

# Franklin Women

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## September 2016 Newsletter

It is hard for me to believe that 2 years have passed since our first ever FW event. I remember the day we launched the event on our website all too well. It was scary. It felt like I was sending out an invite to my birthday party not knowing if anyone was going to show up. As it turned out, lots of people showed up and that event started what Franklin Women is today – a respected professional network for women in diverse health and medical research careers. So, we have hijacked this newsletter to showcase the last 2 years of Franklin Women. This includes our 'stats', but after going through the results of our recent survey we realised that FW is more than the numbers. It is the words that you, members of the health and medical research sector, have used to describe FW that really hit home to us that we are making a difference. While it is important to measure and report 'the numbers', it is often the things that are harder to measure that can give you true insight into your impact (and also give you the warm fuzzies!).

You will also find in this newsletter some insight into how we are planning to improve and grow in response to your feedback (like introducing a pilot mentoring program – hoorah!).

Happy reading!

Melina and the FW Team

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## What happened this month

- Research Australia [annual public opinion poll](#) to gauge the strength of community support for health and medical research.
  - Australian Academy of Science announces a [new Chief Executive](#), Anna-Maria Arabia.
  - The [Innovation and Science Australia Bill](#) was introduced to parliament, laying the foundation for establishing this new organisation.
  - Applications are now open for [Veski Innovation Fellowships](#), for researchers and scientists to undertake their research in Victoria.
  - Our latest [blog post](#) is up, where Lia Paola Zambetti talks about her career journey from immunologist to international science communicator.
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# Strategic thinking – where we're up to

*You may remember that about 6 months ago FW had a strategic planning day to take some time out from 'day-to-day' activities and do some bigger picture thinking (you can read about the outcomes from the day in [Melina's blog](#)). Since then we've been madly working through the actions and we'd like to share with you how we're going.*



"A goal  
without  
a plan  
is just  
a wish"

## **Action 1 – Review and measure FW activities over the last 2 years**

Before we could plan ahead we needed to take stock of what we have achieved thus far. So, our first action was to measure all of our activities over the last 2 years (you can see the summary in 'Franklin Women by numbers' below). This was an important step because not only did it allow us to give ourselves a big pat on the back (as we have done a lot for a small team of dedicated volunteers), it also informed our second action which was to get feedback from you, our members.

## **Action 2 – Ask our members what we are doing well and what we can improve**

We needed to ask our FW members, and the wider health and medical research community, how we are doing and whether we are meeting their needs. So we did what any good researchers would do – design a survey! We had close to 200 respondents who provided feedback on each of our events and activities and on FW more generally. This survey turned out to be a wonderful tool for reflecting on which of our events and initiatives were adding value, and what other initiatives are needed in the sector that FW is in a good place to take on. The survey also allowed us to measure more than just numbers. It provided the qualitative data that gave us an insight into the 'heart' of our organisation – this is what made all of the hard work behind the scenes worth it. You can read more about the survey findings later in this newsletter.

## **Action 3 – Take a step back and revisit the aims of FW**

A lot has changed in the last 2 years – FW as an organisation has evolved and so has the sector itself, especially when it comes to addressing gender equality. Because of this we felt one of the most important goals for our planning day was to review the [vision, mission](#), aims and values of FW. It is important that these are well defined so that we have a reference to steer our future activities, and so that our members and friends are clear on what we are all about.

We felt that over the last few years FW has really found its niche. Therefore it was time to update our mission and vision, and we're really excited to share them with you.

The renewed **Vision** of Franklin Women:

*A health and medical research sector where women thrive*

And our more action orientated **Mission**:

*To empower women to pursue rewarding careers across the health and medical research sector*

We do this by:

- *building a community of like-minded women, offering support and opportunities;*
- *providing training opportunities in important skills outside of the technical sciences;*
- *introducing and advocating for initiatives that address barriers faced by women in health and medical research careers; and*
- *showcasing talented women in the field, their diverse career pathways and the impact of their work.*

Finally, our **Values**, which guide everything we do:

*Innovative, influential, inclusive and inspiring*

**TO DO:**

1. WAKE UP
2. MAKE COFFEE
3. DRINK COFFEE
4. MAKE MORE COFFEE

#### **Actions 4 to 30: OMG, where to start!**

By the end of our Strategic Planning Day our action list was 30 items long! Most of them were planning for what is in store next for FW, but we realised to achieve it all we need some help. Thankfully, many of you who completed our survey answered our call out for partners to assist us in delivering our initiatives and, thanks to your help, we are really looking forward to the year ahead for Franklin Women!

***Want to know more about the brains and faces behind the FW NSW Peer Advisory Committee? Check out the brief bios of Dr Magda Ellis, Dr Melina Georgousakis, Dr Anita Heywood, Dr Holly Seale, Dr Devanshi Seth and Ms Amy Vassallo on the [FW website](#) (and we really must snap a photo at the next event!)***

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# Franklin Women by numbers

*To celebrate the 2nd anniversary of Franklin Women, here's a quick and fun summary of all the wonderful things that have been achieved in this short time...*



## The FW members and friends survey

***A big thank you to those who completed our Members and Friends survey earlier this year, letting us know your thoughts about Franklin Women, what we're doing well and where we can improve. Since all research is only as good as the communication of its findings, we wanted to give you all an update on the results, and how we're responding to your feedback.***

Nearly 200 participants provided feedback through the survey, and were overwhelmingly supportive of the establishment of Franklin Women!

To quote one of our respondents:

*"Franklin Women is run by women who know the real needs of medical researchers/students as they have walked the same path...it is a very well-organised community with an interactive website and brilliant events that are likely to have an impact on one's career through networking and insightful discussions of relevant topics."*



Other strengths of FW that respondents emphasised were the diversity of its membership, that it crosses disciplines and career paths, and that it provides opportunities to make meaningful connections with women from different organisations and career levels. Also the welcoming and warm environment, as well as never forgetting to focus on the fun, whilst still being professional!

Feedback also included that you love our events (and the newsletter, thank you!), though we acknowledge that we have not yet been able to extend our events to locations outside of Sydney.

The survey also provided the opportunity for feedback on what other initiatives would be the most valuable for FW to provide, and the overwhelming feedback was a ***mentoring program***. So we are very pleased to announce that we will soon be launching a pilot structured Franklin Women Mentoring Program in 2017. There will be more to come about the Program but if you are interested in more information do *get in touch*.

## We are loving right now...

***Connecting and communicating! One of the things we discovered from our survey is that not everyone was aware of the many ways to engage with FW, so below you can find quick links to some of our favourites.***

- [Facebook](#) – for curated news from the health and medical research community.
  - [Twitter](#) – a great option to follow our events if you're based outside of Sydney.
  - [Instagram](#) – for pretty pictures and Monday Mantras.
  - [Blog](#) – for inspiring stories, especially on the diverse careers out there for women in health and medical research.
  - [Newsletter](#) – well obviously ☺, and here's the trademark [cute animal post!](#)
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We want to include your contributions in our newsletter. If you have published your work recently or are doing (or know of) something that other women in our field would be interested in, drop us a [line](#). Want to receive our newsletters directly to your in-box? [Subscribe here](#).