

A stylized illustration of a woman's neck and shoulders. She has short brown hair and is wearing bright red lipstick. She is wearing a blue pinstriped blazer over an orange top. A blue strap with a silver buckle is visible on her left shoulder. She is wearing a necklace with black beads and a silver pendant that looks like a star or a flower. The background is dark blue on the left and white on the right.

Inspiring in the wisdom they share these women are gutsy achievers, strong minded, generous of spirit, beautiful in their creativity and are the rich fabric of Central Queensland. We honour them.

INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN *of* CAPRICORNIA

EDITED BY BARBARA LAWRENCE

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WOMEN**

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INTRODUCTION

VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT PROFESSOR SCOTT BOWMAN

As Vice-Chancellor of CQUniversity, I am delighted to write the Foreword for this book, *Inspirational Women of Capricornia*.

On reading the stories I was full of admiration for the personal drive, initiatives taken and the entrepreneurial determination of these inspiring women. The contribution these women make to the Central Queensland region is enormous and each and every one of them deserves the acknowledgement this book provides.

Inspirational Women of Capricornia has been produced to provide young women with a diversity of role models and show that extraordinary women are everywhere. These women build strong and caring communities in which we want to live and work.

I would expect that women of all ages will be able to identify with the story writers and feel the passion and commitment they have shared with us through their writing.

CQUniversity prides itself in providing opportunities for motivated learners, of all ages, to achieve their dreams – to be what they want to be. *The Inspirational Women of Capricornia* book shows that with determination, motivation and education, women can and do achieve whatever they set their mind to.

I congratulate the women who generously wrote their stories and I thank the CQUniversity staff who identified and recognised the inspirational women of Capricornia through the publishing of this book. Well done to all!

Regards
Professor Scott Bowman
Vice-Chancellor and President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every woman who has written for this book has unselfishly shared their wealth of knowledge, life experiences and a little part of themselves. We owe them a great debt and acknowledge, with humility, their generosity.

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A special thank you to Kristine Jones who has so willingly organised the gathering of these stories and the compilation of this book.

We owe a special thank you to Peter Lawrence for the photos, which shine with the strength and beauty of these truly inspirational women.

We would also like to thank Christopher Lawrence for the cover design which intrigues the imagination of readers and reflects the diversity of the women of Capricornia.

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*Chief Executive Officer, Hillcrest Rockhampton Private Hospital
Ramsay Health Care*



LILLIAN LEVER

OWNER/MANAGER, KOORANA CROCODILE FARM

My mother was the strong hand and mind that melded me into what I am today. I grew up in Tasmania with apples and a mother who had divorced in 1953 when this was not at all socially acceptable. The apples were very quiet and passive but not my mother. She moved me to Melbourne as soon as I had matriculated as 'Tasmania offers no opportunities for employment'. There I gained a Diploma in Library Science and started my working life as a librarian with the Aeronautical Research Laboratories.

The essence of what she has taught me all my life and what she has lived by can be summed up as:

Decide on what you want to achieve and pursue it to the end. Sometimes there are obstacles – these are merely testing places to make you look at what your goals are. Redefine the path to them if necessary before pushing on to the ultimate goal.

Never say:

I can't do that because I'm a woman but rather:

'That may be more difficult for me, but because I am a woman I know I can succeed.'

Sadly she died last year just two months short of her 102nd birthday.

I am a mother, business woman, chef, farmer and entrepreneur. My association with the land is different to most. I see value adding as an essential element to business.

I have had to work hard to prove that I had the physical and mental attributes to be successful in a male dominated industry. I have walked a fine line to ensure acceptance, but not be labelled 'one of the blokes'. I worked logically on problems encountered on the farm, in the industry and with government departments to earn respect. Women can succeed in non-traditional

areas although it takes determination and stamina. In a male dominated field I did succeed. Most people do not put women and crocodiles together in the same sentence and expect it to work. The challenge was to be accepted within a fledgling national industry where even the male participants were unwilling to trust each other. Some 30 years on there are quite a few women involved with crocodiles from workers on farms and within abattoirs, to managers and scientific researchers.

8 John and I met in Indonesia in 1980 where he was doing a consultancy for the United Nations in Irian Jaya to draft a wild crocodile management plan for that region and I was doing a consultancy for CSIRO. We decided to marry and became a team focused on starting the first private enterprise crocodile farm in Queensland. I had had no experience with crocodiles having worked in a major city and worn silk dresses and pearls all my working life. The closest that I had come to crocodiles at that time was ownership of a crocodile skin handbag.

During the early stages of our development we lived in a caravan on site. From being a professional librarian in Melbourne, employed by CSIRO, I took up the role of bread winner, book keeper, outboard motor operator, camp cook,

crocodile handler and fencer. Plus three step sons. Originally we started with three breeding size crocodiles. This number has grown to around 3000 animals, on average.

I am publicly acknowledged as a partner in our business and more importantly for me the five male members of my family assume I have every right to be a partner. I am as necessary to our business as John – though I am not as well known or as easily identifiable.

I have been fortunate to have had some interesting committee positions offered to me and also been asked to give some papers at influential conferences. Some of these are:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 2010 | Director, Iwasaki Foundation |
| Feb 2009 | Invited paper 'To be average scares the hell out of me' Economic opportunities for women in Asia-Pacific, Singapore (sponsored by World Bank, Group Gender Action Plan, Singapore Management University and the Stern School of Business, New York University) |
| 2006 | Member, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's New Animal Products Research and Development Advisory Committee |

- 2002 – 2005 Member, Westpac National Advisory Committee for Women in Banking
- 2002 Paper for ABARE 2002 Agricultural Outlook Conference.
Rural communities: innovative business, enterprising communities
- 2001 Finalist, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's Rural Woman Award
- 2000 – 2001 Member, Ministerial Advisory Council for Women in Agriculture and Resource Management
- 2000 – 2001 President, Queensland Rural Women's Network

I believe strongly in successful women established in their careers mentoring younger generations of women. Our stories should be celebrated and told to enthuse these younger women. Lack of self confidence is a major drawback for many women. ***Empowerment and gender equality should come from inner confidence.*** I feel that successful women in whatever role they have chosen – motherhood to crocodile farming and everything in between – should be mentors. Young women need to

know **not just** the successes but also what the pitfalls have been. But the main message should be:

*Never lose sight of your original goal or lose faith in yourself.
Persistence is the key to success*

I am very proud of the success of our family business – Koorana Crocodile Farm.

With all the value adding we have entered into we are farmers, tourist operators, manufacturers, wholesalers, meat processors, retailers and exporters. We produce crocodile skin, crocodile skin products, and crocodile meat. We sell live crocodiles, a crocodile experience for the public and training courses for private enterprise and government employees whose work places include areas that may, or do, contain crocodiles. In fact we provide most things crocodile. Value adding and alternate agriculture crocodiles at its best.

I have two sayings pinned to the wall in the office toilet – so they are read daily. One was given to me by my mother and the other by my mother-in-law. They are:

'To be average scares the hell out of me'

'Do not go where the path may lead.

Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail'



MELISSA ADAMS

SENIOR SERGEANT, OFFICER IN CHARGE ROCKHAMPTON POLICE STATION

I envy those people who know what they want from their career and are able to work to the whole five year, 10 year plan model we hear about. I have never been able to consciously work like that. I think *my career has basically grown from a range of happy circumstances and gradually learning to have the courage to 'have a go'.*

Like many people, I started out doing what was expected of me, going to university to pursue something I was 'good at' – English and Journalism. A degree in print journalism and modern history later, I went to work at a suburban newspaper, which included covering the police rounds. It seemed to me that the police officers I dealt with were doing so many interesting things and their work was so unpredictable. That appealed to me. I also thought the concept of working with the one employer but having access to a wide range of roles and working

anywhere in the state was a bonus. I suppose a career as a police officer offered something of an adventure but with the stability and order that was attractive to me.

In February 1991 I joined the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and spent 10 months at the Police Academy at Oxley. We were the first large intake in the post Fitzgerald era and facing a new revised university based training. I loved the work and the steep learning curve I was suddenly on. I appreciated that this was training like nothing I had ever done before and I surprised myself with what I could get through, particularly in terms of physical skills. I am no athlete! I graduated in time for New Year's Eve on the Gold Coast. I still remember working with my training officer, standing back to back at the top of the Surfers Paradise Mall having bottles thrown at us by an unruly members of the crowd. I am

not sure I had any idea of what I was supposed to do but I learnt fast! I still work every New Year's Eve – everyone I know is working, the camaraderie amongst the staff is great and it's a unique look at the rest of the world at play!

My career has given me so many opportunities, working in places as diverse as Mt Isa and Airlie Beach, in roles over the last 20 years that include general duties, prosecutions and finally as officer in charge of a station.

The only real long term 'significant' goal I ever began to wonder about was becoming an officer in charge of a station. When I became the officer in charge of Upper Mount Gravatt Police Station in 2007 I believe that was essentially due to the support of important mentors.

I have been lucky in my career to have been encouraged by a range of informal mentors. The 'informal' nature of their support, given freely in the work place, worked best for me, though the QPS supports a number of formal mentoring and leadership programs. My mentors were diverse – but chief among them were a senior female officer, then an Inspector, now a Chief Superintendent and a Senior Sergeant, a male, who was one of the most supportive leaders I had ever encountered, or have since.

In both instances, these mentors were role models in the way they conducted themselves daily and in their successes, which set standards and goals for me to aspire to. More importantly, for me, they gave me a push when I needed it and gave me tools to come out of my comfort zone and try new paths.

Essentially they didn't let me 'give into myself' and helped me develop enough self belief to go for that officer in charge position.

Through my own career and in watching my own female staff develop, ***one of the greatest challenges I think women may face is in that concept of their own self belief and their capacity to put themselves forward.*** I believe many women need convincing they are capable of taking on the next step in the ladder, whatever that may entail. I see women who are confident in taking on specific tasks and high work loads but its almost as though daring to apply for the formal role is just that step too much – they 'need further development', there is 'someone else better qualified', 'I'm just not ready'... a whole range of self-deprecating talk sabotaging self confidence. Women don't like to seem selfish, but in a way, being a bit single minded about your goals is the only way you will achieve

them – don't wait for someone else to push you where you want to go, ultimately, it's up to you.

One of the most satisfying aspects of my job now is in helping my staff achieve their own goals. Some of the Constables I work with still amaze me daily, with the things they put up with whilst maintaining enthusiasm for their work. I think I can truthfully say that I can still come to work everyday and learn something new, get satisfaction from my job... and get a giggle out of the people I work with – they are a great crew. I still think I have the best job in the world.



LYN ANDERSON

MANAGER, ROSEBERRY COMMUNITY SERVICES

My name is Lyn Anderson and I am the Rockhampton Manager of Roseberry Community Services.

My first husband and I have four adult children who have blessed us with four wonderful grandchildren who are actively involved in sports and music.

My interest in human services and the welfare of children and young people began when my daughter was just eight weeks old. My first husband and I were asked to become foster parents to a young person of 12 years of age. We agreed and lo and behold, we had three brothers arrive on our doorstep with all of their possessions.

These children had been through too much for ones so young. Their mother had died when the youngest was two years of age and their father could not cope. They had been from foster home to foster home and we decided there and then that this would be their home.

Home life was a madhouse with seven children and two dogs, two snakes, a turtle, numerous fish and one very active cockatoo!

After many years, my first husband and I decided to go our separate ways and it was after this that I decided to study psychology and learn more about human behaviour and what makes us tick!

I then changed direction completely from Business Administration to working in Community Services... what a change that was! I started providing general counselling and family support services and then moved to providing support to women and children affected by domestic and family violence and counselling for women victims of child and adult sexual assault.

I was fortunate to be able to meet my second and current husband (I do think he's a keeper!!!) along the way and he has been my greatest supporter.

I was presented with an opportunity to manage a community service agency and managed to increase the capacity of the centre by establishing a community legal centre, domestic and family violence counselling and court

support services, a No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS), a new women's shelter, a youth share house for homeless youth, and a number of independent one and two bedroom units for those less fortunate than ourselves.

After some time, I decided it was time to move on and let someone take the Centre to a new level and after working for a time in Townsville, was offered a position here in Rockhampton and so moved back to Central Queensland to take up my current role.

It's important to listen to young people and their stories because it is knowing their story that gives us the opportunity to understand who they are today and the incredible resilience they possess.

I believe it is important to outline the great work that is done by the support workers here at Roseberry Community Services (RCS).

RCS as an organisation began 26 years ago in Gladstone with the youth shelter Roseberry House. They too have grown over the years to provide a range of services primarily targeting young people but also community housing.

RCS manages two programs in Rockhampton. The Transition to Independent living program which supports young people 16 – 25 years of age in transitional units for a period of up to 12 months. The units are dotted around

Rockhampton and we have one block of four units in Yeppoon. The young people are referred to us and if they are assessed as having enough of the necessary skills to live independently, we refer them to be housed in one of our units. A case plan is developed with their worker and they are supported to manage completely independently.

This might mean linking them in with other service providers e.g. employment agencies, mental health, counselling, and the like. The goal is to have the young people housed in stable, affordable and long-term accommodation with the necessary skills to sustain that tenancy. This is a very demanding task!

The second program is Jack's House Youth Shelter (JH). JH provides crisis accommodation for young people 16 – 19 years of age who are homeless. Unfortunately, for many of these young people, it is their parent(s) who drop them to the shelter as homeless.

During their stay at the shelter they are given the opportunity of learning the most basic of skills. Things such as appropriate levels of hygiene... it's amazing how many young people get to this age and have no idea about how often to take a shower, or how to shave!

The shelter is staffed 24/7 and within a week of intake, the young people and youth worker develop a support plan

which is based around their identified goals. Centrelink have an earning or learning mandate and this is usually the first of the goals...maintain or re-engage in schooling or other forms of education; training courses, or seeking employment.

The barriers to employment are many for young people... driver's license, ID, literacy and numeracy issues, communication skills, general deportment and mental health issues to name a few.

A typical week for youth workers involves ensuring that case plan goals are met, which may mean making and taking a young person to the doctor, mental health, counselling, job network agencies, finding clothing, doing resumes and anything and everything that a young person would need to do.

The young people are expected to participate in a weekly house meeting which is a time where they are able to bring up any issues and discuss. (This is an opportunity for youth workers to model appropriate adult behaviour and conflict resolution and communication skills). It's also where young people come up with ideas to be put to me as the Manager... like cooked breakfasts on Saturdays or Sundays or being allowed to go out whenever they want at night without permission!

It is also at this meeting that they decide on who will do what chores and the weekly menu and shopping list is compiled with each person assigned a night as chef.

Monday nights the shopping is done and all young people participate...the youth worker does have to watch for all the outrageous things that end up in the trolley, however.

Sundays are activity days... and all young people attend...sometimes a day at Stoney Creek, perhaps caving; sometimes a BBQ and footy on the beach... whatever takes their fancy.

I usually start my day by going to Jack's House... catch up with the night shift youth worker and check in with the day shift worker. It also gives me an opportunity to hear the young person's stories and they're important stories to hear.

Then it's off to the office... my job is to oversee these programs, to provide support and supervision for staff and to ensure that we are providing the best of services to young people. I provide training to staff and develop or source programs and resources to be used in service delivery.

A big task is to identify gaps in services for young people and work hard with other community agencies and groups to lobby to fill those gaps. By the time reporting is done, networks are maintained and meetings are attended or chaired, my week is usually over.



MARGARET HORNAGOLD

CEO, DARUMBAL COMMUNITY YOUTH SERVICES

My motto is 'Live by the power of one'. For me it takes one to make a difference; *it takes one to make a change and it starts with me, the individual*, as the one who can do that in my life.

Throughout my life I have had the privilege of knowing strong Aboriginal women who have helped shape and guide my career, my choices and my decisions. These have included my grandmother, my mother, my daughter, friends, relatives, colleagues and others that I may not have known personally but whose works have inspired me.

Gaining and acquiring knowledge has been a quest for me and I always enjoy research and exploring innovative and new ways of considering proposals and ways of working.

My life has been blessed with the arrival of my two grandchildren, Patrisha and Isaac, and I am honoured to now be a member of the grandmothers club.

I would like to think that my contribution to life has been one of hard work, commitment, passion and determination and that those whom I have helped along the way are the ones who can bear testimony to this.



MEAGHAN GALLAGHER

SALVATION ARMY CHAPLAIN

How did I get here?

Spending most of my life in Sydney, it's hard to believe that I'm now living over 18 hours from home. Many people ask what makes you do what you do? Or how did you become involved in The Salvation Army?

My journey begins three weeks after I was born, attending my first church service at The Salvation Army. I've been involved with them ever since. However, I've only been in full-time ministry for the last eight years.

Prior to this I had worked as a dressmaker, looked after kids before and after school and was a diversional therapist at an aged care facility. Having done this, I felt that I couldn't do this forever. This led me to retraining, where I did a receptionist/typist course. After finishing this course, there was a period of time

where I couldn't find a job. Unsure of whether there would be any positions available I went to see the personnel department at The Salvation Army's head office in Sydney. Over the next eight and a half years I was involved in many departments, eventually coming to work in the Human Resources Office for around six years. I completed a Diploma in Human Resources and a Graduate Diploma of Commerce believing that this was the type of work that I was meant to be doing. However, there was a greater plan ahead. Having had all this work experience behind me I felt a calling into full-time ministry.

There have been many things that have influenced my life. My parents, grandparents, family, friends and many people encouraging me and supporting me in whatever I was doing. Along with this was a decision

that I made when I was a child to invite God to be part of my life. Since then there have been many decisions that I have made. Some of these have been good; others have been not so good. But always behind me were the people supporting, encouraging and praying for me. I know that I have been blessed to have this support all throughout my life.

In thinking about what lessons there have been along the way I have found that where I thought I was going in life and career did not turn out that way. However, in looking back I can see how all my experiences in life, all the work experiences that I have had come together to now help me do what I am doing. Everything that I have done is still being used today. It may seem that none of the previous work experience could possibly mesh together. In my work I need to be able to mend or fix things, stick to a budget, work with kids, do activities with people of different ages. Not to mention manage people in a voluntary or employment capacity. This means that every job that I have ever had now comes together to form a basis for what I do. So the lesson that I take from this is that ***no matter what experiences I have had in work or life, nothing is ever wasted.***

No matter what you do in life there are always tough times that come. When I have experienced the tough times I go back to the support base that I have. At all times, whether good or bad, I turn to my faith in God. Whilst doing this I also have a support base of people that I go to. For me this is family, friends and others who have experienced similar things to me. To be able to talk through what is happening is important as it helps me to have more clarity, as well as figure out the next steps. But also allows me to assess whether I need to change my attitude, outlook or behaviour.

I am so thankful that I not only have been brought up in this beautiful country but that I have been blessed with people in my life who love, care for and look out for me. I have people that continually support, encourage and pray for me. During my career I have always had people around me who I've been able to learn from and hopefully I have been able to do the same for others. If there is any success that I've had during my ministry, it has been due to the work of a team, not because of anything that I have done. I've been asked many times what my passion is. It would be that I would be able to give to others the same love, support and encouragement that I've received, not to mention praying for them too.

The privilege of being part of The Salvation Army is something that is hard to describe. There is so much history, so much support from the community and it is humbling to hear the stories of years gone by when people have been helped, supported and encouraged. In hearing how people's lives can be and are transformed is what encourages me to keep going. To see a person's life transformed is one of the reasons I do what I do.

When I look at my life and what has happened during it, particularly for my work life, I see that nothing I have done has ever been wasted. Every part of it has led into the next. Even if I think I knew where my life was headed, sometimes things turn out differently. To have a support base or support system is extremely important and for me my faith is the basis of everything.



JACQUI MACKAY

ABC RADIO BROADCASTER

My memory of my life as a child is that from the time I woke up in the morning until often after I went to bed, ABC radio was a constant presence in our house. My mother always had it on, sometimes just as background noise, sometimes at the forefront of what we were doing 'Shh Jacquie I'm listening!'

Looking back now the ABC was like a friend and a teacher to my mother, sometimes a source of annoyance, but only ever turned off during cricket or football coverage when some of Mum's massive record collection would be put on.

It seems logical now that I should one day come to work for the ABC, and as a teenager it must have been in the back of my mind, for I did my work experience at a university radio station. However it took a while for me to actually come to believe that I had it in me to be a part of an organisation that I so revered.

As I came to the end of Year 12 I struggled to decide what I should do. So I did what many others have done, enrolled in an arts degree! Mine was through the University of Western Australia. My strengths were always in the humanities and I embarked with enthusiasm upon courses in history, English and anthropology. As I went further in my studies I discovered I adored history, especially social history; talking with people and recording their stories. In my third year at university I undertook a series of oral histories with people who told me their experiences of life in Perth and Fremantle during the Second World War, especially many Americans who fell in love with 'Aussie sheilas' and stayed after the war ended.

This led to many more oral history projects, some for the Army Museum of Western Australia and some for contract histories. What I was discovering about myself was that I had a talent for listening, and a desire to help others tell the story of their life.

Along the way I started doing volunteer work for the radio for the Print Handicapped Station in Perth (the love of radio still there in the back of my mind apparently!). This was a great experience in many ways – I could produce and present my own programs and I took on more and more responsibilities and more and more shifts to learn as much as I could.

By this time I had completed an honours degree in History and postgraduate qualifications in public history and decided that I would like to learn more about journalism. A year's Graduate Diploma in Media Studies taught me a lot about constructing a news story but I still wondered whether it was possible for me to eventually get a job with the ABC – by now that had become for me the holy grail!

I plucked up the courage to audition for the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts Broadcasting course and to my surprise was accepted with open arms. WAAPA was a fabulous experience for me. I am by nature a private and somewhat shy person but being surrounded by a group of fun-loving and supportive extroverts pulled me out of my shell and allowed me to shine.

A year and a half into the course I was recommended for and offered a job at the ABC in Rockhampton and so began my career as a broadcaster.

Becoming a broadcaster was a long time in the making and came via a circuitous route, but I learned a lot through all my studies – how to research, how to write, how to interview and how to structure a story. These are all invaluable skills for anyone wanting a career in the media.

While my work as the breakfast presenter is at times stressful and tiring, it is also a position of great trust and responsibility. ***I never take for granted that I am in an extremely privileged position*** to be able to talk to a wide range of people and to usually be welcomed into their world. I also don't lose sight of the fact that I am being allowed into peoples' lives and if I don't meet their needs I will be turned off! The ABC holds such a position of trust and familiarity for so many people that I feel a huge responsibility to uphold the high expectations that everyone holds.

Any job, even one that you love, can become tedious at times. It's important then to review why you wanted to work in that industry in the first place – if you still get a

thrill out of aspects of the job, concentrate on them. I still love to tell a good story and I love to get out and meet people. I still am enormously encouraged by my listeners who are a wonderful bunch and who often ring or write to tell me that I'm doing a good job. They are the reason that I continue to put in so much effort into each and every program.

The work environment at the ABC is open plan and so it's important to get on well with people. ***I learned very early on that you have to be a team player and that the help that you give others will return to you – so be generous!***

Being a good listener is also vital in any communications role whether it be in the media, PR, teaching, medicine or retail. Take time to make people feel they are important and you will enjoy their respect.

By the same token though, don't make your work the only thing that defines you. I have long enjoyed a love of music and have kept a semi-professional singing career going for many years. I have a wonderful husband and two children and they keep me very occupied as well as very grounded. Perhaps equally importantly though I also exercise daily. It keeps me not only physically well but also mentally well and I know it has helped me through tough times.

My advice to anyone wanting a successful career is to put in the hard yards, be respectful to those who have gone before you, learn what you can from them, and listen.



JANET QUAIFE-RYAN

PRINCIPAL PSYCHOLOGIST, QUAIFE RYAN AND ASSOCIATES

I was born in Africa in Empangeni, Zululand, so I guess that makes me a Zulu despite my white skin. My parents are lovely and honoured but were of their generation: sexist. As the third daughter of four daughters I was a gender disappointment.

Reactively, I became a lifelong feminist, supporting equal rights, dignity and pay for women. As a daughter of the fifties I made an inner vow to be 'just as good as a man'. I had no idea at the time this was not necessarily a terribly high goal. Turns out my foremothers were significant contributors to the community: great aunt, one of the first women into Oxford; Grandmother, a suffragette and senior public servant when women generally did not enjoy paid work; mum, physically saved starved African babies; got a scholarship to Yale; co-founded the Rockhampton Women's Shelter; and was in the first batch of women ordained as Anglican Priests.

My own contribution, however, got off to a wobbly start. We were dragged around the continents so Dad could specialise in Psychiatry. I was always the strange new girl with the funny accent. At seven, Dad tested us kids, psychometrically quantifying me as super bright. This would have shocked my teachers... and I, who just knew I was thick. There was evidence I was thick. In Australia my underwhelming performance continued until I repeated Grade 9. My huge (lifelong) academic turnaround surprised us all, from failure to dux. Despite finding my feet, I was becalmed after Year 12, so I tried nursing.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, initially hated me and called me 'the cheekiest first-year ever'. My opinion of them is complicated. In my immaturity it seemed to me their main agenda was to break their student nurses. Of the 88 who started, I remember there

were only nine who finished. Despite being a misfit for nursing it gave me back-bone and some organisational and medical skills that have been critical for my later work. Nursing was very difficult for my temperament but to have completed it with the Diploma, veil and title, 'Sister', is something about which I have always been proud and grateful.

Around this time a one-off visit to a church resulted in my deciding to be a devotee of Christ. A decision which, though initially brought great relief and happiness, has led to much struggle, pain, hope, joy and exhaustion. It set in stone the desire to make my life count for something good.

A year in Africa inspired me to start psychology at University of Queensland. It was the most wondrous thing, into my dreariness came light. Destiny, even.

In my next degree, Honours (Psychology), I met another budding psychologist, who was brilliant, charismatic, witty and the most beautiful boy I had ever seen. This was Matthew with whom I had two smashing little boys and 30 years of marriage.

My first job as Psychologist at Division of Community Medicine was big for a new graduate and it nearly broke me with overwork that first year. It was to be the beginning of a long battle with workaholism which was all about proving one's worth.

At this time I had an unforgettable dream one night that I was taken up out of my body knowing God was showing me my future. I was flying above big 'yank' cars and then a canal that looked just like the Seine with café and restaurants and galleries. When I awoke I wrote on my kitchen grocery board 'we are going to America'. Matthew and I had been offered a Catholic scholarship three years previously to do postgraduate study overseas but had turned it down. With my fey encouragement he returned to the Catholics and, surprisingly, the scholarship was still available. We lived in San Antonio, Texas, for two years (with its iconic River Walk!) – followed by Washington D.C. for two and a half years.

Matt challenged me while I was seven and a half months pregnant, and with a four year old toddler, to live and work with the poor in Washington D.C. We moved into the Dorothy Day house: a huge shabby house in the slums of D.C. We heard gunfire every night and, surreally,

tanks driven past our windows as Bush fought his futile war against drugs. There were 13 contending community members caring for six live-in homeless families. From rubbish bins we fed our house and another 150 homeless a week at Peace Park opposite the White House. The house was chaotic and violent, run as it was by Harvard and Yale do-gooders who were more generous than practical, a totally nutty place to take our children. Over this time the Janet I knew disappeared as I turned myself inside out to become the radical self-sacrificial Christian woman and wife I thought I was supposed to be.

My pregnancy was so strained Monty came out with immunoglobulin suppression, an auto immune impairment which caused hardship for two years. I felt my nursing experience saved his life more than once but the bedbugs, the sleep debt, the 'zoo floor' (the room next to ours slept 10) and chronic anxiety will long be remembered.

Eventually a scary warning from Monty's paediatrician sent the family packing, back to Australia.

Here, I worked as an Associate Psychologist in a prominent Rockhampton practice. Concurrently I was a tutor in business; and psychology at Central Queensland University.

Two years later I started my own practice with almost no money at all. Julie Kelso – Edwards joined me as a partner for a while, then Joanne Bell and other associates joined for some years. There have been the usual business highs and lows along the way; enough to trigger frequent questioning of whether running your own small business is ever worth the grief. Still, I heard on the ABC the other day that of women business owners, only 3% are standing after 10 years, so 17 years is something, I guess.

Along the way I wrote a Child Behaviour Advice column for a national magazine, 'Sunshine Baby', (started here by the co-founder of Parents magazine in London); did some ABC radio health talks; was co-facilitator for an Inaugural CQU Leadership Program; spoke in the misnamed 'Great Celebrity Debate' on 'Who was the weaker sex?'; got to be a Board Director of Anglicare; and have consulted with a variety of corporations.

Who knew that our feminist generation, the women who did it all, would often break themselves doing it? My forties were anguished but the biblical quote that 'suffering leads to hope', counter intuitive as it seems, was spot on after all.

At school I thought I was the Bomb: my Enneagram Personality Type 4 always wants to be special, but it turns out I am just ordinary. ***I like to think that my life has been small but valuable***; I have been chiselled by life into the 'Wounded Healer'. I still intensely love seeing broken people heal, which I see every day.

I used to vow to be as 'good as a man' but it turns out I want to emulate only one man because He is Light, and Love. I hope I have learned to really like and love people in all their muck and mess because it's just like my muck and mess. I am tired, but I can't wait for the next chapter.



MARY CARROLL

CEO, CAPRICORN ENTERPRISE

It's the simple things in life in which I find most enjoyment – spending time with family, reading a good book, gardening, a nice cup of tea, walking the dogs, watching a great doco or English comedy, and enjoying a good glass of wine with my husband's amazing home cooked curries.

However, an appreciation of achieving goals and deadlines at work with a happy team is also very important to me.

Growing up very contented in Koongal, Rockhampton with my mum, dad, 10 siblings (*yes, 11 kids and yes, we did have a TV, and yes we were Catholic*) and numerous pets (*chooks, ducks, cats, fish, dogs, even a cow and a horse*), I assumed I'd be a mother of four one day and a flight attendant! So becoming a CEO by age 40 was quite a different result to the one I thought I had planned.

My mother encouraged us to read and learn, whilst our father encouraged us to enjoy the outdoors and be

free spirited. My father was the first and only ever baby born at Port Alma, a place which is now the subject of proposed major port expansion in a resource hungry world. Nearby is the pristine environment of north Curtis Island and the home of our family holiday shack at Seahill. This very special place holds thousands of fond memories and continues to host our family holidays in the true meaning of 'getting back to basics'.

Post senior school education, I decided to travel the world and learn more about life, which as it turned out, had been fairly sheltered within the confines of Catholicism!

Having a love of children, I chose a career in early childhood and was nanny to some gorgeous multicultural families in Sydney, Brisbane and Vancouver, Canada which I thoroughly enjoyed. Then a hospitality job at Expo '88 in Brisbane led me to my first management role at the age of 19.

But it was a subsequent role in office work at a mining engineering firm in Brisbane, with great mentors in administrative and financial procedures, even coal prep data which opened my eyes to an expanded career. Then it was off to Canberra where a full-time role as office manager at a union, was complimented with part-time work in Promotions and Marketing for the city's most popular nightclub. Whilst in Canberra I thoroughly enjoyed raising funds for a children's charity and made some wonderful friends, one of whom was to be my matron of honour at my wedding many years later.

36 In subsequent years, an offer to obtain a degree in town planning at the University of Queensland, was not as great as my desire to learn on the job and earn a living as a full-time Tourism General Manager and concurrently a local government elected councillor back at home on the beautiful Capricorn Coast. The results I could obtain in the work and community environment were more appealing to me than returning to study full-time for four years.

An increased desire to make a real difference in my local community led me to stand for state politics in the year 2006 in the seat of Keppel. Unsuccessful in that attempt, led me to a move back to Brisbane as State Secretary for

The National Party. It turned out that I was to be the last State Secretary for The Nationals and the very first State Party Secretary for the newly merged Liberal National Party (LNP). In fact, I was technically the first person employed by the new political party and the role ahead was to be quite historical in the making.

In 2009, now living in the state seat of South Brisbane, I was asked to nominate for the LNP's first state election against the sitting Member, Premier Anna Bligh. Called a 'corflute candidate', it was an unwinnable seat – fast forward to 2012 and who would have been able to predict what would transpire in the most historical general election in not just the state, but the nation. Ironically, having moved back home in December 2009 to my current role in an A-political organisation in Rockhampton, I would work with Premier Bligh and her local Members and Departments for the next two years very productively for the benefit of the Rockhampton/Capricorn Coast region.

It is the belief in individuality and the choice to take a chance which determines the fullness of our lives. My career and personal choices in life have honestly followed a path presented to me. I have always held a desire to achieve

great things and have enjoyed building hard working teams around me who share that vision and passion.

Judgements can be made on an individual's intelligence quotient (IQ), but it is equally their emotional intelligence (EQ) which I believe determines their success in a team environment, both internally and externally. After all, we are all emotional human beings and many do not, or cannot, separate the position from the personality.

My career has taken me from the brashness of a Union stoush, to the closed doors of political plotting. It has taken me from children's playgrounds to executive boardrooms. I feel just as comfortable speaking with the Premier or Prime Minister as I do chatting with a neighbour or someone with a disability.

Effective, constructive communication is the underlying success of any organisation, corporation, business or personal relationship, relatively simple to achieve, yet often articulated incorrectly with consequences greatly underestimated.

If I had to describe myself in one word it would probably be that I am a 'doer'; not a very exotic description, but a practical one. I am results driven and am very loyal to my employer and my team members.

My current role as Chief Executive Officer for Capricorn Enterprise, the regions peak Tourism and Economic Development Organisation and my former role as State Party Secretary for the LNP both involved merging of two or more organisations. In both roles, I led the merging of human resources, finance, membership and corporate structure with associated legislative requirements, and am responsible for organisation and destination branding, media and marketing. Effective communication is the common denominator to achieve in all these areas of organisational change and growth.

As a Godmother to three children, aunty and great aunty to about 30 gorgeous children, maybe someday I'll build an orphanage in India.

Who knows where 2012 and beyond will take me – one thing is for sure, I'll have a cup of tea with my husband and our puppies by our side!



GWENDA FREEMAN

SENIOR REGIONAL SERVICES MANAGER, AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

Wanted: Girl, good with figures. Ring ****

A valid advertisement in those days (these days, of course, sexist ads are out!), and I responded – after all I'd always been good with maths. And so I got my first job, as a bookkeeper in a fibreglass boat manufacturing organisation.

And when I left, four years later, I looked for another job as a bookkeeper, as I was now trained and experienced.

I left that job, which was with a bulk furniture and electrical discount store, two years later, and married and became a stay-at-home wife (which was more or less expected in those days) and began having children.

Expecting my third child, after two children and a divorce, I took on some work as a sort of community liaison officer at a secondary school for six months. This certainly gave me new insight into the community, and community development processes. At the end of that

project, and with the imminent arrival of my baby, I was captivated by an advertisement in the paper (yes – this was still the days before PCs and the internet, so I always read the paper!) to study for a degree by distance education.

I had always yearned to study at university, somehow seeing it as a challenge that I wanted to undertake and prove to myself (and others) that I could do it! I had no reason to undertake it, excepting that it was a challenge. And fortunately for me, at the time there was very little cost involved in undertaking a university course. So – I applied – and I'll never forget the thrill of being accepted. I went ahead and enrolled – and YES – I was a university student.

I happen to be a bit of an optimist, and refuse to allow imagined disruptions to daunt me. A bit like the little train going up the hill – 'I THINK I can; I THINK I can...' but of course the realities of having two young children, plus a new baby, and a house move from

Victoria to Queensland, plus an unexpected stint at managing a general store, plus my lack of experience at doing assignments and meeting deadlines, meant that I had a difficult start.

I had been fortunate in being able to attend a ‘starting out’ kind of meeting for prospective students before I left Melbourne, and amazingly, the main message from this was – ‘get the assignments in, and you’ll probably pass. Most people fail their course because they don’t get assignments in.’ This turned out to be brilliant advice, as my biggest challenge over the next 14 years was, in fact, getting the assignments in!

After four years in Queensland we returned to Victoria. I was expecting my fourth baby, and had been quite ill with the pregnancy. And my father-in-law had cancer – we wanted to be nearby. We were absolutely battling for money, I remember we didn’t have enough to buy warm bedding for the colder climate. My partner did his best, but any work he got was at the lowest salary level.

I remember being in early labour and underlining jobs in the paper that maybe I could do, and wondering how soon after the birth I would be fit enough and with it enough to undertake job interviews. And it was just after the birth that I had a kind of revelation.

As I marked the appropriate sort of jobs for me, I looked longingly through the job ads at the more senior positions, with higher salaries, and wondered to myself how people got those kind of jobs. I could do them, too, I thought resentfully, recalling jobs I had been in where I virtually did the management role in my capacity as the bookkeeper/helper, allowing that person to take the credit for my expertise.

Suddenly, a couple of things popped into my head. In order to get these kind of jobs, maybe, I thought to myself, they do the right training. And maybe, instead of aiming for the lower level jobs, they actually apply!

Something in me, sparked by my need to do well for my kids, and my realisation that my partner couldn’t do more than he was doing, changed my aspirations, and I started marking different jobs, and thinking – I can do this! I went to two universities and applied to do their Graduate Diploma in Business (despite the fact that study was now getting to be a costly affair, and also despite the fact that I hadn’t finished my degree yet). I was accepted on the basis that I was working in the area, was mature aged, and had done some recent tertiary study. And to my delight, I gained my first management job – in the health area, which was to become the type of work I have stayed in.

Life then became the most hectic I can imagine, looking after three children plus a breastfeeding baby, working full-time, and attending university two evenings a week to do my business studies. I became extremely well organised, worked on priorities, and got some help with housework.

Being awarded a Graduate Diploma in Business (Management) was a very proud moment. And then I resumed my studies for my arts degree by distance education, focussing on psychology and philosophy.

Five years after the birth of my fourth child, I discovered that I was unexpectedly expecting again! After some initial misgivings about the spread of ages of my children – after all, my oldest boy was nearly 18 – we were delighted to welcome number five child into our family.

At the time, I took some maternity leave and returned to my job. However there were organisational changes happening, and in the end I decided that after six years in that role, I'd like a bit more time at home with my new baby. And I took advantage of having the extra time – that year I completed seven units of study (full-time study) towards my degree, and in addition did foster care, was a municipal councillor, including Deputy Mayor, and on various other community committees.

On my return to work I took on a role at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, in Alice Springs; and then as Executive Officer at Remote Health. Whilst in Alice Springs I finished my degree at last, and attended the graduation ceremony in Victoria.

Back in Victoria, I worked in another health management role, before entering the university system as a Senior Lecturer in rural health (including Aboriginal health). During this time I did some studies in teaching and education, and also managed to upgrade my business studies to a masters level. Unfortunately the program of Government funding for this role was discontinued after two years, and I then took on the CEO role at an Aboriginal Co-op. This was a very demanding role, taking me nearly 70 km from home each day, and including lots of late nights. After nearly two years at this, I returned to a university role, hoping this would be less demanding, as I hated being away from my young daughter so much.

I love working at universities in lots of ways, I love the lecturing, and dealing with the students. But I found I really missed active management. I also had what I can only assume was a bit of a mid life crises – thinking about what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. I had already made a decision to work in the health service or

education area, resolving not to put my time and energy into making money for someone else, but rather to work for something making a positive input into health and well being.

As I am not particularly keen on working for religious organisations; nor for the government; I found myself attracted to Red Cross. I did some fundraising work with Red Cross in Victoria, before applying for management roles in New South Wales and Queensland. Red Cross is an international organisation with a wonderful history of working to help the world's most vulnerable people. The seven Red Cross fundamental principles are: humanity, neutrality, independence, impartiality, unity, universality, and voluntary service. Whilst waiting for this to happen I spent a year as manager of a university Aboriginal education centre.

Then came an opportunity to take on a small management role in Rockhampton, Queensland. I decided that although from a career point of view it seemed like a backward step, it could be just the 'way in' that I needed. So I moved (with my long suffering partner, now a qualified social welfare worker himself) to Rockhampton. I enjoyed the role hugely, and have loved working for, and being a part of, Red Cross.

In addition to the Blood Bank, which most people know of; Red Cross does amazing work in emergency services, refugee and migrant support, international humanitarian law, and all sorts of service provision – much of it run and staffed by volunteers, and some, which is the area I mainly work in, funded by government.

After three years working with Red Cross I was thrilled to gain a new role as a 'Senior Regional Services Manager', and to have some opportunities as Acting Regional Manager.

I feel that I've 'landed on my feet', and that I am able to make the kind of contribution to Red Cross that embraces my passion for health and wellbeing, and in particular my passion for Aboriginal health, with my management skills and expertise. I feel that I'm helping to 'make a difference'.



MELINDA SCASH

PRINCIPAL, ROCKHAMPTON GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A commitment to education requires a genuine belief in young people. It is essential to recognise and respect their vulnerabilities and strengths, their fears and hopes, their capacities and aspirations. It is a labour of love, actualised through purposeful planning, sustained emotional energy and a capacity to manage the requirements of accountability required by multiple stakeholders.

Education is a job that matters. It is a demanding profession. It demands a teacher's heart: her attention, her capacity for compassion, her creativity. I have no desire to alienate male teachers (of whom there are far too few) but I do not apologise for feminising the pronoun in this context.

It remains a fact that, despite the majority of teachers being women, a minority of school leaders at the Principal and Board level, in every educational system, is female.

Working alongside innovative educational leaders is invaluable in enriching contemporary educational pedagogy. I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with extraordinary innovators in education:

- David Loader (OAM) was the first in the world to thrust technology into the hands of students through his introduction of laptop computers at Methodist Ladies College in 1989.
- Dr David Warner created an authentic student-centred learning environment at ELTHAM College of Education and challenged traditional concepts of learning through the 'Knowledge Era' philosophy.
- Stephen Paul (OAM) tenaciously ensured School Spirit through transforming self-respect into enduring self-belief.

I am very conscious that each of my influential mentors is male. Despite the majority of my valued colleagues at the 'chalkface' being female, those with the opportunity to make a difference on a broader scale continue, most often, to be men.

46 Accepting the role of Principal was something I neither sought nor envisaged. I did not doubt my capacity to make a contribution of value to education, but I failed to recognise the pathway of leading a school. This is common among women in education – we do not aspire to Principal leadership. We remain busy with the demands and responsibilities of the daily work of teaching. Despite accepting a myriad of leadership positions, commensurate with a commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for learners, there are few female role models to indicate that leading a School is a realistic or attainable pathway.

The 'Principal' role is a singular position in a school, and therefore realistically difficult to achieve. In 25 years of teaching (in six Australian Schools), five of the six Principals with whom I have worked have been men. The five schools led by males were coeducational and four of those schools catered for students from Prep (or earlier)

to Year 12. The single female who was a Principal was responsible for a Prep to Year 12 school for girls.

In 2008 my husband and I accepted parallel positions in the United Arab Emirates working with Emirati Principals in an educational reform project to raise achievement for local young people. In the gender-segregated culture of the Middle East, I worked with female principals in exclusively female schools. It became apparent that the all-female learning environments were significantly advanced in regard to educational engagement and achievement in comparison with the boys schools. Women were intuitively setting higher standards, expectations and creating a more challenging and differentiated learning environment for the country's young Emirati women than was being provided for the young Emirati men in 'brother' schools.

These inspired female educators had no idea that they were so far advanced in the educational experience they were providing the daughters of the UAE. There are many cultural reasons which contextualise this, which I will not attempt to explore here. The point of this observation, in this reflection, is that I recognised that women in education, regardless of culture, frequently underestimate

the value of their contribution. It empowered me to feel that what I could offer should matter.

Being Principal of Rockhampton Girls Grammar School comes with the responsibility of being the custodian of a heritage which represents contributions of many, many lifetimes. It is a humbling reality. The School's story was forged by Miss Helen E Downs, who was Principal from 1892 until 1906.

I recognise a critical responsibility in this role to mentor all educators with whom I work, but I especially accept that ***I have a responsibility to encourage women committed to their profession to envisage their capacity for leadership.***

I have a responsibility to mentor female teachers who are committed to empowering young women into leadership positions. Female teachers are often so busy dedicating themselves to the task that they do not perceive a pathway which would allow them to influence the strategic planning either at an Executive or Board level in the schools in which they work.

Healthy education is critical to healthy communities. The measurement of the quality of an individual's contribution is not gender-specific, but it is deeply concerning that women in education are under-represented in leadership, particularly as Principals across all sectors. It simply cannot be true that in an environment in which the professionals are predominantly female, there is insufficient capacity for proportional representation among Principals.



JENNY SMITH

REGIONAL MANAGER, AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

On those occasions when I allow myself to reminisce about my upbringing, I believe I was blessed with the best possible parents and a truly idyllic childhood. Despite spending most of my formative years in Brisbane, I still refer to myself as a ‘bush baby’, having been born at St George in South West Queensland. I grew up in a modest working class family of five children and two working parents and am grateful for the ordinariness of a childhood peppered with some painful experiences amongst a sea of great joy. I have no doubt that my exposure to life on the margins as both a child and an adult has greatly influenced my personal values as well as my career choices.

With close to three decades experience in a range of human services (aged care, mental health and disability), and as a strong advocate for the oppressed and

vulnerable, I’ve seen people at both their best and their worst. My primary interest is supporting marginalised people to live valued and meaningful lives, particularly using Social Role Valorisation theory as my major frame of reference. Additional professional interests include organisational development, governance and trouble shooting; human resource management; human rights; disability advocacy (especially Citizen Advocacy); and political behaviour.

In the early 1980s I graduated from what is now Griffith University with an Associate Diploma in Community Recreation. Since then I’ve undertaken training in a range of other areas including leadership and management; conflict resolution; case management; risk management; human resource management; industrial relations; governance and financial management.

Shortly after graduating, I came to Rockhampton as an earnest young woman, thinking I'd be away from my family for maybe two years at the most. I'm still here! I like to think that's an indication of the ample opportunities I have encountered, enabling me to contribute to my community and to explore its natural wonders. Ten years ago my husband and I built a home at Keppel Sands and I relish being part of this tiny microcosm of the bigger world. It really is a great little community to live in.

In May 2008 I took up the position of the Regional Manager for Red Cross in Central Queensland. It's proved a very satisfying challenge and one which I believe is a natural career progression. June 2012 saw me take up a new opportunity with Capricornia Training Company – allowing me to focus my energies on providing support and opportunities for young people experiencing a range of significant issues and barriers in the critical pre-adult phase of their lives.

Over my working life, I've been an active participant in many local community based organisations and professional bodies, and helped to establish some which still continue to thrive. I think that one of the key

features of my career is not just the paid positions I've held, but possibly more importantly, the many voluntary positions I have held and continue to undertake. Participating in community organisations is a great way to learn about creating and managing change and making a real difference in people's lives.

Another factor that has been a constant throughout my career is that whilst I have not yet taken up further tertiary study, I am a voracious learner across diverse subject areas.

Having mostly worked in the non-profit community sector, I am acutely aware of the need for board members and senior staff to remain abreast of legislative changes within industrial landscape and the resulting changes to the employer's obligations, and always obtaining professional advice on anything other than routine matters.

One of the most significant lessons I've learnt, and thankfully I learnt this early, is that *the world is not fair but that people can influence change* – both for the better and the worse! I determined early in life that I wanted to be someone who influenced for the better. I've found that the world turns slowly, that patience is not only a

virtue but a necessity. I found it's vital to accept that not everyone shares the same values and beliefs, and that it's not always easy being consistent or coherent in upholding one's own values and beliefs. That can be a daily struggle.

A prevailing self-belief, even when one's self-confidence withers or when you've found others have actively undermined you, is what drives me through tough times. Having strong mentors and friends, remembering the struggles of my protégé and others who have lived very segregated and opportunity-poor lives, coupled with an abiding belief in the goodness of people generally, have all helped me to rise above various adversities.

The thing that brings me most pride in my career and life generally would have to be my reputation for loyalty, reliability, honesty, compassion and justice. To me, this is exemplified by the many former staff, individuals and their families whom I've served that have remained in contact with me over a very long period of time. It's not just the regard of others that is important to me, but being able to look myself in the mirror and know that I might not be a world beater, but I am doing what I can with what I have to make a better world. Another source of pride is the continuation of organisations that I've been

involved in developing, the strong personal relationships I've developed, and simply being at home with who I am.

For younger women (or men) looking for some pointers to leading a meaningful and satisfying career, I'd suggest the following: don't be a martyr nor a bludger; don't expect the world to be served up to you on a platter; be curious, always; and be a life-long learner. Flourish with and learn to enjoy change because there's nothing more certain in life – it's inevitable! Keep up with what's happening in the world, with technology, and with what interests other people. Pay attention to your own health – physical, emotional and spiritual. Find mentor/s and don't forget that you, too, can mentor someone else. Always be honest, especially with yourself. Seek out feedback – others can be reluctant to give it to you, or may mistakenly believe you don't need or want it. Be selective about whose feedback you value. Engage in regular personal reflection and learn to appreciate who you are i.e. what is important to you, the values you hold dear, and those things that really don't matter in the bigger scheme of things. Finally, if you have the opportunity to build a career in a field you love, or do something that matches your personal values, grab it with both hands – that is a gift beyond compare!



TRACEY SWEENEY

EVENT AND RECRUITMENT DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR FOR CENTRAL QUEENSLAND HEALTH SERVICE DISTRICT

My mother always told me that I should dress for the job I want not the job I have and I suppose it is something that has stuck with me over the years of my working career. It was something that I not only have literally done but also figuratively in the fact that I always approached my work with a future goal in mind and also aimed work at a higher standard than expected at all times. It's not always about knowing exactly what you want in a clearly marked out plan, it is more about just knowing that you want more and that you are prepared to achieve it no matter what path your life takes you.

When I graduated from high school I was accepted into the Queensland College of Art to pursue my creative graphic design aspirations. It was something that I always had an interest in but just the thought of moving away from my friends and family into the unknown where I wouldn't have that support was something that I wasn't ready for at the tender age of 17.

Another thing my parents used to make me do every weekend was go through the Courier Mail job section to look at what jobs were available to see what interested me and what I would like to do later in life. ***I used to read out aloud the jobs I could see myself doing in the next 5 to 10 years*** and most of all look at the salary offered and imagine all the clothes and shoes I would be able to purchase... if only!!

So one Saturday morning as I read out my imaginary careers I stumbled across one that was perfectly me in every way – it was a job for the marketing manager of a large national company. I don't even remember what organisation it was for but it sparked something inside me to change my path and enrol at CQUniversity to study a Bachelor of Business Marketing.

Being a typical 'Generation Y' I wanted to start getting experience and earning as soon as possible so I began applying for jobs in the marketing field and studied external part-time. After a string of administration temping jobs I finally landed my first role in the marketing world at The Morning Bulletin. This kick started my career in media advertising, where I also worked in roles at Southern Cross Ten, Sea FM and Hot FM.

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After five years in media sales and with my marketing degree completed I decided it was time to move out of the high pressure sales environment and gain some experience where I would be buying the advertising for a change. I was extremely lucky to land my current job as Consumer and Community Engagement Senior Project Officer at the Central Queensland Health Service District.

Since working at the Central Queensland Health Service District I have started studying again and am currently completing my Master of Business Administration through CQUniversity. Since commencing my studies I have been appointed to higher level roles and am hopeful that through completing my MBA more opportunities will be offered.

Although I am extremely dedicated to my work, I also try to get involved in as many community based committees and groups that have a strong female membership, such as the Rockhampton Miss Showgirl Committee of which I have been involved in for over seven years. I believe being involved in these types of groups not only fulfils my personal goals but also helps in developing my professional skills and networks and I would definitely advise all young women in business to do the same.

Being a young woman in the corporate world I really believe in ensuring that women support each other and create valuable networks. It is definitely time to re-think the 'Pale, Stale, Male' business leadership stereotype, and I would love to see more women in positions of influence in our community. More often than not we can be our own worst enemies and I feel that it is important to celebrate our achievements and take time to give ourselves a pat on the back.



LIBBIE WILSON

OWNER/MANAGER, KEPPEL BAY MARINA

Talking about my journey is somehow not about me but the opportunities that have come my way, the people I have had the privilege to meet and the wonderful places I have visited.

My early childhood years in suburban Melbourne were happy and free.

In 1957, when I was in Year 6, our family moved to Port Moresby, Papua and New Guinea where my father was appointed Chief Justice. We had such a happy time there. Life was so different, Pisin language a cinch, my very own Papuan Canoe, life was 'a beach'!

In 1959 I set off for boarding school with my older sister in a DC4 to Brisbane then a steam train ride to Southport where St Hilda's School awaited us. Boarding school provided so many opportunities. Friends for life, an interesting education, sporting opportunities – especially rowing where I met my future husband Richard.

In my senior year I had no idea what career path I would take. I thoroughly enjoyed biology and physiology at school so moved on to the University of Queensland to study science. I was so fortunate to reside at The Women's College on campus where again, life-long friendships are made and stimulation to work hard and enjoy study and all the opportunities that brings.

Zoology, botany and entomology kept me enthralled and I graduated with a BSc majoring in Entomology and Parasitology. Papua and New Guinea provided a wonderful array of insects for the insect collection required for the course. They were not easy to collate – most were new species and my collection was retained for university records. Many an hour was spent with light traps, a cyanide collecting jar and nets collecting insects in the jungle, on the beach, up river and around the house.

I returned to Papua and New Guinea to work and began in Port Moresby using my parasitology at the Medical School. At the time, mid 60s, PNG was attracting scientists from around the world. My first expedition experience was with The Traub Expedition collecting parasites from rodents in the New Guinea highlands. Col Traub, a flea expert, was sent to PNG by the Bernice P Bishop Museum in Hawaii.

Again I threw myself into the project, fascinated by the planning of the main camp and accommodation, all under canvas, the 'lab' and the communication with the locals. That was where my pisin knowledge came in handy. We set traps through the jungle and also enlisted locals to bring in animals they had trapped to eat. We brushed the rodents and marsupials to remove ectoparasites then opened their nasal passages searching for chiggers. I have the honour of a chigger named after me! *Ascoschoengastia (laurentella) libbymannae*. 11 new species in 2 genera of chiggers alone were found which explains the importance of scientific recording in emerging countries.

The scientific expeditions I was able to join enabled me to see parts of PNG I would otherwise never have seen. I

was so lucky and I grabbed every opportunity with wide eyes and open arms. Other journeys included collecting plants for the Lae Herbarium on islands between Lae and Port Moresby through the Trobriands and Louisiades.

Another trip was for me to plan the whole expedition with another scientist to Kar Kar Island in search of a particular Slipper Orchid that grew in the volcanic crater. We found the orchid! The island has since erupted!



In 1969 married life began on Banana Station, in the worst drought we've experienced. Banana Station ran tropicalised Herefords at that time. In the mid 70s we separated from the family run business and began many years of scientific crossbreeding research in conjunction with The CSIRO Rendel Laboratory. Richard spent

many years on industry and CSIRO Research boards, the Australian Meat and Livestock Research and Development Corporation, as well as the Emerald Pastoral College board.

Our aim was and still is to produce more productive cattle at least cost by selection for growth, reproduction and carcase traits under commercial conditions.

Having grown up in PNG with servants to cook, clean and launder, it was a shock for me to cook for five station hands. Over the years I had up to 12 at any one time! It was a big learning curve for me to learn the cuts of meat when we killed and how to cook them, to have cakes ready for cut lunches and desserts to follow dinner. I did not let cooking get me down. I challenged myself, I immediately re-cooked anything I ruined and built up a great collection of easy, tasty, good-looking dishes.

I enjoyed taking on the business accounts and taught myself to use a computer, starting with a Commodore 64 hooked into the tv screen! I kept cattle records, mostly weights, so we could readily do our own performance recording.

In conjunction with our cattle research and strict management principles, we became involved in catering for groups and public open days as well as our own annual bull sale. That led to my being invited by the chairman of BEEF88, the first BEEF, to look after all hospitality, catering and beef promotions.

My little computer recorded everything we had planned for each day, who was doing what almost minute by minute. I was basically a committee of one and called in expertise from many quarters as needed. I discovered I had so much support from so many due to approaching them with a positive attitude, can-do approach and something in it for the supporter.

We ended up designing a BEEF88 Sausage, had 56 Rockhampton Regional Restaurants serving special beef dishes and Penfolds wines available at all venues with a BEEF88 sticker on every bottle. There was a Picnic in the Park at the Botanical Gardens to include Rockhampton and surrounding families in the celebrations, Shopping Centres had cooking demonstrations with BBQs for lucky winners.

Catering for delegate lunches utilised the beef dishes, especially Beef Shortcuts, the industry body, AMLC, was promoting. The Beef Banquet for 1200 held in the Rockhampton Shopping Fair was indeed a huge challenge.

Another change in direction in my life was taking on the Keppel Bay Marina project in 1989. We took on the project from a group of Central Queenslanders just as construction of the rock walls and dredging was due to begin. Another steep learning curve! We travelled the eastern seaboard looking at marinas and resort developments, making notes and taking photos of what appealed and what to avoid.

We actually built the pontoons for the marina on site with a team of labourers using the Bellingham design. The Entrance road was designed by LandPlan but once we owned the project we did the Marina Centre and Bayside Villas landscape plans and planted out with another small team. I was pleased I

enjoyed botany at university and my work at the PNG Herbarium.



Running the Waterline Cafe in the Marina Centre was another challenge made easier by those many hours cooking for men on our property. It is now a fully fledged restaurant.

Building residential apartments to make the most of climate and views was another challenge and our coastal trip studies were invaluable as we sat around the table with an architect and engineer. Our greatest challenge now is when is the right time to complete the project's resort and 400 apartments, taking into consideration changing recreational requirements and the economy. The final 130 berth development is currently underway making 530 in total to service this truly boating paradise.

In summary, I have really enjoyed my journey so far. I have been lucky to have had many different and exciting challenges. We are most proud of our family. Our son, Mark and his wife Belinda run the Banana Station aggregation, daughter Kylie runs the Marina including the Waterline Restaurant where husband Matt is Executive Chef, and daughter Annie, a Vet graduating with honours, runs the Bauhinia Barranga Grazing cattle aggregation with husband Rob. Their journeys also give us great pleasure and pride, especially the six grandchildren they have produced.

Negativity has no place in progression

Positivity opens doors

Seize the opportunity

*Never gloat – appreciate the outcome but see the potential
improvements*



TRACEY WUST

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HILLCREST ROCKHAMPTON PRIVATE HOSPITAL RAMSAY HEALTH CARE

I was born and bred in Rockhampton. While I have travelled the world it is in Rockhampton that my career began and continues to develop. I have always felt extremely blessed that from a very young age ***I always knew that I wanted to be a nurse.*** I am certainly fortunate that my passion for this profession has stayed with me and will always.

My education commenced at the Rockhampton Base Hospital some 30 years ago. This hospital based training under the wonderful stewardship of Miss Norma West was the beginning of a life long journey of learning and developing. This journey has been influenced and inspired by many great leaders such as Miss Norma West, Amy Zelmer, Mark Doran and Patrick Greier.

Midwifery and a peppering of tertiary studies in Education, Nursing and Management provided a stable platform to launch into management in the Health Sector. I have found that taking every opportunity that presents itself a valuable tool in facilitating exposure to learning environments.

My first opportunity came when I agreed to be seconded to small rural hospitals in Central Queensland to relieve the 'Matrons' for annual leave.

This was my first taste of management. It was the private health sector that presented itself as my next challenge and some 20 years ago I began as a Director of Nursing at St John's Hospital, Rockhampton. I have been in the private health sector ever since and find it dynamic, complex and full of challenges.

I continue to manage small hospitals in my role as CEO as I find I can be more 'hands on' and able to 'walk the talk', maintain an open door policy and be highly visible and approachable to staff and patients.

All of these strategies have been valuable in my management role, particularly in people management. Mr Paul Ramsay AO, Chairman of Ramsay Health Care always says 'look after the people and the business looks after itself'.

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As a CEO the bulk of my time is spent creating and maintaining the correct organisational culture for the hospital. The values of the organisation must reflect the values of its people. I like to follow Richard Branson's philosophy 'Hire for attitude, train for skills levels'. It is imperative that the people's values fit with the organisations. If they don't fit, they must go. This link is important in preserving the culture that you are creating and maintaining. I have found that once you have created a strong supportive culture it will become self fulfilling as people that don't have the same value system don't become part of the adhesive work group and eventually leave for one reason or another.

The private health sector is a constantly changing difficult business to survive in. As a manager you must be extremely responsive to change and act as a gate keeper to prioritise those changes that require more attention than others. I see my job as a gatekeeper for Heads of Department so they don't get too overwhelmed with constant demand of them to important changes.

What drives me through tough times are words from two mentors who were great CEOs –

1. *'When the going gets tough the tough get going'.*
2. *'In the end you will be judged on how you cope with the hard situations. It is these tough times that make you strong'.*

I am most proud of the success that we as a team have achieved at Hillcrest Rockhampton Private Hospital. The hospital was in receivership and struggling in a harsh competitive market. We are now considered the 'Employer of Choice' and have created a brilliant private hospital providing on exceptional service to its patients. It took 10 years but we did it. I believe that this success story is due to an organisation valuing its people, –

‘looking after its people’. A supportive organisational culture is vital to success.

As a manager I find it helpful to network with a mentor to assist with self preservation. Having the ability to debrief, unload or just ‘shoot the breeze’ with a colleague is so important. Also I have experienced the great value in staying fit and healthy in maintaining a positive well being. Cycling and running have become a wonderful passion that helps preserve a strong mental and physical well being.

INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN
of Capricornia

Inspiring in their wisdom.