

**Paper for New Zealand Conference on Pay and Employment Equity for Women,
Wellington, June 28-29, 2004**

Name: Nicky Murray
Title: **Girls can do anything? Women and industry training in New Zealand**
Organisation: Lincoln University
Email: murran@lincoln.ac.nz
Phone: (03) 32527-778 (Home)

It is not just a matter of some women getting into the mainstream, but of shifting its very course; with the realisation that if it leaves out the half the human race it cannot be as main as all that.

(Katherine Whitehorn, British Journalist, *Observer*, 18 August 1991)

Introduction

Training and skill development are key elements in the attempt to secure pay and employment equity for women in New Zealand. Despite a greater equality of opportunity which the ‘knowledge society’ seems to promise, and the growing perception that girls are in some way advantaged in the contemporary education system, women remain substantially under-represented in industry training, a form of vocational education, in New Zealand. Part of the reason for this is simply a reflection of the smaller proportion of women who work in industry: the ‘engine room’ of our society remains male-dominated. But the nature of work which women tend to perform: part-time, casualised and in support roles, also means they are less likely to receive training.

This paper draws on my Master’s thesis, *A history of apprenticeship in New Zealand* (2001)¹ and my current PhD research on industry training. It is also informed by a recent EEO Discussion Paper, *Modern Apprenticeships: Training for the boys?* (2003) and a 2004 Industry Training Federation report, *Women in industry training 2000-2003* (McGregor & Gray, 2003; Curson, Green, & Hall, 2004). I first briefly survey the historical place of women

¹ In particular, Chapter Nine: ‘Women and apprenticeship’ (Murray, 2001).

in the apprenticeship system, examining the ‘positive action’ initiatives of the late 1970s and 1980s, by which the Department of Labour and other organisations attempted to increase the number of women apprentices and broaden the participation of women in non-traditional occupations. In 1992, the apprenticeship system was replaced with the employer-led industry training strategy. I discuss the impact that this had on women’s training. Finally, I examine the current situation, focusing on inequities apparent in industry training statistics and the gross gender imbalance of the Modern Apprenticeships initiative, which was introduced by the Labour/Alliance government in 1999.

Historical Background

Apprenticeship in New Zealand was the ‘traditional preserve of young Pakeha men’ and was not a common experience for women (Horsfield, 1988, p.165). For those women who did serve an apprenticeship, the system was often open to exploitation by employers (Street, 1993). Resistance was strong to apprenticing women and, more particularly, to acknowledging their skills through fair payment. In 1923, the ‘modernised’ apprenticeship legislation excluded women unless a case was made to the Arbitration Court for an order for a specific industry. The first female apprenticeships, those in ladies’ hairdressing, were recognised in 1926 (Martin, 1996). In 1927, women working in the chemistry trade were included in the apprenticeship order covering that trade (*Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), H-11, 1928). Also in 1927, the Bakers and Pastry-cooks award permitted women to be apprenticed to the trade, ostensibly under the same conditions as male apprentices. The modifications and conditions for women apprentices, however, were clearly designed to restrict them to less ‘skilled’ work than their male counterparts performed.

Although women were rarely directly excluded from an occupation, apprenticeship regulations were one means used to restrict their employment, along with the insistence by some unions on equal pay for women workers. In some awards, the number of women who could be employed in proportion to the number of men was restricted, and in others the type of work women were permitted to carry out was limited. In some cases, these restrictions were based upon protecting women from heavy work but usually the restrictions focused on the skill involved in the job: ‘awards restricted women to repetitive work on highly subdivided tasks, to “unskilled work”’ (Robertson, 1991, p.35). Thus, the arbitration system ‘systematized, structured and sustained the segmentation of the labour force’, allowing male

workers to protect their jobs, their skilled status and their pay rates from the threat of cheaper female labour (Robertson, 1991, p.33).

The proportion of women in paid employment steadily increased throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The nature of that work also changed as the number of women in domestic service decreased rapidly, while those employed in the industrial and commercial sectors increased (Nolan, 1993). Many women entered the paid workforce during the Second World War. This work, however, did little to break down barriers to women's involvement in skilled occupations or to increase the status of what was classed as 'women's work'. The recognition of the temporary nature of the work, and the clearly held expectations that the jobs would be 'returned' to men at the end of the war, limited the inroads that women were able (or chose) to make: 'the war redistributed women within female-dominated areas of employment; it did not break down the sex segregation of the workforce' (Montgomerie, 1989, p.74).

Post War Issues

The war years did accelerate the growing trend of women's involvement in paid work, making working women more conspicuous, and bringing issues of women's employment, especially equal pay, to the fore (Macdonald, 1993). Post-war apprenticeship legislation permitted an increase in the number of industries with women apprentices but the total numbers of women in formal apprenticeships remained miniscule and they were restricted to very few trades. In the decade after 1945, the overriding activity for many women was child-bearing and raising. The level of participation in the workforce of married women aged sixteen to twenty-nine years barely increased during this time, although the number of older married women returning to the workforce did increase steadily (Dunstall, 1996).

The 'Second Wave' Begins

Throughout the 1960s some women began to question the stereotypes that held them in the home and, by the early 1970s, conditions were ripe for the re-emergence of active feminism. Within this more ambitious framework for women's empowerment, it became clear that equal pay legislation alone was insufficient to address the disadvantages and discrimination that women faced in the work place. Thus, the emphasis shifted to broadening the participation of women in the labour force (Martin, 1996). The legislative impediment to greater numbers of women apprentices was removed with the *Apprentices Amendment Act* 1972. Despite this new legislation, there were few immediate changes in the numbers or types of female apprenticeships. The reality was that most employers remained resistant to the idea of taking

on a woman apprentice. The small number of women apprentices in the early to mid 1970s, and their concentration in women's hairdressing, is shown clearly in Table 1.

Table 1: Female apprenticeship contracts, contracts in force as at March 31, 1972-1975 (Department of Labour, 1975, p.40)

| TRADE | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Baking | 9 | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| Carpentry | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Clothing | 6 | 6 | 10 | 13 |
| Coach building | - | - | 1 | - |
| Dentistry: Mechanical | 2 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Electrical | - | - | - | 1 |
| Engineering | - | - | 2 | 3 |
| Hairdressing: Men's | 3 | 3 | 9 | 9 |
| Hairdressing: Women's | 1266 | 1263 | 1229 | 1187 |
| Horticulture | 7 | 10 | 13 | 24 |
| Jewelry | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Motor Trades | - | - | 5 | 8 |
| Painting | - | - | - | 2 |
| Photo-engraving | - | - | - | 1 |
| Plumbing | - | - | - | 1 |
| Printing | - | - | 5 | 10 |
| Radio | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Retail Meat Industry | - | - | - | 1 |
| TOTAL | 1294 | 1300 | 1293 | 1276 |

Positive Action²

In 1975, in response to continuing concerns about the disadvantages that women faced in the workforce, the Women's Advisory Committee of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) was established. This committee was instrumental in setting up 'positive action' programmes in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Department of Labour also began a number of local initiatives, notably the 'Positive Action' campaign that was launched in late 1982. This programme was designed to move women out of the small number of occupational groups to which they were largely confined (Martin, 1996). During 1983, a public education programme encouraged women to expand their vocational horizons. The programme was named 'Women

² I am indebted to my colleagues, Dr Alison Kuiper, of Lincoln University, and Alison Kagen, now working at the Human Rights Commission, for providing much of the background information for the following sections.

across the Workforce’, after the suggested title of ‘Girls into Trades’ was rejected as having too narrow a focus (and an unfortunate acronym!). In the early 1980s, the Christchurch branch of the Society for Research on Women (SROW) carried out a study of women in non-traditional jobs. This led to the production of the *Personal Viewpoint* pamphlets, which profiled a selection of those women.³ That these initiatives were needed was confirmed by the low numbers of women apprentices in the ten years up to 1982, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Females as a percentage of all apprentices in the private sector, 1972-1982 (Welch, 1984)

| | 1972 | 1977 | 1982 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of Female Apprentices | 4.8% (26693 Contracts in Force) | 5.2% (29838 Contracts in Force) | 7.8% (26124 Contracts in Force) |
| Percentage of Female Apprentices (excluding Women’s Hairdressing) | 0.1% (25427 Contracts in Force) | 0.4% (28460 Contracts in Force) | 1.7% (24531 Contracts in Force) |

The Apprenticeship Act 1983

Pressure for reform of the apprenticeship system⁴ throughout the 1970s and early 1980s resulted in the *Apprenticeship Act* 1983, which, although an essentially conservative measure, incorporated growing social awareness of the systemic disadvantage that women faced in the labour market. The Act charged local apprenticeship committees with promoting apprenticeship to under-represented groups (*New Zealand Statutes*, 1983, p.219). This was reinforced in 1984 by the introduction of the Female Apprentice Incentive for Recruitment (FAIR) scheme, where employers of female apprentices, other than those in the hairdressing trade, would receive a \$20 per week subsidy during the first year of training (Catherwood, 1985). The reason behind these initiatives was the ‘tiny’ percentage of women apprentices, reflecting the concentration of women into narrow occupational groupings.⁵

³ The initiative was supported by National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW), and a further series of the pamphlets were published by the Vocational Training Council (Alison Kuiper, personal communication, August 2000).

⁴ The main points of debate were the rigidity of the system, the low status of trades and the most efficient way of organising the formal component of apprentice training (Murray, 2001).

⁵ At the 1981 census, over half of all full-time employed women worked in seven occupational groups: clerical workers (15.4 per cent); sales assistants (7.75 per cent); typists (7.5 per cent); bookkeepers/cashiers (7 per cent); health workers (7 per cent); teachers (6.6 per cent) and clothing workers (4 per cent) (Horsfield, 1988, p.279).

Department of Labour 'Positive Action Programme', 1984-1990

At the end of 1984, the Labour Department established a Positive Action Programme for Women, with the catch-phrase: 'Girls Can Do Anything' ("Positive action programme appointments," 1985). In early 1985, four Senior Employment Officers (Positive Action for Women)⁶ were appointed in each of the main centres. The programme used the existing resources of the Labour Department to 'promote wider job horizons for girls and women and to identify and promote training and employment opportunities in non-traditional areas of work' (AJHR, 1985, G-1, p.23).

One of the roles of the Women's Employment Officers was to promote women into apprenticeship. There were some successes; for example, of the 82 supplementary apprentices taken on by New Zealand Railways in 1985, fifteen were women, and seven of these women were hired as a direct result of initiatives from the Women's Employment Officers. Three hundred and sixteen women began apprenticeships in non-traditional jobs in the year ended September 1985.⁷ For some of those women, however, the reality of the apprenticeship experience was at times harrowing. A carpentry apprentice at Addington railway workshops, for example, had to work in an area where the 30-foot high walls and doors were plastered with *Playboy* centrefolds. One of the officers recollected visiting a diesel mechanic apprentice who had resigned from her apprenticeship:

*Basically she left because they called her 'Cunt', they didn't use her name, it was like 'hand me the spanner, Cunt'. And they had absolutely no idea, I think genuinely, that that was really why she'd left, that it was inappropriate behavior. The union guy said they would take action on her behalf against their members if she wanted to, but she just wanted to get out...*⁸

Neo-liberal changes

By 1987, 'positive action' programmes began to fall victim to economic and political changes. Deregulation of the economy and pressure to reduce government spending from 1984 resulted in a re-evaluation of the role of government. Employment patterns were altered by economic restructuring and new technologies (AJHR, 1988, G-1). The Department of Labour changed the emphasis of its Positive Action programme in 1987, integrating the features and activities of the programme 'into normal and routine operations within

⁶ Alison Kagen, personal communication, November 2000: the job title changed to 'Women's Employment Co-ordinator' in June 1987 and to 'Women's Employment Advisor' in March 1988. The women's positions were disestablished in 1990.

⁷ NACEW Minutes, 1985-6. AAOC, W3473, 21/12, National Archives, Wellington.

⁸ Kagen, August 2000.

employment centres' (AJHR, 1987, G-1, p.50). Many feminists began to question the validity of putting so much energy into encouraging women into apprenticeships in the traditional trades.⁹ It was felt that the limited success rates during the mid 1980s (see Table 3), coupled with the downturn in many of those trades, suggested that effort was better placed in encouraging women into new occupational areas.¹⁰

Table 3: Females as a percentage of all apprentices in the private sector, 1984-1988
(Department of Labour, 1984-1988)

| Year Ended 31 March | 1984 | 1986 | 1988 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Percentage of Female Apprentices (Contracts in Force) | 9.2% | 10.25% | 10.78% |
| Percentage of Female Apprentices (excluding Women's Hairdressing) | 2.3% | 2.9% | 3.3% |
| Percentage of Female Apprentices in Women's Hairdressing | 77.3% | 73.8% | 71.7% |

The 1990s

The introduction by the National government of a voluntaristic, industry-led training regime in the early 1990s did little to improve the position of women in industry training. The risks posed to women's participation in industry training by a market-orientated model were signposted by Pocock (1992) in research that compared entry-level training for women over several countries. She found that industry-led training systems first tended to constrain access to training and, second, tended to reinforce poorer outcomes for those women in training: 'Placing overall control of entry level training in the hands of industry – without a firm legal framework and frequent monitoring – will widen...gaps and replicate and reinforce women's secondary status' (Pocock, 1992, p.ii).

⁹ Roberta Hill's study of technological change in the printing industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s, for example, showed how the male printers were able to 'capture' the skills required to operate new technology (Hill & Gidlow, 1988).

¹⁰ Kuiper, June 2000.

Although by 1993 the incidence of female apprenticeship contracts had risen to 18 per cent of total contracts, nearly 84 per cent of those contracts were still in women's hairdressing. Very few women were represented in the administration of apprenticeship and the FAIR recruitment scheme had met with only limited success, due to the low level of the subsidy and entrenched attitudes (National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, 1994). These statistics seemed grim indeed, twenty years after the introduction of equal pay, and in light of two and half decades of positive action. It must, however, be noted that the total numbers of young people beginning formal apprentices had also declined dramatically, from 9117 new contracts (1123 females) in the year ended March 1986, to 2468 (502 females) in the year ended June 1993 (Department of Labour, 1984-1993).

The Contemporary Situation

As the economy strengthened during the 1990s, the numbers taking part in structured industry training increased. Nevertheless, of the 42,799 industry trainees at March 1998, only 16 per cent were women (Skill New Zealand, 1998a). Several long-standing trends helped account for this. First, women were over-represented in both part-time and casual work, situations where training is less likely to be offered by employers. Second, many women were employed in the service sector, which had less developed systematic training arrangements. Third, two of the areas where women's employment was concentrated, the health and education sectors, did not have industry training organisation coverage (National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, 1994). As at December 2002, women represented 46 per cent of the labour force, but only 24 per cent of industry trainees were women (Tertiary Education Commission, 2003a).

An analysis of women in industry training between 2000 and 2003, carried out by the Industry Training Federation, identified even more worrying trends when this low level of participation was further disaggregated by industry. While the number of women in industry training increased by around 64 percent (from 12,962 in 2002, to 21,338 in 2003), a markedly greater increase than the total growth in numbers of industry trainees (43.1 per cent), 45.5 per cent of this growth was attributable to just two Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) – the Community Support Services ITO (2403) and the Hospitality ITO (1410). In general, 'service and care-related industries are major centres of female participation' (Curson et al., 2004, p.9). Table 4 highlights selected ITOs where, in 2003, women were either concentrated, or noticeably absent.

Table 4: Concentration of females by selected ITO, 2003 (highest and lowest) (Curson et al., 2004)

| Industry Training Organisation | Percentage of female trainees ¹¹ | Number of female trainees | Average wage/salary according to Kiwi Careers website: http://www.kiwicareers.govt.nz |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| Community Support | 94.6 | 3692 | Disability support worker: ¹² \$10 per hour (approx.) (Health Workforce Advisory Committee, 2001) |
| Hairdressing | 92.8 | 1372 | \$8 to 20 per hour (\$16,640 to 41,600 per annum) |
| Boating | 0.6 | 3 | \$15 to 25 per hour (\$31,200 to 52,000 per annum) |
| Building | 0.4 | 18 | \$25 to 30 per hour (\$52,000 to 62,400 per annum) |
| Joinery | 0.1 | 21 | (\$12 to 20 per hour) \$25,000 to 40,000 per annum |
| Plumbing | 0.3 | 3 | (\$17 to 22 per hour) \$35,000 to 45,000 per annum |
| Total ITO trainees | 23.7 | 21338 | |

The significance of the concentrations shown in Table 4 becomes apparent when the possible remuneration for various occupations is added. These wage and salary levels shown in the table were garnered from the Kiwi Careers website. This source was chosen for three reasons. First, it is easily accessible; second, the wage bands cover both broad occupational definitions and regional differences; and finally (and crucially) it is a site used by many young people when career choices are made. These figures are indicative approximations only, but the significant wage differentials between the two ITOs where women are most heavily concentrated, and the four ITOs where they are least concentrated, offer some telling insights, especially when it is considered that all the ITOs listed offer Level 4 qualifications.

¹¹ The Pharmacy ITO has the highest percentage of female trainees (95.8 per cent), but as this translates to only 69 trainees, I have chosen not to include it in this table.

¹² The 2001 New Zealand Health Workforce report highlighted recruitment and retention issues for this group of workers, for whom training is provided by Community Support Services ITO. The predominantly female workforce was employed by a plethora of service providers. There was a high turnover of workers (20 per cent plus); the contractual nature of much of the work led to hidden costs for workers and the increasing casualisation of the workforce; and there was low industry morale (Health Workforce Advisory Committee, 2001)

Given, then, that women's overall participation in industry training is low, and that those women who do participate tend to be concentrated in the lower-paid service and care sectors, it is necessary to ask why this is so. Curson et al (2004), while recognising the need for greater research, suggested two possible reasons, which resonated with, and extended, the earlier NACEW findings. First, women have 'embraced provider-based education at a faster rate than men', with women accounting for 58 per cent of all enrolments at tertiary education providers in 2002 (Curson et al., 2004, p.17). The hairdressing industry provides a good example of the growing trend towards privileging tertiary study, as opposed to workplace-based training:

Faced with choosing between an apprenticeship or attending a tertiary course in hairdressing, many people opt for the latter. Tertiary education has a cachet among teachers and parents that apprenticeships can't match. But tertiary – in this case at least – isn't always better. It's all too easy for a student to find themselves at the end of such a course saddled with debt, without a job to go to, and competing with legions of other graduates (Skill New Zealand, 1998b).

Changes to the government's funding formula in 2000, which gave Private Training Establishments (PTEs) the same EFTS subsidies as Tertiary Education Institutions (TIEs), greatly benefited private training providers, encouraging the expansion of training places (Education Directions Ltd, 2001). Thus, in 2001, there were approximately the same numbers of full-time hairdressing students as there were apprentices.

Second, Curson et al (2004) suggested that 'there may be a lack of suitable training options for the positions that women tend to occupy within an industry' (Curson et al., 2004, p.20). This vertical gender segregation was in evidence, for example, in an analysis carried out in 2002 by the Electricity Supply ITO, which showed that the majority of women involved in the industry worked in clerical, management or professional roles – areas where industry training was either not appropriate, or was not regarded as a priority by employers (Curson et al., 2004).

A third possible reason for low levels of participation and segregated nature of that participation was in evidence in my PhD research. Two of the case study industries I studied are considered 'traditional' apprenticeship industries: engineering and the electrical industry. During my interviews with stakeholders in industry training in each of these industries, similar themes regarding gender balance were evident. According to most respondents, there were no actual barriers to women participating and their participation was encouraged. Those views, however, were almost always immediately qualified with doubts about women's

physical ability, concern about the reaction of their (largely) male colleagues, and a general feeling that the trade would not be of interest to women. The following quotation was typical:

I took the first girl apprentice on, because X rings me, and says 'I've got a girl, no one will take her on'. I said, 'OK, she's mine, not a problem, I'll do that'. It was too hard for her, physically too hard for her...they pull cables, you know, they've got drums of cable, and the cable's that thick, and it's 300 metres, and they're pulling it down the street. It's physically demanding work. And she tried, you know, and she would say 'I feel really bad because the boys have to help'. But she did, she tried, she was really good.

I've been here 15 years... and [she] is the second female apprentice I've seen. They don't like the work, as far as I can tell. If they do, they sort of tend to go the electronic way. Tidier and cleaner, those sorts of things, my guys are in muddy trenches, you know, the distribution side of it is really messy and dirty and horrible...They just don't seem to come through. When we've advertised, we never get any females... just the word 'electrical industry'...and it can sometimes not be a friendly environment. I mean you'd be what? One girl among 21 guys, it's a hard place...it's pretty 'in at the deep end' sort of stuff (Interview with (female) contracts manager, electrical company).

And another example:

...I have no problem with females going through, but the problem that we have with these groups is the younger ones, they're at that age, you know, and to have a female in the group, ohh...and they'll either take it on board, or they'll go against it, or they'll...you know...I mean we had one guy coming through, 'what are you doing here, you should be in the kitchen', you know, those sort of remarks...he got short shrift and left. One of the biggest thing with most females is they've got no wrist strength, OK, and you need wrist strength, because when you're tightening a chuck up, you don't want what you've got in that chuck moving, so you need that strength. Now you can get round that, 'cos it's only torque, so all you do is you put a longer bar on, but you don't want to over-tighten, so you have to be very careful with those sorts of things. But if they're taught the right way, and they do the things the right way, they shouldn't have too much problem...(Interview with polytechnic tutor, engineering industry).

Yet, as Cockburn (1999), writing about women in engineering, argued:

Men's greater average physical stature and strength are often cited as a reason for men's preponderance in engineering occupations. Yet it is not self-evident that they should be all male. Many machines, from the lever to the mill, have been developed precisely to *substitute* for human physical strength (Cockburn, 1999, p.127).

Thus, women tend to favour education routes other than industry training; their training options may be circumscribed because of the positions they occupy within an industry; and there may be explicit or implicit discrimination against them accessing an industry, or training within that industry. A fourth reason may also be suggested for the low levels of women's

participation in industry training: they are simply not interested. McGregor & Gray (2004) argued that parents, who are the main source of information and careers advice for many secondary students (Boyd, Chalmers, & Kumekawa, 2001): ‘have traditionally seen apprenticeships as a pathway for non-academic young men’ (McGregor & Gray, 2003, p.1). Modern Apprenticeships, for example ‘barely register[ed] as a choice and certainly not [as] a priority’ in a ‘Destinations and Tracking’ survey carried out in 2003 by Careers Services (Career Services, 2003).

The ‘girls don’t apply’ catch-cry can also be seen as symptomatic of a deeper concern regarding the low status of the trades. If apprenticeship or industry training is not well regarded by either young people or their parents, it is not surprising, given the other barriers, that few young women are interested. A virtuous circle would see the economic importance of the skilled trades recognised, which would raise their mana (and recompense), which in turn would make them more attractive to high-calibre applicants, including more women, thereby easing skill shortages and increasing productivity.

Modern Apprenticeships

An analysis of Modern Apprenticeships,¹³ introduced by the Labour/Alliance government in 1999, reinforces the picture of disadvantage that women face in accessing industry training. As at March 2003, only 6.2 percent (315) of the 5102 Modern Apprentices were women. A factor in this gender disparity is that trainees remain concentrated in what could be considered ‘traditional’ apprenticeship industries (see Table 5). Since the inception of Modern Apprenticeships, eight of the larger industries (all with a history of apprenticeship training) have accounted for a steady two-thirds of trainees. As at 31 March 2003, those eight industries employed 67 per cent (3427) of all apprentices, but only 38 per cent (120) of all women Modern Apprentices. Conversely, nearly 30 per cent (86) of women apprentices were concentrated in just four industries: hospitality, public sector, retail and tourism, which employed a tiny 3.4 per cent (174) of all Modern Apprentices (Tertiary Education Commission, 2003b). Although the scheme is still in its infancy, if the trend for women

¹³ Modern Apprenticeships are administered by the Tertiary Education Commission (formerly by Skill New Zealand) and: provide systematic, high quality workplace learning; are aimed primarily at sixteen to twenty-one year olds; are based on a training agreement, signed off by employer and apprentice; lead to national qualifications at Levels 3 and 4 on the NQF; cover generic and specific skills; extend apprenticeship to non-traditional industries; and complement existing education/training options. The essence of the programme is the appointment of Modern Apprenticeships Co-ordinators, who recruit and place apprentices, support and facilitate their training and mentor them (Skill New Zealand, 2001).

apprentices to be concentrated in such service industries continues, there will be a need for careful monitoring. In both the United Kingdom and Australia, there has been a marked disparity in apprenticeship completion rates between the service and industrial sectors (Cleary, 2002; Ryan & Unwin, 2001; Steedman, 2001).

Table 5: Modern Apprentices as at 31 March 2003 (Tertiary Education Commission, 2003b)

| Industry | Total Modern Apprentices | No. of women | Women as a % of the total |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Building and Construction | 818 | 7 | 0.8% |
| Engineering | 784 | 11 | 1.4% |
| Motor | 764 | 20 | 2.6% |
| Electrotechnology | 411 | 10 | 2.4% |
| Boating | 229 | 2 | 0.9% |
| Electricity Supply | 167 | 13 | 7.8% |
| Bakery | 143 | 40 | 28.0% |
| Printing | 111 | 17 | 15.3% |
| | 3427 | 120 | 3.5% |
| | (67%) | (38%) | |
| | | | |
| Forestry | 422 | 12 | 2.8% |
| Agriculture | 345 | 48 | 13.9% |
| Horticulture | 272 | 41 | 15.1% |
| | 1039 | 101 | 9.7% |
| | (20.7%) | (32.1%) | |
| Other industries with 5 or more women Modern Apprentices | | | |
| Hospitality | 94 | 31 | 33.0% |
| Public Sector | 55 | 42 | 76.4% |
| Retail | 14 | 6 | 42.8% |
| Tourism | 11 | 7 | 63.6% |
| | 174 | 86 | 49.4% |
| | (3.4%) | (27.3%) | |
| | | | |
| All other industries | 462 | 8 | 1.7% |
| | | | |
| Total | 5102 | 315 | 6.2% |

In light of the fact that the gender imbalance of Modern Apprenticeships scheme had become a 'subject of international employment rights scrutiny', McGregor & Gray (2003) were asked to prepare a report for the Human Rights Commission. Their findings reinforced the dangers

of relying on broadening the range of industries in the scheme alone as a means to ensure greater equity (McGregor & Gray, 2003). As has been seen with industry training, women have remained concentrated in lower paid service sector industries, or within ‘support’ capacities in male-dominated industries. There is little to suggest that increasing the number of women Modern Apprentices in industries such as tourism, retail or hospitality, or extending the scheme to ‘female-friendly’ industries, would result in significant improvements in terms of women’s pay levels.

So why does this matter? First, at a practical level, women’s peripheral participation in Modern Apprenticeships (and industry training) means that they are denied equitable access to government resources. Modern Apprenticeships, in particular, is a very well-funded initiative, from which women are clearly excluded. Second, the Modern Apprenticeship figures illustrate a lack of commitment to equity in the design of the initiative. As Connole (1997) argued, governments must cease designing ‘training arrangements for young men and then making unsatisfactory running repairs to the system to accommodate women and other equity groups’ (Connole, 1997, p.1). McGregor & Gray (2003) reported that the Tertiary Education Commission’s rather ‘hands-off’ approach to improving the gender balance of the scheme, which relied on advertising and broadening the range of industries offered as discussed above, was short-sighted: ‘the greatest opportunity for making a difference with regard to these under-represented groups is to put in place initiatives early so that the structural inequalities of the past apprenticeship system are not replicated’ (McGregor & Gray, 2003, p.13). Finally, given dire skill shortages in many industries,¹⁴ and changing demographics that suggest many of these shortages are structural, rather than cyclic,¹⁵ recruiting from, and limiting training to, only half of the population is no longer sustainable. Indeed, a British investigation into gender segregation found ‘a significant correlation between sector-specific skills shortages and the under-representation of women in these sectors’ (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2004).

¹⁴ The Department of Labour’s February 2004 report, *Skill in the labour market*, found that difficulties in staff recruitment were ‘more of a problem in recent quarters than at almost any point in the last 25 years’ (Department of Labour, 2004, p.1). Fifty per cent of firms surveyed reported difficulty in finding skilled staff; 27 per cent in finding unskilled staff (higher levels than at anytime since the 1970s); and 20 per cent listed labour as the main constraint on expansion (a figure unprecedented in post-1984 New Zealand). Some of the most severe shortages were reported in areas where the industry training system is the main supplier of skilled workers, that is, building and construction; vehicle and engineer service and repair; and engineering, for example (Department of Labour, 2004).

¹⁵ OECD (2002) figures suggest that over the next 25 years, there will be around 70 million people retiring from the workforce in OECD countries, to be replaced by only five million people. Comparatively, over the last 25 years, 45 million retired from the OECD workforce, and were replaced by 120 million people (Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Social Development, Department of Labour & Statistics New Zealand, 2003, p.8).

Both of the reports discussed above set out sensible and practical recommendations to ameliorate the inequities in industry training and Modern Apprenticeships. For example, Curson et al (2004) called for broadening the number and range of training positions within industries, extending industry training organisation coverage and increasing the number of funded Modern Apprenticeships places. McGregor & Gray (2003) suggested supporting Modern Apprenticeships co-ordinators in the recruitment of more diverse apprentice intakes, recommended the use of targeted financial incentives and suggested encouraging public sector organisations to increase their numbers of women apprentices (and other under-represented groups). Both reports called for better marketing and promotion of industry training as a whole, of those women who have succeeded in male-dominated sectors, and of the benefits for both industries and women of increased participation. While wholeheartedly endorsing these recommendations, it is hard to ignore the echoes of similar sentiments that underpinned the 'positive action' initiatives of twenty to thirty years ago. Whether the current calls to action will have a greater impact on the complex and deeply-ingrained attitudes of employers, young people and their families, and women, which impede greater participation by women in industry training, remains to be seen.

References

Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives.

- Boyd, S., Chalmers, A. & Kumekawa, E. (2001). *Beyond school: Final year school students' experiences of the transition to tertiary study or employment.* Wellington: NZCER.
- Career Services. (2003). *Destinations and tracking pilot: Full survey report.* Wellington: Careers Services.
- Catherwood, V. (1985). *Young people, education and employment* (Planning Paper No. 23): New Zealand Planning Council.
- Cleary, P. (2002, 19 August). *Business failing the skills test* [Website]. Financial Review. Retrieved 27 August, 2002, from the World Wide Web: <http://afr.com/australia/2002/08/19/FFXIARS905D>
- Cockburn, C. (1999). Caught in the wheels: the high cost of being a female cog in the male machinery of engineering. In D. MacKenzie & J. Wajcman (Eds.), *The social shaping of technology* (2nd ed.). Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Connole, H. (1997). *Making training work for women: A qualitative study of women's experience in VET* [Website]. TAFE NSW. Retrieved 10 May, 2004, from the World Wide Web: www.tafensw.edu.au/publications/gendequi/womcont.htm
- Curson, R., Green, N. & Hall, D. (2004). *Women in industry training, 2000-2003.* Wellington: Industry Training Federation.
- Department of Labour. (1975). *Women in the workforce series, facts and figures, Supplement No. 2.* Wellington: Research and Planning Division.
- Department of Labour. (1984-1993). *Annual return of apprentices.* Wellington: Department of Labour.
- Department of Labour. (2004). *Skills in the labour market - February 2004.* Wellington: Department of Labour.
- Dunstall, G. (1996). The social pattern. In G. W. Rice (Ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd ed., pp.451-481). Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Education Directions Ltd. (2001). *A statistical profile of the PTE sector.* Wellington: TEAC.
- Equal Opportunities Commission. (2004). *Plugging Britain's skills gap: Challenging gender segregation in training and work.* UK: Equal Opportunities Commission.
- Health Workforce Advisory Committee. (2001). *The New Zealand Health Workforce: A stocktake of capacity and issues 2001.* Wellington: Health Workforce Advisory Committee.

- Hill, R. & Gidlow, B. (1988). *From hot metal to cold type: Negotiating technological change in the New Zealand newspaper industry* (DSIR Social Science Series 3). Wellington: DSIR Publishing.
- Horsfield, A. (1988). *Women in the economy*. Wellington: Ministry of Women's Affairs.
- Macdonald, C. (1993). *The vote, the pill and the demon drink*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd.
- Martin, J. E. (1996). *Holding the balance*. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press.
- McGregor, J. & Gray, L. (2003). *Modern Apprenticeships: Training for the boys?* (An Equal Employment Opportunities Discussion Paper). Auckland: Human Rights Commission.
- Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Social Development, Department of Labour & Statistics New Zealand. (2003). *Population and sustainable development 2003*. Wellington: Ministry of Economic Development.
- Montgomerie, D. (1989). The limitations of wartime change. *New Zealand Journal of History*, 23(1), pp.68-86.
- Murray, N. (2001). *A history of apprenticeship in New Zealand*. Unpublished Master of Social Science Thesis, Lincoln University, Lincoln.
- National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women. (1994). *Women's access to industry training*. Wellington: NACEW.
- New Zealand Statutes*.
- Nolan, M. (1993). Politics swept under a domestic carpet? *New Zealand Journal of History*, 27(2), pp.199-217.
- Pocock, B. (1992). *Women in entry-level training*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Positive action programme appointments. (1985, June). *Labour and Employment Gazette*, 35, p.30.
- Robertson, S. (1991). Women workers and the New Zealand Arbitration Court, 1894-1920. *Labour History*, 61.
- Ryan, P. & Unwin, L. (2001). Apprenticeship in the British 'Training Market'. *National Institute Economic Review*, 178, pp.99-114.
- Skill New Zealand. (1998a, September). Equity afloat. *Skills*.
- Skill New Zealand. (1998b, September). Having a great hair day. *Skills*.
- Skill New Zealand. (2001). *Modern Apprenticeships News*. Wellington: Skill New Zealand.
- Steedman, H. (2001). Five years of the Modern Apprenticeship initiative: An assessment against continental European models. *National Institute Economic Review*, 178, pp.75-87.

Street, M. (1993). *Scarlet runners: Women and industrial action 1889-1913*. Wellington: Working Life Communications.

Tertiary Education Commission. (2003a). *Industry Training 2002*. Wellington: Tertiary Education Committee.

Tertiary Education Commission. (2003b). *Modern Apprentices as at 31 March 2003*. Wellington: TEC.

Welch, L. (1984). *A survey of trends in women's training 1972-1982*. Paper presented at the Women's Studies Association (New Zealand), Blenheim.