

## Chapter 8 – Leaders

### Main findings

- Approximately 36.5% of Queensland State Government board positions are currently held by women.
- Women constitute 34.8% of Queensland Parliament members.
- In 2008 women occupied 35.2% of Queensland Public Service senior executive positions.
- In 2009, 29.5% of all serving Queensland Judges and Magistrates were women.
- Women are underrepresented as leaders in Australia's top private companies.



*‘Women are underrepresented as leaders in  
Australia’s top private companies.’*

## **Introduction**

In recent years women's participation in the workforce has increased and females currently make up 46% of the state's employed persons.<sup>1</sup> At the same time women's levels of educational attainment have become comparable with those of their male counterparts.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, females are grossly underrepresented in leadership roles.<sup>3</sup> Although it is difficult to ascertain specific causes of this underrepresentation, qualitative advice provided by male and female employees suggests that potential causes of this 'glass ceiling' phenomenon may include: the existence of masculine work cultures at senior organisational levels; a lack of female role models; limited strategic networking opportunities; and restricted access to flexible work arrangements.<sup>4</sup>

## **State Parliament**

The 2006 Queensland State General Election saw 30 women (33.7% of all persons elected) elected to the 89-seat Legislative Assembly. This figure has remained fairly stable since 2001, when 33 women were elected.<sup>5</sup>

Currently, women hold 31 (34.8%) of 89 seats in parliament and five of the 18 cabinet ministers are female, including the Premier. Six of the 11 parliamentary secretaries are also women as is the Queensland Governor.<sup>6</sup> The year 2007 marked the first time in Queensland's history that women occupied both top political positions of Governor and Premier.

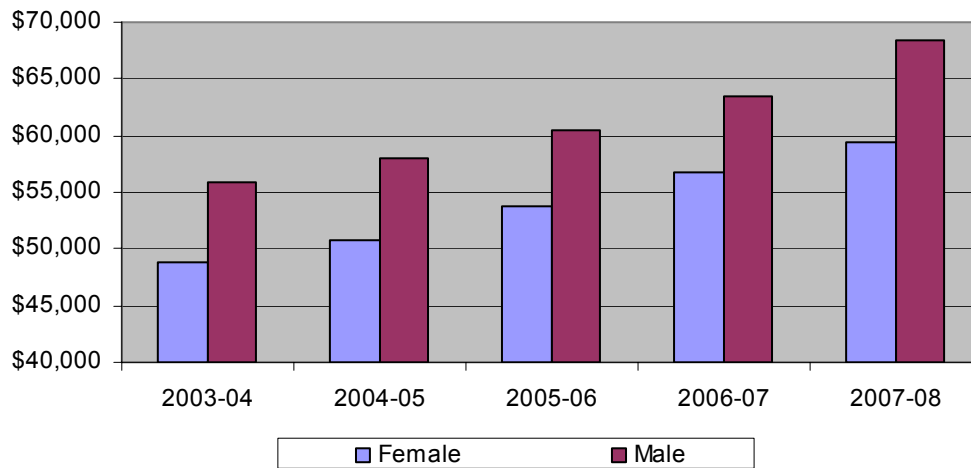
## **Local government**

In 2008, 181 women were elected into Queensland local government. Women tend to be underrepresented in local government as both candidates and elected representatives. Women comprised 17% (46) of all mayoral candidates and 31% (423) of all councillor candidates in the 2008 election. Women currently hold 11 (15.1%) of the 73 mayoral positions in Queensland, and 170 (35.4%) of the 480 councillors positions. While the proportion of female mayors has dropped slightly since the 2004 election when women constituted 17% of all mayors, women's representation as councillors increased in 2008 from 30% representation in 2004.<sup>7</sup>

## **State Public Service**

According to the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, women made up 61.3% of the State Public Service workforce in 2008.<sup>8</sup> Despite women constituting more than half of the 248,907-person workforce, average annual earnings for female full time, permanent employees are consistently lower than the earnings of their male counterparts (see Figure 8.1).<sup>9</sup>

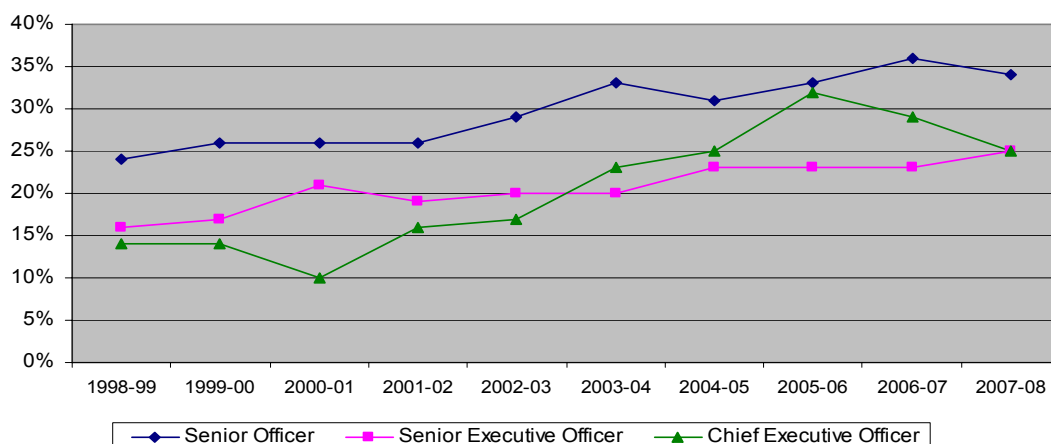
**Figure 8.1**  
**Average annual earnings of Queensland Public Service full time, permanent employees by gender, by financial year – 2003-04 to 2007-08**



Source: Office of Public Service Commissioner, 2004 – 2008, *Annual Reports Office of the Public Service Commissioner Annual Reports 2003/04 – 2007/08*, viewed 22 January 2009, [http://www.opsc.qld.gov.au/resources/publications\\_and\\_forms/annual.shtml](http://www.opsc.qld.gov.au/resources/publications_and_forms/annual.shtml)

One factor impacting this discrepancy in average salary is the gender composition of the senior executive service, with men more likely than women to occupy high paid senior management positions (see Figure 8.2). In 2008, women occupied 35.2% of all Queensland Government senior executive positions. As displayed in Figure 8.2, in 2008 women represented 24.0% of chief executive officers (CEOs) including departmental director generals and commissioners, 28.4% of senior executive service (SESs) officers and 37.8% of senior officers (SOs).<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 8.2**  
**Percentage of women in senior management positions, Queensland Public Service, by financial year – 1998-99 to 2007-08**



Sources: Office of Public Service Merit and Equity, 1999, *Office of Public Service Merit and Equity Annual Report 1998/99*, Queensland Government, Brisbane.

Office of Public Service Commissioner, 2000-08, *Annual Reports Office of the Public Service Commissioner Annual Reports 1999/00 – 2007/08*, viewed 22 January 2009, [http://www.opsc.qld.gov.au/resources/publications\\_and\\_forms/annual.shtml](http://www.opsc.qld.gov.au/resources/publications_and_forms/annual.shtml)

## Judiciary

As at January 2009, women comprised 29.5% of all 149 serving Queensland Judges and Magistrates (see Table 8.1).

**Table 8.1**  
**Members of the Queensland judiciary by gender**

Members of the Queensland judiciary	Total	Female	% Female
Supreme Court Judges	24	8	33.3
District Court Judges	38	8	21.1
Magistrates	87	28	32.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>29.5</b>

Source: Supreme Court Library of Queensland, 2009, *Queensland Judiciary – Profiles*, viewed 22 January 2009, <http://www.sclqld.org.au/qjudiciary/>

Within the Queensland judiciary women currently hold a number of senior positions including: President of the Court of Appeal Division in the Supreme Court, Chief Judge of the District Court and President of the Children’s Court of Queensland.<sup>11</sup> Women hold three of the seven roles as Justices of the High Court of Australia.<sup>12</sup>

## Government boards

Queensland Government boards have traditionally been characterised by a low percentage of female members. In order to address women’s underrepresentation in this area of leadership, the Queensland Government has committed to ensuring that wherever possible, 50% of new appointees to government bodies are female. In 2008, a total of 393 new appointments were made to Queensland Government boards, with women accounting for 188 (47.8%) of all new appointees. The total number of women occupying board positions has steadily increased in recent years from 33.6% of all board members in 2006, to 36.5% at the conclusion of 2008.<sup>13, 14</sup>

## Private company directors and managers

In 2008, the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency conducted its biennial Census of Women in Leadership, examining the gender composition of the top 200 companies, as listed on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX200). Results of the 2008 Census indicate women held only 2.0% (4) of all board chair positions and 8.3% (125) of board directorships, with just over half of all ASX200 boards reporting no female board directors. The proportion of Australian female board directors is lower than other comparable countries including Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.<sup>15</sup>

The proportion of board directorships held by women in 2008 represented a decline from 2006 when women held 8.7% of all board directorships. Similarly, in 2008, 10.7% of executive management positions were held by women, a decrease of 1.3 percentage points compared with 2006. Decreases in the

proportion of women in private industry leadership roles between 2006 and 2008 may be attributed in part to an increase in the number of male-dominated mining, materials and energy companies featured on the ASX200 in 2008 compared to 2006.<sup>16</sup>

## Indigenous women leaders

As is the trend for women generally, Indigenous women are underrepresented in formal positions of leadership. In 2008, females who identified as Indigenous comprised only 1.4% of the State Public Service workforce while males who identified as Indigenous constituted less than 1% of all State Government staff. In the same year, there were a total of 6 Indigenous women in senior executive positions (including SO, SES and CEO roles) which equated to 0.4% of all senior executive staff, with Indigenous males holding 15 (0.8%) of the 1,711 senior executive roles.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Indigenous women have low levels of representation in Queensland local government. In 2008, Indigenous women were elected to 6 councillor positions which accounted for 1.3% of all councillors and 25% of all Indigenous councillors. Following the 2008 election, Indigenous men represented 8.2% (6) of all elected mayors. No Indigenous women were elected as mayors in this election.<sup>18</sup>

Although specific membership figures are unavailable, anecdotally Indigenous women are well represented as members of Queensland Community Justice Groups. In 2002, the Queensland Government legislated to provide Community Justice Groups with the statutory authority to address alcohol management issues within Indigenous communities. Community Justice Group members often include Elders, traditional owners and respected members of the community.<sup>19</sup>

## Community leadership

A number of community awards recognise women as leaders in their communities. The Order of Australia Awards recognise outstanding achievements made by women and men in their community in areas of arts, education, business, the law, sport and community work. In the 2009 Australia Day Honours list, 167 women (31.2% of all recipients) were honoured with Order of Australia Awards, while in 2008 the Queen's Birthday Honours List included 138 women (30.1% of all recipients) who received an Order of Australia Award.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009, *Qld Stats, Jan 2009*, Cat. no.1318.3, viewed 27 January 2009,

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1318.3>Main%20Features4Jan%202009>

<sup>2</sup> id., 2008, *Education and Work*, Cat. no. 6227.0, viewed 22 January 2009,

[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/656CB57FE56C0491CA25750C000EF65B/\\$File/62270\\_may%202008.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/656CB57FE56C0491CA25750C000EF65B/$File/62270_may%202008.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009, *Qld Stats, Jan 2009*, loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Piterman, H., 2008, *The Leadership Challenge: Women in Management*, viewed 27 January 2009,

[http://www.ofw.facsia.gov.au/publications/women\\_management/p1.htm](http://www.ofw.facsia.gov.au/publications/women_management/p1.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Electoral Commission Queensland, 2009, *Election Information and Results*, viewed 28 January 2009,

<http://www.ecq.qld.gov.au/elections/index.html>

<sup>6</sup> Queensland Parliament, (date not defined), *Legislative Assembly – Current Members*, viewed 22 January 2009,

[http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/legislativeAssembly/members\\_current.asp](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/legislativeAssembly/members_current.asp)

<sup>7</sup> Local Government association of Queensland Inc., 2008, *Queensland Communities Decide 2008*, viewed 21 January 2009,

[http://www.lgaq.asn.au/imported/LGAQ\\_LIBRARY/LGAQ\\_FACILITY/Policy/Governance%20Policy/o8o5%20ElectionFactSFiguresFinal.doc](http://www.lgaq.asn.au/imported/LGAQ_LIBRARY/LGAQ_FACILITY/Policy/Governance%20Policy/o8o5%20ElectionFactSFiguresFinal.doc)

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- <sup>8</sup> Queensland Government Office of Public Service Commissioner, 2008, *Office of the Public Service Commissioner Annual Report 2007/08*, viewed 22 January 2009, [http://www.opsc.qld.gov.au/resources/publications\\_and\\_forms/annual.shtm](http://www.opsc.qld.gov.au/resources/publications_and_forms/annual.shtm)
- <sup>9</sup> id., 2004 – 2008, *Office of the Public Service Commissioner Annual Reports 2003/04 – 2007/08*, viewed 22 January 2009, [http://www.opsc.qld.gov.au/resources/publications\\_and\\_forms/annual.shtm](http://www.opsc.qld.gov.au/resources/publications_and_forms/annual.shtm)
- <sup>10</sup> id., 2008, *Queensland Public Service Senior Executive Service by Gender by Indigenous Status*, unpublished data.
- <sup>11</sup> Supreme Court Library of Queensland, 2009, *Queensland Judiciary – Profiles*, viewed 22 January 2009, <http://www.sclqld.org.au/qjudiciary/>
- <sup>12</sup> High Court of Australia, 2008, *Current Members of the High Court*, viewed 22 January 2009, [http://www.hcourt.gov.au/justices\\_01.html](http://www.hcourt.gov.au/justices_01.html)
- <sup>13</sup> Queensland Government Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2008, *Register of Appointees to Queensland Government Boards*, unpublished data.
- <sup>14</sup> id., 2006, *Register of Appointees to Queensland Government Boards*, unpublished data.
- <sup>15</sup> Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, 2008, *EOWA 2008 Australian Census of Women in Leadership*, viewed 27 January 2009, [http://www.eowa.gov.au/Australian\\_Women\\_In\\_Leadership\\_Census/2008\\_Australian\\_Women\\_In\\_Leadership\\_Census/Media\\_Kit/EOWA\\_Census\\_2008\\_Publication.pdf](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Australian_Women_In_Leadership_Census/2008_Australian_Women_In_Leadership_Census/Media_Kit/EOWA_Census_2008_Publication.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Queensland Government Office of Public Service Commissioner, 2008, *Queensland Public Service Senior Executive Service by Gender by Indigenous Status*, unpublished data.
- <sup>18</sup> Queensland Government Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation, 2008, *Council Statistics by Gender by Indigenous Status*, unpublished data.
- <sup>19</sup> Queensland Government Department of Justice and Attorney General, 2008, *Community Justice Groups*, viewed 28 January 2009, [http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/files/CourtsAndTribunals/Community\\_justice\\_groups.pdf](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/files/CourtsAndTribunals/Community_justice_groups.pdf)
- <sup>20</sup> Australian Government, 2009, *It's an Honour: Australia celebrating Australians*, viewed 27 January 2009, <http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/honours/announcements.cfm>