

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Inflexible work stifles national productivity**

## ***New scholarship recognises leadership potential of women working part-time***

**SYDNEY, April 3, 2012:** The leadership potential of women who work part-time has been recognised by a new joint Chief Executive Women (CEW) and Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) scholarship. The inaugural scholarship provides two women, working part-time a chance to participate in the AGSM Women in Leadership Program.

CEW and AGSM Executive Education are pleased to announce Maree Sidey, Director of Community Programs at Australian Drug Foundation and Briana Palmer, Convenience Trading Manager at BP as the recipients of the Women in Leadership Scholarship for emerging women leaders working on a part-time basis in the business, government or not-for-profit sectors.

CEW President, Belinda Hutchinson says: "Providing these women with access to executive-level training and education will help ensure they thrive in leadership roles. Women who are working part-time sometimes don't get the same development opportunities as women that work full-time."

Rosemary Howard, Executive Director and Conjoint Professor at AGSM Executive Education concurs: "A particular career point of failure for women is the child-rearing years where we need to do a much better job of providing part-time and remote flexible working arrangements for parents."

"The gender imbalance stems largely from a shortage of mid-career female professionals. There are 1.3 women to every one man in our university system – we are investing a lot of money in educating our women. Yet 10 or 15 years later that doesn't apply because of issues such as family and re-entry into the workforce," Howard says.

"This new scholarship is an opportunity to encourage women in way of professional development, and to support them during the period when they are typically combining their careers with their family lives," adds Howard.

### **Workplace flexibility makes economic sense**

Recent changes to Federal Government legislation now sees reporting on gender diversity outcomes for employers of over 100 people.

From 1 January 2011, an employee has the right to request a change in their working arrangements to assist them care for the child including changes in working hours, patterns and location.

Commenting on the amendment bill Hutchinson says: "Flexible work options may initially increase some administrative costs for an organisation but big firms in Australia say the benefits in terms of increased recruitment, retention, productivity and morale make it worthwhile."

"We recognise that not all jobs lend themselves to part time, but certainly the introduction of more sophisticated technology should allow businesses to become more open to flexible work practices for both women and men," adds Hutchinson.

“Part-time and flexible work is critical in encouraging women – and men – to stay in their careers. Government and large organisations need to lead this and commit to new ways of allowing people to work when they can make their most valuable contribution,” says Howard.

In 2010 Telstra Business Women’s Awards survey found that 63% of women chose a lack of flexible working options as amongst the biggest obstacles for returning to work after having children.

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**For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:**

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#### **About Women in Leadership Scholarship**

Chief Executive Women (CEW) and AGSM Executive Education and have partnered to offer two scholarships to women who work on a part-time basis to participate in the AGSM Women in Leadership Program. This objective of this new initiative is to encourage greater diversity in the participation of women in leadership roles. The scholarships will be sufficient to cover course fees of \$14,000, accommodation, most meals and travel to/from the program and additional course related costs.

It is expected that the value of the scholarship is sufficient for the successful applicant to not incur any additional expenses related to the undertaking of the program. This is an opportunity for women with significant managerial experience to build their leadership and change agent capabilities and achieve strong outcomes for themselves as well as their organisations. The Women in Leadership program runs over 4 modules with the first commencing May 3, 2012 in Sydney.

#### **About CEW**

CEW is a member-based organisation, comprising over 200 of Australia’s leading business women. CEW has a shared goal to facilitate greater representation of women at senior levels of Australian business, government and the not-for-profit sectors. CEW’s core values are: collegiality, altruism, authenticity, respect and, vision. Go to <http://www.ceb.org.au> for more information.

#### **About AGSM Executive Education**

AGSM Executive Education, part of the Australian School of Business, UNSW, is one of Asia Pacific’s leading providers of executive education, providing participants with access to the latest international research and cutting edge thinking on key business issues such as productivity. AGSM Executive Education offers a portfolio of services including Custom, Tailored, Open and Consortium Programs as well as Coaching and Executive Development Services.

Open enrolment program Women in Leadership has been designed to develop the capabilities of high-potential women to make a difference to their own careers and to the leadership landscape of Australia. For more information, go to: [www.agsm.edu.au/wil](http://www.agsm.edu.au/wil)