Press release
19 October 2016

Australian CIOs forecast women to equal men in IT leadership roles

- When compared globally, 37% of Australian CIOs project women will be on par with men in both staff and leadership roles, ranking second behind 50% of French CIOs.
- 44% of CIOs globally see men continuing to dominate IT leadership roles – a figure which reduces to 34% in Australia.
- The majority of Australian CIOs believe challenging existing stereotypes (53%) and proving their competence (49%) are the greatest barriers the IT industry presents for women.

Sydney, 19 October 2016 – According to independent research commissioned by specialist recruiter Robert Half among 960 CIOs globally more than seven in ten (71%) Australian CIOs see a future where women will be on par with men for at least non-management roles.

When compared globally, Australian sentiment towards women in technology is more reassuring, with 37% of Australian CIOs forecasting that women will be on par with men in both staff and leadership roles – ranking second behind France (50%), but well ahead of Asia (24%) and the UK (25%). Interestingly, merely 4% of CIOs around the world see women holding the majority of both staff and leadership roles – a figure which rises to 6% in Australia.

However, there are still some barriers to overcome, as more than one in three (34%) Australian CIOs hold the belief that, despite women reaching parity in staff levels, men will continue to hold the majority of leadership roles. This compares with an average of 46% of CIOs across Brazil, France, Germany, UK, Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan, who foresee male dominance continuing in the sector.

Nicole Gorton, Director, Robert Half Australia said: *"The technology sector is experiencing exponential growth, particularly within the Big Data, cyber-security and mobile spaces. And while gender imbalance within the sector has long been recognised as an ongoing issue, with 91% of Australian CIOs saying they find it challenging to source skilled IT candidates, it is more important than ever for women to enter the IT sector and obtain positions across the chain of command."*

The most recent analysis of Labour Force figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) comparing the female to male representation of IT workers in Australia shows the proportion of female employees across IT divisions has dropped as the sector has expanded[1].

When asked about the challenges the IT industry imposes on women working in the sector, 53% of Australian CIOs say challenging existing stereotypes within the industry is the greatest barrier, followed by proving their competence (49%). Other industry challenges women have to overcome include proving their competence (49%), overcoming impersonal/cultural considerations (41%) and earning respect (31%). Almost one in four (24%) CIOs refer to overcoming a male-dominated workplace.

The survey findings suggest that misconceptions and stereotypes within the industry, rather than concerns about technical competencies and professional capabilities, are the main barriers obstructing

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1 ABS 6291.0.55.003 - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, Aug 2016

progression for women in the IT field. Only 11% of Australian CIOs believe that there are no challenges for women in the sector.

"Improving female representation within the technology workforce will not be without challenges and requires an encompassing approach, starting with positioning IT as an attractive career path for both men and women. Secondly, in order to challenge this traditionally male-dominated environment and channel more women into their technology teams, Australian companies need to further encourage workplace diversity and promote the added value of a balanced workforce to the wider business community," **Nicole Gorton** added.

"The fastest growing jobs in Australia require STEM – science, technology, engineering and maths – knowledge and skills. With insufficient Australian talent in the pipeline, investing in education and encouraging women to stay engaged in STEM-related education and careers is a vital step towards increasing and ensuring the full representation of female IT professionals and leaders."

"With more opportunities in the IT sector, this presents a fantastic opportunity for women aspiring to work in IT as companies are looking for IT candidates with strong skill sets who can spread value across the board. Furthermore, ambitious women working in IT need to seize opportunities and position themselves for advancement and leadership roles," **Nicole Gorton** concluded.

What will be the future for women working in the technology field?

	All Countries	Australia	Brazil	France	Germany	Hong Kong	Singapore	UK	Japan
In time, women will be on par with men for staff-level roles but men will continue to hold the majority of leadership roles	*44%*	34%	43%	29%	46%	53%	52%	47%	54%
In time, women will be on par with men in both staff and leadership roles	*31%*	37%	33%	50%	27%	25%	26%	25%	22%
Men will continue to hold the majority of both staff and leadership roles	*17%*	16%	14%	10%	24%	19%	17%	20%	15%
In time, women will hold the majority of both staff and leadership roles	*4%*	6%	8%	3%	2%	1%	2%	1%	6%
Don't know	*4%*	7%	2%	8%	3%	2%	3%	7%	3%

Source: Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 960 global CIOs.

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Notes to editors

About the research
The annual study was developed by Robert Half and is conducted by an independent research company. The study is based on 960 interviews (160 of which were Australian-based) with CIOs, senior IT and technology executives from companies globally, with the results segmented by company size, sector and geographic location.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy and member of the S&P 500. Founded in 1948, the company has over 325 offices worldwide providing temporary, interim and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services, technology, and administrative professionals. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Mount Waverley, Perth and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com.au.

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Which is more important when it comes to getting a job in the IT and finance sector: qualifications or experience? According to recruiters, however, these qualifications form just one part of the industry picture. Are qualifications more important than work experience in the tech and finance industry? Or vice versa? We speak with industry insiders to get their opinions.

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