



Australian Government

Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2016-17

A report on the gender composition
of Australian Government boards

Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2016-17

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Executive Summary

The Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report is prepared annually by the Australian Government Office for Women, and reports on the Government's performance against its gender diversity target.

On 1 July 2016, the Government's new target of women holding 50 per cent of Government board positions overall, and men and women each holding at least 40 per cent of positions on individual boards, came into effect. This new target replaced the previous gender diversity target of women holding 40 per cent of Australian Government board positions overall.

This Report includes details of both whole-of-Government and individual portfolio performance against the Government's gender diversity target in 2016-17. As at 30 June 2017, women held 42.7 per cent of Australian Government board positions. This is the highest outcome since public reporting on the gender balance of Government boards began in 2010-11.

Statistics on new appointments made in 2016-17 show how individual portfolios have progressed towards meeting the target. Of the 729 new appointments across Government made in 2016-17, 46.2 per cent of appointees were women. As at 30 June 2017, women comprised over 50 per cent of new appointments made by seven of the 18 portfolios.

In addition, the number of women across portfolios that hold Chair and Deputy Chair roles are reported. Specifically reporting on the number of women who hold these senior positions is important in understanding women's representation at higher levels of leadership.

The scope of reporting on gender balance on Government boards is determined by the Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2016-17 – Guidelines (see Appendix).

Gender Balance On Australian Government Boards Data

Overall Government Results

As at 30 June 2017, there were 337 boards with a total of 2,508 members. Of these, 1,072 board members (42.7 per cent) were women. This compares to 30 June 2016, when there were 332 boards with a total of 2,351 members, 953 (40.5 per cent) of whom were women.

Table 1 details the number of boards, and the number and percentage of occupied positions, by gender, as at 30 June for the past four years.

Table 1: Gender balance on Australian Government boards

Year	Number of boards	Number of positions	Number of women	Number of men	% women
2017	337	2,508	1,072	1,436	42.7
2016	332	2,351	953	1,395	40.5
2015	361	2,570	1,005	1,565	39.1
2014	387	3,206	1,272	1,934	39.7

Portfolio Results

As at 30 June 2017, two portfolios out of 18 met or exceeded the new 50 per cent gender diversity target. A further 12 portfolios had between 40 and 50 per cent of their board positions held by women (see [Figure 1](#) - page 6 and [Table 2](#) - page 7).



Figure 1: Portfolio performance against the gender diversity target as at 30 June 2017

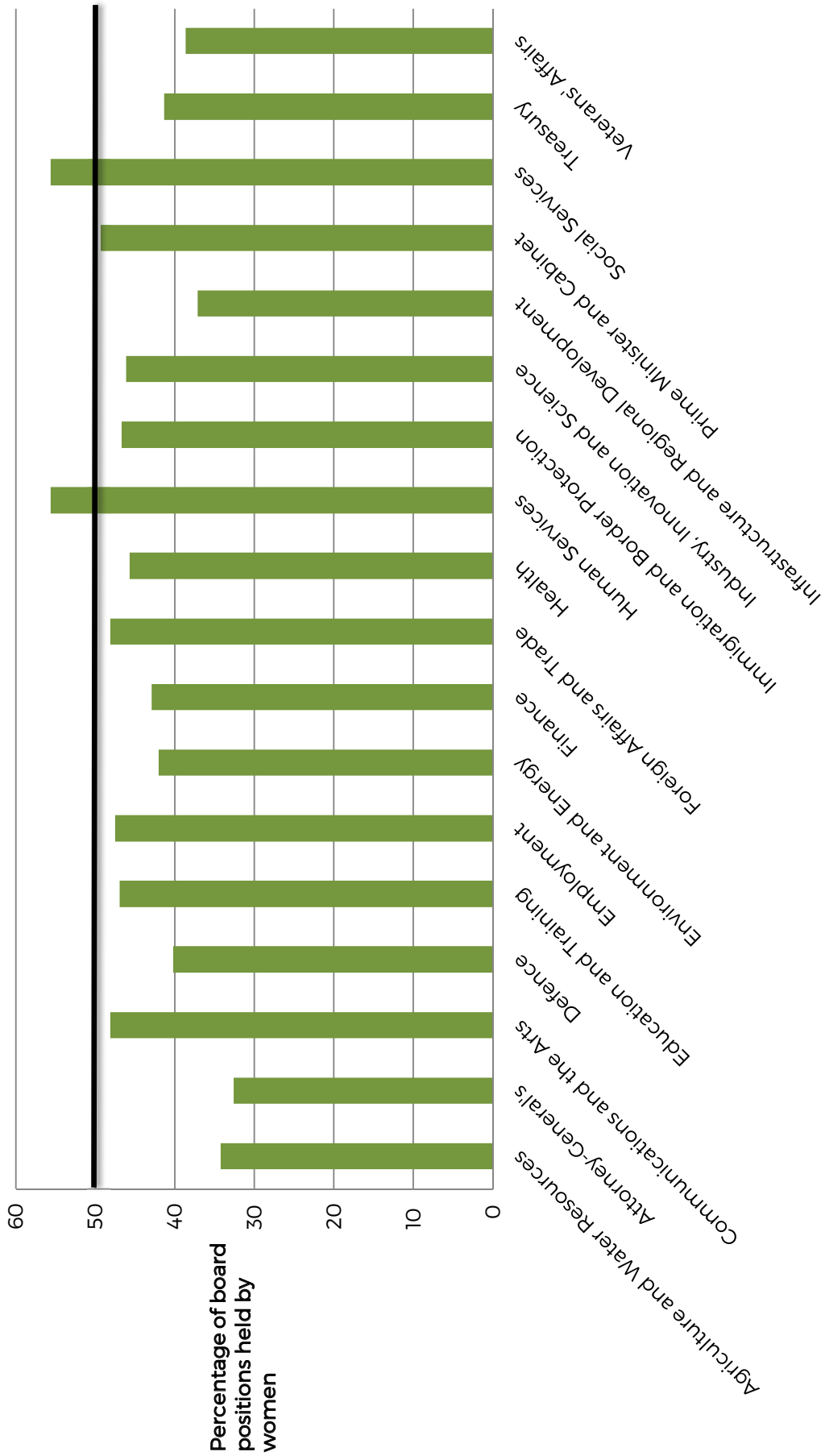


Table 2: Portfolio results as at 30 June 2017

Portfolio	Number of boards	Number of positions	Number of women	% women
Agriculture and Water Resources	18	114	39	34.2
Attorney-General's	8	43	14	32.6
Communications and the Arts	24	162	78	48.1
Defence	18	102	41	40.2
Education and Training	14	81	38	46.9
Employment	7	61	29	47.5
Environment and Energy	17	119	50	42.0
Finance	6	21	9	42.9
Foreign Affairs and Trade	20	162	78	48.1
Health	49	444	203	45.7
Human Services	2	9	5	55.6
Immigration and Border Protection	2	15	7	46.7
Industry, Innovation and Science	22	167	77	46.1
Infrastructure and Regional Development	78	669	248	37.1
Prime Minister and Cabinet	9	71	35	49.3
Social Services	11	81	45	55.6
Treasury	25	143	59	41.3
Veterans' Affairs	7	44	17	38.6
TOTAL	337	2,508	1,072	42.7

New Appointments

New appointments are those appointments made over the 2016-17 financial year that were not reappointments of the same person to the same position.

Of the 729 new appointments made in 2016-17, 46.2 per cent of appointees were women. This is slightly lower than the 2015-16 figure of 46.5 per cent. The individual portfolio results (see [Table 3](#) - page 8) show that in 12 out of 18 portfolios there was an increase in the percentage of new appointees who were women. As at 30 June 2017, women comprised over 50 per cent of new appointments made by seven of the 18 portfolios.



Table 3: Gender balance of 2016-17 new appointments

Portfolio	Number of new appointments	Number of women	% women (2016-17)	% women (2015-16)
Agriculture and Water Resources	19	9	47.4	38.9
Attorney-General's	8	3	37.5	42.9
Communications and the Arts	10	6	60.0	54.5
Defence	39	17	43.6	47.1
Education and Training	33	14	42.4	14.3
Employment	26	18	69.2	30.0
Environment and Energy	15	10	66.7	42.1
Finance	5	2	40.0	40.0
Foreign Affairs and Trade	62	28	45.2	61.4
Health	166	77	46.4	45.2
Human Services	4	3	75.0	40.0
Immigration and Border Protection	7	3	42.9	0.0
Industry, Innovation and Science	63	29	46.0	40.8
Infrastructure and Regional Development	186	72	38.7	45.2
Prime Minister and Cabinet	25	13	52.0	51.2
Social Services	25	16	64.0	66.7
Treasury	32	13	40.6	53.3
Veterans' Affairs	4	4	100.0	53.9
TOTAL	729	337	46.2	46.5

Chair and Deputy Chair Roles

As the most senior board members, the Chair and Deputy Chair are crucial to the functioning of every board. As at 30 June 2017, women held 31.8 per cent of Chair and Deputy Chair positions across all Government boards. This is a decrease of 0.2 percentage points since 2015-16.

Table 4 details the number of Chair and Deputy Chair positions, and the percentage of these positions held by women as at 30 June for the past four years. This data excludes Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director and Managing Director positions.

Table 4: Gender balance of Chair and Deputy Chair roles

Year	Total Chair/Deputy Chair positions	Number of women	Number of men	% women
2017	403	128	275	31.8
2016	425	136	289	32.0
2015	409	123	286	30.1
2014	455	140	315	30.8

External Nominations

The 2016-17 year is the first year that the Office for Women has collected and reported on external nominations (see [Figure 2](#) – page 10).

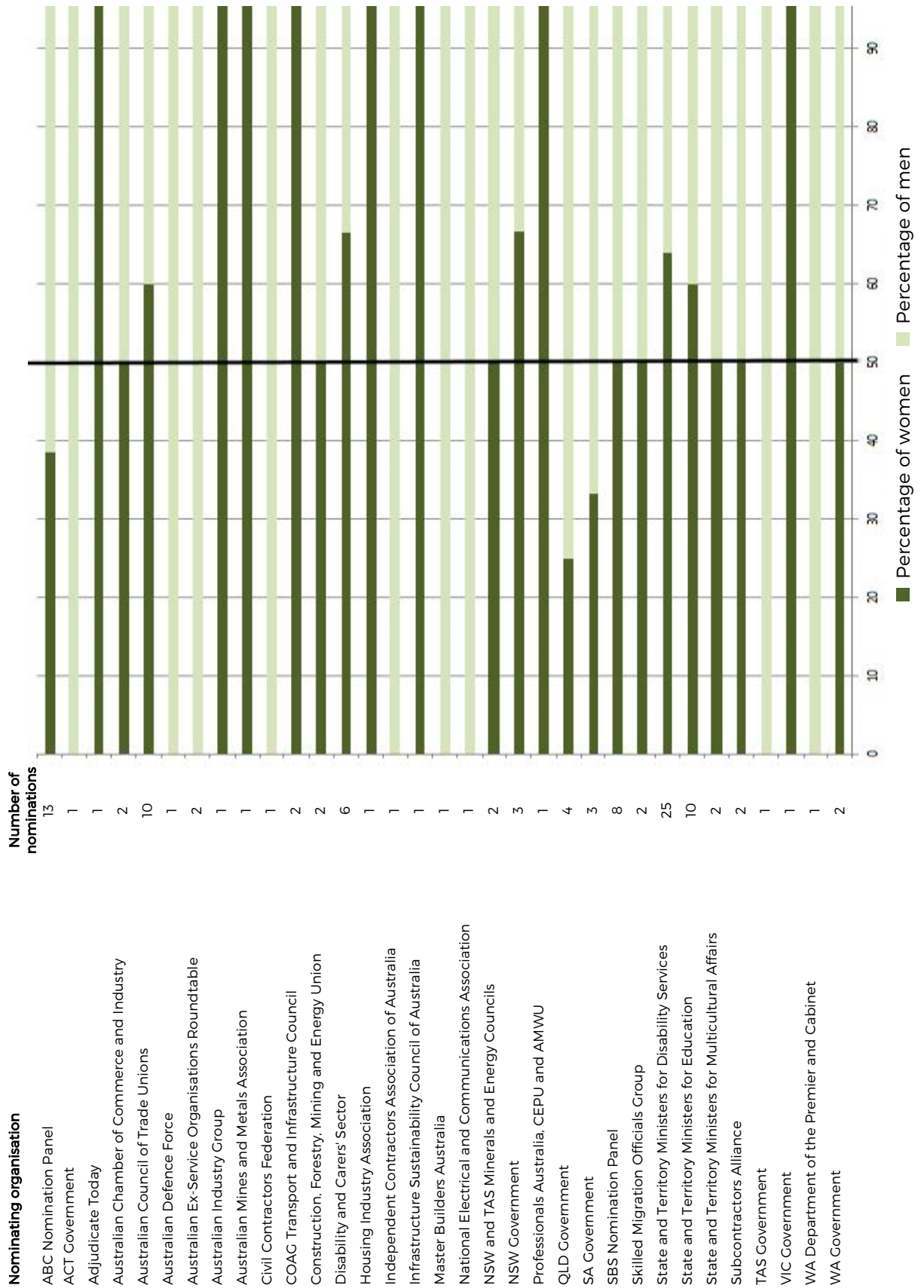
An externally nominated appointment is an appointment made on the nomination of a State or Territory Government, a non-Government body, another Commonwealth Minister, or another portfolio. This includes appointments processes where it is either legislated or accepted practice for nominations to be provided to the Minister. While all nominations are reported, not all nominations made by external bodies resulted in the appointment of the nominee i.e. multiple nominations may be received for the same vacancy.

Of the 729 new appointments made in 2016-17, 115 were appointed following a nomination from an external body. Women accounted for 53 per cent of these nominations.



Figure 2: Percentage of women nominated by external bodies 2016-17

Gender Balance of External Nominations



Appendix

Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2016-17 – Guidelines

Not all appointments to all Government boards are reportable. Boards that are within the scope of the 2016-17 Gender Balance Report are as follows:

- bodies covered by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act);
- ministerial advisory committees;
- review committees where the appointments are made by a minister or Cabinet; and
- Commonwealth statutory authorities.

A list of the relevant entities that are subject to the PGPA Act can be found at:

www.finance.gov.au/publications/flipchart/index.html.

Within this subset of boards, only appointments that have some level of input or sign-off from particular representatives of the Government are included, that is:

- the Prime Minister alone;
- one or more Commonwealth Government Ministers;
- the Governor-General in Council; and
- Cabinet.

The Report excludes appointments that are:

- to a Commonwealth Court or Tribunal;
- formally elected with no formal Government approval;
- nominated by a third party with no formal Government approval;
- of a particular office-holder to a particular board or committee required by legislation (ex officio appointments);
- appointed by an organisation without Government involvement;
- nominated by a State or Territory Government without Commonwealth Government approval;
- nominated by a government of another country without Commonwealth Government approval; or
- acting appointments (appointments of six months or less).

Reportable appointments must have had a person filling the position as at 30 June 2017 to be included.

Employees engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999* or other enabling legislation are not included unless the engagement is for the specific purpose of serving on a Commonwealth decision-making or advisory board, committee, council or similar.

Boards that comprise only one person are not included; however, boards that have several members and only one member is reportable are included.

New Appointments

New appointments are appointments made over the 2016-17 financial year, which fulfil all of the criteria above but do not require the successful candidate to have been formally working in the role at 30 June 2017. These do not include reappointments.

External Nominations

These are nominations for appointments that fulfil the criteria above and are received from a State or Territory Government, a non-Government body, another Commonwealth Minister, or another portfolio. They do not include appointments recommended by a Department, the Chair/CEO/Board of the body itself, or by two or more Ministers where one was the portfolio Minister. The nomination process could be either legislated or accepted practice.



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