



RISE PROJECT

Information for Phase 1 Organisations

A partnership between:



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About the project

What is RISE?

Realise. Inspire. Support. Energise. (RISE) is a ground breaking project that aims to break down systemic barriers and provide direct pathways for culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) women to reach senior leadership positions within Australian organisations. RISE is a partnership between Diversity Council Australia ('DCA'), Settlement Services International (SSI) and Chief Executive Women (CEW).

This project aims to address the systemic barriers that restrict CARM women's movement into senior leadership in 25 Australian organisations. Innovatively working at the individual and systemic levels concurrently, the project will identify, design, deliver and evaluate effective change interventions that eliminate structural barriers in these organisations. This will directly benefit 375 nominated CARM Women in Middle Management (WMM) working in these organisations. Given that the project is targeting systemic change,

it is anticipated that the project will have wider positive impact for CARM women beyond the staff participating

The project provides a key opportunity:

- **to access critical support, advice and training** needed to drive change and increase CARM women's representation in leadership.
- **to be promoted** in case studies of leading practice and educational materials
- **to join a community of practice** of like-minded practitioners and learn from each other through the duration of the project.



Why do we need the RISE project?

We know that CARM women face systemic barriers when it comes to career advancement.

In 2017, **DCA's Capitalising on Culture and Gender in ASX Leadership** [i] research found that only 1.5% of all ASX senior executives are culturally diverse women (defined as women from any cultural origin other than Anglo or North-West-European).

The same year, **DCA's Cracking the Glass Cultural Ceiling** [ii] research showed how women from non-Anglo cultural origins are at a double disadvantage in Australian workplaces as their gender and culture combine to make it more difficult than their male counterparts or than women from Anglo cultural origins to access leadership roles.

Six years on, in 2023, **DCA's Culturally and Racially Marginalised Women in Leadership** [iii] research found that the state of play for CARM women remains largely unchanged – CARM women in leadership in Australia are few and far between as systemic barriers remain in place.

Together, this research shows that whilst **CARM women are ambitious, capable, and resilient**, they experience range of entrenched systemic barriers in Australian workplaces such as:

- being assessed against biased leadership models,
- not having access to influential social networks where promotion decisions are often made, and
- not having their voices centred so their lived experiences at work can be better understood (including when organisations are trying to develop and promote CARM women into senior leadership).

This is why we are working with 25 organisations, and 375 nominated CARM Women Middle Managers (WMM) in these organisations, to implement lasting change interventions that will address the root causes of these issues.

[i] Diversity Council Australia (J. Shireenjit, J. O'Leary, A. Legg, and C. Brown), *Capitalising on Culture and Gender in ASX Leadership*, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2017.

[ii] Diversity Council Australia (J. O'Leary, D. Groutis, and R. D'Almada-Remedios), *Cracking the Glass-Cultural Ceiling: Future Proofing Your Business in the 21st Century*, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2017.

[iii] Diversity Council Australia (V. Mapedzahama, F. Laffernis, A. Barhoum, and J. O'Leary), *Culturally and Racially Marginalised Women in Leadership: A Framework for (Intersectional) Organisational Action*, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2023.



Collaborate to create change

By partnering with us, 25 participating organisations will gain access to the 6 change elements below – these target creating change in the organisation as well as building on CARM women middle managers’ leadership capabilities.

The project partners will provide:

- **An Organisational Self-Assessment Tool**, completed by Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion practitioners and the CARM WMM, which diagnoses key systemic barriers locking CARM women middle managers out of leadership.
- **An Action Plan Template**, which provides a strategic framework for organisations to create their own strategic action plan. DCA will provide support with creating the action plan and organisations will drive the implementation of the plan.
- **DCA’s Racism at Work training program**, which provides anti-racism training to stimulate nuanced, critical, and reflexive ways of understanding systemic racial barriers.
- **SSI’s Cultural Responsiveness training program**, which explores sustainable ways to navigate a diversity of cultures in the workplace.
- **A Support Model for Advancing CARM Women’s Leadership Skills**, which provides CARM women with coaching, mentoring, and a career advancement plan, so they can better leverage their leadership skills and progress in their careers. This model recognises that while CARM women do significant leadership work in their organisations, they are not always provided with the same access to formal leadership positions, training and mentorship as other employees.
- **CEW’s Leadership Development training program**, which builds leadership capacity and provides opportunities for networking and membership connections, offers participants an invitation to the CEW Connect community on the completion of the program.



Your organisational journey

1. Create your project team

When the project starts, participating organisations will identify an internal project team to drive the project, which centres the voice of CARM women.

This team could be comprised of:

- D&I/HR contacts,
- a senior executive sponsor/champion, and;
- members of an employee resource group or similar, such as committees and councils

2. Invite CARM Women Middle Managers to volunteer

The internal project team will also identify and confirm the participation of up to 15 CARM women from middle management.

CARM women in middle management refers to those at a CEO-4 level, but lower levels of management can be included if 15 CARM middle managers are not available.

We encourage organisations to circulate information about the project to staff, and invite women to self-identify and volunteer for the project.

DCA will provide organisations with templates and advice to put in place a safety protocol and cultural and racial safety guidelines for engaging staff in this project.

Kick start the change process!

Participating organisations will (with DCA support):

1

Complete the ASSESS to RISE organisational self-assessment tool.

2

Develop an action plan to address systemic barriers

3

Make a commitment to sponsor and support CARM women's career development

4

Implement the action plan, including training and activities, over 12 months

5

Take part in a Community of Practice

CARM women's journey

At the same time, the 15 participating CARM WMM will (with project partner support):

1

Take part in introductory project session(s) with the RISE Consortium project partners

2

Participate in organisational self-assessment and feedback tools

3

Create a career advancement plan

4

Take part in a CARM women-centred career advancement program, which is reflective of goals in the career advancement plan.

Your investment

Your investment in the project will depend on the activities included in your organisational action plan and on the training options that CARM women in your organisations choose for their career advancement plans.

An indicative spend for organisational training could be approximately \$7000, including:

- \$4,500 - 1 DCA training (3 modules)
- \$2,500 - SSI (1 day training)

An indicative spend for training, mentoring and career support for 15 CARM women will depend on each CARM woman's career advancement plan and the organisation's training allocation/personal development budget.

The tables on the next page provide further estimates of the some of the likely costs, however, please note there may be additional costs involved.

As a participating organisation, your investment is likely to include:

Co-contributions

Activity	Estimated co-contribution	Considerations
DCA's Racism at Work virtual training	\$4500 for 3-5 virtual training sessions over 5-7 hours for 30 staff members. Additional sessions will be at a higher cost and in-person training will incur additional costs.	The 30 staff members involved in the training could include the project team and a combination of, for instance, the immediate supervisors/managers and/or team members of the CARM women participating, organisational champions and mentors and other staff involved directly or indirectly in the project.
SSI's Cultural Responsiveness training	\$2500 for a 1 day training course for 15-25 staff members. Face to face training delivery is preferable.	Timing is flexible and training can be split over two days if needed.
(Opt-in) CEW's Leaders Program	\$3000 per participant for a 7 day program delivered over 7 non-consecutive days in 3 face-to-face blocks (3 days-2 days-2 days) scheduled six to eight weeks apart in all locations aside from Perth, where there will be a two block program (3 days-4 days).	Participants will take part in the larger CEW Leaders Program
(Optional) External subcontractors	TBC - dependent on activities in organisations' action plan	Any costs associated with engaging external subcontractors to assist with implementation of the action plan
(Optional) Communication assets	TBC	Organisations may wish to co-produce communications assets to amplify good news stories from their action plan and from the CARM women involved with the project team (e.g. video case studies, social media products)

Staff-time commitments

Participant	Staff time	Considerations
Project team	1-4 hours per week	Includes internal coordination and Community of Practice meetings.
Mentors	3 hours in the first week (including training) 1 hour mentoring meetings	These time commitments may be updated due to availability. There are likely to be a mix of mentors from within your organisation and external mentors.
CARM Women who participate	Introduction session (1-2 hours); Mentor meetings (1 hour each); Career advancement activities (TBC)	These time commitments may be updated according to individual career advancement plans and availability.
Project team and CARM women (evaluation and case studies/other)	2 hours at the beginning, mid-point and end of action plan	Please note time commitments for evaluation and case studies can be incorporated around work schedules.

Collaborate to create change

The RISE consortium will invite organisations to collaborate on opportunities to showcase their good practice throughout the project. The consortium will collect and summarise learnings over the project about the systemic barriers and enablers for CARM women's access to leadership. This work will inform a final project summary with key case studies on organisational practice to address these barriers and enablers (this may be presented as an online exhibition, infographics, toolkits or in another format). Where possible, final project outputs will be co-designed with participants.

This process may involve:

- Conducting focus groups/online engagement with CARM women (individual informed consent will be sought);
- Drawing on notes from communities of practice;
- Developing a summary of findings on systemic barriers and enablers; and
- Developing case studies with participating organisations and/or voice stories with participants.

The RISE consortium will provide all participating organisations and women with an information statement and an informed consent process to take part in activities informing final project outputs. All data will be collected and stored confidentially on a password protected DCA server for 5 years. Informed consent will be separately sought from organisations and individual participants where data will be reported in a way that identifies participants (e.g. case studies or similar outputs).

Please note, participating organisations will be able to choose to have information relating to their workplace de-identified in any publicly released RISE communications.

Checking change impact

The RISE project will be evaluated. Both organisations and participating women will be asked to take part in evaluation surveys. Organisations and participating women will receive more information on evaluation at the beginning of the project. Any publicly released RISE evaluation data or information will be aggregated and de-identified to protect the anonymity of the participating organisations and CARM women.

Key Dates

Successful Phase 1 organisations notified:
November 2023

Project Introduction Meetings: January -
February 2024

ASSESS to RISE tool completed: February -
March 2024

Action plans implemented: May 2024 - May
2025

Please note these dates are indicative and are
subject to change

Key Contact

For more information on
the RISE project, please
contact **RISE@dca.org.au**



About the Project Partners

Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is the project lead, an independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. They provide unique research, inspiring events and programs, curated resources, and expert advice across all diversity dimensions to a community of member organisations, reaching over 20% of the Australian labour market. DCA will be responsible for project management and evaluation and will utilise lived experience regarding intersectionality.

Settlement Services International (SSI) is a community organisation and social business that supports Australians to achieve their full potential. They work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, to build capacity and enable them to overcome inequality. They have a strong focus on the advancement of women, with a notable female leadership team.

SSI will provide cultural responsiveness training to CARM managers, identify barriers for women of CARM backgrounds and recruit program mentors.

Chief Executive Women (CEW)

CEW's Leaders Program is a bespoke development program encouraging women leaders to truly be themselves. It is designed and facilitated by CEW members who share their wisdom and lifelong experiences. It is independent, intimate, challenging, collegiate and reflective in nature. Learning happens through continuous dialogue and experimentation with structured leadership competencies. Upon completion of the Program, alumni are welcomed into the Connect Women Community where they join over 2,500 women leaders in a professional network.



