



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 5 June 2020

It's time for Australian states and territories to act on equal honours this Queen's Birthday

Australian women are in the frontlines of our nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the lead-up to the announcement of the 2020 Queen's Birthday Order of Australia awards, community movement Honour a Woman and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency are encouraging all state and territory governments to develop and embed gender equality-focused nomination processes for the Australian Honours to ensure women receive due recognition for their essential work.

"Honour a Woman's advocacy has contributed to more women being honoured in the Order of Australia over the last three years", said Honour a Woman co-founder, Dr Elizabeth Hartnell-Young. "However, this improvement in gender equality will only be sustained when there are deliberate mechanisms to generate nominations of women in each state and territory."

The majority of Honours are now awarded to men (approximately 60%) and statistics provided by the Governor General's Office to Honour a Woman show significant gender disparities across the states and territories in the 2020 Australia Day Honours:

Western Australia,	28.8% of the 52 awards went to women
Australian Capital Territory,	32.1% of the 28 awards went to women
Northern Territory,	35.7% of the 14 awards went to women
New South Wales,	36% of the 257 awards went to women
Queensland,	41.1% of the 112 awards went to women
Tasmania:	46.9% of the 32 awards went to women
South Australia:	49.2% of the 61 awards went to women
Victoria:	49.8% of the 265 awards went to women

"We welcome the recent progress towards gender equality, but the results are not consistent nor sustained around Australia," said Libby Lyons, Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency and an Ambassador for Honour a Woman. "If we're serious about improving gender equality, then it's necessary to set targets and measure and report on progress to achieve sustainable change."

"The pathway for embedding equality in the Order of Australia is for states and territories to have dedicated systems to ensure outstanding women are nominated. Victoria has reached gender equality through a state-driven nomination program," said Carol Kiernan, co-founder, Honour a Woman. "Recognition Matters has increased the proportion of Honours awarded to Victorian women from 35% in the 2018 Australia Day Honours to almost 50% in 2020. Other states such as South Australia and Tasmania did well in the last Honours round compared to previous years, but unless dedicated systems are in place, we risk leaving equality to chance."

Honour a Woman proposes four possible models: appointing an awards officer to support community nominations (the Victorian model); forming a sub-committee of existing state councils for women; funding a national group such as the National Council of Women to undertake the task through its affiliates; or establishing Order of Australia Nominating Working Parties in each jurisdiction.

"The states and territories have a vital role in ensuring that the Order of Australia recognises the exceptional contribution of all Australians," said Ruth McGowan OAM, co-founder Honour a Woman. "It is time for action to celebrate men's and women's achievements equally."

Media Contact: Murray Black 0438 071 876 / E murray.black@wgea.gov.au

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

Background information on gender equality and the Order of Australia

The 2020 Australia Day Order of Australia Awards

Since Honour a Woman began in 2017, the nominations of women have more than doubled, increasing from 31% to 42% of the total pool.

However, statistics published by the Governor General's Office illustrate that there were still ongoing gender disparities in the 2020 Australia Day Awards:

- Out of the 31 categories, 23 had more male than female nominees
- Architecture, The Arts and Disabled were the only categories with more female nominees
- Four categories had no female nominees at all
- In Medicine, 75% of nominees (66 out of 88) and 73% of award recipients (46 out of 63) were male
- In Law, 70% of nominees (21 out of 30) and 67% of award recipients (12 out of 18) were male
- In Multicultural Affairs, 68% of nominees (23 out of 34) and 68% of award recipients (15 out of 22) were male
- In Sport, 63% of nominees (42 out of 67) and 63% of award recipients (31 out of 49) were male
- In the Community category, where it might be expected women would be more evenly represented, 53% of nominees were male (290 out of 548)
- 58% of all nominees (686 out of 1190) and 58% of all award recipients (489 out of 837) were male

The Victorian model

The Victorian Government launched *Recognition Matters* in January 2019 to generate more nominations for women.

A dedicated awards officer within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) directly nominates 200 Victorian women a year. The role description says that 'the Adviser, Honours Equity role is responsible for identifying and nominating outstanding Victorian women for Australian Honours and leading the Recognition Matters campaign to encourage more people in the community to nominate Victorian women. The role leads the department's efforts to ensure an equal number of women to men are recognised in the Australian Honours system.'

The Victorian DPC also works with community organisations and industry peak bodies to encourage nominations of women providing online tools and information sessions across the State.

The Victorian program has delivered a significant increase in the proportion of honours awarded to Victorian women from 35% (69 women to 130 men in 2018 Australia Day honours) to 43% (148 women to 188 men in 2019 Australia Day honours).

In the 2020 Australia Day Honours list, Victorian women comprised 49.6% of the state's award recipients. It is a sustainable model as it is not dependent on any individual or the Honour a Woman movement.

The four models proposed by Honour a Woman

Honour a Woman is proposing four possible models for the states and territories to adopt:

1. Appointing an awards officer to support community nominations (current successful Victorian model).
2. Forming a sub-committee of an existing council such as the Tasmanian Women's Council, Women NSW, ACT Ministerial Council on Women and SA Premiers Council for Women.
3. Funding a national group such as the National Council of Women to undertake the task through its affiliates.
4. Establishing Order of Australia Nominating Working Parties in each jurisdiction (modelled on the Australian Dictionary of Biography Working Parties).