

# Supporting gender equality in workplaces

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# The challenge:

- Labour market opportunity, education, health, and political clout for women: 118 years away from closing the gender gap (World Economic Forum's 2015 Global Gender Gap report)
- Australia: mid range performer in terms of work towards gender equality (OECD 2017: the pursuit of gender equality an uphill battle)
  - Australia gender pay gap of 87 cents to one dollar (slightly better than the OECD average of 86)
  - Best performers are Belgium, Luxembourg, Costa Rica and Slovenia, all better than 95 cents to one dollar



# The business case for work on gender equality

- Workplaces which foster gender equality have:
  - more motivated staff
  - retain talented staff longer
  - develop innovative solutions
  - have strong reputations
  - reduced sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination

⇒ business case for gender equality (Badal 2014; Our Watch, VicHealth & ANROWS 2015; WGEA 2016a; WHO 2010)

- **Mercer research** on initiatives driving organisational growth in organisations: 'when women thrive, businesses thrive'



# Policy support

- **Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012**
  - Remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce
  - Promote the elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender (family and caring responsibilities)
  - Inadvertently promote gender-based inequities - “women as carer”?
  - Inequitable access to negotiating or implementing flexible work arrangements
- **Family friendly workplace policy**
  - Inclusionary: manage motherhood, caring responsibilities, and employment
  - Exclusionary: career progression, future employment prospects, return-to-work, role-changes, unsupportive and inflexible conditions or unfair or unreasonable expectations, inequitable implementation

# Presenting the case for work

- **defining gender equity and gender equality**

- **Gender Equality:** means that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. (UNICEF 2010)
- **Gender Equity:** is the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls and is about equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination .It refers to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms or differences between the sexes. (UNICEF 2010)

- **the importance of language**

- gender inclusivity, gender diversity, intersectionality

- **use of research evidence to legitimise the work**



# The challenge of ensuring a receptive context for change

1. **Quality and coherence of local policy**
2. **Key people leading change (especially a multidisciplinary and mixed gender team)**
3. **Co-operative inter-organisational networks**
4. **Supportive organisational culture, including managerial and other subcultures**
5. **Environmental pressure, moderate, predictable and long-term**
6. **Simplicity and clarity of goals and priorities**
7. **Positive pattern of relations between different groups in the organisation**
8. **Fit between the change agenda and the locale**

Source: derived from Pettigrew et al. 1992

# Tools/resources to support gender equity work in workplaces

| Approach                              | Overview of approach   | Number of resources identified | Formal evaluation completed | Theoretical or practical underpinnings provided | Usefulness could not be assessed using chosen methods |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Policies and procedures</b>        | Statements or processes which embed gendered considerations into the workplace               | 7                              | 0                           | 3   | 4   |
| <b>Gender analysis</b>                | Analysis to identify the gender responsiveness of workplace practices                        | 11                             | 0                           | 9   | 2   |
| <b>Gender audits</b>                  | Review of aspects of the workplace to determine gender responsiveness                        | 4                              | 2                           | 1   | 1   |
| <b>Organisational change programs</b> | Whole-of-organisation approach to addressing inequitable attitudes, behaviours and practices | 3                              | 2                           | 1   | N/A   |



# Tools/resources to support gender equity work in workplaces

| Approach                                   | Overview of approach  | Number of resources identified | Formal evaluation completed | Theoretical or practical underpinnings provided |
|--|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Gender equity training</b>              | Provides participants with the knowledge and skills to effect change by raising awareness about gender equality                     | 2                              | 1                           | 1   |
| <b>Bystander training</b>                  | Training which equips staff to identify, speak out about and respond to behaviours, attitudes or practices which support inequality | 4                              | 4                           | N/A, evaluation identified.                     |
| <b>'Other' workforce development</b>       | Activities which increase knowledge of gender equality, and support the implementation of workplace programs                        | 1                              | 0                           | 1   |
| <b>Communication and awareness-raising</b> | Campaigns/activities which raise awareness about gender inequality  | 1                              | 0                           | 1   |



# Gender equity training

- 2 hour workshop in Great South Coast region
- Statistically significant improvement in gender equity score 4-6 weeks after training compared to before training

*“[I have] a better understanding within myself about gender equity, having grown up with a different view probably. I grew up on a farm and all that and it was much more stereotyped male-dominated and all that sort of thing. I probably did have a bit of a view from my mum, you know like, my job as a woman is to keep men happy. But I’ve probably dropped that off pretty well now. So the whole Baby Makes 3 and the gender equity side of it particularly, and all of that, has been very personally informative to me.” (maternal and child health nurse and grandmother)*

**Source:** Taket, A, Büss, C, Coady L and Crisp B (2016) The Baby Makes 3 Plus project in the Great South Coast region: Final report from the external evaluator, January 2016. Deakin University. Available at: [http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/ccp/resources/5ffa6367-9deb-43fa-be60-4bf675d40ff2/baby\\_makes\\_3\\_plus.pdf](http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/ccp/resources/5ffa6367-9deb-43fa-be60-4bf675d40ff2/baby_makes_3_plus.pdf)

# Gender equity and bystander training

## *Programmes of work in two organisations in Hume Region*

*“I guess the topic of gender equality was something that was a new vocabulary for me, a new conversation in the workplace.” (male staff member, Hume Region)*

*“It’s really made me look at my own behaviour a little bit, and my own view and attitudes, you know, because I’m a male, obviously, yeah. It’s made me think about my relationships at work and at home.” (male staff member, Hume Region)*

*“It resonates very well with me. Not just because I’m a woman, just because I see it as something that just should be. Respect and equity should go across the board for everyone. And in that gender equity as well, clearly.” (female staff member, Hume Region)*

*Source: Alam 2016, Taket et al 2016*

# Tracking change

- **Gender equity score using items from National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS):**
  - In general, men make better political leaders than women.
  - When jobs are scarce men should have more right to a job than women.
  - A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.
  - A woman has to have children to be fulfilled.
  - It's OK for a woman to have a child as a single parent and not want a stable relationship with a man. (reverse scored)
  - Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workplace in Australia.
  - Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household.
  - Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship.
- **Gender equity attitudes, bystander attitudes and behaviour, from VicHealth's survey of bystander knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in preventing violence against women, includes modules for:**
  - social settings
  - sports club
  - workplace

# Insights from Mercer

## Diagnosis: organizations are failing to build future female talent pipelines

- current female hiring, promotion, and retention are insufficient to create gender equality over the next decade.
- improvements in hiring at the highest levels of the organization are not extending to lower levels.
- progress made over 2014 data not result of systemic improvements in good practices rather, it seems to result from ad hoc actions, such as increased hiring at the top.

## Prescription: the 6 P's of an effective gender diversity strategy

### INDIVIDUALS NEED TO:

- Have *passion* to drive diversity
- Make it a *personal* priority
- Show *perseverance* over time

### ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO:

- Rely on *proof* before jumping to solutions
- Install regular, robust *processes* to ensure equity
- Implement and support critical *programs*



## In conclusion:



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