

**TASMANIAN LEADERS**  
**AFTERNOON TEA WITH PARTICIPANTS UNDERTAKING THE**  
**I-LEAD 2022 WOMEN IN INDUSTRY PROGRAM**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2022**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this afternoon tea to recognise the 2022 cohort of participants in the I-LEAD Women in Industry Program with the Tasmanian Leaders Program.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise their enduring culture and connection to land, sea and culture. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I commit to a future that listens to and respects Aboriginal stories, culture and history.

I also acknowledge:

- Robert Woolley, Tasmanian Leaders Board Chairperson
- Gillian Biscoe and Adrian Daniels, Tasmanian Leaders Board members
- Angela Driver, CEO Tasmanian Leaders
- and a special welcome to all participants in this year's program.

I congratulate you all both for applying to participate in the program and for being selected. Science Technology Engineering and Maths knowledge is associated with 75 percent of the fastest growing occupations, innovation and high paying jobs. Yet, males make up 84 percent of all persons with qualifications. Only one in four information technology graduates, and fewer than one in 10 engineering graduates is female.<sup>1</sup> Just 27 percent of the 300,000 strong manufacturing workforce are female.<sup>2</sup>

We know that there are a number of key reasons why women are underrepresented across STEM and other industry and technical fields.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://womenworkforceparticipation.pmc.gov.au/action-area-jobsof-the-future>, accessed 17/10/2022.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.afr.com/companies/manufacturing-leaderscallformorewomentojointheirranks>, accessed 17/10/2022.

First, STEM fields are often viewed as masculine, and teachers and parents often apply gender stereotypes and underestimate girls' maths abilities.

Secondly, STEM are still male-dominated cultures, and fewer women study and work in STEM. STEM fields tend to perpetuate inflexible and exclusionary cultures that are not supportive of, or attractive, to women.

Thirdly, STEM has fewer role models to inspire girls' interest in these fields, and fewer examples of female scientists and engineers in books, media and popular culture.<sup>3</sup>

So, one of the key aims and outcomes of the program is to "showcase" role models. You are all role models in your cohort and also in your wider organisational community. The benefits of this I-LEAD program therefore should apply widely. Hopefully, you should feel confident that you have gained personal benefits from participation, and that you now have other women with whom you can discuss, reflect and share ideas and find solutions.

May I reflect on my own career and how my journey may resonate with you and your career journey. When I went into the law there were very few female role models. Similarly, when I was appointed to the Federal Circuit Court, I was the first Tasmanian woman to take up that role.

In respect of my career journey, I never saw myself as a leader. Over the years, in fact, I shied away from leadership positions. I tried to overcome my lack of confidence by working hard. When I became a partner in my law firm, I worked harder. When I became a barrister, I spent hours on preparation, staying up late, getting up early. When I became a judge, I wrote many drafts of every judgment. My motivation was always a fear of failure, not a desire for success. I frequently underestimated myself, but stuck to the old saying, "the harder you work, the luckier you get."

May I mention a few challenges. First, in the 1980s, as junior counsel in the Helsham Inquiry into the Lemonthyme and Southern Forests, a tribunal member

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/the-stem-gap/> accessed 11 Oct 22

treated me rudely throughout the lengthy Inquiry. I believed I had done nothing to justify his attitude towards me. Needless to say, I was the only female at the busy Bar table. It upset me at the time, but I picked myself up and vowed never to give in to inappropriate behaviour by bullies or sexist colleagues in my profession.

Secondly, the conflict between family life and work was difficult especially when my two children were young. Memorably, my law firm gave me six weeks sick leave after the birth of my second child. I finished work on the Friday, my daughter was born on Sunday and I was back to work within six weeks. Part-time work for a lawyer was not a realistic option in those days and working from home was certainly not an option.

As one of nine partners, I found it hard to be listened to in partners' meetings. I was often not taken seriously. One example was when I tried to introduce a sexual harassment policy in the early 1990s, although I persisted.

Thirdly, as a barrister, male judges were often rude to me. I witnessed some appalling judicial behaviour to female lawyers. I recall a male judge belittling a junior female lawyer in her first trial. The male client sacked her during the trial, believing she was incompetent as a result of this treatment. She was in tears and very distressed. She survived. More importantly, she became a magistrate in later years.

I always tried to look positively to the future. Whenever I had a setback, I found it helpful to talk to a trusted friend.

In sport too, I had setbacks, but I worked hard to improve my skills at those times.

May I propose some personal and very modest leadership advice in the form of my seven tips:

1. Work hard, persevere and never give up, and always keep your dignity when setbacks occur.
2. Surround yourself with good people when you can. I was able to employ many competent employed solicitors when a partner and, eight excellent legal assistants when a judge.

3. If you fear something, such as I feared public speaking, try to fight the fear because the more you do of something you fear, the easier it gets.
4. Look for a mentor or mentors for advice and support, but always make your own decisions and stand by your own judgments.
5. Always prepare well, which will increase your confidence to have the courage to speak up.
6. Attend female leadership programs like this, to learn from other women how to make the most of your talents. Learn from leaders and develop a style of leadership with which you are comfortable.
7. Be brave and take risks. Personally, I took a risk leaving my law firm partnership and my guaranteed income to go to the Tasmanian Independent Bar. I did not know whether I would get work and what income I would earn. That risk led to a busy and fulfilling time as a barrister and led to my appointment as a judge.

A final piece of advice, a sense of humour always helps and, try not to take yourself too seriously.

Well, it is time I concluded. You are about half-way through your program. I am sure you have already benefitted greatly from the interactions between you all and with your facilitators.

I am sure your participation is a mark of your commitment to leadership and to its responsibilities. I congratulate the cohort for applying to the program and encourage you to back yourselves and others around you.

I hope also that you enjoy the program and I look forward to speaking with you as we enjoy some afternoon tea together.

Thank you.