

The women who show politicians how it should be done

The inaugural awards of an ongoing program acknowledge the vital contribution of women in important spheres of Australian life, write **Narelle Hooper** and **Catherine Fox**.

In the midst of a national debate on the status and treatment of women, *The Australian Financial Review* and Westpac have recognised outstanding women who are using their influence to improve business and society.

More than 350 women were nominated for the initial 100 Women of Influence awards. The finalists were selected from across the economy by a panel of leading Australians. Those chosen have been successful in their careers and influential in shaping a bold and diverse future for Australia, the panel says.

Among the list – the first in an ongoing annual awards program – are Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westacott, Origin Energy chief operating officer Karen Moses, Kraft Foods chief Rebecca Dee-Bradbury, philanthropists Layne Beachley, Carol Schwartz and Debbie Dadon, and Reconciliation Australia chief executive Leah Armstrong.

“Influence often seems so wishy-washy when compared with the assumptions that power is absolute,” judge and director Wendy McCarthy says. “Influence is what women can have when they do not have power. If we want to change the world we need both . . . influence can be powerful and change culture.”

Jillian Segal, ASX director and one of those recognised, says the awards process is an important step in legitimising women’s contribution at all levels.

“Women to date haven’t spoken out with an open voice in the community and the awards are part of the pathway of

encouraging women to be active,” she says.

“It’s part of having a dynamic and mature society to have women, who represent half the population and the majority of decision-makers as consumers, to have a voice and play a leading role in different fields and seek to shift society for the benefit of all.

“Women are often criticised for not putting their hands up for recognition and are often too busy keeping their heads down doing their job. There are more and more models out there to show women can and need to play a significant role in society.”

Wendy Simpson, chairman of Wengeo group, yesterday launched Springboard Australia, a venture investment fund to support women entrepreneurs.

She says the politicians are missing the point that women have not been heard for a long time and social media is giving them a voice.

“In all this what no one’s talking about is women’s achievements. Until we can talk about women’s achievements, we’re not going to progress as a strong economy.”

Entries for the awards were invited in June across 10 categories: board/management, innovation, public policy, business entrepreneur, diversity, young leader, global, social enterprise, philanthropy and local/regional.

The judging panel included Wendy McCarthy, former joint chief executive of Goldman Sachs Australia Stephen Fitzgerald, Future Fund chairman David Gonski, CEO of UN Women Australia Julie McKay, Fairfax Media director Sandra McPhee, Reserve Bank board member Heather Ridout, Allens law firm chief Michael Rose and Red Cross board member Sue Vardon.

Winners from the 10 categories and the overall 2012 Woman of Influence will be announced at a ceremony at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney tonight.

Awards co-ordination by **Beverley Uther**

The Financial Review’s 100 Women of Influence

The 100 women of influence of 2012 came from 10 categories:

Board and management, public policy, business entrepreneur, innovation, social enterprise, youth, diversity, local/regional, philanthropy and global. More at afr.com



Board & Management

Becky Lumlock, QLD
Brenda Shanahan, VIC
Cassandra Kelly, NSW
Eva Skira, WA
Helen Gillies, NSW
Jane Wilson, QLD
Janet Matton, VIC
Janet Whiting, VIC
Jennifer Westacott, VIC
Jillian Segal, NSW
Karen Moses, NSW
Kerrie Mather, NSW
Lyn Copley, NSW
Lyn McGrath, NSW
Marianne Foley, NSW
Nicola Wakefield-Evans, NSW
Rachel Argaman, NSW
Rebecca Dee-Bradbury, VIC
Romilly Madew, NSW
Sam Mostyn, NSW
Sharon Cook, NSW
Vikki McFadden, NSW

Business Entrepreneur

Anna Whitlam, VIC
Catherine (Kate) Gunn, NSW
Christine Cameron, QLD
Gai Waterhouse, NSW
Leanne Preston, WA
Liz Davenport, WA
Tammy May, SA

Diversity

Felicity Harley, NSW
Fran Raymond, ACT
Margaret Beazley, NSW
Miriam Silva, SA
Nadine Flood, NSW
Nareen Young, NSW
Rachelle Lewitan, VIC

Global

Audette Exel, NSW
Barbara Jinks, QLD
Gemma Sisia, Tanzania
Moya Dodd, NSW
Serafina Maiorano, US
Shirley Kaye Randall, NSW
Suzanne Dvorak, VIC
Vanessa Torres, VIC

Innovation

Elizabeth Elliott, NSW
Jane Burns, VIC
Jane Visvader, VIC
Megan Clark, NSW
Suzanne Cory, VIC

Local/Regional

Alana Johnson, VIC
Clare Thompson, WA
Deb Wilkes, WA
Deborah Conway, QLD
Elizabeth Eastland, NSW
Fiona Shewring, NSW
Janelle Whitehead, NSW
Justine Hansen, WA
Lesley Fitzpatrick, ACT
Maggie Burns, TAS
Melanie Raymond, VIC

Philanthropy

Annabelle Chauncy, NSW
Annie Crawford, NSW
Carol Schwartz, VIC
Debbie Dadon, VIC
Jeanne Pratt, VIC
Layne Beachley, NSW
Tanya Hosch, SA

Public Policy

Carmel McGregor, ACT
Cassandra Goldie, NSW
Dawn Casey, NSW
Fiona Reynolds, VIC
Helen Silver, VIC
Jacky Hodges, WA
Judy Raper, NSW
Kim Rubenstein, ACT
Leah Armstrong, NSW
Margaret Sheil, VIC
Margaret Staib, ACT
Megan Houghton, QLD
Melanie Stutsel, ACT
Michele Bruniges, NSW

Social Enterprise

Carey Badcoe, NSW
Elizabeth Honor Lloyd, ACT
Jan Owen, VIC
Jodie Sizer, VIC
Karen Mahlab, NSW
Kirstie Parker, NSW
Merinda Donnelly, NSW
Natalie Walker, NSW
Rebecca Scott, VIC
Ronni Kahn, NSW
Sharon Callister, NSW

Young Leader

April Long, NSW
Bianca Orsini, NSW
Felicity Briody, QLD
Holly Ransom, WA
Marita Cheng, VIC
Samantha Cran, NSW
Yassmin Abdel-Magied, QLD



Janet Matton
Chief operating officer IBM Aust & NZ



Jennifer Westacott
BCA chief executive



Suzanne Corey
President Aust Academy of Sciences



Leah Armstrong
CEO Reconciliation Australia