

# On Board

Email Newsletter of the Ministry of Women's Affairs Nominations Service

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August 2009

Nga mihi mahana ki a koutou katoa. Welcome to the August 2009 edition of On Board.

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- Governance advice from Māori Women Leaders Workshop
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## **A message from Hon Pansy Wong, Minister of Women's Affairs**

Greetings to all On Board readers. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on my thinking and priorities with regard to women in leadership roles.

As I mentioned to you in On Board last December, promoting women in leadership is one of three top priorities for me. Women do have the skills and talents necessary for boards and New Zealand's success depends on making full use of these. I want to see a significant increase in the numbers of women on boards and in senior management in both the state and private sectors, and I have strongly advocated this position to the private sector.

We started towards this goal earlier this year with the launch of the *Women on Boards* business case by the Prime Minister, Hon John Key. The *Women on Boards* report compiles the main international evidence on the connection between women on boards and company performance, and demonstrates that making better use of women's skills and talents in the boardroom is good for business. You can find more information about the report in this issue of On Board.

This evidence also applies to the state sector, and the government wants to fully utilise the skills offered by women. I have asked the Nominations Service to develop new strategies to get even more women on to state sector boards and committees. The launch of *Women on Boards* was just the beginning and I intend to keep the momentum going in both the private and state sectors.

The Ministry is pleased to hear from you and I have met many of you as I have travelled around the country. I continue to be impressed by the contribution you can

and do make to the success of your families, your communities and the New Zealand economy. Some of you have expressed your frustration that registering with the Nominations Service has not yet resulted in a state sector board role, but please be aware that there is strong competition for these roles. In the meantime I encourage you to be active in seeking out and pursuing your own governance opportunities in the state and private sectors, and within your communities and professional associations.

I am pleased to see that women are now being more active at initiating and attending networking events. Often I come across women who are hesitant about promoting themselves, and this has to change. We will continue to work on your behalf, but you must also be prepared to back yourselves!

Working together we can maximise women's contribution to New Zealand's society and economy.

**Hon Pansy Wong**  
**Minister of Women's Affairs**

## **Women on Boards: Why women on company boards are good for business**

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Women's Affairs recently launched the publication '*Women on Boards: Why women on company boards are good for business*', as part of an initiative to increase the participation of women on private sector company boards.

*Women on Boards* presents the main international evidence on the connection between women on boards and company performance. For instance, evidence from one international study showed that the Fortune 500 companies that had the most women board members were around 50 percent more profitable than those with the least. *Women on Boards* also considers practical ways that companies can gain from having a more diverse mix of members on their boards.

*Women on Boards* was developed in co-operation with Business New Zealand and the Institute of Directors in New Zealand. Director of the Ministry of Women's Affairs Nominations Service, Pamela Cohen, notes that the launch is 'just the start of our work. Together with our partner organisations we seek an increase in the number of women on private sector boards.'

If you would like to read *Women on Boards*, the full report is available on the Ministry of Women's Affairs website at [www.mwa.govt.nz/women-on-boards](http://www.mwa.govt.nz/women-on-boards). [CONFIRM LINK]



## **Māori Women's Leadership Workshop**

At a recent workshop hosted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, participants discussed ideas for increasing the number of Māori women on boards in the public and private sectors. They also shared advice for current and potential women directors about how to get on a board, planning a career in governance, and how to be an effective director.

Several participants pointed out that your reputation is your most important asset in governance. You need to take control of your 'brand' and manage it. The way you behave in and out of the boardroom will determine your effectiveness and reputation as a director. Take your time and don't react instinctively – think about what type of person you want to be known as in the future.

A compilation of this information and advice about working in governance will be available on our website in early October. We will also provide a link to this document in the December issue of On Board.

## **Advice on how to present your CV**

Recently we received feedback from some of the agencies that approach us for nominees for government boards and committees. These agencies can look at literally hundreds of CVs during an appointment process. The key issue is having a clear CV that provides a clear impression of who you are. This can help the process of creating shortlists of suitable nominees.

It's important to make your CV stand out, and to present the information in a way that makes it easy for the agencies to use. In particular, their feedback recommended that you describe your unique qualities and attributes, and that you provide a significant amount of detail about the organisations that you're involved with.

### **1. Your CV should emphasise what makes you unique**

Your CV should quickly give the reader a sense of the benefits you would bring to a board. One way of doing this is to list the skills and experiences that make you unique at the front of your CV. These qualities include:

- rare skills that only you (or very few people) have
- your most significant governance and work roles
- achievements
- any awards or titles.

Anyone can be taught hard skills, such as technical or administrative procedures. The idea is to highlight what else makes you special.

It can also be important to describe your connections and involvement in your community, areas of interest, professional life, cultural activities and sports roles. These networks make you unique, and are of particular interest to people making appointment decisions about community-based roles. For example, you can distinguish "My professional involvement is in..." from "My broader interests are in promoting the arts and supporting children's development."

## **2. CV should go into detail about the organisations you're involved with**

Remember that the people reading your CV aren't necessarily familiar with the organisations you're involved with.

It's extremely helpful to go into specifics about the committees, organisations, and companies you're involved with. The idea is to clearly illustrate the roles you've held and the kind of experience you have had. Some useful details to provide include:

- What is the scale of the organisation? Does it operate at the level of your community or city, or is it a regional or national operation?
- What exactly does the organisation do? What does its daily work involve? What is its strategy or purpose?
- How many people are involved in the organisation? How many people are employed by it and how many people does it help or work with?
- What is the organisation's annual budget and (if appropriate) its revenue and profit?
- What have been your most significant results in the organisation? What have been your significant achievements during your involvement with it?
- What responsibilities do you have in the organisation? If you're a manager, how many staff do you manage? What sort of budget are you responsible for?
- If you have held other roles, what are they? Coach? Mentor? Facilitator? Organiser? Supporter?

You may have been a member of an iwi-based Trust or body that funds educational scholarships or other initiatives. You may have been a member of a local interest group or a nationwide network of some sort. This could be anything from your school's PTA, to your local marae, to a nationwide body. Providing some simple details helps readers understand what experience and skills you have and what your interests are.

For example:

President, Karori branch of Plunket (2006-2008). I led the local branch of this nationwide organisation, and achieved a significant growth in membership and revenue generated from our annual street appeal.

Secretary, FOE [Fight the Obesity Epidemic] (2001-2004). This is a small interest group based in Wellington but with a nationwide outreach programme via the internet. I helped establish the terms of reference, the web presence and the strategy for us to reach decision-makers and thought leaders.

## **Recent appointments of women to state sector boards and committees**

Congratulations to all the women recently appointed to state sector boards and committees. They include:

*Dentists Disciplinary Tribunal*

Moana Avia  
Jennifer Robson

*New Zealand Lotteries Commission*

Judy Kirk

*Commissioner for Financial Advisers*

Annabel Cotton

*Real Estate Agents Authority*

Kristy McDonald as chair

*National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee*

Dr Virginia Williams as chair

*Broadcasting Standards Authority*

Mary Shanahan

*New Zealand Trade and Enterprise*

Julie Christie

*Nursing Council of New Zealand*

Patricia Seymour

*National Ethics Advisory Committee (NEAC)*

Dr Lorna Dyll  
Central Regional Ethics Committee  
Dr Nina Sawicki (as health practitioner member)  
Susan Corbett (as community representative member)

*Dental Council*

Minnie McGibbon (as health practitioner member)  
Leslea Eilenberg (as health practitioner member)  
Wendy Tozer (as lay member)

*Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa*

Anne Rush

*Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*

Miria Louise Pomare

*New Zealand Film Commission Board*

Patsy Reddy as chair  
Rhiannon Evans

*Sport and Recreation New Zealand*  
Katie Sadlier  
Waimarama Taumauu

*Ministerial Review of Electricity Market Performance*  
Miriam Dean

*Capital Development Taskforce*  
Mary Holm

*Legal Aid Review*  
Dame Margaret Bazley as chair

*High Cost Highly Specialised Medicines Review Panel*  
Joy Quigley

*The Correspondence School Board of Trustees*  
Jacky Stafford

*University of Canterbury Council*  
Sue McCormack  
Catherine Drayton

*University of Waikato Council*  
Jennifer Vernon

*Review of the Holidays Act 2003 Ministerial Advisory Group*  
Helen Kelly

*Taskforce on Whanau-centred Initiatives*  
Suzanne Sniveley  
Di Grennell  
Nancy Tuaine  
Linda Grennell

*National War Memorial Advisory Council*  
Fiona Cassidy

*Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd*  
Dr Susan Macken as chair  
Liz Hickey

*Landcare Research New Zealand Ltd*  
Tania Simpson

*New Zealand Forest Research Institute Ltd (trading as Scion)*  
Alison Andrew

*Te Maori Manaaki Taonga Trust Board*  
Rose Evans

## Keeping in touch

We're always happy to talk with you either by phone or in person about your CV and your governance goals. If you are going to be in Wellington and would like to meet, then give us a call on (04) 916-5814.

### The Team

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If you have any queries about the information in this newsletter, or the Nominations Service in general, please contact Sean or Pamela.