

VICTORIAN PLANNING AUTHORITY

Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2025



Acknowledgment of Country



The Victorian Planning Authority acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Victoria and their continued connection to land and waters. We honour and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We are committed to our reconciliation journey, because at its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, for the benefit of all Victorians.

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Introduction

This Gender Equality Action Plan has been developed to address the Victorian Planning Authority's (VPA) obligations as a public entity under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. It includes an analysis of the Workplace Gender Audit (WGA), as well as the key strategies and actions VPA will implement between July 2021–June 2025.

This plan sits within the broader *VPA Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Belonging Plan*, and aims to ensure VPA is able to attract and support a diverse workforce which is representative of the community we seek to serve.



Source: Fauxels at Pexels

Executive summary



The VPA Gender Equality Action Plan has been developed through a thorough baseline audit analysis and consultation process. This has included:

- **Workplace Gender Audit analysis**, which included data gathered through internal VPA HR systems to measure the VPA's performance against each *Gender Equality Act 2020* indicators as of June 20, 2021
- **Analysis of the VPA People Matter Survey results** for 2021 against each *Gender Equality Act 2020* indicator
- **Internal consultation with staff members**, including workshops to identify actions for improving gender equality and broader diversity and a feedback session held by the Community and Public Sector Union with union members
- **External consultation with the VPA Board and experts** on intersectional workplace inclusion and gender diversity.

The key findings of this process identified opportunities for improvement against each indicator. These findings included:

INDICATOR 1 Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

The balance between men and women is fairly even across the VPA. The pattern across different levels indicates that there is a slightly higher representation of men at more senior levels (from Level 0 to Level 4) and at entrance level (Level 8), with women making up a higher proportion of employees at the mid-level of the organisation (Level 5 and Level 6).

Overall, employees feel there is a positive workplace culture in relation to people from most backgrounds and identities. Some employees felt the workplace was less supportive of people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or who have a disability. This indicates a possible need to increase the accessibility of recruitment processes, minimising the potential for unconscious bias, however this is untested. It would be beneficial to collect data on more specific aspects of applicant and employee identity and background to better understand the presence of applicant diversity, and to specifically consider and target under-represented demographics within VPA.

INDICATOR 2 Gender composition of governing bodies

The Board is made up of four women and three men, demonstrating a positive gender balance. The Board is however less diverse on some other diversity indicators.

INDICATOR 3 Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender

The gender pay gap varies at each employment level. The largest gender pay gap measurement is at Level 3 (VPS6). At the more junior and senior levels, women are paid more than men, however there are significantly less employees in these cohorts.

The total gender pay gap between women and men at VPA is:

- Median annualised salary: 4%
- Median total remuneration: 5.1%
- Mean annualised base salary: 10.6%
- Mean total remuneration: 10.5%

This is lower than the current mean annualised salary gender pay gap in Victoria which is currently 12.2%. The VPA mean annualised salary gender pay gap of 4% is close to the Victoria public service gender pay gap, which was 4.3% in June 2020. This could be further reduced by addressing key drivers such as unconscious bias.

INDICATOR 4 Sexual harassment

There have been no formal complaints made about sexual harassment. One informal complaint was raised to HR by a female about a male, but this was not progressed to a formal complaint. No trainings or actions were taken to prevent sexual harassment in the last 12 months. Sexual harassment and pathways to address a complaint are referenced within existing policies (including the *Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, Equity, Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Policy* and the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Sector Employees*), but these policies could be strengthened to include explicit and specific details and considerations for incidents of sexual harassment. It is important to ensure training and awareness occur to both prevent sexual harassment and raise awareness of the reporting pathway for this. Notably, 84% of respondents believes VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination (14% neutral, 2% unfavourable).

INDICATOR 5 Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Internal career progression and learning and development were identified as key priority areas. In particular, staff felt there was a need to strengthen a fair and transparent process for allocating learning and professional development opportunities, as well as management demonstrating a clear and consistently applied internal recruitment process.

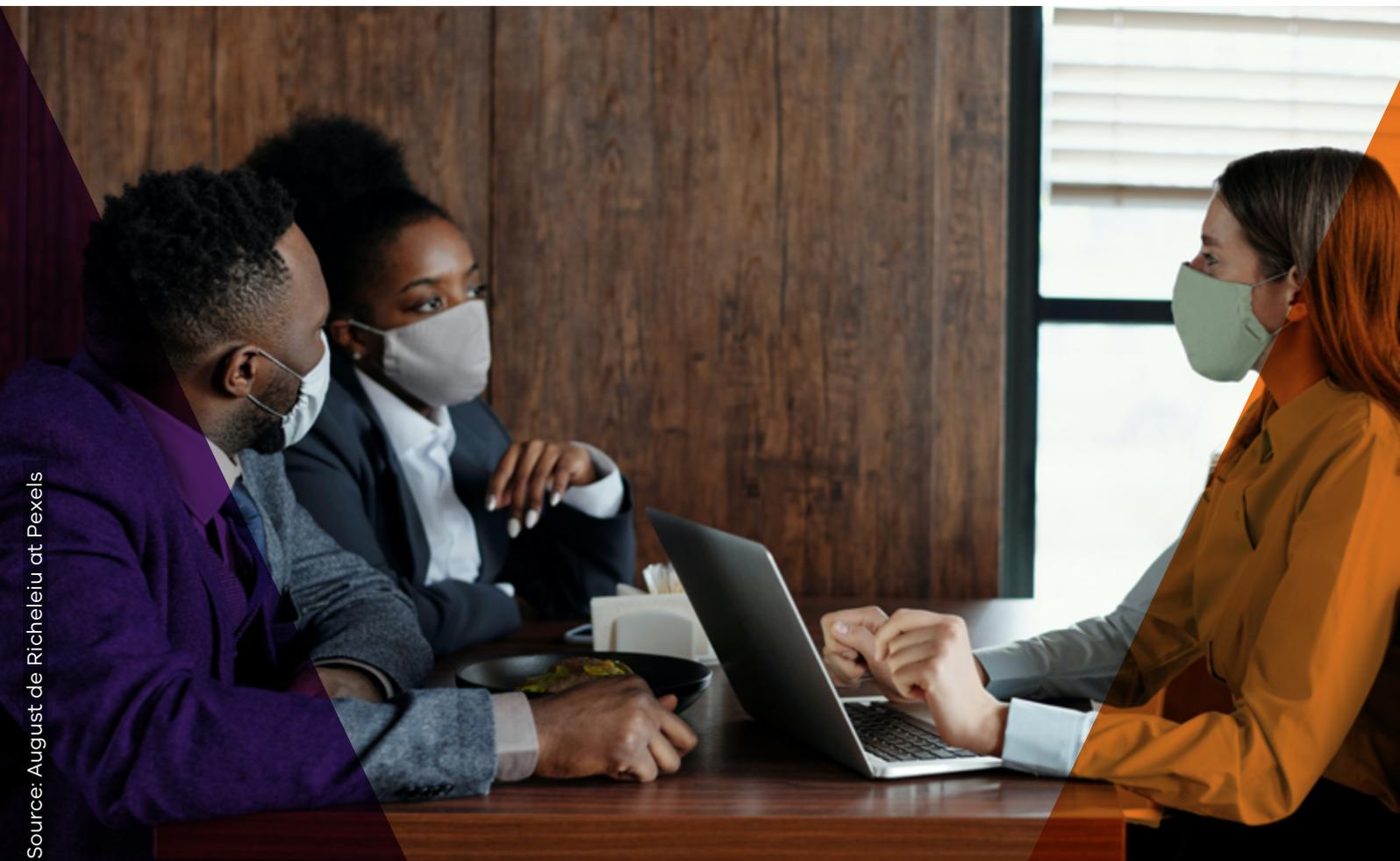


INDICATOR 6 Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions, practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities

VPA supports a range of flexible work practices, however there is some concern held by staff around how utilisation may impact opportunities or career progression. Parental and carers leave is being accessed by staff, however staff consultations indicate there could be benefit in further promoting secondary parental leave. No staff have taken family violence leave, and staff consultation indicates the benefit of proactively communicating the availability of this leave to remove potential barriers of access.

INDICATOR 7 Gendered segregation within the workplace

Men are more highly represented in Manager and Professional Roles, while women are more highly represented in Clerical and Administrative Worker roles. This further supports the ongoing need to ensure we have more thorough and transparent guidelines for recruitment and promotion, and that these processes specifically aim to minimise unconscious bias.



SECTION 1

Baseline audit analysis

Methodology

Workplace Gender Audit analysis

VPA's HR data reports provided inputs to the Workplace Gender Audit (WGA). This data has informed this baseline assessment by providing quantitative data on the gender equality indicators.

People Matter Survey analysis

There were 122 respondents to the 2021 People Matter Survey – 53 men, 56 women, 13 prefer not to say. No respondents identified as non-binary, trans, gender-diverse or using a different term to describe their gender. The results of this survey provided both quantitative and qualitative information against the gender equality indicators.

Where possible, this data has been disaggregated to provide the responses of people of different genders, backgrounds and identities. This has enabled an intersectional analysis of the responses provided in relation to each indicator.

Data gaps

Some limitations to internal VPA HR data include:

- gender is only captured as male or female, there is no data on self-described gender (including those who identify as non-binary or gender-diverse)
- lack of data on cultural identity
- lack of data on sexual orientation
- lack of data on flexible work practices.

Some limitations to the People Matter Survey data analysis include:

- grouping of some cohorts for anonymity meant it was not always possible to disaggregate data to determine different aspects of identity and background of respondents. This meant it was not always possible to analyse differences in response between cohorts.
- 13 people did not identify their gender in the People Matters Survey, and in some cases this cohort was grouped with others in a way that influenced analysis (or example, men who had a cultural identity other than Australian were unable to be separated from people who did not share their gender).

Findings

INDICATOR 1 Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

The VPA workforce was made up of 48% people who identified as women (59 people) and 52% of people who identify as men (63 people). VPA does not currently measure other self-described genders.

The balance between men and women is fairly even, however the pattern across different levels indicates that there is a slightly higher representation of men at more senior levels (from Level 0 to 4) and at entrance level (Level 8), with women making up a higher proportion of employees at the mid-level of the organisation (Levels 5 and 6).

Employment level			Women	Men
0	CEO	VPS E01	0	1
1	Executive Director & CFO	VPS E02/7.3	3	4
2	Director	VPS 7.2 & 7.1	6	7
3	Manager	VPS 6	13	16
4	Planner/Partner/Analyst/Coordinator	VPS 5	10	15
5	Planner/Advisor/Officer	VPS 4	13	10
6	Planner/Officer/Accountant	VPS 3	12	5
7	Graduate Planner/Receptionist	VPS 2	2	2
8	Student Planner	VPS 1	2	3

Women constitute 60% of employees on part-time contracts, with six women on part-time contracts and four men.

89% of respondents to the People Matter Survey feel there is a positive workplace culture at VPA in relation to employees of difference sexes/genders (10% neutral, 2% unfavourable). This figure does not change significantly based on the gender of respondents.

Intersectionality

According to internal HR data, no employees currently identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and no employees currently identify as having a disability. However, People Matter result differ to this as outlined below.

There are slightly more women than men in the 25–44-year age groups, and more men than women in the 15–24 and 45+ age groups.

Age	Women	Men
15–24 years	5	6
25–34 years	20	17
35–44 years	22	20
45–54 years	9	10
55–64 years	5	8
65+	0	2

The People Matter Survey tells us that:



One employee identifies as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



Five employees identify as having a disability



15 employees identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual or use another term (other than straight) to describe their sexuality



25 employees identify as having a cultural identity other than Australian, 12 of whom are women

The People Matter Survey also asked participants questions relating to the VPA culture regarding employees from different backgrounds and identities.

Responses demonstrated that a large majority of employees feel that there is a positive workplace culture at the VPA in relation to:

- Employees who identify as LGBTIQ+ (85% favourable, 14% neutral, 1% unfavourable)
- Employees from varied cultural backgrounds (81% favourable, 17% neutral, 2% unfavourable)
- Employees of different age groups (79% favourable, 19% neutral, 2% unfavourable)

There was a reduced majority who agreed that there is a positive culture in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (59% favourable, 36% neutral, and 5% unfavourable).

50% of respondents felt there is a positive culture in relation to employees who have a disability, while the other half were neutral.

INDICATOR 2 Gender composition of governing bodies

The VPA Board comprises four women and three men. The Chair is a woman, and the Deputy Chair is a man.

Intersectionality

As with the composition of the workforce, no Board members identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, nor do they identify as having a disability.

Age	Women	Men
55–64 years	1	1
65+	3	2

The Board consists of people over the age of 55 with the youngest Board member being 61 years of age. The majority are over the age of 65.



INDICATOR 3 Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender

Internal HR data was used to assess the gender pay gap for women. VPA does not currently capture data on self-described genders (including those who identify as non-binary or gender-diverse), so this pay gap was not assessed. Both mean and median pay gaps were captured to provide a more holistic understanding of the gender pay gap within VPA. Gaps were also captured for both annualised base salary and total remuneration.

The total gender pay gap between women and men at VPA is:

- Median annualised salary: 4%
- Median total remuneration: 5.1%
- Mean annualised base salary: 10.6%
- Mean total remuneration: 10.5%

This is lower than the current gender pay gap in Victoria which is currently 12.2%¹. The VPA mean annualised salary gender pay gap of 4% is lower than the Victoria public sector gender pay gap, which was 9.6% in June 2021².

1 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *(Finally) Equal Pay Day*, 31 August 2021. <https://www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/finally-equal-pay-day>

2 <https://vpvc.vic.gov.au/data-and-research/data-facts-visuals-state-of-the-sector/employee-pay-and-gender-pay/#datasets>

Below is the gender pay gaps for each employment level³:

Employment level		Median annualised base salary	Median total remuneration	Mean annualised base salary	Mean total remuneration
0	CEO VPS E01	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	Executive Director & CFO VPS E02/7.3	-3.2%	-2.9%	-5.3%	-5.0%
2	Director VPS 7.2 & 7.1	-9.8%	-10.1%	-3.9%	-3.9%
3	Manager VPS 6	12.7%	13.1%	8.0%	8.4%
4	Planner/Partner/Analyst/ Coordinator VPS 5	0.7%	1.0%	-2.4%	-2.2%
5	Planner/Advisor/Officer VPS 4	0.0%	0.0%	-0.8%	-0.7%
6	Planner/Officer/Accountant VPS 3	-3.2%	-4.5%	-4.5%	-4.9%
7	Graduate Planner/ Receptionist VPS 2	-8.1%	-7.4%	-8.1%	-7.4%
8	Student Planner VPS 1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The gender pay gap varies at each employment level. The largest gender pay gap across all measurements is Level 3 (VPS6). At the more junior and senior levels, women are paid more than men, however it is important to note that there is significantly less employees in these cohorts. The majority of employees sit between Levels 3–5 (36 women, 41 men) where there is a larger gender pay gap. Fewer employees sit between Level 0–2 (9 women, 12 men) and between Levels 6–8 (14 women, 10 men) where women are paid equal to or more than men.

Salary decisions are implemented in accordance with the *Victorian Planning Authority Enterprise Agreement 2021*. It has several clauses that aim to support improved gender equity, including:

- The need to consider gender equity effects of appointments above the base salary point
- Section 28 specifically articulates considerations in relation to gender equality and salary, including the Gender Pay Equity Principles, a commitment to a collaborative approach to achieving gender pay equity, a process for claims relating to systemic gender equality issues, and a commitment to consultation with the Union in the preparation of the Gender Equality Action Plans.

³ The gender pay gap is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings as per the Workplace Gender Audit guidance. A gender pay gap that is positive (i.e. >0) means that the average annualised full-time salaries of men are greater than women or people of self-described gender, while a gender pay gap that is negative (i.e. <0) means that the average annualised full-time salaries of women or people of self-described gender are greater than men.

Intersectionality

The gender pay gap is seen to increase for employees as they get older. Men are paid more than women in the 15–24 age bracket, however women are paid more than men in the 25–34 age bracket. From 35, the gap widens, as men are paid increasingly more than women.

Age	Median annualised base salary	Median total remuneration	Mean annualised base salary	Mean total remuneration
15–24 years	13.5%	12.9%	8.7%	8.6%
25–34 years	0	0	-12.9%	-12.5%
35–44 years	5.6%	5.2%	7.8%	8.0%
45–54 years	29.6%	29.8%	19.4%	18.3%
55–64 years	40.1%	40.1%	22.7%	23.1%
65+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The initial pay gap between 15–24 years could indicate that men are in senior positions at a younger age than women. This is supported by data that demonstrates men in this age bracket hold more senior positions at VPA than women in this age bracket:

Employment level	Women aged 15–24	Men aged 15–24
5 – Planner/Advisor/Officer	0	1
6 – Planner/Officer/Accountant	0	2
7 – Graduate Planner/ Receptionist	1	2
8 – Student Planner	2	1

The increasing gender pay gap from 35–44 years could be associated with women taking greater time out of the workforce for caring responsibilities, and this impacting career progression and opportunities in the future⁴. Similarly, it could be associated with more women needing to work part-time due to caring responsibilities (eight women and four men are currently working part-time at VPA according to internal HR data).

VPA does not currently collect data which allows for an analysis in relation to cultural background or sexual orientation.

⁴ <https://www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap>

INDICATOR 4 Sexual harassment

There have been no formal complaints made about sexual harassment. One informal complaint was raised to HR by a woman about a man, but this was not progressed to a formal complaint.

No training or actions were taken to specifically prevent sexual harassment in the last 12 months.

The People Matter Survey demonstrates positive responses in relation to the management of sexual harassment within VPA, with 93% of respondents believing that VPA encourages respectful workplace behaviours (6% neutral and 1% unfavourable). 84% of respondents believe VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination (14% neutral, 2% unfavourable).

81% of respondents feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work (12% neutral, 7% unfavourable). Responses vary slightly based on gender, with 89% of men (9% neutral, 2% unfavourable) and 80% of women (13% neutral, 7% unfavourable) feeling safe to challenge inappropriate behaviours at work.

VPA currently has an *Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy 2017*, which defines harassment as

an unwanted behaviour and can take many forms. It may involve inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence⁵.

The policy does not explicitly address sexual harassment, although this is included within the scope. The resolution process encourages an informal approach first, and does not consider the challenges of doing so in instances of sexual harassment. This policy could be strengthened by specifically outlining what constitutes sexual harassment, and providing a specific pathway for these complaints to be made.

Sexual harassment is also referenced under the *Equity, Anti-discrimination and Diversity Policy 2017*. This states that

Under the legislation, it is also unlawful to sexually harass someone. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behaviour. It involves behaviour that could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written.

The Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees does require public sector employees to *'follow the spirit as well as the letter of the law relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.'* Sexual harassment is implied in this scope, but not specifically addressed.

⁵ VPA Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy 2017 D/08/3679 July

INDICATOR 5 Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

The People Matter Survey tells us that 67% of respondents believe that VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit (25% neutral, 7% unfavourable). However, when this is adjusted for gender, 62% of men and 77% of women believe VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit.

85% of respondents believe gender is not a barrier to success at VPA (11% neutral, 4% unfavourable). When this is adjusted for gender, 85% of men and 93% of women believe their gender is not a barrier to their success at VPA. 13 respondents chose 'prefer not to say' in relation to their gender, and 54% of this cohort believe that gender is not a barrier to their success, while 23% answered unfavourably to this statement.

VPA's *Equity, Anti-discrimination and Diversity Policy 2017* states that:

Equity, discrimination and diversity in employment cover a continuum, from recruitment and selection and induction throughout the employment cycle and any termination in the employment relationship.

Recruitment

The *Agreed VPA Recruitment and Resourcing Process 2019* notes that external recruitment processes apply assessment tools consistently to all candidates. It also states that *'the panel will assess practical experience as past behaviour is the best indicator of future performance'*.

Of the 33 new hires in July 2020–June 2021, 20 new hires were women, and 13 were men. These hires occurred between Level 3 (VPS 7) and Level 8 (VPS 1).

Career progression

Five women and seven men were permanently promoted between July 2020 and June 2021.

58% of respondents to the People Matter Survey felt they had an equal chance of promotion at VPA (24% neutral, 18% unfavourable). This number did change based on gender – 54% of women felt they had an equal chance of promotion (24% neutral, 18% unfavourable) compared to 70% of men (13% neutral, 17% unfavourable).

The *Agreed VPA Recruitment and Resourcing Process 2019* states that:

a merit-based process should be undertaken which may include some or all of expression of interest, written application, interview and reference checks.

Templates are provided to ensure a consistent format for recruitment documents, but existing tools do not provide explicit guidance on how to conduct a merit-based process (for example, how to develop key selection criteria in a way that avoids unconscious bias) or how each form of assessment should be weighted in the final decisions.

Learning and professional development

The *Agreed VPA Recruitment and Resourcing Process 2019* states that opportunities to transfer between teams at level and to build skills and knowledge should be discussed with managers, and that these decisions will be made in line with business needs and operating requirements.

The *Professional Development Policy 2017* notes that professional development plans should include activities that are aligned with VPA's strategic goals, and can include up to one role development activity and two career development activities per year.

Career development opportunities were accessed by 11 women and seven men. Higher duties were performed by six women and seven men, and three women and four men were internally seconded.

66% of respondents to the People Matter Survey were satisfied with the way their learning and development needs were addressed in the last 12 months. There was a large difference in satisfaction rates between men and women, with 75% of men responding favourably (11 neutral, 13 unfavourable) but only 59% of women (27% neutral, 14% unfavourable).

70% of all respondents feel there are adequate opportunities to develop skills and experience at VPA (22% neutral, 7% unfavourable). Satisfaction drops slightly for women, with 66% agreeing (27% neutral and 7% unfavourable) and increases for men with 79% agreeing (13% neutral, 8% unfavourable).

Exits

Eight women and eight men left the organisation between July 2020 and June 2021.

Intersectionality

Age

Overall, age is not seen as a barrier to success, with 75% of all respondents responding favourably to this question in the People Matter Survey (19% neutral, 7% unfavourable). Gender did not significantly alter this perception.

However, perceptions were different for more marginal age groups. Of people who identified as being within the age groups of 15–24, 55–64, and 65+, only 53% felt their age was not a barrier to their success at VPA (35% neutral, and 12% unfavourable).

Sexual orientation

Overall, sexual orientation was not seen as a barrier to success, with 88% of respondents responding favourable to this question in the People Matter Survey (11% neutral, 4% unfavourable). This number slightly increased for those who identified as being either gay or lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or uses a different term to describe their sexuality, with 93% of these respondents responding favourably to this question (7% neutral).

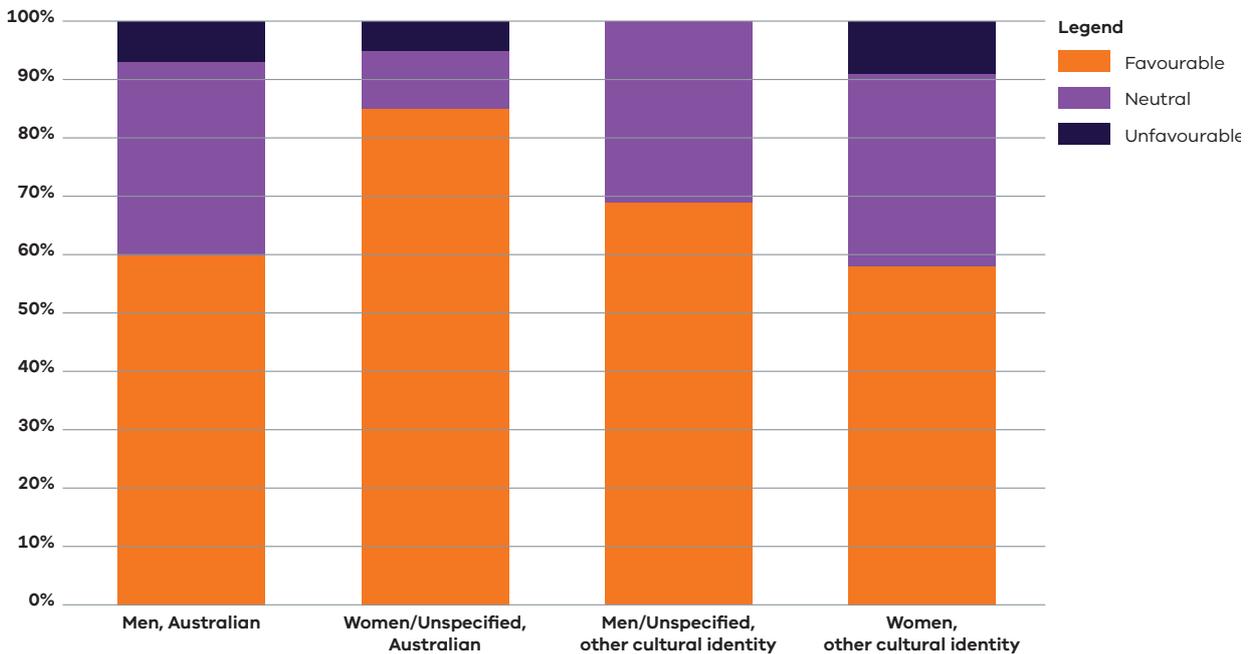
Cultural background

Overall, 70% of respondents felt that their cultural background is not a barrier to success at VPA (24% neutral, 6% unfavourable).

25 people identify as having a cultural identity other than Australian. For this cohort, 76% felt their cultural background is not a barrier to success at VPA (20% neutral, 4% unfavourable).

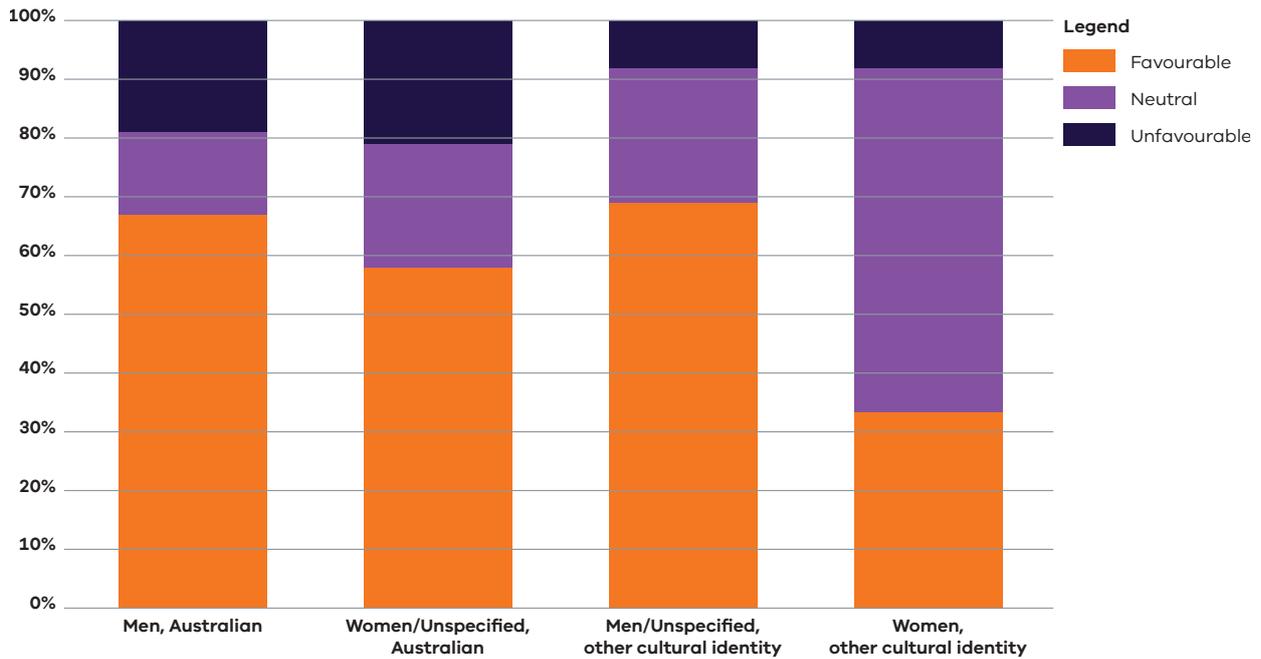
People did respond differently to questions based on recruitment, promotion and career development based on the intersection of their cultural identity and their gender.

Figure 1 My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit



Women who have a cultural identity other than Australian had the lowest belief in the fairness of recruitment and promotion decisions, with 58% responding favourably to this statement (33% neutral, 8% unfavourable). Men who identify as Australian had the next lowest favourable response, with 60% responding favourably (33% neutral, 7% unfavourable). Men and unspecified gender (grouped for anonymity) who have a cultural identity other than Australian had the second highest favourable response, with 69% (31% neutral). Women and unspecified gender (grouped for anonymity) who identified as Australian had the highest belief at 85%.

Figure 2 I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation



Men who identify as Australian and as other cultural identities were fairly equal in their favourable responses about having an equal chance of promotion at 67% (14% neutral and 19% unfavourable) and 69% respectively. 58% of women and people of unspecified gender who were Australian responded favourably (21% neutral, 21% unfavourable) and only 33% of women who do not identify as Australian responded favourably (14% neutral, 19% unfavourable).

Other areas of difference include on learning and development, with only 50% of women who do not identify as being Australian responding that they are satisfied with the way their learning and development needs have been addressed, compared to the overall average of 60%.

Disability

According to the People Matter Survey, five employees currently identify as having a disability at VPA. 59% of respondents responded that disability is not a barrier to success at VPA, with 39% responding neutrally and 2% responding unfavourably.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

According to the People Matter Survey, one employee identifies as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

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

Flexible work

VPA does not systematically capture flexible work data, but the People Matter Survey tells us that 41 staff members do not currently utilise flexible work arrangements. 36 women currently use flexible work arrangements, as well as 43 employees who identify as men or have not specified their gender (grouped for anonymity).

The below table captures the number of respondents who do utilise flexible work arrangements by the type of arrangement they are currently utilising⁶:

Flexible work arrangements	Number of respondents
Working from alternative locations	36
Flexible start and finish times	36
More hours over fewer days	23
Part-time	11
Using leave to work flexible hours	4
Study leave	4
Purchased leave	1
Other	2

VPA has a flexible work policy which states that the default position is that *'every role can have some form of flexibility regardless of the reason you want it'*. This policy also specifies that employees may request a change in their working arrangements if they are:

- parents of a child of school age or younger
- a carer under the *Carer Recognition Act 2012*
- identify as an employee with a disability
- are 55 years or older
- experiencing family violence.

Types of flexible work offered include:

- flexible start and finish times
- compressed working
- remote working
- part-time
- job sharing
- purchased leave.

⁶ This figure cannot be disaggregated by gender due to PMS grouping for anonymity.

The Way We Work April 2021 provides a more detailed insight into the principles behind flexible work approaches at VPA. This document outlines strategies and resources for enabling flexible work practices.

The People Matter Survey tells us that 72% of respondents feel using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success at VPA (18% neutral, 10% unfavourable). There is not a significant difference between genders, with 71% of women responding favourably (20% neutral and 9% unfavourable) and 77% of men (15% neutral and 8% unfavourable).

77% of respondents also feel there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who use flexible work (17% neutral, 6% unfavourable). There is not a significant difference between genders, with 77% of women responding favourably (21% neutral, 5% unfavourable) and 83% of men (13% neutral and 4% unfavourable).

83% of employees feel they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities. There is no significant difference between genders, with 86% of women responding favourable (7% neutral, 7% unfavourable) and 87% of men (11% neutral, 2% unfavourable).

Parental leave and responsibilities

Five men and four women took parental leave between July 2020 and June 2021. Women took a total of 2,686 hours of paid and 250.8 hours of unpaid parental leave, and men took a total of 592.8 hours of paid and 76 unpaid hours of parental leave. 14 women and 16 men accessed carers leave during this period.

It is also important to note that VPA employees were primarily working from home during this time, and were also able to access additional special leave in relation to COVID-19. This included 20 additional days of paid special leave if an employee had unexpected carers requirements due to the closure of their children's school, school moving to remote or flexible learning, the closure of their children's childcare centre, or due to additional curriculum days/extension of school holidays.



VPA's *Enterprise Agreement 2021* outlines that a primary caregiver who has provided more than three months of continuous service is entitled to 16 weeks paid leave and an additional 36 weeks unpaid leave. All other employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks of unpaid leave. A secondary caregiver who has provided more than 3 months of continuous services is entitled to 4 weeks paid parental (and an additional 12 weeks paid leave if they take over the primary responsibility for the care of the child within the first 78 weeks), as well as 48 weeks unpaid leave (or an additional 36 weeks unpaid leave if they take over the primary responsibility for the care of the child. Prenatal leave, pre-adoption leave, permanent care leave and grandparent leave is also available.

Employees are entitled to 114 hours of paid personal/carers leave (pro rata for part-time employees). Employees are also able to convert any or all of their accrued person/carers leave entitlement to half pay for a period equal to twice the period to which the employee would otherwise be entitled.

In the People Matter Survey, 65% of respondents (30% neutral, 6% unfavourable) felt having caring responsibilities, and 66% (29% neutral, 6% unfavourable) felt having family responsibilities, were not barriers to success at VPA. These numbers did not vary greatly between genders.

80% of respondents and 81% of respondents felt there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who have caring responsibilities and family responsibilities respectively. This did not differ significantly between genders, although men responded slightly more favourably to both statements:

- 77% of women (21% neutral, 2% unfavourable) responded favourably in relation to caring, while 87% of men (11% neutral, 2% unfavourable) responded favourably.
- 82% of women (16% neutral, 2% unfavourable) responded favourably in relation to family responsibilities in comparison to 85% of men (13% neutral and 2% unfavourable).

86% of respondents feel that VPA supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender (11% neutral, 2% unfavourable). Responses did not differ significantly between genders.

Family violence

No employees took family violence leave between July 2020 and June 2021.

The *VPA Family Violence Leave Policy* offers non-casual employees up to 20 days of paid family violence leave per year, and also supports temporary changes to flexible work arrangements. Accessing this leave requires evidence in the form of documentation provide by the police, a court, a registered medical practitioner, a family violence support service, a lawyer, or alternative source considered appropriate by the HR coordinator.

The People Matter Survey demonstrates that 81% of employees believe that VPA would support them if they needed to take family violence leave (19% neutral). This number increased for women at 86% (14% neutral), with men still at 81% (19% neutral).

Intersectionality

Sexual orientation

In the People Matter Survey, people who identified as gay or lesbian, bisexual, pansexual or who use a different term to define their sexuality responded positively to all aspects of flexible work, caring and family responsibilities and family violence support. All responses were over 90%.

Cultural identity

For those who identified as having a cultural identity other than Australian, People Matter Survey results were slightly less favourable than for those who identify as Australian.

56% (40% neutral, 4% unfavourable) and 48% (48% neutral, 4% unfavourable) of respondents who identify as having a cultural identity other than Australian responded favourably in relation to caring and family responsibilities not being a barrier to success.

Women who have a cultural identity other than Australian responded significantly lower to most questions in relation to flexible work or caring and family responsibilities. 50% felt that using flexible work was not a barrier to success (25% neutral, 25% unfavourable), 42% felt having caring responsibilities or family responsibilities was not a barrier to success (50% neutral, 8% unfavourable). This was different to women who identify as Australian, with 79% responding that flexible work was not a barrier to success (16% neutral, 5% unfavourable), and 68% (26% neutral, 5% unfavourable) and 76% (21% neutral, 3% unfavourable) responding that having caring and family responsibilities were not a barrier to success respectively.

Age

Age did not significantly impact responses.

INDICATOR 7 Gendered segregation within the workplace

The table below demonstrates that men are more highly represented in Manager and Professional Roles, while women are more highly represented in Clerical and Administrative Worker roles.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations		Women	Men
1	Managers	8 (40%)	12 (60%)
11	Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators	0	1
13	Specialist Managers	8	11
2	Professionals	42 (46%)	50 (54%)
22	Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals	5	1
23	Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals	36	49
26	ICT Professionals	1	0
5	Clerical and Administrative Workers	11 (92%)	1 (8%)
51	Officer Managers and Program Administrators	2	0
52	Personal Assistants and Secretaries	3	0
53	General Clerical Workers	2	1
55	Numerical Clerks	1	0
56	Clerical and Office Support Workers	3	0

91% of respondents to the People Matter Survey feel that work is allocated fairly in their workgroup, regardless of gender (7% neutral, 2% unfavourable). This number did not change significantly based on gender, with 93% of women responding favourable and 96% of men.

The People Matters Survey also explored cultural safety, with 89% of respondents saying they feel culturally safe at work (8% neutral, 2% unfavourable). 93% of respondents said they have not experienced bullying or discrimination (5% neutral, 2% unfavourable).

Responses varied slightly based on gender. 94% of men said they feel culturally safe at work (2% neutral, 4% unfavourable), while 91% women did. 100% of men have not experienced bullying or discrimination, while 89% of women said they have not experienced bullying (7% neutral, 4% unfavourable) and 95% of women said they have not experienced discrimination (4% neutral, 2% unfavourable).⁷

⁷ People who did not specify their gender had more unfavourable responses, with 62% responding work was allocated in their workgroup fairly regardless of gender, 77% saying they have not experienced bullying and 54% saying they have not experienced discrimination. These responses have been included in the collective responses but cannot be included under a specific gender.

Analysis of findings

Women from cultural backgrounds other than Australian are less confident in the fairness of VPA's recruitment and promotion practices than other cohorts of employees.

While a majority of employees express a belief that VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit, and that gender is not a barrier to success at VPA, women from cultural backgrounds other than Australian provided the least amount of favourable responses. These responses are consistent with broader findings on the experience of culturally diverse women in Australian workplaces, as only one in five culturally diverse women feel their workplace is free of cultural diversity or gender-based biases and stereotypes⁸.

Men who identify as Australian provided less favourable responses than Australian women or men from diverse cultural backgrounds, however internal HR data shows men are more represented in leadership, and in managerial and professional roles. This means that these less favourable perceptions are not supported by the data which indicates men are still being recruited and accessing more senior roles than other genders. The perceptions of unfairness indicated in these responses could suggest a form of backlash in relation to diversity work – some individuals can see gender equality initiatives and the promotion of women to leadership roles as unfair or not meritocratic, and often occurs when individuals fear personal impact or the status quo has changed⁹.

Men hold more roles and are paid more between 15–24 years, and this gap increases from the age of 35.

This is most likely linked to common drivers of the gender pay gap, with data suggesting reasons could include unconscious bias resulting in men being promoted at a younger age, and women taking more time out of the workforce or working part-time due to caring responsibilities which can impact career progression¹⁰.

While there is strong representation of women in leadership, women still hold the majority of clerical and administrative roles while men the majority of professional and leadership roles.

VPA has a fairly even gender composition across its workforce, and many women are in key positions of leadership. However, the data demonstrates that there are opportunities to improve gender equality at all levels of the organisation. It will also be important to consider intersectionality and address potential barriers for women who are also part of other marginalised communities.

Lack of uptake of family violence leave and sexual harassment claims demonstrate need for training and consideration of accessibility of these processes.

While a lack of reports can indicate a lack of instance, it can also indicate a lack of accessibility of support and reporting processes, including potential fears around how disclosure may impact employment. 30% of workers in Australia have experienced family violence¹¹, which means it is important VPA has accessible support available for its employees. Similarly, a national survey by the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2018 found that one in three respondents experience sexual harassment in the

8 Diversity Council of Australia, *Cracking the Glass-Cultural Ceiling*, 2017.

9 *Male Champions of Change and Chief Executive Women, Backlash and Buy-In: Responding to the Challenges in Achieving Gender Equality* (2018).

10 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *The Gender Pay Gap*, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap>

11 McFerran, *Safe at Home, Safe at Work? National Domestic Violence and the Workplace Survey* (2011).

workplace, but only one in five reports it¹². It is therefore important that VPA ensures it is taking actions both to prevent sexual harassment, and to ensure processes for reporting are as accessible as possible for all employees.

There is a need to clarify and strengthen processes for internal career progression opportunities and promotions. While VPA demonstrates an effort to prioritise merit, this concept can serve to reinforce existing bias if it is not supported by a clear framework to avoid defining merit on gendered expectations or unconscious bias. A more transparent process can also support staff to feel more confident that aspects of their identity (such as gender or cultural background), their working arrangements or their responsibilities outside of work are not impacting their opportunities for career progression.

While men and women are both accessing parental and carers leave, women are taking significantly more hours of paid and unpaid leave. There is also a sense of uncertainty among staff about how accessing family or carers leave may impact career progression. Nationally, fathers are not taking parental leave, with men accounting for only 6.5% of workers who took primary parental leave in 2019–2020¹³, and 85% of fathers and partners take less than 4 weeks of leave¹⁴. VPA's policies in relation to parental leave are in line with best practice, being flexible and equally available to both genders. This indicates VPA could potentially aim to increase promotion of leave entitlements and create a more enabling culture for men to access parental leave.

There is a need to strengthen internal data collection to ensure VPA has an intersectional understanding of their workforce and can more effectively target efforts towards diversity and inclusion. This includes incorporating voluntary collection of cultural diversity and of gender identity beyond binary male/female, as well as ensuring people are given the opportunity to identify their Aboriginality, disability and sexual orientation if they wish to.

12 Australian Human Rights Commission, *Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces* (2018).

13 Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Australia's gender equality scorecard: Key results from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2019–20 reporting data* (2020).

14 Australian Human Rights Commission, *Supporting Working Parents Report* (2014).

SECTION 2

Consultation & engagement

Methodology

VPA consultations were conducted through three key processes:

1 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)/Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Belonging (IDEB) Plan consultation workshops

These workshops were conducted as a joint consultation in developing the IDEB plan to ensure these plans are complementary and to provide an intersectional lens to the GEAP. Two sessions were run and were attended by a total of 26 employees. Consultations were structured around four case studies which captured a range of diverse backgrounds and identities, and staff were invited to identify the value of having diverse people as employees at VPA, and to explore barriers and opportunities for improving:

- Access to employment
- Retention and career progression
- Flexible work practices
- Cultural safety.

2 GEAP/IDEB survey

A survey was sent to VPA staff allowing anonymous responses. 27 people completed the survey. The questions included in this survey were:

- Are there any specific barriers or challenges that you have experienced, or are aware of, which may make it difficult for people of different identities or backgrounds to apply for work at VPA?
- Are there any specific barriers or challenges you have experienced or are aware of, which may make it difficult for employees of different identities or backgrounds to be able to progress their careers at VPA? (e.g., flexible work practices, promotion, access to professional development)
- Are there any specific barriers or challenges that you have experienced, or are aware of, that may make it difficult for employees of different identities or backgrounds, to feel culturally safe and supported in their workplace?
- Do you have any thoughts or suggestions about how VPA could make their recruitment process more accessible for people of different identities or backgrounds?
- Do you have any thoughts or suggestions about how VPA could better support employees of different identities or backgrounds to progress their careers at VPA?
- Do you have any thoughts or suggestions about how VPA could better support employees of different identities and backgrounds to feel culturally safe and supported?

3 Union member review

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) led a review and discussion with members within VPA. This provided additional context and insight to existing data, and provided feedback on proposed actions.

4 External consultations

External consultations were also undertaken alongside broader IDEB consultations. These consultations focussed on identifying strategies for making VPA more accessible and culturally safe for people from a range of identities and backgrounds. Consultations were conducted with:

- Seona James (Owner/Director of Indigenous Cultural Connections)
- Daniel Witthaus (CEO of NICHE Australia)
- Margherita Coppolino (Chair of Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Disability & CALD Victoria State-wide Network)
- Kathryn Wilson (Transgender Victoria)
- Veronica Pardo (CEO of Multicultural Arts Victoria).

As part of the process of developing the GEAP, the main governing body, the VPA Board was consulted, focusing on the findings from the baseline audit and analysis, the interventions for change to the VPA landscape and how the changes will be supported.

Internal consultation findings

Value of diversity

The consultations demonstrate the value employees see in increasing workforce diversity, including:

- An increase in the diversity of skills and perspectives
- Creating a richer workplace culture and environment for all employees by increasing the diversity of interests, personalities and ways of thinking
- Improved ability to access and work with different communities, including those which have experienced marginalisation.

Participants also demonstrated a recognition and valuing of hobbies or interests that indicated particular skills or perspectives, for example creative and analytical thinking for cryptic crosswords, or connection to arts and culture through an interest in theatre. This demonstrated the potential value to VPA of non-professional skills and experiences.

The VPA needs a greater spectrum of people to introduce a greater diversity of perspectives.
– VPA employee

Recruitment

Participants noted barriers that currently exist for VPA employing people of different genders and intersecting forms of diversity. This included:

- **Unconscious bias**, particularly towards single parents, people from different cultures, or with particular needs relating to language barriers, disability or neurodiversity. Participants also highlighted some bias in relation to age, both in favour of older people as more reliable and capable of leadership, and in favour of young people who are assumed to be more innovative and forward thinking in planning and city shaping.
- **The need for formal qualifications** was seen as a potential barrier for people from some backgrounds, and it was questioned as to whether this was necessary for all roles.
- **Selection criteria response in applications** was also seen as a potential challenge, especially for those who are applying to work in the public sector for the first time.
- **Emphasis on written and verbal communication** was seen as a potential challenge for people who may have stronger skills in other areas
- **Shortage of qualified urban planners** was identified as a general challenge, noting that this also likely meant a lack of qualified women and gender-diverse urban planners were available to apply for roles within VPA

Some strategies that were shared to address these challenges were:

- **Combatting unconscious bias** through training for recruitment panels, as well as incorporating purposeful actions into the recruitment process to mitigate unconscious bias such as blind recruitment
- **Conducting an accessibility audit of the recruitment process** to identify ways to ensure the recruitment process is accessible to people with different needs
- **Affirmative recruitment processes** that specifically target groups which are underrepresented in VPA, such as First Nations people or people with a disability. Examples provided were internship processes, or advertising through specific organisations or job sites for marginalised groups
- **Review selection criteria and weighting** to focus on skills and capabilities, with less emphasis on formal qualifications and professional experience where appropriate
- Provide guidance for completing the application process including on how to respond to key selection criteria
- Consider incorporating task-based or project assessment in recruitment processes to ensure candidates are able to demonstrate practical skills
- **Advertising flexible work practices in job vacancies** to demonstrate commitment to supporting employees with diverse needs.

“ [The VPA should] work on unconscious biases, make people more aware of them and learn how to make better decisions. ”
– VPA employee

Flexible work

Participants noted barriers that currently exist for VPA employees of all genders and diverse backgrounds to access flexible work. This included:

- Ensuring employees are aware of flexible work options
- Lack of cultural leave options
- Potential negative perceptions of flexible work resulting in diminished opportunities for progression or professional development.

It's really hard to find the information [on policies and flexible work options]. I was sent an email early on with the links to policies and procedures so if I need anything I can access it, but in terms of trying to find that information myself it would be hard to find!

– VPA employee

Flexible work is still looked upon poorly by some senior leaders and I worry that it makes me a less attractive candidate for promotion. I also really worry about when we are back in the office those that continue to work remotely sometimes won't be considered as dedicated to their roles and valued for career progression.

– VPA employee

Some strategies that were shared to address these barriers included:

- Offering cultural leave, and allowing people to choose which cultural holidays they have off work
- Ensure all new hires are aware of flexible work options and that discussing flexible work needs is incorporated into the on boarding process
- Regular check-ins with new hires to make sure they have access to the flexible work options they need
- Provides examples in leadership of people with young families who work flexibly.

Being aware of diverse religious holidays and other cultural events may be useful. For example, the VPA could provide leave for Eid that would not impact one's leave balance. Furthermore, should the VPA have first nation's employees, then the organisation should be aware of, and accommodate, leave for cultural events. For example, an indigenous person should not be prejudiced in taking more than 3 days leave for sorry business [referring to compassionate leave].

– VPA employee

Work at the VPA seems flexible enough, though as we return to a "covid-normal" we need to ensure that we do not lose the gains in work flexibility made during the pandemic. For example, a carer should not be forced to work the minimum 2 days in the office if they believe it will impact their work capabilities and thus, impact their ability for progression.

– VPA employee

Retention and progression

Participants noted challenges that currently exist for employees of all genders and different identities to stay and progress their careers at VPA. These included:

- Age as a barrier to professional development and progression opportunities, both for older (50+) employees and younger employees
- Part-time employees could be overlooked for training or promotion opportunities
- Socialising was seen as important for career progression however this mostly occurred after hours and involved the consumption of alcohol. This was seen as a barrier for people with caring responsibilities or who do not drink (especially for cultural or religious reasons)
- Unconscious bias was again seen as a potential barrier to progression, especially for people with disabilities or for those who speak English as another language. There was a perception that this could mean people were unfairly judged as not being a good leader.

Some strategies that were shared to address these challenges included:

- **Developing a mentorship program** which would allow for connections between junior and senior staff and would support investment in learning and development for junior or new staff
- **Targeted secondment programs** that aim to support the professional development of all staff.

“ Sometimes I think part-time people are not looked on as favourable for promotion – the job usually calls for 1 FTE and there is concern about the full workload being able to be done. ”

– VPA employee

“ The VPA is incredibly receptive to and flexible regarding career progression but younger staff are not prioritised in learning/development – it appears that the VPA would rather train its more permanent long term staff. ”

– VPA employee

Cultural safety

Participants noted some key areas that could impact the cultural safety of people of different genders or other diversities. This included:

- The possibility for people to feel isolated if they are one of the only hires from a particular background, marginalised community or identity
- Potentially placing the burden on individuals to identify and advocate for their own support needs
- The lack of clear and accessible pathways to address issues
- The lack of visibility of non-binary or gender-diverse people, and no gender-neutral bathrooms.

There was a sense that VPA has made great progress in addressing issues of cultural safety, including in relation to gender equality and cultural diversity, but that there were still opportunities to strengthen this.

“ I imagine the lack of cultural diversity could make those who are culturally or otherwise diverse feel uncomfortable and as though they are out of place. ”
– VPA employee

“ Senior executive team has been very good at promoting full inclusion, and we are now considering this in our PDPs. ”
– VPA employee

“ VPA has been good at recognising and celebrating cultural diversity. ”
– VPA employee

“ I have not heard of any direct instances, but there have been occasions where people have been careless in how they have phrased things which has felt racist to the person hearing it. ”
– VPA employee

“ I have experienced sexism in the past at the VPA, however it is much better these days than in the past. I think we are trying to do the right thing and we need to keep working to improve not consider the job done and stagnate. ”
– VPA employee

“ As someone of a Middle Eastern background I feel very supported here and I feel like I have been given the same opportunities as others. I’m very happy to be working at the VPA. ”
– VPA employee

Some strategies were shared on how to increase cultural safety, including:

- Having a gender-neutral bathroom and change room
- Cultural induction into workplace practices, especially for those who are new to the workforce/haven't worked in Australian context before/coming in from other sectors
- Having clear and accessible processes to address issues relating to workplace culture that is focussed on learning and building better practice
- Incorporating regular check ins from HR with new hires to check in about workplace culture and flexible work needs
- Incorporating different socialising opportunities within work hours and without alcohol
- Incorporating ongoing opportunities for diversity training and increasing awareness – i.e. cultural celebration days, learning Auslan, sessions on gender identity
- Proactively preparing for and recruiting people from specific marginalised groups to avoid isolation
- Introducing a youth Board director position.

“ Visibility is key – increase diversity and those who are diverse will feel safer and build a greater sense of belonging. ”
– VPA employee

“ Discontinue serving alcohol at VPA events. Ensure culturally appropriate food options are always available. Perhaps have ‘celebrate my culture/difference’ days where staff get to highlight their perspectives and views. ”
– VPA employee

“ I don’t think the VPA necessarily performs poorly in this regard. On the contrary, I think the VPA works hard as an organisation to be culturally supportive and sensitive. However, perhaps something could be said about white males being aware of the issues of gender disadvantage and their white male privilege. The VPA does have a good culture, but I have worked in an organisation that had a “blokey” “jock” culture, and it was incredibly detrimental to morale. ”
– VPA employee



Source: Polina Zimmerman at Pexels



Source: Helena Lopes at Pexels



Source: Pavel Danilyuk at Pexels

External consultation findings

The external consultations focussed on how to make VPA a culturally safe organisation for people of all genders, and took an intersectional approach to incorporating considerations for specific marginalised groups including First Nations people, people from migrant backgrounds, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, and people with a disability.

In addition to the proposal of strategies included in Section 4, some of the key findings from this process include:

- VPA should ensure a level of awareness, knowledge and understanding of a range of lived experiences and identities across the organisation – this is especially relevant for First Nations, but also relevant to building understanding on issues relating to diverse cultures, disability and the LGBTIQ+ community.
- VPA must ensure they are adequately addressing the needs of diverse and marginalised communities in their external work, as this is a key indicator of understanding and cultural safety for potential employees from these communities too. This also requires VPA staff to be able to speak to the work that is being done in the gender equality space, as well as in the First Nations space, disability space, LGBTIQ+ space and in relation to migrant communities.
- A core component of cultural safety is to ensure VPA staff are able to correct and learn from each other. It is important to build a culture where employees feel safe and comfortable calling each other out respectfully, and where there is a motivation to build and improve inclusive practice.
- Strategies for building cultural safety should be supported by visible indicators of inclusion, as well as the celebration of key cultural events and days. This could include displaying relevant flags (including First Nations, LGBTIQ+, and trans flags), and celebrating days of awareness or cultural significance. People could also be supported and encouraged to add personal decorations to their desk, as this can also encourage a culture of bringing your whole self to your workplace.
- It is important to engage people from marginalised communities in identifying the steps that can be taken towards inclusion, but to ensure they are not burdened with driving and leading this process.
- While it may take time to address all of the policy and procedural change required to be truly inclusive, it is important staff are able to acknowledge the shortcomings of existing processes in how they are used – for example, if a form only lists binary genders, this should be acknowledged when an employee is being asked to complete it.
- It's important to consider a more holistic understanding of gender interactions and inappropriate behaviours. It is necessary to apply a queer lens in how prevention and response processes are developed, for example in relation to sexual harassment.

SECTION 3

The case for change



The Victorian Planning Authority is the Victorian Government's lead urban growth planning agency and works to grow and develop urban areas of state and regional significance. We plan and build communities for all Victorians, including people of diverse gender, race, cultures, sexuality, religion and ability. We play a key role in ensuring that all Victorians live in a safe and equal society, and have access to equal power, resources and opportunities in how we design and build urban spaces and communities.

It is vital that our workforce is representative of the community we seek to serve, and for our planning and projects to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of people of diverse identities and from a diverse range of backgrounds. We acknowledge that women, non-binary and gender-diverse people have historically experienced, and continue to experience, discrimination and disadvantage based on their sex and gender. We believe this understanding must be applied in understanding how the needs and priorities of women, non-binary and gender-diverse people are considered and met by urban planning processes and urban infrastructure. We also acknowledge that barriers experienced due to gender inequality can be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes. It is therefore important that VPA takes an intersectional approach in how we aim to address gender inequality in our organisation and our work, and that we implement strategies that broadly aim to increase diversity, as well as targeted strategies and special measures which aim to address specific barriers and forms of disadvantage experienced by particular cohorts.

VPA acknowledges the significant benefits of gender equality and broader diversity within our workforce for our organisation. Employees with different identities, backgrounds and lived experience increase the diversity of skills and lenses within our workforce. This creates a richer work environment for all employees, exposing us to new ways of thinking and creating opportunities for learning and growth. This also provides greater access and insights into different communities, allowing us to shape cities to better respond to the needs and priorities of all Victorians.

VPA has a vital role to play in ensuring the needs of diverse people of all genders are equally heard and considered in how we build cities and communities. This Gender Equality Action Plan will build our capacity to ensure people of all genders are welcome and supported to thrive and succeed at VPA. It is also a vital strategy in supporting us to put into practice our value of Inclusion, ensuring we *recognise difference, celebrate diversity and consider all points of view for a fairer, socially responsible and respectful workplace and society*¹.

1 Victorian Planning Authority *Strategic Plan 2021–2024*.

Vision statement

Through the Gender Equality Action Plan, we aim to:

- attract and retain a diverse workforce, ensuring people of all genders feel welcome and have a deep sense of belonging, and are supported to thrive and succeed
- ensure our workforce and the outcomes of our work is benefitting from diverse knowledge, skills and perspectives to better equip us in our ability to understand and respond to the needs of all Victorians.

Intersection with VPA Inclusion, Diversity, Equality and Belonging (IDEB) Plan

This Gender Equality Action Plan acts as a pillar-specific strategy within the VPA IDEB Plan. The Gender Equality Action Plan therefore aims to support the IDEB principles:



Principle 1 – We are diverse

To achieve our plan, we need the best people, with varied skills and backgrounds and the most innovative and diverse ways of thinking. We also need to reflect the community we serve and meet legislative responsibilities. Our goal is to recruit, develop and retain a workforce that reflects the make-up of the Victorian community at all levels of the VPA, from our student planners and newest recruits to our most senior executives.



Principle 2 – We are inclusive and flexible

We want people to bring their authentic selves to work. To achieve this, we need our people have a great experience, get support when they need it and contribute all their talents to the things they love to do. Our goal is to foster a workplace culture where people feel they belong, that is inclusive, collaborative and supports the talent and diversity of our people. We aim for everyone at VPA to feel valued and included, with an employment experience free from bullying, discrimination and harassment, and with leaders that actively carry out their duty to keep everyone safe.



Principle 3 – We are connected and engaged with communities

We want to create better opportunities to connect and engage with communities, where our employees participate in things that make them proud. Our goal is to accurately reflect and represent the rich diversity and perspectives of Victoria's many communities through engagement on and delivery of our plans.

SECTION 4

Strategies & measures for 2021–2025 based on WGA

The below strategies are being implemented as a part of the VPA Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Belonging (IDEB) Plan, and will be resourced according to the IDEB Budget. Responsibility for implementation sits with the People & Culture team and with the IDEB working group. The IDEB working group is made up of representatives from across the organisation, including those at different levels and classifications.

1 Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

We will aim to ensure gender balance at all levels of the organisation by:

- 1.1** Conducting an accessibility audit of VPA's recruitment process to strengthen access to employment for disadvantaged groups, including those who are women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse.

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2024
Success indicators: VPA is seeing an increase in the number of diverse hires, including those who are women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

- 1.2** Actively promoting VPA as an inclusive employer in job advertisements, position descriptions and other spaces

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2022
Success indicators: VPA is seeing an increase in the number of diverse hires, including those who are women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

- 1.3** Delivering training on unconscious bias to all staff, including those in recruitment and management positions (aligned with [Action 3.1](#))

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: VPA staff feel they are better equipped to implement recruitment processes without bias
Verified by: Internal VPA pulse check survey

1.4 Reviewing key selection criteria to ensure reasonable weighting on capabilities and skills alongside qualifications and specific experience (aligned with [Action 3.2](#))

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2024
Success indicators: VPA has an increase in the number of employees who are women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

1.5 Engaging staff networks and external providers to implement a targeted pathway project for marginalised cohorts (prioritising women, non-binary people, trans men, trans women, gender-diverse people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other cohorts who are identified as underrepresented within VPA)

Implemented by: IDEB working group
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Increased percentage of staff believe there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders
Verified by: People Matter survey

We will increase the ability of employees, including gender-diverse and non-binary people, to safely have their identity seen and celebrated by:

1.6 Implementing systems that welcome voluntary self-identification of data on self-described genders (including non-binary, trans or other forms of gender diversity), cultural and racial background, sexual orientation and disability.

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Increased percentage of staff believe there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders, backgrounds and disability
Verified by: People Matter survey

1.7 Creating a gender-neutral bathroom and changing room space

Implemented by: IDEB working group
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Increased percentage of staff believe there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders, backgrounds and disability
Verified by: People Matter survey

1.8 Celebrating days focussed on diversity and marginalised communities as an organisation - e.g., IDAHOBIT, Pride Month, Wear It Purple

Implemented by: IDEB working group
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Increased percentage of staff believe there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders, backgrounds and disability
Verified by: People Matter survey

2 Gender composition of governing bodies

We will ensure gender equality is sustained and diverse voices are represented within the VPA Board by:

- 2.1** Engaging with DPC on the promotion of Board opportunities to implement 40–60% women, non-binary and gender-diverse gender quota formally to ensure VPA maintains Board balance.

Implemented by: IDEB working group
Completed/established by: June 2024
Success indicators: Maintain gender balance of 40–60% female, non-binary and gender-diverse Board directors
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

- 2.2** Encouraging DPC to proactively advertise for Board members from marginalised communities in all future Board recruitment

Implemented by: IDEB working group
Completed/established by: June 2024
Success indicators: Future recruitment of Board directors from diverse backgrounds, including people under 30, people with a disability, people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, people from a cultural background other than Australian, or people who identify as a LGBTIQ+
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

- 2.3** Requesting the introduction of a youth Board director position

Implemented by: IDEB working group
Completed/established by: June 2024
Success indicators: Future recruitment of Board directors from diverse backgrounds, including people under 30, people with a disability, people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, people from a cultural background other than Australian, or people who identify as a LGBTIQ+
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

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

We will address the drivers of the gender pay gap within VPA by:

3.1 Delivering training on unconscious bias to all staff, including those in recruitment and management positions (aligned with [Action 1.3](#))

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Reduced gender pay gap across all levels of the organisation
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

3.2 Reviewing key selection criteria to ensure reasonable weighting on capabilities and skills alongside qualifications and specific experience (aligned with [Action 1.4](#))

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2024
Success indicators: Reduced gender pay gap across all levels of the organisation
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

3.3 Reviewing positions to assess qualifications, skills and capabilities for comparable positions to ensure equal pay for equal work

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2024
Success indicators: Reduced gender pay gap across all levels of the organisation
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

3.4 Develop a process for internal recruitment, secondments and promotions which focuses on skills and competencies, is consistent and transparent, and is designed to minimise unconscious bias (aligned with [Action 5.3](#))

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2024
Success indicators: Reduced gender pay gap across all levels of the organisation
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

3.5 Establish a 12-month return to work process, including access to mentorship, for employees who return from long term leave to ensure they are effectively reintegrated into the workplace (aligned with [Action 7.3](#))

- Implemented by:** People & Culture team
- Completed/established by:** June 2025
- Success indicators:** Reduced gender pay gap across all levels of the organisation
- Verified by:** Internal VPA HR data

4 Sexual harassment in the workplace

We will take action to prevent sexual harassment by:

- 4.1** Hiring an external provider to conduct training on sexual harassment for all staff

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Maintain zero cases reported¹
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

- 4.2** Incorporating the explicit prohibition and zero tolerance of sexual harassment in the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Increase in percentage of employees who feel VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination
Increase in percentage of employees who feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work
Verified by: People Matter Survey

We will increase the ability of employees to report sexual harassment by:

- 4.3** Outlining and actively promoting a specific reporting pathway for sexual harassment which is survivor-centred as an addendum to the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Minimum 85% employees report that they would feel comfortable reporting sexual harassment, and believe reports would be responded to appropriately
Verified by: Internal VPA pulse check survey

¹ It is noted that an initial increase in reporting in 2022/23 could indicate an increase in accessibility of reporting pathways, which may be a step on the journey to both effectively preventing and responding to sexual harassment.

5 Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

We will increase opportunities for recruitment and promotion of women and gender-diverse people by:

5.1 Implementing an internal mentoring program targeted at supporting women, gender-diverse and marginalised groups to access mentorship (aligned with [Action 7.1](#))

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2025
Success indicators: 10 women, non-binary or gender-diverse staff members participate as mentees in the VPA Mentorship Program
50% of professional development is undertaken by women, non-binary or gender-diverse people
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

5.2 Introduce a quota to professional development opportunities to ensure they are accessible to all genders at all levels and classifications

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2025
Success indicators: Increase in percentage of employees who feel VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit
Verified by: People Matter Survey

5.3 Develop a process for internal recruitment, secondments and promotions which focuses on skills and competencies, is consistent and transparent, and is designed to minimise unconscious bias

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Increase in percentage of employees who think gender is not a barrier to success at VPA
Increase in percentage of employees who feel they have an equal chance of promotion at VPA
Increase in percentage of employees who are satisfied with the way their learning and development needs have been addressed
Verified by: People Matter Survey
Success indicators: Increase in percentage of staff who feel managers/hiring staff are able to implement fair and equitable internal recruitment processes
Verified by: Internal VPA pulse check survey

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

We will increase support for people of all genders to balance their work with caring responsibilities by:

6.1 Formally incorporating conversations about available flexible work practices into onboarding and performance review processes to allow more opportunities for staff to identify what options they would like to utilise

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Increase in the number of employees utilising flexible work practices
Verified by: Internal HR data/People Matter survey
Success indicators: Increase in percentage of employees who believe that using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success at VPA
Verified by: People Matter Survey

6.2 Actively promoting flexible work options available, including promotion of examples of when these have been accessed by leadership

Implemented by: IDEB working group
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Increase in percentage of employees who believe there is a positive cultural within VPA in relation to employees who use flexible work practices
Verified by: People Matter Survey

6.3 Collecting internal data on flexible work practices

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2023
Success indicators: Maintain or increase percentage of employees who feel they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities
Verified by: People Matter Survey

6.4 Leadership to undergo training in remote and flexible work management

Implemented by:	People & Culture team
Completed/established by:	June 2024
Success indicators:	Maintain or increase percentage of employees who are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration
Verified by:	People Matter Survey

6.5 Incorporate statement that flexible work will not disadvantage or impact access to professional development opportunities, secondments and promotions into internal recruitment process

Implemented by:	People & Culture team
Completed/established by:	June 2023
Success indicators:	More than 75% of managers feel confident in their ability to effectively manage staff remotely
Success indicators:	More than 75% of managers believe flexible workplace practices are beneficial to VPA
Verified by:	Internal VPA Pulse check survey

We will increase the accessibility of family violence leave for employees by:

6.6 Reducing evidence requirements until two weeks (10 days) of family violence leave have been taken

Implemented by:	People & Culture team
Completed/established by:	June 2024
Success indicators:	Increase in the number of staff who are utilising family violence leave
Verified by:	Internal VPA HR data

6.7 Proactively communicating process for accessing family violence leave and examples of when it could be taken

Implemented by:	People & Culture team
Completed/established by:	June 2024
Success indicators:	Increase in percentage of employees who feel that VPA would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
Verified by:	People Matter Survey

6.8 Hiring an external provider to conduct family violence training for all employees

Implemented by:	People & Culture team
Completed/established by:	June 2024
Success indicators:	Increase in the percentage of staff who would feel confident and comfortable accessing family violence leave Increase in the percentage of staff who feel confident in being able to respond to disclosure of family violence from a colleague or direct report
Verified by:	Internal VPA Pulse check survey

We will increase the accessibility of family and carers leave for employees of all genders by:

6.9 Actively encouraging employees to take parental leave through communication campaigns, including promotion of when senior employees have taken parental leave and providing examples of secondary carers taking leave

Implemented by:	People & Culture team
Completed/established by:	June 2023
Success indicators:	Increase in the number of employees accessing parental and carers leave Improved balance in the number of hours of family leave taken by people of different genders
Verified by:	Internal VPA HR data
Success indicators:	Increase in percentage of employees who believe that having caring and family responsibilities is not a barrier to success at VPA Increase in percentage of employees who believe that there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who have caring and family responsibilities Maintain or increase percentage of employees who believe VPA supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender
Verified by:	People Matter Survey

7 Gendered segregation within the workplace

We will aim to achieve improved gender balance across areas of work by:

7.1 Implementing an internal mentoring program targeted at supporting women, gender-diverse and marginalised groups to access mentorship (aligned with [Action 5.1](#))

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2025
Success indicators: Reduced gendered segregation within the workplace
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

7.2 Promote and create access to women's leadership programs and professional development

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2025
Success indicators: More than five women, non-binary or gender-diverse people are accessing women's leadership programs
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

7.3 Establish a 12-month return to work process, including access to mentorship, for employees who return from long term leave to ensure they are effectively reintegrated into the workplace (aligned with [Action 3.5](#))

Implemented by: People & Culture team
Completed/established by: June 2025
Success indicators: Reduced gendered segregation within the workplace
Verified by: Internal VPA HR data

SECTION 5

Leadership & resourcing your GEAP

Strategic resource plan (budget for consideration)

The VPA is committed to funding the delivery of activities and will allocate an appropriate budget over the lifespan of the plan. The budget will be reviewed annually to accommodate any adjustments and additional requirements to the implementation program within available resources.

July 2021–June 2022

Activity	Action leader	Recommended time	Estimated budget (excl. salary costs)
1.2 Actively promoting VPA as an inclusive employer in job advertisements, PDs and other spaces	VPS 5	10 hours	\$–
1.6 Implementing systems that welcome voluntary self-identification of data on self-described genders (including non-binary, trans or other forms of gender diversity), cultural and racial background, sexual orientation and disability	VPS 5	5 hours	\$–
1.7 Creating a gender-neutral bathroom and changing room space	VPS 5	10 hours	\$1,400
1.8 Celebrating days focussed on diversity and marginalised communities as an organisation – e.g., IDAHOBIT, Pride Month, Wear It Purple	VPS 5	40 hours	\$7,000
3.1 Engaging with DPC on the promotion of Board opportunities to implement 40–60% women, non-binary and gender-diverse gender quota formally to ensure VPA maintains Board balance	Executive Officers & Board Chair	5 hours	\$–
4.2 Incorporating the explicit prohibition and zero tolerance of sexual harassment in the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy	VPS 5	5 hours	\$–

Activity	Action leader	Recommended time	Estimated budget (excl. salary costs)
4.3 Outlining and actively promoting a specific reporting pathway for sexual harassment which is survivor-centred as an addendum to the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy	VPS 5	10 hours	\$–
6.3 Collecting internal data on flexible work practices	VPS 5	10 hours	\$–
6.5 Incorporating statement that flexible work will not disadvantage or impact access to professional development opportunities, secondments and promotions into internal recruitment process	VPS 5	3 hours	\$–
6.6 Reducing evidence requirements until after two weeks (10 days) of family violence leave have been taken	VPS 5	4 hours	\$–
6.9 Actively encouraging employees to take parental leave through communication campaigns, including promotion of when senior employees have taken parental leave and providing examples of secondary carers taking leave	VPS 5	20 hours	\$–

July 2022–June 2023

Activity	Action leader	Recommended time	Estimated budget (excl. salary costs)
1.1 Conducting an accessibility audit of VPA's recruitment process to strengthen access to employment for disadvantaged groups, including those who are women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse	VPS 5	100 hours	\$–
1.3/ 3.1 Delivering training on unconscious bias to all staff, including those in recruitment and management positions	VPS 5	45 hours	\$20,000
1.4/ 3.2 Reviewing key selection criteria to ensure reasonable weighting on capabilities and skills alongside qualifications and specific experience (aligned with 3.2)	VPS 5	38 hours	\$–

Activity	Action leader Recommended time Estimated budget (excl. salary costs)
2.1 Engaging staff networks and external providers to implement a targeted pathway project for marginalised cohorts (prioritising women, non-binary people, trans men, trans women, gender-diverse people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and other cohorts who are identified as underrepresented within VPA)	VPS 5 12 hours \$-
2.2 Encouraging DPC to proactively advertises for board members from marginalised communities in all future Board recruitment	VPS 5 10 hours \$-
3.3 Reviewing positions to assess qualifications, skills and capabilities for comparable positions to ensure equal pay for equal work	VPS 5 10 hours \$-
4.1 Hiring an external provider to conduct training on sexual harassment for all staff	VPS 5 45 hours \$20,000
5.3 Developing a process for internal recruitment, secondments and promotions which focuses on skills and competencies, is consistent and transparent, and is designed to minimise unconscious bias	VPS 5 38 hours \$-
6.1 Formally incorporating conversations about available flexible work practices into on boarding and performance review processes to allow more opportunities for staff to identify what options they would like to utilise	VPS 5 10 hours \$-
6.2 Actively promoting flexible work options available, including promotion of examples of when these have been accessed by leadership	VPS 5 10 hours \$-
6.7 Proactively communicating process for accessing family violence leave and examples of when it could be taken	VPS 5 10 hours \$-
6.8 Hiring an external provider to conduct family violence training for all employees	VPS 5 45 hours \$20,000

July 2023–June 2024

Activity	Action leader	Recommended time	Estimated budget (excl. salary costs)
2.3 Requesting the introduction of a youth Board director position	EO	5 hours	\$–
3.4/5.3 Developing a process for internal recruitment, secondments and promotions which focuses on skills and competencies, is consistent and transparent, and is designed to minimise unconscious bias	VPS 5	38 hours	\$–
3.5/7.3 Establishing a 12-month return to work process, including access to mentorship, for employees who return from long term leave to ensure they are effectively reintegrated into the workplace	VPS 5	38 hours	\$–
6.4 Leadership to undergo training in remote and flexible work management	VPS 5	45 hours	\$20,000

July 2024–June 2025

Activity	Action leader	Recommended time	Estimated budget (excl. salary costs)
5.1/7.1 Implementing an internal mentoring program targeted at supporting women, gender-diverse and marginalised groups to access mentorship (aligned with 7.1)	VPS 5	45 hours	\$25,000
5.2 Introducing a quota to professional development opportunities to ensure they are accessible to all genders at all levels and classifications	VPS 5	10 hours	\$–
7.2 Promoting and creating access to women’s leadership programs and professional development	VPS 5	38 hours	\$40,000

Executive leadership's commitment to, and endorsement of, the GEAP

The VPA's *Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2025* sets out our commitment to progress towards greater gender equality.

We seek to advance gender equality and increase the representation of women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse people in our organisation. We believe our workforce should represent the diverse identities, backgrounds and lived experiences of the Victorian community that we serve. We are committed to being a diverse workforce with an inclusive culture where employees feel they can bring their whole selves to work, and genuinely feel respected and valued.

This plan will help the VPA challenge our beliefs and attitudes that undermine gender equality progress and provide us with practical actions to overcome barriers to achieving this.

The success of this plan will be attained through our employees and leaders fully embracing and demonstrating an authentic commitment to improving gender equality. Our plan aims to embed best practice inclusion where gender equality is integrated into our policies, procedures and across the different functions of the organisation, so employees can access the support they require equitably, and we can retain the valued skills of our people.



Source: Cottonbro at Pexels



Source: Marcus Aurelius at Pexels

SECTION 6

Measuring progress

GEA INDICATION 1 Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

VPA increases the number of diverse hires, including those who are women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse

Verified via Internal VPA HR data

- 64% of new hires were women
 - Data not currently collected on non-binary, trans or gender-diverse
- 2021 baseline**
- No new hires identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as having a disability
 - Data is not currently collected on cultural background or sexual orientation.

- 2022 goal**
- Maintain above 50% of hires as women, non-binary or gender-diverse people.
 - Data will be provided on voluntary self-identification of data on non-binary, trans or gender diversity, cultural and racial background, sexual orientation and disability

2023 goal Maintain above 50% of hires as women, non-binary or gender-diverse people

2024 goal Maintain above 50% of hires as women, non-binary or gender-diverse people

2025 goal Maintain above 50% of hires as women, non-binary or gender-diverse people

VPA sees an increase in the number of diverse applicants, including those who are women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse

Verified via Internal VPA HR data

2021 baseline Applicant data is not currently collected

2022 goal Applicant data is not currently collected

2023 goal Data will be provided on voluntary self-identification of data on non-binary, trans or gender diversity, cultural and racial background, sexual orientation and disability

2024 goal Minimum of 50% of applicants are women, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse

2025 goal Minimum of 50% of applicants are women, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse

VPA staff feel they are better equipped to implement recruitment processes without bias

Verified via	Internal VPA pulse check survey
2021 baseline	Not yet measured, to be added to pulse check survey in 2022
2022 goal	Baseline data to be provided
2023 goal	Above 70% of employees feel they are better equipped to implement recruitment processes without bias.
2024 goal	Above 75% of employees feel they are better equipped to implement recruitment processes without bias.
2025 goal	Above 80% of employees feel they are better equipped to implement recruitment processes without bias.

VPA increases the number of employees who are women, non-binary, trans and gender-diverse

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	49% of employees are currently women. Data not currently collected on self-described gender.
2022 goal	Data will be provided on voluntary self-identification of data on non-binary, trans or gender diversity, cultural and racial background, sexual orientation and disability.
2023 goal	Above 50% of employees are women, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse.
2024 goal	Above 55% of employees are women, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse.
2025 goal	Above 60% of employees are women, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse.

Increased percentage of staff believe there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	89% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders
2022 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders
2023 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders
2024 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders
2025 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees of different sexes/genders

Increased percentage of staff believe there is a positive culture in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	85% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+
2022 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+
2023 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+
2024 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+
2025 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+

GEA INDICATION 2 Gender composition of governing bodies
(noting that the VPA does not control the appointment of its Board, however can encourage DPC and the Minister to consider these targets when undertaking Board recruitment)

Maintained 40–60% female, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse Board directors

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	57% of board members are women Data is not currently collected on self-described genders
2022 goal	Maintain gender balance of 40–60% female, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse Board members
2023 goal	Maintain gender balance of 40–60% female, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse Board members
2024 goal	Maintain gender balance of 40–60% female, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse Board members
2025 goal	Maintain gender balance of 40–60% female, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse Board members

Future recruitment of Board directors from diverse backgrounds, including people under 30, people with a disability, people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, people from a cultural background other than Australian, or people who identify as a LGBTIQ+

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	To be measured from 2022
2022 goal	Baseline data to be presented
2023 goal	Maintain diversity of Board members
2024 goal	Maintain diversity of Board members
2025 goal	Maintain diversity of Board members

GEA INDICATION 3 Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender

Reduced gender pay gap across all levels of the organisation.

Verified via Internal VPA HR data

Current VPA pay gaps are:

2021 baseline

- Median annualised salary: 4.0%
- Median total remuneration: 5.1%
- Mean annualised base salary: 10.6%
- Mean total remuneration: 10.5%

2022 goal

VPA gender pay gaps are no higher than:

- Median annualised salary: 4.0%
- Median total remuneration: 5.1%
- Mean annualised base salary: 10.6%
- Mean total remuneration: 10.5%

2023 goal

VPA gender pay gaps are reduced to:

- Median annualised salary: 4.0%
- Median total remuneration: 5.1%
- Mean annualised base salary: 10.6%
- Mean total remuneration: 10.5%

2024 goal

VPA gender pay gaps are reduced to:

- Median annualised salary: 3.9%
- Median total remuneration: 5.0%
- Mean annualised base salary: 10.5%
- Mean total remuneration: 10.4%

2025 goal

VPA gender pay gaps are reduced to:

- Median annualised salary: 3.5%
- Median total remuneration: 4.5%
- Mean annualised base salary: 9.5%
- Mean total remuneration: 9.4%

GEA INDICATION 4 Sexual harassment in the workplace

Maintain zero cases reported¹

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	Zero cases were formally reported
2022 goal	Zero cases formally reported
2023 goal	Zero cases formally reported
2024 goal	Zero cases formally reported
2025 goal	Zero cases formally reported

Increase in percentage of employees who feel VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	84% of employees believe VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination
2022 goal	Minimum of 84% of employees believe VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination
2023 goal	Minimum of 84% of employees believe VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination
2024 goal	Minimum of 88% of employees believe VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination
2025 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees believe VPA takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination

Increase in percentage of employees who feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	81% of employees feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work
2022 goal	Minimum of 81% of employees feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work
2023 goal	Minimum of 81% of employees feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work
2024 goal	Minimum of 85% of employees feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work
2025 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work

¹ It is noted that an initial increase in reporting in 2022/23 could indicate an increase in accessibility of reporting pathways, which may be a step on the journey to effectively preventing and responding to sexual harassment.

Employees would feel comfortable reporting sexual harassment, and believe reports would be responded to appropriately

Verified via	Internal VPA pulse check survey
2021 baseline	Question to be added to pulse check survey in 2022
2022 goal	Baseline data to be provided
2023 goal	Minimum 75% of employees would feel comfortable reporting sexual harassment, and believe reports would be responded to appropriately
2024 goal	Minimum 80% of employees would feel comfortable reporting sexual harassment, and believe reports would be responded to appropriately
2025 goal	Minimum 85% of employees would feel comfortable reporting sexual harassment, and believe reports would be responded to appropriately

GEA INDICATION 5 Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

12% of women, non-binary or gender-diverse staff members participate as mentees in the VPA Mentorship Program

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	To be gathered following commencement of mentorship program
2022 goal	Program not implemented
2023 goal	Program not implemented
2024 goal	Program not implemented
2025 goal	12% of women, non-binary or gender-diverse staff members participate as mentees and complete the VPA Mentorship Program

50% of professional development is undertaken by women, non-binary or gender-diverse people

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	45% of career development opportunities were accessed by women. Data is not currently collected on self-described genders
2022 goal	Program not implemented
2023 goal	Program not implemented
2024 goal	Program not implemented
2025 goal	50% of career development opportunities were accessed by women, non-binary, trans or gender-diverse people

Increase in percentage of employees who feel VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	67% of employees believe that VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit
2022 goal	Minimum 67% of employees believe that VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit
2023 goal	Minimum 67% of employees believe that VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit
2024 goal	Minimum 70% of employees believe that VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit
2025 goal	Minimum 75% of employees believe that VPA makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit

Increase in percentage of employees who think gender is not a barrier to success at VPA

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	85% of employees believe that gender is not a barrier to success
2022 goal	Minimum of 85% of employees believe that gender is not a barrier to success
2023 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees believe that gender is not a barrier to success
2024 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees believe that gender is not a barrier to success
2025 goal	Minimum of 90% of employees believe that gender is not a barrier to success

Increase in percentage of employees who feel they have an equal chance of promotion at VPA

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	58% of employees believe they have an equal chance of promotion
2022 goal	Minimum 58% of employees believe they have an equal chance of promotion
2023 goal	Minimum 62% of employees believe they have an equal chance of promotion
2024 goal	Minimum 70% of employees believe they have an equal chance of promotion
2025 goal	Minimum 75% of employees believe they have an equal chance of promotion

Increase in percentage of employees who are satisfied with the way their learning and development needs have been addressed

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	66% of employees were satisfied with the way their learning and development needs have been addressed
2022 goal	Minimum 66% of employees were satisfied with the way their learning and development needs have been addressed
2023 goal	Minimum 70% of employees were satisfied with the way their learning and development needs have been addressed
2024 goal	Minimum 75% of employees were satisfied with the way their learning and development needs have been addressed
2025 goal	Minimum 80% of employees were satisfied with the way their learning and development needs have been addressed

Increase in percentage of employees who feel managers/hiring staff are able to implement fair and equitable internal recruitment processes

Verified via	Internal VPA pulse check survey
2021 baseline	Question to be added to pulse check survey in 2022
2022 goal	Baseline data to be provided
2023 goal	Minimum 65% of staff feel that the managers/hiring staff are able to implement fair and equitable internal recruitment processes
2024 goal	Minimum 70% of staff feel that the managers/hiring staff are able to implement fair and equitable internal recruitment processes
2025 goal	Minimum 75% of staff feel that the managers/hiring staff are able to implement fair and equitable internal recruitment processes

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

Increase in percentage of employees utilising flexible work practices

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data/People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	66% of staff use flexible work arrangements
2022 goal	Detailed intersectional data on staff utilisation of flexible work will be made available Maintain 66% of staff utilising some form of flexible work arrangements
2023 goal	Minimum 70% of staff are utilising a form of flexible work, including a representative balance of genders
2024 goal	Minimum 70% of staff are utilising a form of flexible work, including a representative balance of genders
2025 goal	Minimum 70% of staff are utilising a form of flexible work, including a representative balance of genders

Increase in percentage of employees who believe that using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success at VPA

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	72% of employees believe that using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success at VPA
2022 goal	Maintain 72% of employees believe that using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success at VPA
2023 goal	Minimum 75% of employees believe that using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success at VPA
2024 goal	Minimum 80% of employees believe that using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success at VPA
2025 goal	Minimum 85% of employees believe that using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success at VPA

Increase in percentage of employees who believe there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who use flexible work practices

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	77% of employees believe there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who use flexible work practices
2022 goal	Maintain 77% of employees believe there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who use flexible work practices
2023 goal	Minimum 80% of employees believe there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who use flexible work practices
2024 goal	Minimum 85% of employees believe there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who use flexible work practices
2025 goal	Minimum 90% of employees believe there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who use flexible work practices

Maintain or increase percentage of employees who feel they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	83% of employees feel they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities
2022 goal	Maintain 83% of employees feel they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities
2023 goal	Minimum 85% of employees feel they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities
2024 goal	Minimum 90% of employees feel they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities
2025 goal	Minimum 90% of employees feel they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities

Maintain or increase percentage of employees who are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	91% of employees are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration
2022 goal	Maintain 91% of employees are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration
2023 goal	Maintain 91% of employees are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration
2024 goal	Maintain 91% of employees are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration
2025 goal	Maintain 91% of employees are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration

Managers feel confident in their ability to effectively manage staff remotely

Verified via	Internal VPA pulse check survey
2021 baseline	Question to be added to pulse check survey in 2022.
2022 goal	Baseline data to be provided.
2023 goal	Minimum 75% of managers feel confident in their ability to effectively manage staff remotely
2024 goal	Minimum 80% of managers feel confident in their ability to effectively manage staff remotely
2025 goal	Minimum 85% of managers feel confident in their ability to effectively manage staff remotely

Managers believe flexible workplace practices are beneficial to VPA

Verified via	Internal VPA pulse check survey
2021 baseline	Question to be added to pulse check survey in 2022
2022 goal	Baseline data to be provided
2023 goal	Maintain 75% of managers believe flexible workplace practices are beneficial to VPA
2024 goal	Minimum 75% of managers believe flexible workplace practices are beneficial to VPA
2025 goal	Minimum 75% of managers believe flexible workplace practices are beneficial to VPA

Increase in the number of staff who are utilising family violence leave

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	Zero staff members accessed family violence leave
2022 goal	Minimum 1 staff member has accessed family violence leave
2023 goal	Minimum 1 staff member has accessed family violence leave
2024 goal	Minimum 1 staff member has accessed family violence leave
2025 goal	Minimum 1 staff member has accessed family violence leave

Increase in percentage of employees who feel that VPA would support them if they needed to take family violence leave

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	81% of employees feel that VPA would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
2022 goal	Minimum 81% of employees feel that VPA would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
2023 goal	Minimum 81% of employees feel that VPA would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
2024 goal	Minimum 85% of employees feel that VPA would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
2025 goal	Minimum 90% of employees feel that VPA would support them if they needed to take family violence leave

Increase in the percentage of staff who would feel confident and comfortable accessing family violence leave

Verified via	Internal VPA pulse check survey
2021 baseline	Question to be added to pulse check survey in 2022.
2022 goal	Baseline data to be provided.
2023 goal	Minimum 70% of employees would feel confident and comfortable accessing family violence leave.
2024 goal	Minimum 75% of employees would feel confident and comfortable accessing family violence leave.
2025 goal	Minimum 80% of employees would feel confident and comfortable accessing family violence leave.

Increase in the percentage of staff who feel confident in being able to respond to disclosure of family violence from a colleague or direct report

Verified via	Internal VPA pulse check survey
2021 baseline	Question to be added to pulse check survey in 2022
2022 goal	Baseline data to be provided
2023 goal	Minimum 70% of employees would feel confident in responding to disclosures of family violence
2024 goal	Minimum 75% of employees would feel confident in responding to disclosures of family violence
2025 goal	Minimum 80% of employees would feel confident in responding to disclosures of family violence

Increase in the number of employees accessing parental and carers leave

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	5 men (55%) and 4 (45%) women took parental leave 14 (36%) women and 16 (64%) men accessed carers leave
2022 goal	A representative gender balance of employees took parental and carers leave (based on workforce composition)
2023 goal	A representative gender balance of employees took parental and carers leave (based on workforce composition)
2024 goal	A representative gender balance of employees took parental and carers leave (based on workforce composition)
2025 goal	A representative gender balance of employees took parental leave (based on workforce composition)

Improved balance in the number of hours of parental leave taken by people of different genders

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	Women took 2,686 hours of paid and 250.8 hours of unpaid parental leave (81% of leave hours) Men took 592.8 hours of paid and 76 hours of unpaid leave (19% of leave hours)
2022 goal	80% of leave hours are taken by women or people with a self-described gender 20% of leave hours are taken by men
2023 goal	80% of leave hours are taken by women or people with a self-described gender 25% of leave hours are taken by men
2024 goal	75% of leave hours are taken by women or people with a self-described gender 30% of leave hours are taken by men
2025 goal	70% of leave hours are taken by women or people with a self-described gender 30% of leave hours are taken by men

Increase in percentage of employees who believe that having caring and family responsibilities is not a barrier to success at VPA

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	65% of employees feel having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success at VPA
2022 goal	Minimum 65% of employees feel having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success at VPA
2023 goal	Minimum 65% of employees feel having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success at VPA
2024 goal	Minimum 70% of employees feel having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success at VPA
2025 goal	Minimum 75% of employees feel having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success at VPA

Increase in percentage of employees who believe there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who have caring and family responsibilities

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	80% of employees feel that there is a positive culture within VPA in relation to employees who have caring responsibilities
2022 goal	Minimum 80% of employees feel that there is a positive culture within VPA towards employees who have caring responsibilities
2023 goal	Minimum 85% of employees feel that there is a positive culture within VPA towards employees who have caring responsibilities
2024 goal	Minimum 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture within VPA towards employees who have caring responsibilities
2025 goal	Minimum 90% of employees feel that there is a positive culture within VPA towards employees who have caring responsibilities

Maintain or increase percentage of employees who believe VPA supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender

Verified via	People Matter Survey
2021 baseline	86% of employees feel that VPA supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender
2022 goal	Minimum 86 % of employees feel that VPA supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender
2023 goal	Minimum 90% of employees feel that VPA supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender
2024 goal	Minimum 90% of employees feel that VPA supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender
2025 goal	Minimum 90% of employees feel that VPA supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender

GEA INDICATION 7 Gendered segregation within the workplace

More than 5 women, non-binary or gender-diverse people are accessing leadership programs

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	N/A
2022 goal	N/A
2023 goal	N/A
2024 goal	5 women, non-binary or gender-diverse people are accessing leadership programs
2025 goal	5 women, non-binary or gender-diverse people are accessing leadership programs

Reduced gendered segregation within the workplace

Verified via	Internal VPA HR data
2021 baseline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 women and 12 men hold manager roles• 42 women and 50 men hold professional roles• 11 women and 1 man hold clerical and administrative roles
2022 goal	There is an increased balanced distribution of men, women and people with a self-described gender across the organisation
2023 goal	There is an increased balanced distribution of men, women and people with a self-described gender across the organisation
2024 goal	There is an increased balanced distribution of men, women and people with a self-described gender across the organisation
2025 goal	There is an increased balanced distribution of men, women and people with a self-described gender across the organisation

Appendix



Acronyms

CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPSU	Community and Public Sector Union
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
EO	Executive Officer
FTE	full time equivalent
GEA	<i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>
HR	Human Resources
IDAHOBIT	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia
IDEB	Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Belonging
LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, plus
PD	position description
PDP	professional development plan
VPA	Victorian Planning Authority
VPS	Victorian Public Sector
WGA	Workplace Gender Audit

