



Media Release

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Call for gender targets in the corporate workplace

The Director of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), Helen Conway, called for organisations to set clear numerical targets for appointing women to leadership and management positions, following the release today of a report by KPMG on ASX-listed companies' response to ASX Corporate Governance Council's recommendations relating to gender diversity.

"I applaud the work of the Council in putting in place these gender diversity recommendations. As can be seen from this first KPMG report, they are driving heightened awareness of the need for gender diversity and, most importantly, prompting tangible initiatives to achieve it," said Ms Conway.

"Achieving gender diversity in workplaces requires aligning it with business strategy, treating it as a business priority (rather than an HR department initiative) and dealing with it as you would with any other business initiative. This includes setting targets for the appointment of women and putting in place the necessary leadership, focus and accountability to achieve these targets."

"It is encouraging to see the progress outlined in the KPMG report, and that 61% of companies have established a diversity policy. It is worth noting that only 36% of the companies covered have set measurable objectives for achieving gender diversity and, in some cases, these are not expressed as numerical targets. This will be insufficient to drive the necessary improvement in the female talent pipeline."

Ms Conway said the business case for gender equality is clear and is broadly accepted. Impending changes to EOWA's underlying legislation will see the Agency focus on gender equality and use the new outcome-based data, which it receives from employers reporting to it, to work collaboratively to drive change.

The Agency's biennial Australian Census of Women in Leadership, to be released this year in November, will provide a good snapshot of how we are progressing towards the goal of gender equality in Australia's corporate leadership.

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