

Department of Health
**Gender Equality
Action Plan
2022–25**



To receive this document in another format, email **People and Culture** <Inclusion@health.vic.gov.au>

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Health, March 2022.

Except where otherwise indicated, the images in this document show models and illustrative settings only, and do not necessarily depict actual services, facilities or recipients of services.

ISBN 978-1-76096-765-9 (PDF/MS Word Online)



Secretary's foreword

Gender equality in the workplace will be achieved when all people can access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of their gender and background.

With that in mind, I am proud to present the Department of Health's *Gender equality action plan 2022–2025*.

Here at the Department of Health, we recognise that gender equality is foundational to the health, wellbeing and safety of our people and, in turn, the Victorian communities we serve.

This action plan has been developed by examining the current state of gender equality in our department through our first workplace gender audit, along with looking at best practice research.

Our people were integral to developing this action plan. Our personal and lived experiences informed and determined our priority actions to advance gender equality in the department.

We have made fundamental progress in gender equality including increased awareness among our people about the issues that drive gender inequality and a strong uptake of flexible work outside of carer needs. But it's clear we still have more to do.

We have also taken a closer look at how gender inequality can be compounded when it intersects with other forms of inequality and disadvantage such as Aboriginality, disability, cultural diversity, sexual orientation, gender identity and age.

We know that a blanket 'fix-it' solution isn't fit for purpose. Through this action plan we will tailor the strategies and measures we put in place with an intersectional gender lens. At times, these will be bespoke solutions but with at-scale outcomes.

Through this action plan we will:

- hold our leaders accountable for championing gender equality
- increase intersectional gender representation and inclusion
- normalise flexible work and supporting staff with caring responsibilities
- improve support and processes for staff who experience unacceptable behaviours, and
- reduce pay gaps toward elimination.

We're also required – under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* – to conduct gender impact assessments on new and reviewed policies, programs and services that have a significant impact on the public. I am pleased we have committed to take this a step further, ensuring we will also apply an intersectional gender lens to our internal policies, programs and services through the course of this action plan.

As the Department of Health, we are aware of the toll the pandemic has had on people's health, social and economic wellbeing – especially women. On average, Australia's health workforce is predominantly female, placing them at the frontline of Victoria's COVID-19 response. We recognise that this has been enormously demanding, both physically and emotionally. Many women have also been working the 'double-double shift', balancing their jobs with increased caregiving and housework due to remote schooling, working from home and often caring for other family members. And so, through this action plan, we also seek to provide the necessary support to those who have been adversely impacted by the pandemic.

Genuine and sustainable change takes time. We are committed to listening to our people and being guided by their experiences, measuring and reporting on our progress, and being flexible in how we work together.

Nothing changes if we don't change. This action plan lays a strong foundation for the next four years. It shows us what needs to change and, importantly, charts the course for how we will make that happen.

I sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to developing our action plan, particularly to those who so candidly shared their stories, offered specialist skills, raised important questions, and proposed answers.

Our *Gender equality action plan 2022–2025* is the next step in our journey to achieving a respectful and inclusive workplace, defined by equality. I look forward to working with you on its implementation, to reporting on our progress, and to seeing the positive changes we can bring about, together.

Professor Euan Wallace
Secretary
Department of Health

Contents

Secretary's foreword	3
Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners	5
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recognition statement	5
Language statement	5
Our department	6
Legislative framework	7
Introduction	8
Gender equality in Victoria	9
Our vision for gender equality	9
Our achievements in gender equality	9
An ongoing commitment to diversity and our people	10
Gender equality principles	11
Our consultation process	12
Themes beyond the GEAP	13
Gender inequality affects people in different ways	14
Inclusion of trans and gender diverse staff	16
Our focus areas	16
Our workplace gender audit	17
Limitations and continuous improvement opportunities	17
Our strategies and measures	18
Focus area 1: Leadership and accountability	19
Focus area 2: Gender representation in our workforce	22
Focus area 3: Preventing gender-based inappropriate behaviour	27
Focus area 4: Flexible working, caring and family violence leave	30
Focus area 5: Gender pay equity	34
Strategic resourcing	37
Measuring progress	38
Appendix 1: Additional workplace gender audit data	39
Indicator 3: Sexual harassment	39
Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion	39
Indicator 6: Leave and flexibility	40
Appendix 2: Resourcing plan	41
Glossary	42

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The Department of Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Victoria and pays respects and recognises the contribution from their Elders past and present.

We proudly acknowledge the strength and resilience of First Nation peoples as the world's oldest living culture and the contribution of generations of Aboriginal leaders who have fought tirelessly for the rights of their people and communities.

We acknowledge the distinct connection between gender inequality and colonisation, dispossession, stolen generations and other discriminatory government policies from the past. We also acknowledge that gender inequality is compounded by the impacts of westernised structures of colonisation that still exist in contemporary society, and the burden of intergenerational trauma that has been placed within the diverse Aboriginal communities of Victoria.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recognition statement

The Department of Health pays respect to and recognises the contribution of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living and working in Victoria.

Throughout this document the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Language statement

The term 'intersectional groups' refers to staff who experience compounded gender inequality on the basis of age, disability, cultural diversity, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Trans and gender diverse staff are named separately in our plan further to our consultations that highlighted the importance of acknowledging that gender exists beyond the binary and that our *Gender equality action plan* be inclusive of all gender identities.

'LGBTIQ+' refers to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex or queer. Some research mentioned in this document is limited because it does not account for the experiences of people with an intersex variation. For this reason, we use the term 'LGBTIQ+' to reflect the research's limitations.

'Our' and 'we' refer to the Department of Health.

Our department

Our job is to help Victorians stay healthy and safe and deliver a world-class healthcare system that leads to better health outcomes for all Victorians.

The department supports Victorians to stay healthy and safe in lots of ways:

- To keep you in good health, we provide expert health information and advice that you can trust.
- When you need a health or aged care service, we will ensure you receive quality care by the best health workers in the world.
- When we have emergencies that have an impact on your health, we will be there to help guide you and keep you safe.
- If you are struggling with your mental health, we will ensure access to a range of care and supports.

The department delivers a healthcare system that meets the changing health needs of all Victorians by focusing on people first. Prevention is our starting point, creating the right conditions and supports to promote and protect good health and intervene early at every point.

We have five major reform directions to evolve our healthcare system so we can deliver better health outcomes for the Victorian community. Our reform directions are underpinned by three core principles that form the basis of everything we do:

- We deliver the health outcomes that matter the most to the community.
- We ensure fairness so we meet the needs of all Victorians.
- We do things in partnership with the community and health sector.

Serving the Victorian community is our passion, and we deeply believe that a sustainable, world-class healthcare system that delivers the best health outcomes will make Victorians the healthiest people in the world.

Legislative framework

On 31 March 2021 the **Gender Equality Act 2020** <<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/gender-equality-act-2020>> came into effect. The Act was established under *Safe and strong: a Victorian gender equality strategy* and requires all defined public entities to take action towards achieving workplace gender equality including through identifying and eliminating systemic forms of gender inequality in policies, programs and delivery of services in workplaces and communities. Public entities must also recognise that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of discrimination and disadvantage (s. 4 of the Act).

The three core obligations under the Act are:

- undertaking gender impact assessments when developing or reviewing policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public (Part 3 of the Act)
- preparing a gender equality action plan (GEAP) that includes the results of the workplace gender audit (WGA) and strategies and measures for promoting gender equality based on the results of the WGA (Part 4, Division 1, s. 10 of the Act)
- undertaking a WGA before developing a GEAP (Part 4, Division 1, s. 11 of the Act).



Introduction

Gender equality at work means having the ability to access opportunities with no barriers presented by traditional expectations of the roles people of different genders play both within and outside of the workplace.

**Eleanor Williams, Executive Director,
Mental Health and Wellbeing**



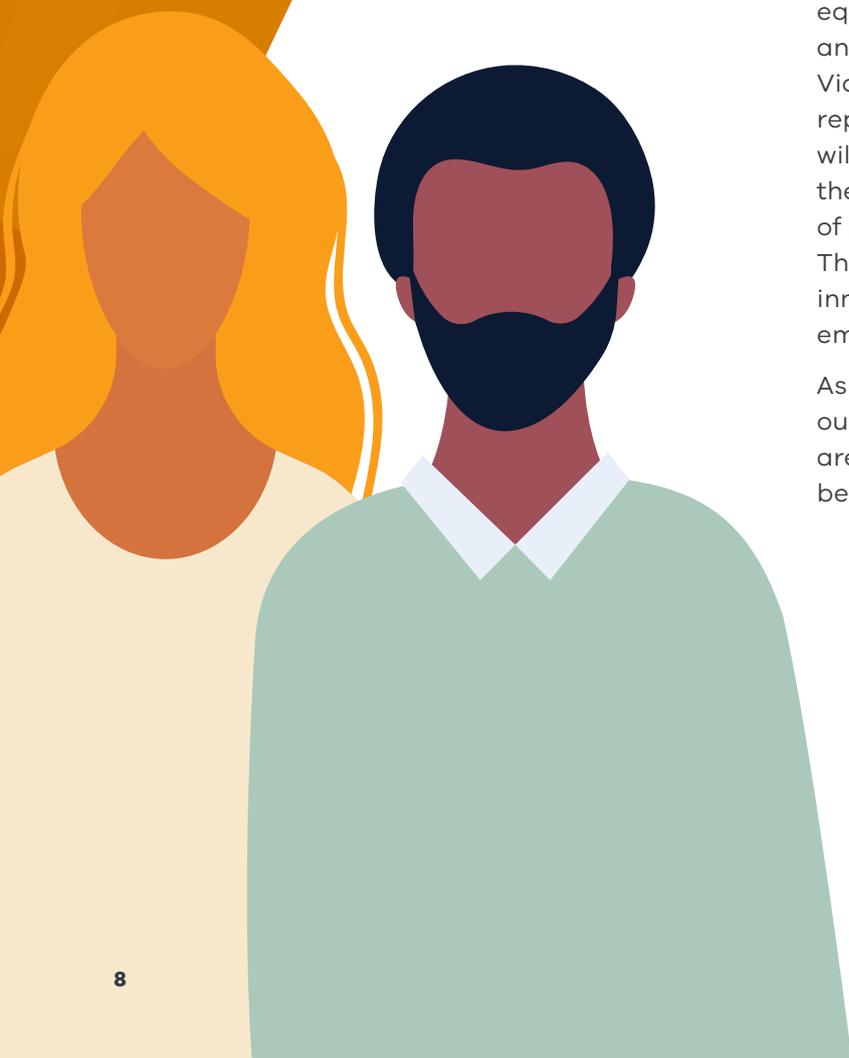
The creation of our first GEAP under the Gender Equality Act presents a timely opportunity for real and meaningful change; to both build on the work to advance gender equality in the department to date, while putting into place new initiatives to advance equity and equality in our workplace.

The Act promotes the right to gender equality, eliminating the causes of gender inequality, works to redress disadvantage, stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence and accommodate gender diversity.

We should all be able to live in a safe and equal society, with access to equal power, resources and opportunities, the right to health, wellbeing, dignity, privacy, respect, justice and choice.

We know that increasing workforce gender equality and diversity benefits all our employees and will enhance the work we do for all Victorians. Improving gender equality and representation across intersectional groups will allow a diversity of perspectives to be at the table, resulting in a more holistic analysis of issues, leading to improved decision making. The benefits include increased productivity, innovation, creativity and improvements in employee engagement and retention.

As the Department of Health, we acknowledge our role in leading the way in the sector and are committed to modelling gender equality best practice.



Gender equality in Victoria

Our GEAP will help progress the Victorian Government's vision within our workplace, as set out in *Safe and strong: a Victorian gender equality strategy*:

- All Victorians live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities, and are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- All Victorians recognise that gender equality is essential to economic prosperity and that gender inequality has significant economic cost.
- Victoria leads the way in gender equality with sustained, enduring and measurable action.

We will contribute to the following whole-of-government long-term outcomes as set out in *Safe and strong*:

- Participation in learning, education, the economy and society is not limited by gender.
- Victorians are rewarded equitably for their contribution in all aspects of society.
- Victorians do not tolerate attitudes and behaviours that support gender inequality.
- All Victorians are visible, have an equal voice and occupy decision-making roles not only at work but in communities, sport, media and the arts.
- All Victorians are safe in their homes, communities and workplaces.
- All Victorians are socially connected and healthy.
- Victorians model and promote a commitment to gender equality.
- Gender equality is embedded in all Victorian Government decisions and actions.
- The Victorian Government models gender equality best practice in the workplace.

Our vision for gender equality

To become an exemplar department in which our leaders and all staff proactively advance gender equality as an integral part of health, wellbeing and safety.

The department will achieve this by working to remove barriers and building a more inclusive workplace and culture where all people are treated with respect and have equal access to opportunities, regardless of their gender and other identities.

Our achievements in gender equality

This plan builds on the *Gender equality action plan 2019–2021* of the former Department of Health and Human Services, which had five strategic focus areas: attract a diverse and high-performing workforce; inspire and grow our people; engage and retain our people; purposeful leadership; and create a great people experience.

Key achievements under the plan included:

- establishing a women's leadership program
- supporting the first Leadership Development Workshop for the Women of Colour Network
- introducing a sexual harassment online module as part of our mandatory compliance training
- completing an audit against the Workplace Equality and Respect standards and training for executives and staff
- implementing the 'all roles flex' policy across the department
- providing support for staff taking parental leave and returning to work via the Grace Papers initiative, including an online platform and coaching.

The actions in the department's past GEAP have formed our important foundations towards improved gender equality. Although impact measurement hasn't been a focus of past strategies, anecdotally we have seen a much greater awareness of the issues that drive gender inequality, a stronger uptake of flexible work outside of carer needs and a steady uptake of training in areas such as sexual harassment and unconscious bias. While there is a way to go with data collection, we've also strengthened the voices of our intersectional groups with more people openly sharing their identity data such as disability, Aboriginality and gender diversity through People Matter surveys and other systems.

This GEAP has a focus on measuring progress via the gender equality indicators as well as ensuring individual interventions are measurable where applicable. This GEAP is therefore pioneering in ensuring impact is measured going forward.

An ongoing commitment to diversity and our people

Under the former department, we put in place strategies and plans to promote inclusion of diverse groups in our workforce, including an Aboriginal employment strategy, a disability employment strategy and an LGBTIQ+ action plan.

As a new department, the Department of Health is committed to developing an exceptional, diverse, healthy and safe workplace. Through developing new implementation plans that are underpinned by state plans such as *Getting to work: Victorian public sector disability employment action plan*, which commits all government departments to 12 per cent representation of people with disability, *Pride in our future*, Victoria's first LGBTIQ+ strategy and *Barring Djinang*, a five-year Aboriginal employment strategy, we commit to an inclusive workplace.

The department's *Aboriginal workforce strategy 2021–2026* demonstrates our commitment to embed the principles of true self-determination and cultural safety into our employee experience. We will create an outstanding culturally safe employee experience, where individuals are valued for their cultural knowledge and lived experience. As a key measure under the Aboriginal workforce strategic objective 'Expanded empowered Aboriginal leadership' we have a 4 per cent leadership target and we will develop an Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program in 2022 in partnership with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

The department's Culture Project, which began in 2021, is also underway. It aims to identify the current and ideal future culture of the department and enable movement towards a desired state. This desired state incorporates constructive behaviours that will support organisation-wide strategies, approaches and practices that enable an inclusive and culturally safe workplace that reflects the Victorian community. In 2022 the project will see staff actively participate through a department-wide culture assessment and vision workshops, which will be used to inform development of the roadmap towards our desired culture in order to build a positive workplace for all.

Gender equality principles

We are committed to the 10 gender equality principles outlined in s. 6 of the Act. These principles informed development of this GEAP.

Gender equality principles

- 1 All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- 2 Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- 3 Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- 4 Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
- 5 Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- 6 Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- 7 All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.
- 8 Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.
- 9 Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
- 10 Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

Gender equality in the workplace is about the opportunity for everyone to participate and contribute to the department's meaningful work. The COVID-19 pandemic made balancing working life and care responsibilities incredibly challenging and increased my awareness of issues with gender inequality. The opportunity to contribute to the GEAP gave me the time to reflect on how as a department we can structurally address these challenges.

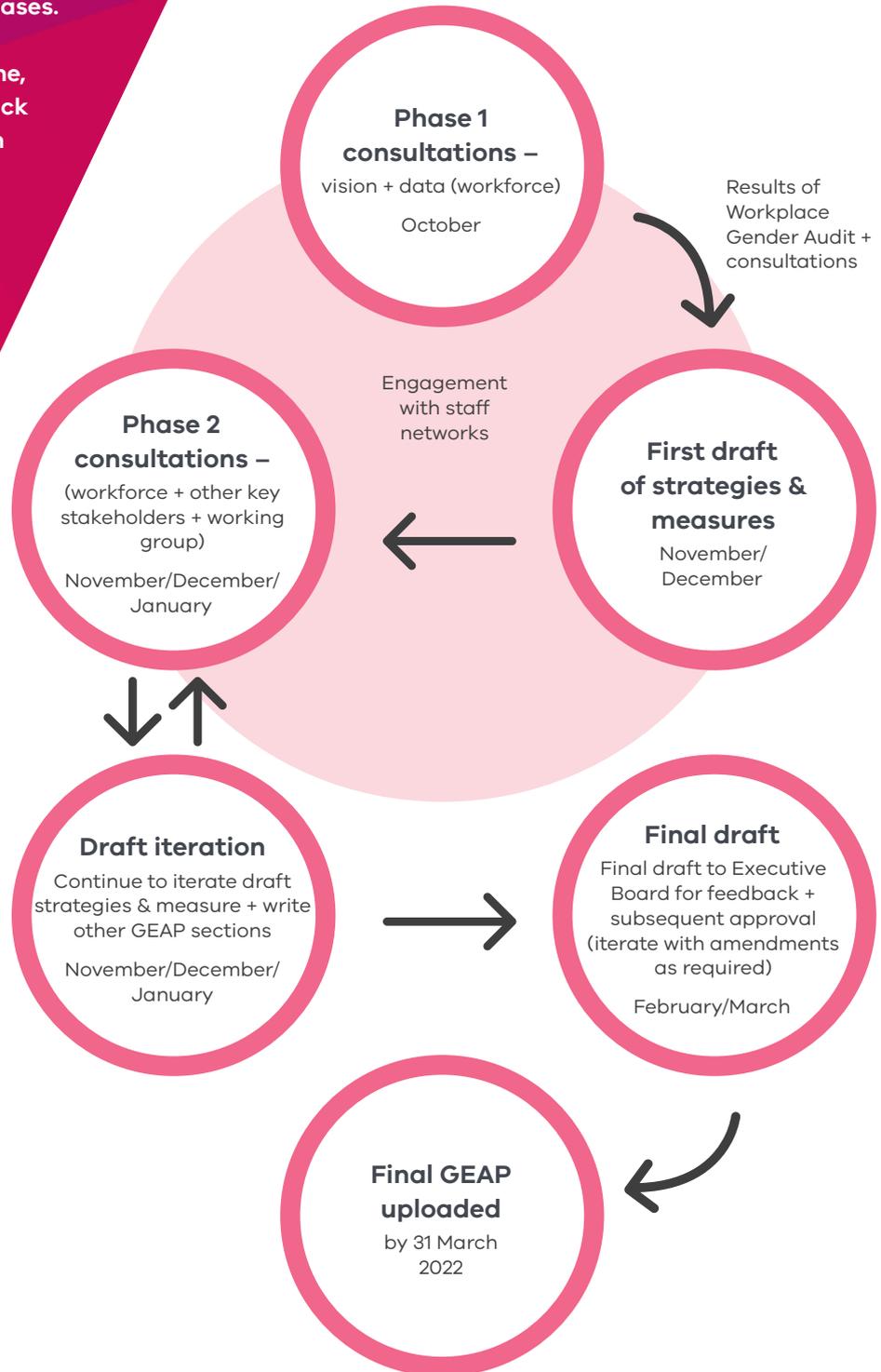
Sylvia Melville, Program Advisor, Commissioning and System Improvement



Our consultation process

The consultation process for developing the GEAP took place from October 2021 to February 2022 in two phases. We are sincerely grateful to all those who contributed their time, passion and considered feedback to this work including staff with parenting and other caring responsibilities, as well as those who shared their personal stories of how gender inequality impacts them.

Figure 1: GEAP consultation process



We intentionally began our consultations with a blank page to ensure our focus areas were a true reflection of the perspective and ideas of our employees.

A series of workshops facilitated by one of our external partners focused on building a vision for gender equality in the department as well as looking at barriers to gender equality and how we might overcome them. A further series of workshops facilitated by the Inclusion team focused on data under the seven gender equality indicators, why the data is telling us what it is and what we could do to improve. The Inclusion team also facilitated a series of informal lunchtime drop-in sessions as well as providing an anonymous feedback form. Members of the Aboriginal Staff Network, Enablers Network, Pride Network and VPS Women of Colour Network participated in focus groups and informal discussions across both phases of consultation.

Phase 2 consultations included two workshops in which staff provided feedback on the initial draft of strategies and measures, with opportunities for writing and discussions as well as a series of informal lunchtime drop-in sessions.

Staff who participated in consultations were invited to participate in the Gender Equality Action Plan Working Group, with participants from across levels of the workforce, divisions and staff networks. The working group met twice to provide advice and input on the draft as well as providing extensive out-of-session feedback.

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and various stakeholders with subject expertise were consulted on the results of our WGA and provided feedback on strategies. The draft was then submitted to the Executive Board for feedback and subsequent approval. More than 100 staff were engaged throughout the consultation process.

Themes beyond the GEAP

We acknowledge that a number of themes that emerged through the consultation process require consideration and work beyond the scope of this plan, within and beyond gender equality. Working to eliminate structural barriers to gender equality will be key to ensuring everyone is valued and treated as equals regardless of gender in our department into the future. Further themes for exploration include:

- superannuation payments during periods of all paid and unpaid parental leave
- parental leave superannuation booster payments
- removing the delineation between primary and secondary carers
- expanding the definition of care beyond the nuclear family to allow staff to nominate who they care for based on individual circumstances
- subsidies for childcare/caring costs
- whole-of-government policy changes to reduce pay inequity
- leadership accountability and capability beyond gender equality
- systemic improvements to help address other specific forms of discrimination.

Gender equality at the department means that everybody is able to participate meaningfully and equally in our workplace, regardless of our gender identities. The strategies put forward in this plan aim to take positive steps towards increasing participation and understanding of the rainbow community in our workplace, further enabling the valuable contributions of our LGBTIQ+ colleagues in our work and within the community. The Pride Network looks forward to supporting the implementation of this plan as we strive towards gender equality together.

Toby Sherring, Pride Network Co-chair



Gender inequality affects people in different ways

We know that people can experience compounded gender inequality in the workplace when it is combined with other forms of discrimination and disadvantage they experience on the basis of their other identities. Gender inequality that is layered in this way with one or more overlapping experiences of discrimination or disadvantage associated with a range of different identities or attributes is known as 'intersectional gender inequality'.

Intersectional gender inequality

To eliminate gender inequality in our workplace, we must work both within and beyond this plan to eliminate forms of overlapping discrimination and disadvantage that our staff experience.*

This includes discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of:



* This infographic shows some examples of the types of discrimination or disadvantage that compound gender inequality.

Aboriginality – specific forms of racism and continue to embed cultural safety and self-determination.

Aboriginal women with caring responsibilities have the highest rates of cultural load and women reported significantly lower levels of support to address culturally unsafe situations at work compared with men.¹

Age – stereotypes and other barriers faced by older staff members. Women over 60 years old have lower superannuation balances than their male counterparts,² and older women are the fastest growing group of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.³

Disability – barriers that can be physical and behavioural that impact on full participation of staff with disabilities both invisible and visible. Women with disabilities have lower workforce participation rates when compared with men with disabilities and all women,⁴ have lower incomes from employment and are more likely to be in precarious employment than women and men without disabilities.⁵

Cultural identity and ethnicity – various forms of racism and discrimination including linguistic discrimination and improve cultural safety. A higher proportion of women of colour (60 per cent) have experienced some form of discrimination in the workplace than have not,⁶ and culturally and linguistically diverse women have lower workforce participation rates when compared with culturally and linguistically diverse men and all women.⁷

LGBTIQ+ identities – specific forms of discrimination and harassment such as transphobia, homophobia and biphobia. More LGBTQ+ Victorians have faced unfair treatment based on their identities than not: Fifty-eight per cent based on sexual orientation and 77.7 per cent of trans and gender diverse Victorians.⁸

Other attributes such as socioeconomic status.

Our consultation participants highlighted the importance of addressing intersectional gender inequalities through the strategies and measures set out in this plan and beyond. We know there is further work we need to do to better address specific forms of discrimination and disadvantage experienced by our staff.

The department is committed to improving data collection and creating a supportive environment for disclosure to increase the data available to inform our next WGA in 2025.

This will help us to better understand the specific experiences and needs of intersectional groups and be able to respond with targeted strategies to address inequalities.

To achieve workplace gender equality, we must work to eliminate all forms of discrimination and disadvantage that our staff experience.

1 See *Gari Yala (Speak the Truth) Gendered Insights* <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Gari_Yala_genderedinsights2021.pdf>.

2 See *Women's economic security in retirement* <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Women%27s_economic_security_in_retirement.pdf>.

3 See *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016: Key findings* <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/2049.0>>.

4 See *Women with disability* <<https://womensworkforceparticipation.pmc.gov.au/women-disability.html#:~:text=The%20workforce%20participation%20rates%20for,is%20for%20persons%2015%2D64>>.

5 See *Factsheet: Employment of Persons with Disability* <<https://dpoa.org.au/factsheet-employment/>>.

6 See *Workplace survey report 2021* <<https://womenofcolour.org.au/workplace-survey-report-2021/>>.

7 See *Culturally and linguistically diverse women* <<https://womensworkforceparticipation.pmc.gov.au/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-women.html>>.

8 See *Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022–32* <<https://www.vic.gov.au/pride-our-future-victorias-lgbtqi-strategy-2022-32>>.

Inclusion of trans and gender diverse staff

Members of the department's Pride Network participated in consultations, proactively co-hosted discussions and made a submission that highlighted a number of inclusion issues faced by LGBTIQ+, trans and gender diverse staff and the opportunity to address systemic and cultural issues as part of this plan. We know from these conversations that to achieve gender equality that is inclusive of trans and gender diverse staff, we must recognise that there are more than two genders and that people express their genders in a variety of ways. We also understand that LGBTIQ+ people may experience forms of gender inequality based on their gender presentation, regardless of their gender identities.

Gender identity exists beyond the binary of women and men and includes other genders such as non-binary, trans and gender diverse people. Trans and gender diverse employees may experience exacerbated workplace inequality due to social expectations about gender norms. For example, studies have shown that trans and gender diverse employees are twice as likely to experience unemployment and are twice as likely to experience adverse job outcomes when compared with cisgender employees.⁹

We acknowledge the limitations of some of the department's systems to correctly record and update gender. This has led to reports of undue stress and embarrassment during onboarding or through automated reports. The department is committed to simplifying and improving this process. As the department continues to improve gender reporting beyond the binary and build a culture for more open data disclosure, we seek to address and raise awareness of some of the gender inequalities faced by trans and gender diverse staff.

To achieve workplace gender equality, we must ensure meaningful inclusion of trans and gender diverse staff.

Our focus areas

Our key areas of focus have been informed by workforce consultation and the gender equality principles, also ensuring we are responding to our WGA and incorporating best practice research. Each focus area outlines a goal we will achieve through various strategies shown in this plan:

- 1 Leadership and accountability:** Accountable leaders who champion gender equality.
- 2 Gender representation in our workforce:** Increased gender inclusivity and representation of intersectional groups across our workforce.
- 3 Preventing gender-based inappropriate behaviour:** Improved processes and awareness to support staff who experience workplace sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour.
- 4 Flexible working, caring and family violence leave:** Normalised flexible work, support for caring and for staff taking family violence leave.
- 5 Gender pay equity:** Reduced gender pay gap towards elimination and increased gendered segregation of labour awareness.

Our focus areas are interconnected, acknowledging that advancement across these areas collectively will improve gender equality in the department.

⁹ See: **Gender inequality: Nonbinary transgender people in the workplace** <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2016.1236511>> and Grant JM, et al. 2011, Injustice at every turn: a report of the national transgender discrimination survey, National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, Washington DC.

Our workplace gender audit

We completed our first WGA as per the requirements under the Act in 2021, which included two main types of data:

- workforce data from employee data systems as at 30 June 2021
- employee experience data from the Victorian Public Sector Commission's People Matter Survey (PMS) 2021, the Victorian public sector's annual employee opinion survey.

Please see focus areas under 'Our strategies and measures' and Appendix 1 for results of our WGA.

Limitations and continuous improvement opportunities

The machinery-of-government changes and the COVID-19 response recruitment made the 2020–21 year unique for workforce change.

The department's data systems require improvement to be able to measure and better reflect experiences of staff who experience intersectional gender inequality. In our 2021 WGA we did not have workforce data available based on disability, cultural identity, gender identity beyond the binary, sexual orientation or religion. Our current system does not collect information about cultural identity, religious identity or sexual orientation.

We will improve by:

- developing and improving diversity profile/data collection mechanisms to baseline, monitor and report on workplace gender equality indicators
- implementing communication campaigns to sensitively target staff who experience intersectional gender inequality to provide data (with the support of our staff networks)
- improving coordination between data extraction and data analysis for the purposes of the WGA, ensuring improved data collection results in improved data analysis.

Key to addressing issues that drive gender inequality will be the regular reporting by division to our deputy secretaries to determine localised strategies and interventions.



Our strategies and measures

This section sets out our strategies and measures that will ensure we promote gender equality in the department over the next four years based on the results of our WGA and workforce consultations.

Key – Branches of corporate services

OP, P & I = Organisational Planning, Performance and Improvement

CCS = Common Corporate Support

Comms = Communications

WR & E = Workplace Relations and Engagement

P & C = People and Culture

Key – Workplace gender equality indicators

- 1 Gender composition of the workforce

- 2 Gender composition of governing body

- 3 Pay equity

- 4 Sexual harassment

- 5 Recruitment and promotion

- 6 Leave and flexibility

- 7 Gendered segregation within the workplace

I am privileged to work in an organisation where I am visibly surrounded by strong female leaders, many of whom use flexible working arrangements to support work-life balance. But we still have a long way to go. We need to bridge the pay gap between us and our male colleagues. We need to normalise discussions about issues that influence our experience of the workplace, like menopause and pregnancy. We need to overtly acknowledge the cost of invisible labour and stubborn stereotypes. I don't want the next generation to also inherit these burdens. It needs to stop with us, here and now.

Olivia Goodman, Acting Deputy Secretary and Senior Counsel, Regulatory Risk, Integrity and Legal Division





Focus area 1: Leadership and accountability

Accountable leaders who champion gender equality

What we know

- Transparency and accountability are a vital part of cultural change, with benefits for gender equality and beyond. Our workforce want to see more of it.
- Increased accountability can also reduce the harmful effects of biases that could disadvantage women and people who experience intersectional gender inequality.¹⁰
- Our consultations highlighted that our people want to see our leaders at all levels champion a more gender-equitable workplace and the importance of embedding strategies and measures that empower our leadership to do so across all gender equality indicators.

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
Senior leaders are accountable for achieving gender equality	1.1 Review and update the PDP goal library to introduce mandatory and optional gender equality goals for leaders at all levels	Number of goals developed and promoted User feedback sought and goals reviewed annually	All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	1.2 Ensure there are gender equality KPIs in PDPs for leaders	Increase in proportion of leaders with key performance indicators (KPIs)	All		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Secretary and divisional heads with support from P & C
	1.3 Invite staff with lived experience from intersectional groups to regularly participate in the Secretary's Wellbeing Roundtable	Number of roundtables attended by intersectional groups Responsive implementation activities established	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Secretary with support from P & C
Senior leaders and VPS staff members at all levels of the workforce visibly champion gender equality	1.4 Identify and promote both senior leaders and VPS staff as Gender Equality Champions and define role activities	One to two senior leader champions and two to four VPS champions identified per division, ensuring representation across genders (dependent on size of division) Role activities defined and reviewed annually	All		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional heads with support from P & C

¹⁰ See *How to increase transparency of progression, pay and reward* <https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/BIT_How_to_improve_gender_equality_guide-ITPPR.pdf>.

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
Leaders at all levels build capability in challenging stereotypical gender norms, constructively intervening to improve workplace culture and in responding to sexual harassment	1.5 Investigate and implement learning interventions for leaders (at all levels), with a focus on challenging stereotypical gender norms and constructively intervening to improve workplace culture	Average end-user satisfaction/advocate rate of 70% or above 80% of leaders complete required training	1, 2, 4, 6, 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	1.6 Source and implement facilitated training for people managers in responding to sexual harassment	Average end-user satisfaction/advocate rate of 70% or above 80% of leaders complete required training	4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
We ensure a gender lens is applied to all new policies, programs and services both internally and externally	1.7 Conduct gender impact assessments (GIAs) on all new external policies, programs and services and those that are up for review	Number of GIAs conducted and uploaded to SharePoint page		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional heads
	1.8 Conduct GIAs on internal policies, programs and services, including those that are new, up for re-view and where gender discrimination has been identified	Number of GIAs conducted and uploaded to SharePoint page Issues of identified gender discrimination are resolved	All		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional heads
	1.9 Regularly promote materials and available training on conducting GIAs to our workforce	Awareness and engagement metrics Awareness of key divisional staff on GIA requirements	All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional heads with support from P & C
Our staff at all levels are informed on gender equality progress in our department	1.10 Develop a dashboard to regularly report to our workforce on gender equality data and progress	Dashboard developed Feedback regularly sought to ensure usability	All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CCS OP, P & I
	1.11 Regularly communicate about the importance of and progress in gender equality in the workplace and share gender equality data with all staff	Awareness and engagement metrics	All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional heads, P & C with support from Comms

Gender equality for me means being safe, equal and respected. It means that I matter. It means that the diversity of the community around me matters and are supported to be self-determining. It means that we are represented and treated with fairness, kindness and respect so we can heal, function and thrive. It means that we are welcome; that our health, wellbeing, characteristics and conditions are respected and accommodated as part of the variety of human experience and variation. It means that our lived and learned interest and expertise is valued, wanted and that we are promoted in order to prevent ill-health, protect our health and improve the organisation. For this, our health and wellbeing policies, plans and practices must reflect, protect and support the sex, gender and diversity needs and diversity of us and the greater community.

GEAP consultation participant





Focus area 2: Gender representation in our workforce

Increased gender inclusivity and representation of intersectional groups across our workforce

What we know

Indicator 1: Gender composition of the governing body

45%

Executive Board members were women

59%

senior leaders were women



Indicator 2: Gender composition of the workforce



Generally, **women are proportionately underrepresented at more senior levels**, particularly in VPS6, SES2 and SES3 classifications.

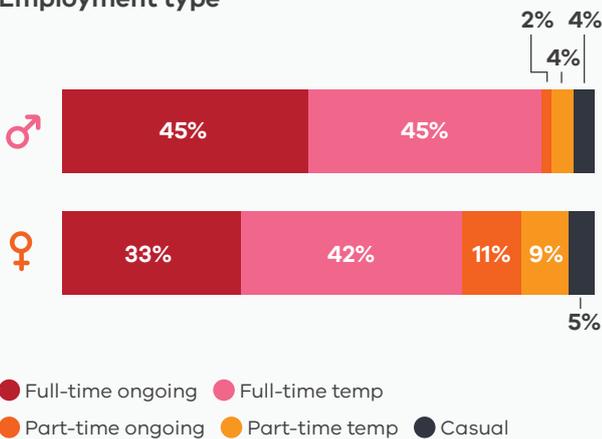
♂ 37%
men

♀ 63%
women

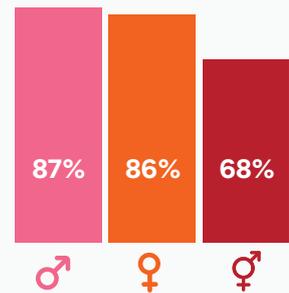
♀* ≈1%
non-binary/
different term

* The 1% is approximate, as per the 2021 PMS. Workforce data currently notes the breakdown as 63% women and 37% men = 100%. The department has historically not adequately recorded gender beyond the binary; however, PMS results show at least 1% of employees identify as non-binary or a different term and 12% of employees indicated they would prefer not to say.

Employment type



People Matter Survey - respondents who agree with the statement: 'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders'



Employees who identified as non-binary/different term/ prefer not to say in the 2021 PMS were less likely to agree that there is a positive workplace culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders.

Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion

Approximately **2/3 of higher duties roles were assigned to women**, which is proportionate to overall workforce composition. These were mostly at the VPS5 and VPS6 levels.

77% of career-focused learning and development opportunities were taken up by women, predominantly by ongoing employees at VPS5 classification and most aged 35–54 years.

- Our staff want to see increased representation across genders of Aboriginal, culturally and ethnically diverse staff, staff with disability and LGBTIQ+ staff at all levels of the workforce in our department and for representation across our workforce to reflect the Victorian community.
- We heard from our workforce about the importance of making our workplace more gender inclusive, noting that between a quarter and a half of complaints about gender identity discrimination are workplace-related in Australia.¹¹
- 2021 PMS results highlight that women and people in Group NB/DT/PNS¹² responded less favourably to PMS questions mapped against Indicator 1 (gender composition of the workforce) and Indicator 5 (recruitment and promotion).

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
Human resources policies and procedures are inclusive and accessible for all intersectional groups	2.1 Regularly review HR policies and ensure inclusion of intersectional groups and alignment with gender equality principles	Number of updates to HR policies that ensure inclusion and alignment with gender equality principles	1, 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	2.2 Develop and implement a department-specific 'Supporting gender transition in the workplace' toolkit for managers	Toolkit developed Establish feedback loop for managers on usability	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
Staff are educated and informed about gender diversity including better awareness and understanding of the issues faced by our trans and gender diverse community	2.3 Provide and promote resources targeted to people managers and to all staff on gender diversity	Resources provided User feedback indicates increased awareness	1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	2.4 Regularly promote VPS inclusive language writing style guides	Engagement and awareness metrics	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
	2.5 Source and implement trans and gender diverse awareness training	Increase in percentage of agree / strongly agree responses to PMS question 'gender is not a barrier to success' from Group NB/DT/PNS ¹³	1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C

11 See **Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission** <<https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/gender-identity/>>.
 12 This group includes staff who identify as non-binary, 'I use a different term', or 'Prefer not to say' grouped together for statistical significance. In future, where available, disaggregated data based on gender identity ('non-binary', 'I use a different term') will be included.
 13 'Non-binary', 'I use a different term' and 'Prefer not to say' were grouped together in the 2021 PMS for statistical significance.

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
We support the specific needs of intersectional groups through targeted action plans and strategies	2.6 Refresh our inclusion framework with increased focus on addressing discrimination and disadvantage faced by intersectional groups	Framework refreshed in consultation with staff increase in percentage of agree/strongly agree responses to PMS questions 'age/being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander/cultural background/disability/sexual orientation is not a barrier to success' including from intersectional groups where available	1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			P & C
	2.7 Create an LGBTIQ+ workforce action plan	Plan created in consultation with staff increase in percentage of 'agree/strongly agree' responses to PMS questions 'gender/sexual orientation is not a barrier to success' across Group NB/DT/PNS and sexual orientations where available	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				P & C
We provide opportunities for growth and development of emerging, existing and intersectional leaders	2.8 Pilot, implement and evaluate leadership training for leaders (VPS5–6) and emerging leaders (VPS3–4) from intersectional groups ¹⁴	Conduct needs assessment to determine training needs Average end-user satisfaction/advocate rate of 70% or above	1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	2.9 Review, make changes to and promote the department's mentorship program to attract mentors and mentees from intersectional groups ¹⁵	Conduct a needs assessment and make changes to the program accordingly Average end-user satisfaction/advocate rate of 70% or above	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C

14 There is currently mixed evidence on whether such interventions help women progress and continued evaluation will contribute to research in this area. See **How to improve gender equality in the workplace: evidence-based actions for employers** <https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/BIT_How_to_improve_gender_equality_report.pdf>.

15 Men mentoring women has been found to have positive impacts on the careers of women. See **The men who mentor women** <<https://hbr.org/2016/12/the-men-who-mentor-women>>.

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
We support increased gender diversity and intersectional representation in decision making	2.10 Continue to participate in the initiative to appoint 50 per cent women executives in the Victorian Public Service	At least 50% representation of women on the Executive Board	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	2.11 Investigate options for increasing intersectional and gender diversity balance across leadership and access to decision making, including in committees and working groups	Options identified and implemented Increase in presence of intersectional groups in decision-making forums	1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	2.12 Explore and advocate for workforce targets for intersectional groups	Options identified that can be meaningfully implemented Frequency of advocacy	1				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
We regularly communicate to and educate our workforce around lived experience stories of leadership, allyship, experiences of intersectional groups and support for increased data disclosure	2.13 Include lived experience stories to promote leadership of people who experience gender inequality including from intersectional groups where relevant in internal communication activities across the department	Awareness and engagement metrics	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms in consultation with staff networks
	2.14 Raise awareness of intersectional gender inequality and allyship, targeting racism, ageism, ableism, discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation through relevant communications activities	Awareness and engagement metrics	1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
	2.15 Share resources to support intersectional groups to safely disclose identity data at all points of the employee lifecycle through relevant communication activities	Awareness and engagement metrics	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
We regularly communicate to and educate our workforce around lived experience stories of leadership, allyship, experiences of intersectional groups and support for increased data disclosure	2.16 Share information on the importance of using pronouns with departmental staff	Awareness and engagement metrics Number of learning and development programs that include messaging about pronouns	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
Our data systems facilitate intersectional data collection and WGA requirements, ensuring the diverse identities of our staff can be appropriately recorded	2.17 Explore and implement changes to workforce data systems including methods to collect data on promotions, temporary assignments and streamlining approach to Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations	Increase in data available for intersectional groups A feedback loop to monitor reports of system limitations is implemented Increase in availability of data for WGA	1, 5, 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CCS P & C
	2.18 Advocate for improvements to PMS questions that relate to gender equality	Advocacy conducted annually VPSC feedback process promoted	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	2.19 Develop programs and recruitment activities to increase underrepresented intersectional groups, gender diverse staff and victim/survivors of family violence in our workforce	Programs developed and implemented in response to available data and needs identified Increase in representation of identified groups	5		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C

I wish to see the Department of Health being an inclusive organisation, providing equitable opportunities for all people, regardless of their gender. It is not often that we have a first-hand opportunity to shape our future.

GEAP consultation participant, Public Health





Focus area 3: Preventing gender-based inappropriate behaviour

Improved processes and awareness to support staff who experience workplace sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviours

What we know

Indicator 4: Sexual harassment

no. 0*

Number of formally reported cases of sexual harassment

2%

of women in the PMS indicated they experienced sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months

* Sexual harassment is underreported in the department. While there were no formal complaints of sexual harassment, the PMS shows that about 2% of women experienced some form of sexual harassment during the year.

accountability

support

awareness

respect

bystander
action

wellbeing

safety

- Our staff want to see improved processes and awareness about sexual harassment, sexism and gender-based violence.
- The Australian Human Rights Commission Respect@Work report found that workplaces need to do more to prevent sexual harassment.
- Recommended practice to better prevent and respond to sexual harassment involves seven key areas,¹⁶ which inform our strategies and measures.

¹⁶ Informed by the seven domains outlined in the AHRC 2020 Respect@Work Sexual Harassment National Inquiry report as per **VPSC guidelines** <<https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/wp-content/pdf-download.php?postid=124481>>.

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
We take a victim-centred approach to sexual harassment in our systems and processes	3.1 Review and amend current policy and processes to adopt a victim-centred approach to the way the department responds to sexual harassment and to ensure we respond to the needs of trans, gender diverse staff and intersectional groups	Increase in reports of sexual harassment via PMS Increase in number of staff disclosing incidents via other channels Number of amendments made that ensure inclusion of identified groups Feedback loop on policies and processes established	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WR & E supported by P & C
	3.2 Ensure availability of support before and after a report as well as during any formal processes	Availability of supports ensured Feedback loop established	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				WR & E
	3.3 Improve record-keeping to store and categorise all sexual harassment complaints and develop a risk register	Record-keeping mechanism established to ensure categorisation	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WR & E
	3.4 Review and amend current policy and processes to ensure they respond to the needs of trans, gender diverse staff and intersectional groups	Policy reviewed and amended to ensure appropriateness for different groups Feedback loop established	4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WR & E
	3.5 Increase and promote reporting options available including establishing an anonymous process and address barriers to reporting	Increase in number of reporting options available Promotion of awareness and engagement metrics Barriers to reporting identified and addressed	4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WR & E
Our workforce are aware of policies, processes and how to be active bystanders in response to sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviours	3.6 Increase internal awareness around sexual harassment, sexism and gender-based violence, our policies and how to report	Engagement and awareness metrics	4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
Our workforce are aware of policies, processes and how to be active bystanders in response to sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviours	3.7 Increase internal awareness about harassment and the unique experiences of trans and gender diverse staff and intersectional groups	Increase in percentage of agree / strongly agree responses to PMS questions mapped to indicator 4 of NB/DT/PNS ¹⁷ respondents	4		☑	☑	☑	P & C with support from Comms
	3.8 Explore new approaches to workplace sexual harassment training and evidence-based approaches to engaging staff including how to be an active bystander ¹⁸	Increase in percentage of agree / strongly agree responses of women and NB/DT/PNS respondents to question <i>I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work</i> Increase in percentage of agree / strongly agree responses across genders to <i>My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination</i>	4		☑	☑	☑	P & C with support from Comms
	3.9 Explore the use and application of an independent mechanism to seek complainants' feedback on policies and processes to inform continuous improvements	Number of complainants who provide feedback Level of complainant satisfaction with outcomes	4	☑	☑	☑	☑	WR & E

As a new-ish father of a two-year-old and with a new baby on the way, to me gender equality means doing things equally at home. A major part of this for me was taking the full provision of parental leave available to me as the secondary carer.

The benefits have been immeasurable. For me, I now enjoy a deeper bond than ever with my toddler, which will be with both of us for our whole lives. For my wife, who is as driven as I am, and has been able to return to her important career as a lawyer. For our whole family, which no longer has a #1 and #2 parent – but two who contribute equally.

Leadership means many things, but for the rest of my career thanks to this experience I will both continue to lead by example and heavily push for all dads and partners under my management to take parental leave as much as I can. While we all have our workplace pressures and it's always difficult to balance work while having staff on leave, it may be one of the best investments for families, children and society that we can make.

Yi-Luen Tan, Manager, Victorian Health Building Authority



¹⁷ 'Non-binary', 'I use a different term' and 'Prefer not to say' were grouped together in the 2021 PMS for statistical significance.

¹⁸ VicHealth has created a **social norms email campaign to encourage bystander action** <<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/sexism-remote-working-bystander-guide.pdf?la=en&hash=6A95C52D6073C331D950A76138862D97B025E03B>>.



Focus area 4: Flexible working, caring and family violence leave

Normalised flexible work, support for caring and for staff taking family violence leave

What we know

Indicator 6: Leave and flexibility

26%

of all **men**
took paid
carers leave

29%

of all **women**
took paid
carers leave



No. of employee exits during parental leave:

♂ = 0 ♀ < 5

Men took an average of **4.5 weeks** of **paid parental leave**.
No men took **unpaid parental leave**.

Women took an average of **8.5 weeks** of **paid parental leave** and **15 weeks** of **unpaid parental leave**.

94%
of employees taking **paid parental leave** were **women**.



Flexible work and caring

- Our consultations revealed that our staff want access to flexible work to meet their individual needs across genders and other identities, to know more about the types of flexibility available and to see roles advertised as flexible by default.
- Flexible work arrangements help nurture and retain effective leaders, as does promoting shared parental leave across genders. Australian and international research shows that flexible work promotes workforce participation, employee satisfaction and productivity across genders.¹⁹
- Cultural support within the workplace for flexible work policies is key.²⁰
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing workplace gender inequality in Australia, which saw men do less unpaid care work.²¹ We must continue to monitor the ripple effects of the pandemic.

Family violence

- Family violence increased in the country and the state during COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.²²
- Our consultation participants told us staff want to know more about what family violence is and to be more aware of the supports available.
- Our workplace has a crucial role to play in preventing family and gender-based violence.

¹⁹ See *Flexible work post-COVID* <<https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/flexible-work-post-covid>>.

²⁰ See *Flexible work arrangements: work life balance* <https://insync.com.au/wp-content/uploads/genderworx-working-paper_flexible-work-arrangements.pdf>.

²¹ See *Supporting gender equality: Lessons for the post-COVID workplace* <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/static/c8bf63b5c73f03a4aabb778288a8d63/Resource-Snapshot_gender_equality-Mar_2021.pdf>.

²² See *Police-recorded crime trends in Victoria during the COVID-19 pandemic* <<https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/research-and-evaluation/publications/police-recorded-crime-trends-in-victoria-during-the-covid-19>>.

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
Our systems and processes support flexible work as the default way of working and we measure flexible work practices	4.1 Review and amend systems and templates to ensure flexibility is the default (or, if not, on a 'why not' basis) and that they are fit-for-purpose to support job-share arrangements including those above 1 FTE	Templates / system changes completed that support flexibility Reduction in number of system limitations Increase in number of staff / senior leaders who work flexibly/part-time Increase in number of job-share arrangements above 1 FTE	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			P & C
	4.2 Identify and implement methods to collect data on flexible work arrangements and exits after parental leave	Methods identified Increase in data available on flexible work	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			P & C
Our workforce is aware of the high level of support for flexible work and have resources to support their flexible work choices	4.3 Promote and regularly review resources to educate on new and innovative ways to embed flexibility including non-traditional job-sharing ²³ to all staff and managers	Awareness and engagement metrics Feedback on resources provided Decrease in gender gaps of PMS levels of agree / strongly agree responses for Having caring responsibilities, family responsibilities, flexible work arrangements are barriers to success	6		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	4.4 Increase internal awareness of male staff and intersectional groups about the high level of organisational support for caring and staff who work flexibly, including through sharing lived experience stories ²⁴	Increase in percentage of agree / strongly agree responses from men and Group NB/DT/PNS ²⁵ to <i>I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration</i> Increase in percentage of agree / strongly agree responses from women and NB/DT/PNS respondents to <i>My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender</i>	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms

23 Non-traditional job sharing includes temporal flexibility/asymmetry, inter-generational sharing and verticality. See **Reimagining jobsharing** <https://b536ef95-d95a-41ab-8ea2-86d91525afdc.filesusr.com/ugd/d1755c_36c7d73366aa4ee18c684e6761059ae1.pdf>.

24 Informing men about the high levels of support among their male colleagues, including managers, increased rates of men intending to take five to eight weeks of parental leave by 50 per cent. See **Supporting men to take longer parental leave and work flexibly** <<https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PI-dual-trial-report-080621-for-upload.pdf>>.

25 'Non-binary', 'I use a different term' and 'Prefer not to say' were grouped together in the 2021 PMS for statistical significance.

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
We promote job-sharing and support staff who work part-time	4.5 Source, pilot and evaluate a job-share platform	Job-share platform sourced Number of matches made via platform Average end-user satisfaction/advocate rate of 70% or above	6			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	4.6 Promote part-time work for all genders to meet individual needs	Awareness and engagement metrics Increase in number of male and gender diverse staff and senior leaders in part-time roles	6		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
We celebrate and support staff with parenting and caring responsibilities	4.7 Continue to advocate to expand the definition of caring relationships to meet the diverse needs of our staff	Representative groups are invited to enterprise agreement negotiations	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	4.8 Review and make changes as required to enhance supports for staff taking parental leave and with caring responsibilities	Needs assessment conducted Changes to supports implemented Feedback loop established for staff taking parental leave	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	4.9 Create and promote a department 'keeping in touch' policy to support staff going on parental leave	Policy created in consultation with staff who have taken parental leave Awareness and engagement metrics	6		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
We respond to the ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our staff with caring and family responsibilities	4.10 Gain greater understanding on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 on our workforce and respond with appropriate supports	Needs assessment conducted Supports identified and promoted	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
Our workplace practices are aligned to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework and our staff are informed about family violence leave and supports	4.11 Continue to implement the department's MARAM action plan	Number of people accessing family violence leave Number of staff who participate in family violence training	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			P & C
	4.12 Increase communications about family violence leave availability and supports for all genders	Awareness and engagement metrics Increase in percentage of agree / strongly agree responses from men and Group NB/DT/PNS ²⁶ to PMS statement <i>My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave</i>	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms

We have been working in a job share arrangement for the last 12 months, which has allowed each of us to bring different skills and perspectives to our shared work, to learn from each other's experiences, to share the load on tricky decisions, and to protect each other's time off.

On the work front, Phil has been able to bring experience in consulting and at the Mental Health Royal Commission to the table, while Sarah brings deep experience in the VPS, in strategic policy and in health and human services. Our complementary skills strengthen our thinking and leadership within the branch and division.

In our home lives, job sharing during 2021 meant each of us was able to dedicate time to our young families during another very hectic year, safe in the knowledge that the other was progressing things at work when we were offline.

Sarah Nesbitt and Phil Ames, Executive Directors, Reform & Planning



26 'Non-binary', 'I use a different term' and 'Prefer not to say' were grouped together in the 2021 PMS for statistical significance.



Focus area 5: Gender pay equity

Reduced gender pay gap towards elimination and increased gendered segregation of labour awareness

What we know

Indicator 3: Pay equity

The median gender pay gap was

5.7%

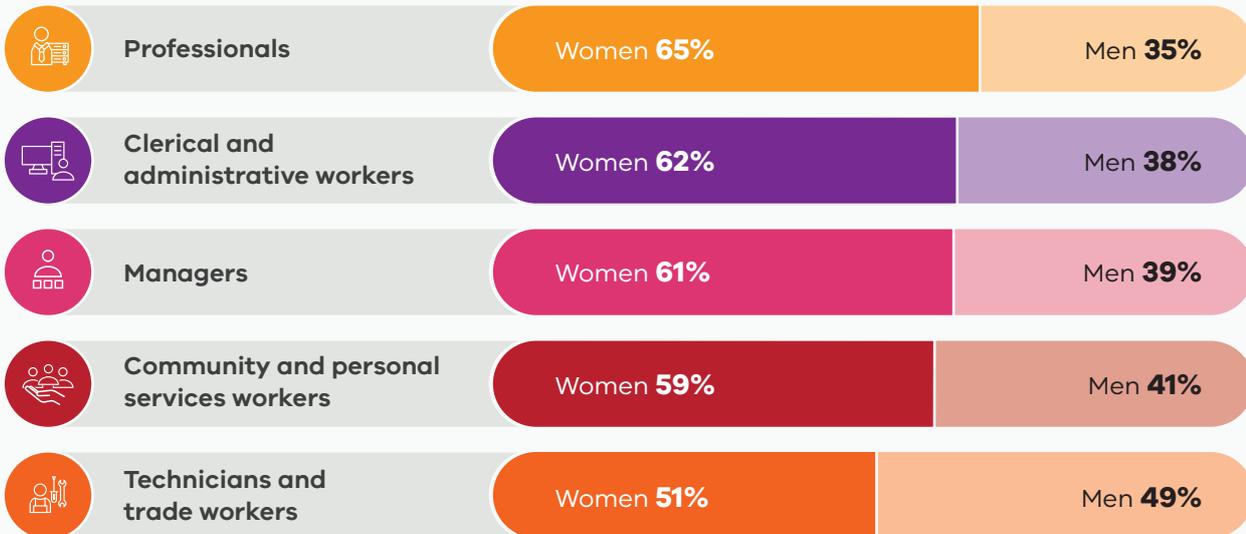
a difference of

\$6,063

in median annual salary



Indicator 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace



As per ANZSCO classification codes and sub-codes, women are proportionately underrepresented in:

31%
ICT professionals

51%
Engineering and sciences

- Our data shows more pronounced pay gaps at senior levels, for older women and for women who work part-time.
- Consultations highlighted:
 - a number of systemic barriers to pay equity such as the VPS level structure and associated progression and that sustained action is required to improve
 - the need to raise awareness around the gendered division of labour and its relationship to the pay gap and gender equality.

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
We target pay gaps at the divisional level	5.1 Analyse pay gaps at the divisional level, identify activities to address them, set targets, monitor and report on progress	Divisional pay gap analysis conducted Targets set Reduction in divisional level pay gaps	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with divisional heads
	5.2 Conduct further analysis on pay gaps for older women and women who work part-time and implement responsive actions	Analysis conducted to understand statistical significance of gaps and how they can best be targeted Actions implemented	3		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
We increase reporting on remuneration review processes and implement targeted policies towards eliminating pay gaps where they are most pronounced	5.3 Expand the reporting of the Remuneration Committee to the Executive Board to include Senior Technical Specialist and Senior Medical Administrator classifications and implement solutions to target pronounced gaps	Reduction in pronounced pay gaps	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	5.4 Establish affirmative action policies to address VPS pay gaps and communicate their purpose and function to staff	Reduction in pronounced pay gaps	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C
	5.5 Conduct analysis of salaries at commencement by gender and intersectional identities and implement responsive activities	Analysis conducted to identify gender pay gaps in salary at commencement Strategies implemented and reviewed for efficacy	3		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C

Objective	Strategies In practice we will...	Measures	GE indicator	Year				Led by
				1	2	3	4	
Our workforce is aware of the pay policy and salary negotiation processes and managers are aware of the role bias plays in hiring outcomes including for intersectional groups	5.6 Increase internal awareness of VPS pay policy and progression processes	Awareness and engagement metrics Increase in percentage of agree / strongly agree responses across genders to PMS statement <i>I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation</i>	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
	5.7 Educate our people leaders about the role of bias in hiring outcomes and taking positive steps to eliminate it	Awareness and engagement metrics	3		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
	5.8 Create and provide resources on salary negotiations aimed at managers and staff, ensuring appropriateness for intersectional groups	Salary negotiation resources created User feedback	3		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
We have policies to support staff into non-traditional roles and a workforce that is aware of the gendered segregation of labour and the impacts on gender inequality	5.9 Celebrate both women and men in non-traditional roles in our communications, and build understanding around gender segregation of occupations within the workforce and sector	Awareness and engagement metrics	7		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms
	5.10 Explore other opportunities to promote roles with gender underrepresentation including through developing specialist recruitment programs	Opportunities identified to promote roles Number of promotion activities conducted Specialist recruitment program opportunities explored	7		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P & C with support from Comms

Strategic resourcing

The Gender Equality Act requires all government departments to have appropriately assigned resources to implement the strategies and measures that are outlined in this plan.

Our department is committed to creating a Gender Equality Implementation Team that will consist of a full-time, dedicated People and Culture lead, and people from Common Corporate Support, People and Culture, Organisational Planning, Performance and Improvement and Workplace Relations and Engagement to implement the required improvements to data collection and reporting, as well as a representative from each division. The department will also establish a Lived Experience Advisory Group and will continue to consult with the CPSU.

The purpose of the Gender Equality Implementation Team will be to monitor the progress of GEAP implementation and ensure implementation activities are performed in a timely and coordinated manner. It will also ensure implementation is informed by lived experience where appropriate. The team will consist of two sub-groups – leaders responsible for implementation activities and staff working directly on implementation.

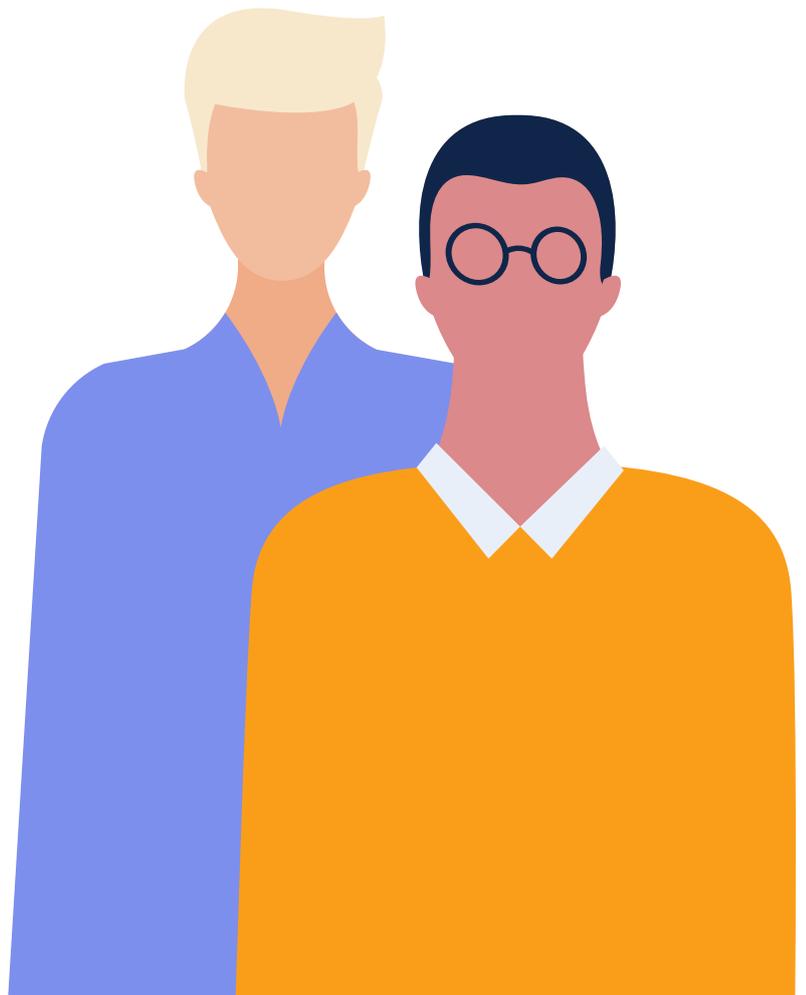
See Appendix 2 for the detailed resourcing plan.



Measuring progress

We are committed to measuring our progress. Regular monitoring and reporting will help us to understand our progress in gender equality. We will report on the progress of our GEAP every two years as required under the Act and also publish our progress annually on our website. Further, we will take an iterative approach to implementation by:

- reporting on the outcomes of our strategies and particular initiatives quarterly to our Executive Board and divisions for continued strategic and tactical input
- establishing project management approaches to track progress in implementing strategies and measures set out in the GEAP
- establishing annual implementation plans that show how strategies will be put into operation during each year
- developing GEAP outcomes/SMART goals against which we will monitor and report our progress, such as:
 - Focus area 1: Leadership and accountability: By 2023, all PDPs include gender equality KPIs
 - Focus area 2: Gender representation in our workforce: By 2024, at least 90 per cent of workforce PMS respondents agree or strongly agree to the statement *Gender is not a barrier to success*
 - Focus area 3: Preventing gender-based inappropriate behaviour: By 2024, at least 80 per cent of workforce PMS respondents agree or strongly agree to the statement *My department takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination*
 - Focus area 4: Flexible work, caring and family violence leave: By 2024, at least 90 per cent of workforce PMS respondents agree or strongly agree to the statement *My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender*
 - Focus area 5: Gender pay equity: By 2025, we will eliminate the pay gap across our executive workforce
- setting targets and KPIs through the course of this plan as outlined in specific strategies
- streamlining WGA requirements into business-as-usual processes and reporting, including implementing changes to workforce data systems to improve data collection, monitoring and progress reporting
- establishing a dashboard (at the organisation and division levels) of key data measures aligned to the gender equality indicators and a gender equality achievement register outlining progress against individual strategies to ensure we monitor and share our progress with our entire workforce
- establishing a communication, change and engagement strategy to support all strategies and measures relating to communications under this plan and to monitor staff engagement.



Appendix 1: Additional workplace gender audit data

Indicator 3: Sexual harassment

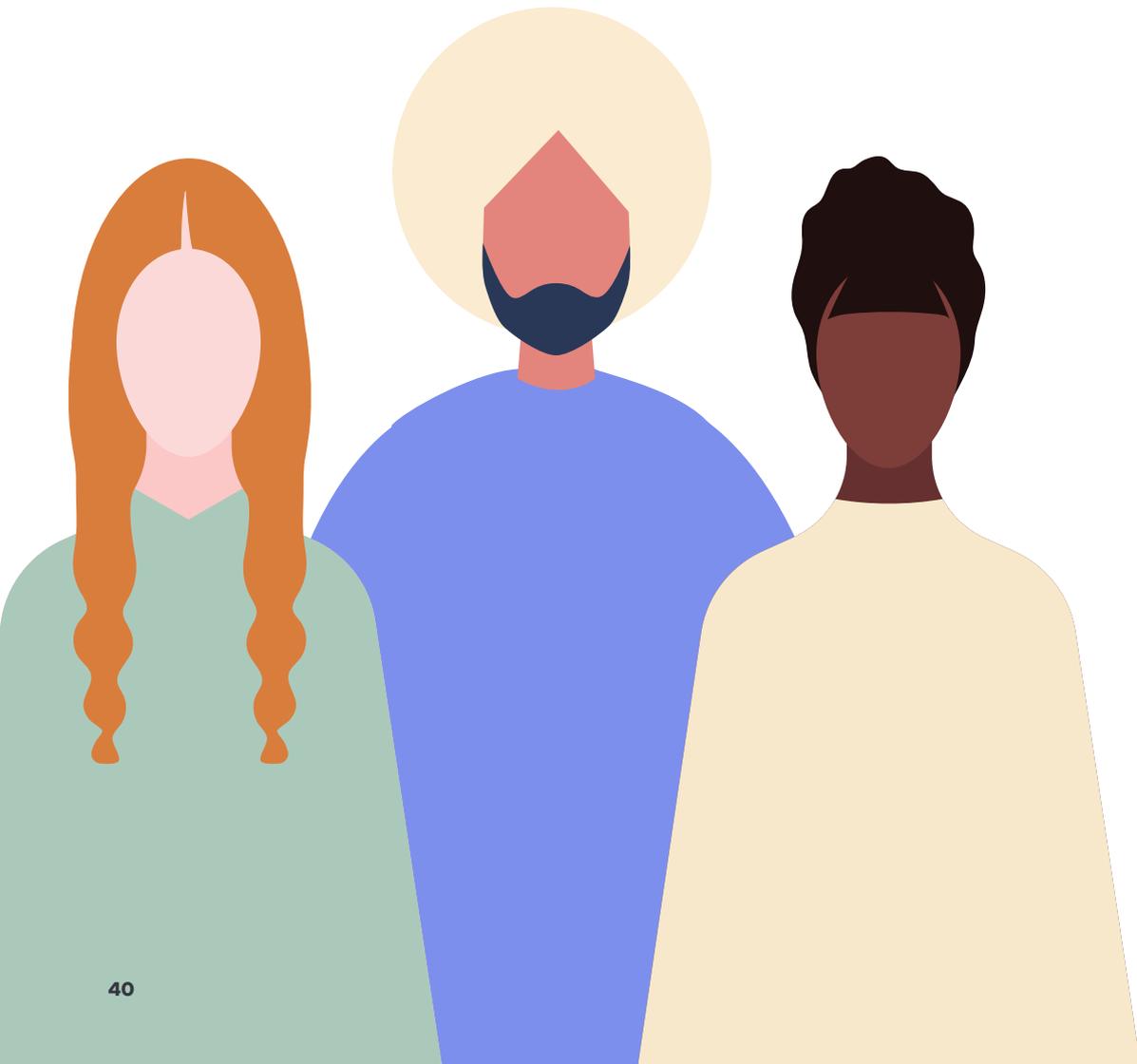
Percentage of People Matter Survey respondents who strongly agree / agree	Men	Women	Non-binary / different term / prefer not to say
My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination	75%	70%	48%
My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours	89%	87%	70%
I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work	74%	69%	41%

Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion

Percentage of People Matter Survey respondents who strongly agree / agree	Men	Women	Non-binary / different term / prefer not to say
My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit	59%	56%	32%
I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation	51%	49%	23%
Not a barrier to success in my organisation:			
Gender	83%	80%	61%
Age	73%	68%	50%
Being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	69%	64%	55%
Cultural background	79%	72%	58%
Disability	70%	64%	49%
Sexual orientation	84%	79%	65%
Having caring responsibilities	70%	64%	50%
Having family responsibilities	74%	67%	54%
Using flexible work arrangements	73%	69%	51%

Indicator 6: Leave and flexibility

Percentage of People Matter Survey respondents who strongly agree / agree	Men	Women	Non-binary / different term / prefer not to say
I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration	85%	88%	68%
My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave	78%	83%	64%
My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender	86%	81%	66%



Appendix 2: Resourcing plan

Human resources
(full-time equivalent
[FTE])

People and Culture

1 FTE: Coordination and oversight of GEAP implementation

0.5 FTE: Training and mentoring coordination

0.5 FTE: Data analysis

Workplace Relations and Engagement

0.5 FTE: Sexual harassment systems, policy and process improvement

Organisational Planning, Performance and Improvement

0.5 FTE: Data dashboard implementation and maintenance

Common Corporate Support

0.5 FTE: Data collection and system improvement

Communications

0.2 FTE: Internal communications support

Divisions

Support from Divisional Coordination functions to deliver divisional implementation plans

Glossary

Active bystander: Someone who takes action after witnessing or hearing about an incident of sexist or sexually harassing behaviour. This may include giving a disapproving look, speaking out or reporting the behaviour.

ANZSCO: Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations.

Bullying: Repeated unreasonable behaviour by an individual towards a worker that creates a risk to health and safety.²⁷

Cisgender: A person whose gender corresponds with their biological sex.

Disability: Includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers may hinder people's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.²⁸

Discrimination: When a person or group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, breastfeeding, age, disability or sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.²⁹

Enablers Network: Network that represents the needs, interests and concerns of public sector employees with lived experience of disability to ensure fair and equitable treatment.

Gender: Part of how you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being a man or woman. Some people understand their gender as a mix of these or neither. A person's gender and their expression of their gender can be shown in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

Gender diverse: An umbrella term for a range of genders expressed in different ways. Gender diverse people use many terms to describe themselves. Language in this area is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.

Gender equality: Equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes between people of different genders.³⁰

Gender impact assessment: Assessment designed to help organisations think critically about how policies, programs and services will meet the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people. The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires **certain organisations** <<https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/defined-entities-under-gender-equality-act>> to conduct gender impact assessments so all new policies, programs and services and those up for review that directly and significantly impact the public benefit all Victorians. A gender impact assessment must:

- assess the effects that the policy, program or service may have on people of different genders
- explain how the policy, program or service will be changed to better support Victorians of all genders and promote gender equality
- where practical, apply an intersectional approach to consider how gender inequality can be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of other factors such as age, disability or ethnicity.

²⁷ *Fair Work Amendment Act 2013*

²⁸ Based on the social model of disability as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <[²⁹ See **Workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying** <<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/employers/workplace-discrimination-harassment-and-bullying>>.](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crpd/pages/conventionrightspersonswithdisabilities.aspx#:~:text=Persons%20with%20disabilities%20include%20those,an%20equal%20basis%20with%20others.></p></div><div data-bbox=)

³⁰ Definition as per the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Gender stereotypes: Generalised views or preconceptions about what attributes, characteristics, behaviours and roles are performed by a person to adhere to their sexed body. Gender stereotypes are harmful when they limit a person's capacity to develop their personal attributes, pursue careers or make personal life choices.³¹

Intersectional groups: Staff who experience compounded gender inequality on the basis of age, disability, cultural diversity, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Intersex: An umbrella term for people born with natural variations to sex characteristics. This includes physical features relating to sex including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive parts of the person's anatomy. It might also refer to the person's chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging as a result of puberty. Some people with intersex variations describe themselves according to their specific intersex variation or use other context-dependent language. For example, someone may say they have Klinefelter (a common variation). Most people with intersex variations are cisgender and identify as male or female.

LGBTIQ+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer.

People matter survey (PMS): the Victorian public sector's annual employee opinion survey.

Pride Network: A peer-directed volunteer group that values and celebrates diversity in our department, including leading and supporting LGBTIQ+ inclusion, equality in the workplace and celebrating LGBTIQ+ participation.

Senior leaders: Staff with STS, SMA, SES1, SES2, SES3 classifications in the context of our organisation. However, for the purposes of our data, senior leaders does not include the SMA classification.

Sexism: Sex-based prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination.

Sexual harassment: Unwelcome sexual behaviour that could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written.³²

Sexual orientation: A person's romantic or sexual attraction to others. A person's gender does not mean they have certain sex characteristics or a particular sexuality, or vice versa.

Trans (short for transgender) person: Someone whose gender does not only align with the one assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves.

Victorian Public Service Women of Colour Network (WoCN): A staff-led collective run by and for self-identifying women of colour across the VPS. WoCN strives to create a safe and inclusive space that allows contribution to policy, community and lived experience, advocacy for professional and personal development and improvement of diversity and inclusion practices across the VPS.

Workplace gender equality indicators: The seven indicators prescribed under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

³¹ See **Gendered stereotyping** <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/wrgs/pages/genderstereotypes.aspx>>.

³² See **Take action: Empowering bystanders to act on sexist and sexually harassing behaviours** <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/PVAW/Take-Action-Bystander_Oct2019.pdf?la=en&hash=D3150832DDE6E645A0B854AC2CD57B119E03BD22>.

