

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **3 in 4 AUSTRALIAN MEN SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY, BUT MOST OF THEM DON'T ADVANCE IT**

***Bain & Company and Chief Executive Women's seventh report on gender parity in Australia examines which men are taking action and why others may not.***

**Sydney—March 19, 2019—** In the workplace, while most men (76 percent) are gender equality supporters, few (17%) prioritise taking action. This is the key finding from Bain & Company and Chief Executive Women's (CEW) seventh Australia gender parity report, *Better Together: Increasing Male Engagement in Gender Equality Efforts in Australia*, released today.

Bain & Company and CEW surveyed almost 2,000 Australians across more than 14 industries to understand the current levels of male engagement with gender equality initiatives, the most effective motivators to increase it and the barriers preventing uptake.

"Organisations with strong leadership commitment, clear strategies and gender equality programs are addressing some of the structural barriers for women in the workforce, yet progress towards gender equality in leadership ranks remains slow. To accelerate this progress it is vital that men at all levels are on board," said Sue Morphet, President Chief Executive Women.

"As long as it's normal that women take 95% of the parental leave, and that mostly women take the option to work part time when they return to the work, it will be mostly men whose careers are fast tracked towards senior roles. Normalising parental leave and career flexibility for both men and women is good for men and women, good for workplace productivity and good for society," said Sue Morphet.

"Gender equality is a proven business asset, benefiting organisations as a whole. It should not be perceived as a women's issue: equality is an issue for everyone," said Chio Verastegui a partner with Bain & Company and one of the authors of the report.

Engagement in gender equality initiatives is defined as the level of participation in activities that support gender equality, including participating in gender equality training, mentoring a female colleague, calling out instances of discrimination, or working part time.

To benchmark engagement, survey respondents were asked about their own participation and the role they play in activities that support or enable gender diversity.

- 17 percent of men report being highly engaged.
- 13 percent of men are not engaged at all.
- The majority (70%) sit in the benign middle, neither highly engaged nor fully disengaged.

Across the male respondents there were four factors that correlated to higher engagement levels: seniority in the organisation, age, exposure to female role models, and fatherhood.

- Senior leaders are nearly two and a half times more likely to be highly engaged than other male employees.
- Men under the age of 34 also reported higher levels of engagement than their older counterparts.
- Men with female role models, either at work or at home, were more than twice as likely to be highly engaged compared with those who had none.
- Fathers were nearly twice as likely to be highly engaged versus men with no children.
- Men who had fulfilled a primary caregiver role, at any point in their careers, were almost three times more likely to participate in gender parity programs or initiatives.

Opinions and perceptions about men's engagement vary between men and women. The survey found that while 64 percent of male respondents feel satisfied with their current level of engagement, women do not agree. Almost 70 percent of women said that they would like men to be more involved.

"The survey highlighted the fundamental disconnect between how men and women view male engagement which puts further progress at risk. Without a shared view of what is required a dangerous cycle could ensue, in which women demand more participation, causing men to disengage or retract their support," warns Chio Verastegui.

The report found that while three-quarters of men surveyed support gender equality, nearly 30 percent of those aren't sure of the steps to take to engage.

Male supporters say that five factors limit their engagement: lack of time, other priorities, not knowing how to engage, lack of access to the right forums and not seeing the personal benefits of engaging.

"Men's active support is critical to achieving gender equality. And it's imperative that leaders continue to take steps to ensure that men and women not only support the concept of equality but are supported and enabled to take action to achieve it," said Chio Verastegui.

*Better Together: Increasing Male Engagement in Gender Equality Efforts in Australia* identifies key actions that can help increase male engagement on gender equality issues:

- **Make it personal.** Highlight the benefits of equal opportunities for both men and women where having a balanced career can include equal sharing in family responsibilities. Appealing personally to male relatives, colleagues and friends to get more engaged can also be powerful.
- **Make it easy.** Use existing processes to further improve male engagement (e.g. a more balanced mentor-mentee mix, unconscious bias mitigation built into people processes). Engage men to co-drive programs, encourage them to be actively involved in equality initiatives and create a safe space to increase mutual understanding.
- **Make it effective.** Through monitoring organisational performance and celebrating progress demonstrate the business case for change for your specific organisation

The report is the seventh in a series of landmark gender parity surveys by global management consulting firm Bain & Company and Chief Executive Women, Australia's preeminent organisation of 550 senior women leaders.

Nearly 2,000 members of the Australian business, government and not-for-profit community responded to the survey on attitudes about gender equality and male engagement in gender equality initiatives. Respondents were roughly 49 percent male and 50 percent female, with less than one percent opting to not disclose their gender.

[FULL REPORT](#)

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## **About Chief Executive Women**

Chief Executive Women (CEW) is the preeminent organisation representing Australia's most senior women leaders from the corporate, public service, academic and not-for-profit sectors. Founded in 1985, CEW has more than 550 members whose shared vision is "women leaders enabling women leaders."

Through advocacy, targeted programs and scholarships, CEW works to remove the barriers to women's progression and ensure equal opportunity for prosperity. CEW's programs are informed by research and led by CEW members.

For more information, visit [cew.org.au](http://cew.org.au).

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