginning a political career as a councillor before seeking the office of mayor was considered important to these women to gain experience and to establish a public profile. Building a profile was particularly important for urban-based mayors in shires with larger populations. According to some participants there was more support for mayoral candidates who had first served as councillors. One urban mayor, who was well-known in her area and had a high profile in community organisations, was initially unsuccessful in her bid for the mayoral position. At the time she was told by a constituent, ‘Look, we’d vote for you, but you need to be a councillor first.’

However, two of the nineteen women were directly elected to the mayoral position. Both of these women were from rural shires and explained that they were well known in their areas before taking up office, having served in various community positions. One also suggested that she had been advantaged by her extensive experience in council administration as the former Deputy Shire Clerk. This finding reinforces the prior research of MacManus and Bullock (1995:159) who argue that ‘Participation in high-profile community organisations and activities and political party organisations may be better “training grounds” today than lesser elective posts.’

As Table 6 indicates, fourteen of the nineteen mayors (73%) had ten or more year’s experience in local government prior to their election to mayoral office. All but one of the cohort had more than four year’s experience. However, the time participants had spent in the mayoral role was relatively short. Over half of the group was elected between 1996 and 1999.

**Community involvement prior to entering local government**

All of the women mayors had been active in their communities prior to their election. The areas in which they had concentrated their energies ranged from sporting associations to children’s groups, school boards, business associations, welfare groups, and tourism bodies.

The women mayors were adamant that extensive community involvement was essential for those aspiring to be elected to local government. In this respect they echoed the perspective of a former Queensland Minister for Local Government, Di McCauley (1993: 49) who, when offering advice to aspiring female candidates, argued that community involvement is a ‘pre-requisite for local government service for all women’ and this ‘provides an important network for advice, opinion monitoring and decision-making processes.’ In highlighting the importance of their community activism prior to election, the women mayors referred to
recent changes in the role and responsibilities of local government. These changes include the devolution of service delivery from state governments to local municipalities, with associated new portfolio responsibilities for local government in areas such as community welfare, employment, aged and youth care, and economic development (Marshall and Dollery, 1997). Rather than reinforcing stereotypes of women in local government as being akin to ‘housewives’ (Glezer, 1980; Bristow, 1980; Hollis, 1987), an alternative explanation is that a knowledge of the ‘industry’ is essential for all high level managers and leaders, whether male or female. It appears as the responsibilities under the purview of local government have expanded women have been increasingly successful in adapting to those altered conditions.

Clearly, community involvement is important for all members of local government, not only women. It could be argued, however, that the route of community involvement is more important for women because they often lack the business contacts and networks of men (Pini et al, 2004). Community involvement not only prepared these women mayors for office and gave them a community profile, it was also in itself an impetus to seek office. This element is discussed further in the following section together with other forces that motivated women to enter local government.

**POLITICAL CAREER ASPIRATIONS**

*Motivation to enter Local Government*

All nineteen women mayors were asked why they entered local government. Two themes recurred in the responses. The first of these was a level of dissatisfaction with the incumbent administration and a belief in their capacity to bring about change. The second motivating force for the women mayors was that they had been encouraged to stand for election.

For those motivated by discontent with the previous council, most had wanted to advance particular issues in their communities but had met with what they described as apathy, arrogance, incompetence or unnecessary bureaucracy. In this sense the participants were politically motivated by factors similar to those reported by women in Victorian local government over fifteen years ago (Sinclair et al, 1987), as well as those reported by their New Zealand counterparts (Drage, 1999) and those in Japan (Bochel et al, 2003). One interviewee, for example, was intent on having a swimming pool built for young people in her rural town, while a second was concerned about problems with local roads, and a third about economic development in the shire. These women were motivated by an urge to be proactive as expressed by one mayor, ‘It was no good complaining about it, so I ran for the council.’ These sentiments are consistent with the findings by Trimble (1995) in her study in Canada when she found that women chose to become involved in local government politics because of the profound influence on their lives, that is, ‘It is powerful in ways that matter to them’ (Trimble, 1995).

A second reason for entering local government was being encouraged to do so. This supports Drage’s (1999: 203) survey findings that persuasion was the strongest motivating force for women councillors, and the work of Barry et al (2004). Often the persuasion came from other women: ‘The person who was my biggest encourager was a lady.’ One (urban) mayor said she had been recruited by a woman deputy mayor: ‘She really gave me a lot of encouragement, a lot of confidence … she was a tremendous role model for me.’ Another interviewee was challenged, rather than encouraged: ‘I happened to be at a dinner party with one of the councillors … we ended up having a huge argument about something the council did, and he said to me “If you don’t like it, stand!”’, and I said “Right, I will”.

*The influence of party politics in local government*

In response to the question as to whether they were involved in party politics, thirteen of the nineteen mayors (68%) indicated that they had never been a member of a political party, while four (21%) reported that they had been members of a party but no longer were members.
Only two of the nineteen stated that they were currently members of a party—both of the Australian Labor Party. The overwhelming view of participants was that the role of party politics in local government was minor because councils deal with issues that are considered to be apolitical. As one mayor said, ‘Whether you allow a motel to have an extra eight rooms or not is not exactly a political issue.’ Another commented, ‘I am issue-focused rather than political.’ Some of the mayors expressed relief that the local government arena in which they operated was apolitical.

These results are in contrast to those in the UK, where most local councillors are elected under a ‘party label’ (see for example, Cole, 2002), but support prior studies (Drage, 1999 and Tremaine, 2000 in New Zealand; Neylan and Tucker, 1996 in Australia) on the alleged minor role that party politics plays in local government. In particular, Sinclair et al (1987: 54) found that most of their Australian subjects argued that their non-membership of a political party was the best credential for council, and they strongly opposed the intrusion of party politics at the local level. At the same time, the reported low level of party political activity in local government reported by the women mayors needs to be read with some caution, as interpretations of the meaning of ‘political’ may be subjective. This was well illustrated by a response from one mayor who commented that, ‘Our council's not political. It’s just that we’re all National [Party].’ Another provided further reason to examine the data more closely in that she stated, ‘Look, independent in local government is code for conservative.’ These perspectives resonate with the literature on party political power in local government authorities. In two studies of rural local governments, Longreach in Queensland and Cowra in New South Wales, Higgins (1997) and Gray (1991) respectively, found that the majority of councillors were politically conservative, but claimed political neutrality. This claim provided legitimacy for their actions, and effectively silenced any opposition from councillors whose different perspectives (typically those who were associated with the Australian Labor Party) were represented as antithetical to the ‘common good’ of the shire.

Future political aspirations

Local government is often represented as a possible platform from which one can launch a political career. In the United Kingdom, for example, Briggs (2000: 74) argued that ‘As with their male counterparts, women often use local politics as a training ground prior to election to the national legislature.’ In Japan, Bochel et al (2003) have found evidence that experience in local government is a career path to election in central government. In Australia, Whip and Fletcher (1999) and Haslam-McKenzie (2003) have suggested that because of this purported link between a local government career and further political aspirations, women’s increased participation in local government could translate to greater gender equity in national and state governments.

Responses from the Queensland women mayors indicate that few of them have aspirations to serve at state or federal political level. These interviewees typically asserted that their role in local government was an end in itself rather than a stepping stone to future political involvement. Of the nineteen women mayors, one had actually served as a state government representative, and another had run for federal office; both expressed their preference for local government. A further participant echoed this perspective saying:

I’ve actually been offered the seat as candidate for our federal party twice, and twice I’ve turned it down. I didn’t want to be away from my children when they were that young. And really I always wanted to be mayor … it was the potential to steer and lead a community … the hands-on stuff. It’s very real. It’s palpable.

The veracity of the assertion by these women and other female mayors that they had no political aspirations beyond local government may be open to question. They may not have viewed it as apposite to articulate their political aspirations. However, the fact that the women were extremely candid in the interviews about a wide range of issues and were also assured of
anonymity, their responses to questions about their future political plans have a high degree of trustworthiness.

TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE TYPOLOGY OF WOMEN IN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The profile that is presented of women mayors in Queensland challenges previous work which has typically homogenized and stereotyped women in local government as middle class, middle-aged homemakers and local government leadership as something which is done when children are no longer dependent. There was little evidence in the data of the ‘maternal feminist’ or ‘girl-guide’ as described by Sinclair et al (1987) or indeed the ‘committee woman’. Unlike those described as typical of these categories, many of the women mayors interviewed had entered local government with young families, had a strong career identity prior to entering local government, and viewed local government as a specific career choice. A growing number have formal educational qualifications and many were younger – particularly those in urban areas. The women were thus more clearly representative of those described in 1987 as the ‘modern or super mother’ and ‘career activist’. The categories that have increased and appear to be now dominant in 2005 were only emerging in 1987.

Influential in shaping the women mayors’ desire to enter local government was not party political involvement, but frustration with the existing administration and active community involvement. This, together with the limited impact of party politics on the local governments over which the women preside, meant none of the interviewees conformed to the identity of ‘party woman’ as described by Sinclair et al. 1987. Collectively, the data indicate that the ‘typical’ woman in Australian local government differs substantially from that described almost two decades ago.

CONCLUSION

Given the small sample used in this study, and its exploratory intent, it is difficult to generalise our findings to the broader population of women mayors in Australia, or indeed women in local government across the states. The more valuable contribution of the findings from this research stems from the implications it has for the future robustness, viability and prosperity of the local government sector more generally. To remain contemporary, the local government sector needs to acknowledge the changing profile of women mayors. In this vein, the findings of this research provide policy direction and outline challenges for local government regulators. Results of this research have demonstrated that the following factors are relevant in supporting women leaders - facilitation of women mentors, specific succession planning strategies, policies on the work-family balance and policies that acknowledge differences in leadership styles between men and women. Local government regulators and decision makers need to formulate and implement policies that reflect these priorities in order to increase the proportion of women leaders.

The paper also raises fruitful areas for further research. Three areas are identified. In the first instance, a range of research questions emerge as to furthering knowledge about the women described in this paper. Issues which require investigation are whether female local government leaders differ from female leaders in either the public sector or the private sector, and what specific challenges and dilemmas are encountered by women in local government. As Broussine and Fox (2002) argue, if local government is to ‘modernise’ itself, then notions of the different leadership styles of men and women and the implications this has for female participation in the sector needs to be explored. A fruitful area of research would be to seek the views of female local government leaders from other jurisdictions on this issue.
A second area of research requiring attention in the area of local government and gender concerns differences between women. MacManus and Bullock (1995:174) have highlighted this issue in terms of the lack of research on the ‘interactive effects’ of gender and race on women’s experience of local government. There is, however, a range of other subject positions, such as sexuality and class, which may shape women’s involvement in the local government sector and their impact requires investigation. The data presented in this paper demonstrates the need for more consideration to be given to the mediating influences of gender and other subjectivities as clear differences are evident for women mayors according to their geographic location.

The final area for future research raised by the findings is the changed and changing nature of local government. What is relevant about this change in terms of this exploratory study is that while there has been significant literature documenting the transformation of the Australian local government sector (for example, Chapman et al, 1997), a gender analysis has not been undertaken. It is thus not apparent how the restructuring and rationalization of local government as well as the adoption of managerialism and its associated discourses of efficiency, competition and customer focus, have and are impacting on women in the sector. However, evidence from England and Wales on the appointment of local government chief executive officers seems to suggest that in periods of change, the tendency was to revert to known notions of management and leadership which are male oriented (Broussine and Fox, 2000). This finding, and its implication for the Australian local government sector which has undergone significant periods of micro economic reform, are crucial areas for future research.

REFERENCES

Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA), 2001, National Framework for Women in Local Government, Department of the Prime Minister, Canberra.


APPENDIX 1
Percentage of Female Councillors in each Australian state from 1980-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>2004 %</th>
<th>2000 %</th>
<th>1994 %</th>
<th>1980 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>30.3++</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>26.8+</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia (2003)</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania (2003)</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+Does not include 26 where gender unknown
++ 1125 positions available as May 2004 only 995 filled

Source: Compiled by the authors from data from web sites of councils, data supplied by local government departments and local government associations.
Table 1: Interviewees according to regional category, Queensland 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNCIL TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL COUNCILS</th>
<th>WOMEN MAYORS</th>
<th>% WOMEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>n=125</em></td>
<td><em>n=19</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>15%</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Age profile of women mayors, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE CATEGORY</th>
<th>RURAL (%)</th>
<th>URBAN (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;40 years</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50 years</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>2 (28.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-55 years</td>
<td>5 (42%)</td>
<td>3 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;55 years</td>
<td>6 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (28.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of women mayors</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Education profile of Queensland women mayors, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF EDUCATION</th>
<th>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>AGES OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship (Year 8 equiv.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>57, 62, 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior (Year 10 equiv.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>51, 53, 53, 56, 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-senior (Year 11 equiv.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52, 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40s, 44, 49, 51, 53, 60, 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No equiv. – Educated overseas)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4: Number of children in Queensland mayors’ families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO. OF WOMEN MAYORS</th>
<th>NO. OF CHILDREN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Occupations before becoming mayor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUSINESS</th>
<th>PROFESSIONAL</th>
<th>NON-PROFESSIONAL</th>
<th>NON-PAID WORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small business (2)</td>
<td>Teacher (2)</td>
<td>Governess and cook</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer/grazier (2)</td>
<td>Deputy principal</td>
<td>Child care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher shop</td>
<td>Community developer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post officer</td>
<td>Radiographer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest house proprietor</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering business</td>
<td>Dental nurse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy shire clerk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n=2 (10.5%)</td>
<td>n=1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=8 (42%)</td>
<td>n=8 (42%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: Time served on Council, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FIRST ELECTED TO COUNCIL n=19</th>
<th>FIRST ELECTED TO MAYOR n=19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1990</td>
<td>9 (47%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-94</td>
<td>5 (26%)</td>
<td>4 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-99</td>
<td>4 (21%)</td>
<td>10 (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1 (.5%)</td>
<td>5 (26%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>