

MEDIA RELEASE

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It's time for equal honours this Queen's Birthday

In the lead-up to the announcement of the 2019 Queen's Birthday Order of Australia awards, community organisation Honour a Woman and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency are highlighting the current gender inequalities in the awards system and asking all Australians to nominate more women for awards.

Since the Order of Australia was established in 1975, men have consistently received around 70% of the Australian honours.

Statistics provided by the Governor General's Office to Honour a Woman clearly illustrate the gender disparities in last year's round of Queen's Birthday Order of Australia Awards:

- Out of the 31 categories, 28 had more male than female nominees
- Mining was the only category with more female nominees and men and women were equally represented in the Religion and the Conservation and the Environment categories
- 8 categories had no female nominees at all
- In the female-dominated industry of Education, 58% of nominees were male (35 out of 61)
- In Medicine, 78% of nominees were male (89 out of 114)
- 66% of all nominees (718 out of 1090) and 63% of all award recipients (489 out of 778) were male

"These statistics from last year's Queen's Birthday honours list are very telling and clearly show just how we undervalue women and the important contribution women make in our society," said Libby Lyons, Director, Workplace Gender Equality Agency and an Ambassador for Honour a Woman.

"Australian employers can play an important role in changing this situation. I ask employers to recognise and celebrate the skills, experience and contribution of their accomplished female employees by nominating them for an award.

"We know that receiving an Order of Australia award increases a woman's profile and raises their visibility in their chosen field. As more women receive awards, it might even help to improve the persistent lack of gender balance on boards and at the CEO level."

Honour a Woman co-founders Carol Kiernan and Dr Elizabeth Hartnell-Young said that gender inequality in the Australian honours system begins with fewer women being nominated.

"These awards do not fairly represent our society. Many outstanding women who contribute tirelessly to our community are being overlooked. In last year's Community category, where you would expect women to be more fairly represented, 62% of nominees were male (292 out of 470).

"Continuously rewarding more men and fewer women with an Order of Australia perpetuates the cycle of women's invisibility in society, in the community, in the workforce and in the boardroom.

"It is time for the Order of Australia to recognise equally 'men and women whose actions have set them apart and enriched our community'."

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About the Agency: The Workplace Gender Equality Agency is an Australian Government statutory agency charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. www.wgea.gov.au.

About Honour a Woman: Honour a Woman is a non-partisan movement working towards gender equality in the Order of Australia. We seek 50/50 by 2020. www.honourawoman.com