

E-Book - July 2025



DIVERSITY STRENGTHENS FLEET

WITH THE EXPERTISE OF:

ALPHABET



ayvens



ELEMENT-ARVAL GLOBAL ALLIANCE

Diversity strenghtens fleet

Diversity — in society, in business, and in leadership — is facing increasing pressure. Around the world, we're seeing setbacks: from political forces trying to reverse progress, to governments slowing down on inclusion efforts. These developments don't just threaten social harmony; they also risk stalling innovation and economic growth. We know that diverse teams — at every level of an organization — lead to better decisions, greater creativity, and a more fulfilling workplace for everyone.

That's why I'm encouraged to see how strongly the topic of diversity resonates within our own fleet and mobility community. At Nexus, the organization behind Fleet Europe and Global Fleet, we founded the Inspiring Women in Fleet community with a clear mission: to promote greater inclusion and provide a platform for real voices, real stories, and real change.

This e-book is a reflection of that mission. Together with our valued partners, we've brought together powerful personal experiences — honest accounts from women across the industry. They share the challenges they've faced with gender inequality, but more importantly, how they've turned those challenges into sources of strength and inspiration.

It is my sincere hope that this community will one day no longer be necessary — that by 2030, equality and representation will be a given, not a goal. Until then, we continue to listen, support, and lead.

I hope this book inspires you — as much as the women in it inspire me.



Caroline Thonnon,
Owner and Co-founder of FleetEurope.com,
Initiator of Inspiring Women in Fleet.

Colophon

CHIEF EDITOR: Luberto van Buiten | **COORDINATION:** Bénédicte Crauwels | **EDITORS:** Yves Helven, Garcelle Hodge | **SALES:** David Baudeweyns, Daniel Savigny, Ravtej Chadok
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Breaking barriers: women driving change in the fleet and mobility sector

In an industry traditionally dominated by men, three trailblazing women are challenging the status quo and redefining leadership in fleet and mobility management, discussed in a Fleet Europe Podcast about diversity. "It isn't just about numbers."

When Ökşan Öztürk, founder and co-CEO of fleet management company Filo Broker, walks into client meetings, she is often still met with skeptical glances. "In a conversation once, a customer asked me if I had ever seen a burnt clutch," she recounts. This seemingly basic question reveals a deeper challenge: proving competence in a male-dominated field. "I asked why that was important or relevant – but after the meeting I immediately searched to find out more. It was a proof that we have a long way to go."

Linda Ellis, award-winning fleet manager at pharmaceutical UCB, understands this struggle intimately. As a Black woman in the industry, she's experienced what she calls the "double minority" challenge. "We almost have to prove ourselves before we're even trusted to do the job," Ellis explains—her award for fleet innovation is a testament to her resilience.



(From left to right) **Luberto van Buiten (Fleet Europe – host), Linda Ellis (UCB), Ökşan Öztürk (Filo Broker) and Merry Marwig (Privacy4Cars) discuss the importance of diversity in the fleet world.** (Image: Global Fleet Summit)

The privacy perspective

Merry Marwig's journey into the industry is equally compelling. Merry is the Sales and Marketing Manager at Privacy4Cars, a private professional specializing in automotive data. She entered the field after experiencing workplace harassment. "I wanted to make change," Marwig says, "to help people understand control over their personal data."

These women aren't just talking about change—they're implementing it. Öztürk's company is developing a fleet academy program specifically designed to support women's professional development. Ellis mentors young professionals through leadership programs, and Marwick is preparing to release a groundbreaking white paper on privacy in mobility.

Global fleet management statistics reveal a sharp reality: women still represent only a fraction of leadership positions. A recent survey indicated that 30% of women believe an invisible "glass ceiling" prevents their professional advancement.

A new approach to diversity

"Diversity isn't just about numbers," Marwig argues. "It's about bringing different perspectives to the table." Her automotive analogy is, "just as different vehicles require specific maintenance, diverse teams need tailored support to excel."

While complete equality remains a distant goal, these women are driving meaningful change. Their message is clear: the future of fleet and mobility management is diverse, innovative, and unstoppable.

As Ellis puts it, "We survived pandemics, wars, and shortages. This is just another opportunity to show up and be confident in our space."

The industry is listening—and changing, one breakthrough at a time.



"We survived pandemics, wars, and shortages. This is just another opportunity to show up and be confident in our space" according to Linda Ellis.

(Image: Global Fleet)

Have faith in yourself, and above all: BE BRAVE

How Alphabet creates an environment that helps talent rise to the top.

Two of the most senior women at Alphabet and BMW Financial Services are role models for the career progression achievable at organisations that are genuinely committed to inclusivity.

The long-term commitment of the BMW Group, including Alphabet, to create a culture that is free from prejudice and that values diversity in all its dimensions, has seen talent rise to the top. The company does not treat inclusivity as a separate topic, but as something that's embedded in how it moves the organisation forward.

Kathrin Frauscher, CEO BMW Financial Services Austria and Alphabet Austria, and Tracey Leith, CEO BMW Financial Services BeLux and Alphabet Belgium, lead their organisations on their own terms, shining as beacons for female colleagues looking to advance their own careers in an industry that has historically been male dominated.

"Over the last 26 years of my career, I have seen a positive change with more women in senior positions, and I am generally no longer the only woman in meetings now," says Tracey.

Her mission is to create an environment where colleagues feel safe to ask, learn, and grow – a mission that demands action, not just warm words.

"We are focusing on Individual Development Plans, hiring the best talent and welcoming diverse profiles," she says. "Many individuals in the industry have the drive and the passion. They just need the opportunity, support, and encouragement. When you invest in their growth, they'll become ambassadors for what's possible in your organization."



Kathrin Frauscher, CEO BMW Financial Services Austria and Alphabet Austria, has previously served as CEO BMWFS Denmark, CEO BMWFS India, and Head of Sales & Marketing BMWFS Central & Southeastern Europe. *(Image: Alphabet)*



Tracey Leith, CEO BMW Financial Services Belgium & Luxembourg and Alphabet Belgium, was formerly Chief Operating Officer BMWFS South Africa and COO BMWFS UK. *(Image: Alphabet)*

This is not a question of women being coached to think and act like men, but instead of embracing diversity and inclusion to value the broader perspective women can bring to business.

"That added layer of empathy and awareness can shift outcomes, because it's a complementary way of seeing things," says Tracey.

Throughout her career, she has consistently taken on positions and roles that took her out of her comfort zone and which have developed her into a better leader, and she is eager to instil this confidence in her colleagues.

"If we can unlock this, we will see a lot more women developing into more senior roles," she says. "The focus should be on identifying and nurturing young female talent, providing them with the tools and support they need, and building their confidence early."

It's a theme echoed by Kathrin, who encourages anyone eager to embrace a new challenge, regardless of age, cultural background, or gender: "To step outside your comfort zone, remain curious, relish the learning process, and have faith in yourself. Strong dedication and passion will always lead to personal growth."

And, she adds, "have faith in yourself, and above all: BE BRAVE!"



Putting DEI into practice

Policy, action, and targets form the foundation of Alphabet's dedication to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. As a leader in leasing and fleet management, Alphabet is committed to a comprehensive DEI policy embedded within its HR practices, aiming to cultivate a workplace where every individual feels respected, regardless of gender, age, abilities, sexual orientation, or cultural background.

Jesper Lyndberg, CEO of Alphabet International, emphasizes that the company is actively pursuing initiatives to fulfil its commitment. These efforts include increasing the recruitment of women, particularly in leadership roles, alongside offering networking, training, and mentorship programs. "We want to create a workplace where we can attract all talents no matter their background, gender, age, etc. This also means fostering a culture where diverse behaviors are recognized and valued," says Lyndberg.

Alphabet is also ensuring a supportive environment through mandatory DEI training and establishing confidential channels for reporting workplace harassment and discrimination. To gauge its progress, Alphabet uses KPIs and employee surveys to track its journey towards becoming an even more inclusive employer.

"We are aiming for a balanced environment that accommodates diverse lifestyles and supports gender parity, with a target of having 30% women in managerial roles by 2030," stated Lyndberg.

Where next for gender inclusivity?

In an era of DEI policies being removed by the U.S. Government, experts in the fleet and mobility sector discuss the importance of gender inclusivity in the workplace.

"We have ended the tyranny of so-called Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies all across the entire Federal Government and, indeed in the private sector and our military," President Donald Trump proudly announced.

His administration has made a priority of dismantling DEI programs in the Federal Government and is pressuring companies to follow its lead.

DEI policies in the U.S. are aimed at promoting the fair treatment and inclusion of all people, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, religion, or disabilities, and specifically endeavour to include people of under-represented groups. Several companies have followed the president's orders and removed their DEI policies, but several others have spoken up about the importance of fighting for gender inclusion.



Anne-Cécile Huet (Ayvens) and Ina Hansen (TraXall International) taking a stand for incorporating underrepresented groups into workplaces. (Image: Global Fleet Summit)

Voices of leadership and change

At this year's Global Fleet Summit, one of the main topics of conversation was the importance of gender diversity and why businesses need to incorporate different perspectives to achieve commercial success. These themes were addressed by a panel of female professionals, who shared their career journeys and their insights into gender equality.

Anne-Cécile Huet, Deputy Managing Director of Ayvens Portugal, spoke about entering the industry at a time when senior positions were almost exclusively held by men, and witnessing the significant progress made since she started.

Ina Hansen, COO of Traxall Germany, recalled how she was frequently the only woman in the room in her early sales roles, and how she chose to wear a pantsuit to "blend in." She said having a visible female mentor might have changed things. Today, she added, there is abundant evidence that companies that draw on different perspectives, including gender diversity, achieve greater success.

A focus on DEI has led to the creation of corporate leadership training and scholarships, helped to narrow the gender pay gap, and has brought attention to the perspectives and opinions of minority groups. In addition, DEI programs have inspired the introduction of quotas that ensure schools and workplaces that have traditionally been rooted in patriarchy now open their doors to qualified women.

The DEI fight is not over, and Caroline Thonnon, co-CEO of Nexus Communication (publisher of Fleet Europe), called on businesses: 'To continue to empower women and minority groups, and stand for what is right among those who do not prioritise inclusive spaces.'



Caroline Thonnon (Fleet Europe): "Continue to empower women and minority groups and stand for what is right among those who do not prioritize inclusive spaces." (Image: Global Fleet Summit)

“Every day is an opportunity to learn”

Anne-Cécile Huet, the Deputy Managing Director at Ayvens Portugal, previously worked as the Head of Assignment in Internal Audit at Société Générale. During her tenure, she had the opportunity to audit entities across more than 15 countries and in 4 district business lines.

Ayvens operated in the industry she found most captivating, as she has always had a passion for cars. When she was able to transition from auditing to business activities, ALD was the clear choice for her.

Were there any challenges you encountered from being a woman in a mainly male-dominated industry?

The underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions was certainly a barrier to my projection within the company, and I was not entirely convinced I could sustain a long-term career in the automotive industry. Fortunately, there have been significant changes over the past 10 years, particularly at Ayvens, and we remain dedicated to diversifying our teams.

Did being one of few women among many men offer any strategic advantages, such as insights?

In my perspective, gender is not inherently connected to specific talents having an impact in the workplace. However, the different experiences that women bring can offer unique insights and perspectives that enrich team dynamics and decision-making.



Anne-Cécile Huet, Deputy Managing Director at Ayvens Portugal; “Every day is an opportunity to learn” (Image: ayvens)

How has the male/female balance changed since your start in this industry?

I now have 14 years of experience in this industry and have witnessed significant changes, particularly regarding female representation and their overall perceived legitimacy. In the past, there was constant scrutiny of women in decision-making roles, but I no longer perceive this as a major obstacle.

Reflecting on my own company, Ayvens, we have transitioned from having minimal representation of women in senior leadership positions to achieving a 30% ratio. While we still have work to do in terms of balance, there is a strong commitment to providing equal opportunities.

What are some skills you gained or tips you have?

[Bodytext] If you have a qualified opinion on a topic, supported by objective facts or relevant experience, do not hesitate to share your insights and challenge the status quo.

Similarly, do not hesitate to express where you feel your contribution will be the most impactful for your organization. It will help you understand your possibilities, identify potential areas for development and open some doors. Be the catalyst for your own growth!

What advice would you give to your own younger self, starting out in this industry?

A motto you live by?

Everyone is imperfect and everyone does make mistakes, and it is okay. What truly matters is the learning and development journey, the willingness to constantly grow and adapt.

I would also emphasize the importance of accepting help, whether it comes from your supporters or those who challenge you. You can turn these experiences into valuable opportunities for improvement and make a significant impact!

I would say: "Every day is an opportunity to learn." I like to reflect on what I have learned at the end of each day, whether it was through an informal discussion, an experience, a podcast, an error, etc.



"Do not hesitate to express where you feel your contribution will be the most impactful for your organization." (Image: Fleet APAC)

The campaign for gender diversity in the transport industry

Concrete steps are needed to deliver progress in this male-dominated sector.

The United Nation's Azhar Jaimurzina, Chief Transport Connectivity and Logistics Section for the Economic and Social Commission for APAC (ESCAP) spoke passionately at the 2025 Fleet APAC Summit about the need for diversity and inclusion among all underrepresented groups, especially within the transport sector.

At the beginning of her career, she found herself being one of the only women in her organisation, and while change has come, she still sees much work to be done. She serves in the UN's Transport Connectivity and Logistics Section, a department dedicated to:

- **Creating** a common voice on development towards sustainability goals;
- **Providing a space** for countries to create solutions to development challenges;



Azhar Jaimurzina gives an expert talk at the Fleet APAC Summit. (Image: Fleet APAC)

- **Providing an analysis** of economic social and environmental issues for policymakers;
- **Assisting** countries in their development.

Gender gaps across the sector

Transport remains a male-dominated sector with gender gaps at all levels of the workforce.

“Back in 2022, women made up only 16% of the transport workforce in the Asia Pacific region. Bringing awareness towards gender equality promotion in transport is needed,” said Jaimurzina.

ESCAP has actively supported gender equality and female empowerment, pinpointing key issues to address, while pushing for inclusion:

- **Embrace** diversity for improved services;
- **Implement** gender-sensitive policies;
- **Put in place** organisational measures for gender sensitisation;
- **Balance** administrative roles and others;
- **Enhance** career appeal and retention;
- **Accelerate** leadership development.

“Initiatives pushing for inclusion like Inspiring Women in Fleet are hugely beneficial. It is about advocating, informing, and stimulating conversation in every way possible,” said Jaimurzina.



“Bringing awareness towards gender equality promotion in transport is needed,” stated by Azhar Jaimurzina. (Image: Fleet APAC)

At Arval, diversity and inclusion are deeply embedded

Sarah Roussel joined Paribas about 30 years ago on an apprenticeship, when she was still a student at ESSEC. “And I stayed there!”, she tells us. After a short break to complete her academical background at INSEAD, she came back to hold increasingly important roles with BNP Paribas. Since November 2022, she is the General Manager of Arval France.

As part of Fleet Europe’s ongoing interview series Inspiring Women in Fleet, we have met female industry leaders with interesting stories about battles fought and battles won. Arval is one of the rare places where the war for gender balance seems over, and equal representation is firmly anchored in corporate culture. Gender equality, however, is under on-going vigilance, Ms Roussel explains.

You were a very young woman when you took on significant responsibilities...

“Yet I’ve never suffered in my career at BNP Paribas from I being a woman. Being a woman – and a mother of three – has never been a barrier to my career, either in terms of responsibilities or salary. It probably helps that I never doubted myself in that regard!”

After many years involved in the financial aspects of BNP Paribas Group, you are now heading Arval France, one of its subsidiaries in automotive – an industry long dominated by men.

Did you sense anything different?

“While the automotive industry is perhaps still less “female friendly” than others, that is not the case at Arval France. When I joined three years ago, gender balance was already a non-issue. We have gender parity across our staff and at all management levels – including at the very top of the company, the Executive Committee”. “This didn’t happen by chance. It’s the result of a long-standing policy within BNP Paribas and Arval: company agreements, diversity charters, equal pay policies, talent development... all of this is part of a broader strategy to promote diversity, not only gender balance.”



Inspiring Woman in Fleet: Sarah Roussel,
General Manager of Arval France. (Image: Arval)

How do you promote gender balance?

"By actively fighting sexist language or behavior in the workplace, by training staff and ensuring pay equity. And by supporting women in leadership positions through networks like BNP Paribas MixCity. I'm proud to work in a company like Arval, which is very committed to promoting diversity!"

And what about that broader goal, diversity?

"Diversity and inclusion are deeply embedded in Arval's culture. Each year since 2015, we've been awarded the Alliance Diversity / Professional Equality label by AFNOR, as a recognition of our commitment and concrete actions for equal opportunities and diversity promotion."

"We believe that differences are valuable. That's why we have a long standing proactive diversity and inclusion policy. Our diversity initiatives cover areas such as disability, gender equality, or the prevention of harassment or discrimination."

"I share Arval's belief that everyone deserves equal opportunities in recruitment, training, pay, and promotion – regardless of age, gender, place of origin, or sexual orientation. Competencies is what truly matters."

And how do you ensure that this concern for equality is evenly distributed throughout the company?

"BNP Paribas Group has a code of conduct that outlines the rules for professional ethics and respect for others, with a mandatory training session for all employees, and adherence to it is part of the annual employee performance evaluation process."

A few quickfire questions to end.

One: What's your advice to young people on how to grow their career?

"Be curious, work hard, and take calculated risks. In other words: take on roles that match your skills and offer exciting challenges."

Two: What's your proudest professional achievement so far?

"At Arval, I'm proud of our customer satisfaction and employee engagement, both being today at their highest level ever. In the automotive industry, being elected Chairwoman of the French leasing association SesamLLD is a sign of trust and recognition from my peers."

Final question: What is a motto that you live by?

"As a business leader, life is simpler when your team pushes you, rather than you having to drag them along! As a leader, your number one objective is to create collective motivation to deliver a common goal. This creates the positive energy your company needs to adapt and change."

Driving change in the Middle East and Africa's transport landscape

The region is quickly developing its e-mobility industry, offering solutions to fossil fuel pollution through vehicle electrification and constructing charging infrastructure, and a rising number of women are engaged in bringing this change.

Transport accounts for 40% of Africa's carbon dioxide emissions, making it a target sector for decarbonisation. Since the 2015 Paris global climate agreement was signed by all 54 countries in Africa, the adoption of electric vehicles in Africa has been the slowest globally. Uptake has faced the challenges of high vehicle purchase prices, limited battery ranges, and a lack of access to electricity.

Jacqui Carr, Chief Executive Officer of Eqstra, says affordability, infrastructure, and policy alignment are the leading pain points.

"The transition to electric mobility in Africa is underway, but it's not uniform," she said. "In South Africa, we've seen a clear policy commitment through the EV White Paper, which outlines a roadmap to 2035 balancing industrial growth, decarbonisation, and job preservation. That's a critical step forward. However, infrastructure remains a constraint. Charging networks are still limited, particularly outside major cities."

Charging and temperature roadblocks in the Middle East

In the Middle East, 22% of CO₂ emissions come from transport. The UAE specifically has made electrifying and decarbonising its fleets a priority, under its UAE Energy Strategy 2050, which has also set a goal of generating 50% clean energy in its total energy mix by 2050. The principal challenges this region faces to electrify its mobility are EV availability, temperature, total cost of ownership, and charging infrastructure.



Jacqui Carr, Chief Executive Officer of Eqstra:
"The transition to electric mobility in Africa is underway." (Image: Jacqui Carr)

Reem Al Marri, Senior Legal Counsel and Board Secretary at Massar Solutions, says that electrification is “taking off,” with more improvements underway. “Some of the main challenges are derived from our geography, weather, consumer habits, and culture. Long summers and the layout of cities make driving necessary, and many people are still used to driving fuel-powered cars for convenience.”

EV benefits are in place, such as companies that transition to battery power having the ability to uplift their green rating. For drivers, priority parking is given to EVs at public shopping areas. “Charging stations are well spread in cities, with coverage being extended to remote areas and intercity highways,” said Al Marri.

Mobility improvements

While the mobility landscape in both regions is still developing, another area in need of progress is gender diversity within the transport sector. Transport inequities negatively affect female economic inclusion – data suggests access to reliable and secure transportation hinders 16.5% of women in developing countries.

The transport sector in the Middle East and North Africa is also a poor employer of women, who account for only around 3% of its employees.

“It is fair to say that the mobility sector is male dominated, but several government regulations encourage inclusivity. Women are now part of leadership and decision making in many key companies, and overall there is great support for us to pursue a career in the sector,” says Al Marri.

For Carr, the key is intentionality.

“We need to create environments where women can thrive, not just enter. That means mentorship, flexible work models, and clear career pathways. It also means challenging outdated perceptions of what leadership in mobility looks like. Women are not just part of the story—we’re central to it,” she said.



Reem Al Marri, Senior Legal Counsel and Board Secretary at Massar Solutions: “Charging stations are increasing in cities, but there’s still a need for more coverage.” (Image: Reem Al Marri)

“Gender balance is evolving”

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI for short) is important to Athlon. And that means action, not just words. Sonja Tang and Elke Beeken explain how – and why – the company walks the talk.

Elke and Sonja bring different perspectives to the topics of gender balance and inclusion. Elke has decades of experience in the industry. Currently she is International Account Manager Midsize Markets. Sonja is a legal eagle, with a path that started outside the industry. Now she is Head of Legal for Athlon Group and the BeNeLux Cluster and member of the Executive Committee.

The fleet industry has the reputation of being a male bastion. Is – or was – that a challenge?

Elke: “When I started 25 years ago, people were surprised I knew about cars. I had to challenge that stereotype.”

Sonja: “Today, I don’t see specific challenges for women – it’s more about individual situations, such as family dynamics.”

What does the female perspective add to conversations in fleet?

Sonja: “Everyone brings different insights. Women often focus more on connection, but it’s really about personality. Diversity improves teams.”

Elke: “Insights also come from experience and education, not just gender. Respect and learning from each other are key.”

The male/female balance has changed in our industry. How has that impacted things?

Sonja: “The effect of more women in higher management is that more perspectives influence decisions.”

Elke: “Nowadays you can indeed see a larger female presence in our business on several levels, also in leading roles. I do believe that for some women this can be a boost.”

For some companies, inclusivity is a reality. For many, it’s still a target. What would you advise a CEO who’s still at the beginning of that journey?

Elke: “Keep DEI high on the agenda. It’s essential that everyone feels included. This will contribute to a productive work environment.”



Sonja Tang,
Head of Legal for Athlon Group and
the BeNeLux Cluster and member
of the Executive Committee

(Image: Athlon)

Sonja: "Foster inclusivity by using clear language and engaging topics. Remember, diversity extends beyond gender."

What's Athlon's take on promoting inclusivity?

Elke: "DEI is key to Athlon. We unite 49 nationalities with our shared values. We encourage our people to speak up and prioritize DEI, for the well-being of our teams. Everyone deserves to grow and thrive."

Can you give some specific examples?

Sonja: "For one, we promote inclusive recruitment by training our hiring panels to reduce unconscious bias. Also, we offer hybrid working options to support work-life balance, and tools to ensure psychological safety. And we conduct annual employee surveys to measure satisfaction and inform action plans."

And what's the male/female ration like at Athlon today?

Sonja: "Our Executive Committee of nine has three women. Overall, 44% of Athlon employees are women. And women make up 24% of our leadership."

In your career so far, what are you particularly proud of?

Sonja: "I'm proud of always making choices that suit me, embracing new opportunities, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance."

Elke: "My career has had its challenges, but taking risks has been crucial. Moving from local to international car leasing and becoming an international account manager is a significant achievement."

Last question: What's a motto that you live by?

Sonja: "Don't define your path for life but take the changes you get on the road and be not afraid to change your direction or take same side ways in between. Do what makes you happy."

Elke: "You are only confined by the walls you build yourself: So don't limit yourself."



Elke Beeken,
International Account Manager
Midsized Markets for Athlon Group

(Image: Athlon)

Closing the gap: How Australia is rewriting workplace equality

In Australia, workplace gender equality reporting is a cornerstone of corporate transparency and governance. Under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, all private sector employers with 100 or more staff must submit annual reports to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). Despite ongoing efforts, women still earn only 78 cents for every \$1 earned by men on average, a gap that remains a focus for both regulators and employers.

A shifting reporting landscape

Recent updates have strengthened the reporting framework. Since 2024, WGEA publishes employer-level gender pay gaps, significantly increasing public and stakeholder visibility. As of 2025, companies with over 500 employees are required to set gender equality targets, with measurable outcomes expected within three years. Reporting criteria have also been expanded to include indicators such as leadership composition, flexible work policies, parental leave usage, and sexual harassment prevention measures.

These changes reflect a growing expectation that companies not only measure but also act on gender disparities, aligning diversity metrics with broader ESG obligations and investor scrutiny.

Progress and value creation

[There are signs of positive momentum. In 2023–24, 56% of reporting employers narrowed their pay gaps, and 68% analysed pay equity, up from 55% the year prior. Of those, three-quarters acted on their findings, indicating that data transparency is translating into strategic HR action.



Despite progress, women still earn only 78 cents for every \$1 earned by men on average. (Image: Shutterstock)

Beyond compliance, there is a clear economic rationale. Equalising female workforce participation could add 1 million full-time workers to Australia's economy. Moreover, organisations with gender-diverse leadership teams are consistently linked to stronger financial returns, improved innovation, and greater resilience in times of change.

Business driver

Australia's gender equality reporting framework is evolving from a compliance tool into a driver of business performance and workforce sustainability. For executives and procurement leaders, understanding and engaging with these requirements is not just a legal necessity; instead, it's a strategic advantage.

APAC's first Fleet Manager Award winner: "This marks a milestone in our industry"

Zulaikha (Ika) Zawawi, Regional Procurement Manager for Car Fleet at Nestlé, has become the first winner of Fleet APAC's Fleet Manager of the Year Award, in recognition of her approach to align Nestlé's global priorities with regional execution across APAC markets.

"I feel incredibly honoured, and it's an amazing achievement to win the first APAC Fleet Manager Award.

I believe it marks a milestone in our industry," said Zawawi as she received her award during Fleet APAC's 2025 second annual Summit in Bangkok, Thailand.

Zawawi's approach stood out for its ability to align Nestlé's global priorities with regional execution across APAC markets—from Japan to Indonesia, Australia to India.



Zulaikha (Ika) Zawawi: "I feel incredibly honoured, and it's an amazing achievement." (Image: Fleet APAC)

She implemented a coordinated, yet locally adapted strategy, harmonising fleet policies, standardising supplier selection, and moving from ownership to leasing where appropriate.

These changes enhanced governance, cost visibility, and operational control, and supported the adoption of fuel-efficient vehicles in line with Nestlé's net zero roadmap. Her work delivered both financial savings and environmental impact, providing clear tracking of total cost of ownership and reducing the fleet's risk exposure.

"As a fleet manager, I strive to always work for more efficient, sustainable, and greener and smarter solutions for our fleet. That definitely has been, and continues to be my focus, trying to optimise our fleet as much as we can, and make it more efficient. It would not be possible without the right team and right partners to achieve that," said Zawawi.

Australian companies not only measure, but also act on gender disparities

The expert jury, to whom Zawawi presented her project, commended her ability to combine strategic ambition with execution—and back it up with results. Her initiatives have delivered tangible improvements in fleet cost efficiency, policy standardisation, and sustainability performance. More than a project, her work represents a model for professional fleet transformation across the region.



Zulaikha (Ika) Zawawi gives an expert presentation at the Fleet APAC Summit.

(Image: Fleet APAC)

New vs experienced – two perspectives of the fleet sector

In these two exclusive Fleet Europe interviews, an expert with 20 years of experience in fleet and a newcomer compare and contrast their perspectives on gender inclusivity in the fleet sector.

Heidi DiAngelo, Director, Strategic Business Development at Ridecell, has been in fleet for over two decades, having worked at Geotab, LeasePlan International, and Element Fleet Management, roles which have given her a grandstand view of the evolution of the industry.

While there were always capable women working in the industry, Heidi often found herself in circles where they were less visible—at certain events, in leadership meetings, and sometimes on internal teams. Still, she never saw those situations as limiting. Instead, she leaned into the challenge and saw them as opportunities to grow. Over the years, she’s watched the industry shift dramatically. “It’s not just that more women are joining fleet and mobility,” she said. “We’re stepping into leadership roles, mentoring others, and helping shape what comes next. And the biggest difference? We’re not just present—we’re being included in the conversation and helping to drive where we are going next.”

Yulia Derkach, Category Manager EMEA for Eaton, has held her role for almost 1 year now, coming from a background in economics and recently being a Senior Buyer and Country Buyer for her company in EMEA.

While it is still early for her to make a clear call on how diverse the industry in EMEA is as a whole, from her own experiences so far, she personally feels that the industry has been inclusive for her as a woman in Fleet. She is proud to have always experienced diverse teams and work environments



Heidi DiAngelo, the Strategic Business Development Lead for Ridecell: “Visibility was the first wave of change.” (Image: Heidi DiAngelo)

throughout her career, and has continued to feel that inclusion entering into the fleet category. "Inclusion and representation is a necessity and it is important for everyone to have access to opportunities. We should always hire the person most qualified for the job."

What key factors support inclusion and what barriers do we need to break down to maintain this momentum for change?

DiAngelo highlights: "Visibility was the first wave of change. Just seeing more women and underrepresented voices in leadership made people stop and rethink what was possible. Then came advocacy and mentorship—people, both women and men, who didn't just invite others with unique voices in, but also made space for them to lead. Now, we're putting real structure behind those values: formal mentorship programs, equitable policies, intentional hiring. Fleet is going through a true transformation in so many ways—and this kind of thoughtful focus on diversity is a big part of that.

Inclusion is not just about giving people what they want, but it is about creating environments where all are included

Yulia Derkach

To keep progressing, we need to stay intentional. Keep asking: 'Who's not at the table? Whose voices haven't been heard yet?' Creating a sense of true diversity of thought and decision-making is not a one-time initiative—it's an ongoing practice."

Derkach explains: "Inclusion is not just about giving people what they want, but it is about creating environments where all are included, recognized and can bring their best self. We all bring different personalities, come from different backgrounds, countries, and operate differently. You should not be judged by your differences. It is important to implement inclusion correctly and to not develop more exclusion in the process. Respect and inclusion should be applied to everyone."



Yulia Derkach, Category Manager EMEA for Eaton:
"Inclusion and representation is a necessity."

(Image: Yulia Derkach)

The authors

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