

GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT

*Targets and Quotas for Women in Leadership:
A Global Review of Policy, Practice, and
Psychological Research*

CENTRE FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP



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**Targets and Quotas for Women in Leadership:
A Global Review of Policy, Practice, and Psychological Research.**

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Gender Equality Project

The Gender Equality Project (GEP) is a networked organisation of industry partners, research partners and associates collaborating in pursuit of the common mission:

‘To produce a significant and sustainable improvement in the gender balance in leadership roles of participating organisations’

The underlying assumption is that a more balanced representation of men and women in leadership and decision-making roles will mean that organisations are making better use of the full range of available talent and better meeting the needs of both men and women at work. Improving gender balance is both smart economics and good human rights.

The GEP aims to develop new, validated and tailored solutions to address gender inequality in leadership roles of industry partner organisations. The research is focused on the mission and aligns the activities of the GEP to the needs and goals of industry partners.

The GEP is an initiative of the Centre for Ethical Leadership (CEL) at Melbourne Business School, which is responsible for the management of the research and development program. All GEP members are invited to participate in six monthly workshops for the sharing and discussion of latest research findings, global best practices, case examples and other relevant information.

The GEP commenced with a Planning Workshop held in April 2011, attended by industry partners, researchers and associate partners, as well as a keynote address by Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Liz Broderick, with the purpose of identifying the core research projects to be undertaken by the GEP. There are three initial core programs of relevance to all industry partners:

- Unconscious Bias
- Resilience
- Targets and Quotas
- Flexible work practices

These core research programs will be supplemented by projects targeted at specific issues and needs within each industry partner organisation.

The Diversity Leadership Skills Training Programs (DLSTP) is the primary research vehicle into understanding unconscious bias, how it impacts from an individual and organisational perspective, and what behaviours support or detract from gender equality in the workplace.

Executive Summary

In Australia and many other countries, increases in the number of women in senior leadership roles within most corporations have been small and slow to occur. The underemployment and underutilisation of women has been costly for nations and organisations alike. However, even where the benefits of increased gender diversity are recognised, existing strategies seem to have peaked in their impact on the numbers of women employed in traditional male roles, including senior leadership. This has led to the question of “what other strategies can be used?”

In response to this question, many industry, public sector, regulatory and international organisations have recommended the establishment of targets or quotas for the number of female leaders to be recruited and promoted into leadership roles. The use of quotas for parliamentary representation is widespread across the world but few companies employ quotas. The use of targets is more widespread amongst companies but the lack of systematic reporting makes it hard to determine just how widespread.

Targets and quotas do make a difference to the numbers of women in targeted senior leadership roles, including board and senior management roles. In Norway, following the legislation of quotas, women’s representation on boards rose from 7% in 2003 to 40.3% in 2010. In Australia, following the ASX requirement for the disclosure in each annual report of the measurable objectives for achieving gender diversity and progress towards achieving them, women comprised 27% of all new board appointments in 2010, up from just 5% in the previous year.

Targets and quotas evoke negative reactions although there is little systematic research on their impacts on individuals and work cultures. Studies of the reactions to affirmative action policies in the USA have found that women who are appointed under the policies are seen as less qualified, less competent and less legitimate in their role by both men and women, including the women who are appointed under affirmative action. Surprisingly, considering the widely held view that targets and quotas are anti-meritocratic, there is no research evidence that women appointed under targets or quotas are less competent or perform less effectively than the men they may have replaced or women appointed under processes without gender targets or quotas.

There is however, widespread evidence that specific, measurable and challenging targets are heavily utilised and highly effective in other areas of managerial work. Most managers are assigned performance targets for which they are held accountable and for which their achievement impacts on rewards, such as short and long term incentives and ultimately promotion opportunities. We argue that assigned gender targets for which managers are held accountable and, where appropriate, rewarded for achievement, would be similarly effective for diversity with some strategic reimagining about how to achieve those targets. Effectiveness of targets would be further enabled if accompanied by organisation specific support strategies and organisational efforts to remove constraints on the acceptance and commitment to gender targets due to mindsets, culture, systems and processes.

In summary, based on the evidence available for this report, we recommend:

1. The setting of gender targets for the leaders of work units within organisations, particularly at top executive levels. Targets should be linked to performance and to “at risk/variable” remuneration.
2. Annual public reporting by organisations on number of women in leadership roles, and the strategies implemented to increase the number of female leaders and the impacts of these strategies on attitudes, culture and performance.

Introduction

After 25 years of anti-discrimination legislation in most western democratic countries, substantial improvements in women's educational attainment, and increased labour-force, social and political participation, observations about the intractability of gender inequality in senior leadership roles remain valid. Many organisations have increased the number of women at many levels through a variety of strategies targeting recruitment, development, support and retention. However, the statistics show that in Australia and most other countries increases in the number of women in senior leadership roles within most corporations have been small and slow to occur.

If existing strategies and human resource management processes do not produce the desired increases in the number of women in leadership roles, the question to be asked is "what strategies will produce the required increase in female leaders so that organisations and the nation can capture the performance benefits of a more diverse workforce and greater utilisation of the capabilities of women?"

In response to this question, many industry, public sector, regulatory and international organisations have recommended quotas or targets for the number of female leaders to be recruited and promoted into leadership roles. For example:

Table 1: A sample of demonstrated benefits of gender diversity

The Case for Greater Gender Diversity in Corporate Australia

- Women bring new ideas, and different decision-making and communication styles that have positive effects on board function and company management.
- Women on boards can provide insights into female consumer behaviour, and their presence improves company and brand reputations especially for their female market.
- Knowledge economies are dependent on the diversity of skills and creativity of their workforce and organisations miss half the talent pool by not investing in gender diversity.
- The economy requires women's productivity to be maximized and doing so could yield an estimated 20% increase in Australia's productivity.
- Narrowing the gap between male and female employment rates would boost Australia's GDP by 11%. This in turn would increase pension-scheme sustainability, household saving and tax take.
- Organisations with greater gender equality are more attractive to female applicants.
- Women in management positions serve as role models for others; they encourage the career development of women and ensure the pipeline of qualified and experienced women remains open.
- Companies with female CEOs, female board membership and a higher proportion of women in senior management are more profitable (McKinsey, Women Matter, 2010).
- Women have a right to equal participation in leadership, regardless of the economic or other benefits.

This lack of progress is costly. Recent studies have provided ample evidence of the benefits of diversity policies and of increasing the proportions of women in leadership roles (see Table 1). The demonstrated benefits notwithstanding, experience over the past 20 years has shown that traditional selection and promotion practices, which many believe to be based on merit, are unlikely to produce acceptable increases in the number of female leaders fast enough for those who believe that greater equality in the numbers of male and female leaders in organisations is a desirable goal.

- In 1995, the United Nations set a target of 30% for women's parliamentary representation and specified a number of avenues through which this could be achieved. These include the equalisation of educational opportunities for girls and women; quotas for female participation in governance; legislative reform to address issues specific to women and children; gender-responsive financial and budgetary policies; increased statistical and research data reporting by gender; and greater support for grassroots women's development movements.

- It is estimated that approximately half of the countries in the world have recommended or adopted some form of electoral gender quota. Of the 90 nations represented in Global Database of Quotas for Women, 74 have specified quotas in their constitution.
- Norway was the first country to introduce a 40:40:20 rule for gender diversity on corporate boards in 2003. The law was applied initially to the boards of state-owned organisations, with a two-year compliance period, and then extended to all publicly listed companies in 2006, again with a two-year transition period. The sanctions included dissolving companies found to be non-compliant.
- Spain (2007), and more recently Iceland, France, and the Netherlands (2010) have introduced quota-based legislation, and laws are pending in various stages of ratification in Belgium, Canada, and Italy.
- The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in the United States in 2009 passed a ruling requiring listed companies to disclose whether, and if so, how gender diversity was considered in the nomination of new board directors. This rule came into effect in 2010 and requires companies to report on whether they have a diversity policy governing board appointments, and if so, how it is implemented in each appointment process.
- During the 2010 election campaign the incumbent Labor government announced a 40% target policy for women on federal boards, which is yet to be met and was not accompanied by any sanctions for non-compliance. This also did not extend to a target policy for women's representation on the boards of public companies.
- The Australian Human Rights Commission's 2010 Gender Equality Blueprint report includes Promoting Women in Leadership as Recommendation 8. Specifically, it recommends that a minimum target of 40% representation of each gender (the 40:40:20 rule) be set on all Australian Government boards, in senior executive ranks of the public service, in all companies providing goods or services to the Australian Government, and finally on the boards of all publicly listed companies in Australia. The Blueprint also recommends that if substantial progress is not made, the Australian Government should consider legislating mandatory gender quotas and penalties for non-compliance.
- In January 2011 the ASX Corporate Governance Council introduced changes to their corporate governance rules to require ASX-listed companies to adopt and disclose a diversity policy that includes measurable objectives for achieving gender diversity and to report annually on their achievement against those objectives, including the proportions of women employed in the whole organisation, in senior management roles and on the board of directors. Expectations that the ASX might introduce quotas if the setting and reporting against voluntary targets did not achieve significant change has led to widespread discussion and debate in Australia about the use of targets and quotas to increase the number and proportions of female leaders in corporations.
- The Financial Services Institute of Australia has drafted reporting principles for gender diversity, which member organisations must follow.
- The European Parliament passed a non-binding resolution in July 2011 that quotas should apply in all EU nations with female board representation to be at 30% by 2015 and at 40% by 2020.
- In the United Kingdom, the 2011 Women on Boards report by Lord Davies recommended that FTSE350 listed companies in that country should set targets for number of women on their boards by 2013 and 2015, and that FTSE100 companies should set a minimum target of 25% female board representation to be achieved by 2015. It further recommended that companies be required to disclose the number of women on their boards and establish policies around boardroom gender diversity and include in their annual reporting the processes they use in making board appointments. The report made further recommendations around the search and development process to assist with promoting more women to boards. However, both the 2011 report and Lord Davies himself reject the use of mandatory quotas for women on boards.

The recommendation of quotas or targets for increasing gender diversity generates a range of responses. Quotas, in particular, are hotly debated and often lead to polarised positions. The extremes of that debate characterised by objection to the violation of the merit principle at one end, and the insistence on the need for drastic action or "temporary special measures" at the other. Table 2 provides some of the common arguments for and against quotas.

Table 2. Examples of common arguments for and against the use of quotas

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotas promote better and more creative talent development and retention. • Quotas force organisations to be innovative and to look harder for qualified women, and work harder to develop their female employees. • Only quotas can achieve the degree of progress required for women to attain a critical mass in leadership positions. • Quotas are an effective temporary measure for achieving greater gender equality – decades of aspirational programs have not delivered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotas represent additional regulation and will impose additional costs and inefficiencies on business. • Quotas undermine the principle of merit, and business is based on meritocracy, not diversity. • If there were enough qualified and experienced women, they would already be represented at senior levels of organisations. • Many women believe that in attaining seniority through quota-base hiring, they will be marginalised and viewed as tokens.

Targets are usually considered more acceptable than quotas based on the belief that the former are voluntary while the latter are mandatory. In Australia, this distinction has been strongly influenced by the ASX requirement that organisations set and report on voluntary targets with the suggestion that mandatory quotas will be imposed if organisations do not cooperate with the spirit of the ASX requirement. However, within organisations the degree of voluntarism in the setting, pursuit, and achievement of targets can vary depending upon the planning, accountability, and reward structures in which the targets are embedded. For example, a manager who is assigned a target, who is held

accountable for their achievement, and who loses bonus or other rewards if he or she does not hit the target, may believe that targets are mandatory.

Many support the setting of voluntary targets at the organisation level but then argue that managers within companies be held accountable for gender targets and have their rewards linked to the achievement of those targets. For example, Women on Boards states that the business community consensus is against the imposition of mandatory gender quotas, but in favour of targets that are taken seriously and tied to performance and remuneration.

Table 3: The meaning and requirements of the merit principle

The Merit Principle

The most common objection to mandated quotas, and sometimes targets, is that they are inconsistent with the application of the principle of merit in selection and promotion processes. Support for the merit principle is based on beliefs that it leads to the selection of the best person for the job and that it is the fairest rule. Conversely, gender targets and quotas are believed to lead to the selection of less competent women in the place of more competent men and to be unfair to the men who are overlooked. Successful application of the merit principle, however, must satisfy certain requirements that are not met in the selection and promotion processes of most organisations.

1. That the selection process is blind to all considerations besides the job related capabilities of the candidate. Research on unconscious bias demonstrates that even with the best intention of not being biased, this condition is difficult to satisfy.
2. That the criteria and processes used to determine the capability of candidates are valid in the following ways: (i) They are correctly measured. (ii) They correctly discriminate between candidates. (iii) They predict performance on the job. Research shows that interviews are subjective and lack validity but they remain a common form a selection process. Experience is often over-used as a surrogate for job related skills. Even objective measures can be biased because they can be influenced by historical inequalities, prejudice and stereotypes (Crosby, Iyer, & Clayton, 2003). For example, SAT exams for students in the US typically indicate poorer performance for racial minorities compared to whites. SAT scores are the determining factor in college selection, yet they only predict a very small amount of actual college performance. In fact, when socio-economic status is controlled for, SAT scores do not predict college performance at all (Fernald, 2002), and yet they continue to form the basis of US college selection.
3. More broadly, that all people have equal opportunities to be considered for selection and promotion. The conditions for satisfaction of this requirement will depend upon how far the analysis is taken in defining “opportunities”. For example, opportunities might include access to a selection pool or job assignments, training and development activities that prepare a person for a role.

In the following sections, we first position targets and quotas in the range of actions that have been taken to increase the number of women in leadership roles, discuss three criteria that are used in assessing the effectiveness of gender targets and quotas and then review the available evidence for the effects of targets and quotas on each of those criteria. We conclude with two recommendations.

Strategies and Practices

Strategies for increasing the number of female leaders

Targets and quotas are two of a range of strategies that organisations have adopted as part of diversity and inclusion policies. Typically, diversity is defined more broadly than gender and will include other individual differences such as age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and cultural background. In some organisations, diversity is defined in ways that goes beyond observable surface characteristics, such as gender and race, to include differences in behavioural factors such as leadership and communication styles, knowledge

and values. In recognition of the fact that having a diverse work force does not guarantee that people will work together effectively, many organisations supplement their diversity strategies with inclusion policies and strategies that are aimed at more fully capturing the benefits of diversity by engaging all staff, particularly those in minority groups, effectively in the work process.

Strategies for increasing the number of female leaders can be focused on any number of steps in the chain of activities that start with recruitment, selection and induction then go on to include leadership and supervision, performance management, work cultures and codes of conduct, training and development, promotion and separation. Opportunity enhancement strategies aim to increase the capabilities of women so that they can meet selection criteria and increase the pool of female talent available for selection into targeted roles. The large number of training, development, mentorship, and networking programs and organisations that are routinely created and availed of by governments and companies are examples of efforts to help women become more eligible for senior positions. Diversity

strategies can also cover maternity leave and other benefits, flexible work practices and support networks that increase the opportunities for women to participate in the work force and more fully utilise their capabilities.

Targeted selection strategies focus on the identification, recruitment and selection processes of the organisation and aim to increase the number of women in targeted roles by increasing the numbers of qualified applicants and ensuring that there are no biases against the selection of qualified women. Preferential selection strategies are those that aim to increase the number of women in targeted roles by taking gender into account in the selection process. This may be in the form of a weak preference, which refers to the process where, given equally suitable candidates, a woman will be chosen before a man. Strong preference refers to situations in which gender is taken into account as a selection criterion and may therefore lead to a situation where a less qualified female is selected ahead of a more qualified male candidate.

Targets and Quotas

All of the above strategies focus on the processes through which women end up in leadership roles. As such, they can be characterised as “push” or “supply” strategies. Targets and quotas focus on the outputs of the supply processes and can be characterised as “pull” or “demand” strategies. Like challenging performance goals in other areas, targets and quotas for gender make managers accountable for both outcomes and for the development of the strategies and processes that produce the outcomes specified. As discussed later, the achievement of challenging goals often requires the development of strategies and, if managers are unable to develop new strategies, they will fall back on past practices or, if possible, reject the challenging goal.

The discussions and debates about targets and quotas have tended to focus mostly on their application to the selection and promotion processes within organisations, which is the area that we focus on in this paper. However, targets and quotas can be applied to any indicators used as a measure of the activities covered by diversity strategies, such as numbers of people coached or trained.

Gender quotas generally refer to mandatory requirements for a particular number of women in specific positions that are imposed on organisations through legislation or through some other regulatory requirement. Quotas are non-negotiable and are backed by sanctions for failure to achieve the required levels of female staff in the specified periods. Both the quota level and the penalties for non-compliance can vary. Quotas, and tar-

gets, may mandate a specific level of gender representation, such as a “50:50 gender balance” (or as close to as possible), a minimum proportion such as “at least 25% female representation, or some combination as in the “40:40:20 rule”, which specifies at least 40% of each gender, and the remaining 20% of either gender. The sanctions for non-compliance can also vary. For example, in Norway, the first country to legislate gender quotas for women on the boards of all publicly listed companies, specified penalties for non-compliance included the dissolution of the company. In contrast, in Spain, the second country to introduce gender quota legislation, the requirement is only to publicly report on and explain any failure to meet the mandated quota.

A gender target is usually a voluntary, aspirational goal for levels of gender representation in an organisation. Targets may be stated as either levels or changes in the numbers or proportions of female staff. While targets are voluntarily set by organisations, for individual managers, the levels of discretion when setting targets, the processes by which the targets are set, the accountability processes and the consequent outcomes, such as rewards, all vary widely. In some organisations, the setting of gender targets, holding managers accountable for their achievements and rewards for goal achievement are the same as for targets or goals set for performance in other areas of a manager’s job. For managers where targets are imposed and carry the risk of lost income for failure to achieve the assigned goal, gender targets may seem like quotas. In other organisations, managers are left to set their own targets and report on their achievements. The approaches adopted by organisations who have considered quotas and target tend to fall somewhere between these two approaches.

Current Gender Target and Quota Practices

What has been largely lacking in the debate about targets and quotas has been comprehensive data on their use and the outcomes of their use. While many companies publish gender diversity data, most do not. The ASX gender diversity guidelines will address this shortfall to some degree; however, standardised data for the majority of companies not listed on the ASX is difficult to obtain.

In keeping with the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act of 1999, and the proposed 2011 strengthening of the act, almost all organisations in Australia have policies and procedures around cultural and gender equality. In addition, large organisations are required by law to report on their efforts to remove discrimination against women. Many companies have an extensive range of diversity policies and practices

in place. Relatively fewer have specific target or quota practices, although given the recent ASX gender diversity policy and similar moves in countries around the world, the number of companies publishing targets or implementing quotas can be expected to grow.

An often noted concern about women's representation in leadership positions is the lack of comprehensive and detailed data on the numbers of women in different organisational levels, and an even greater dearth of information on the kinds of policies and practices companies engage in to address the problem and their impacts on other outcomes such as attitudes and performances.

The extent to which organisations publicise these initiatives varies; some are proactive about publicising their approach, while others are not. While there are aggregate figures available, for example the percentage of women on boards, the lack of published codified data makes it difficult to establish progress in gender equality in senior leadership roles at the industry or organisation level. While the ASX's gender diversity policy will in part address this problem, data for companies that fall outside the new reporting requirement are

likely to remain elusive. Other reporting initiatives include a consortium involving the ASX and National Australia Bank is working to establish an index of gender equity in organisations in Australia, called the Gender Performance Rating, which would rank organisations on the basis of their progress towards gender equality. Most large banks and professional services firms in Australia have already adopted targets for women in senior positions. These include Westpac, ANZ, Commonwealth Bank, Bank of Queensland, National Australia Bank, and PricewaterhouseCoopers. The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) also bestows a Business Achievement Award annually to publicise the initiatives of organisations in the area of gender equality. Despite these attempts however, it remains difficult to gauge the extent or prevalence of target or quota practices currently in place in Australian companies.

Table 4 provides a sample of Australian and international organisations that publicly express specific target or quota policies around increasing the number of women in their organisations, or the number of women in leadership positions in their organisations.

Table 4. A sample of Australian and International Target/Quota Company Practices.

Company	Practice	%	Date by	Applied to	Outcomes
Allianz	Target	30%	2015	Management Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2010, women constituted 15% of managers directly below board level. • 20% of middle management are women. • 32% of overall management positions are held by women.
ANZ	Target	40%	2011	Company-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three women on the Management Board of 12 executives in 2010 (in 2007 there was none). • In 2010, the proportion of women in management rose from 36% to 38%. • Aim of 40% female managers achieved by 30 September 2011.
Bank of QLD	Target	25%	2015	Senior Management	Not Available
Bayer	Target	30%	2015	Senior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of women company-wide was 35% in 2010. • Women accounted for around 37% of skilled employees and nearly 31% of trainees.
BMW	Target	13-15%	2020	Company Wide	Current percentage of women is 8.8%.
BMW	Target	15-17%	2020	Non-tariff Positions	Not Available.
CBA	Target	35%	2014	Senior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a Diversity Council that is chaired by the CEO. • Set a three-year strategy to strengthen diversity in the organisation, supported by sustainable culture change; • Put in place clear targets and measurement to monitor progress, with the most senior executives having personal diversity targets for their businesses to achieve. • With women making up 62% of CBA's workforce and over 43% of management roles filled by women, a key Diversity in leadership focus is to increase the representation of women in senior leadership roles, so that there is a broad representation of women right across the Group.
Daimler Chrysler	Target	20%	2020	Senior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall percentage of women increased to 13.5% in 2010. • Women comprised 21% of trainees overall (11% of commercial-technical trainees). • Women constitute 9% of senior management. • Around 900 mentees and mentors have taken part in the Group-wide TANDEM monitoring program since 2007.
Daimler Chrysler	Target	14-18%	2015	Level 4 Management	Women now account for 12.4% of Level 4 Management.
De Beers Group	Target	10%	2009	Technical related positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women constitute about 22% of the global workforce. • Women occupy 20% of management roles. • Women hold 9% of technical related positions. <p>Number of women in management rose from 18% in 2007 to 21% in 2008.</p>
Deloitte (UK)	Target	25%	2015	Board Level	Not Available

Company	Practice	%	Date by	Applied to	Outcomes
Deloitte (USA)	Target	35%	2005	Executive Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's representation as partners, principals, and directors has risen from 6% in 1995 to 22% in 2009. • Women senior managers have increased from 23% to 36% from 1995 to 2009. • The gender gap in turnover decreased from 7% in 1995 to less than 1% in 2009. • Additional milestone in 2009 – exceeding 1,000 U.S. women partners, principals, and directors.
Deutsche Telecom	Quota	30%	2015	Upper and Middle Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the introduction of the quota, the number of women company-wide has increased from 19% to 23%. • Deutsche Telecom was able to recruit a number of women for top positions and important development programs.
Ernst & Young (Australia)	Target	Double current number	2013	Senior Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative commenced in 1996, the representation of women at the partner, principal, and director level has more than doubled from 7% to 15%. • The promotion rate for women at partner level has more than doubled from 12% to 25%. • Women now comprise 13% of executive management positions (up from zero in the mid-1990s).
Ernst & Young (Oceania)	Target	40%	2013	Executive Level	Not Available
ING	Target	33%	2015	Senior Level	Not Available
ING	Target	15%	2015	Management Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2009, the percentage of women in Management Council increased from 12% to 13%. • In 2010, women in the ING Management Council rose from 13% to 15%.
Lloyds Bank	Target	25%	2015	Senior Level	Not Available
Louis Vuitton	Target	30%	2015	Senior Management	Not Available
Louis Vuitton	Target	40%	2020	Senior Management	Not Available
Merck	Target	30%	2015	Upper/Middle Management	Women currently constitute 22% of senior management positions.
Merck	Target	40%	2020	Upper/Middle Management	Not Available
NAB	Target	14-30%	2015	Subsidiary board positions	Not Available
Qantas	Target	45%	2014	Executive Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current standing is 41%. In relation to senior executives, the diversity action committee will closely monitor recruitment activity to facilitate positive outcomes. • Women accounted for 46% of all new hires across the business – up 4% from 42% during the 2009/10 reporting year. • Areas where there were particularly high success levels for women were in Customer & Marketing (including Cabin Crew) where 69% of all new hires were female and in Commercial where 75% of all new hires were female.

Company	Practice	%	Date by	Applied to	Outcomes
Rio Tinto	Target	20%	2015	Senior Management	Women represented 14% of senior management in 2010.
Rio Tinto	Target	40%	2015	Graduate Level	Women constituted 27% of 2010 graduate recruits.
SAP	Target	25%	2017	Management level	In 2010, numbers stayed relatively flat, at 17.8%, in 2010 versus 17.7% in 2009.
Shell	Target	20%	N/A	Senior Management	Not Available
Sodexo	Target	23-25%	2015	Senior Management (Group 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's representation has increased from 16% to 18% among the top 250 executives and from 22% to 23% in senior management. • The proportion of women in middle management roles at Sodexo, including Sodexo Prestige, has gone from 40 to 47% in just two years.
Telstra	Target	30%	2013	Board (Non-Executive Level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They now have 31% women in the senior management team. • Engagement of identified groups equal to or greater than national benchmarks. • Female representation for 30 June 2012 at 32% (Telstra) and 25% (Executive Management).
Westpac	Target	40%	2014	Executive & Senior Management	As at September 2011, women comprise: 37.5% of the executive and senior management.
Woolworths	Target	33%	2015	Executive Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 2003-04 financial year, 16.7% of leadership roles in Woolworths Limited were held by women. • In the 2008-09 year it had risen to 27%.

Determining the Effects of Targets and Quotas

When the evidence for the range of positive effects produced by gender diversity, particularly in leadership roles, is juxtaposed against the evidence that traditional methods of selection and placement are not producing significant change, the question arises as to “what new strategies can be used to produce the desired increases in the numbers of female leaders and consequential benefits?” Targets and quotas are one set of answers. While there are many opinions about the potential effects of targets and quotas, these are often based on expectations of what might happen when women are selected or promoted through a process that includes targets and quotas and not on the evidence for the predicted effects.

The specific question we address is “if women are selected and promoted through processes that include targets or quotas, will the resulting gender diversity deliver the benefits that gender diversity has been shown to produce?” In order to answer this question we examine the evidence for the effects of targets and quotas on three key criteria:

1. The actual state of gender diversity in organisations with target and quota practices, that is, the proportion of women in senior leadership positions in organisations.
2. The attitudes toward target and quota policies and practices and reactions to women who are selected or promoted under a targets or quotas policy.
3. The performance outcomes for women promoted under target and quota practices, and for the companies that use them.

In collating and reviewing the evidence for the effects of targets and quotas we have sourced data from the ASX, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Government departments, not-for-profit, lobbying and policy organisations, international government and non-government bodies, by researching and actively canvassing information from individual companies, and by sourcing and reviewing social and psychological literatures.

In the sections that follow, we present the results of research on the three key criteria identified. It is important to know that a long-standing challenge has been the availability of comprehensive data with which to address these criteria.

Table 5. Some quick facts about women's leadership in Australia

Some quick facts about the current state of women's leadership in Australia:*

- Australia ranked equal 1st for women's and girls' educational attainment in 2010, but slipped from 15th (in 2006) to 23rd (in 2010) in its Global Gender Gap Index ranking.
- Women hold only 10.9% of Australian board directorships (increased from 8.7 in 2010).
- The number of female board directors increased by only 0.2% between 2002 and 2010.
- Women constitute 3% and 2.5% of ASX-listed CEOs and Chairs, respectively.
- 54% of ASX listed companies have no female directors. 65% of companies overall have no female Executive Key Management Personnel.
- Women occupy 24% of Executive Key Management support roles, but only 4.1% of Executive Key Management line roles.

*Australian Government EOWA 2010 Census Report.

Table 6. Percentage of Women Board Directors in Australia in 2011 (Boardroom Diversity Index (BDI), Women on Boards, 2011).

Sector	2010	2011
ASX200	8.7	10.9
Superannuation Trustees - Corporate	21.2	19.4
Superannuation Trustees - Industry	18.9	21.9
Superannuation Trustees - Public Sector	22.0	23.6
Superannuation Trustees - Retail	17.1	18.0
Total Superannuation Trustees	19.4	20.4
Credit Unions	21.0	18.4
National Sporting Organisations	26.5	22.7
Government Boards - Federal	30.4	31.0
Government Owned Corporations NSW	24.4	23.7
Government Owned Corporations Queensland	32.0	36.0
Government Boards Victoria	N/A	40.0
Government Boards South Australia	45.3	47.4
Government Boards Western Australia	N/A	27.8
Government Boards Tasmania	N/A	28.1
Rural Research & Development Corporations	22.4	22.5
Cooperative Research Centres	17.3	18.3

Table 7. Percentage of Female Board Directors of Listed Companies and Female Executive Managers in Countries Comparable to Australia (EOWA 2010 Census Report).

Country	% Female Board Directors	% Female Executive Managers
Australia	8.4	8.0
Canada	14	16.9
New Zealand	8.7	N/A
South Africa	16.6	19.3
United Kingdom	9.0	13.5
United States	15.2	12.2
China*	8.5	8.0
Singapore*	7.3	N/A

* Women on Boards Report, 2011, Governance Metrics International.

Diversity Outcome of Targets and Quotas

The first criteria for assessing the impact of targets and quotas is the actual impact on the numbers of women in target roles. In Australia for example, following the ASX requirement for the disclosure in each annual report of the measurable objectives for achieving gender diversity and progress towards achieving them, women comprised 27% of all new board appointments in 2010, up from just 5% in the previous year. We consider the effects of government mandated practices, parliamentary quotas for women, and the opening of roles for women in defence forces.

In Norway, women's representation on boards rose from 7% in 2003 prior to the introduction of the 40:40:20 law, to 40.3% in 2010. The increase in the number of women on boards in Norway hasn't yet translated into greatly increased levels of women on executive committees, which still sits at around 12%. Additionally, there is mixed anecdotal evidence both for and against the impact of the legislation.

According to some, the move has been embraced by most organisations, and many senior businesswomen report being more actively sought for board level roles. Suggestions that many companies would simply "pad" their boards with female non-executive directors in order to comply with the legislation was not borne out with average board size remaining unchanged after the legislation took effect (Dittmar & Aherne, 2011). However, a greater number of companies chose to become private rather than remain public (thus avoiding the law's jurisdiction) and to register in other countries following the introduction of the law. Additionally, Seierstad and Opsahl (2010) note that since the introduction of Norway's quota legislation, the number of board directorships held by women has doubled, thus the number of female directors has not risen so much as the number of board positions they occupy, the so-called "golden skirt" phenomenon.

Table 8. Summary of International Gender Quota Legislation and Impacts, April 2011.

Company	Country	Year	Quota	Impact
Public Companies	Norway	2003	40% by 2008	Achieved 40.3% female board representation in 2010.
	Spain	2007	40% for companies with more than 250 employees by 2015.	Recommendation only, no sanction for non-compliance. Numbers of women on boards increased from 4% to 10% in 2010.
	Iceland	2010	40% for public and private companies with more than 50 employees by 2013.	N/A
	France	2010	20% by 2013, 40% by 2016.	N/A
	Netherlands	2010	Immediate 30% for boards and in senior management in public companies with more than 250 employees.	N/A
State-owned Companies	Denmark	2009	Immediate 30%.	Female board membership was already 30% in 2000, and rose to 35% in 2009.
	Finland	2004	40% by 2005.	Female board membership increased from 30% in 2004 to 44% in 2010.
	Iceland	2006	50:50 or as close as possible for odd-numbered boards	40% by all companies in 2006.
	Ireland	2004	40%, no deadline.	Not yet reached. Female board membership was 34% in 2009.
	Israel	1993	30%, no deadline.	Female board membership increased from 7.4% in 1993 to 37% in 2000.
	South Africa	1996	30%, no deadline.	Female board membership reached 20% in 2000, and 36% in 2009.
Proposed	Belgium		33% within 7yrs for all public and state owned companies.	Law pending.
	Canada		50% within 3yrs for all public and state-owned companies.	Law pending in Senate as of December 2010.
	Italy		33% for all public companies.	Approved by House 2010, pending in Senate.

Spain's legislation is less prescriptive than Norway's, requiring companies with more than 250 employees to negotiate gender equity with unions, and larger companies to have 40% female board representation, but only requiring explanation for non-compliance, rather than imposing penalties. In the year following the introduction of the law, female board representation rose from 3.7% to 6%. However, it did not increase as dramatically after that, and currently stands at 10.2%. This is arguably due to the lack of serious penalties for non-compliance. Firm outcome data is not available for the success of Spain's laws, as they do not come in to full force until 2015. Similarly, no outcome information is available for the remaining countries passing gender quota legislation as yet, since the laws in those companies have either only just been introduced and are still in transition phases, or are not yet in effect.

It is worth noting that, thus far, recent quota legislation around the world specifically targets women on company boards. It is often noted that increasing female representation on boards will not necessarily flow to substantially increasing the number of female on executive committees and in other senior leadership roles. However, there is some correlational evidence that the greater the number of women board directors in an organisation, the more women at top executive level in that organisation (Matsa & Miller, 2011). While there is not yet sufficient evidence out of countries that have introduced gender quotas for women on boards, this finding suggests that in time, the benefits of increased board representation for women are likely to flow through to women in other senior positions.

In general there is a paucity of evidence on the organisational performance results of employing target or quota policies. However some research indicates that companies that aggressively pursue affirmative action policies perform as well as firms that do not (Holzer & Neumark, 2000). Furthermore, there is some evidence that being publicly recognised as an affirmative action hirer has a positive effect on a firm's share prices (Wright, Ferris, Hiller, & Kroll, 1995), and that companies that employ affirmative action practices experience an increase in return on stocks (Bellinger & Hillman, 2000). This evidence, however, is mostly correlational and based on a limited sample. In terms of persuading organisations to adopt targets and quotas, a convincing research demonstration that target and quota policies lead to improved organisational performance is yet to be conducted.

Parliamentary Quotas for Women

Australia granted franchise to women in 1902, at the same time providing them with the right to sit in parliament. The following year, in 1903, four women nominated for election to the federal parliament; none was elected. In fact it was not until 1943 that a woman was first elected to parliament in Australia. Despite being one of the first countries to grant women the vote, Australia was among the last to witness the successful election of a woman candidate to parliament with the election of Enid Lyons (of the United Australia Party) and Dorothy Tangney (of the Australian Labor Party) to the House of Representatives and Senate, respectively.

Parliamentary quotas can be constitutionally and/or legislatively mandated quotas or voluntary political party-based quotas. By 2005, over 40 countries around the world had amended their constitutions or passed legislation introducing parliamentary quotas. In a further 50 countries major political parties had adopted voluntary quotas for the nomination of female candidates. To date, there are no legislated quotas for women's parliamentary representation in any Australian parliament.

In 1981, the Australian Labor Party adopted an affirmative action program instituting quotas for the endorsement of female candidates for parliamentary elections. More recently, in 2002, the ALP passed a policy aiming to achieve female candidates in 40% of winnable seats, the same target as for men. While not instituting a formal policy, the Liberal Party has actively recruited female candidates from women's networks and undertaken training and mentorship of women to stand as candidates. The Australian Democrats have had significant proportions of female senators, including several female party leaders, in every Federal Parliament since the party was formed in 1977. Similarly, the first Australian Greens senator to be elected was female, and since 1990, the Greens have had greater numbers of female senators than men, with six of the nine Greens senators in the current Federal Parliament being women. In 2010, Australia elected its first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard. However, as detailed in Table 5 below, fewer than 30% of Australian Parliamentarians are female.

Table 9. Women in Australian Parliaments as of June 2011.

Parliament	Lower House Women	Lower House Total	Upper House Women	Upper House Total
Commonwealth	37	150	30	76
New South Wales	21	93	13	42
Victoria	29	88	13	40
Queensland	32	89	-	-
South Australia	11	47	7	22
Tasmania	6	25	6	15
Western Australia	12	59	17	36
Northern Territory	8	25	-	-
Australian Capital Territory	7	17	-	-

Source: Senate Brief No.3, July 2011.

Table 10: Women in Parliament Globally

Women in Parliament Globally
<p>In 1995, the United Nations set a target of 30% for women’s parliamentary representation and specified a number of avenues through which this could be achieved. These include; the equalisation of educational opportunities for girls and women, quotas for female participation in governance, legislative reform to address issues specific to women and children, gender-responsive financial and budgetary policies, increased statistical and research data reporting by gender, and greater support for grassroots women’s development movements.</p> <p>It is estimated that approximately half of the countries in the world use some form of electoral gender quota. Of the 90 nations represented in Global Database of Quotas for Women, 74 have specified quotas in their constitution. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), as of 2008, women hold an average of 18% of seats in parliaments around the world. Countries with the highest proportion of female parliamentary representation include: Sweden (47%), Cuba (43%), Finland (41%), the Netherlands (41%), Argentina (40%) and Denmark (38%). The United States and the United Kingdom are currently in line with the global average of 18%.</p>

While many countries have adopted parliamentary quota practices, the extent to which they are implemented and enforced is not clear. This presents a challenge in establishing the effectiveness of parliamentary quotas in actually increasing the number of women in parliaments. In Norway, women’s representation in parliament rose from 25% to 38% following the adoption of party political quotas by the Norwegian Labour party in 1983.

However, in Brazil, following the introduction of parliamentary quotas in 1996, the number of women occupying seats in the national legislature only rose from 6.2% to 8.9% in 2006. This is likely due to the fact that while a number of seats are reserved for women, it was not compulsory that those seats be occupied by women if women were not available for election. In addition, the quota laws allowed parties to increase the number

of candidates put forward for election, thus increasing competition for female candidates.

In the United Kingdom specific targets and quotas were not formally adopted at the party level, or legislated at the parliamentary level due to concerns that such practices would breach the Sex Discrimination Act. In 2002 amendments to this act were passed to “permit” (but not prescribe) parties to set targets and quotas for female candidates. This measure has not resulted in a significant increase in female parliamentary representation, however, with the percentage of women in parliament rising less than 2% since the passing of the amendment. Many researchers have pointed out that women’s political representation has always tended to be higher in socialist and former communist countries, even prior to the adoption of target or quota practices.

Arguments have also been made that an important determinant of the success of quotas is whether they extend to the local government level and to board and decision-making position in government bodies to provide a trajectory for national representation.

It seems likely that comprehensive, legislatively mandated and enforced parliamentary quotas for women do succeed in numerically increasing the political representation of women in a relatively short period of time. All of the nations with greater than 30% female parliamentary representation have a gender quota system in place. However, there is still resistance toward measures that are seen to be non-merit based, and essentially undemocratic. A common argument is that they result in the advancement of an under-qualified or inexperienced female over more experienced and qualified male candidate. To date there is no reliable quantitative evidence as to whether quotas have resulted in less effective political representation by virtue of their non-merit basis.

Targets and Quotas for Women in Defence Forces

A small number of countries draft or conscript women into their defence forces in the same way they do men. These include Israel, Eritrea, China, Libya, Malaysia, North Korea, Peru and Taiwan. While many countries have moved in recent decades to increase the number of roles women are allowed to occupy, for example, special elite combat units and on submarines, few defence forces have quotas for female representation. Notably in fact, until the 1970s, the US Army had a gender “quota” forbidding more than 2% of positions being filled by women. Since lifting that cap the number of women in the US armed forces has risen to about 14%, with about 90% of positions open to female applicants, and in 2011, the US government moved to allow women to serve on nuclear submarines. Other countries that allow women to serve on submarines include Norway, Australia, Canada and Spain.

In 2000, the Israeli Defence Force’s Equality Amendment to Military Service law gave women and men equal rights to all positions. Both France and Canada have targets or quotas for women’s representation in their armed forces with Canada setting a quota of 25% in 1999, and France a goal of 10% in 1998. Both countries also moved to increase the range of positions open to female applicants.

In 2011, the Australian government announced that all restrictions on women serving in combat positions would be removed provided that physical requirements are met. This change would come into effect within five years.

Reactions to Targets and Quotas

The second criteria against which effectiveness of target and quota practices can be assessed is the effects on the psychological and social reactions to them, both from the perspective of men and women in the organisations that utilise them, and also from the perspective of the experience of women who are hired as a function of such practices.

In the lead up to the passage of the Norwegian legislation there was considerable criticism from the corporate sector on grounds ranging from its undemocratic nature and concerns around excessive government intervention in corporate affairs, to the practical obstacles to finding suitably qualified women and the consequent potential decrease in the quality of corporate governance. However, eight years on, the legislation is rarely remarked upon within Norway, and a range of organisations and initiatives have emerged aimed at identifying, developing, and recruiting women into leadership positions to ensure a pipeline of qualified board applicants. Indeed one of the most successful initiatives, called Female Future, was set up by the Business Federation of Norway in response to the introduction of the quota legislation. An example of how the introduction of a quota lead to the development of a new supply strategy.

Target and quota-based employment practices have been introduced indirectly in the form of affirmative action, reverse discrimination, or preferential selection processes in the USA. These practices were initially introduced to address social and employment inequity for racial minorities and later extended to women. A large body of social and psychological research has emerged since the initial use of these practices in the USA in the 1960’s.

There are two bodies of research on reactions to the use of affirmative action in selection and promotion processes. The first examines factors that predict people’s attitudes towards affirmative action policies. The second examines people’s reactions to those selected under such policies, including the reactions of the person selected.

Attitudes toward Affirmative Action

Research on the social and psychological factors that predict attitudes towards affirmative action provides useful insights into the factors that organisations might need to consider in order to gain acceptance of the use of targets or quotas as a strategy to increase gender diversity.

Research on the factors affecting attitudes towards affirmative action policies has been conducted since the mid eighties, shortly after the introduction of Equal Employment Opportunity laws in the USA and culminated in a meta-analytic review of all studies in this body of research by Harrison et al. (2006). In their study, Harrison et al (2006) reviewed research on the characteristics of individuals and the types of affirmative action practices, and perceivers, that predicted attitudes toward and acceptance of affirmative action recruitment practices. The findings from the Harrison et al (2006) meta-analysis are summarised in Table 11.

This results also confirmed that attitudes towards affirmative action practices are more positive among members of beneficiary categories. Among women in the case of affirmative action for women, and among ethnic minorities in the case of affirmative action for racial minorities. This is explained by the significant relationship between perceived self-interest and positive attitudes toward affirmative action – thus the more people believe they will receive a benefit from affirmative action, the more positive their attitudes towards it. This factor is also related to perceptions of organisational justice, since to the extent to which affirmative

Table 11. Factors Predicting Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action Practices *

Predictor	Description	Correlation**
Prescriptiveness of practice	The extent to which the practice limits discretion and considerations of merit.	-.32
Self-interest	Belief in receiving personal benefit from affirmative action practices.	.42
Collective interest	Belief that one’s demographic category receives a collective benefit from affirmative action practices.	.38
Personal experience	Having personally experienced race- or gender-based discrimination in employment.	.19
Perceptions of discrimination	Perception that a target demographic category experiences high levels of discrimination.	.31
Racism	Prejudicial attitudes or discriminatory behaviour toward a given race (Black and Hispanic people in this case).	-.40
Sexism	Prejudicial attitudes or discriminatory behaviour toward a given gender (women in this case).	-.52
Political ideology	Conservative social and political values (that governments should not intervene to correct social or economic inequality).	-.35

* Harrison et al. (2006)

** A negative correlation means that the predictor produced a negative attitude toward or resistance of affirmative action policies. A positive correlation means the reverse.

The result for the predictor “prescriptiveness of practice” shown in Row 1 of Table 11 confirms what is widely acknowledged in discussions of targets and quotas. Quotas, which are a more prescriptive practice for increasing the number of women in leadership roles, are less likely to be accepted than targets that allow for some discretion in the amounts and timing of increases in female leaders.

action practices by one’s employer are seen as unjust by non-beneficiaries, they impact negatively on perceived self-interest.

As also illustrated in Table 11, people have more positive attitudes toward affirmative action if they have been subjected to employment discrimination themselves, or are members of a demographic category

which experiences higher levels of employment discrimination. This is a pertinent issue in relation to increasing the numbers of women on boards, where they can give voice to discrimination concerns at senior level.

Another key predictor of negative attitudes towards affirmative action practices are prejudicial attitudes toward the target group; sexism in the case of gender-based affirmative action, and racism in the case of race-based affirmative action (Kravitz et al. 2000). Both sexism and racism are strongly predicted by right-wing political views, and right wing political affiliation (in the U.S.), and both these latter psychological dimensions are related to more negative attitudes towards affirmative action on the basis of race and gender.

Reactions to Women hired under Targets and Quotas

Although it is often stated that women hired under targets and quotas will find it more difficult to be accepted, there are no research studies that directly address this question. However, studies of the reactions to women hired under affirmative action practices clearly indicate that people believe that such practices lead to less qualified candidates and hold negative attitudes towards women selected.

Table 12 details the most consistent findings of a review of approximately 20 studies examining the effects of gender-based affirmative action practices on the reaction of both recipients of affirmative action (beneficiaries), and others (non-beneficiaries) in organisations that use these practices. The central theme is clear. Women hired under affirmative action practices are in general seen as less competent and less deserving of their position, and the women who are hired under affirmative action practices suffer similar self-perceptions. Women who are hired under any selection process that includes targets, quotas, preferential treatment or other forms of conscious bias towards women are more likely to be seen as less qualified and less competent, and also less legitimate in their roles than individuals who have been hired through a selection process without such a deliberate bias. Research shows these reactions are often the result of people discounting the selected woman's actual skills and abilities as the explanation for her selection, even when there is evidence that she possesses the required capabilities for the role (Garica, Erskine, Hawn, & Casmay, 1982; Heilman, 1994; Heilman & Blader, 2001). This is especially the case for women selected into non-traditional or male dominated roles.

Furthermore, women themselves who are hired as a result of a preferential selection practice are more likely to feel marginalised and less deserving of their position, and indeed to perform more poorly in it compared to women hired under a merit-based practice. Being hired because of one's gender, or even the perception that one has been hired because of one's gender can make negative stereotypes more accessible. Research on stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995) shows that making a person's minority group status salient (for example being hired due to one's gender) leads them to behave more in accordance with others' stereotypical expectation, that is, that women are less competent in leadership than their male counterparts. For example, according to Quinn and Spencer (2001), women in a stereotype threat condition experienced higher levels of anxiety, poorer performance, and poorer strategy use on a maths test compared to both men, and to women who were not in a stereotype threat condition.

Therefore while mandated affirmative action practices may produce an increase in the representation of the target demographic category, the psychological and attitudinal reactions of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries are largely negative, and require careful management. Gamliel (2007) examined the role of framing of recruitment policies and found that the more a policy is framed as involving preferential selection, the greater employee's disapproval of the organisation's policy. However, on an optimistic note, Hideg, Michela & Ferris (2011) have recently found that employees who are involved in the formulation of affirmative action policies and practices are more likely to have positive attitudes toward it, and more likely to adhere to the policy. Thus education about the role of targets and quotas may play an important part in ameliorating the negative reactions.

It is worth noting that in the U.S., despite a thirty-year history of affirmative action practices in the public sector and government organisations, these negative reactions are still observable. Studies from the U.S., where affirmative action practices have been most widespread, show that workplace race and gender diversity have in fact increased as a result of these practices (Badgett, 1999; Blank, 1985). However, while the numbers of target demographic categories (i.e., racial minorities and women) have increased in some sectors and roles, this has yet to flow through to senior leadership roles in larger or private sector organisations. The number of women on listed boards in the U.S. remains at about 15%, and the number of women in executive positions is at about 12%.

Table 12. Evidence for Consequences of Affirmative Action Practices.

Type of Outcome	Outcomes
Attitudes of beneficiary	<p>Women who believed they were hired because of their gender Chacko (1982):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower organisational commitment • Less job satisfaction • Less satisfaction with superiors and co-workers • Greater levels of role conflict and ambiguity
	<p>Women told they were NOT recruited to a university under a quota system had higher levels of work-related self-esteem compared to those told they were recruited under a quota system (Unzueta, Gutierrez & Ghavami, 2010).</p>
	<p>Employees hired on the basis of merit (vs. affirmative action) are perceived as more (Heilman, McCullough, & Gilbert, 1996):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent • Likeable • Fair <p>Engaging with a co-worker hired on the basis of merit (vs. affirmative action) is perceived as more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivating • Pleasant
	<p>Women hired under affirmative action have less favourable perceptions of future female candidates hired under affirmative action (Heilman, Kaplow, Amato, & Stathatos (1993).</p>
	<p>If others thought they were affirmative action beneficiaries, women inferred that they themselves (Heilman & Alcott(2001):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were less competent • Made more performance-limiting task decisions • Had more negative self-regard • Had higher negative affect
	<p>Heilman, Simon, & Repper (1987) Women hired under affirmative action and given no feedback about their ability perceived themselves to (Heilman, Lucas, Kaplow, 1990):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform less well • Possess less leadership ability • Have less desire to remain in leadership • They also had higher levels of: • Stress • Task disengagement <p>Women given information on their ability (regardless of whether they were hired under affirmative action) did not differ from each other on these dimensions</p>
	Attitudes of others towards beneficiary
<p>Heilman, Block, & Stathatos (1997) Women hired under affirmative action are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended smaller salary increases • Perceived as less competent compared to men, and compared to women not hired under affirmative action practices. 	
<p>Organisational diversity programs that are not seen as justified result in lower competence ratings of beneficiaries (Richard & Kirkby, 1998).</p>	
<p>Self-entitlement beliefs and perceptions the human resource practice are not favourable to the self predict lower job satisfaction (Byrne, Pitts, & Miller, 2010).</p>	
<p>The less deserving a beneficiary of affirmative action is seen to be, the greater non-beneficiaries' resentment towards beneficiaries (Feather, 2008).</p>	

Performance of Women Hired Under Targets and/or Quotas

The third criterion against which the usefulness of target and quota practices can be assessed is the actual performance metrics of women who attain leadership positions as a result of targets and/or quotas. While there is some evidence for company-level consequences of female board appointments, there is an almost complete lack of empirical evidence on the actual performance of women hired under these practices. It is extremely difficult to identify whether the negative psychological and social implications discussed in the last section are in fact born out at the level of actual performance. The data on company performance comparing gender-diverse and non-gender-diverse companies, and company performance and value following female board appointments is mixed making this criterion difficult to assess directly.

Arguments against quota legislation often refer to their effect on the quality and level of experience of women such as those hired as directors hired as a result of the quotas in Norway. A recent study by Dittmar and Aherne (2011) at the University of Michigan examined the consequences of Norway's legislation and found that women who were added to boards to comply with the laws had less upper management experience than both their male equivalents and women hired to boards before the legislation was in effect. Specifically they found that women hired to boards after the quota legislation took effect were on average eight years younger, more highly educated, had half as much previous CEO experience, and were more likely to be hired as a non-executive director than their male equivalents. Firms also experienced a 2.6% reduction in company value when the laws were announced. That drop was 5% for companies with no women on their board, suggesting that there was a strong perception that the more work a company had to do to comply with the laws, the greater the detriment to the company's value. However, further analysis of these findings showed that it was not due to women on company boards per se, but due to less experienced directors, suggesting that the real issue is the lack of upper management experiences for women. That is, the cost of imposing quotas is due to loss of experience, not gender.

Dittmar and Aherne's study also appears to contradict the Harvard Business Review's finding that companies with more women executives produce greater earnings than the average for those companies with fewer women in executive positions. In contrast to Dittmar and Aherne's study, Farrell and Hersch (2009) found no stockprice reaction to the appointment of female directors. Indeed in a more recent study examining share-

holder reactions to mandatory new director appointments, Adams, Gray, and Nowland (2011) found that market reactions toward female board appointments were in fact more positive than toward male appointments. Their study also found that female directors are significantly more likely to be academics and to hold an MBA, and marginally more likely to hold a law degree. Less encouraging were their findings that women were less likely to be appointed to bigger boards, or to boards where the CEO sat on the nominating committee.

In addition, analysis in 2009 by Norway's Center for Corporate Diversity showed an overall increase in levels of education across boards since the introduction of the quota legislation. It is also argued that any decrease in experience on boards due to quota-based hiring is only a short term consequence, until there are greater numbers of more experienced women in board positions, and this is argued to have been only made possible as a result of legislated quotas.

Rose (2007) examined the consequences of gender diversity on boards in Denmark and found no evidence to support the view that the appointment of female directors adversely impacts actual company performance, arguably a more concrete and crucial metric than company value. Interestingly however, Rose (2007) also failed to find any substantial benefits to company performance of hiring female directors. This lack of either positive or negative effect he attributes to the strong socialising forces that operate on new board members that mitigates in favour of continuity of operation and maintenance of the status quo.

The Case for Targets

The evidence reviewed throughout this paper suggests that the introduction of gender targets in organisations has a positive impact on the numbers of women in leadership roles. While the evidence for negative reactions to affirmative action could be construed as a reason for not using gender targets, there is no evidence that this backlash will be long lasting as the numbers of women increase or that it undermines performance. It is possible that, as in other areas, people take time to adjust to new challenges and, as the context changes, in this case there are more women who are seen to be performing effectively, the attitudes towards diversity will also change.

Based on the research evidence for the positive effects of specific, measurable goals, that is targets, on performance across the many task domains were they

have been tested, we conclude that assigning specific, challenging gender targets will lead to improvements in gender diversity and the benefits that this produces. The evidence is unequivocal. Assigning managers specific, challenging goals (targets), and providing feedback on their performance for which they are accountable, leads to improved performance. There is no evidence to suggest that the same beneficial effects would not be achieved through the assignment of specific, challenging gender targets.

The positive effect of specific, challenging goals that are followed up with feedback and accountability on achievement is generally considered the most robust finding in the history of management research (Locke & Latham 2006; Mento, Steele, & Karren, 1987). Specific, challenging goals plus feedback and accountability have been found to positively impact outcomes across a wide range of tasks, cultures, ages, settings and time periods (Latham & Locke 2007; Locke & Latham 2006). While the statements of goals can vary, the more specific goals that spell out what is to be achieved and by when, that is targets, have much more pronounced effects on outcomes than more general statements of goals that do not include levels or timing of the outcomes sought (Locke & Latham, 1990). Similarly, challenging or stretch goals are more motivating and produce greater improvements than goals that set targets at easy to achieve levels (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981; Locke & Latham, 1990; Latham & Locke, 2007).

While the research on specific, challenging goals has not been reported for diversity or gender targets, we believe that the robustness of the effects of goals will generalise to gender targets. In generalising this research we need to be cognisant of the fact that, for many managers, the task of meeting challenging gender targets will be complex and, in many cases, novel. Complex because of the range of factors that can influence the effective recruiting, retention and development of women into roles where there are few of them. Novel because, for many managers, the introduction of gender as a decision criterion into the organisation processes is outside their past experience. Therefore, conditions that are related to the effects of specific, challenging goals on complex and novel tasks must be met if gender targets are to have their desired impacts.

First, to be effective, challenging goals have to be accepted by the person they are assigned to and that person has to remain committed to achieving the goal (Earley & Kanfer, 1985; Kernan, Heimann, & Hanges, 1991). Second, the person responsible has to have access to, either from their own experience or from others, the required strategies for achieving the assigned goal (Wood, Whelan, Sojo & Wong, 2012). As goals become more challenging, particularly for complex, novel

tasks like increasing gender diversity, individuals are often called upon to discover and implement new strategies (Wood, et al, 2012). The move from the execution of past strategies that don't work to the discovery and implementation of new strategies that do work requires imagination, acceptance of the challenge and a commitment to see it through. When managers either do not accept the values or reasons that lie behind assigned targets or doubt their ability to achieve them, they are less likely to accept and remain committed to the target. Even managers who accept the values of and reasons for gender diversity may reject gender targets if they doubt their capability to achieve the targets.

The constraints and enablers that could affect the acceptance, commitment and strategic imagination needed to make gender targets should be taken into account as part of any strategy to use gender targets for increasing gender diversity. The common constraints include mindsets about gender targets and the related culture in work units and organisations and existing systems and processes. The constraints imposed by mindsets, culture, systems and processes can be converted into enablers if tackled before the introduction of gender targets. When this is not possible, steps should be taken to minimize their effects in parallel with the introduction of targets. Key enablers for the successful introduction of challenging gender targets are the support strategies that provide managers with the necessary supply of competent women, such as innovative recruitment, development and retention processes, for achieving their targets.

Three critical mindsets that will be related to the acceptance and commitment to gender targets are gender essentialism beliefs, an "either merit *or* more women" rather than a "merit *and* more women" and confidence in their own ability or self efficacy for achieving gender targets. Managers with a strong gender essentialism mindset believe that men and women are innately different, including but not limited to their brain structures, and are therefore suited to different roles. Managers with a weaker gender essentialism mindset are more likely to believe that observed differences between men and women such as leadership behaviors, success in particular endeavors and distributions in particular roles are the product of opportunities, socialisation and learning. The strength of gender essentialism mindsets held by managers in an organisation will be a stronger predictor of reactions to gender diversity and acceptance and commitment to gender targets. Managers with a strong gender essentialism mindset are more likely to believe that current systems are fair in their treatment of men and women and that diversity strategies are a form of discrimination. They are also more likely to strongly oppose gender targets than managers with a weaker gender essentialism

mindset. When a gender essentialism mindset is widely held among managers in a work unit or organisation, then the prevailing culture is also likely to be opposed to gender diversity and, in particular, gender targets.

The adoption of an “either merit *or* more women mindset” can also lower acceptance and commitment to gender targets. The belief that efforts to increase the number of women in particular roles must come at the cost of merit is often buttressed with the unspoken assumption that if talented women were available they would be selected without gender targets. Another form of this argument is that there is not the supply of women with the required skills and therefore to increase the demand for women through gender targets will lead to the selection of less capable women. The “either merit *or* women mindset” may also lead managers who are assigned gender targets to select less competent women and thereby, intentionally or unintentionally, create the conditions for confirming their mindset.

The counter mindset is that of “merit *and* more women”. In light of the failure of existing strategies to deliver the desired levels of diversity in many organisations, adoption of this mindset and the self-efficacy to see it through will require the strategic imagination to discover new ways of recruiting, developing, retaining and promoting women. Managers with a “merit *and* women” mindset will often find local strategies that maintain or enhance merit while increasing the number of women in their work teams or units. Team based and flexible work arrangements are strategies that have been found to work in some settings. The transfer of these strategies to other work teams and units throughout organisations will often be constrained by the existence of gender essentialism mindsets and cultures.

The third mindset that often comes into play when a manager is assigned a challenging target is the self-efficacy mindset, which is the level of confidence that the manager has that he or she can achieve the target (Bandura, 1997). The stronger the manager’s self-efficacy mindset, the more likely he or she is to accept the target and remain committed to achieving it through the ups and downs of set backs, prolonged effort and testing of different strategies. Managers who doubt their capacity to achieve targets, which may be because of a gender essentialism or “merit *or* women” mindsets or because they cannot go beyond current practices and imagine strategies for achieving the targets, are more likely to reject the targets or be less motivated in their efforts to achieve them. The levels of constraints and enablers will be a critical determinant of the self-efficacy mindsets of managers who are assigned challenging gender targets (Bandura, 1997).

A second set of constraints that can limit the effectiveness of gender targets are the existing systems, processes and frameworks that are used to shape and influence behaviors and outcomes within an organisation. Often, diversity strategies will be undermined by the practices that are promoted and rewarded by existing systems. The most obvious and usually the first to be dealt with are the selection and promotion systems, which have been subjected to audits and redesign in many organisations. Other systems and processes that can impact on the progression of women include rewards, particularly the allocation of bonuses, task allocations and meetings. Audits of these systems and processes for potential biases against women can focus on the inputs, such as competency frameworks and other criteria, the processes involved, and the outputs.

A key enabler for the achievement of challenging gender targets will be access to a supply of women with the capabilities for successful employment in the roles targeted for increases in the numbers and proportions of women. Many, but not all, of the strategies for creating the necessary supply of qualified women lie outside the direct control of managers who are tasked with the specific, challenging gender targets. There are a long list of gender supply side strategies that are currently being employed in organisations, including innovative search and recruitment, support networks, return to work policies and practices, flexible work arrangements, career planning, mentoring and other programs. It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the effectiveness of the different strategies but we do note that these supply strategies can potentially increase the supply of job ready women through innovative approaches to the identification, development and retention of women.

There are many other potential constraints and enablers that might come into play in specific organisations, which are not addressed in this paper. For example, in many professional services firms, mindsets about client preferences, such as “the client wants 24/7 availability of a particular partner” constrain the employment of women and others with responsibilities for young children and other dependents. Other examples of how current constraints might be converted into enablers include the possible redesign of roles and jobs and the criteria used to assess people, in particular the possible use of more specific task skills criteria in place of the overused experience criterion.

Recommendations

The issue of targets and quotas is a complex one. The evidence shows that quotas produce an increase in the numbers of women at target roles. The evidence for gender targets is not well documented in leadership roles but, on balance, leads to the same conclusions, targets can increase the numbers of women.

The research on reactions to affirmative action practices provides indirect support for the conclusion that target and quotas will produce negative reaction and, likely rejection, by both men and women, including the women who are selected on targets or quotas. However, the evidence for how long these reactions will last is mixed. In Norway, there has been a general acceptance of the quotas after only 5 years. In the US, many people still reject affirmative action practice after 30 years. It is also important to note that attitudes towards gender can affect the acceptance of diversity policies and practices, which may also be true for targets and quotas.

The evidence for the performance effects of selecting women under targets and quotas is not strong on either the case for or the case against. Short term market reactions are not evidence of the quality of female appointments. They reflect the beliefs of those who buy and sell shares and their reactions to quota legislation. In Norway, quotas do not seem to have affected the quality of women appointed to boards or the longer term performance of companies.

Based on the evidence that specific, challenging targets with feedback and accountability have been found to apply to every other task in organisations, there seems no reason why specific, challenging gender targets would not produce increase in the number of competent women appointed to and who performs in senior leadership roles.

Recommendation 1: Targets

We recommend that organisations seeking to increase the number of women in senior leadership roles assign managers specific, challenging gender targets, require them to report on achievements against those targets and hold them accountable for the proportion of women in their work units, using the same planning, feedback and accountability processes for targets or goals assigned for other outcomes, such as sales, finance and other areas of performance. In those organisations where managers' rewards are contingent upon the achievement of assigned targets in other areas, we further recommend that similar rewards be attached to the achievement of gender targets.

On the basis of evidence reported in this paper plus evidence from the research on the impacts of specific, challenging goals in other task domains, we expect that assigned gender targets, when introduced in parallel with efforts to remove constraints due to mindsets, culture, systems and processes and the provision of support in the development of new strategies for achieving gender targets, will produce increases in the numbers of female leaders without any drop in performance. There are few managers in modern corporations who are not familiar with and who do not work to assigned targets in some areas of their role that require some innovation. Gender targets should be no different.

Recommendation 2: Reporting

We recommend that organisations publish data on the company websites on the proportions of women in leadership roles, annual changes in proportions, major initiatives to increase females, and assessments of the impacts of the initiatives, including staff reactions to diversity and other outcomes.

The solution of any complex problem requires clear feedback on progress, including details on the solutions tried and their effects. This is as true for gender diversity as it has been for other major initiatives. While there is a steady flow of reports on the current numbers of women in leadership at the country and sector level, plus detailed figures on the state of gender equality, and analyses of the impacts of gender diversity on the economy, data on individual organisations is sorely lacking. ASX Gender Diversity policy will address this lack of reporting and availability of data to some extent.

Conclusion

The argument for the benefits of diversity, including increased numbers and proportions of women in leadership roles, is broadly accepted in business and government. However, current push or supply strategies for increasing the numbers of female leaders are not having the desired effects and new approaches are needed. Targets with teeth, including challenging standards, accountability and contingent rewards, offer a way out of the current impasse. Managers are familiar with targets in other areas of performance and they work. However, challenging gender targets may challenge the mindsets and strategic imagination of many managers, which can lead to the rejection of the targets or a lack of commitment on seeing them through without, the proper education programs and support.

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Value to the Gender Equality Project

Jennifer leverages her extensive research experience to work with research partners from around Australia on developing innovative applied research programs that are tailored to the priorities of Industry Partners.

Professional Experience

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Robert has designed, developed and delivered programs for senior leaders and provided advice in many Australian and overseas corporations, including ANZ Bank, McDonald's Australia, Qantas, Saudi Aramco, Dow Chemical, Telstra, P&O Ports, Dubai Ports World and the Hong Kong Government.

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