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WORKPLACE GENDER AND EQUALITY STRATEGY PROJECT FINAL REPORT



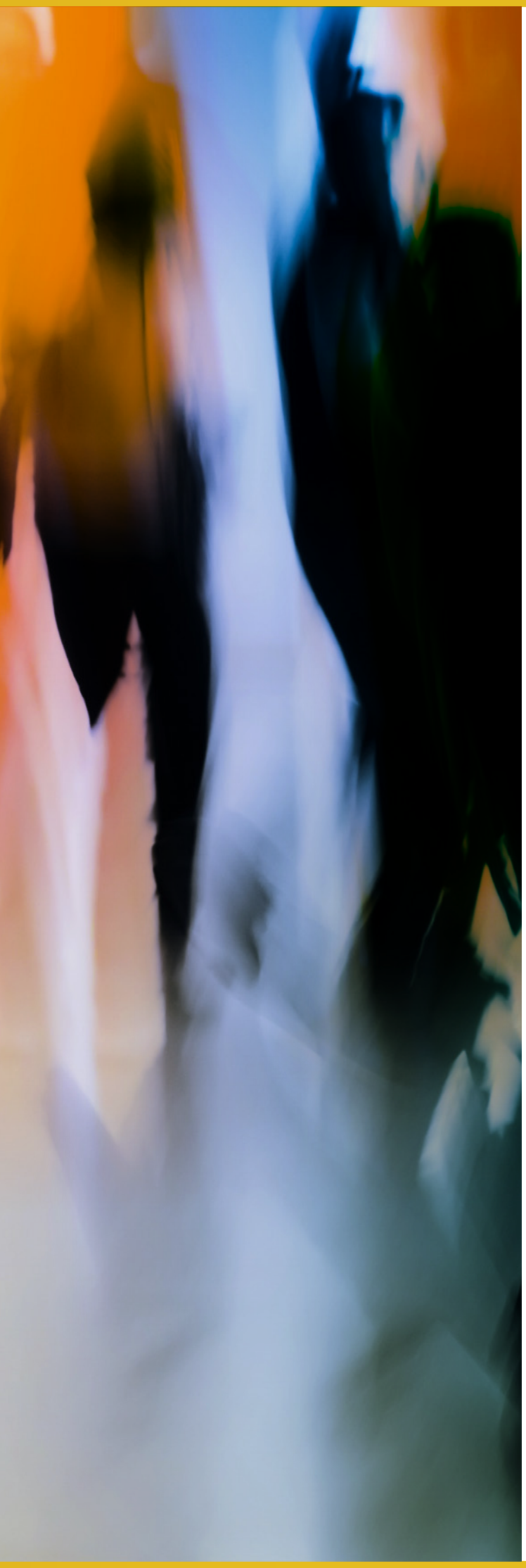
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

CENTRE FOR WORKPLACE LEADERSHIP



"MORE DIVERSITY IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP ROLES HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT ON A RANGE OF WORKPLACE INDICATORS, INCLUDING STAFF SATISFACTION AND PRODUCTIVITY."

- Louise McSorley, Acting Director, Workplace Gender Equality Agency



INTRODUCTION

Progress towards workplace gender equality is a national priority. For Australian organisations, closing the gender gap and maximising the potential of both male and female employees is crucial for increasing productivity and securing future growth. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA's; 2014) gender equality indicators have found that while 45% of Australian employers have policies on flexible work, and family and caring responsibilities, only about 13% have a strategy for implementing such policies. Over half of organisations have a standalone gender equality policy, but only 7% have a gender equality strategy. Women's representation is low at management levels, with women comprising around 26% of the top three layers of the management hierarchy in Australian organisations with 100 or more employees. Pursuit of flexible work practices and promotion of gender equity needs to be implemented in a more strategic, integrated and sustainable way in order to have real effect at the workplace level.

INTENT AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

With funding from the Australian Government through the Department of Employment, the Centre for Workplace Leadership undertook a project to support and assist organisations to become more strategic in promoting and achieving gender equality in the workplace, building on their existing policies and practices.

Ten organisations seeking to develop a whole-of-organisation approach to gender equality were recruited to demonstrate how organisations can start the process of developing a gender equality strategy. These organisations covered a range of industries, locations and workplace sizes[1]. The project consisted of three parts:

1. Diagnosis of the organisation's current position of progress towards gender equality.
2. Development of tailored recommendations for developing a gender equality strategy.
3. Case study profile of the organisation, suggested goals and future action.

1 See *Appendix A: Profiles of Participating Organisations*

KEY ELEMENTS OF A GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

The Centre for Workplace Leadership conceptualised a whole-of-organisation gender equality strategy using the WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit. Developed by the WGEA with input from industry and academic partners, the toolkit provides a framework for assessing the development of a whole-of-organisation approach to gender equality. In particular, the toolkit is based on a gender equality 'roadmap', which conceptualises an organisation's journey to workplace gender equality as progressing away from avoidance and compliance with legislation through a series of stages towards a sustainable, strategic approach to gender equality. The project also drew on the gender equality diagnostic tool as a template to assess gender organisation and the twelve key focus areas necessary for a gender equality strategy:

- stakeholder engagement;
- leadership accountability;
- communicating a diversity strategy;
- measurement and reporting;
- policies and processes;
- supply chain;
- gender composition;
- gender pay equity;
- flexibility;
- talent pipeline;
- leader and manager capability; and
- gender inclusive culture.

We chose an approach based on the WGEA's toolkit[2], framework and diagnostic, because it is consistent and compatible with the Centre's approach to leadership and workplace practices. Specifically, this approach:

- places ultimate responsibility and accountability for gender equality on organisational leaders;
- recognises the need to address gender equality as a strategic whole-of-organisation issue;
- acknowledges the developmental nature of an organisation's progress towards gender equality; and
- is sophisticated enough to allow identification and diagnosis of various problem areas, while simultaneously lending itself to practical and intuitive solutions.

An overarching gender equality strategy is important to ensure that discrete initiatives are complementary and working towards the overall goals of promoting gender equality in the workplace and supporting the organisation's business priorities. It is important for a strategy to consider:

- **Context:** outline the organisation's industry setting, overall business strategy, values and principles, tailored business case for investing in gender equality, supporting data and assessment of the current state of the organisation.
- **Key focus areas (see above for the full list of the 12 key focus areas):** select priorities identified in the data and outline action for each in relation to objectives, specific responses, enablers, risks and barriers, outcomes and barriers, and measurement of impact.
- **Timeframe:** sequence actions for each objective over the next two to three years and decide on who is responsible for implementing and measuring the ongoing action.

This framework underpinned the work with each of the ten organisations, helping to structure their goals around workplace gender equality in an overarching, high level way that took into consideration the specific situation of the organisation as well as the sector in which it operates.

2 WGEA Gender Strategy Toolkit

PROCESS UNDERTAKEN WITH EACH ORGANISATION

The same process was undertaken with each organisation, in four phases:

1. Approach and engagement
2. Knowledge gathering
3. Development of strategy recommendations
4. Presentation of strategy recommendations

Phase 1: Approach and engagement

The ten organisations were selected from a list of candidates compiled by suggestions from the government and the Centre for Workplace Leadership's network. The first interaction with each of the organisations was an initial phone call to gauge willingness to participate in the project. At this critical stage, the benefits of participating in the project were outlined to the organisation, any initial questions about participating were answered, and organisations were assured that time commitment and burden on the organisation would be minimised.

Once an organisation had agreed to participate, a key project contact was identified. The role of this person differed in each organisation, with contacts including HR Manager; HR Director; Gender and Strategic Management Research Advisor; and Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

Having secured agreement to participate, the fieldwork schedule was set, including dates and times of consultation meetings, the purpose of each meeting, and which staff should be engaged in the consultations.

Phase 2: Knowledge gathering

Before face-to-face meetings commenced, organisations were sent a questionnaire based on the WGEA gender equality diagnostic tool[3], examining their progress in each of the twelve key areas. The questionnaire served as the first level of data collection and informed the rest of the project. The specifics of who was asked to complete the questionnaire in each organisation were determined in consultation with the key project contact and varied depending on the organisation's complexity. The questionnaires were designed to enable participating organisations to provide information prior to face-to-face fieldwork at a time and pace that suited them.

Once the questionnaire was complete a consulting team visited each organisation for the first face-to-face consultation. The consulting team comprised a Centre for Workplace Leadership Business Advisor partnering with a Diversity and Inclusion Strategist . The aim of the visit was to fill any gaps in knowledge drawn from the questionnaire and ask necessary follow up questions to begin identifying needs and a possible strategy. The Diversity and Inclusion Strategist[4] took part in the interviewing process, contributing questions based on their expert knowledge.

Interviews with leaders and staff responsible for people management processes were used to inform the development of a strategy. Interviews were also conducted with employees who had experience with the impact of gender equality in the workplace. There were up to three interviews conducted to provide insight into organisational barriers to gender equality; however, this varied depending on the complexity of the organisation. Interviews on the day sometimes included a group session if there was a gender equality working group operating in the organisation. Interview topics concerned the organisation's strategic priorities, their current approach to gender equality, existing barriers to gender equality and goals for the future. The consulting team used the results of the diagnostic tool to ask the organisations about each of the focus areas, concentrating on areas where the score was particularly low or particularly high to identify priorities for action. For example, during the interview with A Hospitality Group, the consulting team noticed an unusually high score in relation to the talent pipeline. When they discussed these responses, they discovered that the interviewees were not aware of potential issues of unconscious bias in this area that could potentially impact on gender equality in the workplace. The consulting team also asked where the organisations saw themselves in relation to progress on gender equality, incorporating both the organisation's perspective and the extent of their awareness of gender equality issues. For example in the case of the SwanCare Group, the interviewees commented that gender equality was not on their radar because 70% of their employees are women, and although they used flexible working practices there was no formal policy around this.

3 WGEA Gender Strategy Toolkit on pages 23-35

4 CWL worked with Diversity and Inclusion Strategists from A Human Agency Consulting (A-Ha) and Diversity Partners.

Phase 3: Development of strategy recommendations

After meeting with the organisations, the consulting team worked together on drawing up tailored recommendations to help each organisation move towards creating a successful gender equality strategy. This work drew on academic research, the team members' experience in the field, tools developed by the WGEA such as the Gender Strategy Toolkit and knowledge of the specific situation of each organisation garnered during the consultations. It was drawn up by the consulting team together with the whole Gender Equality Strategy Project Team at the Centre for Workplace Leadership and the WGEA.

The combination of the industry expertise of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategists and the Centre's interviewing and problem identification expertise guided the rapid development of targeted strategies. The strategic plans developed for each organisation outline their current position; the steps needed to build an overarching gender equality strategy; and specific areas of focus, including suggested initiatives.

Phase 4: Presentation of strategy recommendations

The final stage of the project was presentation of the strategy recommendations. Organisations received a written copy of the recommendations, with an invitation to present them in person or via videoconference.

As each organisation had its own specific strengths and challenges, the recommendations varied from one to another, with focus on different key areas. For example, in the case of Myer Family Company, the key focus area was identified as cultural change to ensure an inclusive culture and maximise the potential of male and female employees. They recommended actions to take to address those particular areas, as well as existing success factors that would assist in dealing with them, potential risks and barriers, the outcomes and benefits that organisations could expect as a result of a more strategic approach and proposed measurements mechanisms. Examples of each are presented in the following table. For example, the consulting team recommended that the Florey Board have a regular agenda item reporting on changes to the leadership culture and the number of women in leadership roles.

Next Steps

Following the presentation of the strategy recommendations some organisations provided feedback regarding their next steps in working towards implementing a gender equality strategy.

Swancare are reviewing their current policies and strategies with the view to revising and formalising the language to reflect their existing views and goals in relation to gender equality much more clearly and concisely.

Asia Development Bank expressed their appreciation of the strategic recommendations and, at the time of this report, were discussing them internally.

Florey Institute have tabled the Gender Equity Strategic Plan at their policy development committee attended by their Director and will review in more detail with input from EqIS. Florey has requested a follow up meeting with the Business Advisor to go over some aspects of the strategic plan before it is finalised. When they have a final draft document the Strategic Plan will be tabled at the executive group for their input and buy in before being adopted.

The Hospitality Group are developing a strategy based on the recommendations.



EXAMPLE KEY AREAS OF FOCUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (FROM ACROSS THE 10 CASES)

Key Focus Area	Actions	Success Factors
Talent Pipeline	› Formalise the identification process, including collecting data on candidates; › Create targets/ values that specify that the pool of candidates will include both women and men, and not exclude employees working flexibly; › Analyse capability frameworks for unconscious bias, such as gendered language.	› Focus on internal promotions; › Buy-in from managers identifying talented employees and candidate pools.
Gender Inclusive Culture	› Ensure that the language and rhetoric used does not exclude certain groups (e.g. comments that that working from home is taking a 'day off' are inappropriate); › Make social functions more gender-inclusive by holding them at family-friendly times and restrict events based around alcohol and sport, which may engage male networks and exclude women; › Include empowerment and inclusion in the organisation's values to show the organisation's intent and commitment to these behaviours.	› Current focus on cultural change and ongoing focus on employee engagement; › Education of all stakeholders (leaders, managers and employees).
Flexibility	› Develop a framework for piloting flexible work options in supportive and interested teams; › Implement/facilitate pilots in parts of the organisation to test ideas and identify flexibility barriers and enablers; › Use learning and insights to strengthen or refine flexibility policies, processes and practices; › Promote and export new/improved flexibility models across the organization; › Recognise and celebrate, and role-model successes achieved while working flexibly; › Compare policies against industry best practice.	› Likely availability of suitable pilot sites with an open-minded team leader and members; › Leaders and employees in the organisation have experience with flexible arrangements (though informal); › Support in principle by top leaders for work-life balance.
Manager and Leader Capability	› Incorporate inclusive leadership and unconscious bias activities based upon the WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit, within business strategy programs; › Ensure the removal of gender bias from related performance and talent frameworks.	› Senior leadership committed to supporting and developing the focus on diversity & inclusion, (with the emphasis on gender equality); › Diversity and inclusion strategy proposal for organisation.
Leadership Accountability	› Propose and gain senior leadership team agreement to review gender equality progress as a standing agenda item at their meetings every quarter, supported by robust gender reporting; › Follow up with executives' Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or objectives for gender equity targets in their business scorecards.	› Support in principle for the importance of gender equality has been established among senior leaders; › Relevant data are already being collected in employee engagement survey and for WGEA reporting.
Measurement and Reporting	› Develop proposition and table for endorsement by the organisations's diversity advocacy group; › Seek support from top leadership for quarterly gender reporting and review; › Design, test and validate gender equality dashboard concept and content with a range of representative stakeholders; › Pilot reporting process for two quarters, review and finalise	› Buy-in has already been achieved by some leaders; › Manager of Diversity and Inclusion is already in place to lead efforts; › Some mechanisms are already in place for annual WGEA reporting.

Risks/Barriers	Outcomes/Benefits	Measurement
› Allocating responsibility for and the additional costs of collecting and analysing more data; › Not having data on job candidates, promotions and those in talent pipeline and compare in relation to broader workforce.	› Increased gender diversity of candidate pool, flowing into sustainable diversity of leadership team; › Developing talented leaders from different backgrounds.	› Improved gender balance in promotions; › Increased diversity within teams over time and throughout the talent pipeline.
› Not everyone within the organisation recognises that there is a current problem with the way gender or working flexibly is spoken about; › Attitudes may be ingrained and unconscious, so it is important to have open conversation about them, recognise issues and focus on evidence rather than opinion.	› Greater sense of inclusion for all employees, which may have flow on effects on employee engagement, productivity and retention.	› Qualitative feedback from employees, particularly flexible workers & managers; › Include questions about diversity and inclusion in employee engagement survey and analyse responses by gender, job level and employment type.
› Lack of support from leaders at top of overarching organisation; › Flexibility solutions are not necessarily transferable between different units; › Regular rotation of unit leadership creates risks and barriers for informal arrangements.	› Assumptions and stereotypes (including gender-based) regarding flexibility are successfully challenged; › Increased flexibility drives improvements in ability to attract, engage and retain the best female and male talent.	› Sustained adoption of flexible work practices in pilot teams; › increased utilisation of flexibility among men and women across organisation.
› Diversity workshops held but poorly attended by managers; › Gender equality issues sidelined in workshops.	› Managers feel better supported in their roles; › Employees' needs are better met; › Fewer 'drop-ins' for HR freeing up time for more strategic work.	› Manager feedback on training; › Employee engagement survey questions; › Drop in rates for HR
› Other business priorities/ distractions may displace gender equality focus; › Metrics may still be insufficient to support process; › Momentum and focus often decreases after initial energy.	› Focus on gender equality becomes normalised as a business imperative; › Ongoing focus and transparency drives action and accelerates progress; › Executives cascade accountability down through their own structure.	› Quality and frequency of action planning in response to metrics; › Improvement in key gender metrics in dashboard/diagnostic; › Visible sponsorship/ ownership by senior leadership.
› Enthusiasm is not sustained among managers at all levels, beyond current reporting deadlines; › The motivating link between gender equality measures/reports and business outcomes is not clearly communicated or internalised throughout the organisation (lack of an explicit gender equality strategy and business case; see above).	› Measurement provides the basis for action; › Regular reporting keeps gender equality front of mind for executives; › Gender equality is progressively seen as relevant to performance; › Metrics help to generate focus and a sense of urgency; › Robust reporting provides a sound context for target-setting.	› Qualitative feedback from reporting end-users; › Actions generated by reporting and degree to which targets are met.

FINDINGS FROM THE VISITS

All of the participating organisations demonstrated a basic understanding of the importance of gender equality to their work and had implemented gender equality practices and policies in some shape or form.
They all also demonstrated enthusiasm in sharing information with the consultants. An understanding of the importance of gender equality and a willingness to discuss successes and barriers are key milestones on the road to gender equality.

However, most of the organisations had not integrated their gender diversity practices and policies under a unified and sustainable gender equality strategy that is linked to core business activities throughout the organisation. The findings for each of the ten participating organisations are reflected in the cases in Appendix B, but in general, the consultants found that:

- Organisations often do not realise how gender equality can benefit them in their specific context. In other words, while organisations often understand generic benefits from gender diversity and equality, they do not demonstrate a clear understanding of how these benefits apply to a more specific business case for gender equality within their organisation. For example, leaders may be aware of the fact that gender equality and diversity can often have performance benefits. However, they often do not make the more immediate and specific connections between gender equality and improved labour market competitiveness or stakeholder engagement. A more tailored approach based on a specific business case and strategy can improve motivation towards gender equality targets and a better understanding of how gender diversity can be leveraged towards business outcomes.
- Organisations are often focused on certain key focus areas but show little awareness of other important areas, leading to implementation of practices and policies that are either less effective by themselves or may have some gaps. For example, some organisations focus on measurement of gender representation overall and at managerial levels but do not focus on other areas, such as the implementation of flexible work practices. This may lead to a reduced ability to attract high-quality talent of both genders.
- Some organisations approach gender equality as simply creating a positive work environment for women. In the majority of industries and occupations, this may generate positive outcomes. However, this is an overly simplistic approach that can cause problems in certain industries and occupations. In male-dominated industries and occupations (e.g. science, mining, engineering, etc.), this can lead to the view that gender equality is a “women’s issue”, resulting in a lack of a sense of ownership for gender equality among men leading and working in the organisation. On the other hand, in female-dominated industries and occupations, this focus on creating a positive environment for women may result in a failure to attract and retain high-quality male employees. Thus, gender equality must be viewed more broadly as creating a work environment that is positive for both men and women.

TIPS FOR LEADERS TO EMBED A GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY IN A WORKPLACE

Drawing on the WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit, the Business Advisors have identified where each organisation lies on the roadmap to gender equality and made recommendations for the next steps. Each of the ten organisations demonstrated different strengths, accomplishments, barriers, risks and challenges, requiring tailored strategy recommendations. The observations above and the cases in Appendix B demonstrate that every organisation must develop its own gender equality strategy; that there is no single "off-the-shelf" strategy that organisations might adopt. However, there are a few general activities that we can recommend to organisations.

- As a starting point towards developing a gender equality strategy, we recommend that organisational members, starting with the leadership team, learn more about what gender equality entails and how it can be beneficial to their organisation. Educational resources provided by the WGEA are very useful for doing so.
- Business Case: as mentioned above, it is important to strengthen, publicise and internalise a business case for gender equality that is specific to an organisation's particular circumstance. For each organisation in this project, Business Advisors provided custom recommendations to help in building a business case. They also provided specific recommendations in three key gender equality areas and noted other areas for further attention. These recommendations were tailored to assist each organisation along its own path to gender equality. (See the table presented for Phase 4 of the project above for examples.) Other organisations will similarly need to visit the question of what gender equality will do for them. Each must consider their own organisational history and environment as they understand how gender equality should be incorporated into their business strategy. Just as no two organisations work from the same business strategy, neither will they share the same business case for gender equality or the same gender equality strategy.

In providing a broad suite of case studies that highlight a number of different challenges faced by organisations looking to improve their gender equality strategies, this project can guide leaders of other organisations in their understanding of how the process of inquiry, learning, and gender equality strategy development plays out. These examples should facilitate gender strategy development: organisations will be able to refer to specific circumstances and practical solutions as they work through the WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit.

"IT'S GREAT TO SEE ORGANISATIONS REALISE THAT GENDER EQUALITY IS NOT JUST ABOUT COMPLIANCE; IT'S ABOUT DOING THE RIGHT THING AND ACHIEVING THE ORGANISATION'S FULL POTENTIAL."

- Jesse E. Olsen, Centre for Workplace Leadership

APPENDIX A

PROFILES OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Organisation 1 The Hospitality Group

Size: 900 Employees
Industry: Accommodation and Food Services
Location: Regional Australia

Organisation 2 The Florey Institute of Neuroscience & Mental Health

Size: 500 Employees
Industry: Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
Location: Parkville, VIC
Established: 2007

Organisation 3 The Myer Family Company

Size: 105 Employees
Industry: Financial and Insurance Services
Location: Head Office in Melbourne with other offices in Sydney, Perth and Brisbane

Organisation 4 Asian Development Bank, Sydney Office

Size: 35 Employees
Industry: Regional Economic Development
Location: Sydney, NSW
Established: 2005

Organisation 5 Jacobs Group Australia

Size: 3,500 employees
Industry: Technical Professional & Construction
Location: Offices throughout Australia
Established: 2013

Organisation 6 Canberra Grammar School

Size: 351 Employees
Industry: School Education
Location: Canberra
Established: 1929

Organisation 7 St Vincent de Paul

Size: 152 employees, with 600 members and 1600 volunteers
Industry: Social Assistance Services
Location: Head Office in Canberra, with stores and services throughout the ACT and Goulburn and South-West NSW region
Established: 1833 in France, with over 100 years history in the Canberra and Goulburn region, but the Canberra and Goulburn organisation was formally established in 2007.

Organisation 8 Asciano

Size: 8,000 Employees
Industry: Business Partnerships & Supply Chain Management
Location: St Kilda Road, Melbourne
Established: 2007

Organisation 9 INPEX Australia

Size: 900 Employees
Industry: Mining
Location: Perth
Established: 1986

Organisation 10 SwanCare

Size: 370
Industry: Health Care and Social Assistance
Location: Bentley, Western Australia
Established: 1961

APPENDIX B





Building the business case for gender equality

The case of a hospitality group in Australia

Organisation

900 Employees

Accommodation and Food Services

Regional Australia

This hospitality group has recently acquired a number of local clubs, which is fuelling rapid growth. All acquisitions will be merged under the main brand. There is roughly equal representation of men and women within the organisation at both the managerial and employee levels, though there are no women on the Board. Flexible working policies are in place and the CEO and Board receive monthly updates about the gender composition of the workforce.

The organisation has a number of important practices either in place or in development, such as regular monitoring, training programmes and flexible working policies. However, there is no overarching strategy.

The current challenge

The organisation is unsure about the next steps to take, beyond maintaining current practices and ensuring they are embedded in the new acquisitions. A first goal should be to develop leaders' knowledge and awareness of the **business benefits of gender equality**, as well as what gender equality entails, and what progress may look like for this organisation.

Moving forward

The next important step for this organisation is to support the useful processes implemented so far by developing a strategic approach to gender equality. This strategy should be based on a **business case for gender equality** which will underpin current and future policies, ensure coherence, and demonstrate relevance to business priorities. In business terms, there is real value in a diverse workforce, that reflects the community in which it operates.

"HAVING THIS CONVERSATION HELPED US RETHINK OUR CURRENT PROCESSES TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE MORE FOCUSED ON THE IMPORTANT ISSUE OF GENDER EQUALITY"

– HR Manager, the Hospitality Group

Future action

In addressing areas of focus for future action on a gender equality strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of **building the business case for gender equality**, this hospitality group could apply these tools in the following way:

Actions

- HR runs focus groups with leaders as to why gender equality is important to this organisation, what it would look like and how it could support the strategic objectives of the business; and
- HR uses data to substantiate the business case and target specific areas, e.g. data on workforce composition and the engagement survey.

Success factors

- Focus on excellent customer service by connecting diversity of employees to customers, personalising service and better anticipating customer needs; and
- Building on the group's community presence by ensuring the workforce represents the community and is connected to its values to foster positive associations and mutual cooperation.

Risks/barriers

- Leaders may not identify the need for a discrete strategy;
- Disconnection between the customer service team and customers;
- Misalignment with the community;
- Recruitment difficulty; and
- Skewed leadership.

Outcomes/benefits

- An overarching strategy will ensure the organisation's objectives are clear, specifying how gender equality supports business objectives and ensuring policies and initiatives are consistent.

Measurement

- Stakeholder feedback on the strategy and its ability to deliver on its objectives.

To find out more

The WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit which includes a section on making a business case for gender equality.

UN Women has produced a document on the Gender Dividend

The WGEA provides a range of online training programmes and resources

Numerous organisations exist in Australia that can help identify female talent at executive and board level, such as Women on Boards, Executive Women Australia, Chief Executive Women, and the Diversity Council Australia.

A project by the Centre for Workplace Leadership

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

CENTRE FOR WORKPLACE LEADERSHIP

Commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Employment

Australian Government
Department of Employment

Supported by the WGEA and A Human Agency Consulting

Australian Government

Workplace Gender Equality Agency

a-ha! a human agency



Communicating the Diversity Strategy throughout the Workplace

Asciano

Organisation

8,000 Employees

Business Partnerships & Supply Chain Management

Melbourne

EST. **2007**

Asciano Limited is Australia's only combined rail freight and port operator. It was first listed on the stock exchange in 2007 when it began extending its transport infrastructure portfolio by adding Pacific National and the Patrick container ports, port operations and stevedoring capabilities. It continues to add other Australian and New Zealand companies. Its legacy as a traditionally male-dominated workplace means that 7 of 8 Board members are men, the executive management team consists of 8 men (including the Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director) and 1 woman and 10% of both managerial and non-managerial positions are held by women.

Asciano's leadership believes that developing a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community in which it works—in all levels of its business—is a commercial imperative, and the company has developed a Diversity Policy. The policy sets out its commitment to diversity and inclusion at the Board, executive and employee levels. The company has a Diversity Steering Committee, chaired by the Director of HR, Corporate Affairs & Customer, which guides the diversity strategy and the implementation of diversity and inclusion action plans in each of the company's Divisions. Measurable strategies and targets are set to increase female participation in Asciano's workplace and are one of the CEO's Key Performance Indicators. Application target rates were recently set to 35% women for salaried roles and 8-10% for blue collar roles. These efforts led to placements of 40% women in salaried positions but only 6% in blue collar jobs.

Asciano has implemented innovative programs designed to support a more diverse workforce. A premier initiative is the WILpower Cadetship Program, which is an accelerated development pathway for women to pursue an operational management career. Other significant programs are the 'Time for New Shoes' employment campaign designed to encourage women to consider joining the Asciano Freight Team, with full-time and part-time positions available, and for female employees they offer the My Mentor Courageous Woman initiative, a self mentoring leadership program for women. The Inclusive Leadership in Action program provides practical actions for Managers to build a truly inclusive culture.

The talent pipeline for executive roles is 38% women, and 25% of participants in the Executive Development Programs were women. Progress against the key diversity goals and initiatives is formally included in the monthly human capital reporting to ensure Senior Leadership Team focus and engagement with progressing diversity in the workplace. Further policies which support the development of diversity throughout Asciano are the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy, and the Flexibility Policy, a Flexible Working Arrangements Policy and the Job Share Policy.

The current challenge

Asciano has a number of strategic diversity and gender equality initiatives in place. However, it needs to build a gender inclusive culture that empowers the employees and harnesses their differences to create innovative, market-leading customer solutions to grow the business.

Moving forward

On its way to creating a sustainable working environment where diversity, and particularly gender equality, is a business and cultural norm, Asciano needs to ensure that its workforce is fully equipped and committed at all levels to build and maintain gender equality. Asciano's Board and senior leadership are committed to its Diversity Policy, which is vital to developing, implementing and sustaining gender equity strategy across the workplace. However, the leadership and management need to actively communicate, promote and advance gender equality throughout the workplace. Bottom-up commitment to a diverse workplace is also required. Developing and maintaining gender equality should be seen as everyone's responsibility, with all leaders and managers accountable, evaluated and rewarded. Australian industrial companies, including Asciano, have successfully transformed their workplaces with the introduction of strategic health and safety promotion strategies over time. A similar strategic approach could be applied to gender equality.

Future action

In addressing areas of focus for future action on a gender equality strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of **embedding existing diversity policy into a coherent strategy**, Asciano's senior leadership team could apply these tools in the following way:

Actions

- Run focus groups with leaders/managers as to why gender equality is important to this organisation, what it would look like and how it could support the strategic objectives of the business;
- Use data to substantiate the business case and target specific areas, e.g. data on workforce composition and implement a diversity and inclusion employee survey; and
- Communicate the strategy and business case for diversity and gender equality throughout all levels of the organisation.

Success factors

- A Diversity Policy, the WILpower Program, Job Share and Flexible Work Arrangements, and My Mentor Program have been put into place;
- The CEO's KPIs include increased participation of women across the Company; and
- A Diversity Steering Committee has been established.

Risks/barriers

- Limited resources/time to commit to developing the business case; and
- Lack of diversity in decision making.

Outcomes/benefits

- Increased company leadership/management commitment to creating a gender inclusive workplace; and
- An overarching diversity strategy embedded into the business strategy will ensure the organisation's objectives are clear, specifying how gender equality supports business objectives, ensuring policies and initiatives are consistent, and helps make current policies more effective.

Measurement

- Stakeholder feedback on the strategy and its ability to deliver on its objectives.

"WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO BE PARTNERING WITH THE CENTRE FOR WORKPLACE LEADERSHIP, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE IN THIS KEY INITIATIVE AS I BELIEVE THIS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN ASSISTING OUR BUSINESS TO ACHIEVE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE GENDER DIVERSITY SPACE."

- Christine Davall GM Rewards, Resourcing and HR Systems

To find out more

WGEA Gender Strategy Toolkit,

WGEA strategy for inclusiveness, well-being and diversity in engineering workplaces

Asciano, Rewarding Careers for Women,

Asciano, WILpower Cadetship Program

A project by the Centre for Workplace Leadership

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

CENTRE FOR WORKPLACE LEADERSHIP

Commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Employment

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Supported by the WGEA and Diversity Partners

Australian Government | Workplace Gender Equality Agency | Diversity Partners creating inclusive cultures



Walking the talk on women's empowerment

The Asian Development Bank, Sydney Office

Organisation

35 Employees

Regional Economic Development

Sydney, NSW

EST. **2005**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), established in 1966, is headquartered in Manila, Philippines. Its Sydney office (ADB Sydney), established in 2005, serves as a base of operations for many of the international organisation's key initiatives in the Pacific Region. In addition to being the ADB's representative office for Australia and New Zealand, it coordinates programs for Nauru, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It also houses the Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI), the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF), and the Pacific Business Investment Facility (BIF).

As the representative office of an international organisation, ADB Sydney is not required to implement domestic workplace laws. However, the ADB's emphasis on women's empowerment as a critical part of economic development in Asia and the Pacific has motivated them to address gender equality within their organisation.

The ADB has an overall diversity plan that focuses on workforce diversity with respect to such characteristics as nationality and gender. Twelve of the ADB's 67 nationalities are represented in the Sydney office. Additionally, through a number of initiatives beginning in the 1990s, the ADB globally has reached 33% female representation among its international staff, with 24% among senior positions.

ADB Sydney has actually outperformed the ADB's global targets, achieving equal representation among staff and a slightly greater number of women in senior positions. On the other hand, a large proportion of the ADB global workforce is comprised of local or contract staff. ADB Sydney has achieved equal gender representation across these various categories. However, while the ADB globally makes overall numbers available for benchmarking on international and local staff, they do not keep statistics for contract staff.

The current challenge

While the global organisation and the Sydney office have made great strides on a number of fronts, it is **unclear whether some current practices support gender equality**. For example, in the global organisation, a vacancy-driven staffing system—where employees apply for internal positions —creates complexity in understanding whether women and men are moving up through the internal pipeline equitably. ADB Sydney has succeeded in achieving a gender equitable talent pipeline, but transparency around the overall organisation would allow for benchmarking and secure these local gains. Furthermore, long-term contract staff at ADB, including the Sydney office, do not enjoy many of the employee benefits that permanent staff do, and the ADB does not have an extensive offering of flexible work practices. For example, there are no provisions for part-time employment for permanent staff. Additionally, while telecommuting is becoming more accepted at ADB globally, its official policy limits such arrangements to 3 days per month and is at the discretion of individual managers. In ADB Sydney, such arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, but are subject to change when senior management rotates.

Moving forward

Because the ADB works towards the economic development of the Asia/Pacific region in large part through women's empowerment, it is **critical that this organisation leads by example**. This means that in order to achieve its mission, the ADB (including all regional offices) should ultimately seek to establish itself as a leader in gender equality.

While there is an explicit link between gender equality in the ADB and its ultimate mission, the diagnostic process revealed that this link may not be internalised among many leaders and employees. Internalisation can start with training programs and education materials such as those available from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, but it must occur at all levels - top to bottom. This will empower both leaders and employees to better leverage the ADB's extensive expertise in women's empowerment towards the improvement of its own work processes and culture.

Being part of a highly centralised organisation, ADB Sydney will need to use its feedback mechanisms to encourage ADB globally along the path to gender equality. ADB Sydney will need to preserve its strengths in gender representation, progress in workplace flexibility, and the positive and inclusive culture.

Future action

In addressing areas of focus for future action on a gender equality strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of **influencing the central ADB organisation to gain senior leadership and board approval for a gender strategy**, ADB Sydney could apply these tools in the following way:

Actions

- Run focus groups with leaders as to why gender equality is important to this organisation, what it would look like and how it could support the strategic objectives of the business; and
- Use data to substantiate the business case and target specific areas, e.g. data on workforce composition, potential wage gaps, promotions, an employee engagement survey, etc.

Success factors

- There is a recognition within the ADB of the importance of women's empowerment;
- Gender targets for representation are being met; and
- ADB Sydney has experience of success with flexible working arrangements for permanent and contract staff that can be useful examples for the central organisation.

Risks/barriers

- Leaders may not recognise the need for a discrete strategy; and
- Growing complacency after having achieved certain targets.

Outcomes/benefits

- Heightened connection between the internal workings of the organisation and its mission;
- More attractive value proposition for employees of all backgrounds and improved retention of talented staff (including contract); and
- An overarching strategy will ensure the organisation's objectives are clear, specifying how gender equality supports business objectives and ensuring policies and initiatives are consistent.

Measurement

- Stakeholder feedback on the strategy and its ability to deliver on its objectives.

"WE WERE PLEASED TO BE A PART OF THIS PROJECT BECAUSE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IS A CRITICAL PART OF OUR WORK IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC."

– Dr Andrea Iffland, Regional Director, ADB Sydney

To find out more

The WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit provides information about the stages of journey to workplace gender equality.

The WGEA also provides a range of learning resources.

More information and resources on Women's Empowerment Principles.

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Ensuring gender equality is embedded in the next generation

Canberra Grammar School

Organisation

351 employees

School Education

Canberra

EST. **1929**

Canberra Grammar School is an independent primary and secondary school that enrols both boys and girls up until year three, and then only boys throughout later primary and secondary school years, offering an education informed by the Anglican faith and Christian teachings. As part of their endeavour to be the best school in their region and beyond, they focus on the holistic development of their students, looking to mould future leaders who are intelligent, international and innovative, as well as compassionate, confident and creative.

To fulfil this mission, Canberra Grammar School is focused on attracting the best employees. Due to the generational change among teachers, 50% of the school's staff has been hired in the last few years. With this high volume change, Canberra Grammar School is focused on improving their recruitment processes, but they face challenges in recruiting in particular subjects.

In terms of workplace gender equality, Canberra Grammar School is focused on preventing discrimination and promoting a healthy culture through pro-active training. Over the past twenty years, the gender composition of teachers in the school has changed from being male-dominated to achieving greater balance, particularly in increasing the number of female leaders, with the school having female heads of department and senior leadership team representatives. In the school overall, there are more female teachers, who are concentrated in the primary school, with more male teachers in the senior school. The school is undergoing a period of cultural change and there has been a focus on developing a more inclusive culture, including training on harassment, bullying and any other inappropriate behaviour to educate the school staff.

The current challenge

In developing their students as future leaders, the Canberra Grammar School aims to expose their students to international and future-focused ideas. In Australia and internationally, there are increasing numbers of women in leadership and the workplace, making it more important for students to have **strong female leaders and teachers as role models** to reflect the community and prepare them for the workplace. A tailored strategy for workplace gender equality could also help the school capitalise on the benefits of gender equality, particularly in terms of attracting and retaining talented staff in an increasingly competitive labour market.

Moving forward

As part of their cultural change process and changing demographics of their staff, Canberra Grammar School can review their current practices and develop a more strategic approach to promoting workplace gender equality. It is important for the school's leadership to have a conversation about **what gender equality and diversity mean to the school**. The broader school community, including parents and alumni, should also be engaged in this conversation about gender equality.

Canberra Grammar School has the opportunity to be industry leaders in workplace gender equality. The senior leadership team can champion progress in this area by encouraging focus and investment in this issue to develop a gender equality strategy that identifies particular objectives and action plans for achieving them. In the strategy, the school should focus on continuing to provide and expand on its flexible working arrangements, and continue to develop its manager and leader capabilities and gender-inclusive culture, with specific initiatives and resources for each area of focus.

Future action

In addressing areas of focus for future action on a gender equality strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of creating a **school environment which embeds the principles of gender equality**, the senior leadership team of Canberra Grammar School could apply these tools in the following way:

Actions

- Run focus groups with leaders and staff as to why gender equality is important to this school, what it would look like and how it could support the school's overarching strategic objectives;
- Engage the broader school community in a conversation about diversity and how the school could act; and
- Use data to substantiate the business case and target specific areas i.e. workforce composition and employee engagement; for example collecting data on workforce composition and running the engagement survey.

Success factors

- Focus on educational mission, role modelling gender diversity in leaders for students to build them as future leaders;
- Attracting and retaining the best staff from all backgrounds;
- Leveraging the different perspectives of people from a range of different backgrounds;
- Integration with the broader community to reflect the diversity of the community.

Risks/barriers

- Leaders may not identify the need for a discrete strategy; and
- Leaders may not feel the organisation has the time or resources to develop a strategy.

Outcomes/benefits

- Improved connection between students' learning environment and the broader community; and
- An overarching strategy will ensure the school's objectives are clear, specifying how gender equality supports business objectives and ensuring policies and initiatives are consistent.

Measurement

- Stakeholder feedback on the strategy and its ability to deliver on its objectives.

"THIS PARTNERSHIP HELPED US TO IDENTIFY OUR STRENGTHS, RECOGNISE SOME OPPORTUNITIES AND DEVELOP NEW GENDER SPECIFIC GOALS TO HELP US REACH OUR TARGET OF BEING AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE."

– Michael Simon, Human Resource Manager, Canberra Grammar School

To find out more

WGEA Gender Strategy Toolkit

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Drawing on the full range of available talent

INPEX Australia

Organisation

900

Mining

Perth

EST. **1985**

INPEX Australia is part of the international INPEX CORPORATION which has its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. Already ranked in the top 100 global petroleum companies, INPEX CORPORATION's vision is to become a top class international oil and gas exploration and production company.

Though established in Australia since 1985, INPEX relied exclusively on a contracted workforce until 2009. Employees currently make up 30% of the total workforce, though this is expected to increase when INPEX Australia's multi-billion dollar Ichyths LNG Project moves from its construction phase into operations. There is the opportunity to increase the representation of women: currently women make up 40% of employees and 16% of managers. This compares positively with its Japanese operations, where the workforce is 15% women, and fewer than 3% of managers are women. Since early 2015, INPEX's Japanese head office, through its Global HR/Diversity & Inclusion Group, has been involved in the Japan Business Federation's (Keidanren's) 'Voluntary Action Plan on the Promotion of Female Managerial Staff and Directors'.

INPEX Australia has a range of policies and programs designed to support a more diverse and gender equitable workforce. A Manager of Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing (DIW) has been engaged. Parental leave is standard. The company has a flexible work and part-time work policy, allows telecommuting and carer's leave, and has a sexual harassment and discrimination policy in place, which includes a grievance process and manager training. Workplace engagement surveys with specific diversity and inclusion questions have been completed.

More than 550 people were trained at Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) face-to-face workshops and an EEO online e-learning module was implemented. The company was the major sponsor of the National Diversity Debate 2014. The DIW Manager has participated in the Council of Economic Development Australia (CEDA) Women in Leadership seminars.

The current challenge

As INPEX Australia continues to pursue opportunities in the region, it needs to draw on the **widest possible pool of talent**. A coherent gender equality strategy will enable them to tap into the full talent pool, and may provide a diversity advantage in innovation, leadership and decision making.

"WE WERE VERY INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT AND LEARNING MORE ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY. AS AN EMERGING GLOBAL COMPANY, WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES WE HAVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN GENDER EQUALITY BOTH IN AUSTRALIA AND IN JAPAN."

– Catherine Johnson,
Manager, Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing, INPEX Australia

Moving forward

Developing and implementing a coherent gender equality and diversity strategy is a key action for **accessing a broad range of talent**. Targeting effort and resources towards clear gender equality objectives in the immediate and longer term will be crucial for embedding the goal of gender equality in INPEX Australia. A gender equality strategy does not need to be a complex document: a simple, succinct and focused articulation of directions is easier for leaders to communicate, employees to understand, and everyone to mobilise around.

Future action

In addressing areas of focus for future action on a gender equality strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of **drawing on the broadest possible pool of talent** as they expand, INPEX Australia could apply these tools in the following way:

Actions

- Managers and HR managers create targets/values that specify that the pool of candidates will include both women and men, and not exclude employees working flexibly;
- HR develops data-gathering mechanisms to track gender composition of each key recruitment stage in all employment categories; and
- All managers analyse capability frameworks for unconscious bias, such as gendered language.

Success factors

- Impending expansion of workforce creates opportunities to make headway towards new equality targets;
- Buy-in from top leaders for identifying talented employees and candidate pools; and
- In hiring contract workers, it may be possible to leverage recruitment agencies that follow best practices in gender equality.

Risks/barriers

- Allocating responsibility for and the additional costs of collecting and analysing more data;
- Potential hiring manager resistance to policy changes;
- Potential over-use of individual female managers to participate in interviewing process, due to limited supply;
- Recruitment agencies (for contract workers) may source weak female candidates to create gender diverse candidate pools; and
- Unconscious bias among hiring managers may still influence hiring decisions.

Outcomes/benefits

- Increased gender diversity of candidate pool, flowing into sustainable diversity of leadership team;
- Developing talented leaders from different backgrounds; and
- Better decisions at leadership levels, due to greater diversity of perspectives.

Measurement

- Improved gender balance of new hire population;
- Improved gender balance in promotions; and
- Increased diversity within teams over time and throughout the talent pipeline.

To find out more

INPEX in Australia

Workplace Gender Equality Agency Diagnostic Toolkit

Annual Diversity Debate

Council of Economic Development Australia (CEDA) Women in Leadership seminars

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Making gender equality the responsibility of all

Jacobs Group (Australia) Pty Ltd

Organisation

3,500 employees in Australia

Technical Professional & Construction Services

Offices throughout Australia

EST. **2013**

Jacobs Group (Australia) Pty Ltd (JGA) is part of Jacobs, an international company employing 66,000 people in more than 30 countries, established in 1947. Since the recent merger of Jacobs with Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM), JGA is undergoing transformational change. SKM was awarded the Employer of Choice for Women (EOCFW) citation from 2006 to 2013. Dr Michael Shirley, who transitioned from SKM to JGA, is committed to actively advancing equality across the business and as an advocate for the consulting industry as a Consult Champion of Change. JGA has a diversity and inclusion vision, which is 'to be recognised as an industry leader in embracing and leveraging diversity to ensure a safe and inclusive workplace and improved business growth'. JGA has a Diversity and Inclusion employee network, gender portfolio managers, a proposed diversity and inclusion strategy, and policies for establishing flexible work arrangements and preventing harassment. JGA is also in the process of establishing a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council, which one of the Group Vice Presidents will chair. The company employs a diversity and inclusion manager (0.4 FTE), who is co-ordinating a national diversity and inclusion survey with JGA employees "to gain knowledge of priorities and career expectations in this area".

The transition period for JGA has created a cultural challenge. Current numbers for women employees reflect the challenges within the industry to attract and retain women, and as a result the leadership have introduced targets. JGA's Infrastructure & Environment Division has surpassed its target of 25%, with 28% professional women employees, and it has nearly reached its target of 20%, with 18% women managers. The Resources & Power Division, which employs many engineers, has 14% professional women employees and 7% women managers, with targets of 20% and 14%, respectively.

The current challenge

As the Australian economy moves from its mining and resources base to one based on technology, advanced manufacturing and innovation, the challenges for consulting companies like JGA will include employing, training and maintaining the most talented women and men for new work environments. To **broaden diversity in the workplace and ensure JGA is drawing from the widest possible talent pool**, the leadership needs to develop, promote and advance inclusive leadership and management across the organisation. In this way, developing and maintaining gender equality is seen as everyone's responsibility and leaders and managers are routinely held accountable, evaluated and rewarded.

"WE ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING AN EQUAL WORKPLACE, AND GENDER EQUALITY IS AT THE CORE OF OUR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY. I AM PROUD TO BE LEADING JACOBS ANZ IN THIS AREA AS WE STRIVE TO CREATE CHANGE INTERNALLY, AND ACROSS THE WIDER INDUSTRY. OUR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE WORKPLACE GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY PROJECT WAS A VALUABLE EXERCISE ENABLING US TO ASSESS OUR PROGRESS AND PROVIDED GUIDANCE ON THE KEY DRIVERS FOR GENDER EQUALITY SUCCESS.". -

Dr Michael Shirley
National Champion of Change and Group Vice President

Moving forward

Cultural change and sustained gender equality in the workplace is dependent upon active top-down and bottom-up commitment.

JGA has top-down leadership in this agenda, which is one of the major levers for successful cultural change. However, there is also the need for managers and employees to be **engaged across the organisation** in the understanding of the business case for gender equality and its realisation in the workplace. In particular, leaders and managers need to be held accountable for removing barriers in their operational areas.

Future action

In addressing areas of focus for future action on a gender equality strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of **engaging the whole of JGA so that gender equality is recognised as the responsibility of all**, senior management could apply these tools in the following way:

Actions

- Diversity and Inclusion teams to lead focus groups with leaders/ managers as to why gender equality is important and how it could support the strategic objectives of the business; and
- Diversity and Inclusion teams to use data to substantiate the business case and target specific areas, e.g. data on workforce composition and the diversity and inclusion survey.

Success factors

- Diversity and inclusion strategy proposal exists;
- Group vice-presidents are committed to supporting and developing the focus on diversity and inclusion;
- Establishment of the JGA diversity and inclusion employee Networks and Advisory Council; and
- Establishment of the post of Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

Risks/barriers

- Consistent organisational support at all levels of local and global leadership for the business case for the D&I strategy;
- Loss of talented staff where there have been gender and/or flexibility barriers in career development and support; and
- Bias and lack of diversity awareness in decision making.

Outcomes/benefits

- An overarching strategy will ensure the organisation's objectives are clear, specifying how gender equality supports business objectives and ensuring policies and initiatives are consistent.

Measurement

- Stakeholder feedback on the strategy and its ability to deliver on its objectives.

To find out more

Women in Engineering Australia

Consult Australia Workforce Diversity Industry Snapshot 2013

Consult Champions of Change

WGEA Strategy for inclusiveness, well-being and diversity in engineering workplaces

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creating inclusive cultures



Building a gender-inclusive organisational culture

The Myer Family Company

Organisation

105 employees

Financial and Insurance Services

Head Office in Melbourne with other offices in Sydney, Perth and Brisbane

The Myer Family Company has grown from a small wealth management business of 16 people, based in Melbourne, to a national company with more than 100 employees. As they look to increase profitability and expand their client base, they recognise the need to attract and retain the best talent and build engagement among employees. All of these factors have led to a period of cultural change within the company, focusing on leadership capability, teamwork and employee motivation, while retaining the collegiality, agility and inclusiveness of a small business.

The current challenge

The increased focus on employee engagement and motivation has highlighted the need for more **attention to a gender dimension within their organisational culture**. In doing so, they can attract and retain the best talent, and also use the diversity of staff to offer fresh perspectives and bring about new ideas. They currently have processes that reflect their commitment to diversity, including flexible work policies, and measurement and reporting processes that include the gender composition of the workforce, however these are not yet integrated within an overarching strategy.

Moving forward

The ongoing process of cultural change within the Myer Family Company offers an ideal opportunity to unlock the benefits of gender equality. Attracting the best talent is good for employees and company alike. Retaining talented employees by addressing their individual needs offers clients a stable service, which is positive for business.

By creating an explicit strategy for **addressing gender equality within their organisational culture**, they can establish goals, identify changes to be made and establish timeframes and measurements.

Future action

As with the overall cultural change programme, the organisation should look to use both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

At the top, it is important that there is leadership commitment and a clear understanding of what gender equality looks like, why gender equality is valued in the organisation and the benefits to be gained.

Developing a tailored business case can be crucial in achieving this outcome. For the Myer Family Company, the benefits include securing the best available talent by creating a culture of inclusion and empowerment. Senior management should undergo training and development to ensure they are unlocking the potential of their staff as well as identifying, recognising and meeting their needs.

Employees also need to be engaged in the process of culture change. This can be done by discovering their attitudes to relevant aspects of their working lives in a safe and non-threatening environment. Annual meetings of the whole organisation can be used to develop a narrative around gender equality that is owned by all employees.

In addressing areas of focus within the strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of creating a **gender-inclusive culture**, the Myer Family Company could apply these tools in the following way:

Actions

- The whole organization should work to ensure that the language and rhetoric used does not exclude certain groups (e.g. comments that working from home is taking a 'day off' are inappropriate);
- HR and management should make social functions more gender-inclusive by holding them at family-friendly times and restricting events based around alcohol and sport, which research shows may engage male-dominated networks and exclude many women and men; and
- Senior leadership should include empowerment and inclusion in the organisation's values to show the organisation's intent and commitment to these behaviours.

Success factors

- Current focus on cultural change and ongoing focus on employee engagement; and
- Education of all stakeholders (leaders, managers and employees).

Risks/barriers

- Not everyone within the organisation may recognise prpblems with the way gender or working flexibly is spoken about; and
- Attitudes may be ingrained and unconscious, so it is important to have open conversation about them, recognise issues and focus on evidence rather than opinion.

Outcomes/benefits

- Greater sense of inclusion for all employees, which may have knock-on effects on employee engagement, productivity and retention.

Measurement

- Qualitative feedback from employees, particularly flexible workers & managers; and
- Include questions about diversity and inclusion in employee engagement survey and analyse responses by gender, job level and employment type.

"THIS PROJECT CAME AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME, HELPING US TO THINK MORE ABOUT WHAT AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE ENTAILS TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF ALL OUR EMPLOYEES, MALE AND FEMALE."

– Clare Bird, Human Resources Director, Myer Family Company

To find out more

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency has a toolkit to help draw up a gender equality strategy

The WGEA also has resources to help engage leadership with gender equality and set up employee consultation.

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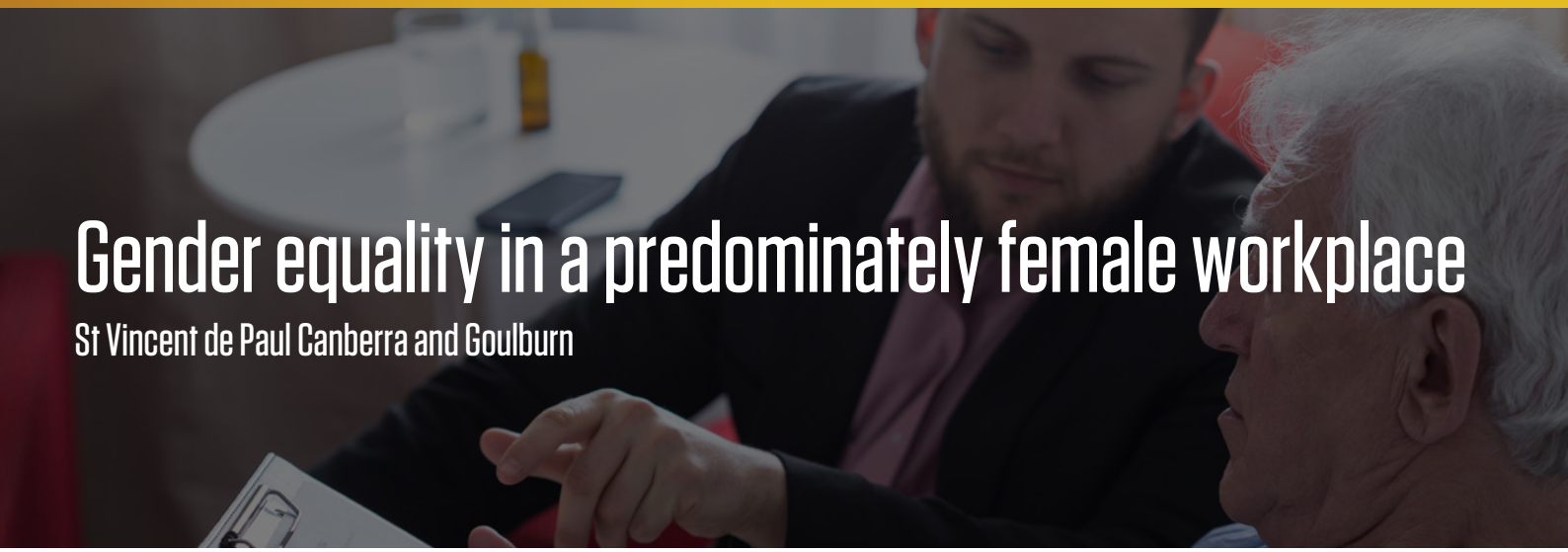
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Workplace Gender Equality Agency

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creating inclusive cultures



Gender equality in a predominately female workplace

St Vincent de Paul Canberra and Goulburn

Organisation

152 employees, with 600 members and 1600 volunteers

Social Assistance Services

Head Office in Canberra, with stores and services throughout the ACT and Goulburn and South-West NSW region

EST. **1833 in France, with over 100 years history in the Canberra and Goulburn region, but the Canberra and Goulburn organisation was formally established in 2007.**

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a global charitable organisation focused on helping those in need, following the principles of Catholic social teaching. In Australia, it operates on a federated basis, with each state or territory organisation operating largely independently. It is a membership-based organisation, run principally by volunteers and supported by paid employees working mainly in program coordination and case-worker roles, as well as running the organisation's HR, Finance and ICT. St Vincent de Paul Canberra and Goulburn offers programs and services that include family services, social housing, street services for the homeless, corrective services job assistance programs, mental health services, home care and youth camps. They also operate 24 opportunity shops in their area, with funds from these shops used to support the organisation's work.

Their employees are primarily female, reflective of the wider community services industry. The senior leadership group is gender-balanced. The membership base is equally comprised of men and women. This filters through to the board, with three women to five men.

After a period of financial challenge, the organisation is now consolidating their position, with a new CEO appointed three years ago. Part of this future focus includes emphasis on sustainability and innovation, recruiting more volunteers and rethinking the role of members, particularly looking to attract or re-attract people aged between 30-60 years old and more female members and youth.

The current challenge

St Vincent de Paul Canberra and Goulburn has developed an inclusive culture that focuses on supporting the needs of their employees and volunteers. They now need to **articulate and codify these behaviours,** embedding them in policy to ensure consistency and fairness across the organisation. It is also important for the organisation to ensure they do not fall into the trap of many female-dominated industries, that is, a concentration of female employees at the bottom and male managers at the top. Though the organisation has a balance of female and male leaders, this has occurred naturally, and it may be necessary to develop goals around maintaining gender balance to ensure this diversity is not lost when particular managers leave.

Moving forward

The organisation's **respect for diversity and inclusive culture should be supported by policy to embed its sustainability.** In particular, it will be important to have guidelines for requesting and accessing flexible work, which is currently offered according to employee needs, but there may need to be more flexibility for volunteers and members for recruitment and retention.

Given the female-dominated workforce, it is also important that the organisation works to recruit more men to help cater to the diversity of the client group, ensuring that there are linkages, empathy and understanding between those giving and receiving help.

Once St Vincent de Paul Canberra and Goulburn has worked to strengthen its policies and ensure its processes are standardised across the organisation, the next step will be to build measurement and reporting practices. Implementing data collection will help track recruitment and selection, workforce composition and promotion, employees working flexibly and leave, all of which will be easier to report and showcase to access donors and government grants.

Future action

In addressing areas of focus for future action on a gender equality strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of **embedding existing policies and processes into the organisational strategy and culture,** St Vincent de Paul could apply these tools in the following way:

Actions

- HR establishes a timeframe to review the current policies, identify gaps and develop new policies, including the resources and people responsible;
- HR puts into writing the practices already being used that are not yet in policy (e.g. around access to flexible work); and
- HR speaks to employees and senior leaders about the need for new policies and identifies differences within areas of the organisation.

Success factors

- Having an inclusive culture; and
- Undergoing a modernisation process, including changing back office systems and possibly moving to online record-keeping.

Risks/barriers

- Lack of time and resources;
- Policies may be owned by HR and not be understood by all employees; and
- There may be differences in employee needs, roles and locations that are hard to accommodate in standard policies.

Outcomes/benefits

- Consistency and fairness across the organisation; and
- Ensuring that current practices are sustained into the future.

Measurement

- Feedback from leaders, managers, employees and volunteers on how useful they find the policies to be.

To find out more

See the WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit for more about the stages of the journey to workplace gender equality.

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Achieving gender equality from top to bottom

SwanCare Group

Organisation

370

Health Care and Social Assistance

Bentley, Western Australia

EST. **1961**

The SwanCare Group is one of the leading providers of Aged Care accommodation for Western Australians. It displays a structural gender disparity common to other organisations in the healthcare industry: 70% of employees are women, while its 14-member board has 4 women and 10 men, and the CEO and 2 of the 4 general managers are men. As a residential care business, SwanCare enables many employees to work part-time and flexibly because it provides 24-hour, 7-day-a-week residential care. This flexible working environment is particularly popular with employees who have family care needs. However, SwanCare has not recognised its flexible work practices in a specific and transparent policy.

SwanCare has developed a talent pipeline through partnerships with three universities and pays half of the fees for employees to update their industry qualifications. Their people strategies include internal industry training and supporting staff to develop and look for new career opportunities but remain in the company. Swancare's HR staff are aware of the importance of developing an inclusive culture in regard to multicultural behaviours but have not implemented a diversity strategy. They have implemented a sexual harassment and discrimination prevention policy and provide training for all managers in its prevention, they have also consulted with employees via a survey on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace.

The current challenge

The challenge for SwanCare is to **increase the number of male employees in a traditionally female industry,** while **ensuring women are represented at senior levels of the organisation.** Men are represented in every type of job at SwanCare while women are not. For example, there are no women in maintenance roles.

Moving forward

As a result of the various strengths already mentioned, SwanCare is seen as an organisation of choice for women in the residential care sector, and has a strong reputation. The question is how to ensure it is also seen as an organisation of choice for men. To secure, sustain and build upon its business advantages, SwanCare needs to develop and implement a **transparent gender equality strategy** incorporating a business case, which will bring together its workplace initiatives create a diverse and gender equitable culture with a focus on both genders being represented at all levels.

> "WHILE WE DID NOT SEE GENDER AS A PROBLEM WITH 70% WOMEN ON STAFF, THIS PROJECT HAS HELPED US RECOGNISE AND IDENTIFY WHERE WE CAN IMPROVE ON OUR SYSTEMS AND STRATEGIES ON GENDER EQUITY TO MAKE THEM MUCH MORE CLEARLY DEFINED"
>
> *Fiona Millar, Manager Human Resources, SwanCare*

Future action

In addressing areas of focus for future action on a gender equality strategy on a gender equality strategy, it is useful to identify::

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of **ensuring gender equality at all levels of the organisation**, SwanCare could apply these tools to its management development in the following way:

Actions

- HR reviews leadership capabilities and associated behavioural indicators for gender neutrality and adjust as necessary;
- HR and senior leadership ensure the removal of gender bias from related performance and talent frameworks; and
- HR, especially learning & development, incorporates inclusive leadership and unconscious bias activities based upon the WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit within regular leadership courses and business strategy programs.

Success factors

- Focus on improving people leadership capabilities of department managers, rather than having employees go to HR with diversity and gender problems; and
- Business benefits of a gender-inclusive culture.

Risks/barriers

- Instead of holistic gender inclusive leadership capability, gender inclusive capability is seen by some to be for women only; and
- Initial enthusiasm is not maintained.

Outcomes/benefits

- Improved/changed gender-inclusive workplace behaviours by leaders and managers;
- Building inclusive leadership capability and unconscious bias self-awareness that is owned by the leadership and management; and
- Top-down responsibility for developing a culture of diversity, rather than relying on HR to administer more gender diversity at all levels.

Measurement

- Qualitative feedback from the leadership and management teams through annual review of changes made to their practice, which demonstrates gender inclusiveness.
- Quantitative feedback looking at gender diversity in recruitment data.

To find out more

SwanCare Group Strategic Plan

WGEA Gender Strategy Toolkit

WGEA Learning resources

A project by the Centre for Workplace Leadership

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

CENTRE FOR WORKPLACE LEADERSHIP

Commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Employment

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Supported by the WGEA and A Human Agency Consulting

Australian Government

Workplace Gender Equality Agency

a-ha! a human agency



Retaining talent in male-dominated industries

The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health

Organisation

500 Employees

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

Parkville, VIC

EST. **2007**

The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health at Melbourne University is one of the world's leading brain research centres. While 60% of its PhD students are female, only 14% of its senior research positions are occupied by women, and there are similar ratios for the board, advisory committee and senior management team. The Foundation Council has no female members.

The current challenge

The Institute Director has expressed concern about the 'wastage' that occurs with **talented women leaving scientific research**, a trend that could hold Australian science back on the world stage. The National Health and Medical Research Council, which represents 70% of the Florey's funding, is now making institutional funding contingent on "requirements in policies to support the progression and retention of women in health and medical research".

Moving forward

Given the known issues around gender diversity in scientific research, the Florey could set itself up as a **model of best practice** by building on the work they have done in the last 18 months. So far, the Florey has established a number of specific programs and undertaken research, led by an international expert to examine the career paths of women in science and provide recommendations for future action. There is now an Equality in Science committee, which has subgroups on mentoring, parenting, policy, fundraising and communication. The Fred P. Archer Fellowship supports the promotion and retention of senior women researchers at the Florey. Women scientists in medical organisations in the Parkville campus area of the University have combined to increase awareness and set gender equality standards for the sector. The Florey has a target of 30% female membership of committees and a very active mentoring programme.

"THIS PROJECT WAS VERY TIMELY FOR US AS WE HAVE IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PROGRESSION IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND ARE NOW IN A POSITION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A MORE FORMAL GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY"

- Nathalie Braussaud
Co-Chair Equality in Science Committee

Future action

An essential step is to bring together the work done so far in a more strategic way, such as is outlined in the WGEA's Gender Strategy Toolkit. In addressing areas of focus within the strategy, it is useful to identify:

- specific actions to be taken;
- existing factors in the organisation that will help achieve success;
- risks and barriers that might impede the chances of success;
- the desired outcomes and benefits arising from those actions; and
- how to measure the actions.

In the case of **creating and retaining gender balance in a male-dominated industry**, accountability of the leadership is a key step. The Florey Institute could apply these tools to this goal in the following way:

Actions

- The executive committee develops and implements a gender diagnostic for the institute; and
- Senior leadership establishes executives' Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or objectives for gender equity targets.

Success factors

- Director and others recognise that the institute must incorporate a diverse talented workforce so they are best placed to be at the forefront of their field.

Risks/barriers

- Other business priorities/distractions displace gender equality focus; and
- Metrics are insufficient to support process.

Outcomes/benefits

- Focus on gender equality becomes normalised as a business imperative; and
- Executives cascade accountability down through their own structures.

Measurement

- Developing gender equality is recognised as every employee's responsibility, but leaders and managers are routinely accountable, evaluated and accountable.

To find out more

Site of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, which has information about reporting requirements, as well as learning resources, toolkits and useful guides

Women in Male-dominated workplaces toolkit from the Australian Human Rights Commission

National Medical and Health Research Council's revised Administering Institution Policy - consideration of gender equity

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