Promoting CALD Women’s Participation on Boards and Decision-Making Positions

ADVANCING THE GENDER EQUALITY AGENDA FOR CALD WOMEN

Final Report
June 2013
About FECCA

The Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA) is the national peak body representing and advocating for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Our role is to advise, advocate, and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to government, business and the broader community.

The FECCA Women’s Advisory Committee which was established in October 2003 promotes issues of concern to women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds who as a result of a number of intersectional factors, including gender, culture, religion and ethnicity, continue to face disadvantage and marginalisation. The Committee has a strong belief in the elimination of all forms of discrimination, violence and oppressive acts against women. Through this Committee, FECCA seeks to promote understanding in government, non-government and general community and advocate for the right of access to services, information and opportunity that will optimise quality of life for all CALD women.

FECCA’s commitment to gender equality is reflected in the Women’s Policy Statement Supporting Australian Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds 2012.

About this Project

In October 2012, FECCA received funding from the Australian Government Office for Women within the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to undertake the Women’s Leadership and Development Strategy/Promoting of CALD Women’s Participation on Boards and in Decision-Making Positions Project (the Project). The overall aim of the Project is to enhance the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women on boards and in decision-making positions.

FECCA subsequently commissioned Maria Dimopoulos and Georgia Prattis from Myriad Consultants to undertake the Project.
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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>ACLW</td>
<td>Australian Centre for Leadership for Women</td>
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<td>AHRC</td>
<td>Australian Human Rights Commission</td>
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<td>AHRI</td>
<td>Australian Human Resources Institute</td>
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<td>AICD</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Company Directors</td>
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<td>AIM</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Management</td>
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<td>AMaRWA</td>
<td>Australian Migrant &amp; Refugee Women’s Alliance</td>
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<td>AMC</td>
<td>Australian Multicultural Council</td>
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<td>ANZSOG</td>
<td>Australia and New Zealand School of Government</td>
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<td>APSC</td>
<td>Australian Public Service Commission</td>
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<td>APS</td>
<td>Australian Public Service</td>
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<td>Australian Sports Commission</td>
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<td>Australian Stock Exchange</td>
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<td>ASX CGC</td>
<td>ASX Corporate Governance Council</td>
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<td>Aus/AID</td>
<td>Australian Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>AWCCI</td>
<td>Australian Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<td>CALD</td>
<td>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse</td>
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<td>CAPWIP</td>
<td>Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics</td>
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<td>CEDA</td>
<td>Committee for Economic Development of Australia</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
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<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
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<td>CWDI</td>
<td>Corporate Women Directors International</td>
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<td>DCA</td>
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<td>Disability Peak Organisations</td>
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<td>Equality Rights Alliance</td>
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<td>FaHCSIA</td>
<td>Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
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<td>FECCA</td>
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<td>GEIs</td>
<td>Gender equality indicators</td>
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<td>INSTRAW</td>
<td>United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>MCWH</td>
<td>Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health</td>
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<td>NFAW</td>
<td>National Foundation for Australian Women</td>
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<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non English Speaking Background</td>
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<td>NFP</td>
<td>Not For Profit</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
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<td>NSO</td>
<td>National Sporting Organisations</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OIW</td>
<td>Office for Women</td>
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<td>SBS</td>
<td>Special Broadcasting Service</td>
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<td>SES</td>
<td>Senior Executive Service</td>
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<td>SIGI</td>
<td>Social Institutions and Gender Index</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>WBL</td>
<td>Women, Business and the Law</td>
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<td>WGEA</td>
<td>Workplace Gender Equality Agency</td>
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<td>WGE Act</td>
<td>Workplace Gender Equality Act</td>
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<td>WIGB</td>
<td>Women in Global Business</td>
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<td>WOB</td>
<td>Women on Boards</td>
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Acknowledgement of the Wisdom and Experience Of Indigenous Women

“Women are the backbone of all Indigenous organisations and central to the development of their communities.”
Lowitja O'Donoghue, AC CBE
Australian of the Year (1984, 1990)

This Research Project acknowledges the significant contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women have made to the knowledge wisdom relating to women and leadership in diverse contexts. Particular gratitude is extended to Jackie Huggins and Kerrie Timm who so generously shared some ‘lessons learned’ as a result of their extensive involvement in Indigenous women’s leadership issues.

Inspiration can also be drawn from the world class example set by the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples (Congress).

The Congress was established with gender equity as one of its founding principles. This message was clearly delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during the consultation period prior to the establishment of Congress in 2010. As a result of the consultations undertaken by the Social Justice Commissioner and the Steering Committee gender equity was embedded in the governance model and arrangements recommended in the Steering Committee Report from the establishment of Congress in 2010.

Gender equity has been enshrined in Congress’ Constitution, practices and processes to make sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are equally represented in its membership, delegate structures, National Board and Co-Chairs, Ethics Council, staff and other structures as they are established. In section 15 of the Constitution the make-up of the National Board is outlined. Subsection 15.1(c) specifies that the company must have substantial gender equality in its leadership. Gender equality in the elected position is constituted in sections 15.3(3) and 15.4(2). Gender equality has been maintained in the inaugural and subsequent elected National Boards, in the delegate representation at both National Congresses (2011 and 2012), on the Ethics Council and at the first Congress National Youth Program in 2012.

Since Congress’ establishment as a company limited by guarantee in 2010, Congress has achieved 50% representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in its senior roles on the National Board and Ethics Council. Congress has two Co-Chairs, one female and one male, elected from its membership every two years. Almost 58% of Congress’ membership of nearly 5,000 individuals are women. 75% of its staff are women, with half of executive positions filled by women.

Congress is committed to continuing to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women’s voices, experiences, issues and opinions are heard not only within its own organisations and communities, but by government and in the broader community.1

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1 The Congress were the 2013 ACLW Sustaining Women’s Empowerment in Communities and Organisations (SWECO) Award Winners

The website for The National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples is www.nationalcongress.com.au
Acknowledgements

The support and involvement of many individuals and organisations in this research project are gratefully acknowledged.

The Project Team would like to sincerely thank all stakeholders for their considered and useful contribution.

Thank you to members of the project’s Advisory Group who provided invaluable advice and corrected factual and technical errors:

- Elizabeth Broderick
- Margherita Coppolino
- Dure Dura OAM
- Joumanah El Matrah
- Maria Saraceni
- Padmini Sebastian,
- Juliana Krumah AM,
- Professor Samina Yasmeen
- Nareen Young.

A special acknowledgement for the support and input from our Expert Panel: Professor Hurriyet Babacan and Dr Adele Murdolo.

In particular, we wish to thank the women who agreed to be interviewed about their leadership and Board experiences. We have been inspired by their strength, their passion and their determination.

Thank you also to the many amazing women who attended focus groups across Australia and who so generously and openly shared their experiences and wisdom.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the individuals who supported us in relation to recruiting participants through the promotion of the research through their networks.

Particular thanks go to Elizabeth Broderick and her team at the Sex Discrimination Unit, particularly Alison Aggarwal for their ongoing support for the Project. Assistance with the project included a range of activities, including the distribution of the survey.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the team at Women on Boards and thank them for their assistance.

The DCA as a peak body for the sector, has proved invaluable and we are particularly indebted to the insights provided by Nareen Young and her team.

Finally a very big thanks to Janice Webster and the team at the FECCA Office for your patience, your skilful administrative capacities and your tireless commitment to ensuring the processes associated with the research went smoothly.

Our challenge has been to do justice to the diversity of the views expressed, to the insightful comments and constructive criticisms. We hope we have achieved this.

Maria Dimopoulos and Georgia Prattis
Foreword

We are pleased to present this report which helps to shine a light on the great potential for contribution by CALD women, across all sectors of Australian society, through an increased level of participation on Boards and decision making bodies.

The underrepresentation of CALD Women in senior leadership and Board positions and the related need for effective strategies to enhance and promote opportunities for greater participation and representation have been concerns for FECCA for a number of years.

FECCA has continued to seek progressive change in CALD women’s participation and representation through a number of different forums and activities while ensuring that its own governing structures continue to be equally reflective and harnessing the skills of CALD women representatives. We expect that this report will ignite a rich dialogue about new, dynamic goals and advocacy to support higher levels of CALD leadership across the country.

The findings in this report bring together months of important discussions with women – both individually and in groups – from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds. We are grateful to the women who took the time to speak candidly about their experiences, and hope that these findings will promote and propel CALD women with their diverse rich skills into significant decision making bodies helping to build a stronger, socially and economically, Australian society.

We gratefully acknowledge the guidance by our esteemed colleagues for their invaluable contribution to this research project through their active participation on the Advisory Committee. Equally we extend our thanks to MyriaD Consultants commissioned by FECCA to undertake this work.

The following quote by one of the women who were interviewed for the case studies of this research succinctly and accurately encapsulates our aspirations and hopes for the outcome of this important research project:

“One of the most important messages I hope this project promotes is that women from culturally diverse backgrounds have so much talent but we need to be able to make those talents more visible to those in decision making roles and not waste the precious talent and contribution. There is no doubt that there are women who could be taking on much greater leadership roles both in their own communities and within the broader Australian community, but they need to be acknowledged, valued and supported”

We acknowledge and thank the Office for Women (FaHCSIA) for funding this timely research project and providing the opportunity to highlight and showcase the potential value of CALD women’s skills for the entire Australian community.

Voula Messimeri AM  
Honorary President FECCA

Eugenia Grammatikakis  
Senior Deputy Chair FECCA
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

“The world is wasting a precious resource today. Tens of thousands of talented women stand ready to use their professional expertise in public life; at the same time, they are dramatically underrepresented in positions of leadership around the world.”

Madeleine K. Albright - Chairman, NDI Board of Directors

1.1 Project Summary

On October 2012, the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA) received funding from the Office for Women (FaHCSIA) to undertake the Women’s Leadership and Development Strategy/Promoting of CALD Women’s Participation on Boards and in Decision-Making Positions Project (the Project). The overall aim of the Project is to enhance the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women on boards and in decision-making positions. FECCA subsequently commissioned MyriaD Consultants to undertake the Project.

The Project was formally launched by Ms Julie Collins, Minister for the Status of Women, in December 2012.

Project Background

The Australian Government has committed to achieving a target of at least 40 per cent women and 40 per cent men on Australian Government boards by 2015. The remaining 20 per cent can be either women or men.


As at 30 June 2012, women held 38.4 per cent of Government board appointments. This is up from 35.3 per cent in 2011, demonstrating sound progress towards the 40 per cent gender balance target. Over the 2011-2012 financial year, 41.0 per cent of the 1633 new board appointments were awarded to women, demonstrating the concerted effort of portfolios to improving the representation of women on their boards.

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2 As quoted in Markham, S. Strengthening women in parliament. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Hansard Society, National Democratic Institute Board of Directors, 23 May,
While welcoming this news of increased female participation on Boards, FECCA is aware anecdotally from its own networks that participation of CALD women on Boards and in decision-making positions is much lower, especially in the public sector.

**Rationale**

Immigrant and refugee women face multiple barriers to equal participation in the workforce and wider community. Alongside Australian-born women, they can experience discrimination based on gender, and alongside their male family and community members, they can experience discrimination based on cultural, religious and linguistic biases.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that very few of these women occupy positions on Boards or decision-making positions, especially in the public sector.

Through its activities and programs, FECCA is aware that CALD women are underrepresented in high level positions, but there is currently a dearth of research or data to support this.

In order to understand and address the reasons for this under-representation of CALD women and the limited progression into leadership roles there is clearly a need to have a more information on the issues, challenges and opportunities for CALD women, and sufficient data to set a baseline against which future progress can be measured.

To help address these issues, a proposal was submitted by FECCA and subsequently funded by the OfW to undertake this pioneering project.

**Project Aims**

The Project aims to further the Australian Government’s commitment to increase the representation of women on Government Boards through its target of at least 40 per cent women by 2015 through the generation of ideas and discussion within the community. It aims to answer the following questions:

- **What are the opportunities and challenges shaping the participation of CALD women in leadership and on boards and decision-making bodies?**
- **What interventions are needed to improve representation?**

This project attempts to improve the understanding of the opportunities and challenges posed around the participation of CALD women in leadership and on Boards and decision-making bodies, and establish the scope for maximising the delivery of such opportunities whilst identifying ways to reduce or eliminate the challenges.

The Australian Government is committed to utilising the findings of this important project once completed in order to implement initiatives and policies to improve CALD women’s participation on boards. This will undoubtedly contribute to maximising the use of their diverse
skills for the benefit of all Australians, while helping to achieve greater equity for this significant proportion of the Australian population.

**Key Research Objectives**

The objectives of the research are:

- To identify the current numbers of CALD women in leadership and on Boards at public, private and community levels.
- To map positions occupied within Board’s to identify whether or not CALD women are being equally represented in decision-making and leadership positions, for example, the role of Chair and Deputy Chair.
- To identify issues and propose strategies relevant to enhancing CALD women's participation on Boards and in decision-making and leadership positions.
- To compile sample data on the characteristics of Boards and decision-making bodies that do/do not include CALD women.
- To identify trends in CALD women's paths to Board participation; how, by whom and why they were successfully appointed.
- To document case studies illustrating women's experiences and generate discussion on the issues.
- To identify initiatives and policy recommendations that may improve CALD women's participation on Boards and in decision-making and leadership positions.

### 1.2 Structure of this Report

The report is presented in three parts.

**Part One** of the report presents the overall findings in relation to the key research questions. It is set out in 5 sections:

**Section One** provides an introduction to the research topic and outlines the context in which the research was undertaken, the core issues that underpin the research and the key research questions are presented.

**Section Two** outlines the methodology used in this study which includes a description of the conceptual and theoretical approaches underpinning the research design. This section also outlines the challenges and strategies utilised in the recruitment of participants and an outline of the collection, interpretation and analysis of data.

**Section Three** outlines the findings of the study. This is presented honouring the richness of the data. The findings are presented as themes and emergent superordinate themes that represent the commonalities and differences within the reported experiences of the participants.
Section Four includes a discussion of the implications of the key findings in regard to the key objectives of the research and also presents a summary of insights from the project.

Section Five proposes a series of high level recommendations to progress the commitment to gender equality for CALD Women.

Part Two of the full report includes detailed research reports on each of the methodologies used to gather data and inform overall findings. It includes:

- A detailed literature and document review
- Focus groups report
- Case studies report
- Organisational surveys report
- Profiles of CALD women leaders

Part Three of the full report includes a series of appendices relevant to the project.
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study utilised a mixed methods approach, that is, both quantitative and qualitative methods. Mixed method research is a growing area of methodological choice for many academics and researchers from across a variety of discipline areas. An oft used quotation by Creswell and Plano Clark provides a comprehensive definition of mixed methods as follows:

"Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone."

Mixed methods, in which quantitative and qualitative methods are combined, are increasingly recognized as valuable, because they can capitalize on the respective strengths of each approach. Additionally, as Karen Henwood suggests, integrating qualitative with quantitative methods also provides researchers with a tool for the potential “democratisation of the research process”. Henwood suggests that integrating methods may thus also help establish and embed research validity by communicating responsibly and honestly when exploring multiple perspectives.

Quantitative methods included
- surveys (questionnaires distributed to all participants)
- structured interviewing (both face to face and by telephone)
- secondary analysis and official statistics
- content analysis.

Qualitative methods included
- interviews (face-to-face and by telephone)
- focus groups
- case studies
- documentary analysis.

Each method addressed a different aspect of the research issue:

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Interviews obtained the perspectives of CALD women
Focus groups permitted rich discussions and examples
Case studies highlighted the significance of CALD women’s contribution through their leadership roles
Surveys and key informant interviews provided an assessment of the extent to which issues relevant to CALD women in leadership were identified and addressed
Surveys were also administered to all focus group participants.

2.2 Conceptual and Definitional Issues

The need to ensure clarity around key concepts and definitional parameters was an essential pre-requisite to ensuring rigour around the research process.

Clarity in relation to key terms such as ‘CALD/NESB/ethnicity, ‘leadership’ and ‘intersectional identity’ was achieved through a thorough examination of literature and currently accepted approaches in policy and practice.

The following definitions were used throughout the project design and implementation.

CALD

The terms ‘Culturally and Linguistically Diverse’ (CALD) and ‘Non-English Speaking Background’ (NESB) are both commonly used in the research, practice, and policy discourse to refer to all of Australia’s non-Indigenous ethnic groups other than the English-speaking Anglo-Saxon majority.⁶

It should be noted however that there continues to be confusion and a perceived lack of clarity in relation to the term ‘CALD’ and its distinction from the term ‘NESB’.⁷

Guidance around the defining characteristics of ‘CALD’ and cultural diversity was sourced from the 2011 Census which asked several questions to provide a picture of Australia’s cultural profile. These included:

- In which country was the person born?
- Was the person’s father born in Australia or overseas?
- Was the person’s mother born in Australia or overseas?
- If born overseas - In what year did the person first arrive in Australia to live here for one year or more?
- What is the person’s ancestry? (Provide up to two ancestries only).
- Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?
- Does the person speak a language other than English at home?

⁶ Indigenous Australians are generally excluded from CALD and NESB because their experiences and needs as first nation people are seen as significantly different from other groups.

How well does the person speak English?
What is the person's religion?

The ABS also provides guidance in relation to definitions associated with ‘generations’ of CALD groups:

**Generations in Australia**

**First generation Australians**
First generation Australians are people living in Australia who were born overseas. This is a diverse group of people including Australian citizens, permanent residents and long-term temporary residents.

In 2011, there were 5.3 million first generation Australians (27% of the population)(a).

**Second generation Australians**
Second generation Australians are Australian-born people living in Australia, with at least one overseas-born parent. In 2011, there were 4.1 million second generation Australians (20% of the population)(a).

**Third-plus generation Australians**
Third-plus generation Australians are Australian-born people whose parents were both born in Australia. One or more of their grandparents may have been born overseas or they may have several generations of ancestors born in Australia. In 2011, there were 10.6 million third-plus generation Australians (53% of the population).

For the purpose of this study women self-identified and included mainly first and second generation as well as a small number of third generation. Importantly, CALD women are not a homogenous group that share a common ideological perspective on all issues.

**Race and Ethnicity**

Race and ethnicity are terms commonly used in ethnic minority research. Both these terms present a number of problems in terms of definition and classification.

**An ethnic group** is a social category of people who share a common culture, such as a common language, a common religion, or common norms, customs, practices, and history. Ethnic groups have a consciousness of their common cultural bond. An ethnic group does not exist simply

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because of the common national or cultural origins of the group, however. They develop because of their unique historical and social experiences, which become the basis for the group’s ethnic identity.

Like ethnicity, race is primarily, though not exclusively, a socially constructed category. A race is a group that is treated as distinct in society based on certain characteristics. It is not the biological characteristics that define racial groups, but how groups have been treated historically and socially. Society assigns people to racial categories (White, Black, etc.) not because of science or fact, but because of opinion and social experience. In other words, how racial groups are defined is a social process; it is socially constructed. Whilst there are no genetically or biologically distinct races within the broad category of human race, this should not obscure the fact that racial thinking persists in the general society and that people are often treated on the basis of their presumed “race”.

Within this study, we strongly advocate for the need to move beyond essentialised concepts of race and ethnicity to examine the socio-political processes which relate to their social construction and the ways in which these terms articulate with other categories such as social class and gender and structure social relationships.

However it should be noted again that information in relation to the respondent’s ethnicity was self-attributed and self-described.

Leadership Roles

For the purpose of this study the term leadership role has been defined as

“A role requiring the management, guidance and direction of a workforce (paid or voluntary) and the responsibility for the development and/or implementation of policy within the organisation.

2.3 Research Approach

Our approach to the research is characterised by the following core principles

- Intersectionality
- Cultural Competence
- Data Quality and Rigour

Intersectionality

There is a need to ensure that ‘multiple’ diversities are addressed in describing the leadership experiences of CALD Women, including gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, and religious belief.
As such, the Research Team adopted an intersectional approach to the design and implementation of the research. An intersectional approach neither constructs categories like race, class, gender, and sexuality as autonomous categories of analysis nor attempts merely to add one category to another.\textsuperscript{10}

The core elements of an intersectional approach have been articulated in the Beijing Platform for Action and in the Outcome document from the Special Session of the General Assembly entitled “Women, 2000: gender, equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”. The Beijing Declaration calls for Governments to “\textit{Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people.}”

Intersectionality is well developed in feminist scholarship as a means of dealing with “multiple” and “complex” inequalities. Scholars have taken up intersectionality to conceptualize and analyse manifold inequalities and discrimination that members of certain communities face\textsuperscript{11}.

In theoretical terms, it appears as though intersectionality provides great opportunities to attend to the specificities of and diversity among CALD women and to conceive of ways to act against the complex inequalities they face.

**Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence in research is the ability of researchers and research staff to provide high quality research that takes into account the culture and diversity of a population when developing research ideas, conducting research, and exploring applicability of research findings\textsuperscript{12}.

Cultural competence in research plays a critical role in study design and implementation processes, including the development of research questions and hypotheses, outreach and recruitment strategies, consent activities, data collection protocols, analysing and interpreting research findings, drawing conclusions and presenting the results.

Altogether, cultural congruence in these research processes helps to ensure the research is applicable to diverse populations and if necessary can be adapted to meet the target population’s social, cultural and linguistic needs. Depending on the type of research, cultural


competence can be crucial to successfully recruiting and retaining diverse individuals as study subjects.

According to the literature, most researchers do not understand or have not received training that enables them to work from and/or incorporate the perspective of minority populations into their work and thus assume the cultural perspective of the majority in the conduct of their work.\textsuperscript{13}

Data Quality and Rigour

Rigour was enhanced in this study through:

- The selection of an appropriate and reasonably heterogenous sample;
- The use of a range of data collection methods, including well conducted in-depth interviews to gather the data; and a thorough and systematic analysis of the data.

2.4 Target Groups

The key target group was ‘CALD Women’. For the purposes of the research project, the following cohorts were identified:

- Board directors - those who hold a seat on a board including Executive and Non-Executive members.
- Executive Management Personnel - the most senior person in the organisation (e.g. CEO) and those who report directly to that person. Executive managers include both executive and non-executive directors.

Selection of Participants

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants, including executives from corporate, government, non-government, not-for-profit organisations and academic institutions. Purposive sampling techniques involve selecting certain units or cases “based on a specific purpose rather than randomly”.\textsuperscript{14}

Neuman states that purposive sampling is appropriate when the researcher wants to recruit individuals from a “difficult-to-reach, specialised population”.\textsuperscript{15} Due to both the nature of the


research topic and the leadership status of the prospective participants, the population targeted within this study could well be described in this way.

**Recruitment**

A series of strategies and processes were utilised to recruit participants.

Direct recruitment process was used whereby individuals within the realms of the Project Team (including the members of the Advisory Committee) professional networks were asked to approach colleagues or friends who were deemed to be in leadership roles or on Boards (as defined for this study) and who they thought might be interested in taking part in the study.

Potential participants were then invited to contact the researcher if they were interested in receiving further information about the study. This initial approach also resulted in a snowballing effect whereby prospective participants subsequently informed others within their networks about the study.

It is important to note that a great deal of consideration was given to the process of recruitment in regard to the risk of causing offence by approaching someone who may not have considered herself to be from a ‘culturally and linguistically diverse background’. Those asked to approach others all professed to being mindful of this and agreed to undertake the task with great sensitivity.

The women who subsequently expressed an interest in participating in the study were provided written material including information about the study, together with a consent form and case study template.

It was intended therefore, that the provision of this information would enable potential participants to more accurately determine their eligibility for inclusion in the study.

**Data Collection**

Qualitative data was gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Smith et al. describe the qualitative research interview as “a conversation with a purpose”\(^\text{16}\). They assert that this form of interview allows greater flexibility and enables the interviewer to go into novel areas and thus produce richer data. In addition, they say this approach acknowledges the participant as the perceived expert in the telling of their story.

According to Reid, Flowers and Larkin one-to-one interviews enable interviewer and respondent to “work in flexible collaboration, to identify and interpret the relevant meanings that are used to make sense of the topic”17

Rubin and Rubin use the term responsive interviewing rather than in-depth interviewing to highlight the interactive nature of the interview process which they also say should generate a depth rather than a breadth of understanding. They emphasise the importance of recognising the mutuality of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee as conversational partners18. The main goal of responsive interviewing, they say, is to achieve a deep understanding of what is being studied and they describe the process of achieving this as follows:

Research design and questioning must remain flexible to accommodate new information, to adapt to actual experiences that people have had, and to adjust to unexpected situations. The researcher creates future questions based on what he or she has already heard, requiring the researcher to analyse interviews throughout the project rather than just at the end. 19

As discussed earlier, in-depth interviews also enable the researchers to engage with the participant in a manner that contributes to the rigour of the research process. Smith et al. suggest that “unless one has engaged deeply with the participant and their concerns, unless one has listened attentively and probed in order to learn more about their lifeworld, then the data will be too thin for analysis” 20

Data Analysis.

According to Smith et al. there is no single approach to data analysis, but rather a degree of flexibility and a clear focus on exploring participant’s attempts to make sense of their experiences. They describe data analysis as follows:

19 Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p 35
A set of common processes (e.g. moving from the particular to the shared, and from the descriptive to the interpretative) and principles (e.g. a commitment to an understanding of the participant’s point of view and a psychological focus on personal meaning-making in particular contexts) which are applied flexibly, according to the analytic task.[21]

Ethical Considerations

There were a number of ethical considerations that were required to be addressed prior to and during the undertaking of this research. These considerations are outlined below.

Informed consent.

The researchers obtained informed and voluntary consent from respondents prior to their participation in the study. In accordance with these requirements, signed Consent Forms were collected from each respondent and respondents were provided with pertinent information about the study.

Participants were advised of their right to withdraw consent during the interview and to review, edit or erase the recording or transcript of the recording of the interview prior to its inclusion in the study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity.

All participants were offered the option of remaining confidential and anonymous in their responses.

To ensure that participants achieved this level of assurance, the issue of confidentiality was discussed prior to the commencement of interviews.

Underlying Motivations to Participate in the Research

It is important to recognise that an overwhelming factor motivating involvement in the research was the concern to address what the majority of respondents identified as a ‘serious gap’ in research and the need to ensure the research would be directed towards change.

The generosity of the participants in talking frankly about very personal matters was greatly appreciated. Their stories and valuable insights, which represent the study findings are presented in this report.

[21] Ibid, page 79
2.5 Distribution

A number of organisations generously agreed to post the information about the project, including the survey or send out an email to their membership providing the link to the survey. These included:

- Diversity Council of Australia
- Women on Boards
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
- EMILY’s List National Bulletin
- Diversity Council of Australia – Diversity Matters E-Newsletter
- Volunteering Inc – newsletters across Australia
- Women on Boards
- Women in Global Business
- Settlement Council of Australia
- Ethnic Communities’ Council of Western Australia
- Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory
- Multicultural Council of Tasmania
- Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW
- Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria
- Ethnic Communities Council of QLD
- Multicultural Communities’ Council of South Australia
- Centre for African Australian Women’s Issues network
- Institute for Cultural Diversity
- Network of immigrant and Refugee Women
- Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights
- Food for Thought Network
- Municipal Council of Victoria

Promotional activities to raise awareness of the Project and its objectives included:

- A presentation at the Australian Council of Social Services Conference
- Articles in various journals and newsletters

2.6 Data Collection Tools

In line with the multi research method, a range of data collection instruments were developed and implemented to achieve the research objectives. In summary these included:

- Demographic Surveys
- Organisational surveys
- Case study templates
Secondary Data: Literature and Document Review

Secondary data consist of existing data sets, reports, and documents, usually compiled by other persons or organizations, and relevant to the focus of the research. When properly incorporated into the process of analysis, these data provide an essential complement to the primary data collected.

The overall purpose of the review was to help build a solid understanding of the current situation relating to CALD women in leadership roles and to uncover data gaps.

A literature and document review was undertaken to assess baseline assessment of CALD women on boards and in decision making positions.

Rationale for identifying baseline data:

- Baseline data are critical reference points for assessing changes.
- Baseline data is used as a starting point for gauging progress towards the goal and objectives and measuring the level and direction of change. It establishes a basis for comparing the situation before and after an intervention and making inferences as to the effectiveness of the project.
- Baseline data should include the kind of information that would be appropriate for measuring changes in accordance with the objectives of the programme or intervention.

Key methods of establishing baseline data included:

- Review of Existing Policy and related mechanisms for Reporting gender representation on Boards and in senior leadership positions
- Review of Membership of National and State Government Board Registries
- Review of Existing Surveys (Eg., 2012 Australian Census of Women in Leadership

The information and findings of the desk based study were subsequently integrated with the data and findings from the primary data collection and analysis.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are the most common qualitative research technique and often generate more information than alternative research methods. They are an ideal method to explore such complex issues as people’s professional trajectories, the barriers which they met along the way, and the support which they think is required to widen access to positions of power.

The real value in this technique comes from free-flowing discussion and the unexpected findings that often occur. A wealth of information can be generated as the dynamics of group interaction builds upon the conversation to reveal the underlying thoughts, emotions and attitudes behind behaviours and opinions which are difficult to achieve using other techniques.
A total of five state/territory based consultations were conducted face to face throughout late March and April 2013. Both a project consultant and FECCA representative attended each of these consultations. Face to face consultations were conducted in:

- Perth
- Hobart
- Canberra
- Melbourne
- Adelaide
- Sydney

Face to face consultations had also originally been planned for Brisbane and Darwin but due to low response rates it was decided it was more feasible to undertake these consultations via phone. This has resulted in ‘snowball sampling’ that has provided access to a greater number of women than originally identified.

In total, sixty-five CALD women have participated in national focus groups or consultations either face to face or by phone.

Data collection has comprised:

- Qualitative feedback based on the discussion agenda developed for national focus groups and consultations.
- Quantitative and qualitative data based on a Demographic Survey developed for national focus group and consultation participants. This survey aimed to capture data on professional areas of expertise, academic qualifications, board appointments and/or decision making roles and, strengths participants bring to leadership roles as CALD women.

Case Studies: Individuals

The case study approach was used to determine the leadership contributions of CALD women.

The case study approach is used in this research to illuminate women’s experiences, looking carefully at their personal experiences. The use of case studies was essential in assisting the women to define leadership in their own terms.

The qualitative nature of this study was best suited to a case study approach, which enables description of women’s leadership experiences in their own terms.

The study adopted in-depth conversational interviews. Blackmore writes about using conversational interviews in her research, where the storytelling genre of the interview could be adjusted to a more informal discussion, taking the form of a conversation\(^{22}\).

Merrill observes that ‘the interview dialogue becomes a more equal two-way process as the interviewer and the interviewee interact in a conversation. The interviewer should be prepared to share life experiences with the interviewees’.23

Conversational interviews were used to elicit dialogue with the interviewees. The study was carried out from an ontological position, which suggests that people’s knowledge, views, understanding and interpretations are meaningful for the generation of knowledge.

The participants’ views and opinions helped bring out issues that would not be apparent in more closed and structured methods of data collection.

Invitations to submit individual case studies were promoted through the focus groups and consultations, via a range of websites, newsletters and CALD networks.

Women were also identified via the mapping exercise undertaken in the initial stages of the project and through recommendations made by other CALD women.

The case studies included:

- Women in senior leadership positions
- Women on Boards

Broadly, the case studies sought to document the perceptions, experiences, visions, achievements and the lived experiences that have shaped CALD women’s leadership perspectives and approaches.

Qualitative feedback was sought in relation to the following key areas:

- Description of career path leading to being appointed on a Board or in a decision making role.
- Factors that have contributed to opportunities to access positions on a Board or in a decision making role.
- Key challenges as a CALD woman in accessing and participating on a Board or in a decision making role.
- The unique strengths / opportunities that CALD women bring to Boards or decision-making roles?
- Key lessons learnt along the way / advice to other CALD women seeking leadership roles.

Organisation Surveys

Every effort was made to identify current policy and practice approaches undertaken by key organisations across a range of sectors. Surveys were sent out to elicit good/innovative

23 Merrill, B. (1999), Gender, Change and Identity: Mature Women Students in Universities, Aldershot: Ashgate.
practices in relation to the promotion of diversity generally, and the inclusion of CALD women more specifically.

Due to the extremely small response to the surveys, a further review of key organisations’ websites was reviewed to identify potential opportunities for strengthening examples of innovation.

**Key Informant Interviews**

A Stakeholder Map was developed based on the following key sectors
- Government
- Public Sector
- Private Sector/Corporates
- Academic
- Professional Women's Organisations
- Sports Sector
- Media Sector
- Not-for-Profit Women's Peaks
- Academic
- Peak CALD Women's Organisations
- Peak Multicultural Organisations

Key informants were subsequently identified from each of these sectors and in depth interviews were conducted. In addition, a range of individuals who are central to work in this field and have produced a number of key studies were also interviewed.

### 2.7 Research Limitation

A number of research limitations have been identified including:

- **Methodological Issues** - Specific sensitivities in relation to ‘identity measurements’.

- **The Problem of Categorisation** - Because ethno-racial origin is a multidimensional phenomenon, and not always easily measured, determining CALD backgrounds of participants is not always a simple matter.

- **The issue of impact of faith and religion on CALD Women’s experiences of leadership**

- **Respondent Biases in the Consultation Tools** - The hypothesis was that those who are aware of or have been involved in issues related to CALD women on boards and in decision making would have an inherent interest in making them publicly known.
3. KEY FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this part of the report is to present the findings of the study in a manner consistent with the methodological approach outlined in the previous section.

3.2 Secondary Data Review

The review of secondary data included two key components:

a) A brief summary and analysis of the literature

b) A review of secondary data sources which included:

- Existing Policy and related mechanisms for Reporting gender representation on Boards and in senior leadership positions
- Membership of National and State Government Board Registries
- Existing Surveys (Eg., 2012 Australian Census of Women in Leadership

Literature Review

The literature review begins with a brief summary of some of the recent Australian literature related to women and leadership and highlights some of the inherent biases and gaps as they relate to CALD women in leadership roles. The review then gives particular attention to the research on minority ethnic women and leadership. Much of the literature, with some exception, is international given the lack of Australian based research.

Intersectional analysis provides the lens through which the review of existing national and international research is undertaken. The concept of intersectionality has been important in inserting additional questions into the analysis of social relations, particularly in the field of gender equality. The application of an intersectional approach to analyses is important in order to make visible the actions of those women who would otherwise be obscured from discussions.

An intersectional approach also shifts the away from a deficit view of CALD women and communities as places full of cultural poverty disadvantages, and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged. Various forms of capital nurtured through cultural wealth include aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital.
KEY FINDINGS

Key issues emerging from the literature review included

- While there is an increasing abundance in research related to gender and women on boards and leadership positions generally, there is very little Australian research that specifically focuses upon the experiences and issues for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- The experiences of ‘women and leadership’ documented in research are presented as universal, with little effort to integrate the unique and particular experiences of ethnic minority women.
- In identifying and addressing the range of challenges and barriers, very few Australian reports (with some exception) pay attention to gender in connection with other inequalities.
- Often research has focused solely on race or gender, without looking at the effects of being of a racialized/ethnic and gendered group.
- Conceptions of leadership draw largely on the leadership experiences of a limited population, and of those in a restricted range of organizational settings.

The literature identifies a range of strategies for increasing the representation of minority ethnic women on boards and in senior leadership roles. These include:

- Collection of Multi-Identity Data Sets
- Establishment of Advisory Bodies/Taskforces
- Organisational Statements of Commitment/Policies
- Professional Networks
- Leadership Development Programs
- Research/Evidence Based Advocacy

Review of secondary data sources

The overall purpose of the review was to help build a solid understanding of the current situation relating to CALD women in leadership roles and to uncover data gaps.

Data sources included:

- Existing Policy and related mechanisms for Reporting gender representation on Boards and in senior leadership positions
- Membership of National and State Government Board Registries
- Data and trends on gender equality and representation

Key Questions Guiding the Data Review included

- What is the coverage of the data source?
- To what level is the data disaggregated?
- For which population is the data representative
Key findings included:

- Existing datasets are not inclusive of ethnicity or other variables that impacts on women’s experiences of leadership/access to leadership opportunities.
- CALD women continue to see limited advancement to senior levels with organisations, particularly corporate, even though diversity programs abound.
- CALD women at the intersections of two or more identity categories are largely left out of most gender equality and related policies. As a result CALD women become marginalised.
- Ethnicity/race is an important intersecting axis of inequality that is often neglected in gender equality policies, either because it is seen as belonging to other policy domains or seen as not relevant.
- Whilst the creation of gender indicators has been under development in recent years, there appears to be limited or no discussion relating to the inclusion of ethnicity/intersectional identity and how they shape and impact gender equality.
- Unlike other countries where sex disaggregated data is further distilled based on ethnicity and cultural identity, Australia does not collect this information.
- By way of international comparison, both Europe and the USA have undertaken some detailed surveys aimed at establishing base line data relevant to ethnic and minority women and their representation on Boards and key decision making institutions.
- Implications for the lack of data means that we do not know or appreciate the enormous contribution that CALD women are making.
- There is no monitoring and reporting framework that integrates ethnicity and cultural background of women.
- On the whole both public sector and private sector initiatives aimed at promoting leadership opportunities tend to promote their programs to mainstream women rather than women from culturally and linguistically diverse groups.
- There are very few examples of practices/programs that included attention to CALD women, (eg, in the range of leadership programs being offered) and secondly, that the ‘good practices’ cited tended to be those undertaken by not for profit Organisations, particularly multicultural/ethno specific agencies.

3.3 Focus Groups

A total of 65 women identifying as culturally and linguistically diverse participated in national consultations either by attending state / territory based focus groups or by participating in interviews.

Summary of Challenges and Barriers

The consultation process revealed three consistent themes in relation to challenges and barriers impacting CALD women’s participation on boards and in decision making positions.
These included the perceptions of women themselves around capability requirements for engaging at leadership levels, experiences of discrimination and, lack of access to leadership pathways.

**Perceptions of capability requirements for engaging at leadership levels**

- Whilst the majority of women involved in consultations had held board and / or executive positions within the multicultural sector, few had engaged in or even considered similar roles in the private / corporate sector.
- A common view amongst this cohort of women was that corporate board models in particular did not ‘fit’ with community board experience and therefore skills sets developed within community leadership roles would not be transferable.
- Many spoke about a lack of confidence in seeking opportunities outside the multicultural sector and suggested that self-perception further served to limit opportunities for CALD women who were often ‘pigeon holed’ once they had established a reputation for working in this sector. The women that had moved into mainstream government or corporate leadership roles had reached significant decision-making positions.

**Experiences of discrimination**

- Discrimination was another dominant theme in the experiences of CALD women in leadership roles. Exposure to discrimination was as common for those that remained within multicultural settings as it was for those that held leadership roles in mainstream sectors. In both contexts women confronted cultural issues around gender and hierarchy and highlighted that women continued to have to work harder than men to be seen as equal.
- Beyond multicultural sector settings, discrimination was experienced at intersectional levels with both gender and ethnicity impacting CALD women’s participation.
- A number of the women who had held roles on high level public and private sector boards found that the current discourse of ‘success’ was forcing CALD women to silence their own sense of identity based on their cultural and ethnic diversity. This concern was reinforced by the research process where a number of women in senior executive and board roles, who had been contacted to participate, indicated that they did not identify as CALD despite indicators suggesting a high probability that they were.
- Where women had made efforts to contribute from a CALD perspective within their Board roles, it was not uncommon for them to be deterred from doing so again.
- Women’s accents also featured as a factor contributing to discrimination. This issue was repeated by a number of women who believed that having an accent diminished their ability to be heard or contribute in board room settings.
- More generally, national consultation participants highlighted that discrimination against CALD women occurred not only at the most senior of leadership levels but at levels that traditionally lead to leadership roles, and that this was an issue for all women. They expressed concern that limited progress was possible without addressing
leadership pathways for women generally, but with particular attention to issues for CALD women who experienced additional layers of discrimination.

**Lack of access to leadership pathways**

Lack of access to leadership pathways occurred at two levels; one level involved the inaccessibility of programs and initiatives designed to create pathways to board positions and the other involved inaccessibility of networks where many of the negotiations for these opportunities are perceived to take place.

**Programs and initiatives**

- The overwhelming majority of women contributing to national consultations had not previously heard of available leadership programs such as Board Ready, Boardlinks, CEW Leaders Program and AICD Women's Leadership Development Programs. This was despite the fact that most had held very senior leadership positions (mostly within the multicultural sector). For those that were familiar with such programs and initiatives, these were often far too expensive to consider.
- Women generally believed there were no program or initiatives focused on promoting CALD women’s participation on boards or in decision-making positions and this remained a significant factor preventing them from contributing valuable skill sets to government and business in particular. In one state, a CALD women’s organisation had developed their own program to develop women’s potential for leadership roles.
- There was a recognition of the efforts of government in establishing registers for Board appointments but women had become increasingly reluctant to register and questioned their potential to achieve significant improvements in representation.

**Networks**

- By far, the most significant issue around leadership roles identified by women in national consultations involved the lack of access to networks where opportunities for Board positions are circulated. There exists a general perception that most Board positions are seldom advertised but filled by people being ‘tapped on the shoulder’ through these networks and unless you are part of them you do not get ‘a look in’.
- Many women believed that when the Appoint Women and state based registers were established, they were expected to improve the identification and visibility of suitably qualified and experienced women but there is no evidence base to show they have delivered results for CALD women. Of the women that were registered either with national or state based registers, they had either never received a response for a prospective Board position or had only been contacted to alert them to multicultural sector opportunities.
- Many questions were also raised around executive search companies subcontracted by government to identify candidates for leadership positions. Again, these companies operate based on networks and often charge high fees to registered clients.
Ways Forward – Suggested Interventions to promote the participation of CALD women on Boards and in decision-making positions

The focus groups demonstrate a plethora of largely untapped talent with the potential for significant contributions to Australia in a global context. CALD women have commended FECCA for taking up this issue and have urged for outcomes that lead to evidence-based, improved access and participation of CALD women on Boards and in decision-making roles.

CALD women identified a number of interventions to achieve this. Key areas for intervention relate to systemic changes, developing a business case specifically for CALD women and specific CALD women initiatives.

A summary of suggested interventions is set out below.

Systemic Changes

The need for systemic change was perceived as paramount in ensuring that any progress could be measured. Interventions included:

- Establishing data collection methods for government Boards and c-level positions that capture gender, cultural heritage and international experience.
- Engaging key government stakeholders with social inclusion and access and equity portfolio responsibilities as spheres of influence in promoting representation of CALD women on boards and in decision-making roles.
- Reviewing government Board and executive recruitment processes to address existing barriers. This would include ensuring executive search companies share government’s commitment to diversity.
- Reviewing government funded Board ready programs for women and setting participation targets that reflect demographics.
- Establishing monitoring and evaluation processes to measure progress in improved representation.

Developing a Business Case for CALD Women

A significant inhibitor contributing to under-representation in leadership was considered to be the lack of a business case promoting the benefits of engaging culturally and linguistically diverse women on boards and at executive levels.

There remains a fundamental need to recognise and promote the particular and unique contributions these women make as a critical factor in organisational strengthening and profitability. Whilst the business case for diversity has continued to build, there is no focus on intersectionality and how this influences experiences and opportunities for CALD women.
A business case with the capacity to influence change would also be supported by existing leaders/high profile champions promoting this message and, elevating the public profile of CALD women and their achievements in leadership roles.

Specific CALD Women Initiatives

National consultation participants recognised that as CALD women, they also had an important role to play in changing the current landscape. Interventions included:

- Looking beyond ‘multiculturalism’ as the primary sector where career and leadership pathways can be developed
- Developing a mentoring network of existing CALD women with leadership experience to work with the younger generation of CALD women with leadership ambitions
- Establishing a ‘diverse women on boards’ network and developing links that enable access to key leadership networks
- Establishing a CALD women’s register to periodically measure what targets are being achieved.

3.4 Key Informant Interviews

Twenty two interviews were conducted with ‘key informants’. The following key questions guided discussions:

- Do you collect any such data?
- Do you collect any data at all in relation to ethnicity?
- Is any consideration being given to the collection of such data in the future?
- Has any work been done around promoting the register to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?
- Can you share any data around the number of women on the register and possibly sectors represented?

Interviewees were assured that nothing in the final report would be attributable to them as individuals.

Key themes emerging from discussions included:

- Lack of understanding of the need to identify CALD women as a distinct group
- Lack of confidence and knowledge in relation to approaches and strategies to address issues particular to CALD Women
- Concerns that many businesses avoid discussing cultural identity for fear of being discriminatory
- Limited understanding of the range of resources/organisations currently available to partner or work more collaboratively with.

For many organisations, even those specifically dedicated to advancing women on boards the concept of intersectional diversity is not one that has featured in their own discussions.
Whilst this is slowly changing due to the efforts of CALD Women's Organisations and their allies, there is a need for a concerted advocacy campaign aimed at intensifying awareness and interest in this topic.

A key concern raised by some key informants was whether integration of intersectional approaches to the issues of women and leadership could potential dilute the need for the focus on gender.

Importantly a few respondents reported the research had already prompted a rethink of their approach to ‘women on boards’, particularly in relation to assessing the specific issues for CALD Women.

A small number of informants also highlighted that there is an urgent need to address more structurally embedded organizational practices and procedures that continue to conflate ‘diversity approaches’ with those of ‘women’ and other minority groups.

Suggestions to improve the retention of senior women include nominating a change agent to provide support and encouragement for senior women, more transparent organisational processes and structures, and changes in hiring practices.

In seeking to elicit some information from key informants in relation to ‘good practice’ examples, where women from diverse backgrounds were included two key theme emerged:

Firstly, that there were very few examples of practices/programs that included attention to CALD women, and secondly, that the ‘good practices’ cited tended to be those undertaken by not for profit organisations, particularly multicultural/ethno specific agencies.

Importantly, the identified ‘good practices’ are critical developments towards the improved inclusion of CALD women, but unfortunately the examples cited tended to be short term projects with little opportunity to build more long term impact.

### 3.5 Case Studies (women)

In total, sixty CALD women contributed case studies either by completing and submitting a case study template or by participating in a phone based or face to face interview covering the questions set out in the case study template.

The overwhelming majority of women participating in this part of the study possessed significant levels of experience in decision-making roles or on boards.

The case studies provided invaluable qualitative data around career paths into leadership positions, ongoing challenges faced by CALD women in these roles and the range of unique contributions they bring to leadership roles.
Career paths enhancing pathways to boards and decision-making roles

CALD women’s backgrounds, careers and areas of professional expertise varied significantly but almost all had achieved outstanding levels of community based activism, post graduate qualifications and high levels of recognised expertise and performance in their jobs. Common to all women was the significant role that networks had played in their career and leadership opportunities.

Another common factor that emerged in reviewing case studies was that the majority of women has been guided and supported by a senior level mentor and had also been willing to undertake pro bono work to develop leadership capabilities. Interestingly, where mention was made of a mentor’s gender, all except one were women.

Challenges experienced by CALD women in relation to participating on boards and in decision-making roles

There were no responses that left this section of the case study blank and no responses to indicate that CALD women had not encountered challenges or barriers. Responses to case studies completed via interview reflected the same results.

Most women continued to encounter challenges as a result of their identity, despite lengthy experience in leadership roles. Challenges reflected three key themes:

- **dominant cultures** – these were experienced in both mainstream and multicultural settings where women continued to have to navigate male dominated cultures
- **intersectional bias** – difference was experienced across gender, ethnicity and religion and often served to limit perceptions around what CALD women could contribute
- **limited networks** – more powerful and influential networks remained inaccessible for many CALD women given strong socio-economic and inter-generational influences that dictated access.

Unique contributions that CALD women bring to boards and in decision-making roles

“Resilience, ability to adapt to change, comfort with vulnerability and desire to push boundaries. Understand the true dimensions of diversity and we are very good at dealing with uncertainty, language and cultural barriers and finding ways to overcome these. We find new ways of doing things to overcome these barriers because we have experienced significant change in our personal lives in a new country and overcame them.”

*(Leading CALD woman)*
CALD women were able to contribute a plethora of examples around the unique strengths and contributions that CALD women bring. These reflected the following broad areas:

- **intercultural capabilities** – an enhanced ability for intercultural communication and engagement
- **innovation** – an ability and willingness to think differently and present alternatives
- **global perspectives** – a broader view of the world and ability to link to ideas and opportunities outside the norm
- **adaptability** – capacity for collaboration and negotiation
- **commitment to diversity and equality** - capacity for inclusiveness and valuing difference

Advice to CALD women with aspirations for leadership roles

Advice to CALD women seeking board or decision-making positions reflected key lessons women participating in this part of the study had experienced as a result of their journey. Advice reflected the following key themes:

- **pathways** – CALD women continued to be under-represented as they did not have access to the same formal leadership structures that had been established for mainstream women and needed to lobby around this.
- **perception of self** – CALD women needed to overcome their reluctance and demonstrate confidence in their abilities
- **public persona** – not being afraid of being different and avoiding the trap of conforming to ‘fit in’
- **commitment** – ensuring homework is done and informed decisions are made
- **networks** – networking as the most important activity of all.

### 3.6 Surveys (organisations)

Despite targeted efforts and distribution of over 50 organisation surveys there was a very low response rate to this part of the research with only 3 federal government departments and 2 women’s organisations in the multicultural sector providing responses. Whilst the very small response rate to this component of the project did not allow for any accurate findings around participation of CALD women on boards and in decision making bodies, it did suggest a number of issues relevant to progressing CALD women’s leadership (these issues were reinforced through the key informant interviews and in the desk top literature and document review).
Lack of hard data

- Data collection amongst government departments is inconsistent given there currently exists no mandate or business imperative for intersectional data to be collected.
- Where the collection of data on ethnicity has been considered, it is optional to provide this and so the validity of figures cannot be assured.
- The lack of data inadvertently impacts exclusion as progress cannot be measured.

Misconceptions

Responses by government departments suggested a number of misconceptions around definitions of CALD as well as how CALD women are characterised.

- There seems to be some confusion in distinguishing between CALD and Indigeneity and the assumption that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women are represented under CALD.
- In proposing strategies to enhance the participation of CALD women in decision making or board roles, responses suggested that CALD women are only accessible through ethno-specific contexts and media, and needed to be trained to develop capabilities required for board participation.
4. DISCUSSION AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

The Promoting CALD women’s participation on boards and decision-making positions project emerged through a recognition that although the Australian government is making significant progress in achieving greater representation of women on boards, there exists no concrete data to evidence how well CALD women are faring as part of this progress. CALD women, through their engagement with the multicultural sector, have indeed suggested that they remain well under-represented on boards and in decision-making roles across both the public and private sector.

The Australian government acknowledges that the under-representation of CALD women “is something that needs to change to reflect Australia’s multiculturalism - one in four Australian women is born overseas24”, and is committed to improving CALD women’s participation at these levels of leadership.

Within this context, this project sought to document hard data on how many CALD women do in fact occupy top leadership and decision-making positions, and to determine what opportunities and challenges shape their participation in these roles. Further, it aimed to identify sound and reasonable interventions needed to improve representation.

From the outset, this project adopted a strengths based approach – one that recognised the existing achievements and capabilities of Australia’s CALD women and was designed to capture and document the capital that they undeniably already contribute. This was a critical factor in enabling the project researchers to engage many of the CALD women who so generously contributed to this research. Most references to CALD women take a deficit perspective and often present them as vulnerable and needing to be ‘empowered’ – as the profiles of women involved in this research will attest, this is certainly not always the case.

Interestingly, whilst CALD women commended an initiative which recognised and sought to capture their leadership contributions, the researchers continued to encounter deficit perceptions of CALD women amongst many of the key informants who participated in the research. It was not uncommon amongst this cohort to hold misconceptions around things such as language levels and CALD women’s levels of interest in leadership roles outside of ethno-specific or multicultural contexts. These are important issues and require attention given that they inadvertently impact on exclusion.

As explained in the methodology, this project was informed by an intersectional approach and was cognisant of the need to ensure multiple diversities were addressed in describing the leadership experiences of CALD women, including gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, disability and religious belief. Although every effort was made to highlight this and to draw out experiences around intersecting factors, the project data was

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24 Minister for the Status of Women, Julie Collins Media Release ‘More opportunities for women from diverse backgrounds’
able to capture very little in relation to these. This has resulted in project limitations relevant to CALD women with a disability, sexuality and religion in particular, and their impacts. What it has reinforced is that these issues are complex and require sensitive attention in any potential future research in this area.

The project used a range of methodologies to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that would enable the researchers to address the key objectives of the project. The data from each methodology was then synthesised to respond to project objectives as set out below.

Extent to which CALD women occupy positions on boards and decision-making roles

The extent to which CALD women occupy positions on boards and decision-making positions across Australia could not be determined by this research because the data does not exist. Despite exhaustive search processes the researchers could not find evidence of organisations that take an intersectional approach to data collection or disaggregation. Whilst data on gender composition in leadership roles is widely collected, there was less evidence of data being collected around CALD and no data that could be identified capturing the intersection between the two.

Only the small sample sizes of CALD women participating in this project can offer some indication levels at which CALD women are represented.

Focus Group Participants
Of these:
- 15 (23%) women had held the role of chair on a board
- 7 (11%) women had held the role of deputy chair on a board
- 16 (25%) women had held the role of chair or deputy chair on a community board

**Case Study Participants**

![Participant's Experience on Boards and in Decision-Making positions](chart)

Of these:
- 20 (33%) women had held the role of chair on a board
- 9 (15%) women had held the role of deputy chair on a board
- 10 (16%) women had held the role of chair or deputy chair on a community board

**Pathways for CALD women into leadership roles**

CALD women’s backgrounds, careers and areas of professional expertise varied significantly but reflected a number of consistent themes which they identified as significant contributors in paving the way to board or decision making roles. These included:

- outstanding levels of community based activism
- an ongoing commitment to academic achievement
FECCA: Promoting the Participation of CALD Women on Boards and Decision-Making Positions

- recognition of professional expertise achieved through exceptional workplace performance
- developing a strong network base

Often these pathways were supported by having a senior level mentor and a willingness to undertake pro bono work to develop leadership capabilities.

Challenges that shape the participation of CALD women in leadership roles

Whilst the overwhelming majority of CALD women involved in the research were in high level leadership roles in a range of community, public and private sectors they spoke openly of the range of obstacles and challenges they had endured and often continued to encounter as CALD women, despite lengthy experience in leadership roles. Challenges included:

- dominant cultures – these were experienced in both mainstream and multicultural settings where women continued to have to navigate male dominated cultures
- intersectional bias – difference was experienced across gender, ethnicity and religion and often served to limit perceptions around what CALD women could contribute
- limited networks – more powerful and influential networks remained inaccessible for many CALD women given strong socio-economic and inter-generational influences that dictated access to these.

CALD women involved in the research who held leadership roles within contexts related to their communities, but who had aspirations to access leadership roles at higher levels, also spoke extensively around challenges they encountered as CALD women. These included:

- Perceptions of capability requirements for engaging at leadership levels – assumptions that community leadership skills were not transferable to other sectors and that once women had established a reputation for working within the multicultural sector they were ‘pigeon-holed’
- Experiences of discrimination – the combination of gender and ethnicity served to increase levels of exclusion and having an accent exacerbated this further.
- Lack of access to leadership pathways – at one level this involved inaccessible programs and initiatives designed to create pathways to board positions and on another level involved inaccessibility of networks where negotiations for board opportunities are perceived to take place.

Challenges shaping the participation of CALD women on boards and decision –making positions also occurred within organisational contexts outside the multicultural sector. As key informant interviews revealed, there remains no imperative around equal representation of CALD women. This is compounded by stereotypes in relation to language skills and perceptions that CALD women are only interested in ethno-specific areas. Interestingly these stereotypes echo the challenges identified by CALD women.
Challenges that shape the participation of CALD women in leadership roles

The project provided an ideal chance to reflect on the role CALD women have played in leadership roles in their communities and in the sectors in which they have chosen to pursue their professional goals. It aimed to ensure that contributions were documented and highlighted.

Where these unique contributions have been recognised and valued, CALD women have been given leadership opportunities where they have often excelled. They included:

- *Intercultural capabilities* – an enhanced ability for intercultural communication and engagement
- *Innovation* – an ability and willingness to think differently and present alternatives
- *Global perspectives* – a broader view of the world and ability to link to ideas and opportunities outside the norm
- *Adaptability* – capacity for collaboration and negotiation
- *Commitment to diversity and equality* – capacity for inclusiveness and valuing difference

A further opportunity that shaped the participation of CALD women on boards and decision-making positions was access to networks, a theme that permeated all areas of discussion with women in this research. Networking was seen as the most critical activity in creating opportunities and many of the women who had accessed high level boards shared that they had committed just as much time to networking as they had to their job.

A growing number of multicultural women’s organisations have started creating their own opportunities and are actively implementing initiatives that will carve the path for CALD women to establish themselves in leadership roles. These initiatives have taken the form of professional CALD women’s networking events, mentoring programs involving CALD women already on boards and in decision-making roles, and leadership training. It is important to note however that these initiatives are mostly focused on grassroots community based leadership.

Interventions needed to improve representation

The data documented within this project leaves no doubt as to the outstanding leadership qualities and capabilities possessed by CALD women. Project participants have commended FECCA for taking up this issue and have urged for outcomes that lead to evidence-based, improved participation of CALD women in leadership roles where they can contribute these qualities and capabilities and where they can also be fairly represented in efforts to progress gender equality.

The next section of this report sets out as recommendations the range of interventions required to improve representation.
4.1 Emerging Insights

“One of the most important messages I hope this project promotes is that women from culturally diverse backgrounds have so much talent but we need to be able to make those talents more visible to those in decision making roles and not waste that precious talent and contribution. There is no doubt that there are women who could be taking on much greater leadership roles both in their own communities and within the broader Australian community, but they need to be acknowledged, valued and supported”.

(Case Study Interview)

The following insights constitute an overall summary of some key facts emerging from the research:

- CALD women are not a homogenous group that share a common ideological perspective on all issues. CALD women have to manage often contradictory socio-economic and political identities and loyalties to their families, religious beliefs, professions, ethnic communities, political parties and other allegiances.

- Although numerous studies point out the impact of gender on leadership opportunities, there has been a serious lack of empirical research in Australia that systemically analyses the impact of the intersections of race/ethnicity/sexuality/ability and gender on the leadership experiences of CALD Women.

- There is an urgent need to promote the need for publicly accessible statistical data disaggregated by sex and ethnicity as a matter of course in all relevant data domains and collections and by all relevant agencies.

- The research has highlighted there is a critical need to develop new methodologies to identify the ways in which various forms of discrimination converge and impact on CALD Women.

- The impressive list of women who participated in the consultations and submitted case studies represent a group of readily identified leaders who are renowned for their expertise and career achievements.

- Despite a range of initiatives aimed at inclusion and diversity, most CALD women reported that they did not feel significant progress had been made.

- Professional CALD women with ambitions to lead continue to face significant barriers in the corporate, business, public sector and political arenas, even as outcomes for women generally improve.

- CALD women have been at the forefront in championing the discourse and strategies that support women’s rights and gender equality.
CALD Women often take the lead and initiate change in their own local communities, yet they continue to remain under-represented in many areas of leadership and decision-making.

Perceptions by a majority of research participants that their contributions as leaders have been largely undervalued by key influencers in Australian society more generally.

There are specific complexities that need to be sensitively addressed in relation to disability, sexual orientation and religion and how they impact on CALD women in leadership contexts.

CALD women come from diverse communities and traditions representing an extraordinary richness of experience, understanding and knowledge. They are role models, who showcase a breadth of diverse women's achievements, strength and their commitment to fight for gender equality.

Historically, CALD women have always played a large role in our nation becoming more unified and effective in what we do, and more importantly, who we are as a country. CALD Women provide our nation with a largely untapped resource of differing perspectives that many in our society have now begun to fully realize.

The collective successes of those women who participated in the study are all the more impressive, because these achievements occurred while also having to endure differing levels of discrimination and exclusion. Despite the aforementioned obstacles, the case studies provide a narrative of resistance and resilience - an ability to often rise beyond the demeaning and belittling behaviour.

The models we have in leadership are still Anglo-Centric and Euro-American on the whole. It is important to also note that though there is little written about leadership experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse women, the findings from the research indicate that CALD Women believe that they have unique leadership experiences and styles compared to their mainstream counterparts.

CALD Women have demonstrated their role as advocates for change and transformation amongst themselves and for those they lead, although the experience of acts of discrimination/racism during their leadership journeys have created a range of significant stressors. Several women reported feeling constantly scrutinised and challenged to act competently.

In institutions where much emphasis is placed on achievement (attainment of status, prestige, and recognition within the organization) in comparison to affiliation (friendly interaction with students and advisees) some women reported that other CALD women in positions of influence were often silent on issues of discrimination for other CALD women seeking to enhance their leadership opportunities.
A few examples were given where CALD women ignore an act of discrimination against another CALD woman in order to preserve her status and good rapport with others from the majority culture.

Due to the power differential and underrepresentation of CALD women or ethnic communities generally, some CALD women often felt that they had no one within their organisation to turn to for support or mentorship.

Highly visible and effective CALD women in public life have been designated as something other than leader, such as ‘community activist’ or ‘pioneer’.
5. INTERVENTIONS NEEDED – PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

CONTEXT

Australia is a multilayered, multicultural democracy claiming to be based on mutual respect for its diverse peoples and cultures, introducing goals that value diversity and inclusion while counteracting hierarchies, inequalities and exclusion.

Gender equality policies, as the most developed policies against inequality, provide the best entrance to develop inclusive gender equality policies.

Gender equality is about enabling women and men to reach their potential to contribute to, and benefit from, full economic, social, cultural and political participation. To achieve this, women need to attain equal representation in the high level decision-making roles in both the public and private sectors. This not only enables individual women to achieve equality within leadership positions, it also ensures that the issues, perspectives and needs of women are equally represented in the decision-making process, ensuring quality outcomes for both men and women.

The current government’s focus and dedication to gender equality and the empowerment of women undoubtedly provides an opportunity to give more concerted and focused attention to the issue of CALD Women in relation to their representation on Boards and key decision making bodies.

In reviewing the quality of gender equality policy in relation to intersections between gender and other inequalities, the conclusion is that while there are some promising practices many challenges remain.

CALD women at the intersections of two or more identity categories are largely left out of most gender equality and related policies. A key challenge had been the lack of available quantitative data on CALD women on boards since very few organisations collected data disaggregated according to both ethnicity and gender; usually only data on one or the other was available.

As indicated in the literature review which provided the conceptual basis for analysis, the impact of such an approach is to render the experiences of minority ethnic women as ‘invisible’.

In contemporary policy discussions, ethnicity/race frequently emerge only as part of agendas concerning social exclusion, poverty, vulnerability and disadvantage.

There is clearly a need for a new conceptual framework to inform the development of inclusive gender equality policies and practices. CALD women cannot be understood as the mere addition of women AND CALD, but rather a distinctive category.

Such a framework needs to adopt a mainstreaming approach in which the possible different experiences of intersecting groups are taking into consideration in all gender equality policies.
Government has a responsibility to develop inclusive policy and to deliver effective services. Programs, policies and projects that do not consider the need to integrate the experiences of ethnic minority women risk of exclusion and marginalisation.

In a multicultural context the understanding of intersectionality is critical to any analysis of the quality of gender equality/leadership policies. The intersection of multiple forms of inequality and difference means that there can be no simple unitary category of woman to which gender equality policies can be applied.

Key characteristics of an intersectional approach to gender equality include:

- Attention to the structural dimension of all relevant inequalities is needed, for the same reason as attention to the structural dimension of gender inequality is needed. Attention to the structural dimension assures that the specific ontology of each inequality can be accounted for.

- A focus on agency and contribution, not only on barriers and disadvantages. While attention to barriers and disadvantage or ‘vulnerabilities’ are essential, there is a risk that the positive contributions or ‘cultural capital’ that CALD women bring is made invisible or diluted.

Government needs to do more to ensure that the voices and views of CALD women are included in consultations and are listened to, in order to provide appropriate ideas and solutions for long-term investment.

**About the Recommendations**

These recommendations have been formulated in a way that reflects the absence of comprehensive frameworks that can inform the development and implementation of inclusive strategies to enhance the participation of CALD women.

Bi-partisan political support and leadership at state, federal and local government levels are essential for continual progression of gender equality and CALD women and its implementation at national and state/territory-level.

The following high level recommendations have been directly informed by the findings of this project and have been refined through in depth discussion with members of the project advisory group.

**Recommendation 1**

The Australian Government place on the Council of Australian Governments’ (Select Council on Women’s Issues) agenda the consideration of the introduction of a National Approach to Promote CALD Women’s Leadership and Participation in Governance and Decision-making Women’s Leadership. The development of the framework would involve extensive consultation with all key stakeholders.
Recommendation 2
That the Sex Discrimination Commission undertake a review of current leadership initiatives with a view to identifying specific issues and strategies impacting on intersectional equality for CALD Women.

Recommendation 3
That the Government as a matter of priority collect relevant information on CALD Women’s participation on Boards and senior leadership positions to provide a basis for equity analysis and inform future policy direction.

Recommendation 4
That the Minister for the Status of Women provide an annual statement to Parliament on Australia’s progress in improving CALD women’s economic and financial independence which includes an analysis of the participation and representation of CALD women across private and public sector industries.

Recommendation 5
That the Australian Bureau of Statistics, where possible, review all existing surveys and data, relevant to pay equity, for evidence of any trends over time in leadership inequity and issues affecting CALD female participation in decision making.

Recommendation 6
That funding be sought to undertake a feasibility study exploring options for the establishment of a National Institute of CALD Women’s Leadership.

Recommendation 7
That the findings of this Report, including the Case Study Profiles25 are broadly disseminated as part of a public campaign targeting key sector groups.

Recommendation 8
That consideration be given by the Office for Women for the establishment and resourcing of a National Taskforce on CALD Women’s Leadership. The Taskforce will advise and consult on policies and emerging issues to inform the development of a national strategy. It is suggested that the membership of the Project’s current advisory committee be considered as part of the composition of the Taskforce.

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25 Please note that further consent may need to be sought from some women profiled in this study before wider public dissemination.
5.2 Expected Outcomes

The implementation of the above recommendations is expected to contribute to achieving the following objectives:

- The elimination of challenges CALD women face as they strive to fulfil their leadership potential and achieve socio-economic parity for themselves, their families and their communities.

- The ability to measure levels of CALD women’s participation in leadership roles and progress being made.

- Improved commitment to gender equality that is inclusive of CALD women through imperatives that recognise their levels of representation in Australian society.

- That an evidence base will become available to demonstrate Australia’s international commitments (CEDAW) to advancing gender equality for all women.

- A nation that is well prepared and equipped for a future which will be more diverse than it has ever been before.

5.3 Recommendations in Detail

A detailed description of the rationale for each recommendation outlined, together with the opportunities for change that it presents, are set out below.
**Recommendation 1**

That the Australian Government place on the Council of Australian Governments’ (Select Council on Women’s Issues) agenda the consideration of the introduction of a National Approach to Promote CALD Women’s Leadership and Participation in Governance and Decision-making Women’s Leadership. The development of the framework would involve extensive consultation with all key stakeholders.

**Rationale**

Inclusive gender equality policies are policies that are empowering, that contribute towards the active citizenship of all, and that are informed by knowledge on the intersection of gender with other inequalities, so as to be adequate in Australia’s diverse and multicultural context.

At its most recent meeting, the COAG Select Council on Women’s Issues noted that “progress is being made in a range of critical areas including the development of a National Approach to Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Participation in Governance and Decision-making.”

Given the government’s strong commitment to a national approach around women’s leadership, one that recognises and is responsive to the barriers faced by particular groups of women, there is now opportunity and an evidence base to ensure that CALD women are addressed as an under-represented group.

A national approach to promoting CALD women’s participation in governance and decision-making will:

- Establish a national framework that strengthens inclusion
- Support an increase in the numbers and participation of CALD women in public life so that decision-making more clearly represents and reflects the interests and demographics of the community
- Result in an intersectional approach to women’s leadership that recognises the role played by multiple relational factors and responds to the complexities of inequalities. This will have Australia well placed to join international best practice around advancing women’s equality.

**Opportunities for Change**

- Consideration by the COAG Select Council on Women’s Issues to commit to a national approach in promoting CALD women’s leadership
- Establishment of a COAG working group on gender equality leadership and CALD women
- Consultation with select stakeholders nationally
- Consultation outcomes reported to Select Council for consideration
- Adoption of pathways to maximise integration within the National Framework for Gender Equality.
**Recommendation 2**

That the Sex Discrimination Commission undertake a review of current leadership initiatives with a view to identifying specific issues and strategies impacting on intersectional equality for CALD Women.

**Rationale**

Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, has been actively promoting the importance of women's representation in decision-making roles in the community, government and business sectors.

Initiatives have included:

**The Gender Equality Blueprint**

The Gender Equality Blueprint recognised as a priority area the criticality of considered attention to be focused on promoting women in leadership. This has resulted in significant progress towards achieving equal representation of women on federal government boards.

Although much progress has been made for women in general, this research has established the first stage of an evidence base suggesting that CALD women have not been beneficiaries of this progress.

A review of the Gender Equality Blueprint using an intersectional approach will provide the foundations from which existing barriers for CALD women can be removed. Intersectionality is a policy paradigm increasingly applied to increase awareness of the role played by multiple relational factors when trying to understand and respond to the complexities of inequities.

**Male Champions of Change**

In April 2010, Commissioner Broderick was instrumental in bringing together some of Australia's most influential and diverse male CEOs and Chairpersons to form the Male Champions of Change group. The group aims to use their individual and collective influence and commitment to ensure the issue of women's representation in leadership is elevated on the national business agenda.

There is an opportunity to consider broadening the representation of the group to ensure the inclusion of high profile business and industry leaders from CALD backgrounds.

**Sex Discrimination**

The research findings highlighted that the experiences of ‘sex’ based discrimination often intersects with other grounds of discrimination. However, the current approach in policy and legislation is to list the grounds as ‘separate’ and distinct.
There is an urgent need to examine the potential for an intersectional approach by the Commission to the experience of sex based discrimination by CALD women.

Such an approach allows for a deeper analysis of qualitatively different experiences that women at the intersection of gender and other inequalities. This approach also necessitates the need to have more targeted measures.

Current efforts by the Commonwealth Government to codify existing anti-discrimination legislation can lead to newly created possibilities to address discrimination based on race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability or multiple discrimination.

**The need to invest in CALD women**

Intersectionality as a tool for analysis and policy development, addresses multiple discrimination and helps understand how different sets of identities impact on access to rights and opportunities. There is a need to explore the implications of the intersection of race, ethnicity, national identity and other identities with gender in all its deliberations in order to build consensus on the needs and uses of a methodology on intersectionality as a critical component of the government’s work.

**Opportunities for Change**

An intersectional analysis could have four distinct components:

**Data Collection**

The first requirement for intersection analysis is the availability of reporting and evaluation data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, descent, citizenship status and other identities. Disaggregated data will make it possible to identify the magnitude of impact of particular issues and policies on CALD women.

**Contextual Analysis**

Once disaggregated data is available, the second task is to document the impacts of a problem that are the result of the convergence of identities. That is to probe beneath the single identity to discover other identities that may be present and contributing to a situation of disadvantage. The contextual realities might for example include the legacy of immigration.

**Intersectional Review of Policy Initiatives and Systems Implementation**

With disaggregated data and contextual analysis as background, policy initiatives and systems of implementation can be evaluated for their efficacy in addressing the problems faced by different intersectional identities. For example, does a policy initiative addressing gender discrimination and economic opportunity for one group of women create further tensions with CALD women creating a competition and hierarchy of minorities that serves to perpetuate the domination of a majority group. Or on the other hand, do the implementation procedures for national machinery include a variety of strategies that are sensitive to the different situations of subordination of women within different groups.
Implementation of Intersectional Policy Initiatives

The government can take concrete steps and implement plans of action based on the data to support such work. The government needs to take action at the upper most level to enable data collection, analysis and the allocation of adequate resources for this task. In addition to the implementation there must be mechanisms for effective review of such implementation.

Ways forward

- Undertaking of research utilising intersectionality to improve understanding of how gender relates with other axes of discrimination and disadvantage in leadership contexts.
- Use of this research to review the Gender Equality Blueprint to identify specific issues and strategies impacting on intersectional equality for CALD Women.
- Application of the revised Gender Equality Blueprint to inform policy initiatives and systems of implementation to reflect intersectional approaches.
Recommendation 3

That the Government as a matter of priority collect relevant information on CALD Women's participation on Boards and senior leadership positions to provide a basis for equity analysis and inform future policy direction.

Rationale

Statistics on critical gender issues are needed because they are the basis of policies promoting women's participation and advancement in society. Gender statistics portray the status of women compared to men and serve as tools for measuring progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women.

A key finding of the research was the lack of imperative to collecting data on CALD women's participation on boards and senior leadership positions. As such, this data is not consistently or widely collected and thereby prevents equity analysis using an intersectional approach.

Without mandated reporting in relation to CALD women who occupy roles on boards or senior leadership positions, there is no benchmark from which progress can be measured.

Changes in reporting obligations have already been driven by research on poor gender equality outcomes at the senior management level in Australian entities. Reporting is intended to assist entities to gather information so that they have a clearer understanding of gender balance within their organisations and what objectives they need to put in place to improve gender equality. Indicators respond to gaps in the availability of consistent and publicly accessible sex-disaggregated data relating to a number of key issues. They aid evaluation of the impact of policies and programs on women and benchmark women's progress. However, under current arrangements, no evaluation of the impact of these can be undertaken to benchmark the progress of CALD women.

In ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW (July 1980), Australia has undertaken to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal rights of all women. Article 13 gives effect to Australia's obligation to ensure equal participation of women in economic, social and cultural life in order to give full effect to the Convention. Such obligations, as they relate to a significant percentage of Australia's women, can only be effectively measured if data collection and reporting mechanisms are accessible.

A review of existing Gender Balance Reporting Mechanisms and Frameworks is therefore essential to identifying intersectional indicators.
This includes:

- Developing a model that enables the collection of data that can be measured using an intersectional approach
- Mandating the collection of data that enables measurement inclusive of an intersection of gender and ethnic diversity
- Mandating the reporting of this data against measurable targets aimed at improving the representation of CALD women on boards and in senior leadership roles.

Opportunities for Change

There are a number of current developments that provide opportunities for addressing the serious absence of data collection relating to CALD women on Boards and leadership positions.

The Australian Government is already working with its state and territory counterparts to improve data collection and analysis to inform policy, investment decisions and practices that will deliver enhanced participation for women and remove discriminatory barriers that lead to inequality.
Recommendation 4

That the Minister for the Status of Women provide an annual statement to Parliament on Australia’s progress in improving CALD women’s economic and financial independence which includes an analysis of the participation and representation of CALD women across private and public sector industries.

Rationale

The research has highlighted there is an urgent need to develop new methodologies to identify the ways in which various forms of discrimination converge and impact on CALD Women.

The commitment to an annual statement to Parliament on Australia’s progress in improving CALD women’s economic and financial independence, and one which is inclusive of an analysis of the pay equity situation in Australia, will embed the government’s international and national obligations around gender equality.

It will further reinforce reporting obligations ensuring that government has a clearer understanding of progressing gender balance that is reflective of the nation’s demographic make-up.

Opportunities for Change

- Mandating annual reporting of disaggregated data on CALD women on boards and senior leadership roles to the Office for Women
- Committing to an annual statement to Parliament by the Minister for the Status of Women that demonstrates progress towards gender equality for CALD women at leadership levels.
Recommendation 5

That the Australian Bureau of Statistics, where possible, review all existing surveys and data, relevant to pay equity, for evidence of any trends over time in leadership inequity and issues affecting CALD female participation in decision making.

Rationale

Proactive steps need to be taken by adopting an intersectional approach that ensures equal respect, participation and enjoyment of human rights and opportunities for CALD women, including economic rights.

To date, gender and other forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination, have been considered in parallel. However, interlinked and mutually reinforcing trends as highlighted in this project, have increased the demand for a more comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of discrimination against women, including the intersection of the various different forms of such discrimination.

The research has highlighted there is an urgent need to develop new methodologies to identify the ways in which various forms of discrimination converge and impact on CALD Women.

There is a need to develop reporting and evaluation tools capable of capturing the effects of multiple forms of discrimination, including gender and racial discrimination.

There is also an urgent need to mainstream an intersectional analysis of various forms of discrimination, including racial and gender discrimination, into the design and implementation of policies and programmes currently being implemented by the Federal Government in relation to promoting women on boards and decision making positions.

The opportunity is timely for developing data collection methods for government boards and c-level positions that capture gender, cultural heritage and international experience.

The development of a framework will

- raise consciousness, persuade policy makers and promote changes
- provide ideas in relation to appropriate intersectional methodologies
- provide an unbiased basis for policies and measures
- monitor and evaluate policies and measures.

Opportunities for Change

- That the Gender Statistics Advisory Group (GSAG) is expanded to include an expert on intersectional approaches to policy, research and analysis as it relates to the intersection of gender and ethnicity.
- Revising the ABS Gender Equality Indicators developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in partnership with the Office for Women to reflect intersectionality.
Recommendation 6

That funding be sought to undertake a feasibility study exploring options for the establishment of a National Institute of CALD Women’s Leadership.

Rationale

Findings from the research indicate a glaring absence of targeted and concerted programs specifically aimed at facilitating the inclusion of CALD women in leadership initiatives. CALD women also highlighted as a significant barrier the lack of support systems such as mentors and sponsors that create pathways for nomination into leadership roles.

CALD women are also less likely to have access to networks where key intelligence is shared and that would enable them to evaluate their leadership potential and opportunities.

CALD women participating in this project urged strongly for a centralised body with the specific aim of building the capacity for CALD women’s leadership.

Opportunities for Change

- Investigating the feasibility of establishing an Institute for CALD Women’s Leadership.
  The role of such an Institute might include:
  - Developing targeted programs for CALD women that support their leadership aspirations
  - Building a diverse network of mentors and trusted advisors to facilitate and promote greater inclusion
  - Launching ongoing advocacy activities including the development of key policy positions
  - Launching a series of campaigns to increase the number of CALD Women in the senior-most levels of public and private sector organisations in positions as CEOs or no more than one level below, and in corporate board seats

An example of an effective strategy demonstrating how such an Institute has the capacity to bridge the significant gaps in leadership opportunity, is presented below.
Recommendation 7

That the findings of this Report, including the Case Study Profiles\(^{26}\) are broadly disseminated as part of a public campaign targeting key sector groups.

Rationale

The need to invest in the promotion of CALD Women’s potential to contribute at the most senior levels of leadership has been an obvious finding of this research. Existing misconceptions uncovered in the research need urgent attention given their capacity to inadvertently compound existing barriers.

The range of women profiled in this research present a timely opportunity to begin dispelling the myths and stereotypes that limit CALD women’s fair participation in gender equality commitments.

There is a clearly evident need for government, corporate and other key decision makers to support CALD women’s upward mobility and remove obstacles that limit their participation and the nation’s access to unique capabilities that offer boundless opportunities.

Opportunities for Change

- Pursuing approaches that utilise this research to develop a business case promoting the benefits of engaging CALD women on boards and senior leadership roles.
- Addressing the fundamental gap that exists in recognising and promoting the particular and unique contributions CALD women make as a critical factor in organisational strengthening and profitability. Whilst the business case for diversity has continued to build, there is no focus on intersectionality and how this influences experiences and opportunities for CALD women.
- Supporting the business case for CALD women with the capacity to influence change using existing leaders / high profile champions promoting this message and, elevating the public profile of CALD women and their achievements in leadership roles.

\(^{26}\) Please note that further consent may need to be sought from some women profiled in this study before wider public dissemination.
Recommendation 8

That consideration be given by the Office for Women for the establishment and resourcing of a National Taskforce on CALD Women’s Leadership. The Taskforce will advise and consult on policies and emerging issues to inform the development of a national strategy. It is suggested that the membership of the Project’s current advisory committee be considered as part of the composition of the Taskforce.

This recommendation is ‘overarching’ and provides the immediate implementation of the above recommendations.