

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mentoring for Cultural Diversity

The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) is pleased to announce an important new initiative aimed at advancing the board careers of women from culturally diverse backgrounds.

As part of its commitment to increase the cultural diversity in Australian boardrooms, this year the AICD has expanded its Chairs Mentoring Program (CMP) to include an additional emerging and culturally diverse stream.

When the 2026 Chairs Mentoring Program launches this week, twelve of the 46 mentees, or more than a quarter of this year's intake, will be from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Over its sixteen years, the CMP has played a significant role in advancing board diversity in Australia. When the program began in 2010, women held just 8.3 per cent of ASX 200 directorships. Today that figure is close to 40 per cent, with many former mentees progressing to senior board and chair roles, and several returning to the program as mentors themselves.

Independent research by the University of Queensland recognised the CMP as making a meaningful contribution to this shift, reinforcing its impact beyond individual participants and into the broader Australian governance landscape.

Now by piloting the culturally diverse stream, the AICD is providing a practical channel to support a wider diversity of women who are ready to advance their directorship careers.

AICD Managing Director and CEO Mark Rigotti said this is not about quotas or ticking boxes, it's about improving governance.

"Despite the significant gains we've seen in the number of women on boards, there are persistent gaps in the representation of wider diversity and AICD is proud to be playing a part towards addressing this.

"Different lived experiences and perspectives sharpen risk oversight, enrich strategic thinking, and help boards navigate uncertainty. The more diverse the board, the better positioned it is to challenge assumptions and make robust, future-focused decisions."

The CMP is one of AICD's most important and enduring initiatives. Since its establishment in 2010, the program has paired hundreds of highly experienced board ready women with Australia's most respected chairs and senior directors, creating a structured pathway into board leadership that is both practical and transformational.

The AICD would like to acknowledge our mentors for their continued commitment, time and expertise, and for their ongoing contribution to AICD and good governance.

The Chairs Mentoring Program is made possible by the generous sponsorship of Corrs Chambers Westgarth and AICD again thanks them for their ongoing support of the program.

Corrs Chambers Westgarth Senior Partner and CEO Gavin MacLaren said: "We are delighted to be able to again support such an important initiative. We look forward to seeing the impact the leaders in this program will make in their board careers."

Access the [2026 Chairs Mentoring Program Mentee bios](#).

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