



Media Release

CASE FOR QUOTAS AT SHE LEADS CONFERENCE

16 May 2014: More than 170 aspiring and emerging women leaders joined together on Tuesday to hear from some of Australia's most accomplished women.

Dr Anne Summers AO provided the keynote address, while other speakers and panelists included Carmel McGregor, Deputy Secretary of People Strategies and Policy at the Department of Defence and Helen Conway, the Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

In her 'call to action', Dr Summers encouraged women to stand together and support each other to change the status quo.

"It is ludicrous to argue that thirty years after women began graduating from Australian universities in equal or greater numbers than men, that there is not an equal distribution of talent and merit in this country.

"So why is this not reflected in the ranks of our leadership in politics? In business? In public administration?"

"As I have often argued, we need a strong independent and effective women's lobby – why should it just be the miners, the farmers, the trades unions, etc which are able to have powerful lobbies in Canberra? Women need this too."

Dr Summers also laid down a strong argument for quotas of 40 per cent for women's participation in leadership roles.

"We need to be quite clear about one thing: without enforceable numerical targets – what I would call 'quotas' – we are not going to see noticeable and permanent change.

"At present, as we have seen in politics, the appointment of women is a matter of whimsy. If the bloke in charge feels like doing it, he will. Or, in the current case, he didn't.

"We have to move beyond whimsy to regulation. Just as we do with every other goal we are serious about attaining."

The *She Leads Conference* brought together some of Australia's most accomplished women leaders with women across the age spectrum and a range of industries, who are interested in either taking up leadership roles or taking their leadership roles further.

The *She Leads Conference* is part of a broader [YWCA of Canberra](#) initiative to create pathways for women into leadership, and includes a year-long Diploma of Management tailored specifically for women.

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Frances Crimmins is available for interview.

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For more information about the She Leads initiative visit www.ywca-canberra.org.au

Watch the Conference panels and keynote address on the YWCA of Canberra [youtube channel](#)

About the YWCA of Canberra: The YWCA of Canberra is a feminist, not-for-profit community organisation that has been providing community services and representing women's issues in the Canberra community since its establishment in 1929. The YWCA of Canberra employs more than 350 staff across the ACT, and delivers 30 quality programs in children's services, community development, housing, youth services, women's leadership, advocacy, and training. Represented in 122 countries, the YWCA has a global reach of 25 million women and girls. As part of this international movement, the YWCA of Canberra works for a world where reconciliation, justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment are promoted and sustained through women's leadership. For more information visit: www.ywca-canberra.org.au