



**Gender Equality
Action Plan
2022 - 2026**



CONTENTS



PAGE
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY - 2

- ABOUT US - 3

01 - MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO & CHAIR - 5

02 - WHY GENDER EQUALITY MATTERS - 6
- THE CASE FOR CHANGE
- 10 GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES

03 - DEVELOPING THE PLAN - 7
- AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT

04 - OUR WATCH (QUOTE) - 8

05 - GENDER EQUALITY DEFINITIONS - 9

PAGE
06 - ACTION PLAN - 12
- STAFFING, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
- PAY GAP ANALYSIS AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

07 - CULTURAL AND PHYSICAL SAFETY - 13
- WORKPLACE SAFETY AND GENDER ATTITUDES

08 - FLEXIBLE LEAVE - 14
- WELLBEING SUPPORT & WORK-LIFE BALANCE

09 - IMPROVE DATA CAPTURE - 15
- DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

10 - REFERENCES - 16

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

South West Healthcare acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge their significant cultural heritage and fundamental spiritual connection to Country and value their contribution to a diverse community.

We are proud to embrace the spirit of reconciliation and learn more from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community about how best to improve their health, social and economic outcomes.

CRAIG FRASER
South West Healthcare, CEO



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ABOUT US

South West Healthcare is Victoria's largest sub-regional health service and the Barwon South West sub-region's major specialist referral centre. We provide more than 150 medical, nursing, mental health, allied health and community health services to a catchment of over 110,000 people in Warrnambool, Camperdown, Lismore, Portland, Macarthur and Hamilton.

Our major city (and headquarters), Warrnambool, is one of the fastest-growing regional cities in Victoria. Major primary industries include health, education, retail, tourism, dairy, food production, manufacturing, meat processing, professional services, and new-age energy.

Delivering high quality healthcare and actively engaging with our community and other providers, we work to better understand current and emerging health and wellbeing issues and to help people recognise and guide their healthcare outcomes.



South West
Healthcare 



- 1 Warrnambool campus
- 2 Camperdown campus
- 3 Lismore campus
- 4 Macarthur campus
- 5 Portland campus
- 6 Hamilton campus

OUR VISION

Leaders in healthcare, partners in wellbeing.

OUR MISSION

To improve the health and wellbeing of South West Victorians by partnering with them, their communities and other providers to deliver high quality healthcare with a future-focus through our engaged, empowered and motivated workforce.

OUR VALUES

Our Culture of Care

We put the person at the centre of everything we do. We are compassionate and responsive to the needs of consumers of our service, their families, our staff and volunteers.

Our Culture of Respect

We behave in a manner that demonstrates trust, inclusion and mutual understanding. We respect diversity and communicate openly with consideration of others.

Our Culture of Integrity

We are transparent and ethical in all that we do. We are accountable for our decisions and actions. We embrace honest feedback and act on it.

Our Culture of Excellence

We ensure every interaction is of the highest standard, every time. We do not compromise on quality.

Our culture of leadership

We lead by example and empower everyone. We are strategic, responsive and resilient.



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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO & CHAIR

South West Healthcare aspires to be an organisation where all people are valued, respected, have equal access to opportunities and are encouraged to realise their potential. This action plan will provide a pathway to achieve this fully.

We all have a role to play in creating a vibrant community, and a moral and ethical imperative to provide a fair and enriching environment for staff, volunteers, patients and visitors, which reflects the evolving expectations of the communities we serve. Our workplace can influence attitudes, behaviours and social norms to create gender equality and diversity. It is important no individual is discriminated against or denied opportunities because of their gender or gender identity.

Our Gender Equality Action Plan focuses on furthering our inclusive, equitable and just culture to attract and retain talented people and help individuals to achieve their full potential. This plan aligns with our Disability Action Plan, Cultural Safety Plan, Equitable Access Policy and our People and Culture Strategy. It has been created in consultation with the South West Healthcare Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West, our staff and the relevant industrial representatives.

Setting high standards for gender equality and inclusivity is fundamental to South West Healthcare values and is essential to everyone feeling safe in the organisation. We can learn from the mistakes and successes of the past to focus on change and become more welcoming and inclusive, and for that change to be enduring. Respecting different skills and experiences all genders bring to the workplace and being aware of cultural challenges faced by some because of their gender or gender identity is our way forward.

Workplace Gender Equality Agency research⁵ indicates that organisations with greater gender equality perform better and generate tangible benefits: such as increased efficiency, creativity, productivity, innovation and employee and consumer engagement. These benefits will help to attract and retain high calibre people to enhance our capacity for solving complex and emerging health problems, and to ensure South West Healthcare is a workplace of choice. These efforts are pivotal to our vision for being leaders in healthcare and partners in wellbeing.

Everyone is encouraged to embrace this strategy and the guidance it offers about how to make gender equality and diversity a core part of our collective conscience. We look forward to delivering this action plan and the positive impacts it has.

CRAIG FRASER
SOUTH WEST HEALTHCARE, CEO

BILL BROWN
SOUTH WEST HEALTHCARE, CHAIR



WHY GENDER EQUALITY MATTERS

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Gender equality is a human right and a state of equal access to resources and opportunities that is a necessary foundation for sustainable communities.²

Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to a person's physiology or designated sex at birth.

Gender influences people's experience of and access to healthcare. Ways in which health services are organised and provided can either limit or enable a person's access to healthcare information and support services, and the outcome of those encounters. Health services should be affordable, accessible and acceptable to all, and they should be provided with quality, equity and dignity.¹ Gender equality is about opening doors to people who have been prevented from accessing opportunities because of broad social inequities.

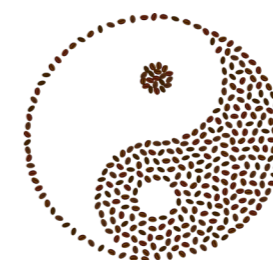
The purpose of this plan is to advance principles of gender equality across all activities at South West Healthcare to create lasting and widespread change. By promoting equality and respect and working towards gender equity, South West Healthcare understands we are contributing to the shared community goal of preventing injustices against women and gender diverse people.⁷

The plan leans-in to building entry points, pathways and support for under-represented people in our organisation to create a culture that welcomes, respects and empowers all employees.

10 GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES

Gender equality principles,³ as listed in section 6 of the Act, are:

1. All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness
2. Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender
3. Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice
4. Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria
5. Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls
6. Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community
7. All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices
8. Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes
9. Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage based on sex and gender.
10. Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality



DEVELOPING THE PLAN

The Victorian Public Sector People Matter Survey⁶ was conducted in 2021 and provided valuable information to the current status of gender equality across the state of Victoria. The process involved gathering and analysing workforce data focusing on seven workplace indicators to help determine engagement policies, areas for improvement and identifying systemic gaps to be addressed.

Other data has been sourced from the following systems;

- Kronos (payroll system)
- Springboard (recruitment system)
- GROW (online training system)
- Consumer and employee feedback; and
- Other People and Culture (P&C) Directorate reports

Baseline data incorporates the following organisational indicators:

1. Gender composition at all levels of the workforce
2. Gender composition of governing bodies (the Board)
3. Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
4. Sexual harassment in the workplace
5. Recruitment and promotion practices
6. Availability and usage of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence and flexible working to support workers with family or caring responsibilities
7. Gendered work segregation in the workplace

AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT

Equality and diversity can have many benefits which lead to better decision-making and inclusivity throughout the organisation and the following five key areas have been identified for improvement:

1. Gender attitudes,
2. Closing the pay gap,
3. Workplace safety,
4. Enabling flexible working; and
5. Improving data capture.

To move the dial on equalising pay, work flexibility, workplace safety, gender attitudes and improved data capture, we need to de-bias systems and make informed evidence-based decisions.

There is also an opportunity to improve our data collection to capture the number of employees with intersectionality identifiers to fully understand the impact of our decisions on gender equality.

Improving data capture will assist the process to help determine policy changes with the aim of improving equity for all at South West Healthcare. This work is yet to be undertaken and this living document will reflect changes as they occur. When equal access to rewards, resources and opportunities is systematically embedded in a safe and inclusive environment, successful outcomes within the plan will be realised.

AUDIT INDICATORS

1. GENDER COMPOSITION

2. BOARD COMPOSITION

3. EQUAL REMUNERATION

4. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

5. RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION

6. FLEXIBLE LEAVE

7. GENDERED SEGREGATION



**'...workplaces have a vital role to play
in creating an Australia where women
are not only safe, but also respected,
valued and treated as equals in private
and public life...'**

– Our Watch, Workplace Equality and Respect Standards

GENDER EQUALITY DEFINITIONS



Systemic gender equality issue

This means an issue of a systemic nature within an organisation that—
(a) relates to one or more workplace gender equality indicators; and
(b) adversely affects a class or a group of employees of that body.

Governing body

In relation to a defined entity, means a board of directors, trustees, committee of management, council or other governing authority of the defined entity.

Defined entity

The Gender Equality Act 2020 applies to certain organisations that have 50 or more employees, including: public service bodies, universities, local councils etc. Defined entities have obligations to promote workplace gender equality and consider gender equality in their policies, programs and services.

Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women, men and gender diverse people. There are many genders outside of the binary understanding of gender (women and men), including transwomen, transmen, bigender, agender, non-binary, self-described, genderfluid and genderqueer.

Gender diverse

An umbrella term for people who experience and identify outside of the binary understanding of gender.

Gender identity

Gender identity is the personal sense of one's own gender. Many of us are taught that there are two genders – woman and man – however we now understand gender to exist on a spectrum. Some people feel more masculine, some people feel more feminine, others have changing or less strong gendered feelings. People's potential to identify as their authentic gender can be limited by social constructs and expectations.

Gender fluid (or Genderfluid)

Having a gender identity and presentation that shifts between or shifts outside of society's expectations of gender.

Cisgender

Having the same gender identity that largely meets expectations given the sex assigned at birth

Gender pronouns

Pronouns are a way people refer to each other and themselves. She and he are gendered pronouns typically used by female or male identifying people.

Pan sexual

Pansexuality is the romantic, emotional, and/or sexual attraction to people regardless of their gender. Like everyone else, pansexual people may be attracted to some people and not others, but the gender of the person does not matter. People of any gender identity can and do identify as pansexual

Transsexual

A transgender person, especially one whose bodily characteristics have been altered through surgery or hormone treatment to bring them into alignment with their gender identity.

Genderneutral

Pronouns such as they, them, theirs don't imply 'male' or 'female' and are typically used by gender diverse identifying people. Other gender-neutral pronouns include ze, hir, hirs, and ze, zir, zirs.

Sex

A person's biological sex characteristics – generally classed as female, male or intersex. Sex characteristics are not the same as gender. A person's anatomical characteristics can often be conflated with gender identity, such as genital and chest shape. Sex has historically been understood as either female or male, however, some people are born with natural variations to sex characteristics, referred to as intersex, that do not fit medical norms for female or male bodies.

Sexual orientation

Sexuality or sexual orientation describes a person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to others. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual and pansexual are some examples of sexualities.

People who identify as...

The terms 'men' and 'women' are commonly used to describe sex characteristics. Saying 'people who identify as...' when referring to gender is inclusive of transpeople. Alternatively, you can use 'all women' (which implicitly includes transwomen) compared with 'cisgender women' (to specifically refer to those assigned female at birth who also identify as women), and so on.

Intersectional gender inequality

The disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on any of the following in addition to gender inequality: Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.

05

Gender Equality Audit

The Victorian Public Sector People Matter Survey statistics for South West Healthcare are displayed below in accordance with the Gender Equality Commission recommended standards. The Gender Equality Action Plan (page 12 onwards) outlines strategies that have been identified to address matters of inequality arising from data sourced from the People Matter Survey.

1



Workforce gender composition

Describes overall workforce gender composition

Total staff : 1791

Female	75%
Male	15%
Diverse	10%

Part time	57%	(92% female)
Full time	29%	(63% female)
Casual	14%	(78% female)

74% of respondents agreed a positive culture exists at SWH in relation to employees of different sexes/gender.

2



Gender composition of Governing Body

South West Healthcare's Governing Body is comprised of five women and four men which is higher than the Australian average of 27% female, challenging traditional gender stereotypes.

Female	56%
Male	44%
National average	50%

3



Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap at South West Healthcare is:

Median annualised base salary	3.9%
Median total remuneration	4.2%

Definition: - the gender pay gap measures the difference between the average earnings of women and men in the entire workforce.

Women have more instances of leave without pay due to caring responsibilities which can affect gender pay gap percentage

Gender Equality Audit continued

4



Sexual Harassment

Percentage of survey respondents who agree with the following statements:

I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work	61%
My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination	59%
My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours	76%

From 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 there were two sexual harassment complaints.

5



Recruitment and Promotion

Percentage of survey respondents who agree with South West Healthcare hiring and promotion practice statements:

Recruitment/promotion decisions are fair	F 47%	M 51%	D 40%
Equal chance of promotion	F 47%	M 51%	D 40%
Gender is no barrier to success	F 78%	M 82%	D 53%
Being Aboriginal is no barrier	F 69%	M 78%	D 51%
Cultural background is no barrier	F 75%	M 81%	D 51%
Sexual orientation is no barrier	F 75%	M 78%	D 45%
Disability is no barrier	F 55%	M 67%	D 42%
Age is no barrier	F 72%	M 78%	D 57%

6



Leave and Flexibility

Percentage of workforce using parental leave
Female 87% | Male 13%

*no staff members exited the organisation during parental leave

Percentage of survey respondents who agree with SWH leave practices:

SWH supports me if I need to take family violence leave	F 75%	M 75%
SWH supports family/caring duties regardless of gender	F 58%	M 61%
Flexible work request are given due consideration	F 66%	M 66%

7



Gendered segregation

Managers	F 60%	M - 40%
Professionals	F 82%	M - 18%
Technicians and Trade workers	F 56%	M - 44%
Community and personal service workers	F 81%	M - 19%

Gender composition of ANZSCO code major groups in the organisation

Clerical / Administrative workers	F 83%	M - 17%
Sales workers	F 0.0%	M 0.0%
Machinery operators / drivers	F 7.0%	M 93%
Labourers	F 76%	M 24%



Action plan

Staffing, recruitment and retention

Pay gap analysis and diversity initiatives

06

Item	Objective	GEI	Key Actions	Measures	Lead	Progress Update
S-1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and address the gender pay gap Collect and monitor all relevant gender data for new and existing employees. Recruitment practices reflect equity best practice 	3. 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement strategies to fully understand and address pay equity issues and identify opportunities for change Monitor changes by conducting bi-annual pay equity analysis of departments and conduct annual pay parity analysis (all of health service), including relative comparators (i.e. hourly rates/roles) Improve intersectionality data capture through the recruitment process, whilst respecting privacy Review and update recruitment practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodic gender pay gap data review Audit recruitment processes periodically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People & Culture Directorate 	
S-2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and promotion practices are fair and equitable. Leadership and career development training opportunities are accessible to all staff regardless of gender. 	1.5.7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review and structure recruitment processes to ensure gender equality Develop succession plans that promote fairness and equality across all roles, divisions and departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender balance is present at all stages of recruitment process Succession plans promote gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Leadership team & Managers People & Culture Directorate 	
S-3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain gender composition of the South West Healthcare Governing Body 	1.5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> As opportunities arise, ensure future recruitment of board members aligns with equal gender composition objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South West Healthcare achieves and maintains equal gender composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Directors 	



Cultural and Physical Safety

Workplace safety and gender attitudes

Item	Objective	GEI	Key Actions	Measures	Lead	Progress Update
C-1	1. Promote gender neutral language that is inclusive and welcoming for all genders and diverse backgrounds	4.5	1. Develop terminology guidelines around how to refer to people and avoid gendered language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and promotion of guidelines to reflect same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D&I Committee 	
C-2	1. Increase organisational awareness of family violence, associated supports and legal obligations 2. Increase organisational awareness of sexual harassment, associated supports and legal obligations	1.4	1. Utilise various mediums to raise awareness of family violence and sexual harassment and promote support services available 2. Review building infrastructure to support a safe environment for survivors of trauma, sexual harassment and gender-based violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of staff and consumer feedback periodically Review outcomes of Cultural Safety Plan implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D&I Committee Project Manager SHRFV (Strengthening Hospital Response to Family Violence) 	
C-3	1. Implement the South West Healthcare Cultural Safety Plan 2. All South West Healthcare policies, programs and services are compliant with the Gender Equality Act 2020	4.5	1. Implement and embed the South West Healthcare Cultural Safety Plan 2. Conduct gender impact assessments as per the Gender Equality Act 2020 when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review outcomes of the Cultural Safety Plan implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Community Health D&I Committee Executive Directors 	
C-4	1. Promote diversity support networks available for staff	1.3.7	1. Identify, develop and promote diversity and wellbeing support resources available at South West Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review outcomes of the Wellbeing program Develop programs where opportunities exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D&I Committee People & Culture Directorate 	
C-5	1. Ensure people feel safe disclosing disabilities (see Disability Action Plan)	1.3.5	1. Promote Disability support available to staff and consumers at South West Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review outcomes of the Disability Action program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D&I Committee People & Culture Directorate 	



Flexible leave

Wellbeing support and work-life balance options

08

Item	Objective	GEI	Key Actions	Measures	Lead	Progress Update
F-1	1. Ensure flexible leave options, parental or carers leave is available to all genders	1.6.5	1. Provide guidance and support to all employees for professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review leave types by gender and workforce type to address issues as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People & Culture Directorate Senior Managers Workforce Committee 	
F-2	1. Ensure availability of confidential support and access to family violence leave for all employees	1.6.5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote gender equality and South West Healthcare responsibilities under the family violence framework, MARAM (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment & Management Framework) Promote education and training surrounding family violence to create awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review support program and address any changes required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People & Culture Directorate D&I Committee Relevant MARAM staff 	
F-3	1. Ensure flexible work options allows employee career progression for all genders	1.6.5	1. Consider opportunities for work flexibility, including options for secondment to higher duties, succession planning and career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review strategies used to promote employee career progression after returning from parental or carer's leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People & Culture Directorate Senior Managers 	



Improve Data Capture

Data collection and analysis

Item	Objective	GEI	Key Actions	Measures	Lead	Progress Update
I-1	1. Ensure systemic processes capture gender and intersectional data across South West Healthcare	1,3,5,6	1. Identify, Improve and embed systemic processes to capture gender and intersectional data of SWH employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review outcomes of actions to increase gender and intersectional data capture of employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People & Culture Directorate 	
I-2	1. Ensure recruitment processes collect and track data by individual, team and department across South West Healthcare	1,3,5,6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve and embed systemic processes to capture employee data specific to recruitment, promotion, exits, career development, higher duties and secondments 2. Act on learnings and action opportunities to improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review outcomes of actions to increase employee career data capture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People & Culture Directorate 	
I-3	1. Ensure systemic processes capture gender and intersectional data of our consumers	1,4	1. Identify, Improve and embed systemic processes to capture gender and intersectional data of South West Healthcare consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review actions to increase gender and intersectional data capture of consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People & Culture Directorate Health Information Services 	



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