

WOMEN ON BOARDS

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE MIDLANDS REGIONAL MEETING OF BPW NZ - 3 SEPT 2011

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This is by no means a complete set of information but organisations, agencies and services I have utilised in my search for opportunities.

The key one for women is the **Ministry of Women's Affairs** which offers a **Nominations Service** – registration with this service is a “must”. I also recommend that when you are in Wellington, you visit the Ministry, meet the nominations staff under the Directorship of Pamela Cohen, as I have received many more opportunities once I introduced myself to staff and we had a comprehensive discussion. The website is www.mwa.govt.nz/women-on-boards. There is an on-line tool to assess your governance skill and lets you take part in a unique virtual board meeting should you wish to do so. Once you are registered, the MWA will notify you of vacancies that suit your qualifications, experience and interests. There is information on how to apply and usually an offer of endorsement if you do apply. The Home page of the website also offers “What we do”, “Our Advice”, “Be inspired”, “Boards in NZ”, “Links and resources”, “What's new?”. The “Links and resources” is where I accessed the document “**Women on Boards – Why women on company boards are good for business**” – a joint report from Business NZ, Institute of Directors NZ, and the MWA – good reading/information. You can also access the Human Rights Commission's “**NZ Census of Women's Participation 2008**” from this site or contact Dr. Judy McGregor, EEO Commissioner of the HRC for a copy.

An important website is that of the **Crown Ownership Monitoring Unit (COMU)**- (was CCMAU) - www.comu.govt.nz. Treasury's COMU monitors the government's investment in companies/entities owned by the Crown, assists with the appointment of directors, and provides performance and governance advice to Ministers. This website provides a list of the Portfolio of Entities and News as well as access to much information with links from the Home Page to “About COMU”, “Board Appointments”, “Portfolio of Entities”, “Ownership Framework”, “Publications”, and “Announcements”. You can register on line. There are over 500 companies, trusts, advisory boards and other entities to which the Crown makes appointments.

Some Ministries have their own Recruitment Automailer database. One I had applied for one position, I was asked if I wished to be included in this service and now receive “new opportunities” when they arise. It is a matter of accessing websites and following links – e.g. the Ministry of Economic Development has a “Crown Entities and Other Boards” Talent Pool and through the recruitment automailer, you are directed to www.med.govt.nz/careers.

The **Ministry of Consumer Affairs** has a Nomination Service similar to the MWA. www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz. Go to Link “About MCA” – what MCA does, who works here and information about consumer representation. Link on to “Consumer Representation” which leads on to “Applying to become a CR, Being a CR, Recruiting CRs”; these will lead you to “Registering with the MCA Representative Nominations Service”. Other Ministries have similar services.

The Ministry of Health, has within its services a huge number of committees which has members appointed to them. The MWA nominates many women to these, many as consumer or community representatives for which there is a statutory requirement to balance professionals. Website with direct information is www.moh.govt.nz/statutorybodies.

Auckland Chamber of Commerce – Women Directors, www.womendirectors.co.nz. I am registered with this Auckland agency but am guessing that other regional agencies offer a similar service which aims to

- Connect women leaders with businesses seeking directors
- Provide information on corporate governance and “how to” tools
- Be a portal for women seeking a Directorship role to register their interest
- Be a portal for businesses seeking independent directors to search for skilled people
- Promote good governance and independent representation of the Boards of SMEs
- Identify and support emerging female leaders
- Staircase women directors through increasingly larger organisations.

I have personally have had no response to my membership on this database but do appreciate that it is focussed on SMEs and women with business experience. However, it has offered me Directorship training at low cost, often subsidised by the **EEO Trust NZ**, working with **The Boardroom Practice** to attend one day seminars on “Introduction to Corporate Governance” and “Strategy and Finance in Governance”. The Boardroom Practice usually works within individual corporates and seldom offers public courses but there is occasionally an opportunity to attend 2-day short courses through universities. Website is www.boardroompractice.co.nz. Director Janine Smith also provided me personally with a professionally prepared Resume on Board and Director Experience to assist me in preparing a suitable resume for myself.

Once registered with the EEO Trust NZ, www.eeotrust.org.nz, opportunities are offered women to attend seminars and events that promote women leaders and speakers. It is also an opportunity for networking. The EEO Trust will supply you with copy of a new UK report “Women on Boards” (February 2011) prepared by Lord Davies of Abersoch, CBE, - containing practical recommendations to address the imbalance of membership of boards in the UK.

There is a new network of women leaders called **Global Women – Women in Leadership**. Members of this are women who are already leaders; it offers networking events, and has initiated a “Break Through Leaders’ Programme” - the Chair of the Programme’s Advisory Committee is Dame Jenny Shipley. It accepts 25 emerging women leaders for a one-year mentoring programme at a cost of \$20,000. It has been developed to address what the market told Global Women it needs – women to grow as leaders operating in a global environment. Content consists of specific workshops on leadership development, tailored for senior women, networking with Global Women members, and customised mentoring and coaching by some of NZ’s most senior women leaders. I was offered a place with the first intake but the cost was prohibitive for me -even with the Margery Toulson Scholarship of \$1,500, and even though I was offered a small subsidy. Anyone interested in joining Global Women – www.globalwomen.org.nz

The NZ Institute of Directors is another avenue to seek opportunities. www.iod.org.nz. Membership is open to a range of applicants – from company directors to those involved in governance positions or likely to accept directorships. This offers networking and events, research and policy, purchasing benefits, training courses, complimentary use of meeting facilities in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and London, but importantly the eligibility to register for director appointments with the Board Appointment database.

There is also the opportunity to apply for the Mentoring for Diversity programme – Board ready women may be selected through an application process, to be mentored by experienced Directors, free to the mentee.

As mentioned before, there are many avenues of opportunities to find vacancies, including the newspaper. It takes a lot of time to search and when you make an application, so have many others, and then it can take up to six months for find out if you have been successful – or not! So you just keep applying.