

Tuesday 8 June 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW REPORT SHOWS MEN AND WOMEN ACCESSING FLEXIBLE WORKING EQUALLY IS KEY TO FUTURE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Chief Executive Women today called for Australia's business leaders to learn from COVID and embed flexibility as a strategic performance driver. New research released today shows 95% of employees want flexibility and they also want their companies to do more to encourage flexible work arrangements.

The '*Equitable Flexibility: Reshaping our Workforce*' report, conducted in partnership with global consultancy firm Bain & Company, outlines the latest insights from employees and companies on workplace flexibility. Through surveys and interviews, the report confirmed flexible and remote-work arrangements can work at scale and highlights flexible working as a key lever for economic growth.

Key report findings:

- Around two-thirds of respondents say they expect their workplaces to become more flexible after the pandemic subsides (nearly 60% of women and 66% of men).
- 80% of respondents believe flexibility is viewed more favourably now than it was before the COVID pandemic.
- 63% of respondents said their company is more flexible than it was three years ago.
- 95% said they would take a flexible arrangement in the next three years if offered.
- Employees said equal take up of flexibility is the most effective way to overcome barriers to gender equality in the workplace, followed by unbiased recruitment and promotion, and leadership.
- Respondents said restrictions to career progression, longer work hours, and the need to be constantly accessible or 'on call' as the biggest disadvantages of flexibility.

Chief Executive Women President Sam Mostyn AO said flexibility is more than working remotely and should be provided equally to men and women to maximise economic benefits, with senior male leaders working flexibly a key to unlocking improved financial and workforce outcomes.

"This research shows employees are more engaged when there are strong workplace flexibility options available to them, which results in better business outcomes. This provides an opportunity for business leaders to think about implementing flexibility at scale across their organisations and include options such as different start times, compressed working weeks and part-time work," said Ms Mostyn.

"We also believe businesses should measure the uptake of flexible working options through a scorecard that is reported regularly at the highest levels of the organisation – in a similar way to how business assesses customer satisfaction levels or workplace safety rates."

Bain & Company Partner Agathe Gross said the research results highlight the need for increased flexibility to be designed and executed carefully.

"The research clearly shows employees want more flexibility, but they're also concerned about career opportunities and promotions if they do work flexibly. While we know flexibility has many benefits, we do need to be aware of these unintended consequences," said Ms Gross.

The research will be launched through an online panel discussion later today with media invited to attend.

What: Launch of CEW research report, '*Equitable Flexibility: Reshaping our Workforce*'

When: Today, Tuesday 8 June 2021, 2:00 – 3:00pm, launch, 3:00-3:15pm, media Q&A

Who: Sam Mostyn AO – President, Chief Executive Women
Agathe Gross – Partner, Bain & Company
Tim Reed – Chair, Business Council of Australia
Carol Schwartz AO – Chair, Equity Trustees
Ming Long AM – Deputy Chair, Diversity Council Australia
Sally Patten – BOSS Editor, Australian Financial Review (moderator)

Media can register to watch the launch: <https://events.humanitix.com/equitable-flexibility-reshaping-our-workforces-research-launch>

The full research report is available online at https://cew.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CEW-Report-2021_all.pdf

Chief Executive Women: Website: <https://cew.org.au/>, Twitter: [@CEWAus](https://twitter.com/CEWAus)

Bain & Company: Website: <https://www.bain.com/>, Twitter: [@BainAlerts](https://twitter.com/BainAlerts)

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