

CEO Champions

Talking points from our discussion on commitments

At the CEO Champions luncheon this afternoon, high level leaders from the Women's Forum community met to discuss concrete commitments they could each take back to their own organisations.

We heard the importance of capitalising on leadership in unlikely places - not just from the top.

We heard the importance of having challenging conversations. Both ourselves, internally and peer to peer. We heard that quotas work. They trigger and accelerate the pace of change.

And, about turning our diversity conversations into inclusion conversations. Doing it in a way that doesn't detract from the progress we've already made on gender, but instead builds on it.

We spoke about the importance of watching your language. Words like charisma and gravitas are wonderful, and important leadership qualities. But they can lead to superficial decision making if we're led by our biases.

Another participant spoke about their practice of always ensuring one woman, or two women out of three is part of each and every conversation about promotion at senior levels. It's important to ask ourselves the question – “Why *not* Jane?” even if we don't ask that question about Jack.

About identifying and supporting the male feminists in our organisations. One participant spoke to us about their policy of enforcing an empty chair if women are not hired for senior positions. The result? No empty chairs and more capable, impactful women leading in the organisation.

We also heard about ways that we can improve on the performance of our existing senior people, building on balanced representation with compulsory bias training and participation in D&I initiatives for management.

And, about linking compensation to criteria on diversity and inclusion - when we think about our supply chains, but also when we're talking about bonuses within our own organisations.

We are confident our CEO Champions will bring what they have heard from one another back to their own organisations and take the lead for inclusion in the ways that will be most impactful for them.