

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT Agenda 2033

The fast track to an equal future



CEW

Women Leaders Empowering All Women

Acknowledgments

CEW would like to thank and celebrate all speakers, sponsors, event organisers and guests who made the 2023 CEW Leadership Summit a resounding success.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and pay our respect to their Elders past and present. CEW celebrates the diversity of First Nations people and their continuing connection to land, water and community, and acknowledges the strength of First Nations women leading their communities. We extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of the CEW community.

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Introduction

The CEW Leadership Summit, hosted on Wednesday 6 September 2023, brought together leaders from every sector in Australia for wide-ranging, daring discussions on what it will take to shift the dial on gender equality.

There was a resounding acknowledgment that incremental change is not enough, and an absolute commitment to fast-track equality over the next decade.

According to the CEW Senior Executive Census 2023, gender equality in CEO roles is still 50 years away. It will take visionary thinking, bold leadership and innovation to shift the dial from 50 years to 10.

In a day of inspiring conversation, keynote speeches and riveting lightning talks, attendees were left empowered to drive meaningful change in their respective industries with real life examples of what it takes to make tangible, sustainable change.


Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director of the World Economic Forum asked us to make bold change for the future; "It's time to course correct and its better sooner rather than later".

"Today is unapologetically about action, no more mucking about"

Sally Bruce, COO & CFO, Culture Amp



Sally Bruce
COO & CFO, Culture Amp

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a maroon blazer over a colorful polka-dot top, stands at a clear podium with microphones. She has her hands clasped and is smiling. The background is dark.

"The power
of change lies
in our hands,
today we will
ignite a chain
reaction."

Narelda Jacobs OAM
Channel 10 Journalist and Presenter

Key learnings from the Summit to achieve Agenda 2033

1. What gets measured gets done: Implement targets and real accountability
2. Create true belonging and inclusion
3. Be audacious: lead from the top
4. Invest in diverse leadership pipelines
5. Change the narrative and systems to deliver equity and respect



These actions will accelerate CEW's vision

Diverse women leaders at every decision-making table

Women's participation enabled across all sectors

Women being economically secure and free from violence across their life course

Workplace flexibility for all to work and care for family

WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS DONE:

Implement targets and use accountability to achieve gender equality goals

CEW President, Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz, opened the Summit with the sobering findings from the CEW Senior Executive Census.

Now in its seventh year, the CEW Census tracks the representation of women in senior leadership teams of Australia's top ASX listed companies.

Although we can celebrate an increase of women CEO's, the data is clear - women are still undeniably underrepresented in senior leadership in corporate Australia.

When it comes to the jobs at the top, 91% of CEO's are still men, and the leadership pipeline is stagnating, with 8 in 10 CEO pipeline roles still held by men.

Gender equality is not a set and forget objective. Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director at the World Economic Forum, emphasised that inequality is an international epidemic and it was already 100 years to achieve gender equality across the world, but Covid added an entire generation. This is a global reality, "no matter where you are, it is not good enough".

The World Economic Forum's innovative use of data gives us a global view of what works when it comes to gender equality, and creates a path to move forward. She used this data to challenge us to strive for better - to create the world we want to inhabit.



Throughout the day, there was agreement 'what gets measured gets done' and the path to accelerate equity is through clear and measurable targets and accountability.

Set a 40:40:20 by 2030 gender target with real accountability and transparency in your company.



"There is a path to accelerating gender equality. The moonshot - the gender parity sprint, 50/50 by 2030.

It's possible, and ambitious, and with you all here, it's within our reach".

Saadia Zahidi

Managing Direct at the World Economic Forum

Shemara Wikramanayake, CEO of Macquarie Group, echoed this sentiment, saying that in order to address community needs, we need diverse thinking; "you can't be what you won't see, don't limit yourself to what you see, and be the positive change".

She spoke about how change is facilitated through a combination of accurate data, clear and challenging goals and keeping leaders accountable.

CEO's of our top Australian companies emphasised what works - setting targets with real accountability and transparency, investing in a gender balanced pipeline and building inclusive, flexible workplaces is the winning formula for gender equality.

On the 'Accelerate 40:40' panel, speakers outlined that their journey towards a gender equal workplace was about more than just statistics. It improved their corporate cultures, operational outcomes and their bottom line.





Mike Henry, CEO of BHP, explained that it was no surprise that the transformational change in BHP's leadership had pushed them as a company and they had seen an increase in overall performance.

He spoke about how this change in the DNA of the organisation "unlocked a level of creativity, commitment, innovation and resourcing that has led us here today".

Leah Weckert, CEO of Coles Group, encouraged the audience to be imaginative when designing the future of work, but that accountability was essential. She said the most important thing the company did was set targets.

The Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP, Minister OFW Victoria, told the audience that making systemic change requires grit, determination and time: "I first spoke about this issue at 19, positive change would happen in 18 months, and here I am at 50 still talking about quotas".

She also laid out the visionary Victorian gender equality plan, ['Our Equal State'](#) which is designed to 'change the conversation, direction and ambition of our government'. The plan places women and marginalised communities at the centre of the conversation.

When faced with challenges or pushback, leaders emphasised the importance of boldness when envisioning a better future. Mike encouraged the audience to take heart in the face of failure or pushback: "If there's one thing I have learnt, it's getting up there and setting a brave ambition and create a dynamic where solutions arise to achieve the goal.

Have the boldness of leadership to make the commitment and your people will surprise you and come up with the solutions".

Our speakers laid down the challenge to our audience and provided the road map for Agenda 2033.

If we are serious about gender equality, we need to set ambitious targets, hold ourselves accountable, and be active in creating the world we want to see. We are our own moonshots.



Build true belonging and inclusion

The power and productivity of diverse voices and thinking dominated the Summit. It was clear that to reach equality by 2033, everyone must have a voice.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, June Oscar AO, highlighted that intersectionality has always been integral to our collective identity;

"it is women in all our diversity, trans women, sister girls and all gender diverse peoples from many different cultures that share knowledges and ways of doing, about caring, nurturing and protecting, acting as the backbone of our communities, families and keep the ball rolling, we are shaping our future."

Our passion and our ambition has led us to where we are now, to be role models for other women and girls, so their journey to the head of the table is not as difficult.

She spoke about the collective experience of so many women, always being the elephant in the room, who were "apparently too loud, too passionate". She reminded us that we are appropriately loud, and understandably passionate.



The 'Culture First' panel built on this important message, explaining that intersectionality is the foundation of a better future.

Moderator: Akii Ngo, Intersectionality Consultant, Educator, Equity and Inclusion Survivor-Advocate and Activist highlighted the importance of taking up space as your authentic self because "you can't compartmentalise yourself".

True inclusion is the recognition that "identity is part of who they are, but not everything of who they are, recognise the complexities of everyone."

Catherine Clarke, CEO of Paralympics Australia, spoke about how inclusion is a net good. Building on the incredible success of the Matildas, Catherine looked to the opportunity to compound that success during the Brisbane Paralympics in nine years' time to use sport to make change on and off the field: "it's about winning big, in any field of play".

True intersectionality requires a new form of leadership. Sam Mostyn AO, Chair of the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce, cautioned "white women like me sometimes also have to get out of the way and not just replicate what men have done and hold power for ourselves". She stressed that we need to own a different kind of leadership that is uniquely us.

Anna Brown OAM, CEO of Equality Australia, highlighted that we could use the privilege of leadership to protect others, particularly trans women "we have so many allies in this room, and by supporting trans equality, we lift up everyone".

Didier Elzinga, CEO of Founder Culture Amp spoke about getting comfortable with being uncomfortable; "privilege is compound, and an inclusive organisation grapples with the people in front of us, and the stories behind them".

He pointed out that inclusion is a never-ending journey. "At a level, it's an ideal that you will never achieve, which is a good thing. It's part of the journey and there's always something to work on and learn, part of the journey is learning how far you have to go".



Catherine Clark
CEO of Paralympics Australia



Akii Ngo
Intersectionality Consultant, Educator,
Equity and Inclusion Survivor-Advocate and Activist

"Identity is part of who they are, but not everything of who they are. Recognise the complexities of everyone."

Akii Ngo, Intersectionality Consultant, Educator,
Equity and Inclusion Survivor-Advocate and Activist

Be audacious: lead from the top

The CEW Leadership Summit grappled with not just the question of leadership; but how can we lead towards a better future?

“You’re already doing amazing things, utilise our audacity and our undeniability to achieve goals, and hold ourselves and others to account”

Sam Mostyn AO, Chair, Women’s Economic Equality Taskforce



Taryn Brumfitt
Founder, Body Image Movement



We have to be audacious, to own a different kind of leadership that is uniquely us “don’t let incrementalism win the day, we have big goals”. Sam Mostyn AO

Persistence was a strong theme of the day. Brid Horan, Chancellor of Dublin City University spoke about how social change requires constant work and vigilance and that time alone doesn’t change things.

Australian of the Year, Taryn Brumfitt also spoke about how “polite persistence breaks down resistance” reminding us that the first step in changing the world is changing your mind “lean in and sparkle”.

“Polite persistence breaks down resistance...Lean in and sparkle”

Taryn Brumfitt, Founder, Body Image Movement

Kaylee Anderson, advocate and Director of the Indigenuity Lab spoke about how social change has always asked us to be bold: “This morning we heard about the CEW Census which speaks about how gender equality is not a set and forget objective. No form of social justice has ever been a gift, it’s always been a prize that’s fought hard for, and this is no exception.”

"No form of social justice has ever been a gift, its always been a prize that's fought hard for, and this is no exception."

Kaylee Anderson
Director, The Indigenuity Lab



Both Mike Henry and Peter Collins, Head of Ethics and Integrity, WEHI, spoke about how it is vital that men act as leaders as we work towards gender equality.

Mike spoke about how men must use their privilege to make room for women; "paradoxically, it's easier for men to lead this than women, for men it's a strategic imperative for business".

Peter Collins
Head of Ethics and Integrity, WEHI



Peter Collins spoke about how men are the beneficiaries of our hard work and that in the grand narrative of history, ethics is on the side of gender equality. He also spoke about how gender equal leadership is vital for change "if you want to see where real ethics happen, look around this room."

June Oscar AO spoke powerfully on how women's leadership, particularly First Nations women's leadership was vital to reshaping the world into our vision.

She described that despite being traditionally isolated from institutions of power, women have always been strong and tenacious, even when the dark shadow of the patriarchy threatens them: "because of our knowledge, because of what we have withstood, they will never make us disappear because of our love and nurture, I know the future is safe in women's hands."

She shared her vision of the future, where "Australia can become what I believe Australia truly is, so we can become the best of us, a country that's welcoming, caring and empowering for all of its peoples, regardless of their backgrounds and status".



Shemara Wikramanayake
CEO of Macquarie Group

Invest in diverse leadership pipelines

Throughout the day our speakers emphasized that in order to ensure Agenda 2033, we must create a diverse and sustainable leadership pipeline behind us.

CEW President Susan Lloyd Hurwitz spoke about the importance of creating pathways for the next generation. She spoke about asking the more searingly honest focus group she knows, her three children, to whom it was clear that gender equality wasn't about checking a box, it was about benefiting everyone.

Leah Weckert, CEO of Coles Group reflected on the sponsors who had supported her in her journey, reflecting that a sponsor knows that you can do more than you think you can.

She shared how Coles had redefined leadership pipelines to be more gender equal, going through each function, rewriting feeder roles to be more equitable and creating targeted programs designed to mentor and support women into leadership.

She then challenged the audience to sponsor one amazing woman each. Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director of the World Economic Forum went further, explaining that the best practice organisations were looking beyond their workforce to high schools and actively sending mentors out to highschools and universities and building specific internships. She offers insight into the need to specifically target women

“Women tend to be more modest. Be ready to jump in”.

Saadia Zahidi, Managing Direct at the World Economic Forum

CEO of Macquarie Group Shemara Wikramanayake asked the audience to step into their power as trail blazers who are paving the way for the women who will follow them, particularly in male dominated industries: “The responsibility of women in our industry is so young girls can see women succeed and thrive in these industries”.

She spoke about taking a proactive approach to creating diverse leadership pipelines, explaining that they always go to the program, understand the solutions and how they control these solutions.

She spoke about Macquarie's commitment to hire at 50:50 and asked young women to not invertedly cut off choices, sharing a childhood story of when she had wanted to be James Bond. It never occurred to her that 007 had never looked like her before.



Leah Weckert
CEO of Coles Group

Change the narrative and systems to deliver equity and respect

The pathway to parity requires addressing systemic barriers, such as the crisis of work and care, discrimination and violence against women and marginalised groups, and poverty.

Danielle Wood, the CEO of Grattan Institute, spoke about how women are being squeezed by the crisis of work and care. She said until the crisis of unpaid care is addressed, there will be a limit to women's economic participation.

She spoke about how 'women's work' and 'men's work' were treated and viewed differently and that feminised roles like care are not appropriately valued.

She used her powerful metaphor that if untapped women's workforce participation was a massive iron ore deposit, we would have governments lining up to give tax concessions to get it out of the ground.

Summit breakout sessions grappled with the question on how we rewrite the rules to achieve respect and safety. Dixie Link Gordon, CEO of AWAN laid out her vision of the future "women deserve safety, we deserve love, we deserve everything this country has to offer, freedom from violence is part of our human rights".

E-Safety Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant spoke about how we must create 'safety by design' and that ensuring safety and respect in online spaces was too important to leave the technology industry to regulate themselves.

Professor Michael Flood, Sociologist Professor, School of Justice at QUT spoke about the changing nature of misogyny on the internet, and that the resentment and rise of the 'misogyny influencer' is a pushback from "when the cosy hold on power and privilege is threatened".



He spoke about the need to subvert this narrative and promote feminist and women's voices online and in person. As well as 'inoculating' young men with media literacy and take the rise of neo-misogyny as "seriously as we take Nazism".

Commissioner Grant spoke about how the future of the internet must be designed with safety and respect in mind, with companies proactively assessing risks and building safeguards in.





Helen Waters Silva
CEO of WAGEC

The 'Be Well' panel addressed how women's health issues have often been trivialised, under researched and overlooked. Professor Jayashri Kulkarni AM, Professor of Psychiatry, Monash University & Director of HER Centre Australia said that women's health should be everyone's business, and it is nobody's business at the moment. To achieve true equality, we have to make health systems that are gender responsive.

'Breaking the silence' panel spoke about challenging narratives that have led to inadvertent discrimination, particularly around homelessness and poverty. Helen Waters Silva, CEO of WAGEC, spoke about the need to reframe how we looked at homelessness and poverty, how it was not a problem 'over there' but one that was pervasive in our neighborhoods.

Brianna Casey of CEO Foodbank Australia, spoke about how these narratives impact every element of our lives: 'food is meant to be a human right, and it appears that when it comes to food some are more human than others'.

These systemic barriers are often inherited. June Oscar AO laid out the systemic issues that act as roadblocks to true equality, the structures that currently exist in Australia need to be challenged.

She spoke about how systems can be remade to be more inclusive and fair, particularly when speaking about the Constitutional Voice to Parliament; "for all of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, this matters. We want a founding document that reflects who we are, as a polity and who we aspire to become, we all have the opportunity in front of us to use our sphere of influence to weave a future into being where this becomes a reality"

"We have the opportunity to have conversations about what future we want, educate others and share our stories and values".

June Oscar AO Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

Although our speakers covered a wide range of topics, a universal theme emerged: Bold change requires bold action, a strong action from the day was the need to respond to the world we live in, not the world we inherited decades ago.

Our speakers impressed on the audience that in order to make the change needed to reach Agenda2033, we had to be bold, challenge systemics barriers and ensure that everyone is treated with equity and respect.



Michael Flood
Professor, Queensland University of Technology

CEW offered 3 calls to action at the summit

1.

We're asking you to commit to a target of 40:40:20 by 2030 and to be transparent and accountable around progress towards that target.

2.

We're asking you to invest in talent pipelines to ensure you have an equal representation of men and women.

3.

We're continuing to ask all to make sure that our workplaces are inclusive safe and respectful.

At the same time, we are asking ourselves what we can do at this point to further demonstrate our commitment to achieving gender equality for all women.

For example, how can we become a much more diverse and inclusive organisation, how can we collaborate more effectively with others, and how can we openly and honestly invite all genders into our conversation.

There is much work to do as we know a gender equitable world will be better for all.



ABOUT

Chief Executive Women

Chief Executive Women's (CEW) shared purpose is 'women leaders empowering all women'.

CEW's over 1,200 members represent Australia's most senior and distinguished women leaders across business, academia, government, sport, the arts, and not-for-profit sectors. CEW's members have leading roles within Australia's largest private and public organisations.

They oversee more than 1.3 million employees and \$749 billion in revenue. Members' organisations have a combined market capitalization greater than \$1.144 trillion and contribute more than \$249 billion to Australia's GDP.

Since 1985 CEW has influenced and engaged all levels of Australian business and government to achieve gender balance.

Through advocacy, research, targeted programs and scholarships, CEW helps to remove the barriers to women's progression and ensure equal opportunity for prosperity.

CEW's members work actively to realise our vision of a community where women and men have equal economic and social choices and responsibilities.





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