

## media release

Embargoed: 11.30am (AEST) Thursday 31 August 2006

### 2006 EOWA AUSTRALIAN CENSUS OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

## Australia's boardrooms closed to women

The results of the *2006 EOWA Australian Census of Women in Leadership* released today show that Australia's top 200 companies have made little progress in increasing the numbers of women in their boardrooms.

Conducted by the Federal Government's Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), the Census shows that there has been only incremental improvement in the number of women board directors (now 8.7%) since the Census was first conducted in 2002.

The number of women executive managers in the ASX 200 has increased slightly to 12.0% from 11.4% in 2004, however the increase is based on only a small rise in the number of women in executive manager positions and a decrease in the size of executive management teams.

The number of female CEOs has not increased since 2003. Just six ASX 200 companies (3%) – GasNet Australia Group, Harvey Norman Holding, Macquarie Airports, Macquarie Countrywide Trust, St George Bank and Telecom Corporation of New Zealand - are led by women.

According to EOWA Director, Ms Anna McPhee, the disappointing Census results highlight that 47% of Australia's employees and 40% of shareholders remain under-represented at the most senior levels of business.

"Women remain largely excluded from positions which have significant influence over Australia's business direction, economy, public policy and the community generally", she said.

At board director level there are 10 men to every one woman and at CEO level there are 33 male CEOs for every female CEO in the ASX 200.

While the number of companies with no women on their boards is almost unchanged (50.0%), boards with more than one female member are increasing. The Census shows there is a considerable increase in the percentage of companies which have two or more women board directors and which have 25% or more board women or executive managers. 12.0% of companies (from 7.1% in 2004) have 25% or more board directors and 18.0% of companies (from 13.7% in 2004) have 25% or more executive managers. This is almost on par with the USA where 12.8% of Fortune 500 companies in 2005 had 25% or more women board directors.

For further information please contact:  
Rebecca Barnes (02) 9448 8528 or 0411 482 738  
Or Nicole Parsons 0412 505 854





Australian Government

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60.5% of ASX 200 companies have at least one woman in an executive management position, which is almost 10 percentage points higher than in 2003.

“While we are far from the tipping point, achieving a critical mass of women appears more attainable than recruiting the first woman board director or executive manager. Appointing the first woman appears to be the most significant hurdle for many companies but once overcome they seem likely to appoint more women to leadership positions” Ms McPhee said.

“Organisations with more than one woman executive or board director have been able to tap into a broader network and women in leadership positions can pull other women up through the organisation.”

Only five ASX 200 companies have 25% or more women on both their board and senior executive team. They are David Jones, Great Southern Plantations, Just Group, Telecom Corporation of New Zealand and Ventracor.

The number of women who have the necessary experience in profit and loss roles is continuing to grow the pipeline to the top jobs. Women hold 7.4% of line roles, an increase from 5.0% since the Census was first conducted in 2002. Nearly three-quarters of male executive managers are in line positions.

Australia’s progress is greater only than New Zealand’s, and continues to lag behind the USA the UK, Canada and South Africa in the numbers of women board directors and executive managers. Women in the US, for example, reached Australia’s current level of board representation, 8.7%, back in 1994.<sup>1</sup>

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

ENDS

Diary Note; The EOWA Census will be released at a media briefing from 10.30 – 11.15 on Thursday August 31 at ANZ’s Bondi Meeting Room (Level 20, 20 Martin Place). The briefing will feature an expert panel including EOWA Director Anna McPhee, Woodside Petroleum and Coca-Cola Amatil board director Jillian Broadbent, and ANZ’s MD Consumer Finance, Jenny Fagg.

A full media kit will be available on the EOWA Media Centre ([www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)) from midday

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<sup>1</sup> Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors of the Fortune 500.

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