



REPORT

# Foreign territory: Women in international relations

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LOWY INSTITUTE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia's international relations sector — the departments and organisations that are responsible for conducting Australia's international relations — has a severe gender imbalance in its workforce. While there have been notable trailblazers, the pace of change has been slow and uneven across the sector. Few of the most important diplomatic postings have ever been held by a woman. Women do not appear in the sector's key policy-shaping activities. Significantly fewer women are rising to senior positions in the sector compared with the Australian public sector as a whole, international peers, and the corporate sector. The gender imbalance in the Australian Intelligence Community is particularly pronounced.

It is important for the sector to address this imbalance. A more diverse workforce will not only better reflect Australian society, but make full use of the available talent pool. There is substantial evidence from the private sector that gender-balanced workforces are more effective, efficient, and innovative. Until the sector better represents Australian society it fails to use the best available talent to navigate Australia's place in an increasingly complex world.

Australia's international relations sector<sup>1</sup> has a gender problem. Whether the focus is Australia's diplomatic envoys, government departments with international functions, academia or think tanks, or the Australian Parliament, there is an acute shortage of senior women serving in the most important and strategic roles either in Australia or abroad.

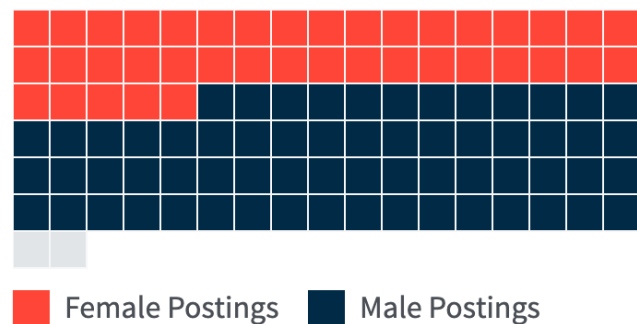
There have been trailblazers in the sector, particularly in the past few years. In early 2019 in Australia, we have a female Foreign Minister, Senator Marise Payne; a new female Defence Minister, Senator Linda Reynolds; Shadow Foreign Affairs Minister, Senator Penny Wong; and Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Frances Adamson. In recent years we have also seen a female Prime Minister (Julia Gillard) and Governor-General (Quentin Bryce), and the country's first female Foreign Minister (Julie Bishop) and Defence Minister (Senator Payne), and first female Secretaries of public service departments. There have been two female ambassadors to China and Australia's first female Defence intelligence agency director.<sup>2</sup> On these examples, it is tempting to conclude that the sector's gender diversity challenges are largely resolved, and it is true that there has been significant progress.

A comprehensive analysis of the data, however, makes it clear that the pace of change has been slow and that the sector is well behind others both in Australia and abroad.

For example, there has never been a female ambassador or high commissioner to Washington DC, Jakarta, Tokyo or London<sup>3</sup> and only around one-third of Australian ambassadors, high commissioners, and heads of mission are women.<sup>4</sup> One-quarter of the influential Secretaries Committee on National Security are women, an increase from none in 2015/16 and the highest in the committee's history.<sup>5</sup> Just over a third of members of parliament are women.<sup>6</sup> The gender imbalance of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security is also striking. Since its inception in 1998, the Committee has never been chaired by a female MP and for almost half of that time has had no female members at all, including as recently as 2015. Female membership is currently 27 per cent, up from 18 per cent in the last parliament.<sup>7</sup>

Only four times in history have women headed Australia's internationally focused public service departments and agencies.<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of this study, these are DFAT, Attorney-General's Department, Department of Defence, Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)/Department of Home Affairs,<sup>9</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), plus Treasury, the Australian

Only 1 in 3 Heads of Mission Are Women



*Women are under-represented in the [Australian Intelligence Community] overall, particularly at senior levels and across technical, operational, and analytical roles.*

Federal Police (AFP), and Austrade.<sup>10</sup> Also included are the six major agencies of the Australian Intelligence Community (AIC),<sup>11</sup> three of which sit within the Defence Department.<sup>12</sup>

There are far fewer women in the senior management of these organisations when compared with the average across the Australian Public Service (APS).<sup>13</sup> Only 14 per cent of heads of departments and agencies in the study are women (2 in 14),<sup>14</sup> compared with 50 per cent of Commonwealth government department heads overall<sup>15</sup> and 31 per cent of all APS agency heads.<sup>16</sup> Around 45 per cent of the senior executive service (SES) across the public service are female,<sup>17</sup> in contrast with just 33 per cent of the senior executive of the core internationally-facing departments and agencies in this study.<sup>18</sup>

Women are under-represented in the AIC overall, particularly at senior levels<sup>19</sup> and across technical, operational, and analytical roles.<sup>20</sup> While there has been an improvement in senior female representation at some agencies within the AIC in the past two years (the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) is notable, with 42 per cent of women in its SES in 2018 compared with 34 per cent two years earlier, as is the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), with recent efforts taking women in its SES to 56 per cent<sup>21</sup>), female presence in the senior executive service across the AIC is well below the APS average. In some agencies it has declined over the past five years, falling as low as 9 per cent in the Office of National Assessments (ONA; now Office of National Intelligence) in 2016 and 24 per cent averaged across the three intelligence agencies within Defence.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, women rarely feature in the sector's key policy-shaping activities. From the study's research on declared authorship, a woman is yet to be selected to lead on any major foreign policy, defence, intelligence, or trade white paper, inquiry or independent review.<sup>23</sup>

This three-year study of gender balance in the sector is based on a comprehensive data-gathering and analysis process that has collected and brought together for the first time two decades of data on gender representation across the sector. This includes public service employment data from Australia's 14 international-facing government departments and agencies; an analysis of the gender balance in overseas postings across the sector; the personnel of relevant parliamentary committees; complete historical data on leadership of Australia's overseas missions; gender-based security clearance data; a review of the sector's gender and diversity policies and cultural audits, and authorship of all major policy-setting exercises in the sector. The research was supplemented with a substantial qualitative survey of 646 respondents (male and female) working in the sector: "Gender Diversity and Australia's International Relations"; as well as in-person interviews with approximately 50 executives, heads of department, and senior leaders across the sector to investigate the causes of the

sector's relative lack of progress in addressing its gender imbalance. The findings indicate that the sector lags significantly behind the rest of Australia's public service and even corporate Australia in addressing workforce gender inequalities, particularly at the senior executive and leadership levels.

## WHY GENDER DIVERSITY MATTERS

Gender diversity matters for several reasons. First, a more diverse workforce means the international relations sector better reflects Australia's society as a whole. Second, it broadens the population coverage of the sector and therefore boosts its talent pool. Third, gender balance in a workforce has other very perceptible benefits: it produces a broader range of ideas and experiences, leads to greater productivity, more innovation and better decision-making,<sup>24</sup> and provides a more positive and healthier workforce.

In the public sector, there has been limited research conducted to identify and evaluate any tangible effects of improving gender balance in the sector's organisations. There are, however, a multitude of management studies and research projects across the private sector that have produced a substantial body of evidence on the benefits of better gender balance in workforces. The evidence indicates that gender diversity in organisational leadership provides a wider range of knowledge, ideas, and abilities that are of quantifiable benefit to organisations.<sup>25</sup> There is strong evidence that improving gender balance in private sector organisations also produces measurable and significant improvements in their financial performance.<sup>26</sup> For example, significant studies by McKinsey, Credit Suisse, Deloitte, and the Peterson Institute for International Economics in the past decade have all shown that the higher the proportion of women in senior management, the greater the return to shareholders.<sup>27</sup>

The evidence also cautions against putting too much emphasis on 'trailblazers': in fact, having more women across the breadth of an organisation's senior leadership appears to have a bigger impact than having a woman on the board or as the CEO. The correlation between more female executives and higher profits "underscores the importance of creating a pipeline of female managers and not simply getting lone women to the top".<sup>28</sup>

There is no reason why the benefits of better diversity, so comprehensively demonstrated in the corporate sector, are not equally applicable to workforces in the public sector. While the body of research undertaken specifically on the public sector is smaller, some important findings have emerged. There is evidence that the gender composition of policymaking institutions affects the choice of issues to address and the priority given to those issues. For example, women are more likely to view the full participation of women and girls in society as an

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important foreign policy goal.<sup>29</sup> Female legislators promote greater provision of female health services,<sup>30</sup> and are more likely to vote and advocate for women's issues.<sup>31</sup> A 2014 study of male and female economists in the United States found that men and women differed widely on the importance they attached to policy issues concerning gender such as the wage gap and equal opportunity.<sup>32</sup> There is a risk therefore that policies specific to women's interests may be overlooked without more equal gender representation among policymakers.

A more diverse workforce is a more capable workforce — a point that has been made by numerous senior officials across the Australian international relations sector.<sup>33</sup> A review into the treatment of women in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) found that diversity in leadership was crucial to capacity and led to more effective problem-solving.<sup>34</sup> There is some evidence that gender-balanced teams may produce more effective outcomes.<sup>35</sup>

## OVERVIEW OF THE DATA

*...there has been some progress in righting gender imbalances over the past two decades, but the pace of change has been slow, and the progress uneven.*

### GENDER BALANCE IN THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE LEVELS

Analysis of employment data across Australia's 14 international-facing departments and agencies shows there has been some progress in righting gender imbalances over the past two decades, but the pace of change has been slow, and the progress uneven.

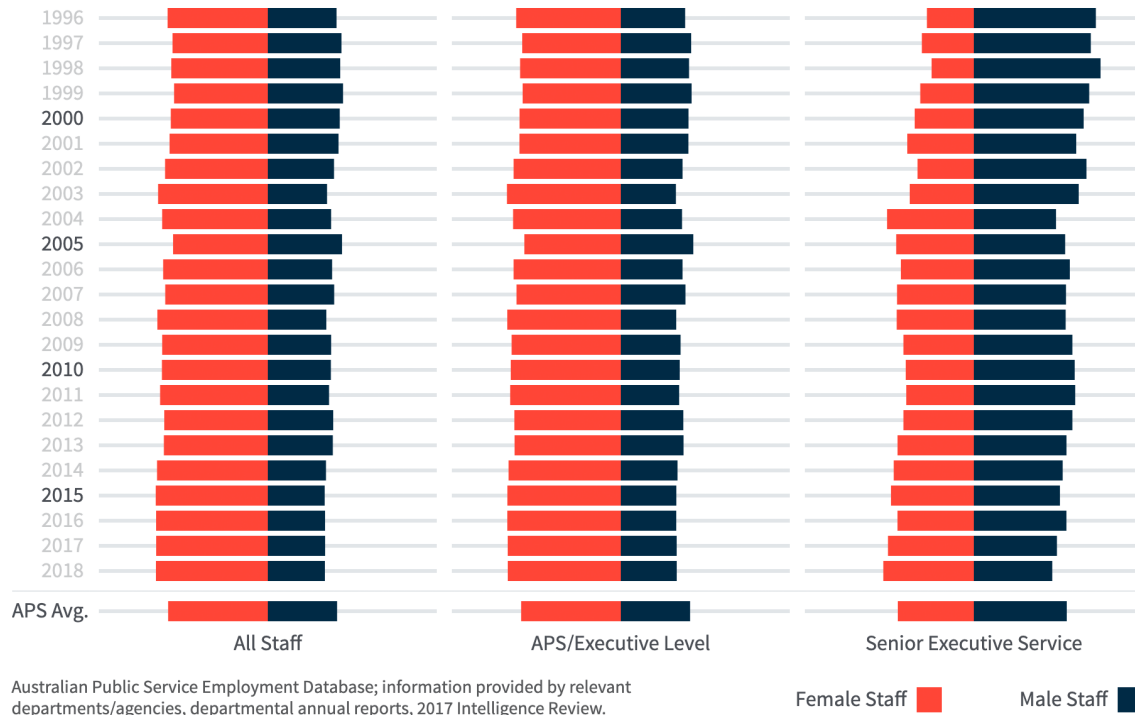
Women currently lead 2 of the 14<sup>36</sup> internationally focused departments and agencies in the study sample. Until June 2016 when Frances Adamson was appointed Secretary of DFAT, that number was zero. Secretary Adamson's appointment was followed by that of Stephanie Fahey as head of Austrade in January 2017.

Despite these recent appointments, the sector's proportion of female leaders falls well below the rate across Commonwealth departments generally (in which 9 of 18 leaders are women, or 50 per cent) and across public sector agencies as a whole (where just under one-third are women).<sup>37</sup>

In their senior executive service (SES levels 1–3), all of the government departments and agencies in our study sample, with the exception of the Attorney-General's Department and PM&C, fall below the 2017–18 APS average of 45 per cent women in their senior management.<sup>38</sup> Some, particularly in the defence and intelligence agencies, fall considerably below that figure. Around a quarter of SES positions in the intelligence agencies are held by women, 29 per cent at ONA (up from 9 per cent as recently as 2016),<sup>39</sup> 36 per cent at DFAT,<sup>40</sup> and 33 per cent at Defence (APS/civilian).<sup>41</sup> In the ADF (Army, Navy, Airforce), 11 per cent (21 of 189) of star-ranked officers<sup>42</sup> were women as at 30 June 2018.<sup>43</sup>



APSED tiered results, 1996–2018



Australian Public Service Employment Database; information provided by relevant departments/agencies, departmental annual reports, 2017 Intelligence Review.

Some government departments such as the Attorney-General’s and PM&C are outliers, with the proportion of women at the senior executive level now close to or passing 50 per cent.<sup>44</sup> Other agencies in the sector such as DFAT have improved their gender balance in recent decades: for example, DFAT’s 36 per cent female SES is up from 12 per cent female SES in 1996.<sup>45</sup> However, women have outnumbered men in the graduate intake for more than two decades,<sup>46</sup> and at the junior executive level (EL1) — the single biggest group in the organisation — women have been the majority for almost a decade. Faster progress would be expected.<sup>47</sup> Even the Defence Department APS has a similar proportion of females in its SES (33 per cent at the end of 2018) to that in DFAT, despite coming from a much smaller base (9 per cent) two decades earlier.<sup>48</sup>

Likewise, progress has been slow and uneven across the intelligence community. Across the three intelligence agencies within Defence, ASD is the standout. New data revealed in October 2018 by the Director-General of ASD shows that ASD has made significant progress in its senior ranks in the past two years and now has the highest proportion of women (56 per cent) in its senior executive of any of the agencies covered in this study.<sup>49</sup> For the three intelligence agencies within Defence, however — ASD, Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO), and Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation (AGO) — the proportion of females in the senior executive was just under a quarter in 2016<sup>50</sup> and



even declined slightly between 2006 and 2016.<sup>51</sup> ASIO has done better, with 35 per cent of its SES being female at the end of the 2016 financial year.<sup>52</sup> ONA lags in the representation of women in its senior executive. Two decades ago, 10 per cent of senior ONA executives were female. In June 2016, however, there were no permanent female staff at all in ONA’s senior executive service.<sup>53</sup> ONA has improved from this very low base in the past two years, adding 56 staff overall (40 per cent) and five senior women, taking the proportion of women in the senior executive to 29 per cent — still under one-third.<sup>54</sup>

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Gender balance in DFAT’s SES is at 37 per cent, although women make up 58 per cent of DFAT’s total workforce.<sup>55</sup> This is lower than the share of women in the US State Department’s SES (40 per cent), even though the overall proportion of women in the State Department is much smaller (44 per cent).<sup>56</sup> New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade comprises 55 per cent women, and 43 per cent of its senior leadership are women.<sup>57</sup> However, DFAT has slightly more women in senior leadership than the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) at 33 per cent.<sup>58</sup>

Senior Executive Service gender balance: international comparisons



*US Department of State data September 2018, NZ State Service Commission Public Service Workforce Data December 2017, DFAT Annual Report 2017-18, UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office Diversity and Equality Report 2017-18*

Heads of Mission: International Comparison



When it comes to putting females in senior roles overseas, Australia has also lagged. Australia’s female representation at head of mission level (ambassadors and high commissioners) was the second lowest among our Five Eyes partner countries in 2018 at 32 per cent<sup>59</sup> — around the same as that of the United Kingdom (31 per cent),<sup>60</sup> but behind New Zealand (39 per cent),<sup>61</sup> the United States (37 per cent in 2018, down from 39 per cent in 2017),<sup>62</sup> and Canada, which at 45 per cent<sup>63</sup> is considerably more equal in its senior representation abroad. Since mid-2018 however, DFAT has

significantly improved its gender balance among senior diplomats, with females now filling 40 per cent of ambassador and high commissioner roles as at March 2019.<sup>64</sup>

Australia's gender performance in the international relations sector does not reflect its gender record overall, however. In fact, Australia sits at second place among G20 nations in terms of the gender balance it has reached in senior public sector roles, ahead of both the United States and United Kingdom.<sup>65</sup>

In the corporate sector, Australia also performs better than key international peers. The percentage of women on ASX 200 boards is currently close to 30 per cent<sup>66</sup> — this is higher than for the UK equivalent, the FTSE 250, with 23 per cent women directors in 2018,<sup>67</sup> and is also higher than the United States, with around 20 per cent female board seats at S&P 500 companies in 2018.<sup>68</sup> Canada also lags Australia on this score, with women in less than 23 per cent of FP500 board seats.<sup>69</sup> On the measure of female CEOs of listed companies, Australia sits at a similar level to its peers.<sup>70</sup>

#### WOMEN IN POLICY-SETTING

It has been more than 50 years since the Commonwealth 'marriage bar' was lifted in 1966, six years before the US State Department and seven years before the UK Foreign Service lifted theirs.<sup>71</sup> Since then, the Australian Government has produced approximately 33 major white papers, reviews, and inquiries that have shaped Australia's international relations architecture and influenced its foreign and security policy. There have been more than a dozen associated with defence, eight for foreign affairs and aid, eight for intelligence, and at least five on the economy and trade. In 53 years, none of these major policy-setting exercises has been led by a woman.

This unadorned statistic suggests that women are not seen as strategists or strategic leaders. Women do appear on the 'advisory panels' associated with these documents. For example, women comprised 13 per cent of advisers to the 1997 foreign affairs white paper panel,<sup>72</sup> 25 per cent of the external reference group for the 2011 strategic review of the Treasury,<sup>73</sup> and 20 per cent of the review panel for the 2014 independent review of aid effectiveness.<sup>74</sup> To date, however, the primary authors, formal reviewers, and advisory panellists on Australian defence, foreign policy, and intelligence reviews — including the 2016 Defence White Paper,<sup>75</sup> the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, and the 2017 Independent Intelligence Review<sup>76</sup> — have all been male.

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The Attorney-General's Department, PM&C, and Treasury have all been led by men since their establishment, despite women often having held the Deputy Secretary positions in each of those departments. In this decade, however, PM&C has elevated two women to senior positions reporting directly to the Secretary: the current Deputy Secretary National

Security Caroline Millar, appointed in late 2018, and former senior defence official Margot McCarthy, who was in the role of National Security Adviser from 2012 to 2015.<sup>77</sup> The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (a precursor to the Department of Home Affairs) has had a female secretary once (1996–98), and three of the six current Home Affairs deputy secretaries are women, with roles including citizenship, immigration, and corporate affairs.

The government's peak national security committee — the Secretaries Committee on National Security, which was established in 1996<sup>78</sup> and pulls together Canberra's key international policy, security, defence, and intelligence heads — has been an all-male committee for most of its 22-year history.<sup>79</sup> With three women on the committee as at November 2018 (DFAT Secretary Frances Adamson, Finance Secretary Rosemary Huxtable, and PM&C Deputy Secretary National Security, Caroline Millar), the current gender balance of 3 in 12 is the highest in the committee's history.<sup>80</sup>

#### AMBASSADORS AND WOMEN IN SENIOR POSTINGS OVERSEAS

In 2018, 31 per cent of Australia's ambassadors serving overseas at the two most senior levels<sup>81</sup> were female.

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A woman has never been appointed as head of five of Australia's ten largest overseas posts: the United States, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand.<sup>82</sup> Over the history of those missions, women have filled the head of mission role only 4 per cent of the time, while three of those ten largest missions are now headed by a woman. Most of the remaining large posts have seen only one female ambassador in their history, with the notable exception of China which has had two consecutive female ambassadors.<sup>83</sup> Of Australia's top ten two-way trading partners, five have never had a female head of mission.<sup>84</sup> Female appointments as head of mission in Australia's Five Eyes partner nations have also been elusive. Natasha Smith was the second female ever appointed as ambassador to one of Australia's Five Eyes partners when she assumed the role of High Commissioner to Canada in 2018.<sup>85</sup>

One of the contributors to this disparity is the track record in government appointments of politicians to senior diplomatic roles.<sup>86</sup> Of Australia's 15 former heads of mission in the United States and the United Kingdom, 26 per cent and 46 per cent respectively have been political appointees and male.<sup>87</sup> The Australian Government has never appointed a female politician to these prestigious postings.

There has been some improvement in the number of women holding top diplomatic posts in the past decade.<sup>88</sup> For the first time, women have been appointed to the top positions in China (twice), India, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines — four very important countries to Australia. Historically, however, the data shows a clear trend:

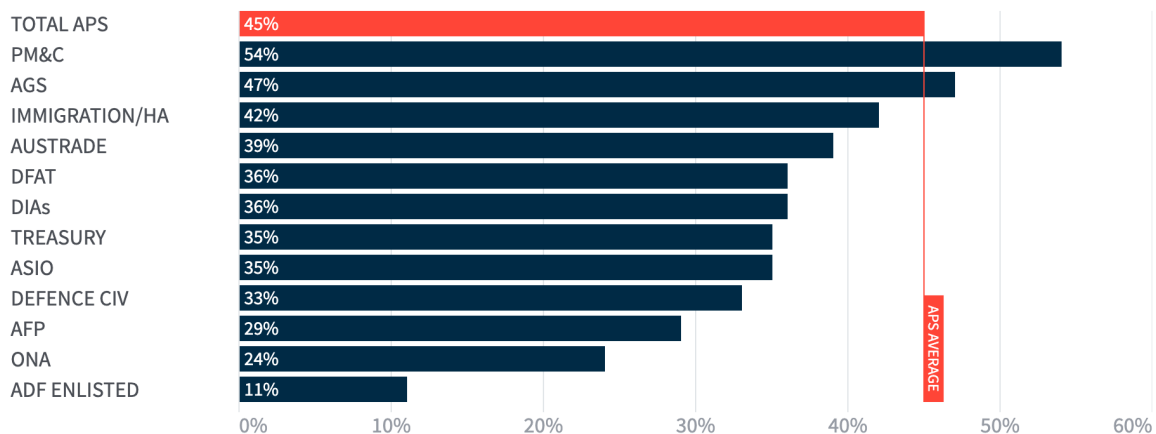
Australia's largest and most strategically or economically important posts are much more likely to be headed by men.

For a modern and progressive nation, this sort of imbalance presents a negative picture of Australia. Sending mostly men to the most important global positions and forums and to deal with complex intelligence and analytical issues is inimical to Australia's national interest and to the effective pursuit of Australia's foreign policy interests. All of these interests will be better served by a balanced workforce. The trend is not confined to diplomats and foreign affairs. DFAT is only one of at least 23 government departments and agencies that posts its Australian officials overseas.<sup>89</sup> While little public data is available for the intelligence community, our research suggests that across many of the agencies, a range of key liaison relationships overseas have yet to be managed by women or have only once ever been managed by a woman.

Of the two overseas postings for ONA, for example — in London and Washington DC — no woman has yet served in the agency's liaison position in Washington, and the London position has been filled five times but only once by a woman. The three defence intelligence agencies also have a patchy record on female appointments.

The Defence Department faces a particular set of challenges, with a very small proportion of women overall for substantive operational reasons. For example, the restrictions on women serving in combat roles were lifted only in 2013.<sup>90</sup> Even so, progress on diversity in international roles has been very slow. In 2006, 10 per cent of staff at Defence overseas positions were women. Ten years later, the number had barely shifted, to just 11 per cent in 2016.<sup>91</sup> Only twice between 1996 and 2016 was a woman sent as Defence attaché to one of Defence's top-ten postings abroad: Wellington in New Zealand and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, both in the past six years.<sup>92</sup>

#### Gender balance in senior executive service, 2018



Source: Australian Public Service Employment Database; information provided by relevant departments/agencies, departmental annual reports, 2017 Intelligence Review.

*Of the Departments that have high proportions of women overall and women in the senior executive service...the number of women posted abroad is disproportionately small.*

Other organisations in the study sample have had fewer structural constraints on diversity than Defence, but the story across these organisations is similar. Of the Departments that have high proportions both of women overall and women in the senior executive service (such as the Attorney-General's Department, Austrade, and Treasury), the number of women posted abroad is disproportionately small. In Attorney-General's, for example, women made up 67 per cent<sup>93</sup> of all employees and 47 per cent of its SES,<sup>94</sup> but only 33 per cent of its staff posted abroad in 2016.<sup>95</sup> At Austrade, 54 per cent<sup>96</sup> of the organisation were women in early 2017 but overseas that figure drops to 35 per cent,<sup>97</sup> and at Treasury although 53 per cent of the organisation are female,<sup>98</sup> overseas that figure drops to 33 per cent.<sup>99</sup>

In the online survey "Gender Diversity and Australia's International Relations"<sup>100</sup> conducted as part of our research, 68 per cent of respondents believed that the selection process for overseas opportunities is affected by conscious or unconscious bias. Further, 65 per cent of respondents identified a lack of transparency surrounding some overseas work opportunities. These perceptions are corroborated in interviews with several agency and departmental senior staff conducted for our research. One interviewee cited assumptions employers make about women's preferences; for example, the assumption that women with families would not want a posting in a developing nation. Another interviewee offered that men with families are much more likely to get important overseas roles than women with families, that gender norms and stereotypes often play a role in hiring, and that some women who move into these senior overseas postings have made deliberate decisions not to have children.<sup>101</sup>

#### DEFENCE: A SPECIAL CASE

The Department of Defence, and particularly the Australian Defence Force, is a special case. The 'pipeline' of women available to draw on for promotions is far smaller than for other organisations in the sector. Female participation in the ADF has historically been very low, and was 17.9 per cent in the 2017/18 financial year, with Army having the lowest proportion of women at 14.3 per cent of the force.<sup>102</sup>

From 2012, Defence has made concerted efforts to identify and address the drivers of this low female participation, and initiated a process to generate a comprehensive set of strategies to improve women's experiences and career progression in the ADF. The "Pathway to Change" process resulted from a series of reviews into Defence and ADF culture, following incidents of abuse and harassment within Defence.<sup>103</sup> Among those reviews was the independent review of the treatment of women in the Defence Force (the "Broderick Report"),<sup>104</sup> and the Carmel McGregor review on employment pathways for APS women in Defence.<sup>105</sup> Recognising the challenges outlined in these reports, Defence leadership has progressively implemented the

Pathway to Change agenda, including initiatives to lift female participation in its workforce and improve their progress through its ranks. Restrictions on women serving in combat roles were lifted in 2013.<sup>106</sup> Long-term participation targets have been set: for Army, 15 per cent women by 2023; for Navy and Air Force, 25 per cent by 2023.<sup>107</sup> To improve transparency and spur greater diversity, an annual report on women in the ADF was established.<sup>108</sup> A diversity council and diversity champion were appointed, recruitment efforts broadened, unconscious bias training programs implemented, as well as a number of other important initiatives including improved flexible work practices.

Despite these reforms, the pace of change is slow, and the composition of the organisation's leadership remains extremely male-skewed. At the turn of this century, 1 of 117 ADF star-ranked officers (1 per cent of those ranked Brigadier and above) were women.<sup>109</sup> In 2018, almost two decades later, that number was 21 of 189 star-ranked officers, or 11 per cent — a big improvement, but from a tiny base.<sup>110</sup> Among the Defence civilian employees who make up 24.5 per cent of Defence,<sup>111</sup> women would be expected to fare better, and they do. They represent 42 per cent of all Defence APS staff, and 33 per cent of its SES.<sup>112</sup> However, the former Defence Secretary, Dennis Richardson, observed that the phenomenon of former ADF (male) employees taking up civilian roles distorts the gender balance at the executive levels. According to Mr Richardson, around 20 per cent of Defence APS staff are drawn from the (mostly male) ADF. Their training and experience prepares them better for promotion rounds, adding an additional layer of competition for non-ADF women competing for the same positions.<sup>113</sup>

The Defence Department deserves credit for addressing the gender imbalance in promotion and selection rounds. Broadening the selection and promotion criteria in the past few years as part of the Pathway process has delivered a more balanced result.<sup>114</sup>

Defence has also made progress in elevating senior women. Rebecca Skinner, formerly head of Defence People, was appointed in late 2016 to the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy and Intelligence role. She held the role for a year before being promoted to acting Associate Secretary in October 2017 and was confirmed in the position in September 2018. The role of Associate Secretary includes oversight of the security and vetting service, and fills in for the Secretary when required.<sup>115</sup> Justine Greig is Deputy Secretary Defence People,<sup>116</sup> replacing another senior female executive, Roxanne Kelley, who moved to a more senior role in the Department of Social Services.<sup>117</sup> A spokesperson for Defence People has said that recent shifts in senior ranks have enabled access to those roles, in particular for a small pool of women at the lower SES levels, but added that this achievement “should not be overstated ... Five years [ago] this could not have been said”.<sup>118</sup>

*Broadening the selection and promotion criteria in the past few years...has delivered a more balanced result.*

## AN INTELLIGENCE GLASS CEILING

Australia's intelligence agencies, collectively, have the lowest proportions of women in leadership among the study sample. The issue is complicated by the AIC's general lack of transparency in reporting even basic gender statistics. However, data gathered for this study with the cooperation of the AIC indicates that the proportion of women in the senior executive service across the five agencies for which there is data falls below, and in some cases very far below, the APS average of 45 per cent.<sup>119</sup>

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Parts of the AIC have a pipeline problem; parts have a ladder problem; and parts have both. The pipeline problem is that for most of the AIC, women have been joining the community at much lower rates than male recruits. Across the five agencies for which we have been able to obtain data,<sup>120</sup> 38 per cent of junior (non-SES) staff in 2016 were female. There are exceptions to the 'pipeline' problem within the community: ASIO reports a majority intake (60 per cent) of female graduates in 2017/18, and more than 45 per cent women in the agency overall.<sup>121</sup> ONA has almost equal numbers of male and female non-SES staff in its ranks. However, the numbers overall may mask a lower proportion of female operational/analytical recruits because of a strong female skew in corporate roles. The gender imbalance in security clearance requests also highlights the gender bias in these agencies' pipelines: only 23 per cent of the security clearances requested by Defence in 2015–16 were for women.<sup>122</sup>

For some agencies, the pipeline problem starts even before the recruitment stage. For example, many roles in the intelligence community such as cybersecurity and data analysis call for engineering or other STEM (science, technical, engineering, and mathematics) backgrounds. Many parts of Defence, including the three Defence intelligence agencies, also call for capability in engineering, technical, and construction roles, and the demand for such skills is growing.<sup>123</sup> Yet the proportion of women in STEM disciplines is very low across society,<sup>124</sup> and the proportion of women in STEM-related roles in the AIC reflects this. In ASIO, for example, just 16 per cent of information technology officers and engineers were women in 2017.<sup>125</sup>

The ladder problem reflects the phenomenon occurring across the whole sector, in that female career intelligence officers are not ascending to senior ranks at the same rate as their male counterparts. While 32 per cent of EL1 and EL2 staff across the five reporting agencies are women, only 13 per cent of women appeared at SES level 2 in 2016.<sup>126</sup>

In 2016, around a third of ASD's total staff were women and the proportion is similar now although currently 56 per cent of its SES are female.<sup>127</sup> Women comprised 29 per cent of AGO staff in 2016.<sup>128</sup> Among the five AIC agencies for which we have obtained data, DIO carries a better gender balance overall at 43 per cent women,<sup>129</sup> although it is less



technically focused than the other defence intelligence agencies, which may explain this result.

In addition, women are missing from the intelligence community's high-level agenda-setting activities. Of the official interviews conducted for the 2017 Independent Intelligence Review, only 16 per cent (12 of 75) were with women.<sup>130</sup>

Australia's first and only female intelligence director led the AGO for three years to 2015.<sup>131</sup> The other five intelligence agencies have yet to be led by a female Director-General. Of those agencies that have featured senior women in their ranks, several were not career intelligence officers but secondees or transfers from outside the intelligence community.<sup>132</sup>

Those women who do succeed in breaking into AIC senior management are more likely to be found filling corporate functions and are less likely than their male counterparts to hold core strategic and operational roles.<sup>133</sup> The situation is uneven across the sector, however. For example, 48 per cent of ASIO's SES Band 1 are women, compared with only 28 per cent of the Defence intelligence agencies' SES Band 1.<sup>134</sup> In this decade, both Inspectors-General of Intelligence and Security (the government body tasked with overseeing the legality and propriety of the activities of the AIC) have been women.<sup>135</sup>

The intelligence agencies of the AIC have committed to addressing the gender imbalances in their organisations. ONA publicly released a 2015–18 Diversity Action Plan, which included measurable commitments and review time frames.<sup>136</sup> Its performance against that plan has been strong during its two years of growth mode following the 2017 Independent Intelligence Review, and the number of female senior executives has lifted from zero (of ten) in 2016 to five (of seventeen) in 2018. Similarly, ASIO put a Gender Equity Strategy in place in 2016 with a series of 'Gender Equity Bold Goals', including shortlist ratio targets for executive promotion rounds as well as internally publicised gender metrics for promotion, transfer, and recruitment.<sup>137</sup> The strategy's 2018–20 update boosted its commitments on recruitment and vetting processes.<sup>138</sup> The Defence Department has also conducted annual gender reviews and has implemented a set of strategies to improve the position of women across the organisation (including in its intelligence agencies).<sup>139</sup> In a first for the AIC, ASD has used its new Twitter account to publicly discuss its approaches to, and progress on, gender diversity.<sup>140</sup>

Despite these strategies, however, of the 233 respondents in our online survey (male and female) who expressed a view on the AIC's commitment to "achieving real progress on gender equality", only 6 per cent said they were "very committed", 42 per cent said they were "somewhat committed", and 51 per cent answered that intelligence agencies were "not committed". By comparison, of the 357 who gave their views on the commitment of the

*...women are missing from the intelligence community's high-level agenda-setting activities.*

“Defence Force and Policing” to the same question, far fewer (31 per cent) answered that these agencies were “not committed”.

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security is the natural body to review and probe the AIC’s progress on gender equality. However, the committee itself has had few female members, has never had a female chair, and as recently as 2015 it was a 13-member all-male committee.<sup>141</sup> With only 27 per cent of the current membership being women (3 of 11),<sup>142</sup> the committee is not well positioned to hold the AIC accountable for its record on gender.

#### THE ISSUE OF SECURITY CLEARANCES

Organisations that require their staff to maintain the highest security clearances (Positive Vetting) tend to have the highest gender imbalance, especially in senior management. Some interviewees for this study suggested that security clearance processes may be producing a bias against female applicants. It is no secret that the security clearance process is slow and complicated. It requires a high level of disclosure, invasive investigation, and psychological assessment.

However, we investigated this possibility and obtained detailed data, not previously in the public domain, with the cooperation of the Defence Department and the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency. The data disclosed no evidence that applications for security clearances by women are treated more harshly or have a lower success rate than those by men.<sup>143</sup> The data did not identify gender bias in either the number of clearance denials, the cancellation rates or psychological assessment results. In ASIO, for example, women candidates have a higher success rate than males through the vetting process.<sup>144</sup>

The gender-skewed workforces in those agencies requiring high-level security clearances can therefore be attributed primarily to their pipelines rather than to a biased clearance process. Across the AIC overall, fewer women apply for these clearances. This presents a clear challenge to these agencies to broaden their recruitment process to attract more female candidates.<sup>145</sup>

Importantly, the agencies in the AIC are encumbered by few transparency requirements and are exposed to little public scrutiny. This has masked a lack of progress on gender diversity in the AIC overall, and may partly explain why they remain behind their policy counterparts.

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## INSIGHTS FROM THE SURVEY

The “Gender Diversity and Australia’s International Relations” survey conducted as part of this research was a voluntary online survey of 32 questions. A total of 646 respondents (67 per cent women and 33 per cent men) participated from across the sector. The majority of respondents were aged 25–44; 45 per cent of female respondents and 43 per cent of male respondents had at least one child. While a voluntary, opt-in survey such as this does not produce statistically conclusive results, the survey responses provided interesting insights into practitioners’ views of gender issues in the international relations sector, and on the gender differences in those views.

Sixty per cent of women and 24 per cent of men felt their gender had played a role in them missing out on a raise, promotion, key assignment, or chance to get ahead. Almost all (91 per cent) women and half (49 per cent) of the men agreed that senior women in their organisation had to work much harder for their positions than their male peers. More than three-quarters of women (77 per cent) said women often lacked the confidence to put themselves forward for promotions.

Of a range of possible factors affecting women’s progress in an organisation, 73 per cent of women and 39 per cent of men believed organisational culture was very important; the next strongest factors were unconscious bias and stereotypes (69 per cent of women and 34 per cent of men) and boys’ club networking (67 per cent of women and 30 per cent of men).

Some men reported difficulties seeking additional parental leave even though almost all respondents to our survey (95 per cent) agreed that paternity and carer’s leave arrangements are important factors in improving gender equality within organisations. It is not possible to quantify the number of women voluntarily leaving the workforce or choosing not to apply for promotions due to issues such as childcare responsibilities. However, in a relevant finding from the survey, only one-third of both male and female survey respondents agreed that “it is hard to recruit and promote women into senior positions because women generally assume more responsibility for child-rearing which places some limits on their capacity”. Two-thirds of women and 56 per cent of men disagreed with that statement.

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*...the small number of women reaching highly visible leadership roles has not addressed the systemic imbalances at executive and senior management levels.*

## ANALYSIS: WHAT IS CAUSING THE IR SECTOR'S GENDER PROBLEM?

While some of the agencies in our study sample have now been led by a woman at least once, the small number of women reaching highly visible leadership roles has not addressed the systemic imbalances at executive and senior management levels. Ironically, there is some evidence from the private sector that the achievements of female trailblazers can cause organisations to become complacent, rather than more proactive, about gender diversity.<sup>146</sup> Their presence may even mask these issues, leading decision-makers to conclude they no longer need to invest as heavily in finding solutions.<sup>147</sup> The achievements of these trailblazers should be lauded. However, in organisational terms having a proportional representation of women in senior management ranks is a more meaningful marker of success at achieving gender parity than having a lone female at the top.

### A TRIPLE THREAT OF BARRIERS

Our analysis suggests that there are three distinct barriers to progression for women climbing the ranks of Australia's international relations and national security organisations. Two of these are prevalent across all industries, while one appears to be unique to the international relations sector.

First, there is a vertical divide. The evidence set out above shows that men and women in the international relations sector are experiencing different pathways to seniority. A majority of women responding to our survey believe that gender has played a role in their missing out on promotions, pay rises, or key assignments.<sup>148</sup>

A number of possible barriers to progression have emerged in this study: that there are biases in processes for the promotions and overseas appointment, whether conscious or unconscious; that the recruitment processes, particularly for intelligence and security roles, are not attracting sufficient females to form a substantial pipeline to sustain gender balance in that part of the sector; that there are fewer women coming into the STEM professions which are particularly relevant for defence and intelligence roles;<sup>149</sup> and that cultural issues and attitudinal norms may be hampering women's progress.

A key dilemma in the sector (while not unique to it) is the prevalent mindset that in meritocratic workforces the best employees will succeed. Comments from respondents to our online survey support this: "For anyone to get ahead they must focus on work. Some women do and can succeed now"; and "cream rises to the top ... now that women have equal educational opportunities they have a chance". However, this mindset is misconceived. The evidence of the majority female intake at DFAT for more than two decades stands in direct contrast with the far smaller female participation in its senior leadership.

While bias in the workplace can affect both men and women,<sup>150</sup> the data uncovered by this study shows that the biases faced by men in this sector have impeded less on their career progression.

The very low proportions of women in senior positions are not simply a hangover from the now-long since dismantled ban on married women in the public service.<sup>151</sup> The evidence is clear that pathways to promotion and key placements in international postings are harder for women. Male networks are one possible factor; in a recent review of the public service, over half of the women surveyed in male-streamed departments said they felt “excluded from networks that are important to progression”.<sup>152</sup> Most respondents in our survey agreed that “hiring and promotions are too often made on the basis of networks rather than ability”.<sup>153</sup> Internal gender reviews in the Defence Department identified this as an issue, and as a result the Department has appointed more women as members of key committees and decision-making bodies to facilitate better networking mechanisms.<sup>154</sup>

There is a prevalent mindset — not unique to the sector — that ‘meritocratic’ processes produce the best workforces. However, this overlooks the impact of bias, both conscious and unconscious. Definitions of ‘merit’ can overemphasise factors that favour men and disadvantage women. An overreliance on the formal evaluation and reward systems which frequently characterise merit-based systems can lead to an unbalanced result in recruitment and promotion processes.<sup>155</sup> Dismantling ‘unconscious bias’ has now been acknowledged almost without exception across the sector as an important step in achieving better gender balance.

Second, there is a horizontal divide. Women in the sector are found more commonly on the corporate, ‘people’, or ‘softer’ policy side of the house. The authors were repeatedly told in interviews that senior women are less likely to be running high-profile policy, operational, or intelligence-focused branches and divisions. A similar division has been referred to as the ‘glass curtain’, with the ‘masculine’ roles in hard areas of security, cyber and intelligence, and ‘feminine’ roles in human rights, development, and peace.<sup>156</sup> Demanding or ‘high-tempo’ policy jobs are often seen as male roles.<sup>157</sup> Some women have reported that they are told they will not get the jobs they want if they have children or it will be harder to achieve management roles if they work part-time, and many believe that if they have young families, busy overseas postings will be elusive.<sup>158</sup> Related to this is a de-facto security divide: with many fewer women applying for roles that require high-level security clearances (which may derive from the pipelines into these roles), the ‘hard’ agencies that require higher clearances such as Defence and some of the intelligence agencies are more male-skewed than others in the sector.

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*...the larger, more important or more prestigious an embassy is to Australia, the less likely that its diplomatic, defence, or intelligence functions will be led by women.*

This leads to a third, and sharp, 'international' divide between the sexes. Relocating interstate and overseas — for both short and longer periods — is an integral part of the career path for many in the international relations sector including academics, diplomats, intelligence officers, and military personnel. In fact, 23 government departments and agencies post their staff overseas, relocating families for years at a time.<sup>159</sup> However, there is a disconnect between a government agency's gender balance in Canberra and its overseas workforce. Calculations of the national interest also seem to affect international careers. The evidence indicates that the larger, more important or more prestigious an embassy is to Australia, the less likely that its diplomatic, defence, or intelligence functions will be led by women.

#### THE FAMILY QUESTION

The severe imbalance in women in the senior executive levels across the international relations sector is not explained by short periods of maternity leave. One of the significant factors affecting women's progress through the sector's ranks is the controversial issue of family commitments and personal choice. Women, particularly those with young families, may freely choose family over career. The numerical impact of this is unquantifiable, but it likely accounts for some of the disparity between males and females at senior levels in the sector. However, there may also be procedural, structural, cultural, and attitudinal biases which in combination may deter other women from pursuing senior careers across the sector. There is a significant body of work which has investigated the theory that women who choose to "prioritise their family over their career may not be making a decision from the same platform as their male colleagues".<sup>160</sup>

Societal expectations of women as mothers may be a factor. The disproportionate share of domestic work and family responsibilities shouldered by women is another explanation.<sup>161</sup> While not unique to the sector, its impact is compounded by the more extreme imbalance of males and females across the sector, particularly in the senior ranks and in the AIC generally. This contributes to an increased 'masculinity' of the workplace, adds to the possibility of a boy's club mentality,<sup>162</sup> and increases the risk of unconscious bias at work.<sup>163</sup> Another explanation lies in the assumptions employers may make about a woman's ambitions or preferences when considering her for an international placement. In a career where international postings are critical to advancement, such biases and assumptions about women's societal roles and personal preferences can play a significant role in the granting of those postings.<sup>164</sup> Compounding this, the financial impact of postings for employees with children has recently increased. In 2017, the government cut household assistance costs for public servants overseas, which had been used in part to cover allowances for childcare.<sup>165</sup> This created a double standard: within Australia, staff have

access to the government childcare subsidy regime here, but on posting, there is no equivalent. These sorts of policy changes have a disproportionate impact on the viability of postings for women and the effect on the gender balance of postings is magnified.

## THE TRANSPARENCY CHALLENGE

In our survey, 80 per cent of all respondents agreed that a lack of transparency and accountability was impeding women's progress in the sector. In an acknowledgement of this, some organisations in the international relations sector such as Defence and the AFP have conducted and published the results of extensive culture reviews, many of which were unflattering.<sup>166</sup> As AFP Commissioner Andrew Colvin has said: "We had allowed bad behaviour to become normalised, and not to be questioned."<sup>167</sup>

Few other organisations in the sector have opened themselves up to such scrutiny and have instead chosen to deal with gender issues internally. Reviews on gender and leadership by DFAT and the six AIC agencies, by contrast, have not been publicly released.<sup>168</sup>

The public release of reviews such as these is important. First, the dimensions of the issues are exposed, and employees' concerns acknowledged. Second, the publication of the data allows for tracking of organisations' progress against their goals, and maintains a steady pressure to continue with reform programs rather than shelve them after announcement. The Defence reviews into the treatment of women from 2011 onwards<sup>169</sup> prompted new levels of transparency about gender, culture and diversity issues, changes in recruitment and promotion methods, and new and ambitious gender targets. These have been updated annually since.<sup>170</sup>

Publicly benchmarking cultural change also provides some insurance against the adverse impact of management changes. Some heads of organisations have shown strong leadership on diversity and organisational culture. The danger is that without transparency, when strong leaders who have actively pursued diversity initiatives move on to new roles, the driving force behind the initiatives lapses.

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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The effective conduct of international relations requires analytical and problem-solving ability as well as operational skills. It needs careful and thoughtful long-term planning to shape the best outcomes for the national interest but also needs swift reactions to often unforeseen international incidents. None of these tasks are best served by groupthink and unacknowledged bias. On the balance of available evidence, gender diversity — and diversity more broadly — in senior ranks gives an organisation a clear competitive advantage: it leads to a more functional, cooperative, efficient and effective work environment.



*This study has found that some progress has been made, with most organisations in the sector attempting actively to address this issue.*

Despite the evidence, however, women remain a rarity across the very senior ranks of Australia's international relations sector, and despite some trailblazers, progress towards equality has been slow. The agencies and departments in the sector continue to lag APS averages, are behind the wider Australian workforce, and behind Australia's Five Eyes partners on many measures. Some organisations in the sector have well-documented cultural problems, and the sector as a whole appears to shelter behind assurances of meritocracy, while acknowledged and unacknowledged sources of bias persist.

This study has found that some progress has been made, with most organisations in the sector attempting actively to address this issue. Defence has made a strong, sustained, and transparent effort to transform its culture and attract more women; AFP responded to its comprehensive culture audit with a stronger gender strategy for its international operations.<sup>171</sup> In the AIC, ASIO, ASD and ONA have significantly improved their gender balances in their SES. DFAT's current Secretary Frances Adamson has continued the work started by former secretary Peter Varghese, in publicly acknowledging the issue, and both secretaries made conspicuous attempts to improve the gender balance in the foreign service. Some agencies in the sector, however, have been far more timid in their approaches. Some have lost momentum when progressive leaders who were active in addressing gender imbalance have moved to different roles.

Finally, the data uncovered by this study point to several areas of action that the agencies in the sector can act on now to increase momentum on their gender balance efforts:

- The sector needs to more systematically address recruitment deficits and promotion processes, to build and support career ladders for females, particularly in the intelligence community which still lags badly.
- To address the particular imbalances within the AIC, the newly established Office of National Intelligence should create a dedicated branch to broaden the community's diversity efforts in both recruitment and retention, and track and report publicly on their progress.<sup>172</sup>
- The deterrent effect of lengthy and invasive security clearance processes for jobs in the AIC must be better understood and acknowledged, and efforts made both to explain the processes better to applicants and streamline them as far as possible.
- There is scope for stronger mentoring programs to bolster women's performance in promotion rounds, assisting them in preparing applications and interview techniques. Several of the organisations in this study have policies for this already; the challenge is to ensure the most effective implementation of those policies.

- To alleviate the disproportionate impact on women of the burden of childcare and family duties, the sector's departments and agencies should allow overseas officials with children, both male and female, access to a dedicated childcare allowance or rebate.
- Organisational gender balance should be a matter of public record, whether agencies are within the AIC or not. Improving transparency on gender balance across the sector will set public benchmarks and hedge against the impact of management transitions. All taxpayer-funded gender and diversity strategies and independent reviews should be published. Where security concerns exist, such as in the AIC, sanitised versions should be made available to the public, as several of our Five Eyes partners have done.<sup>173</sup>
- In accordance with the 50:50 gender balance goals of the APS Gender Equality Strategy 2016–2019,<sup>174</sup> all departments and agencies examined in this study should have some version of a gender equality or diversity action plan, with published data, targets and time frames.<sup>175</sup>
- Leaders and organisations should be equally accountable for progress on these plans. Diversity targets should be attached to management performance assessments, including at the Secretary and Director-General level, with Minister-level involvement for any who fall short.
- Finally, political appointees to ambassadorial roles overseas should, at a minimum, reflect the gender diversity of parliament.<sup>176</sup>

These measures are just some of the possible actions the sector should take to improve the representation of women at all levels of its organisations. While there has been progress in the past two decades, the pace of change has been slow and uneven across the sector. It is therefore letting itself and the country down. An unrepresentative workforce does not deliver the best value for taxpayers of the sector's annual multi-billion-dollar expenditure. It is not representative of Australian society, with a risk this may colour strategic decisions and policy responses. In some parts of the sector, commitment seems lacking. Having a senior cohort which is mostly male depicts a society that, despite its claims, has failed to progress socially; this is detrimental to the national interest and hinders the achievement of our foreign policy objectives. Finally, without faster progress, the sector will fail to take advantage of the best available talent to ensure that it has the necessary capabilities to navigate Australia's place in an increasingly complex world.

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## METHODOLOGY

This Analysis is the result of a three-year research project that commenced in mid-2016. All of the organisations in the review sample (see below) were formally asked to participate, and all agreed. The authors also arranged in-person interviews with representatives of all organisations in the sample. Interviews commenced mid-2016 and proceeded throughout 2016 and 2017. Each participating organisation was sent a comprehensive questionnaire, and all provided formal responses in 2017 or 2018. Requests for further information were sent to some organisations in 2018 after the initial round produced additional avenues of inquiry.

The study involved substantial desk research of all available data on workforce composition across the sector, as well as numerous studies on diversity and gender both nationally and internationally. The Australian Public Service Commission APS Employment Database was an invaluable resource, and the APSC provided tailored data across a 22-year period broken down by agency, gender, and job classification annually from 1996 to 2018 specifically for the purposes of this project. We are extremely grateful for the APSC's assistance.

The authors also devised a voluntary, online survey, delivered via Survey Monkey, which opened in November 2016 and was closed in early 2017. The survey, "Gender Diversity and Australia's International Relations", received 646 responses: 430 females and 215 males. Not all respondents answered every question. Of the sample, 259 were aged 25 to 34 years; 204 between 35 and 44 years, 98 between 45 and 54 years, and 49 aged 55 and over. Around 45 per cent (289 respondents) had children. Asked to identify their primary field of work in their career, 22 per cent nominated diplomacy, 22 per cent international development, 15 per cent national security and defence, 15 per cent academia and research, 6 per cent trade/economics/finance, and 4 per cent media/journalism.

The full results of the survey are presented at:  
<https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/charts/gender-diversity-and-australias-international-relations/survey-results/>.

Authors also conducted interviews with senior personnel from the departments and agencies in the sample, as well as other organisations in the sector. Approximately 30 formal interviews were conducted, as well as more than 20 additional (informal) interviews across the sector.

Formal interviews included:

- Attorney-General's Department
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian National University College of Asia and the Pacific

- Australian Secret Intelligence Service
- Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
- Australian Strategic Policy Institute
- Austrade
- Menna Rawlings CMG, British High Commissioner to Australia
- Rebecca Skinner, Department of Defence — then Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy and Intelligence
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including Secretary Frances Adamson
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection (now Home Affairs)
- Dennis Richardson AO, former Secretary of the Defence Department 2012–17), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2010–12), Ambassador to the United States (2005–10), and Director-General of Security (1996–2005)
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Dr Margot McCarthy, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health; former National Security Adviser (2012–13)
- Office of National Assessments (now Office of National Intelligence)

The authors provided a preliminary draft of the report to participating organisations in early 2018 and received comprehensive feedback which was incorporated as appropriate into the final report. The draft was separately subject to a formal peer review process in accordance with Lowy Institute protocol.

#### DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY

Attorney-General's Department

Australian Federal Police (AFP)

Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS)

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO)

Australian Trade Commission (Austrade)

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Department of Defence, including the Defence intelligence agencies Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO), and Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation (AGO)

Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), now  
Department of Home Affairs

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C)

Office of National Assessments (now Office of National Intelligence)

The Treasury

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The 'international relations sector' here refers to the major foreign policy, national security, and international relations organisations and agencies in the Australian public sector, and includes: Australian government departments and agencies with international-facing roles or responsibilities; parliamentary committees with foreign policy or national security oversight; the Australian Defence Force; the Australian Intelligence Community; and relevant specially commissioned reviews or advisory panels.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Adams succeeded Frances Adamson as Ambassador to China in 2016. Maria Fernandez was head of the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation from 2012 to 2015: Stephen Easton, "Immigration Names New Chiefs, Staff to Be 'Empowered'", *The Mandarin*, 23 February 2015, <https://www.themandarin.com.au/23359-customs-immigration-form-single-structure/>.

<sup>3</sup> High commissioners, in the case of Commonwealth countries.

<sup>4</sup> 36.8 per cent at July 2019: authors' calculations, counting ambassadors, heads of mission, and consuls general, but not Deputies or Austrade representatives; from DFAT, "Australian Ambassadors and Other Representatives", <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/our-people/homs/Pages/australian-ambassadors-and-other-representatives.aspx>. Note: this count includes political appointees. If they are excluded the proportion appointed by DFAT increases to 40 per cent women: Frances Adamson, "The Game of Thrones Effect: The Interrelationship between Role Models and Reality for Women in International Security", address to Women in National Security Conference, Canberra, 24 October 2018, <https://dfat.gov.au/news/speeches/Pages/anu-women-in-national-security-conference.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup> Authors' research and response to question received from PM&C media branch on 8 November 2018 regarding composition of Secretaries Committee membership. The recent changes due to the creation of the Home Affairs Department also saw the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department added to the committee, and all 12 Secretaries are now permanent members of the Committee.

<sup>6</sup> 36.5 per cent: Parliament of Australia, search results "Senators and Members", [https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members), accessed 3 July 2019.

<sup>7</sup> As at 7 July 2019, 3 of 11 Joint Intelligence and Security Committee members were women: Kristina Keneally, Jenny McAllister and Amanda Stoker — see [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence\\_and\\_Security/Committee\\_Membership](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence_and_Security/Committee_Membership). In the previous parliament, two members were women: Penny Wong and Jenny McAllister.

<sup>8</sup> Authors' data collection and calculations based on publicly available data.

<sup>9</sup> The period of this study covers the transition of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) into the Department of Home Affairs. All data refers to the DIBP.

<sup>10</sup> This group formerly included AusAID, now part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

<sup>11</sup> The Australian Intelligence Community is now referred to as the National Intelligence Community (NIC), but given this study's focus on the period 2016 to 2018, this report will continue to use 'Australian Intelligence Community (AIC)'.

<sup>12</sup> Unless specified, in this study 'intelligence agencies', 'Australian Intelligence Community' or 'AIC' refers to the following six key intelligence and defence intelligence organisations: Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO); Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS); Office of National Intelligence (ONI) and its predecessor the Office of National Assessments (ONA); Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO); Australian Signals Directorate (ASD); and Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation (AGO).

<sup>13</sup> The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) reports that female representation in SES (senior executive service) roles has risen from 36 per cent in 2008 to 45 per cent over the decade to 2018: see APSC, "Diversity", <https://apsc.govcms.gov.au/diversity-0>; and APSC, *State of the Service Report 2017–18* (Canberra: APSC, 2018), vi, [https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/g/files/net5296/f/18583\\_-\\_apsc\\_-\\_sosr\\_-\\_web.pdf](https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/g/files/net5296/f/18583_-_apsc_-_sosr_-_web.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> DFAT Secretary Frances Adamson and Austrade CEO Stephanie Fahey.

<sup>15</sup> Nine of the current 18 Commonwealth government departments: see <https://www.australia.gov.au/about-government/departments-and-agencies/list-of-departments-and-agencies>, accessed 7 November 2018.

<sup>16</sup> The latest available data on this measure is the 2016 APS agency survey: see APSC, "Gender in the Australian Public Service", 2016, <https://stateoftheservice.apsc.gov.au/2016/12/gender-in-the-aps/>.

<sup>17</sup> APSC, *State of the Service Report 2017–18*, vi. The overall public service data is for Australian Public Service (APS) reporting agencies only including Defence civilian employees, as at 30 June 2018. It excludes five of the six agencies in the Australian Intelligence Community, as well as members of the Australian Defence Force.

<sup>18</sup> Authors' calculations. Total of 'core' internationally-facing departments and agencies as at end of financial year 2016 and includes DFAT\*, DIBP\*, Treasury\*, Austrade\*, Defence civilian\*, AFP<sup>^</sup>, ONA\*, ASIO<sup>#</sup>, and the Defence intelligence organisations<sup>†</sup>: \*Australian Public Service Employment Database data provided to the Lowy Institute by APSC on 4 October 2016 and 21 November 2018 ("APSED data"), <sup>^</sup>Annual Reports, <sup>#</sup>Institutional responses to Lowy Questionnaire and <sup>†</sup>Institutional responses (data supplied by Defence Department to Lowy Institute, emails of 19 December 2016, 7 February 2017). \*On 2018 APSED data (including ONA and ASIO, excluding other AIC organisations), the average is 35 per cent females in SES roles.

<sup>19</sup> ONA, "ONA Diversity Action Plan 2015–2018", 3, <https://www.ona.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1406/f/ONA%20Diversity%20Plan.pdf?v=1495515046>.

<sup>20</sup> Authors' research from a range of sources including data collected from Lowy Institute surveys of organisations in the study sample.



<sup>21</sup> Mike Burgess, “Then and Now: Coming Out from the Shadows”, speech to ASPI National Security Dinner, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, 29 October 2018, <https://asd.gov.au/speeches/20181029-aspi-national-security-dinner.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> APSED data and Institutional responses to Lowy Questionnaire as at June 2016 (which is the latest date at which data is available for all five of six AIC agencies participating in the study); the proportion of female SES in ONA has improved in the past two years to 29 per cent, with the agency growing by 41 per cent since 30 June 2016.

<sup>23</sup> This is distinct from roles such as independent reviewers of (individual) adverse security assessments. See section on ‘Women in policy-setting’, 9.

<sup>24</sup> UK Parliament, “Women in the UK Intelligence Community: A Report by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament”, 5 March 2015, 9–10, [http://isc.independent.gov.uk/files/20150305\\_ISC\\_Report\\_Women\\_in\\_the\\_UKIC.pdf](http://isc.independent.gov.uk/files/20150305_ISC_Report_Women_in_the_UKIC.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Mariateresa Torchia, “Women Directors on Corporate Boards: From Tokenism to Critical Mass”, *Journal of Business Ethics* 102, Issue 2 (2011), 299–317; Jenny Maria Ruiz-Jimenez and Maria del Mar Fuentes-Fuentes, “Management Capabilities, Innovation and Gender Diversity in the Top Management Team: An Empirical Analysis in Technology-based SMEs”, *Business Research Quarterly* 19, Issue 2 (2016), 110

<sup>26</sup> Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton and Sara Prince, “Why Diversity Matters”, McKinsey & Company, 2015, <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>; The Credit Suisse Research Institute, “The CS Gender 3000: The Reward for Change”, 22 September 2016, 22, <http://publications.credit-suisse.com/tasks/render/file/index.cfm?fileid=5A7755E1-EFDD-1973-A0B5C54AFF3FB0AE>; and “Credit Suisse Report Shows Companies Run by Women Fare Best”, *The Australian*, 27 September 2016, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/credit-suisse-report-shows-companies-run-by-women-fare-best/news-story/5181313d6ecf6b6437e58a374c85ad49>; Greg Pellegrino, Anne Weisberg, and Sally D’Amato, “The Gender Dividend: Making the Business Case for Investing in Women”, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, 2011, 12–13, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ru/Documents/public-sector/gender-dividend-en.pdf>; Marcus Noland, Tyler Moran and Barbara Kotschwar, “Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey”, 2016, Peterson Institute for International Economics Working Paper No WP 16-3, February 2016, <https://piie.com/publications/wp/wp16-3.pdf>; Marcus Noland and Tyler Moran, “Study: Firms with More Women in the C-Suite Are More Profitable”, *Harvard Business Review*, 8 February 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/02/study-firms-with-more-women-in-the-c-suite-are-more-profitable>; Vivian Hunt, Lareina Yee, Sara Prince and Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle, “Delivering through Diversity”, McKinsey & Company, January 2018, [https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Organization/Our%20Insights/Delivering%20through%20Diversity/Delivering-through-diversity\\_full-report.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Organization/Our%20Insights/Delivering%20through%20Diversity/Delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx); Georgina Dent, “What Diversity Does for the Bottom Line”, *Australian Financial Review*, 24 October

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<sup>27</sup> The Credit Suisse Research Institute, “The CS Gender 3000: The Reward for Change”, 22; and “Credit Suisse Report Shows Companies Run by Women Fare Best”.

<sup>28</sup> Noland, Moran and Kotschwar, “Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey”, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Joshua Busby and Heather Hurlburt, “Do Women Matter to National Security? The Men Who Lead US Foreign Policy Don’t Think So”, *The Washington Post*, 2 February 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/02/02/do-women-matter-to-national-security-the-men-who-lead-u-s-foreign-policy-dont-think-so/?utm\\_term=.e2470f9e7c6e](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/02/02/do-women-matter-to-national-security-the-men-who-lead-u-s-foreign-policy-dont-think-so/?utm_term=.e2470f9e7c6e).

<sup>30</sup> Sonia Bhalotra and Irma Clots-Figueras, “Health and the Political Agency of Women”, *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 6, No 2 (2014), 164–197.

<sup>31</sup> Dana Wittmer and Vanessa Bouche, “The Limits of Gendered Leadership: Policy Implications of Female Leadership on Women’s Issues”, *Politics & Gender* 9, Issue 3, (2013), 245–275; Jessica Gerrity, Tracy Osborn and Jeanette Morehouse Mendez, “Women and Representation: A Different View of the District”, *Politics & Gender* 3, Issue 2 (2007), 180.

<sup>32</sup> Ann Mari May, Mary McGarvey and Robert Whaples, “Are Disagreements among Male and Female Economists Marginal at Best? A Survey of AEA Members and their Views on Economics and Economic Policy”, *Contemporary Economic Policy* 32, Issue 1 (2014), 111.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin, former Chief of the Defence Force: “The greater our diversity, the greater the range of ideas and insights to challenge the accepted norm, assess the risks, see them from a different perspective, and develop creative solutions”, address to the inaugural Women and National Security Conference in Canberra, 5 April 2017, <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-05/adf-chief-says-gender-diversity-crucial-for-military-capability/8419022>; Dennis Richardson, former Secretary of Defence and DFAT and former head of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), notes that gender balance is in an organisation’s “pragmatic self-interest in wanting to have the biggest gene pool possible”: interview with author, Canberra, 2 August 2017; Mike Burgess, Director-General Australian Signals Directorate (ASD): “We must have full access to the brightest minds across our society. Limiting ourselves is ludicrous”, speech to ASPI National Security Dinner, 29 October 2018, <https://asd.gov.au/speeches/20181029-aspi-national-security-dinner.htm>; Director-General of Security Duncan Lewis: “an organisation that is diverse and inclusive is more productive, engaged and innovative”, see “ASIO Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2018–20”, 1, <https://www.asio.gov.au/sites/default/files/ASIO%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20Strategy.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force: Audit Report*, Chair: Elizabeth Broderick (Sydney: Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014), Chapter 5, Principle 2: Diversity of Leadership Increases Capability,

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/review-treatment-women-australian-defence-force-audit-report-2014/chapter-5-principle-2>.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Alice Eagly and Blair Johnson, "Gender and Leadership Style: A Meta-Analysis", *CHIP Documents* 11 (1990), [https://opencommons.uconn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=chip\\_docs](https://opencommons.uconn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=chip_docs); a 2015 analysis of 156 peace agreements found that when women were included in negotiations, a peace agreement was more likely to be reached and implemented, and the probability those agreements would last more than 15 years increased by 35 per cent: Thania Paffenholz, "Beyond the Normative: Can Women's Inclusion Really Make for Better Peace Processes?", Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding Policy Brief, April 2015, 2, <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Beyond-the-Normative-Can-Womens-Inclusion-Really-Make-for-Better-Peace-....pdf>; Marie O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin and Thania Paffenholz, "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes", New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015, 12, <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking-rev.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Frances Adamson at DFAT and Stephanie Fahey at Austrade. Note: figures do not include secondees or acting positions.

<sup>37</sup> APSC 2016, "Gender in the Australian Public Service"; data not available for 2017 or 2018.

<sup>38</sup> The overall public service data is for APS reporting agencies only and includes Defence civilian employees, as at 30 June 2018. It excludes five of the six agencies in the Australian Intelligence Community and members of the Australian Defence Force. Remaining data from responses to authors' questionnaires in 2016 and 2017. Data not available for ASIS. The 45 per cent figure comes from APSC, *State of the Service Report 2017–18*, vi.

<sup>39</sup> APSED data 1996–2018.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Star-ranked officers in the Australian Defence Force are the equivalent of the APS senior executive service.

<sup>43</sup> Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2017–18* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2018), 86, [http://www.defence.gov.au/annualreports/17-18/Downloads/DAR\\_2017-18\\_Complete.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/annualreports/17-18/Downloads/DAR_2017-18_Complete.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> PM&C, 54 per cent female SES; Attorney-General's Department, 47 per cent female SES: APSED data 2018.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Melissa Conley Tyler, Emily Blizzard and Bridget Crane, "Is International Affairs Too 'Hard' for Women? Explaining the Missing Women in Australia's International Affairs", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 68, Issue 2 (2014), 161.

<sup>47</sup> Although the EL1 level of women dropped just below half to 48 per cent in 2018: APSED data 2018.

<sup>48</sup> APSED data, *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Burgess, “Then and Now: Coming Out from the Shadows”.

<sup>50</sup> Defence intelligence agency data, provided to Lowy Institute by DIO, 7 February 2017.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Response to Lowy Institute Questionnaire from ASIO, 5 December 2016 and ASIO Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee for Intelligence and Security Review of Administration and Expenditure, October 2016, [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence\\_and\\_Security/AE15/Submissions](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence_and_Security/AE15/Submissions). Defence intelligence data provided by the Department of Defence to the Lowy Institute, 7 February 2017.

<sup>53</sup> There have been three female Deputy Directors-General of ONA on secondment since 1999. APSED data 1996–2018, and response to Lowy Institute Questionnaire from ONA, 12 October 2016. Defence intelligence data provided by the Department of Defence to the Lowy Institute, 7 February 2017.

<sup>54</sup> APSED data, *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> DFAT, *Annual Report 2017–18* (Canberra: DFAT, 2018), 228, <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/corporate/annual-reports/Documents/dfat-annual-report-2017-18.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> US Department of State, “Full-time Permanent Workforce by ERGD [Ethnicity, Race, Gender and Diversity] as of 09/30/2018”, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/284353.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> NZ State Service Commission, “Public Service Workforce Data”, December 2017, 28–36, <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/sites/all/files/public-service-workforce-data-2017-v3.pdf>.

<sup>58</sup> DFAT, *Annual Report 2017–18*, ii; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Diversity and Equality Report 2017–18*, 6, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/753934/Diversity\\_and\\_Equality\\_Report\\_2017-18.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/753934/Diversity_and_Equality_Report_2017-18.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> Authors’ calculations based on DFAT, “Australian Ambassadors and Other Representatives”, as at February 2018, <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/our-people/homs/pages/australian-ambassadors-and-other-representatives.aspx>.

<sup>60</sup> UK Government, list of British embassies, high commissions and consulates, <https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies> — checked by individual embassy webpages plus some additional research where embassy page was unclear.

<sup>61</sup> New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Embassies”, <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/embassies/>.

<sup>62</sup> US State Department, “Ambassadorial Appointments Overseas”, as at 2 November 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/287323.pdf>; and Robbie Gramer and Jefcoate O’Donnell, “White and Male: Trump’s Ambassadors Don’t Look Like the Rest of America”, *Foreign Policy*, 17 September 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/09/17/white-male-trump-ambassadors-dont-look-like-america-us-state-department/>.

<sup>63</sup> Government of Canada, “Embassies and Consulates”, <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates> — checked by individual embassy webpages plus some additional research where embassy page was unclear.

<sup>64</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Our Embassies and Consulates Overseas”, <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/our-locations/missions/pages/our-embassies-and-consulates-overseas.aspx>.

<sup>65</sup> David Donaldson, “Women Leaders Index: Australia Strong Globally, but Lags behind Europe”, *The Mandarin*, 14 September 2017, <https://www.themandarin.com.au/83618-women-leaders-index-australia-strong-globally-lags-behind-europe/>; Global Government Forum, “The Women Leaders Index 2016–17”, <https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/women-leaders-index-gender-equality-2017/>.

<sup>66</sup> Australian Institute of Company Directors, “Board Diversity Statistics”, 30 January 2019, <https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/advocacy/board-diversity/statistics>.

<sup>67</sup> UK Government, “Record Number of Women on FTSE 100 Boards”, 8 March 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-number-of-women-on-ftse-100-boards>.

<sup>68</sup> Catalyst, “Women On Corporate Boards”, 21 December 2018, <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-corporate-boards-globally>.

<sup>69</sup> Canadian Board Diversity Council, “The Annual Report Card 2017”, <https://boarddiversity.ca/cbdc/annualreport/> (latest available data).

<sup>70</sup> Australia (5.5 per cent), United States (8 per cent), the United Kingdom (6 per cent), France (2 per cent), and Germany (1 per cent); Heidrick & Struggles, “Route to the Top 2017”, CEO and Board Practice Report, 28 September 2017, 5, [http://www.heidrick.com/-/media/Publications-and-Reports/Route\\_to\\_the\\_Top\\_2017\\_final.ashx](http://www.heidrick.com/-/media/Publications-and-Reports/Route_to_the_Top_2017_final.ashx); Conrad Liveris, “Gender Equality at Work 2019: A Longer View”, March 2019, [https://conradliveris.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/geaw2019\\_final-1.pdf](https://conradliveris.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/geaw2019_final-1.pdf).

<sup>71</sup> Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane, “Is International Affairs Too ‘Hard’ for Women? Explaining the Missing Women in Australia’s International Affairs”, 161; “Women in the Civil Service — History”, <http://www.civilservant.org.uk/women-history.html>; Helen McCarthy, “Women, Marriage and Work in the British Diplomatic Service”, *Women’s History Review* 23, Issue 6 (2014), 853–873.

<sup>72</sup> DFAT, *In the National Interest: Australia’s Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper* (Canberra: DFAT, 1997), 91–92, [http://repository.jeffmalone.org/files/foreign/In\\_the\\_National\\_Interest.pdf](http://repository.jeffmalone.org/files/foreign/In_the_National_Interest.pdf).

<sup>73</sup> The Treasury, “Strategic Review of the Treasury”, December 2011, 35, [http://archive.treasury.gov.au/documents/2283/PDF/strategic\\_review.pdf](http://archive.treasury.gov.au/documents/2283/PDF/strategic_review.pdf).

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<sup>75</sup> Department of Defence, “2016 Defence White Paper — Expert Panel and Community Consultation”, <http://www.defence.gov.au/WhitePaper/ExpertPanel.asp>.

<sup>76</sup> PM&C, *2017 Independent Intelligence Review* (Canberra: PM&C, 2017), 9, <https://pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/2017-Independent-Intelligence-Review.pdf>.

<sup>77</sup> Stephen Easton, "McCarthy's New Challenge: From Centre of National Security to Aged Care Policy", *The Mandarin*, 9 September 2015, <https://www.themandarin.com.au/51218-new-challenge-centre-national-security-aged-care/>; and Harley Dennet, "Movers & Shakers: National Security Reshuffle Reaches across Four Departments", *The Mandarin*, 19 October 2018, <https://www.themandarin.com.au/100199-movers-shakers-national-security-reshuffle-reaches-across-four-departments/>.

<sup>78</sup> Department of Defence, "National Security: Responding to the Challenges", *Defence Magazine*, April 2005, [https://web.archive.org/web/20110605173816/http://www.defence.gov.au/defencemagazine/editions/20050401/sections/public\\_service.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20110605173816/http://www.defence.gov.au/defencemagazine/editions/20050401/sections/public_service.htm).

<sup>79</sup> Authors' research. Consistent public data on annual membership, which changes regularly, is not available.

<sup>80</sup> Authors' research and response to question received from PM&C media branch on 8 November 2018 regarding composition of current Secretaries Committee membership.

<sup>81</sup> HOM (head of mission) SES Bands 2 and 3 (9 of 29): DFAT, *Annual Report 2017–18*, 228.

<sup>82</sup> The other five are Papua New Guinea, India, China, Philippines, and Timor Leste.

<sup>83</sup> Australia's ten largest embassies are Washington, Jakarta, Port Moresby, London, New Delhi, Bangkok, Beijing, Manila, Dili, and Tokyo. Information received from SBS, email 5 August 2016. Washington, Jakarta, London, Bangkok, and Tokyo have never had a female ambassador. Port Moresby and Dili have had a female ambassador in the past. Beijing and New Delhi have a current female ambassador.

<sup>84</sup> Australia's ten largest two-way trading partners are China, United States, Japan, South Korea, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, India, and Germany: DFAT, "Australia's Top 10 Two-way Trading Partners", 2017, <http://dfat.gov.au/trade/resources/trade-at-a-glance/Pages/html/two-way-trading-partners.aspx>. The United States, Japan, United Kingdom, and Thailand have never had a female ambassador. China, India, and Germany have a current female ambassador. New Zealand and Singapore have had a female ambassador in the past.

<sup>85</sup> The Five Eyes intelligence alliance consists of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The first Australian female appointed head of mission was Annabel Rankin, High Commissioner to New Zealand from 1971 to 1975: Commonwealth of Australia, *House of Representative Official Hansard*, No 150, 16 September 1986, 703, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id:%22chaamber/hansardr/1986-09-16/0013%22;src1=sm1>.

<sup>86</sup> Daniel Flitton, “Coalition Quick to Match Labor in Making Politicians Diplomats”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 June 2015, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/coalition-quick-to-match-labor-in-making-politicians-diplomats-20150618-ghrgl2.html>.

<sup>87</sup> Lowy Institute data collection from a range of online sources.

<sup>88</sup> DFAT Secretary Frances Adamson has credited the department’s Women in Leadership Strategy, launched by her predecessor Peter Varghese, for lifting the number of female heads of mission from 27 per cent in late 2015. In the strategy, there is an objective to have at least 43 per cent women at SES Band 1 and 40 per cent at SES Band 2 by 2020. DFAT says in 2018 it has 40 per cent of its overseas postings led by women but this count excludes political appointees, which have all been men. See Frances Adamson, “The Game of Thrones Effect: The Interrelationship between Role Models and Reality for Women in International Security”; and “Women in National Security: Frances Adamson”, ANU TV (YouTube), published on 28 October 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uonrs6NfZkQ>.

<sup>89</sup> Australian Government, “Australian Foreign Policy: By the Numbers”, 2, <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/file/2311/download?token=-pUYVtTV>.

<sup>90</sup> See “Defence: A Special Case”, 12– 13.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>92</sup> Data provided by Defence Department to Lowy Institute, email, 19 December 2016.

<sup>93</sup> Attorney-General’s Department, *Annual Report 2017–18* (Sydney: Attorney-General’s Department, 2018), 62, <https://www.ag.gov.au/Publications/AnnualReports/17-18/Documents/AGD-AR-17-18.pdf>.

<sup>94</sup> SES Bands 1, 2, and 3: *Ibid*, 63.

<sup>95</sup> Response to Lowy Institute Questionnaire from Attorney-General’s Department, 9 November 2016.

<sup>96</sup> APSED data 1996–2018.

<sup>97</sup> Response to Lowy Institute Questionnaire from Austrade, 7 May 2017.

<sup>98</sup> APSED data 1996–2016, provided to Lowy Institute by APSC, 4 October 2016.

<sup>99</sup> The Treasury, Organisation Chart, as at 18 February 2019, [https://static.treasury.gov.au/uploads/sites/1/2019/02/TOC\\_all-names\\_190212.pdf](https://static.treasury.gov.au/uploads/sites/1/2019/02/TOC_all-names_190212.pdf).

<sup>100</sup> Lowy Institute, “Gender Diversity and Australia’s International Relations Survey”, 2016, Question 17. The survey was conducted online in November and December 2016. It consisted of 646 respondents from across Australia’s international relations sector.

<sup>101</sup> Confidential interview with author, telephone, 8 December 2016.

<sup>102</sup> Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2017–18*, 88.

<sup>103</sup> Department of Defence, “Pathway to Change — Evolving Defence Culture”, <http://www.defence.gov.au/PathwayToChange/>.



<sup>104</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force: Phase 2 Report, 2012*, Chair: Elizabeth Broderick (Sydney: Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012), <https://defencereview.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/adf-complete.pdf>; Department of Defence, *Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2012), [http://www.defence.gov.au/PathwayToChange/\\_Master/Docs/120410-Pathway-to-Change-Evolving-Defence-Culture-web-version.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/PathwayToChange/_Master/Docs/120410-Pathway-to-Change-Evolving-Defence-Culture-web-version.pdf).

<sup>105</sup> Department of Defence, “The Review of the Employment Pathways for APS Women in the Department of Defence”, 2011, <http://www.defence.gov.au/pathwaytochange/docs/epapsw/>.

<sup>106</sup> Department of Defence, “Removal of Gender Restrictions from ADF Combat Roles”, <http://www.defence.gov.au/women/index.htm>.

<sup>107</sup> Department of Defence, *Women in the ADF Report 2016–17* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2017), 8, <http://www.defence.gov.au/annualreports/16-17/Downloads/WomenInTheADFRReport2016-17.pdf>.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>109</sup> Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2000–01* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2001), 313, <http://www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/00-01/full.pdf>.

<sup>110</sup> Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2017–18*, 87.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 80–83. ADF: 57 957 permanent force and full-time reservists; APS: 18 784 staff, both on headcount basis.

<sup>112</sup> APSED data 1996–2018.

<sup>113</sup> Dennis Richardson, interview with author, Canberra, 2 August 2017.

<sup>114</sup> Department of Defence, email from representative of Defence People Group, 22 April 2018, on the results of bulk promotion rounds for First Assistant Secretary roles post 2015 that have promoted more women than previously.

<sup>115</sup> Department of Defence, “Defence Senior Leaders”, <http://www.defence.gov.au/Leaders/>.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Harley Dennet, “Defence Loses Half Its Top Executives”, *The Mandarin*, 25 January 2018, <https://www.themandarin.com.au/87797-defence-loses-half-top-executives/>; Department of Social Services, “Organisational Structure”, as at 5 November 2018, <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/overview/organisation-charts>.

<sup>118</sup> Department of Defence, email from representative of Defence People Group, 22 April 2018.

<sup>119</sup> We have gathered data on the Australian Intelligence Community from responses to Lowy Questionnaires and data provided from ONA, ASIO, ASIS, and Defence. Public data is available from ASIO Annual Reports (<https://www.asio.gov.au/sites/default/files/Annual%20Report%202016-17.pdf>), the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Review of Administration and Expenditure, No 15 (2015–2016) — Australian Intelligence Agencies, June 2017, (<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/>



committees/reportjnt/024083/toc\_pdf/ReviewofAdministrationandExpenditure.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf), the *2017 Independent Intelligence Review* (<https://pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/2017-Independent-Intelligence-Review.pdf>), and the ONA “ONA Diversity Action Plan 2015–2018” (<https://www.ona.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1406/f/ONA%20Diversity%20Plan.pdf?v=1495515046>).

<sup>120</sup> ASIO, ONA, and defence intelligence agencies. Latest data June 2018 (ASIO and ONA), June 2016 (defence intelligence agencies).

<sup>121</sup> Information provided by email from ASIO Diversity and Inclusion, 28 November 2018.

<sup>122</sup> Responses by Defence Department (7 February 2017) and Australian Government Security Vetting Agency to Lowy Institute request for data (24 March 2017). See also “The Issue of Security Clearances”, 16.

<sup>123</sup> See, for example, Department of Defence, *Women in the ADF Report 2016–17*, 4, 71.

<sup>124</sup> Only 16 per cent of STEM-qualified people are women, according to the Office of the Chief Scientist, *Australia’s STEM Workforce: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics* (Canberra: Australian Government, 2016), v, [https://www.chiefscientist.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Australias-STEM-workforce\\_full-report.pdf](https://www.chiefscientist.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Australias-STEM-workforce_full-report.pdf).

<sup>125</sup> Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of Administration and Expenditure No. 16 (2016–2017)* — Australian Intelligence Agencies, 23. 2016–17 data for the Defence intelligence agencies not stated.

<sup>126</sup> Latest data available. Authors’ calculations, based on ASIO response to Lowy Questionnaire, 13 September 2016; ONA based on APSED data; Defence intelligence agencies based on data provided to Lowy Institute, 7 February 2017.

<sup>127</sup> Burgess, “Then and Now: Coming Out from the Shadows”.

<sup>128</sup> Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security *Review of Administration and Expenditure*, No 15 (2015–2016), 31.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

<sup>130</sup> See PM&C, *2017 Independent Intelligence Review*, Appendix 2, 128–130.

<sup>131</sup> Maria Fernandez was head of the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation from 2012–2015: Easton, “Immigration Names New Chiefs, Staff to Be ‘Empowered’”.

<sup>132</sup> An exception is ASIO, with two of three Deputy Directors-General women, one a career intelligence officer. Email advice from ASIO Diversity and Inclusion, 28 November 2018.

<sup>133</sup> Author conducted interviews with senior staff from across the intelligence community, Canberra, June 2017.

<sup>134</sup> ASIO data: email advice from ASIO Diversity and Inclusion, 28 November 2018. Defence intelligence agencies’ data, June 2016 (latest available).

<sup>135</sup> See “The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security”, <https://www.igis.gov.au/about/inspector-general-intelligence-and-security>.

<sup>136</sup> ONA, “ONA Diversity Action Plan 2015–2018”, 9–10.

<sup>137</sup> Response to Lowy Institute Questionnaire from ASIO, 5 December 2016; Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, *ASIO Annual Report 2016–17* (Canberra: ASIO, 2017), 83, <http://apo.org.au/system/files/114751/apo-nid114751-452686.pdf>.

<sup>138</sup> ASIO, “Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2018–20”, 5.

<sup>139</sup> Department of Defence, “Defence Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2012–2017”, June 2014, [http://www.defence.gov.au/Diversity/\\_Master/docs/DDIS-12-17.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/Diversity/_Master/docs/DDIS-12-17.pdf); Department of Defence, “APS Gender Equality Strategy 2016–2019, Defence Action Plan”, [http://www.defence.gov.au/Diversity/\\_Master/docs/APS-Gender-Equality-Action-Plan-20170424.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/Diversity/_Master/docs/APS-Gender-Equality-Action-Plan-20170424.pdf).

<sup>140</sup> Australian Signals Directorate (@ASDGovAu), “While we work to increase our numbers of #WomenInSTEM, we are smashing the #GlassCeiling”, Twitter, 15 November 2018, <https://twitter.com/ASDGovAu/status/1063252475099009024>.

<sup>141</sup> Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, “Committee Membership”, as at 28 March 2015, [https://web.archive.org/web/20150328210321/https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence\\_and\\_Security/Committee\\_Membership](https://web.archive.org/web/20150328210321/https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence_and_Security/Committee_Membership).

<sup>142</sup> Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, “Committee Membership”, as at 7 July 2019, [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence\\_and\\_Security/Committee\\_Membership](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence_and_Security/Committee_Membership).

<sup>143</sup> Data provided to Lowy Institute by Australian Government Security Vetting Agency and Defence Department in February and March 2017.

<sup>144</sup> Email advice from ASIO Diversity and Inclusion, 28 November 2018.

<sup>145</sup> However, the latest data from ASIO indicates an almost 50/50 gender split in its Grade 1–6 officers; email advice from ASIO Diversity and Inclusion, 28 November 2018.

<sup>146</sup> Gill Plimmer, “Women Do Not Win When Women Lead”, *Financial Times*, 21 July 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/56850dec-49b2-11e6-8d68-72e9211e86ab>.

<sup>147</sup> Richard Zeigenhaft, “The Rise and Fall of Diversity at the Top: The Appointments of Fortune 500 CEOs from 2005 through 2015”, in G William Domhoff ed, *Who Rules America*, Supplementary website, January 2016, [https://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/rise\\_and\\_fall\\_of\\_diversity.html](https://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/rise_and_fall_of_diversity.html).

<sup>148</sup> Lowy Institute, “Gender Diversity and Australia’s International Relations Survey”, 2016, Question 7: 60 per cent women compared with 24 per cent men. In the 2018 APS employee census, 12.3 per cent of respondents indicated they had been subjected to discrimination during the 12 months preceding the census and in the course of their employment. Of those respondents, 32.4 per cent said they had been subjected to gender-based discrimination: APSC, *State of the Service Report 2017–18*, 156.

<sup>149</sup> Office of the Chief Scientist, *Australia’s STEM Workforce: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*, v, 12.

<sup>150</sup> For example, Kate Higgins, “Men Twice As Likely to Have Flexible Work Hours Requests Knocked Back: Study”, ABC News, 3 February 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-03/men-more-likely-to-have-flexible-work-requests-knocked-back/7137208>.

<sup>151</sup> Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane, “Is International Affairs too ‘Hard’ for Women? Explaining the Missing Women in Australia’s International Affairs”, 161.

<sup>152</sup> Meredith Edwards, Bill Burmester, Mark Evans, Max Halupka and Deborah May, ‘Not Yet 50:50. Barriers to the Progress of Senior Women in the Australian Public Service’, ANZSOG Institute for Governance at the University of Canberra, 7, 23, <http://www.5050foundation.edu.au/assets/reports/documents/Not-yet-50-50.-Barriers-to-the-Progress-of-Senior-Women-in-the-Australian-Public-Service.pdf>.

<sup>153</sup> 88 per cent of women and 67 per cent of men: Lowy Institute, “Gender Diversity and Australia’s International Relations Survey”, 2016, Question 11, Lowy Institute.

<sup>154</sup> Department of Defence, email from representative of Defence People Group, 22 April 2018.

<sup>155</sup> Emilio Castilla, “Achieving Meritocracy in the Workplace”, MIT Sloan Management Review, 13 June 2016, <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/achieving-meritocracy-in-the-workplace/>.

<sup>156</sup> Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane, “Is International Affairs Too ‘Hard’ for Women? Explaining the Missing Women in Australia’s International Affairs”, quoting Alison Broinowski, 166; see also, “Reader Riposte: Women and the Commentariat”, *The Interpreter*, 11 September 2011, <https://archive.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/reader-riposte-women-and-commentariat-2>.

<sup>157</sup> There are some key exceptions: the female DFAT Secretary, the Deputy Secretary National Security in PM&C, the Ambassador to China, the Associate Secretary of Defence, and some key operational and intelligence-focused roles in ASIO and ASD, according to data gathered for this study.

<sup>158</sup> For example, Lowy Institute “Gender Diversity and Australia’s International Relations Survey”, 2016, responses including Questions 6, 17, 18, and 19; author interviews; and Noel Towell, “Macho Public Service Workplaces Are Making Women Do the ‘Office Housework’”, *The Canberra Times*, 8 February 2017, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/public-service/macho-public-service-workplaces-are-making-women-do-the-office-housework-20170207-gu7wi9.html>.

<sup>159</sup> Australian Government, “Australian Foreign Policy: By the Numbers”, 2, <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/file/2311/download?token=-pUYVtTV>.

<sup>160</sup> Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane, “Is International Affairs Too ‘Hard’ for Women? Explaining the Missing Women in Australia’s International Affairs”, 165, listing a range of sources in support of the argument.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid; and Leah Ruppner, “Census 2016: Women Are Still Disadvantaged by the Amount of Unpaid Housework They Do”, *The Conversation*, 11 April 2017, <https://theconversation.com/census-2016-women-are-still-disadvantaged-by-the-amount-of-unpaid-housework-they-do-76008>.

<sup>162</sup> CEDA, “Women in Leadership: Understanding the Gender Gap”, June 2013, 7, <http://www.ceda.com.au/CEDA/media/ResearchCatalogueDocuments/PDFs/15355-cedawiljune-2013final.pdf>; Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane, “Is International Affairs Too ‘Hard’ for Women? Explaining the Missing Women in Australia’s International Affairs”, 163.

<sup>163</sup> Deloitte Access Economics, “Westpac Diversity Dividend Report”, October 2017, 43, [https://www.westpac.com.au/content/dam/public/wbc/documents/pdf/aw/Inclusion%20and%20Diversity/DeloitteAccessEconomics\\_WestpacDiversityDividendReport.pdf](https://www.westpac.com.au/content/dam/public/wbc/documents/pdf/aw/Inclusion%20and%20Diversity/DeloitteAccessEconomics_WestpacDiversityDividendReport.pdf); CEDA, “Women in Leadership: Understanding the Gender Gap”, 7, 16–17, and 25.

<sup>164</sup> PwC, “Developing Female Leaders: Addressing Gender Bias in International Mobility”, March 2015, 5, <https://www.pwc.com.au/pdf/developing-female-leaders-2015.pdf>.

<sup>165</sup> Alex Oliver, “Australia’s Flatlining Foreign Affairs Budget”, *The Interpreter*, 10 May 2017, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/australia-s-flatlining-foreign-affairs-budget>.

<sup>166</sup> Reports on Reviews into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force and ADFA, 2012, <http://defencereview.humanrights.gov.au/reports>; Elizabeth Broderick, “Cultural Change, Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police”, 2016, <https://www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/PDF/Reports/Cultural-Change-Report-2016.pdf>.

<sup>167</sup> Commissioner Andrew Colvin, Institute of Public Administration Australia address, 9 February 2017, <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-media/national-speeches/institute-public-administration-australia-address>.

<sup>168</sup> The authors requested but were not given access to the 2015 May review. The strategy resulting from that review is available at <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/women-in-leadership-strategy.aspx>.

<sup>169</sup> Elizabeth Broderick, “Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force”, speech to the Australian Human Rights Commission, 3 November 2011, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches/review-treatment-women-australian-defence-force-academy>.

<sup>170</sup> See the annual *Women in the ADF* reports (starting in 2012–13), available at Department of Defence, Annual Reports, Supplementary Reports: <http://defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/>.

<sup>171</sup> AFP, “International Operations Gender Strategy 2018–2022”, 2018, <https://www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/PDF/InternationalOperationsGenderStrategy.PDF>.

<sup>172</sup> The UK Parliament’s “Women in the UK Intelligence Community: A Report by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament” provides a potential framework to draw lessons from: see [http://isc.independent.gov.uk/files/20150305\\_ISC\\_Report\\_Women\\_in\\_the\\_UKIC.pdf](http://isc.independent.gov.uk/files/20150305_ISC_Report_Women_in_the_UKIC.pdf).

<sup>173</sup> UK Government, “Women in the UK Intelligence Community: A Report by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament”; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, “Annual Demographic Report: Hiring and Retention of Minorities, Women, and Persons with Disabilities in the United States Intelligence Community Fiscal Year 2016”, 2017, <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Reports%20and%20Pubs/Annual%20Demographic%20Report%20-%202016.pdf>.

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