



Community Leadership

LODDON MURRAY INC.

(Incorporating the Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program)

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MEDIA RELEASE

Women Celebrate Leadership

At the invitation of Community Leadership Loddon Murray (CLLM), a group of forty women in leadership roles across the north central region came together in Bendigo on Friday 20 August to network and discuss common issues.

Cr. Lisa Ruffell welcomed the dinner guests from as far away as Swan Hill in the north and Romsey in the south. Cr. Ruffell proclaimed her personal mission to encourage and support young women to enter into leadership roles and this was picked up with equal enthusiasm by the guest speaker, Kate Roffey,.

Drawing on her experiences as the Executive Director of the Australian Tennis Foundation, and as a director and member of numerous sporting boards, Kate issued a challenge to all women in leadership roles.

"I measure myself against my own personal standards, not against the men in the room," Kate said in reference to the boards where she is the sole female member. "We need to set our standards high and make decisions that make us proud."

Kate paid tribute to the many women who have helped to break down the barriers over previous decades to make her path an easier one. "We also need to lead by example and leave a legacy for the women coming behind us."

It was agreed during facilitated table discussions that women have a valuable contribution to make to councils and boards. It was also noted that although there is a slightly higher ratio of women in the Australian population there is a considerably lower number of women in leadership positions.

A wide range of barriers were identified. Providing a welcoming environment and offering mentoring to new and aspiring board members were some of the strategies identified to assist women to participate more fully.

At the conclusion of the discussion, one attendee was "inspired to think about the next step" in her career and community leadership.

Patti Cotton, a board member of Continuing Education, spoke about a new group formed to "inspire, support and encourage young women in Bendigo."

"I have hope for the future," said Cr. Yvonne Jennings, currently the only serving female councilor at Swan Hill.

Master of Ceremonies, Fiona Parker from the ABC Radio morning show, was excited by the vibrant conversation in the room and invited CLLM board member, Beth Taylor, to launch a new CLLM initiative funded by the Victorian State Government.

Free forums will be conducted in Bendigo during October for women wanting to learn more about being on a board or committee, as well as develop skills to assist them in current roles. More details can be found at www.lmclp.org.au or by calling 5470-5122.

PHOTO: Diane Bunnnett (left), an active member of the agricultural industry, pictured chatting with Fiona Parker from ABC Radio during a networking dinner held for women in leadership roles.

For further information about this media release please contact the project manager, Kerry Anderson, on 5470-5122 or 0418 553 719.

Engaging, encouraging and empowering members of the community in leadership