



TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP

The art of increasing the number of women leading

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FOREWARD

This White Paper has been developed to provide organisations of all sizes with access to best practices for securing gender equity.

It is informed by the systems of award-winning companies, set against our own experience of what is required to effect fair, significant and enduring change. And it is offered in the knowledge that outcomes for organisations and workers are measurably better where gender equity is practised. Further, we hold that having more women in leadership positions and more women working in traditionally male-dominated sectors, is the key to having the future we all want.

Times have changed and rapidly so. We are facing a world that is increasingly politically and socially divided. We are at the end of the Holocene (12,000 years of climate stability) and are now in the Anthropocene (the era marked by human footprint on every part of our planet).

We are a very successful species – all human indicators are on the ascent (better food, education, we live longer, don't die during childbirth at the rates we used to, and have wide access to technology and all it offers). However, every planetary indicator is on the descent – the climate crisis is on our doorstep, plastics are in our food chain, insect populations (on which human food production depends) are declining dramatically and we are living in the fifth-largest species extinction on record. It is a bleak and confronting picture.

We ask: What, in the practice of leadership, got us to this point and what kind of leadership will move us into a better tomorrow?

We believe (and have ample evidence to support this) that women in leadership may be one of the most significant contributions to our sustainability that we can muster.

FORWARD CONTINUED

We know the importance of giving more women the tools and platforms with which to create and promote a more sustainable future. It is why I founded Homeward Bound Projects seven years ago, which now has a network of 500+ women with a STEMM background working both individually and collaboratively to make a meaningful difference in the world.

It is in this context that gender equity is less about fairness and equal opportunity (although these are undeniably important) or improved business performance (although this unarguably occurs when women are in greater numbers at the executive table). Our position is fundamentally about our planet, people and legacy.

More great leadership, shared equally between men and women, is critical.

The COVID-19 pandemic we have all been living through for more than two years has unequivocally demonstrated how quickly we can change and adapt (policies, legislation, processes and behaviours) when the need is great enough. It has also demonstrated that women (as part time workers, care givers, health care workers and educators) have paid a hefty price for the staggering changes we have all had to endure. Gender disparity, and the consequences for all of us in failing to address this, is a problem that needs sustained effort. We can and must demonstrate the same level of commitment of effort and resources to addressing it once and for all.

We have been talking about, and moving incrementally towards, gender equity for decades. With this White Paper, we hope to inspire and empower you to take 'the great leap forward' now, so that we may all start to reap the rewards within a decade, not a century – We may not have that luxury of time.



FABIAN DATNER
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INTRODUCTION

Gender equity means “fairness of treatment for men and women according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.”

(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

WHY GENDER EQUITY IS IMPORTANT

Over the past 20 years, Fabian Dattner and the Dattner Group team have worked extensively with executive groups, senior leaders and teams on creating more enlightened approaches to engagement of all people. On this journey, we have accrued a significant body of knowledge on many practices in business, not least of which is the basics of working together, men and women, for a better future.

It has been known now for well over a decade that organisations with greater gender diversity in senior leadership outperform those without. The results of research into this conducted by McKinsey & Co – first in 2007¹ and again in 2010² – were unequivocal. Similar findings emerged from Development Dimensions International’s (DDI) research undertaken in 2015³. Once again, when segmented

by financial performance, there were large differences in the proportion of women in leadership roles: the top 20% of organisations had 37% of women in leadership roles and a further 12% in the pipeline; compared with 19% leaders and 8% in the pipeline for organisations in the bottom 20%.

The reason for this is that women are naturally predisposed to utilise leadership behaviours that promote organisational performance. Rigorous analysis from the Hay Group division of Korn Ferry⁴ found that women more effectively employ the emotional and social competencies correlated with effective leadership and management than men. Research published in the Harvard Business Review found that women leaders demonstrated 15 out of 16 competencies shown to drive business performance, more frequently than men⁵. McKinsey’s Organisational Health Index has found that women used 5 out of 9 leadership behaviours that improve organisational performance, more often than men.

So, purely in terms of business performance, gender equity makes sense. However, the need and benefits go fundamentally deeper.

Now, as the Fourth Industrial Revolution heralds the convergence of advanced digital, physical and biological technologies to bring social, economic and political change, the call to action is becoming louder.

Industry 4.0 represents “a fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate to one another... an opportunity to create an inclusive, human-centred future”.⁶ Women in leadership are integral to this paradigm shift.

It is also worth noting that women now control approximately 90% of global household spending, valued at more than US\$32 trillion dollars.⁷ If organisations are to really know their customers/ market, more women need to be the leading voices that navigate an increasingly complex world. Without the equal inclusion (requiring equitable participation, remuneration and leadership contribution) of half our population, Australia and the rest of the world will not be able to capitalise on the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Finally, as noted in the Foreword: Women have a critical part to play in creating a more sustainable future for us all.

In recent years, we have seen the influence of some formidable, visionary women significantly change the ‘climate change’ landscape: Christiana Figueres, whose ‘collaborative diplomacy’ resulted in the landmark Paris Agreement; Patricia Espinosa, current UN Climate Chief and ‘team builder with a ruthless streak’ working doggedly to ensure countries uphold their commitments under the Agreement; Gina McCarthy, the first-ever White House Climate Advisor, charged with implementing President Biden’s progressive climate policies; Amina J Mohammed, current UN Deputy Secretary General and instrumental in developing the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainability Development Goals; now-19-year-old Greta Thunberg, the voice of a new generation and thrice-nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, inspiring worldwide ‘school strikes for climate’ to provoke politicians to act decisively to address the climate crisis.⁸

Many other women are leading and working on climate action, as well as the many sustainable development goals that encompass factors such as health, poverty, food and water security. Many more have the potential and the desire to make a difference, yet are lacking the means and supports required to facilitate success.

It is with these imperatives in mind that we developed this Paper, to support Boards, Executive teams and Human Resources professionals to develop and implement gender equity strategies that will close the gender gap.

ARE WE THERE YET?

Short answer: No. Certainly, some significant inroads have been made, but progress overall is halting and inconsistent. And the COVID-19 global pandemic has set us back substantially.

In Australia:

- The AICD (Australian Institute of Company Directors) reported in August 2021⁹ that the number of women appointed to ASX200 boards was 33.7% (down from 45% in 2018, but slightly up from 29.5% in September 2019¹⁰). The number of ASX200 male-only boards has decreased overall from 28 in 2015, to zero in 2021.
- In C-suites, however, the picture is far less encouraging. A recent survey from Chief Executive Women (CEW)¹¹ reported that just 6% of the top ASX300 companies have women CEOs, and the percentage of women CEOs in the ASX200 is the same as it was five years ago (5%). In 2021, 78% of CEOs were appointed from line roles with profit and loss accountability; however, women make up just 14% of line management roles across the ASX300 and it is forecasted to take 65 years for women to make up 40% of line roles in executive leadership teams, based on census trends from the last five years. This is why gender targets and focus on developing women into pipeline roles is imperative.
- As at September 2021, the gender pay gap was 14.2% (an increase from 13.4% in April), meaning that, on average, Australian women would have to work an additional two months per year to achieve parity with men. In some sectors the gap is significantly higher than the average – 21% in the healthcare and social assistance industry, where women make up 80% of that workforce.¹²
- Fifteen years ago, Australia was hailed by the World Economic Forum as a leader in the global fight for gender equality – ranked 15th on the Global Gender Gap Index. As at October 2021, Australia had slipped to 50th place.

Globally:

- Just 27% of management positions are held by women.¹³
- The average gender pay gap is an estimated 23%.¹⁴
- In the 76 years since gender equality was enshrined in the UN Charter, not one country has achieved gender parity.¹⁵
- A year ago, at the rate of change to date, it was projected that, on average across the globe, parity may take another 100 years to achieve; in the wake of COVID-19, this forecast has been increased to 136 years.¹⁶

THE IMPACT OF COVID

Though much data is still being collected and the most recent/longitudinal impacts yet to be published, data from 2020 and 2021 unequivocally shows that women have borne the brunt of the global pandemic significantly more than men, and gender equity gains have taken a significant hit. As former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard has written: “this crisis exacerbates underlying inequalities”.¹⁷

With women being overrepresented in casual and part-time employment, and in sectors that have been most affected by restrictions put in place to limit the spread of the virus (retail, hospitality, tourism, education), job losses have been significant. Globally, the number of employed women dropped by 4.2% (representing 54 million people) and 45 million left the workforce altogether (a figure greater than men).¹⁸ Australian figures suggest that women’s workforce participation dropped from a record high of 61.5% in January 2020 down to 57.5% by May and, despite some gains, was still 1.3% lower in August than it had been in pre-COVID February.¹⁹

As well as the immediate financial (dis)stress resulting from these job losses, long-term financial security is also a significant concern. As a result of our government’s allowed early release of superannuation savings to help buffer the effects of COVID-related job losses, a survey of AMP clients in Australia indicated that women were withdrawing more of their superannuation than men, and more were closing their accounts, widening the superannuation gap even further.²⁰

Women have also been the majority at the frontline of managing COVID impacts (globally, women represent 75% of healthcare workers).²¹ This has increased their risk of exposure to the virus and of bringing it home to their families.

The ABS Household Impacts of COVID-19 survey found that 31% of employed Australians worked from home most days, compared to 12% pre-pandemic. Another survey found this work from home figure to be 60% compared with 7% prior to the pandemic.²² Whether working or not, women also took up the bulk of increased caregiving and teaching duties (with the temporary closure of schools – globally, a reality in 42% of countries – and childcare facilities),²³ as well as spent even more time on household chores than normal. For those who have remained employed, this has been an additional, stressful burden. For those who have lost their job, these increased domestic responsibilities have limited access to new work opportunities.

With the emotional stress of lockdowns, longer periods of time together, increased consumption of alcohol and financial stress from diminished employment, there has also been an increase in sexual and domestic violence against women and girls worldwide.²⁴

While we will no doubt recover from the impacts of this pandemic, as Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins noted to the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 in September 2020: "Without positive action... Australia's progress towards gender equality will be set back a generation, to the detriment of us all". She further noted, and we concur, that we now have "a once-in-a-generation opportunity to remove the structural and systemic barriers that impede women's full participation in the paid workforce once and for all".²⁵

For all the damage it has caused, this pandemic has shown that we are capable of quickly changing our approaches to work. Businesses have had to 'pivot' their offerings. Governments have offered unprecedented social and financial supports, to levels that, if sustained, could better support more fair and equitable workforce participation. Enforced working from home, teamed with appropriate digital technologies, has shown organisations that gender equity-friendly flexible work arrangements are a viable option.

A survey of 6000 Australian public service employees, for example, indicated that over 90% of managers found their teams to be as or more productive working from home, and were supportive of the continuation of such arrangements post-pandemic; survey participants also noted the personal benefits of working from home – more time for self/family due to not having to commute, as well as satisfaction in being able to complete more work and have more autonomy over work.

This pandemic has shown that we can make the changes we need to achieve gender equity. It is a matter of will and of commitment.

We have a responsibility to the highly educated Australian women entering the workforce to identify and overcome the systemic barriers that continue to impede advancement.

The next section of this Paper outlines how to review and develop organisational practices focussing on the four stages of the employee lifecycle (i.e. how to attract, select, develop and retain women), with a particular emphasis on increasing the number of women in leadership positions. These evidence-based recommendations are based on initiatives undertaken by Dattner Group in partnership with leaders in business. They are designed to guide and inform choices that both men and women in leadership, working together, may explore and implement to diversify the leadership pool, and provide the right support to families and caregivers.



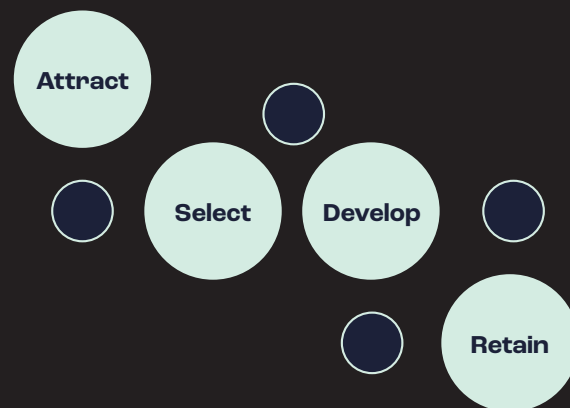
**‘This crisis exacerbates
underlying inequalities.’**

PROGRESSING GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY

To address such a deep-seated and systemic challenge, the introduction of discrete policies, processes and training will not effect sustainable change.

It requires a collaborative, boundaryless, 'whole system' approach; 'marathon' rather than 'sprint' endurance; and commitment of both male and female leaders at all levels to become champions of gender equity. Changing the game takes a movement, not just a change management plan or process.

The challenge is not insurmountable, with many culture change experts agreeing that a 'small steps, giant wins' approach gender parity. While organisations are rational, logical, time-managed and processed, it is ultimately the people who deliver the organisation's objectives. People as beings lead with emotions and cognitive processing influenced by past experiences, our environment, personal motivators and needs. Just as in nature, change occurs in small increments. So, know where the biases and blockers are, mark each milestone as a win to recognise, then sustain change by monitoring and extending to embed the change.



Gender gaps are often the result of embedded approaches to hiring, retention and progression within companies. The following recommendations and change levers are summarised into **ATTRACTION, SELECTION, DEVELOPMENT** and **RETENTION**, and collated to provide a practical **Gender Equity Review Checklist**, which can be found on **page 36**.

It is worth noting here that, while three-quarters (76.5%) of WGEA-reporting organisations have a gender equity strategy or policy, only a third (33.5%) have implemented KPIs for managers relating to outcomes²⁶. This paper is intended to support leaders with practical actions that can measurably progress gender equity strategies.

ATTRACTION

There is a range of measures and initiatives that can be implemented to increase gender diversity by attracting external candidates to an organisation. We outline these under the Attraction pillar of a Gender Equity Strategy.

Develop an organisation branding strategy that includes explicit communication to potential external women applicants

- **Use diverse images and inclusive language** in marketing materials and on the corporate website to attract women to non-traditional roles.²⁷
- **Provide information on the full range of career opportunities available to women**, including opportunities for **flexible work practices** and other available care strategies, and encourage women to apply for both corporate and non-traditional roles. This can be achieved by making the organisation's **Talent Community Portal** highly interactive, live and engaging. In turn, this approach provides metrics and insights that will attract a potential talent pool irrespective of vacancies, and more efficiently too.
- **Publish profiles and case studies of women in non-traditional roles** to provide role models potential applicants can relate to and be inspired by.
- **Sponsor awards and awards events** to enhance the organisation's profile and to promote women's accomplishments within non-traditional roles.
- **Engage with TAFE, colleges and universities** where senior and graduate technical women are providing career guidance. Offer scholarships, internships and vacation employment for women, speak at student clubs and sponsor university design projects.
- **Engaged employees are your best brand advocates.** Foster a positive culture where both men and women are talking about how inclusive their workplace is. Social networks, both in real life and through social platforms, are powerful. Under-35s are trending away from traditional social media platforms and into shared interest spaces called 'digital campfires'.²⁸ Conversations are now happening here in a more private setting of shared experience, rather than on other platforms where images and brands are carefully curated.
- **Promote achievement of individual and corporate awards focused on women** to recognise participation and success in 'leading practice' awards.
- **Engage with schools to raise awareness of opportunities for girls.** Support third-party attraction programs targeting high school girls; speak at schools; create teaching aids; sponsor competitions, work experience and camps for girls, and provide career guidance.
- **Use women's voices for audio/visual content/advertising.** Given many advertising campaigns use male voiceovers, the female voice 'stands out' and sends a strong signal that the organisation is inclusive.
- **Focus on how you 'brand' your organisation and career opportunities.** Ensure the brand and value proposition used in job advertisements is attractive to women.

Manage recruitment strategies to encourage women applicants

- **Share your gender diversity strategy and goals with recruitment and labour suppliers**, and encourage them to partner with you to achieve these outcomes. Expect recruitment firms to present 50% female candidates for every position.
- **Train internal recruiters and hiring managers to recognise stereotypes and unconscious bias** about the sort of work women can do and the myths about women in non-traditional roles.
- **Open up more paid internships and graduate placements for women** in organisations with roles in content production, data and AI, engineering and cloud computing, people and culture, marketing and sales, and specialised project management. These are six of the eight micro-clusters with the highest employment growth rate, where women remain underrepresented, despite Australia being ranked number one on Educational Attainment in the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index (meaning we have achieved full parity). Focus hiring more for behavioural, self-motivated learning and human-centric skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills. Then develop specific competencies on the job.
- **Create job advertisements that attract women to apply.** The images and language used in advertisements, particularly in male-dominated industries, send a strong signal about being an employer of choice for women. Feature women prominently in promotional material. Remove irrelevant selection criteria that describe non-merit factors. Women may only apply if they perceive they 'tick all the boxes', whereas men are still likely to apply even if they aren't an exact competency match.
- **Locate advertisements broadly and where women will notice them.** Organisations are becoming more creative about placement of job advertisements and are no longer relying only on traditional channels to advertise roles.
- **Offer a female contact for questions.** Leading organisations give female applicants the opportunity to ask questions of women employed in non-traditional roles.
- **Obtain feedback from women applicants at each stage of the recruitment process** and use this process to create a positive experience for applicants. A candidate's experience during the recruitment process is a key determinant of whether they will accept a role. Leading organisations therefore recognise the benefits of making the process a positive experience for all candidates.
- **Provide feedback to all candidates who request it**, to objectively discuss their strengths and competency areas where they weren't as competitive.

SELECTION

There is a range of measures that can be implemented to increase gender diversity by addressing how an organisation identifies and selects the best internal and external candidates to fill vacancies within the organisation.

Employees involved in the recruitment process are often the first face-to-face contact for the potential candidate. As a result, their language and behaviour send a strong signal about the culture and values of the organisation. The experience the candidate has during the recruitment process will be a key determinant of whether they will accept a role with an organisation.

The following initiatives may be considered under the 'Selection' pillar of a Gender Equity Strategy.

Strategies for an inclusive and rigorous interview and selection process

- **Hold managers to account for delivering on diversity goals.** A recent Lean In report found that, while 70% of companies hold senior leaders so accountable, only 30% hold managers (often the decision makers in hiring/promotion) accountable.²⁹
- **Ensure line managers and those sitting on selection panels are trained to recognise stereotypes and unconscious bias.** This enables an organisation to address the risk of informal evaluation and selection methods that favour men over women. Train decision makers to consider how candidates with a diverse range of experiences can transfer their skills to jobs in roles or professions, and to look more laterally at skills and experiences.
- **Build awareness in managers that women are likely to be hesitant to apply for new roles and may be less likely to promote their successes.** Selection techniques need to take this into account.
- **Ensure selection panels adhere to a recruitment process that uses fair and grounded criteria,** instead of a reliance on subjective and informal judgements of 'fit' and affinity bias (the unconscious tendency to rank more highly people who have something in common with us, e.g. went to the same school, live in the same area).

- **Recognise skills derived from unpaid work.** Australians do the third-highest amount of unpaid work per day in the OECD, at just over 4 hours per day.³⁰ Moreover, Australian women spend 64% of their average weekly working hours on unpaid work, compared with 36% for men.³¹ The skills gained in this sphere should not be devalued in an interview, and may be associated with effective management and professional competencies, such as time management, problem solving, communication, people management and organisation skills.³²
- **Consider a 'Women-in-Cyber initiative'³³** to address the growing global skills and knowledge gap in cyber security, by recruiting mothers and women returning from a career break for roles where diversity of thinking is critical and the right aptitude is screened for. Some training partners secure guaranteed employment before training commences and STEM backgrounds are not required.
- **Require all interview panels to have women** participating in the selection process.
- **Highlight the strategies that the organisation is implementing** to address the perceptions female candidates may have about the culture of the industry.
- **Use gender-blind resumes,³⁴** i.e. have names, and any other personal or identifying information that may indicate gender, excised from documents by someone not involved in the decision, prior to any culling or shortlisting, and apply ID numbers until a decision is made to interview. New tech solutions are allowing managers to overcome bias by screening candidates using objective measures.
- **Reframe the employment conversation from seeking and developing the 'best candidates' to seeking and developing the 'best teams'.** Make merit part of the diversity conversation, rather than diversity being part of the merit conversation. This means merit can no longer be an excuse for lack of diversity. It opens businesses up to a more useful concept of what it is to have merit, is a better way of achieving the highest-performing teams and broadens the talent pool. Biases will be perpetuated unless they're intentionally interrupted. Further, people who think they work for meritocracies are less likely to do what it takes to interrupt them. Businesses must replace subjective non-meritocratic business processes with bias interrupters that are based on objective metrics.
- **Analyse, in-depth, why women are unsuccessful in the interview process.** Follow up those who do not accept job offers, or have a third party consult with people who declined job offers and report back.

- **Establish leadership capabilities in job criteria** that focus on the capabilities and skills that are genuinely required to lead in any given organisation – that is, those that support strategy execution – rather than those that appeal to particular managers or roles in isolation.
- **Offer an induction program and buddy system** that starts from the job-offer stage and assists women to form relationships, build networks and transition successfully to the organisation. Great onboarding programs last for the first 12 months of employment for external hires because cultural norms, networks and speed to competency can take longer than 6 months. Losing a good employee in the first year of employment is costly in terms of financial cost, brand ambassador potential and loss of potential talent for the leadership pipeline.
- **Require formal reporting to Executive** if no women are on the shortlist of candidates for a particular role or, where there are female candidates, an explanation is required if a woman is not successful in securing the role.
- Research from **Women on Boards** showed a strong discontent with Board selection processes – and this was reported by candidates, employers and recruiters. Of the 700 respondents,³⁵ the strong experience was that selection remains a *'closed shop'*, reserved for a known and trusted pool of networked men and women through an opaque process. Board selection requires more transparent processes, timelines and weighting on skills such as governance and education.



DEVELOPMENT

There is a range of measures that can be implemented to increase gender diversity by supporting the development of women (with a focus on leadership). While there are measures needed to address particular challenges that women face in developing into leadership roles, there are some foundational steps required to create a robust, level playing field within which both men and women can grow as leaders.

The following initiatives may be considered under the ‘Development’ pillar of a Gender Equity Strategy.

Develop an objective, aligned leadership competency framework

By promoting a leadership competency framework – one that objectively specifies leadership performance requirements, values capabilities and needed behaviours to drive results by career level – an organisation can improve the way they select, develop and recognise leadership strength more inclusively.

Implementing a leadership competency framework that is aligned to the strategy clarifies performance expectations, provides the foundation for a common view of the desired culture, reduces risk from rogue behaviour, and opens the leadership pipeline to a full and diverse range of female talent. Taking a closer look at the behaviours of key leaders – and the climate those behaviours create – is the first step towards assessing the need for a change.

Consider the following questions and how they apply to you:

- *What critical leadership competencies provide the foundation for the business’s performance?*
- *Can we measure the behaviours in action?*
- *Do we assess and validate leadership competency before any promotion to formal leadership roles?*
- *How do we evaluate their impact?*
- *What leadership competencies are needed to deliver on tomorrow’s strategic imperatives?*
- *How do they compare with today’s priorities?*
- *What leadership competencies do we value?*
- *Do these values vary by geography? Does performance vary among businesses or regions? How do we address the variations?*

Deploy a common talent assessment process

Talent assessment is the most critical component of the leadership development system. By applying a standard leadership assessment process and approach, you can gain a sense of your in-house talent as a whole and, more specifically, the quality and breadth of capabilities of potential leaders.

Develop evaluation systems that provide managers with objective measures of behaviour and performance to reduce manager bias. One such measure is a behaviour-based (i.e. 360-degree) evaluation tool based on the type of leadership competency framework described above. Behaviour-based evaluations gauge not only what people do, but how they do it, and provide an objective basis upon which to evaluate talent.

Set and monitor targets for senior leadership and management roles

There is persuasive evidence confirming the efficacy of consciously and formally setting targets for women in leadership and management, to advance gender equity. A 30% target for women on boards in ASX200 companies that was set in 2015, was met in 2019 and continued to increase, such that in June 2021 representation was at 33.6%. The census data suggested targets are also correlated with improved gender diversity in executive leadership teams. The setting of gender targets in the Australian Public Service has seen the proportion of women in senior executive positions increase from 26.8% in 2001 to 50% in 2021.³⁶

Having a target to strive for helps maintain focus, as well as guiding strategy to its achievement. AICD and CEW recommend 40:40:20 board/executive leadership ratios, i.e. 40% each men and women, 20% flexible. For the 'flexible' portion, we would encourage increased diversity through promotion of other underrepresented cohorts, e.g. CALD people, LGBTQIA+, those with a disability – so long as selection is based on merit, and genuine intent and belief in the value of diverse perspectives, not tick-the-box tokenism.

Evaluate your leadership development infrastructure

Many organisations have programs that target leadership and succession planning exclusively at the most senior levels. But few have programs that identify talent in the emerging and early talent ranks. This can leave a large gap in the talent pipeline. It's especially important to have a leadership infrastructure in place at the emerging phases, where people often need information and support the most.

This approach can help shorten developmental milestones and expedite top performers' readiness for advancement. It also provides a mechanism by which high-potential women can have their development accelerated earlier in their career and overcome tenure or career break bias.

By evaluating the infrastructure and investments used to identify, develop and advance high-potential talent, you can identify and fill gaps within the system to better support emerging leaders' career momentum.

Consider the following questions when assessing your organisation's leadership development infrastructure:

- *Are we identifying people for the right roles over the medium and long term? Do we have the right retention and acquisition strategies in place to close gaps and reduce turnover costs? What assumptions do we make and how are we testing them?*
- *Are we proactively managing our slate of high-performing, high-potential talent?*
- *How can we adjust talent selection processes to increase the leadership pipeline at various levels?*
- *Are the current assessments accurately and objectively measuring potential? Do we assess high-performing and high-potential staff early enough in their careers?*
- *Are the talent management processes and tools currently in use capturing the full range of their performance?*
- *Do our development programs target the right set of needs or skills, based on current and potential career level?*
- *What combination of experiential, coaching and formal learning programs make the most sense, based on career level?*
- *What adjustments should we make in the talent review process to see greater success in identifying and advancing high-potential and high-performing talent? How can these individuals become more visible?*
- *What's the right succession planning tool to use? Are we capturing the right data?*

Make development opportunities more equitable and inclusive

Once these foundational structures are in place, there is a range of opportunities to increase the likelihood that women are able to fill senior vacancies and directly target a more diverse cohort of leaders.

- **Monitor the composition of talent teams** and ensure they are gender-diverse and include women from non-traditional roles.
- **Train leaders engaged in the talent identification process to recognise stereotypes and unconscious bias** about the work women can do and their potential for success in male-dominated roles.
- **Create a process that acts to challenge decision making.** Have a senior manager play the role of the 'challenger', asking probing questions to reduce the potential for unconscious stereotyping and to ensure that women get their fair share of opportunities to be tested and trusted.
- **Offer flexibility in the time, mode and location of training** to make it accessible.
- **Provide support to partners** to facilitate employee participation in training programs out of hours and in different locations.



Adopt a 70:20:10 approach to development

70% on the job

The majority of adult learning occurs on the job. This is the area where learning can have most impact and should be intentionally planned and implemented.

Ensure that formal practices are in place and set targets to ensure women are participating equally in on-the-job development, including enterprise-wide projects and higher duty opportunities. Assign high-potential women candidates to short-term assignments in visible roles for skill-building, networking and for transitioning leaders to international and stretch assignments. Be careful not to make assumptions about female mobility when deciding international assignments.

20% learning from others

- **Encourage more awareness** in women of the importance of fostering internal and external networking relationships in addition to doing their jobs. Train them in the skills required to do this well.
- **Offer informal and formal opportunities** for women to network with other women within the organisation and include men within these networks. Diversity networks are most successful when women plan and self-manage them, with the Executive Team actively supporting with budget and visible sponsorship actions.
- **Provide time and resources** to participate in and host external networking groups. Integrate women clients into events to increase the networks of women within the industry, particularly for client/customer-facing events that are outside their functional remits.
- **Bridge the gap** where men and women team up as allies for mutual development gains. This is a change in thinking from the previous men mentoring women approach. Both men and women become mentors, advocates and sponsors for each other. This approach is placed to break the enduring bias about women's capability to lead.

Case studies have reported positive impacts for men in learning how to manage work and life domains, developing enhanced skills in managing complexity and competing demands, as well as increased empathy. For women, there have been positive outcomes in perceptions of their own leadership, shifts in how the language of leadership has been redefined and better collaboration and a more inclusive leadership style.

10% formal learning

Formal programs, best applied for 'in real time' application on-the-job, account for 10% of effective adult learning.

- **Offer structured leadership development programs** focusing on required leadership capabilities and tailored coaching to embed sustained change.

Know your female succession pipeline

- **Ensure senior leaders participate in the skills and career development process**, to reinforce the priority on developing women within the organisation and the benefits of including women.
- **Engage senior leaders as role models for skills and career development of women** and profile their career paths, particularly senior women in non-traditional roles.
- **Monitor advancement and any 'leaky pipe' of women's representation in development** at all levels and take action when required. Take particular note of key career and life phases that can impede career goal attainment.
- **Take a strengths-based development approach** to quell commonly reported inner-critic and self-limiting thinking and behaviour patterns of women. While it is critical to develop strong self-awareness around less constructive behaviours in the workplace, it has been our experience that a 'closing the gaps' or a 'fix' approach does not work for women developing their leadership.

RETENTION

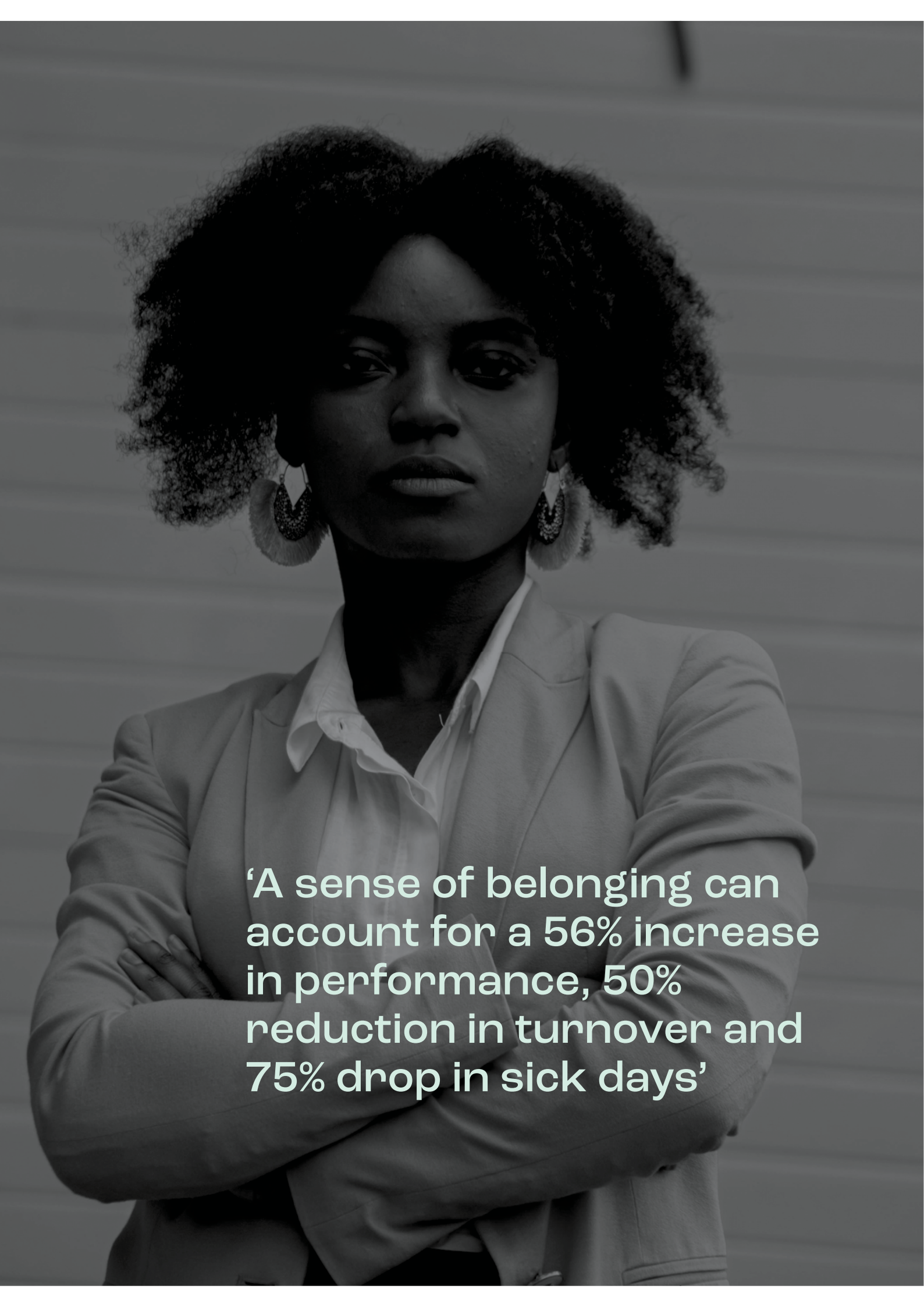
There is a range of measures that can be implemented to increase gender diversity by reducing unwanted attrition and engagement of women.

While a ‘whole of organisation’ approach to retention is recommended, it is the critical relationship between leaders and their direct teams where much of the psychological contract is maintained. Effective leadership for retention is inclusive, empowering and collaborative. Ultimately, most people want to feel that they belong, are treated fairly and are empowered to do meaningful work.

An inclusive workplace enhances not only retention, but also organisational effectiveness, competitive advantage, better decision making, improved morale and higher returns to the bottom line and shareholders. Indeed, a 2019 study found that a sense of belonging can account for a 56% increase in performance, 50% reduction in turnover and 75% decrease in sick days.³⁷

Further, we now see a ‘generational changeover’ in play, set to influence workplaces for many decades to come. So-called Generation Z (people born 1995 – 2009, aged 12 to 27 in 2022) are entering the workforce and will represent over 1 billion of the global workforce by 2030. Generation Y/Millennials (born 1980–94, aged 27 to 42 in 2022) are now ripe, or in the pipeline, for managerial or senior leadership positions. This is noteworthy from an attraction/retention perspective, as a recent report from Intel cited that diversity and inclusion are as important a factor as salary for Gen-Zs. Also, 56% said they would be hesitant to take a job if there were no minorities represented in the organisation’s leadership team. A SurveyMonkey report found that 69% of Millennials would likely stay for more than 5 years with a company focused on diversity and inclusion, compared with just 29% for one that isn’t.³⁸

The following initiatives may be considered under the ‘Retention’ pillar of a gender equity Strategy.



'A sense of belonging can account for a 56% increase in performance, 50% reduction in turnover and 75% drop in sick days'

Gender diversity retention practices

- **Change the organisation's culture to embed diversity and flexibility** in all aspects of the organisation through a gender equity strategy. Commit to challenging any perception that investment in this is a form of 'special treatment' for women. Both **male and female leaders should become champions of gender parity**.
- **Promote and display zero tolerance for sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.** A 2018 survey reported that 39% of women in Australia experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the previous 5 years.³⁹ Companies must communicate a clear message that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. The #MeToo movement, which began in 2006 and has gained considerable momentum in the last few years, has opened some big doors. These need to remain open and robust organisational policies created, updated and communicated to enable safe reporting and responsible handling of sexual harassment complaints in the workplace. Importantly, organisations and their leaders should be fostering a culture where all people feel safe to speak up. Without this, underreporting of incidents will remain a core issue for organisations.
- **Ask women about their experience in the workplace**, and how policies and practices can be improved. Review discrimination/harassment complaints – how they were managed and with what outcomes. Make changes as required.
- **Ensure managers regularly talk about career development needs and opportunities with the women in their team**, and advocate for them wherever possible.
- **Mentoring by senior leaders** can help to enhance women's career advancement as well as dismantle biases through greater exposure to diverse perspectives.
- **Deliver on the promise.** Ensure that what is discussed and offered to candidates during the recruitment process is maintained at all stages of employment and career development. A 'pulse check' meeting at the 6-month and 12-month anniversaries for new employees can uncover incongruence before cultural norm thinking sets in and informs improvements to implementation of the strategy.
- **Display commitment and progress towards achieving gender equity** by participating in and sponsoring reputable industry awards and gender equality awards. The *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* requires non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees to submit a report to the **Workplace Gender Equality Agency** each year. The WGEA Employer of Choice recognises employers that are leaders in gender equality and many women will look for this citation when considering alternative employment opportunities. For smaller organisations, the reporting criteria can still inform a gender equity strategy and plan.

- **Promote the gender diversity of teams bidding for new business**, acknowledging the competitive advantage this brings relative to other suppliers. Partnership of clients, suppliers and contractors towards a common goal of gender equity is increasingly part of businesses' 'license to operate' expectation, due to proven enhanced safety and performance outcomes.
- **Send a signal that you are serious by asking all suppliers (products and services) to explain their gender profile** as part of the purchasing process.
- **Work at a granular level.** Provide each manager with data for their own functional area and show them how it compares to other areas or other similar organisations. Bring the data back to the work-unit level rather than organisational averages. Ask why certain areas of the business are losing their female staff members. Identify managers who 'get it right' and reward them – publicly. Calculate the cost of turnover and charge the cost centres of business units the full cost of unexplained or unacceptable attrition and report it in their bottom line results.
- **Implement flexible work policies and practices** that benefit men and women in support of managing their work/life domains (see Flexibility section), and integrate with the gender equity strategy addressing any stigmas or barriers around uptake.
- Develop strategic **community partnerships** with organisations progressing gender parity and corporate social responsibility, recognising that the broader societal issues impact on the organisation and the people within it.
- **Support female entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders** by partnering with them on projects and strategic-level problem solving or create opportunities to lead the organisation from within as we progress through the changing world and Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Pay equity

- **Regularly audit, monitor and ensure pay equity for both fixed and variable pay**, and under all types of wage-setting mechanisms, and make the review process and results transparent to all employees. Research found that employers who consistently did pay audits between 2015 and 2020 closed their managerial pay gaps faster than all other companies; by contrast, those who stopped doing pay audits actually saw their managerial pay gaps increase.⁴⁰ If your organisation has a significant graduate intake, review for pay equity in entry-level positions. A 2021 report revealed that across sectors, median undergraduate starting salaries are 2.5% lower than men's and the gap widens to 13% for postgraduates.⁴¹ Take action to address any perceived and real inequity. Further, research shows that actions to close pay gaps are three times more effective when the results are reported to the Executive or Board.⁴²

- **Introduce a system of bonus allocation that will allow scrutiny** and track results by gender for each manager. Conduct a review before signing off on performance bonuses to ensure gender equity.
- **Create clear policies around promotion and compensation when working flexibly.** This may include emerging pay policies where employers continue to pay men and women a full-time equivalent superannuation payment for up to five years during unpaid parental leave and part-time work periods, bridging a significant pay gap over the course of an individual's full working life.
- Empower parents by considering the percentage paid of gross salary during maternity leave and look to the OECD's top 10 countries such as Norway, Sweden and France (78–94%) to innovate around how this could be a game changer in your industry or organisation.
- **Beware of self-assessment as part of the remuneration process** as it will disadvantage women, who tend to be harder on themselves.
- When implementing an **Inclusion Indicator metric** in engagement surveys, a question about feeling free to speak up is highly recommended.
- **Recognise and support men and women who speak out** against gender stereotyping, inappropriate language and exclusionary actions.
- **Engage senior leaders as role models** for work/life effectiveness and around valuing results over 'face-time' and excessive work hours.
- **Analyse meeting styles and behaviours to encourage full inclusion.** Challenge group norms when women are not seen to be contributing to discussions. Train managers to identify different styles and to draw out and recognise input from women.
- **Contract an external firm to conduct exit interviews** with all professional women six months after they leave. Establish what they are doing at that point in time.
- **Consider your approach to supporting employees in situations of family or domestic violence.** A 2019 Australian Government survey reported that 17% of women experienced physical or sexual violence, and 25% experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous cohabiting partner. The problem is significant. Two-thirds of organisations reporting to WGEA now have a policy or strategy that covers leave, flexible working and support structures including care, financial and emergency relief.⁴³
- **Conduct audits of on-site facilities for women** including accommodation, change facilities, breast-feeding facilities and toilets in operational areas.

Implement policies and practices that foster an inclusive culture

- **Do not hold company functions at venues where women cannot be full members** with equal rights. Surprisingly, there have still been cases reported in the media in the last two years.

FLEXIBILITY

There is a range of measures that can be implemented to increase gender diversity by addressing how an organisation manages flexibility in working arrangements. It is particularly important that measures put in place are available equitably across the entire organisation, not only to women.

The following initiatives represent emerging best practice in this area and consider flexible work, or work/life integration management practices beyond the minimum legal requirements, to focus on the organisational benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has effectively forced many organisations to adopt flexible work practices over the past two years, and both employers and employees have seen the performance and wellbeing benefits that are possible as a result. However, post-pandemic, organisations will need to resist the enduring major psychological need for 'control' (with employees citing workplace cultures of rigidity, lack of trust or poor leadership and management competencies), that flexible work challenges, if recent gains are to remain a significant part of the workplace landscape, along with the benefits to gender equity they support.



Understand what flexible options are available

There are numerous bases upon which work can be undertaken flexibly. Some of the more commonly used approaches are listed below.

Type	Description
Flexible hours of work	This is where you may vary your start and finish times.
Compressed working weeks	You may work the same number of weekly (or fortnightly or monthly) working hours, compressed into a shorter period. For example, a 40-hour week may be worked at the rate of 10 hours per day for four days instead of eight hours a day for five days. Changes to salary are not required.
Time-in-lieu	You may work approved overtime and be compensated by time in lieu. It can include 'flexitime' arrangements, where you can work extra time over several days or weeks and then reclaim those hours as time off.
Telecommuting	You may work at a location other than the official place of work. A wide range of terms refer to working at different locations, including 'mobile/remote working', 'distributed work', 'virtual teams' and 'telework'. <i>Note that telecommuting is generally most effective when there is a relatively even split between time spent in the office and working elsewhere. This lessens the sense of isolation that can come from working away from the office.</i>
Part-time work	A regular work pattern where you work less than full-time and are paid on a pro-rata basis for that work. Not all part-time work is necessarily flexible in nature, but it offers flexibility to workers who have other commitments or lifestyle choices that are not compatible with full-time work.
Job sharing	A full-time job role is divided into multiple job roles to be undertaken by two or more employees who are paid on a pro-rata basis for the part of the job each completes.
Purchased leave	A period of leave without pay, usually available after annual leave allocation is finished. Employers typically deduct the amount of unpaid leave from your salary, and this can be done as a lump sum or averaged over the year.
Unplanned leave	Informal access to leave for unanticipated or unplanned events.
Flexible careers	You are able to enter, exit and re-enter employment with the same organisation, or to increase or decrease your workload or career pace to suit different life stages. This may be particularly relevant if you are transitioning to retirement. It can also include taking a 'gap year' early in your career and returning to work for the same employer afterwards.

Implement flexible work strategies, policies and practices

The Fair Work Act 2009 provides employees with a right to apply for flexible working arrangements if they meet certain criteria. In addition to discrimination claims, additional potential avenues to challenge employers' refusal of a flexible working request have been tested in the legal system over recent years. This emphasises the need for employers to **properly** consider any requests and have sound business reasons for any refusal.

Another way of looking at flexible work requests, beyond minimum legal rights, is to start with the question, '**Why not?**' and then putting in place an initial trial period, implementing adjustments that pass the 'reasonable' test with support of Flexible Work Day Ambassadors in the organisation to reduce any 'flexism' or stigmas around requests.

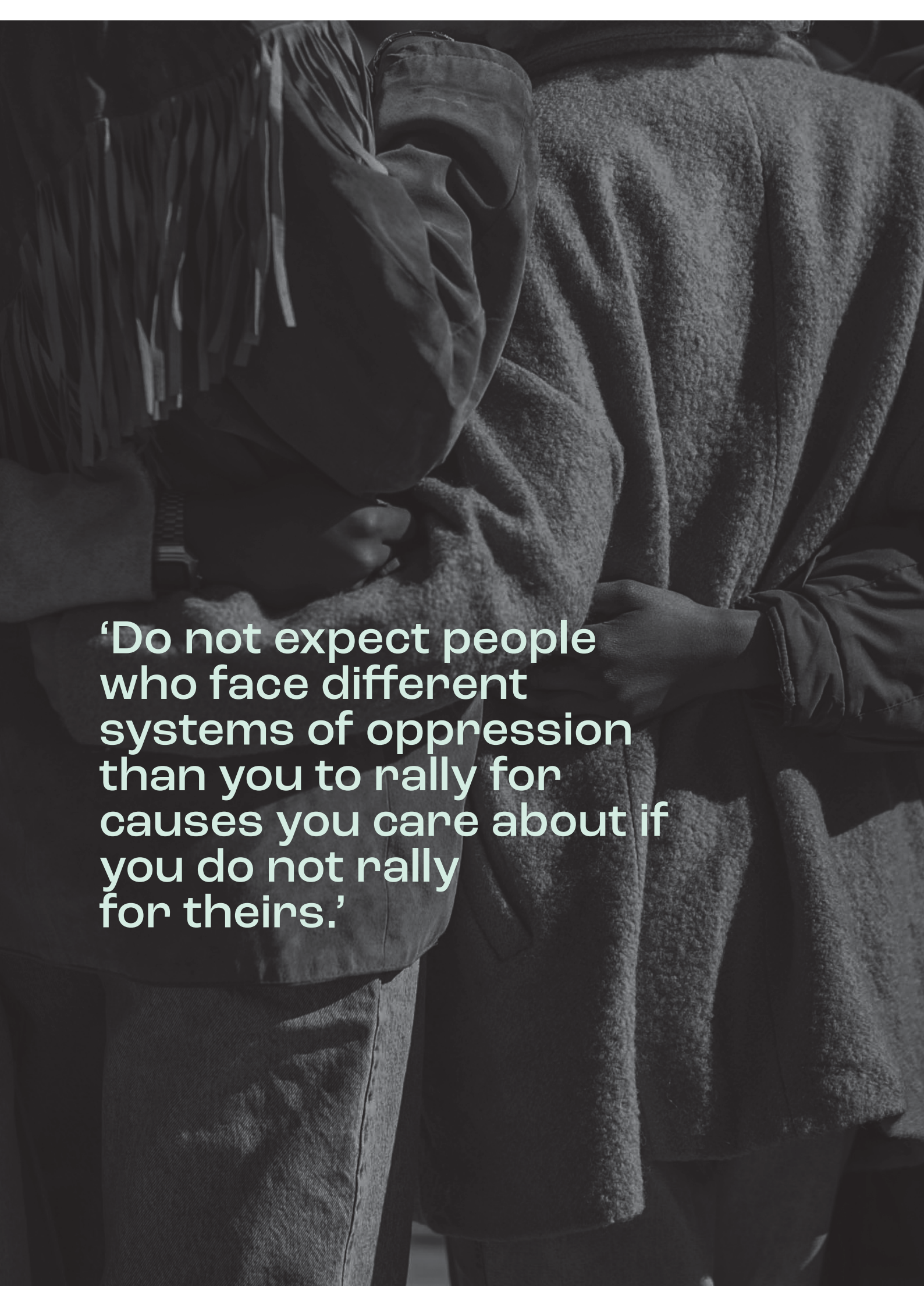
- **Align flexible work policies to individual health and wellbeing**, as well as to family life factors. Look for correlations in engagement surveys between uptake of flexible work and uptake of health and wellbeing offerings.
- **Flexible work for teams.** In 2018, The Diversity Council of Australia launched its Future-Flex initiative, calling on teams to redesign work and move away from the need for individual flex-work requests, recommending to: a) Review the components of every team member's job including tasks, duties, accountabilities, location and timing, and b) Create team-based flexibility solutions in partnership with the manager.
- **When women are due to return from parental leave**, meet with them to discuss their career aspirations and potential pathway. Make no assumptions about what role they may or may not be able to do as a new parent.
- **Consider what models of client engagement and relationship management** will both meet the needs of clients and also support the provision of flexible working arrangements. Client firms employ women too; many, if not most, will be undertaking their own gender diversity and inclusion strategy. Negotiate ways of always having key project staff available to respond to client needs, without tying it down to a single point of 24/7 contact. Be willing to collaborate with clients to come up with innovative solutions to this key flexibility challenge.
- **Consider how video conferencing and other 'virtual' meeting technologies** can reduce the frequency and duration of travel for meetings, while also increasing the connectivity of remote teams and reducing the firm's carbon footprint.

- **Ensure paid parental leave provisions are best-in-market** and a distinctive part of the unique value proposition that working at your organisation offers.
- **Ensure sponsorship of childcare services is best-in-market** and a distinctive part of the unique value proposition that working in your organisation offers. Options may include:
 - Long daycare centres: care for children 0 to 5 years of age during parental working hours
 - Vacation care: supervised activities for school-aged children during school holidays
 - Out of school hours care: for children before and/or after school hours while parents are at work
 - Family daycare: children looked after by a registered caregiver in the caregiver's own home.
- **Subscribe to a service that provides employees with information and referral services** on the availability of childcare. The scope of the service may range from the provision of information through to the matching up of parent needs with existing vacancies in service providers.
- **Provide appropriate facilities and paid lactation breaks** to enable a mother who is breastfeeding her baby to return to work and continue to feed her baby by expressing breast milk.
- **Enforce a 'no meeting before 9am or after 5pm' policy.**
- **Implement a 'keep in touch' program** for employees who go on extended leave. This may include parental leave, sick leave or long service leave.



Ongoing support for employees and their families

- **Provide on-site and off-site support for employees** including Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) representatives and access to an Employee Assistance program.
- **Provide support for families of employees** including online support, site visits, family days and inclusion in social events.
- **Where employees are working remotely, ensure the provision of communication technology**, such as greater mobile phone access and web-based video conferencing, to enable employees to keep in contact with their family on a regular and accessible basis.
- **Ensure that support for employees' carer responsibilities is best-in-market.** Options (in addition to legislated paid carer's leave) may include:
 - The provision of a family room at work
 - Supporting a 'get well room' in a childcare centre
 - Contracting a home nursing agency.
- **Flexible work practices mean adjusting work to fit individual needs** – not having a few fixed flexible options. The key question needs to be: "What can we do to keep this individual?"
- **For team members on temporary assignments remote from their home**, make available an arranged service that offers personal assistant or concierge support to keep their home running smoothly while they're away.
- **Provide childcare at residential or out-of-work-hours training courses**, or subsidise childcare costs, to help employees to attend courses or conferences.



**‘Do not expect people
who face different
systems of oppression
than you to rally for
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INTERSECTIONALITY

Increasingly there is an acknowledgement that looking at 'women' as a homogenous group and taking a one-size-fits-all approach to increasing gender diversity and inclusion ignores the lived experience of many people who identify as women, but also have other elements of their identity that bring with them their own factors of privilege and/or disadvantage.

This section outlines the basics of Intersectionality to provide a robust, more nuanced framework for looking at gender, and other issues of diversity and inclusion. Through this lens, you can build a more targeted, effective gender equity strategy.

WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY?

Although there are many elaborate definitions, the Ontario Human Rights Commission offers a very simple description: "... multiple forms of discrimination occurring simultaneously".⁴⁴

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities (e.g. gender, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) might combine to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege. The term 'intersectionality' was first used by scholar and civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 in her paper 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics'.⁴⁵

Intersectionality today

As Crenshaw built on foundations created by people like 19th century black liberation activist Anna J Cooper, modern feminists build on hers. Today, intersectionality encompasses more than just the intersections of race and gender. It's now widely used to illustrate the interplay between any kinds of discrimination, whether based on gender, race, age, class, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, gender or sexual identity, religion or ethnicity.

EXAMPLES OF THE IMPACT OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Aboriginal women

Aboriginal women face systemic disadvantages. Compared to other women, they are 45 times more likely to experience violence and are 25 times more likely to be killed or injured.⁴⁶ Aboriginal women are also at far greater risk of homelessness.

There is also a strong link between the experience of domestic violence and incarcerations, with an estimated 90% of Indigenous women in prison also being the victims of domestic violence.⁴⁷ Indigenous women are the most incarcerated group within Australia, comprising 34% of the women's prison population despite making up 3% of the 'Australian' population.

These figures are exacerbated with the intersection of class, which sees the majority of these women locked away for crimes of poverty due to forced homelessness, illness, or unemployment as a result of their abuse. In Western Australia, 64% of women in prison for fine defaults are Indigenous.⁴⁸ Recently released figures show that 33% of Indigenous men who died in custody did not receive adequate medical care. This statistic jumps to a tragic 50% when looking at Indigenous women's deaths in custody.

Older women

Older women experience compounded disadvantage when compared with older men when it comes to financial security and other factors.

In Australia:

- Census figures from 2016 revealed that one in three single women over 60 were living in permanent income poverty, and in the 5 years since the previous survey, The number of older homeless women increased by over 30% to nearly 7000. This figure is likely to continue increasing due to economic disadvantage experienced by women.⁴⁹
- In 2019, men who retired at 65 had an average super balance of \$359,870 while women had an average of \$289,179 – 20% less.⁵⁰ Nearly a quarter of women aged 60-64 were reported to have no superannuation of their own, compared with 13% of men. Women on average live 3 years longer than men, meaning their (reduced) retirement savings must stretch further.⁵¹
- Older women are significantly more likely to be victims of elder abuse than older men. According to helpline data from six states collected in 2017–18, around 70% of reported victims were women.⁵² This may be because older women face both gender inequality (which underlies violence against women) and ageism.⁵³

Women with disability

It is estimated that, in Australia, women with disability are three times more likely to experience sexual violence, and twice as likely to experience partner violence, than women without disability.⁵⁴ Women with disability are less likely to be in paid employment, and are paid less than men with disability and women without disability.⁵⁵

CALD women

Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds face additional barriers to education and employment, and may have limited information about their rights. CALD women are over-represented in low-paid and insecure work, by virtue of racism, language barriers, difficulty of having qualifications recognised in Australia, and lack of social or professional networks for seeking employment.⁵⁶

For example, migrant women are 7% less likely to be employed than those born in Australia; 37.5% of women accessing domestic violence support services are of non-English-speaking backgrounds, but represent only 17.3% of the total population in Victoria.⁵⁷

Women from low SES backgrounds

Women from low SES (socioeconomic status) backgrounds face barriers in accessing essential services and supports, which can compound other gendered disadvantages. For example, socioeconomic inequality heightens the risk of violence against women.⁵⁸

LGBTIQ+

LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual and Questioning) communities face significant barriers to accessing essential inclusive services and supports in the community and are more likely in all Australian workplaces to experience sexual harassment.⁵⁹

The LGBTIQ+ community experience discrimination when attempts are made to access essential services, or when attempting to support friends, partners or other individuals who identify as LGBTIQ+ within the service system.⁶⁰ This community experiences family violence, and significant discrimination, which have negative implications for individual and collective mental health, general health and wellbeing.⁶¹

Disaggregation of gender-related data is an important factor in making the impacts of Intersectionality more transparent. This work is being advocated in Australia by **Economic Security4Women**. Some of the outcomes of this disaggregation process are available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics at **4125.0 - Gender Indicators, Australia, Nov 2019**.

WHAT CAN I DO?

No matter who or where you are, it is always possible to more fully integrate intersectionality into your view of these issues.

Recognise difference

Oftentimes, it is easier to believe and to explain to others that 'all women feel' a certain way or that 'LGBTIQ+ people believe' some common understanding, but this does not reflect reality. We must recognise that all unique experiences of identity, and particularly ones that involve multiple overlapping oppressions, are valid.

Do not shy away from recognising that people experience the world differently based on their overlapping identities. Because of the way we have been socialised, we often feel it is rude to formally recognise others' difference. We see this in how people are uncomfortable naming another person's perceived race or asking for someone's preferred pronouns. However, we must recognise these identities as a way to step beyond our assumptions that our experience is common.

Avoid oversimplified language

Once we recognise this difference, we can move away from language that seeks to define people by a singular identity. By avoiding language that assumes our own experiences are baseline, we can open ourselves up to listening to others' points of view.

Become familiar with gender identity terminology

Just as we need to learn or re-learn the names of countries when existing borders dissolve or are created, in order that we more fully understand the world we live in, increasing acceptance of non-binary gender identity has created a new landscape. If inclusiveness is our intent, then learning to navigate this landscape with respect will require us to understand and use preferred terminology, so that we may appropriately acknowledge the people in this landscape. An internet search will yield the information you need, but a good foundation for understanding different gender identities can be found in the Child Family Community Australia Resource Sheet.⁶²

Analyse the space you occupy

Becoming comfortable recognising difference also involves recognising when that difference is not represented in the spaces you occupy. Diversity of all kinds matters in your workplace, your community spaces and more. You may feel that your workplace is racially and ethnically diverse, but is it accessible to people with disabilities? Take note of the welcoming or distancing practices of the spaces you frequent.

Seek other points of view

Explore the narratives of those with different interlocking identities than you. This includes surrounding yourself with others who have differing interwoven identities, but keep in mind that oftentimes, even when you have a diverse group of people, it falls on individuals to educate others about the oppressions they face. When these people share their experiences, take the opportunity to listen. However, do not expect people with identity markers other than your own to be there or to want to educate others. In your own time, seek out existing intersectional narratives, from your podcasts to your television. If you are unsure about a concept or want to learn more about a specific intersection of identity, Google it! This will help you be better prepared to enter into conversations with others and progress together.

Show up

Do not expect people who face different systems of oppression than you to rally for causes you care about if you do not rally for theirs. As you hear about issues others face, learn about the work that is currently being done around these topics. Listen and defer to those who live with these intersectional identities each day. As you do, you will likely deepen your understanding of your own identity and the subjects you care about most.

CONCLUSION

Gender equity is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of whether they are a woman or a man. The aim is to achieve broadly equal outcomes for women and men, not exactly the same outcome for all individuals.

Embedding change can be supported by creating strategies, practices, policies and initiatives with championed leaders to address core concerns. These concerns translate into measurable actions to close pay gaps, implement parental and other contemporary supporting policies, assess performance and hiring processes, and provide access to development and meaningful work commensurate with skills and experience.

Leaders have a continuing opportunity and obligation to make quality decisions that include the gender lens, assessing through gender impact assessment and gender-responsible approaches. Then integrating this into their collective and individual decision-making processes.

Many organisations have made progress towards increased gender parity in recent decades. However, women continue to earn less than men and are still experiencing systemic and cultural barriers to career advancement. This disadvantage is multiplied where women are additionally defined by disability, age, ethnicity and other overlapping identities. Addressing the disparity, for both men and women, is increasingly an issue of individual and organisational performance. Importantly, a diversity of voices, skills, experiences and styles is critical to navigating our way through the climate crisis we are facing, and leading for a more sustainable future.

If your organisation has successfully embedded gender equity changes, we encourage you to share this and scale it. Promoting positive change and approaches within industry, value chains and the broader community is leadership for the greater good. It's through sharing stories that the narrative and paradigm of leadership will shift, enabling more men and women to succeed. Let's do it together and for each other.

Dattner Group
March 2022

GENDER EQUITY REVIEW CHECKLIST

	Recommendations	Assessing	Planning	Progressing	Embedded	Sharing Practice
ATTRACT	Develop an organisation branding strategy with explicit communication to potential female applicants					
	Manage recruitment strategies to encourage women applicants					
	Leverage an interactive Talent Community Portal to engage diverse pool					
SELECT	A trained, gender-balanced selection panel					
	Selection based on more than just role competency					
	Rigorously analyse selection outcomes for continuous improvement					
DEVELOP	Develop an objective, aligned leadership competency framework					
	Deploy a common talent assessment process					
	Evaluate your leadership development infrastructure and outcomes					
	Make development opportunities more equitable and inclusive					
	Adopt a 70:20:10 approach to development					
RETAIN	Have a Gender Equity Strategy and implement the plan to completion					
	Audit each element of the total pay strategy, policy & process to identify and fix gender parity gaps					
	Lead for an inclusive culture, measuring for continuous improvement and key business performance outcomes					
	Offer best-practice flexible work options and supports					

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