

Email – M. Littlejohns

28 February 2018

I am concerned that the application of the 9 year limit on independence on chairs may have the unintended consequence of reducing the number of female chairs on boards and be detrimental to other diversity initiatives. Based on my own experience, I suspect that few females are recruited and appointed to boards directly as chairs, but are only considered for the position subsequently when they have proven their abilities to their fellow directors. Such appointments tend to occur after several, if not many years of service as a female non-executive director: in my case, after 8 years. I am sure that I would not have been considered for the role as chair if I was no longer considered independent a year later.

Currently there are too few female chairs of boards. This new proposed ruling could reduce that number and indeed generally discourage females from applying for NED positions on boards given the limited number of role models.