## WOMEN ON BOARDS STRATEGY 2020-2025

Continuing our progress



The Tasmanian Government acknowledges the Aboriginal Custodians of Tasmania and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Communities, Sport and Recreation Department of Communities Tasmania GPO Box 65 HOBART TAS 7001

Phone: (03) 6165 8388 Email: women@communities.tas.gov.au Website: www.women.tas.gov.au Facebook: Women in Tasmania

Copyright State of Tasmania November 2020

## Contents

Minister's message	
Where we are now	
Action summary	7
Women on boards profile: Kathryn McCann	
Focus Area I: Strengthen pathways	
Women on boards profile: Helen Galloway	
Focus Area 2: Create contemporary systems and processes	
Women on boards profile: Dana Faletic	
Focus Area 3: Influence change	
Women on boards profile: Sally Darke	
Focus Area 4: Monitor gender equity	
Women on boards profile: Yvonne Rundle	
How we developed this Strategy	

## Minister's message

The Tasmanian Government is committed to increasing diversity and the representation of women on Government boards and committees. Since the *Women on Boards Strategy 2015-20* was released, significant improvement has been made in tackling gender inequality and enhancing the diversity of boards. Over the last five years, we have increased women's representation on Government boards and committees by 12.6 per cent, from 33.8 per cent in June 2015 to 46.4 per cent as at 30 June 2020.



By implementing actions under the original Strategy, we've encouraged participation by a diverse pool of women across Tasmania and ensured that greater consideration is given by Government agencies in identifying and recruiting women with the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to fill our board vacancies. Notable achievements have included updating the Cabinet Gender Equity Guidelines for Government Board Appointments to require agencies to consider measures to identify women for appointments, expanding the reach of the Tasmanian Women's Register, updating the Guidelines for Government Businesses to require compliance with the Strategy, and awarding 81 scholarships to Tasmanian women to build their governance and leadership skills through attending courses run by the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

While the increased diversity on Government boards and committees represents important progress for Tasmanian women, the Government recognises that there is more work to be done to ensure the momentum continues to support the target of 50 per cent representation of women across Government boards and committees.

The barriers contributing to the continued underrepresentation of women in positions of leadership, including board membership, are complex and not easily overcome. Research and consultation undertaken for the Strategy indicate that the most significant barriers to participation include lack of flexible meeting practices on some boards, board culture, recruitment processes, conscious and unconscious bias limiting women's career progression, lack of networks, and assumptions held by some women that they do not have the requisite skills to meet all selection criteria.

There are also structural, situational and personal barriers that exist to prevent women from participating in certain industries and sectors to begin with, such as in the areas of construction, primary industries, fisheries, engineering and safety. These latter barriers are being addressed by the State Government through industry programs to enhance workplace cultural change and development pipelines for women, and further initiatives will also be set out in the *Leadership and Participation Action Plan for Women*, which is due to be released in January 2021.

The Women on Boards Strategy 2020-25 provides a new set of actions to build on the progress we have made so far.

Promoting gender balance on Government boards and committees will continue to provide wide-reaching benefits, including informed decision making, more effective governance, the introduction of new ideas and opinions, stronger connections with the community and industry, and ensuring that a balanced perspective continues to be incorporated into the Government's decision making during the recovery period from COVID-19.

This Strategy will work to generate positive change and real opportunities for women's participation on boards



and committees by expanding the pool of potential female candidates, providing mentoring and support for women wishing to start their leadership journey, providing scholarships to women to assist with leadership development, and facilitating more opportunities for women to be appointed to government board positions. While the Strategy focuses on increasing women's representation on Government boards and committees, actions have been included to support the private and not-for-profit sector to improve gender equality on their boards. This recognises that the whole Tasmanian community benefits from increased representation of women both on public and private boards and committees.

This Strategy is intended to complement the *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-21* and associated action plans, which aim to break down the barriers that produce inequities for women and girls. In particular, the *Women's Leadership and Participation Action Plan* will provide a range of actions to improve opportunities for women in leadership and workforce participation, including participation in industries of importance to Tasmania's future. As women have in many ways been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, increasing women's participation in industries of importance will be vital to Tasmania's recovery and will ensure that we have strong governance and leadership for the future.

I strongly encourage women who wish to broaden their governance skills to sign up for the Tasmanian Women's Register, which promotes vacancies on Tasmanian boards and committees. The Register aims to maximise outcomes for the Tasmanian community by promoting better decision making and good governance on boards and committees through gender diversity. More information on the Women's Register can be found on the Department of Communities Tasmania's website at www.communities.tas.gov.au.

I wish to thank the women profiled in the Strategy and the women who will be profiled on the *Women in Tasmania*  website for agreeing to share their stories. The profiles of these women demonstrate the incredible diversity of Government boards and committees, and the different pathways that can be taken to board Directorship. As well as celebrating the success of women on boards, it is hoped that these stories will inform and inspire women who are starting their own leadership journey.

The progress made under the Women on Boards Strategy 2015-20 demonstrates that clear and committed processes will result in positive change. This Strategy will continue to build upon our success to achieve our target of gender equity across Tasmanian Government boards and committees, which will strengthen our economy and community.

Sarah Courtney MP Minister for Women

### Where we are now







Women represent over **46%** of Directors across

Government Business Enterprises and State-Owned Enterprises

**42** positions on Government

boards and committees are filled by women



**33%** of Chairs on Government boards and committees are women In the past 12 months,

**55.8%** of new appointments and

42.3%

of reappointments were women



scholarships have been awarded to Tasmanian women to build their governance and leadership skills since 2015

\*Data as at 30 June 2020

## Action summary

On I July 2015, the former Minister for Women, the Hon Jacquie Petrusma MP, released the Women on *Boards Strategy 2015-20: A Five-Year Plan.* The Strategy outlined actions for increasing women's participation on Tasmanian Government boards and committees.

The Women on Boards Strategy 2020-25 (the Strategy) builds and expands upon the first Strategy with a refreshed set of actions to target Government boards and committees where women's representation can be increased, and encourage greater representation of women on private and not-for-profit Tasmanian boards and committees.

Actions in this Strategy are grouped into four focus areas:

#### Focus Area I: Strengthen pathways

- 1. Expand the Women in Leadership Scholarship Program to support women to develop leadership skills in their early careers and areas of non-traditional employment for women.
- 2. Invite senior board members to become mentors for young women or women wishing to step up to Chairperson roles.
- 3. Create a Women on Tasmanian Boards network, where members can share experiences and opportunities, and provide advice to aspiring and new board members.

#### Focus Area 2: Create contemporary systems and processes

- 4. Expand and promote the Tasmanian Women's Register.
- 5. Encourage boards to access flexible meeting arrangements to support the full participation of women on boards and committees.
- 6. Where non-government organisations are invited to nominate a candidate for appointment to a Government board or committee, encourage organisations to nominate at least one male and one female candidate.
- 7. Create a Women on Boards Gateway on the Women in Tasmania website.

#### Focus Area 3: Influence change

- 8. Collaborate with the private sector to support an increase in the percentage of women on non-Government boards and committees in Tasmania.
- 9. Building on the profiles in this Strategy, develop a communications campaign profiling female board members.
- 10. Work with Women Supporting Women to run information sessions for regionally based State Servants on taking up board and committee positions.
- 11. Develop practical resources to assist agencies, Government boards, and the private sector to increase the number of women on boards and committees.

#### Focus Area 4: Monitoring equity

- 12. Progress attainment of the 50 per cent representation of women on Tasmanian Government boards and committees target by July 2022.
- 13. Increase the representation of women in Chairperson positions on Tasmanian Government boards and committees to a target of 40 per cent by July 2025.
- Increase women's representation on every eligible state sporting organisation board to 20 per cent by 2020, 30 per cent by 2021 and 40 per cent by 2022.

## Kathryn McCann

Tasmanian Heritage Council Tasmanian Development and Resources Board

As a young woman, I always had aspiration to be part of something bigger than myself and often found myself putting up my hand for volunteering roles. Through those volunteering opportunities, I gained skills and confidence and felt a sense of belonging when participating as part of a team working towards a common goal.

Throughout my professional career, I have been fortunate to have had several key influences that have helped shape my development, decision making and the opportunities that have been presented to me. I have stumbled across some of these key influences and some I have actively sought out. I would recommend getting a mentor to all women looking to develop their careers and specific areas of skill or expertise, or just to have someone to bounce off, particularly when the going gets tough.

My first formal board role was in the Tasmanian tourism industry, when I was elected to the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania. I am still on this board today (over 10 years later) and can confidently say that this role has provided me with experience and relationships that have been instrumental to my career to date. I clearly remember in those early days around that board table being unsure as to where I could add value and contribute. Through years of hard work and growth, I have been able to develop my position on this (and now other) boards to feel confident in my ability to contribute and make a difference.

Gaining experience working on, with, and for boards helps develop some excellent skills in my opinion. Understanding good governance and the roles and responsibilities of being on a board are very useful skills to have in any professional pursuit. Being able to navigate and understand decision making in different governance structures has been important in my career.

I have had the opportunity to work with a range of exceptional individuals from a diverse array of backgrounds and areas of expertise, and sitting on Government boards and committees has allowed me to really grow my knowledge and understanding in a range of areas that I may not have been exposed to.

Understanding the responsibilities that come with being on a board is important. Before committing to join a board, please do detailed due diligence on the organisation to gain a good understanding of culture, strategy, values, other board members and financial position. This will help greatly in your decision making around joining a board and how you might play a role in its future. Formal training around the role of a board to ensure that you are clear on your commitment is important. The Australian Institute of Company Directors' Company Director's Course was great for me and I would recommend to others.

Kathryn McCann is the Deputy Chair and Director of the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, a member of the Tasmanian Heritage Council, a member of the Tasmanian Development and Resources Board, and a Director of Oak Possability in the disability services sector. Kathryn currently works as Chief Operating Officer for the Beacon Foundation and is a Graduate of the University of Tasmania, where she completed her degree in Arts and Commerce with majors in Psychology and Marketing.

# 66

Throughout my experience on boards, the one factor that I have continuously witnessed is the power of diversity around a board table, like any team, as being essential to its success. Having varied perspectives, views, expertise, values and lived experience provides a great foundation for good leadership.

 $\sqrt{2}$ 





## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS

### **Actions**

Action I: Expand the Women in Leadership Scholarship Program to support women to develop board leadership skills in their early careers and in areas of nontraditional employment for women.

Improving women's representation and leadership in industries or professions where women are traditionally under-represented is vital to changing women's engagement in these sectors. This includes representation on boards in areas of economic importance to Tasmania, as we work through our COVID-19 recovery.

The 2019-20 State Budget allocated funding of \$200 000 over four years for scholarships to support women in leadership under the Tasmanian Women Strategy 2018-21. From 2021, the program will offer training in board directorship to early career women and leadership development opportunities for women in nontraditional areas of employment.

Through the Program, the Government will partner with the Australian Institute of Company Directors and industry peak bodies to provide a range of different training options to enhance women's leadership skills. The Program will also build on measures that industry peak bodies are taking to address gender diversity issues, in recognition that industries may face varying challenges in attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining women, and that tailored measures may be required for different industries.

#### Action 2: Invite senior board members to become mentors for young women or women wishing to step up to Chairperson roles.

In July 2020, the Department of Communities Tasmania conducted a survey of 121 women sitting on Tasmanian Government boards and committees (the Women on Boards Survey). Among other things, the women surveyed indicated that strategies addressing mentoring, training and networking would be the most impactful in achieving gender parity on Tasmanian Government boards and committees, including increasing the proportion of women as Chairs.

Research conducted in Australia and the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup> has found that the types of mentoring and development relationships that arise through informal networks are important for facilitating sponsorships into senior assignments, including on boards. However, women can face barriers to accessing informal mentoring networks, as there is a limited supply in Tasmania of female role models and mentors in senior positions for younger women to emulate and engage as sponsors. In recognition of this, the Tasmanian Government supports a number of mentoring programs, including Tasports' Intern Director Initiative, which provides governance experience to emerging leaders.

Developing avenues for mentoring can increase women's confidence and strengthen pathways to board appointments, particularly for women in non-traditional areas of employment. Under this action, the Government will investigate different mentoring opportunities, including mentoring from senior men and women in the State Service who sit on boards, and offering opportunities to women to attend meetings as an observer.

#### Action 3: Create a Women on Tasmanian Boards Network, where members can share experiences and opportunities, and provide advice to aspiring and new board members.

Consultation undertaken with the Tasmanian Women's Council and women sitting on Tasmanian Government boards and committees has highlighted the importance of networking to enhance women's leadership skills. Some women have also suggested that support needs to be provided to women throughout their appointment to a board, particularly on boards with low female representation.

Creating a Women on Tasmanian Boards Network through the Women in Tasmania Facebook page, with key networking events held in the North and South of the State, will allow members to share experiences, make connections and generate opportunities for development.

Annie Pye, 2005, The Importance of Context and Time for Understanding Board Behaviour, International Studies of Management and Organization 34, no. 2; Alison Sheridan, 2001, A View from the Top: Women on the Boards of Public Companies, Corporate Governance 1, no. 1.

## Helen Galloway

Tasracing Pty Ltd Board TT-Line Company Pty Ltd Board

After finishing a double degree at the University of Tasmania, I embarked on the usual rite of passage at the time for young Tasmanians – moving away. I found myself in one of the fastest growing places in the world, Macau, People's Republic of China. I recognised and took advantage of the opportunities this presented. It was sheer hard work combined with the serendipity of being in the right place at the right time.

In 2011, I was asked to join a global executive team, making strategic decisions for businesses with profits exceeding US\$4 billion a year. I was the first and only female on this team, with nine other male colleagues. This was a pivotal experience in shaping my career journey to becoming a Non-Executive Director. In my various roles in an organisation with over 50 000 staff, I experienced the very best and very worst of gender inclusion.

Over the next five years, I strengthened this executive experience and pursued a volunteer board role on the Singapore Hockey Federation Board, aligning my passion for hockey with my governance skills. This was the starting pathway to future board roles.

Shortly after returning to Tasmania, I saw adverts for Non-Executive Director roles at Tasracing and TT-Line. Both adverts sought skills and experience in my core domain of commercial strategy and finance, and utilised my relevant parallel industry experience with gaming, hotels and tourism (including ferries).

During my career journey, I can attribute professional development to a sponsor and later a mentor, David Sisk. It is important to understand the difference between a sponsor (internal to your workplace) and a mentor (external) and seek them out. I firmly believe the Women on Boards Strategy relies on males in top executive positions sponsoring women to reach their full potential, which is the pipeline for board roles.

My tip for women is to believe in yourself and surround yourself with supportive networks. I rejected a promotion three times, before someone told me "you are doing the job already." I didn't believe I could do the senior executive role while having a young family; I was too close and immersed in work to realise this. Equality starts at home – over the course of my career, my partner and I have always been a close-knit team and supported each other with our goals. His support was invaluable in taking the promotion and excelling in my career.

I value the fact that as a board member I am contributing my skills and experience to benefit Tasmania, as the two Shareholder Ministers hold the shares in trust on behalf of the Tasmanian community. Gender equality is a human right with significant social and economic benefits. The importance of equal access to power, resources and opportunities is vital for Tasmania's future, or as Warren Buffet eloquently states "we've seen what can be accomplished when we use 50 per cent of our human capacity. If you visualise what 100 per cent can do, you'll join me as an unbridled optimist...".

Helen Galloway is currently a Non-Executive Director with the Government boards Tasracing and TT-Line. She is the Chair of the Sorell Council Audit Panel and a Non-Executive Director of Bank of Us – Tasmania's customer-owned bank. Helen is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Certified Practicing Accountant.

# 66

I think of a board as a 'multi-brained human', it needs issues considered with many different perspectives, yet with a level of congruence and collaboration to lead an organisation. Strong female representation on boards brings this diversity of thought, which leads to better decision making.

#### **FOCUS AREA 2**



## CREATE CONTEMPORARY SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

### **Actions**

#### Action 4: Expand and promote the Tasmanian Women's Register.

The Tasmanian Government's Women's Register (the Register) connects women with opportunities on Government boards and committees by broadcasting information on vacant positions to registered women. Any woman who is interested in being considered for a Government board or committee appointment can register to join.

Government agencies are required by the Cabinet Handbook and Cabinet

Gender Equity Guidelines to consult with the Register at an early stage when seeking nominations for Government board and committee appointments. Following the recruitment process, agencies must provide a Tasmanian Women's Register Appointment Certification Form to Cabinet, which provides details on the proposed gender balance of the board or committee, how many women from the Register were considered in the recruitment process, and what other measures have been taken to ensure that women have been considered for appointment.

Expansion and promotion of the Register to new networks of women presents an opportunity to broaden awareness of available board and committee positions. Under this action, the Tasmanian Government will:

- a) Expand the Women's Register Appointment Certification Form to include pipeline recruitment data such as the number of females who applied for the position and were interviewed, the gender composition of the selection panel, whether the position is ex-officio (appointed by virtue of a person's position in the State Service) and how the position was advertised.
- b) Expand the Tasmanian Women's Register to promote vacancies on the boards and committees of

organisations which receive core funding from Government.

- c) Develop a Communications Strategy to promote the Tasmanian Women's Register to existing boards and committees (and supporting officers in Government agencies), relevant peak industry groups, the new Women on Tasmanian Boards Network and other women's networks.
- d) Establish a data collection process to measure the Register's effectiveness over time.

#### Action 5: Encourage boards to access flexible meeting arrangements to support the full participation of women on boards and committees.

In the Women on Boards Survey, 63 per cent of women indicated that access to videoconferencing or other technologies would encourage them to join other boards or committees.

In particular, the location of meetings can hold back some women living in regional areas from applying for boards and committees. Women from regional and remote communities remain under-represented on Tasmanian Government boards and committees. As at 30 June 2020, out of the 344 individual female board members, only 24 were based in the North West and 59 in the North. For male board members too, the majority live in the South of Tasmania.

There is now an opportunity to leverage new ways of working prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including flexible meeting arrangements. Since COVID-19, 84 per cent of Women on Boards Survey respondents indicated that they had been given the option of attending meetings via videoconferencing or telephone, or both. Continuing flexible approaches to meeting arrangements after COVID-19 will allow female members to fully participate in the activities of their board or committee, supporting more inclusive boards with a diversity of views to inform decision making.

#### Action 6: Where non-government organisations are invited to nominate a candidate for appointment to a Government board or committee, encourage organisations to nominate at least one male and one female candidate.

Some Government boards and committees are required to seek nominations from non-government organisations.

In requesting nominees, it is critical that Government boards and committees consider the benefits of gender equality. Deloitte<sup>2</sup> has found that gender parity on Government boards enhances the effectiveness of the board and subsequently facilitates higher decision quality and greater innovation, whilst also having a leveraging affect to facilitate diversity and inclusion across the organisation more broadly.

The Tasmanian Government's Women on Boards Database shows that there has been strong growth of women on Government boards and committees since 2015 and in the 2019-20 financial year, women comprised 55.8 per cent of new appointments. To keep up this momentum, agencies will review their board appointment processes to identify opportunities that all Departments can take to formally encourage women to be nominated for board positions, including encouraging non-government organisations to nominate at least one male and one female candidate when invited to nominate candidates for appointment.

#### Action 7: Create a Women on Boards Gateway on the Women in Tasmania website.

The Women in Tasmania website provides a one-stop-shop for information about Tasmanian Government policies and programs for women, useful information and resources on women's issues.

To allow agencies, industry, nongovernment organisations and members of the public to easily find and access information on Government boards and committees, a Women on Boards Gateway will be created on the Women in Tasmania website.

The Gateway will include information relating to joining a board, promoting a vacancy, resources and toolkits created under this Strategy, and Annual Reports detailing progress of actions outlined in this Strategy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Deloitte, 2016, Research Report Toward Gender Parity: Women On Boards Initiative, https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-towardgender-parity-women-on-boards-initiative-041016.pdf.

## Dana Faletic

State Fire Commission

My board journey started around six years ago - I wanted to contribute to the Tasmanian community through volunteering in some capacity, but I didn't know where to start or what I could do that would have a meaningful impact. Also, as a mum of two young children and working part-time, I knew I wouldn't be able to commit to volunteering over multiple days.

I saw an advertisement for committee members for a non-government organisation called Womensport & Recreation Tasmania Inc (WRST) and looked into what WSRT did. I was particularly attracted by the WSRT 'Get Active Program', which seeks to enable people to be healthier and more physically active. I didn't have a specific skill or qualification, but thought my generalist skills and interest in being healthy and active might be helpful on the WSRT board.

This was in 2014 and I'm still a Board member (President since 2015). In that time, I have managed a range of processes in order to keep the organisation running, improve governance and accountability, and promote the objectives of the organisation. This includes recruiting and managing staff and board members; setting budgets and paying invoices; renewing the WSRT Constitution; preparing board and Annual General Meeting papers and meetings; monitoring grant progress; holding meetings with stakeholders; and representing the organisation at promotional events. These things have contributed indirectly to the delivery of programs that have benefited many Tasmanians.

My day job has given me the opportunity to be Treasury's representative on the State Fire Commission. I joined in May 2018, knowing very little about the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS). I was warmly welcomed and have since learnt a lot about the Commission, the TFS, and our role in the Tasmanian emergency services environment and community. It is a privilege to be part of the Commission and to work alongside the professional staff of the TFS and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, and to better understand the commitment of TFS volunteers. As one of two female Commission members (out of seven members), and a male-dominated work force, I have taken a particular interest in the strategies that the Commission and TFS employ to attract more women to apply for roles within the TFS, to ensure we are working to improve gender equity.

I am also a member of the support Committee for our local North West Bay Scout Group (NWBS Group). This is a community group, and I am constantly humbled by the time and energy committed by the NWBS Group Leaders. Being on the Committee has connected our family more closely to the Group and local community. I've made a lot of friends, had a lot of laughs, and even organised and run a Bunnings BBQ. I can highly recommend a BBQ fundraising event for building camaraderie amongst volunteers!

Dana Faletic has been a State Fire Commission member for two years, being appointed as the Department of Treasury and Finance representative in May 2018. Dana is currently a Specialist Agency Analyst in the Budget Management Branch of Treasury. In addition to her Treasury and State Fire Commission roles, Dana is also the President of Womensport & Recreation Tasmania, and Secretary of the support committee for the North West Bay Scout Group. Dana is a two-time Olympian in the sport of rowing.

# ßĜ

My board/committee journey has broadened my professional skills, experience and connections with people. I've grown in a professional sense; become more closely connected to the local and broader Tasmanian community; and feel that I am achieving what I set out to do six years ago - to give back to the Tasmanian community.

#### FOCUS AREA 3



## **INFLUENCE CHANGE**

### Actions

Action 8: Collaborate with the private sector to support an increase in the percentage of women on non-Government boards and committees in Tasmania.

Research on the business case for gender diversity on private boards shows a correlation between companies that have a higher proportion of women on their management committees and better performance and financial outcomes<sup>3</sup>. In recognition of the benefits of gender equality on non-Government boards, the Department of Communities Tasmania is already encouraging funded peak bodies in the community sector to make efforts to increase gender diversity on their boards and committees through respective grant agreement provisions.

Structural, situational and personal barriers can prevent women from participating in certain industries and sectors to begin with. Established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee acknowledges in its Interim Report<sup>4</sup> that cultural barriers remain to women seeking and gaining employment in stable, high-paying and diverse industry roles. The Interim Report recommends that the State Government should support further industry programs to enhance workplace cultural change and development pipelines for women.

Under this action, the Tasmanian Government will investigate ways to collaborate with the private sector to improve gender equality on Tasmanian boards and committees and the number of women in leadership roles, including through scholarship partnerships under Action I. This will require Government to foster industry connections with the Women's Portfolio and may include cross promotion of board vacancies and board training opportunities, showcasing stories of success and sharing learnings.

#### Action 9: Building on the profiles in this Strategy, develop a communications campaign profiling female board members.

As many women are unaware of available board positions or where to find opportunities, the Tasmanian Government will run a communications campaign profiling female members of Government boards and committees to encourage other women to take up board positions. The campaign will build on the profiles included in this Strategy and showcase the stories of other female board and committee members on the Women in Tasmania website (including the new Women on Boards Gateway) and Facebook page.

The stories will include practical advice for women interested in joining Government boards or committees and will demonstrate the wide variety of board positions on offer. The campaign will seek to encourage more women to join boards and committees and to celebrate the valued contribution that women make to boards and committees.

#### Action 10: Work with Women Supporting Women to run information sessions for State Servants in regional areas on taking up board and committee positions.

Women Supporting Women is led by women in senior positions in the Tasmanian State Service, who have joined together to create an initiative aimed at supporting women through networking, professional learning and development opportunities, and providing strategies to overcome barriers to career progression, to ensure women achieve their leadership potential.

Under this Action, the Department of Communities Tasmania will partner with Women Supporting Women to hold panel discussion and networking events focused on assisting State Service women living in regional areas to join Government and non-Government boards and committees, to be promoted via the Women on Tasmanian Boards Network and the Women's Register.

Action II: Develop practical resources to assist agencies, Government boards, and the private sector to increase the number of women on boards and committees.

The Department of Communities Tasmania regularly receives queries from agencies and boards regarding best practice approaches to board appointments. To provide a more coordinated approach to board appointments across the Tasmanian Government, resources will be developed to assist agencies and boards to recruit board members and increase the number of women on boards and committees. Resources will also be developed to help women to gain Government board positions and encourage the private sector to increase the number of women on boards and committees. All resources produced will be available from the Women on Boards Gateway.

This initiative will include practical resources available through the new Women on Boards Gateway, including:

- an information pack to support women to become board-ready;
- a guide to promoting gender equity through Government board and committee vacancy processes; and
- a best practice toolkit to support panels to recruit women to boards, such as tips to mitigate against unconscious bias, support gender diverse selection panels and remove gendered language from advertisements.

- <sup>3</sup> Credit Suisse Research Institute, 2012, *Gender Diversity and Corporate Performance*, https://www.credit-suisse.com/about-us/en/reports-research/studies-publications.html.
- <sup>4</sup> Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council, July 2020, *Interim Report*, https://www.pesrac.tas.gov.au/reports.

## Sally Darke

Tasmanian Community Fund Board Tasmanian Ports Corporation Pty Ltd Board

My first governance experience occurred 25 years ago, following coffee with a family friend who told me that B&E (Bank of Us) was looking for a new gender-diverse Board member with a local government background. At the time, I lacked an understanding of governance and a comprehensive knowledge of a building society, and was pregnant! Since joining the B&E Board, I have had an amazing governance journey, culminating with the opportunity to Chair the Board and in 2016 was awarded the *Customer Owned Banking Association – National Award for Distinguished Service*.

I was a Director in the Advisory Practice of KPMG for 10 years, where I provided state-wide consultancy services for many not-for-profit, government and private organisations. This position gave me the opportunity to consult in the governance space, become actively involved with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), and be involved in the governance of Scotch Oakburn College including Chairing the Board. At present, I am Chair of the Tasmanian Community Fund Board and am a Non-Executive Director for TasWater and Tasports. I also facilitate governance training, including work for the AICD.

I have had the opportunity to work with excellent leaders in governance who have become role models, and I have always taken professional development and networking seriously. Originally, my core skills in Human Resources were my competitive advantage, but over time I have learnt that you need to be across all areas of the business from a strategic perspective. Originally, the notfor-profit sector provided a great opportunity for me to develop my governance skills. Living just out of Launceston means I have also brought a regional perspective to state-wide organisations.

For me personally as a female board member, I have always felt comfortable and supported in Board rooms that were traditionally very male-dominated. I applaud the leadership in our State from peak bodies, government and individuals who have assisted the journey for females in governance positions. Today, I am delighted to see the number of talented, skilled and confident females on our Tasmanian Boards. I encourage any young women to see governance as part of their career journey. Sally Darke is currently Chairperson of the Tasmanian Community Fund and Non-Executive Director of the TasWater Board and Tasmanian Ports Corporation Pty Ltd Board. She is also a past Chairperson of Scotch Oakburn College; past Chairperson, Director and Adviser to the Board of B&E (Bank of Us); was the first female Board member of AFL Tasmania: and was a Director in the advisory practice of KPMG. Sally has more than 25 years' experience in Human Resources and Corporate Governance in the financial, infrastructure, education, sporting and community sectors with an emphasis on regulated industries.

# ßĜ

As I reflect on my governance career to date, I appreciate how much I enjoy what I do. I believe the Boards add real value to our organisations, and I enjoy the intellect and company of those I sit around the Board and executive table with. I continue to be motivated by the opportunity to provide leadership and strategic decision-making for organisations in our State, at a time when there are tremendous opportunities and COVID-19 challenges.

WOMEN ON BOARDS STRATEGY 2020-2025 21

#### **FOCUS AREA 4**



## MONITOR EQUITY

An annual report outlining progress against the Strategy will be released publicly each year, along with the Department of Communities Tasmania's annual Women on State Sporting Organisation Boards Report. Achievements made under the Strategy will be highlighted on the Women on Boards Gateway as a motivational tool for women considering joining both Government and non-Government boards and committees.

### **Actions**

Action 12: Progress attainment of the 50 per cent representation of women on Tasmanian Government boards and committees target by July 2022.

In 2015, the Government set out to achieve a target of 50 per cent representation of women across Government boards and committees. As at 30 June 2020, 46.4 per cent of board and committee positions were filled by women, up from 33.8 per cent from June 2015.

The benefits of gender equality on boards are wide-reaching, with positive effects on performance, productivity and the bottom line. Research from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency indicates that publicly committing to gender equity goals and making people

accountable for their delivery can help drive the action required to achieve gender balance.

In recognition of this, the Tasmanian Government has renewed its commitment to reaching the target of 50 per cent representation of women across Government boards and committees, by implementing the actions in this Strategy.

Progress will be monitored by Cabinet Ministers, and a report on whole-ofgovernment progress will be provided to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

Action 13: Increase the representation of women in Chairperson positions on Tasmanian Government boards and committees to a target of 40 per cent by July 2025.

As part of this Strategy, the Tasmanian Government commits to a target of 40 per cent representation of women in Chairperson positions on Government boards and committees by July 2025.

Women currently hold 33.3 per cent of all Chair positions on Government boards and committees. Increased diversity in leadership positions will support achievement of increased gender diversity in general board and committee positions.

The actions in this Strategy support clear, consistent communication regarding gender equity across all Government boards and committees. Together with the development of key networks, practical toolkits and mentoring opportunities, these activities will contribute to not only increasing the number of women on boards, but also women in Chair positions. Action 14: Increase women's representation on every eligible state sporting organisation board to targets of 20 per cent by 2020, 30 per cent by 2021 and 40 per cent by 2022.

Women have historically been underrepresented at board-level of state and national sporting organisations, limiting the skills and perspectives these boards can draw on in making decisions.

The Tasmanian Government is taking measures to increase women's representation on State Sporting Organisation (SSO) boards, by requiring that levels of representation be met for an organisation to be eligible under the Sport and Recreation State Grants Program (SRSGP). Under the new requirements, SSOs are required to have a gender diverse board or committee, with no less than 40 per cent representation from any one gender (sports operating under a unitary model are exempt). The requirement is being phased in over three years and from 2022, SSOs must have no less than 40 per cent of any one gender to be eligible for funding. The May 2020 Women on State Sporting Organisation Boards Report shows that in 2019, 50 per cent of Tasmanian SSOs had 40 per cent or greater female representation at board level.

Guidelines have also been released to support the participation of women and girls in sport and recreation, which encourage sporting organisations to have diverse representation within leadership positions, including board membership. The Guidelines recommends strategies to increase diversity in leadership, including targeting, promoting, and training women into management and board positions; providing networking and development opportunities for women in leadership positions; and considering caring responsibilities when scheduling times and attendance methods for board meetings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Gender Strategy Toolkit: A direction for achieving gender equality in your agency, https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Gender\_ Strategy\_Toolkit.pdf.

## Yvonne Rundle

Aurora Energy Pty Ltd Board Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd Board TasTAFE Board

If I was asked where my journey as a Company Director began, I would probably have to go back to when I completed my "professional year" back in about 1990. Following admission into the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia (now CAANZ), I got involved in various Institute committees. From initially participating in conference organising committees, to going on to being involved in state and national committees, and subsequently chairing the State Council for the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Tasmania, my foray into future directorships was seeded.

My first appointment to a Non-Executive Board position was to the Port of Devonport Corporation Pty Ltd in 2001. A friend and former colleague who was working for the Port at the time put my name forward as a possible Director, when the company was seeking to appoint its first female directors. The combination of being a local female, together with my financial and business skills, landed me the role and I appreciated the opportunity. I learnt a lot in that first role and was grateful for the opportunity to Chair my first Audit and Risk Committee.

My next director opportunity came from a phone call one day from the Deputy Chancellor of the University of Tasmania (UTAS) seeking my interest in taking a position on the UTAS Council. Following a meeting with the Chancellor and subsequent Cabinet approval, I was appointed to the UTAS Council in April 2005. My time on the UTAS Council sparked my passion for our education system. I was appointed Deputy Chancellor in 2007 and by the time I resigned from the UTAS Council in 2011, UTAS had become a significant part of my life, with my involvement stretching beyond the UTAS Council to membership of an additional five committees. I thoroughly enjoyed my involvement with UTAS and learnt a lot! Since then, I have been fortunate to have been appointed as a Non-Executive Director on a number of government boards, with my current portfolio including Aurora Energy Pty Ltd, Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd and TasTAFE.

Over the years, my time combining working as a Chartered Accountant, as well as being a Non-Executive Director, has been very rewarding for me, but I must acknowledge my family who have supported me throughout my journey. Without their support, the travel commitment in attending meetings both intra and interstate, the endless reading, the phone calls and the need to action issues regardless of when or where you are would not have been possible. Being involved on a Board requires significant time commitment and dedication, but with all this comes invaluable learning opportunities and a network of friends and colleagues that exist long after your board involvement has ceased.

Yvonne Rundle has experience in a range of board roles, with her current roles including Director of Aurora Energy Pty Ltd and Chair of Aurora Energy Board Audit and Risk Committee, Director of Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd and Chair of Metro Audit and Risk Committee, Director of TasTAFE and Member of the TasTAFE Audit and Risk Committee. Director of Fairbrother Foundation Pty Ltd, Director of Action Against Homelessness Limited and Director of the University of Tasmania Foundation Incorporated, as well as a Director of a number of privately owned companies. Yvonne is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. Australian Institute of Company Directors and University of Tasmania. Yvonne lives in the North West of Tasmania.

# BB

When considering whether to be involved with a company at boardlevel, each person must undertake their own due diligence. Getting an insight into the organisation and whom you will be working with is important. The ability to bring an enquiring mind whilst considering strategic opportunities and balancing this with appropriate attention to governance issues is a constant balancing act. The first six months or so of taking on any new board role requires a lot of time, as you meet the people, learn the business and broaden your knowledge on that industry.

## How we developed this Strategy

The Women on Boards Strategy 2020-2025 was developed in consultation with a Working Group of the Tasmanian Women's Strategy Interdepartmental Committee.

The Strategy was also informed by contributions from the Tasmanian Women's Council, initiatives being undertaken in other Australian states, research on the benefits of gender parity on government and nongovernment boards, recommendations from the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee's Interim Report, and a survey of women on Tasmanian Government boards and committees.

The Strategy is based on the *Women* on *Boards Strategy 2015-2020*. Over the five-year period of the first Strategy, the Department of Communities Tasmania (Communities Tasmania) collected data on each agency's progress towards achieving the target of 50 per cent representation of women across government boards and committees, which was analysed during the first phase of development for this Strategy. Communities Tasmania also reviewed activities undertaken and agency information gathered through the Tasmanian Women's Register. In July 2020, Communities Tasmania conducted a survey of 121 women sitting on Tasmanian Government boards and committees. The majority of respondents agreed with the statement that the culture of their board or committee was perceived to be inclusive of gender equality. Women also highlighted that the original Strategy was working well and emphasised the importance of continuing the Strategy. However, respondents noted that barriers to participation continued to exist for women and suggestions were provided for strategies or actions to achieve gender equality on Government boards and committees, including:

- mentoring, sponsorship, internship programs, training, workshops and networking;
- induction processes;
- opportunities to act up or observe meetings;
- gender equity targets, and targeted recruitment;
- visibility of opportunities, such as through the Tasmanian Women's Register;
- flexible meeting arrangements;
- promoting inclusive best practice examples;
- open and transparent selection procedures;
- encouraging non-government bodies to appoint women;
- diverse selection panels; and
- inclusive practices at meetings.

The suite of actions in this Strategy have been developed to address the areas highlighted through the consultation process that require further focus, and research on best-practice initiatives to support achievement of the target of 50 per cent representation of women on Tasmanian Government boards and committees.

Actions are grouped into focus areas that highlight the Government's key priorities for the next five years.

