

*Karen Morley*

# Beat gender bias



HOW TO  
PLAY A BETTER  
PART IN A MORE  
INCLUSIVE  
WORLD

## **Praise for *Beat Gender Bias***

‘Everyone knows about the causes and consequences of gender bias, but few know how to combat it. This book, packed with practical suggestions, is a must-read for anyone interested in reducing gender bias and creating an inclusive workplace.’

**Dr Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Chief Talent Scientist at Manpower Group, Professor of Business Psychology at Columbia University and UCL**

‘Dr Morley has extensive experience working with organisations and their leaders. Her insights, combined with her extensive knowledge of organisational behaviours, have clearly been brought to the fore in *Beat Gender Bias*. It is a very approachable and well-organised tool to enable anyone to understand bias, the situations that arise when bias is viewed as acceptable, and how you can turn a toxic environment into an inclusive one. I would recommend the book to anyone that is hoping to lead an organisation to maximise everyone’s talents and create a highly productive organisation that will be successful into the future.’

**Anthea Hancocks, CEO, Scanlon Foundation**

‘Creating a truly inclusive workplace, where your team genuinely want to put down roots and grow, starts with a mindset and culture of safety, connection and feeling welcome. A constant threat to this flourishing is bias, and as leaders it’s often the unconscious thoughts that play out in the lived reality.’

‘*Beat Gender Bias* is a fantastic framework for raising awareness and identifying behaviours in ourselves and our teammates, and for challenging this head on in a way that brings teams on the right journey to a place of work that bears out the true nature of diversity and inclusion.’

**Michael Schneider, Managing Director, Bunnings**

‘When organisations have a role to serve the community, naturally half the population benefiting should be women and girls. However, many studies demonstrate that there is unconscious bias in service delivery by government agencies. The tools and tips outlined in Dr Karen Morley’s book *Beat Gender Bias* will assist councils to be more inclusive in service delivery to everyone across the community. Reading this will assist public sector leaders to make the invisible visible and then work to address equitable delivery of service.’

**Ruth McGowan, OAM, Local Government consultant and trainer**

‘I have long been a believer in the critical importance of diversity of thought in achieving high performance. The GFC and economic cycles have seen many organisations without sufficient diversity of thought struggle or even disappear. Encouraging inclusion and listening are keys to leveraging the diversity dividend. How to successfully and consistently promote diversity and achieve inclusion are the hard parts. Thankfully, Karen’s book gives all leaders the tools we need to do this.

‘I was fortunate to have exposures to some amazing Male Champions of Change (MCCs) in my time at Aurecon. MCC leaders like Giam Swiegers and Bill Cox have highlighted the correlation between diversity and innovation as not being a coincidence – diversity drives innovation. The numerous industry awards won by Aurecon are proof of that. Not to mention that truly diverse and inclusive organisations are more fun to work in! With Karen’s book in hand, I am confident many more leaders will be able to champion change and beat bias, to ensure that their organisations and communities are high-performing.’

**Paul Axup, CFO, Aurecon**

‘Karen’s book is easy to read, data-rich, and informative. It provides practical and clear suggestions for achieving change on diversity and inclusion in groups and organisations. It is a valuable reference tool for those of us – whether we are leaders, members of groups,

or parents – who want to see continuing change in this area in our society and our organisations. Most of all, it helps us learn more about ourselves and be better people and leaders for it.'

**Andrea Durrant, Managing Partner, Boards Global**

'I had the pleasure of being supported by Karen on my leadership journey for the last 12 months. During this period we had lots of meaningful conversations around purpose-driven leadership and what makes a strong team. Having worked in many different countries around the globe, there is one big learning for me: don't believe thinking or doing things your way is the only or best way! Diversity is one of the key enablers to a high-performance team. The more different backgrounds, experiences and worldviews the people in your company have, the better they will find solutions and drive performance.

'Gender bias is still one of the most pertinent biases, and as the father of a daughter, I am much more sensitive to this dimension of biases since she was born. The topic of bias is much wider than that – any bias prevents you from exploring the opportunities around you and it can be very hurtful to another person; it is never factual. We are all used to seeing the world through our own eyes, but I encourage every leader to change perspective and to experience the wealth of a more diverse view – it is truly enriching and one of the greatest experiences I have as a leader every day.'

**Rafael Pasquet, CFO, Mercedes-Benz Financial Services Australia Pty. Ltd.**

'A thought-provoking and practical book on gender bias for any leader in today's workplace. I really enjoyed Karen's book because it provides effective leadership tools to help identify and overcome gender bias, reframe the conversation, and create more inclusive workplaces.'

**Angela Williams, General Manager Community & Housing, Broadspectrum**

Karen Morley

Beat  
gender  
bias



This is an excerpt from **Beat Gender Bias** by  
Dr Karen Morley. You can purchase the complete  
book from many good bookstores.  
**Beat Gender Bias** is also available from  
your preferred ebookseller.

First published in 2020 by Major Street Publishing Pty Ltd

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A catalogue record for this  
book is available from the  
National Library of Australia

ISBN: 978-0-6485159-9-9

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Cover design by Simone Geary and Production Works

Internal design by Production Works

Printed in Australia by Ovato, an Accredited ISO AS/NZS 14001:2004 Environmental Management System Printer.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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*There's no greater gift than thinking that you had  
some impact on the world, for the better.*

**— GLORIA STEINEM**

## Foreword

As we head into the 2020s, there has never been a more important time to turn our attention to ensuring our organisations are inclusive.

As survey after survey shows, leaders of organisations feel that there has never been greater uncertainty. There have been major shifts in globalisation, technology, geopolitics, demographics and industries. In a world where change is inevitable, organisations must be able to adapt and innovate. For organisations, that means drawing on all the diverse talent that is available and creating an environment where everyone can fully participate and contribute.

As Karen Morley says, 'The compelling logic for increased diversity is because it increases performance.' It is perhaps no surprise that increased diversity improves performance. As the legendary investor Warren Buffett has said, 'We've seen what can be accomplished when we use 50 per cent of our human capacity. If you visualise what 100 per cent can do, you'll join me as an unbridled optimist...' Furthermore, research by a range of leading advisory firms and academic institutions indicates that companies' performance is enhanced by being more diverse. That research shows that having a diverse workforce provides tangible and measurable benefits. Companies are more profitable, more collaborative and more inclusive when they hire women.

And in terms of organisations we can relate to, companies that we know well are talking about the difference that diversity makes. For example, our largest miner, BHP, has committed

to a 50:50 gender split at all levels of the organisation by 2025. Why have they made this commitment? For better performance. The company has seen improvements in its safety record, produced higher operational results and returned better scores on employee engagement where it has greater diversity.

For many of us, our lived experience also demonstrates that gender balance makes a positive difference. I speak regularly to both men and women who talk about the improved team dynamics when there is gender balance – whether that means an organisation needs to look at increasing the number of women or the number of men. And I speak from experience with both.

Finally, there is also the persuasive ethical argument that we should all have the opportunity to reach our full potential and make the greatest contribution we can.

So, given that there are compelling reasons for organisations to pursue greater diversity and ensure inclusivity, why has progress been slow? The answer is that it's tough to bring about the sort of change that is required – and in particular, to overcome the biases that we all have, and which are so often embedded in organisational cultures.

Karen Morley has done us all a great service by writing this book. She has the deep knowledge and experience to translate what we know about building more inclusive organisations into how to do it. And she does it in such a straightforward and practical way. In particular, I appreciate that Karen tells stories and gives tips that provide a way forward for leaders and organisations that might feel stuck, despite their best

intentions. Her 'bias busters' provide a great checklist for what can and needs to be done.

I am sure all readers will appreciate Karen's candour – whether she is talking about her own biases, saying when it doesn't make sense to push for greater diversity, or suggesting that we don't try to convert Resistors. This is a really practical guide, but it draws on a deep understanding of psychology and group behaviour, as well as the research on gender equity.

I've known Karen for many years – and she has never failed to offer insight and practical guidance. With this book, I am confident that all readers will deepen their knowledge and find ways to become more effective leaders. And it is through personal leadership that we can all make a difference – to build stronger organisations and a better society.

*Kathryn Fagg, AO  
Chairman Boral Ltd, Past President Chief Executive Women,  
Non-Executive Director Male Champions of Change*

## About the author

Karen's vision is to amplify leadership impact. A critical way to do that is to make sure that everyone's talents are developed to the full. That's why inclusive leadership strategies and practices are core to her work. She is an authority on the benefits of gender-balanced leadership and how to help women to succeed at work.

What really lights Karen up is the idea of helping to make the working world a better place: one where everyone's talent and potential shine, one where everyone has a chance to rise up and be their best.

It's her own experience of difference that drives Karen's motivation to beat bias. She's experienced the pain of being excluded; it feels like being stuck in first gear. The engine keeps revving, but all it does is create more friction. She's learned how to shift gears, relieve the pressure and accelerate change. She helps inclusionists to be more influential so that they create bigger change more rapidly. And she works with leaders who want to be more inclusive, showing them how to see what's invisible and what to do to overcome bias.

Karen has helped organisations like Bunnings, CSL, Department of Education, Department of Justice, Downer, Fulton Hogan Australia, HASSELL, Melbourne Water, QBE, Office-works and The University of Melbourne on their diversity and inclusion programs.

She has previously published *Gender Balanced Leadership: An Executive Guide* to help organisations be fairer and get

great results and *Lead Like a Coach: How to Get the Most Out of Any Team* to help leaders increase engagement and get better work done.

### **Working with Karen Morley**

Karen works with executives and human resources leaders from a range of different organisations to help their leaders create fairer and more innovative workplaces. She consults with organisations on strategies to increase gender inclusion, reduce unconscious bias and promote inclusive leadership. Her Inclusionist Quest program is for inclusion influencers who want to step up the rate of progress, stop backlash and create workplaces where everyone thrives.

To find out more about how Karen can work with you or your organisation, please visit [www.karenmorley.com.au](http://www.karenmorley.com.au) or call +614 38 215 391.

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# Introduction

I was six when I first experienced bias. Rather than my gender, which is what I will be focusing on in this book, it was my left-handedness. Try as I might, I could never score more than 6 out of 10 on my writing tests. There was no encouragement from my teacher, only criticism. The three other left-handers in the class received the same treatment. It wasn't about the quality of our writing – even at six I could tell that! It was always about the inferiority of being left-handed.

I kept trying to 'get it right', frustrated that I couldn't gain approval and succeed. I couldn't crack the secret code; to my teacher, I was a left-hander first and Karen Morley second. The feeling of not being seen for my skills and efforts was very strong, even at such a young age.

I care so much about bias because at such an early age in my life I had constraints placed on me simply because I was different.

Luckily for me, I did well in other subjects and I had a very supportive family.

The next year, I was in a new class with a new teacher and everything was different. The world opened up fully to me. I did well at school and later at university. I completed a master's degree in psychology with an exceptional group of mental health professionals, working with women and children experiencing domestic violence.

My first working role was in a community health service led by a female CEO, with a gender-balanced workforce. It was a great privilege to work in such a purpose-driven, fair and growth-oriented culture. The experience shaped my view of what work should be like.

Several years later, when I sought to advance my career in another organisation, I once again found myself constrained by bias. This time, it was because of my gender. I felt passed over for promotional roles, with vague feedback as to why. My situation changed dramatically when a new CEO joined the organisation and appointed a female boss to my division. Over the next six years I enjoyed rapid career advancement.

Since then, I've been committed to doing what I can to advance the careers of women and promote inclusion. I want to change the way we shape and experience the world of work. Work should be a place where talent and potential shine, where people are noticed and recognised because of what they can do, not what they look like. My dream is that no-one should be held back due to their skin colour, gender, sexuality, handedness or any other feature. We should all have the opportunity to rise to be our best!

While this book focuses on beating gender bias, its broader purpose is to give you the knowledge and tools to beat all kinds of bias. My goal is to drive a stronger awareness of the value of inclusive leadership to amplify everyone's full talents and potential.

- ▶ **Part I** explores what to know, what to value and what to do in order to beat bias.
- ▶ **Part II** is a deep dive into the most vexing biases; it provides suggestions on how to mitigate them.

- ▶ **Part III** focuses on how leaders can create a gender-balanced, inclusive culture at an organisational level.
- ▶ **Part IV** provides a roadmap for how to change everyday conversations, explaining how to notice bias, how to let others know about it and how to stop it happening.

Each chapter closes with a 'Bias Buster' section, detailing specific actions you can take to outsmart bias. Take them one at a time! Choose the action that best fits you and your role, the one that will most benefit your team or organisation.

Let's progress gender balance and create more inclusive cultures!

Good luck!



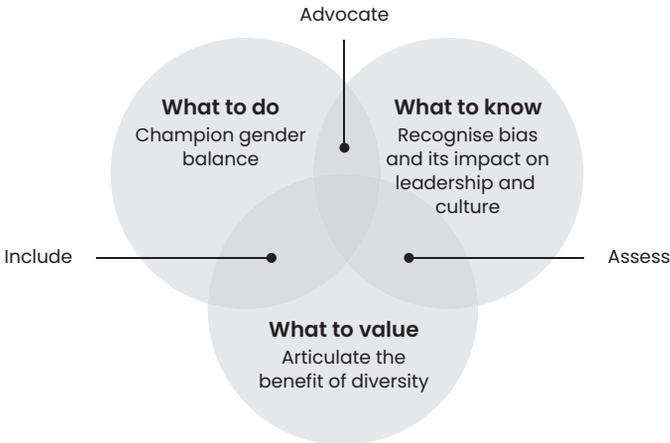
# *What does it take to beat bias?*

*We must carry forward the work of the women who came before us and ensure our daughters have no limits on their dreams, no obstacle to their achievements, and no remaining ceilings to shatter.*

**—BARACK OBAMA**

To beat gender bias, three key areas need attention: what to do, what to know and what to value, as shown in the diagram following. This is the focus of this first part of the book.

***What it takes to beat bias***



To beat bias, you need to actively champion gender inclusion. When you advocate for inclusion you make bias and its impact transparent.

We're still learning how bias works, and how it affects decisions. It's critical to know what bias is and how it impacts beliefs about leadership because if we can't see it, we can't change it. When we know what it is, we can analyse how it impacts leadership and organisational cultures.

We need to continue to assess and learn about the impact of bias to clarify the value we gain when we beat it. If we don't assess its impact, we won't choose the right course of action. The clearer the benefit of diversity to your team or your

organisation, the better. When we remove bias, what's the payback to the bottom line?

When the value of removing bias value is clear, you can champion specific actions that include rather than exclude.

In this first part of the book:

1. **Chapter 1** describes how to be a Champion of gender inclusion and how to support those who are. Why not do both?
2. **Chapters 2, 3 and 4** cover what to know. You might not feel ready to champion gender inclusion because you don't know enough about it. Start here, to increase your understanding. Chapter 2 details how to understand bias, and how to recognise and prevent biased behaviour. Chapter 3 exposes the dark side of organisational cultures that are not balanced. It highlights the toxicity that extreme contest cultures create. Chapter 4 presents the antidote to such cultures, outlining a prescription for gender-balanced culture.
3. **Chapter 5** explores how to articulate the benefits of gender-inclusive workplaces.



## What to do: be a Champion, not a Bystander

*It's about the legacy you leave and diversity is a key part of that... If I leave with the right diversity in place, then it's a job well done.*

**— ALAN JOYCE, CEO, QANTAS**

When all is done and dusted, what will you be known for? My past experiences of difference began my journey to beat bias. They drive my present aspiration to increase inclusion. A common motivator of Champions of diversity and inclusion is their own experience of difference.

I ask leaders in my Inclusive Leadership workshops to reflect on when they first experienced difference. I ask participants to identify what it felt like. The number of negative experiences far outweighs the positive.

A recent workshop identified these negative feelings:

- ▶ stressed
- ▶ isolated
- ▶ excluded
- ▶ lonely
- ▶ vulnerable
- ▶ uncomfortable
- ▶ inferior
- ▶ awkward
- ▶ embarrassed
- ▶ angry.

Positive feelings that were identified included 'awesome', 'refreshing', 'proud', 'special' and 'fascinated'.

It's uncomfortable to recall negative emotions: we tend to shy away from doing so. The purpose of this activity is to ground the senior leaders with whom I work in the real impact of exclusion. Those few who have never personally experienced the negativity of difference get to hear what it's like from their peers. It makes the disadvantage that others face more salient and meaningful. It reminds us of our 'ordinary privilege', which motivates action.

We then focus on what it's like to feel included, to highlight the difference between these two emotional states and experiences. This helps to clarify the gap that inclusive leadership can breach. When senior leaders are motivated to champion the benefits of inclusion, they create a powerful legacy.

### **Nick Marinelli: a Champion in action**

In 2019, Nick Marinelli stepped down from his role as CEO of Fulton Hogan Australia (FHA), a billion-dollar infrastructure and construction company. Reflecting on his diversity legacy, he told me that there were two clear experiences of difference that motivated him to be a Champion. They were key to his

decision to ensure a positive diversity legacy for his organisation and sustained his resolve over many years.

After leaving school, Nick was a builder's labourer for several years. Building sites were very much a 'man's world' at the time. He became aware of a sense of inferiority as he compared his treatment to that of 'educated' others working around him. He also noticed that women were not treated in the same way as men, and had fewer opportunities.

His personal sense of inferiority spurred him to further his education. He completed a degree. Of this transition, he says that he identified that there was something different he could do with his life and his career. He is very grateful for the support of his organisation, and he worked hard for it in return. He recalls how good it felt; it was highly motivating to him to experience the success of working hard and achieving well.

Nick loves it when people succeed and when leaders feel pride in the achievements of their people. One of his joys in being CEO was seeing leaders light up when their people felt recognised for their achievements.

The second experience that motivated Nick occurred more recently within FHA. Female engineering graduates are in short supply. They represent about 15 per cent of all engineering graduates in Australia. FHA was recruiting female graduates at above those odds but was finding it hard to keep them at quite the same rate.

To increase support for them, a two-day workshop was arranged. Nick joined the group and 'noticed a problem' almost immediately. Some of the women identified a clear lack of support from their managers to attend the workshop.

Nick couldn't believe it. As he related this story to me, he became more animated. Even now, years later, he remains incredulous at the lack of support provided to these talented women. He's convinced that if they had been men there would have been no question about their attendance. 'For two days?' he said, 'You've got to be kidding.'

He became aware of a second issue. It will be all too familiar to women who have worked in non-office-based male-dominated workplaces. Required safety wear was not available in appropriate sizing.

Nick tells the story of one participant who was the sole woman on a particular worksite. She was dismayed when she first saw the safety wear. She had to roll up the sleeves and legs of the clothing to wear it. She described herself as looking like the Michelin Man. There was no way she wasn't going to stand out, and it was no way to try to fit in. She felt discouraged, yet she persisted. Nick describes that workshop conversation as one of his light-bulb moments.

In Nick's business he wanted everyone to have the same opportunity and he could see this wasn't happening.

As CEO, he knew that it was important to find out more about what was getting in the way. While he wanted everyone to have opportunity, he was realistic enough to know that not everyone shared his motivation. He didn't feel that managers were deliberately blocking the women. Yet he knew he had to involve himself directly so he could figure out what needed to change. This is advice that he would give to other diversity Champions: get in on the ground to see what people experience before you tick the box to say it's done.

To make it work, and make it stick, Nick believes that diversity needs to make sense as part of the overall business strategy. His leaders and he worked hard to get buy-in to their business strategy. Then they worked on the diversity and inclusion strategy to support it. This minimised resistance.

Nick says, 'People have to be able to say *why* we're doing this. If it's a part of the strategy, it makes sense to them.' Then it's much easier to figure out what you need to do to make it work.

When Nick's organisation had earlier focused on gender diversity, they did it as a stand-alone. It sat outside of the strategic framing, and there was a lot more resistance. There was resistance in particular about 'getting the best person for the job'. (The irony of this is not lost on Nick!) Second time around, they broadened out their focus to inclusion and they added Indigenous, age, ethnicity and disability program goals. This shifted the resistance.

Nick's advice to other CEOs is to be clear about where inclusion connects with strategy. Trying to carry out any initiative in isolation of the strategy is unlikely to work.

One indicator of success that Nick likes to share is the shift in the representation of women at FHA's annual awards. The awards have nine categories, one of which is Rising Star. Five years ago there were no women regional finalists. At the 2019 ceremony, about one third of the nominees were women. Women were all but one of the regional Rising Star winners. This is tangible evidence of achievements to date.

Nick sees the key lessons for championing diversity as follows:

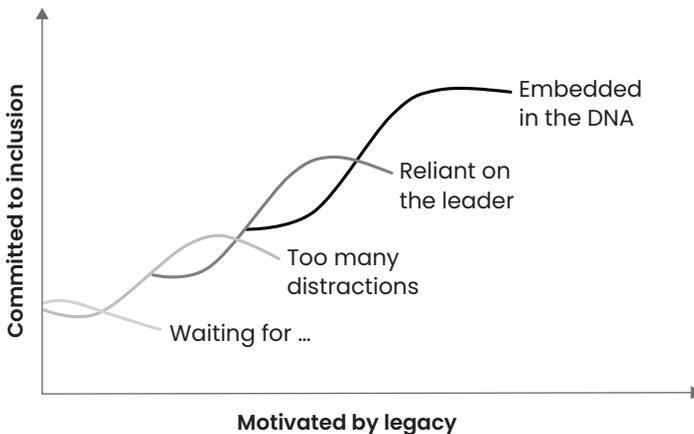
- ▶ Start early, and get into the detail, talk to people.
- ▶ Keep it in focus, don't let your attention wane.

- ▶ Embed it in the strategy so that it gets into the organisation's DNA, and outlasts you.

Nick used his desire to leave a positive legacy to propel his commitment to inclusion. As he leaves FHA, he can point to indicators that change is in the company's DNA. Yes, there's more work to do. The construction industry has systemic challenges that make gender inclusion especially hard work. He achieved change using his motivation to create equal opportunity for career advancement: to take personal accountability for it. He wanted to make it bigger than himself so that it's in the organisation's DNA and will stick.

It's Nick's legacy that is his motivation, combined with a strong commitment to inclusion. Instead of waiting for a better time, being distracted by myriad issues or making it about him, Nick focused on making it part of FHA's DNA (see Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1: A Champion's legacy is to embed diversity in the organisation's DNA**



## **What it takes to be a Champion**

What does a Champion look like? Do Champions have to be CEOs, like Nick? Can men be Champions for gender balance? There are some who think that it's a bit ironic for men to be Champions. But is it?

For the last 40 years we've been focused on 'fixing women', creating more opportunity for them. Women have been doing the heavy lifting, championing feminism and equal opportunity advances. It's not enough. For a start, we haven't devoted the same effort to opening up opportunity for men. What would fewer gender-based prescriptions mean for men? What difference could it make to men who pursue female-dominated roles and careers? And what difference would it make if those roles were gender-balanced?

Not enough time has been spent on balancing the best of the genders. Men and women should have freedom of choice about the kinds of people they want to be and the kinds of roles they want to play.

Unfortunately, that's a bigger agenda than the one I have for this book. For now, my focus is on the bias that prevents women from having equal opportunity to succeed in non-traditional work roles and careers. It's here that men retain the dominant position in organisational and business leadership life. That won't change without dedicated attention.

Back to the question: should Champions be male or female? Personally, I think this question is a distraction.

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**Anyone who wants to champion gender diversity should feel welcome to do so.**

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Is it more *effective* for men or women to champion gender equality? While female Champions have led the way to gender-balanced leadership, it isn't an either/or question.

Professor Isabel Metz of Melbourne Business School believes that male CEOs who are committed to equality may be particularly effective change agents. That's 'because of the perceived absence of self-interest and credibility in doing so'.<sup>1</sup>

Female CEOs and leaders may be seen to advance their own interests when they pursue equality for women. (We can certainly question that position but will let it go for now!) Males are unlikely to be seen in the same way. There's a popular argument that men 'lose' and women 'gain' when the gender balance of top roles changes.<sup>2</sup> If men are more vocal and active in support of gender balance they become a credible voice in favour of gender equality for other men. In some contexts that may reduce the perceived threat and increase momentum for change.

It is not only male CEOs who have persuasive power. Men who want to be part of a more equal world should feel confident that they *can* contribute. They should add their voices and use their persuasive powers to champion gender equality. Women should continue to champion the cause.

Many voices strengthen the call for change. Gender-balanced persuasion, using the voices of both men and women, is an apt way to achieve gender-balanced leadership.

As men are the dominant power holders, their role in change is fundamental.



## **The Male Champions of Change movement**

Male Champions of Change (MCC) is a national movement helping to share the responsibility for championing gender balance.<sup>3</sup> This represents a fundamental and welcome progression in promoting inclusive leadership. The movement is significant. It signals the readiness of senior men to challenge themselves and to lead the way towards better gender balance and inclusion.<sup>4</sup>

By bringing men together to focus on gender equality, men are influencing each other in powerful ways. They are exposed to positive messages and an array of constructive possible actions.

Male Champions and Supporters change minds. They may also change more intransigent implicit attitudes about women and senior leadership. Their credibility and power change the minds of their more sceptical peers and this is good news.

Professor Metz interviewed more than 40 Australian MCC members to understand their motivations.<sup>5</sup>

She found that Champions are motivated by existing positive attitudes, they get the value of gender balance and stand up to advocate for it.

Supporters get it too, but they're going about what they do quietly and without much recognition. MCC Supporters were motivated by personal reasons such as existing positive attitudes: 'I want to make a difference.' Their work has great value and would benefit from amplification, letting people know what they're doing and why they're doing it.

Bystanders were neither for nor against gender balance; they'll do what they're told to do and change when the environment around them requires it. MCC Bystanders were motivated by external pressures from stakeholders: 'It seems like it's the right thing to do.' Pressure from others and feeling out of step with peers are what motivates them to change their behaviour.

Metz identified that many Bystanders became more passionate about gender equity once they were members of an MCC group. She attributes this to their having gained a better understanding of the issues.

Sceptics ask why, which projects opposition. It directs everyone's efforts to convincing them otherwise. Sceptics in the MCC groups were prompted by 'ulterior personal motives'. They joined to gain status and visibility: 'I'll do this to make myself look better to people I want to impress.' Sceptics can be guided by their need for status.

And Resistors just say no; they actively oppose moves towards gender balance.

### ***What makes male Champions effective?***

Male Champions influence each other in powerful ways. Together with Supporters, they change attitudes. They are effective at changing the attitudes of Bystanders. They have credibility and trustworthiness. They give clear and consistent messages that have personal congruence.

The MCC groups may be one of the strongest ways for male leaders to influence their peers, particularly those who don't believe in equality or those who think there is a lack of suitably qualified women.

Senior organisational leaders are powerful and credible, and their influence goes well beyond the MCC and peer groups. It is well known that powerful influencers change our explicit attitudes.<sup>6</sup> Their messages carry great weight and they set the tone. People see them as experts and place their trust in them. Who could be more persuasive about leadership than a CEO?<sup>7</sup>

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**Persuasion is effective at changing explicitly held attitudes.**

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We should, however, be extremely cautious about Resistors; attempts to persuade them can backfire. Weak messages may create, or reinforce, attitudes that oppose equality. Unconscious attitudes may also be further strengthened.<sup>8</sup> Resistance may be further entrenched.

Conscious attitudes adapt to a wide range of change techniques. Until recently, proven methods to change unconscious associations have been limited. There are two main methods: overtraining associations in their opposite direction, or interrupting associations.

Our minds work on two tracks, one conscious, slow and explicit, and the other unconscious, fast and implicit. It would be particularly helpful to understand if persuasion affects our unconscious attitudes. Because they are unconscious, they are harder to identify. Researchers have recently turned their attention to this question.<sup>9</sup>

How does persuasion change implicit attitudes? There is no short answer because implicit opinion is complicated, as we'll discover in Chapter 2. Implicit evaluations do change when we have plenty of 'cognitive bandwidth' available, when we are not overloaded and we have the time to think deliberately. No matter how persuasive the message, it takes a lot of thinking effort to override implicit attitudes. Credible sources, like CEOs and other senior leaders, are more likely to change our implicit attitudes, as we are more likely to give them our full attention.

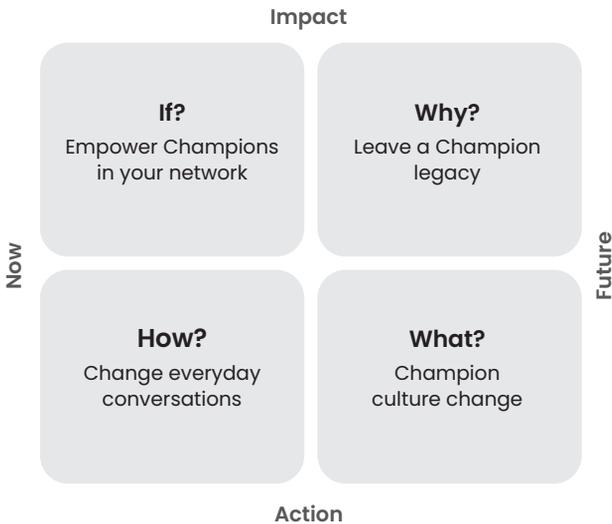
Under the right conditions, persuasion can change implicit attitudes.

## How you can be a Champion

Nick's story highlights the mindset for being a Champion. True, he was CEO of his organisation and that gave him status and power to lead change.

Whether or not you are a CEO, you can create a meaningful legacy by paying attention to your actions now, and how they will have an impact in the future. Figure 1.2 captures this dynamic between our actions now and their future impact.

**Figure 1.2: How to be a Champion**



To leave a Champion legacy you need to advocate for the value of diversity and inclusion. Get a firm focus on the future impact you want to have and align yourself to that.

Champions focus on creating a gender-balanced culture, a climate of inclusion. That's the best way to beat bias. Championing culture change is what you need to do to contribute to a

more inclusive future. If you're the CEO, you have formal levers that you can use to understand and adapt your organisation's culture. If not, work with others to influence your culture.

Now if this sounds a bit challenging, don't worry. There are simple ways to change the conversation, and you can create a bigger change than you might think. Making very small adjustments to how you engage in everyday conversations is a powerful way to create change. Changing the conversation will pay back if we are able to unlock the potential of so many more people at work. What a difference it would make if everyone was enabled to reach their fullest potential and do their best work!

Whether or not you are a senior leader in your organisation, one of the strategic things you can do is become a Champion for gender inclusion. And then you can support and empower other Champions in your network. Let's make it a quest. Set your sights on your legacy and let's make a better world together.

## **How to create more Champions**

Many of us don't believe we can be powerful enough to make this kind of change. It seems to take a lot of effort and is something that other, more powerful people do. If you feel like you need to know more about bias, and to better understand the benefits of gender inclusion before you work on creating Champions, read Chapters 2 through 5 first, then return here.

If you are ready now to help create and support Champions, start by reviewing the people in your network. The aim is to identify a small number you can help shift towards Champion status.<sup>10</sup>

I've created a Champion Continuum (Figure 1.3) to represent what it takes in practice to create Champions. It's a guide to help you understand how to engage others in change. Plot where leaders in your network are on the continuum. Below, I suggest ways to encourage them to move to the right of the continuum.

**Figure 1.3: Champion Continuum**



Champions might be CEOs or other leaders, they might be men or women. Think of this continuum as another pipeline. We focus so much on the pipeline of women who are ready for more senior roles. Add this pipeline of male support into your mix.

How can you amplify support for gender balance by creating your own Champions pipeline?

This is an instance in which you can use affinity bias to advantage. When men in leadership roles are Champions and Supporters, they influence other men like them. Affinity bias can be made to work for change rather than against it.

Tactics for Champions include thanking and encouraging them, and offering to help. Share their stories with others.

Amplify the work of Supporters in your network by letting people know what they're doing and why they're doing it. Ask yourself: 'Who are the Supporters I know?'

A senior leader I was mentoring on inclusive leadership shared his philosophy of inclusion with me. He believed his teams were particularly innovative because of their diversity. He was saying all the right things to me and there was a great deal of passion in his stories.

I asked him who knew about his approach and his stories. I was aware that being a Champion wasn't his reputation. I asked him two questions: 'What if you had a reputation for being a Champion?' and 'What would you like your legacy to be?' For him, this opportunity to shift his reputation to be more positive was motivating. If he shared his stories he could move from being a Supporter to being a Champion in his organisation.

Bystanders are the 'walking on eggshells' group. They hold themselves back because they are too concerned about getting it right; they worry too much about offending others. They would take action if they had guidance but without it they are not sure what to do. Suggest that they take specific and clear actions, and expect them to be done. Bystanders tend to respond well to being held accountable for change.

As for the Sceptics, don't take their scepticism at face value and don't try to convince them with alternative facts. Seek to understand where they are coming from and what their concerns are.

Finally, to Resisters: in my view they are best left alone. There's plenty of work to do with people in the other categories. The challenge with Resisters is that putting pressure on them to change can in fact increase their expression of bias. Change the context around them, grow support; this will make change possible.

Sometimes a focus on an external cause can help to make better sense of why diversity and inclusion are important. Everyone wants to make a difference. Everyone needs a sense of purpose. If you believe that someone in your network could make a difference, find out what motivates and engages them in their broader world. Find their hook.

For diversity, sometimes it's a motivation to ensure a successful future for their daughter. For others, it might be to enable girls living in poverty to have an education, or to promote understanding of the impact of women's involvement in peace negotiations. It might be their desire to decrease family violence.

Having discovered the motivating factor, help them connect with an inclusion purpose through the channel of these broader interests.

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**Find key people in your network, and work on increasing their support for gender inclusion. Start with one person.**

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You don't have to influence everyone. Identify people with whom you already have a connection and work the power of connection to speed up change. Who do you have the opportunity to influence, even if in small ways? Where are they on the continuum? Seek to inspire them to increase their support for gender balance.

## Bias Buster 1a

### Create your Champion legacy

- ▶ What do you want your legacy to be? Write your legacy purpose statement:

'I [*do something*] to [*advance inclusion*] so that [*the world is a better place*].'

I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

so that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ What will it take to achieve your legacy?
- ▶ What do you need to do next to start living your legacy?

## Bias Buster 1b

### Support Champions in your network

- ▶ Who is in your Champions pipeline?
- ▶ Where are they on the continuum?
- ▶ What is one thing you can do with each of them to move them one step closer to the Champion end of the continuum?