

The Leadership Shadow

*Listen, learn and
lead with action*

Introduction

The Leadership Shadow is a practical approach for leaders and their teams to understand their employee's perception of their leadership and how their behaviour and priorities can impact the acceleration of gender equality and inclusion in their organisation.

The Leadership Shadow was first published in 2014 by Champions of Change in collaboration with Chief Executive Women and based on an adaptation of a model provided by Pine Street, the leadership development group of Goldman Sachs.

Since then, the Leadership Shadow has been widely adopted by Champions of Change Members and our leadership teams as an integral part of the Champions of Change Coalition's commitment to listen, learn and lead with action.

Over the past 10 years feedback from our experience using the Leadership Shadow approach has further informed the practice. The insights are incorporated this edition which also broadens its purpose from concentrating on gender balance in leadership to addressing gender equality and inclusion.

The Leadership Shadow model has helped us learn and find better ways to lead the efforts that seek to achieve greater gender equality and inclusion in our organisations.

It has helped some of us better analyse what we have been doing, reveal what has and hasn't worked and then adopt more effective ways of moving ahead.

For some of us, it has acted as a circuit breaker to encourage further action.

Changing our approach to leadership requires focussed attention and none of us claim to have all the answers. However, by sharing the model and our experiences we endeavour to stimulate thinking around how behaviours and priorities of leaders are perceived and how they serve to create respectful, safe and inclusive cultures of belonging for all.

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Casting your leadership shadow

If we want our leadership to make a difference, we must understand our own impact—the shadow we cast. The challenge is that it is hard to see our own shadow—its shape, clarity and reach.

The path to lasting performance improvement on any priority—like inclusive gender equality—starts at the top. What we say; how we act; what we prioritise; and how we measure together determine what gets done and what doesn't. These four elements make up the Leadership Shadow model, which allows you as a leader to consider whether the imprint of your words and actions is as clear and powerful as you want it to be.

In the following pages, we describe the model and how it might help achieve greater gender equality and inclusion within organisations. For a number of us, the model has helped to identify blind spots and to prioritise action.

The model is flexible. Its core logic is universal—so that you can use it wherever you exercise leadership and in whatever line of work. Naturally, the solutions and strategies that the model will prompt you to apply to your specific purposes will differ from one leader and organisation to another.

We present the Leadership Shadow pictorially and describe it simply. We recommend that you and your fellow leaders:

- 1 Read and reflect on The Leadership Shadow, using the provided questions
- 2 Ask for feedback (from peers, employees and other leaders)
- 3 Understand and prioritise opportunities for improvement
- 4 Set goals and take action
- 5 Restart the process

Throughout this document, we share comments and experiences of Champions of Change Coalition Members working with The Leadership Shadow.

The Leadership Shadow gives you a structure to sharpen your approach and demonstrate how you are making diversity a priority. Making progress on gender balance is not yet second nature for many of us. The Leadership Shadow focuses the mind on how to take a leadership position that will drive progress on what is an important social, economic and productivity priority for Australia.

Simon Rothery, Chief Executive Officer,
Goldman Sachs Australia & New Zealand

New expectations of leaders

Changing workforce dynamics accelerated by Covid-19 have elevated the need for authentic/empathetic leadership that promotes inclusive gender equality*

The level of employee connection and people-centred communication during the pandemic was warmly received and fostered greater empathy and understanding across organisations.

- ◆ Employees appreciated the opportunity to see the 'whole person' in senior leaders and have greater personal interaction with them.
- ◆ Working virtually has opened up space for a more visible and diverse range of voices to contribute ideas and perspectives to discussions, where previously only a few voices might have dominated.
- ◆ The role of leadership providing a sense of purpose, direction and excitement for the future has never been more important.

At the same time, leaders are facing new challenges. As flexible work becomes normalised, there is a need to ensure that hybrid models of work do not entrench existing inequalities (e.g. boys' club in the office) or 'old ways of working' which are less inclusive. Further, in a fast moving environment where decisions are made quickly, advancements can be lost without specific attention to gender equality.

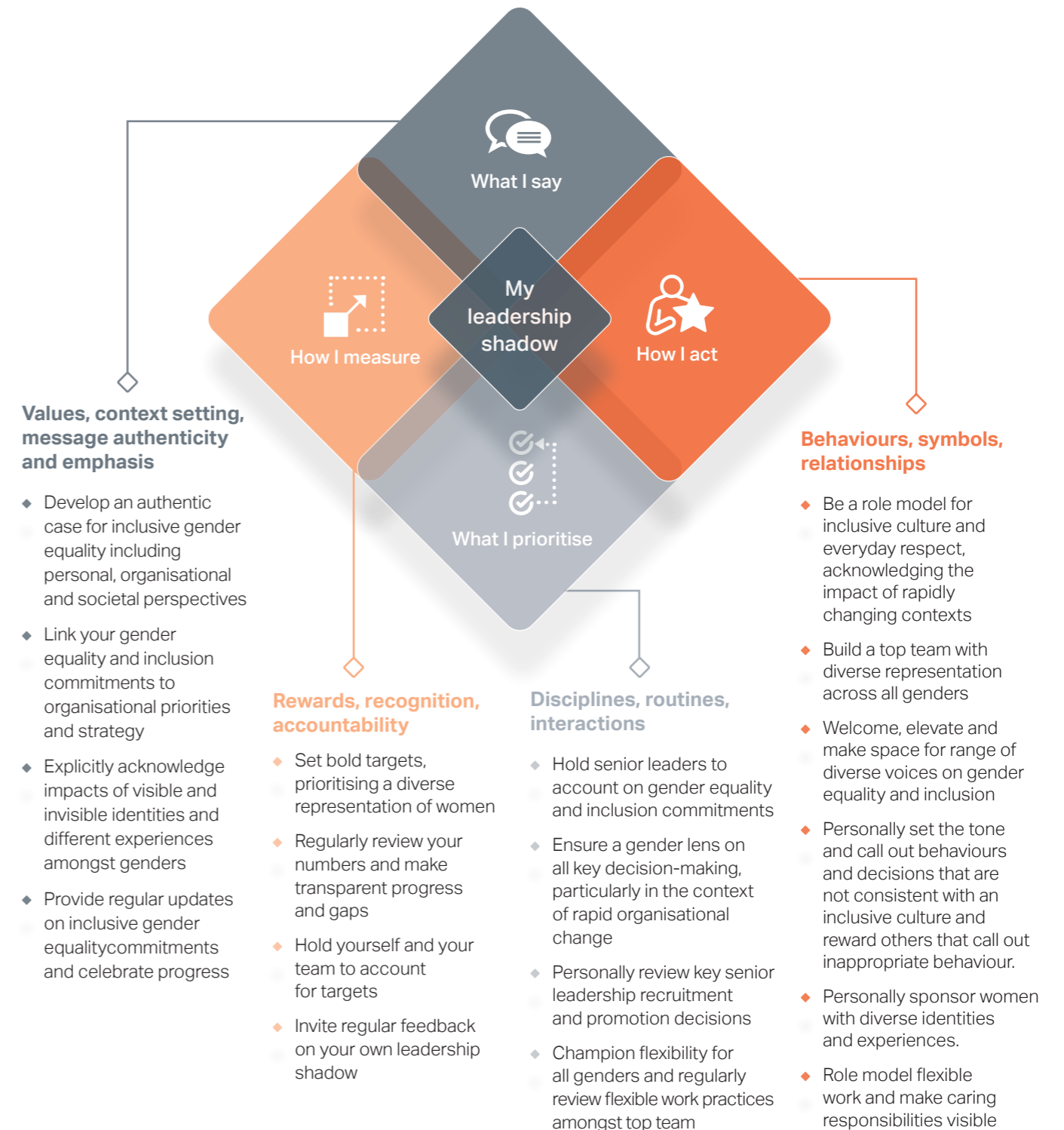
The Leadership Shadow is a model to enable reflections on personal leadership on inclusive gender equality. It is not about reflecting on organisation policies (e.g. parental leave provisions) but about the 'shadow' that leaders cast through their communication and everyday actions or inaction on inclusive gender equality.

To surface insights and action priorities for inclusive leadership, all Champions of Change CEOs and their senior leadership teams use the Leadership Shadow Model as a framework to reflect on their personal leadership.

***"inclusive gender equality"** recognises that diversity, equity and inclusion strategies must consider and engage all genders in global efforts to achieve gender equality, with a particular focus on elevating and advancing currently under-represented and marginalised groups. At its core, is the intent to create respectful, safe and inclusive cultures of belonging for all.

My leadership shadow

The path to lasting impact on any priority—like inclusive gender equality—starts at the top. What we say; how we act; what we prioritise; and how we measure, together determine what gets done (and what doesn't). These four elements make up the Leadership Shadow Model, which allows you as a leader to consider whether the imprint and impact of your words and actions on gender equality is as clear and powerful as you want it to be. Some examples below:



¹The Leadership Shadow for gender balance has been adapted from a model provided by Pine Street, the leadership development group of Goldman Sachs

What I say



As leaders, we must identify, deliver and monitor the message we send about gender equality and inclusion, as well as ensure it is consistent with our actions. Every leader knows that employees have well-tuned antennae to pick up signals from the top about 'what matters around here'.

The case for gender equality and inclusion must be specific, and connected to strategy. Providing regular updates and celebrating success maintains momentum.

Develop an authentic case for gender equality

- ◆ How well could others articulate why gender equality and inclusion matters to me?
- ◆ How often and in which fora do I talk about gender equality and inclusion as a priority? Do I actively include a diversity of women?
- ◆ How visibly do I advocate for gender equality and inclusion externally? With my suppliers, and partners? Does this include a diversity of women?

Link your gender equality commitments to organisational priorities

- ◆ How well do I articulate the link between gender equality and inclusion objectives and our organisational priorities and strategy?
- ◆ Have I made the business/organisational and societal case for gender equality clear? How?
- ◆ How integrated are gender equality and inclusion objectives with our strategy? With our organisational values?

Explicitly acknowledge diversity amongst women

- ◆ How well do I acknowledge the diversity amongst women and how different and intersecting identities can impact on experiences in the workplace (e.g. cultural background, sexual orientation, disability etc)?

Provide regular updates on gender equality and celebrate progress

- ◆ How well are gender equality, diversity and inclusion objectives integrated into regular reporting?
- ◆ How do I talk about what we are learning, our initiatives, actions and outcomes?
- ◆ How do I seek to understand and respond to the nuanced challenges people face in meeting our gender equality and inclusion objectives?



One way I talk about diversity is to give examples of situations where a leader has 'let a voice in' successfully. In other words, that the inclusion of someone's opinion has changed the outcome for the better. These stories help people understand what gender balance and inclusion can actually deliver to the business and how strong leaders leverage the talents of all.

Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz, former Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Mirvac

I know that when I ask questions about why we're not making more progress on improving diversity, that I have to be genuinely open to understanding the challenges—because they are real. Then I try to discuss them like any other business challenge—what can we do that will make a difference?

Kathryn Fagg, Non-Executive Director

The way that I was holding gender diversity as a separate objective, not integrated with other business priorities, was giving the impression that I wasn't really serious. I explicitly started to integrate its prioritisation much more into my day-to-day business. I now try to talk about gender balance side-by-side with P&L and cost.

Simon Rothery, Chief Executive Officer, Goldman Sachs Australia and New Zealand

How I act



Actions and decisions give credibility to our communications about, and commitment to, gender equality and inclusion. When our people see messages of support translating into tangible actions, progress and change, momentum is created. 'How I act' reveals the behaviours, the symbols and the nature of the relationships that leaders develop to support greater gender equality and inclusion.

Be a role model for an inclusive culture and everyday respect

- ◆ Does my team reflect diversity (within the organisation? Or within society?) and demonstrate how to harness different views and ways of operating?
- ◆ How do I reward and promote people with a track record of inclusive and respectful leadership?
- ◆ How comfortable am I acknowledging the career advantages I have had and addressing my own biases?

Personally set the tone and call out behaviours and reward others who call out inappropriate behaviour

- ◆ Do I consistently work to understand and address processes that are getting in the way of advancing gender equality and an inclusive culture?
- ◆ How clear are standards of acceptable and desired behaviours? How consistent and visible are the consequences when standards are not met?
- ◆ Do I or our organisation make exceptions for the harmful behaviour of certain leaders e.g. rainmakers, public figures, long tenures)?

Personally sponsor women of diverse backgrounds

- ◆ Do I personally sponsor women from diverse backgrounds? Is my sponsorship visible?
- ◆ Do I invite in, elevate and make space for a range of women's voices?

Build a top team with diverse representation of women

- ◆ What signal does the gender and diversity composition of my team send to my organisation?
- ◆ If any gender dominates my team, how do I acknowledge this imbalance and take visible steps to redress it?

Role model flexible work and make caring responsibilities visible

- ◆ Do I role model flexible work? Do I make my own caring responsibilities visible? Does my team?



It was a really confronting moment for me when I realised we needed to be much clearer about our expectations about equality. The standard you walk past is the standard you accept. I knew I had to be clear and direct about what was unacceptable behaviour in the Army and that there would be tough consequences for anyone found to be in breach.

Lieutenant General David Morrison AO, former Chief of Army

A focus on behaviours that support an inclusive culture is changing the day-to-day experience for all our people. It requires our leaders to seek feedback, reflect on their biases, actively counter them and try new approaches – in every interaction and decision.

Louise Adams, Chief Operating Officer, Aurecon

What I prioritise



We know employees notice what leaders take interest in and how we spend our time: the disciplines, routines and interactions that advance objectives. The goal here is to develop and visibly lead processes that drive towards greater gender equality and inclusion.

Hold senior leaders to account on gender equality commitments

- ◆ How does my team describe the level of priority on gender equality and inclusion commitments?
- ◆ Do I place as much emphasis on gender equality and inclusion objectives as other business or organisational priorities?

Ensure an inclusive gender lens on all key decision-making, particularly in the context of rapid organisational change

- ◆ How often do I question gender impacts when making organisational decisions? (E.g. leadership changes, investments, team composition, structure changes, products and services)
- ◆ How strongly do I challenge or seek to redress decisions that appear to have a gendered outcome?

Personally review key senior leadership recruitment and promotion decisions

- ◆ Do I interrogate recruitment and promotion decisions for senior leadership roles?
- ◆ How do I communicate my priority of hiring a diverse senior leadership team?

Champion flexibility for all genders and regularly review flexible work practices amongst top performing team

- ◆ How do I recognise and celebrate people who are building flexible teams?
- ◆ How visibly and regularly do people on my team work flexibly?



Ultimately, the buck stops with me. I need to make sure that all of the leaders in my organisation are inclusive. I don't want this to be a diversity project—it has to underpin the way we do business. That doesn't happen unless we have honest conversations and my team expects me to hold them accountable.

Giam Swiegers, former Chief Executive Officer, Deloitte Australia

In the past, people's opinions and biases were often at the forefront of our talent discussions. We embarked on a strategy to take out bias—using external assessments, global benchmarking, leadership and 'potential' data. Now we have a more objective and collective view of talent. This enables us to confidently discuss career planning, mobility and the benefit of getting different critical experiences across diverse business segments.

Alan Joyce, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Qantas Group

How I measure



Measurement tells employees what really matters and reveals where we are making progress and where we are not. It includes the rewards, recognition and accountability for those we work with.

In Australia, formal reporting mechanisms are in place to track gender data through the Workplace Gender Equality Agency guidelines. Robust and consistent measurement systems for gender equality and inclusion should now be part of our standard reporting suite.

Set bold targets, prioritising a diverse representation of women

- ◆ Have I set granular gender equality and inclusion targets for my organisation and team?
- ◆ What happens when targets are achieved or exceeded? What happens when they are not?
- ◆ Does my gender reporting enable an understanding of broader and intersecting diversity? (e.g. gender, age, cultural identity, disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)

Regularly review your numbers and make transparent progress and gaps

- ◆ Compared to other business priorities, how robust is the gender equality progress review process?
- ◆ How often do I speak about progress and gaps on our gender equality and inclusion targets and objectives?

Hold yourself and your team to account for targets

- ◆ How am I held to account for gender equality and inclusion objectives?
- ◆ Do I integrate gender equality, diversity and inclusion into performance discussions with my team?

Regularly get feedback on your own leadership shadow

- ◆ How much feedback do I get from colleagues, customers and partners about:
 - ◆ our progress on gender equality and inclusion?
 - ◆ my personal leadership on gender equality and inclusion



For The Leadership Shadow (or any model) to be effective, it needs to be moved beyond me. I decided to discuss the model at length with my team so that we could reflect on our collective leadership shadow. It's about me but also about other leaders in the organisation adopt behaviours implicitly condoned through my actions, words or behaviours.

Dr Ian Watt AC, Non-Executive Director

I've become much more confident over recent years in taking a stronger leadership role in advocating for gender diversity. It just seems so wasteful if we're not using 100% of our community's talent.

Kathryn Fagg, Non-Executive Director

A robust and consistent approach to reporting on gender equality across the sector will help us to understand the challenges, learn from pockets where there has been success, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Chris Beattie, Chief Officer, South Australian State Emergency Service

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- ◆ Members of the Champions of Change who have shared their experience over the past 10 years using the Leadership Shadow.



The Champions of Change Coalition includes CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors and community leaders who believe gender equality is a major business, economic, societal and human rights issue. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, our mission is to step up beside women to help achieve gender equality and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

championsofchangecoalition.org

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