



media release

Embargoed: 1.00am (AEST) Tuesday 28 October 2008

2008 EOWA AUSTRALIAN CENSUS OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Women's glacial progress melts away

The *EOWA 2008 Australian Census of Women in Leadership* released today reveals that the number of women on boards and in executive management positions has declined since 2006, and in some cases reverted to pre-2004 levels. Australia now trails the USA, UK, South Africa and New Zealand.

Conducted by Macquarie University, the EOWA Census shows the number of women executive managers in the ASX200 has declined to 10.7% from 12% in 2006 and 11.4% in 2004. The number of companies with no women executive managers has risen sharply to 45.5% from 39.5% in 2006.

54.5% of ASX200 companies have at least one woman in an executive management position, which is lower than the USA (85.2%), Canada (65.6%), UK (60%) and South Africa (59.3%). In only 16.5% of ASX200 companies, women comprise 25% or more of the executive management team, down from 18% in 2006.

Women who *do* make it to executive roles are overwhelmingly clustered in support roles that don't provide access to the profit-and-loss or direct client services that are widely considered essential for rising to the top. The encouraging increase of women in line management roles observed from 2003 to 2006 (4.7% compared to 7.4%) has reversed and declined to pre-2004 levels (5.9%). This trend was also reported in the 2007 US Census.

At the time of the Census, women held only four CEO positions (2%). Harvey Norman Holdings Limited, Macarthur Coal Limited, Macquarie Airports and Singapore Telecommunications Limited were the only ASX200 companies led by women.

At board director level there were more than 10 men to every one woman and at CEO level there were 49 male CEOs for every female CEO in the ASX200.

Women chaired just four boards (2%) and held 8.3% of board director positions, a decline from 8.7% in 2006 and just 0.1 percentage point higher than in 2004. This is lower than other comparable countries and the EC averageⁱ (10.3%). Just over half of all ASX200 boards have no women board directors. In 6% of ASX200 companies, 25% or more of the board directors are women, a decrease from 12% in 2006 and 7.1% in 2004.

There are just a handful of companies among the ASX200 where women make up 50% or more of the senior management team - Austar United Communications Limited, Babcock & Brown Capital Limited, Bunnings Warehouse Property Trust, Consolidated Media Holdings, Hastings Diversified Utilities Fund, Macquarie Airports, Macquarie DDR Trust, Macquarie Office Trust and Spark Infrastructure Group. Only one company, Just Group Limited has a 50% female board and 57.1% of its executive managers are female.

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The number of male-dominated mining, materials and energy companies that joined the ranks of the ASX200 has highlighted the issue of gender segregation and exposed the difficulty that women experience in advancing within non-traditional industry sectors.

"At the 2006 Census we described the pace of change as glacial, in 2008 the results show that women's progress is melting away" said EOWA Director, Anna McPhee.

"Everyone from business leaders, employers, educators, parents, men and women, should be concerned about this chronic waste of female talent".

"The dearth of women at the top levels of business is the result of fewer opportunities, hostile cultures and outdated work practices that haven't kept pace with women's increased education levels, experience and ambition to be among the people influencing Australia's future".

The EOWA Census was conducted in partnership with ANZ, Macquarie University and the US research organisation, Catalyst.

ENDS

The EOWA Australian Women in Leadership Census will be officially released at the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Luncheon with Mike Smith, ANZ CEO and panel members David Mortimer AO, Chairman of Australia Post; Belinda Hutchinson MAICD, Non Executive Director of QBE Insurance; and Elaine Henry OAM MAICD, CEO of The Smith Family

Date: Tuesday, 28 October 2008

Time: 12.30pm – 2.20pm

Venue: Sheraton on the Park Ballroom, 161 Elizabeth St, Sydney

Complete media kit including details of available talent available at
http://www.eowa.gov.au/Australian_Women_In_Leadership_Census/2008_Australian_Women_In_Leadership_Census/2008_Media_Kit.asp

ⁱ European Commission Report on Women and Men in Decision Making 2007