



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

# MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 20 October 2009

## TAPPING INTO THE TALENT POOL OF SMALL BUSINESS WOMEN FOR CORPORATE BOARDS

Statement by Mr Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, has recommended the creation of a national register of talented small business women who could make themselves available as candidates for appointment and election to more senior corporate boards, in a submission on equal opportunity lodged with the Australian Government.

ACCI's submission to the Review of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act recommends that ready-made links between Australia's network of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and industry associations be used in partnership with government to explore the feasibility of a register.

"While the number of women in senior management positions in major companies is not high, there is an enormous pool of talented women entrepreneurs who have owned and operated their own businesses. Bridging the gap between these women and large business in the corporate sector is a challenge we should set ourselves as a nation. If talented women with business acumen are available to serve the corporate sector, then that talent should be harnessed."

"Chambers of Commerce and Industry and industry associations have close and established links with women in small and medium business. There is scope for the government to work with business organisations and fund a programme which can make a difference to women's participation, without the need for regulation or quotas."

ACCI's submission also:

- affirms support by the business community for merit based non discrimination and equal opportunity;
- identifies a mix of regulation and education as having made a difference in women's workforce participation;
- warns against counterproductive regulatory approaches, such as quotas;
- highlights the gains to women's participation if labour market regulation is flexible and not one-size-fits-all; and
- identifies barriers to work and family issues if flexibility clauses in industrial awards and workplace agreements are dumbed-down.

A copy of ACCI's submission can be found at: [www.acci.asn.au/SubmissionsMain.htm](http://www.acci.asn.au/SubmissionsMain.htm).

For further information:

Peter Anderson	Chief Executive	02 6273 2311 / 0417 264 862
David Gregory	Director of Workplace Policy	03 9668 9950 / 0417 052 390
Brett Hogan	Director of Communications	03 9668 9950 / 0407 273 884

*ACCI represents over 350,000 businesses in every State and Territory and all industries. Our network employs around 4 million employees, ranging from the top 100 companies to tens of thousands of small and medium businesses.*

[www.acci.asn.au](http://www.acci.asn.au)

MR 134/09

LEADING AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS