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THE
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Beyond the boardroom

What diversity in the workplace really means

[INTERVIEWS BY]
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VALUING WOMEN'S WORK: THE AUSTRALIAN STORY

The facts:

1/2

Women retire with less than half the amount of savings in their superannuation accounts compared with men.

1 in 12

Fewer than 2 per cent of ASX 200 companies have a female CEO and only 1 in 12 board directors are women.

-\$2000

Women are now more likely to have a tertiary qualification than men, but women graduates will earn \$2,000 less than male graduates and \$7,500 less by the fifth year after graduation.

25 years

Under the former Coalition Government's Work Choices laws, the pay gap widened for the first time in 25 years, as thousands of women lost penalty rates and other important job conditions and minimum wages were cut in real terms.

-18%

Women in full-time paid work still earn 18 per cent less than men or \$1 million less over a lifetime.

Source: Australian Council of Trade Unions.
www.actu.org.au/Campaigns/EqualPay/default.aspx

THE NORWEGIAN EXAMPLE

In 2003, Norway became the global pioneer of mandatory quotas with government legislation requiring public companies to have a minimum of 40 per cent women and 40 per cent men on their boards.

The legislation has clearly been a success with the gender composition of public limited company boards having changed significantly. A decade ago about five per cent of board members were women – now it meets the target of 40 per cent.

In his opening address to the 2012 Sydney Peace Foundation's Annual Forum, the Australian Representative to the United Nations Global Compact, Matthew Tukaki, said that "diversity in the workplace is not just about breaking glass ceilings. It is about the empowerment of women in our society who should receive equal pay for an equal days work, where we can do more to invest in small business start-ups for indigenous women and women from migrant communities." He also said that the debate sometimes gets lost in the clouds and ivory towers of other representative bodies. We asked some of Australia's leading experts on diversity in the workplace what they think.

Frances Feenstra – Founder and Chair, The 100% Project

Frances Feenstra is a respected organisational psychologist with a long work history in the corporate, professional services and university sectors. She is a vocal advocate for gender equity especially related to corporate leadership in Australia. She is also the founder and Chair of The 100% Project – a not for profit organisation that aims to address the imbalance in leadership positions in Australian organisations.

At The 100% Project we believe gender is not a 'women's issue', but a business issue. Our vision is to see 100 per cent of leadership talent, (both female and male), equally contributing to our social and economic future.

Senior executives constantly tell me that "quotas are not the answer" and that they would "love to have more women in senior roles, if only we could find them." There are plenty of highly educated, experienced women willing to step into senior leadership positions, if only the decision makers could get past their inbuilt attitudes toward women in leadership. Addressing those attitudes is half the point of quotas. We have to change HOW organisations look for leaders and WHAT they look for in their leaders in order to move forward.

Many corporate leaders still believe that women aren't making it to leadership roles or onto boards because of something they lack – such as time, competence or style. The issue is leaders are still asking the 20th century question – 'What is wrong with these women that they are not making it to the top?' rather than the 21st century question – 'What is wrong with this company if we are not able to attract, retain and promote the majority of the educated talent pool?'



Frances Feenstra
Founder and Chair,
The 100% Project.

Freda Miriklis – President, International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International)

As the International President of BPW International, Freda Miriklis has represented the interests of businesswomen at numerous UN meetings including the Commission for the Status of Women and the UN Global Compact (UNGC) Leaders Summit in New York. Since 2009, she has lead consultations with industry and business leaders across the Asia Pacific region exploring the potential for the Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business (WEPs) – a joint initiative of UN Women and the UNGC. She is an internationally recognised speaker on the WEPs and in 2011, was appointed by the UN to the Women's Empowerment Principles Leadership Group.

The recent global financial crisis has highlighted the need for business to use the best available talent and build a sustainable model in order to not only ride out the storm but to future proof: to withstand future knocks and continue to return dividends to all of its stakeholders. The empowerment of women is a vital part of this new business model.

And the statistics stack up elsewhere in terms of gender equality in Norway:

60/40%

There are on average 60 per cent men and 40 per cent women on public limited boards;

70%


About 70 per cent of all women are employed, with only a small difference between men and women;

40/50%

Women make up 40 per cent of the parliament and 50 per cent of the cabinet; and

60%

60 per cent of people in higher education are women.

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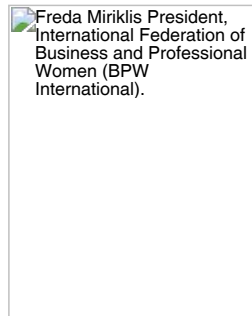
Since 1930, at its inception, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International) has believed that the empowerment of women and equal opportunity in all aspects of political, social and business life is not only the smart thing to do, it is the right thing to do.

Whilst we have always believed that women are vital to business success, it's only now that we've had the business case to promote women's empowerment in the workplace. Research is clear – more women on boards increases the bottom line of that business

UN Women and the UN Global Compact have initiated a roadmap, which provides a set of guidelines for empowering women, called the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). The WEPs are a simple seven-step process for empowering women and over 400 CEOs worldwide have indicated their commitment to making this change by signing the statement of support.

Around the world, businesses and civil society are catching on and empowering women at all levels, from the top and in their communities. More and more we will see women leading business and we look forward to the day when gender diversity and equal pay is the norm.

Not only does our community and business need this, so does our economy.



*Freda Miriklis
President, International Federation
of Business and Professional
Women (BPW International).*

Nada Roude – Founder of the United Muslim Women's Association

Nada Roude worked at the Ethnic Affairs Commission for more than 17 years as a Senior Project and Liaison Officer providing key advice to the NSW Government in Australia on issues related to the settlement of ethnic communities. Since 2001 she has been involved in developing cross-cultural religious education training programs for both the government and private community sector. She is an advocate for human rights, equality and inter-faith dialogue.

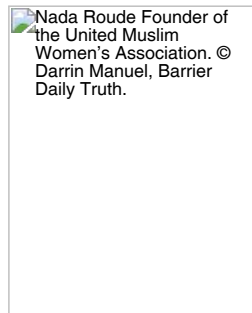
When I talk about 'inclusion' it means a commitment to supporting women from diverse backgrounds to reach top levels of business.

There should be more women in decision-making roles, but if we are serious about giving opportunities then the issue of merit is equally important.

We need to be very careful that the debate does not make us complacent in thinking that just because there is a conscious commitment to increasing the number of women appointed onto boards, that we have adequately dealt with the issue of access, equity and diversity in the workplace.

Australia has come along way in terms of removing barriers to equality in our society, but there is still a lot of work to be done. Many women from different cultural backgrounds, who are visibly 'different', are still disadvantaged by having to break through this barrier to getting a foot in the door to employment. What we need to see is more activity in the business sector so that diversity of women in the workplace is put at the core of business.

The issue of language is also important. In some cases, media coverage and political narrative has been condescending and tends to drive a wedge between people in our society.



*Nada Roude
Founder of the United Muslim
Women's Association. ©
Darrin Manuel, Barrier
Daily Truth.*

Nareen Young – CEO, Diversity Council Australia

As CEO of Diversity Council Australia (DCA), Nareen Young is one of Australia's most prominent leaders on diversity in the workplace. In 2012, the Financial Review and Westpac Group named Nareen as one of Australia's 100 Women of Influence and gave her the top honour in the diversity category. In December 2012, she was named one of Australia's most influential women

by 'Daily Life'.

In terms of gender diversity, we need to separate the issue out into three distinct categories – the number of women on boards, the number of women in senior management positions and women's employment conditions generally. They are not the same thing.

There is a fairly naive assumption that having more women on boards means that things are going to be better for women's employment. Firstly, we need to think about cultural diversity and about social and economic backgrounds so that we draw from the broad pool of women in Australia, not just a small group of business elites. Secondly, we need to have the public discussion to ensure that women on boards will make a difference in terms of women's employment.

For business, it's certainly about setting targets and most of our [DCA] members have set targets for women in leadership within their organisations. They are also working hard on the important issues for women's employment around mainstreaming flexibility and pay equity (see box: Valuing women's work: The Australian story on page 49). The Government tends to be on that same page, but the media industry needs to grow up because their reportage is way behind the rest of the Australian community on this issue.

Women are absolutely capable of doing anything men can, but we tend to have a different style and bring a more collaborative approach to business.

The changes we need to see in the workplace are about legitimising women's employment patterns over the career cycle. That would mean that women could work flexibly for their entire careers and that flexible work would be seen as valid, secure and equal, allowing women to aspire to senior positions and be able to work flexibly.



Nareen Young
CEO, Diversity Council Australia.

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A quick look at the books, events, movies, music, websites and other things we love.



In the studio

- Australia Awards
- Penrith City Council
- Virgin Live
- UNGC Communication On Progress Report 2014
- UNGC Communication On Progress Report 2015

