



## **Australian Institute of Building Submission to the *Report into Women in the Building and Construction Industry in Tasmania***

### **Introduction**

The Australian Institute of Building (AIB) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the *Report into Women in the Building and Construction Industry in Tasmania*. The AIB is keen to see more women employed in the building and construction industry, and welcomes this inquiry by the Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board.

### **Vision**

The vision of the AIB in regards to this inquiry is to ensure that:

- Equal career opportunities for women in the building and construction industry;
- Positive work environments are commonplace which are supportive of equal opportunity and responsibility;
- The building industry is a viable and growing sector for the benefit of the state, consumers and builders;

### **Nature of the Inquiry**

The stated recommendations of the report are:

- 1.) More focus on the messages about the industry being given in schools;
- 2.) Further research on the gap between females enrolled in VET education and application for apprenticeships;
- 3.) TBCITB, in partnership with employers, to conduct a recruitment campaign aimed at women to create an entry level critical mass;
- 4.) Encourage networks of women in the industry regardless of occupation;
- 5.) TBCITB should investigate providing development opportunities for women in management and executive roles in small to medium business;
- 6.) Investigate exemptions from gender discrimination legislation;
- 7.) Large organisations mentor smaller ones on gender diversity;

- 8.) Industry associations to tailor training for family business operators;
- 9.) Investigate grant scheme for women's business start-ups;
- 10.) Promotion of successful women in industry publications;
- 11.) Raising consciousness about what constitutes discriminatory behaviour; and
- 12.) Industry-wide working group to be established to foster long-term change.

## **AIB Policy Position**

In *AIB Information Publication No.12 – Policy Statements of the Institute*, it states:

### **Chapter 2.4**

#### **WOMEN IN THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

##### **Policy**

*2.4.1 The Australian Institute of Building (AIB) supports and encourages equal career opportunities for women in the building and construction industry. It recognises that women have the right to pursue career paths and recommends to AIB members that they exercise their influence in ensuring positive work environments and are supportive of equal opportunity and responsibility.*

##### **Background**

*2.4.2 Efforts should be made to ensure that both genders are adequately represented on all aspects of the Institute's activities.*

*2.4.3 The responsibility for implementing a fair and equitable approach to women lies with people at all levels in the industry. This includes the use of procedures which will encourage women to voice any issues under dispute without fear of any retribution; the application of equal employment opportunity (EEO) principles in the selection process for recruitment; determination of salary packages commensurate with expertise and experience regardless of gender; the provision of training and promotion opportunities to senior roles regardless of gender; and the application of review processes which do not differentiate between genders.*

*2.4.4 Any workplace should be in an environment where all workers, regardless of gender, feel comfortable and welcome as colleagues. This can be achieved by having in place a code of ethics and behaviour, the prohibition of discrimination and harassment, together with the provision of appropriate facilities and clothing.*

## **General comments**

AIB is concerned that 76 survey respondents is too small as a genuinely representative and scientific sample, and recommends that further research be undertaken with a larger number of respondents to properly assess the situation of women in the building and construction industry in Tasmania.

AIB generally supports the above 12 recommendations of the report, but makes the following points:

- Regarding the recommendation 4.), that women should be encouraged to join women's networks in the building and construction industry, AIB notes that the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) currently exists and plays an excellent role to bring women of diverse occupations in the industry together. However, AIB also encourages women in the building and

construction industry in Tasmania and elsewhere in Australia to join the Australian Institute of Building, and very much welcomes them to do so. We believe that the AIB has a lot to offer women in the industry in terms of networking, professional development and to have an influence in helping effect positive change in the industry on a myriad of issues. In short, women in the industry should be encouraged to join NAWIC, and the official professional body which is the AIB.

- Regarding the recommendation 6.), AIB questions whether perceived or actual discrimination in the building and construction industry in Tasmania is best dealt with by employing reverse discrimination to assist women in the industry. It is possible that women who achieve some level of success using reverse discrimination may be thought of by their male colleagues as only having got where they are because of this special treatment, and may not be taken so seriously. Such special assistance may also be viewed by many women as patronising and unnecessary. However, if further research shows that such assistance is necessary to bring about the necessary sweeping change in the industry, then it should be considered as one of a number of possible useful policy levers.

### **Further Information**

For further information, please contact the AIB Chief Executive Officer or Policy & Advocacy Manager on (02) 6247 7433 or [ceo@aib.org.au](mailto:ceo@aib.org.au) or [policy@aib.org.au](mailto:policy@aib.org.au)

## Appendix 1

### About the AIB

Founded in 1951, the AIB is the peak body for building and construction professionals, acknowledged for its ability to bring individuals together who share a common interest in improving the standing of the building profession and their career within Australia and overseas.

The AIB is incorporated by Royal Charter and is the pre-eminent professional body for building professionals in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Recognised as the accrediting body for building and construction degrees at educational institutions, the AIB has a long and proud history of supporting and servicing the building profession. For more than sixty years, the Institute has worked with the building and construction industry, government, universities and allied stakeholders to promote the building profession, support the development of university courses in building and construction whilst promoting the use of innovative building techniques and a best-practice regulatory environment.

AIB is proud of its role in promoting the exchange of information amongst individuals and accomplishes this through publications including the *Construct* magazine and the Australasian Journal of Construction Economics & Building (AJCEB).

The AIB also has an extensive continuing professional development program in Australia and overseas and facilitates the annual AIB Professional Excellence in Building Awards Program.

For further information please go to [www.aib.org.au](http://www.aib.org.au)