



Australian Government

Office for Women

Women on Australian Government Boards Report 2009-2010

A statistical gender analysis of the composition of

Australian Government boards and bodies

1 July 2009 – 30 June 2010

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FOREWORD by the Minister for the Status of Women

I am very pleased, as the Minister for the Status of Women, to release the 2009-2010 Women on Australian Government Boards Report.

The 2008-2009 report was the first release of its kind, and this year's report builds on the Australian Government's undertaking to increase transparency of reporting of women on Government boards and decision-making bodies.

These reports will now play an even more important role. The Australian Government committed during the last election to a target of 40 per cent representation for both women and men on Australian Government boards by 2015.

As at 30 June 2010, five portfolios met or exceeded the target. This is an increase from three portfolios as at 30 June 2009, with seven more within ten per cent of achieving 40 per cent. At the aggregate level women's representation on Government boards has increased from 33.4 per cent to 34.5 per cent.

Across 2009-10, twelve of nineteen portfolios have improved the number of women they appointed to Australian Government boards and bodies. On the basis of our target-setting, and the work being done to support these targets, I am confident that subsequent reports will have us meeting our commitment by 2015

Clearly there is no room for complacency if we are to sustain progress towards gender equality. The 40 per cent target will provide the focus that is needed to achieve our goals in this area.

We know that boards make better decisions when they are representative of the entire community. Tapping into women's skills and experience is not just good for women – evidence shows that a gender balance in top level decision making roles and forums is associated with improved governance and decision making.

In addition to our work relating to Government boards, the Australian Government is also supporting progress in the private sector. We have, for example, partnered with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) to increase the number of women on private sector boards by funding 70 scholarships for board ready women to complete key courses such as the AICD Company Directors Course.

All Australians should be able to aspire to leadership. The Australian Government's actions in this area will help ensure that gender-based barriers are removed and genuine merit recognised, so that both women and men can strive to be leaders in government, administration, business and the community.

Kate Ellis, MP
Minister for the Status of Women

Executive Summary

The Australian Government is determined to see greater gender balance in the nation's top level boards and leadership ranks, to ensure economic growth and to tackle major challenges, such as our ageing population. To reinforce its commitment in this key area, the Government has committed to achieving a target of at least 40 per cent women and 40 per cent men on its boards by 2015.

As a gender snapshot, the number of female sitting members **as at 30 June 2010** stood at **34.5 per cent**. **Five** portfolios met or exceeded the **40 per cent** target, up from **three** in 2008-09.

Across the reporting period, women held **33.9 per cent** of the **5373 board positions** active between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010.

Five portfolios had at least one woman on all their boards and bodies. **Twelve** of nineteen portfolios improved their representation of women.

83 of the total **509** boards and bodies recorded no female board members. **1564 new board members** were appointed during the 2009-10 financial year. Of these, **34.9 per cent** went to women.

Female board members represented more than 40 per cent of total new board appointments in **six** portfolios.

Introduction

The *Women on Australian Government Boards Report* is an annual whole-of-government status report on the level of women's representation on a range of key Australian Government boards and bodies.

Information in the *Women on Australian Government Boards Report 2009-10* represents appointments prior to the Government's election commitment to set a target of a 40 per cent gender balance on federal boards by 2015. Any impact on the gender balance of new appointments resulting from this commitment will be represented in future reports.

It is also important to note that appointments to Australian Government boards and bodies are often for a three-year term, and re-appointments for a further three years are not uncommon. Therefore any changes to overall figures are likely to be gradual.

Current Environment

The election of Australia's first female Prime Minister, combined with sustained media coverage of the poor representation of women in the decision-making ranks of Australia's top 200 ASX companies has stimulated community interest in the gender balance among the nation's leadership ranks.

On 12 October 2010, Prime Minister Gillard, in a speech to the Queensland Media Club, commented:

"I believe that merit is equally distributed between the sexes, and if you believe that - and I do - and you look at any institution and it's not around about half men, half women, you should be asking yourself the question why, because if merit is equally distributed between the sexes and the outcome is not half-half, then it must lead you to the conclusion that there are women of merit who have missed out for whatever reason, and so I think that would cause an organisation to query why is that happening; why are women of merit missing out, so it's essential, if we are going to have a merit-based selection method for occupations that is we see the merit in half of our community apparently not getting a fair go that we should address the issues as to why they're not getting a fair go."

The 2010 Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency Australian Census of Women in Leadership (the Census) reports only minor change from 2008, where women on ASX200 boards and in senior management levels hold:

- 8.4 per cent of board directorships, from 8.3 per cent in 2008;
- 2.5 per cent of Chair positions, from two per cent in 2008; and
- three per cent of CEO roles, from two per cent in 2008.

While the Census is the only definitive measure of the status of women on boards and in executive management in Australia's top 200 ASX companies, the number of female board directors in ASX200 companies has now reached 11 per cent, possibly based on a number of private sector initiatives currently under way:

- The ASX corporate governance guidelines require companies to implement and publish diversity policies and targets, and report against the proportion of women on staff, in senior ranks and on boards.
- The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) introduced a suite of initiatives which also call on companies to set and report on voluntary gender diversity targets.
- The AICD's '*ASX200 Chairmen's Mentoring Program*' aims to increase the number of women on ASX200 boards by introducing a 12 month mentoring program linking chairs and senior directors of major companies with highly qualified women identified as potential ASX200 board directors.

- The '*Male Champions of Change*' initiative involves senior executives from some of Australia's largest companies partnering with the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to address gender inequities in the senior executive ranks and boardrooms of the private sector.
- The '*C-Suite*' project run by the Business Council of Australia in partnership with the Australian Human Resources Institute, focuses on boosting the level of female Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and Chief Financial Officers in ASX200 listed companies by linking identified high achievers with leading CEO mentors.

The Australian Government has a number of existing mechanisms to facilitate equitable appointments to government boards, including:

- **AppointWomen** - an online register that matches talented board-ready women with Commonwealth agencies who are seeking candidates for board positions. (www.appointwomen.gov.au)
- **The Australian Public Service Commission's merit and transparency guidelines** encourage an increase in the representation of women in senior government appointments through using registers such as AppointWomen. (<http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications08/meritandtransparency.htm>)
- **The Gender Panel** provides capacity and expertise for government agencies to draw from in undertaking their gender assessments and related gender-sensitive work. Panel members include organisations and individuals with demonstrated expertise and experience in gender analysis in one or more of the following areas: research, evaluation, policy advice, development of gender mainstreaming educational materials and gender analysis training.

The Australian Government is also working in partnership with stakeholders to address the under-representation of women in key leadership and decision-making roles:

- **Partnership with the AICD** – a new partnership between the Australian Government and the AICD aims to promote and lead change in the private sector by offering over 70 talented board-ready women, and experienced female board members seeking Chair positions, scholarships to attend the Company Directors Course or the Mastering the Boardroom course.
- **2010 Year of Women in Local Government** – the Government provided funding towards leadership and capacity building activities to improve the participation and representation, of women in the nation's councils and shires.
- **Australian Sport: the pathway to success** – the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is establishing a Women in Sport Register to match sporting boards with female board candidates to increase the representation of women under this new policy.
- **Sports Leadership** – the Office for Women and the ASC continue to partner in delivering grants to women undertaking accredited training in coaching sports governance, media/communications and sports management; and scholarships to gain the qualifications that allow progress to senior executive roles in sport.

Reporting Parameters

The annual *Women on Australian Government Boards Report* publishes information on the actual number of women and men holding decision-making positions. To allow the Government to provide an accurate and statistically valid picture of the gender ratio on Australian Government boards and bodies, the following methodology is used:

- The publication reports on the number of positions held by women and men on boards and bodies across two reporting periods – a data snapshot taken on one day ('Gender

Snapshot as at 30 June 2010'), and all women and men occupying board positions on or after the 1 July 2009 to before or on 30 June 2010 ('Australian Government Board Membership').

- Ongoing board members (those with no change to their board tenure during the reporting period), board members with appointment period that expired and were not renewed, and new board appointments, are captured in the report, appearing in either the 'Gender Snapshot' and/or 'Australian Government Board Membership' depending on their tenure start and finish dates.
- Vacant board positions, and board members with appointments that finished before or commenced after, the 2009-10 reporting period, are not included in the report.
- Where the appointment period of an existing board member expires, and a new board member is appointed, the report records this as two board members over the reporting period (1 July 2009 – 30 June 2010). The new board member will also appear under 'New Appointments', and in the 'Gender Snapshot as on 30 June 2010'.
- Reappointed board members (where a board member was reappointed to their board position as their existing appointment period was expiring) are counted as one board member, with most recent board appointment information (role, appointment method, level of government influence in the appointment) included in the report.
- Significant changes to the data from the 2008-09 reporting period may be explained by Machinery of Government changes and the abolishing or establishing of Australian Government Boards, eg the portfolio of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency increased their number of boards from one board with one member to four boards with 15 members.

Reporting Process

The *Women on Australian Government Boards Report 2009-10* is compiled by the Office for Women in collaboration with all Australian Government Departments. All board, body and appointment-related data is drawn from information entered by departments via the *Government Boards Recording System* (GovBoards).

Data in this annual report is based on that provided by departments, who hold responsibility for deciding which boards and bodies fit reporting parameters and which categories they apply to their own portfolio boards and bodies.

Gender Snapshot as at 30 June 2010

As at the 30 June 2010, women held **34.5 per cent** of **4,556** board positions within **476** Australian Government boards and bodies. This is comparable to the 2008-09 figure of **33.4 per cent**.

Women continued to represent over half the positions on boards and bodies in the Departments of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and Immigration and Citizenship. **Five** portfolios met or exceeded the 40 per cent target, an increase from **three** portfolios in 2008-09. Notable gains were made by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, with an increase from **13.1 per cent** in 2008-09 to **29.1 per cent** in 2009-10, and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, from **39.2 per cent** to **46.6 per cent**.

Table 1: Women's Board Representation: As at the 30 June 2010

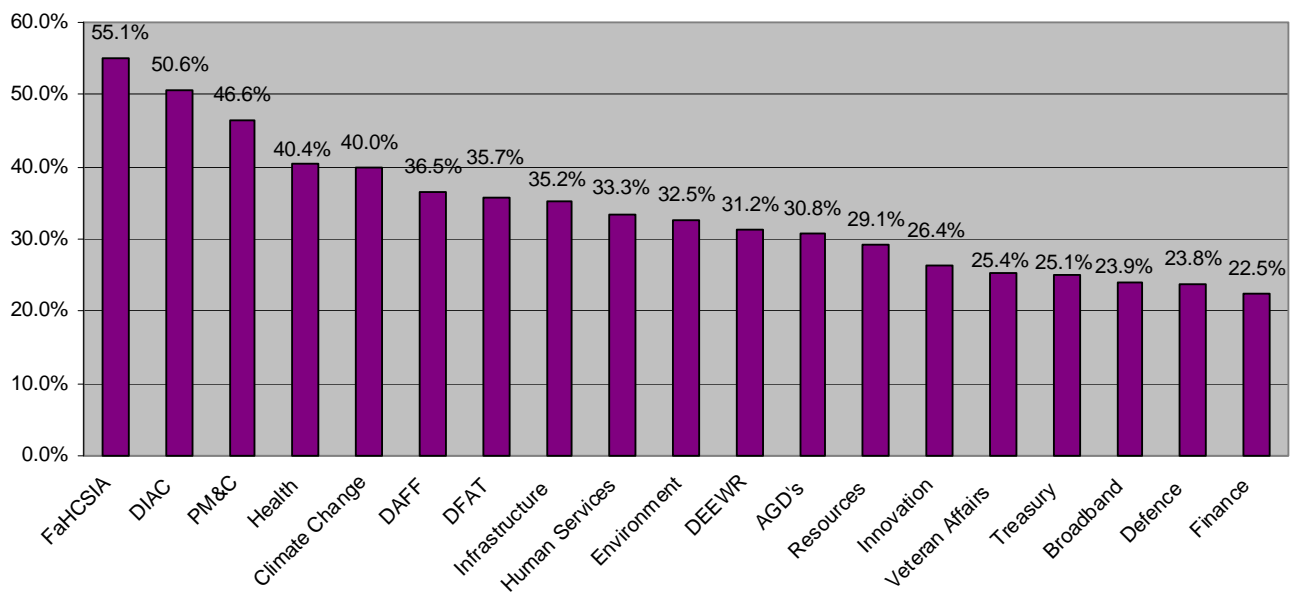
Department	Boards/ Bodies	Positions	Women		
			Number	% 30 June 2010	% 30 June 2009
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	31	181	66	36.5%	32.4%
Attorney-General's	42	487	150	30.8%	28.0%
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy	6	46	11	23.9%	27.3%
Climate Change and Energy Efficiency	4	15	6	40.0%	0.00%
Defence	31	160	38	23.8%	24.7%
Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	24	247	77	31.2%	31.9%
Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts	55	329	107	32.5%	31.9%
Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	25	401	221	55.1%	55.3%
Finance and Deregulation	14	71	16	22.5%	24.7%
Foreign Affairs and Trade	15	129	46	35.7%	24.4%
Health and Ageing	43	560	226	40.4%	40.0%
Human Services	1	6	2	33.3%	33.3%
Immigration and Citizenship	7	156	79	50.6%	57.3%
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government	62	625	220	35.2%	19.0%
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research	56	573	151	26.4%	26.8%
Prime Minister and Cabinet	8	58	27	46.6%	39.2%
Resources, Energy and Tourism	9	55	16	29.1%	13.1%
Treasury	30	319	80	25.1%	25.5%
Veterans' Affairs	13	138	35	25.4%	27.8%
Total	476	4556	1574	34.5%	33.4%

Portfolio Ranking as at 30 June 2010

As at 30 June 2010, five portfolios met or exceeded the 40 per cent target, with the Departments of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs at **55.1 per cent**, Immigration and Citizenship at **50.6 per cent**, Prime Minister and Cabinet at **46.6 per cent**, Health and Ageing at **40.4 per cent**, and Climate Change and Energy Efficiency at **40.0 per cent** representation of women on their boards and bodies. **Three** portfolios were within **five per cent** of reaching the gender target.

Comparisons must be considered within the context of the wide range of boards and positions spanning Australian Government portfolios. For example, the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy managed six boards with 46 members, while the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government had 62 boards and 625 members.

Figure 1: Portfolio Ranking: Representation of Women as at 30 June 2010



Australian Government Board Membership - 2009-10 Financial Year

During 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, women represented **33.9 per cent** of members on **509** Australian Government boards and bodies, spanning **19** portfolios and **5373** board positions.

Five portfolios met or exceeded **40 per cent** representation of women as board members, up from **two** portfolios in the 2008-09 reporting period. As in previous years, the level of female board members in the portfolios of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Immigration and Citizenship sat above **50 per cent**.

Women's representation in Chair positions was **18.7 per cent**, although representation in Deputy Chair positions was comparable to general board membership, at **33.8 per cent**.

Table 2: Representation of Women between 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010

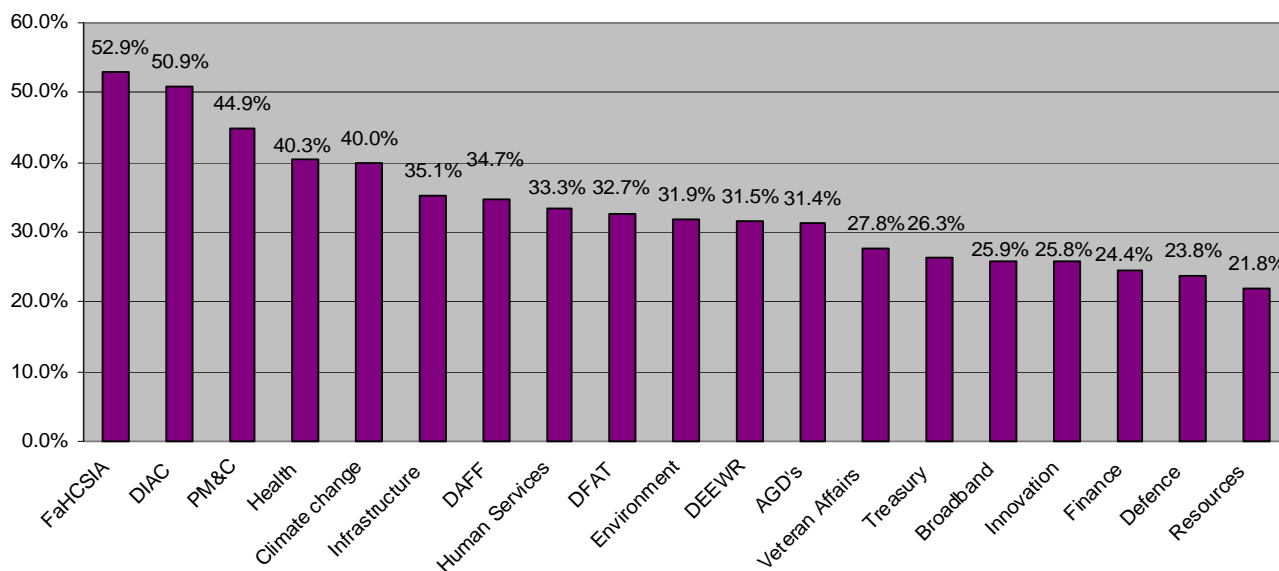
Department	Boards/ Bodies	Positions	Women		
			Number	% 2009-10	% 2008-09
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	33	213	74	34.7%	29.0%
Attorney-General's	43	573	180	31.4%	28.9%
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy	6	54	14	25.9%	26.3%
Climate Change and Energy Efficiency	4	15	6	40.0%	0.0%
Defence	31	160	38	23.8%	24.7%
Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	29	337	106	31.5%	33.7%
Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts	59	451	144	31.9%	34.0%
Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	27	456	241	52.9%	53.8%
Finance and Deregulation	15	86	21	24.4%	22.4%
Foreign Affairs and Trade	15	150	49	32.7%	23.2%
Health and Ageing	45	644	259	40.2%	38.4%
Human Services	1	6	2	33.3%	33.3%
Immigration and Citizenship	7	159	81	50.9%	56.8%
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government	63	644	226	35.1%	25.0%
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research	68	765	197	25.8%	25.7%
Prime Minister and Cabinet	8	69	31	44.9%	36.5%
Resources, Energy and Tourism	12	78	17	21.8%	11.3%
Treasury	30	369	97	26.3%	25.6%
Veterans' Affairs	13	144	40	27.8%	27.2%
Total	509	5373	1823	33.9%	33.4%

Portfolio Ranking

Twelve portfolios improved their number of female board members during the reporting period.

The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government both saw an increase of over **10 per cent** in the number of female board members, while the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade increased its representation by **9.5 per cent**.

Figure 2: Portfolio Ranking: Representation of Women 2009-10



Board Diversity

During the 2009-10 financial year, **83** of the **509** Australian Government boards had no female members, compared to **9** boards that had no male members.

Five portfolios - the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Health and Ageing, Human Services, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Immigration and Citizenship - show representation by women on all their boards.

Table 3: Boards without Female Members

Department	Boards without women		
	Boards	Number	%
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	33	10	30.3%
Attorney-General's	43	13	30.2%
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy	6	0	0.0%
Climate Change and Energy Efficiency	4	2	50.0%
Defence	31	13	41.9%
Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	29	2	6.9%
Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts	59	6	10.2%
Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	27	7	25.9%
Finance and Deregulation	15	5	33.3%
Foreign Affairs and Trade	15	0	0.0%
Health and Ageing	45	0	0.0%
Human Services	1	0	0.0%
Immigration and Citizenship	7	0	0.0%
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government	63	1	1.6%
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research	68	10	14.7%
Prime Minister and Cabinet	8	1	12.5%
Resources, Energy and Tourism	12	5	41.7%
Treasury	30	5	16.7%
Veterans' Affairs	13	3	23.1%
Total	509	83	16.3%

New Appointments

546 of **1564** new board appointments went to women during the 2009-10 financial year, at **34.9 per cent** representing a slight decrease from the 2008-09 figure of **36.8 per cent**.

Six portfolios appointed more than 40 per cent of new board appointments to women. The portfolios of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Immigration and Citizenship reported **50 per cent** and over of new appointments going to women during the period.

Women represented **22.3 per cent** of the available Chair positions on new board appointments, which is an improvement in women's representation to Chair positions across 2009-10. Women's representation in Deputy Chair positions to new appointments also improved from all appointments across 2009-10, increasing from **33.8 per cent** to **42.0 per cent**.

Table 4: Representation of women in new appointments

Department	New Board Appointments	Women		
		Number	% 2009-10	% 2008-09
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	40	20	50.0%	38.7%
Attorney-General's	16	5	31.3%	41.5%
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy	13	3	23.1%	25.0%
Climate Change and Energy Efficiency	15	6	40.0%	0.0%
Defence	36	13	36.1%	60.0%
Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	112	38	33.9%	43.5%
Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts	39	12	30.8%	39.5%
Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	96	42	43.8%	54.7%
Finance and Deregulation	16	3	18.8%	21.7%
Foreign Affairs and Trade	18	7	38.9%	10.0%
Health and Ageing	153	59	38.6%	43.0%
Human Services	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Immigration and Citizenship	11	6	54.5%	56.0%
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government	598	219	36.6%	12.5%
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research	262	62	23.7%	27.4%
Prime Minister and Cabinet	28	16	57.1%	22.2%
Resources, Energy and Tourism	21	10	47.6%	15.0%
Treasury	84	24	28.6%	25.4%
Veteran Affairs	6	1	16.7%	23.4%
Total	1564	546	34.9%	36.8%

Figure 3: Portfolio Ranking: Representation of Women in New Appointments

