



Foreword

Profile Queensland Women is a biennial publication of the latest statistics on women's status in Queensland.

In a single document it provides a wealth of information and hard data on women's health, economic security, work-family balance, safety and leadership.

This profile highlights areas where women have progressed. It gives us an important benchmark to measure the achievements and successes of government and industry, while clearly illustrating areas where improvements are needed to address existing and emerging inequity, and under-representation.

There have been encouraging gains in women's education, workforce participation levels, breast and cervical cancer prevention, and increased representation in leadership positions. However, as the profile starkly shows, many women are still living in poverty or, along with their children, are threatened with future poverty.

In 2004, women – not men – remain the primary carers of children, regardless of whether both parents work full-time. Women are restructuring their working lives around their family responsibilities, putting off further education, and are limited in their access to superannuation.

They continue to be under-represented in higher paid jobs, and those that contribute the most to our economy. As their participation in the workforce has risen, there has been little commensurate increase in men sharing the child-rearing load.

Disturbingly, this profile shows the gap between earnings of men and women in full-time work to be widening right across the board. Women are making the career, family and financial sacrifices that men are not. One-third of all marriages end in divorce. Significant numbers of Queensland women and their children then live in poverty.

Profile reveals that women's experience of both domestic violence and sexual assault continues to be a critical issue for Queensland society. It also highlights the declining fertility rate, with clear implications for how we structure our laws, policies, services and infrastructure to meet the needs of an ageing population.

This document is an excellent measure of Queensland women's circumstances in 2004. Let's use the information to improve women's opportunities and the quality of their future lives.

Desley Boyle MP
Minister for Women