

Minister for Fair Trading
Minister for Youth
Minister for Volunteering

Linda Burney MP



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MEDIA RELEASE

GETTING MORE WOMEN INTO GOVERNMENT

The lemma Government is spearheading a push to encourage more women to stand at the local government elections in September this year.

Acting Minister for Local Government and Minister for Youth Linda Burney said the Government was keen to increase the representation of women.

In NSW, women account for:

- 17 percent of mayors
- 26 percent of councillors – an increase from 16 percent in 1987
- 5 percent of general managers
- 24 percent of other senior managers.

Ms Burney described these statistics as too low and said more women were needed in decision-making roles at local government level.

“Councils and residents have a lot to gain by having more women representing them,” she said.

“Women comprise just over half of the State’s population – it’s only fair that their voices are heard when decisions are being made,” Ms Burney said.

“I’m pleased that we are seeing more women becoming involved in local government at both the elected and managerial level.

“But there is still a long way to go for women in local government to have anything like equal representation.

Two working parties are being established following a ‘Women in Local Government’ forum held at Parliament House last month, with one focusing on increasing representation at the elected level and the other supporting women in senior management roles in local councils.

They are expected to report back to Government by the end of February.

“Getting involved in local government can be very rewarding – working locally with inspiring people on a range of projects can make a difference within the community as well as be rewarding on a personal level,” Ms Burney said.

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Emily Hill, 18, is a member of Marrickville Youth Council.

“Before I joined the Youth Council I had a very limited understanding of my local community,” Miss Hill said.

“It has been one big learning experience. I have been given opportunities and new skills that not only help me personally but have helped me in a professional capacity to better represent young people.

“You don’t have to reach too high to get things done and, budget aside, there are few restrictions to achieving great things. If you have a good idea there are always people around you willing to support you. That is amazing.”

Sarah Trapla is a councillor on Fairfield City Council, first elected when she was 24. She also works in local government, for Canterbury City Council.

“Being a councillor has given me an opportunity to serve my community and participate in a decision-making role which shapes our future, through services, infrastructure and valuable programs,” Ms Trapla said.

“People don’t always realise that what they are doing at the ground level is valued by others. I take inspiration from them and as a councillor. I’m able to link people with other networks in our community.

“I was fortunate to have had a great woman mentor and support me and I want to do that for others too, to be able to have a positive influence on all spheres of young women’s lives – career, education, recreation and community service.”

Ms Burney said that as Minister for Youth she particularly wanted to encourage young women to consider how they can contribute to their communities.

“It’s important that elected members are representative of their communities, that is why we are calling on women to consider standing for this year’s elections – particularly those from diverse backgrounds and different ages,” she said.

“By standing for council, by choosing a career in local government or by participating in the local Youth Council, you can ensure your voice is heard.”

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