

HRpulse

Gender Equity in the Workplace

RESEARCH REPORT



Research supporters



HRpulse Sponsor





Foreword

The timing of this study is opportune with the Australian Stock Exchange implementing guidelines from 2011 on the reporting by listed companies of diversity initiatives. It comes also at a time when Australian representation by women in the senior executive and board ranks of top companies had reached the point of world's worst practice by OECD standards. Until very recently our performance on gender sat well behind similar organisations in New Zealand, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. According to 2008 data from the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, only 10.7 per cent of Australian executive managers, 8.3 per cent of board directorships, and 2 per cent of CEOs and board chair posts in ASX200

companies were occupied by women.

The position was much better in government with 37 per cent of women in senior executive positions and 20-25 per cent of women in cabinet and shadow cabinet in the federal parliament.

By the end of 2010 the position had improved somewhat with women representing 10.3 per cent of board positions (up from 8.3 per cent) and senior executive female participation moving from 10 to 12 per cent. However, with the ASX Corporate Governance Guidelines now a fact of life and the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner calling for targets of 40 per cent senior female participation within five years, Australian business is on notice.

So it was into this landscape that AHRI surveyed its database early in 2011. The results reveal some interesting data with nearly two-thirds of the sample reporting male majorities of between 70-100 per cent in management and leadership positions in their organisations, and three out of four reporting male majorities of 70-100 per cent on their boards. Not surprisingly, around six out of ten respondents believe that the gender mix in their organisation is not appropriate.

Despite that, it would appear that organisations are slow to take action with only a minority of respondents reporting that managers at any level are required to satisfy measurable key performance indicators on gender equity. Only 18 per cent of CEOs, 19 per cent of executives, 18 per cent of senior managers, 14 per cent of middle managers, 12 per cent of team leaders and 11 per cent of supervisors are reported as having gender equity KPIs. In a world where 'what gets measured gets done', this result betrays a reality of insufficient corporate action on gender equity within Australia's workplaces.

Corporate Australia will need to start walking the talk sooner rather than later on gender equity given the further survey findings that while two-thirds of CEOs and senior executives are supportive or strongly supportive in their attitude to gender equity, less than one in three respondents believe adequate training is given on managing gender bias in their organisation, and one in three report awareness of inequities on remuneration. Those findings suggest that overall commitment to the issue is still heavier on rhetoric than action.

It is to be hoped that real change in workplace gender equity begins to gain traction in the short-term and I am pleased to commend the findings of this study to you as an AHRI contribution to advancing that imperative.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Peter Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter Wilson AM
National President
Australian Human Resources Institute



It was pleasing to see on this one hundredth anniversary year of International Women's Day that a strong sample group of 920 AHRI members responded to the workplace gender equity survey that has resulted in this report. It would have been even more pleasing if the response ratio to the survey was closer to fifty-fifty for male and female members, but the 74 per cent female and 26 per cent male response ratio may itself be an indication of where the issue rates as a priority.

In the workplace, gender equity needs to be seen not as a women's issue but a business issue. Male and female employees gain from the boost to business sustainability of a workforce that has the capacity to utilise the value that both sexes bring to the enterprise. How many businesses that are male dominated fail to tap the potential of a female customer base that more enlightened competitors are able to see and reach? Over time the parental leave debate has moved from a discussion centred on leave and flexible work options for mothers to one in which the role of both parents are seen as relevant, and that now has male employees seeking to take advantage of the opportunities for workplace flexibility that have emerged. The wider issue of gender equity is heading in that direction but still has a way to go, and this study may well move it in that direction.

The continued success of the AHRI HRpulse series relies entirely on member support, and once again I take pleasure in thanking those members who have given their time and made the effort to complete the survey on gender equity. If enough HR practitioners and people managers continue to give us the benefit of their expertise and express their views through our surveys on appropriate subjects, the profession is able to use those views in public forums to influence matters of policy and change practices. We are also able to disseminate the authoritative voice of the profession to boost its standing in the business community.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Serge Sardo'.

Serge Sardo
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Human Resources Institute

Acknowledgements

Project sponsor: Peter Wilson AM
Project director: Serge Sardo
Research coordinator: Anne-Marie Dolan
Report authors: Serge Sardo, Paul Begley
Sponsor: Bridge Consulting
Research supporters: The Westpac Group and UN Women Australia

Volume 3, Number 1
© Australian Human Resources Institute March 2011

KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

- Approximately two-thirds of CEOs and senior executives are reported by respondents as either supportive or strongly supportive in their attitude to gender equity
- Two-thirds of respondents (61.31%) do not believe managers and supervisors in their organisation are appropriately trained to manage gender bias
- Six out of ten (62%) respondents report male majorities of between 70% and 100% of positions at management and leadership levels in their organisations
- Three quarters (74%) of relevant respondents report male majorities on their boards of between 70% and 100%
- Three out of four respondents (75.73%) believe child care arrangements are not conducive to gender equity in their organisation and nearly half (47.33%) believe after-hours travel is not conducive, with 44.5% indicating that job sharing arrangements are not conducive
- A minority of respondents report that managers in their organisation are required to satisfy key performance indicators relating to gender equity, with only 17.92% of CEOs, 18.91% of executives, 18.36% of senior managers, 14.32% of middle managers, 11.91% of team leaders and 11.16% of supervisors having gender equity KPIs
- A total of 34.5% of respondents report awareness of gender inequities in their organisation with respect to remuneration
- If voluntary gender equity results are not achieved in the next three years, nearly two in five respondents (38.62%) would support legislated gender quotas
- While nearly six out of ten respondents (57.98%) believe their organisation has an appropriate gender mix overall, 65.13% of respondents believe the gender mix at management and leadership level in their organisation is not appropriate, and 69.72% believe the mix is inappropriate at board level
- One in five respondents (21.79%) believe recruitment and selection practices in their organisation are not designed to minimise gender bias, and nearly one in three (30.63%) believe performance management and promotion practices are similarly flawed.

SURVEY OVERVIEW

The survey that resulted in these findings was conducted online during December 2010 and January 2011, and communicated by email to the AHRI member database.

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 1. Age of respondents

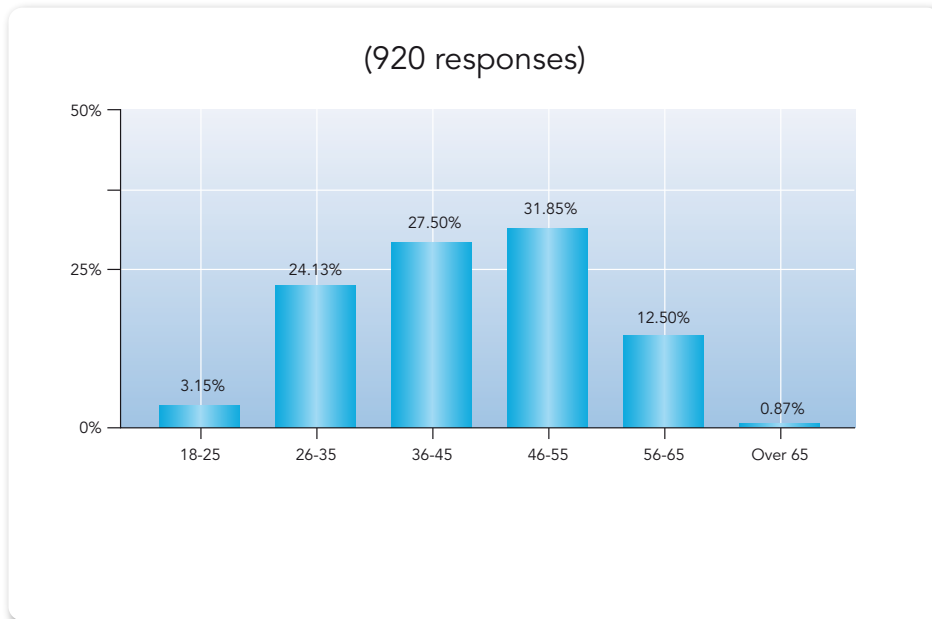


Figure 1 shows that approximately eight out of 10 respondents were aged between 25 and 55.

Figure 2. Gender of respondents

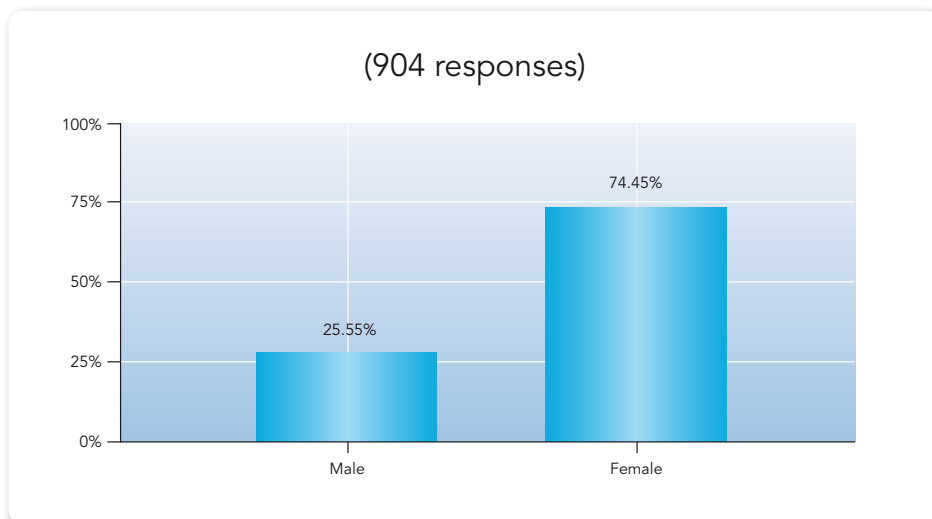


Figure 2 indicates that nearly three out of four respondents were female.

Figure 3. Position in organisation

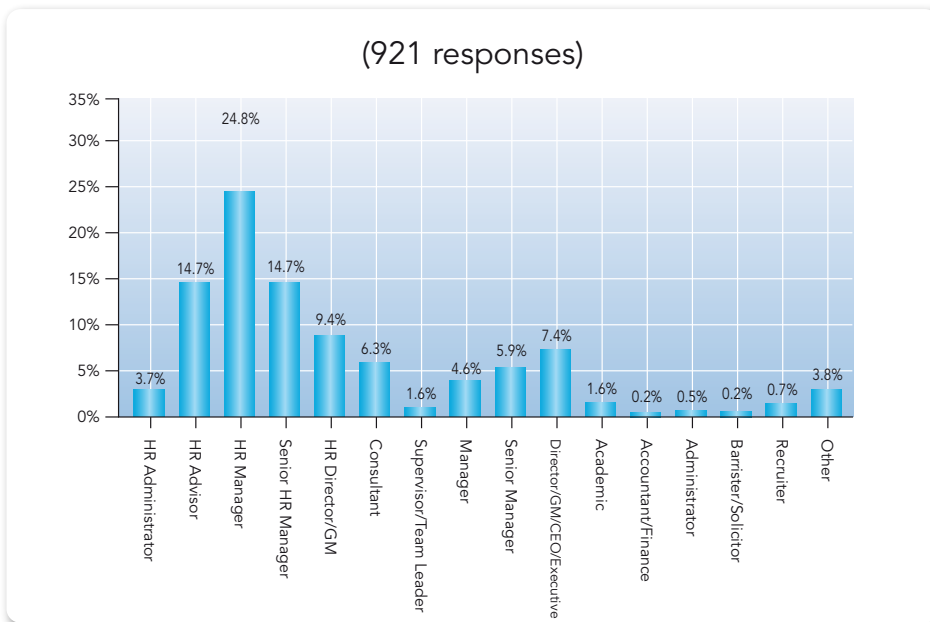
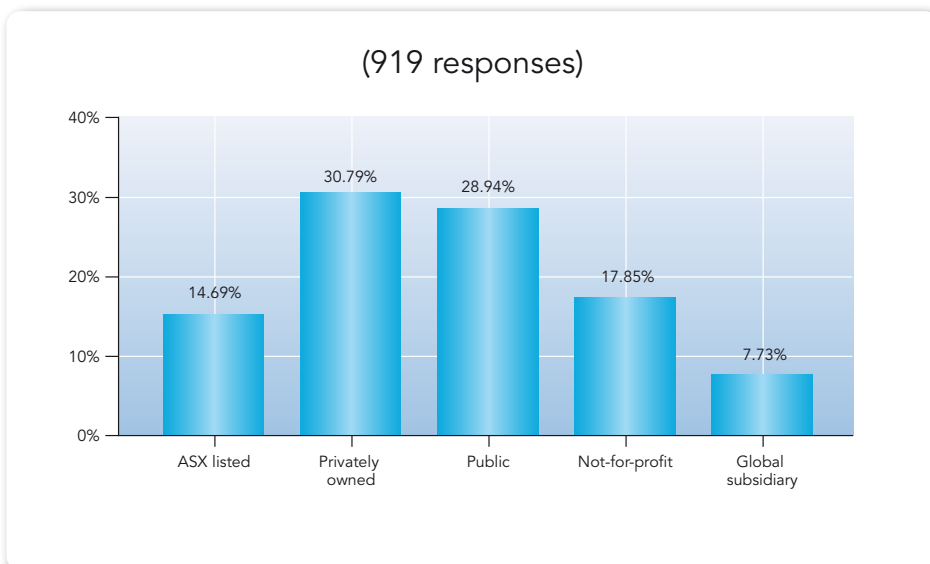


Figure 3 indicates that nearly seven out of ten respondents (67.22%) worked directly within the HR function as a director, senior manager, manager, adviser or administrator. Approximately a quarter (26.73%) worked in general roles as CEO, director, senior manager, manager, supervisor or consultant. Respondents describing themselves as accountant, recruiter, barrister, solicitor or academic each constituted a small proportion of the sample.

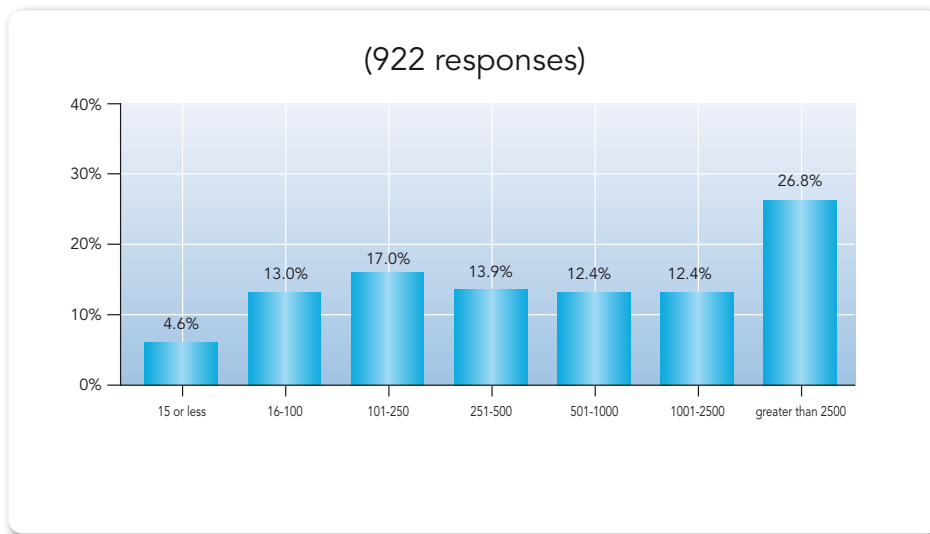
Figure 4. Sector



More than half of the sample group (53.21%) were from the private sector, with 14.69% of those from ASX-listed companies and 7.73% from global subsidiaries. The public sector accounted for 28.94% of respondents and 17.85% were from not-for-profit enterprises.

No industry sector stood out, with respondents evenly spread across the spectrum.

Figure 5. Size of organisation



More than half of the sample group (51.51%) were from organisations that employ more than 500 employees, including a quarter (26.79%) from organisations with more than 2500 employees. Nearly one in three respondents (30.91%) were from organisations that employ 100 -500 employees and 17.58% were from organisations with fewer than 100 employees, including 4.56% from businesses with fewer than 15 employees.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

Questions were asked of the sample group in the areas of workforce gender profile, organisational policies and procedures, and attitudes to gender bias.

Gender profiles

Figure 6. Gender profile of organisation

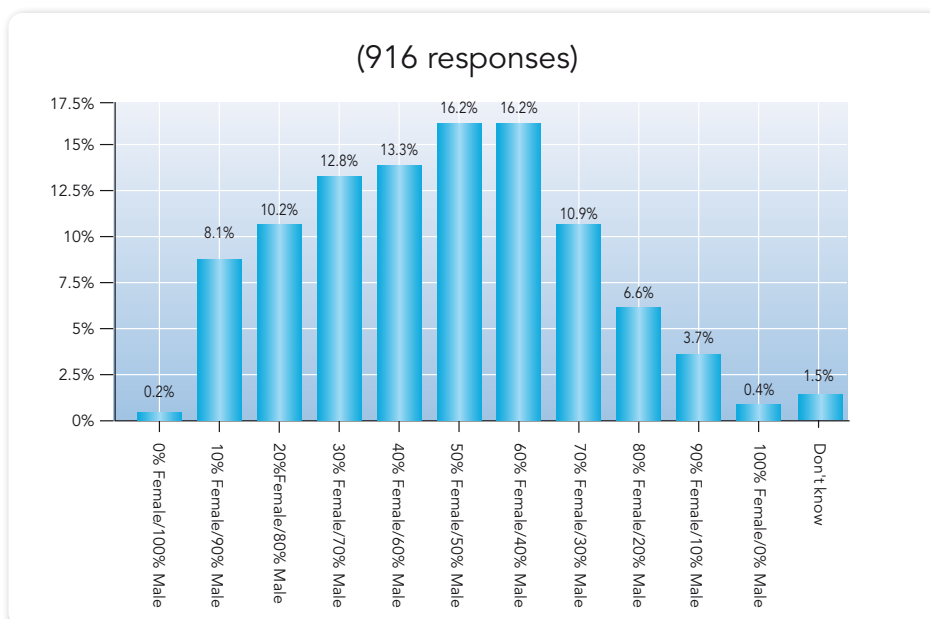


Figure 7. Gender profile of management in organisation

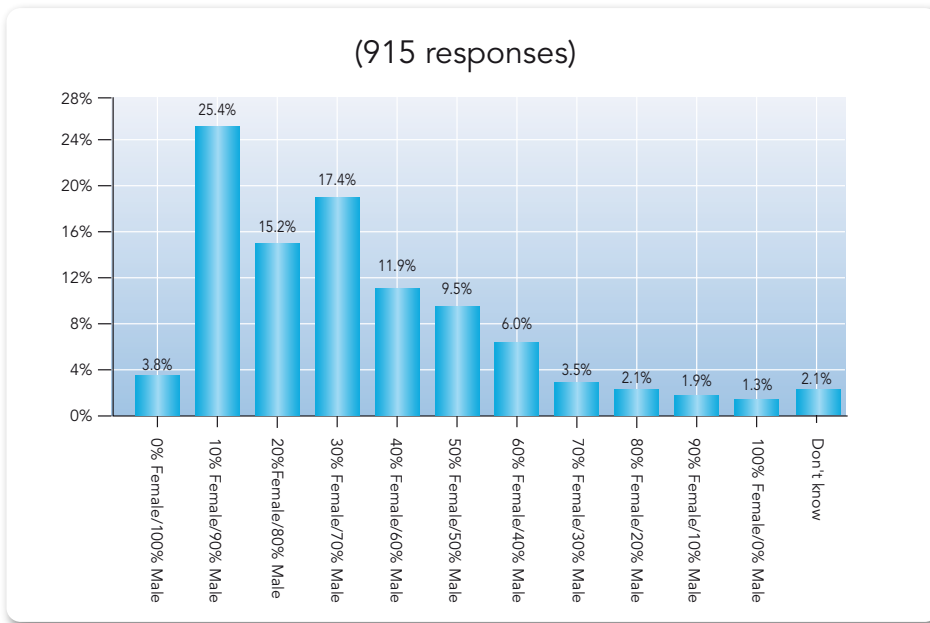
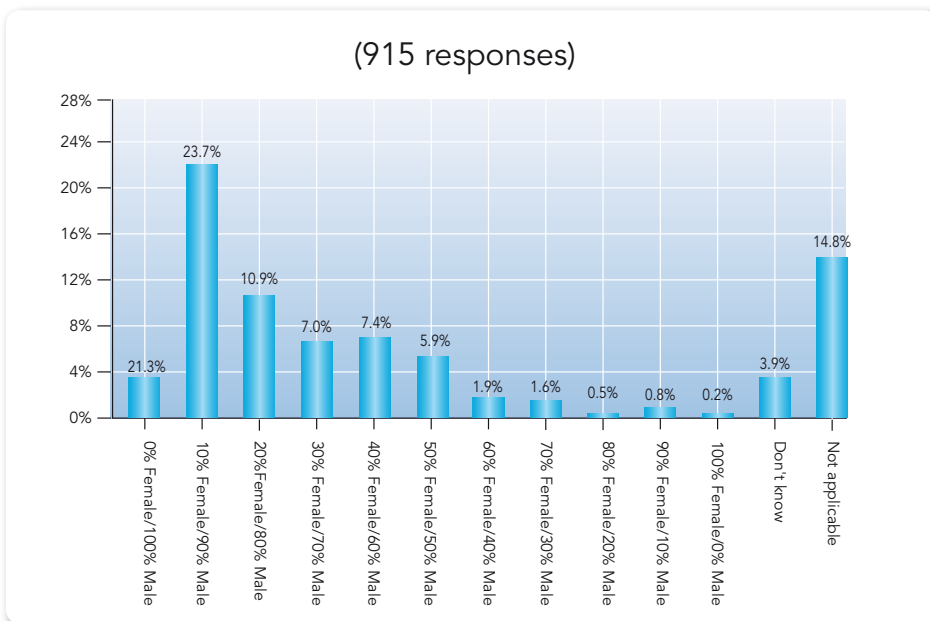


Figure 8. Gender profile of board positions in organisation



Figures 6-8 taken together provide a context for looking at the gender profiles of organisations from three perspectives.

Figure 6 shows that nearly half of the total employees (45.64%) reported by the sample group are from organisations with a general gender profile that is roughly fifty-fifty. Nearly one in three (31%) are from organisations in which females are in a distinct majority, while one in five (21.18%) are from organisations in which males represent a majority of the workforce from 70% to 90%.

By contrast Figure 7 shows that nearly two-thirds of the same sample (61.76%) report that the gender profile of those with management and leadership positions in their organisation fall within the 100% - 70% male majority groupings, while only 8.75% fall within the comparable female majority groupings.

Figure 8 refers to the gender profile on boards. With 14.75% of the sample group reporting that the question is not applicable to their organisation, that makes of total of 576 from the relevant 780 respondents (or 73.84%) who report male majorities on their boards of between 100% and 70%, with a mere 27 respondents (3.46%) reporting female majorities of that order.

Organisational policies and practices

Table 1. Gender equity initiatives

Does your organisation have gender equity initiatives in place relating to the following activities?
(917 responses)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Attraction, recruitment, selection	38.82%	54.96%	5.78%
Learning and development	33.37%	58.89%	6.87%
Promotion and leadership development	37.08%	55.94%	6.32%
Other	8.40%	35.77%	11.67%

A clear majority of respondents report that their organisation has no gender equity initiatives in the areas of attraction, recruitment and selection (54.96%), learning and development (58.89%), and leadership development (55.94%).

Table 2. Appropriate gender mix

Do you believe your organisation has an appropriate gender mix in the following areas?
(909 responses)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable
Overall	57.98%	37.95%	1.98%	0.88%
Management/Leadership positions	32.89%	65.13%	1.43%	0.33%
Board members	20.35%	58.75%	4.62%	15.62%
Graduate positions	41.03%	22.33%	7.81%	27.72%

Table 2 shows that 592 of the 909 respondents (nearly two-thirds of the sample group) believe the gender mix in their organisation is not appropriate at the management and leadership level. A greater proportion of 69.72% (534 of the relevant sample group of 767 respondents) believe the gender mix at board level is not appropriate in their organisation.

A total of 56.77% of the 767 respondents whose organisations have graduate positions, believe an appropriate gender mix operates.

Table 3. Achieving a gender mix

Do you believe your organisation is doing enough to achieve an appropriate gender mix?
(916 responses)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable
Overall	53.28%	38.86%	4.80%	2.84%
Management/Leadership positions	40.39%	50.98%	5.35%	2.18%
Board members	24.89%	46.07%	11.46%	16.48%
Graduate positions	42.79%	20.52%	8.19%	26.75%

Table 3 indicates that considerably more than half (55.16%) of the relevant 765 respondents believe not enough is being done at board level to achieve an appropriate gender mix, with 11.46% reporting they don't know. Of the total sample of 916 respondents, 50.98% believe not enough is being done at management and leadership level.

Table 4. Structure and gender equity conduciveness

In your view, is the physical and operational structure of your organisation conducive to gender equity, specifically relating to the following areas
(919 responses)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Flexible start and finish times	80.96%	18.06%	0.65%
Discretionary time off work	80.74%	17.41%	1.31%
Parent leave after child birth	91.73%	6.31%	1.52%
Recognition of broken service	56.80%	31.56%	10.66%
Availability of child care facilities	19.59%	75.73%	4.46%
Job sharing arrangements	51.47%	44.50%	3.70%
Safe transport facilities after hours	44.40%	47.33%	7.29%
Networking opportunities	59.30%	35.69%	4.57%
Professional development opportunities	71.71%	25.79%	2.07%

Table 4 indicates that large proportions of the sample believe their organisation is strong in the areas of parental leave (91.73%), flexible start and finish times (80.96%), discretionary time off work (80.74%) and PD opportunities (71.71%).

Areas of notable weakness in terms of conduciveness to gender equity are child care availability (19.59%), safe transport after hours (44.4%) and job sharing arrangements (51.47%).

Table 5. Gender equity and KPIs

Does your organisation require any of the following to satisfy key performance indicators (KPIs) with respect to achieving measurable results in relation to gender-equity policy?
(915 responses)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable
CEO	17.92%	54.54%	22.40%	4.70%
Executive team	18.91%	57.27%	19.13%	4.37%
Senior managers	18.36%	63.28%	12.90%	4.81%
Middle managers	14.32%	68.85%	10.82%	5.25%
Team leaders	11.91%	70.49%	10.82%	5.90%
Supervisors	11.26%	70.27%	10.71%	6.67%

Table 5 shows that considerably more than half the respondent organisations do not require people in key positions to satisfy measurable objectives relating to KPIs on gender equity especially at the lower management levels, with more than 70% of team leaders and supervisors having no gender equity KPIs, while more than 60% of middle managers and senior managers are each without accountability in the area.

CEOs and executive team members fare better though respondents still report that only 17.92% of CEOs and 18.91% of executives have gender equity KPIs.

Table 6. Gender equity KPIs and bonus payments

Are gender equity KPIs connected to the calculation of bonus payments?
(675 responses)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable
CEO	17.78%	32.89%	13.78%	33.93%
Executive team	17.78%	32.89%	12.59%	34.52%
Senior managers	14.67%	35.70%	9.04%	36.15%
Middle managers	10.37%	38.52%	7.26%	37.48%
Team leaders	7.85%	41.04%	6.37%	38.37%
Supervisors	7.11%	40.44%	6.67%	39.11%

While the full sample did not respond to the question reflected in Table 6, of the 675 responses, fewer than one in five CEOs executives and senior managers had KPIs in the area linked to bonus payments whereas fewer than one in 10 team leaders or supervisors had KPIs connected to bonuses.

Experience of and attitudes to gender equity

Table 7. Supportive attitudes to gender equity

In general, to what extent do you think people at the following levels in your organisation are notable for their attitude to gender equity?
(907 responses)

	Strongly opposed	Unsupportive	Ambivalent	Supportive	Strongly supportive
CEO	1.32%	6.95%	25.80%	37.05%	27.45%
Executive team	0.99%	7.61%	29.33%	41.57%	19.74%
Senior managers	0.88%	6.95%	32.86%	42.67%	15.10%
Middle managers	0.88%	7.06%	37.82%	39.36%	12.79%
Team leaders	0.88%	6.84%	41.23%	36.93%	12.13%
Supervisors	0.99%	7.50%	41.68%	35.94%	11.25%

While fewer than one in 10 employees at all levels are unsupportive of gender equity, Table 7 shows that respondents see support at the top of the organisation being stronger than lower down the hierarchy with 63.5% of CEOs and 47.19% of supervisors being reported as either supportive or strongly supportive, while 25.8% of CEOs and 41.68% of supervisors are reported as ambivalent on gender equity.

Figure 9. Recruitment practices and gender bias

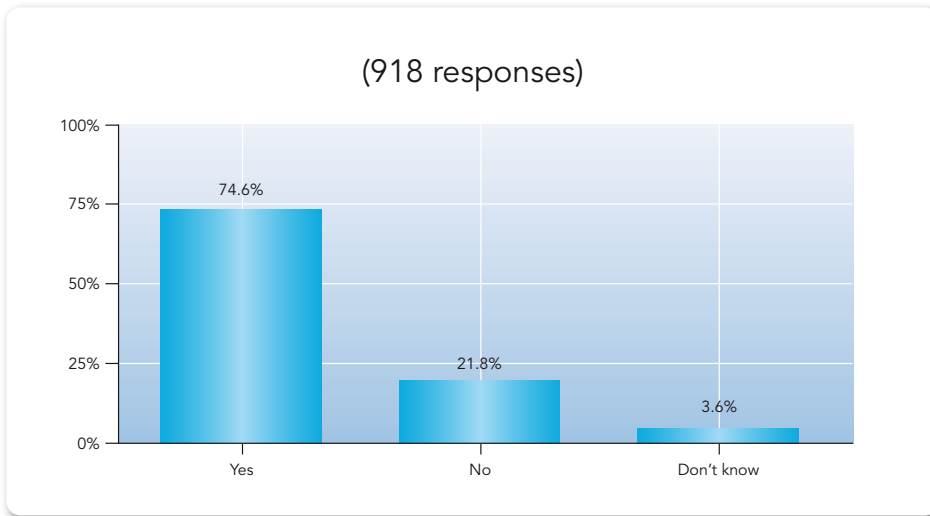


Figure 9 shows that three out of four respondents (74.62%) believe recruitment and selection practices in their organisation are designed to minimise gender bias, though one in five (21.79%) believe that not to be the case in their organisation.

Figure 10. Performance management, promotion and gender bias

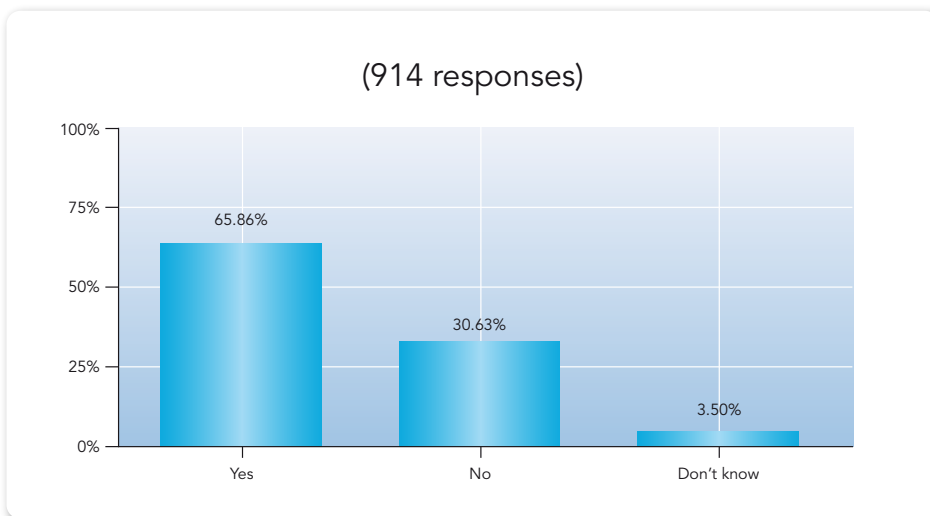


Figure 10 indicates that two-thirds of the sample (65.86%) believe that performance management and promotion practices in their organisation are designed to minimise gender bias, though nearly one in three (30.63%) believe that not to be the case in their organisation.

Figure 11. Training and the management of gender bias

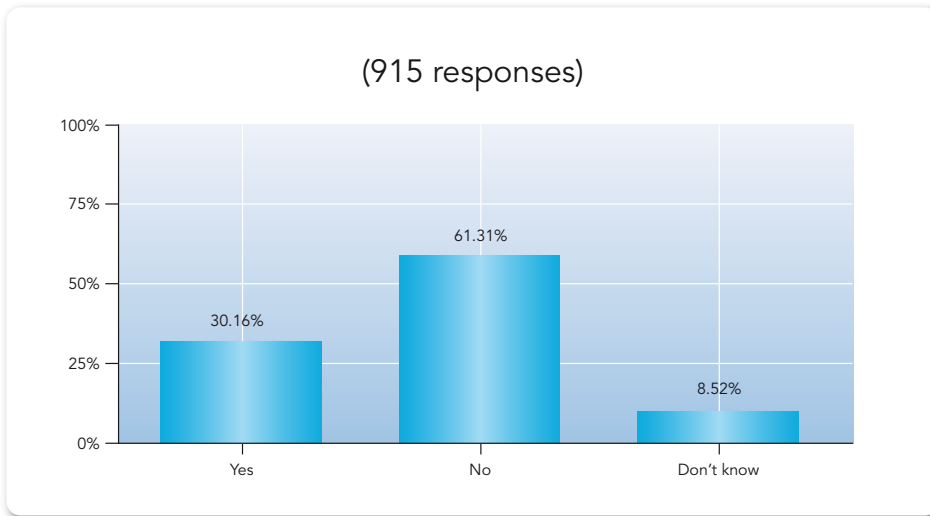


Figure 11 shows that nearly two-thirds of respondents (61.31%) do not believe managers and supervisors in their organisation are appropriately trained to minimise gender bias, with only 30.16% believing they are appropriately trained.

Figure 12. Personal experience of gender bias

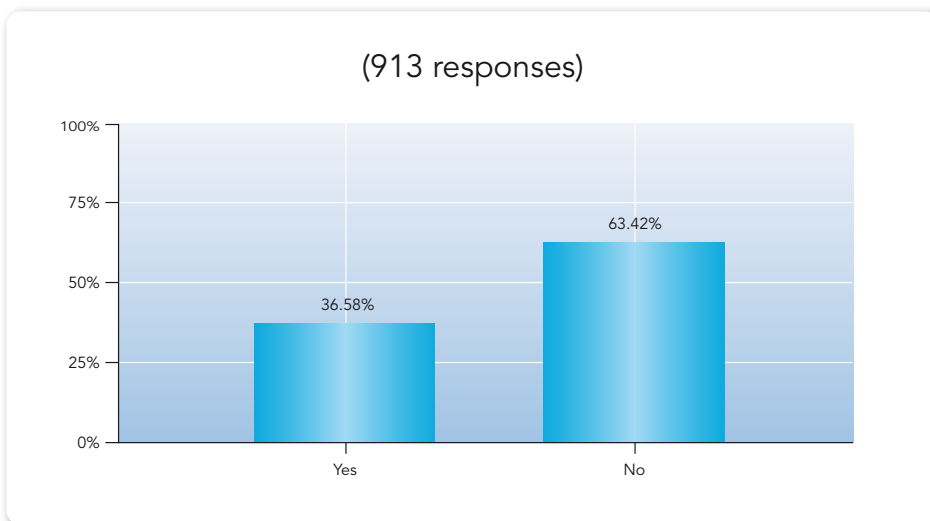


Figure 12 indicates that more than a third of respondents (36.58%) report having personally experienced or witnessed gender bias in their organisation.

Sample respondent comments

Respondents were asked what their organisation can and should do to minimise gender inequity. A total of 570 respondents gave written answers to that question, a sample of which is set out below.

Educate leaders at all levels in unconscious bias and the benefits from having a diverse workforce. Provide guides and support tools for leaders. Develop and implement a diversity strategy which incorporates initiatives aimed at minimising gender inequity and development and advancement of women.

Job design, recruitment & selection, promotion and pay should all be objective items. They should all contribute positively to the end result of a company, which should result in the best outcome possible. This should not be affected by gender.

Within the Construction industry there is a historical view that certain people should perform certain roles. This is slowly changing as the workforce evolves. Recruiters now have a greater say in selecting the most experienced person for the role.

It starts with the basics, recruiting more females into non-traditional roles, and developing them in preparation for leadership roles in future. Providing a stronger support network for females who do work on our projects outside the main office.

Hire more females in a greater range of roles; look for opportunities for more women to become team leaders and therefore get on the promotion ladder and contribute to committees.

I honestly don't believe there is a gender bias in our company. Unfortunately the only reason for low numbers of females is the availability of females in the industry. The company has genuinely shown in the past that there are no gender or age related issues.

Ensure that managers put more weighting based on qualifications and capabilities as opposed to the industries that those employees will be dealing with.

Consider all employees on merit and performance for promotions and recognition.

More flexible work practices would be ideal but is difficult to achieve in a consulting organisation due to client demands. When someone is working on a project of limited duration it is not easy to convince a client that 2 people can job share and be able to hand over all the knowledge from one person to another. Other clients are not convinced that the work can be done part-time.

Very difficult to say due to the over-riding organisational culture that stems from the parent company's culture and the society in which it exists.

Keep the inequity top of mind and actively pursue recruitment for more balance in the organisation.

More leadership skills development. More education about flexible work practices that are already available, particularly when positions are advertised.

Culture starts at the top.

Nature of industry tends to ensure gender balance is maintained; however this is more by accident than design. We need to introduce more training and awareness and strategic initiatives to ensure we retain the balance AND for the right reasons.

Recognise the legitimacy of part-time positions for managers.

Have a more targeted approach to bridge the gap - at the moment all we have in terms of recruitment is a 'merit based selection process' and hope for the best.

For us the most important processes are our recruitment and development ones. If we do these on the basis of merit and ability only, we don't need to worry about gender.

Provide opportunities for experience in male dominated fields.

It is a difficult industry for females. Traditionally very male dominated. There were not many women who studied engineering in the past and hence there are not many senior female engineers. This is slowly changing as more females study engineering. The blue collar workforce is again traditionally all male and the culture that has been created is therefore very 'blokey'. It would take a special kind of woman to want to work out in the field which is rough and tough and very male oriented. It is not that the industry is anti-women, but tradition has shaped it and it will take a long time to reverse the trend. Due to this culture, women are treated differently. Not always in a bad way. Often they are afforded more respect because they are women, but as a female in a male's world, you never get to see the 'real' side of men as they control their 'blokey' behaviour if a female is present. Our organisation is slowly employing more young female graduate engineers that over time will assist to reverse the male dominated leadership positions, but on the blue collar side of the business, no women have ever applied for positions.

We don't have gender bias.

Difficult within a business that is primarily engineering and but we have a good mix and recruit females wherever possible.

Have more rigour in relation to promotion criteria.

This organisation is a University. The traditional working practices of academics, and the expectations placed on their performance, do not serve women well. Traditional notions of what it means to be engaged in one's work (culture of long hours, sacrifice everything to work, be able to travel often and far leaving family at home, etc), and little recognition of how the traditional work practices of the academy disadvantage women. This will change somewhat in the next decade as half the academic workforce retires or scales down - research suggests that Gen Y academics will not continue the old working practices. More work needs to be done in breaking down old cultures within academia - in an era of increasing metrification of productivity (research output, grant income) we need to get better at the metrics. Most tools used to benchmark performance are premised on old notions of everyone working full time, uninterrupted, in a linear career path. These indicators need to be deconstructed so that we are better able to see how traditional notions of work are no longer serving us well, and are impeding the progress of women

Modify selection to be more attitudinal and aptitudinal rather than on direct previous experience.

Greater education around unconscious bias and how this affects promotions. Greater understanding from this as to how diversity can positively impact our results as a firm and provide more diverse solutions/perspectives to our clients. We still don't get this generally.

Figure 13. Remuneration and gender inequity

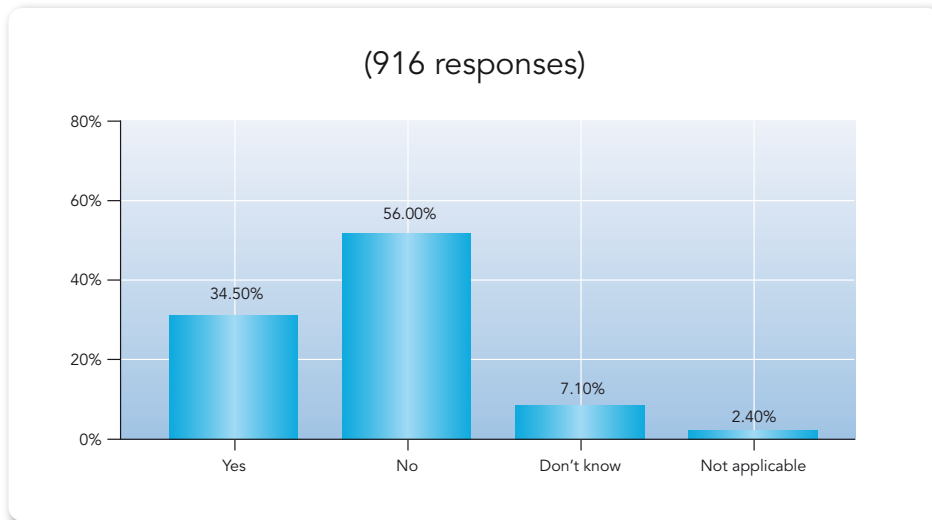
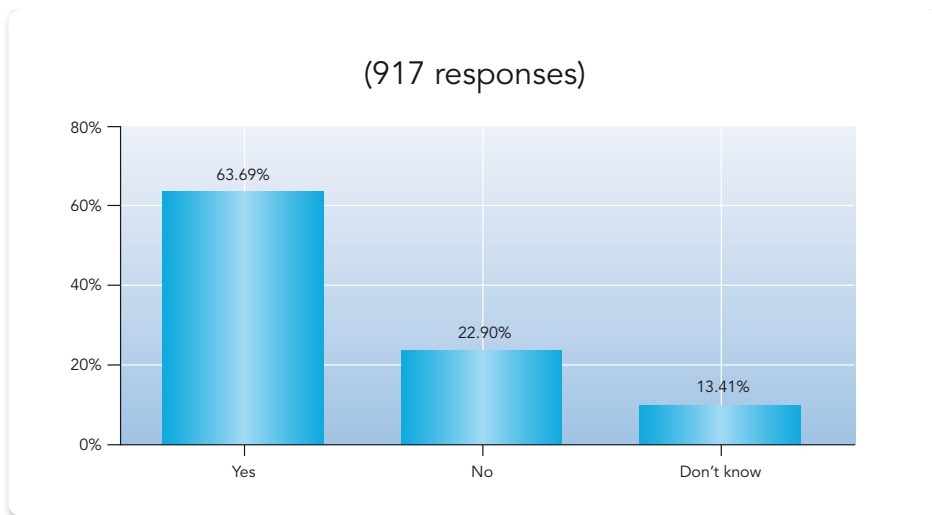


Figure 13 shows that while more than half of the sample group (56%) are not aware of pay inequities in their organisation based on gender, more than a third (34.5%) report being aware of pay inequities.

Figure 14. Pay reviews, parity and employees on leave



As indicated in Figure 14, nearly two-thirds of the sample group (63.69%) report that their organisation includes employees on leave in pay reviews to ensure parity, while more than one in five (22.9%) do not.

Sample respondent comments

Respondents were asked their opinion on what organisational best practice on gender equity would look like. A total of 585 respondents gave written answers to that question, a sample of which is set out below.

Most experienced or best candidate for the role no matter who they are.

Removing the symbolic actions, like golf days that only men are invited to, that still exist within construction and maintenance industry. A significant change in the gender balance for heavy industry, and practices that provide sustainable options for females to enter and exit the workforce easily.

Best practice in our industry would still mean hiring the most highly skilled and appropriate person for the role without gender concern. If there were two equal applicants we would choose the female to increase our gender balance.

Ensuring equal opportunities when it comes to hiring, pay, promotion and development. HR practice should be levelled so that it applies to all persons regardless of gender.

All members are treated equally; however, this is not always the case regarding physical testing, living in a field environment and certain career opportunities.

One that enables more women to advance to higher levels in an organisation, or one that allows people (both men and women) to work flexibly without sacrificing promotional opportunities.

In my opinion gender equity best practice is non-discrimination within the workplace functions, such as parental leave, pay standards, work/life balance.

Equal access for all employees to flexible working hours, leave for family reasons etc. Clear and transparent processes for selection for positions, particularly for senior positions.

A target of balance in gender ratios in the organisation. Flexible work arrangements to have a male spin on them instead of just parental purposes. Regular reporting on percentages of gender at each level of the organisation to keep focus.

Ratios of workforce consistent all the way to the top. Equal pay, equal opportunities. Boys' club does not exist within head office.

All staff are considered equal - ensuring there are no situations that create challenges.

Men and women treated equally

50-50, females in senior roles, equal pay.

It's about equality not giving women more chances than men. Having KPIs for percentage rates of females in positions can be seen as potentially discriminating against males if they are the best person for the job. I think the main issues lie in bias from senior managers. Next generation are far more attune with equality. I anticipate this will not be an issue on ten to fifteen years.

Meritocracy truly applied

men and women performing the same work are paid the same amount •men and women performing different work of equal value are paid the same amount •the workplace's organisational structures and processes do not impede female employees' access to work-based training, promotions or flexible working arrangements.

Where your organisation matches or is better than your industry peers.

Where you level the playing field by ensuring women have the opportunities they need to help them get equal opportunity so merit wins out.

We have a total commitment to merit.

Something which is natural and genuine.

Fair representation of women across all roles/levels in the organisation.

No difference in recruiting processes. No difference in pay/conditions between genders. Recognition of parental leave required for both genders.

Best person for the job - regardless of their gender. Also, women are sought out for their skills and their careers are not affected by things like maternity leave etc ... They are advised of vacancies at senior levels whilst on leave, for example, and are considered for all opportunities regardless of caring responsibilities.

When there are as many incompetent women in leadership positions as there are incompetent men.

Female representation at senior levels, including board. Recognition of work/life balance with flexible employment arrangements. Specific programs targeted at developing women.

Diversity targets, policies and initiatives in place and supported by senior managers.

Egalitarianism in practice and effect.

No barriers to women filling director and senior management roles. Females being employed in non-traditional female roles. Females on contracts receiving same remuneration as males for similar roles.

Leaders select the best person without reference to gender.

True commitment to supporting diversity overall (not just gender) within the company at all levels, rather than just as 'token' gestures to help win awards or meet regulatory commitments. However, people should still be promoted according to their capabilities and not just to meet a quota.

When conditions of service are available and accessible to both male and female employees.

An open and transparent process where gender inequity is positively addressed. Recruiters and CEOs need to look past the issues that may be barriers to employing females.

Actively seeking diversity in the workplace, across gender, race and other factors.

Selection, development and promotion is based on merit not on gender. Within our organisation there are a number of women who deselect from their managerial roles when their children are young and their personal choice is to work part-time. We facilitate this and welcome them back to managerial roles once they wish to return to full time employment.

Full transparency and acceptance of genders to the extent that the issue is no longer an issue and is seen as seamless within all activities and attitudes.

It should be part of the culture and therefore initially invisible. KPIs create artificial equity which is only ever useful in the short-term in order to change culture.

A good 40-50% of leadership positions occupied by females, female voices are listened to, all employees are made aware of subtle gender discrimination even though overt discrimination may be covered.

Organisational understanding of the different socialisation experienced by men and women in their upbringing and in society generally and the effect this has within workplace culture. Encouraging both men and women to operate outside their learned gender behaviour. For instance, men can learn to listen and to encourage others to comment, women can learn to interrupt (particularly when men dominate the conversation).

An organisation that values and promotes employees based on their skills and knowledge.

Recognising a balance. There are differences with genders at work and a best practice will minimise the effects, particularly to women who traditionally are more likely to have broken careers or suffer promotion setbacks. Eventually the acceptance of the differences will ensure that gender will not need to be considered because it will be a part of the culture of all organisations to have in-built policies to deal with any discrepancies.

Equality in promotions, pay, positions, recognition.

We have a strong culture and policies in place which promote and deliver equitable practices. Every person is treated according to their needs within the boundaries and guidelines of our flexible work, EEO and OHS policies.

Like any best practice initiative there are horses for courses. In the business in which I currently work, wider education around the benefits of gender equality would be the starting point. Once this is embedded I would implement niche programs that target improving female participation in key roles across the business.

Recruiting and promoting on merit and for the long-term skills an employee can provide.

Where women feel equally valued in terms of their contribution to the organization and have the same chances of promotion.

Equal opportunities for all from recruitment through to termination.

Equal % of females in leadership roles as % of female staff in organisation. Inclusive language and culture. High engagement scores for both genders.

People are placed into roles due to role requirements and individual competencies and not based on gender.

As it is currently.

Best practice in organisations trying to achieve gender equity in a predominantly male workforce would include identifying and developing women with potential to become leaders, providing flexible work arrangements, encouraging return of women from parental leave, setting up networking opportunities and mentoring programs, having women on selection panels, setting targets and measuring progress with measures included in KPIs for managers, ensuring pay equity for like roles.

Sample respondent comments

Respondents were asked what organisations can do to effect change in gender equity. A total of 556 respondents gave written answers to that question, a sample of which is set out below.

Have firm guidelines and policies which are to be practiced along with periodic review to ensure they are being followed.

Monitor it. What gets monitored gets attention and action.

Address facilities Address obvious issues e.g. pay inequality. Increase awareness of conscious and unconscious behaviours. Actively seek to recruit women make more of role models in your organisation. Get men talking about the issue as they are the ones who will need to make the changes as the women are still not here.

Have a total commitment to merit.

Treat all with respect for the individual skills, experience and contribution and background. The rest will follow and will be seen to be fair. In my experience in the last 20 years HR quotas and targets are not well received and in the long term create more issues.

Actively seek out women who can be effective in these roles given training and mentorship.

Genuinely accept and appreciate women's extra roles (i.e. carer, mother) and make sure that employment contracts and opportunities reflect that. I also think there needs to be more done in regard to child care in Australian businesses. I work for a huge government department which could tender and run child care centres for their staff with minimal impact.

I don't think it is about doing something - I think it is about letting time take its course. The younger generation will push a change that the organisation may not be ready for but if we are going to keep going that change will have to come. Culture change is slow.

Starts with leadership and recognition of the business benefits of gender equity.

Senior management actively promotes the message time and time again of gender equity and does not tolerate inequity in issues about gender.

Manage and promote from the top down. Create measurable KPIs which are linked back to promotion and remuneration

Affirmative action programs.

Make all managers accountable at all levels within the organisation and this would require it being a KPI

More information/informative sessions on capability development within the organisation where unique and varying individual characteristics can be brought together for building the overall business

Develop women leaders to be ready to step into higher roles, create policies that support women in their careers despite maternity leave, create a culture that is supportive of families.

Senior management need to recognise that recruiting in their own image is neither beneficial nor sustainable for future business growth and development.

Reinforce objective merit based practices.

Organisational business strategy, cascading into KPI's at all levels.

Education, create opportunities, indirect discrimination

Continual training. Transparent procedures. Leading from top.

Remove policy bias, provide adequate training, positively encourage women to participate in career enhancing development activities.

Flexible work options.

Train staff at entry to the organisation about the values in gender equity.

Start looking outside the industry at what make an organisation successful and try thinking outside the square.

Be aware and educated.

Sometimes I think it will take the proverbial smack in the head- the threat of legal action, poor publicity etc.

Allow more flexible work patterns and recognised non-paid work experience instead of disadvantaging those who have taken time out to bring up children. Also recognise that some older women are now free to pursue careers at a higher level whereas when they were younger they chose to put family care first.

High quality flexible work practices. Educate the males to minimise prejudice, remove the "old boys' club" from boards, support high achieving and female role models via mentoring programs.

Put in policies and strategies that ensure those policies are lived and enacted. Hold senior management accountable, if needed by government legislation. I work in the public sector and we ourselves are a very bad example - as a taxpayer I expect the government to at least force its own employers to be doing something proactive in this space.

Collect the statistics, analyse the statistics, see where the gaps are, develop 5 year strategies to address the gaps, put in place yearly projects to achieve better gender outcomes, allocate financial and people resources to work on projects, hold managers accountable for outcomes.

Making gender equity happen

Table 8. Gender targets and quotas

Please answer the following questions relating to gender targets and quotas.
(901 responses)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Do you support voluntary gender targets?	52.83%	36.18%	10.88%
If sufficient progress is not made in gender equity results in three years, will you support legislated gender quotas?	38.62%	43.73%	16.54%

Table 8 indicates that while respondents are supportive of setting gender targets, with 52.83% approval for the idea, there is a reluctance to go the way of quotas, even after targets have not been met, with 43.73% opposed to the idea and 15.54% on the fence, leaving a total of only 38.62% indicating preparedness to support legislated quotas following three years of failure to meet targets.

Sample respondent comments

Respondents were asked what HR directors can do to make gender equity work. A total of 624 respondents gave written answers to that question, a sample of which is set out below.

Executive overviews and targets.

Ensuring gender targets get on to the KPIs of all leaders, to drive the cultural change. Unless it affects someone's bonus, it generally doesn't get the attention it deserves.

Ensuring there are a range of diversity programs aimed at improving the mentoring and opportunities for a large range of the workforce.

Vigilance! To make sure that the issues maintains a high priority but within good business overall practices.

Ensuring that organisations follow best practices and champion EEO.

Promote fair and consistent policies which does not disadvantage either gender.

Ensuring that the ROI for effecting gender equality to be made known to CEOs and the board.

HR's direction in gender equity is to keep up to date with new legislative initiatives as well as to promote and maintain equality within the workplace through forward thinking.

Highlighting the benefits of gender equity and developing appropriate policies and practices to achieve it.

Encouraging mentor programs across the genders. Review closely remuneration levels, recruitment strategies, promotion strategies.

Open, transparent practices and conversations at all levels of the organisation.

Educating board and executive management.

Making sure policies and recruitment processes, career paths support equal opportunity and making sure learning and development is in place to train staff on expectations and responsibilities.

Ensuring the company has gender equity by providing flexible working hours etc.

Education of the CEO and senior managers. Lead by example.

Constant vigilance around recruitment and selection, criteria adopted, testing and interview methods, language used for advertising, public face of the business.

Increase awareness of direct and indirect forms of discrimination. Provide opportunities for women to have healthy role models through mentoring programs.

Push proactive policies and actions within their organisations.

Educating senior leadership team. Implement, manage and monitor gender equity strategy and initiatives. Incorporate values consistent with gender equity principles in all HR related processes.

Being a champion, being proactive, having resilience and the 'guts' to push the difficult issues.

Promote awareness of gender equity to the CEO and executive. Clear selection processes from development of selection documentation to selection of employee to ensure gender equity throughout the process e.g. development of selection documentation, timing and placement of advertisements, composition of selection panel.

Leading the way with CEOs to implement gender equity.

Setting goal and targets and educating people on the importance of achieving them.

Advocacy.

HR practitioners are generally the ones who are promoting gender equity and are best placed to influence others in the workforce.

Walk the talk.

Taking a leadership role and promoting culture change so that gender equity in the workplace becomes day to day practice and not a 'nice to have'.

Promotion and advocacy at the executive table.

Ensure the best people are recruited, everybody receives the same opportunities and ensure everybody understanding the anti-discrimination policy.

Awareness raising, training men and women, targeting and developing women for future positions, recruitment policies, including gender issues in performance reviews etc. It is just a question of how important HR directors see this issue among the many other things they have to focus on.

Continual education and making the recruitment process unbiased.

To explore, gain feedback, take time out to explore possibilities and see what is possible.

Thorough understanding of turnover metrics, support for career development and education of managers and staff. Encourage role models.

Draw the attention of decision makers and line managers to best practice in the area. Promote organisational leadership in the area by way of the talk and the walk, and do not just pay lip service.

They should be making sure it does not happen.

Promotion with the aim of embedding it into organisational culture.

I think we have to in the first instance make sure that the organisation is not discriminating, even inadvertently through selection processes etc. Then I think there needs to be a level of flexibility provided around work.

Sample respondent comments

Respondents were asked what the impact for organisations will be if gender equity is not achieved. A total of 601 respondents gave written answers to that question, a sample of which is set out below.

Certain industries will not see the significant growth and change that other have seen in the last 10 years. It will also mean at an economic level, that a significant proportion of the workforce (women) will continue to work part time, or in casual arrangements, as the flexibility around full time employment won't be supported as widely as it should.

A further skills shortage if the workplace does not make the hours more flexible and if there are not enough challenges for intelligent women to strive for.

In our industry there is no overnight fix for gender inequity. Until more female graduates are available through the education system we can do little but ensure that we retain our existing female professionals by providing appropriate support services.

Possible impact on engagement and dissatisfaction in the workplace. As well as increased turnover and increased industrial action.

Discontentment and annoyance which can impact on morale and ultimately capability.

Turnover, less committed workforce.

50% of the potential candidate pool is eliminated where companies don't improve gender equity; increased costs due to higher turnover; less responsive to the market; lower levels of creativity.

Not able to attract best candidates.

strong female managers/leaders will leave to find a more supportive environment to work in.

Very skilled and talented female staff will become disillusioned and move on... the company will limit its growth and profitability. Staff will see it as a boys' club.

Company will be less competitive.

We will miss the business opportunities that diverse thinking brings. We will get out of step with women who are major customers, sources of talent, and sources of funding for businesses.

An unbalanced talent strength.

Loss of skills and knowledge and the unique mindset and capabilities women bring to the workplace. Disengaged younger women in organisations as no role model to aspire to.

Atrophy, failure to improve, cultural malaise.

I do not accept the word 'achieved' in your question. Gender balance is a process and not a one-time goal. If we accept it as a goal and even if it is achieved standards may later slip back. Treat it as a process and accept slower change and society is more likely to have a more secure gender acceptance and balance for the long term.

Our organisation will fail to thrive because at board level it is 100% male which is not in keeping with the equality that has been achieved at senior management level. This could become a point of frustration in the future as the board exudes a one dimensional view and has a blokey culture.

It's a spiral and will never change! Plus, think of all the talent we're not using.

An organisation's workforce capability will be severely depleted. Skill shortages in some areas currently male dominated.

Women will be kept at lower levels of the workforce and then not re-enter it if they choose to leave as they may feel they have little or no opportunity for progression. This will hasten the shortage of people in the workforce.

Could skew the thinking of the organisation and lead to culture change.

Reduced diversity of thought and skill at senior levels, may also reduce our ability to attract and retain female talent.

Nothing in my organisation.

Increased stress. Increased pay inequity. Failure to capitalise on female talent pool. Organisations who are good employers for women will flourish. Bad employers will see reputation compromised.

More women will drop out of the work force, many because of demoralisation and stress...seeing males achieve higher pay and status while measurable achievements and outcomes are often less than women's. Lack of respect within management in organisations as well as lack of support for the dual roles many women hold and manage well contribute to women dropping out of the workforce and doing other work, often not in their trained field (which may have been in a skills shortage field).

Indifference amongst the lesser gender workforce, greater attrition, greater workplace disengagement, workplace hostility towards HR practices.

I have worked under senior female managers/executives who are rigid and closed to new ideas, so I don't think gender balance ON ITS OWN is the answer to improving organisational culture and performance.

Unsustainable businesses.

Lower productivity, diminishing culture.

I see lots of road blocks in organisations. Our organisation has blocks to succession planning for individuals because women in senior positions are all being granted part time work and getting exactly what they want with regards to achieving their family responsibilities and work life balance. They are staying part time and not wanting to return to full time work so happy to stay as part time managers. The effect is now the organisation is at the stage where with so many part time managers, others below them see they have no room to grow or move up and therefore they are leaving. The turnover at management level is "0". Also, these part time mums do not want to take on more senior positions so they are not moving up either. This is presenting a number of challenges.

It will continue as it is.

Boys' only culture and acute discrimination against the employment of older women as is evident at the moment.

I don't think there will be any adverse impact if gender balance is not achieved with a laissez faire approach. What would have an adverse impact is so called "positive" discrimination.

What can AHRI do?

Sample respondent comments

Respondents were asked what AHRI can do as a professional association to contribute to gender equity. A total of 627 respondents gave written answers to that question, a sample of which is set out below.

Presenting the benefits regularly. Conducting research.

Informing organisations and educating HR practitioners. Recognise organisations that do it well.

Creating awareness of female "success stories" in line management roles. Involvement with government at various levels to hold forums on creating greater participation of women at supervisory/management levels. Promotion of supervisory training programs targeted at women.

Offer practical advice. Raise awareness.

Case studies of where/how gender equality has worked and what they did to address their imbalanced workforce.

Influencing in the media, using your networks and contacts to influence at every level.

Promoting discussion.

Be an active role in its board and senior executive profiles.

Monitor gender equity approaches applied in industry. Publish research to demonstrate better practices and benefits of gender equity. Broker industry access to experts in gender equity audit / strategies.

Undertaking surveys and research, publishing and promoting the results. Contributing to an informed dialogue.

Lobby government and bring to their attention the issues for consideration and debate. Raise information and issues in newsletters to AHRI members. Continue to have the discussion and keep it on the agenda. Advise of actions taken against those employers who 'break the rules'. Promote information on best practice employers. Advise 'the best models'.

Promote strategies and initiatives that companies can take up.

By providing ideas and assistance on how companies can and are achieving gender equity.

Dissemination of knowledge.

Education. Policy development.

Publicity of those companies who champion the best practice.

Promoting education and awareness.

Research and studies in the issue and why there is a gender imbalance.

Promotion of best practices. How to influence baby boomer males on the benefits of cultural and gender diversity.

Surveys, lobbying, education.

The publication of this survey will raise awareness. I see awareness and education as the key issue.

Talking the talk so that industry can walk the walk.

Raising awareness of the issue within the media and educating managers who are non-HR as to the benefits. Recognising that jobs are not necessarily 38 hours plus and that part-time positions can legitimately exist at senior management level.

Raise awareness, educate on what organisations are doing and what successes they are having.

Research and providing information to organisations in understanding trends/impacts and strategies to achieve greater gender equality

Promotion of women as skilled professionals. Support for women in professional roles through networking events etc., but these events should not just be aimed at women - men must be included to achieve true equity.

Education and awareness.

Encouraging more females into traditionally male dominated areas where they have the same level of determination and ability to build knowledge.

To educate and advise.

Education and awareness-raising. Contributing research to equal pay cases.

Doing good research on the issues. How many women who want senior and executive positions feel they have been discriminated against? The unspoken reality is that there are a considerable number of women with no aspirations or ambition to rise to these roles. So we really need to know what the genuine barriers are to those who do want to, and do work hard to get there.

Ensuring an awareness and public opinion on gender equity.

Continuing to educate HR practitioners on strategies and ideas to create gender equity in Australian workplaces.

Education and the maintaining of a debate on the matter.

Promotion of best practice. Providing input into a review of the education system that encourages males and females to enter professions previously dominated by a particular gender.

To educate big groups perhaps by running seminars and workshops, so that others better understand and gain knowledge about equity.

Keep talking about it and provide some statistics to back it up.

Providing information and development sessions.

Discussion and promotion, raise the visibility of the issue.

Including diversity discussions and speakers at events, etc. Run workshops on establishing diversity strategies.

Holding up the mirror for the industry. Providing evidence of best and useful practice. Providing links and forums for discussion and a test-bed for ideas.

Become a champion of merit based practices in all aspects of HR practices.

Partnering with EOWA to incorporate gender equity initiatives into AHRI services.

Advocacy.

Campaign for voluntary targets and compulsory monitoring- my organisation does not even measure gender breakdown in promotion processes.

Surveying HR practitioners, making results known, advocating for diversity.

Informational, provide strategies.

Continuing education of the value that women can make regardless of the fact that they may need to leave the workplace for periods of time. Also, push to allow men to be able to be given the same rights as women if they are to be the primary carer (i.e. paid paternity leave entitlements the same as maternity leave)

Educating organisations on why gender equality is important and how it can make a difference to the business.

Promoting best practice models within the profession and industry. Lobbying the government to create social frameworks that support women in the workforce e.g. readily available socially supportive pre-school childcare (as in Scandanvia). Families cannot afford to work if asked to pay \$125 plus per day for long-day care.

Promotion of the issue, for example, in HR Monthly.

Professional learning research.

Lobbying government to introduce quotas and more support for flexible work practices for all employees. A tighter labour market will help the cause.

Work with the AICD to help support their Woman on Boards program. These are industry leaders who are champions - work with them.

Representation, information sharing and promotion.

Training and development of management, providing advice and support for management. Mentoring programs.

Back off. Women need to get opportunities based on merit and organisations should only be penalised if discrimination is occurring.

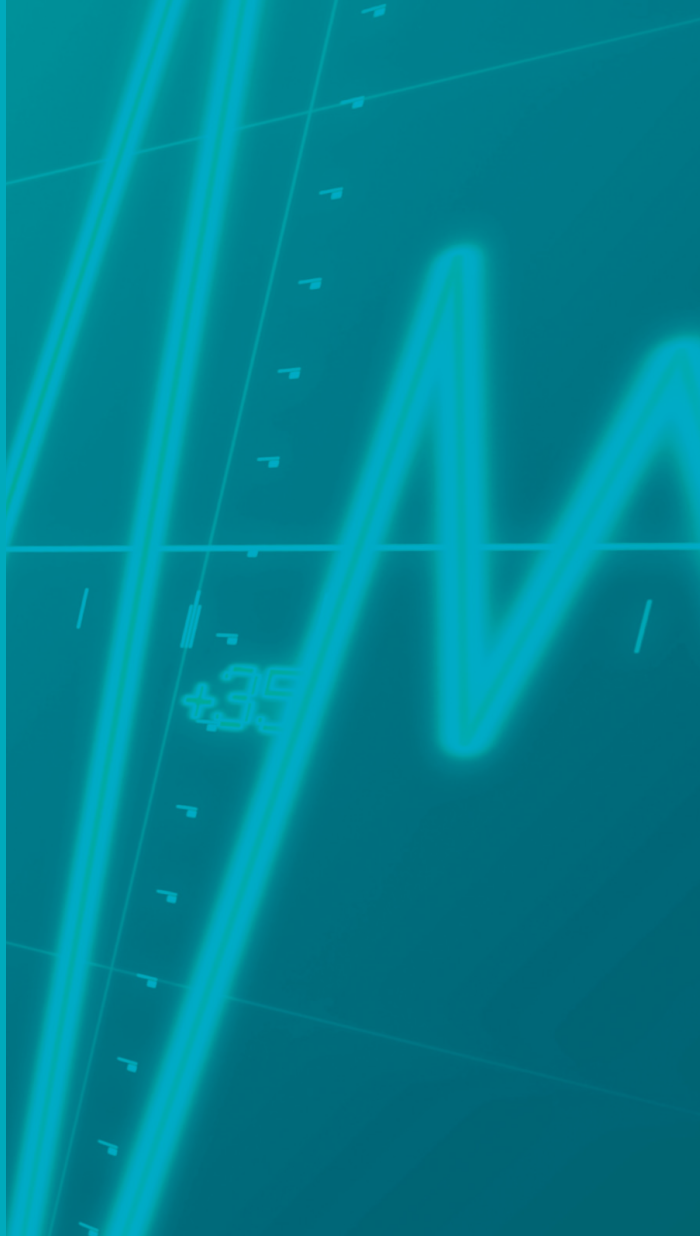
Sharing example of best practice. Contributing to an ongoing dialogue on gender equity. Normalising the principles of gender equity by positioning them as core business for all HR professionals, not just employment equity specialist. The issue of occupational gender segregation needs to be addressed.

Study other countries such as Norway, Sweden and use their model. Research what works and what doesn't and present these ideas in a public forum.

Monitoring target outcomes, promoting equality stories and practices, development of government submissions.

Raise awareness.

Keeping it in the forefront of our mind. Providing research and results to members to utilise in discussion forums and may assist in changing mindsets.



**Australian Human Resources
Institute Limited**

ABN 44 120 687 149

Level 13, 565 Bourke Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

T (+613) 9918 9200

F (+613) 9918 9201

www.ahri.com.au

