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Gender and generation in native title: Director demographics and the future of prescribed bodies corporate

While gender and age are often noted as being important dimensions of Indigenous leadership and governance, they have rarely been examined in detail. This paper focuses specifically on the gender and age of directors on the boards of prescribed bodies corporate (PBCs), the corporations established to hold and/or manage native title rights and interests.

A predominant view persists of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as excluded or marginalised in native title. Statistical data for the year 2011–12 reveals, however, that women’s representation on PBC boards is higher than that found in mainstream sectors, while the literature reveals a complex picture of cultural, historical, demographic, institutional and intercultural factors that influence men’s and women’s participation and power in the native title arena.

A key generational concern is the relatively low number of older people and the growing number of young people in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. Viewed in relation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and projected changes, the pool of potential PBC directors looks likely to grow in coming years. This paper argues that, as an increasingly significant sector, PBCs have the potential to both contribute to and benefit from the strengthening of community capacity but this potential will not be realised until the constraints on the capacity of PBCs to meet their statutory obligations and pursue native title holder aspirations are addressed.

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[PBCs \(Prescribed Body / Bodies Corporate\)](#)

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