



## CONFERENCE PURPOSE, VALUES AND HISTORY

The Australian Education Unions Federal Women's Conference is held annually. It forms part of the strategy and policy development processes of our Union.

At the Federal Women's Conference delegates from around Australia, together with women from the Federal Office of the AEU, gather in order to debate and discuss the significant issues for women within our society, for women within our Union, and for women and girls within education systems.

### Purpose

The Conference has four main purposes:

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| <b>Policy</b>      | To develop policy and strategy in relation to trends within education, industrial relations and society generally.   |
| <b>Advice</b>      | To advise our Union on methods to improve and broaden the representation and participation of women who are members of our Union and the impact of developments within society, our Union and education systems, on women.                                     |
| <b>Development</b> | To provide delegates with current information in relation to the latest trends within education, industrial relations and society generally. To expose delegates to leading writers, researchers and advocates, and to extend delegates' knowledge and skills. |
| <b>Activism</b>    | To build the activism of women, as members of the Union and generally, and to assist them in creating networks.  |

Each year a theme or emphasis is chosen for the Conference. This focus may be on a key emerging trend in industrial or professional arenas. Alternatively, it could be a more encompassing topic such as the 1996 Conference which focussed on Public Education.

## Values

The Conference is a **feminist** forum. Its core values are:

**Inclusiveness** of all participants;

**Respect** for a variety of views;

**Encouragement** to take risks within a safe and supportive environment;

**Development** of individuals and the collective in order to advance the position of women; and

**Celebration** of women's achievements within our Union and elsewhere.

## History

The Federal Women's Conference celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in 2005 and you will receive a separate paper to commemorate this event, along with the stories of Women's Officers and significant achievements women in our Union have made in their struggle for women's rights in public education and beyond.

A report from the 2005 Federal Women's Conference follows in these papers.

## Today and the Future

The AEU is proud of its achievement in relation to the promotion of women and issues of particular concern to women. However, it recognises the need for constant vigilance to protect these achievements and that there are still many gains to be made. The AEU therefore looks to its annual Federal Women's Conference as a major source of direction and innovative ideas.