



Australian Government

Gender Balance

on Australian Government Boards

2023 — 2024 Annual Report

A report on the gender composition of
Australian Government boards and bodies



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Foreword

As the Minister for Finance, Women, and the Public Service, I am pleased to present the Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Annual Report 2023-2024.

Women's equal representation in leadership and representation is essential for better policy and outcomes, not just for women, but for our entire community and economy. This report shows that the Government continues to lead the way in gender equal leadership, reaching a record high of women holding 54.4% of Australian Government board positions. Another record high result has been achieved, with women holding 45.3% of Chair and Deputy Chair positions.

This is the third consecutive year of exceeding the target¹ for women to hold 50% of all Australian Government board positions, and the highest representation of women on government boards, since reporting began in 2009.²

Meeting and exceeding the overall target does not mean job done – we have not yet achieved the target of at least 40% women on individual boards and we don't want to take our foot of the accelerator. To maintain momentum the Government recommits to our existing targets:

- Women to hold 50% of all Australian Government board positions
- Women to hold at least 40% of Australian Government board positions at the individual board level

And to shine a light where there is more work to do the Government has set new targets:

- Women to hold 50% of Australian Government board positions at the portfolio level
- Women to hold 50% of Chair and Deputy Chair positions on Australian Government boards at the portfolio level

These new targets reflect the stretch needed to close the gap in women's representation – as women held 50% of Chair and Deputy Chair positions in only 7 out of 17 portfolios. As at 30 June 2024 women made up 50% of board positions in only 11 out of 17 portfolios.

Progress towards gender equality and equal representation in leadership is not inevitable – it requires ambition, effort and accountability. Our ambition and effort is guided by these targets and this report holds us accountable. I look forward to working with my Ministerial colleagues to continue this important work.



Katy Gallagher

Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher

Minister for Finance, Minister for Women
and Minister for the Public Service

1 The target was first achieved in 2021-22, [Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2021-22](#) | PM&C

2 When reporting was introduced in 2009, women held just 33.4% of positions.

Executive summary

The *Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Annual Report* has been prepared since 2008-09 to outline performance against the Government's targets for gender balance on Australian Government boards.

The Australian Government has continued to meet the target for women to hold 50% of overall reportable positions on government boards in 2023-24. As at 30 June 2024, women held 54.4% of Australian Government board positions, the highest rate of representation on record.

Record high representation was also seen in Chair and Deputy Chair positions, where women held 45.3% of positions as at 30 June 2024 - an increase of 3.0 percentage points since 30 June 2023.

This is the second year of reporting on the representation of women at the individual board level. There is still more progress to be made against the target for women to hold at least 40% of Australian Government board positions at the individual board level. There has been a slight decrease in representation on individual boards with 21.6% of boards having less than 40% representation of women compared with 21.3% in 2022-23.

Women's representation in new appointments and external nominations has improved with new appointments increasing by 4 percentage points to 56.9% in 2023-24 and external nominations increasing by 9.3 percentage points to 54.5% in 2023-24.

Changes to targets and scope for the next reporting period

With the release of [Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality \(Working for Women\)](#) in March 2024, the Government has renewed and expanded its targets.

The new expanded targets require women to hold 50% of Chair and Deputy Chair positions and 50% of board positions at the portfolio level.

The scope of board positions will also be expanded to capture all positions on relevant boards and bodies. This includes ex-officio and external appointments as opposed to only government appointed positions as is currently reported. The 2024-25 annual report for will reflect this expanded scope.

Gender balance on Australian Government boards data

Target: Women to hold 50% of all Australian Government board positions

As at 30 June 2024, there were 347 Australian Government boards and bodies with 2,187 filled reportable positions. Women filled 1,190 of these positions, or 54.4%. This result is an increase of 2.8% since 30 June 2023, and is the highest representation of women in overall positions to date.

Table 1 details the number of boards, number of filled reportable positions, the number, and the percentage of reportable positions filled by women and the percentage point difference in women's representation from the previous year, since 2016-17.

Table 1. Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards as at 30 June, from 2017 to 2024

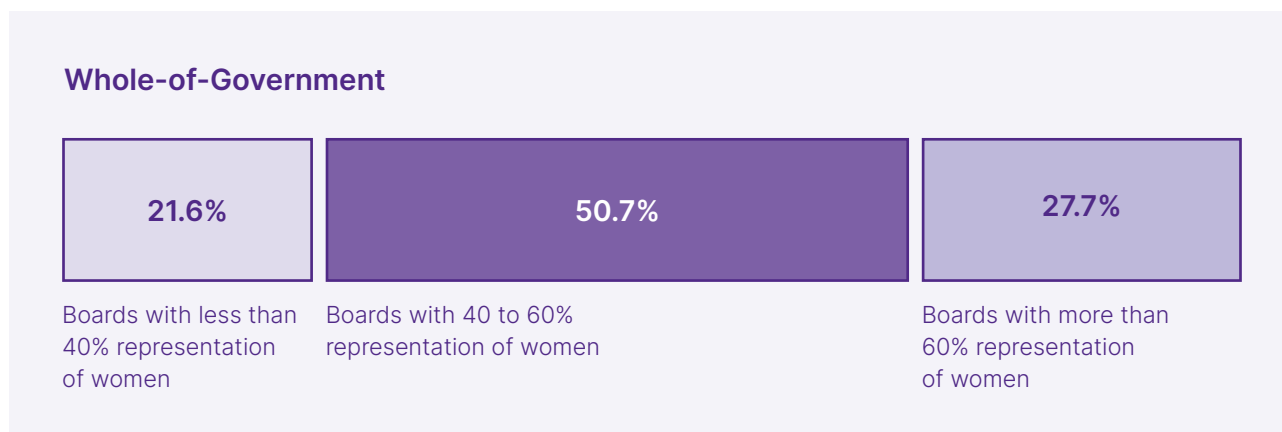
Year	Number of boards	Number of filled reportable positions	Number of reportable positions filled by women	Percentage of reportable positions filled by women	Percentage point change since previous year
2023-24	347	2,187	1,190	54.4%	▲ +2.8
2022-23	344	2,208	1,139	51.6%	▲ +0.2
2021-22	335	2,214	1,138	51.4%	▲ +1.8
2020-21	342	2,315	1,149	49.6%	▲ +1.1
2019-20	343	2,489	1,206	48.5%	▲ +0.6
2018-19	341	2,313	1,109	47.9%	▲ +2.1
2017-18	339	2,530	1,158	45.8%	▲ +3.1
2016-17	337	2,508	1,072	42.7%	▲ +2.2

Target: Women hold at least 40% of Australian Government board positions at the individual board level

As at 30 June 2024, 347 individual boards were reported across the Australian Government. Of these boards, women hold at least 40% of positions on 272 boards (78.4%).

On 75 boards (21.6%) women hold less than 40% of positions. On 96 boards (27.7%) women hold over 60% of positions.

Figure 1. Representation of women on individual boards, as at 30 June 2024



New target - baseline: Women to hold 50% of Australian Government board positions at the portfolio level

As at June 2024, 11 out of 17 portfolios met or exceeded 50% representation of women on Australian Government boards (an increase from ten portfolios in 2022-23). Figure 2 shows the results for individual portfolios with more detail provided in Table 2.

Figure 2. Percentage of reportable positions on Australian Government boards filled by women as at 30 June 2024, by portfolio

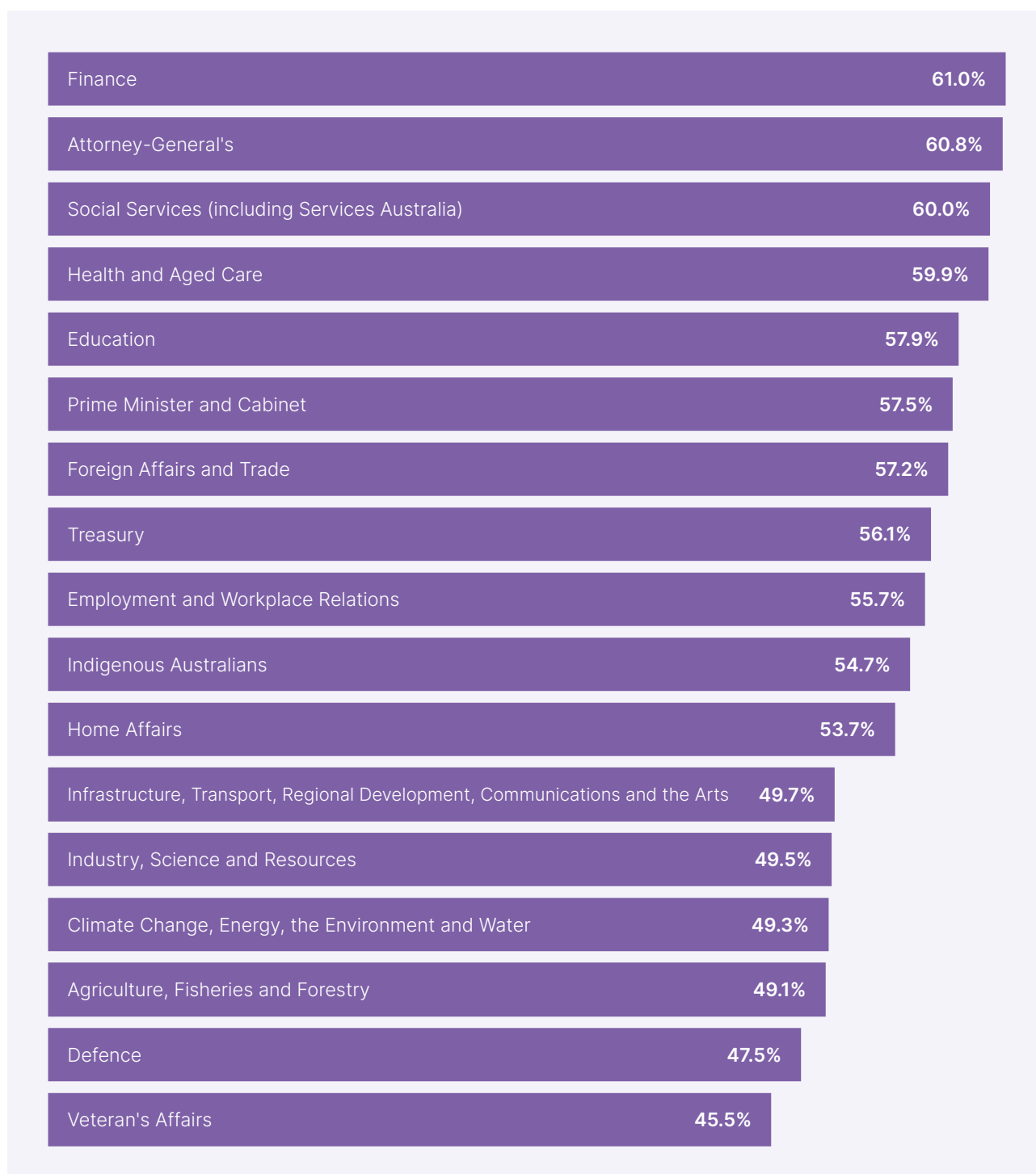


Table 2. Gender Balance of overall Australian Government board positions as at 30 June 2024, by portfolio

Portfolio	Number of boards as at 30 June 2024	Number of filled positions as at 30 June 2024	Number of positions filled by women as at 30 June 2024	Percentage of positions filled by women as at 30 June 2024	Percentage of positions filled by women as at 30 June 2023	Percentage point difference since 30 June 2023
Finance	7	41	25	61.0%	44.1%	▲ +16.9
Attorney-General's	11	74	45	60.8%	45.8%	▲ +15.0
Social Services (including Services Australia)	6	45	27	60.0%	62.9%	▼ -2.9
Health and Aged Care	49	414	248	59.9%	58.7%	▲ +1.2
Education	23	178	103	57.9%	56.9%	▲ +1.0
Prime Minister and Cabinet	6	40	23	57.5%	61.9%	▼ -4.4
Foreign Affairs and Trade	19	138	79	57.2%	50.7%	▲ +6.5
Treasury	22	132	74	56.1%	51.2%	▲ +4.9
Employment and Workplace Relations	13	106	59	55.7%	55.2%	▲ +0.5
Indigenous Australians	9	64	35	54.7%	41.9%	▲ +12.8
Home Affairs	5	41	22	53.7%	53.7%	0.0
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	96	394	196	49.7%	46.6%	▲ +3.1
Industry, Science and Resources	19	95	47	49.5%	54.6%	▼ -5.1
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	27	221	109	49.3%	44.0%	▲ +5.3
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	17	110	54	49.1%	51.2%	▼ -2.1
Defence	12	61	29	47.5%	49.3%	▼ -1.8
Veterans' Affairs	6	33	15	45.5%	44.4%	▲ +1.1
TOTAL	347	2,187	1,190	54.4%	51.6%	▲ +2.8

New target - baseline: Women to hold 50% of Chair and Deputy Chair positions on Australian Government boards at the portfolio level

As at 30 June 2024, women held 45.3% of Chair and Deputy Chair positions on Australian Government boards. This result is 3 percentage points higher than the 30 June 2023 result.

In seven of 17 portfolios, women held 50% or more of Chair and Deputy Chair positions. This result is an increase from the previous year where four of 17 portfolios had at least 50% representation of women in Chair and Deputy Chair positions. Figure 3 and Table 3 detail the portfolio results for the gender balance of Chair and Deputy Chair positions as at 30 June 2024.

Figure 3. Percentage of reportable Chair and Deputy Chair positions filled by women, as at 30 June 2024

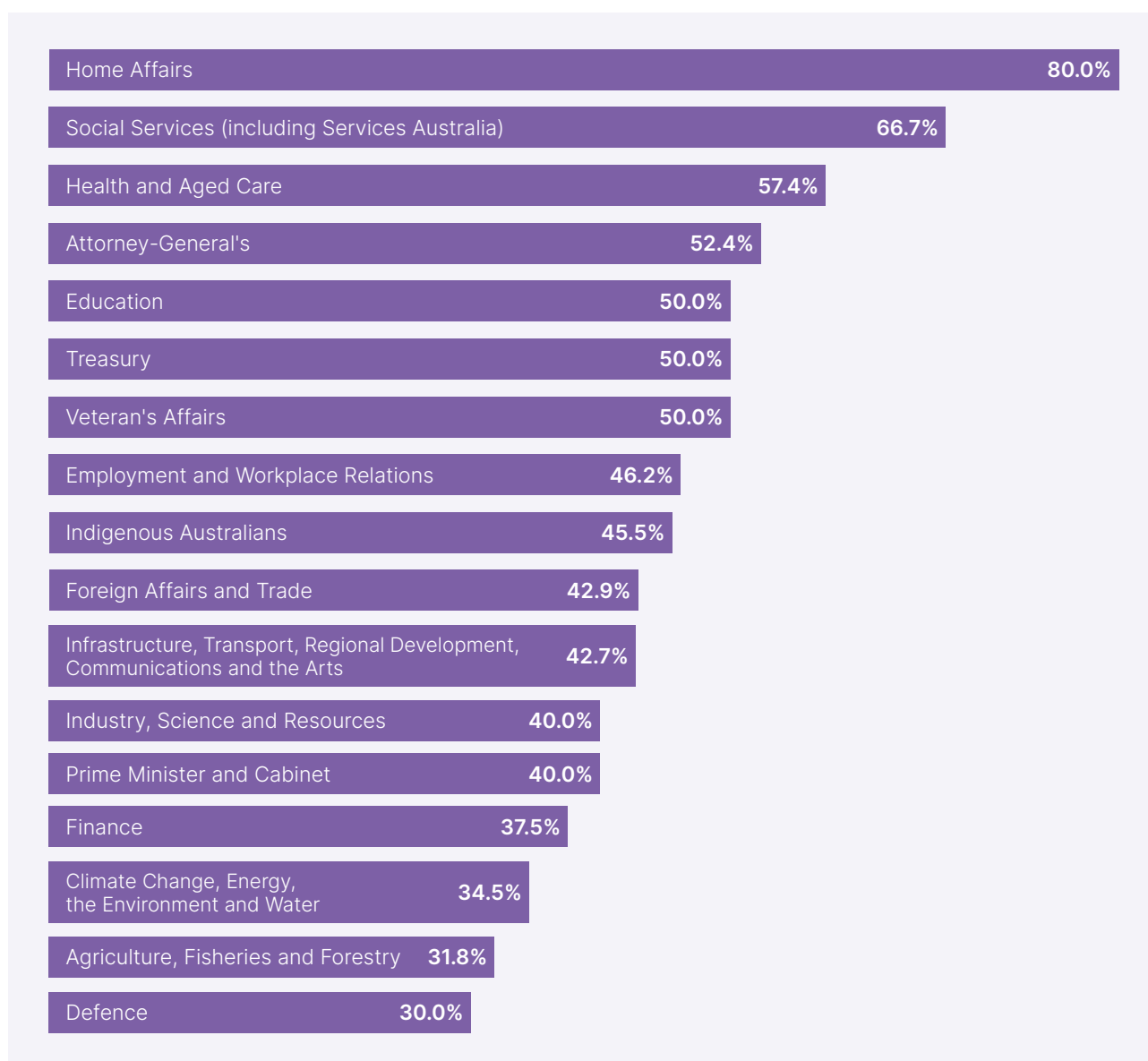


Table 3. Gender balance of Chair and Deputy Chair positions as at 30 June 2024, by portfolio

Portfolio	Number of Chair and Deputy Chair positions	Number of Chair and Deputy Chair positions filled by women	Percentage of Chair and Deputy Chair positions filled by women	Percentage of positions filled by women as at 30 June 2023	Percentage point difference since 30 June 2023
Home Affairs	5	4	80.0%	25.0%	▲ +55.0
Social Services (including Services Australia)	6	4	66.7%	80.0%	▼ -13.3
Health and Aged Care	54	31	57.4%	59.2%	▼ -1.8
Attorney-General's	21	11	52.4%	43.8%	▲ +8.6
Education	18	9	50.0%	41.7%	▲ +8.3
Treasury	28	14	50.0%	38.7%	▲ +11.3
Veterans' Affairs	6	3	50.0%	50.0%	0.0
Employment and Workplace Relations	13	6	46.2%	37.5%	▲ +8.7
Indigenous Australians	11	5	45.5%	45.5%	0.0
Foreign Affairs and Trade	21	9	42.9%	31.6%	▲ +11.3
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	150	64	42.7%	39.7%	▲ +3.0
Industry, Science and Resources	15	6	40.0%	57.9%	▼ -17.9
Prime Minister and Cabinet	5	2	40.0%	0.0%	▲ +40.0
Finance	8	3	37.5%	28.6%	▲ +8.9
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	29	10	34.5%	21.7%	▲ +12.8
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	22	7	31.8%	45.8%	▼ -14.0
Defence	10	3	30.0%	38.5%	▼ -8.5
TOTAL	422	191	45.3%	42.3%	▲ +3.0

Additional data

New appointments

New appointments are appointments made within the 2023-2024 financial year, (the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024) that were not a reappointment of the same person to the same position.

Of the 908 new appointments made in 2023-2024, 56.9% (517 new appointments) were for women. This is an increase of 4.0 percentage points since 2022-2023, when women comprised 52.9% of new appointments.

Table 4 shows that in 2023-2024, for 11 of 17 portfolios, women received more than 50% of new appointments.

Table 4. Gender Balance of new appointments to Australian Government boards in 2023-2024, by portfolio

Portfolio	Number of new appointments 2023-2024	Number of women newly appointed 2023-2024	Percentage of new appointments who were women 2023-2024	Percentage of new appointments who were women 2022-2023	Percentage point difference in new appointments between
Finance	13	11	84.6%	66.7%	▲ +17.9
Attorney-General's	37	27	73.0%	18.2%	▲ +54.8
Foreign Affairs and Trade	49	32	65.3%	60.0%	▲ +5.3
Prime Minister and Cabinet	23	15	65.2%	82.1%	▼ -16.9
Social Services (including Services Australia)	16	10	62.5%	40.0%	▲ +22.5
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	73	44	60.3%	45.8%	▲ +14.5
Education	157	94	59.9%	60.5%	▼ -0.6
Health and Aged Care	135	80	59.3%	52.7%	▲ +6.6
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	146	78	53.4%	52.7%	▲ +0.7
Employment and Workplace Relations	47	25	53.2%	76.0%	▼ -22.8
Treasury	58	30	51.7%	56.8%	▼ -5.1
Industry, Science and Resources	78	38	48.7%	59.1%	▼ -10.4
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	39	18	46.2%	48.4%	▼ -2.2
Defence	18	8	44.4%	57.1%	▼ -12.7
Home Affairs	14	6	42.9%	42.9%	0.0
Veterans' Affairs	5	1	20.0%	45.5%	▼ -25.5
Indigenous Australians	0	0	N/A*	35.9%	N/A*
TOTAL	908	517	56.9%	52.9%	▲ +4.0

* The Indigenous Australians portfolio did not have any new appointments in the period 2023-24.

External nominations

External nominations refer to nominations made by an individual, an organisation or a number of organisations who are not the Australian Government Minister responsible for approving the appointment, or a member of their department. This may include a state or territory government or a non-government organisation and extends to appointment processes where it is either legislated or accepted practice for nominations to be provided to the Minister. Not all nominations made by external bodies result in the appointment of that nominee, as multiple nominations may be received for the same vacancy.

In 2023-2024 (for the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024), women received 128 of 235 external nominations, equating to 54.5%. This result is 9.3 percentage points higher than in 2022-2023, when women received 45.2% of external nominations.

Appendix A

Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards reporting guidelines

The Australian Government remains committed to gender targets for Australian Government boards. Targets have been in effect since 1 July 2016 and call for:

Target 1: Women to hold 50% of Australian Government board positions.

Target 2: Women to hold at least 40% of positions at the individual board level.

The targets were revised in 2024 to also include:

Target 3: Women to hold 50% of Australian board positions at the portfolio level.

Target 4: Women to hold 50% of Chair and Deputy Chair positions on Australian Government board positions at the portfolio level.

To measure the government's progress against these targets, the Office for Women publishes this Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards 2023-24 Annual Report on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website.

This reporting measures the representation of women on Australian Government boards across four metrics:

- 1. overall positions on Australian Government boards**
 - reported at the whole-of-government and portfolio level
- 2. Chair and Deputy Chair positions on Australian Government boards**
 - reported at the whole-of-government and portfolio level
- 3. new appointments to Australian Government boards**
 - reported at whole-of-government and portfolio level
- 4. external nominations to Australian Government boards**
 - reported at the whole-of-government level.

Chair and Deputy Chair positions

Board members holding Chair or Deputy Chair positions, or functional equivalents, contribute towards this metric. Equivalent roles can include, for example, Chief or Deputy Chief Convenors and Commissioners.

New appointments

New appointments are those made over the 2023-2024 financial year, which fulfill all of the criteria outlined below in scope of reporting, but do not require the successful candidate to have been formally working in the role as at 30 June 2024. Reappointments of the same candidate to the same position do not contribute towards the new appointment metric, only to the overall gender balance metric and the Chair and Deputy Chair gender balance metric (if applicable).

External nominations

External nominations refer to nominations made in the 2023-2024 financial year, by either an individual, an organisation or a number of organisations who are not the government Minister responsible for approving the appointment, or a member of their department.

External nominations can include, but are not limited to, nominations made by a state or territory government, an overseas government, the Australian Senate or House of Representatives, non-government bodies, departments and agencies that are not the relevant portfolio agency and Ministers that are not the relevant portfolio Minister.

External nominations do not include nominations made by a Minister's department, the relevant board or its Chair, or by two or more Ministers where one is the relevant portfolio Minister.

Both successful and unsuccessful nominations are within the scope of the Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards 2023-24 Annual Report and contribute to the external nominations gender balance metric.

Scope of 2023-24 reporting

Boards

Some Australian Government Boards do not fall within the scope of the Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards 2023-24 Annual Report. To be in scope, a board must meet two conditions.

Condition one

The board must be either:

- a body covered by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) (further information can be found at [PGPA Flipchart and List](#))
- a ministerial advisory committee
- a review committee, whose members are appointed by a Minister or the Cabinet
- a Commonwealth statutory authority.

Condition two

At least one appointment to the board must be approved by any of the following representatives of the Australian Government:

- the Prime Minister
- one or more Commonwealth Ministers
- the Governor-General in Council
- the Cabinet.

Australian Government boards that fall outside the scope of gender balance reporting include Royal Commissions, Commonwealth Courts and tribunals.

Positions

Gender balance data is reported on a positions basis. Not all positions on Australian Government boards are within the scope of the Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards 2023-24 Annual Report, including positions which are:

- elected with no formal Government approval
- nominated by a third party with no formal government approval (these positions are captured in external nominations data only, see above)
- of a particular office holder to a particular board or committee, as required by legislation (e.g. a Minister serving as the Chair of a board)
- for employees engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999* or other enabling legislation for purposes beyond serving on a Commonwealth decision-making or advisory board, committee, council or similar (e.g. ex-officio appointments of senior public servants), or acting appointments of six-months or less.

Where a board has a mixture of in-scope and out-of-scope positions, the board and its in-scope positions are included in the Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards 2023-24 Annual Report. Out-of-scope positions do not contribute to the number of filled positions or to the report.

Expanded scope 2024-25

The expanded scope will be presented in the 2024-25 annual report. It will capture all positions on relevant boards and bodies (this includes ex-officio and external appointments), as opposed to only government appointed positions as is currently reported. This is to provide greater visibility of the gender composition of Australian Government. The gender balance targets will also apply to all positions on relevant boards and advisory bodies.