# 1. Reignite the conversation with a stronger case for change:

How to reset the conversation and reinvigorate the cause.

# What does it mean?

There is still a way to go before we achieve gender equality in the Australian Public Service. To maintain momentum to achieve positive change it's important the conversations on gender equality are frequent and constructive.

Agencies should take proactive steps to understand the gender equality conversations amongst staff and to capture the stories that may be circulating but which could be absent from the formal narrative.

# **Taking Action**

# Starting the conversation

- Know your baseline identify successes and acknowledge there may still be real issues and understand the challenges.
- Engage with all staff Provide forums and opportunities
  that enable all staff to contribute in a safe way including
  those who may currently silently or vocally oppose gender
  equality action in the agency.
- Test and adjust your messaging use the feedback to ensure your how and why meet the needs of your staff and address the circumstances unique to your agency.
- 4. Equip staff to have constructive conversations Ensure you provide all staff with the training, tools and information to continue to have meaningful and positive conversations on gender equality within your agency and the APS. This could include bias and cultural training, language guides, regular online and face to face forums and discussions and regularly reporting on key data and metrics.

# A Case Study PwC D&I Internal Current State Review

## **Issue**

A need to create a baseline of the current state of D&I across PwC and test the policies and processes against the lived experiences of staff, before developing a sustainable and targeted D&I strategy.

# **Action Taken**

- PwC undertook an extensive national consultation process engaging PwC people at different levels and parts of the business from every office across the country.
- Staff were engaged through interviews, meetings, focus groups, webexs, surveys and email correspondence.
- Started conversations about staff experiences of life at PwC with a specific focus on the culture, feelings of inclusion, career progression, mentoring and support.
- Focused on engaging any detractors and the silent majority, communication options allowed staff to participate in the process anonymously.
- Comprehensive quantitative data review from recruitment, onboarding, promotion, retention, partnership, parental leave, part time and the impact of communications and language.

# **Impact**

The feedback received was detailed, insightful and varied. Creating a detailed picture of people's perceptions allowed the team and leadership to understand the effectiveness of existing policies and approaches as well as the barriers faced by staff. This understanding set the foundation for the development of a tailored strategy with targeted interventions to engage all our people and genuinely create sustainable cultural change. Building on from existing work, what was needed were specific interventions to address the challenges, barriers and issues uncovered from the current state review, with a specific focus on changing behaviours and supporting inclusive leadership – so 'Our D&I Plan' was developed. The plan highlights the organisational imperative of D&I, shares the findings from the current state, identifies the areas of success and improvement and outlines the plan to achieve progress through three focus areas of:

- Behaviours
- Targets and transparency
- · Leadership accountability and role models

The plan was launched in early 2018 in conjunction with a comprehensive communications and engagement campaign, and is currently being implemented.





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# 2. Create a holistic picture of success:

Looking beyond 50:50 targets to a wider suite of measures to build a whole picture of diversity and (importantly) inclusion.

# What does it mean?

Successfully achieving an equal and inclusive environment is about providing equal opportunity to all employees regardless of demographic whilst addressing structural and cultural issues to embed change. There is a misconception that equality is about exclusively progressing women into leadership, however this is not the case. Ensuring you are communicating this to your employees is a vital step breaking down barriers and supporting authentic change.

# **Taking Action**

# Creating authentic cultural change

- Clearly communicate the APS equality and inclusion goals to your team
- Take ownership of making real improvements and engage your team in the way forward
- Measure the current state in your team, remembering this is more than the gender spilt (refer to the adjacent success measures you can track and manage)
- Involve your team in those results and plan a way forward

   celebrate success
- Re-measure and monitor success indicators to track progress and refocus where necessary.

Measuring for success should be undertaken continuously. The results from what is measured should be the driving force to create meaningful change.

Questions to ask yourself when assessing the results...

What am I measuring?

**Why** are these the results we are getting? What are you doing right and what needs improvements?

**How** do I refocus or change direction to drive authentic change?

# Identifying success within your team

**Demographic...** Measuring your demographics within a team is useful, however it is important to remember that the gender spilt within a team is only one small indication of equality success.

**Survey...** A valuable measurement tool is the use of surveys within your team.

A survey can provide visible support for equality and inclusion within your team and identify the areas that need to be addressed and actioned.

**Progression...** Ensuring there are consistent expectations for a role across your team is vital to ensuring all employees have equal opportunity. Ensure you have clear metrics to determine success and that they are communicated and applied to all employees.

**Retention...** Whilst being conscious of recruitment practices being equitable, fostering a positive and inclusive culture can greatly impact retention rates. Monitoring this over time will give you a holistic view of how you are tracking.

**Learning & Development...** Managing and tracking the learning opportunities provided to staff can be a indication of equal opportunity. Comparing this within functions will give you a clear picture of those in comparative positions and any gaps arising in career development between employees.

**Participation...** Monitoring participation in meetings and team activities of staff may expose areas in which employees are uncomfortable and provide opportunities for you to explore the reasoning behind it.

**Flexibility** ... Measuring who is utilising flexibility can inform your approach to increase awareness and opportunities.





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# 3. Move from Supporting Flexible Work to Truly Valuing it:

How to have a conversation around flexible working and implement it effectively in teams

# What does it mean?

Flexibility can take many forms, including variations to how, where and when work is completed. This can mean that implementation is not always simple, straight forward or permanent. Below are examples of flexible working:

- · Part-time
- · Remote working
- · Flexible hours
- Job sharing.

# How do you benefit?

Flexible working is beneficial to both employee and employer. Managing staff who have the opportunity to work flexibly can present some real management benefits including but not limited to:

- · Driving performance and wellbeing
- Increasing staff productivity & satisfaction
- · Staff independence reducing micro management
- Inspired people, increasing staff creativity and ambition
- · Attract & retain staff.

# **Taking Action**

# Six steps to refresh your team approach

### 1.Introductory Communication

The first step is to provide the team with initial communication and identify the changes you wish to make and the conversations you wish to start. Consider the best person, phrasing to send this initial email or meeting agenda item to ensure maximum engagement.

# 2. Initial Survey

A short and anonymous survey to be sent to all team members to gather baseline data on how flexible working is currently used and accessed across the team to understand current opinions on access, uptake and barriers to working flexibly.

#### 3.Reflection

Analyse and reflect on the survey results Anecdotal and personal reflections Framing and design of the team workshop

# 4.Team Workshop

This session should be designed for leaders and team members to share reflections, discuss how flexible working is currently being implemented and determine how, as individuals and as a team, improvements can be made.

### **5.Distribute Outcomes**

Ensure all information from the workshop is captured, in particular the actions and commitments, through the development of a document that will be meaningful and useful for the team. Share the document to the team with allocated next steps.

### 6. Follow up

Within 4-6 weeks post the workshop send a follow up survey to all who participated in the workshop to measure change. Key focus is on meaningful conversations and actions, follow through of commitment and an increase in feelings of understanding and ease of working.

# Managing flexibility effectively

**Lead** ... Role model flexibility. Speak positively about flexible working. Clearly define roles and KPIs. Articulate your team composition/way of working to your clients

**Learn** ... Set up active learning trial periods to test different arrangements

Build Culture ...establish inclusive behaviours at team meetings allowing for equal voice. Build trust and a sense of belonging. Be transparent to all

**Connect** ... Ensure regular opportunities to connect socially. Determine the channels and tools to maximise connection and establish communication patterns

Plan ... Plan ahead, allocate tasks to suit flexibility.

Beware of dependencies and include the whole team such as Executive Assistants

Manage ... Establish clear accountability and have open conversations about performance. Be aware of bias.





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# 4. Encourage visible role models and leadership:

Maintain leadership champions - make men who work flexibly more visible

# Men desire flexible working but have less access

Flexibility is often portrayed as a women's issue, but it is actually desired by men and women alike.

- 60% of men surveyed want to work or are already working flexibly<sup>1</sup>, including men of all ages, not just fathers with young children
- Men (17.4%) are also almost twice as likely as women (9.8%) to have their requests for flexibility declined.<sup>1</sup>
- Telling stories that reinforce existing stereotypes only continues to reinforce a message that flexibility is not accepted for all. Instead, diversity of role models, including men, invites all staff to place themselves in the story and consider what flexible working might look like for them.

# Lack of flexible working options disengages men

Many men are willing to leave their job if flexible working is not offered or able to be accessed.

 18% of men have seriously considered leaving their organisation because of a lack of flexibility. This increases to 37% for young fathers and 29% for men under 35 years of age without caring responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

Not offering flexible working impacts an organisation's ability to attract, retain and engage staff, at a significant cost to the organisation.

# Men taking parental leave impacts gender equality

Actively and visibly encouraging new dads to take parental leave can be a great way for an organisation to demonstrate to their employers that flexible working options are not restricted to women, and that they are serious about supporting gender equality and bridging the gender pay gap. Encouraging men to take parental leave is one way to help women re-enter the workforce and reduce the impact of having children on a woman's career. In fact, a woman's wage increases 6.7% for every month a father stays on parental leave.<sup>5</sup>

# **Taking Action**

# Helping Men work flexibly

# #1 Build a culture that supports flexible working for all

... Simply having a flexible working or parental leave policy isn't enough. The impact of the best flexible working policies are limited where organisational culture and leadership do not actively support and enable all staff to access the full extent of the policy. Leaders can build a culture of flexible working by actively supporting, promoting and modelling flexible working from the top. For male leaders, this means sharing their own stories of how they have personally benefited from working flexibly as well as how they are supporting other men and women in their teams to work flexibly.

**#2 Change the narrative from enabling mothers/women to all workers** ... Ensure that communications about
flexible working are not limited to women (or mothers)
working flexibly.

## #3 Equip middle management to lead flexible teams ...

Don't let middle management become a blocker! Managing a team that works flexibly for the first time can be a challenge. Managers used to having high visibility of their teams may resist such a change and deny requests or make it difficult for staff who want to work flexibly. Middle management may need to be educated on the benefits of flexible working to men and women, and upskilled on how to manage high performing flexible teams.

#4 Start by supporting a defined cohort to build momentum ... Starting with a defined cohort like new dads can help build momentum to help expand to all men. Actively supporting dads returning to work through flexible working options can be a powerful foundation for extending the message to all men that flexible working is for everyone.

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- <sup>1</sup> https://www.bain.com/insights/the-power-of-flexibility/
- <sup>2</sup> http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6333.0August%202017 ?OpenDocument
- <sup>3</sup> https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/men-get-flexible
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# 5. Embed cultural change:

Using data to myth bust and overcome bias

# What does it mean?

It is widely acknowledged that legislation and policies and strategies, such as the Australian Public Service (APS) Gender Equality strategies, have gone a long way to combat obvious discrimination on the basis of gender in the APS. However, 'one source of obstacles to greater gender equality relates to how humans think and the common stereotypes that are the products of the societies ... that we live and work in. Resistance to gender equality may arise through unconscious thinking and the biases it gives rise to'<sup>1</sup>. Bias can be mitigated through an understanding of how it works and where the 'bias hot spots' are. Culture can be shaped to better support gender equality outcomes.

# How do you benefit?

The business case for gender equality has been well made with some recent figures suggesting that the OECD countries would be 3 trillion dollars better off with greater female participation in the workforce<sup>2.</sup>

There is evidence that having more women in top leadership positions improves organisations' performance including in relation to governance<sup>3.</sup>

Organisations that tackle bias will be more likely to create a culture where talented women are attracted, retained and optin to promotion and progression processes. They will also mitigate the forces of change resistance more quickly through the use of evidence based argument.

The drivers of organisational culture that are enabling or prohibiting Gender equality outcomes.

Three dimensions of organisational culture affect its alignment:

- 1. symbolic reminders (artifacts that are entirely visible);
- 2. keystone behaviours (recurring acts that trigger other behaviours and that are both visible and invisible), and
- 3. mind-sets (attitudes and beliefs that are widely shared but exclusively invisible).

Of these, behaviours are the most powerful determinant of real change. What people actually do matters more than what they say or believe. And so to obtain more positive influences from your cultural situation, you should start working on changing the most critical behaviours – the mind-sets will follow. Over time, altered behaviour patterns and habits can produce better results.

Leadership role modelling the behaviours that support gender equality and visibly supporting others that do so is therefore critical<sup>4</sup>.

# **Taking Action**

# Some considerations for creating a culture that supports gender equality

1. Think beyond unconscious bias training to tackling bias hot spots:

Unconscious bias training should be one tool or intervention in a holistic suite of actions to tackle bias. Other areas where bias should be consciously tackled include:

- Processes for identifying talent within the organisation, including identifying people with potential for promotion. Use multiple objective data points within a robust analytical framework to arrive at conclusions around talent. See Are we there yet?: The gender equality journey in the Australian Public Service, for how Home Affairs are doing just that<sup>5</sup>.
- Agree and enforce behaviours and chairing conventions for key meetings and governance forums that encourage equal participation
- Be mindful of gender stereotyping in task allocation and allocation of Acting or 'crisis management' roles.
- Avoid biased and non evidence based language in explanations of performance. 'He's a gun<sup>6.'</sup>
- 2. Treat your gender equality strategy implementation like any other culture change program and be held accountable for 'Return on Investment' and benefits realisation
- Consider all organisation elements that drive and shape culture and incorporate these into your program strategy and plans, acknowledging the dependencies
- Establish gender equality program plans, governance and reporting arrangements that follow better practice Program and Project Management (PPM) and change management principles and be held accountable for budget, quality and time measures.
- Identify and track tangible benefits and include predictive measures so that benefits can be tracked through longitudinal trends
- Have appropriate leadership sponsorship. Aim for the Secretary, or Deputy Secretary equivalent roles.

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- 1 3. 6. Unconscious Knowledge, Bias and Mitigating Strategies; The Centre for Ethical Leadership; Ormond College, The University of Melbourne
- 2. Women in Work Index 2018, PwC.
- 10 Principles for Mobilising Your Organisational Culture, by <u>Jon Katzenbach</u>, <u>Carolin Oelschlegel</u>, and <u>James Thomas</u>

Source: The Katzenbach Center

For further insights: See strategy-business.com/10PrinciplesCulture

Are we there yet?: Progress of the Australian Public Service gender equality strategy, 2018





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# 6. Focus on inclusion & intersectionality:

Creating inclusive leaders

# What does it mean?

The APS is increasingly attracting a diverse workforce. In order to achieve the best out of the workforce APS leaders must be inclusive. The demonstration of more inclusive behaviours by leaders (be they senior executives or managers) will increase the proportion of employees who feel highly included and valued in a team.

The current siloed approach to equality action means people have to choose which pillar (gender, culture, ability etc) with which they identify most (or the one they feel disadvantages them the most). People's efforts and actions are also siloed and sometimes in tension. A singular focus on one identity – gender - limits an organisations' ability to harness the benefits that diversity can bring.

To ensure genuine gender diversity, attention needs to be given to all elements of diversity to correct biases and obstacles to ensure a level playing field between and within gender groups.

Even leaders who fully embrace the business case for diversity can feel unprepared to lead diverse teams or paralysed by the fear of offending someone or appearing ignorant. Yet, it is better to acknowledge diversity and inclusion and the associated issues than to say nothing and ignore it.

# How do you benefit?

The ability of a leader to create an inclusive culture is on of the most important factors for creating sustainable and rewarding diversity.

Diverse leadership can:

- · Help attract and importantly retain diverse talent
- Enables team members to feel like they can be authentic and bring their whole selves to work as they are valued for their diversity of though and background
- Achieve improved business outcomes by enabling staff to contribute to their full potential.

# Taking action

#### Five actions of inclusive leaders

- Committed to diversity and inclusion vocally committed to diversity and inclusion because it aligns with their personal values, and they believe in the business case for change
- Conscious of their own bias conscious of their own blind spots as well as flaws in the system, and work hard to ensure opportunities for others
- Open and supportive ensures all team members are given the opportunity to contribute and when they do feel like they are listened to and valued
- 4. Focused on growth and innovation makes it safe to propose novel ideas, challenge accepted practice and incorporates different perspectives into solutions
- Collaborative empowers team members to make decisions, seek advice and implement feedback form others and shares credit for team success.





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