



The Dream Collective

ALLYSHIP AND GENDER EQUALITY RESEARCH

Measuring the perceptions of men in the workplace, and the motivators and barriers to gender equality and diversity & inclusion training initiatives.

PREPARED FOR THE DREAM COLLECTIVE, BY:



November 2021



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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An online, quantitative study was conducted amongst 1,000 males working in “white collar” positions, in both Australia, and Japan (2,000 respondents in total). **The following report provides insight into the Australian audience only.**

A range of measures were taken to capture attitudes, behaviours and feedback, taking special care to minimise cultural differences in scale answering tendencies, and to favour “actionable responses” that are based on actual behaviour as opposed to mere “sentiment”.

Further, efforts were taken in the research to provide a space to elicit honest & genuine responses to identify barriers to gender equality initiatives since obtaining honest responses is crucial to gaining an accurate understanding of where workplaces are currently at, and what work remains to be done.

Qualitative, open-ended questions were also employed to help provide depth, particularly around real-life experiences and what male workers believe might be helpful to inspire colleagues to also champion the cause.



RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The Dream Collective's mission is to act as a catalyst and driving force behind improvements to diversity and inclusivity practices in the workplace; especially with a goal of seeing greater female representation in leadership positions.

Key to the value of this research is the uncovering of real male perceptions and attitudes toward gender equality and DEI initiatives; highlighting the key motivators that could drive engagement and participation, and the possible barriers that stand in the way of valuable training and discussion in this space.



FINDINGS OVERVIEW

52%

men feel they are suffering from reverse-discrimination, but the majority say their opportunities for advancement in the workplace has either **remained the same (57%)** or in some cases, **improved (26%)**, indicating discrepancy between perception and reality.

48%

say they feel fatigued by the diversity and inclusion discussion but **87% said that they had either not seen any significant change to their work environment (61%)** or said their work environment has become more **empowering over the last 2 years (26%)**, possibly demonstrating that discussion and awareness of inclusion benefits everyone

61%

Whilst **awareness and willingness to engage is high amongst men 61%**, it's driven more by obligation than personal conviction, with **36% believing that promoting gender equality is a zero-sum game** and **only 22% believing that their actions would have a critical impact on gender equality.**

33%

When it comes to engaging and motivating participants in gender equality initiatives, **33% said those led by human resources are “Not at all motivating or engaging”**, suggesting that in order for gender equality (GE) initiatives to be effective, a fresh, holistic approach is needed.



SAMPLE PROFILE

Sample	AUS n	AUS%
Survey qualifiers	1,010	100%

Gender	AUS n	AUS%
Total	1,010	100%
Male	1,010	100%

Age (Generation)	AUS n	AUS%
Zoomers / Gen Z (18-24)	149	15%
Millennials / Gen Y (25-40)	299	30%
Generation X (41-56)	295	29%
Baby Boomers (57-75)	248	25%
Silent Generation (76+)	19	2%

Location (AUS)	AUS n	AUS%
NSW	365	36%
VIC	274	27%
QLD	163	16%
SA	82	8%
WA	77	8%
ACT, TAS & NT	49	5%

Work Status	AUS n	AUS%
White Collar / Office / Professional	837	83%
Administrative Worker	-	-
Service / Retail / Hospitality	173	17%

Role	AUS n	AUS%
Top Management e.g. Chairman, VP, Board of Directors, C-Level	93	9%
Senior / Middle Management e.g. GM, Regional Manager	261	26%
First-Line Management e.g. Supervisor, Office Manager, Team Leader	244	24%
Employee / Worker	398	39%
Other	13	1%
Prefer not to say	1	<1%

Business Size	AUS n	AUS%
Micro Business (Sole trader, or 2-4 employees)	72	7%
Small-Medium Business (5-199 employees)	486	48%
Enterprise (200+ employees)	452	45%

Industry	AUS n	AUS%
Manufacturing	58	6%
Retail Trade	101	10%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	139	14%
Information, Media & Telecommunications	72	7%
Other Services	20	2%
Healthcare & Social Assistance	96	10%
Education & Training	90	9%
Financial & Insurance Services	87	9%
Public Administration & Safety	63	6%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	51	5%
Construction	35	3%
Wholesale Trade	22	2%
Administrative & Support Services	34	3%
Accommodation & Food Services	38	4%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	23	2%
Arts & Recreation Services	17	2%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	13	1%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	5	0%
Mining	12	1%
Other	34	3%



1.

MALE PERCEPTIONS & ARCHETYPE

How do men in white-collar occupations view Gender Equality?



1

CHANGE IN MEN'S EXPERIENCES



The majority of Australian men working in white-collar positions do not feel that their experience working in their profession or industry has changed significantly in the past 2 years; and certainly, very few men feel as though their situation has worsened – with the possible exception of job security.

51%

While just over half of men feel as though there has been no significant change in their situation when it comes to job opportunities, feeling comfortable to speak freely, empowerment, or respect from colleagues, roughly one quarter of men actually feel that their situation has improved on these dimensions

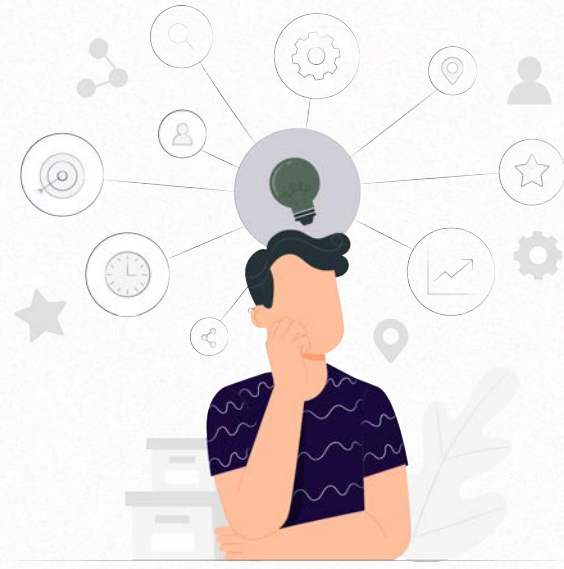
34%

actually believe that the level of respect they receive from colleagues has improved since 2 years ago.



2

WHICH SOURCES BUILD PERCEPTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY?



Men do believe that they are informed when it comes to gender issues and the idea of gender equality; the majority of working men feel at least a minor influence from several different sources, and a major influence from some in particular.

80%

The significant majority of men in Australian do believe that ‘gender equality affects all of us’ and that something needs to be done

45%

Lived personal experiences tend to be a critical influence on gender issues perceptions, with **45% saying that this is their primary influence**; though around 3 in 10 also cite workplace experiences, independent research, and even training or education. By comparison, few men say that the opinions of friends or peers influences them on these issues.

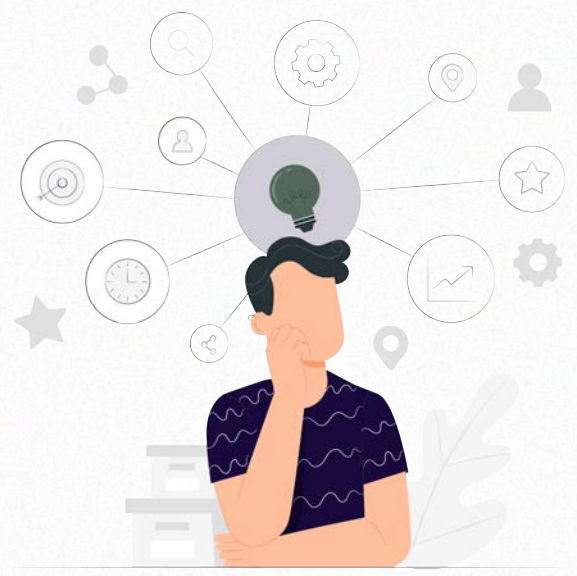
48%

Of men feel fatigued by gender equality,, and also believe things have got to the point where reverse discrimination is occurring (52%).



2

WHICH SOURCES BUILD PERCEPTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY?



45%

Just under half (45%) of men believe that men and women are already treated equally, and that **if women fall behind, men aren't to blame, but rather it could sometimes be due to the drive or motivation of women**

30%

Slightly more encouragingly, only 30% believe 'it is not really my responsibility'...

26%

...And even fewer say that "men and women aren't supposed to be equal"



3

GENDER EQUALITY SPECIFICALLY IN THE WORKPLACE



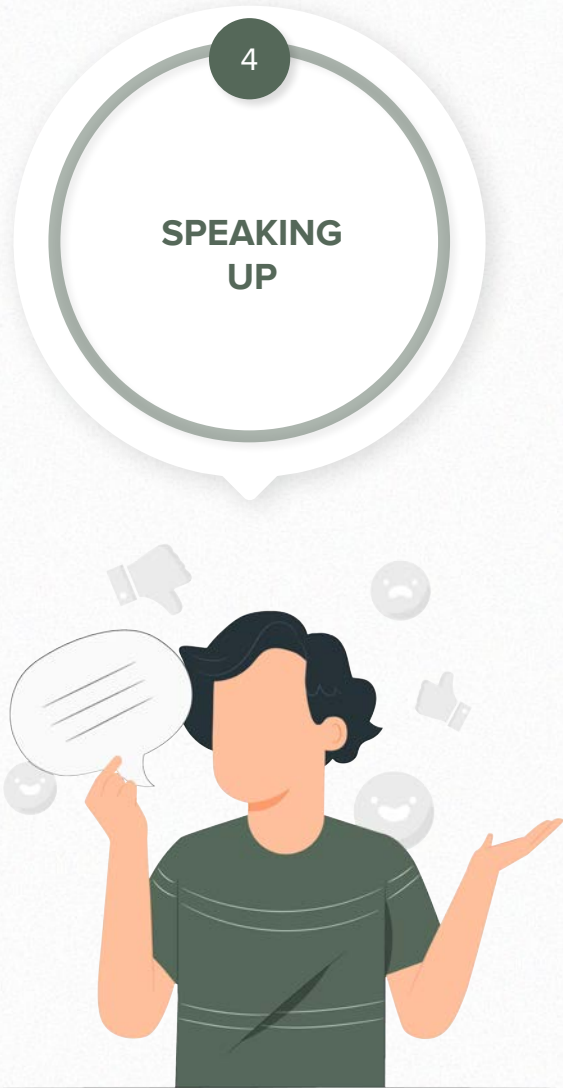
Evidence suggests that Australian men are now familiar with the concept of gender equality.

60%

say that when it comes to women’s career advancement, “*I have greater awareness than my peers do*”. However, while awareness – and even willingness to engage in initiatives – is high, this is not the same thing as personal conviction

61%

say that while they make great efforts to meet targets for women’s career advancement, ‘this is driven primarily by obligation, as opposed to strong personal convictions’



65%

Encouragingly, **two thirds (65%) of Australian men believe that when colleagues make gender stereotypes or comments that are inappropriate in terms of gender equality, these occurrences have a negative effect on the workplace**, and only 1 in 8 believe that such situations actually have a positive effect

Nevertheless, this negative effect tends to be seen as rather subtle. Rather than ‘setting back gender equality efforts’, it is more a case of ‘normalising discrimination’.

70%

In line with the high proportion that view such situations as having a negative effect, most men (up to 70%) say they would feel comfortable about speaking up about such behaviour. ‘Reporting’ behaviour like this is most likely to be informal – **men are most comfortable speaking to another colleague, and least comfortable speaking to HR or other staff management**



5

**MALE
ARCHETYPES:
WILLINGNESS VS.
ABILITY TO MAKE
CHANGE**



25%

Whilst very few Australian men (25%) believe they have no impact on the ideas or opinions of others, those who do think they can influence others tend to think that they have only a minor impact (53%), rather than a critical one (22%)

54%

Showing the imbalance and the need for empowerment, a much higher proportion recognise the critical role and impact that men play in achieving gender equality (54%); and **virtually no men say they have no role to play (8%)**



4 ARCHETYPES IDENTIFIED: WILLINGNESS VS. ABILITY



Amongst Australian male workers, **nearly 4 in 5 believe they have only a relatively low ability to enact change when it comes to gender equality**; inspiring and motivating their colleagues. Amongst these men, however, they are split almost 50/50 according to whether they believe men have a large role to play, or a small one.

The proportion who view their ability to make a difference as high, but their willingness to be low, is very small.

Q What impact do you think you could have on gender equality within your organisation or industry, in terms of your ability to inspire and motivate your fellow colleagues, and your colleagues listening to any ideas or opinions that you have? | How much of a role or impact do you believe that men should play, when it comes to gender equality within your organisation or industry?
 Base: Australia (n=1,010).



AMONGST WHITE-COLLAR MALES IN AUSTRALIA...

22%

believe they could have a critical impact within their organisation or industry by **inspiring colleagues** and getting them to **listen to their ideas and opinions**

25%

believe that they have **no impact** and that what they say or do has **no effect on others**

Q What impact do you think you could have on gender equality within your organisation or industry, in terms of your ability to inspire and motivate your fellow colleagues, and your colleagues listening to any ideas or opinions that you have?
Base: Australia (n=1,010)





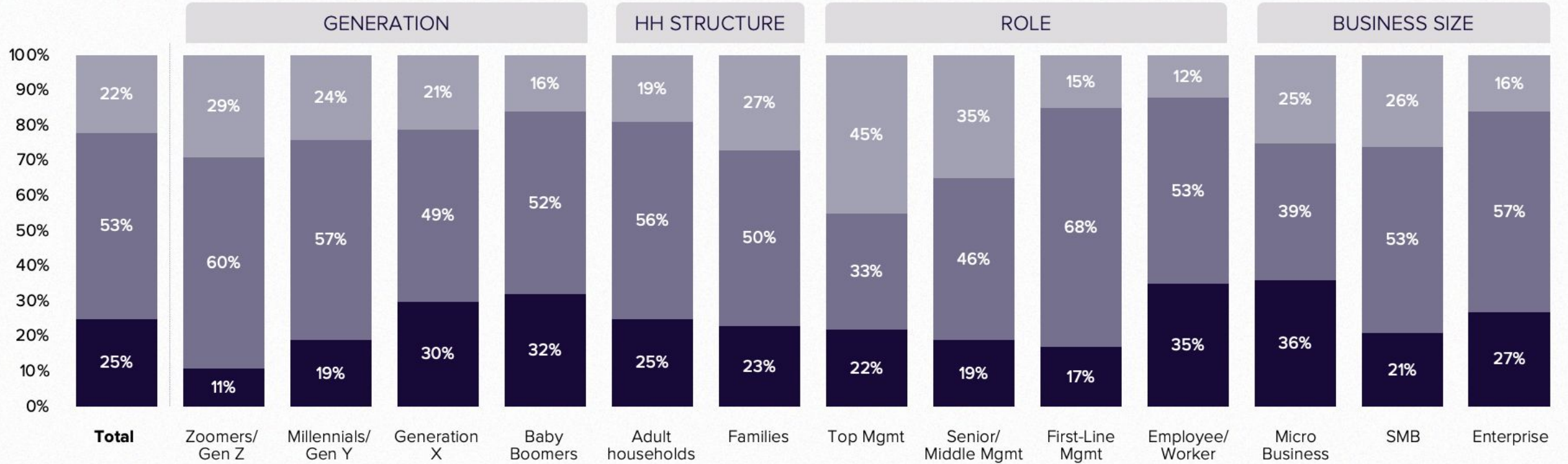
MEASURE OF PERSONAL IMPACT



Amongst Australian men, it is the **younger generations** that perceive themselves as having **greater influence on their peers**

This is despite the obvious result that men in more **senior roles** recognise their greater degree of influence.

Those in **family** life stages also view themselves as having greater influence on others' viewpoints.



■ No impact ■ Minor impact ■ Critical impact



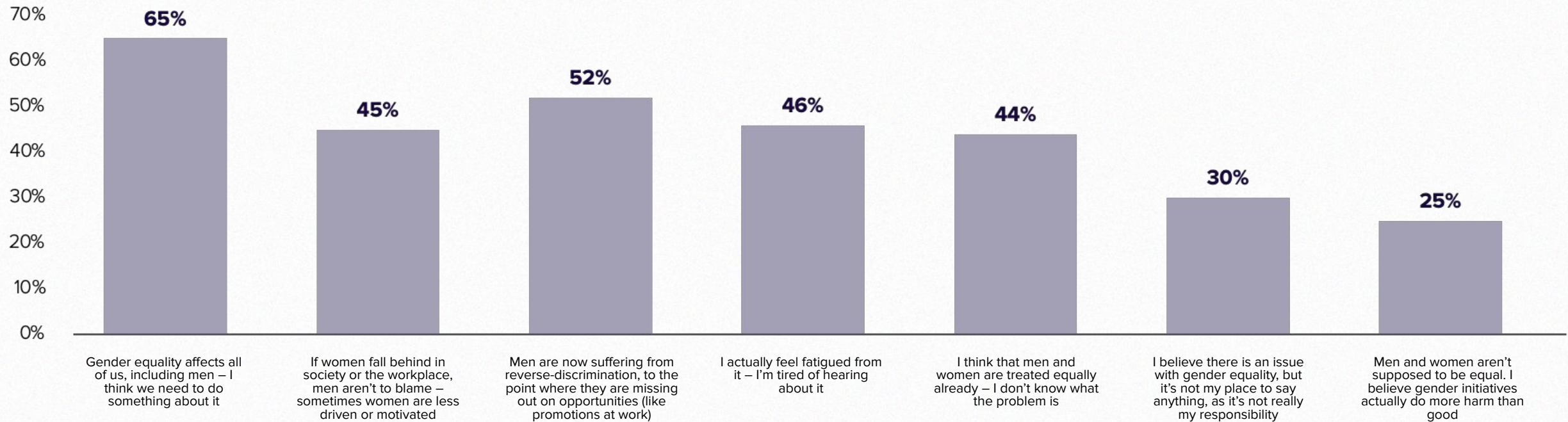
ATTITUDES TO GENDER EQUALITY IN SOCIETY



Australian male white-collar workers tend to agree that **“gender equality affects all of us”** and that something needs to be done – three quarters of men (or more) agree this is true.

Within Australia, it is **older** generations who are more greatly feeling the **fatigue** from GE, and believe that men are suffering from **reverse-discrimination**.

Interestingly, **Australian** men are more likely to feel **fatigued** from GE, think that **men now suffer from reverse-discrimination**, and that **men and women are already treated equally**.





AMONGST WHITE-COLLAR MALES IN AUSTRALIA...

54%

believe that the actions and involvement of men are **critical** to achieving **gender equality**

ONLY

8%

believe that men have **no role to play**

Q How much of a role or impact do you believe that men should play, when it comes to gender equality within your organisation or industry?
Base: Australia (n=1,010)



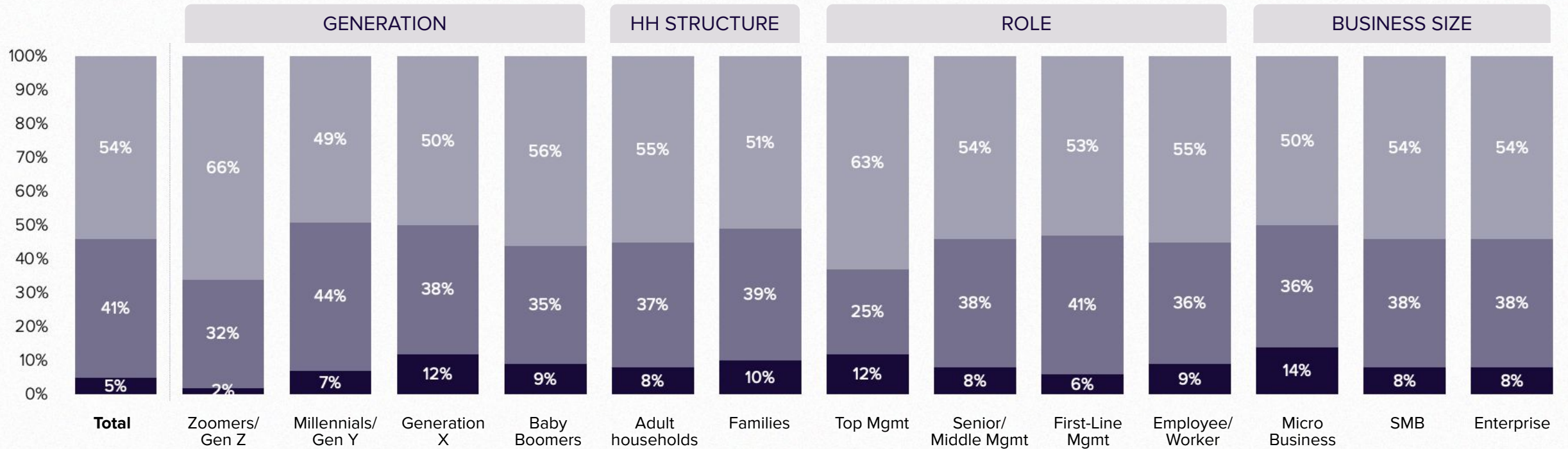


MEASURE OF PERSONAL IMPACT TO ENACT CHANGE



Men in Australia in more **senior roles** are more likely to **recognise** the critical impact that men have on achieving gender equality.

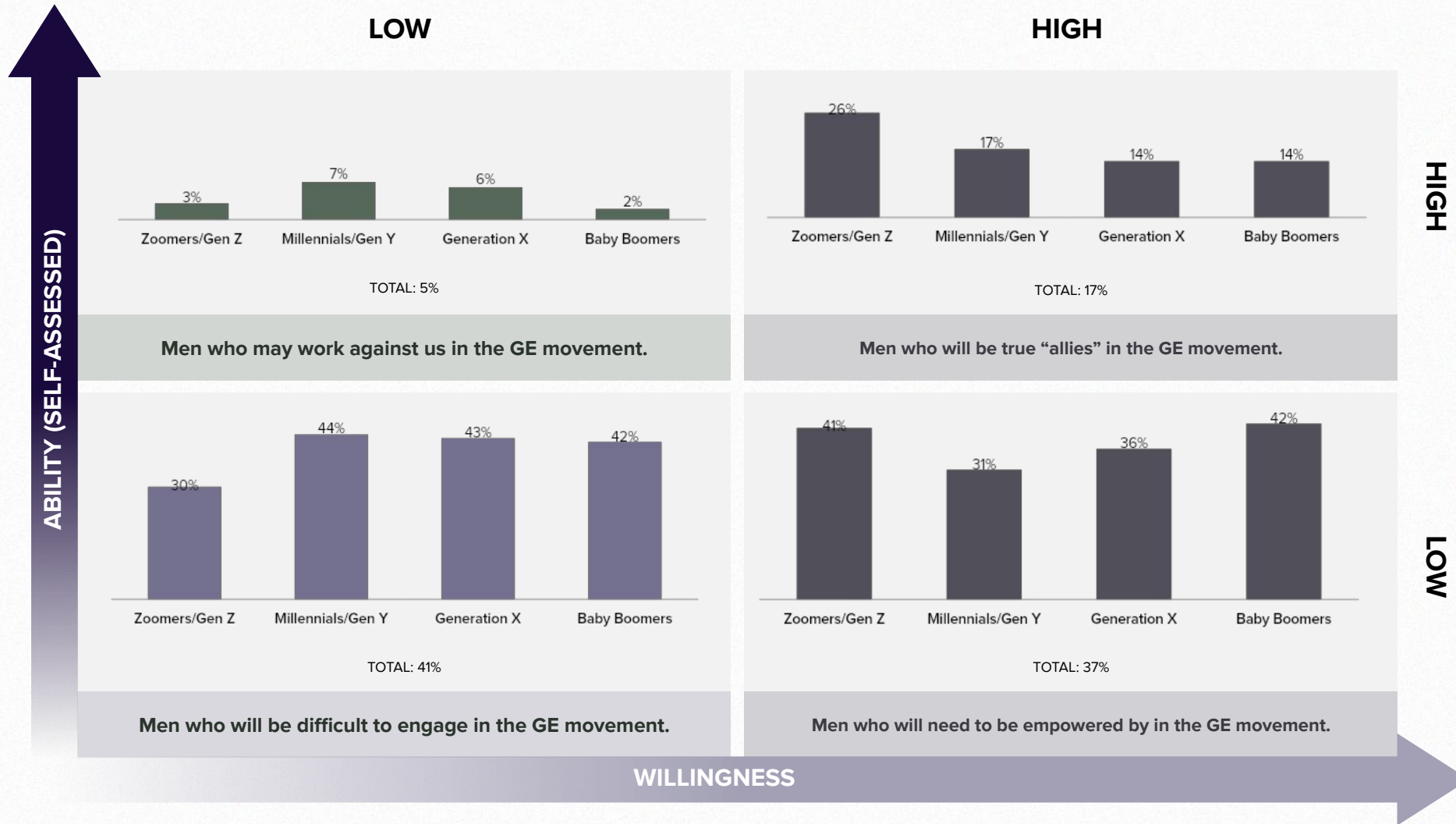
This is perhaps somewhat reflected in a higher proportion amongst the **Baby Boomer** generation, too; however, it is **Gen Z** that seem to most greatly recognise the importance of the actions of men.



■ No impact ■ Minor impact ■ Critical impact



WILLINGNESS VS. ABILITY



Zoomers / Gen Z are over-represented amongst the ally group, having a high willingness to make a change, as well as a strong ability to influence others. The disengaged in Australia are more likely to be from older generations.

Q What impact do you think you could have on gender equality within your organisation or industry, in terms of your ability to inspire and motivate your fellow colleagues, and your colleagues listening to any ideas or opinions that you have? | How much of a role or impact do you believe that men should play, when it comes to gender equality within your organisation or industry?
Base: Australia (n=1,010).



WILLINGNESS VS. ABILITY



Those in **Top Management** are most likely to present as the true “ally” archetype, with high ability and high willingness to make a difference. There is, however, also an element of more **senior management** that are resistant to change despite having strong impact on others. **Lower tier workers** are over-represented amongst the archetype that needs **empowerment** (high willingness but low ability to enact change).

Q What impact do you think you could have on gender equality within your organisation or industry, in terms of your ability to inspire and motivate your fellow colleagues, and your colleagues listening to any ideas or opinions that you have? | How much of a role or impact do you believe that men should play, when it comes to gender equality within your organisation or industry?
Base: Australia (n=1,010).



2.

TRAINING MOTIVATORS

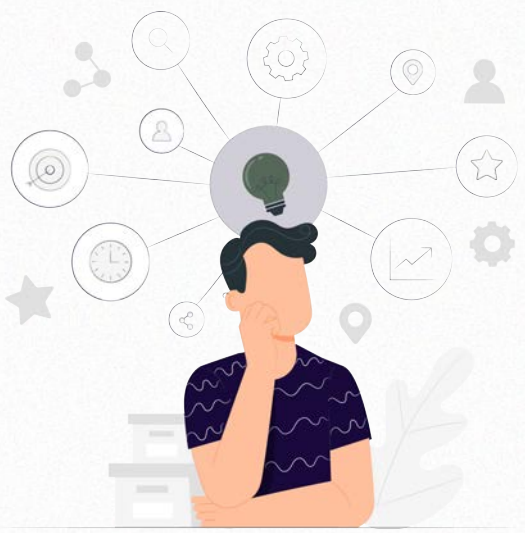
How can men in white-collar professions be most effectively reached and engaged, via training on Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives?





1

RESPONSE TO TRAINING



37%

The most common response that Australian men are likely to give to GE & DEI training is one of partnership; **37% are keen to participate together with, and for the encouragement of, others**

12%

A substantial number are also willing to step up and champion the effort – **12% are willing to lead the charge, while 25% say they would be willing to be a ‘first mover’ in the initiative.** Encouragingly, only very few (26%) would act as followers, laggards, or rejectors; the latter comprising only 9% of total men

13%

Whilst it’s no surprise that top management are most willing to take on a leadership role, **13% of them are also rejectors – a higher proportion than any lower hierarchy levels**



2

KEY PARTICIPATION MOTIVATORS



Overall, Australian men are motivated to engage and participate in workplace training on gender equality primarily on altruistic and other-person oriented goals – that is, because they personally believe it’s the right thing to do, and it’s their way of supporting their female colleagues. 51% & 48% of them (respectively) say these goals would ‘motivate them greatly’.

45%

They also have in mind some mutual benefits; 45% say such training would be good for team development, and 40% that it would be good for family members and relationships

41%

Australian men do not leave themselves out of the equation when it comes to the training motivators – 41% say that it would be good for ‘my own personal development’

31%

However, the other self-oriented rationales tend to motivate less – only 25-26% say that it being a HR requirement, or good for my image and how I’m perceived, would motivate them; and 31% say it would be good for my career opportunities

Amongst the resistant archetype (high ability, low willingness), **more mutual and “other-person” centred factors are more highly motivating**. Positing the benefits for family members, team/company innovation, and improved business performance may be more motivating than it is for other archetypes.



WHO ARE THE TRAINING CHAMPIONS WHO WILL LEAD THE RESPONSE TO GE & DEI TRAINING?



37%

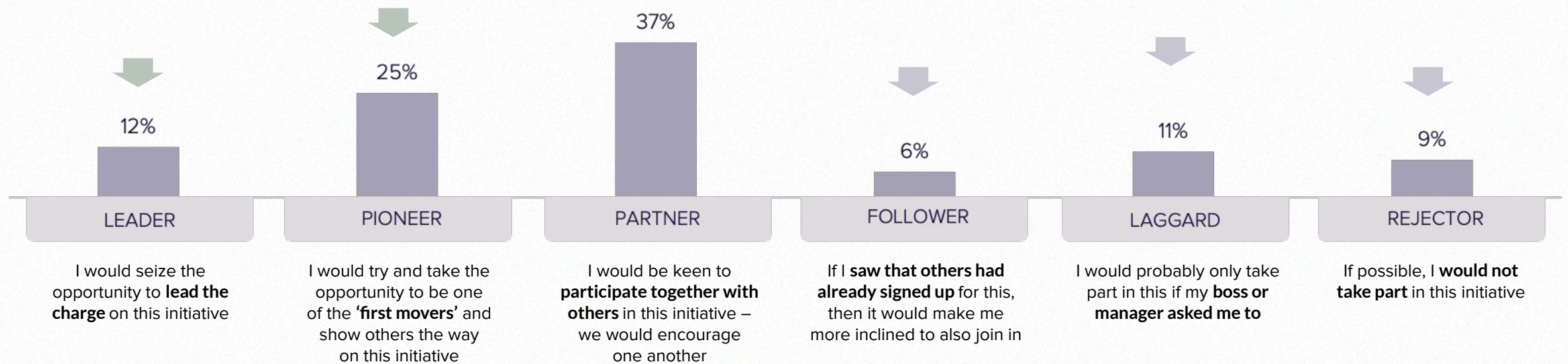
As to be expected, the **bulk** of male white-collar workers would respond with a **somewhat “moderate”** degree of enthusiasm to planned GE & DEI training in the workplace; 37% would take on a “partnership” role, being keen to participate in unity with colleagues.

25%


In encouraging news, **one quarter** (25%) claim they would help **pioneer** the initiative, being a “first mover” and showing others the way, while around **1 in 8 (12%)** would be comfortable taking on a **leadership** (or champion) role.

26%

One quarter (26%) would take a **passive** approach, either following others; only participating if told by a superior, or flat-out rejecting the training (around 1 in 10 for this latter cohort).



Q If your workplace began planning for a training course on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, which answer best describes how you would respond?
Base: Australia (n=1,010)

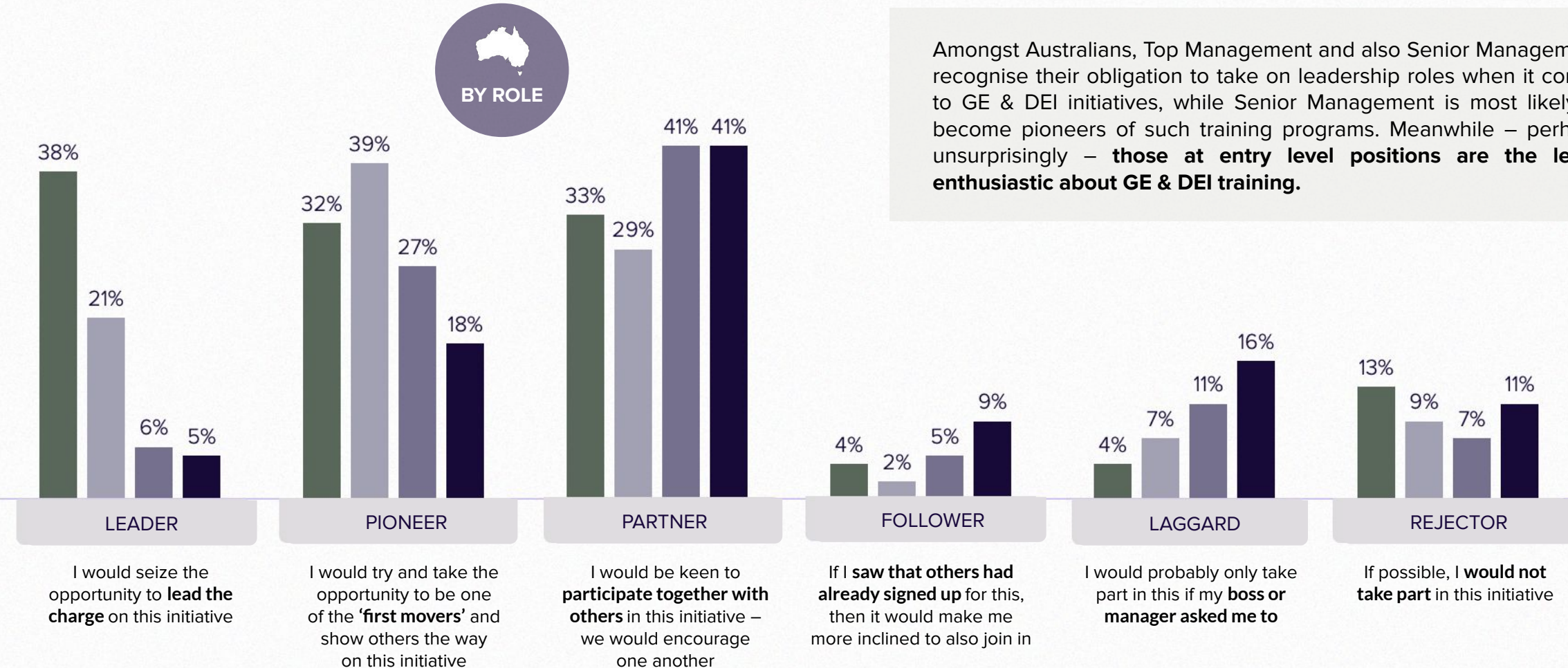
A close-up, low-angle shot of a woman's hand raised in a meeting. The hand is in sharp focus, with fingers slightly spread. In the background, several people are seated at a table, blurred. The setting appears to be a professional meeting or conference room with large windows in the background.

Real voices are most likely to strongly **motivate and engage** men in gender equality training. Training needs to provide an opportunity to hear **real experiences** from real people.

In terms of converting **learnings into action**, a **two-way dialogue** and workshopping that **values the input of men** (and not being one-way); as well as taking the time to **provide research-supported context and theory** behind the training are the two things that are most likely to be seen as helpful by men.



WHO ARE THE TRAINING CHAMPIONS WHO WILL LEAD THE RESPONSE TO GE & DEI TRAINING?



Amongst Australians, Top Management and also Senior Management recognise their obligation to take on leadership roles when it comes to GE & DEI initiatives, while Senior Management is most likely to become pioneers of such training programs. Meanwhile – perhaps unsurprisingly – **those at entry level positions are the least enthusiastic about GE & DEI training.**

I would seize the opportunity to **lead the charge** on this initiative

I would try and take the opportunity to be one of the **'first movers'** and show others the way on this initiative

I would be keen to **participate together with others** in this initiative – we would encourage one another

If I **saw that others had already signed up** for this, then it would make me more inclined to also join in

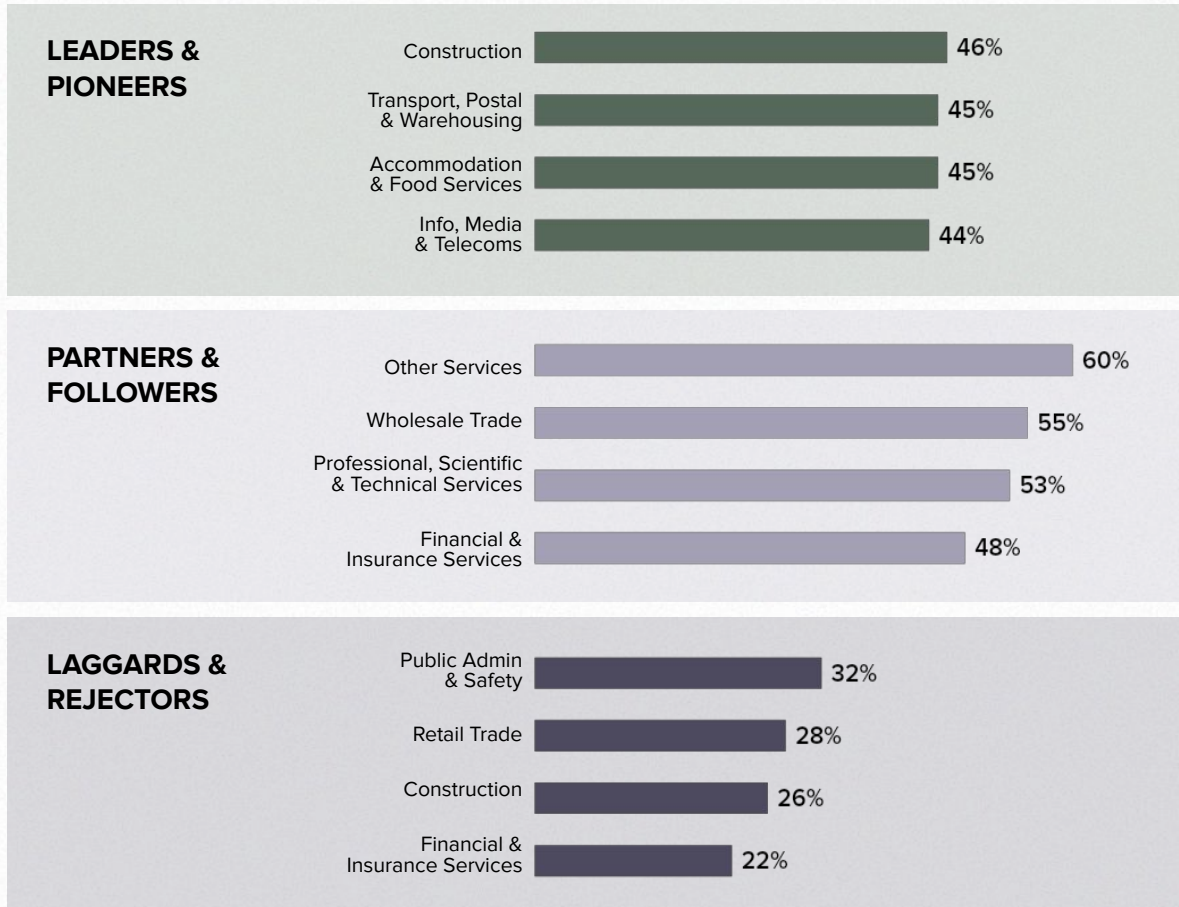
I would probably only take part in this if my **boss or manager asked me to**

If possible, I **would not take part** in this initiative

- Top Management
- Senior/Middle Management
- First-Line Management
- Employee/Worker



WHO ARE THE TRAINING CHAMPIONS WHO WILL LEAD THE RESPONSE TO GE & DEI TRAINING?

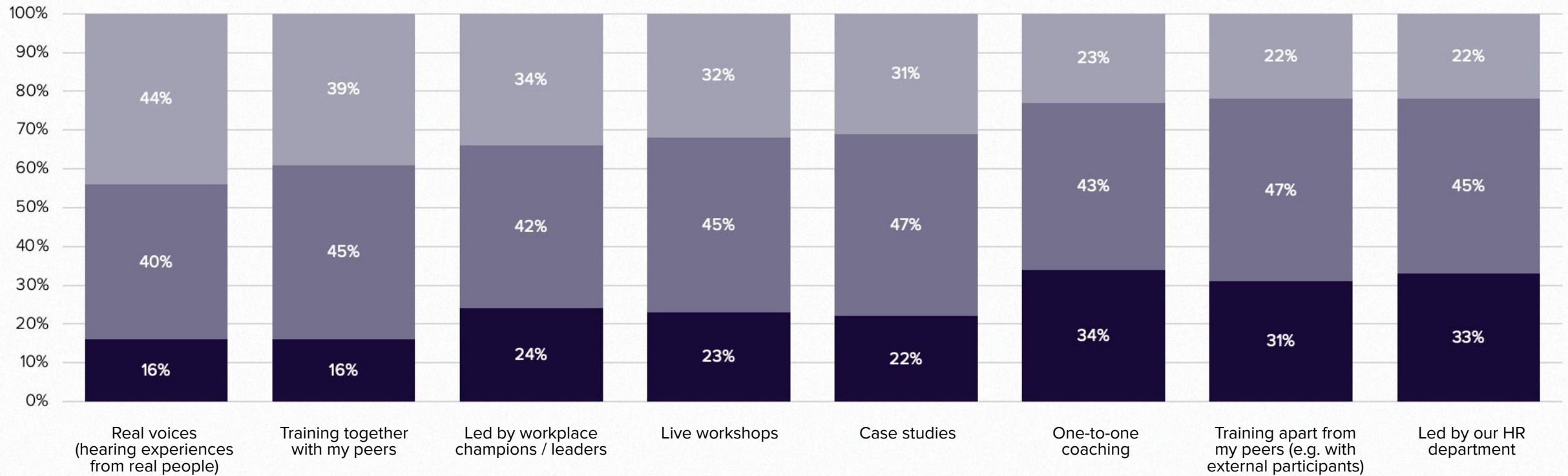




PROGRAM FORMATS THAT ARE MOST AND LEAST ENGAGING



Men in Australian workplaces are most likely to find hearing **real voices** and real-life experiences the most motivating! Training that **includes their peers** and is driven by **workplace champions** is also likely to be highly motivating and engaging, and men will find **live workshops** and **case studies** largely motivating. **HR-driven** sessions, training done **externally**, and **one-to-ones** are **least motivating**.

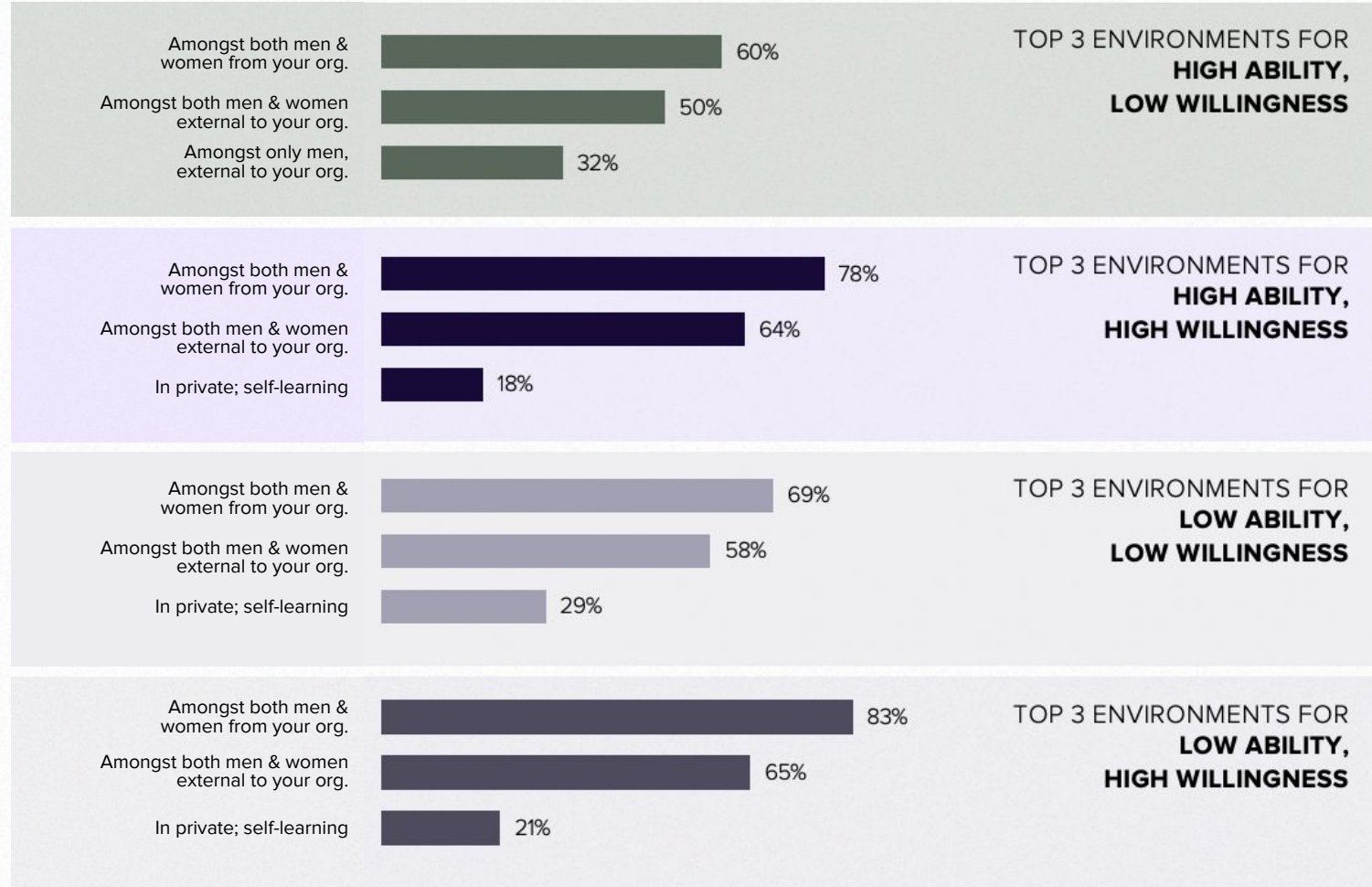


Not at all motivating/engaging
 Somewhat motivating / engaging
 Highly motivating / engaging

Q To what extent would each of the following things engage and motivate you, if you were to take part in a training program on gender equality?
Base: Australia (n=1,010)



ENVIRONMENTS RANKED TOP 3 FOR LEARNING & DISCUSSION



In Australia, the potentially “obstinate” with higher ability to make change but lower willingness, differ by viewing an environment where only other men, ex-organisation as being more preferable than other archetypes (but still behind co-gendered environments).

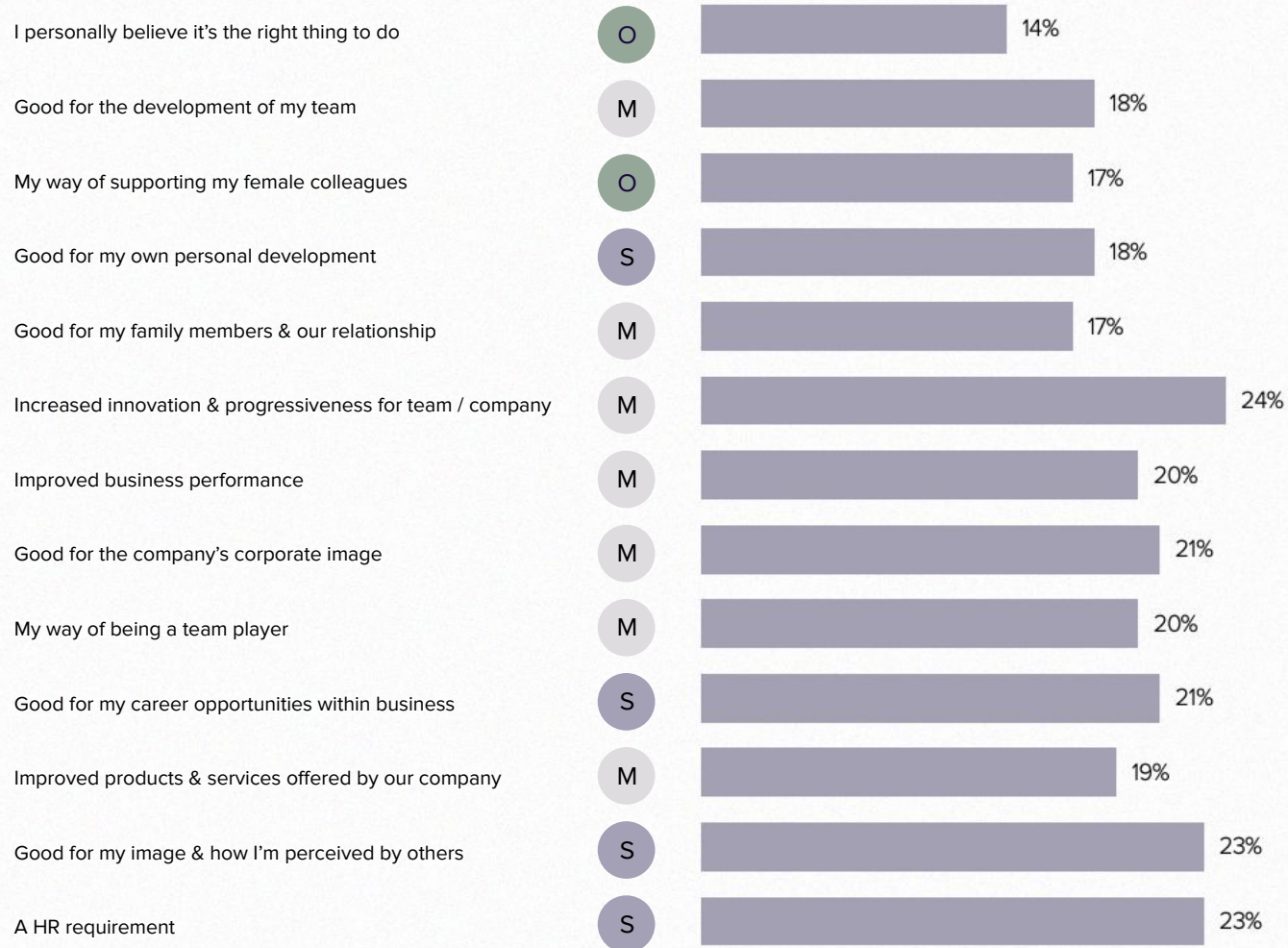
The “**disengaged**” are relatively more likely to find **private, self-learning** environments more preferable, vs. other archetypes.



Amongst men in Australia, the strongest motivators for taking part in GE training have an **altruistic** theme, placing the benefit of others first – personally believing it’s the “**right thing to do**”, and being their way of “**supporting their female colleagues**”.



KEY PARTICIPATION MOTIVATORS FOR WORKPLACE GE TRAINING




Australian male workers say that these aspects motivate them to engage and participate in GE workplace training.

- S** Self-oriented
- M** Mutually-oriented
- O** Other person-oriented



3.

TRAINING BARRIERS

What are the key barriers to overcome for men to act, and take part in GE/DEI training?





1

MALE ONLY ATTENDEES



63%

Encouragingly, for the most part, male white collar workers do not view a male-only environment as being necessary for GE training. In fact, **the overall preference is for mixed gender training, with other participants from their organisation**, and 63% of participants say that a male-only environment would be ‘not important’ and that they would not mind who else is in attendance

The resistant archetype (high ability but low willingness to enact change) are more likely to favour a male-only, extra-organisation environment but are still behind co-gendered environments).



2

KEY PARTICIPATION BARRIERS



16%

Overall, men do not indicate that any of the eight barriers to participation measured (see page 38) would be an especially great deterrent for them to engage and participate in workplace GE training – on average, 16% of Australians say that any of the given factors would deter them greatly. However, we can still expect some resistance or reluctance – on average, 45% of Australians say that any of the factors would deter them at least slightly

20%

The aspects that are most likely to deter men greatly from participating, are somewhat ‘self-oriented’ – 20% cite the possibility of ‘reduced opportunities for me’, and 19% saying the time required for training and discussion would be a deterrent

Deterrents for the resistant archetype as well as those who need more empowerment (high willingness but low self-assessed ability to make change) skew toward the self-focused – the possibility of reduced opportunity, the time required for training, and, for the unempowered, potential blowback / hostility. Meanwhile, **the leading barrier for allies is the perception that it does not match my workplace culture; and upsetting the status quo is also a noteworthy deterrent**

Overall, **differentiation is rather weak** between the various rationales as barriers to participating in GE training and discussion.

However, **time required for training and discussion** is the issue that is most likely to be cited as a deterrent for Australian men.

“...[it would be a barrier] If it was a very lengthy process that very greatly interrupted work. Another reason would be if the process seemed to be an attack on males. The way forward is progressively working together.”

“...[it would be a barrier] if the objective didn't align with the overall company's goals. It's not about doing something for the sake of it and so you can brag. It needs to be relevant and it has to align with the overall culture and beliefs.”

“We don't have barriers only time restraints. We are all very busy even and the last thing any of us really need or want is more training in a area which I don't believe has ever been an issue.”





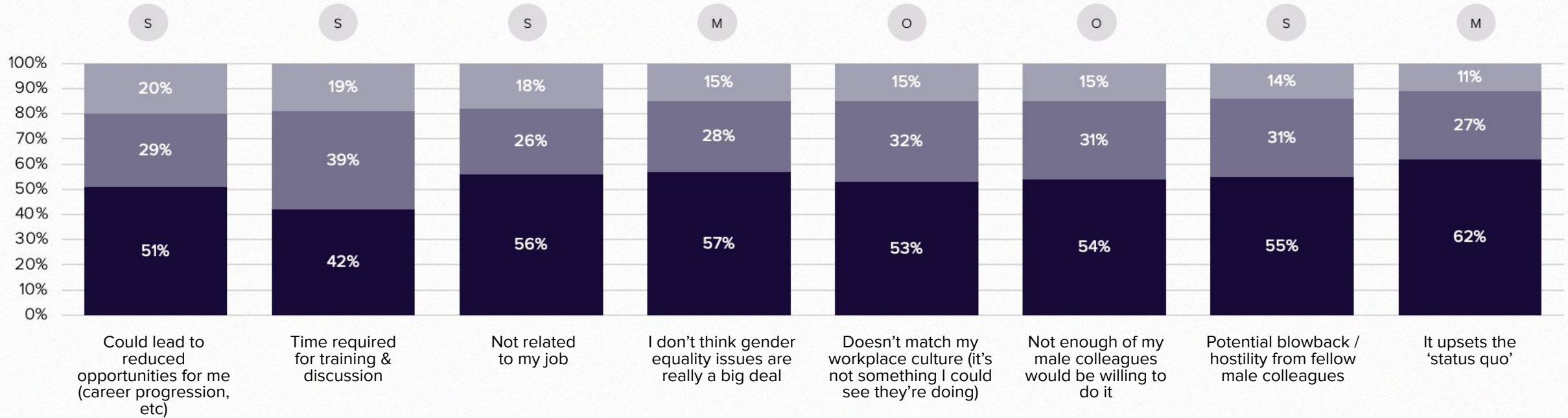
KEY PARTICIPATION BARRIERS FOR WORKPLACE GE TRAINING



Time required for training and discussion acts as a barrier for the largest number of Australian male workers, with 58% saying it would either deter them greatly, or at least slightly

The possibility of reduced career opportunities just eclipses it, however, as far as the proportion who say this reason would deter them greatly. 1 in 5 (20%) claim this

Otherwise, only a relatively small proportion (around 1 in 7, or 15%) say that any of these factors would deter them greatly. Generally, more than half of men in the workplace say that any of these factors wouldn't deter them at all from GE training



Q How much would each of the following factors deter you from engaging and participating in workplace training on gender equality? Base: Australia (n=1,010).

Deter me greatly
 Deter me slightly
 Wouldn't deter me at all

S Self-oriented
 M Mutually-oriented
 O Other person-oriented



KEY PARTICIPATION BARRIERS FOR WORKPLACE GE TRAINING



ABILITY (SELF-ASSESSED)

LOW

	% Would deter me greatly
S Could lead to reduced opportunities for me	38%
S Time required for training and discussion	32%
O Doesn't match my workplace culture	32%
S Not related to my role	28%

The leading barrier for **resistant** workers is the perceived possibility of **reduced career opportunities**. **Not matching the culture** of the workplace is also cited, more than it is for those with lower ability to bring about change.

Men who may work against the GE movement.

	% Would deter me greatly
S Time required for training & discussion	24%
S Could lead to reduced opportunities for me	21%
S Not related to my role	19%
M I don't think gender equality issues are really a big deal	19%

Men who will be difficult to engage in the GE movement.

HIGH

	% Would deter me greatly
O Doesn't match my workplace culture	23%
S Could lead to reduced opportunities for me	20%
S Not related to my role	20%
M It upsets the 'status quo'	19%

For GE allies, **not matching workplace culture** is the leading barrier. The risk of upsetting the status quo is also (relatively) more of a barrier than for other archetypes.

Men who will be true "allies" in the GE movement.

	% Would deter me greatly
S Could lead to reduced opportunities for me	17%
S Time required for training and discussion	14%
S Potential blowback/hostility from fellow male colleagues	11%
M I don't think gender equality issues are really a big deal	10%

Those who **need empowerment** tend to rate barriers as less of a deterrent overall (lower numbers). But **potential blowback** from colleagues is the 3rd greatest barrier (while not being in the top 4 for other archetypes).

Men who will need to be empowered by in the GE movement.

HIGH

LOW

- S Self-oriented
- M Mutually-oriented
- O Other person-oriented

WILLINGNESS



PRACTICAL ACTIONS FOR BUSINESSES & INDIVIDUALS



IN CONCLUSION...

Research to date has focussed on the business impact of diversity, conclusively finding that gender diversity leads to better operational and financial performance.


However, achieving that kind of success can only happen if the entire organization takes part.


Wherever you are on your gender D&I journey, these practical actions are key to sustainable change.

Looking for support in your own Diversity & Inclusion initiatives? Get in touch today.

thedreamcollective.com.au

 The Dream Collective

 The Dream Collective

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