



VICTORIA POLICE

EQUAL, SAFE & STRONG

VICTORIA POLICE
GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY
2020-2030







ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Victoria Police respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country throughout Victoria. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging and continue to recognise and embrace the fact that Aboriginal People are connected to the oldest, continuous history.

ABORIGINAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Victoria Police proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the first peoples and Traditional Owners, Custodians and caretakers of the land and water on which we rely.

We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on incredibly disciplined social and cultural obligations. These social and cultural obligations have sustained up to 65,000 years of existence.

We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of our Aboriginal employees and the Aboriginal community on gender equality. In the spirit of self-determination, Victoria Police acknowledges our First Peoples; Aboriginal Victorians who are best placed to determine a culturally appropriate path to gender equality in their workplaces and communities.

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF COMMISSIONER SHANE PATTON

Equal, Safe and Strong is our 10-year blueprint for developing a gender equal Victoria Police Force. This strategy has emerged from the confronting picture of workplace experiences of women highlighted by the 2015 VEOHRC *Independent Review into Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, including Predatory Behaviour, in Victoria Police*. The report highlighted that issues such as safety, career progression and respect are core concerns for women in our organisation and affect our credibility and service to the community, such as policing responses to family violence and sexual abuse.

In recent months, as Chief Commissioner and a Male Champion of Change, I have spent time speaking with many in our workforce about these issues. This includes in meetings with representatives of the Women in Policing Advisory Group, the Women in Policing Local Committees and other work areas across the organisation. These conversations have been frank and profound, and I want to take this opportunity to thank those who have shared their perspectives and experiences. They have deepened my understanding of how gendered stereotypes negatively impact individuals and prevent our organisation from benefitting from the full complement of skills and knowledge of our women.

We have made progress in these areas since the 2015 report, however there is still much we need to do, want to do and must do, to be an organisation where both women and men thrive equally. Achieving this goal is not only the right thing to do but will enhance our delivery of policing services to the Victorian community.

To achieve this goal, we need to do things differently. As Chief Commissioner I am committed to driving deep and meaningful change at every level of the organisation. We will focus on equipping every employee with the knowledge and skills to take responsibility and action to create workplaces that are professional, safe and gender equal.

Equal, Safe and Strong is the culmination of significant consultation, research and planning. The following pages outline an informed, measured and purposeful response to improving gender equality within Victoria Police Force. It signals the high expectations we should have of ourselves and of each other.

This Strategy applies to every Victoria Police employee; Police officers, Victorian Public Servants, Protective Services Officers and Police Custody Officers.

There is a lot of work to do and my executive team and I are committed to making this blueprint a reality.

Shane Patton APM
Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police



MESSAGE FROM GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSIONER DR NIKI VINCENT

The understanding of gender equality within Victoria Police, and the importance of embedding such practices across its workplaces, has been growing since the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission comprehensive review and audit in 2015.

I commend Victoria Police's commitment to gender equality and the Gender Equality and Inclusion Command it created in January 2020. *Equal, Safe and Strong* sets out the roadmap to embed gender equality practices as we work towards a safe, respectful workforce for everyone.

Given the significant proportion of time Victoria Police spend responding to family and sexual violence, it must be a leading role model for Victorian organisations and the community in understanding gender equality and how this improves service delivery. Every Victoria Police employee can play a role in addressing the structural and cultural barriers to a safe, gender equal workplace.

Unfortunately, gender inequality at work is too common. It brings significant economic and social impacts, while preventing women, men and gender-diverse Victorians from achieving their full potential. The results are less productive organisations, lower morale and higher absenteeism and turnover.

The cultural issues that have led to toleration of gender inequality will need to be challenged and the transformation will be uncomfortable, particularly for a well-established, hierarchical organisation like Victoria Police. However, if we change values and beliefs we can shift the mentality and drive progress.

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Victorian Police must demonstrate meaningful progress on workplace gender equality and in the community. As Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner, I support the journey of organisations like Victoria Police towards becoming a more gender equal workplace.

By working together we can create sustainable commitment and change, and the *Equal, Safe and Strong* strategy is a positive step towards our shared goal of an inclusive, gender equal Victoria.

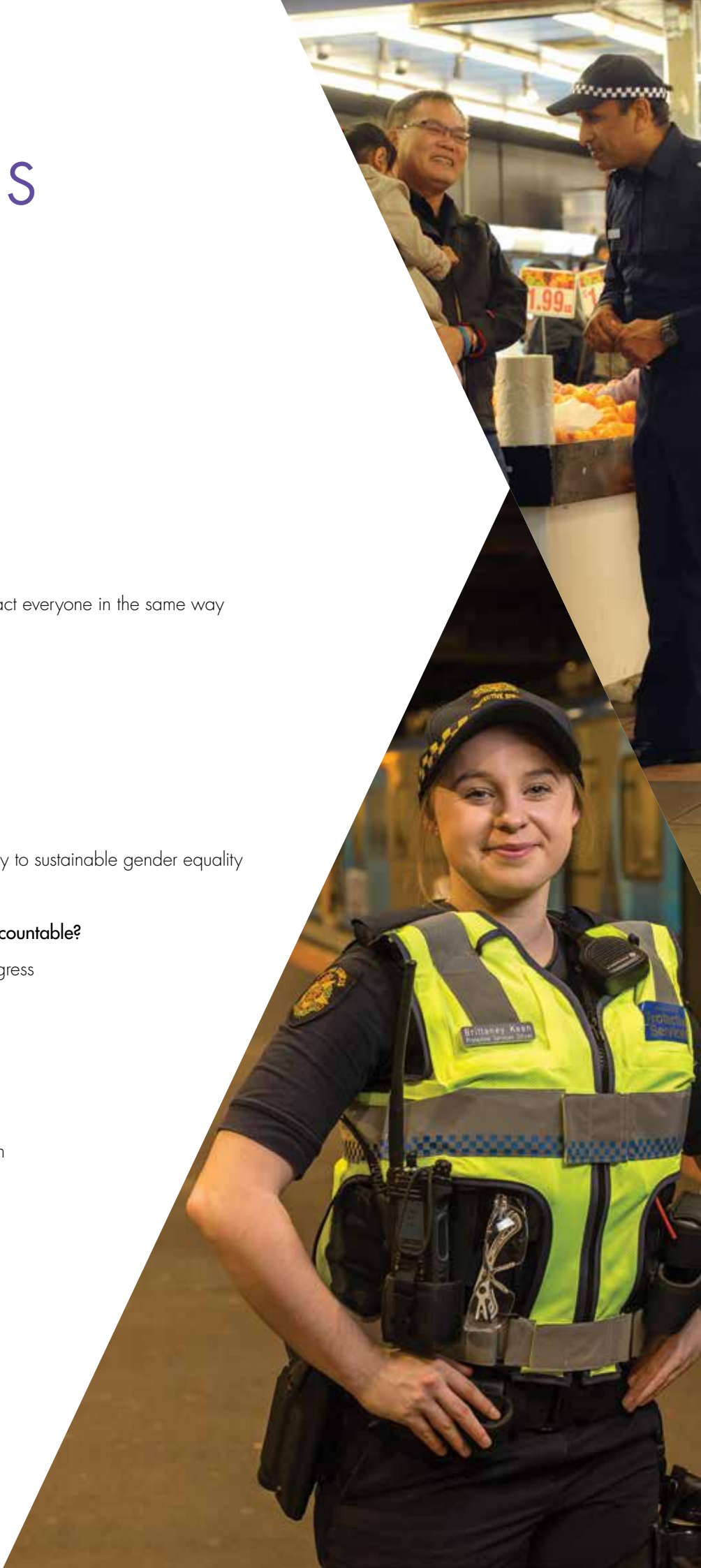
Dr Niki Vincent

Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner



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INTRODUCTION

OUR VISION

- Victoria Police leads the way in sustainable gender equality.
- All Victoria Police employees work in a safe and equal workplace, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities, and are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Victoria Police culture values a diverse workforce, reflective of gender representation in the community.
- All Victoria Police employees recognise that gender equality benefits everyone and enhances police responses to the community, especially those who have experienced gendered violence.

Gender equality will create a better workplace for our people and help them meet the demands of contemporary policing and provide excellence in community service, particularly on the issue of gendered violence. *Equal, Safe and Strong* is our long-term strategy towards achieving sustainable gender equality in Victoria Police by 2030.

The strategy recognises gender equality as foundational to the transformational change that accompanied *Blue Paper: A vision for Victoria Police in 2025*. Our workforce must reflect modern society where all employees have caring and work responsibilities. Development and leadership opportunities should be available regardless of gender. Regular action plans will hold us accountable for outcomes as we modernise and strengthen our workforce with the skills to reach its potential.

The strategy owes much to our unique partnership with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) which has revealed the nature, extent and drivers of sexual harassment, sex discrimination and predatory behaviour in our organisation. Despite five years of hard work and significant improvement across many areas, the deep and transformative change we want requires ongoing resourcing, leadership and strategic commitment.

Strict gender stereotypes continue to define features of Victoria Police culture. These harm our employees, forcing them to shut themselves off to adapt. This profoundly

impacts our capability to deal with family violence, sexual offences and child abuse.

COVID-19 has revealed Victoria Police to be an adaptable organisation that quickly accelerated flexible, agile and inclusive work practices across our many roles and workplaces. Achieving gender equality requires us to call on this flexibility, learn from our workforce's lived experience and elevate the voices of our women. *Equal, Safe and Strong* will drive lasting organisational change and ideally lead similar changes across the state.

The Strategy's four broad sections are:

1. Where are we at?
2. Where do we want to be?
3. How are we getting there?
4. How are we holding ourselves accountable?

Sustainable gender equality is an ongoing integrated approach that assesses and removes the gendered influence on organisational structures, practices and culture.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The Strategy is aligned to key strategic internal policies and Victorian legislation; both form the bedrock of our work and provide essential parameters for developing our action plans.

Figure 1: Victoria Police's gender equality strategic framework



This 10-year gender equality strategy supports the Blue Paper and sets-up a pathway to realising gender, diversity and flexibility (see Figure 1).



Over the Strategy's 10-year life span a more professional, flexible and diverse workforce will emerge as we meet current descriptors highlighted for this pathway in the Capability Framework¹ (p. 43):

- Foster, champion and maintain a gender diverse, inclusive and safe workplace, free from individual and systemic forms of discrimination and harassment by treating everyone with dignity and respect and providing equality of opportunity for all Victoria Police employees, irrespective of their gender, culture, ethnicity, gender/sexual orientation or disability.
- A workplace which is representative of the diversity of the communities we serve.
- Education and training that reflects the professionalisation of the workforce and expected performance and behavioural standards.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

- *Gender Equality Act 2020*: Passed in February 2020 and commencing in March 2021, this Act requires the Victorian Public Sector, including Victoria Police, to report on, plan for and progress gender equality.
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*: This Act recognises that access to opportunities is not equal for everyone and discrimination can be socially disadvantageous. The Act also includes a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation.
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*: This Act, together with state and territory anti-discrimination laws, provides the primary framework for understanding and addressing sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination, and recognises the right to work in an environment free from sexual harassment.
- *Victoria Police Act 2013*: This Act is the primary legal instrument regulating the objectives, structure and powers of Victoria Police.

¹ This document is a point in time reference. The Capability Framework and related guidelines are expected to change.

WHERE ARE WE AT?

WHAT'S GENDER EQUALITY?

The Victorian *Gender Equality Act (2020)* defines this as “*equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes between persons of different genders.*” You should be free to develop your personal abilities, pursue professional careers and make life choices free from gender stereotypes, roles or prejudices. Gender equality is a human right and a precondition to social justice. Removing limiting gendered expectations creates equal, safe and strong workplaces.

GENDER INEQUALITY DOESN'T IMPACT EVERYONE IN THE SAME WAY

For many, gender inequality is compounded with other forms of discrimination and disadvantage. We need to understand the full complexity of a person's barriers or potential and that these can make it harder for them to bring their whole selves to work.



- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer employees** can feel like they need to hide their gender identity or sexuality especially in a workplace that values heterosexuality and stereotypical masculinity. A gender equal workplace removes the rigid gendered expectations and allows everyone to bring their best self into a safe and respectful workplace.



- In the spirit of self-determination, Victoria Police **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees** together with the Aboriginal community, are best placed at the centre of this work to ensure initiatives are culturally appropriate and addressing the unique barriers of racism and sexism experienced by our First Nations people. Victoria Police is committed to strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal communities, building culturally safe workplaces and increasing Aboriginal employment.



- **Culturally and linguistically diverse employees** face multiple barriers that can affect their day-to-day work including linguistic, cultural, racial and religious discrimination. Victoria Police must ensure all gender equality initiatives are considerate of the diversity of our employees and offer culturally appropriate resources.



- **Employees with accessibility needs** can face various attitudinal and environmental barriers hindering their full potential. Victoria Police has committed to offer meaningful employment opportunities that are equally accessible for people with differing abilities.

See Victoria Police's *Diversity and Inclusion Framework* for more on current priorities.

² The use of terms sex and gender are consistent with the Victorian Government inclusive language guidelines. Victorian Government (2016) *Victorian Public Sector: Inclusive Language Guide*.

We need to recognise that **sex** and **gender** are different concepts. Sex refers to someone’s biological sex characteristics and includes male, female and intersex. Gender is a social construct that creates social expectations as expressed by clothes, physical appearance or pronouns. Many people see themselves as a man, woman, a combination of both or neither.² Gender equality work targets the removal of the social expectations on the sexes, allowing all people to be equal and free of stereotypes.

HOW FAR WE’VE COME

VEOHRC has been working closely with Victoria Police since 2015 to help us better understand the scale, scope and drivers of gender inequality in our organisation. Its first independent audit, the *Review into Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, including Predatory Behaviour in Victoria Police* was released in 2015, revealing entrenched sexism.³

VEOHRC completed two more audits over the following five years, aimed at supporting Victoria Police to create cultural and systemic change. Our close collaboration has seen us implement a range of recommendations across the organisation.

In August 2019, VEOHRC released its third and final audit which found that “Victoria Police is transforming into a modern policing organisation that is disrupting its deeply entrenched culture of systemic discrimination and high tolerance for gendered harm.”⁴ This work has contributed to an increase in women’s representation in leadership positions (see Figure 2) and an increase in uptake of flexible work (see Figure 3).

The third audit included an Outcome Monitoring Framework (VEOHRC OMF)⁵ revealing the areas we need to focus on to progress gender equality within Victoria Police. These focus areas guided the creation of this Strategy and will continue to inform the design of our future monitoring and evaluation plan, to be completed within the Interim Action Plan (Dec 2020–Sep 2021) in developing the 10-year strategy.

Figure 2. Leadership⁶ composition of males and females for Police officers and Victorian Public Service (VPS) roles within Victoria Police.

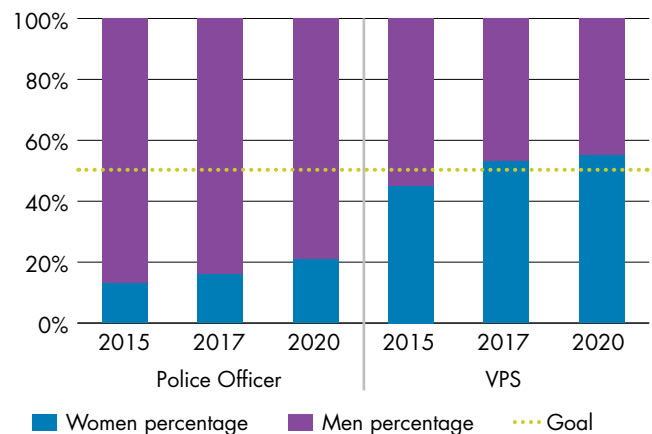
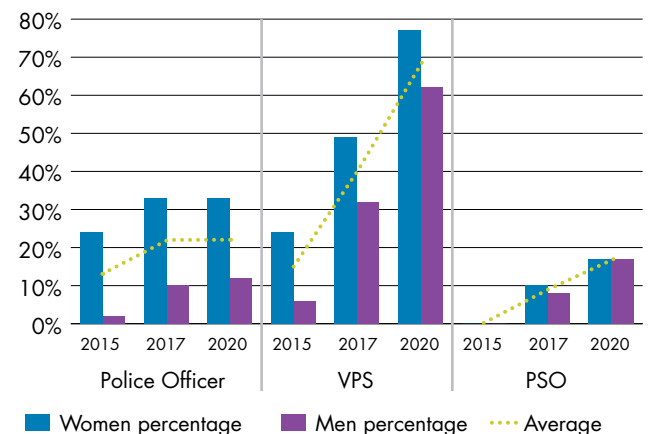


Figure 3. Flexible work uptake



² The use of terms sex and gender are consistent with the Victorian Government inclusive language guidelines. Victorian Government (2016) *Victorian Public Sector: Inclusive Language Guide*.

³ Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) (2015), *Independent review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour in Victoria Police: Phase 1 audit and review*, Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission, Melbourne, Australia.

⁴ Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) (2019), *Independent review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour in Victoria police: Phase 3 audit and review*, Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission, Melbourne, Australia.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Leadership, as referred to in this graph includes VPS: VPS5, VPS6, VPS7, EO-1, EO-2, EO-3, and Police Officer ranks of Senior Sergeant, Inspector, Superintendent, Commander, Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Commissioner.

Table 1 highlights Victoria Police's most significant initiatives since 2015 in laying the foundations for gender equality.

Table 1. Progress since 2015

INITIATIVES	PROGRESS SINCE 2015
Gender Equality and Inclusion Command (GEIC)	Established in January 2020, the GEIC is a centre of excellence helping us embed gender equality in our culture and practice with a specific focus on gender and evidence-based outcomes.
Women in Policing Local Committee (WIPLC)	Established from VEOHRC Recommendation 3, WIPLCs are committed to ensuring all women feel supported, valued and safe and encouraged to achieve their potential. ⁷
Women in Policing Advisory Group	A senior advisory committee overseeing WIPLCs for all regions, commands and departments and providing them advice, leadership, organisational influence and review.
Flexible work	More people at Victoria Police want to work flexibly. Procedural changes like recording all flexible work requests and justifying applications we reject, create a clearer picture of how we're tracking with flexible work.
Parental leave backfill program	This program reduces discrimination and workplace harm associated with parental leave.
Women in leadership	Women in leadership roles has grown 5 per cent since 2017 despite the numerous barriers, biases and negative attitudes remaining.
Restorative engagement and redress scheme	This scheme is independent of Victoria Police and available to former and current Victoria Police employees who have experienced workplace sex discrimination or sexual harassment. It's designed to acknowledge past wrongs and offers a range of options for eligible participants.
Gender equality dashboard and gender equality CompStat	The dashboard makes gender equality data accessible to managers and employees. We're tracking recruitment, promotion and uptake of flexible work for members and Victorian Public Service (VPS) employees. The first gender equality CompStat was held in 2019, bringing together leaders from across the organisation to discuss the implications of this data.
Training programs	<i>It's About Respect: Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination 2018</i> offered employees a clearer understanding of the impacts and definition of sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as a better understanding of legislation and policy. All People Development Command employees were also provided with professional boundaries training.
Professional development plans	These plans have made considerable changes to recording and tracking professional development, since starting in 2020.
Revised values	In 2020 Victoria Police relaunched the <i>Victoria Police Values: Respect, Leadership, Professionalism, Support, Integrity, Safety and Flexibly</i> .
Human resources business partners	These will partner with leadership groups to drive human resource solutions aligned to organisational strategies. They will focus on improving workplace relationships, morale and culture, addressing complex people matters like workplace harm, and increasing capability, engagement and productivity.
OneLink	OneLink is Victoria Police's centralised employee support service linking current and former employees impacted by workplace harm with a range of support services.
Taskforce Salus	Established in October 2014, Taskforce Salus identifies and investigates sexual predatory behaviour and serious sexual harassment allegations against current or former police, Protective Services Officers (PSO) and VPS employees.

⁷ VEOHRC, (2015)

WHY IS THIS STILL A PROBLEM?

Despite some significant achievements since 2015, Victoria Police acknowledges that we have not addressed the primary drivers which hold us back from sustainable progress in gender equality. Strict adherence to gender stereotypes has negatively impacted police culture and amplified inequality.⁸

Unequal access to resources and opportunities between groups is based on levels of power and influence. Gender inequality is a power imbalance between genders. This power imbalance is reinforced by rigid gender stereotypes influencing norms, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that advantage more powerful groups.⁹

Policing is historically associated with traditional masculine behaviours, entrenching gendered norms in how we work and think. Traditional masculinity confines people to perform according to outdated and narrow understandings of masculinity.¹⁰ One that values a singular set of attributes such as being heterosexual, forceful, dominant, and suppressing emotions. This understanding of masculinity creates a stereotype of what a police officer is 'meant to be' regardless of sex or gender.¹¹ Modern masculinity has expanded to allow people to be free from traditional gender roles and stereotypes, so individuals are not restricted by social expectations. Allies and advocates of gender equality understand that removing the gendered stereotypes for all people results in a safer, inclusive and respectful workplace. In a workplace where gender stereotypes and traditional masculinity is not challenged you may observe gender discrimination, including:

- significant rates of gendered workplace harm – over 26 per cent of Victoria Police's female employees have experienced sexual harassment.¹²
- only 11 per cent of employees who have experienced sexual harassment within Victoria Police make a formal report.¹³
- significant overrepresentation of women in flexible and part time work which demonstrates that caregiving is still seen as the primary responsibility of women (see Figure 4 and 5).
- over representation of men, especially in leadership positions and access to higher duties (see Figure 4 and 6).
- a diminished response to gendered workplace harm and gendered community violence.¹⁴

Figure 4. Overall Workforce Representation (Oct 2020)

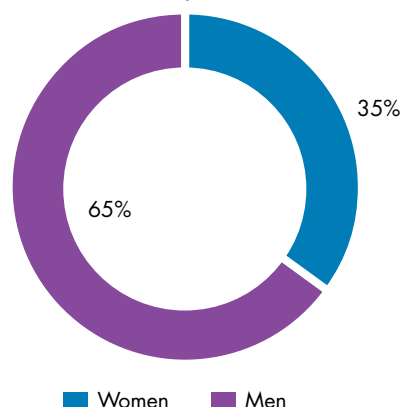


Figure 5. Part time/Casual representation (Oct 2020)

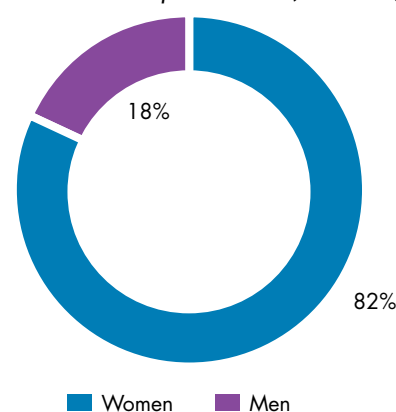
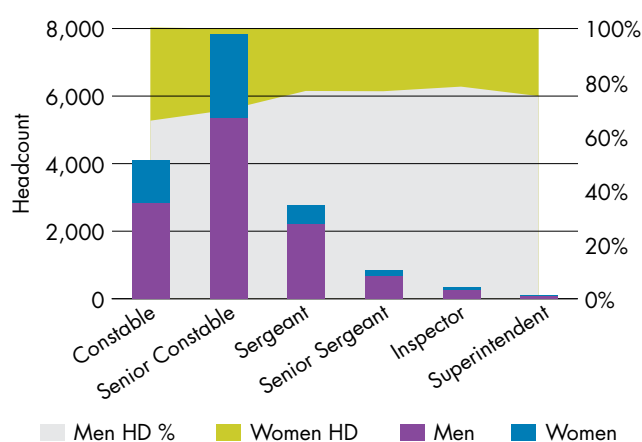


Figure 6. Access to higher duties (HD) (Oct 2020)



⁸ Leonard et al (2018), Policing for same sex attracted and sex and gender diverse (SSASGD) young Victorians, Monograph Series No 110 GLHV@ARCSHS, La Trobe University: Melbourne.

⁹ Our Watch (2015), Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

¹⁰ Ibid. Leonard et al (2018).

¹¹ Our Watch (2019) Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

¹² Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) (2019), Independent review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour in Victoria Police: Phase 3 audit and review, Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission, Melbourne, Australia.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

BENEFITS OF GENDER EQUALITY

REDUCED HARM OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Addressing the harm of gender inequality, includes removing gendered stereotypes, sexual harassment and discrimination by shifting employee behaviours and attitudes, resulting in a safer workplace and healthier employees. This strengthens our workplace culture and increases employee accountability to understand and ensure gender equality.¹⁵

REDUCED HARM CAUSED BY GENDERED NORMS AND STEREOTYPING

Removing these gendered stereotypes allows people to be treated as individuals and praised for their own skills, abilities and aptitudes. There is equality in career advancement, emotional/mental health support and flexible work. The less stereotypical masculine traits and gendered stereotyping, the less gendered workplace harm.¹⁶

MORE CAPABLE AND EFFICIENT POLICE

A diverse workforce allows employees to challenge their own perceptions, attitudes, values and group norms. Like-minded workplaces become homogenous, with groupthink and bias common and unchallenged. Diversity fosters a more progressive, inclusive and successful workplace.¹⁷

ENHANCED ABILITY TO RESPOND TO GENDERED VIOLENCE

A workplace that understands the drivers of gendered workplace harm and community gendered violence delivers better service. With a better understanding, we can address these drivers internally, and better respond to gendered violence, keeping victims safe, and holding perpetrators to account.¹⁸

ENHANCED COMMUNITY REPUTATION AND TRUST OF POLICE

Strong, continued gender equality leadership further establishes Victoria Police as a safe and desirable organisation to work for. A workplace culture that values gender equality will attract and retain valuable employees and increase community trust that we are a safe organisation to report gender-based violence to. This builds community trust in our ability to police with credibility, capability and accountability.¹⁹

FAIR AND MERIT-BASED RECRUITMENT

A workforce that emphasises fair, merit-based recruitment, challenging gendered biases and assumptions will give everyone equal access to opportunities for career advancement.



¹⁵ Ibid. (VEOHRC) (2015).

¹⁶ Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) (2019), Proud, Visible, Safe, responding to workplace harm experienced by LGBTI employees in Victoria Police, Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission, Melbourne, Australia.

¹⁷ Saxena, A. (2014). Workforce diversity: A key to improve productivity. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 11(1), 76-85.

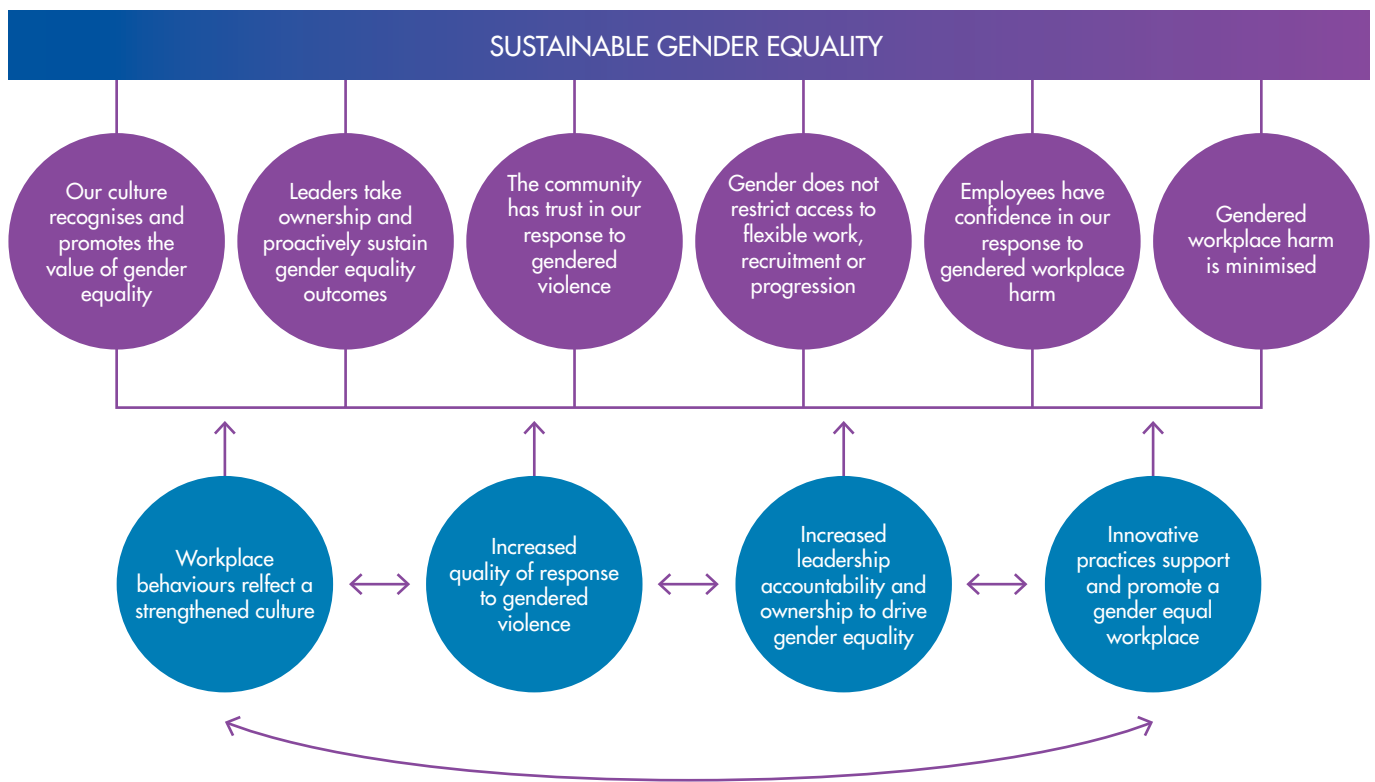
¹⁸ Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) (2019), Independent review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour in Victoria Police: Phase 3 audit and review, Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission, Melbourne, Australia.

¹⁹ Ibid.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

In building sustainable gender equality, we will shift the organisation from a focus on independent programs and projects and progress to a more fully integrated approach that removes unnecessary gender influences from the structures, practice, and by extension, the culture (see Appendix 1). In line with best practice, this means our Strategy does not come with an end state but will focus on creating gender equal outcomes for all and seek to keep pace with new insights, evidence and community expectations. In a large, complex workplace like ours, with a wide cross section of the community, gender equality must become part of our fabric.

Figure 7: Where we want to be



While the below paths may appear linear, they have complex ripple effects across all outcomes. We will build sustainable gender equality through a deliberate evidence-based focus on these four key outcomes:

- **Workplace behaviours reflect a strengthened culture.** This begins with a comprehensive communications strategy to meaningfully engage our people. Gender Equality and Inclusion Command (GEIC) will walk beside employees in their journey to understanding the benefits of gender equality, using findings from our place-based approach. By strengthening the content and delivery of our policies, practices and training, all employees can make choices about their work and home life, free from gendered backlash or reprisal. This will demonstrably change attitudes and skills, paving the way for a stronger culture that values diversity and drawing from a wider talent pool.
- **Increased quality of response to gendered violence.** Through our communication strategy, our training uplift, educational strategies and our 10-year Strategy we will engage leaders and employees to increase understanding of the drivers of gender inequality and the links to gendered violence. A greater understanding and strengthened culture will enhance police service delivery, keeping victims safe and holding perpetrators to account.
- **Increased leadership accountability and ownership to drive gender equality.** We must empower our leaders with clear organisational expectations, underpinned by innovative policy, practice, systems and training uplift. Findings from our place-based work will help in establishing clear, effective responses to gendered workplace harm. Stronger processes and fit-for-purpose data metrics will ensure workplace leaders own and drive gender equality.
- **Innovative practices support and promote a gender equal workplace.** Permission to challenge how we think and work will drive real change. Effective collaboration with key partners will embed gender equality into the core of our organisation. Applying a gendered lens in reviewing our policies, training and systems – including merit, workplace harm, flexible rostering and the complaint model – will ensure decisions affecting others are free from bias and consider gendered impacts. The result will be a stronger more gender equal workforce and sustainable gender equality.

Sustainable gender equality is defined by the following outcomes:

- **Our culture recognises and promotes the value of gender equality.** As a leader in gender equality, our organisation will attract employees who have a contemporary understanding of a modern police officer. The strength of our culture will ensure new employees subscribe to our gender equal values and drive our inclusive future.
- **Leaders take ownership and proactively sustain gender equality outcomes.** Leaders at all levels are committed to proactively driving progress in their departments, commands, regions, divisions, stations and their teams.
- **The community has trust in our response to gendered violence.** With a strong reputation for being a gender equal organisation, the community will have confidence that victims of gendered violence will be believed and supported. With greater accessibility to an enhanced police response the community can trust that perpetrators will be held to account.
- **Gender does not restrict access to flexible work, recruitment or progression.** In our workforce, all genders will have caring and work responsibilities and the same opportunities to develop and lead. Our policies, systems and leadership support, will allow all employees to undertake flexible work, take carer's and parental leave and enter and progress through our organisation free from gendered barriers.
- **Employees have confidence in our response to gendered workplace harm.** Our strong accountability processes will maintain gender equal standards by continually reinforcing behavioural expectations. Employees will know reported gendered workplace harm will be swiftly addressed through a victim-centric approach with fair and effective outcomes.
- **Gendered workplace harm is minimised.** This strategy aims to achieve through primary prevention, by creating a culture and environment that is hostile to perpetrators of gendered workplace harm. When it does occur, we will ensure a comprehensive victim centric response to prevent continued harm and hold employees to account.

HOW ARE WE GETTING THERE?

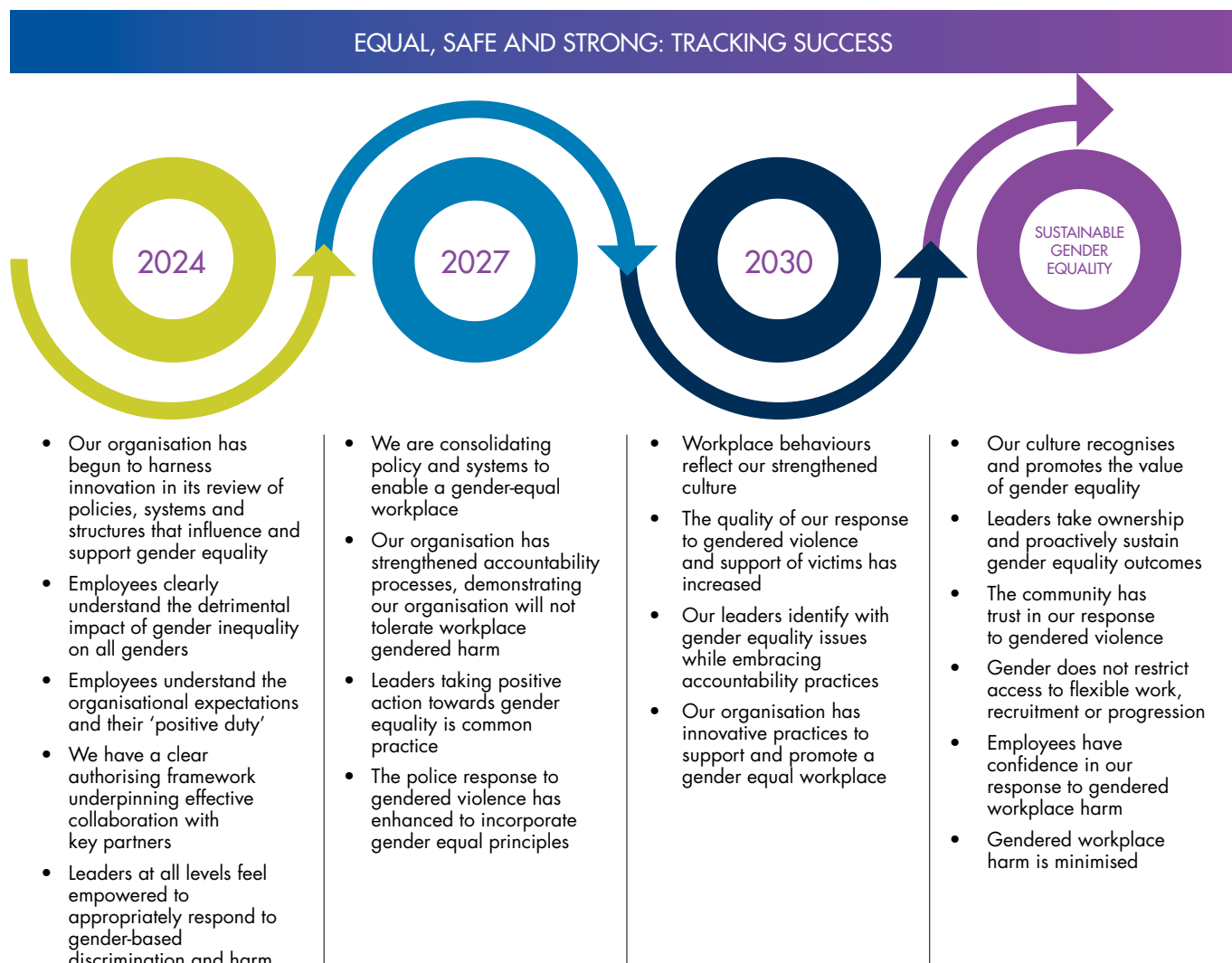
VICTORIA POLICE'S 10-YEAR PLAN TO SUSTAINABLE GENDER EQUALITY

We have developed and tested a program logic with our key partners and stakeholders (*Appendix 1*) to achieve sustainable gender equality by 2030 and our Action Plans to implement our initiatives over the life of the Strategy. Additionally, we have developed descriptions of what success looks like with each Action Plan, to inform their evaluation (see *Figure 8*). To comply with legislative requirements, these Action Plans will be submitted to the Gender Equality Commission in October of the corresponding year.

Across the life of the strategy, we will oversee:

- *Interim Action Plan (Dec 2020 – Sep 2021)*
- *First Action Plan (2021–2024)*
- *Second Action Plan (2024–2027)*
- *Third Action Plan (2027–2030)*

Figure 8. Tracking success



INTERIM ACTION PLAN (DEC 2020 – SEP 2021)

The next ten months are crucial in two ways: on one hand we will continue progressing VEOHRC's recommendations, develop our people's understanding of gender equality and gendered workplace harm and start testing our place-based approach; while on the other hand, we start making solid strides towards our outcomes.

Informed by the legislative requirements for public reporting in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, we will:

- develop, in consultation with our stakeholders, the First Action Plan,
- undertake a Workplace Gender Audit that will clarify our baseline data so that we can formulate the right strategies and actions for the next three years; and
- develop a framework to monitor and evaluate our progress over the course of the First Action Plan.

We will align our efforts with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* to ensure we are guided by Victorian Government best practice and efforts in gender equality. As the first set of legislative obligations come in to force in 2021, these interim actions (see *Appendix 2*) will ensure we meet the legislative requirements and set us up to deliver the Strategy's outcomes.

FIRST ACTION PLAN (2021–2024)

The First Action Plan will build on the organisation's gender equality efforts over the last few years. It will put in place key assertive actions to drive long-term change, while guiding work that needs to be completed within the Strategy's first three years. During this, GEIC and its partners will work to:

- consolidate a solid evidence base to inform all our work
- establish frameworks for smooth interaction with key partners
- tailor measures to attract and retain women
- support women's leadership targets
- achieve a level of organisation-wide understanding that sets the right foundations to change attitudes and behaviours.

Creating momentum in primary prevention in the first three years will provide an essential platform for the Second and Third Action Plans. This will involve action to prevent gendered workplace harm before it happens. While changes to culture and attitude can take a long time, we should start to see evidence about the impact of the First Action Plan as we implement and evaluate it.

SECOND ACTION PLAN (2024–2027)

The Second Action Plan will draw from the strong evidence around what worked well in the first three years and the efficiency and effectiveness of key actions. Evidence will help us strengthen or adjust existing actions and develop new approaches to anything not progressing as we expected. Victoria Police will look to improve internal policies and systems and move towards stronger gender equality practice which:

- demonstrates that workplace gendered harm isn't tolerated
- influences leaders' day-to-day practices
- transforms how all employees understand and take responsibility for gender equality.

THIRD ACTION PLAN (2027–2030)

The Third Action Plan will deliver solid, continuing progress across all areas using improvements in data collection and analysis, embedding a more detailed, accurate and deeper view of gender equality in our organisation. The final action plan of the Strategy will ensure:

- Enhance quality of police response to gendered violence
- leaders owning gender equality outcomes
- workplace behaviours reflect a strengthened culture
- a gendered approach to workplace policies and systems has been mainstreamed.

The continuous involvement of stakeholders by GEIC across Victoria Police over the 10-year Strategy will make more employees receptive, supportive and involved with its initiatives and allow leaders to advocate and promote for gender equality to be business-as-usual.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

To achieve a gender equal workplace, Victoria Police needs ongoing commitment from all our people, regions, departments and commands. Working in partnership is essential for the Strategy's success and implementing the three action plans.

The *Program of Work* working group can influence organisational change and build capability. We value and recognise its work and effort to date and look forward to continuing GEIC's partnership approach towards sustainable gender equality by 2030.

Our partners include:

- Executive Command
- Capability Department
- Family Violence Command
- Human Resources Department
- Media and Corporate Communications Department
- People Development Command
- Professional Standards Command.



HOW ARE WE HOLDING OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE?

MONITORING AND EVALUATING PROGRESS

The Strategy introduces a group of outcomes over 10 years (see Figure 8) with progress monitored at each Action Plan. Each Action Plan will have its own monitoring and evaluation plan containing key evaluation questions and performance indicators. Success will initially be monitored using indicators from the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and from the VEOHRC OMF. New data sources will become available as data collection improves. This will allow annual reporting and evaluation towards the end of each Action Plan to shape the next one (see Figure 9).

Our monitoring and evaluation plan will align with the VEOHRC Outcome Monitoring Framework, the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and indicators that track progress on our gender equality outcomes. Importantly, we will work closely with the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner and meet our reporting obligations as a “defined entity” in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

We’ll be updating the 10-year Strategy in line with the best available evidence. A final report will review the Strategy’s achievements and set our future direction.

Figure 9. Planning, implementation and evaluation cycle



USEFUL ACRONYMS

GEIC

Gender Equality and Inclusion Command

PSO

Protective Services Officer

VEOHRC

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

VEOHRC OMF

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
Outcome Monitoring Framework

VPS

Victorian Public Service Employees

WIPLC

Women in Policing Local Committee



GLOSSARY

DISCRIMINATION

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, sex, or disability.

EMPLOYEES WITH ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

This includes employees with long-term (six months or more) physical, mental health, intellectual, neurological or sensory impairments.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence covers a wide spectrum of conduct that involves an escalating spiral of violence between family members, partners and chosen family. These behaviours can include physical and sexual abuse as well as psychological, emotional, cultural, spiritual and financial abuse.

GENDER

Gender is a social construct that creates social expectations on sexed bodies as expressed by clothes, physical appearance or pronouns. Many people see themselves as a man, woman, a combination of both or neither.²⁰

GENDERED WORKPLACE HARM

This umbrella term covers any way a person experiences discrimination, harm or violence based on their gender in the workplace.

GENDERED STEREOTYPES

Generalised views or preconceptions about what attributes, characteristics, behaviours and roles are performed by a person to adhere to their sexed body. Gender stereotypes are harmful when they limit a person's capacity to develop their personal attributes, pursue careers or make personal life choices.²¹

GENDERED VIOLENCE

This term covers violence against a person because of their gender. This includes violence against women, plus those who don't adhere to gendered stereotypes but are subject to violence to try to force them to conform to a status quo or punish them for non-conformance. *In this document, gendered violence is an umbrella term covering any way a person can experience discrimination, harm or violence based on their gender in their **their private lives, at home, with their family and in community.***

PLACE BASED PILOT/APPROACH

The Place Based Approach is a new way by which Victoria Police is going to achieve gender equality in all our workplaces. GEIC will work in partnership with local workplaces to build their capability to deliver on gender equality outcomes. It commences with a pilot of two uniform stations to test new ways of working and inform broader application. It is designed to enable each station to capitalise and adapt the broader, centralised change projects to local conditions and to align these to the station's goals for its workplace and service delivery.

PRIMARY PREVENTION

Primary Prevention is the educational process to prevent gendered violence before it occurs. For Victoria Police this means working with employees directly to build an understanding of the drivers of gendered workplace harm and the connection to gender equality in order to prevent gendered workplace harm occurring.

²⁰ The use of terms sex and gender are consistent with the Victorian Government inclusive language guidelines. Victorian Government (2016) Victorian Public Sector: Inclusive Language Guide.

²¹ United Nations Human Rights (2020), *Gendered stereotyping*, OHCHR.org.

PROGRAM LOGIC

A program logic model is a schematic representation that describes how a program is intended to work by linking activities with outputs, intermediate outcomes and longer-term outcomes.

SEX

Sex refers to a person's biological sex characteristics which includes male, female and intersex.

SEXED BODY/IES

Refers to the social stereotypical gendered expectation placed on a person because of the sex they were assigned at birth.

SEXISM

Sex based prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination.

STEREOTYPE

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

TRADITIONAL MASCULINITY

Also known as stereotypical masculinity, traditional masculinity believes there is only one dominant way of being a man – the traditional way – where men are expected and encouraged to adhere to the stereotypical traits of being heterosexual, forceful, competitive and dominant. These values are directly linked to harmful and violent behaviour.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This component of gender-based violence is targeted towards a woman, because she is a woman.

The four main drivers are:

- the condoning of this violence
- men's control of decision making
- rigid gendered stereotypes of masculinity and femininity
- male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

WORKPLACE HARM

The detrimental effects of being targeted by all forms of inappropriate behaviour at work including sex discrimination, gender-based bullying, sexual harassment and assault, predatory behaviour, victimisation, workplace conflict and bullying.

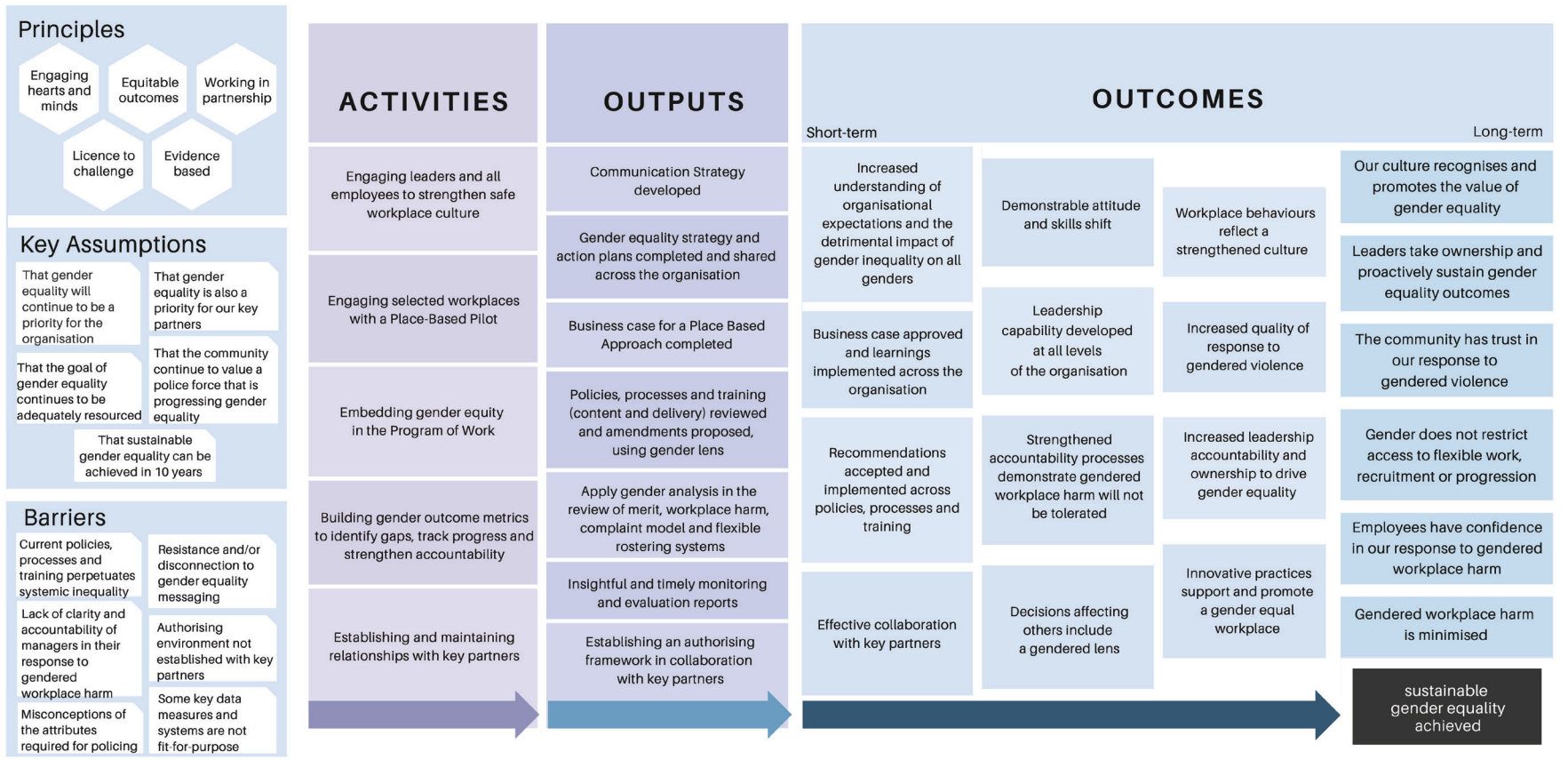
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

EQUAL SAFE AND STRONG: Program Logic

Problem: Strict adherence to gender stereotypes has negatively impacted police culture, amplifying inequality.

Goal: Sustainable gender equality by 2030



APPENDIX 2: INTERIM ACTION PLAN (DEC 2020–SEP 2021)

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE	WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Develop <i>Gender Equality Action Plan (2021–2024)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate and clarify baseline, including status update on VEOHRC recommendations Conduct workplace gender audit Promote benefits of gender equality Consult key partners in the development of strategies for gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful submission of <i>Gender Equality Action Plan</i> to the Gender Equality Commissioner by October 2021 Positive feedback from internal partners and external stakeholders 	Gender Equality and Inclusion Command	Dec 2020–Sep 2021
Develop monitoring and evaluation framework for <i>Gender Equality Action Plan (2021–2024)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of VEOHRC Outcome Monitoring Framework in line with 10-year Program Logic Identification of key performance indicators Consult with internal partners and external stakeholders in the development of key evaluation questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy-in from internal partners and external stakeholders Successful release of monitoring and evaluation framework 	Gender Equality and Inclusion Command	Jan 2020–Sep 2021
Undertake a 2020–2021 Workplace Gender Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review requirements of <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> in relation to Workplace Gender Audit Collect and analyse organisational data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data to inform the First Action Plan Submit audit results to the Gender Equality Commission 	Gender Equality and Inclusion Command	Dec 2020–Sep 2021
Develop a Communications and Engagement Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communications messaging framework in consultation with key internal and external partners Conduct an environmental scan to ensure understanding of previous engagement strategies, their reviews and outcomes Promote key messages of the Gender Equality Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release of Communications and Engagement Strategy Build organisational understanding of gender equality and the benefits to Victoria Police’s culture and practice 	Gender Equality and Inclusion Command	Dec 2020–Sep 2021

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE	WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Engaging two pilot sites with a Place Based Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of pilot stations • Engagement with senior leadership • Conduct data analysis to inform baseline and areas of focus • Develop and test a gender equality workplace framework for pilot stations • Development of Place-Based Pilot Toolkit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement approach implemented • Tailored gender equality workplace framework developed for pilot stations • Place-Based Pilot Toolkit delivered 	Gender Equality and Inclusion Command	Dec 2020–Sep 2021
Establish an authorising framework to guide the implementation of the Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the objective of the framework with key stakeholders • Agree on implementation actions with stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy-in from internal and external partners • Endorsement of authorising framework by executive management 	Gender Equality and Inclusion Command	Feb 2020–Jun 2021
Establish Gender Impact Assessment Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align gender equality impact assessment with Policy impact Assessment • Consult with key partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement of process 	Gender Equality and Inclusion Command	Mar 2020–Jun 2021
Development of the Sexual Harassment Prevention Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with VEOHRC • Clarify roles and responsibilities within program of work • Develop draft for consultation • Release of Sexual Harassment Prevention Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful release of Sexual Harassment Prevention Plan • Positive feedback from stakeholders 	Gender Equality and Inclusion Command	Mar 2020–Jun 2021



NOTES



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