



"Quota Quandary"

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The big topic around the traps now is whether quotas are needed to improve the representation of women on Australian boards.

It sounds extreme, and on one level, it could be counter-productive. Nobody should be promoted simply because there's a quota. But then, the numbers suggest we might need some radical solutions because we seem to be going backwards.

According to the latest survey by Egan Associates, there are now fewer women serving as non-executive directors. The study found that across the 300 biggest listed companies, only 9.4 per cent of non-executive directors are women, compared to 10.6 per cent in 2009. The proportion is slightly better in the top 50 companies, with 16.3 per cent of non-executive director positions held by women in 2010. But even that number shows there's been some slippage. It's down on 2009, when 16.9 per cent were women.

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