

Leading on gender equality during the COVID-19 pandemic

Practical Actions



Leadership

- ✓ Strongly signal your commitment to understanding and addressing the impact of COVID-19 on all staff and vulnerable groups.
- ✓ Involve women in the development of COVID-19 specific policies and return to work policies to ensure they are inclusive, gender-sensitive and consider women's expertise and perspectives.
- ✓ Provide (or sponsor) high potential women with equal access to leadership roles/ responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic – recognising that experience in crisis management is a valued credential for more senior positions in the future.
- ✓ Understand any gender-differentiated impacts of the pandemic for your organisation and sector (including amongst customers and suppliers) and actively address them in decision-making and engagement with Government and other stakeholders.
- ✓ Consider how sponsorship and corporate social engagement efforts can support the needs of women, and those on the frontline of the pandemic response.
- ✓ Consider how gender inequalities can be addressed and/or eliminated in planning for a post-COVID-19 future. Engage women and women's organisations in this planning.



Accountability during change

- ✓ Track and report on sex-disaggregated data related to flexible working, recruitment, exits and promotions to ensure that progress toward gender equality is maintained / accelerated.
- ✓ Consider targeted interventions to support women whom have 'stepped back' during the pandemic to manage personal priorities to retain their senior engagement.
- ✓ Ensure gender-balanced recruitment, retention and development so that women employees and other diverse groups are not unconsciously or disproportionately impacted in pandemic response measures.
- ✓ If removing positions that skew to women or other diverse groups (e.g. in functional teams), consider:
 - Redeploying high-potential women into other jobs to retain the best talent.
 - Strategies such as reduced workweeks, job-sharing, and decelerating pay increases to keep more women working.
- ✓ Maintain funding for programs that support gender equality and the advancement of women as business decisions are made.



Flexible work

- ✓ Consider how your organisation can adapt and embed flexible work on an ongoing basis.
- ✓ Provide resources to assist managers lead flexible teams including flexible mindsets on how and when work gets completed.
- ✓ Be mindful of employees with caring responsibilities and accommodate the additional needs they have during the pandemic, particularly single parents and parents of children with disability, parents of immunocompromised children and those who are caring for elderly family members.
- ✓ Encourage and support male employees to share equally household work, homeschooling and caring – without active leadership and support, these additional responsibilities will continue to fall disproportionately to women.
- ✓ Consider special measures for employees who may be partners of frontline responders to COVID-19 (doctors, nurses, aged-care workers etc), enabling them to best support their families during the pandemic.



Physical, mental and emotional well-being of employees

- ✓ Acknowledge that colleagues and staff may be dealing with many invisible factors, such as mental health issues, financial distress or worry for loved ones far away.
- ✓ Encourage staff to take care of their own physical, mental and emotional health and provide access to resources / guides to support this goal.
- ✓ As employees return from stand down:
 - Remain connected and make sure they are across all relevant company announcements.
 - Be open to how people will "show up" when contact is made and tailor support to the individual and/or team – recognising that stress and comfort levels will fluctuate.
 - Be on the look out for staff who may be particularly vulnerable, such as those experiencing mental health conditions, people impacted by domestic and family violence, and people who may be socially isolating alone.
- ✓ Encourage your team to look after one another:
 - Empower your team to ask "Are you OK?" if a colleague's behaviour seems 'off'.
 - Publicise contact details of specialist support services as well as your EAP.



Domestic and family violence support

- ✓ Raise awareness of reports of women's increased exposure to domestic violence during the pandemic and measures you have in place to support those who may be impacted.
- ✓ Share widely, with all employees, information on public services, including domestic violence hotlines and support services available for people who may be impacted.
- ✓ Offer your team training to recognise the signs of domestic and family violence, respond to their colleagues' experiences and refer them to specialist support.

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Useful Resources



Leadership

- [The Leadership Shadow](#) (MCC & CEW)
- [The Panel Pledge](#) (MCC, WLIA, CEW)
- [Backlash and Buy-In](#) (MCC & CEW)
- [Harnessing our Innovation Potential](#) (MCC & Accenture)
- [COVID-19: Inclusive leadership in times of uncertainty](#) (PwC, MCC National 2015 Group)
- [Statement from Jacobs Chair and CEO Steve Demetriou on COVID-19 Actions](#) (Jacobs, MCC Global Tech and Consult Australia Groups)
- [Diversity Still Matters](#) (McKinsey, MCC Founding Group)



Accountability during change

- [In the Eye of the Beholder: the Merit Trap](#) (MCC & CEW)
- [40:40:20 Talent Processes Toolkit](#) (Property MCC)
- [A Gender Equal Future of Work: Discussion Guide](#) (MCC Founding & STEM)



Flexible work

- [Accelerating Change on Flexible Ways of Working](#) (MCC)
- [COVID-19 update: ANU campuses move to remote work and study](#) (Australian National University, MCC STEM Group)
- [Flexible Teams: Resources for Managers](#) (NSW Public Service Commission, NSW Government MCC Group)
- [Faculty of Medicine and Health Working from Home Guide](#) (University of Sydney, MCC Founding Group)
- [A Variety of COVID-19 Advice for Employers and Employees](#) (Association of Consulting Architects Australia via MCC Architecture Group)
- [Employee and Leader Guide to Working from Home Set Up](#) (QBE, MCC National 2016 and Insurance Groups)
- [Sample Working at Home Update Comms](#) (QBE, MCC National 2016 and Insurance Groups)
- [A Blueprint for Remote Working: Lessons from China](#) (McKinsey & Company, MCC Founding Group)
- [Managing Virtual Teams and Managing the impact on you and your employees during COVID19](#) (AMP Capital, National 2016 MCC Group)



Physical, mental and emotional well-being of employees

- [COVID-19 Support Guides](#) (Super Friend via Cbus Super, MCC National 2016 Group)
- [How to take care of your wellbeing while working from home](#) (MYOB, MCC STEM Group)
- [Coronavirus: How to protect your mental health](#) (BBC, MCC Global Tech Group)
- [Staying Connected During COVID-19 - supporting teams and colleagues on "stand down" or extended leave](#) (MCC)



Domestic and family violence support

- [Workplace Responses to DFV during COVID-19 crisis](#) (MCC)
- [How to help someone experiencing violence or abuse at home during isolation](#) (Julie McKay, PwC, MCC National 2015 Group on Women's Agenda)
- [Domestic and Family Violence: Impact of the coronavirus](#) (Commonwealth Bank of Australia, MCC Founding Group)
- [The Shadow Pandemic](#) (UN Women)