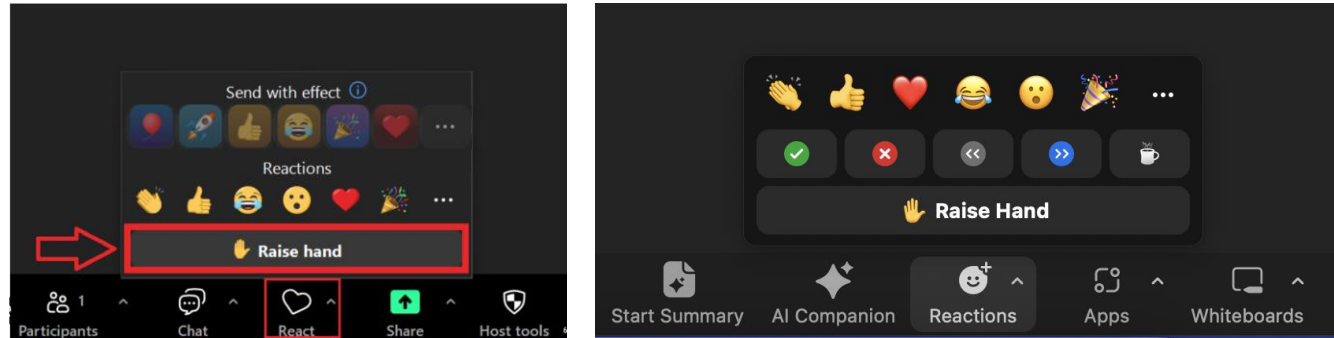# Implementing change that sticks:
# Overcoming barriers to sustainable workplace transformation

Presenter: Nina Laitala, Institute of Community Directors

Date: Wednesday 19 November

# Housekeeping

- When you'd like to share with the group, please use the raise hand function.



- Chat function is for everyone to use. Feel free to share your experience and advice, respond to prompts and answer any questions that arise if possible.

- You will receive the slides and the recording via the email you registered with.

- Please don't use AI to summarise or record this session.

- Please mute yourself unless you are speaking to the group.

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# Nina Laitala

- 20 + years community leadership

- Former CEO Victorian Student Representative Council

- Musician

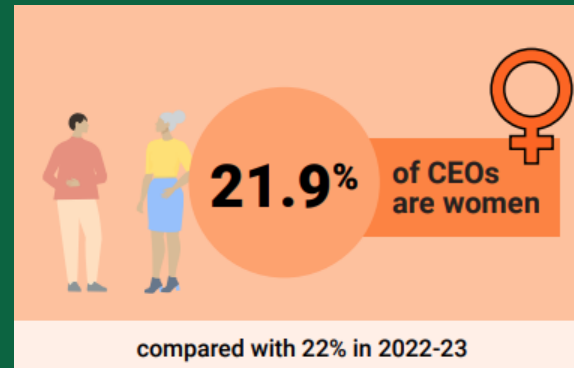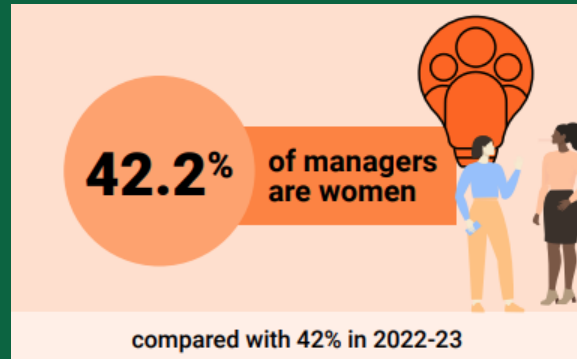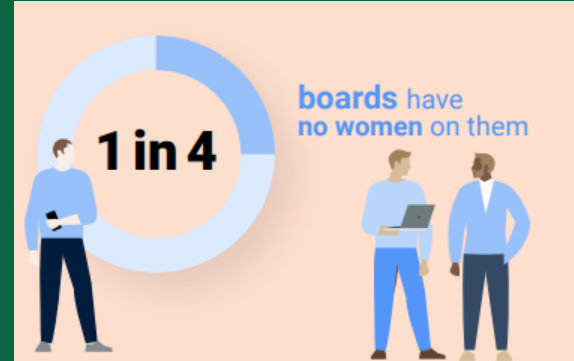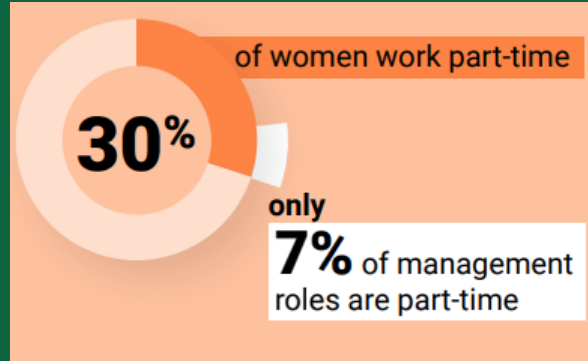- Experienced community board chair, deputy chair and secretary

## Today we will…

- Identify and discuss structural and cultural barriers to gender equity

- Introduce and apply change management strategies to embed long term success

- Looking after yourself during workplace transformation

- Explore how organisational documents can support sustainable change

# Here's what we know…


30% of women work part-time

only 7% of management roles are part-time


1 in 4 boards have no women on them


100% of occupations have a gender pay gap in favour of men


42.2% of managers are women

compared with 42% in 2022-23


21.9% of CEOs are women

compared with 22% in 2022-23


Men account for 17% of all primary carer parental leave taken

up from 14%

Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard 2023-24_V10_0.pdf

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# LGBTIQA+ statistics

- 26.7% witnessed negative behaviours toward LGBTIQ+ colleagues; 10.9% witnessed serious bullying
- Trans unemployment rate is 3× higher than the general population
- 70% of people with intersex characteristics experienced workplace sexual harassment in past 5 years
- Only 4% of LGBTIQ+ women and gender-diverse people are in senior leadership roles
- Nearly half of LGBTIQ+ women experienced sexual harassment at work in 2022

Intersectionality at work report – CGEPS 2023

# Some good news…



## Support for parents and carers

Most employers (80%) have a policy or strategy in place to support employees with family or caring responsibilities. This is a notable rise from 72% in 2022–23. In the past 5 years, it has increased by 11pp.

FIGURE 50: Proportion of employers with a formal policy or strategy to support employees with family or caring responsibilities

| Year | Employers (%) |
|------|------|
| 2023-24 | 80 |
| 2022-23 | 72 |
| 2021-22 | 69 |
| 2020-21 | 67 |
| 2019-20 | 69 |
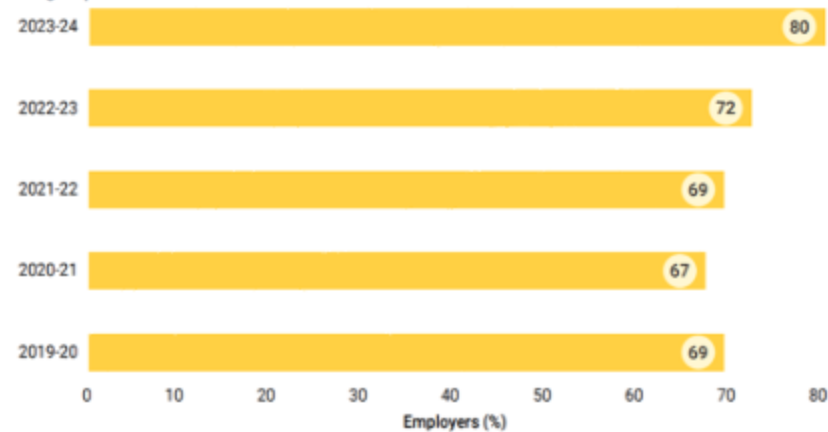
## Family and domestic violence support

Nearly 9 in 10 employers (87%) have a policy or strategy to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence, an increase of 6pp since 2022–23.

FIGURE 52: Proportion of employers with a formal policy or strategy to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence (change over time since 2019-20)

| Year | Employers (%) |
|------|------|
| 2023-24 | 87 |
| 2022-23 | 81 |
| 2021-22 | 73 |
| 2020-21 | 70 |
| 2019-20 | 66 |
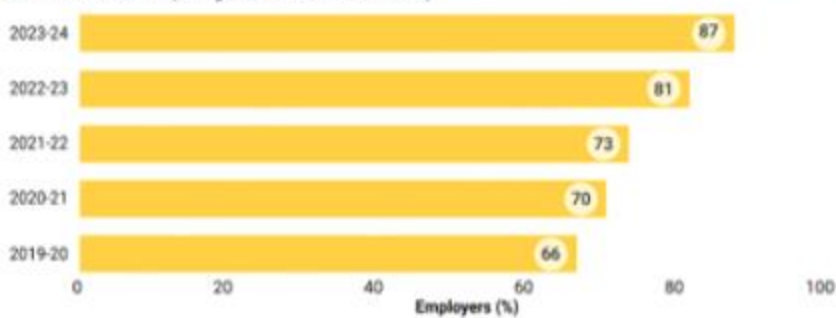
A new National Employment Standard under the Fair Work Act 2009 implemented an employee entitlement to 10 days paid family and domestic violence leave in a 12-month period.
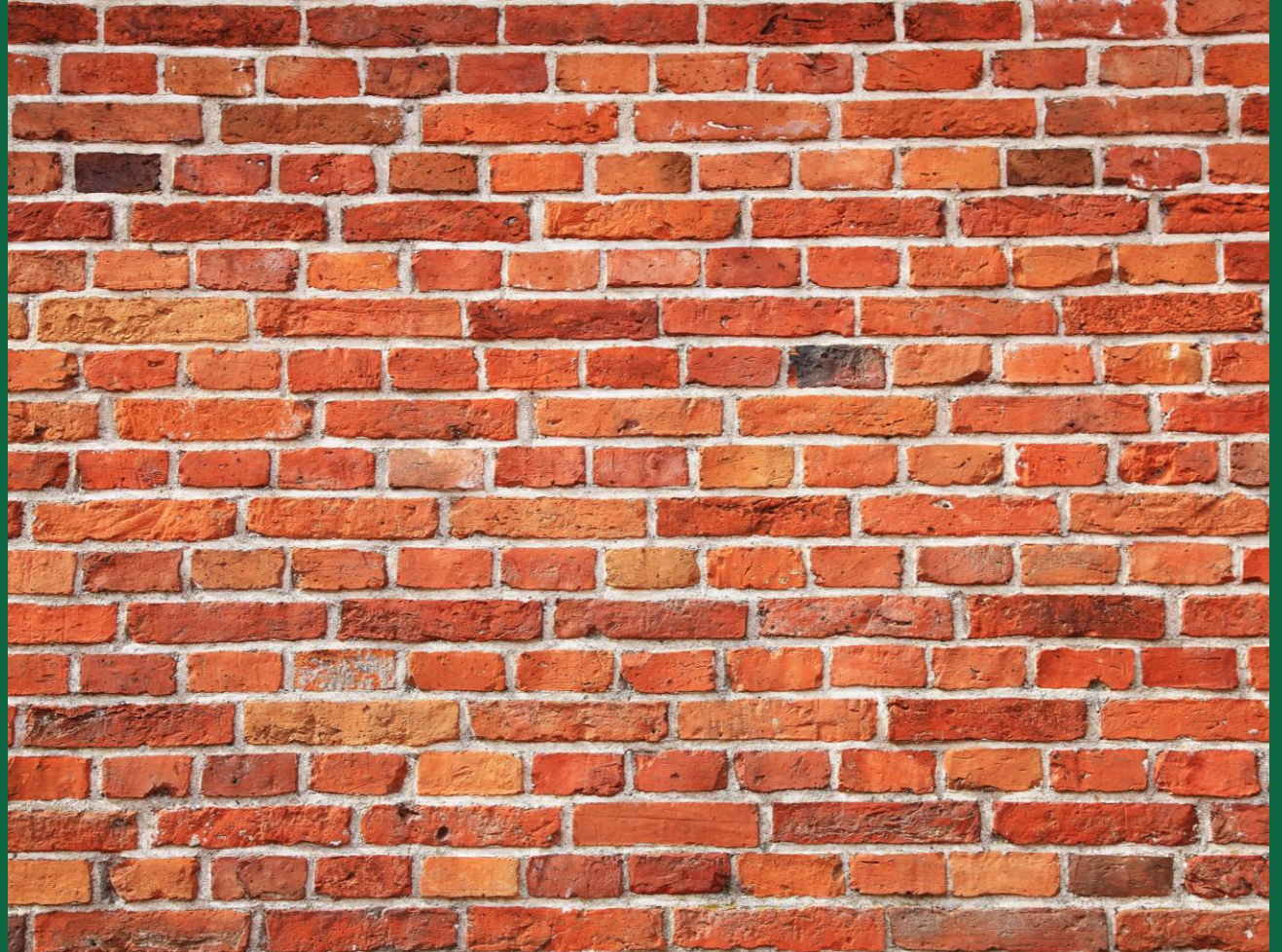
## Flexible working arrangements

The proportion of employers having a policy or strategy on flexible working arrangements has increased by 3pp to 87% in the past 12 months.

FIGURE 54: Proportion of employers with a formal policy or strategy on flexible working arrangements

| Year | Value |
|------|------|
| 2019-20 | 76 |
| 2020-21 | 79 |
| 2021-22 | 82 |
| 2022-23 | 84 |
| 2023-24 | 87 |

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# Structural barriers

- **Gender pay gap**

- **Underrepresentation in leadership**

- **Occupational segregation**

- **Rigid workplace structures**



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# Cultural barriers

- **Unconscious bias and stereotypes**

- **Exclusion from networks and sponsorship**

- **Resistance to change**

- **Invisibility of gender-diverse experiences**
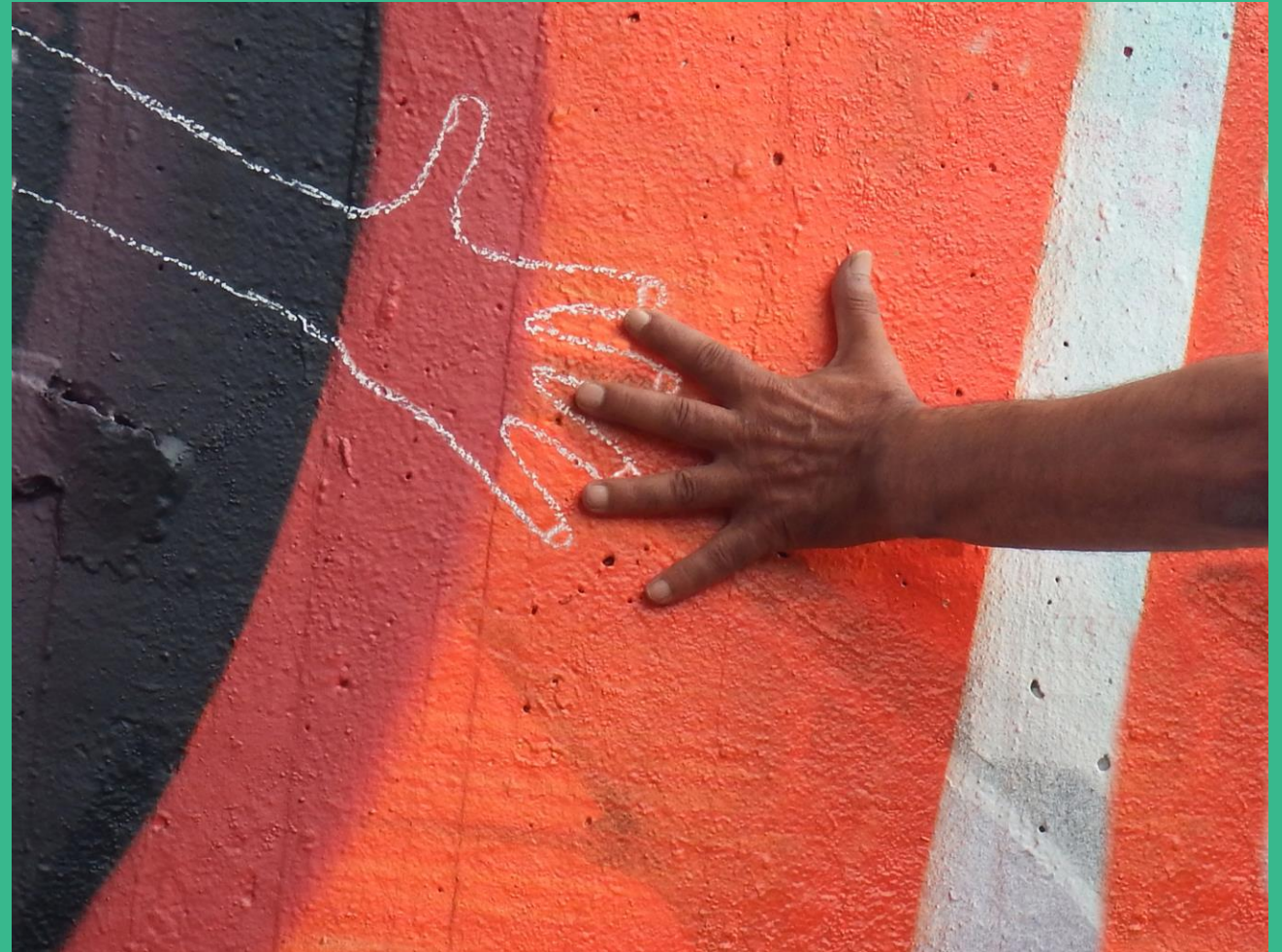
# Interpersonal and intersectional barriers

- **Harassment and discrimination**

- **Lack of psychological safety**

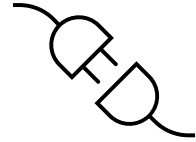- **Compounded disadvantage for those also facing racism, ableism, ageism, or other forms of discrimination.**

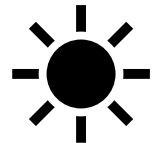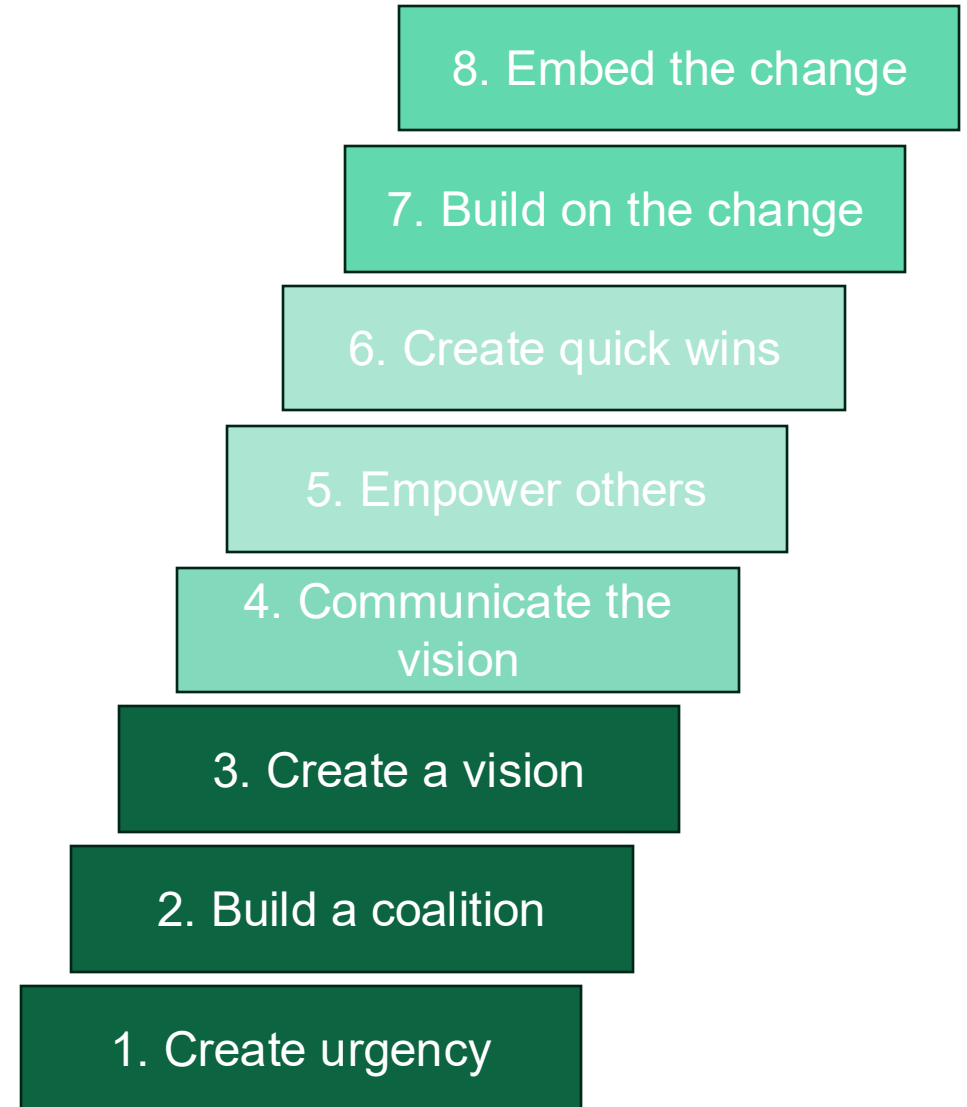**What barriers have you experienced in your workplace or professional life?**



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# Kotter's eight steps to change

Implement and sustain

8. Embed the change

7. Build on the change

Engage and enable the organisation

6. Create quick wins

5. Empower others

4. Communicate the vision

Create climate for change

3. Create a vision

2. Build a coalition

1. Create urgency

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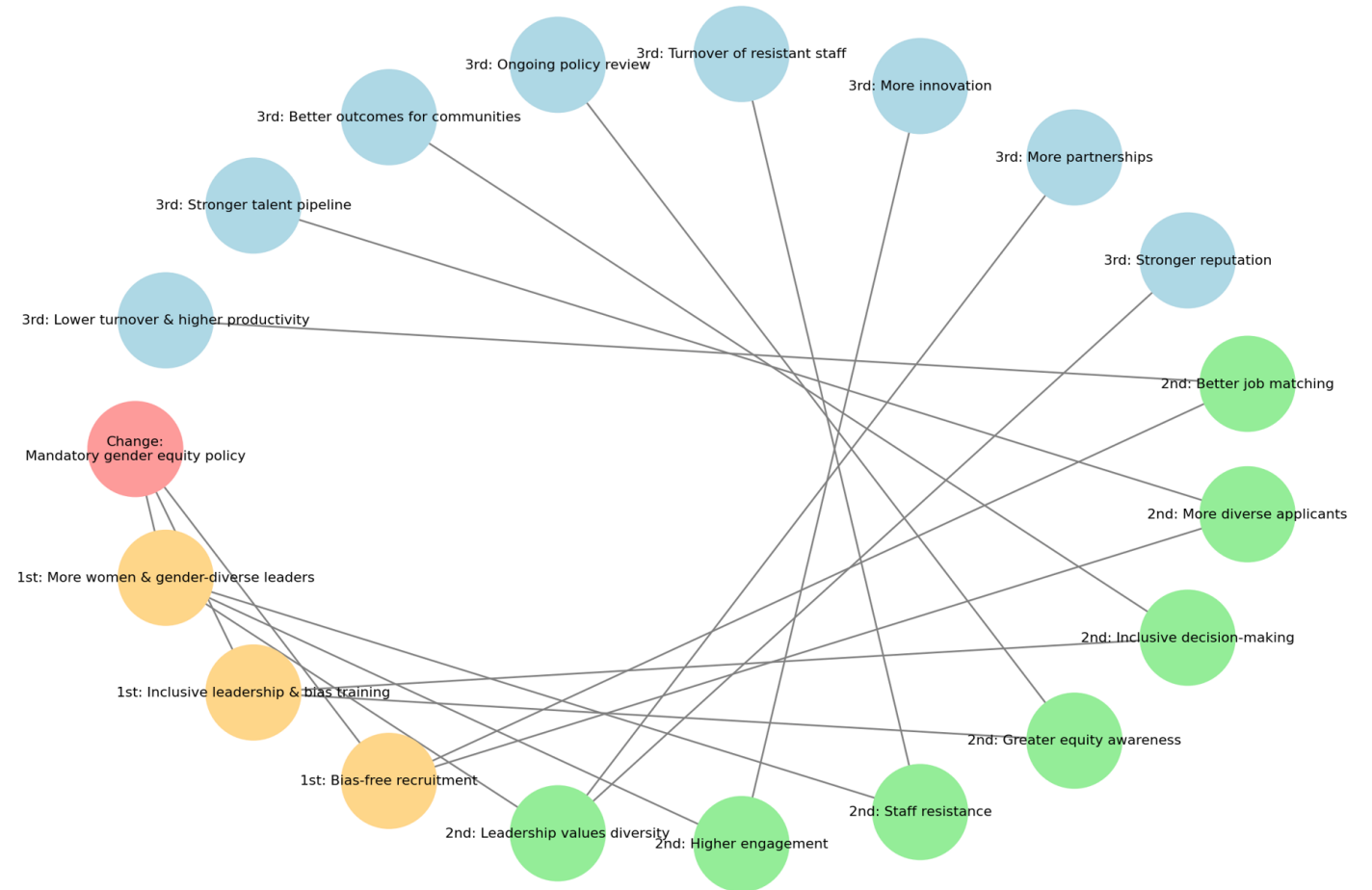Where not-for-profits go for help

# Future wheels

**Future wheels provokes us to think about intended and unintended consequences of change, as well as the unintended impacts these consequences can have, further down the line.**

https://www.mindtools.com/a3w9aym/the-futures-wheel



**Future Wheel: Gender Equity & Inclusion Policy**

# Know your people

**Innovation:** Mandatory gender equity & inclusion policy with leadership targets.

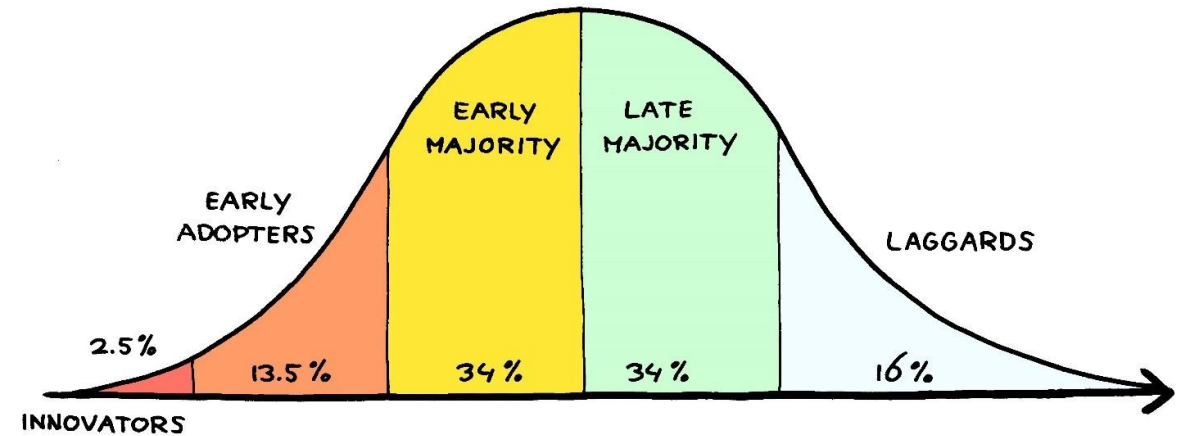**Innovators (2.5%)** Equity champions trial policy early, share results.
**Early adopters (13.5%)** Leaders quickly integrate inclusive practices.
**Early majority (34%)** Join in after seeing early successes.
**Late majority (34%)** Comply when required, minimal engagement.
**Laggards (16%)** Resist or delay adoption, minimal compliance.

**Leadership insight:** Focus on innovators & early adopters first, use wins to draw in early majority, don't over-invest in laggards early.
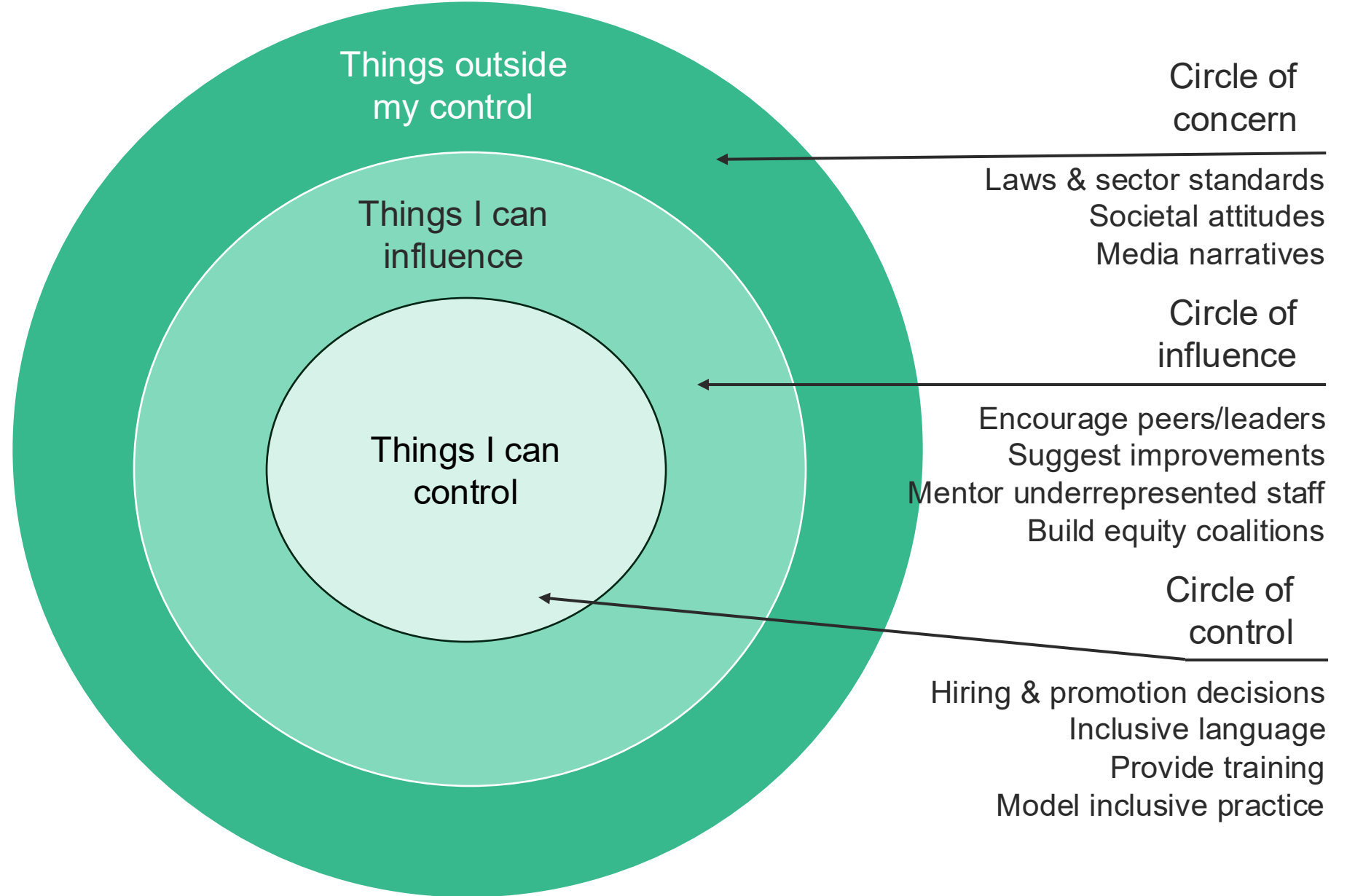


https://www.enablersofchange.com.au/what-is-the-diffusion-of-innovations-theory/

Things outside my control

Things I can influence

Things I can control

**Questions to ask yourself:**

What can I do?

What is within my control or influence?

Circle of concern

Laws & sector standards
Societal attitudes
Media narratives

Circle of influence

Encourage peers/leaders
Suggest improvements
Mentor underrepresented staff
Build equity coalitions

Circle of control

Hiring & promotion decisions
Inclusive language
Provide training
Model inclusive practice

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# Embedding sustainable transformation

## Workplace policies

**Recruitment and promotion**

- Gender-neutral job descriptions and advertising.
- Bias-free recruitment processes (e.g., diverse panels, blind CV screening).
- Targets or quotas for women and gender-diverse representation in leadership.

**Pay equity**

- Regular gender pay gap audits and public reporting.
- Transparent salary bands for all roles.
- Equal pay for equal or comparable work.

**Leave policies**

- Paid parental leave for all genders, with "use it or lose it" provisions for partners.
- Paid carers' leave for dependents of any age.
- Menstrual and menopause leave.
- Bereavement and compassionate leave that's inclusive of chosen family.
- Gender affirmation leave for trans and gender-diverse employees.
- Cultural or ceremonial leave for First Nations staff.

**www.communitydirectors.com.au/tools-resources/policy-bank**

**Flexible work**

- Flexible hours, hybrid/remote work options.
- Job-sharing and part-time leadership roles.
- Four-day work week or compressed work weeks.

**Workplace culture and inclusion**

- Zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, and bullying.
- Gender transition and affirmation policies.
- Gender-neutral facilities and inclusive uniforms.
- Cultural safety and intersectionality frameworks.

**Leadership and accountability**

- Gender equity goals embedded in leader KPIs.
- Annual public reporting on diversity and inclusion progress.
- Equity and inclusion training for all staff, including leaders.

**Career development**

- Mentoring and sponsorship programs for women and gender-diverse staff.
- Leadership programs targeting underrepresented groups.
- Access to professional development during parental leave.

# Embedding sustainable transformation
## Organisation documents and plans

**Foundational Governance Documents**

**Constitution / Rules of Association** – Include commitments to diversity, inclusion, and gender equity in your organisation's purpose and objectives.

**Board Charter** – Set expectations for gender-balanced governance, inclusive decision-making, and accountability for equity outcomes.

**Code of Conduct** – Embed respectful behaviour, anti-discrimination, and equity principles for all members, staff, and volunteers.

**Strategic & Operational Planning**

**Strategic Plan** – Explicit equity goals and measurable targets (e.g., representation, pay equity, inclusion scores).

**Operational / Business Plans** – Action steps, responsibilities, and resources allocated to achieve gender equity goals.

**Workforce or People Strategy** – Workforce diversity targets, inclusive leadership development, and retention strategies.

**Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)** – Required for some public sector bodies under Victorian law; can also be adopted voluntarily.

**Financial & Resource Planning**

**Budget** – Allocate funding for equity initiatives (training, accessibility upgrades, inclusive recruitment).

**Workforce Data Reporting** – Regular analysis of gender pay gaps, promotion rates, and representation in leadership.

**Risk & Compliance Documents**

**Risk Management Plan** – Include equity-related risks (e.g., reputational damage from inequity, legal non-compliance, talent loss).

**Compliance Register** – Track obligations under gender equality legislation, anti-discrimination laws, and workplace safety.

**Human Resources & Workplace Culture**

**Recruitment & Selection Policy** – Ensure bias-free hiring processes.

**Learning & Development Plan** – Prioritise equity, inclusion, and leadership training.

**Performance Review Framework** – Include equity-related KPIs for managers and leaders.

**Succession Plan** – Ensure diverse talent pipelines for leadership roles.

**Engagement & Communication Documents**

**Stakeholder Engagement Plan** – Commit to diverse consultation and representation in decision-making.

**Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)** – If relevant, align with gender equity commitments for First Nations women and gender-diverse people.

**Annual Report** – Publicly report on equity progress and outcomes.

# Plan to succeed

1. Objectives/goals/purpose
2. Activities/deliverables
3. Scope – Circle of control, influence and concern
4. Timeline and milestones
5. Who's involved? Roles and responsibilities
6. Risk management
7. Communications
8. Budget
9. Approval process

# Further reading

www.communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/qualities-of-good-leadership

www.communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/leadership-styles

www.communitydirectors.com.au/research/icda-leadership-white-paper

www.communitydirectors.com.au/articles/great-change-needs-good-leadership

www.communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/ten-questions-women-should-ask-about-joining-a-board

www.communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/10-questions-diversity

www.communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/ten-tips-for-leading-cultural-change-in-an-organisation

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025JK-webinar

**Tomorrow's webinar: Creating inclusive and supportive work environments**