

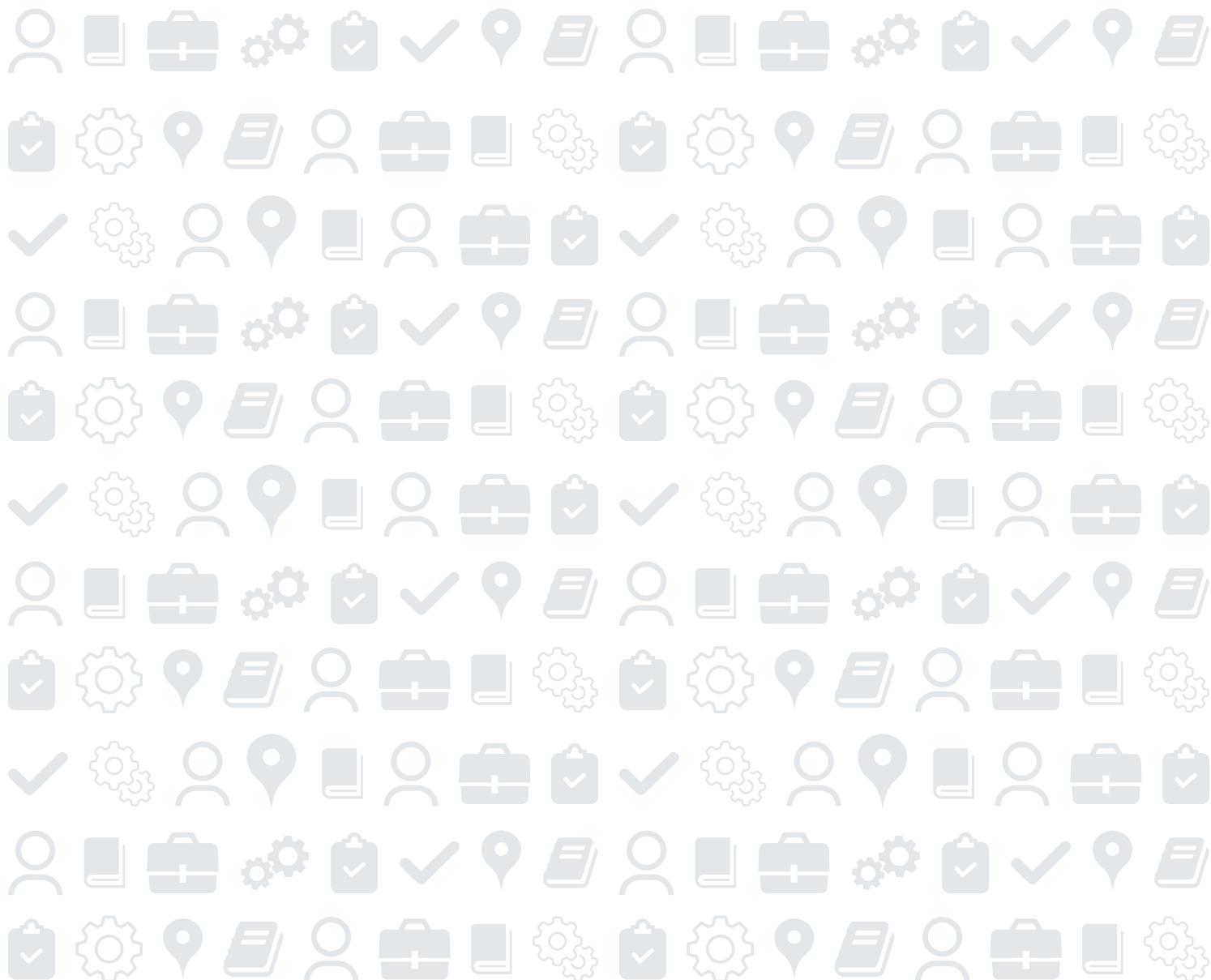


MALE CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE 

A Gender Equal Future of Work

Discussion Guide for Leaders

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Dear Colleague,

The 'future of work' is a topic of increasing focus for governments, industry, the education sector and communities across the world. Organisations are preparing for and managing changes that are disrupting how we live and work. These changes include rapid advances in technology, social and demographic shifts, and increasing consumer, citizen and stakeholder expectations.

As leaders focused on gender equality, we see the future of work as a turning point. It is an opportunity to harness the disruption underway to intentionally challenge and transform the structures that perpetuate gender inequality.

We have made significant progress towards gender equality in Australia. Yet women are still under-represented in leadership positions and over-represented in lower-paid sectors of employment. The overall gender pay gap remains unacceptably high; and the unequal sharing of caring and domestic responsibilities continue to limit women's careers. Some groups of women experience greater marginalisation, and even lower rates of workforce participation. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, women with disability and those in regional, rural and remote areas.

In a tech-driven era, there is an increasing demand for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills in our workforce. Yet women comprise as little as 13% of undergraduates in STEM fields such as IT and engineering. This imbalance has the potential to cast a long shadow over future STEM job and leadership opportunities for women.

We do not want to further replicate or indeed exacerbate disadvantage for future generations.

To influence and intervene in our fast-moving environment, we need to start by asking the right questions and experiment with bold new approaches, building on our success to date and tailored to the way in which our organisations are experiencing change. By doing so, we can play our part in creating a gender equal future for generations to come.

In this discussion guide, we share our approach to understanding opportunities for gender equality in the future workforce. We invite you to join us in advancing bold, disruptive action in our efforts to achieve gender equality in our workplaces.

“ Women are not starting from a level playing field. Unless we intentionally put gender at the centre of our actions, we will sleepwalk into a future where existing inequalities are either replicated, or worse, exacerbated.
– Elizabeth Broderick, Founder and Convener, MCC

“ The days of micromanaging, top-down leadership are over. In the future we’ll see a greater emphasis on leaders who can develop the right environment for innovation with colleagues and employees.
– Peter Varghese, University of Queensland

“ We need people who are more digital savvy, data savvy, and able to interrogate data. But we will also need a broader skill set; for people to be more flexible and adaptable. How do we train our people to develop those skills?
– Martin Parkinson, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

“ We need to act together to ensure that our response does not undermine the great progress we have achieved toward gender equality.
– Gary Wingrove, KPMG

“ In an uncertain world, don’t plug gender into your decision making when you are two-thirds of the way into the journey, plug it in at the start. Make it a priority in strategic workforce planning, recruitment, retraining and reskilling.
– Ian Watt, Non-Executive Director

“ In a future dominated by Artificial Intelligence, people and culture will determine our direction more than technology. It takes humans to make sense of the world and create knowledge, and diversity is the compass to guide us through the ambiguity of innovation.
– Larry Marshall, CSIRO

The future of work is evolving, but key themes are emerging now

The future of work is changing how we work, where we work, what we do and how we learn. Change is taking place at great speed and its impact is difficult to predict. Depending on your perspective, these changes could be seen as opportunities to anticipate, manage and harness, or as disruptive threats. We listened and learned with leaders and experts about how they see the future of work changing our workplaces. A number of common themes emerged:

DRIVERS



- Rapid advances in technology, robotics, computing and artificial intelligence (AI)
- Evolving societal norms, and expectations of work
- Continued globalisation
- Increasing consumer, citizen, stakeholder and regulator expectations
- Major demographic shifts, such as an actively ageing population

How we work



- Employees' expectations of career lifecycle changing, including normalising career transitions, increased use of agile and time-limited teams, flexible careers and equal sharing of caring and domestic responsibilities.
- Fluidity between traditional models of work (i.e. ongoing employment in a single role or position) and on-demand work (i.e. shorter, fixed-term and project-based contracts and labour hire, sometimes referred to as 'the gig economy').
- Changed expectations of (and obligations for) employers engaging on-demand labour.
- Longer and more flexible engagement in the workplace by employees approaching and during traditional 'retirement' period.
- Complex employee transitions, retraining and continuous learning to meet emerging priorities.

Where we work



- Increased flexibility and remote working.
- Greater mobility and increased working across traditional geographic borders.

How we learn



- Dynamic life long learning integrated into careers to support agile job and skills transitions.
- Increased demand for the following:
 - High quality, accessible, flexible and digitally enabled forms of education and training, including micro-learning opportunities
 - Language training and cross-cultural competency programs.
- An increased focus on integration of education, training and employment to facilitate increased job readiness of entry-level employees.

What we do



- Reconfiguration of jobs and workplaces between employees and technology – from automation to augmentation.
- Change in employees' expectations, with an increasing focus on 'purpose-driven' and ethical jobs and careers.
- Increased demand for skilled employees in growth sectors:
 - Health Care and Social Assistance
 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
 - Construction
 - Education and Training.
- Increased demand for skilled employees with the following capabilities:
 - STEM literacy
 - Creative, conceptual, critical and cross-disciplinary thinking
 - Adaptive and growth mindsets
 - Flexibility to respond to new and emerging job requirements
 - Cross-cultural competencies and linguistic capabilities
 - Remote and flexible workforce management
 - Entrepreneur and intrapreneur skills to lead and capitalise on rapid change.

How can we harness the opportunities presented by the future of work to accelerate progress towards gender equality?

The changes that our organisations are experiencing and anticipating present opportunities to accelerate progress on gender equality.

Potential opportunities:	What can leaders do?
<p>Disrupting gender segregation in occupations and industries</p> <p>A large-scale shift to the service, health, care and STEM sectors will create new jobs requiring hybrid and integrated skills. For example: ‘integrator’ or ‘interpreter’ roles combine technical expertise with communication, collaboration and engagement skills. Gender stereotyped roles and occupational segregation associated with specific sectors, could be actively disrupted in this transition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies to build gender-balance in all sectors. This includes specifically attracting both women and men into careers in traditionally-gendered industries. • Reassess the value of and remuneration applied to traditionally female-dominated roles and sectors. • Address outdated notions of merit in recruitment and promotion decisions. Focus on recruiting for skill, experience, capability and potential to meet future business or organisational objectives. • Target 50:50 gender representation for every aspect of the recruitment and promotion process. • Set and review gender equality targets and give them the same priority and importance as other business/organisational objectives.
<p>Creating new career pathways and increasing the value of learning and potential</p> <p>An increasing focus on agility, active ageing and life long learning could place greater value on the ability to learn, attracting new candidates for STEM roles. This can support career transitions and help organisations to access new pools of talent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how critical capabilities can be sourced from new and different talent pools. • Check job descriptions and review your idea of the ‘best candidate’, with a focus on adaptive learning skills, to complement or augment technical mastery. • Invest in training and continuous learning to support career progression throughout careers. • Ensure gender balance in training and education.
<p>Embedding flexibility as the norm, rather than the exception</p> <p>Jobs that can be done flexibly and/or remotely could increase options for employees to manage caring and domestic responsibilities while progressing their careers.</p> <p>Flexible and mobile work also allows greater participation for employees who are approaching or undertaking partial retirement, are geographically dispersed, or who have disability - and other groups underrepresented in the workforce today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion flexibility from the top and make it a visible priority for leaders in your organisation. • Invest in policies, technology and tools that enable seamless, flexible and remote working. • Set strategies and measure progress to ensure flexible work does not inhibit access to opportunities and career progression. • Strengthen flexible work and parental leave policies with a view to increasing uptake of these conditions by men. • Consider how flexible work and innovative employment strategies could help retain the skills of actively ageing employees.

“ A lot of our mining jobs will be city based and require new skill sets, creating mobility across industry lines and therefore increased opportunities for women. – Joanne Farrell, Rio Tinto

“ We realised the current pipeline of women in STEM at universities would not meet our demands for 50/50 recruitment targets, so we are taking women with diverse qualifications and training them in core technology skills and applications. It’s opening up a lot of new opportunities for our graduates.” – Bob Easton, Accenture

How can we harness the opportunities presented by the future of work to accelerate progress towards gender equality?

Potential opportunities:	What can leaders do?
<p>Reframing STEM roles to reflect their broader impact and purpose</p> <p>This could make STEM more inclusive and open up a wider pool of potential talent for this growth sector.</p> <p>The framing and promotion of STEM work could be shifted to emphasise the broader social impact and purpose of science and technology roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the diverse and expansive careers available in the STEM sector and the contribution undertaking these careers makes to society. Raise the profile of eminent women in STEM to celebrate their impact and highlight role models. Recognise and reward leaders for respectful and inclusive work practices in STEM.
<p>Valuing equality and diversity as drivers of innovation</p> <p>Diverse perspectives drive innovation. As business adapts to a changing environment, there will be an increased focus on innovation. This presents an opportunity to increase workforce diversity – across gender, culture, skills, abilities and backgrounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulate the link between innovation, equality and diversity. Set expectations of leaders to build diverse and inclusive teams as drivers of innovation. Reward adaptive and inclusive leaders who harness diverse thinking for innovation. Challenge behaviour and structures that reinforce hierarchy. Draw on less experienced staff to bring forward new ideas and contribute to innovation goals. Utilise technology to better include the perspectives of staff in regional, rural and remote areas.
<p>Putting equality and diversity at the heart of design</p> <p>Prioritising equality and diversity in design has the potential to broaden appeal and better address customer, citizen and stakeholder needs and expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve people from diverse communities and backgrounds in product, service and policy and program design. Ensure design and technology ideas and solutions are specifically reviewed through the lens of gender equality and diversity.

“ In the manufacturing sector, if diversity is built into design at the start, and service at the end of chain, then you get better outcomes.
 – Andrew Stevens, Non-Executive Director

“ The need for critical thinking will reinforce the value of diversity. The more angles we can bring to bear on a problem, the better the outcomes will be.
 – Peter Hoj, University of Queensland

“ We were getting feedback that we weren’t winning pitches because our workforce was not reflecting the diversity that our customers were looking for.
 – Mike Foster, Fujitsu

How can we mitigate the risk of replicating or exacerbating gender inequality in the future?

While progress towards gender equality has been made, a number of emerging risks need to be addressed by leaders to avoid progress stalling or slipping.

Potential risks:	What can leaders do?
<p>Exacerbating existing gender gaps, including in STEM:</p> <p>If women remain under-represented in certain high-growth areas which are higher paid such as STEM roles, this may exacerbate the gender pay gap.</p> <p>Further, the growth in women’s participation in STEM may not translate to growth in pay or recognition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage and collaborate with the education sector at all levels to increase women and girls’ participation in STEM study and careers. Address systemic norms and attitudes, that can stall, impede and/or end women’s careers in STEM. Hire for STEM roles based on mindset and potential in combination with skills and experience. Set and track gender equality targets for STEM roles across the organisation at all levels. Conduct regular gender pay gap audits and make findings transparent. Commit to action to tackle the gender pay gap.
<p>Unequal access to skills transition and learning opportunities:</p> <p>If skills transition, learning and retraining programs are designed around the profile of today’s workforce in STEM-related areas, they may not include women and men equally.</p> <p>This could exacerbate existing gender gaps and magnify the exclusion experience by groups who are significantly underrepresented in STEM-related roles today (including older women).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce training programs to build STEM capability amongst existing staff, with a focus on diversity and inclusion. Monitor the uptake of training and learning opportunities for future roles by diversity groups. Review the delivery of training and education programs to ensure that they are high quality, accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all employees in high growth sectors. Harness the skills of ‘digital natives’ as leaders and mentors in building broader technological capability.
<p>Declining access to gender equality and diversity provisions and policies:</p> <p>If employees in the gig economy and/or casual work do not have access to the provisions and entitlements of permanent employees (including parental leave), this may further exacerbate existing economic insecurity for women, including insufficient superannuation savings.</p> <p>Men’s capacity to undertake caring and domestic responsibilities may also be diminished by loss of entitlements in the gig economy and casual work.</p> <p>People in the gig economy, in casual work and in geographically dispersed locations may also be at greater risk of sexual harassment and have reduced capacity/power to speak out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop innovative models enabling gender equality policies to be applied and accessible regardless of employment or contract status. Update sexual harassment policies to cover contract workers, casual and geographically dispersed employees.

“ People are struggling to value the ‘soft skills’. Everyone is happy to talk about them – but they are not valued.
– Ann Sherry, Convener, MCC STEM

“ We need to put a balanced life at the centre of the company’s objectives. If the way to succeed is to work 80 hours a week for 20 years you are going to end up with a narrow leadership group.
– Dig Howitt, Cochlear

How can we mitigate the risk of replicating or exacerbating gender inequality in the future?

Potential risks:	What can leaders do?
<p>Increasing demand for care over the lifecycle:</p> <p>If caring responsibilities are increased as a result of the ageing population, systems to support an ageing population will need to be strengthened. At present, these responsibilities are predominantly carried by women. Further, older women experience economic insecurity due to the gender gap in retirement savings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support carers of older people through flexible work and other carer support practices.• Build manager capability to be responsive to the caring and domestic responsibilities that employees carry across the lifecycle.
<p>Entrenching a male-dominated world view through technology participation and design:</p> <p>If technology, AI and scientific research programs today remain led and designed by men using historical data, this may continue to entrench gender bias and perpetuate a male-dominated view of the world.</p> <p>For example, online image searches for the term 'CEO' returns predominantly images of men of Anglo-Saxon appearance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish tech design teams that reflect gender balance and diversity.• Test and review the design of technology to assess impacts on gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and safety.• Review how technology is reaching and benefitting different groups, with a particular emphasis on marginalised groups of women and girls.

“ Training of AI is sometimes based on data sets and procedures that reflect a historical male bias. There is a risk of in-built bias in AI reflecting the world-view of the people responsible for the training procedures. – Alan Finkel, Australia’s Chief Scientist

“ Remote, rural and regional women have fewer options, can face more sexism and violence, and risk job insecurity. The future of work allows greater mobility and can reduce isolation. – Kate Jenkins, Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Convener, MCC National Group est. 2015

“ To help bring equality, we need to support our parents and make sure men have the opportunity to share in parental responsibilities. All new ANU parents, when they act as primary carer, can now take up to 26 weeks paid leave, and we are encouraging fathers to share equally in this important responsibility. – Brian Schmidt, Australian National University

“ A significant challenge for us will be to maintain what we have achieved towards gender equality – we will need to run to stay still, mainstreaming our current strategies like flexible work and gender balanced hiring and introducing new ones. – David Kalisch, Australian Statistician

How might we take advantage of the disruption taking place today, to create a gender equal future?

Consider the opportunities that a gender equal future of work presents to your workforce, your organisation – and ultimately, our nation. Positioning gender equality front of mind while anticipating and responding to emerging trends will harness the opportunities and mitigate the risks.

Many of the strategies that have delivered results in the past, such as normalising flexible work and removing gender bias in recruitment and promotion, will continue to be relevant as we move into the future.

The pathway to a gender equal future of work starts with leaders stepping up – men and women together – and asking questions to listen, learn and guide their actions:

Future of work trends

- What are the top trends impacting on your organisation and workforce?
- How might technological disruption be affecting the where, what and how of work in your organisation?
- How might demographic changes, including an actively ageing workforce, create opportunities for your organisation?
- How might changing expectations and social norms – for example around work/life balance, domestic and caring responsibilities – create opportunities for your workforce and talent pipeline?

Gender equality implications

- What is the starting point for gender equality in your organisation and in leadership positions? And how might you expect future trends to impact this?
- How might the increased demand for STEM skills impact on women’s representation in leadership positions?
- What barriers currently exist in your organisation to gender equality in leadership?
- How might these change with future work trends?
- How might you better monitor the gender balance of your organisation, across occupations and leadership positions?

Practical actions

- In what parts of your business is there already gender equality in teams and in leadership? How might you apply lessons learnt to develop gender equality in future growth areas?
- How might you pitch and assess future roles to be inclusive of a broad range of skills and perspectives and attract diverse talent?
- Who might benefit from skills transition and learning programs for future roles? How? What actions might you take to achieve gender equality in skills transition and retraining?
- How might you create and achieve diversity targets when building teams for technology and innovation products?
- How might you build leadership capability to respond to new and different ways of working? (including flexibility and mobility)
- What opportunities exist within your organisation to drive innovation through increasing diversity in your teams or in your strategic planning?
- What are the most important things your organisation can do to encourage more women to join, stay and thrive within the STEM workforce?

What bold, new experiment can you lead in your organisation – taking advantage of the disruption happening today – to advance your business and achieve gender equality for future generations? What action can you take to safeguard your organisation’s progress towards gender equality?

Actions to Create A Gender Equal Future of Work

Australian Nuclear Science Technology Organisation (ANSTO)

Disrupting Gender Segregation in Nuclear Research

Context

Only 1% of operational staff in OPAL – Australia's only nuclear research reactor run by ANSTO in Australia – are women.

Staff in operational roles (operators, reactor engineers and shift managers) manage the logistics and undertake round the clock monitoring to ensure the safety and efficiency the reactor – directly contributing to it being the safest and best multi-purpose reactor in the world. These staff receive intensive training and undergo a three-year period of accreditation and authorisation.

Historically operational roles at the nuclear reactor attracted between 3-5% women candidates, however a recent advertisement for a Reactor Engineer position attracted an all-male candidate pool.

Action taken

To address this gender imbalance, ANSTO undertook a critical review of their entire recruitment process. Advertisements were carefully constructed to focus on transferable skills and desired behaviours, including problem solving, team work and supporting the safety culture. The required qualifications were broadened to allow for a wider variety of backgrounds to be eligible for appointment – from engineers-only to include a broad range of sciences.

ANSTO tracked gender balance throughout the recruitment process.

Impact

The new process returned a significantly more diverse candidate pool – with 21% women candidates, a 50/50 gender split of candidates at interview.

The OPAL team has increased the number of women in their workforce by reviewing their recruitment practices and there has been an increase in the quality of the hires due to the new focus on behaviours in addition to skills. The future workforce of OPAL will be more gender diverse and have transferable skills, particularly as roles change in the future due to technological disruption.

Lessons learned

A critical learning from this experience is the power of words. A simple review of the advertisement alone had a drastic impact in the diversity of the candidate pool. It also demonstrates that unnecessarily restrictive qualifications can exclude the best talent.

Actions to Create A Gender Equal Future of Work

Qantas

Disrupting Gender Segregation in Aviation

Context

With the growth of the aviation industry, and the retirements and attrition of current pilots, Boeing estimates that the global commercial airline industry will require almost 790,000 new pilots over the next 20 years. While it will be a challenge for the industry to meet the demand, it is also an opportunity for airlines to contribute to a gender equal future of work.

Historically, there has been a chronic gender imbalance among pilots. Women represent an average of only 3% of the profession globally. For the Qantas Group, in which women represent 5% of pilots, building a long-term talent pipeline which addresses this gender imbalance is key to meeting the growing demand for pilots.

Action taken

To take advantage of the opportunity to build a more gender equal future, the Qantas Group announced the Nancy Bird Walton initiative. The initiative, named after the pioneering Australian aviator, commits the Qantas Group to at least a 40% intake of qualified women through our various pilot recruitment programs over the next decade.

Recognising that business, government, schools and individuals all have a role to play in championing girls and women in technical jobs, Qantas is working to promote technical careers via careers counsellors and careers fairs and sending pilots who have been successful in their technical careers to schools across the country. They also support Power of Engineering open days for Australian high school girls.

Lessons learned

It's clear that a grassroots approach is needed to inspire the next generation of women to take up a career in aviation and study the science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects that will enable them to do that.

Qantas will continue to encourage women and girls into pilot and technical careers through the Nancy Bird Walton initiative. And through its long-term inclusion strategy, Qantas is committed to seeing a future where on every second flight, you'll hear a female voice over the PA from the flight deck.

Actions to Create A Gender Equal Future of Work

MYOB

Creating New Career Pathways for Women in STEM

Context

MYOB recruits for software engineering roles on a year-round basis. Historically, women have represented less than 12% of applicants for developer positions. This is a significant barrier for MYOB in creating and maintaining a gender balanced engineering teams. With significant future growth expected for elements of the business which require skilled staff, there is potential for the gender imbalance to intensify.

Action taken

To increase gender diversity amongst software developers MYOB created the Developer Program. This paid internship program recruits women at different life stages with limited knowledge in software development and teaches them coding and development for a period of 12 to 24 months. Following this training, they progress onto a pathway to become an Associate Developer.

The program was piloted in Melbourne with an initial recruitment campaign and selection of three interns in 2016. Developer has been refreshed and relaunched in 2018 with a number of additional elements. Participants will complete six month's training at the Coder Academy (an Accredited coding institution) during which time they receive mentorship from women leaders within MYOB's Engineering and Experience team. Upon completion from Coder Academy interns will enter the Future Makers Academy (MYOB's graduate program). Within the Future Makers Academy, they will practice their coding knowledge on commercial projects while undertaking rotations through teams, under the guidance of a technical mentor.

Impact

There has been an increase in women's representation in engineering teams and visibility of the program has sparked interest in the roles available. The program has provided an opportunity for women with transferable skills to enter an industry that was previously inaccessible to them and has inspired other organisations to adopt a similar approach to pursuing gender equality.

Lessons learned

MYOB recognises that the pipeline of women software developers can be developed at different stages of the career lifecycle, rather than solely waiting for the pool of women software engineers to increase through the education system.

The program has created a replicable model for retraining and reskilling employees into technical roles which can be used as the future of work creates new opportunities. The fact that participants are paid to undertake the training is critical for removing barriers for entry for candidates returning to work or already in paid work and looking for career transition.

Actions to Create A Gender Equal Future of Work

Telstra

Embedding Flexibility in New Ways of Working

Context

As a business with technology at its core, Telstra is already experiencing significant disruption and the effects of global trends like digitisation, automation and STEM skill shortages.

Telstra's organisational strategy clearly articulates that the future workforce will be smaller, with a flatter structure and more agile ways of working and responding to change – Telstra has a clear pathway towards the 'where, what and how' of their future state.

Action Taken

Agile project methodology is one of the tools that Telstra staff are using to collaborate and innovate – but adopting this methodology has not been without challenges. Using Agile approaches can disrupt flexibility, because of a preference for co-location and the visual management of work. The 'physicality' of the approach could be seen to be at odds with Telstra's well-established All Roles Flex commitment, where flexibility is the starting point for all roles, and sees staff working remotely, part-time and in activity-based workspaces.

One of the leaders in Telstra's Transformation and People function saw the benefits that could be realised by adopting Agile project methodology – enabling her team to build skills for the future, but also recognised the tension in these two future-focused business strategies.

The team worked together to analyse their work patterns, considering:

- where people were working – remotely, from home, within activity-based workspaces
- when it made sense to bring the team together –with respect to each other's work days and times
- how to best run meetings – to ensure inclusion of all team members skills and perspectives
- what technology could help them to deliver their work – such as smart boards, online collaboration and project management platforms.

The team also engaged the services of an Agile coach to provide advice on leading practice and to support their continuous improvement.

Impact

By focusing on supporting each other's professional and personal priorities, and being persistent in experimenting with new approaches, the team is enjoying increased job satisfaction. Team members report feeling more empowered and accountable for their work and senior stakeholders have provided positive feedback as project deadlines are consistently met.

Lessons learned

The lessons learned to proactively embed flexibility into new ways of working will be shared across the organisation, as more teams move to working in an agile way.

Actions to Create A Gender Equal Future of Work

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Valuing Equality and Diversity as Drivers of Innovation

Context

As in many organisations, women are underrepresented in DFAT's technology workforce – comprising less than 30% of the Information Management and Technology Division's 400 - strong workforce. There is a significant underrepresentation of women in the leadership of this Division - women make up less than one-fifth of frontline managers and just a quarter of the contingent contracting workforce, and there is only one female IT officer posted to an overseas role.

Recognising the importance of diversity of thought to the development of technology solutions for the future, the Chief Information Officer and their leadership team have made a clear and concerted effort to address gender inequality.

Action taken

Over the course of a year, the leadership team has dedicated resources and taken targeted action to drive gender equality. The leadership team started by setting clear gender targets for each level in the Division (and for contractors) and mapping pathways to 40/40/20 representation. To build 'grass roots' ownership of the work, a gender equality 'ideas challenge' was run which resulted in five new ideas: developing a STEM career pathways speaker series, creating a senior leadership job-shadowing program, focusing on diversity through recruitment and retention, and normalising flexible work and building inclusive leadership skills. These grassroots led initiatives were complemented by a systemic approach to undertaking gender neutral recruitment processes.

Impact

This dedicated work program is yielding results, with women now representing 45% of one level of middle management, a higher proportion of women than men undertaking technical training programs, and a jump of 17 percentage points of staff who recognise that the most senior management actively supports the use of flexible working arrangements by both men and women.

Lessons learned

The leadership team credit the initial success of this program to unwavering leadership commitment, developing broad awareness of representation statistics and a data-driven approach to identifying and addressing barriers to diversity, and ongoing grassroots consultation, communication and engagement on the pathway to gender equality.

Actions to Create A Gender Equal Future of Work

Aurecon

Developing Adaptive and Inclusive Leaders who Harness Diverse Thinking

Context

Aurecon recognised early that digitisation is changing the nature of engineering jobs, with a need for greater emphasis on creative skills, agility and the ability of engineers to work across traditional geographic and industry demarcations. To take advantage of the opportunities of the future, Aurecon has prioritised developing leadership, with a new focus on innovation and inclusion.

Action taken

Aurecon is delivering a leadership program called Beyond Management – Leading Inclusively, to build leadership capability at all levels for the future. The program was developed through a ‘design jam’, drawing on internal and external knowledge around how to engage hearts and minds around equality, inclusion and innovation. It starts with senior leadership teams undertaking the program and sharing with their direct reports why they should engage in the program and their own personal reflections on inclusive leadership.

The program draws together the personal and business aspects of gender equality and focuses on the business case for diversity and inclusion from a range of perspectives. It includes a ‘Diversity Walk’ during which participants experience career progression without their own privilege and explains the difference between inclusion and diversity. The program uses *The Leadership Shadow* as a reflection tool and as a framework to create action plans for growth.

Impact

A key impact for leaders who have completed the experience to date has been the empowerment to explore with their direct reports the ‘value’ that employees do or don’t experience at Aurecon. The focus on value – both for the individual and business – creates a link between Aurecon’s focus on innovation and inclusion. Participants have reported back that they have greater personal ownership of driving inclusion in their teams and increased understanding of their own role and position in creating change.

Lessons learned

The experience has demonstrated the transformative power of taking a group of leaders on a personal journey to determine their own case for change.

Actions to Create A Gender Equal Future of Work

Accenture

Engaging with the Education Sector to Increase Girls' Participation in STEM

Context

Accenture has been able to achieve a 50/50 intake of skilled STEM graduates. However, the shrinking pipeline of women in the field, coinciding with an increased demand for STEM skill in all workplaces, presents an urgent challenge.

Action taken

To help grow the pipeline of future candidates, Accenture focused on reaching girls in early high school before they make their final subject choices. The Accenture Girls in STEM event began in 2015 in the United Kingdom, followed by events in India, France and the United States of America. In 2018, the inaugural Girls in STEM event was held in Australia. The event aims to inspire the next generation of women in STEM, engage them in all aspects of STEM studies and careers and celebrate the successes of established female role models.

In partnership with Australian Business and Community Network, Accenture engaged 60 girls aged 11-13 from socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Sydney who attended the event at Accenture offices. The session brought to life the diverse range of roles and careers within the field, covering topics such as forensic investigations, using design thinking to solve school bullying, interactive sessions with robots, drones and virtual reality and conversations with women in STEM careers. The program enabled students to practice valuable enterprise skills such as communication, collaboration and teamwork as well as fostering growth mindsets.

Impact

Formal and informal feedback on the event from teachers and students was overwhelmingly positive. Evaluations completed by the students showed a significant increase in perceptions and interest in STEM subjects. When the girls were asked about the statement 'I am interested in considering a STEM career in the future' positive responses rose from 30% to 79%.

Lessons learned

By delivering this event, Accenture learnt that greater focus is needed in the 11-14 age range when girls are making decisions about what subjects they would like to study. Further, by focusing on the application of STEM to solve problems students were passionate about increased engagement and interest in STEM studies and careers.

About Male Champions of Change

The Male Champions of Change is a coalition of CEOs, Secretaries of government departments, Non-Executive Directors and Community Leaders. The Male Champions of Change believe gender equality is one of the nation's most significant societal and economic issues.

Established in 2010, by then Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, our mission is to step up beside women to help achieve a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

The Male Champions of Change STEM Group is supported by the Australian Government's National Innovation and Science Agenda.

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www.malechampionsofchange.com