



**Bold moves in the boardroom:**  
skills and capabilities fit for the future

February 2022

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# Foreword



**Juliet Bourke**  
Chair  
30% Club Australia  
Education Working Group

**The primary focus of this collaborative research project between the 30% Club Australia and Deloitte Australia was to look at board appointments in terms of directors' skills and capabilities.**

More provocatively, our shared purpose was to ask whether boards, and therefore the organisations they govern, are set-up to successfully navigate an increasingly complex, global and unstable landscape. Even more pointedly, what needs to stay the same, and what needs to change to ensure future fitness? And where does diversity fit into this picture?

Thank you to the 31 non-executive directors as well as the representatives from executive search firms and the investor community, for generously sharing their insights.

Notwithstanding that these questions are top of mind for directors, we found a spectrum of views about solutions. The most inspiring of which were from those non-executive directors, such as the Chair of Telstra, John Mullen, who are making bold moves in order to ensure they have diversity of thinking on their boards.

In particular, they are rethinking board composition to ensure in addition to selecting directors who demonstrate fundamental governance capabilities, there is a stronger focus on the environment, workforce, technology, data and customers. While the intent is undoubtedly to ensure future fitness, it has an additional benefit in terms of helping with a board's gender diversity aspirations given that women are well represented in a number of these domains at the executive level, and thus provide an untapped pool of talent.

Finally, my personal thanks to Nicola Wakefield Evans (Chair of the 30% Club Australia), the wonderful members of the 30% Club Australia Education Working Group, the AICD secretariat and Deloitte Australia for enabling the vision for this research to become a reality.



**Tom Imbesi**  
Chair  
Deloitte Australia

**The challenges presented to boards as they steered their organisations through the COVID-19 crisis have irrevocably impacted so many aspects of governance.**

After reflecting on lessons from our recent past and with a view to making boards fit for the future, we wanted to explore what potential opportunities there are by broadening diversity on boards.

Through our collaboration with 30% Club Australia, this report brings a fresh hypothesis to this topic focusing on the skills and capabilities needed to lead organisations in the context of extraordinary, sustained and unpredictable change. The report outlines several specific and actionable measures for chairs to become true advocates for diversity, resulting in better board decisions. We also highlight great examples of leaders who bravely champion diversity, making strategic choices and patiently searching for new board talent to augment the skills mix of experienced board members.

As the Chair of Deloitte Australia, I understand the weight of expectation from an ever-burgeoning range of stakeholders alongside a strong generational shift in sentiment, which is forcing all chairs to consider board transformation for the future. So we are delighted to share a summary of great stories, ideas and insights from members of our board community who not only see the value of diversity of thought – and diversity of all kinds – but are challenging the long-held limitations on board composition and culture that are ripe for reform.

I would like to thank all the non-executive directors and chairs who took time to provide valuable insights on the benefits a diverse board can offer. We are grateful for your ongoing dialogue with us on how boards can become and remain future fit.

# Executive summary

Fit for purpose: are boards set up for success with their current skills and capabilities?

**In 2022, boards continue to operate amid the ongoing global pandemic, persistent cyber threats, trade wars, climate activism, geopolitical tensions and a growing trust deficit between citizenry and governments. This environment has confronted boards with a multitude of difficult challenges and dynamic opportunities.**

The 30% Club Australia and Deloitte Australia took the opportunity to engage with 31 leading members of the board community, along with representatives from investors and executive search firms, to capture their observations and insights, and draw out implications for the capabilities required by the boards of the future. In particular, we asked whether boards of the future could be better equipped to successfully navigate new exigencies, and whether (and if so, where) diversity fits into this picture.

Naturally, we found a deep respect for board members with battle scars, who had weathered past storms of corporate life and therefore take a calm and balanced approach to addressing ambiguity and complexity.

In addition, we found an emerging group of directors experimenting with new appointments to augment their boards to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose. These directors are finding new sources of appointable talent, from those operating at the fringes of the existing director pool, but also drawing in those who are transitioning from corporate life. Rather than relying on traditional CEO and CFO candidates, or directors drawn from their own personal networks, these directors at the forefront of change are looking for additional skillsets and capabilities.

Their aim is to bring in directors who not only have foundational governance skills, including financial proficiency and operational experience, but can also add value through their heightened sensitivity to ESG issues, stakeholder capitalism, social licence to operate, elevated employee expectations, or through bringing digital fluency, an entrepreneurial mindset or systems thinking.

The majority of directors interviewed acknowledged the need to rethink board composition and many were making incremental changes. Some are making bolder moves, including Telstra’s Chair, John Mullen, who is a case study in this report. His appointment of two new board members, Elana Rubin and Bridget Loudon recognised the opportunity to introduce new perspectives in relation to new digital platforms and community engagement, therefore enhancing the board’s diversity of thinking. His advice to other boards?

“Take a chance and see it through... you can look at people who would never even get considered for a major board role – and because it’s three out of ten, if you make a mistake, is it the end of the world?”

In summary, this report suggests the need for greater diversity of thinking to ensure boards are future fit. In particular, and building on existing strong board governance foundations, it helps to define the nature of these new skills, capabilities and experiences, as well as where to find them and the critical role of the chair in creating the conditions for their successful integration. These are presented as the following:

## Four key insights

1. **Why a focus on future fitness?**  
A new operating environment requires greater diversity of thinking to better respond to risks and maximise opportunities.
2. **What new capabilities are needed?**  
Future fit boards need strong governance foundations, *plus* a broader set of skills and capabilities.
3. **Where is new talent located?**  
To find future fit directors, boards must look further afield.
4. **Who needs to drive change?**  
Pushing into new territory requires a proactive and supportive chair.

# Recommendations

Arising from the insights of the 31 board members interviewed, as well as the representatives from the investor and executive search firm communities who participated in two focus groups, six recommendations for action are suggested.

For some boards these recommendations will reinforce actions already in train, for others however, they are intended to help prompt a new direction.



- 1 Open a discussion to scope the future context**  
Invite board members, management and external experts to discuss future trends, risks and opportunities and the potential implications in terms of board composition.
- 2 Invite an independent review of existing capabilities, skills and traits**  
Taking into account those findings, as well as the insights from this report, review whether (and what type of) augmentation is needed to the board's composition to ensure future fitness.
- Broaden the brief and search in new fields for missing capabilities and skills**  
3 Design a board member success profile, in concert with search firms and investors, which reflects the critical underlying skills and capabilities identified in this report rather than just past board or executive titles. In particular, look beyond existing networks and traditional executive roles (e.g. CEO and CFO) to encompass those with sustainability, STEAM, digital, transformation, marketing, legal and regulatory as well as people and culture experience.
- 4 Audit nomination processes and outcomes**  
Ask the Nominations/People and Remuneration Committee to annually audit the nomination processes and appointments in terms of the board composition review undertaken and future fit objectives. Consider working with more than one executive search firm to generate as broad a list of potential candidates as possible.
- 5 Tell the story**  
Engage with investors, shareholders, proxy advisors and other stakeholders to communicate actions taken and planned to ensure future fitness.
- As chairs, be bold and push for greater diversity of thinking**  
6 Create the appetite for greater board diversity among other board members, take a calculated risk on diverse candidates and provide additional support (including a psychologically safe board culture). One way to think about this is in terms of the board size and setting aside a discrete number of board seats (e.g. 1-3 for a board size of 7-10) to enable the introduction of a new cadre of diverse thinkers. Another way is to take greater risks on those who are appointed out of cycle.

# 1. Responding to a new operating environment

A new operating environment requires greater diversity of thinking to better respond to risks and maximise opportunities.

**Boards now operate in a dynamic environment of heightened regulatory oversight, digital disruption, supply chain congestion, climate change, cost escalation, democratisation of business opportunities and stakeholder activism (Figure 1).**

In addition, the pace of change is accelerating at an exponential rate, news cycles have no down time and electronic communication is pervasive and instantaneous. Organisations need to future-proof now to thrive in the future.<sup>1</sup> Overlaid against this background has been the global pandemic. All of this has presented boards with complex risks as well as unforeseen opportunities.

As COVID-19 hit, the directors interviewed for this research observed that their past experiences proved critical to organisational resilience. Many had experienced the GFC and other shocks, and knew the imperatives around balance-sheet strength, speed of decision making in a crisis and the importance of effective and unequivocal communications with the market, shareholders, customers, communities, employees and other stakeholders.

As Deloitte previously identified in its 2020 report *Leading in a brave new world*, ‘the dinosaurs are back in favour’ – experienced directors and extensive executive journeys proved vital to navigating the unrelenting challenges, while also finding opportunity amongst the chaos. This sentiment hasn’t changed for the directors interviewed for this research.

What has changed, however, is a stronger appreciation for the value of diversity to address current challenges.

“I think if you’ve got board members who are diverse, and contribute different perspectives and ideas, and then you use that material to come together and make a judgment, you’re more like a jury than a single judge. You will get more right.”

A number of interviewees also suggest that recent reputationally damaging decisions made by high profile boards may have been avoided if there had been greater diversity of thinking on boards.

“Boards will need to deal with the big societal shifts that are underway like indigenous issues, Me Too, respect at work. [The] companies/boards that are struggling now are ones that have been blind to social factors such as gender quotas and cultural issues.

You’ve got to renew (your social) license every day. It’s got to be delivered in every action that you take.”

Combining those insights and looking to the future, directors consistently flagged the need for deeper knowledge of the environment, sustainability and climate change domain including as it relates to social licence to operate, workforce management and organisational culture issues. They also highlighted the value of directors with digital fluency and digital transformation experience, as well those who hail from a contrasting industry and therefore bring analogous thinking and insights. For others, the focus was on the benefit derived from directors who tap into cutting edge knowledge flows emanating from their global networks, as well as their experience working in diverse global markets.

While all interviewees were supportive of diversity of thinking, some directors worried about introducing new and potentially quite different talent in times of crisis when stability is of paramount importance. In contrast, others suggested that this moment is precisely when fresh perspectives are needed, working in combination with seasoned directors.

“You want continuity and stability on the board, but if you’re able to experiment and change, I think that’s something people should be open-minded to.”

<sup>1</sup> McKinsey & Company, *Defining the skills citizens will need in the future of work*, 2021

In summary, while all the directors said that current boards performed well in terms of managing the global pandemic, three-quarters suggested that the broader operating environment could be better addressed through a more diverse set of views around the board table. Why?

“[Because then] you’ve got a team of people who can add value to management. You’ve got a team of people who are wise counsel on a broader set of issues than just your balance sheet and your numbers.

You’ve got a group of people that the market has confidence in because your investors come to you partly looking at boards as well as management. You’ve got a group of people who start to reflect the business community of the current and the future and the issues of the current and the future, not just the past.”



## Twelve forces of disruption on an increasingly complex macro environment

(Figure 1)



## 2. Future fit boards

Future fit boards need strong governance foundations, *plus* a broader set of skills and capabilities.

**All directors strongly affirmed the value of traditional board capabilities such as financial literacy, governance expertise, industry and sectoral knowledge, management and operational experience.**

There is also an emerging sense that board governance can be enhanced by broadening the capabilities around the board table. In addition, many directors interviewed said they place greater emphasis on what they refer to as critical skills and core behavioural traits. Together these directors identified that future fit boards should comprise of traditional capabilities, plus a range of:

1. **Technical capabilities** (functionally orientated), such as workforce strategy, organisational culture, change management, customer, digital transformation and fluency across technology, cyber, data, automation and artificial intelligence and risk management.
2. **Critical skills** (not functionally derived), such as customer and community engagement and experience in dealing with regulators and government stakeholders.
3. **Core behavioural traits**, such as a learning mindset, curiosity, equanimity, emotional intelligence, flexibility, self-awareness and empathy.

Directors spoke about fundamental critical skills and traits required of all board members to ensure future fitness. They also spoke about boards needing to access a broader range of technical capabilities beyond those derived from traditional finance, operations and management experience.

*"I think what we've seen is that having one skill is not enough anymore. You've got to have more. You've got to have the ability to think about stakeholders.*

*You've got to have some experience in negotiating with external [stakeholders]. You've got to have connections, so we can use collective influence to get things done... even if we're looking for someone with a specific technology bent, we want people who can also do this other stuff."*

### Skills, capabilities and experience identified as important for future fit boards

Directors identified that future fit boards ought to comprise traditional capabilities, plus a range of:

Digital, technology and data literacy

Community, social licence and stakeholder and investor management

Workforce, HR and culture

Customer

Commercial leadership

Climate, sustainability and ESG

International experience

Varied or deep industry/or sector experience

Government or regulatory

Risk management (CRO background)

Cyber

● Importance as indicated in terms of number of board members who raised the topic



## Traits identified as important

Brave, courageous, tenacious, resilient, confidence to challenge

Collegial with values alignment to other board members, collaborative and respectful

Curious with a learning mindset, active listener

Adaptable, flexible, nimble, agile, open minded

Transparent, honest, authentic, ethical, good judgement, moral compass, wise, humble

Future focused, forward thinking, innovative, growth mindset, ambitious

High EQ, self-aware, empathetic

Calm

Good communication

Analytical

Systems thinking

● Importance as indicated in terms of number of board members who raised the topic

In addition to commentary about the importance of these capabilities, skills and traits, some directors interviewed suggested a complementary need to focus on the demographic diversity of candidates to ensure that there is a wider representation of the community in the boardroom.

“I’m looking for [whether potential candidates] have a particular ethnic background, people with disability, First Nations people.

I would love to have more of that thinking on boards because that really would anchor us into future thinking and how the world’s evolving.”

“We’re barely through the gender part and we are still having debates about it. Then we haven’t drawn from the great talent pools of cultural diversity, people of colour, different religions and backgrounds. There’s still something that stops us having that proper conversation and doing it justice.”

In terms of challenges to changing the profile of board directors, some interviewees reflected on current processes used to assess the capabilities, skills and mindsets of board members, both the performance of those currently on boards and those used to assess potential candidates. They questioned whether the processes were sufficiently robust.

“I think we’re going to have to step into being a lot more gutsy about how we look at ourselves as directors and be prepared to have proper 360-degree feedback and find a way that management can give proper feedback.

A director really should be more assessed on what they’ve done as a director, particularly if you’ve been at it for more than four or five years. But we don’t really do that.”

“Even that skills matrix that everyone does, none of that tells you whether you’ve got a decent director. It just tells you you’ve got someone who might have been a lawyer once or was an accountant once.”

# 3. Looking further afield

To find future fit directors, boards must look further afield.

**In 2021, a snapshot of the ASX 200 showed that directors are predominantly from traditional CEO (40%) and finance roles (20% including CFOs, Investment Bankers, and Accounting Firms) rather than broader executive roles including Chief Marketing Officer, Chief People Officer, General Counsel or Chief Information Officer<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2).**

For future fitness, interviewees spoke about board renewal in terms of sourcing both a depth and breadth of talent. With the advent of virtual meetings, boards have started to source directors from around the country and overseas, meaning they can now more easily access a deeper marketplace of potential directors.

Many of the directors interviewed suggested that in addition to searching for former CEOs and CFOs in these deeper pools of talent, boards should include a broader group of directors. These directors will enable boards to access a more diverse set of technical capabilities, such as investor and government relations, regulation, marketing, sustainability, organisational development and digital, as well as manifesting the requisite underlying core skills and traits.

Taking a gender diversity lens to this potential talent pool, some board directors noted that women were more likely to work in these areas, and hence a broader pool of technical capabilities will also help boardrooms achieve greater gender balance.

Given an apparent reluctance to draw from these pools by more conservative board directors, some interviewees encouraged potential candidates to highlight their experiences in terms of underlying skills, experience and sectoral knowledge rather than their previous organisational role. A corollary to this is an encouragement to chairs and Nominations/Culture and Remuneration Committees to look beyond organisational titles and traditional career paths, to ensure their knowledge about the responsibilities and remits of these roles is current and not solely based on their own past experiences.

<sup>2</sup> [Open Director](#) Career backgrounds of ASX 200 directors provided a snapshot of 1,274 non-executive directors on the ASX200 as at November 2021.

“If you’ve been an HR executive in a bank for a long time, the skills you actually have is you’ve worked in a financial services company. So you’ve got deep sector experience. You’ve been in a people role. People who’ve been in people roles have deep analytical experience. They’ve been able to deal with complexity. If you think of the whole complexity of the rules around employment and payment and people we’ve had to shift around flexibility, for example, which has required some very deep thinking around the workplace of the future and how to attract and retain people.”

“It is quite interesting that you can’t chair an audit committee unless you’ve had finance experience, but there are so few people chairing HR committees or REM committees who have HR experience. I don’t know of anyone.”

Many directors acknowledged that boards often still appoint directors from within their existing networks and business circles, and this is reinforced by executive search firms which are likely to supply lists of more known or established candidates with previous NED experience.

Having said that, an emerging group of directors spoke about a sea-change in the approach to recruitment.



“The way board recruitments are playing out in my experience, now is a much broader sweep of the possibilities, and a much more insightful study, of the skills individuals bring together.”

And I think if you are running a board recruitment process and you don’t start with 10 and get to two, and then you have a struggle to work out who is the best fit, you haven’t done your job properly.”

“I do think good boards are spending a lot of time deeply thinking about both the individual but [also] the collective capability that the board has to have.”

Some representatives from the executive search industry are also observing a change, citing briefs that are looking for transferable skills, the importance of currency of experience and the potential to draw experience from contemporary domains such as fin-tech and founder organisations.

“Boards are looking for people who think about tomorrow – those who think differently and an awareness of interaction with the customer.”

“There is enormous generational change in boards. They need currency and recency of thinking, relevance of experience and executives that understand the challenges of now.”

Some investor groups are also expecting more diverse boards and are putting pressure on the system to shift focus.

“We need solutions that people can bring to [face into] the challenges that the previous generations have created.

Skills are things on a piece of paper, tick boxes. But how do you ensure they are applied? Board and individual director performance is an area that could be improved.”

A risk, however, is boards will search for a ‘unicorn’ director who manifests an impossibly broad array of skills and capabilities to counter a lack of diversity among other directors on the board.

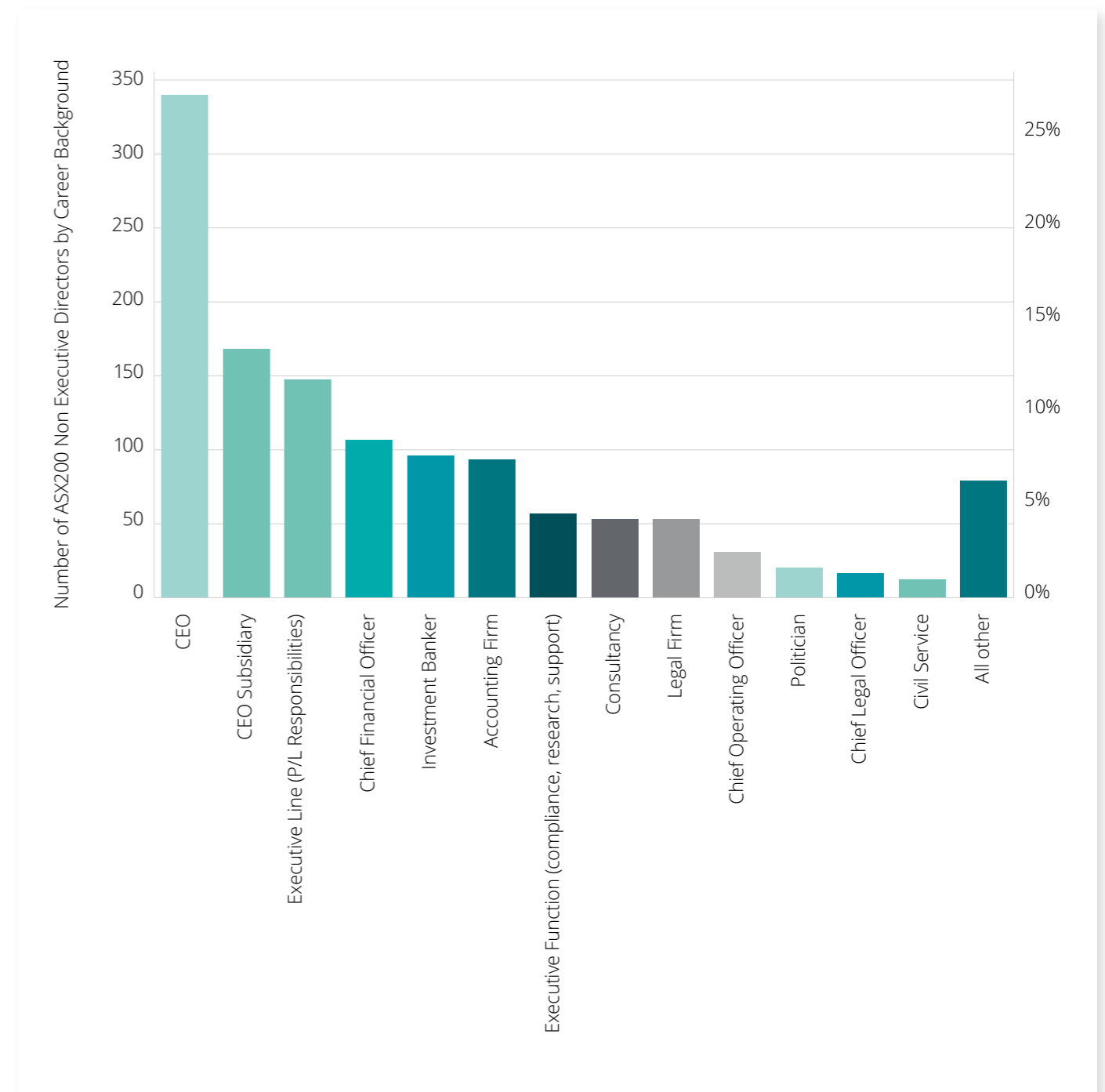
“You can get wedged into, ‘I’m looking for the one-legged duck with the pink wing’... and that can make life a bit tricky.”

In summary, directors encouraged boards to place greater weight on recruiting for the future, and less weight on replicating the past.

“Boards shouldn’t necessarily look to replace the skills they’re losing, but rather go back to square one and think about where the business is going in the next five years. Then ask what kind of people or skills do we need to address our strategy and our challenges ahead? We need to be looking to the future, not just replacing what we needed in the past.”

## Career profile of ASX200 directors

(Figure 2)



Open Director Career backgrounds of ASX 200 directors provided a snapshot of 1,274 non-executive directors on the ASX200 as at November 2021.

## 4. The role of the chair

Pushing into new territory requires a proactive and supportive chair.

**While all directors contribute to sourcing and supporting new appointees, chairs play a pivotal role in the selection of board members and the culture around the board table.**

Directors interviewed for this report identified six actions chairs could take to support the appointment of more diverse talent to the board and the creation of a welcoming environment.

Each of these six actions are exemplified in the case study of Telstra's Chair John Mullen and his appointment of Elana Rubin and Bridget Loudon.

- 1 Critically assess board skills and develop a courageous board succession process
- 2 Align the diversity of thinking and skills needed to the board's strategy
- 3 Actively partner with search firms to illuminate broader pools of talent
- 4 Allow sufficient time to find different appointees
- 5 Role model an inquisitive mindset and inclusive environment
- 6 Invest more time and energy in nurturing diverse talent.



## Case Study

*The chair's role in championing diversity: take a chance and nurture it through.*

### 1. Critically assess board skills and develop a courageous board succession process

When John Mullen took over as chair of Telstra in 2016 he saw an opportunity. With several seats on the board needing to be filled, John challenged himself to think differently. He deliberately put the traditional skills matrix aside explaining, "over the years everyone filled in one more box to the point where pretty well everybody filled in every single box. The process had become far too formulaic to serve the needs of a modern board appropriately."

Starting from first principles, John identified what was needed to create a finely balanced board equipped to meet the organisation's strategy and rapidly emerging challenges.

First, he dealt with quite an obvious gap in the board's combined experience.

"Telstra is the most complicated board I've ever been on, and I didn't have the skills to go head-to-head with management on technical issues," John says. "I really needed some directors who could get into that detail."

This requirement for deep technical experience was soon filled through the appointments of Eelco Blok (former CEO of Dutch-based telco KPN), Niek-Jan van Damme (former CEO of Deutsche Telekom) and Roy Chestnutt (a senior executive from Verizon Communications) to the Telstra board.

### 2. Align the diversity of thinking and skills needed to the board's strategy

Two-thirds of the ten-person board now comprised a blend of deep technical experience with the vital governance and financial skills that "ensure you sleep well at night," said John, including a strong, detail-oriented audit committee chair.

Once these more traditional roles were covered, three board seats remained and John was determined to add the missing ingredients to create greater diversity of thought.

### 3. Actively partner with search firms to illuminate broader pools of talent

The search began to fill the remaining board seats and John was very clear on the perspective he needed. "I wanted someone to be the voice of social conscience, the voice of the customer and the voice of the employee."

John scrapped the usual list of candidates and briefed his search firm partners to approach leaders from Australia's top 12 not-for-profits as well as industry superannuation funds.

The search led to Elana Rubin, who joined Telstra with extensive board experience and a unique perspective that prompts constructive debate.

Elana is quick to highlight risks and opportunities of broader diversity on boards and how new appointees have a role to play in the way they integrate with other directors.

"John is a brave chair, because forming the board does require a degree of courage if you want to look outside your immediate cohort," Elana says.

"Someone who thinks a bit differently can be seen as a problem to solve, rather than an opportunity to grasp. I try to make sure my contribution is across the board, not just in the areas I'm most interested in or have a different perspective on."

### 4. Allow sufficient time to find different appointees

For the next seat, John couldn't ignore the stark change being driven by younger generations.

"None of us on the board really knew what it's like to be a millennial living life as a digital native," he says.

"It had to be somebody a lot younger than me. It had to be somebody who achieved success in their own field. The third requirement – the most difficult – was that it had to be somebody who understood the realities of being at an ASX20 company and all the governance that goes with it."

It took two years to find Bridget Loudon, who fitted the brief with experience at Bain & Company and as the co-founder of a successful tech start-up. There were certainly some early questions as to the wisdom of bringing a millennial with no board experience onto an ASX20 board, but John was committed to seeing it through and giving Bridget time to find her feet.

"Bridget handled it with absolute aplomb. She's thoughtful, constructive and she's made a great impression across the board."

Elana agrees, emphasising that the rewards are out there for boards willing to take the time and think outside the box.

"There's a pool of potential candidates which we don't get access to unless we dig them out ourselves. Lots of Gen Zs and millennials think differently. They want different things, they want them in a different order. How we capture that voice is increasingly important. We all have a responsibility – not just to push the door back, but to keep that door open."

### 5. Role model an inquisitive mindset and inclusive environment

Ultimately, Elana believes there are clear benefits of diversity and the chair plays a critical role in setting the tone.

"The chair in the first instance has to advocate for diversity. They need to manage the meetings so all people have the right space and support to get airtime. It's about making sure there's time in the agenda to really unpick an issue from a different perspective."

The Telstra Chair believes Bridget and Elana have helped the board think more laterally when tackling issues.

"We've now got voices that challenge every topic from a different perspective. As a result, the debate is much broader. Is it morally right? Is it something you have to do or something you should do?" he says.

### 6. Invest more time and energy in nurturing diverse talent

Bridget was certainly grateful for the early and ongoing effort of her fellow board members to help her become comfortable on the board.

"There's a language and a dynamic in the boardroom. There's a way of speaking and there are so many unwritten rules. John and the other directors were so welcoming and wanting to help me be part of this world and really went out of their way to do so."

When it all comes together, everyone benefits. "It really is a spectacular group – cohesive, deeply professional and respectful. Everyone creates space for one another. They debate like they're right, but listen like they're wrong. There's a very special dynamic there which John has created," Bridget says.

### Final words

John's advice to other chairs is clear.

"Take a chance and see it through. Diversity means a lot more than gender. Diversity means diversity of thought, diversity of experience and diversity of approach, irrespective of your gender. Don't shut down something because you feel slightly uncomfortable, or it isn't quite working out. You want somebody who's their own master, who speaks up most vigorously to defend their point of view. You can look at people who would never even get considered for a major board role – and because it's three out of ten, if you make a mistake, is it the end of the world?"

Bridget warns there's a broader issue at play. "The more conservative your board is and stays, the more conservative your ambitions. I am worried that Australia does fall behind and we're not as courageous as organisations as we could be."

"It's imperative that we get disruptive thinking in the boardroom because our competitors aren't just our traditional set of competitors anymore. They're kids in hoodies in a dark room down the road, that don't have a bachelor's degree. And unless we're starting to think and disrupt ourselves as Australian companies, we will be disrupted," Bridget says.

With Elana and Bridget on the board, one seat remains. For John and Telstra, it's one more opportunity to boldly champion board diversity.

# Conclusion

**This research identified strong support for boards which complement traditional governance capabilities with a broader set of skills to address the changing organisational landscape.**

Having said that, there were a spectrum of views on the nature of those skills and capabilities.

The most open-minded of the directors interviewed, as exemplified by the Telstra Board case study, are focused on issues such as climate, customers, the broader community, digital transformation and the workforce, and are prepared to look further afield for potential candidates who can bring those perspectives to the board table.

Our hope is that the four insights from this report, along with the six recommendations for action, will help accelerate change by inspiring more board directors to make bold moves to ensure their boards have the skills and capabilities fit for the future.



# Methodology

The 30% Club Australia and Deloitte Australia co-designed topic areas for exploration via interviews with 31 current non-executive directors and chairs across a diverse range of industries and sectors. Sixty-five percent of these directors were women and 35% men.

The interviews were conducted by members of the 30% Club Australia Education Working Group and senior Australian Deloitte Partners from 2 June to 4 November, 2021.

Preliminary findings arising from the interviews were tested with representatives from a range of investor groups and executive search firms, all of whom are members of the 30% Club Australia.

## Segmentation of chairs and Non-Executive Directors interviewed

(data as at 7 December, 2021)

### Directors representing

- 19 ASX20 boards
- 10 ASX50 boards
- 14 ASX100 boards
- 4 ASX200 boards

### Sectors represented

- Banking and Capital Markets
- Central Government
- Consumer Products
- Health and Human Services
- Health Care
- Industrial Products and Construction
- Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Government
- Insurance
- Investment Management
- Life Sciences
- Mining and Metals
- Oil, Gas and Chemicals
- Power, Utilities and Renewables
- Real Estate
- Retail, Wholesale and Distribution
- State Government
- Technology
- Telecom, Media and Entertainment
- Transportation, Hospitality and Services

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Presented in conjunction with 30% Club Australia.



### About the 30% Club

The 30% Club Australia launched in May 2015 with the primary objective of campaigning for 30 percent women on ASX200 boards by the end 2018. Nicola Wakefield Evans is Chair of the Australian chapter, working closely with working groups and valued supporters from around the country in promoting the benefits of diversity at all levels of business. In March 2019, the 30% Club Australia announced a new objective for 30 percent women on ASX300 boards by the end of 2021. As at 30 November, 2021, the ASX300 comprised 32.6% women.

Visit: [www.30percentclub.org](http://www.30percentclub.org)

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