Western Australia not only has the highest gender pay gap in the country at 24.9% but only 9.5% of C-Suite positions on the WA ASX 100 are held by women according to the latest FACTBase Bulletin by the Committee for Perth. When you analyse the number of women in the WA ASX C-Suite, there are 16.7% in the top 10 companies, only 3.8% in the 11-20, 12% in the 21-50 and 6.2% in the 51-100 companies.

“Of the 526-people appointed onto the WA ASX 100 C-Suites, only 50 are women. The low number of female executives indicates that they’re not advancing through the leadership pipeline. In OECD countries, women occupy just under 30% of senior management positions. While that is still an inequitable figure, their rate is more than three-times better than our 9.5%,” said Committee for Perth CEO, Marion Fulker.

“The Bulletin also revealed that only 2.8% of Chairpersons, CEOs, or Managing Director positions are held by women. These women are concentrated in the top 50 WA ASX companies, and there are no women in the top management tier of the ASX 51-100 companies. Only one woman is appointed to the dual role of CEO and Managing Director, compared to 21 men who hold the same dual roles.”

The C-Suite is a popular term that refers to senior management positions that begin with ‘C’, such as Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Operations Officer. Company board members have historically been selected from these C-level and senior management positions.

The FACTBase Bulletin found that the most common senior managerial roles that women are appointed to are company secretaries and joint company secretaries 30.5%, general managers and group managers 20.3%, and C-positions, such as Chief Human Resources Officer, Chief Operating Officer or Chief Financial Officer 15.3%.

“Research suggests that the shortage of women being appointed is based on perception rather than a lack of suitable or qualified women. When you look at the women in the C-Suite who have postgraduate qualifications, more than 45% have a Master’s degree, almost a third have Postgraduate Diplomas and Graduate Certificates, and more than 16% have a Master’s in Business Administration,” added Mrs Fulker.

“We know, from Filling the Pool, that female workforce attrition can be compounded by inflexible work arrangements or workplace policies, practices and cultures that act as barriers to women from competing or reaching the top of the corporate ladder. On top of that, women spend almost twice as long as men on domestic activities and nearly 70% of primary carers are women. So, women are fighting not just on the work-front but the home-front as well.

“Achieving gender equality will require a multi-pronged approach which addresses barriers in the workplace, educational opportunities for women and men, girls and boys, but also changing cultural perceptions of what females and males should and can do. An improved leadership pipeline makes good business sense, but more importantly, translates into better social outcomes.”

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