

Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–25



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Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to launch the Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–2025 to strengthen the SRO’s commitment to improving gender equal opportunity within our workplace and community.

Our employees have equal access to opportunities, responsibilities, and accountabilities and we have a commitment to being a workplace that is inclusive and respectful, where wellbeing is paramount and where staff are given access to opportunities for success and feel they belong culturally, socially, and professionally.

I am proud of the work we have accomplished in gender equality and I look forward to achieving the strategies and actions in this Plan.

Paul Broderick

Commissioner of State Revenue

Message from the Executive Director

It is my pleasure to launch the new Gender Equality Action Plan to assist the SRO in the continuation of driving and improving gender equality.

My role is to lead meaningful change at the SRO, and I am very proud of the success we have demonstrated in building an inclusive culture. During the development of this Plan, the SRO has conducted an audit (Attachment A) and consulted a wide range of stakeholders to understand gender equality issues.

As a senior leader within the SRO, I am committed to ensuring we hold ourselves accountable for progress and results.

Peta Jennings

Executive Director — People, Culture and Capability

Why do we need Gender equality?

Over the past 50 years, a number of key pieces of legislation have been introduced to progress gender equality, equal opportunity and pay equity in Australian workplaces. Notably in 2012 the *Workplace Gender Equality Act* was passed by both Houses of Parliament. The new legislation represented a fundamental change to the way gender equality in the workplace was approached. It also established the **Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)**.

The WGEA has a large data collection function which shows change is happening for the better. There has been a strong increase in employer action on gender equality. As employers have taken action, gender equality outcomes have improved, and the gender pay gap has declined. Women continue to move into management roles and an increasing number of employers now have a strategy or policy to support gender equality or promote flexible work.

But there is still work to be done. Men continue to out-earn women across all industries and occupational categories, gender segregation remains deeply entrenched, and women remain underrepresented in senior leadership.¹

Principles

The SRO has considered the *Gender Equality Act's* principles throughout the consultation process and in the design and development of the Plan's strategies and measures.

Commitment

Societies that value all genders as equal are safer and healthier. Gender equality is a human right. Everyone benefits from gender equality.

The SRO is committed to improving gender equality for our employees. It is also recognised that the promotion and delivery of the GEAP is a shared responsibility.

Increasing representation of women in leadership roles improves gender equality and provides benefits at both the individual and organisational level. It has been recognised that inclusive organisations have improved performance and innovation, better customer service, more satisfied and secure employees, and less harassment and discrimination.

¹ wgea.gov.au/about/our-story

To continue the SRO's commitment to improving gender equality and diversity, the Plan will continue to focus on:

- Delivery of leadership and career development programs.
- Monitoring progress on gender equality.
- Reduction of the median pay gap across all levels.
- Provision of a safe workplace free from harassment and discrimination.
- Promotion of flexible work arrangements.
- Ensuring all programs and policies that benefit Victorians are developed with a gender lens, through Gender Impact Assessments.

Intersectional Gender Inequality

The SRO recognises the differing perspectives and needs of women and employees with diverse gender identities from a range of backgrounds.

The SRO understands how the intersections between diverse experiences impact safety, economic security, and work, and how leadership is critical in the development of policy making.

Gender inequality is not experienced in the same way by all genders - it can be compounded by the way gender-based discrimination intersects with other forms of diversity such as Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other attributes – which can intersect and influence individual experiences and outcomes at work.

Systemic discrimination and bias - both conscious and unconscious — can create inequalities at every stage of the employment cycle. It shows that women and men from diverse groups can face multiple and compounding disadvantages when participating and progressing in the workplace. These range from inequitable access to employment opportunities, compounding biases in recruitment and promotion to cultural barriers, and increased likelihood of discrimination in the workplace.

The SRO, in considering intersectionality, has taken into account audit results, People Matter Survey (PMS) results, and feedback from the Working Group, employees and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU). An analysis of audit data was difficult as historically limited information is collected at the commencement of employment, which is an action item of this Plan. Similarly, our PMS results showed a high number of employees selecting 'prefer not to say' for intersectionality questions. We are confident that through consultation, communication, and training of this Plan's actions, we will give employees and managers greater confidence in discussing and raising awareness around intersectionality.

Further, the SRO is proud that actual and PMS results for rates on sexual harassment, discrimination and diversity and inclusion demonstrate a very respectful culture, and we are excited that the 'gender' journey we are on, will be strengthened and heightened over the four years of ambitious actions.

Achievements

In the development of this Plan, the SRO has recognised past achievements and current successes. Some of these include:

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CURRENT SUCCESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The VPS now has over 51% of Executive positions occupied by women, exceeding the Government target of 50%.• Of the SRO's seven Executives, 3 are women.• The SRO has 57% of staff identifying as women and 43% as men.• Staff surveys at the SRO have almost always indicated that women have equal or better job satisfaction rates to men.• The SRO has significantly higher retention rates of staff compared to VPS average retention rates. Of the 23 full-time ongoing employees who left in the last financial year, 70% were men.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The SRO has implemented mandatory training programs including SRO Conduct and Ethics; Professional behaviour at the SRO, and Privacy at the SRO.• We have a commitment to proPEL (program for Personal Effectiveness and Leadership), which provides access to high quality learning for all SRO leaders. Included is the LEaP (Leadership Experience Program) pathway which is aimed at staff who are considering leadership opportunities.• We have offered scholarships to 10 leaders (5 male/5 female) in 2020–2021 in the Queensland University of Technology Public Sector Management Program (Grade Certificate).• We implemented the EdCast platform on LEXi, which provides high quality content that can be assigned by leaders or recommended by the system according to the learning goals entered by the staff member. All staff must complete a minimum 20 hours of learning — pro rata for part time. This move to self-directed learning allows for maximum flexibility and equality for all in access to learning and development.• We conducted 'Exploring Leadership' programs which are an entry point to first line leaders. The last two programs had 24 participants, including 15 women (62%).• We offered 36 Learning Support Packages in 2021–2022 to 24 women (67%) and 12 men (33%).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We launched the SRO's Diversity and Inclusion Framework, which details the continuing support of a diverse and inclusive culture across the SRO, through a range of initiatives such as merit and equality-based recruitment and selection processes, through to staff and leadership development opportunities.• Some of the success factors include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% of our Branch Managers are women and 50% are men.• 40% of our Grade 6 specialists are women and 60% are men.• 50% of our Team Leaders are women and 50% are men.• 59% of our Grade 5 specialists are women and 41% are men.

Consultation, communication, and leadership

The SRO undertook consultation led by the GEAP Project Leader (Brett Pearson) through the formation of a Working Group (WG) made up of 10 employees. The employees came from all divisions and from both Melbourne and Ballarat sites and included one CPSU representative. The WG was formed through an EOI process where applicants were required to express their interest along with the skills and attributes they could bring to the group.

To fulfil our obligations to undertake meaningful consultation, the WG held regular meetings between September 2021 and April 2022, where audit results and employee experiences (PMS) were discussed. Further, the WG was broken up into teams, and each team was allocated several audit indicators, and asked to generate actions and strategies for the GEAP.

Consultation with all employees, the Executive team and the CPSU took place where they were offered the opportunity to provide feedback and input into the draft GEAP.

The SRO Executive is committed to the GEAP, and two Executive Directors are joint sponsors – Darren Joyce, Deputy Commissioner and Executive Director Corporate Services, and Peta Jennings, Executive Director People, Culture and Capability.

Gender Impact Assessments

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* the SRO, being a defined entity, is required to undertake a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) of all new policies, programs, and services, including those up for review, that directly and significantly impact the public. A GIA assesses the effects the policy, program or service may have on people of different genders and explains how it will be changed to better support Victorians of all genders and promote gender equality. Additionally, where practical, the GIA applies an intersectional approach to consider how gender inequality can be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on other factors such as age, disability, or ethnicity.

In March 2021, an internal procedure document was developed which explains that the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), as the lead agency, is likely to be responsible to identify policies, programs and services that directly and significantly impact the public (for both revenue and employment related initiatives) and undertake GIA's on those identify policies, programs, and services. The internal procedure document also provides a list of steps for undertaking a GIA.

To date, both the DTF and the SRO have not been required to develop a GIA on revenue and employment related initiatives.

Strategic Resource Plan

In complying with the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the SRO has undertaken the following:

- Audit: up to 1 December 2021, approximately 300 hours were spent ensuring the audit met the requirements of the Act. This included weekly meetings with Human Resources and Payroll staff, ensuring the requirements of the audit were understood and the audit was on schedule. Several other staff were required to provide data input for the audit.
- Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs): this requirement is being managed by an Administrative Law and Policy Specialist from the SRO's Policy and Legislation Branch. Although to date there has not been the requirement for a review of policies, there has been significant time spent consulting with DTF regarding the application of GIAs in the development of a range of revenue policy initiatives.
- Analysis of audit and PMS data: there has been significant time invested in analysing audit and PMS data by the WG and the Project Leader to develop strategies and actions for the GEAP. Further, considerable time has been invested in developing tables and graphs to assist in the data analysis.
- GEAP: in developing the GEAP, the SRO intends to invest significant resources over a four-year period. Prior to having the SRO's draft GEAP endorsed by executive, there has been regular meetings with the Project Lead, Program and Policy Manager and HR Branch Manager in developing the GEAP ensuring its compliance.
- Over the four-year period, the GEAP will deliver a significant training component. This will require the Learning and Development Branch to source, develop and deliver specific training actions from the GEAP.
- There will be other GEAP actions requiring input from SRO divisions including:
 - Corporate Affairs: assisting with a range of staff communications.
 - People, Culture and Capability: leading delivery of the GEAP, ensuring all actions are delivered.

Governance will be by way of a newly formed Gender Equality Committee, to be chaired by the Gender Equality Co-Sponsors. This is expected to require a significant investment of time by employees across the SRO.

INDICATOR	STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	YEAR RANGE
Gender composition at all levels of the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand on the gender equality and diversity workforce data collected and reported on to improve gender equality and diversity metrics. Understand, through analysis and consultation of audit and PMS results, the impacts on gender equality. Continue to deliver SRO leadership development programs, with a focus on women at VPS3–VPS6, to increase gender balance in leadership roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications campaign throughout the year (including induction) to encourage employee confidence in sharing their demographic details to better capture and report on gender equality and diversity metrics. Introduce additional gender equality workforce metrics to be captured and reported on to monitor progress, including the number of women who apply for promotions vs the number who are successful, the PMS results of women vs men to check that they are similar. Continue to liaise with the VPSC and other organisations (DTF, GE Commission) to benchmark and interpret workforce data consistently across the VPS. Focus on women at VPS3–VPS6, who through the PDP process demonstrate an interest and capability in leadership. Connect and engage with the Women of Colour network on contemporary practices in the development of culturally appropriate leadership programs. 	2022–2023
			2022–2023
			2022–2025
			2022–2023
			2022–2025
Gender composition of governing bodies *NB: Executive data included in main audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strive for gender-balanced composition of executive, senior managers, managers. Gender Equality Sponsors to continue to lead gender equality as a key business and strategic focus and a driver for improved organisational performance and engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Gender Equality Committee to monitor progress and identify risks and challenges in the delivery of the GEAP (quarterly). Executive and HR to identify skills and capabilities required to be a leader and incorporate into training. GE Sponsors to regularly communicate with Executive regarding the Implementation Plan. 	2022–2023
			2022–2024
			2022–2025
Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender (a) 5% on advice from GE Commission and DTF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the median pay gap by at least 5% over 4 years from 11.9% to 6.9% (a). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payroll and Project Leader to analyse all grades audit results commencing with Grade 6.1, 4 and fixed-term employees. The outcomes of the gender pay analysis to be shared with all employees. 	2022–2025
Sexual harassment in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and communicate the SRO’s zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Promote and communicate policies, processes, and training to ensure all genders feel safe to report sexual harassment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement new mandatory manager and staff training to facilitate the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace. 	2022–2025
			2022–2023
			2022–2023
			2022–2023

INDICATOR	STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	YEAR RANGE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a process that provides an alleged victim-centric² approach to case management of sexual harassment complaints. • Implement and promote a process for employees to safely and confidentially seek advice from HR professionals. • Annually communicate and promote resources available to all employees to counter sexual harassment and emphasise SRO's zero tolerance approach. 	
Recruitment and promotion practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build the SRO's reputation as a leading employer in the public sector. • Compliance with higher duties and secondment policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the SRO's commitment to gender equality and diversity, inclusion, and flexible ways of working internally. • Engage with employees and external networks to continue to embed recruitment and engagement practices to increase diversity and build on being recognised as a leading employer in the public sector. • Audit of payroll higher duties and secondments for compliance with policy. 	<p>2022–2023</p> <p>2022–2023</p> <p>2023–2024</p>
Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to Family Violence Leave, flexibility, supporting family/caring responsibilities including parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Family Violence leave, flexibility, parental leave, family/caring responsibilities leave policies and procedures. • Enhance parental leave opportunities and manager awareness in relation to staying in touch days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication campaign (including induction) throughout the year to raise awareness of leave entitlements and flexibility options. • Develop user-friendly Parental Leave intranet page with easy-to-understand entitlements and tips for parents. • Education and support for managers regarding their responsibilities with staying in touch days. • Enhance opportunities for employees on parental leave parents to gain access to training, study, team meetings and SRO changes. 	<p>2023–2024</p> <p>2023–2024</p> <p>2023–2024</p> <p>2023–2024</p>
Gendered work segregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand and address occupations with significant gender segregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of audit, PMS and recruiting data to understand where gender segregation may exist and to address any barriers. 	<p>2023–2024</p>

² <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/respectwork-sexual-harassment-national-inquiry-report-2020>

As a result of consultation with the WG and an analysis of the PMS results, the actions that are not specific to one indicator include:

- Development of a four-year Implementation Plan detailing how each indicator's actions will be achieved.
- Development of a dedicated gender equality MySRO page containing information such as links to relevant government agencies, legislation/acts, articles/research, parental leave, family violence supports and the DPC Innovation Network.
- Develop a communication plan to promote gender equality at the SRO, including articles on 'lived experiences' such as sexuality or disability.