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Women in Governance

Food and Fibre have a way to go

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1 Executive Summary

The glass ceiling has long been smashed by women, but in recent times there has been ever slowing progress made in achieving gender diversity in board rooms in the New Zealand food and fibre sector.

The aim of this research report is to examine the current state of women in governance in the New Zealand food and fibre sector, and to build understanding as to why there is still a short fall when it comes to gender diversity on the boards of so many organisations in the sector. The main question this report addresses is:

- How can gender diversity be increased on governance boards in the New Zealand food and fibre sector?

The methodology is made up of a literature review, to provide base knowledge in order to perform thematic analysis along with eight semi-structured interviews to provide real world context of women in governance in the New Zealand food and fibre sector. From this, three high level themes which included nine insights were distilled:

- Societal Factors
 - Workplace Culture
 - Food and Fibre Gender Roles
- Support and Representation
 - Mentoring and Role Models
 - Personal Relationships
 - Unconscious Bias
- Gender Equality in the Workplace
 - Role Availability
 - Pay Gap
 - Experience and Competency
 - Talent Management

Analysis of these themes and insights, whilst also taking in consideration the literature review, provided 3 main areas of discussion around the **value of women**, looking **future forward** to continue making positive progress, while also recognising some **unintended consequences** of aiming for a perfect 50/50 split of gender diversity in the board room.

The recommendations made following this are for those who are in governance in the New Zealand food and fibre sector and see the need to increase gender diversity in the sector.

- Know the current workforce that New Zealand Food and Fibre Sector have available for development
- Raise awareness and have the conversation with peers about the benefit and need for gender diversity
- Implement gender diversity recommendations in the relevant boards corporate governance codes
- Create inclusive workplace culture
- Training for all levels of people throughout business workforce
- Create an accessible, supportive network of mentors for women interested in governance

2 Acknowledgements

This project has been a real team effort, so to everyone who has taken the time to discuss this project through with me and ask how I'm going and putting up with my extended ramblings – thank you.

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4 Introduction

If you look hard enough you will find many strong, ambitious, powerful women in the world, who are leaning in and showing up every day. Not just in work, but in their lives. These women exist the world over, in communities, in business and in families. And yet women are still so far behind their male counterparts globally. They are paid cents on the dollar (Gupta, Mortal, & Guo, 2018). They are unconsciously discriminated against every day. They are taught to live and survive in a man's world.

The discussion of gender equality has long been had – it is ongoing and important (Sandberg, 2013). But it's safe to say progress has stalled over the last 15 years (Deloitte, 2018). Somewhere along the line, progress started and there was a shift in women in the workforce and the world decided that was good enough. Women can be found in most areas of work now, from administration right up to CEO and board director but the climb to the top has been slow, and the lack of women in governance is glaringly obvious. There are pockets of shift, for example the public sector in New Zealand has gone hard and fast, with women now taking up 50.1% of governance positions (Stock, 2019). But that is not to say because one slice of society has achieved balance, the rest are hot on their heels.

The food and fibre sector is moving women upwards at a sluggish pace, with very little diversity and inclusion reporting occurring across many of the bigger unlisted corporates in the industry (Joshi, Son, & Roh, 2015). More men than women are in the food and fibre workforce, with women generally over-represented in entry level jobs, while older cohorts are very heavily weighted towards being men (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2021). The Food and Fibre sector has a long way to go in achieving any kind of gender equality, and while progress has slowed it remains as important as ever to not only have the conversation but start taking action. We can only talk about it for so long, before the statistics become words on a page and more and more corporates pay gender diversity lip service, without actually taking meaningful action.

With the workforce of the food and fibre sector being overwhelmingly male, it means many of the board members in the food and fibre sector are also overwhelmingly male. Diversity in the board room is becoming a topic many people are talking about – but again the action being taken is at a slow, some would say glacial pace (Joshi, Son, & Roh, 2015). A thriving food and fibre sector that is fit for future purpose is essential to New Zealand's economy, and in order to achieve this, the workforce must also be fit for purpose. Continuing on with boards that are 'Stale, Pale, and Male' can be detrimental to the diversity of thought that is so desired by many in governance, and also detrimental to the future of the sector and the organisations in it.

The ideal outcome for this research is to investigate how to start making progress again, and get our food and fibre women marching forward, armed with the best knowledge, training, and support to be the best future board members possible.

'Done is better than perfect' – Sheryl Sandberg

5 Aims and Objectives:

Focusing on the governance structures in New Zealand's Food and Fibre Sector, the aim of this report is to:

1. Investigate and understand the current state of governance in the food and fibre sector – what is being done currently and what do we know at the moment?
2. Identify the benefits of having gender diversity in governance roles.
3. Understand the options and define frameworks that can be applied to gaining gender diversity in governance roles.
4. Investigate ways to better the current diversity of governance boards.
5. Offer recommendations for achieving balanced gender diversity in governance in New Zealand's Food and Fibre sector.

For the purpose of this report, gender has been used throughout, and is inclusive of any person who identifies as a female, women, or uses she/her pronouns (regardless of sex assigned at birth). The New Zealand food and fibre sector is the main group of focus to the report and excludes the public sector (for the main part).

6 Methodology

The purpose of the research is to provide an analysis of the current state of what is being done to first understand and encourage diversity of gender in governance roles in the New Zealand food and fibre sector.

The literature review was used to investigate and understand key themes that were used to develop foundations, give context, and frameworks to better understand the broader view of what diversity in governance is, the benefits of having diversity governance, and to drive exploration of options for increasing gender diversity in the food and fibre sector in New Zealand. The literature review also identified gaps in the current research, including quantifying the benefits of having a diverse workforce in the broader context of work.

Much of the literature sourced from the Lincoln University Library site while based on governance, and women in the boardroom, was not specific to the Food and Fibre Sector in New Zealand. Statistics and data pertaining to the Food and Fibre sector were retrieved from the relevant organisations websites, and annual reports.

Following the literature review, eight key questions (*Appendix 1*) were developed and used when conducting semi-structured interviews. These interviews were completed across five weeks, with eight participants who are currently in senior leadership roles or governance roles in the food and fibre sector in New Zealand. Many of the people interviewed agreed to speak on the condition of anonymity. Some of the quotes pulled from these interviews and included in the analysis below are therefore not able to be attributed. Key themes were identified from these interviews and then summarised using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) linking them back to the literature. This thematic analysis also formed key ideas which aided the development of insights for discussion. Also provided were real world insight into the experiences, and thoughts of both the current state of women in governance in the food and fibre sector, and also helped to identify opportunity areas for the future.

A mind-map was created using *Miro* to distil key themes from the interviews, and this was used alongside using a thematic analysis process from Braun and Clarke (2006) that was implemented in the earlier literature review.

6.1 Limitations of Methodology

With any project such as this there are limitations within what is able to be done. This project was completed in a relatively short time frame. Ideally, with more time, following the interviews there would have been an opportunity to survey a small slice of the food and fibre cohort. Due to limited time and delayed responses from interview participants, the decision was made to not pursue the survey.

A few of the larger organisations who don't currently report on diversity were approached and asked if they would provide diversity data on condition of anonymity to this report for analysis. Unfortunately, none of the 3 organisations were willing to do so.

7 Literature review

7.1 Workforce Diversity

As leadership and work force models have changed and modernized over the last 100 years, there is a surgency of buzzwords that are used now to categorise what shapes a good team looks like, and one of those words is 'Diversity' (Kirby & Richard, 2000). To have a diverse workforce is to have an inclusive mix of people from different cultures, career stage, age, and gender (Kirby & Richard, 2000).

While there is increasing awareness of the value of diversifying the workforce, there is still a lack of genuine research which provides evidence of the benefit of having a diverse workforce in place. There is also a lack of research when it comes to the measured benefits of a having a diverse leadership team. In fact, a study done by Renee Adams, and Daniel Ferreira in 2007 demonstrated that efforts to achieve a perfectly gender balanced governance team can actually lead to negative performance in organisations where the shareholders have greater rights. This was backed up by Guillaume, Dawson, Otaye-Ebede, Woods, & West, 2017, noting that increased diversity in the workplace and lead to lower employee morale, more conflicts, and poorer job performance. These studies were all completed looking only at the information aspect, and further studies are needed that look further into the effect of diversity when things like thought processes, beliefs, and backgrounds are considered (Guillaume, et. al., 2017). Although minimal research has been done in understanding exact and quantifiable benefits of diverse workforces, there are some studies that have been done which point to the benefits of including diversity in the workforce (van Kippenburg et. Al. 2004).

Building out diversity in the workplace, not by trying to achieve the perfect 50/50 balance, but providing at least some diversity to start provides an organization many benefits (Palmer, 2006). Having a mix of perspectives, genders, and life experiences will improve workplace performance, however it has been proposed that this benefit is only observed up to a point. Beyond this the performance begins to decline suggesting it is because the colleagues become so unfamiliar with each other, it can damage working relationships and make it harder for people to work together, therefore reducing overall observed productivity (Palmer 2006).

A revolutionary study of the effects and benefits in the workforce was done in 2004 by van Knippenberg et. Al. They proposed the categorization-elaboration model (CEM) (*Figure 1*), which reconceptualizes and integrates information/decision making and social categorization perspectives on work-group diversity and performance. Further work, also done by van Kippenburg & van Ginkel in 2010 using the same model explored the benefits and negatives of maintaining a diverse workforce. Diverse work groups utilise diversity in terms if resource and information only to the extent that they are motivated and able to do so (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2010). The CEM offers a more complex understanding of the interactions between performance vs. diversity relationships, and how they dissect. It also explores the effects of implementing a diverse workforce and argues it may not always be a beneficial strategy to improving workplace performance (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2010). Van Kippenberg & van Ginkel suggest that more exploration is needed using the model to fully understand the benefits of managing a diverse workforce, and they note it needs to be progressive, and organisations should not let diversity become a liability.

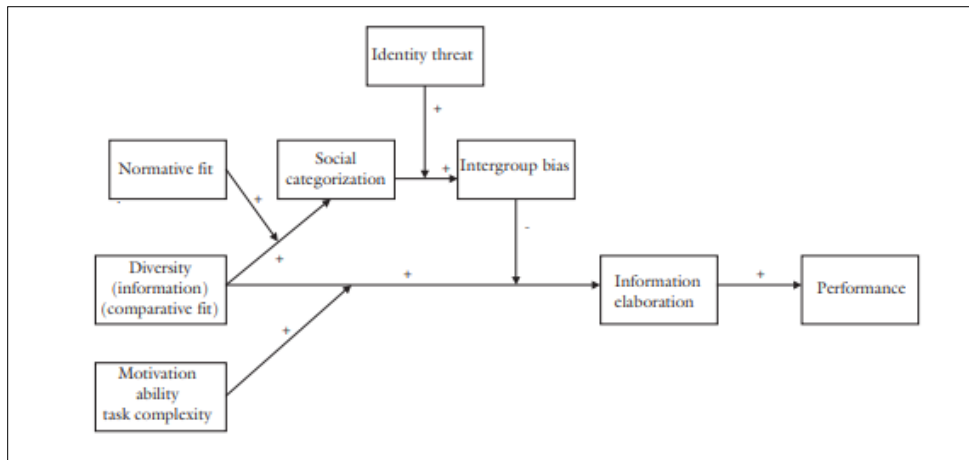


Figure 1: The categorization-Elaboration Model of work group diversity and group performance (van Kippenberg et al., 2004)

7.2 New Zealand Women Governance – Current state

One crucial dimension of diversity is gender diversity, which focuses on achieving a balanced representation of individuals of all genders in the workforce. It addresses the historical underrepresentation of women and other gender identities in various industries and leadership roles. Gender diversity initiatives aim to create equitable opportunities and ensure that all employees, regardless of gender, have equal access to career advancement and decision-making processes. (Adams & Ferreira, 2008). There is now more balanced gender diversity in lower tiers of many organisations, but women are missing from executive leadership and governance levels (Gallup & International Labour Organization, 2017).

Women represent roughly half of the world’s population, but that representation is not translated over to the workforce (Gallup & International Labour Organization, 2017). According to a report published by Gallup & International Labour Organisation in 2017, 50 per cent of working age women are participating in the workforce, compared with 76 per cent of men. Looking closer to home, as of June 2023 65.4 per cent of working age women participate in the workforce, compared with 74.4 per cent of men (Ministry for Women, 2023). In the food and fibre sector there is a wide gap between male and female workers with the workforce being reported as nearly two-thirds male (65%) (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2021). Having such a high proportion of males makes lifting the number of females challenging (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2021). Some sectors within food and fibre experience more variability in genders than others, for example forestry has a workforce that is 80% male (Figure 2).

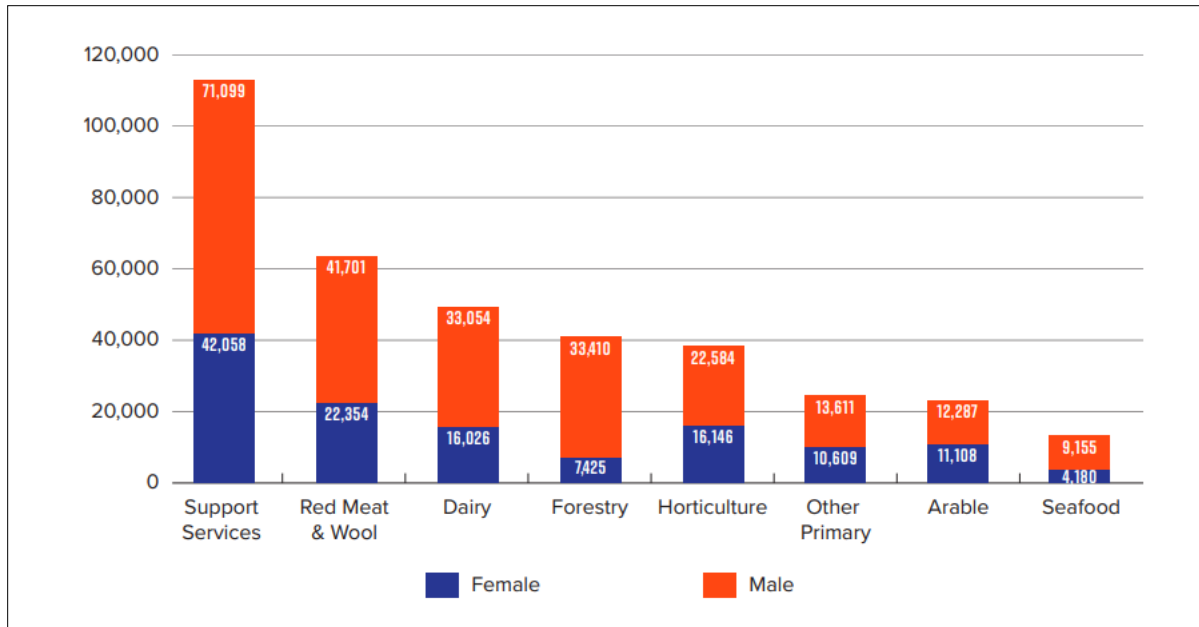


Figure 2: Gender representation for the New Zealand food and fibre workforce (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2021)

Looking across the workforce horizontally (women vs men) paints a grim enough picture of underutilisation, but the statistics really begin to skew when you look top to bottom at women in lower career levels jobs e.g., administrators vs. women in higher tier jobs e.g. executive leadership or directorships (Adams & Ferreira, 2008). It is true the world over the further up in career level, the less women are represented in these positions (Adams & Ferreira, 2008).

New Zealand experiences very similar statistics as the global representation of women, with most women in work nationally currently holding lower tier admin jobs (Deloitte, 2018). Overall, in New Zealand as at 2018 when Deloitte measured women on boards, 31.5% of board seats were held by women (Figure 3). The public sector is thriving, with women making up 50.1 percent of Public Sector Boards (Stock. 2019)

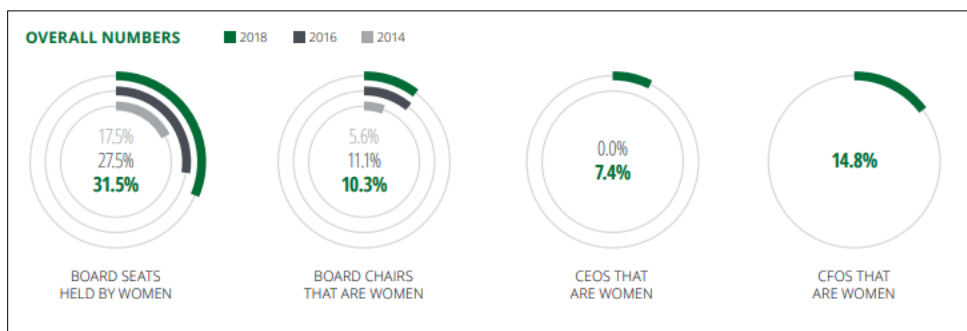


Figure 3: Data-driven change. Women in the boardroom. A global perspective. (Deloitte, 2018.)

Progress in New Zealand has been slow in the private sector. There is a lot of progress to be made to catch up to the public sector, with women making up only 25.9 per cent of boards (Harwarden & Greenwood, 2021). At the last measurement done by Stock in 2019, eleven companies (18%) listed still did not have a female director, while just seven had achieved gender equality (Stock, 2019). Many boards in the private sector in New Zealand do currently have 1 female director appointed but the attitude seems to be once

they are appointed the boards job is done and due to lack of resource and support things like the pandemic, in the agricultural sector economic downturns take priority over developing robust and measurable diversity and inclusion policies (Stock, 2019).

It is believed that a 'one and done' attitude is being adopted by some boards (and shareholders), where the organization lacks any real commitment to an equal gender cause and deflect it to the lowest possible level of action (Adams & Ferreira, 2008). This 'one and done' attitude represents the idea of female tokenism that is being seen across many governance boards in the New Zealand Food and Fibre Sector. It is a superficial nod to having a diverse board, rather than actually acknowledging and progressing inclusivity (Davis, 2019). In many of these environments where a woman finds herself the single representative on a board, they may find themselves in a situation where their voice is not genuinely listened to or respected (Roudaki, 2018).

7.3 Benefits of Gender Equality on Boards

McKinsey (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015) examined proprietary data sets for 366 public companies across a range of industries in Canada, Latin America, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They examined metrics such as financial results and the composition of top management and boards, and produced two key findings:

- Companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.
- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians (*Figure 4*).

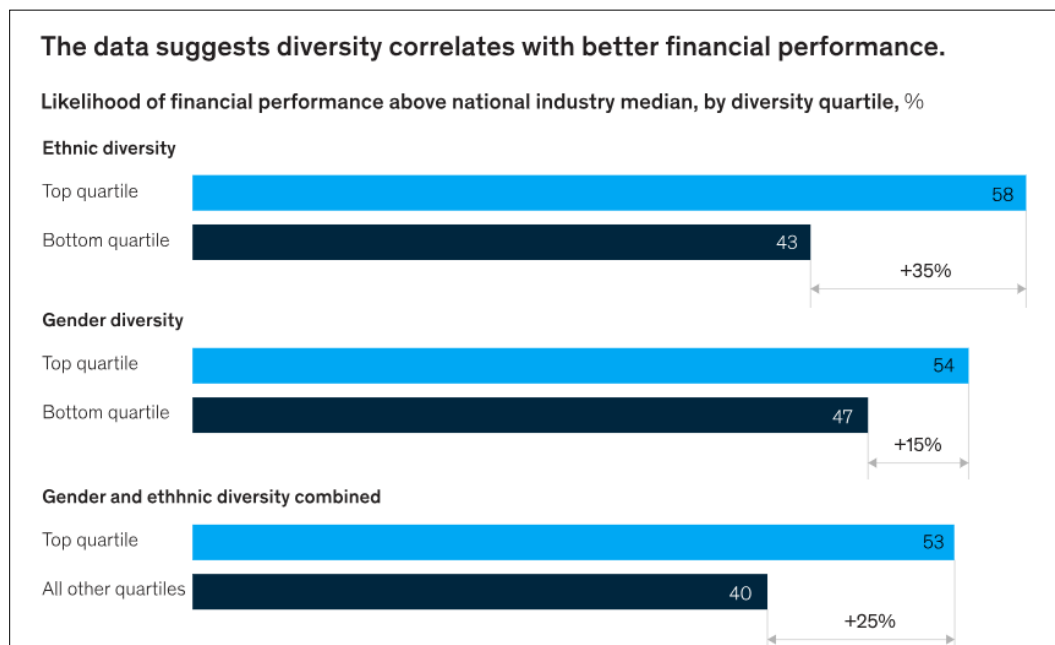


Figure 4: Financial Performance above national industry median (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015)

Deloitte New Zealand was commissioned by Westpac New Zealand to produce a report stemming from their Access Economics team in 2017. The report focused on the economic benefits of gender parity in leadership at all levels across businesses. Results from this showed that increasing the participation of women in the workforce and additionally by supporting them into more leadership and governance roles, the New Zealand economy could grow by up to NZ\$881 million (Deloitte, 2018).

Financial benefits aren't the only argument that is being increasingly important for implementing gender diversity in the boardroom. Having an equal gendered board means a better depth of discussion around the board table and allows a wider set of solutions when raising issues and concerns (Deloitte, 2018). Women allow a different perspective to be considered on boards, and most organisations in the food and fibre sector are repositioning for the future in order to better be able handle future challenges and opportunities by making sure they have a fighting fit organisation (Adams & Ferreira, 2008).

7.4 Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias is woven throughout society and is embedded in everyone. Left unacknowledged unconscious bias can lead to negative decisions and interactions (Davis, 2019). Leaders now more than ever need to first understand what their bias's may be, to then begin to address how they can practice what Davis dubs 'inclusive leadership'. She sets out four pillars of inclusive leadership:

- 1) Value diversity and work to foster a more inclusive workplace culture;
- 2) Develop new competencies, skill sets, and a new mindset for leading the workforce of today and the future;
- 3) Recognize that great talent comes in all shapes, sizes, colours, preferences, backgrounds, and ethnicities; and
- 4) Embrace the reality that inclusive leadership is becoming the new normal and a key lever for attracting, engaging, and retaining top talent and for achieving competitive advantage, high performance, and business success.

Gender bias impedes advancement opportunities and plays a role in the gender inequality seen throughout the corporate executive leadership system (Davis, 2019). Often this bias is unconscious (hence the name), with many hiring managers never realizing the effect it has on the decisions made (Thomas, 2018). The effect of unconscious bias on New Zealand boards has manifested as the persistent underrepresentation of women in directorship positions in New Zealand. The Women on Boards (Women on Boards New Zealand, 2021) highlighted the progress New Zealand has made with women in governance but notes that until unconscious bias is first acknowledged by current boards members, and then worked to reduce the effect it has on undermining female representation at a governance level it will remain a common place issue in the advancement of women into board roles (Harwarden & Greenwood, 2021).

Unconscious Bias also extends to assumptions about the way women behave, and the leadership styles they tend to use (Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006). This also has implications in assuming how they may also perform as board member and adds extra (and often unjustified) scrutiny than what might be experienced by their male counterparts (Davis, 2019). Women are positioned as more caring by society in general, and often in situations where women 'act like a man' they are then described as 'cut-throat' or 'smiling assassin' (Sandberg, 2013). As soon as women act in a way that society perceives as 'out of the norm' for a woman, negative connotations are applied.

7.5 Glass ceiling or leaking talent pipeline?

Talent management has long been defined as a practice that ensures an exclusive amount of high performing, high potential employees remain engaged and employed with an organization (Swales, Downs, & Orr, 2014) In more recent times, the idea of 'inclusive talent management' has become referenced more, although is still ill-defined (Swales, Downs, & Orr, 2014). An exclusive talent management begins to make more sense as it becomes more defined, because being able to keep a

broader number of people moving upwards positions an organisation in a way that means they can keep entrenched knowledge, and established relationships throughout the workforce (Swales, Downs, & Orr, 2014). Recruiting a diverse workforce requires intentional effort, so the ability to build and produce talent from an intentionally diverse pipeline is important (Augustin & Stumpf, 2018).

Keeping women in work and on a path to career levels higher than an administrator means careful management of women in the talent pipeline (Stewart, 2016). The path to leadership and governance isn't built for women (Stewart, 2016). Taking time off for babies, means taking time off work, and time off a career. These 'gaps' in a career, however long, can mean women are viewed as behind in experience and behind in career development. Further to that when women return to work, they are often looking for more part time roles, so they are able to also still fulfil their duty as fulltime family carer (Astin & Leland, 1991).

A common setback is the pipeline into executive roles and therefore governance roles is not made for women, and this means sometimes the only identifiable people to coming through are men (Sandberg, 2013). With a shortage of female talent into senior and executive leadership, this truncates the pipeline for women into boardrooms (Women on Boards, 2021). There are some arguments for benefits of 'blind hiring' where lists of applicants are prepared by a third party, and any identifying markers indicating gender (or other diversity markers) are removed from the applications (Astin & Leland, 1991). Studies show in general where any indicating markers about gender (and other diversity metrics) are removed from applications, women fare significantly better than if the process wasn't blind. There are many thoughts as to why, but the main one links back to unconscious bias in hiring managers.

Having a diverse board encourages constructive and challenging dialogue which is key to the effective functioning of any board (Stewart, 2016). Allowing equal access to the board room and governance roles also goes a long way, not only to giving women access to the benefits of paid work, but it also allows women to make important contribution to high level decision making made in organizations (Fine, Sojo, & Lawford-Smith, 2020).

7.6 Pay Gap

Pay gap amounts have debated the world over in the last 50 years, and while the global gap amount is not consistently agreed on, most recent studies estimate that globally women earn 77 cents to every male's \$1 (Gupta, Mortal, & Guo, 2018). A recent analysis on the gender pay gap revealed that, when averaged over time, working women receive significantly lower rewards than men in comparable jobs (Joshi, Son, & Roh, 2015). This analysis also found that while men and women may be evaluated similarly in terms of performance, the reward benefits were 14 times larger for men than women.

Closer to home, the statistics are not better, with women in New Zealand receiving on average 9.5% less than their male counterparts (Houpapa, 2021). Often women are in lower tier, or entrant level jobs, and this is true in the New Zealand Food and Fibre sector (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2021). With this comes a disparity between what women are worth, and what women are paid. Sheryl Sandberg (2013) told an anecdote where a woman was told that upon receiving a promotion, the male hiring manager told the new employee he was stoked because he was getting 'the same experience, but for cheaper'. Unfortunately, this hasn't gone away. Women often struggle to speak up for themselves, and negotiate effectively for a higher salary (Gupta, Mortal, & Guo, 2018). Knowing that a male in the same role is being paid (in New Zealand) 6% on average more is disheartening for many women (Deloitte, 2018).

There are many who argue the pay gap is generally because women in middle management or above get paid cents on the dollar (in most cases) because they have taken time away from their careers to start a

family, and so their experience is less than the men in the same roles who continued to work through those 1-3 (or more) years (Joshi, Son, & Roh, 2015).

7.7 Maslow's Hierarchy of Need

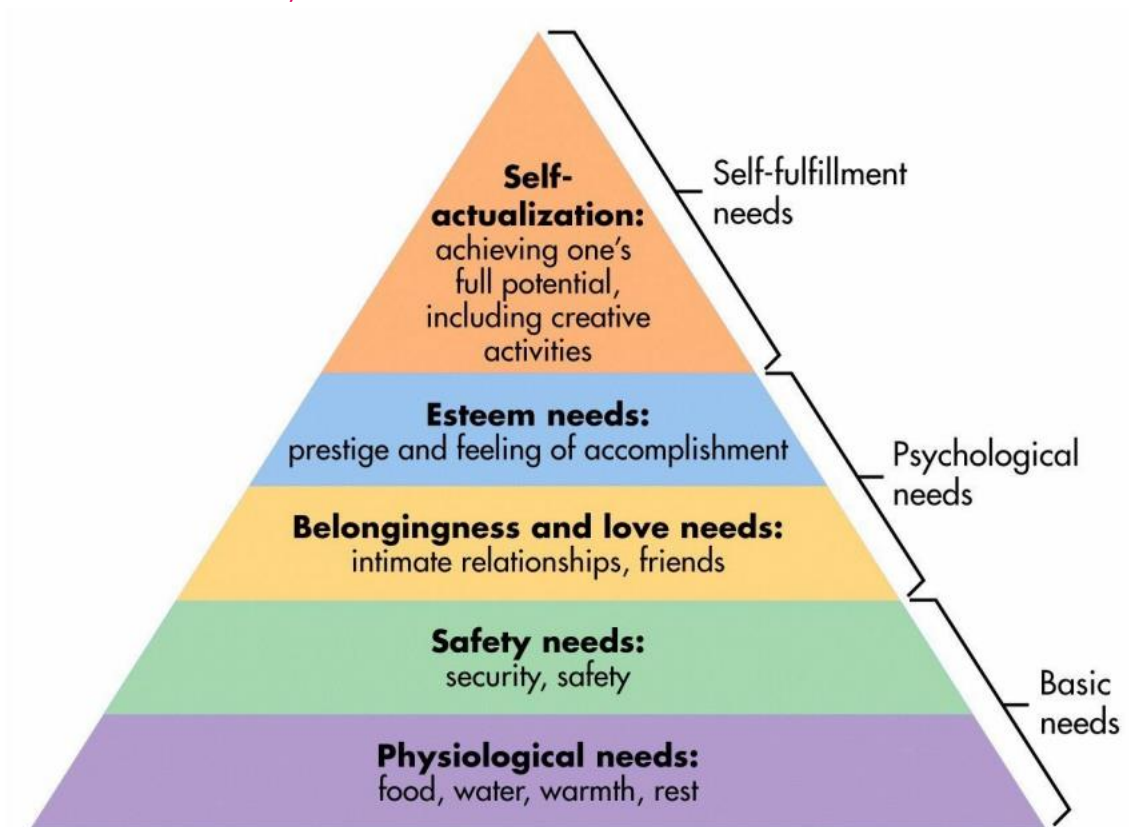


Figure 5: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)

Maslow (1943) proposed that human beings have a set of needs, that can be divided in a five-stage model to show the hierarchal nature of these needs and how they can be divided into different categories:

- **Basic Needs:** According to Maslow, the most essential human needs are the ones that keep us alive, like food, water, shelter and air. Without this basic level of survival, a person can't be expected to do much in the way of higher thinking or achievement.
- **Safety Needs:** With basic needs fulfilled, the next level of needs moves to safety. These are things like financial security, freedom from fear, stable health and anything that can lend our day-to-day lives a level of predictability and security.
- **Belongness and love needs:** Once basic survival and a modicum of security are established, human needs change a little bit. The third level of the hierarchy includes concepts like friendship, community, love, shared experiences and anything that gives humans a sense of belonging among themselves.
- **Esteem needs:** The top of Maslow's Hierarchy — the ultimate condition of human opportunity — has to do with self-actualization. But first, humans must fulfill needs of esteem. Esteem, in this sense, refers to a person's sense of self and their sense of self in relation to others. This level

includes things like dignity, personal achievement and maybe even a sense of prestige in a certain area.

- **Self-actualisations:** Finally, once a person has all they need to survive, function, and understand their position in the world and their community, they can enter the final portion of the hierarchy. Self-actualization can mean many things, but many of the examples center around a desire to explore, create or expand ones skills. Concepts like beauty, aesthetics and discovery translate into real-world examples like art, learning a new language, refining one's talents and becoming the best one can be.

This model is now widely used due to the ability to apply this model to many different areas of humanity. Using Maslow's hierarchy of need in the context of women in governance in food and fibre allows the ability to see where having a fulfilling job for women and also allows them to fulfil the tiers in Maslow's hierarchy.

By recognizing and addressing the various needs outlined in Maslow's Hierarchy, organizations can create an environment where women in governance can thrive, fostering both their personal and professional development. This, in turn, contributes to more effective and diverse leadership within the organization.

7.8 Case Studies

The below case studies were chosen as examples of large organisations in New Zealand (With the exception of the inclusion of Norway) that are leading the way when it comes to identifying, reporting and being accountable for maintaining a diverse workforce and board.

7.8.1 Spark New Zealand

Spark New Zealand considers itself one of the leading employers in New Zealand and has been working on their diversity and inclusion policy in order to provide their customers the most value. Sparks ambition is to achieve a 40:40:20 representation companywide (described by Spark as 40% men, 40% women, and 20% any gender). Currently they are reporting overall across the workforce, their female representation at 37%. Further breakdowns are as follows: females in the wider leadership group (senior leaders outside of the board and leadership squad) is 47%. The board is 43% female and 57% male, with three female directors (including the CEO) and four male directors. The leadership squad has a 60% female and 40% male split.

Spark has worked closely with Champions for Change, a New Zealand based organisation, to help accelerate change in diversity and inclusivity in Spark, but also wider across the New Zealand business landscape. As well as celebrating women in the workplace they are working on reporting the ethnicity make up of their workforce (although out of scope for this research report).

Spark is now considered one of the companies at the forefront of maintaining an inclusive workforce. The diversity and inclusion policy includes measurable objectives, and names responsibilities for achieving the diversity and inclusion measure put in place by the board (Spark, 2022).

7.8.2 Fonterra

Fonterra is a global dairy nutrition co-operative owned by farmers and their families, united by a fundamental belief in the power of dairy to make a difference (Fonterra, n.d).

Looking among the rural sector, Fonterra have been leading change in the diversity and inclusion space. Noting that if they want to achieve their strategic goals, then they must 'commit to maintaining a diverse workforce'.

*“If the CEO and board are vocal about gender equality, then others will listen” - Haylee Putaranui
Fonterra’s Head of Diversity and Inclusion*

Currently they are reporting female representation in leadership 34.8% (the board currently is four women of 11 board members – slightly above the leadership group at 36.3%), and a gender pay gap of 5.1% on a median basis compared to the national average of 9.2%.

Fonterra have implemented five ‘Diversity & Inclusion Commitments’ in order to measure the progress of their Diversity and Inclusion. These five commitments are as follows (retrieved from Fonterra’s website:

- **Workplace Flexibility**
 - ‘We encourage and support our people when they need to work from different locations, or at different times. We welcome talking to you about your flexibility needs and understand these may change.’
- **Equal opportunities**
 - Fonterra applies the principles of equal opportunity and equity to all recruitment and employment processes. We work to sustain an environment respectful of difference free from harassment and discrimination.
- **Gender Pay**
 - Our approach is that no unexplainable gender pay gap exists for the same job. For waged employees, this is embedded in our collective employment agreements. For salaried, we use a range of independent pay market data
- **Hiring Locally**
 - By hiring and developing local talent, we contribute toward the shared success of Fonterra and the countries where we operate. For our main locations, locals comprise a minimum of two-thirds of the team.
- **Human Rights**
 - Fonterra’s approach prioritises the rights and protections of our employees around the world. In 2014 we adopted ISO26000* and continue to adhere and build on the principles of a socially responsible organisation.

** ISO 26000 is defined as the international standard developed to help organizations effectively assess and address social responsibilities that are relevant and significant to their mission and vision; operations and processes; customers, employees, communities, and other stakeholders; and environmental impact. (ASQ, n.d.)*

Fonterra are regularly assessing and reviewing their policies and identifying opportunity areas for increasing the diversity and inclusion in their workforce through all levels. The people team work closely with hiring managers to ensure a gender lens is applied in recruitment and also pay. Fonterra has acknowledged that these things may be small, but they have a ‘big impact’ on Fonterra’s people and customers.

7.8.3 Norway

Norway is an interesting case of mandated gender quotas on governance boards. In 2005, the state introduced a mandatory 40% gender quota on all boards of listed companies. This is widely recognized as the beginning of the push internationally for getting women into the board room (Casey, Skibnes, & Pringle, 2010). They are now making the case to mandate that same quota for unlisted (private)

companies. The implementation of the policy led to a strong (and mandated) increase in women on boards in Norway, from 5% in 2003, to 40% in 2008 when the policy was fully implemented (Casey, Skibnes, & Pringle, 2010). Norway has a high participation of women in work, with a 9% difference between women's and men's participation (Casey, Skibnes, & Pringle, 2010).

At the time the mandate was proposed, many concerns were raised. The strongest one that came through was where the country would find women to fill the position. There was huge concern that there were simply not enough women trained at the required level to take positions on the boards. However, in the case of Norway mandated gender quotas for corporate boards have proven that change is possible and have revealed capable women for these roles, even in the face of scepticism about their existence.

8 Analysis

The following section reports and analyses the findings from the semi-structured interviews. Using the mind map created from *Miro* (Figure 6), three key themes and nine insights were distilled and used to organise the analysis (Figure 7).

8.1 Mind Maps



Figure 6: Mind Map from Miro created from the interview results showing interlinking themes.

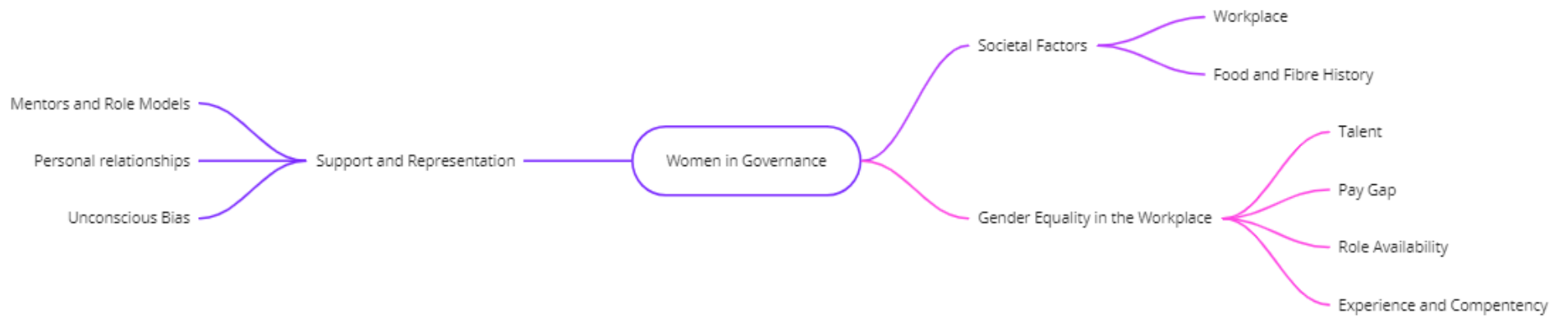


Figure 7: Mind Map from Miro showing the grouping of the insights into three key themes – Societal factors, Gender equality in the workplace, and Support and representation.

8.2 Societal Factors

8.2.1 Workplace Culture

Workplace culture is the shared values, behaviours, and attitudes of the people working for that business. (Fine, Sojo, & Lawford-Smith, 2020). Many interviewees commented that in order to progress forward with increased diversity, work needs to be done to define inclusive and diverse workplace culture. Each business should have defined strategic goals, and values to achieve a balance of genders that is reflective of the community it operates in. Fonterra repeatedly brought up as a leader in food and fibre as a north star for achieving diversity throughout the organisation.

“In order for us to even begin addressing the imbalance, the guys at the top have to acknowledge it exists, otherwise we might as well continue banging our heads against a wall”.

Without establishing a well-rounded and inclusive culture, there is a risk that people will either not stay on the business, or new people are less likely to want to seek opportunities to join. This is often because they do not feel comfortable or supported in their work and themselves, so they are unlikely to thrive in an uncomfortable environment. Workplace culture has a direct impact on productivity and therefore profitability, and the ability for a business to achieve defined goals.

Women tend to seek workplaces where they are able to have a work life that complements the rest of their life balance. They want to be able to be the best contributor to the family that they can be and spend time with their family, while they still have the energy.

8.2.2 Food and Fibre Gender Roles

Women in general are encouraged by society to pursue marriage, family, and fulfilment outside of a career, or job goals, whereas men are encouraged to leave raising children to women and to pursue ambitious career goals to ‘provide’ for their family (Sandberg, 2013). While this is starting to shift globally, the New Zealand food and fibre sector lags behind with progress. Most people in New Zealand will know of a farming family that fits the historical gender roles. That is not to say there is not any progress being made. New Zealand’s food and fibre sector is vibrant, with a diverse range of people working within the sector, many of them passionate and excited about the future New Zealand’s largest export sector. However, there is progress needed to get the governance boards of the organisations and businesses that represent the sector to reflect the diversity of the community beneath them. During interviews, many people could name a few organisations that came to mind that were ahead in terms of gender diversity. While the sector has started to see some shift in women’s influence, senior leadership and governance has been slower to reflect the same change. In some part it will likely always be imbalanced, as noted in many of the interviews and the literature, the sector should be chasing down progress, and not perfection.

“We need women to realise they a partner in the business, not just the admin lady”.

Progress is being made in many businesses in terms of incentives that support women through their careers while balancing their family life. Initiatives such as balanced parental leave, and fair pay policies, are being implemented by many companies with companies like Fonterra leading the charge and paving way for others to follow. Many of the companies discussed in the interviews had published diversity and inclusion strategies for all levels of the organisations, and many had also included measurable metrics, to ensure ongoing accountability. A few of the people highlighted that although these organisations are ahead, they are not the norm yet and it isn’t the companies that are able to be named as progressive that

should be in the spotlight, the focus needed to now shift to be on the ones that are lagging behind. Work needs to be done with the whole sector to begin to understand why these organisations are so far behind, and why progress is slow or stagnant.

8.3 Support and Representation

8.3.1 Mentoring and Role Models

Mentoring is not a new concept. Men have been doing it for decades, but women are slow to lead the charge when it comes to mentoring. It was noted with the rise of women in higher level leadership and governance roles in New Zealand and in the food and fibre sector, it has meant there are now more women who are in a position to enable the next generation of women. Several key organisations in the industry have now had a female CEO, and there are a few chair people now that are female. The ability for the up-and-coming generation to see these women in high-level positions and see that women can have influence in decision making has allowed confidence to grow in the lower levels and empower some women to take similar tracks. Also discussed earlier in the literature review, the implementation of inclusive talent management in the sector has made it easier for women to continue up the career levels.

“We need people like you to advance up the levels, and I’m not talking in 20 years or even 10. We need you there in 5.”

This need for role models, and mentors needs to be carefully balanced. A concern highlighted in several discussions throughout the exploration of this topic in interviews highlighted that there are several constraints as to why people may not be able to give their time to being a mentor. These included time pressure, where especially women who hold governance positions already have a full plate when it comes to professional settings, they often feel like they can’t do a mentorship position justice, and they also tend to worry about giving good value to their mentee. Also spoken about was that men need to help women, a ‘women helping women’ culture cannot be relied on as a sustainable way forward.

“There are more men in elevated governance positions than women, and if the end goal is to move women up in the levels, then we need more men on board with that because yes we (women) can do it, but we can’t do it alone”

8.3.2 Personal Relationships

Many interviews commented on the need to network and make connections wherever possible. This is for a number of reasons, one which is highlighted by Sheryl Sandberg, but was also commented on by many interviewed. Women must position themselves as ‘likeable’ and ‘nice’ (Sandberg, 2013). This is helped by networking and building personal connections. Men do not need to rely so much on being likeable, because they are generally hired based on potential (Sandberg, 2013). Women have to work much harder at being trusted than men, and because of this extra work, many of the experiences of the women interviewed commented that because it was harder it often meant less women try.

Many of the interviews made the comment about the ‘Boys club’ that the rural sector has been experiencing in prior years, there’s a thought pattern that amongst the governance structures ‘it’s not what you know, it’s who you know’. The food and fibre sector, and also rural New Zealand are still a relatively small community. And because these highly elevated positions carry a lot of acknowledged risk (and certainly a lot of reward) people in the sector look to place people they trust in these positions. Building trust is not something that can be done by presenting the community concerned with a well put

together CV. It needs to be done over a number of years, by being out and about. The community still favours face to face communication above all other forms, so in order to build that trust and get buy in from the people who matter when governance positions become available it is important to get in front of them. The natural tendencies of women to not want to be in the spotlight means this job is often done by men. A few of the women interviewed explained how they had to learn how to be comfortable being in the spotlight, and that in the future, the training and support given to future female leaders needs to include specific support to enable women to be comfortable leading from the front.

8.3.3 Unconscious Bias

This topic was front of mind for a lot of the people interviewed, with two thirds of them recounting stories of when other people's unconscious bias impacted on them. Because everyone has it, and it can often go unchecked, it has a large impact on hiring decisions and also role decisions. One person recounted her first project that she undertook with a board (as not a board member). She was the only women on the project and found herself naturally taking over the admin of the project, even though many of the tasks were not her jobs to do. She found herself to be the one organising the meetings, and taking notes without generally being asked, it was just the natural assumption of gender roles. She found no one questioned it until she made a conscious decision to stop and see what happened. She commented that she found the men around her just assumed she would be the one to do and she found herself just doing it. This, she said, was a great example of unconscious bias from everyone around the table.

This perspective was not unique from this one interview. 66% of those interviewed, and not just women had experienced unconscious bias in some form. As discussed in the literature review it can be very damaging but also limiting to a company's talent attraction, because now when people are looking for career opportunities, they are beginning to take notice of how companies address these things. They are also looking at the board and the profile of them as a guide on how much the company values diversity. When women are in a workplace where they are outnumbered, they often find themselves being expected (or even unconsciously) falling back into assumed gender roles. They also find it uncomfortable existing in a workplace with no allies. Having to constantly fight and advocate for yourself, by yourself can have a large impact on women. One of the women interviewed spoke about being the only woman on a board and the complications that come with that. While she is well respected, there was settling in period where her experience of being listened to and taken seriously was a struggle. For so long the board had only had white men, so it was so foreign to consider such a different point of view that getting traction for this particular woman was a bit of struggle to begin.

"They recommended me for the role, so they knew I was a woman. But as soon as we got in the first meeting, I think they forgot I was a director and thought I was the tea lady"

8.4 Gender Equality in the Workplace

8.4.1 Role Availability

Another strong theme that came through from 80% of the interviews was the availability of roles for women. Many governance positions aren't actually advertised, the tendency is for the current board to either recruit themselves or ask a third party to compile a list of eligible candidates. This means they aren't advertised (broadly speaking, there was the acknowledgement that some are advertised) and often candidates are shoulder tapped based on their skills, previous experience and deemed fit for the role. While this does mean most of the time the right candidate is selected, it also means the candidate selected is someone who the current board members align with the most. As noted in the literature review, and also pulled out by many interviewed everyone has some level of unconscious bias so likely in a

lot of these selection processes the selection committee's unconscious bias often has a part to play in choosing the candidates (and even potential the candidate list). Frustration was generally described by the people interviewed who were at the mercy of this hiring method previously, and many noted their concern with this selection method. Boards who either don't have gender diversity or some type of unconscious bias training, are unlikely to practice more inclusive candidates' selection, so rather than having a diverse range of people around the table the board can be too closely aligned in thought pattern. And as discussed previously, the less diverse a board is, the less capability they have to have successful outcomes when it comes to challenges and issue solving.

"It's hard to get your foot in the door if the door isn't open".

8.4.2 Pay Gap

Five of the eight interviewees highlighted the pay disparity between men and women. Highlighted in the literature review above, progress to close the gap is happening but slow. Many of the interviews commented that one reason there is still a pay gap is because women tend to take part time work, and therefore lesser responsibility, so naturally the pay will be less. Women are seeking more flexible work, in order to better serve themselves and their families. Governance does tend to have less contact hours, and often companies have standardised pay grades for board members, so gender pay gaps are smaller at governance level. However, although board positions can offer more flexible hours, it can also mean extended travel, and heightened risk which is not appealing to those women looking for more family time.

Women also tend to negotiate significantly less than men, which creates its own pay disparity. An explanation suggested for this was because women must remain likeable, and many women worry that by playing hard to get they will lose the initial offer, and it might be a while before another one comes along. As part of managing the talent pipeline, which is another important insight in this research, there is a need to support women to learn to advocate for themselves and teach effective negotiation skills.

"No wonder women don't negotiate as much as men. It's like walking through a minefield backwards, with heels on"- Sheryl Sandberg, 2013

Many companies in the New Zealand food and fibre sector do not publicly report on pay gap. In many interviews where the people worked for a corporate, or on a board for a corporate often it was reported that the relevant company was 'working toward' reporting in the future, but right now there wasn't anything meaningful happening. When asked why they thought that hadn't happened yet, the theme was because the actual statistics were disappointing, or different than the board imagined they'd be, and so often these companies report that they 'are not yet ready' to report on their diversity and inclusion, or their pay gap because it would reflect them badly. Many people acknowledged this was disappointing and of the people whose companies didn't report did reflect that there was work underway to address this but could not say how long it would take to reach a resolution.

"If they don't say anything about it, then the board don't have to admit they are part of the problem".

8.4.3 Experience and Competency

Experience and competency came up in all eight of the interviews, with many noting that women, while tending to be risk averse which doesn't naturally suit them to leadership and governance, they also often won't apply to jobs or roles if they feel like they don't have the necessary experience or exact skills needed. This was not only to their detriment, but also the wider food and fibre industry because these women often do have the skills, and while they might not tick all the boxes, they have the ability to learn

and upskill. This theme when spoken about often then linked into confidence of women and women being supported into further development (which then also links into other themes identified using the thematic analysis of talent management and personal relationships).

Many of the people interviewed had children, and there was a mix of experiences when it came to returning to work after parental leave. Five of the women interviewed returned to work within three months of giving birth, and all of them commented it was made possible by having a strong support network around them, whether it was a partner who shared the family life load, or parents or parents in law who were able to assist with childcare. There was a strong feeling of guilt amongst many of the women who had returned to work within six months, and even from one person interviewed who took two years out after having multiple children expressed a feeling of guilt when she returned to the work force. Many women commented the return to work was made possible by a supportive employer. Having flexible working conditions, including hours, and working from home. Of the men interviewed, all returned to work within two weeks of their partner giving birth and resumed their jobs as normal.

Many of the women in governance roles that were interviewed commented they were 'lucky' to have gotten a role at one point or another in their career. This work 'luck' came up a lot when asked to describe how they got to where they were in their career (at least once for each woman, 68% of the interviewees used the word luck more than once). It was noted this was often the preferred term used to describe opportunities that stood out to them throughout their careers. On less frequent occasions the women would describe getting these opportunities through hard work or because they deserved the recognition of promotion. One woman even commented if it weren't for her husband, she wouldn't have taken a pivotal role in her career, because she didn't think she was the perfect fit. She then followed this up with saying she was 'lucky' to have landed the role after a very brutal hiring process.

8.4.4 Talent Management

The food and fibre and sector are experiencing a shortage of workers across the board, so it is a bit of a difficult sell at the moment convincing organisations that talent development in women specifically needs to be accelerated beyond that of anyone else in the industry. Many companies are focusing on talent attraction as a priority. It was highlighted in many interviews that in order for the sector to thrive, having robust and diverse leaders at the helm is in the sectors best interests, and at current state the slow progress in measurable and accountability diversity metrics is not setting the sector in good stead for the future. Many people interviewed could identify a handful of organisations that are targeting women's development but found it just as easy to identify twice as many organisations who are making no or little progress.

There are several organisations that have been created over the years targeting women in the food and fibre sector to develop the future female leaders. These organisations are invaluable and help create a space for future women to develop professionally. A theme among participants was the need for these women forward organisations to partner with other organisations to keep the conversation going around gender diversity in the mainstream rural sector. It is no longer enough to celebrate when a woman gets appointed to the board, or C suite position. There is a need to make sure the sector is consistently placing women at the forefront and one way to get that done is to develop them intentionally.

9 Discussion

9.1 Value of Women

80% of the interviews highlighted why we need women in our board rooms and on our senior leadership teams in the food and fibre sector. Women think fundamentally differently to men (and other genders), and to continue down the path the rural sector has been going down, with board members who have very similar thought patterns and backgrounds, makes it difficult to provide a different view on issues that arise and need solving.

As part of the wider Kellogg Rural Leader's journey, there have been many informal conversations about this report, as well as reviewing available literature and the interviews completed. Women face challenges in life and certainly in the workplace broadly, two of the male interviewees commented they don't think there is still any real barriers to women rising into leaderships positions or governance positions, and this sentiment was echoed when four of the women interviewed commented they felt those around them on boards and leadership groups felt enough had been done. Two of the people spoken to in conversation have mentioned they 'don't see' gender, they are after 'diversity of thought' in their teams, rather than an equal or allocated number of specific genders. This has then led to an interesting tension between whether gender should be acknowledged, or 'seen', and why it is important to acknowledge women in the workplace. In a world trying to move away from labels and attempting to be politically correct, this has been incredibly detrimental to women's progression and development. Now more than ever women should be leaning and getting the job because she is experience, because she has potential and because she is a woman.

The food and fibre sector in New Zealand has been experiencing a tough few years, with COVID-19 and a difficult economic and environmental climate. Many organisations have been facing challenges and have been operating in survival mode. This has left little time and money for organisations to consider implementing robust and measurable diversity metrics that make them accountable to people outside of their organisations. With companies like Fonterra beginning to lead the charge, there is some work being done (Fonterra, n.d), but there is a large chunk of big industry players still with glaring gaps where their diversity and inclusion policies should be. It is hard to make progress when companies make it okay to not do anything about it, by not prioritizing their women and refusing to acknowledge and report on their diverse (or not so diverse) workforce they are partaking in hindering the very progress women need to continue closing the gap on statistics in diverse governance.

Throughout the research the justification for getting women into governance board has been positioned as proving the economic benefits for business, and how and why having gender diversity in governance structures will allow companies to thrive. A bit of a gap identified through the research has been the benefit to individuals. Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (*Figure 5*) having a stable and secure job, that allows women to fulfil their basic needs of having access to food, water, warmth etc. is the most important tier. Further than that, Maslow's top tier describes 'Self Actualization'. This is 'achieving one's full potential'. Depending on what the goal is for any given individual, women may be able to fulfil this need with a governance position. Benefits to individual women are not talked about enough when discussing the need for gender diversity in governance.

9.2 Future Forward

The need for developing the pipeline and getting women into a position where they are trained and educated to take on higher roles was an important recurring theme that was highlighted in both the literature review and interviews. In order to develop our women to be future leaders we need to have them in a supported position to do so. However, this approach places the onus on women to be the ones to get themselves there, and while there needs to be an element of personal responsibility, it can't be done without supporting and challenging the mindset of the men who currently occupy the high-level roles. This was a surprising discovery throughout the research, as it was considered as part of the original hypothesis. Without the support and buy in from these men (and the few women who have managed to get there) there will continue to be stagnated progress. Likely part of the reason the food and fibre sector has stagnated is partly caused by the lack of continuing development at the top, as well as stagnated support from the bottom. Learning is forever, and while energy has been (probably rightly) focused on the pipeline of women (and people) coming up in the sector, some attention could pivot upwards and on to people who are established in current governance roles to help them to recognise the need for diversity in people and provide unconscious bias training.

Using Lewin's 3 stage model of change (*Figure 8*), it can be seen that significant change will not happen in a linear progression (Lewin, 1942). Using this framework will be useful for organisations that are not currently doing any work on diversity and inclusion or have found that their progress may have given way to project deemed as more important in the prioritisation process. It can be applied in many circumstances and used to address some of the challenges identified throughout this research. Potentially relevant uses to gender diversity in governance include changing an organisational culture or changing the behaviour and skills of individuals or teams. It is worth noting that this is more of a project-based framework, and it is cyclical in nature, so the steps can be repeated as require beginning with small changes and revolutionising to big change.

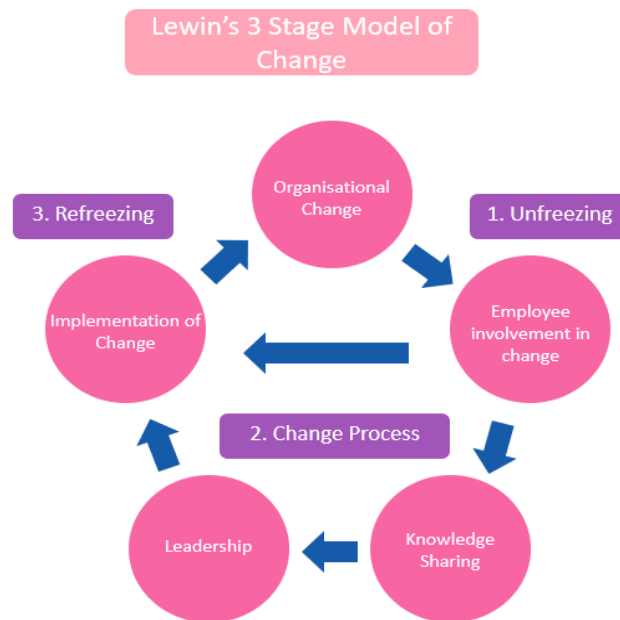


Figure 8: Lewin's 3 Stage Model of Change (Adapted from Lewin, 1945).

Another framework that will help to drive wider change in the industry is the use of Theory of Change model derived from work done by Andrew Weiss in 1995 (*Figure 9*). During the interviews, and in research, it was highlighted the need for change at all levels, and as seen in *Figure 9* the relativity of power each 'level' holds in terms of making change. Much the same as Lewins 3 stage model of change, Weiss' theory of change denotes that change is not linear and each level holds relative power that can make effective and widespread change difficult to achieve. This framework is useful when considering what needs to happen at each level in order to achieve true gender diversity in governance. *Figure 9* also suggests some interventions distilled from the research in this project that can be applied at each level to address the lack of diversity in governance in New Zealand's food and fibre sector.

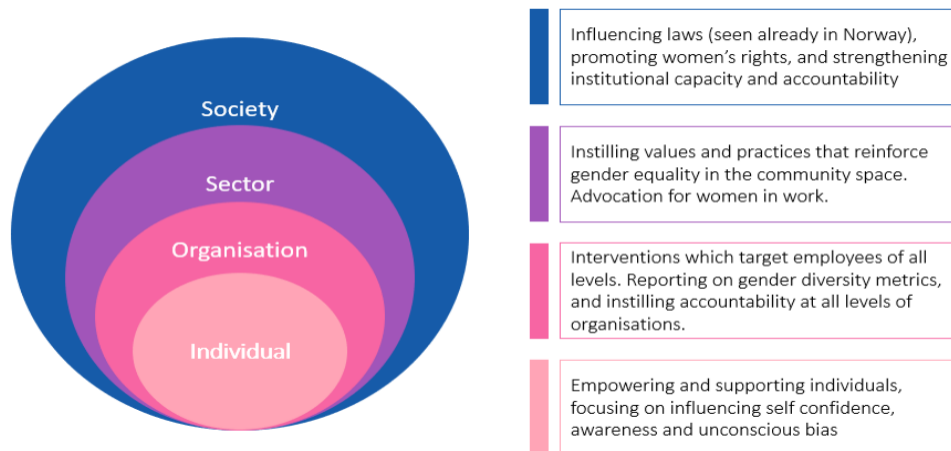


Figure 9: Theory of Change Model (adapted from Weiss, 1995)

9.3 Unintended Consequences & Risks

Achieving gender diversity on boards (while likely a long way off) will likely have some unintended consequences on the food and fibre sector, and the women within the sector. While the conversation around achieving gender diversity is often positive, there should consideration taken for the negatives associated with this.

Women already feel pressure to return quickly to work, whether that be financial pressure, or career pressure. Some women simply don't want to return to work at all following starting a family. Proposals to shorten the pipeline will place increased pressure on these women, as they further up in an organisation they are, the more likely they feel they are needed to return to work. An example of this is if a woman is in a lower tier career level – e.g. an administrator – these are much easier roles to backfill or hire for a fixed term than if a woman was to leave a C suite level job. A CEO is much more difficult to replace for a short term. Now that we are seeing women in these elevated careers, if they decide to take time out for family reasons, there is a much greater pressure to return often faster than desired.

There is also a concern that is with an increase the need for female director (based on a hypothesis where gender quotas are implemented at a government level similar to what has been implemented in Norway) women will feel an increased pressure for demand for them to serve on boards. This increased demand may see women who do not necessarily want to be on boards developed and recommended for roles that they have no desire to hold in the first place. It increases the possibility women will be further

undermined by raising questions about their motivation and commitment to serve on boards or whether it becomes a situation of forced compliance (Casey, Skibnes, & Pringle, 2010).

Along with these unintended consequences there are also associated risks as the societal changes take effect. As the world moves from gender ascriptions in favour of assumed gender-neutrality this becomes reflected in the workplace. However, when the majority of the governance positions are filled by males, there is increased invisible pressure for women to keep up with the majority in terms of performance metrics as directors are now assumed to be non-descript in gender. So, the pressure to 'manage like the other men' is intensified and convention which are inherently masculine in design are now applied to the majority. This is where the prior discussed danger of 'not seeing gender' can become harmful to the women of the future.

10 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to analyse the current state of women in governance roles in food and fibre, and to investigate why we are still experiencing a lack of women in governance, even with so many support organisations in place specifically for women and all of the noise being made to develop women in the industry. The aim of the report was to continue the conversation within the food and fibre sector and to highlight some opportunities and recommendations for women and organisations looking to upskill and maximise women talents in governance across the New Zealand food and fibre sector. While progress has been made in prior years, recently it has slowed and even stagnated in some parts of the industry.

There is still a long way to go in the fight for gender equality and equity across the board, but certainly in governance in the food and fibre sector. There is no doubt that there are many champions of change in the New Zealand food and fibre sector, and there are also many examples of organisations and women making change, and empowering women to fulfil their aspirations. Certainly, when we look to the public sector in New Zealand, it presents a good case for success but the New Zealand food and fibre sector lags far behind, and progress has showed signs of slowing in recent years.

The interviews highlighted examples of passionate people in the sector and also outside of it who are making change in their lives and paths where they can, but they recognised we need a broader approach including applying training to all career levels. Insights from the interviews provided some real-world context into the future of women in the food and fibre sector and highlighted some opportunities areas where gains can be made.

The identified frameworks from the discussion provides guidance for real change in the sector however small it may start. To begin progress again the New Zealand food and fibre sector can look towards the bigger players already making progress identified in the case studies, and while some organisations have a long way to go to catch up to those already charging ahead, even small progress is better than none. Done is better than perfect.

The New Zealand food and fibre sector has a real opportunity to reset the expectations of the future. Off the back of a tough couple of years economically, there is now a chance to reset for the future and be future fit for upcoming opportunities and challenges. The key to being future fit lies within the people in the sector, and in order to create the best future for generations to come means having a workforce that reflects the rich diverse community within the sector. Women have an equal place in that future, and everyone has a role to play in getting there.

11 Recommendations

In order to continue the development of women in the food fibre industry into governance positions, there needs to be a multi-pronged approach and the pressure to develop needs to shift from just these women to more broadly the people already in governance roles. In order to get a better and more fair future and enable gender diversity the people already on the governance boards need to be trained and further educated on the benefits of gender diversity in governance, and how to check their unconscious bias. Women need to support women. But men also need to support women in order to protect the future of the New Zealand food and fibre industry.

The recommendations have been organised into quick wins, evolution, and revolution so as to recognise that real change can begin immediately but it may be small to start, but there is the potential for revolutionary change in the future.

11.1 Quick wins:

Know the current workforce that New Zealand food and fibre sector have available for development: This centres around organisations profiling their workforce and asking them to self-report on diversity metrics such as gender, ethnicity, age. This will allow organisations to start with a dataset (although likely imperfect to start) to begin to build from to be able to examine where they may not be achieving well, and to identify opportunity areas. Using Lewins 3 stage model of change, the first step is ‘unfreezing’, and involving employees in the first stages of change is important to bring them on the journey. It is also generally low cost and easy to collect. This is the first step in being able to report on diversity and inclusion. It can also help organisations to identify who they have in the pipeline to fast track and develop their skills and knowledge.

Raise awareness and have the conversation with peers about the benefit and need for gender diversity: In order to achieve progress, the problem first needs to be identified and talked about. Sometimes these conversations can be uncomfortable, so they are avoided. It is no longer good enough to ignore. Encouraging self-awareness can also help to combat unconscious bias and mitigate the effects of bias choices especially in the context of selecting new board members to recommend.

11.1 Evolutions:

Implement gender diversity recommendations in relevant organisations’ corporate governance codes: This has already been done in many boards, especially in the public sector. Having these codes on gender diversity in boards is a form of soft regulation and they are also implemented voluntarily. This makes them a good starting place for achieving gender diversity. This also allows a grace period while there is a small gap in the number of women able to take on governance roles versus the governance roles available to females. This should be addressed over time, with more robust training pipeline to support and encourage women into governance positions.

Create inclusive workplace culture: Ensuring organisational values align with diversity and inclusion practices, can help to create a more inclusive workplace where women and other minorities feel more comfortable. Creating an inclusive culture includes developing practices such as developing diversity initiatives and reporting publicly to support accountability of these measures. It can also include developing a fair and transparent hiring and promoting process, to ensure positions, especially governance positions are hired on merit, qualifications, and potential – not because the person is a great guy and plays golf with the chairman every Thursday.

11.3 Revolutions

Training for all levels of people throughout business workforce: Training does not stop because the person has reached governance level. Training should be implemented on a regular basis for all existing board members, and people in the pipeline. This training should include unconscious bias training to begin to address the issues experienced by nearly every woman in corporate life.

It can be hard to develop the talent the food and fibre sector has when the sector experiences challenged in any given year. Priority needs to be given to women, and there needs to be a drive to shorten the pipeline from bottom to top. In order to reach some semblance of balance there needs to be an availability of talent to choose the right person for the right job, and this won't be achieved if we don't fast track women through the pipeline.

Create an accessible, supportive network of mentors for women interested in governance: the New Zealand food and fibre sector is a relatively small and mostly inclusive sector. While there are many ways to further individual training, it is difficult to know how to find a mentor and to know who might be available. The creation of a robust network that can connect aspiring women leaders with experienced board members (male or female) can provide guidance, support and practical knowledge that women need to achieve success in governance positions.

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13 Appendix

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

Interview #:

Interviewee:

I'm currently a scholar on the Kellogg Rural Leadership programme, and as part of this course, it involves a research project through post graduate study at Lincoln University. The topic which I've chosen to research is: 'Gender diversity in governance in the New Zealand food and fibre sector'.

I'm interviewing you to get an understanding on what a broader range of people in the industry think about the current state and how we can improve gender diversity in the future. I'd like to also point out that there are no right or wrong answers, but I'm interested in your honest opinion given your background. The interview should take about 45 minutes to an hour, and I'd like to record the interview through teams so that I can focus more on our discussion although I will be taking notes as we go. This will also be kept anonymous, with no names/roles or other specific personal details being mentioned in the report. I also think it important to mention that your responses here are in no way reflective of your organisation, but rather as an individual working within the food and fibre sector in New Zealand. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, or do not wish to answer, please tell me and we can either move on or end the interview depending on your preference.

Questions:

1. Can you share any examples of successful initiatives aimed at promoting gender and age diversity in leadership roles within the food and fibre sector?
2. From your perspective, how can the kiwifruit industry leverage the experiences and perspectives of people from different ages and genders to navigate industry challenges and opportunities more effectively at the leadership level?
3. What strategies do you think could be effective in encouraging and supporting the advancement of diverse talent into senior leadership positions in the kiwifruit sector?
4. How would you assess the current representation of women in senior leadership positions within the kiwifruit industry?
5. How might having more diversity (age, gender, culture) in senior leadership roles impact the decision-making processes and overall governance of the kiwifruit industry?
6. What factors do you believe contribute to the underrepresentation of women in top leadership roles in the kiwifruit industry?
7. In your experience, how important is organisational culture in influencing diversity in leadership roles?
8. Have you observed any differences in the representation of women in leadership roles across different sectors within the food and fibre sector?
9. What potential long-term implications do you foresee for the food and fibre sector if there continues to be a lack of gender diversity at the most senior levels of leadership and governance?
10. How do you view the role of mentorship and sponsorship in facilitating the progression of women in food and fibre governance?