

Gender Equality Action Plan

2021–25



Acknowledgement of Country

The VEC pays respect to Victoria's traditional owners and their elders past and present who have been custodians of this country for many thousands of years. Their living culture and their role in the life of Victoria is acknowledged by the VEC.

Version history

This version was prepared for external reporting in March 2022.

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Introduction

The Victorian Electoral Commission

At the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), our vision is all Victorians actively participating in their democracy. Our purpose is to deliver high quality, accessible electoral services with innovation, integrity and independence.

We are an independent and impartial statutory authority established under Victoria's *Electoral Act 2002*.

Our Values

Independence: we act with impartiality and integrity.

Accountability: we are transparent and manage resources effectively.

Innovation: we shape our future through creativity and leadership.

Respect: we are considerate of ourselves, others and the environment.

Collaboration: we work as a team with partners and communities

The VEC's Gender Equality Action Plan

To achieve equality for all genders in our workplace, we committed to undertake a workplace audit to identify where changes are required and plan and implement actions to achieve these changes. This report details the findings of the audit and our planned actions.

Workforce Gender Audit

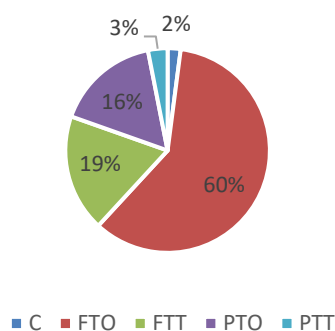
We undertook a Workforce Gender Audit in October 2021 and present our findings here, alongside employee experience data collected as part of the Victorian Public Sector People Matter Survey (PMS) 2021.

1. Gender composition of the workforce

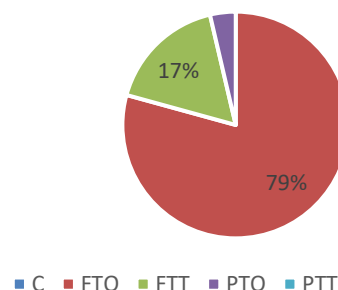
1.1 Workforce data

Employment type all VEC				
	Women	Men	Total	%
Casual (C)	2		2	1.12%
Full-time ongoing (FTO)	58	65	123	68.72%
Full-time temp (FTT)	18	14	32	17.88%
Part-time ongoing (PTO)	16	3	19	10.61%
Part-time temp (PTT)	3		3	1.68%
Total	97	82	179	

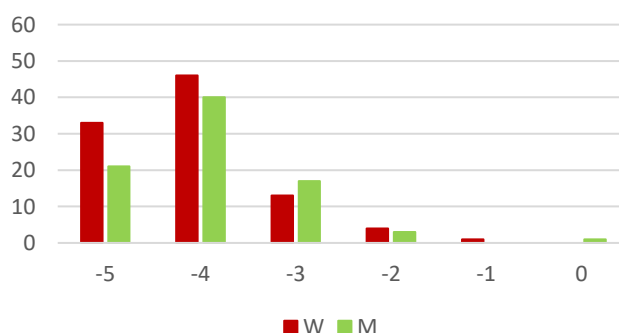
Employment type (women)



Employment type (men)



Employment level by gender



1.2 Employee experience

Gender response to key questions.



There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander

75

81

There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds

85

91

There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders

92

93

There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different age groups

78

91

There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+

75

81

There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees with disability

83

87

Gender composition insights

According to the data collected in the PMS, the gender composition of the VEC in the reporting period was:



- 37% women
- 43% men
- 1% trans, non-binary or gender diverse
- 19% preferred not to say.

Looking at employment types, 84% of our PTO employees were women. Women were in the majority in the lower-level roles, noting that our Executive Management Group was evenly split between women and men.

The employee experience data showed a highly positive culture in the reporting period around acceptance of diverse employee sexes and genders. This data diverges from the positive when it intersects with age; our younger men, aged 15 to 34 years, were much less positive at 66% about the age-group culture than their older colleagues, with 88% of men aged 45 to 54 years feeling positive.

2. Pay equality

Median base salaries

All	\$91,574	\$105,666	\$93,536	15%
Full Time Ongoing	\$93,536	\$111,734	\$99,438	18%
Full Time Temporary	\$88,624	\$91,572	\$89,608	3%
Part Time Ongoing	\$86,798	\$64,895	\$85,956	+26%
Part Time Temp	\$91,574	-	\$91,574	N/A

Median salaries by level (5 to 3)

	Women			All Women	Men		All Men	All staff	
FTO	75,342		125,947	93,536	69,151		122,348	111,734	99,438



Pay equality insights

In the reporting period, we had an overall gender pay gap of 15%. This was, unfortunately, higher than the overall 9.6% pay gap for non-casual Victorian Public Sector (VPS) employees.

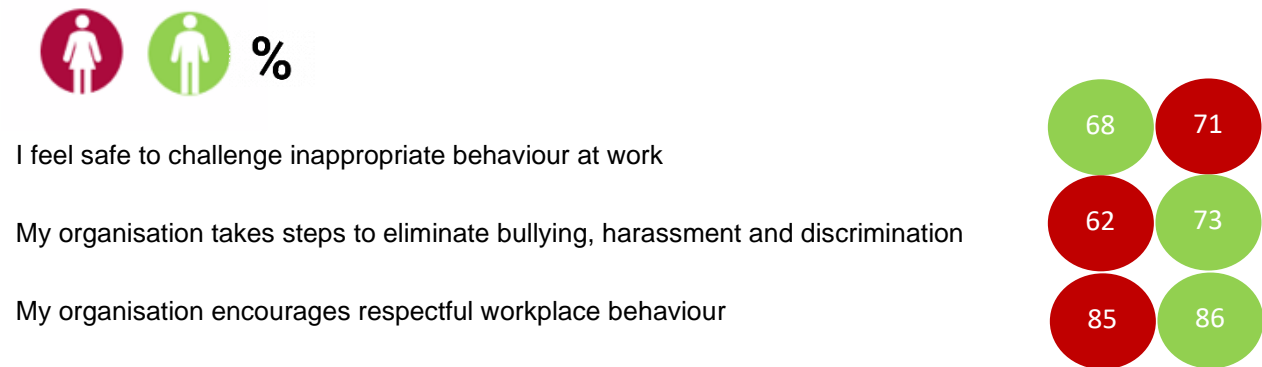
The data also revealed that the most significant pay gap applied to employees working in positions 4 levels below the CEO (shown as -4 in the table above). This cohort had slightly more women (46) than men (40) in the reporting period.

3. Sexual harassment

There were no formal sexual harassment complaints made in the 2021 comparison reporting period, and we have received none since. In the PMS data, 97% of men and 98% of women reported that they did not experience any behaviours that would have constituted sexual harassment.

The behaviour reported most by women in the PMS survey was ‘intrusive questions about my private life or comments about my physical appearance’.

The behaviour reported most by men in the PMS survey was ‘inappropriate physical contact’.



Sexual harassment insights

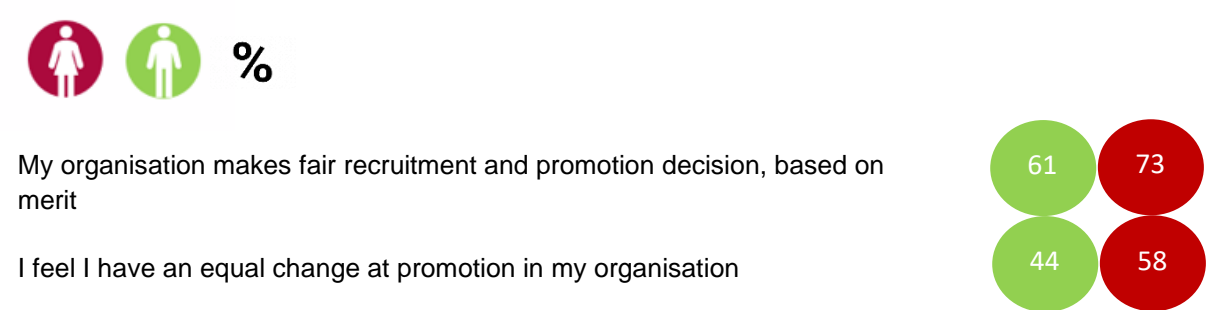
While we had virtually no incidences of any form of sexual harassment, we note that men felt less safe than women to challenge inappropriate behaviour in the reporting period.

The PMS data indicated that the number of women reporting to have experienced bullying or harassment at work was 19% (compared to only 8% of men). This aligns with the data above, which showed that only 62% of women felt we were being proactive in preventing such behaviour, compared to 73% of men.

Consultation with employees on the broad topic of experience of negative behaviours showed they are not well acquainted with the processes and support structures in place to manage such behaviours. Consultation also showed a low level of trust in some parts of those processes and structures.

4. Recruitment and promotion

We actively promote all roles internally to ensure equitable access to promotion and secondment opportunities. However, the employee experience data from the PMS showed this was not the perception of our employees in the reporting period.



Recruitment and promotion insights

We have some work to do to ensure our employees feel more positive about their equal chance at promotion. As this was one of the lowest scores in the 2021 PMS survey, we will reflect action on this in our action planning.

5. Leave and flexibility

We currently have 33 employees accessing flexible work arrangements, representing 19% of our workforce. There are 23 women and 10 men accessing part-time hours, compressed hours and job share arrangements.

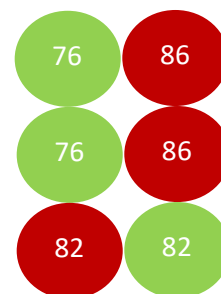
In 2021, 15 employees accessed parental leave, 53% of these were women and 47% were men. The number of people who exited the organisation while on parental leave was 0.



My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave

I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration

My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender



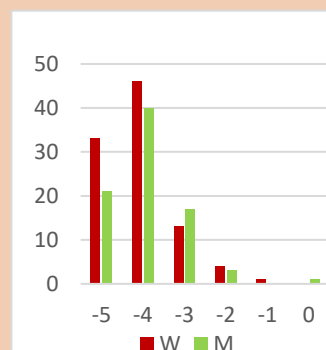
Leave and flexibility insights

We are proud of our strong culture supporting flexibility. Our flexible work opportunities are well accessed and have high levels of support across the organisation. The employee experience indicators here showed that men viewed flexible work arrangements less positively than women, unless those arrangements were accessed for caring responsibilities.

6. Gendered segregation

The gender distribution across all levels of the organisation was relatively even in the reporting period, with the biggest difference showing 3 levels below the CEO (-3 in the table below). There were 7% more men than women in this cohort.

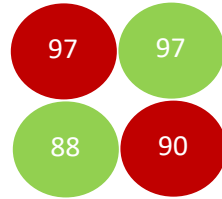
Level to CEO by gender							
	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	Total
Women	33	46	13	4	1		97
	34.02%	47.42%	13.40%	4.12%	1.03%		
Men	21	40	17	3		1	82
	25.61%	48.78%	20.73%	3.66%	0.00%	1.22%	
Total	54	86	30	7	1	1	179





My organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language

In my workplace, work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender



Gendered segregation insights

We note the gender balance at positions 3 levels below the CEO (shown as -3 in the table above) for further investigation and understanding. It is pleasing to note the employee experience data showed a positive response to this factor in the reporting period.

Consultation and engagement

We have undertaken various forms of consultation to date on the development of this plan. After the initial workplace gender audit was completed, data has been shared and collected across various group, including:

- the Executive Management Group – the VEC’s governing body
- the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU)
- the VEC CPSU delegates
- via an anonymous feedback survey (Quarterly People and Culture Pulse Survey)
- employee discussion groups.

Consultation to date has been led by the Director, Human Resources and the Manager, Human Resources Operations. The Director, Human Resources is leading the project on behalf of the Electoral Commissioner.

During consultation we have sought views and opinions that we have incorporated into the action plan. An ongoing action is to continue with this consultation on a regular basis including the review of actions we’ve completed.

Where possible, we have ensured the diversity of the consultation group while balancing sensitivity and privacy risks associated with such a small organisation. This will continue to be the case.



The case for change

We are committed to acknowledging and ensuring the following:

- 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 based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage because of sex and gender.
- Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.


Our gender equality vision

We have a strong commitment to equal access for all Victorians, and to ensuring gender equality is fundamentally embedded into everything we do. Our commitment to gender equality is complemented by other exiting strategies related to:


- Aboriginality – through our Aboriginal Engagement Plan
- Disability – through our VEC Disability and Inclusion Access Plan 2019
- Ethnicity – through our Multicultural Inclusion Plan 2020-2023
- Age – through our Young People Inclusion Plan 2021-2023
- Homelessness – through our Homelessness Advisory Group
- Safety and equality – through our Social Procurement Strategy.

Strategies and measures

The VEC Gender Equity Action Plan 2021–25

Workplace gender equity indicator	Action/s (person/s responsible)	Measure	By when
Pay equality	Review all positions for pay equity issues, particularly at 4 levels below the CEO (-4) where the most significant pay gap is (HR Director/Executive Management Group	Reduce gender pay gap by half	June 2025
Gender composition of all levels of the workforce 	Investigate and rectify gender imbalance at 3 levels below the CEO (-3 to the CEO) to ensure greater parity (HR Director)	Improved gender balance for all genders	June 2024
	Actively promote part-time work options to men to increase the number accessing PTO roles (hiring managers/HR Team)	Increase number of men in part time roles year on year	December 2023
	Target entry level and early career cohorts of employees for mentoring and secondment opportunities (hiring managers/HR Team)	PMS result for positive response to different age groups	n/a
	Invest in a system of identifying, reporting, and preventing discrimination and bias	Increased employee experience metrics in PMS data year on year.	n/a
	Audit all worksites to ensure there are safe, inclusive, and accessible on-site facilities for all staff, particularly for disabled people, women and non-binary or gender-diverse	Increased participation levels in inclusive work practices year on year. Increased employee	June 2024

	people, and transgender people. Facilities may include bathrooms, breastfeeding/chest-feeding areas, changerooms, prayer rooms and other culturally safe spaces	experience metrics in PMS data year on year.	
Sexual harassment	Review and update harassment, discrimination and bullying processes and support structures to ensure a victim-centric approach (Manager, HR Operations). Ensure supports are in line with Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission guidelines.	Policies and procedures are updated in line with best practice for a victim-centric approach	Sept 2023
	Ensuring complainants are informed and supported through the process by the VEC and Employee Assistance Program, CPSU (build trust in VEC to take victim-survivor focused action)	Increased levels of trust as measured in the People and Culture Pulse Survey	October 2023
	Further roll out of the awareness campaign (dealing with harassment, discrimination, and bullying) commenced in 2021 covering reporting procedures, obligations of employees and individual responsibility (Learning and Development Team)	Increased levels of trust as measured in the People and Culture Pulse Survey	June 2024
	Focus on delivery of victim-centric tools, not just education, and build trust in the VEC as a safe environment	Increased levels of trust as measured in the People and Culture Pulse Survey	Sept 2023
	Increase employee awareness and promotion of transparent processes for	PMS result for positive response to having an equal chance of	June 2024

Recruitment and promotion practices 	secondment and higher duties (Manager, HR Operations)	promotion increased year on year for all genders	
	Review of upgrading and promotion selections over the last 24 months for trends demonstrating unconscious bias. Implement training for management/requirement in development discussions that managers' report on their selections	PMS result for positive response to having an equal chance of promotion increased year on year for all genders	June 2024
Leave and flexibility access	Review and communicate family violence leave policies and processes to ensure they are victim centric and in line with sector best practice (Manager, HR Operations)	PMS result for positive response to being supported to take family violence leave for all genders is increased year on year	June 2024
	Seek employee feedback on levels of understanding of supports available, ease and trust in using supports, and review of all existing and/or upcoming position descriptions for capacity to offer as job-share or part-time	Increased participation levels in inclusive work practices year on year. Increased employee experience metrics in PMS data year on year	June 2024
	Training for all managers on flexi-first approach to rostering, set expectations of the organisation that flexi work can and will be accommodated	Increased participation levels in inclusive work practices year on year. Increased employee experience metrics in PMS data year on year	June 2024
	Review 'all staff' and 'people leader' training to educate, promote and support inclusive workplace practices (disability in the workplace, cultural safety in the workplace, flexible work). Training	Increased participation levels in inclusive work practices year on year. Increased employee	June 2024

	materials and policies developed in consultation with relevant cohorts/networks	experience metrics in PMS data year on year	
Gender segregation	Investigate and rectify gender imbalance at 3 levels below the CEO (-3) to ensure greater parity (HR Director) <i>This action is also outlined under 'Gender composition' above</i>	Improved gender balance for all genders	June 2024
	Mentoring programs based on gender, cultural background to encourage movement/progression throughout the VEC		December 2023

