


Gender strategy toolkit


A direction for achieving gender
equality in your organisation





Contents


Introduction	1
The gender equality journey	1
Why is a gender equality strategy important?	2
The change process	3
Navigating the toolkit	3


 Section 1: The business case for gender equality	4
How gender equality supports business performance	5


 Section 2: The gender equality roadmap	10
On-ramp points and express lanes	13

 Section 3: The gender equality diagnostic tool	16
Key focus areas	17

 Section 4: Mapping your current position	20
Using the Gender Equality Diagnostic Tool	21
Scoring	22
Overall assessment	35

 Section 5: Planning your journey	36
Creating or refining your strategy	37

 Section 6: Making the journey	42
--	-----------

 Section 7: Travelling faster	45
Reviewing your strategy and action plans	46

Appendix A: Suggested metrics	48
Appendix B: Example objectives	49
Appendix C: Examples of strategies on a page	56

Introduction

Addressing gender equality within organisations will not happen accidentally, and like any other business issue, a strategic and systematic approach is required.

The gender equality journey

Gender equality in the workplace is achieved when all employees are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of whether they are a woman or a man. Our goal in providing this toolkit is to equip organisations with the skills and resources to accelerate strategic, sustainable and meaningful change.

Addressing gender equality within organisations will not happen accidentally, and like any other business issue, a strategic and systematic approach is required. The process of achieving gender equality is often referred to as a 'journey'. This is because the end-state or 'destination' (i.e. a workplace which is genuinely and sustainably equitable to both women and men) can only be achieved over time, and through a series of stages, which are cumulative in their impact.

A key starting point for many organisations is through annual reporting to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). *The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* requires all non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees to report to the Agency in a standardised format on gender outcomes, including in areas such as workforce composition, pay and flexible work. In return, the WGEA provides feedback to each of these employers in the form of confidential, customised benchmark reports on their gender performance.

These benchmark reports provide a powerful business intelligence tool, enabling employers to compare their gender performance to their peers, identify areas for improvement and track the effectiveness of their gender equality strategies over time.

This data is unique. No similar benchmarking data is available to employers in Australia. It provides employers with the evidence base to pinpoint their efforts to improve gender equality in their workplaces.

Aims of the toolkit

This toolkit has been developed to help organisations leverage the value of the benchmark data in a strategic, structured and sustainable way. The toolkit also provides guidance for those organisations aiming to adopt best practice or become WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality¹ (EOCGE).

➔ Identify the on-ramp points to the gender equality journey

The toolkit assists organisations starting on the gender equality journey and those already on the journey wanting to make faster and more effective progress – by making better decisions which result in appropriate, well-targeted actions, and doing this systematically (i.e. in a sequence which delivers desired outcomes as efficiently as possible). Central to this is the design and implementation of a gender strategy.

➔ Provides the 'how'

A well-constructed gender strategy provides the fundamental framework by which organisations can navigate and accelerate their own unique gender equality journey. In the following sections of this toolkit, we explain *how* to build an effective gender strategy, and *how* to use this to generate momentum and sustainable progress. In section 3, we highlight specific opportunities to maximise progress (which we refer to as 'on-ramps' and 'express lanes').

➔ Showcase best practice

The toolkit contains advice on leading practices, which reflect both contemporary research and ongoing learning from workplace application of concepts by organisations which started their journey some time ago. Employers that are just recognising the need to start their gender equality journey can benefit significantly from this learning.

¹ A strategic approach to gender equality is a prerequisite for the WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation (criterion 1) and an essential underpinning for meeting other criteria.

Who is this toolkit for?

Any individual who is a stakeholder in workplace gender equality and has the potential to influence an organisation's approach to gender issues should find some or all of the frameworks and ideas useful. Such stakeholders are likely to include business leaders and managers, diversity champions and sponsors within organisations, and human resources or diversity practitioners.

From an organisational perspective, we recognise that gender equality starting points and levels of readiness and maturity will differ, and have therefore attempted to accommodate the resulting range of needs. We envisage several different scenarios in which the toolkit will be relevant, in particular:

- ➔ **Organisations that have recently started (or are about to start) their gender equality journey.** Often the hardest question is “where do we start?” and “what does progress look like?” The toolkit helps to answer these questions and provides a structured approach for prioritising effort and investment.
- ➔ **Organisations that have already started their gender equality journey.** Their question may be “how can we make faster progress?” or “how can we achieve more impact from our effort?” Here, the toolkit can be used more selectively, to identify and help fill gaps in approaches (especially those that lack strategic direction) and enable stakeholders to avoid pitfalls and wasted effort from well-intentioned but poorly-targeted initiatives and investment (e.g. which address symptoms rather than root causes).

Why is a gender equality strategy important?

A strategy defines a range of objectives in a particular area of endeavour and the underlying business rationale. Typically, it will also indicate how these objectives will be realised, and provides an assessment of risks and success factors. Developing specific project plans for discrete initiatives will also provide the detail of how the strategy is executed. Without a strategy, it is either difficult or impossible to gauge whether day-to-day activity and investment are helping the organisation effectively progress towards the desired end-goal.

Achievement of gender equality outcomes is no different. The underlying assumption of this toolkit is that when organisations use it to become more strategic in their approach to gender equality, the resulting strategy will link to, and support, broader business strategies and objectives.

The underlying assumption of this toolkit is that a more strategic approach to gender equality will support broader business objectives.

Advantages of a strategic approach

- ➔ **Concerted action:** all parts of the organisation are working and moving in a similar, consistent direction.
- ➔ **Well-targeted investment:** every program or initiative can be tested before proceeding: will it help achieve the strategic objectives that have been agreed?
- ➔ **Synergies:** organisations can avoid ‘re-inventing the wheel’ by adopting similar approaches that are mutually supportive and enable avoidance of mistakes and wasted effort.
- ➔ **Economies of scale:** sharing information and resources across the organisation and using collective commercial power (e.g. use of external vendors / service providers) to increase cost-effectiveness.
- ➔ **Consistency of approach:** when different business units or teams approach gender equality similarly, employees’ experience of the workplace is consistent and predictable, wherever they are deployed internally; this fosters engagement and productivity.
- ➔ **Mobilisation and motivation:** a strategy provides a basis for communicating intent, engaging stakeholders around specific objectives and building long-term support.
- ➔ **A basis for measuring success:** clarity of direction and purpose provides a robust basis for measuring progress and success, including return on investment.
- ➔ **Reporting requirements:** adopting a more strategic approach to gender equality will assist organisations to meet their WGEA reporting obligations, e.g. in relation to GEI 1, which contains questions in relation to strategy. Adopting a strategic approach will enable employers to answer ‘yes’ to questions where they previously responded ‘no’, helping them improve their performance against reporting matters.

The change process

The gender equality journey involves a process of change: the end-point is different from the start. There is a significant body of learning from organisations that have, for a range of reasons, needed to change the way they operate or conduct their business. As a result, there are many different models and proprietary tools for managing organisational change.

The goal of this toolkit is not to substitute any of these. Instead, it aims to provide a simple, strategic framework for identifying and taking action in relation to gender equality that is consistent with generic change management approaches. It can also be easily integrated into a specific change methodology already used by an organisation. It aims to reflect established core change management principles.

To achieve this, the toolkit is structured around the four steps which typically guide change programs. These steps are summarised below and are explained in more detail in the toolkit sections which follow.

The diagram below shows how each of the WGEA tools and resources relate to each of the steps in the change process:

- ➔ **Throughout:** the gender equality roadmap provides an overarching means of assessing progress towards the desired end state, and milestones in between.
- ➔ **Step A:** the gender equality diagnostic tool provides a robust framework for analysing where an organisation is currently positioned on the gender equality journey, and helps to identify the opportunities and challenges in terms of making better and faster progress.

- ➔ **Step B:** a gender equality strategy has to be produced by each organisation for itself, informed by the roadmap and diagnostic analysis and using the guidelines contained within this toolkit.
- ➔ **Step C:** the achievement of each strategic objective will occur through an action (or implementation or project) plan for each activity, program or initiative that is identified and agreed by stakeholders.
- ➔ **Step D:** WGEA benchmark reports will provide new insights for organisations and a means of assessing progress relative to industry or other external comparators; the diagnostic can continue to be used as a means of re-evaluating progress at any time, relative to gender equality best practice.

Navigating the toolkit

The toolkit is intended to be logical and intuitive. Before defining and describing the gender equality journey, it explains the benefits of making the journey – i.e. the business case. After explaining the gender equality journey, the toolkit describes the essential building blocks of an effective gender equality strategy. These elements are then put together to create a ‘diagnostic’, which organisations can use to assess their current gender equality status and performance, and identify any gaps and weaknesses in their approach. This insight provides the basis for taking action to improve these shortfalls, including appropriate sequencing and prioritisation.

The toolkit also provides a robust and consistent way for organisations to evaluate their current and future gender equality achievements, as well as their progress over time. The WGEA ‘building a gender equality strategy’ webpages provides a central hub of resources on developing specific actions and strategies on each of the key focus areas discussed in this document.

Figure 1: The step change process





Section 1

The business case
for gender equality

Section 1

The business case for gender equality

Too frequently there is insufficient focus given to the development, endorsement and socialisation of a robust and credible business case for gender equality.

A business case for gender equality is an essential prerequisite for building commitment to a gender strategy and its implementation. This principle is valid not only for commercial organisations, but also in a public or third (voluntary / not-for-profit) sector context.

Too frequently there is insufficient focus given to the development, endorsement and socialisation of a robust and credible business case for gender equality. Weakness at this stage of the strategy development process has the potential to undermine the success of everything that follows, as a business case is usually critical to stakeholder support. Reliance on a sense of corporate responsibility or supportive individual or collective attitudes and values is not best practice or a sound approach as it is usually insufficient in a commercial context.

The learnings from organisational experience indicate approaches to the gender equality business case often suffer from a number of the following limitations:

- reliance on a generic business case instead of developing a specific one, unique to the organisation
- no gathering or utilisation of relevant and compelling data (quantitative and qualitative) to substantiate the business case
- the specific business case is not cascaded or redefined for sub-units or teams within the organisation
- key stakeholder understanding is limited to parts of the business case
- key stakeholders have an intellectual appreciation of the business case but lack belief or conviction in its validity
- the business case is not actively communicated or promoted across the organisation
- no attempt is made to measure impact or return on investment arising from gender equality action in order to retrospectively demonstrate the legitimacy of the business case (and use this to build future support).

Tailoring the business case

The generic business case for gender equality is a good starting point for building support for gender equality action within your organisation, but it should not be regarded as sufficient on its own. Typically, stakeholders such as leaders and middle-managers want to know the specific benefits to them, their team or their whole business. It will usually be up to human resource or diversity managers to define the *specific* business case.

There are two types of input which will help answer the question “what is the specific business case for gender equality here?” These are:

- ➔ **Quantitative inputs:** what does the data indicate are your biggest gender issues? It could be gender imbalance within leadership or executive teams, disproportionate loss of female talent, or a disconnect between the gender diversity of customer and customer-facing teams.
- ➔ **Qualitative inputs:** what do key stakeholders (executives, leaders, managers, employees etc.) think are the most important and relevant focus areas of the generic business case for your organisation and why? A series of interviews and/or focus groups with a representative sample of stakeholders will provide invaluable insight into where the business benefit of investment in gender equality is likely to come from.

These two different sets of inputs should be correlated to produce a final result. Where there are differences, these will need to be explored further and reconciled. However, the final result is an indication of the most important business drivers – in other words, it is a relative rather than an absolute picture.

The same process can also be cascaded down by applying the same methodology to discrete business units or individual teams. The same questions apply: what does the data show, and what do key stakeholders see as the main business benefits from achieving gender equality? For instance, an information technology function or team may see greater innovation from gender diverse thinking as a significant benefit, whereas a marketing or customer-facing team would be expected to place priority on stronger customer relationships and solutions. Increased engagement and productivity/performance ought to be common to all teams.

Since business leaders tend to be data-rational due to the nature of their role, credible and reliable metrics to support the case are essential. If these are unavailable, consideration should be given to developing the mechanisms to provide the data and track and report the key metrics going forward. When the metrics show progress over time, this will foster support for further action and investment in gender equality. If measurable progress does not occur, this provides a basis for investigation to understand why the organisation’s efforts are not having the intended effect, and then remedial action taken.

When the explicit, data-backed business case has been defined and endorsed by the relevant stakeholders, it should be communicated across the organisation, business unit, function or team, preferably within broader business messaging alongside the gender strategy. It should be made accessible to employees at all levels, although the level of detail appropriate for different stakeholder groups may vary.

In Table 1, we have set out the generic gender equality business case in a number of ways. This can be used as a starting point for developing a specific organisation business case.

Table 1: Business benefits

Measure	Benefits
Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ A workforce which is as diverse as its customers can more effectively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and anticipate customer needs, which enables proactive tailoring of customer solutions, services, advice and information • personalise communications and interactions, develop deeper connections, and engage more meaningfully with customers.
Market share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Attracting and retaining new business in target market segments can be influenced by perceptions in relation to factors such as ethical conduct, corporate responsibility or citizenship, and commitment to equality and diversity.
Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Talent and capability is not found in one particular demographic. To ensure an organisation has access to the best available talent and is able to retain this, it will need to progressively become an employer of choice for existing and potential employees of all backgrounds. ➔ Rapidly changing workforce demographics (a shrinking, ageing and more female workforce) mean organisations will increasingly be challenged in the search for talent unless they are able to draw from, and retain, candidates from diverse backgrounds.
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Research and organisational experience indicate diverse teams consistently outperform homogeneous teams and produce stronger (business) outcomes – provided an inclusive culture operates, where all ideas or contributions are valued and considered. ➔ Employees at all levels who are valued and included, irrespective (or because) of their individual differences, and who can ‘be themselves’ at work are typically more engaged, motivated and therefore productive. ➔ Co-workers who understand and respect individual differences collaborate more effectively and with less conflict.
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Developing innovative solutions to customer needs, creative exploitation of technology and continuous process improvement may help sustain competitive advantage. ➔ Diverse and inclusive teams are more innovative because they have a wider set of experiences, approaches and resources to draw upon. ➔ Enabling people to constructively challenge established approaches and conventional thinking provides the basis for experimentation and managed risk-taking.
Agility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Flexible teams are typically more adaptive and responsive to rapid changes in business conditions and priorities because they already communicate, collaborate and deliver results in ways which are far less restricted by time and location, and which exploit technology to full advantage.
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Diverse teams which operate inclusively can manage and mitigate risk more effectively by avoiding sub-optimal decision-making associated with ‘group-think’.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Communities and their individual constituents are increasingly influential (and may also be customers). A workforce that represents and is connected to local communities and their values is better able to anticipate and meet their expectations; this can help foster a positive disposition towards an organisation when business outcomes have community impact.
Other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Diversity, particularly gender equality at leadership levels, is subject to increased scrutiny and strengthened legislation. The effect will include greater exposure of the gender diversity of talent pipelines to leadership levels. ➔ An organisation’s reputation and brand will continue to be relevant in relation to government, regulators, shareholders, investors, analysts, contractors, suppliers and partners. Progress in equality, diversity and inclusion can help an organisation position itself as a business which is well-managed (including in relation to risk), and authentically ‘lives’ its culture and values.

How gender equality supports business performance

The WGEA describes a gender-equitable workplace as one in which women and men are equally represented, valued and rewarded. Leading organisations in gender equality have recognised that building and maintaining gender balanced teams and an overall workforce is essential but not sufficient to achieve this aspiration.

In order to fully capitalise on the benefits that gender equality brings to organisations of all kinds, employers must also develop and foster a culture which is consistently inclusive to both women and men. Flexible mindsets and work practices represent key enablers of gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

The diagram below illustrates how these foundational elements support business performance² and create long-term competitive advantage. The return on investment (ROI) from achieving genuine workplace gender equality is derived from sustainable performance improvements, not short-term transient gains which may be subsequently lost.

Foundations

- ➔ **Diverse and representative workforce:** a gender-balanced workforce (at all organisational levels, particularly leadership) is an essential foundation for maximising team and business performance, but it is not sufficient without the two additional components of inclusion and flexibility. Organisations will need to determine the appropriate benchmark against which to determine whether gender diversity is appropriately representative (the overall population, national workforce, local community, client or customer base etc.).
- ➔ **Inclusive and equitable culture:** a gender inclusive and equitable workplace culture provides the basis for fully utilising the different and complementary strengths that women and men bring to their work and teams. Inclusion involves empowering everyone to make a relevant contribution – e.g. listening to the ‘quietest voice in the room’, and valuing and considering everyone’s ideas equally. This promotes diversity of thinking, in which assumptions and the status quo can be constructively challenged in pursuit of the best solution. Inclusive cultures require inclusive leadership behaviours, e.g. where decisions are not made within exclusively male networks.

Figure 2: The business case for gender equality



² Note that terms such as business performance can equally apply to public sector or not-for-profit organisations. Organisational (non-commercial) performance is a relevant and equally valid measure of impact generated by gender equality action.

- ➔ **Flexible and empowering workplace:** flexible work practices enable the attraction, retention and optimal utilisation of gender diverse talent. Research indicates a strong correlation between flexible work and a sense of inclusion and engagement. Structured appropriately, flexibility has the potential to strengthen individual and team performance, as well as customer relationships and responsiveness. Flexible teams are typically more agile and adaptable because their work methods are less constrained by time and/or location.

Drivers

- ➔ **Build and leverage complementary capabilities within and between teams:** women and men bring different strengths and capabilities, although these are not necessarily 'hard-wired' by gender. Either way, to develop the best solutions and deliver the best results, everyone has to be open to alternative ways of thinking (e.g. problem-solving, assessing risk etc.), different work styles and preferences (e.g. introvert and extrovert) and leadership styles.
- ➔ **Engage, mobilise and retain best available talent and continuously learn:** the most engaged and productive employees are those who are:
 - empowered to realise their full potential
 - enabled to maximise their contribution to the organisation and team
 - fairly recognised and rewarded
 - encouraged to be themselves.

Anticipating and embracing different ways of working also provides an opportunity for continuous learning and improvement.

- ➔ **Exploit diverse thinking to create best customer and market solutions:** most employees have customers of some kind, whether internally or externally. When the composition of teams reflects the gender (and other) diversity of their customers and clients, they are better able to:
 - develop deeper and more meaningful connections and longer term relationships
 - understand customers' perspectives and better anticipate and exceed their needs and expectations
 - proactively tailor customer communications, advice, insights and information.

Research and organisational experience demonstrate gender diverse and inclusive teams are consistently more innovative than homogeneous teams, and avoid the risks associated with 'group-think' (i.e. easily agreed but sub-optimal solutions).

- ➔ **Deliver seamlessly by collaborating across barriers and differences:** anticipating and embracing different ways of working reduces the potential for interpersonal conflict, and more constructive business and organisational outcomes.

Outcomes

At a high level, organisational and leadership commitment to gender equality has the potential to increase business performance and competitive advantage. This is achieved through the combination of enhancements in productivity, customer or client service, innovation, agility and risk management, as explained above.

Benefits

The return on investment in gender equality may not necessarily be immediately evident at an organisational level, although benefits to employees, customers and other stakeholders may be more visible.

Fully unlocking the value from a gender equitable workplace requires culture change as well as process improvement. Influencing individual attitudes and values is not always easy and takes time. However, the prize on offer is an organisation and/or business which is more sustainable, i.e. is better equipped for the future, irrespective of a constantly evolving external environment and an accelerating rate of change.

Below are some examples of success indicators for each of the foundations and drivers in the business case.

Table 2: Examples of success indicators

Business case component	Measured by
Diverse and representative workforce	Improvement in gender balance of overall workforce and sub-groups (e.g. by level, business unit, job family) compared to comparator population (e.g. workforce, community, customer base).
Inclusive and equitable culture	Increase in positive responses to benchmark question in employee engagement survey about gender inclusivity of organisation.
Flexible and empowering workplace	Increase in utilisation of formal flexibility options by women and men and an increase in positive responses to benchmark flexibility question in employee engagement survey.
Complementary capabilities in teams	All required / desired capabilities are collectively demonstrated in aggregated performance assessments of team members.
Talent engagement, mobilisation and retention	Sustainably improved gender balance of talent pipeline, development program participants, international / special assignments, retained talent.
Diversity of thinking	Qualitative feedback of team leaders and members in relation to increased innovation of solutions.
Seamless collaboration across boundaries	Qualitative feedback of team leaders and members in relation to improved collaboration and / or reduced conflict across relevant boundaries.



Section 2

The gender equality roadmap

Section 2

The gender equality roadmap

The roadmap enables organisations to plot where they are on their journey.

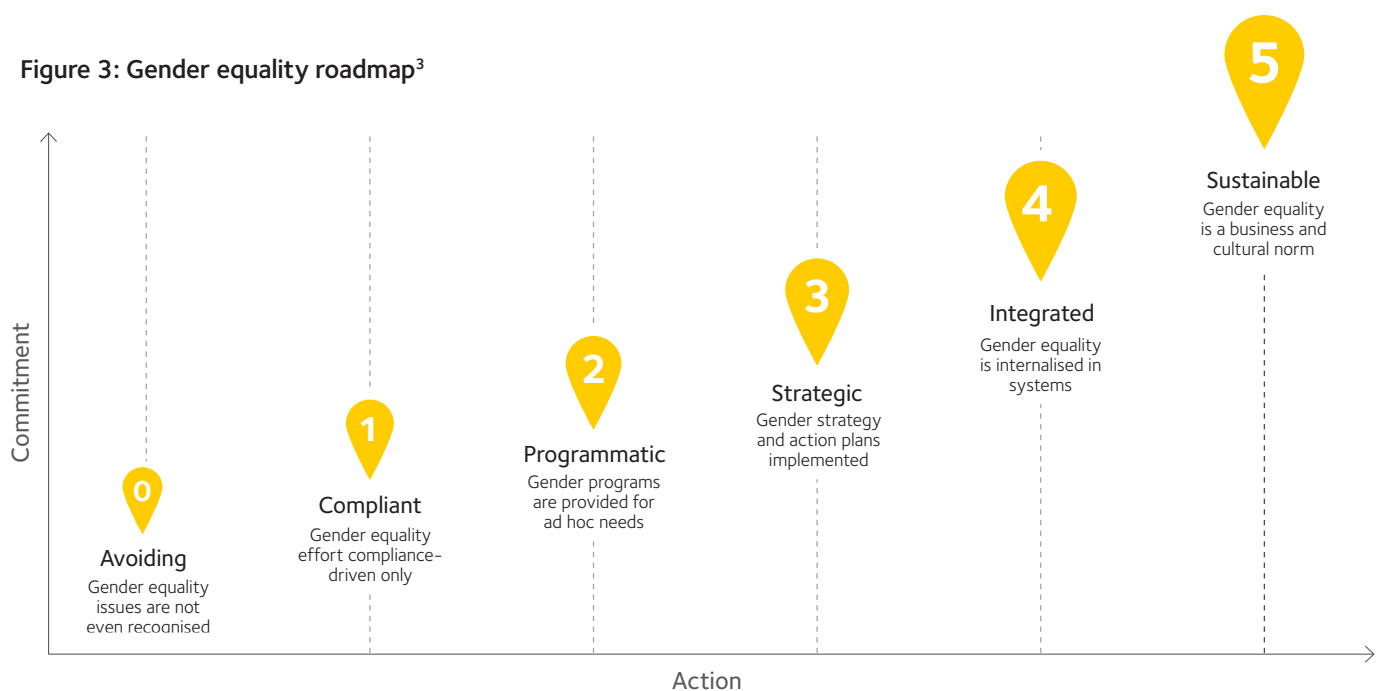
The 'gender equality roadmap' (roadmap) is designed to help organisations understand the nature of the gender equality 'journey' and the identifiable phases within it, from least effective practice to highly effective and best practice. The roadmap enables organisations to plot where they are on their journey. Stakeholders can then identify what progress looks like and plan accordingly. The roadmap acts as both a framework for identifying and understanding gender equality progress (or absence of it), and as a common language for stakeholders to discuss progress.

The phases of the journey may not be as discrete or well-delineated as shown on the model; some phases may last longer than others. Nonetheless they reflect the real experiences of

leading organisations in equality and diversity. Note that progress along the roadmap is a function of the combined effect of both commitment and action – and the congruence between these. It is only when good intent is converted into action that progress is made.

Organisations less advanced in gender equality can exploit the valuable learning from these experiences, to increase momentum and accelerate progress (which we refer to later as using 'on-ramps' and 'express lanes'). The roadmap phases are therefore intended to punctuate a typical journey, not necessarily an 'ideal' journey route. The roadmap's purpose is to help organisations see opportunities to make their journey as fast, efficient and constructive as possible.

Figure 3: Gender equality roadmap³



³ *Adapted from the Diversity and Inclusion Pathway© model developed by Diversity Partners Pty Ltd (www.diversitypartners.com.au) and shared with their kind permission.

Table 3: Typical characteristics for each stage of the roadmap

Phase	Characteristics
0 Avoiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural and cultural barriers to female career progression are unrecognised or denied. → Exclusive and/or discriminatory behaviour towards women accepted and/or normalised. → No measurement or reporting of gender representation or equality issues. → No-one accepts (or sees a need to allocate) accountability for gender equality /diversity.
1 Compliant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Gender equality / diversity are seen as a compliance risk, not a business enabler or imperative. → Any gender equality / diversity activity is limited to meeting compliance obligations. → Responsibility for compliance with gender legislation or regulation is owned by support functions. → Only data required to meet compliance obligations is gathered and is not exploited.
2 Programmatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Gender equality / diversity activity occurs only in response to issues that can't be ignored. → Actions and initiatives are ad hoc, reactive and tactical rather than planned, proactive and strategic. → Gender initiatives are disconnected and fragmented, which limits synergies, efficiencies and impact. → Business priorities take precedence and displace gender equality action if/when necessary. → Failure of gender programs / initiatives to achieve progress or change undermines long-term support.
3 Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A specific business case for addressing gender equality is identified and promoted by leaders. → A gender strategy is developed which links to and supports business strategy and objectives. → Gender strategy is used to guide effort, investment and specific initiatives and is regularly reviewed. → Action plans are developed and implemented to realise gender equality strategic objectives. → Governance and reporting mechanisms are in place to ensure leadership oversight.
4 Integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Gender equality best practice is integrated into business and people policies and processes. → The business case for gender equality is understood and embraced at all organisational levels. → Commitment to, and investment in, gender equality progress is unaffected by business challenges. → Structural and cultural barriers to female career progression are actively challenged and addressed.
5 Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Business leaders hold themselves and their people publicly accountable for gender equality outcomes. → Leaders have the necessary capability, confidence and commitment to build gender inclusive culture(s). → The organisation and its leaders are role models for gender equality / inclusion, and influence others. → Ongoing commitment to gender equality is unaffected by changes in leadership composition. → Gender equality is simply part of how business is done, and how people work together – always.

Different stakeholders of the organisation may intuitively identify which phase they think their organisation has reached. However, their perspective will reflect how they experience gender equality in their particular part of the organisation. Perspectives may therefore differ, and this should be expected. One of the benefits of the roadmap is it stimulates discussion. Users of the roadmap should expect that different stakeholders will have a range of perspectives on where the organisation is on its gender equality journey. Where assessments vary, it is valuable to explore why this is, in order to understand and rationalise different approaches, levels of support and results. A coherent gender strategy will help align the whole organisation and create consistency across sub-units and teams.

Another application of the roadmap could be to assess an organisation's level of progress relative to its industry / sector or competitors. The new WGEA benchmark reports create new opportunities to assess gender equality performance relative to industry peers. Sometimes, a noticeable gap in relation to external comparators can be a powerful stimulus for action, particularly when the data is provided by an independent source.

On-ramp points and express lanes

We have extended the roadmap concept to include two important features:

- ➔ **On-ramps:** an opportunity to join the gender equality journey at a particular phase using the WGEA tools and resources, thus reducing or eliminating time spent in the previous phase(s).
- ➔ **Express lanes:** a short-cut from one phase to another, avoiding an intermediary phase.

Getting on the journey

The requirement for non-public sector organisations with 100 or more staff to report annually to the WGEA can serve as a catalyst to move out of the 'Avoiding' phase (0) and into the 'Compliance' phase (1). Some organisations will do enough to remain compliant and no more; others will use the insights provided by the reporting process to accelerate their progress.

Some organisations will consciously move or unconsciously drift into the programmatic phase (2) where they implement certain initiatives or programs in response to specific needs, typically relating to a workforce segment such as working mothers. These needs may be highlighted by data from a number of sources, including WGEA annual reporting. Other sources may include internal metrics, employee feedback and engagement survey responses.

Whilst these programs may be well-intentioned and welcomed by employees, they often only alleviate symptoms of gender inequality, rather than address root causes to create lasting change. The risk is that these initiatives provide a false sense of comfort that the organisation is making progress towards greater gender equality when, in fact, it is not because the programs are not connected to, and supportive of, a gender strategy and strategic objectives.

Moving into the programmatic phase may represent a natural but passive evolution, and many organisations spend time and resources here, with little or no benefit to show for it. Worse still, a failure to demonstrate progress despite effort and investment may damage stakeholder support, which is difficult to regain, thus undermining possibilities for future action and progress.

Frequently, programs are focused on the perceived 'needs' of women rather than addressing the nature of the organisation and its culture to ensure that women can succeed on their own merits (rather than, for instance, developing male-typical attributes which the organisation uses as measures of success, either formally or informally). A strategic approach enables organisations to address systemic and cultural barriers to gender equality more easily and effectively than a programmatic one.

Moving beyond the programmatic phase

Organisations that find themselves in the programmatic phase should not be dismayed. Nor should the gender equality work that has led to that point be undervalued or dismissed as irrelevant. The constructive and necessary response is to adopt a strategic approach, by developing a sound gender strategy, and current programs and initiatives can be reviewed for relevance and effectiveness.

Those programs that support one or more strategic objectives can be continued – and linked wherever possible. Those programs that do not align to and support the gender equality strategy may need to be adapted or discontinued, to recover the opportunity cost they represent. Valuable resources can be redirected to deliver the best impact and return on investment.



By exploiting the learning from WGEA reporting and benchmarks, as well as other insights from complementary data, it is possible to avoid or minimise the duration of the programmatic phase (or avoid it completely and take an 'express lane' to the strategic phase (3)). Organisations can take this short cut through the development and implementation of a gender strategy (supported by a robust and specific business case).

Once a gender strategy has been established, an organisation will be well-placed to consider applying for the EOCE citation, provided this is executed effectively through an action plan. The structure and content of the strategy can be built around the outcomes of the gender equality diagnostic process which is detailed in Section 4.

Progression beyond the strategic phase (3) requires organisations to leverage the impact of their efforts by moving from initiatives into integration – whereby gender equality best practice is increasingly incorporated into all relevant business and people processes, until it becomes completely intrinsic. Taken to its logical conclusion, there should be no need for a separate gender equality strategy. Best practice should simply be part of business and organisational strategies.

Taking gender equality to the next level

Reaching phases 4 (integrated) and 5 (sustainable) requires culture change as well as policy and process improvement. Organisational workplace culture is a cumulative reflection of the prevailing attitudes and values prevalent in the workforce. This will be shaped by leaders and managers more than any other single factor. Their attitudes and values, demonstrated by their behaviours (including decision-making), send a clear signal of what is important and expected of others. Ultimately, leaders and managers need to be role-models and coaches to others in gender equitable and inclusive behaviours.

It follows that progress through phases 3, 4 and 5 ought to be driven by actions and interventions that are increasingly ‘top-down’, not just ‘bottom up’ (which may be more typical of the earlier phases). Phases 0 – 2 are more likely to be driven by human resources and/or diversity leaders. The transition from programmatic to strategic should therefore involve a shift in ownership and leadership from support functions to the mainstream business. This may be subtle at first, but should become increasingly visible. Again, it is the introduction of a strategy that provides the vehicle for this shift.

Another indicator of reaching phases 4 and 5 is the increased level of connectivity between equality, diversity and inclusion activities relating not just to gender, but to other workforce segments. A good example of this would be actions to address unconscious bias within people processes. This focus need not just be limited to unconscious gender bias. An approach which develops awareness of unconscious bias and provides tools to minimise it will help create an equitable work environment for all employees, irrespective of their individual background or differences.

The differentiator between phase 4 (integrated) and phase 5 (sustainable) is largely cultural. Phase 4 includes ensuring the essential ‘hard-wiring’ (systems, frameworks, policies and processes) which support the gender equality strategy is in place across the organisation. The emphasis in phase 5 is on the ‘soft insulation’ (the workplace cultural norms) that surround the hard-wiring and optimise its performance.

Sustainability is achieved because everyone in the organisation understands and believes in the value of gender equality. It is a natural and implicit part of how work is delivered, all the time. Employees (including managers and leaders) become unconsciously competent in gender equality.



Example of a programmatic approach

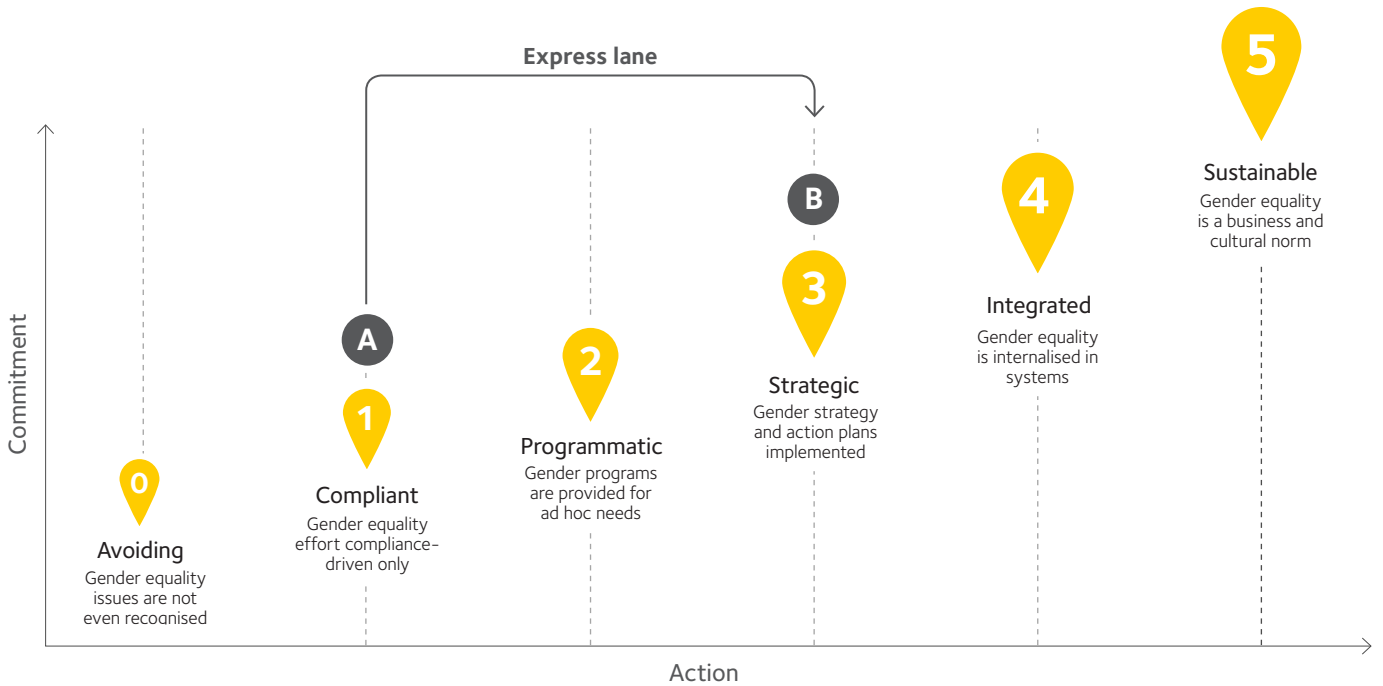
An example of an approach which is representative of the programmatic phase might be found in an organisation’s approach to parental leave and the return to work of a primary carer of a new-born child. In Australia, the vast majority of primary carers are women, a position which is only changing very slowly. An employer’s policies and practices in this area will therefore usually impact women disproportionately, compared to men. An increasing number of employers now offer a bonus to employees who return to work from maternity or primary carer parental leave, and stay for a qualifying period.

At face value, this appears to be a positive action, and most qualifying employees will be happy to accept the bonus. However, a question remains as to whether such a bonus influences the decision of employees’ (mainly women) to remain with the organisation in the longer term. Often, return to work rates are high, but the retention of women returners one or two years later is noticeably lower – women return, but they don’t necessarily stay. Employee feedback suggests retention is heavily influenced by factors such as the ease and constructiveness of the re-entry process, the role provided, manager attitudes and, above all, access to flexibility.

Organisations that address all of the above factors, as well as offering a return to work bonus – as part of a strategic response to the issue of retaining female talent – are more likely to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes – i.e. a higher rate of retention of women with primary carer responsibilities. In many cases, organisations do not appear to measure long-term retention of employees returning from parental leave – even when they have chosen to invest in offering a return to work bonus – so they will not know (or be able to demonstrate) the impact of, or return on, their investment.

Some organisations cite industry or market practice as the reason for introducing a return to work bonus. This may be a valid start point, but there is little benefit (and, in fact, potential for damage) if the use of a bonus to attract female talent is not part of a broader strategy for retaining that talent. A programmatic approach has the potential to erode future stakeholder support, even for well-conceived initiatives, if current investments and activity are seen to be failing to deliver the expected outcomes.

Figure 4: On-ramps and express lanes



Key: **X** = On-ramp point

To use on-ramp A:

- ➔ submit a robust annual WGEA compliance report using appropriate due diligence
- ➔ use the resulting data together with your customised WGEA benchmark report to identify and prioritise gender equality challenges and opportunities in your organisation
- ➔ start taking action to address these challenges and opportunities.

To use on-ramp B:

- ➔ use the gender equality diagnostic (in Section 3) to inform the development and implementation of a robust gender equality strategy and business case
- ➔ If relevant employers apply for the EOCGE citation and (whether initially successful or not) use the outputs of the process to strengthen and refine the strategy; repeat the process annually until citation is achieved and maintained.

To use the express lane (from phase 1 to 3):

- ➔ complete the annual WGEA compliance report and in parallel use the WGEA *Gender strategy toolkit* to design, implement and communicate a robust gender equality strategy (including a specific and credible business case)
- ➔ define and prioritise the programs and initiatives that will enable the organisation to achieve its strategic gender objective(s)
- ➔ link the gender equality strategy to business strategy.



Section 3

The gender equality
diagnostic tool

Section 3

The gender equality diagnostic tool

Key focus areas

The gender equality diagnostic tool enables organisations to assess their current gender equality performance against a range of specific measures; we have called these “key focus areas”. Key focus areas are elements that make up an effective gender strategy from which measurable outcomes can, and should, be achieved.

The key focus areas reflect extensive research of organisational experience and international best practice in achieving gender equality progress. This research includes insights from analysis of Australian data by the WGEA from reporting over time by Australian employers.

The diagnostic tool outlines 12 “key focus areas”, all are important and none are irrelevant. They comprise a comprehensive framework for thinking about gender equality. However, this does not necessarily mean that all the focus areas need to be addressed at the same time.

It may be helpful to think of a gender equality strategy as a complex machine or engine that propels an organisation along the gender equality journey. It contains many moving parts (i.e. the key focus areas) all of which are essential to its ongoing effectiveness and longevity. If some parts are not maintained or are missing, the engine will fail, sooner or later. Some parts being absent or failing may have immediate impact; for others the effect may be more gradual.



Each organisation will need to identify the greatest gender equality challenges and opportunities, and plan and prioritise accordingly – i.e. which key focus areas to address first. It is better to be realistic about what can be achieved in a given timeframe.

Gender equality is a complex area that presents a challenging agenda. Being overly ambitious creates a risk of under-achievement that may damage future progress. If an action plan is realised more quickly and easily than expected, additional objectives can be considered. ‘Stretching but achievable’ is a sound approach.

The key focus areas are interlinked and are complementary to other WGEA requirements and standards, specifically:

- ➔ annual compliance reporting including gender equality indicators (GEIs) and minimum standards
- ➔ EOCGE criteria
- ➔ benchmark reports against industry data and other comparators.

However, some key focus areas go further than these existing requirements, partly in anticipation of the progressive raising of future WGEA requirements and expectations, and partly to challenge organisations to exceed these wherever possible in pursuit of current international best practice.

The following sections take users through a process of organisation self-assessment and recommend potential actions and responses to facilitate progress.

Key focus areas

There are 12 key focus areas that make up essential components of a comprehensive gender equality strategy:

- ➔ stakeholder engagement
- ➔ leadership accountability
- ➔ strategy and business case
- ➔ measurement and reporting
- ➔ policies and processes
- ➔ supply chain
- ➔ gender composition
- ➔ gender pay equity
- ➔ flexibility
- ➔ talent pipeline
- ➔ leader and manager capability
- ➔ gender inclusive culture.

These key focus areas (and their interconnectivity) are represented in a diagram below. Aspects to note are:

- leaders are ultimately accountable for every aspect of a gender equality strategy and its outcomes – notwithstanding that they will be supported by others (e.g. HR / diversity practitioners) in its execution
- stakeholder engagement is required at every stage of the gender strategy execution, and for every component
- a culture which is gender equitable and inclusive is at the core of every aspect of gender equality strategy – without this, gender equality will not be a sustainable proposition.

Figure 3: Key focus areas



How the diagnostic tool links to other WGEA tools and measures

Both compliance reporting requirements (i.e.GEIs) and EOCGE criteria are reflected in the key focus areas; they are the building blocks of an effective gender strategy.

One exception to this relates to supply chain and procurement management to achieve gender equality outcomes. This key focus area is aimed at driving gender equality progress outside the organisation more than inside. Nonetheless, it represents best practice and is therefore included in order to stretch organisational thinking and action when ready. Research also suggests that equitable supply chain practices (gender-related and others) are noticed by employees and influence their perception of their employer.

The synergy between the Diagnostic, GEIs and EOCGE criteria offers several benefits. The data gathered through annual compliance reporting and EOCGE applications will support:

- ➔ reliable and informed roadmap and diagnostic assessments
- ➔ gap analysis and identification of priorities for action against the key focus areas.

Even when organisations choose not to apply for EOCGE citation, they will still be able to construct a gender strategy which is 'fit-for-purpose' using the diagnostic methodology and informed by the outcomes of annual WGEA reporting and the associated benchmark comparisons.

Mapping to WGEA tools and resources

The table below shows how the focus areas map against existing WGEA tools and resources.

Key focus area	WGEA measures		
	Annual reporting (GEIs)	Employer of Choice criteria for Gender Equality	Gender equality benchmarks report
Stakeholder engagement	GEI 5	Criterion 5	5.1–5.3
Strategy and business case	GEI 1	Criteria 1 and 7	1.7; 3.1; 4.1; 4.2; 6.1
Leadership accountability		Criteria 1 and 7	
Measurement and reporting	Workforce Profile	Criterion 1	
Policies and processes	GEIs 1–6	Criterion 1	1.7; 3.1; 4.1; 4.2; 4.6
Supply chain		Criterion 1	
Gender composition	GEIs 1 and 2	Criterion 7	1.1–1.6; 2.1–2.2
Gender pay equity	GEI 3	Criterion 3	3.1–3.8
Flexibility	GEI 4	Criterion 4	4.1–4.5
Talent pipeline	GEI 1	Criterion 2	
Manager and leader capability		Criterion 2	6.3–6.4
Gender inclusive culture	GEI 6	Criterion 6	



Section 4

Mapping your
current position

Section 4

Mapping your current position

We are now at step 1 of the change process ('Analysis').

Question to ask: "Where are we now?"

Using the gender equality diagnostic tool

The gender equality diagnostic tool provides a basis for consistent and robust assessment of an organisation's current gender equality progress and performance against best practice indicators (which we have called 'signposts'). It does this by setting the core gender strategy key focus areas against each phase of the gender equality roadmap.

This is not intended to be a formulaic or algorithmic methodology. Assessment requires application of judgement, informed by direct observation or experience, and supported by relevant data sources (both qualitative and quantitative).

In this way, stakeholders in organisations can assess their current status against best practice indicators (the 'signposts'). Different stakeholders may have varying perspectives and score the organisation differently, according to the nature of their role and connection to the gender equality agenda (e.g. business leader, gender champion, team leader, team member, human resource manager, diversity practitioner etc.).

This is not only to be expected, but also represents a valuable insight. Exploring the reasons behind different stakeholder perspectives may uncover issues which are specific to particular parts of the workforce. The more diverse the stakeholders that are consulted, the more robust the assessment process will be. Understanding the issues better can inform development of solutions which are more effectively targeted.

The more inputs that are gathered, the more robust and useful the aggregated picture will be. Consulting with stakeholders in this way, and seeking their inputs, is also an engagement and support-building process in itself. One of the most useful features of the diagnostic is in identifying priorities for action; inevitably, organisations will perform more strongly against some focus and result areas than others; weaker scores suggest an area for prioritisation.

The overall diagnostic assumes equal weighting for each key focus area. Some organisations may validly choose to place more emphasis on certain elements than others, according to their own particular context – e.g. the nature of the business and the level of maturity achieved to date.

However, no key focus area should be seen as irrelevant, because they are all components of an effective, comprehensive gender strategy, which reflects best practice. It is for each organisation to determine whether they wish to place more emphasis on one component than another.

Organisations may be more advanced in some areas than others; individual scores against focus areas can be aggregated and averaged to indicate an overall position on the roadmap.

WGEA data sources will include:

- ➔ annual WGEA compliance reports (including workforce profiles)
- ➔ WGEA benchmark reports
- ➔ EOCGE submissions and outcomes
- ➔ other relevant internal data sources are likely to include:
 - ➔ policies, procedures and people management frameworks (e.g. capability models)
 - ➔ results from employee engagement or diversity surveys
 - ➔ quantitative metrics (e.g. talent pool composition, development program participation, flexibility utilisation, performance distributions, gender pay equity etc.)
- ➔ performance against relevant kpis and business scorecard measures, if applicable
- ➔ relevant business practices (e.g. project and client account allocation, procurement etc.)
- ➔ leadership communication relating to gender equality, including the business case.

When organisations have evaluated themselves, the “Where to Next?” section suggests potential actions to improve gender equality performance and accelerate progress along the roadmap. The diagnostic results and suggested responses can then be used to inform the development of specific gender equality action plans.

Scoring

Scoring is a two-step process:

- ➔ Step 1: detailed assessment – score your organisation against each of the key focus areas. Do this by reviewing the ‘signposts’ provided. The signposts describe a level of organisational practice for a given key focus area which is aligned to each of the roadmap phase. **Place a tick against the signpost that best describes your organisation’s practices**
- ➔ Step 2: overall assessment – aggregate your detailed scores to provide an overview of your organisation’s current gender equality position and performance. Do this by copying each of your ticks for each key focus area onto the master table. Then allocate a numerical score for each tick, aggregate the scores and divide the total by 12 (the number of key focus areas) to produce an overall average. Round the average up or down to identify your organisation’s overall indicative roadmap phase.

The pages which follow provide the templates to be completed for steps 1 and 2.

Stakeholder engagement

A stakeholder is an individual or group who or which has an interest in, or an ability to influence, a given gender equality outcome.

Internally, all employees (and at different levels) have a role in gender equality; externally, stakeholders could include (but are not limited to) customers or clients, communities, shareholders, trade unions, professional or industry bodies, regulators and government.

Different stakeholders have varying needs and expectations regarding gender equality; engaging and building support with each (individual or group, male and female) requires regular, two-way interaction to identify and respond to these.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	No appreciation of the many stakeholders in gender equality: it is seen mainly as a working mothers' issue and women's responsibility	
1 Compliant	Government and/or regulators are now seen as additional stakeholders because of their role in gender equality outcomes	
2 Programmatic	Individual stakeholders beyond working mothers are engaged but only to develop and execute specific initiatives or programs	
3 Strategic	A full range of gender equality stakeholders (male and female, internal and external) is identified during strategy development.	
4 Integrated	Key stakeholders (individuals and groups) are engaged in the gender equality agenda using a planned, proactive approach.	
5 Sustainable	Stakeholder engagement in gender equality issues forms part of normal day-to-day workplace and business interactions.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Begin to develop a 'map' of gender equality stakeholders (groups and individuals).
- ➔ Begin engaging with individuals and groups of stakeholders on the topic of gender equality. Refer to positive external developments involving clients, competitors and industry group.
- ➔ Begin awareness-raising through internal communications on gender equality such as internal story-telling and celebrating business successes with a gender-related dimension or link.
- ➔ Develop a strategic stakeholder communication and engagement plan that identifies the needs and expectations of individuals and groups and progressively implement the plan.
- ➔ Deploy a range of communications and engagement strategies (e.g. third party influencing) and ask supportive, credible leaders to influence their peers. Also involve customers and key stakeholders.
- ➔ Embed gender equality messaging into regular, routine business communications from leaders, highlight role-models and position the organisation as an industry leader and shaper.

Strategy and business case

A coherent gender equality and diversity strategy is the basis for:

- ➔ targeting effort and resources towards clear gender equality objectives (immediate and longer term)
- ➔ linking gender equality objectives to business strategy, plans and goals
- ➔ communicating strategic intent regarding gender equality to stakeholders
- ➔ mobilising and sustaining commitment to a common gender equality agenda
- ➔ ensuring synergies and economies of scale are exploited through consistent and concerted action.

A business case – specific to your organisation and supported by reliable data – is a key foundation for the strategy. An approach reliant on individual or organisational values is unlikely to be sufficient in a commercial context.

Clarity about how gender strategy supports business strategy is key to reaching the ‘sustainable’ phase; these two strategies are likely to be fully merged rather than separate agendas or documents.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	No gender equality strategy and no recognition of a need for or benefit from one (because no case has been investigated or made).	
1 Compliant	The value of a gender strategy and supporting business case is not recognised because they are not required to be compliant.	
2 Programmatic	A business rationale may be prepared for discrete initiatives or programs but no overall gender strategy links them together.	
3 Strategic	The value of a gender strategy based on a credible business case has been recognised and developed.	
4 Integrated	A fully transparent gender strategy is used to guide all future gender equality investment and activity, and assess outcomes.	
5 Sustainable	Gender equality strategic objectives (if required) are embedded into business strategy, workplace culture and behaviours.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation’s practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Gather data which helps start a conversation about gender equality (e.g. market, customer or competitor practices) and use or create opportunities to share this with key stakeholders.
- ➔ Collate, analyse and (where possible) distribute available internal data to highlight issues, costs and risks that may arise from gender inequality (e.g. female turnover rates).
- ➔ Seek feedback and perspectives on gender equality, diversity and inclusion in your organisation from a range of credible female and male employees and address areas where you need more data / insight.
- ➔ Socialise and test a draft business case and gender equality strategy with a representative range of leaders and other stakeholders; identify resistance points and adapt the proposition.
- ➔ Keep the gender business case and strategy alive and use them as key references to assess (and communicate) progress and successes, and re-emphasise linkage to business strategy.
- ➔ Embed gender equality principles and values into your organisation’s future vision, business strategies and culture statements so that a separate gender strategy is not needed.

Leadership accountability

Visible leadership commitment to gender equality is a critical success factor. Unless gender equality is seen as an important business issue to leaders, it is unlikely to be seen as important to others in the organisation and leadership hierarchy, particularly middle managers.

This commitment needs to be communicated regularly to employees and other stakeholder groups as part of the broader business messaging. Communication includes what leaders say and do, as well as what they value and reward, and the expectations they set of others. To translate verbal commitment into meaningful action, leaders need to hold themselves and others accountable for measurable progress and tangible outcomes with respect to gender equality.

There are a number of formal mechanisms that can help demonstrate and operationalise leadership commitment; these include gender targets, business scorecards, individual key performance indicators (KPIs) or objectives. The more meaningful consequences these mechanisms have (such as reward outcomes for leaders and their teams), the more impact they are likely to have (e.g. driving action and appropriate behaviours).

Establishing an effective governance structure at the executive level to oversee diversity progress is also a prerequisite for success. The executive team, a sub-group of it, or a specific council or forum can provide the necessary oversight. Whatever model is used, visible business ownership, leadership and oversight of the gender equality strategy is critical.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	No-one is accountable for gender equality and no-one sees a need for such accountability.	
1 Compliant	Support functions such as human resources are seen as accountable for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.	
2 Programmatic	Individual managers or leaders take, or are given, accountability for discrete gender equality projects or initiatives.	
3 Strategic	Senior leadership team recognises the need for gender equality action and actively communicates its role in driving progress against clear metrics.	
4 Integrated	Formal accountability for gender equality progress and outcomes has been defined and cascaded through all management levels.	
5 Sustainable	Maintaining gender equality is seen as everyone's responsibility but leaders and managers are routinely accountable, evaluated and rewarded.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Gather articles / examples of visible leadership on gender equality issues, plus best practice research / guidance from advocacy bodies; share these with leaders.
- ➔ Gather and share internal data that demonstrates gender inequality and its impact. This will enable gender equality to be positioned as a business issue requiring leadership focus.
- ➔ Challenge, advise, coach and support individual leaders to sponsor, champion or lead a gender equality initiative. Recognise their contribution and communicate their successes.
- ➔ Establish a formal body (led by credible, influential leaders of both genders) to take accountability for the execution of gender equality strategy and communicate its role and membership.
- ➔ Develop, pilot and implement a gender equality diagnostic for the organisation and sub-units. Follow-up with KPIs for leaders and managers, i.e. link remuneration to gender equality outcomes.
- ➔ Position maintenance of gender equality, diversity and inclusion as a business objective that is measured, managed and rewarded as is any other business imperative.

Measurement and reporting

Robust reporting of key metrics is a core business discipline for understanding performance, reporting of gender equality and diversity data should be no different.

Data can take many forms, and it will usually be a HR / diversity practitioner's responsibility to identify which data will be most relevant and useful. Importantly, data can help drive the gender equality agenda by credibly demonstrating to stakeholders that there is an issue to be addressed or a risk to be managed, which will create a business benefit.

Business stakeholders are likely to have work styles and preferences which are logic-driven, analytical and data-rational and are likely to respond positively to quantitative data (metrics). However, qualitative data (e.g. individual employee feedback or engagement survey responses) will provide valuable reinforcement, context and insight into human impact.

Reporting will highlight whether or not interventions are delivering the expected results and return on investment (and, if not, which areas require corrective action or improvement). Regular progress reporting is therefore an important means of building and maintaining stakeholder support.

All of the data collated and analysed for the WGEA annual reporting and EOCGE submissions is likely to be relevant. However, as these are annual snapshots, organisations should consider quarterly reporting to executive stakeholders for relevant metrics, plus supplementary data and trend analysis.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	No data-gathering or reporting related to gender equality or diversity occurs because no value is attached to these.	
1 Compliant	Gender data-gathering and reporting only to meet compliance obligations; ownership rests with one or more support functions.	
2 Programmatic	Gender data-gathering and reporting is limited to specific issues and needs when they arise; no defined leadership oversight.	
3 Strategic	Proactive data-gathering and reporting informs gender strategy design and implementation, of which there is oversight.	
4 Integrated	Gender equality / diversity metrics form part of routine management information which informs leadership action planning.	
5 Sustainable	Key business and people performance metrics are analysed and reported by gender as standard practice and implications routinely assessed.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Proactively begin the collation of gender data where it is already available, or initiate analysis of existing business and/or people reporting from a gender perspective.
- ➔ Identify and/or create opportunities to share compliance-related data (e.g. WGEA workforce profile) with a broader stakeholder audience and add impact by analysing the data and its implications.
- ➔ Create the mechanisms and databases to capture and store fragmented gender data, so it can be opportunistically exploited in future and begin identifying and addressing 'hot spots'.
- ➔ Develop a gender diversity 'dashboard' which succinctly captures key metrics for stakeholders; seek or create regular opportunities to report / present the dashboard to leaders.
- ➔ Research and understand existing business reporting mechanisms and explore how gender data could be integrated into these with report owners to add value for report users.
- ➔ Continue to identify or create opportunities to enhance gender reporting and strengthen its linkage between business decisions and outcomes; analyse and provide insights to business leaders.

Policies and processes

Progress towards sustainable gender equality, diversity and inclusion requires best practice to be integrated into the design and operation of key policies and processes.

If policies and processes are not audited and optimised, their outcomes are unlikely to be gender-equitable and barriers which impact women disproportionately relative to men will continue to create gender inequality.

Business processes include allocation of work, projects and customers /clients, procurement, marketing, problem-solving and decision-making. People processes encompass the organisation’s approach to the management of employees throughout their tenure.

Policy and process design can help address potential inequities in decision-making – such as by reducing the risk of conscious or unconscious gender bias – while process or procedural safeguards such as diverse decision-making, review groups and robust decision-making criteria will also help address these potential inequities.

Polices and processes should be reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect changes in the external environment, such as legislative changes.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	Gender inequalities arising from lack of policies / processes or the design and operation of existing ones are unrecognised.	
1 Compliant	Policies and processes (or elements) relating to gender equality only exist where they are required by law or regulation.	
2 Programmatic	Some policies and processes relating to gender equality may have been developed but only on an ‘as needed’ basis.	
3 Strategic	Specific gender equality policies and processes are introduced proactively to support gender strategy and objectives.	
4 Integrated	Policies and processes impacting gender equality are reviewed and refined holistically to ensure coherence and synergy.	
5 Sustainable	Gender equality objectives are fully embedded within business and people policies and processes rather than ‘standing alone’.	



Complete the self assesment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation’s practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Research industry and/or national best practice policy provisions and conduct gap analysis with own organisation, to highlight any inconsistencies with good practice; share findings and assessment of risks and costs created with key leaders.
- ➔ Consult advocacy or industry bodies on appropriate gender policies or processes and/or adapt examples from comparable peer organisations which demonstrate leading gender practice.
- ➔ Gather employee feedback from a range of sources (e.g. in person, focus groups, exit interviews, surveys) to identify gaps in policies and processes or opportunities to improve them.
- ➔ Align ongoing policy and process development with strategic gender objectives; invite employee resource groups / networks to advise on policy needs and test / validate new processes.
- ➔ Develop mechanisms to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of polices and processes from a gender perspective, through quantitative and qualitative data.
- ➔ Continue monitoring the impact and effectiveness of policies and processes from a gender perspective so they reflect changes in the organisation and its operating environment.

Supply chain

Leading organisations in gender equality recognise the need to ensure their procurement principles, practices, and overall supply chain management are consistent with, and actively support, its gender equality objectives. This includes ensuring that potential or existing suppliers or partners demonstrate commitment to, and action on, gender equality.

Leveraging commercial influence within a supply chain (both up and downstream – i.e. as a provider *and* a buyer of goods and services) can help drive industry and national progress towards gender equality more quickly as it requires organisations to play a leadership role within their sphere of influence. Increasingly, international benchmarks for equitable supply chain practices are being established, such as within the United Nations Global Compact.

There are strong reputational and brand benefits from adopting supply chain practices which promote gender equality. Research suggests that supplier diversity action impacts employee satisfaction with overall organisation equality efforts.

Best practice includes consideration of gender equality within processes for initiating relationships with suppliers or customers and regularly reviewing these for ‘fit’ with the organisation’s gender strategy.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	The relevance of procurement / supply chain policies and practices in relation to gender equality outcomes is not recognised.	
1 Compliant	Australian laws and regulations do not require procurement / supply chain policies and practices to promote gender equality, so no compliance-driven activity occurs.	
2 Programmatic	Promotion of gender equality through procurement / supply chain practices is limited to specific vendor types (e.g. recruiters) and ad hoc tender responses.	
3 Strategic	Organisation-wide procurement / supply chain policies and practices in relation to gender equality are mandated and communicated.	
4 Integrated	Procurement / supply chain systems and related business processes are adapted to support gender equitable policies and outcomes are monitored.	
5 Sustainable	Using supply chain influence to promote gender equality is an expected and intrinsic part of all business practices and aligns to organisation culture / values.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation’s practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Develop a set of procurement principles and terminology which promotes gender equality and integrate these into policies and practices (e.g. tendering processes and documentation).
- ➔ Communicate (internally and externally – e.g. through annual and/or sustainability reports) the organisation’s commitment to promoting gender equality through its supply chain management and procurement practices.
- ➔ Brief existing and potential suppliers on the changes to procurement policies and practices, and educate them about the value of gender equality and the business benefit this provides.
- ➔ Support existing and potential suppliers (as appropriate) to achieve the necessary gender equality standards within new procurement policies and practices.
- ➔ Review and monitor the way in which the organisation and its suppliers’ advertising and marketing practices portray women; challenge and change these where appropriate.
- ➔ Conduct supplier audits to check consistency with gender equality policies and strategy, brand values, and organisational culture; identify anomalies and develop actions to address each one.

Gender composition

Building gender-balanced teams at every level of the organisation improves engagement, retention and performance. Gender balance at leadership, executive and board levels is particularly important, because it improves the quality of strategic decision-making and the development of solutions.

Gender diverse teams are more innovative, because they draw on greater diversity of thinking and a range of cognitive approaches.

Organisations need to track and influence the inflows and outflows of female talent at each organisational level to understand the dynamics of gender composition; it is not a static issue. Modelling of these dynamics provides the basis for the design and implementation of stretching but achievable gender targets. Targets help to drive and accelerate changes in gender composition and provide a basis for allocating and cascading leadership accountability.

Research suggests that a minority gender needs to represent at least one third of a team or group's overall composition before a 'tipping point' is reached and the minority can influence the group's decision-making on a sustainable basis.

Building a robust, gender-diverse talent pipeline, especially to leadership levels, is key to sustainable gender equality. Best practice includes the integration of gender equality principles into strategic workforce planning.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	The organisation and its leaders / managers are 'blind' to the gender composition of teams, levels and the overall workforce.	
1 Compliant	The gender composition of the workforce and segments within it are only monitored and reported to the extent required by law.	
2 Programmatic	Selective monitoring of gender for high-need or high-profile groups / segments; data utilisation is reactive and tactical.	
3 Strategic	Team and overall workforce gender composition is monitored as are business and people process outcomes by gender.	
4 Integrated	Organisation-wide gender balance is a business objective which is supported by proactive monitoring and action-planning.	
5 Sustainable	All business and people decisions reflect the ongoing objective of sustained workplace gender balance and equality.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Raise consciousness of gender composition differences between teams through conversations, in meetings, and leadership forums etc. and generate debate on causes and effects.
- ➔ Utilise the compliance-driven gender composition data by proactively analysing their implications and reporting these to potential stakeholders, particularly leadership teams.
- ➔ Extend gender composition data-gathering for selected populations to all teams, units and levels and create frameworks for regular gender reporting to leaders.
- ➔ Establish action planning to address gender gaps and monitor impact and track inflows and outflows of talent by gender and plug leaks.
- ➔ Monitor work / project / customer allocation by gender and evaluate business outcomes from a gender perspective to link workforce gender representation to customer and other external metrics.
- ➔ Capture data to demonstrate the benefits arising from gender balance, equality and inclusion and share these with external stakeholders to promote similar commitment and action.

Gender pay equity

Gender pay equity is not only an issue of fairness, it is a key driver of gender equality and diversity overall because it impacts an organisation's ability to attract, engage and retain talented women. Pay equity operates at two levels: organisational and in relation to comparable roles and/or job families ('like-for-like' comparisons).

Overall, pay equity within an organisation requires gender-equitable opportunity for career progression (i.e. to the most senior, and usually higher paid, roles), which, in turn, requires the removal of barriers to progression.

Gender pay equity between comparable roles requires bias-free decision-making (starting with performance reviews and talent management decisions). Transparency in relation to pay equity decision-making is an important component of best practice.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	Gender pay equity is not recognised as a relevant business or people issue and no data is available or sought.	
1 Compliant	Gender pay equity data-gathering, analysis and reporting is conducted to the extent required by law and not acted upon.	
2 Programmatic	Gender pay equity data-gathering, analysis and action takes place in response to specific issues if, and when, they emerge.	
3 Strategic	Gender pay equity is understood as a driver of overall equality and approaches are developed to regularly capture and act on data.	
4 Integrated	A comprehensive, integrated and proactive approach exists to address gender inequities in performance and pay practices.	
5 Sustainable	Pay policy design and practice is transparent and bias-free and gender-equitable reward is a business and cultural norm.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Gather data, case studies and examples of good or best gender pay equity practice in your industry and/or nationally and use this to generate and inform debate on the issues.
- ➔ Identify or create opportunities to report gender pay equity data to leaders and other stakeholders and provide analysis and commentary on risk implications (e.g. female talent retention).
- ➔ Develop a more holistic approach to gender pay equity analysis and reporting across all levels, job families and key roles and where possible, integrate pay equity data into broader people metrics.
- ➔ Gender pay equity is an explicit, transparent objective of remuneration and equality / diversity strategy; it is supported by a specific business rationale; reporting is conducted annually.
- ➔ Pay equity reporting includes year-on-year trend data for all key populations and is used as a basis for corrective action where macro and micro-inequities are identified.
- ➔ Gender pay equity data is regarded as routine management information and corrective action is a business process which continues until stable, consistent gender pay equity is sustained.

Flexibility

Business benefits for organisations which embrace and provide equitable access to flexibility include talent attraction and retention, engagement, productivity and agility, which translate into stronger performance.

Research and experience also indicate that work and career flexibility are drivers and enablers of equality, diversity and inclusion. Women are disproportionately impacted by a lack of family-friendly policies and practices because they comprise the majority of primary carers in the Australian workforce and therefore bear the double burden of managing work and family demands concurrently.

Policies do not necessarily translate into practice. Often, barriers to increased flexibility reflect negative attitudes of employees (who fear stigma) and managers (who fear losing control). To make progress, organisations need to challenge assumptions, shift attitudes and build a flexible workplace culture.

Flexibility solutions need to be team-based, not just individualised. Progress also requires men (especially male leaders) to embrace, utilise and role-model flexibility in all its forms. Only then will flexibility be normalised for employees of either gender or any background.

The most flexible organisations do not make (or allow managers to make) value judgements about why flexibility is requested. This is irrelevant when performance is measured by outputs and results, not by the input of visible time spent at a particular time in a particular place.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	No recognition of how effective flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices can promote gender equality and diversity.	
1 Compliant	Generic flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices only exist to the extent they are required by legislation or regulation.	
2 Programmatic	Flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices are provided to meet the needs of specific groups or individuals.	
3 Strategic	Flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices are designed and accessible to benefit all employees; the flexibility business case is established.	
4 Integrated	Flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices are leveraged as a business enabler; no value judgements are made about flexibility needs.	
5 Sustainable	Flexible, family-friendly working is expected, normalised and equitably accessible; it is integral to all business and people practices (e.g. workforce planning).	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Identify flexible and/or family-friendly work practices that have occurred naturally in the organisation; analyse and record success factors and share positive stories opportunistically.
- ➔ Use compliance-driven flexible / family-friendly work practices as a foundation for more; encourage managers and employees to try more or different options, and actively promote successes.
- ➔ Ensure flexibility policies are inclusive and accessible to all employees – without bias or value judgements; ensure family-friendly policies do not disadvantage some staff.
- ➔ Build and promote 'whole team' approaches to flexibility and family-friendliness rather than ad hoc individual ones; train, coach and support team leaders to manage flexible teams.
- ➔ Develop mechanisms to track occurrence of flexible and family-friendly work practices and target areas of need; communicate successes that have been achieved by teams working flexibly.
- ➔ Remain open to new ways of working as technology and other factors create change; strengthen your organisation's brand by helping stakeholders (e.g. customers) achieve progress.

Talent pipeline

Building a robust pipeline to leadership that is sustainably gender diverse involves identifying, attracting, developing, mobilising, fully utilising and retaining female and male talent equally at all levels. The pipeline begins when talented people join an organisation (including graduate recruitment) to the point where high-potential employees become the organisation's leaders.

Capitalising on both female and male talent is critical, however, research and organisational learning indicates that, in many workplaces, there are structural and cultural barriers to equitable career progression for women and, as a result, female talent often 'leaks' from the pipeline at a higher rate than for men.

Capitalising on female talent is about:

- creating a 'level playing field' that enables women and men to equally realise their full potential and maximise their contribution to organisational success
- eliminating barriers specific or disproportionate to women.

Unconscious gender bias is an intangible but critical barrier to address. For example, it is manifested in leaders and managers hiring, developing, sponsoring and promoting 'in their own image'. Sometimes, this bias is institutionalised in capability frameworks which place higher value on male-typical behaviours. Other barriers include exclusive cultures and male networks, and a lack of appropriate mentors, sponsors and role-models.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	The organisation and its leaders are unable and/or unwilling to recognise the playing field is not level for women.	
1 Compliant	Recruitment / talent processes are compliance-driven; the value of enabling / empowering female talent remains unrealised.	
2 Programmatic	Investment in female talent focuses on developing capabilities necessary to survive / succeed in a male-centric workplace.	
3 Strategic	Female talent investment is linked to gender strategy, and leverages the different capabilities of both women and men.	
4 Integrated	Talent definition / identification, leadership capability models, and access to development are gender-equitable and bias-free.	
5 Sustainable	Access to development is gender-equitable for employees at all levels; talent is fully leveraged, irrespective of gender.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- Start collecting data – qualitative and quantitative – on how female and male talent is leveraged: recruitment, development, promotion. Analyse and record differences for future use.
- Use the data that indicates female and male talent has a different experience to highlight the potential costs and risks this creates for the organisation, as well as its inherent inequality.
- Use research indicating gender diverse teams outperform uniform teams to build the case for valuing and developing the complementary strengths of women and men equally.
- Further analyse data to identify the underlying causes of gender-based inequality in career opportunities and review talent processes / frameworks (e.g. capability models) for gender bias.
- Monitor and manage participation in development activity by gender to ensure equality and balance; capitalise on female and male examples of career success and leadership role-models.
- Promote the benefits of fully utilising female and male talent externally; provide industry leadership and support to other organisations who aspire to achieve the same outcome.

Leader and manager capability

Achieving gender equality through the development of gender-diverse, inclusive, flexible teams and organisations requires knowledge, skill and supportive attitudes amongst all employees, particularly managers and leaders.

Individuals will possess these capabilities to differing degrees and some will require support from the organisation to gain the requisite level of competence and confidence.

Equitable opportunity for development of other key capabilities for all employees, irrespective of individual difference (e.g. gender), is a key foundation of equitable career advancement and diverse leadership teams.

Gender-related development interventions and activities are often most effective when they are integrated into existing or future management and leadership development programs. In this way, gender equality, diversity and inclusion are positioned as part of broader leadership and management agendas, maximising participant buy-in and content synergies.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	The capabilities required to build and maintain gender equality in teams and the organisation are not recognised as relevant.	
1 Compliant	Capability-building is limited to raising awareness of equality legislation compliance responsibilities for all employees.	
2 Programmatic	Individual development addresses specific gender equality needs as they arise and focuses on knowledge rather than skills.	
3 Strategic	Capabilities required to build and maintain gender equitable teams are recognised, and development resources are available.	
4 Integrated	Developing capability to build gender equitable teams and workplaces forms part of broader leadership development.	
5 Sustainable	Gender equality capability (individual / organisational) embeds through inclusive role-modelling, coaching and teamwork.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Gender equality capability-building will start with awareness-raising; why it matters and how it contributes to organisational success; develop a communication plan to support this.
- ➔ Developing capability (individual and organisational) requires motivation to learn and change; promote gender equality benefits beyond compliance and that everyone has a role in it.
- ➔ Use gender equality initiatives and activity as a vehicle for increasing understanding of gender equality issues and support for addressing them; engage and educate participants.
- ➔ As the business case for gender equality becomes better understood and supported, assess and address development needs of managers and leaders to take responsibility and act.
- ➔ Adopt a more structured approach to building gender equality capability by integrating development activity into existing and new learning programs and modules, particularly for leadership.
- ➔ Maintain a suite of learning methodologies and content to meet ongoing gender equality development needs of different stakeholders, as they move or progress internally and externally.

Gender inclusive culture

Organisation culture can be described as the set of prevailing attitudes and values which are recognised and shared by all members of an organisation. These attitudes and values determine the way business is conducted and the way work is delivered, including whether these are gender-equitable or not.

Some organisations explicitly define and communicate values, principles, codes and behaviours that are valued and expected in their particular workplace.

To achieve sustainable gender equality, an organisation's culture will need to foster appropriate attitudes, values and behaviours which support and are congruent with gender strategy objectives; sometimes, this will require cultural change.

Leaders, through their behaviours and actions (including the decisions they make), shape culture more than any other single factor. To foster a culture of gender equality, leaders' behaviours need to be inclusive, and their decisions equitable.

Cultural change can be measured and reported, such as through the use of benchmark questions around gender equality, diversity, inclusion and flexibility in employee engagement or 'pulse' surveys.

Self assessment

Roadmap phase	Signposts	Your org
0 Avoiding	Gender-specific barriers are unrecognised and unaddressed; there is no awareness of a need to shift culture.	
1 Compliant	Cultural norms, attitudes and behaviours regarding gender equality are defined only by anti-discrimination / equal employment opportunity legislation.	
2 Programmatic	Disconnected initiatives attempt to influence gender-related aspects of culture and behaviour but they lack impact.	
3 Strategic	Gender equality and the supporting values and behaviours form part of a defined and communicated aspirational culture	
4 Integrated	Desired cultural norms, values and behaviours are actively influenced by integration into leadership and capability models.	
5 Sustainable	A gender equitable and inclusive culture is intuitive to all employees and defines how all business and work is conducted.	



Complete the self assessment by ticking the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices. Once you have done that, consider where to next?

- ➔ Position gender equality progress as a function of culture change, not just policies, processes and programs; it requires appropriate attitudes and values, driven by visible leadership.
- ➔ Communicate with stakeholders to increase understanding that legislative compliance is the lowest standard and gender equality best practice is the highest; identify and start addressing the gaps.
- ➔ Identify opportunities to integrate gender equality, diversity and inclusion action into broader organisation culture change and leadership development activity when this occurs.
- ➔ Ensure that gender equality / inclusion and culture change messaging is consistent, synchronised and mutually supportive; assist leaders to communicate and promote these effectively.
- ➔ Build the capability to measure and monitor gender equality / inclusion progress and culture change through qualitative data-gathering mechanisms e.g. employee feedback and surveys.
- ➔ Leverage the organisation's cultural strength by influencing external stakeholders to follow its example; support customers, partners, community groups. to make similar progress.

Overall assessment

Below is a template and an example of the second and final step in the assessment process, where the individual scores against each key focus areas is consolidated in one place.

This presents a comprehensive overview of how your organisation is performing in the areas critical to success for gender equality progress and outcomes, as judged by key stakeholders. It also enables organisations to determine an aggregated view of where they are currently positioned on the gender equality roadmap.

Review the hypothetical example first and then complete the blank template underneath for your own organisation. This toolkit can be forwarded to other individual stakeholders or groups, in order to obtain a broader (and more inclusive) picture of how your organisation's gender equality performance is assessed.

If this scoring methodology is considered helpful and effective by user organisations, the WGEA will consider developing a web-based diagnostic, which will make the process easy to communicate, use and distribute within your organisation.

Once you have reviewed the scoring methodology in Step 2, apply it to your own organisation, using the template below:

- ➔ Transfer your individual scores for each focus area on the template by placing a tick in the relevant box.
- ➔ Calculate the sub-totals (i.e. according to how many ticks there are for each column/roadmap phase).
- ➔ Add the subtotals together then divide this figure by 12 (the number of focus and result areas).
- ➔ Round this figure up (.5 or more) or down (less than .5) to produce a whole number.
- ➔ This number represents the overall indicative roadmap phase for the organisation.

Table 5: Diagnostic output – example

Key focus area	Gender equality roadmap phase					
	0 Avoiding (0 points)	1 Compliant (1 point)	2 Programmatic (2 points)	3 Strategic (3 points)	4 Integrated (4 points)	5 Sustainable (5 points)
Stakeholder engagement		✓				
Strategy and business case		✓				
Leadership accountability				✓		
Measurement and reporting			✓			
Policies and processes		✓				
Supply chain	✓					
Gender composition			✓			
Gender pay equity		✓				
Flexibility	✓					
Talent pipeline		✓				
Manager and leader capability			✓			
Gender inclusive culture		✓				
Points sub-totals	0 (2x0)	6 (6x1)	6 (3x2)	3 (1x3)		
Total score	15 (Sum of sub-totals)					
Overall indicative roadmap phase	1 (15/12 = 1.25 then rounded [down])					

Table 6: Diagnostic output - template

Key focus area	Gender equality roadmap phase					
	0 Avoiding (0 points)	1 Compliant (1 point)	2 Programmatic (2 points)	3 Strategic (3 points)	4 Integrated (4 points)	5 Sustainable (5 points)
Stakeholder engagement						
Strategy and business case						
Leadership accountability						
Measurement and reporting						
Policies and processes						
Supply chain						
Gender composition						
Gender pay equity						
Flexibility						
Talent pipeline						
Manager and leader capability						
Gender inclusive culture						
Points sub-totals						
Total score						
Overall indicative roadmap phase						



Section 5

Planning
your journey

Section 5

Planning your journey

We are now at step 2 of the change process ('design').

Questions to ask:

"Where do we want to be (and why)?"

"What is the best route to get there?"

Creating or refining your strategy

The process for developing a strategy, whether you are doing this for the first time or improving what is already in place, need not be complex. The key is to ensure that all the relevant data has been gathered and considered, in order to define your gender equality objectives.

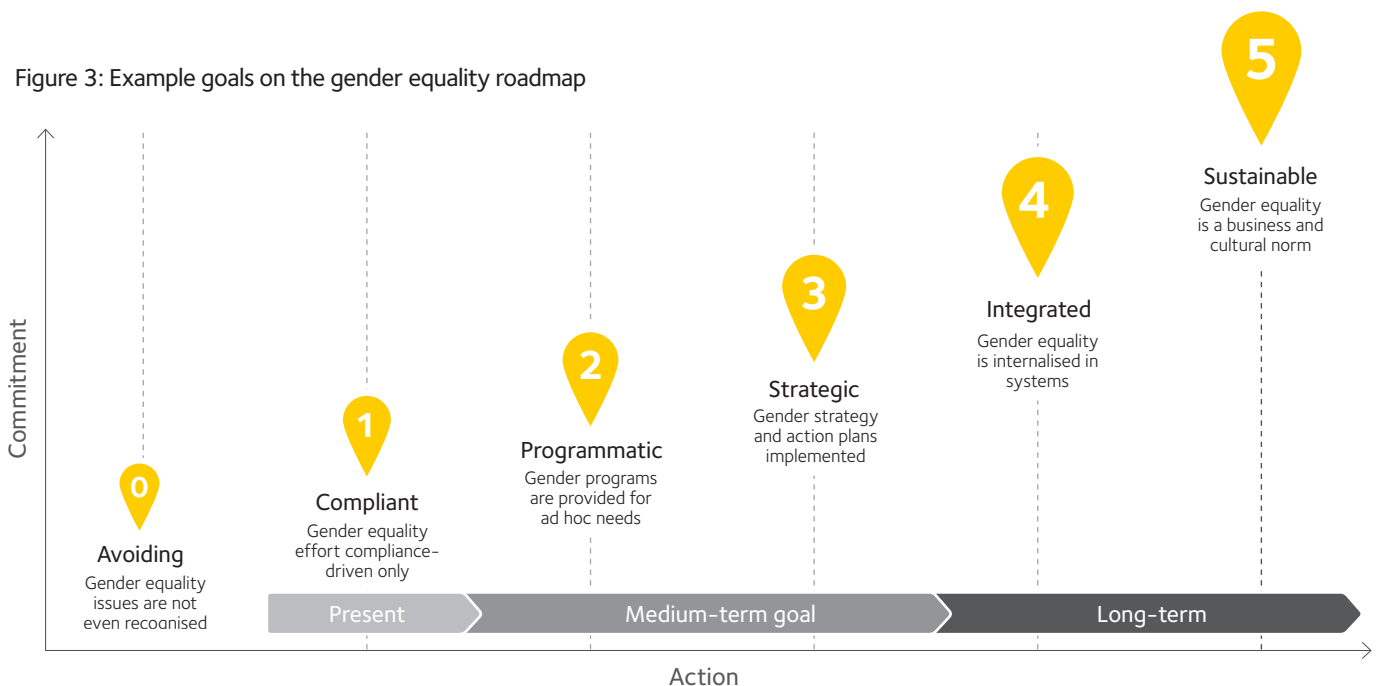
The gender equality roadmap and diagnostic tool are intended as the essential framework that will enable organisations to develop and maintain a gender strategy which is relevant, coherent, succinct and adds value (i.e. it will increase impact and the rate of change). Of course, as we have indicated earlier in the toolkit, there are also a number of additional, complementary data sources (internal and external – e.g. WGEA benchmark reports) to help inform decision-making.

The diagnostic process should have identified areas where the organisation is performing more and less effectively. Use this information to prioritise where you wish to concentrate effort and investment.

Building a vision

In developing your workplace gender equality strategy, it is important from the outset to consider your organisation's overall vision and strategy to ensure alignment. When setting broader gender equality goals, it is recommended you revisit the gender equality roadmap and consider how your organisation wishes to move along the roadmap and the appropriate time frame.

Figure 3: Example goals on the gender equality roadmap



* Adapted from a model developed and shared by Diversity Partners Pty Ltd © 2013

For example, in Figure 3 (previous page), an organisation may set the goal of moving from a compliance phase to strategic in the medium term. This may also include goals of improving performance against gender equality indicators or becoming an EOCGE citation holder. Over the long term the organisation may set the goal of reaching the sustainable phase.

Other goals an organisation may seek to achieve include:

- ➔ becoming an EOCGE citation holder
- ➔ standing out and leading the industry in gender equality
- ➔ further developing a unique and gender-equitable employee value proposition
- ➔ specific cost reductions as a result of improvements to gender equality (e.g. reduced cost of turnover).

The vision and goals that are set will influence the strategies and actions that are developed.

Setting specific goals and priorities


One of the most useful features of the diagnostic framework set out in section 4 is identifying priorities for action. Inevitably, organisations will demonstrate strength against some key focus areas more than others and weaker scores suggest areas for prioritisation.


It may be useful to develop a 'heat map' which indicates how your organisation is performing (at a high level) against the key focus areas. This provides an instant 'snapshot' of performance and a guide to prioritisation through the use of colour, as shown in Figure 4. In this case, as the organisation has gained leadership commitment and understands the business case, it is likely they are in the programmatic phase.


Figure 4: Example heat map



Key:

-  shows where your organisation is performing well against the relevant lever – action: monitor, continue and exploit this strength

-  shows where your organisation is performing adequately against the relevant lever but additional focus and effort is required – action: review, plan and implement improvements

-  shows where your organisation is presented with a significant opportunity to make progress – action: investigate and develop an action plan to address this issue at the earliest priority

Using a heat map helps to identify, socialise and then communicate the areas of greatest priority and assists in developing a strategy that is tailored and specific to your organisation. For each of the key focus areas, it is recommended that you set specific goals. Various tools are available to assist you in doing this. For example, the WGEA target-setting toolkit can assist in setting gender composition targets, and the guide to pay equity toolkit can assist in setting pay equity goals.

To develop a heatmap for your organisation, you should first assess your organisation against each of the 12 key focus areas using the diagnostic tool and process. Develop a way of indicating priority (see Figure 4) with a colour or symbol.

When you have designated a colour to each focus area box, take a moment to look at the overall picture and understand the big picture. What is the predominant colour and how is this distributed across the focus areas? Are the gaps aspects of the infrastructure for gender equality (e.g. strategy and business case, measurement and reporting or policies and processes) or are they around aspects of how the infrastructure is leveraged (such as gender composition or the talent pipeline).

Key focus areas marked orange are the obvious areas for immediate focus. Where a number of key focus areas have been designated yellow, your organisation (through its leaders) may need to determine which of these to prioritise first. Key focus areas assessed as light yellow should not be ignored; rather, they should be monitored on an ongoing basis so that opportunities to leverage or strengthen these practices can be taken when they arise.

From the process of building a heatmap and prioritising key focus areas, you should have gained a clear sense of your organisation's strengths and development areas across all the focus areas of gender equality strategy. These can now form the basis of your strategy and timeframes – short, medium and longer term objectives. Each of these will need to be supported by an action plan which provides the essential detail of how the objective will be achieved – roles and responsibilities, resources, risks, measures etc. Further guidance is provided below.

We also recommend reviewing your customised benchmark report to understand your relative performance for each key focus area and set goals that reflect the status of gender equality in your industry.

Human resource and/or diversity practitioners may need to proactively facilitate these kinds of decision-making discussions, and articulate the business benefits on offer. When considering potential gender objectives and where the most important priorities lie, it will be useful to consider where the organisation is currently positioned against your competitors and overall industry or sector, as well as comparisons against gender equality best practice using the diagnostic tool and heatmap process.



It is important to recognise that gender equality best practice is not a policy or process in its own right; it has to be an integral part of every core people process.

For example, gender pay equity is a key component of broader remuneration strategy and policy. It therefore follows that where a major people process is relatively immature, it will be difficult to achieve gender equality best practice until the process is strengthened. For instance, it will be more difficult to build a robust gender diverse talent pipeline if your organisation does not have a strategic approach to talent management as a whole.

This challenge is also an opportunity: if the organisation recognises the need and takes action to improve a core people process (e.g. talent), this can include integration of gender equality best practice at the same time (e.g. agreeing and communicating an organisation-wide definition of talent and high potential, which helps reduce the risk of unconscious gender bias).

Strategy development process

A practical process for developing a strategy is:

- ➔ assemble a small strategy development working group (which includes several diverse stakeholders)
- ➔ collate and analyse all necessary data
- ➔ review and agree on the implications of the data
- ➔ identify which of the key focus areas are priorities
- ➔ develop draft objective(s) for each of these areas.

Strategy framework

A strategy does not necessarily need to be a complex document. A simple, succinct and focused articulation of strategic direction is easier for leaders to communicate, for employees to understand, and for everyone to mobilise around.

When the objectives have been endorsed, the remainder of the strategy detail can be completed. Below is a simple structure for headings within a gender strategy, followed by examples of the essential information anticipated under each heading.

→ context

- organisation specific gender equality business case
- linkage to business strategy
- supporting data (quantitative and qualitative)
- assessment of current state – refer to roadmap / diagnostic outcomes and benchmark report
- statement of vision / values (if applicable)

→ key focus areas – as identified as priorities by the diagnostic process

- objective(s)
- action / response
- success factors / enablers
- risks / barriers
- outcomes / benefits
- measurement of impact / progress / return on investment (ROI)

[Repeat the above for each focus area that has been prioritised for inclusion]

→ timeframe – sequencing of actions for each objective (over next 2–3 years)

→ one-page strategy summary: for easy, effective communication

There are a number of ways in which a gender strategy can be presented. Structuring it around some or all of the key focus areas is a methodical and natural progression from the diagnosis process as shown below. Inclusion of the business case is highly desirable, because the strategy document, if appropriately communicated, is a means of building stakeholder engagement and support.

Figure 5: Strategy structure overview



At appendix B, we have set out an example of a strategic objective for each of the focus areas, together with important supporting information which provides an overview of how the objective will be achieved. This additional detail provides the basis for an action plan to be developed for each objective once the strategy has been socialised, validated, finalised and approved by the executive or senior leadership team.

The socialisation and consultation process should also involve representatives of other key stakeholder groups, such as a diversity council if one exists or a women's / gender network or resource group, to maximise the benefit of diverse thinking and to build support and engagement around the strategy. The review process will also ensure that time and effort is not wasted developing the detail of the gender strategy and its objectives, only to adjust or redefine these later.

We do not recommend that you attempt to tackle all key focus areas concurrently, as this could create execution risk and a possible loss of focus. One option is to sequence the strategy implementation over several years. In this case, a strategy framework might look like this:

- ➔ **Year 1:**
 - Key focus area 1 – objective:
 - Key focus area 2 – objective:
 - Key focus area 3 – objective:
- ➔ **Year 2:**
 - Key focus area 4 – objective:
 - Etc.

An alternative approach could be to structure the strategy around stakeholder groups. Examples to choose from could include:

- ➔ **employees**
 - gender pay equity objective
 - flexibility objective
 - gender inclusive culture objective.
- ➔ **customers**
 - gender composition objective
 - measurement and reporting objective
 - policies and processes objective.
- ➔ **community**
 - supply chain objective
 - stakeholder engagement objective.
- ➔ **all**
 - leadership accountability.

A slightly different alternative might be to structure your strategy and objectives around broader headline themes such as:

- workforce
- workplace
- marketplace

Figure 6: Strategy linkage and alignment



The suitability of these themes will depend on the nature of your organisation’s business or purpose. At appendix C, we have illustrated a number of ways of capturing and presenting a strategy on a page. Many organisations find it very helpful to condense their strategy, once finalised, into a summary version that can be easily understood at a high level, and supports a range of strategy communications to different stakeholders.

It is also valuable to be able to describe and explain how a gender equality strategy aligns to, and supports, people and business strategies for the organisation.



Section 6

Making the journey

Section 6

Making the journey

We are now at step 3 of the change process ('implementation').

Question to ask: "How can we start (or keep) moving?"

A coherent strategy facilitates stronger, faster gender equality progress and outcomes because it helps to ensure effort and investment are directed towards the right areas in the right order. The execution of the strategy requires a separate project or implementation plan for each objective.

However, not every objective will (or should) be tackled concurrently. A typical strategic timeframe will be three to five years; actions and initiatives will need to be carefully distributed over the relevant timeframe, to ensure cost-effective delivery of optimal outcomes.

Prioritisation and scheduling

The priority, sequencing and timing of initiatives should take account of:

- ➔ potential impact and likely return on investment
- ➔ level of stakeholder support
- ➔ timing of, and synergies with, other HR or change initiatives
- ➔ business loading and priorities
- ➔ complexity of work and implementation challenges / barriers
- ➔ availability of resources
- ➔ regulatory and other external drivers.

Implementation planning

Develop an implementation / project / action plan for each focus and result area, which details:

- ➔ work streams
- ➔ approaches and methodologies
- ➔ outcomes and deliverables
- ➔ roles and responsibilities
- ➔ resources required
- ➔ timeframes and milestones.

Communication planning

A communications plan should include:

- ➔ responsibility for communications
- ➔ target audiences
- ➔ audience needs / expectations
- ➔ key messages
- ➔ timeframes / scheduling / frequency
- ➔ media options.

Communication objectives

Communications to support the release or refinement of gender strategy should:

- ➔ **explain** – articulate the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of the gender strategy
- ➔ **educate** – equip stakeholders with the knowledge and confidence they need to articulate and promote the gender strategy
- ➔ **engage** – motivate and inspire stakeholders to actively contribute to the gender equality journey and convey a sense of ownership for successful outcomes at all levels

Communication messages need to be tailored to the specific needs and expectations of each stakeholder (individuals and groups).

Stakeholder/Audience	Key messages/benefits
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ role of directors in promoting gender equality at the board level ➔ ambassadorial role of board members in relation to gender equality ➔ need board to set expectations of executives to drive gender equality ➔ role-modelling gender-diverse recruitment / composition at board level ➔ reinforcement of business benefits from gender equality (particularly better decision-making and risk management) ➔ not just about meeting compliance (e.g. ASX) requirements ➔ many external stakeholders (including shareholders) in gender equality.
CEO/Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ need to demonstrate accountability for gender equality to board ➔ need to advocate business case for gender equality continuously ➔ need to drive gender strategy and own progress and outcomes ➔ need to cascade accountability for gender equality through direct reports ➔ gender equality aligns with stakeholder (e.g. customer) expectations ➔ need for executives to role-model gender inclusive leadership ➔ reinforcement of business benefits from gender equality (particularly improved engagement and performance).
Human resource and/or diversity practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ role is to facilitate (not own) gender solutions (architecture, project management, subject-matter expertise) ➔ also need to coach, influence and appropriately challenge leaders and managers ➔ need to act as change agents in the organisation / business ➔ need to be able to articulate and promote the business case for gender equality ➔ need to be absolute role-models of gender equality best practice and gender inclusive behaviour ➔ responsible for ensuring gender equality compliance obligations are met (as a 'hygiene factor') .
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ gender equality is a 'win-win' for employees and employers (the business) ➔ everyone has a role in creating and maintaining a gender-inclusive culture – through inclusive and collaborative behaviours ➔ constructive ideas and feedback on how the organisation can become more gender equitable and inclusive will be welcomed and taken seriously ➔ everyone should have the same opportunity to contribute, succeed, realise their potential, and be fairly rewarded, irrespective of gender or other differences.



Section 7

Travelling faster

Section 7

Travelling faster

We are now at step 4 of the change process ('review').

Question to ask: "How can we make better and faster progress?"

Reviewing your strategy and action plans

In effect, this stage flows back to the start of the change process ('analysis'), creating a cycle of continuous improvement.

Evaluation

A strategy should describe how and when evaluation will occur. Ongoing evaluation involves showing what has been achieved to date. This kind of evaluation can be undertaken at regular intervals as a form of progress audit.

The final evaluation involves assessing whether or not strategic objectives have been achieved, using whatever measures of organisational performance were set out in the strategy, and additional ones if appropriate (e.g. if technology has enabled better or more extensive data-gathering and reporting).

Ongoing evaluation

The strategy document should set out the process and frequency for monitoring organisational progress or performance in relation to each objective. Questions to ask at regular intervals include:

- ➔ How is the organisation progressing in relation to each of the objectives within the gender strategy?
- ➔ Is there sufficient data to reliably assess progress / measure outcomes?
- ➔ Where lack of progress or issues are identified, how can this information be used to address these issues?
- ➔ What activities or actions should be stopped / started / changed?
- ➔ Does the strategy or individual objectives need to be adjusted in light of experience to date, and what are the implications of this?

A primary method of assessing whether the execution of a gender strategy is producing the intended impact will be to monitor, measure and regularly report the outcomes of core people processes over time. Ideally, the mechanisms to track and report should be in place before the strategy implementation begins, to enable measurement of results before, during and after specific initiatives and interventions.

A range of relevant metrics, aligned to key focus areas, is set out at appendix A to support the measurement of strategy effectiveness.

A primary method of assessing whether the execution of a gender strategy is producing the intended impact will be to monitor, measure and regularly report the outcomes of core people processes over time.

Final evaluation

This occurs after the deadline for achievement for each objective within the strategy. Questions to ask include:

- ➔ Has the organisation achieved the respective objective(s) within the gender strategy?
- ➔ If not, why not – and what is the learning from each success, partial success or failure?
- ➔ How should the next gender strategy be adapted to exploit the previous learning, and to maximise the chances of success?

It may also be helpful to cross-reference gender strategy outcomes with performance in:

- ➔ compliance reporting (GELs and minimum standards)
- ➔ EOCGE submission
- ➔ benchmark report(s)

Another useful set of data may come from specific comparisons with other organisations or inputs from gender advocacy bodies.

Copyright and Disclaimer

This toolkit is shared openly with the intent of promoting progress towards workplace gender equality. Ownership of the intellectual property within this toolkit rests with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Any reproduction or dissemination of the toolkit, whether whole or in part, for commercial benefit is strictly prohibited.

The ideas and recommendations contained within this toolkit are used or adopted entirely at the discretion and own risk of employers. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency cannot accept any responsibility or liability for outcomes resulting from the use of this toolkit, either directly or indirectly.

Acknowledgements

The Agency would like to acknowledge and thank Neil Cockcroft for his involvement in the development of the gender equality strategy toolkit. The Agency would also like to acknowledge and thank Diversity Partners for the use of the gender equality roadmap which has been adapted as a core component in this toolkit.

Appendix A

Suggested metrics

➔ Stakeholder engagement

- employee engagement by gender (from engagement / culture / pulse surveys)
- customer gender composition and engagement (from customer / market surveys).

➔ Leadership accountability

- achievement against gender targets, business scorecards and individual KPIs.

➔ Strategy and business case

- employee / manager awareness of gender strategy and business case.

➔ Measurement and reporting

- achievement rates of post-reporting action items / plans.

➔ Policies and processes

- improvements in process outcomes from a gender equality / diversity / inclusion perspective (e.g. allocation of key project work / assignments or customer/client accounts by gender)
- redundancy / involuntary exits by gender
- frequency of policy / process audits.

➔ Supply chain

- gender of ownership / leadership of external suppliers / providers (by small / medium / large enterprises).

➔ Gender composition

- gender composition of board, executive, senior managers, managers, total workforce (by business units / support function / team / location)
- workforce composition by job level and job family.

➔ Gender pay equity

- gender pay gaps (like-for-like, by level and organisation wide) – for base salary and performance-related / discretionary reward.

➔ Flexibility

- utilisation of flexibility policy options by gender
- proportion of flexibility requests declined
- parental leave return rate
- parental leave retention rate (1 and 2 years post return to work).

➔ Talent pipeline

- gender of external (experienced) job candidates (long-list, short-list, interviewee, new hires)
- gender composition of graduate recruits
- gender composition of talent and promotion pools or leadership development participant groups
- outcomes from potential and succession readiness assessments by gender
- rates of progression and promotion by gender
- performance ratings by gender

➔ Leader and manager capability

- improvements in performance ratings against key capabilities (e.g. gender inclusive leadership behaviours) for managers and employees with gender-related responsibilities / accountabilities.

➔ Gender inclusive culture

- positive response rates and trends against benchmark inclusion question(s) in employee engagement survey
- incidence and resolution rates of discrimination / harassment complaints by gender.

Appendix B

Example objectives

Below are examples of possible gender equality strategic objectives for each key focus area, together with supporting information. The content of each example is intended to be indicative, not exhaustive.

Example – stakeholder engagement

Objective	Build engagement around gender equality amongst middle managers
Action / response	→ develop a 'roadshow' targeted at middle managers (for use in team meetings or stand-alone) which presents the specific business case for gender equality (in organisation / business unit / team) and provides a 'safe space' for feedback and discussion.
Success factors / enablers	→ visible commitment to gender equality from executive and senior leadership → business case for gender equality (specific to organisation) articulated and endorsed → current, reliable and compelling data (quantitative and qualitative) to underpin the business case → two-way interaction in roadshows (explain and listen).
Risks / barriers	→ low interest / attendance → resistance and negativity from minority of attendees derails / displaces message.
Outcomes / benefits	→ middle managers feel recognised and listened to → consultation is first step in support-building process → rich data gathered on issues and resistance points which can be factored into implementation and communications planning.
Measurement of impact / ROI	→ feedback / evaluation gathering at end of roadshow → test engagement / support levels through short e-mail survey to participants.

Example - leadership accountability

Objective	Embed senior leadership team (SLT) accountability for gender equality into existing regular business meeting practices
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ propose and gain CEO agreement to review gender equality progress as a standing agenda item at SLT meetings every quarter supported by robust gender reporting.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ CEO support and ability to influence / challenge SLT ➔ robust reporting mechanisms to drive quarterly reviews ➔ transparency of business unit gender data within SLT ➔ SLT members' ownership and action in response to data.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ other business priorities / distractions displace gender equality focus ➔ SLT members resist formalised ownership and accountability ➔ process promotes unhealthy competition / negative behaviour amongst SLT members ➔ momentum and focus decreases after initial energy ➔ metrics are insufficient to support the process.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ focus on gender equality becomes normalised as a business imperative ➔ ongoing focus and transparency drives action and accelerates progress ➔ SLT members cascade accountability down through their own structures.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ quality and frequency of action planning in response to metrics ➔ improvement in key gender metrics in dashboard / diagnostic ➔ visible sponsorship / ownership by SLT members of specific interventions

Example - strategy and business case

Objective	Gain executive and board approval for a three year gender equality strategy
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ apply gender equality diagnosis process with a sample of stakeholders. ➔ use inputs to formulate draft strategy and business case. ➔ test and validate draft strategy and business with different stakeholders. ➔ submit strategy and business case for approval.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ CEO support in principle and belief in the generic business case for gender equality ➔ high quality and relevant data is easily available.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Inconsistent or highly divergent view on strategy and/or business case.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ clarity of strategic direction ➔ empowerment and framework for action planning ➔ sound basis for engaging and mobilising stakeholders ➔ means of determining and prioritising investment ➔ visible demonstration of commitment to gender equality ➔ foundation for measuring progress and outcomes.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ stakeholder feedback on value of the strategy (e.g. in delivering the above benefits).

Example – measurement and reporting

Objective	Build support and implement a regular gender equality reporting regime to key stakeholders using an agreed dashboard format
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ develop proposition and table for endorsement at diversity council ➔ seek CEO support for quarterly executive team gender reporting and review ➔ design, test and validate dashboard concept and content with a range of representative stakeholders ➔ pilot reporting process for two quarters, review and finalise.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ CEO / executive team ‘buy-in’ ➔ human resource information system and data reliability (‘rubbish in, rubbish out’).
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ initial enthusiasm no sustained.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ measurement provides the basis for action. ➔ regular reporting keeps gender equality front of mind for executives ➔ gender equality is progressively seen as more of a business issue ➔ metrics help to generate focus and a sense of urgency ➔ robust reporting provides a sound context for target-setting.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ qualitative feedback from reporting end-users ➔ actions generated by reporting and completed.

Example – policies and processes

Objective	Ensure business and people processes to support gender equality
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ establish regular policy / process audit responsibility and timetable ➔ conduct audit and identify opportunities to strengthen design and operation of policies and process ➔ compare against best practice and/or industry benchmarks.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ support of policy and process owners ➔ user-friendliness and simplicity of policies and processes.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ complexity and multiplicity of policies and processes ➔ resistance to change from policy and process owners.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ more gender-equitable, diverse and inclusive decision-making from users of policies and processes.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ gender-equity, diversity and inclusion of policy and process outcomes.

Example – supply chain

Objective	Use commercial influence to promote gender equality within supplier and business partner organisations
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ review and strengthen procurement principles, policies and practices (e.g. in relation to tendering, service level agreements) ➔ engage with suppliers / partners to communicate and discuss changes and expectations ➔ regularly review supplier / partner performance against new gender equality standards ➔ revise preferred supplier lists according to outcomes.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ some suppliers will be more easy to influence than others (according to commercial value of contracts, market dynamics etc.) ➔ supplier support for gender equality needs to be measurable.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ verbal commitments from suppliers may not translate into tangible action ➔ success may require accurate and honest self-reporting by suppliers ➔ own commitment to, and action on, gender equality needs to be above reproach.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ leverage effect can induce change within many other organisations ➔ positions gender equality action as a business imperative ➔ sends strong signal to numerous external stakeholders about commitment to gender equality.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ achievement rates for tender process requirements ➔ achievement of service level agreements ➔ suppliers transmit gender equality expectations through supply chain.

Example – gender composition

Objective	Increase the gender diversity of the executive leadership team (ELT) until it is sustainably gender-balanced
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ conduct modelling of ELT member inflows and outflows by gender ➔ use model to develop a stretching but achievable gender target ➔ socialise, test and finalise target amongst key stakeholders (including CEO and individual board and ELT members) ➔ communicate target and rationale widely – internally and externally ➔ monitor and report progress against target, regularly and transparently ➔ take remedial action as necessary or reset target if achieved early.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ stakeholders are engaged in the target-setting process from the outset ➔ the target is realistic and based on credible modelling ➔ robust action plans are developed to support achievement of the target ➔ clear leadership accountability for achievement of the target is defined and allocated.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ target represents unrealistic stretch ➔ target timeframe is too long which undermines urgency and ownership ➔ target induces inappropriate behaviours (e.g. promoting women in favour of men in order to hit the target).
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ focus, energy, urgency, and concerted action accelerate change and achieve gender balance on a faster trajectory.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ gender composition of ELT every quarter and annual and quarterly variance.

Example – gender pay equity

Objective	Reduce the gender pay gaps (like-for-like, by level, and organisation wide) year-on-year.
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ research and identify barriers to gender diversity in the pipeline to leadership and equitable progression of female and male talent ➔ progressively address barriers and monitor impact (e.g. gender diversity of talent pools) ➔ review overall gender pay gap annually and trends ➔ regularly conduct audit of like-for-like (job role / family) pay gaps and address anomalies.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ accurate and accessible fixed and variable pay data across business / sub-units and locations. ➔ ability to minimise unconscious bias through process / decision-making safeguards and decision-maker (people leader) awareness-building.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ decision-makers (for performance, reward, promotion and talent etc.) fail to recognise and challenge their own and each other's gender biases ➔ inequitable decisions (performance, reward, promotion and talent etc.) are retrospectively 'justified' ➔ mechanisms for pay data-gathering, analysis and reporting produce unreliable or inconsistent results.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ improved gender pay equity outcomes drive improvements in ability to attract, engage and retain the best female and male talent.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ progressive reductions in overall gender pay gap until it is statistically negligible on a consistent basis.

Example – flexibility

Objective	Reduce the gender pay gaps (like-for-like, by level, and organisation wide) year-on-year.
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ develop a framework for piloting new / different flexible work option within supportive and interested teams ➔ implement / facilitate several pilots in different parts of the organisation to test ideas and identify flexibility barriers and enablers ➔ use learning and insights to strengthen or refine flexibility policies, processes and practices ➔ promote and export new / improved flexibility models across the business / organisation ➔ recognise and celebrate team successes achieved while working flexibly and flexibility role-modelling.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ senior business leader agrees to champion flexibility pilot project ➔ availability of suitable pilot sites with an open-minded team leader and members ➔ human resource and/or diversity practitioners with necessary capabilities to facilitate and support pilots, and to coach team leaders and members.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ pilots do not produce expected outcomes (i.e. flexible work options which can be made to work in the given context) ➔ flexibility solutions are not transferable between different teams / business units ➔ manager and employee attitudes are not sufficiently influenced by the piloting.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ flexibility policies are translated into increased practice ➔ team flexibility models are proven to work ➔ assumptions and stereotypes (including gender-based) regarding flexibility are successfully challenged.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ sustained adoption of flexible work practices in pilot teams ➔ increased utilisation of flexibility throughout workforce (reported by gender) ➔ continued improvements in responses to benchmark flexibility question(s) in employee engagement survey.

Example - talent pipeline

Objective	Ensure all candidate pools for job vacancies and interview panels are gender diverse
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ revise recruitment policy and hiring manager training to communicate new approach and business benefits ➔ develop data-gathering mechanisms to track gender composition of each key recruitment stage ➔ review and revise recruitment agency service level agreements to ensure vendor alignment.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ hiring manager buy-in and supportive behaviour ➔ ability of HR managers to identify and challenge homogeneous candidate pools ➔ ability of recruitment agencies to source gender diverse candidate pools and provide accurate timely reporting.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ hiring manager resistance to policy changes ➔ recruitment agencies source weak female candidates to easily create gender diverse candidate pools ➔ over-use of individual female managers to participate in interviewing process due to limited supply ➔ unconscious bias amongst male hiring managers still influences hiring decision-making .
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ increased gender equality / diversity of recruitment process inputs and decision-makers drives better gender-balance amongst new hires.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ improved gender balance of new hire population ➔ improved gender balance within teams over time ➔ increased gender diversity through whole talent pipeline over time.

Example - leader and manager capability

Objective	Build inclusive leadership capability and unconscious bias self-awareness
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ review leadership capabilities and associated behavioural indicators for gender neutrality and adjust as necessary ➔ ensure the removal of gender bias from related performance and talent frameworks ➔ develop inclusive leadership and unconscious bias awareness capability in managers and leaders through design, piloting and progressive roll out of a customised workshop ➔ integrate learning into the broader leadership development curriculum and executive coaching program ➔ test employees' sense of inclusion (by gender) through benchmark questions in employee engagement survey.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ changing leader / manager perceptions of what inclusion and bias mean ➔ translating complex and challenging concepts into practical tools and techniques which can be applied in the workplace.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ low appreciation of the business benefits of a gender-inclusive culture ➔ low engagement / participation from target groups due to challenge of the agenda.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ improved / changed gender-inclusive workplace behaviours by leaders and managers.
Measurement of impact / ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ improving responses to a benchmark question on inclusive culture in employee engagement survey (reported by gender).

Example – gender inclusive culture

Objective	Develop a workplace culture throughout the organisation which is measurably more gender-inclusive, year-on-year
Action / response	➔ make client entertainment and team social event practices more gender-inclusive.
Success factors / enablers	➔ education of stakeholders (e.g. client relationship managers, team leaders and team members) ➔ success of alternative client and team event timing and locations.
Risks / barriers	➔ return to covert default behaviour (events based around alcohol, sport and non-family-friendly timing) which engages male networks and excludes women.
Outcomes / benefits	➔ higher levels of gender inclusion and connectivity ➔ stronger engagement and retention of female team members ➔ improved engagement of female clients.
Measurement of impact / ROI	➔ qualitative feedback from team members and clients (through targeted surveying with a gender analysis).

Appendix C

Examples of strategies on a page

Figure 7: strategy on a page – ‘holistic’ format

Vision	To be an international industry benchmark and role model business in the utilisation of gender equality as a business enabler			
Mission	To build a gender inclusive culture that empowers our people and harnesses their differences to create innovative, market-leading customer solutions and grow our business			
Values	Gender equality, diversity and inclusion are an intrinsic part of who we are: they drive how we work together, how we do business, how we serve our customers and how we contribute to our communities			
Benefit	Gender equality, diversity and inclusion add value to our business and all our stakeholders: they support higher performance, deliver stronger outcomes, and help us build competitive advantage			
Enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workplace and culture which is intuitively flexible, agile and adaptable • A workforce which is fully equipped at all levels to build and maintain gender equality 			
Lever	Leadership accountability	Talent pipeline	Building capability	Flexibility
Actions in 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender equality built into business scorecards • senior leader gender KPIs piloted in Q4 then cascaded to all managers • gender KPIs linked to reward outcomes in 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • audit of talent processes for bias risk and remediation • talent pool gender target • external mentoring and sponsorship program design • gender diversity of all job candidate pools mandated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roll-out of inclusive leadership program • executive coaching includes gender equality • mentoring and sponsorship program designed and piloted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design pilot for expanded/new flexibility options • identify pilot sites • conduct whole-team flexibility pilots in 2015 • develop flexibility tracking mechanisms
Measures	Scorecard and KPI outcomes vs. target	Gender Diversity of all job and talent pools	Leader performance against key capabilities	Increased flexibility use by both genders

Figure 8: strategy on a page – ‘journey’ format



Where are we now?

Context

- the expectations and needs of customers and other stakeholders are changing (and growing)
- the workforce from which we draw future talent is shrinking, becoming older and more feminised – and has more choices

Challenges

- new commercial challenges require leadership which is capable and diverse, and can build a high performing culture and workforce

Opportunities

- a sound diversity and inclusion strategy which drives well-targeted and prioritised initiatives, aligned to our business and culture change agenda
- leveraging an inclusive, flexible workplace improves business performance and competitive advantage



Where do we want to be?

Our business

- is an innovative market leader which utilises the diversity of thinking that employees from diverse backgrounds produce in an inclusive culture

Our leaders

- hold themselves accountable for gender and other diversity progress and measurable outcomes
- consistently role-model inclusive leadership behaviours

Our people

- help create an inclusive, productive workplace
- engage fully, trusting their contribution will be equitably recognised and rewarded
- be ambassadors and recommend us as a great (inclusive) place to work
- lead by example and act as role models for our culture and values



How will we get there?

Priorities

- our strategic priorities will balance level of challenge with return on investment
- we aim to accelerate diversity and inclusion progress until we reach the desired future state
- initiatives will be aligned to business needs and priorities as well as our culture / values

Actions

- establish governance and accountability mechanisms
- implement a diversity and inclusion ‘dashboard’ of key data (qualitative and quantitative) to support action planning
- review our flexibility proposition then pilot and implement improved / new approaches
- strengthen HR systems, policies and processes to integrate diversity, inclusion and flexibility best practice



How can we track our progress?

Measures

Leadership accountability

- achievement against gender targets, scorecards and KPIs

Measurement and reporting

- achievement rates of post-reporting action items / plans

Flexibility

- utilisation of flexibility policy options by gender
- proportion of flexibility requests declined
- parental leave return rate
- parental leave retention rate (1 and 2 years post return to work)

Policies and processes

- process outcomes in gender equality, diversity and inclusion terms (e.g. allocation of projects / assignments or customer / client accounts by gender)
- redundancy / involuntary exits by gender

Figure 9: strategy on a page – ‘key focus area’ format

Priority levers >	Leadership accountability	Talent pipeline	Building capability	Flexibility
Strategic long-term objective	Increase visible leadership accountability for gender equality	Build a representative and sustainably gender diverse talent pipeline to leadership	Grow leader and manager capability to deliver our gender equality vision	Develop a workplace and culture which fully leverages flexibility as a business enabler
Current actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quarterly diversity dashboard in place executive team quarterly diversity review established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> our definition of ‘Talent’ and ‘high-potential’ is defined and communicated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inclusive leadership and unconscious bias awareness program piloted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexibility research conducted across all business units and support functions
Future actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gender diversity metrics to be integrated into business scorecards senior leader gender KPIs to be piloted in Q4 gender KPIs to be cascaded to all managers once process finalised gender KPIs linked to reward outcomes in 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> audit of Talent identification and development processes for bias talent pool composition target set for each level external mentoring and sponsorship program design in place gender diversity of internal and external candidate pools mandated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisation-wide roll-out of above program in 2015 according to agreed schedule integrate gender equality into executive coaching program executive coaches required to submit gender equality capability statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> design a framework for piloting expanded or new flexibility options identify supportive teams for piloting across Australian sites conduct whole-team flexibility pilots staggered throughout 2015 develop mechanisms to track utilisation of all flexibility options

Figure 9: strategy on a page – stakeholder format

<p>Workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: ensure diversity of our employee population fully reflects the communities in which the company operates. • Approach: strengthen design and operation of recruitment, development and promotion processes to increase diversity of candidate pools. • Actions: (1) target non-traditional talent sources through community media and events; (2) source and implement unconscious bias awareness program for all people leaders.
<p>Workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: build a workplace and culture that fully embraces and utilises flexibility. • Approach: conduct flexibility pilots in one or more supportive teams in every business unit and function. • Actions: (1) research current practices to identify specific flexibility barriers and enablers; (2) roll-out flexibility workshop for team leaders and managers; (3) design and implement pilots to refine and drive flexibility models.
<p>Marketplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: to promote gender equality in our industry by strengthening requirements of our potential suppliers in our tendering processes. • Approach: improve current procurement policies and practices to reflect supplier diversity best practice. • Actions: (1) audit procurement practices to identify issues and opportunities for improvement; (2) implement improvements; (3) Roll-out vendor management best practice workshop to all managers who procure services.



Advice and assistance

**For further advice
and assistance,
please contact:**

Workplace Gender Equality Agency
Level 7, 309 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

t: 02 9432 7000 or 1800 730 233

e: wgea@wgea.gov.au
www.wgea.gov.au