

# HERE FOR DIVERSITY

Adopted by the ACON Health Ltd board 8 July 2015

## ACON BOARD DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The ACON board values the diverse nature of the communities from which we were founded and is proud to serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities.

ACON's Diversity Statement commits us to pursue diversity in all of our work:

- Respecting individuals and valuing difference in our communities is a strength.
- We believe we have a responsibility to demonstrate leadership on diversity issues within our communities and more broadly.
- We respect and value the diverse life experiences of our clients, communities, staff, partners, and volunteers.
- By having difference in our staff and volunteers we are better able to achieve our mission and able to provide better services to our diverse communities.
- Only by valuing and developing the skills of all our people will ACON be in the best position to deliver our mission and meet our future challenges.
- Creating and maintaining a diverse culture is about recognising and responding to individual difference, contribution, and need - not treating everyone the same.
- At ACON, it is everybody's responsibility to ensure that respecting individuals and valuing diversity is part of every program and governance structure.

This Diversity Statement applies to the board. We visibly demonstrate our leadership and our commitment to diversity through the activities we undertake to ensure the ACON Board reflects the diversity of our communities.

Knowledge, skills, and experiences are important parts of the directors' skill matrix. This matrix informs board appointment decisions, notably those made by the board itself when there is a casual vacancy or when accessing the provisions of clause 11.4 of the Constitution, that allows the board to appoint up to two additional directors. That clause states:

### 11.4 Powers of the Board to appoint Directors

- a. The Board has the power to appoint Directors to fill casual vacancies. Casual Vacancy appointments remain effective until the next AGM.
- b. Subject to clauses 11.7(a) and 11.7(b), the Board also has the power, by resolution or written notice signed by all of them, to appoint up to 3 further Directors including (without limitation) in circumstances where it seeks to ensure that at least one Director is a person living with HIV.
- c. Any Director appointed under clause 11.4(b) shall serve for a term of 12 months (unless that Director resigns or is removed from office in accordance with this constitution before the end of the relevant term), at which time they must automatically retire.
- d. Only the Board has the power to appoint Directors under this clause.
- e. Directors appointed under this clause 11.4 are eligible for reappointment by the Board under this clause 11.4 and are eligible for election by members under clause 11.3(a).

The board considers diversity of gender, HIV sero-status, ethnicity, ability, culture, age and geography around the board table to be important considerations when exercising its powers to appoint Directors, and form part of the directors' skill matrix.

In addition the board believes that effort must be made to develop community capacity that ensures the governance of ACON reflects the diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities that it serves.

The board welcomes the experience and expression of diversity within its communities and will encourage and support the participation of women, HIV positive people, people from CALD communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, younger people, people living with a disability, and community Elders with diverse backgrounds, and from across the many communities in which ACON's works, to participate in the governance of ACON.

The board commits itself to:

1. regularly auditing its own diversity practice in relation to board membership;
2. exceeding the current target of 30% of board directors identifying as female<sup>1</sup> within 3 years;
3. increasing the diversity of the board in relation to gender, ethnicity, ability, culture, age and geography<sup>2</sup> within 3 years; and
4. developing the knowledge, skills, and capacity of community members from diverse backgrounds to participate in ACON's governance.



<sup>1</sup> [companydirectors.com.au/General/Header/Media/Media-Releases/2015/Boards-should-adopt-30-per-cent-target-for-female-directors](http://companydirectors.com.au/General/Header/Media/Media-Releases/2015/Boards-should-adopt-30-per-cent-target-for-female-directors)

<sup>2</sup> [probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2015/03/aussie-boards-becoming-more-culturally-diverse-report](http://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2015/03/aussie-boards-becoming-more-culturally-diverse-report)