Behavioural insights & gender equality

The second VicHealth Leading Thinkers residency

A report by Iris Bohnet & Jeni Klugman

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Foreword

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

In September 2016 VicHealth announced that Professor Iris Bohnet and Dr Jeni Klugman will share the Leading Thinkers 'Behavioural Insights & Gender Equality' residency as foremost global experts on this topic. I am delighted that we can now introduce the emerging program of work and highlight the first collaborations that have already been made.

Gender equality is a core principle of a fair, respectful, safe and inclusive society. While we still have a way to go, there is no doubt that Victoria is a world leader in this space. Under the leadership of the Victorian Government, through their commitment to building gender equality and preventing violence against women, and the hard work of the sector over many years, we are beginning to see a shift in attitudes and a growing momentum for change.

Our second Leading Thinkers journey will allow VicHealth and our collaborators to continue our behavioural insights approach, and our organisation's 15-year history of leading research and programs to prevent violence against women, but this time with a gender equality focus.

I look forward to sharing progress over the next three years as our Leading Thinkers collaborate with VicHealth and our partners to deliver the Behavioural Insights & Gender Equality program of work.

Jerril Rechter
CEO, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)

> " **Gender equality is a core principle of a fair, respectful, safe and inclusive society.** "
>
> Jerril Rechter, CEO VicHealth

Statement of residence:
VicHealth Leading Thinkers

VicHealth's Leading Thinkers initiative is designed to connect international thought leaders with policymakers and key local experts, with the aim of generating and provoking new thinking, inspiring momentum, enabling change, supporting and deepening relationships across sectors and, most importantly, delivering positive health and wellbeing results for all Victorians.

2016-19: Behavioural insights & gender equality (Iris Bohnet & Jeni Klugman)

Pioneering global approaches in behavioural insights will be translated into practical strategies and applications for Victorian and Australian organisations seeking to transform the underlying drivers of gender equality (unconscious bias, gender stereotypes, gender role models and social norms).

Professor Iris Bohnet

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Professor Iris Bohnet is a Professor of Public Policy and a behavioural economist at Harvard Kennedy School, 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.

Professor Bohnet served as the academic dean of the Kennedy School, is the director of its Women and Public Policy Program, co-chair (with Max Bazerman) of the Behavioural Insights Group, an associate director of the Harvard Decision Science Laboratory, 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 of directors of Credit Suisse Group and University of Lucerne, as well as the advisory boards of the Vienna University of Economics and Business, EDGE and Applied, and numerous academic journals. She is a member of the Global Agenda Council on Behaviour of the World Economic Forum.

Dr Jeni Klugman

Dr Jeni Klugman is Managing Director at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, and a fellow at the Kennedy School of Government's Women in Public Policy Program at Harvard University.

Dr Klugman's previous positions include Director of Gender and Development at the World Bank, and director and lead author of three global Human Development Reports published by the UNDP. She sits on several boards and panels, including for the World Economic Forum and the Journal of Human Development and Capabilities.

She 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.

Leading Thinkers 2016–19 Taskforce

The Taskforce is a group of experts who will inform and collaborate with VicHealth and other partners through the 2016–19 Leading Thinkers residency.

The main functions of the Taskforce are:

- to investigate, provide operational and implementation advice, and collaborate with VicHealth on the aims and objectives of the Leading Thinkers initiative
- to provide relevant skills, experience and credentials to examine key strategic matters relating to Leading Thinkers

- to champion the approaches developed during the Leading Thinkers residency.

The Taskforce includes individuals from a range of organisations promoting gender equality in Victoria and Australia. Representation on the Taskforce includes academia, government, the private sector and the not-for-profit sector.

Taskforce Members

Member name	Position	Organisation
Chair: Nithya Solomon	Executive Lead, Innovation Office	Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)
Ro Allen	Commissioner	Victorian Commission for Gender and Sexuality
Jodie Eden-Jones	Manager, Workforce Diversity	Department of Education & Training
Amanda Green	General Manager, People, Culture & Performance	Richmond Football Club
Sam Hannah Rankin	Director, Public Sector Innovation	Department of Premier & Cabinet
Lisa Heap	Women's Lead Organiser	Victorian Trades Hall Council
Kristen Hilton	Commissioner	Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission
Corri McKenzie (Tania Farha, Acting)	CEO	Office of Prevention and Women's Equality
Catherine Neville	Executive Director, Advocacy and Strategic Communications	Jesuit Social Services
Philip O'Meara	Director, Diversity, Community Participation, Sport and Recreation, and Partnerships	Department of Health and Human Services
Liam Smith	Director	BehaviourWorks
Jennifer Watt	General Manager, Marketing and Communications	Melbourne Football Club
Robert Wood	Director	Centre for Ethical Leadership
Cheryl Woollard	Executive Director, People & Culture	Worksafe

2014–16: Behavioural insights & healthier lives (David Halpern)

Dr David Halpern of the UK's Behavioural Insights Unit was VicHealth's inaugural leading thinker. His two-year residency, which concluded in April 2016, saw the development and implementation of a series of behavioural insights trials to gently nudge the public into creating healthier lifestyles.

For more information about the inaugural Leading Thinkers residency, go to: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/leading-thinkers

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND VICHEALTH LEADING THINKERS RESIDENCY

BY IRIS BOHNET & JENI KLUGMAN

As we embark on this exciting journey with VicHealth and a range of stakeholders, we thought it would be useful to share the broad contours of the program. This is motivated by the importance of gender equality not only for women and girls, but for firms, governments, not-for-profit organisations, economies and societies more broadly.

WHY GENDER EQUALITY MATTERS

'The time for change is now'

The global commitment to women's empowerment and to gender equality has never been stronger. And the potential gains for basic human rights, for human development and for economic growth have never been larger.

Gender equality is multidimensional. It is not just about equal opportunities to decent work, or women in boardrooms. Gender inequality is happening in our homes, our workplaces, our schoolyards, our hospitals, on our television screens, and on our sporting fields.

Closing gender gaps can bring dramatic gains in wellbeing for individuals, families and societies. The human development index is a widely used measure of achievement in individual wellbeing, encompassing health and education alongside income. Figure 1 shows the strong cross-sectional relationship between a country's achievements in gender equality and human development.

In terms of benefits for the economy, strong and accumulating evidence suggests that lower levels of gender inequality are associated with gains in income, economic growth and national competitiveness, as documented by the recent UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment and the McKinsey Global Institute. The Grattan Institute has estimated that if Australian women were able to do as much paid work as Canadian women, almost half a million additional women would be in the workforce, and Australia's GDP would be boosted by approximately $25 billion (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012; Daley et al. 2012). Even just among tertiary graduates, the Australian economy would gain $8 billion if female graduates transitioned from university into the workforce at the same rate as men (Poynton & Rolland 2013).

Figure 1: Gender equality goes with human development

- Central & Eastern Europe & Central Asia
- Developed Regions
- East Asia & the Pacific
- Latin America & the Caribbean
- Middle East & North Africa
- South Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- **Australia**
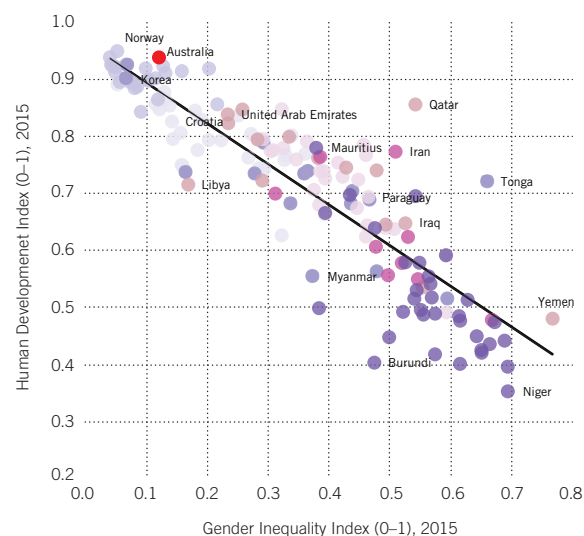
Source: United Nations Development Programme 2016 Human Development Report

Globally, the pace of improvement in closing gender gaps has been far too slow on a range of fronts, from economic opportunities, to political representation, to violence against women. These challenges are interrelated and rooted in persistent gender inequalities in society. Around the world, discriminatory social norms persist. For hundreds of millions of women around the world, multiple layers of disadvantage – due to age, poverty, ethnicity, disability, geography and migratory status – remain powerful obstacles to equal rights and opportunities.

This picture is replicated in Australia and Victoria, as highlighted in **Box 1**. *Safe and strong: a Victorian gender equality strategy*, highlights the ways that gender inequality is perpetuated across the lifecycle, and how the adverse impacts are compounded by the way that gendered barriers interact with other forms of disadvantage and discrimination. For example, women from culturally diverse communities face additional barriers to education and employment as a result of language barriers, racism and discrimination, and lack of information about their rights, among other factors (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2016).

Gender equality is the key social determinant for the prevention of violence against women and family violence. Recent global analysis published in *The Lancet* found that the most significant determinants of rates of violence across countries are variables related to gender equality (Heise & Kotsadam 2015). Likewise, as underlined by the findings of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, violence in Australia is driven by the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, and by adherence to rigidly defined gender roles and identities.

BOX 1:
SOME KEY FACTS FOR AUSTRALIA[1]

Australia has made some impressive achievements. The country ranks second in the world in women's years of schooling (United Nations Development Program 2016). Women make up 24 per cent of board directors in ASX 200 companies, up from 8 per cent in 2009 (Australian Institute of Company Directors 2016), and there is growing recognition of domestic violence as a societal, community and workplace issue.

At the same time, there are persistent gaps – in the workplace, at home, in society and in politics. Here are some selected facts.

AT WORK

In 2016, Australia dropped to 46th in the World Economic Forum's gender equality ranking, 31 places below its 2006 rank. According to the WEF, Australia's slide partly reflects persistent gender wage gaps. Australian women working full time earn almost $27,000 less than men per year, an average gap of about 23 per cent (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2016b).

More than one in three Australians (35 per cent) feels that women have worse job opportunities than men. In the United States, this figure is 32 per cent (International Labour Organization & Gallup 2017).

AT HOME

Nearly two in five Australian women have experienced violence from a man known to them, which is the leading driver of death, disability and illness among those aged 15–44 (VicHealth 2016). There is worrying evidence about people's attitudes, including among young Australians (aged 16–24), of whom, for example, around half agree that electronically tracking a partner without consent is okay, and one-fifth say that men should take control in relationships (Webster et al. 2014).

Australian women spend almost twice as much time on unpaid work as men. This includes spending about 16 hours on housework per week on average, more than double that of men (HILDA 2014).

IN LEADERSHIP

Australia is currently ranked 50th globally in proportion of women in parliament (29 per cent), behind New Zealand, Mexico, Spain, Slovenia and Belgium, among others. More than a quarter of Australians believe that men make better political leaders (Webster et al. 2014).

Men continue to dominate corporate leadership – as illustrated by the fact that in 2017, there were more men called Peter leading ASX200 companies than total women (13, compared to 9). ■

[1] It is beyond the scope of this note to capture all of Australia's achievements and gaps in gender equality – readers are encouraged to refer to excellent publications from the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Work and Gender Equality Agency. These include *Gender workplace statistics at a glance* (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2016c) and *Gender pay equity insights 2016: Inside Australia's gender*.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

It is increasingly well recognised and documented that social norms shape women's opportunities in a range of settings.

Such norms can limit choices even when, as in Australia, the educational achievements of girls and boys have been equalised, when legal barriers to participation have been eliminated and where governments are formally committed to gender equality, including through constitutional guarantees and equal rights legislation.

Social norms influence our behaviour through both our reflective, rational mind and through our more automatic, non-conscious responses. When attitudes or stereotypes affect our understanding, actions and decisions in unconscious ways, this is referred to as 'implicit bias'. Such bias is activated involuntarily – without an individual's awareness or intention.

Everyone has beliefs and associations that are unconscious and automatic. These are shortcuts that save us time and brainpower, and can be helpful, as explained by Nobel Prize winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman (2011). Some of these associations come from our experience, and may capture some aspect of truth. But many stereotypes come from TV shows, sensational news reports, and cultural stereotypes that have little to do with reality. Evidence suggests that implicit bias develops over a lifetime, beginning at a very early age; the media and news programming are oft-cited origins of implicit associations, as well as parental and community behaviour.

Automatic associations that are based on stereotypes and prejudices undermine our attempts to be fair and our declared beliefs in gender equality. Implicit bias does not necessarily align with our declared beliefs – for example, one may say that one does not think that women should do most of the childcare, but implicit bias may reveal this assumption. Another key aspect is that although implicit bias may tend to favour our own in-group, this is not always the case – women and girls may internalise norms in ways that exclude themselves from certain opportunities. For example, the strong gender stereotype that boys are better at maths may make girls more reluctant to study STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) or pursue careers in STEM.

Behavioural insights provide a tool to shift the aspirations, expectations and behaviour of women and men, boys and girls. VicHealth is exploring this potential to deliver practical and actionable design solutions to tackle gender inequality.

Some key lessons on how to design processes to eliminate implicit gender biases are brought together in a recent book by Iris Bohnet (2016). These demonstrate the ways that business, government, civil society and other agents can tackle adverse norms and implicit biases in the workplace, community, and more broadly in the media and society. **Box 2** highlights selected practices to combat gender biases in the workplace, using data and analytics. The good news is that while implicit biases are pervasive, such biases are also malleable. However, our understanding about how to influence norms is incomplete – we need to test promising options to identify solutions that work, so we can each contribute to making a difference.

Government does not have all the levers to make the changes we want. The role of the private and community sectors, media, sporting and volunteer groups are key, as are partnerships.

" 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

BOX 2:
GENDER EQUALITY BY DESIGN IN THE WORKPLACE

What Works. Gender Equality by Design provides evidence and practical tools to re-design how we live, learn and work to eliminate gender bias. A brief selection of recommended approaches follows.

APPLY DATA TO PEOPLE DECISIONS

This requires several elements, beginning with collecting, tracking and analysing data to understand patterns and trends. It is important to measure in order to detect what is broken, inform interventions and experiment to learn what works. Calling its human resource department 'People Operations', Google has been at the forefront of 'people analytics'. The data revealed to Google, for example, that an apparent gender gap in quit rates – women were twice as likely to quit employment as the average Google employee – was in fact a 'parent gap'. Young mothers were twice as likely to quit. So Google introduced a new maternity and paternity leave plan. Instead of the industry standard of 12 weeks, Google offered new mothers five months off and other new parents seven weeks. The impact of this change was significant: new mothers at Google are now no more likely to leave than the average employee.

CREATE SMARTER HIRING PROCEDURES

Among the elements that make a difference are 'blind' hiring practices that remove demographic information from job applications, evaluate candidates comparatively, hire in batches and use predictive tests and structured interviews to evaluate candidates, rather than unstructured interviews and panel interviews that tend to reinforce bias.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics introduced blind hiring practices in 2015, withholding names and other identifying information from evaluation committees. The new practices boosted the proportion of female senior executives from 21 to 43 per cent (Towell 2016). Starting in April 2016, the British Civil Service, along with entities including HSBC, Deloitte, the BBC, and the National Health Service (collectively responsible for employing 1.8 million people in the UK) has introduced blind hiring practices. In the US, an increasing number of employers do away with applicant names and some employers go even further: Compose Inc., a cloud-storage firm in California, no longer asks job applicants for their resumes but instead asks them to complete tasks relevant to the job.

CREATING SMARTER PROMOTION PROCEDURES

Needed changes in promotion practices include the use of both long-term targets and specific, short-term, achievable goals, instead of sharing self-evaluations with managers. In 2016, Credit Suisse started changing its performance appraisal practices and no longer shares employee self-evaluations with managers in advance of the appraisals. Sharing self-evaluations with managers before they make up their minds tends to disadvantage women because they have been found to be more self-critical and less confident than men. Self-evaluations can turn into self-fulfilling prophecies as they influence managers' judgements (an example of the 'anchoring effect'). ■

USING BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TO TACKLE GENDER INEQUALITY IN VICTORIA

Here we briefly outline, with respect to each of the proposed interventions, what the problem is, what behavioural insights might bring, and expected lessons.

We propose to address gender inequality in a range of settings such as workplaces, the media and others. The trials and research outlined below were carefully selected and chosen because of the potential insights to help drive change to achieve the objectives laid out in the Victorian gender equality strategy.

Our criteria to select specific interventions are outlined in **Box 3**, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the large-scale and long-term changes that are needed to address gender inequality in Victoria.

BOX 3: CRITERIA TO GUIDE SELECTION OF TESTABLE INTERVENTIONS

- Stakeholder interest and potential for partnership
- Potential impact/scalability/replicability
- Relevance to disadvantaged groups – for example, low socio-economic status, socially excluded, Aboriginal – or those overcoming multiple sources of disadvantage
- Cost and feasibility within timeframe
- Adding value to existing efforts

" VicHealth and the Leading Thinkers' expertise in unconscious bias are a valuable addition to the Recruit Smarter initiative. I am delighted to promote opportunities for collaboration across Victoria's sectors to create a level playing field for all job applicants. "

THE HON. ROBIN SCOTT MP,
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

RECRUITMENT BIAS

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

If asked, most of us would say that discrimination against women in the workplace is wrong and unacceptable. Yet research shows that treating women and men equally in hiring decisions, job evaluations and leadership positions remains far more of an ideal than a reality.

So if we agree that gender discrimination is wrong, why is it still happening? One answer is that many of us harbour unconscious biases that can affect our judgement, even though we may be unaware of them. Uncovering these unconscious, or implicit, biases can be the first step to eliminating them.

This discrimination can start at the recruitment and application level – even before the employer determines who shall be shortlisted, interviewed and offered a job, as we explain here.

Around the world, women and men tend to work in different occupations – this is problematic because female-dominated occupations are generally accompanied by lower pay and worse working conditions (International Labour Organization 2016).

Australia has historically had very high rates of occupational sex segregation – indeed in the mid-1980s, it had the most sex-segregated labour force in the OECD (Moskos 2012). This has persisted over the last two decades, as demonstrated in Figure 2. Segregation has remained fairly constant across most occupations over time, with women making some inroads into management and professional occupations, but not into other male-dominated occupational categories, like technicians. It is especially marked for personal assistants and secretaries (98 per cent female), and carpenters and joiners (0.7 per cent female) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011). The extent of segregation is such that it has been estimated that over half of Australian women would have to change occupations in order to have the same occupational distribution as Australian men (Coelli 2014).

Figure 2: The stickiness of occupational segregation in Australia 1995–2015
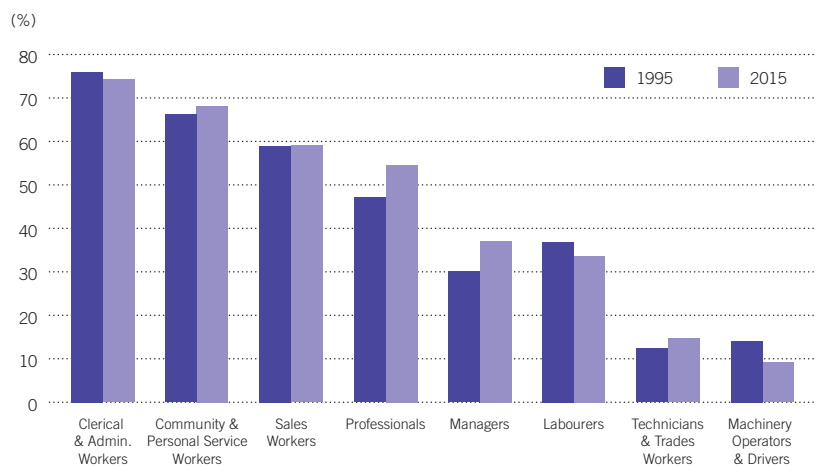
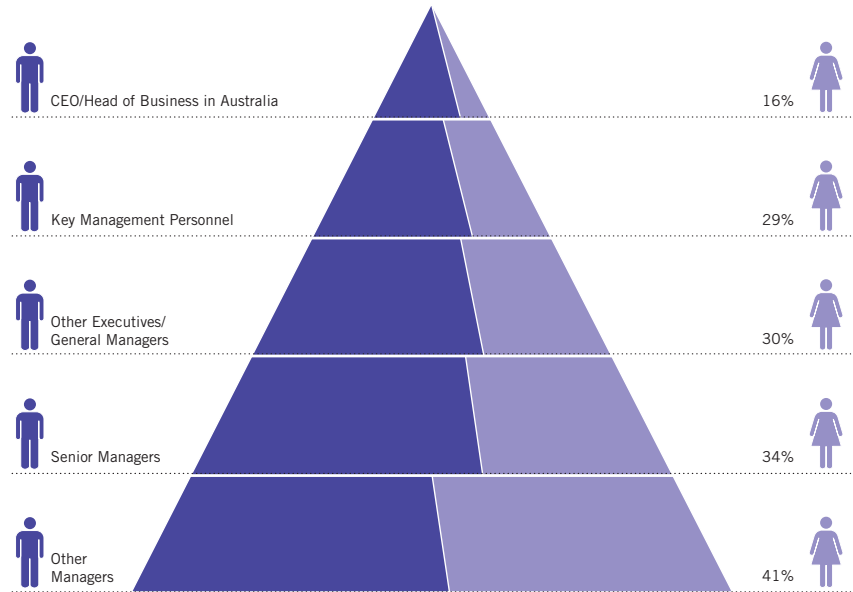Source: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/20160801_Industry_occupational_segregation_factsheet.pdf pg7

" I am excited about the promise of the program of work that is being developed through the VicHealth *Leading Thinkers: Behavioural Insights and Gender Equality*. Gender equality is a key determinant of a fair and inclusive society. The cutting edge approaches of Professor Bohnet and Dr Klugman are a welcome and much-needed complement to the work of Victorian organisations seeking to transform gender equality outcomes within our state. "

KYM PEAKE,
SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, VICTORIA

Segregation occurs not just *across* occupations, but also *within* them. Men's relative domination of the highest status jobs in both traditionally male and female industries is evidenced by the underrepresentation of women in management, which is more pronounced at more senior levels. As Figure 3 indicates, recent Workplace Gender Equality Agency analysis of data, covering 40 per cent of Australian employees, found that women comprised about 41 per cent of middle managers, but only 34 per cent of senior managers, 29 per cent of 'key management personnel' and only 16 per cent of CEOs. By contrast, women made up 51 per cent of all workers in non-management roles (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2016a).

Figure 3: Representation of women by management category, 2015–16

CEO/Head of Business in Australia	16%
Key Management Personnel	29%
Other Executives/ General Managers	30%
Senior Managers	34%
Other Managers	41%

Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2016, Gender Segregation in Australia's Workforce

The persistence and extent of occupational segregation – in the absence of formal restrictions on where women and men can work – is in part due to its self-reinforcing nature. Because people observe men and women working in different jobs and occupations, their aspirations and capabilities are affected by gender stereotypes. This likely affects both employer and employee perceptions, resulting in an environment where employees gravitate towards gender 'appropriate' occupations, and are discouraged or even prevented from doing otherwise. US research suggests that men's resistance to working in gender atypical fields is a key barrier to future declines in occupational sex segregation (Moskos 2012), evidence that male employees also internalise stereotypes.

Gender stereotypes can lead to gender discrimination during the hiring process. This has been empirically investigated in several countries, with evidence of significant discrimination against women in high-status and male-dominated jobs, alongside discrimination against men in female-dominated jobs (Azmat & Petrongolo 2014; Australian Human Rights Commission 2017). In Australia, researchers sent fake resumes to apply for entry-level jobs in four female-majority occupations. They found that there was a pro-female bias in the applicants called back, but only in occupations in which the percentage of females exceeded 80 per cent (in this study, waitstaff and data-entry roles) (Booth & Leigh 2010).

Occupational segregation also reflects broader social trends. For instance, research in the US has found that the increasingly common trend of 'overwork' perpetuates gender segregation in a number of occupations (Goldin 2014). While working long hours is an expected norm in many male-dominated occupations, women – especially mothers – may be less able to meet this expectation as their time is subject to more family demands than their male counterparts, which would affect their job preferences and aspirations (Cha 2013).

How the job is framed and expectations about hours can affect the preparedness of women to apply for such positions, and employers' attitudes.

While recent research on the causes of occupational segregation in Australia is limited, we would expect many of these factors to be at play. Here we propose to focus on one particular source of recruitment bias – the choice of language in job advertisements.

Recent US research suggests that the language in job advertisements can affect the gender composition of the applicant pool. Researchers have found that women were considerably less likely to apply for an administrative assistant position when the advertisement contained 'male' connotations (in this instance, by the ad repeatedly referring to working in an environment surrounded by sports), than when these connotations were removed (Flory et al. 2014). Researchers also found a deterrent effect of 'male' wording on female application rates in a laboratory study, and strong correlations between the gendered nature of the wording in job ads on a Canadian search online platform and the ratio of men and women working in those jobs (Gaucher et al. 2011).

THE BEHAVIOURAL ANGLE

New insights into the human mind can help organisations of all types design practices that combat biases in hiring, promotion and pay processes that discriminate against women. Many companies, among them Ernst and Young, Facebook, Google and IKEA Group, have introduced mandatory training to help their employees recognise and counter implicit biases in their work. Governments and civil society actors in Europe have developed guides and checklists to make it easier for firms to eliminate bias from their job evaluations (European Commission 2012).

The Victorian Government and a number of private sector employers in Victoria are already undertaking measures to combat bias in recruitment and promotion. In 2016, the Victorian Government launched Recruit Smarter, an 18-month pilot program to assess which personal details – including name, gender, age and location – should be de-identified during application processes. It will be developed in partnership with both the public and private sector.

The VicHealth Leading Thinkers 'de-biasing job advertisements' trial is formally included in the Victorian Government's RecruitSmarter pilot, and is also being offered to other organisations interested in the trial.

New tech start-ups are developing digital platforms to help organisations eliminate implicit biases in human resource functions[2] – we propose to build on these innovations in the design of this intervention.

Our proposed focus is specific: on recruitment. Job postings often use gendered language. Adverts containing terms like 'competition' and 'dominant' are likely to evoke stereotypically male traits, while adverts asking for 'collaborative' and 'community-minded' applicants appeal more to stereotypically feminine traits (for an example of gendered advertisements, see Figure 4).

Employers are beginning to tackle gendered language from job advertisements and other company communications. Companies like Microsoft, Starbucks, Square and Twitter now use predictive language processing technology to de-bias their job advertisements and to use inclusive language to attract a large pool of diverse job applicants.

We propose to test the impact of purging gendered language in Victoria by creating two versions of job advertisements: an initial control version that contains either stereotypically male or female language, and a gender-neutral version of this advert. By testing whether the gender split of the applicant pool changes according to the language used in the advert, we will systematically measure whether de-biasing language can help to increase gender diversity in the workplace.

[2] For more information on Unitive, please see www.unitive.works. For more information on Gapsquare, please see https://gapsquare.com.

EXPECTED LESSONS

If we find that simple differences in how a job is described and advertised influences the gender ratio of the applicant pool, this will have important implications for a large range of employers in the public and private sectors seeking gender balance in their workforces. If it is shown that using readily available software and taking care to avoid specific types of words and descriptions is effective, private firms and government employers can go a long way towards equalising the pipeline of applicants for jobs traditionally dominated by men.

Figure 4: Sample job advertisement for an engineer role (Gaucher et al. 2011)

Feminine	Masculine
Company description	
• We are a community of engineers who have effective relationships with many satisfied clients. • We are committed to understanding the engineering sector intimately.	• We are a dominant engineering firm that boasts many leading clients. • We are determined to stand apart from the competition.
Qualifications	
• Proficient oral and written communication skills. • Collaborates well, in a team environment. • Sensitive to clients' needs, can develop warm client relationships. • Bachelor of Engineering degree or higher from recognised university. • Registered as a Professional Engineer.	• Strong communication and influencing skills. • Ability to perform individually in a competitive environment. • Superior ability to satisfy customers and manage company's association with them. • Bachelor of Engineering degree or higher from recognised university. • Registered as a Professional Engineer.
Responsibilities	
• Provide general support to project teams in a manner complimentary to the company. • Help clients with construction activities. • Create quality engineering designs.	• Direct project groups to manage project progress and ensure accurate task control. • Determine compliance with client's objectives. • Create quality engineering designs.

" Deloitte Australia is really pleased to partner with VicHealth on this important project. Spotting unconscious biases woven into the threads of employment processes and practices is, by definition, hard. Taking a scientific approach to identification and elimination offers the best chance of unravelling those threads and creating better outcomes. "

JULIET BOURKE,
PARTNER, HUMAN CAPITAL, DELOITTE AUSTRALIA

MEDIA BIAS

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Women are underrepresented in the news, and when they do appear, it can be in ways that portray sexist stereotypes. This is problematic because the media is a powerful platform to influence social norms.

How women and men are portrayed in the media can reinforce positive or harmful gender stereotypes.

Women are much less likely to be featured as actual subjects in news reports. Analysis of 13 US newspapers published between 1983 and 2008 documented that male names have received at least *four times* as much exposure in news coverage as female names (Shor et al. 2015). Recent analysis by the Women's Leadership Institute Australia found that women accounted for about one-fifth of sources directly quoted in news articles over the surveyed period (articles from the general news, business and related news, and finance news sections) (Women's Leadership Institute Australia 2016).

This extends to news reporting on sports. On television, coverage of women in sport made up 9 per cent of all sports coverage in Australian television news media, while male sport, on the other hand, occupied 81 per cent of television news reporting (the balance is mainly horse racing) (Lumby et al. 2014).

When women *are* featured in sports coverage, female athletes and their achievements tend to be depicted in a biased manner. Researchers who have explored specific content of news reports have pointed out that female athletes are often objectified and sexualised (Godoy-Pressland 2016). And while the success of male athletes is often attributed to their talent and hard work, women's achievements in sports are often attributed to 'luck' or the support of coaches and trainers (Fink 2015). Female athletes also tend to be infantilised by being frequently referred to as 'girls' or 'young ladies' or described as emotionally unstable (Bruce 2016).

In terms of production, male journalists in print media outnumber female reporters by roughly two to one in the US (Women's Media Center 2015), Australia and New Zealand (Strong & Hannis 2007). Similarly, women worldwide remain underrepresented in such senior management position as editors or senior writers.[5]

To date, most research on gender biases in sports reporting relies on the manual review of news reports, which is both time- and resource-intensive, and leads to trade-offs between scope and depth of the analysis. When large numbers of articles are examined over a longer time period, the insights are typically more limited. For example, the *Women for media report 2016* analysed 6000 articles in Australian newspapers, one of the more extensive analyses in terms of sample size. The report contains important insights, finding, for example, that women represented just 21 per cent of people quoted in news articles over the surveyed period (Women's Leadership Institute Australia 2016).[6] This type of analysis very usefully reveals gender bias in terms of news sources and authorship, but typically does not cast more detailed light on the content, nature and context of the articles. By contrast, studies that provide a more nuanced and detailed analysis of the content of, and language used in, sports news are very limited in sample size and time scope. For example, recent analysis of gender differences in the portrayal of gymnasts at the 2012 Olympics reviewed 40 newspaper articles (Eagleman 2015), and a study of coverage of women's cricket undertook qualitative content analysis of 29 articles (Biscomb & Griggs 2012).

[5] Evidence from Australia: 'Women's struggle for top jobs in the news media' (North 2012).

[6] In Australia, 'Women are only a fifth (20%) of those in governance (e.g. board of directors), almost none (10%) in top-level management (e.g. publishers, chief executive officers), women in senior management (22.2%) and middle management (29.1%) (e.g. news directors, executive editors, and chief of correspondents, among others).' (International Women's Media Foundation 2011)

" VicHealth's suite of research projects on gender equality is a hugely exciting initiative. Each project uses a cutting-edge evaluation method to address a critical topic. Together the projects will add substantially to our knowledge about how to achieve gender equality in Australia. "

JEFF BORLAND,
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THE BEHAVIOURAL ANGLE AND EXPECTED LESSONS

Major Australian media corporations have emphasised their commitment to equitable coverage – see, for instance, a News Corporation spokeswoman's assurance that the company is 'committed to representing the communities we operate in and championing positive change on their behalf', and the assurance of Fairfax Media editorial director Sean Aylmer that 'our journalists actively seek diverse comments on their stories. The more voices the better.' (AAP 2016)

Against this stated commitment to equitable coverage, and the state government's goal of ensuring that all Victorians are visible and have an equal representation in media and professional sports, big data analysis (methodology described below) holds the promise of uncovering and empirically documenting systematic gender bias in media reporting of areas like sports, business and leadership, and political representation.

INITIAL ANALYSIS: MEDIA COVERAGE OF SPORTS

We have commenced the analysis on sports-related media coverage, and propose to tackle three broad questions:

1. To what extent are female athletes and sports teams underrepresented in news reporting on sports? To what extent are female-typed sports underrepresented?

2. How does news coverage of sportswomen differ from news reports on male athletes and teams?

3. Which biases and gender stereotyping in sports news coverage apply to male athletes?

Big data analysis, as the term implies, makes the review of a relatively large sample of print media technically feasible while also providing a level of detail that is comparable to in-depth case studies. Using a combination of manual classification of news articles and computational text analysis, we plan to review sport-related news coverage in the 10 newspapers with the highest circulation in the state of Victoria over a period of 18 months, which corresponds to over 62,000 news articles. The newspapers included in the sample represent a mix of local, regional, statewide and national reporting outlets. Additional information will be collected for each newspaper, including newspaper ownership and address, gender of the editor-in-chief and gender of the head of the sports section (where applicable). This portion of the analysis was designed and led by Susanne Schwarz under Jeni Klugman's supervision.

Documenting the bias is a critical first step. Our hypothesis is that uncovering and exposing systematic bias in sports reporting will lead to more conscious management and staff decisions about gender balance in both news production and coverage. Specifically, we could imagine that the data could be a wake-up call for news organisations, government and civil society, that, building on behavioural insights, could be leveraged into a campaign for change. Learning from how the United Kingdom was able to increase gender diversity on the corporate boards of the FTSE100 companies without introducing quotas, the 'EAST-framework' for behaviour change could be applied – making it Easy, Attractive, Socially desirable and Timely for journalists to report more inclusively. Elements of such a campaign could include goal-setting and tracking (e.g. x per cent coverage of women in sports, y per cent female journalists/reporters), norm-setting by highlighting and celebrating success as well as identifying laggards (e.g. news outlets with least/most gender bias), and creating competition between news outlets (Beshears et al. 2017).

FURTHER AREAS OF ANALYSIS

It is possible, using the same types of methods, to extend the analysis to examine bias in other spheres of reporting, including politics and corporate coverage.

This study is a world first. There has never been a big data analysis of gender bias in media reporting of sports, business or politics, at least not in the published literature. Uncovering these biases in a systematic way will provide a better understanding of the magnitude, scope and nature of the problem. It will also provide a robust baseline and allow tracking of improvements over time and comparability to attitudinal surveys conducted in Victoria over the same time horizon (for example, VicHealth Indicators or the National Communities Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey).

LOOKING AHEAD

While the work unfolds across the fronts outlined above, we will explore the possibility to contribute in other areas as appropriate. For example, we are exploring opportunities to trial comparisons between implicit bias measures and explicit ones. This could offer unique insights for certain populations, such as young people.

Another possible front, given the key role sport and recreation play in strengthening communities, particularly in rural and regional Victoria (Tonts & Atherley 2017), is to explore ways to support efforts to improve the participation and leadership of women and girls will be examined. One option could be the use of self-assessments and gender-audit tools. This could draw on the experience of EDGE, which provides an evaluation and certification tool that companies and organisations can use to assess their policies and practices. EDGE is rapidly becoming a globally recognised standard, certifying best company practices to achieve gender equality; roughly 110 companies from over 40 countries and 22 industries are engaged in the EDGE assessment and certification process.

We are encouraged by the increased investment in women and girls in sports in Victoria (see **Box 4** for a recent analysis) and look forward to the opportunities this allows for upcoming trials and further analysis.

BOX 4:
VIEWS ABOUT THE BIG GAME

The first season of Australian Football League (AFL) Women's, the professional Australian Rules football league for female players, was launched in February 2017. The inaugural Carlton–Collingwood match drew a crowd of 24,568 – almost 10,000 fans more than forecast, and a crowd so large that the Victorian Police shut the gates to the match and declared a lockout before quarter time (Denham 2017).

In 2016, before the launch of the female league, the AFL held a women's exhibition series, with 10 matches played in venues across the country.

VicHealth commissioned the Gender Equality in Sports Survey to examine community responses to an exhibition game in September 2016. Analysis of the views of about 3000 respondents (of whom about 2000 were Victorian) generated a range of interesting insights. Responses to the game were both positive – the game was 'mind blowing', 'an exciting revolution' – and negative – 'standard of play was rather poor, but hey let the women play if they want'.

While some felt a women's AFL game was important as 'Women should have the same opportunities as men', one respondent even remarked that they 'prefer lingerie football instead'.

The survey also asked participants their views on female sports coverage. Overall it found that significant numbers of both women and men supported greater coverage of women in sports. When asked whether 'there is enough on-field/on-court TV, radio and newspaper coverage of female sports', only 27 per cent of Victorians agreed (20 per cent of female respondents and 34 per cent of men), with 44 per cent of Victorians disagreeing and 29 per cent neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Multivariate analysis suggested that women, the better educated, and individuals from English-speaking backgrounds were more likely to support greater coverage.[7] ■

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[7] *Gender Equality in Sports Survey 2016: VicHealth internal analysis* (VicHealth 2017). Preliminary analysis found that holding all else constant, male respondents were about 9 per cent less likely than females to disagree with the statement that 'there is enough on-field/on-court TV, radio and newspaper coverage of female sports'. An individual born in a non-English speaking country was 19 per cent less likely and an individual with a tertiary degree was 8 per cent more likely to disagree with the above statement, compared to an Australian-born individual and an individual who didn't finish high school, respectively.

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