This book began with a question, captured in the title of Chapter 1: *A transformational programme?* Throughout the chapters LDW has been positioned as something unique, something special, a particular ‘kind’ of women’s programme. This is not to say that there have not been issues raised, criticisms made, room for improvements noted, or women for whom the programme has worked less well than for others.

**Frame 4: A transformational approach**

The theoretical framework for the programme has drawn heavily on the work of the CGO, with their ‘4 Frames’ (Ely et al. 2003:4-6) being used as a touchstone returned to on several occasions. Each frame has a different understanding of gender and of gender inequalities in the workplace, which requires a different approach or strategies to achieving gender equity. Traditionally programmes that focus on training women for leadership would fall into Frame 1, the fix or equip the women approach. This Frame focuses on women as the ‘problem’; women are at fault in some way – if only they learned to play the game, if only they could be taught to make the tough decisions, if only they were prepared to work longer hours, if only they put their views forward more strongly, and so on.

Gender is seen in terms of socialised sex differences. The expectation is that women will change to fit the organisation and to fit a male model of behaviour and aspiration. Changing the organisation to make it more amenable to women is given no consideration.

By contrast, the LDW programme from the beginning was designed with a dual goal. The early planners not only wanted to provide a context for women’s development, they simultaneously aspired to create a cultural shift at UWA, one that would welcome and recognise women’s contributions (Eveline, 2004). By the early 21st century programme planners were calling this aspiration for cultural change, in line with the work of the Centre for Gender and Organizations (CGO), a Frame 4 approach.

In the CGO model, the focus of Frame 4 is a re-visioning of work cultures. This relies on a more complex understanding of gender - that gender is an ‘organising feature of social life’. Gender, therefore, is socially constructed, something we do, rather than something we have (see Chapter 3). This re-visioning of work practices is based on understanding that historically-based practices in the workplace were designed by men. These practices disadvantage not only women, but also some men and
other ‘identity’ groups. For the CGO the focus of Frame 4 is no longer the women; the focus is on transforming work cultures.

In pursuing its dual agenda, of developing women and challenging the traditional/masculine culture, the LDW Programme goes beyond the sole emphasis on cultural transformation of the CGO model. For, while LDW was designed with an eye to the larger cultural change agenda, it has always been recognised that the women who undergo the programme are the primary means of carrying the transformational agenda forward.

Recognising the potential of women as change agents, however, has its pitfalls and must be handled with sensitivity and a good dose of critical questioning. It is one thing to enhance women’s understanding of the gendered culture with talk of ‘tempered radicals’ and ‘small wins’, but is there evidence that participating in LDW makes a difference to participants’ workplaces? Viewing every LDW participant as a potential change agent displays a high degree of optimism but is that optimism borne out in how every LDW participant sees herself? It would be foolhardy to answer with an unconditional ‘yes’. Moreover, the question of organisational responsibility raises another key issue: placing the burden of cultural change on the shoulders of the women participants is not only unfair to them, it also denies the very real support of the men and wider group of women who mentor the women and sponsor and champion the programme.

The threefold mission of the programme (with one statement referring to enabling the women and two referring to culture change), detailed in Chapter 2, encapsulates the components of a broader culture change agenda which refuses to resolve into a women vs culture change approach. The programme has addressed these dual goals, both through programme design and through broader initiatives that reach well beyond the current cohort programme. Peer learning that includes a presentation to the organisation, mentoring that benefits and changes the mentors as well as the mentees are two examples. The curriculum itself has an emphasis on workplace culture, cultural literacy and tools for cultural change.

Nonetheless, at the core of the stories told by so many women in these pages is a recurring theme of personal change. How they have a greater sense of belonging, are more connected with men and women on campus, have a bigger picture of the organisation, understand gender when they see it being played out in their workplace, are prepare to stand up for themselves and their rights, know how to get things done, have a stronger sense of career, are working to develop a leadership style that works for them. The list could go on. How does one have a final tally when so many have been involved, at all levels, in so many parts of the organisation, and over a sustained period of time?

The voices of the women are strong. They say that LDW has made a difference to them. However, in claiming that LDW is a transformational programme, there is clearly need for justification beyond the impact on the participants themselves.

What would be missing?

One way to think about this is to reflect on UWA without an LDW programme. We can scan back through the pages of this publication to remind us of what would no longer exist.

Firstly, let us subtract the Planning Group, the 42 women who have been involved in guiding the programme. Let us subtract the thoughtful and challenging conversations the LDW Planning Group has had over the ten years. Each year a group of 12 women from across campus have wrestled with culture change issues, with diversity issues, with the lobbying and politicking required to ensure ongoing funding and profile for the programme. Conversations would often take surprising and fruitful side
tracks. Where else on campus did a broad representation of men or women regularly make the time to have these conversations about gender equity and culture change?

Then let us subtract the programme ‘spin offs’: the women’s welcome at staff orientation, the Senior Women’s Network, the Committee Skills project, the numerous events as highlighted in Chapter 2, that have been held over the last decade. Let us subtract also the number of times that gender equity has been publicly championed at these events.

Certainly subtract the participants, some 358 women over ten years who have participated in the programme. Deduct their programme experiences — all those conversations about gender, about the gendered workplace, about leadership, about visibility and acting strategically, about reading the organisational culture. Subtract the connections created between the women, their shared experiences and understanding. Subtract also the role modelling that took place between the women, the encouraging, the recognition of rights in the workplace that were not shared or were denied, the increased understanding of differences between staff groups, the friendships across campus. Take away the peer learning groups, those peer learning presentations, the grappling with the learning that took place in them and the sometimes awkward attempts to present the learning in new and honouring ways.

Let us subtract any synergies that occurred with other equity and diversity initiatives — any ways in which they supported or sustained or encouraged or challenged each other. Deduct, too, the contribution of LDW to the Employer of Choice for Women award to the University.

Take away too many of the career changes, the career foundations, career building and career steps that were discussed in Chapter 5 — the taking up of opportunities, the influence of LDW in applying for promotion, seeking and winning secondments, contributing new ideas to workplaces, exercising leadership, speaking up in meetings, taking up committee responsibilities, creating balanced lives, re-negotiating workloads. Then subtract the women who say they would otherwise have moved on.

The mentors and the benefits they have claimed both for themselves and the organisation would also have to go, along with the benefits of mentoring for the participants, the collegial connections, the bigger picture, the career encouragement. Let us also subtract the message that ongoing support for LDW gives to both the men and the women of the organisation.

It becomes difficult to imagine UWA without all of this: without the personal and collective changes, without their changes in careers, networks, contributions and leadership, not to mention the increased understanding of the men and the undoubted ripple-on effects. When so many women are changed, when so many people’s working lives are touched, the culture is changed. Does the programme add up to more than the sum of its parts?

Does this add up to organisational transformation? UWA Vice-Chancellor, Alan Robson, believes it does:

Very few things happen in an institution that could be said to transform that institution, but LDW has transformed UWA.

UWAnews 17/5/04

Clearly, in many tangible and subtle ways, LDW is part of the University community.
Looking ahead

The tenth anniversary celebrations and the production of this publication have been used as a reflection of a moment in time, an opportunity to look backwards in order to look forwards.

Both these views remind us there is unfinished business. Of course the institution still has a long journey towards an inclusive workplace for women, equitable distribution of power and resources and status and earnings, with balanced lives and diverse career paths. There is no room for complacency.

The question implies a recognition that there are limits to what the women can achieve on their own as well as a sense of wishing to have a shared understanding of programme learning. The Planning Group has also asked this question. How do we build allies and influence male colleagues? How can we increase understanding amongst those men who do not yet understand? And, then there are women who say, ‘we need this, not the men’, as they point to the preponderance of men taking other leadership options, such as the Heads of School Programme.

It is a critical question and, once again, we need to move beyond the Frame 1 approach. It is tempting to fall into a ‘fix the men’ approach, but what would a Frame 4 programme for men look like? It too would have gender, the gendered workplace, organisational culture, and gendered leadership as themes. There would be an emphasis on cultural literacy, raising awareness of advantage and disadvantage, and understanding masculinity. This certainly would be cutting edge development, but would any men wish to participate? Are there men who wish to learn about the gendered culture?

Secondly, listening to the voices of the women in Chapter 6: How am I a minority? reminds us that the programme has a tendency to revert to the ‘mono-cultural’ despite the diversity of the women in it. The focus on gender somehow precludes dealing with difference. While this has been an issue for the programme for some time and although some changes have been made, more work is required.

This publication has sought to look seriously at the LDW programme aspirations and achievements in its ten year history. It can be concluded that LDW has been successful on many fronts - from developing the careers and potential of individual women to the cultural transformations referred to by the Vice-Chancellor and others. Is there some kind of critical mass operating at UWA, where the number of people, men and women, with increased awareness and understanding regarding how gender operates in the workplace, provides the context within which cultural transformation occurs? Are there, as Joanne Martin (2004) describes, tipping points, where achieving gender equity becomes that little bit easier?

Finally then, the question can be asked, can organisational transformation take place without an LDW? Do we have an essential ingredient at UWA that others are missing? The success of LDW provides a strong case for building women’s programmes into an
essential component of organisational strategies to tackle the ongoing gender imbalances in the workplace. This publication provides a model of what works.

"I think the situation for women and for gender equality at UWA has improved steadily over the last ten or more years, and this should continue. However, the price of equality is eternal vigilance, and there are pockets of the University where hoary old attitudes can still be found. LDW is a proven success and one of the schemes UWA can be proud of.

Male mentor