

Towards a prosperous, equal and inclusive future

Leading on inclusive gender equality

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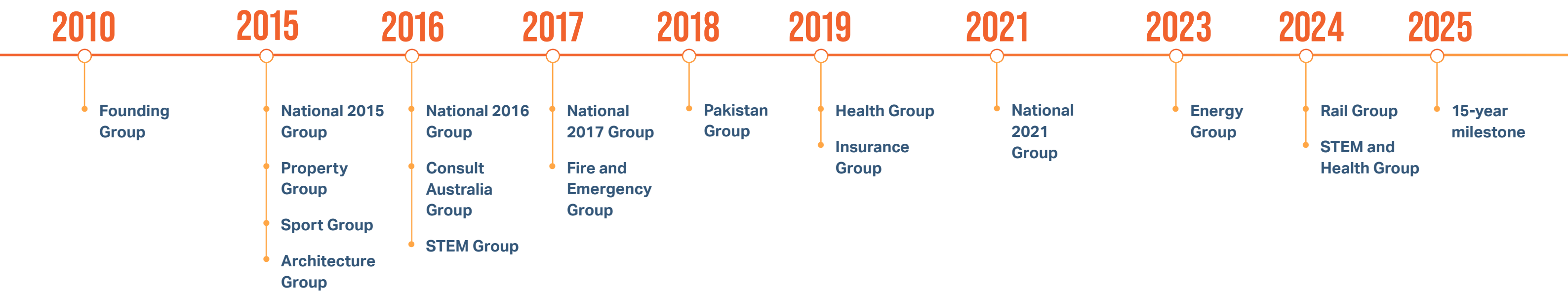
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About Champions of Change Coalition

Champions of Change Coalition was founded in 2010 by Australia’s then Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick AO. Today, it is a globally recognised leadership strategy for advancing inclusive gender equality across workplaces, sectors and society. With more than 250 CEO and board-level leaders representing over 1.5 million employees, our Coalition focuses on taking action within organisations, creating industry benchmarks, influencing national policy and leading transformational change on gender equality and inclusion.

Our vision is to achieve inclusive gender equality across our workplaces by 2030.

The Coalition is committed to listening to and learning from visionary women leaders, activists and advocates for women's rights and equality across Australia and globally. We thank them all sincerely for their willingness to share their stories and expertise, collaborate and partner with us over the past 15 years.



We recognise that not all women and gender diverse people experience gender inequality in the same way. Our approach focuses on inclusive gender equality which centres people in all their diversity, with a focus on those facing intersecting and compounding barriers. We are committed to building inclusive, respectful workplaces where everyone can thrive. This includes a strong commitment to reconciliation, respect for and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. [Read more](#)

Foreword

by Elizabeth Broderick AO, Founder

Fifteen years ago, I invited a small group of men in powerful roles to step up alongside women to accelerate progress on gender equality. At the time, the idea of ‘male champions of change’ raised eyebrows, and rightly so. It was not about men speaking for women, or men saving women. I knew then what we’ve seen proven many times since: if you want to accelerate change you must engage those with influence in the effort.

That small group of leaders listened, learned and acted. They stepped up as ‘Champions’, not because they were perfect, but because they were committed to achieving progress. What began as a conversation has grown into Champions of Change Coalition, a bold leadership strategy involving more than 250 CEOs and board-level leaders, representing over 1.5 million employees. We’ve created a ‘new normal’ where leaders take personal accountability for change, challenge outdated norms, and work collectively to transform workplaces, industries and systems so they work better for women and everyone.

Our work has focused on:

- **building gender-equal and diverse workforces, capturing the performance advantage**
- **creating workplace cultures of care, respect, safety and belonging, leveraging the talent advantage**
- **embedding equality and inclusion in what we deliver, creating an innovation advantage and positive social impact.**

We’ve stood behind our numbers, tackled difficult issues and freely shared the insights, lessons and tools we’ve developed because change accelerates when we work openly and together. Many of the initiatives we developed have since become national policies or globally accepted standards.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of all is how far we’ve come in making inclusive gender equality a business, social and economic imperative, embedded into how organisations operate. Our work has been about rewriting outdated narratives, shifting systems built for a bygone era, and designing new ones with fairness, safety and inclusion at their heart. We’ve proven that when workplaces are made better for women, they’re made better for everyone. They are safer, more respectful, more flexible, more innovative and more productive.

Still, we are not done yet. In every sector, we face persistent ‘tough spots’ that hold back progress. These tend to be the jobs and industries that shape our country’s future, but too often are stuck in the past. And while we’ve made real gains, we also recognise that not all women have benefitted equally, particularly those women who face higher levels of discrimination. There is also more we can do to engage men in the value of this work. We must continue to embed inclusive gender equality by design and apply an intersectional lens across everything we do.

What gives me hope is the spirit of generosity, the vision for a fairer world and long-term leadership that defines our Members and their organisations. Over the years, I’ve seen CEOs and their teams invest their time, expertise and influence. I’ve seen them reflect deeply, listen carefully and act decisively, even when it’s uncomfortable to do so. Most importantly, I’ve seen them stay the course.

Thank you to every Director, CEO, Implementation Leader, expert advisor, partner and team member who has joined us in this work.

“

Many believe rising inequality is inevitable, but we have the opportunity to prove this is not the case.

I remain optimistic because I have seen what is possible when leaders sign up to a shared vision, collaborate and take action.

”



Elizabeth Broderick AO
Founder
Champions of Change Coalition

Our impact

Leadership	1. Put gender equality on the CEO and board agenda	Made inclusive gender equality core business, listening to and learning from employees, human rights experts and the women's sector. Today, more than 250 CEOs and Chairs invest their time and expertise to lead this work within their organisations and through collaborative action at sector and national levels.
	2. Challenged outdated leadership models and definitions of merit	Disrupted outdated leadership models and narrow views of what constitutes merit. Championed initiatives like the Panel Pledge and Leadership Shadow , setting new expectations for visible, diverse and inclusive leadership.
Accountability	3. Raised the bar on accountability and transparency	Created more specific and granular gender equality measurement frameworks to accelerate change on gender equality and pay equality, including a focus on the sport sector. We also publish the world's largest voluntary disclosure on workplace gender equality each year. Our impact reporting, Organisational Gender Equality Dashboard and National Workplace Gender Equality Tracker will continue to set the standard for transparency, accountability and taking targeted action.
Representation	4. Built gender-balanced leadership pipelines in key sectors	Embedded 40:40:20 targets into recruitment, development and promotion systems across traditionally male-dominated industries. We also implemented sponsorship and succession planning strategies to ensure women are consciously factored into talent processes for the roles, careers and sectors of the future.
	5. Tackled gender pay gaps with evidence and action	Created a methodology for ensuring pay equity in like-for-like roles, then developed and shared practical tools, audits and action frameworks to guide measurable reductions in organisational gender pay gaps, including in sectors where gaps were once dismissed as inevitable.
Care, respect, and safety	6. Brought care into the leadership and workplace agenda	Lifted caring from a hidden personal responsibility to a shared organisational and leadership challenge. Our work helped normalise part-time and flexible work while influencing more inclusive policies on paid leave, caregiving and workplace design, debunking the outdated idea that careers and care can't coexist.
	7. Mainstreamed flexibility across all roles and workplaces	Set the standard in making flexibility accessible for all employees and took it beyond head office. By redesigning roles, shifts and systems, Members showed that flexibility can be part of every job, improving performance, retention and equity.
	8. Made respect and safety a leadership priority	Acted well ahead of legislative change to prevent sexual harassment, eliminate everyday sexism, and support those affected by domestic and family violence. Our work reframed respect and safety as a core leadership accountability rather than a compliance issue, setting workplace standards that can radiate into homes and communities.
Inclusive decisions and design	9. Developed a blueprint for inclusive decision-making and design	Captured all we have learned about gender-inclusive decisions and design through the creation of our highly practical and flexible 7 Switches: A Guide for Inclusive Gender Equality by Design . We shared this framework freely and globally to help accelerate change.
	10. Helped shape national thinking and policy on gender equality	Changed the way organisations talk about and take action on inclusive gender equality, as a human right, economic driver and business priority. We shared our tools and resources for others to adopt or adapt to help lift standards, expectations and the pace of change.

Our future priorities

Leadership	1. Rewire leadership pipelines for gender-balanced CEO succession	Lead a specific focus on the feeder roles to CEO, ensuring women and diverse candidates are considered essential in the mix. This involves redesigning development programs, sponsorship and succession planning so that diverse and inclusive pipelines are seen as an expectation and a competitive advantage.
	2. Partner on policy reform and system-wide impact	Leverage our collective insights and experiences to help government and key stakeholders shape reform, regulatory standards and cross-sector opportunities to accelerate change.
Accountability	3. Take targeted action to address the compounded barriers facing diverse women	Standardise how we collect and use data on diverse women's workplace experiences to inform more sophisticated and targeted action, particularly for those facing compounding barriers to employment and career progression.
Representation	4. Crack the tough spots in roles and sectors where women remain largely excluded	Make progress where it's hardest: in the high-value, high-profile roles and industries where women are still largely shut out. This involves shifting entrenched cultures, and re-imagining job design and selection criteria, particularly in tech, construction, energy, banking and finance, operations, and frontline leadership.
	5. Remove structural barriers to women's economic security	Tackle occupational segregation, the part-time penalty and unpaid care load, which contribute to unequal pay and retirement savings. This includes building career pathways that deliver long-term financial outcomes and economic security for women.
Care, respect and safety	6. Identify and deliver breakthrough strategies on care	Elevate care as a shared leadership, business and economic issue, identifying breakthrough strategies on the mindsets, policies and infrastructure required to unlock workforce talent and productivity. This includes supporting equal caring across genders, enabling all employees to care without penalty, and redesigning systems to reward contribution over constant availability.
	7. Modernise flexibility models to match the way we live and work	Leverage all we have learned from the pandemic to design flex models that work for all industries, all employees and in contemporary settings. This includes flexible and hybrid work systems that meet the needs of diverse roles, industries and life stages.
	8. Make respect and safety a non-negotiable standard	Continue lifting standards and expectations so that respectful behaviours become a threshold requirement for employment, pay, and promotion and leadership. At the same time, continue building organisational capability to respond to employees who use violence, in addition to supporting those affected.
Inclusive decisions and design	9. Hardwire gender equality into every system and transformation	Leverage major transformations to hardwire inclusive gender equality into the future. This includes using the 7 Switches as standard practice for shaping decisions, products, services, policies, technology, systems and infrastructure, particularly in areas such as the development and use of AI and industry transitions.
	10. Shift social norms by showing what progress looks like	Shape what people see as normal in workplaces and in society, shifting outdated ideas about who should do what, whether it's leading a company, caring for a family or choosing a career. Share what's working and demonstrate that gender equality is good for business, employees, the economy and the community.

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... high and rising inequality is not an inevitability; it's something that individual countries can influence. A universal trend of increasing inequality would support the idea that inequality is completely determined by global economic forces like technological progress, globalisation or capitalism. **The very different trends we see among countries exposed to these same forces suggest that national institutions, politics and policy matter.**

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Our World in Data

Introduction

Through 15 years of leadership action to help achieve gender equality in the workplace, we've learned that when we design work to be better for women, we make it better for everyone.

When leaders step up to create more flexible workplaces, all people gain the chance to care for children, to support ageing parents, or to simply live more balanced and healthy lives. When we prioritise safety and respect in the workplace, we give all people greater freedom, dignity and the opportunity to thrive, setting standards that radiate to homes and communities. When teams become more diverse in gender, background and thought, performance and innovation follow.

While this report reflects on the progress we've made and the lessons learned, it also highlights where we must go next. Persistent challenges remain, especially in areas we call 'tough spots', where outdated ideas about leadership, appropriate careers for men and women, and effective workplace cultures still hold people and organisations back.

Our focus is on addressing these hard-to-shift barriers through coordinated action across organisations, sectors and society. At the same time, we are alive to how rapidly the world is changing, making it essential that we both protect what's been achieved and make the most of the transformative opportunities we see ahead to accelerate progress.

Our aspiration is for workplaces that are consciously and deliberately designed at every level to enable all people to thrive. Built on cultures of care, safety, respect and belonging, these workplaces help shape a more equitable society, with positive ripple effects for homes and communities. We invite others to join us in shaping a world where everyone can lead, contribute and belong.



Andrew Stevens
Chair
Champions of Change
Coalition



Annika Freyer
CEO
Champions of Change
Coalition

This is a leadership priority

We understand that freedom, fairness, opportunity and safety are core values for all Australians, and achieving gender equality is essential for our country's current and future prosperity.

Our collective future depends on tapping into the full potential of everyone, fostering resilience, innovation, social cohesion and growth.

The case for continued leadership to achieve inclusive gender equality across workplaces remains clear:

- **Individual, family and community wellbeing:** Safe, respectful and inclusive workplaces help create healthier, happier people while promoting social cohesion and economic resilience within families and communities.
- **Enhanced productivity and business outcomes:** Diverse workplaces help to address critical skill shortages, boost innovation and drive sustainable growth.
- **Economic prosperity:** Equitable participation significantly expands economic opportunity, lifting individuals, families and communities nationwide.
- **Human rights:** Inclusive gender equality recognises the value and dignity of every individual, strengthens trust and fairness in workplaces, and creates societies that are more connected, resilient and equitable.

Champions of Change Coalition and national data shows that intentional leadership focus has accelerated change. Collective action has led to a more gender-balanced national talent pool where women are now more engaged in and connected to the workforce than ever before. Progressive policies have also opened opportunities for men to access flexible work practices, spend more time with their families and enjoy more respectful and vibrant workplaces.

However, we have unfinished business. Women represent half our population, yet they are still under-represented in leadership, channelled into specific roles and careers by narrow ideas about what they are capable of, paid significantly less than men overall, and lack personal safety at work, at home and in the community. These issues are more pronounced for diverse women, such as women with disability, First Nations women, LGBTQ+ women, migrant and refugee women, and women from different cultural backgrounds, who can experience multiple and overlapping barriers. Men also feel pressure from old-fashioned beliefs that they should put work first, be the 'primary breadwinner' and ignore their own mental health.

Plan International's Gender Compass research shows that Australians are in favour of measures to advance gender equality in the workplace – in fact they expect it. By continuing our work together, we can build workplaces that are better for everyone.

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Inclusive workplaces unlock talent, spark innovation and boost productivity, driving economic growth and social cohesion. Building on 15 years of momentum, we are committed to delivering on our vision, creating lasting benefits for all Australians.

”

Andrew Stevens

Chair Champions of Change Coalition

Our approach

Our Founding Members first stepped up to accelerate change on gender equality in workplaces in 2010. At the time, women's representation in leadership was low and the pace of change was far too slow. Today, the Coalition comprises more than 250 CEO and board-level leaders, collectively representing over 1.5 million employees with operations across the world. We work with corporate, government, academic and community leaders, peak industry bodies and associations and importantly, the women's sector to achieve rapid change.

Our strategy is to innovate and serve as an accelerator for organisations that prioritise the human rights, business, social and economic value of inclusive gender equality.

Our vision is to achieve inclusive gender equality across our workplaces within a generation.

Members are personally engaged in developing and delivering strategies and initiatives across their entire business system.

Being accountable is a cornerstone of our strategy – we stand behind our numbers, and share our insights, lessons, outcomes and resources widely for others to adopt and adapt.

While we continue to focus on personal engagement and organisational leadership, we have extended our approach to working within industries and sectors, across supply chains and partners, together as a Coalition and at national and societal levels to increase the scale, reach and impact of our work.

This includes prioritising inclusive gender equality by design in the systems, products and services we build and deliver, rather than just fixing unequal systems of the past or 'bolting on' solutions when inequalities are identified. We are also applying an intersectional lens across all our work, recognising that our strategy must benefit all people.

Many of the actions developed and implemented as part of the strategy are now globally accepted standards for organisations wishing to become employers of choice for all people.

Champions of Change Coalition strategies and actions focus on five interconnected themes:

- 1. Leadership**
- 2. Accountability**
- 3. Representation**
- 4. Care, respect and safety**
- 5. Inclusive design**

Looking ahead

Tackling the most difficult challenges together

Despite progress, insights arising from gender pay gap data and our own deep dives within functions, organisations and sectors highlight persistent barriers to inclusive gender equality that cannot be easily solved. For example, many of our organisations have achieved or are progressing towards gender equal representation overall, but in some critical areas, change is slow or non-existent despite equal and significant effort.

These areas are tough spots and they are underpinned by interconnected workplace and societal dynamics that are difficult to shift, including:

- **societal expectations that limit people's choices** and opportunities in work and life, based on outdated ideas about men's and women's roles and capabilities
- **unequal responsibility for unpaid care** and household duties that limit women's career and economic potential
- **workplace systems and policies designed for an outdated workforce** and society, that create barriers to women's full participation and progression
- **unwelcoming workplace cultures for women** and under-represented and marginalised groups
- **continued undervaluing of traditionally feminised roles** and industries, perpetuating gender pay gaps.

Across most organisations and sectors, these tough spots feature common characteristics such as:

- **high-profile, high-paid, critical roles** that are pivotal to the core purpose of an organisation
- **high-value, high-impact sectors and roles** of the future such as those in tech, mining, construction and care
- **roles on the pathway to senior leadership** or CEO positions
- **so-called 'greedy jobs' that require more time** and offer less flexibility and control over working hours.

All our experience as a Coalition over the past 15 years highlights that sustainable progress requires coordinated action and collaboration at organisation, sector and national levels – this is particularly important in addressing tough spots.

At the same time, we will actively pursue opportunities to tap into societal, technological and workplace transformations underway to protect what we have achieved and accelerate progress.

“

Some barriers remain entrenched. Addressing them is key to closing gender pay gaps, achieving equal representation, and advancing women's economic equality. This will be a major focus of our work ahead. At the same time, we'll harness the momentum of social, technological and workplace change, building on what's been achieved and accelerating progress towards our vision.

”

Annika Freyer
CEO Champions of Change Coalition

Champions of Change Coalition – *Listen, Learn, Lead with Action*

Vision

Inclusive gender equality across our workplaces by 2030

Purpose

Working together to achieve inclusive gender equality and cultures of care, respect and belonging, enabling all to prosper

Reach & Impact

Personal

Organisational

Industry /
sector

Supply chain
and partners

Coalition

National
and societal

Strategy & Priorities

1. Leadership

- Building CEO and board-level leadership on gender equality
- Developing the next generation of diverse and inclusive leaders
- Creating inclusive sectors / industries of the future

2. Accountability

- Creating a National Workplace Gender Equality Tracker
- Embedding an Organisational Gender Equality Dashboard
- Gathering more complete data on the experiences of diverse groups of women at work

3. Representation

- Tackling critical labour shortages underpinned by occupational / industrial segregation
 - Addressing social and cultural influences
 - Engaging the next generation
 - Establishing supported career pathways
 - Targeting skilled migration

4. Cultures of care, safety, respect and belonging

- Ensuring workplaces are safe and respectful including when engaging with customers, suppliers and communities
- Achieving breakthrough strategies on care
- Refining contemporary flexibility models

5. Inclusive decisions and design

- Ensuring inclusive decisions and design in all that we do and deliver
- Influencing transformational opportunities in areas such as:
 - AI /technological advances
 - women's health
 - supply chains
 - reshaping sectors and industries for the future

Approach

Gender inclusive and intersectional design integrated at every stage, across all initiatives

Outcome

Gender equality, safety, social and economic prosperity for all

Champions of Change Coalition strategies and actions focus on five interconnected themes

Focus area

Our goals

Leadership

CEO and board-level leaders stepping up together to achieve inclusive gender equality across our workplaces within a generation

Accountability

Transparency in standing behind our numbers, sharing outcomes and lessons widely to help accelerate change

Representation

Gender balance at all levels, across occupations and industries, and in the pipeline to leadership
Everyone can pursue roles and careers of their choice and work towards long-term economic security
No or low gender pay gaps in the workforce across all industries

Care, respect and safety

Workplaces set new standards for care, safety, respect and belonging that radiate into homes, communities and society

Inclusive decisions and design

Inclusive gender equality is built into the structures, systems, decisions and design processes underpinning everything we do and deliver

Leadership

Our goal

- CEO and board-level leaders stepping up together to achieve inclusive gender equality across our workplaces within a generation.

Progress

- We have made inclusive gender equality a male and C-suite issue with the establishment of the Coalition in 2010, scaling up to 250 Members today to enhance our impact, and national and international reach and influence.
- Through sustained advocacy, high-profile panels and forums and expert commentary now rarely proceed without women's representation, diverse voices and perspectives.
- Coalition members listed on the ASX 200 have more gender-balanced executive leadership teams than their non-Member-listed peers, demonstrating the impact of concerted effort.

Priority challenges

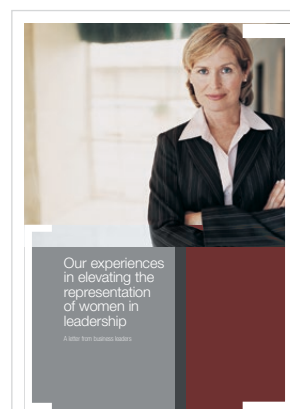
- Despite progress, there is persistent over-representation of men in leadership positions and pipelines, compounded by fixed and outdated models of what it takes to succeed in CEO roles. Further targeted action remains essential to elevate more women into CEO positions and critical roles on the pathway to leadership.
- Pathways to leadership are often unclear, making it difficult to devise and implement development programs that deliver the capability needed for the next generation of leaders.
- Further leadership and collaboration is also required to build gender equality into key industries and sectors where progress remains slow or stalled, those facing labour shortages, and those critical to Australia's future social and economic prosperity.

Focus for the future

- 1 Building CEO and board-level leadership on gender equality**
- 2 Developing the next generation of diverse and inclusive leaders**
- 3 Creating inclusive sectors/ industries of the future by working together at industry and national levels**

Our actions

2011



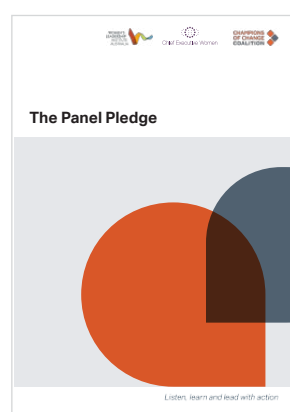
Launched the foundational report **Our experiences in elevating the representation of women in leadership**, developed in collaboration with business leaders and McKinsey & Company. The report outlined a strategic approach for CEOs to progress gender diversity as a core business priority, driving cultural transformation and systemic change across organisations.

2014



Developed and released **The Leadership Shadow** in partnership with Chief Executive Women. This foundational framework guides leaders to reflect on and align their words, actions, priorities, and measurements to effectively lead on gender equality and foster inclusive workplace cultures.

2012

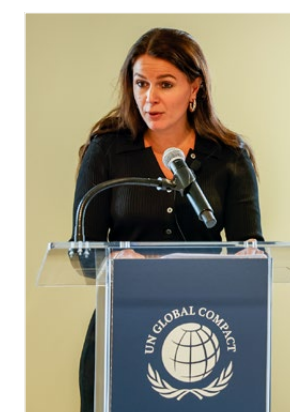


Established the **Panel Pledge**, developed in partnership with Chief Executive Women and the Women's Leadership Institute Australia, as a commitment by leaders to achieve gender balance on panels and at public forums, actively increasing the voice, visibility and participation of diverse women in national discourse.

2018

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2025

(exc. 2020–22
pandemic years)



Supported an annual **delegation of Members to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** in New York as part of our long-term commitment to listen to and learn from the women's sector, including women's rights defenders.

2013



Developed and released **Accelerating the Advancement of Women in Leadership: Listening, Learning, Leading**, a report outlining a 12-point plan focused on four key themes: stepping up as leaders, creating accountability, disrupting the status quo, and dismantling barriers for carers, to drive significant and sustainable increases in women's representation in leadership positions.

2020



Changed our name from Male Champions of Change to **Champions of Change Coalition**, marking 10 years since establishment. This change was made to better reflect the organisation and Members' evolution and the importance of collaborative efforts to advance gender equality.

Our actions

2020



Developed and released **Gender Balance in Fire and Emergency: Going Beyond 'It's the Right Thing to Do' – The Case for Change** in collaboration with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, presenting a compelling rationale for leadership action to improve gender diversity in the fire and emergency sector.



Developed and released **Practical Actions: Leading on gender equality during the COVID-19 crisis**, providing practical actions for leaders to maintain and advance gender equality during the pandemic. The guide focused on leadership, accountability, flexible work, employee wellbeing, and support for those affected by domestic and family violence.

2023



Developed and released a refreshed **Champions of Change Strategy** with the bold vision of achieving inclusive gender equality across workplaces by 2030. This strategy focuses on five key priorities: leadership, accountability, developing gender-equal and diverse workforces (40:40:20), fostering cultures of care, respect, safety and belonging for all, and embedding equality and inclusion into all aspects of organisational operations. An intersectional lens was elevated, recognising the importance of addressing multiple dimensions of diversity. The comprehensive approach aims to deliver transformative change within a generation.

2023



Published the discussion guide **Power to Create Inclusive Gender Equality in the Workplace**, offering leaders practical actions to better understand, use and share their power to achieve inclusive gender equality.

2024



Developed and released **Sponsorship Track: A practical guide to gender-inclusive progression**, a comprehensive resource providing organisations with structured guidance on implementing sponsorship programs. The approach supports leaders in actively disrupting gender biases in talent pipelines, redefining traditional leadership models, and creating targeted opportunities to accelerate women's advancement into senior roles across diverse sectors.

2025



Released **Towards a Prosperous, Equal and Inclusive Future: Leading on Inclusive Gender Equality**, marking 15 years since the establishment of Champions of Change Coalition, reflecting progress over that time, key challenges and priority focus areas for the future. The report affirms our Members' ongoing commitment to lead on gender equality as a business, economic, societal and human rights imperative.

National progress

- Australia has made strong progress advancing women into leadership roles, especially within the public sector, where women's representation has reached record highs across parliament and senior government positions.
- Progress in the private sector remains uneven, with women continuing to be significantly under-represented in executive leadership roles, even in traditionally feminised occupations/industries.

“

Building a gender-balanced leadership pipeline has been a clear strategy for the Coalition from the outset. This is a generational challenge and a productivity imperative. Our priority now is to translate women's greater workforce participation into sustainable gender equality in leadership.

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Janet Menzies
Convenor, STEM and Health Group
Champions of Change Coalition

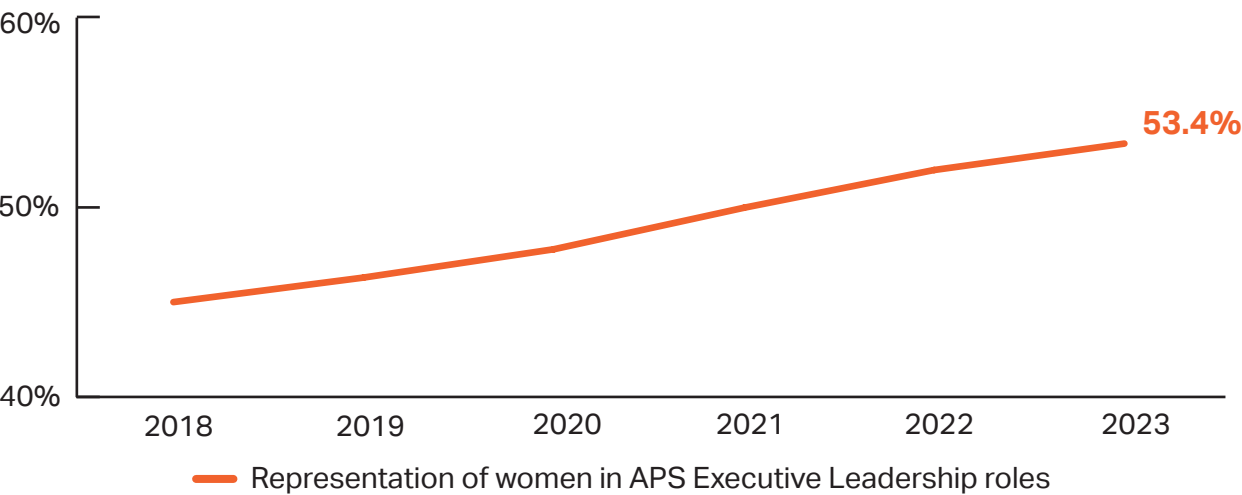
Leadership

National progress

Gender equality in leadership

Through intentional leadership and gender equality action planning, women's representation in SES roles has increased to 53.4% in the Australian Public Service (APS)

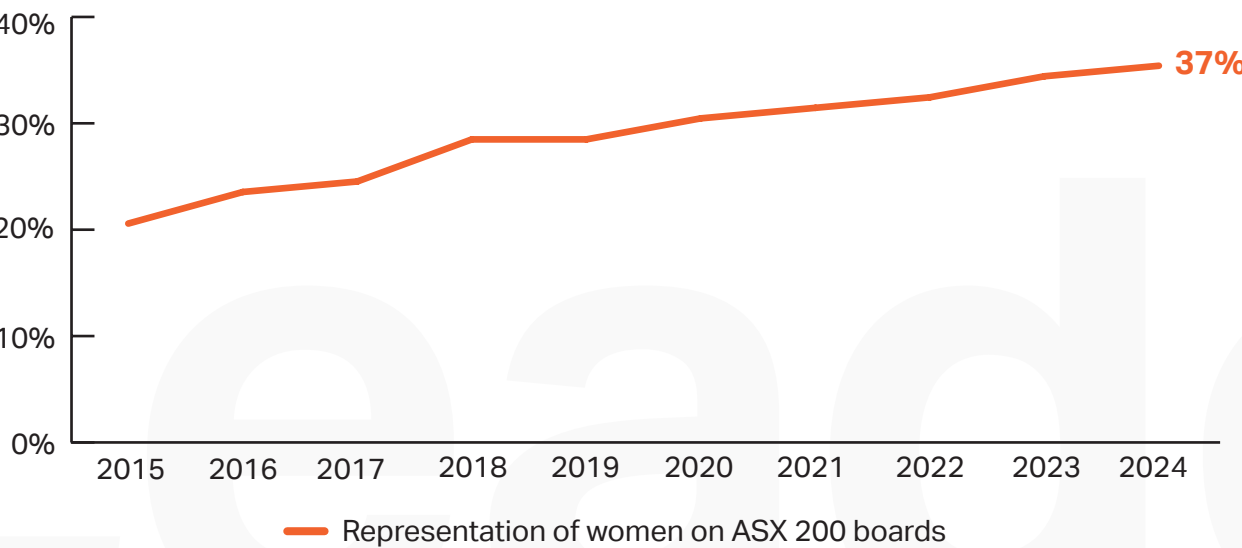
Figure 1. Public sector leadership teams (%)



Source: Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), State of the Service Report 2022-23

The proportion of women holding ASX 200 board positions has grown steadily to 37%

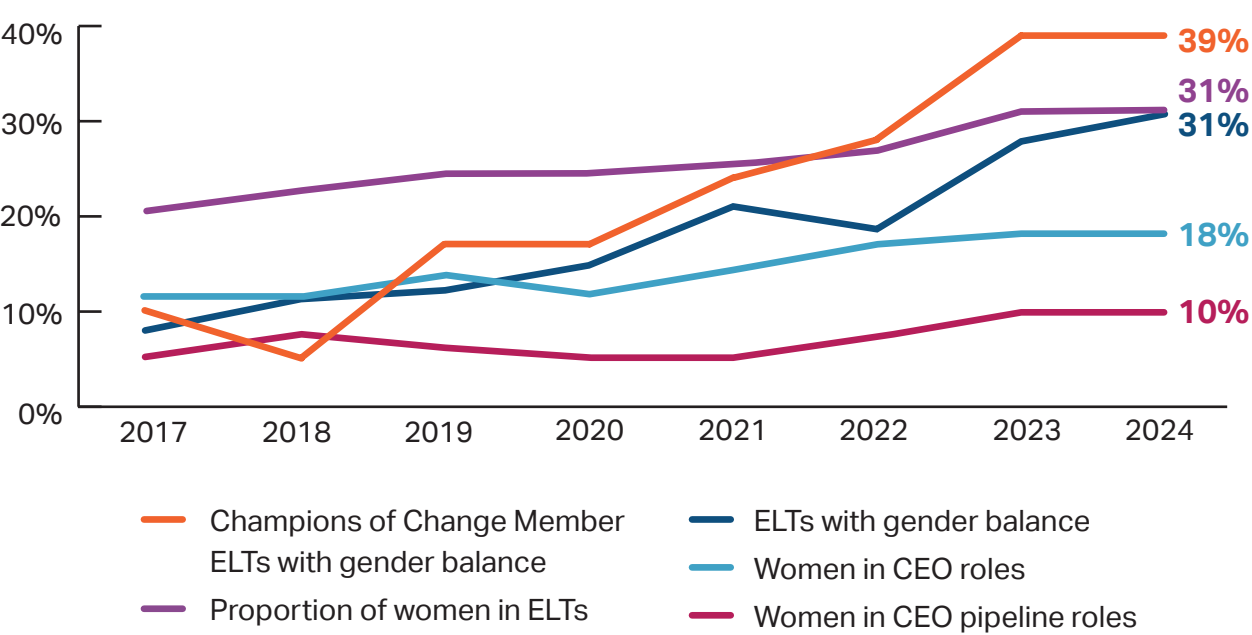
Figure 3. Gender representation on listed ASX 200 boards



Source: Australian Institute of Company Directors

Coalition Members outperform ASX 200 benchmarks for gender-balanced Executive Leadership Teams however, overall the pace of change at the highest levels remains slow

Figure 2. Eight-year trends in gender representation across ASX 200 leadership



Source: CEW Senior Executive Census 2017-2024

Accountability

Our goal

- Transparency in standing behind our numbers, and sharing outcomes and lessons widely to help accelerate change

Progress

- We have developed frameworks for setting and tracking targets, reporting on progress and identifying critical interventions to advance inclusive gender equality and pay equality across workplaces.
- Member organisations have increasingly embedded gender equality in their leadership accountability frameworks and introduced transparent reporting practices.
- Our Sport Group led the way in developing, implementing and reporting on a comprehensive measurement framework for tracking progress on the pathway to gender equality and pay equality in sport.

Priority challenges

- Despite progress led by Champions of Change, Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), Diversity Council Australia (DCA), Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), Chief Executive Women, the 30% Club and others, gender equality reporting remains inconsistent and fragmented. A unified Organisational Gender Equality Dashboard is essential to standardise internal reporting and increase impact.
- We also need a consistent National Workplace Gender Equality Tracker capturing longitudinal data, workforce trends and women's retirement outcomes to improve transparency, accountability and impact.
- Addressing gender inequality means recognising how it impacts different groups of women. Despite efforts by DCA and others, consistent data on First Nations women, culturally diverse women, LGBTQ+ people, women with disabilities and those facing financial hardship is lacking. A standardised, intersectional reporting approach will help ensure equity strategies meet the needs of all groups.

Focus for the future

- 1 Creating a National Workplace Gender Equality Tracker to monitor system change and impactful interventions**
- 2 Embedding an Organisational Gender Equality Dashboard to identify and progress tough spots**
- 3 Gathering more complete data to understand the different experiences of diverse groups of women at work**

Our actions

2010



Developed a standard, detailed and transparent **framework for reporting progress on gender equality** in the workplace. Previously, companies were only required to report their overall gender representation. The approach informed the development of ASX reporting guidelines and gender equality benchmark reporting to WGEA.

2024



Developed and published **Closing gender pay gaps: Our actions and commitment** reinforcing our focus on transparency and accountability by reporting progress, challenges and strategic actions undertaken to eliminate gender pay gaps across our organisations and society.

2019
onward



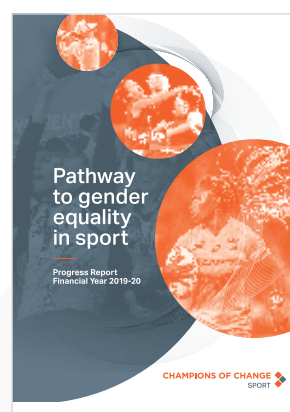
Published our **annual Impact Report**, the world's largest voluntary disclosure on workplace gender equality metrics and high-impact actions, covering areas such as women's representation in leadership, gender pay equity, and the creation of respectful and inclusive workplace cultures.

2025



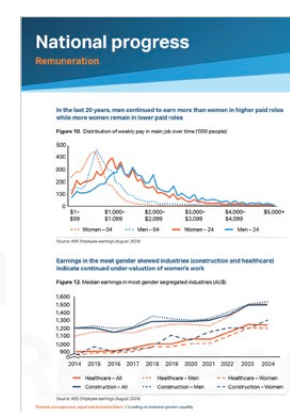
Developed and released the report **UNSTOPPABLE**, detailing a decade of progress in advancing gender and pay equality within Australian sports. The report highlights achievements, persistent challenges and future priorities, including increasing women's representation in leadership and closing participation, investment and pay gaps.

2019
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2024



Developed and released our series on the **Pathway to Gender Equality and Pay Equality in Sport**, a world-first initiative providing sports organisations with a structured approach to measuring, monitoring and advancing gender equality and pay equity in sport. The approach focuses on leadership, participation, pathways, investment and practical actions that can be taken to accelerate change across the entire sports ecosystem.

2025



Worked with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to develop and release a national data series assessing long-term change on key measures of gender equality in the workplace. The Coalition will use the **National Workplace Gender Equality Tracker** to monitor progress towards our vision and help identify priority issues and industries to focus on.

National progress

- Over the past 15 years, accountability for achieving workplace gender equality has increased at a national level through initiatives such as the ASX and WGEA reporting requirements, the latter covering progress on women's representation, gender pay gaps, inclusive workplace practices and target setting.
- There is an opportunity to build on our globally leading datasets. This includes addressing the significant gaps remaining in intersectional data capture and reporting, which hinders effective policy design, strategies and initiatives that can deliver sustainable change.

“

We've made the most progress when we've listened, learned and taken bold and disruptive action. We've shared what's working freely and widely to help lift the bar and measured ourselves against higher standards. We have the strategy, experience and momentum to achieve our vision.

”

Kathryn Fagg
Director
Champions of Change Coalition

Accountability

Representation

Representation

Our goals

- Gender balance at all levels (40:40:20), across occupations and industries and in the pipeline to leadership.
- Everyone can pursue roles and careers of their choice, working towards achieving long-term economic security.
- There are no, or low gender pay gaps (+ or -5%) in the workforce across all industries.

Progress

- We have made progress advancing women's representation, pay and economic security through dedicated strategies, accountability measures and continuous improvement. This includes strategies designed to interrupt bias in talent attraction, recruitment and development, aiming explicitly for 40:40:20 gender representation targets within leadership teams and development programs. These systematic efforts have contributed to steady gains in women's representation in senior leadership roles.
- Member organisations and sector groups are working to attract, retain and progress more women in traditionally male-dominated industries. Alongside improved representation, we are addressing gender pay gaps through regular audits and targeted actions, leading to reductions in both base salaries and total remuneration gaps.

Priority challenges

- There are still built-in barriers that push women and men into different types of jobs. These are shaped by old ideas, inflexible work arrangements, and work and pay systems that don't work well for people with caring responsibilities.
- We can also work more closely with the education system to challenge old gender stereotypes and help break down job segregation. This requires collaboration across sectors so that women and men have equal chances in every job, at every level, and in what they earn.

Focus for the future

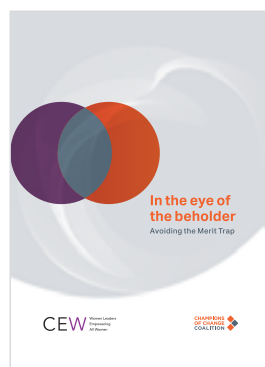
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Tackling critical labour shortages underpinned by occupational / industrial segregation

- Addressing social and cultural influences
- Engaging the next generation
- Establishing supported career pathways
- Targeting skilled migration

Our actions

2016



Developed and released: **In the eye of the beholder: Avoiding the Merit Trap** in partnership with Chief Executive Women. This guide provides organisations with insights and practical strategies to recognise and address how biased perceptions of what constitutes 'merit' perpetuate gender inequality in recruitment and promotions, with the goal of ensuring more equitable and genuinely merit-based outcomes.

2017
→
2025



Developed and released a comprehensive suite of resources to address gender pay gaps, including **Achieving equal pay in like-for-like roles**, **Closing gender pay gaps: Our actions and commitment**, **Closing gender pay gaps: Guide for leadership, transparency and employer action** and **Working together to close gender pay gaps**. These resources provide practical frameworks, guidance and actionable strategies for organisations to measure, understand and eliminate gender pay gaps.

2018



Developed and released the discussion guide **A Gender Equal Future of Work**, urging leaders to proactively embed gender equality into strategies addressing technological and social changes shaping the future of work and workplaces.

2019
→
2024



Developed and released the toolkit **40:40:20 For gender balance: Interrupting bias in your talent processes** offering practical strategies for organisations to achieve gender-balanced recruitment and promotion by addressing biases and expanding talent pools.

2019

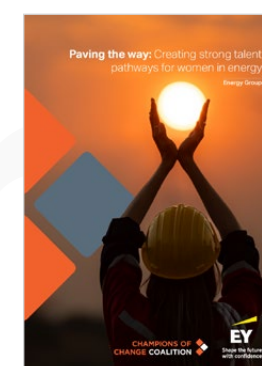


Developed and released the report **Harnessing Our Innovation Potential: Gender Equality in STEM**, providing insights from nearly 3,000 Australian STEM professionals, highlighting barriers to women's retention and advancement in STEM fields, and urging leaders to implement systemic and cultural changes to create inclusive and supportive workplaces.



Partnered with SBS to develop the online **Gender Equity course** within the SBS Inclusion Program, leveraging the Coalition's extensive research and experience to provide smaller and mid-sized organisations with practical tools and knowledge to advance gender equality in the workplace.

2024



Collaborated with EY to develop and release **Paving the Way: Creating strong talent pathways for women in energy**, outlining strategies for organisations, industry leaders and governments to build gender-balanced talent pipelines and foster inclusive workplace cultures, ensuring women are equally engaged in, contributing to and benefiting from Australia's energy transition.

National progress

- National data shows that Australia's talent pool will continue to become more gender-balanced, more mature and more culturally diverse, underscoring the need for employers to develop contemporary strategies to capitalise on these shifting workforce dynamics.
- There are more women in the workforce for longer, but men still dominate in leadership, and industrial gender segregation persists, underpinning gender pay gaps.
- While gender pay gaps are closing as women earn more than before, they continue to make less than men overall and gaps remain high across every major sector.
- Feminised industries and occupations such as paid care work continue to be undervalued and underpaid, perpetuating gender imbalance in these sectors.

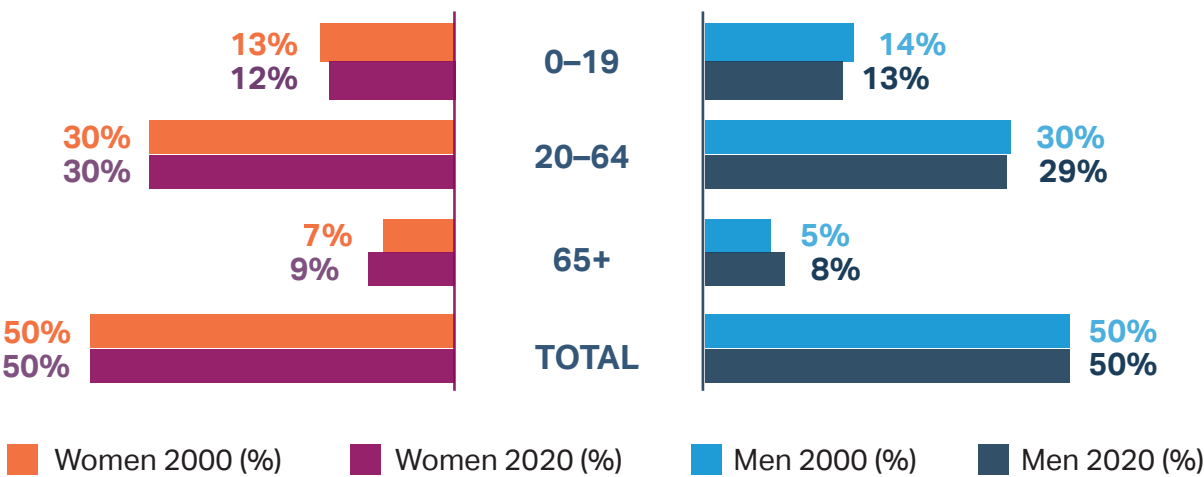
Representation

National progress

Australian workforce

While the working age population (20–64 years) continues to be evenly made up of men and women, the workforce is still not gender-balanced

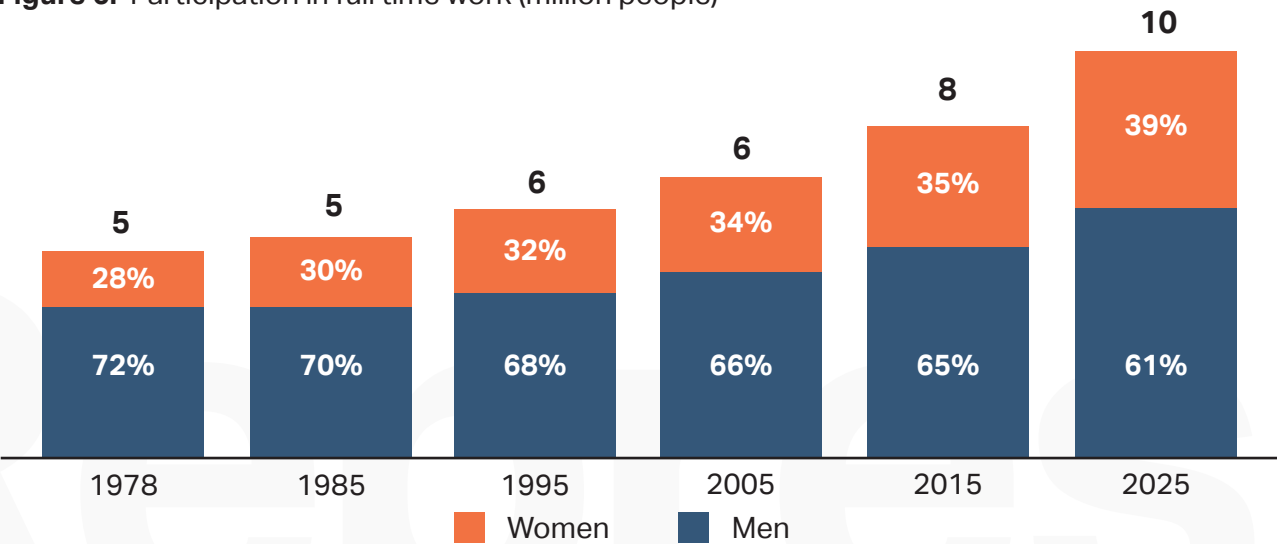
Figure 4. Working age population (% men and women)



Source: ABS Twenty years of population change (2020)

Australia's full-time workforce has almost doubled in ~50 years, with more women entering, yet men still represent two-thirds of full-time workers

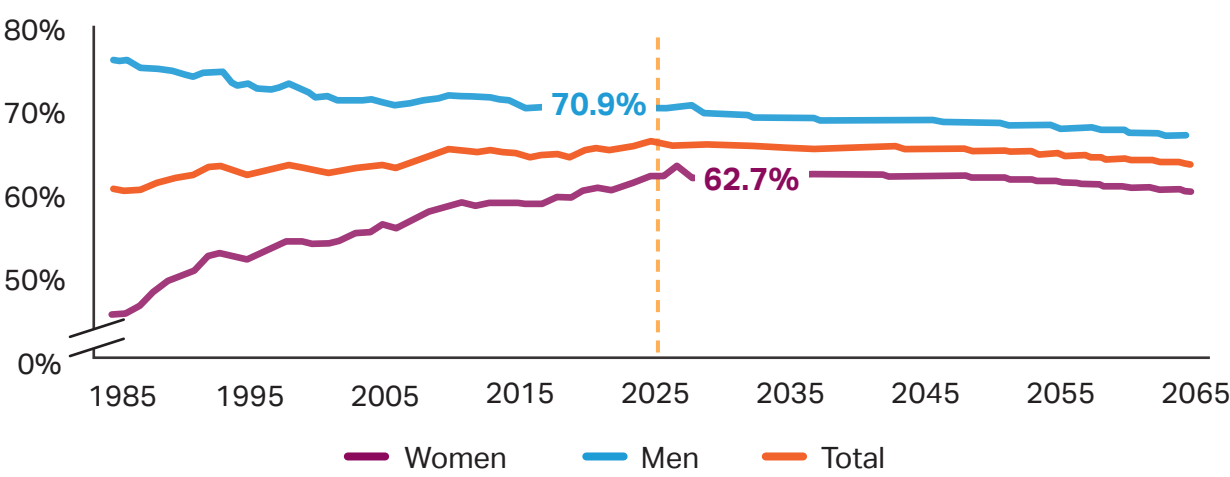
Figure 6. Participation in full time work (million people)



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey 6202.0

Women are participating more than ever in the workforce and the gender participation gap is expected to continue narrowing

Figure 5. Projected participation rates (%)

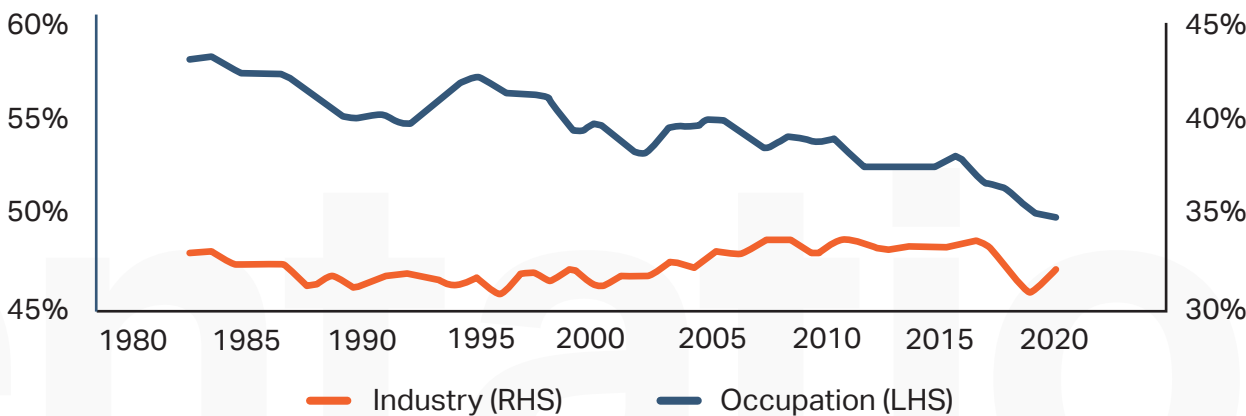


Source: Australian Government Intergenerational Report 2023: Australia's Future to 2063 (Chart 3.6 from ABS Labour Force and Treasury data)

Occupational gender segregation has improved but industrial segregation persists (mostly driven by women in healthcare and men in construction sectors)

Figure 7. Gender segregated workforces (%)

Occupational and industrial gender segregation in Australia – Index of dissimilarity based on the occupation and industry of main job



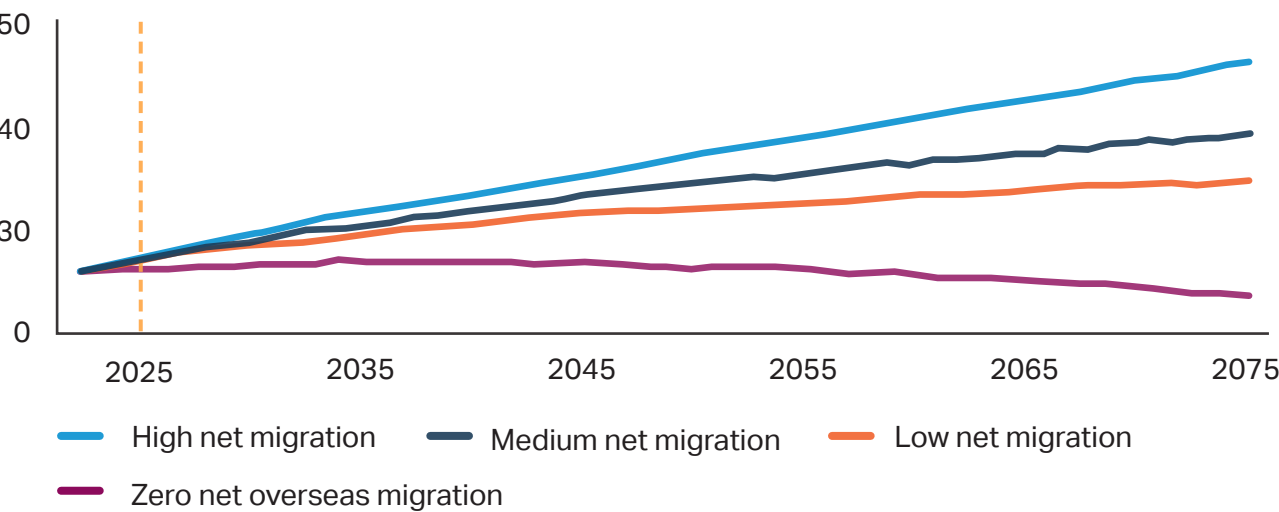
Source: Index of dissimilarity based on the occupation and industry of main job – ABS Labour Force Survey per interjurisdictional Women's Economic Outcomes Senior Officials Working Group Council on Federal Financial Relations (WA Treasury) 2024 Report

National progress

Australian workforce

Australia's workforce is expected to increase in diversity, driven by growth from overseas migration

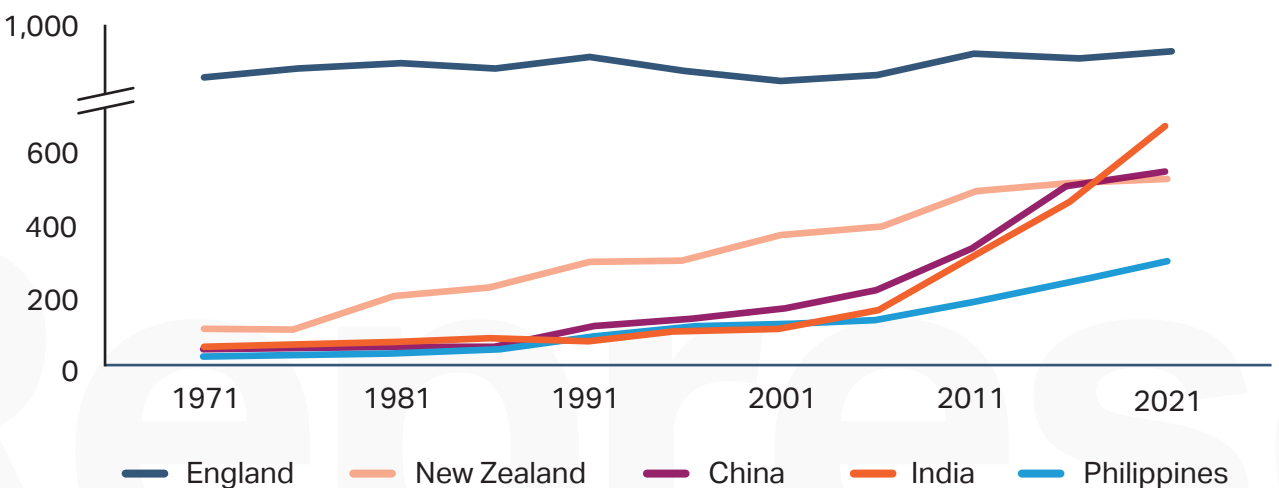
Figure 8. Projected population growth in Australia (million people)



Source: ABS Population Projections Australia 2022 (base) – 2071)

Australian demographics are shifting, translating to workforces that are more culturally diverse than ever before

Figure 9. Top five overseas countries of birth over time ('000 people)



Source: ABS Cultural diversity of Australia (2022)

“

The nature and shape of Australia's workforce is rapidly changing. We must continue to develop workplace systems and cultures that recognise and harness the power of this diversity, enabling all people to thrive.

”

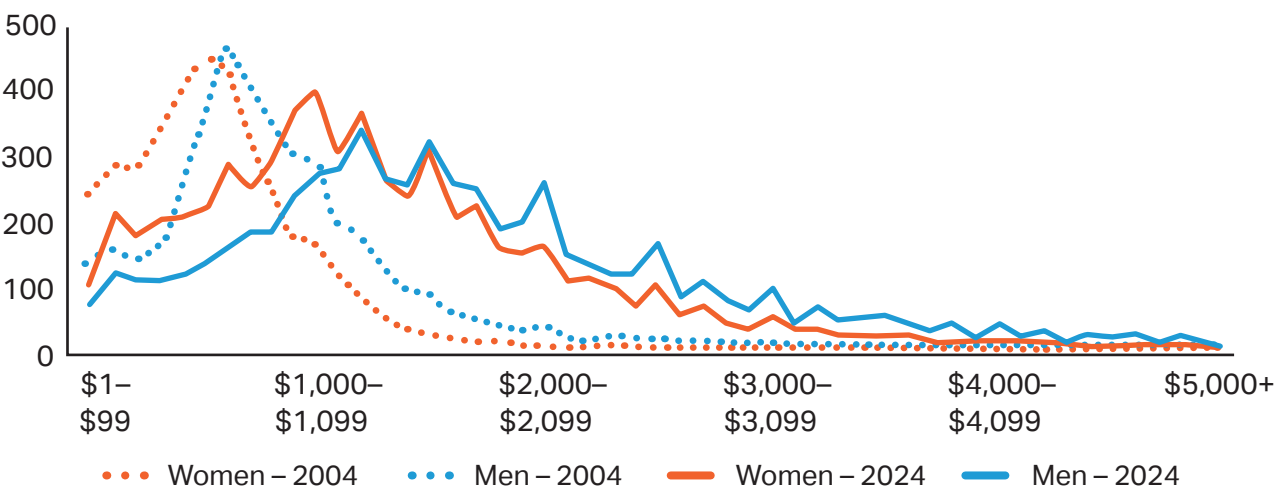
Andrew Colvin
Director
Champions of Change Coalition

National progress

Remuneration

In the last 20 years, men have continued to earn more than women in higher paid roles while more women remain in lower paid roles

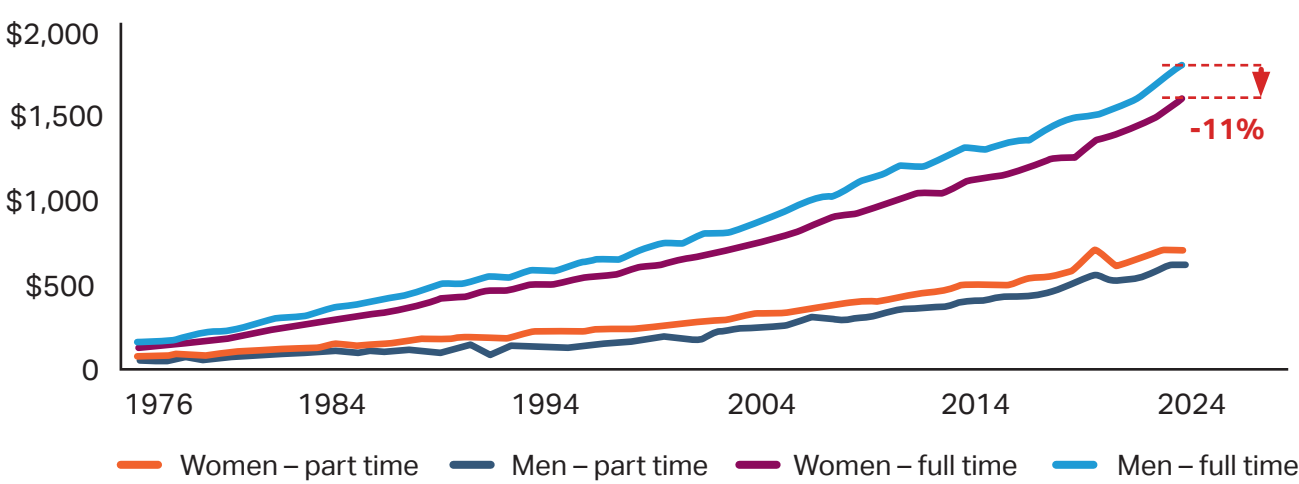
Figure 10. Distribution of weekly pay in main job over time ('000 people)



Source: ABS Employee earnings (August 2024)

While women's earnings are increasing at a faster rate than men's due to an increasing number of women working full time, an 11% gender disparity remains

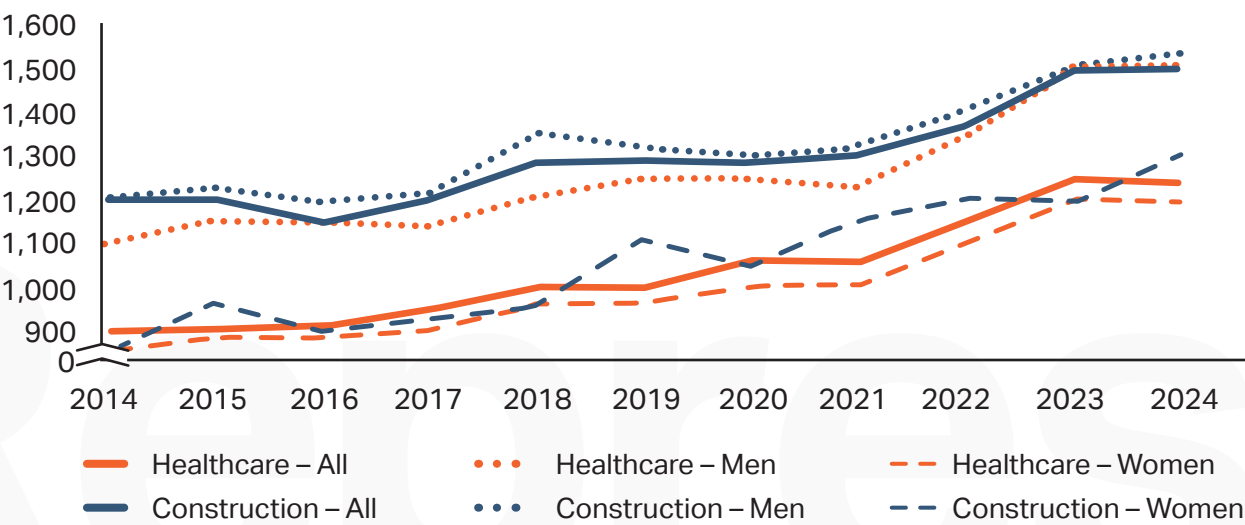
Figure 11. Median weekly earning in main job (A\$)



Source: ABS Employee earnings

Earnings in the most gender-skewed industries (construction and healthcare) indicate continued under-valuation of women's work

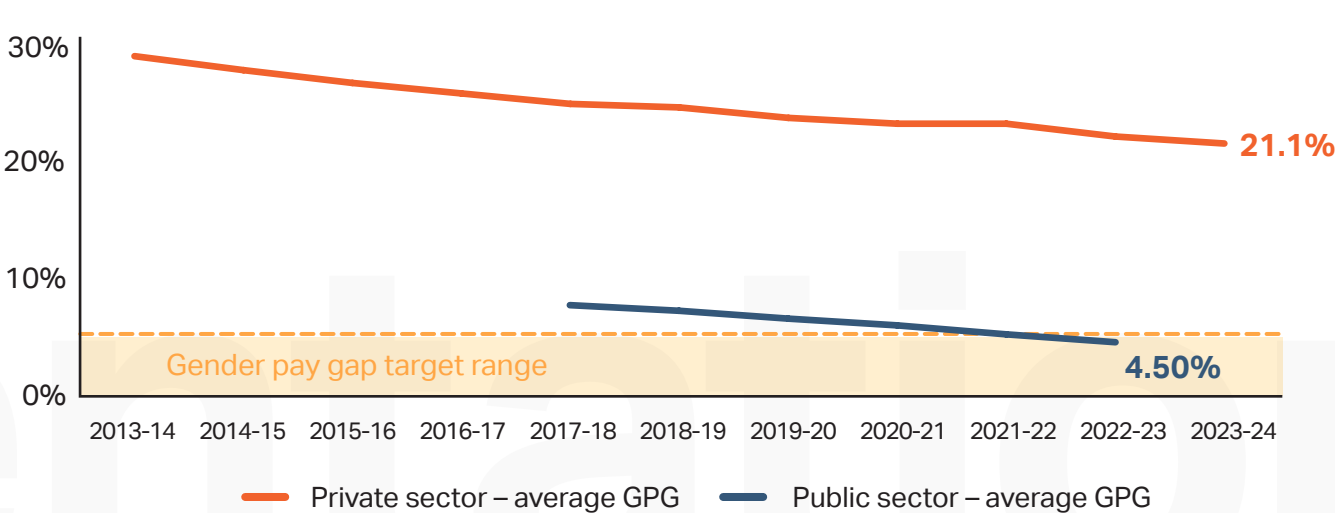
Figure 12. Median earnings in most gender-segregated industries (A\$)



Source: ABS Employee earnings (August 2024)

Since the introduction of more concerted strategies and mandatory reporting, the gender pay gap in the public and private sectors (reporting to WGEA) has declined

Figure 13. WGEA gender pay gap (%)



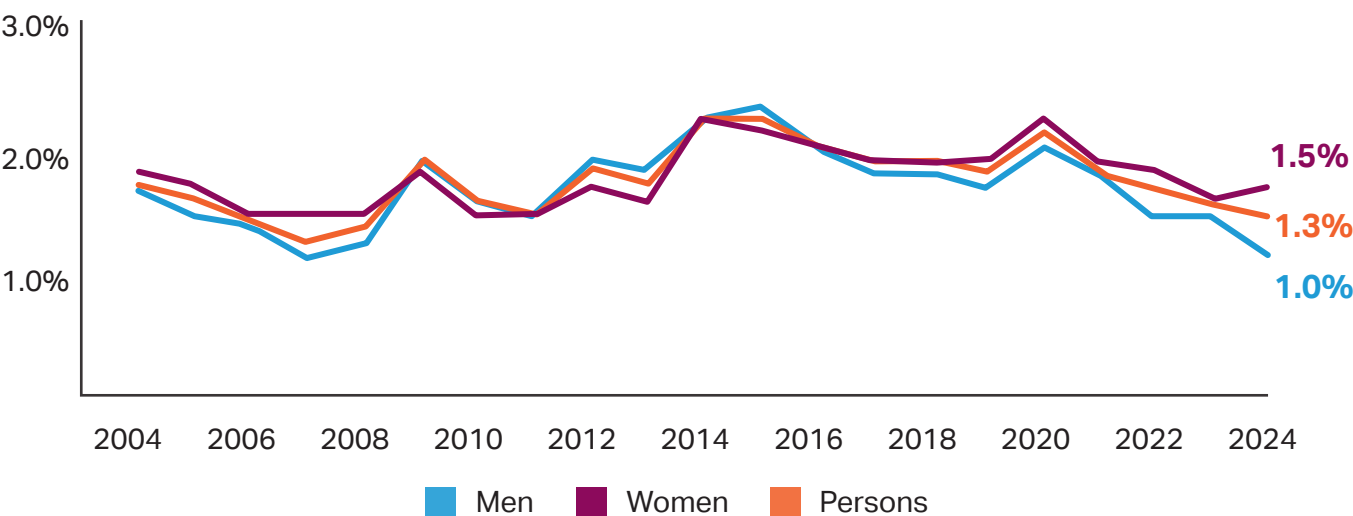
Source: WGEA gender pay gap data; APSC State of the Service reports

National progress

Economic security

The trajectory is shifting such that women now feel more job insecurity than men, and the difference is increasing

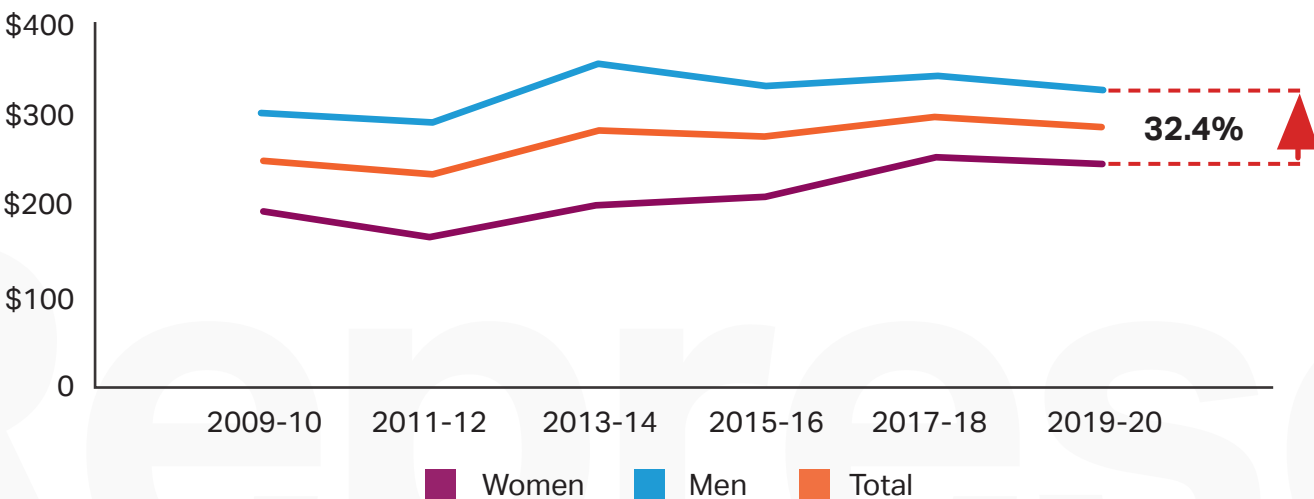
Figure 14. Expectation of economic insecurity within 12 months (%)



Source: ABS Secure Jobs

A 32.4% difference in average superannuation balances between men and women reaching or at retirement age persists

Figure 15. Average super balance of 55–64-year-olds (A\$,000)



Source: ABS Household Income and Wealth, Australia

“

This is a pivotal moment to close gender pay gaps and embed women’s economic security for the long term. As industries, workforces and technologies evolve, we must act deliberately to ensure women are contributing to, leading and benefiting from major transitions now underway.

”

Jenelle McMaster
Director
Champions of Change Coalition

Care, respect and safety

Care, respect and safety

Our goal

- Workplaces are safe and respectful for all employees and set new standards that radiate into homes, communities and society.

Progress

- We have focused on creating workplaces that prioritise care, safety, respect and belonging, and where everyone can thrive.
- Member organisations were ahead of legislation in working to proactively eradicate sexual harassment from workplaces by integrating prevention into broader health and safety strategies, establishing robust policies and reinforcing leadership commitments by articulating new standards and holding people accountable for their behaviour. Significant investment has gone into employee education, employee support capabilities and confidential reporting channels.
- While most organisations now support employees experiencing domestic and family violence, more can be done to support impacted women in maintaining their connection to the workforce and economic security, and implementing responses for employees who use or may be using domestic and family violence.
- Our leadership on flexible work practices is an example of redesigning entrenched workforce systems and policies to better support all people in managing their work and life priorities and unlock the full talent pool.

Priority challenges

- Despite progress, outdated processes and tolerance of poor and dangerous behaviour persist. Further action is needed to build workplaces with a culture of care, safety, respect and a sense of belonging.
- Clearer definitions and deeper understanding of respect are needed for truly inclusive cultures.
- Unequal caregiving loads, undervaluing of female-dominated roles, and rigid job structures continue to disadvantage women.
- Flexibility helps, but true progress requires redesigning work and care systems to reflect caregiving as a lifelong, shared reality that runs in parallel with people's careers.
- Women's careers must be valued equally, and men's caregiving roles normalised.

Focus for the future

1 Ensuring workplaces are safe and respectful including when engaging with customers, suppliers and communities

2 Achieving breakthrough strategies on care

3 Refining contemporary flexibility models

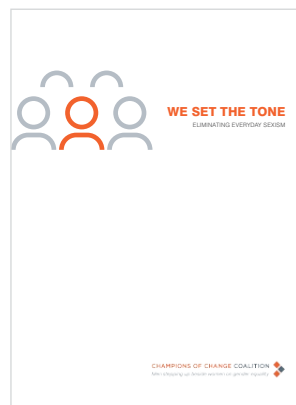
Our actions

2014



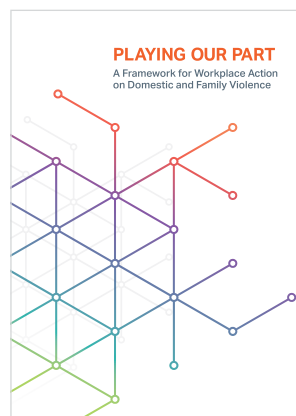
Worked with Telstra to codify, translate and scale its **All Roles Flex** strategy across the Coalition.

2017



Developed and released **We Set the Tone: Eliminating Everyday Sexism**, a comprehensive resource guiding leaders to identify and address everyday sexism in the workplace. The initiative described what everyday sexism looks like in the workplace and provided practical steps to foster respectful and inclusive environments, emphasising leadership accountability and the importance of challenging behaviours that perpetuate gender stereotypes.

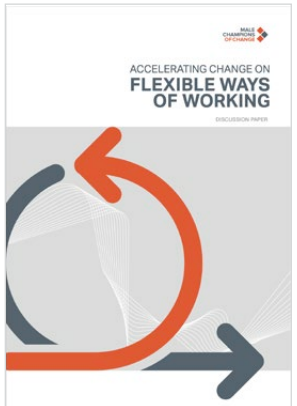
2018
→
2024



Worked with the women's sector and victim-survivors to develop **workplace responses on the issue of domestic and family violence** including the introduction of paid domestic and family violence leave. In 2024, the Australian Government legislated paid domestic and family violence leave. Given our longer-term experience in implementing this strategy, it gave us an opportunity to support other businesses as they introduced their policies.

Developed and implemented the **Playing Our Part framework**, providing organisations with practical actions and resources to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence, including supporting affected employees, addressing those who may use violence, promoting gender equality, and extending efforts to clients and communities. The updated resource released in 2021 was developed in partnership with Full Stop Australia, Our Watch, No To Violence, the Gendered Violence Research Network, WESNET and Challenge DV.

2020



Released the discussion paper **Accelerating change on flexible ways of working**, highlighting the benefits of flexible work arrangements, advocating for their universal availability to challenge traditional gender stereotypes, and recommending rotational in-office and remote work to prevent power imbalances.



Developed and released **Employees who use domestic & family violence: A workplace response**, offering guidance for organisations to address and support employees who may be using domestic and family violence, emphasising the importance of accountability and assistance to change behaviour. The resource was developed in partnership with Full Stop Australia, Our Watch, No To Violence, the Gendered Violence Research Network and Challenge DV.

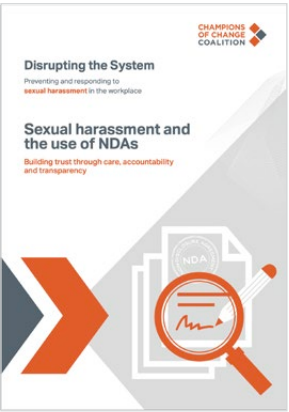
2020
→
2021



Developed and released **Disrupting the System – Preventing and responding to sexual harassment in the workplace**, a comprehensive resource guiding organisations to proactively address sexual harassment as a leadership priority. The guide emphasises a workplace health and safety lens, early intervention, person-centred and trauma-informed reporting, and transparent responses, to foster safer and more inclusive workplace cultures.

Our actions

2022



Developed and released the **Sexual Harassment and the Use of NDAs** report, highlighting the ethical concerns surrounding non-disclosure agreements in sexual harassment cases, advocating for greater transparency, and stressing the need for informed decision-making for those affected.



Released the report **Shifting Expectations: Flexibility for frontline, shift and site-based roles**, demonstrating how leadership commitment and innovative work practices are introducing flexibility in traditionally rigid sectors like manufacturing, energy, logistics, mining and telecommunications, leading to enhanced workforce engagement, productivity and employee wellbeing.

2023



Developed and released **Building confidence and trust in workplace responses to sexual harassment**, guiding organisations to implement trauma-informed, person-centred, safe and fair approaches for responding to workplace sexual harassment. The resource prioritises holistic care, long-term recovery and meaningful choices for those impacted, helping shift organisational responses from legal risk management to genuine human-centred support and transparency.

2020
→
2025



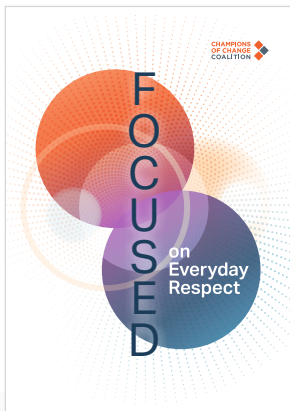
Participated in the annual **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign**, highlighting Member efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and amplifying the work of partners dedicated to ending violence against women.

2019
→
2025



Activated and engaged a broader network through our **Everyday Champions of Change workshops**, leveraging a decade of Coalition strategies and resources to support leadership on inclusive gender equality across all levels of an organisation. Around 500 leaders from 60 Member organisations participated, including in targeted workshops for leaders in leasing and capital transactions within the property sector.

2024



Developed and released **FOCUSED on Everyday Respect**, a comprehensive resource guiding leaders to build workplace cultures of respect, inclusion and belonging. Created through extensive stakeholder consultation and supported by practical tools, case studies and clear frameworks, this initiative equips organisations with actionable steps to recognise, prevent and address everyday disrespect, fostering safer workplaces, communities and homes.

National progress

- Women remain more connected to the workforce throughout their lives than ever before, underpinned by improved workplace conditions such as paid parental leave, and part-time and flexible work practices.
- There is a gradual increase in the number of fathers taking parental leave. However, caring and household responsibilities are still not shared equally, impacting women's career opportunities and long-term economic security.
- Overall, parents are not satisfied with their work–life balance.
- Respect@Work legislation has shifted the responsibility for preventing workplace harassment and discrimination from individuals to employers. This has strengthened accountability, increased awareness, and helped create safer, more respectful environments for women at work.
- While workplaces are making progress in promoting women's safety, there is a need for further action given the scale of the issue across the country, including the opportunity to further strengthen legislation to prevent discrimination and promote equality.

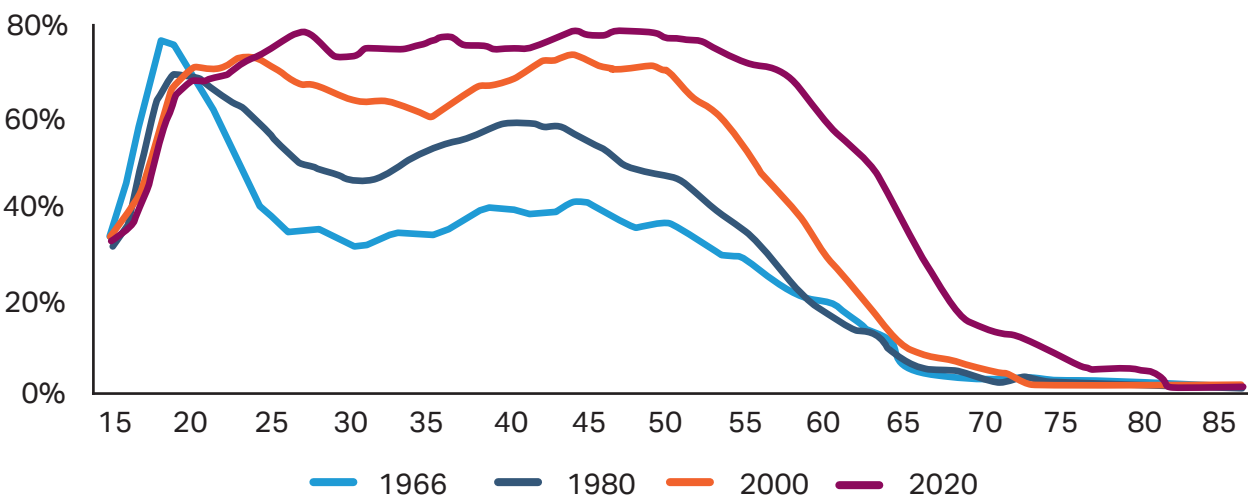
respect & safety

National progress

Care and flexibility

In the last 20 years, more women have stayed connected to the workforce for longer, likely due to (inter alia) improved workplace conditions

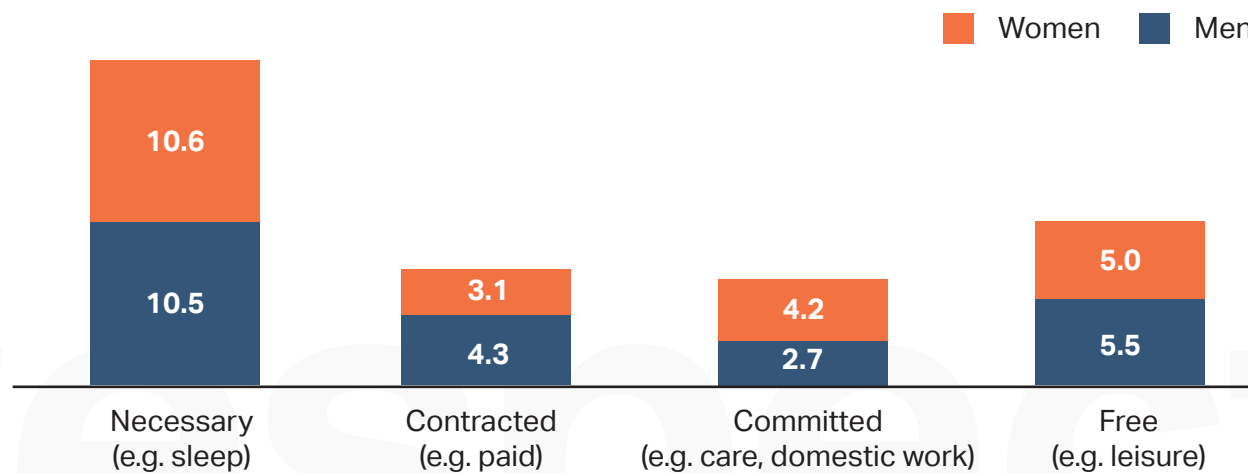
Figure 16. Women's connectivity to the workforce by age (% of employed women)



Source: ABS Changing female employment over time

Women continue to spend on average ~1.5x more time than men per day on unpaid domestic work, childcare, adult care and voluntary work (i.e. committed work)

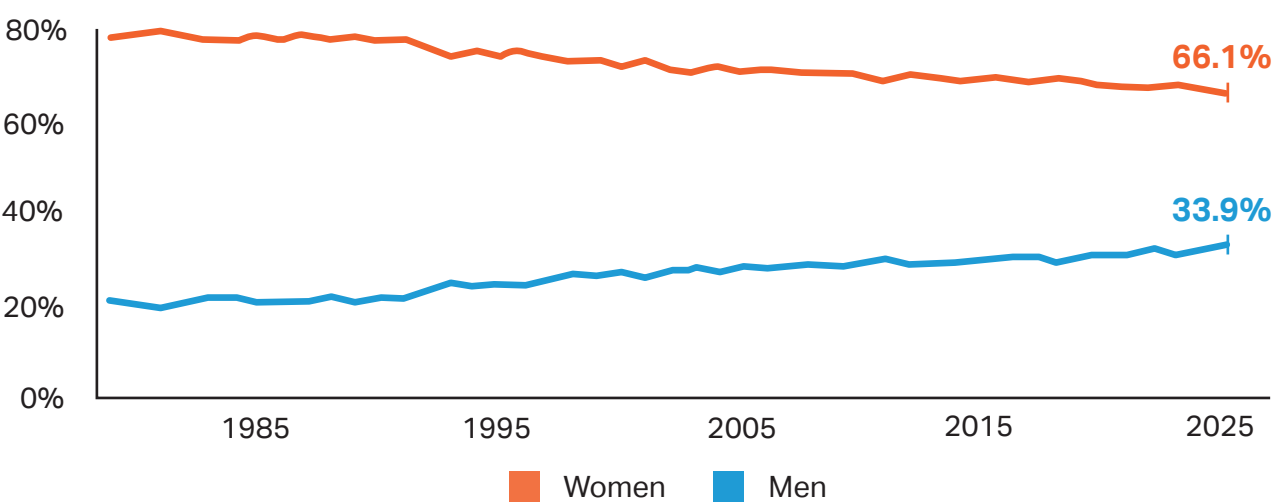
Figure 18. Use of time (average hours per day)



Source: ABS How Australians Use Their Time 2020-21 financial year

While more men are working part time, the majority of part-time workers continue to be women (66%)

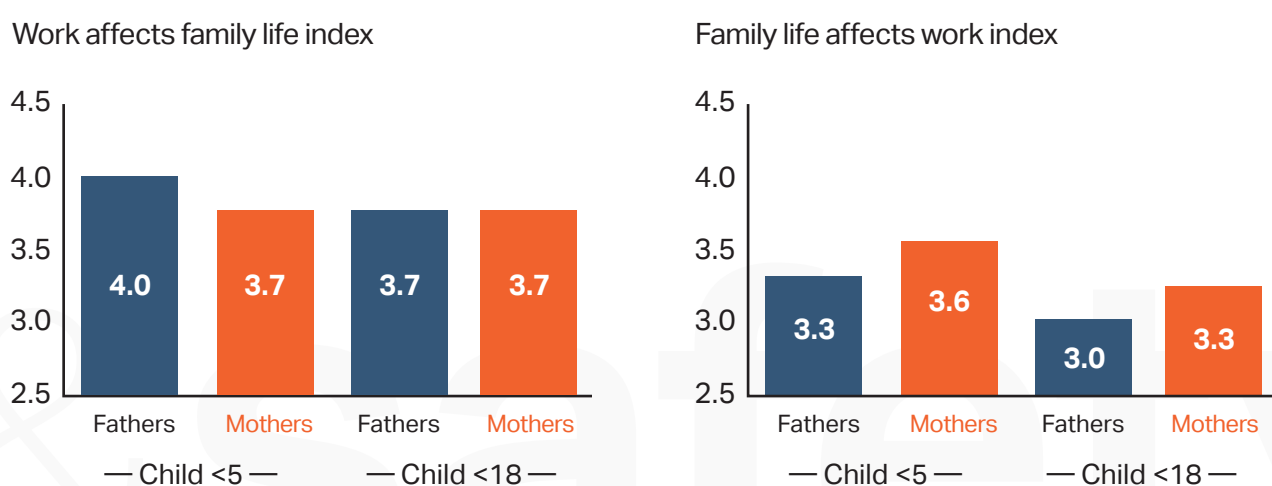
Figure 17. Part-time workers (% of total part-time workforce)



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey 6202.0

Parents of all genders are not satisfied with their work-life balance, suggesting a more equal allocation of paid and unpaid work could be beneficial

Figure 19. Work-life balance indices, by gender and age of child



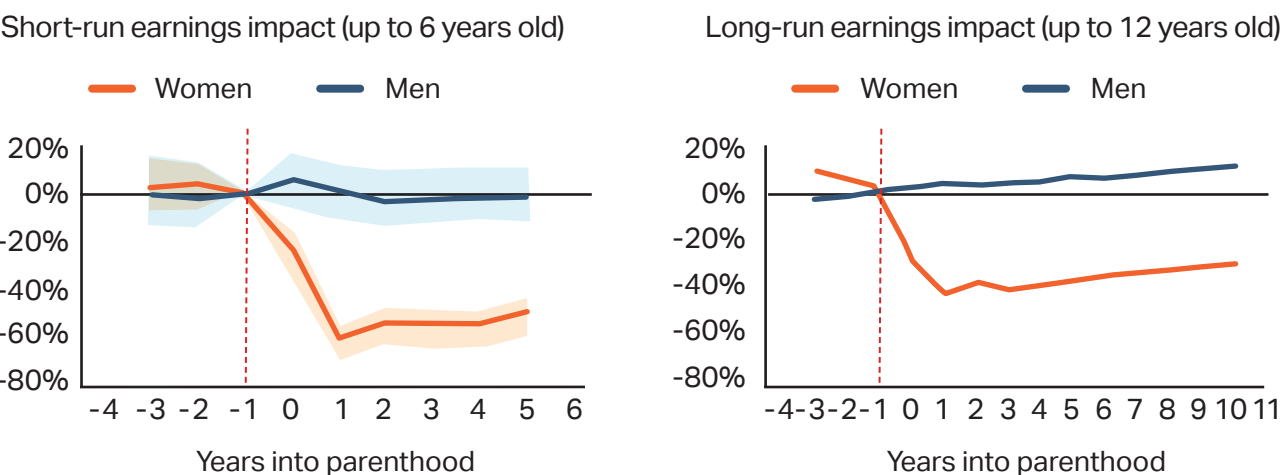
Source: Treasury Working Paper (Bahar E et al), Children and the Gender Earnings Gap: Evidence for Australia (2023)
Chart 6: work-family balance indexes, by sex and child age

National progress

Impact of care on economic security

On average, women experience an earnings drop of 40–60% within the first year of becoming a parent and do not recover while men's earnings steadily grow over the long term

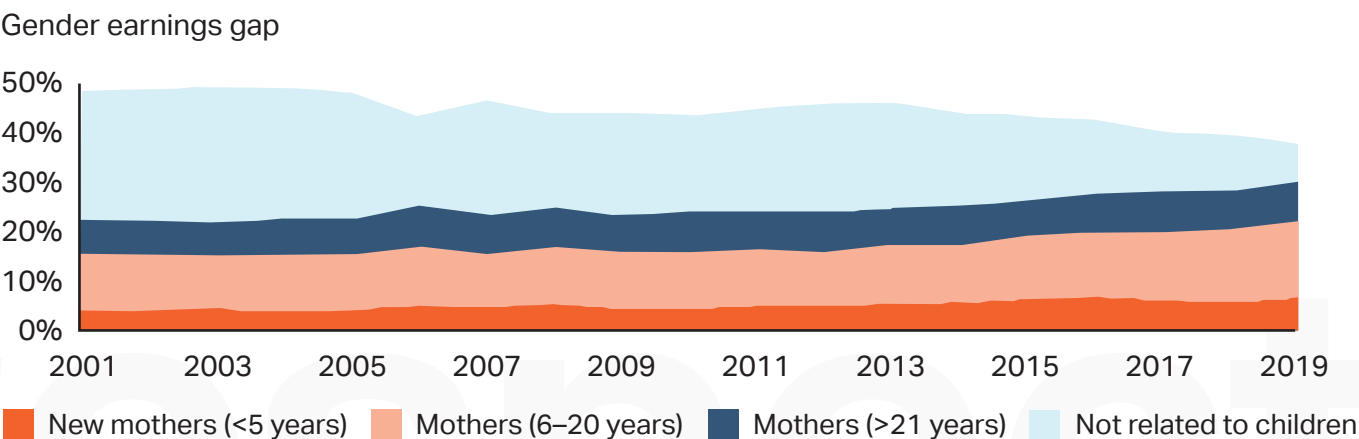
Figure 20. Impact of children on earnings, by years into parenthood (%)



Source: Treasury (Bahar E et al), Children and the Gender Earnings Gap: Evidence for Australia (2022) Figure 1: Impact of children on earnings, by sex (short-run impact based on Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) data; long-run impact based on ATO data)

The increasing child-related gender earnings gap, driven mostly by women with school-aged children (6–20 years) suggests workplaces need better flexibility to give men and women more choice in caregiving

Figure 22. Deconstructing the child-related gender earnings gap (%)

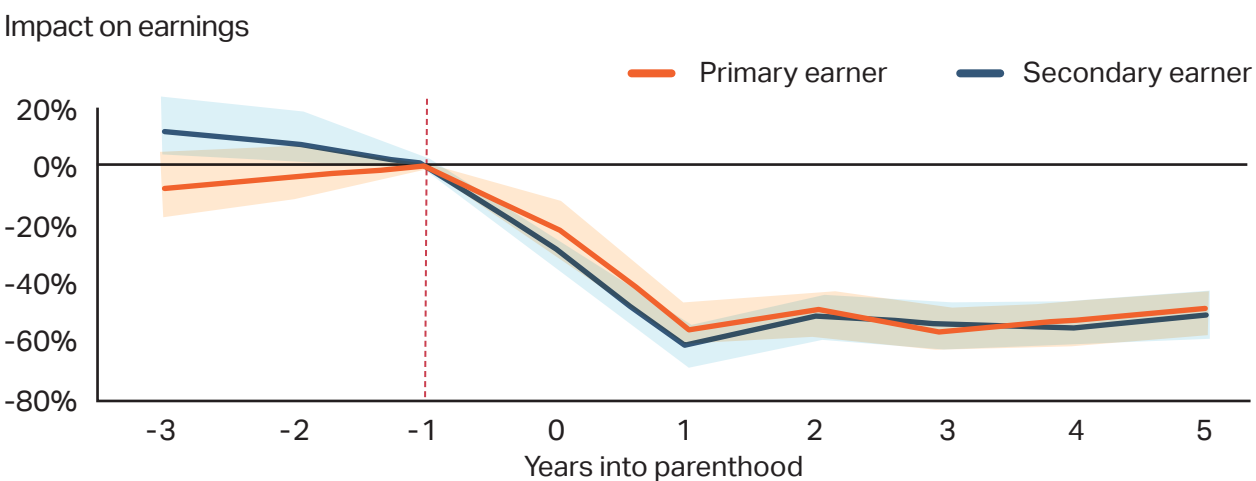


Note: the gender earnings gap is larger than the gender pay gap as it accounts for participation rates and hours of work between men and women to, unlike the gender pay gap, include those who are not working

Source: Treasury Working Paper (Bahar E et al), Children and the Gender Earnings Gap: Evidence for Australia (2023)
Chart 3: Decomposition of gender earnings gap

Irrespective of whether a woman is the primary or secondary earner prior to having a child, earnings reduce and do not recover

Figure 21. Impact on primary and secondary women earners (%)



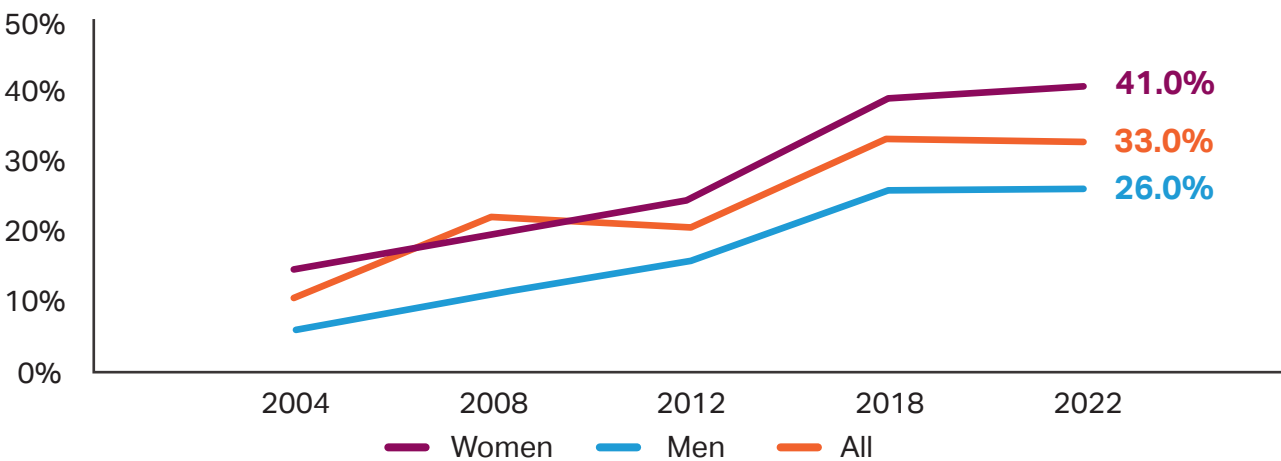
Source: Treasury Working Paper (Bahar E et al), Children and the Gender Earnings Gap: Evidence for Australia (2023)
Chart 4: Motherhood penalty by breadwinner status (based on HILDA data)

National progress

Safety and respect: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Women (41%) continue to experience more sexual harassment at work than men (greater understanding of sexual harassment and decreased tolerance have driven an increase in reporting)

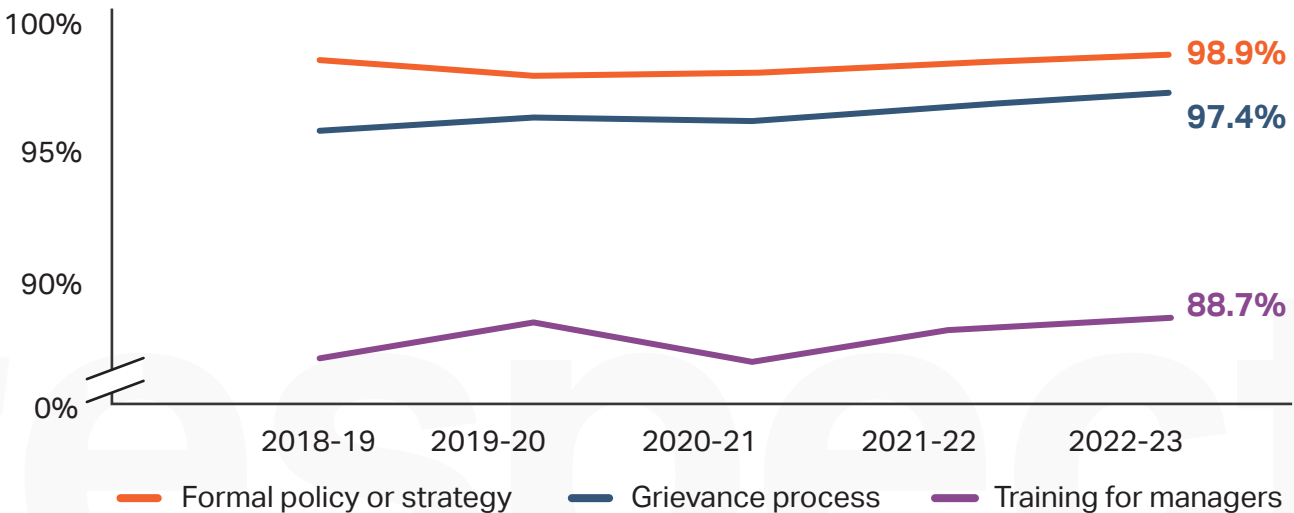
Figure 23. Workplace sexual harassment (%)



Source: Australian Human Rights Commission national workplace sexual harassment surveys (experience of sexual harassment in last five years) (2004-2022)

Almost all (98.9%) organisations reporting to WGEA have a formal policy on workplace sexual harassment and a grievance process, and most train managers

Figure 24. Sexual harassment prevention policies (%)



Source: WGEA Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard 2022-2023

“

Creating workplaces that are safe, respectful and inclusive for all employees is essential to attracting and retaining the best talent. The world of work is evolving such that inclusive behaviours are now a threshold criteria on the pathway to leadership.

”

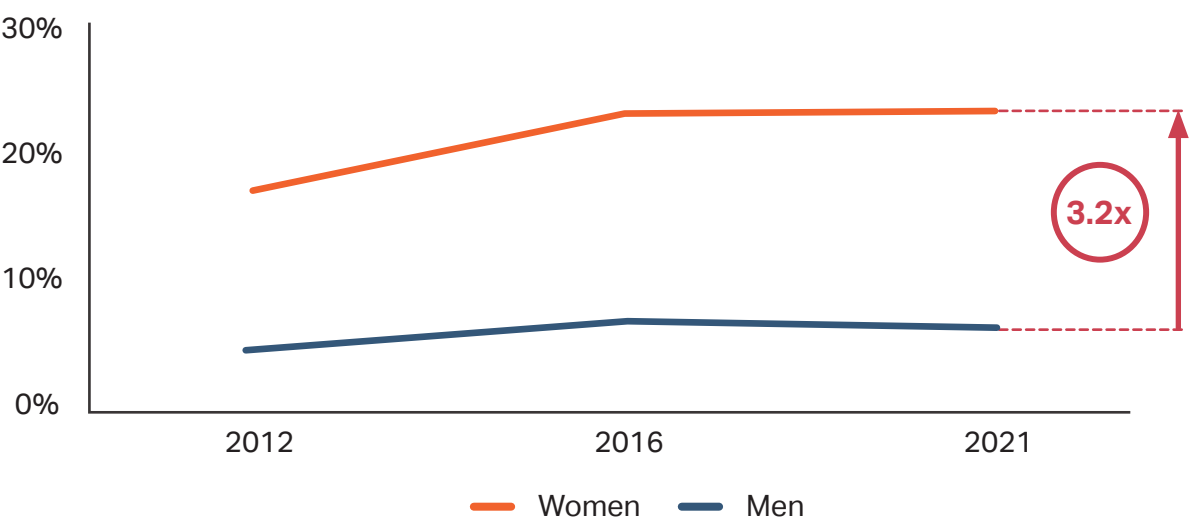
Kristen Hilton
Convenor, National 2015, 2017 and Fire and Emergency Groups
Champions of Change Coalition

National progress

Safety and respect: Workplace responses to domestic and family violence

Intimate partner violence rates remain high over time, with women three times more likely to experience it

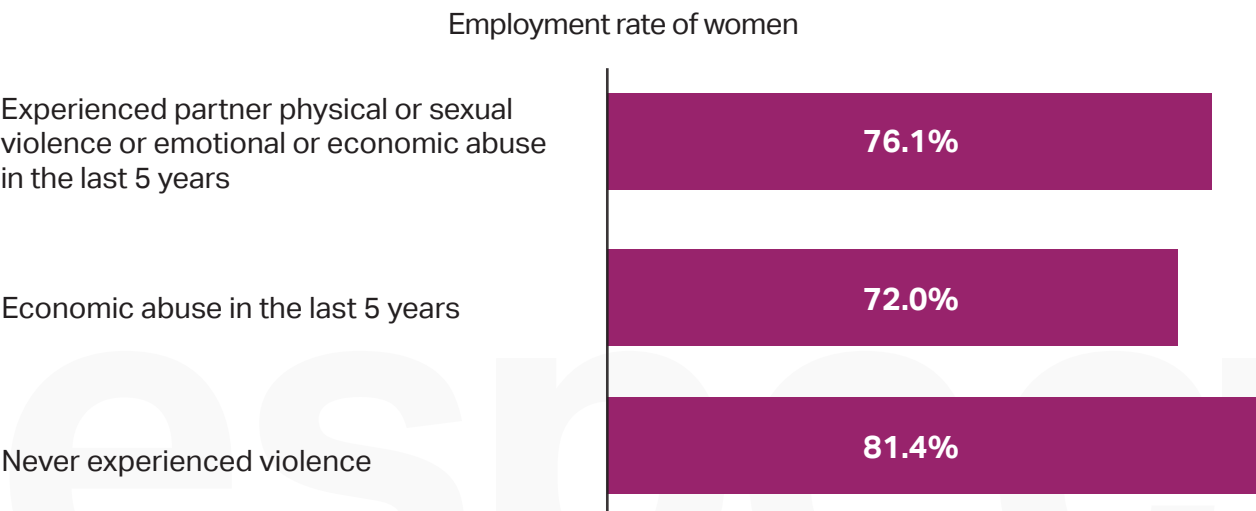
Figure 25. Domestic and family violence in Australia (%)



Source: ABS Personal Safety Surveys 2012, 2016, 2022

While many are employed, women who have experienced violence or economic abuse are less likely to be employed

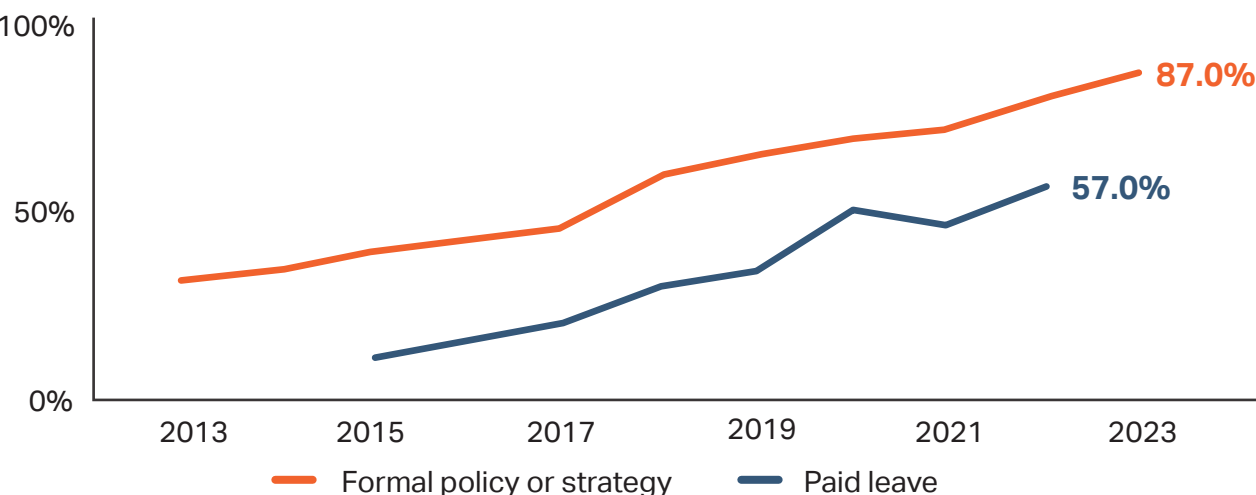
Figure 27. DFV Employment rate of women (%)



Source: The cost of domestic violence to women's employment and education, Anne Summers

The number of employers providing formal domestic and family violence support has risen significantly (Fair Work Australia introduced an entitlement to 10 days' paid domestic violence leave in 2022)

Figure 26. Domestic and family violence policies and paid leave



Source: WGEA, Australia's Gender Equality Scorecards (2022–2024) and 2019 media releases

Inclusive decisions and design

Inclusive decisions and design

Our goal

- Inclusive gender equality is built into decisions, design processes and everything we do and deliver.

Progress

- We have used our experiences and lessons learned over the past 15 years to develop and implement the 7 Switches framework. This initiative guides organisations to proactively integrate gender equality considerations into strategy, operations and decision-making from inception rather than as an afterthought or when issues arise.
- Our Member organisations have actively reviewed and refined their public presence to ensure they represent respectful, inclusive environments for all people.
- We developed and implemented the 'Supplier Multiplier' to ensure that women were equally represented at every level in pitch and project teams.

Priority challenges

- While progress has been made through inclusive design initiatives, deeper leadership and organisational commitment is critical to embedding gender equality from the outset, in support of improved employee, commercial and organisational outcomes.

Focus for the future

1 Ensuring inclusive decisions and design in all that we do and deliver

2 Influencing transformational opportunities such as:

- AI / technological advances
- women's health
- supply chains
- reshaping sectors and industries for the future

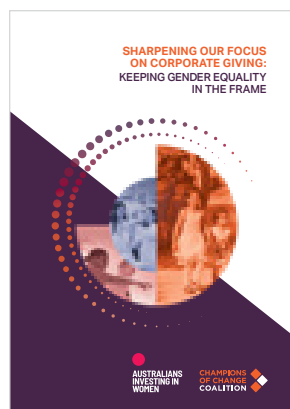
Our actions

2017



Conducted systematic reviews to ensure gender equality in organisations' external presence; employee experience; engagement activities; and awards, recognition and honour systems as part of deeper efforts to identify and improve cultures that may appear to exclude women. Lessons learnt are captured in our resource: **Building a gender-balanced and inclusive presence: Test the messages you project.**

2021



Developed and released **Sharpening Our Focus on Corporate Giving: Keeping Gender Equality in the Frame**, in partnership with Australians Investing In Women. This provides a framework for organisations to assess and enhance the impact of their corporate giving and community partnerships by intentionally applying a gender lens to advance gender equality.

2023



2024



Developed and piloted **7 Switches: A Guide for Inclusive Gender Equality by Design**, a groundbreaking framework enabling organisations to embed gender equality in all decision-making and design processes. Launched in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, the framework aims to set new standards, drive systemic change, and unlock innovation and growth through inclusive practices from the outset.

2024



Collaborated with Football Australia and Commonwealth Bank to develop a **7 Switches case study**, demonstrating how embedding inclusive gender equality into decision-making and design processes can drive transformative outcomes. This is exemplified by the strategic initiatives surrounding the Matildas and the Legacy '23 campaign during the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.



Developed **Equity by Design: Applying the 7 Switches to transform the built environment**, a practical resource aligned with the Coalition's 7 Switches framework. It guides architects and developers to integrate equity, gender equality, accessibility and wellbeing into all stages of design, creating inclusive environments that enable everyone, particularly members of under-represented groups, to thrive.

2025



Led by the Fire and Emergency Group, initiated a focused effort to ensure access to **gender-inclusive personal protective equipment (PPE) and personal protective clothing (PPC)** to support the safety, retention and attraction of women in frontline roles. Using the 7 Switches framework, and engaging international and cross-industry partners, the initiative identified gaps and barriers in current PPE/PPC practices, culminating in detailed recommendations and collective actions outlined at key forums, including the Australian and New Zealand National Council conference.

National progress

- Many people believe gender equality has been achieved, and some are even concerned about an overcorrection (Plan International Australia, Gender Compass 2023-24), but the data says otherwise. There is still considerable upside on offer if we embed inclusive gender equality into all decisions and design processes, so that it becomes an expectation, and its absence is seen as a failure to meet contemporary standards.

“

This work challenges leaders to go beyond surface-level activity. It's about making decisions and designing structures, cultures and systems that ensure gender equality is embedded into the future. ”

James Fazzino
Convenor, National 2015, 2017 and Energy Groups
Champions of Change Coalition

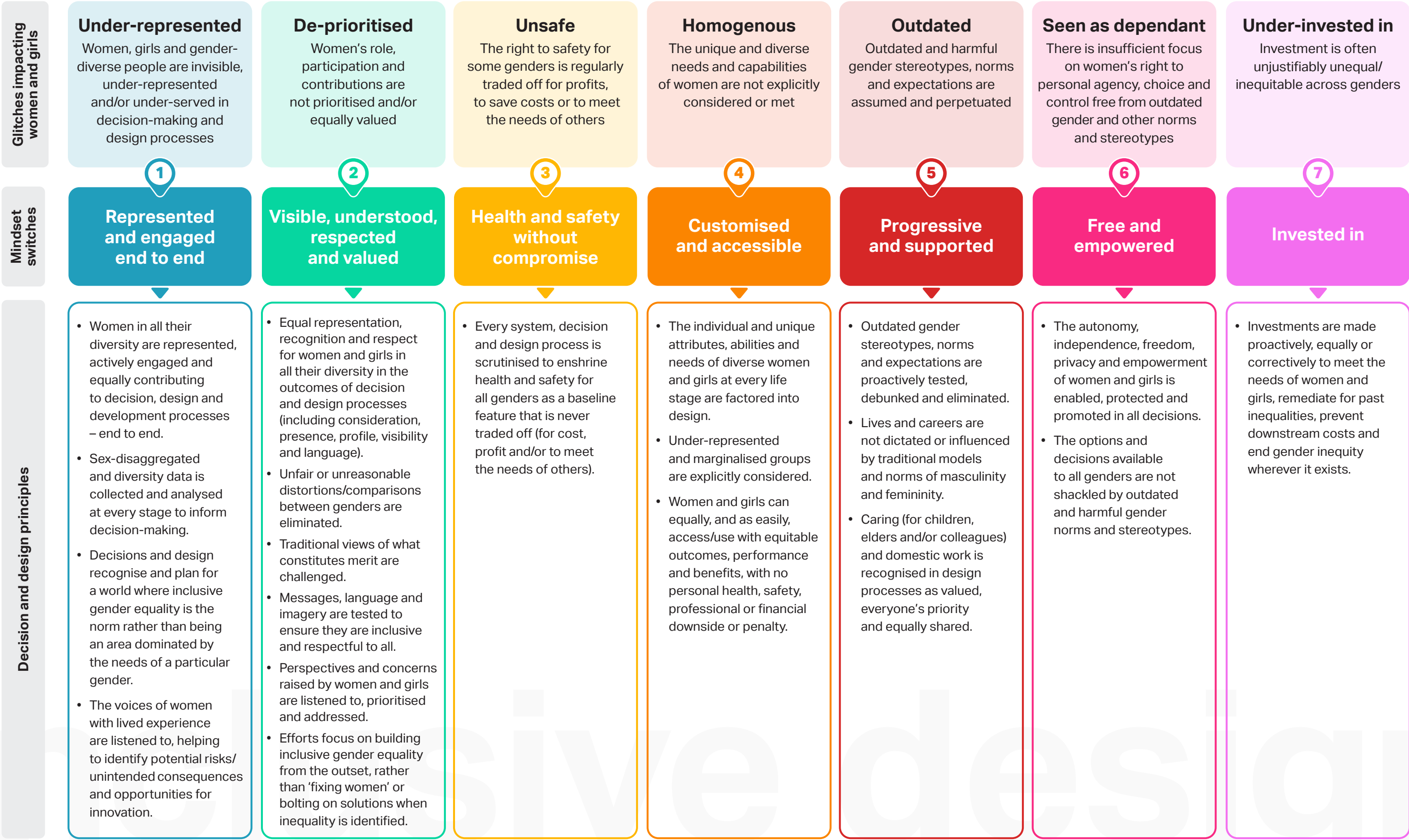
Based on our 15 years' experience working together, we developed **7 Switches: A Guide for Inclusive Gender Equality by Design** to ensure we are building inclusive gender equality into everything we do and deliver. 7 Switches helps any organisation to consciously consider gender quality as part of their systems development, decisions and design processes from the outset, and can be used across any industry, sector or organisational system.

A summary of this resource is shared on the following page to help others learn from our experience so we can together accelerate change.

Inclusive design

Inclusive decisions and design

7 Switches for Inclusive Gender Equality by Design



A conversation on key issues

A conversation on key issues

We want to openly address some concerns in the strategies to achieve gender equality and perceptions of progress. Our experience and firm belief is that everyone can and should benefit from these efforts.

Gender equality strategies

Gender targets are discriminatory	Gender targets aim to support fairness and opportunity. Many of today's workplaces have their foundations in a different era where historical practices can create barriers to success for women and girls. Targets are an intervention designed to fix historical disadvantages, rather than to provide one group with an advantage over another. They also help organisations ensure they build teams that have a balance of skills, experience and capabilities. Everyone earns their place based on capability, performance and potential. It's just that more people are given the opportunity to do so.	There is no signpost on when gender equality in the workplace will be achieved	There are clear signposts – we are making progress, but we are not there yet. Signposts we are tracking include women's representation at all levels and across all industries, connectivity to the workforce over time, gender pay gaps and equality in retirement savings. We want to reach a point where freedom, fairness, safety, opportunities and outcomes aren't limited by gender or exclusive to one gender. Clear metrics exist and tracking shows how far we've come and what's left to do. Ultimately, the goal is to have inclusive gender equality built into workplace systems and policies, creating fairer, safer and more respectful and inclusive workforces where everyone thrives.
The gender pay gap is a false and misleading concept	Gender pay gaps provide a way of measuring how Australia is becoming a fairer country for everyone. They are not suggesting men and women are paid differently for the same job (that's illegal). Instead, they represent the difference in earnings between men and women across the entire workforce. Gender pay gaps highlight issues like unequal access to leadership roles, pay differences across industries, and the impact of unpaid caregiving responsibilities on women's careers, opportunities and pay. Addressing the issues underpinning gender pay gaps helps ensure talent, not circumstance, determine opportunities, earning potential and financial security.	Focusing on gender equality ignores other pressing global issues	The number one issue for most people right now is living standards and improving women's representation in the workplace and leadership are critical to solving that issue. Inequality underpins or is exacerbated by many of the challenges facing the world today. Addressing gender inequality helps tackle broader challenges by promoting freedom, fairness and safety, unlocking talent, improving decision-making and strengthening communities. A focus on equality contributes to economic growth, innovation and social resilience, benefiting everyone.

A conversation on key issues

Gender equality strategies

This is just virtue signaling or performative activism	We have a deep commitment to this work and have been setting goals, taking action, tracking progress and sharing outcomes for a long time now. Actions include introducing open and fair recruitment processes, building gender equal teams and leadership, updating policies on flexibility, care and parental leave, and addressing gender pay gaps, while also building cultures of safety, respect and inclusion that benefit all people. Workplaces of today are vastly and demonstrably better, safer, more vibrant and inclusive because of these strategies.	Why are we focusing on this when equality has already been achieved?	Significant progress has been made, but gaps remain, whether it's representation in leadership, gender pay gaps, the unequal sharing of caring responsibilities and household work or issues of personal safety and freedom from harassment. Rigid gender expectations affect men too. Many men feel pressure to be the primary breadwinner, to suppress emotion, ignore their mental health or to fulfil narrow ideas of success. True gender equality means addressing the full picture, so that no-one is limited or defined by outdated roles. Recognising progress is important, but more work is required to deliver true equality.
Gender equality is being forced on us by elites or foreign agendas	Equality has proven time and time again to be a transformative force that helps drive national prosperity, innovation and resilience, which leads to everyone being better off. By ensuring everyone can contribute their skills and ideas, we can unlock solutions to the complex local and global challenges we face, from building stronger economies to fostering more cohesive communities and addressing critical issues like climate change, cost of living and social inequity.		

A conversation

A conversation on key issues

The impact of gender equality strategies on men

Men are being excluded or overlooked	Men still hold the majority of leadership positions in Australian workplaces . However, workforces are now multi-dimensional, and a more diverse range of people are now considered for roles and have access to opportunities that might have previously been quarantined for a certain type of person. A truly fair system ensures that roles and positions are awarded based on capability, performance and potential. Most men do not want to work in organisations that unfairly preference them over others.	Men today are made to pay for the patriarchy, which very few actually support	Nobody expects men to pay for what has happened in the past . Most men genuinely want a more fair, equal, safe, respectful and inclusive world. Outdated systems and expectations damage everyone including men. The focus is on removing barriers that hold everyone back. Gender equality is about fairness, creating opportunities and ensuring safety and respect so that everyone can thrive. When we address these issues together, everyone benefits.
Masculine energy is being demonised	It's more about expanding what masculinity can look like, rather than demonising men or masculine energy . Research among Australian men also shows men do not like being defined by outdated and narrow norms and expectations that assign them particular roles (e.g. breadwinner, dominant, aggressive, disciplinarian). By updating and broadening the way we think about masculinity, more men can lead fuller, healthier lives where they get to choose what they do and how they do it.	Women don't want men advocating for equality. They suspect ulterior motives. Men can't win either way	Women deeply value men who advocate for equality sincerely and respectfully . It's about showing up, listening and supporting change, not dominating the conversation or seeking credit. When men demonstrate consistent, genuine support for gender equality, fairness, safety, respect and inclusion, trust and genuine partnership follow.

A conversation

A conversation on key issues

The impact of gender equality strategies on men

The conversation around gender equality marginalises men and boys	Gender equality benefits everyone, including men and boys. It should be an open conversation that challenges historical stereotypes that pressure men to conform to outdated and narrow ideas about their role in work, families and communities, improving mental health, relationships, freedom and opportunities for all genders. For example, policies to support gender equality have enabled more men to be actively involved in their children's lives, care for their families and prioritise their own mental health. They have also helped to create more safe, vibrant and inclusive workplaces and flexible work practices for all people.	Corporate culture has been neutered by political correctness	Corporate culture is evolving to reflect the diverse world we live in. Fairness, safety, respect and inclusion create workplaces where everyone can contribute and succeed. Companies that adapt are outperforming those that don't because they're attracting the best people and using diverse talent to foster innovation. Rather than political correctness, we are responsive to the needs of today's employees and organisations and preparing for the future.
Traditional gender roles work just fine. Why change them?	Traditional roles work for some people and that is completely their choice, but they are not the only option. Gender equality ensures everyone has open choice and equal opportunities. It's about enabling freedom, rather than dictating specific roles for specific people. It's positive to see people are increasingly able to pursue lives, roles and careers that they choose rather than having them defined or dictated by historical expectations and traditions.	This is just natural backlash against the over-reach on gender equality that has been building for years	The goal has never been to provoke backlash – it's to create understanding and build support for change. The current environment and objections to advancing gender equality provide an opportunity to listen to people's concerns, clarify misconceptions, and reshape our approach so we can bring more people along in creating workplaces and societies that are fair, equal and benefit all.
		This is the end of woke / woke is broke	'Woke' has become a term used to criticise and undermine efforts toward fairness, respect, safety, inclusion and equality – values that most people genuinely support. This work is about building organisations and communities where everyone is safe, treated with dignity and given a fair chance to succeed.

A conversation on key issues

Diversity, equity and inclusion strategies

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is prioritised over competence, experience and strategic knowledge	We are focused on broadening the pool of talent to ensure the most competent and experienced people have access to opportunities and careers. When organisations embrace fairness, equality and inclusion, they gain access to a wider range of skills and perspectives, and more inclusive workplace cultures and team dynamics, leading to better workplaces, decision-making and outcomes.	DEI undermines sound and fair employment and education practices	Employment and education practices should reward capability, performance and potential. Our focus is on ensuring opportunity isn't limited by tradition, outdated systems, stereotypes and policies. Contemporary policies help organisations to identify and address these gaps, ensuring the best person for the job or specific opportunity gets it. As well as ensuring they have the best people for specific roles, leaders are also responsible for ensuring they have the best overall mix of people in teams and across the organisation to deliver success.
DEI erodes meritocracy by prioritising diversity over quality	A focus on equality and inclusion strengthens the concept of a true meritocracy by ensuring that opportunities aren't limited by tradition, outdated norms and stereotypes or exclusion. For example, efforts to ensure open, transparent and fair recruitment processes have ended the once pervasive and unfair practices of 'jobs for mates' or 'old school ties'. Another example is that women were often excluded from opportunities because their managers assumed they would not be interested due to their caring responsibilities. When organisations redefine merit (what's needed and how to get there), cast a wider net and are open-minded, they find the best talent across diverse backgrounds, which leads to better performance and outcomes benefiting organisations and their employees.	DEI has created an unnecessary regulatory and self-regulatory burden on corporate Australia	Companies that embrace fairness, equality, inclusion and respect see higher innovation, better decision-making and stronger employee engagement. Regulatory or self-regulatory frameworks can help organisations stay accountable to these goals, just like consumer protection, or quality or safety standards. These efforts future-proof businesses by aligning them with the values of diverse workforces, customers, communities and the global economy.

A conversation on key issues

Diversity, equity and inclusion strategies

DEI efforts feed into a culture of identity politics, separatism and division that voters are rejecting	Our experience is that this work builds connection rather than division, particularly as Australia becomes a much more diverse nation. Organisations want to recognise, attract and value diverse talents and perspectives because it drives innovation and success. When done right, it unites people by ensuring everyone feels they belong and can contribute. Most people want workplaces and societies where capability, performance and potential matter, and creating diverse, respectful and inclusive workplaces helps make this a reality.
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DEI is driven by self-interest and injustice – practitioners and beneficiaries are invested in perpetuating identity politics	It's about building better workforces. Focusing on equality and inclusion aims to build workplaces and societies where everyone, regardless of background, can succeed based on their capability, performance and potential. This includes updating or redesigning systems and policies to promote fair, safe, respectful and inclusive workplaces where all people can succeed.
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A conversation

A conversation on key issues

Merit

Gender equality efforts are undermining merit by prioritising diversity	True meritocracy requires removing biases and barriers, not ignoring capability. When we prioritise equality, we're ensuring that everyone's talents are fairly seen and assessed, rather than drawing from the same narrow talent pool or outdated ideas of what it takes to succeed. Historically, assumptions and stereotypes have overlooked skilled individuals from all backgrounds. Addressing this doesn't weaken merit, it strengthens it by ensuring the best candidates are identified and rewarded.	Shouldn't we just hire the best candidate regardless of gender? Why do we need special measures?	Everyone supports hiring the best candidate, but historical practices can mean the best talent may often be completely overlooked. Special measures like transparent processes and targets, and structured decision-making help organisations fairly assess every individual's true capability. Ultimately, this means making sure talent, rather than tradition, determines who succeeds.
Gender targets mean organisations aren't choosing the best people – aren't we sacrificing quality for equality?	Gender targets don't mean compromising quality or undermining merit. They're designed to ensure organisations select from the broadest pool of talent. By challenging tradition and outdated thinking, gender targets help teams and leadership reflect diverse skills, experiences and perspectives.	Organisations are just ticking boxes for diversity instead of focusing on competence	Effective diversity and equality initiatives are strategic choices to improve performance. Diverse teams are more vibrant, innovative, resilient and successful. Organisations committed to equality amplify it by expanding their talent pools and selecting genuinely on merit. It's important to note that leaders often choose the best person for a particular role and also the best person to complement and strengthen teams overall, by bringing in diverse experiences and perspectives.

A conversation

A conversation on key issues

Flexibility

Flexible work practices have damaged workplace productivity and culture	Flexible work practices have proven their worth through increased productivity and organisational resilience while supporting employee wellbeing and talent attraction. The evidence is clear – organisations offering flexibility attract and retain talented employees, create better work–life balance, and build resilient, inclusive cultures.	We are forcing flexibility on organisations that simply can't function that way	Flexibility isn't a one-size-fits-all mandate. It's a strategic approach adapted to each organisation's specific needs. Effective flexibility considers roles, individual circumstances and business requirements. Thoughtful flexibility improves employee satisfaction, wellbeing and business continuity, benefiting organisations and employees alike.
Flexible working is just an excuse for employees to slack off or reduce productivity	Flexible working arrangements consistently result in higher productivity, engagement and retention. Trusting people with flexibility empowers them to deliver their best work, fostering greater accountability and performance. Leading organisations embrace flexible work because it enhances productivity and commitment.	Flexibility puts additional pressure on employees to be 'always on'	Flexibility works best when there's mutual trust, clear expectations and strong communication. People know when they're expected to be available, how to stay connected with their teams, and when it's okay to switch off. Leaders set the tone by role modelling healthy boundaries. Teams focus on outcomes, stay accountable to each other and respect different ways of working.

A conversation

A conversation on key issues

Flexibility

Is work from home (WFH) the same as flexible work practices?	WFH and flexible work practices are not the same. WFH specifically refers to working remotely, usually from home, instead of commuting to an office. It focuses on where work is done. In contrast, flexible work practices include a broader set of arrangements related to both where and when work is completed. These can include flexible hours, compressed work weeks, shift swapping, hybrid models, or job sharing. Differentiating between WFH and flexible work practices helps organisations design work arrangements that meet the diverse needs of all employees. Flexible practices support work–life balance, mental health and productivity, leading to more inclusive and adaptable workplaces.	Flexible work only benefits certain people, like women or those with caregiving responsibilities	Flexible work aims to benefit everyone. It’s about providing choice and opportunity to employees, regardless of their circumstances. Flexibility supports a wide range of personal interests, responsibilities and life situations. When organisations offer flexible work options broadly, they not only boost employee satisfaction, productivity and wellbeing and also create a more diverse, inclusive and healthier workplace culture that benefits all employees.
		People should be ineligible for promotion or development opportunities if they are not in the office all the time	Promotion and development opportunities should be based on performance, skills and contributions, not on physical presence in the office. Expecting employees, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, to be in the office all the time can create significant barriers for those who may need flexible working arrangements. Organisations that value outcomes over office hours and provide access to opportunities for all employees, regardless of their location, tend to foster a more inclusive and equitable environment. This approach ensures that caregiving responsibilities or personal circumstances do not limit an employee’s potential to grow and advance within the organisation. Promoting flexibility supports diverse talent, improves retention and leads to a more innovative and engaged workforce.

Thank you



As we mark 15 years of Champions of Change Coalition, we extend our heartfelt and deep appreciation to everyone involved, past and present: Members, Implementation Leaders, Executive Assistants, People, Culture and Corporate Affairs teams, Expert Advisors, Partners, Convenors, Board Members and the Champions of Change Coalition team.

Thank you for investing your time, resources and expertise. Thank you for your commitment, leadership and relentless pursuit of inclusive gender equality.

Together, we are shaping a more prosperous, inclusive and equitable future for everyone.

“

Equality is a foundation and differentiator for our nation. We are not perfect. There is more work to do, and achieving inclusive gender equality will make our country safer, stronger and fairer – for everyone.

”

Elizabeth Broderick AO

Founder Champions of Change Coalition

Coalition Partners

30% Club	Full Stop Australia
ANROWS	No to Violence
Apropela	Office for Women (Australia)
Australian Equity in Energy Transition Ambassadors	Our Watch
Australian Human Rights Commission	Reconciliation Australia
Australian Institute of Company Directors	The Global Institute for Women's Leadership
Australians Investing in Women	Trawalla Foundation
Business Council of Australia	UN Population Fund (UNFPA) / Equity 2030 Alliance
Challenge DV	UN Global Compact
Chief Executive Women	UN Women Australia
Disability Leadsrhip Institute	Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN)
Diversity Council Australia	WESNET
Equality Australia	Women’s Leadership Institute Australia
Equality Rights Alliance	Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)
Equimundo	Workplace Respect
Flequity Ventures	World Economic Forum

Group Partners

Australasian Rail Association (ARA)
Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)
Australian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC)
Consult Australia
Property Council of Australia

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Louise Adams	Aurecon
Umar Ahsan Khan	Dawlance
Humayun Bin Akram	IDP Education Pakistan and Egypt
Virginia Anderson	SMEC
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Khurrum Ashfaque	Telenor Pakistan
Jason Avanceña	Nestlé Pakistan
Saira Awan	TCS
Zeeshan Baig	Syngenta Pakistan
Ameet Bains	Western Bulldogs Football Club
Nick Bangs	Unilever, Australia New Zealand
Dennis Barnes	SnowyHydro
Todd Battley	Aurecon
Chris Beattie	South Australian State Emergency Service
Emeritus Prof. Christine Bennett AO	Convenor STEM and Health Group, Champions of Change Coalition
Bastien Blanc	Hashoo Group
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Glen Boreham AM	Non-Executive Director

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Collene Bremner	NT Fire and Emergency Services
Brian Brennan	Transdev Australasia
Virginia Briggs	MinterEllison
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Kevin Burrowes	PwC Australia
Gillian Cagney	Worley Services
Frank Calabria	Origin Energy
Jonathan Callaghan	Cromwell Property Group
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Chris Chapple	ISPT
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Aamir Chottani	Chottani Industries
John Cleland	Essential Energy
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Kerryn Coker	Arup
Mark Collette	Energy Australia

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Amir Khan	HBL Microfinance Bank
Anees Khawaja	MG Apparel
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Francisco Layson	SJB Architecture
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Ehsan Saya	Daraz Pakistan
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Matt Scriven	Basketball Australia
BRIG Isaac Seidl AM	Department of Defence, Defence Joint Health Command
Steven Sewell	Abacus Group
Selina Short	EY
Asim Siddiqui	EY Ford Rhodes
David Smales	AusNet Services
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Andrew Stevens	Board Chair Champions of Change Coalition

Coalition Members

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Ashok Sukumaran	Stantec Australia
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James Sutherland	Golf Australia
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Sami Wahid	Mondelēz Pakistan
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Mike Wassing	NSW State Emergency Service
Rachel Watson	Hydro Tasmania
Adam Watson	APA Group
Rob Webb	AFAC
Adam Weir	Surf Life Saving Australia
Daniel Westerman	Australian Energy Market Operator
Liz Westgarth	Hassell
John Whittingham	AJC
Tim Wiebusch ESM	Emergency Management Victoria
Noral Wild	Cushman and Wakefield
Caroline Wilkie	Australasian Railway Association
Geoff Wilson	Non-Executive Director
Steven Worrall	Microsoft Australia and New Zealand
Will Wright	Douglas Partners
Graham Wright	Carlton Football Club
Scott Wyatt	Viva Energy Australia
Andrew Yates	KPMG Australia
Michael Zorbas GAICD	Property Council of Australia

We recognise women in all their diversity

Efforts to advance gender equality have not lifted all women equally. By highlighting the specific demographics of people who experience exclusion, we increase their visibility and boost understanding of how exclusion is experienced within organisations and in society more generally.

Inclusive gender equality recognises that our work must consider and engage all people in global efforts to achieve gender equality, with a particular focus on elevating and advancing currently under-represented and marginalised groups. At its core, the intent is to create respectful, safe and inclusive cultures of belonging for all.

Throughout this document, the terms 'women', 'women in all their diversity', 'women experiencing intersecting inequalities' and 'diverse people' are used. Women includes cis, non-binary and trans women. In referring to women experiencing intersecting inequalities, we mean the structural inequalities and multiple, intersecting and compounding barriers to inclusion and progression faced by women from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds including First Nations women; ethnically and/or racially marginalised women; single parents and sole caregivers; women with disability (visible or invisible); neurodivergent women; and LGBTQ+ women.

When referring to diverse people, we mean the wealth and variety of people and aspects of identity that broadly make up Australia's population.

What is inclusive gender equality?

Inclusive gender equality considers and engages all genders in global efforts to achieve gender equality, with a particular focus on elevating and advancing currently under-represented and marginalised groups. At its core, the intent is to create respectful, safe and inclusive cultures of belonging for all.

Reconciliation

Champions of Change Coalition acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and commit to building a brighter future together. Our head office is located on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. The 'Eora people' was the name given to the coastal Aboriginal peoples around Sydney. 'Eora' means 'here' or 'from this place'.

The workplaces of our people and Champions of Change Coalition Members span the nation and the world. We extend our respects to the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which we and our Members work and live.

Champions of Change Coalition includes CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors and community leaders who believe gender equality is a major business, economic, societal and human rights issue. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, our mission is inclusive gender equality across our workplaces by 2030 and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

championsofchangecoalition.org

15
YEARS

Marking 15 years
since the establishment
of **Champions of Change
Coalition**