



**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND**

**USQ Women's Network Inc.**

**BUSINESS PLAN**

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# 1. Business Overview

## 1.1 Type of Business

The USQ Women's Network Inc. (WN) has a unique ability to represent the interests of University women, and can offer valuable input to the development and implementation of various policies or activities to achieve this commitment. The WN was established in 1992 and now has over 130 members.

## 1.2 Background Information/History

The WN held its first meeting in December 1991. The dedicated women who organised this gathering saw this initiative as providing a forum that could address ideas and issues of interest to women within the University community. The first task of the broadly representative Executive Committee, which was elected in January 1992, was to set out a program of activities for the year. In doing so, the Executive attempted to address all the needs and interests regarded as most important by female staff, as well as allowing for women at USQ to *meet, have fun, develop and support one another*. It resolved to:

- Organise monthly meetings and events with guest speakers;
- Prepare and circulate a monthly newsletter; and to
- Work through a number of sub-committees to investigate issues and spearhead discussions.

Then followed a brochure produced in the same year which outlined the purposes of the WN as endeavouring to:

- Enable information sharing both informally and through seminar sessions;
- Establish a network both informally and through the identification of key women/positions on campus;
- Provide a consultative role to USQ management;
- Encourage and enable greater female representation on key university committees;
- Provide access to women willing to play the role of mentors in terms of career progression;
- Encourage women in research and assist women in developing the necessary skills to do so;
- Identify a spokesperson/group prepared to take issues arising from network meetings to senior management.

Key figures in the initial establishment of the group were the Equal Opportunity Officer, June Wilson, Dorothy Baker from the USQ Library, and Charmaine Ryan from the Business Faculty.

In the years that have followed, three very successful conferences were held bringing together women from the USQ campus and from the Toowoomba community.

### ***1.3 Vision, Mission, Aims and Objectives***

#### **Vision**

The University of Southern Queensland Women's Network Inc. strives to provide and encourage leadership, development and advancement of women in our local communities.

The WN seeks to support the University of Southern Queensland's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunity for women in employment as part of its legislative obligations.

#### **Mission**

The WN has and will continue to work in informal and formal ways to support a culture in the University which values, acknowledges, and promotes women's achievements and contributions within the tertiary education sector.

#### **Aim**

The WN vision will be achieved through increasing and improving opportunities, networking and awareness of women's issues within the tertiary education sector and to effectively engage with members of the USQ and wider communities.

#### **Objectives**

The WN seeks to:

- Support equal opportunity initiatives for women in the USQ community;
- Provide a voice and discussion forum for issues of concern to women;
- Sponsor public information talks, meetings and workshops on topical and emerging issues such as women's health, financial planning, negotiating the promotion process and superannuation;
- Promote mentoring and networking opportunities for women;
- Encourage personal development for women;
- Promote career development for women.

Membership is open to all women at USQ from the general and academic staff. As of October 2005, membership is now open to USQ students.

## **2. Promotional Plan**

### ***2.1 Membership***

The organisation invites University of Southern Queensland academic staff, general staff and students who are over the age of 18 years to become members.

### ***2.2 Potential Membership***

The WN currently has 130 members. Because the aims and objectives are focussed on women's issues, the WN primarily targets females. However, WN invites males to join as members to further the goals and objectives of the network.

### ***2.3 Who uses our services?***

There are a number of customers and potential customers who can benefit from the services that WN can provide. These customers include:

- USQ Academic and general women staff;
- USQ female students;
- Other USQ employees with an interest in women's issues;
- USQ management and committee structures (e.g., Status of Women in Employment and Education Committee, Equal Opportunity Office, Social Justice Committee, Women's Mentoring Program);
- Wider local communities in Toowoomba, Wide Bay, and Springfield;
- Other women's groups:
  - Zonta,
  - Student guild,
  - Australian Federation of University Women,
  - Women on the Move,
  - What Women Want Group.

### ***2.4 What is our Promotion Plan?***

The WN has developed a promotion plan in which to market the activities and services that WN and provide. Some of the promotional channels include:

- Information provided to new staff during induction;
- USQ Women's Network website;
- Specific email Distribution List - #USQ Women's Network Inc.;
- Workshops;
- Special events (e.g., conferences); and
- Word of mouth.

An organisation's reputation and its continued existence can depend on the degree to which its targeted "publics" support its goals and policies. The WN will inform the

general public, interest groups, and key stakeholders of the organisation's policies, activities and accomplishments through:

- Social functions;
- Invited speaker's program;
- Workshops;
- USQ Newsflash media releases;
- Women's Movie Nights;
- Women's events; and
- Conferences.

There are a number of benefits and challenges that are facing the WN.

The most important benefit is that WN is uniquely positioned within the USQ community to provide support and guidance to women at USQ. We also have the ability to informally network across faculties, staff from general to academic and students. We are specifically focussed on issues associated with women, and we have our members involved in university-wide committees. This provides us the ability to lobby across many of the USQ committees. In particular, we have a dedicated executive committee who are committed to achieving the aims and objectives of the organisation. Within our membership, WN has many people with expertise that the network can draw upon to provide services to the university and external communities.

The WN also faces some challenges in its ongoing development and pursuit of achieving its goals and objectives. Firstly, the WN is reliant on volunteer staff who are already overworked in a very busy tertiary organisation. Secondly, within USQ there is limited availability of financial and physical resources. Like many other groups, the WN has to compete for scant physical and financial resources.

### **3. The Financial Management Plan**

#### ***3.1 Capital Needs***

WN has a working capital of \$528.43 (2004-2005 financial year).

#### ***3.2 Sources of Finance***

The executive committee of WN has considered where we might be able to source funding. The following are some potential sources:

- Fundraising during social functions
- Donations (from membership and external parties)
- Grants
- Membership fees (not collected). Currently membership is free. This issue is to be reviewed at the next annual general meeting.

#### ***3.3 Financial Viability***

Audited financial statement is required yearly by the Office of Fair Trading.

WN has been financially viable since its establishment in 1991.

In-kind financial support is received from the following:

- USQ Insurance - WN has coverage under the umbrella of USQ's insurance;
- Volunteer time of membership;
- Grants;
- Bunker room - this room is provided rent-free;
- WN website - this is located within the USQ website and is provided free-of-charge;
- In-kind support from faculties - items such as stationery;
- USQ rooms used during workshops (e.g., T110); and
- Publicity through USQ Newsflashes is provided free-of-charge to WN.

## **4. The Organisation Structure**

### ***4.1 Personnel***

A Management Committee will manage the WN. This management committee of the association consists of a president, vice-president, treasurer, and any other members the association members elect or appoint at a general meeting. A member of the management committee, other than the secretary, must be a member of the association. At each annual general meeting of the association, the members of the management committee must retire from office, but are eligible, on nomination, for re-election.

Election to the management committee will follow the guidelines as set in the WN Constitution.

The management committee must meet at least once every four (4) months to exercise its functions.

The WN is also responsible for nominating representatives to the University's Status of Women in Employment and Education Committee and the Equal Opportunity Committee.

### ***4.2 Business Organisation***

WN is an incorporated association (non-profit) IA32895.

### ***4.3 Legal Considerations***

There are a number of legal issues for WN to consider. These include:

- WN is registered as a business - ABN 97484127956.
- WN is in the process of applying for tax deductible status where WN can receive tax deductible donations. We are in the process of applying for this status.
- WN is under the umbrella of USQ's insurance IA No. 32895.
- Members of the association are bound to honour the duties of membership of an incorporated association (fiduciary).

### ***4.4 Premises***

WN is allocated premises known as the bunker room. The WN has applied for separate funding to upgrade the bunker room. This is not an ideal location and a goal of WN is ultimately to have suitable premises.

## **5. Annexures**

1. University of Southern Queensland Women's Network Constitution
2. Certificate of Business - ABN 97484127956
3. Copy of Insurance Certificate (USQ)
4. Copy of Commendations received