

OCTOBER 2018



# The Panel Pledge

Speaking up for more  
inclusive panels



PANEL  
PLEDGE

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# Tēnā koutou katoa

As Champions for Change, we understand the benefits of diversity in leadership and we are committed to our vision of a prosperous and equitable Aotearoa. Taking action is at the core of what we do, where our individual action contributes to our collective group impact.

Every year, many of us are asked to sit on panels at seminars and other events that attract large and influential audiences. These events offer us a platform to raise our own profile, discuss our initiatives and viewpoints, and gain credibility.

However, too often, these panels lack representation of women and greater ethnic diversity. As leaders, it's time we questioned why this is the case.

There are two primary reasons for demanding more women and greater ethnic diversity on panels.

The first is that it is the right thing to do. There are many qualified women in New Zealand who are experts in their fields, and who, by gender alone, represent half of the New Zealand population – a population that invests, consumes and makes critical decisions every day. We also live in one of the most ethnically diverse societies in the world. When we put people on pedestals and showcase their expertise, we should be ensuring we represent a broad range of views from the society in which we live.

The second is even more simple: diversity on panels makes for more interesting discussions. Different ideas spur new thinking, connections and innovation.

We invite you today to take the Champions for Change Panel Pledge and commit to standing up for diversity on panels.

It's a simple ask: when invited to speak on a panel, ask about its gender and ethnic make-up, and push back if women and ethnically diverse people are not represented. Further, require planners and event producers to try harder. It will benefit them and the quality of their events, too.

Thank you in advance for your support. Together, our individual action will have a collective impact on bringing a diverse range of views to the forefront.

**Nāku iti noa, nā**

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## CO-CHAIRS CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE



**MICHELE EMBLING**  
CHAIR PWC



**DAVID MCLEAN**  
CEO WESTPAC



# The Champions for Change Panel Pledge

As a Champion for Change, I understand the benefits of diversity in leadership and are committed to a vision of a prosperous and equitable Aotearoa.

Conferences and panels provide a platform for ideas, debate and inspiration. A good panel brings together diverse perspectives, experiences and expertise—and encourages substantial debate.

In New Zealand, many high-profile conferences and events lack gender balance and ethnic diversity, despite there being many qualified women and ethnically diverse candidates. I am personally committed to the Champions for Change Panel Pledge to achieve more balanced gender and ethnic representation at conferences and on panels. As such, I pledge to:



## 1 SET EXPECTATIONS UPFRONT WHEN ASKED TO SPEAK

In order for me to consider joining a panel, forum, or any speaking engagement, please confirm the following:

- **Who are the other speakers and participants?**
- **How will diverse perspectives be attained? For example, why were the panellists selected and how was diversity considered in the planning of this event?**



## 2 HIGHLIGHT GENDER AND ETHNIC IMBALANCE

Panellists are seen as leaders, and when visible leadership is of only one gender or ethnicity, it perpetuates the notion that only one gender and ethnicity is suitable to lead.

“You can’t be what you can’t see” is a well-known quote on fair representation. With fewer female and ethnically diverse role models, members of the younger generation are less likely to see themselves in positions of authority. As such, please confirm:

- **Is there fair gender representation on the panel?**
- **How has the panel selection team made significant effort to obtain diverse ethnic representation on the panel?**



## 3 ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE DIVERSE VOICES

Panellists can sometimes face tough audiences and have valid concerns as to how their ideas will be received, particularly when their ideas might be different from others. As a Champion, I commit to support and encourage other panellists, ensuring women and ethnic minorities gain credit for their own ideas and that diverse opinions are taken seriously. Please confirm:

- **How will you ensure women and ethnically diverse speakers will participate in a meaningful way?**

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**PLEASE NOTE:** I reserve the right to withdraw from the event if the final speaker line up does not reflect the requests in this pledge. Thank you in advance for your support in this important piece of work, to bring more inclusive and diverse panels to the New Zealand market.



## Why take the pledge?

### **DIVERSE PANELS ARE MORE INTERESTING**

It's easy to understand that diversity of thought from panellists makes for a better, more interesting and informative discussion. Those from different backgrounds can offer unique perspectives, so the audience is more likely to gain insights and deeper understanding of the topics covered.

Panellists that represent a wider population group are more likely to accurately reflect public views on a topic.

### **DIVERSE VIEWS BETTER REFLECT OUR SOCIETY**

Fairness is the Kiwi way, with hundreds of ethnicities co-existing (particularly in Auckland), it is the inclusive thing to do to give people a fair go and the opportunity to be heard. It is also an approach that fosters a more accurate reflection of input from our complete society, rather than one dominant perspective.

### **YOUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE, MATTERS**

Champions for Change commit to standing up for more inclusive panels and pressing for change. As business leaders, Champions pledge to inquire about efforts to ensure women and ethnic minority groups are considered and represented whenever they are invited to be involved in, or sponsor, a conference or panel.

### **OPPORTUNITY TO MAXIMISE IMPACT**

There is the opportunity to maximise the impact of diverse representation on speaking panels in our country. Inform your team so they can support you in your commitment. Extend the pledge to your own organisation to ensure all forums your organisation runs or sponsors take gender balance and diversity into account.

## About Champions for Change

Champions for Change is an initiative that brings together 56 leading Chairs and CEOs to advance inclusion and diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand, through individual leadership and collective impact. Champions for Change is convened and funded by Global Women, and Co-Chaired by two elected Champions – currently David McLean, CEO Westpac, and Michele Embling, Chair PwC. Current initiatives include speaking out about the benefits of inclusion and diversity for businesses; measuring gender and ethnic representation through the Diversity Reporting Framework, creating inclusive and flexible workplaces, and investing in talent pipelines and leadership capability.

**Got any questions about the Panel Pledge? Email us at [champions@globalwomen.org.nz](mailto:champions@globalwomen.org.nz)**