

# Leading Thinker residency:

Behavioural insights & gender equality

## Final report



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## Foreword

### Dr Sandro Demaio, CEO VicHealth

The VicHealth Leading Thinkers initiative translates pioneering global approaches in behavioural insights into practical strategies and applications for Victorian organisations.

In September 2016, VicHealth announced that Professor Iris Bohnet and Dr Jeni Klugman would share the Leading Thinkers ‘Behavioural Insights & Gender Equality’ residency as foremost global experts on this topic. Gender equality is a core principle of a fair, respectful, safe and inclusive society, and this residency was a way for VicHealth to build on a 15-year history of leading research and programs to prevent violence against women.

The recent passing of the Gender Equality Act 2020 that aims to improve workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector, universities and local council ([www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-bill](http://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-bill)) highlights the foresight of this initiative.

Professor Bohnet and Dr Klugman have worked with VicHealth and numerous partners to deepen knowledge and capabilities in practices that benefit Victorians in settings ranging from workplaces to community sports. The ‘Gender Neutral Job Advertisements’ trial was included in the Victorian Government’s Recruit Smarter pilot. In 2019 a deliberative forum brought together practitioners, policy makers and academics to co-define a set of practical ways that workplaces, health and sports settings could move from intention to action. A world-first machine learning analysis has helped understand the nature of gender portrayal in the media, a powerful channel to influence aspirations and motivations.

I would like to thank our Leading Thinkers for their ground-breaking work helping VicHealth deliver good health for all Victorians. And I would particularly like to thank our health promotion partners who helped us test and share new practices that can shift the dial on gender equality.

# Statement of residence

Nithya Solomon, Executive Lead Innovation Office



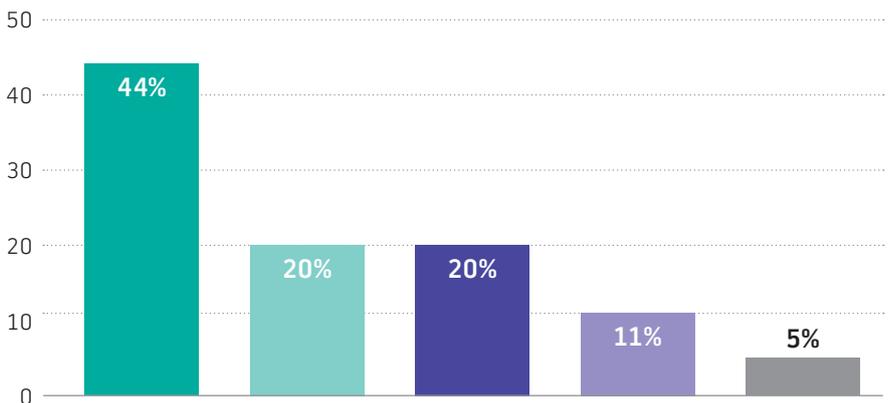
In 2014 VicHealth developed the Leading Thinkers initiative to make international thought leadership in behavioural insights practical and accessible for Victoria. The initiative was planned as a series of multi-year residencies featuring eminent global practitioners who could spend an allocated period of time with VicHealth and mentor us, and our network of partners, in their practice.

Professor Iris Bohnet and Dr Jeni Klugman shared VicHealth’s 2nd Leading Thinkers Residency, *Behavioural Insights and Gender Equality*, which was launched in April 2017. The objectives of this residency were:

- To build knowledge and awareness in the application of behavioural insights approaches to gender equality
- To build capability in the design and delivery of behavioural insights (BI) approaches to gender equality, via trials and research localised for the Victorian context and in alignment with the objectives of the Victorian gender equality strategy.

Professor Bohnet and Dr Klugman collectively spent 90 days over a 4-year period working with VicHealth and a range of organisations and partners in Victoria. Their time was allocated as follows:

- Build knowledge in BI strategies for gender equality (via workshops, symposia, communities of practice, group and 1:1 meetings)
- Design and delivery of BI trials and research
- Expert consultation for researchers and practitioners
- Reports, papers & publications
- Administration



## Highlights

### New, co-created knowledge about ‘what works’

**10** trials and studies shaped in partnership with over 30 organisations, to translate pioneering global approaches in behavioural insights into practical strategies addressing unconscious bias, gender stereotypes, gender role models and social norms. These range from a world first machine learning analysis of gender portrayal in sports media to the debiasing language in job advertisements trial included in the Victorian government’s ‘Recruit Smarter’ pilot.

### Demonstrated appetite and demand to access our Leading Thinkers’ expertise

**3287**

attendances at events or symposia

**> 750,000**

people reached including in-person and virtual attendance and online engagement

Evaluation feedback that Leading Thinkers Initiative provided unique opportunities to engage with networks and thought leaders, not otherwise available via existing networks/channels.

### Participatory knowledge sharing among research and practitioners.



For example, 20 researcher and practitioner organisations contributed their ‘What works’ case studies for a deliberative forum that generated 7 categories of commitments to action. 91.8% participants would “definitely” or “to a large extent” action the ideas and strategies developed.

## Evaluation insights

An independent evaluation was conducted by the University of Melbourne's Centre for Program Evaluation, to learn about people's experiences with the residency, and the initiative as a model, and to identify possible strategies for improving the initiative.

The evaluation confirmed that the aspects of greatest value were the access to knowledge, ideas and methods of the Leading Thinkers.

**76% Agreed/Strongly Agreed:** Being part of the Leading Thinker activity introduced me to new ideas

**69% Agreed/Strongly Agreed:** Accessing the knowledge of thought leaders (most valuable part of the Leading Thinkers' residency)

**61% Agreed/Strongly Agreed:** The Leading Thinkers residency increased MY understanding of gender equality

Considerations for adapting the model to include Australian Leading Thinkers and to provide more opportunities for direct and extended engagement with the Leading Thinkers were commonly cited themes in improving the model for future.

“

**It is a rare privilege for everyday people working in the field to be able to connect to some of the top thinkers (the Leading Thinkers) at a personal level. Normally we can only just hear them speak and maybe get a chance to ask an audience question, but rarely get the chance to interact and learn from them in the forum like the symposium and workshops. This was a distinctive strength of this program.”**

*Survey Respondent*

## Leading Thinkers Taskforce

We would like to acknowledge the time and contributions of the Leading Thinkers' Taskforce for the *Behavioural Insights & Gender Equality* residency. This group provided operational and implementation advice and contributed skills, experience and credentials to examine the approaches developed by our Leading Thinkers. Our thanks to:

Ro Allen	Sam Hannah Rankin	Leonora Risse
Ryan Earles	Lisa Heap	Liam Smith
Jodie Eden-jones	Kristen Hilton	Victor Sojo
Julie Edwards	Emily Lee- Ack	Robert Wood
Tania Farha	Catherine Neville	
Amanda Green	Philip O'Meara	

# About Professor Iris Bohnet & Dr Jeni Klugman

VicHealth's Leading Thinkers 2017–2020



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## Professor Iris Bohnet

Iris Bohnet is the Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government and the Academic Dean of Harvard Kennedy School. She is a behavioural economist, combining insights from economics and psychology to improve decision-making in organisations and society, often with a gender or cross-cultural perspective. Her most recent research examines behavioural design to de-bias how we live, learn and work.

She is the author of an award-winning book about gender equality and advises governments and companies on the topic around the world. Professor Bohnet is the co-director of Harvard's Women and Public Policy Program, and the faculty chair of the executive program: "Global Leadership and Public Policy for the 21st Century" for the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders.

She serves on the boards, advisory boards or as a patron of Credit Suisse Group, Applied, Edge, genEquality, TakeTheLeadWomen, We Shape Tech, Women in Banking and Finance, and the UK Government's Equalities Office as well as numerous academic journals. She was named one of the Most Influential People in Gender Policy by Apolitical in 2018 and 2019 and received an honorary degree from the University of Lucerne, Switzerland, in 2016.



## Dr Jeni Klugman

Jeni Klugman is Managing Director at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. Dr Klugman's previous positions include Director of Gender and Development at the World Bank, fellow at the Kennedy School of Government's Women in Public Policy Program at Harvard University, and director and lead author of three global Human Development Reports published by the UNDP.

She is a member on the Lancet Commission on Gender and Global Health, and regularly participates in major global gender policy initiatives. Most recently these include: the Lancet Series on Gender Equality, Stanford University; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on Women's Economic Empowerment; and the Council on Foreign Relations' Advisory Committee on Economic Inclusion and Global Growth. She is currently advising UN Women, the World Bank and partners on justice for women; the World Bank on gender dimensions of forced displacement; and the UN Development Program on human mobility.

Jeni holds a PhD in Economics from the Australian National University and postgraduate degrees in both Law and Development Economics from the University of Oxford where she was a Rhodes Scholar. She was included in the Apolitical Inaugural List of the World's 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy in 2018 and in 2019.

“

**Building on what works, behavioural design creates better and fairer organisations and societies. It will not solve all our gender-related problems, but it will move the needle, and often at shockingly low cost and high speed.”**

*Iris Bohnet, What Works. Gender Equality by Design*

# Final report from Dr Jeni Klugman and Professor Iris Bohnet

This is a report outlining the key achievements of our residency, along with some of our reflections of the journey. The rationale for how we framed the residency objectives and how we selected the program of work is outlined in some detail in the report we produced for the launch of this residency: *Behavioural Insights & Gender Equality: the second Leading Thinkers Residency*. We proposed to shape trials and research addressing behavioural drivers of gender inequality such as unconscious bias, gender stereotypes, social norms and role models.

**Behavioural drivers of gender inequality**

**Unconscious bias**

**Social norms**

**Role models**

**Gender stereotypes**

## The start of the journey



**Jeni:** When I was asked to be a VicHealth Leading Thinker in April 2016, I was initially intrigued by the concept. What could we bring, how could this work? I was excited to be working with Iris, who had just published her fabulous book, *What Works – Gender Equality by Design*. And it quickly became clear, from our initial conversations, that there was enormous appetite at VicHealth for knowledge and learning from experience around the world, and a willingness to test and explore new ideas to really move the needle on gender equality.

I was also struck by key aspects of the setting – a State Government committed to real change and explicitly focused on changing norms, role models and stereotypes. A whole range of partners from civil society, the private sector, the media and academia, who were keen to accelerate progress on the agenda. And, last but not least, the enthusiasm and capacity of VicHealth – starting with the Innovation Office and the leadership and extending to staff throughout the organisation and the board. Coming from the US and having worked on gender equality on dozens of countries around the world, the situation was unique.

**Iris:** It has been a great pleasure serving as a Leading Thinker together with Jeni Klugman for the past four years. I had not heard of the concept of a ‘Leading Thinker’ before I received a call from Dr David Halpern, the Chief Executive of the Behavioural Insights Team and previous and inaugural Leading Thinker, in early 2016, asking whether I would be interested in serving as his successor, but was immediately intrigued. An organisation focused on advancing Victoria’s health keen on using behavioral insights to promote gender equity—what a revolutionary idea! VicHealth was convinced then, and I believe still is, that gender equity is an integral part of health, influencing such diverse topics such as women’s participation in sports, women’s safety at work, unconscious bias in schools and women’s power and influence in the organisations VicHealth is supporting and collaborating with.



## Major learnings



**Iris:** Important lessons learned include an increased focus on nimble systemic change. Behavioral design, or nudges, offer an additional tool in our collective toolbox, stronger than simple awareness raising or moral appeals, but less costly than many carrots and sticks. With its focus on behavioral insights science during David Halpern’s and Jeni’s and my tenure, VicHealth has laid the groundwork to benefit from this additional tool and help other organisations follow in its footsteps to employ these insights for good.

**Jeni:** I learnt important lessons working on these persistent challenges of gender inequality in a setting which was and is more favourable to progressive change than most places I have worked around the world. Of course, the global COVID-19 pandemic has turned all of our lives upside down, not least in Melbourne and Victoria. But the crisis has also highlighted how underlying inequalities are magnified – the burden of care, which is causing so many women to withdraw from paid work, the increasing risk of violence in the home, and causing economic hardship for already disadvantaged groups in our community.

It is important to create awareness and build partnerships and coalitions with individuals and groups working day-in and day-out to advance different aspects of the gender agenda. VicHealth and partners on the ground were able to identify entry points for change, and better understand the needs and constraints of key players in the agendas being investigated – from large employers through to major newspapers.

Flexibility was key, as leaders change and opportunities emerge and close over time. And the need for both energy and patience – changing norms and behaviors to support equal opportunities for women and men, boys and girls, is a long-term agenda and requires sustained efforts over time.



## Key achievements and highlights

Key achievements and work products developed and delivered during the residency are outlined in the following pages.



**Iris:** One of the highlights during my tenure as a Leading Thinker was my visit in Melbourne in February 2019. Among other events, I participated in a deliberative forum focused on advancing gender equity in Victoria and a symposium that featured former Prime Minister Julia Gillard. What an impressive role model she is and how beloved by the audience!

In the forum, we developed strategies on how to level the playing field so that men and women can thrive at work and in society more broadly. I shared some of our research focused on redesigning how we live, learn and work. In fact, in many ways, DESIGN can serve as a mnemonic for what we were trying to achieve.

**D** stands for diagnosis arguing that we should stop throwing money at the problem but instead, diagnose what was broken. Were women underrepresented in leadership because of gender gaps in promotion or because they left the organisations mid-way through? Were women in sports covered less by the media because there were fewer women competing or because there was underreporting, etc.?

**E** in DESIGN stands for evaluation. Once the root cause of the problem is identified, we need to evaluate the effectiveness of the medicine prescribed. Unfortunately, one size does not fit all, and organisations will need to keep being nimble, pilot and test, to understand whether in their context, say, blind evaluations procedures where names and other identifying information is removed from applications, work.

**SIGN** in DESIGN reminds us that we need to put up signposts so that people can take the right medicine more easily. This is one of the core insights of behavioral science: raising awareness of the problem is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to solving the problem. Once we agree on the cause and the medicine, we have to make it easier for people to follow through on their virtuous intentions.

“

### Behavioural Insights & Gender Equality: How can we make it easier to go from intention to action”

#### Symposium: inspiring & mainstreaming a new way forward

The flagship symposium event brought together almost 750 people in person and via livestream to share practical ways in which organisations can bring gender equality strategies to life in workplaces, leadership, government and sport.

Key elements included:

- Keynote addresses by Prof Iris Bohnet, the Hon. Julia Gillard AO and the Hon. Gabrielle Williams (Minister for Women).
- Partnered panel discussion and workshops with Male Champions of Change, Womens Leadership Institute Australia, the Office for Women, Behavioural Insights Team, Price Waterhouse Coopers showcasing behavioural insights resources and approaches in use.
- #LeadingThinkers had 167 mentions, reaching 750,325 people
- 85% respondent attendees agreed/strongly agreed “the information presented will be helpful to my work”.



**Deliberative forum:  
a mechanism for sharing emerging knowledge and co-shaping best practice**

In parallel, a deliberative forum of over 70 academics, policy makers and practitioners, working in the field of gender equality and public health, collectively examined 21 ‘what works’ case studies provided by organisations implementing behavioural approaches.

**Behavioural Insights & Gender Equality:** How can we make it easier to move from intention to action?

The remit

21 “What Works” case study presentations from a range of organisations (via expression of interest process)

The input

Problem themes	Solution themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are not aware of their biases</li> <li>• People do not care about gender inequities</li> <li>• There is a mismatch between what woman want and what the system wants</li> <li>• Change is hard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing is believing</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• From best practice to best evidence</li> <li>• De-biasing procedures</li> <li>• Inclusive practices</li> </ul>

The Framework  
for discussion

How can we work together more effectively?	What personal commitments are you prepared to make?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a ‘what works’ data repository</li> <li>2. Create opportunities for collective learning and knowledge sharing</li> <li>3. Invest in cross-sector goals, planning and reporting</li> <li>4. Develop cross sector partnerships</li> <li>5. Bring new people into the conversation</li> <li>6. Recruit influential champions of change</li> <li>7. Raise the norm by providing leadership to your sector</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring what I’ve learned back to my professional &amp; private life</li> <li>2. Become a role model</li> <li>3. Encourage &amp; support men to be involved</li> <li>4. Engage with those with different perspectives</li> <li>5. Educate myself</li> <li>6. Advocate for change</li> <li>7. Build on networks &amp; share resources</li> <li>8. Develop workplace initiatives</li> </ol>

The Consensus



**Follow through**

VicHealth has enabled ongoing conversations by coordinating two reconvenings of the participating organisations, to share progress on work efforts and commitments. We were delighted to hear that 75% of participants have been able to progress their pledge/s since the forum.

The Follow  
through

**READ MORE:**

Participant report: [What Works Case Studies](#)

# Media



**Jeni:** When Professor Iris Bohnet and I began working with VicHealth to help bring behavioural insights into efforts to promote gender equality, it was clear from the outset that sport plays an important role in Australian society and media.

We wanted to focus on social norms, because these reflect shared expectations and informal rules about how people should behave. As I investigated with co-authors in a recent special issue of *The Lancet*<sup>2</sup>, ignoring gender norms and inequalities undermines the health of everyone – women and girls; boys and men; and gender minorities.

Social norms shape opportunities for women and girls in a range of settings. Importantly, such norms can also limit choices, even in settings like Victoria, where explicit barriers to equality have been removed and government is committed to a vision in which all Victorians are visible and represented, not only at work, but also in communities, sport and media.

## Big data analysis: World first application of machine learning techniques to understand gender stereotypes and portrayal in the media

Unconscious bias

Social norms

Role models

Gender stereotypes

### The approach

As part of our contribution to a more systematic understanding of gender bias in Victoria, we used a big data analysis, made possible by improvements in data availability and computational techniques.

We developed a coding instrument to systematically measure the quantitative representation of women both in the sports news and general news, and the extent to which sport-related news stories contain language or content reflective of gender bias.

Content reflective of gender bias could include:

- use of gendered language (e.g. describing women athletes as fragile or emotional)
- mention of gendered roles (e.g. wife, father, sister, son)
- references to relationship or family status (e.g. athlete has two children, athlete is engaged to be married)
- mention of physical attributes or appearance (e.g. make-up, outfit, hair of athlete/team; body shape, weight, strength of athlete; race or ethnicity)
- diminishing successes (e.g. attributing achievements to others, such as having a supportive coach or supportive family).

This research utilised data from Dow Jones and was supported by Swinburne Social Innovation Research Institute.

### Outcomes & key findings

Working together with colleagues from Swinburne University, we processed five years of data to analyse 241,781 written articles and 123 million words. This is the first ever, large-scale use of machine learning to examine the portrayal of women and men in Victorian sports print media.

The report, *Buried Treasures and Missed Opportunities in Victorian Sports Reporting*, provides new evidence to both inform the debate and to highlight challenges and opportunities. These important findings are a major step forward in better understanding gender portrayal in sports reporting and what needs to be done to reach gender equality goals in women's sports reporting.

- Content analysis revealed comparable and unbiased portrayal of men and women in sports reporting. For example, references to appearance, the use of gendered language and other measurable gender biases are infrequent in sports articles about both men and women.
- Opportunities to read articles about women in sport are scarce and do not match the levels of female participation in sports, or the demand for articles about female sports. The vast majority of newspaper sports articles centre on men.
- Female journalists are more likely to write about women in sport, but only account for 12 per cent of sports articles. The share of women writing sports articles fell from 18 per cent to 12 per cent over the five-year study period.

This analysis was featured in a Melbourne Press Club webinar on 29 September 2020,

Despite major events and success of women’s sport, underreporting persists



30.2 million words written in articles about men



3.3 million words written in articles about women

Total words written about females and males in Victorian sports print articles 2014–2019 Buried Treasures and Missed Opportunities in Sports Reporting <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search/victorian-sports-reporting>

titled ‘Moving the Goalposts’. ABC news presenter Mary Gearin moderated a discussion between Dr Jeni Klugman, Dr Bridie O’Donnell and Gen Simmons, offering a glimpse into the depth of challenges for women in sport and possible ways forward.

### VicHealth Quill Award for Excellence in Reporting on Women in Sport

**DRIVER OF GENDER EQUALITY EXPLORED:** Social norms, gender stereotypes

#### Approach & outcomes:

Established by the Melbourne Press Club in 1995, the Quill Awards for Excellence in Victorian Journalism are the premier media awards in Victoria.

To encourage and celebrate more positive journalistic reporting of female athletes in the print sports media, VicHealth sponsored a 3-year Award for excellence in reporting on women in sport.

- 2018 winner: Samantha Lane for her book ‘ROAR: The stories behind AFLW – A movement bigger than sport’. The book was published by Penguin Random House.
- 2019 winner: Lucy Carter (2019) for her piece ‘Liz Cambage Sidelined by Mental Health Issues’.



“Data science is an exciting tool to use in solving social problems and driving innovation. Our work in sports media and obesity portrayals accelerated understanding of gendered narratives in the public domain, which in turn, helps to reach people with the right messages more effectively. It was a great opportunity to work together with VicHealth.”

*Dr Arezou Soltani-Panah, Swinburne Social Innovation Research Institute*

#### Replication/‘sister’ analysis: Workplace gender diversity media coverage

VicHealth supported the University of Melbourne research to better understand how workplace gender diversity issues are reported in the media. The analysis found that media reporting focused on high-profile women and sexual harassment cases but missed opportunities to show the work experiences of marginalised women.

This research used machine learning to analyse over 250,000 newspaper articles, taken from the Dow Jones data set. With the enactment of the Gender Equality Act 2020, this research will help to establish and track progress on this timely issue. Read The ‘Good, Bad and Merit’ arguments in Australian news coverage of workplace gender diversity.

## Workplaces

“

It was great to have the trial from VicHealth added to the Recruit Smarter suite. It helped us to bring a range of organisations together to trial unconscious bias initiatives and build evidence on the effect of gender-neutral language in job advertisements on the gender representation of applicants.”

*Dr Victor Sojo Monzon, Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Department of Management and Marketing, University of Melbourne*

“

Many are doing standard bystander training, that's not working, so progressing these trials is a great service to the world.”

*Prof Iris Bohnet, Leading Thinker*



### RecruitSmarter

Recruit Smarter was an initiative of the Victorian Government in partnership with the University of Melbourne's Centre for Ethical Leadership (CEL), and organisations across the public, private and community sectors, to address unconscious bias in workplace recruitment. Led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Recruit Smarter saw the 46 participating organisations develop and trial a range of approaches to address unconscious bias in recruitment practices.

### Gender neutral job advertisements trial: understanding unconscious bias in the first step of the recruitment process.

Unconscious bias

Social norms

Role models

Gender stereotypes

#### The approach

A range of global literature has linked the gendered nature of language in job ads and communications to the gender balance of prospective candidates. Many companies internationally are now using predictive language technology to de-bias their job advertisements and communications.

The 'Gender neutral job advertisements trial' was one of the first trials conducted during this Leading Thinkers residency. The purpose was to test, in Victoria, the impact of purging gendered language from a job ad on the gender balance of the applicant pool. Rewording a job advertisement is a relatively easy action for an organisation to take as it doesn't require any changes to existing processes or policies.

#### Outcomes & learning

This trial was included in the Victorian Government's Recruit Smarter initiative and was also offered to other organisations. VicHealth also chaired the 'Targeting Gender Biased Language in Job Advertisements' working group for Recruit Smarter.

20 organisations participated in the trial to have their advertisements were debiased.

- In 12 out of 20 ads, debiasing occurred to increase the number of traditional minority groups progressing through a recruitment process.
- In eight cases, making an advert 'gender neutral' meant decreasing the number of feminine-coded words.

Further key insights from the trial included:

- At the time that this work was being conducted, the use of gender decoders was becoming increasingly normal for Australian organisations. With many organisations already de-biasing job advertisements, it was difficult to obtain a true baseline (i.e. from a time when no attempt was made to de-bias job ads).
- In spite of the increasingly common practice of using gender decoders to de-bias job advertisements it was much less common for organisations to measure the impact of this practice.

### Bystander trials

Numerous studies on the prevention of sexual harassment, training programs and reporting systems have shown consciously promoting more women into influential roles and ensuring that senior male executives consistently reinforce anti-harassment messaging, are more effective. However, corporations commonly introduce diversity training and other initiatives without looking to the evidence or rigorously testing the impact of initiatives after their introduction. There is very little known about what works to promote bystander action against sexism and sexual harassment.

With input from Leading Thinker Prof Iris Bohnet, VicHealth and the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) we designed trials that will help promote bystander action to prevent sexism and sexual harassment. Due to the global coronavirus pandemic, the planned workplace trials have been postponed until early 2021.

# Sport

## Quick Wins Checklist

Unconscious bias

Social norms

Role models

Gender stereotypes

### The approach

Women's participation in sport is increasing in Victoria, particularly in AFL and cricket, and sporting clubs are looking for ways to make their environments welcoming and inclusive.

Clubs are also busy places and often staffed by volunteers. They're seeking easy and attractive ideas to help them create inclusive and welcoming environments for women and girls.

27 gender assessments were reviewed, including 12 international audits, 10 Australian audits and four local/municipal council audits. Based on this review, the [Quick Wins Checklist](#) was developed as a sharp list of ten most powerful, simple and often zero-cost ideas that a grass-roots sporting club can implement. For example, scheduling games and training sessions for women and girls on the main venue courts/grounds; and introductory or social sport opportunities for new or returning female participants.

### Outcomes & learning

The nine Victorian Regional Sports Assemblies (RSA) are working alongside sporting clubs to implement the Quick Wins Checklist, which includes seeking the club's commitment to two actions to ensure sustainable gender equality change.

## Gender Equality in Sports Survey

Unconscious bias

Social norms

Role models

Gender stereotypes

### Approach & outcomes:

VicHealth commissioned the Gender Equality in Sports Survey (GESS) to examine community responses to an AFL Women's exhibition game in September 2016. From 3,000 respondents (2,000 of whom were Victorian), 44% disagreed with the statement 'There is enough on-field/on-court TV, radio and newspaper coverage of female sports'.

To ensure ongoing tracking of gender attitudes in sport settings, relevant GESS questions have been incorporated within VicHealth's Community Attitudes Survey.

## Storytelling

Unconscious bias

Social norms

Role models

Gender stereotypes

### Approach:

It's well known that involvement in community sport is good for physical and mental health. Yet we also know women face unique barriers to being involved in community sport.

Based on the notion of *Seeing is Believing*, this behavioural insights project captured stories of 'ordinary' role models in community sport and examined how their involvement has contributed to transforming the drivers of gender equality.

### OUTCOMES:

Seven community sports clubs were selected for a qualitative interview and a number of videos produced, such as the Swell Mamas ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=dC3zHQT93a4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dC3zHQT93a4)) and Wyndham Track and Field ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=Phs8sEmluMw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Phs8sEmluMw))



“  
It certainly had an impact in terms of challenging some ... prior thinking. Just the sheer fact of putting it out there and potentially clubs reading it, highlighted to them ‘Oh, okay, is that what gender equality is?’ Because that’s often a hard thing to actually put to a club is what does it look like.”

*RSA interviewee*

## With thanks to the many organisations with whom we've partnered during this Leading Thinker Residency

Ambulance Victoria  
Behavioural Insights Team (BIT)  
Behaviourworks  
Committee for Economic Development of Australia  
Deloitte  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Dow Jones Factiva  
Georgetown Institute  
Male Champions of Change  
Melbourne Press Club  
Office for Women  
PwC  
SixFold  
Swinburne University – Social Innovation Research Institute  
Transurban  
University of Melbourne – Department of Management & Marketing  
Victoria Police  
Women in Economics Network (WEN)  
Women's Leadership Institute of Australia  
Worksafe

## Publications

[Quick Wins Checklist](#)  
[Buried treasures and missed opportunities in Victorian Sports Reporting](#)  
[The 'good, bad and merit' arguments in Australian news coverage of workplace gender diversity](#)  
[What works case studies \(2019 Deliberative Forum\)](#)  
[Participant Report \(2019 Deliberative Forum\)](#)



Victorian Health Promotion Foundation  
PO Box 154 Carlton South  
Victoria 3053 Australia  
T +61 3 9667 1333 F +61 3 9667 1375

[vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au](mailto:vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au)  
[vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://vichealth.vic.gov.au)  
[twitter.com/vichealth](https://twitter.com/vichealth)  
[facebook.com/vichealth](https://facebook.com/vichealth)

VicHealth is committed to health equity, which means levelling the playing field between people who can easily access good health and people who face barriers, to achieve the highest level of health for *everyone*.



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VicHealth acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land. We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future.