



VICTORIA POLICE

EQUAL, SAFE & STRONG

VICTORIA POLICE
GENDER EQUALITY
ACTION PLAN 2022-2024

The *Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2024* is part of *Equal, Safe & Strong Victoria Police Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2030*.

Equal, Safe & Strong demonstrates our organisational commitment to achieving sustainable gender equality within our workplace, for the benefit of our people and the community.

To read *Equal, Safe & Strong Victoria Police Gender Equality Strategy 2020–30* visit police.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-strategy.

The *Equal, Safe & Strong Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2024* recognises, outlines and draws on the supportive and specific roles of diverse stakeholders and partners for its implementation.

Consistent with the Gender Equality Act, relevant information included in this Gender Equality Action Plan will be available at genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au.

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

In over 40 years of policing, I have never been asked how I would balance my parenting responsibilities with my policing duties. I have never been told I was promoted solely because of my gender. Nor have I ever been made to feel unsafe because of persistent and unwanted attention by my manager.

Throughout my career I have had the benefit of working with many outstanding women in Victoria Police. Since becoming Chief Commissioner, I have been able to reflect on how very different our experiences have been. While I have long recognised that gender inequality exists in our organisation, I acknowledge that I did not fully appreciate the extent of harm experienced by women in Victoria Police. I am grateful to the many women who have shared their stories and challenged my understanding of the state of gender inequality in our organisation.

As a member of the Champions of Change Coalition I am acutely aware that gender inequality persists across the private and public sectors. While organisations need to address this issue for the benefit of their employees, for Victoria Police, gender equality is critical to our service to victims of crimes such as family violence.

In December 2020, I was proud to launch *Equal, Safe & Strong*, the Victoria Police ten-year gender equality strategy that set the ambitious goal of achieving sustainable gender equality by 2030. This first gender equality action plan 2022–2024 reflects an organisation-wide collaboration to drive this transformative change. The action plan prioritises building the capability of our leaders to create safe, respectful and inclusive workplaces and to strengthen our response to gendered workplace harm. This work will shape the way gender equality becomes part of our culture and identity. Being a modern police force means being an employer of choice for women. We must provide a working environment where all our people can thrive at any rank and level and where their career success is not limited by gender.

There is much work to be done. My executive team and I are committed to achieving material progress towards gender equality for the benefit of all our people and the Victorian community.

Shane Patton APM

Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police



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INTRODUCTION

EQUAL, SAFE & STRONG – VICTORIA POLICE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

In 2020 Victoria Police set the ambitious goal to achieve sustainable gender equality by 2030. Built upon five years of organisational reforms, *Equal, Safe & Strong – Victoria Police Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2030* (the strategy) provides the roadmap for how Victoria Police will continue to transform to become a gender equal organisation, where all our people can thrive in their service to the community.

The key mechanism for making material progress towards this goal is through regular action plans. *Equal, Safe & Strong – Victoria Police Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2024* (the action plan) is the first of three action plans to support the implementation of the strategy. These action plans will outline tangible commitments to harnessing innovation in our practice and culture. With a strong focus on monitoring and evaluation, we will reflect on our progress and lessons learned as we develop each successive action plan.

Strong accountability across all levels of the workforce is vital if we are to achieve the scope and scale of this change. Our organisational accountability is governed by the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (the Act) which mandates that Victoria Police takes positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and publicly reports on our progress.

The Victoria Police ten-year strategy was built on five years of collaborative effort with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC). This partnership gave us a deep understanding of the unique challenges we face as an organisation in achieving sustainable gender equality.

The establishment of the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (the Commission) provided Victoria Police with the opportunity to further strengthen our approach by providing a legislative framework with clear external accountabilities. The strategy ensures we meet our requirements under the Act, while continuing our role as leaders in gender equality reform.

EQUAL, SAFE & STRONG TEN-YEAR 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.

THE GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

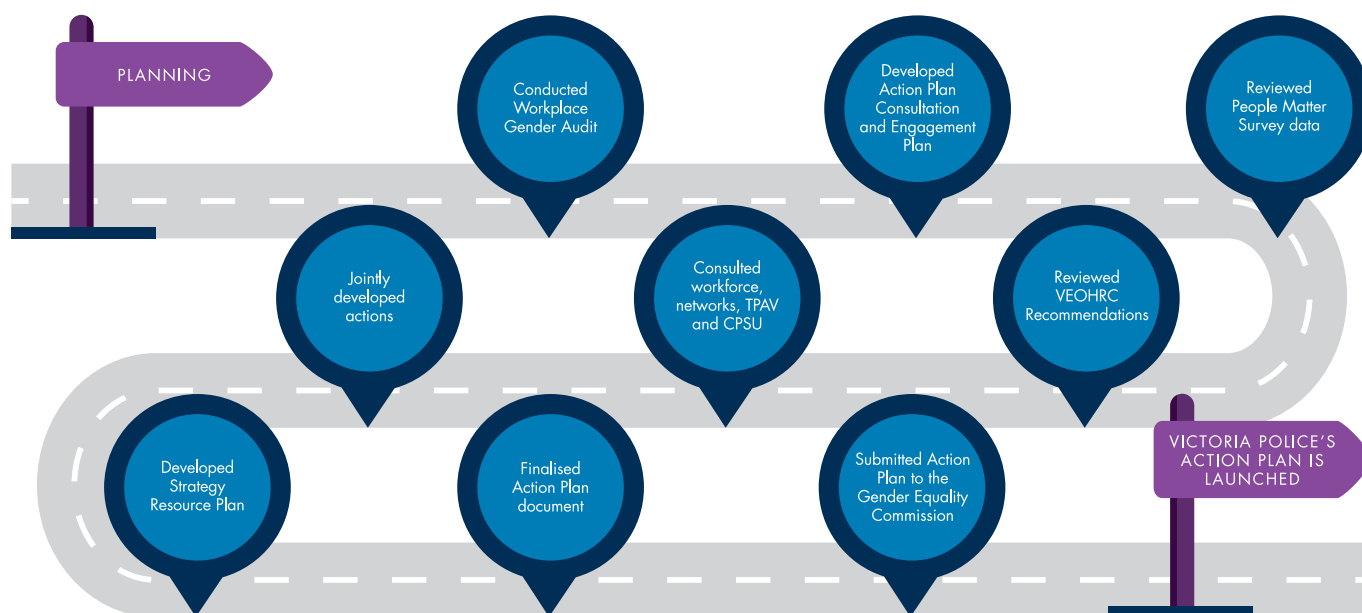
The Act, which took effect on 31 March 2021, will improve workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector. The Act requires defined entities to:

- develop and implement a gender equality action plan, which includes:
 - » results of a workplace gender audit
 - » strategies for achieving workplace gender equality
- publicly report on their progress towards workplace gender equality
- promote gender equality in policies, programs and services that impact the public
- complete gender impact assessments.

DEVELOPING A MEANINGFUL EQUAL, SAFE & STRONG ACTION PLAN

The Gender Equality and Inclusion Command (GEIC) coordinated the development of this first *Equal, Safe & Strong* action plan. Aligned with the requirements of the Commission, the action plan was developed through the following process.

Figure 1: Developing a meaningful action plan



Our first step in drafting the action plan was to conduct a Workplace Gender Audit on our three distinct employee types: police officers, Victorian Public Service employees and Protective Services Officers (PSOs). This painted a picture of the current state of gender equality in Victoria Police as at 30 June 2021. The audit assessed the organisation according to the seven indicators outlined in the Act.¹ The data was submitted to the Commission on 1 December 2021 to be made publicly available.

¹ The *Gender Equality Act 2020* indicators are: Gender composition at all levels of the workforce, Gender composition of governing bodies, Gender pay equity, Workplace sexual harassment, Recruitment and promotion, Leave and flexibility and Gendered work segregation.

We strengthened our understanding of the current opportunities and obstacles by reviewing our *2021 People Matter Survey* data and the extent to which we have successfully implemented the recommendations made by VEOHRC in its two independent audits.²

An important part of the development of the action plan was engaging closely with our people to draw on their experience and jointly explore future areas of focus. Our approach to meaningful consultation included regular communication about the development of the action plan and sharing the results of the Workplace Gender Audit. We invited employee input using an online feedback form, with over 1,500 responses received.

We also conducted focus groups with a representative sample of the workforce and our employee networks, including our Women in Policing Committees and Advisory Group, Pride Network (LGBTIQ employees), Enablers Network (employees with a disability), the Aboriginal Employee Network Council and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Networks. These consultations provided an intersectional lens to our work.

We engaged with our employee representative bodies, the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and The Police Association of Victoria (TPAV), to ensure that our work was informed by their understanding of the challenges facing our employees. This included obtaining their feedback on the Workplace Gender Audit and engaging in an ongoing dialogue on our areas of focus and proposed actions.

Working closely with our Gender Equality Outcomes Committee (GEOC), consisting of our partners in key commands and departments, and internal working groups, we consolidated our data and feedback to jointly develop 29 actions. We also coordinated a Strategy Resource Plan to outline the resources and governance structures that will deliver our actions.

As a result of this approach, the action plan reflects the expertise, experience and voices of our people and partners. The success of its implementation relies on continuing this collaboration.



² Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) (2015) *Independent Review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour in Victoria Police. Phase 1 report*, Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission, Melbourne, Australia.

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.

CASE FOR CHANGE

THE STATE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN VICTORIA POLICE

Victoria Police began demonstrating significant leadership in gender equality when it invited VEOHRC to uncover the systemic harm and disadvantage experienced by women in our organisation. Since 2015, we have been transparent in confronting our past mistakes and in reforming the elements of our practice and culture that allowed these to occur. Through an extensive program of work across the organisation³, we have begun to transform into a modern policing organisation that is disrupting a deeply entrenched culture of discrimination and high tolerance for gendered harm⁴.

The *Equal, Safe & Strong* strategy and the first *Equal, Safe & Strong* action plan represent a matured approach to achieving material progress towards sustainable gender equality in our organisation. Through an outcomes focus, we have shifted from task acquittal as our key measure of success to a fully integrated approach that removes gendered influences from workplace structures, practice and culture. These outcomes and their associated actions are underpinned by the principles of the Act.

In setting the foundations for the achievement of sustainable gender equality by 2030, this action plan prioritises building the capability of our leaders to create safe, respectful and inclusive workplaces, and strengthening our response to gendered workplace harm. These two areas of focus emerged as our most pressing issues in our analysis of the current state of gender equality at Victoria Police. Our data continues to reveal the impact of gendered stereotypes in our organisation. In particular, we are concerned that:

- women continue to experience gendered workplace harm but the overwhelming majority do not feel safe to report (see Figure 2 and 3)⁵
- men are overrepresented in police leadership positions and opportunities for career advancement (see Figure 4)⁶
- only a quarter of our workforce consider that our organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit (see Figure 5)⁷
- there is a significant overrepresentation of women in lower ranks in flexible and part-time work, with only 42 percent of all employees who believe there is a positive culture within Victoria Police in relation to employees who use flexible work arrangements (see Figure 6)⁸.

Figure 2: Prevalence of sexual harassment



Figure 3: Reporting of sexual harassment



3 For a detailed summary of the progress we have made since 2015, refer to *Equal, Safe & Strong Victoria Police Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2030*, 8–9.

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 People Matter Survey – Victoria Police (2021)

6 Victoria Police (2021) Workplace Gender Audit

7 People Matter Survey – Victoria Police (2021)

8 People Matter Survey – Victoria Police (2021)

Figure 4: Workforce composition by gender

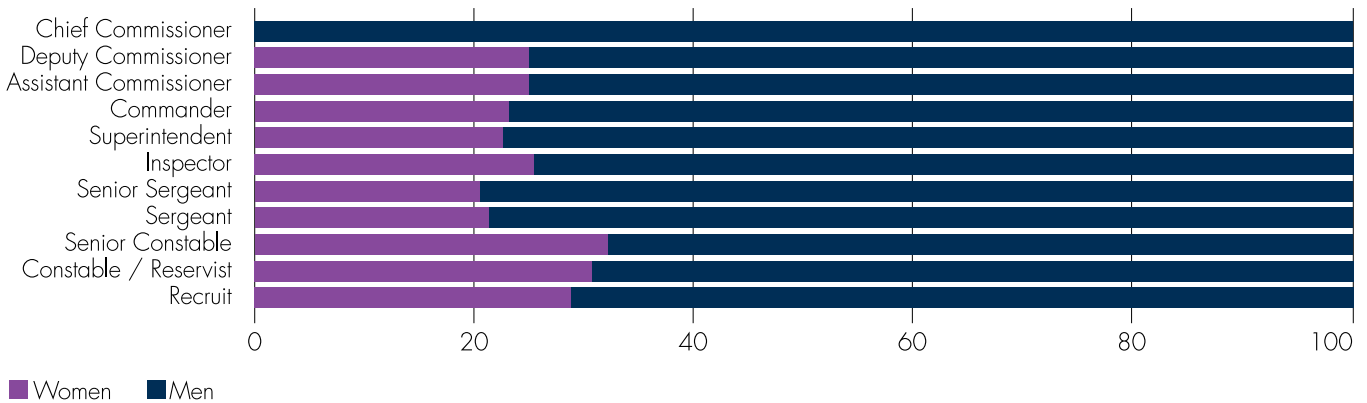
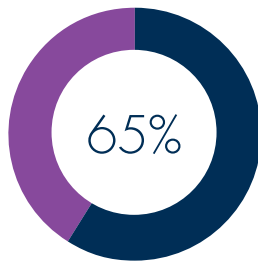


Figure 5: Employee attitudes towards promotion decisions

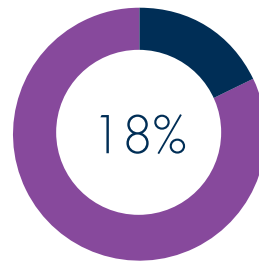


Only one in four employees believe our organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit.

Figure 6: Workforce gender composition as compared to flexible work arrangements by gender



Men comprise 65% of the workforce in Victoria Police...



...but only 18% of flexible work arrangements.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS

While this data demonstrates that gender inequality persists in our organisation, signs of positive change are emerging:

- In the twelve months to June 2021, the proportion of women police officers successfully securing promotion reached levels closer to the workforce gender composition than in previous years⁹.
- The majority of employees agree that Victoria Police’s commitment to gender equality reform has improved in the last year¹⁰.
- Sixty-five percent of employees agree that their manager is active in driving gender equality initiatives in the workplace¹¹.

9 Victoria Police (2021) Workplace Gender Audit

10 People Matter Survey – Victoria Police (2021)

11 People Matter Survey – Victoria Police (2021)

THE BENEFITS OF GENDER EQUALITY

There is clear evidence to demonstrate that achieving sustainable gender equality will benefit our people, our organisation and our community¹².

REDUCED GENDERED WORKPLACE HARM

By creating gender equal workplaces, we will disrupt the enabling environment that allows gendered workplace harm to occur. Removing gendered stereotypes, which confine our people to perform according to outdated and narrow understandings of policing, will result in a safer workplace for all genders.

A MORE CAPABLE AND MODERN POLICE FORCE

Evidence shows that diverse and inclusive teams are more productive and innovative¹³. By removing gendered barriers to career advancement, we ensure that we have access to the full talent pool and build a workforce that reflects the capabilities and values of a modern policing organisation.

ENHANCED SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Gendered violence, including family violence and sexual offending, is a major threat to community safety and Victoria Police is on the frontline. Achieving gender equality will strengthen community trust that we are a safe organisation to report gendered violence to and that perpetrators will be held to account.

WHAT VICTORIA POLICE WILL LOOK LIKE IN 2024

By 2024 our organisation will have strengthened capabilities in achieving gender equality outcomes and responding to gendered workplace harm. In a large, complex law enforcement agency like Victoria Police, building capability requires both centralised and local levers that enhance skills, knowledge and attitudes.

- We will have harnessed innovation in our policies, systems and structures that influence and support gender equality.
- Our leaders will feel empowered in their response to gendered workplace harm.
- Workplace behaviours will have begun to reflect a strengthened culture through an increased understanding of the benefits of gender equality.
- Our employees will demonstrate a stronger understanding of how gender equality in our organisation will enhance our response to gendered violence in the community.



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

STRENGTHENING OUR APPROACH USING AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS

Gender inequality can be compounded by other forms of discrimination and disadvantage. Intersectionality acknowledges that a person's characteristics are not mutually exclusive, but rather build upon one another leading to layers of discrimination and workplace harm. Victoria Police recognises that gendered workplace harm is often exacerbated by other systemic barriers, limiting the ability of our people 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 workplaces that value homosexuality and stereotypical masculinity. A gender-equal workplace removes the rigid gendered expectations and allows everyone to bring their whole 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 address 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 will ensure that our 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.

Our first Equal, Safe & Strong action plan is informed by an understanding of the multiple layers of discrimination that our people can experience. Through consultation with our employee networks, we explored opportunities to strengthen our approach to gender equality using an intersectional lens.

The action plan also complements organisational diversity and inclusion strategies and actions plans for:

- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer employees
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees
- culturally and linguistically diverse employees
- employees with disability.

ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

Our first *Equal, Safe & Strong* action plan consists of 29 actions that will be delivered by commands and departments across the organisation.

Our 29 actions are aligned to the 2030 outcomes in the *Equal, Safe & Strong* strategy¹⁴ to drive meaningful progress towards sustainable gender equality. Each action is also aligned to the relevant workplace gender equality indicator, as required under the Act, including where an intersectional lens is needed to strengthen employee inclusion.

Our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework (see page 17) is a project management tool designed to keep us on track to meet each action's implementation milestones.

OUTCOME 1: OUR CULTURE RECOGNISES AND PROMOTES THE VALUE OF GENDER EQUALITY

In order to achieve sustainable gender equality, Victoria Police culture must reflect the values of an inclusive and gender equal workforce. We will know we have achieved this when all our employees recognise the benefits of gender equality for all genders. Our first action plan will set the foundations for this cultural change by enhancing knowledge, skills and attitudes which directly contribute to safer workplaces.

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Develop a Gender Equality Communication and Engagement Strategy	<p>The achievement of sustainable change relies upon the extent to which our workforce connects with the benefits of gender equality.</p> <p>The Gender Equality Communication and Engagement Strategy will strengthen knowledge and attitudes that support gender equality.</p> <p>✓ Explicit intersectional focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, execute and evaluate whole of organisation Gender Equality Communication and Engagement Strategy 	HRC	All
Build gender attuned capability in organisational communications and engagement	<p>Informed by the Gender Equality Communication and Engagement Strategy, MCED will develop internal communications and apply a gendered lens across all internal and external communications.</p> <p>✓ Explicit intersectional focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design, execute and evaluate internal communications, tools and tactics Adopt best practice gender equality advice to build gender attuned capability across MCED 	MCED	Recruitment and promotion
Implement place-based gender equality pilot	<p>The place-based gender equality pilot will identify local opportunities to strengthen a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace culture.</p> <p>✓ Explicit intersectional focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design, deliver and review pilot station action plans Develop recommendations for inclusion in a gender attuned leadership capability framework 	HRC	Workplace sexual harassment

¹⁴ Refer to *Equal, Safe & Strong Victoria Police Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2030*, Appendix 1 Program logic, 21.

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Implement equal access workplace projects	Equal access workplace projects will target workplaces where unequal representation is most prevalent to identify and address core drivers of inequality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design, deliver and review tailored interventions Develop recommendations for inclusion in a gender attuned leadership capability framework 	HRC	Gendered work segregation
Strengthen governance through diversity in representation	<p>Increasing the diversity of representation in governing bodies will enhance organisational capability by ensuring that key decisions which impact our employees are reflective of our entire workforce.</p> <p>✓ Explicit intersectional focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key governing bodies and develop processes to improve their diversity 	HRC	Gender composition of governing bodies

OUTCOME 2: LEADERS TAKE OWNERSHIP AND PROACTIVELY SUSTAIN GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES

We must empower our leaders by developing their skills and knowledge to drive gender equality outcomes in their workplace. By integrating Gender Impact Assessments into the review of policy, practice, training and organisational plans, we will ensure all our work is informed by a gendered understanding. Defined monitoring processes and fit-for-purpose metrics will strengthen accountability.

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Build capability for Gender Impact Assessments	<p>The <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> requires that a Gender Impact Assessment is applied to all new and amended policies and programs. A suite of tools will be built to support policy and program developers to apply a gendered lens.</p> <p>✓ Explicit intersectional focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver a suite of tools Integrate Gender Impact Assessment into existing processes 	HRC	All
Implement Gender Impact Assessments to policy	<p>In order for the Victoria Police Manual to reflect a gendered understanding, processes will be established to ensure a Gender Impact Assessment is undertaken for all new and amended policies.</p> <p>✓ Explicit intersectional focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design (with HRC) tools for policy review Integrate Gender Impact Assessment into existing policy development processes 	CD	All
Implement Gender Impact Assessment to training programs	<p>In order for Victoria Police training programs to reflect a gendered understanding, processes will be established to ensure a Gender Impact Assessment is undertaken for all new and amended training programs (including content and delivery).</p> <p>✓ Explicit intersectional focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design (with HRC) tools for training review Integrate Gender Impact Assessment into existing training review processes 	PDC	All

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Build gender equality focus in organisational plans	This action will ensure that Victoria Police planning processes include a tangible gender equality focus by incorporating this as a specific requirement in annual action plans. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design and establish processes to support gender equality inclusion in action plan development • Embed a gender equality focus into the Planning Community of Practice to inform annual planning 	CD	All
Implement action plan Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework	A Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework will assess the organisation's material progress towards sustainable gender equality utilising Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each action in the action plan. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and monitor KPIs twice yearly • Develop annual progress reports • Utilise learnings to inform 2024–2027 action plan 	HRC	All

OUTCOME 3: THE COMMUNITY HAS TRUST IN OUR RESPONSE TO GENDERED VIOLENCE

In order for the community to have confidence in our response to gendered violence, Victoria Police must demonstrate that we are a gender equal organisation that understands the gendered drivers of violence against women and children. Our first action plan will target police training to deliver an enhanced response to the community.

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Strengthen police training on responding to gendered violence	The attitudes, skills and knowledge required to respond effectively to gendered violence rely on our organisational understanding of gender inequality. This action will ensure that a gendered lens is applied to the training of our supervisors, frontline and detectives. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and enhance relevant learning outcomes for current training • Review and enhance competency testing into existing training modules 	PDC	N/A
Enhance Sex Offence and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) and Family Violence Investigation Unit (FVIU) career and development pathways	Strengthening promotion and progression at SOCITs and FVIUs to ensure a gendered understanding is a key leadership capability within these units. This will improve community confidence in our specialist responses to gendered violence and increase gender balance in leadership positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop inherent requirements of officer in charge (OIC) roles, with a focus on capabilities required to lead victim-centric teams and to improve the rate of brief authorisation • Work in partnership with HRC to improve the attraction, selection and retention of OICs with required capabilities, including exploring centralised panelling, amendment of position profiles and descriptions, and consistency in selection of candidates for higher duty opportunities 	FVC	Gendered work segregation

OUTCOME 4: GENDER DOES NOT RESTRICT ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE WORK, RECRUITMENT OR PROGRESSION

Sustainable gender equality will build our organisational capability to serve the community by ensuring that we have full access to the talent pool. Removing gendered barriers to recruitment, promotion and progression will enable us to attract, develop and retain employees who embody our values and reflect a modern police force.

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Strengthen police recruitment campaign with gender focus	The new Victoria Police brand campaign proposes a tailored and candidate-centric approach so that a diverse range of applicants can see themselves in the role. This action has an explicit focus on attracting female applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and execute a segmented approach to creative development and media buy, underpinned by research and analysis • Review campaign effectiveness 	MCED	Recruitment and promotion
Embed structured onboarding program	This action seeks to counter the detrimental impact of backlash that women experience upon promotion. We will support retention and amplify early performance through a proactive manager-led structured onboarding program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to address barriers to early performance in newly promoted employees • Design suite of onboarding tools and integrate into existing processes 	HRC	Recruitment and promotion
Introduce suitability assessment process for police promotions	To ensure police promotions prioritise the capabilities required at each rank, applicants will need to demonstrate suitability for promotion prior to applying for a specific role. Applicants will be assessed according to more consistent and objective rank requirements, reducing backlash and reinforcing leadership competencies. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design suitability assessment process aligned with existing capability frameworks and qualifying programs • Commence and review phased roll out of suitability assessment process 	HRC	Recruitment and promotion
Apply Gender Impact Assessment to position profiles and descriptions	Position profiles and descriptions significantly influence the candidate pool. Through the application of a Gender Impact Assessment, we will remove gendered barriers to the application process, whilst ensuring promotion decisions reflect the inherent requirements of the role. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design (with HRC) tools for review of position profiles and descriptions • Integrate Gender Impact Assessment into existing review processes 	HRC	Recruitment and promotion
Establish an organisational definition of merit	Victoria Police does not have a formal definition of merit, leading to subjective and inconsistent assessment of capability in opportunities for progression. This action will establish a clear and explicit set of rules for how merit should be applied across the employee lifecycle. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate evidence on best practice and current state • Develop definition and integrate into relevant policies and legislation 	HRC	Recruitment and promotion
Implement definition of merit into selection processes	In order to ensure that practice and culture reflect the organisational definition of merit, this action will implement changes to policy, procedure, training and communications. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and amend relevant policy and procedures • Implement communication and training initiatives 	HRC	Recruitment and promotion

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Explore selection panel composition for police promotion	Strengthening the composition of selection panels through a more diverse range of expertise and perspectives will reduce the impact of biases and improve the panel's capability to assess applicants according to organisational requirements. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop best practice panel composition model Amend relevant policy and processes 	HRC	Recruitment and promotion
Enhance structured support for working parents and carers	Workplaces that value and support the role of all parents are far more likely to retain high performing employees and sustain the wellbeing, resilience and motivation for service. This action seeks to improve support of employees who transition to parenthood and other caring roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build manager-led best practice transition program Amend existing policy, programs and recording processes 	HRC	Leave and flexibility
Redesign flexible work practices	The gendered nature of flexible work reflects the continued influence of stereotypes in relation to caring roles. By re-designing flexible work practices, including policy, process, rostering and recording, this action will ensure consistent and equitable access to flexible work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver best practice approach to flexible work, including changes to policy, process, rostering and recording Implement communication and engagement approach 	HRC	Leave and flexibility
Higher duties policy and process reform	Career progression is improved through the availability of higher duties opportunities. This action will develop a best practice organisational approach to higher duties to support equal access to career progression, whilst meeting workplace capability requirements. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver best practice approach to higher duties assignments, including standardised decision-making and recording Amend existing policy and processes 	HRC	Recruitment and promotion
Introduce remedies to reduce VPS gender pay gap	At Victoria Police the gender pay gap is more significant for VPS than for police, driven primarily by gendered disparities in negotiated start salaries. This action will implement remedies to address these disparities. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver processes to strengthen consistency in VPS starting salaries Integrate impact of new processes into annual gender pay gap review 	HRC	Gender pay equity

OUTCOME 5: EMPLOYEES HAVE CONFIDENCE IN OUR RESPONSE TO GENDERED WORKPLACE HARM

A critical component of sustainable gender equality is ensuring our people have trust in our response to gendered workplace harm. Our first action plan provides the foundations for increased employee confidence through improvement to centralised complaint and discipline processes and stronger local capability to respond to gendered workplace harm.

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Develop gendered workplace harm organisational knowledge and learning framework	Existing training on gendered workplace harm is siloed, impacting the capability of managers to respond effectively. Through an organisational learning framework, this action will identify gaps and build an evidence informed approach to improve learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify overlap and gaps in centralised learning offerings on gendered workplace harm and related behaviours Identify learning outcomes and enhance existing training opportunities Build business case to deliver organisational learning framework 	PDC	Workplace sexual harassment

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Build gender attuned capability in discipline reforms	An important part of delivering an accessible, transparent, victim centric and remediation focussed complaints and discipline system, is ensuring it recognises and respond to the needs of victims of gendered workplace harm and gendered violence. This action will ensure a gendered lens is applied to all elements of system and process reform. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement processes to build gender attuned capability into complaint and discipline reforms 	PSC	Workplace sexual harassment

OUTCOME 6: GENDERED WORKPLACE HARM IS MINIMISED

A key precursor to reducing gendered workplace harm is to proactively identify and address existing risk. Through innovative, intelligence-led interventions, we will build our capability to target workplaces and employee cohorts at risk. This will reduce workplace harm by providing opportunities for prevention and early intervention.

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES / MEASURES	OWNER	GENDER EQUALITY ACT INDICATOR
Develop profiles to inform organisational approach to gendered harm	This action will enable the organisation to predict risk indicators of gendered workplace harm for victims, offenders and workplaces. An intelligence-led approach will provide predictive models for targeted workplace interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop process for analysis and compilation of profiles Establish governance mechanisms to support intelligence led interventions 	PSC	Workplace sexual harassment
Introduce structured exit processes for all employees	Employee exit is a key change point in the employee lifecycle that can identify opportunities for improved practice and culture, including interventions to prevent workplace harm. A structured, consistent approach to exit surveys will provide actionable intelligence about areas at risk of workplace harm. ✓ Explicit intersectional focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement best practice exit processes, including changes to policy, process and centralised recording Establish governance mechanisms to support intelligence led interventions 	HRC	Workplace sexual harassment
Establish the Gendered Harm Strategic Review Working Group	The Gendered Harm Strategic Review Working Group will coordinate and analyse intelligence to identify workplaces and employee cohorts at risk to support targeted interventions. This will increase opportunities for prevention, reporting and accountability of workplace managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish working group structure and governance. Develop process for the collection and analysis of data sources relating to gendered harm Develop suite of intelligence led interventions and accountability processes 	HRC	Workplace sexual harassment
Intervention program	To address the ongoing risk presented by employees who have returned to their workplace following an investigation into gendered workplace harm, this action will explore interventions that support behaviour change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with internal and external partners to explore an intervention program for employees investigated for family violence and gendered workplace harm and to identify arrangements for its delivery. 	FVC	Workplace sexual harassment

STRATEGY RESOURCE PLAN

To comply with the Act and demonstrate material progress towards sustainable gender equality, Victoria Police has committed to an ambitious set of actions. We have developed a Strategy Resource Plan which outlines how we will deliver these actions.

Responsibility for the actions in the plan will be shared across key commands and departments. HRC will provide ongoing coordination, support and expertise.

The first *Equal, Safe & Strong* action plan spans three financial years as depicted below. Existing resources will be relied upon in the remainder of the 2021–2022 financial year to ensure appropriate project planning and preparatory work. For the financial years spanning 2022–2024, dedicated resources will acquit the actions and ensure they achieve their intended impact.

Figure 7: The first *Equal, Safe & Strong* action plan spans three financial years



A strong governance framework will provide the leadership and resourcing to drive implementation of the action plan. This framework consists of three mechanisms:

GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES COMMITTEE

GEOC is chaired by the Assistant Commissioner of HRC and comprises the Executive Directors and Assistant Commissioners responsible for delivering the actions to implement *Equal, Safe & Strong*. GEOC meets quarterly to oversee progress, monitor accountability and strengthen a shared sense of ownership to gender equality outcomes.

GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES WORKING GROUP (GEOWG)

The GEOWG is chaired by HRC and comprises of senior managers from commands and departments accountable for the actions. The working group will meet quarterly to advise on progress against milestones and identify opportunities for alignment and collaboration across the organisation.

COMMAND/DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP

Each accountable senior manager will chair a dedicated working group within their own command and department to drive the implementation of their actions with their project owners. HRC will be represented at each working group to provide expertise in support of implementation.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Victoria Police has developed a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework (MEL) to support the achievement of sustainable gender equality by 2030. At the heart of this goal are the six long-term outcomes in *Equal, Safe & Strong*:

- Our culture recognises and promotes the values of gender equality.
- Leaders take ownership and proactively sustain gender equality outcomes.
- The community has trust in our response to gendered violence.
- Gender does not restrict access to flexible work, recruitment or progression.
- Employees have confidence in our response to gendered workplace harm.
- Gendered workplace harm is minimised.

The action plan has been designed to make material progress towards these outcomes and the seven workplace gender equality indicators in the Act.

Action owners are responsible for the effective delivery of actions and for reporting on their progress to HRC. HRC is responsible for overall program management to coordinate, monitor and guide the action plan's implementation. This will be achieved using the MEL framework, which includes the following components:

MONITORING

We will monitor implementation of *Equal, Safe & Strong* by reviewing the:

- completion of action milestones across the three years
- progress towards each action's strategic intent.

EVALUATION

We will evaluate annually the implementation of *Equal, Safe & Strong* by measuring:

- established key performance indicators and milestones
- the effectiveness and impact according to their strategic intent and the six long-term outcomes.

LEARNING

We will ensure continuous learning from our implementation of *Equal, Safe & Strong* through an annual report which:

- identifies the achievements and challenges in the implementation of the actions
- allows opportunity to pivot future implementation according to lessons learned
- informs the development of actions in the 2024–2027 action plan.

As part of our obligations under the Act, in October 2023 we will submit our first progress report to the Gender Equality Commission.

ACRONYMS AND SHORTENED FORMS

CD

Capability Department

CPSU

Community and Public Service Union

FVC

Family Violence Command

FVIU

Family Violence Investigation Unit

GEAP

Gender Equality Action Plan

GEIC

Gender Equality and Inclusion Command

GEOC

Gender Equality Outcomes Committee

GEOWG

Gender Equality Outcomes Working Group

GIA

Gender Impact Assessment

HRC

Human Resource Command

LGBTIQ

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer

MCED

Media, Communications and Engagement Department

MEL

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

OIC

Officer in Charge

PDC

Professional Development Command

PSC

Professional Standards Command

SOCIT

Sex Offence and Child Abuse Investigation Team

TPAV

The Police Association of Victoria

VEOHRC

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission



GLOSSARY

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. This is as distinct to sex, which refers to a person's biological sex characteristics which includes male, female and intersex.

GENDER ATTUNED CAPABILITY

This is an employee capability 'attuned' or focussed on understanding gender equality and working in ways that locate and mitigate gender inequality. The capability requires knowledge and practice in understanding gender dynamics.

GENDER EQUALITY

The Victorian *Gender Equality Act 2020* defines gender equality as "equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcome between persons of different genders". This includes equal access to economic, social, cultural and political participation and freedoms. Gender equality is premised on valuing all genders equally, recognising their similarities and the differences and the value of the various roles they may play in the social context.

GENDER EQUITY

The process of being fair and driving justice for all genders, with a focus on parity of outcome. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to ease a bias or systematic discrimination. An example may be offering additional paid parental leave to men to encourage their uptake participate in the primary care of their children.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This involves undertaking a systematic and purposeful, evidence informed gender assessment of a policy, program, service or process. This explores and assesses the explicit, unintended or hidden impacts and outcomes of a policy, program or strategy across genders. Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) are mandatory for all new or revised policies, programs and services that directly impact community. In Victoria Police, GIAs will also be applied to internal facing work as this will have a direct impact on our service delivery.

GENDERED VIOLENCE

This term refers to violence against a person because of their gender. This type of violence disproportionately affects women. 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 private lives, at home, with their family and in the community.

GENDERED WORKPLACE HARM

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

INTERSECTIONAL

The way in which people's attributes (such as race, gender, ability, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity and socio-economic status) interact to shape their experience of individual, cultural and structural oppression, discrimination, violence and disadvantage or conversely privilege. Adopting an intersectional approach recognises that people's experience of gender inequality cannot be separated from their experience of other aspects of their identity or their access to resources, power and privilege.

KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

This is a framework that is outcome focussed and brings together traditional knowledge channels (training for example) but with the addition of assessment, experiential learning or practice to transition knowledge to learning. It is outcome rather than knowledge focussed and takes the learner from 'knowing' better to 'doing' better.

ONBOARDING PROGRAM

This is a series of tools and actions carried out by supervisors to introduce and embed the new incumbent into the workplace. It is the final aspect of the recruitment phase. Onboarding ensures early performance, can reduce backlash, assist selection transparency and reduce attrition.

PLACE BASED PILOT

The Place Based Pilot is a new way by which Victoria Police is going to achieve gender equality in all our workplaces. HRC 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.

PROGRAM LOGIC

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

SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT

This refers to a suite of assessment tools and activities drawn on in candidate selection or assessment. Introducing suitability assessments is designed to provide our selection panels with a more robust and meaningful range of information with which to make candidate selections.

TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

This refers to a suite of tools and supports designed to enhance transition from one role, workplace or employment context to another. It can refer to transition to/or from parental leave, return to work from injury, transition to retirement, promotion, or exit across the employment lifecycle.

WORKPLACE GENDER AUDIT

This audit is mandated by the Gender Equality in the Public Sector Commission under the Gender Equality Act. It sets out a series of workforce data points aggregated by gender and forms the baseline against which our material progress on gender equality will be measured.

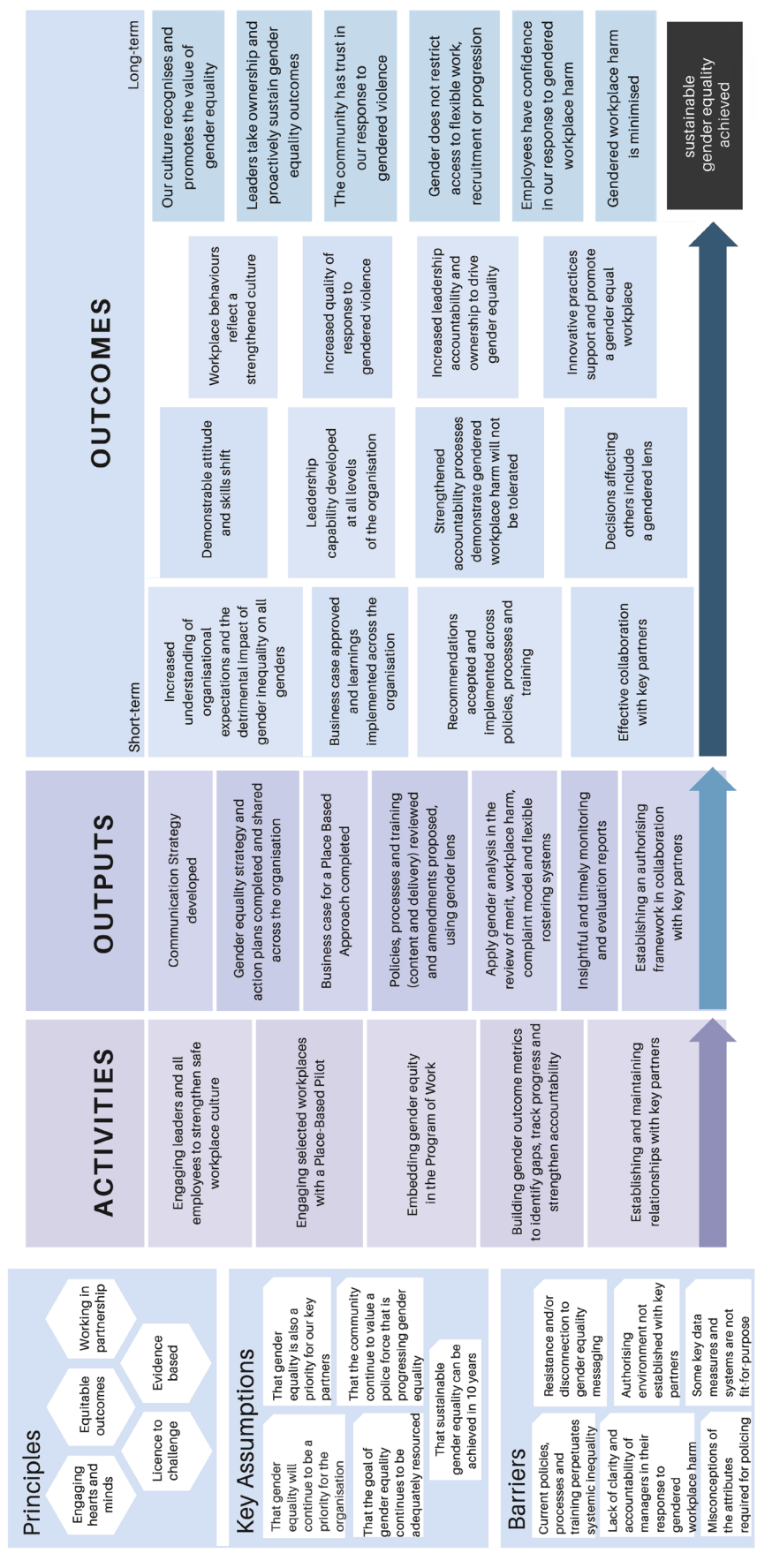


APPENDIX 1: PROGRAM LOGIC



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





VICTORIA POLICE

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