

## Unions play critical role in disclosing reality: Crabb

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The counting, monitoring and recording that unions do to make sure experiences don't go untold is really important, particularly for women, ABC journalist Annabel Crabb said recently.

"It's not enough for every individual to know it and occasionally whine about it at the school gate. Unless you measure it, it doesn't become real, and that's the importance of counting stuff," Ms Crabb, guest speaker at Federation's Women's Conference, also said.

The event's theme was 'Women + Power = Progress'. Ms Crabb said women had played an extraordinary role as drivers of political change over the past couple of years.

"At the 2022 election, the House of Representatives went from having 48 female MPs to having 58 — an increase from about 31 per cent to 38 per cent on one day — a huge jump, the highest number ever of female representatives ever. And that happened because the issues on which those women ran — climate, integrity and women's rights — were named and counted and campaigned upon, and people listened," Ms Crabb said.



"I think this was an election in which democracy kind of struck back because people looked, particularly in those seats, at the alternative of more of the same or a capable woman who seemed independent...

"So, naming, counting, keeping track, caring enough to take note. I know it's a huge part of what the union movement does. It's a huge part of why we are all gathered here today, and I think in a world that is highly dispiriting at times, we can take comfort from the fact that our democracy is still kicking."

Conference delegates were also addressed by General Secretary Maxine Sharkey and Senior Vice President Amber Flohm.

They learned more about the More Than Thanks or Rebuild with TAFE campaigns at morning workshops.

Participants were given the opportunity to attend optional activities — a session about superannuation or a focus group regarding the Centre for Professional Learning — during the lunch break.

Members chose which afternoon workshop they wanted to attend, selecting from:

- Incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into teaching and Performance and Development Plans
- LGBTIQ+ perspectives

- From complaining to campaigning
- Engaging rural and remote women in our union
- Taking control of your Performance and Development Plan
- Experienced women as new activists
- Multicultural education
- Health and safety
- Inclusive education: Advocating for yourself and your students with complex needs.

In the panel session, four women teachers from diverse backgrounds and experiences shared their personal stories, to highlight the impact of discrimination and privilege, and to demonstrate the need for structural change to improve inclusiveness.