

Women in Leadership: Insights to Action

Evidence based strategies
for advancing women into
leadership.

Survey report
July 2025



Executive Summary

The Challenge

Despite considerable investment and attention directed toward addressing gender equity in leadership, progress remains slow and, in some areas, is moving backwards.

While many organisations struggle to attract and retain women in leadership, most continue to focus on 'fixing' women rather than addressing the systemic barriers that exclude them.

This research shows how a focused approach to supporting women in leadership could lead to better outcomes for women as well as for the organisations that employ them.

Our Survey Approach

This research employed a quantitative survey to capture the experiences of women in leadership roles across New Zealand.

Rather than adding to the substantial body of research documenting what's wrong, **we sought to understand what was having the most positive impact on women's careers into leadership and provide actionable insights into where organisations can focus their resources and attention for maximum impact.**

212 women in leadership roles shared what had the most positive impact on their careers into leadership. In this report, we've focused on four top factors for women's careers and the critical opportunities they highlight.

The Top Four Factors of Women's Leadership Success

Supportive Managers (42%)

1. Immediate managers emerged as equally important as life partners in driving career success. Managers are crucial for active career support through encouragement and advocacy, skill development, enabling flexible work arrangements, and putting women's names forward for key projects and roles.

Partner Support (42%)

2. Leadership advancement cannot be separated from life circumstances and family dynamics. Who you marry, have kids or cohabit with, is critical to your career. Effective partner support includes equal sharing of household and caregiving responsibilities, emotional and practical support for career ambitions, and understanding of leadership role demands.

Leadership Development Programs (36%)

3. Formal leadership development emerges as the third most impactful factor, demonstrating the continued importance of structured skill-building and self-awareness development. High-impact programs provide practical skills, confidence building, and networking opportunities with other emerging leaders.

Flexible Work Arrangements (33%)

4. Work arrangements that enable women to navigate leadership responsibilities alongside life commitments rank as the fourth most impactful factor. This includes part-time and flexible scheduling, remote and hybrid work opportunities, and the ability to personalise working hours.



Critical Opportunities

The research found critical gaps between what makes a positive difference to women's careers and where organisations currently focus their efforts:

- **Manager Accountability:** While 43% of respondents report their organisation regularly measures gender diversity, only 15% report that gender equity targets are considered in leader's performance evaluations.
- **Male Engagement:** Only 17% of respondents report their organisation provides inclusive leadership development for men, despite men holding the majority of leadership positions and therefore the most power to create change.
- **Care-giving Norms:** While organisations offer flexible work arrangements, the ongoing impact will come from shifting gender norms around care-giving to enhance partner support.

Some Surprises

Several commonly promoted diversity initiatives ranked low in actual career impact:

- **Male allies:** 15% (important but not primary)
- **Mentoring:** 13% (valuable but not impactful)
- **Female allies:** 13% (valued but not career-defining)
- **Male role models:** 2% (minimal impact)

These findings challenge conventional diversity wisdom and suggest organisations may be over-investing in lower-impact initiatives.

The data indicates that traditional mentoring delivers less impact than sponsorship (which ranked higher at 20%), while male ally programs rank significantly below systemic factors.

“This research reinforces the need for systemic support for women’s careers into leadership. Organisations that build the capabilities of managers and men, and focus on shifting care-giving norms, are more likely to attract and retain qualified and talented women for their leadership roles. Importantly, those that understand what will make the biggest difference in their context, will see results quicker, stay ahead of their competitors, and maximise their gender equity investments”.

Dr Amanda Sterling

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Introduction

We know a lot about the problems women face advancing their careers into leadership. Organisations like McKinsey, Deloitte, Culture Amp, DDI, the World Economic Forum, and Champions for Change (part of Global Women) have been capturing and analysing data on this for years.

But we know very little about the solutions, or what is actually having the most impact on supporting women into leadership roles. What the reports above largely agree on is that the exclusion of women from leadership is systemic rather than something women are doing (or aren't doing).

This has implications across society and business as organisations struggle to attract and retain talented and qualified women, close their gender pay gaps, represent the customers and communities they serve, and build adaptive and resilient workplace cultures where people and businesses thrive.

The Opportunity

While considerable investment and attention has been directed toward understanding the barriers women face into leadership, there remains a critical gap between identifying problems and implementing effective solutions.

Many organisations are investing significant resources—both financial and human—into addressing gender equity in leadership, yet progress remains slow and, in some areas, is moving backwards.

This challenge is compounded by a continued focus on problems rather than solutions. When solutions are proposed, they often address perceived problems rather than amplify what actually works. This approach risks alienating key allies and contributing to the overwhelm that many organisations experience when tackling gender equity.

We identified an opportunity to shift the focus from the problem to evidence-based solutions, particularly within the New Zealand context.

We sought to understand what was having the most positive impact on women's careers into leadership and provide actionable insights into where organisations can focus their resources and attention for maximum impact.



Methodology

This research employed a quantitative survey to capture the experiences of women in leadership roles across New Zealand. The survey was designed to move beyond traditional problem-identification to focus specifically on understanding what drives successful career progression into leadership.

The questions were developed out of contemporary empirical research on the barriers women continue to face progressing their careers into leadership as well as case-study evidence on what is working.

The survey was structured around two key areas:

- **Organisational practices:** Participants were asked to identify what their organisations were currently doing to support women's careers.
- **Personal career impact:** Participants were asked to select the top three factors that had had the most positive impact on their careers into leadership.

We also collected written comments at the end of the survey. A selection of these appear as quotes throughout this report.

The survey was conducted over a four-week period from March 3-31, 2025, timed to coincide with International Women's Day 2025 to maximise engagement and participation.



Demographics

The survey attracted 212 responses from women in leadership roles across New Zealand.

Women were invited to participate if they identified, or lived, as a woman in New Zealand and:

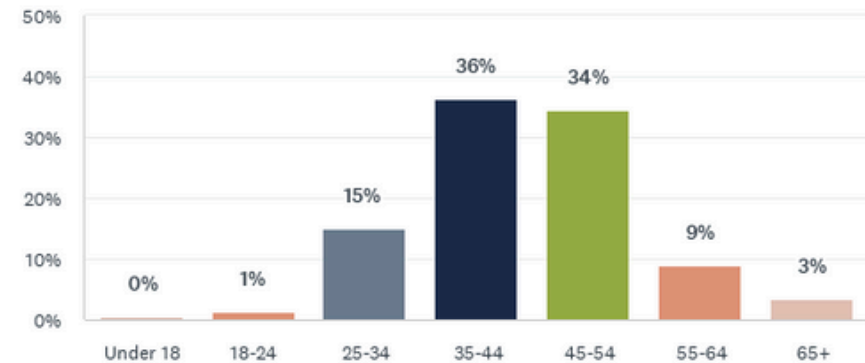
- held a formal leadership role within their organisation,
- were on a trajectory to leadership, or
- wielded informal influence over a community group.

Note:

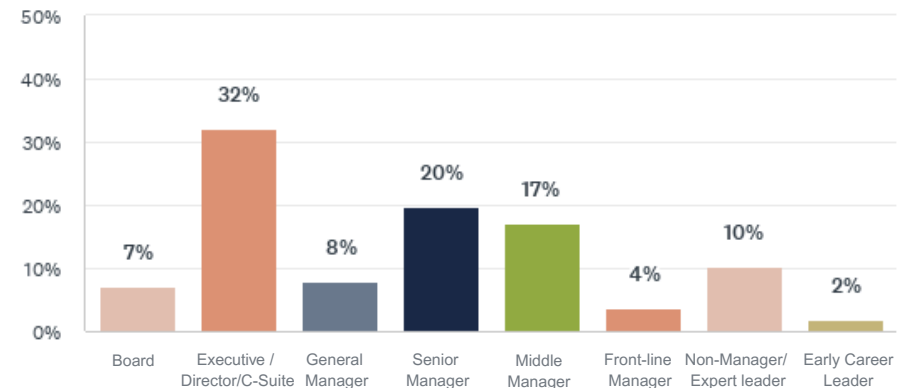
These demographics represent women who are actively navigating senior leadership roles.

- Senior leadership years - 70% of respondents were aged between 35-54.
- Strong representation at executive levels - 32% C-Suite and 20% Senior Manager.

Age

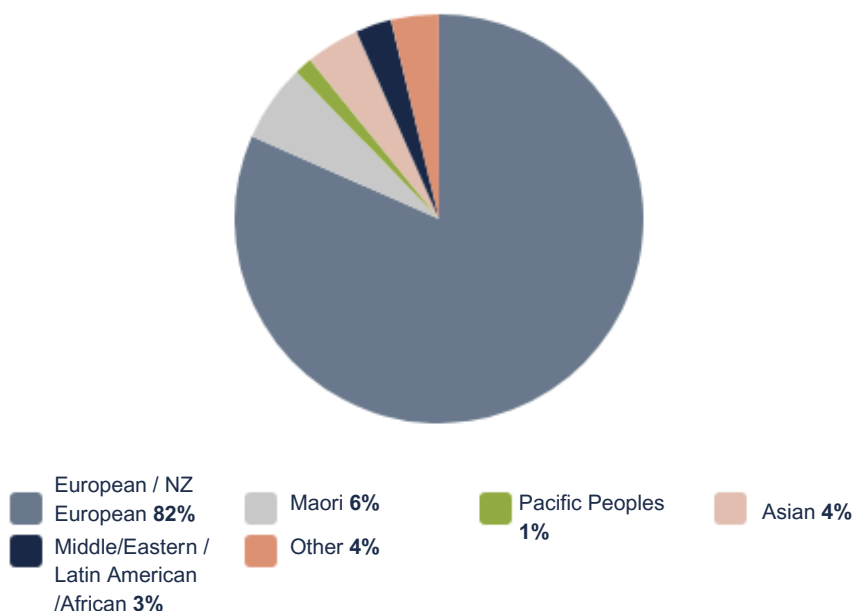


Leadership level





Ethnicity



The 'other' category represented Australian, Indian, Russian/Canadian, Indian/European, Pakeha/Indian, Indo Fijian, NZ European/Maori, and South African.

Note:

The profile of predominantly European/NZ European women aged 35-54 in senior roles largely reflects the current composition of leadership in New Zealand. However, it also highlights the ongoing need for greater ethnic diversity at senior levels.

Industries

The diversity of industries represented means that this data provides general insights rather than industry-specific solutions.

The highest response rates came from:

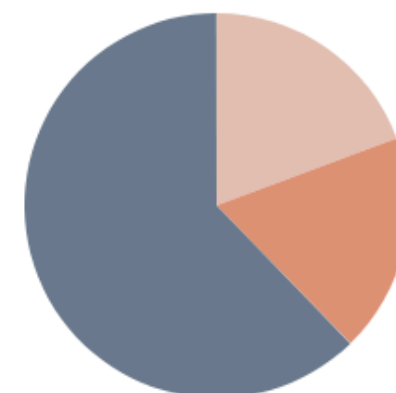
- Professional, Scientific, Technical, Administrative and Support Services (22%)
- Financial and Insurance Services (17%)
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (8.5%)
- Education and Training (8%)
- Construction (6%)
- Manufacturing (5%)

Other industries represented included Agriculture, Retail and Wholesale trade, Transport, IT, Public Admin, Health Care, Arts, Consulting, Governance, Government, Public Service, Politics, Travel, Engineering, Research, Not for Profit, Property and Infrastructure, Communication and Marketing, Environmental Services, and Legal.

Organisation Size

The size of organisation that respondents came from.

- **Small:** Less than 20 employees **19%**
- **Medium:** 20 to 99 employees **18%**
- **Large:** 100 or more employees **62%**



Your manager(s): You have had a manager (or managers) who has actively supported your career progression. This could be through encouragement, skill development, coaching, enabling your work arrangements, putting your name forward or allocating you to key projects.

Partner support: You and your partner equally split household and care-giving responsibilities, or your partner is the stay-at-home or primary care-giver.

Leadership development: You have been on leadership specific training programmes that has given you self-awareness as well as skills and capabilities that you've applied to your career into leadership.

Work arrangements: Your work arrangements (for example, part-time, flexible or the opportunity to work from home) have enabled you to navigate your leadership role and your life outside of work (e.g. care-giving).

Female role-models: You have seen examples within your organisation or elsewhere where other women have shown you how to lead as a woman. This has enabled you to see ways you can progress your career, navigate care-giving and/or menopause, or show up authentically.

Networking / professional relationships: The relationships and networks you have built at your school (e.g. at your primary, secondary or at University) or over your career have helped you advance your career.

Sponsorship: You have had senior leaders through your career who have advocated for you. For example, by putting you forward, or shoulder-tapping, you for a leadership role. This could be informally or through a formal sponsorship programme.

Coaching: You have had 1:1 support through coaching.

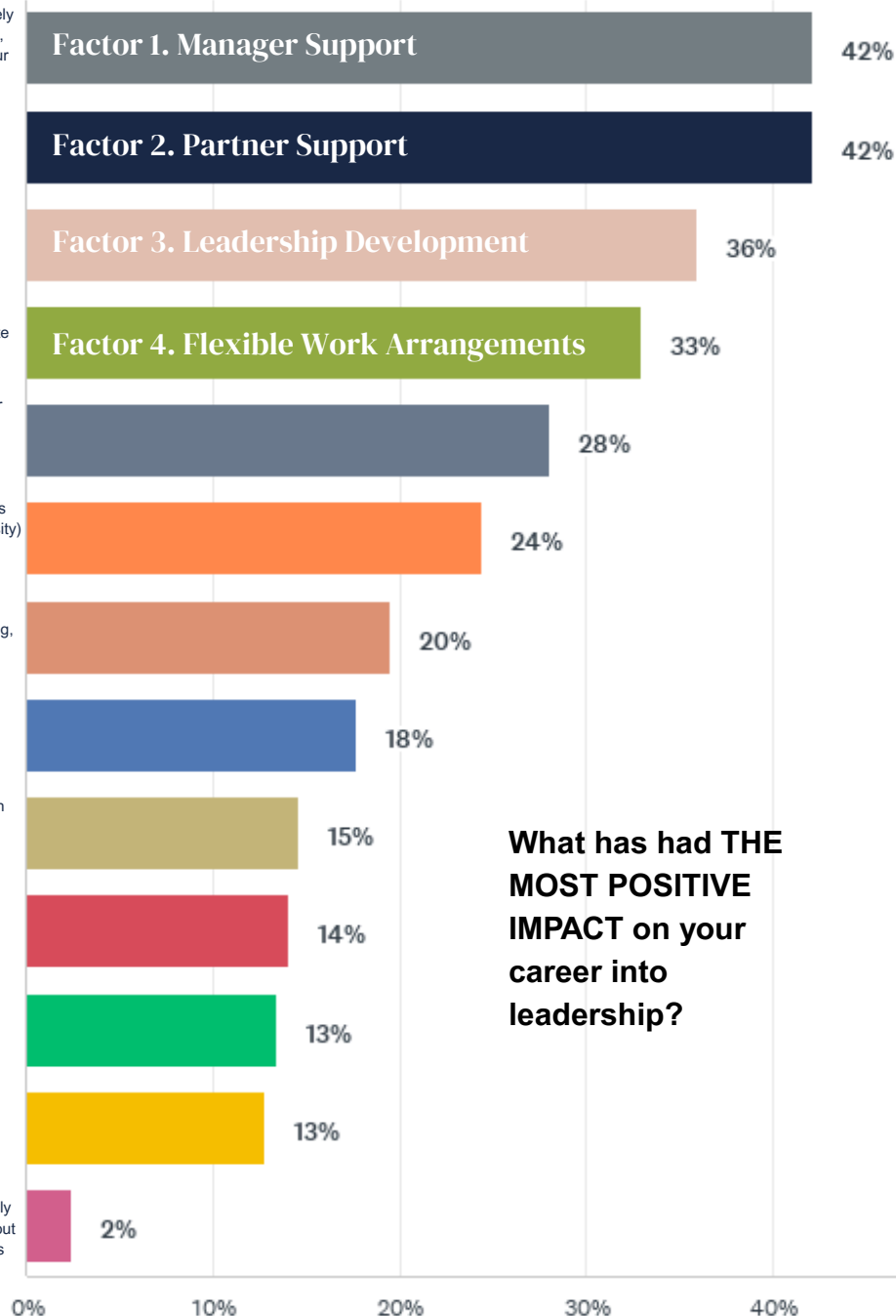
Male allies: You have had explicit support from men. For example, through language and behaviours that have made you feel welcome and valued in leadership.

Community support: Your friends, family, or services in your community, have supported you throughout your career. This could include through general encouragement and/or child or domestic care.

Mentoring: You have had senior leaders through your career that have provided you with advice or acted as a sounding board. This could be informally or through a formal mentoring programme.

Female allies: You have had explicit support from women. For example, through language and behaviours that have made you feel welcome and valued in leadership.

Male role-models: You have seen examples within your organisation (or elsewhere) where men have showed their vulnerabilities as leaders, actively called out micro-aggressions against women, and/or been transparent about their care-giving roles. This has enabled you to see ways you can progress your career, navigate care-giving, or show up authentically.



Key Findings

This research reveals critical insights into what actually drives women's success in advancing their careers into leadership.

Rather than focusing on barriers, these findings reveal the factors that women themselves identify as having the most positive impact on their career progression.

In this report, we've focused on four top factors for women's careers and the critical opportunities they highlight.

These **'Four Factors'** represent workplace and personal support systems that enable women's careers into leadership.

1.

Manager Support 42%

Immediate managers emerged as equally important as life partners in driving career success.

Managers are crucial for active career support through:

- Encouragement and advocacy for advancement opportunities.
- Skill development and informal coaching.
- Enabling flexible work arrangements when needed.
- Putting women's names forward for key projects and roles.
- Allocating stretch assignments that build leadership capability.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: This finding highlights how important it is for organisations to invest as much as, if not more, into developing manager capability to support women's careers as they do in women's leadership development programs.

Actions for organisations include building manager awareness and capability for supporting women's careers through bias awareness training, career development conversation skills, and accountability mechanisms.

"It's not just about supporting women into roles, it's about supporting us when we're there."

"Senior leaders need to role model good behaviour and values and hold others to account if others are not meeting these expectations."



"The biggest for me was having a partner who does more than 50% of domestic duties. He shares the 9-day fortnight with me (both doing 80 hours over 9 days) so we only have our youngest in care 4 days a week. He continues to do the heavy lifting at home, especially as I travel for work these days. Without him my journey would not have been possible."

"How can we support men to be less threatened by women in the workplace? Perhaps some of this is generational and, as our children become the leaders of the future, our young men will be more comfortable in a gender neutral environment."

2.

Partner Support 42%

Leadership advancement cannot be separated from life circumstances and family dynamics. **Who you marry, have kids or cohabitate with, is critical to your career.**

Effective partner support includes:

- Equal sharing of household and caregiving responsibilities.
- Partners serving as primary caregivers to enable career focus.
- Emotional and practical support for career ambitions.
- Understanding and accommodation of leadership role demands.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Addressing gender equity in leadership needs to be tackled at a multitude of levels, including shifting gender norms across society and supporting more men to take on active care-giving roles.

While organisations can't directly influence these personal decisions, they can contribute to the necessary shifts through shared parental leave provisions, and supporting male colleagues to take an active role in care-giving through policy, practice and role-modelling.



3. Leadership Development Programs (36%)

Formal leadership development emerges as the third most impactful factor, demonstrating the continued importance of structured skill-building and self-awareness development.

High-impact leadership development provides:

- Self-awareness and leadership competency development.
- Practical skills applicable to leadership roles.
- Confidence building and leadership identity formation.
- Strategic thinking and decision-making capabilities.
- Networking opportunities with other emerging leaders.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Quality leadership development programs deliver measurable career impact, but they must be part of a broader ecosystem of support rather than a standalone solution.

Actions for organisations include addressing the other three factors in this equation (partner support, flexible work and a supportive manager). One of the ways you can do this is through a **Leadership Pipeline Assessment**, to build a clear roadmap of initiatives tailored to your organisation's specific context.

"We need to continue valuing feminine leadership approaches eg. empathy, consensus building, caring, etc - not just hiring women who can be good 'masculine leaders' but hiring all genders who can demonstrate this."





"To foster a thriving and high-performing work environment, organisations must prioritise the implementation and maintenance of key principles that support employee growth, well-being, and productivity. This includes providing ongoing support, promoting flexibility, and creating opportunities for individuals to develop their skills in an environment that encourages learning."

4. Flexible work arrangements 33%

Work arrangements that enable women to navigate leadership responsibilities alongside life commitments rank as the fourth most impactful factor.

Effective work arrangements include:

- Part-time and flexible scheduling options.
- Remote and hybrid work opportunities.
- Compressed work weeks.
- Job sharing arrangements.
- Ability to personalise working hours.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Flexibility in how, when, and where work gets done is not just an employee retention tool, it's a leadership pipeline enabler. However, **most women have a different experience of what they need - so the flexibility itself needs to be flexible.**

Clear guidelines on the time and place for flexibility, as well as equipping front-line managers with the skills to have conversations about workplace flexibility, or shift to outputs rather than hours type approaches to work management (where appropriate), would help ensure flexibility is applied in the most impactful ways.



Some surprises from the data

Several commonly promoted diversity initiatives ranked low in actual career impact:

- **Male allies:** 15% (important but not primary)
- **Mentoring:** 13% (valuable but not impactful)
- **Female allies:** 13% (valued but not career-defining)
- **Male role models:** 2% (minimal impact)

These findings challenge conventional diversity wisdom and suggest **organisations may be over-investing in lower-impact initiatives.**

The data indicates that traditional mentoring delivers less impact than sponsorship (which ranked higher at 20%), while male ally programs, though important, rank significantly below systemic factors.

Note:

Rather than suggest initiatives focusing on these be scrapped, **we recommend incorporating them into a broader eco-system approach** that has a demonstrated impact. For example, male allies are critical in management support and shifting norms around care-giving, mentoring can be impactful within a well-designed leadership development program.

Undertaking a **Leadership Pipeline Assessment** would identify just how this could be done for maximum impact.



"In my experience, strong male advocates are critical. You need allies where the balance of power currently sits so that when more females are promoted, the support of the male dominated leadership is consistently made aware of what the expectations are and they have awareness of their biases. Without that, programmes and policies are doomed."

The critical opportunities

In analysing the data we found critical gaps between what makes a positive difference to women's careers and where organisations currently focus their efforts. We see these as unique opportunities for organisations to laser focus their efforts and investments.

These critical opportunities include:

- Developing manager accountability and support.
- Investing in the inclusive capabilities of men.
- Shifting gender norms around care-giving.

Developing manager accountability and support

Managers play a critical role in the pipeline of women into leadership roles. Providing greater accountability, support, awareness and skills to managers across all levels of the organisation would ensure that the pipeline of women into leadership is well supported.

But this needs to go beyond the C-Suite and embed inclusivity into organisational culture.

What the data says:

While there is room for improvement, **representation, role modelling, and active allyship is largely positive from the C-Suite**. We see a largely positive response to the questions around senior leadership (i.e. Directors, C-Suite & Executives):

- Representing a diversity of experiences. For example, gender, race (61% agree or strongly agree).
- Role modelling a variety of different working styles and working arrangements (61% agree or strongly agree).
- Actively working to create inclusion in workplaces. For example, through language and behaviours that make people feel welcome and valued (68% agree or strongly agree).

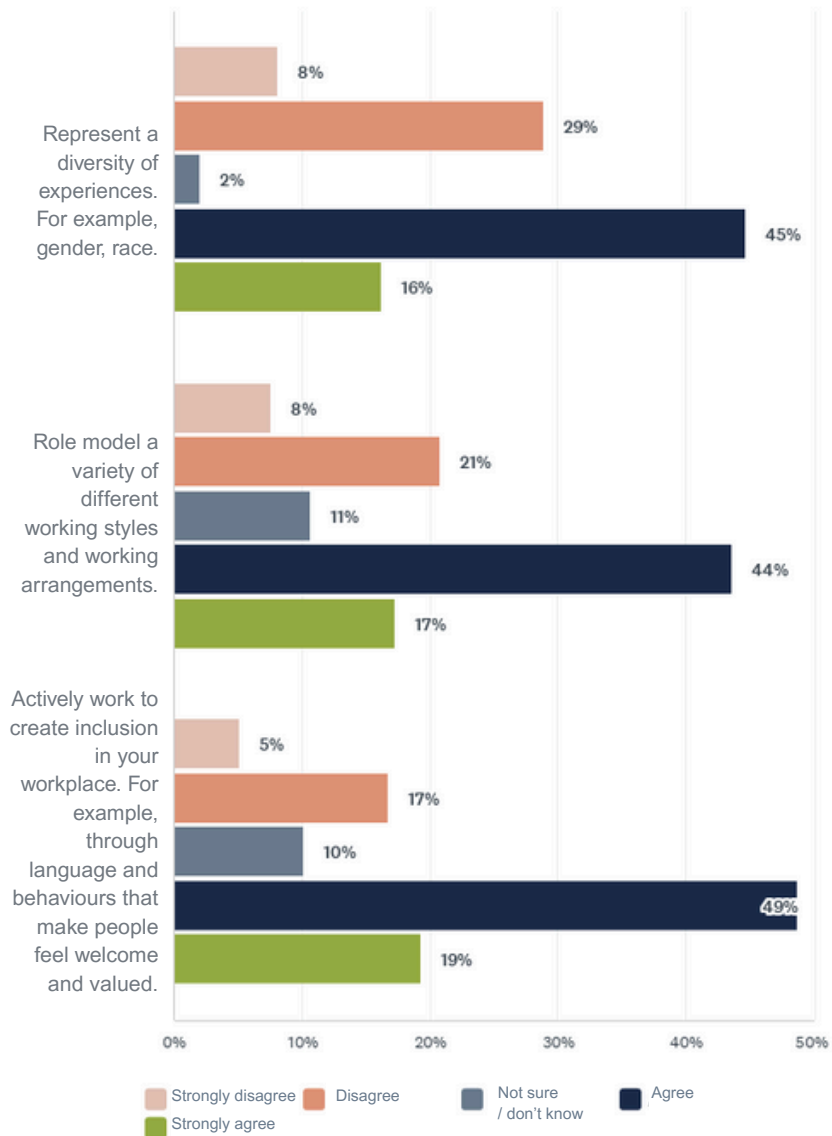
However, **we see critical gaps in embedding accountability and action through the organisation.**

- Regular measurement and reporting on gender diversity in leadership is mixed. 43% of respondents reported agree or strongly agree that their organisation does this, while 42% answered disagree or strongly disagree.
- Only 33% agree or strongly agree that their organisation has made a public commitment to closing the gender pay gap, while 48% disagree or strongly disagree that their organisation has done this.

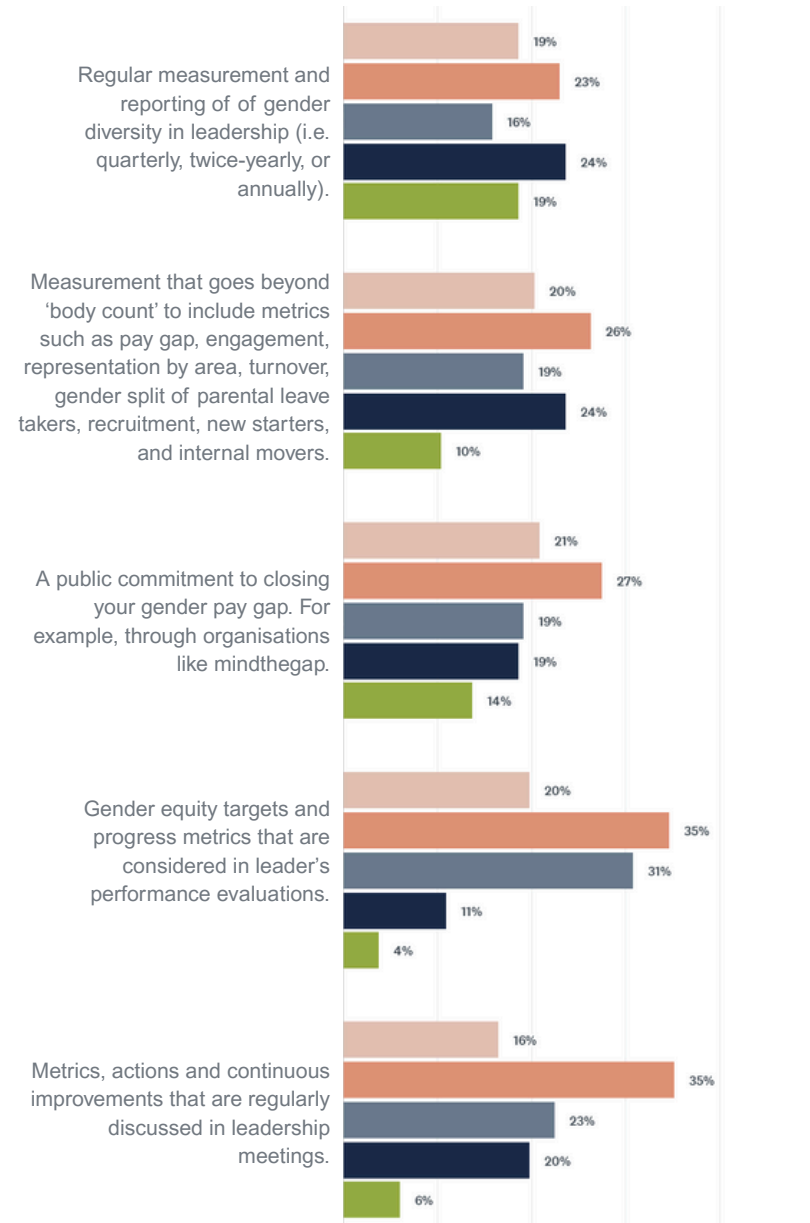
The biggest gaps though are in manager accountability and continuous improvement.

- 15% agree or strongly agree that gender equity targets and progress metrics were considered in leader's performance evaluations, and 55% disagree or strongly disagree.
- 26% responded agree or strongly agree that metrics, actions and continuous improvements were regularly discussed in leadership meetings, and 51% disagree or strongly disagree.

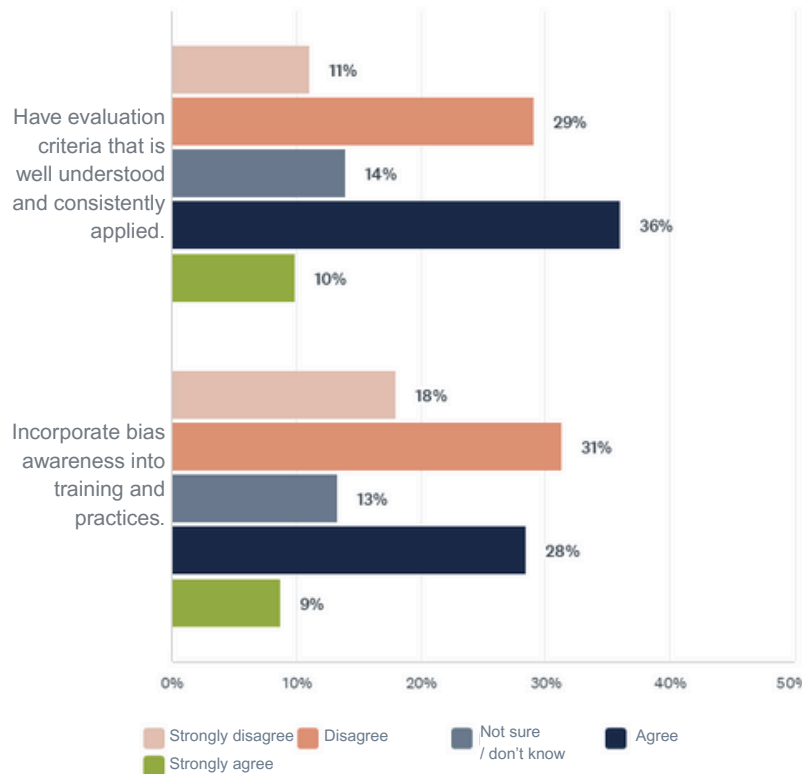
Your organisation's senior leadership (i.e. your Directors, C-Suite & Executives):



Your organisation has gender equity targets, strategy and measurement that include:



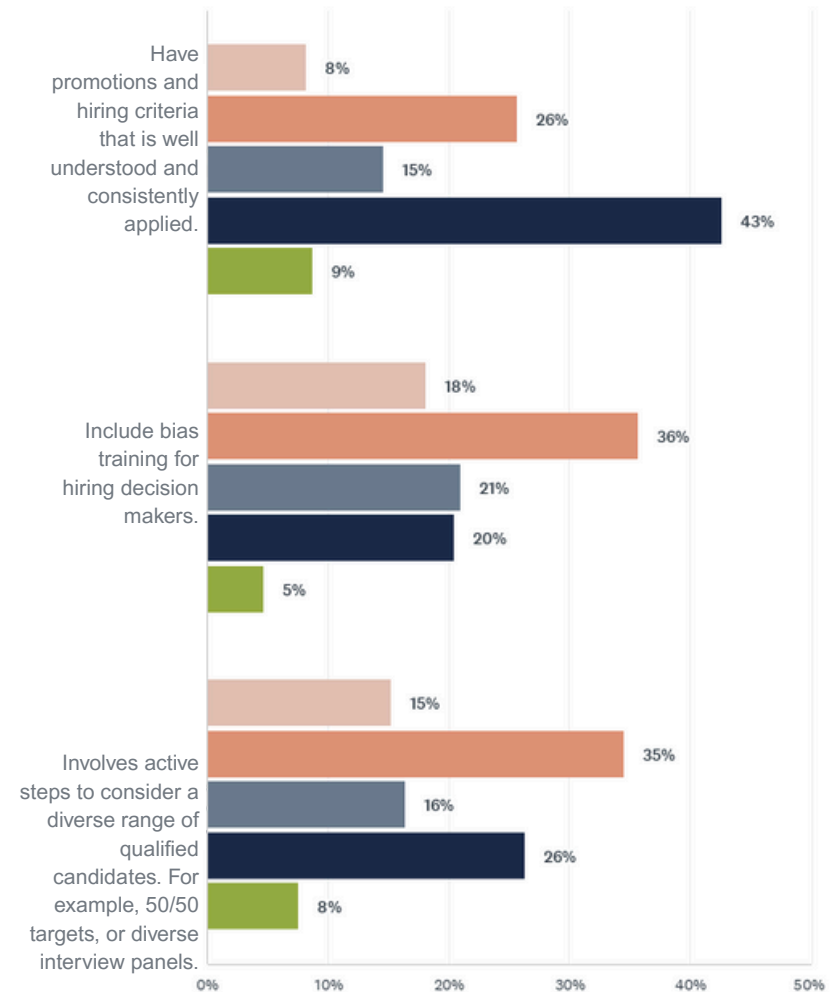
Your organisation's performance reviews:



Note:

The majority of women completing this survey are leaders / managers within large organisations. The % of don't know / not sure answers speaks to an opportunity to better communicate, raise awareness, and engage with these leaders.

Your organisation's recruitment practices:



INSIGHT TO ACTION:

Flow external benchmarking and reporting through to internal accountability.

Organisations that are doing this work well - seeing shifts in representation and closed gender pay gaps - are consistently using measurement to drive cultural change. A significant part of this is holding managers accountable to their gender inclusion results by including these metrics in management performance reviews.

Note:

For an example of how this works in practice, see our **Z Energy case study** where we applied our **Leadership Pipeline Assessment** to identify what they were doing well, and what they could build on to increase the representation of women in leadership roles and close their gender pay gap.



The metrics included in successful approaches go beyond 'body count' to include factors such as engagement, representation by area, employee turnover, gender split of parental leave takers, recruitment, new starters, internal movers, and gender pay gaps.

Not only does this support data-driven conversation but allows organisations to continuously improve on other significant levers for women's inclusion.

Review performance, promotions, and recruitment practices and build the awareness and skills of managers.

Biases against women, merit based arguments and an undervaluing of the experiences and perspectives that women bring, still create significant barriers for women on the pathway to leadership. Reviewing policies and practices to ensure that a diverse range of qualified candidates are recruited and promoted, are low hanging fruit actions for organisations looking to address this.

However, there is a risk that organisations don't see the benefits of the diversity they're striving to achieve, or get significant push-back, if managers/leaders aren't actively engaged in recruiting and including people with a diverse range of experiences. The opportunity is to build awareness and capability across all management/leadership levels - not just to understand how to do this, but the importance and impact of their role in doing so.

"The women in leadership I see are mostly childless. The work load, travel and out of hours commitments do not seem family friendly - in a way that does not seem to bother the men - who all have children in my company. The working expectations of senior leadership need to change".

Investing in the inclusive capabilities of men

Men play an important role in the structural support for women at work, in leadership, and at home. We need to build critical capabilities for leadership in women AND men in order to see the benefits of inclusive workplace cultures.

"I find in my current organisation men are still listened to and respected more than women - this creates an added load for women (and people of other ethnicities etc)".

"One of the biggest barriers has been women who 'shatter the glass ceiling' and expect others to crawl over the glass they leave behind. They reach those levels by adopting the same traits as the male-driven culture, instead of being authentic to who they are".

"Companies need to be abundantly clear what leadership qualities the organisation values & communicate these to all people"

What the data says:

We saw a mostly positive response to the question: Your organisation provides the following development support specifically targeted at women. For example, the main forms of development organisations provided included:

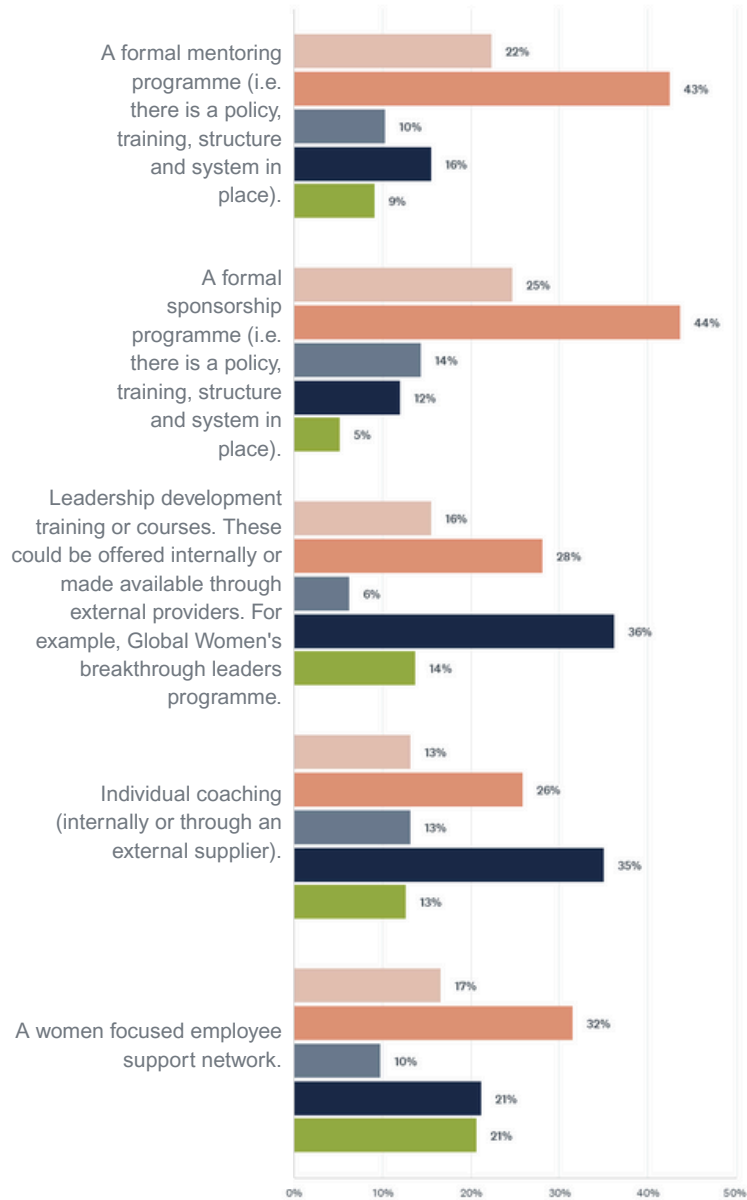
- Leadership development training or courses (50% agree or strongly agree).
- Individual coaching (48% agree or strongly agree).
- A women focused employee support network (42% agree or strongly agree).

Meanwhile, **only 17% of respondents reported agree or strongly agree that their organisation provided inclusive leadership development for men** and 27% that their organisation provided courses or training focused on allyship or removing bias.

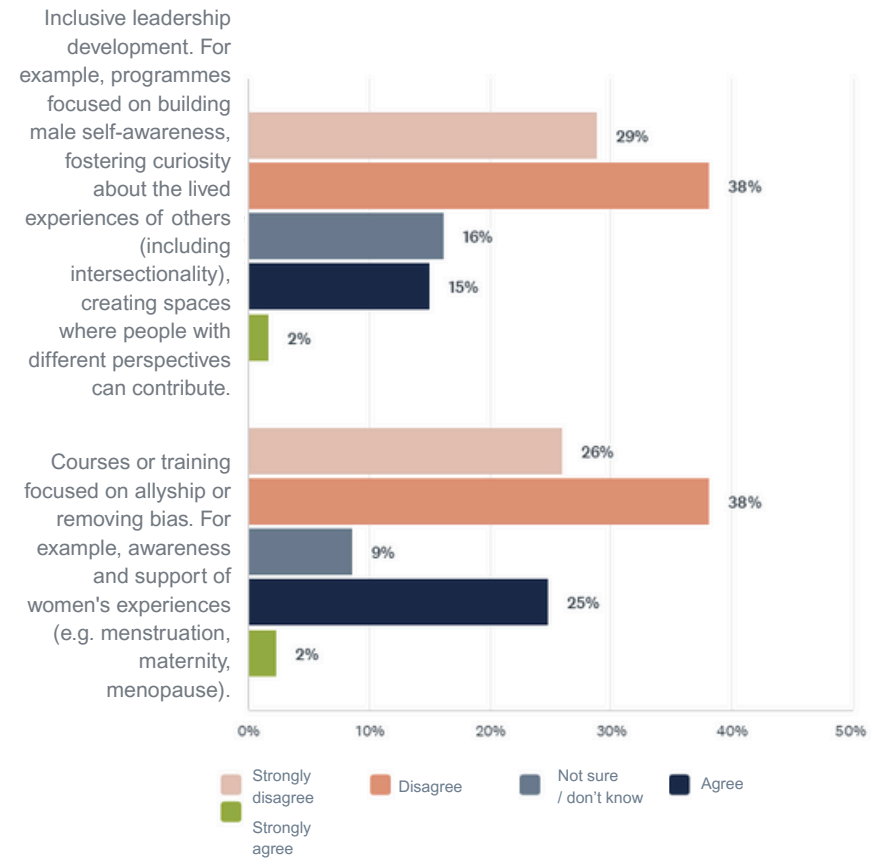
The results for these initiatives focusing on men skewed more towards the negative - disagree and strongly disagree. We also see a similar pattern in mentoring and sponsorship programmes for women - suggesting that **there may be behaviours within these organisations that are creating additional barriers for women into leadership, and doing more to undermine their progression than support it.**

- Inclusive leadership development for men (67% disagree or strongly disagree).
- Allyship or bias training (64% disagree or strongly disagree).
- Mentoring (65% disagree or strongly disagree).
- Sponsorship (69% disagree or strongly disagree).

Your organisation provides the following development support specifically targeted at WOMEN:



Your organisation provides the following development support specifically targeted at MEN:





INSIGHT TO ACTION:

Engaging and equipping men with the self-awareness and practical skills to be equal partners, active allies, mentors and sponsors for women.

In this survey, systemic workplace support accounted for three of the four top factors driving women's leadership success. Meanwhile, men still hold the majority of leadership and board roles in NZ, and therefore still the most power when it comes to mentoring, sponsorship, and management support provided to women. In addition, partner support - equally splitting household and care-giving or being the primary care-giver - is first equal in factors that have the most positive impact on women's career's into leadership.

Note:

Investment in male allyship awareness and training is a relatively new wave of work to address gender representation in leadership. So, while the impact of male allies is relatively low at 15%, it's quite possible that it has not had the impact on women's careers into leadership yet.

“The bottom line is that men have the most power to build home environments and workplace cultures where talented and qualified women thrive.”

Dr Amanda Sterling

Shifting gender norms around care-giving

We know, from the career impact data, that flexible work arrangements are having a positive impact on women's careers in leadership (ranked as one of the four most impactful factors for women's careers at 33%). However, while organisations are doing this well for women, the ongoing impact of this work will come from a greater attention on men.

What the data says:

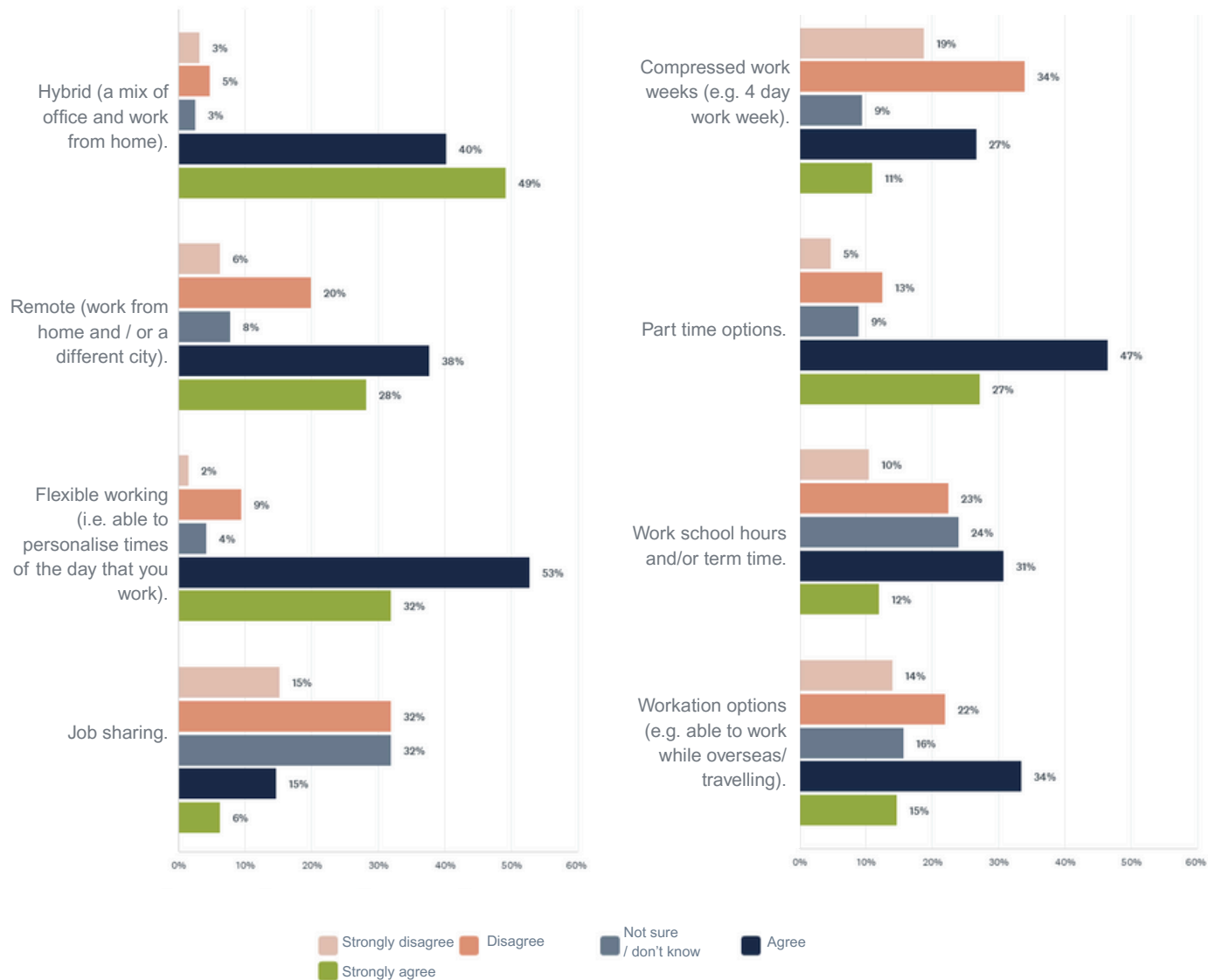
Flexible work was among the highest rated offerings. Most notably, respondents responded agree or strongly agree to their organisations offering hybrid work 89%, flexibility 85%, part-time 74%, and remote work options 66% .

This data suggests that **offering a variety of different work arrangements is something that most organisations are doing well and it is having a positive impact on supporting women's careers.**

However, while 64% of respondents answered agree and strongly agree that their organisation had policies that supported men to take parental leave, **there was a gap between these parental leave policies and their financial incentives.** Only 23% reported agree or strongly agree that their employer made employer contributions to Kiwisaver during parental leave, and only 31% that the same amount of paid parental was available to both parents.

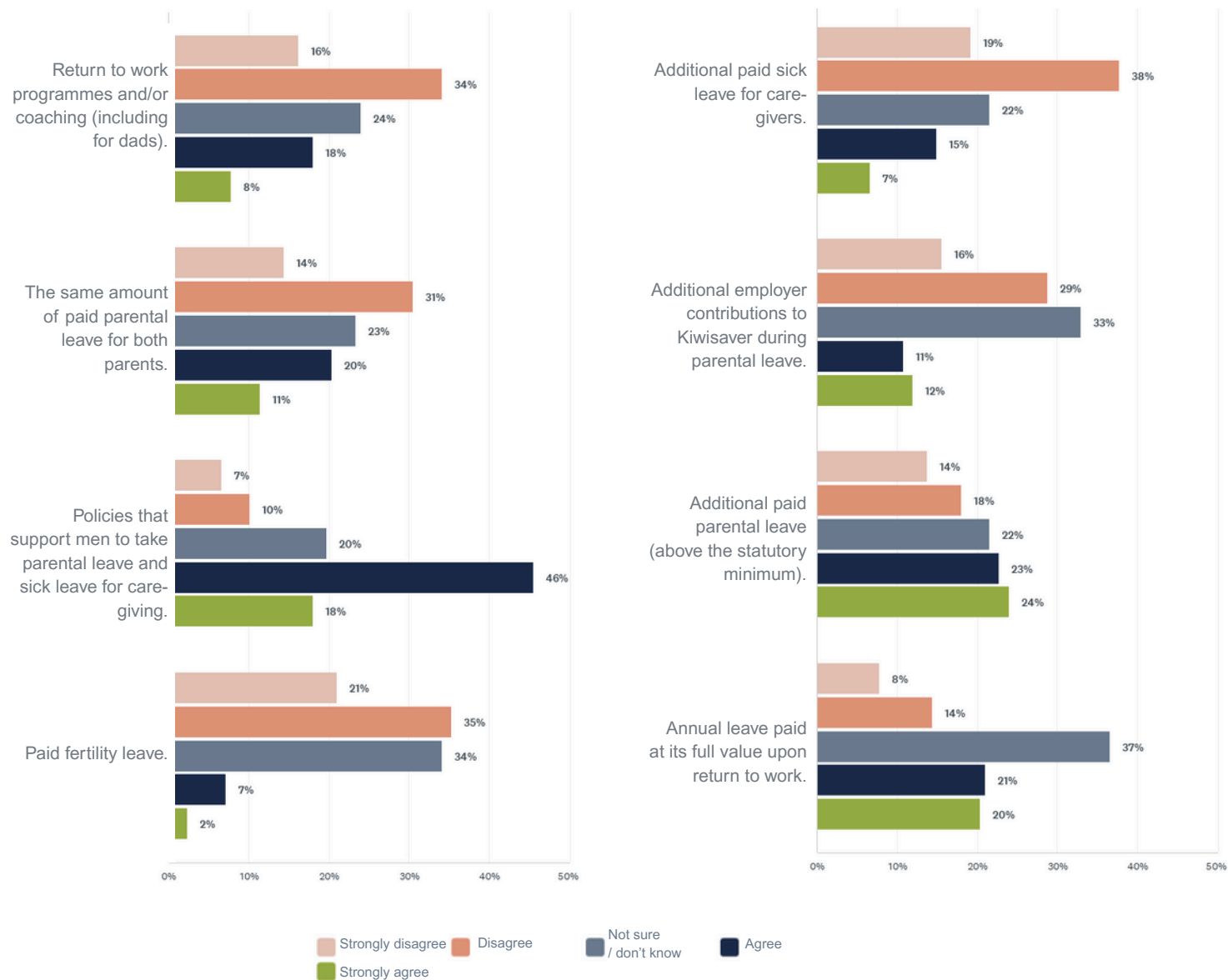


Your organisation offers the following work arrangements:





Your organisation provides the following support for working parents:



INSIGHT TO ACTION:

We need men to take parental leave and adopt flexible, part-time or hybrid work arrangements.

The ongoing impact of this will be in shifting gender norms around care-giving and enhancing partner support (ranked one of the top two factors for its positive impact on women's careers in leadership). We need men to be taking up alternative work options that support them to actively participate in care-giving and domestic labour.

We know from the research that women are more likely to be passed over for promotion, have interesting work dry up, and be kept out of more challenging projects when they take up flexible and part-time work options. While this data doesn't indicate this is happening for the women who completed this survey (as flexible work is reported as having a positive impact on their careers), it's worth keeping in mind. There are cultural shifts needed around what gets recognised and rewarded as leadership, and how those who work from home, remotely or part-time, maintain visibility and credibility in ways that enhance their careers.

While this survey didn't capture data on men taking up alternative work options, it does highlight an opportunity for organisations to measure the gender split of people in these sorts of roles, and use that data to inform, focus, and track their progress.

Key metrics for these work arrangements should include:

- Exploring the gender split of people taking up different kinds of work options, as well as parental leave.
- Analysing this data by leadership level to ensure it's being role-modelled and that leadership pathways are open for those who take up these work arrangements.



In summary:

applying these insights

This research reinforces the need for systemic support for women's careers into leadership and challenges the predominant focus on developing women as the primary way to get there.

This section provides actionable strategies to do this and maximise your investment in gender equity initiatives.

Identify your specific needs

1. Organisations that can identify which areas require immediate attention within their specific context will achieve faster, more sustainable results than those applying generic diversity best practices. Diagnostic capability is going to be essential for competitive advantage.

Link gender metrics to manager performance

2. Organisations that close the accountability gap - linking gender metrics to manager performance - can expect to see accelerated representation gains without additional diversity program investment. This represents the highest-ROI intervention opportunity.

Develop middle-manager capability

3. Organisations that focus only on C-Suite commitment are likely to experience a limited trickle-down effect. Middle management support is critical for your leadership pipeline. Organisations that develop their awareness, and capabilities for inclusion are more likely to see system-wide improvements.

Shift gender norms around care-giving

4. Organisations that successfully engage men in flexible work, parental leave, and caregiving will create a multiplier effect—improving both workplace gender equity and home-based partner support. This dual impact accelerates women's careers beyond single-intervention approaches.

Be strategic, systemic and data driven

5. The systemic nature of the **Four Factors** means that partial implementation will deliver limited results. Organisations that understand their levers, and address all four factors simultaneously will outpace competitors in talent attraction and retention - enhancing the strength of their leadership pipeline.

“Organisations that deeply understand their specific challenges, use evidence to inform their approach, and engage their leaders across all levels and genders, will see a greater retention of women. Most importantly, they’ll realise a competitive advantage in attracting talented and qualified people to their leadership teams”.

Dr Amanda Sterling

How Dr Amanda Sterling can help your organisation

Dr Amanda Sterling combines groundbreaking research insights with decades of practical experience to help organisations move from problem identification to solution implementation. Her evidence-based approach focuses on the systematic changes that actually drive women's leadership advancement.

About Amanda

Dr Amanda Sterling is a principal Director and an award-winning consultant who partners with organisations to remove barriers for women into leadership and create inclusive workplaces where people and businesses thrive.

Amanda combines her decades of experience working in corporate leadership development and culture change, as well as deep expertise on leadership, gender, and inclusion, to help organisations attract and retain more women in leadership and close their gender pay gaps.

Amanda's groundbreaking PhD research (completed in 2023) revealed critical insights into what is still holding women back from leadership roles and the opportunities to address this. Her research has been featured in NewsHub, The Press, The Dominion Post, NewsTalkZB, RNZ's The Panel, and was highlighted by Global Women and the University of Auckland.

Amanda is originally from the Kaipara region but has called Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland home for the last 20 years. She is also a proud parent to one son.



Services

Speaking

Engage all your people in conversations about gender equity in leadership.

Dr Sterling delivers talks that challenge conventional thinking and inspire action based on the latest research findings. Her speaking engagements help organisations:

- Shift from the problem to the solutions.
- Engage male allies and sceptics through research, data and story-telling.
- Create momentum for systematic organisational change.

Ideal for: Leadership meetings and conferences, employee resource groups, board presentations, and industry events.

Workshops & Manager Development

Empower your leaders to understand and leverage their leadership power to create more inclusive teams.

Drawing directly from research and providing practical tools and frameworks for:

- Having powerful career conversations.
- Building bias awareness and inclusive leadership behaviours.
- Creating accountability mechanisms for women's advancement.
- Implementing flexible work arrangements that retain high-performers.

Available as: Half-day intensives, multi-session programs, or integrated leadership development modules.



Leadership Development Programs

Build the critical competencies your leaders need to lead inclusive and high-performing teams.

Dr Sterling designs and delivers leadership development that integrates inclusion with critical leadership competencies. Programs focus on:

- Building self-awareness and understanding of individual leadership strengths.
- Creating psychological safety for diverse team performance.
- Navigating change and complexity in organisational decision making.

Available as: Executive programs, emerging leader development, or organisation-wide leadership curriculum.

Leadership Pipeline Assessment

Using best practice insights and contemporary research, we'll help you understand the health of your leadership pipeline, and what will make the biggest difference to attracting and retaining more women in your leadership roles.

The comprehensive assessment examines your organisational culture and leadership pipeline data to identify key opportunities for improvement.

You'll get a targeted action plan specifically designed for your organisation's unique needs, and focused on building stronger pathways for women to advance into leadership positions and close your gender pay gap.

This isn't another diversity report that sits on a shelf. It's an actionable strategy that addresses the invisible barriers, unconscious bias, and systemic issues that are costing you top talent.

“We specialise in supporting organisations to remove the barriers for women into leadership.

The approach we take is informed by cutting edge research, and decades of experience in leadership and culture change.

But, most importantly, we work alongside your leaders to amplify what's working, build ownership, and increase the impact of this work”.

Dr Amanda Sterling

Ready to move from insights to action?



Book a 30 minute chat to discuss what these insights mean for your organisation.

We can:

- Go deeper into the data relevant to your industry.
- Identify what might be most impactful for your organisation.
- Co-create your next steps.

BOOK A TIME HERE



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