



SA Leaders for Gender Equity Key Messaging - January 2023

Who are the SA Leaders for Gender Equity

The SA Leaders for Gender Equity is a group of South Australian business leaders working together with the common aim of achieving gender equality.

The Leaders were established by the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission in 2012. The group was initially modelled on the Male Champions of Change but then in 2017 the group expand to include women. In 2021 the secretariat support for the group moved from the Equal Opportunity Commission to the South Australian Department for Human Services. At this time the group became The South Australian Leaders for Gender Equity (SALGE). The revised group reviewed its purpose and is committed to advancing gender equity by changing behaviour and levelling the playing field across businesses, not-for-profit and government organisations who are based in SA. SALGE's purpose is to advance gender equity because talent is gender neutral, but bias isn't. SALGE will do this by having a voice in all rooms and through their influence in the community.

SALGE members will act individually and collectively to inform and influence all levels of South Australian business and government on the importance of gender equity.

Values – What the group believes in and stands for

Openness

Knowing what we know is never enough. We listen, we voice, and we listen again.

Associations: curiosity, inclusion, just, fairness, lack of restriction, frankness, creative, imaginative, reception, seek out the new, unconventional, agreeable, diversity, adventurous.

“The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend” Henri Bergson,
Philosopher, 1859-1941.

Courage

We stand for what is right, not what is easy.

Associations: brave, patience, confidence, feeling fear but choosing to act, doing what must be done, unafraid, unflinching, following your heart, perseverance in the face of adversity, keep trying, challenge the status quo.





“You can choose courage, or you can choose comfort. You cannot have both” Brene Brown, Professor and Author, 1965 to present.

Integrity

We are accountable to what we choose to do, and for what we choose to ignore.

Associations: respect, truthful, accountable, fair, trust, doing the right thing, keeping commitments, accepting.

“The time is always right to do what is right” Martin Luther King JR, African American Baptist Minister and Activist, 1929 – 1968.

Commitment

Gender equity is our responsibility – women’s rights are human rights.

Associations: dedication to a cause, duty, obligation, devoted, intent, a promise.

“Motivation is what gets you started. Commitment is what keeps you going” Jim Rohan, American entrepreneur author & motivational speaker, 1930 – 2009.

SALGE’s priority focus areas are:

1. Increasing women’s representation in leadership roles

Note: The use of the term “women” throughout SALGE is inclusive of both cisgender and transgender women. We also acknowledge the under-representation of non-binary people in leadership, which is also a result of gender inequality.

2. Addressing the gender pay gap.

SALGE is chaired by Jane Pickering, Chief Executive, Eldercare.

SALGE members have steering responsibilities, serve as the governing body, set the future direction of the group, and oversee the implementation of the group’s agreed outcomes.

Membership

SALGE aims to develop a membership that is representative of the community by seeking women’s and men’s representation from within a range business sectors and government, as well as those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQ+ or living with a disability.

INSERT link to photos and bios





Key Messages

Our Leadership Commitment

- We encourage all business leaders and employers to embrace and address gender for the benefit of their own business bottom line and for social equity.
- As senior business leaders in South Australia, we are working to progress sustainable change within our organisations and to increase the participation of women at the highest levels of industry. It is our duty to educate and encourage other South Australian businesses do the same.
- We believe gender equality is achievable and makes a powerful and positive difference to productivity, effectiveness and innovation, creating workplaces that are employers of choice for all.
- As the heads of organisations we reflect on our own leadership and ensure we are sending the right signals to the rest of the business. We demonstrate our commitment to women's leadership and walk the talk.
- *The path to lasting change starts at the top.*
- By prioritising gender equity initiatives, we are showing our employees, our industry and our State that we walk the talk.

Flexible Work

- Flexible working arrangements promote gender equity by providing access to working in ways that enhance business and personal effectiveness and efficiency.
- Flexibility is not a women's issue, it is a family and community issue. It is about sharing diverse caring responsibilities and about increasing the capacity of people to participate in the workplace.
- Flexibility is equally important and relevant for men and women as it breaks the bias around gender roles outside the workplace.
- *We must challenge the notion of 'presenteeism' – work is a thing you do, not a place you go.*
- Increasing men's active involvement in caring not only increases opportunities for women to engage more fully in the workforce, it also recognises the value for men in caring for their children. This can result in businesses having access to a broader talent pool, and an overall increase in productivity.
- A range of flexible workplace arrangements can be used within a wide range of business settings. While flexibility can improve business practices, success requires leadership, accountability, innovation, dedication, long term support and accountability for results.





- Research has shown that the persistent myth that women seeking flexible options are less ambitious is far from true. In fact, women who work flexibly are equally if not more serious and committed to reaching their full career potential and are willing to take different routes to achieve their career aspirations.
- “The aging population means employees are staying in the workplace longer, often in a more flexible capacity. And the current generation of new recruits, known as millennials, has very different work expectations than their baby boomer parents. Survey after survey has shown what millennials want most is to work flexibly”.⁴³

Unconscious Bias

- Traditional ideas around how women and men should engage with the workplace must change if we are to meet the social and economic challenges in the decades ahead.
- By recognising and reducing our biases, we can identify the best candidate for a particular role, and by taking advantage of diverse thinking, perspectives, and experiences, we expand business opportunities.
- We need to find ways to eliminate entrenched bias in our recruitment processes and leadership decisions - not just because it's fair, but also because it means greater innovation and problem-solving capacity, better productivity, reduced turnover and happier employees.
- As business leaders, we know that what gets measured is more likely to be prioritised. Setting gender equity goals is a key step to achieving gender equality.
- Gender diversity needs to move from the 'aspirational list' to become a business priority. This means setting targets that are documented, measured, and reported on.
- *Addressing gender equality within organisations will not happen accidentally, and like any other business issue, a strategic and systematic approach is required.*
- We need more leaders to see gender equity as a key business driver, not a buzz word. Getting more women into senior leadership positions where they can participate in the decision-making process is important from both a commercial and human rights point of view.
- We encourage all business leaders and employers to embrace and address gender equity for the benefit of their own business bottom line and because it is the right thing to do.
- Unconscious biases can have a serious impact on workplace culture – they affect who gets hired, who gets promoted, and how we measure performance. Workplace policies and procedures need to be in place to reduce the impact of these biases on gender equity and diversity more generally.





- Unconscious bias happens automatically, is not under our control and is triggered by our unconscious mind making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations. These are influenced by our genetic make-up, background, past and present cultural environments, and personal experiences.
- When talking about gender equality, particularly around women's leadership, the issue of merit is inevitably raised. The best person for the job should always be appointed, regardless of race, gender, or background. However, what we traditionally call 'merit' needs to be challenged along with unconscious bias. As the Male Champions of Change have stated "if we continue to define 'merit' as people 'like us' who have done what we did, we will get more of the same."⁴⁷

Equal Pay

- The gender pay gap is real. Men earn more than women in every country and in every industry.
- *Employers do not generally set out to pay women and men unequally, but unconscious gender biases can affect performance ratings, promotions and pay decisions.*
- Businesses play a crucial role in addressing the gender pay gap and change must come from the top.
- Employer policies that embrace salary transparency can help eliminate hard-to-justify gender pay gaps and can play an important role in helping achieve equal pay.
- We firmly believe in the principle of equal pay for equal work and are making the systemic changes needed to make this a reality.
- As senior business leaders, it is also our role to raise awareness of the gender pay gap. Apart from being an issue of fairness, it makes perfect business sense to ensure the economic security of women and prevent lost opportunity in human capital investment and potential.





Gender Equity in Australia – Key Statistics

About gender equality in Australia

- Women and girls make up just over half (50.7 per cent) of the Australian population.¹
- While women comprise roughly 47 per cent of all employees in Australia,² they take home on average \$251.20 less than men each week (full-time adult ordinary earnings)³.
*The national gender “pay gap” is 15.3 per cent and it has remained stuck between 15 per cent and 19 per cent for the past two decades.*⁴
- Australian women account for 68% of primary carers for older people and people with disability.⁵
- 95% of primary parental leave (outside of the public-sector) is taken by women and women spend almost three times as much time taking care of children each day, compared to men.⁶
- In 2017, Australia was ranked 35th on a global index measuring gender equality, slipping from a high point of 15th in 2006. While Australia scores very highly in the area of educational attainment, there is still a lot of progress to be made in the areas of economic participation and opportunity and political empowerment.⁷

Barriers to gender equality

- The Australian workforce is highly segregated by gender and female-dominated industries – such as aged care, child care and health and community services – have been historically undervalued.⁸ Australian women are over-represented as part-time workers in low-paid industries and in insecure work and continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles in the private and public sectors.⁹
- *More than half of women aged 18 or older have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime.*¹⁰
- On average, women spend 64 per cent of their working week performing unpaid care work.¹¹ They spend almost twice as many hours performing such work each week compared to men.¹²
- In 2015-2016 the average Australian woman was reaching retirement with an average of \$113,660 less superannuation than the average male.¹³ As a result, women are more likely to experience poverty in their retirement years and be far more reliant on the Age Pension.¹⁴
- More than one in three Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence in her lifetime and one in two experiences sexual harassment.¹⁵
- It is estimated that violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy \$22 billion in 2015-16.¹⁶





Positive developments

- The number of women on the Boards of ASX-listed companies grew from 8.3 per cent in 2009 to 26.2 per cent in 2017¹⁷ due in part to a diversity policy implemented by the ASX Corporate Governance Council in 2010.
- Increasing the number of women in corporate leadership positions is likely to significantly increase financial returns.¹⁸
- Australian men and women overwhelmingly believe (90 per cent) that men should be as involved in parenting as women.¹⁹ However, while a significant number of fathers, and in particular young fathers, would like to be able to access better workplace flexibility arrangements, men are much more likely than women to have such requests denied.²⁰
- As of 2016, over one million Australian workers are able to take leave and enjoy other protections because of domestic violence clauses in their workplace agreement or award conditions.²¹

Workforce participation

- Women comprise 47.9% of all employed persons in Australia, 26.3% of all employed persons are women working full-time, and 21.6% working part-time.²²
- Women constitute 38.4% of all full-time employees and 68.5% of all part-time employees²³
- The workforce participation rate* is 62.1% for women²⁴ and 70.4% for men (this was 61.4% for women and 70.9% for men in February 2021)²⁵
- The workforce participation rate among those aged 15-64 years is 76.2% for women and 83.2% for men. (this was 75.0% for women and 83.4% for men in February 2021)²⁶

** The workforce participation rate relates to active population, all people aged 15 years and over who are working or looking for work (i.e. employed or unemployed).*

Flexible work

- In Australia, 73% of businesses surveyed declared that their company is more productive as a result of having more flexible working arrangements.⁴⁴
- 90% of Australian men and women believe that men should be as involved in parenting as women and that equal participation in caring work leads to greater financial and social equality over the life course.⁴⁵
- *Men are less likely to ask to work flexibly, and when they do ask, they're more likely to be turned down. Australian men are twice as likely as women to have their requests to work flexibly rejected.*⁴⁶





Economic security

- The full-time average weekly ordinary earnings²⁷ for women are 13.8% less than for men²⁸. This has decreased by 0.4 percentage points since May 2021.
- Among non-public sector organisations with 100 or more employees, the base salary gender pay gap for all employees is 18.3%, and 23.8% for total remuneration²⁹.
- The gender pay gap for adult average hourly ordinary time cash earnings³⁰ for full-time non-managerial employees is 8.8% in favour of men and 11.1% for all non-managerial employees³¹.
- The median undergraduate starting salaries for women are 3.9% less than for men. This gap widens 14.1% for postgraduate (coursework) graduates³².
- Median superannuation balances for women at retirement (aged 60-64) are 23.4% lower than those for men in 2018-19³³.
- *55.2% of people receiving the aged pension are women*³⁴.

Educational attainment

- Of all women aged 20-24, 92.5% have attained year 12 qualifications or above, compared to 87.5% of men in the same age bracket³⁵. Of all women aged 25-29, 48.3% have achieved a bachelor degree or above, compared to 36.1% of similarly-aged men³⁶
- Women represent 59.5% of domestic students enrolled in universities or other institutions. This has risen from 57.9% in 2012³⁷.

Paid parental leave

Of all organisations in the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2020-21 dataset:

- 60% provide primary carer's leave in addition to the Federal Government's paid parental leave scheme.
- 52.5% provide secondary carer's leave in addition to the Federal Government's paid parental leave scheme.

Women in leadership

Results from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2020-21 dataset show:

- Women hold 17.6% of chair positions and 31.2% of directorships,³⁸ and represent 19.4% of CEOs and 34.5% of key management personnel.³⁹
- *22.3% of boards and governing bodies have no female directors*⁴⁰. *By contrast, only 0.6% had no male directors.*⁴¹





Statistics from the Australian Institute of Company Directors reveal:

- 34.2% of directors in the ASX 200 are women, as of 30 of November 2021.⁴²
- Women comprised 41.8% of new appointments to ASX 200 boards as of 30 November 2021.⁴³

Unconscious Bias

- Senior Australian men in business are twice as likely to rank other men over women as effective problem solvers, despite believing that women were as capable as men in delivering outcomes.⁴⁸
- *Gender based discrimination has decreased global income by 16%, or US\$12 trillion, including US\$2.440 billion in East Asia and the Pacific.*⁴⁹
- Sex discrimination (both direct and indirect including unconscious bias) is the biggest contributing factor to the pay gap at 38%.⁵⁰
- Gradually reducing discrimination in social institutions could lead to an annual average increase in the world GDP growth rate of 0.03 to 0.6 percentage points by 2030.⁵¹





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