

MEDIA RELEASE
**What's changed during 100 Years of the
International Women's Movement?**

A survey of around 300 women working in technology, carried out as part of the annual Telstra Females in Information Technology and Telecommunications (FITT) International Women's Day (IWD) forum, has thrown some light on the success, or otherwise, of the original 1910 IWD Charter.

The FITT function, held in Sydney on March 8, was officially opened by Hon. Jodi MacKay, NSW Minister for Women, and had an interactive panel consisting of Senator, the Hon. Helen Coonan, Pru Goward MP, NSW Shadow Minister for Women, and Deena Shiff, Group Managing Director, Telstra Business.

Two pillars of the original 1910 charter were universal suffrage and equal pay for equal work and, according to Maggie Alexander, a founding member of FITT, progress has been a bit of a mixed bag.

While all of our members have a voice at polling day, we obviously have not been vocal enough about narrowing the gender salary gap, said Ms Alexander.

As part of the day's proceedings, over 300 members and guests were asked to complete a survey that sought to rank five specific aims for the women over the next 100 years, and also gave respondents the opportunity to add one more aim of their, or their table's, choosing.

The order of priority, according to the set aims of the survey was:

1. Continuing to strive and campaign for equal pay for equal work
2. Encouraging Australia's female youth (regardless of industry) to focus more on success by achievement rather than media-driven body-image stereotypes
3. Supporting women from IT&T backgrounds to make it to board and C-level positions within private Australian organisations (and not only public/NFP sector where female representation is higher)
4. Encouraging successful women in IT&T in Australia to share their road to success¹ with younger women in IT&T or those considering IT&T careers
5. Creating a level landscape for women in IT&T in Australia regardless of cultural, religious or social pressures so that they can achieve their potential

It is both sad and significant to note that the number one priority has been the same for one hundred years, but it's also encouraging to see how Australian women are coming together to collectively and collaboratively address current issues, said Ms Alexander.

According to Ms Alexander, findings from the open aim section of the survey fell into a small band of categories.

There were a significant number of suggestions that revolved around the need to do more to encourage females in secondary education to view technology as a career that offers them great rewards, both financially and personally. Another common theme was a belief that we needed to look at our industry in non-gender terms. There was a

strong feeling that equality would be best achieved by looking at both genders as simply employees, rather than the traditional them and us attitude that arguably exists today, said Ms Alexander.

In putting the survey into context, Ms Alexander stressed that FITT's membership covers over 1,800 members drawn from a wide range of career positions, from software engineers to CIOs, and all the way up to senior management of global technology and telecommunication companies, and that the guests at the function were a representative sample of all job classifications.