

# 7 SWITCHES

Inclusive Gender  
Equality by Design

Switched on leaders, organisations, industries and governments delivering a more equitable future



**CASE STUDY**  
Football Australia's strategic  
focus on inclusive gender  
equality by design



# 7SWITCHES

## Introduction

The 7 Switches is an innovative and practical guide to help deliver inclusive gender equality through better design and organisational decision making. Developed by Champions of Change Coalition, it aims to help ensure gender equality and inclusion are built into the design of any business system, project, process, service or product rather than bolted on or retrofitted to legacy systems once issues arise.

This case study uses the 7 Switches framework to demonstrate the incredible outcomes possible when a sophisticated, gender equal and inclusive approach is applied from the outset, underpins every decision, and is never compromised.

Football Australia and CommBank are members of the Champions of Change Coalition. The investment in, and contributions of Coalition members over the past 14 years has helped to create

**"The 7 Switches for Inclusive Gender Equality by Design."**

More detail on applying the 7 Switches to decisions and design processes is provided from page 12 onwards.





# 7 SWITCHES

## Football Australia's strategic focus on inclusive gender equality by design

### Overview

In 2020, Football Australia and New Zealand Football were appointed hosts of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™. Beyond the ambition of hosting the most commercially successful women's football tournament, the broader vision was aimed at fostering a lasting impact on both football and society.

The FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ set a new standard, surpassing all previous benchmarks, and establishing itself as the most significant and successful edition of the tournament. It was more than just a sporting event, it was a platform to challenge gender norms, foster inclusivity, and inspire future generations of women and girls. With the eyes of the world upon Australia and New Zealand, there was a unique chance to showcase the power of women's sports in driving societal transformation.

This case study delves into Football Australia's strategy to leverage the tournament as a catalyst for advancing women in sport and promoting gender equality. It also highlights the influential partnership with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CommBank), the major sponsor of the Australian Women's Football Team, the CommBank Matildas.

Football Australia was committed to harnessing the tournament's potential to make a positive and long-lasting impact on gender equality in sport. In 2021, Football Australia's commitment to this vision was actioned through the launch of Legacy '23. Over the subsequent years, Legacy '23 evolved into football's primary leveraging strategy, emphasising the generation of economic and social benefits both domestically and internationally.

### The Game Changer: Legacy '23

Legacy '23 represented a blueprint in how major sporting events could be leveraged to drive societal change. The strategy was conceived and executed to systemically, intentionally, and effectively build inclusive gender equality into sport and drive societal transformation. It was built on five pillars:

#### Participation

Football Australia's initiatives aimed to increase participation in football for women and girls. The National Club Development Program focused on building capacity and capability of community clubs to build an inclusive environment, while the Sporting Schools program introduced football to primary school-aged children. The goal was to achieve a 50:50 gender participation ratio, and progress was made through targeted programs and outreach efforts.

#### Facilities

Legacy '23 sought to improve football facilities across Australia, ensuring that women and girls at clubs had access to safe and inclusive spaces for training and competition. Significant investments were made in community facilities, high-performance centres, and stadium infrastructure, with the aim of enhancing the footballing experience for players of all levels.

#### High Performance

Football Australia left nothing to chance in preparing the CommBank Matildas for the tournament, showcasing the considerable strides made since the release of the Performance Gap Report in 2020 which assessed the landscape for elite female footballers. Significant investment was made into the Women's National Team Program, with the goal to achieve sustained success on the international stage and cultivate a pipeline of talent for future generations.

### Leadership and Development

Legacy '23 aimed to promote gender equality in leadership roles within football, with a focus on coaching, refereeing, and administrative positions. Programs like the Our Game Women in Leadership Program provided opportunities for women to develop their skills and pursue careers in football management and administration. Our Game Women and Non-Binary Persons in Media program aimed to ensure gender parity off the pitch in media and creative roles.

### Tourism and International Engagement

The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 presented an opportunity to showcase Australia and New Zealand on the global stage, attracting visitors from around the world, boosting the economy, and fostering cultural exchange. Initiatives like the Pacific Four Nations Tournament and international friendly matches helped to strengthen diplomatic relations and promote sports diplomacy.

### Power in Partnership: Commonwealth Bank & Football Australia

In 2021, CommBank entered into a 4-year partnership, injecting significant investment into elite women's football and grassroots initiatives around the country. CommBank's sponsorship of the CommBank Matildas affirmed the bank's long-term commitment to supporting gender equality and inclusion in sport, engaging millions of customers, communities, and employees in the lead up to and during the tournament.

The partnership has since grown to include the CommBank ParaMatildas and Pararooks, Australia's national teams for those with cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury and symptoms of stroke.

It also redefined the business case for commercial sponsorship of women's sport

***"Inclusive gender equality recognises that diversity, equity and inclusion strategies must seek to create respectful, safe and inclusive cultures of belonging for all.***

***Leaders can help shift mindsets, behaviours and decisions to create a future where inclusive gender equality is embedded in everything we do and deliver.***

***There is tremendous upside to capture given the human rights, talent, innovation and commercial advantage we know diversity delivers."***

***Elizabeth Broderick***

***Founder and Convenor  
Champions of Change  
Coalition***

***Legacy '23 Ambassador***

## The Switch



**Represented  
and engaged end  
to end**

- Women in all of their diversity are represented, actively engaged and equally contributing to the design and development process – end to end.
- Sex-disaggregated and diversity data is collected and analysed at every stage to inform decision-making.
- Decisions and design recognise and plan for a world where inclusive gender equality is the norm rather than being dominated by the needs of a particular gender.
- The voices of women with lived experience are listened to.

## Football Australia created opportunities to engage women in all of their diversity as participants, decision-makers and leaders.

Football Australia took a proactive approach in ensuring that women were not only participants but leaders in every aspect of the tournament's organisation.

***"Our commitment was to lead by example, ensuring that women had a voice in every decision made."***

**James Johnson, CEO Football Australia**

Sarah Walsh, a former Matilda and long-term member of Champions of Change Coalition, was appointed Head of Women's Football, Women's World Cup Legacy.

Melissa Andreatta was appointed full time Assistant Coach of the Matildas and Head Coach of the U23 team.

Sponsorship of strong women leaders and a gender-balanced organising committee, was instrumental in shaping a tournament that truly reflected the values and needs of women athletes.

## Key Outcomes

- *Our Game Women in Leadership Program* launched and delivered to 175 women across 5 states.
- Between 2021 and 2023, a 63% increase in women entering coaching roles in the sport and 27% growth in women pursuing refereeing.
- First intake of *Our Game Women and Non-Binary Persons in Media Program* delivered to address underrepresentation of women and non-binary persons in sports media, including creative roles.

## The Switch

# 2

*Visible, understood,  
respected and  
valued*

- There is equal representation, recognition, and respect of women and girls in all their diversity (consideration, presence, profile, visibility, language) in the outcomes of decisions and design processes.
- Discriminatory distortions/ comparisons between genders are eliminated.
- Traditional views of what constitutes merit are challenged.
- Messages, language and imagery are tested to ensure they are inclusive and respectful to all.
- Perspectives and concerns raised by women and girls are prioritised and addressed.

## Football Australia prioritised and valued women's contribution and achievements

Visibility and respect for women athletes were central to the tournament's success.

Football Australia launched impactful marketing campaigns that brought players like Sam Kerr and Mary Fowler into the spotlight, not just as athletes but as icons of empowerment.

***"This World Cup is our chance to show young girls that football isn't just a game, but a pathway to empowerment."***  
**Sam Kerr, Australian Captain**

Commonwealth Bank of Australia contributed significantly to these efforts, with extensive advertising that heroed the CommBank Matildas and shone a light on the millions of young fans they were inspiring through the tournament.

A behind-the-scenes Disney documentary "Matildas: The World at Our Feet" elevated fan affiliation and a sense of personal connection with the players by showcasing their dedication, challenges, and achievements through personal stories.

## Key Outcomes

- CommBank Matildas are seen as positive, powerful, diverse and authentic role models for women and girls.
- The 2023 tournament was the most successful FIFA Women's World Cup, with more than 2 million spectators and global viewership of almost 2 billion.
- It was also the largest Australian viewing audience in the history of free-to-air TV (11.15 million for Semi Final).
- Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade supported activities at embassies in conjunction with the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 Trophy Tour – a first for a foreign policy agency.

## The Switch

# 3

**Health and safety without compromise**

- Every stage and decision is scrutinised to enshrine health and safety for all genders as a baseline feature that is never traded off (for cost, profit and/or to meet the needs of others).

## Football Australia supported the CommBank Matildas with world-class preparation and inspired participation in sport

Prioritising the health and safety of participants, Football Australia implemented advanced medical protocols. This included consideration for menstrual health and mental wellness, for example kits incorporated anti-leak technology into the fabric in order to alleviate period anxiety amongst players.

***“Our commitment extends beyond financial support; we are here to ensure the health and well-being of these incredible athletes.”***

**Sarah Walsh, Head of Women's Football Australia**

## Key Outcomes

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- Football Australia has made significant strides to address the findings of its 2020 *Performance Gap Report*, improving preparation and support of elite female footballers.
- State of the art 'Home of the Matildas' at LaTrobe University Sports Park and Team Base Camp at the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre provided for an optimum performance environment for the 2023 campaign.
- The 'inspiration effect' from FIFA Women's World Cup is projected to create healthier habits and reduce health costs by \$324 million through increased participation in football.

## The Switch

# 4 *Customised and accessible*

- The individual and unique attributes, abilities and needs of diverse women and girls at every life stage are factored into design.
- Under-represented and marginalised groups are explicitly considered.
- Women and girls can equally, and as easily, access and use with equitable outcomes, performance and benefits, with no personal health, safety, professional or financial downside or penalty.

## Infrastructure improvement works around Australia were designed and delivered to meet the needs of women and girls

Making football accessible and enjoyable for all attendees was a key goal.

Football Australia ensured that all CommBank Matildas domestic matches were equipped with family-friendly amenities and multilingual support, while facilitated access by sponsoring tickets for underrepresented and minority community groups.

Player public appearances, like jersey presentations were held at family friendly public spaces and during daylight hours.

Young community football participants were involved in the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 as flag bearers, mascots, and ball kids.

The result was a tournament environment that was not only inclusive but also welcoming to a diverse global audience.

## Key Outcomes

- Infrastructure improvement works at FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 training sites included pitch renovations, new and upgraded floodlights, and renovation of dressing rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Partnerships with fashion and lifestyle brands created a supporter program tapping into everyday life, e.g. CommBank Matildas and Colette collaboration led to scrunchies, clips and jewellery selling out online within 2 days of launch.
- The Australian Government's \$200 million Play Our Way program was announced shortly after the success of the tournament, aimed at improving sporting facilities and equipment supporting the enduring engagement of women and girls in sport.

## The Switch

# 5

*Progressive and supported*

- Harmful gender stereotypes, norms and expectations are proactively tested, debunked and eliminated.
- Lives and careers are not dictated or influenced by traditional models and norms of masculinity and femininity.
- Caring (for children, elders, colleagues) and domestic work is recognised in design processes as valued, everyone's priority and equally shared.

## FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 helped debunk outdated and harmful gender stereotypes, norms and expectations

The tournament showcased in new ways the power and prowess of elite women athletes.

Players, through their stories, shared expansive views of relationships, families and individuals.

Significantly, the embrace of players as both elite athlete and parents through leadership and practical support, challenged conventional norms and highlighted the potential and value of integrating family life with professional sports.

Supporting the athletes' careers on and off the field was another critical focus. Football Australia introduced several initiatives, such as educational programs and financial planning workshops, to help players manage their careers beyond sports.

CommBank is complementing these efforts by creating internship opportunities for athletes within the bank, thus promoting long-term career development.

## Key Outcomes

- Participation of women and girls in football has increased from 21% to 26% since 2021.
- Registrations for the 2024 season are up 20% on average since the tournament.
- More than 665 community clubs have achieved 1-star status through *Club Changer*, a program by Football Australia designed to foster inclusive and welcoming cultures and provide a positive environment for players, coaches, volunteers and officials.
- Men and boys saw CommBank Matildas as powerful role models, helping drive visibility, appreciation and perception of women's sport.



## The Switch

# 6

*Free and empowered*

- The autonomy, independence, freedom, privacy and empowerment of women and girls is enabled, protected and promoted in all decisions.
- The options and decisions available to all genders are not shackled by outdated and harmful gender norms and stereotypes.

## CommBank Matildas have inspired women and girls' autonomy and independence

Both Football Australia and CommBank were dedicated to empowering future generations of female athletes.

Football Australia and its Member Federations implemented a range of grassroots initiatives catered for social and non-traditional formats of the game, increasing participation opportunities for all.

CommBank's commitment to empowerment extended into financial literacy programs for women in sports, aiming to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary for financial independence.

## Key Outcomes

- CommBank Matildas helped change perceptions and increase confidence about what young girls can achieve, with 91% of female followers feeling the CommBank Matildas represented 'empowerment' and 60% reporting women are more empowered after the tournament.
- 78% of teachers and educators from *Football Fever Schools* feel the CommBank Matildas have made young girls more interested in football/sport.
- 76% of male followers believe the success of the CommBank Matildas will definitely or probably impact their support for gender equality initiatives or women in leadership roles.

## The Switch

# 7

*Invested in*

- Investments are made equally or correctively to meet the needs of women and girls, remediate for past inequalities, and end gender inequity wherever it exists.

## Football Australia attracted government and commercial investment in women's football and sport, addressing funding gaps and investing for the future

The financial commitment to the success of women's football was substantial, recognising that investment drives impact.

This strategic investment not only elevated the profile and performance of women's football but also had a much greater impact beyond the sport itself. It spurred increased participation and funding in other women's sports, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for female athletes across various disciplines.

In the lead up to the tournament, Football Australia also reset the parameters for commercial partnerships, prioritising new values like social impact, rather than relying solely on traditional metrics (set by men's sport). CommBank bought into the vision and demonstrated their long-term commitment through a multi-year sponsorship deal.

CommBank has a history of leading in purpose-led partnerships with a 25-year history of supporting women in sport.

The partnership with the CommBank Matildas made CommBank one of the largest supporters of women's sport in the country.

The partnership was founded on the mutual ambition to deliver to the Legacy '23 plan and ensure the FIFA Women's World Cup, 2023, had a long-term impact on participation for women and girls across Australia.

### Key Outcomes

- The 2023 tournament was the most successful FIFA Women's World Cup, with more than 2 million spectators and global viewership of almost 2 billion.
- It achieved the largest Australian viewing audience in the history of free-to-air TV (11.15 million for Semi Final).
- Australian and State Governments invested \$398 million for Legacy '23 and related initiatives, primarily through substantial stadium upgrades nationwide.
- Government support reflects buy-in to the potential of women's football to drive positive societal change.
- FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 generated an induced economic impact of \$1.32 billion, with almost 87,000 visitors to Australia driving economic activity.

***“This World Cup has rewritten what is possible for women’s sports, setting a precedent for future events and proving that with the right support and visibility, women’s football can achieve unprecedented success.”***

**James Johnson,  
CEO Football Australia.**



James Johnson, CEO Football Australia  
Sarah Walsh, Head of Women's Football  
Jill Ellis, x2 Women's World Cup winning coach

## **Challenges**

Football Australia's implementation of Legacy '23 faced significant challenges despite its promise.

The strategy encountered hurdles such as the need to address the shortfall in football facility investment and achieve gender parity in leadership roles and participation. A key example is national facilities audit revealed that only 41% of all football facilities were inclusive to women and girls.

Sustaining the momentum generated by the tournament also demanded ongoing commitment and investment from all stakeholders.

These challenges were highlighted amid the extraordinary impact of the CommBank Matildas and the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, which galvanised even those previously disinterested in sport, leading to increased enthusiasm and engagement with women's football.

Despite scepticism about the sustainability of the momentum and the potential long-term impact on women's sports, there is recognition of the need for continued efforts to support women's participation in sport and drive societal change.

## **Conclusion**

The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 set a new global standard for the presentation and support of women's sports. Through strategic investment and a sophisticated approach to gender equal and inclusive design the event not only celebrated athletic excellence but also championed gender equality, leaving a lasting legacy that extends well beyond the playing field.

This comprehensive approach ensured that the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 became a transformative event that reshaped perceptions, influenced policies, and inspired a new generation of athletes and fans alike

The successful collaboration between Football Australia and CommBank serves as a benchmark for future sporting events, demonstrating the power of partnership and the importance of investing in women's sports for societal progress.

The CommBank Matildas emerged as powerful ambassadors for women's sports, challenging stereotypes and inspiring millions across the globe. Their success on the field transcended traditional sports audiences, influencing attitudes and behaviours beyond the world of football. The tournament also provided an opportunity to celebrate women and girls in all their diversity and foster cultural understanding, reaching communities of all backgrounds





***The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup didn't just celebrate women's soccer; it showcased the spirit and resilience of women athletes everywhere, proving that the field is where equality can begin to take root.***

***Seeing the stadiums filled with fans cheering for women athletes was a powerful reminder of how far we've come—and the potential of where we can go. The 2023 World Cup was not just a tournament; it was a movement.***

***The success of the 2023 Women's World Cup is a testament to the hard work of countless women who fought for recognition in sports. Their legacy was vividly alive in every game, every goal, and every cheer.***

***This tournament has redefined what is possible for women's sports. The players on the field were champions of the game and champions for gender equality, inspiring millions around the world to dream bigger."***

***Sarah Walsh***

*Head of Women's Football  
Football Australia*



# 7 SWITCHES

Practical tools to guide your action







***“Engaging women in decision-making is crucial, but a more methodical and systematic approach is necessary if we want to build gender equality into everything we do.*”**

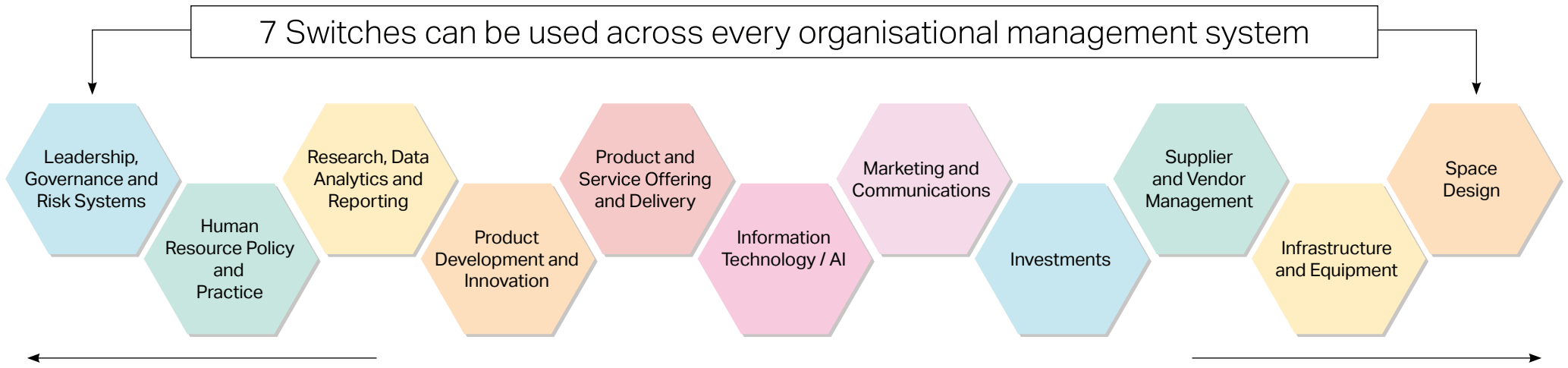
***7 Switches is an essential business tool to drive the deep, fundamental change we need to truly break from past mistakes, create fairer, safer and equal environments for women, and address gender inequity at pace.***

***We thank our Members and their teams who have invested in and developed this ground-breaking approach.”***

***Annika Freyer***

*CEO  
Champions of Change  
Coalition*

**Why this matters:** Women, girls and gender-diverse people are often unintentionally invisible, under-served, excluded, or harmed by everyday decisions



Common **Glitches** in decision-making processes create **Malfunctions** impacting our progress towards inclusive gender equality

Women, girls and gender-diverse people are invisible and, under-represented and/or under-served in decision-making and design processes

**Under-represented**

Women's role, participation and contributions are not prioritised and/or equally valued

**De-prioritised**

Investment is often unjustifiably unequal/ inequitable across genders

**Under-invested in**

The right to safety for some genders is regularly traded off for profits, to save costs or to meet the needs of others

**Unsafe**

**Decision-making Glitches**

There is insufficient focus on women's right to personal agency, choice and control free from outdated gender and other norms and stereotypes

**Seen as Dependant**

The unique and diverse needs and capabilities of women are not explicitly considered or met

**Homogeneous**

Outdated and harmful gender stereotypes, norms and expectations are assumed and perpetuated

**Outdated stereotypes**



# Use the **7 Switches** to help ensure inclusive gender equality is embedded into decisions and design processes



## Here's how to get started:

- Consider the Glitches and Malfunctions identified throughout the 7 Switches guide. Can you identify any of these pain points in your organisation, including systems, processes or policies you're responsible for, or have in development?
- Share the 7 Switches with your leadership team, employee resource groups and business system leads to raise awareness and stimulate thinking and action on more gender equal and inclusive decisions and design. Remember, 7 Switches can be used across every organisational management system, from leadership, governance and risk systems to infrastructure, equipment and space design.
- Identify one or more projects in your organisation where 7 Switches could be piloted and outcomes assessed.
- Use the Circuit Breaker questions outlined in 7 Switches as prompts to ensure inclusive gender equality is built in – not bolted on – to every project, policy, product, service, system and process at the outset.
- Share 7 Switches as part of organisational gender equality and inclusion initiatives.
- Share case studies internally and externally, including the benefits, challenges and lessons learned from applying the guidance in 7 Switches in your organisation's decision making and design processes.

The following pages provide an overview of this guide, helping you make informed decisions for introducing and embedding inclusive gender equality in your organisation.

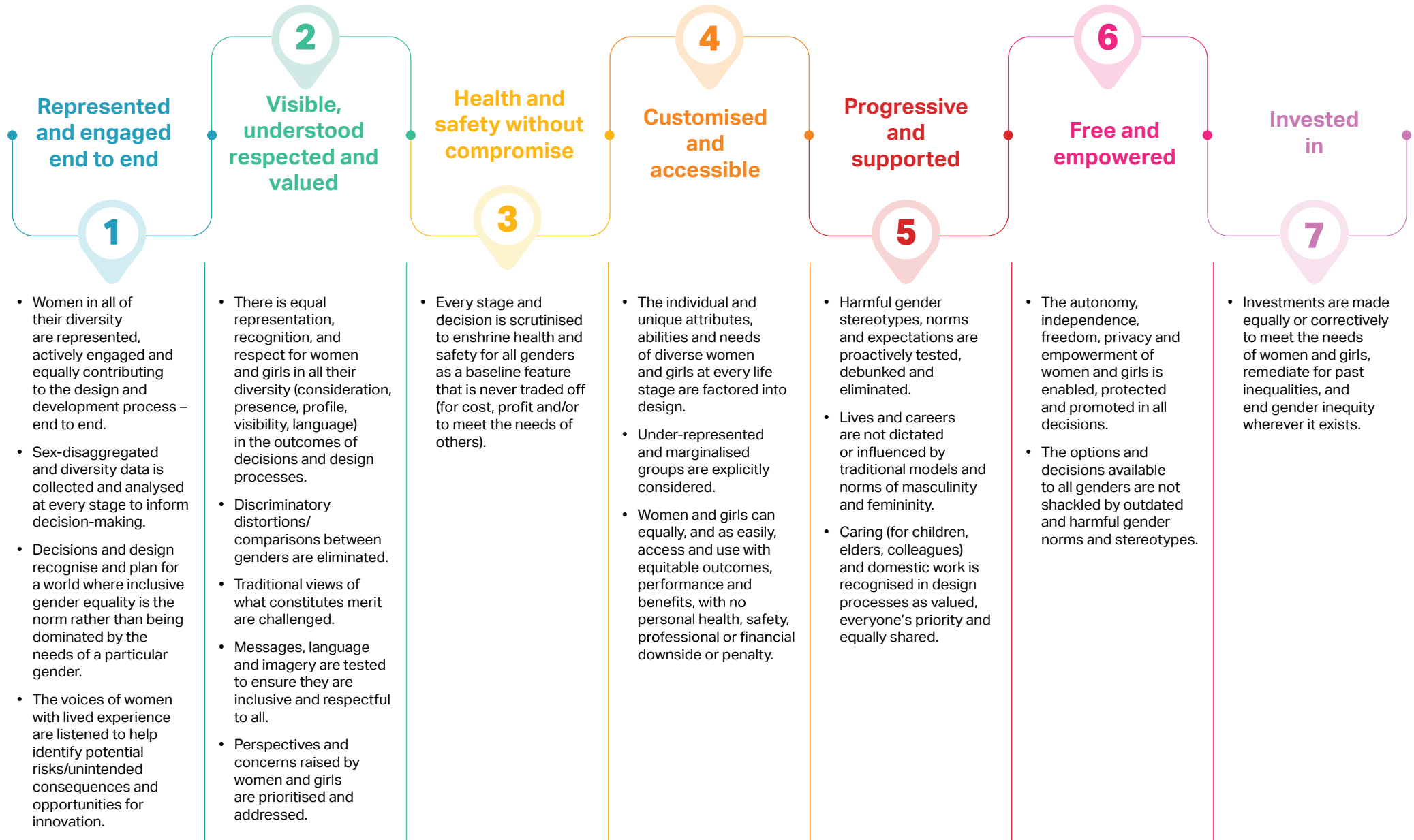
***"For years, we've invested heavily in fixing systems that neglected over half of the population, often causing harm. That's inefficient and unfair by any measure.***

***7 Switches empowers leaders to take a systems approach to integrating inclusive gender equality into the operational fabric of their organisations. Embracing it could also drive innovation, market expansion, and other commercial advantages as organisations respond to unmet needs."***

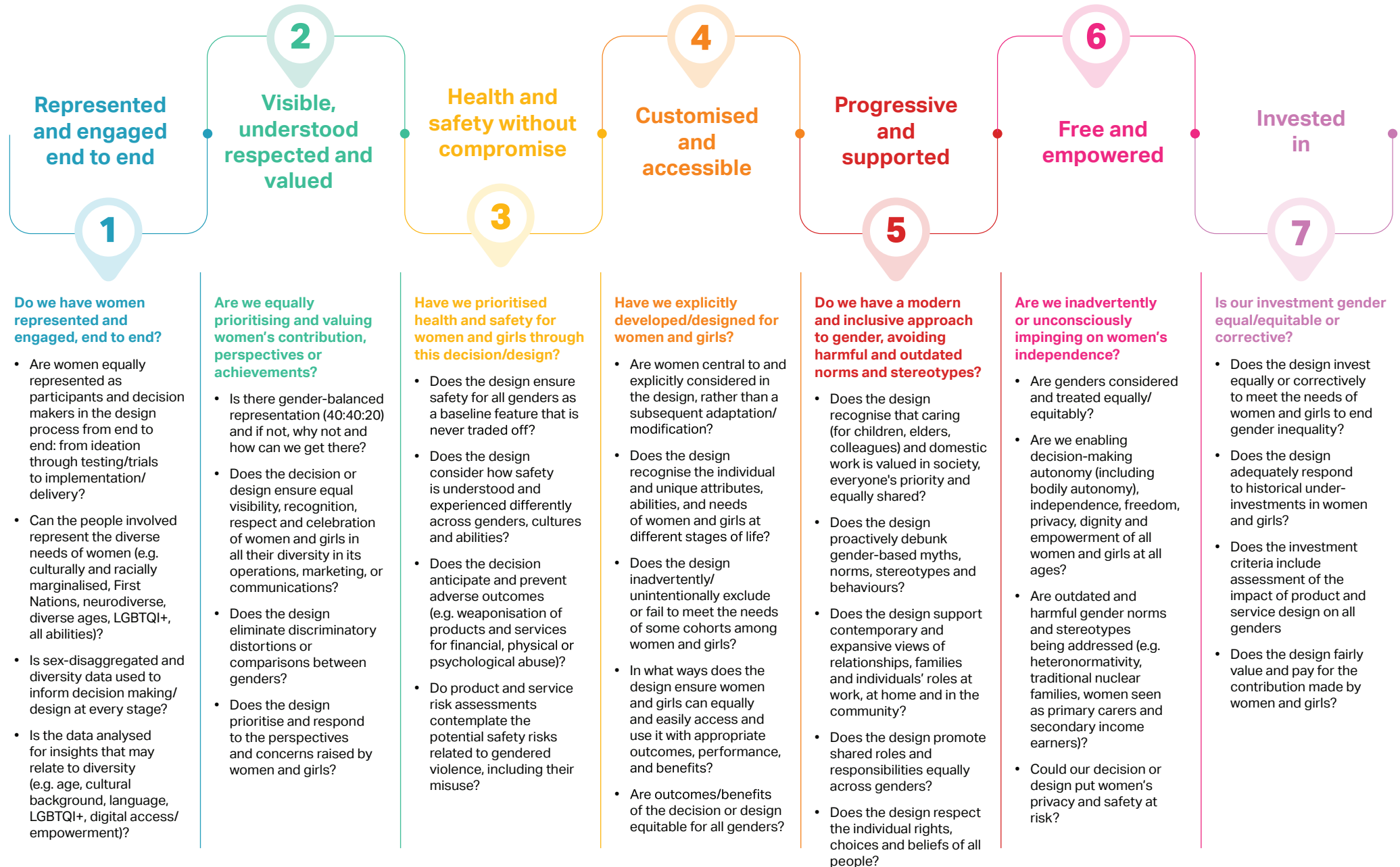
**James Fazzino**

*Chair of Manufacturing  
Australia Champions of  
Change Convenor*

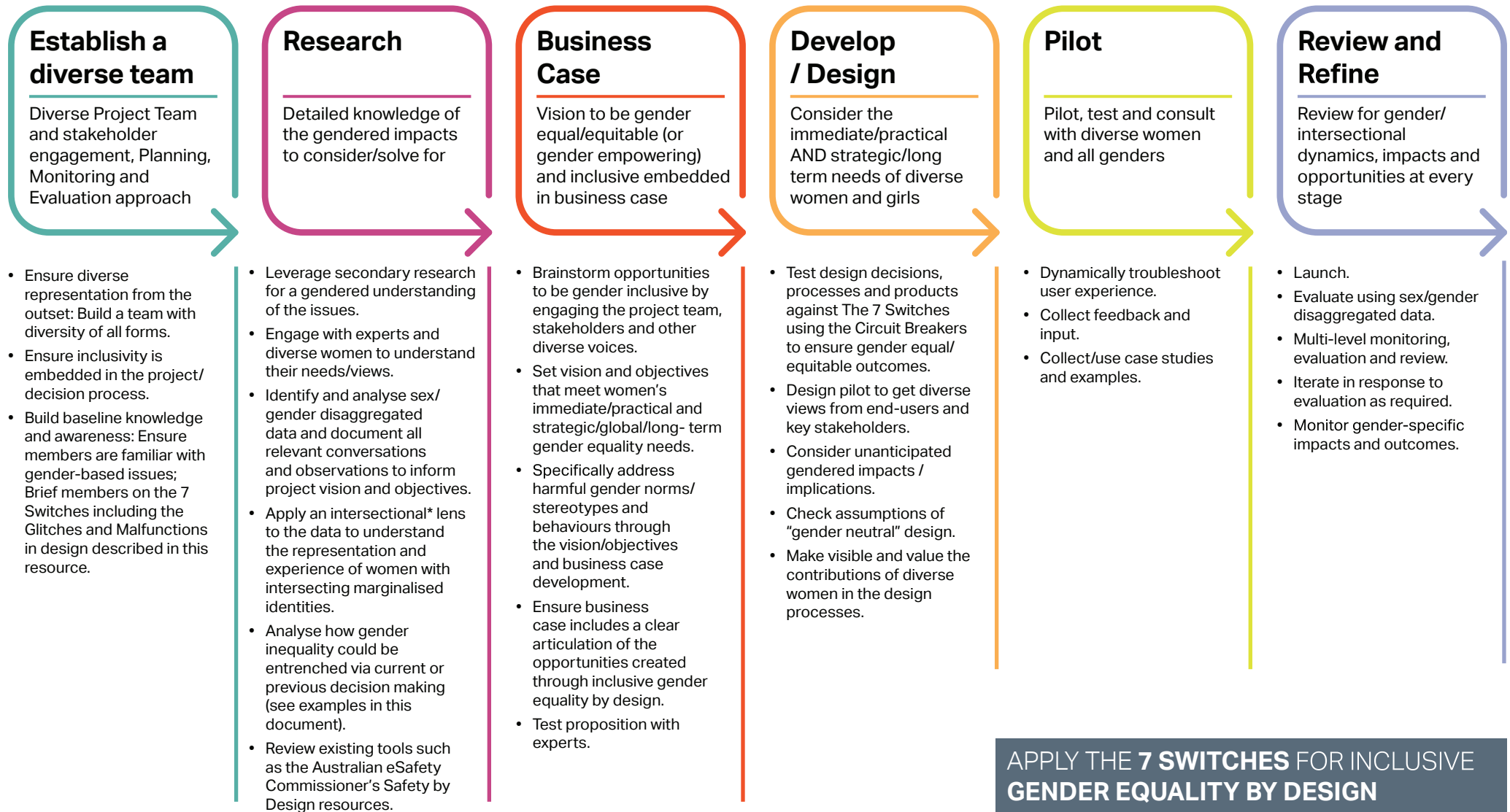
# 7 Switches to build gender equality into everything you do and deliver



# Circuit Breakers: Key questions to help ensure inclusive gender equality is embedded into your design and decision-making processes



# Incorporate **7 Switches** into every stage of existing decision-making and design processes



**APPLY THE 7 SWITCHES FOR INCLUSIVE GENDER EQUALITY BY DESIGN**

*\* Intersectionality in gender equality recognises the interconnected impact of various social categories like gender, race, and class, acknowledging how individuals may face distinct forms of discrimination or privilege due to the overlap of these factors.*




# END NOTES

In developing 7 Switches, we undertook a literature review of existing models and frameworks that seek to embed gender inclusive decision making in specific sectors or use cases. These along with research on language and gender inclusive terminology provided valuable insight in developing the 7 Switches for a broader audience.

- EDGE Certified Foundation. [The EDGE Standards Framework](#).
- Future Transport Visions Group. [GET IT: Gender Equality Toolkit in Transport](#)
- UNDDP. [Gender Equality Seal](#).
- UNOHCHR. [Gender integration](#).
- UN website: [United Nations Guidelines for gender inclusive language](#)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Equity 2030 Alliance
- UN Global Compact
- Gender Equity Now (GEN). (2019). [GEN Certification Reference Guide](#).
- Municipal Association of Victoria. (2019). [Whittlesea City Council Gender Equity in Design Guidelines](#).
- The Centre for Inclusive Design. (2019). [The Benefits of Designing for Everyone](#).
- UNESCO. (2019). [ROAM-X Internet Universality Indicators](#).
- Perianes, M. B. (2020). [Women-Centered Design: The Future of Innovation & Investment](#).
- Arup, UNDP, & University of Liverpool. (2022). [Cities alive: Designing cities that work for women](#).
- Criado Perez, Caroline. Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men. Chatto & Windus, 2019.
- Deloitte Access Economics and Australians Investing in Women (AIW). Breaking the Norm. November 2022.
- Moody's Analytics. "Close the Gender Gap to Unlock Productivity Gains." March 2023.
- McKinsey Global Institute. The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth. United Nations Population Fund. Equity 2030 Alliance: Normalizing Gender Equity in Science & Technology and Finance. <https://www.unfpa.org/equity-2030-allianc>







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 achieve inclusive gender equality across our workplace by 2030 and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

[championsofchangecoalition.org](http://championsofchangecoalition.org)

The Equity 2030 Alliance envisions a world of infinite opportunities for all. The Alliance leverages the collective power of positive disruptors to close the gender-equity gap in science and technology design. The Alliance seeks to accelerate actions to normalize gender equity in science and technology by introducing data-driven arguments and strategies. We believe our actions will lead to an inclusive, sustainable and gender-equitable future in which women's voices are heard, their needs are met and their potential is fulfilled.

[www.unfpa.org/equity-2030-alliance](http://www.unfpa.org/equity-2030-alliance)