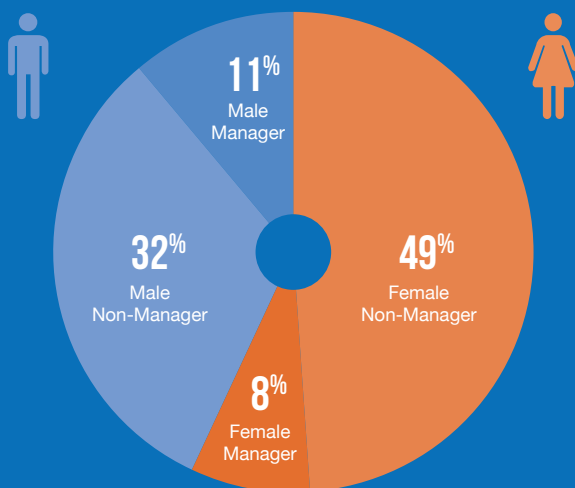


# ELIZA'S PROJECT: ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CO-OPERATIVE SECTOR

Co-operative and mutual enterprises (CMEs) have a long history of empowering women. Women had an equal vote in co-operative leadership decades before they could vote for parliament. In 1846, **Eliza Brierley** became the first woman member of a co-operative.

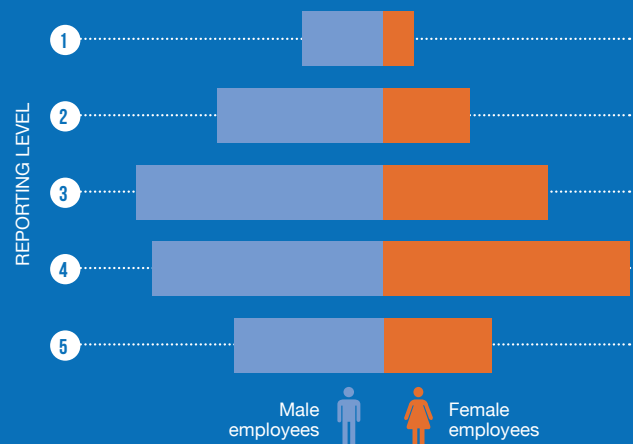
Last year, the International Co-operative Alliance and the International Labor Organization surveyed the co-operatives sector globally, and found that, while women make up more than half the membership of co-ops, they are significantly under-represented at management and leadership levels. Preliminary research conducted by Per Capita for the BCCM has found a similar pattern in the CME sector in Australia.

## WOMEN AS EMPLOYEES



Women are the majority of employees but not the majority of managers

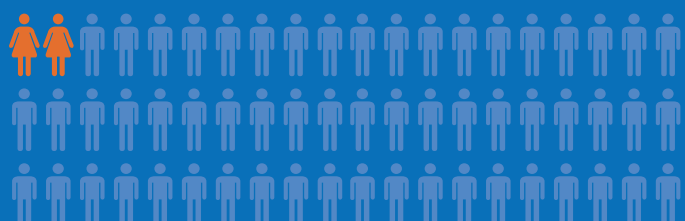
## WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT



The higher up the management level, the fewer the women in managerial roles

## WOMEN AS CEOs

Of the CMEs for which we have data, only 2 out of 60 have women CEOs





## ELIZA'S PROJECT

In 1846, **Eliza Brierley** lined up with a queue of male mill workers to hand over her one pound to become a full member of the Rochdale Pioneers Equitable Co-operative Society. At a time when women were still the property of their father or husband, and decades before women got the vote, Eliza forced the co-operative society to accept her as an equal.

With its strong history of involving and empowering women, the CME sector is in a unique position to take a leadership role in addressing the gender gap at Executive and Board level, but more work is needed to identify the cultural and structural barriers. The BCCM and Per Capita are seeking partners in the CME sector to join with us to complete this research. Together we will track women's participation in governance, and develop best practice programs to increase the representation of women at the highest levels of the CME sector in Australia.

### NEXT STEPS IN 2017:

1

The BCCM will write to members seeking partners to co-invest in this research

2

The BCCM and Per Capita will survey members to deepen the evidence and produce a Phase 1 Report mapping the participation of women in the Australian CME sector

3

The BCCM and Per Capita will hold a symposium to discuss the results and make recommendations based on the evidence

4

*Eliza's Project: A Gender Strategy – 2018*

### ARE YOU INTERESTED?

Please contact Melina Morrison, CEO BCCM, if you are interested to know more or wish to get involved in *Eliza's Project*:

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THIS GENDER RESEARCH PROJECT IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY

