

On Board

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

December 2008

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

In this edition:

- Message from the new Minister of Women's Affairs
- Results from the 2007 gender stocktake of state sector boards and committees
- Ministry of Health vacancies in 2009
- Transitioning into governance – an article by Paddy Austin
- Frequently Asked Questions about the Nominations Service
- Governance training opportunity
- Recent appointments of women to state sector boards and committees
- Changes to the Nominations team

A message from Hon Pansy Wong, the new Minister of Women's Affairs

Greetings to all On Board readers, and thank you for your ongoing contribution to leadership in the state sector.

I have been Minister of Women's Affairs for only a few weeks, but I have long supported women's participation in leadership in business and other areas. New Zealand's success depends on making full use of women's talents, because we make up more than half of the population. I am keen to take that message strongly to the private sector, where only 8.65 percent of board positions on New Zealand's top 100 listed companies are held by women, as well as continuing to push towards the goal of equal participation of men and women on state sector boards and committees.

One of the goals set in 2004, when Cabinet endorsed the Action Plan for New Zealand Women, is to reach the target of having 50 percent of state sector appointments being women by 2010. Currently the result is 41.5 percent, which I found disappointing because it is unlikely that within two years the 8.5 percent gap can be reached. I need to work with you and the Ministry to devise strategies to resolve this predicament.

One thing that struck me from the Ministry's initial briefing is how strong the business case is for having more women – and more diversity generally – on boards. The equity argument is strong too, but it is evidence of improved profitability that will convince business. According to the 2007 study by USA research organisation Catalyst, companies with the highest percentage of women board directors outperformed those with the least women directors by 53 percent for return on equity, 42 percent for return on sales, and 66 percent for return on invested capital.

Other studies back this up, showing a strong correlation between gender diversity on boards and company performance. We have to find new ways to take this message to private sector decision-makers.

At the same time I will be taking a very active interest in appointments in the state sector to ensure that your talents are recognised.

I wish you a safe, happy and relaxing Christmas and New Year break and a prosperous 2009.

Hon Pansy Wong
Minister of Women's Affairs

Our New Minister

Hon Pansy Wong is the Minister of Women's Affairs and the Minister for Ethnic Affairs. She is also the Associate Minister for ACC and the Associate Minister of Energy and Resources.

Pansy was born in Shanghai, China and grew up in Hong Kong. She moved to Christchurch in 1974, where she graduated from the University of Canterbury with a Master of Commerce (Honours).

In 1989, she entered politics as a Canterbury Regional Councillor, and in 1996 she entered Parliament as National List MP and New Zealand's first Asian MP. Pansy became the MP for Botany in 2008, the first Asian New Zealander to win an electoral seat.

2007 Gender Stocktake of State Sector Boards and Committees

In addition to nominating women for boards, the Nominations Service monitors progress towards the goal of gender balance on government boards and committees by 2010. We now have the results of the latest annual stocktake as of 20 December 2007.

There was a slight decrease in the percentage of women on boards and committees in the year from December 2006 to December 2007.

Whole of Government	December 2006	December 2007
Total boards and committees	412	412
Total Ministerial appointees	2675	2715
Women Ministerial appointees	1131	1128
Percentage of women	42.3%	41.5%

The results show that a gradual increase towards gender balance cannot be relied on. Sustained effort is needed to increase the participation of women on government boards and committees.

MWA will work closely with our new Minister and with other government agencies to help increase the participation of women, and we look forward to providing plenty of great candidates over the year ahead.

Vacancy Alert! Ministry of Health committee and council vacancies 2009 – Application deadline 30 January 2009

The Ministry of Health recently advertised a significant number of 2009 council and committee vacancies.

We are in the process of contacting women on our database who broadly fit the criteria to invite them to apply for one or more of these roles. If you are interested in governance roles in the health sector, and we haven't been in touch, then please check out the council and committee vacancies on the Ministry of Health website by clicking on this link, '[Upcoming Appointments and Current Vacancies](#)'.

Transitioning into governance By Paddy Austin

This is the first in a series of articles where women on our database share their advice and experiences in governance

Paddy Austin has contributed our first article, which talks about moving from senior management into governance roles. Paddy is a Principal of Francis Group Consulting Ltd. She has been accredited by the Institute of Directors, and was recently admitted as a Fellow of the Institute. Paddy is a University of Canterbury Councillor, and a member of the board of its commercialisation company, Canterprise.

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There is no shortage of commentary on the need for women to be represented on boards in greater numbers. All very well – but how do you get onto a board? Having a professional qualification helps. But what of the woman who is more of a generalist and comes from a CEO background, or communications, or HR (the so-called 'soft skills')?

It helps to join professional groups like the Institute of Directors, which has some excellent courses and good networking opportunities. Databases are available for you to register with: the MWA, CCMAU and IOD ones being the most prominent. Many recruitment consultants maintain databases too, so it's good to contact them.

And getting experience is a must. It might be voluntary to start with: school boards and charitable trusts are traditional starting points. You learn excellent governance skills, and often meet some useful contacts.

I am a classic example of a bundle of 'soft skills'. And I had to do it the hard way: hours of voluntary governance in situations where good governance is not only a good idea – it's essential for survival!

I got my first professional board appointment in 1997, about ten years after starting down the voluntary path. After that, as a City Councillor, I had access to some excellent board opportunities, eventually ending up as Chair of a company with \$2b of assets. I have to say that it was a steep learning curve to go from my non-financial background to Chair of such a significant company. Crash courses on accounting for non-accountants and, more importantly, on-the-job training from my colleagues on that board, while I was still an ordinary board member, were crucial.

So I guess it's possible to go from generalist to senior director, if you're focused, determined to add value and prepared to put in some hard yards. A key thing is that you have to be prepared to learn, and you must be prepared to ask the questions. Finding a mentor who has the skills that you don't makes the difference between a director who's going to add increasing value and one who will remain trapped in her original skill set.

Anyway, I look forward to a time when the process is more open to diversity, and it's easier for women than it has been. And to a time when communication, people management, general facilitation and common sense are no longer known as soft skills!

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If you have a story or advice to share, we invite you to contribute. Please contact Pamela Cohen on cohen@mwa.govt.nz.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Nominations Service

Q: *I've been on the Nominations Service database for a while and haven't yet been contacted about a board role. Is it worth my while to update my CV?*

A: We get a lot of different kinds of requests for board and committee roles over time. It's important for us to have current information so we can identify you when opportunities do arise. In addition, if you tell us about any experience you've gained, it becomes more likely that we'll be able to find a role for you.

If your CV hasn't changed in the last few years, all you need to do is notify us that the information is still the same, and we will re-date your CV.

We will notify you about non-profit board vacancies from time to time. We also share news about relevant training courses, research and other governance resources through this email newsletter – so it's worthwhile to keep your contact details up to date.

Q: *What is an 'invitation to apply'? Does it mean the Nominations Service recommends that I apply for a role?*

A: We sometimes email women on our database inviting them to apply directly for a position on a board or committee. There are a variety of reasons we do this, including:

- a role has been publicly advertised and we want to draw it to your attention (e.g. the Ministry of Health vacancies mentioned above); or
- some processes require that candidates fill in an application form, which we can't do on your behalf; or
- a role has broad application criteria, making a large number of the women on our database eligible, so we want applicants to self-select.

Our aim is to draw opportunities to your attention which may be of interest, and for which you may be suitable. With invitations to apply, the decision about whether to apply is yours. You're under no obligation to follow up on an invitation from us, and there's no need for you to inform us if you do decide to apply for a role.

Performance in the Boardroom - qualification and skills enhancement training for company directors

Jens Mueller, Associate Professor for Entrepreneurship and Strategy at Waikato Business School, and company director Sandy Maier, have developed the Qualified Director Course. The course will be offered in Wellington on March 2, 3, and 4 (full days) and April 3 (half day) in 2009.

During this 3-and-a-half day programme, practitioners from leading New Zealand and global firms will present a tool kit for existing and aspiring company directors. This seminar will prepare new directors for their duties, tell owners and shareholders how to create effective boards, and boost the existing abilities of sitting directors.

Successful completion of the 3-and-a-half day seminar entitles participants to the Qualified Director award, Level 1.

For further information you can [click on this link](#) to find out more about the recently held Auckland Seminar, or you can contact Lynn Harris at the EMA:

- DDI: (04) 470-9889
- Mobile: (027) 232-4875
- Email: lynnh@emacentral.org.nz

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:

Genesis Power Ltd

Sara Lunam

New Zealand Railways Corporation

Linda Constable

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra Board

Colleen Marshall

New Zealand Lotteries Commission

Laura Humphreys as deputy presiding member

Sandra Geange

Tertiary Education Commission Board

Deirdre Dale

ACC Board

Sara Lunam

New Zealand Venture Investment Fund Board

Anne Blackburn

Waitangi Tribunal

Dr Aroha Harris

Tania Simpson

Earthquake Commission Board

Linda Robertson

Psychologists Board

Beverley Burns

Perinatal and Maternity Mortality Review Committee

Anja Hale

National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability (National Health Committee)

Kitty Chiu

Dr Sheila Williams

Ethics Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ECART)

Kate Davenport as chair

Cancer Control Council

Professor Lynnette Ferguson

Nursing Council of New Zealand

Julia Hennessy

Deborah Rowe

Health Research Council of New Zealand

Professor Linda Smith

Medical Council of New Zealand

Judith Fyfe

Dr Karen Martyn

Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board

Caryl Blomkvist

Physiotherapy Board

Maree Grbin

Northern X Regional Ethics Committee

Pauline Hopa

Northern Y Regional Ethics Committee

Raewyn Sporle

Crown Health Financing Agency Board

Pip Dunphy

June McCabe

National Ethics Advisory Committee

Dr Ann Richardson

Dr Elizabeth Smales

South Canterbury District Health Board

Nicola Ann Hornsey

*New Zealand Injury Prevention
Strategy Stakeholder Reference Group*
Molly Pardoe

*New Zealand Walking Access
Commission*
Maggie Bayfield
Dr Kay Booth
Barbara Stuart

Northland Conservation Board
Robin Lieffering

*West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation
Board*
Kim Thomas

Southland Conservation Board
Helen McPhail

*Library and Information Advisory
Commission Nga Kaiwhakamarama i
nga Kohikohinga Korero*
Haromi Williams

New Zealand Blood Service Board
Tania Kingi
Anne Urlwin as chair

*New Zealand Registered Architects
Board*
Anna-Marie Chin

*Board of Inquiry on the Proposed New
Zealand Coastal Policy Statement*
Kathryn Edmonds

Film and Literature Board of Review
Dr Josephine Baddeley as deputy
president
Judith Fyfe
Andrea Haines

*New Zealand Horticultural Export
Authority Board*
Ingrid Hofma

*Western Institute of Technology at
Taranaki Council*
Mary Bourke
Hinerangi Edwards
Marise James

*Advisory Committee on Official
Statistics*
Ria Earp

*Hauauru Ma Raki Wind Farm Board of
Inquiry*
Dr Diane Menzies
Gina Rangī

*Lottery Environment and Heritage
Distribution Committee*
Lois Livingston

*Chartered Professional Engineers
Council*
Elena Trout

Nga Whenua Rahui Committee
Mavis Mullins

Families Commission
Dr Jan Pryor as Chief Commissioner

*Family Violence Death Review
Committee*
Wendy Davis as chair
Ngaroma Grant
Brenda Hynes
Dr Alison Towns
Vaoga Mary Watts

*National Animal Welfare Advisory
Committee*
Karen Phillips

Copyright Tribunal
Susan Frankel as chair

National Kaitiaki Group
Beverley Gibson
Dr Matire Harwood

State Housing Appeal Authority
Selma Scott

Changes to the Nominations team

We're pleased to welcome two new members to our team, following the departure of Chris Gilman to live in Edinburgh.

Steve Hickey has been working with the Nominations Service since 2006. He first joined us as a contractor hired to write and edit profiles on our database, and then became a part-time Executive Assistant.

Steve has a background in film and television. He wrote and directed a feature film in 2000, and co-created its spin-off TV series in 2002.

Clare Needham has worked as a solicitor at Bell Gully, specialising in employment law, and as an in-house solicitor for Penguin Books in London.

Upon return to New Zealand, she was a research assistant to the Principal Youth Court Judge, where she researched and wrote the first Youth Court Judges' Handbook, which includes guidelines on Youth Court procedure, offences, remedies and sentencing. During this period, she also studied creative writing at Victoria University.

She then moved into arts management, managing and marketing a number of major theatre productions over the past four years.

Steve and Clare have been appointed as part-time Nominations Assistants. They will usually be the people contacting you about upcoming vacancies.

Keeping in touch

We're always happy to talk with you either by phone or in person about your CV and your potential for nomination. 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.

If you do not wish to receive *On Board* in future please email molloy@mwa.govt.nz with 'No thanks' in the subject line and we will take you off our mailing list.

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