



# Gender Diversity among Chairs and Chief Executives of the Top 100 Co-operative and Mutual Enterprises (2016–2021)

Data collected by the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM), as part of the annual National Mutual Economy report, has revealed significant improvements to gender diversity among chairs and Chief Executives of Australia's Top 100 Co-operative and Mutual Enterprises (CMEs).

Co-operatives and mutuals are some of the country's most successful and longest-running businesses. As some of Australia's leading brands, CMEs deliver essential goods and services to 8 out of every 10 Australians, in sectors such as banking and finance, health and general insurance, motoring and mobility, agriculture, retail and wholesale and across many areas of social care. CMEs contribute \$35.3 billion in turnover to the Australian economy, directly employ over 70,000 people, and have combined memberships of more than 31 million.<sup>1</sup>

Data gathered from the annual survey showed that in 2021, 17 per cent of CEO roles among the Top 100 CMEs were held by women, which represented a significant improvement from a similar survey conducted in 2016. The 2016 Eliza's Project report found that of the CMEs for which there was data, only 3 per cent had a woman CEO. In comparison, in 2016, 5 per cent of the top 200 ASX-listed companies had a woman CEO,<sup>2</sup> but this figure remained the same in 2021.<sup>3</sup> In 2016, the highest-turnover organisation of the Top 100 CMEs where the office of CEO was held by a woman in 2016 was number 49, whereas today that ranking has jumped to number 2.

Similarly, the recent survey has demonstrated improvement in the gender diversity of CME board chairs. In 2016, of the Top 100 CMEs 15 per cent had women chairs, while by 2021 this number had increased to 21 per cent. While the ASX-200 also witnessed increased gender inclusion in chair roles over this period, the improvement was lower than for CMEs, moving from 5 per cent in 2016 to 10.5 per cent in 2021.<sup>4</sup> In 2021, the top-ranked CME to be chaired by a woman was number 4, having climbed from the 2016 position of number 13.

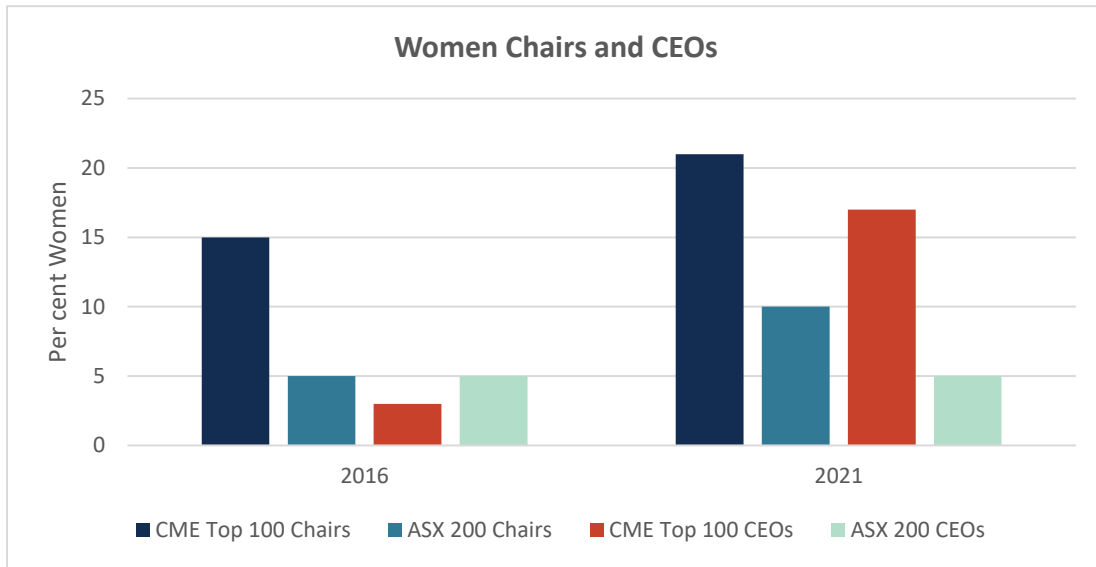
---

<sup>1</sup> BCCM, 2021, [National Mutual Economy 2021 Report](#).

<sup>2</sup> Orr, A. 2017, [Eliza's Project: Gender Inclusion in the CME Sector in Australia](#), pp. 15-16.

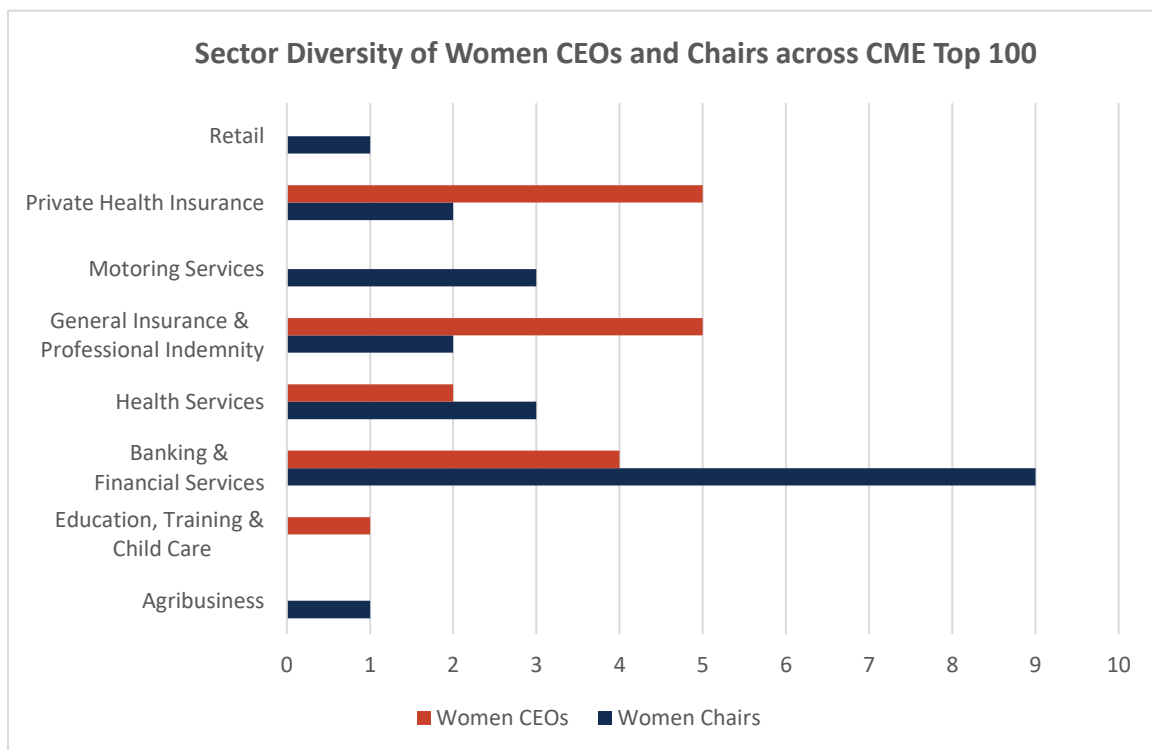
<sup>3</sup> Patten, S. 2021, [ASX 200 companies failed to appoint a single female CEO last year](#), The Financial Review, 8 September, accessed 21 February 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Patten, S. 2021, [Just one in 10 ASX 200 chairmen is a woman](#), The Financial Review, 2 July, accessed 21 February 2022.



In 2021, CMEs with women CEOs mostly operate in the areas of private health insurance (5) and general insurance and professional indemnity (5), with banking and financial services (4), health services (2) and education, training and childcare (1) also represented.

CMEs with boards chaired by women showed even greater sector diversity, with women chairs found in banking and financial services (9), motoring services (3), health services (3), private health insurance (2), general insurance and professional indemnity (2), agribusiness (1) and retail (1).



## About the BCCM

---

The BCCM is the voice of Australia's co-operative, mutual and member owned enterprises and provides the latest research on the economic and social contribution of this sector in the Australian economy. In the [2021 National Mutual Economy Report](#) there were 2,031 active CMEs in Australia with the combined total revenue of the top 100 CMEs at \$35.3b (excluding superannuation funds).

The BCCM's membership operate in all sectors in the Australian economy, creating opportunities to explore partnerships around mutual benefits. In 2020 the BCCM published the [Leading the Resilience Report](#) which used qualitative research methods to show that CMEs are resilient organisations, outliving their ASX listed counterparts with a focus on fulfilling their purpose over the long term through sustainable growth and a member-first mentality.

The BCCM formed in 2013 following the UN International Year of Co-operatives. The early focus of the BCCM was to increase awareness about co-operatives and mutuals across all areas of the economy. In 2016, a Mutuals Task Force was formed with a focus on how to grow the number of co-operatives and mutuals in health, social and community services. The BCCM was invited to deliver workshops to Government agencies, co-designing some new co-operatives with interested people and organisations. In 2017, the BCCM was engaged by the National Disability Insurance Agency to support 90+ allied health workers 'spin out' of government to form Australia's first employee-owned mutual to form from a public agency.

The BCCM has supported new co-operatives and mutuals to form in a range of sectors and is a member of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) with access to world-wide networks.

### Contact:

Melina Morrison, CEO, BCCM

E: [melina.morrison@bccm.coop](mailto:melina.morrison@bccm.coop)

M: +61 410 902 656

---

Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM)

GPO Box 5166, Sydney, NSW 2000

E: [info@bccm.coop](mailto:info@bccm.coop) | P: +61 (02) 8279 6050 | [www.bccm.coop](http://www.bccm.coop)