



## **Research Summary Toward Gender Parity: Women On Boards Initiative**

Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services,  
Office for Women and Domestic Violence Reform

October 2016





# Reading this report

## Key terms

Throughout this report, the following terms are used:

- **Diversity:** Diversity refers to the visible and invisible characteristics that make people unique. Gender is just one aspect of diversity, and the subject of this report. However, research shows boards perform better when they include the best people with a diverse range of perspectives and approaches, and this value-add is not limited to gender alone.<sup>1</sup>
- **Inclusion:** Previous research by Deloitte has shown that feelings of inclusion are comprised of perceptions of: (1) fairness and respect; and (2) value and belonging. The highest level of inclusion is when people feel safe to speak up even when they have a different point of view to the majority (“psychological safety”). These feelings of inclusion are separate concepts and build upon each other sequentially.<sup>2</sup>
- **Boards:** The generic term ‘boards’ refers to the various boards, advisory groups, committees and other governing entities which provide leadership and have oversight of Queensland Government bodies, Private sector and Non-For-Profit (NFP) boards.
- **Decision-makers:** The generic term ‘decision-makers’ refers to individuals, such as chairs, board members and those who have the authority to make decisions that directly influence the gender representation of the board and the boardroom environment.
- **Gender parity:** Often used interchangeably with “gender balance”, it refers to an equal representation of women and men in a given context, for the purposes of this report this is representation on boards.

## Research methodology

The insights presented in this report are informed by the research conducted by Deloitte, all of which can be found in the extended research report. Specifically, Deloitte Access Economics undertook the following research:

01. Secondary research – a literature scan for high-level and thematic findings was used to inform the primary research.
02. Primary research – including:
  - A. Economic modelling: An overview of the economic modelling process undertaken by Deloitte Access Economics is contained in the Extended Research Report Toward Gender Parity: Women on Boards Initiative.
  - B. Survey: In September 2016, Deloitte Access Economics sent a survey to 149 Queensland Government boards representing 1,829 members. In total, 149 board members responded across 48 boards (12% response rate). Deloitte Access Economics has determined that the results are reasonably reflective of Queensland Government boards for the topic of gender parity, although the results should not be applied to other forms of inquiry. The survey sample was checked for any potential sample bias and Deloitte Access Economics determined that the sample had similar characteristics as the targeted boards. There is a 7.5% margin of error in the results, at the 95% confidence interval, which is considered acceptable.
- C. Stakeholder consultations: Consultations were held with members of Queensland Government boards to better understand barriers to, and strategies for, achieving board gender parity.
- D. Recruiter focus group: In September 2016, a focus group was conducted with 20 public sector employees that have direct involvement with the recruitment process within Queensland Government boards, to identify their experiences with finding and placing women on boards.

1. Bourke, J. (2016) *ibid*.

2. Deloitte (2013) ‘Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup? A new recipe to improve business performance’.

# Introduction

Around the world, interest in the representation of women on boards is at an all-time high. And Queensland is no exception.

Despite the positive changes to women's status and roles made over the past century, gender inequality persists in our community<sup>3</sup>. This includes women's representation in senior leadership positions, such as boards. However, the case for change is as much about improving business performance as it is about gender equality. Put simply, boards perform better when they include the best people with a diverse range of perspectives and approaches<sup>4</sup> within an inclusive culture.

It is this insight that led the Queensland Government to set a target of 50 percent representation of women on government boards by 2020<sup>5</sup>:

It is a bold and ambitious target. But it is one with merit, as the research undertaken for the *Toward Gender Parity: Women On Boards Initiative* clearly demonstrates.

“Having more diversity on boards is good business sense and this is reflected in the bottom line of companies with women at the top table. Here in Queensland, we can lead the way as a strong voice for women in leadership roles across the workforce, while increasing productivity and growing our economy.”

**Minister for Women, the Honourable Shannon Fentiman, 29 July 2015<sup>6</sup>**

This research, undertaken by Deloitte on behalf of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, is one of a suite of Women on Boards initiatives aimed at helping Queensland boards increase the representation of women<sup>7</sup>. The methodology included a literature scan, economic modelling, consultation and a survey of Queensland Government board members.

In short, the research shows that the case for change in Queensland is strong. The economic modelling by Deloitte Access Economics reveals that gender parity on Queensland boards will deliver \$87 million<sup>8</sup> in productivity gains without any additional workers or hours worked.

The literature scan identified a strong connection between gender diversity on boards and board (as well as organisational) performance. Those findings were confirmed and extended via findings from a survey of Queensland Government board members. In particular, boards with gender parity (i.e. 50/50) – were much more likely to be identified as high performing<sup>9</sup> – and survey respondents were much more likely to identify the environment as one committed to diversity and being highly inclusive.

Put simply, boards perform better when they include the best people with a diverse range of perspectives and approaches within an inclusive culture.

Conversely, low performing boards had a much lower representation of women, if indeed they had any women at all. Not unexpectedly they had low levels of commitment to diversity. However, board members felt high levels of personal inclusion and that makes intuitive sense. When board members are very similar to each other, it's easy to feel a sense of mutual respect and connection.

Putting these two findings together – the characteristics of high and low performing boards – it is evident that much more value is created when boards comprise men and women who work within an environment that is highly cohesive and appreciates the value that diversity generates.

These findings underscore the significance of the positive trajectory on Queensland Government boards: over the last 12 months the proportion of women on boards<sup>10</sup> increased by 8% (from 31% to 39%)<sup>11</sup>. Nevertheless, while the end goal is within reach, the research shows that women continue to experience challenges in achieving board positions, and 12 of 17 Queensland Government portfolios do not have gender parity (even if “parity” is given a 10% tolerance of 40/60, rather than 50/50).

This report reveals that achieving change will require more than isolated mentoring and networking programs. A more impactful and holistic strategy is needed. Most importantly, achieving gender parity across all Queensland boards (Government, Private and Not-for Profit) will require “game changers”: more courageous decision-makers to step up and become actively involved in challenging the status quo.

There are four clear insights from research conducted for *Toward Gender Parity: Women On Boards Initiative*. These insights quantify the value of board gender parity to the Queensland economy and clarify what it will take to drive change.

For more information about the findings see the Extended Research Report *Toward Gender Parity: Women on Boards Initiative*.  
[www.qld.gov.au/womenonboards](http://www.qld.gov.au/womenonboards)

3. Queensland's Women's Strategy, 2016-2021.

4. Bourke, J., (2016) Which two heads are better than one? How diverse teams create breakthrough ideas and make smarter decisions, Sydney, New South Wales: Australian Institute of Company Directors.

5. The target applies to 239 boards designated by the Queensland Government as “in scope”. The target does not apply to the following government bodies/ roles on the Queensland Register of Appointees: (i) courts and tribunals (as the target is directed at board or committee appointments); (ii) Government and Non-Government ex-officio positions (as these appointments are by position); full-time or part-time statutory office holders (as the target is directed at board or committee appointments); and bodies established to meet inter-jurisdictional agreements (as appointees are decided with the agreement of another State or the Commonwealth).

6. The Hon Shannon Fentiman, Gender targets can help to grow Queensland economy, Media Statement, 29 July, 2015.

7. Further information on the Queensland Government Women on Boards initiative is contained in the Appendix.

8. 2015/16 dollars.

9. Broad outputs measures were developed based on guidance by the Australian Institute of Company Directors, to provide an indication of high performing boards. Actual board performance was not assessed.

10. To which the target applies.

11. As at 30 June 2016.

# Key insights



## Insight 1: Gender parity delivers real dollar value to Queensland

Achieving board gender parity will increase productivity by \$87 million<sup>12</sup>

Economic modelling by Deloitte Access Economics shows that gender parity on boards could increase gross value added growth by 0.12%, representing a 5% increase to the 2.2% growth observed in 2014-15.

This will translate into an increase of \$87 million, conservatively estimated, in productivity gains for Queensland. Moreover, these gains can be realised without requiring additional workers or additional hours to be worked.



## Insight 2: High performance = men and women + commitment to diversity + inclusion

High performing Queensland Government boards have men and women, are committed to diversity and are highly inclusive

A survey of 48 Queensland Government boards (and 149 board members) shows that high performing boards share three characteristics: male and female representation, a commitment to diversity and an inclusive operating environment. Conversely, low performing boards have less than parity, low levels of commitment to diversity and high levels of inclusion.

This finding highlights two points. Firstly, board value is derived from a dual focus on gender parity and inclusion. Secondly, homogenous boards that are inclusive can feel effective; however they are missing the diversity that helps drive improved performance.

This insight supports the findings in the literature which shows that boardroom diversity improves monitoring, innovation and decision-making effectiveness, and the organisation's performance more broadly.



## Insight 3: The target is in sight, but barriers remain

Board commitment needs to translate into concrete action

Positively, the proportion of women on Queensland Government boards increased by 8% from 31% to 39% following the introduction of gender diversity targets, demonstrating the value of dedicated effort and clear focus.

81% of Queensland Government board members who responded to the survey agreed (to varying degrees) that their board is "committed" to achieving gender parity. Yet just 38% said they have a documented strategy for doing so, suggesting that many do not see parity as a priority.

If boards are committed, the community can expect to see tangible actions to redress a lack of parity.



## Insight 4: More game changers need to stand up and be counted

Courageous decision-makers who step up and actively challenge the status quo will be the drivers of change in Queensland

There is a clear opportunity for more key decision-makers to step up and change the game by challenging the status quo. In strengthening their commitment, key decision makers should focus on:

01. Alignment: Ensuring all board members believe in the business case and the need to change the status quo.
02. Articulation: Personally advocating the value of gender parity and inclusion in an authentic and engaging way.
03. Action: Personally prioritising diversity and inclusion, through a focus on inclusive capability (e.g. unconscious bias) and unbiased processes (e.g. recruitment).
04. Accountability: Holding themselves and others personally accountable for the achievement of gender parity and inclusion goals.

12. In 2015/16 dollars

# Insight 1: Gender parity delivers real dollar value to Queensland

“Any change that will improve economic productivity in Queensland is an important adjustment to make. And economic modelling by Deloitte Access Economics reveals that board gender parity can do just that.”

The tide is turning on Queensland's economy. Figures from the latest Queensland Treasury State Budget show that Queensland is expected to record the strongest Gross State Product (GSP) growth of all States, on average, over the forward estimates.<sup>13</sup> This growth has been supported by strong economic fundamentals but these fundamentals need to continue to ensure that Queensland's growth remains strong for future years.

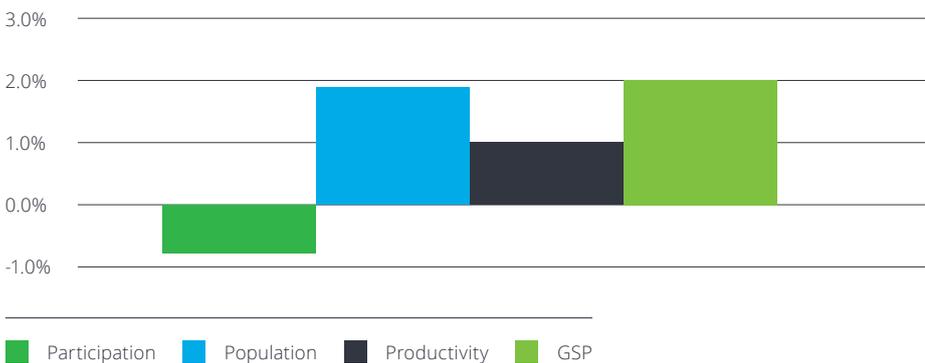
The predicted success of the Queensland economy is built on three key foundational elements; Participation, Population, and Productivity which drive GSP.

Figure 1 demonstrates the breakdown of Queensland's GSP from 2007/08 to 2014/15 across the three foundational elements.

When there are changes to any of the three foundational elements, there is a resultant effect on Queensland's GSP. As a State, Participation is reducing as the population is ageing, while Population is increasing in line with predicted State and international migration. Productivity, however, needs to double just to ensure our current standard of living remains. And therein lies the opportunity.

Given its importance to long-term growth, any change that will improve economic productivity in Queensland is an important adjustment to make. And economic modelling by Deloitte Access Economics reveals that board gender parity can do just that. How is that so?

**Figure 1:** Contribution to Queensland's GSP from 2007/08-2014/15<sup>14</sup>

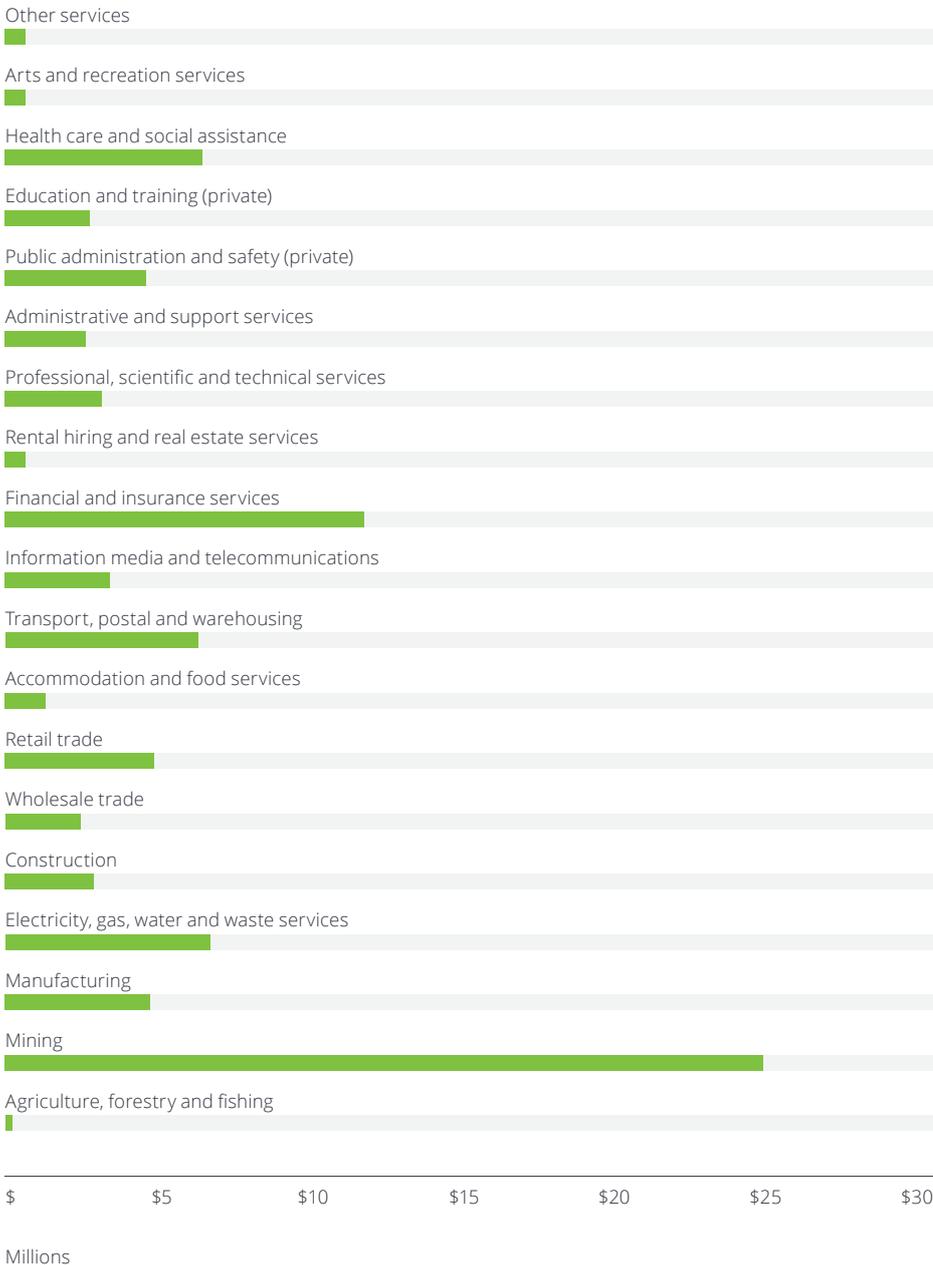


**Source:** Deloitte Access Economics analysis based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data

13. Queensland Government, Budget Strategy and Outlook 2016-17

14. 2007/08 to 2014/15 was chosen as this is consistent with the current ABS productivity cycle.

**Figure 2:** GVA improvements in Queensland by industry with gender parity on boards (\$ millions)



“If Queensland were to achieve gender parity on all Queensland boards, Deloitte Access Economics estimates that the total gain would be \$87 million.”

**A productivity gain for Queensland**

Productivity measures the efficiency of the production of outputs in the economy, improvements in productivity result in a change in the value added to the economy. In other words we produce more with the same inputs and this contributes to economic growth.

If Queensland were to achieve gender parity on all Queensland boards, Deloitte Access Economics estimates that the total gain would be \$87 million,<sup>15</sup> which is the equivalent of a 0.12% increase in GVA, and a 0.03% increase in GSP.

As shown in Figure 2, mining and financial and insurance services are the two largest areas for productivity gains, with the remainder of the value spread out across other industries. This is due to several factors in these industries – i.e. a significantly higher portion of organisations in these industries compared with others which have boards, and the current low representation of women on these boards. That means that the opportunity is greatest in these industries, it does not imply, however, that industries with smaller gains should neglect board parity.

At a glance, a 0.1% gain might sound small; however, compared to a 2.2% total productivity gain in 2014/15, it's a worthwhile increase. This gain does not include other benefits identified through the research therefore is a conservative estimate of the benefits of gender parity on boards.

15. 2015/16 value

# Insight 2: High performance = men and women + commitment to diversity + inclusion

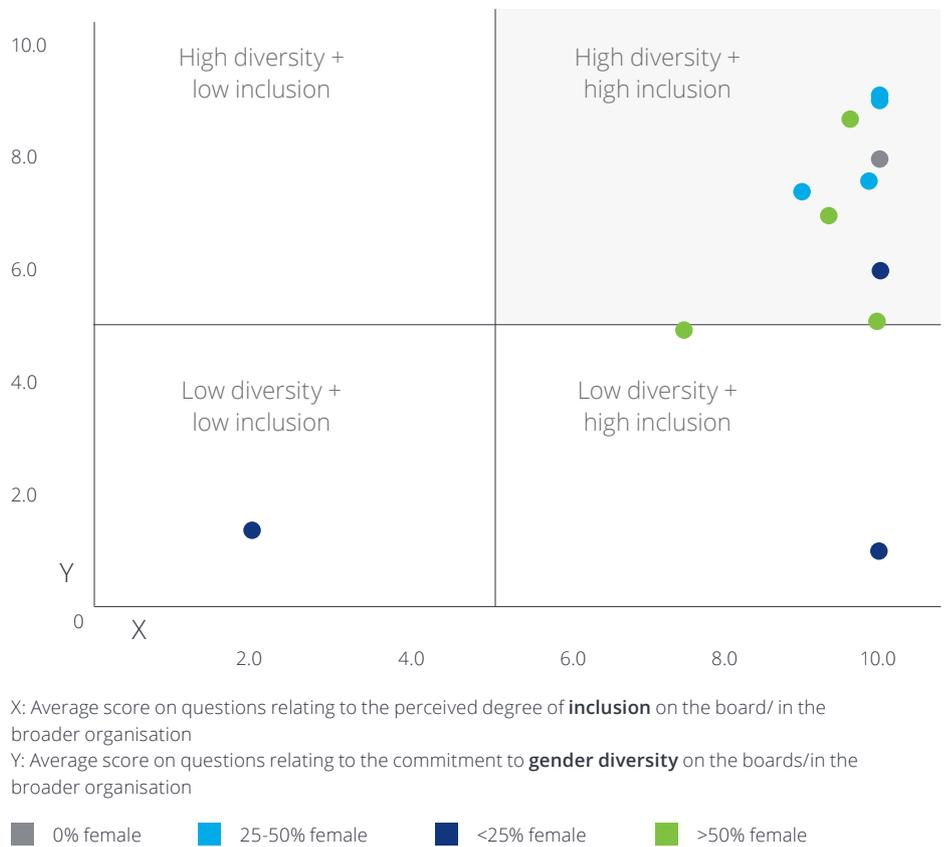
Deloitte Access Economics' modelling shows that gender parity on boards can increase Queensland's economic prosperity. It paints the big picture. The question is why? The answer can be found by zooming in on what happens around the boardroom table.

**Figure 3:** The benefits of gender parity on boards – a scan of the literature

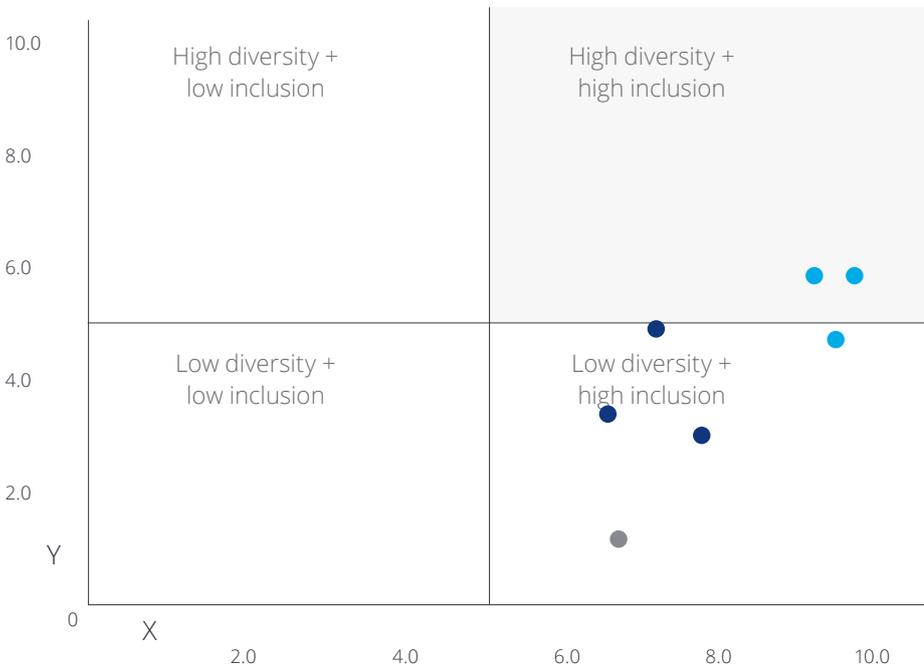
A scan of the academic and industry literature shows that gender parity – or even some level of representation of women - can deliver the following benefits:

- Enhanced board and organisational financial performance:** Using metrics such as profitability, return on equity/assets and market value.
- Improved monitoring by the board:** By improving governance processes, ethical conduct and reducing corporate fraud.
- Improved innovation and decision-making by the board:** By increasing the breadth of strategic human and social capital and positively influencing the dynamics within the group.
- Enhanced organisational social performance:** Using metrics such as corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation, serving as a differentiating factor for investors, customers and employees.

**Figure 4:** High performing Queensland Government boards – percentage of men/women and perceived degree of commitment to diversity and inclusion



**Figure 5:** Low performing Queensland Government Boards – percentage of men/women and perceived degree of commitment to diversity and inclusion



X: Average score on questions relating to the perceived degree of **inclusion** on the board/ in the broader organisation  
 Y: Average score on questions relating to the commitment to **gender diversity** on the boards/in the broader organisation

■ 0% female   ■ 25-50% female   ■ <25% female   ■ >50% female

Research shows that diversity in the boardroom improves monitoring, innovation and decision-making effectiveness, and an organisation's performance more broadly<sup>16</sup> (see Figure 3). In an effort to understand the drivers of these outcomes, one strand of research has started to examine the impact of gender diversity on group dynamics. In addition to extending the breadth of social networks and experiences, this research has found that gender parity contributes to an environment of psychological safety, conversational turn taking and social cohesion – each of which assists in perspective sharing and collaborative behaviours which help drive the performance outcomes above.<sup>17</sup>

“While homogenous boards can feel effective, this research shows they are missing the diversity that helps drive performance.”

Will achievement of the Queensland Government's board gender targets alone drive value?

While gender parity – or even some level of male/female representation - delivers some value, inclusion is a critical success factor. Put simply, high board performance is achieved through a focus on both gender diversity and inclusion.

**Unpacking high performing Queensland Government boards**

As part of the research, Deloitte Access Economics sought to test these findings in a Queensland context, and whether Queensland Government boards that are committed to gender parity and inclusion are also higher performing.

To do this, broad output measures were identified to provide an indication of high performing boards. Following guidance by the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Queensland Government boards were identified as “high performing” if the following policies and practices were identified<sup>18</sup> :

- Board orientation for new members
- Allocation of resources for professional development or mentoring activities for board members
- Documented roles and responsibilities of board members
- Board meetings scheduled to oversee the development and implementation of the organisation's strategy
- Processes in place for succession planning
- Metrics for monitoring and evaluating board performance
- Communication of information to the Minister
- Code of conduct for board members
- Risk management framework, and;
- Evaluation of board performance.

16. Vafaei A., Ahmed K. and P. Mather, 2015, 'Board Diversity and Financial Performance in the Top 500 Australian Firms', Australian Accounting Review 75, no. 25: 413-427

17. Bourke J., (2016) ibid.

18. The identification of high performing boards is based on self-reported information. Actual performance was not assessed by Deloitte Access Economics.

Across the 48 Queensland Government boards surveyed, 12 were identified as high performing and 7 low performing. Those that were high performing shared two key features:

- 01. Gender parity (50/50) – or at least the inclusion of women.  
All but one of the 12 high performing boards included women. One third (four boards) had more than 50%+ women, one third (four boards) had 25-50% women and one quarter (three boards) had less than 25% women (Figure 4). To sum it up – 92% included men and women, and one third had parity. The association between gender parity (or at least the inclusion of men and women) and high performance becomes even more obvious when the profile of high performing boards is compared with that of low performing boards (Figure 5). Of the seven low performing boards, nil had parity (compared with one third of high performing boards).

In short, on Queensland Government boards, high board performance is related to gender parity (50/50) or at least the representation of men and women.

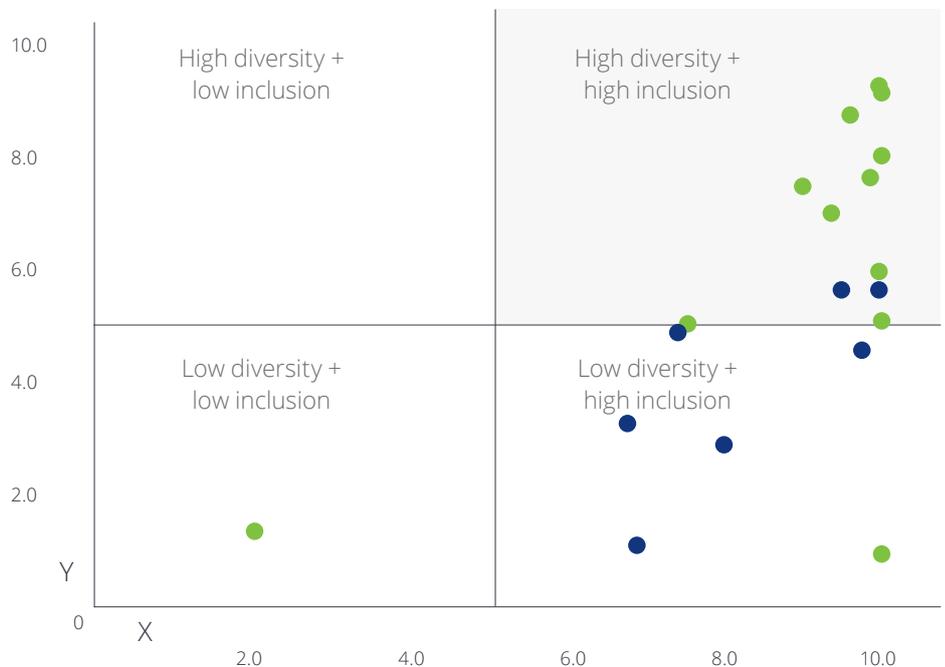
- 02. An inclusive culture and commitment to diversity.  
Secondly, high performing boards were more likely to be committed to diversity and have an inclusive working environment (see Figure 6) – one in which board members are treated fairly and with respect, one in which there is a sense of value and belonging. In contrast low performing boards were less likely to be committed to diversity, and yet board members felt highly included. More specifically, two-thirds (66%) of high performing boards had both a commitment to diversity and inclusion, while (28%) of low performing boards were both committed to diversity and inclusive.

“In short, on Queensland Government boards, high board performance is related to gender parity (50/50) or at least the representation of men and women.”

These findings support the insight that both a commitment to diversity and a highly inclusive board environment is necessary for parity.

Finally, it is noteworthy that low performing boards had less women, and members felt the environment was highly inclusive. While homogenous boards can feel effective – e.g. a sense of sameness can deepen connectivity between board members and expedite decision-making – this research shows they are missing the diversity that helps drive improved performance.

Figure 6: High performing vs low performing Queensland Government boards– perceived degree of gender diversity and inclusion on the board and in the broader organisation



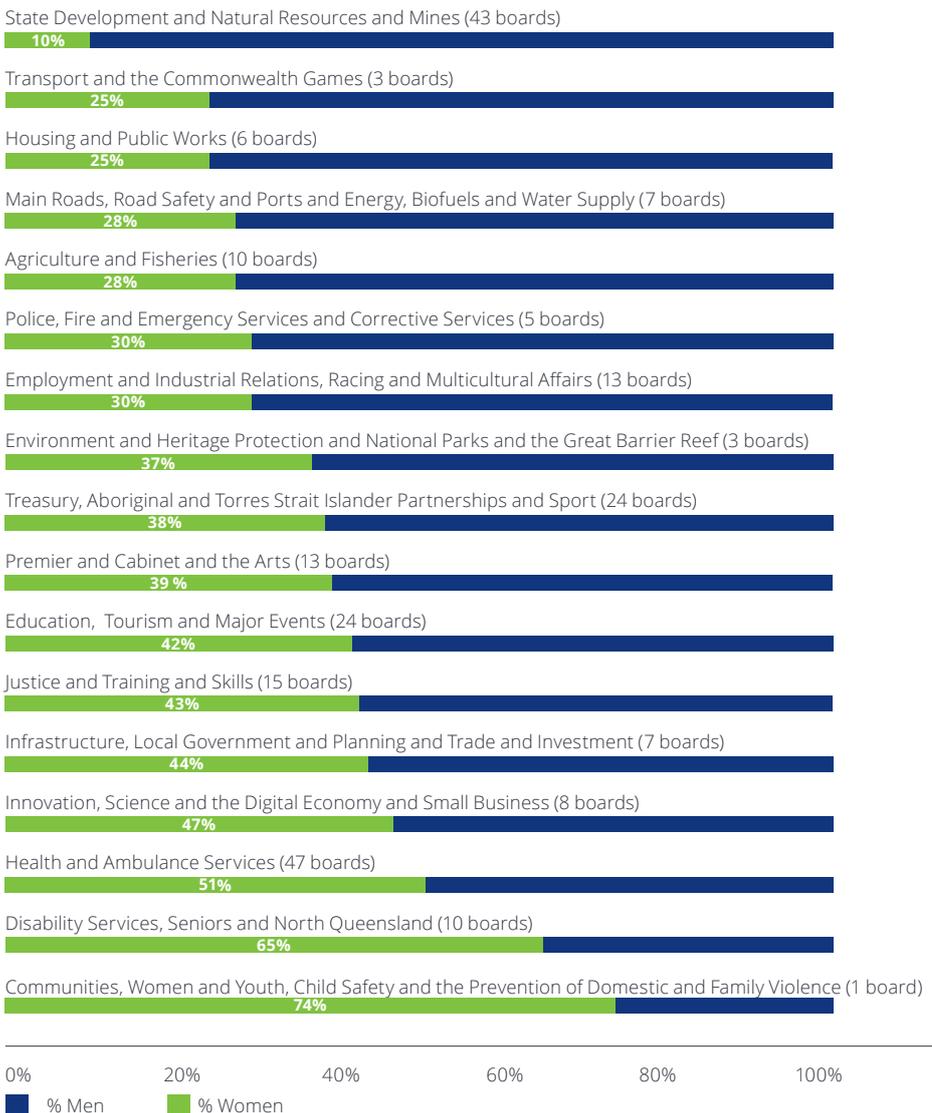
X: Average score on questions relating to the perceived degree of **inclusion** on the board/ in the broader organisation  
Y: Average score on questions relating to the commitment to **gender diversity** on the boards/in the broader organisation

■ Low performing boards      ■ High performing boards

# Insight 3: The target is in sight, but barriers remain

As Insight 2 shows, many Queensland Government boards are well under way to achieving gender parity and inclusion. Indeed, following the introduction of the gender targets, the proportion of women on Queensland Government boards increased 8% from 31% to 39%, demonstrating the value of dedicated effort. For others, however, there is still work to be done. Figure 7 provides the percentage for overall gender

**Figure 7:** Queensland board gender diversity ratio by portfolio for boards<sup>19</sup>



representation based on the Queensland Register of Appointees (in scope government bodies and positions). Further more, Figure 7 demonstrates, if parity sits at 50/50 – or somewhere within a ten percent tolerance (i.e. 40/60) – then 12 out of 17 Government portfolios have boards that do not meet gender parity.

### Barriers to board gender diversity

With the increased interest in the representation of women on boards around the world, much work has been undertaken to identify the drivers of, and barriers to, board gender diversity – i.e. what supports it, what prevents it. That research indicates that, generally speaking, women will experience challenges to board level membership when:

- Decision-makers are not genuinely committed to diversity and inclusion and do not see it as their personal responsibility to drive change
- Gender diversity and inclusion is viewed through a compliance lens, rather than an enabler of business performance
- Decision-makers are not held accountable for diversity and inclusion outcomes
- Recruitment searches are confined to traditional corporate pathways, or sectors dominated by males, apply unnecessarily narrow criteria or are restricted by existing policy and legislation
- Conscious and unconscious biases and assumptions, including gender-stereotypes and similarity-attraction bias, influence the mindsets and behaviours of decision-makers and are embedded into processes (e.g. recruitment), and;
- Once appointed, the boardroom environment itself is not inclusive of women.

19. See footnote 5 for boards “in scope” of the target.

Some of these themes were reviewed via the survey of Queensland Government boards. Overall the findings indicate that addressing barriers to gender parity on boards will require a holistic approach rather than isolated programs and practices.

**Priority areas for attention**

Deloitte’s previous research has identified seven factors that positively influence diversity and inclusion, and which help create change. This seven facets framework

is aligned to the current research findings and provides guidance to Queensland Government boards on what it will take for them to attract and retain highly talented women.

Table 8 outlines the survey results against the seven facets framework, and is designed to help Queensland boards identify priority areas for attention.

In addition to the barriers identified above, during the consultation process

questions were raised as to whether some legislative terms and policies governing board appointments could indirectly - and unnecessarily – limit women’s participation. It was beyond the scope of this research to validate or refute these comments.

Nevertheless it is worthy of investigation and a detailed review of relevant legislation and criteria for Government board appointments would be of significant value to either make the necessary amendments or to eliminate any misconceptions.

**Table 8:** Seven facets of change framework

Facet	Description	Current performance of Queensland Government boards surveyed
<b>Vision and strategy</b>	The board/department/organisation has articulated why diversity and inclusion is important, and established a strategy for change	38% of survey respondents agreed that their board has a documented strategy for progressing gender parity on their board
<b>Governance</b>	There is appropriate oversight of the board’s diversity and inclusion strategy and progress towards its goals	34% of survey respondents agreed that there is an individual(s) on the board responsible for achieving gender parity on their board
<b>Leadership</b>	The board members are committed to gender parity and an inclusive operating environment, demonstrate inclusive behaviours and are accountable for outcomes	While 81% of survey respondents agreed that their board is committed to gender parity, only 43% have action plans aimed at building the commitment and inclusive capability of decision-makers to achieve gender parity
<b>Systems and processes</b>	The board dedicates attention to ensuring that bias is eliminated from processes, including recruitment, and that board deliberations are inclusive	59% of survey respondents agreed that their board has processes and systems in place to support the achievement of gender parity on the board
<b>Specific initiatives</b>	The board supports specific initiatives (e.g. sponsorship programs) until gender parity is attained	39% of survey respondents agreed that their board has specific initiatives to drive the achievement of gender parity on the board
<b>Measurement</b>	The board regularly evaluates its performance on gender parity and an inclusive operating environment	28% of survey respondents agreed that their board has metrics for measuring progress on gender parity on their board and report these publicly
<b>Branding and communication</b>	The board communicates externally its commitment to gender parity and inclusion	80% of survey respondents agreed that their organisation is perceived to be inclusive of women, and 70% of survey respondents agreed that their industry is perceived to be inclusive of women

# Insight 4: More game changers need to stand up and be counted

As Insight 3 shows, the commitment of key decision-makers is critical to achieving gender parity. Without it, gender parity will not occur and the benefits will not be realised. Why? Put simply, decision-makers have the power to change the status quo.

### The importance of commitment

In a separate line of investigation on the survey data, relational tests were conducted on strategies for achieving gender parity with the actual percentage of women on the boards surveyed.

This analysis identified the culture of the organisation and board commitment as the most significant predictors of women on boards (see figure 9). Similarly, survey respondents were asked to identify the factors that they believe are most impactful in achieving gender parity. Having a board chair that is genuinely committed to gender parity was amongst the top three drivers identified by survey respondents, along with an objective focus on skill-sets during the recruitment process and an inclusive board environment (see Figure 9).

The “word cloud” below shows the most frequently mentioned words used in response to the survey question: ‘What factors do you believe are most impactful in achieving gender parity on boards?’ The larger the word, the more frequently it was referenced by survey respondents:

While 81% of survey respondents agreed that their board is committed to gender parity, there is variation in the strength of that perceived commitment (Figure 11). Specifically, just 34% of surveyed respondents “strongly agreed” that their board is committed to gender parity. Staying the course is hard, and strengthening this commitment will be critical to success for many Queensland boards as they work towards achievement of the gender parity targets.

### Stepping up and changing the game

To achieve change in Queensland, more decision-makers, including board chairs and members, need to step up and change the game by advocating for the value of gender parity and challenging the status quo. By serving as a visible champion of gender diversity, decision-makers set the tone for broader cultural change. This is not a new message. There is support for this finding from a suite of other reports

Figure 9: The top five drivers of women on boards



Figure 10: ‘What factors do you believe are most impactful in achieving gender parity on boards?’



including McKinsey and Company's Women Matter series<sup>20</sup> and the work of the Male Champions of Change.<sup>21</sup>

So where should decision-makers - or "game changers" focus to have the biggest impact?

Figure 11 provides a framework for game changers to help drive change. There is a focus on individual role modelling (focussing on mindsets and behaviours) – as well as organisational change (focussing on systems and processes). Together, we think about this in terms of Alignment, Articulation, Action and Accountability –

attention to which would produce an A+ on a game changer's personal report card. To help game changers think through these four factors, we pose a series of powerful questions for self-reflection.

Figure 11: Survey respondents – strength of commitment to gender parity

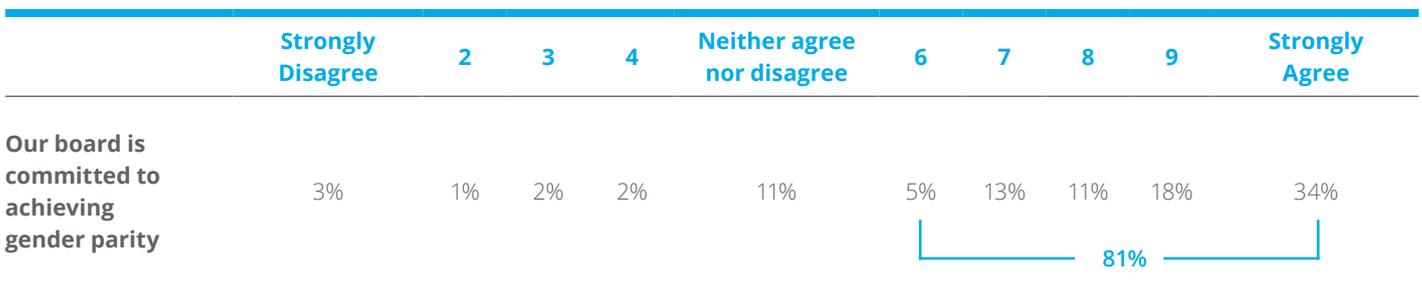


Figure 12: Game changer's iterative action plan

	<b>Alignment</b> I have a personal belief in the business case and the need to change the status quo	<b>Articulation</b> I advocate for gender parity and inclusion in an authentic and engaging way	<b>Action</b> I personally prioritise diversity and inclusion, and focus on ensuring inclusive behaviours and systems within the board environment	<b>Accountability</b> I hold myself and others personally accountable for achieving diversity and inclusion goals
<b>Game changer's powerful questions for self-reflection</b>	Am I, and other members of my board, genuinely committed to gender parity and inclusion?	Do I have an engaging story for gender parity and inclusion, which links to organisational strategy and which addresses resistance?	Am I, and other board members, inclusive of diversity, including women?	As a board, do we hold one other accountable for behaving inclusively?
	Does the board have a clearly defined strategy for achieving gender parity and inclusion?	Do I and my board have a reputation for championing gender parity and inclusion?	Does the board employ strategies to mitigate bias in the selection process?	Is diversity and inclusion integrated into our board effectiveness assessments?
	Has the board set goals relating to gender parity and inclusion?	Do I make the most of every opportunity to champion gender parity and inclusion?	Is commitment to gender diversity and inclusive capability a requirement for board membership?	Are diversity and inclusion goals linked to KPIs?

20. McKinsey & Company, 2007, Women Matter: gender diversity, a corporate performance driver, Retrieved 20th July 2016 from <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/women-matter>

21. See <http://malechampionsofchange.com/>

# Conclusion

There is a hidden powerhouse in the Queensland economy – it's parity on boards.

This report shows that board gender parity will help grow the Queensland economy by \$87 million in productivity gains, without any additional workers or hours worked. This is, as they say, money for jam.

This report also shows that gender parity improves board performance. Not tokenism, but gender parity. In Queensland, high performing Government boards share two core characteristics – they have a balance of male/female representation; and they have a commitment to diversity as well as an inclusive working environment. Clearly, boards perform better when they include the best people with a diverse range of perspectives and approaches, and where individuals feel included. The benefits are there for the taking.

The Queensland Government is showing the way by setting a target of 50/50 by 2020. Not just setting a target – but also by showing they have what it takes. Uplift from 31% to 39% is an impressive improvement. However, there is still work to be done given that 12 out of 17 Government portfolios have boards that do not have gender parity. And of course there is room for improvement amongst private and not-for-profit boards as well, noting that women comprise only 23% of ASX boards.<sup>22</sup>

## But what exactly will it take?

01. Communicating the business case for change - including the performance benefits and real dollar value that will be delivered to the Queensland economy through gender balanced boards in all sectors
02. Attention to gender parity as well as inclusion – knowing that is what drives high performance on boards
03. Addressing board-specific barriers that exist through a holistic approach to change, underpinned by strategic alignment (i.e. linking gender parity and inclusion to business strategy), inclusive systems and behaviours, and accountability, and;
04. Personal leadership – with game changers stepping up and taking personal responsibility for improving gender parity in their sphere of control.

## Next steps

This research report is one element of a suite of Queensland Government Women on Boards initiatives aimed at increasing women's representation on Government boards, as well as engaging with the private and not-for-profit sector to increase numbers of women on business and community boards.

This initiative will be delivered over the next 3-years, and will include delivery of the following additional elements:

01. The development of gender parity action plans, designed to support boards and other key stakeholders (e.g. board recruiters) to implement plans to facilitate achievement of targets
02. The establishment/enhancement of mentoring schemes, in conjunction with relevant industry associations and networks, to facilitate progression of women into leadership positions, and;
03. The development of mechanisms to better connect women with education and training opportunities, to help them gain the relevant skills and capabilities to take board positions as they emerge.

For further information on the Women on Boards initiative, please go to: [www.qld.gov.au/womenonboards](http://www.qld.gov.au/womenonboards)

22. Australian Institute of Company Directors (2016) Appointments to ASX 200 Boards as at 30 June 2016, <http://www.companydirectors.com.au/Director-Resource-Centre/Governance-and-Director-Issues/Board-Diversity/Statistics> downloaded 25 September 2016.

# Appendix

## Background information: The Queensland Government's Women on Boards Initiative

Despite positive changes to the status and roles of women, gender inequality persists in Australia. This restricts women's full participation in social, economic and cultural opportunities, including across Queensland.

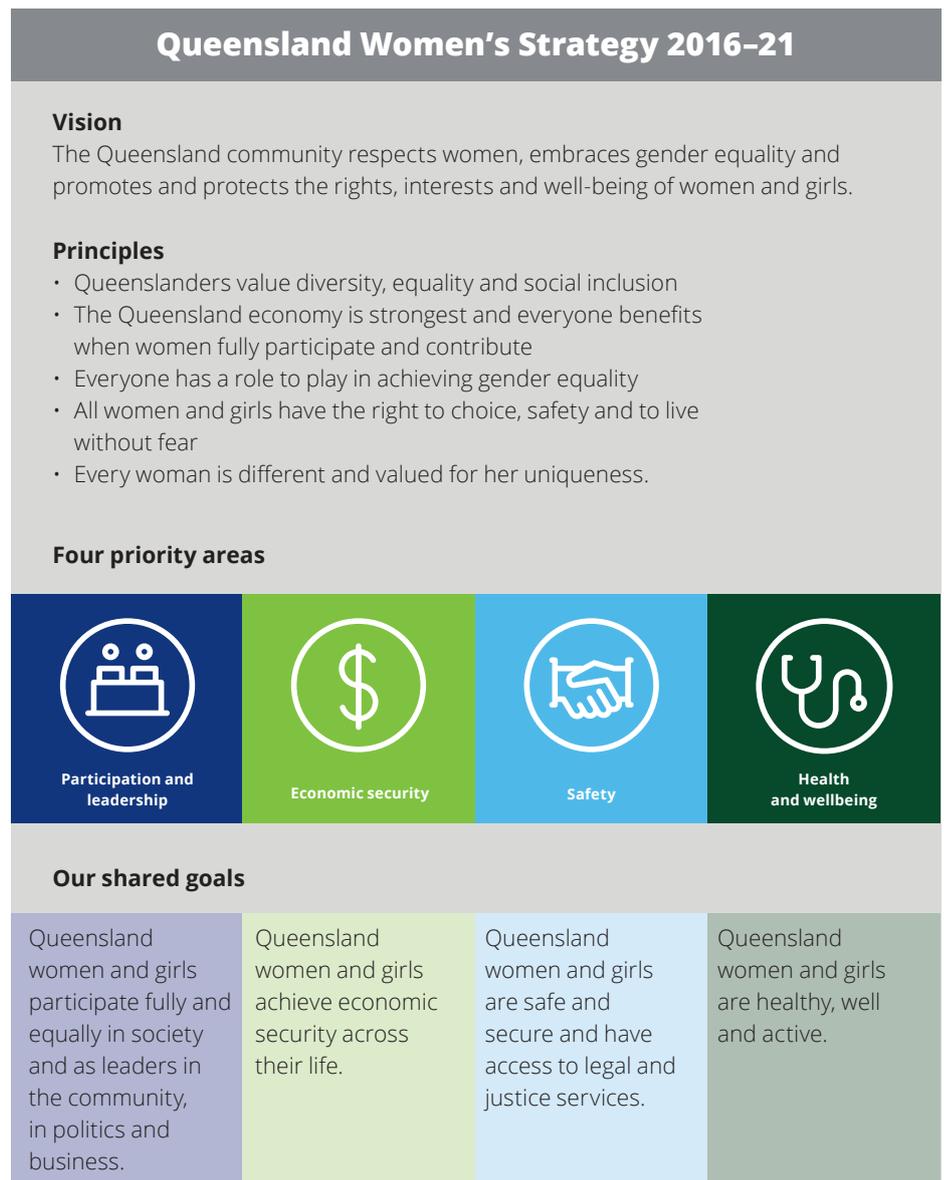
In seeking to address this issue, the Queensland Government released the Queensland Women's Strategy 2016-21 – a framework for government, the private sector and the wider Queensland community to achieve greater gender equality in Queensland. This strategy identifies four priority areas for realising positive change. Each outlines a series of actions that will guide achievement of greater gender equality over the next five years (see Figure 13).

A key element within the 'Participation and leadership' priority area is the Women on Boards Initiative (WOBI). Delivered over three years, this initiative aims to facilitate achievement of the Queensland Government's targets in priority sectors:

- 50 per cent of all new board appointees to Queensland Government bodies to be women
- 50 per cent representation of women on Queensland Government bodies by 2020.

In 2016, Deloitte was engaged by the Queensland Government to assist with key elements of the Women on Boards Initiative, including the publication of the *Toward Gender Parity: Women On Boards Initiative* report.

Figure 13: Queensland Women's Strategy 2016-21



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