



Parliament
of Victoria

Gender Equality Action Plan

2022–2025

Message from the Parliamentary Executive Group

As the heads of the three departments which make up the Parliament of Victoria, we are pleased to present our first Gender Equality Action Plan to the Gender Equality Commission. This is a conjoint plan for the three departments and is the result of broad-reaching cross-departmental collaboration.

The Parliament of Victoria has a unique influence over the Victorian community through its contribution to enabling Victorians to exercise their democratic rights. As part of this role, we recognise we need to lead the way toward gender equality in our workplaces.

The vision of the Parliament of Victoria is to create a safe, diverse and inclusive workplace where all people are treated equitably. We also value having a workforce that reflects the diversity and lived experience of the Victorian community.

We acknowledge that gender equality, far from being simply a moral imperative or aspect of social responsibility, also represents a key strategic priority. We also acknowledge that we have a way to go in realising our vision. Not only do we face significant internal change, but we are also facing enormous societal change and changes in a post-pandemic world of work. COVID has shone a light on the long-term impact inequitable access to resources and opportunity has on disadvantaged groups and women. Unless we drive change across our workplaces we hamper progress towards our vision, we reduce innovation, performance, opportunity and we contribute to extensive disadvantage.

Social demand for change is unquestionable. A safe and respectful workplace culture now largely determines our ability to attract and retain our workforces and achieve our vision. We are not immune nor are we shielded from scrutiny. In many respects, just the opposite. Our workplaces must be places where people can trust that they will not be harmed or disadvantaged.

It is also worth noting that the Parliament of Victoria is engaged in providing pathways to education and employment within Parliament through our Reconciliation Action Plan and our Disability Action and Inclusion Plan. These effectively sit alongside our Gender Equality Action Plan.

Our staff have spoken clearly. Their views form the structure of our first Gender Equality Action Plan.



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Section 1

Our organisation

The Parliament of Victoria respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as first people of Australia and the Traditional Owners of this land and its waters. We pay respect to Elders, knowledge holders and leaders of the past, present and future.

We welcome the opportunity to use this project as a means to further our shared agenda of building an Australia where Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have strong relationships, respect and trust.

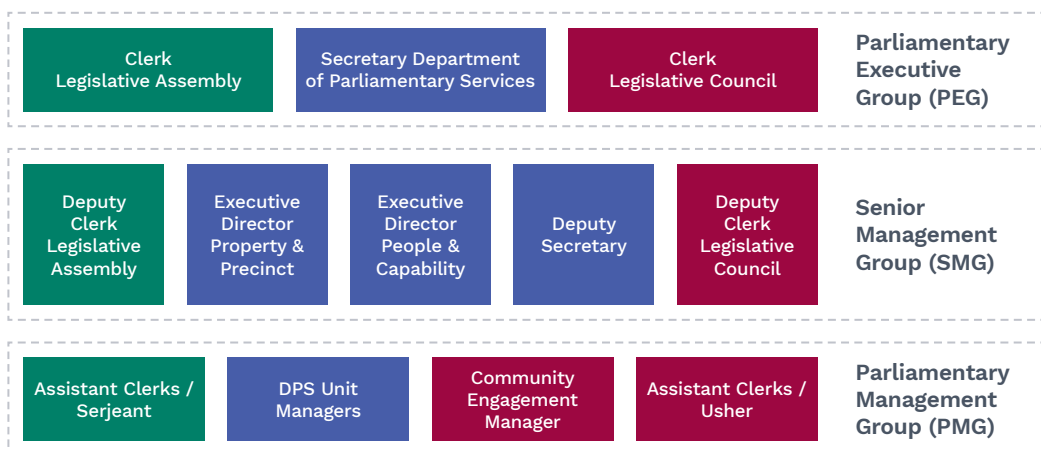
The Parliament of Victoria's Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) covers employees across three separate entities: the Department of the Legislative Assembly, the Department of the Legislative Council and the Department of Parliamentary Services.

The employees of the three departments work together to support Members of Parliament to fulfil their duties as legislators and representatives of their constituents. It was on the basis of the closely integrated way we work, and the varying sizes of the three departments, that the decision was taken by the Parliamentary Executive Group to submit a joint GEAP as opposed to separate plans.

Members of Parliament are excluded from the GEAP. They are not employees of the three entities. Similarly, their Electorate Officers have been excluded following advice from the Gender Equality Commission.

The structure of the Parliament of Victoria's departments is enshrined in legislation and makes for complexities across the workplaces, along with different cultures and practices.

Structure of Parliament of Victoria's executive and management groups



The current state of gender inequality

Gender inequality in the workplace remains a systemic issue, with data from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2021) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Census of Population and Housing, 2017) showing that women continue to be paid less than men and are likely to face greater barriers in their employment. Barriers are exacerbated by additional characteristics such as race, disability and age.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) has consistently reported that women continue to be paid less than men, are likely to experience greater barriers and plateaus in relation to career progression, and on average accumulate less retirement or superannuation savings. Simultaneously, men are consistently shown to have less access to family-friendly policies such as parental leave or flexible work arrangements relative to their female counterparts.

As noted below, the Parliament of Victoria has a gendered pay gap. Women are paid less when looking at both average base salary and average total remuneration, by 6.4% and 6.5% respectively. The pay gap is wider for the median at 9.4%.

When looking at the gendered pay gap by employment basis, there is a significant wage gap for women in full-time, ongoing employment. Further, the gap is greater for women on fixed-term contracts, both full- and part-time.

Such a systems issue requires significant changes in order for these differences to be suitably addressed, particularly recognising that pay levels are directed through Enterprise Agreements across all three departments.

To inform the GEAP, the Gender Equality Working Group (GEWG) reviewed the workforce data, the results from the People Matter Survey (160 respondents in 2021, an engagement rate of 49%), and output from wide-ranging manager and employee consultations (132 participants) and written submissions. Four key themes emerged:

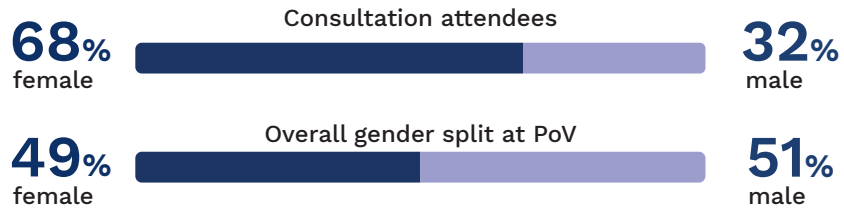
- a desire for workplace flexibility
- a lack of diversity in the workforce
- gender as a barrier to promotion
- inappropriate workplace behaviour.

Pay equity is an additional area appearing in the workforce data audit as a theme to be addressed.

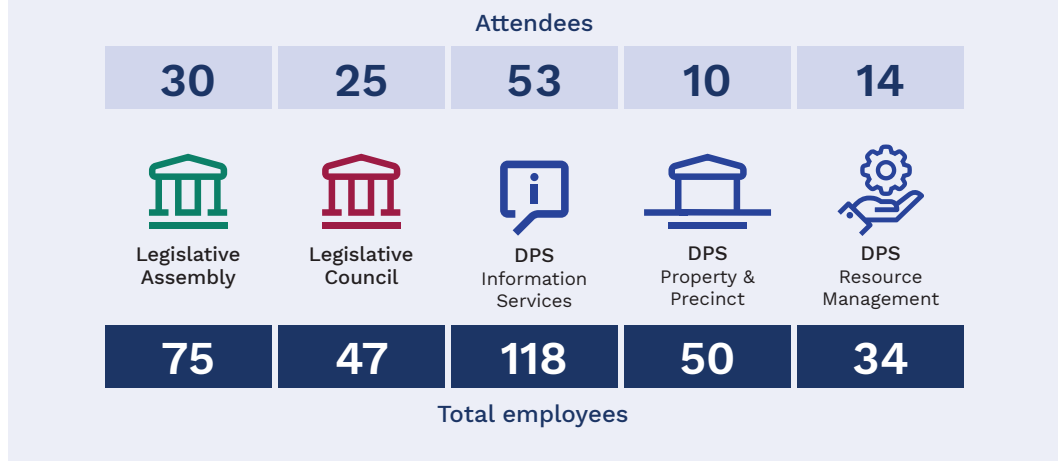
All business units were represented in the consultations. We see the significant and robust employee engagement in this process as a sign that those who work at the Parliament care deeply about gender equality and want to contribute to positive change for the institution. This GEAP has been built around the issues that staff identified as the most important to them.

Developing Parliament of Victoria’s Gender Equality Action Plan

Meaningful consultation



Consultation participants by department/directorate



GEAP preparation



The case for change

We recognise that the achievement of gender equality will require long-term commitment from our leaders, regular evaluation of our targets through rigorous assessment against our measures, and a concerted effort to drive cultural change. Our leaders have a pivotal role to play in creating and maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace.

Our workplace engages with many stakeholders and so can use our position to promote equality in all forms. This is also in line with community expectations that public sector organisations promote equality and respect. ‘Respect’ is one the values contained within the Parliamentary Officers’ Code of Conduct, which is modelled on the values contained within the *Parliamentary Administration Act 2005*.

Parliament of Victoria’s key values



Through the Gender Equality Action Plan, we aim to positively impact the financial security for disadvantaged groups and women, increase women’s participation in all levels of our workplace, increase the diversity of our leadership team, close the pay gap and close the superannuation gap.

Outcomes we aim to achieve are to increase the confidence of disadvantaged groups, increase the connectedness of our workplace and the communities we support, increase the number of promotion-ready women, improve access to women for full-time, ongoing roles, improve the understanding and empathy across our workforces with respect to barriers, and reduce negative workplace behaviour by simultaneously preventing it and improving reporting. The GEAP is one initiative supporting our efforts to become a more gender-sensitive workplace, and to enable us to measure our progress in improving our work structures, operations and methods.

Community awareness about the treatment of women in workplaces is growing. Since the advent of the *MeToo* movement, as well as numerous high-profile cases of workplace bullying and sexual harassment in Australia, the obligation is now on employers to demonstrate the steps they are taking to create safe and respectful working environments.

The recent focus on the experiences of women in parliamentary workplaces led to a landmark independent review by Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins. The resulting report, *Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces*, proposes pathways through which parliaments can become safer and more respectful work environments. The Jenkins report follows a national inquiry report into sexual harassment, *Respect@Work*, which

identified the rate of change in this space in Australia as ‘disappointingly slow’.¹ We are currently creating our own frameworks for preventing, reviewing and improving reporting of negative workplace behaviour in order to improve cultural safety.

Gender inequality is not experienced in the same way by all. While gender equality is the principal component of this plan, we aim to concurrently address other forms of discrimination, including but not limited to homophobia, racism, ableism, ageism and religious discrimination. The strategies in this plan will be implemented in conjunction with the Parliament’s Reconciliation Action Plan and Disability Action and Inclusion Plan. There is a correlation between the diversity of an organisation and its performance, including increased productivity, innovation, creativity and employee engagement. A diverse workforce also leads to more informed decision-making with a wider range of perspectives.²

We understand that gender equality and a safe and respectful workplace culture are basic rights. They bring significant social, economic and health benefits, and contribute to employees’ quality of life. As *Set the Standard* put it: ‘a safe and respectful workplace culture influences [the] ability to attract and retain the best people, drive organisational performance as well as to manage what are now significant reputational and legal risks.’³

To effect cultural and material change, and to make a genuine difference that is enduring, changes to our work practices, evaluation measures and education programs are vital. Change will require leadership and a commitment that parliamentary culture is collectively owned.

We recognise that changing something as entrenched as gender inequality will not happen quickly or easily. However, there is strong commitment from our leadership and our workforce to begin and to change. Parliaments are atypical workplaces, in that we are characterised by short electoral cycles, changing political leadership and unique competitive pressures. From similar work that has been undertaken by other parliaments in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada, we understand the required cultural changes are extensive and complex and will take years to effect.

We see the work of cultural transformation as ongoing work that will continue across several GEAPs.

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

2 <https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/gender-equality-business-case#org-performance>

3 Australian Human Rights Commission, *Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces* (2021), p. 12.

Current organisational strategies and measures

Recent initiatives at the Parliament of Victoria to promote inclusivity, diversity and accessibility include the following:

Initiative	Function
Reconciliation Action Plan	To make clear our commitment to meaningfully working with First Nations peoples and organisations to contribute to reconciliation in Australia.
Disability Access Inclusion Plan	To make Parliament more accessible and inclusive by enhancing the accessibility of Parliament's built environment; providing opportunities for all people to access and engage in Parliament events, public hearings, programs, and services; ensuring Parliament communications and information are accessible to all; and building disability awareness and confidence in Parliament employees.
Youth Associate Program	To develop and use skills relevant to communications and community engagement as they relate to Auslan users, and to create an Auslan Parliament vocabulary.
VPS GRADS Program	To offer university graduates diverse roles across public sector departments by providing learning and development opportunities, networking opportunities and the development of peer networks. The program also seeks to provide pathways to students with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background or those with a disability.
Swinburne industry placement program	To develop university students and introduce them to the workforce by combining hands-on learning in industry with their academic studies.
Barring Djinang TAFE Graduate Program	Developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TAFE and VET graduates to fill positions in the Victorian Public Sector.
PACE Mentoring Program	Connects jobseekers with a disability with mentors from the Parliamentary staff cohort.

The new Parliamentary Officers' (Non-Executive Staff—Victoria) Single Enterprise Agreement 2020 was approved by the Fair Work Commission on 4 May 2021 after bargaining that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clause 6 of the Agreement seeks to operationalise gender pay equity principles, to address gender pay gaps and to reinforce the reporting requirements under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. The Agreement also contains enhanced paid parental leave entitlements for primary and secondary caregivers, and provisions to ensure that people taking parental leave do not miss progression payments and superannuation.

Vision statement

To create a safe, diverse and inclusive workplace where all people are treated equitably.

We are living these values when we:

- create a gender-equal and respectful environment
- respect different viewpoints
- have equal opportunity in the workplace
- balance family, work and social responsibilities
- reflect the diversity of the Victorian community.

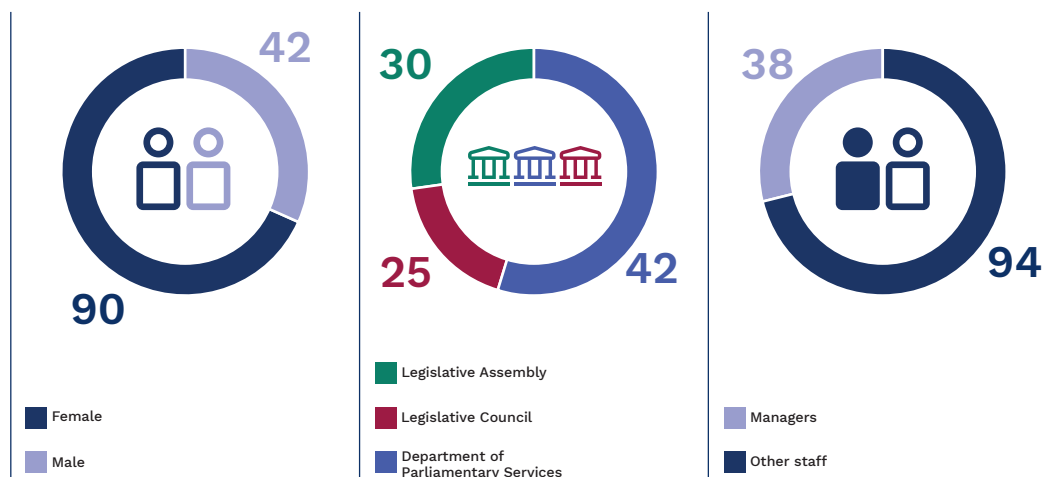
Creating the Gender Equality Action Plan

This GEAP has been created by Parliament's staff and for Parliament's staff. At its core are issues that were identified through extensive consultations with employees from across the three departments and across different classifications.

Six consultation sessions were conducted with Parliamentary staff in October 2021, facilitated by The Equality Institute. These have been a crucial source of information for the GEAP about the current state of the workplace and the concerns of staff. Participants were asked to score and discuss the Parliament's performance in a variety of areas based on their individual and collective experiences. They were then asked to prioritise the top issues that the organisation should address in the GEAP and to suggest strategies and measures for improvement.

A total of 132 people participated. Separate sessions were conducted for managers and other staff to make it easier for staff to speak freely.

Participants in the consultation sessions



The GEAP has also drawn on a gender audit, based on internal workforce data and the results of the People Matter Survey. The People Matter Survey is designed by the Victorian Public Sector Commission and regularly conducted across the public sector. This survey provides both an insight into the experience of Parliament's staff and a point of comparison with the rest of the public sector. We will use future People Matter Surveys to track our progress as we implement this GEAP. In 2021, 49 per cent of Parliamentary Officers (160 respondents) completed the survey. We intend to increase the proportion of people completing the survey in future years as part of this GEAP.

This work was led by a Gender Equality Working Group, consisting of 28 staff from different parts of the organisation. The Group was created in July 2021 and comprises a steering committee and two project working groups, one dedicated to gender impact assessments, and the other to devise the GEAP. The steering committee has met regularly over the past 18 months and many members of the working group have participated in training sessions run by the Gender Equality Commission.

The Working Group has regularly reported on its progress to staff and has sought input from the whole workforce, both informally and formally.

We consulted with Parliament's relevant governing body, the Parliamentary Executive Group and the Senior Management Group, throughout the preparation of this Plan. Members of the governing body attended the meaningful consultation sessions and saw and approved several drafts of the Plan.

Staff workplace delegates from the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) were advised of and participated in the meaningful consultation sessions described above. Staff workplace delegates from the CPSU were also invited to take part in an earlier staff information session which included a speech from the Commissioner. The CPSU was provided with a copy of the draft Plan prior to its finalisation.

In delivering this Plan, we will continue to work with staff across the organisation. We will work in an agile fashion, stretching in the areas where we achieve our goals early, and correcting course as needed to ensure we meet our targets.

Enabling the Gender Equality Action Plan

This being the Parliament's first GEAP, we recognise we have to first establish sound foundations to ensure the Plan's ongoing sustainability and success. This will take time and a systematic approach.

Our gender audit revealed gaps in the availability of data in some areas, especially intersectional data.⁴ It is important to fill these data gaps first so we can better understand the current situation and can establish a baseline for measuring our progress. Future plans will be able to build on the new data to develop more specific strategies and targets.

⁴ Intersectionality refers to the ways in which various aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

In the course of preparing the GEAP, we recognised many instances where some strategies have to be first implemented and come into effect before downstream changes can occur. For instance, work conditions have to be embedded and acculturated across the workforce before those changes enable a talent pipeline, which then flows on to matters related to workforce composition and diversity.

To that end we envision the Parliament’s first GEAP working in two phases, which differ depending on the indicator:

PHASE 1 April 2022 to October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing initiatives where we have a clear understanding of what is needed • Collecting better and more targeted data where we do not currently have a full understanding • Analysing and understanding the data to establish targets, finetune strategies and devise further initiatives
PHASE 2 October 2023 to October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing initiatives developed during Phase 1 • Evaluating and reporting on our progress

Four key actions will be required to support the Plan.

Resourcing

A new role of a dedicated gender, diversity and inclusion manager/officer will be created with the appropriate governance structure and support to facilitate delivery of the GEAP. This person will be responsible for implementing the strategies set out in this plan. This person and their team will help to drive cultural change and oversee and reinforce equality and diversity in the workplace. The team will also help to integrate the work of other parliamentary working groups on reconciliation, disability and inclusion, and streamline back-end data collection.

Building a data bank

Datasets needed for the GEAP, the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan and the Reconciliation Action Plan will be compiled and, working to a once-only principle, employees will be surveyed and the data combined with data from the People Matter Survey. The data will sit in a single repository for many/future applications.

Consultation with individual business units

Individual business units will be consulted to assist them with the work of achieving gender equality. Assistance will be offered to help identify patterns, analyse the causes of gaps, propose course corrections as needed, finetune bespoke targets and strategies, and assist with annual reporting.

Reporting and accountability

We will create an annual scorecard to be published on the Gender Equality Hub for staff and in departmental annual reports, setting out common measures to report on progress. We will conduct a two-year review of overall GEAP progress to be reported to the Gender Equality Commissioner, with course corrections implemented where needed.

Section 2

Our plan

The following strategies and targets are mapped against the workplace gender equality indicators, as set out in the Gender Equality Act. However, many issues which this Plan is addressing affect more than one indicator. The strategies in this Plan should be understood as interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Ultimately this suite of strategies will work together to achieve our vision.

The goals in this plan are intended to be ambitious but achievable. Future GEAPs will build on the success of this plan and we expect the GEAPs to be increasingly ambitious over time.

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY INDICATOR 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

Bringing them [people of colour] in the door is not the job. Yeah, they're in the building but the workplace is not equal. Creating a fair, equitable, safe work environment. That is the work that needs to be done.

Staff member during the consultation

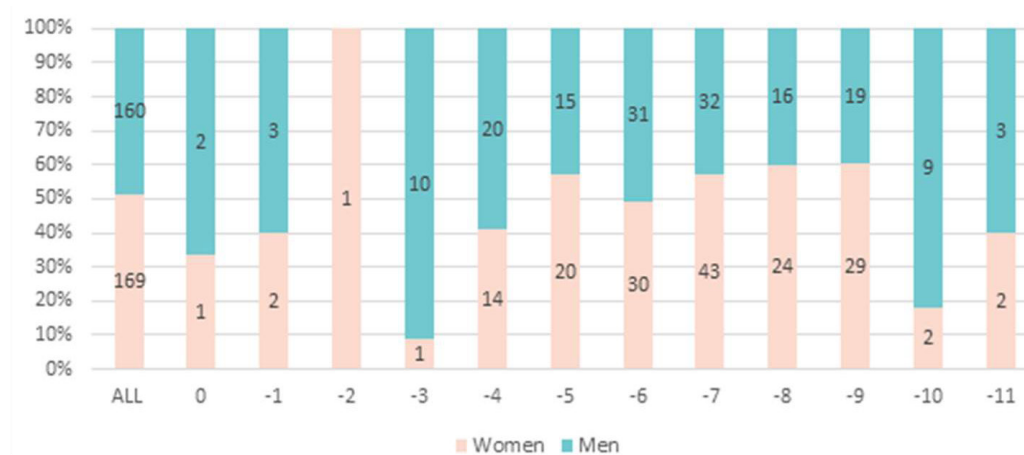
Key audit data findings

Our gender composition is balanced. Of 329 staff, 51% (169) are women, 49% (160) are men. None self-describe their gender.

At the Executive level (Secretary, Clerks, Deputy Clerks and DPS Executive) 3 of 8 roles are filled by women. Direct reports to the Executive level are predominantly men. Their direct reports (classifications -4 to -11) are balanced, except for -10 which is male dominated.

The majority of the workforce is aged 25–54 years. The average age is 39 years. There are more women than men in the 25–54-year-old cohort (58% to 41%). Respondents to the People Matter Survey indicate that age is an issue culturally.

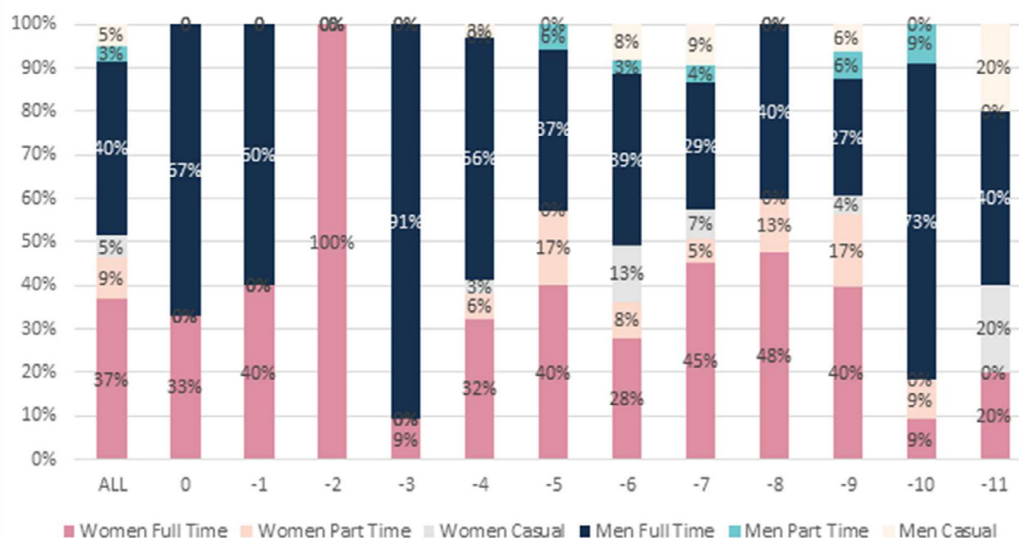
Workplace composition by gender—Classification 0 to -11 (N=329)



More women than men occupy fixed-term part and full-time roles, and permanent part-time roles. Their financial security and superannuation savings are not as stable as their male cohorts. This is a similar pattern as we see in the general population.

77% of the workforce is employed on a full-time basis (ongoing or fixed term), 121 women and 132 men. 13% (31 women and 11 men) work part-time (ongoing or fixed term). 10% (17 women and 17 men) work casually. Specifically for part-time roles, this is lower than the VPS average, where 19% of the workforce is employed on a part-time basis.

Workforce composition by gender, classification and employment basis



Responses to the People Matter Survey indicate that some staff do not believe that there is a positive culture in relation to some groups, especially people from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background and people with disabilities, with PoV's scores below the VPS average. Cultural safety was also raised as an issue in consultation sessions.

Statements from People Matter Survey	Parliament of Victoria staff agreeing with statement (%)		Victorian public sector (%)
	2021	2019	2021
'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders.'	76	76	77
'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.'	53	46	69
'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds.'	75	78	78
'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different age groups.'	63	80	71
'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+.'	71	70	72
'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees with disability.'	54	52	60

Intersectional initiatives

Ethnic background and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Only one person in our current workforce self-identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. 53% of respondents to the People Matter Survey agreed that there is a positive culture towards Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders. In the consultations, many felt they could not comment on whether Aboriginality or ethnic background was a barrier to promotion because they could not speak from lived experience. However, staff assumed it would be. A few different areas were raised for consideration, for example the colonial nature of the building itself and how this might act as a barrier to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working at Parliament. Another participant felt more needed to be done to make the workplace 'culturally safe' and an equitable and fair workplace for people of colour.

There are systemic issues that the PoV cannot resolve easily. However, this strategy focuses on what we can do to promote employment supports, pathways and a supportive culture for First Nations People. It is important to note that through 2020 the Parliamentary departments contributed to the ongoing development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP drives internal efforts to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the First Peoples of this land and endorses steps towards reconciliations in the wider community. The Parliamentary departments support First People employment initiatives, including participation in the VPSC Barring Djinang Aboriginal employment initiatives for TAFE/VET graduates and the Aboriginal pathway to Victorian Government graduate program. These initiatives help public sector agencies support and improve career experiences for Aboriginal employees, placing a strong focus on career development. In June 2018, Aboriginal staff made up 1.2% of all public sector employees.

Disability

We have no workforce data about disability at this stage. However, 54% of respondents in the People Matter Survey consider the culture is supportive in relation to employees with a disability.

The Disability Action and Inclusion Plan began as a project for the PoV's Emerging Leaders in 2018-19 to promote the PoV as a disability-friendly and inclusive organisation. The PoV is a member of the Australian Network on Disability. The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will integrate the four strategic areas of the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan:

- access to employment
- adjustments to systems and structures
- disability awareness training
- culture.

The age of our buildings and heritage overlays can create challenges around access for those with some disabilities which we are working to resolve through our ongoing renovation program.

Similarly, we have no data about people's identification as LGBTIQ+, people's religious backgrounds and neurodiversity. Only 3% of respondents to the People Matter Survey thought that there was a cultural problem in relation to staff who identified as LGBTIQ+.

An important first step is to collect the data, and to continue engaging with specialist external agencies to shape fit-for-purpose responses based on others' lived experience rather than making assumptions about what minority groups require.

Goals and strategies

Phase 1: By October 2023

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
To achieve gender parity at all levels.	Parliamentary leadership to explicitly acknowledge their commitment to gender equality and genuine cultural change and accountability, with the GEAP as the primary plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders will be accountable for measurable progress and tangible, proactive steps that drive cultural change • leaders report on progress on the GEAP at general and departmental staff meetings twice a year • GEAP update reports included as a standing item on all governance meeting agendas across Parliament. 	Leaders regularly report on and discuss progress of the GEAP.
	Create and support the new role of a dedicated gender, diversity and inclusion manager/officer to support cultural change and oversee and reinforce equality and diversity in the workplace.	DPS People & Capability establishes the role of a Diversity and Inclusion Specialist with the responsibility for delivering the Parliament Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Diversity and Inclusion Specialist leads the implementation of the Strategy and is supported by a governance framework established to support the cross-Parliamentary departmental work of supporting gender, diversity and inclusion.
	Education on unconscious bias, cross-cultural awareness, self-leadership, and wellbeing. Strategies to address unconscious bias rolled out in recruitment and promotion practices (e.g. de-identified CVs).	All employees understand the shared responsibility for progressing gender equality. Employees have increased level of knowledge and awareness of unconscious bias and how to tackle it.
	Build capacity of all staff with training in cultural safety.	Staff have increased understanding of cultural safety issues in the workplace.

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
To achieve gender parity at all levels. (continued)	Embed gender impact assessments into existing policy- and decision-making processes across units to mainstream gender equality.	Gender impact assessments included in applicable policy development and review processes. Parliament-wide Gender Equality champions established in each department to support units to meet <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations.
	Create a Gender Equality Hub online to communicate Parliament wide, and to share tools and resources.	Gender Equality Hub established.
	Integrate Gender Equality Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan and Disability Action and Inclusion Plan to share resourcing, pool data and lessons, and address intersectional needs and impacts.	Utilising a Working Group model to incorporate lived experience into D&I guidelines and education. Data gathered and tracked about disability, ethnicity, race, religion, and sexual orientation in the PoV workforce.

Phase 2: By October 2025

Goals	Strategies	Phase 2 deliverables
To achieve gender parity at all levels.	Advocate for 'inclusivity' to be added to the parliamentary officer values in the <i>Parliamentary Administration Act 2005</i> .	Legislation passed that adds 'inclusivity' as a parliamentary officer value in the <i>Parliamentary Administration Act 2005</i> .
	Diversity and inclusion targets around pay parity, promotion and leading cultural safety changes will be developed and incorporated into managers' performance plans, ensuring they are accountable for creating positive shifts in our gender equality measures.	Leaders' performance on diversity and inclusion measures move positively year on year.
To improve the diversity of the workforce of the PoV.	Work with different business units to identify and develop initiatives to offer professional development to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from outside the organisation through secondment, paid internships, and partnerships with universities. Active recruitment and development of people from varied/minority backgrounds. Develop and roll out leadership and development opportunities for staff from varied/minority backgrounds at different levels across the organisation.	Initiatives are implemented and workforce is more diverse in line with public sector averages.

How will we measure progress?

Future People Matter Surveys will show an increased proportion of staff agreeing with the statement 'Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation'.

The diversity of the Parliament workforce in terms of disability, cultural background, religion and sexual orientation (including people with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background) will be closer to the average for the Victorian public sector.

In future People Matter surveys, the proportion of staff agreeing with the following statements will be higher than the public sector average:

- ‘There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders.’
- ‘There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.’
- ‘There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds.’
- ‘There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different age groups.’
- ‘There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+.’
- ‘There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees with disability.’

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY INDICATOR 2: Gender composition of governing bodies

Parliament could be a welcoming place for a greater number of diverse disabilities with only minor modifications, e.g. hours of work or accessibility. The building itself can present challenges.

Staff member during the consultation

Key audit data findings

Parliament's governing bodies (PEG and SMG) are comprised of 63% men and 38% women. The Parliamentary Management Group (PMG) is comprised of 69% men and 31% women.

The only other identity data about the composition of governance bodies currently available relates to age and Aboriginality.

Goals and strategies

Phase 1: By October 2023

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Achieve a gender balance on governing bodies PEG, SMG and PMG.	Ensure clear policy and process guidelines around the recruitment of governing body members and reduce barriers to the recruitment of diverse applicants.	Succession plans developed for governing bodies and working groups, including consideration of a talent pipeline that provides equal opportunity to all genders.
	Implement a career sponsorship and mentorship program by matching potential talent with senior leaders in Parliament and promoting role models from diverse backgrounds.	Sponsorship/mentoring program established, including mechanisms to collect data about uptake.
External engagement by the organisation models a gender balance.	Develop and implement policy on gender balance and diverse representation for internal and external speakers for seminars, conferences, lectures and community engagement events.	At least 40% of speakers at internal and external seminars, forums, functions, lectures and community engagement events will identify as female.

How will we measure progress?

PEG, SMG and PMG governance groups will move closer to an equitable gender balance.

At least 40% of speakers at internal and external seminars, forums, functions, lectures and community engagement events will identify as female.

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY INDICATOR 3: Equal remuneration of work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce irrespective of gender

Key audit data findings

Looking at the organisation, there is a gap between women's and men's pay, with the median base salary⁵ and total remuneration⁶ of men in the organisation being 9.4% higher.

The Parliament will seek to better understand the causes of the pay gap as part of this Plan, including breaking down the pay gap for different employment levels within the organisation.

The pay gap is wider in the 35–44 age group (10.2%) and 45–54 age group (12.7%) than in other age groups.

Goals and strategies

Phase 1: By October 2023

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Reduce the gender pay gap with the long-term goal of achieving gender pay parity at every level.	Conduct gender pay gap audit by classification and workgroups every 2 years.	Audit completed every 2 years and reported to all staff.
	Procure and implement a Human Capital Management System to assist in data capture and analysis.	
	Reduce the gender pay gap at levels 0 to -3 (equivalent to PoV executive managers and PoV Grades 7 and 6.2).	See Indicators 2 and 5.
	Reduce any gender pay gaps at levels -4 and below (equivalent to PoV 6.1 and below).	Analysis conducted of the factors driving any gender pay gap at levels -4 and below, including options to address these factors.
	Roll out a 'keeping in touch' program for people on parental leave, to ensure that people on parental leave have access to opportunities that arise while on leave.	Program established.

⁵ The full-time annual base salary is the relevant award/agreement for the employee's classification, not actual earnings.

⁶ Total salary or total remuneration includes base salary plus any additional benefits, including bonuses, superannuation, overtime, and penalties paid on overtime, allowances and any other amounts.

Phase 2: By October 2025

Goals	Strategies	Phase 2 deliverables
Reduce the gender pay gap with the long-term goal of achieving gender pay parity at every level.	Establish gender pay gap targets based on the additional data and understanding developed in Phase 1.	Targets established, monitored, and reported to staff.
	Reduce any gender pay gaps at levels -4 and below.	Implementation of options identified through the analysis of the factors driving any gender pay gap at levels -4 and below.

How will we measure progress?

Gender pay gap targets will be established as part of this plan and there will be movement towards them.

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY INDICATOR 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace

There is major disparity between policy and action. The response is extremely lacking.

Staff member during the consultation

We have extended the focus of this plan to cover inappropriate workplace behaviour broadly, including but not limited to, sexual harassment, discrimination and workplace bullying, in recognition of the feedback received from the workplace consultations. It also reflects the interconnectedness of distinct types of inappropriate behaviour and the strategies to address inappropriate behaviours.

Key audit data findings

Only 59% of People Matter Survey respondents stated that they felt comfortable challenging inappropriate behaviour, which is lower than the public sector average of 63%.

Statements from People Matter Survey	Parliament of Victoria staff agreeing with statement (%)		Victorian public sector (%)
	2021	2019	2021
'I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work.'	59	-	63
'My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination.'	62	63	66
'My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours.'	83	84	82

In the People Matter Survey, 94% of respondents said they had not experienced any form of sexual harassment in the last 12 months, while 6% claimed they had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months. However, there was only one formal complaint in the same period.

With respect to bullying, staff who experienced bullying in the 12 months prior to 2021 provided the following explanations for why they did not submit formal complaints.

Reasons from People Matter Survey	Proportion of staff citing this reason (%)
'I believed there would be negative consequences for my reputation.'	75
'I didn't think it would make a difference.'	65
'I believed there would be negative consequences for my career.'	50
'I didn't feel safe to report the incident.'	20
'I didn't know who to talk to.'	10

Goals and strategies

Phase 1: By October 2023

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Create an inclusive and respectful environment with zero tolerance for inappropriate workplace behaviour, including sexual harassment.	<p>Leadership to actively foster a culture of safety and respect in the workplace.</p> <p>Leadership to make a formal commitment to gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, with express provisions that set out a zero-tolerance position for sexism, racism, and discrimination.</p>	Senior leaders and managers model respectful behaviour and reinforce standards of behaviour for all who work in Parliament to promote cultural change.
	Review and revise the Code of Conduct to include a commitment to promoting inclusivity.	Revised Code of Conduct established and implemented to cover governance structures, policies, and procedures.
	<p>Develop an intersectional, mandatory training program by specialist organisations on safe and respectful workplaces that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying problematic behaviours and referral protocols specific training for managers on responding to complaints of inappropriate behaviour, including sexual harassment complaints bystander training increasing awareness of support, resources, and entitlements available. 	<p>Mandatory training completed by all staff as part of induction and every two years.</p> <p>Increased confidence by all in the organisation to talk about and challenge inappropriate behaviour in all aspects of Parliament life.</p>
Create an environment where employees can identify inappropriate workplace behaviours and feel confident that due process will be followed when a complaint is made.	<p>A trauma-informed, victim/survivor-centric culture of reporting</p> <p>Current systems reformed to ensure that reporting processes for inappropriate workplace behaviour include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> immediate and ongoing victim/survivor-centric support services that centre the complainant's wellbeing, with the focus to be on the conduct, not the positions of the parties involved where inappropriate behaviour is identified, a commitment to either bring about behavioural change in people behaving inappropriately or remove them from the organisation an independent and timely confidential complaints system the matter being triaged with the complainant's consent and to their needs and preferences referral to other parties as necessary specialised support services (e.g. specialist agencies, police) family violence and gender-based violence solutions, including for perpetrators of violence. 	<p>New framework established, publicised and implemented.</p> <p>Data collection systems established to measure and track complainants' levels of satisfaction with processes.</p> <p>Sexual harassment complaints reported to SMG on a quarterly basis, with reports to include resolution data (de-identified).</p> <p>Increased confidence by all in the organisation to make formal complaints about inappropriate behaviour, including sexual harassment.</p>

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Create an environment where employees can identify inappropriate workplace behaviours and feel confident that due process will be followed when a complaint is made. (continued)	To strengthen implementation of this system we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create multiple pathways to raise a complaint related to inappropriate workplace behaviour, including exploring alternative independent complaints mechanisms • consult with employees to identify barriers to reporting. 	Alternative independent complaints mechanisms and other options to reduce barriers explored and assessed for appropriateness.
	Develop strategies to actively promote and encourage participation in the People Matter Survey to increase response rates and ensure the data collected is more reflective of the whole workforce.	Strategies to increase the response rate to the People Matter Survey are rolled out.

Phase 2: By October 2025

Goals	Strategies	Phase 2 deliverables
Create an inclusive and respectful environment with zero tolerance for inappropriate workplace behaviour, including sexual harassment.	Track complaints about inappropriate behaviour from beginning to resolution, including complainants' levels of satisfaction with the process.	Data about inappropriate behaviour complaints are tracked and reported to the workforce regularly.
	Revised Code of Conduct to be embedded in induction materials.	Induction materials updated.
Create an environment where employees can identify inappropriate workplace behaviours and feel confident that due process will be followed when a complaint is made.	Implement options explored in phase 1 to reduce barriers to people reporting inappropriate behaviour, including an alternative independent complaints mechanisms if appropriate.	Initiatives to reduce barriers implemented and more people report inappropriate behaviour.

How will we measure progress?

The response rate for future People Matter Surveys will increase to at least 70% over the next four years.

In future People Matter Surveys, the proportion of staff agreeing with the following statements will be higher than the public sector average:

- 'I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work'
- 'My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment, and discrimination.'

In future People Matter Surveys, the proportion of staff answering yes to the question 'Have you experienced bullying at work in the last 12 months?' will reduce.

The ratio of formal reports about bullying to people indicating that they have experienced bullying in People Matter Surveys will increase to 50% by 2023 and 80% by 2025.

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY INDICATOR 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Key audit data findings

Although 70% of respondents in the People Matter Survey considered that gender is not a barrier to success at the Parliament of Victoria, only 34% of respondents answered favourably to the question 'I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation' and only 53% believe that the organisation 'makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit'.

Barriers to success were perceived by people in several different areas:

Statements from People Matter Survey	Parliament of Victoria staff agreeing with statement (%)		Victorian public sector (%)
	2021	2019	2021
'My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit.'	53	58	50
'I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation.'	34	-	42
'Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation'	70	-	74
'Being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in my organisation.'	50	-	67
'Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation.'	61	58	50
'Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organization.'	70	76	75
'Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation.'	51	56	58
'Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation.'	63	74	73

The workforce consultation sessions conducted as part of this process revealed barriers for women of colour, those with disability and people with diverse gender identities. Intersectional data for the workforce have not been collected previously. The organisation will seek to address that as part of this plan.

Goals and strategies

Phase 1: By October 2023

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Reduce the barriers to recruitment and promotion opportunities at PoV.	To comprehensively understand the barriers to recruitment and promotion, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish mechanisms to collect data on the number of female, male and non-binary applicants who apply for, are interviewed for and who are offered roles at each level ensure the Human Capital Management System includes identity and diversity data. 	Report on the barriers to recruitment and promotion based on the data collected through Indicator 1. Mechanisms established to collect data on the number of female, male and non-binary applicants who apply for, are interviewed for and who are offered roles at each level. Human Capital Management System is set up and stores required identity and diversity data.
	To reduce barriers to recruitment we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use gender neutral language and include prominent diversity and flexible working statements in job advertisements and social media offer flexible working by default in advertisements use structured interviews and clear criteria when recruiting, and provide interview questions to candidates in advance use skills-based assessment tasks in recruitment uplift the diversity of our workforce. 	Audit of advertisements, position descriptions, recruitment processes and interview panels conducted and new templates and policies established.
	Promote inclusion of personal stories from different perspectives/lived experience in learning modules.	Diversity champions established and trained to support, drive and model inclusion across the organisation.
	Set benchmarks for workforce diversity against the Victorian Public Service.	Benchmarking exercise completed.
	Develop and communicate a transparent process for secondments and acting opportunities, professional development opportunities (such as leadership programs, conference attendance and postgraduate courses) and work on flagship PoV projects (such as the GEAP, Reconciliation Action Plan and Disability Access and Inclusion Plan working groups).	Eligibility criteria and the decision-making process are publicised, and expressions of interest are requested for secondments, professional development opportunities and assignment to high-profile projects. Equivalent amounts of money (per person, on average) spent on professional development courses taken by men and women.
	Undertake a gender-sensitive review across all levels of PoV to interrogate parliamentary tools, activities, and policies, including codes of conduct, sitting hours, internal- and external-facing events and ceremonies, facilities and amenities, flexible work arrangements, and so on.	Barriers to attracting talent, talent retention and promotion identified, including options to address these barriers.

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Reduce the barriers to recruitment and promotion opportunities at PoV. (continued)	Provide additional professional development to staff who are involved in whole-of-parliament projects.	Project plans for Parliament-wide projects include a professional development component. Wider range of employees volunteer for whole-of-parliament projects.
	Exit surveys (voluntary) to better understand which workplace factors affect retention. Exit surveys reviewed to ensure they have an intersectional focus.	Exit survey data collected and made available for analysis by SMG.

Phase 2: By October 2025

Goals	Strategies	Phase 2 deliverables
Reduce the barriers to recruitment and promotion opportunities at PoV.	Implement improved recruitment processes to attract greater gender diversity in candidates.	Greater gender diversity in appointments across work units and levels.
	Execute targeted campaigns to attract people from underrepresented groups.	Increased diversity in workforce, more in line with the public sector average.
	Implement options identified in gender-sensitive review of parliamentary tools, activities, and policies (Phase 1).	Changes implemented.
	Exit surveys (voluntary) to better understand which workplace factors affect retention.	Results used to identify factors that lead to attrition and actions developed to address the impact of these factors.

How will we measure progress?

In future People Matter Surveys, the proportion of staff agreeing with the following statements will be higher than the public sector average:

- ‘There are adequate opportunities for me to develop skills and experience in my organisation.’
- ‘My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit.’
- ‘I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation.’
- ‘Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation’
- ‘Being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in my organisation.’
- ‘Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation.’
- ‘Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organization.’
- ‘Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation.’
- ‘Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation.’

At least 40% of applicants for jobs, people interviewed for jobs and people hired will be female.

Retention rates of people will be the same, regardless of gender.

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

Key audit data findings

The Parliament currently has limited data about flexible work arrangements but has committed to gather more data as part of this plan.

The number of staff working part-time at the Parliament is lower than the public sector average (13% compared to the public sector average of 19%). Women are three times more likely to be working part-time than men (31 women compared to 11 men).

Respondents to the People Matter Survey indicated that:

Statements from People Matter Survey	Parliament of Victoria staff agreeing with statement (%)		Victorian public sector (%)
	2021	2019	2021
'I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration.'	76	61	68
'Using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success in my organisation.'	55	-	56
'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who use flexible work arrangements.'	65	63	60
'My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender.'	74	-	72
'Having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation.'	58	64	57
'Having family responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation.'	60	-	59

During consultations, a desire for job flexibility was identified as a high priority by staff.

With respect to family violence leave, 78% of respondents to the People Matter Survey agreed that 'My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave'. Three women took family violence leave during 2020–21.

In relation to parental leave, most staff felt that there was a gendered difference in perception for men and women who took it up. For women returning from parental leave, especially part-time, there was a perception that they missed opportunities for progression or were viewed as less capable.

Goals and strategies

Phase 1: By October 2023

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Employees experiencing family violence are aware of and satisfied with the workplace supports available to them.	<p>Review and communicate PoV's family violence policy and processes. Ensure they are victim/survivor-centric and in line with sector best practice.</p> <p>The policies and processes will be supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People & Capability undertaking family violence training • managers and key staff receiving 'responding to disclosures' training • external referral network established to refer family violence disclosures • dedicated hub created on PoV intranet that includes family violence information, including leave policy, contact officer details and supporting information. 	<p>Policy and processes updated and supporting actions implemented.</p> <p>More staff take family violence leave.</p>
The Victorian Parliament has transitioned to flexibility by default.	<p>Work towards all roles being flexible by default.</p> <p>Strategies during this phase will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a gender-neutral, flexible work policy, signed off by leadership • writing flexibility as a core component in all position descriptions for new hires • creating a dedicated page on intranet for info about flexible working arrangements • undertaking surveys of staff to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place • evolving PoV's digital strategy to underwrite flexible working. 	<p>Flexible work policy developed and strategies implemented.</p> <p>Increase in numbers of staff taking up flexible work arrangements.</p> <p>Appropriate mechanisms to survey staff and capture the data are established.</p>
Family and/or caring responsibilities are not an impediment to progression at PoV.	<p>Review and communicate PoV's parental leave and caring policies and processes. Ensure they follow industry best-practice, and they encourage people of all genders to take family or carers' leave when needed.</p>	<p>Policies, processes and guidelines reviewed and distributed.</p> <p>Support programs designed and embedded across PoV.</p> <p>Appropriate mechanisms are in place to capture and store data about the career progression of staff who return from parental, or carers' leave compared to other staff.</p>

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Family and/or caring responsibilities are not an impediment to progression at PoV. (continued)	<p>The policies and processes will be supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programs designed to ensure staff are supported during their return to the workforce following a period of extended leave, including the 'keeping in touch' program detailed in Indicator 3 • promotion of job-share arrangements and staggered return-to-work options for staff coming back from parental leave • data being collected and evaluated on the progression of staff returning from parental leave or carers leave • dedicated hub created on PoV intranet for information about parental and carers' leave policies, including case studies • guidelines produced on timing and location of Parliamentary meetings to ensure consideration of work arrangements for parents and carers. 	

Phase 2: By October 2025

Goals	Strategies	Phase 2 deliverables
The Victorian Parliament has transitioned to flexibility by default.	<p>Additional strategies during this phase include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing flexible work policy • establishing and rolling out training for managers to understand the options for flexible work, how to lead hybrid teams, promoting a 'work differently' approach to practices and guidance on avoiding proximity bias • modelling flexibility in the workplace by parliamentary leadership • case studies collected from staff at various levels (including senior leadership), canvassing stories about flexible work in practice and published on hub • designing a flexible work campaign aimed at all genders, that encourages the use of flexible working arrangements (beyond remote working). 	Flexible work embedded across PoV and more staff take flexible work options.

How will we measure progress?

Family violence leave

In response to surveys, staff will indicate increasing awareness of the PoV supports available to employees experiencing family violence, including family violence leave.

Increased traffic to family violence intranet page/hub (measured in page views).

Increased proportion of staff taking family violence leave.

In future People Matter Surveys, the proportion of staff agreeing that ‘My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave’ will be higher than the public-sector average.

Flexible work arrangements

In response to surveys, staff will indicate that they have the physical equipment they need to work flexibly, and their teams have established appropriate processes to enable people to work flexibly without being disadvantaged.

More staff take up flexible working arrangements.

In future People Matter Surveys, the proportion of staff agreeing with the following statements will be higher than the public sector average:

- ‘Using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success in my organisation.’
- ‘There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who use flexible work arrangements.’
- ‘I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration.’

Family and caring responsibilities

The rate of people who leave the organisation within 12 months after returning from extended family/carer leave is no higher than the general attrition rate.

The number of men taking up extended parental leave and primary carer schemes will increase.

In future People Matter Surveys, the proportion of staff agreeing with the following statements will be higher than the public sector average:

- ‘My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender.’
- ‘Having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation.’
- ‘Having family responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation.’

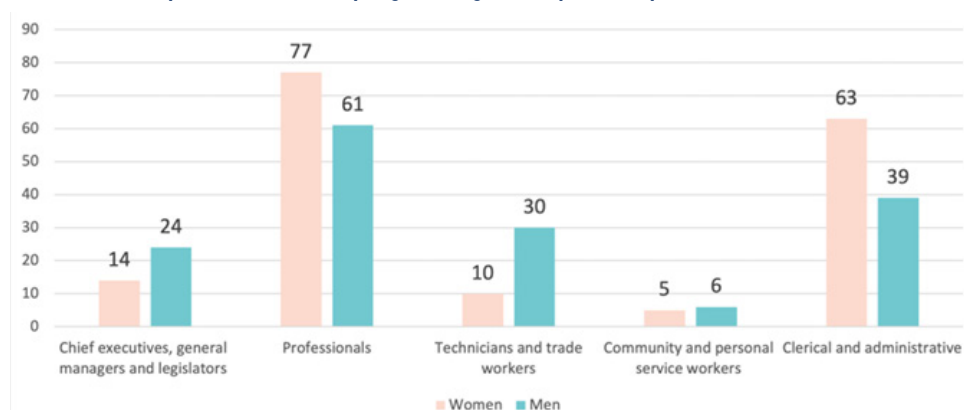
WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY INDICATOR 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace

Key audit data findings

Gender segregation can particularly be seen in ICT roles (4 women compared to 18 men), technicians and trades (10 women compared to 30 men) and administrative and clerical roles (63 women compared to 39 men).

The gender composition of different occupations (as classified by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) can be seen below.

Gender composition of employees by occupation per ANZSCO codes (N=329)



Goals and strategies

Phase 1: By October 2023

Goals	Strategies	Phase 1 deliverables
Address gender segregation where there is an under-representation of one gender in a group/branch or in roles.	Ensure the employment environment, from recruitment to working conditions (e.g. flexible work arrangements, caring provisions, higher duties) creates opportunities to improve gender under-representation in gender-segregated business units.	See other indicators.
	Develop career development programs for sections of the workforce which are heavily gender segregated.	Programs established. Appropriate mechanisms are in place to capture and store data about the career progression of staff in areas with high degrees of gender segregation broken down by gender.
	Review recruitment processes to ensure they do not contain gender bias.	See Indicator 5.
	Building awareness of gender equity and equality by applying an 'intersectional gender lens'.	Gender Impact Assessments are applied where needed.
	Ensuring our hybrid work model enables diversity, inclusion and flexibility.	See Indicator 6.

How will we measure progress?

The ratio of women to men in ICT roles, technician/trade roles and administrative/ clerical roles will be within $\pm 10\%$ of the industry average.

In areas where there is a high degree of gender segregation, promotion rates will be similar for women and men.