



Gina Rushton

Journalist
Sydney

Tony Abbott's former chief of staff Peta Credlin last night advised young women to stay as confident and resilient throughout their careers as they are at the beginning.

"I think we leave university and leave school with a lot of confidence and we think the world has changed for us ... and I certainly felt like that," Ms Credlin said at the Women of the Future Awards in Sydney.

It was important for women to show strength and resilience in their work and not to disappear, she said, as part of a panel discussion at the event.

"People say to me 'you know you're really lucky to have the best job in the country and I'm like there's no luck involved — I worked my guts out'," she said.

"You will want to have women like me in politics, you will want to have women like me sitting in positions of power.

"If I was a guy I wouldn't be bossy, I'd be strong."

Ms Credlin joined some of the nation's most powerful women for The Australian Women's Weekly event. Despite the past week's turbulent events, during which the political staffer has been blamed and defended, Ms Credlin honoured her commitment to speak at the event celebrating strong women, and sat on a panel offering advice to young women.

The annual awards were held at the NSW Art Gallery and offered a prize pool of \$100,000 for eight women making a difference in their communities who "contribute to this country's bright future".

The magazine has named Ms Credlin as the nation's "most powerful woman" in its edition out tomorrow, ousting Foreign Minister Julie Bishop from the top spot.

But the decision to place Ms Credlin at the top of the list was made before last week's spill. Among those who frocked up to be inspired by the words of Ms Credlin, and other leading females, were Australian Indigenous Education Foundation scholarship alumni Sarah Treacy and Kygim King. "I would love to be a leader to my community in indigenous education," said Ms Treacy, 21.

In her third year of a primary teaching degree at Macquarie University, she hopes to lift education standards in remote communities. "My dream is to get my masters under my belt, work in remote NSW and then move back to the remote Kimberly region to teach in community."