

Friday 2nd November 2012

New program aims to improve female representation on super boards

The **Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees (AIST)** and **Women in Super** will today launch *Super Springboard*, a 12 month program for women interested in becoming directors of superannuation funds.

The *Super Springboard* program – which will offer a comprehensive training program, mentoring and networking opportunities - has attracted \$150,000 in funding from the Gillard Government to provide 10 scholarship places.

The scholarship funding is to be announced today by The Honourable Bill Shorten, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation at the program's launch in Melbourne before more than 200 representatives of the super industry.

AIST CEO Fiona Reynolds thanked the Government - particularly Minister Shorten - for taking the issue of board diversity seriously, launching the Springboard program and providing funding.

“Even though we’re doing better on gender diversity than listed companies, we still need to improve the gender gap on superannuation boards. Super Springboard will help us to achieve this,” Ms Reynolds said,

The Chair of Women in Super – a national networking and advocacy group, **Ms Cate Wood** encouraged women new to superannuation boards, or those wanting to become a super trustee director to consider applying for the program.

“Our research has shown that women face significant hurdles in becoming directors of super funds. This program will play a key role in helping super fund boards move to our target of 40 per cent female representation and, importantly, put more focus on closing the gender gap in retirement savings,” Ms Wood said.

Super Springboard will include a variety of specialist training, including AIST's Trustee Director Course, and participants will be allocated a dedicated mentor. Participants will also attend the Conference of Major Superannuation (CMSF), and receive complimentary places at Women in Super events, as well as complimentary membership of both AIST and Women in Super.

Priority for the ten scholarship places will be given to funds that currently have no women on their board, or only one female director, Ms Reynolds and Ms Wood said. AIST and Women in Super will continue to work closely with funds and their sponsoring organisations to improve gender representation on their boards.

Applications for the 2013 Super Springboard program close on 10 December 2012. Applications open on 2 November 2012 via the AIST website: www.aist.asn.au

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AIST is the peak industry body for the \$450 billion not-for-profit super sector which includes industry, corporate and public sector funds covering the super interests of nearly two-thirds of the Australian workforce.

