



Gender Diversity among Chairs and Chief Executives of the Top 100 Co-operative and Mutual Enterprises (2016–2022)

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. The Top 100 CMEs contribute \$34.3 billion in turnover to the Australian economy, directly employ over 76,00 people, and have combined memberships of more than 31.7 million.¹

Data gathered from the annual survey showed that in 2022, 23 per cent of CEO roles among the Top 100 CMEs were held by women, improving on the 2021 figure of 17 per cent, and representing a significant improvement from the 3 per cent result reported in the 2016 Eliza's Project report².

The Eliza's Project report found that in 2016, 5 per cent of the top 200 ASX-listed companies had a woman CEO, remaining the same in 2021³, and increasing slightly in 2022 to 7 per cent⁴. In 2016, the highest-turnover organisation of the Top 100 CMEs where the office of CEO was held by a woman was number 49, whereas in 2021 and 2022 that ranking had 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, in 2021 this number had increased to 21 per cent and continued to see improvement in 2022 rising to 25 per cent. The ASX-200 also witnessed increased gender inclusion among chairs over this period, although the improvement was lower than for CMEs, rising from 5 to 10.5⁵ per cent over the 2016-2021 period, and retreating to 9.5 per cent in 2022⁶. In 2022, the top-ranked CME to be chaired by a woman was number 4, having climbed from the 2016 position of number 13.

¹ BCCM, 2021, [National Mutual Economy 2022 Report](#).

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

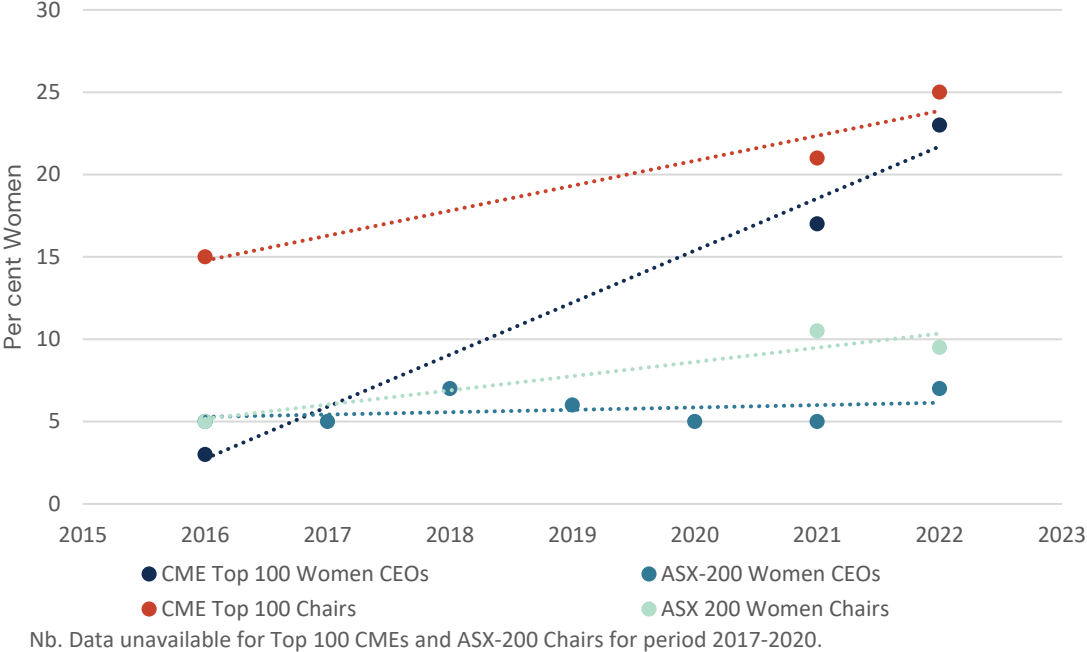
³ Patten, S. 2021, [ASX 200 companies failed to appoint a single female CEO last year](#), The Financial Review, 8 September, accessed 21 February 2022.

⁴ CEW and Bain & Company, 2022, [CEW Senior Executive Census 2022: Take Action or Step Backwards](#), p 25.

⁵ Patten, S. 2021, [Just one in 10 ASX 200 chairmen is a woman](#), The Financial Review, 2 July, accessed 21 February 2022.

⁶ AICD, 2022, [Gender Diversity Report](#) (June 2022), p 6.

Women Chairs and CEOs



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 1,832 active CMEs in Australia with the combined total revenue of the top 100 CMEs at \$34.39b (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.

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