

# More women needed to make awards truly Australian

## ■ Vivienne Pearson

In response to growing criticism about the low proportion of women who receive Order of Australia honours, the Governor-General is announcing initiatives to redress the balance.

Sir Peter Cosgrove is encouraging Australians to use International Women's Day, March 8, as an opportunity to nominate a deserving woman.

"Australia has not always fully recognised women who smash glass ceilings, give their all for worthy causes and contribute so much to our community," Sir Peter said in a video address that is set to screen around the country at International Women's Day events.

Women made up 34.7 per cent of



those honoured on Australia Day this year, a slight increase on 2016's five-year average of 31.04 per cent.

As the system is one of community nomination, the percentage will only increase if more women are nominated.

Lady Cosgrove joined her husband in the call to nominate more women. "On the eve of International Women's Day, I hope you'll nominate a woman you know whose achievements ought to be celebrated, and recognised, in the Order of Australia," she said. "So, on March 8, let's nominate."

The changes to be announced involve introducing an email address ([nominate@gg.gov.au](mailto:nominate@gg.gov.au)) to kickstart the nomination process. And for the first time, nomination applications can be made online.

Elizabeth Broderick (pictured), one of three women on the Council for the Order of Australia, which considers nominations, said there were many unrecognised women who deserved to be honoured.

Ms Broderick, a former Sex Discrimination Commissioner, said women's contributions to society are less visible, "especially those in community sectors and in unpaid work".

"On International Women's Day, give our nation the opportunity to say thank you on behalf of all of us for an extraordinary contribution."