

GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2021 – 2025

Prepared for: Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector

Dated: 20 June 2022

heywoodruralhealth.vic.gov.au



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer	3
Our Commitment	4
Our Services	5
Our Case for Change	5
Key Terms and Definitions	8
Data Collection	9
Consultation	9
Leadership, Resourcing, and Governance	10
Heywood Rural Health Gender Equality Action Plan 2022 – 2025	11
Progress Measurement	11
Appendix 1: Heywood Rural Health Gender Equality Workplace Audit Infographic	12
Appendix 2: Health Level to CEO Classification Table (for small health services)	13
Appendix 3: Heywood Rural Health Gender Equality Action Plan	14

Acknowledgment

Heywood Rural Health acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the lands and water of Australia. We pay our respects to Gunditjmara Elders, past and present and all Aboriginal people in the Heywood and neighbouring communities.



Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

We are very pleased to present Heywood Rural Health's first Gender Equality Action Plan. This plan represents our commitment as an organisation to create a gender-equitable workplace.

The *Gender Equality Act* passed through the Victorian Parliament in February 2020 and came into effect on the 31st of March 2021. The *Gender Equality Act* is the first legislation in Australia that requires the public sector to take positive action toward achieving gender equality in the workplace.

The Heywood Rural Health Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025 is an outline of our commitment to gender equality for the next four years. It has been submitted to the Gender Equality Commission per our requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. The results of our Workplace Gender Audit have formed a baseline audit analysis of our workplace to help us understand our gender equality barriers and to further build on the actions of this current plan for future Gender Equality Action Plans.





Leigh Parker Chief Executive Officer Phil Saunders Board Chair



Our Commitment

Heywood Rural Health (HRH) is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and gender-inclusive workplace that values the diversity of its staff.

As the largest employer in Heywood and surrounds, and with 90.38% of our staff identifying as female, we understand the important role we play in that by improving gender equality in our organisation, we are also improving gender equality in our community, helping to reduce family violence and the discrimination experienced by women based on their sex and gender.

Heywood Rural Health recognises that gender equality is a human right and that all employees should have access to the same resources and opportunities, regardless of gender or differences. We also understand that other forms of discrimination and intersectional diversity can compound gender equality.

By embedding the principles of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* into our Health Service and a Gender Equality lens, we are committed to creating a workplace culture that is inclusive, diverse and free from the disadvantage and discrimination that women have historically experienced based on their sex and gender. Diversity includes;

- Gender
- Age
- Aboriginality
- Disability
- Race and Ethnicity
- Religion
- Sexual orientation

The Gender Equality Action Plan will align with and support Heywood Rural Health's other strategic action plans and work. These include (but are not limited to);

- Heywood Rural Health Strategic Plan 2022 2025
- Statement of Priorities
- Consumer Engagement Plan
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- HR Strategic and Culture Plan
- Workforce and Culture Strategic Plan
- Family Violence Workplace Support Plan

In developing our Gender Equality Action Plan, we have considered the gender equality principles as outlined in the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Victoria)*. Over the next four years of implementing our Gender Equality Action Plan, we will work towards developing an inclusive and diverse health service



Our Services

Heywood Rural Health is an important part of the fabric of our community. Our service catchment area is defined as Heywood and the surrounding district, located in the Glenelg Shire of South West Victoria.

We have been providing health services from our site since 1957. Our facility continues to expand its services in response to the changing needs of the local community.

Heywood Rural Health provides an integrated services health service that comprises low-level acute beds, primary and community health services and residential aged care services. The Health Service has 5 acute inpatient beds, and 45 Aged Care beds, comprising a combination of high and low care. Heywood Rural Health also has a Community Health Hub, which includes a medical clinic, allied health and community nursing services, home care, meals on wheels and Telehealth.

Heywood Rural Health is funded by the Victorian Department of Health under the Small Rural Health Services flexible funding model. In addition to funding received from the State, we receive funding from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing for Residential Aged Care and community-based services.

Our Case for Change

Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* (the "Act") commenced in March 2021 and is the first of its kind in Australia. The Act was developed in response to the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence which showed that Victoria needs to address gender inequality to reduce family violence and all forms of violence against women. The objectives of the Act are to:

- Promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women;
- Support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services in workplaces and communities;
- Recognise that 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;
- Redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence, and accommodate persons of different genders by way of structural change;
- Enhance economic and social participation by persons of different genders, and;
- Further promote the right to equality set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.



Background and Context

The following data provides a brief snapshot of the gender imbalance experienced in Australia and highlights the importance of bodies of work such as Gender Equality Action Plans and the role workplaces play in working towards gender equality:

- In 2021, Australia's global ranking for gender equality has declined. We rank 50th globally.¹
- Every 9 days a woman is killed by her current or former partner.²
- Almost 1 in 4 women have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15.³
- 1 in 2 women have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15.⁴
- 3 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women⁵, 2 in 5 women with disabilities⁶ and 2 in 5 LGBTIQ people have experienced intimate partner physical or sexual violence. These numbers are even higher for intersex, transgender and gender diverse people.⁷
- The estimated cost of violence against women and their children in 2015-16 was \$22 billion.⁸
- Violence against women is more damaging to the health of Victorian women aged 15 to 44 than any other risk factor for chronic disease.⁹
- Women are paid on average 14% less per week than men. This means women must work approximately 59 extra days annually to earn the same income as men.¹⁰
- In 2019-2020 women made up 14.6% of Board Chairs and 18.3% of CEOs. This number is even lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and women from multicultural backgrounds.¹¹
- Increased gender equality in the workplace can improve performance, reduce staff turnover and encourage creativity.¹²

⁸ KPMG (2016) The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia

¹⁰ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2021)

¹ World Economic Forum (2021) Global Gender Gap Report

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019) Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2017) Personal safety, Australia 2016

⁴ ABS (2017) Personal safety, Australia, 2016

⁵ Our Watch (2018) Changing the picture

⁶ Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (2021) Nature and extent of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against people with disability in Australia

⁷ The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (2020) Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people in Australia

⁹ VicHealth (2004), The health costs of violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne

¹¹ The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2021)

¹² Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2016), The business case for gender equality, Commonwealth Government, www.wgea.gov.au



Equity versus Equality

The connection between gender inequality and violence against women can difficult concept to grasp. Research shows us, however, that gender inequalities and unfair and unjust ideologies, like stereotyping, gender exclusion and rigid gender roles underpin violence against women.

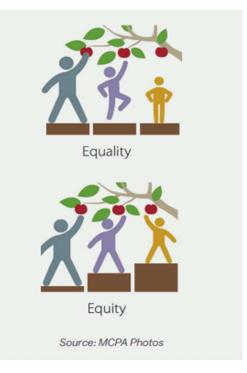
Equality is treating everyone the same. Equality aims to achieve fairness.

Equity is giving everyone what they need to achieve something. Equity may at times appear unequal, but it ensures everyone's individual needs are met to achieve their goals.

Gender inequality refers to the unfair distribution of power, resources, opportunities and value in society based on gender (*Our Watch et al, 2015*)¹³. This unfair treatment leads to unequal health, and social and financial outcomes for women, men and gender diverse people.



(Our Watch, 2017)



¹³ Our Watch (2017) Let's change the story: Violence against women in Australia.



Key Terms and Definitions

To support the development of an inclusive workplace, the following definitions are provided to raise awareness and use in everyday interactions:

Term	Definition
Gender Equality	Involves equality for people of all genders. This term means not only equality of opportunity but also equal or just outcomes. It requires the redistribution of power, resources and responsibilities between men and women in particular, and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures that create and sustain gender inequality.
Gender Equity	The process to achieve gender equality. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed to rectify gender- related imbalances.
Gender	The socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women. Unlike the biological characteristics and differences between men and women known as sex, gender roles and expectations are socially learnt and can vary between cultures and can change over time.
Cisgender	A person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth.
Sex	The biological and physical characteristics used to define humans as male or female.
Trans and Gender Diverse	An umbrella term used to describe all those whose gender identity does not match their biological sex.
Diversity	The practice or quality of including or involving people from a wide range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders and sexual orientations.
Intersectionality	A methodology of studying the overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination (WHO, 2009). It acknowledges that some people are subject to multiple forms of oppression.

Source: wgea.gov.au/gender-equality-and-diversity



Data Collection

To develop our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), Heywood Rural Health undertook a Workplace Gender Audit in July 2021 (please refer to Appendix 1). The data was taken from the following sources:

- VPSC People Matter Survey (PMS) 2021;
- PayGlobal (payroll system);
- HR database;
- Consumer and Employee feedback; and
- Riskman and HR reports.

Several barriers were presented during this data collection period:

- Current payroll and HR systems are not designed to capture the information required, particularly intersectional gender data; and
- At the time of data collection an external Health Service managed Heywood Rural Health's payroll and employee information

As such, a large amount of the intersectional data was not able to be collected. Because of these identified barriers to data collection, data collection and working with HR and data management systems will be a key priority in the HRH GEAP to ensure accurate data collection for the next Workplace Gender Audit and subsequent Gender Equality Action Plan.

Gender pay gap data: To classify our staff, Heywood Rural Health used the 'Health Level to CEO Classification Template (for small health services)', as supplied by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector. This template can be found in Appendix 2.

Consultation

Our Gender Equality Action Plan (the Plan), was developed in consultation with several internal and external stakeholders to ensure that the plan is relevant and meaningful.

Consultation and feedback were sought in several ways to ensure staff were engaged in the development of the plan.

An organisation-wide anonymous survey was conducted to ascertain staff observations about gender equality at Heywood Rural Health and suggestions for improving gender equality across the organisation. The following questions were asked of staff, board members and our Consumer Advisory Group:

- 1. Have you observed/are you aware of gender inequality at Heywood Rural Health?
- 2. What does it look like?



- 3. What priority actions would you like to see included in the Heywood Rural Health Gender Equality Action plan?
- 4. Do you have any ideas that would help rebalance any inequity?

Consultation occurred across the Organisation, with various methods employed to seek a wide range of feedback, including;

- Anonymous Survey Monkey emailed to all staff
- All staff email with the survey questions for printing and distributing
- General Staff Meeting discussions and paper-based anonymous surveys for filling out
- Survey distribution at the Board Meeting and Consumer Advisory Group meeting
- Gender Equality included as an agenda item in staff meetings
- Feedback was sought from relevant unions for their input, which could be used to inform the development of the action plan.

All feedback received has been collated and used to inform the key objectives and actions for inclusion in the GEAP.

Leadership, Resourcing and Governance

Leadership

Heywood Rural Health has embedded the Gender Equality Action Plan within the Leadership Team, with the Business Systems and Innovation Manage appointed as the Executive Sponsor. The Leadership Team, Chief Executive Officer, Department Managers and Board of Directors all play an important role in the promotion, participation and delivery of the Plan. Senior staff have been allocated key actions to carry out with their teams as appropriate to the Plan.

Governance

The governance of the plan sits with the CEO and the Leadership team, with actions and results to be reported vertically and horizontally throughout the organisation, for effective and timely implementation and monitoring of the plan, and by requirements under the Gender Equality Act.

Resourcing

Heywood Rural Health is a participant in the Barwon South West Gender Equality Reference Group. This group is resourced by Barwon Health, with a 0.4 FTE allocation (Gender Equality Project Officer). HRH are utilising the Project Officer's input and expertise, as well as embedding Gender Equality into the Business System and Innovation Manager and People and Culture Team's profile. However, no additional FTE allowance has been made locally.



The Heywood Rural Health Gender Equality Action Plan can be found in Appendix 3.

The Gender Equality Action Plan includes objectives and key actions to take steps towards improving gender equality as related to each of the seven Gender Equality Indicators (GQI) as set out by the Commission;

- 1. Gender composition of the workforce
- 2. Gender composition of the governing body

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- Gender pay equity
 Workplace sexual harassment
- 5. Recruitment and promotion
- 6. Leave and flexibility
- 7. Gendered workforce segregation

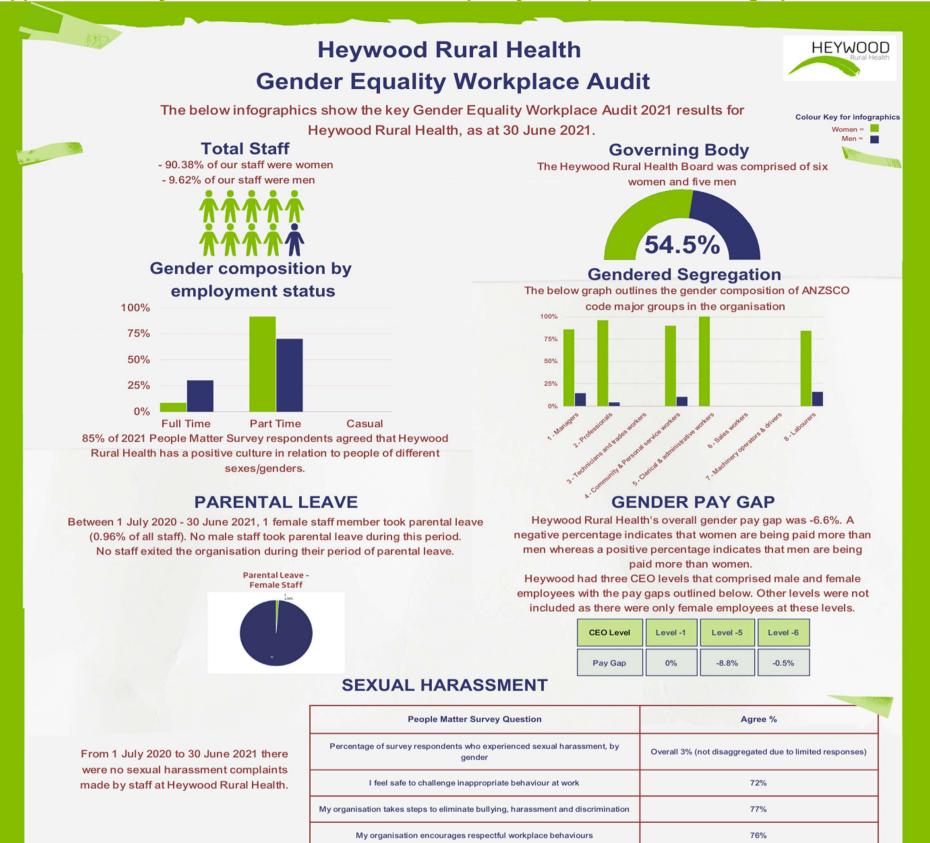
Progress Measurement

The progress of strategies and key actions of the Plan will be monitored and tabled as outlined below;

Group / Committee	Frequency
Heywood Rural Health Leadership Team	Quarterly and as required
Heywood Rural Health Board	Annually or as required
Heywood Rural Health Staff	Annually or as required
Commission for Gender Equality in the Public	Biannually (commencing 31 October 2023)
Sector	

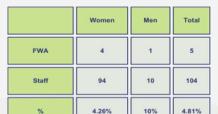


Appendix 1 – Heywood Rural Health Gender Equality Workplace Audit Infographic



FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The below table shows the proportion of staff using formal flexible working arrangements by gender



RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

People Matter Survey Question	Agree %
My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit	68%
I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation	48%
Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation	92%
Being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in my organisation	85%
Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation	88%
Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation	86%
Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation	83%
Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation	89%

People Matter Survey Question	Agree %
My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave	91%
I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration	77%
My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities regardless of gender	83%



Appendix 2 - Level to CEO Classification Guide (for small health services)

Example titles at each 'level to the CEO'

Level	Description of Level	Nursing	Allied Health ¹	Other clinicians and scientists ²	Operations	Corporate/other
0	Chief Executive Officer					
-1	Executive/Leadership team	Clinical Services Manager	Community/ Allied Health Manager		Corporate Services Manager/Quality Manager	Chief Financial Officer/People and Culture Manager/Business Manager
-2	Heads of/Nurse Unit Managers/Managers	Nurse Unit Manager (NUM)				
-3	Leaders with additional responsibilities (not included above)	Assistant NUM, Nurse Educator, After Hours Supervisor			Team leader	Team leader
-4	Registered Nurses without additional responsibilities (not included above)	Registered Nurse, Midwife, Psychiatric Nurse				
-5	Qualified allied health and other clinical professionals/scientists without additional responsibilities		All other registered/ qualified allied health professionals	All other qualified/ certified/registered clinicians, scientists engineers and researchers		
-6	Other Staff	Enrolled Nurses (EN),	Technicians, interns, assistants, students, trainees, apprentices, welfare/youth /community development workers	Technicians, clinical and personal health care workers, diploma qualified counsellors, trainees, students, interns	Food services, ward clerks, PSAs, maintenance workers, general services workers	All other staff without leadership responsibilities or specialist expertise

1 Allied health includes all professions included in the Allied Health Professionals Enterprise Agreement

2 Other clinical professionals and scientists include Audiologists, Clinical Perfusionists, Dietitians, Genetic Counsellors, Medical Physicists, Medical Scientists, Pharmacists, Psychologists and any other clinical or scientific role

Note: Levels where no staff are represented at Heywood Rural Health were deleted and subsequent levels moved up.



Appendix 3 – Heywood Rural Health Gender Equality Action Plan

Action Plan Themes

- Leadership/Governance (L)
- Processes and Procedures (P)
- Data and Reporting (D)
- Workplace Culture (W)
- External Requirements (E)

Gender Equality Indicators (GEI)

- 1. Gender composition of the workforce
- 2. Gender composition of the governing body
- 3. Gender pay equity
- 4. Workplace sexual harassment
- 5. Recruitment and promotion
- 6. Leave and flexibility
- 7. Gendered workforce segregation

Leadership/Governance

	Objective	GEI	Key Actions	Key Milestone/Deliverable	Responsible	Timeframe
L1	Review processes to ensure and maintain pay parity	3,5	 Review identified data for pay gaps; identify causes and contributors As required, install adjustment to improve pay parity Encourage salary negotiation by showing salary ranges throughout recruitment and promotion processes 	Annual reporting on pay gap to track change/trends	Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Managers, People & Culture (P&C)	Yearly



L2	An organisational commitment to the gender composition of the workforce	1,5,7	 Review the gender composition of the workforce Ensure gender balance on interview panels 	Bi-annual review	CEO, Leadership Team (LT), P&C	6 monthly
L3	Maintain 50/50 gender composition of the Board of Directors	2	1 Ensure Board recruitment aligns with the Board Governance Charter and achieves equal gender composition	Heywood Rural Health (HRH) achieves and maintains a 50/50 gender composition	Board Chair, CEO and DoH	Yearly
L4	Introduce gender- neutral language that is inclusive for staff of all genders and diverse backgrounds	1, 5	 Conduct an awareness campaign and education for staff Pronoun Project – LGBQTIA+ Ensure relevant HRH documents and communications are written with a gendered and intersectional lens 	Education and pronouns introduced Audit of documents and communications	LT, P&C, Education Dept, Workplace Coach	December 2022 December 2023
Proc	esses & Procedure					
	Objective	GEI	Key Actions	Key Milestone/Deliverable	Responsible	Timeframe
P1	Increase organisational awareness of family violence and supports	6	 Review and communicate family violence leave policies and processes to ensure they are victim- centric and in line with sector best practice Ensure all managers have completed family violence support training 	Policy and procedure review Training and education targets are met FVCO staff are trained	P&C, FVCOs, Business Systems & Innovation Manager (BSIM)	December 2022



			 Continued training and support through Family Violence Contact Officer (FVCO) program Ensure staff completion of FV training on Solle/GROW 			
P2	Review recruitment and promotion practices to ensure fair and equitable recruitment and promotion	1, 5, 7	 Review recruitment processes to attract a greater diversity of gender and intersectionality in candidates (e.g. review of language on job advertisements and position descriptions, the composition of interview panels) Provide education to staff involved in recruitment for using appropriate language and questions 	Recruitment processes are reviewed and updated as required Education and training delivered to Senior Management	P&C	December 2022
P3	Ensure leadership and career development training opportunities are available to all staff regardless of gender	1, 5	 Promote career development and training opportunities to all staff irrespective of their gender or employment status Continue to develop Staff Training Plans for all staff (including non- clinical staff) 	All staff receive training opportunities Uptake of career development and training opportunities offered	P&C, All Managers	Ongoing
Data	& Reporting					
	Objective	GEI	Key Actions	Key Milestone/Deliverable	Responsible	Timeframe
D1	Implement systems to allow for accurate collection of data for future Workplace Gender Audits	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7	 Review and improve relevant HR, recruitment and Payroll systems to record intersectional data for staff and board members, including; Gender Disability 	Data recorded accurately and easily accessible for completion of future Workplace Gender Audit	P&C, BSIM	June 2023



D2	Continuous	5, 6,	 Cultural identity Religion Sexual orientation ANZSCO codes Implement changes to new staff documentation to obtain intersectional data Implement changes to current staff documentation (annual staff development training) to obtain intersectional data Develop definitions and processes to 	Data recorded accurately and easily	P&C, BSIM,	June 2023
	improvement of systems, processes and definitions to allow for accurate collection of data for future Workplace Gender Audits	7	 record relevant data related to; Permanent promotions Career development Higher duties Internal secondments Exits Flexible working arrangements 	accessible for completion of future Workplace Gender Audit	Payroll	
Work	place Culture					
	Objective	GEI	Key Actions	Key Milestone/Deliverable	Responsible	Timeframe
W1	Promote a culture of fairness and respect where staff feel safe to report sexual harassment and discrimination	4	 Review the current complaint process for workplace bullying, harassment and sexism and identify barriers to reporting Develop an awareness campaign regarding sexual harassment and discrimination policies and internal complaint mechanisms 	Barrier analysis on reporting gendered discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying in the workforce Communication developed on gender safety; how to report gender-related discrimination, sexual harassment, and information about how many claims were substantiated.	CEO, Leadership Team, Education Department, P&C, all staff	June 2023 June 2023



			 3 Develop workplace sexual harassment and bystander action education and training 4 Implement anonymous reporting processes for instances of sexual harassment, including appropriate response and support mechanisms 5 Continue with Family Violence Contact Officer training as required 6 Implement Zero Tolerance stance on sexual harassment in the workplace 	Annual review of all reported incidents of sexual harassment Number of FVCO staff trained Zero Tolerance program implemented		June 2023 Ongoing December 2023
W2	Improve flexible workplace practices across the workforce	6	 Develop and implement policies/procedures/models that support shared caring and workplace flexibility for all staff regardless of gender (e.g. working from home, school-friendly hours, job share arrangements) Include flexible workplace practice documents in new staff induction packs Include discussions about care and outside work responsibilities in annual performance review discussions for all employees Ensure all meetings have both in- person and virtual attendance options Ensure Family Violence leave is available to all staff across the organisation 	Annual reports of all formal flexible work arrangements PMS results to capture feedback on workplace flexibility Distribution of flexible workplace practice documents to all new staff	CEO, LT, P&C, Managers	December 2022 December 2022 June 2023 December 2022 June 2022