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New campaign launched to boost the number of female Order of Australia recipients Business leader says public recognition of women remains elusive

Business leader and social enterprise pioneer Carol Schwartz AM has launched a high-profile campaign to boost the number of women recognised through the Australia honours system.

Ms Schwartz today launched a new guide designed to help increase the number of women receiving awards in the Order of Australia.

“Tomorrow another crop of venerable and deserving men and women will be revealed as Order of Australia recipients, yet history shows us that only around a third of the people on that list will be women,” Ms Schwartz said. “We want to make sure that not one more Australia Day rolls around without that gross inequality being eliminated.”

The new guide – *Advancing Women: Women & the Order of Australia* – is an initiative of Ms Schwartz’s Women’s Leadership Institute Australia (WLIA), in cooperation with Our Community, which provides support for not-for-profit organisations and linkages between that sector and business and government.

The guide will be sent to every Member of Parliament and every Mayor and Shire President in Australia, seeking their support to nominate and promote nominations for women. It is also available for free download from the WLIA website at <http://www.wlia.com.au/> and at www.ourcommunity.com.au/honours

Women & the Order of Australia walks the reader through the process of nominating someone for an award, providing advice on the sorts of women you might consider nominating and how to build your case.

The guide reveals that over the past decade, only around a third of awardees have been women – and the trendline is going down, not up.

Ms Schwartz said too few women received honours because too few women were nominated.

“Just over half of all people who are nominated for an award in the Order of Australia get an award – and in fact women who are nominated generally do even better than men,” she said. “What we need to do is boost the number of women who are nominated.”

Ms Schwartz said it was an utter fallacy to think that women did not receive public awards because women weren’t carrying out important work.

“We need to rethink the way we think about community contribution,” she said. “People should not receive public awards just because they are good at their jobs – let’s look at who is really contributing to building Australia today.”

Our Community Group Managing Director Denis Moriarty said most people would know at least one great woman they could nominate for an award.

“A century after women won the right to vote in Australia and more than 50 years since women were awarded equal pay for equal work, true equality remains elusive,” he said. “We must continually challenge and change women’s role in society. We need to acknowledge that there is still a long, long way to go in achieving true leadership equality – and part of that is ensuring that women get the public recognition they deserve through the awarding of Australia’s top honours.”

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