



25 August 2015

Dear colleagues,

Chief Executive Women, the Male Champions of Change and Women's Leadership Institute Australia share a common goal - a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership in Australia. We are working together to identify approaches, put them into practice and disseminate those that are successful.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to commit to the Panel Pledge. Attached we include information about the Panel Pledge, its rationale and how it can be implemented.

You may share our concern in noting that in Australia and around the world, many high-profile conferences and events lack gender balance, particularly in regards to keynote speakers and panels.

We experience this first-hand. As members of Chief Executive Women, we are more often than not the only woman on stage at events. As Male Champions of Change we consistently find ourselves sitting on panels that are exclusively male.

The absence of women at public professional forums is a problem. Because speakers are usually male, audiences are given an exclusive perspective. The lack of diversity limits the quality of the conversation. Moreover, when visible role models are male, absence of women perpetuates absence of women. Fewer women choose to speak, and fewer are chosen. Compounding this problem is that without the opportunity to serve on panels women lack profile-building opportunities, which is an important contributor to experience and recognition.

At the suggestion of the Women's Leadership Institute of Australia, the Male Champions of Change in 2012 committed to a Panel Pledge: when asked to be involved in or sponsor a panel or conference, we each inquire about organiser efforts to ensure women leaders are represented.

We believe gender imbalance at events is entirely solvable and the opportunity for improving is awaiting widespread sign-up.

With this in mind, we invite all Australian leaders to commit to the Panel Pledge.

We hope you will join us.

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Chief Executive Officer, Network Ten

John Lydon
Managing Partner, McKinsey & Company

Carol Schwartz, AM
Director, Stockland
Founding Chair, Women's Leadership
Institute Australia

Gary Wingrove
Chief Executive Officer, KPMG Australia

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Non-Executive Director

Kevin McCann, AM
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Mike Smith, OBE
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**Lieutenant General David
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Stephen Roberts
CEO, Citi Country Officer, Australia

Peter Varghese
Secretary of the Department of Foreign
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Simon Rothery
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