

EDITION #99 Winter



## KATE RAMSAY AND THE A n D COACHES WELCOME YOU TO OUR STAYING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER

As you will see above, this Value Adding is edition #99. My late partner Des and I wrote edition #1 soon after we merged our businesses and created AnD Leadership Consulting back in early 1994. We named this new business to represent the and/both way of living and leading. This is the penultimate edition given I plan to make the upcoming summer edition the final one. My theme for this newsletter is the value of gender diversity – a topic my regular readers will know is close to my heart. In **Did you know?** I share the good news that Australia's three most powerful economic institutions are now led by women economists. However, I then write that the bad news is that the World Economic Forum's latest Global Gender Gap report assesses that it will take 123 more years for the world to reach gender equality. In a **Good Read** I recommend a book called *Inconvenient Women – Australian Radical Writers 1900 – 1970* by Jacqueline Kent. **And to close** I quote four of Kent's 'inconvenient women'.

### Did you know?

#### Women in economics

The June 14 edition of *Women's AGENDA* was headlined 'It took more than a century, but women are taking charge of Australia's economy – here's why it matters'. The piece was written by Du.gu Yengin, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Adelaide and was originally published in *The Conversation*.

Associate Professor Du.gu Yengin writes that, with the recent appointment of Jenny Wilkinson to lead Treasury (the first woman in its 124 year history), women now head the top three economic posts in Australia, with Michele Bullock at the Reserve Bank and Danielle Wood at the Productivity Commission.

Why does this matter? Associate Professor Du.gu Yengin writes that gender diversity matters 'not just in who holds the top jobs, but in what gets researched and how decisions are made'. She argues that there is growing evidence that male and female economists not only ask different questions, but also approach problems differently. She cites one study that found female central bankers tend to act more independently and deliver lower inflation; and other research in the US and Europe showed gender differences in how economists think about a range of areas, including labour markets, taxation, health and the environment,

and in terms of public spending from welfare to the military.

Returning to Australia, Yengin admits that in spite of this Treasury appointment, the economics profession remains 'stubbornly male' with, for example, only 17% of economics professors being female. However, she still believes that having women lead the three top economic posts in our land is worthy of celebration because, 'when young women see leaders who look like them, they're more likely to imagine themselves in those roles too.'

Associate Professor Du.gu Yengin concludes:

*Having more diverse perspectives doesn't dilute economics – it deepens it. It makes the discipline more responsive to the diversity of the real-world challenges it's meant to address.*

### Global gender gap

The same edition of *Women's Agenda* also reported that the World Economic Forum has just released its annual Global Gender Gap report. This predicts that, with the current rate of change, it will take another 123 years for the world to reach gender parity.

The good news is that the report has raised Australia 11 places on the overall ranking list and is now 13<sup>th</sup> in the world. This rise is mostly about the shift in what the report calls 'political empowerment', ranking us 30<sup>th</sup> for the number of women in parliament, 8<sup>th</sup> for women

in ministerial positions and 19<sup>th</sup> overall for political empowerment.

More good news - Australia ranked first in our proportion of women in the professional and technical workforce, but then 58<sup>th</sup> for wage equality for similar work - placing us 32<sup>nd</sup> in the world for economic participation and opportunity.

Minister for Women Katy Gallagher observed that these improved results can be put down to "what is possible when government takes gender equality seriously". Here's hoping our scores will be even higher in next year's report, given three women now head our top economic posts and that 52% of the Labor Caucus are women.

## A good read

I have just read *Inconvenient Women – Australian Radical Writers 1900 – 1970* (NewSouth, 2025) written by biographer Jacqueline Kent.

Kent has thoroughly researched Australian women writers who succeeded the suffragists and preceded the 70s wave of feminists.

Why inconvenient? As Associate Professor Anthea Taylor wrote in her review of the book in *The Conversation*:

*For Kent, these iconic women were "inconvenient" in many ways. They pursued careers as journalists, poets and novelists at times when many women were relegated to the private sphere. They spoke out against injustices, despite the personal cost. They lived unconventional lives, personally and professionally. And they embodied alternative forms of womanhood.*

The book explores the lives of some of Australia's most radical and influential writers of that time including Katharine Susannah Prichard, Miles Franklin, Kylie Tennant, Mary Gilmore, Marjorie Barnard, Eleanor Dark, Dorothy Hewett, Ruth Park and Pamela Travers.

The author describes the genre of her book as 'Joint Biography'. It could well also sit comfortably in the history section of any bookshop, because Kent interweaves her writers' stories between the history of those years, including the Second World War and the Great Depression.

I have just two small grumbles about the book: the first is that Kent includes so many writers that I sometimes felt hungry for more detail and so wished she would have delved deeper into the lives of some of them. And my other gripe is that it ends rather suddenly after covering the work and lives of the Indigenous writers Kath Walker (Oodgeroo Noonuccal) and Faith Bandler.

I would have appreciated a Conclusion chapter that could have provided a segue from these so-called inconvenient writers to the feminist activist writers who came next - such as Germaine Greer and Anne Summers.

While still on the topic of books, I can't resist reminding my readers about my book *A hell of a lot of glass – achieving gender equality in the workplaces of Australia*. Just when I was thinking that, given it was published in late 2023, it could be reaching its 'used-by' date, the banning of most of the Diversity Equality and Inclusion (DEI) programs in the US and the flow on effect here in Australia, means we feminist activists must remain ever vigilant.

And the good news is that discounted copies are now available for sale. Give Kate a ring or drop her an email.

## And to close

Quotes from four of Kent's 'inconvenient women'.

Stella Miles Franklin:

*It's a sign of your own worth sometimes if you are hated by the right people.*

Faith Bandler:

*Dear friends, much pain has been endured in the past, and that pain is no longer designated to hopelessness. It's time to move the process of reconciliation forward with a little more speed. That is the task. If not now, when? If not us, who?*

Katharine Susannah Prichard:

*Don't sacrifice your life to work and ideals. The most important things in life are human relations.*

Dame Mary Gilmore:

*Youth troubles over eternity, age grasps at a day and is satisfied to have even the day.*