

# On board

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

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September 2006

Welcome to the Suffrage Day edition of On Board.

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## **A Suffrage Day message from the Minister**

### ***Championing diversity***

*Making the best use of the whole talent of our nation.*

Today is Suffrage Day, marking 113 years since New Zealand women became the first in the world to be able to vote in national elections. To mark the day I'd like to acknowledge the huge contribution women already make to the New Zealand economy and to highlight three new initiatives in the private sector that aim to see women's talent better used at board level.

You are probably aware that while the state sector is well on its way to achieving the government's target of equal representation on state sector boards (thanks, in no small part to the Nominations Service), women's representation on private sector boards is much lower – at around 7% for top 100 NZX listed companies.

Although causation is difficult to prove, a number of studies have found a correlation between stronger financial performance and better representation of women on boards. For example, a 2001 Catalyst study of 353 Fortune 500 companies found that the group of companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams experienced better financial performance than the group of companies with the lowest women's representation: return on equity was 35 percent higher, and total return to shareholders was 34 percent higher. (Catalyst (2004) *The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity.*)

While not looking for ways of utilising the skills of 50 percent of the population doesn't make good business sense, knowing this and changing it are two different things.

That is why I am delighted to see some champions of diversity emerging in the private sector. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) has been investigating whether there are opportunities to work with the private sector to increase opportunities for women to serve on commercial boards. In the course of that work it has become aware of three private sector web-based director brokerage proposals in different stages of development

The Nominations Service is in close touch with the people developing these databases, and as soon as they have firm details will let everyone know how and where to register.

I welcome these developments and have no doubt that businesses will benefit from the increase in board skills, knowledge and experience that will result. I can think of no better way to celebrate the memory of the suffragists who fought to gain women the right to vote than to support those who seek to ensure women's voices are heard used in the boardroom as well as in the House.

Lianne Dalziel  
**Minister of Women's Affairs**

### **Private Sector Women Director Board Recruitment Opportunities**

As the Minister mentioned in her message, we are closely in touch with the people developing private sector nominations databases, and are keen to support them.

The proposals have arisen out of concerns that women are not well represented on private sector boards. As database developer Sandy Maier says 'such sites will greatly facilitate successfully placing women on boards, because women tend to be well represented in SMEs, under-represented in many traditional search processes, and not currently easily self-registrable or identifiable through open data bases of potential candidates.'

All three proposals are aimed at providing efficient and cost-effective recruitment services for women. They are:

The Auckland Chamber of Commerce (Chief Executive, Michael Barnett), in partnership with the EEO Trust (Executive Director, Philippa Reed), are developing a web-based brokerage service to connect women with small to medium enterprises seeking directors. They will be providing information on governance best practice, and news about director development opportunities.

Sandy Maier and Jens Mueller are building a web-based service aimed at matchmaking between director candidates and organisations searching for new board talent. The site will provide for self registration of interested potential directors, full key word search capacity for companies seeking candidates and state-of-the-art control over security and confidentiality.

Rosanne Hawarden, managing director of Computer Support Enzed Ltd and Syspro New Zealand Ltd, is mounting an internet-based initiative, called RealContacts for Directors. This system opens a channel of contact directly between hiring boards and prospective directors.

We congratulate the initiators of these three proposals!

### ***What happens next?***

When the developers are ready to launch later this year, we will email you with information about how and when you can sign up.

When the sites are ready, we will email you with:

- the date they go live
- their web address and how to contact them
- what they require from women who intend to register.

If a private sector directorship is what you want, via the databases you will be able to directly connect to the board recruitment market.

### ***The IOD Board Appointment Service***

Also remember there is an existing avenue for private sector appointments. The Institute of Directors (IOD) has a well established Board Appointment Service. The service searches its database of members to establish a 'long list' which is discussed with the organisation, and then candidates for interview are identified. This database matching service is available only to IOD members. For further information go to [www.iod.org.nz](http://www.iod.org.nz)

### **New appointments of women to State Sector bodies**

And speaking of women in governance, there have been a number of new appointments over the last few months... so it's congratulations to the following women:

#### **Standards Council**

Dr Sharon Kletchko

#### **TVNZ Board**

Anne Blackburn

#### **Landcare Research New Zealand Ltd Board**

Jo Brosnahan

#### **National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd Board (NIWA)**

Dr Wendy Lawson

#### **New Zealand Forest Research Institute Ltd Board (Scion)**

Dr Kathy Garden

#### **Te Waka Toi (the Māori Arts Board of Creative New Zealand)**

Ranui Ngarimu

**Arts Board of Creative New Zealand**

Kate De Goldi

Pele Walker

**Museum of Te Papa Tongarewa Board**

Lorraine Wilson

**New Zealand Film Commission Board**

Vanessa Alexander

Wendy Palmer

**Lottery Marae Heritage and Facilities Distribution Committee**

Mihi Namana

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

Dr Karleen Edwards

**Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board**

Penny Nicholas

Marjorie Noble

**Equal Employment Opportunities Trust Board (EEO Trust)**

Alison Thom

A list which includes reappointments as well as appointments is available on our website in the 'What's New?' section.

**Updating CVs**

It is always helpful to us (and most especially to you) if you keep your CV up-to-date. Just email us the changes or additions and we will act on that. If in doubt, then just give us a call.

**Changes to the team**

Introducing two new staff members who are job sharing the Executive Assistant position in Nominations. If you are telephoning, the new voices will be those of Joy Aberdein and Steve Hickey. We're delighted to have them working with us, and for you.

Just reminding you that we are always pleased to meet and talk with women from our database. It's helpful to us to be able to expand our knowledge and 'put a face to a name'. So if you are going to be in Wellington and would like to meet, give us a call.

And that's it for this edition - au revoir until December

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If you have any queries about the information in this newsletter, or the Nominations Service in general, please contact one of the team.

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

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