

2 October 2015

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) would like to take this opportunity to make a further submission with respect to the *Australian Government Boards (Gender Balanced Representation) Bill 2015* (the Bill).

As noted in our previous submission, the AICD supports the objective of increasing representation of women on Government boards. We consider it appropriate that governments establish targets to promote gender diversity on government boards to be implemented through policy and practice. We note that the federal government policy, introduced in 2010 and maintained with bipartisan support, establishes a gender diversity target for government boards of 40 per cent men, 40 per cent women, and 20 per cent to be made up of either gender.

The AICD supports effective policies to improve and strengthen gender diversity on government boards. In this regard, we recently wrote to Prime Minister Turnbull to encourage a recommitment to the gender diversity policy in government appointments and offered our support for programs and initiatives to achieve this outcome.

With respect to the Bill, the AICD considers the better approach is to recognise the government's existing target and for this to be supported by clear disclosure obligations.

It is our understanding that the intention of the Bill is to strengthen the existing policy target and not to introduce a quota. To this end, we propose that the Bill be amended (see attached) to remove ambiguity while achieving this outcome by focusing on targets, accountability and disclosure.

The AICD also supports greater transparency and disclosure on the performance of government boards against the government's gender diversity policy target as proposed by the Bill. As we have previously advised, we consider the ASX Corporate Governance Council's Corporate Governance Principles and an 'if not why not' model of disclosure an appropriate starting point for this enhanced transparency.

The AICD would support the Bill if it was amended to this effect.

Please contact Louise Petschler General Manager Advocacy on [lpetschler@aicd.com.au](mailto:lpetschler@aicd.com.au) or me at [jbrogden@aicd.com.au](mailto:jbrogden@aicd.com.au) or on (02) 8248 6600 with any questions.

Yours sincerely



**JOHN BROGDEN**  
Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer