

Cartoon: Matthew Lysaght

Time to stop all the stereotypes

EDITORIAL

By **ROSIE DAVIDSON-TAIG, TY LEWIS and TODD VANDYKE**

PROGRESS in gender equality throughout the 20th century has been substantial. Throughout this time Australia has been a leader, such as in being one of the first countries to give women the vote and the right to stand for parliament. However, we should not be complacent in the light of past achievements and should be looking to the equal representation of women in roles of the 21st century.

We must remain mindful that developments in science and technology are expected to make obsolete 60 per cent of today's jobs by 2025. If stereotypes and discrimination that have steered women away from science and technology continue the consequences will be dire.

With the achievements of famous scientists such as Elizabeth Blackburn, Marie Curie and Linda Richards, you would think that women would be more highly regarded in science and technology; but you'd be wrong – sadly there are still discriminatory attitudes.

Two recent controversies have

highlighted this problem. The remarks of Tim Hunt, a Nobel Prize winner in the field of Medicine that "Three things happen when they [women] are in the lab: you fall in love with them, they fall in love with you, and when you criticise them they cry," were demeaning and unacceptable.

Then there have been revelations that female surgeons in Australia have faced harassment from their male counterparts. Such incidents send the wrong message to young women contemplating careers in these fields and contribute to the historical under-representation of women in science.

One thing is clear, the absence of women in science has not resulted from a lack of ability. As observed by Mikaela Bell who will be attending the 2016 National Youth Science Forum: "I think that we've always had the capability in science to be as good as the boys, I just think that the interest, or the drive to be a part of it, wasn't there before."

In the Australian team for this year's International Science Olympiad nearly half of the representatives are women. This will be the highest proportion of women ever in the competition.

Old stereotypes are clearly wrong and we should be looking towards a bright future.

Students leap ahead now in many courses

By **MADISON GRAHAM, KIRA MORRIS and CODY MORAN**

TORONTO High School students are taking advanced study options as they embrace the opportunity to accelerate in their education through the school's LEAP program.

The Learning Enrichment Acceleration Pathways, or LEAP program, is a gifted and talented program developed to meet the needs of students beyond the regular curriculum.

The program runs from year 7 to year 9, enabling students to participate in a full but accelerated curriculum.

At the end of year 9 students then have a number of educational pathways available to them, ranging between following the normal progression to year 10, accelerating in a single year 11 subject or accelerating in all subjects to a full year 11 course load.

This is the first year in which students are moving from the LEAP program on to a range of senior courses.

While students are challenged by the demands of completing accelerated courses the opportunity is proving to bring out their best.

Head of Teaching and Learning and LEAP, Melynda Smith-Kain, said: "Students who are accelerating in a subject are performing at the top of their classes."

Hannah Lavis, a year 10 student



Jacob, Jeffrey and Julia are leaping ahead.

Picture: Cody Moran

student who this year is completing a fully accelerated year 11

studying a year 11 Business Studies course, said that while working at an advanced level has presented difficulties at times, the recipe for overcoming these is simple: "Hard work, dedication and motivation."

The hard work is paying dividends for the students and Mikaela Bell, a

course, and will shortly commence her Higher School Certificate.

"It has opened up a lot of doors and opportunities," she said.

The students who are involved in accelerated programs encourage others to follow their lead and set themselves high academic targets.

Rising cricket star is taking on the state

By **JOEL MATHER, BILLY ARTHUR and FLYNN FARDELL**

TALENTED cricketer Jess Hjort has been accepted into the NSW Academy.

Jess has won selection into the Newcastle-Central Coast Under-15 Girls' team and will be competing with the best players from across NSW in a state-wide tournament to be held in October this year.

Jess's cricket success stems from club level competition that she has been involved in for the past five years.

Her cricketing career started when she was 8-years-old playing for Warners Bay Cricket Club before moving to Newcastle City Cricket Club where she currently plays.

Jess had to overcome some early self-doubt as she "wanted to quit because I didn't think I was good enough". However, she grew to "love the challenge of competing against good players" and soon began to build



Jess has her eye on the cricket state championships.

Picture: Joel Mather

Jess's idol is Elyse Perry, the renowned cricketer and soccer player. "I dream

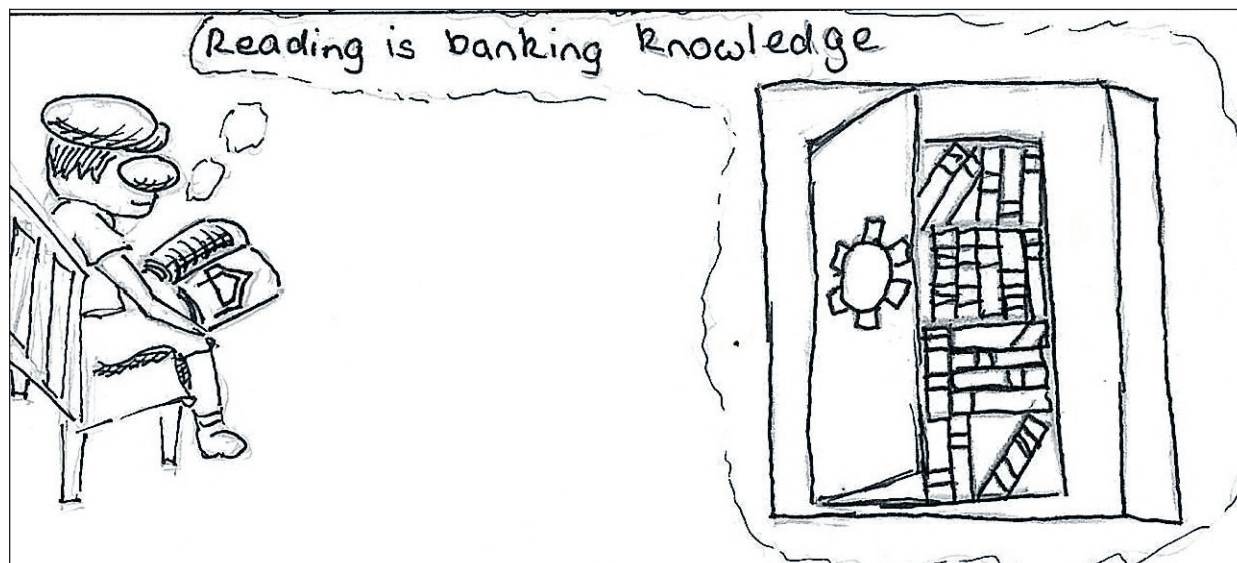
some impressive statistics. "My best performance was when I took five wickets, bowling against the best team in the competition."

to also play at a national level and inspire other young girl cricketers to rise above the stereotypes and pursue their dreams."

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