What works, what's fair?

Using systematic reviews to build the evidence base on strategies to increase gender equality in the public sector

Authors:

Dr Victor Sojo, The University of Melbourne

Prof Michelle Ryan, The Australian National University

Prof Cordelia Fine, The University of Melbourne

Dr Melissa Wheeler, Swinburne University of Technology

Dr Melanie McGrath, The University of Melbourne

Dr Miriam Glennie, The Australian National University

Dr Victoria Roberts, The University of Melbourne

PhD Candidate Lindsie Arthur, The University of Melbourne

PhD Candidate Rachael Hadoux, The University of Melbourne

PhD Candidate Kate Western, The Australian National University

Contact:

Dr Victor Sojo
The University of Melbourne
Parkville 3010, VIC
+61 3 9035 3553
vesojo@unimelb.edu.au

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Executive Summary

Workplace gender equality is a central topic of academic and policy debate in the public and private sectors – and source of heterogenous views within the community (Evans et al., 2018; Pew Research Center, 2017). In part, this polarisation reflects two major obstacles for policymakers, leaders, and managers seeking to make ethical, evidence-based decisions about the promotion of gender equality in the workplace.

The first obstacle is the lack of a systematic, evidence-based resource about strategies that are effective in achieving workplace gender equality, which can be used for decision-making.

The second obstacle is the lack of evidence-based and philosophically informed discussion about the legitimacy of different strategies implemented to enhance workplace gender equality.

This project addresses these obstacles by systematically synthesising relevant research and providing evidence-based policy and practice recommendations to *expand the evidence base for organisational gender equality.* More specifically, in this project we:

1. Present a conceptual framework to classify the many available strategies to promote workplace gender equality and discuss their legitimacy.

2. Produced five novel reviews of the academic literature to systematise evidence on the effectiveness of different strategies in achieving change in the workplace gender equality indicators outlined in the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic).

3. Hosted a deliberative forum with the Victorian Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector and key Victorian Public Sector stakeholders to evaluate, validate and ground the recommendations, to ensure they were fit for purpose.

The findings from this project are reported here in the form of a volume with six chapters. Chapter 1 contains conceptual dimensions we can use to organise and analyse the legitimacy of strategies to address workplace gender equality. Chapters 2 to 6 present the five systematic reviews we produced. Each of these five chapters includes an executive summary, introduction, methods, findings and recommendations, a roadmap to guide actions, and the set of references cited and reviewed.

Below, we provide a summary of the logic behind each of the reviews, along with key insights and recommendations.

Chapter 1 - Framing Gender Equality Positive Actions in the Public Sector

The objective of this narrative review was to provide a set of dimensions along which workplace gender equality interventions could be organised and analysed in terms of their perceived legitimacy. Following Khaitan (2015), we made three distinctions among workplace gender equality strategies: (i) *facilitative* versus *distributive*; (ii) *direct* versus *indirect*; and (iii) *remedial* versus *non-remedial*. These dimensions were construed as intersecting. For example, a particular measure may be *facilitative*, *direct,* and *remedial*. We also contrasted these strategies to *universal welfare measures* and provided illustrative examples.

This framework provides a useful tool for classifying different strategies. In particular, locating a specific strategy on these dimensions helps to: draw attention to the potential costs and benefits for the intended beneficiaries as well as other institutional stakeholders; indicate alternatives that

might be similarly effective in promoting gender equality while reducing costs (including backlash); and identifying relevant data for monitoring the effectiveness of, and continuing need for, the strategy.

Chapter 2 - Using Anonymous Application Procedures to Address Discrimination in Recruitment and Selection

The objective of this systematic review was to assess the evidence about the capacity of Anonymous Application Procedures (e.g., CV de-identification) to reduce discrimination towards women and minority groups in personnel recruitment and selection processes. The research indicates that AAP are effective at reducing discrimination towards women and ethnic minority groups at the CV shortlisting/interview invitation phase of the selection process. AAP are also effective at reducing discrimination towards women for job offers but this positive effect on job offers was not observed for ethnic minority groups.

AAP are more cost-effective when (i) there is evidence of discrimination, (ii) there is a critical mass of job-ready candidates from protected categories, (iii) done in large recruitment campaigns, and (iv) anonymisation is effective. In this chapter, we provide recommendations to improve AAP and outline an employment-life-cycle approach to reduce workplace discrimination and enhance inclusion.

Chapter 3 - Men's engagement with flexible work: Barriers and facilitators shaping fathers' uptake of parental leave

The objective of this rapid systematic review was to identify individual, organisational, and societal barriers and facilitators shaping men's uptake of flexible work. To date, this research has largely focused on men's uptake of parental leave. The findings highlighted the importance of ameliorating the economic and career costs for fathers who take up parental leave. Key barriers identified included intrahousehold income inequalities (i.e., men's greater earning power), masculine norms, and workplace cultures that stigmatise and punish men's leave-taking. In contrast, dedicated, generous paternity leave reserved for fathers was identified as a key facilitator of uptake, which appears to help trump traditional gender attitudes and set new norms of entitlement for paternity leave. Facilitating flexible work through formal policies and informal practices and norms also appears to be helpful.

We recommend that organisations utilise available resources for embedding flexible work policies and practices, while also attending to gendered dynamics in developing strategies. In particular, we suggest that policy makers: (i) use the data they submit as part of their obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) to identify concerns about flexibility stigma; (ii) align promotion of flexible work and carer leave with Victorian Public Service purpose; (iii) consider whether policies, norms and practices are genuinely a business necessity rather than 'masculine defaults'; and (iv) create a sense of entitlement to carer leave and work-life balance in men.

Chapter 4 - Addressing Public Sector Drivers of Sexual Harassment

The objective of this review was to systematise the available evidence regarding institutional/organisational drivers of sexual harassment in the public sector. We identified both structural factors (i.e., distribution of power and gendered organisation of work) and social factors (i.e., conformity to dominant values, organisational tolerance, and social tolerance) within the public sector that appear to increase the likelihood sexual harassment will occur.

To address these drivers of sexual harassment, we proposed a whole-of-organisation approach with a preventative and management actions focusing on interventions at the organisational (e.g., policy reviews, changes in espoused values, increased gender diversity in teams and leadership), team (e.g., manager training on policy/practices to manage sexual harassment, staff training on respectful relations) and individual levels (e.g., bystander intervention training, socio-emotional training for instigators).

Chapter 5 - Information-Based Approaches to Gender Pay Equity: Pay Audits, Pay Transparency and Job Evaluation

The objective of this systematic review was to identify ways to improve *information quality* and *information use* in information-based strategies that are designed to diagnose pay inequity and inform decisions about corrective action (i.e., pay audits, pay transparency, and job evaluation). We found limited evidence of the effectiveness of these strategies in reducing gender pay gaps. This lack of evidence about impact reflects two situations: (i) strategy ineffectiveness in some studies; and (ii) strategy impact not measured in terms of pay in other studies.

We provide a roadmap for action with the objective to facilitate the use of pay equity information to both increase accountability, and support awareness about the causes and consequences of inequity. This includes: (i) actions to support information use – that is, develop workforce statistical capability, link pay strategies to pay-setting and provide information and education about pay equity to employees; (ii) actions to improve information quality – that is, minimise gender bias in calculations of adjusted pay gaps and maximise the level of detail in information inputs and outputs; and (iii) integration with other information systems and organisational processes – that is, integrate pay-related information systems with pay-setting architecture and embed pay-related information into human resource information systems.

Chapter 6 - Gender Targets and Quotas in Leadership Roles: Examining Secondary Gender Equality Outcomes

The objective of this review was to systematise and evaluate evidence from academia, industry and government about the impact of leadership gender quotas on the extent of women's influence, public attitudes, and gender-relevant labour market indicators. The evidence indicates that although quotas are effective in increasing the numbers of women on boards and elected bodies, they do not appear to have any impact on the share of women in senior roles (e.g., board chair, mayor) in the five to ten years after implementation. Gender quotas increase attention to women's policy interests in parliaments and political parties. Yet, institutional factors, including women's lack of access to agenda-setting roles, consistently prevent this attention from translating into concrete policy outcomes.

Quotas have a positive effect on perceptions of the competence and effectiveness of women leaders and attitudes towards gender equality. Importantly, having more women in political power was related to women in the community having higher trust in, and more engagement with, government services. Finally, in the corporate sector, we identify negligeable spill-over effects in terms of more women working for the organisation either full-time or part-time, more women in management roles, or gender pay gaps. To enhance the positive spill-over impacts of gender quotas, we provide recommendations to increase female leaders' visibility, create intersectional quotas at relevant organisational levels, work on the long-term pipeline of qualified women, address the lack of balance in care responsibilities, and implement strategies to reduce bias in recruitment, selection, project allocations, promotions, and salary decisions.

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Prof Cordelia Fine, The University of Melbourne

Prof Michelle Ryan, The Australian National University

Dr Victor Sojo, The University of Melbourne

1.1. Introduction

What positive actions should Victorian public sector organisations take to promote workplace gender equality, as required by the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic). The purpose of this report is to help policy makers answer this question for their own organisations, by considering both 'what works' and 'what's fair'.

With regards to identifying 'what works', we provide four brief reports that offer findings and recommendations based on systematic reviews of specific strategies to promote gender equality: anonymised application procedures; uptake of paternity leave; three gender pay equity strategies (pay audits, pay transparency and job evaluation); and gender targets and quotas in leadership. In addition, a fifth report presents findings and recommendation based on a systematic review of the organisational drivers of sexual harassment in the public sector. Initial recommendations derived from all but the gender pay equity review were evaluated and discussed in a deliberative forum with key Victorian Government stakeholders and revised in response to this feedback.

However, the question of what positive actions *should* be taken is not just an empirical question, a matter of 'what works'. It is also an ethical one, a matter of 'what's fair'. The purpose of this introduction is therefore to provide some background for thinking about the actual and perceived legitimacy of different positive actions.

In the first section, we put the Gender Equality Act's gender equality indicators into context – that is, as *outcomes* brought about by many different factors that are often contested or not fully understood. The second section sets out dimensions along which strategies can vary. We use examples from the systematic reviews to illustrate these dimensions, but they will also be useful for policy makers considering other strategies, and aid in anticipating, understanding and addressing concerns about the legitimacy of different positive actions.

1.2. The Gender Equality Indicators in Context

The Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) sets out seven workplace gender equality indicators: gender pay equity; gender composition of all levels of the workforce; gender composition of governing bodies; workplace sexual harassment; recruitment and promotion; gendered work segregation; and leave and flexibility. These are rightly understood as potential *indicators* of underlying systemic and unfair *causes* of differential outcomes that defined entities should seek to redress. The Act also requires organisations to consider how contributing causes may be compounded or differ depending on employees' other characteristics (race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity).

It is worth making this point explicit, because controversies and resistance regarding positive actions to promote gender equality generally do not arise from disagreement over the facts of the gender indicators themselves (e.g., the actual gender composition of a governing body or the magnitude of differences between genders in the uptake of flexible work). Instead, the

disagreements stem from different views on 'what's fair'. These views will be based on beliefs and assumptions about (i) what *causes* those inequalities, (ii) whether those causes represent an injustice or unfairness that should be remedied, and (iii) considering all organisational stakeholders and values, what steps can justifiably be taken to address these disparities.

A well-known distinction underlying many such tensions is equality of *opportunity* versus equality of *outcome*. There is now widespread consensus that gender (and other protected characteristics) should not be a barrier to workplace opportunities. However, the gender indicators represent group-based *outcomes*, with multifaceted (and often contested) causes. It's useful to divide these into three kinds of causes (see Figure 1.1 using the gender pay gap as an example):

i. *Individual gender factors:* Systematic gender differences in genuinely free choices (e.g., inherent differences in preferences or values);
ii. *Non-organisational gender factors:* Systematic gender differences in choices or outcomes arising from outside-the-organisation social and family conditions (e.g., household division of labour, societal gender norms, childhood gender socialisation);
iii. *Organisational gender factors*: Systematic gender differences in choices or outcomes arising from gendered practices within organisations (e.g., organisational gender norms, prejudice, bias, discrimination and "masculine defaults").

Figure 1.1. *Examples of different kinds of (often contested) explanations for the gender pay gap*
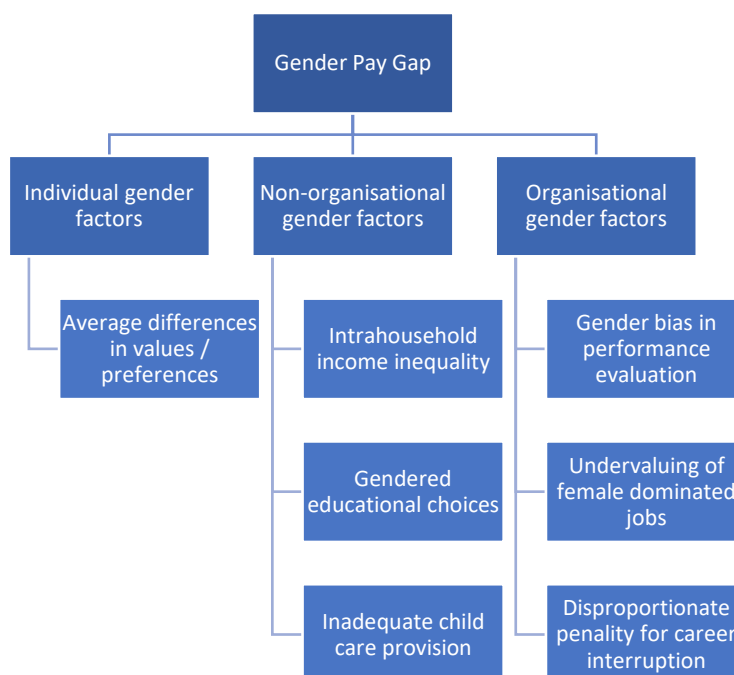
Since views on these issues are quite heterogenous among Australians, there will inevitably be differing opinions among workers as to the extent to which disparities on the Act's gender indicators reflect injustices to be fixed. The exception is workplace sexual harassment, an unambiguously negative outcome for all employees, regardless of gender or other attributes (although there can be disagreement among employees over what constitutes unacceptable or harmful workplace behaviour).

These three kinds of causal explanations are not mutually exclusive and will often be interrelated. Acknowledging the potential for contributions from individual gender factors and non-organisational gender factors, in addition to potential organisational gender factors, may help diffuse resistance or objections based on assumptions that positive actions are premised on a specific "politically correct" account of why workplace gender inequality exists. In other words, it may be helpful to be clear that the legitimacy of positive actions to address organisational gender factors is compatible with a range of views on why disparities on gender indicators exist.

1.3. Strategy Dimensions

Positive actions to promote gender equality vary along a number of overlapping dimensions (see Khaitan, 2015), including *facilitative* versus *distributive*; *direct* versus *indirect*; and *remedial* and *non-remedial*. The dimensions are cross-cutting: for example, a particular measure may be *facilitative*, *direct* and *remedial*. In addition, positive action strategies to promote gender equality can also be contrasted with *universal welfare measures*, which may nonetheless be especially beneficial for certain protected groups (e.g., income support, minimum wage, superannuation payments that are not contingent on paid employment).

1.3.1. Facilitative versus Distribute Measures

Facilitative measures target organisational gender factors that are known, assumed or suspected to give rise to gender-based structural constraints (such as bias, discrimination, prejudice, stigmatisation, masculine defaults, etc.). They aim to create an environment that facilitates the disadvantaged group accruing a particular workplace benefit (such as a higher wage or uptake of carer's leave). For example:

- Pay transparency measures (see Chapter 5 - Information-based approaches to gender pay equity);
- A campaign promoting parental leave for fathers (see Chapter 3 - Men's engagement with flexible work).

Such measures are less likely to elicit fears that they will violate tenets of fairness or merit. For these measures, any objections are more likely to take the form of concerns that the measures are unnecessary (e.g., because no bias exists in recruitment committees) and/or ineffective and therefore a waste of resources, or other conflicting values (e.g., privacy issues arising from transparency measures). Policy makers can anticipate and respond to such concerns by carefully considering the evidence as to whether there is genuinely a constraint on the basis of gender (including intersectional considerations), including drawing on analysis of workforce data and employee experience data. In addition, they can make a commitment to monitoring the effectiveness and necessity of the measure or piloting it before full implementation.

Distributive measures allocate the workplace good itself (in contrast to creating a facilitative environment). For example:

- Gender quotas for leadership roles, intersectional or otherwise (see Chapter 6 - Gender targets and quotas in leadership roles).

Distributive measures, particularly strong ones, carry a high risk of stigmatising beneficiaries, although there is evidence that this reduces over time (see Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). However, as Khaitan (2015) points out, for state institutions, issues of representation and democratic participation are key to the legitimacy of a public institution, and thus "the identity of individual members does become a legitimate merit-related concern." (p. 227). Moreover, there is evidence that distributive measures that effectively diversify the composition of groups can help ameliorate

biased attitudes towards women and minority groups in the long term (Eagly & Koenig, 2021; Levine & Ancheta, 2013; Murray, 2010). Gender representation may also help to reduce androcentrism in products and services (see Fine, Sojo & Lawford-Smith, 2020), relevant to the Act's aim to promote gender equality in the policies, programs and services of defined entities.

1.3.2. Direct versus Indirect Measures

Direct measures target the relevant gender group directly. For example:

- Targeted recruitment via signalling interest for women in job advertisements (see Chapter 2 - Using Anonymous Application Procedures to Address Discrimination in Recruitment and Selection);
- Using partnerships with women's associations to promote jobs to a female demographic (see Chapter 2);
- Gender quotas (see Chapter 6).

As such, they single out a particular group, which may carry costs in terms of backlash and resentment, particularly if also a distributive measure (such as gender quotas).

Indirect measures choose a different (non-protected) attribute as the basis for selection as a potential beneficiary, where that attribute is a reasonable proxy for the protected attribute. For example:

- A policy improving the work conditions of part-time roles;
- Providing financial incentives to all employees returning from extended parental leave.

These measures may be less likely to elicit backlash or stigmatisation, since they are open to anyone with the relevant characteristic, regardless of gender, race or other socially salient group membership. These measures might also lead to innovative ways of managing all employees.

1.3.3. Remedial versus Non-remedial Measures

Remedial measures seek to undo either historical or continuing harms of discrimination. In the latter case, this includes efforts to change policies or practices (e.g., for recruitment or promotion) that appear neutral, but that mask dominant masculine norms. For example:

- Job evaluation to establish comparable worth (see Chapter 5);
- Flexible work policies (see Chapter 3).

Policies to ameliorate organisational cultures that are especially hostile to women or gender/sexual minorities (e.g., sexual harassment), such as bystander training to identify and respond to sexual harassment (see Chapter 4 - Addressing Public Sector Drivers of Sexual Harassment), could also be considered remedial measures.

Non-remedial measures focus on present and future conditions of disadvantaged groups and seek to create equal conditions without directly redressing previous or current injustices.

- Anonymous Application Procedures (see Chapter 2);

1.4. Further considerations

Challenges to entrenched norms may be strongly resisted. Pointing to successful organisations that have changed their policies and practices with positive effects, or data indicating a better correspondence between the new proposed practice or criteria and genuine merit, as well as benefits to all employees (e.g., more respectful culture or better work-life balance for all employees), may be helpful.

In considering or designing positive actions, policy makers should bear in mind that there may be tangible and/or expressive costs to strategies that involve singling out women or intersectional gender groups for workplace benefits: both to other employees, and the intended beneficiaries. They may nonetheless be justified. Nevertheless, *all else being equal in terms of effectiveness in promoting gender equality*, universal measures are preferable to positive actions, indirect measures are preferable to direct measures, and facilitative measures are preferable to distributive ones to support uptake and prevent backlash (Khaitan, 2015). However, this analysis should not deter officials from implementing distributive or direct measures. Such measures might require other risk-mitigation strategies to prevent and manage resistance to change and backlash (VicHealth, 2018).

In the following 5 chapters, we dive into each of the systematic reviews we produced. Each of these chapters covers the logic behind the reviews, the methods used, key findings and their associated implications, followed by a roadmap to action. We hope these reviews help guide positive action.

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Chapter 2 - Using Anonymous Application Procedures to Address Discrimination in Recruitment and Selection

Dr Victor Sojo, The University of Melbourne

Dr Melissa Wheeler, Swinburne University of Technology

PhD Candidate Lindsie Catherine Arthur, The University of Melbourne

Dr Melanie McGrath, The University of Melbourne

2.1. Executive Summary

We conducted a systematic review of research about the capacity of Anonymous Application Procedures (AAP), also known as CV de-identification, to reduce discrimination towards women and minority groups in personnel recruitment and selection processes.

After a systematic search and selection of relevant peer-reviewed and industry/government literature, we systematically analysed 15 publications containing 24 separate intervention studies, 12 of them conducted in public sector organisations. The key findings are:

i. AAP are effective at reducing discrimination towards women and ethnic minority groups at the CV shortlisting/interview invitation phase of the selection process. This effect appears only when evidence of discrimination is present and when no other recruitment and selection diversity management intervention is already in place.
ii. AAP are effective at reducing discrimination towards women for job offers. However, this positive effect on job offers was not observed for ethnic minority groups.
iii. Discrimination towards ethnic minority groups, older aged, and overweight workers appear to be based on visual cues, which are hard to override with AAP once candidates move to the interview phase of the selection process. This kind of discrimination requires further interventions, such as prejudice reduction or direct/affirmative action.
iv. AAP are more cost-effective when (i) there is evidence of discrimination, (ii) there is a critical mass of job-ready candidates from protected categories, (iii) done in large recruitment campaigns, (iv) anonymisation is done by the candidates using standardised application forms, instead of candidates submitting CVs, and (v) anonymisation is reviewed and further masked by independent recruiters, before independent evaluators conduct the shortlisting of candidates to interview.

In this report, we expand on the logic, methods, and findings of the review. We also present policy implications and further considerations in the use of AAP to reduce discrimination.

2.2. Introduction

While workplace diversity has been the topic of much research and organisational policy in recent years, the fact remains that female applicants and applicants from diverse backgrounds face significant barriers in gaining employment. Discrimination in recruitment and selections processes continues to be a pervasive problem (Adamovic, 2021). Both conscious and unconscious processing of candidates' information can lead to sub-optimal personnel decisions and discrimination among evaluators (Genat, 2019).

Academic research has focused on three large categories of interventions produced to tackle workplace discrimination:

i. *Prejudice reduction* interventions attempt to change the conscious perceptions and evaluations that recruiters and hiring managers have about women and minority groups, in the hopes that those attitudinal changes will lead to less discrimination in people management and higher representation of stigmatised groups (Paluck & Green, 2008).

ii. *Direct/affirmative action* interventions focus on directly increasing the representation of marginalised groups via mechanisms such as targets, quotas, or tiebreaks, instead of attempting to reduce prejudice as the avenue for change (Sojo, Wood, Wood, & Wheeler, 2016).

iii. *Bias mitigation and nudging* are behavioural interventions that change the way we manage personnel and resources to reduce the likelihood that conscious or unconscious processing of workers' personal attributes will impact processes and outcomes, effectively bypassing prejudice (Morse, 2016; Stratemeyer et al., 2018).

Previous research has shown that the CVs of women and minority groups are often unwarrantedly screened out in recruitment processes, particularly when these groups are underrepresented in specific industries or occupations (Adamovic, 2020). *Anonymous Application Procedures* (AAP), commonly known as CV de-identification, include a range of *bias mitigation* strategies that attempt to conceal job applicants' markers of protected attributes (e.g., gender, ethnic background, age) during personnel recruitment, selection, and promotion evaluations (Stratemeyer, et al., 2018).

According to Kahneman (2011) and other dual-process researchers (see Evans & Stanovich, 2013 for a review), there are two different modes of thinking, referred to as System 1 and System 2. System 1 is described as automatic, unconscious, and impulsive; System 2 operates in conscious, controlled, and reflective thinking. Biases are a product of System 1 thinking, and we are especially prone to biases when we are overworked or under time pressure.

Based on dual-process theories (Evans & Stanovich, 2013), we argue that in the absence of peripheral cues about personal attributes that are irrelevant to job performance, and with appropriate instructions, evaluators can focus on the core experiences and expertise of the candidates they are assessing for selection. AAP try to eliminate any personal identifying information that might be used to discriminate against marginalised groups in early stages of recruitment and selection process. By doing so, AAP aim to create a *level playing field,* where applicants are judged based on their experience and qualifications, instead of irrelevant personal attributes.

Many public sector agencies want to take action to improve their own gender and ethnic diversity and inclusion practices, but the lack of evidence-based research into the effectiveness of diversity management interventions means that organisations often do not know where to begin (Foster Curtis & Dreachslin, 2008).

In recent years, the Australian Government has begun to test evidence-based approaches to reduce bias in selection processes. Reviewed in the current paper, the Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA) recently trialled an AAP intervention, asking over 2000 public servants to assess hypothetical applicants for a public service position (Hiscox, et al., 2017). Contrary to what one might expect, de-identifying CVs decreased the number of shortlisted female and minority candidates; that is, participants in the identified condition showed a preference for female and minority candidates for the hypothetical role. However, CVs are never perfectly matched (i.e., identical) in the real world. Even when CVs are de-identified, gender-based individual differences such as communication styles (i.e., how one expresses themselves) can lead male candidates to be seen as preferable (Kolev, Fuentes-Medel, & Murray, 2019).

In the *Recruit Smarter* campaign (also reviewed in the current paper), the Victorian Government worked with researchers at the University of Melbourne to pilot interventions aimed at reducing selection bias, including AAP (Stratemeyer et al., 2018). The AAP pilot resulted in significant improvements for different social groups (e.g., applicants born overseas, women in male-dominated

roles) across the five organisations involved in the pilot but suggested that de-identifying CVs alone will not guarantee positive results for all social groups in all contexts.

Even though AAP can be very costly to implement, they have become popular over the last ten years. Academic researchers and government agencies around the world have conducted several trials to evaluate the capacity of AAP to reduce the impact of stigmatised attributes on recruitment and selection processes. These trails have studied the capacity of AAP to reduce discrimination based on a range of attributes, including gender, ethnicity, age, weight, socio-economic status, and prestige of university attended. However, these studies have reported variability in the effectiveness of AAP, leading to a range of questions we want to address in the current review:

i. Are AAP effective at reducing discrimination towards women and other minority groups in shortlisting and job offers?
ii. Under what institutional/people management conditions are AAP more likely to be effective at reducing discrimination towards women and other minority groups in shortlisting and job offers?
iii. What attributes of AAP make them more effective at reducing discrimination towards women and other minority groups in shortlisting and job offers?
iv. What unintended consequences are associated with the implementation of AAP?

2.3. Methods

This project constitutes a systematic review, which identifies, selects, appraises, and systematically summarises all the available empirical evidence (e.g., peer-reviewed articles, white papers, unpublished datasets and manuscripts) to answer our specified research questions (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2009; Cooper, Hedges & Valentine, 2009). Systematic reviews are conducted using a transparent and rigorous process (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman & The Prisma Group, 2009) with the goal of advancing scientific knowledge and producing comprehensive and reliable recommendations.

2.3.1. Eligibility

References were eligible for inclusion in the review if they met the following criteria:

i. *Intervention*: At least one personal attribute must be anonymised in the CVs/job applications. However, there were no exclusions on the basis of what attribute is anonymised.
ii. *Study design*: There must be a comparison condition, that is a baseline comparison, or a comparison group not subject to anonymisation. Consequently, studies were required to have a design that was experimental in nature: pre- and post-treatment, a randomised controlled trial, or quasi-experimental.

2.3.2. Literature search

A search string designed to capture references meeting these criteria was entered into more than 25 academic databases. The following Boolean search string was entered into the databases in Table 2.1: (anonym* OR blind* OR de-identif*) AND (recruit* OR hir* OR "job appl*" OR CV OR resume OR résumé OR curriculum). We searched in the fields of title, abstract, all subject terms and indexing.

As Google Advanced Search for Google Scholar does not support Boolean search strings, all combinations of anonymous application search terms and context search terms were entered separately. Search parameters were: English language, search in text of page (to exclude sites simply

linking to those containing our search terms), and pdf file type (to restrict search results to reports and documents).

Table 2.1. Full List of Databases Included in Literature Search

Database	Search fields	Specific databases
Ebscohost	Title and Abstract	Academic Search Complete
		Business Source Complete
		EconLit
		Education Research Complete
		OpenDissertations
		SocINDEX with Full Text
ProQuest	Title and Abstract	ProQuest Central
		ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global
PsycInfo	Title and Abstract	Individual databases not specified by PsycInfo
Google Scholar	Title and Keywords	

We also conducted a search for grey literature by making requests for unpublished material and using Google Advanced Search. Requests for unpublished material were made via organisations associated with management and psychological research from March 2020 until now. These included the [North American] Academy of Management, Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management, the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, and the Society of Australasian Social Psychologists.

These searches returned a total of 25,034 references. Thirty of these met screening criteria and were assessed for inclusion in the final set of references. After full text assessment, 15 publications containing 24 intervention studies were retained for data extraction. Twelve of the 24 studies in the final set were conducted exclusively in public sector organisations across a number of countries, including both the Victorian and Australian Governments.

In Figure 1, below, we present the PRISMA Flow Diagram summarising literature search and inclusion (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman & The Prisma Group, 2009).

Figure 2.1. *PRISMA Flow Diagram summarising literature search and inclusion for AAP*

Identification	**25,035** records identified through database searching
	1,312 additional records identified through other sources

19,190 records after duplicates removed

Screening

19,190 records screened → **19,164** records excluded

Eligibility

30 full-text articles assessed for eligibility → 15 full-text articles excluded, with reasons

Not an original empirical study: 4

Didn't manipulate anonymisation: 5

Didn't measure outcome variable of interest: 4

Duplicate: 2

Included

15 studies included in qualitative synthesis

2.3.3. Data extraction

The final set of eligible references were independently coded by two members of the research team. The coding was performed using a data extraction tool capturing information regarding the setting and nature of the intervention, the anonymisation target and process, results and conclusions, potential contributing factors, and quality assessment. A member of the research team identified discrepancies between coders, which were resolved through discussions. All identified discrepancies resolved in this manner were minor and no discrepancies were identified in coding of the nature or direction of the study results. To our knowledge, this is the most comprehensive review of AAP ever conducted.

2.4. Findings and Recommendations

In this section of the report, we provide summaries of the evidence about when AAP is most effective, factors that might hinder its implementation and recommendations to increase its effectiveness (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2. Evidence of AAP impact and recommendations to improve effectiveness

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Impact of AAP on interview offers for women and ethnic minorities	AAP had a positive effect on getting women and ethnic minority applicants shortlisted for job interviews at the same rate as their male and ethnic majority counterparts. This effect only occurred when there was evidence of discrimination in the baseline comparison of women/ethnic minority candidates versus men/ethnic majority candidates.	AAP can be used as an effective tool to reduce discrimination against women and ethnic minorities in CV evaluations during recruitment processes.
	When no discrimination was observed in the control or base-line conditions, using AAP either reduced the likelihood ethnic minority candidates would be invited to an interview or had no effect on differences in interview invitations between ethnic minority and majority candidates. For gender, AAP had no impact on interview invitations when there was no evidence of previous discrimination.	AAP should be used to increase the shortlisting/interview invitation rate of minority candidates and women in situations where there is evidence of previous and continuing discrimination in recruitment and selection against these groups of applicants.
	Organisations that are already engaging in equal employment opportunity or preferential selection strategies (e.g., shortlisting a minority candidate over a non-minority candidate when the two are matched on skill and job fitness), saw no benefit or went backwards when	Organisations should take a holistic look at the range of activities they are undertaking to diversify their pool of candidates and employees and only use AAP when it would not hinder other, more cost-effective actions that are already (or could be) in place.

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	implementing AAP to reduce ethnicity and gender discrimination.	
Impact of AAP on job offers for women	In workplaces where men were more likely than women to get post-interview job offers, under control and baseline conditions, AAP worked to reduce discrimination against women in job offers.	AAP can be implemented as an effective tool to give women more than a "foot in the door" and help them progress to the job offer stage when there was previous evidence of discrimination.
Impact of AAP on job offers for ethnic minorities	The current evidence on whether AAP increase the chances of ethnic minorities getting a post-interview job offer is not consistent or robust enough to be helpful in developing policy.	Organisations need to consider discrimination mitigation strategies other than AAP (e.g., prejudice reduction interventions, bias mitigation prompts, targets or quotas) if they want to protect ethnic minorities from discrimination at the interview and job-offer stages.
Impact of AAP on interview offers for weight groups	Only one study focused on this topic and found a reduction in discrimination in interview offers towards overweight applicants in the AAP condition, relative to the control condition. No evidence is available about the impact of AAP on job offer discrimination towards overweight people.	AAP might be used as an effective strategy to reduce weight-based discrimination in CV shortlisting for the interview stage. However, the evidence here is limited, and we suggest proceeding with caution.
Impact of AAP on shortlisting for interview and job offers for age, university prestige, and socio-economic status groups	The current evidence on whether AAP reduce age, university prestige, and SES discrimination in recruitment and selection is not consistent or robust enough to be helpful in developing policy.	Organisations need to consider discrimination mitigation strategies other than AAP (e.g., prejudice reduction interventions, bias mitigation prompts, targets or quotas) if they want to protect age, university prestige, and socio-economic status groups from discrimination in recruitment and selection.
Impact of visual cues	There appears to be an effect of discrimination based on visual cues, which negatively impacts older aged, overweight, and ethnic minorities applicants once their visible stigmatised characteristics are un-blinded.	Organisations need to consider discrimination mitigation strategies other than AAP (e.g., prejudice reduction interventions, bias mitigation prompts, targets or quotas) if they want to protect groups stigmatised based on visual attributes from discrimination during and after interviews.
Impact of language cues	For minority groups with the dominant language in a society as their second language (e.g., English as their second language in Australia),	AAP could unwittingly compound the disadvantage experienced by some minority groups. Proper audits should be conducted whenever AAP are

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	AAP might not be effective at masking their backgrounds. The written language of these candidates may have grammatical forms or spelling that might unnecessarily be used by the recruiters as indicators of their first language or as proxies for their job competence.	implemented. AAP should be used in concert with other measures such as bias mitigation training for recruiters/interviewers and ongoing support for minority staff who have been selected
Making AAP more effective	AAP using standardised application platforms/templates appear to be the most useful for employers (due to improved efficiency) and the employee (due to more effective anonymisation).	AAP will be more effective via standardised software-based application templates/forms to answer selection questions than manually de-identifying CVs. Standardisation also helps AAP to be implemented at scale.
		Standardised application templates/forms need to be simple and require few steps. Cumbersome templates might discourage some minority groups from applying for jobs, when they might have otherwise simply uploaded their CVs.
	When CV anonymisation is done by the applicant, anonymisation can be incomplete. Subtle cues containing information about the employees' protected attributes (e.g., ethnicity, SES, gender) may be retained and used by evaluators.	Applicants should not be tasked with anonymising their own CVs. Organisations can: 1. Use standardised templates/forms; 2. Clearly instruct applicants on what information to omit in the application form, and to avoid using identifying information in their answers; and 3. Appoint an independent recruiter to check applications to further de-identify answers, before other recruiters do the shortlisting.
	When CV anonymisation is done by a recruiter, anonymisation can also be incomplete. Subtle cues containing information about the employees' protected attributes (e.g., ethnicity, SES, gender) may be retained and used by evaluators.	If anonymisation is done by a recruiter, there should be: 1. Clear instructions on what information to omit; and 2. An additional independent recruiter to review the application for quality of anonymisation before shortlisting by other recruiters.
Unintended consequences	Some studies found that AAP increased the number of shortlisted candidates. This effect might mean that more candidates are considered	Organisations should monitor changes in the percentages of shortlisted candidates under AAP conditions (e.g., relative to previous non-AAP rounds of

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	suitable under AAP. However, other studies found no impact of AAP on the number of candidates shortlisted.	recruitment). In particular, they should be mindful of situations where minority groups are disproportionally dropped after the interview.

2.5. Key Considerations from the Research

Our review found that AAP were effective at reducing discrimination against women and ethnic minority groups during the CV review for shortlisting phase of the selection process. However, evidence indicates that there are divergent impacts of APP for women and ethnic minorities at the interview-job offer phase. While AAP reduce discrimination for women in job offers, such an effect was not present for ethnic minority applicants. This disparity in outcomes indicates that at the interview stage, women might be able to both show their skills and job fit and be perceived as an in-group by the interviewers, whereas ethnic minority applicants might not. This situation calls for a range of other interventions to reduce discrimination and increase perceptions of fit towards and representation of ethnic minority candidates of all genders (Cooney-O'Donoghue, Adamovic, & Sojo, 2021), including prejudice reduction interventions (Paluck & Green, 2008) and affirmative action (Sojo et al., 2016).

The value of AAP is realised under three specific conditions: (i) when there is a critical mass of job-ready members of protected categories who are (ii) being discriminated against in recruitment and selection, and (iii) when selecting for a relatively larger number of jobs. That is, if there are few job-ready members of a specific protected category and when only selecting a few people, AAP might not be the most appropriate strategy to diversify your pool of candidates and final recruits. Similarly, when there is no clear evidence of discrimination or organisations are already making *effective* effort to diversify their pool of recruits, AAP might not yield positive effects.

AAP were described as very costly in the reviewed literature. Even when using computer-based application templates with clear instructions, independent recruiters need to spend hours reviewing the applications to make sure identifying information is not present, before moving to the evaluation phase. Of course, the investment in personnel is even higher when organisations try to manually blank out information in CVs submitted by applicants in different formats, which also leads to more identifying cues left unchanged. Therefore, AAP are probably best suited for large recruitment campaigns, where organisations can use online/computer-based application forms with clear instructions to applicants, requiring fewer hours for recruiters to review and mask information, (i.e., economies of scale).

Importantly, AAP promise to level the playing field. By largely getting rid of information about protected attributes, AAP are expected to support efforts to evaluate personnel *only* on their experience and expertise. The inherent fairness of this premise makes AAP easier to sell as a morally right intervention. However, AAP do not solve the problem of previous unequal access to opportunities and resources that are correlated with protected categories and might impact access to said experience and expertise.

We also identified areas for further research. The impact of AAP on job offers for minorities requires further research, as this outcome was less likely to be explored in the literature we reviewed. Also, in the studies that considered it, the sample sizes to test the impact of AAP on job offers were too small. Therefore, these findings need to be interpreted with caution, and further studies are required.

The studies we reviewed largely focused on one attribute (either gender or ethnic background). Only a few focused on more than one attribute and, even then, there was no

intersectional analysis of the data. Future AAP studies need to investigate the impact of AAP to reduce discrimination in shortlisting and whether the effects carry over at the interview phase for applicants with intersecting protected attributes.

2.6. A Roadmap for Action

Reducing discrimination in recruitment and selection processes has received decades of attention in organisational psychology and management research. The strategies to address this issue have become more sophisticated over the years, and for many of them, we have empirical research to support their implementation in a comprehensive way.

Addressing discrimination in recruitment and selection processes in the public sector would require an employee-lifecycle approach. Employment inclusion should start before the selection process and end when staff leave or retire from a job. A strong focus on the nature of the relationship between the organisation and broader community where it operates is critical.

Organisations that have better relationships with the community and a social license to operate are more likely to attract job candidates that represent the community and are proud to work for the organisation (HealthWest Partnership, 2020; Jones, Willness, & Madey, 2014; Turban & Greening, 1997). Strong engagement with community, peak bodies, and local business will enhance the VPS' opportunities to attract a diverse pool of job candidates. In general, the VPS needs to understand how it is perceived by the broader community, particularly by job seekers who belong to minority groups, and consider a workforce mutuality approach to community relations and employment pathways (HealthWest Partnership, 2020).

In the following paragraphs, we provide recommendations for actions to both reduce discrimination during the recruitment and selection processes and support employees who have been selected. When considering the kind of actions that can be taken, we propose three kinds of psychological interventions that have been successful in the past to address prejudice in occupational context: (a) prejudice reduction, (b) bias mitigation and nudging, and (c) direct action (Paluck & Green, 2008; Sojo et al., 2016; Stratemeyer et al., 2018).

2.6.1. Prejudice reduction

Interventions that attempt to reduce prejudice can be the baseline for action in addressing discrimination in recruitment and selection. Start at the top with *normative influence and value consistency* (Paluck & Green, 2008). In particular, having senior and middle managers talk about the standard of behaviour they expect of all employees and modelling behaviours that are consistent with the VPS values of responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership, and human rights. Having a clear narrative to make the connection between those values and diversity and inclusion within the VPS will be part of the work needing to be done.

Norms and values can be reinforced with *diversity and inclusion training.* Such training should be customised for managers, general staff, and human resources professionals, and consider the kinds of operations that different government departments and agencies perform and the communities where they work. The training should articulate (i) the demographic diversity that exists in the Victorian community and how that diversity is related to economic resources and educational and employment opportunities; (ii) the actions that the VPS is undertaking to have the broader community represented and supported among VPS employees, and (iii) the actions that managers, general staff, and human resources professionals are expected to perform at an individual level to be more inclusive of different groups.

2.6.2. Bias mitigation and nudging

In this report, we focused on AAP as a potential bias mitigation strategy. Many other bias mitigation strategies can be implemented. For instance, organisation should closely pay attention to the *language used in job advertisement*, the kind of values they promote, and the way the work environment is described. All those elements serve to attract or repel different candidates (e.g., work environments perceived as hyper-competitive and inflexible are less likely to attract a diverse pool of candidates; Knight, 2017).

Previous research has shown that using *structured and systematic protocols*, including clear evaluation criteria, behavioural questions, and rubrics or anchors to evaluate candidates' responses horizontally (i.e., comparing candidates' answers to each question at a time, instead of doing a broad assessment of all the responses; Bohnet, 2016) can reduce bias in interview processes (Genat, 2019). Similarly, *bias mitigation prompts* can be useful tools to remind interviewers of the most common biases that appear during the interview process and strategies to reduce their impact.

Beyond recruitment and selection processes, *fairness in the allocation of in-the-job opportunities* to learn new skills and show existing capabilities will have a large impact on the capacity of all employees, including women and minority staff, to develop their careers. Managers should consider and keep a record of how they plan training, provide feedback, and allocate projects that have stronger developmental potential because they involve senior internal and external stakeholders, high budgets, opportunities for learning new skills, and visibility (Sojo & Wood, 2012; Dunlea, Sojo, Thiel, & Westbrook, 2015). Such a record can be a reminder of which employees among their staff have been favoured in the past and which one should be getting new opportunities.

2.6.3. Direct action

Organisations can take more active steps to increase the representations of women and minority groups among their ranks. Such direct action will create a demand for qualified members of underrepresented groups at different levels of the organisation. The most common form of direct action is setting benchmarks and goals for women and minority representation for recruitment, selection, job opportunities, promotions, etc. These goals are then translated into strategies that are more or less prescriptive about how to achieve the goals and consequences for not achieving them (Sojo et al., 2016).

For instance, *targeted recruitment* has been used successfully to increase the representation of minority groups among the pool of candidates for a job. There are many ways to do targeted recruitment (Stratemeyer et al., 2018). For instance: (i) indicating in job advertisements that candidates from a specific group are encouraged to apply, (ii) using community partnerships / connections to promote job openings in other organisations that support members of the specific communities (e.g., resource centres for women, ethnic minority groups, migrants, or people with disabilities), or (iii) using social media to target specific demographics with the advertisements, among many other.

Also, previous research has shown that the use of *reporting requirements, targets and quotas* for members of underrepresented groups at work can be effective at increasing their representation (Knight, 2017; Sojo et al., 2016). Diversity reporting requirements help make evident the representation gaps. Targets and quotas help to focus attention on priority areas and motivate leaders to develop strategies to meet the targets. Importantly, previous research indicates that the use of targets and quotas can help change prejudiced attitudes in the long term, once peers get used to higher representation of minority groups and realise these individuals are just as competent as members of dominant groups (Eagly & Koenig, 2021; Levine & Ancheta, 2013; Murray, 2010).

2.7. Conclusions

The current systematic review has shown that AAP can be an effective tool to get more female candidates to be selected for interviews and get a job offer. The evidence for ethnic minorities and other visible minorities indicates this positive effect might last only until the candidates get to interview stage and they are re-identified. Importantly, AAP appears to be most cost-effective when there are large numbers of job-ready candidates from the specific underrepresented group, there is evidence of discrimination in recruitment and selection towards these groups, and the organisation is doing a large recruitment campaign. Nevertheless, there is no silver bullet to eradicate discrimination in recruitment and selection processes. Organisations should think about the whole employment lifecycle of their workers and create a comprehensive system of support to enhance both substantive representation and a sense of inclusion at work among women and minority groups.

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Chapter 3 - Men's Engagement with Flexible Work: Barriers and Facilitators Shaping Fathers' Uptake of Parental Leave

PhD Candidate Rachael Hadoux, The University of Melbourne

Dr Melissa Wheeler, Swinburne University of Technology

Prof Cordelia Fine, The University of Melbourne

3.1. Executive Summary

Uptake of carer leave and flexible work is highly gendered, a phenomenon that can be understood as both an outcome of, and contributor to, gendered constraints operating within and outside the workplace. The objective of the current review was to identify individual, organisational, and societal barriers and facilitators shaping men's uptake of flexible work. We undertook a rapid review, which follows the same principles of comprehensiveness and transparency as a systematic review, but with some aspects of the process streamlined to facilitate reporting in a short timeframe.

Following a literature search for original, quantitative or qualitative research, we identified 62 studies reporting relationships between any individual, interpersonal, organisational, or societal factor hypothesised to be positively (facilitator) or negatively (barrier) associated with men's actual or intended use or non-use of flexible work. These studies largely focused on men's use of paternity/parental leave, pointing to the need for further research investigating men's engagement with other forms of flexible work.

Broadly speaking, the findings highlighted the importance of ameliorating the economic and career costs for fathers who take up parental leave. Intrahousehold income inequalities (i.e., men's greater earning power), masculine norms, and workplace cultures that stigmatise and punish men's leave-taking were identified as key barriers. In contrast, dedicated, generous paternity leave reserved for fathers was identified as a key facilitator of uptake, that appears to help trump traditional gender attitudes and set new norms of entitlement for paternity leave. Facilitating flexible work through formal policies and informal practices and norms also appears to be helpful.

Facilitating men's uptake of flexible work, particularly beyond a circumscribed period of parental leave, will be challenging for organisations in which such employee-friendly flexibility is currently stigmatised and/or incompatible with existing work patterns. It will call for a tailored, multi-level approach involving interventions at the level of leadership, management, infrastructure, policies, and workplace norms.

We recommend that organisations utilise available resources for embedding flexible work policies and practices, while also attending to gendered dynamics in developing strategies. In particular, we suggest that policy makers: use the data they submit as part of their obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) to identify concerns about flexibility stigma; align promotion of flexible work and carer leave with Victorian Public Service purpose; consider whether policies, norms and practices are genuinely a business necessity rather than 'masculine defaults'; and create for men a sense of entitlement to carer leave and work-life balance.

3.2. Introduction

Flexible work is a broad concept. Roughly speaking, it includes any deviation from a standard employment relationship of secure, continuous, full-time work, often involving long hours and/or constant availability. Some flexible work arrangements therefore facilitate workers' ability to combine paid employment with other valued activities, especially family/caring responsibilities (e.g., Hobson, 2011). More generally, access to flexible careers across the life course promise a more sustainable alternative to traditional "lockstep" arrangements (Moen & Roehling, 2005; Tomlinson, Baird, Berg & Cooper, 2018).

Employee-friendly flexible work practices include formal or informal arrangements that enable employees to work reduced or non-standard hours (e.g., part-time work, parental/family leave, schedule control, time-in-lieu, compressed working weeks, job sharing, shift swaps and purchased leave), or to work from home or other locations. However, it should be noted that some forms of flexible work are often more beneficial for employers than workers: for example, outsourced work, zero-hour contracts and other forms of casualisation, and the capacity for remote work when it leads to expectations of 24/7 availability (Fleetwood, 2007; Rubery, Keizer & Grimshaw, 2016). This mixed nature of work patterns that fall under the "flexible work" umbrella may contribute to understandable suspicion towards flexible working models.

The uptake of flexible work and leave is a gender indicator within the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic). Nationwide, it shows considerable gender disparities. The broader context for understanding this disparity is marked gender differences in time spent in paid versus unpaid work. Women spend approximately two-thirds of their total work hours doing unpaid work, on average, and the remaining third in paid work. For men, this pattern is reversed. (OECD, n.d.). Unsurprisingly, alongside this unequal division of paid versus unpaid labour are distinct differences between women and men in flexible working arrangements. For example, the latest available data from the OECD show that women are more than twice as likely to work part-time (37.1 per cent versus 5.3 per cent). This difference is particularly stark in the prime working (and child-raising) years, with 30.9 per cent of women aged 25-54 working part-time, compared to 8 per cent of men (OECD, n.d.).

Gender differences in uptake of parental leave are similarly stark. For example, men working in organisations reporting to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees) make up just 12 per cent of those who take primary carer leave, rising to 20 per cent among managers (WGEA, 2022). Although data on uptake of other flexible working practices are sparse, they are strongly associated with women (Borgkvist et al., 2018). The resulting gender differences in labour market experience and attachment are leading contributors to the gender pay gap and inequalities in workplace progression (e.g., Goldin, 2021; Jones, 2019). Increasing men's uptake of flexible work is therefore considered key to progress towards greater workplace gender equality.

Some might argue that these gendered patterns reflect inherent differences in men's and women's preferences and values with respect to paid versus unpaid work, particularly caring. Indeed, flexible work has traditionally been discussed and understood as specifically important for women, particularly mothers, to enable them to combine paid work with caring responsibilities. However, there is growing interest in men's desire for, access to, and uptake of flexible work practices. For example, European data from the OECD suggest that work-life balance is a priority for men as well as women, and that many men would be willing to reduce earnings in order to work fewer hours (Hobson & Fahlén, 2009).

In addition, changing demographic trends and employment conditions means that reconciling paid work with other valued and necessary activities can be a pressing issue for many employees, not just those with caring responsibilities. For example, managers and professionals living in single-person households also experience a range of work-life pressures (Wilkinson, Tomlinson & Gardiner, 2017).

Despite the potential benefits to both employers and employees of flexible work arrangements (Kelly & Moen, 2021), the literature points to individual, organisational, and societal barriers to men's uptake of flexible work (Ewald, Emilee & Huppatz, 2020). At the individual level, masculine identities are imbued with moral meanings and obligations. For blue collar workers, this has been characterised as incorporating an ethic of hard work in order to support their families (Williams, 2010). For professionals, a norm of work devotion dictates that career should always come first, alongside expectations of long hours and constant availability (e.g., Blair-Loy, 2010).

At the organisational level, unsupportive supervisors and justified perceptions that there will be negative career consequences are manifestations of flexibility stigma, that regards employees who work flexibly as less committed and less productive (Williams et al., 2013). In line with this, 27 per cent of fathers who took just two weeks of leave under the Australian Government's parental leave entitlement scheme reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace in relation to taking the leave or their return to work (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014).

Meanwhile, at the societal level, welfare settings, tax, and childcare costs reinforce breadwinner-homemaker households (Wood, Griffiths & Emslie, 2020), and thus associated gender norms. Moreover, the labour market in advanced post-industrial economies such as Australia has long been structured around this gendered division of labour (Charles & Grusky, 2004).

Increasing men's uptake of flexible work is thus a non-trivial task. The few existing field studies investigating how to promote flexible work among all employees, regardless of gender, indicate the need for a multi-level approach involving interventions at the level of leadership, management, infrastructure, policies, and workplace norms (e.g., Kelly & Moen, 2021).

Thus, the objective of the current review was to identify individual, organisational, and societal barriers to, and facilitators of, men's uptake of flexible work. Our systematic search for relevant studies revealed that, to date, this research largely focuses on men's uptake of paternity/parental leave. Indicative of the recency of research interest in men and flexible work, only a small number of studies looked at uptake of other forms of flexible work. For this reason, our review focuses primarily on the factors shaping men's uptake of parental leave. The eligible studies comprised both quantitative and qualitative studies from more than a dozen OECD countries.

3.3. Methods

This project constitutes a rapid review (Cooper, Hedges & Valentine, 2009), including a systematic literature search and selection (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman & The Prisma Group, 2009), with some aspects of the coding and analysis process streamlined to facilitate reporting in a truncated timeframe (Abrami et al., 2010; Thomas et al., 2013).

References were eligible for inclusion in the review if they met the criteria presented in Table 3.1. There were no geographical or time restrictions.

Table 3.1. Inclusion criteria for reviewed papers

Area	Criteria
Context	Any factor at the individual, interpersonal, organisational, or societal level hypothesised to be positively (facilitator) or negatively (barrier) associated with men's uptake of flexible work
Outcome of interest	Any primary data of men's use /non-use of actual or intended flexible work
Nature of study	Must report original quantitative or qualitative analysis of data
Language	Only English language papers were retained for screening, given the feasibility of translating references in the current time frame
Publication	Academic journal, industry report, trade report, dissertations

3.3.1. Literature search

A search string designed to capture references meeting these criteria was entered into more than 25 academic databases. We also conducted a search for non-academic reports and grey literature using Google Advanced Search. These searches returned a total of 4,479 references. One-hundred sixty-seven of these met initial screening criteria and were assessed for inclusion in the final set of references (Figure 3.1). The number of references retained for data extraction and breakdown across outcome categories is given in Table 3.2.

Figure 3.1. *PRISMA Flow Diagram summarising literature search and inclusion for Men and Flexible Work*

Identification

| **5,290** records identified through database searching | **8** additional records identified through other sources |

4,479 records after duplicates removed

Screening

| **4,479** records screened | → | **4,312** records excluded |

Eligibility

| **167** full-text articles assessed for eligibility | → | 105 full-text articles excluded, with reasons |

Included

62 studies included in qualitative synthesis

Table 3.2. Summary of References Retained for Data Extraction

Outcome Category	Quantity
Total number of references retained for data extraction	62
Individual-level factors	37
Organisational-level factors	21
Societal-level factors	26

Note. Quantity total exceeds 62, as many papers explored multiple levels.

3.3.2. Data extraction

The final set of eligible references were coded by a member of the research team with experience in data extraction for systematic reviews. The coding was performed using a data extraction tool capturing information regarding primary findings and recommendations. Any studies not meeting basic research standards were excluded from analysis, and we weighted our recommendations by the quality of those retained.

3.4. Findings and Recommendations

The tables below provide summaries of the evidence regarding individual (Table 3.3), organisational (Table 3.4), and societal level (Table 3.5) factors that facilitate or inhibit men's uptake of parental/paternity leave and associated policy recommendations. We focus on findings most relevant to public sector organisations. To be consistent with the reviewed research literature, we use the terminology "paternity leave" in the summary of findings table. However, we apply the gender-neutral terminology "secondary caregiver" used in the VPS Enterprise Agreement in the roadmap for action, in which we address that context more specifically.

3.4.1. Individual-level factors

These studies explore individual-level circumstances, particularly income (father's, mother's, and household), education, and gender-related attitudes. A critical finding is the role of intrahousehold income inequality as a barrier to men's greater uptake of paternity leave, pointing to the need for well-paid, reserved paternity leave. Notably, such policies appear to be able to trump gender attitudes and norms.

Table 3.3. Individual-level factors impacting men's uptake of parental/paternity leave

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Household income	Inequality of earnings matters. The higher earner in the household (usually men) suffer greater short- and long-term income loss from taking parental leave. Fathers' greater relative income decreases parental leave use, as well as the likelihood of taking longer than a reserved fathers' quota.	Attending to the gender pay gap will tend to make economic optimisation decisions around uptake of unpaid leave more egalitarian.
Intersectionality	Economic optimisation is particularly important in lower income households; low-income fathers can't afford the 'luxury' of equal parenting.	Paternity leave with generous benefits, or at full pay, will reduce opportunity costs, particularly for those in lower-income brackets.
Gender attitudes/norms	Gender attitudes do appear to play a role in uptake. However, they appear to be less important than organisational and societal-level factors.	Policies can trump gender attitudes when it comes to uptake.

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	Gender attitudes seem to have more influence when it comes to shared parental leave - fathers are reluctant to use parental leave that could otherwise be used by mothers. Qualitative research indicates that this conflicts with masculine norms. In contrast, earmarked paternity leave increased the sense of entitlement to take leave, and reduced the need to rationalise this non-normative decision.	Non-transferable, paid, paternity leave has the potential to overcome barriers associated with masculine norms. However, implicitly referring to fathers as "secondary caregivers" may reinforce traditional gender norms. NB: The duration of reserved paternity leave may establish what is a legitimate/acceptable leave length for fathers.

3.4.2. Organisational-level factors

These studies explore organisational-level factors – both formal policies and informal culture and norms. Overall, the findings point to the importance of a workplace culture that is supportive of work-life balance to facilitate uptake.

Table 3.4. Organisational-level factors impacting men's uptake of parental/paternity leave

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
Formal Policies	Men are more likely to take paternity/parental leave in organisations that facilitate work-life balance.	Beyond flexible work policies, organisations also need to have processes, infrastructure, and human resources that facilitate flexible work.
	Policy design is necessary but not sufficient. Fathers are less likely to take leave in the absence of an adequate replacement for them.	Ensure adequate resources for replacement of staff who are on leave.
	Evaluating workers on performance rather than time (presenteeism) facilitates leave uptake.	Ensure evaluation is genuinely based on performance/results.

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
Informal Norms	Informal workplace norms, particularly norms of overwork/constant availability, can undermine good leave policies. Fear of stigma and backlash can also inhibit uptake of leave.	Make flexible work options visible, acceptable, and actively promote to everyone. Utilise freely available toolkits provided by WGEA, Work, Family and Health Network and Victorian Public Sector Commission: https://www.wgea.gov.au/flexible-work https://workfamilyhealthnetwork.org https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/flexible-work-policy-and-resources/ Identify and deal with issues such as crisis-oriented work patterns, chaotic work schedules, or 'overselling' of products and services that make flexible work infeasible.

3.4.3. Societal-level factors

Studies investigating societal-level factors were focused on the effect of different kinds of national-level policies on fathers' uptake of parental/paternity leave. These confirmed the importance of non-transferable, well-paid, statutory paternity leave.

Table 3.5. Societal-level factors impacting men's uptake of parental/paternity leave

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
Reserved paternity leave/ 'fathers' quotas'	Reserved, well-paid paternity leave has a marked positive influence on fathers' uptake of leave. Increasing the shareable portion of leave appears to have little further effect on uptake.	Defined entities with lower entitlements for paternity leave should prioritise expanding these benefits.
	The effectiveness of reserved paternity leave is conditional on the level of benefits, as well as formal and informal organisational factors.	Increasing benefit level, such as topping up the government scheme to full pay, will likely increase uptake.
	Introducing and extending well-paid fathers' quotas can reduce and even reverse gaps in uptake based on contract type, social class, education, and worker type, particularly among lower education, lower income fathers.	Statutory paternity leave policies may help to set norms.

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
Reserved paternity leave versus shared (gender-neutral) leave	Men in male-dominated workforces are less likely to take gender-neutral leave than men in female-dominated workforces. However, this is not the case for reserved paternity leave.	Reserved paternity leave may be particularly important in male-dominated areas of the public service. Gender-neutral shared leave policies may inhibit male uptake.

3.5. A Roadmap for Action

Our research identified individual, organisational, and societal factors that shape men's uptake of parental leave. Here we focus on the organisational factors since these are within the scope of Gender Equality Action plans. Victorian Public Service organisations enjoy an auspicious context for developing a roadmap for action.

The Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement (2020) entitles eligible employees to 16 weeks of paid parental leave as primary caregivers. Secondary caregivers are entitled to 4 weeks paid leave and an additional 12 weeks of paid leave if they take over the primary caregiving role. There are additional provisions for unpaid leave. (Different entitlements are in place for other defined entities under the Act.) Put in the context of the current findings, this means that eligible fathers are entitled to the same length of ear-marked, paid, parental leave as are mothers, even as so-called secondary caregivers.

There are numerous toolkits and guides available for developing policies and strategies for embedding flexible work in organisations (Table 3.4). Rather than replicating these existing, excellent resources, we focus here specifically on identifying and addressing organisational gender-related factors. The current evidence gap points to the need for more research. In the interim, organisations will need to draw on the quantitative and qualitative data they collect as part of their obligations under the Act to establish baseline data, and to develop and test strategies to shift gendered patterns on this gender indicator. With this challenge in mind, we make some practical suggestions below.

3.5.1. Use available data to identify concerns about flexibility stigma

Questions relating to flexible work and carer leave in the Employee experience/People Matter survey data will provide insights into employees' perceptions of organisational norms regarding flexible work and carer leave. Disaggregation of the data by gender and, where possible, other characteristics, may help indicate where in the organisation these barriers to uptake are most intense. This may assist in prioritising managers for training or assistance in responding to requests for flexible work arrangements.

3.5.2. Align promotion of flexible work and carer leave with Victorian Public Service purpose

While it is routinely argued that establishing a business case for the promotion of flexible work is important, the ethical dimension is often overlooked. Flexible work arrangements enhance people's capacity to combine fulfilling paid work with other valued activities. This is of benefit to all employees, a point worth emphasising.

However, it is also the case that unpaid care work makes an essential and substantial contribution to society. Many people enjoy benefits from the unpaid work of raising the future generation of workers, tax-payers, and citizens (England & Folbre, 1999). This point should have a

special resonance within the Victorian Public Sector, given its purpose to serve the Victorian community. Recognising the true value of this work, and the contribution it makes to society, may help to destigmatise flexible work.

3.5.3. Consider whether policies, norms and practices are "masculine defaults"

Prior to the passage of anti-discrimination legislation, it was normative for jobs to be gender-segregated (as well as by race and class). Jobs may retain a legacy of practices and norms that are designed by and for the traditional incumbents of the role (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Practices that appear to be rational and gender-neutral, such as using constant availability and overwork as a proxy for commitment, may particularly disadvantage women, gay men, single mothers, and low-income women, who are less likely to have a partner at home who takes primary responsibility for unpaid household labour, or to be able to afford to outsource it (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Not all work can be done flexibly (Goldin, 2021), whether in relation to time or venue. However, it's always worth questioning whether a particular inflexibility is genuinely due to a business necessity, or if it is a masculine default.

3.5.4. Create a sense of entitlement to carer leave in men

Our review pointed to the importance of earmarked fathers' leave for trumping traditional gender attitudes and masculine norms. The VPS Enterprise Agreement uses the gender-neutral terminology of primary and secondary caregivers. Importantly, this language is fully inclusive of gender and sexual minorities, as well as non-nuclear households. However, it nonetheless implicitly cleaves to a traditional breadwinner/homemaker model by nominating one parent – who will typically be the father – as the "secondary" caregiver. Ensuring that fathers are recognised as such in the workplace, and promoting their entitlement, as fathers, to 16 weeks of paid parental leave in total, may help to overcome the barrier of masculine norms.

3.6. Conclusions

Research on flexible work, and the associated concept of work-life balance, has understandably tended to focus on the experiences of women, especially mothers. It is only relatively recently that interest has broadened to include fathers (and other demographics, including for those without children). Indeed, it is noteworthy that all but two of our eligible studies were published in the last two decades, with about a third published between 2019 and 2021. The nascent nature of the literature helps to account for why, despite the many forms that flexible work can take, our eligible studies focused almost exclusively on men's uptake of parental/paternity leave. It therefore remains an open question to what extent the findings and recommendations presented here can be generalised to other, less time-circumscribed, forms of flexible work.

Nonetheless, it seems likely that similar principles will apply. Our findings suggest that intrahousehold income inequality and unsupportive organisational culture are key barriers to more equal uptake of parental leave between couples, and that the income and career opportunity costs associated with taking leave may disproportionately inhibit both low- and high-income men (in the case of heterosexual couples). So long as flexible forms of work, such as part-time hours, are associated with economic and career progression penalties, this will create barriers to their uptake by the higher earner within the household (including for same-sex couples). This conclusion points to the interrelations between flexible work and other gender indicators, particularly gender pay equity, gender composition, and promotion.

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PhD Candidate Lindsie Catherine Arthur, The University of Melbourne

Dr Victor Sojo, The University of Melbourne

Dr Victoria Roberts, The University of Melbourne

PhD Candidate Kate Western, The Australian National University

4.1. Executive Summary

We conducted a rapid review of the available evidence regarding drivers of sexual harassment in the public sector. After systematically searching the academic literature, we analysed 29 publications reporting organisational predictors of sexual harassment in the public sector. The following factors were identified:

Structural Factors

 i. *Distribution of Power.* Unequal distribution of formal and informal power.

 ii. *Gendered Organisation of Work.* Roles with high sex-ratios or poor accommodation of sex-specific needs.

Social Factors

 i. *Conformity to Dominant Values.* Masculinity as the dominant value system and sexist expectations regarding dress.

 ii. *Organisational Tolerance.* Uncertainty regarding expected standards of behaviour or consequences for engaging in sexual harassment. Poor communication regarding policies and processes.

 iii. *Social Tolerance.* Perceptions of tolerance towards sexual harassment and a history of victim blaming or backlash.

In the following report, we provide details about the methods of the review and expand on our key findings and present policy implications arising from this evidence. We propose a broad set of evidence-based recommendations that are designed to reduce the impact of these drivers, prevent, and manage workplace sexual harassment. We then zoom in on key areas of action the Victorian Public Sector (VPS) may consider, focusing on interventions at the organisational (e.g., changes in espoused values, increased gender diversity in teams and leadership), team (e.g., manager training on policy/practices to manage sexual harassment, staff training on respectful relations) and individual levels (e.g., bystander intervention training, socio-emotional training for instigators).

4.2. Introduction

Despite their similarities, the public sector is distinct from private sector organisations in a myriad of ways and thus warrants specific investigation. For example, the public sector is encompassed within political communities, is funded by taxes, and is controlled by political rather than market forces (Boyne, 2002). For these reasons, the public sector is expected to reflect the

social values and legislative framework of their electorate, unlike private organisations that reflect the values of the key stakeholders (e.g., shareholders, investors). Recently, there has been a shift towards the creation of public value, leading to increased collaboration between public and private agencies, and the communities that they serve (Crimp, 2017), and increased interest in public sector organisations as model institutions.

Sexual harassment is a serious health and safety hazard with the potential to cause serious harm. Unfortunately, sexual harassment is a widespread problem in public sector organisations, with serious long-term consequences for targets of abuse and organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018; 2021; Jackson & Newman, 2004; Krook, 2018). Workplace sexual harassment is broadly defined as unwanted sex-related behaviours (e.g., sexist jokes, quid pro quo, verbal sexual advances, sexual assault) that the targets find (and, in some jurisdictions, a reasonable person would have found) offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening to their individual or occupational wellbeing (Sojo, Wood, & Genat, 2016).

Three dimensions of sexual harassment are typically described in the psychology and management literatures: (1) *gender harassment* includes verbal, physical, or symbolic acts expressing sexist or sexualised hostility towards members of one gender or sexual orientation group; (2) *sexual coercion* encompasses workplace rewards or punishments that are made contingent upon sexual favours; and (3) *unwanted sexual attention* comprises physical or verbal sexual approaches that are not wanted, welcomed, or reciprocated, including actual or attempted sexual assault (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Willness et al., 2007).

In the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) section 92(1), the legal definition of sexual harassment focuses on sexual coercion, unwanted sexual attention and sexually crude behaviours. This overlooks gender harassment, which is not necessarily sexualised but encompasses hostility towards a person because of their gender or sexuality. Also, situations of workplace sexual assault are covered by the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) Part I (40), defined as a person intentionally touching another person who does not consent to the touching; and the touching is sexual; and the person touching does not reasonably believe that the other person consents to the touching.

The discrepancies between the way psychology and management academics investigate sexual harassment, and how the topic is dealt with legally, is not entirely surprising. While some of the early research in this area was the product of courts asking for organisational reviews to inform sexual harassment class actions against organisations, research has also been done independently of the legal system. Importantly, research should not be limited to investigating phenomena that fall within existing legal definitions of sexual harassment. Nor do organisations need to be constrained by legal definitions in order to specify what behaviours are to be considered acceptable and unacceptable at work.

Research investigating the experience of sexual harassment in the public and private sectors consistently shows that sexual harassment impacts the target's mental and physical health, their confidence and ability to do their job, their future career prospects, including their ability to get a reference, and causes significant distress and shame (O'Neil et al., 2018; Sojo et al., 2016). Meta-analytic investigation into the relationship between organisational tolerance for sexual harassment and wellbeing revealed that, even after controlling for individual experiences, high organisational tolerance was associated with poorer occupational and personal well-being (Sojo et al., 2016). This indicates that, in order to prevent poor workplace experiences, organisations must identify and address systemic or structural drivers of sexual harassment.

The impact of sexual harassment on public sector organisations is also considerable, reducing organisational-level performance and productivity, the ability to attract and retain the best people, and the capacity to manage significant reputational and legal risks (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018; Safe Work Australia, 2019; Willness et al., 2007). In addition to these negative performance outcomes, public sector organisations fall short as model institutions. Further, by

making an effort to implement respectful and inclusive workplace practices, the VPS can be in a better position to be set the standard for other organisations.

To date, academic research has primarily focused on the individual, interpersonal and legislative factors that drive sexual harassment in the public sector. Comparatively less academic research has focused on an organisational level of analysis to identify the structural factors, social factors, and organisational stressors that drive sexual harassment and other forms of abuse within organisations (Roberts & Sojo, 2019; Roberts, Sojo & Grant, 2020; Sojo & Roberts, 2019). A lack of understanding of the underlying causes of sexual harassment specific to public sector organisations undermines our capacity to develop whole-of-system evidence-based policies and management practices that aim to prevent and reduce the impact sexual harassment. In this review, we aim to address this knowledge gap by answering the following research questions:

i. What are the organisational factors associated with sexual harassment in the public sector?

ii. What interventions and organisational changes can be implemented to reduce the incidence of sexual harassment in the public sector?

4.3. Methods

This project constitutes a rapid review, which follows the same principles of comprehensiveness and transparency as a systematic review (Cooper, Hedges & Valentine, 2009), including a systematic literature search and selection (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman & The Prisma Group, 2009), with some aspects of the coding and analysis process streamlined to facilitate reporting in a truncated timeframe (Abrami et al., 2010; Thomas et al., 2013).

4.3.1. Eligibility

Primary studies were eligible for inclusion in the review if they met the criteria outlined below:

i. *Outcome of interest:* Sexual harassment, including unwanted sexual attention, gender harassment (sexual and sexist hostility), sexual coercion and gender policing.
ii. *Context:* Public sector.
iii. *Factors:* Antecedents and correlates of sexual harassment.
iv. *Nature of study:* Must report original collection and analysis of data.
v. *Language:* Only English language papers were retained for screening, given the feasibility of translating references in the current time frame.
vi. *Publication years:* 1992 – 2022, to guarantee contemporary research was used.
vii. *Exclusion:* Military, educational or hospital context.

4.3.2. Literature search

A search string designed to capture references meeting these criteria was entered into 25 academic databases. The following Boolean search string was used: "sexual harassment" OR "gender harassment" OR "sexual hostility" OR "sexist hostility" OR "unwanted sexual attention" OR "sexual assault" OR "sexual coercion" OR "quid pro quo") AND ("public sector*" OR "public serv*" OR "civil serv*" OR "public manage*" OR "public administ*" OR "public personnel" OR govern*").

We searched in the fields of title, abstract, all subject terms and indexing in these databases: Business Source Complete; EconLit; Academic Search Complete; Family & Society Studies Worldwide; OpenDissertations; SocINDEX with Full Text; Urban Studies Abstracts; PsycINFO; ABI/INFORM Collection; Accounting, Tax & Banking Collection; Asian & European Business Collection;

Australia & New Zealand Database; Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database; Continental Europe Database; East Europe, Central Europe Database; Military Database; Political Science Database; Psychology Database; Public Health Database; Publicly Available Content Database; Research Library; Social Science Database; Sociology Database; UK & Ireland Database.

We also conducted a search for non-academic reports and grey literature using Google Advanced Search. These searches returned a total of 1,462 references. Fifty-four references received a full text-review, and 29 empirical articles were included in the final set of references to analyse (see Figure 1). In these articles, 19 referred to sexual harassment in general, seven addressed gender harassment (sexist and sexual hostility) and five addressed sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention. Some articles mentioned more than one type of sexual harassment (e.g., sexual coercion and sexual hostility). The majority of research reviewed was conducted within wealthy and developed nations, including Australia, United States, Canada, and United Kingdom. However, research from developing nations is also present, including Pakistan, India, Mexico, Nigeria and Pacific Island countries.

Figure 4.1. *PRISMA Flow Diagram summarising literature search and inclusion for Public Sector Drivers of Sexual Harassment*
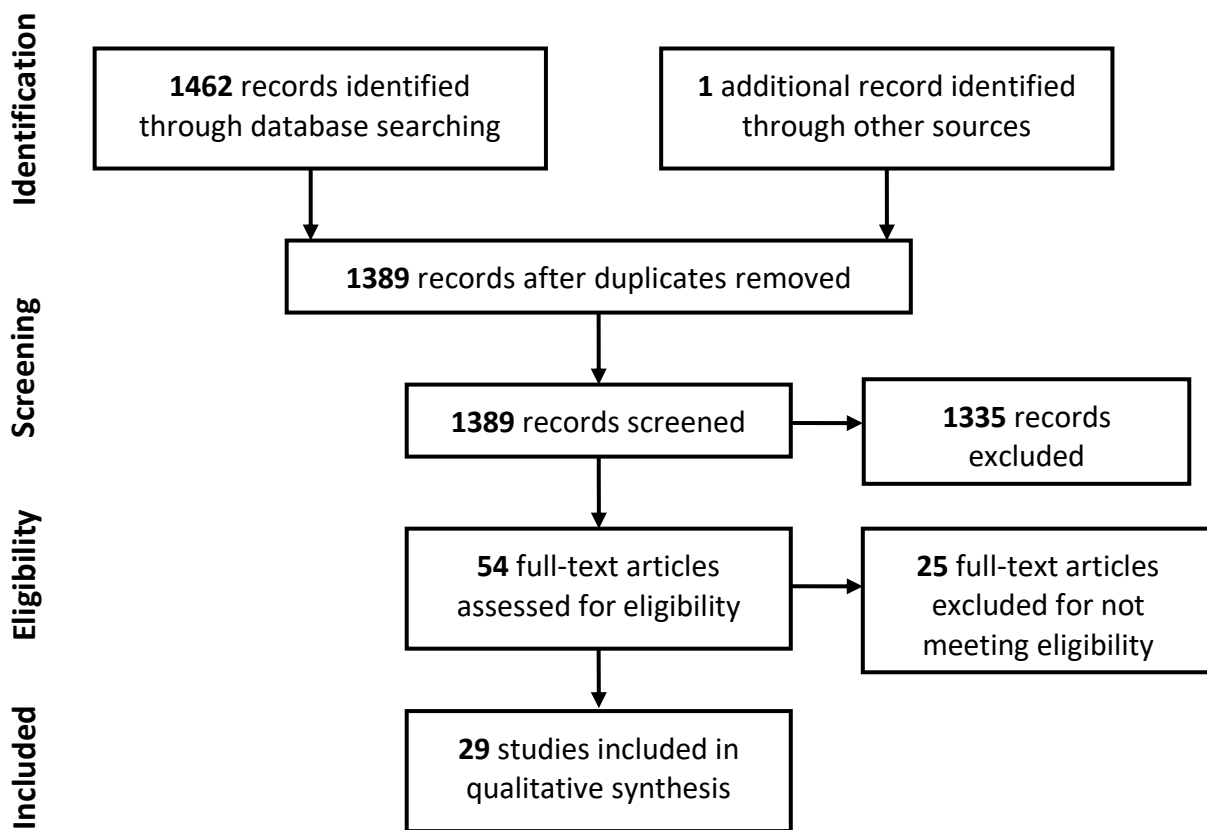
4.3.3. Data extraction

The final set of eligible references we coded by a member of the research team with training in organisational psychology and experience in data extraction for systematic reviews. The coding was performed using a data extraction tool and codebook capturing information regarding the research aims, methods and key findings from each article.

4.4. Findings and Recommendations

In this section of the report, we provide summaries of the evidence and recommendations to prevent and manage sexual harassment in public sector organisations.

4.4.1. Predictor Category 1: Structural Factors

In this section, we examine how structural factors may influence incidents of sexual harassment in public sector organisations. Structural factors are understood as the formal and informal parameters within which members of the organisation are expected to operate.

Table 4.1. Evidence of structural factors influencing sexual harassment in the public sector

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
Distribution of Power	The *formal distribution of power* – through prescribed organisational hierarchies – may contribute to the experience of sexual harassment via several mechanisms: *legitimate power* (i.e., organisational authority to demand compliance); *reward power* (i.e., ability to provide rewards and resources) or *sanction power* (i.e., ability to issue punishment). Formal power can be used to coerce sexual favours and is associated with sex-based harassment in the provision of rewards and sanctions. For example, promotions may be offered with conditions of sexual coercion or withheld from people that do not comply.	*Prevention:* • Transparent reward structures may minimise the opportunity for sexual or sexist manipulation related to promotions, bonuses or other organisational rewards. Formal agreements or policies that outline key performance indicators reduce ambiguity and provide a framework of rewards available to employees. • In place of one-on-one review processes, formal performance review processes that involve multiple perspectives (i.e., 360 reviews with subordinates, peers and supervisors) can improve the transparency of rewards and sanctions. Human resources should then review the feedback from the different assessors and independently identify discrepancies that may signal poor professional relationships. • To support objectivity, hiring processes should involve a clear set of skills required (e.g., qualifications, type of experience) and input from multiple sources wherever possible. This may include hiring managers, human resources, colleagues and future subordinates (in the case of management positions). • There needs to be a clearly planned approach to dealing with managers' resistance to efforts to prevent and manage sexual harassment and dealing with workplace gender equality more generally. This should include a plan for their supervisors on how to have conversations with these managers and take corrective actions.

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
		Management: • In the case of senior management or sensitive claims, sexual harassment should be handled independently. Third-party groups can be employed to mediate complaints. Independent complaint systems can also be used to avoid formal power interfering with the review process.
	Informal power is derived from the personal possession of social resources others desire, including: *referent power* (i.e., interpersonal identification and attraction); *expert power* (i.e., prior success, knowledge); or, *status based on group membership* (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability). Majority group membership offers protection from sexual harassment, while minority membership likely increases vulnerability to harassment. Individuals who identify with multiple low-status groups are most at risk.	*Prevention:* • Diversifying leadership roles/portfolios can be an effective way to mitigate the perceived and actual association between demographic variables and status. • Engaging in diversity and inclusion training can facilitate attitude change that is designed to reduce biases towards minority groups or groups with lower social status. Further, gender and sexuality training can be used to debunk sex-role assumptions and combat sexist hostility that is disproportionately targeted at women and LGBTQI+ persons. • Engaging in knowledge sharing practices (e.g., workshops, mentoring) can reduce informal power associated with expertise.
Gendered organisation of work	*Workplace sex-ratio* is a predictor of sexual harassment in the public sector. Men and women in occupations that are dominated by the opposite gender are at a higher risk of sexual harassment when compared to occupations with balanced gender representation. The effect of gender ratio is further elevated in gender-based roles (e.g., construction, engineering, nursing, teaching) because people carry inappropriate expectations about gender into the workplace.	*Prevention:* • Desegregating traditionally gender-based roles is necessary. Reducing the dominance of one gender serves to separate gender identity from the occupation and creates a larger network of comparable colleagues for individuals within the underrepresented gender. Diversity quotas can be used to improve diversity (see report on Anonymous Application Procedures in this volume). • Target diversity training in sectors of the organisation that are prone to high sex-ratios and thus represent a high risk of sexual harassment towards members of the minority sex. In these areas of the organisation, in-person training with high levels of interactive scenarios and exercises should be used.
	Lack of organisational accommodation for sex-specific needs: Lack of flexibility surrounding	*Prevention:*

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
	menstruation, pregnancy and menopause can place women in a uniquely vulnerable position. This leads to sex-based oppression of women. Regarding menstruation, women report having to conceal their menstruation despite experiencing physical and psychological disruptions or face gender policing.	• Provide formal policies regarding flexible working arrangements so that flexibility is not subject to individual supervisors. • Flexible arrangements may include working from home, time in lieu, flexible hours and job-share arrangements. • Engage in communication and consultation with female employees to identify strategies that accommodate sex-specific concerns.
	Client relations: Public facing roles are more likely to experience persistent instances of sexual harassment (e.g., sexist hostility, gender policing) and women are disproportionately likely to hold public facing roles (e.g., librarian, council administration, receptionist). The normalisation of sexual harassment is more common in high intensity environments (e.g., crisis response teams) due to a generally higher tolerance for abuse in these environments.	*Prevention:* • Give members of the community clear information about expected standards of behaviour while interacting with members of public agencies / departments, including zero tolerance for sexual harassment, preferably with plain language explanation of behaviours that will not be tolerated. • Additional protocols should be introduced to manage cases of client- and contractor-perpetrated sexual harassment. • Challenge the normalisation of sexual harassment by addressing undesirable behaviour early and explicitly. Management support should be available when sexual harassment continues after it has been addressed. • Provide public-facing employees with training on how to identify, manage, and report sexual harassment from clients. Training for existing/long-term employees should also emphasise the organisations commitment to change the culture and prevent sexual harassment. • Actively collect data regarding the incidence and experience of sexual harassment in public facing roles so that the onus of reporting is on the employer. Data can be collected formally (e.g., surveys, review meetings) or informally (e.g., emails asking, ongoing conversations with staff). Use this information to develop mitigation strategies in high-risk locations.

In this section we examine how the social factors may influence incidents of sexual harassment in public sector organisations. Social factors are understood as cognitive and motivational factors that explicitly or implicitly underpin the way members of organisations interact with each other (i.e., values, beliefs and norms). Although the research in this section explores the influence of factors which are intimately woven within larger societies (e.g., national culture, religious contexts), we focus on the values, beliefs and norms within individual organisations.

Table 4.2. Evidence of social factors influencing sexual harassment in the public sector

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
Conformity to dominant values	*Masculinity as the dominant value* system is endemic in the public sector. In leadership positions, value is placed on stereotypically masculine traits such as competitiveness, dominance, assertiveness, and efficiency. Over emphasising the value of traditionally masculine traits leads to sexist hostility towards non-masculine employees. Behaviours which may be tolerated in male dominated groups (e.g., objectification of women) also contributes to incidences of sexual harassment.	*Prevention:* • Review the values and behaviours organisations are using to select, evaluate and promote staff. Moving away from masculinity as the only value system requires employers consider how everyday practices underpinned by masculine behaviours and defaults are contributing to culture. • Create key performance indicators and systems that reward employees who demonstrate organisational citizenship, cooperation, and mentoring. • Engage in consultations (e.g., focus groups, 1:1 interviews) with employees to identify key behaviours and policies that reinforce the value of masculinity. Managers should then review what can reasonably be changed without disrupting key department operations. • Messaging around prevention and management of sexual harassment needs to be targeted towards all genders (i.e., not just a "women's issue", but an issue that also affects men and consequently, reform will also benefit men).
	Explicit and implicit dress codes create opportunities for sexual harassment at work. Formal workplace restrictions are targeted disproportionately at women's dress (e.g., high heels, make-up, no short skirts). When employees dress outside the dominant implicit dress code for their gender, they are more likely to face sexual harassment. Finally, standards of dress are traditionally based on white/western grooming standards,	*Prevention:* • Avoid prescribing dress codes that are specific to men and women. Decisions regarding what is acceptable work attire should be based on safety (e.g., open toe shoes) and not sex-specific appearance (e.g., make-up, earrings). • Under no circumstances should an employee's choice of clothing be accepted as justification for sexual harassment.

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
	which can further isolate people who wear ethnic or religious items (e.g., hijab).	• Cultural intelligence training might help reduce the policing of clothing and appearance of ethnic minority workers.
Organisational Tolerance	*Failure to define appropriate standards of behaviour and consequences* for failing to meet those standards creates ambiguity for both instigators and victims. Surveys of employees reveal that both men and women struggle to clearly articulate what behaviours are deemed appropriate in their workplace.	*Prevention:* • Policies should include clear information about expected standards of behaviour at work and any related interactions (e.g., online communication, professional events, outside-work events with colleagues). • Describe consequences for different forms of sexual harassment in policies. Due to the complexity of sexual harassment, policies must be specific and clarify how different cases can be managed. • Definitions of expected standards of behaviour should be uniform across all individuals and sectors of the organisation, regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality or employment type. • Simple visual tools (e.g., posters) can be introduced in shared workplaces (e.g., kitchens, bathrooms) to identify unacceptable behaviour. Messaging should be simple, clear and direct.
		Management: • When a sexual harassment claim is presented, victims and alleged instigators should be made aware of the pathways to manage it and possible outcomes, to manage expectations for all parties. • Transparency can be improved by outlining what has been done to manage previous/ongoing cases of sexual harassment. For example, yearly reporting on the number of complaints and resolutions demonstrates action has been taken by the organisation. This should be done across the whole of the VPS or in large divisions to preserve anonymity.
	Barriers to access policies and procedures. Individuals often do not know how to seek help or where to find important information. Keeping sexual harassment policies on intranets or internal servers' limits who can access policies. For example,	*Prevention:* • In preparation of managing complaints, it is important to have a clear and simple diagram outlining all the avenues available to make a complaint, what to expect from each avenue (i.e., who is involved in each avenue, what steps will be followed), timelines, what not to

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
	contractors and casual staff may not have access to organisation infrastructure where information is stored about how complaints can be made.	expect, and additional supports that will be made available to the complainant. Diagrams can then be placed around offices, workplaces and online. • Information about policies and procedures should be available online so that all staff can access information, including diagrams with avenues to make complains and what to expect. • Employers should communicate regularly and through diverse strategies (e.g., email, meetings) about where employees can seek relevant policies and procedures.
	Failure to communicate can undermine well-developed policies and procedures. It isn't enough for policies to exist; they must also be communicated to employees. Online modules lack validity as a tool to reduce sexual harassment and voluntary training workshops often fail to attract employees that perpetrate harassment.	*Prevention:* • Education campaigns should inform employees of existing policies and procedures, including information about where to access policies, how to make formal complaints, details of the process and possible outcomes. • Education campaigns should include communication strategies that are cost-effective and can be scaled across thousands of employees, such as emails, posters in common areas, digital communications (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams) and brief online webpages. • In place of voluntary training or training in areas with very low incidence of sexual harassment, the VPS should identify areas with a high number of complaints or concerns. Dedicated training should then be provided to the divisions and individuals that are identified as problematic. Note, divisions with high incidence may also have a higher acceptance of sexual harassment. For this reason, it is necessary to assess levels of acceptance and incidence.
Social Tolerance	*Actual and perceived reactions* to sexual harassment matter. Sexual harassment is more likely in organisations where employees perceive the consequences for instigators of abuse are not observable, clear, or proportional. In sub-sections of the organisation where sexual harassment (in particular, gender harassment) is	*Prevention and Management:* • Early action (e.g., giving specific and timely feedback) to address less intense but more frequent forms of sexual harassment (e.g., sexist and sexual hostility) can help define appropriate behaviour and prevent escalation of abuse to more intense forms. • Social psychology and behaviour change interventions (e.g., social norms) can be used to minimise undesirable behaviour and

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
	common, perpetrators may misjudge their behaviour as the dominant social norm.	redefine acceptable behaviour. For example, avoid unintentionally advertising undesirable behaviour (which risks normalising it) and instead highlight the areas for which the VPS is a top performer regarding diversity and equality. Publicly celebrate organisational role models that demonstrate desirable behaviour, including employees that speak out about sexual harassment.
		Management: • Multiple, independent parties must review sexual harassment claims so that consequences are decided objectively and not determined based on personal or professional relationships. • Keeping a record of all complaints and punishments ensures that sanctions are uniform and consistent across time and individuals. This process is often overlooked and can lead to bias. Minority group members are most at risk of disproportionate punishments when compared to majority group members.
	The belief that *reports of sexual harassment will not be believed or taken seriously* prevents individuals reporting experiences of sexual harassment. Similarly, fear of backlash or victim blaming prevent victims coming forward and eliminating sexual harassment.	*Prevention and Management:* • Sexual harassment policies should mandate a complete process from complaint to resolution. Once a complaint has been lodged by an employee, the predetermined process should be followed to completion. There should also be timely communication of the outcome of the complaint to the complainant. • Limiting access to complaint systems (e.g., only managers can access complaint portals) can place subordinates at risk if their manager is the abuser. Multiple avenues of complaint should be available to all employees, regardless of status within the organisation. This may include human resources, adjacent managers, finance, employee representatives. • Involving multiple parties in the review of complaints can prevent backlash against targets of sexual harassment who come forward, particularly in instances when the direct manager is the abuser. • Bystander intervention training can prepare all employees to identify and address sexual harassment so that victims do not feel isolated. Bystander training must be hands-on,

Area	What the evidence says	Recommendations
		interactive and relevant to common experiences at work.
Communication and Language	The language used to communicate about sexual harassment has the potential to inflict harm. Describing some forms of sexual harassment as "less serious" can undermine the experience of victims. However, language which describes sexual assault and other sexual harassment as equal in intensity can reduce sympathy for sexual assault victims.	*Prevention:* • Avoid using terms like "less serious" and "low level" when describing different forms of sexual harassment. Instead, behaviour should be described in terms of intensity and frequency. • Intensity and frequency of sexual harassment should be considered when developing policy and responses to abuse. A combination of low intensity and high frequency has the potential to cause similar harm to high intensity and low frequency events in the long term. • The level of intensity should be determined based on the ability for a single experience to cause trauma. Harm can arise when individuals fail to acknowledge the severity of some forms of harassment (e.g., sexual assault).
	Tension can form within organisations that promote a firm stance against sexual harassment when actual employment practices do not reflect the messaging. For example, when organisations fail to respond to complaints, language like 'zero-tolerance' can give victims and perpetrators doubt about the organisation's commitment to a safe workplace. Describing sexual harassment policy as 'zero-tolerance' can also create barriers for self-reflection, with perpetrators less willing to admit wrongdoing.	*Prevention:* • Organisations must explain that 'zero-tolerance' means that complaints will be reviewed and addressed. Undesirable behaviour will be explicitly acknowledged, and appropriate actions taken by leadership. • 'Zero tolerance' should not mean that all sexual harassment will be dealt with in an equally severe manner (e.g., suspension, dismissal). Consequences should be appropriately matched with the intensity and frequency of the harassment. This match needs to be clearly explained in organisational policies.

4.5. A Roadmap for Action

In the previous section, we identified broad social and organisational factors that drive sexual harassment, in addition to providing recommendations from the academic literature. Below, following consultation with the VPS, we provide a road map to address key areas of concern and opportunities for improvement. In this section, we provide recommendations about where to start and how to scaffold interventions to maximise positive outcomes at the organisation, team and individual level.

The public sector should prioritise preventative measures that stop sexual harassment *before* it happens. Prevention efforts can be primary or secondary (Vartia & Leka, 2011). Primary interventions prevent the occurrence of harmful phenomena, while secondary interventions slow, reduce or reverse the progression of events, prevent recurrence, and provide individuals with effective coping resources. Prevention should start at the organisation level and move down through the teams and individuals. This allows the structures that drive sexual harassment to be addressed before placing personal responsibility on employees.

Whilst effective prevention is crucial, sexual harassment is unlikely to ever be completely eliminated; meaning that appropriate management strategies are also necessary. When sexual harassment has been identified in the workplace, tertiary interventions aim to reduce negative impacts and restore health and wellbeing (Vartia & Leka, 2011). As with preventative measures, it is important to improve the management of sexual harassment at the organisational level, before introducing change into teams and individuals. For example, it is impractical to train individuals to identify sexual harassment when the reporting processes are not effective or fair.

Figure 4.2 denotes two processes – prevention and management – that frame our road map for the VPS. We focus on prevention strategies as the area where the VPS should invest the greatest level of resources. We then outline key management strategies that improve transparency and promotes a culture of equality and fairness. For each process, we move from the organisation to the individual, acknowledging that this linear approach does not accurately represent the reality of organisational life. In many instances, individuals will need to change in order to create change at the organisational level.

Figure 4.2. *Roadmap of actions to reduce sexual harassment in the public sector*

Prevention	Management
Organisation Promote culture of equity and respect Diversify leadership and workforce Review SH policy	**Organisation** Eliminate barriers to reporting SH Robust, independent management of reports Introduce relevant flexible working arrangements Transparent review processes
Team Train leaders on preventing and responding to SH Train staff on respectful relations, including diversity and inclusion Utilise innovative and empirical behaviour change interventions	**Team** Train on Bystander intervention
Individual Engage staff to identify and prevent SH	**Individual** Training for instigators

4.5.1. Prevention – Organisational Level

Promote a culture of respect

Promoting a culture of equity and respect is an important primary prevention intervention. *Respect* is already included as a core value at the VPS, encompassing the principles of fair treatment and freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying. The VPS can emphasise and communicate the alignment of this Public Sector Value with the importance of addressing sexual harassment.

Practical recommendations:

- Respect should be operationalised through criteria used to recruit, evaluate and reward performance, and promote staff.
- Respect should be publicly endorsed by senior management and team leaders. Public endorsements can be simple and cost-effective, such as an email from senior management outlining the steps being taken by the VPS to reduce sexual harassment. Organisation and team meetings are also a great opportunity to efficiently communicate with staff about the processes being undertaken to improve respect at work.

Diversify leadership and workforce

Leadership diversification and accountability must be prioritised as primary prevention interventions. Power disparities in general and those that fall across gender lines are more likely to drive sexual harassment. Making efforts to create gender balance within organisational units and in leadership is a necessary step to help prevent sexual harassment and make sure that power

imbalances correlated with protected attributes do not operate as obstacles for speaking up, reporting and addressing sexual harassment.

Practical recommendations:

- Diversity cannot be achieved overnight. However, the processes that improve diversity (e.g., targeted recruitment) can be implemented rapidly so that future hires and promotions facilitate diversity at all levels of the organisation.

Review sexual harassment policy

Sexual harassment policy should be reviewed and updated. The VPS should adopt an intersectional approach to sexual harassment policies. This means considering the way that people's social identities can overlap and how this may influence a range of factors related to policy, including willingness to report, understanding what constitutes sexual harassment, and compounding experiences of abuse.

Practical recommendations:

- Enact a taskforce to review existing sexual harassment policy and update according to legislative and research-based recommendations regarding sexual harassment. The taskforce should be made up of employees from diverse departments, positions and demographic factors, instead of relying on the human resource perspective alone.

- Consult with employees with diverse social identities, including those from a diverse range of ages, races, sexualities, disabilities and genders.
- Updates to the policy should establish acceptable behavioural expectations that are relevant to the current working environment (e.g., in-person, online, social media use, intimate relationships at work).
- Policies should specify, preferably also with a diagram, different kinds of reporting and support available, how to seek these forms of support and reporting, who will respond to the requests, what process will be followed, what timeline to get a response employees can expect, any other aspect of relevance identified during consultations.

- Prearrange regular intervals to review and update sexual harassment policy.

4.5.2. Prevention – Team Level

Train leaders on preventing and responding to sexual harassment

Employers have a legal responsibility to maintain the safety of their staff, including protecting them from sexual harassment. Training leaders is an important aspect of this responsibility. Managers that fail to effectively deal with complaints create a vulnerability for the perpetuation of sexual harassment.

Practical recommendations:

- Management and senior staff should model behaviour by engaging in diversity and inclusion training with employees.

- Management should also receive further training ensure that they understand the legal implications of failing to prevent sexual harassment. There should be clear understanding about what actions are being implemented to create cultures of inclusion and respect, what evidence there is of sexual harassment at work (and especially in their local department), and how incidents are managed.

- Job demand overload and ineffective work systems can increase stress and the risk of sexual harassment. Ensuring managers are equipped with the skills to manage their team can help protect against job stress.

Train staff on respectful relations, including diversity and inclusion

Training should not be used as a "fix-all" approach because it is overly reliant on conscious decision making, often overlooking the implicit or non-conscious biases that drive behaviour. However, as part of a holistic approach, training is a valuable tool to educate employees about what diversity and inclusion looks like in day-to-day interactions. It also provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the experience of minority groups within the public sector.

Practical recommendations:

- Online modules should be avoided for training that requires deep engagement and interaction with others.

- To reduce the cost of in-person training across the entire organisation, resource heavy training should be reserved for teams and/or departments where sexual harassment is most prevalent.

- Team leaders and managers should conduct a training needs analysis to determine which teams and departments demonstrate the greatest need for training. This analysis can shape the skills and learning objectives that drive each training session. A third-party member (e.g., Human Resources) may conduct the training needs analysis so that direct managers do not boycott this process in an attempt to minimise time away from job demands.

- Provide incentives for engaging in training that reduce the tendency for instigators to self-select out of training opportunities. For examples, promotions may only be awarded to people who participated in training. To ensure equal access to training opportunities, training sessions should be offered across multiple days and times, avoiding time-periods that are systematically disadvantageous for some employees (e.g., school pick-up times which may disadvantage young mothers).

- Individual job demands can hinder engagement with training. Timing of training workshops is therefore crucial in this process, so consultation with individuals and teams regarding the timing of training can maximise engagement.

Utilise innovative and empirical behaviour change interventions

'Nudges' are behaviour change interventions that are designed to encourage positive behaviour through non-conscious and automatic processes. Unlike bias training, nudges are used to shape behaviour without the reliance on conscious decisions making.

Practical recommendations:

- Posters placed in common areas can provide information in a clear or simple way. For example, animations and infographics can carry information about what is considered inappropriate behaviour and how to react if you witness sexual harassment at work. By increasing the visibility of behavioural expectations and reporting options, these simple and cost-effective posters can reinforce what is acceptable and increase saliency of sanctions.

- Pre-commitments are another form of nudge, requiring individuals to commit (often publicly) to a set of behaviours or goals. Asking managers and staff to commit to respectful workplace behaviour makes it easier to hold them accountable for their behaviour. Identity

research suggests that most people prefer to hold a self-image that is consistent across time, which makes precommitments an innovative way to motivate desirable behaviour.

- Descriptive and injunctive norms are a nudging technique that can have a significant impact on reducing sexual harassment. For example, emphasising that sexual harassment is rare and that most people behave in accordance with policy reduces the perspective that sexual harassment is common and therefore accepted. Similarly, empowering critical members of the organisation (e.g., powerful male allies) to speak out against sexual harassment and gender norms can influence target groups that identify with the messenger (e.g., other male employees).

4.5.3. Prevention – Individual Level

Engage staff to identify and prevent sexual harassment

Changes made at the organisational or team level can lead to significant attitude change within individuals. Even so, to reduce sexual harassment, individuals must feel committed to the organisation's values.

Practical recommendations:

- Engage with staff to understand what they perceive as risk factors driving sexual harassment. Consulting with a diverse demographic will provide insights that are unavailable to a homogenous group.

- An organisation wide *Code of Conduct* can communicate what is behaviour is expected. Requiring employees to sign in agreement of the code can nudge behaviour as a form of precommitment.

- A voluntary call for feedback and suggestions about preventing sexual harassment can increase individual commitment to future interventions. Requesting input from others demonstrates that the VPS is open to listening to staff experiences.

4.5.4. Management – Organisational Level

Eliminate barriers to reporting sexual harassment

There are many reasons that people choose not to report sexual harassment at work. The most common reasons include power imbalances, fear of losing future promotion opportunities, and fear of backlash or victim blaming. Minimising or eliminating these barriers is an important step towards a fairer workplace.

Practical recommendations:

- The VPS must invest in a reliable and secure reporting system. A VPS specific infrastructure may be designed, or new technologies can be purchased from software companies that specialise in reporting software. The infrastructure should be piloted before being released to staff so that any problems can be identified.

- Reporting systems should include an option to report external personnel, including clients, customers and contractors.

- Sexual harassment reporting should not be restricted to specific team or management hierarchies. Instead, employees should be able to lodge a report with any manager or team leader that they feel comfortable speaking to.

- Anonymous reporting systems can also be used to encourage disclosures and identify problem areas. As an unintended consequence, anonymous reporting is potentially

vulnerable to false complaints. As a harm minimisation strategy, evidence should be reviewed, and the alleged instigator should be given an opportunity to respond to the claims.

- Wherever possible, language translations for reporting systems improves access for employees who are not native English speakers.

Robust, independent management of reports

In general, the lack of clarity about what processes exist and whether they are standardised across the VPS was very salient for the VPS. While this may be a communications problem, it is likely a problem of disparate and idiosyncratic policies and practices across departments. Moving forward, reports of sexual harassment should be managed using a universal process to enhance clarity and transparency.

Practical recommendations:

- In the case of senior management or sensitive claims, sexual harassment should be handled independently. Third-party groups can be employed to mediate complaints. Independent complaint systems can also be used to avoid formal power interfering with the reporting process.

- Multiple, independent parties should review sexual harassment claims so that consequences are decided objectively and not determined based on personal or professional relationships.

- Keeping a record of all complaints and punishments ensures that sanctions are uniform and consistent across time and individuals. This process is often overlooked and can lead to bias. Minority group members are most at risk of disproportionate punishments when compared to majority group members.

Introduce relevant flexible working arrangements

Flexible work arrangements are often granted at the discretion of direct managers. Due to caring responsibilities, women are often disproportionately disadvantaged by non-flexible work.

Practical recommendations:

- Create universal policies that facilitate flexible work options as standard. This can give employees an increased capacity to negotiate their own working conditions within a framework outlined by the organisation, rather than the manager.

- The VPS should focus on maximising good flexible work arrangements; meaning those that make employment accessible for the greatest number of people. For example, flexible hours allow young parents to work around school schedules and working from home can assist workers with physical disabilities who are otherwise unable to travel into the office.
- However, casual contracts are flexible work arrangements that are precarious and offer no security or benefits (e.g., sick leave) to employees. Casual employment is a risk factor for sexual harassment and should be avoided where possible.

Transparent review processes

Power imbalances are inherent in review processes because the employee under review is vulnerable to their supervisor's feedback. Still, steps can be taken to improve transparency and reduce power imbalances.

Practical recommendations:

- In place of one-on-one review processes, formal performance review processes that involve multiple perspectives (i.e., 360 reviews with subordinates, peers and supervisors) can improve the transparency of rewards and sanctions.

- Human resources should complete a secondary review of feedback from the different groups and independently identify discrepancies. Discrepancies between perceptions of subordinates, peers and supervisors may signal poor professional relationships that should be investigated further.

- An unintended consequence of including multiple people in a single review meeting (e.g., manager and human resource personnel) is that this can further increase the power imbalance away from the employee under review. In the case of sexual harassment there is minimal risk that senior staff will collude to sexually harass the employee, though harm may be minimised through a process of piloting and evaluating the effectiveness of this recommendation at the VPS.

4.5.5. Management – Team Level

Train on Bystander intervention

Bystander training gives employees the tools needed to identify, report and (if appropriate and safe) stop sexual harassment. Bystander training should also provide the tools to deliver emotional and instrumental support for colleagues who are the targets of sexual harassment.

Practical recommendations:

- Bystander intervention training needs to be hands-on, interactive, experiential and relevant to the common experiences of sexual harassment people face at work.

- Bystander interventions should also clarify the importance of not "going along" with sexist or sexual jokes.

4.5.6. Management – Individual Level

Training for instigators

Completely eliminating sexual harassment is unlikely, so interventions should be provided to instigators of sexual harassment.

Practical recommendations:

- Depending on the intensity and frequency of the sexual harassment, it might be necessary to implement individual education for the instigators of abuse.

- An unintended risk associated with diversity is that the meaning of sexual harassment may differ for different demographics of workers. Instead of diminishing diversity, additional education may be required for employees from different cultural backgrounds, where behavioural standards differ from the VPS.

4.6. Final Considerations

4.6.1. Intersectional Approach

The VPS needs to adopt an intersectional approach to managing sexual harassment at work. To be truly intersectional, the VPS must consider the way that people's social identities can overlap, creating confusing or compounding experiences of sexual harassment. Social identities can vary based on a multitude of characteristics, including age, race, sexuality, disability and gender. Many researchers argue that sexual harassment is driven by power differentials and that people in positions of power are more likely to perpetrate harassment. However, the intersectional lens proports that other individual differences (including those listed above) must be recognised to discern what individuals understand sexual harassment to be (both in kind and frequency).

4.6.2. Implications of Public Sector Actions

Australian adults spend a substantial portion of their waking hours at work (~ 37.5 hours a week), many of whom work within the public sector. The VPS is the second largest employer in Australia, employing over 340,000 people across more than 1800 departments (Victorian Public Sector Commission, 2022). Preventing sexual harassment in the VPS thus provides an opportunity to create substantial positive change. Successfully reducing sexual harassment in the public sector also lends weight to the persuasion of private organisations, who may otherwise by resistant to adopt equitable and inclusive practices. Leading by example allows the public sector to encourage respectful practices in the wider community.

4.7. Conclusions

The recommendations presented here have been developed through review of the academic literature and consultations with the VPS. Although no single intervention is likely to eliminate sexual harassment, a combination of these recommendations can lead to meaningful reductions in the incidence of sexual harassment within the VPS. Wherever possible, our interventions have been designed to addresses structural and systemic drivers of harassment. However, we also recommend introducing interventions that facilitate fair and equitable behaviour, including outcomes for perpetrators. Creating lasting change is a slow process that requires persistent effort from individuals, organisations and society at large. Nevertheless, this process is important for the wellbeing of everyone at work and should continue to be a priority for all involved.

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Chapter 5 - Information-Based Approaches to Gender Pay Equity: Pay Audits, Pay Transparency and Job Evaluation

Dr Miriam Glennie, The Australian National University

Prof Michelle Ryan, The Australian National University

Dr Victor Sojo, University of Melbourne

5.1. Executive Summary

Internationally, many jurisdictions are strengthening workplace gender equality legislation to accelerate reductions in the gender pay gap. Most legislation relies on information-based strategies that are designed to diagnose pay inequity and inform decisions about corrective action. In this review, we examined contemporary research on the three most common strategies (i.e., pay audits, pay transparency and job evaluation), to assess the impact of these strategies on the gender pay gap in different settings, and to identify the barriers and enablers to strategy effectiveness.

In particular, we sought to identify ways to improve information quality and information use in practice. Systematic search and screening for studies reporting on the implementation of one or more strategies in an organisational setting resulted in the identification of 12 peer reviewed studies. The majority were conducted in public sector organisations.

We found limited evidence of these strategies reducing gender pay gaps. This lack of evidence about impact reflects two situations: (i) strategy ineffectiveness in some studies and (ii) strategy impact not measured in terms of pay in other studies.

A range of barriers hindering the application of the strategies and the use of information obtained from them were identified both across and within strategies; barriers to information quality related primarily to failures to account for and/or remove gender bias from measures of adjusted gender pays and job evaluation. Barriers to information use were related to lack of authority to adjust pay or pay practices, and rejection by individuals holding pay-setting authority that the pay disparities identified genuinely resulted from pay inequity.

Fewer enablers were identified; those that were identified related to the use of decision-making transparency to improve manager accountability for equity in pay-related decisions, and the disclosure of pay-setting systems to support employee perceptions of procedural fairness.

Review findings were used to inform a roadmap for action for the Victorian Public Service (VPS). This roadmap, briefly outlined below, sets out a series of actions to support the effective implementation of the information-based strategies currently in use in the VPS, particularly the pay audit and pay gap disclosure mandated by the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) – roadmap Sections 1-3). It also contains recommendations for future expanded use of information-based strategies, including incorporating comparative job evaluation (roadmap Section 5.5).

i. ***Key objectives***

Use pay equity information to increase accountability

Use pay equity information to support awareness about the causes and consequences of inequity

ii. ***Actions to support information use***

Develop workforce statistical capability

Link pay strategies to pay-setting

Provide information and education about pay equity to employees

iii. ***Actions to improve information quality***

Minimise gender bias in calculations of adjusted pay gaps

Maximise the level of detail in information inputs and outputs

iv. ***Integration with other information systems and organisational processes***

Integrate pay-related information systems with pay-setting architecture

Embed pay-related information into human resource information systems

5.2. Introduction

Gender pay inequity, in which women and men performing work of equal or comparable value are paid unequally, is an important but often under-recognised contributor to gender pay gaps. Pay gaps, which measure the difference between men's and women's total average earnings, result from a wide range of factors including occupation, hierarchical position, career disruptions, and unpaid care responsibilities, as well as pay inequity (KPMG, 2019).

In the 1970s and 1980s, pay equity was central to debates about gender pay disparity (Rubery, 2019). However, contemporary debate tends to focus more on facilitating women's access to senior and leadership roles to reduce the gender pay gap. Neither of these issues is more important than the other, and both require attention, as closing the gender pay gap cannot be achieved without attention to all its causes. There are risks of over-emphasising one specific factor, particularly women's leadership, as greater representation of women in senior positions reduces concern about a persisting gender pay gap (Georgeac & Rattan, 2019).

Two reasons why attention to pay equity has subsided are, firstly, that it is often incorrectly assumed that unequal pay is no longer a major problem. The gradual narrowing in interpretations of equal pay, which is often now taken to mean equal pay for identical work (Charlesworth & Smith, 2018), contributes to this misinterpretation. There are indeed fewer examples of overt gender pay discrimination now than there have been historically. However, gender discrimination in pay persists, and is estimated to account for up to 40% of pay gaps (KPMG, 2019).

A second reason why attention to pay equity has declined is that attempts to establish the comparable worth of similar jobs, via methods such as job evaluation, often proved extremely difficult and faced widespread resistance including protracted legal conflicts (Acker, 1991; Whitehouse et al., 2001). As a result, there has been limited recent progress on remedying the under-valuation of female-dominated work.

Despite these obstacles, pay equity remains an important component of strategies to reduce the gender pay gap, and there are a range of tools available to employers to support this endeavour. Employers play a key role in both creating and reducing gender pay gaps, both directly by valuing of men's and women's work via remuneration, and indirectly by shaping men's and women's careers

via career hierarchies, and the provision, or not, of career development and employment supports such as flexible working and parental leave.

Employer actions to address pay equity impact their gender pay gap directly, as they involve adjustments to pay or pay practices. Examples include adjustments to individual wages to correct unequal pay; changes to pay bands to remedy the undervaluation of female-dominated roles; and changes to supplementary pay (e.g., allowances, loadings) to rectify gender-based inequalities in access.

Employer actions that may indirectly impact pay disparities and subsequently reduce the gender pay gap over the medium to long term involve changing practices that facilitate women's ongoing participation in employment. This includes practices such as facilitating flexible working, parental leave, increasing women's representation in better renumerated positions, and occupations through career development, and reducing gender bias in performance and promotion processes.

In an attempt to stimulate employer action on gender pay disparity, and to support employer accountability for gender equality, most developed countries have enacted pay-related information disclosure legislation. The information generated from these disclosures has shed light on the endurance of pay inequality in organisations. However, as a means to stimulate employer action on reducing gender pay gaps it has had limited effect (Cowper-Coles et.al., 2021).

In Australia, the gender pay gap amongst full-time workers has declined modestly over the past 40 years, but there has been limited change in the gap amongst part-time workers (Glennie et al., 2021). There has been some acceleration in pay gap reductions over the past 10 years, but progress has been patchy, with substantial decreases in some industries and stagnations or even increases in others (WGEA, 2022).

There are a multitude of reasons behind the lack of progress on reducing pay gaps. Perhaps most problematic is the emergence of new sources of pay inequity, even as old ones are remedied (Rubery, 2019). Although it is easy to bemoan the lack of impact stemming from information disclosure legislation, the changing nature of pay inequity reinforces the importance of information, analysis, and monitoring to maintain currency in knowledge of pay inequity and adjust interventions accordingly.

The information-based strategies underpinning disclosure legislation are expected to support the diagnosis of pay inequality and its sources, including pay inequity, and subsequently inform corrective actions in pay and pay practices. Two inter-related problems impede the impact of such strategies: one being that the information generated is not high quality; and that other being that the information is not used to change practices. In Australia, information quality was a particular issue in early iterations of national workplace gender equality legislation, which required descriptive, primarily qualitative information disclosure about the overall state of workplace gender equality including pay. However, reviews of report content found that the information generated was superficial and overly general (Ainsworth et al., 2010).

In response to the apparent ineffectiveness of qualitative, descriptive information disclosure regimes, many jurisdictions have moved towards quantitative information disclosures, based on accounting methods that seek to generate both financial and non-financial measures of gender equality. Pay audits and pay transparency are both examples of such accounting methods that form the basis of much contemporary disclosure legislation. Nominating specific formats for pay-related disclosure is beneficial for information quality.

However, caution is needed as, despite common perceptions of accounting techniques as impartial and objective, processes of quantification are inherently subjective and often political (Burchell et al., 1980). Decisions made about what and how to measure can introduce bias into

results (Trotman et.al., 2011), and underpinning methods of calculation are not often disclosed (Steccolini, 2018).

Furthermore, increasing information quality does not automatically solve information use problems, including accountability. Pay audits are particularly at risk of under-use as, unlike the previously favoured job evaluation, audits are not directly linked to pay-related decision-making. The gap between generating audit information and using that information is evidenced in *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* reports, in which only 54 per cent of organisations that conduct a pay audit use the information to close identified pay gaps (WGEA, 2021).

Numerous jurisdictions, including France, Spain, and the Australian state of Victoria, have recently introduced strengthened legislation to increase employer accountability; these mandate not only the disclosure of pay-related information, but also the use of that information to reduce gender pay gaps. Other jurisdictions, such as Sweden and the Canadian province of Ontario, link pay audits to comparative job evaluation to create a direct link to pay-related decision-making, and address pay equity explicitly.

To better understand the effectiveness of information strategies for pay equity, this review sought evidence on the implementation of the three pay equity information strategies most commonly nominated in gender equality legislation: pay audit, job evaluation and pay transparency.

Pay audits analyse individual pay to identify pay gaps between men and women, and their sources, including pay inequity. *Job evaluation* analyses features of jobs or job categories to determine pay rates. *Pay transparency* involves sharing information (publicly or within an organisation) about individual pay, aggregate pay gaps or organisational pay practices. Given their complementary objectives, the three strategies can be used in unison; for example, a pay audit may be used to identify disparities between male and female dominated occupations, which are then analysed via job evaluation, or the pay gap calculated in a pay audit may be publicised to support pay transparency.

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), reporting entities are required to conduct a pay audit, develop a gender equality action plan on the basis of that audit, and publish their gender pay gap. The Victorian Public Service (VPS) uses job evaluation to establish rates of pay and has a process for job re-evaluation but does not use comparative job evaluation for the purpose of pay equity.

The objective of this review was to survey contemporary research on the implementation of organisation level information strategies for pay equity to assess their effectiveness in different contexts and to identify factors that hinder or support their use to reduce organisation level gender pay gaps. To achieve this objective, the review addresses the following research questions:

  i. What impact have pay audit, pay transparency, and job evaluation had on the gender pay gap in different settings?
 ii. What are the barriers to, and enablers of, pay audit, pay transparency, and job evaluation effectiveness?

5.3. Methods

We conducted a scoping review of contemporary evidence on the implementation of pay equity strategies within organisations. In line with methodological guidance for this review type, the review sought to generate a broad overview of the literature in the field (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), in the hope of yielding the most possible insights into best practice. Although scoping reviews quantify the nature and extent of literature, they are primarily a qualitative analysis – reflected here in the data extraction process. We adopted a realist approach (Pawson et al., 2005) to data synthesis, which seeks not to provide not a linear measurement of effectiveness, but analysis of when and why initiatives work or don't work in different contexts.

Three separate searches were conducted using search strings relevant to each of the pay equity strategies, in concert with a search string relevant to gender. Each search used one of the strategy strings with the gender string. The following search combinations were conducted: 1 AND 4, 2 AND 4, 3 AND 4.

Pay equity string:

- *"pay audit" OR "pay gap analysis" OR "pay gap audit" OR "pay equity audit" OR "pay discrimination audit" OR "gender audit"*
- *"job evaluation" OR "comparable worth"*
- *"pay transparency" OR "pay secrecy" OR "pay process transparency" OR "pay gap transparency" OR "pay gap disclosure"*

Gender string:

- *gender OR female OR women*

The search was entered into Scopus, ProQuest, PsycInfo, EMBASE and Google scholar databases. Search limits were set to search in abstract, title, keyword fields; English language; peer-reviewed, publication date 2000-2021.

5.3.2. Eligibility

References were eligible for inclusion in this review if they met the inclusion criteria outlined in Table 5.1m, below.

Table 5.1. Inclusion criteria for reviewed papers

Area	Criteria
Purpose of pay equity strategy or analysis	Improving gender equality, or analysed with reference to impact on pay equity, the gender pay gap, or pay equity perceptions
Context	Organisation level (single organisation or multiple organisations)
Nature of study	Empirical study of strategy implementation and/or impact
Processes and outcome of interest	Strategy barriers and enablers; gender pay gap
Nature of publication	Peer-reviewed academic articles or conference papers

Search results and eligibility outcomes for each of the pay equity strategies is presented in Table 5.2, below. Only the 100 most relevant Google scholar search results were screened. Figure 5.1, below, shows the flow of primary studies in the screening and selection process.

Figure 5.1. *PRISMA Flow Diagram summarising literature search and inclusion for the Gender Pay Equity Review*
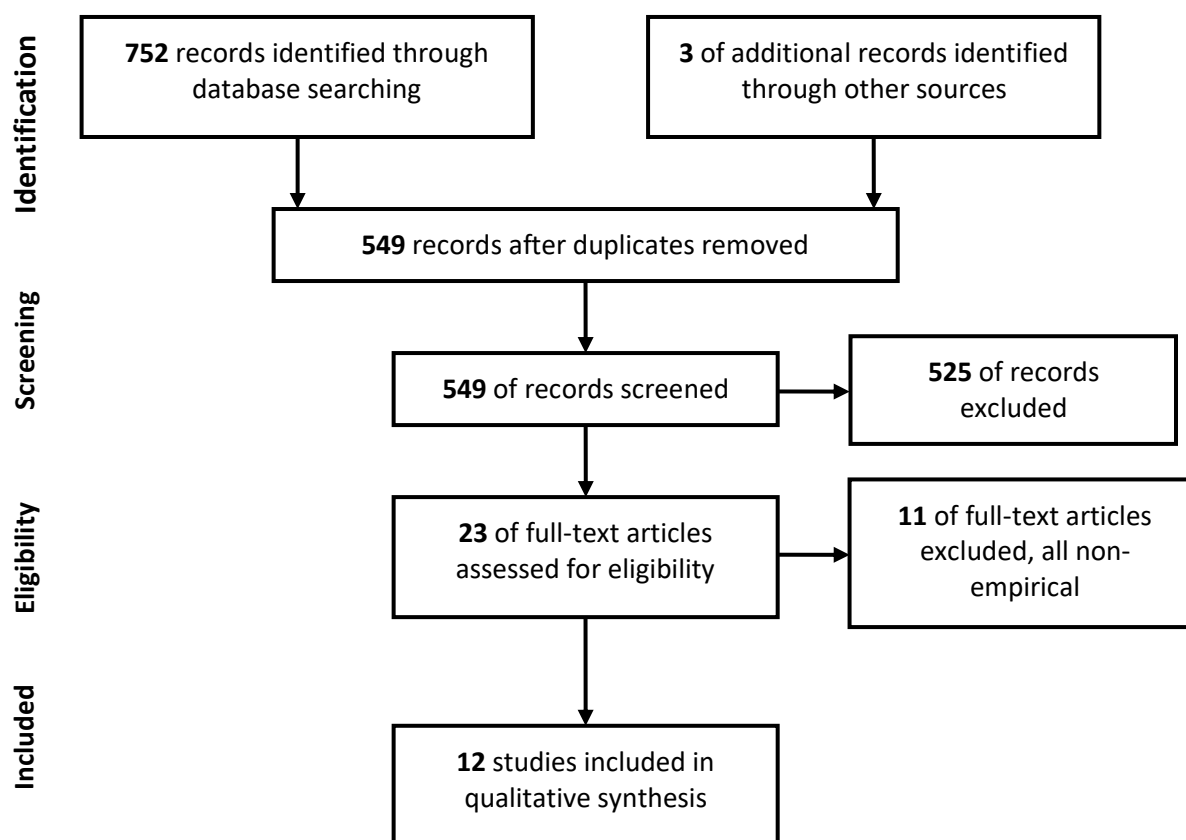
Table 5.2. Summary of search results and eligible studies

Outcome Category	Search results	Eligible studies
Pay audit	151	4
Job evaluation	255	5
Pay transparency	143	4
Total	549	12*

*One study was identified in both the pay audit and job evaluation search results. Most review studies reported on two strategies applied in unison, with one strategy playing a supplementary role to the primary strategy (e.g., a pay audit informed the primary strategy of job evaluation).

5.3.3. Data extraction and analysis

For each eligible primary study, the following data items were extracted: study objective, setting and sample, study design, key findings, impact on pay, fairness perceptions, implementation insights including barriers and enablers. Analysis was conducted both within and across pay equity strategies.

5.4. Findings and recommendations

The review found limited evidence that the three pay equity initiatives reduce organisation level gender pay gaps. The lack of evidence of impact in some cases reflected strategy ineffectiveness, while in others it reflected the scope of review papers which often, problematically, excluded analysis of pay outcomes.

More impactful strategies involved two or more of the pay equity initiatives and were directly linked to pay related decision processes. Legislation is a clear determinant of practice, with most review studies reporting initiatives in line with local legislation. Within the small sample of studies reporting on pay outcomes, a legislative mandate for remedial pay was the strongest predictor of pay equity information being used to make changes that reduced the pay gap.

The findings relevant to each of the initiatives are presented individually below.

Table 5.3. Pay audit findings and recommendations

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Impact	Of the three review initiatives, pay audits used in isolation had the least impact on pay gaps, with no studies reporting a pay gap reduction. The primary reason for this low impact was the information generated not being used widely, or at all.	A pay audit is not inherently connected with pay related decision making, and as such is often implemented as a purely analytical exercise. To support the likelihood of information uptake, pay audits should be linked to one or more other pay equity initiatives and to pay related decisions.
Information quality		
Tool / instrument / method selection	A variety of pay audit instruments are used in practice; there is no consensus on best practice tool/instrument and little research on reasons behind instrument selection. Cost and proximity appear to shape tool selection, with a preference for free, locally designed tools.	Variation in instrument selection reduces comparability across departments/agencies and may lead to inequities. Unless there is a clear requirement for a specialist instrument, a standard, free instrument is preferable, as is presently offered by VPS.
Selecting the sample of employees to be included in audit	Analysis that excludes data at the extremes ("outliers") often involves removing highly paid men and low paid women. This can artificially reduce the pay gap. Excluding employees on non-standard employment arrangements (e.g., casual, part-time) often removes low paid women, which artificially reduces the pay gap.	Employee sample selection should generally include all employees. Any decisions to remove employee categories should be fully justified and an analysis should be conducted to assess the implications for gender pay gaps in the sample.
Selecting the data items	The data items included in an audit can impact results. Some items, such as performance rating, can be	All variable selection should be assessed with a gender lens to consider potential bias.

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
(variables) to be included in audit	subject to gender bias. Counting these items as not related to ('independent of') gender may artificially reduce the 'residual' pay gap – which is the amount of the pay gap that cannot be explained by factors other than gender.	For variables identified as a predictor of pay disparity (e.g., performance, experience, tenure), the relevant organisational processes (e.g., performance measurement, career development, retention management) should be assessed for gender bias.
	In settings where legislation prescribes pay remediation but does not prescribe a standard audit method (e.g., France and Sweden), organisations may test different formula to find the one that results in the lowest pay gap.	A standardised tool or formula may improve accuracy and comparability across departments and agencies.
Information use		
Rejection of bias	The most common barrier to audit information being used to change pay related practices is rejection by line and/or senior management of the notion that any pay disparities identified result from pay inequity.	Communication of pay audit methodology prior to analysis may reduce denial of results. Raising awareness about the causes and consequences of pay inequity may reduce denial of systemic gender bias.
Statistical literacy	The statistical literacy required to understand and interpret pay audits is not common beyond specialist roles. This may impede widespread engagement with results and/or impede scrutiny of methodology.	Training in statistical literacy related to pay audits should be conducted within the VPS. Results must be presented in ways that are widely comprehensible to increase engagement and scrutiny.

Table 5.4. Job evaluation findings and recommendations

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Impact	Basing pay structures on formal job evaluation is associated with lower pay gaps than systems based on individual pay negotiation.	Formal job evaluation should form the basis of pay structures. Job evaluation systems should be designed with consideration of potential gender bias in criteria or weightings.
	Using comparative job evaluation to inform pay and/or pay structure adjustments to remedy an undervaluation of female-dominated jobs can reduce a gender pay gap in the short term.	Comparative job evaluation should be conducted if pay audits reveal a clear pay disparity between comparable positions that are male- and female- dominated. Markers of comparability may include similar duties, skills/qualification requirements or managerial responsibilities. Pay gap monitoring should be conducted to assess impact over longer periods and monitor for the emergence of new pay inequities.
Information quality		
Tool / instrument / method selection	A variety of instruments are used to undertake a comparative job evaluation, with most adopting a points-based system that awards a set number points for different skills, responsibilities etc. There is no consensus on best practice tool/instrument and little research on reasons behind instrument selection. Variation in instrument selection across public sector agencies reduces comparability and may lead to inequities.	Unless there is a clear requirement for a specialist instrument, a gender inclusive, VPS-wide job evaluation instrument is preferable.
Job category gender allocation	Analysing pay disparity across job categories (e.g., computer engineers and administrators) overlooks within job category disparities. This likely disadvantages women in male-dominated jobs categories (e.g., female computer engineers) who are often lower paid than male counterparts.	Job evaluation comparisons should be conducted alongside analyses of within job category pay disparity via gender pay audits. This will generate more comprehensive data on organisational pay equity than job evaluation alone.
Job characteristic selection	All job characteristics (skill, experience, responsibility) are subject to gender bias; the more subjective the measure, the higher the risk of gender bias in assessments.	Job characteristics selected for assessment should be as objective as possible. A characteristic is more objective if it can be verified with some form of data beyond individual opinion, for example,

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
		educational qualifications as opposed to 'skill'.
Job worth assessment	Attributing (monetary) value to job characteristics is the most contested stage of comparative job evaluation. Male assessors tend to assign lower value scores to stereotypically female job skills and/or responsibilities such interpersonal skills and caring responsibilities.	Transparent and consistent criteria about how to assign value should be agreed upon in advance. The criteria should be consistent across job categories. Awareness should be raised about gender bias in the valuation of stereotypically gendered skills. This may include gender bias training directly relating to job evaluation for those involved in assessments.
	Job evaluation contractors often apply valuations that reflect the current market pay rates to organisation level job assessments; this fails to assess for gender bias in market pay rates, which can reinforce prevailing gender bias.	Pay equity analysis capability within the VPS should be supported to reduce the need to outsource job evaluation assessment. Job evaluation criteria and weightings should reflect the value generated by a role for the VPS.
Information use		
Wage-setting authority	The use of comparative job evaluation information may be impacted by whether the individuals and/or organisation has the authority to adjust pay or pay practices. In many settings, individual public sector agencies lack financial delegation to exceed an existing personnel budget, or to adjust pay independently of industrial negotiations.	Addressing public sector pay equity requires a whole-of-government approach.
Resistance to changes in pay	Recommendations to adjust wages to correct gender pay inequity based on comparative job evaluation may struggle to secure legitimacy if recommendations differ to prevailing labour market wages. Recommendations to adjust wages on the basis of comparative job evaluation to correct gender pay inequity may face legal resistance.	Information about the undervaluation of female-dominated jobs, and the consequences for economic security and wellbeing may help alleviate resistance on the basis of unawareness. Communicating the methodological rigour of pay audits and/or job evaluation methods may help alleviate resistance on the basis of perceived procedural injustice.
Fairness perceptions	Individuals are likely to view adjustments to pay or pay practices as unfair if they believe themselves disadvantaged by the changes. Depending on how many individuals	Any adjustments to existing pay practices should contain clear information about existing inequalities and justifications for changes. This could include information about the criteria for assessment, how the

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	adopt this view, changes to pay or pay practices may face widespread resistance.	assessment was conducted and by whom. Communicating these procedural details in advance of a job evaluation assessment may help secure better acceptance of results.

Table 5.5. Pay transparency findings and recommendations

Areas	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Impact	Transparency in specific pay related decisions (e.g., promotion) or pay outcomes (e.g., individual pay) is more likely to influence a gender pay gap reduction than transparency in formal pay processes, which may or may not be implemented as designed, or aggregate pay outcomes like the gender pay gap.	Pay transparency initiatives should be broken-down into the smallest unit possible to make data more impactful; for example, instead of organisation level data, share division-level or individual-level data. Similarly, trend-analysis will be more meaningful at more granular level so transparency and performance monitoring activities can be complementary.
Information quality		
Level of pay transparency	Publication of individual pay is more likely to illuminate pay inequity than publication of an organisation level gender pay gap.	Publication of individual pay at more senior levels, where pay inequality is typically greater, may support better recognition of pay inequity. Publication of individual executive pay is common in publicly listed organisations. In settings where pay disclosure is not mandatory, anonymised pay data may encounter less resistance.
Scope of pay process transparency	Transparency in the way pay is formally determined; for example, the job evaluation system, is insufficient to support pay equity if other systems that directly impact pay like performance evaluation or promotion assessment are not also transparent.	All formal processes with a direct impact on pay, including the basis for assessments of performance and promotion, should be made transparent to employees and preferably made public to inform prospective employees.
Information use		
Pay decision transparency	Transparency in the way pay is formally determined will not support reduced pay inequity if decision makers (e.g., line or senior managers) do not implement	Some level of transparency should be established around pay-related decisions by managers; for example, the decision outcomes and the gender of affected employees could be made transparent to an equity and diversity community. Individual

Areas	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	systems as designed and/or in an unbiased way.	managers could be asked to justify decisions if significant gender disparities exist, particularly if repeated over time.
Employee pay decisions	No review study examined whether individual employees were able to use transparent pay related information to seek improved pay conditions. Broader research shows that most women lack the bargaining power to self-advocate for improved pay conditions, meaning that pay transparency only benefits relatively advantaged women.	Remedying pay inequity should not be the sole responsibility of individual employees.

5.5. A Roadmap for Action

Pay audit, job evaluation, and pay transparency are all currently utilised in the VPS. Pay audit and pay gap transparency are core components of reporting obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) and should form the basis of immediate attention. As the VPS has standard methods for each strategy, initial action should focus on clarifying strategic purpose and establishing supportive scaffolding to maximise information use. Departments and agencies should then seek avenues for maximising accuracy and specificity in all three strategies, before looking to integrate them into broader wage-setting architecture and embedding them in information systems.

Before detailing specific recommendations for action, two important considerations should be raised to inform implementation planning. Firstly, for organisations planning approaches to pay equity, it is important to note that the biggest risk of ineffective information strategies for pay equity is not the waste of resources undertaking them, but legitimising pay inequity by embedding gender bias in the initiatives themselves.

Failure to recognise, acknowledge, and remedy gender bias in organisational processes, including those designed to support pay equity such as job evaluation, was the primary barrier to strategy effectiveness in the early implementation studies of the 1970s and 1980s (Rubery, 2019; Acker, 2010). This review shows limited improvement on this front, which reinforces the ongoing need for targeted education about sources of pay inequity and indicators of gender bias – unconscious or otherwise. Accountability mechanisms must then be enacted to ensure the translation of knowledge into practice; for example, transparency in individual manager decisions impacting employee pay.

Secondly, the significance of the wage-setting context on organisational pay practices must be acknowledged. This review focused on organisation level pay equity strategies, as the target of workplace gender equality legislation. However, the limits of organisation level action on pay equity must be recognised, as organisations are not the only actors determining pay and pay practices. In the public sector particularly, the wage-setting of individual agencies can be directly influenced by personnel budget constraints, salary caps and overall funding cuts that can constrain the pursuit of pay equity, particularly via remedial pay.

Pay disparities between agencies may be equal to, or more substantial than, those within individual agencies, with salary bands in male-dominated agencies often higher than in female-

dominated ones (Williamson, 2009). The wage-setting context also influences attitudes to pay and pay-equity, and in systems dominated by market-based wages, approaches to pay based on equity considerations can struggle to secure legitimacy (Figart, 2000). Public sector pay equity will require a whole-of-government approach, in addition to the co-operation and commitment of unions, industry bodies and professional associations – which all play varying roles in establishing rates of pay for different groups of workers.

In light of these considerations Table 5.6 sets out a roadmap for action that details the steps, in chronological order, that VPS departments and agencies can take to optimise the effectiveness of these information-based strategies for pay equity. Suggestions for immediate actions are provided under each of the key principles, but these principles should also form the basis of all associated strategic actions. Action items presented under Sections 1-3 relate to pay audits and pay gap transparency – as currently required under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic). Section 4 would involve the incorporation of comparative job evaluation; prior to this, separate attention should be paid to ensuring that the existing job evaluation system supports gender pay equity in the initial valuation of positions, as well as in job resizing reviews.

Naturally, there are resource implications in many recommended actions. Most activities have only indirect costs stemming from personnel time. Some activities have direct financial costs, such as developing workforce capability via training and enhancing human resource information systems. However, these direct costs are offset by indirect savings; for example, enhancing human resource information systems saving manual processing time. Detailed cost estimations are beyond the scope of this review.

Table 5.6. Roadmap for action on information-based strategies for pay equity

i. Key objectives	**Information-based strategies must have a clear strategic purpose to avoid redundancy.**
Use pay equity information to increase accountability	Accounting exercises such as pay audit and pay transparency must be used to increase the accountability of both organisations and managers for equity in pay-related decisions. Without accountability, accounting information is a limited value. Actions: - Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) establishes accountability mechanisms for organisation level accountability; in addition to these: - departments and agencies should establish accountability mechanisms for managers who make pay-related decisions; for example, creating transparency in line manager decisions by making aggregate performance or promotion rates by demographic characteristics known to equity and diversity managers and included in line manager performance reviews.
Use pay equity information to support awareness about the causes and consequences of inequity	Pay equity information must be used to support reductions of conscious, unconscious and systemic bias amongst managers with responsibility for pay-related decisions to mitigate the emergence of new forms of inequity as old ones are remedied. Action: - Incorporate the information generated in pay audits into equity and diversity training for managers to illustrate patterns of inequality in their immediate context.

	- Use the information generated in pay audits to support contextual relevance in anti-discrimination training or awareness campaigns.
ii. *Actions to support information use*	**Both organisation and service level action will be required to support pay equity in the VPS.**
Develop workforce statistical capability	Workforce capability in statistical analysis and statistical literacy amongst general employees is necessary to enable widespread engagement with pay audit methods and findings.
	Action:
	- Develop statistical capability in the VPS equity and diversity workforce (e.g., analyst training) to support the generation and use of high-quality pay equity data, including that generated via pay audits. - Develop statistical literacy in the broader VPS workforce by presenting pay audit results in non-expert language to support employees' ability to use of pay gap disclosure to make informed pay and employment decisions.
Link pay strategies to pay-setting	If individuals conducting pay audits are specialists who do not have the authority to adjust pay or pay practices and/or do not have working relationships with the individuals who do, there is an increased risk that pay audit information will not be used.
	Action:
	- Link pay audits to pay system planning and/or pay-related decisions to increase the likelihood of the information being used; for example, incorporate pay audit results into enterprise bargaining, or create strategic partnerships between equity and diversity managers, remuneration managers and line managers making pay-related decisions.
Provide information and education about pay equity to employees	Knowledge about the meaning of pay equity, its causes and its consequences, is necessary to support positive attitudes towards pay equity initiatives and support legitimacy in pay audit and pay gap information.
	Action:
	- Communicate a clear definition of pay equity, its causes and consequences, in addition to pay audit results and pay gap disclosure; where possible, this should be done prior to analysis.
iii. *Actions to improve information quality*	**VPS methods for each of the strategies establish baseline standards for accuracy and bias suppression. In the future, departments and agencies may wish to progress to more advanced methods to calculate adjusted gender pay gaps to further maximise accuracy and disaggregation. An adjusted pay gap is the gap that cannot be explained by any factor other than gender and is a particularly useful measure of pay inequity.**
Minimise gender bias in calculations of adjusted pay gaps	Accuracy in adjusted pay gap calculations is achieved when the gap calculated is as close as possible to the true adjusted gap. Achieving this means ensuring that all factors included as legitimate sources of pay variation are as free as possible from gender bias. For example, if performance is included as a legitimate reason for pay variation, but the

	performance measurement method is gender bias, the adjusted pay gap will reflect that bias and subsequently be less accurate. Action: - Assess all factors nominated as legitimate causes of pay variation for potential bias; this may involve analysing performance measurement, promotion, recruitment and appointment systems.
Maximise the level of detail in information inputs and outputs	The more specific the information is with reference to the causes of pay disparity and the individuals affected, the more valuable the information will be. Action: - When conducting analysis and when disclosing results, include the most specific details useful while maintaining individual privacy and confidentiality. This may include information such as intersectional characteristics (both individually and collectively), as well as information about relating to job type, occupation, education, supervisory duties, career stage.
iv. Integration with other information systems and organisational processes	**Over time, the strategies should be embedded in broader wage-setting and information systems architecture rather than operating as stand-alone initiatives. This will improve information use and may reduce information processing workloads. Feedback loops should also be created between pay audits and organisational processes commonly subject to gender bias such as performance measurement, recruitment, appointment and promotion to ensure process reviews are initiated if pay audit results suggest bias in a particular system or manager's decision making.**
Integrate pay-related information systems with pay-setting architecture	Integrating pay-equity information strategies and pay-setting systems will further support information use by reducing reliance on relationships between business units. At this stage, incorporating scope for comparative job evaluation using a comparable format to existing job sizing reviews (i.e., to measure and secure agreement between workers and management about the time and staffing levels needed to complete work tasks required to create a product or deliver a service) will further support system integration for pay equity. Action: - Create procedural connections between pay audits and pay-setting systems; for example, require pay audit results be considered during enterprise bargaining. - Create scope for comparative job evaluation using a comparable format to existing job sizing reviews if pay audits identify clear pay inequities between positions dominated by distinct demographic groups (e.g., men and women, Indigenous and non-Indigenous).
Embed pay-related information into human resource information systems	Embedding pay equity information strategy inputs and outputs in existing information systems will support process automation and live pay equity information for real time monitoring. Over time, departments and agencies should look to develop lead indicators for each of the workplace

> equality indicators nominated in the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) to support quality improvement.
>
> Action:
> - Develop human resource information systems to ensure data storage and linkages between data sets (e.g., personal information, payroll, job evaluation) that enable live data monitoring and automatic pay equity reporting.

5.6. Conclusions

There is a clear need for more evidence on effective pay equity practice within organisations, including more evaluation of strategies' impact on an organisation's gender pay gap. The quantity of organisational research on the three pay equity strategies is clearly at odds with the number of organisations implementing them. This review yielded only twelve studies published over the past twenty years despite the hundreds, if not thousands, of organisations implementing them every year under legislative mandate. The limited empirical research is likely a reflection of employers' reluctance to share pay related data with researchers.

In all review studies reporting on organisational pay data, the authors were directly involved in the pay equity strategy – typically as an expert adviser. Even if organisations continue to be wary of sharing data with academic researchers, both organisations and agencies monitoring pay gap reporting should work to build the evidence base on effective organisation level pay equity initiatives by evaluating both implementation process and impact on pay gaps over short, medium, and long term. The VPS is in a unique position to build a strong evidence base on the implementation of a uniform approach to pay equity information strategies, and to be one of the first to develop knowledge about intersectional pay inequity.

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Chapter 6 - Gender Targets and Quotas in Leadership Roles: Examining Secondary Gender Equality Outcomes

Dr Melanie McGrath, The University of Melbourne

Prof Michelle Ryan, The Australian National University

Dr Victor Sojo, The University of Melbourne

6.1. Executive Summary

We conducted a rapid systematic review of the available evidence for the impact of leadership gender quotas on the extent of women's influence, public attitudes, and gender-relevant labour market indicators. After systematically searching literature from academia, industry and government, we analysed 76 publications reporting outcomes related to board and electoral gender quotas. Key findings for each outcome category are:

Extent of women's influence

1. Although quotas are effective in increasing the numbers of women on boards and elected bodies, they do not appear to have any impact on the share of women in senior roles such as board chair or mayor in the five to ten years after implementation.

2. Gender quotas increase attention to women's policy interests in parliaments and political parties. Policy areas of interest to women such as health, education, social justice, and welfare, are discussed more frequently and the subject of an increasing number of introduced bills after the implementation of gender quotas.

3. However, institutional factors, including women's lack of access to agenda-setting roles, consistently prevent this attention from translating into concrete policy outcomes.

Impact on public attitudes

1. The implementation of quotas has a positive effect on perceptions of the competence and effectiveness of women leaders and attitudes towards gender equality.
2. Increases in women's electoral representation arising from gender quotas enhances women's trust in, and engagement with, government service provision. This has the potential to strengthen policy impact across a wide range of areas not limited to gender issues.

Labour market indicators

1. Within firms subject to board-level gender quotas, there is no evidence of a spill-over effect on women's employment share, or the share of women working part-time at lower levels of the organisation.
2. There is little evidence to suggest that greater number of women on boards has contributed to stronger representation of women among senior managers in organisations subject to board-level gender quotas.
3. Gender pay gaps in executive management compensation persist after the introduction of board gender quotas. However, the gender gap in managerial pay is significantly smaller in countries that have implemented board quotas than those that have not.

In the following report, we provide details of the method of the review and the contexts in which leadership gender quotas have been implemented. We also expand on our key findings and present policy implications arising from this evidence.

6.2. Introduction

Despite making up half of the Australian workforce, women continue to be underrepresented in the upper echelons of public and private sector organisations. Data from the Australian Public Service Employment Database indicates that in 2016 women held only 42.9% of Senior Executive Service officer roles and less than 38% of positions in the two highest bands of this classification (Hiscox, 2016). A range of factors contribute to this persistent under-representation of women in leadership roles including gender discrimination in hiring and promotion, women's disproportionate responsibility for household and caring tasks, and pervasive stereotypes around gender and what characterises a leader.

Eliminating these structural barriers to women's full participation will require long-term and multi-pronged commitments to gender equality. Targets and Quotas for women in leadership present a short-term and effective means of improving women's representation while this systematic change occurs (Sojo, Wood, Wood, & Wheeler, 2016).

Gender targets operate by setting goals for the expected percentage or number of people from each gender group to occupy or be nominated for specific roles. Targets can vary substantially in their enforcement mechanisms or sanctions for failure to achieve the goal, leading to descriptors such as 'weak targets' with minimal enforcement, or 'hard targets' that without being called 'quotas' have robust scaffolding around them to support achieving the set goal (Sojo et al., 2016). On the other hand, quotas are government or industry mandated percentages of representation or numbers of gender groups in lists of candidates or positions. These requirements are typically paired with robust enforcement mechanisms, such as close monitoring and financial or operational penalties for noncompliance (European Parliament, 2011; Sojo et al., 2016). The primary studies reviewed in this chapter were concerned with *hard targets* and *quotas* for women in political and corporate leadership.

In the last 15 years, many jurisdictions have introduced targets and quotas to increase the parity of gender representation in leadership roles. In 2004 Norway introduced one of the earliest quotas for women on corporate boards (Bertrand et al., 2019) and was followed soon after by Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Iceland, and Spain (Maume et al., 2019). In recent years India has followed suit as one of the first emerging markets to introduce gender quotas for leadership in corporate entities (Naaraayanan & Nielsen, 2020).

Within the domain of political governance, half the countries in the world now have some form of electoral gender quota as a feature of their parliamentary system (Dahlerup et al., 2013). The state of Victoria has been part of this push for gender parity, introducing a requirement in 2015 that women make up no less than 50 per cent of all appointments to courts and paid Government boards (Premier of Victoria, 2015).

There is an extensive body of research investigating the impact of these targets and quotas on women's numeric representation in leadership roles (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018; Sojo et al., 2016). Electoral quotas have been found to increase the numbers of women in parliaments in Argentina (Htun et al., 2013), Belgium (Meier, 2004), Italy (Bonomi et al., 2013; De Paola et al., 2010), Morocco (Darhour & Dahlerup, 2013) and many other jurisdictions (Caul, 2001; Paxton et al., 2010). Board quotas have been similarly successful in increasing women's representation in the countries in which they have been introduced (Sojo et al., 2016; Storvik, 2011; Wang & Kelan, 2013).

Questions remain, however, about whether increasing numbers of women in leadership roles contributes meaningfully to addressing the structural barriers faced by women. Research into secondary impacts on outcomes beyond simple numerical presence is in its early stages and we do not yet have a comprehensive picture of how the implementation of targets and quotas in leadership roles may affect other indices of gender equality. In this project we review the evidence

for the impact of quotas on three categories of outcomes relevant to the Victorian public sector: (1) extent of women's influence; (2) impact on public attitudes; and (3) labour market indicators.

Extent of women's influence refers to the extent to which women in the targeted roles carry out their duties in a way that furthers the interests of other women, that is, substantive representation. In electoral terms this may be measured by public expenditure or parliamentary activity reflecting gendered priorities (e.g., Clayton & Zetterberg, 2018; Dauti, 2021). In both the electoral and board context, women's capacity to reach positions of power or authority, such as a Ministerial role or a position on a board's audit committee, may also be a measure of the capacity for substantive representation (e.g., Kerevel, 2019; Maganelli et al., 2017).

Impact on public attitudes refers to the effect on attitudes and perceptions that the presence of women in leadership roles may have on the broader public. For example, there may be shifts in perceptions of gender equality and bias, attitudes towards women in leadership, or views about governments or leadership bodies in general (e.g., De Paola et al., 2010).

Finally, the impact of gender targets and quotas on *labour market indicators* may be reflected in reductions in the gender pay gap, changes in women's workforce participation, and gendered differences in willingness to apply for jobs at lower levels of an organisation (e.g., Bertrand et al., 2019; Maggian et al., 2020).

The key objective of the current review is to draw conclusions regarding the impact of gender targets and quotas on improving gender equality for outcomes reflecting the extent of women's influence, impact on public attitudes, and gender-relevant labour market indicators. An additional objective of the review is to identify contextual factors that may promote or inhibit these outcomes.

6.3. Methods

This project constitutes a rapid review, which follows the same principles of comprehensiveness and transparency as a systematic review (Cooper, Hedges &, Valentine, 2009), including a systematic literature search and selection (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The Prisma Group, 2009), with some aspects of the process streamlined to facilitate reporting in a truncated timeframe (Abrami et al., 2010; Thomas et al., 2013).

6.3.1. Eligibility

References were eligible for inclusion in this review if they met the criteria outlined in Table 6.1, below.

Table 6.1. Inclusion Criteria for Reviewed Papers

Area	Criteria
Nature of target quota	Gender or intersectional involving gender
Context	Electoral or corporate leadership
Outcome of interest	Must measure a secondary outcome falling under the category of women's influence, public attitudes or labour market indicators
Nature of study	Must report original analysis of data
Language	Only English language papers were retained for screening, given the feasibility of translating references in the current time frame

6.3.2. Literature search

The following Boolean search string was entered into the databases listed in Table 6.2: *((Affirmative action) OR target OR quota OR targets OR quotas) AND (gender OR female OR women OR diversity OR equality).*

We also conducted a search for grey literature using Google Advanced Search. As Google Advanced Search does not support Boolean search strings, all combinations of target and quota search terms and context search terms were entered separately. Search parameters were: English language, search in text of page (to exclude sites simply linking to those containing our search terms), file type: pdf (to restrict search results to reports and documents).

Table 6.2. Full List of Databases Included in Literature Search

Database	Search fields	Specific databases
Ebscohost	Title, subject terms	Academic Search Complete
		Business Source Complete
		EconLit
		Education Research Complete
		ERIC
		Family & Society Studies Worldwide
		OpenDissertations
		SocINDEX with Full Text
		Urban Studies Abstracts
ProQuest	Document title, all subjects and indexing	ABI/INFORM Collection
		Accounting, Tax & Banking Collection
		Asian & European Business Collection
		Australia & New Zealand Database
		Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database
		Continental Europe Database
		East Europe, Central Europe Database

Database	Search fields	Specific databases
		Education Database
		Healthcare Administration Database
		Military Database
		Political Science Database
		Psychology Database
		Public Health Database
		Publicly Available Content Database
		Research Library
		Social Science Database
		Sociology Database
		UK & Ireland Database
		ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global
PsycInfo	Heading word, title, subject headings, APA Psycinfo classification word, original title	Individual databases not specified by PsycInfo
Google Scholar	Title	

These searches returned a total of 23,092 references. One hundred and sixty of these met screening criteria and were assessed for inclusion in the final set of references. Figure 1 outlines the complete screening process. The number of references retained for data extraction and breakdown across outcome categories is given in Table 6.3.

Figure 6.1. *PRISMA Flow Diagram summarising literature search and inclusion for the Targets and Quotas Review*
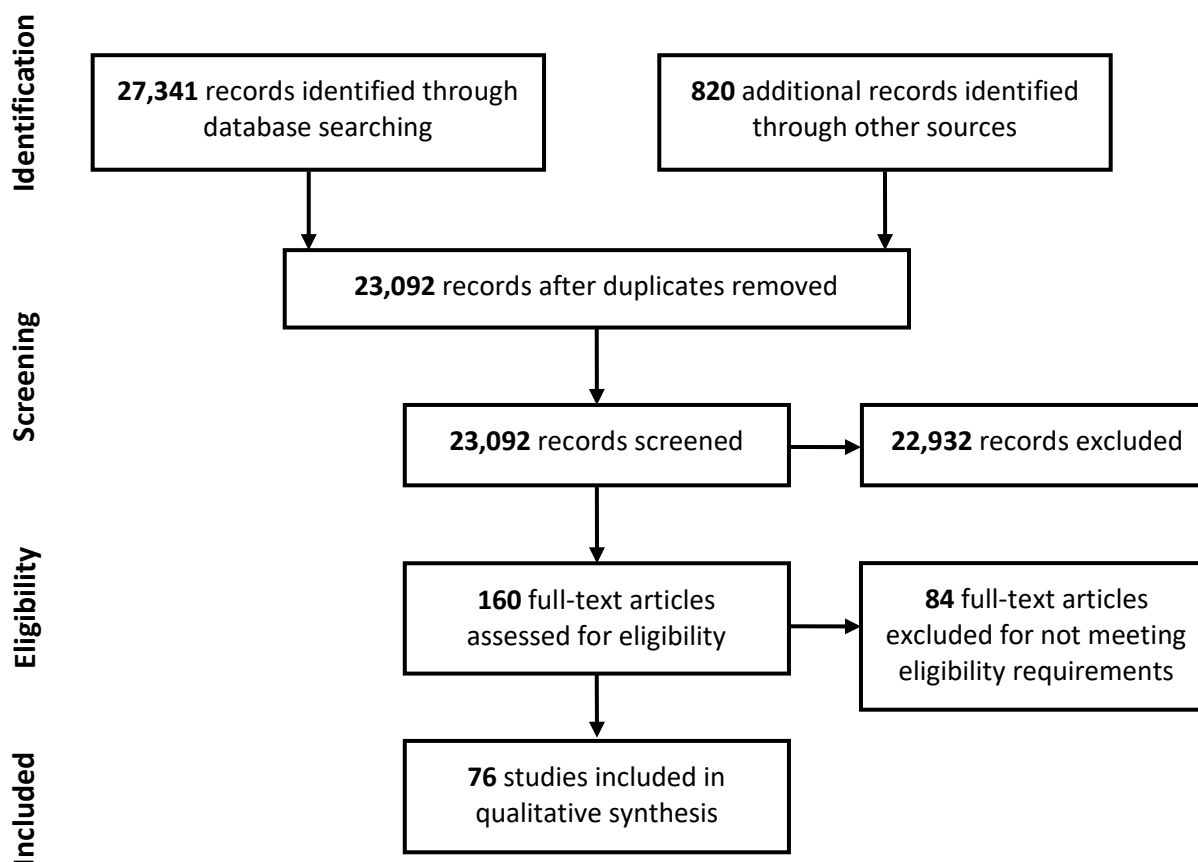
Table 6.3. Summary of References Retained for Data Extraction

Outcome Category	Quantity
Total number of references retained for data extraction	**76**
Extent of women's influence	60
Impact on public attitudes	13
Labour market indicators	16

6.4. Findings and Recommendations

In this section of the report, we begin by providing contextual notes for the literature we have drawn on, before providing summaries of the evidence and policy implications of leadership gender quotas for each of the three outcome categories independently.

Academic study of the impact of leadership gender quotas is comparatively young. Although electoral quotas have been employed in some nations for at least 20 years, the first board quotas were introduced in Norway in 2004, with other nations not following suit until at least 2010. As such, much of the evidence for the outcomes of gender quotas has been gathered less than five years after their initial implementation. For the purposes of this report, outcomes measured less than five

years after implementation of quotas are considered 'short-term', 'medium-term' is used to refer to outcomes five to ten years after implementation, while 'long-term' refers to anything greater than ten years. These are arbitrary cut-offs we have identified, and do not reflect any consensus on specific time-frames in the academic literature.

Given that study in these areas is in its early stages, for some outcomes there is not yet a large body of evidence with clear convergences. Throughout the tables below, we note where this is the case. Finally, in our literature search our goal was to achieve the broadest possible coverage in our outcome areas of interest and so we deliberately included grey literature, such as reports and unpublished academic manuscripts, in our search criteria. Consequently, the quality and methodological rigour of the references is varied. However, any studies not meeting basic research standards were excluded from analysis, while we weighted our recommendations by the quality of those retained.

6.4.1. Outcome Category 1: Extent of Women's Influence

Under this outcome category, we examine the extent to which the implementation of gender quotas facilitates women to meaningfully access power and status and translate their representation into substantive outcomes for other women. Changes in women's power and influence have been studied in relation to both board and electoral quotas. Electoral quotas have been implemented in a wide range of country settings, with some of the earliest quotas introduced in new or developing democracies. To draw on the broadest possible set of evidence, we have evaluated all literature pertaining to gender quotas and our outcomes of interest. However, we have weighted our recommendations to the evidence provided by papers conducted in developmental and cultural contexts similar to Australia.

Table 6.4. Evidence for Effects of Leadership Targets and Quotas on Women's Influence

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Nature of women's participation in leadership roles	Analyses conducted less than 5 years after the implementation of board gender quotas show little to no impact on the share of women in board chair or other significant roles such as audit or remuneration committee membership. However, studies of the outcomes of Norway's 2004 board quotas indicate there may be long-term effects, with improvements in women's representation in chair and deputy chair roles reported after ten years of quotas.	It cannot be assumed that the effects of gender quotas in one area (whether role, organisation, or sector) will spill-over into other areas. Quotas should be considered for all areas in which greater representation of women is required, including executive candidate quotas. Realistic evaluation timelines should be implemented.
	Women's lack of status and influence on boards has been attributed to gender stereotypes and isolation from 'inner circles'. There is some research to suggest that that these effects are reduced when boards achieve full gender balance but are not eliminated while women remain in the minority	

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	in the broader context of the organisation and industry.	
	Where board quotas have been limited to certain types of organisations (e.g., Norway's quota only applied to publicly limited companies), positive effects of quotas on women's representation in senior roles have not spilled over to other types of boards.	The Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector should consider establishing an advisory group comprising representatives from across the public sector (such as those in attendance at the deliberative forum), as well as academic researchers and women with board and electoral experience, with the purpose of investigating all areas in which gender quotas may be constructively implemented in the Victorian public sector.
	Similar to board gender quotas, women's representation in senior roles (e.g., mayor, parliamentary committee membership or leadership) as a result of electoral gender quotas are rarely observed. Where such effects are found, they only appear to emerge at least ten years after the implementation of quotas.	Any representation effects of quotas are likely to be observed in longer time frames, and therefore realistic evaluation timelines should be implemented. Faster progress towards gender equality is likely to require additional policy measures (such as those examined in other sections of this report) to be implemented in concert with quotas for women in leadership roles.
	Women's participation in boards and elected bodies can be limited by gender inequality in other areas such as household responsibilities and traditional gender norms. One study conducted after the implementation of local government gender quotas in France found that although women were elected at greater rates after quotas were introduced, they failed to achieve leadership roles because they were more likely to resign than male councillors. Analyses found this was not related to a lack of political competitiveness or ambition, but local gender norms regarding women's role in society.	Gender quotas should be considered one action in a suite of measures addressing gender inequality. It is critical that gender quotas are implemented in concert with actions that address gender norms and stereotypes, women's disproportionate responsibility in the household, and frequent socioeconomic disadvantage. Other reports in this project offer recommendations for each of these areas.
	Quotas are most likely to improve women's representation in senior roles when they increase the numbers	Gender representation at all levels within the public sector should be measured and monitored to

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	of women in 'pipeline' positions or professions and create a larger pool of well-qualified potential female leaders.	establish pipeline indicators and targets.
Women's interests reflected in legislation and public expenditure	There is substantial evidence that the introduction of quotas leads to greater attention to women's interests by political bodies. Parliamentary speeches and debates more frequently reference women's issues after the introduction of quotas, and there are significant increases in the introduction of bills addressing issues such as health, education, childcare, reproductive rights, gender violence, and gender equality. This effect is also observed in political party platforms. Parties – both left and right – in countries with electoral gender quotas pay greater attention to issues in which there is traditionally a gender gap, such as social justice and welfare state expansion.	The finding that representational quotas increase attention to women's interests have implications beyond gender. Quotas for other historically underrepresented groups such as socioeconomic status, and ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities, may be one tool for increasing attention to their specific needs in policy agendas.
	However, institutional factors are consistently found to prevent this attention to women's interests from being translated into concrete changes in policy or law. At least in the short to medium term, the implementation of quotas has not led to increased public expenditures in policy areas reflecting women's interests. Similarly, despite significant increases in the introduction of women-centred bills, there is no corresponding increase in the passage and adoption of such bills. Institutional factors linked to the failure of these bills include women's lack of access to agenda-setting roles such as mayor or party leader, party leaders' control over the legislative process, and informal norms that entrench gender bias.	Collaboration among female legislators, and between these legislators and women's organisations may strengthen the capacity to achieve substantive policy outcomes. In a local government context this may involve the creation of women's caucuses that share resources and develop strategies to advance women's policy priorities. Such collectivisation of women need not be confined to elected positions. Other areas within the public sector may develop women's networks with a similar purpose.

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Public service provision	There is a small amount of research suggesting that local government bodies that have implemented quotas are perceived as having a higher quality of public goods, fewer citizen complaints, and are more responsive to the concerns of women. To date, however, public service provision has not received a great deal of attention in academic research and has only been studied in settings considered more patriarchal than Australia.	Public sector bodies could contribute to greater research in the area of public service provision by collecting gender disaggregated data on their service provision and client perceptions.

6.4.2. Outcome Category 2: Impact on Public Attitudes

In this section we examine how the implementation of leadership gender quotas may affect attitudes towards women, gender equality, and leadership. Examinations of the impact of electoral quotas on public attitudes have been conducted largely in developing nations, or nations with developing democratic processes such as Iraq, Rwanda, and Uruguay. In contrast, board quotas have predominantly been introduced, and therefore studied, in developed nations such as Norway and Italy.

Table 6.5. Evidence for the Effect of Leadership Targets and Quotas on Public Attitudes

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Attitudes toward female leaders	The implementation of electoral quotas has a positive effect on perceptions of the competence and effectiveness of women parliamentarians. Early evidence suggests electoral quotas may also have spill-over effects on perceptions of women's competence in the workplace. This effect on attitudes towards female leaders is attributed, in part, to the increased exposure to, and visibility of, women in these roles as a result of their greater numbers	Electoral and other leadership quotas may have their greatest impact when supported by measures to ensure the visibility of female candidates, parliamentarians, and other leaders.
	The increase in positive attitudes towards women's leadership capacity is not accompanied by a reduction in implicit or explicit preferences for male leaders. Social norms prioritising men as leaders persist, at least in the medium term (up to ten	Organisations should have realistic time frames for evaluating the success of gender quota interventions as it may take up to ten years to observe their impact on perceptions of the effectiveness of women leaders. Shifting social norms that explicitly and implicitly link leadership to notions of masculinity

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	years after implementation of quotas).	may take considerably longer. Measures to hasten this process are outside the scope of this review and represent a significant area of academic study.
Attitudes toward gender equality	Board quotas can contribute meaningfully to progress toward gender equality in organisations.	Gender quotas are best considered a necessary, but not sufficient, factor in achieving gender equality in organisations.
	Such quotas are most likely to have a positive effect on gender equality when embedded as an organisational value.	Gender equality should be recognised as a value of an organisation, and a desirable goal. Where board quotas are in place, they must be communicated and understood as an important and positive means of achieving this goal. This may be conveyed by statements in annual reports of commitment to gender equality and reporting on progress on gender quality issues such as gender pay gaps, childcare, paid leave, flexibility and sexual discrimination and harassment. Positive messaging from board directors and senior managers regarding the benefits of gender quotas and female representation in leadership should aim to negate false dichotomies drawn between gender equality and meritocracy.
		Gender quotas are likely to be more effective when men in leadership roles champion gender equality broadly, but also the legitimacy and competence of the women they work alongside.
	Evidence is mixed on the exact proportion of women on boards required to progress gender equality, however it converges on the need for more women rather than less. While some research suggests a minimum	To make meaningful progress toward gender equality there should be no fewer than three women on boards of any size. On larger boards, women should represent at least one third of directors, however, larger quotas of

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	of 33% (one-third) of board members should be women, other lines of inquiry indicate that on smaller boards especially, a minimum of three women are required to achieve the necessary critical mass to achieve tangible improvements in gender equality.	40-50% are likely to be more effective.
Visibility of female leaders	Early evidence suggests that the implementation of electoral quotas may increase the visibility of female candidates and leaders.	The implementation of gender quotas and visibility of women leaders may interact to increase gender equality. While gender quotas make it more likely female candidates will receive coverage, heightened visibility via both direct engagement with constituents and media coverage also accelerates positive shifts in perceptions of women in leadership.
	Although increased visibility plays a key role in progressing gender equality, sexist coverage acts as a barrier to women pursuing leadership roles.	Content of media coverage should be monitored, and mechanisms put in place to ensure women are subject to fair coverage and treatment by the media. Although evidence-based strategies to combat media sexism are beyond the scope of this report, potential measures may include the incorporation of gender-fair principles into the codes of conduct regulating Australian media, while simultaneously strengthening enforcement approaches to code breaches.
		Within the public sector, there should be clear protocols for the equal and fair portrayal of women in government publications and transparent processes of compliance.
Women's attitudes and experiences	Increases in women's parliamentary representation as a result of gender quotas, have a positive effect on women's understanding and engagement with politics, and their trust in the electoral process.	Active interventions to increase women's representation in leadership, such as through quotas, promotion and retention processes, and increasing visibility, will likely increase women's trust in, and engagement with, government service provision. This has the potential to strengthen policy impact across a wide range of areas not limited to gender issues.

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
		Active interventions to increase women's representation in leadership, such as through quotas, promotion and retention processes, and increasing visibility will likely contribute to the engagement and confidence necessary for more women to pursue leadership roles in the future.

6.4.3. Outcome Category 3: Labour Market Indicators

Under this outcome category we explore the potential impact of board and electoral quotas on labour market indicators of gender equality, including gender pay gaps and changes in women's workforce participation. Such outcomes have been studied almost exclusively in the context of board quotas, with only two of the studies identified in our literature search examining whether electoral quotas have had spill-over effects on women's experiences of work. As such, most of the evidence outlined below is in relation to the impact of gender quotas for boards.

Table 6.6. Evidence for Spill-over Effects of Leadership Targets and Quotas on Labour Market Indicators

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
Women's workforce participation	Within firms subject to board-level gender quotas, there is no evidence of a spill-over effect on women's employment share, or the share of women working part-time at lower levels of the organisation.	Leadership gender quotas alone are unlikely to be an effective tool to close disparities in women's broader workforce participation, at least in the short to medium term. Increasing women's involvement in recruiting decisions or human resources policies may increase the trickle-down effects of leadership quotas. Quotas of 50% may be necessary to facilitate equal contribution of women to board decisions and influence over corporate polices.
	The broader societal context in which leadership quotas are introduced does not influence the impact of quotas on women's workforce participation. We fail to find spill-over effects in countries ranked highly on gender equality measures (e.g., Norway) as well as those with considerably lower rankings (e.g., France and Italy). However, there is some evidence that pre-existing	Leadership gender quotas are likely to have their greatest impact on women's workforce participation when implemented in organisations with clear equality norms and other gender diversity initiatives in place.

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	levels of gender equality within individual organisations may contribute to a greater impact of quota implementation on women's workforce participation in those firms.	
	There is also no evidence that board-level or electoral gender quotas have a positive impact on women's workforce participation in the broader jurisdiction i.e., beyond the organisations subject to the quota. While there is some evidence to suggest that women's workforce participation does increase after the implementation of quotas, similar increases are observed in men's participation, thereby maintaining pre-quota gender ratios in employment share.	Any trickle-down effects of quotas are likely to be observed in longer time frames, and therefore realistic evaluation timelines should be implemented. Faster progress towards gender equality is likely to require additional policy measures (such as those examined in other sections of this report) to be implemented in concert with quotas for women in leadership roles.
	Little research to date has examined the impact of electoral quotas on women's workforce participation and the results of early studies in this area are inconclusive.	
Gender pay gap among board directors subject to the target/quota	The impact of quotas on the gender pay gap among board members appears mixed. While in some countries (e.g., Norway and India) the pay gap between male and female board members is seen to narrow significantly after the implementation of gender quotas, in numerous other states (e.g., Germany, Italy, and France) the gender pay gap persists or even increases. This appears largely attributable to variation in women's access to key committees that attract higher remuneration. While lack of access to such committees can, in part, be explained by potential demographic differences between women appointed under quota regimes and their male counterparts (e.g., age, experience), highly experienced female directors have also been shown to be subject to	Meaningful progress in gender equality relies not only on the number of women in leadership roles, but on the nature of the positions they occupy. To achieve pay parity on boards it is necessary to ensure that there is not an inner 'glass mezzanine' that reduces women's access to important monitoring committees, including audit and remuneration committees.
		Processes by which board directors are appointed to committees should be structured to avoid biases that disadvantage women. Implementing committee-level quotas requiring that at least one woman sit on each board committee may not only contribute to closing the gender pay gap among board directors, but also improve the performance of those committees.

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
	'positional' gender segregation limiting their access to powerful positions on corporate boards.	
Gender pay gap in executive management compensation	With few exceptions, the evidence suggests that gender pay gaps in executive salaries persist after the introduction of board gender quotas. However, the gender gap in managerial pay is significantly smaller in countries that have implemented board quotas than those that have not. In addition to gender pay gaps in fixed remuneration, there are often significant discrepancies between men and women in variable remuneration components such as fringe benefits, annual and multi-year bonuses, and benefit expenses.	Board-level gender quotas alone are unlikely to mitigate gender pay gaps in executive management compensation. Targeted measures such as gender pay gap audits or reporting transparency will be necessary to ensure women receive the full benefit of the increases in representation facilitated by gender quotas. The Pay Equity Review prepared for this project canvasses the evidence base for strategies to tackle gender-based disparities in compensation. Any such measures must also apply to variable remuneration, including superannuation.
	Gender pay gaps in executive salaries are largely attributable to discrimination – a failure to recognise and reward female effort - rather than differences between the genders in skills, human capital, family situation and the like. In countries that have implemented board quotas the portion of the gender pay gap accounted for by discrimination against female managers is significantly reduced.	Approaches to implementing quotas that define and communicate organisational norms of fair and equal treatment are likely to have a stronger effect on gender pay gaps in executive compensation.
Women's representation in executive management	The implementation of board quotas does not appear to have had a substantial impact on women's representation in executive management in the medium term. There is limited evidence of an increasing probability of women being appointed as executives in the immediate aftermath of quota implementation, especially in companies where the workforce was female-dominated, however the effect was weak and does not seem to be borne out by longer term data.	As previously noted, trickle-down effects of board-level gender quotas on women's representation in executive management may take at least ten years to be observed, and realistic evaluation timelines for evaluation should be implemented.
		Governments and companies should be wary of relying solely on board-

Area	Summary of findings	Recommendations
		level quotas to address the under-representation of women in executive management. Gender quotas at multiple levels of an organisation would increase the pool of women available and qualified for management roles and accelerate progress toward gender quality.
Gender gap in rates of application	A single experimental study investigating the effect of gender quotas on women's willingness to apply for entry- and top-level positions found that implementing quotas solely at the entry-level discouraged women from applying, whereas quotas at either the top-level alone or both entry- and top-level promoted parity in rates of application between men and women.	Although the evidence presented in this table suggests board-level quotas may not have strong spill-over effects on other indicators of gender equality, this work cautions against abandoning board quotas in favour of entry-level quotas. Board quotas have the capacity to encourage women to climb the corporate ladder, however additional policy approaches such as entry- and mid-level gender quotas and pay equity strategies will be necessary for them to enjoy gender equality as they do so.

6.5. A Roadmap for Action

In this review we systematically examined the evidence for the impact of leadership quotas on gender equality outcomes beyond numerical representation of women. Three classes of outcomes were examined:

i. **Impact on public attitudes**: Shifts in perceptions of gender equality and bias, women in leadership, and views about leadership bodies in general.
ii. **Extent of women's influence**: The extent to which women in the targeted roles carry out their duties in a way that furthers the interest of other women.
iii. **Labour market indicators**: Reductions in the gender pay gap, changes in women's workforce participation, effects on representation of women at lower levels of an organisation, or across sectors.

A summary of findings for each of these outcomes is given in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7. Impact of Leadership Gender Quotas on Secondary Outcomes: Summary of Findings

	Positive impact	Unclear	No impact
Public attitudes	Heightened perceptions of the competence and effectiveness of women leaders		Persistence of social norms prioritising men as leaders
	Increased visibility of women leaders		
	Improved attitudes towards gender equality		
	Increase in women's understanding of and engagement with government		
Women's influence	Greater attention to women's interests by political bodies	Little improvement in the share of women in significant internal roles (e.g., board chair, mayor, audit subcommittee member) in 10 years, but some early indications of increases in the long term	Increased policy attention does not translate to concrete policy shifts or outcomes
		More favourable perceptions of public service provision have been observed in some jurisdictions, but further research is required	
Labour market indicators	Preliminary evidence suggests that top-level quotas promote parity in rates of application between men and women	Impact on the gender pay gap is inconclusive. While gender pay gaps often persist after the implementation of quotas, they are frequently smaller than in jurisdictions without quotas	No spill-over effect on women's employment share, or share of women working part-time
			No spill-over effect of board quotas on women's representation in executive management

Note. All impacts reported within a 5–10-year time-frame unless otherwise specified

Quotas have been conclusively shown to increase the proportion of women in the positions to which they are applied, making them a successful intervention for rapidly improving women's representation (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). Our comprehensive review of the literature has shown that implementation of quotas also has a positive impact on several secondary indicators of gender equality. In particular, quotas and the representation that flows from them improve public attitudes towards women leaders, governments, and gender equality in general.

i. **To harness and expand the positive of impact of quotas on public attitudes we recommend:**

   1.1. *Further increasing the visibility of women leaders among the public by establishing clear protocols for the equal and fair portrayal of women in government publications and transparent processes of compliance.*

The success of gender quotas in not only increasing the proportion of women in leadership roles, but also driving greater political and public attention to their policy interests has implications for other historically underrepresented groups. Quotas for those with lower socioeconomic status or in racial, ethnic, or sexual minorities may be one tool for increasing attention to their specific needs in policy agendas (Clayton & Zetterberg, 2018). We also note that approaches that treat women as a homogenous target group for interventions such as quotas will rarely achieve equitable outcomes due to the numerous other marginalised identities that intersect with being female.

ii. **Disabled women, trans women and non-binary people, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and women of diverse sexualities will face particular and often compounded, barriers to workplace equality. We recommend:**

   - *Information management systems be reviewed to maximise the capacity to gather data on representation in the public sector along a range of intersecting identities.*

   - *This data be used to inform the establishment of quotas within quotas to ensure equitable representation of a diverse range of women.*

Gender quotas at one level of an organisation, or in one sector, do not appear to impact women's representation in other areas in the short to medium term. The ongoing under-representation of women in roles to which quotas have not been applied undermines the capacity of those quotas to effect broader gender equality outcomes. Without suitably skilled and qualified women at lower levels of an organisation the pool of talent may not be large enough to support leadership quotas. Further, some evidence attributes women's lack of influence once in leadership roles to gender stereotypes and isolation from powerful inner circles and suggests this cannot be eliminated while women remain the minority of the broader organisation or industry (Storvik & Gulbrandsen, 2016).

iii. **Rather than relying on leadership quotas to trickle down to lower levels or spill over to other sectors, quotas should be applied to all roles where women are underrepresented. We recommend:**

   - *Ensuring Workforce Gender Audits measure and effectively monitor representation by gender and other intersecting identities both vertically and horizontally across the Victorian Public Sector.*

   - *The Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector establish an advisory group including VPS representatives and academic researchers, with the purpose of investigating all areas in which quotas may be constructively implemented in the VPS. This should include:*

     o *Candidate quotas for executive positions*

     o *Committee-level quotas on boards requiring that at least one woman sit on each subcommittee*

   - *Approaches to implementing expanded VPS quotas should:*

     o *Define and communicate organisational norms of fair and equal treatment*

- *Position quotas as a positive means of achieving and maintaining these norms*
- *Directly negate false dichotomies between 'equality' and 'merit'*

Evidence shows that in developed nations there is not, in reality, a tension between merit and equality. The implementation of gender quotas has been shown to increase the quality of leaders in both electoral and board contexts (Bennouri et al., 2020). Women who progress to leadership roles under quota systems are frequently as qualified, or more qualified, than the men in those roles (e.g., Allen et al., 2016; Bagues & Campa, 2021; Beer & Camp, 2016). Studies have shown that with an influx of highly qualified and capable women, it is the under-performing men who vacate leadership roles, leading to higher performing leadership bodies overall (Baltrunaite et al., 2014; Besley et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, what is considered 'merited' is constructed by tradition and convention and does not always objectively reflect the highest possible standards of performance (Crosby et al., 2013). Notions of merit that reflect the status quo can prevent organisations from benefitting from the skills and perspectives of candidates with diverse life experiences. To truly embrace and benefit from diversity, organisations should subject their standards of merit to regular, clear-eyed scrutiny.

iv. **Persistent under-representation of women should also be addressed by a long-term strategy to establish a 'pipeline' of women at all levels and across all sectors. We recommend:**
- *Using Workforce Gender Audits to develop a map of the gender pipeline*
- *Establishing pipeline targets at each level within each sector*
- *Evaluating information management systems to ensure they can track individual promotion and development across the VPS, so women's progress can be monitored.*
- *Establishing initiatives to drive promotion and development of women in areas in which they are underrepresented, with consideration for the needs of those with intersecting identities that compound barriers to career progression.*
- *Investigating models for outreach to secondary schools and tertiary education institutions to increase numbers of girls and women entering study in fields where women are historically underrepresented. Several successful programs exist and could be adapted to address VPS pipeline problems at their source (see Women and Girls in STEM map: https://djpr.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1925305/Women-in-STEM-Map.pdf and the University of Melbourne's Pathway to Politics Program: https://www.unimelb.edu.au/pathways-to-politics for examples)*

Quotas must complement other efforts to transform social and organisational norms and values and should not, on their own, be expected to translate to substantive outcomes for women. Institutional entrenchment of gender inequality and social norms regarding the role of women frequently prevent the beneficiaries of quota systems from achieving outcomes that benefit other women.

v. **Quotas must be implemented in concert with a range of measures intended to enhance gender equality. We recommend:**
- *Women's disproportionate responsibility for childcare and household duties be addressed by measures to improve access to childcare and the roadmap to increase men's uptake of flexible work arrangements provided elsewhere in this report.*

- *Women's frequent socioeconomic disadvantage be addressed by the elimination of the gender pay gap and pay structures that financially penalise a woman for carrying and raising children.*

- *Strategies to reduce gender prejudice, such as those outlined in the Anonymous Application Procedures roadmap in this report, be implemented immediately.*

6.6. Conclusions

Early research into the outcomes of leadership gender quotas focused almost exclusively on whether these interventions were successful in increasing the numbers of women on corporate boards and in legislatures. It is only relatively recently that academic inquiry has turned to questions regarding the substantive impact that women's greater representation has had on progress toward gender equality. This report has examined the available literature addressing the impact of leadership gender quotas on women's influence, public attitudes, and labour market indicators. As noted throughout our findings, little of this research has been able to report on long-term outcomes (greater than ten years) of gender quotas and this should be borne in mind when evaluating our findings. Three key themes emerge in our policy implications:

i. **Gender quotas at one level of an organisation, or in one sector, do not appear to have spill-over effects to other levels or sectors in the short to medium term.**

Quotas have been shown to increase the proportion of women in the roles to which they are applied. Rather than relying on leadership quotas to 'trickle down' to lower levels, or 'spill over' to other sectors, quotas should be considered for all roles where women are underrepresented.

ii. **To take full advantage of leadership gender quotas, organisations must create a 'pipeline' of women suitable for senior positions.**

Employing quotas and other measures to increase women's representation at all levels, creates a pool of experienced and qualified women to take on leadership roles. This, in turn, increases the likelihood that these women will attain senior roles such as board chair, mayor, or member of significant committees. Proportionate representation at all levels of an organisation also challenges the gender stereotypes that undermine women's power and influence.

iii. **Quotas must complement other efforts to transform social and organisational norms and values and should not, on their own, be expected to translate to substantive outcomes for women.**

Institutional entrenchment of gender inequality and social norms regarding the role of women frequently prevent the beneficiaries of quota systems from achieving outcomes that benefit other women. Consequently, gender quotas must be implemented in concert with a range of measures intended to enhance gender equality. A number of potential organisational measures are presented in this project, but a holistic approach to gender equality also requires commitment from the private sector, media, and a range of community actors.

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Dr Victor Sojo

Victor Sojo is a Senior Lecturer in Leadership at the University of Melbourne. He researches strategies for the economic empowerment of women and minority groups, workplace abuse, and leadership development in the public sector.

Prof Michelle Ryan

Michelle Ryan is a Professor of Social and Organisational Psychology and the Director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at The Australian National University. Her research focuses on understanding how social and psychological processes create and perpetuate gender inequality at work.

Prof Cordelia Fine

Cordelia Fine is a professor in the History & Philosophy of Science program in the School of Historical & Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her research includes the study of scientific and popular biological explanations of workplace gender inequalities, and the effects of gender-related attitudes on organizational judgments.

Dr Melissa Wheeler

Dr Melissa A. Wheeler has a PhD in social psychology from the University of Melbourne. Her research interests include moral psychology, applied ethics, workplace diversity, and ethical leadership. Melissa's research has been published in top tier journals, including Leadership Quarterly, Journal of Business Ethics, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, and Cities.

Dr Melanie McGrath

Melanie McGrath holds a PhD in social psychology from the University of Melbourne and is an Emerging Scholar of the Center for the Science of Moral Understanding at the University of North Carolina. Her fields of interest include perceptions of harm, dimensions of threat, the nature of moral evaluation, and human interaction with artificial intelligence.

Dr Miriam Glennie

Miriam Glennie is a Research Associate at the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at the Australian National University. Miriam holds a PhD in management, with particular expertise in public sector management. Her research interests include gender equality reporting, the gender pay gap, performance measurement and human resource analytics.

Dr Victoria Roberts

Victoria Roberts holds a doctorate in management and is a Lecturer in the Department of Management and Marketing at The University of Melbourne. She specialises in the field of organisational research and has a particular interest in the prevention and management harassment and abuse in work and sport organisations.

PhD Candidate Lindsie Arthur

Lindsie Catherine Arthur holds a Masters in Organisational Psychology from The London School of Economics. Currently a PhD Candidate at The University of Melbourne, her research centres around gender, behaviour, and social interactions. She is also passionate about education and improving day-to-day interactions between diverse populations.

PhD Candidate Rachael Hadoux

Rachael Hadoux is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences at the University of Melbourne. Rachael's research focuses on the primary prevention of violence against women and aims to address this issue by examining what core beliefs and attitudes lay the foundations for gendered violence and violence-supportive attitudes.

PhD Candidate Kate Western

Kate Western is a PhD (Clinical Psychology) Candidate at The Australian National University. Her research investigates the role of identity processes in recovery from trauma, with a particular focus on supporting survivors of gendered and sexual violence.