

# QG Breakfast Series

## Embracing technology for a bright future

### Welcome

Kylie Ramsden, A/Senior Director, Office of the Deputy Director-General,  
Corporate Services Division, Queensland Health

MC: Good morning everyone and welcome to the Queensland Government Breakfast Series hosted by Queensland Health Women's Network in partnership with the Public Service Commission. My name is Kylie Ramsden, I'm from Queensland Health and it's my pleasure to be hosting today's event.

Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodian of the land on which we meet today and Elders past, present and emerging. I'd also like to acknowledge the dignitaries we have in the room today, including our Minister for the Health portfolio the Honourable Steven Miles, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Also here today is the new Queensland Health Director-General Dr John Wakefield and Deputy Directors-General from across the sector. We also have Rob Setter who's the Chief Executive of the Public Service Commission. And our speakers who I'll introduce shortly who have so kindly joined us here this morning for the event. Welcome to everyone and thank you for joining us today.

These breakfast events have their origin in maintaining a momentum of enthusiasm, goodwill and ideas between the Aspiring Women Leaders Summits that we hold in March every year. We deliver the Breakfast Series to provide a platform for the issues that are important to you and us all. The Breakfast Series was the idea of Barb Phillips who's our Deputy Director-General of Corporate Services Division in the Department of Health. And these events would not have happened without her leadership, support and encouragement. So thank you Barb.

Today, this is the last breakfast event for 2019. And I'd like to take a moment now before we get too far into things to thank the team behind these events rather than at the end when everybody's leaving. So thank you Michelle, Lauren and Dan who are key to the event. And to Kim, Mary-Anne, the Women's Network and all the fantastic volunteers who get up really early on a morning after a long weekend. So that's especially awesome. So thank you all for being the outstanding and highly professional team that you are. I'm really privileged to work with you, and can vouch for your tireless efforts to ensure that we all experience a really great event every time.

It's great to see a lot of familiar faces here today along with some new. For those who've attended one of these before we hope you enjoy the new seating arrangement where we've not assigned tables this time to ensure that you can mix a little easier and hopefully meet and talk to some of your colleagues from across the sector who you perhaps haven't met before. Okay. As I said earlier, today's breakfast event is the third and the final for the 2019 Queensland Government Breakfast Series and the theme today is drivers of change, male champions, and meaning partnerships. We'll hear from some leaders in this space and learn more about the barriers that hinder males to support gender equity and how we might

tackle those issues together. We'll also talk about the benefits of men and woman working in partnership in our workplaces and the opportunities for men to step up and support those partnerships to help us all, and pathways for women to demonstrate their leadership both in and out of the workplace. To start the program we'll hear an opening address from Barb followed by an address from our Minister, Steven Miles, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Rob Setter then will take stage after which we will have a wee break for breakfast. At this point please don't be alarmed if most of the VIP's up the front here leave. It's not because of the event, it's because of another thing that is going on this morning in Queensland Health. We recently appointed our first Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer and Deputy Director-General Haylene Grogan. And as new colleagues to Haylene we're enormously proud of this momentous event in the Queensland Health journey. And to welcome Haylene to our agency a traditional smoking ceremony is being held this morning at the Health Building in Charlotte Street. So the Minister, John and Barb all have to race off to welcome Haylene. So normally people leaving an event en masse in the middle would be a little bit awkward, but today we're really happy to see you off.

Following breakfast we'll hear from Julie McKay, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at PwC Australia. And our last speaker for today will be Todd Battley, Chief Executive of AECOM, a member of the Male Champions of Change and a pay equity ambassador for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Then we'll conclude the event this morning with a question and answer session where we'll have roving mics going around for you to join in conversation with Rob, Julie and Todd.

We've also invited Friends with Dignity to the event for this morning. Friends with Dignity is a volunteer based not-for-profit charity that provides practical programs to assist survivors of domestic violence in collaboration with refuge and crisis centres. Friends with Dignity are offering two prizes today. The first is a fantastic hamper, including a Dick Gray Photography voucher, a bath robe, and Eco 10 pack, a dress ring, and some bath salts, valued at over \$500. Second prize is a bottle of Moet and gorgeous champagne glasses in a wooden box. Tickets for the raffle are \$10 each or three for \$25. You can purchase tickets with cash at the raffle desk at the back where the ladies are near the door there. Or the staff will come around to the tables during the breakfast. Eftpos facilities are available but they prefer cash if you've got it.

## Opening address

Barbara Phillips, Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services Division,  
Queensland Health

MC: And now on to the proceedings. And it's with great pleasure that I welcome Barb to the stage.

BARBARA: Thank you. And good morning. It's always a wee bit daunting first thing in the morning to look out at so many faces, but please be reassured you look very bright and shiny and reasonably happy considering food's still on its way. As Kylie so ably introduced us my name is Barbara Phillips and I'm the Deputy Director-General of Corporate Services Division of Queensland Health an executive sponsor of Queensland Health Women's Network. I would also like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which this event is taking place, and the Elders past, present and emerging. Well, it is the third and final event of the 2019 Queensland Government Breakfast Series. I'm not sure how it goes so quickly. We start at the start of the year and we think we've got a very long time to plan it out and it goes very, very quickly across the year. It

seems amazing that we're at the last one. I'm very, very pleased that you're able to join us this morning for what I think will be a lively and informative discussion.

This event is co-hosted by the Queensland Health Women's Network and the Public Service Commission to which we're very grateful. The Queensland Health Women's Network was established to inform and support progress towards a more inclusive workplace and to provide pathways for inspiration, change and equality. We're here to discuss partnerships with men and women and the essential role men play as male champions in driving change. We will learn more about the barriers that hinder male support of gender balance and how we can tackle them together, as well as the benefits of partnering in our workplaces.

But there is a far more basic and fundamental argument for why gender balance matters. It is one that strikes me when I look around this room is that we are all human and that we all deserve to be treated with respect. For some women, or people from minority groups such as LGBTIQ+, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from different multicultural backgrounds respect is not always offered or given in the first instance. We are living in a world where it seems we are not all treated equally. And that maps out across aspects of our lives, be it personal relationships, education, sport or work. Surely this is not the perception and I hope not the reality we want to continue. Not for our colleagues, for the people that come after us, or our children and grandchildren. To me we are all responsible for change. Our culture does not just live in one pocket of an organisation, it lives with all of us. But we all need to understand what role we play and how we can build our organisations to be more capable, more resilient, more respectful and more reflective of the communities we serve. The very strongest and bravest leadership is required to drive change and this morning our male champions who have joined us will all provide a unique perspective to this discussion. The Male Champions of Change are an exemplar group driving change nationally and it is wonderful to be joined by one of their members here this morning, Todd Battley. The first Male Champions of Change peer group, the founding group, began in 2010 with eight Australian leaders and has since grown to a group of 30 CEO's, Board Directors, Government Department, University and Military leaders with new groups now forming across different organisations, sectors and geographies. The Male Champions of Change coalition now encompasses 13 groups amounting to more than 220 leaders across Australia. And this says that male champions generally want to lead meaningful action that achieves change. What contributes to this group's success is their reliance on their ideas on both the challenges and the solutions towards progress and the focus on practical actions that can make meaningful and lasting differences.

It reminds me again that respect, inclusiveness and empathy are so important in engaging people in change, and that fairness is brought not just to women but for people of all diverse backgrounds. At the simplest level this is the work of so many of us in this room boils down to: treating each other with fairness and respect. If we can create this culture in our own organisations when serving the people of Queensland we will truly see progress.

The issues in front of us are well defined and widely acknowledged. So that's not the purpose of our conversation this morning. We're here to learn from some male champions who are cutting through and making a real difference. So it is encouraging to have a healthy representation of both men and women in the room today to better understand how to partner together to create change. It has been an absolute privilege to be the Executive Sponsor of the 2019 GQ Breakfast series, to provide you with insightful and meaningful opportunities of how we can shape our partnering approach to complex issues and challenges.

Our conversations were kicked off this year at the Aspiring Women's Leaders Summit in March where we focused on powerful partnerships and powerful conversations. This led us

into our first breakfast event in May where we discussed workplace inclusion and leading in an inclusive workforce. At our August breakfast we heard from experts in the industry on how our workforce can embrace technology for a bright future. Today has been a reminder of how we must continue to work together to achieve change, and these events are just one way that we can tackle the issues that are important to you as the drivers of continuous improvement in our workplaces.

As always we'll be sending out a short survey following this event. Please, if you can take the time we really do appreciate your feedback. It helps us shape the following breakfasts that we can do and what we can do differently and hopefully better as we go forward.

I'm pleased to announce that the 2020 Aspiring Women's Leaders Summit will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March next year. So I hope you can get there. Yes. Oh, thank you, all those people writing it down. I'm very grateful. I know, I say that because actually it's always really difficult because as we get to the Aspiring Women's Leader trying to get the membership we always are over-subscribed. And I always feel really badly for those people who keep coming up to me in the lift and saying could you just fit me in at one more table. And it's really hard. So if you can get in early and put the date in I'd be very grateful.

We are very close to finalising an exciting line-up of speakers, which will include some of our nation's greatest influencers of change. And I am confident that this Summit could be our greatest yet. Thank you for attending this morning and for your ongoing support over this year. I look forward to seeing you all next year. Thank you.

## Address

The Honourable Steven Miles, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services

BARBARA: I would like now to introduce the Honourable Steven Miles, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services.

MINISTER: Thanks so much Barb. Good morning everyone. Let me acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we're gathered on,, the Turrbal and Jagera people and pay my respects to their Elders past and present on what is a very special, important day for Queensland Health in our efforts to close the gap. To our esteemed guest speakers Todd, Julie and Rob thank you very much for being here with us this morning. I'm very grateful for the chance to be here with you. I was to be here with you, then I briefly was to not be here with you, and now I'm here with you again. I'd been looking forward to it very much and then last Monday when the Premier said you can come to Roma with me on Monday can't you Steven? I said, as one does to Premiers, of course, no worries. And then when she injured her ankle at the weekend and said we could no longer go to Roma I did, as we do with Premiers, expressed great disappointment. And then threw this program into disarray by demanding my speaking spot back. And I'm sure Barb said, as Barb says, don't worry, we'll make it work. And that's what we're doing.

I've been incredibly fortunate to have had my time in political and public life, to have seen in my time in political and public life incredible progress in terms of gender equality. My first job in politics as a young staffer I worked for a woman Minister and she was one of two women in a Cabinet of 18 members. In 2015 I became one of the first people in the world to be a Minister in a government with a female leader, a female deputy leader, a 50% Cabinet made up of, or a Cabinet made up of 50% women. And that means that in that time I've seen an incredible number of women champions emerge, and I've been the beneficiary of their

championship. They've championed me in so many ways. Some men too, but many, many women. And that change means something. Someone in a meeting with me recently said why would Queensland be one of the first places that might want to liberalise access to the contraceptive pill, make it easier for women to get access to the contraceptive pill, and I said well if men took the contraceptive pill I think that would have happened some time ago. It's why we were the first Queensland government able to reform our abortion laws. It's why just recently we made it possible for women to get, for victims of sexual assault, mostly women, to get access to forensic examinations at our hospitals without having to talk to the Police first.

So I want to tell you about some of those women champions. Starting with the Premier. Most Queenslanders know her as a kind and passionate woman. Someone who truly loves Queensland. And working closely with her I can tell you she is exactly that. Jackie, our Deputy Premier, is a great friend. Publicly she's seen as fierce and strong, but privately she's smart and incredibly empathetic. Of our other Ministers I'm probably closest to Shannon Fentiman our Employment Minister. We were elected on the same day. We were friends before elected on the same day, but we've dragged each other through these mad, crazy jobs. And spending three years with her while she was Child Safety Minister certainly helped me prepare for my stint as Health Minister. My office is dominated by women. My Chief of Staff, Danielle, has put up with me for longer than anyone should have to. Katharine, my Senior Media Advisor is here, and she has probably the hardest day to day job in government. She also wrote the speech, so. Amy, Kirsten, Ali, Bec, Rachel, Mel. I employ some blokes too, but most of my office are women. Our health system is led by some incredible women. And I'd like to honour some of them. More than half of our Board Chairs are women. Barb doesn't just put on a great breakfast, she also runs one of the biggest capital programs in the country. Literally billions of dollars and thousands of jobs. Jeanette Young our Chief Health Officer is one of the most trusted faces and voices in the State. Yasmina who runs the DG's office not only puts up with the fact that I can't pronounce her name properly, but she is a thought leader, not just on LinkedIn but also in real life. And she would be here with us today if she wasn't at Stamford with a bunch of other thought leaders from around the world. Alex Markwell is proving herself an incredible leader of the Clinical Senate. Clare Walker is a fantastic leader of rural doctors here in Queensland. Mel Fox makes sure that every single day we remember the voice of consumers in our health system. Beth Mole at the Queensland Nurses and Midwives Union is a constant source of counsel for me, as are Sharon Kaddy and Kate Flanders at United Voice, and together passionate voices for health workers. And also every few years they help get me elected, which is incredibly important too. Finally, it might seem strange for me to do this, but a strong a fearless press gallery is incredibly important in my job. And just recently the Courier-Mail Senior Political Editor Sarah Vogler announced her resignation. She is a great loss. For someone from News Limited she had a rare, surprising and disarming interest in finding out the truth and writing about it. And so she'll be greatly missed. In their own ways all of these women are champions to me. And I hope that I've been able to, for some of them, where I could along the way, be champions for them too. Not because of my or their gender, but because I think it's all of our jobs to find good people and help them to contribute better.

And that's my reflection on today's topic that I'm honoured to address. That for all of us our first job, everyone's first job, the first line of every job description should be find good people and help them to do great things. Of course I acknowledge that men have a really important role to continue the path, continue progress toward gender equality. And that's why it's fantastic to see so many men here today. The last time I addressed this breakfast it felt a bit like the leadership group of our government and now it feels a bit more balanced. I know the men here are here to genuinely listen and engage in a discussion about championship and partnership. It was great to see so many people write down the 4<sup>th</sup> of March. Barb is right, tickets will sell out so get in quick.



And let me finish just by apologising that we can't stay for all of this session. The appointment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chief Health Officer is a national first. It's incredibly important for our State. I'm really proud to have championed that role, a role that will be filled by a First Nations woman starting in that role today.

So thank you all so much for the chance to provide some reflections this morning. And I can't wait to see you all on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March. Thank you.

## Address

Robert Setter, Commission Chief Executive, Public Service Commission

KYLIE: Now it's my pleasure to introduce Rob Setter to the stage. Rob's career over the past 37 years – he doesn't look like a day over 37 years too Rob, thanks – has been in both the private and public sectors. He has a strong leadership record in corporate governance, organisational reform and leadership development. Rob's current position is Chief Executive of the Public Service Commission. Previous government executive positions he's held include the Associate Director-General of Science, Agriculture, Food and Regional Services, the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, and the Director-General of the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. He's also held several senior executive roles in the Queensland TAFE sector. Rob is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He was a founding director of Aviation Australia. I didn't know that about you. That's really cool. And also the Corporation (ui) for the Australian Agriculture College Corporation. And for several years was a non-executive director of AgriFood Skills Australia, a national industry skills Council. He's presently a Board director for the Australia and New Zealand School of Government. So please join me in welcoming Rob to the stage. Thanks.

ROB: Thanks very much. I should say after that incredibly personal presentation by the Minister, which I acknowledge, now I give you the bureaucratic version. Can I too acknowledge the traditional custodians and owners of the land on which we gather, the Turrbal and the Yuggera people, and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I am delighted to be here to be part of the program. The whole issue of inclusion, fairness, respect, rebuilding confidence in the public sector has been the agenda of the Commission and indeed the Leadership Board since I came back into government in 2015. And of course at that time matters of gender equity had to that point largely been led by women. It is true thankfully I think that evermore men are stepping up recognising the crucial role leaders like myself play in achieving gender equity in our communities and in our workplaces. But if we are to progress towards gender equity, true equity, we need to acknowledge, support and normalise the role of men in balancing work, family and community. But this alone will not be enough. We must increase our efforts to further grow the number of women in leadership positions. We must be relentless and we must be purposeful in creating an equal playing field in equalising opportunities for women in all workforces.

As you know 70% of the public sector workforce are women. But we also know that representation in senior positions falls away significantly. The PSC has been looking to understand why this is the case. Pleasingly policy and enticed behavioural changes are making a difference. In 2016 the Queensland Government Chief Executive Leadership Board agreed on diversity targets for the Queensland public sector workforce. Even the decision to set targets was not an easy one, nor necessarily a unanimously agreed one. It was actually the continual provocation of Julie McKay in her role at the time that actually convinced us that without it we would not actually deal with the issues that we actually fundamentally believed in. As part of the process we set some ambitious targets to achieve by 2022. One of

these was 50% representation of women in our senior executive and above roles. Why not 70% you might ask. And that's not an unreasonable question. Our latest data shows that just over 47% of senior executive positions in Leadership Board agencies are indeed filled by women. What's significant about this is it's up 6% since 2015. Clearly targets make a difference. With also 47% of senior officer positions filled by women. I would argue our talent pipeline is stronger than ever. And while we know we still have a way to go it's worthwhile to understand the work across the sector continues to support progress. Continuing investment in development leadership capability of women, including events like today, building business, strategic and financial acumen is of course important in addition to development opportunities. But perhaps the most important challenge is challenging assumptions, challenging processes and decision making in recruitment and selection.

We've been purposeful in our work to build inclusive and diverse workplaces. The Board has implemented an overarching strategy, a public sector inclusion and diversity strategy and action plan. Within this strategy we shaped the Queensland public sector gender equity strategy which seeks to transform the way we work to realise the equity. We're promoting greater access to flexible work practices through education and awareness campaigns like Let's Talk about Flex, and Flexible by Design - just check out our website - to foster awareness and acceptance that many existing jobs can indeed be delivered flexibly. We have increased the uptake in flexible work across the sector from 40% in 2015 to 58% in 2018. I'm looking forward to this year's Working for Queensland results, which I predict will see that up in the 60's.

Importantly, we are purposeful in sharing the stories of how men in our workforce are accessing flexible work practices. Our ambition is to have access equally for men and women. In practicing what we preach and showing that it can work and indeed work well I'm proud of the fact that at the Public Service Commission 84% of our employees actually work flexibly. Working for Queensland 2018 data tells us flexible work practices have increased for men. Each year the survey provides data that informs and monitors the effectiveness of our gender inclusive strategies and we are seeing encouraging shifts. More recently our focus has been on progressive policies such as domestic and family violence leave, and holistic approaches to health, safety and wellbeing.

But back to flexible work. We saw an increase of senior leaders increasing access of flexibility in their workplaces actually modelling balance. Dealing with the past reality that men are caregivers was not possible nor desirable but is in fact a must-do. Annabelle Crabb in her recent publication *Men at Work, Australia's Parent Trap*, shines the light on custom and practice in this area. Perhaps the most telling point she makes is how differently mothers and fathers experience work/family balance. To the women in the room I'll apologise, I'm telling you how to suck eggs, but bear with me won't you. She references research from the Australian Institute of Family Studies. It draws attention to what happens to a woman's life in the first 12 years after becoming a mother. At birth her parenting hours shoot up, quite understandably, from zero to about 45 hours a week. The work tapers away steadily over the following 12 years. Similarly her paid work hours plummet. She gradually builds them back up over the ensuing decade although she never quite ends up where she started. Crabb points out also that the birth of her child and the mother's time spent on housework abruptly doubles and stays that way. By comparison, the mean hours per week spent by fathers of young children on paid work, housework and childcare is dramatically different observes Crabb. Time spent on parenting issues with the birth of the child, although not again understandably to the level of the mother, strikingly however the mean hours spent on housework barely shifts for men with the birth of the baby. The research shows that a man will, generally speaking, do about 15 hours of domestic work before the birth of his child and around 15 hours a week after and for the first 12 years of the child's

life. And his hours of paid work forge along at 45 hours a week seemingly unaffected by significant change in his personal circumstances. In other words, Crabb ponders, when a family changes it is women who change and adapt to the new reality. Her not unreasonable question is: why not men?

There are many ways for us to support men to take on greater caring responsibility which will enable them to balance their roles at home and at work. We continue to champion diversity and inclusion through the Board, but achieving equity takes courage and persistence. I'm pleased to say that the tangible improvements were reflected following the Commission's 2017 review of gender pay equity. This was a first of its kind for the sector and highlighted that the gender pay gap in the sector is significant and overall pay for females was 18.4% less than men. Many people were surprised by this. But many were not. Although pay equity is a legal requirement there are a number of systemic and societal factors can undermine its achievement. As I said before it's a complex issue. Equality and pay equity can be influenced by a number of factors, including gender stereotypes and unconscious biases, and recruitment, promotion, performance and remuneration decisions. The review in 2017 allowed us to gain a better understanding of where pay disparities exist in the workplace and provided actions to address these. We've been monitoring our progress since the review and we've seen positive change.

As an outcome of the gender pay equity review Awards will be amended to make moving through pay point increments less disadvantageous for part time workers. The proposed Award changes would mean that pay point increments would increase each calendar year irrespective of whether you are full time or part time. This will play a significant part in our work to close the gender pay gap. Not to mention reduce the disparities between men and women's superannuation balances. The other positive action from the gender pay equity review is the review of parental leave of the directive to focus on amendments that will provide gender equitable access to paid parental leave. Together these are significant changes which will bring us ever closer to gender pay equity.

As a sector leader I'll continuing working with my peers to challenge the status quo. I'll continue to look for opportunities for progressive change that make a difference to the lives of people in our current and future workforces. And given Crabb's insights the opportunities are as much about custom and practice in parenting in the role of men.

Thank you.

## Address

Julie McKay, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, PwC Australia

MC: I'm delighted now to introduce Julie McKay. And Julie is a partner and the Chief Diversity Inclusion Officer at PwC with responsibility for leading the firm's internal diversity inclusion transformation as well as supporting clients to adopt inclusive practices that realise the benefits of diversity. Prior to commencing with PwC Julie spent nine years as the Executive Director of UN Women Australia working across government, the private sector and the community to identify the barriers to gender equality and challenging the laws, policies and attitudes that perpetuate inequality. For the last four years Julie has also served as the gender advisor to the Chief of the Australian Defence Force. And in that role spent time across Australia understanding military culture and addressing structural and attitudinal barriers to gender equality within Defence. Which must have just been incredible to do. In addition to supporting the Chief of the Australian Defence Force response to the Broderick Review into unacceptable behaviour in the Military Julie led a review of the recruitment



process which has resulted in substantial changes to the recruitment model. Julie also convenes the Queensland Male Champions of Change supporting CEO's of some of Queensland's largest employers to deliver on their diversity commitments. So please join me in welcoming Julie to the stage.

JULIE: Thank you very much. My commitment to being on time means I've got my phone here. But it's always a risk that my mother will start texting me so bear with me. I too would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we're meeting this morning and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I must admit I think I'm getting grumpy. I remember when I started out working in the women's sector in 2005 and I met a whole lot of the people who I just saw as the absolute legends of social change in this country. Women running domestic violence services, people running homelessness shelters, people who'd been at the forefront of the feminist movement for decades and I remember thinking wow these people are everything I thought they would be, and wow they're really grumpy. I'm really grumpy. And I saw one of the Board members who I worked with on that first day in Homelessness Australia a couple of weeks ago and she said wow Julie you really caught the bug didn't you? And I thought I wonder whether she means caught the gender equality bug or whether she means caught the grumpiness bug, 'cause I can't actually tell the difference anymore. But what I would say is that I think in 2019 we need to face into a reality that we still live in a deeply, deeply sexist country. And while there are absolutely data points that are pointing in the right direction, evidence of programs and initiatives and organisations that have made huge change, huge change that hopefully can't be undone, there is still far too many data points, examples and organisations who simply haven't faced into the sorts of issues that we're here this morning to discuss. There are simply too many leaders who are able to say I am a champion for gender equality, I'm a supporter of women's empowerment, without the accountability behind them to make real change. And so I guess what I wanted to do this morning is share with you some of my grumpiness and then some of the things that I think work in this space, including absolutely reframing the discussion about what gender equality is and means and who is ultimately responsible.

I also acknowledge that in this room we have leaders from across the Queensland Government, and on any measure the Queensland Government has made extraordinary progress, both as an employer, but possibly more importantly as a thought leader encouraging businesses here in Queensland and around the country to follow their lead in terms of flexible work, in terms of the prevention of violence against women and a number of other critical areas. So in part I think you all have the privilege of working in part of an organisation that has actually done an enormous amount in this space of which you should all be very proud.

When we think about male champions, and the topic today was we were asked to think about the role of men in gender equality I think it's really important to acknowledge that absolutely hearing an unexpected voice talk about the importance of gender equality is a disruption, does have impact. When we hear CEO's who we usually don't hear talking about issues of women's empowerment, talking about the importance of preventing violence against women, talking about the value of having women on their Boards, talking about the experience of working in a Cabinet that is dominated by women. We do fundamentally challenge our thinking. Because we think wow, I wonder why that person's talking about this, that's interesting. And so whether it's a good thing or a bad thing the impact of the Minister, of Rob, of Todd, speaking about these issues will always be more powerful than the impact of someone who looks like me speaking about them. Another part of my grumpiness. But we can put that to the side.

So without doubt we need male leadership in this space. But I think what we need to do is not pretend that this is a new concept. I remember in 2007 I was pretty chuffed to be invited

to speak at the first United Nations Conference on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality which was held in Bangkok. And at that time I did a lot of research to think about what can I say that's interesting, this is the first time the UN has convened on this topic globally. And what I found was this incredible report that set a framework for male leadership in the workplace around gender equality. It was written by McKinsey in the 1970's. That was a pretty depressing moment when I realised that actually all of the things that I thought I had come up with, all of the things that I thought I was part of, all of the leadership ideals that we were setting were actually set out in the 1970's. But what happens in this space, it turns out, if you stay in it long enough, is that new research demonstrates new areas for action, we get excited, we follow them for a while, it's really hard, we take our foot off the pedal, economic crisis happens, distraction of another social issue. What we don't see is long-term systemic change. And so we allow ourselves, decade after decade, to have renewed interest and renewed energy and renewed excitement instead of hearing what should be incredible outrage about the fact that in 2019 we still see the prevalence of domestic and family violence at the levels that we do. That we still see sexism and sexual harassment in our workplaces daily, if not more often in some places. Progress on all of the measures of women on Boards, women in leadership, the pay gap, superannuation and retirement savings, access to housing, access to support services, access to health services, progress is being made. But it's glacial. And in 2019 I think we actually have an obligation to expect more than glacial progress. More than that I actually have real concerns about the stereotypes that are being built into technology. You only have to look at things like Siri and Alexa and Cortana and all of these devices that actually enable many people's lives to actually see that the gender stereotypes that we've all grown up with that we're hoping desperately have shifted in our generation are being programmed in to these bots and chat bots. And there's a fantastic TED talk that speaks to these issues that says that actually in 2017 an analysis of chat bots, the little helper devices on web searches, showed that where they're talking about health care and administration and support services the bots are given a female gender. They're there to help and serve and support. Where they're talking about finance, about law, about insurance, they're almost without exception given a male identity. Now you could argue that that was just an accident and someone grumpy like me is overplaying the significance, but what I would say to you is that actually the programmers of this technology are almost without exception male. And so what we're seeing is our future being designed by the biases of our past. Siri when it first came out could tell you where your closest stockist of Viagra was. If you asked Siri where a sexual assault service was or where you could access abortion she responded I don't know, I find that offensive. Gender bias is built-in to new technology.

The NCAS survey last year showed that 40% of Australians who responded to the survey believe that women exaggerate the inequality faced by them in Australia and that 50% of women mistakenly take compliments as sexism. So misunderstand sexism for compliments. We've got a significant issue. And the number one thing that I think organisations need to do if they're going to make significant progress around gender equality is fundamentally understand the baseline of where they are starting. We actually have to shift from having champions of gender equality to having leadership and cultural change. And I know that Todd's going to speak further to the concept of culture. We have ideals like the Panel Pledge which have been fantastic in saying actually we're not going to come to events where we see all males talking about issues of significance to our country. We're simply either going to boycott them and we're going to ask our speakers and our male champions to boycott them. And those things are disruptors. They have absolutely changed the way in which behaviour is enabled in leadership rooms all around the country. But I think we need to go further. Where's our toilet cleaning pledge? Our liquified lettuce in the fridge cleaning pledge? Because the reality is that those jobs, the ones we don't want to talk about over breakfast, the ones we absolutely don't want to mention around Board tables, those jobs are still

sitting on the shoulders of women. And until they are shifted to be shared more equally between men and women we aren't going to see the significance aside or shift.

In a very career-limiting move my last year at UN Women, the Canberra International Women's Day Lunch had the CDF, Chief of Army, Chief of Air Force, Chief of Navy as our panel. And it was a pretty incredible day for me having worked with those leaders for a long time and having known how deeply they had shifted their beliefs and how deeply they believed that the Defence Force could be different. My opening question to that panel that day was: what percentage of the housework do each of you do? And it was career-limiting I must admit. But it was a really interesting moment for them as leaders. It was the first time any of them had ever been asked or challenged to think about what their personal commitment to gender equality really is. As opposed to their leadership commitment. As opposed to their organisational commitment. Which was undoubtedly positive. And I'm not saying that every single job needs to be split 50/50, that every single household needs to be interrogated, because I know that different models work in different places. But as a norm, as a societally accept norm the data that Annabelle Crabb shares that Rob highlighted about the changes in our society, the burden of unpaid work needs to shift.

So we have to understand where we're starting. We are starting in a deeply sexist society. When we say that, and try saying it, at a barbeque, in your workplace, people react really strongly. There's defensiveness, there's anger, you see veins popping up. We live in a deeply sexist society. Fact. And until we can actually get people to understand, believe and own that we will not see the shift that we need. We absolutely at organisational levels need to understand where our workforces are at. Too often I get engaged to come in and review a diversity and inclusion strategy that has failed. And 75% of them fail. And the reason for that is we spend all this time looking for leading practice, and we say oh the public service has done that, and oh this company's done this, and oh the Defence Force did that, and we stick it all together in a glossy brochure and we announce it as our D & I strategy. But the reality is that's not benched in any factual basis for your organisation. For the attitudes of your employees at that time. And so the strategy doesn't work. You would never have a cultural change strategy or a technology strategy that wasn't embedded in the current state or the starting point for your organisation. So as individuals I really encourage you to think about how well does your agency or team understand the data that you've got available and the evidence available to you in this space. We need to work harder to equip people, but men particularly, to identify and then to call out sexist behaviour in the workplace. Understanding privilege and power is really important. And what happens for men in my experience when they understand patriarchy really deeply is the majority of them realise that it actually doesn't work for them either. Because patriarchy isn't as simple as men oppressing women, it's actually a very small group of men having power over all other men and women. And once you come to understand that you see a whole lot more men feeling really comfortable to have a conversation about gender equality in a different way.

We absolutely need to address structural inequality. So the processes around flexible work, around encouraging men to take more parental leave. Conscious interventions in recruitment, promotion, hiring decisions, to force us to think about the fact that without those conscious interventions we see the perpetuation of male leadership that we have seen over the last 20 years in Australia. Those interventions work and need to be rolled out. The reality of this situation in 2019 in Australia is that men and women are dying as a result of gender inequality in this country. And that's not me being grumpy or dramatic. Maybe a little bit grumpy, but not dramatic. Women are dying at the hands of their partners. Every day we're reading it in the media. And if anything I think we're becoming less concerned, because there's just so many being reported. Women are dying because of gender inequality in this country. But men are also dying because of gender inequality in this country. Because we have a stereotype that reinforces the need to be tough and strong and never ask for

assistance, which means that men aren't seeking medical assistance for preventable diseases. We're losing lives. And we still haven't triggered the type of response that is needed.

I need to wrap up. But we also know that we need to build significant numbers of people supporting these causes. Male champions, partnerships in this space are critical. But behind them needs to be a mass support. The biggest, closest thing we had to a public campaign of men supporting gender inequality was the White Ribbon campaign. And I remember when I was the director for that campaign in 2007 when it was separating from UN Women saying the outcome here would be to close the doors because the job is done. The doors of that campaign closed last week. Not because the job was done. And whatever you think about the financial situation in the context of the campaign the reality is our country lost the only male-led, or in theory male-led, campaign to prevent violence against women that we've tried. So this week and in the weeks ahead we actually need to think about what does that mean for us and how do we re-energise a genuine partnership around gender equality that lifts us from where we are in 2019 to a place that we'd be proud of 10 years from now. Thank you.

## Address

Todd Battley, Chief Executive AECOM, and Male Champions of Change

KYLIE: It's time now to welcome Todd Battley to the stage. Todd became the Chief Executive in 2017 and leads a team of over 3500 designers, engineers, planners, scientists and project managers - which must be really fun every day - in over 20 offices across Australia and New Zealand. The traditional engineering consulting firm he joined as a James Cook University civil engineering graduate in 1996 has changed significantly. That was last century too wasn't it? It has changed a lot. In that time he's held a number of senior leadership roles, including most recently Managing Director for Northern and Western Australia region with responsibility for Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Todd's relentless focus on staff and client service excellence has enabled him to build a resilient and dynamic business riding the highs and lows of the resource driven markets of North Australia. Most recently Todd has led the cultural change that has made flexible work the norm at AECOM and he speaks regularly as a Male Champion of Change to improve diversity inclusion across the sector. Todd believes strongly that engineers are the first providers without whom we would not have safe roads, buildings, public transport, reliable energy or clean water. Thanks for joining us today Todd.

TODD: So I'm following the Health Minister, Barbara, Rob, Julie. I'm the fourth speaker. There's not a lot of material I've got left, they've used it all. So. But before I get started I do want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I thought I might briefly build on that introduction and just introduce myself a little bit. Introduce a little bit about the Male Champions of Change and talk about that from the inside. Tell you why I think diversity on its own is hopeless. That's right, hopeless. And then talk about why culture and partnership makes all the difference. How does that sound? Still pretty weak. Let's go again. How does that sound? That's great.

Anyone here went to James Cook University? Good man, I didn't realise.

MALE: 20 years (ui).



TODD: 20 years before me. For those that haven't it's like UQ, except without the shoes or without the really nice buildings. So I grew up in Townsville. I'm 45 years old, I'm married with three kids. I've got three significant roles in my life that really matter to me. First role is I've got to be a good husband, to my wife Melissa, a good dad to my three relatively young kids, and during the daylight hours and some of the night I'm the Chief Executive of AECOM. And as you've just heard AECOM's a really large engineering company essentially that employs engineers, scientists and the like. With 90,000 people worldwide and about 3,500 in Australia and New Zealand. And if I can get through all of that and I've got any spare time I love to get out on a mountain bike. So that's me. Just like many of you.

I've been Chief Executive for about two years, but I've worked at AECOM for 23. And the only reason I'm talking to you today is that about 13 years ago when I was running my first team really of significant size, it was about 200 people, I had two young engineers head off to a conference from Brisbane to Adelaide. They'd asked if they could go, and it was a bit of a boom at the time, we had plenty of cash, and I said yes. Ordinarily I probably wouldn't have. Two people at the same conference for a week interstate. And they came back and they wanted to have a meeting with me. And it was our custom that if you went away to something like that you had to come back and share what you learned. And I thought well this will be interesting, maybe they just want a chance to talk to the whole team. But they sat down and they gave me a list of all of the things that I was doing incorrectly to further the career of women in the team. See these two young engineers were women. And the conference was the very first Women in Engineering Conference that had been held in Australia. And it was oversubscribed, and it was in Adelaide. And so they offered, kindly, in fact almost with pity on their faces, to sit with me regularly to explain what I was doing wrong empowered with this new knowledge. And to be honest it started a real journey for me of improvement, of trying to be a better human being and a better leader. Thankfully those two women, Robyn and Clare, are still working at AECOM, still doing significant things, are still champions for excellent engineering, and also champions for the support of their female colleagues.

So when I took up the Chief Executive role I had the opportunity to join the Male Champions of Change. The MCC movement is focused on men working alongside women to accelerate a gender equal world. And it was started by a chap called Michael Rennie who worked at McKinsey who decided, after giving great consideration to what he wanted his life to mean, he thought about all of the things that looking back in 100 years' time that people would look at, scholars would look at and say that made a difference. He decided of all of the things that he could do that lifting I guess the equal standard of women in our community would be a very significant contribution. So he started Male Champions of Change, which then blossomed from there. McKinsey & Co started it just for their clients. There's now 220 CEO or equivalent title men who are part of the movement here in Australia. A great Australian invention that has impact all through the world. So while I'm here talking as a Male Champion of Change I want you to understand that there's plenty of others just like me that could have been here sharing a similar story. Men who are working to improve their leadership and also to ensure that Michael Rennie's original idea would at least bear fruit.

After listening to Julie I do get a sense that we're not getting there quick enough. And that's often the benefit of these meetings for me is I hear from someone else and hear another perspective and get a bit of a kick up the bum to keep going. International Women's Day this year, was anyone at an International Women's Day event? Good. You might remember the theme was balance for better. And I think about that sums up the work of the Male Champions of Change. Looking to create an environment where balance is achieved more easily. So I work predominantly in construction and engineering. They're male dominated professions that make up that sector. They have been for the last 100 years and perhaps 1000 years. And interestingly I can see that the adversarial nature of the work, the contracts



that are terrible, the hyper-competitiveness - all of those things – could actually be traced back to a lack of diversity, especially gender diversity, in the industry. When I started work most issues on site were sorted out behind the site shed. These days we're a fair bit more sophisticated, we put suits on and we bring a team of lawyers. But the attitude hasn't shifted much. The attitude hasn't shifted much. And the Consult Australia Male Champions group can actually see they want to see change in this area. They want to see change in diversity because it'll make us a better industry. We want to see change in our supply chain. We want to see change for the people that work in our industry. We want it to be a better industry.

So in addition to the pressing social need that Michael Rennie saw all those years ago I just think about the amazing amount of talent that my business would have access to if I could get equal representation across the board. And I want to see change because I reckon that our industry would deliver better, deliver better engineering, better hospitals, better schools, better roads, better infrastructure. And it would be done in a way that was better. Would help us serve the communities that we live in all the much better. So the business case for me is clear. It's about being better.

But diversity on its own isn't actually enough. Does anyone here think that by putting roughly equal numbers of men and women in one room and give them a challenge they'll suddenly produce a better result? My answer to that is maybe. Maybe it will. It probably won't produce a worse result. But will it be better? 'Cause I reckon diversity is fleeting. Diversity is about percentages, scorecards. Diversity is obsessed with the stats. Which are all important. They're all important. But I would suggest to you that a culture in your organisation, in your team, in your workplace, in your department, that embraces and then leverages the difference and as a result produces better outcomes for your organisation, for your clients, for your communities, that is taking diversity and actually putting it to work. So if you're obsessed by the stats in your team but haven't given much thought to the culture in your team I see that like throwing seeds into poor soil. Some of those seeds, the really hardy ones, will germinate. They'll find a way to make it. They'll flourish even. But it'll just be a matter of luck. Plenty more will fall by the wayside. They'll just give up. And that's the waste.

So the big risk at a breakfast like this is mentioning the word culture. The HR team all sat forward in their chairs, the rest of you crossed your arms. But is culture powerful? Is it powerful? Has anyone ever been to a football match? Some of you may have watched the NRL grand final. When something outstanding happens at the football what do people do? They go crazy. Have you even been to a philharmonic orchestra or the ballet? What do people do when something absolutely outstanding happens there? [claps] The same person feeling the same emotion of elation, of joy, or disappointment, acts completely differently. That's the culture. That's the difference of culture. And indeed the power of it. So what sort of culture perhaps, and in the 10 minutes this morning I thought I would just give you something that you could take away that you could at least look at, and I point you to Google. The Aristotle Project. Google studied all of their teams across their entire organisation to try and figure out why some teams worked better than others. Why did some teams perform really well and some didn't. They looked at everything. And in Google's typical way they tracked it all. Probably did things that you're not allowed to do in this country, they tracked people's education, whether they had postgraduate degrees, where they ate, what they ate, who they ate with. They tracked it all. And the number one indicator of a high performing team wasn't any of those things. It was actually psychological safety. My team has my back. That's the number one indicator of whether a team in a workplace will perform better than the team next to it. Sounds really simple. But that statement, I have got your back and I know you have got mine, is actually grounded in something fundamentally deeper than that, it's grounded in trust. It's I trust I can share my ideas. And I trust we can

debate them. We can even argue. We can disagree. And that's okay. And I can change my mind. And our relationship isn't broken. It's actually quite profound. I have got your back you have got my back, is actually profound. And I would say in the work environment, in mine and in yours it's extremely rare. If I wanted to be provocative I would say that we are so fearful of managing the tension that is associated with conflict that we spend time actively avoiding it. And Australia, for all of our straight talking, we are collectively passive aggressive. We just smile sweetly, vehemently disagree, collect our breath, keep the peace and move on. And as a result of this we do not yield the benefit of productive disagreement in our workplaces.

So if you want to put diversity to work the first thing you've got to look at is what's the culture like. And I would suggest to you that a culture that fosters productive disagreement will be one that takes diversity and makes it work for you. So what's that got to do with partnership? And if you want to promote diversity you have to look at the culture in your teams. And if you want to be deliberate about the culture you've got to look at the leadership. And as we've just heard from the other speakers, that involves both men and women. We need environments where men and women can trust each other, can feel safe, can argue, and still get along.

In organisations like AECOM and in most of the Male Champions of Change organisations it is men who are in leadership roles. Maybe not all of the leadership roles, but sometimes in the majority. And it's up to those men to work with the women in their teams to be deliberate in creating a culture that enables diversity to be leveraged to creating great psychological safety.

So if we want a gender balance across our industries and across our organisations and we want to get there quickly, and if you accept that cultures need to shift to ensure that diversity is leveraged it stands to reason that we're all in this together, men and women.

Thank you very much.

## Audience Q&A session

**Moderator:** MC - Kylie Ramsden, A/Senior Director, Office of the Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services Division, Queensland Health

**Panel members:**

Robert Setter, Commissioner and Chief Executive, Public Service Commission

Julie McKay, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, PwC Australia

Todd Battley, Chief Executive AECOM, Male Champions of Change

**KYLIE:** Rob, Julie and Todd obviously have joined us on stage for a short Q & A session. So there are mics.

**RADMILA DESIC:** Good morning, my name is Radmila Desic, I'm from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. Todd, my question is to you. I actually have a very strong background in construction. How do you change that culture, particularly on the ground where we have such a significant lack of women in non-traditional trades?

**TODD:** Oh it's a great question. One we're grappling with. The Champions group that I'm a part of is a common firms like us in the built environment and we are currently thinking about this sort of what have we got to do to alter the pipeline of talent that's coming in to

the industry. 20 years ago, more than 20 years ago when I studied engineering it was about 20% female 80% male. There's over 400 programs encouraging women into STEM currently in Australia. They've been going and people running their hardest for a long period of time. In 2019 the percentages are exactly the same, it's about 20% women 80% men. So we've got to address that. And we're not sure how, is the answer. But what we can do in the firms like ours where in the white collar end of that supply chain is we can definitely adopt and have done in our flexibility, different parental leave arrangements, and make sure that we've got great career paths for women professionals as they're coming through their careers so we can continue to grow what we have. We have to absolutely look after the talent we do have in our industry. We can't have any of it run out the door and join, you know join government or anywhere else for that matter.

MADELINE: My name's Madeline, I'm from the Office of the Chief Nurse and Midwife. My sister's partner is part of the LGBTQI community. She's Torres Strait Islander and she's a female engineer. She faces discrimination almost on a daily basis. And she's constantly asking us what practical day to day things she can do to overcome that. Do you have any advice that I can take back to her?

TODD: I think there are probably plenty of places that she could work that will be reasonably blind to all of those things that you mention and just want her to perform her job really well as part of a team. And so I think that my first bit of advice would be select the employer really well, really carefully. And I think that'd be the starting point. But without knowing more of the details it would be very hard to comment. Maybe my fellow panellists might have something they'd like to add.

JULIE: I think for me the conversation about inclusion is actually one that we need to also get out of about the pillars of diversity. And so in my experience what works in teams to really challenge the behaviours that go unspoken, that go unchecked is trying to get every individual to think about a time where they have felt excluded. And even the most included of the included, you know the captain of the winning NRL team over the weekend who you would argue is in a pretty privileged inclusive type environment. Every person in my experience has a time in their life where they can identify that they were excluded. They weren't picked for something they wanted to do. Their parents judged them for something. They were left out at school. They were bullied in the workplace. They had something about their identity that they were hiding from their colleagues and peers. And if you can get people to really think about what that felt like, whether it was a lifetime of that experience or whether it was 10 minutes of that experience, what that felt like and actually think about what it would mean to feel like that every single time you get up in the morning, every single time you enter a workplace, every single time you have a conversation with your colleagues. It starts in my experience to get people to be more aware of the way in which they're engaging and treating people. So for years we focused on unconscious bias training and put everyone through Powerpoint decks that did very, very little to actually change behaviour. But the new thinking is really around inclusive leadership. And that is to understand your own journey, your own experience of exclusion and then to try and create a language in a team that actually enables people to give honest feedback, to give I guess a platform for people to actually say look this is something that really means something to me. So it's not a direct answer for that individual, but as a cohort encouraging your teams to have conscious conversations about inclusion I think really helps. And then for that individual absolutely seeking support from an EAP service to get some advice in the immediate so that they're kind of psychologically safe and they're looking for employers - and there's many in the room today, there's many on the stage - who are really proactive in trying to find talent and support talent. So that would be my best advice.

ROB: Since we've introduced the LGBTIQ+ network support into the public service I've been absolutely astounded by the level of community support, organisational support, and indeed support within the workplace that enables people to be who they are, to bring their best selves to work, and support people through challenging situations. So I think not only is it about the organisation that this lady might choose to work but it's also about the self-confidence and awareness but it also is about seeking out support. It is there. It may not be visible to some, but is there largely. And I say the Queensland public service LGBTIQ support network is really strong and growing. And if they're looking to work in government I'd be reaching out there.

MALCOLM LURCH(?): Yeah, Malcolm Lurch from Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. I really enjoyed your discussion around culture Todd. And any of us who have visited the States know the culture that exists there if you've had waiters fighting over you to just get that little bit of 10% extra. And we were discussing Scandinavia and the differences that there are in those cultures. Will we ever get to a point where we have the sort of equity levels in society, cultural acceptance, while we're still chasing, pursuing that dog eat dog type culture that's being reflected in some of our senior political commentary over the last couple of weeks?

TODD: This is a breakfast. These are huge questions. Right. After you do that bit and you sit down here this is the relaxing bit. But anyway. It's a great question. Look, I think if I just make a comment on corporate Australia. I think what corporate Australia fundamentally needs in the heads of corporate Australia is better human beings. And I think the Banking Royal Commission of recent times what that showed is that those people weren't behaving as great human beings, and some of the decisions they were making was writ large for all to see. I think the thing that we can get right when we do get it right is we put purpose back in the middle at the centre of the organisations that we run. And that's really important. 'Cause I think purpose is the motivator for most of us. We come to work, regardless of the job, to do good. Whatever that good might look like. And having a connection to purpose really matters. Because it stops it being just about profit. And I would say that profit, working in a for profit area isn't a bad thing. That's 10% of everything we're talking about. The 90% is the bit that really matters. And while I don't think Australia needs to necessarily follow the US in a dog eat dog sort of style what Australia absolutely needs to do is be more innovative, if we all still want to be living here in the lifestyles that we've got now. And we're not. And innovation is actually about change. It's about people and it's about discomfort and it's about disagreement. And it's all the things that as Australians we don't like. So I wouldn't suggest we need to be more comfortable. We probably need to be uncomfortable, or comfortable being uncomfortable, but we don't necessarily need to make it in that sort of hyper-aggressive sort of that we can see elsewhere, is my view.

JULIE: Can I also just add to that. I think there is a narrative in Australia which speaks to some of your commentary Todd about these issues existing somewhere else. So they exist in government. They exist in corporate Australia. And the reality is every single individual is a voter and in almost every circumstance, if they have an even tiny superannuation investment is a shareholder. And I think what we actually have to do is activate Australian society that the reality if you go electorate by electorate on the issues people voted on they don't vote on issues of gender equality, on prevention of violence against women, on the empowerment of women, anywhere, ever. We actually have to start that conversation. Why is this not an issue of national significance to us when we vote. When we look at the momentum that's coming in the US around shareholder questions and shareholder inventions in the behaviour of you know why there are not more women on the Board, where are women in senior leadership, what are you doing about pay equity, how do you guarantee and be accountable for culture. And we've seen the start of it in Australia, but it's this big. And again I think we kind of, we sit back a bit and we think well that's for someone else,

that's for a much bigger shareholder, that's for someone else to think about. And the reality is it's mums and dads who start these conversations, family members who go actually you know what, I'm going to write a letter. And suddenly that letter ends up triggering a campaign, a change. And I think that's the piece that's missing in Australia is that mass frustration we will not accept this as the norm anymore, and we're going to vote on it, we're going to challenge our corporations on it, and we're going to actually choose our employers on it. You know it took about five minutes after Westpac announced it was going to become the green bank all those years ago for all the other banks to come into line, because they started losing staff. The staff well hang on I want to work for the green bank. And so suddenly all of those policies were neutralised. And they can fight at the edges about who's better and who's worse. But they've all made huge changes and huge commitments in that space. Again, wouldn't it be fantastic if we saw the same momentum around gender equality.

FEMALE: I was thinking how do we get talking about is it time for a philosophy of people in the workplace not men and women in the workplace. And I was wondering if the men up there have ever considered how we have a conversation about people in the workplace where I can talk about I don't like the habitual gender behaviour of you know letting me out of the lift first for example. How do I have a conversation with my colleagues in a respectful and kind way that isn't offensive or upsetting. I know that they're being polite etcetera, but I don't like being gendered like that. How do we get to that point? Or why haven't we up until now? Why is it men and women and not people in the workplace?

ROB: So the conversation for me is more about respect, building confidence and recognition of uniqueness, valuing uniqueness. It's not actually about gender or, in terms of how you put in place strategy. What I try to do, and I know the PSE advocates strongly across the sector with agencies is engaging whatever strategy you are in an increasingly inclusive way by respecting opinion by seeking out differences of opinion, by inviting to the table people who have difference of opinion. And what I see occurring is policy and strategy emerging that is actually closer to a more majority view than in the past. What the downside of that is it takes more time. And in the public service what we love and what we demand to do is we're time poor. We need an answer. We want a strategy. We're going to announce it next week. Give us what you've got the politicians request. And so you don't actually have the time to engage and indulge in processes that are genuinely inclusive, respectful of individuals for what they have a contribution are. Where we tend to go I think in the past is more to who thinks like us and will help us endorse what it is we need to meet the timeline. And I think social media drives this. If you think about your own family, and mine live in the trees at Glasshouse Mountain and they're from all ends of the spectrum, and I mean spectrum in many ways. My brother-in-law spends all his time on the internet at night talking to people who think and talk, like he thinks and talk. And he's closed his mind to a broader engagement of broader conversation. So when I talk to him about, he's usually very grumpy, I talk to him about where's your respect for others who think differently to you. And he has no time nor tolerance for that. So my personal home mission is to convince him to be more respectful and tolerant of other people's views, and challenge him when he goes off on his inevitable tirade about those things that are very monocular in vision.

KYLIE: We've all got an in-law like that don't we?

ROB: Oh yes.

KYLIE: We have run out of time. So please join me in thanking our speakers. And also the audience members who were so brave in asking their questions.



## Closing comments

Kylie Ramsden, A/Senior Director, Office of the Deputy Director-General,  
Corporate Services Division, Queensland Health

KYLIE: Thank you again everyone for coming today. Especially after a long weekend it's always hard, and for navigating the protesters this morning too, which held a lot of us up this morning. We hope you continue this conversation back in your workplace. And as always we do love hear from you so please feedback any way you can and you feel comfortable with. We will be forming the program for next year pretty soon, so please join in. Have a great week. Travel safely for those who have come from a long way. And we hope to see you all again for the series next year. Thank you.

## Interview with Todd Battley

Todd Battley, Chief Executive AECOM, and Male Champions of Change

ANTHONY: Todd, welcome to the QG Breakfast Series.

TODD: Lovely to be here Anthony.

ANTHONY: What do you see are the benefits of gender equality in the workplace?

TODD: Anthony, I work in a really male dominated environment in engineering and construction. And if you just think about that, at the moment and over the last 100 years we've essentially had mainly men, really high percentages of men, maybe 90% as our workforce. So I could have, if I could double the talent pool, double the size of the workforce by including all of the women that might be interested in that as a series of professions then I'm going to have a better organisation. And in fact I think we'd have a better construction and engineering industry to serve the communities that we live in.

ANTHONY: And why is that?

TODD: Well I think it just stands to reason that if we could double the size of the talent pool we'd have better and higher qualified and maybe better people, better skilled people, able to do the work that we've got ahead of us. I think in addition to that one of the things I see in construction – and it's my own thesis, you won't see this written up – is that our industry over the last 100 years being male dominated has actually had a tendency towards a lot of aggression, sort of hyper-competitiveness, and that's resulted in some really poor outcomes. And if you look at our industry at the moment right now even in 2019 it's got a reasonably poor record around profitability for the companies involved. The types of contracts that we sign are typically really aggressive, difficult to manage contracts. It's not collaborative. Not as collaborative as we'd like. And even the mental health outcomes aren't great for the participants in the industry. So I would contend that there's actually a great case for a better balance in our industry. And I think that some of what we do in 2019 are artefacts of what happened years and years ago. So we have to change that if we want to have a long-term sustainable industry.

ANTHONY: Tell me about Male Champions of Change. You or AECOM is part of the Australian network. How does that work?

TODD: Yeah, so the male Champions of Change movement started about 15 years ago. And it was actually started as a bit of a one-off by a fellow called Michael Rennie who worked for McKinsey & Co. And he started it off for his clients and it sort of grew from there. And he tapped into this, I guess a real need in the business community at the time in how to position men and women together as partners in improving gender equality. And Michael's vision for his own life was really about what are the things he could tackle through his working life that might make a difference 100 years from now. So a really impressive guy. And I had the privilege of meeting him not that long ago, and hearing him tell this story. So the Male Champions sets about putting men who are in leadership positions, and let's face it the stats are pretty obvious that the majority of leadership positions in 2019 are filled by men. So putting men in leadership positions and giving them the tools, both I guess emotional tools, but also then the sort of tactical tools in your organisation to help drive meaningful change for women throughout the organisation, by creating better career pathways, by making sure that the employment is a richer experience for everyone. So Male Champions is all about men standing next to women and helping you know I guess a dream of vision for a gender equal world.

ANTHONY: And what does that look like in your workplace?

TODD: At AECOM you've got to sort of acknowledge the starting position. So we're about a 65/35 male female split across the entire workforce. But the intake of students that come in to engineering, the profession generally, is about 20% female. So we work really hard at the very front end of trying to encourage more young women to take up STEM courses, engineering, science, technology, mathematics and the like, and then we try and create I guess a balance all the way through the organisation. And this is a work in progress. So we have a 50/50 graduate intake, men and women, which is getting harder to fulfil, because lots of people are doing a similar thing. And then we I guess set about deliberately trying to interrupt the bias that exists in male dominated sectors to ensure that women can progress their careers and do anything that they like. Just like the men can progress their careers and do anything they like within the organisation. We look at things like gender pay gap. We look at promotions. We look at a whole range of things that are tactical, but we also look at the culture of the organisation. Because it's really important that the culture of the business is a fertile place where people can grow their careers. And I would contend that if it's good for women it'll actually be good for all of us. Many of the, you know sort of difficult I guess cultural barriers, they're not just difficult for women they're difficult for all sorts of people. So I think being able to spend time deliberately defining and then reinforcing a positive culture I think has as much to do with it as being too obsessed with the statistics of men and women at different levels.

ANTHONY: AECOM is a prime example of what change can do in bringing a positive culture to an organisation. For businesses or departments that are not quite there yet what would be some of the first steps that they would need to take?

TODD: I think the first step is probably to have at least some initial conversations with the team. And I do think this is an all-in thing. You can't, the leadership can't do it on its own. Having people understand why this is important and why it matters. Not just as something that the CEO thinks is a great idea, but actually because this is going to benefit everybody. That the starting point. And in fact that might take a fair period of time. And one of the things Male Champions acknowledge through its work is engaging men is one of the first steps. So to engage the men in the room. So it's not seen as something that is for the women but it's actually for all of us. All of us benefit if we get this right. That's I think the first step. I started myself Anthony 13 odd years ago as a team leader where I actually had some feedback from some staff, two young female staff, who went off to a conference, in Adelaide of all places, and came back and told me, it was a Women in Engineering

Conference. And they came back and gave me all this feedback about all the things I was doing wrong. Anyway, it was actually fantastic. Those two women are now much more senior in the organisation still with AECOM. But they were good enough to give me that feedback. And for me it started a bit of a journey of sort of self-discovery about my own biases and the like, but also could I be a better leader, could I be a better human being. And some of the things that actually irked me they were able to put into words. So I think you can start this if you're running a team of 10 or a team of 20 or a department or indeed a company. But I think the really important thing is get started. And nobody's an expert at this. This is kind of you know change. It's hard, it's a bit messy, it doesn't work out as you'd hoped, but you just got to kind of keep at it.

ANTHONY: And looking now years down the track of what you've accomplished and those around you what does that feel like?

TODD: Oh look it feels like we're only just getting started to be honest. And I would hate to think anyone listening to this would think I'd be standing here saying we've got this all sorted out. It's just not true. And my work is a small part of a broader group of people that are all doing their bit. But it does feel good. It does feel good to be able to point to meaningful, cultural change that benefits the whole organisation. I'll just give you one example. So we changed, and keep in mind the private sector probably lags the public sector in many of the benefits that employees might just generally experience and enjoy, but we changed all of our parental leave policies last year, or 18 months ago, to make them more accessible for people. And I sat down with our CFO at the time and budgeted for what was that going to cost us. 'Cause these things aren't cheap. And so we sat down and used the previous year as an example of well you know it cost us whatever it cost us the year before, it should cost us that, but if we increased the availability of parental leave to our fathers in particular well maybe that might cost us a bit more, so we upped it by 20% We went eight times through the budget with that change in policy. And it wouldn't be a week that goes by I don't get an email from a reasonably senior member of staff saying I love this, I think it's wonderful, I got to spend three months off with my new baby or whatever, and we just think it's awesome, the best thing that ever happened. And I think that's a great example. Those little things make it kind of all worthwhile. And I think also make it a better place to work. And hopefully we do our bit for, in that case parents, making them better parents across the broader spectrum of the community.

ANTHONY: Well, Todd keep up the great work that you're doing, you and the team at AECOM. And I think being at a forum of this nature brings together people who are not only curious I guess but are willing to learn and willing to see what other people are doing that will help steer them in the right direction.

TODD: We're all learning. I'll be looking for a few tips ourselves. And that's you know one of the things I certainly would acknowledge is that most of these ideas that we use are stolen proudly from somewhere else. And that's great, that's efficient. It's better than trying to think them all up yourself. So yeah, it's lovely to be here.