Women in Chemistry @ Parliament House
25 August 2011

Professor Margaret Sheil
Australian Research Council

Career Timeline

- CEO
- PVC/DVCR
- Dean
- Professor
- Associate Professor
- Senior Lecturer
- Lecturer
- Postdocs
- PhD
- BSc(Hons)

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Web: arc.gov.au  Email: info@arc.gov.au
“It’s ridiculous to suggest this technique will have any value in understanding the changes in proteins due to cataract. HE demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding or experience protein chemistry and would have to rely on the postdoc to do the experiments.”

NHMRC reviewer
Government Investment in R&D 2011-12

- Universities: 21%
- NHMRC: 8%
- ARC: 9%
- CRCs: 2%
- Business & Innovation: 24%
- Other Science: 4%
- Other: 6%
- Rural: 2%
- Energy and the Environment: 5%
- Other Government: 11%

Investigator Driven: 4.5%

The ARC

- National Competitive Grants Program: $810M in 11-12
- Discovery & Fellowships: $502 M
- Linkage & Centres: $308 M

- Evaluation and Policy
- Excellence in Research for Australia

- Statutory Agency established 2001
- Mission: to deliver policy and programs that advance Australian research and innovation globally and benefit the community
- Fund direct costs to Universities and partners
- All disciplines except clinical medicine & dentistry
Australia’s Female Chemists

Doreen Clark AM
President of RACI
1994

Joy Bear AM
Leighton Medal 1998

Dr Jean Youatt
Monash

“I did twice go and see professors about promotion, but I got no encouragement at all and I didn’t know then what to do. To this day I don’t know what the process is. I didn’t know you could go ahead and apply anyway, so I just gave up. But that was part of my upbringing too: I had the reverse of assertiveness training.”
Discovery Project Applications

Proportion of male and female applicants and success rates by career age (years since PhD) (DPs, 2001-10)
Research Opportunity & Performance Evidence (ROPE)

- changing how we measure excellence *track record* v. performance evidence
- assessors take into account any career interruptions
  - childbirth
  - carer’s responsibility
  - misadventure and illness
- more female assessors & committee members
“The Dept of Botany does not wish to reappoint her, chiefly because they realise her interest is entirely in research .........; partly as she was not entirely successful as a teacher of undergraduate work. The Dept obviously prefers a less gifted person who will accept a large amount of routine duty.”

HOD on McClintock 1933
What else can we do?

• Nominate women for awards!!!!!
• Universities/employers need to provide leadership/supportive environments and pro-active mentoring
• Mentoring must include advice on timing, *scale and scope* as well as actual quality of grant proposals and publications
• Universities/senior women/academies/societies etc. must encourage them to apply!

Language and role models are important!

*A mother, top grant winner and master of high-tech instrumentation*,..., Professor Margaret Sheil

*Wisenet/Campus News*
June 2000