



**Victorian
Public Sector
Commission**



VICTORIA
State
Government

Gender equality action plan

2021 - 2025

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Message from the Commissioner

Foreword from Victorian Public Sector Commissioner Adam Fennessy PSM

With pride and excitement, I share the Victorian Public Sector Commission's first Gender Equality Action Plan. It was written by our people, for our people and represents our organisation's contribution to statewide equality, in workplaces and the community.

The Commission is a defined entity under the Gender Equality Act 2020. Our efforts combine with those of universities and local councils to support one goal – equality.

Equality will be achieved when women, men and gender diverse people can access and enjoy equal resources and opportunities regardless of gender.

Our vision for gender equality here at the Commission connects what we give with what we get.

A gender diverse workplace where we value respect, give support and pay equal, so all succeed.

We aim to achieve it within 2 years by prioritising:

- diversity, equity and inclusion
- career support
- equal pay for equal work

Up to 21% of our colleagues could be experiencing the effects of intersectional gender inequality and 2% of us self-describe our gender. As we write this plan, the overall pay gap in our organisation is 11.6%.

The 30 strategies in our Gender Equality Action Plan will improve the employee



experience every year, and eliminate the gender pay gap by 2023.

Adam Fennessy PSM
Commissioner
Victorian Public Sector Commission

Data and insights

Results from a baseline gender audit and the People matter survey 2021.

Understanding our data

The Commission undertook a baseline gender audit using data as at 30 June 2021. We extracted workforce data from internal systems and collected employee experience data via the People Matter Survey. We submitted the data to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector on 1 December 2021.

Workplace gender audit data is broken down separately for women and men.

To protect the anonymity of our staff, we have not released any data for individuals who identify as non-binary or self-describe their gender. This is because we have fewer than 10 staff in this group.

A person with a self-described gender may identify as non-binary, trans, gender diverse, agender, genderqueer, genderfluid or using any other term.

The audit data reflects some intersectionality, considering how gender inequality may be compounded by the impacts of disadvantage and discrimination that someone might experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age or disability.

The complete workplace gender audit dataset is available at vpssc.vic.gov.au. The dataset excludes personal and potentially identifying information. This protects the anonymity and safety of employees. We uphold privacy protocols by not publishing the analysis of de-identified individuals or datasets from small groups.

There are some data gaps. We plan to establish remaining data sets regarding intersectionality, for example ethnicity, cultural identity, religion and sexual orientation. This would build capacity to allow more nuanced analysis in future.

In places, we compare the Commission's workforce data to Victorian public sector and Victorian Public Service workforce data in [State of the Public Sector 2021](#).



Summary of results 2021

We analysed the results according to 7 gender equality indicators.

1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce
2. Gender composition of the governing body
3. Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels, irrespective of gender
4. Sexual harassment in the workplace
5. Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace
6. Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities
7. Gendered segregation in the workplace.

Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

Key points:

- The Commission has a workforce of 114 people and 75 are women
- The overall gender composition is 66% women, lower than in the Victorian public sector (68% women) and higher than in the Victorian Public Service (59% women)
- 50% of Executives are women (3 women)
- Up to 21% of people may experience intersectional gender inequality, for example on the basis of Aboriginality, disability or age
- 85% of part-time ongoing and 100% of part-time fixed roles are women
- 61% of full-time ongoing and 63% of full-time fixed roles are women

Notes:

- Charts display gender differently according to source data
- Where charts show a statement, the percentage reflects how strongly people agree with the statement (e.g. gender is not a barrier to success)

Data source: workplace gender audit 30 June 2021 and People matter survey 2021

Data source: People matter survey 2021

Data source: workplace gender audit 30 June 2021

Data source: workplace gender audit 30 June 2021

Indicator 2: Gender composition of the governing body

The Commission did not submit data about its governing body in the baseline gender audit. Its Advisory Board currently consists of the Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) as chairperson. There are no other members at present. At the time this plan was written, the membership of the Advisory Board was being reviewed by the VPSC and DPC.

Indicator 3: Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels, irrespective of gender

Key points:

- The Commission's overall gender pay gap is 11.6%, higher than the overall Victorian Public Service pay gap of 2.0% and overall Victorian public sector pay gap of 9.3%
- There is a negative pay gap at Executive level and VPS 3 to 4 levels

Notes:

- The overall gender pay gap is calculated using median base salary
- The CEO (Commissioner) level is not included in overall pay gap to avoid skewing
- When calculated using mean base salary, the pay gap is 3.2%
- Mean pay for VPS 1-2 and people with self-described gender is not shown in the table below due to privacy requirements surrounding use of small datasets



Data source: workplace gender audit 30 June 2021 and State of the public sector 2021

Data source: workplace gender audit 30 June 2021 and State of the public sector 2021

Indicator 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Key points:

- According to the People Matter Survey, 5 respondents in the organisation experienced or witnessed sexual harassment during the reporting period
- No formal complaints were made during the reporting period

Data source: People matter survey 2021

Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Key points:

- Fewer women (45%) than men (68%) feel like they have an equal chance of promotion in the workplace
- Fewer women (69%) than men (71%) feel that the organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit
- Fewer women (63%) than men (86%) feel that there are adequate opportunities to develop their skills and experience
- Fewer women (57%) than men (82%) feel that their learning and development needs have been addressed

Data source: People matter survey 2021



Indicator 6: Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities

Key points:

- Most people say using flexible work is not a barrier to success in this organisation
- 75% of women and 80% of men say having a disability is not a barrier to success in this organisation
- 73% of women say having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success

Data source: People matter survey 2021

Indicator 7: Gendered segregation in the workplace

Key points:

- Women are more likely to work in professional or clerical roles
- More men than women are managers
- 20% of professional roles, 25% of clerical roles and 64% of manager roles are held by men

Notes:

- Terms relate to employment type, classified according to ANZSCO framework which may differ from employment level or job title
- Professional roles within the Commission include arts, media, business, human resources, marketing, design and information communication technology
- Clerical roles within the Commission include office managers and program administrators, personal assistants, office support workers and administration
- Management roles within the Commission include chief executives, general managers, legislators and specialist managers

Data source: workplace gender audit 30 June 2021

Consultation and engagement

A summary of the consultation and engagement actions taken.

Listening to our people

We consulted staff and stakeholders prior to developing the Gender Equality Action Plan. We engaged a facilitator to conduct workshops, ensuring people's safety and wellbeing during participation.

All staff were invited to participate. We encouraged people of all ages, gender identity, cultural background, sexual orientation, people with a disability, male allies, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to influence the vision for gender equality in our workplace.

We administered a survey for people who couldn't attend a workshop, providing an option to contribute anonymously.



Consultation	Participation	Discussion
Workshop for staff	14 people December 2021	Workplace gender audit Views and experiences Vision for gender equality
Workshop for managers	10 people December 2021	Workplace gender audit Views and experiences Vision for gender equality
Internal staff survey	15% participation January 2022	Views and experiences Anonymous comments
Meeting of the Executive	5 people January 2022	Workplace gender audit results Staff and manager insights Leadership vision for gender equality Recommendations

We consulted stakeholders from the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and the Victorian Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector to ensure the Gender Equality Action Plan meets expectations. A CPSU staff representative was present during the staff workshop.

The strategies and measures in our GEAP are based on evidence. Drafts were shared during development, to ensure collective agreement and commitment.

What people said

We asked what values would support gender equality in our organisation.

People said:

- "Respect, integrity, human rights and inclusion"
- "Walking the talk, words and actions"
- "Courage, empathy, care and dignity"

We asked which symbols would support gender equality in our organisation.

People said:

- "Gender neutral language"
- "Women in management and senior leadership roles"
- "Flexible work and fewer fixed-term roles"

We asked what behaviours would support gender equality in our organisation.

People said:

- "It's psychologically safe to share ideas and voice opinions"
- "People actively use and promote flexible work and parental leave"
- "Human resourcing and promotion opportunities are transparent"

Indicators and insights

Open allClose all

Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

Insights from our people

- Positive perspectives on representation of women at Executive level
- Want more women in senior leadership and management roles
- Want more roles as ongoing employment
- Women do not feel as supported as men in learning and development or career pathways
- People with disability want more support to manage their health and work
- Age bias could be limiting career progression for women aged 50-60
- Part-time roles should be created to acquire skills and capability, not just used to absorb work volume

Gender composition of the governing body

Insights from our people

- Seek commitment to balanced and diverse gender representation on Advisory Board

Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels, irrespective of gender

Insights from our people

- Longer lengths of tenure within a classification level could be affecting gender pay gap
- Intersectional women may experience a larger pay gap
- Even small pay gaps should be eliminated
- High proportion of women at lower levels

- Soft skills like contributing to organisational culture should be rewarded
- There is a perception that difference in men's and women's negotiation skills could be contributing to pay gap
- Transparency of work helps people gauge what is equal work in terms of skill, effort and responsibility

Sexual harassment in the workplace

Insights from our people

- We could better equip leaders and bystanders with skills to support and intervene
- Consider providing advice specific to a remote work environment
- Need for clear, easy to access advice on the intranet for staff

Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Insights from our people

- Differing views on what merit is and how to apply merit in recruitment
- Opportunity to employ more diverse staff using special measures including job carving for people with disability
- We could review recruitment and attraction processes through the lens of gender equality, removing gender bias
- Want to see more part-time roles at senior VPS 6 level, perhaps via job-share
- Seek gender balance and diversity on recruitment panels
- Use plain English, inclusive language in position descriptions
- Some employees may opt not to progress through levels, but still want to be recognised and developed in their current role

Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities

Insights from our people

- Use of part-time and flexible work arrangements is concentrated at middle levels (VPS4 and 5)
- Strong perception that people can't use flexible work arrangements at senior and Executive levels
- Stigma and bias relating to use of flexible work could be affecting people's career progression
- Encourage more men to utilise parental leave
- Ensure consistent keeping in touch days and return to work experiences
- Raise awareness of who family violence leave is for and when to access it

Gendered segregation in the workplace

Insights from our people

- Aim for 50/50 gender balance and diversity in managerial roles
- Seek gender balance on internal working groups and committees
- Want to see more women representing VPSC on whole of government projects and on speaking panels
- Recruit more men for professional and clerical roles



Ongoing collaboration

Following publication, the Commissioner will communicate the GEAP to all staff during the all-staff forum and via internal digital channels. Progress updates will be provided at quarterly staff forums and published on our website every two years in line with reporting obligations.

The case for change

We developed our Gender Equality Action Plan with respect to the 10 gender equality principles, set out in the Gender Equality Act 2020.

Principles

The principles:

- 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.
- Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
- Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- 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.
- 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.
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
- Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.



Priority issues

The audit results and staff consultations revealed priority issues.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

- Up to 18% of people may experience compounded effects of intersectionality

Career support

- People do not always feel that recruitment and promotion is merit-based
- 45% of women do not feel they have an equal chance of promotion
- Women do not feel as supported as men to learn and develop
- There is no use of part-time work above VPS 6 level

Equal pay for equal work

- The Commission has an overall pay gap of 11.6% (excluding the Commissioner)
- There are more men than women in VPS 6 managerial roles
- There are half as many men at VPS 3, 4 and 5 levels than there are women

The strategies in our Gender Equality Action Plan were selected to drive change on priority issues. Change is further supported by whole of government workforce strategies Getting to Work, Barring Djinang, and the Mental Health and Wellbeing charter.

Our vision

Our vision connects what we give with what we get.

A gender diverse workplace where we value respect, give support and pay equal, so all succeed.



We aim to achieve it within 2 years, halfway through this 4-year action plan.

Strategies and measures

Strategies for each of the gender equality indicators, their outputs, measures, timeframes and responsibilities.

Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

Outcomes

- Gender equality is front of mind across the organisation
- Our workforce is gender equal, diverse and inclusive
- We counter the compounded effects of intersectional inequality

Strategies

Open allClose all

1.1 Monitor gender equality in a simple and transparent way

Outputs and measures

Dashboard created

Dashboard indicators set

Shared quarterly

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Governance and Corporate

1.2 Agree our approach to achieving and maintaining optimal gender composition

Outputs and measures

Agreed approach to goals
(use of KPIs, targets, quotas)

Agreed approach to correction where necessary

Accountability embedded in Executive performance plans

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Executive Management Group

1.3 Fill data gaps on intersectionality

Outputs and measures

3 new datasets collected (cultural identity, religion and sexual orientation) in line with the People Matter Survey strategy

Timeframe

Year 2

Responsibility

People and Analytics

1.4 Celebrate all genders

Outputs and measures

Internal event and communications on International Women's Day, Wear it Purple Day, Pride March and International Men's Day

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Capability and Inclusion

Outputs and measures



Timeframe

Responsibility

Indicator 2: Gender composition of the governing body

Outcomes

- The Commission’s strategic direction is equally influenced by men, women and people with self-described gender
- We value advice that upholds our culture of service

Strategies

Open allClose all

2.1 Commit to gender balance on the advisory board



Outputs and measures

50/50 representation of men and women

Broader gender diversity over time

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Commissioner

2.2 Select contemporary members to the advisory board

Outputs and measures

Advice considers gendered impact on customers and community

Advice supports progress on gender equality

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Governance and Corporate

Indicator 3: Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels, irrespective of gender

Outcomes

- We are conscious of the dynamic pay gap
- We use evidence to close the gender pay gap across all levels
- We offer equal pay for equal work
- The overall pay gap is eliminated by 2023

Strategies

Open allClose all

3.1 Monitor the gender pay gap as it change

Outputs and measures

Dashboard indicators shared quarterly

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Governance and Corporate

3.2 Design key decision points to eliminate overall gender pay gap

Outputs and measures

Recruitment and remuneration procedures reviewed

Agreed criteria for objectivity in remuneration

% annual reduction in pay gap

Goal set to eliminate overall pay gap by 2023

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Deputy Commissioner

3.3 Set acceptable tolerance for pay gap variation per level

Outputs and measures

3 tolerances agreed, maintained and decreased over time

+/- X% at VPS 3-5 level

+/- X% at VPS 6 level

+/- X% at Executive level

Work-level pay disparities are analysed and corrected

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

People and Analytics

Commissioner to privately monitor Executive pay gap

3.4 Create a culture where work is shared openly

Outputs and measures

Collaborative project initiation

Human resource costs embedded in project plans

Access to work samples

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Project Pipeline Group

Indicator 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Outcomes

- People know what to do if they experience or witness sexual harassment
- There is reduced occurrence of sexual harassment
- People feel safe and respected at work

Strategies

Open allClose all

4.1 Show zero tolerance for sexual harassment

Outputs and measures

Commissioner statement scripted (similar to VSB) and read when appropriate
For example, when sharing People Matter Survey results.

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Commissioner

4.2 Publish clear information for staff on the intranet

Outputs and measures

New content and tools for staff (sexual harassment and other negative behaviours)

Number of staff who know it's there (usability testing)

Page analytics

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Communications and engagement

4.3 Increase proficiency in managing sexual harassment

Outputs and measures

1 new item added to manager's checklist

Manager confidence score (tested)

Number of occurrences, discussions, complaints, reports

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Capability and inclusion

4.4 Determine why negative behaviours occur and why complaints aren't made

Outputs and measures

Monitor and analyse incidences or occurrences

Discuss where possible, confidentially or anonymously

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Deputy Commissioner

Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Outcomes

- Recruitment and promotion practices are fair and unbiased
- People steer their own development
- We design for gender diversity and inclusion

Strategies

Open allClose all

5.1 Agree our approach to merit in recruitment

Outputs and measures

Common understanding Consistent and transparent application of gender and intersectional lens

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Deputy Commissioner

5.2 Apply a human-centred design approach to women's development

Outputs and measures

Learning and development offerings designed by women for women and self-described

Participant satisfaction

Timeframe

Year 2



Responsibility

Senior Leadership Group

5.3 Review attraction and recruitment practices to remove gender bias and promote gender diversity

Outputs and measures

Policies, processes and assets improved

Number of position descriptions edited for inclusive language

Improved gender balance and diversity at each stage

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Capability and Inclusion

5.4 Invite, encourage and reward use of contemporary employment practices

Outputs and measures

Review documentation to be more inclusive

All requests considered for reasonable adjustments, special measures, flexible work or job sharing



Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Deputy Commissioner

5.5 Support intersectional people to rise here

Outputs and measures

Custom development

Higher duties opportunities

Employees recruited using special measures

Timeframe

Year 1

Responsibility

Executive Management Group

Indicator 6: Availability and utilisation of terms,



conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities

Outcomes

- Flexible work is the norm in our workplace, right to the top
- People feel supported to balance their professional, family and community responsibilities
- A person's career progression is not limited by their work arrangement

Strategies

Open allClose all

6.1 Show support for part-time and flexible work at higher levels

Outputs and measures

Managers and Executives utilise flexible work in some way and communicate that they are doing so

Timeline

Year 1

Responsibility

Executive Management Group

Communication and Engagement

6.2 Invest in technology that enables flexible and hybrid work

Outputs and measures

Enabling video conferencing technologies to support hybrid working

Staff uptake of new technologies

Timeline

Year 1

Responsibility

Governance and Corporate

6.3 Champion flexible work by overcoming practical challenges

Outputs and measures

Champion appointed

Organisational record of problems and solutions

Upwards report including recommendations for improvement

Timeline

Year 1

Responsibility

Volunteer

6.4 Foster positive mental health and wellbeing by encouraging gender equal use of leave

Outputs and measures

People report feeling comfortable to request flexibility

Utilisation of personal leave, parental leave

Parental leave and part-time work promoted to men

Timeline

Year 1

Responsibility

People and Analytics

6.5 Raise awareness of who can use family violence leave and when

Outputs and measures

Communication items

Timeline

Year 1

Responsibility

Governance and Corporate

6.6 Revise the VPSC accessibility action plan with focus on support for employees in line with Getting to work

Outputs and measures

New plan from 2022

Timeline

Year 2

Responsibility

Governance and Corporate

Indicator 7: Gendered segregation in the workplace

Outcomes

- Our management team is gender equal
- We challenge gender norms and stereotypes
- Women and people of self-described gender are supported to lead in public and professional forums
- Policy and practice support societal progress toward gender equality

Strategies

Open allClose all

7.1 Commit to gender equal composition of managerial team at VPS 6 level

Outputs and measures

50/50 men and women

Gender diversity and intersectional diversity is represented

Timeline

Year 2

Responsibility

Executive Management Group

7.2 Design attraction and recruitment to encourage men to apply for professional and clerical roles

Outputs and measures

PD's revised with gender inclusive language

Gender balance of applicants

Timeline

Year 3

Responsibility

Volunteer

7.3 Provide support for women and gender diverse people to promote the Commission and its work at events

Outputs and measures

Events attended

Panels served

Speaking notes and presentations on file

Timeline

Year 3



Responsibility

Communications and Engagement

7.4 Apply principles of gender equality in procurement

Outputs and measures

Added to selection criteria

Timeline

Year 1

Responsibility

Governance and Corporate

7.5 Embed gender impact assessments in new policies

Outputs and measures

Built into project pipeline

Assessments for new strategies and policies

Timeline

Year 1

Responsibility

Project Pipeline



2023 Gender equality progress report

A summary of the obligations we will uphold and how we measure success.



Resourcing

Cost and time resourcing for each of the 30 strategies to implement.



Item / responsible	Time commitment (estimate)	Budget requirement
Dashboard	40 hours build and update	Absorbed
Technologies	20 hours procurement	\$15,000
Learning and Development	20 hours procurement	\$10,000
Commissioner	7 hours (+ admin)	Absorbed
Deputy Commissioner	16 hours (+ admin)	Absorbed
EMG	20 hours (+ admin)	Absorbed
People & Analytics	88 hours	Absorbed
Integrity and Advisory	40 hours	Absorbed
Capability and Inclusion	250 hours	Absorbed
Governance and Corporate	250 hours	Absorbed
Senior Leadership Group	100 hours	Absorbed
Project pipeline	11 hours	Absorbed
Volunteer	80 hours	Absorbed
Total	942 hours (124 days)	\$25,000

