

*A resource sheet for executive leaders***Getting women on board – strategies and approaches**

As an executive leader, what can you do to encourage more women on your boards?
The following practical ideas will demonstrate that you and your agency are serious about having more women participating in decision making at the board table.

- ✓ Actively look for women nominees – appropriately skilled women are often out there, but sometimes an effort must be made to find them.
- ✓ Publicly support women's leadership and communicate the benefits of a diverse board.
- ✓ Implement programs, or scholarships, which allow women to obtain relevant skills and qualifications to enter executive positions and to serve on boards.
- ✓ Request equal numbers of male and female nominees when board vacancies arise.
- ✓ Set up a structured mentoring or shadowing scheme for emerging women leaders so they can develop self-confidence, skills, knowledge of the relevant industry, and appropriate networks.

Structural workplace policy changes to increase the representation of women without cultural and attitudinal change are likely to be ineffective. (Hudson 20:20 Series)

- ✓ Set up an induction scheme to ensure all board members are able to fully participate in board business.
- It's not rocket science. The simplest way to find women to serve on boards is of course to go looking for them. All it takes is a little conscious effort and determination. It isn't about lowering standards, but about making diversity a deliberate priority. (Jane Allen, 2006)
- ✓ Don't make 'tokenistic' appointments. Ensure appointments are merit based, transparent, and made by an independent committee. A more formal process circumvents the 'old boys' network', which can also have positive ramifications for board process and corporate governance.
- More diverse boards require more diverse sources of supply. (DTI, 2004)
- ✓ Run a networking event or presentation that profiles a woman leader in your agency or industry. Invite senior male and female executives, board members and emerging leaders.
 - ✓ Organise a cross-government or cross-industry forum for executive and non-executive directors to discuss gender equity on boards, and strategies to achieve this.
 - ✓ Include achievable goals in strategic plans and managers' performance indicators to ensure gender equity outcomes.
- 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.
- ✓ The board itself needs to be publicly supportive of women in leadership – it is the board which sets the tone for corporate culture.
 - ✓ When vacancies arise, take the opportunity to review the board in order to assess whether a new appointment opens an opportunity to diversify the board. Appraise existing knowledge and experience, identify skills gaps, and develop selection criteria that enable recruitment from a large pool of candidates.