



Australian Government

Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards

Report 2018–19



**A report on the gender
composition of Australian
Government boards**

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Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2018–19

978-1-925363-61-6 Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2018-19 (Hardcopy)

978-1-925363-62-3 Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2018-19 (PDF)

978-1-925363-63-0 Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2018-19 (HTML)

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Foreword



As the Minister for Women and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, I am strongly committed to increasing women's representation in leadership and decision making positions, both in Australia and in our neighbouring region.

Gender diversity on boards and in other leadership roles clearly contributes to more effective and innovative decision making and outcomes, stronger stakeholder relationships and increased organisational performance.

Setting goals, as well as tracking and reporting on progress are key to driving change. That is why the Australian Government set a 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.

The Australian Government continues to make good progress towards achieving its gender diversity target. At 30 June 2019, we have achieved the highest rate of women on Australian Government boards since reporting began in 2009 — a total of 47.9 per cent, which is a 2.1 percentage point improvement since 30 June 2018.

I acknowledge and thank my Ministerial colleagues for their sustained efforts to consider gender diversity when making Government board appointments. Their commitment is making a real difference. Seven Government portfolios have now reached or exceeded the 50 per cent target and a further six portfolios are within five percentage points of meeting the target.

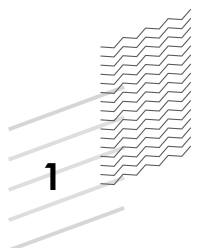
While we are on track to achieve our targets, there is more we can do, particularly in increasing the representation of women in Chair and Deputy Chair positions. As at 30 June 2019, women held only 35 per cent of Chair and Deputy Chair positions. This reflects no change since 30 June 2018.

I will continue to work with my Ministerial colleagues, state and territory governments, businesses and unions to improve gender diversity when making nominations to future Australian Government board positions.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marise Payne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line underneath the name.

Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Women



Executive Summary

The *Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report*, prepared annually by the Australian Government Office for Women, outlines performance against the Australian Government's gender diversity target for Government boards.

The Government is committed to a 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. This target was introduced on 1 July 2016, and replaced the previous gender diversity target of women holding 40 per cent of Australian Government board positions overall.

Since the 2017–18 report, there has been positive progress.

- At 30 June 2019, women held 47.9 per cent across all Australian Government board appointments, an increase of 2.1 percentage points from 30 June 2018.
- Seven of 16 portfolios met or exceeded the 50 per cent gender diversity target: Communications and the Arts; Defence; Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business; Health; Industry, Innovation and Science; Prime Minister and Cabinet; and Social Services. This is up from six portfolios in the last reporting period.
- A further five portfolios are within five percentage points of meeting the target: Agriculture; Attorney-General's; Education; Environment and Energy; and Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- The representation of women on Government boards increased for seven of the 16 portfolios since 30 June 2018.

The findings for 2018–19 also show that further effort is needed.

- There has been no change in the number of women in Chair and Deputy Chair positions across all Government boards, remaining at 35 per cent since the last annual report.
- Of the 656 new appointments made over 2018–19, 52.7 per cent of nominees were women – a decrease of 0.4 percentage points.

During the reporting period, a number of machinery of government changes affected the structure of portfolios. Some of these included changes to the Administrative Arrangements Order (see Appendix A). It is important to note that as a result of these changes to portfolio composition, it is not possible to compare some portfolio data in this report with that of previous years.

The *Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report* — *Guidelines* determine the scope of reporting for portfolios (see Appendix B).

Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Data

Overall Government Results

At 30 June 2019, there were 341 Australian Government boards comprised of 2,313 positions. Women represented 47.9 per cent of all board positions (1,109 board members).

This was an increase of 2.1 percentage points since 30 June 2018. Women then represented 45.8 per cent (1,158 board members) of overall Government board roles, with 339 boards and 2,530 members.

Table 1 details the number of boards, number and percentage of occupied positions by gender, and the percentage point difference from the previous year, since 2014.

Table 1: Gender balance on Australian Government boards at 30 June since 2014

| Year | Number of boards | Number of filled positions | Number of women | Number of men | % Women | Percentage point change since previous year |
|------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------|---|
| 2019 | 341 | 2,313 | 1,109 | 1,204 | 47.9 | +2.1 |
| 2018 | 339 | 2,530 | 1,158 | 1,372 | 45.8 | +3.1 |
| 2017 | 337 | 2,508 | 1,072 | 1,436 | 42.7 | +2.2 |
| 2016 | 332 | 2,351 | 953 | 1,395 | 40.5 | +1.4 |
| 2015 | 361 | 2,570 | 1,005 | 1,565 | 39.1 | -0.6 |
| 2014 | 387 | 3,206 | 1,272 | 1,934 | 39.7 | N/A |

Portfolio Results

At 30 June 2019, seven out of 16 portfolios met or exceeded the 50 per cent gender diversity target: Communications and the Arts; Defence; Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business; Health; Industry, Innovation and Science; Prime Minister and Cabinet; and Social Services.

A further eight portfolios had between 40 and 50 per cent of their board positions held by women: Agriculture; Attorney-General's; Education; Environment and Energy; Finance; Foreign Affairs and Trade; Home Affairs; and Treasury (see Figure 1 and Table 2).

Figure 1: Portfolio performance against the gender diversity target at 30 June 2019

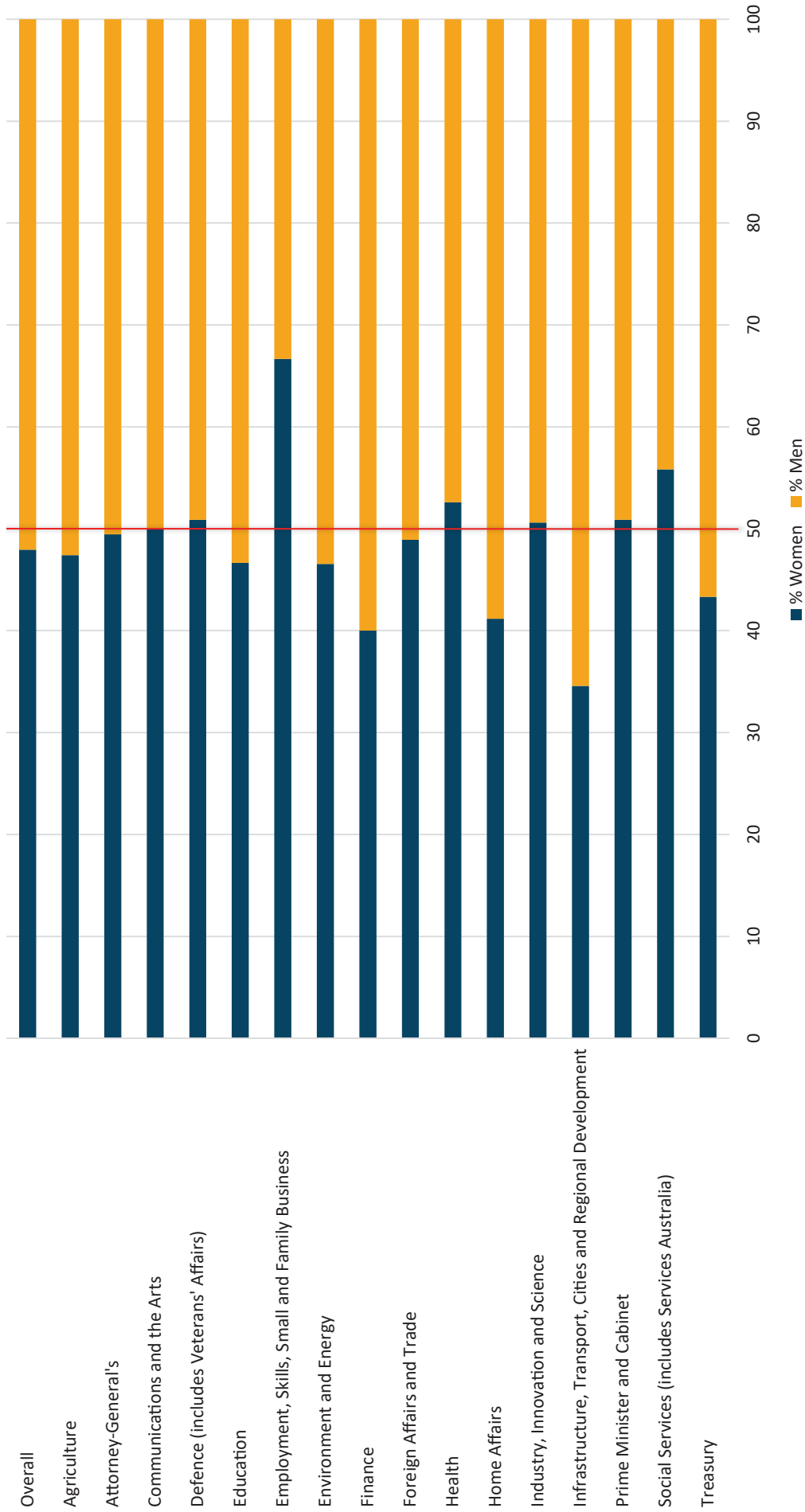


Table 2: Portfolio results at 30 June 2019

| Portfolio | Number of boards | Number of filled positions | Number of women | % Women at 30 June 2019 | % Women at 30 June 2018 | Percentage point difference from 30 June 2018 |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Agriculture | 20 | 135 | 64 | 47.4 | 43.3 | +4.1 |
| Attorney-General's | 14 | 89 | 44 | 49.4 | 43.6 | +5.8 |
| Communications and the Arts | 24 | 176 | 88 | 50.0 | 53.3 | -3.3 |
| Defence ¹ (includes Veterans' Affairs ²) | 26 | 173 | 88 | 50.9 | 45.6 | +5.3 |
| Education | 16 | 105 | 49 | 46.7 | 51.1 | -4.4 |
| Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business | 3 | 6 | 4 | 66.7 | 49.6 | +17.1 |
| Environment and Energy | 17 | 116 | 54 | 46.6 | 49.0 | -2.4 |
| Finance | 6 | 40 | 16 | 40.0 | 42.5 | -2.5 |
| Foreign Affairs and Trade | 24 | 184 | 90 | 48.9 | 50.6 | -1.7 |
| Health | 52 | 540 | 284 | 52.6 | 46.8 | +5.8 |
| Home Affairs | 3 | 17 | 7 | 41.2 | 42.9 | -1.7 |
| Industry, Innovation and Science | 23 | 166 | 84 | 50.6 | 49.6 | +1.0 |
| Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development | 69 | 266 | 92 | 34.6 | 38.0 | -3.4 |
| Prime Minister and Cabinet | 10 | 57 | 29 | 50.9 | 52.9 | -2.0 |
| Social Services ³ (includes Services Australia ⁴) | 10 | 86 | 48 | 55.8 | 55.3 | +0.5 |
| Treasury | 24 | 157 | 68 | 43.3 | 42.3 | +1.0 |
| Total | 341 | 2313 | 1109 | 47.9 | 45.8 | +2.1 |

1 Defence departmental data includes 18 boards, 118 filled positions, 53 women and 44.9% women.

2 Veterans' Affairs departmental data includes 8 boards, 55 filled positions, 35 women and 63.6% women.

3 Social Services departmental data includes 8 boards, 75 filled positions, 43 women and 57.3% women.

4 Services Australia departmental data includes 2 boards, 11 filled positions, 5 women and 45.5% women.



New Appointments

New appointments are those appointments made over the 2018–19 financial year that were not reappointments of the same person to the same position.

Of the 656 new appointments made in 2018–19, 52.7 per cent of appointees were women. This is a decrease since the last annual report when women comprised 53.1 per cent of new appointees.

Table 3 shows at 30 June 2019, in six of the 16 portfolios, women represented 50 per cent or more of new appointments. This is a decrease since the last annual report, where women comprised 50 per cent or more of new appointments in 11 of 16 portfolios.

Table 3: Gender balance of new appointments by portfolios in 2018–19

| Portfolio | Number of new appointments | Number of women | % Women at 30 June 2019 |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Agriculture | 42 | 19 | 45.2 |
| Attorney-General's | 19 | 8 | 42.1 |
| Communications and the Arts | 47 | 20 | 42.6 |
| Defence ⁵ (includes Veterans' Affairs ⁶)* | 40 | 25 | 62.5 |
| Education* | 26 | 14 | 53.8 |
| Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business* | 1 | 1 | 100.0 |
| Environment and Energy | 26 | 11 | 42.3 |
| Finance | 7 | 1 | 14.3 |
| Foreign Affairs and Trade* | 26 | 16 | 61.5 |
| Health* | 243 | 154 | 63.4 |
| Home Affairs | 3 | 1 | 33.3 |
| Industry, Innovation and Science* | 44 | 25 | 56.8 |
| Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development | 85 | 32 | 37.6 |
| Prime Minister and Cabinet | 4 | 1 | 25.0 |
| Social Services ⁷ (includes Services Australia ⁸) | 8 | 3 | 37.5 |
| Treasury | 35 | 15 | 42.9 |
| Total | 656 | 346 | 52.7 |

* Portfolios where women represent 50 per cent or more new appointments

5 Defence data – from 23 new appointments, 12 were women representing 52.2% women.

6 Veterans' Affairs data – from 17 new appointments, 13 were women representing 76.5% women.

7 Social Services data – from 6 new appointments, 3 were women representing 50% women.

8 Services Australia data – from 2 appointments, there were no women.

Chair and Deputy Chair Roles

As the most senior board members, the Chair and Deputy Chair positions are crucial to the functioning of every board.

At 30 June 2019, women held 35 per cent of Chair and Deputy Chair positions across all Government boards. This result shows no change since 2017–18.

Table 4 details the number of Chair and Deputy Chair positions, the gender balance and the percentage of women in these positions at 30 June, since 2014. This data excludes Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director and Managing Director positions.

Table 4: Gender balance of Chair and Deputy Chair roles

| Year | Chair and Deputy Chair positions | Number of women | Number of men | % Women | Percentage point change since previous year |
|------|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------|---|
| 2019 | 408 | 143 | 265 | 35.0 | 0 |
| 2018 | 389 | 136 | 253 | 35.0 | +3.2 |
| 2017 | 403 | 128 | 275 | 31.8 | -0.2 |
| 2016 | 425 | 136 | 289 | 32.0 | +1.9 |
| 2015 | 409 | 123 | 286 | 30.1 | -0.7 |
| 2014 | 455 | 140 | 315 | 30.8 | N/A |

External Nominations

An externally nominated appointment is one 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, e.g. multiple nominations may be received for the same vacancy.

Of the 656 new appointments made in 2018–19, 64 women were nominated from an external body, 34.4 per cent (see Figure 2). This is a decrease of 9.6 percentage points since 2017–18, when women accounted for 44 per cent of external nominations.

Figure 2: Number and percentage of women nominated by external bodies in 2018–19



Appendix A

Since 30 June 2018, Administrative Arrangements Orders have changed on three occasions:

28 August 2018

- The Department of Human Services, now Services Australia, became part of the Social Services portfolio.
- The Jobs and Innovation portfolio was dissolved. The Department of Jobs and Small Business and the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science were established.

4 April 2019

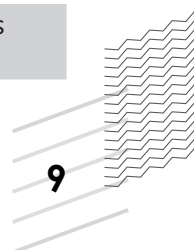
- The transfer of responsibility for the Early Release of Superannuation Benefits on Compassionate Grounds Program from the Social Services portfolio to the Treasury portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for sections of the *Narcotic Drugs Act 1967* from the Home Affairs portfolio to the Health portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for the Commonwealth Central Authority function under the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption from the Attorney-General's portfolio to the Social Services portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for the National Office for Child Safety from the Social Services portfolio to the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio.

29 May 2019

- The transfer of responsibility for industrial relations from the Employment portfolio to the Attorney-General's portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for vocational education and training, and apprenticeships from the Education portfolio to the Employment portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for migrant adult education from the Education portfolio to the Home Affairs portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for settlement services for refugees and humanitarian migrants from the Social Services portfolio to the Home Affairs portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for whole of government service delivery from the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio to the Social Services portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for population policy from the Infrastructure portfolio to the Treasury portfolio.
- The transfer of responsibility for housing affordability from the Social Services portfolio to the Treasury portfolio.

In addition to these changes, five departments were renamed:

| Old title | New title |
|---|--|
| Department of Agriculture and Water Resources | Department of Agriculture |
| Department of Education and Training | Department of Education |
| Department of Human Services | Services Australia |
| Department of Jobs and Small Business | Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business |
| Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development |



Appendix B

Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report — Guidelines

Not all appointments to Government boards qualify for gender balance reporting. Boards that are within the scope of the 2018–19 Gender Balance Report are:

- 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 Commonwealth Minister or Cabinet and
- Commonwealth statutory authorities.

A list of the relevant entities subject to the PGPA Act is at: www.finance.gov.au/government/managing-commonwealth-resources/structure-australian-government-public-sector/pgpa-act-flipchart-list

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 2019 to be included in this report.

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 2018–19 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 2019. 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.

