

A resource sheet for boards

The Plumbers and Drainers Board

Despite there being only eight female plumbers in Brisbane, three of seven board members of the Plumbers and Drainers Board are women. This Board shows a serious commitment to equitable gender balance in the plumbing industry. Read more about the ways to open doors for more women to move onto your board table.

Only eight women plumbers in Queensland . . .

The Plumbers and Drainers Board is administered by the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation. The role of the Board is to issue licenses for plumbing and draining work, hear complaints and take disciplinary action against plumbers where necessary. The Board consists of seven positions, three of which are held by women. Members consist of nominees from trade unions and from state government departments. Despite there being only eight female plumbers in Brisbane, the board manages to achieve an equitable gender balance.

The Plumbers and Drainers Board has developed some useful initiatives that support the appointment of women, and allow the Board to achieve better outcomes.

Ensuring women are represented

A lack of women plumbers means there is little likelihood of women being represented in industry nominated positions. However, many of the representatives from government departments are filled by women. This allows gender equity to be achieved by drawing on a diverse range of skills from within government as well as from industry bodies.

In the long-term it is important to work towards a plumbing industry in which women are active participants. The Queensland Government is currently partnering with the Plumbers Union in a program to encourage women to undertake plumbing apprenticeships.

The Office for Women is also developing a *Women in Hard Hats* project to encourage women to pursue careers in non-traditional fields such as mining and construction.

The 'deputy' system

The Plumbers and Drainers Board have a system by which each board member has a 'deputy'. This was instigated for pragmatic reasons – to ensure that meetings were consistently attended by relevant representatives, and to enable quorum so that decisions could be made. However, one of the unforeseen benefits has been that it also allows a mentoring of emerging leaders, and fosters the development of skills for possible future board positions and leadership roles. The manager of the Plumbers and Drainers Board has particularly supported the appointment of suitably qualified women to these positions.

Benefits of a diverse board

Diversity on Queensland Government boards enables a better representation of Queensland's communities. Although there are few women plumbers, it is often women who engage with and organise plumbing services. Ensuring women are represented on the Board results in decisions and other outcomes that reflect this.

More information on the *Women on Boards* Strategy can be found on the Office for Women's website. Visit www.women.qld.gov.au/womenonboards or call 1800 177 577 between 8.00am and 6.00pm.