



Women's
AGENDA

**PRESS FOR
(IMMEDIATE)
PROGRESS**

*A snapshot of women at work and how
employers can help shift the dial by 2020*

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INTRODUCTION

On International Women's Day 2018 we were asked to 'Press for Progress'.

That call to action followed last year's 'Be Bold For Change.'

Back in 2017 following the 'bold' call, we worked with a roundtable of leaders with the help of Baker McKenzie to workshop five ideas for shifting the dial for women in business by 2020.

We're now one year closer to that target year, and it's clear that not enough has changed.

So do we shift the deadline? Is it now 2021, or even 2025?

No, we don't move the deadline. We merely up the intensity.

By 8th March 2020, we want to see significantly more progress achieved for women in Australia. To get there, we must 'press for progress', immediately.

As such, in this report we've revisited the five 'bold' ideas we came up with in 2017 and, based on more recent research findings, built on them by sharing an additional three key things employers can do.

We've also created this report as a comprehensive record of where we are at in March 2018 when it comes to workplace gender equality, with the information shared based on a large number of reports, data sets and other research – including research and examples released in the days just prior to publishing.

The 'bold' ideas we can use to push for significant progress are listed at the end of this report. We urge employers to consider taking on at least one, if not all of them.

Thank you to Baker McKenzie who supported the research and production of our 2018 report, as well as its launch on the 12th March 2018. And thank you to our lead report researcher and writer Kristine Ziwica.

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A SHAPSHOT: GLASS NOT YET HALF FULL

By many indicators, women in Australia are on the forward march in our workplaces.

Here are the headlines:

- More women are working full stop. The [Women's workforce participation](#) rate now stands at 59.1 percent, [down slightly from 59.3 percent](#) last year, but much higher than forty years ago, when it stood at [43.4 percent](#).
- The [full-time national gender pay gap is trending down to 15.3 percent](#), from a ten year high of 18.5 percent in 2014.
- Women hold [11 CEO positions in the ASX 200, compared to just 4 in 2008](#). And they hold [21 percent of ASX200 Executive Leadership positions, compared to 11 percent ten years ago](#). However, a number of such organisations still do not have a woman on their boards, and even more have no women in their executive leadership teams

- The number of [women across all manager categories has grown consistently](#) since Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Agency first started keeping records in 2013.
- And Australia now ranks 35th in the world, according to the [World Economic Forum's Global Gender Report](#), up ten places from 46th last year, reversing a backward slide from a high of 15th in 2006.

Yet, the glass is not quite half full.

All industries have a gender pay gap in favour of men. All senior roles are dominated by men. And is a minor recovery in the Global Gender Report rankings after a drop of 30 places in just ten years (largely fueled by Australia's relatively low women's workforce participation rate) really an indicator working women's are heading towards a fairer, more equitable future?

What's more, you can't look at the state of women at work in 2018 without thinking about the women who aren't at work and asking why. Australian women's workforce participation rate is low compared to men's ([59.1 percent compared to 70.2 percent for men](#)), they overwhelmingly constitute the part-time workforce (68.4 percent) and many women, particularly those with children, report they are "underemployed", i.e. they would like to work more but can't ([12 percent of those with school age children and 9.1 percent for those with young children](#)).

AUSTRALIA'S RANKED
35 in the world
ON GENDER EQUALITY,
ACCORDING TO THE
WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM





Then there's also the urgent need to explore leadership diversity beyond gender alone, with DCA research finding just 10% of culturally diverse female leaders feel that their their opinions are valued and respected, despite 88% of such women planning to advance to a very senior role. The research found just 2.5% of the 7,491 directors of ASX-listed companies were culturally diverse women in 2015.

Achieving change is going to take a concerted ongoing effort, and not just by Australia's women, who are increasingly mobilizing behind the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements to press for broader, structural change here in Australia and around the world.

It's going to require the attention of our politicians, policy makers and employers, who in 2018 must not only cede to the long touted and perhaps more palatable "business case", but to the palpable and growing impatience of generations of women, who are understandably frustrated by the slow pace of change.

"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."

ANNE-MARIE ALLGROVE, PARTNER AND CHAIR OF THE
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE, BAKER MCKENZIE

GENDER PAY GAP: AUSTRALIA IS A 'MID RANGE' PERFORMER

In 2018, [Australia's national gender pay gap](#), the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time base salary earnings expressed as a percentage of men's earnings, stands at 15.3 percent. That's \$251.20 less per week.

If you're thinking, my that's a rather long caveat explaining precisely what this figure measures and averages don't tell us how many women out there are earning less than men for doing the *exact same job*, well, you're not alone.

But there are important reasons the gender pay gap is measured this way. It indicates women's *overall* position in the paid workforce, and that's the point. The figure captures *all* the factors that drive the gender pay gap, not just direct discrimination, i.e. paying Bob and Sally differently for doing the same job. It draws our attention to the structural issues, like the unequal distribution

NATIONAL PAY GAP NOW AT

15.3%

WOMEN AT MANAGERIAL LEVEL
ARE PAID ON AVERAGE

26.5%

LESS THAN MEN

of caring responsibilities, occupational segregation, the undervaluing of women's work, the lack of women in senior positions, the lack of flexible work and the concentration of women in part-time work with poor pay and prospects. If we're serious about addressing the gender pay gap and all it illuminates, only a full diagnosis can lead to effective treatment.

On the diagnostic front, [a recent report from Diversity Council Australia](#) suggested sex discrimination accounts for 38 percent of the gap, years not working (interruptions) 21 percent, and industry/ occupational segregation 30 percent.

Drilling down beyond the national average, women in the Financial and Insurance Services Industry continue to face the highest gender pay gap (29.6 percent), while women in Public Administration and Safety the lowest (5.9 percent). Women who live in Western Australia are likely to experience the highest gap (22.8 percent) compared to those who live in South Australia who experience the lowest (9.8 percent). And [women at managerial level are paid on average a whopping 26.5 percent less than men](#) – that's a shocking \$93,000 less a year.

The good news is that the national gender pay gap is down, ever so slightly, from 16.2 percent last year. And it's down from a ten-year high (in 2014) of 18.5 percent.

Meanwhile, a number of large organisations are making well-publicised efforts to close their gender pay gaps, including Australia Post, SA Water and Energy Australia.

But don't break out the champagne just yet. The fact is, Australia's national gender pay gap has remained pretty stubborn -- between 15 and 19% -- for two decades. An argument could be made that progress is glacial, if not stalled. A new [report from the OECD on the gender pay gap classified Australia as a "mid-range performer"](#) compared to other developed countries.

In 2018, is "mid-range" good enough?

DOING WELL? THE CAREERS & INDUSTRIES LEADING ON CHANGE

How do you define “doing well”? For the purposes of this report, we’ll look at a few things, including pay and seniority.

Money and status aren’t everything, but they are useful metrics that give us an indication of women’s overall position in the workplace.

When it comes to pay, as previously noted, [according to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#), those working in Public Administration and Safety have the lowest average national gender pay gaps. And those in the Wholesale Trade, Education & Training, Accommodation and Food Services and Manufacturing are also getting a, comparatively, better deal when it comes to pay equality.

There is, however, another way to look at this. The WGEA’s findings are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ earnings survey, Census data and workplace data collected by the Agency. But there’s also what people tell the tax office and how that plays out in 350, much more specific, occupational categories.

THERE IS A **63%**
HOURS ADJUSTED GENDER PAY GAP
BETWEEN **MALE AND FEMALE SURGEONS**

**MEN OUTEARN WOMEN
IN ALL BUT
14 occupations**

This [data was recently analyzed by Ben Phillips, a principal research fellow at the Australian National University’s Centre for Social Research and Methods](#), and it indicates men out earn women in all but 14 occupations. So it’s a challenge, according to this measure, to name specific occupations where women are “doing well” insofar as they out-earn men or do not experience a gender pay gap. But such occupations include bookkeepers, mixed crop and livestock farmers, earthmoving plant operators, domestic cleaners and fitness instructors.

You’ll note, however, that they are not among the highest paid professions generally, and that, clearly, is part of the problem. [The women in the highest earning professions, according to ATO data](#), are Judges, Neurosurgeons, plastic and reconstructive surgeons, futures traders, and vascular surgeons. But while women in these professions earn the most compared to women overall, and in that regard they are “doing well”, they are under-represented in all these occupations and earn less than their male peers. Much, much less. Surgeons, for example, have an hours adjusted gender pay gap of 63 percent.

Turning to seniority, which industries are making the greatest strides in advancing women into leadership positions, at executive level and on their boards? Overall, [according to the WGEA](#), Health Care and Social Assistance have the highest proportion of women in management, followed by Education and Training, the Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services.

According to Conrad Liveris’ [Gender Equality at Work 2018 Report](#), female executives are most likely to be found in healthcare, energy, financial services and some infrastructure companies.

WORK TO DO: THE CAREERS AND INDUSTRIES PLAYING CATCH UP

When it comes to pay, those working in the Financial and Insurance Services sector are the worst off.

But their pay inequality crown – if that’s a thing, it certainly is a dubious honour – is in danger of being taken by the Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services industry, which has seen its gender pay gap steadily increase every year (now at 31.4 percent) since the WGEA started collecting records in 2013. Other poor performers in the bottom five include Construction, Agriculture, and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

In terms of specific occupations, [Ben Phillip’s from ANU’s analysis](#)’ of the Australian Tax Office Data clearly indicates which occupations will see women experience the highest gender pay gap: Barristers (141 percent),

Financial Dealers (70 percent), Electrical Distribution Trades Workers (66 percent) and Surgeons (63 percent).

Meanwhile, the rate of women in the partnerships of major law firms is (slowly) improving, with the AFR’s June 2017 survey finding women account for 25.2% of such positions. It’s slow in accounting firms also, with December 2017 AFR figures finding women make up just 1 in 5 partners in Australia’s largest 100 accounting firms. 35 firms on the list have no female partners.

Turning again to seniority, [according to the WGEA](#), Construction, Mining, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Public Administration and Safety and Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services have made the *least* progress in advancing women into management.

According to Conrad Liveris’ [Gender Equality at Work 2018](#) Report, female executives are least likely to be employed by resources, agriculture and property companies.

“This year the AICD will be focusing on those 64-odd boards that have only one woman on them, as well as the 9 that at the start of 2018 somehow still had no women on them at all. In particular, those companies with one woman need to realise that one woman does not gender diversity make. Some of those boards may have appointed one woman to their boards to get organisations like ours off their back and to get off the ‘name and shame’ list, so there’s still work to be done. However, there’s no silver bullet. We need to continue influencing across a range of areas to achieve the cultural change needed in corporate Australia. Ideally that would include all ASX 200 Chairs making the commitment to achieving at least 30% women on their boards and driving that change.”

ELIZABETH PROUST AO,
CHAIRMAN OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF COMPANY DIRECTORS

WHAT ABOUT WOMEN RUNNING BUSINESSES?

Women are starting businesses at a faster rate than men right now, with females now accounting for around a third of entrepreneurs in Australia (the figures vary according to different reports)

And although research by Mastercard recently ranked Australia as fifth for the highest number of entrepreneurs in the world, and a number of high-profile female entrepreneurs are regularly celebrated and profiled in the media, we need more data regarding earnings and wealth gaps between male and female entrepreneurs and business owners.

There are some stats that may tell part of the story.

Globally, a study by 99 Designs of 3000 entrepreneurs found that male entrepreneurs are more than twice as likely as their female counterparts to raise more than \$100,000 in outside funding.

According to a 2017 survey of Australian funds by the AFR, just 26% of active investments made by Australia's top nine funds were given to businesses [with female co-founders](#).

Indeed, it's telling that just nine of the 100 Australians under 40 featured on the AFR's 'Young Rich List' were female this year, given the list is largely dominated by entrepreneurs and startup founders.

An ABS report prepared for the Office For Women in [2015 found that 12.5%](#) of the then 5.3 million employed women in Australia were operating their own businesses, with a 46% increase in the number of women business operators in the [two decades to 2014](#). It found a wider pay gap between men and women running businesses, than across the general population.

We need a better understanding on the pay gap between men and women running businesses – especially given an increase in female entrepreneurs, and particularly given difficulties and complications for female business owners in accessing resources and services like paid parental leave.

Male entrepreneurs are more than twice as likely as their female counterparts to raise more than \$100,000 in outside funding

THE DOMESTIC LOAD: WHO'S DOING THE CARING?

There's a very clear answer to the question of who is doing the caring: Women.

[According to new data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) (drawn from the 2016 Census), the typical Australian woman spends between five and 14 hours a week doing unpaid domestic housework, while the typical Australian man does less than five hours a week.

[An analysis of housework and childcare trends for stay at home parents released by the Australian Institute of Family Studies](#) late last year showed stay at home mothers clocked a combined total of 74 hours a week in housework and childcare, compared to 47 hours for stay at home dads. Cue outrage headlines: Mr. Mums still happy to shirk the work.

This matters, because as long as women are tethered to the home by an unequal burden of the domestic load, they will not be able to work in equal numbers and continue to be diverted onto the so called "mummy track" of part-time work with poor pay and poor prospects, while accumulating the impact of the "motherhood penalty" over a lifetime. Indeed, [Australian women have some of the highest part-time work rates in the world, according to the OECD](#). In fact, it's in

the top three, surpassed only by Switzerland and the Netherlands.

And this again matters because we must ask ourselves why this is happening, and what policies and employment practices (in addition to broader culture change) are needed to help create a revolution for men at home that supports the revolution for women at work. Do our public policies and employment practices support men as carers?

The 2015 Save the Children Report, State of Australian Fathers, found that the relatively limited length of paid leave for fathers compared to other OECD countries was a major obstacle to early bonding for fathers and their children.

Meanwhile, a 2016 study by Bain and Co and Chief Executive Women found 60 percent of men wanted flexible working hours, but were coming up against a lack of senior support. And an Australian Human Rights Commission report found men are twice as likely as women to have their request for flexibility rejected.

HOURS PER WEEK DOING
UNPAID DOMESTIC HOUSEWORK



between **5** and **14**
HOURS
AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

less than **5**
HOURS
AUSTRALIAN MEN

WOMEN'S HEALTH & SAFETY

It's reassuring to see that workplaces are further considering the role they play in the health and safety of staff, but there's more work to be done.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has identified domestic and family violence as a workplace issue, given the majority of women affected are employed. Increasingly, we're seeing senior leaders speaking out on this point.

We are also seeing more organisations offering paid domestic violence leave. But the access to such options vary dramatically for women depending on where they work, and if they are self employed. A recent Women's Agenda/Good Shepherd study on paid domestic violence leave found 36% of respondents have no access to paid family/domestic violence leave, while another 17% were unsure if they did or not. Of the small sample of self employed women we surveyed, many said their financial livelihoods could be destroyed if they needed to take time away from work due to domestic or family violence.

Meanwhile, the rates of domestic and family violence remain alarmingly high in Australia.

The February 2018 report Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia found that on average one woman a week is killed by a current or former partner, with one in six women having been subjected to physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner, since the age of 15.

Domestic violence is causing more illness, disability and deaths than any other risk factor for women between the ages of 25 and 44. Indigenous women are 32 more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence.

The report also found that one in two Australian women have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15.

When it comes to the physical and mental health of women in Australia, the stats may tell a compelling story about the consequences of the hours being put in at home and work.

Recent research by Jean Hailes on the physical and mental health issues raised by 10,000 Australian women between the ages of 18 and 80 found that 40% had been professionally diagnosed with anxiety or depression at some point in their lives. The survey authors linked the increased anxiety to a lack of physical activity, finding that 'busy' women between the ages of 18 and 35 were more likely to report at least mild levels of anxiety.

Jean Hailes found 60% of women do not complete the recommended 2.5 hours of moderate physical activity a week, with a lack of time and energy listed as common barriers. Meanwhile, The Imagination Gap report commissioned by Atlassian in partnership with the AFL Women's League found that just 34% of women continue participation in team sports into their adult years, compared with 50% of men.

WOMEN'S RETIREMENT: A SECURE ECONOMIC FUTURE?

According to a new report released last year by Australia National University and Per Capita, Not So Super for Women, Australia's compulsory superannuation system is clearly failing women.

The latest figures show women retire with around half as much superannuation (53 percent) as men.

A survey of 4,000 workers and further analysis of available data conducted by the authors of the report pointed to the not so surprising causes: intermittent, low paid work combined with the fact that women do the overwhelming majority of unpaid housework, parenting and caring. In short, the report found the most significant explanation for the superannuation gender gap is motherhood. The sting of the greatest "motherhood penalty" hits women in their retirement.

60%

OF MEN WANTED FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS, BUT THERE WAS A **LACK OF SENIOR SUPPORT**

Also last year, the Financial Services Council and the Self Managed Super Fund Association hosted the Women, Super & Wealth Summit, which brought together thought leaders from the superannuation and wealth management industries to debate "real world solutions".

[In her speech at the event, Sally Loane, the CEO of the FSC](#), stressed the importance of improving girls and women's financial literacy and access to financial advice, and she praised businesses leading change by paying super contributions for women on parental leave. In a subsequent [editorial for the Age](#), she suggested the removal of barriers in the Sex Discrimination Act to allow employers to legally pay women higher superannuation to help narrow the gap.

Last year's flurry of activity, once again highlighting the dire situation for women heading towards retirement and putting forward policy solutions, follows a 2016 Senate inquiry into the issue. The resulting report, [A Husband is Not a Retirement Plan](#), made 19 recommendations, including paid parental leave with a super guarantee for those on leave, more rights to flexible work, and dropping plans to make people wait until they are 70 to access the age pension.

Two years later, the Government has yet to publish a reply to this inquiry, and when [Women's Agenda recently went in search of answers from the Office for Women](#), who state on their website that "strengthening women's economic security" is a priority, we were given the run around and sent onwards to a variety of other government departments.

Is there a coordinated cross government strategy to address this issue? And if there is, why won't anyone talk about it? Who is going to capitalize on the significant policy work already done and drive forward change?

BARRIERS STILL IN THE WAY IN 2018

Gender inequality and its various manifestations in our workplaces is a complex problem with a variety of causes.

As we progress into 2018, a lot of the kinds of overt discrimination faced by previous generations of women are less common, though not vanquished, as some would prefer to believe.

The Weinstein allegations and explosion of sexual harassment and assault allegations that followed remind us of that. The fact that women over the age of 55 are the fastest growing group of the homeless population is a salient reminder of the lifetime cumulative effect of the “motherhood penalty”.

We live in a society that still values men more than women, and at work this happens to varying degrees in a variety of ways. The Diversity Council tried to unpick the major drivers and determined that sex discrimination accounts for 38 percent of the gender pay gap, years not working/interruptions 21 percent (a proxy of motherhood penalty), and industry/ occupational segregation 30 percent.

“It’s not right or fair to expect women to have to wait any longer for the pay gap to close – so, we’re fixing that right now.”

CATHERINE TANNA,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENERGY AUSTRALIA

So if you’re looking for answers, there are three biggies that don’t explain everything but explain a lot.

Sadly, the impact of years not working, usually due to the birth of children, has more than doubled since the Diversity Council first did research into the drivers of the gender pay gap in 2007 – suggesting the impact of the so called “motherhood” penalty in Australia is on the rise.

Meanwhile when it comes to women on boards and in executive management positions, Elizabeth Proust AM, Chairman of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, told Women’s Agenda she was concerned about a different mind-set preventing progress: that one woman on board is a sufficient commitment to diversity.

Occupational segregation remains firmly entrenched in Australia. [Women are overrepresented in the study of health, education, commerce, humanities, creative arts and services, while men dominate the study of information technology, engineering, construction and environmental sciences.](#)

[Australian women have some of the highest part-time work rates in the world, according to the OECD.](#) In fact, it’s in the top three, surpassed only by Switzerland and the Netherlands. And sadly, [the impact of years not working, usually due to the birth of children, has more than doubled since the Diversity Council first did research into the drivers of the gender pay gap in 2007](#) – both suggesting the impact of the so called “motherhood” penalty in Australia is entrenched and on the rise.

[New research from PwC](#) shows women are aware of this, and concerned. Almost half of professional women who responded to the survey were nervous about the impact starting a family might have on their career, and nearly half of mothers who returned to work felt they were overlooked for promotions upon their return to work.

GREEN SHOOTS OF CHANGE

To mark International Women's Day this year, both the new Minister for Women Kelly O'Dwyer and her shadow Tanya Plibersek delivered wide ranging substantive speeches on the subject of women and gender equality to the National Press Club.

O'Dwyer flagged that the budget would contain measures to address gender inequality. Plibersek launched Labor's National Strategy for Gender Equality. Ahead of the next Federal election, the issues raised in this report may rise up the political agenda and be the subject of a true competition of ideas.

According to [Conrad Liveris' Gender Equality at Work 2018 Report](#), based on the previous three year appointments cycle, 69 women are likely to be appointed in the 2018 calendar year, meaning that the 30 per cent target set by the Australian Institute of Company Directors is likely to be met in December. This would be the steepest increase in women on company boards since 2012-13.

In Australia, there is yet more evidence supporting the "business case" for gender equality. Liveris' report also shows that companies with greater diversity among their management and directorships are less volatile, and sustain better than average performance on a range of metrics.

Yet more evidence has emerged proving efforts to fix gender inequality by "fixing women", as Catherine Fox put it in her widely acclaimed 2017 book *Stop Fixing Women*, or encouraging them to "lean in" as Sheryl Sandberg famously put it, are a non-starter. [New research from RMIT showed that while confidence helps men get ahead, it makes little difference for women.](#) The penny is dropping that simply targeting efforts at "boosting women's confidence" won't work and it's time to do the hard yards of tackling structural inequalities.

This year, [a record 120 employers](#) received the employer of choice stamp of approval from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), a record WGEA says indicates that Australian employers are increasingly recognising the benefits of improving gender equality in workplaces.

In November, WGEA also revealed that more employers are pursuing measures indicating they are taking gender equality seriously, with 38 percent of the 11,000 employers reporting to WGEA saying they are undertaking gender pay audits, and 72 per cent of employers reporting they now have an overall gender equality strategy (of course a 'strategy' does not solve the problem). When it comes to flexible work, 68 per cent of employers now say they have a strategy or policy in place – which is an increase in 5 per cent from the previous reporting period, but does raise concerns for the remaining 32 percent.

Meanwhile when it comes to the gender pay gap, we're seeing some large employers taking solid steps to close it. In 2017 Australia Post announced it reached zero on its gender pay gap, while Energy Australia [announced in March 2018](#) that it will spend \$1.2 million closing a gender pay gap affecting 350 women in its organisation by April 2018.

Other examples of companies making 'bold' moves include Viva Energy Australia, which in 2017 announced it will pay full time superannuation to part time employees for up to five years.

By putting an emphasis on diversity, and publishing and acknowledging how much work it has to do, tech company Atlassian has made significant progress over the past year, achieving majority female appointments across its tech [graduates in its Sydney office](#), notable given just 13% of technical degrees in Australia are going to women. Atlassian shifted its emphasis from evaluating candidates based on 'culture fit' to 'values fit' and also required a diverse set of candidates to be interviewed for executive positions – with the latter move seeing a number of women appointed to C-level and board positions.

GAZING INTO THE CRYSTAL BALL: THE FUTURE OF WOMEN AND WORK

Now that we've had a good long look at the situation for women at work in 2018, let's gaze into our crystal ball and look at what the future may hold.

According to Professor Rae Cooper, that exercise is, unfortunately, not undertaken often enough. "We are talking about robots more than we are about women in the future of work debate – this must change," she said on releasing their report on women and the future of work in March 2018.

Professor Cooper and her colleagues at the University of Sydney, including Professor Marian Baird and Dr. Elizabeth Hill, set out to fill this gap with their groundbreaking [Women and the Future of Work report](#).

The study, which included a representative survey of more than 2000 working women aged 16 to 40, showed significant gaps in job security, respect and access to flexibility and training, i.e. gaps between young women's expectations and reality.

The report provides an excellent insight into the kind of working world women would like us to create, and how far we have yet to go.

For example, 90 percent of women identified access to flexibility as important, but only 16 percent strongly agreed that they had access to the flexibility they need. The majority of women (92 percent) said developing the right skills and qualifications was important to success at work, but only 40 percent said they had access to affordable training.

And interestingly, at a time when sexual harassment has dominated the headlines (the report revealed that a shocking one in ten young women are currently experiencing sexual harassment in their jobs), "having a job in which I am treated with respect" was the number one priority for young women, ahead of having an interesting or well-paid job.

How optimistic are young women that we can address these gaps in expectations and reality while tackling the shocking levels of harassment? Only 53 percent of young women said they expected to see an improvement in gender equality in the workforce in the coming decade.

Surely, we can do better than that.

90%

OF WOMEN IDENTIFIED ACCESS TO FLEXIBILITY AS IMPORTANT, BUT ONLY **16%** STRONGLY AGREED THAT THEY HAD ACCESS TO THE FLEXIBILITY THEY NEED.

WHAT NEXT? PUSH FOR IMMEDIATE PROGRESS

How can employers help shift in the dial for women at work by 2020?

In 2017, we worked with a roundtable of senior leaders to come up with five bold ideas for shifting the dial for women in business by 2020.

At the time, we concluded that there is no silver bullet to workplace gender equality, the best option is to pursue a number of 'shifts' that can, in collaboration, promote significant and sustainable change.

We stand by these bold ideas, and urge more employers to consider how they can help accelerate progress.

So on the following pages we've revisited these five ideas. And based on what we've seen work and not work over the previous 12 months, as well as other concerns raised over this period, we've listed another three ideas we'd like to see more employers pursue.

Of course, there is also significant work for policy makers to do – a topic for a separate report.

“There are a host of jobs that might legitimately need to be full-time but in the majority of roles there are degrees of flexibility. Why put in place artificial barriers that don't need to be there?”

KELLY O'DWYER, MINISTER FOR WOMEN

1 Shift the cultural expectations through conversations.

Every day assumptions made about men and women at work are limiting the opportunities both men and women can pursue and explore – such as flexible work, interests outside of work, work-related travel and overseas opportunities, the option to work on big projects etc.

How to do it

- Start promoting stories within your organisation, encourage employees to see and relate to the differences they see in each other.
- Encourage conversations in the office about life outside of work, incorporate these into more structured team meetings, celebrations or social events. Or, start a monthly 'Conversation Series' inviting employees to share more about their priorities and interests outside of work.
- Ask employees to share a diversity story, a lesson, or challenge during regular meetings.
- Encourage male leaders to discuss their flexible work arrangements – encourage them to take up and to talk about, paid parental leave.
- Make flexible work a genuine employee wide opportunity, rather than something for 'working mothers' alone. Encourage employees to discuss what they're doing on the days they're not in the office

2 Shift the corporate culture: Through Pressure and influence

Organisations will quickly take action on gender diversity once external pressure is applied. We've seen this across ASX 200 companies, where the number of women on boards has been improved significantly since 2009, due to a number of factors including ASX reporting guidelines and heightened media attention.

While there's a role for consumers and shareholders to play applying this influence, employers can themselves play a direct role.

How to do it

- Set a requirement for major suppliers to share specific diversity stats. Or, go one step further, and suggest there will be a reduced fee for those that can't present acceptable diversity standards.
- Ask recruiters and head hunters to present candidate lists that are 50% female.
- Highlight diversity standards and expectations during client meetings.
- Invite shareholders to vote on the diversity performances of organisations, just like they would on salaries.

“Employers must assess the #colourgap in their organisations. Are the colours of the community reflected in the business? Remember diversity is about people who come in different ethnicity, ability and sexuality. Ensure that your HR and recruitment processes are unbiased.”

SADHANA SMILES, CEO,
HARCOURTS VICTORIA

3 Shift the numbers: Through targets and KPIs

What gets measured, gets managed. Reported and publicized targets will play a significant role in increasing the number of women in senior leadership.

But these targets need to go beyond just women on boards, to being applied to address numerous aspects of inclusivity.

Targets can be applied to everything from the number of women and the breakdown of ethnicity across different levels of the organization, to the number of women and minority groups being formally sponsored. Other areas for targets could include the number of promotions, the number of women attending training course, and the number of female-led suppliers being used.

Targets will work if people are incentivized. Establish clear reporting mechanism and link them to the KPIs of senior managers.

How to do it

- Start with setting targets for elements of the business that can be clearly monitored, such as formalised sponsorship programs, the rate of women attending training courses, and the number of women being shortlisted for promotions and new hire opportunities.
- Link such targets to the job descriptions of senior management, and those connected to seeing such targets come to fruition – such as direct team leaders, and other business functions like HR and procurement.
- Make senior leaders accountable for achieving such targets by linking them to the KPIs attached to bonuses.
- Where possible, report such progress against targets on a 'Diversity' section of a company website, much like tech companies in the United States have done. Be clear and upfront with customers, clients and employees on how you're tracking against such targets.

4 Shift the Gender Pay Gap: Do a Pay Audit and rectify it

Surprising pay gaps often emerge when organisations conduct pay audits, especially those that believe they don't actively discriminate against women.

A pay audit is the first step in addressing the problem. But committing to fund any pay gaps that emerge is the next. AECOM did this two years ago, allocating millions of dollars to close the gap, while Energy Australia has just announced it will spend \$1.2 million closing the gender pay gap affecting 350 of its female employees.

How to do it

- Get serious and establish a budget for rectifying the problem.
- Identify like for like gender pay gaps across the organisation.
- Address common factors that may have contributed to like-for-like pay gaps: Are women given a fair opportunity to negotiate their pay? Are gaps emerging during the recruitment process?
- Link pay gap reports and measures to rectify it, to the KPIs of senior management.

“Employers need to stop writing off mothers who have taken some time out of the workforce. The assumption that a career break signals a lack of ambition is wildly outdated and costly for employers. A more open-minded, flexible attitude to talent and progression is the key.”

SACHA NAUTRA,
FINANCE CORRESPONDENT,
THE ECONOMIST

5 Shift the profile of women: Give ‘Mid Level’ Women a voice

When we workshoped these ideas with various senior women, they openly said they don't need any further visibility in demonstrating their capacity or in getting more opportunities.

But they could see that women at the ‘middle point of their careers with ambitions for leadership’ are often struggling to be recognized. This period of a woman's career can also coincide with taking on additional responsibilities at home.

How to do it

- Create formal sponsorship programs to assist mid-level women – establish targets for the number of women involved (as suggested above).
- Promote the profiles and stories of mid-level women through internal communications. Don't target senior women alone.
- Support and encourage opportunities for ‘mid level’ women to build on expertise and focus areas they can use to establish an industry and media profile.
- Offer media and social media training to ‘mid level’ women to support them in establishing a personal brand as an influence.
- Celebrate and acknowledge the success of women across all levels of the organisations. Use company communications and social media to share their stories.
- Establish leadership programs that enable women to connect and engage with different functions of the business.
- Establish recruitment programs that encourage women to make ‘mid career’ shifts – for example into roles and industries that have traditionally required specified university degrees, but could actually benefit from the insights and knowledge women can bring in from both their life and working experiences.

In 2018, we're building on the previous five 'bold' ideas workshopped in 2017, to share three simple measures we believe employers committed to progress can press to achieve right now.

1 Press to end sexual harassment at work

Tick-a-box training is not enough. A no tolerance policy actively shared from the very top of an organisation is needed. This is vital not only for protecting staff, but also for protecting the reputation of an organisation, given the #MeToo movement is seeing more women speak up, including publicly, about the sexual harassment they have experienced at work.

How to do it

- Issue repeated statements from the CEO or most senior leaders of an organisation noting the 'no tolerance' approach, including stating that those who can not respect their colleagues should 'leave'.
- Internally publish clear guidelines for those who wish to report sexual harassment regarding how they can do it and whom they can turn to
- Establish working groups that can determine the extent of the problem, and set targets and goals for eliminating it
- The duty should be on employers to protect women, much like it is regarding Health and Safety legislation, as Professor Rae Cooper from the University of Sydney suggests.

“Employers need to value the contributions women make equally and objectively. It sounds simple but it's perhaps the most powerful thing employers can do to help improve opportunities for women in their workplace.”

TANIA GARONZI, MANAGING DIRECTOR,
HISENSE AUSTRALIA

2 Press to make flexible careers an actual reality

A 'part time' or flexible job should not halt career advancement, nor result in diminished roles and responsibilities. Making 'flexible careers' a reality requires an overhaul of how flexible work is currently being used and who it is considered to be for. We need to see men and women working flexibly, with the option provided to parents and those without kids, and to everyone no matter what their leadership level in an organisation.

How to do it

- Establish workplace goals for flexible work – what will the ideal scenario look like by 2020, what small targets can you put in place to get there?
- Initiate “lead loudly” policies, asking leaders to be loud and proud about leaving the office in order to take care of responsibilities outside of work. Also ask leaders to avoid staying in the office after a set time each afternoon.
- Note that the CEO, MD or most senior person in the organisation sets the ultimate example when it comes to flexibility.
- Advertise roles as 'flexible' to encourage a greater candidate pool. Avoid terms like 'part time' and 'full time'. Discuss the details of how and when the job will be completed with the successful candidate, rather than determining it prior to them being hired.
- Introduce options for further leave or reduced hours during school holidays.
- Ban the scheduling of meetings out of work hours, as well as late in the day when meetings run the risk of going overtime and hindering an employee's ability to meet responsibilities outside of work

3 Press to prioritise employee health, wellbeing & safety

Addressing sexual harassment is one step in improving this, while taking steps to improve outcomes for those affected by family or domestic violence is another. From there and beyond Health & Safety regulations, employers can and must consider the mental and physical health of staff.

How to do it

- Introduce paid domestic violence leave to employees, as well as other flexibility options for those who may need counselling, or assistance in leaving a home or difficult situation. Communicate what is offered regularly. Good Shepherd offers a Family Violence Policy that can help other employers.
- Workshop options to help staff get the recommended 2.5 hours of physical activity a week. Can group activities be arranged? Further flexibility offered?
- Have leaders regularly communicate to staff that the organisation values their health and wellbeing, and encourages them to seek help if necessary and/or to enquire with a manager about how the organisation can help with their health goals
- Ensure employees have access to a number of helplines and materials, including Employee Assistance Programs, and can visibly see other options to other reach-out services like beyondblue and The Black Dog Institute. Such materials should be communicated continuously.

“It would be great for employers to speak up more about their initiatives and what they are doing – share the knowledge. I’ve long said it does not matter about the awards, what matters is what your employees say about your organisation. Are your policies actually being put into practice.”

CASSANDRA HEILBRONN, HEAD OF QUEENSLAND WOMEN LAWYERS

PROGRESS, NOW

It's clear we must push for immediate progress in order to significantly shift the dial on women at work.

The ideas listed above are just a start on what employers can do. We hope to see progress made on some of the three key priority areas over the next 12 months, as well as more employers giving serious consideration to the five 'bold' ideas first outlined in 2017. Thank you to everyone who participated in this report, and also to the various researchers and writers behind the numerous studies mentioned.

Thank you again to Baker Mckenzie for the excellent support in making this report a reality.

RESEARCH, RESOURCES AND USEFUL LINKS

A snapshot: Glass not yet half full

[Workplace Gender Equality Agency: Gender Workplace Statistics at a Glance](#)

[Workplace Gender Equality Agency: Australia's Gender pay gap statistics](#)

[Chief Executive Women Senior Executive Census 2017](#)

[Australian Institute of Company Directors Gender Diversity Quarterly Report Volume 10](#)

[Diversity Council of Australia, Cracking the Glass Cultural Ceiling](#)

[Workplace Gender Equality Agency: Australia's gender equality scorecard: Key findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2016-17 reporting data](#)

[World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report 2017](#)

[Australian Bureau of Statistics, Gender Indicators, Australia 2017](#)

[The University of Sydney, Australian Women's Work Futures Survey](#)

<https://cew.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CEW-Executive-Census-2017.pdf>

Gender pay gap: Australia a 'mid range' performer

[Workplace Gender Equality Agency: Australia's gender equality scorecard: Key findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2016-17 reporting data](#)

[Diversity Council Australia/ KPMG: She's Price\(d\)less: The Economics of the Gender Pay Gap](#)

[BCEC/WGEA Gender Equality Series: Gender Equity Insights 2017, Inside Australia's Gender Pay Gap](#)

[Closing the gender pay gap: Multinational face a maze of gender pay gap reporting requirements – meeting them is vital](#)
[OECD The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle](#)

Doing well? The careers & industries leading on

[Australia's gender equality scorecard: Key findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2016-17 reporting data](#)

[Ben Phillips, analysis of Australian Tax Office data for the Sydney Morning Herald](#)

[2014/15 Australian Tax Office \(ATO\) Taxation Statistics](#)

[Chief Executive Women Senior Executive Census 2017](#)

[Australian Institute of Company Directors Gender Diversity Quarterly Report Volume 10](#)

[Conrad Liveris, Gender Equality at Work 2018](#)

Work to do: The careers and industries playing catch up

[Australia's gender equality scorecard: Key findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2016-17 reporting data](#)

[Ben Phillips, analysis of Australian Tax Office data for the Sydney Morning Herald](#)

[2014/15 Australian Tax Office \(ATO\) Taxation Statistics](#)

[Chief Executive Women Senior Executive Census 2017](#)

[Australian Institute of Company Directors Gender Diversity Quarterly Report Volume 10](#)

[Conrad Liveris, Gender Equality at Work 2018](#)

[One-third of top 100 accounting firms have no women partners](#)

['Glacial pace': one third of new law firm partners are women](#)

What about women running businesses?

[AFR, Aussie VCs leading on gender diversity but there's a long way to go](#)
[PMC, A Profile of Australian Women in Business](#)
[Startup Muster, survey of the Australian startup ecosystem](#)
[Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs](#)
[99 Designs, Women in Business 2018: The march goes on](#)

The domestic load: Who's doing the caring?

[Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia- Stories from the Census 2016](#)
[Australian Institute of Family Studies Stay at home dads Fact Sheet 2017](#)
[OECD Part time employment rate \(indicator\) 2018](#)
[Save the Children, State of Australia's Fathers Report 2015](#)
[Bain & Company and Chief Executive Women, The Power of Flexibility: A Key Enabler to Boost Gender Parity and Employee Engagement 2016](#)
[Australian Human Rights Commission, Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review, 2014](#)

Women's Health & Safety

[Vichealth, Physical Activity Strategy 2018 to 2023](#)
[The Jean Hailes Women's Health Survey](#)
[Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia, 2018](#)
[The Imagination Gap: teams, dreams, and the future of women in leadership. Report commissioned by Atlassian, in partnership with the AFL Women's League BeyondBlue](#)

Women's retirement: A secure economic future?

[Australia National University and Per Capita, Not So Super, For Women](#)
[Sally Loane, CEO Financial Services Council, Speech to the Women, Super & Wealth Summit](#)
[Sally Loane, CEO Financial Services Council, Age editorial](#)
[Senate Inquiry Report, A Husband Is Not a Retirement Plan](#)
[Women's Agenda, Lack of women's economic security policy the 'real news' in the PM's baby pic](#)

Road Blocks to Change

[Conrad Liveris, Gender Equality at Work 2018](#)
[Diversity Council Australia/ KPMG: She's Price\(d\)less: The Economics of the Gender Pay Gap](#)
[OECD Part time employment rate \(indicator\) 2018](#)
[PwC, Women Worried Family Will Stall Career](#)

Green shoots to change

[Conrad Liveris, Gender Equality at Work 2018](#)
[RMIT, Boosting Confidence Doesn't Help Women at Work Study](#)

Gazing into the Crystal Ball: The Future of Women and Work

[University of Sydney, Women and the Future of Work](#)

Bold Ideas

[Five Bold Ideas for Shifting The Dial on Women In Business by 2020, research report workshopped by roundtable of senior leaders \(most with a connection to the legal profession\) in partnership with Baker McKenzie in May 2017.](#)