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AIBE Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace

Employer of Choice for Gender Equality

Leading Practices in Strategy, Policy and Implementation





Towards encouraging the use and citation of the report it should be referenced as:

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Disclaimer

Inherent Limitations

This report has been prepared by the AIBE Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). The data used to produce this report comprises responses to the WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) application process, by successful applicants for the years 2013-2018. We have not sought to independently verify those sources.

No warranty of completeness, accuracy or reliability is made in relation to statements and representations made in these applications and which have been quoted in the report or in the case studies contained in the report.

Third Party Reliance

The report is provided solely for the WGEA and neither the AIBE Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace nor any employee of the University of Queensland undertakes responsibility arising in any way from reliance placed by a third party on the information contained in this report. Any reliance placed, is that party's sole responsibility.

Acknowledgements

This report is compiled using data maintained by WGEA and comprises responses by EOCGE organisations to application questionnaires provided by WGEA as well as supplementary materials provided in support of such applications. The interpretation of these survey data and views contained in this report, however, are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency or its employees. This research was funded by supporting grants from the Faculty of Business, Economics & Law at The University of Queensland.



Since its inception in 2014, the Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) citation has provided employers with a benchmark for leading practice and publicly recognises their commitment to achieving gender equality in their organisation.

Each year citation holders demonstrate that they have met a rigorous, evidence based set of criteria that are necessary to drive gender equality in our workplaces.

This comprehensive report demonstrates the positive and measurable improvements that are being made by these leading employers. Citation holders are improving the gender balance of their leadership teams and are closing their gender pay gaps at a faster rate than the other employers in our dataset. These findings alone demonstrate the tangible, positive outcomes of the work undertaken by many organisations in their journey towards gender equality.

One of the clearest and most instructive findings of this report is the crucial role that leadership commitment to gender equality plays in achieving meaningful change. This report clearly demonstrates something we have always known- that change will not happen unless workplace leaders, from the CEO down, drive this change.

It is really pleasing to see the commitment of EOCGE citation holders' to advocating for gender equality beyond the organisations in which they work and lead.

Citation holders are visible industry leaders who drive gender equality initiatives and outcomes within their own workplace as well as with their suppliers, clients and the community in which they operate.

This ongoing advocacy is crucial in changing social attitudes on workplace gender equality and empowers others to follow by loudly leading from the front.

It is clear from this report that citation holders are achieving sustainable workplace gender equality outcomes and that the citation has motivated them to drive real change. My hope is that this report will assist and guide all employers to recognise the business benefits of gender equality and will inspire them to put an action plan in place to tackle, head on, the issues that will deliver gender equality in their own workplaces.

Libby Lyons

**Director
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Key Findings

Strategic Overview of Workplace Gender Equality Initiatives

The mark of a leading practice Employer of Choice for Gender Equality is their holistic, strategic approach to gender equality in the workplace. Leading practice EOCGE organisations are led by CEOs who not only 'walk the talk' but also have a deep understanding of the causes of workplace gender inequality. These CEOs lead from the front and through their own actions and behaviours, as well as detailed attention to every facet of the organisation, drive an inclusive culture. The culture of inclusion means that these CEOs bring their organisations with them, consulting staff on gender equality strategy and involving everyone in its implementation. These CEOs understand that the business case is founded upon leveraging diversity and the loyalty and dedication of staff who know they work in an equitable workplace. EOCGE organisations are not content to drive change internally but bring their clients, suppliers, industry associates and even their competitors with them on the journey.

EOCGE organisations have detailed and sophisticated suites of practices underpinning policies. These support

the retention of women in their workplace and level the playing field for their progression. Every aspect of the employee life cycle is considered by practices that actively consider how gender equality policies and practices drive an inclusive culture and how policy and practice deliver upon their overarching strategy. EOCGE organisations are also characterised by a willingness to undo organisational structures and practices that inhibit the progression of women and undermine employee engagement generally.

Strong governance and oversight are hallmarks of EOCGE organisations, with detailed strategic plans for gender equality strongly integrated into overarching organisational strategic plans. EOCGE organisations have a comprehensive suite of policies underpinning their strategies with strong and empowered executive level committees to provide governance and oversight. EOCGE organisations hold everyone accountable for the delivery of gender equality strategy outcomes and typically have robust metrics to track progress and assist with refining practice, policy and strategy.



EOCGE organisations recognise that driving cultural change is not a quick process and while their organisation may have similarities to other organisations there will be much that is different. As such, there are few ‘off the shelf’ solutions. EOCGE organisations are typically reflexive in their approach to workplace gender equality. This is to say that causes and effects of workplace gender inequality are often reciprocal, meaning that organisations are continuously learning and refining policies and practices, consulting on and trialling new initiatives, reflecting upon success and failure and regularly

renewing practices, policy and strategy. However they do not do this alone. They work with industry peers, clients, consultants and academics, among others outside of their respective organisations, to generate potential solutions to the issue of workplace gender inequality.

The following diagram summarises the connections between strategic workplace gender equality initiatives. These are mapped to the sections of the report where they are discussed in detail.



Summary of Key Findings

The following summary of key findings from this report have been collated against the seven pillars of reporting required of EOCGE citation applicants.

Leadership, Accountability and Focus

Leading practice EOCGE organisations:

- are led by CEOs who have a sophisticated understanding of the drivers of gender inequality in the workplace and lead all firm initiatives from the front
- recruit, train and adopt inclusive leaders and leadership practices when espousing and embedding strategic gender equality initiatives
- have CEOs who role model authentic and inclusive leadership through their day-to-day actions as well as their internal and external messaging
- have CEOs who role model *genuine* workplace flexibility
- are characteristically engaged in advocacy of gender equality beyond their own organisation. Typically they are industry leaders, driving gender equality in their field as well as with their clients. They are also engaged with the broader community in supporting issues related to gender equality
- evidence a genuine commitment to the care and support of their workforce. The EOCGE citation is held out as an artefact representing a deeper cultural commitment to gender equality and their people more generally
- have comprehensive and fully integrated suites of policies which support their strategic gender equality plans
- have comprehensive dashboards reporting metrics for all aspects of their gender equality strategy and these are regularly reported to oversight committees

Learning and Development

Leading practice EOCGE organisations:

- invest heavily in training and development of their staff in all areas related to strategic gender equality initiatives and support women in their progression through targeted training and development. Are committed to continuous learning and are constantly innovating with regard to gender equality policies and practices
- create opportunities to engage with others inside and outside of their industries in continuous

improvement of their learning and development practices with regard to gender equality

Gender Pay Gap

Leading practice EOCGE organisations:

- consistently measure and monitor gender pay gaps across, between and within position banding
- act upon gender pay gaps immediately, allocating budget to ameliorate any inequalities where these are identified
- have a rate of decline in the total remuneration pay gap that outstrips that of non-citation holders over the five-year reporting period covered by the report
- have sophisticated mechanisms to measure and monitor gender pay gaps and are actively engaged in their reduction

Flexible Working Arrangements and other Initiatives Aimed at Supporting Women and Men including those with Family or Caring Responsibilities

Leading practice EOCGE organisations:

- have adopted an 'all roles flex' philosophy towards work
- have flexibility strategies and policies that are characterised by a full suite of flexibility options and these organisations understand that the ability to undertake work, how, when and where an employee prefers, provides a heightened degree of ability for those with caring and other life responsibilities to participate fully in the workplace. Thereby, enabling career progression

Employee Consultation

Leading practice EOCGE organisations

- are characterised by sophisticated strategic gender equality plans that draw upon inclusive planning mechanisms that directly involve their respective workforces
- draw upon individual interviews, organisation-wide surveys, focus groups and team meetings amongst other ad hoc data-collection methods to consult with their employees on matters of gender equality
- adopt a reflexive process to employee consultation: involving the 'testing' of ideas generated on the basis of feedback, effectiveness and efficiency of changes are then re-explored through employee consultation.



Preventing Sex-based Harassment

Leading practice EOCGE organisations:

- have clear and firm policies regarding the ways that claims of sex-based harassment are handled within their organisations
- have a clear zero-tolerance policy to sex-based harassment and discrimination within the organisation
- incorporate accountability measures into key performance indicators of people managers (e.g. team leaders, managers).

Targets for Improving Gender Equality Outcomes

Leading practice EOCGE organisations:

- have a greater proportion of women managers overall compared to non-EOCGE organisations
- have more women in all levels of management relative to non-citation holders, demonstrating a greater commitment to the retention and progression of women in their respective workforces.
- in male-dominated industries, have more women managers relative to non-EOCGE organisations. This is particularly interesting in light of women's underrepresentation overall as a proportion of these workforces and therefore suggests that EOCGE organisations are engaging in effective strategies that promote women throughout the talent management pipeline into positions of management and leadership

- favour full employment of their workforce relative to non-citation holders. This is demonstrated through employing women (and men) in more full-time versus casual and part-time roles
- have boards (or equivalent) that are significantly more likely to have women members relative to non-EOCGE organisations
- commonly use targets as a key support of their gender equality strategies. Targets are used contextually in key areas to drive and embed substantive change
- in male-dominated industries, are actively engaged in growing the pipeline of women entering their field through partnerships with schools, universities and industry-based programs
- have well-established governance structures and organisational bodies that provide regular oversight and reporting around progress towards strategic gender equality plans
- adopt specific, detailed 'gender equality' strategies, often as part of a wider 'diversity and inclusion' strategy. Gender equality in these organisations is a major focus in its own right
- have a focus upon moving towards gender parity of their respective workforces. This is particularly true for organisations that are in male-and-female dominated sectors respectively
- can be characterised as having proportionally more women employed in their organisations relative to non-EOCGE organisations overall.

Introduction

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is an Australian Government statutory agency created by the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Act) which is charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces.

WGEA works collaboratively with employers providing advice, practical tools and education to help them improve their gender performance. WGEA also works with employers to help them comply with the reporting requirements under the Act. This reporting framework aims to encourage measures that improve gender equality outcomes.

WGEA (2019e) is committed to promoting and contributing to understanding, acceptance and public debate of gender equality issues in the workplace and works collaboratively with employers, business, industry and professional associations, academics and researchers, equal opportunity networks and women's groups in meeting its objectives under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Act). The legislation aims to improve and promote equality for both women and men in the workplace.

The principle objects of the Act are to:

- promote and improve gender equality (including equal remuneration between women and men) in employment and in the workplace
- support employers to remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce
- promote, amongst employers, the elimination of discrimination based on gender in relation to employment matters (including in relation to family and caring responsibilities)
- foster workplace consultation between employers and employees on issues concerning gender equality in employment and in the workplace
- improve the productivity and competitiveness of Australian business through the advancement of gender equality in employment and in the workplace.

As a part of furthering its objectives, WGEA maintains a program that it actively encourages employers to apply for. WGEA reports that this citation is a leading practice recognition program that is voluntary and separate to compliance with the Act (WGEA, 2019d). All employers covered under the Act are able to apply for the citation.

The EOCGE citation is strategically aligned with the Act (Act) to promote and improve gender equality

for both women and men, while recognising the historically disadvantaged position of women in the workplace.

The citation recognises that gender equality is increasingly critical to an organisation's success and is viewed as a baseline feature of well-managed and leading organisations.

Research has demonstrated that groups with diverse perspectives and flexibility in thinking almost always outperform homogenous groups, leading to higher levels of creativity, innovation and organisational agility (Deloitte, 2011; McKinsey, 2018).

Data collected by WGEA reflects that being awarded the EOCGE citation provides recipients with significant differentiation in a competitive marketplace and provides public recognition of an organisation's focus on gender equality. This is noted as supporting an organisation's ability to attract and retain the best possible talent in building a high-performance workforce. WGEA also reports that the process of investigating whether an organisation complies with the citation criteria can be, and has been, an excellent driver of change within many organisations (WGEA, 2019d).

The citation includes criteria under seven focus areas and an examination of the employees' lived experiences:

1. Leadership, strategy and accountability
2. Developing a gender balanced workforce
3. Gender pay equity
4. Support for caring
5. Mainstreaming flexible work
6. Preventing gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying
7. Driving change beyond your workplace.

To be successful in obtaining the EOCGE citation, organisations must be able to demonstrate the fulfilment of detailed criteria in relation to each of the above focus areas. Appendix B sets out a summary of the 2019–2020 criteria to become an EOCGE. It should be noted that in many areas throughout the report we find that **all EOCGE organisations** are undertaking certain practices or have certain policies. In most cases this is a reflection of the criteria set out by the WGEA as part of the citation process in any given year. As such all EOCGE organisations demonstrate many consistencies in these areas.

Additionally, it should be noted the EOCGE Application Questionnaire evolves every year to reflect community expectations for higher minimum standards to receive the citation. For example, the 2019–2020 Application contains over 80 new criteria that should be addressed by applicants. Most of these are a reflection of what leading practice EOCGE organisations are already doing and details of which have been identified throughout this report. Finally, throughout this report where organisational practices clearly align to (or exceed) the research literature, in terms of their proven contribution to progressing gender equality in the workplace, we have referred to these EOCGE organisations as ‘leading practice organisations’.

While the number of women in management roles has been steadily increasing, the number of women in CEO roles (WGEA, 2019C) and women on ASX200 boards (AICD, 2019) has recently plateaued. Presently, women are retiring with superannuation balances less than half that of men (Clare, 2015). Australia’s Gender Equality Scorecard (WGEA, 2019c) shows that while over 75% of Australian employers now have a gender equality strategy or policy, of these, less than 33% have implemented KPIs for managers relating to gender equality outcomes. While many organisations are placing greater emphasis on gender equality in the workplace, there remains much to be done.. This report highlights the hundreds of initiatives that EOCGE organisations have in place, which drive gender equality in their respective workplaces.

Purpose and Scope of the Report

The purpose of the report is to document leading practice gender equality strategies, policies and practices as set out by 119 organisations in their successful applications for Workplace Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice for Gender Equality status, as well as 58 organisations that consistently maintained their EOCGE status from 2013 to 2018. The report details what a strategic approach to gender equality in the workplace looks like, as well as the policies and leading practices that underpin it.

To date, no study has examined the policies and practices of organisations that have been independently identified as leading workplaces for gender equality by a ‘for purpose’ government agency. The aim of the research design in this study was to induce insights into policies and practices reported by EOCGE organisations as acting to further gender equality in the workplace. The application data provided by EOCGE organisations to obtain their citation contains details of both their policies and practices in relation to direct questions around the

seven core areas identified by WGEA (2019d) and also a suite of other initiatives that are reported in relation to open-ended questions contained in the questionnaire. (Appendix B sets out the matters that must be addressed by citation applicants.) Text box questions in the questionnaire aimed at confirming minimum standards required to be an Employer of Choice, while other questions required written responses detailing the organisation’s actions in the seven core areas. The report concerns itself with the later questions and therefore, largely qualitative methods were used to analyse and report upon the data with a smaller portion of supplementary quantitative data analyses completed.

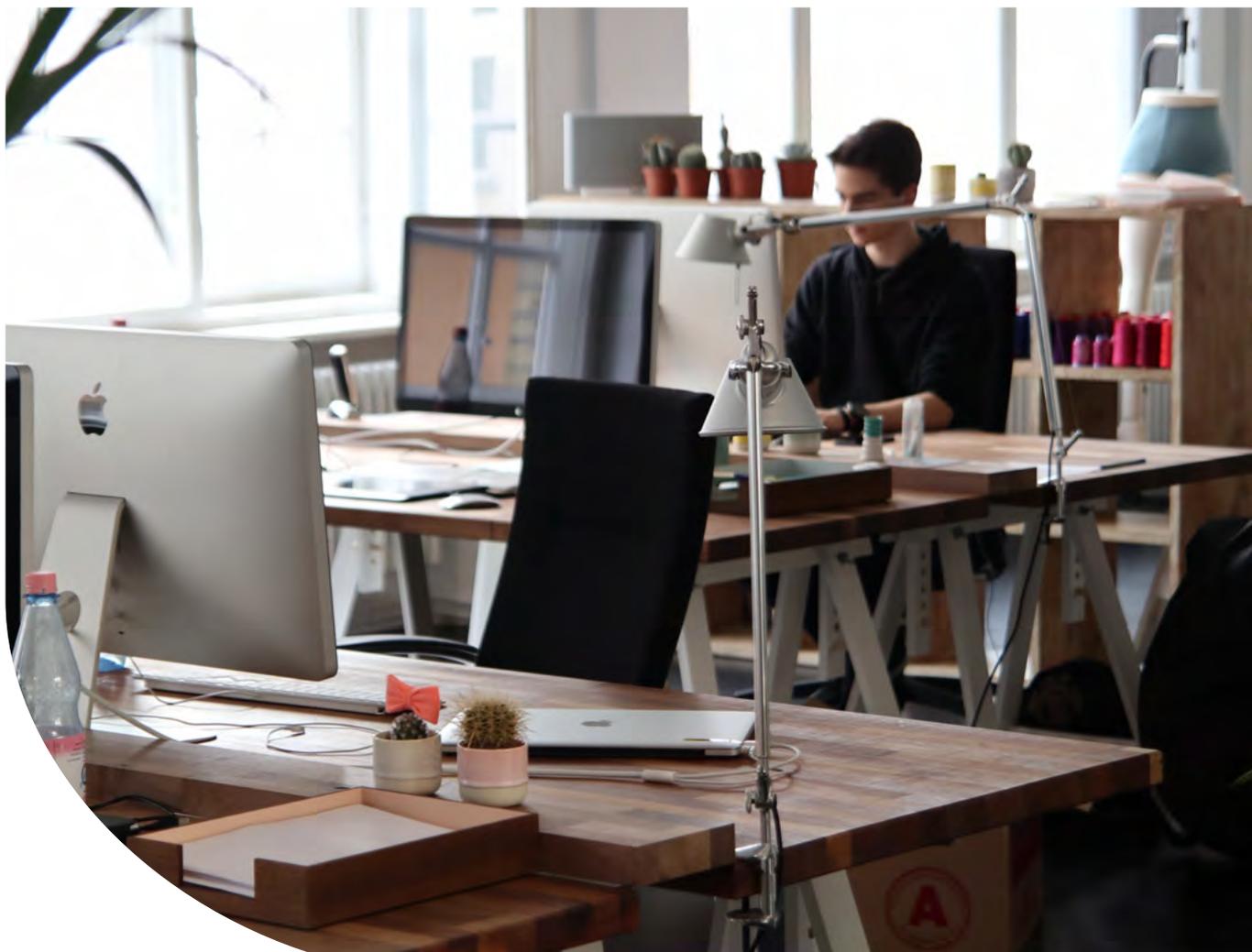
The report has been designed to act as a resource for organisations that are yet to begin their journey towards workplace gender equality, are relatively new in tackling this challenge or are seeking new ideas or insights into leading practices in the field. It should be noted that EOCGE organisations span every sector of the Australian economy and some policies and specific practices may be better suited to some sectors than others.

Its scope includes:

- a longitudinal examination of EOCGE organisation applications for all organisations that have consistently maintained their EOCGE status since 2013 and reporting upon identified trends in policy and practice. A total of 58 organisations are examined
- a cross-sectional analysis of all EOCGE citation holders’ application data for 2018 to identify and report upon contemporary leading practices for gender equality in the workplace. A total of 119 organisations are examined
- a comparison of leading practice organisational policies, strategies and processes with contemporary academic and practitioner literature
- comparison of quantitative data reported by all organisations reporting to WGEA with EOCGE citation holders.

Report Structure

The review of the 2013 to 2018 EOCGE organisation applications and supporting data provided to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency highlights key areas of EOCGE strategic organisational focus in tackling gender equality. While these generally align to WGEA’s seven focus areas, the report is organised around themes identified by the authors based upon consistent patterns of organisational priorities reported in the EOCGE applications.



Several case studies have also been included as leading practice organisational exemplars identified by WGEA. These have been included to offer deeper insights in specific themed areas.

The report is structured as follows (also see Figure 1):

- **Section 1** details how EOCGE gender equality statistics differ from other reporting organisations as well as providing an overview of why gender equality is an imperative for EOCGE organisations.
- **Section 2** reports upon strategy formulation and strategic oversight of EOCGE gender equality policies and practices.
- **Section 3** details the critical role played by CEOs and their commitment to delivering gender equality in their workplace and beyond.
- **Section 4** reports upon EOCGE gender equality policies in detail.
- **Section 5** reports upon EOCGE training and development practices in detail.
- **Section 6** details critical EOCGE organisational practices linked to delivering gender equality in their workplace and beyond including the following:
 - the adoption of targets (and quotas)
 - holding managers accountable for gender equality targets
 - education and involvement of clients in gender equality;
 - industry advocacy for gender equality
 - community engagement for gender equality
 - proactive engagement in the STEMM and trades pipeline.
- **Section 7** details the metrics used by EOCGE organisations to measure and monitor strategic progress as well as reporting upon the use of gender equality dashboards.
- **Section 8** provides a brief discussion on the key findings of the report.
- **Appendix A** provides a detailed methodology and data limitations.
- **Appendix B** provides a summary of the 2019–20 EOCGE citation checklist.
- **Appendix C** provides a list of EOCGE organisations for 2017–18.

Section 1 – The Gender Equality Imperative



Key Findings

Leading practice organisations:

- that come from male-dominated industries (e.g. mining; transport, postal and warehousing) demonstrate clear ambitions to improve women's workforce representation within their organisations. Likewise, in female-dominated industries, there is a push towards increasing the number of men
- have more women employed at all levels of management
- display a sharper downward trend in GPG data across the five-year period analysed
- prioritise gender equality as a strategic organisational imperative, seeing gender equality as an issue of morality and ethics alongside offering their organisation commercial benefits
- from commercial or for-profit industries rationalise their focus on gender equality via three discrete arguments: the 'business case'; the 'social justice' case, and; the 'equal representation' argument
- situate their rationale for gender equality upon a holistic, values-based, strategic approach to gender equality wherein the foundation is on fairness and inclusion.



Action Points

- Benchmark your organisation's progress against comparable organisations on gender equality progress.
- Examine and critique the downwards trajectory of gender pay gaps over time throughout the organisation. Evaluate progress relative to industry benchmarks and explore opportunities to minimise this across all levels of the organisation.
- Quantify and communicate your gender equality imperative, addressing how this has changed over time.
- Focus on cohesive and robust communication of your rationale for focusing on gender equality. Situate this within a holistic, values-based and strategic approach that is founded upon fairness and inclusion.

1.1 How do Employer of Choice Organisations Differ?

Organisations that report to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency are required to provide a range of data to describe their workforce composition. Those that obtain Employer of Choice citation status also report on these same workforce composition metrics (e.g. gender composition of the workforce, gender pay gap data). These data can be further partitioned to identify, for example, the number of women in certain levels of management, in any given reporting period. By exploring the differences between EOCGE organisations and the remaining organisations by industry sector, it's possible to illuminate key differences or unique characteristics of industries or management levels.

To provide a snapshot overview of the workforce composition of both EOCGE organisations and the overall cohort of organisations reporting to WGEA, these data have been extracted and analysed in both cross-sectional and longitudinal formats. By no means is the following workforce composition analysis exhaustive. Instead, this is designed to provide an overview of the types of workforce demographics that make up the citation holders list, alongside the overall cohort. Further details regarding unique workforce composition data can be obtained by contacting the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

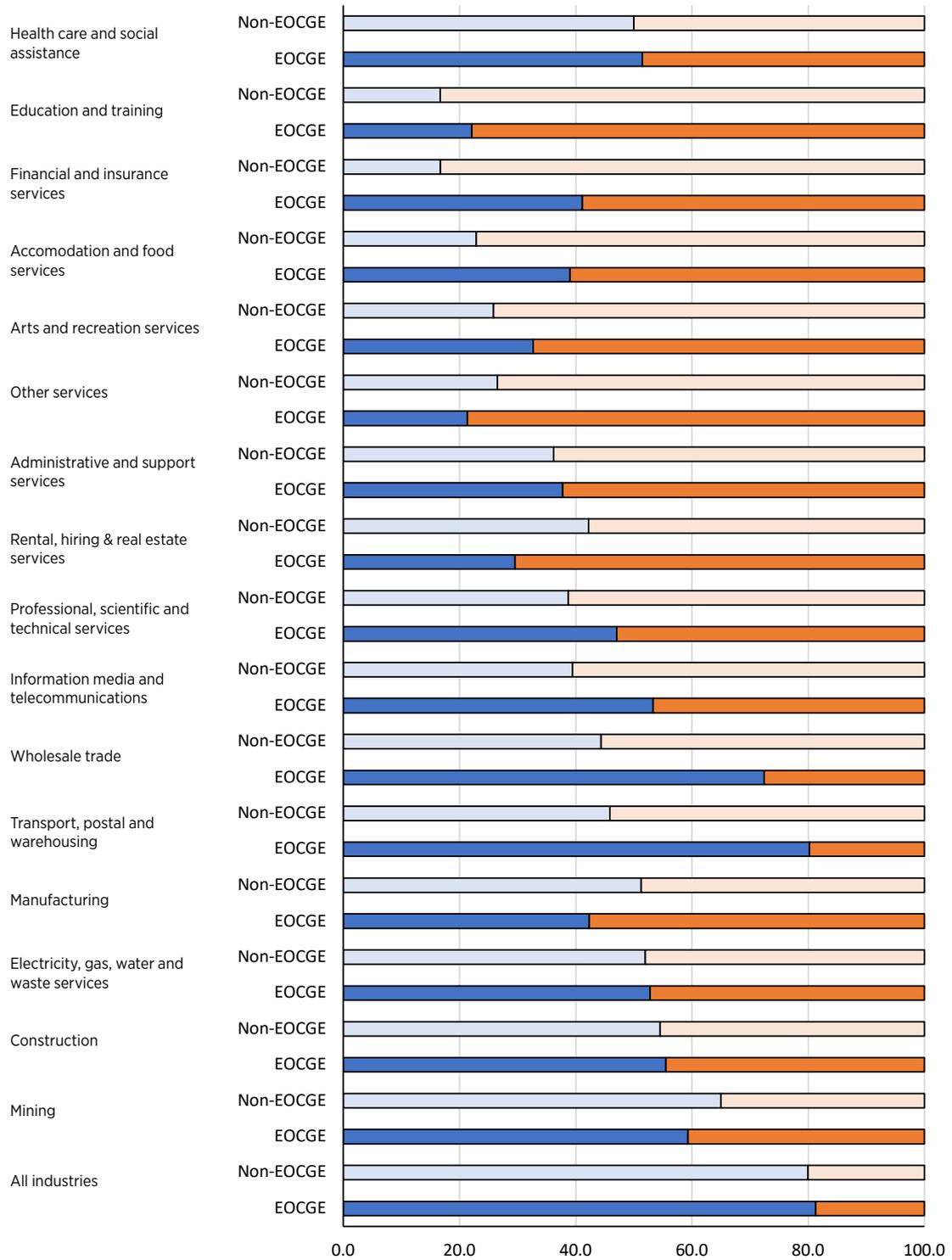
1.1.2 Gender Composition by Industry

Figure 1 below depicts the proportion of men and women within each industry that reports to the *Workplace Gender Equality Agency*¹ within the 2017–18 reporting period. Reporting organisations are further divided into citation holders of the Employee of Choice Gender Equality award versus the remaining organisations who simply report to WGEA.

1 This graphic excludes Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing; Public Administration & Safety, and; Retail Trade as there are inadequate EOCGE citation holders within each of these industries.

Figure 1 Gender composition by industry

■ % women ■ % men

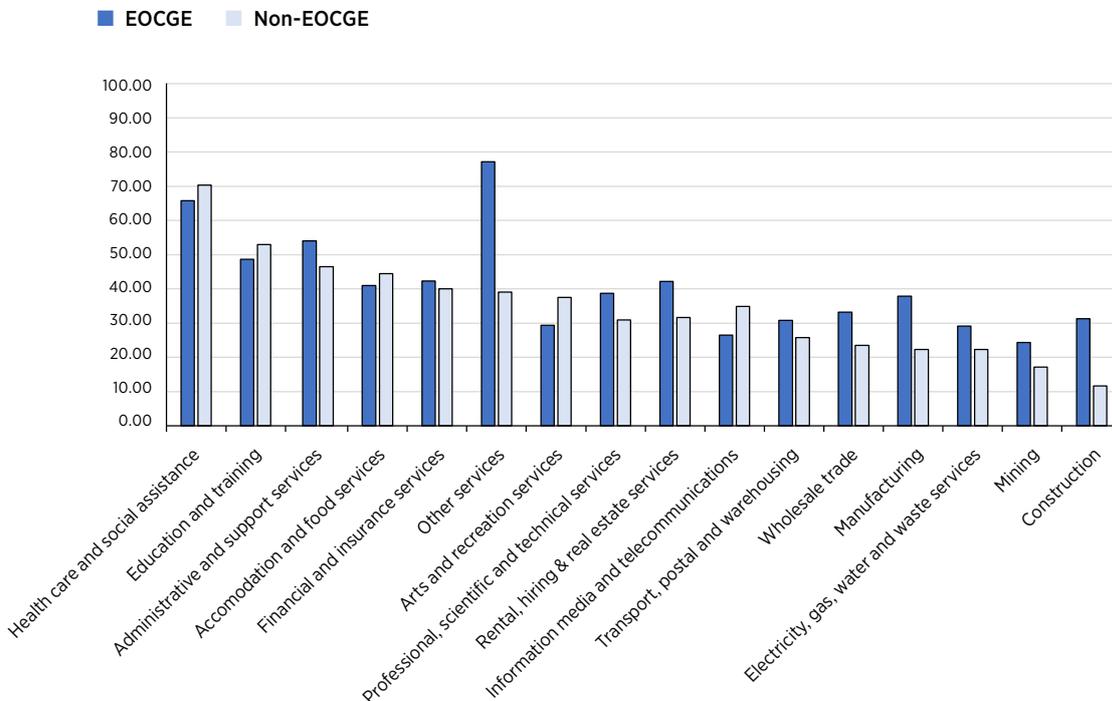


Broadly speaking, EOCGE organisations employ a greater proportion of women in their workforces (see “All Industries”) though some differences are marked for certain industries. Male-dominated industries such as those in which women comprise <30% of the workforce (e.g. construction; mining; transport, postal & warehousing) show some positive effects with regard to holding EOCGE citation status when considering women’s workforce representation. Nevertheless, these are inconsistent across male-dominated industries within the EOCGE citation cohort relative to non-EOCGE organisations. It remains clear, however, that male-dominated industries within the EOCGE cohort express a clear ambition to improve women’s workforce representation within their organisations and likewise, in female-dominated industries, there is a push towards increasing the number of men.

1.1.3 Percentage of Women Managers by Industry

Depicted in Figure 2 is the proportion of women managers across industries that reported to WGEA in 2017-18. The key finding here is that EOCGE organisations have a greater proportion of women managers overall, when compared to organisations that report to WGEA but do not hold citation status. For male-dominated industries, such as construction or mining, EOCGE organisations clearly outperform those who do not hold citation status when it comes to the number of women in management. This is particularly interesting in light of women’s underrepresentation overall as a proportion of these workforces and therefore suggests that EOCGE organisations are engaging in effective strategies that promote women throughout the talent management pipeline into positions of management and leadership. EOCGE organisations in male-dominated industries have engaged the issue of female underrepresentation in both their overall workforce and in leadership positions through a range of strategies. These organisations have devoted attention to increasing the pipeline of female entrants to their firm and their industry sector as a whole. Section 6.6 of the report outlines how these firms have acted to increase female entry to their talent pipelines while Section 5.2 of the report outlines how women’s development programs have acted to increase the number of women in leadership positions.

Figure 2. Percentage of women managers by industry



Note: This figure excludes the following industries due to inadequate representation on the EOCGE organisations list: Public Administration and Safety, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing & Retail Trade.

Some industries that boast a higher proportion of women in the workforce, do not demonstrate a proportionate number of women in management positions. (e.g. health care and social assistance). This may be emblematic of ‘The Glass Elevator’; experienced by some men in female-dominated industries who ascend to leadership

positions quicker than their female counterparts (Jones, 2006). This poses some interesting challenges for EOCGE organisations as they navigate gender equality, particularly where stakeholders understand gender equality as overall workforce participation (e.g. more women in the organisation overall), rather than equality at all levels of the organisation.

On integration of both Figures 1 and 2, some very interesting insights emerge. For some female-dominated industries (e.g. education & training, financial and insurance services), there remains a significant difference in the number of women working in EOCGE organisations, versus those working in non-EOCGE organisations. What's more, when examining the number of women in management, this pattern remains for the financial and insurance services industries; however, within education and training, the number of women managers is not reflective of their workforce representation. Interestingly, on closer inspection of qualitative data provided by these industries within EOCGE applications, it is very clear that these applicants have a heightened awareness of the challenges they face in attracting, retaining and promoting women into leadership within their industries. This is particularly a problem identified by research institutions and organisations within the financial services industry in which there is strong workforce stratification that sees women concentrated in non-leadership positions. These inconsistencies in progression of women throughout their talent management pipeline, in combination with qualitative report date, point towards challenging institutional barriers that impinge upon women's career progress. It may also be the case that EOCGE organisations who are represented within these industries are citation holders because they are acutely aware of the difficulties they face with regard to these issues and are consciously addressing them with varying levels of success.

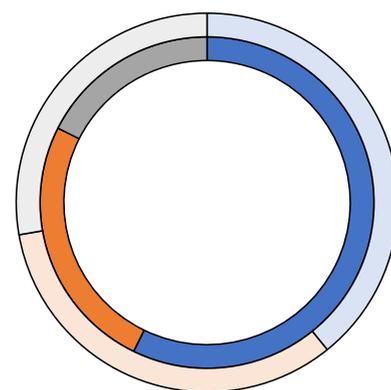
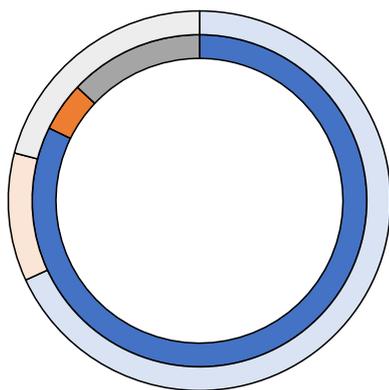
1.1.4 Proportion of Male and Female Employees by Employment Status

The overall trend of men and women in EOCGE organisations is a trend towards greater proportions of the workforce employed full-time. This differs from non-EOCGE organisations where there is a more traditional reflection of gendered work roles that sees more men concentrated in full-time employment relative to women in non-EOCGE organisations.

It is important to highlight that EOCGE organisations have a markedly greater proportion of women employed full-time and fewer women working in part-time or casual employment relative to non-EOCGE organisations.

Figure 3. Male employees by employment status

Figure 4. Female employees by employment status



■ Full-time ■ Part-time ■ Casual

■ Full-time ■ Part-time ■ Casual

Note: Inner dark ring is EOCGE, outer is non-EOCGE

Taken together, the patterns of employment status for men and women in EOCGE organisations, relative to those that do not hold citation status, suggests a preference for EOCGE organisations to favour full employability versus offering part-time or casual roles. This is important as the research clearly shows that a casualisation of any workforce negatively impacts women who tend to adopt more precarious and unreliable forms of work (e.g. casual work, part-time work) as opposed to full employment (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016a;b).

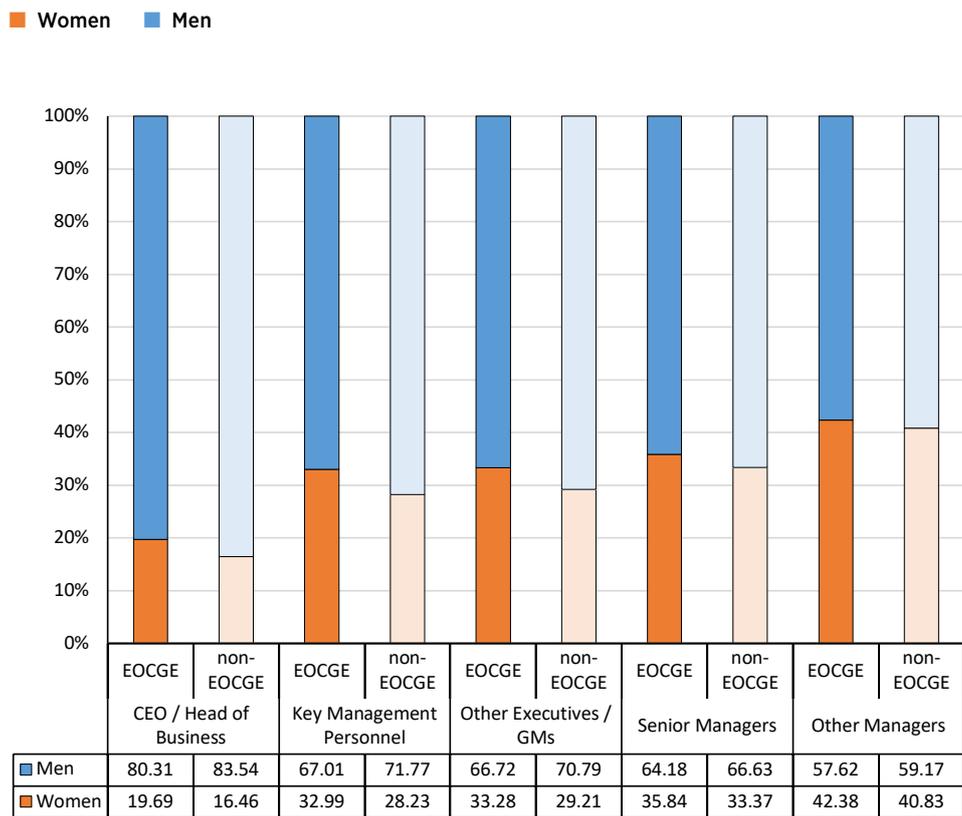
The data may also reflect the fact that a lack of flexibility often drives women out of the full-time workforce, either into part-time or casual roles, or away from the workforce altogether. Due to the uneven distribution of domestic labour between men and women, (child care in particular) an unfair burden of caring responsibility falls upon women (Economic Security for Women, 2019). Inflexible working hours and conditions force many women to either quit the workforce all together or to accept part-time or casual roles as a means of dealing with these work/care conflicts. It has been argued that many women would remain in the full-time workforce if enough flexibility were available. The data may be a reflection of this position, since EOCGE organisations typically provide a high degree of flexibility and structural support to new parents (see Sections 4.1–4.3 of the report). However, since EOCGE organisations are not asked to report upon their reasoning for the distribution of full-time, part-time and casual roles, we cannot be certain that this explanation is behind the reported result.

1.1.5 Five-Year Average of Women at all Management Levels

It was clear from the pattern of effects that across the five-year reporting period from 2013–18, depicted in Figure 5 below, that there were more women (on average) all levels of leadership in EOCGE organisations when compared to non-citation holders. Across industries, EOCGE organisations reported higher proportions of women as key management personnel; other executive/GMs; senior managers and in other managerial positions. It was only upon looking at the proportion of CEO / heads of business who were women where this decreases somewhat, though EOCGE citation holders still exceed all EOCGE reporting organisations in this category.

This finding is particularly significant, since the initiatives set out in Section 5.2 of the report, with regard to initiatives to progress women within their respective organisations, seems to be behind this positive result. There is strong support in the academic literature for the idea that for the full benefits of gender diversity to manifest, a tipping point in the proportion of women in board roles and leadership roles within an organisation needs to be reached. It is no coincidence that the idea of 40/40/20 is held as the target ratios of women and men in both board and leadership roles in organisations. Many scholars argue that for diversity to have its full impact on organisational outcomes, a critical mass of that diverse group is required so that their voice (diversity of thought) will have its maximum impact (Kanter, 1977). In the case of gender diversity, this number ranges from 30-40% (Torchia, Calabro & Huse, 2011).

Figure 5. Five-year percentage average of women at all management levels

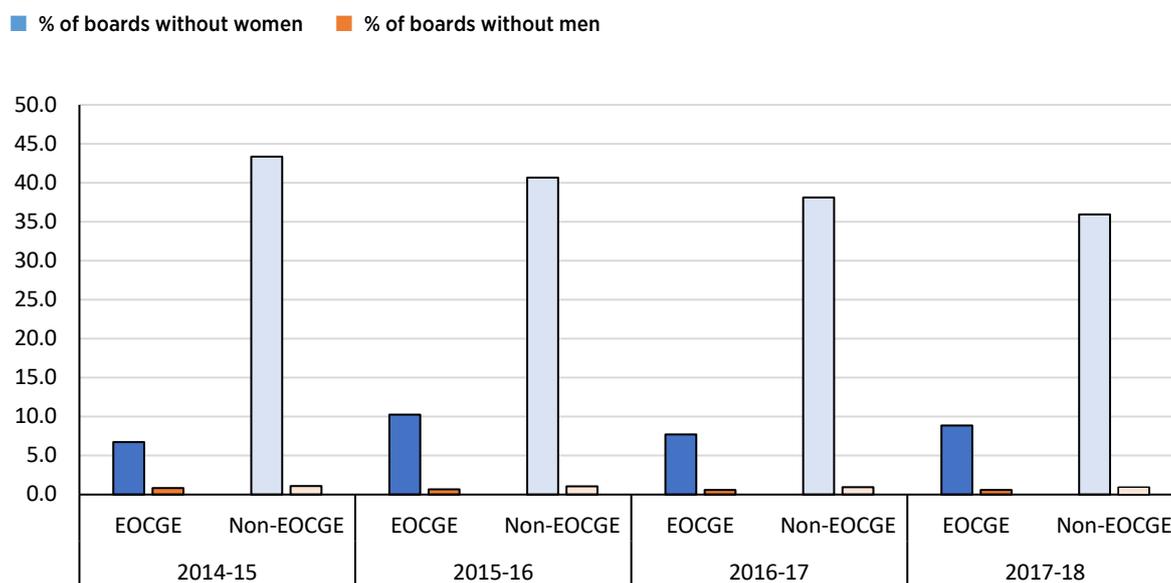


1.1.6 Boards without Male or Female Representation

Across the 2014–2018 reporting period ², there was a significant difference between EOCGE organisations and non-citation holders with regard to the percentage of boards without female representation. This was consistently true within each reporting period. When looking at the metrics for the proportion of boards without male representation, it was clear that there was little difference between EOCGE organisations and non-citation holders suggesting that EOCGE citation status may inform women’s representation in positions of governance.

Whilst it might be expected that EOCGE organisations have mandatory representation of women on their boards, it is also the case that some organisations may not have control over board appointments, particularly in cases where they form part of a multi-national corporation.

Figure 6. Percentage of boards without male or female representation

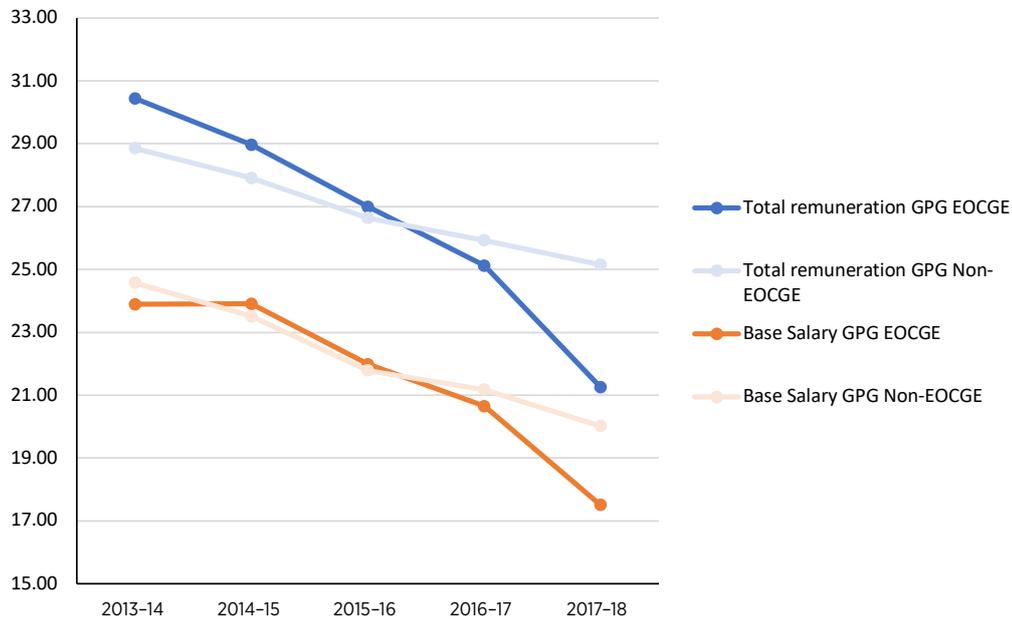


1.1.7 Change in Full-time Remuneration and Gender Pay Gap 2013–18

The depiction of change in full-time remuneration and the gender pay gap (GPG) over the five-year reporting period from 2013–18 shows positive gains for women. While EOCGE organisations are initially higher relative to non-citation holding organisations, this may again be an artefact of organisations that understand their challenges with gender inequality self-selecting into a cohort of employers working towards challenging the status quo. On examination of the five-year trajectory it is clear from the convergence within the 2015–16 reporting period, with regard to the total remuneration GPG, that positive gains are being made by EOCGE that outstrip those of non-EOCGE organisations. Moreover, it is important to highlight that the types of industries EOCGE organisations come from include those in which discretionary pay forms an important part of remuneration packages (e.g. Professional, Scientific and Technical, Financial and Insurance Services). Therefore, the fact that EOCGE organisations indeed outperform non-citation holders from 2015 and beyond is particularly noteworthy.

² Data was unavailable for board composition during the 2013–14 reporting period.

Figure 7. Change in full-time remuneration & GPG 2013–18



The workforce composition metrics provided above suggest some unique features of EOCGE organisations relative to those organisations that do not hold citation status. It is clear that:

- on average, in 2017-18 there was a greater proportion of women managers in EOCGE organisations across industries when compared to non-citation holders
- overall, the pipeline of women feeding into leadership positions appears more robust for EOCGE organisations relative to non-citation holders
- EOCGE organisations favour models of full-employment rather than a casualisation of their workforces;
- five-year averages from 2013-18 indicate that women are more strongly represented at all levels of management in EOCGE organisations relative to non-citation holders
- EOCGE organisations are significantly more likely to have women on their boards when compared to non-citation holders
- EOCGE organisations demonstrate more agility, despite a higher starting point, in reducing their total remuneration GPG. This signifies a willingness of EOCGE organisations to interrogate their discretionary pay data within the context of gender equality to better inform total remuneration packages of men and women employees.

Additional information on the gender pay gap data, in particular, can be found at www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news/take-the-six-steps-to-pay-equity

1.2 The Gender Equality Imperative

Every Workplace Gender Equality Agency EOCGE citation holder reported gender equality as being a strategic organisational imperative. Most EOCGE organisations referred to the advantages brought by greater gender equity toward organisational outcomes. Many also noted that it was ‘just and ethical’ to strive for workplace gender equality, noting that it was ‘simply the right thing to do’. In addition, many others argued that their organisation should reflect the composition of the society in which they operate.

Most for-profit EOCGE organisations, in their internal and external communications, referred, either directly or indirectly, to the strong ‘business case’ for gender equality, by citing an extensive array of studies and reports that highlight the improved financial outcomes attached to increased workplace gender equality. Likewise, not-for-profit EOCGE organisations also highlighted the positive outcomes for service delivery to be gained from

greater gender diversity. Key studies by Catalyst (2004), Deloitte (2011), Morgan Stanley (2016), McKinsey (2018) and KPMG (2018), were often cited by EOCGE organisations, with all of them pointing to gender equality as being a financial (or service) driver for their organisations and for the economy as a whole.

For example, Catalyst's (2004:2) study, and many further follow up studies undertaken by Catalyst, find that groups of companies with the highest representation of women in their top management teams experience over 30% better financial performance than groups of companies with the lowest representation, both in terms of return on equity and total return to shareholders. Morgan Stanley (2011:2) independently reported that firms with higher gender diversity have higher return on equity as well as lower return on equity volatility. McKinsey (2018:1) highlights that, not only is there a statistically significant correlation between a more diverse leadership team and financial performance, but also that the executive roles that women occupy are critical to financial performance metrics. They find that the highest performing companies had more women in line (typically revenue-generating) roles than in staff (support) roles in their executive teams.

KPMG insights (2018; 2019) emphasise that the potential contribution to the Australian economy by addressing the issue of workplace gender inequality is significant and could deliver a \$140 billion lift to living standards within two decades. Studies by Goldman Sachs (2009) and the World Economic Forum (2018) support these findings and suggest that addressing this issue as a society could see GDP increase by as much as 11-12% or over \$150 billion.

Deloitte (2011) was among the first to highlight that financial outcomes are not simply a matter of adding more women, by noting that the mechanisms for delivering upon the business case for gender equality should match the mechanisms used to drive any other strategic initiative. In Deloitte's (2011:20) 'The Gender Dividend' report they note 'What is needed, therefore, is a business response to what is essentially a business problem, that is, an evaluation of the bottom line impact of investing in women. Organizations need to assess in real terms—revenues, profits, growth, productivity, customer satisfaction, or whatever metrics they use to deem themselves successful—what they will achieve by shifting their mindset, re-evaluating investments, and reconsidering their leadership model to reflect a more balanced mix of women and men as workers and consumers. This shouldn't be an abstract management exercise. Rather, organizations should use the same models that apply to any significant organizational or policy change. Because to change the results, you have to change the model.'

Likewise, McKinsey (2018:2) highlights that for gender equality initiatives to deliver their intended benefits they must:

- be directly linked to overall organisational strategies
- have CEOs and leaders articulating a compelling vision, embedding real accountability for delivery and cascading this down through middle management in a data-driven way
- be targeted, based upon strategic priorities, and invest in both hard and software support programs and a culture of inclusion
- tailor initiatives to relevant business areas or geographic regions to maximise buy-in and impact.

McKinsey (2018:2) noted, therefore, that 'Designing a truly effective inclusion and diversity strategy is no small undertaking'. McKinsey's (2018) report highlights a key issue and criticism that leading gender equality academic Alice Eagly, among many others, puts forward about the over-reliance by businesses on the 'simple' business case to produce increased profits (Eagly, 2016). Eagly notes that the relationship between organisational gender equality initiatives and outcomes is complex and it is extremely difficult to disentangle cause and effect. In this regard she points to both the women on boards and workgroup diversity research literature, which is mixed in terms of the financial outcomes produced. In these cases, simply adding more women to the board or to workgroups, with no attention paid to a range of other contextual factors or supporting initiatives, is unlikely to produce any appreciable effect and may even drive adverse outcomes. Therefore organisations must pay individual attention to the 'conditions under which diversity produces its varied effects on outcomes that include gains for social justice as well as group and organisational performance.' (Eagly, 2016:200).

What is highlighted above is that in many ways the social justice case, the diverse representation case and the business case are so closely entangled that it seems that arguing the primacy of one above the others misses the point.

Put simply, without appropriate values such as justice, ethics and leaders who embody these values; without managers and employees who value inclusion and promote diverse voices; without policies and practices that entrench these values and metrics that hold deviants to account, there is no business case.

A common feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations is their understanding that the business case is founded upon a holistic, values-based, strategic approach to workplace gender equality and a keen focus upon policies, practice and metrics to assess progress.

CEOs of EOCGE organisations articulated this in many ways. However, regardless of their industry sector, the connection to outcomes was always through a foundation of fairness and inclusion, as the quotes in Table 1 evidence.

Industry Sector	CEO Statements about their Gender Equality Imperative
Administration	<i>“Through greater workforce diversity, we receive a wider range of new ideas, different approaches to business issues and broader contact with the markets in which we operate. This translates to increased innovation, productivity and profitability. We do this because we know we can’t attract and retain the best people and improve workplace productivity if there’s any unfairness or perception of unfairness in our workplace.”</i>
Information technology	<i>“We want a team that’s fully engaged, highly motivated and properly remunerated. We want to attract and retain the best people, regardless of their gender or creed and we want to make us a great place to work. To make that happen we need to be flexible, fair and inclusive, that’s who we are, that’s our culture. Gender diversity has helped to open a pathway for broader thinking. Not only is diversity the right thing to do, there is a sound business case for gender diversity because, there is a larger talent pool to choose from, particularly given the younger generation of women who are achieving higher qualifications than their male peers, there is greater engagement through inclusive behaviours and practices, which can lead to better performance and discretionary effort and a greater diversity of thought and more perspectives lead to innovative thinking, which ultimately results in better outcomes. It’s important that our workforce reflects the diversity of our society so we can better understand and respond to the market.”</i>
Manufacturing	<i>“Our success depends on our ability to create innovative solutions. We achieve this by leveraging diversity of thought, experience and skills. Our inclusive workplace culture brings engaged employees willing to go the extra mile and makes us significantly better placed to attract and retain high performers and high performance impacts the bottom line. Talent is the ultimate competitive advantage. But workplace diversity is about more than productivity. For me it goes to the heart of our values and is about treating every member of our team with dignity and respect.”</i>
Professional services	<i>“Diversity and inclusiveness are at the core of our values. It is about who we are and how we work with our clients and with each other. By building diversity across our practice we bring our values to life to collaborate effectively with each other, innovate the very best outcomes and solutions, and to inspire our clients and ourselves.”</i>
Financial services	<i>“Firstly, it’s the right thing to do, and I don’t think that people argue that anymore. I have a twelve year old daughter and it never occurs to me that she shouldn’t have every opportunity available to her in the world. Secondly there is a very cold hard business reality; teams with a diversity of mind perform better. When you have people who come at a problem from a different perspective, who have different experiences of life, different emotional reactions to things, just different ways of thinking, you end up with a better outcome. And in a world today that is so competitive where every inch of an advantage you can get over your competitors matters, you’ve got to get everything that works for you and that’s why again I think it’s kind of a no brainer on both counts.”</i>
Education	<i>“It is inconceivable that in a just and ethical society, women have any less opportunity in employment or in life. For real progress, it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to continue and consistently strive for positive change.”</i>

Table 1. CEO statements about their gender equality imperative.

Section 2 – Strategy Formulation and Employee Involvement



Key Findings

Leading practice organisations:

- develop and implement gender equality strategies and policies that are fully integrated into the overall organisation strategy with the gender equality strategy providing the framework for policies and actions that underpin progress
- have, on average, 3–5 year gender equality strategic plans
- acknowledge and account for the (dis)advantages of their industries as well as identifying and capitalising on their organisations' strengths within strategy development
- engage their workforces in the development and implementation of gender equality strategy through: focus groups, targeted interviews or case studies, piloting, targeted surveys, and cross-validation of data gathered
- ensure women's voices are clearly represented in their committees and sub committees
- integrate governance and oversight into the implementation of gender equality strategy.



Actions Points

- Establish and evaluate a stand-alone gender equality strategy that integrates clearly with the overall organisational strategy. Ensure that the full integration of these strategic initiatives provides the framework for policies and actions that underpin, support and promote progress.
- Coordinate timely strategic planning that ensures gender equality strategy documents are relevant, up-to-date and fit for purpose in underpinning policies and action.
- In developing or monitoring gender equality strategies, look beyond the confines of the organisation to recognise (dis)advantages of your industry and how these might be overcome by unique strengths of your organisation.
- Establish opportunities for your people to be engaged within strategic planning on gender equality. Ensure that gender equality is promoted and facilitated through the engagement and consultation process.
- Incorporate and monitor governance processes that underpin and support the oversight of gender equality strategies.

2.1 Strategy and Strategic Intent

A key feature of leading practice EOCGE citation holders is the central importance placed upon their gender equality strategy. This strategy informs all policies and actions undertaken towards reaching gender equality by citation holders and is fully integrated into the organisation's overall strategy. Gender equality strategies defined the direction in which each organisation wished to move as well as establishing the framework for its policies and the actions required to get them there.

Citation holders have, on average, 3–5 year strategic plans, which set out a consistent approach to working towards the achievement of gender equality in their workplaces. These strategies take into account the advantages and limitations of their respective industries as well as clearly setting out their organisation's inherent strengths and weaknesses. Strategies for EOCGE organisations were usually derived after consideration of internal and external reviews of the workforce as well as past gender equality initiatives. Citation holders are also marked by a high degree of workforce involvement in the development, testing, implementation and review of policies and their operationalisation.

Most citation holders are also clear about the values that underpin their strategic intent, with the majority pointing towards an inclusive culture as a core value of their organisation. As noted earlier in the report, a characteristic of citation holders is the inclusive leadership demonstrated by their CEOs and a focus on applying organisational resources towards building upon an inclusive culture. These leaders not only 'walk the talk' but embody the core values they are trying to codify in their gender equality strategies.

There is a well-established literature around the power of strategic intent when linked to core values (Collins & Porras, 1996; Hamel & Prahalad, 1989). Core values and core purpose can remain fixed while policies and practices adapt to failure and success as well as the changing external environment. A key premise of strategic intent is that everyone in the organisation should be able to articulate the organisation's intent for its strategy and this intent must be clear and succinct enough to guide everyday actions. For example, 'we aim to have equal representation of men and women in all key management positions by 2025'.

Such a statement of intent not only drives the policies and practices of an organisation but also the behaviours that might influence this outcome. As Stone (2017:27) notes, “audacious ambitions can aid long-term success by focusing and applying organisational energies to a unifying and compelling goal ... core values assist in decision-making and are brought to life by the implementation of the policies and practices which reinforce them.” As noted earlier in the report, it was a feature of CEOs of EOCGE organisations that they clearly set out their organisation’s strategic intent with regard to gender equality.

While it must be stressed that each EOCGE citation holder approached strategy development and implementation differently, there was significant common ground in the identification of gender equality as a strategic priority requiring multiple reinforcing policies and activities. The following were key priority areas:

1. Promotion and embedding of an inclusive culture and values surrounding gender equality throughout the organisation as a baseline for success.
2. Detailed understanding of the current context and position of the organisation in relation to how much gender equality is valued within the organisation as well as an understanding of metrics surrounding it. This includes ongoing assessments of the organisation’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
3. Empowering of the organisation’s leadership group and workforce to participate in ongoing gender equality strategy formulation and implementation.
4. Collaboration/consultation with external stakeholders in the development and implementation of leading practice gender equality policies and practices.
5. Communication and promotion of gender equality strategic intent internally and externally, outlining clear, ambitious but achievable goals.
6. Development, review and regular update of a suite of gender equality policies and actions to deliver upon strategic intent.
7. Holistic integration of clear gender equality policy goals into all organisational plans and activities.
8. Training and development of all employees to equip them with the capabilities necessary to implement organisational policy and deliver strategic intent.

9. Formal accountability for gender equality policy outcomes across all levels of the organisation.
10. Transparent mechanisms for reporting progress to the organisation’s leadership group, workforce and external stakeholders.
11. Mechanisms for regularly monitoring, evaluating and revising gender equality policies and practices as well as overarching strategy.

Many EOCGE citation holders noted that the citation application process provided a strategic blueprint or ‘comprehensive roadmap’ for change by highlighting key areas to consider when striving for workplace gender equality. However, strategic priorities were often determined by the industry sector the organisation occupied. Typically, considerations around the overall historical gender participation in that sector as well as gender role segregation within industry sectors were key strategic drivers. For example, organisations in male-dominated sectors such as mining, construction and trades demonstrated significant concerns around attracting more women to enter the sector, as well as their progression within the sector into senior roles. However professional organisations and those in the finance sector, with a high proportion of women already, focused more upon the progression of women into senior and executive roles.

2.2 Workforce Involvement in Gender Strategy

A common characteristic of EOCGE citation holders is the high degree to which their respective workforces are involved in a two-way (bottom-up and top-down) formulation of gender equality strategy and policy development. As noted elsewhere in the report, all citation holders had a diversity or gender equality workgroup or committee comprised of key members of the organisation’s executive team, including the CEO, which reported directly to the organisation’s executive leadership group. However, most of the citation holders also had various workgroups, taskforces or subcommittees, usually comprising staff members, or in some cases middle managers. The sub-committees reported to the overarching committee and were tasked with assisting them in various aspects of strategy formulation, policy development, testing and implementation.



Transurban

Leading practice gender equality strategies are those that are holistic, all-encompassing and detailed. Transurban has adopted an approach to setting their gender strategy that has resulted in an integrated approach that coordinates policy and practice with strategic objectives set by executive. This is underpinned by a focus from the executive leadership on the human capital within Transurban.

We interviewed Helena Bugeja, Transurban’s People and Culture Partner and Development Lead, about their strategy and leadership of gender equality in the workplace.

Transurban has taken a leading position in making gender equality a strategic priority. Can you take us through the reasoning of why Transurban took this position?

Transurban’s approach to most things is not to be incremental or piecemeal since it just doesn’t work. If there is one thing about the organisation that is really evident, it is that it has grown amazingly quickly by being focused and applying some basic principles to everything we do. So we don’t like to get distracted by lots of little things adjacent to or adjunct to what we see as our primary focus. To get momentum behind things we have to choose the

things that are most important to us. It also helps that we are not a large organisation. This means that if we get behind something it is fully integrated into the whole business. If we did otherwise it would be inauthentic and it simply wouldn’t work; it wouldn’t capture the hearts and minds of our people.

From a gender perspective, while the strategy emerged from the Board and our Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the key is that the approach needs to be authentic and people need to feel that they own it. Five years ago, initiatives were happening in silos with varying success, but we now have an integrated offering that centres on a philosophy of belonging and wellbeing. We take a whole-of-organisation approach. So, for example, we had stand-alone flexibility policies as well as gender policies and separate inclusion policies, but that is artificial since you really can’t separate these ideas. When you approach these separately they start to look a little transactional but when you integrate them authentically they become part of the culture. They simply become part of the everyday lived experience of working here.

How important is the involvement of Transurban’s people in strategy formulation and implementation?

What we have found is that our strategy is not so much led by our People and Culture team, driving it from the top, but rather it is whole-of-organisation led. So rather than the message from the top saying ‘this is what we are going to do, this is how you are going to do it’ we are seeing it embraced by everyone because it is authentic to them. They see it as the right thing to do and for them it just makes sense. A key part of that is involvement. Strategy needs to come from the bottom up as much as the top down and this means that people need to have the opportunity to communicate what is important to them. We do this in several ways. Just recently we have surveyed everyone about deeper issues around who our people are and what they care about. From this has come a mandate from our people that validates our planned focus areas and refines what we need to do going forward. So, for example, our involvement in recognising and acknowledging significant events such as the International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women was driven by our employees telling us that they want the company to be involved, rather than just one or two people at the top saying so.



Helena Bugeja, People and Culture Partner and Development Lead



So, then, how important is senior leadership in this process?

It is absolutely critical. Our CEO has conversations with all of our staff through regular whole-of-organisation face-to-face forums where anyone can ask questions or make suggestions, through our digital tools, and our people can contact him directly to follow up on ideas. And this is driving a culture where people are really comfortable to say what is on their mind; they know they have a voice and it will be heard. There is a level of honesty and transparency led by the CEO that is appreciated. This has become the way we do things around here; that same expectation of honesty and transparency across all of the teams in the organisation. Even our building space is designed to encourage informal and formal working and 'kitchen conversations'. Our people are well connected with each other and this enables good ideas to spread pretty quickly throughout the organisation and gather a groundswell of support for implementation.

So, all of this fits with our strategy of wanting to drive gender equality. We have a unique business model, and while we do have areas of the business that are male dominated, such as engineering, we are working on the strategic premise that diversity of thought drives better outcomes and gender equality provides a strong foundation for this. If our people genuinely believe in and drive our gender equality strategy, because it is realistic and authentic, then they are more likely to attract diverse talent to work here too. This is critical in an industry such as ours in ensuring that we meet future challenges and continue to move towards a gender diverse workplace. Likewise, it is essential that those at the top, such as the Executive

Committee, our CEO and the Board, set the tone of the organisation in this direction and role model the kinds of behaviours they want to see others adopt.

Our Transurban Board has played a pivotal role in setting targets and KPIs that the organisation is expected to drive towards and these are measured and reported upon regularly with managers, including executive committee members, and each are held accountable. There is an important balance here, however, in not letting the measures set a minimum bar. 'What gets measured get done' but we need to be aware of both the upside and downside of targets in getting the spirit and the intent of the measure right, rather than default to 'tick the box'. This is helped by asking questions like 'what does success look like?', 'what is that measure trying to achieve?', 'what are the real drivers of behaviour?' and not losing sight of the bigger issues such as, 'what is the story behind the data?' These are a work in progress and there is always more we can do to get these measures right, continuing to integrate to provide a fuller picture of our progress.

It's also important that we listen to what is happening outside of our organisation in this space, and in this regard we are privileged with a board comprising members who have a deep understanding of gender equality issues, are exposed to new ideas in their other roles and can reflect upon these when thinking about what is next for Transurban. We are also a highly consultative firm that is exposed to many sectors that helps us think broadly when faced with solving these complex challenges. Being a relatively young firm, it is part of our DNA to be curious and look for leading practices since we understand that we don't have all of the answers.

Most EOCGE organisations, while ensuring that women's voices are clearly represented in their committee and subcommittees, took the view that there needed to be a gender balance in representation. The two most common reasons offered for the inclusion of men, particularly in subcommittees, were, firstly, that men are more likely to be in a position that can effect change and, secondly, that men at all levels of the organisation need to understand the issues and be a part of the solution. Nonetheless, it was also a feature of EOCGE organisations that internal women's representation groups and networks were widely consulted and involved in policy development.

Typically, subcommittees are directly sponsored by members of the committee and comprise volunteers who have an interest in gender equality and have the capability to contribute towards the development and implementation of solutions.

Some EOCGE organisations have also adopted micro-models of the Male Champions of Change initiative, introduced by former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick. This model seeks to recruit senior, influential men to advocate for gender equality. These types of initiatives are always complimentary to subcommittee engagement. Like committees and subcommittees, 'male champions' are facilitated access to capability development (see following) in the area of workplace gender equality. They are charged with advocating for change, sponsoring and enabling change and educating and influencing men in support of committee and subcommittee initiatives. Some EOCGE organisations had widened this influential group to include influential women, changing the descriptor for this group from 'Male Champions of Change' to 'Equity Champions'.

2.2.1 Capability Development

EOCGE citation holders are at differing stages of the journey towards workplace gender equality. Typically, organisations that are in the earlier stages of their journey engage in capability development for committee members as well as staff and middle management members of the subcommittee.

Capability development comprises multiple mechanisms including:

- attendance at external gender equality related functions, seminars, forums and workshops
- circulation of WGEA, DCA, industry, market research, consulting and media gender equality reports
- reviews and workshops around industry and national/international leading practice for workplace gender equality

- engagement of external experts in the area of workplace gender equality to educate on the scope of the issue and the elements that need to be addressed in tackling it
- sharing of existing organisational gender equality data
- engagement with industry-based gender equality representative bodies such as:
 - Women in Law
 - Women in Banking and Finance
 - National Association of Women in Construction
 - Women in Super
 - National Committee for Women in Engineering
 - National Association of Women in Operations

The aim of capability development is to equip committees and subcommittees with the knowledge, understanding and tools required to develop and implement a gender equality strategy as well as the policies and practices to underpin it.

Regardless of the stage in the journey, these forms of capability development are regularly re-visited for committees and subcommittees of EOCGE organisations.

2.2.2 Whole-of-Organisation Engagement

All EOCGE organisations regularly conduct surveys of all staff. These are mostly in the form of employee engagement surveys, diversity and inclusion surveys or specific gender equality surveys.

Surveys include quantitative measures of satisfaction with existing policies and practices, perceptions of overall workplace gender equality, fairness, discrimination, quality of leadership, quality of opportunity, work/life balance, barriers and impediments to retention and progression, support for new initiatives as well as industry- or sector-specific questions. Given the critical role played by this engagement mechanism, organisations early in their gender equality journey often retain external advisors to assist in the construction, delivery and analysis of gender equality surveys.

A key feature of a good survey is the inclusion of qualitative questions that require written feedback on what underlies the employees' responses to specific quantitative questions. It also allows employees to share their overall views or concerns and what they feel could be done to improve gender equality in the organisation (Singleton & Straits, 2005).



The inclusion of detailed demographic questions in the survey is critical, as this allows the survey to be used to identify 'hot spots'. Leading practice surveys are anonymous, but include demographics such as gender, sexual identity, age, team/unit/division/region, level in hierarchy and employment status (full-time, part-time, contract, flexible arrangement). Detailed demographics enable in-depth analysis of the data to identify and target specific policy areas, units/divisions or hierarchical levels for attention.

Additionally, many EOCGE organisations noted that, while their focus is on examining and understanding gender differences in the survey data from the point of view of improving outcomes for women, they were also looking for male engagement around issues and particularly for 'push back' in policy areas. Identifying these gendered response differences is seen as a first step in recognising areas where men are not engaged and where additional resources may be needed.

Most EOCGE organisations make results of surveys (usually aggregated) available to all staff and provide forums to socialise the data. These forums are often used to collect further feedback. Typically, survey results and follow-up feedback are used by the committee to determine strategic priorities and to communicate with staff about target areas and areas requiring further detailed research.

Many EOCGE organisations reported that workforce engagement in designing and implementing gender equality strategy is greatest when employees' views are not only sought but also when they can see that

their input is valued and has been acted upon. A feature of EOCGE organisations is that they have clear mechanisms for acting and reporting upon staff engagement with gender equality strategy, policy and practice.

EOCGE organisations also engage in many other forms of organisation-wide one-way information sharing through resource hubs, webinars, functions and presentations, some of which have capacity for workforce feedback and input. Leading practice in these areas has been outlined separately elsewhere in the report.

2.2.3 Targeted Engagement

Collection, interpretation, dissemination and prioritisation of all organisation survey data is a first step for most EOCGE organisations. Typically, for whole-of-organisation initiatives, such as workplace flexibility, the next step is targeted policy formulation/refinement and testing. EOCGE organisations use a range of mechanisms in this process, however most typical is the use of policy-specific surveys, focus groups, workshops, unit- or division-targeted surveys, detailed case studies and pilots involving those who have been, or are most likely to be, affected by a particular policy.

Some EOCGE organisations have also used male champions or equity champions as a further means of staff engagement and communication for specific issues.



2.2.3.1 Focus Groups

Depending on how far along the gender equality journey an organisation is, focus groups can be used alongside organisation-wide surveys to gain an overall understanding of the issues confronting the organisation. For example, many organisations reported bringing together large groups of senior women from within their organisation to gain an overall understanding of barriers to career progression and success that have occurred across their career. Other organisations reported 'listening tours' where focus groups of women from across all levels and sectors of the organisation were brought together in various locations to share their experiences. For instance, one organisation reported that such forums had identified issues around the need for tailored personal protective equipment for women, which would otherwise have gone unreported at senior levels, while another discovered gender differences in access to basic facilities such as washrooms and toilets. Such forums are usually hosted directly by the committee and attended by key committee members.

In other EOCGE organisations, focus groups containing representative numbers of employees from across the organisation (dependent on the size and spread of the organisation) were also brought together for facilitated discussions around specific policies or issues identified in organisation-wide surveys or forums. In this case, the focus groups were usually equipped with general information on the issue as well as specific contextual information. A key outcome of the process is that the focus group

provides 'saturation' surrounding the issue. That is to say that the focus group is large enough to represent and convey the views of all those in the organisation who might be affected by the policy or issue.

Depending on the issue and the skills of focus group members, focus groups were also used to suggest refinements and to workshop potential solutions for the committee to consider.

A feature of EOCGE organisations is recognition that policies not only affect employees but also need to be enacted by managers. Focus groups of leaders and managers responsible for the implementation and oversight of policies were also characteristic. Management focus groups, forums and workshops were largely conducted around implementation and practice rather than policy and involved understanding and developing better ways to operationalise policy through sharing past experiences.

Focus groups were usually attended by at least one member of the committee or appropriate subcommittee, and in most cases were run by a committee, subcommittee or HR team member. However, where contentious issues or staff perceptions may have compromised quality responses, organisations usually hired an external facilitator to run the focus group and present findings.



As noted above with surveys, once the committee had analysed the focus group responses and agreed upon a draft policy or practice solution it was usual to reconvene the focus group to socialise and test the solution with them before communicating it more widely.

2.2.3.2 Interviews and Case Studies

Focus groups do, however, have limitations. Firstly, an idea or an individual can come to dominate the conversation in a focus group and other issues, which are understood by those present, remain unvoiced. This is often the case with larger focus groups. Secondly, unless well-managed, it can be difficult to prioritise the relative importance of focus group outputs. Finally, while focus groups and workshops can often be sufficient for broadbrush policy formulation and practice improvement, sometimes issues can be more complex and nuanced. This requires a deeper understanding of an individual or a set of individuals' lived experiences as a better way to understand the effects of policies and practices upon them. Likewise, individuals can provide narratives about their broad experiences across a career providing detailed input across a range of policies.

Most EOCGE organisations reported using interviews and case studies for targeted engagement of staff, particularly for complex issues such as flexibility, parental leave and career progression.

Like focus groups, enough participants need to be interviewed to reach 'saturation' in the issues being reported. Relative to focus groups, the process is time consuming and produces a lot of information that

will need to be compiled and analysed for common themes, issues and how these should be ranked or prioritised. As such, one-on-one interviews and their analysis were reported by citation holders as usually being undertaken by an external research expert, unless there was an in-house staff member skilled in this area of engagement.

The use of case studies was also a feature of most EOCGE organisations. Case studies go beyond interviews with individuals and include observation of working practices, work/life balance, and discussions with colleagues, subordinates and managers about how an individual (or a select group of individuals) interacts with the policy or practice being featured. These were mainly used as policy and practice exemplars for organisational members through multimedia presentations; however, they were also used as source material to provoke detailed discussions in policy focus groups, forums and workshops.

2.2.3.3 Piloting

Pilots were also a feature of some policy initiatives, particularly around the area of workplace flexibility. For example, before rolling out a new work-from-home initiative in one EOCGE organisation, a small group of individuals were recruited to test the logistics and efficiency of a work-from-home technology set-up, as well as its advantages and limitations upon colleagues and clients. Likewise, pilots were often used to road-test policy packages, support materials and training around these practices.

2.2.3.4 Targeted Surveys

Targeted surveys were often used as an engagement mechanism with those directly affected by specific policies or practices. Survey items and open-ended questions were used to test particular aspects and details of the policy and its operationalisation. Surveys among EOCGE organisation were mainly used to explore workplace flexibility policies, though they were also used to understand issues around structural and institutional barriers across the employee life cycle (recruitment, training and development, identification of high performers, career progression and promotion, and succession into leadership roles). Targeted surveys were often used to gather detailed information as a precursor to focus groups.

Exit surveys (and interviews) were used to capture information and in particular trends surrounding why employees were leaving and, in particular, whether this was due to issues surrounding gender inequality in the workplace. Such surveys can capture information that might otherwise be missed and can be used to target specific areas of the firm where patterns emerge or to address specific policies (Stone, 2017). Exit surveys and interviews were usually undertaken by external providers.

2.2.3.5 Cross Validation of Engagement Information

A key role of the committee was in cross-validating information obtained from different sources. That is to say that, information obtained from focus groups may be found to broadly reflect information obtained from organisation-wide surveys and/or targeted surveys, interviews, case studies, exit interviews and other metrics maintained by the organisation. The key objective to ensure that there was no over-reliance on one source of information and to provide more certainty around the conclusions drawn from those information sources.

2.3 Gender Equality Strategy – Governance and Oversight

Supportive governance for gender equality is fundamental to achieving positive outcomes and meaningful change. For many organisations, gender equality has become a routine element of governance processes and reporting that incorporates auditing and evaluations as well as public reporting of outcomes (Brunila & Edström, 2013). Nevertheless, many organisations, excluding those that hold citation status, fail to go beyond surface-level measures such as age and gender proportions (Vuontisjärvi, 2006). Even in instances where organisations report on the gender composition or gender pay gaps,

most do not investigate or implement strategies to address these issues (Ehnert, Parsa, Roper, Wagner & Muller-Camen, 2016). Governance structures in EOCGE organisations routinely address these issues by overseeing the development of gender equality strategy and providing oversight and review of its operationalisation.

The governance structures of EOCGE organisations, in relation to their gender equality strategy, mostly comprised senior executive level individuals constituting an overarching ‘gender equality committee’ which provided oversight of specific purpose subcommittees as well as monitoring, evaluating and managing gender equality strategy, policy, practice, data and reviews across their workforces. The composition of these committees varied significantly across EOCGE organisations. However, as a minimum, they generally comprised the following:

- chief executive officer
- a sub-set of direct reports to the CEO
- regional general managers (in geographically dispersed organisations)
- a human resources manager (or equivalent title)

Many (though somewhat surprisingly, not a majority) of committees also included selected individuals from within the organisation (either managers or employees) who had a demonstrated passion, insight or expertise around gender equality initiatives.

By having dedicated gender equality governance structures in which the CEO and executive members have oversight and direct accountability for gender equality strategy and its operationalisation, not only is there direct line of sight to progress against the strategy, but because it is measured and managers are being held accountable, there are also clear signs of progress on many fronts being reported by EOCGE organisations. Likewise, there are clear benefits to the organisation with regard to their corporate social responsibility agenda more broadly, since senior management are able to discuss the issue with first-hand knowledge and insight to external stakeholders such as unions, shareholders and the media (e.g. Jo & Harjoto, 2011; Neubaum & Zahra, 2006)

As noted above, it was also a feature of nearly all EOCGE organisations that subcommittees (either formally or informally constituted) were established to oversee specific elements of the organisation’s gender equality strategy. Subcommittees largely consisted of middle managers and employees whose role was to, more or less, act as a ‘grass roots conduit’ for gender



equality initiatives (both for implementation and feedback). Oversight of organisational subcommittees (e.g. flexibility steering committees, women's networks and parents groups) charged with acting on specific elements of gender equality strategy in EOCGE organisations were often sponsored or led by the CEO or a member of the executive committee who reported back to the overarching committee.

The organisational committees that oversaw gender equality strategy within EOCGE organisations were referred to by a multitude of different titles. Nonetheless, each of these bodies met regularly (quarterly on average) and provided ongoing oversight, review and regular discussion on the progress of their organisations gender equality strategy:

- Gender Equality Committee
- Diversity Council
- Diversity Committee
- Diversity Working Group – Gender Equality
- Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group
- Diversity and Equity Committee
- Inclusion and Diversity Council
- Regional Diversity Committee

It should be noted that while most EOCGE organisations did not have dedicated gender equality committees, opting rather for diversity committees, it would be fair to say that, regardless, their work was primarily concerned with oversight of gender equality initiatives.

A key distinction of EOCGE organisations is the heightened level of board, CEO and executive attention, sponsorship and prioritisation of strategic gender equality initiatives within their respective organisations. While CEO leadership was key, EOCGE organisations were characterised by a range of different senior individuals also being visibly involved in sponsorship of specific gender equality initiatives and subcommittees.

While not all organisations reported specifically on how they went about developing their gender equality strategy in their EOCGE applications, many EOCGE organisations reported that, year on year, they would focus on particular facets of overarching gender equality strategy. Hence, while always addressing all of the components of their gender equality policies referred to throughout this report, most EOCGE organisations would identify and tackle particular problem areas and set these aside for special attention and additional resourcing, moving on to other problematic areas once the current issue had been addressed. Many EOCGE organisations reported upon specific industry or organisational contexts that required such attention.

Most EOCGE organisations gender equality strategic plans were considered alongside their overarching organisational strategic plan. This meant that gender equality strategy would be automatically reviewed as a part of the regular organisational strategic review process. This review process, in most organisations, took place at least annually and included all of the senior leadership team and the board.

Section 3 – CEO Leadership is the Key



Key Findings

Leading practice CEOs:

- are advocates for gender equality, working to influence their c-suite peers, members of their organisations, professional colleagues and industry groups beyond the confines of their organisation through internal and external communications, presentations and membership of peak bodies
- use metrics and measures to prompt discussion and action drawing upon workforce composition data, gender pay gap data, data inciting personal accountability, and mid-year planning / performance review cycle data to shape rhetoric
- are unafraid to challenge the status quo in the reorganisation of work. They demonstrated creativity and a willingness to test novel approaches to work composition
- embody gender equality as part of everyday work through values-based communication, public commitments to change their own personal behaviours but also those of their peers and their organisation for the purposes of challenging inequality
- are fearless in their soliciting of feedback internally or externally on matters of gender equality, integrating these perspectives into the way they lead their organisations
- engage, influence and role-model behaviours that are a vital contributor to the degree to which gender equality becomes part of organisational DNA
- embody and lead executive teams who adopt inclusive leadership practices that include: awareness of own biases; curiosity surrounding novel ideas and experiences; cultural awareness; collaborative work approaches; committed to action that serves the greater interests; and courageous in challenging the status quo.



Action Points

- Incorporate inclusive leadership behaviours as key performance indicators within the recruitment, selection, and retention of CEOs, executives and leaders throughout the organisation.
- CEOs may look to upskill in engagement, influence and role-modelling of gender equality behaviours through consultation, personal and professional development.
- Provide safe opportunities for CEOs and people leaders to solicit feedback in real-time on their

inclusive leadership practices, with identified opportunities for development and progress clearly articulated and measured.

- Identify and select relevant and appropriate opportunities for engagement with peers, professional bodies and industry stakeholders on matters of gender equality at the CEO level.

3.1 CEO Influence in the Promotion of Gender Equality

There is a noticeable absence of empirical research on the role of leadership in diversity management (Howell & Costley, 2006). Nevertheless, it remains clear that CEO engagement, influence and role-modelling is a vital contributor to the degree to which gender equality becomes part of organisational DNA.

Broadly, there has been a trend within academic research towards more relational leadership approaches that prioritise interpersonal connection and careful management of others' identities that impact on work (e.g. Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2010; Haslam, Steffens, Peters, Boyce, Mallett & Fransen, 2017). Moreover, most effective leaders are those who empower their followers and facilitate two-way influence between themselves and their followers (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Translated into practice, these more novel leadership behaviours have been captured by the term inclusive leadership which – according to recent work from Bourke & Dillon (2016) – describes a leader who is:

1. aware of their own biases
2. curious about novel ideas and experiences
3. culturally aware
4. collaborative in approach when working with others
5. committed to a course of action that serves the greater interests
6. courageous in challenging the status quo.

Together, this suite of inclusive leadership behaviours converge to engage those groups that are traditionally excluded from the broader group and furthermore, inclusive leadership predicts more favourable perceptions of work group performance by those individuals underrepresented in the organisation (Jin, Lee & Lee, 2017). Even more compelling, is results suggesting that inclusive leadership is a stronger predictor of work cohesion within teams relative to diversity training (Law, 2012).

In many ways, inclusive leadership practices facilitate the experience of psychological safety within workplaces – the experience of feeling comfortable bringing your ‘whole self’ to the workplace within interactions (Edmonson, 1996). In other words, inclusive leaders create an environment in which individual employees feel comfortable taking interpersonal risks as they embody their true selves at work (Edmonson, 1999). Inclusive leaders who create such an environment do so through their own embodiment of their ‘truest selves’ at work, leading by example and bringing employees along with them in growing such a workplace environment.

Inclusive leaders influence those around them in favour of creating a positive workplace. In the context of gender equality, we know that sharing first-hand experiences of gender equality can be more effective in influencing others than simply reporting data (Sanyal, et al., 2015). By individualising the experience of inequality, inclusive leaders are able to translate and share the impact that inequality can have when left unchecked. Importantly, inclusive leadership is not simply a belief in equality, but rather an embodiment of equality through personal behaviour, communication (both internal and external) as well as the demonstrable ways in which CEOs influence gender equality within society more broadly.

CEOs from EOCGE organisations took an active role in influencing peers, other industries and the general public on matters of gender equality. There were several commonly reported strategies used by CEOs in building influence on matters of gender equality including:

- consistent application for EOCGE WGEA status;
- a multi-source approach to tackling gender inequality (e.g. changing individual behaviours, ways of speaking about gender inequality, individual advocacy);
- a strong reliance on workforce composition statistics:
 - reporting via KPI scorecards regularly
 - leadership meetings
 - standing agenda items in executive meetings.

Other unique strategies adopted by CEOs to aid in influencing their work colleagues included novel approaches like ‘leaving loudly’ in which CEOs make a point to show their peers that it is culturally acceptable and in fact the norm to leave on time from their workplaces.





When facing resistance from others, leading practice CEOs draw on alternate reputable sources to share with peers and colleagues retaining their commitment to the greater interest, despite push-back from others. One CEO reported that,

"I have had many conversations with leaders and team members who have shared with me that they don't believe gender equality is an issue in the developed markets where we operate, I encourage them to read the overall finding section of the World Economic Forum - The Global Gender Gap Report 2017 to get a real update on what gender inequality really looks like globally."

Drawing on alternate sources of possible influence is a consistent approach adopted by leading practice CEOs. This could include workforce composition data and gender pay gap data as well as information from the broader employee life cycle (e.g. performance and development reviews, promotional outcomes). Moreover, leading practice CEOs integrate personal examples, imbuing communications with anecdotes that members of their organisation would likely relate to. One CEO from the healthcare and social services sector reported, "I don't stop being responsible for health services when I'm at home and I certainly don't stop being a mother, wife or daughter when I'm at work."

CEOs that adopt leading practice strategies for influencing others on matters of gender inequality also adopt a broader understanding of the contexts in which gender inequality manifests and is perpetuated. This can be evidenced by a consideration of factors that can inhibit access to leadership development opportunities for women earlier in their careers, as well as continuing factors that may hamper efforts to challenge the status quo. Within the Education & Training sector, one CEO reported that,

"Today there are only eight female university vice-chancellors out of Australia's 39 universities. There were 11 in 2004 so we're going backwards. A little more hopefully perhaps, 23 of Australia's deputy vice chancellors (academic) are women. [Our] story of gender performance is fairly representative of most universities; there are steady improvements but progress is slow and there remain some real challenges."

A standout feature evidenced within the quote above, is the acknowledgement that whilst there may be faltering progress, there remain opportunities to celebrate. Moreover, this provides an ongoing reminder of the work that remains outstanding in truly challenging the gender inequality that persists within leading practice organisations despite their best efforts.

3.1.1 Workforce Composition

Leading practice CEOs utilise workforce composition figures to influence others on the effectiveness of

various gender equality initiatives. Moreover, they integrate their workforce insights into policies and practices that inform better workplace outcomes for employees; psychological health and wellbeing, for example. It is indeed this amalgamation between composition, policies and outcomes that differentiates CEOs who effectively influence others on gender equality.

Workforce composition, as a means of influence by CEOs within their messaging, was common across all EOCGE organisations across all years as well as within the cross-sectional dataset. Nevertheless, the sophistication of ways in which these figures were used did differ across the cohort, with some organisations adopting more straightforward figures of women's workforce composition whereas other organisations adopted more complex reporting. Complex reporting would, for example, integrate more detailed reporting of gender representation across the workforce alongside personalised messaging on the impact this can have for individuals who may be disadvantaged under the extant status quo. One of the factors that appeared to drive this difference was the level of data collected and its availability. For example, the use of dashboards or more frequent reporting and monitoring of figures throughout the organisation.

3.1.1.1 Underrepresentation of Women

Framing workforce composition as an issue of underrepresentation of women at certain levels was one strategy drawn upon by a large portion of CEOs within the cohort of EOCGE organisations. By flipping workforce composition into a matter of 'deficiency' within organisations, CEOs were better positioned to redress the 'gap' with a variety of strategies and practices. Within the pProfessional, scientific & technical services, one CEO stated,

"It remains simply unacceptable, and has been for a long time, that whilst over 60% of law graduates from Australian universities are women, women are so underrepresented in leadership positions in the law. But what really is starting to happen now is that there is a much better understanding of the root causes that have contributed to these unacceptable statistics. By addressing those issues, together we will make the legal profession not just better for women but better for everyone."

Leading practice also involved the consideration of the broader context in which workforce composition is considered within EOCGE organisations. For example, many organisations drew upon graduation rates of women within fields of study traditionally considered to feed their organisations, the number of adolescent girls studying relevant subject areas

within school, as well as broader areas from which prospective employees might emerge (e.g. industry bodies and professional networks). This broader understanding and cultural awareness with regard to gender equality serves to highlight a baseline from which further action is prompted.

3.1.1.2 Targets and Quotas

CEOs from EOCGE organisations utilise targets (and quotas in some circumstances such as graduate recruitment), as a means of influencing others to understand the importance of policies, practices and actions within their organisations and their linkage to improving gender equality. The cohort of EOCGE organisations contained a portion of very vocal and staunchly supportive CEOs willing to express this in open forums. One CEO reported "We will never make progress unless we embrace targets ... I can tell you that what gets measured gets managed. If you don't measure it, it doesn't get managed."

Often this commitment was highlighted within the context of their existing workforce composition and as a means of pursuing progress towards the targets subsequently stated. For example, one professional, scientific and technical services firm's CEO reported,

"Women make up 45% of this year's promotions, meaning that 18.4% of the 423-strong global partnership is now female. Last year [our organisation] set itself a target to have women make up 25% of the partnership by 2018. At the same time it launched an international advisory group on diversity that is accountable to the board."

Within other contexts, CEOs have drawn upon targets and quotas as a means for instituting change in specific areas of workforce composition. All EOCGE organisations reported targets for management as well as non-management roles; however, there was a subset of organisations that also reported targets for their governing bodies (where these organisations had the capacity to do so). In the healthcare and social services cohort, one stated,

"As your CEO, I have made a commitment to gender equality and pay equity, including my role as a Pay Equity Ambassador. In the past 12 months we have continued to lead the way as an employer of choice for gender equality. This has seen improvements such as, we recently changed our board and selection policy to set a target that maintains the number of women on the Health1 Board. This means that at least three of our nine board directors have to be female. Currently we have four female board directors. So you can see that even at board level, we take gender equality seriously."



Where EOCGE organisations reported not having targets and quotas for their governing bodies, this was largely attributable to their lack of control over its composition and make-up.

3.1.1.3 Workforce Composition Changes / Progress

CEOs of EOCGE organisations also utilised workforce composition changes to influence others. For some CEOs, this was an exercise in celebrating and sharing improvements with the intent of influencing others to share their own recognition of policy impacts. One CEO within the financial and insurance services industry reported,

“... an increase in the number of women in leadership positions to 48% up from 46% last year, which brings us closer to our target of 50% by 2017.” While another CEO in the same industry reported that, “The number of women across [the organisation] now stands at 66%, including representation at the executive management and management levels. In addition, female representation on [our] board is currently 40%, including a female chairperson.”

Whilst celebrating progress and improvements within workforce composition is suggestive of improved gender equality, many CEOs also highlighted the persistent need for sustained effort and attention to policies, practices and initiatives designed specifically to redress gender inequality. This willingness to speak up and challenge the status quo, whilst at the same time remaining humble regarding the continued work required is a key feature of inclusive leadership (Bourke & Dillon, 2016) and a hallmark of leading practice on gender equality. Finally, core elements of CEOs’ messaging designed to influence others using workforce composition progress included:

- figures indicative of gender equality progress
- implications of change and progress for gender equality within the organisation
- acknowledgement and celebration of ‘wins’ and of development opportunities
- projected next steps for the organisation into the future.

Leading practice CEOs were willing to acknowledge shortcomings within their existing approaches while at the same time proposing new ways forward within their suite of gender equality strategies and initiatives. One CEO from the professional, scientific and technical services industry reported,

“We now have a number of both male and female partners with children working flexibly. This year we have 50% men and 50% women attending leadership courses at Harvard (after a track record of 90% men). Excitingly for me, of our youngest 50% of partners, (those under 45 which I just sneak into) half are women. Fifty per cent of our board is women. I wanted to give you some real examples today of how simple collaborative policy changes, coupled with practical conversations can bring about real change. It is not a walk in the park, it has created some challenging conversations, and I don’t want to suggest that we have it absolutely right. We get things wrong and we have a lot of work to do. However, we have stayed true to our idea that gender equity is both right and necessary and we continue to see the results of our changes. Gender equality is possible. It just requires energy, persistence and lateral thinking, and it will give you great business outcomes.”

CEOs may not always have the opportunity to compile messaging of influence that contains all elements of

best practice, when workforce composition figures shift in positive directions, these changes can always be communicated through best-practice mechanisms and mediums listed below within internal/external communications.

3.1.2 Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap is an incredibly common figure drawn upon by CEOs to influence others in favour of changes that support gender equality. For many organisations, a detailed analysis of the gender pay gap at different levels of the organisation (e.g. employee, middle-management, executive) is commonplace with CEOs frequently drawing upon these figures to incite action. Leading practice also comprised transparency in the use of pay gap figures that may be less favourable and this was particularly clear for CEOs attempting to influence change not only within their organisation but also within their professional spheres.

CEOs who were most effective in their use of gender pay gap statistics (e.g. on average, on a like-for-like basis, across the organisation, i.e. 'equal pay') used messaging that was novel in approach as well as personal to their audience. One unique example was from a CEO in the professional, scientific and technical services industry, who personalised messaging on the gender pay gap to individuals, namely women, within their organisation as follows,

"Imagine you've been working since 30 June until today, for free. On average, that's what Australian women have done this year due to the gender pay gap. The WGEA uses average weekly ordinary time earnings data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to calculate that the current national gender pay gap at 15.3%. As a large employer, we're committed to treating our people equally, regardless of gender."

This personalisation of messaging is, once again, a key feature of communication by an inclusive leader.

Other CEOs adopted a more instrumental approach communicating the importance of rectifying inequality in order to remain consistent with organisational values. In these instances, CEOs utilised gender pay gap figures within their own organisation to influence change in recruitment, performance and development reviews, or even on matters of work allocation where this contributed to gender inequality. For example, the allocation of high-profile case files in law firms.

3.1.3 Personal Accountability for Measures

A common feature of leading practice was CEOs who assumed personal accountability for measures

designed to challenge gender inequality. There was a subset of these organisations that took this one step further in an attempt to influence their peers and colleagues to also take accountability for gender equality progress. One CEO from the education and training sector reported that,

"... there is some evidence that women at [our organisation] are not going for leadership roles or promotion in the numbers that men are and this needs to be looked at ... I and the whole [organisation's] team are committed to achieving gender equality in the workplace, and that has different aspects in terms of composition, remuneration, conditions and practices so that they are not indirectly discriminatory and prevent harassment and discrimination in our workplace."

This was particularly effective when peers of the CEO were also made accountable for specific actions or targets. One CEO from the professional, scientific and technical services industry reported that

"I am personally accountable for the delivery of our diversity and inclusion strategy and seek to ensure support and leadership from across the partnership and management. To this end, initially each member of the board/executive committee has committed to pursuing individual diversity objectives, which have been published on the firm's intranet, and all of our partners have now been asked to also commit to an individual diversity objective as part of their goal setting process. The firm is, in turn, committed to monitoring and reporting on our progress against our action plans and targets."

Importantly, a subset of organisations and CEOs also instituted accountability through KPIs and enforced these via performance and development planning processes within the organisation. This level of commitment signals to those around the CEO and throughout the organisation the level of support embedded throughout the organisation for gender equality.

3.1.4 Mid-Year Planning and Performance Review Cycle

CEOs influenced others' understanding of gender inequality by sharing messages regarding the ways in which inequality can be challenged through different elements of the employee life cycle, namely mid-year planning and performance reviews. Within this context, CEOs from EOCGE organisations sought to celebrate progress in promotion rates. At the same time, many CEOs also took the opportunity to recognise the degree to which they had improved, focusing on progress rather than successful outcomes. One CEO from the education and training sector reported,

"I am pleased to see our representation of women across the organisation is a healthy 60.8% - well above our 1984 figure of 34% and the NSW government's current benchmark of 50 per cent. Women in senior positions sits at 38% and senior academic representation remains steady at 31% - a significant improvement from 1984 where we had only one female professor and one female associate professor!"

Again, like other domains of CEO communication, leading practice also incorporated recognition by CEOs that further work was required to embed change, particularly within the context of performance development and subsequent promotions. Another CEO from the education and training sector reported that,

"At the level of professor only 33% were women. Not bad compared to many others in the sector, but still not good enough. When you look at our demographic there appears to be a log jam at the mid-career level for women. In other words they're not getting promoted to the senior academic roles as often as men. And of course this sort of struggle or challenge is mirrored across the rest of the Australian and Queensland business community."

CEOs also recognised and acknowledged the more nuanced ways that gender inequality can manifest. Recognition of this was a key feature of leading practice CEOs who sought to influence others in favour of improved gender equality. One CEO reported that,

"It is an ongoing journey for us to lift female participation in all areas of [our organisation]. What can we do? [Our] Diversity Council, which I Chair, meets quarterly and consists of all members of the Executive Management Team. We are all closely involved in the Company's decision-making in relation to the promotion of a more gender-diverse workplace. Whilst our progress against targets is good, we know that continued progress in gender diversity will depend on our attitudes, the decisions we make and the actions we all take every day. Please always do your best to be conscious of your own stereotypes and biases, not just in relation to gender, but to characteristics such as race, age, disability and industry background."

Demonstrating this level of cultural awareness of gender inequality within their organisations was a key feature of inclusive leadership communications.

3.1.5 Reorganisation of Work

One of the less common ways in which CEOs influenced gender equality was through the reorganisation of work as it was previously understood within EOCGE organisations. For

instance, this sometimes included a 'paradigm shift' in what comprises 'work' at its essence, while others adopted a more pragmatic approach to rethinking work allocation to ensure that women and men had equitable chances of accessing career developmental work and promotion opportunities within their workplaces. One CEO from the professional, scientific and technical services sector reported that,

"We have shifted the paradigm to be focused around work achieved, not hours spent, in the office. At present, 36% of our workforce is on flexible working arrangements. Much of the business world continues to grapple with the efficacy of quotas and targets. However, our organisation is living proof of their power. An initial target of 30% female partnership by 2015 was reached before the deadline and a new target of 40% has been set for 2020. We are very confident we will meet that target. These changes, and many others that I have not touched on here, have led to cultural change at our firm. As of the end of 2015, we have a 98% return rate from maternity leave, a 50 per cent representation of women on our board and an increase in women in the partnership from 18% to 32% over the past six years."

EOCGE organisations whose CEOs reported on a re-imagining of the ways in which work is organised and distributed, also positioned this within the context of figures underpinning gender equality shifts. For example, gender pay gap shifts, workforce composition changes, and women in leadership progress.

3.2 CEO Communications

CEOs, as senior leaders of organisations, are vitally important to the successful implementation of equality, diversity and inclusion change (Thomas, 2004), playing a key role in establishing organisational culture (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Schein, 2010), through effective communications. Communications that come from CEOs have traditionally focused on the external world outside of the organisation, with internal communications considered the responsibility and domain of the personnel or human resources department (Pincus, Rayfield & DeBonis, 1991). It is clear however, that CEOs of leading practice EOCGE organisations understand the importance of their role in leading and embedding gender equality throughout their organisations through carefully crafted and authentically embodied messaging. EOCGE organisations' CEOs understand the importance of balancing both internal and external messaging on gender equality, rather than favouring one over the other.

Positive internal relations between CEOs, management and employees is heavily influenced by CEO communications and leadership on issues

important to the organisation. All too often, organisations see communications as a mechanism of knowledge distribution that is one-way in nature. However, leading practice incorporates mechanisms of feedback, whether through direct (e.g. face-to-face dialogue, online communication) or indirect (e.g. through third parties) channels, to facilitate the development of understanding and ‘closing the loop’ on matters of organisational importance. This is particularly true within EOCGE organisations where there is an emphasis on internal communications involving feedback loops and closing out of internal CEO messaging.

Similarly, EOCGE organisations also show a clear recognition for the importance of positive external communications between CEOs and stakeholders on matters of gender equality. With regard to external communications, CEOs exhibit clear strategic alignment within their communications, a well-defined commitment to change both personal and organisational behaviours and, moreover, external communications are delivered through a diverse and varied suite of mediums and technologies.

Internal communications that come from EOCGE organisations on matters of gender equality are robust, aligned to strategic messaging and the suite of policies present within the organisation at hand. The CEOs within EOCGE organisations adopt a range of different communication styles. In many ways, these mirror what scholarship suggests is vital to fostering gender equality, through accountability, building ownership, communicating, leading by example, and initiating and driving culture change (Kelan & Wratil, 2018). Leading practice involves CEOs personalising their message to incorporate personal or relevant examples for their audiences as well as utilising relevant organisational metrics to substantiate their message. Once again, this approach to communication is consistent with an inclusive leadership style regarding matters of gender equality.

A key feature of internal communications is the CEOs’ willingness to revisit strategies and practices currently in place for the purposes of continuous improvement. This was also consistent with external communications, though more from a ‘lessons learned’ approach to gender equality management. This ‘revisability’ of policy and procedure within organisations was identified by Galea and colleagues (2015) as being an important precursor for organisations positioning to genuinely challenge internal gender inequality.

The following section of this report details the different mechanisms for CEO communications

(internal and external) and looks at the unique elements that comprise leading practice when CEOs communicate to their various audiences on matters of gender equality. Whilst there are different subsections contained within, there is evidence to suggest that CEOs draw on multiple mechanisms (e.g. strategic alignment of communication efforts alongside organisations metrics) to communicate with impact. In other words, these different elements are not mutually exclusive but rather may be utilised in combination, or all together in more robust communications such as in the case of speeches or annual reporting.

3.2.1 Strategic Alignment of Communications

All EOCGE organisations reported having a strategic policy document outlining their commitment to gender equality and the actionable steps planned to attain this. For some organisations, this strategic policy document formed part of an overall diversity and inclusion strategy document whereas for other organisations, gender equality was addressed within a separate stand-alone policy document.

External communications of EOCGE organisations’ CEOs were aligned with this strategic policy document and were demonstrated through a clear articulation of how the actions described by CEOs supported internal organisational planning. One CEO from the professional, scientific and technical services sector reported that,

“The firm [is] proud to once again be recognised for its work in the area of gender equality. [This organisation] continues to take positive steps to build a culture of genuine diversity and to support the success of women in our firm. Since 2002, our professional development programs have included programs specifically focused on the engagement, professional development and promotion of women in the firm. These programs play an important part in the professional development of women in the firm, and reflect the value that we place on our people and on the relationships that we have with each other, our clients and the broader community.”

CEOs also shared with external audiences their policies and procedures under review for gender equality compliance with clear commitments to improving. One CEO reported “we are committed to making gender invisible for pay, performance and career advancement. Gender inequality should be a relic of the past.”

This commitment recognises that gender equality is hard and staying the course with regard to progress requires persistent efforts and courage from externally facing CEOs who may face push-back from others. Through aligning gender equality with strategic intent in external messaging, EOCGE CEOs were able to illustrate the importance of gender equality to a broader public forum.

3.2.2 Overall Trends of CEO Communications – Both Internal and External – Focused on Gender Equality Strategy

There were clear trends comprising leading practice for EOCGE organisations. These included:

1. unambiguous statements about the presence of a gender equality strategy
2. clear and pervasive discussion of gender equality strategy across multiple platforms and forum types
3. utility of metrics and measures along with relevant policy, procedures and strategies
4. open sharing of the gender equality strategy (or summary versions)
5. keen willingness to engage with employees on gender diversity strategy matters
6. communications on gender equality strategy imbued with hope whilst retaining a pragmatic tone.

3.2.2.1 Internal Communications

The gender equality strategy of all EOCGE organisations was referenced within CEO internal communications throughout the reporting period. Some CEOs were consistent in their references to gender equality strategy in each reporting year, coinciding references to strategy with certain occasions or opportunities. For example, International Women's Day or quarterly organisation-wide updates. Others, integrated mentions of gender equality strategy within a diverse range of internal communication opportunities, embodying a view of gender equality as an integrated part of 'the way we do business.'

The defining feature of leading practice within CEO internal communications on gender equality policy, was the extent to which specific actions and initiatives were referenced and described along with the robustness of these descriptions. For example, a critical feature of leading practice involves internal messaging in which the CEO links the multiple levels of organisation that inform gender equality strategy. One such CEO reported,

"As many of you know, over the past decade our Board of Directors and myself have been strongly committed to supporting and achieving a culture of gender equality and diversity ... I believe that much of our continued success in this area can be attributed to our Gender Equality and Inclusion Strategy, which underpins our gender diverse organisation. This is further supported by [our] policies and strategies that specifically support the achievement and maintenance of our gender equality objectives – covering areas such as recruitment, succession planning, performance management, and training and development."

By summarising the ways in which gender equality strategy integrates into the actions and policies that embed gender equality throughout the organisation, those employees who may have less awareness of how their actions directly inform gender equality outcomes, have the opportunity to grow their awareness and understanding with tangible examples. One CEO reported:

"[Our gender equality strategy] is an enterprise initiative to drive systemic change and business outcomes through a more inclusive and diverse environment ... To drive momentum forward, we have committed to three corporate goals,

1) Improve our hiring, promotion and voluntary terminations to levels above current representation: We will track each of these metrics twice a year and hold our leaders accountable for hiring, promoting and retaining our women above levels of representation.

2) Expand our awareness through unconscious bias training: All managers and above will take Unconscious Bias Training, and we will commit to taking action in job descriptions, diverse interview panels and female candidates.

3) Build our reputation as a great place for women to work: We will create a brand strategy and develop content to share our story externally.

The Council, along with key business and HR stakeholders, is driving measurable action plans to embed diversity into how we do business. We will be measuring the impact of our action plans in July this year and will report on our progress."

CEOs in leading practice firms took opportunities as they arose to communicate internally on the strategic alignment between gender equality initiatives and actions and the broader strategic planning of the organisation. At times, these included communications via in-person mediums such as face-to-face employee roadshows, site meetings and staff forums, as well as online mediums such as staff newsletters, email communications and intranet site news articles.



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Revenue = a/b/c
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Moreover, CEOs in EOCGE organisations recognised the complexity of implementing gender equality strategies and communicating this internally. One CEO reported,

“There is no one single strategy which will make the change. It is complex and requires many approaches. As a leader, I intend to stay the course and continue creating an inclusive environment and culture in our workplace where we can attract and retain the best people and fully engage them in business. Achieving a gender balance is the right thing to do and it is a key strategy for sustainable long-term advantage.”

This embodied commitment by the CEO is a clear demonstration of communication emblematic of inclusive leadership. CEOs who adopt an inclusive leadership style also recognise and describe the overarching strategic approach that is required to embed and retain a robust leadership pipeline when communicating internally. One CEO reported,

“The efforts need to be multi-faceted, broad and deep. Gender targets, leadership accountability, sponsorship of high-potential females, development programs, agile and flexible working conditions and targets. They’re all part of the equation.”

The vast majority of EOCGE organisations noted that the citation itself was a mechanism for ensuring they were working at the cutting edge of gender equality strategy. They were clear in communicating

that the citation process enabled their critique of current practice and integration of more novel approaches to achieving gender equality. This form of messaging also incorporated a focus on the measurable impact of gender equality strategy. For example, one CEO reported,

“The citation recognises that we have the infrastructure in place in terms of policies and processes but for me it is more important that our firm’s success be measured by achievement of the outcomes set out in the Women in Leadership strategy.”

There were also clear examples of leading practice organisations describing internal CEO communications that illustrate detailed examples of the ways in which gender equality strategy links to individual policy. One CEO from the professional, scientific and technical services sector reported,

“Promoting gender equality, diversity and pay equity are issues to which [we are] strongly committed. We have a number of programs and policies in place that are specifically designed to support workplace flexibility which in turn helps promote gender equality. Additionally, the firm has developed a gender equality strategy which contains comprehensive guidelines that help to ensure that our organisation engages in best practice in every aspect of our human resources activities and procedures – including recruitment, retention, performance management, promotions, talent identification, and learning and development.”



At its core, as an activity by CEOs, communicating the organisation's gender equality strategy was a means of making clear that a strategic direction had been set and, perhaps most importantly, that steps were underway to achieve gender equality. This was particularly powerful when CEOs integrated metrics against which progress in gender equality was measured and evaluated. One such CEO from the professional, scientific and technical services sector reported,

"... I would like to take the opportunity to restate my personal commitment and reinforce the firm's strategy to address the imbalance of women and men in leadership roles within the firm. The firm has a target of 30% of leadership roles to be held by women by 2018 with an aspirational target of 40%. As a firm, we have made significant progress since the implementation of the Women in Leadership strategy in 2012. At that point in time, 11% of partnership roles were held by women and, with deliberate effort, it appeared that the firm was well on its way to achieving the target we had set ... however, as I write this update, 17% of partnership roles are held by women. For our firm to be prosperous, to remain competitive, to attract high quality work and to have a strong culture with diverse leadership, we need to maintain our focus on achieving our targets. The Women in Leadership strategy, endorsed by the Australian Board at the end of 2015, emphasised accountability on the partners to sponsor women and men equally into leadership roles. It also articulated the responsibility on all of us to reinforce our position externally to our clients and potential clients that [we] take gender equality seriously. I must also acknowledge changes in society with an increased recognition of the role men play in the raising of their children and sharing domestic responsibilities with their partner or spouse. It is important therefore to remind everyone that the firm's policies around parental leave and flexible working are in place for women and men. As I conclude this message, it appears that we take a leap forward and then we face setbacks. The setbacks however have ignited a change in focus to ensure the actions put in place are directed to achieving the strategy in the form of dedicated sponsorship of career progression, as well as ensuring that women are not disadvantaged in their remuneration as a result of factors that affect career progression in a way that may not be experienced by men ... for further information, you can find the Women in Leadership strategy and the firm's Workplace Gender Equality policy on our intranet."

The integration of metrics into CEOs' internal communications provided a baseline against which to measure progress.

There were instances of unique approaches to CEO communications on matters of gender equality strategy towards internal audiences. While some CEOs adopted what could be described as more conciliatory language within their internal communications, others were firmer in language utility, being unapologetic in their description and linkages between gender equality strategy and actions underway within their organisations.

Another unique feature adopted by a subset of EOCGE organisations was the approach of linking gender equality programs underway within the organisation with those occurring concurrently within the immediate community – with some of these led by the EOCGE organisations themselves. Examples of this were particularly clear on days like International Women's Day where there was a focus on gender equality.

Some organisations adopted a strategic approach to their communications of gender equality strategy. This was evidenced through the integration of communications in what could be described as a stepwise or graduated fashion. For example, leading practice organisations sought to link a common thread amongst CEO internal communications through 'follow-up' discussion mechanisms such as a series of communication releases that built upon the prior gender equality idea or a themed suite of communications released internally.

3.2.3 Communicating a Commitment to Change

3.2.3.1 Internal Commitment to Change Personal Behaviours

Leading practice in CEO internal communications involved clear statements of commitment to improve gender equality within the organisation. A willingness to express a verbal commitment was consistent across industries and organisations, though these expressions were most pragmatic and tangible within the education sector. Expressions of commitment to change with regard to gender equality centred on personal commitments to change as well as commitment to empower others to change – through revisiting and evaluating standards and processes that may have impinged on gender equality within the CEOs' immediate environment (e.g. workplaces, industries or society at large).

Leading practice for CEOs' expressions of commitment to change within the context of gender equality were reliant on statements that incorporated several key features including:

- a clear and unambiguous commitment to do better
- a statement of the baseline from where the CEO wanted to improve
- an impetus for change
- a goal that the CEO envisaged as possible
- a plan for reaching the goal with explicit reference to who this involved.

Expressions of commitment were broadly referenced across the large majority of organisations and industries but appeared most prevalently within those organisations where there was evidence of a social justice business case for gender equality.

Statements of commitment to change one's own behaviour as a CEO were included within internal communications. These were particularly noteworthy when including specific actions that were measurable and easy to implement. One CEO from the Financial & Insurance Services sector reported,

"My initial pledge is to be more conscious and aware of the issue. In fact, not long after the session I was involved in a conversation regarding gender parity ... to sit down and hear how my team feels about parity and understand what they personally want to tackle. To avoid using language that discriminates against any gender, especially in a non-formal context. To discourage others (by questioning their logic) from biases surrounding a particular gender."

CEOs also internally communicated their commitments to personally act alongside their consideration of the continued progress required to effect change. In many ways, this offered the audience a prompt for their own personal behavioural change efforts on issues of gender equality.

CEO messaging that was particularly notable included those within which there was a discussion of tangible actions that CEOs intended to act on and the capacity, such as the chair of the diversity and inclusion committee, in which they intended to operate. One CEO from the education and training sector stated,

"I am very committed to diversity and equity in our workplace. I firmly believe in the importance and virtues of fairness, inclusiveness and respect. This contributes to a positive work environment where people feel valued and are supported to achieve their personal and professional aspirations. One important aspect of diversity and equity that I am also committed to is

gender pay equity in our workplace. As Chair of the Diversity and Equity Committee, I ensure we analyse and monitor pay by gender on an annual basis and take action where necessary. Also in my role as a Pay Equity Ambassador with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, I signed a public pledge reaffirming my commitment to gender pay equity."

Some CEOs also leveraged their own memberships or sponsorships as a means for inciting others to act for improved gender equality outcomes. One CEO from the education and training sector stated,

"I would like to emphasise my personal commitment to gender equality. I have recently taken on the role as a Pay Equity Ambassador and join a number of business leaders who, in association with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, are working to raise national awareness of the importance of gender pay equity."

It is clear that CEOs within EOCGE organisations adopt a range of strategies to communicate their personal commitment to effecting change within their professional spheres. The aforementioned strategies of inciting the actions of others, specifying pathways to act as well as articulating the capacity in which CEOs are acting personally, were significant contributors to leading practice internal communications.

3.2.3.2 External Commitment to Change Personal Behaviours

Commitment to change was articulated in external messaging of EOCGE CEOs via a number of strategies. For many organisations, this included publishing gender pay gap statistics publicly and externally with the intention of prompting both dialogue and action.

When communicating pledges to change, these commitments were highlighted from all areas of the organisation; from the upper most echelons of the organisation down to the front-line, with regard to both the value and importance of gender equality.

Many declarations of commitment to gender equality were also contextualised by praise for the broader organisation's community for the hard work already completed that had further embedded gender equality progress. One CEO from the financial and insurance services sector reported,

"[We] could not succeed without the continuing contribution of our dedicated staff. Much of the success of our organisation can be attributed to what I believe underpins our thriving business, a gender diverse organisation as part of an overall diverse workforce. Over the past decade, [the] Board of Directors and I have been strongly committed to supporting and achieving a culture of gender equality and diversity

throughout the organisation where both men and women can excel."

Furthermore, many CEOs also took the opportunity to highlight ways in which gender equality 'makes sense' for the business bottom line. For example, one CEO in the professional, scientific and technical services sector reported that,

"It is the right thing to do but more importantly it makes business sense ... The cost to business of losing people at any level because of a question of diversity is just an unacceptable proposition."

Through adopting a more instrumental perspective, some CEOs in EOCGE organisations saw gender equality as more of an issue of managing expectations. That is to say, these CEOs communicated their commitment to attaining gender equality through various messaging. For example, one CEO from the financial and insurance services sector reported,

"In part, I see the challenge as an issue of basic line management and relentless execution. The numbers are the numbers and when we miss a diversity target it's no different than if we missed a customer satisfaction target or any other target. We ask: What more can we be doing? What are the reasons? How we can make sure we get there as quickly as we can? To me, it's about the visibility and transparency of the goal and the trust we create internally by showing our accountability for meeting it."

Many EOCGE organisations' CEOs also externally communicated impassioned messaging surrounding the right of women to equitable opportunities within the organisations in which they work. For example, one CEO from the Professional, Scientific & Technical Services sector reported,

"At the most basic level, women should be given every opportunity to achieve full and successful careers in their chosen fields. Pay equity should be a given, and promotion based on real merit, not on the basis of what we think a leader looks like. I should say that gender equity for me isn't just about equal numbers it's about cultural change to value inclusion and diversity of thought. From our organisations perspective, I believe that gender diversity is both a commercial imperative, and a competitive advantage. A law firm is only as good as its people, and if we don't employ, develop and promote the best lawyers then as a firm we will be weaker."

The right to equal opportunities was made with a strong reference to leadership contexts wherein women's underrepresentation was consistently highlighted across many of the EOCGE organisations. This illustrates how hard gender equality in leadership can be to attain when even those employers who

adopt best practice gender equality policies and procedures openly discuss the persistent difficulties they face in working towards gender equality.

CEOs of leading practice organisations also adopted ardent commitments to change their personal behaviours within the external messaging that was reported. Whilst common to situate a commitment to change within the context of organisational targets and goals, some CEOs also adopted a more personalised approach, drawing on their own experience as parents to highlight their personal motivations for change. One CEO from the financial and insurance services sector described their experience as a father, stating that,

"As a proud WGEA Pay Equity Ambassador, CEO and father of two daughters, I am disappointed to see that the gender pay gap in Australia is still a double-digit figure. We have made changes that are making a difference but still have work to do. I'm committed to making sure the gender pay gap is closed once and for all in [our firm] and right across the community."

A subset of CEOs also situated their commitments to change personal behaviour within a context of bettering society at large. For these CEOs, there was a focus on improving outcomes for society more broadly and being willing to step beyond the confines of their organisations to engage with others. One such CEO from the financial and insurance services sector reported,

"There are some issues that business leaders just can't delegate responsibility for and, in my opinion, gender equality is one of them. It is such a significant issue, so fundamentally important to the wellbeing of our society and to realising our full potential as a nation, that leaders simply have to assume accountability; leading by example and demonstrating personal commitment."

For some CEOs, externally communicating their intention to alter personal behaviours was adapted to focus on small, easy-to-implement changes that result in broader outcomes and influence on matters of gender equality. Some included commitments to 'stand up' and 'speak out' on issues of inequality, while others made a dedication to challenge inequitable representation of women on speaking panels. From the financial & insurance services sector, one CEO said,

"So, from now on when I'm approached to speak at a conference or participate in a panel, I will ask what has been done to secure female speakers and my decision on whether to participate will be based on the answer. [This organisation] will also use its influence with conferences and other events we sponsor to ensure there is an appropriate gender balance of speakers and attendees."

CEOs also communicated their desire to have workplaces and organisations in which equality was a fundamental expectation of men and women who work within them. Also, for some CEOs, this expectation setting coincided with an argument for instituting targets for gender equality and equitable representation at different levels within the organisation.

Commitments to change personal behaviours were externally communicated by CEOs of leading practice organisations through a variety of forums and mediums. For many, this form of messaging coincided with more personalised platforms such as in-person speeches, personal social media accounts, or one-to-one discussion formats.

3.2.3.3 Internally Stated Commitments to Act on Behalf of the Organisation

Enunciated commitments to act on behalf of the organisation in the capacity of CEO, were commonplace amongst EOCGE organisations. Commitments of this type usually featured:

- a statement of the office from which CEOs would act (e.g. committee member, CEO, individual)
- specific actions to be undertaken
- reference to the organisation and the organisation's existing progress on gender equality
- a statement of responsibilities (e.g. I am responsible for _____ and the organisation is responsible for _____).

This mode of internal communication by CEOs was often imbued with optimism alongside pragmatic steps required for progress. Moreover, some CEOs focused on specific policy domains linked to improved gender equality (e.g. flexibility and women's progression to senior leadership) sharing their insights on what was required to improve gender equality within their organisations. For example, with a changing CEO, new CEOs discussed refocussing their efforts on initiatives that may have experienced success in the past, but may have required some reinvigoration. One CEO from the education and training sector reported that,

"To progress gender equality I want to renew the focus on workplace flexibility. We have the policies and procedures in place. It is time to commence a dialogue on how to better implement flexibility in practice at all levels of the University. I want us to challenge the status quo, to be innovative and creative in how we overcome the barriers that women face, particularly in the STEM disciplines and related non-traditional occupations. I want to continue the University's proud reputation as a sector leader in gender equality."

3.2.3.4 Externally Stated Commitments to Act on Behalf of the Organisation

Commitments to act on behalf of the organisation with regard to gender equality were often shared externally by CEOs. This format of external communication could be differentiated from advocacy attempts in that messaging regarding commitments was more transactional in nature with a list of specific actions to be completed, rather than messaging inciting the action of others.

At a broad level, commitments to act on behalf of the organisation included references to the organisation's policies and procedures alongside strategy documentation. For example, one CEO from the professional, scientific and technical services sector reported that,

"As Managing Partner of the Australian offices, I am personally committed to improving gender equality outcomes in the Australian offices. Gender equality is a central element of our overall strategy, and our broad diversity strategy."

Some organisations adopted a more proactive approach, offering opportunities for women to engage in further study via scholarships or bursaries. These opportunities were sometimes offered exclusively to women or a portion were dedicated to women applicants.

EOCGE organisations characteristically had CEOs who were not afraid to communicate with external audiences on the enormity and pervasive impacts of gender inequality, with one of the organisations referring to gender inequality as a 'wicked problem'. This reference came from a CEO within the education and training sector, who stated that,

"It is not easy, and reporting measures alone are not the answer. The factors leading to unequal outcomes for men and women are complex and varied and therefore difficult to change. It is a wicked problem but there is much we can do and will do to advance gender equality. As a Workplace Gender Equality Agency Pay Equity Ambassador I am personally committed to this cause. As an organisation that recently received its 10th WGEA citation as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality, we are committed to this challenge. We must be brave, understand the issues and fix them. Women deserve nothing less."

External commitments to act offer an accountability measure for EOCGE organisations' CEOs. By articulating their willingness to make a public stance on gender equality, leading practice organisations are positioned to offer possible recruits a 'point of difference' relative to other organisations that may offer them employment.



3.2.4 Mechanisms for Communicating Change

Leading practice organisations relied on different channels of communication to transmit internal messaging on matters linked to gender equality. Many of the EOCGE organisations used multiple platforms for the same messaging to ensure that all staff (e.g. onsite, remote, on leave) had access to clear and consistent information on whatever matter was being discussed. At times, this resulted in duplication across systems; however, it was clear that leading organisations valued more consistent messaging rather than risking redundancy.

EOCGE organisations adopted a variety of mediums for distributing CEO communications. These mechanisms included:

	Internal	External
In-person	Town halls, CEO announcements, executive meetings, site meetings; roadshows, ceremonies (semi-regular), and; CEO speeches (e.g. address to shareholders, international women’s day events, professional development conferences, internal speaking engagements).	Public statements; hosting of women’s forums for external stakeholders (e.g. chief executive women panel events, round table discussions, etc.); media statements and media events; scholarship presentations; sponsorship of external events; ambassadorships; panel participation; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boss and Deloitte Leading Diversity Series • Male Champions of Change • participation in case studies of gender equality initiatives and outcomes • women’s sporting teams • W21 International Dialogue on Women in Leadership • Respect. Now. Always. campaign • Australian Institute of Company Directors Australian Governance Summit • Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) Women in Leadership • National Higher Education Women’s Leadership Summit • Women and Leadership Australia events recruitment drives and open days, and; internal programs (e.g. senior women’s shadowing program, women’s shadowing program, mentoring networking events).
Print	Newsletters; posters; marketing materials; recruitment materials; annual reports, and; position papers/white papers/industry reports.	Newspaper features (e.g. <i>The Australian</i> ; <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>); Local newspaper outlets; business-specific print media (e.g. <i>The Financial Review</i> , <i>AFR</i> , <i>BRW</i> , <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , <i>AFR’s BOSS Magazine</i> , <i>The Age</i> , <i>Resources People Industry Magazine</i>); articles produced for specific occasions and events (e.g. <i>International Women’s Day</i>); annual reporting; guest webpage statements (e.g. FlexCareers), and; Op Ed (Opinion Piece).
Online	Email; intranet announcements; website/staff portals; video newsletters, and; interviews (e.g. radio, television).	Social media channels (e.g. Yammer, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter); media releases; media interviews, and; the organisation’s website.

Organisational size was a key determining feature for many organisations with regard to message distribution, with larger organisations favouring mediums that allowed for broader reach. Often EOCGE organisations retained consistency via repackaging context (e.g. media interview or coverage) and distributing this via internal communication.

3.2.4.1 Notable Mechanisms for Externally Communicating Change

One interesting mechanism drawn upon for communicating change was industry-specific action groups (e.g. 100 Women in IT events, Equilibrium Man Challenge, Women in Resources Awards). These differed from advocacy groups (e.g. Women in IT) and from more broadly accessible professional groups that women may be a part of. Instead, these industry specific-actions focused on women within specific professional domains and incorporated unique activities designed to highlight the challenges posed to women within such industries.

3.2.4.2 Audiences of External Communications

Audiences of external communications from EOCGE CEOs differed across the industries contained within the cohort (e.g. education, professional services, construction, mining). Contained below is a list of audiences consistently referenced across both longitudinal EOCGE organisations as well as those contained within the cross-sectional dataset in 2017-18.

- politicians and dignitaries
- industry peers (e.g. other members of the relevant industry)
- professional peers (e.g. CEOs, leaders, stakeholders from other industries)
- professional bodies and bodies of recognition (e.g. Australian Human Resources Institute Awards, The Athena SWAN Accreditation Framework)
- general public.

By diversifying their audiences for external messaging, leading practice organisations were positioned to convey external messaging to greater impact. This was evidenced by the ongoing (and repeated) invitations that CEOs received to communicate with audiences (listed above) across the longitudinal dataset. Additionally, there was also diversification of audiences within both the longitudinal and cross-sectional datasets.

Leading practice organisations consistently reported their CEOs' external messaging as in-person. This propensity for a larger portion of external communication to be in-person is likely linked to the high-profile nature of the CEO. Nevertheless, CEOs reported a broad range of in-person mediums that coincided with both invited speaking engagements as well as more ad hoc presentations and appearances.

CEOs made statements at awards events in particular that were broad in nature, reflecting upon their own experiences with regard to the importance of gender equality, or discussing what their organisation was doing differently to combat gender inequality. One CEO reported that,

"It's very clear to me improved problem solving is about talent and diversity of thought. ...We have a laser-sharp focus on innovation and we are going through a significant leap in innovation within the business. That can't happen without diversity and that means gender equality and more women in our workplace, who are 50% of the talent pool. It also means diversity in the broader sense. Problem solving and innovation are at their best when people of different backgrounds and perspectives work together and that is evident in the research. Working together, women and men can use the strength of their differences to solve problems."

On the other hand, external communications delivered to media were in many ways more precise in nature tending to reflect greater contextualisation within the organisation at hand. For example references to the organisation's gender pay gap statistics, progression of women into senior leadership and specific gender equality initiatives currently underway.

3.2.4.3 Externally Shared Print Mediums

External communications by CEOs from leading practice organisations trended toward the general media. Nevertheless, more bespoke publications or industry-specific outlets were also commonplace.

External communications delivered through print mediums were an important demonstration of CEOs' commitment to making change happen. These outputs were often recycled into online content or referenced within internal communications as a way to highlight public commentary to organisation staff.

Another feature of leading practice was the inclusion of CEO external communications through annual reporting. Many CEOs took this opportunity to highlight their aspirations for gender equality alongside the work underway within this space. One CEO reported that,

"[This organisation] aspires to ensure diversity outcomes are integrated at every level of its business. With a priority focus on gender, [our] approach to diversity demonstrates a strong commitment in supporting women entering the workforce, equity in promotion and initiatives to enhance female retention."

In many ways, external communications from CEOs also served as a mechanism for publicising the aspired culture of EOCGE organisations as it relates to gender equality and in many ways, diversity and inclusion more broadly.

3.2.4.4 Core Elements of Internal and External Communications on Gender Equality

There are a number of core elements common across internal communications on matters of gender equality from EOCGE organisations. A feature of EOCGE organisations who adopted best practice internal communication techniques was the integration of multiple core elements to the messaging rather than a reliance on one over another.

Leading practice when it comes to internal communications on gender equality is constituted by:

- metrics
- value proposition
- frequency;
- clear rationale
- feedback mechanisms

It's clear that CEOs understand that gender equality is an issue for men and women, with clear evidence of communications in these terms being distributed throughout EOCGE organisations. This is consistent with research evidence showing that willingness to

engage in collective action aimed at establishing gender equality increases when men are positioned as agents of change and understand that gender equality is an issue for both men and women (Subašić, Hardacre, Elton, Branscombe, Ryan, & Reynolds, 2018).

A key aspect of leading practice within external communications was the CEO situating the conversation within the context of the broader workforce landscape; CEOs articulated how gender equality wasn't simply an issue within one single area of industry or workplaces. One way this was done was through positioning the conversation (e.g. women in leadership) and the problem (e.g. numerical underrepresentation) within a broader context (e.g. public and private sectors).

Moreover, leading practice CEOs externally communicated using different techniques such as metrics, values alignment, and industry benchmarking as a means for communicating the importance and severity of gender inequality.

The Metrics

Leading practice organisations clearly articulated the metrics (e.g. statistics, standards, benchmarks) that underpin their messaging. It was common to the majority of organisations that metrics were incorporated into gender equality messaging to underscore the importance of adopting a focus on gender equality, to highlight tangible progress and to amplify gender equality initiatives underway or compare progress against relevant benchmarks.

Underscoring the Importance of Adopting a Focus on Gender Equality.

Leading practice organisations consistently communicated internal messaging that integrated a focus on the importance of gender equality for achieving organisation outcomes. For EOCGE organisations, clearly articulating the importance of gender equality was as important as the content surrounding the messaging, often involving a focus point (e.g. bolstering the number of women in leadership roles, talent retention of women leaders in the organisation). Often metrics supported the key goal and substantiated the organisation's motivation and commitment to change, as the following quotes demonstrate:



La ENVIPE 2013 permite conocer que entre los motivos que llevan a la población víctima de un delito a no denunciar, están las circunstancias atribuidas a la autoridad, como considerar la denuncia como una pérdida de tiempo y la desconfianza en la autoridad, con 81.9%.

ESTADOS UNIDOS MEXICANOS



Causas atribuibles a la autoridad	2010	2011
Otras Causas	61.2	63.2
Por otras causas	36.3	35.9
Otro resultado	2.6	0.8

Finance and insurance services

"Although 66% of our workforce is female, bolstering the number of women in leadership roles is the top priority on our gender equality agenda. We're aiming to increase the percentage of women in board and management (EXCO and Senior Leaders) to 30% and 50% respectively by 2019 – a commitment also made as part of our WGEA citation. We'll further support female talent with developmental activities (e.g. participation in Women in Banking and Finance forums), including a female talent pool in our succession planning, having 50/50 gender splits in recruitment shortlists and more. While it's in our interests and that of our customers to have a diversity of views and talent within the leadership ranks, as always people [in our organisation] are appointed based on their competency."

Professional, scientific and technical services

"As an example, we do not keep as many of our talented women as we should. For this reason, the Board has adopted a new approach to diversity and inclusion which will see: the active involvement of our division and office heads; the establishment of appropriate priorities for different regions and teams; a more open and transparent approach to reporting (both on where we succeed and on the areas where we still have some way to go); and gender targets for attainment by 2018. By this date, we want 40% of new partners every year to be women, 25% of our senior management roles to be held by women, and 25% of our equity partners to be women. These are challenging targets which will help ensure a consistent focus on making the most of the many able women we recruit and work is already underway to achieve these aims."

EOCGE organisations consistently emphasised the importance of gender equality messaging within their internal communications irrespective of size, industry or progress currently achieved.

Highlight progress

Another core element of communications was a willingness on the CEOs' behalf to highlight (and at times, celebrate) progress achieved. Rather than being simply an indulgence of CEOs in self-promotion, this was instead used as a mechanism for the CEO to reveal that policies and procedures within the organisation were having a measurable and appreciated impact on both men and women. Part of using metrics in this manner, meant that organisations could draw upon data collected across and within reporting periods to illustrate improvements and progress. For example, one CEO stated,

"Let's recognise the progress we've made to date, but continue to focus on remuneration that reflects performance, making sure that all of our people are paid fairly for the contribution they make ... gender has no place in determining what you do and how you are rewarded for your work."

CEOs in leading practice organisations who utilised metrics to highlight progress were much more effective in their messaging when the improved metrics were also linked to specific targets. As one organisation in the finance sector reported,

"... since his appointment he has also set a gender equity target amongst our general manager population to 40% and has increased his own leadership team's gender balance to 30% women (up from 10% this time last year)."

Amplify gender equality initiatives underway

CEOs made use of internal communications to amplify and give voice to gender equality initiatives currently underway within their EOCGE organisations. Leading practice involved incorporating metrics in ways that allowed the CEOs to communicate with impact, showing that current initiatives were working. One CEO in the professional, scientific and technical services sector reported,

"Just as we do with other business measures, we have set stretch goals to challenge ourselves by aiming to have at least 25% female senior leaders, and 40% women in emerging leader roles by 2020. To enable this step change, we have also identified two key focus areas to monitor in order to facilitate a sustainable and robust gender diverse workforce and leadership pipeline: 50% female graduates by 2020, and 40% of our new starters being women. Gender diversity is important as it reflects what's happening in our society and the clients and communities we serve. It aligns with our values of treating people fairly and providing equal opportunity, and makes sense from a business perspective in terms of increased profitability. An innovative approach was adopted in implementing our additional gender measures, with a core focus on educating our people about adapting our approach."

Another CEO reported that,

"We've been undertaking a lot of qualitative data collection, through focus groups, surveys and 'world cafes' ... pairing this with the quantitative data we have been collecting over many years. And you know what? ... we are seeing growth and change in the right places. It is true that if you measure something it can be managed. In an ideal world we wouldn't need a Gender Equity Plan, we wouldn't need to develop policies and actions to ensure women have the chance to access good jobs with a strong career path, or even to be paid equally as men. But while women continue to lag behind men on the pay and leadership scales, we need to keep talking, keep acting and keep trying to change the reality of imbalance."

Where this produced unintended outcomes, CEOs in leading practice organisations communicated the strategies to be employed to alleviate any less optimal outcomes evidenced within the metrics

presented such as gender pay gaps and numerical representation of women at different levels within the organisation.

Compare progress against relevant benchmarks

The use of metrics to compare progress against relevant benchmarks, both internal and external to the organisation, was a common feature of internal communications described by EOCGE organisations. Leading practice involved CEOs taking the observation of progress against metrics to the next level by incorporating an evaluation of the next steps. This was particularly the case for organisations that reported unexpected outcomes or inadequate progress against the benchmark metrics reported. One CEO from the professional, scientific and technical Sservices sector reported,

"... last month I announced our senior appointments for 2017. As I noted in that announcement, achieving gender equality is a key priority for [us] and an issue I am committed to progressing. Every year since 2013, we have increased the number of women promoted into senior roles. In the three years to date, 42% of partner promotions have been women and I'm pleased that this year more than half of our senior appointments are women. We monitor these statistics closely as the benefits of diversity, inclusion and gender equality are undeniable; diverse teams outperform in the market."

Another CEO from the financial and insurance services sector reported that, "It is clear we, as an organisation and as a business community, have not done enough to get this balance right, given the proportion of women in senior roles."

Frequency of internal communications

Frequency of communication within EOCGE organisations was not often reported in citation applications. However, it should be noted that EOCGE applications require the CEO to communicate with employees on the topic of gender equality at least once annually as well as communicate at least one external statement regarding their commitment and subsequent actions. Nevertheless, those that did indicate the regularity of CEO communications suggested these were integrated within weekly newsletters, at quarterly face-to-face staff forums or within ad hoc personal blogs produced by CEOs. In spite of this strong variation in both frequency and mechanisms, a broader look at the internal communications dataset produced some interesting insights. It was clear that there was a range of different frequencies reported by EOCGE organisations; however, leading practice involved the consistent and regular production and distribution of CEO communications.



Most commonly, these included ad hoc opportunities (e.g. speaking engagements on matters not linked to gender equality) and more planned opportunities. Pre-planned opportunities included the integration of gender equality messaging at internal events such as:

- staff updates
- team meetings with CEO input/presence
- online communications
- social media posting
- quarterly business updates
- annual organisation reporting.

One important point regarding the frequency of CEO communication was the importance of continuity. This pertains to both the messaging itself as well as the frequency. In other words, leading practice organisations reported consistent messaging even through CEO changes, wherein the previous frequency of communication for both internal and external gender equality messaging was retained.

The message: gender equality as values alignment

Effective communications from leading practice organisations incorporated the use of values – both personal and organisational – to help emphasise the importance of gender equality messages. This was particularly relevant for communications from CEOs. In many ways, when CEOs from EOCGE organisations were entirely authentic in their messaging, delivering communications that were bespoke and aligned with their audiences, a consistent theme emerged regarding the content of communications.

The most effective communications comprised CEOs describing their values (e.g. “gender equality is important to me because x, y and z”), the alignment between their personally held values and those espoused within the organisation (e.g. “at this organisation, we believe x, y and z to be most important to reaching our goals and objectives”) and the ways in which these values converge to guide behaviours (e.g. “when we work together in service of gender equality, we can achieve goal a, b and c”). While formulaic in appearance, CEO messaging in leading practice organisations was authentic, often incorporating a self-referent perspective integrated into the organisation’s reference point. One example of this was from a CEO who questioned,

“Why do we need an International Women’s Day you ask? Because the World Economic Forum predicts the gender gap won’t close entirely until 2186 and this is not good enough. We cannot wait 169 years for gender equality. I want my daughters growing up in a world where they have the same opportunities as I did and

I want to lead a company where women and men are given the same opportunities.”

Moreover, CEOs of EOCGE organisations often incorporated a commitment to personally act on matters of gender equality as an outcome of the reaffirmation of their own personal values regarding gender equality. For example, one CEO from the professional, scientific and technical services sector reported that,

“The firm’s success relies on attracting and retaining talented people – both women and men - with diverse ideas, backgrounds and experiences, and providing a supportive culture that enables them to contribute fully and to thrive. My commitment and the firm’s commitment to diversity, including gender equality, is essential to a healthy firm. It is the essence of a world-class firm.”

CEOs expressed commitment to act was often borne out in messaging that projected a better possible future where actions are undertaken and the goals and values that CEOs expressed are realised within the organisations they lead.

Interestingly, leading practice also comprised CEOs expressing a willingness to recognise instances where their organisations were not performing sufficiently well within the domain of gender equality.

When leading practice organisations were recognised by their peers and industry, CEOs internally communicated these messages, thereby positively reinforcing further progress established by leading practice organisations. One CEO from the financial and insurance services sector stated,

“As you know, I am enormously proud of the stand we took 12 months ago: we were in line with many other companies but we weren’t satisfied with that – so we took steps to fix the issue. The reason I’m mentioning it again is that our actions have generated a lot of interest both here in Australia and internationally. The people who are contacting me as well as many of our senior leaders – are giving us enormous praise; they see our actions as being courageous and market leading. This is another example of what I mean. Our challenge will be to sustain our focus to make sure we continue to see improvements in gender equity in all categories, not just pay. I encourage you to read the media release if you haven’t seen it yet, because this is one of the best examples of what we stand for as an organisation. It is a great example of what I mean when I say we will build our brand reputation from the inside. We do the right thing, for the right reasons, at the right time and the community responds.”

CEOs of EOCGE organisations were also adept at contextualising communications to ensure these were aligned to the employee base. At times this meant that CEO communications took more of a personal tone from which a call to action was made. For example, a CEO from the financial and insurance services sector reported,

“Beyond being persistent and beyond listening, is the final and probably most important part of ongoing success. And that is, actually really believing in what we are doing. Meaningful change comes from people, whether it’s leaders or not leaders, who actually believe in the good of an outcome and strive to achieve it. And in our view the business case for how diversity of women leadership makes your business better, that is now a given. The business case for the importance of flexibility for the productivity of the economy is a given. But authenticity is one of the great buzz words of leadership today. And this is a real test for us about whether we really are prepared to walk the talk for the long term. Do we really believe in the change that we are trying to achieve?”

Communications from CEOs in leading practice organisations also commonly included personal reflections of their own motivations for wanting greater capacity to balance and blend work and family domains as the following two quotes also demonstrate:

Professional, scientific and technical services

“The reality for us is that we do not as a firm ever want to promise to anyone joining this firm that they cannot fulfil their career ambitions because of an inhibition put in their way with regard to diversity. We want to make certain that when we talk to our people about joining us that we say so in the full knowledge that they can complete their full career aspirations with this firm knowing that their gender diversity, racial diversity, sexual preference diversity or age diversity will not impact upon them. We have no interest whatsoever in leading and owning and running a firm that cannot give that very clear promise.”

Financial and insurance services

“I intend to be married longer than I’m CEO. It’s okay to have those conversations about whether people need to leave early or to ask for a flexible work environment. Work/life balance is always a struggle, but you’ve got to have the conversation.”

A noteworthy point is that CEOs who do communicate internally on matters of gender equality from a values-guided standpoint are also recognised by others for their work as one CEO from the education and training sector noted,

“I’ve been absolutely delighted at the engagement, enthusiasm, right across campus from staff, and actually some students, getting involved in and preparing for the qualification under the Athena Swan bronze award. At [the organisation], we pride ourselves on our flexibility and our creativity, and these are actually two key attributes to driving towards a more diverse workforce. Flexibility is absolutely key to making this happen. I’m the father of two kids: a daughter and a son. And I cannot conceive that in this time, in Australia, my daughter would have any less opportunity in her career, any less happiness in her life, because of her gender. Now why on earth would I let that happen at [the organisation]?”

The message: gender equality as values alignment internally

Leading practice in external communications also included CEOs expressing gender equality as an alignment in personal, professional and organisational values. For many CEOs, situating gender equality within the context of values prompted a discussion of people in the workplace bringing their ‘whole selves’ to their professional lives with this described as fundamental to effective work. As one CEO from the education and training sector described,

“It fits with our desire to live our values and demonstrate our commitment and openness to people of diverse sexuality and gender identity. If our people succeed, our University succeeds. And our people can only succeed if they can bring their whole selves to work. Anything less would compromise their contribution and [our organisation] would have failed to live up to its values.”

External messaging on values alignment from CEOs was also linked with strategic planning within leading practice firms. Through linking both values and strategy, CEOs communicated the importance of gender equality as an integral part of organisational culture with this observed as a vehicle for high performance.

Taking the integration of values and strategy one step further, were organisations whose CEOs reported monitoring and measurement strategies to retain and enhance further progress for these organisations. A CEO from the financial and insurance services sector reported, “[This organisation] has an ongoing commitment to workplace pay equity and gender equality. It is a key part of our strategy, culture and values, and we watch and monitor it closely.”

By clearly linking gender equality with business bottom line, CEOs externally communicated the significance of gender equality and the extent to which this was embedded within planning, performance and evaluation of company assets. One CEO reported that,

“At [the organisation] we believe that gender diversity is inextricably linked to [our] ongoing success and growth as a company. Through parental leave and phased retirement options we aim to reduce barriers for women in the workforce and provide opportunities to harness and develop the best talent in our company. We not only believe this is the right thing to do, but that it is also good for business.”

The value proposition of gender equality may be clear for many individuals and members of the public, but for commercial businesses, institutions and organisations, there has been a large emphasis on establishing the business case or rationale for dedicating time, energy and resources to gender equality initiatives. Through establishing a values alignment between gender equality and the espoused values of the organisation, leading practice CEOs recognise that embedding equality can become part of how business is done within their organisations, thereby circumnavigating the need to rationalise or justify gender equality actions and initiatives.

The rationale as it’s communicated internally

CEO internal communications in leading practice organisations incorporate a rationale for gender equality often reliant upon research and industry standards to benchmark against other market participants. Broadly, the rationale for gender equality can be communicated via research (e.g. case studies and academic research), ambassadorships (e.g. “Pay Equity Ambassador CEO”), memberships (e.g. Male Champions of Change), industry initiatives (e.g. International Women’s Day) and industry group affiliations (e.g. Women in IT” or “Women in Superannuation).

Research as a mechanism for communicating a rationale is powerful to the degree that this can offer leading practice organisations a comparison point from which to establish their performance. The sources of research can include case studies from within the organisation (e.g. employees adopting alternate ways of working beyond the 9am–5pm ‘normal’ working day) or outside of the organisation (e.g. The Equilibrium Man Challenge), alongside more traditional forms of research whether these be position papers from international consulting firms or local consulting firms. Some leading practice organisations also draw upon academic research resources to inform internal CEO communications, particularly where these underscore an important point to be made or reference an industry standard to meet.

EOCGE organisations consistently deliver CEO communications that highlight and share the various ambassadorships held by them. At times, these are shared on behalf of the CEO within various internal

communication mechanisms. However, CEOs often share their ambassadorships with pride, linking these positions to new insights and learnings they have obtained. Leading practice comprised CEOs taking up ambassadorships on topics of personal relevance, such as pay equity, and this was evidenced by communications that captured their passion and motivation for their key area.

Membership of certain organisations was often communicated to internal audiences by CEOs of EOCGE organisations. Whilst memberships were generally held by the organisation (e.g. Employee of Choice for Gender Equality, Breastfeeding Aware Organisation, White Ribbon Accreditation), CEOs communicated the relevance and importance of these memberships to the workforce, drawing on these memberships to communicate the rationale for gender equality and embedding it within the organisation. However, many CEOs also held individual memberships such as being Pay Equity Ambassadors and/or Male Champions of Change and likewise reported the importance of these personal roles.

Within all EOCGE organisations, there was a clear message communicated by CEOs regarding industry initiatives relevant to establishing gender equality (e.g. International Women’s Day). In many cases, leading practice organisations capitalised on these initiatives by adopting to use of social media tags, such as #pledgeforparity or #beboldforchange, to link their own internal communications and activities to the industry initiative and event. For many organisations, best practice incorporates a series of events, communications and actions that highlight activities and embolden employees to engage with CEO messaging around the initiative. For example, one CEO reported,

“When I got the role, I wanted to understand the gender pay gap so I asked for information on it ... I learned we had a gap and while it wasn’t huge it was financially significant. I asked for it to be eliminated in the next budget cycle and was told the organisation might not be able to afford it. I said, ‘Make us afford it.’ And, now we have to watch it all the time, with every hire, to stay right on top of it.”

CEOs of EOCGE organisations were also adept at incorporating industry groups into internal communications on matters of gender equality. Groups such as Women in Super, National Association of Women in Construction, Women in Banking and Finance or Women in Mining were highlighted by leading practice CEOs within internal communications as a mechanism for connecting their workforce to the positive inroads being made by such groups.



A salient feature of leading practice organisations when sharing CEO communications on gender equality is that they shine a spotlight on ways in which gender inequality impacts both men and women throughout the organisation. For example, one CEO reported that,

“There are a lot of factors as to why women are not getting senior leadership roles. Certainly, if you set targets and measure against those, it gives you an opportunity to put a focus on it. But it’s also about developing policies for people as they come through the workforce and have families – and that’s both women and men.”

For EOCGE organisations, it is clear that underscoring the rationale for gender equality with research and industry standards is an important aspect of CEO internal communications. This supports CEOs in substantiating the importance of continual focus on gender equality issues and challenges as they arise.

The rationale as it’s communicated externally

Leading practice external messaging by CEOs comprised a number of important elements:

- clear statement of research or industry standard aspired to
- explanation of strategies in place
- demonstration of progress using metrics or measures
- clear statement of projected benefit of continued progress
- planned steps for ongoing improvement

Within external messaging from CEOs, leading

practice comprised clear messaging surrounding the rationale for pursuing gender equality. Many CEOs communicated pride in their achievements on matters of gender equality, externally sharing awards and acknowledgements received from industry.

Integrated external communications exemplifying leading practice comprise rationales drawing on research and industry standards to highlight the desirability of gender equality. Whilst this approach to external messaging of the rationale was pervasive throughout EOCGE organisations, exemplars of this format took the messaging one step further by incorporating and building on research and standards to inform future practices. In addition, these CEOs also integrated statements regarding how this has impacted their gender equality progress. One organisation’s CEO reported,

“Our Board has set the target of 40% female workforce by 2020. Our diversity and inclusion strategy so far has been a journey to essentially accelerate cultural change in both our company and also the industry in which we work. We started on our gender equality journey three years ago, and it’s not a quick fix. It’s actually about that cultural change and investment, which takes time.

I’m pleased to say that we are starting to see some signs of progress and that’s encouraging to see those positive, sustainable outcomes. Our diversity and inclusion strategy is now an integral part of our corporate strategy, our Australian strategy and also the way we measure our operational KPIs. We see on a quarterly basis diversity and inclusion KPIs inherently seen as part of the performance benchmarks in the business. It’s not a set and forget initiative.”

Focusing CEO external communications using research and industry standards also provides external stakeholders the opportunity to understand how they too may generate positive outcomes with regard to gender equality.

3.2.4.5 Soliciting Feedback

Soliciting feedback on the various initiatives, actions and procedures associated with gender equality is a vitally important component of leading practice CEO internal communications. In particular, is the inclusion of requests for feedback to the CEO. For example one CEO in the professional, scientific and technical services sector noted,

“The World Economic Forum predicts the gender gap won't close entirely until 2186. That's 170 years; almost as old as [our firm]. I hope you agree that is a shocking statistic. I am pleased about how far we have come [in our organisation], but there is some way to go. Our focus on our diversity agenda has seen us named as the Equal Opportunity in the Workplace Agency's Employer of Choice for Women consecutively since 2005. I think we have an understanding of the need for a diverse workforce and, by being bold and pushing forward, we are ensuring that our team reflects the community that we serve. If you feel you have a great idea about how the firm can continue to move forward, I would love to hear about it and lend my support where possible. Please feel free to comment below, send me an email or give me a call.”

Requesting employee feedback is a particularly powerful tool to close out internal CEO communications when referencing new initiatives or expressing pride in those that create maximal impact. For example, one CEO from the financial and insurance services sector also reported,

“I think the culture we have created at [our organisation] recognises and supports our diverse needs, and we know that we do not have the pay equity issues which exist in many other Australian organisations. I am really proud that [our organisation] has received the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's citation as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality annually since 2012. One of the things I'm most pleased about is that our Keep In Touch program supporting parents on parental leave has seen every staff member who has had a child, return to work; an extraordinary, and very rare, record. It is critical that we do not rest on our laurels, and if you have any thoughts on how to further advance our diversity and inclusion agenda please let your People and Culture Business Partner know.”

Whilst employees within leading practice organisations may not necessarily take up the offer of providing feedback, ensuring the mechanisms are in place

to facilitate this process ensures that internal CEO communications support best practice communication where there is a flow of information throughout the organisation.

3.2.4.6 Communicating Pride in Gender Equality Progress

Communicating pride in workplace outcomes relating to gender equality is a clear and important feature of leading practice internal CEO communications. By highlighting progress, CEOs capitalise on the gains made through leading practice and are positioned to share these broadly throughout the organisation. One CEO from the financial and insurance services sector shared the following message internally,

“... woohoo! We should be very proud of yesterday's announcement that [our firm] achieved its WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equity citation, for the second consecutive year. We were one of just 12 financial institutions and only four mutuals to achieve the citation.”

Leading practice internal communications from CEOs clearly communicate pride in gender equality progress and simultaneously recognise the ongoing efforts required to both sustain progress and leverage future improvements within the organisation. This balance between recognising the past, celebrating the present and preparing for the future was characteristic of leading practice within CEOs' internal communications.

A feature of CEOs who communicate their pride with eloquence, is the utility of metrics to substantiate their recognition of progress. Metrics include:

- external benchmarks (e.g. industry gender pay gap, industry workforce composition metrics)
- internal benchmarks (e.g. engagement survey data, gender pay gaps, etc.),
- industry awards (nominations and conferrals).

Other metrics drawn upon to communicate pride included industry standards, or other notable achievements that indicate superior performance on behalf of the organisation.

Moreover, CEOs of EOCGE organisations integrate their insights on the factors that facilitate gender equality performance into their expressions of pride. For example, one CEO reported,

“I am proud that our culture has evolved to better support women in the workplace. It all comes down to leadership - it's got to be part of the fabric and integrated into everything that we do.”

Leading practice organisations do not necessarily integrate all mechanisms into their expressions of pride for their gender equality progress in any one communication, but rather, utilise these in different situations. For example, when calling their employees to action, leading practice involves the use of insights that inform what others might consider doing within their working day to improve gender equality. Alternatively, when reflecting on progress, CEOs may communicate internal messaging regarding progress against benchmarks.

3.3 Advocacy on Gender Equality

Research shows that CEO advocacy on contentious social and environmental issues can effect change to the same extent as political leaders (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016) through their use of communication channels in ways that facilitate trust in the organisation itself (Tsai & Men, 2017). In this way, CEO advocacy efforts, both internal and external to the organisation, can have a pivotal effect on broader sentiments regarding social justice issues, namely gender equality. One CEO advocated with the following,

"It is imperative for organisations committed to gender equality to take some bold steps to truly 'press for progress'. This includes actively looking for female talent for promotion and promoting them; actively recruiting women for senior leadership roles and reviewing pay levels and ensuring there is no pay gap and, if there is, closing it (that might involve investment in the short term for longer term retention and value to the business). It also means listening and validating the female voice and perspective and giving it due weight. It is time to walk the talk. Action is critical."

3.3.1 Internal Advocacy on Gender Equality

CEO sociopolitical rhetoric within internal communications has been an emerging phenomenon of EOCGE organisations in recent years. In particular, advocacy on matters of gender equality appears with increasing frequency since 2015 and particularly within professional service firms. There remains a clear absence of gender equality advocacy within internal communications with education and finance firms in general. Nevertheless, one organisation's CEO from the cohort of EOCGE citation holders stated, "We all need to help create a society that you and I will be proud of and as a company, we can do something about it."

Leading practice advocacy incorporates not only verbal advocacy but also a personal presence at events, forums or online discussions. Moreover, CEOs of EOCGE organisations lent their voices to causes and campaigns linked to gender equality advocating

to their CEO peers or internal counterparts within their internal communications. One example was from a CEO in the manufacturing sector who stated

"Looking ahead, I am well aware we have some way to go to achieve true gender equality [in our organisation]; however, as we celebrate International Women's Day I pledge to continue to do all I can to create an inclusive and flexible workplace culture. I also encourage you to play a leadership role within your sphere of influence to advance gender equality at work and in the community. Every action counts - from helping women and girls to participate and then achieve their ambitions to challenging gender bias and recognising the contributions of men and women equally together we can make a difference."

Advocacy of CEOs in leading practice organisations also took the form of inviting other CEOs from service providers and client groups to discussions of gender equality. Some CEOs also presented gender equality and inclusion insights to their international counterparts (within multinational firms) sharing learnings and strategic planning opportunities internally. These experiences were shared via internal communications from the CEO to their employees in Australia alongside the insights gained from these experiences that could be translated into further action planning.

Clear calls to action with employees were also delivered by leading practice CEOs in their advocacy. These included explicit statements surrounding what employees can do to support gender equality, specifically within their immediate environment, and was often delivered alongside relevant materials and documents to support pragmatic and tangible action. This professional, scientific and technical services sector CEO asks,

"What can you do? This approach will be led by me and supported by an advisory group, but the involvement of all of our people is critical and everyone will receive an opportunity to contribute to a discussion of priorities initially via a survey which will be sent out in the next few weeks. I encourage you to actively promote diversity and equity and demonstrate the values of fairness, inclusiveness and respect in your work."

CEOs as gender equality advocates were also quick to redress any perceived push back within internal communications ensuring that their employees clearly understood their unique roles within gender equality efforts throughout the organisation. For example, this CEO stated,

"We're taking all employees of [the organisation] – but particularly our men – on a journey of understanding about gender equality that leaves them asking, 'How can I too step up, beside women, in their fight for equality?' rather than leaving them asking, 'What about me? What about my career?' Let's be clear: this isn't about 'men versus women' or 'us' against 'them' – and we're definitely not leaving anyone behind."

EOCGE organisations also adopted an approach within CEO internal communications of 'calling out' preconceptions regarding who ought to advocate on matters of gender equality. One example came from an EOCGE organisation's CEO who asked,

"Why should I, a white middle-aged male, champion this area? The answer is, why not? Anyone can lead on diversity, as long as they believe in doing the right thing and are prepared to put in the appropriate time and effort to achieve tangible outcomes. It is an issue that should have representation at the top of every organisation."

Finally, leading practice CEOs internally communicate a clear intolerance for discrimination, harassment, implicit sexism and bullying. This was uniformly consistent across all EOCGE organisations, industry sectors and professions.

3.3.2 External Advocacy on Gender Equality

Within CEO external communications of EOCGE organisations, advocacy on matters of gender equality are less visible than when compared with internal communications. There are a multitude of reasons why this might occur. Nevertheless, there were examples of some CEOs adopting an advocacy approach to external communications including the direct financial support (both personal and organisational) for a variety of causes including:

- financially supporting specific charities that focus on redressing gender inequality
- supporting women's sporting teams
- establishing scholarships for women;
- sponsoring women leaders within and beyond their immediate organisations
- naming important buildings after women leaders.

A subset of CEOs advocated using more personalised approaches including letters of petition on matters of gender equality to government ministers, personally writing to ASX200 boards with <30% women representation, as well as fervent statements regarding the impacts of funding changes within tertiary institutions and their deleterious outcomes for women and vulnerable students. These more personalised approaches to gender equality were consistent with an embodied passion for challenging gender inequality in ways that could be considered novel or unique within the organisations represented on the EOCGE citations list.

Leading practice external advocacy efforts often contained metrics to set the foundation and indicators of improvements in initial metrics, alongside a challenge for other organisations and leaders. In many ways, this format of advocacy provided a pathway for others external to the organisation who may also be pursuing similar gender equality initiatives. One CEO from the financial and insurance services sector advocated to peers in a public forum,

"[This organisation] committed nearly two years ago to close the gender pay gap and we have achieved that. The fact is it can be fixed; it just requires measurement, planning, commitment and a disciplined program of implementation. I challenge the Australian business community to do this now as a business priority ... WGEA figures released today show that nearly 74% of employers have never done a gender gap analysis. [This organisation] 's ratio of female to male pay rose from 82% to 98.5% following direct action over two years to redress pay inequality. This involved assessing all roles and a program involving new pay, recruitment and remuneration training, policies and guidelines along with an ongoing awareness campaign as well as developing a strong culture of diversity and inclusion right throughout the organisation. So my challenge is that there is no basis for gender pay inequality and that pay equity is achievable and straight forward. Every employer can fix this now. It just needs the urgent attention it deserves to ensure we get rid of, once and for all, this blight on our modern society."

One of the key features of leading practice in EOCGE organisation's CEO outward communications is the external advocacy that CEOs undertake. These advocacy efforts, while including a presentation of relevant metrics and measures underpinning gender equality initiatives and practices, are typically broad calls to action to change makers outside of the organisation, including other CEOs and Government regulators. For example, one CEO from the financial and insurance services sector stated that,

"In Australia, women's representation in leadership roles is lacking in both the public and private sectors. Women make up 51% of the nation and more women under 30 gain degree qualifications than their male peers. The business case for change has been proven time and time again. It improves organisational performance and decision-making, as well as providing employers with access to a larger talent pool. An interconnected suite of initiatives is needed; relentlessly and continuously implemented by leaders of an organisation. These policies need to attack barriers such as cultural norms, gender stereotypes, work design and unconscious bias. Much has been achieved to address overt discrimination in Australia, such as equal opportunity legislation, parental leave, representative selection panels and flexible hours. Despite these measures, the gender gap is prevalent and is particularly acute at the senior executive levels. Regulatory and structural reform to overcome visible barriers is not enough. Invisible barriers still persist and need to be addressed by leaders at all levels. These barriers include the impact of unconscious bias on recruitment, appointment and promotion; workplace culture; and gender stereotypes. To deal with these issues, we need cultural change backed by a committed leadership that truly understands and supports the mandate for diversity. There is no substitute for visible personal leadership and the role of the chief executive and senior leadership is paramount if change is to occur."

Other CEOs adopted a more personalised approach to advocacy with external stakeholders, focusing on specific topics of concern or work challenges perceived as important for gender equality progress. For example, one CEO from the financial and insurance services sector stated,

"I'm also an advocate for creating work/life balance and, while it takes discipline, the results are worth it. I've always believed that it's easier to get a new job than a new family. For me, my wife and five sons are my foundation and the basis of my success. I tend not to think about work when I'm at home and I admit I don't think about home when I'm at work. There won't always be a perfect balance but being very clear about what is most important really allows me to figure out where my attention needs to be."

Leading practice external advocacy efforts engage audiences and stakeholders in gender equality efforts through CEOs issuing a call to action that others can draw upon and follow. In this way, effective advocacy provides a pathway forward with clear expectations about the possible results that may be achieved.



Section 4 – Gender Equality Policies



Key Findings

Leading practice organisations:

- hold comprehensive suites of policies and practices that underpin their gender equality strategy. However, no two EOCGE organisations held the same suite of named policies and nor were those that were similar, implemented in the same way
- have gender equality policies that target: the employee experience (e.g. sexual harassment, anti-discrimination); job-design (e.g. flexibility; parental leave) and the employee life cycle (e.g. recruitment, remuneration, performance and promotion)
- address gender equality in their policies that interface with external bodies (e.g. vendor, contractor and tenderer policy alignment), demanding their suppliers and clients also meet their own standpoints on gender equality before continuing business
- regularly review, consult and update their policies to ensure these remain fit-for-purpose, relevant and effective
- offer parental care support to both men and women equally, substantially above that which is provided by the Australian Government, recognising this as inadequate for supporting parents return to work.



Action Points

- Scan the industry landscape to examine what relevant organisations may be implementing with regard to gender equality policies and practices. Look beyond your industry to organisations of relevance who may offer guidance on policies and practices that may be fit-for-purpose within your organisation. Critically, ensure tangible links are established between metrics and measures of concern and the policy or practice content you are adopting.
- Consult the list of gender equality policies detailed in this report to provide guidance on establishing a baseline within your organisation. These policies outlined are core policies that target and cut across fundamental areas of the employee life cycle.
- Consider the ways that relevant stakeholder-facing policies (e.g. vendor, contractor and tenderer policies) may be adjusted to inform gender equality practices beyond your organisation.
- Regularly review, consult and update your policies to ensure these remain fit-for-purpose, relevant and effective.

As set out in Section 2 of the report, having an overarching gender equality strategy is vital to the successful achievement of workplace gender equality objectives. Stone (2017:37) notes that policies are general statements that serve to guide decision-making and guide the organisation towards its strategic objectives. Policies generally serve three purposes:

1. To reassure employees that they will be treated fairly and objectively.
2. To help managers make quick and consistent decisions.
3. To give managers the confidence to resolve problems and defend their decisions.

Procedures, as opposed to policies, detail precisely what action is to be taken in a particular situation.

EOCGE organisations all have a comprehensive suite of policies and practices that underpin their gender equality strategies. However, no two organisations had an identical set of named policies and nor were most of these policies implemented in the same way.

The following section of the report details leading practice in each policy area for gender equality and which are characteristic of the majority of EOCGE organisations. These have been set out under separate headings with policy titles used by the majority of EOCGE organisations as follows:

- Workplace Flexibility
- Parental Leave and Associated Provisions
- Childcare Assistance and Family Support
- Sexual Harassment
- Anti-Discrimination
- Ethics and Professional Conduct
- Domestic Violence
- Recruitment
- Remuneration
- Performance and Promotion
- Vendor, Contractor and Tenderer Policy Alignment
- Distribution of Opportunities
- Grievance and Whistleblower Policies
- Regular Review, Consultation and Update of Policies

It should be noted that while this report treats these as distinct policies, there was a high degree of overlap between them in most organisations. Many policies, which are considered as distinct in this report, were often clustered. For example, policies relating to ethical and professional codes of conduct often dealt with sexual harassment and bullying, anti-discrimination and grievance processes.

4.1. Workplace Flexibility

When properly implemented, flexible work arrangements have been reported as resulting in lower absenteeism, reduced tardiness, reduced staff turnover, higher work commitment, greater job satisfaction, higher performance and enhanced brand image (Stone, 2017; WGEA, 2019b). Supporting these assertions are studies such as that undertaken by James (2014), which examined 150 organisations in the United Kingdom that had adopted organisation-wide flexibility options instituted in consultation with workers. It was found that of the 150 organisations, 147 had achieved higher revenue growth, worker productivity, diversity, workforce innovation and creativity and reduced employee turnover.

Just over 70% of employers have a policy or strategy for flexible working; however, of these organisations only 5.2% have set targets for employee engagement (WGEA, 2018). This is somewhat surprising given that in Australia, through the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Part 2-2, Div 4, s65) and the *Fair Work Amendment Act 2013* (Part 3), an employer cannot refuse, except on reasonable business grounds, a request by an entitled employee for flexible work arrangements (Australian Government, 2009; 2013). It has been argued by Konrad and Yang (2012) that a wide gap exists between policy documents and their implementation in most organisations. They argue that because of this gap, flexible work policies have failed to fully deliver results for both employees and organisations.

The causes behind the lack of take-up of flexible work practices and their failure to provide satisfaction for employees, managers and the organisation as a whole mainly relate to a range of workplace cultural barriers. These barriers that act to inhibit policy implementation include:

- expectations to be physically seen at work over extended periods of time regardless of how productive the time spent in the presence of managers is (Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999)
- prioritising work above all other life responsibilities (Lyonette, 2015)

- human resource administrator commitment to job design and integration of flexible workers into team-work management (Kim, 2001, Stone, 2017)
- the level of 'social support' provided by peers and managers (Thompson et al., 2004)
- transition support and training provided by the organisation in assisting employees to move into flexible work arrangements (Sherer & Coakley, 1999)
- gender and status of employees requesting flexible work arrangements (Brescoll, Glass & Sedlovskaya, 2013)
- formal and informal communication of flexibility policies, practices and training (Kirby & Krone, 2002)
- overall organisational perceptions of the benefits of flexibility to organisational outcomes (Deloitte, 2013; Allen, 2001)
- career consequences of undertaking flexible work (Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014).

For flexible work arrangements to be most effective, they need to be undertaken in good faith by organisations and employees alike. Both managers and workers need to be thoroughly familiar with organisational policy and intent and flexibility arrangements must be understood as requiring ongoing negotiation, experimentation and adjustment (Paustian-Underdahl & Halbesleben, 2014). Additionally, managers and workers need to recognise and account for the flow-on effects on the peers of employees working flexibly (Teasdale, 2013). Leading practice EOCGE organisation policies evidenced a recognition that each employee's circumstances were unique and therefore provided room for them to negotiate around the widest variation of flexible working practices (see also Putnam, Myers & Gailliard, 2014).

Organisational culture and the degree of managerial discretion permitted in approving flexible arrangements have been identified as the two greatest obstacles to maximising flexible working outcomes (Brescoll, Glass & Sedlovskaya, 2013). This is reflected in the detailed attention paid by leading practice EOCGE organisations in addressing these two key areas. To a large degree, workplace culture influences manager decision-making in negotiating flexibility agreements. The extent to which executive and senior managers role-model flexibility, as well as promote its use as part of everyday working life within the organisation, the more likely employees are to take up flexible work options. (Sanyal et al., 2015). Therefore, a negative organisational culture or a lack of executive engagement around workplace flexibility will simply cause these policies to fail (Paustian-Underdahl & Halbesleben, 2014).



As noted above, the direct managers of employees, where they have discretion over the implementation of flexible work policies, have been identified as potentially causing organisational policy-practice gap (Brescoll et al., 2013). This is especially the case where managers feel that flexible employees may be more difficult to manage and may affect their personal KPIs. Yet managers are a critical element in the provision of flexibility, since it is usual practice for managers to be given initial discretion in approving these requests (Hornung, Rousseau & Glaser, 2008).

Managers usually act as the first point of contact for employees wishing to undertake flexible arrangements and, in the absence of clear company messaging, are the voice of the organisation in interpreting policy for their team (Kossek, Barber & Winters, 1999). Managers will usually assess the success of any arrangement in terms of ongoing performance, career progression and remuneration, both for themselves and their team members (Leslie et al, 2012).

Without organisational promotion and training in flexibility policies and practices, employees will usually be reliant upon their manager's attitude and level of understanding of policies and their ability to provide support for the flexibility arrangement (Timms, et al., 2014). Leading practice EOCGE organisations acknowledged these issues and provided extensive training, promotion and support materials for both managers and employees

to manage the transition to flexible working arrangements.

Without some form of manager accountability, employees are almost completely reliant upon the manager to exercise their discretion for the greater good of the organisation balancing the needs of the employee, the team, themselves and the organisation as a whole, while being unaffected by personal bias and institutional norms; something that has proven to be problematic for many managers (McCarthy, Darcy & Grady, 2010). The degree to which managers can achieve this outcome is related to the level of support they receive from the organisation, either through its human resources management function or executive support through advice and/or training (Stone, 2017). It was a feature of nearly all EOCGE organisations that managers were held accountable for denying flexible working requests and rarely had absolute discretion in making these decisions. Most requests for flexible work were jointly reviewed by members of the human resources team and the manager.

In Australia, the majority of employees using flexible work arrangements are women (ABS, 2019). This is because the primary carer of children in the majority of dual-career families is a woman (ABS, 2019; Economic Security for Women, 2019). There is also a growing body of evidence that suggests that women who utilise flexible working arrangements, in organisations without flexibility strategies aligned to strategic workplace gender equality plans, suffer

a career penalty disproportionate to the time they actually work under flexibility arrangements. This is because they are often sidelined to support roles (which are considered more capable of being undertaken flexibly) or they are simply considered not to be taking their career seriously. However, support roles tend to be less career enhancing and those in flexible roles are often overlooked for training, development and promotion and excluded from critical meetings and development activities (Cahusac & Kanji, 2014, Crowley & Kolenikov, 2014). To combat these issues, leading practice EOCGE organisations use job design methodologies to maximise the possibility of employees maintaining their substantive roles and to track development opportunities and progression ensuring that they are not being penalised for working flexibly.

Career penalties for those undertaking flexible work have been shown not only to apply to women. A series of studies has identified that men are reluctant to make use of flexible working arrangements because they fear contravening the accepted working norms (Burnett et al., 2013). Some studies show that when men do take up flexible work they can often be penalised more than women (Gatrell et al., 2014).

Williams (2000) noted that the idealised worker has traditionally been one who prioritises work above personal and family concerns and will sacrifice non-work activities to devote more time to their work. As Walsh (2012) reports, it has been long accepted in the professions that you have to work excessive hours over many years to achieve promotion. This remains the norm in many industries. The use of flexible working arrangements in such a culture is often taken as a lack of desire to progress and frequently prohibits an employee from being considered for progression to executive roles (Lovejoy & Stone, 2012). Many leading practice EOCGE organisations have recognised this traditional norm and have taken deliberate steps to combat this through role modelling of flexible working by executive team members as well as showcasing male managers and workers successfully progressing while working flexibly.

There is a broad international literature surrounding the gendering and devaluation of flexible roles in organisations. Pas and his colleagues (2014) argue that flexible work practices may be failing in many workplaces because they are primarily seen as a 'motherhood' issue. Therefore, individuals suffer from the stereotype biases and conflicts between the 'mother' role and the 'career' role. Leading practice EOCGE organisations have confronted this issue by de-gendering flexibility and mainstreaming it across their respective organisations with initiatives such as

'all roles flex' and 'start with yes' on issues of flexibility.

Putnam and her associates (2014:413) argue that the issues surrounding flexible arrangements fall into four categories:

1. Variable versus fixed arrangements – flexible arrangements are often constrained by task demands such as fixed deadlines and site decision requirements.
2. Supportive versus unsupportive environments – managers can send mixed messages that simultaneously encourage and discourage using flexible policies and co-workers often chastise those who use them.
3. Equitable versus inequitable implementation of policies – some employers only see flexible arrangements as appropriate for particular demographics such as mothers.
4. Autonomy versus organisational control – employees who have high autonomy often intensify their work practices and work harder or for longer periods than do employees with fixed hours, creating additional inequity.

Recent research into flexibility (Brescoll, et al., 2013; Putnam et al., 2014) suggests that these problems can largely be overcome by:

- having clear flexibility policies that are accessible to all employees
- having clear performance accountabilities for outcomes on both sides
- reducing managerial discretion through increasing the rigor surrounding the decision process of whether work is capable of being done flexibly.

As one EOCGE CEO noted,

"It is relatively easy to introduce a diversity strategy, and it is relatively easy to introduce flexible working policies. What's much harder is shifting the culture for both men and women so real change actually happens. We can only make flexibility the norm if it is seen as normal for both men and women. More broadly, our approach recognises that our people have a life outside of work, and may need support to balance their responsibilities at home or other interests. Our leadership team and I have been conscious that if we work flexibly on a regular basis, we will give others the confidence to ask for non-traditional arrangements that suit them."

The next section of the report outlines how leading practice EOCGE organisations address the many issues that have been outlined above.

4.1.1 Organisational Culture and Flexibility Philosophy

Leading practice EOCGE organisations have shifted towards flexibility being the norm rather than the exception and consider flexibility to be ‘business as usual’. While many EOCGE organisations note that some roles were more difficult than others to make flexible, one EOCGE CEO summed up the prevailing attitude that, “we recognise that although not all roles are able to support all forms of flexibility, all roles can support some form of flexibility”. The decision to shift towards all roles being considered flexible was variously reported as being predicated upon organisational values around employee involvement and trust and the business case for flexibility that results, as well as the shift in the way work is being done globally now and will be done in the future.

With regard to the future of work, many EOCGE organisations cited predictions that increased competition, uncertainty and technological innovation will drive organisations to become more agile and talent hungry. As one EOCGE organisational leader in the education sector noted,

“To successfully operate within these circumstances, a workforce and culture that is agile, flexible and diverse is required. Flexible work arrangements are a powerful lever in achieving this, as they enable a more diverse and inclusive workplace for both women and men.”

There was a strong narrative in many EOCGE organisations around balancing the needs of clients/ customers, employees, managers and the organisation as a whole through trust, leadership and empowerment and recognising that all people have competing priorities in their lives. As one EOCGE CEO noted,

“Our leaders recognise that how we manage the relationship between work and other elements of our lives will be different for everyone and a flexible working arrangement gives our employees a meaningful level of control over when, where and how work is accomplished. This trust granted by leaders provides the freedom for employees to produce their best work.”

EOCGE organisations dominated by client-facing roles, such as in the professional services sector, actively included clients in flexibility conversations to ensure that their needs would also be met. Likewise, there was a move in recent years towards outcomes-based measures of employee performance, rather than face-time.

When reporting upon their workplace flexibility initiatives, most EOCGE organisations said that they communicated compelling external evidence regarding the business case for increased workplace

flexibility to managers to increase the momentum towards the mainstreaming of flexibility. EOCGE organisations consistently cited the following outcomes of their flexibility practices:

- increased job satisfaction
- increased retention
- reduced absenteeism
- increased staff engagement
- increased staff loyalty
- increased business agility
- sustained organisational knowledge
- increased attraction of the best diverse talent
- increased productivity
- increased progression of women into management roles
- increased return-to-work rates after parental leave.

Several EOCGE organisations described their stand on workplace flexibility as generating a significant competitive advantage in the war for talent. As one organisation in the professional services sector reported,

“The strong connection to commercial outcomes is an important one to dispel any concerns that some may have in accessing flexible work arrangements and eases the way for our managers to lead a team that adopts different work practices. What once may have been seen as a challenge is being reframed as a commercial imperative that differentiates us in the market.”

Leading practice EOCGE organisations made extensive reference to the idea of flexibility being ‘business as usual’, ‘mainstreamed’ or ‘normal business practice’. Many EOCGE CEOs reported that, by extension, those individuals that did not embrace and accommodate flexibility as an organisational norm were out of step with both organisational values and strategy.

The mainstreaming of flexibility was accomplished by EOCGE organisations through the following, which will be examined in greater detail below:

- detailed flexibility policies
- facilitating best practice job design
- staff involvement in developing flexibility policy
- consistent promotion of flexibility by all levels of the organisational hierarchy to staff and clients/ customers

- clear roles and accountabilities for employees and managers
- human resources management support for flexibility discussions between staff and managers
- training for employees and managers around all aspects of flexibility
- readily available support materials.

Additionally, leading practice EOCGE organisations, regardless of how far along the flexibility journey they were, actively engaged in addressing and challenging negative attitudes towards flexibility. As noted above, traditional working norms are deeply embedded in many workplaces and as such there are many stereotypes and myths surrounding flexible workers. These create barriers to the take-up of flexibility as well as potentially affecting the progression of those in flexible roles. Beyond the promotion of flexibility, EOCGE organisations directly tackled the following persistent myths.

- “You can only manage people when you can see them”
- “Flexible employees lack commitment”
- “Managing flexible workers is harder than managing traditional workers”
- “Flexibility is only for junior employees”
- “Flexibility is only for parents”
- “Flexibility harms our client relationships”
- “Progression is more difficult for flexible workers”
- “Flexibility undermines teamwork”
- “Flexibility only involves reduced hours”
- “Flexibility can’t work in certain job types”

CEOs did this using internal metrics and external industry and academic reports, role-modelling by senior employees, a determination to disrupt the traditional approach by the CEO and executives, embracing policies which consider an array of flexible working options for individuals, teams and projects, activity-based performance metrics, best practice job design, inclusive development of flexibility policies and ongoing conversations with individuals, managers, clients and teams.

4.1.2 Just for Parents – Gendering Flexibility?

As one EOCGE CEO in the finance sector reported,

“For flexibility to be effective it needs to be made available to as many people as possible in the company without any prejudgements on what people use their non-work time for, whether this be further education, sport or to provide care or anything else.”

Leading practice EOCGE organisations have moved to gender-neutral flexibility-policies which also specify that flexibility is not simply a ‘women’s issue’ or solely available to parents and other carers. Given that women remain as the dominant primary carer in Australia (Economic Security for Women, 2019), limiting flexibility to parents returning from parental leave has the effect of framing flexibility as an issue that mainly concerns women. This not only reinforces stereotypes about women in the workplace but has the effect of causing men to avoid undertaking parental leave and from applying to access flexibility to support caring activities (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2015; Ray, Gornick & Schmitt, 2010).

To confound matters, flexibility is often confused with working reduced hours or part-time. However these are only two forms of flexibility. It is possible through telecommuting, early start/finish or flexible working hours to share equally in caring responsibilities without compromising performance, position or prospects. This was evidenced in The Equilibrium Man Challenge (see WGEA, 2015), an initiative that was referenced by many EOCGE organisations.

While taking steps to use gender-neutral language in flexibility policies and using pictures of both men and women as carers is a positive step towards undoing the myth of flexibility as a women’s issue, the additional business benefits from increased staff engagement, agility, productivity and loyalty that come from extending flexibility beyond those with caring responsibilities were reported by most EOCGE organisations. In leading practice EOCGE organisations the focus is upon ‘what’ and ‘how’ to do flexibility rather than ‘why should we grant it to you’. In these organisations, sport, study, religion, hobbies, volunteering and health and wellbeing are considered equally important reasons to apply for flexibility. These organisations take care to ensure that examples used in promoting flexibility are not only gender neutral but encompass a broad array of reasons why an employee might want to access flexible work.

4.1.3 Timing of Meetings, Communication and Travel

As a practical example of promoting and valuing a flexible culture and balancing of work/life priorities, many leading practice EOCGE organisations have also adopted the following policies:

- Not holding meetings outside of hours (usually between 8.30am and 5pm)
- Not allowing phone calls past 9pm in any time zone of those participating in calls
- Setting attendance at overseas meetings for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to reduce travel over weekends
- Ensuring, where possible, extended travel is kept to a minimum through use of video conferencing and related technologies.

A further example was offered by several EOCGE organisations for emails sent out of hours. These emails had variations on the following in their signature lines: 'We work flexibly here. I'm sending this message now because it suits me, but I don't expect you to read, respond or action it outside of your regular hours.'

4.1.4 Flexibility Policy

Most EOCGE organisations outlined that flexibility was a key strategic priority in their respective workplace gender equality strategies. Flexibility clauses were usually contained in a formal policy in environments without collective or enterprise agreements or set out the minimum condition in these agreements where they were in place.

Leading practice flexibility policies set out the stance that the organisation starts from the default position; that all roles can be flexible and to consider all requests to be reason neutral. This goes beyond the traditional position of legislative compliance with requests related to parental or carer responsibilities, age, disability, matters of family or domestic violence or other grounds related to anti-discrimination legislation.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations also set out in their respective flexibility policies that all positions advertised externally and recruited internally were to be offered flexibly and to state what flexible options were available for the vacant position. Additionally, policies established that the onus was upon the manager with oversight of the role, in consultation with the HR team, to put forward a compelling business case as to why a particular request for flexibility could not be accommodated.

Most policies explained that these cases were to be referred either to the organisation's gender diversity committee, head of human resources or the CEO. In such cases where the request was refused on reasonable business grounds, policies usually required the employee to be offered an alternative role where flexibility could be accommodated.

Workplace flexibility policies and enterprise agreements were supported by flexibility enactment practices and procedures. The following areas were routinely considered and each will be discussed in further detail below:

- Types of flexibility available
- Technology and workplace design
- Process for considering flexibility requests
- Manager responsibilities
- Employee responsibilities
- Human resources responsibilities
- Support materials available
- Performance, progression and remuneration
- Policy review and renewal.

4.1.4.1 Types of Flexibility

Flexibility encompasses a broad range of options with the only consistency being that flexible roles all vary the traditional 9–5, five days a week, fixed-hours work regime (McGuire, Kenney & Brashler, 2010). Flexibility involves modifying one or more of the following:

1. Quantity of hours worked
2. Timing of when hours are worked
3. Sharing of hours worked
4. Where the hours are worked
5. Control/autonomy over the hours worked
6. Purchasing or selling time worked for leave.

EOCGE organisations reported a wide array of formal and informal flexibility options. These varied according to the demands faced by each industry sector, whether the individual role was client facing, the longevity or seniority of the employee and whether the role was project based. Many EOCGE organisations reported that new enterprise bargaining agreements had involved the contemplation of greater flexibility during the negotiation process.

Informal arrangements usually involved temporary and ad hoc (sometimes one-off) versions of more long-term, formal arrangements. Most EOCGE



organisations gave managers significant (though usually bounded by length of time the arrangement would be in place) discretion over granting ad hoc or temporary flexibility. For example many organisations provided flexible working options to carers during school holidays.

The formal flexibility arrangements reported were as follows:

- 'Early start/finish' or 'late start/finish'. On average, for traditional working environments with an 8.30/9am to 5pm regime, early start/finishes usually ranged from 7/7.30am to 3/3.30pm and late start/finishes ranged from 10.30/11am-6.30/7.30pm.
- Part-time/reduced hours. This refers to situations in which an employee was offered days or hours less than a full work week and with compensation adjusted accordingly. A part-time employee may work fewer hours each day of the work week or fewer days per week. Part-time work is only considered as being a flexible work option if an employee wants to work part-time or move from full-time work.
- Telecommuting or working from home. This involved facilitating the employee's ability to

work from home or alternative off-site locations. The effectiveness of telecommuting was highly dependent upon technological support to enable communications between the employee and managers/clients and colleagues (see below).

- Compressed working weeks/rostered days off/ floating RDOs. For example, four days x 10 hours per week with one working day off or nine days x 8hr 50min each fortnight with one day off per fortnight or similar variations upon the number of hours and across how many weeks/months. Some EOCGE organisations offered variations either where the day off could be nominated by the employee on request or RDOs could be accumulated and taken off as a block of leave.
- Job sharing. This usually involved the splitting of a full time equivalent role into two or more roles, which were shared between two or more employees either across or between days a week. Characteristically, EOCGE organisations using job share arrangements had registers of jobs that were capable of being shared, noting where job share partners were actively being sought. Likewise, most organisations made provisions for trial periods and set reviews to ensure that the arrangement was working well for the job share participants and those around them.

- Flexible working hours (day/week/month/year) with either full or limited employee discretion over when hours were worked. For example for one EOCGE organisation, working hours for full-time professional staff are calculated on the basis of a four-week work cycle of 140 hours worked from Monday to Friday between 7am and 7pm, excluding public holidays.
- Purchased leave. For example one organisation had provision for the purchase of 1-4 weeks' extra annual leave through a pro-rata reduction in their annual salary.
- Time in lieu. Extra hours (when worked over a set number of hours or over weekends) worked were converted into additional hours/days that could be taken as paid leave.
- Flexible rosters, shifts or rotations. For example, many EOCGE organisations consulted with employees when developing shift timetables and allocating staff.
- Term-time working. Some EOCGE organisations offered flexible roles that were specifically designed to work only during school terms in their various locations.
- Flexible long service leave. Allowance for taking leave a day at a time, one week at a time or one month at a time or variations on these.
- Wellbeing, wellness or lifestyle leave. A special class of leave offered to all employees, usually allowing 1-5 days that could be used at the employee's discretion for any activity that contributed to achieving greater work/life balance.
- Unpaid leave for special requirements not covered by usual leave and flexibility policies. Unpaid leave was often offered for extended study, overseas work experience and extended holidays. Unpaid leave of 3-12 months was usually offered for these circumstances.

Most EOCGE organisations also made provision for hybrid or 'mixed' flexibility which incorporated two or more of the above types of flexible working. Most formal arrangements also included the ability to review and adjust hours, or other arrangements, if circumstances changed for the employee.

4.1.2.2.1 Special Purpose Flexibility Arrangements

Many EOCGE organisations offered two specific circumstance-based forms of transitional flexibility:

1. Transitioning back to work after parental leave, where a hybrid mix of flexible options were offered to returning parents. These usually included starting on part-time or reduced hours and, graduating (over one to three months) to full-time working hours.
2. Phased retirement, whereby over a period of months or years, the employee was offered either alternative roles or hybrid flexible working conditions that decreased full-time hours to part-time or reduced hours. Some organisations accompanied this flexible arrangement with 1-3 days leave to attend to retirement planning.

Other special purpose leave offered by most EOCGE employers was defence and emergency services leave to accommodate, for example, reservists and volunteer firefighters. Leave entitlements varied widely, with some EOCGE organisations supporting the entirety of an employee's commitment and some providing a week of leave.

4.1.4.2 Technology and Workplace Design

Most EOCGE organisations had made significant investments in office design and technological enablers such as hardware and software depending upon the organisation's suite of flexibility practices and their overall philosophy surrounding their flexibility policy. For example, EOCGE organisations that had adopted an 'all roles flex' philosophy tended to have a greater range of flexible working options that included off-site working and variable hours. Such practices required investment in changing the physical layout of offices to match the way in which work was being carried out as well as a commitment to enabling technologies.

Where people were coming and going from the office at different times and on different days, EOCGE organisations tended to shift towards collaborative spaces rather than traditional models of one desk per employee. However, the office space design was dependent upon the nature of work being engaged in by employees. Whereas completely open plan offices with hot desks may work for some kinds of work, it is not suitable for work that requires a high degree of concentration and little interruption. Most EOCGE organisations with an all roles flex philosophy reported a shift to activity-based working. This shift was accompanied by office layouts that accommodated multiple modes of working with a mix of quiet spaces, collaborative/meeting spaces and open spaces. It was notable that some leading practice EOCGE organisations had taken the opportunity to incorporate child friendly activity-based working areas specifically for working parents who could utilise these areas in emergencies or extraordinary situations when alternative child care could not be sourced.

Where firms retained single desks for each employee, simple things such as the placement of desk cards noting that the employee was working from home and how to contact them had been implemented to ensure that collaboration and contact continued despite the persons' physical absence.

Extensive use of remote working requires a shift from physical to electronic files and systems. Many EOCGE organisations reported needing to streamline existing processes and digitising paper-based systems. Employees also needed to be able to connect to the internal network from anywhere. This requires investment in virtual private network (VPN) technology. A VPN extends a private network across a public network, and enables users to send and receive data across shared or public networks as if their computing devices were directly connected to the private network.

Employees need to be provided with the devices to access the network remotely and most EOCGE organisations that use VPN technology also provide employees with laptops, tablets and smartphones that can be used to access the network. Additionally, depending on the kind of work being engaged in and the types of devices being used, further investment by EOCGE organisations was made into portable headsets, docking stations, Wi-Fi hubs, landline diversion technology as well as monitors and voice hubs, screens and projectors for collaborative meeting rooms enabling virtual attendance at meetings.

Investment in collaborative tools and communication software was also a feature of EOCGE organisations that had moved towards remote working. Most EOCGE organisations had invested in software which included videoconferencing, collaborative drives and secure document and file sharing programs, shared calendars, archives and e-storage, instant messaging and email access. In support of the shift towards remote working, data security and home working policies, particularly around occupational health and safety, had been updated to accommodate the issues involved in taking work off-site. Likewise most EOCGE organisations had invested in 24/7 tech support for off-site workers, through helplines or instant messaging, to enable troubleshooting at any time.

4.1.4.3 Job Design

Many EOCGE organisations reported a first step in providing flexibility was to re-examine each role in the firm. As one CEO in the professional services sector noted, "Flexibility is built in rather than bolted on."

One mechanism referred to by many EOCGE organisations for considering requests for flexible

work options was to examine it through the lens of job design and analysis (Stone, 2017). Job design and analysis is ordinarily carried out by human resources professionals with input from managers and employees who understand the role as it is currently being undertaken. Job analysis (which examines job content, job requirements and job context) and job design (which specifies the content of the job and considers the ways in which work can be done) recognises that there is no single 'best' way to construct a job.

Invariably the construction of a job will involve trade-offs between specialisation and simplification, vertical and horizontal loading, supervision and autonomy (Stone, 2017:182-211). Job analysis and design is a more sophisticated way of examining flexible role requests. It tests the ways in which tasks are broken up, allocated, how they interact with other roles and how they are resourced. In this way team designs or restructuring at an organisational level to support flexibility are considered as a matter of course.

Many EOCGE organisations reported investment in training their HR professionals and managers in job design and analysis methodologies and/or had retained external job design experts to review existing ways of working and offer alternative flexible approaches. As noted above, there is no single best way to design a job and hence human resource professionals or external consultants often design a set of tools that enable managers to consider a ranking of job variables, by importance, alongside a matrix of flexible working options.

EOCGE organisations using a job redesign approach also provided human resource support to managers and employees, as a part of their flexibility discussions, if solutions to business disruption were not immediately apparent. It was also a feature of these organisations that they regularly shared best practice solutions devised by managers, teams and employees in these meetings with the rest of the firm.

Clayton Utz

Clayton Utz prioritises flexibility as a strategic and policy imperative. Within the professional services environment, such a standpoint can be challenging to embed. To support its ongoing culture shift, Clayton Utz has recently refreshed its flexibility policy and reaffirmed flexibility as a key strategic priority for the organisation. Moreover, partners are prompted to ‘walk the talk’ in their role modelling of flexibility, through formalised KPIs and through training and awareness sessions. Clayton Utz also employs a dedicated flexibility manager to support members of the firm to manage, monitor and embed flexibility as a way of life for its workforce.

We spoke with Alison Woolsey, Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Clayton Utz on driving flexibility at the firm.

Clayton Utz outlined flexibility as an absolute priority on 1 April 2015. Can you take us through the reasoning of why it was considered to be a priority?

When we made flexibility an absolute priority for the firm back in April 2015, we had seen movement in the market in corporate Australia (e.g. Telstra's All Roles Flex stance) and we were mindful of the shift in the expectations of employees. At that same time, we were trying to tackle a high attrition rate in our senior female lawyer and female partner ranks. We had to do a deep dive to understand what was behind this. We retained an external consultant and conducted a series of interviews with current and former partners, male and female. What we learned was that one of the key drivers for women leaving the firm was the lack of flexibility. There were other reasons of course – such as the lack of support for parental leavers and parents, unconscious bias, and lack of clarity about path to partnership – but flexibility was a key issue. While we had always had a flexibility policy, it hadn't been promoted or communicated well and with a new management team in place we saw it as time to refashion and promote it.

Nearly five years on we have just launched our refreshed flexibility policy. It is not radically different to that set in 2015, but it is principles-based and leverages what we have learnt. We have a series of eight principles, which set the tone for flexibility

discussions. It is about a flexible arrangement being good for the individual, good for the team and good for the firm and its clients. It's a philosophical shift, anticipating increased communication, that we will explore job redesign, that we'll take a team-based approach and that flexibility will be very much a part of a person's career development and not hold them back. It has also required us to reflect on the social aspect of work and the importance of balancing working remotely with the need for interaction between team members.

We took the opportunity with the new policy to modernise the language and to make it absolutely clear that flexibility is gender and reason neutral. We have a very broad definition of what constitutes flexible working, it's not just formal flexibility like working part-time or from home every Friday but also ad hoc flexibility; feeling that it's OK to get in late from a dentist's appointment, go to an important house/apartment inspection in the middle of the day, assist at school with reading, etc. We also made sure that other policies that support flexibility, such as our Working from Home policy or Technology policy, were woven in or more tightly aligned. In all, the new policy has allowed us to anchor it more firmly across the workplace.

Can you describe the journey over the past five years in terms of embedding flexibility as a part of Clayton Utz's culture?

In 2018 64% of our people said they used some form of flexibility – up from 54% in 2016. We consider this figure will be considerably higher again when we conduct a Pulse Survey in 2020. Previously, we had a presenteeism culture. Flexibility was seen as working part-time or working from home. Mindsets have definitely changed. Different people from different parts of the firm have given flexible working a go – from partners through to legal secretaries. We're in an industry that sometimes has crazy hours and deadlines and we've learnt the importance of people embracing flexible working against that backdrop – that it is often OK to have some down time in the middle of the day to go to the gym or to go for a walk and refresh. We see flexibility as having an important role to play in managing good mental health and wellbeing.

Embedding flexibility is an ongoing project. We still have work to do and, for example, an area of focus is encouraging more men to work flexibly.

What initiatives made the most difference in embedding flexibility as a way of life at Clayton Utz?

Our leadership team believed in the importance of flexibility and stayed the course. It has tried to communicate well, effectively and often to ensure the commitment was regularly reinforced.

Role modelling by senior people and high performers as well as hearing stories about it working successfully were also critical. When you have highly regarded people (and particularly men) working flexibly and confidently, you start to manage negative perceptions about it being associated with underperformers or people who lack ambition. Couple this with story-telling – sharing countless reasons and arrangements – it starts to feel real and normal.

As a part of our prioritisation of flexibility at Clayton Utz, we also made the decision to have a dedicated flexibility manager. Having a subject matter expert available to partners and staff has enabled us to build awareness, engagement and understanding in establishing sustainable work practices.

We've invested in creating real-time dashboards that measure and monitor all critical metrics around gender equality including flexibility data. These are incredibly powerful because you need to be able to see where you might be going off track and proactively take action to address the hot spots before they become real challenges.

We continue to look to the market, including other firms in professional services and other industries, for new ideas around flexibility and gender equality strategies more broadly. The legal profession has certainly improved its awareness and approach over the last five years and collectively law firms have helped mainstream flexibility.



Alison Woolsey, Director of Diversity and Inclusion

How much of a difference have your flexibility and gender equality practices made to the firm's outcomes?

While we set out on the flexibility journey as an attraction and retention strategy for our women in particular, our gender equality strategies are making a real difference for men and women. We know, for example, that our flexible workers are more sustainably engaged than our workforce as a whole.

There is also a benefit in terms of our relationships with clients. Our clients increasingly expect gender-balanced teams and when pitching for work we are often asked questions around this balance and our gender equality initiatives generally. It's part of a broader movement towards better social procurement and social sustainability. Gender equality is a big issue and we must recognise both the business and moral imperative.

It was characteristic of EOCGE firms that, where new forms of flexibility, or technology supporting flexibility, were being considered in redesigning work, pilots would be run on small sections of the firm to test job redesign solutions before rolling them out across the wider organisation. Likewise, employees would be given a trial period in redesigned roles to test that they were meeting the expectations of the employee and the organisation and to decide if further adjustments were required.

EOCGE organisations note the following benefits from the job redesign approach:

- It provides detailed grounds for denying a request for a particular form of flexibility, should it be found that the work cannot be undertaken in another way
- It provides managers and employees with an opportunity to look at the way in which work is currently being undertaken and the potential to uncover efficiencies or inefficiencies and better and more satisfying ways of working
- It demonstrates a level of engagement with individual employees and teams around better accommodating their needs and the needs of the organisation
- Consideration of an individual request for flexibility can result in a flexible option or an enhanced flexible option being available to other/all employees.

4.1.4.4 Staff Involvement

Leading practice EOCGE organisations were characteristic in their high level of ongoing engagement with staff at all levels of the organisation around the development and improvement of flexibility policy and practice. Engagement took multiple forms; however, the most typical kinds of engagement comprised:

- Organisation level surveys
- Whole-of-organisation/division workshops
- Manager group workshops
- Employee group reviews and feedback
- Team-based reviews and workshops.

4.1.4.5 Organisational Level Surveys

EOCGE organisations regularly survey all employees on a range of engagement related issues. Typical questions asked in staff surveys that related to flexibility included questions designed to better understand current perceptions and practices such as:

- whether employees felt that they had the flexibility they needed to manage their work and other life areas
- identifying future needs for flexibility
- utility of various types of flexibility offered
- ability to access flexibility when needed
- effectiveness of flexibility processes and practices
- impact of flexible work practices upon career outcomes (pay and progression)
- impact of flexible work practices on fellow team members
- perceptions of cultural acceptance of flexibility
- unit, team and division level promotion and support for flexibility.

Questions were typically framed in such a way as to give a score. However, provision was usually also made to give written responses explaining why a particular score had been assigned. Additionally, some organisations surveyed clients to gauge their views on flexibility and how it may impact upon the provision of the firm's services to them.

The results of these surveys were usually analysed by division, business unit and team and reported to the organisation's executive group or gender equality subcommittee. The summary results of the surveys were fed back to division, unit and team levels and usually via interactive workshops or forums aimed at addressing identified issues and finding solutions. Team level issues were often put individually to team leaders to address specific issues.

4.1.4.6 Whole-of-organisation Workshops

Many EOCGE organisations engaged in whole-of-organisation or division-wide workshops aimed at reviewing and refining existing flexibility policies and practices or to assist with planning further initiatives.

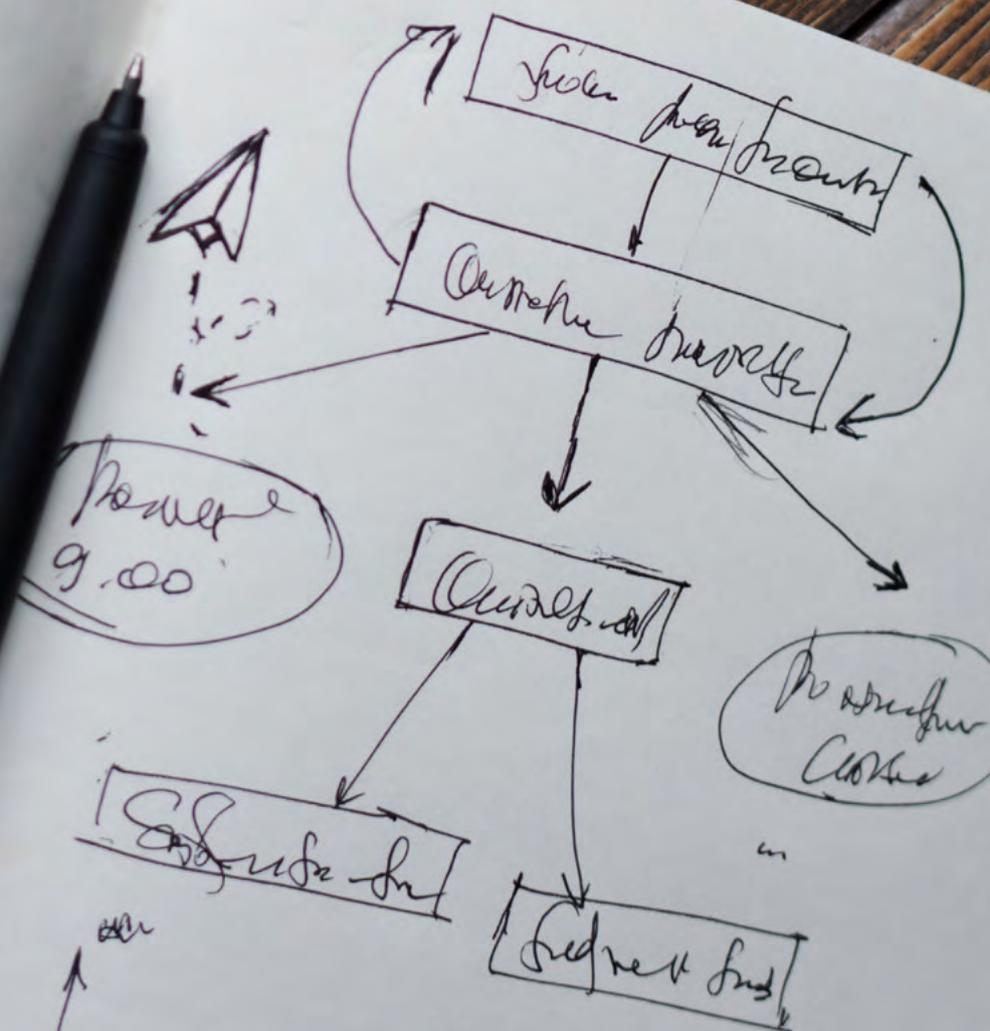
The purpose of having staff and managers together in the workshop was twofold. Firstly, many organisations viewed these workshops as an opportunity for the organisation to promote its support of flexibility and embed it further into the organisation's culture. This was usually done through the sponsorship and facilitation of workshops by the CEO, executive group or gender diversity subcommittee and a re-statement of the organisation's commitment to flexibility. Secondly, to explore operational issues from the perspective of both staff and management. Some EOCGE organisations reported the facilitation of these workshops by external experts and consultants to help maximise workshop outcomes.

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Having both staff and management views in the room was reported by many EOCGE organisations as enabling:

- more detailed and robust debates
- brainstorming and testing of ideas
- providing a better understanding of business and individual needs
- understanding how flexibility tools, technology and resources are currently being used
- refining flexibility policies and practices to maximise individual, team and organisational outcomes
- better understanding obstacles to implementation
- accommodating client/customer needs in a flexible environment
- proofing of support materials and guides
- identifying areas where flexibility policies may need to change.

Given the often varying needs of different sectors, geographical locations or divisions within an organisation, workshops were usually conducted at these levels so as to consider context specific issues.

4.1.4.7 Manager Group Workshops

Most EOCGE organisations engaged in separate workshops with their managers in order to focus upon areas of manager responsibility. As with whole-of-organisation workshops, external experts or consultants were reported as being engaged when workshops centred on the development and implementation of new flexibility policies or practices. However, most EOCGE organisations reported that manager-only workshops were conducted to discuss:

- best practice mechanisms for delivering division, unit or team level flexibility outcomes
- to best frame flexibility discussions with individuals and teams
- to communicate flexibility policy to clients and facilitate their expected service outcomes
- to better understand the businesses need for flexibility and how flexibility drives individual, team and organisational productivity
- how flexibility can be used to attract and retain talented staff
- how flexibility integrates into organisation wide gender and diversity strategies
- how to ensure consistency of approach by managers to flexibility across the organisation

- refinement of tools, checklists, guides and other support material for managers
- formal review and revision of flexibility policies.

4.1.4.8 Employee Group Reviews and Feedback

It was a feature of EOCGE organisations that they had active staff representation groups around issues of diversity and inclusion. Most EOCGE organisations had internal women's networks, parent groups and/or flexibility networks that actively engaged with issues via online or face-to-face forums. These groups were regularly consulted or asked to provide specific reports or general feedback on flexibility policies and practices based on interactions with their members.

Employee groups were often reported as being instrumental in providing thought leadership as well as specific feedback on how flexibility policies were affecting different demographics within the organisation and providing potential policy and practice solutions. These groups were specifically consulted during flexibility policy reviews and renewals.

4.1.4.9 Team Based Reviews and Workshops

As one EOCGE organisation noted, in the case of team based environments,

“Flexible work often affects whole teams and teams play a vital role in ensuring the successful implementation of flexible work. There may need to be work redistributed, and team members should work together to communicate, engage with the process, set expectations and build understanding to ensure the business continues to operate effectively.”

It was a feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations that teams were regularly consulted and engaged around how flexibility policies affected their day-to-day operation and how they would adapt to members adopting different flexibility modes. Teams were often empowered to come up with actions or flexibility guidelines around:

- how they would support each other's personal flexibility goals
- how impacts upon the team dynamic and operations could be more effectively managed
- how flexibility outcomes could be improved for individuals, the team and the organisation, including client needs.

Several EOCGE organisations noted that through shared understanding and open communication practices, fears around negative peer attitudes could be alleviated and employees were more likely to access flexible work practices.

4.1.5 Promotion of Flexibility

4.1.5.1 CEO and Leadership Group Commitment to Flexibility

Organisational and managerial support are essential elements in the effective implementation of workplace flexibility policies and role-modelling plays a critical role in showcasing how this can be accomplished. Nonetheless, lingering doubts remain around the stigma which has traditionally been to flexible roles and the CEO and executive team members need to play an active role in combating these. As set out earlier, in some workplace cultures, flexibility has been seen as a sign that an employee is not serious about their career (Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014). This makes the modelling of flexibility practices and their communication by senior executives and the CEO, in particular, a fundamental part in moving towards a flexible work culture that supports both the retention and progression of staff.

4.1.5.2 CEO Flexibility Actions

It is a feature of EOCGE organisations that most of their CEOs actively engage in flexible working. The majority reported using varied working hours, such as flexible start and finish times, to help them accommodate family commitments around attendance at school functions, sports days and training, parent-teacher interviews, student presentations and award ceremonies, as well as pick-up and drop-off times for day care and before-and-after-school care. Many also noted accommodating elder care responsibilities and their own sporting or other community engagements. Likewise, most CEOs also noted working from home, either as a regular occurrence, (which varied from once per week to once per month) or ad hoc, as schedules permitted. These days were noted by CEOs as often being used to provide additional time around their family. CEOs also reported the importance of effective remote communications technologies in enabling them to operate from home.

EOCGE CEOs actively encouraged their direct reports to undertake flexible work practices and a feature of EOCGE organisations is that they have either a CEO who works flexibly or members of the executive team who do so. Again, the most common forms of flexibility for direct reports were altered start and finish times and regular or ad hoc days working from home.

4.1.5.3 CEO Communications

EOCGE CEOs were prominent in bringing attention to their own use of the flexible work practices, as well as use by their teams. Leaving loudly and announcing their reasons for doing so was common practice by

CEOs and they encouraged their direct reports to do so as well. For example, one CEO noted that twice a week he had arranged to collect the kids from day care and made it a practice every now and then to loudly announce to the office at 4pm on these days “I’m off to pick up my kids, see you tomorrow.” As this CEO also noted,

“Setting the tone from the top enables middle managers and new hires to feel comfortable to work flexibly too.” Open disclosure was noted by many EOCGE CEOs as doing away with the need to ‘hide’ where you are and the feeling of guilt which accompanies this. Many also noted that this was a key ingredient in creating a workplace culture that accepted flexibility as an everyday part of working in their organisation.

Beyond leaving loudly, CEOs also used multiple media forms to communicate their use of flexibility. Most EOCGE CEOs reported their personal use of flexibility and the difference it made in accommodating their personal and work commitments through internal videos, blogs, emails, newsletters, internal social networking tools and at internal and external meetings and presentations. Through their own examples they encouraged others in the organisation to use the forms of flexibility available through their respective organisation’s flexibility policies. One CEO shared their electronic calendar as a means of role modelling flexibility for the whole organisation and announced the following in an email:

“One of the things I wanted to try as CEO is having a public calendar available to give more transparency around my day-to-day activities during the working week: client visits, board meetings, town halls and interstate trips will all be there. Spending time with my two young daughters is really important to me. So when I am spending time with them, when you otherwise might have expected me to be in the office, I will put that in my calendar to lock that time away. Sometimes that will be school drop off, other times it might be school swimming or a school assembly ... and sometimes other stuff just happens! Of course in my role I need to be available, but that does not mean I’ll always be at my desk. As I am sure you all know and experience, life can be a juggle. Flexibility is more than just an abstract idea to me – getting it right in a way that works for our people and our clients is a challenge I believe we need to meet.”

EOCGE CEOs and their executive teams also play a key role in acknowledging and confronting the factors that can undermine the effective implementation of flexibility policies and practices. As set out earlier, for flexibility policies to deliver lower absenteeism, reduced tardiness, reduced staff turnover, higher work commitment, greater job satisfaction and higher performance, the myths and entrenched work practices of the past must be undone. Using multiple communication platforms CEOs and executive team members play a key role in tackling these head on. As one member of an executive team in the finance sector noted in an article made available both internally and externally

“There are many misconceptions that hold back flexible working and all the benefits that it brings. All progressive companies have policies in place to enable flexible working. In human resources we tout the commercial benefits regularly, but a mindset shift amongst management is the key to make it an everyday reality rather than a big deal. To me, flexible working is often much broader than many people assume. It is no longer just about women working part-time because they have young children. People care for elders, they study, they have short-term emergencies, (ever waited all day for a plumber to turn up), they travel, they like

to play golf early in the morning and they have family events to attend. They may be mature and experienced workers who want to reduce, but not cease, working. Our customers are also demanding flexible access to us in the evening, on weekends and online. Operating our lives flexibly is just the way we do things these days – we work while waiting for a plane and we check our social media accounts, do online grocery shopping and book our holidays during the day. We need to worry less about where or when the work gets done and more about whether the work does actually get done ...”

4.1.5.4 Manager Role-Modelling

In leading practice EOCGE organisations, role-modelling of flexibility is not limited to the CEO and executive team members. The importance of middle managers role-modelling flexibility cannot be overstated since, as noted above, it is often middle managers who are seen as most likely to impede the take-up of flexibility offerings in the workplace. Likewise, many employees might not see flexibility undertaken by the CEO or executives as being available to them, but rather, representing a ‘privilege of rank’ that would not make a difference for those who have already made it to ‘the top’. Therefore, middle managers who undertake flexibility send a powerful message that contributes



towards dispelling these ideas, while also becoming champions for flexibility through leading by example. Many organisations noted how important manager role-modelling of flexibility was in their strategy to entrench flexibility as normal practice throughout the organisation.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations strongly encourage their managers to role-model some form of flexible working and many noted that they had instituted policies obliging managers to take up at least one form of flexibility. As one leading practice organisation noted,

“To support our culture of psychological safety, all our managers ensure they are taking up a minimum of one flexibility provision and speaking publicly about it.”

4.1.5.5 Promotional Media

EOCGE organisations not only used a wide array of media to promote flexibility, they characteristically used multiple methods at the same time and regularly relaunched or renewed flexibility promotional campaigns.

A feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations is their clear, regular and consistent messaging around support for flexibility in the workplace. The mechanisms used to promote flexibility comprised of the following:

Videos

Videos were used by most EOCGE organisations as the primary medium for conveying flexible working case studies and CEO- and organisational-level support for flexibility. Real-life case studies were reported by many EOCGE organisations as a powerful way of promoting flexibility. Videos showcased the many ways in which employees could benefit from flexible work options. Employee case studies usually featured men and women from different areas of the organisation telling their individual stories. Multiple case studies were often presented, either together or over time, with an effort to showcase different forms of flexibility and from people in different levels in the organisations hierarchy. Manager perspectives were also featured with them discussing how it works for them personally and how it works within the teams they manage. Areas in which it is often considered to be more difficult to provide flexibility, such as client-facing or site project roles, were also featured. Case studies were often replicated in written form, incorporating photos and images and emailed to employees or used in newsletters, articles and retained on flexibility resource hubs.

Likewise, video was also used to feature the CEO or executives conveying key features of the organisation's

flexibility policies, their commitment to a flexible workplace culture, success stories around flexibility innovations from managers and staff and they often incorporated stories around how the CEO or executives were personally accessing flexible work options.

Videos were often emailed to employees, added to internal flexibility resource hubs or YouTube sites and were played regularly on large screens in shared or entry areas around the organisation. Video and written case studies also featured widely in workshops, forums, events, training and induction sessions and internal social media sites.

Internal social media

Many EOCGE organisations had internal social media platforms where flexibility stories and articles were featured and/or employees could share their own experiences and tips. Some organisations used internal social networking tools for senior leaders to host live debates or discussions between staff, managers and the executive.

Emails

Regular emails from the CEO or senior leaders were a feature of EOCGE organisations. Email was widely used to:

- express ongoing commitment and support for flexibility
- reinforce flexibility policies and practices
- announce new initiatives
- report on existing initiatives
- remind employees and managers about organisational support for flexibility
- attach flyers, tools and tips, factsheets, infographics and other new support materials
- share external reports and research
- encourage feedback and discussion around flexibility
- share success stories, awards and citations for flexibility.

Newsletters

Most EOCGE organisations had an internal newsletter issued fortnightly, monthly or quarterly. Newsletters were used by the CEO, the diversity and inclusion committee chair or head of human resources to provide more detail about topics and initiatives outlined in emails.

Newsletters also provided an opportunity for the CEO to share their opinions about the importance of flexibility and its connection to the organisation's overarching gender equality strategy.

Some EOCGE organisational newsletters had sections dedicated to flexibility, which regularly featured case studies, books, articles and research report reviews, articles written by staff and managers, interviews with senior leaders, as well as reports on external events, comments and links to external resources, such as those on the WGEA website, advertising presentations and details relating to training opportunities inside and outside of the organisation.

Events and presentations

EOCGE organisations engaged in a variety of events and presentations around the promotion of flexibility. Presentations at a range of levels were a common feature in most EOCGE organisations; presentations could be at the unit, division or organisation level. At the division or organisational level, presentations would usually be hosted by the CEO or a senior leader and feature an external guest speaker/s or an internal flexibility content expert. Presentation topics ranged from strategic issues, such as the philosophy of flexibility and its overarching advantages to the organisation, down to operational-level discussions, which were more focused on individual and unit level outcomes and day-to-day stories of enacting and managing flexibility. Some presentations took the form of panels, which allowed for employees engaged in flexible work arrangements (along with their managers) to discuss and debate the topic of flexibility. These presentations enabled sharing of experiences and discussion around dealing with perceptions of others, managing technology, working with client expectations and career progression.

Many EOCGE organisations used ‘roadshows’ to launch or relaunch their flexibility policies in one or multiple locations. Such events usually involved either the CEO or a senior leader presenting the new or revised flexibility policy and supporting materials. A feature of roadshows is the opportunity to restate organisational values and culture, detailing the links between the organisation’s flexibility policy and the organisation’s overarching gender equality strategy. Roadshows were reported as always including a question and answer session at the end of the presentation.

Some EOCGE organisations held regular (mostly annual) town halls which usually covered the year in review as well as a future outlook. It was a feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations that these were also used to discuss progress on their gender equality strategies and flexibility initiatives in particular.

Such events would usually also be live-streamed to other areas of the organisation and recorded for use on flexibility resource hubs.

Finally, some EOCGE organisations had initiated Flexible Work Week or Flexible Working Day as distinct events with a range of activities designed to encourage those who didn’t work flexibly to trial a flexible work option and to highlight the organisation’s policies and practices as well as to dispel the myths surrounding flexible working.

Other forms of flexibility promotion

Large-scale promotion of flexibility through regular events and communication through videos, internal social media and emails were supplemented by most EOCGE organisations with smaller, though no less important, initiatives such as:

- installation of flexibility ‘screen savers’ on organisational computers, promoting the organisation’s flexibility policy or the benefits of flexibility
- posters promoting flexibility on office notice boards and other strategic locations
- support for managers and staff to attend external flexibility promotion events
- competitions for the best employee case study, story, photo or video about how they are using flexibility successfully
- flyers that included CEO endorsements, summary of flexibility policies, flexibility types available and the process for making an application
- position description templates on job advertisements noting that the organisation supports flexible working arrangements.

The purpose of this array of promotion mechanisms and their regular and repeated use was to embed the idea of flexible working as an everyday practice and to shift the organisation towards a flexibility mindset or culture. One EOCGE organisation was notable in this regard for supplying its managers with an hourglass as a constant visual reminder that the critical elements of its flexibility policy were trust, inclusion, motivation and empowerment (TIME).

4.1.6 Role of Managers

4.1.6.1 Managers Responsibilities

Managers in leading practice EOCGE organisations were expected to drive a culture of flexibility, giving them a central role in the success of flexibility in their respective organisations. Managers were at the front-line of implementing flexibility policy and in all but a few cases they were nominated as being the first person in the organisation to which an employee should go to discuss a request for flexible work options. Likewise many leading practice EOCGE

firms expected their managers to initiate discussions with their teams regarding the potential to access flexible arrangements. Regardless of who initiated the conversation, EOCGE organisations reported that managers characteristically were expected to:

- drive and be fully knowledgeable about organisational flexibility policies, the types of options available, the tools, checklists and other processes for conducting an assessment of flexibility requests and implementing outcomes of the process. They were also expected to understand the context of the employee, both in terms of the driver/s behind the flexibility request and in relation to the employee's team members
- actively support and champion their team member in developing their flexible work proposal by facilitating a wide-ranging discussion with them. Explore all potential mechanisms for delivering upon their flexibility request in the strategic context of meeting their needs as well as those of their team, clients and the organisation as a whole
- escalate the flexibility request to the HR team in the event the manager and employee were having difficulty finding an appropriate solution to the request
- ensure transparency in the decision process, including reasons why the request was unable to be met, if it is ultimately rejected, and in such cases, with the support of the human resources function, to explore alternative roles within the organisation that may be able to accommodate the request
- ensure that individualised flexibility arrangements, once agreed, have well developed work-plans, including objectives and performance expectations that reflect the agreed workload allocation and/or any amended working hours. Autonomy over how and when work was undertaken by employees usually involved monitoring of the employee through output performance measures
- consult with the rest of the team with regard to any effects the proposed flexibility arrangement might have upon other members and to facilitate discussions around any potential reorganisation or reallocation of work within the team
- ensure that the arrangement considered the ongoing career progression of the individual and team members, based upon performance expectations established in the work-plan
- ensure that the individual maintained equitable access to ongoing training and development opportunities

- ensure that the individual received all resources needed to enact their new flexible working arrangement, for example, guarantee an employee undertaking work from home had access to the technology (laptop and remote access) and knowledge (training) to be able to do so effectively
- act quickly to address the request for flexibility. Most EOCGE organisations noted a requirement for flexibility requests to be resolved in no more than 21 days
- actively monitor the new flexibility arrangement and review it within 3–6 months to ensure that it was working for the individual, the team and the organisation, with an eye to further improvements and support if needed, plus ongoing annual review of the arrangement thereafter.

A characteristic cultural change that has emerged in leading practice EOCGE organisations, alongside the adoption of flexibility as a working norm, has been a shift away from a focus on 'time at desk' to results or outcomes achieved. Such an approach requires greater trust in employees and requires working towards a culture that recognises and measures the value of the outputs of people, not the quantum of time they are in the office or on a site. Many leading practice EOCGE organisations noted having shifted towards output measures for performance assessment and these have been demonstrated through multiple studies, to be a key determinant in the effectiveness of flexibility (Crowley & Kolenikov, 2014).

4.1.6.2 Managers' Accountability

Any flexibility policy must contain an array of clearly defined mechanisms for accommodating the employee's individual needs within the bounds of the organisation's needs. Good policy will provide a degree of managerial discretion, but also contain provisions for the oversight of their decisions (Putnam et al., 2014). Most EOCGE organisations reported at least one oversight mechanism for managers, while leading practice organisations reported multiple mechanisms for holding managers accountable for promoting their flexibility policies.

All leading practice EOCGE organisations provided mechanisms for the escalation of declined flexibility requests to the human resources function or, in a few cases, to a manager one level above the declining manager. Managers were required to justify their decision by explaining the process they had been through with the employee and whether the decision to decline the request had been based upon valid and justifiable business requirements.

Most EOCGE organisations had instituted formal accountability measures, including key performance indicators (KPIs), for managers around flexibility. KPIs related to direct measures, indirect measures or a combination of both. Discussions of the manager's performance in relation to the promotion of flexibility in their teams was noted by many EOCGE organisations as being an important item in performance appraisals, with some specifically noting both remuneration and progression consequences for those underperforming in this area.

Indirect measures usually comprised attendance at specific training sessions on workplace flexibility and scores obtained from whole-of-organisation surveys or 360-degree reviews. Survey scores or 360-degree responses related to specific questions around flexibility from employees in the manager's business unit or team. These scores were aggregated (usually only for managers with more than five staff members) and compared to an established minimum standard. Some examples of questions asked in surveys and for which managers were held accountable were:

- Does my manager champion flexible work practices?
- How often does my manager discuss flexible work practices?
- Does my manager model flexible work practices?
- Does my manager actively support my flexible working arrangement?
- Does my manager actively promote flexible working arrangements equally for both men and women?

Many EOCGE organisations noted that flexibility was a key component of their gender equality or overarching business strategy and that strategy implementation cascaded accountability for embedding flexibility to leaders across their respective organisations. Given the centrality of flexibility to gender equality strategies, many EOCGE organisations reported that flexibility training was mandatory for managers and records were maintained of attendance at both mandatory and further non-mandatory flexibility training. Attendance records were used as a contributing measure for a manager's flexibility KPIs.

Most EOCGE organisations maintained direct measures of manager engagement with flexibility by tracking the number of flexible work requests, whether these were initially approved or not and whether they were dealt with in the time prescribed. Where trends were identified for a particular unit or individual manager, some EOCGE organisations reported that these units/managers were subject

to some form of performance management, further training or deeper engagement around job design/analysis.

Some EOCGE organisations also had direct KPIs for managers around the progression, pay, performance and turnover of flexible employees, and managers were also held accountable for identified variations from norm metrics maintained for flexible workers.

Finally, many EOCGE organisations reported that formal and wide-ranging discussions surrounding the entrenchment of flexible working had been embedded as part of senior leader performance discussions. Some EOCGE organisations reported that, as well as being part of regular performance discussions, senior leaders were being asked to report face-to-face upon their progress and future plans for embedding a flexible culture in their respective units/divisions in front of either the executive group or the organisation's diversity or gender equality Committee.

4.1.7 Role of Employees

In moving towards flexible workplaces most EOCGE organisations reported that flexibility is a two-way street requiring open and honest conversations between managers and staff. As such, their policies reflected that there were also some obligations upon employees when it came to undertaking flexible working arrangements.

Many organisations noted that employees needed to be open about their flexibility requirements while also considering the needs of their team members and the organisation. For example, team members were encouraged to discuss any important informal aspects of their role with their manager that could prove vital when reorganising work to accommodate the flexibility request. Likewise, there may be specific times of day where the employee's role was critical to team functioning. Many organisations noted that in team-based environments, with the facilitation of their manager, employees needed to work with their team when planning flexible work applications or discussing these with managers.

Similarly, employees needed to inform managers if the flexibility arrangement had unforeseen consequences or difficulties in how work had been assigned or reassigned and whether the arrangement was generally working for them. Even where flexibility arrangements were working well, EOCGE organisations reported that employees needed to remain mindful that their manager and colleagues may need to be able to contact them and so they should let people know the best way of getting in contact with them.



Furthermore, employees needed to maintain a dialogue with team members to ensure that the arrangement was still working for them as well as potentially identifying improvements to the arrangement.

4.1.8 Role of Human Resources Team

The human resources teams were reported as playing a critical role in the institution of flexible working practices by most EOCGE organisations. In the majority of organisations, their role is to be available to support the manager with advice and interpretation of flexibility policies, during the assessment of new flexible work requests as well as if existing arrangements are facing difficulties. Additionally, the human resources function is almost always reported as having a role in the review of the final flexibility agreement to ensure compliance with organisational policies and legislative requirements under the Fair Work Act and anti-discrimination provisions. In this regard they were also cited as being brought in by managers to play a conciliation role in any disagreement, in order to find potential solutions.

Some EOCGE organisations reported that their HR team played an increased role in the delivery of flexibility policy by partnering with the manager and being involved in every step of the process, from assisting the employee to construct their case for a flexible arrangement through to communicating the final outcome.

Most organisations reported that the human resources team were critical in the provision of tailored expert advice to managers in difficult cases and contexts. They were especially valuable in helping managers to balance the needs of the individual, the team and the organisation and aligning these within the context of enterprise agreements and related policies and practices. In this role they were also equipped to apply the overarching philosophy or strategic intent of the organisation's flexibility policy to the case.

Likewise, most large EOCGE organisations reported having specialist flexibility managers or designated flexibility experts within the HR team whose role was to:

- collect and share best practice solutions from previous flexibility applications with managers
- assess roles and apply further job design and analysis to difficult cases
- assist managers in trialling and reviewing flexibility arrangements that are new to their area or in difficult roles.

The human resources teams were also reported as being available for consultation with employees to assist them in positioning their flexibility applications and helping them to consider various aspects of the organisation's flexibility policy before submitting a case to their manager.

Where a flexibility application had been rejected, the organisation's human resources team was generally described as responsible for identifying an alternative flexible role.

Most EOCGE organisations said that the human resources teams were tasked with integration of the lessons learned from previous flexibility applications, trials, successes and failures towards the continuous improvement of flexibility training and support materials, such as guides and checklists, for managers and staff.

4.1.9 Support Materials and Hubs

Most EOCGE organisations reported having dedicated flexibility websites or hubs that were equally available to managers and staff. Some organisations also had manager portals with management-specific materials on them. These hubs acted primarily as central repositories for materials delivered in flexibility training modules. However, they also housed an array of additional tools, tips, case studies, videos and useful links that may not have been used in formal training sessions. Typically intranet hubs housed the following tools, resources and information:

- the organisation's formal flexibility policies (and related policies), its guiding philosophy and strategic intent, including detailed information on the types of flexibility available
- formal flexibility procedure manuals, guidebooks, factsheets, process checklists and forms/templates for managers and staff;
- case studies, advice and best practice strategies for flexibility implementation and ongoing management
- access to online training courses and copies of training materials, including video recordings of training sessions, forums and presentations
- links to external resources such as the WGEA Manager Flexibility Toolkit, the Fair Work Ombudsmen guides and industry-based toolkits
- details of how and where to access organisational flexibility support services
- frequently Asked Questions and formal organisational responses
- internal newsletters, emails and other formal communications

- external articles, reports and research papers
- internal social media portals for sharing of events, news, announcements, updates, discussion-groups and notice boards.

4.2 Parental Leave and Associated Provisions

Across the submissions by EOCGE organisations from 2013–2018 there were four clear trends:

- An increase in the gender neutrality of primary carer status and moves toward ‘shared care’ models.
- An increase in the length of paid leave, extension of definitions of parent and child, and protection of entitlements for primary and secondary carers.
- Increased focus upon retention and career progression of primary carer through ‘stay-in-touch’ programs, ongoing training and development and return to work coaching.
- Growing sophistication of information hubs and parental support programs.

4.2.1 Gender Neutrality of Carer and Models of Shared Care

Most EOCGE organisations had in recent years updated their parental leave policies to remove references to gender and gender roles and adopted inclusive language. In particular, references to ‘maternity leave’ and ‘paternity leave’ have been deleted. Likewise, assumptions regarding women being primary carers and men being secondary carers have been also been removed and replaced with ‘primary carer’ and ‘secondary carer’ regardless of the gender of the carer. However, in leading practice organisations with models of shared care, no assumptions are made that might reinforce the idea of an unequal burden of care. Rather, parents are both generally referred to as ‘carers’ and usually receive identical entitlements.

A feature of shared care models of parental leave is that both parents are entitled to the same length of leave as well as identical entitlements in terms of other policy consideration areas (noted in the next section).

EOCGE organisations that have adopted shared care models typically provide 12–16 weeks of leave for both parents. In shared care models, parents can usually take leave concurrently or separately from their partner, including where both parents work at the same organisation.

The philosophy behind many EOCGE organisations having adopted shared care models is based upon the assumption of the contemporary workforce being typified by dual-career parents who want to play a joint role in the care of their families. Additionally, it was noted that shared care policies make it easier for both carers to return to work, especially where there are more generous considerations around the timing and flexibility of leave. The relatively recent emergence of shared care models is particularly important since it is well accepted in the research literature surrounding workplace gender equality that the unequal division of domestic duties, especially in relation to child care, is one of the primary causes inhibiting the progression of women in the workplace (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

One variation on the above model by an EOCGE organisation was a 150% increase in pay for a primary carer returning to work (in this case the entitlement would be paid for 16 weeks) where their partner is taking over as primary carer and cannot access paid parental leave from their employer. Such a policy is an example of understanding and mitigating the barriers that many women face in returning to work after parental leave.

Additionally, while some organisations had not formally adopted shared care models, they had policy provisions for the situation where a secondary carer in their employ became a primary carer within a certain time (usually 12–52 weeks) after becoming the carer of a child. In these instances, in addition to their secondary carer leave, (outlined below) they would become entitled to primary carer’s leave regardless of how much primary carer’s leave had been accessed by their partner.

4.2.2 Parental Leave Policy Considerations

The parental leave policies of EOCGE organisations considered eight separate areas:

1. Length of leave (paid and unpaid)
2. Status of child
3. Status of parents
4. Length of service before eligibility
5. Timing of leave (when taken)
6. Flexibility of leave (how taken)
7. Continuation of benefits
8. Other leave and associated parenting policies.

4.2.2.1 Length of Leave (Paid and Unpaid)

Across all EOCGE organisations the average length of paid parental leave is 16 weeks for primary carers and three weeks for secondary carers. Some EOCGE organisations offered longer periods of paid leave at different full time equivalents (FTE). For example one EOCGE organisation offered 18 weeks' fully paid leave or up to 36 weeks at 0.5 FTE. Additionally, some EOCGE organisations increased these paid leave entitlements for longstanding employees. Longstanding being defined as between five and seven years of service.

While some EOCGE organisations offered unpaid secondary carer's leave, this was not typical and where offered was usually in line with the length of paid primary care leave (10–18 weeks). Primary carers were, on average, entitled to unpaid leave of between 52 and 104 weeks.

It should be noted that these entitlements are in addition to those provided by the Australian Government and EOCGE organisational parental leave policies contemplate the conditions of these entitlements. For example, the timing of accessing entitlements and return to work needs to take into account the provisions of the government's paid parental leave to ensure that the employee is not working during the paid parental leave period. This may impact upon, for example, keeping in touch days and attendance at training and development functions offered by many organisations.

Government Parental Leave Pay is available for up to 18 weeks for the primary carer while they care for a new child.

To receive the entitlement the individual must:

- be the primary carer of a newborn or newly adopted child
- have individually earned less than \$150,000 in the last financial year
- not be working during the Parental Leave Pay period
- have met the work test in the 13 months before the child's birth or entry into care.

Government Dad and Partner Pay is available for up to two weeks for the secondary carer while they care for a new child.

To receive the entitlement the individual must:

- care for a newborn or newly adopted child
- have individually earned less than \$150,000 in the last financial year

- not be working or taking paid leave during the Dad and Partner Pay period
- have met the work test in the 13 months before the Dad and Partner Pay period starts.

4.2.2.2 Status of Child

A feature of EOCGE organisations' parental policies in recent years is the increase in the scope relating to how a child comes to be in the care of a parent (primary and secondary carers) beyond giving birth. Leading organisations recognised the following:

- formal adoption (under age 16)
- fostering (long-term and under age 16)
- informal adoption by a blood relation (kinship care of child under 16)
- surrogacy.

4.2.2.3 Status of Parents

As above, EOCGE organisations in recent years had adopted inclusive language in policies defining parenthood. These included the following:

- same sex couples
- transgender family units
- grandparent or other relation of the child.

4.2.2.4 Length of Service Requirements for Eligibility

A general trend in EOCGE organisations in recent years is a decline in the time required to have been served in an organisation prior to eligibility for parental leave. With very few exceptions service requirements were identical within EOCGE organisations for both primary and secondary carers regardless of whether they were full-time or part-time. In most EOCGE organisations employees became eligible for parental leave entitlements after one year of continuous service.

However, some EOCGE organisations had recently reduced their eligibility period to as little as six months or, in a couple of cases, three months, as a deliberate mechanism to "... support hiring new mothers and pregnant women, making us an attractive employer to an underrepresented talent audience."

4.2.2.5 Timing of Leave

In leading practice EOCGE organisations the length of time available to access parental leave entitlements, with few exceptions, was the same for primary and secondary carers. However, where exceptions occurred, it was always secondary carers who had less leave available to them.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations noted that they had aligned the timing of primary and secondary leave entitlements to provide greater flexibility to parents upon return to work (see below).

Additionally, there was a marked trend in EOCGE organisations in recent years towards lengthening the time that parental leave entitlements were available to be taken. Leading EOCGE organisations required leave to be taken within 18 to 24 months after the birth or coming into the care of a child. Many organisations reported having recently extended this period from 12 months.

4.2.2.6 Flexibility of Leave

Traditionally, parental leave has been taken as a continuous block of time starting from the birth of a child. However, leading practice EOCGE organisations provided a degree of flexibility over how and when leave could be taken for both primary and secondary carers. Some organisations allowed leave to be taken in two (or sometimes more) blocks and at any time within the set provisions for expiry of parental leave entitlements. Other organisations allowed a block of leave followed by graduated return to work for primary carers, combining leave days with days at work. A few organisations provide for a combination of blocks of leave and part-time work as required by either the primary or secondary carer. As one EOCGE organisation noted, the reason they have adopted this policy is that, "... this flexible approach is designed to assist parents' transition back to work as well as a child's transition into a new care arrangement."

Removing the requirement for leave to be taken immediately after the birth of the child has been noted by many EOCGE organisations as being particularly attractive for secondary carers, enabling them to help the primary carer when most needed and has resulted in more men taking secondary carer leave.

4.2.2.7 Continuation of Benefits

EOCGE organisations recognise the systemic disadvantages that can arise from being the primary carer. As women currently form the great majority of primary carers, they are more likely to face disadvantages. To address this issue most EOCGE organisations have instituted a range of practices associated with their parental leave policies and which encompass the following areas:

1. Continuation or increase of superannuation guarantee payments
2. Asset use entitlements
3. Insurance benefits and allowance continuation

4. Long service accrual

5. Annual and personal leave accrual.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations have adopted policies of continuing to pay the superannuation guarantee charge (SGC) on all paid leave entitlements as well as on a component of unpaid leave entitlements for primary carers. SGC payments in relation to unpaid parental leave are sometimes accrued and paid upon the employee returning to work. Many EOCGE organisations have recently extended SGC payments during the period of unpaid leave to between one and two years. Other organisations have increased the percentage of salary contributed to between 0.25% and 2.5% above that required by the SGC.

One organisation offered employees an increased (12%) payment for up to five years for unpaid parental leave and part-time work periods as a point of employment differentiation. They noted it as an attempt to "... make an enormous difference to the retirement savings of female employees who traditionally take extended time off to have children and often return to work part-time." It is worth noting that women retiring in Australia today, on average retire with less than half of the amount that men do (Clare, 2015). In this regard one other EOCGE organisation, in order to address superannuation inequality, provided a \$500 per annum additional SGC contribution for female employees.

Leading practice organisations included policies that ensure employees who are on paid parental leave maintain access to their company vehicle, laptop and mobile phone and the organisation continues to pay the associated costs or allowances in connection with the use of these assets. Likewise, where insurance benefits such as health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance and salary continuance insurance were provided, leading practice organisations continued to extend payment of these benefits during the paid component of parental leave.

Leading practice organisations have also begun to recognise periods of paid and some unpaid parental leave for the purposes of long service leave accrual or have allowed employees to access long service leave upon the 10th anniversary of their start date, rather than discounting some or all of the period of unpaid parental leave. Other organisations have continued to accrue annual and personal leave on the paid component of parental leave. The philosophy behind such an accrual, as one EOCGE organisation noted, is that, "We understand that the first year of returning to work can be challenging, with adjusting to day care arrangements and needing to take time off if the child

is sick, especially if the child needs to be picked up from day care. Having a healthy balance of leave on returning to work allows parents the opportunity and flexibility to take time out to care for any children.”

4.2.2.8 Other Leave and Parenting Associated Policies

Leading practice EOCGE organisations have also adopted a range of policies associated with parenthood or impending parenthood. These policies include:

- Additional leave for parents who have returned to work that can be used, often flexibly, to ‘adjust to balancing their work and home commitments’
- Provision of access to primary or secondary care leave or separate leave for staff where their families have experienced a miscarried pregnancy or special bereavement leave where a child dies in the first year
- Parking for employees who are close to term for their pregnancy
- Return to work payments for primary carers to assist with transition costs
- Special leave for IVF treatment or for prenatal medical appointments

4.2.3 Retention and Progression of Carers

In addition to policies directly related to leave, EOCGE organisations recognised the career disruption that parental leave can cause to primary carers. Organisations broadly adopted five mechanisms for supporting the retention and progression of primary carers during and immediately after parental leave:

1. Stay-in-touch programs
2. Ongoing training and development
3. Provision for project and portfolio maintenance
4. Return to work coaching
5. Information and decision support.

4.2.3.1 Stay-in-Touch Programs

EOCGE organisations typically engaged in practices designed to keep employees on parental leave in touch with their organisation. Stay-in-touch programs were credited by many organisations as contributing towards greater rates of return to work following extended parental leave (see also Hideg et al., 2018 for support of this initiative). A key feature of these programs was checking the degree to which an employee wished to stay in touch while on parental leave and planning around this requirement.

Leading practice Stay-in-touch programs included:

- Provision of information/education about the program well before taking leave
- invitations to organisational social and team gatherings while on leave
- regular emails/newsletters with business updates
- access to company intranet/application keeping-in-touch’ sites
- scheduled conversations with managers and/or work buddies
- inclusion in team communications
- provision of childcare to facilitate visits (if necessary)
- paid stay-in-touch days (while on unpaid leave)

The principle objective of stay-in-touch programs was to prevent disconnection with the organisation. Programs helped the employee to smoothly transition between work and home, assisted the employee to manage their new family circumstances and helped in the the smooth transition back to work.

Intranet sites and other like applications acted as a hub or central repository for the following:

- locating information about policies and practices related to parental leave
- providing case studies about other employee’s parental leave experiences as well as tips and tricks for transitioning back to work
- providing access to real time or ‘discussion board’ conversations with other parents on leave or newly returned from leave, and
- other internal and external provider tools and resources related to parenting, return to work and work/life balance.

Many EOCGE organisations also had organisationally sponsored Parents Networks which, in addition to discussion groups, held regular functions and information sessions has were integrated into stay-in-touch’ programs. A key feature of these network functions was ‘working parents workshops’ aimed at developing strategies for career success when managing young children. Some larger organisations also had regular stay-in-touch lunches or other functions, which served to reinforce emails and newsletters.

The role described for managers and/or buddies in EOCGE organisational stay-in-touch programs was to provide a regular and ongoing interpersonal



connection with the team and the organisation. Their role was to keep the employee connected and informed about the significant changes or events affecting their colleagues, checking whether the employee needed additional support and inviting them to social and team events.

4.2.3.2 Ongoing Training and Development

Leading practice EOCGE organisations discussed the amount of contact carers wanted to maintain while on parental leave. This discussion incorporated ongoing training and development. Where desired by the employee, leading practice organisations ensured the continuance of an employee's formal learning and development program while on leave and included employees who were on parental leave in considerations for new courses and programs. This was particularly important in the case of leadership development programs or courses that were part of progression pathways. It was a feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations that they provided childcare assistance (where necessary) to enable participation of primary carers in key leadership and career development programs.

Many EOCGE organisations also had policies that provided employees on parental leave the opportunity to nominate for and attend both internal and external courses on offer to all employees.

Additionally, one EOCGE organisation had developed a program specifically tailored towards carers who

had taken extended, multiple-year breaks. The program provided an opportunity to return to work through a paid 20-week 'internship' which included tailored support and coaching.

4.2.3.3 Provision for Project and Portfolio Maintenance

Several EOCGE organisations, where progression was predicated upon project or practice development such as researchers, lawyers, consultants and accountants, have instituted tailored programs to maintain the practice or research portfolio of senior employees while they were on parental leave. One research-intensive EOCGE organisation had a policy where, prior to taking maternity leave, research-active women established with their supervisors an agreed plan covering the leave and post-leave period, which included career planning, access to small grants or other arrangements to maintain key research elements, including managing their higher degree research students and/or laboratory work during the period of leave. It also involved support with gaining extensions of time on research contracts, grants and fellowships, where possible. Additionally, their policy set out that staff returning from long periods of parental/carer leave had access to grants or 'protected time' in order to maintain or resume momentum in their research activities.

Likewise, one professional services EOCGE organisation had established custodian partners to maintain women partners' practices while on parental leave. In their EOCGE submission they noted,

"The first hurdle that we tackled was how we look after the practices of our women while they are on maternity leave, and the transition back. We had to make coming back to work easier, achievable and expected, so that there was no risk that the woman's practice would be lost and they would have to build a new practice on their return, a daunting thought, and exceptionally hard work. We've put systems in place to ensure that there is a custodian partner for the woman's practice. Their responsibility is to maintain the woman's practice while she is on leave, and ensure that an appropriate and sensitive transition takes place on her return."

Practices such as these address the potential loss of social and career capital during absence on parental leave, which is one of the most significant factors responsible for undermining the progression of professional women in the workplace (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016a).

4.2.3.4 Return to Work Coaching

Return to work coaching was a common feature within EOCGE organisations. Typically coaching involved one-on-one coaching on strategies for managing professional and personal commitments upon return to work. Organisations employed different models including a limited number of sessions with external professional career coaches, peer coaching with fellow employees who had experienced successful transitions back to the workplace and coaching by trained HR staff.

Coaching was usually provided for a period of up to six months after return to work and was accompanied by online or call support to HR or an external provider.

4.2.3.5 Information and Decision Support (Parents and Managers)

EOCGE organisations all had comprehensive information and decision support for parental leave.

In most EOCGE organisations, upon learning of parents expecting a new child, individual discussions were held with the employee by a member of the human resources team and/or with managers who had been trained to provide this support. Discussions usually encompassed:

- policies and procedures relating to parental leave and support
- the types of leave that are available and appropriate to the employee's individual circumstances

- information about staying in touch programs
- decisions about appropriate levels of communication during leave and how this will occur (remote access to intranet for example)
- how to access Australian Government parental leave entitlements
- ongoing learning and development activities
- information on returning to work (including flexibility options and childcare assistance)
- direction to online resources including parental leave hubs and introductions to parents' networks
- referral to internal employee assistance program coordinators or external parental support providers (where these are retained by the organisation)
- provision of printed or online resource kits and checklists detailing the above points for the employee to take away and consider.

Additionally, many EOCGE organisations had formal face-to-face training, workshops and/or information sessions around preparing for parental leave and return to work which were offered for employees in the months leading up to taking leave. Formal training was also provided to managers around understanding and delivering upon parental leave policies and practices.

In recent years, EOCGE organisations have also undertaken reviews of their printed and online resources to ensure inclusive language and imagery are used in order to encourage men to take parental leave. The simple inclusion of imagery of men looking after babies in organisational materials has been noted by many EOCGE organisations as having contributed to an upswing in the number of men taking parental leave.

Additionally, many organisations used multiple communication channels, including emails, newsletters, postcards, posters, case-studies, videos, events featuring panel members who have undertaken parental leave and internal communication tools such as Yammer, to promote men taking parental leave.

4.3 Childcare Assistance and Family Support

In recognition of the impact a young family can have upon the progression of parents' careers, and upon the primary carer's career in particular, EOCGE organisations have made significant investments in assisting parents directly with their childcare responsibilities through the provision or facilitation of childcare options and return to work flexibility.

Additionally, EOCGE organisations provided or facilitated indirect support for families through the sponsorship of parents' networks and access to external support programs.

4.3.1 Childcare Assistance

Leading practice EOCGE organisations recognised the availability and cost of child care as a significant factor in primary carers not returning to work earlier. Many noted that access to affordable, quality child care is the key to advancing gender equality in the workplace. However, the provision of direct child day care through on-site childcare centres is often a question of scale and workforce demand.

Nearly all large EOCGE organisations in the education sector had on-site owned and operated or subcontracted child day care centres and offered subsidised care or salary packing of childcare fees as well as parking, where parking was at a premium. Many other large organisations in other sectors also had on-site child day care facilities.

It is well understood in the academic literature that there is a strong connection between the level of tangible assistance offered by organisations in obtaining reliable and affordable child care and women's workforce retention and progression (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Gangl & Ziefle, 2009).

Other organisations had adopted the following alternatives:

- securing priority over permanent places at local childcare centres
- partnering with other firms to fund the building and operation of childcare centres
- funded discounts at local childcare centres or had entered into discount arrangements with national childcare providers
- salary packaging of childcare fees
- provided childcare allowances or rebates
- funded access to external childcare search providers who identified a suite of potential childcare solutions and facilitated access to them
- fully funded or subsidised emergency childcare services to cover instances where traditional care or other support was unavailable and the employee was required to work.

Organisations can also play an important role in lobbying day care centres to extend hours of operation to match the needs of contemporary working environments as part of contracting with them.

Child day care is only one part of the childcare issue for children of school age. Leading practice organisations understand that before-and-after school care and vacation care are also significant issues for parents and a particularly pressing issue for shift workers. For vacation care, most large EOCGE organisations were able to provide on-site vacation care programs for the duration of the holiday periods. Many smaller organisations organised mini-programs and days to help parents during the holiday periods. Examples included the retention of external providers of school holiday programs to provide on-site activities, booking and subsidising places in off-site programs and providing access to referral services to locate and facilitate access to programs.

One EOCGE organisation had developed their own internal 'camp' run by their technology team members and made available to children of employees during the school holidays. The organisation noted that,

"Not only did it provide flexibility to parents to have a care option available for their children, but it also provided kids with exposure to, and education in, the STEM space, an understanding of what their parents did at work and the children appreciated the novelty of going to work with their parents. The program runs for a week during the school holidays at our main office and was facilitated by [an external provider]. We also subsidised 65% of the cost."

Other EOCGE policies that directly addressed issues around child care were:

- full or subsidised support for the costs of child care associated with attendance at conferences and other approved away-from-home duties
- provision for bringing children to work in emergencies and in other extraordinary circumstances, where it was safe to do so
- provisions to allow parents to undertake work-related travel with a baby (under 18 months). Flexibility was offered around the age of the child in line with individual circumstances and arrangements, for example children with special needs or availability of alternative support arrangements.



The types of support offered for the above policies included travel costs for the child and support carer, additional accommodation to allow the person to be accompanied by the child and support carer (could be a partner, nanny or relative) as well as access to the firm's funded emergency child care. Organisations also offered tips and support to assist those travelling with a baby, usually through external providers.

Day care and before-and after-school care was most often supported through policies that recognised the need for parents to leave at appropriate times in order to perform pick-ups and drop-offs; including not scheduling key meetings before or after certain times.

4.3.1.1 Flexibility Practices Tied to Return to Work

Beyond the provision of long-term or ad hoc flexible working options considered elsewhere in the report, leading practice EOCGE organisations also engaged in a number of short-term flexibility practices aimed at new parents returning from parental leave, who wished to return full-time.

Practices vary widely across industry sectors. For example, billable hours relief in the professional services sectors for the first few months after returning to work acknowledged that a transition period was required before someone is likely to be back at full capacity. Likewise some organisations offered graduated return to work programs through shorter working weeks or working days (at full pay) for the first month or two after returning to work to assist with the transition to other care arrangements.

Additionally, several EOCGE organisations provided, in addition to other entitlements, a one-off return to work leave entitlement of between five and ten days, which could be applied, as needed in the first year after returning to work. Again, this was in recognition that new parents were confronted with changes in their care arrangements that could be greatly assisted through flexibility in the early stages of the transition. Likewise, one organisation also provided access to eight days 'starting school leave' to use during the first term of infants/primary school to help with the child's transition to school.

4.3.2 Breastfeeding Facilities

Leading practice EOCGE organisations had invested in private parenting rooms to provide a supportive environment for breastfeeding women. Most organisations had also sought the assistance of and obtained accreditation through the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

Parenting facilities included private parenting rooms to breastfeed and/or express and store breastmilk, and feed and/or change babies. These rooms are lockable from the inside and include baby change tables, armchairs for breastfeeding or expressing, microwave for heating food, sanitary wipes, running water and power points. Leading practice EOCGE organisations also understand that in some cases, the location of parenting facilities may not allow employees to regularly express breastmilk in privacy during working hours. These organisations offered 'mobile mother's kits', which were made available to staff at their

location. These consisted of a comfortable armchair with a footrest, a minibar fridge to store breastmilk and a lockable cabinet to store items such as breast pumps. When booked, the kit was delivered to the employee's work location to keep as long as they were breastfeeding/expressing.

Additionally, leading practice organisations provided a degree of informal flexibility in workday routines to take breaks in order to express and store breastmilk.

4.3.3 Internal Support and Networks for Parents

Leading practice EOCGE organisations recognise that the workforce dynamic has changed and moved towards dual-career families, with men wanting to take a greater role in the parenting of their children. To facilitate this, most EOCGE organisations have sponsored the establishment of formal parenting groups or networks within their organisations.

Parenting groups were usually sponsored, funded and facilitated by the organisation; however, its needs and day-to-day running were determined and undertaken by parents themselves, with resourcing usually facilitated by human resources teams. While the role undertaken by parenting groups differed across EOCGE organisations, they were generally involved in the following areas:

- provision of feedback to the organisation on policies affecting parenthood
- assisting with the development and provision of programs/workshops/forums to assist employees with work/life balance strategies, particularly upon return to work
- provision of peer coaching on matters related to managing work/life balance and return to work
- facilitating meetings/social functions between parents currently on parental leave and preparing to take parental leave as part of staying touch programs, as well as with other parents who are back at work, to build support networks and allow them to share tips and talk about some of the challenges of being working parents
- identifying role models and promoting case studies showcasing issues facing parents and their successful resolution
- providing input into the development and provision of printed kits and web-based hubs for resources, including articles and advice, case studies, wellbeing information, guides and checklists and direction towards other internal and external employee support services to assist working parents

- facilitation of noticeboards, intranet forums and other social media tools, such as Yammer, to connect working parents electronically
- providing input into the development and delivery of programs/workshops/forums to assist managers with the implementation of parental leave, return to work and work/life balance policy implementation.

4.3.4 External Support for Parents

Often the expertise required to provide support for transitioning parents and work/life balance issues is not available internally to the organisation. Many leading practice EOCGE organisations recognised this issue and either supplemented or outsourced this critical function.

EOCGE organisations reported that there were several external providers specialising in the delivery of best practice support to working parents especially where they were geographically dispersed. Services provided include:

- in-office training sessions
- online or real-time, one-on-one support with qualified nurses, counsellors and content experts;
- referrals to further specialist providers
- access to webinars within office hours and hubs where previously recorded material including case studies can be accessed at any time
- identifying and facilitating the right childcare solutions
- providing information on government parental leave entitlements and childcare rebates
- advice and services for supporting dependents with special needs
- programs and resources that support all stages of a child's development, from pregnancy in the early years through to parenting young adults, supporting mothers, fathers and other carers to manage their own wellbeing before and after the child is born
- programs and resources that focus on overcoming the challenges working parents face with achieving personal and professional success
- help with managing stakeholders to establishing flexible and agile working arrangements and programs for both women and men that are designed to help working parents achieve professional and personal success.

Medibank

Medibank has a commitment to ensuring gender equality in its workplace. It believes gender must not be a barrier to participation and recognition. CEO, Craig Drummond, who is a Male Champion of Change, believes in fairness and that organisations must embrace policies that remove barriers to inclusion of women in the workforce. Medibank is a leader in driving flexibility in the workplace. Over 70% of its people work flexibly and they have recently rewritten the rules on parental leave. Now, regardless of gender, both parents are able to take 14 weeks of leave; this is encouraging more men to undertake an equal proportion of parenting responsibilities.

We interviewed Nigel Davis, Head of Inclusion, Sustainability and Engagement at Medibank about their approach to workplace flexibility and parental leave.



Nigel Davis, Head of Inclusion, Sustainability and Engagement

What is Medibank's approach to workplace Flexibility? Can you describe the journey over the past five years in terms of embedding flexibility as a part of the culture at Medibank?

At Medibank we see flexibility as fundamental in increasing diversity and inclusion in our organisation. Without our focus on flexibility we know we won't be able to accommodate the needs of diverse groups of people and the changing needs of

the workplace as a whole. So, for us, it was absolutely the first thing we wanted to get right.

Seventy-six per cent of our people work flexibly, which can mean starting and finishing earlier, part-time work, compressed work weeks, working from home, or other ad hoc arrangements. This means that we have well-established ways of working when it comes to our remote workforce that has allowed us to develop a culture where 'just because we can't see you doesn't mean we can't trust you'.

Our evolution to where we are now has come in stages and we've had lots of opportunities to learn along the way.

In 2014, we moved to our new office building which provided the opportunity to design a space based on activity-based working principles, with health and wellbeing at its heart. In the months before the move, our focus was on culture change in getting ready for that move and the idea that, in our new workspace, managers would not be able to see their people all the time. This also meant figuring out new ways of collaboration that did not necessarily rely on formal face-to-face meetings. Key to this was the introduction of new supporting technologies that allowed for greater collaboration both inside and outside the office, which allowed us to ultimately arrive at our FLEXbetter approach that we have in place now.

Our FLEXbetter approach comes back to the position of trust again. Saying to our employees 'we do trust you' and we will always start from a position of 'yes' when it comes to flexibility. It also involves the broadening of flexibility beyond the ways we want people to work, as it's about the way they want to work as well. This takes into account both formal and informal arrangements as well as ad hoc flexibility. We have a position of flexibility 'for any reason', not just for child care, for example, we are a health and wellbeing organisation and flexibility allows people greater opportunities to engage in sport and community activities. The FLEXbetter approach is about setting expectations from the top down that flexibility is how we work. All our senior executives work flexibly and their leadership shadow filters down, which drives a culture that lets people know that they can too.

Our employee surveys show that flexibility is the strongest driver of our culture, which we are really proud of. We are now focussed on 'how can we continue to embed flexibility beyond the 76% of employees that work flexibly at the moment'.



You know, we don't have it absolutely 100% right at the moment but we are constantly trying to improve on our flexible approaches to work. This is particularly true for our customer-facing roles, but this will come from the lessons we are learning and applying new ways of thinking about the nature of the job. This includes understanding when our busiest periods are, and the ways in which work and its timing can be divided up or redesigned that still meet our customers' expectations. This involves looking at the data, particularly in those customer-facing roles to better understand how we can enable flexibility in what is typically a structured environment. It's an ongoing journey.

What has made the most difference in embedding flexibility in Medibank?

Ultimately, I think it's about the tone from the top. If our leaders were not 100% on board with this there is no way that we would have a flexible workplace. As with nearly all organisations we still have that lingering resistance in pockets of the business, but when they see their leaders doing it, then there really is no excuse for them to be denying it to their employees.

Medibank's activity-based working space

We were clear in the roll out of FLEXbetter about the role leaders were to play in driving the policy and what the organisation's expectations of them were. This has been supported through workshops and ongoing discussions as well as dedicated support for managers by the People and Culture team.

We also have a focus on teams coming together to drive flexibility discussions and implementation in their area, which can take into account the various ways in which teams work in different contexts. This allows the team to decide what works best for them.

It is critical to have a CEO who believes in what we are doing around flexibility and gender equality more broadly. But this does go beyond the CEO and to the whole executive team being supportive of gender equality initiatives as well as having a gender-balanced board that is willing to give new ideas a try. Medibank has a culture of trying new things and challenging the status quo.



Coming together to drive flexibility discussions

Setting public targets is also incredibly important to us, and also keeps us accountable. So getting those targets set upfront at the beginning of each year in a consultative process across the business is extremely important.

What other policies and practices at Medibank support your gender equality strategy?

Parental leave is a big one for us. We recently redesigned our parental leave policy so that both parents have equal access to 14 weeks of paid parental leave regardless of whether they are the primary or secondary carer. They also have the flexibility to take this any time in the first 24 months. This has increased the total proportion of men taking longer than the traditional two weeks from 2.5% to 33% and that number continues to increase.

This initiative had the full support of the Executive Leadership Team who said it was the right thing to do. To get to that point we undertook a specific review to figure out exactly what our people wanted and why our existing policy was not driving the retention rates we desired. What we expected to find was that people would want more paid leave or that they would want superannuation paid on their unpaid component of parental leave. However, we found the most important thing was that our people wanted flexibility around when and how they could use the leave. Every family's circumstances are different and it makes sense to allow parents to decide what works for them. So, we decided 'why don't we just make the whole thing completely flexible?'

Critically, we also need to demonstrate that the policy is having the desired effect, not just on the percentage of men undertaking leave but on retention and engagement. We need to make sure that we capture appropriate metrics and that these are reported to the executive team and the board so that we can see the drivers of delivering our overall diversity and inclusion objectives.

The next evolution of this thinking is that we are looking at our caring policies more broadly. We know from our internal engagement surveys that people with caring responsibilities (outside children) are the least engaged across a number of measures. So, looking at people who are caring for elders or for someone with a disability or those with chronic health conditions and how do we support them. We are excited to see where that lands. We think this will become a key area in the near future for most organisations with changing workforce demographics and an ageing workforce. Because we know that women undertake the greatest proportion of caring responsibilities, which can place a burden on them, so we are looking at ways to address this.

We have a broad range of policies supporting workplace gender equality. However, we need to make sure that we continually challenge and stretch ourselves even in areas where we have been very successful and not allow complacency to creep in. So we will continue to focus on things like balancing our workforce within what have been male-dominated areas but not lose focus on others areas where we have already had success.

4.3.5 Elder Care Support

Recognising that an ageing population is creating a growing demand upon families of working age and this burden often falls inequitably upon women, in recent years, some EOCGE organisations have begun to institute policies for the assistance of employees with elder care responsibilities. While far less sophisticated compared to childcare policies, leading practice EOCGE organisations provide the following:

- information packs for the care of elderly parents
- referral services to support employees with elder care responsibilities
- emergency elder care services.

4.4 Sexual Harassment

Many EOCGE CEOs, through extensive internal and external communications, made note of sexual harassment being a significant issue in the workplace. They also noted that with the rise of the Times Up and #metoo movements, a greater focus has been placed on the issue of sexual harassment. Despite growing awareness of gender equality issues, the incidence of sexual harassment still seems to be on the rise in the workplace (McDonald, Charlesworth & Graham, 2015). However, it should be noted that as support networks and public/media attention increase in this area, this finding may also be due to employees feeling more comfortable in reporting such incidences.

Stone (2017:747) defines sexual harassment as, "... including unwelcome sexual advances, unwanted and persistent physical contact, indecent language, social media annoyance and offensive comments, open discussion of a person's sexual behaviour and the unnecessary display of sexual material."

Programs developed to combat sexual harassment in the workplace by EOCGE organisations recognised that while sexual harassment is most likely to happen to women under 40, no employee is immune to it. Leading practice organisations had instituted complimentary policies around codes of conduct, bullying and anti-discrimination. They had also recognised that because a victim's self-esteem and mental health are often adversely impacted by sexual harassment or they are extremely embarrassed, victims often do not report these incidents. This is despite most EOCGE organisations having strong grievance procedures and formal sexual harassment training (see also Stone, 2017:748). In recognition of this problem, leading practice organisations had formal policies around the encouragement of observer intervention and reporting. Many EOCGE organisations reported that they and their staff had

a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that their workplaces were free from sexual harassment.

The leading practice policies from EOCGE organisations:

- defined sexual harassment with clear examples of behaviour that would constitute sexual harassment
- stipulated that all employees, regardless of position would be held to account. This emphasised that all instances of discrimination and harassment (including sexual harassment) would be taken seriously and was intended to encourage a reporting culture that was not conditional on hierarchy or positions of power
- clarified the definition of workplace
- specifically referenced and prohibited engaging in discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment) or victimisation using any form of technology or media
- recognised that it may be difficult for an employee to raise a concern or complaint about harassment a victim has experienced or observed, but assured the employee that reporting was safe and confidential
- provided clear guidance on how and to whom to escalate reporting of an incident and assured the independence of the person taking the complaint. In most cases the first point of reference was human resources
- clearly outlined processes to be followed and consequences for behaviours found to comprise sexual harassment
- provided for mandatory training of managers and staff, usually upon entry and then regularly every 1-2 years.

4.5 Anti-Discrimination

Australia leads the way in anti-discrimination legislation for the protection of individuals.. EOCGE organisations recognise that it is a legal obligation to ensure that people are not discriminated against on the basis of their race, colour, sexual identity, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibility, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin (Stone, 2017:154). The protections afforded to individuals cover the entire employee life cycle, from recruitment and selection, remuneration, progression/promotion, training and development to termination or retirement.

EOCGE organisations characteristically had extensive mandatory training suites around anti-discrimination, equality of opportunity and inclusive leadership generally across the employee life cycle for both managers and staff. Additionally, anti-discrimination policies of EOCGE organisations were fully integrated with procedures and training around the following additional areas and particularly around the role that bias (conscious and unconscious) can play in each of them. The following specific areas are considered elsewhere in the report:

- Parental and other caring responsibilities
- Flexibility
- Ethics and professional conduct
- Sexual harassment and bullying
- Inclusiveness on key panels, committees and networks
- Recruitment and selection
- Remuneration
- Performance, promotion and progression
- Distribution of opportunity
- Grievance processes.

4.6 Ethics and Professional Conduct

In many EOCGE organisations overarching codes of ethical and professional conduct were enacted to detail organisational expectations more broadly, with issues such as diversity and inclusion, discrimination, harassment and bullying featuring heavily as examples that were not aligned with organisational culture.

In most organisations that adopted this approach, a formal code of professional and ethical conduct was a key feature of the on-boarding process and required each new employee to register their agreement to abide by the code. Codes of conduct typically detailed sets of behavioural rules and guidelines to ensure equal opportunity for all employees with regard to all aspects of the employee life cycle.

In some leading practice organisations gender equal executive level committees had been established to act as an advisory body to the main diversity and inclusion/gender equality committee. Their role was to openly address breaches of the code of conduct, maintain information regarding poor behaviour/conduct in the firm and to provide advice to the committee as required on conduct issues to ensure appropriate action was taken. Codes of conduct were explicit in detailing the consequences for breaches.

Similar to practices outlined above for sexual harassment, a key trait of these codes of practice was to create an environment where employees are obliged to intervene and report breaches or as one organisation noted, “for people to feel free to ‘call out’ poor behaviour when they see it”.

4.7 Domestic Violence

A key feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations was the adoption of stand-alone comprehensive policies in relation to domestic violence. While the majority of domestic violence is perpetrated against women, EOCGE organisations recognised that this form of violence can happen to anyone and the language used in domestic violence policies was gender neutral. Issues that were considered in domestic violence policies of EOCGE organisations included:

- the creation of an environment where employees feel that it is safe to disclose and seek support
- accreditation that supported the adoption of workplace culture, policies and procedures to equip employees with the knowledge and skills to address the issue of domestic violence, both within the workplace and broader community
- paid leave for those directly affected by domestic or family violence to enable them to seek medical and legal assistance, attend court appearances, undertake counselling and relocation, or to make other safety arrangements
- reasonable leave for any employee who is providing support to a family or an immediate household member who is experiencing domestic or family violence. Such leave being used in relation to court hearings, relocation or other necessary appointments
- security strategies to assist employees at risk, including flexible working rosters and a change of work location, email addresses and phone numbers, briefing of security personnel and assistance with strategies to ensure safe travel to and from work
- allocation of an internal member of staff specifically trained in domestic violence issues to support the employee (usually a member of the HR team)
- retention of and referral to specialised external domestic and family violence counselling, support and advice
- provision of emergency financial support through one-off reimbursement of personal expenses incurred by an employee in relation to medical, relocation, temporary accommodation and childcare expenses



- access to temporary flexible working arrangements or other temporary changes to some elements of employee workplace arrangements
- specific attention to treating any information around domestic and family violence confidentially
- inclusion of domestic violence units in on-boarding and ongoing training that established the organisation as one that promotes respectful relationships, workplace safety (physical and psychological) and had a zero tolerance for violence against women.

The amount of leave provided by leading practice EOCGE organisations varied from five to 20 days; however, policies typically gave wide latitude to vary this amount upwards in consultation with the employee's manager and the human resources team as the situation warranted. Likewise, the amount of financial assistance varied anywhere from \$2000 to \$5000 and upward.

4.8 Recruitment and Selection

Organisations within the EOCGE cohort each possess a broad and diverse array of recruitment and selection policies and practices that work towards supporting gender equality. These broadly span domains including: goals and targets; monitoring and evaluation; 'signalling' on gender equality, and; recruitment, selection and on-boarding processes. The following section of this report describes and qualifies leading practices of recruitment, selection, and on-boarding of employees in EOCGE organisations. Common practices across the majority of EOCGE organisations are highlighted under separate headings.

4.8.1 Recruitment and Selection Activities

Goals and targets are defined as numerical

benchmarks set at a specific level to demonstrate to observers a clearly defined commitment to gender equality within recruitment and selection contexts. These were expressed in a multitude of ways from 'aspirational goals' to 'gender targets' with varying levels specified. Those that did report and describe aspirational goals or targets for their recruitment processes were clear and unambiguous with their benchmarks.

4.8.1.1 Goals and Targets

Across the submissions by EOCGE organisations from 2013–2018 there were a number of trends with regard to the ways in which goals and targets for gender equality were understood and implemented:

- Aspirational goals or targets were specified at varying levels: board, leadership, management or graduate recruitment
- Varying levels of sophistication in the consideration of goals and targets as a strategic objective
- Integration with suppliers regarding communicated goals and targets.

For some organisations, having goals and targets was about having "the mix of skills and diversity" within their organisations, with this viewed as a competitive advantage. Some organisations also adopted a planned approach, "Each business unit and geographic territory has a measurable action plan to address recruitment, development and retention of female talent." As the quotes in Table 2 below show, many other organisations reported a focus upon diversity targets as well.

Industry Sector	
Education & training	<i>“Contracted set key performance indicators with our managed recruitment service partner include diversity targets (including gender).”</i>
Healthcare & social services	<i>“To achieve gender neutral recruitment practices by reviewing policies and processes, educating hiring managers on gender equity during the recruitment process. Set and monitor targets 50/50 split (male/female) where possible.”</i>
Finance & insurance	<i>“There is also a target to have 30% of external new hires female in GCB levels 0-3. These targets ensure that more scrutiny and analysis is conducted for recruitment, promotions and development opportunities for women, ensuring that any potential gender biases are identified and minimised and actions put in place to address.”</i>
Professional services	<i>“Leaders are required to demonstrate how they have achieved the company targets for gender diversity by attracting, retaining and developing talent from diverse backgrounds.”</i>
Manufacturing	<i>“We have set gender diversity targets at functional levels and track progress to there.”</i>

Table 2. Quotes related to diversity targets

In the context of these goals and targets for gender equality, many EOCGE organisations also developed strategies for measuring their progress.

4.8.1.2 Monitoring and Evaluation of Recruitment Processes

EOCGE organisations recognise that an integral part of establishing a recruitment and selection strategy that encompasses leading gender equality practices needs to be accompanied with monitoring and evaluation processes. Monitoring and evaluation activities encompass tangible actions that are undertaken by EOCGE organisations in order to establish the level of progress (or otherwise) against the reported goals and targets set for gender equality within recruitment and selection. The monitoring and evaluation of gender equality within recruitment and selection processes occurs along a continuum from more general initiatives aimed at influencing recruiting and selection processes such as gender diverse selection panels and gender neutral language in advertisements, to those more detailed and specific in nature and focused upon outcomes (e.g. gender equality in numbers shortlisted and recruited in all positions at all levels of the organisation reported via dashboard that capture real-time recruitment data over a given reporting period).

A number of consistent trends were evidenced that combined to create leading practice by EOCGE organisations:

- Monitoring and evaluation of performance on gender equality outcomes was considered throughout the recruitment, selection and on-boarding processes for new starters

- Training on matters of gender diversity for those involved within recruitment and selection was considered a vital element of leading practice
- Past performance with regard to gender equality within recruitment and selection was taken as a ‘learning opportunity’ for EOCGE organisations with appropriate action planning for when performance was inadequate
- Leading practice involved retaining a focus on monitoring and evaluation through the use of ‘scorecards’ or ‘dashboards’ that clearly illustrated performance outcomes against goals and targets
- Successful outcomes were celebrated and shared within leading practice organisations.

It is clear that not all organisations apply all of the different components identified above. Nevertheless, leading practice organisations reported an awareness of and willingness to explore, apply, monitor and evaluate a variety of different practices across the areas listed above. These are each detailed below.

4.8.1.3 Gender Equality through Recruitment, Selection and On-boarding

Leading practice organisations demonstrated a clear concern for gender equality not only at the typical point of first entry (e.g. job interview) but from a more holistic perspective. This encompasses the process of attracting possible job applicants, the process of headhunting talented new hires and the integration of these new employees into the organisation through on-boarding activities.

As part of this broader consideration of possible employee engagement and introduction to the organisation, EOCGE organisations adopted best practice strategies that encompassed:

- a concern with the ways in which job advertisements are written using empirical research to guide the choice of language and adjectives to describe job tasks
- the methods through which new hires were attracted (e.g. platforms for advertising)
- the types of information included within recruitment packages (e.g. organisation branding, gender equality information contained within job descriptions)
- the search committee process undertaken to source or head hunt possible new hires.

When EOCGE organisations identified possible bias in their recruitment processes, policies or procedures that disadvantaged one group, they ensured actions took place to rectify this. As one organisation in the finance sector reported,

“To ensure we are minimising the opportunity for unconscious bias in our recruitment and selection processes, earlier in 2018 [we] introduced tighter recruiting guidelines to support gender diversity in our top three levels of leadership.”

This consideration of the pipeline that feeds recruitment efforts is recognised by EOCGE organisations as being a particularly important aspect of gender equality policy. Indeed, many EOCGE organisations connect this with internal talent management processes.

Other features adopted by some EOCGE organisations included:

- anonymous application programs incorporating the removal of name, gender, culture, school, email and interests from submitted CVs
- targeted promotions sessions designed to challenge myths or erroneous feedback that may discourage women from applying for certain roles
- bias callouts: individuals involved within any recruitment, selection and on-boarding activities self-identify their own biases that may operate to include or exclude certain individuals or groups,
- mandatory pay levels with male and female new hires remunerated at the same rate irrespective of their former salary.

As one organisation in the finance sector reported, “Our HR team had implemented an innovative new way to ensure gender equality amongst new starters ... by stating that we will no longer ask prospective employees for their previous salary ...”

Indeed, multiple organisations drew on this strategy of calling out biases to support more equitable decision-making. As one organisation in the energy sector reported,

“It is also [our] policy that any management team that meets to make decisions about performance, promotions, remuneration or talent must take a moment at the beginning of that meeting to expressly consider and discuss the kinds of biases that may be at work among the group or individuals.”

Leading practice organisations described clear linkages between gender equality activities and initiatives within the recruitment, selection and on-boarding process to the policy documents that guided these. Moreover, in these documents EOCGE organisations identified the ways in which output metrics used to evaluate possible candidates might disadvantage one group over another. Aspects considered included:

- family or carer responsibilities
- disability or illness
- part-time appointments
- unequally distributed work roles (e.g. tensions between product development vs. delivery, teaching vs. research, consulting work delivery vs. business development).

4.8.1.4 Scorecards, Benchmarks and Dashboards

EOCGE organisations approached the monitoring and evaluation of key domains within recruitment, selection and on-boarding as a priority. The majority of these organisations had a formalised mechanism for evaluation (e.g. quarterly reporting, biannual reporting) however a subset of these organisations reported quite sophisticated mechanisms incorporating live dashboards that track key metrics and outcomes.

Many leading practice organisations used the collected data to help inform and guide actions where any discrepancies or inequalities were identified. For some this involved more straightforward adjustments to confirm equality opportunity principles within recruitment, selection and on-boarding processes, while others resulted in identification of more complex training needs for different cohorts within the organisation such as for selection panels.

For example one organisation in the energy sector noted the following,

“[Our] Diversity Dashboard (produced quarterly) provides metrics to monitor and measure the effectiveness of processes in place across our recruitment system to eliminate gender bias. It is required that there be at least one woman on an interview panel and where possible, a female on shortlists. Applications by gender are tracked through to appointment. Pay parity (equal pay for equal work) is also checked. Each quarter EMT and the Business Unit leadership teams review the Diversity Dashboard and identify where, if any, corrective actions are required. Examples of actions taken based on the dashboard results include modifying sourcing approaches to increase female applications, through to one-up manager or General Manager taking action on specific internal appointments to sponsor females to apply for and be considered for opportunities.”

The metrics collected by EOCGE organisations included a vast array of data on recruitment and selection with some organisations extending this evaluation into the promotions domain and performance and development review processes. For these organisations, metrics collected included:

- breakdowns of gender equality at different levels of seniority
- gender equality within the allocation of staff development opportunities
- allocation and distribution of higher duties appointments
- approvals for professional development leave
- allocation of job-specific workloads that may impinge upon career success (e.g. teaching allocations for academic researchers; brief distribution within law firms; billable hours within consultancies for staff working reduced hours)
- uptake of recreation leave.

Over the course of the reporting period, some EOCGE organisations described more complicated measures that were adopted to ensure adequate and accurate oversight of metrics and reporting including the centralisation of recruitment, selection and on-boarding processes. This was not characteristic of all EOCGE organisations, but rather a subset and this may have coincided with other organisational changes occurring over the 2013–17 period.

4.8.2 Signalling Mechanisms within Recruitment and Selection

Strategic signalling by EOCGE organisations was a powerful mechanism used to explicitly link gender equality strategy with recruitment and selection procedures in tangible, accessible and well-understood terms.

The majority of EOCGE organisations considered the importance of assessing performance relative to opportunity. For example as one CEO in the education sector reported,

“Assessing achievement relative to opportunity’ considers the time and opportunity available to staff to produce their work and therefore avoids applying the expectations of a full-time, uninterrupted career as the norm.”

Furthermore, in instances where there has been an identified need to recruit for gender diversity, some organisations have taken a more overt approach by applying for exemption under anti-discrimination laws for the purposes of conducting targeted recruitment campaigns within areas of underrepresentation. Or alternatively to bolster their pipeline of talented women by providing scholarships within fields where women are consistently underrepresented.

Some of the more unique strategies for signalling a strategic intent toward recruitment and selection activities have included:

- launching school term only contracts designed to encourage qualified STEM professionals to return to roles that they might previously have been discouraged from working within due to the work/family conflicts
- establishing suitably qualified talent pools to select from, on the basis of past recruitment rounds
- female only scholarship opportunities
- critically analysing and reviewing recruitment marketing to ensure that women were visibly seen on material relevant to attraction, recruitment, selection and on-boarding activities

Many organisations reported their consideration of the strategic positioning of their ‘image’ to potential employees as the quotes in Table 3 evidence.

Industry Sector

Energy	<i>“During the 2014 financial year, we launched a new careers website with the aim of attracting a broader pool of applicants. The website includes diverse and inclusive images and language; profiles male and female employees across a range of roles and draws attention to opportunities for flexible work arrangements.”</i>
Finance & insurance	<i>“The language in adverts in particular was amended to promote females to apply. We have developed new style guides whereby we are launching templates for use in all of our advertising which will ‘softly’ promote females in all levels of the organisation, primarily focused at the leadership level. In addition to this we have produced videos of women in leadership detailing both their work and personal lives and these will be loaded onto various media sites. The emphasis being on showing the strong culture of females in leadership positions and trying to encourage new applications.”</i>
Education	<i>“In 2018, we conducted a review of websites to ascertain whether women were represented in images on each site.”</i>
Manufacturing	<i>“We take steps to ensure that the individuals who are profiled in our videos, interviews, panel discussions and podcasts are diverse and have equal representation of male and females.”</i>
Professional services	<i>“We have developed a new employer brand for which amongst others contains both ‘diversity’ and ‘flexibility’ as brand headings, i.e. Flexibility: Work for a firm that works with you and Diversity: Diversity unites us, diverse thinking empowers us.”</i>

Table 3. Strategic positioning of organisational image

One organisation in the manufacturing sector, that had adopted a focus on strategic signalling and evaluated the impacts of this broader perspective to incorporate recruitment imagery, identified that, “Progressive adverts are found to be 25% more effective than those featuring more traditional portrayals of gender.”

Leading practice organisations consistently signalled the strategic importance of gender equality in a number of ways:

- demonstrable commitment to evaluating performance and outcomes within the context of access to opportunity
- adopting a focus on gender equality within governance processes
- ensuring gender equality was a factor in all talent management processes (e.g. recruitment and selection, on-boarding, performance management, talent management planning, workforce planning).

4.8.3 Explicit Statements on Gender Equality in Recruitment and Selection

EOCGE organisations clearly understand the importance of explicit statements linking their gender equality strategy with recruitment, selection, on-boarding and training and development processes.

This willingness to clearly articulate and stand by those statements was a distinct feature across all leading practice organisations. Commonly, explicit statements from EOCGE organisations contained the following elements:

- clear alignment of the policy to recruitment and selection practices and linkages to the location of relevant policy and specific examples of practice
- the desired outcome with regard to recruitment and selection activities
- outcomes deemed as falling within an acceptable range (in instances where the desired outcome is not achieved)
- a firm position on the organisation’s stance with regard to gender equality within the recruitment and selection context.

Furthermore, there were five common domains across which leading practice organisations made explicit statements regarding their stance on gender equality:

- recruiting behaviour (e.g. internal and external suppliers engaged in gender equality dialogue encompassing vendor, contractor and tenderer policy alignments)
- expectations of the shortlisting process
- expectations of selection panel composition



- mitigating strategies employed for shortlisting/ panel composition shortfalls
- recruitment, selection and training and development procedures.

4.8.3.1 Recruiting Behaviour

Leading practice organisations made clear statements regarding their commitment to gender equality within recruitment and selection. For the large majority of EOCGE organisations, this involved a focus on the recruiting activities that informed the shortlists of job applicants they receive. To ensure gender equality within shortlisting activities, many EOCGE organisations put in place contractual agreements with vendors and suppliers that detailed how recruiting behaviours must demonstrate alignment with gender equality policies and principles detailed in corporate social responsibility governance documentation. As one organisation in the finance sector reported,

“From January 2012 all [of our] preferred external recruitment suppliers need to demonstrate that they comply with [our] Diversity and Inclusion Policy, have a written diversity policy/framework for their business, and undertake appropriate diversity training for their people.”

More recently EOCGE organisations had adopted additional innovative and bold strategies to ensure gender equality within recruiting behaviours. For example, one organisation in the Manufacturing sector reported engaging in alternate social media platforms to connect with potential job applicants and this was particularly useful for positions notoriously hard to fill,

“We find that the female candidate pool for certain qualifications is very narrow and we sometimes struggle

to attract even one female applicant for a role. In these cases, in particular we use targeted sourcing methods such as Facebook, LinkedIn, searching for and contacting ‘passive’ candidates (candidates not looking for work right now). We are also starting to use more specific job boards targeting women and those with caring responsibilities such as FlexCareers, Beam and Work180.”

Other more innovative approaches to managing persistent underrepresentation of women within the organisation included:

- contexts where a suitably qualified male and female were shortlisted, the offer was made first to the female job candidate
- justification being required for gender inequality in shortlists
- headhunting activities targeted toward suitably qualified women
- recruiting for specifically inclusive and constructive behaviours that contributed to inclusive workplace cultures
- introduction of AI (artificial intelligence) or eRecruitment systems as a means for reducing the potential biases that might stem from individual candidate selection
- identifying, targeting and utilising specific advertising platforms for roles (e.g. Work180, FlexCareers, Working Parents Connect).

In their quest to ensure suppliers meet the desired recruiting behaviours, one leading practice organisation in the finance sector stipulated a target for the number of suppliers signed up to deliver services against the organisation’s sustainability principles,



“Suppliers to the [our] Group: All suppliers to the [our] Group are actively encouraged to sign up to [our] Group Supplier Sustainability Principles. [We] currently have a public target of 90% of our material suppliers as signatories. As signatories, suppliers must:

- Comply with all relevant local and national laws and regulations in relation to employment practices, human rights and anti-discrimination.*
- Have written workforce management policies or systems which include diversity in recruitment, equal opportunity, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment standards.*
- Foster an inclusive workforce including differences in age, disability, ethnicity, marital or family status, religious or cultural background, sexual orientation and gender identity.*
- Work to develop measurable action plans to improve diversity and inclusion for gender, disability and ethnicity and report on progress.*
- Respect human rights and address any infringements or adverse human rights impacts associated with business activities.*
- Comply with global labour standards specified by the International Labour Organisation.*
- Provide fair pay and working conditions for employees including adequate rest periods, leave, minimum wage requirements and freedom of association and collective bargaining.*
- Ensure that no child, involuntary or forced labour is used and that all employees are legally entitled to work.”*

4.8.3.2 Shortlisting Strategies

Most EOCGE organisations reported clearly defined and explicitly stated shortlisting targets and requirements within the recruitment process. These included defined expectations regarding the number

or proportion of women expected in any shortlisted job and where these targets were not met within shortlisting activities, a series of steps were mandated prior to further selection activities being undertaken.

The large majority of organisations reported adopting a commitment to including at least one woman on any shortlist produced for positions to be filled, while leading practice organisations indicated a commitment to producing gender-balance (e.g. 50/50) shortlists for any position advertised. For some organisations, there was no distinction between the different levels of the organisation and the mandated proportion of women required on any shortlist. Whereas for others, there were strict guidelines on the required representation of women within any shortlist. As one organisation in the finance sector reported,

“All level 4+ roles are required to have a minimum 40% female representation on shortlists. This includes all roles sourced internally and externally. Consistent with our values, our hiring managers will understand, actively promote and enable flexibility.”

Other EOCGE organisations reported other explicit statements expressing a commitment to gender equality though did not specify their expectations surrounding the proportion of men and women that might quantify what was meant by equality. These types of explicit statements were in the minority.

When specific expectations surrounded gender equality on shortlists, a number of different strategies were reported by EOCGE organisations.

Nevertheless, these were not commonplace for all organisations within the longitudinal dataset, suggesting that while many organisations may have strategies in place, there was a subset of organisations that had more explicitly articulated their position. Leading practice EOCGE organisations reported a range of strategies drawn upon for handling gender-unequal shortlists, which included:

- escalation to the executive office for approval to waive the requirement for a gender-balanced shortlist
- provision of a business case to the department head justifying and explaining why the target was unable to be met
- a ‘gender exception’ policy that allowed for the hiring team’ to apply for an exception which was then reviewed by the HR/Recruitment manager.

Some organisations outlined the expected process for dealing with unequal shortlists in significant detail. For example an organisation in the finance sector reported,

“Where a new direct appointee is proposed by a business for approval by me or my delegate and the nominee is not a woman, the business must confirm that the potential for a female appointment has been considered and explain why a female candidate is not being proposed (there may be a good reason). Where there is less than 50% female representation, the reasons must be explained to senior leadership – more often than not, where this has not been achieved, it is expected that this is corrected. All talent assessment providers are briefed on our expectations around gender balance.”

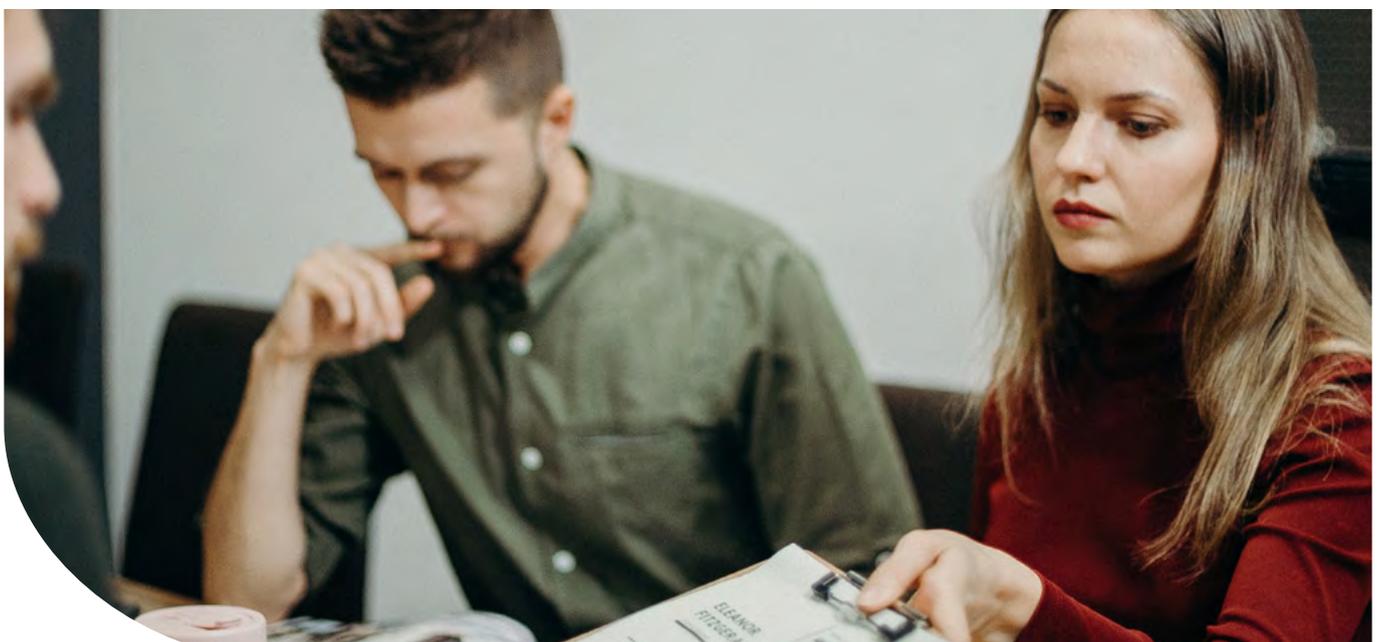
One leading practice organisation in the mining sector reported implementing a new section on their recommendation-to-hire approval forms to tackle workforce gender inequality,

“This year we have included a new section on gender diversity in our Recommendation for Employment approval form. When the manager has a preferred candidate and would like approval to offer employment, they are required to complete a workforce composition analysis and request a gender pay gap analysis based on the remuneration proposed for their preferred candidate. This ensures the hiring manager is considered, proactive and takes accountability for gender diversity.”

4.8.3.3 Selection Panel Composition

A majority of EOCGE organisations reported explicit statements regarding the selection panel composition requirements within recruitment processes. While some organisations specified recommendations (e.g. two women required on any selection panel), others set selection panel composition proportions (e.g. 50% of panel comprised of women).

Some EOCGE organisations specified and mandated representation of women on selection panels for particular job levels, while many other EOCGE organisations simply adopted the same selection panel composition recommendations across all recruitment contexts. Examples of reporting on the presence of women on selection panels is shown in Table 4.



Industry Sector

Education	<p><i>"There is always gender balance ensured on recruitment panels."</i></p> <p><i>"We have a three-member recruitment selection committee to ensure objectivity in the recruitment decision. The selection committee includes: (a) the Manager (or nominee) as Chair; (b) one other person from the management Unit concerned; (c) one person from another management unit (male and female gender representation – all endeavours are made to ensure this wherever possible)."</i></p>
Finance & insurance	<p><i>"Every interview panel must include at least one female."</i></p> <p><i>"For all interviews, a minimum of 1 female is to be included as an interviewee (up to 50% of the panel)."</i></p> <p><i>"Each interviewing panel should be made up of at least one person of each gender."</i></p>
Professional services	<p><i>"Typically interviews are conducted by mixed gender panels, including representatives from P&D and the hiring partners/managers within the practice/department to ensure equality."</i></p>
Manufacturing	<p><i>"All interview panels, for both internal and external candidates, will be conducted with mixed gender representation of similar or equal decision-making authority on the appointment where possible."</i></p>

Table 4. Evidence of gender representation on selection panels

EOCGE organisations also reported mechanisms to report back into the organisation on selection panel composition. Nevertheless, the feedback loop on selection panel composition was not consistently reported by EOCGE organisations despite its clear benefit of ensuring that gender equality was retained within the selection process.

4.8.3.4 Gender Equality as an Explicit Element of Performance Management, Training and Development

EOCGE organisations made explicit statements regarding the ways in which gender equality is considered as part of employee performance management, training and development processes.

For some organisations, consideration of gender equality within such processes involved:

- applying a gender lens to talent management and succession planning processes
- analysis of training uptake by gender
- incorporating 'bias short circuits' within processes that allowed for the acknowledgement and inhibition of cognitive biases that may impact upon gender equality.

Together, this constellation of attraction, recruitment, selection, and on-boarding actions and activities combined to create leading practice within EOCGE organisations. While not all organisations implemented all of the policies listed above, it was clear that a combination, or a significant subset, of these was implemented in ways that supported best practice gender equality.

4.9 Remuneration

All EOCGE organisations had formal remuneration policies that established equal pay for equal work. Equal work was usually defined by reference to well-established market-based job evaluation and ranking scales, which were used in conjunction with market-based pay surveys. Equality of pay was determined through regular (conducted at least annually) organisation-wide gender pay gap audits. Leading practice EOCGE organisations ensured that the overall difference between average male and average female pay at each job grade (i.e. like-for-like), is no more than 1%; a range of practices were instituted to ensure that any greater differences were immediately addressed to reduce the difference. Note that the like-for-like gap was often confused with the generic term 'gender pay gap'. However, it was only one component of the overall gender pay gap (KPMG, 2019).

Leading EOCGE organisations were proactive in ensuring ongoing pay equity through the following 10 practices:

1. A comprehensive job grade framework was maintained to allow comparison of the value of roles across all employees. Without a job grading framework it was challenging to ascertain whether roles had similar value and hence to determine whether women and men doing the same work, or different work of equal or comparable value, were paid the same amount. External experts were often retained to build and or monitor such frameworks.

2. Remuneration policies considered remuneration to include bonuses, allowances, loadings, overtime and packaging, not just base salary increases in remuneration moderation decisions.
3. Planning of remuneration increases through a central review process of proposed pay arrangements for the coming 12 months with divisional/unit leaders. If proposed pay arrangements resulted in a like-for-like gender pay deviation of more than 1% at any grade, relevant division/unit managers were asked to review all recommendations in that grade with a view to bringing the deviation below the threshold.
4. Remuneration decision-makers were trained in the area of bias and pay equity. They were required to expressly consider and discuss the kinds of biases that may be at work among their groups or individuals in making pay recommendations and to challenge the recommendations put before them, including minimising the impact of individual employee skills in pay negotiations.
5. Final independent sign-offs by either the executive leader of human resources, the CEO or a specifically employed remuneration specialist were required for all manager-approved remuneration decisions. The final decisions and gender metrics were conveyed to the board and/or diversity, inclusion or gender equality committee.
6. Comprehensive, fine-grained gender equality metrics and dashboards were maintained and used both proactively and retrospectively. Metrics were used proactively to identify trends across the organisation as well as in discrete divisions or units to allow managerial moderation of the pay recommendations put forward to them. This enabled targeted corrective action to occur prior to remuneration assessments being finalised and to ensure any potential bias in ratings which may affect pay decisions be eliminated early. Dashboards could also be used retrospectively to identify any anomalies that may have occurred at any organisational level. Analysis focused upon remuneration increases by location, division; position, gender, work status (full-time vs. flexible or part-time, or parental leave) and performance relative to opportunity.
7. Budgets were allocated to correct identified pay gaps above the target threshold as part of the remuneration review cycle.
8. Pay gap analyses were conducted immediately upon restructures or the acquisition of another organisation. Gender pay gaps were expressly considered in the restructure, takeover or acquisition process and a budget established to address any identified differences.
9. Salary ranges were included in all job advertisements and starting salaries for graduates and entries to defined roles were equal.
10. Results of pay equity audits, and gender equality dashboard metrics more generally, were regularly published and compared with commitments given to reach targets to reduce any organisation-wide gaps

Note here that, an increase in remuneration was often the end result of an assessment of how an employee had acquitted a range of opportunities relative to their current role. As such, remuneration policies of most EOCGE organisations contemplated all of the inputs in that process. As one leading practice EOCGE organisation noted,

“Final, independent sign-offs are required by the Executive Manager of People and Learning and/or the CEO for all manager-approved staff application processes for professional development, assistance, training, professional development, flexible work arrangements, recruitment and promotions, terminations, probationary reviews, remuneration, benefit allocations, parental leave, unpaid leave, leave cash-outs and performance appraisals to ensure there is no gender bias present. Gender-based data is analysed and provided to all people leaders to support decision-making via a Gender Equality Analysis. This examines: gender balance, pay and other benefits, leadership and succession planning, work environment, recruitment and promotions, flexible work arrangements, performance reviews, professional development, parental leave and terminations. To ensure integrity, we have implemented mandatory One-Over-One reviews in the following areas to decrease chance of gender bias and unconscious bias occurring in decision-making: recruitment, promotions, higher duties, performance appraisals, pay reviews.”

A few EOCGE organisations had also adopted the philosophical position, in opposition to widely accepted practice in Australia, to undertake remuneration transparency as a mechanism for combating gender pay inequality. As one EOCGE organisation reported,

“Gender inequality can too easily be hidden when there is excessive secrecy about what people are paid. For this reason, we are committed to providing more transparency. We are taking three steps toward more transparency: 1 - Removing the restriction to discuss

your remuneration with colleagues (if you desire). 2 - We will no longer enforce terms in employment contracts that forbid you from telling colleagues how much you are paid and 3 - We will remove those provisions from future contracts. Whether you wish to discuss this with colleagues is a matter for you. If you don't want to talk about it that is your right."

Finally, most leading EOCGE organisations noted that their organisation-wide pay gap (which represents the total gap between the average total remuneration of men and women in an organisation) was principally because men occupied more senior and therefore better paid roles while others noted a significant gendered division of labour between different areas of the organisation. This was particularly the case for organisations operating in sectors where workforce participation was highly gendered, such as mining and construction. In both instances, leading EOCGE organisations were taking steps to promote and recruit women to more senior roles as well as encouraging more women to enter their sector. Both of these initiatives are explored in more detail later in this report.

4.10 Performance and Promotion

A significant contributor to the gender pay gap in Australia is the gender imbalance in senior roles (KPMG, 2019). EOCGE organisations characteristically have well-developed strategies to ensure succession pipelines are gender equitable. These organisations have strong systems and processes for performance appraisal and promotion, which take into account factors that might act adversely upon women in appraisal and promotion systems. These systems:

- Accounted for bias
- Have documented, objective and gender neutral performance criteria
- Provided clear progression pathways
- Relied and acted upon a suite of metrics
- tied into proactive succession plans
- incorporated targets.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations engaged in regular (at least annual) succession planning. Succession plans asked managers to identify employees were likely to progress to the next level (or beyond) and to ensure that every team member eligible was considered for succession. Managers were trained in unconscious bias as well as performance appraisal processes and were expected to account for deviations from gender targets. Management level succession plans were usually independently reviewed by human resources and unit/division

level plans reviewed by the Diversity and Inclusion/ Gender Equality Committees, with any deviations from targets investigated. Overall succession numbers were usually considered comparatively, year on year, against targets set by the Committee. Most EOCGE organisations ensured that the percentage of female successors aligned with their gender targets and action plans were put in place to support potential women leaders where discrepancies were identified.

Many EOCGE organisations referenced research that shows women are less likely to apply for a more senior role compared with equivalently qualified men (see also Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016a). To address this issue many EOCGE organisations have adopted a proactive stance in relation to performance analysis and the use of talent data to identify high potential female employees and nominate them for progression. This process is often overseen by HR or executive level talent committees to ensure that the old 'tap on the shoulder' succession does not occur. One organisation noted that it requires at least one female successor for every role in their organisation.

Additional steps undertaken to address the issue of enhancing women's progression by EOCGE organisations were made by ensuring that:

- prerequisite capabilities were clearly defined for all job levels and employees received clear feedback in relation to these in addition to their current role
- promotion policies were transparent and inclusive of standard eligibility criteria and procedures for anyone applying
- promotion opportunities were widely communicated and accessible to all staff, including employees on parental leave
- promotion discussions were raised as part of the performance development review process
- promotion processes were conducted fairly and equitably and consistently applied.

In organisations where billable hours or project outcomes are a key component of performance, EOCGE organisations tracked the allocation of non-billable work such as administration, teaching and training loads.

Where promotion was considered by independent panels, such as is the case for academic promotions in universities, EOCGE organisations ensured gender balance in panel composition.

When EOCGE organisations undertook mergers and acquisitions or when restructures took place, leading practice EOCGE organisations ensured gender equality in the process both in terms of the proportions of men and women as well as for gender pay gaps. For example, one organisation noted that, “When running selection workshops as a result of restructuring activity we use real-time data to look at gender split to ensure no disproportionate outcomes.”

4.11 Vendor, Contractor and Tenderer Policy Alignment

EOCGE organisations do not limit their gender equality policies and practices to internal matters. A feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations are the policies they have adopted with regard to clients, suppliers, partners and the media.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations adopted policies to ensure that their suppliers have practices in place to support gender balance within their businesses. Typically, bigger organisations demanded that their larger suppliers provide information about the female representation in their organisations and teams working on contracts to ensure gender balance was achieved beyond their organisational boundaries. Additionally, smaller EOCGE organisations had procurement policies which communicated their organisation’s commitment to an inclusive and diverse workforce and their intention to partner with like-minded suppliers. Often a statement to the following

effect was included in tendering documents: “In assessing potential suppliers, consideration will be given to suppliers who value gender diversity.”

Likewise, some EOCGE organisations had taken steps to identify and actively exclude firms whose track record in the area of gender equality was questionable.

Another feature of some EOCGE organisations is that they are led by CEOs who have committed to the Panel Pledge initiated by the Male Champions of Change, Chief Executive Women and the Women’s Leadership Institute Australia (Male Champions of Change, 2019).

The commitment is specifically:

“We pledge to increase the visibility and contribution of women leaders in public and professional forums.”

The Panel Pledge is a commitment made by any speaker requested to participate in a panel or forum, to ask the organiser about the gender balance of the program and highlight their commitment to diversity. It involves actively encouraging female voices in leadership and business, and to persevere in attempting to achieve change. Most EOCGE organisations have pledged that whenever their people are invited to be involved in, or sponsor, a panel or conference, they will inquire about the organiser’s efforts to ensure women leaders are represented.

Most EOCGE organisations have undertaken the following actions by ensuring that their staff:



- ask who the other panellists/speakers are, and how gender balance will be achieved
- as a condition of acceptance, state that they expect women will be on the panel and be able to participate in a meaningful way
- reserve the right to withdraw, even at the last minute, should the finalised list be all male
- suggest women from the organisation's network or point to resources available that identify women speakers
- track the gender balance of panels the organisation participates in and the outcomes of communicating the organisation's commitment to the pledge
- include the Panel Pledge in conference sponsorship agreements undertaken by the organisation.
- offering professional development, support and training in public speaking to encourage participation, on public and professional panels and forums.

Similar to the above, leading EOCGE organisations have policies focused on achieving equality in the gender split of audience members in presentations and conferences run by the organisation. These organisations actively invite staff of industry peers, clients and suppliers to bring along a colleague of a different gender, by explicitly advocating that the organisation wants the audience to be diverse. Likewise, leading EOCGE organisations have committed to ensuring gender balance in all images used in all publications and on social media.

4.12 Distribution of Opportunities

As a further commitment to the Panel Pledge process, most EOCGE organisations have also adopted policies that ensure:

- the encouragement and enabling of women in the organisation and the organisation's network to accept speaking opportunities
- targets for spokespeople put forward by the organisation to contribute to making the public face of the organisation more gender balanced
- publically addressing any instances of gender-based derogatory comments

Most EOCGE organisations have policies that address equality of opportunities that contribute to (or detract from) accelerating career progression.

These policies encompass a broad range of issues such as:

- equal access and take up of training and development opportunities
- equal opportunities in client and potential client interactions such as pitches and thought leadership reports and presentations



- equal access to speaking and presentation opportunities at industry conferences
- equal distribution of management and teaching loads for those in research or professions with billable hours;
- equal representation on organisational leadership and development programs;
- equal access to business development opportunities including the allocation of high-profile or developmental files/work/projects and access to work mentors
- equal opportunity to participate in policy committees, recruitment and selection committees as well as boards of trustees or junior and subsidiary boards (where the organisation has control over appointments).

An example of this kind of policy is from the legal sector where EOCGE law firms have publicly signed up to the Gender Equitable Briefing Policy. The aim of the policy is to support the progression and retention of women barristers and address the significant pay gap and underrepresentation of women in the superior courts. By signing this policy, firms publicly commit to put in place steps to increase the number of briefs to women barristers across Australia.

4.13 Grievance and Whistleblower Policies

In support of policy stances on sexual harassment, anti-discrimination, ethics and professional conduct and equality of opportunity, leading practice EOCGE organisations have well-documented processes for addressing grievances and reporting behaviour that is contrary to established codes of conduct. Robust processes reported by EOCGE organisations included:

- clearly defined, widely publicised, confidential and independent pathways for escalating a grievance or reporting contrary behaviour as well as clear provision for independent assessment of claims made
- clear examples and case studies surrounding what constituted breaches and how they can be reported, as well as access to 'ethics hotlines' or independent advice on whether the matter is in breach of Codes of Conduct
- all complaints are investigated and taken seriously by the organisation;
- manifest organisational support for employees calling out contrary behaviour, through on-boarding and training programs, posters, videos, newsletters and senior executive/board messaging

- protections in place to safeguard the anonymity of employees and to protect them from retaliation
- fair application of consequences against those in breach of relevant policies/code of conduct
- function to communicate the outcomes of an investigation resulting from serious breach/es, allowing identification and redress of the issue (while maintaining complainant's anonymity where possible)
- procedural fairness for both the complainant and defendant

The processes outlined above have been identified in numerous studies as maximising the chance of aberrant behaviour being reported (Vandekerckhove & Phillips, 2019). The timely reporting and handling of breaches also reduced the likelihood of future breaches.

4.14 Regular Review, Consultation and Updating of Policies

As working styles, technology and social norms change fairly quickly, EOCGE organisations regularly reviewed and updated their gender equality related policies. On average, reviews were undertaken every 2–3 years in conjunction with extensive consultation with employees and managers, industry best practice and broader social expectations.

In some policy areas, EOCGE organisations noted that the timing of their review was driven either by rapid changes in community expectations or in response to employee feedback from organisation-wide surveys and focus groups.

For example in recent years most EOCGE organisations have undertaken audits of their policy suites for gender inclusive language, have addressed shortcomings in their sexual harassment policies in line with revelations through the #metoo and Time's Up movements and moved towards more diverse modes of flexible working practices.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations also take the opportunity to internally or publically relaunch or recommunicate policies that showcase their commitment to gender equality in the workplace.

Section 5 – Gender Equality Training and Development Practices



Key Findings

Leading practice organisations:

- offer firm-wide training, targeted training and development programs for women, and accessible training via learning hubs and platforms to meet the needs of their workforces
- recognise and account for the role that inherent biases may play within workplace decision-making
- evidence an integrated approach to training and development practices such that key topics are covered within all points of the employee life cycle in ways that are complementary rather than reiterative
- demonstrate a robust understanding of workplace gender equality and their approach to dealing with backlash through their training and development practices. In this way, training and development was utilised as a mechanism for influencing their workforce towards more inclusive behaviours.



Action Points

- Establish and maintain linkages between: firm-wide training; targeted training and development programs for women, and; training delivered via learning hubs and platforms such that these are integrated and build upon one another.
- Ensure that training, particularly that on bias and prejudice, is followed up consistently to retain and sustain behaviour change of participants.
- Scan for and establish opportunities for training and development programs to influence participants on seeing gender equality as part of business-as-usual processes.
- Consult this report for best-practice offerings of training and development that targets gender equality.

5.1 Training and Development

Research shows that investment in training and development is a potential source of competitive advantage and is positively related to employee commitment, organisational performance and profitability (Stone, 2017:387). In fact, high-performance organisations have long been associated with those that place great emphasis on training (Pfeffer, 1998).

Stone (2017:389) reports that training is a particularly important tool in the implementation of new policies, promoting organisational change including the change of organisational culture and in the successful implementation of new strategies.

EOCGE organisations are characterised by the high degree of importance placed on training and development practices in support of their gender equality strategies.

Generally there were three areas EOCGE organisations considered in the delivery of training and development in this area:

1. Firm-wide training including:

- flexibility
- unconscious bias
- inclusive leadership
- domestic violence
- code of conduct
- on-boarding
- overarching understanding of Workplace Gender Equality and push-back.

2. Targeted training and development programs for women including:

- leadership development
- promotion and progression
- sponsorship, mentoring and coaching
- networking
- board readiness.

3. Learning hubs and training platforms

The following section of the report details leading practice in each of these three areas. As with the preceding section on gender equality policies, while this section treats the above areas of training as discrete, there was a high degree of overlap in some training packages. For example, many EOCGE women's development programs included aspects of networking, mentoring, coaching and guidance around career progression. Again, no two programs were the same in how these areas were integrated and as such the report considers each of these areas separately.

5.1.2 Firm-Wide Training

EOCGE firms had a range of training programs related to their gender equality strategies that were usually undertaken by all employees of the firm. However, managers were the focus of additional training in relation to implementation of policies and the philosophy underpinning the training topic.

5.1.2.1 Flexibility

It is a characteristic of EOCGE organisations that they engaged in extensive training around workplace flexibility. Organisations usually had multiple learning modules and modes of learning. These spanned from overarching training on the benefits of flexibility and policies generally, to a suite of specific in-depth modules related to individual aspects of operationalising flexibility in practice. Most EOCGE organisations included a section on flexibility in their induction or orientation activities for new employees generally and new managers specifically. Orientation usually covered the items listed below for overarching training for both new managers and new staff as well as some components of the in-depth modules for new managers:

- What is flexibility, how it benefits organisations generally and what flexibility looks like in the organisation. This often focused on the business case by highlighting research showing the increased ability to attract and retain talent, increase retention, reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, as well as the positive impact on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
- Addressing the myths, stereotypes and unconscious biases surrounding flexibility misconceptions, barriers and challenges.
- Highlighting organisational commitment to flexibility, why it is important to the organisation and outlining accountability for its success.
- High-level outline of flexibility policies and charters and the strategic intent of these.
- Outlining legislative requirements under the *Fair Work Act 2009* and anti-discrimination provisions.
- Invitations to embrace and access flexibility personally and champion it for all staff as a key part of the culture of the organisation.
- Directions on how to find tools, guides, checklists, FAQs and other support.

In-depth training in leading practice EOCGE organisations was ongoing. While attendance at overarching training was a feature for both managers and staff, most in-depth training modules were aimed at managers, though there were some

exceptions which are noted below. Manager training was undertaken in many modes and these will be highlighted in detail further on in the report.

In-depth training was usually carried out across multiple modules, though no two organisations delivered these in the same combination or mode. What was characteristic, however, was that leading practice EOCGE organisations used multiple modes of learning and training and learning opportunities were usually compulsory and conducted at regular intervals. In-depth training modules covered the following topics:

- how managers can set and measure against clear performance/output standards, including how to drive a culture of accountability and commitment in individuals and teams
- how to maintain and address client/customer service levels for managers and employees;
- how to improve and maintain collaboration and communication with and between individuals, teams and managers in a flexible environment for managers and employees
- managing occupational health and safety issues in types of flexibility arrangements for managers and employees
- the use of technology (hardware and software) associated with some modes of flexible working such as telecommuting for employees and managers
- how managers can ensure a balance between the needs of the individual, the team, managers and the organisation (usually in the context of organisational policies or enterprise agreements)
- how to effectively implement flexible work options through the use and understanding of tools, guides and other support resources
- how to choose and implement the best flexibility option available within the organisation that suits the needs of the individual and the team
- how to assess an employee's application for flexible work, including the management of stakeholder expectations, while engaging in constructive two-way conversations
- how to lead and manage a flexible workforce
- contextual sessions with managers on what has worked well (best practice) and what has not worked well within the organisation in the past and why
- individual and team-based job redesign and analysis techniques for managers



- managing and embedding change in the context of moving to a flexible working environment
- managers responsibilities and accountabilities in implementing flexible working arrangements
- practical steps for the development of a business case for a flexibility proposal for employees including tips on how to have the conversation with their manager, how to best manage their time and maximise productivity.

The aim of training is to equip employees with the skills necessary to meet expected performance standards. The benefits that come from flexibility can only be obtained when managers and employees are equipped not only with the right tools and how to use them, but also that they genuinely believe in the benefits they provide (Stone, 2017).

Modes of learning play a particularly important role here. It is clear from the literature that using case studies is a particularly effective mode of learning when dealing with discrimination. (Niemyer, 1995). Case studies that are job-related are considered to be the most effective means of bringing about a transfer of learning. The transfer of learning is enhanced when case studies are used in a workshop context where facilitators can ask probing questions and engage the group in discussions around the case (Byers & Rue, 2000). It was a feature of nearly every EOCGE organisation that they engaged in the use of case studies in both promoting and training around workplace flexibility. Nonetheless, EOCGE organisations leveraged multiple modes in the delivery of flexibility training and its embedding as a cultural feature in their respective organisations. The following modes of training were typically reported by most EOCGE organisations:

- Face-to-face workshops – by far the most prevalent mode for training delivery (these were also recorded for later distribution or live-streamed to allow remote participation). Workshops enabled the delivery of content followed by practical application using organisational tools and processes as well as the use of organisationally based case studies. Workshops enabled a high degree of interactivity as well as the ability for managers and employees to have questions answered in real time. Peer learning from the experiences of other managers were also a feature of these workshops. Some organisations went one step further through the use of role-plays based on difficult or unusual scenarios so that managers, in particular, could practice using the information they had just acquired.
- Action learning programs – workshop-style programs aimed at giving tools and resources to managers to develop their own flexibility plans for themselves and their teams. These were then reported back to a further workshop where they were reviewed, modified and enacted.
- Online modules were often reported as being used either as a primary or a support feature. These were more usually used for refresher training rather than as the primary means of delivering flexibility training. Best practice modules usually had a degree of interactivity and were assessment based, with the learner needing to pass the assessment before a recording of completion is awarded.
- One-on-one coaching – specific training to target identified areas of concern from a performance management context or, in the case of difficult or new flexibility applications, coaching around policy and strategic intent, job redesign or balancing individual versus organisational needs.
- Presentations and forums – used to share best practice and to leverage organisational success around flexibility were also a common feature in EOCGE organisations. Presentations ranged from high end issues such as leveraging flexibility for organisational success to the sharing of best (and worst) case experiences with flexibility.
- Internal social media – used as an online platform for discussion and debate.
- Focus groups – often used to assist managers' development surrounding difficult client-facing or site-based flexibility issues.
- One-way 'classroom' learning – mainly for orientation/induction sessions to impart information.
- Distribution of reading materials – white papers, articles, reviews and other media distributed to reinforce learning.

5.1.2.2 Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias, or implicit bias represents inherent or learned stereotypes about individuals based upon salient characteristics such as race, class, gender, sexuality, size and religion, among others that everyone forms without necessarily being conscious of it. These biases form around social stereotypes or generalisations about individuals, groups or institutions. The human mind uses generalisations to navigate everyday social life, even when these are not necessarily aligned with their conscious values. However, when unconscious generalisations affect judgements about an individual, serious issues, including discrimination, can arise (Noon, 2018).

Unconscious bias training works to make an individual's unconscious biases manifest and to devise strategies to counter them. EOCGE organisations have adopted a range of training practices, usually in combination, to reduce unconscious bias. These generally map onto practices identified in the literature as being effective (see Devine et al., 2012; Gonzalez et al., 2014; Moss-Racusin et al, 2016), such as:

- Provision of empirical evidence on implicit bias and active group discussion and how it might affect decision-making at critical junctures in the employee life cycle. This component of training is aimed at convincing participants of the validity of the phenomenon of unconscious bias.
- Stereotype replacement: where participants are taught to recognise stereotypes. Participants reflect on why they may hold these, consider how to avoid them in the future and develop strategies (such as objective decision-making frameworks) that replace stereotypes with unbiased responses.
- Counter-stereotype training: involves picturing examples of counter-stereotypes. For example, if the counter-stereotype is feminine leadership, participants could be asked to picture an effective feminine leader such as Jacinda Ardern. These could just as easily be aimed at stereotypes around young mothers, those on flexible working arrangements or LGBTIQ+ employees.
- Individualism: where participants are taught to seek specific information about members of a stereotyped group so they can remember each person as an individual rather than seeing the group as a singular unit.
- Perspective taking: involves understanding the world from the point of view of the 'other' and imagining yourself as a member of a stereotyped group.
- Exposure: increasing opportunities for contact with the subjects of bias, through attendance at gender equality conferences, workshops and forums.

- Toolkit: the provision of tips and tools that can be used in day-to-day operations to combat unconscious bias as well as the opportunity to practice with these in the training environment.
- Lifelong practice: unconscious bias is something that cannot be undone in a single session, since stereotypes are often deeply ingrained. Follow up training and practice is required over many years.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations employed a variety of modes for unconscious bias training interventions. Typically, organisations engaged external facilitators to run face-to-face workshops for initial interventions and annual or biannual workshops for new employees. Unconscious bias workshops were regularly followed up by one or some of the following: webinar series, attendance at forums and summits, embedding unconscious bias training into other training suites aimed at key aspects of the employee life cycle (on-boarding, recruitment, performance review and development opportunities among others), online hubs and portals containing information, tips and tools, targeted training prior to remuneration and performance reviews, 'lunch and learns', keynote speakers at organisational functions and conferences, and circulation of case studies based on typical situations faced by managers within the industry.

As a minimum, leading practice EOCGE organisations require attendance at unconscious bias training by senior and executive leaders as well as by supervisors and managers engaged in making decisions at any stage of the employee life cycle. In many EOCGE organisations attendance at training was mandatory. Additionally, many EOCGE organisations incorporated unconscious bias units in on-boarding as well as providing this training to all employees.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations recognise that unconscious bias training is not a silver bullet in their approach to achieving workplace gender equality. Its effectiveness is significantly enhanced when aligned with a range of other initiatives outlined in this report and it forms but one part of an overarching strategy (see Williamson & Foley, 2018 for more in this regard).

Unconscious bias is a term used to describe the experience of unintentional stereotype-based beliefs that influence and shape behaviour towards members of certain groups. As Prestia (2019, pp. 561.) notes, “the subtlety of this prejudice may affect a leader’s perception and influence of professional judgement and decision-making in the areas of communication, hiring, promoting, or team selection.” However, the experience of unconscious bias is not limited to leaders, meaning that the implications of prejudicial behaviours, left unchecked, extend throughout all levels of an organisation.





A thorough review of unconscious bias research findings shows that the implicit associations of everyday people (e.g. nurses, doctors, students, recruiters, police officers) predict significant social and organisational behaviours (Jost et al., 2009).

Many organisations concerned with the negative effects of hidden prejudices on decision-making within their organisations, particularly with relation to gender equality, have sought out unconscious bias training to reduce the negative impacts. Indeed, Williamson & Foley (2018) argue that in Australia, many organisations see unconscious bias training as the silver bullet for gender equality; however we know from international research that mandatory training may indirectly prompt or reinforce bias beliefs (Dobbin & Kahlev, 2018). In fact, recent reporting from the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggests that unconscious bias training whilst tending to reduce bias, does not eliminate it entirely, posing several recommendations on how to best develop and implement such training (Atewologun, Cornish & Tresh, 2018). Broadly, their recommendations point toward reflexive training strategies that incorporate training, measurement, evaluation and efforts toward continuous improvement.

According to Dobbin and Kahlev (2018) there are several key reasons that bias training may not work. These include: short-term educational interventions are inadequate to change peoples' behaviour; anti-bias education may activate or reinforce stereotype beliefs; recent evidence suggests that participation in bias training may incite unrealistic optimism regarding one's own biases resulting in complacency; training may leave the majority group (i.e. white men) feeling excluded, positioning them as adversarial to problem-solving, and; training participants may feel they lack control over their own environment where training is mandated and framed as a reaction to external pressures.

Several strategies that may mitigate against these potentially negative impacts on unconscious bias training could include: ensuring that team composition includes employees from diverse backgrounds; retaining a focus on gender equality and addressing instances of behaviour that may not reflect inclusion immediately; retaining a focus on the overall group rather than partitioning training to focus on men or women exclusively, and; redirecting the focus of training from a litigious and mandated activity, to one that prompts elective engagement from employees. Many EOCGE organisations have indirectly adopted a range of these strategies to counter the potentially negative outcomes described by Dobbin and Kahlev (2018).

5.1.2.3 Inclusive Leadership

In recent years leading practice EOCGE organisations have moved towards inclusive leadership as a model for training supervisors and managers to lead effectively. This movement aligns to strategic priorities around gender equality and creating an inclusive workplace culture. Bourke and Dillon (2016), in a report for Deloitte Insights, note that there are four mega trends that are reshaping the environment and influencing business priorities:

- Diversity of markets: Demand is shifting to emerging markets. With their growing middle class, these new markets represent the single biggest growth opportunity in the portfolio of many companies around the world.
- Diversity of customers: Customer demographics and attitudes are changing. Empowered through technology and with greater choice, an increasingly diverse customer base expects better personalisation of products and services.
- Diversity of ideas: Digital technology, hyper-connectivity, and deregulation are disrupting business value chains and the nature of consumption and competition. Few would argue against the need for rapid innovation.
- Diversity of talent: Shifts in age profiles, education, and migration flows, along with expectations of equality of opportunity and work/life balance, are all impacting employee populations.

The shift to inclusive leadership models by leading practice EOCGE organisations is in response to these simultaneous shifts in the market and the rapidity with which they are occurring. Inclusive leadership builds upon well-established models of leadership, such as Transformational Leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and Authentic Leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) since the basic elements of leadership such as providing direction and influencing others remains unchanged. However the way in which these elements are undertaken must deal with the changing context in which leadership occurs.

In summary inclusive leadership:

- treats individuals and groups fairly, based on their unique characteristics, rather than on stereotypes
- personalises individuals by understanding and valuing the uniqueness they bring while also accepting them as members of the group
- leverages the thinking of diverse groups for more effective idea creation and decision-making that reduces the risk of being taken by surprise.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations provide training that builds a range of inclusive leadership competencies. Bourke and Dillon (2016) have summarised the characteristics of inclusive leaders and these characteristics are the subject of development in the various training regimes engaged in by leading practice EOCGE organisations:

- Commitment: Highly inclusive leaders are committed to diversity and inclusion because these objectives align with their personal values and because they believe in the business case.
- Courage: Highly inclusive leaders speak up and challenge the status quo, and they are humble about their strengths and weaknesses.
- Cognisance of bias: Highly inclusive leaders are mindful of personal and organisational blind spots and self-regulate to help ensure 'fair play.'
- Curiosity: Highly inclusive leaders have an open mindset, a desire to understand how others view and experience the world and a tolerance for ambiguity.
- Culturally intelligent: Highly inclusive leaders are confident and effective in cross-cultural interactions.
- Collaborative: Highly inclusive leaders empower individuals as well as create and leverage the thinking of diverse groups.

A feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations that have adopted inclusive leadership models, is their integration into other policies and practices. For example, inclusive leadership traits were identified as a key hiring criteria for new managers, and many EOCGE organisations required the demonstration of inclusive leadership behaviours as a key performance indicator and prerequisite for progression within their organisations.

Inclusive leadership training is usually provided to all supervisors and managers in the organisation and typically involves external providers in establishing inclusive leadership development programs.

5.1.2.4 Domestic Violence

Most EOCGE organisations had adopted domestic violence policies. Training in this area mainly focused upon prevention, recognition, response and referral. Training in most organisations was aimed at providing managers with familiarity around organisational policies, understanding around what domestic and family abuse is and providing them with the tools to act as a first responder.

Many EOCGE organisations were beginning to provide training to all staff about the issue of domestic violence and the client- or customer-facing workforce workforce in particular. Many organisations in the finance sector had specific mechanisms in place to assist clients who were the victims of domestic violence and training was aimed at equipping staff as first responders for these clients.

Training around bystander engagement and violence prevention associated with domestic violence was also a feature of training for both managers and staff. Training was designed to equip individuals with the skills and confidence to report on any unacceptable/unhelpful language or behaviour they see others experiencing, as well as providing support on how to manage situations where people were often unaware of the impact of their words or actions.

Training was usually delivered by external providers and online modules were used to maintain currency in both the issue and organisational policies and practices.

5.1.2.5 Code of Conduct Training (Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Ethics and Culture)

Codes of conduct were a feature in most EOCGE organisations and often incorporated consideration of ethics, organisational culture, anti-discrimination, sexual harassment/assault (and consent) and grievance procedures. Issues around code of conduct were reported by nearly all EOCGE organisations as being critical to underpinning workplace gender equality strategies and building an inclusive workplace culture. Many noted zero tolerance for breaches in these areas.

Just over half of the EOCGE organisations clustered issues in this area into one or two training packages. Most EOCGE organisations grouped topics around ethics, professional work behaviours and overarching expectations around organisational values and building and maintaining an inclusive culture into one training package. These issues were usually also included in leadership development programs. Anti-discrimination and sexual harassment training

were likewise grouped together as a separate training package. However, just under half of the EOCGE organisations provided separate training packages on each of the issues outlined above. Reporting mechanisms for breaches in these areas were usually incorporated into each package, regardless of whether or not the issues were grouped together.

A feature of nearly all EOCGE organisations was that training was compulsory for all managers and employees. Training was refreshed, on average, every two years. Failure to complete training was usually flagged as a performance management issue, which, depending on the topic, could result in barriers to progression, reduced discretionary remuneration and, in some cases, dismissal, depending on the issue being focused on. In some organisations sexual harassment and anti-discrimination issues were communicated as risk-management issues with reference to occupational health and safety legislation and failure to comply with training requirements were considered grounds for termination.

Training in these areas was usually tailored between managers and employees. Face-to-face training and online modules were the dominant mechanisms for training in this area. Leading practice EOCGE organisations showed a preference for face-to-face training for managers since interactive activities and discussions could be better facilitated in this mode. Where organisations were geographically dispersed, sophisticated online modules were substituted for face-to-face training for managers. Most EOCGE organisations used online modules for training and regular refreshment for employees. Features of training in this area, whether face to face or online, included the following:

- videocasts by the CEO or equivalent outlining the organisation's position on code of conduct issues
- detailed coverage of legislative requirements
- detailed coverage of organisational policies, practices and definitions
- video or written case study vignettes used to highlight correct or incorrect behaviours
- provision of tools and tips and referral to hubs where further resources may be accessed
- interactive activities based upon training content
- discussions (face-to-face or electronically facilitated)
- inclusion of an assessment component at the completion of the training session.

A feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations was the frequency and specificity of internal communications by the CEO in this area. CEOs were active in regularly describing the organisation's expectations around attitudes and behaviours. CEOs were specific in their communications and repeatedly highlighted particular issues. As an example, one CEO sent the following communication to all employees with regard to anti-discrimination,

"Here are six broad categories of everyday sexism:

1. *Insults masquerading as jokes. This appears to be the most common form: "make sure you wear something sexy to that client meeting". It is difficult to even imagine this being said to a man – even as a joke.*
2. *Devaluing women's views or voice. Have you ever interrupted a woman in a meeting or restated their opinion as your own or to give it 'more weight'?*
3. *Role stereotyping. "We'll get you to hand out the name tags and smile nicely at the beginning of the meeting".*
4. *Preoccupation with physical appearance. Comments about body shape, size and physical characteristics are often amplified for women with a public profile.*
5. *Assumptions that caring and careers don't mix. Both women and men are subject to this. Two examples are: access denied to men for flexible working arrangements because caring is a woman's role and women's career progression stalled or stopped because they have children and 'won't be interested or committed to their job'.*
6. *Unmerited gender labelling. Women who are described as 'bossy', rather than assertive, or too emotional or kind and men labelled as too soft or not competitive enough.*

Unless leaders call out everyday sexism, it remains a limiting behavioural force holding people back and slowing the closing of the gender divide."

Most large EOCGE educational institutions as well as some EOCGE organisations in other sectors had engaged external providers to assist with developing and delivering training around consent and sexual assault for people leaders. Consent training is designed to:

- educate employees (and students if an educational institution) about respectful relationships and understanding the law around sexual consent

- provide employees and students with bystander intervention strategies where breaches of consent are occurring
- supply further information about services to support victims of sexual violence, including details about local support services.

Sexual assault training is designed to:

- equip people leaders with information about first response techniques to sexual assault
- teach victims how to deal with sexual harassment and assault disclosure
- provide information on what internal support is available for victims
- discuss how people leaders can be supported themselves when dealing with these matters
- teach how to assist and respond if you are a bystander
- provide further information about external services to support victims of sexual violence, including contact details for local support services.

5.1.2.6 Training on Gender Equality within Recruitment and Selection

EOCGE organisations have a keen awareness of the role that cognitive biases play in matters of gender equality throughout the recruitment, selection and on-boarding processes. The vast majority of organisations have some form of training for those involved within the new hire processes.

Training offered to employees encompassed topics of bias in decision-making (e.g. unconscious bias, cognitive bias, decision making traps) as well as newly developed techniques for hiring committees (e.g. job evaluation methodologies, interview accreditation training). Importantly, training and upskilling included "all of those involved within any hiring or on-boarding process" and it was clear that leading practice organisations actively engaged their most senior leaders (e.g. CEOs, executive leaders) within education programs. For leading practice organisations, senior leaders were recognised as pivotal figures within the re-education and embedding process of gender equality within recruitment and selection and had also drawn upon 'change agents' within recruitment and selection processes in a broader sense. It was also observed that training efforts were often led and endorsed by those most senior within the organisation such as vice chancellors, CEOs and senior executive leaders.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations implemented training programs that were developed in-house, externally developed and delivered in-house, or developed and delivered by external consultants

A feature of some training programs was the evaluation, via examinations and tests, to assess the transfer of learning by participants. This was not a feature consistent of all EOCGE organisations who implemented training programs, and this may contribute to the broader discussion surrounding the efficacy of bias training that stems from a lack of evaluation that can be present for some organisations (Stone, 2017). A key outcome here, therefore, is the acknowledgement that organisations that do implement training programs should also simultaneously consider the transfer of learning that participants benefit from through enactment in their work roles (Stone, 2017).

Often, the training offered formed part of a broader gender equality strategy and included multiple points of intervention for different levels of the organisation. In other words, leading practice organisations did not simply rely upon training of the selection panel but instead sought to draw a broader range of stakeholders into the discussion such as line managers, senior managers and organisational leaders, alongside selection panel members.

A common feature of training offered by EOCGE organisations was that these were linked with other policies and practices. For example, training might be delivered in combination with targeted shortlisting of a gender-equal list of job applicants.

Alternatively, organisations incorporated strategies to ensure adequate reporting and evaluation of gender equality of previously undertaken shortlisting processes at multiple levels (e.g. search firm shortlists, internal shortlists, interview panels, employment offers). This information was then used to help guide future efforts, particularly where inequality was identified without an appropriate rationale for why that might have come to pass.

Other features of training programs described by EOCGE organisations included:

- case study methodologies: utilising case studies as a means of applying newly learned bias mitigation techniques / theoretical insights to novel contexts
- eLearning and in-person training options to cater for remote workers
- skills application testing post-training

- formalised 'accreditation processes' that recognise training completed in pre-work and post-training assessment demonstrating their capabilities.

5.1.2.7 Overarching Understanding of Workplace Gender Equality and Dealing with Backlash

A feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations was the delivery of training and the supporting use of other mechanisms for building a holistic understanding of the issue of workplace gender equality. Such training provided an understanding of the reasons behind workplace gender equality strategies, policies and practices and was noted by many EOCGE organisations as a valuable way of mitigating backlash and push-back by men.

Workplace gender inequality is one of the most thoroughly researched areas in the social sciences. Over 3000 peer-reviewed papers have been published on the topic since 1970 (Eagly & Heilman, 2016), and the broad theoretical causes of inequality are acknowledged to be reasonably well understood (Alvesson & Billing, 2009). Its causes are many and these interact in complex ways for different women, at different times and at different stages of a career. Broadly, the causes of gender inequality in the workplace can be grouped under the following themes:

- *Structural inequalities* such as the availability of child care, change rooms, toilets and access to women's personal protective equipment that physically inhibit women from effective workforce participation. Alternatively, job specifications that unfairly prescribe requirements which disadvantage women can keep them from obtaining certain roles.
- *Differential childhood experiences* around confidence and leadership development often advantage boys over girls and can affect the propensity to negotiate, apply for promotion or ask for pay increases. These activities can also be impacted by structural inequalities, social expectations and the 'double bind' (see below).
- *Social expectations and gender congeniality*. Categorisations of male versus female provide people with the strongest basis for classifying others. Being primarily socially constructed, gender evokes mental associations, which are also learned. These stereotypic expectations include beliefs that shape roles and behaviours toward each gender group. For example, a persistent stereotype associates management with being male, creating automatic biases around role suitability.



- *The Double Bind.* Effective leadership involves the ability to influence a group of people towards a common goal. However, a double bind limits women's abilities to engage in a full range of influencing behaviours. Put simply, societal effects cause women to be evaluated more negatively than men if they are perceived as too feminine in their leadership style, as well as if they are perceived to be too masculine.
- *Direct and indirect discrimination.* There is ample evidence that direct discrimination still exists. In particular, male-dominated industries such as construction, engineering, and mining are identified as environments where many forms of direct discrimination continue to prevent women entering or staying within the industry. There is also evidence of an increase in indirect discrimination, since greater levels of legislative intervention and policing of direct forms of sex-based discrimination have made discrimination more subtle, indirect, and ambiguous.
- *Selection and promotion bias.* On average, women have to wait longer for promotions at all stages of their careers, while there is evidence that the gap in this waiting time between men and women increases at more senior levels. Performance versus promotion scores reveal that, although females generally score slightly higher than males on job performance, men still score higher on measures of potential for promotion. Women's career progression is inhibited when organisations exclusively adopt promotion by application and where unconscious (and sometimes conscious) informal criteria aligned to the social characteristics of those on the panel are used to assess job candidates.
- *Leadership styles and personality dispositions.* The examination of gender differences in leadership styles is extensive. While there are some consistent differences, such as women being slightly more transformational than men, on the whole these differences are small and there are far more similarities than differences. Nevertheless, there are persistent stereotypes that insist that there are significant differences.
- *Division of domestic labour.* There is a continued imbalance in the sharing of domestic responsibilities between men and women. Several factors are at work that limit women's access to the opportunities and the contexts to build valuable career capital. Women still undertake nearly twice as much housework as men and spend more than twice the amount of time providing child care. Parenting pressures are most intense among women having the most career potential and can significantly impact their ability to network, undertake remote projects and attend out-of-hours meetings.
- *Role conflict.* Role pressures and perceptions about the ability of women to meet them are greater at higher job levels, starting at middle management levels and continuing into senior managerial and executive roles. Even where a woman fits the criteria to do a more senior role, she will still suffer from perceptions that she has competing roles that will create conflicts between work and home. Additionally, the inequitable division of domestic labour creates greater work/life pressures on women than men in dual-career families.
- *Access to mentoring and development.* Several studies reveal that mentoring is a critical factor for women in progressing to senior leadership roles. Mentoring consists of two distinct functions: career development functions and psychosocial functions. Career development includes sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure, visibility and the provision of challenging career assignments, so providing both social capital and opportunities to refine and increase other valuable career capitals. The psychosocial functions include encouragement, friendship, advice, and feedback, as well as helping individuals to develop a sense of competence, confidence and effectiveness. Ironically, in industries that are highly male-dominated, and in light of the recent #metoo and Times Up campaigns, senior men can be reticent to mentor younger women. Reasons include the potential for allegations around sexual discrimination or innuendo regarding their motives.
- *Flexibility in the workplace.* There is a large literature about the gendering and devaluation of flexible roles in organisations. Despite the nature of the family unit changing dramatically over the last two decades, the stereotype persists of the male breadwinner. The majority of employees using flexible work arrangements are women, even in the case of dual-career couples. Flexible work practices are failing to progress women where they are primarily seen as a motherhood issue by organisations. Evidence for the failure of more flexible roles emerges in data around poorer pay, more experiences of subtle discrimination and the lack of opportunities for career progression by women in these often part-time roles.
- *The glass cliff* phenomenon holds that sometimes women gain promotion into more senior roles due to societal perceptions that women are better equipped to handle 'healing' roles in traumatised divisions or organisations due to their more

nurturing style. Additionally, organisations that are underperforming may view women as being more effective agents of cultural change through more inclusive leadership styles, which are more likely to engage employees. Whatever the organisational drivers, these positions are more prone to failure and are often roles that males, advised through their networks, will avoid.

- *The gender pay gap.* The gender pay gap in remuneration and superannuation balances can be seen as a financial manifestation of the impact of the above issues in combination.

For a fuller discussion of the issues underpinning workplace gender inequality see Eagly and Carli (2007) and/or Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016a).

Generally, EOCGE organisations engaged gender equality experts to run face-to-face seminars and workshops with managers that delved more deeply into the causes outlined above. Often the workshops coupled an understanding of the root causes of workplace gender equality with strategic policy reviews or workshopping on specific policies and practices.

Other mechanisms common to EOCGE organisations in communicating the overarching causes of workplace gender inequality were:

- the hosting of forums, panels and debates, often including a range of women who have experienced one or more of the above issues, and open to audience participation through extensive Q&A sessions at the end of presentations
- sharing of Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Diversity Council of Australia and other not for profit and industry reports into workplace gender equality
- attendance at and reporting back on workplace gender equality events and conferences
- providing access to podcasts, videos and other links to gender equality presentations on electronic hubs.

Many EOCGE organisations made reference to push-back or backlash by men as a result of instituting workplace gender equality strategies and referenced a joint Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change report (MCC-CEW, 2018) on this phenomenon which noted that,

“Such responses manifest as internal and public debate on issues such as: gender fatigue; the demise of meritocracy; reverse discrimination; experiences of gender-based harassment and discrimination; and the rise of identity politics. There is a view that efforts to achieve gender equality have simply ‘gone too far’. Some call this backlash ... Backlash is a negative reaction to social or political change. In recent times, there has been particular backlash driven by the perception that focus on gender equality initiatives and the promotion of women to leadership roles is unfair and not meritocratic.”

The report (MCC-CEW, 2018) outlines five reasons why backlash may occur:

1. *Lack of understanding:* people may resist change they view as unnecessary or misguided. This may happen if the business case for gender equality, and the benefits it brings, are not clearly communicated, well understood or accepted. When the business case is not made clear, conversation stalls at opinion and may not advance beyond differences of view.
2. *Change fatigue:* leaders may feel they do not have the time, skills or support to implement change. They may also feel that they have tried many strategies without success. This can be exacerbated when gender equality is perceived to be a ‘nice to have’, rather than a driver of better performance.
3. *Industry norms:* disrupting the status-quo – including traditional industry practices and workforce demographics – may feel uncomfortable, unnecessary or counterintuitive. Some feel gender equality initiatives are ‘diversity for the sake of diversity’ and believe certain industries are gendered because they are naturally more suited to either men or women.
4. *Cultural norms:* family dynamics, personal relationships and life experience have all informed our perception of what is ‘normal’. For some, major change challenges these assumptions and can feel uncomfortable, while for others change hasn’t come soon enough.
5. *Fear:* some are concerned they may lose opportunities, status and position if there are gains by women in the workplace. Successful women may feel their achievements are dismissed as a token result of gender equality initiatives. Some, while fearful, embrace uncertainty and actively work to drive gender equality.

The following list outlines a suite of practices that was used by leading practice EOCGE organisations to combat backlash and has been highlighted in various other areas of this report. These actions align closely to those suggested in the Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change report (MCC-CEW, 2018):

- clearly communicated the facts confronting the organisation and explained the reasons for gender equality strategies
- clearly communicated the business case for gender equality and the strategic requirements for the business in the future
- included employee groups to be part of developing and executing action plans to achieve gender equality
- explained why gender equality is a strategic organisational priority and tailor communications to the audience
- created opportunities to discuss the barriers to change as well as potential solutions
- allocated sufficient resources to support and promote gender equality initiatives
- regularly reinforced the case for change through clear and consistent communications
- provided examples of actions leaders at all levels can take to advance gender equality
- encouraged those making progress on gender equality through recognition and reward
- celebrated success stories, relating them to the business case and organisational goals
- shared the stories and experiences of women in the organisation/industry
- built on the existing 'buy-in' by inviting people to share their experiences of organisational policies and practices
- demonstrated how workplace gender equality benefits all employees
- communicated the rationale around appointments and promotions and how merit was applied to make decisions
- demonstrated flexible work as mainstream, not attaching working flexibly to women only or working mothers
- integrated gender equality into performance KPIs on recruitment, retention and representation of women across all levels of the organisation
- directly addressed behaviours that reflect sexism, discrimination or harassment.

5.1.2.8 On-boarding (Orientation and Induction)

Leading practice EOCGE organisations have comprehensive face-to-face on-boarding programs for new employees, supervisors and managers. These programs incorporated the activities noted above for training in the areas of unconscious bias, inclusive leadership and culture, code of conduct, domestic violence and overarching understanding of workplace gender equality. As part of the on-boarding process all new staff were usually required to acknowledge that they accepted and understood the organisation's policies and/or were assessed, usually through online modules accessed as part of the on-boarding process.

5.2 Targeted Training and Development Programs for Women

A key feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations was their commitment to the development and ongoing support of 'women only' training and development programs. However, these organisations also realised that gender equality in the workplace is not about 'fixing women' (Fox, 2017), but rather a recognition that, while organisations are undertaking the redesign of their workplaces to eliminate gender inequality, women often face greater challenges than men in accessing development opportunities. While most EOCGE organisations had integrated women's leadership development programs that encompassed leader development, career progression, mentoring/ sponsorship, networking and coaching, many other organisations had training packages that approached these areas separately. Additionally, some organisations also offered separate women's board readiness programs.

5.2.1 Women's Leadership Development Programs

Leading practice EOCGE organisations stand out from other organisations in their attention to leadership development and progression. Unfortunately, most organisations tend to approach leadership development in a haphazard fashion or rely upon 'natural selection'. However, most EOCGE organisations actively engaged in the development of employees, held managers accountable for development and were continually evaluating the utility of their development programs (see Conger, 2004; Day et al., 2014 for a more detailed discussion of leadership development programs).

Leadership is a complex interaction between people and environments that emerges through social systems. Interactions that promote effective leadership development comprise an array of activities and experiences including, but not limited



to, job assignments, mentoring, feedback (in the form of 360-degree reviews), coaches, challenging projects or life experiences and training, when framed as action learning.

Leadership development can be viewed as anything that builds upon the capacity of an individual to be effective in a leadership role. Most leadership development experts argue that, of the various developmental facets, experience is the most potent. However, it is subject to the quality of the experience and how much the degree of challenge matches expected developmental pathways in an organisation or industry. These pathways and developmental challenges occur over time so that factors play a role and operate in a dynamic process, involving multiple iterations that persist over time (McCall, 2010).

There is a key distinction between leader and leadership development that is noted by Day and others (2014). Leader development has its focus on the development of individual-centred human capital or leadership-related knowledge, skills and abilities. Leadership development, on the other hand, is concerned with the social capital needed to lead at the collective or relational level. In this sense, social capital represents the resources and relational dynamics that are required to effectively lead a team, unit, division or organisation.

In most organisations, leader and leadership development are rarely integrated in interventions associated with organisational leadership development, which means that, historically, organisations have

tended to focus upon the development of individual human capital at the expense of addressing the needs around the social capital of developing leaders, a fact that has consistently disadvantaged women through inequitable access to key networks (Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011).

Additionally, at present, women have an inequitable share of domestic responsibility, including the primary care of children. While the development of some leadership skills become more important at different times during a leader's career, progression is predicated upon cumulative skill development, with some skills being foundational and upon which other skills are built. This means that again, women can be disadvantaged at certain times in their career relative to men, usually mid-career when most women have children, and as such this fact needs to be taken into account in organisational leadership development programs, especially the ability to access such programs when on extended parental leave. To be successful, leaders need to develop and apply skills appropriate at the time to the level and specific context of their leadership.

Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011), through the examination of over 50 women's leadership development programs identified that standard leadership topics and tools can be taught to address the particular challenges women face when transitioning to more senior leadership roles. Such programs overtly identify how subtle (and not-so-subtle) gender bias is usually not the result of intentional acts but rather is built into an organisation's normal routines and practices.

Likewise, such programs acknowledge that sponsorship, mentoring and coaching, and particular key job-related experiences, may be more difficult for women to access. Therefore women are disadvantaged with regard to acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities associated with leader development.

To address these issues, leading practice EOCGE organisations have developed targeted women's leadership development programs, usually in consultation with women within the organisation, to identify specific needs. These are usually also developed with the assistance of external specialist providers such as Chief Executive Women, Women and Leadership Australia and various university business schools, often with the input or direct support of women's industry representative bodies (for example, Women in Banking and Finance, National Association of Women in Construction and Women in Super among many others).

Key elements of women's leadership development programs provided by EOCGE organisations included:

- attendance at specialist women's leadership training courses, which covered topics or activities such as:
 - exposure to up-to-date research on barriers to women in leadership
 - exploring gendered leadership identities
 - strategies to deal with stereotypes, bias, discrimination and work/life balance
 - negotiation skills
 - public speaking and presentation skills
 - developing greater self-confidence and resilience
 - developing a personal brand and positioning a professional profile in the market
 - 360 degree reviews and other diagnostic tools;
 - creation of peer support networks
 - project work and action learning, including opportunities to present work to senior managers and/or the executive
 - exposure to successful women and the opportunity to discuss topics of interest with them
 - access to electronic support hubs with information and resources specifically targeted at women's leadership development and progression.
- work shadowing with senior or executive leaders or

alternate roles in the organisation. work shadowing with senior or executive leaders or alternate roles in the organisation, the aim of which was to improve the profile of women leaders and provide the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills around higher duties

- acting roles and secondments where nominated female employees had the opportunity to gain experience in other roles with the active support and mentoring of the incumbent's manager.

Women's leadership development programs also typically included the following, which will be explored in greater detail in the following sections:

- career planning and progression support
- sponsorship, mentoring and coaching
- networking.

5.2.2 Career Planning and Progression Support

While leader and leadership development programs provide general skills and insight into the specific skills required in senior roles, career planning and progression support programs provide assistance with understanding and meeting the specific requirements for promotion to a specific role or series of future roles. These are predicated on clear career pathways and well-documented job role criteria.

In this area, EOCGE organisations provided a range of women's specialised support programs, which typically provided either an internal or external career coach, as well as workshops designed to map women's existing achievements and capabilities to identify career pathways or specific senior roles. Information sessions were held to provide assistance in understanding and navigating the organisational promotion processes.

Through coaches and workshops, women were provided with specific inputs into promotion requirements for specific roles and/or given guidance and coaching around areas that needed to be addressed before applying. Career coaching conversations could also revolve around alternative career progression pathways, dependent upon the personal circumstances of the participant.

In the case of high-potential women in middle or senior management, many EOCGE organisations acted proactively on progression and had female talent pipelines as a key part of their succession planning; women were identified and sponsored towards identified roles and were often assigned dedicated sponsors or mentors as 'case managers'.

5.2.3 Sponsorship and Mentoring

The term mentoring tends to be used to cover a range of activities from coaching, counselling, formal and informal mentoring and sponsorship. Most of the activities reported by EOCGE organisations comprised formal mentoring. For the sake of clarification, the distinctions are as follows:

- Informal or 'classical' mentoring is where an individual with advanced experience and knowledge personally chooses to become committed to providing support to and increasing the potential for upward mobility of their protégé. The relationship is usually of long duration, relatively exclusive, informal in its structure and is characterised by a dynamic where the protégé receives a range of career-oriented and psychosocial support as either the mentor or protégé identify (Friday et al., 2004).
- Formal or 'career' mentoring is where the relationship is usually part of a deliberate individual development strategy in a greater organisational training and development intervention. The mentor is an individual with advanced experience and knowledge who is either assigned to a protégé or chosen by the protégé from a list of potential mentors. The duration of the relationship is shorter, less personally intense and interactions with protégés tend to be highly structured around specific career development purposes (Friday et al., 2004).
- Sponsorship may be an outcome of either formal or informal mentoring but comprises the contribution of increasing the visibility of the protégé to decision-makers, putting in a 'good word' for the protégé or having the power to direct the promotion of the protégé. In the strictest sense, a sponsor need not necessarily be a mentor (Ragins, 1997).
- Coaching is a planned, short term, one on one instruction with emphasis on the performance of a specific task or set of activities. The coach provides expertise in how to undertake the task or activity (Stone, 2017).

Most EOCGE organisations had formal mentoring programs for women with some having elements of sponsorship around protégé visibility and promotion advocacy.

There is strong support for the assertion that mentoring is more important for the progression of women than for men (Dworkin et al., 2012). There is a body of evidence supporting the positive effect that mentoring has upon protégé outcomes including promotion decisions, increased pay, and career

mobility and this effect is further amplified for female managers in male-gender-congenial industries and contexts such as mining, construction, energy and finance. However, women often find accessing informal mentoring more difficult than men, mainly due to men's preference to mentor other men and their comfort in doing so (Ragins & McFarlin, 1990).

Additionally, male mentors cannot take the place of female role models in providing credible exemplars of leadership behaviours (Latu et al, 2013). Female role models play a critical role in female progression in two ways: they evidence the possibility of obtaining senior roles and boosting self-efficacy and they provide clues about navigating the nuances of leading as a woman, so enhancing leadership capital. Therefore women's networks have a valuable role to play, especially in organisations where there are few women in executive roles.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations typically engaged their senior members as mentors for more junior women in formal mentoring programs whose duration of 3-12 months' duration. Mentor training was usually offered for mentors prior to their commencement in the role. Formal mentoring opportunities for employees were usually not one-off, with employees being able to seek further mentors as their career progressed.

Mentoring tended to be offered to women in middle management or higher and was aimed at progressing women into senior management, and high-potential women from senior to executive management.

A feature of leading practice mentoring for women was the recognition that women mentors or role models could play a role above and beyond that which a senior male could offer. Many organisations had sponsored senior women's networks to act as a source of women mentors for more junior women. Additionally, women's industry representative bodies were often engaged to assist with identifying potential senior women outside of their organisation to act as mentors, especially where there were few senior or executive women within their own organisation.

EOCGE organisations reported mentors as providing:

- guidance around career aspirations
- alignment of the protégé to business strategy
- understanding around how to maximise opportunities
- connection to development experiences, work, clients, industries and people to support protégé goals

- personal knowledge and experiences around dealing with difficult issues and mistakes
- challenges to protégés to undertake stretch experiences and setting goals that will have greatest personal and business impact
- assistance in overcoming roadblocks and challenges
- insight into the protégés performance, strengths and skill gaps
- support for protégé's preparation for promotion and the transition to a more senior role
- support for the development of confidence and general well-being
- support in the development of communication, management and leadership skills.

EOCGE organisations also noted that women mentors provided specific support in:

- building and maintaining robust and lasting support networks of women in similar positions
- fostering strategies for overcoming gender biases within the organisation and with clients
- passing on ideas and techniques for dealing with balancing work and life commitments
- navigating the double bind of leadership, which is prevalent in male-dominated industries
- sharing their experiences of navigating progression as a woman.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations also provided access to executive coaches for high potential women as well as specific coaching workshops for middle managers and above. Executive coaches were usually retained to assist in identifying and developing:

- self-awareness, emotional intelligence, values and strengths
- work/life choices, personal accountability, goal setting and confidence
- personal brand, digital profiles, networks, career plans and tools to overcome roadblocks.

5.2.4 Networking

A feature of EOCGE organisations is the sponsorship and ongoing support for internal women's networks and networking events. Networking is critical to career progression, especially in more senior roles, though it is more a case of 'who knows that you know' rather than simply 'who you know' which is important in promotion contexts (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016b).

Social capital is the network of social contacts that can be accessed to influence one's position in an organisation or industry and the ability to understand and to access these contacts wisely. The value of these social contacts depends on the relative position of the social contact in the organisation or industry. Traditionally, influential networks have been male dominated and difficult for women to access, meaning that men have been traditionally privileged in access to social capital. Additionally, certain networks and memberships can grant access to a higher level of social capital. In turn, this social capital advantages the progression of a career relative to other groups through its exchange for access to quality job experiences, introductions and opportunities to develop more experience in an accelerating upward spiral (Day et al., 2014).

Women's networks were engaged by their respective organisations to provide a wide range of activities. However these were principally designed to increase the social capital of women. In EOCGE organisations, women's networks broadly undertook three functions in relation to supporting the development of women's social capital:

1. *The organisation of functions* usually revolving around speaker panels, forums and keynote addresses by leading thinkers, to which senior members of the organisation as well as customers, suppliers and industry peers were invited. These events were usually themed around a gender equality issue and were designed to provide the opportunity for women to engage with other attendees before and after the event. It was a feature of EOCGE organisations that men were encouraged to attend.
2. *Women-only* events involving panel speakers or keynote addresses with participants from across the organisation or industry. These events were designed for women to connect and share experiences and insights and potentially form long-term associations, including mentoring relationships. Likewise electronic hubs were a feature of women's networks and were established to facilitate online networking and collaboration between women.
3. *Supporting programs* designed to enhance women's visibility by placing women in front of audiences outside of their team. This included training in public speaking, confidence development and digital media, accompanied by identifying and creating opportunities for women to speak at external and internal forums and on social media and traditional media platforms.

5.2.5 Board-Readiness Programs

Some EOCGE organisations with a large number of subsidiaries or with large shareholdings in other organisations were actively encouraging and supporting the development of women as potential board members.

These programs focus on building competence and confidence by providing the training and development needed to successfully pursue positions on subsidiary boards as well as not-for-profit boards. These EOCGE organisations encouraged women to seek experience on not-for-profit boards.

EOCGE organisations had partnered with Women on Boards in assisting with elevating appropriate opportunities and skills development as well as sponsoring women to complete courses through the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

5.3 Learning Platforms and Hubs

It was a feature of EOCGE organisations that they maintained electronic gender equality or diversity and inclusion hubs on their intranet to ensure the capture and retention of gender equality related material,

facilitate live access to training, support, policies and peers as well as promoting future events. These hubs typically acted as:

- central repositories for all gender equality policies and associated forms and information
- learning hubs for online training materials in relation to gender equality policies
- portals for accessing external provider content
- repositories for video case studies, podcasts, interviews and recordings of forums, workshops, panels and keynote addresses
- libraries of gender equality reports, media releases and useful links to academic and business articles and toolkits
- hosts for online employee forums and interest groups
- connection mediums for mentors and protégés
- hosts for gender equality event calendars
- remote access hubs for those on extended parental leave.



Section 6 – Other Critical Gender Equality Practices



Key Findings

Leading practice organisations:

- demonstrate a fearless and, at times, unapologetic approach to communicating on their adoption of targets and quotas
- task people leaders with monitoring and managing key performance indicators of gender equality
- exhibit a desire to educate and involve their clients in gender equality initiatives
- consider industry advocacy to be a core element for gender equality to progress
- are keenly aware of their pipeline inputs, particularly within the context of STEMM and trades. These organisations act upon the knowledge to build capacity and interest in their fields within cohorts of emerging professionals.



Action Points

- Integrate key performance indicators on gender equality into people managers’ responsibilities.
- Scan for and establish opportunities to engage clients, external stakeholders and relevant parties in gender equality initiatives.
- Explore and engage in opportunities for advocacy as an organisation on gender equality progress.
- Look beyond recruitment and selection to the talent pipeline inputs (e.g. beyond university courses, secondary education, primary education and to community groups) for opportunities to build this for the future.

EOCGE organisations represent leaders in the adoption of practices that reinforce their gender equality policies as well as looking beyond the organisation to support gender equality in their industry and the community more broadly. This section of the report identifies six practices that typify leading practice EOCGE organisations in these areas:

1. The adoption of targets (and quotas)
2. Holding managers accountable for gender equality targets
3. Education and involvement of clients in gender equality
4. Industry advocacy for gender equality

5. Community engagement for gender equality
6. Proactive engagement in the STEMM and trades pipeline.

6.1 The Adoption of Targets (and Quotas)

As one EOCGE organisation noted, “... we recognise that like financial and operational targets, gender targets are an essential part of managing and improving business performance.” Likewise, another organisation reported that, “... if we are to shift the dial in such a large organisation, we need to be aggressive about how we achieve our targets.” Many EOCGE organisations reported similar sentiments about the role of targets in demonstrating commitment and providing a mechanism to hold themselves accountable. It is a feature of EOCGE organisations that their targets are:

- ambitious
- aligned to industry context
- accompanied by clear strategies for how targets will be achieved
- backed by KPIs and other forms of accountability for their achievement
- widely published
- regularly reported against to support progress.

Very few EOCGE organisations had formal mandatory quotas; however, where these were in evidence, they tended to be around graduate intake, while a few organisations in more gender-diverse industry sectors had set hard quotas for women on management recruitment shortlists, external hires and/or promotions. In all of these instances the quota was usually set at 50%, though some had set them as low as 40%.

The remainder of initiatives to improve gender balance within EOCGE organisations were through the use of targets.

Most EOCGE organisations identified targets for board, subsidiary boards and other governing bodies as providing a gender composition of 40:40:20, (i.e. 40% men, 40% women and 20% either) where the appointment process was not bound by legislative constraints or other mandatory appointment requirements.

Likewise, EOCGE organisations on average had targets of between 40% and 50% for executive and management positions. These targets were usually set to be achieved in periods of up to five years, again dependent on starting positions and industry context. Non-professional firms with partner groups tended, on average, to adopt targets at the 30-40% target level for equity partnership, whereas other organisations tended to adopt 50% targets for all managerial roles including the executive. These targets were usually accompanied by goals of 50% for external recruitment to management roles, 50% inclusion in succession and leadership development pathways and 50% on shortlists for external appointments.

Targets for graduate intake for nearly all EOCGE organisations were set at 50%. Exceptions related to the intake of apprentices/junior tradespeople and some professions where female graduate pipelines are small, such as engineering. Nonetheless, these EOCGE organisations set targets well above graduate/trade output levels and had adopted strategies for improving these pipelines, which is discussed further below.

Some organisations had applied to the Fair Work Commission to advertise for women only to apply for roles in areas that were significantly underrepresented in order to facilitate the meeting of targets.

Some organisations had also set targets around women's representation in client pitch opportunities, women's content and imagery in internal and external communications, access to and completion of training and internal and external presentations.

Where EOCGE organisations had reported having hit their 50% targets, they shifted their focus towards the monitoring of these targets and continuing to ensure accountability for their maintenance. Where organisations had set goals of 30-40% and had achieved these, they typically set new targets at higher levels.

6.2 Holding Managers Accountable for Gender Equality Targets

Leading practice EOCGE organisations have typically embedded key performance indicators (or balanced scorecard items) across all employees and managers at all levels of the organisation. These KPIs cascade down from the organisational-level strategic plans to divisions, units, teams and individuals. Again, no two organisations were identical in performance indicators used, their weighting or the consequences for failure to meet KPIs, though in the case of the latter they were usually linked to performance bonuses and progression considerations.





Performance indicators centred on key gender equality policies such as workplace flexibility, pay equity, gender targets in the employee life cycle and inclusive culture. Key performance indicators often encompassed broader diversity objectives. KPIs that are common to many EOCGE organisations are:

- people leader accountability for scores in employee diversity and gender equality opinion surveys
- promotion, application and support of flexible working arrangements
- reducing pay inequity within the span of manager's control
- demonstrating an understanding of gender equality objectives through behaviours and promotion in the workplace
- consistently treating employees with dignity and respect, no matter their position or status
- creating and maintaining a work environment that is respectful and accepting of diversity
- clearly communicating and abiding by the company code of conduct
- effectively recruiting, promoting and maintaining a gender-balanced workforce in line with targets set by the organisation
- contributing positively towards the development and maintenance of an inclusive culture
- completing training around gender equality policies.

Beyond key performance indicators in a performance management context, many EOCGE organisations used other forums to hold managers and executives accountable for delivering upon gender equality strategies.

In many organisations, the results of employee engagement surveys were used as a mechanism for managers to meet with their teams and develop an action plan, which outlined key focus areas for the coming 12 months. These focus areas were usually around how to improve a negative outcome or how to maintain or continue with a positive aspect of the survey.

In addition to KPIs, some EOCGE organisations had initiated diversity 'hot-seat' presentations where senior leaders regularly presented to the executive committee on their progress against key gender equality objectives and measures.

To ensure accountability at the executive level, board and executive team members from some organisations have committed to their own personal gender equality objectives. In these cases these objectives were published to all staff and reported upon at the end of each year. In these cases, personal goals were always linked to one or more of the organisation's gender equality strategic objectives.

Maddocks

Inclusive leadership is a hallmark of leading practice EOCGE organisations. Inclusive leaders embody gender equality in their daily routines: their communication with others, their willingness to challenge the status quo, or within advocacy efforts with their c-suite peers and communities in which they operate. Maddocks was identified as an organisation in which there was active involvement of the CEO in advocating for gender equality within law and a willingness to communicate with others on matters of gender equality more broadly.

We spoke with Marita Pascoe, People and Culture Relationship Manager at Maddocks, about workplace flexibility and the importance of inclusive leadership from the top.

What is Maddocks' approach to workplace flexibility? Can you take us through the reasoning of why it is considered to be a priority?

Flexibility was a key area of focus in our first formal and stand-alone Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategy which was approved in 2016–2017. We recognised that flexibility was a key enabler to diversity and inclusion. As an initial policy, this was quite legalistic in approach as you might imagine being a law firm and we have therefore recently re-examined this to make it more accessible. We see

the four pillars of flexibility being: the place of work; the hours of work; the leave you take and everyday flexibility that might be required. We have pockets within our business where they are winning awards for their flexible work practices, but there are other pockets where we are still chipping away. We did a diversity survey in August 2019, and flexibility was a key focus: what were people's arrangements and what were they likely to need within the next three years? We want people to understand that flexible work arrangements are not just for people with caring responsibilities. We want this to be a more sustainable work option more broadly.

How important is it to have an inclusive CEO?

It is critical. Being able to make progress on diversity and inclusion initiatives is completely contingent on having a CEO who champions D&I, as well as a committed board. It is vital to have a CEO who is interested, passionate, curious, open-minded, determined. Michelle's initial piece of work, years ago, to focus on gender equality with Maddocks Women, was what led us to set targets for women in partnership at the firm. Michelle is one of very few female CEOs in law and I think her passion has been at an industry level, not just about Maddocks, so she does get invited to speak all the time and is incredibly generous with the time she gives to those events. She recognises that being able to share the story of where we have come from, is crucial. It's not a journey that has a destination, but we continue working towards further progression.

Michelle recently noted the following:

"I came into the role of CEO believing that, as a woman who'd faced certain gender-based issues in my career, I had a good handle on the need for diversity and inclusion, and what we had to do as an organisation and as a profession to achieve it. I learnt very quickly that while my experiences could inform some changes that we needed to make, I certainly wasn't across everything that we needed to do, or still need to do.

Those of us in leadership positions won't necessarily recognise that different organisational practices could be perceived as unwelcoming or as barriers to others. In pursuing a more diverse workforce at Maddocks it has been critical to create an environment in which people feel that they can raise issues, with the confidence that they will be heard.



Marita Pascoe, People and Culture Relationship Manager

This is easier said than done. It requires a top-down, bottom-up and middle push. It also requires opening the eyes of those in leadership positions to the privilege that they hold. It is still a reality that you don't really get into a leadership position in Australia without the advantage of privilege. I am a woman, which presents challenges to attaining a leadership position, but I'm also white and university educated, which comes with enormous privilege. It is important that those who hold privilege in our society recognise that they have it, and understand the need to share it.

One of the great joys of my time as CEO has been developing my understanding of what it takes to build a diverse and inclusive workplace. I still have a lot to learn!"

– Michelle Dixon 31 January 2020



Michelle Dixon – CEO Maddocks

How important are targets and KPIs in embedding strategic changes such as flexibility?

For the past decade or so we have had targets around the percentage of women in partnership equity, women generally in the partnership, women on our board and we have a focus on the pipeline of women coming through our pre-partnership development programs. If I think about where we've come from as a firm, in terms of our gender representation, I don't know that we would be where we are now, without those targets. It has sharpened our focus. We have consulted with organisations like Diversity Partners for specific D&I expertise and to build transparency around our progress and achievements. For us, looking at what was preventing women from making the step from senior lawyer to partner was certainly a factor that triggered our caretaker-partner policy. The principle of this policy is to ensure that our senior lawyers going on parental leave are able to return to their client portfolio so their time away from the office does not impact their development and progression. A partner is appointed as 'caretaker' to the senior lawyer's practice. The introduction of parental leave coaching, whether it's formal/external or internal, has been another important step. The conversations that then occur around the time of leaving, have assisted to strip back the obstacles for those returning from leave.



What kinds of things did you do to promote flexibility in the workplace? Which of these do you think made the most difference?

I think it's the combination of programs, policies and procedures that is most important, rather than a focus on any one single policy. Ensuring that, regardless of flexible working arrangements, individuals have the same access to opportunities for development and progression is important. That might be through client work or through the programs that we're running to help develop the skills and competencies so that people are ready to take the next step. Policies on their own are just documents. I would hate to think of these as being so prescriptive so as to force behaviour one way or the other. Participating in the citation process hones our focus on best practices and measuring our progress. I think that looking at what we're doing with an external lens, looking at our internal policies and practices with an inclusive lens, looking at learning and development opportunities are all critical elements.

What are the challenges to workplace gender equality going forward?

Gender equality has evolved and will always be evolving. It would be easy for us to become complacent because we have been successful in

increasing our overall gender representation within the firm. We are able to attract high-quality female candidates. The flexibility piece is still something that private practice firms need to work on. We still need to do work to understand what, if any, other obstacles might exist that make it difficult for females to move from general partner to equity partner. We also want to focus on understanding what we can do to bring about change in the number of roles that are traditionally seen as female. One of the key drivers is to be able to increase the diversity of the talent pool for these gender-segregated positions and to improve our overall gender pay gap. For example, we have one male secretary in our Melbourne office. Some of the strategies we are looking at to address this are the position title (What would happen if we changed our receptionist job title to concierge?) and how we work with recruiters and training providers. How can we reimagine these roles to attract a more diverse talent pool? Can we influence the change in roles to make these more interesting to men? I think that if you look at our success in the last decade over the shifts in policies and practices, the proof is there. We have continued to grow. The end game for all of us is diversity of thought and demographic diversity is one means of achieving it.

6.3 Education and Involvement of Clients in Gender Equality Initiatives

Most EOCGE organisations actively invite clients to gender equality related events such as panel discussions, lunches, keynote addresses and special occasions such as International Women's Day celebrations. These are used as opportunities to spread messaging around the organisation's focus, progress and commitment to gender equality. Likewise, organisations also shared internal and industry reports related to gender equality with their clients.

Additionally, many EOCGE organisations act as boundary spanners for their clients, bringing them together and sharing the organisation's experience in working towards gender equality in an effort to support their clients to achieve greater gender equality in their respective organisations. This is usually done through workshops and/or symposiums around gender equality policies and practices as part of a client's business development activities.

EOCGE firms also ensure that their client marketing material and advertising uses inclusive language and is gender balanced in its portrayal of staff. This was noted by many professional service firms as helping to educate clients in gender diversity and breaking down stereotypes still held by some clients. A leading practice initiative started by one EOCGE organisation was to undertake a global commitment to shift advertising away from stereotypical portrayals of gender, across their own brands and the industry as a whole. In partnership with UN Women they launched the Unstereotype Alliance – a global alliance of industry leaders set to banish stereotypical portrayals of gender in advertising and all brand-led content.

6.4 Industry Advocacy for Gender Equality

Similar to their engagement with clients, leading practice EOCGE organisations are heavily engaged in gender equality advocacy within their respective industries. These organisations regularly partner with their women's industry advocacy bodies, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Chief Executive Women, Male Champions of Change, the Centre for Economic Development of Australia, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Women's Agenda and the Diversity Council of Australia, among others, to sponsor:

- industry summits to discuss gender equality issues
- gender equality publications, research projects, reports and white papers
- workshops to further gender equality in their sector

- creation of gender equality working kits and tools appropriate to their industry
- creation, financial support and hosting of industry awards in recognition of the achievements of leading women in the sector.

Additionally EOCGE organisations are usually financial or in-kind supporters of industry-based women's advocacy bodies such as the National Association of Women in Construction, Women in Banking and Finance, National Association of Women in Operations, Women in Technology and Australian Women Lawyers. These advocacy bodies are among many others that host women's industry awards, conferences and networking events.

EOCGE organisations in the STEM education sector have collaborated to institute cross-organisational women's mentoring initiatives to tackle the relative paucity of executive women in these sectors available to mentor women who are early in their career. An EOCGE organisation in the STEM sector has gone one step further by developing a cross-sector mentoring program with an industry that has relatively more women in executive roles and with whom their earlier career women can access as mentors.

Some large EOCGE organisations have opened their development and networking opportunities to women from smaller firms in their industry, or to women in related sectors. While seemingly counterintuitive, these firms are usually alliance partners of the EOCGE organisation or, in the case of individual women, are nominated by existing female employees and who may be potential future employees. Additionally, some firms offer this training to women from their customers and suppliers.

Often EOCGE organisations act alone to boundary span on gender equality issues within their industry. For example, one EOCGE organisation established a cross-business working group to develop a two-year action plan to improve how organisations in the industry address the issue of family violence and financial abuse for their people and customers. The action plan focused on five streams of work: understanding data; culture and leadership; policy, legal and product; insights and engagement; and training. The insights and engagement stream aimed to facilitate knowledge sharing and exploring potential partnerships. This included inviting external stakeholders and subject-matter experts to share their insights with the working group to inform the approach and activities outlined in the action plan.

Finally, EOCGE organisations often do more than assist those in their industry, they also take an active role in highlighting poor practice within their sector and emphasising the need for change. For example, one EOCGE organisation with significant investment power selected organisations where they would use their voting power to block the re-appointment of male board members in companies with all male boards. Another EOCGE organisation publically called on industry members not to ‘fudge’ their numbers when it came to reporting the number of women in different levels of their organisations.

6.5 Community Engagement

Many EOCGE organisations were heavily involved in supporting gender equality through community-based initiatives, assisting those advocating for change and promoting the equalisation of women’s involvement in sport.

Many EOCGE organisations were involved in assisting efforts to combat violence against women as well as supporting the victims of domestic abuse. This was done through direct financial assistance, fundraising events and the sponsorship of summits and conferences aimed at tackling the issue and developing a set of standards and benchmarks for prevention of violence against women. Many leading EOCGE organisations had devised policies to provide direct assistance to customers who were experiencing domestic violence to escape and start a new life. They had dedicated resources to training specialised teams to respond to these circumstances. For example one EOCGE organisation in the finance sector had initiated Family Violence Assistance Grants for their customers experiencing domestic and family violence. The grant is made available to customers who want to leave violent domestic and family situations, but don’t have the financial means to do so. The grant has three parts:

1. Emotional support and connection to specialist services.
2. An independent transaction account to help the customer take a crucial step towards financial independence.
3. Access to a financial grant toward rent, bond or other reasonable expenses to help keep someone safe.

Other EOCGE initiatives included among many others:

- training and financial support for young entrepreneurial women in STEM sectors

- financial sponsorship, hosting of conferences, workshops and the provision of technical and thought leadership for the leadership development of young women
- direct financial contributions and hosting of fundraising events for charities working with marginalised and disadvantaged women.

Many EOCGE members applied their specialist expertise towards directly or indirectly supporting gender equality advocacy. EOCGE organisations in the professional and finance sectors, in particular, provided:

- pro-bono support to assist in the writing of submissions to royal commissions, law reform commissions and other government inquiries related to gender inequality
- assistance with the generation of gender equality policy priorities to be submitted to government
- secondment of staff to the offices of government and not-for-profit gender equality agencies and organisations
- office space and facilities to gender equality organisations.

One organisation in the financial sector issued a social bond that offered investors the opportunity to make a socially responsible investment – by helping to finance companies that have earned the citation of Employer of Choice for Gender Equality from WGEA. The proceeds of the bond will be earmarked for financing or refinancing businesses, projects and assets relating to these companies.

Finally, many EOCGE organisations have actively undertaken the support of women’s basketball, netball and AFL at State and National levels as well as countless local initiatives for girls in sport, through sponsorship and advertising deals, hosting of events and pro-bono administrative support.

6.6 Pipeline Input (STEMM and Trades)

Australia has a particularly gender-segregated economy relative to other countries. For example industries such as mining and construction had 16.3% and 12% female representation respectively (WGEA, 2019). Likewise, professions such as technologists and engineers are also highly male dominated, with female representation at 15.1% (WGEA, 2019) and 12% (Chen et al., 2017) respectively. Additionally, women in trades and craft work stands at 5% (WGEA, 2019).



Nearly all EOCGE organisations with exposure to these sectors were actively involved in building the pipeline to increase the number of women entering their field.

Initiatives broadly consisted of working to undo stereotypes about their field in primary and secondary schools, providing scholarships and internships for women undertaking university degrees in their field as well as working with recruitment agencies and industry bodies to attract women from other fields or from outside Australia.

Most EOCGE organisations with a STEM or trade exposure actively engaged with primary and secondary students to increase the understanding of girls about the existence and attractiveness of careers in their field. These activities comprised:

- visits to primary and secondary schools by inspiring women role models to present engaging and attractive reasons to choose their field. Usually in conjunction with student career expo days
- Sponsorship of girl-only careers expos for year 9-12 students including interactive workshops, presentations by female role models and interactive activities focused on the kinds of tasks undertaken in their industry
- sponsorship and pro-bono support of industry-specific not-for-profit initiatives that routinely visited schools to showcase their industry as an attractive career option
- sponsorship of school holiday programs that provided 'camps' for children and adolescents aimed at showcasing aspects of their industry in a fun and interactive way
- either alone or in partnership with tertiary institutions, working with groups of schools to bring young women into their organisation (or university) for on-site residential programs. Programs typically

showcased career options through hands-on industry-associated activities, presentations by female role models and question and answer sessions.

Many EOCGE organisations engaged in these activities reported their utility in dramatically increasing young women's engagement with the idea of working in their industry.

EOCGE organisations were also involved with local universities in examining ways in which to improve the numbers of women undertaking STEM degrees, promoting their industry or individual organisation to students through presentations, Q&A sessions and the sponsoring of career-related events. Many EOCGE organisations also reported providing scholarships to female students undertaking STEM subjects related to their organisation. Scholarships were usually accompanied by short-term internships and exposure to projects being undertaken by the sponsoring organisation. Some organisations, while not offering sponsorships, did offer internships of varying durations to high-potential female students.

Finally, some EOCGE organisations had developed programs aimed at bringing high-potential women from other industries into their industry through conversion internships aimed at providing women with upskilling in industry-specific areas. Other EOCGE organisations had engaged with industry colleagues and recruitment agencies in workshops specifically focused on increasing the number of women and girls that choose these paths, and to encourage employers to develop ways to recruit and retain women in this sector.

Section 7 – Gender Equality Metrics



Key Findings

Leading practice organisations:

- measure and monitor gender equality metrics and figures and direct resources toward developing integrated, relevant and up-to-date gender equality dashboards
- measure gender equality at all stages of the employee life cycle from recruitment and selection to turnover and exit.



Action Points

- Establish a gender equality reporting dashboard that measures, in real time, metrics and indicators of gender equality progression. Scan for, collate and regularly report on metrics and measures of gender equality throughout your organisation to the most senior governance body within the organisation (e.g. executive leadership team, CEO, board of directors).
- Measure, monitor and improve gender equality metrics throughout the employee life cycle from recruitment and selection to turnover and exiting the organisation.

As noted in many places throughout the report, without accurate trend data across all gender equality issues, it is simply not possible to determine if the policies and practices enacted by organisations are having a positive or negative impact upon strategic gender equality outcomes. Likewise, without fine-grained demographic measures, it is not possible to determine distinct areas of the organisation that require more attention than others (Holton, 2005). While aggregated figures might appear to provide comfort around overall gender balance in employee headcount, for example, a more detailed analysis might show that women dominate in lower hierarchical levels or in some divisions relative to others. In other words, while gross measures may give the appearance of gender balance, detailed measures might allow an organisation to determine if it is leveraging gender balance for the best outcomes across all levels of the hierarchy and in all divisions.

A key feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations is their attention towards gender equality statistics and their aggregation into gender equality reporting dashboards. The importance of gender equality data cannot be overstated.

As one leading practice EOCGE organisation's CEO commented,

"I am a firm believer that what gets measured gets managed. Real-time access to data on gender diversity becomes hard to ignore and demands action. In our organisation, assessing gender equity in all areas of our business is an ongoing priority. Monitoring gender-based metrics helps to ensure accountability and change."

The following sections compile and summarise the key metrics used by leading practice EOCGE organisations and which have been discussed in many areas throughout the report.

7.1 Gender Equality Dashboards

All EOCGE organisations undertook regular monitoring and reporting of gender equality metrics. These were reported to their respective boards, gender diversity committees and senior leaders and were used to track the progress of their gender equality strategies and uncover areas of potential ongoing bias. Data was used to make timely decisions regarding the need for interventions or further support and to fine tune systems, policies and practices.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations in recent years had begun to compile online gender equality dashboards comprising suites of gender equality metrics that report upon each of their separate gender equality interventions and outcomes longitudinally, thereby enabling identification of trends and rates of progress. Most large organisations compiled these metrics and reported them to their boards, gender equality committees and senior managers on average once every 1–3 months. Other organisations compiled and reported every 3–6 months.

Several leading practice EOCGE organisations reported having recently invested in integrating disparate data collection and analysis tools into a single online dashboard operating in real time, updating all metrics as data came to hand. These organisations reported making real-time metrics accessible to their respective boards, gender equality committees, divisional and unit managers and according to their assigned responsibility for delivering aspects of the organisation's strategic gender equality plan.

Leading practice EOCGE organisations had dashboards that enabled detailed analysis of data at the organisational, divisional, department, unit and team levels, by gender, parental status, age, geographical location, work flexibility status, other caring responsibilities and role type.

Gender equality dashboards typically captured metrics around the following key areas:

- employee engagement
- percentage representation (employee life cycle)
- pay parity
- training
- development
- progression
- flexibility
- parental leave
- turnover and exit.

The typical metrics that comprised each of these areas and which were included in gender equality dashboards are detailed below.

7.1.1 Employee Engagement

All EOCGE organisations regularly surveyed employees through ‘staff engagement’ or ‘pulse’ surveys. These surveys were aimed at measuring rates of satisfaction with the organisation as a whole as well as with particular organisational units, policies and practices. Once repeated, using standardised measures, these enabled tracking of trends over time. Engagement surveys are important for multiple reasons:

- Employee attitudes are a major factor in determining employee behaviour, including exit intentions (Stone, 2017).
- Employee attitudes have been shown to be closely linked to customer satisfaction (Story, 1996).
- Employee surveys can be used to generate a large number of improvement suggestions.
- Employee surveys can evidence the effects of changes in policies and practices.
- Employee surveys can uncover unknown grievances or patterns of bias.
- Employee surveys can measure employee sentiments around whether core organisational values are actioned as much as they are espoused (Nankervis, 1990).

EOCGE organisations surveyed their employees around a wide range of issues, including employee and organisational support for gender diversity in the workplace, support for flexible work, alignment of gender equality values and management actions, support for work/life balance, engagement and empowerment of employees around gender equality initiatives, satisfaction with gender equality policies, pay, progression, opportunity, training, development and leadership among others.

While statistics are critical for measuring current



attitudes and rates of change over time, engagement surveys also allow for collection and analysis of qualitative data around areas for improvement and descriptions of why employees rated their response the way they did. Analytics included in gender equality dashboards reflect both the quantitative and qualitative responses of employees to enable more informed change decisions.

7.1.2 Percentage Representation (Employee Life cycle)

All EOCGE organisations had targets for gender participation in their respective organisations and included metrics around all aspects of the employee life cycle. EOCGE organisations typically measured the percentage of women:

- at all levels of the organisational hierarchy
- in all role types
- in all business units, divisions, geographical locations
- by work status (full-time, part-time, flexible)
- job applicants for all roles
- candidates shortlisted for all roles
- graduate and external hires for all roles (offers and acceptances)
- on boards and subsidiary boards, and
- on decision-making committees, working groups and recruitment panels.

7.1.3 Pay Parity

As noted in many places throughout the report, EOCGE organisations conducted whole-of-organisation pay parity analyses at least annually and were committed to reducing the pay gap organisation wide, by level and like-for-like. All EOCGE organisations were committed to gender pay parity for employees in the same role and had targets in place for the reduction of organisation-wide pay gaps.

Pay metrics were typically considered by the following demographics:

- gender
- employment status (full-time, part-time, flexible)
- age (or age bracket)
- job level (including banding)
- job role/family/skill
- organisational unit and sub-units
- geographical location

- tenure (in total and in role).

These demographics were considered to identify gaps, which could then be investigated and reconciled.

Metrics were applied to full remuneration and not just base pay, including bonuses, fixed and variable rewards, overtime, allowances, retention payments, superannuation, salary packages, benefits and equity incentives, market, higher duty and other loadings.

Other metrics which were routinely captured by EOCGE organisations and considered were:

- out-of-pay cycle increases
- starting salaries
- pay of employees on parental or other extended leave
- annualised salary of part-time/flexible employees versus full time
- performance/productivity rating distributions related to pay
- correlations between fixed and variable remuneration increases and performance ratings.

As noted above, many organisations were moving to live systems and metrics dashboards. As one EOCGE organisation reported,

“Live pay gap analysis is provided within remuneration spreadsheets so that leaders are able to see the impact of their decisions on a potential pay gap in real time. This allows us to address issues as they arise and address them before the remuneration period closes.”

7.1.4 Training

Metrics on training broadly served two purposes. Firstly to ensure equal opportunity to access and completion of training around technical skills (generally analysed by gender, employment status, job role and unit/location). Secondly to track the completion of compulsory training modules attached to key gender equality policies such as code of conduct, sexual harassment, unconscious bias and anti-discrimination.

Metrics included attendance and (where applicable) completion of assessment for:

- on-line training courses (internal and external)
- face to face courses, seminars, conferences and workshops (internal and external)
- induction and orientation sessions
- graduate programs.



7.1.5 Progression Activities

As distinct from access to the training of technical skills, progression activities relate to organisational interventions aimed directly at career progression, participation in other activities which are known to contribute to career progression or measuring activities that can detract from time available for development.

Metrics in this area were focused on the succession pipeline by gender and usually centred on women identified as being high potential or future leaders in middle management roles or higher.

Metrics used by EOCGE organisations encompassed the proportion of women engaged in the following activities by age, level, unit and job role:

- mentoring, sponsorship, work shadowing programs
- external career coaching
- general leadership and career development courses, workshops and programs
- specific leadership pipeline programs
- developmental secondments
- acting in higher roles of performing higher duties
- internal and external speaking roles including presentations at conferences
- special studies programs and sabbaticals
- formal internal and external networking events
- certificate-level, bachelor's degree, master's degree or PhD qualification
- internal and external award nominations and receipt

- decision-making committees and subsidiary boards
- tender preparation and pitch teams.

As noted earlier in the report, for workplaces in the professions where billable hours and client portfolios were determinants for progression, or in higher education where grants, papers and other research outcomes served a similar purpose, metrics surrounding the equitable distribution of 'non-productive' workload by gender were also collected. Likewise, in professional services firms, referral of work between partners was also the subject of metrics.

7.1.6 Progression Metrics

While equal representation of women in developmental activities was a proxy measure of opportunity for progression, progression metrics focused on the statistics surrounding entry and progression through the career progression pipeline.

Metrics used by EOCGE organisations encompassed the measurement of (usually by gender, age, level, unit and job role, where applicable):

- nominations to emerging leader and succession-development pipelines
- performance/productivity rating distributions related to progression (with attention to those returning from parental leave)
- direct successors at each level of succession planning across the organisation
- average time before readiness for promotion (for organisations that measured 'ready now', 'ready in one year', 'ready in two years')



- those actually promoted at each level of the organisation
- average time spent in each role and rate of progression through roles
- applicants for leadership roles.

7.1.7 Flexibility

Flexible working plays a key role in the gender equality strategies of most EOCGE organisations. Many organisations noted that specific flexibility questions were a focus of employee engagement surveys, especially around managerial support for flexibility, systems and processes that supported flexibility and whether flexible work was supported by colleagues, as was discussed earlier in the report.

Other specific metrics collected by EOCGE organisations (usually by gender, age, role, level, unit and carer status) comprised:

- total number of flexibility requests
- number of rejections of flexibility requests
- reasons why a request was declined
- utilisation rates for flexible work arrangements by type (both formal and informal).

Flexibility measures were usually concerned with enhancing employee work/life balance. In this regard some EOCGE organisations also monitored leave balances to ensure that employees across the organisation were taking their entitlements when due.

7.1.8 Parental Leave

EOCGE organisations tracked the uptake of paid and unpaid parental leave by gender, age, level, role, unit, and location. Length of unpaid parental leave was also collected. Return and retention rates were maintained, usually by time retained after return in 6-12 month increments.

Some other metrics discussed above, such as those relating to pay and progression are also cut by carer status and those having accessed parental leave.

7.1.9 Turnover and Exit

Most EOCGE organisations collected data with regard to employee turnover by gender, age, job role, level, organisational unit and sub-unit, manager and carer status. Metrics included analytics on exit interviews to identify the reasons why employees left the organisation. Metrics included:

- overall exits by gender
- dismissals
- voluntary exits
- redundancies
- regretted losses (usually high-potential employees or leaders)
- Reason(s) for leaving the organisation.

Section 8 – Conclusion

As WGEA reports (WGEA, 2019f), there is a strong business case for workplace gender equality. WGEA cites the literature supporting increased organisational performance, the enhanced ability of companies to attract talent, the enhanced ability of companies to retain employees and enhanced organisational reputation as just some of the benefits that accrue to organisations that embrace gender equality in the workplace. However, the business case is underpinned, and must be driven, by a genuine belief in the moral imperative for gender equality and the benefits that gender diversity can deliver. The statistics contained in Section 1 of the report, as well as the testimonials by CEOs contained in the 119 EOCGE citation applications, and cited throughout this report, clearly support this position.

EOCGE organisations have more women in their respective workforces, including more women at every level of the organisational hierarchy than non-EOCGE organisations generally. Likewise EOCGE organisations have shown to be more agile in reducing the gender pay gap in their organisations compared with non-EOCGE organisations.

As identified in their EOCGE citation applications and in the case studies contained in the report, EOCGE organisations reported the benefits of greater gender diversity and equity through better business outcomes. There was consistent reporting across nearly all EOCGE organisations of greater employee engagement, leading to higher productivity, greater levels of innovation and client engagement, as well as an increased ability to attract and retain the most talented individuals in their respective fields. Most EOCGE organisations also reported the benefits of engaging with the issue of gender equality outside their organisations as building better relationships within their respective industries as well as with the greater community. Many organisations reported that the strengthening of these relationships, with their focus upon advocating for gender equality, had positively impacted upon bidding or tendering for new work and attracting new clients and customers.

Echoing the findings of McKinsey's *Delivering through diversity* report (2018), we find that designing and implementing a truly effective gender

equality strategy was reported as being 'no small undertaking'. Nonetheless, our report sets out exactly how 119 EOCGE organisations have navigated this complex undertaking through the construction and implementation of leading practice strategies, policies and practices. The impact of the whole-of-organisation strategic approach to gender equality mainstreaming undertaken by EOCGE organisations was consistently reported as being positively seen and felt by all of their employees. Far from being 'window dressing', EOCGE gender equality strategies have altered the culture of their respective organisations and, in many cases, challenged and changed the structures that have historically disadvantaged women and men. It is also true to say that all EOCGE organisations reported that the transition towards gender equality requires a substantial investment of time, resources and attention to be successful.

As outlined above and in Section 1 of the report, EOCGE organisations recognised the business case for workplace gender equality. This is reflected in Section 2, where the report outlined that EOCGE organisations each have detailed strategic gender equality plans that integrate into overarching organisational strategic plans. In other words, gender equality, and diversity more broadly, are key components of delivering organisational outcomes. EOCGE organisations enhanced strategic planning around gender equality through extensive consultation across their respective organisations. Employee inclusion and engagement with developing and implementing gender equality strategies was a hallmark of EOCGE employers. Section 2 also outlined the key governance structures involved in the generation, oversight and review of gender equality strategy. Every EOCGE organisation had a senior executive gender equality or diversity and inclusion committee that oversaw gender equality strategy. However, it was a hallmark of leading practice EOCGE organisations that subcommittees composed of managers and staff across the organisation were also heavily involved in the implementation and review of policies and practices, and the reformulation of strategy.

As reported in Section 3 and elsewhere in the report, the critical role that leadership plays in the delivery of strategic gender equality outcomes cannot be over-

emphasised. Starting at the top, EOCGE CEOs are inclusive leaders who have a deep understanding of the causes of gender inequality and who passionately advocate for equality, both inside and outside of the organisation. They lead organisations that recruit and train inclusive leaders, equipping them with the tools necessary to drive gender equality throughout the organisation. More importantly, EOCGE CEOs foster an inclusive culture in which their leaders and staff alike are supported in ways that maximise the outcomes of gender equality policies and practices. It is a feature of leading practice EOCGE organisations that they evidenced genuine care and concern for the wellbeing of their workforce, which in turn was rewarded by employees with higher levels of engagement.

Section 4 reported upon the detailed suite of policies and strategies critical in supporting strategic gender equality outcomes. EOCGE organisational policies can be characterised as tackling bias and discrimination that can occur at all stages of the employee life cycle, from recruitment to retirement. Specific attention was focused towards undoing the gender pay gap. Likewise EOCGE organisations recognised the structural barriers confronting carers by their focus upon addressing the pillars of support that, not only allowed carers to remain in the full-time workforce, but also ensure an equitable chance at progression. In this regard EOCGE organisations had high regard for the implementation of flexibility policies, providing an extensive array of flexible work options that emphasised employee control over how, when and where they work. Likewise, EOCGE organisations understood the critical role that the provision of reliable and affordable childcare played in the retention and progression of carers in their workforce by providing either direct or indirect child care support, recognition of spouses and family in child caring, as well as providing other support and wellbeing programs.

Section 5 of the report outlined the heavy investment EOCGE organisations make in the development and training of their workforce in relation to policies supporting gender equality in the workforce. Likewise, EOCGE organisations recognised structural biases that confront women in the workplace and worked to replace traditional career structures and

ideas that impede the progress of women. This was supplemented by the delivery of targeted training and development programs for women.

Accountability at all levels of the hierarchy for gender equality outcomes was a feature of EOCGE organisations. Section 6 of the report outlined the use of targets (and the contextual use of quotas) as well as key performance indicators and other forms of accountability in driving strategic gender equality outcomes. Holding people accountable through clear targets and through the use and regular reporting of progress against gender metrics was a feature of all EOCGE organisations. Section 6 also examined the role that EOCGE organisations and their CEOs play in gender equality advocacy outside of the organisation. Leading practice EOCGE organisations regularly engaged with and led discussions with customers, suppliers, industry colleagues and competitors on issues of gender equality. Likewise EOCGE organisations in male-dominated industries were leaders in supporting the growth of their female talent pipeline into their respective industries.

Metrics surrounding progress towards meeting targets set in workplace gender equality strategies are critical to the success of gender equality strategies. Section 7 summarised the suite of metrics discussed throughout the report. It was characteristic of EOCGE organisations to have detailed and comprehensive metrics related to all aspects of their gender equality policies and practices. These were compiled into gender equality dashboards that are reviewed regularly and used to drive gender equality strategies, as well as to identify areas where greater attention is required.

Finally, it is a feature of EOCGE organisations that they were extremely reflexive. EOCGE organisations are learning continuously and constantly refining policies and practices, consulting and trialling new initiatives, reflecting on success and failure and regularly renewing practices, policies and strategies. It would be fair to say that even those organisations at the leading edge of strategic gender equality practice, report that there is much more to do and are committed to the long journey toward workplace gender equality.

Appendix A – Methodology and Limitations

Methodology

Rationale

This study emerged from insights detailed in previous WGEA reports into the relatively slow progress towards gender equality in the Australian workplace as well as industry reports citing the complexity of tackling gender equality and the business case for doing so (Catalyst, 2004; Deloitte, 2011; McKinsey, 2018).

Australia is unique in having an agency that requires all non-government organisations with over 100 employees to report on their progress towards gender equality. Likewise, it is the only government agency in the world to offer a citation for those organisations who address core areas of policy and practice that have been identified as progressing workplace gender equality.

Sample and Context

Two samples were taken from the WGEA EOCGE application data.

The first sample comprised 58 organisations that had continuously maintained their EOCGE citation status from 2013 to 2018. The purpose of using this sample was to identify trends in workplace gender equality policies and practices in responses to the EOCGE application questionnaire over a five-year period. Table 5 outlines the industry sector and number of organisations in each sector.

Industry Sector	n
Administration & support services	1
Construction	1
Education & training	14
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	1
Financial & insurance services	14
Healthcare & social services	3
Information, media & telecommunications	2
Manufacturing	1
Mining	2
Other services	1
Professional, scientific & technical services	15
Rental, hiring & real estate services	1
Transport, postal and warehousing	1
Wholesale trade	1
Total	58

Table 5. Summary of longitudinal EOCGE citation holders industry

The second sample comprised EOCGE application data from 119 parent organisations for 2018. It should be noted that 141 separate applications were completed in for the 119 citation holders, with the difference representing applications from different subsidiaries of the same parent organisation. The purpose of using this sample was to identify the latest policies and practices for workplace gender equality across the broadest cross-section of organisations. For the purposes of the cross-sectional analysis, the 58 organisations from the longitudinal analysis for 2018 are included in this sample. Table 6 outlines the industry sector and number of organisations in each sector.

Industry Sector	n
Arts & recreation services	1
Administration & support services	2
Construction	1
Education & training	19
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	1
Financial & insurance services	27
Healthcare & social services	5
Information, media & telecommunications	3
Manufacturing	11
Mining	1
Other services	2
Professional, scientific & technical services	35
Rental, hiring & real estate services	4
Transport, postal and warehousing	1
Wholesale trade	6
Total	119

Table 6. Summary of EOCGE citation holders by industry

Procedure

Data collected by WGEA in response to EOCGE questionnaires are maintained on electronic spreadsheets maintained at the WGEA offices in Sydney. Individual responses to each question occupy a separate cell in the spreadsheet. Prior to extraction and analysis of the data, the entire dataset was de-identified, with codes replacing organisation names throughout all of the datasets. The text responses from each cell were then extracted from the Excel spreadsheets and compiled into separate text files for each organisation code, by industry sector and by year. Once this was completed, responses to question clusters around particular phenomena, such as flexibility or gender pay gap, were then extracted and compiled by question topic for each organisation, by industry sector and by year. The number of data cells, 12-pitch single-spaced page equivalents of text and word counts for the final text documents produced for analysis are provided in Table 7 below.

Year	N Organisations	N Data Cells	Page Equivalent	Word Count
2013-2014	58	10,675	305	198,151
2014-2015	58	11,775	345	224,109
2015-2016	58	11,160	362	235,328
2016-2017	58	12,299	375	243,510
2017-2018	119	29,820	864	561,430
Total	351	75,729	2,251	1,462,528

Table 7. EOCGE application statistics for 2013-2018

As can be seen from Table 7 in relation to the increased word count for the same number of organisations year on year, additional questions were added to the Application Questionnaire in each of the years analysed and generally, the responses to questions year on year were longer.

Data Analysis

Our interpretation of the data was achieved by using methods common to both grounded theory (Locke, 2001) and naturalistic enquiry (Athens, 2010). Patterns in the data were identified through multiple iterations between questionnaire response data and emergent theoretical constructs even after the stage of theoretical saturation was reached (Athens, 2010, Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001; Pratt, Rockman & Kaufmann, 2006).

Our analysis of the texts obtained from the EOCGE applications was strongly informed by the method employed by Pratt et al. (2006) and which is described in detail in Athens (2010:95-97). The analysis was conducted in multiple stages:

- **Stage 1** involved a manifest analysis (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006) of the texts in order to generate first order codes. Each of the texts was read a number of times by all (not both) authors prior to coding to identify commonly used phrases and patterns of description. These data were used to create codes and to name key themes. Each text was then manually coded. Statements and/or ideas were grouped around common conceptual meanings using first-order codes and names.
- **Stage 2** involved the integration of first-order codes to create theoretical categories through a latent analysis of the data (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). Coded statements and/or ideas were consolidated into a concept group or theoretical category through a reflexive interpretation of the data (Alvesson, 2012) based upon the authors prolonged engagement with the subject and a deep understanding of gender equality in the workplace (Athens, 2010:95).
- **Stage 3** involved the consideration of the texts by code to group, ungroup, refine or discard categories based upon identifiable distinctions between them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This stage identified relationships between theoretical categories and any ordering that might make the relationships between the reported data more meaningful for the reader. In this stage we also tested whether any exceptions or unexplained connections in the derived categories remained in the dataset (Athens, 2010).

Further, the researchers socialised the report to test its thematic structure as well as the logical grouping and ungrouping of policies and practices with WGEA and other industry-based gender equality organisations (Sandberg, 2003).

Limitations

As with any industry-facing dataset, there is a range of potential limitations that may impinge upon the generalisability of this report. These can be understood with regard to the data source itself and the methodological approach adopted to the data.

Self-selection bias. Data was sourced from a cohort of self-selecting organisations that opted to apply for EOCGE citation status. Inherently, this means that organisations that apply, that looking to improve their existing 'state of play' when it comes to gender equality. Whilst this offers the organisations room to improve and further develop their capabilities, it may mean that there are some organisations applying for the citation whose objective metrics (e.g. total remuneration GPG, base salary GPG) may be skewed.

Questionnaire construction. Alongside this self-selection bias, is a constricting of possible responses through the construction of the citation questionnaire itself. The report is based upon responses to questions set by WGEA and its identified seven core areas (see Introduction, page 11). While the authors agree that these areas are core to the achievement of workplace gender equality, this has focused the responses of the EOCGE citation holders towards these areas. This means that some organisations did not describe all of the additional actions and activities underway in areas not specifically mentioned within the questionnaire prompts. Mitigating this are several open-ended questions where organisations are asked to discuss any other initiatives in relation to furthering gender equality in the workplace and the report has picked up many additional practices from the responses to these questions.

Self-report bias. Questionnaires were completed by representatives of each organisation who supplied quotes, data and anecdotes to substantiate their responses. One challenge with this approach to data collection is the inherent bias that comes from self-report (e.g. 'cherry picking' quotes or data that may favourably represent the organisation. One strategy adopted to counter this was to examine the descriptive statistics regarding workforce representation, managerial representation, alongside gender pay gap statistics including the base salary gap and total remuneration gap for the EOCGE organisations that are the subject of this report. The comparison between qualitative and quantitative insights provides adequate convergence on key insights obtained. Moreover, insights gleaned from both qualitative and quantitative datasets were verified with subject matter experts from both the Workplace Gender Equality Agency as well as a subset of EOCGE organisations.

Sampling biases. EOCGE citation holders come from widely varying sectors of the Australian economy. In writing the report we have made every effort to be neutral in our terminology and inclusive of the practices reported by various organisations. However, as set out above, 92 of the 119 applications (77%) for 2017-18 EOCGE holders come from just 4 four of the 15 industry sectors (26%). There is the potential that, while all leading practices were reported, there may have been a bias or emphasis upon those over-represented in the dataset. To balance this, the authors have paid careful attention to reporting practices in industries that have low gender representation or are not well represented in the dataset, so that organisations in these sectors will find policies and practices of greater relevance to them. However, it is worth noting that the vast majority of the policies and practices highlighted through the report have application across every sector of the Australian economy.

In spite of the limitation set out above, responses provided by organisations were, nevertheless, robust, comprising metrics, quotes, insights and substantiating documentation. Moreover, a multi-pronged approach to dataset selection was adopted with the inclusion of both cross-sectional (i.e. 2017-18) and longitudinal (i.e., 2013-18) datasets. This approach resulted in our capacity to explore both changes over time as well as the emergence of more recent innovations and approaches to the pursuit of gender equality.

Appendix B – EOCGE Application Criteria Checklist (2019–2020)

1. Leadership, Strategy and Accountability

Your organisation must have a strategy aimed at achieving gender equality that includes:

- gender balance in leadership
- gender balance across the organisation
- gender pay equity at a like-for-like and organisation-wide basis
- flexible work and support available for employees at all levels, including those with caring responsibilities.

Your organisation must have a policy/policies in place supporting gender equality that covers:

- promotions
- performance review processes
- recruitment – internal and external recruitment consultants must be provided with gender equality guidelines for the recruitment process
- restructures and significant operational changes including planned redundancies
- independent contractors and casuals
- training for people managers on how to deal with potential fears and concerns about gender equality objectives/policies (e.g. resistance to gender equality initiatives).

Your gender equality strategy must include clear objectives and measures, and an evaluation process that occurs at least every two years.

- First application: from 2019–20 you must provide clear details of your strategic objectives, measure and evaluation processes.
- Outcomes: for subsequent applications, after submission of your first application (from 2019–20), your organisation will be required to show progress against measureable objectives over the previous two-year period.

If objectives are not met, you will have an opportunity to explain why.

Your gender equality strategy must be incorporated into your broader business strategy and planning process, and must be endorsed by your governing body and partnership (if applicable).

- Evidence: governing body endorsement of the gender equality strategy must be provided (e.g. extract of meeting minutes of resolution).

Your organisation must evaluate its progress against your gender equality strategy every year at a minimum by tracking metrics in the following areas, and reporting progress to the following groups:

All your workforce

- gender composition of your workforce by manager and non-manager categories
- promotions by gender and manager and non-manager categories
- recruitment and exit (voluntary and involuntary) numbers by gender
- graduate programs and paid and unpaid internships (where applicable)
- utilisation of formal flexible working arrangements (including part-time) for women and men by manager and non-manager categories
- utilisation of, and return from, parental leave (paid and unpaid), of women and men

Key management personnel AND governing body (board)

- all of the above points
- the results of your gender remuneration gap analysis, including pay equity metrics and actions taken
- progress on narrowing your organisation-wide gender pay gap
- all results from your EOCGE employee survey questions
- for gender-based, discrimination and sexual harassment complaints
 - number and nature of complaints
 - process for responding to the complaint
 - timeframes
 - outcomes for complainant and respondent
 - any organisation change following the complaint
 - complainant and respondent turnover.
- Evidence: that the governing body has been informed will need to be provided (e.g. extract of meeting minutes of resolution).

Where gender discrepancies exist for any areas listed in question 1.5, your organisation must analyse systems and processes to identify gender bias in decision-making, and take actions to address issues identified.

Your governing body must be provided with a copy of your completed EOCGE application.

The CEO/head of business of your organisation must be a visible champion of gender equality by communicating with all employees on the following at least every 12 months:

- the organisation's business case for improving gender equality.
- a commitment to zero tolerance of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying
- the organisation's overall gender equality strategy, priorities and progress
- the organisation's commitment to gender pay equity.

Examples of how this has been communicated could include all-workforce emails, an internal broadcast, roadshow or other. You will need to provide details on the method and date of communication.

Your organisation must have a group, committee or council, with representation from senior management level or above, that is responsible for the implementation and oversight of your organisation's gender equality strategy.

- This group can also be in place for other purposes additional to gender equality
- Your CEO/head of business must have direct involvement with your organisation's gender equality initiatives.
- You will need to provide details of your CEO/head of business's involvement in gender equality programs. This could include chairing your organisation's group, committee or council to oversee your gender equality strategy.

Your organisation must ensure that women and men can access opportunities that are considered career-enhancing equitably. For example, this would include high-value or high-profile projects, client allocation, training, grants or sales opportunities (where relevant).

- Provide up to 500 words outlining your approach.

You must hold managers accountable for contributing to the implementation of your gender equality strategy.

- Provide up to 500 words outlining how managers are held accountable (e.g. KPIs).

2. Developing a Gender-Balanced Workforce

Your organisation must have a policy or strategy that includes learning and development, including leadership and/or career development programs, for women and men.

Your organisation must have learning and development plans for all your permanent workforce, and long-term casuals.

- This may be part of an individual's performance and development plan.

Each year, your organisation must track how many women and men, full-time and part-time, have participated in formal leadership development programs.

Your organisation will need to provide details of these programs and the number of participants by gender.

Your organisation must set targets with timeframes to improve the representation of women across all levels of management, where their representation is less than 40%. Progress against manager targets must be tracked.

- First application: from 2019–20 details of the targets, as well as the target date will need to be provided.
- Outcomes: renewal applications (two years later) must show progress against targets (over the prior two-year period).

If targets are not met, you will have an opportunity to explain why.

Where the representation of women in management is less than 40% gender targets for internal and external recruitment shortlists must be in place.

- Details of the targets, as well as the target date will need to be provided.

Your organisation must set targets for non-manager occupational categories where representation of women is less than 40%.

- Details of the targets as well as the target date will need to be provided.
- Outcomes: from 2021–22 when this requirement commences, renewal applications (two years later) must show progress against targets (over the prior two-year period).

If targets are not met, you will have an opportunity to explain why.

Your organisation must set targets for non-manager occupational categories where the representation of men is less than 40%.

- details of the targets as well as the target date will need to be provided.
- Outcomes: from 2021–22 when this requirement commences, renewal applications (two years later) must show progress against targets (over the prior two-year period).

If targets are not met, you will have an opportunity to explain why.

Where your organisation has control over its governing body appointments, and control over other governing bodies (for example subsidiaries), a selection policy or strategy and numerical targets with timeframes must be set to improve the representation of women, where it is less than 40%.

- First application: from 2019–20 details of the targets, as well as the target date will need to be provided.
- Outcomes: renewal applications (two years later) must show progress against targets (over the prior two-year period).

If targets are not met, you will have an opportunity to explain why.

Your organisation must identify and address gender segregation challenges relevant in your organisation and/or industry, e.g. underrepresentation of women or men in caring, administrative, technical, trades or senior roles.

- You will need to provide a written response that answers the following (maximum of 750 words):
 - How does gender segregation impact your organisation and/or industry?
 - What measures have you implemented to improve gender balance in your organisation?
 - Where have you made progress and what were/are the biggest challenges?

3. Gender Pay Equity

Your organisation must have a remuneration policy and strategy that contains specific gender pay equity objectives.

Your organisation must undertake a gender pay gap analysis of its workforce on a like-for-like and organisation-wide basis each year.

A pay gap analysis must be conducted by gender and for full-time and part-time employees on the following:

- base salary
- total remuneration, including allowances, bonuses, performance payments, discretionary pay, overtime and superannuation
- performance pay
- starting salaries
- annual salary increases
- salaries on promotion.

Where gender pay gaps are identified, your organisation must set targets and take other actions to reduce the like-for-like and organisation-wide gender pay gaps.

- First application: from 2019–20 details of the targets, as well as the target date will need to be provided.
- Outcomes: renewal application (two years later) must show progress against targets (over the prior two-year period).

Women and men on primary carer's leave must be included in your organisation's annual reviews of salaries and annual bonus payments.

Your organisation must analyse and compare the results of performance reviews by gender.

4. Support for Caring

Your organisation must have a policy AND strategy to support its workforce who have family and caring responsibilities.

These must be relevant and accessible for employees with a broad range of caring responsibilities including:

- support for return to work from parental leave
- support for parents at all stages of children's lives
- provisions for elder care and disability care.

Your organisation must offer all permanent employees who are primary carers at least eight weeks of paid parental leave at full pay, plus superannuation on its employer-funded scheme.

- this must be paid in addition to the government scheme (not just topping up the government-funded scheme)
- available under any circumstances where there is a new baby: adoption, same-sex couple, surrogacy
- no requirement for your workforce to repay any portion if they do not return to work
- available to women and men
- flexibility in how this can be taken must be provided (e.g. part-time for part of the paid duration)
- if your employer-funded paid parental leave is for a period of time that is less than the government scheme's, superannuation must also be paid on the difference, paid at the minimum wage.

Your organisation must offer all permanent employees who are secondary carers at least two weeks of paid parental leave at full pay.

- this must be paid in addition to the government scheme (not just topping up the government-funded scheme)

- available under any circumstances where there is a new baby: adoption, same-sex couple, surrogacy
- no requirement for your workforce to repay any portion if they do not return to work
- available to women and men
- flexibility in how this can be taken must be provided (e.g. part-time for part of the paid duration)
- three weeks of paid parental leave will be required to be offered to secondary carers.
- four weeks of paid parental leave will be required to be offered to secondary carers.

The maximum eligibility period to access parental leave is 12 months.

- There must be no eligibility period to access employer-funded paid parental leave (both primary and secondary carer's leave).

Your organisation must actively encourage men to take parental leave.

Details of how this is done must be provided. Examples could include through the provision of manager and staff resources, case studies or extending the period when the leave is available.

Your organisation must track the following metrics relating to paid parental leave:

- utilisation by women and men (manager and non-manager)
- return to work of women and men following parental leave
- promotions during parental leave
- voluntary and involuntary departures (including dismissals and redundancies) within 12 months of return from parental leave.

Your organisation must have an action plan to maximise the rate of return to work from parental leave (paid or unpaid) that includes:

- keep-in-touch program while on parental leave
- on-boarding support
- tracking the reasons why, where applicable, women and men who return from parental leave do not return to their original role and to which role they return.

Your organisation must have support mechanisms, other than leave, for those with family or caring responsibilities, including elder and disability care.

- You will need to provide details of support provided, which may include subsidised or on-site childcare support for parents with school age children, referral services for those with caring responsibilities, including for aged parents or family members with a disability.

Your organisation must have a policy or strategy to support those who are experiencing family or domestic violence.

You will be required to provide details of the support available, which could include:

- paid or unpaid leave
- employee assistance program
- training of key staff
- domestic violence clause in the enterprise agreement
- referral to appropriate domestic violence support services for expert advice.

5. Mainstreaming Flexible Working

Your organisation must have a flexible working policy AND flexible working strategy.

The following must be included:

- a business case for flexible working endorsed at the leadership level that must be communicated to all your workforce
- manager accountability for flexible working (e.g. embedded into performance reviews, tracking of approvals and rejections with reasons)
- if relevant, your organisation's approach to flexibility is integrated into client interactions.

Flexible working must be promoted throughout the organisation and to prospective employees, to both women and men, regardless of caring responsibilities.

You will be required to provide details of how this is done. Examples include case studies featuring women and men, resources, events, intranet page.

All people managers must complete training on how to manage flexible working.

- Additional requirement: Requirement 5.3 commences in 2019-20 but from 2020-21 this training must include addressing gender stereotypes that prevent men from requesting flexible working arrangements. This can be done in any way or as frequently as deemed necessary.

Managers, including the CEO/head of business, must be visible role models of flexible working.

At least four of the following options must be available to women and men in your organisation:

- flexible hours of work
- compressed working weeks
- time in lieu
- telecommuting
- part-time work
- job sharing
- purchased leave
- unpaid leave
- self-rostering
- other flexible working arrangements relevant to your workplace or industry.

How does your organisation support part-time/reduced hours in manager roles?

- Provide up to 500 words outlining your organisation's approach, including how you address real or perceived barriers to requesting reduced hours in senior roles.

6. Preventing Gender-Based Harassment and Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Bullying

Your organisation must have a policy on the prevention of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, with a formal grievance process in place.

All employees must have completed training on the prevention of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying at induction and at least every two years.

This training must be provided to your entire workforce, that is:

- managers
- non-managers
- contract and casual staff
- partners in partnership structures.

This training may be conducted online, face-to-face, via management and/or staff/team meetings or video presentation.

Training must include:

- a legislative definition of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying
- definition of a workplace, rights and responsibilities of all the workforce
- details of the grievance/complaints procedure
- details of the internal and external contact support resources
- clear explanation of organisational expectations around conduct and consequences for respondents.

Note: an email with an attached policy and/or advising rights and responsibilities relating to gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying is not considered training.

Your organisation must have had no judgement or adverse final order made against it by a court or other tribunal relating to gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying in the last three years.

Where an individual employee has had a judgement or adverse final order made against them, this does not apply.

7. Driving Change Beyond Your Workplace

In the last 12 months your CEO/head of business, or a member of your governing body, must have made at least one external statement regarding their commitment to gender equality overall (each year for subsequent applications).

This can be done by various means, including a media release on the organisation's website, a social media message, a statement in the annual report, and/or at public forums.

You will be required to provide this statement in your application. It may be used to promote your gender equality initiatives and/or the EOCGE citation.

Your organisation must have procurement guidelines that encourage gender equality across your supply chain.

Each year, your CEO/head of business must be actively involved in at least one external event focused on gender equality.

Your organisation must be involved in a program or initiative to address gender equality issues in your industry or community.

This could include:

- schools program
- gender equality industry network

- sponsorship of gender equality program
- research project.

You will be required to provide details of this gender equality initiative.

Your CEO/head of business must aim to achieve gender balance on internal/external speaking panels.

This involves:

- requesting confirmation of who the other panellists/speakers/participants are, and how gender balance will be achieved
- insisting that as a condition of acceptance, you expect women to participate in a meaningful way
- reserving the right to withdraw from the event, even at the last minute, should this not be the case when the speaker list is finalised
- offering names of women from within your organisation or network and, if helpful, point them to the resources for support in finding women.

Members of the Male Champions of Change, Chief Executive Women and Women's Leadership Institute Australia are required to make similar pledges. See the Male Champions of Change website. To meet this criterion, you are not required to become a member of any of these organisations.

Lived Experience Check

1. CEO Interview

For first-time applicants, or for existing citation holders where your CEO is new to your organisation, your CEO must participate in a 15–20-minute telephone interview with an Agency representative, regarding their leadership and commitment to gender equality. CEOs that have previously been interviewed may be randomly selected for a follow-up interview thereafter.

2. Employee Consultation

To promote transparency around the citation process, employees must have an opportunity to contribute to the application and be given access to the final submission.

At a minimum:

- The group or committee that is responsible for implementation and oversight of your gender equality strategy must be consulted in the development of your EOCGE application.
- All workers must be informed that the organisation is applying for the citation.
- Your completed EOCGE application must be made formally available to all workers, before or upon successful granting of the citation. This could be via publication on an intranet or internal communications platform.

3. Employee Survey

Organisations must consult with all employees, including casuals, and partners in partnership structures on gender equality via an anonymous survey at least every two years and report those results in their EOCGE application.

Prior to administering your survey, please read all the sections below prior to ensure all survey requirements are met.

Questions

The survey questions need to be asked using a five-point scale (for example 'strongly agree'; 'agree'; 'not sure'; 'disagree'; 'strongly disagree').

Employers need to ask the following three questions (which are also outlined in the criterion table):

- "My immediate supervisor/manager genuinely supports equality between genders."
- "I have the flexibility I need to manage work and other commitments."
- "In my organisation gender-based harassment and sexual harassment is not tolerated."

OR

You may replace the three EOCGE questions with alternatives provided they are comparable to, and align with, the intent of these three questions. Employers must obtain approval from the Agency on the suitability of alternatives PRIOR TO conducting their survey. You must include your replacement questions in your application.

Conducting your survey

The method of conducting your survey is determined by your organisation; however, the process must facilitate anonymous participation. Organisations may choose to administer a pulse survey, incorporating questions into an existing survey, for example a biennial employee engagement survey, or by incorporating questions into an existing process, for example rolling it out within another forum such as organisation-wide training, or by using other feedback mechanisms, providing the confidentiality of respondents is maintained.

Sample size

You must either:

- give everyone (including casuals and partners in partnership structures) an opportunity to complete the survey;
- or
- administer the survey to a statistically significant and representative sample.

You will need to provide the Agency with the method/rationale you used to determine the employee sample you surveyed was both statistically significant and representative.

Response rates

- As a general guide, your organisation's survey sample is considered representative if you obtain 400 or more responses. Where samples of less than 400 are collected, a response rate of 60% of your workforce is required, as well as establishing that the sample is comparable to your organisation's total employee profile by age and gender.
- The Agency acknowledges that in some instances, and despite best efforts, organisations will not be able to achieve the desired response rate. In these instances, please provide an explanation why this is the case. If you are unable to achieve either of the above thresholds, and there is a legitimate and significant reason why, for example a merger took place at the same time as the survey, please contact the Agency to discuss the details. The Agency will use its discretion to determine your eligibility to apply for the citation.

Analysis and results thresholds

- All responses must be analysed by gender.
- Analysing all responses received, your organisation must either:
 1. achieve an agreement threshold of at least 70% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' on the first two questions (or the equivalent questions as approved by WGEA)
 2. achieve an agreement threshold of at least 80% for the third question regarding zero tolerance of gender-based harassment and sexual harassment (or the equivalent question as approved by WGEA).

Or

3. achieve an agreement threshold above the industry norm for the survey tool used (if a specific survey tool is used, this is not simply survey software).
- The results of your analysis must be included in your EOCGE application, including the gender breakdown of responses for each question.

If you are unable to achieve either of the above thresholds, and there is a legitimate and significant reason why, for example a merger took place at the same time as the survey, please contact the Agency to discuss the details. The Agency will use its discretion to determine your eligibility to apply for the citation.

We encourage you to provide details of an outstanding initiative your organisation has implemented that has successfully addressed a particular gender equality challenge, so we can promote best practice.

This information may be provided in any format including text, video or other media.

Please provide the following information:

- What was the gender equality challenge?
- What was the initiative?
- Who was involved in the initiative?
- What were the outcomes?

Appendix C – EOCGE CITATION Holders for 2017–2018

Employers of Choice for Gender Equality 2017-18

Accenture Australia Pty Ltd	Corrs Chambers Westgarth
AECOM Australia Pty Ltd	Credit Union Australia Ltd
Alcoa of Australia Limited	Curtin University
Allens	Deakin University
Allianz Australia Services Pty Limited	Deloitte (Australia) Pty Ltd
American Express Australia Limited	Dexus
AMP Limited	DLA Piper Australia
ARC @ UNSW Limited	Dow Chemical (Australia) Pty Ltd
Arcadis Australia Pacific Pty Ltd	ECU
Arup Pty Limited	EY
Ashurst Australia	First State Super
ASX Limited	Genworth
Aurecon Australasia Pty Ltd	GHD
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited	Gilbert and Tobin
Australian Catholic University Ltd	GM Holden Pty Ltd
AustralianSuper Pty Ltd	Griffith University
Avanade Australia Pty Ltd	HESTA
B & McK Services Trust	Herbert Smith Freehills
Baker & McKenzie	Holding Redlich
Bankwest	HSBC Bank Australia Limited
Baxter Healthcare Pty Ltd	Jacobs Group (Australia) Pty Ltd
Becton Dickinson Pty. Ltd.	Johnson & Johnson Pty Ltd
Benetas	K&L Gates
BP Australia	King & Wood Mallesons
Brightside	Konica Minolta Business Solutions Australia Pty Ltd
Caltex Australia Limited	KPMG Australia
carsales.com Limited	La Trobe University
Cbus Super	Lauriston Girls' School
Challenger Limited	LendLease Corporation Limited
Clayton Utz	Lion
Cognizant Technology Solutions Australia Pty Ltd	Little Company of Mary Health Care Limited
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	Maddocks

Maurice Blackburn
McCullough Robertson Lawyers
McKinsey & Company
Medibank
Mercedes—Benz Australia/Pacific Pty Ltd
Mercedes-Benz Financial Services Australia Pty Ltd
MSD
Mercy Health
MinterEllison
Mirvac Limited
Monash University
My Pathway
National Australia Bank Limited
Norton Rose Fulbright Australia
Origin Energy Limited
Palace Cinemas Pty Ltd
Peoplebank Australia Ltd
PepsiCo
Perpetual Ltd
Philip Morris Limited
Philips Electronics Australia Limited
PPG Industries Australia Pty Limited
PwC Australia
Queensland Country Credit Union Limited
Queensland University of Technology
RB Australia Pty Ltd
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Russell Kennedy Lawyers
SAP Australia Pty Ltd
Scentre Group
St Barbara Limited
Stockland Corporation Ltd
Suncorp Group Limited
Swinburne University of Technology
Tabcorp Assets Pty Ltd
TAL Pty Ltd
Teachers Health
Teachers Mutual Bank Limited
Telstra Corporation Limited
The GPT Group
The Law Society of New South Wales
The University of Newcastle
ThoughtWon-(s Austratia Pty Ltd
Transurban Limited
UBS AG
Unilever Australia Limited
University of Canberra
University of Southern Queensland
University of Technology Sydney
University of Wollongong
UOW Enterprises
Viva Energy Australia Pty Ltd
VMware Australia Pty Ltd
Western Sydney University
The Westpac Group
YWCA Canberra

About the Authors



Dr Terrance Fitzsimmons is a senior lecturer in leadership with The University of Queensland Business School. He is also a chartered accountant with over 30 years of practice. He is the director of the AIBE Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace and Managing Director of the Australian Gender Equality Council (AGEC), a body whose members comprise peak national bodies representing 400,000 women across industry sectors in Australia.

His PhD in leadership examined successful attributes of CEOs and differing pathways to CEO roles for men and women. In June 2015, Dr Fitzsimmons and Professor Callan released *Filling the Pool* a major report into gender inequality in Western Australia and what government, organisations and individuals can do to address the issue. In December 2018, Dr Fitzsimmons and Dr Yates released *Hands Up for Gender Equality* a major report into the gendering of confidence, leadership and STEM career intentions in adolescents.

Dr Fitzsimmons has worked with many of Australia's largest firms on their diversity programs and speaks regularly in Australia and overseas in the area of gender equality and inclusion. He has served as national and state presidents of not-for-profit bodies as well as being a director on boards of listed public companies in Australia and overseas.



Dr Miriam Yates is a postdoctoral research fellow at The University of Queensland Business School within the AIBE Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace. She is also a registered psychologist who consults with organisations on matters of strategic planning, diversity and inclusion, leadership development and psychological health and wellbeing at work.

Her PhD examined the gendered nature of power and the implications this has for women's and men's career advancement. Since, Miriam's research portfolio has grown to include topics such as processes of career transitioning in male-dominated industries, the paradox mindset as it relates to women navigating positions of leadership and projects evaluating the efficacy of gender equality policy and procedures in Australian organisations. In 2018, along with Dr Fitzsimmons she released *Hands Up for Gender Equality* a major report into the gendering of confidence, leadership and STEM career intentions in adolescents.



Professor Victor Callan is professor of management and leadership at The University of Queensland Business School, and is also Associate Dean (Research) in the university's Faculty of Business, Economics and Law. He has an international research reputation in the fields of organisational change, work stress, and leadership. He has published in the world's leading management and psychology journals, and based on this record of achievement was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. Victor has won The University of Queensland's (UQ) Award for Excellence in Higher Degree Research Supervision, and is also a recipient of two UQ Excellence in Leadership Awards for his roles in developing research and industry partnerships. In 2015, with Dr Fitzsimmons, he co-authored *Filling the Pool* as a major report into gender inequality in Western Australia, and the actions required to address the issue. In 2016, he was a member of a high-profile research team that investigated skills development in Australia's most innovative organisations in a project funded by the Federal Chief Scientist.

Victor is a regular contributor to executive education and workshops for senior executives and managers in the areas of organisational, workforce and leadership development. He has served on government boards, and completed over 100 projects for federal, state and local government departments including major reviews on skills, training, change and leadership and workforce development.

Research Support Team



Michelle Fitzsimmons is the managing director of Equitus Consulting. Michelle has been heavily involved in the delivery of several major reports into gender equality in Australia: *Navigating CEO appointments: Do Australia's top male and female CEO's differ in how they made it to the top?*, *Filling the Pool* and *Hands Up for Gender Equality* projects. Michelle has acted as chief editor and designer for the report.



Hieu Nguyen is a PhD student in the management cluster at the UQ Business School. Prior to commencing his Doctoral program, he was awarded first class honours in the Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) program from Queensland University of Technology. More recently, he was one of four students to be accepted to the University of British Columbia as part of the Visiting Scholar Program. His research spans the fields of management and organisational psychology, specifically focusing on the effects of emotions on the dark side of leadership.



Laura Parra Navarette is a Bachelor of Commerce final-year student at The University of Queensland A visiting scholar from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Colombia, Laura assisted the authors in undertaking the literature investigation for the report. Laura has a deep interest in inclusive leadership and gender equality. Laura wishes to continue and deepen her study of these important issues in the future.

Ethical Clearance

The University of Queensland Business, Economics & Law, Low and Negligible Risk Ethics Sub-Committee reviewed this study in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, incorporating all updates as at May 2015) (National Statement) on 19 July 2018.

The University of Queensland Business, Economics & Law, Low and Negligible Risk Ethics Sub-Committee is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Statement.

The University of Queensland Business, Economics & Law, Low and Negligible Risk Ethics Sub-Committee approved this project on 19 July 2018, noting that the application met the requirements of the National Statement.

Approval Number: 2018001492



The Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace

The AIBE Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace is situated within the Business, Economics and Law Faculty of The University of Queensland.

The mission of the AIBE Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace is to identify, examine, test and recommend evidence-based solutions that government and organisations can implement to tackle issues related to gender equality. To achieve this, we work as an industry-focused Centre that engages, collaborates with and contributes to ongoing business, government, community and academic dialogue on gender equality to produce outputs of practical value. The Centre, through its partnerships, has been successful in the promotion and adoption of its findings.

We are interested in exploring research partnerships with organisations that possess similar intentions and aspirations.

In particular, we invite research partnerships between industry and the AIBE Centre for Gender Equality in the Workplace around issues of national significance in addressing gender inequality in Australian society. The team of researchers that constitute the Centre have been widely published and are heavily involved in the promotion of gender equality through research, consulting, publication, public speaking and board memberships.

The Centre is jointly funded by The University of Queensland's Australian Institute for Business and Economics, Faculty of Business, Economics and Law and the UQ Business School.

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