

A close-up photograph of several biodegradable seedling trays filled with dark soil. Small green seedlings are emerging from the soil in some of the compartments. The trays are sitting on a light-colored wooden surface.

Joan Kirner emerging leaders program

Overcoming barriers to sustainable workplace transformation

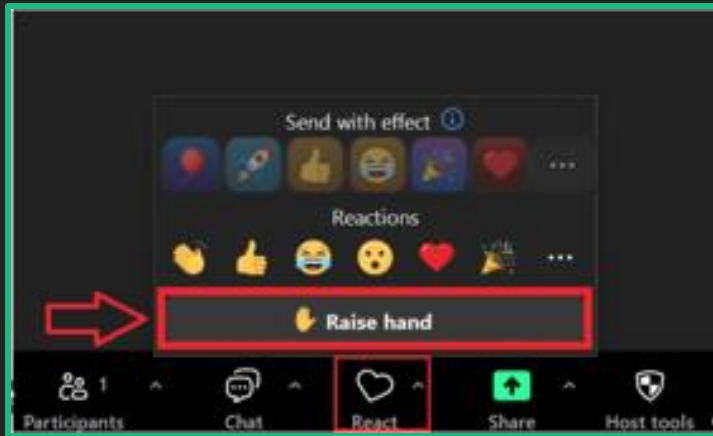
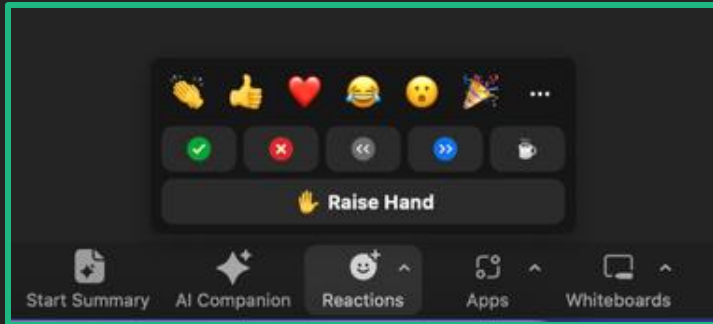


Join the chat...

*Your name,
organisation, land/
country you're
joining from*

Acknowledgement of Country

Housekeeping



- Joining the conversation:

 *Raise hand*

 *Chat*

 *Mute*

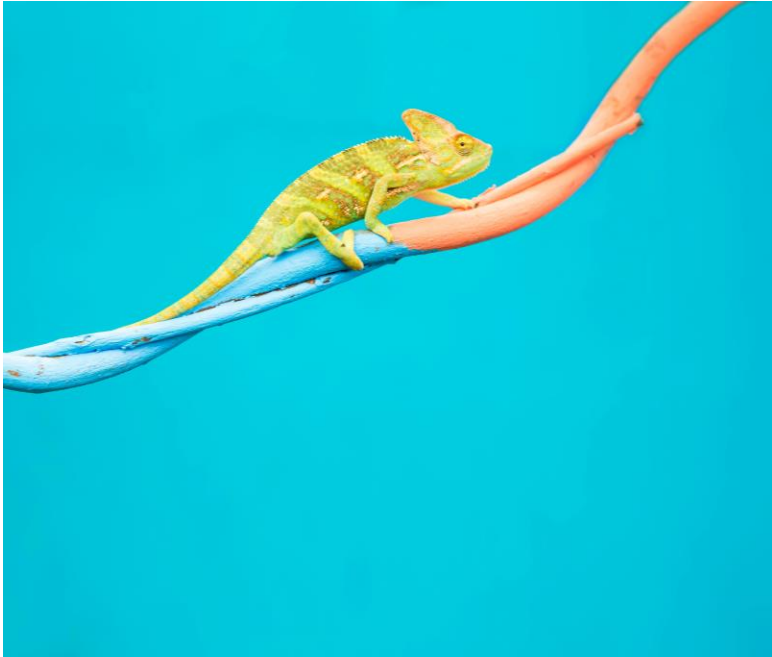
- Slides and recording will be shared
- Please don't use AI to summarise or record this session

Your facilitator



- 20 + years community leadership
- Former CEO Victorian Student Representative Council
- Musician
- Community board member

Today's webinar



Purpose

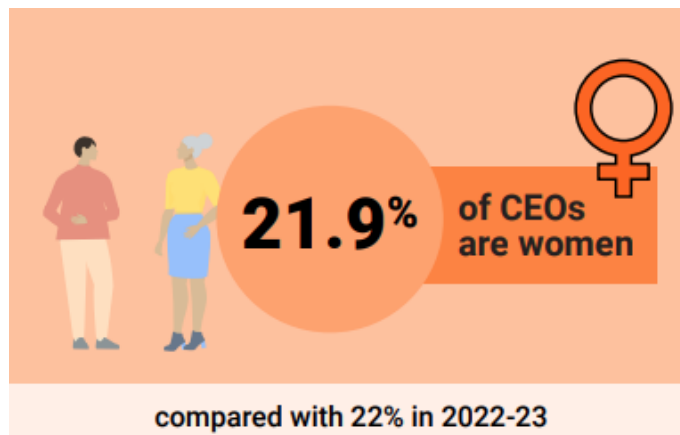
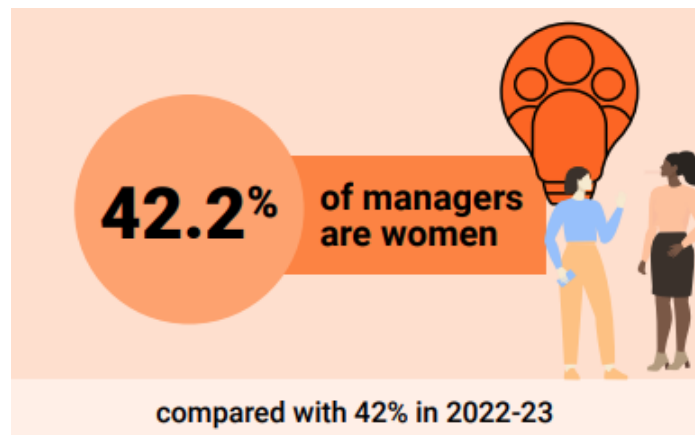
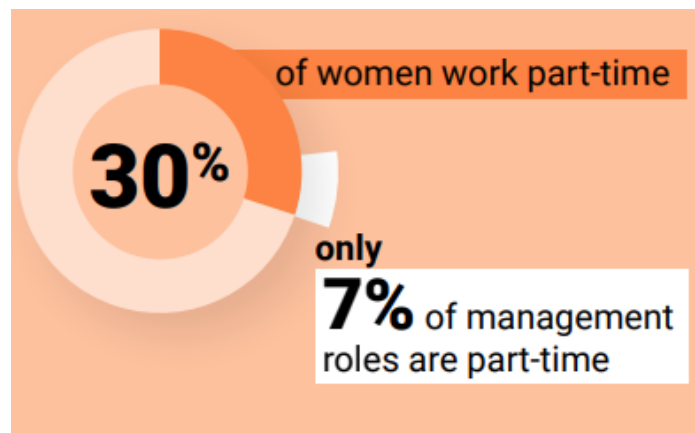
To explore practical approaches to leading change that 'sticks'

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- 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...



LGBTIQ+ statistics

27%

witnessed **negative behaviours** toward LGBTIQ+ colleagues; 10.9% witnessed serious bullying

3x higher

Trans **unemployment** rate is 3× higher than the general population

70%

of people with intersex characteristics experienced workplace **sexual harassment** in past 5 years

4%

of LGBTIQ+ women and gender-diverse people are **represented** in senior leadership roles

50%

Nearly half of LGBTIQ+ women experienced **sexual harassment at work** in 2022

Source: WGEA 2024 Gender Equality Scorecard

Some good news...

Support for parents and carers

80% of employers have a policy or strategy in place to support employees with family or caring responsibilities (up from 72% in 2022-23)

Family and domestic violence support

Nearly 9 in 10 employers (87%) have a policy or strategy to support employees experience family or domestic violence (up 6pp since 2022-23)

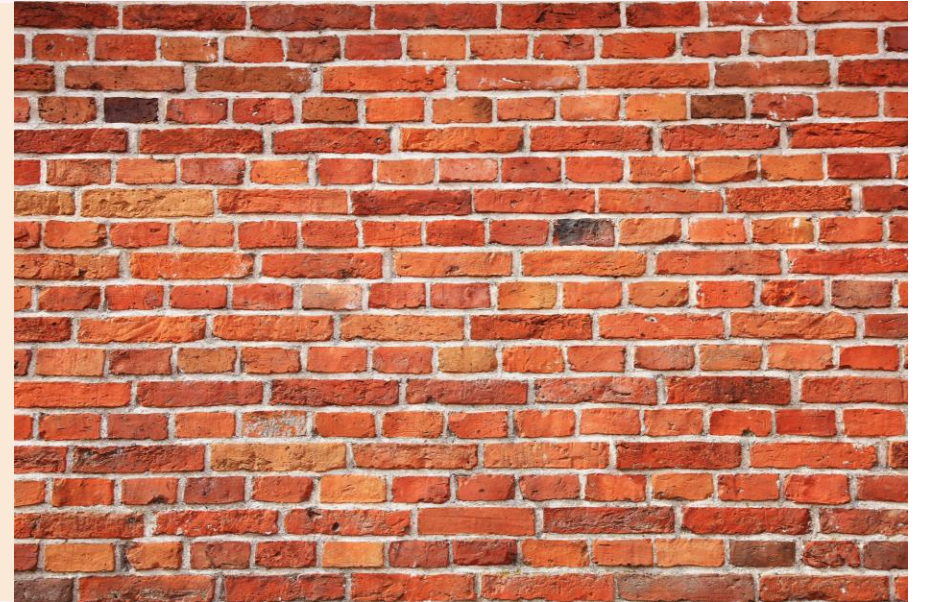
Flexible working arrangements

87% of employers have a policy or strategy on flexible working arrangements (up 3pp in last 12 months)

Source: WGEA 2024 Gender Equality Scorecard

Structural barriers

- Gender pay gap
- Underrepresentation in leadership
- Occupational segregation
- Rigid workplace structures



Cultural barriers

- Unconscious bias and stereotypes
- Exclusion from networks and sponsorship
- Resistance to change
- Invisibility of gender-diverse experiences



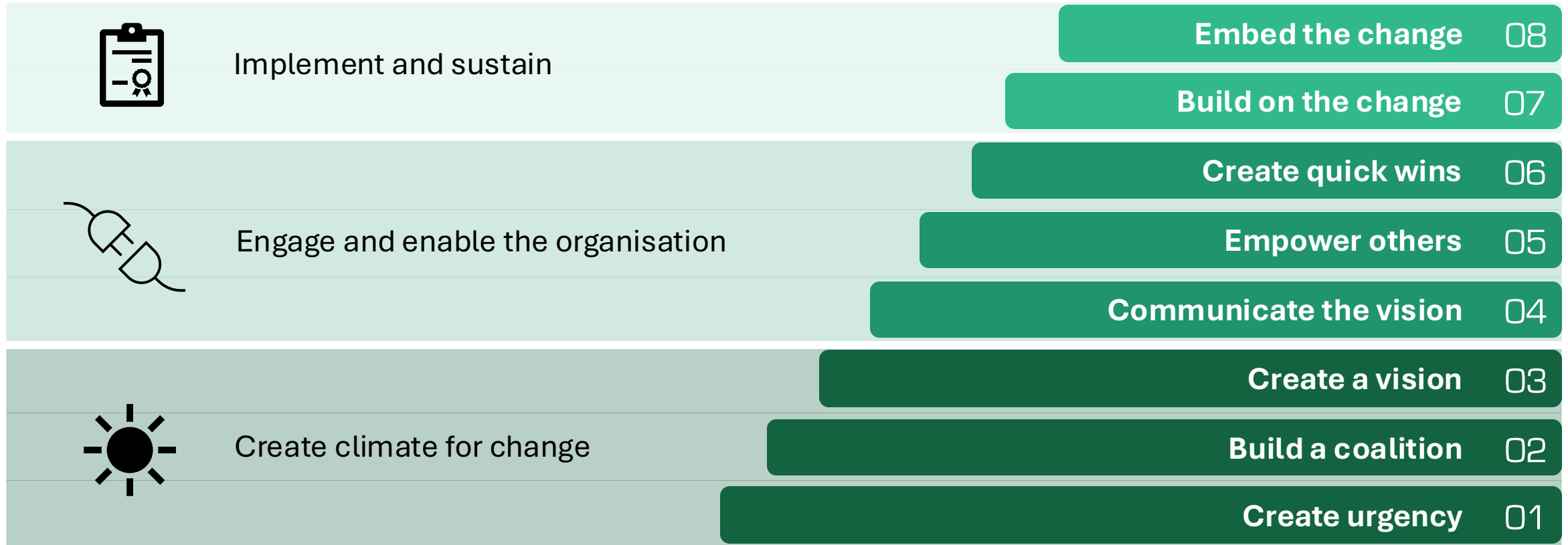
Interpersonal & intersectional barriers

- 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?

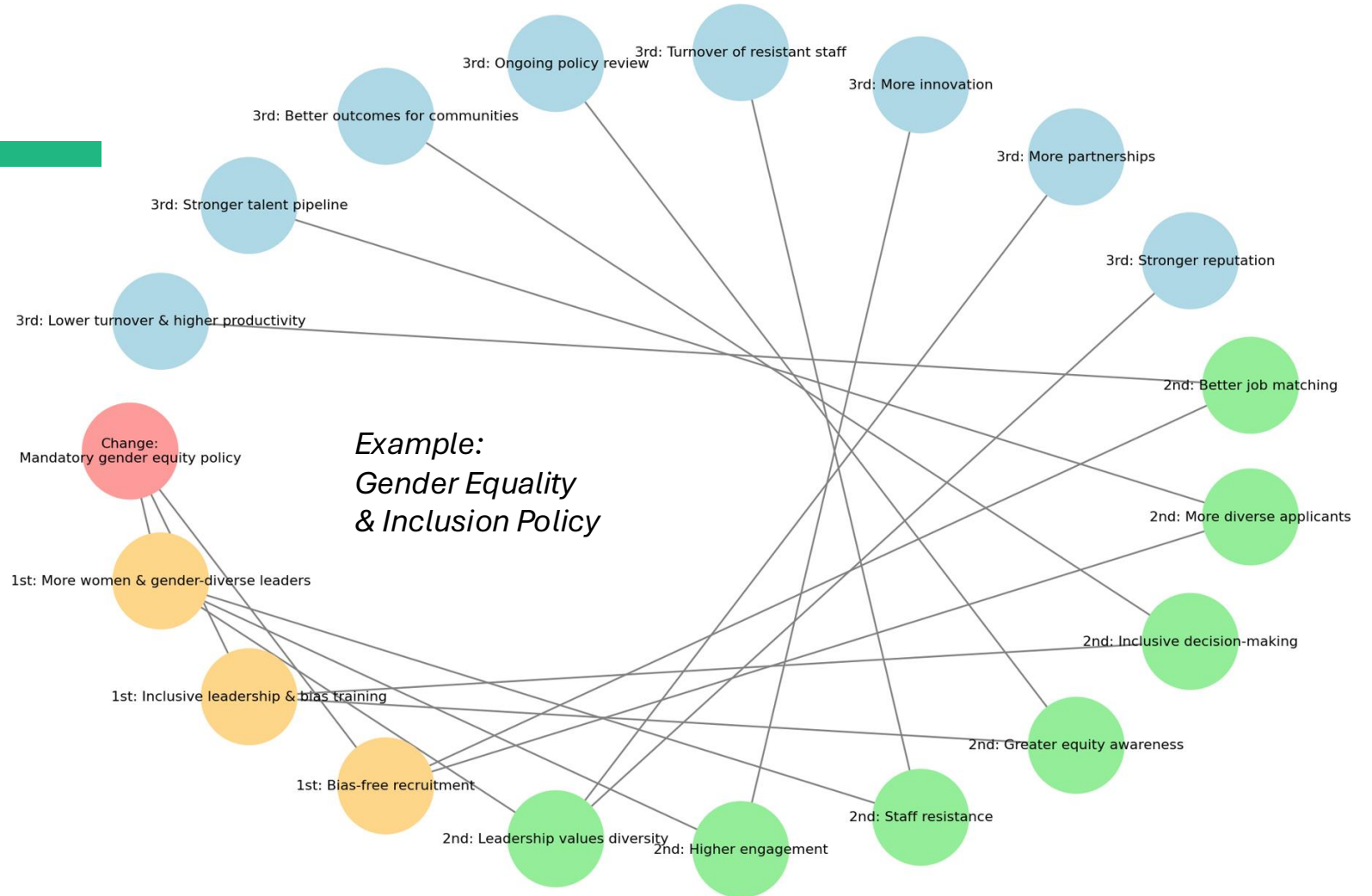
Kotter's eight steps to change



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>

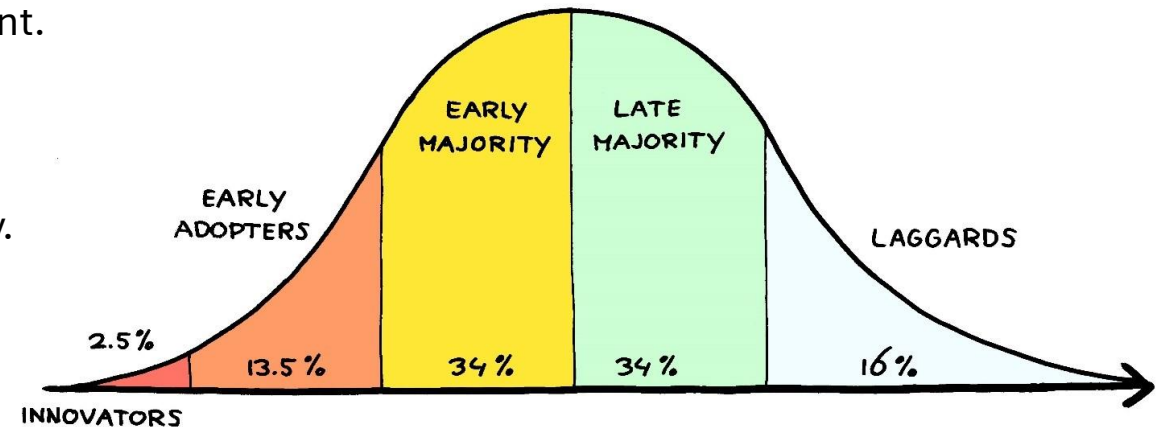


Know your people

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.



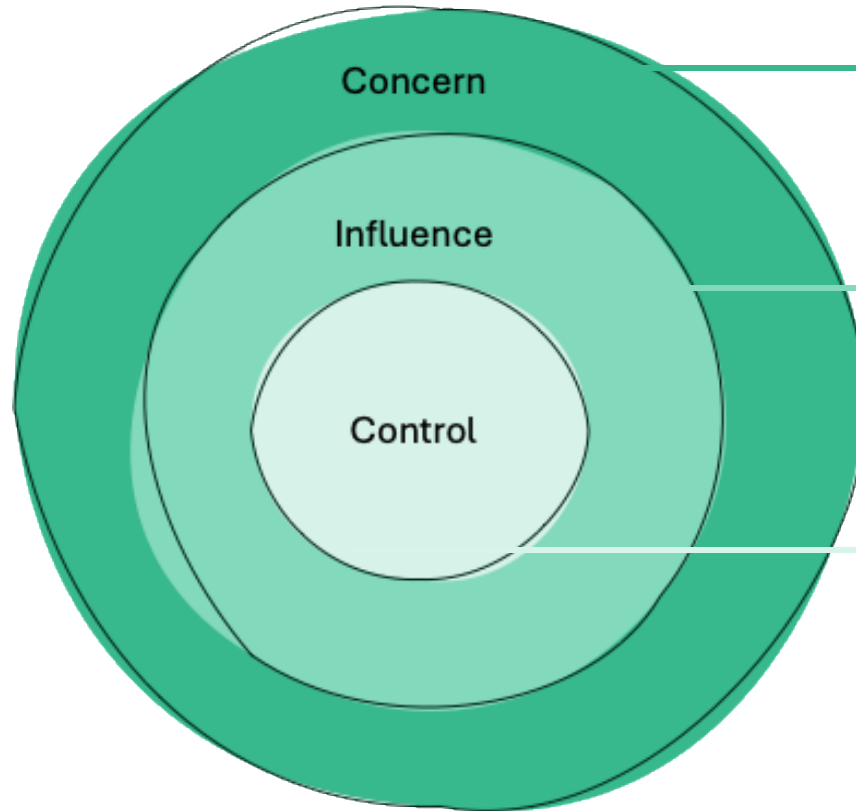
Source: <https://www.enablersofchange.com.au/what-is-the-diffusion-of-innovations-theory/>

Covey's circles

Questions to ask yourself:

What can I do?

What is within my control or influence?



Laws & sector standards
Societal attitudes
Media narratives

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

Hiring & promotion decisions
Inclusive language
Provide training
Model inclusive practice

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

Activity: Plan to succeed

1. Objectives/ goals/ purpose
2. Activities/ deliverables
3. Scope – Circle of control, influence and concern

In your breakout groups, consider a change in your organisation and apply the first three steps in the planning template. Consider the barriers that may arise.



Accountability

In the chat...
“In the next two weeks, I will...”

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

Share your thoughts



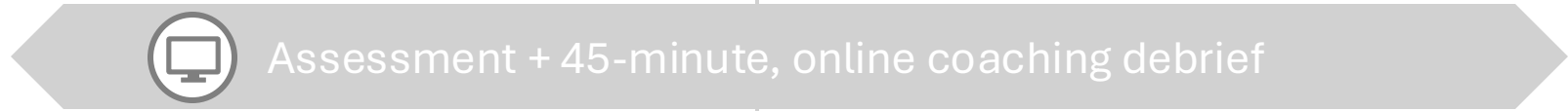
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025JK-webinar>

Tomorrow: Creating inclusive and supportive work environments

5 x full-day workshops
(3 in-person, 2 online)



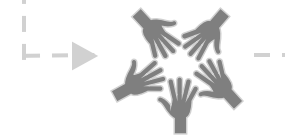
Leadership strengths assessment



4 x 1-hour webinars



Mentoring circle
(60-minutes, online)



Graduation
(2-hours, in person)

