

The women who set the agenda in our community

The top 50

1. Gina Rinehart

Heirless to her father's Hancock Prospecting empire, which she has built into a fortune estimated at close to \$20 billion, Mrs Hancock has become Australia's wealthiest person and one of the world's most powerful business leaders.

She is in the throes of developing the \$10 billion Roy Hill iron ore mine in the Pilbara, which would cement her position among the world's wealthiest.

Despite shunning the media, Mrs Rinehart sits on the board of Ten Network and is the biggest investor in Fairfax Media, giving her an increasingly powerful voice in national affairs.

2. Ann Pickard

Fortune Magazine once described Ann Pickard as the bravest woman in the oil industry.

She spent five years as Royal Dutch Shell's regional vice-president for sub-Saharan Africa, based in Nigeria. She has also served as Shell's director of global business and strategy after previously working for Mobil in South America, the Soviet Union, the Middle East and Africa.

She is now chairwoman of Shell Australia, a role that gives her responsibility for the oil and gas giant's refinery and retail operations as well as tens of billions of dollars worth of investment in LNG projects such as Gorgon, Prelude and Wheatstone. Ms Pickard is also a non-executive director of Westpac.

3. Eve Howell

A recently retired Woodside Petroleum senior executive, Eve Howell has always been a trailblazer.

In the late 1960s she was one of three women to graduate from her university geology class. She was the only one of the three who went on to a career in the industry.

She ran Woodside's North West Shelf venture for four years and was managing director at Apache Energy. Since her retirement she has embarked on a career as a non-executive director with board seats at Downer EDI.

4. Shirley In't Veld

As managing director of Verve Energy, former Alcoa executive Ms In't Veld is one of WA's most recognisable businesswomen, one of the highest-paid public servants and responsible for a multibillion-dollar budget and keeping the power on in WA. She also sits on the board of logistics and transport giant Asciano as a non-executive director.

5. Vittoria Shortt

As Bankwest's chief executive of retail, Ms Shortt oversees WA's biggest personal banking business. She divides her time between Sydney, where her family lives, and Perth. Ms Shortt has also held top posts at the Commonwealth Bank and Carter Holt Harvey and has a background in mergers and acquisitions.

6. Denise Goldsworthy

Responsible for more than 500 employees, Ms Goldsworthy runs Dampier Salt, the world's biggest salt exporter and one of mining giant Rio Tinto's subsidiaries. Ms Goldsworthy was named the 2010 WA and Australian Business Woman of the Year and has been at the forefront of encouraging teenage girls to consider a career in mining.

7. Anne Nolan

One of the State's most experienced and trusted public servants, Anne Nolan has been the "safe pair of hands" behind some of the Government's most important departments.

She is director-general of the newly established Department of Finance, having previously held the same role at the Department of State Development and serving as deputy director-general position at the Department of Premier and Cabinet. She has also been an

roles at Rio Tinto during her 30 years in the mining industry. She is vice-president of organisation resources for the mining giant's iron ore group and a member of various high level committees.

11. Uvashni Raman

Ms Raman is vice-president, finance, for BHP Billiton's fast-expanding iron ore division. She worked for BHP Billiton in South Africa before moving to Perth, and took up the finance role a year ago.

12. Jennifer Seabrook

Special adviser at Gresham Investment House, Ms Seabrook is a mergers and acquisitions and capital restructuring specialist who has advised on some of Australia's biggest takeovers. She is a long-serving non-executive director of mineral sands giant Iluka Resources and also sits on the board of Bankwest, M G Kallis Holdings, IRESS Market Technology and Australia Post.

Mining and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

16. Rhonda Wylie

Mrs Wylie is director of her late husband Bill's commercial property development business, the Wylie Group and has involvement with several charities and medical research organisations.

17. Erica Smyth

With more than 30 years experience in mining and petroleum, Dr Smyth has held high level positions at BHP Billiton and Woodside Petroleum and was a member of the Gillard Government's mining tax policy transition group. Dr Smyth is the chairwoman of uranium company Toro Energy, Scitech and several cultural and scientific bodies.

18. Mimi Wong

As the matriarch of the property developers Golden Group, Mrs Wong, along with her husband Howard Sugiarto and their son

Australia Sports Drug Agency and Basketball Australia and a current member of the UWA Business School advisory board and a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

20. Jane Kenny

Ms Kenny is managing director of law firm Dwyer Durack, where she heads up the general litigation and commercial law department. She is also convenor of the Law Society of WA's Aboriginal Lawyers Committee.

21. Gaye McMath

UWA's executive director of financial services is responsible for everything from facilities management and human resources to the extension program and UWA Press and the Perth International Arts Festival.

22. Linda Wayman

A former journalist, Ms Wayman is the long-time general manager of Southern Cross Austereo's WA operations, which includes oversight for top rating radio stations Mix 94.5 and 92.9. Ms Wayman rose to prominence as head of EventsCorp before being headhunted for her current role.

23. Marylyn New

Millionaire businesswoman Ms New has long been the name behind the Esplanade Hotels Group, which owns the Esplanade in Fremantle and the Esplanade River Suites in Como.

24. Narelle Cant

Ms Cant is a key adviser to Colin Barnett and widely regarded as the Premier's most trusted confidante.

25. Helen Cook

Ms Cook is partner, energy and natural resources, at KPMG and is also closely associated with arts and culture in WA, particularly through board roles at the Art Gallery of WA, Friends of PIAF and Perth Theatre Trust.

26. Eva Sikra

With two decades experience as a chair and board member of banking, stockbroking and financial organisations, the chairman of the Water Corporation is also deputy chancellor of Murdoch University.

27. Samantha Tough

A former Woodside Energy general manager, Ms Tough sits on the boards of companies including Structerre, Southern Cross Goldfields, Advanced Well Technologies and Strike Resources and RemCo.

28. Toni Walkington

Long-time general secretary of the CPSU Civil Service Association.

29. Jeanette Hackett

Vice-chancellor of Curtin University since 2006 and on many educational boards.

30. Lisa Clarke

Ms Clarke started her vehicle hire business McLaren Hire in Karratha 14 years ago with one 4x4 and now has a fleet of more than 1000.

31. Barb de Corti

Self-styled millionaire "queen of

32. Daniel Hatch

You could be forgiven for thinking women have not just broken through the glass ceiling, but smashed it to bits, melted it down and had it recast into nameplates for their executive suites.

Australia's Prime Minister and Governor-General are women. Every night industry leaders like Westpac Bank boss Gail Kelly and recently retired Australian Industry Group chief executive Heather Ridout are on television, fighting the hard fight on behalf of business. Gina Rinehart, a WA woman in charge of a mining empire, is Australia's richest individual.

But all is not as it seems. As West-Business today marks International Women's Day by celebrating some of WA's top female business leaders and achievers, it is worth remembering women are still greatly underrepresented on boards and in executive positions in this country.

January figures from the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency show the percentage of women on the boards of the top 200 Australian Stock Exchange listed companies is just 13.8 per cent.

And that's progress. In 2008 it was just 8 per cent.

Those numbers seem all the more pathetic when you realise that 64 of



Strong credentials: Anne Nolan is considered a safe pair of hands. Picture: Michael Wilson

those top 200 companies still have no women on their boards at all. Australia is not alone in this. Just one in seven FTSE 100 boardroom seats are filled by women and just one in 18 executives in Britain are women.

WA's Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Yvonne Henderson, said while Australia had come a long way, the glass ceiling still exists.

"We know that women still face a lot of challenges when it comes to discrimination and how they are viewed in male-dominated spheres," she said.

"Many women are highly skilled and have a lot of experience to contribute, so it is a shame there isn't greater representation to access this valuable knowledge.

"When it comes to succeeding in

companies one of the main challenges women face is trying to balance family and careers."

But it is not all doom and gloom. The trend is upwards and Ms Henderson talks about "an improved culture of acceptance".

CBH now has its first female board member in the company's 78-year history and Downer EDI has just appointed three talented

women to its board — including two well known West Australians, Kerry Sanderson and Eve Howell.

In small and medium-sized business, too, WA women are succeeding.

Among the names on our list are some less well-known women who have achieved success in their own industries and with their own companies.

Take Lisa Clarke. She started McLaren Hire with her husband Sean in Karratha in 1998 after they saw an opportunity to supply specialist vehicles to Sean's former employer, Clough.

Mrs Clarke was the lead and sole operator for the first seven years, building the company from one vehicle to more than 1000 today.

The fleet, the largest in the North West, has doubled every year and regular clients are big players including Chevron. Her efforts have already won the mother of two a 40under40 Business Award.

What's the secret of being a successful businesswoman in a male-dominated industry?

"I won't be defeated," she said.

"It takes a lot to bring me down.

"I'm also not afraid to get my hands dirty to improve the business.

"You need grit and persistence to face the challenges of running a business — and lots of it.

"As a working woman in what is essentially a man's world, confidence is an invaluable characteristic to have. I believe my confidence and positive attitude working with men results in them having the same attitude in return."



Gina Rinehart



Janet Holmes a Court



Fiona Harris



Ann Pickard



Eve Howell



Diane Smith-Gander

executive director in Treasury and is the former head of the State's energy department and the Independent Market Operator, which she helped establish.

8. Janet Holmes a Court

Chair of Heytesbury, Mrs Holmes a Court famously turned around the company's fortunes after her husband Robert's death 22 years ago. She has served on the board of the Reserve Bank and is heavily involved in the WA Symphony Orchestra.

9. Tina Thomas

Ms Thomas is one of the most senior executives at Woodside Petroleum, serving as its senior vice-president, corporate. The role includes looking after human resources for Australia's biggest oil and gas company. Ms Thomas, who dropped out of high school at 15, joined Woodside in 1989.

10. Joanne Farrell

Ms Farrell has held many senior

11. Sun Murphy

Water Corporation chief executive since 2008, Ms Murphy is also on the board of UWA Business School and chairs several high-level water asset management committees.

14. Linda Kenyon

For the past decade, Ms Kenyon has been the company secretary at Wesfarmers, WA's biggest company, which owns the Coles and Bunnings retail chains as well as insurance and coal mining businesses. She joined the company in 1987 as a legal counsel and previously managed the property division.

15. Fiona Harris

Once a partner in KPMG's Sydney office, Ms Harris has gone on to be a professional non-executive director. She sits on the board of Infigen Energy, Sundance Resources, Aurora Oil and Gas, the Perron Group, Altona

Andrew Sugiaputra, is behind an estimated \$5 billion worth of land and developments, including the high-profile redevelopment of Belmont Park racecourse.

19. Diane Smith-Gander

Last year Ms Smith-Gander became the first woman to join the board of CBH in the grain shipping and marketing company's 78-year history. She brings with her a wealth of experience gained in senior executive roles at Westpac and as a partner at management consultants McKinsey & Co in the US.

Ms Smith-Gander holds board positions with Wesfarmers, Transfield Services and the National Broadband Network Company, which the Federal Government set up to invest up to \$43 billion delivering superfast broadband to Australia.

She is past chairman of the

The top 50

clean", Barb de Corti is the woman who brought chemical-free Enjo cleaning products to Australia.

32. Maria Saraceni

A prominent employment lawyer, Ms Saraceni is a partner at Norton Rose and adjunct professor at Murdoch University.

33. Penny Flett

Long-standing chief executive of the Brightwater Care Group, Dr Flett was the named 2009 WA Australian of the Year for her role as a champion of people of all ages who require high levels of care.

34. Susan Boyd

After three decades in the Australian Foreign Service, Dr Boyd is now director of the WA Gold Corporation and sits on several human rights-related boards. She is president of the WA Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs.

35. Liz Davenport

One of Australia's most celebrated fashion designers, Liz Davenport has grown her business over four decades.

36. Maryanne Kelly

Former general manager of Argyle Diamonds, Ms Kelly is now general manager of iron ore producer Kimberley Metals Group.

37. Marilynne Paspaley

Fondly remembered from the



Maria Saraceni



Penny Flett



Liz Davenport



Kerry Sanderson

ABC TV program GP, Ms Paspaley operates high-end hospitality enterprises in the North West, including Pinetada Hotels and Resorts, McAlpine House and the Kimberley Grande.

The former dean of UWA Business School, Ms Horton is a non-executive director at the SKILLED Group, Cullen Wines and EDGE Employment, chairman of D'Orsogna and trustee and chairman of foundation at the WA Museum.

39. Ruth Tarvydas

Her dresses are a favourite with British TV king Simon Cowell and her designs have been worn by some of Hollywood's biggest names.

Ms Tarvydas' fashion empire is truly global.

40. Jenni Ballantyne

Founder of Second Skin, a manufacturer of custom-made Lycra medical garments used to treat burns and other medical conditions.

41. Kerry Sanderson

For 17 years she was head of Fremantle Ports, then for almost three years she was WA's agent-general in London. Now Ms Sanderson sits on the board of Downer EDI.

42. Kate Lamont

As well as hospitality businesses in the Swan Valley, Margaret River and Cottesloe, Ms Lamont is a director of the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Tourism WA and Tourism Australia board member.

43. Heather Zampatti

Ms Zampatti, the head of wealth

management at Bell Potter Securities in Perth, is one of WA's highest-profile stockbrokers. She has spent two decades management investment portfolios for clients.

44. Mareena Purslove

For two decades her funeral parlours have offered comfort to families in times of grief.

45. Catherine Stoddart

The WA Health Department's chief nurse and midwifery officer and last year's WA Businesswoman of the Year, Ms Stoddart is responsible for 12,000 nurses.

46. Melanie Greensmith

Ms Greensmith's label, Wheels & Dollbaby, is internationally renowned and loved.

47. Megan Larsen

The founder of natural skin care

product company Sodashi, Ms Larsen has spent a decade developing her products which are used in high-end resorts and spas.

48. Heather Jones

The woman behind Success Transport, Ms Jones mortgaged her house to buy her first truck in 2004. She is now regional manager for haulage company Wally Campbell.

49. Kylie Radford

Creative director and label co-creator at fashion house Morrison, Ms Radford has a background in HR but has built up a highly recognised boutique brand in just 10 years.

50. Leanne Preston

Founder of Wild Child, Ms Preston invented Quit Nits, the chemical-free head lice treatment that is now used around the world.