

Report shows more work needed to advance gender equity

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Significant barriers remain in the role of middle managers in advancing gender equity in the public service, according to a new report by researchers at Victoria University of Wellington, Massey University and Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

Published in partnership with the Ministry for Women, the [report](#) was carried out as part of a wider project and in light of recent calls to

address gender inequity.

The team of researchers conducted interviews with senior executives and middle managers from four public service agencies in New Zealand.

Their report shows middle managers report ongoing challenges in balancing the needs of individuals with organisational requirements.

"The study reflects that progress on gender [equity](#) is being made," says Professor Jane Parker from Massey University's School of Management, "but it also flags up that efforts need to continue, involving multiple parties in a cohesive approach."

Initiatives limited by entrenched cultural values

Lead author Dr Noelle Donnelly from the Centre for Labour, Employment and Work at Victoria University of Wellington agrees.

"Our interviews show government agencies are highly committed to addressing and improving gender equity in their workplaces, and they play a very critical role," she says.

"We found that despite managerial intentions, the success of gender equity initiatives were limited by entrenched traditional cultures that privilege certain groups, full-time working and masculinist leadership models, and the challenges in implementing flexible work arrangements."

Dr Donnelly says the report highlights the need to develop coordinated gender equity strategies within agencies.

"Gender equity policies and initiatives were often fledgling in nature, and many managers had limited knowledge of their scope, character and application," she says. "These initiatives need to include both interim and

long-term goals and benchmarks."

The report also recommends creating improved resources and capabilities to support managers in their role as facilitators of [gender equity](#) initiatives in their workplaces.

The Ministry for Women welcomes the report, adding that it contributes to understanding the drivers of [gender](#) pay gaps within organisations.

More information: The Role of Middle Managers in Progressing Gender Equity in the Public Service:

www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Colleges/College

[%20of%20Business/mpower/forthcoming%20events/The%20Role%20of%20Middle%20Managers%20in%20Progressing%20Gender%20Equity%20Report.pdf?E385F11FAEC11726B60E15F32DD4B596](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Colleges/College%20of%20Business/mpower/forthcoming%20events/The%20Role%20of%20Middle%20Managers%20in%20Progressing%20Gender%20Equity%20Report.pdf?E385F11FAEC11726B60E15F32DD4B596)

Provided by Massey University

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