



Women in Leadership

Fact sheet

It is crucial to have women in leadership positions. Women represent half of the population in NSW, and their knowledge and talents are as valuable to the State as that of their male counterparts. Women can bring different and diverse skills and expertise to decision making and women in leadership are role models for other women.

Fast facts

- In 2010, 27.4% of NSW parliamentarians were women.
- In 2010, 25% of District Court Judges and 40% of magistrates in NSW were women.
- In 2010, women held 51% of principal positions in NSW Government primary schools and 35.4% of principal positions in secondary schools.
- As at October 2010, in the top 200 companies on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), only 3% of CEOs and 8% of Executive Key Management were women.

Women in politics

NSW State Government

- Women obtained the right to vote in NSW state elections in 1902.
- Women were eligible to stand as candidates for the Legislative Assembly from 1918, and the first woman, Millicent Preston-Stanley, was elected in 1925.
- In 1926, women obtained the right to be admitted to the Legislative Council and two women, Catherine Green and Ellen Webster, were appointed in 1931.¹
- As at October 2010, 25.8% (24 out of 93) of Legislative Assembly positions and 31% (13 out of 42) of Legislative Council positions were held by women.² 35% of the Cabinet is female, including the Premier and Deputy Premier.³

Federal Government

- Women obtained the right to vote and stand as candidates in Commonwealth elections in 1902.
- It was not until 1943 that women were represented in the Australian Parliament, with the election of Dame Enid Lyons to the House of Representatives and Dorothy Tangney to the Senate.
- Australia had the longest lag time between giving women the right to stand as a candidate and the election of the first woman to parliament, out of western democratic countries.⁴
- The first woman to be elected to the House of Representatives from a NSW seat was Jeannette McHugh in 1983. Ms McHugh was also the first NSW woman to be a Minister, serving as the Minister for Consumer Affairs from 1992 to 1996.⁵
- As at October 2010, there were 37 women in the House of Representatives of whom 13 were elected from NSW.⁶ Of the 27 women in the

Senate, 5 women represent NSW.⁷ In all, 24.7% of the House of Representatives and 35.5% of the Senate are women.⁸

- Across Australia 30% of all Federal and State and Territory Parliamentarians are women.⁹

Local Government

- In the NSW 2008 local government elections, 33% of candidates and 27% of councillors elected were women. This representation is largely unchanged from the 1999 and 2004 elections but represents a significant increase since 1987 when the percentage of elected female councillors was only 16%.¹⁰
- In 2008, 23% of mayors in NSW councils were women, who were more likely to be popularly elected (35%) than elected by fellow councillors (21%).¹¹ This is a significant increase from the 1999 and 2004 elections where only 15% and 12% of mayors, respectively, were women.¹²
- To help promote the advancement of women into leadership positions in local government, 2010 was declared the 'Year of Women in Local Government' by Local Government Managers Australia.¹³

Women's leadership in professions and the workforce and representation on boards and committees

Women make up 45.3% of the NSW workforce¹⁴ but continue to be under-represented in leadership and senior positions in public life and have different experiences in employment than men.

Women's leadership in professions and the workforce, and representation on boards and committees

Private Sector

- Women are dramatically under-represented on private sector boards in Australia.

- In the top 200 companies on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX200), only 3% of CEOs and 8% of Executive Key Management are women.¹⁵
- At CEO level, there are 31 male CEOs for every female CEO of ASX200 companies.¹⁶
- Women are dramatically under-represented on private sector boards in Australia – women hold 10% of ASX200 directorships, and just over 46% of companies have no women in their boards.¹⁷
- Women held four ASX200 CEO positions in 2008 compared to six in 2010.¹⁸
- The percentage of ASX200 companies with no women Executive Key Management Personnel has declined slightly to 61.9% in 2010 from 65.1% in 2008.¹⁹

Public Sector

- In 2010, women's representation in the NSW public sector was 60.9% and the number of women in senior positions was 30.8%.²⁰
- Female employees comprise 36% of the Managers occupational group in the NSW public service.²¹
- In 2010, women held 38% of government board positions, and new appointments of women on government boards reached 42%, a substantial increase from 19% in 1995.²² NSW Government boards and committees provide leadership, direction and accountability to Government. They encompass boards of government trading enterprises, marketing boards, regulatory boards, professional registration boards, area health service boards, trusts and advisory councils and committees.
- To encourage and support the representation of women on the more than 1,500 public sector boards, councils and committees in NSW, women are encouraged to register with the NSW Government Register for Boards and Committees – <http://www.boards.dpc.nsw.gov.au/online-registration>.

Law

- In 2009, women comprised 45.3% of solicitors in NSW.²³
- In NSW, 33% of all men, but only 17% of women, in law have incomes over \$150,000; while 17% of all women, compared to 14% of men, have incomes of \$50,000 or less.²⁴
- Of the members of the NSW Bar Association, women represent only 6.8% (40 out of 587) of all members that are Senior Counsel.²⁵
- As at September 2010, only 25% of judges in the NSW District Court²⁶ and 40% of magistrates in the NSW Local Court were women.²⁷
- As at December 2010, only 17.3% of judges in the NSW Supreme Court were women.²⁸

Education

- Women's representation in principal and executive positions in NSW primary and secondary schools has been gradually increasing.
- In 2009, women represented 51% of primary school principals, an increase from 34.7% in 1999.²⁹ Overall, women represented 67.5% of primary teachers in executive positions in 2009, an increase from 56.7% in 1999.³⁰
- In 2009, women represented 35.4% of secondary principal positions, an increase from 22.5% in 1999.³¹
- In 2009, 45.8% of secondary teachers in executive positions were women, an increase from 34.4% in 1999.³²
- Women's representation in senior academic positions in higher education institutions has also been gradually increasing. In 2009 25.7% of academic staff above senior lecturer level in NSW higher education institutions were women, which is comparable to the national figure of 25.8%. This is an increase from 21.1% in NSW and 21.5% nationally in 2005.³³

Barriers to women gaining leadership positions

- There are a number of barriers which contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in the workplace.
- Women make up 45.3% of the NSW workforce.³⁴ However, there are significantly more women than men working part time roles – more than two thirds of people working part time are women. In contrast, almost two thirds of people working full time are men.³⁵
- It is important that women have access to quality part time jobs which have the same entitlements and career prospects as full time work.³⁶
- Outdated gender stereotypes are still present in some organisational cultures, which impact on promotion and job opportunities for women. Almost half of all employees believe that a boys' club exists within their organisation. More than half believe that promotions are not always on merit with almost 40% of women and 30% of men believing that men are promoted more quickly than women.³⁷
- Approximately half of all women feel that part time work and flexible hours should be made more accessible in their workplace.³⁸

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