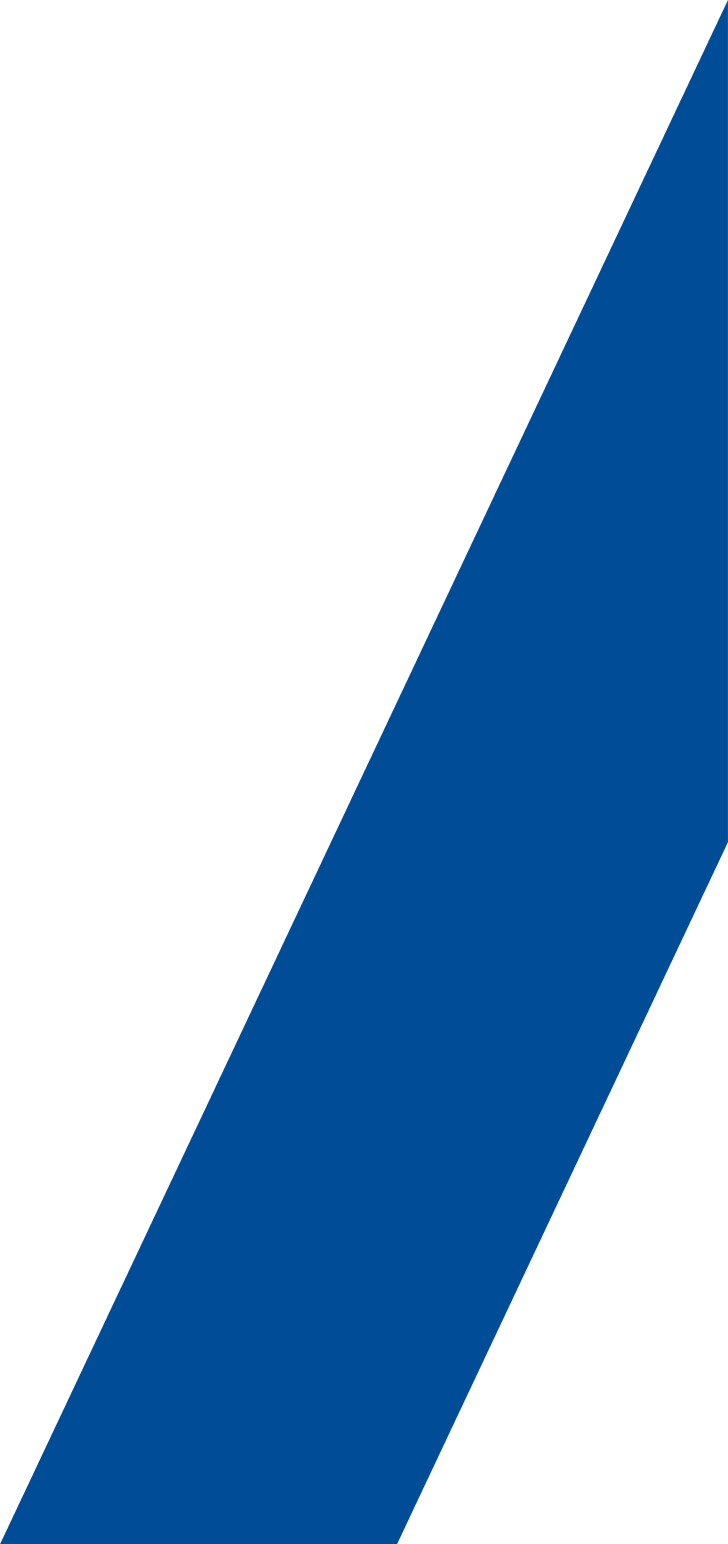
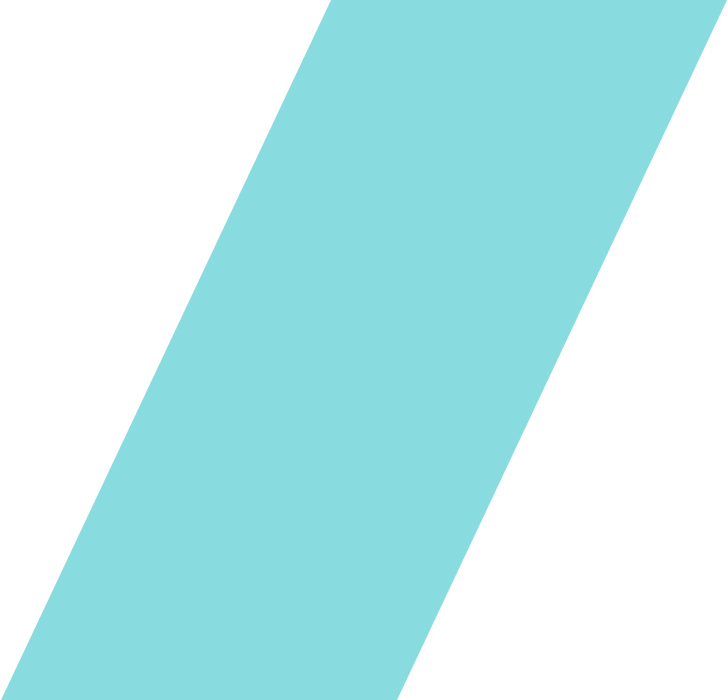
2024 DEECA Gender Equality Progress Report

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We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria’s land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom   
has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria’s Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.

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# **Indicators**

## Indicator 1

Gender composition at all levels of the workforce.

#### Action

* **Action 1:** Ensure robust data collection and reporting measures on gender equality indicators.
  + Develop a data collection and reporting framework within existing corporate systems that complies with privacy requirements and staff preferences to measure our progress towards gender equality across intersectional groups of women.
* **Action 2:** Drive a leadership reset through training and education.
  + Design and deliver an immersive workshop focusing on progressing intersectional gender equality to executive teams.
* **Action 3:** Elevate the representation of women in leadership roles.
  + Establish a One DELWP focus on supporting and developing women to progress into leadership roles, with an emphasis on areas with high gender segregation and on representation of women with intersectional attributes.

#### Confirm if Progress Made

Yes

#### Progress Description

There has been an overall increase of 4.4% in the representation of women. In 2021, women made up 48.2% of the department; in 2023 women made up 52.6%. There was an increase in women as a percentage for VPS Grades 3-6, STS and Principal Scientist.

Women now exceed 50% representation in all classifications except:

* Field Staff (non-VPS, 12.9% of 557 staff; 13.0% in 2021)
* VPS Grade 6 (49.2% of 949 staff; 46.6% in 2021)
* STS (37.5% of 40 staff; 22.6% in 2021)
* Principal Scientist (46.2% of just 13 staff; 0.0% in 2021).

DEECA will continue to monitor these trends and take focused action to ensure gender balanced representation across groups. Overall, these figures reflect our ongoing commitment to fostering a more inclusive and gender balanced workplace. We will continue working towards achieving intersectional gender parity at all levels and ensuring that all individuals have equal opportunities for growth and advancement within our organisation.

## Indicator 2

Gender composition of governing bodies.

#### Action

* **Action 4:** Review DELWP governance frameworks to ensure women from diverse and intersectional backgrounds are contributing to departmental decision making.

#### Confirm if Progress Made

Yes

#### Progress Description

The Governing Board of the Department representing the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries, has increased representation of women from 37.5% in 2021 to 50.0% in 2023. The Board size was 8 overall in 2021 and has remained 8 in 2023. Of portfolio entity boards, women now hold 53% of board positions in Agriculture, 59% in Energy and Resources, and 57% in the Water and 56% in the Environment portfolios.

The department is committed to delivering the Victorian Government's Diversity on Boards initiative. This initiative aims to increase the representation of diverse cohorts, including people with disabilities, rural and regional, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQA+, young people, and women.

## Indicator 3

Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender.

#### Action

* **Action 5:** Undertake an annual gender pay gap audit.
  + Continue annual gender pay gap audit to measure pay equality across tenures, length and type of employment contract at DELWP and inform appropriate actions.
* **Action 6:** Apply an intersectional lens to data collection on pay equity.
  + Adopt the new data collection and reporting framework to measure potential pay inequities across intersectional groups and women to address any pay disparities.
* **Action 7:** Implement bias checks and mitigations.
  + Design and implement the Gender pay equality checklist to mitigate bias at key remuneration stages of the employee life cycle.
* **Action 8:** Embed financial literacy training.
  + Engage our superannuation provider to deliver financial literacy training sessions targeted at women going through key life transitions.

#### Confirm if Progress Made

Yes

#### Action

* **Action 9:** Review and enhance our safe and respectful workplaces. Framework to provide a leading practice approach to prevention, and a culturally sensitive response to sexual harassment and negative behaviours.

Framework to include:

* + policy and response procedure
  + training and awareness to build capability and confidence
  + safe and respectful leadership
  + communication campaigns
  + risk management monitoring, reporting and evaluation
* **Action** **10**: Embed the safe and respectful workplaces learning package into induction and onboarding to promote appropriate workplace behaviours and expectations .
  + Monitor and report on completion rates of safe and respectful workplaces learning activities.
* **Action 11:** Develop and implement safe and respectful and GEAP-related updates in DELWP’s communication plan across all staff channels.

#### Progress Description

We achieve pay parity across all levels of the organisation by adhering to the VPS (Victorian Public Service) and Field Staff Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA), which is the foundation for our pay structure. This pay structure is anchored in a series of standardised work value descriptors, guaranteeing uniform pay across all levels of the workforce.

We are pleased to report that DEECA has achieved a pay gap of 0% for two consecutive years. Previous gender pay gap interventions such as implementing the Pay Gap Action toolkit in 2019, our proactive Gender Equality and Pay (GEAP) actions, coupled with regular pay audits, have been instrumental in achieving our goal of less than 2% pay gap (including in the median salary of women).

Currently we have limited data on gender diverse or non-binary staff. Only 13 (2021) and 18 (2023) of our staff have self-described as gender diverse or non-binary. However, we believe it is important to note a potential pay gap and commit to diligently monitoring future trends. As part of our continuous improvement efforts, we are enhancing our collection and analysis of intersectional pay equity data. By doing so, we aim to gain deeper insights into the complexities of pay disparities and ensure that our initiatives address all dimensions of equity by 2025.

## Indicator 4

Sexual harassment in the workplace.

#### Confirm if Progress Made

Yes

#### Progress Description

Our commitment to creating a safe and respectful workplace is an ongoing journey, and we closely monitor key indicators to assess our progress in addressing sexual harassment.

##### Employee Engagement:

* 2023 PMS results indicate that the incidence of sexual harassment remains stable at 3% from 2021. This suggests that we need to maintain our focus on prevention and intervention.
* Notable declines in sexual harassment, such as sexually suggestive comments (51% in 2023 vs 55% in 2021) and inappropriate physical contact (9% in 2023 vs 10% in 2021), highlight the positive impact of awareness campaigns. However, we do need to monitor incidents involving intrusive questions or comments on physical appearance, from 42% in 2021 to 44% in 2023, despite a temporary drop to 35% in 2022.
* With improved access to information and proactive leadership, initial increases in reported incidents are expected as staff become more adept at recognizing and reporting misconduct. Over time, as awareness programs become established, we anticipate a decrease in reports, reflecting a genuine reduction in harassment and a culture comfortable with addressing it.
* While only 21% of victims confronted the offender directly, there has been a marginal increase in the number of individuals who reported the behaviour to someone else (managers and friends/family), formal reports rose from 1 case in 2021 to 6 in 2023.This suggests a growing awareness of the importance of seeking support and guidance.
* Dismissive behaviour in response to harassment remained steady (84% in 2023 vs. 83% in 2021), while avoidance behaviours decreased from 53% to 43%. Concerns about negative career impacts from reporting rose significantly from 16% to 31%, potentially linked to organizational changes. Other reasons for not reporting, like not seeing the issue as serious or doubting the efficacy of reporting, showed slight increases. We will be monitoring PMS results regularly to better understand this change.
* 2023 PMS asked for a response to "DEECA has zero-tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace" with 92% of respondents agreeing that DEECA has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, and 83% feeling safe speaking up about it without fear of reprisal or negative consequences. This is a promising baseline for this question to track employee confidence in DEECA's speak up culture.

##### Safe and Respectful Workplaces (SRW) Prevention:

* The significant increase in the uptake of Sexual Harassment Response and Prevention (SRW) sessions is a promising sign of increased awareness and engagement across the organisation.
* Starting with 25 sessions in 2021, we saw a substantial increase to a combined total of 61 sessions in 2022. In 2023, we continued this positive trend with 57 sessions.
* Forest, Fire and Regions (FFR) showed significant increase in uptake. In 2020-21, there were 12 FFR staff who participated in the workshop. This number increased to 250 FFR staff attending in 2021 – 2022, and then to 270 in 2022-2023 as we focused on reaching regional FFR staff.
* This substantial growth validates our approach to leverage local champions with influence and networks in promoting the program. This is also evidenced by Loddon Mallee region's increase from 0 to 16 to 91 participants and Hume's growth from 2 to 15 to 66 participants over 2021 - 2023.

##### Sexual Harassment Response:

There is a decrease in the number of sexual harassment complainants reported via the Talk to Us hotline in 2023 compared to 2021. In 2021, we received a total of 7 complaints related to sexual harassment compared to 3 reports of sexual harassment in 2023, all submitted by female employees within our organisation.

The Talk to Us hotline, email address, and online reporting tool were launched in May 2022 with the Safe and Respectful Workplace Behaviour Policy and Procedure. This service provides confidential and anonymous reporting of inappropriate workplace behaviour, including sexual harassment. This person-centric approach ensures complainants have options and it ensures they do not lose control of their report via formal investigation processes.

We will continue to prioritize creating a safe and inclusive workplace environment where all employees feel empowered to report any incidents of harassment.

## Indicator 5

Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace.

#### Action

* **Action 12:** Implement recommendations from DELWP’s 2022 Recruitment Diversity and Inclusion Audit.
  + Review and realign DELWP’s current recruitment policies and procedures to respond to recommendations from DELWP’s 2022 Recruitment Diversity and Inclusion Audit to identify and mitigate systemic barriers to equitable recruitment, retention and progression of women.
* **Action 13:** Review role design, recruitment, training and deployment systems in our emergency management functions to identify and remove barriers for women’s participation and progression
* **Action 14:** Promote DELWP as an employer of choice and leverage existing internal talent pipelines.
  + Actively promote DELWP as an employer of choice to a diverse cohort of talent in areas that lack intersectional gender representation.

#### Confirm if Progress Made

Yes

#### Progress Description

In the year ending 2023, 52.4% of all recruits were women - an increase from 2021, when women made up 51.5% of recruits.

In 2023, women also made up:

50.0% of STS recruits (also 50.0% in 2021)

50.9% of VPS6 recruits (51.8 % in 2021)

59.1% of VPS5 recruits (50.2% in 2021)

60.2% of VPS4 recruits (62.3% in 2021)

##### Promotions:

In 2023, 56.2% of the promotions given were to women, an increase from 51.2% in 2021. In contrast 43.5% promotions were given to men in 2023 and 48.8% in 2021. Limited data sets on the promotion rates for those who identify as other/self-identified do not allow for meaningful analysis. We hope to address this data gap by 2025.

**Career Development Training:**

2023 data shows that women are more likely to participate in career development initiatives than men. Specifically, 59.6% of women have engaged in career development training, this is a significant increase compared to 2021 when 49.5% of women participated in career development training. In comparison, men had lower levels of participation in this training with 40.1% in 2021 and 50.5% in 2023.

**Higher Duties and Internal Secondments:**

There has been an increase of higher duties awarded to women from 52.1% in 2021 to 54.5% in 2023. The data shows that women also take on more higher duties or secondments, compared to men. Internal secondments trends are relatively similar to this. These figures suggest an equitable distribution of internal mobility opportunities.

Overall, the trends above provide valuable insights into the gender dynamics of promotions, training, and responsibilities within DEECA. Our GEAP recognises the importance of addressing intersectional gendered factors affecting women's careers. Our GEAP actions on Indicator 1 and 5 support career progression of women through building leadership gender inclusion capability, accelerated pathways to development and leadership opportunities, and applying a gender lens on our recruitment and promotion practices.

## Indicator 6

Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities (leave and flexibility).

#### Action

* **Action 15:** Showcase DELWP staff and leaders thriving through flexible working.
  + Develop and implement a digital communication campaign showcasing a diverse cohort of DELWP staff and leaders working flexibly to promote work-life integration.
* **Action 16:** Enhance existing training on leading flexible teams to address bias and shift stereotypes.
  + Review existing learning programs relating to flexible and hybrid work to address bias, attitudes and beliefs that negatively correlate flexible working and leave to women’s career progression.
* **Action 17:** Develop a multichannel campaign depicting men role modelling work-life integration.
* **Action 18:** Review DELWP’s policies relating to leave, flexible working, cultural leave and family violence with a gendered lens.

#### Confirm if Progress Made

Yes

#### Progress Description

We prioritise accessibility and support by making policies on family violence leave, flexible work, and caring responsibilities easily available through our intranet. Our employees can seek tailored guidance from subject matter experts and our HR Advisory team. We regularly communicate these policies through internal channels and introduce them during mandatory orientation sessions for new hires. Additionally, a post-event resource is provided to new staff to guide them on accessing available supports. Our Workplace Adjustment policy comprehensively addresses caring responsibilities, with a VPS-wide Workplace Adjustment eLearn emphasizing their importance, and our diversity and inclusion team provide specialised advice on individualised adjustments.

##### Family Violence Leave:

In 2021,13 people accessed family violence leave (out of which 12 staff were women). Whereas in 2023, 43 people accessed family violence leave (out of which 32 staff were women). From 2021 to 2023, there has been a 91.8% increase in the number of days of absence due to family violence leave.

These substantial increases show a significant rise in the uptake of family violence leave. There can be various factors contributing to this increase, including greater awareness and reporting of family violence, or enhancements in the support and policies related to family violence leave. Overall, we believe that it indicates progress in the uptake of family violence leave.​

##### Flexible Working Arrangements:

In 2021, 50.9% of staff were on a formal flexible working arrangement. By 2023, 100% of staff have at least one occurrence of a formal flexible work arrangement. In terms of gender, 26% of men have used at least one flexible working option in contrast to 49% of women. There is a fairly even split between men and women accessing carers leave, and a very small percentage identifying as other or self-described. 25.2% of employees accessed carers leave with the mid-career age range (25-54 years) having the most uptake.

The 2021, 2022 and 2023 PMS data reveals that over 90% of women feel confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration. This shows there is strong appetite for flexible working, and confidence in our policies and procedures. Given that 100% staff accessed a flexible work arrangement within the reporting period, we will continue to monitor this data to ensure consistent or increased confidence from staff.

## Indicator 7

Gendered segregation within the workplace.

#### Action

* **Action 19:** Build leadership capability to overcome mindsets perpetuating gender discrimination.
  + Safe and respectful workplaces framework is embedded into leadership training within identified hotspots with high gender segregation.
  + Deliver targeted training to FFR and FFMVic people leaders to mitigate unconscious bias and gender discrimination and lead more inclusively.
* **Action 20:** Increase the representation of women from diverse and intersectional backgrounds in our early career programs.
  + DELWP’s employment programs focus on young and emerging talent from marginalised background.
* **Action 2**1: Develop a ‘pipeline plan’ to increase the number of women studying STEM subjects at secondary school and in surveying, spatial and valuing pathways.
* **Action 22:** Undertake regular deep-dive analyses into areas with the highest gender segregation to identify issues, prioritise meaningful action and track progress.
  + Deep-dives may involve research, listening and learning, pulse checks and sector-wide analysis.

#### Confirm if Progress Made

Yes

#### Progress Description

DEECA believes that an inclusive workplace culture, free from discrimination and bias, is essential for people of all genders to thrive. Along with increasing representation of women in gender segregated areas, we are also taking focused action towards identifying and mitigating systemic barriers and limiting mindsets that hinder gender equity. We are pleased to report positive progress made in addressing these issues within our organisation, as indicated by PMS results.

Gender-related barriers such as gender discrimination and unfair allocations of work contribute to gender segregated workplaces. In 2021 PMS, 73% of respondents thought their gender was not a barrier to success. In the 2023 PMS, this question was not asked. However, the 2023 PMS survey show that of the 28% of people who experienced barriers to their success, only 1% attributed it to their gender identity. Furthermore, 2021 and 2023 PMS data shows consistent levels of staff who agree that work is allocated fairly in their workgroups, regardless of gender (85% and 86% respectively).

In the 2023 PMS, 5% of respondents experienced discrimination related to their gender identity. This is a decrease from 15% reported in the 2021 PMS. While any incidence of discrimination is concerning, it is noteworthy that gender-based discrimination has decreased, highlighting our efforts to create a more inclusive workplace where people of all genders can thrive.

Overall, our efforts above demonstrate consistent removal of gender-related barriers indicating progress in fostering an inclusive work environment.

Targeted Recruitment of Emergency Roles:

The following metrics demonstrate our clear progress towards reducing gender segregation in Bushfire and Forest Services (BFS), a 'hot spot' for gender segregation at DEECA. We have made significant progress towards greater gender diversity across various roles, showcasing a commitment to inclusivity and progress in addressing gender-related challenges.

The proportion of women in emergency roles within BFS has steadily increased from 25% in 2019 to 33% in 2022, demonstrating an 8% improvement over this timeframe. There has also been growth in the representation of women in strategic leadership roles, rising from 12% in 2019 to 22% in 2022, a significant 10% increase in gender diversity at the leadership level.

A focus area for DEECA has also been to increase female representation in the traditionally male dominated firefighting roles. We are pleased to report that the number of female applicants for seasonal firefighter positions has seen a significant increase, with a 20% increase in applications from women between 2022 (255 applicants) and 2023 (319 applicants).

There has also been growth in applications for specialised roles such as 'rappel and hover exit' positions with a 26% increase from 20.3% in 2022 to 32.5% in 2023. Consequently, the number of women within the seasonal firefighter cohort has increased by 15% from 155 in 2022 to 181 in 2023. This growth aligns with a 5% increase in the proportion of women within the seasonal firefighter cohort, rising from 28% in 2022 to 33% in 2023.

We remain committed to continuously monitoring and improving our practices to create a workplace that values diversity, respects individual identities, and ensures equal opportunities for all employees, irrespective of gender.

# **Strategies and Measures**

## Indicator 1

Gender composition at all levels of the workforce.

### **Action 1** - Ensure robust data collection and reporting measures on gender equality indicators.

#### Responsible

People and Culture - Diversity and Inclusion

#### Timeline

2022 - 2023

#### Status

In progress.

#### Status Description

DEECA recognises the importance of aligning our data collection and reporting framework with gender equality indicators to drive evidence-based initiatives for advancing intersectional gender progress. Overcoming the challenges associated with collecting sensitive diversity data within existing corporate systems, in compliance with privacy requirements and staff preferences, has been a focal point of our efforts. We have made progress in implementing data collection mechanisms to collect intersectional gendered data.

Status Update: Though initially targeted for completion within a year, complexities surrounding privacy and system changes, compounded by IT team constraints amid Machinery of Government changes, posed challenges. We are proud of our achievements despite these challenges but remain committed to continuously improve. We aim to increase staff uptake of sharing diversity information, and establishing robust reporting of intersectional gender equality indicators by 2025.

* + 1. Enhanced HR System: In a collaborative effort between People and Culture and our technology partners, significant enhancements have been made to our HR system, People Central. Previously, staff encountered difficulties in accessing or updating their information, and we did not capture diversity data on key attributes such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability, LGBTQIA+ identification, etc. The added functionality now allows staff a 'self-service' option to seamlessly update their diversity information. This will enable us to collect intersectional demographic data on our workforce to inform future initiatives.
    2. Targeted Data Collection Frameworks: DEECA's Bushfire and Forest Services Group (identified as a gender 'hot spot') successfully aligned the D&I Outcomes Framework (focused on emergency management roles) and its Gender Equity Research project with GEAP indicators. This alignment was achieved through two strategic measures: (1) The Annual Comparison, which evaluates emergency management capability across the state, which now includes a section breaking down each role by gender, enabling identification of highly segregated areas, and (2) Data collected from the Learning Management System which also contributes to this comprehensive approach. Based on this, the Group has been able to develop nuanced interventions in increasing female representation and career development programs.
    3. Employee Engagement Data: DEECA has strategically harnessed employee engagement channels, including the People Matters Survey (PMS), staff-led networks, and collaborative efforts with partner inclusion organisations such as Grace Papers. Through these channels, we actively collected both quantitative and qualitative data to gauge sentiments on intersectional gender equality. Purposefully aligned with GEAP indicators, targeted questions have empowered us to make well-informed decisions on policies affecting women with caring responsibilities, sexual harassment prevention and response, and women close to retirement. As a result we were able to implement precise and timely supports and interventions to advance gender equality within our organization.

#### Evaluation of Success

DEECA is on track to achieve its Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) outcome of stronger data collection and reporting measures. The successful implementation of the initiatives outlined under the 'Status description' have enabled continuous improvement and accountability to inform our gender equality actions, progress, and group performance reporting.

### **Action 2** – Drive a leadership reset through training and education.

#### Responsible

Culture, Change & Capability – Bushfire and Forest Services Group, Organisational Development

#### Timeline

2022 - 2023

#### Status

In progress.

#### Status Description

Evidence from focus group discussions and staff consultations on the GEAP underscored the need for a mindset shift away from traditional masculine leadership styles perpetuating gender discrimination. In response, DEECA committed to immersive workshops aimed at fostering intersectional gender equality among leaders, fostering stronger buy-in for GEAP success.

Status Update: DEECA's Bushfire and Forest Services Group successfully conducted impactful inclusion training on intersectional gender equality. Executive training for other DEECA Groups has been postponed to 2024-2025 due to challenges arising from Machinery of Government changes and Clause 11 impacts. Expanding our efforts, we are also targeting emerging leaders to shape the future of inclusive leadership at DEECA. In collaboration with the Emerging Professionals Network (a staff led network for early career professions across DJSIR and DEECA), a gender equality workshop for over 70 emerging leaders across the organisation is scheduled for May 2024.

#### Evaluation of Success

DEECA is on track to achieve the GEAP goal of challenging mindsets perpetuating gender inequality. We are making significant progress and the effectiveness of the workshops delivered is evidenced by:

* + 1. Deeper understanding and awareness of gender inequality: Workshop participants report better understanding of the compounding impacts of intersectionality on gender equality in their training evaluation survey. The program is currently undergoing a thorough evaluation by a third-party provider, with results expected in March 2024.
    2. Positive Staff Sentiment: Our recent People Matters Survey (PMS) results affirm that staff do not believe that their gender and intersectional attributes are barriers to success at DEECA. Our PMS results from 2022 indicate that 92 per cent of women believed that gender was not a barrier to success at work. This data was not collected in 2023.

### **Action 3** – Elevate the representation of women in leadership roles.

#### Responsible

Culture, Change & Capability – Bushfire and Forest Services Group, Organisational Development

#### Timeline

2024 - 2025

#### Status

In progress.

#### Status Description

DEECA's commitment to gender equality is evident through initiatives such as the Aboriginal Women in Fire Pathway Program, the State Regional Women in Fire Coordinator Group program, and the Regional Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion working groups. This targeted approach positions DEECA as a champion for gender equality across the state, fostering positive impacts in both metropolitan and regional areas. Recognising the importance of quality intersectionality data, efforts are underway to address representation gaps.

Status Update: To further enhance career progression, DEECA has successfully implemented job shadowing and mentoring opportunities for women seeking professional development. Collaborating with staff-led networks, such as the DEECA Women of Colour Network, coupled with executive sponsorship and support from the Diversity and Inclusion team, has yielded successful outcomes in advancing women's career progression. We look forward to aligning our existing programs into accelerated pathways to leadership and development opportunities over 2024-2025/26.

#### Evaluation of Success

DEECA is on track making significant strides in realising the GEAP objective of advancing women in leadership, marked by several positive indicators:

* + 1. Gender Balance in Senior Leadership: In the 2022-23 period, the department achieved a noteworthy composition of 52% women, with a robust presence at the executive level reaching 53.5%, which is a 1.5% increase from the previous year.
    2. Executive Sponsorship for Women: Our Bushfires and Forest Services Group actively participated in the Emergency Management Victoria Sponsorship of Diverse Talent program. In the 2023-24 iteration, DEECA contributed 4 sponsors and 6 women as sponsees, reinforcing our commitment to fostering diverse talent.
    3. Career Progression for Women of Colour: DEECA's Women of Colour network launched its inaugural mentoring program, supported by the Diversity and Inclusion team and executive champions. This successful initiative paired 14 mentees with senior executives over 4 months, resulting in 30% of mentees accepting higher duties or secondment opportunities. This achievement underscores the increased confidence and support instilled by the program, empowering mentees to pursue diverse opportunities. Moreover, feedback from the program was overwhelmingly positive, with 90% of mentees reporting that the program met or exceeded their expectations. Additionally, all mentors affirmed their willingness to recommend the program, emphasizing its value for future rounds and encouraging other executives to participate. The program is running again in 2024.

## Indicator 2

Gender composition of governing bodies.

### **Action 4** – Review DEECA's Governance frameworks to ensure women from diverse and intersectional backgrounds are contributing to departmental decision-making.

#### Responsible

Corporate Services Group – Governance Branch.

#### Timeline

2024 - 2025

#### Status

Ongoing.

#### Status Description

As the department continues to evolve post Machinery of Government changes, DEECA has scoped this action to support the achievement of government policy objectives to increase diversity on DEECA's portfolio entity boards (including women). Actions include supporting Department of Premier and Cabinet's (DPC) in developing an inclusive boards toolkit and contributing to DPC's revised content on the 'Join a Public Board' resource.

The Governing Board of the Department representing the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries, has increased representation of women from 37.5% in 2021 to 50.0% in 2023. The Board size was 8 overall in 2021 and has remained as 8 in 2023. Of portfolio entity boards, women now hold 53% of board positions in Agriculture, 59% in Energy and Resources, and 57% in the Water and 56% in the Environment portfolios.

#### Evaluation of Success

DEECA is contributing to whole of government priorities to increase representation of diverse cohorts on public sector boards, including:

* + 1. Development of inclusive boards toolkit
    2. Revised content on Join a Public Board
    3. Capacity building program for aspiring board members from diverse backgrounds (Subject to Cabinet consideration in Feb/March 2024)
    4. Reporting to Cabinet on progress towards diversity targets is regular, timely, and shows improvement towards government diversity targets and Increased awareness of, and compliance with Victorian Government Diversity Guidelines within DEECA

## Indicator 3

Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender.

### **Action 5**– Undertake an Annual Gender Pay Gap Audit.

#### Responsible

People and Culture.

#### Timeline

2023 - 2024

#### Status

Ongoing.

#### Status Description

#### The department is committed to reducing the gender pay gap and performs a gender pay gap audit annually, with a target of less than two percent.

#### Evaluation of Success

In 2022–23, DEECA’s gender pay gap was zero per cent for the second consecutive year. This is in line with the VPS, which also reports zero per cent (as published in the State of the Public Sector Report).

### **Action 6** – Apply an intersectional lens to data collection on pay equity.

#### Responsible

People and Culture.

#### Timeline

2023 - 2024

#### Status

In Progress.

#### Status Description

Applying an intersectional lens to pay equity relies on the implementation of systems initially scheduled for completion in early 2023 but delayed to late 2023 due to technological and resource constraints.

Status Update: The availability and quality of data required for intersectional analysis currently poses limitations. To address this, we are implementing the following strategies:

1. Employee Engagement: We will continue to build awareness within the organisation about the concept of intersectionality and its relevance to gender equity. Currently, diversity information is only available if staff voluntarily share it in our HR system, People Central. We will explore opportunities to encourage more staff to share their diversity information within privacy guidelines.
2. Data Collection: Our existing data sets are limited and skewed, particularly in the areas of age, gender diversity, and disability intersects. We are committed to monitoring these trends as we expand our data sets on attributes such as CALD status and LGBTQIA+ identification. Our GEAP will be adapted to address any emerging gaps.

#### Evaluation of Success

DEECA collects substantial data on pay equity across intersectional attributes, encompassing LGBTIQA+, age, women of colour, Aboriginality, and people with disability, which informs future actions. This enables the organisation to identify systemic issues and implement evidence-based interventions to rectify gaps, ensuring equitable compensation for women, regardless of race, age, ethnicity, disability, or sexual/gender identity. DEECA's baseline for pay equality across intersectional groups is integrated into group performance reporting, with due consideration for privacy protection where necessary.

### **Action 7** – Implement bias checks and mitigations.

#### Responsible

People and Culture.

#### Timeline

2023 - 2024

#### Status

In Progress.

#### Status Description

DEECA regularly undertakes pay equity analysis to stay informed of emerging trends and potential gaps. This, combined with various capability building initiatives on overcoming unconscious bias, has contributed positively to closing our pay gap to zero per cent for two consecutive years and for achieving gender balance in all levels of the organisation.

Status Update: As we continue to mature in our collection of intersectional diversity data, we will be able to implement fit-for-purpose mitigations on gender bias in employee remuneration decisions on commencement, annual performance appraisals, promotion and/or on return from leave.

#### Evaluation of Success

A gender pay equality checklist is embedded and consistently applied in DEECA's formal recruitment and performance appraisal processes. This will lead to rectifying pay gaps in accordance with an agreed departmental approach.

### **Action 8** – Embed financial literacy training.

#### Responsible

Diversity and Inclusion.

#### Timeline

Ongoing

#### Status

Ongoing.

#### Status Description

DEECA recognises the significance of economic empowerment to advance gender equality. The department formed a strategic partnership with Aware Super, its superannuation fund, to offer tailored financial education sessions with a gender perspective. These sessions covered a range of topics, including retirement planning, optimizing superannuation returns, and bolstering overall financial well-being. The aim was to equip women with the essential tools for achieving financial success.

Status Update: The series met with resounding success, drawing an impressive attendance of over 3,100 participants. Furthermore, it resulted in 182 one-on-one private consultations booked with Aware Super, further emphasizing its value and relevance. These financial education sessions have now become a recurring highlight in DEECA's annual calendar of events, reaffirming our commitment to advancing economic empowerment and gender equality.

#### Evaluation of Success

Our biannual training sessions, facilitated by DEECA's superannuation provider, have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness in enhancing financial knowledge. Evaluation surveys consistently reflect high levels of engagement and increased financial literacy. Notably, during the initial session, 247 attendees initially identified as having "very low knowledge" or stating "I know a little," and this number decreased significantly to only 42 by the session's conclusion.

This positive trend was reaffirmed during the subsequent session, with 193 attendees initially categorizing themselves similarly, but only 25 participants falling into this category by the session's end. These outcomes underscore the value of our training in empowering participants with improved financial understanding and confidence.

## Indicator 4

Sexual harassment in the workplace.

### **Action 9** – Review and enhance Safe and Respectful Workplaces to provide a leading practice approach to prevention, and a culturally sensitive response to sexual harassment and negative behaviours.

#### Responsible

Safe and Respectful Workplaces Advisor.

#### Timeline

2022 - 2024

#### Status

In progress.

#### Status Description

The Safe and Respectful Workplaces (SRW) Framework was successfully launched in May 2022, accompanied by a comprehensive communication package. This launch included webinars and an extensive array of training tools and resources designed for both staff and people leaders. Since the launch, we have taken the following actions to ensure continuous improvement and best practice approach to the efficacy of our program.

Status Update:

* + 1. Participation Numbers: During the reporting period, our facilitated training offerings, which comprised the SRW Workshop for all staff and the First Responder Training for Managers, collectively engaged over 2,250 individual staff members. This participation demonstrates a keen interest and commitment to creating safe and respectful workplaces.
    2. Training Enhancements: In September 2023, we proactively reviewed and refreshed our training packages based on valuable feedback and updated data from our People Matters Survey (PMS). During this process, we embraced an intersectional and culturally sensitive perspective, engaging staff with lived experiences, subject matter experts, and external consultants known for their leading practice expertise. These revisions ensured that our training approaches and content remained aligned with our objectives. We also revamped our digital assets and visual imagery in our training materials and promotional collateral to better represent diverse cohorts, fostering a more inclusive learning environment.
    3. Flexible Training: The First Responder training has undergone significant redevelopment and is now known as 'Leading Safe and Respectful Teams'. It is available in three versions, offering flexibility in delivery: a full 3-hour course, a 2-hour peer learning option, and a 1-hour webinar format. This adaptability caters to the diverse needs of our staff.
    4. Ongoing Capability: Our commitment to fostering safe and respectful workplaces continues with ongoing efforts. We have started to develop additional learning offerings aimed at enhancing the capability of teams and individuals to engage in effective conversations on targeted issues such as gendered violence and sexual harassment. These offerings will take the form of facilitated workshops, e-learns and informal lunch and learn sessions, with plans to pilot these sessions from mid-2024 onwards.

Our dedication to providing a leading practice approach to prevention and culturally sensitive responses to sexual harassment and negative behaviours remains unwavering, and we look forward to further advancements in this critical area.

#### Evaluation of Success

The following success measures collectively reflect the effectiveness of Action 9 in creating safe, respectful, and inclusive workplaces, as well as DEECA's commitment to preventing sexual harassment and promoting a culture of respect and accountability.

* + 1. Policy Endorsement and Launch: The Safe and Respectful Workplace Behaviour Policy and Response Procedure were successfully endorsed and launched in May 2022. The achievement of this milestone indicates a foundational commitment to addressing workplace misconduct.
    2. Data Integration: Sexual harassment complaint data has been effectively integrated into our safety reporting systems, ensuring that incidents are systematically tracked and addressed.
    3. Reduction in Complaints: Our PMS data has indicated a consistent result of 3% of staff experiencing sexual harassment from 2021 to 2023. While any instance of sexual harassment is unacceptable, a consistent number of, or reduction in reports of sexual harassment in the PMS may indicate progress in creating a safer work environment.
    4. Increased Reporting of Inappropriate Behaviour Challenges: In 2022 PMS results, 76% of women reported feeling safe and empowered to confront inappropriate behaviours in the workplace. In 2023, 75% of women expressed the same. These consistent findings highlight the enduring commitment within our organisation to foster a safe and supportive environment, where individuals feel empowered to address and rectify inappropriate conduct when encountered.
    5. Promotion of Respect: The department continues to maintain high levels of confidence from staff that the organisation actively encourages respectful behaviour. 2023 PMS results indicate 89% of women are in agreement with this statement, and 91% of women agreed with this statement in 2022. This demonstrates the positive organisational culture towards fostering respect among the workforce.

### **Action 10** – Embed Safe and Respectful Workplaces learning package into induction and onboarding to promote appropriate workplace behaviours and expectations.

#### Responsible

Safe and Respectful Workplaces Advisor.

#### Timeline

2022 - 2024

#### Status

In progress.

#### Status Description

As part of DEECA's ongoing efforts to promote appropriate workplace behaviours and expectations, we have made significant updates to our induction and onboarding processes. These reflect our dedication to fostering a culture of safe and respectful behaviours from the very beginning of an employee's journey with DEECA. Work has commenced on the following initiatives:

Status Update:

* + 1. New Starter Orientation: New employees are presented with an enhanced orientation presentation on the Safe and Respectful Workplaces (SRW) program. Refreshed content, engaging visuals and the latest available resources have reinvigorated the uptake of this program by new starters. We also increased the emphasis on our "Call it out. Tell Someone. Report it." campaign, to promote a workplace culture of speaking up against negative behaviours. Orientation also now promotes Safe and Respectful Workplaces (SRW) Champions Network and training programs - increasing overall engagement and participation in the offerings.
    2. E-learn Development: We have started scoping the new SRW e-learn. The new Learning Management System is a modernized platform that allows us to deliver our SRW learning package with greater efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that all new employees receive the necessary training during their induction and onboarding.

#### Evaluation of Success

One key success measure is to achieve a 70% attendance rate by new DEECA staff in the Safe and Respectful Workplace (SRW) learning package by 2025. This metric tracks the extent to which employees engage with and complete the training during their induction and onboarding. Achieving this target signifies a high level of participation and commitment to fostering a safe and respectful workplace culture. Additionally, the feedback obtained from induction surveys would also be a measure of success. It aims to gauge the understanding of the Safe and Respectful Workplace framework among new employees. Positive feedback that indicates a sound understanding of the framework reflects the effectiveness of the training and its ability to convey the desired workplace behaviours and expectations.

### **Action 11** – Develop and implement Safe and Respectful and GEAP related updates in DEECA’s communications plan across all staff channels.

#### Responsible

Safe and Respectful Workplaces Advisor, Diversity and Inclusion.

#### Timeline

2022 - 2025

#### Status

Ongoing.

#### Status Description

DEECA has made significant progress in integrating Safe and Respectful Workplaces (SRW) and Gender Equity Action Plan (GEAP) updates into DEECA's communications plan:

Status Update:

* + 1. Bi-Monthly SRW Bulletin: Since September 2022, a bi-monthly SRW Bulletin tailored for SRW Champions and key internal staff has been published. Eight editions reaching over 400 DEECA recipients each have been distributed. This communication platform keeps stakeholders informed and engaged, featuring content that promotes training, external professional development opportunities, and access to resources on sexual harassment and harmful behaviours. The bulletin also incorporates regular updates from the Diversity and Inclusion team, staff-led networks, and gender equality progress.
    2. Yammer Engagement: A dedicated SRW Yammer group for Champions that actively shares information across the DEECA Yammer platform reaches over 6,000 DEECA staff, fostering widespread awareness and engagement.
    3. Dedicated Ada (DEECA intranet) Site: SRW has a dedicated intranet site with comprehensive resources, including pages on sexual harassment and gender-based violence, tools, support, and reporting mechanisms. This centralised hub is a valuable reference point for staff seeking information on these critical issues. Regular Ada newsroom articles also share important information and updates related to SRW and GEAP progress.
    4. Support for Events and Observances: SRW communications actively support and enhance events and observances organised by staff-led networks and business groups with high gender segregation such as Bushfire & Forest Services. By promoting intersectional events and messages on significant events such as International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism, and International Day of People with Disability, we ensure a broader reach and impact within the DEECA community.

#### Evaluation of Success

Success is evaluated by tracking the annual People Matters Survey (PMS) data that should indicate an increase in the percentage of staff members who feel that DEECA actively encourages respectful workplace behaviours. 2022 PMS results show an 91% of women agree that gender does not act as a barrier to success at work, and 2023 results show 89% of women feeling the same. These consistently high levels of gender inclusion demonstrates DEECA is on course for this action. The delivery of quarterly messages across multiple communication channels also consistently reaffirms DEECA's commitment to minimizing inappropriate workplace behaviours and progressing gender equality (GEAP updates).

## Indicator 5

Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace.

### **Action 12** – Implement recommendations from DEECA’s 2022 Recruitment Diversity and Inclusion Audit.

#### Responsible

Diversity and Inclusion, People and Culture.

#### Timeline

2022 - 2024

#### Status

In Progress.

#### Status Description

DEECA’s 2022 Recruitment Diversity and Inclusion Audit identified systemic barriers to equitable recruitment, retention and progression of women. To implement the recommendations from the report, a dedicated Senior Advisor, Diversity and Inclusion has been recruited to drive actions.

Status Update: A phased implementation plan to improve inclusive recruitment practices and increase hiring manager capability on issues preventing fair and equitable recruitment has been scoped. An initial focus is on developing educational resources and learning products for all DEECA staff with a touchpoint/responsibility in the recruitment process. These products are planned to go live in Q4 2023-24.

#### Evaluation of Success

Trends in DEECA's People Matter Survey on staff career progression will be a key metric to evaluate success. The percentage of staff who feel that race, gender and/or identity, age and disability do not limit their career progression will help us measure the efficacy of the implementation plan.

### **Action 13** – Review role design, recruitment, training and deployment systems in our emergency management functions to identify and remove barriers for women’s participation and progression.

#### Responsible

Culture, Change & Capability - Bushfire and Forest Services Group.

#### Timeline

2023 - 2025

#### Status

In Progress.

#### Status Description

DEECA's commitment to promoting women's participation and progression within Bushfire and Forest Services (BFS) emergency management functions has led to several significant developments and initiatives:

Status Update:

* + 1. Gender Equity Research: Bushfire and Forest Services (BFS) commissioned a Gender Equity Research Report in 2022, which identified key opportunities for action within the emergency management space. This report serves as a foundation for ongoing efforts in the group.
    2. Targeted Recruitment: The recruitment process for seasonal firefighters is being refined. This includes reviewing language, imagery, and participation in targeted events like careers days, with a focus on attracting a diverse pool of candidates. BFS also actively co-developed and participated in the inaugural Victorian Girls on Fire events, designed to showcase firefighting as a viable career option for young women, encouraging greater gender diversity within the workforce.
    3. Enhanced Data Collection: BFS' Annual Comparison report, which assesses emergency management capability across the state, now includes a section that breaks down each role by gender. This enhancement allows DEECA to identify areas with high gender segregation and develop tailored solutions to progress gender inclusivity.
    4. Flexible Training Delivery: To be more inclusive and promote equal participation and advancement opportunities, BFS has transitioned an increasing number of Emergency Management training courses from the traditional five-day format to more flexible options. There are also provisions to support trainees' families and carers when necessary. DEECA has also expanded the offering of women-only training events across the state, creating safe and supportive spaces for skill development and empowerment.
    5. Gender Balanced Approach: Rigorous screening processes for training nominations have been implemented to ensure better representation of women in Emergency Management training events. The Chief Fire Officer has also set a gender deployment target of 30% women across all deployments in the state. We have also developed deployment trackers using Power BI to monitor deployment statistics by gender.
    6. Flexible and Inclusive Deployment: Our deployment protocols have been adapted to offer more flexibility, including shorter deployments than the traditional seven days. Remote deployment options are now available for certain roles, such as Finance Officers and Resources Officers. An assurance review has also been conducted to assess senior duty officer rosters, with a strong focus on achieving greater gender equity in these roles.

#### Evaluation of Success

Success is evaluated through tracking increased rigour, structure and transparency about role selection, development and deployment. There are more women in Bushfire and Forest Services (BFS) emergency management roles across levels, indicating the effectiveness of the improvements to systems, processes and structures that were identified and implemented. Key metrics as evidence include:

* + 1. The proportion of women in DEECA's BFS emergency workforce increased steadily from 25% in 2019 to 33% in 2022. Advertised seasonal firefighter roles witnessed a 20% surge in female applications between 2022 (255 applicants) and 2023 (319 applicants)
    2. The representation of women in BFS strategic leadership roles grew from 12% in 2019 to 22% in 2022.
    3. BFS based rappel and hover exit\* role applications from women saw an even higher increase of 26%, rising from 20.3% in 2022 to 32.5% in 2023

As a result, the proportion of women within the seasonal firefighter cohort rose by 5% during the same period, going from 28% to 33% between 2022 and 2023.

\*Please see <https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/26925/PFF-Brochure-pages-web.pdf> for further information on rappel and hover roles.

### **Action 14** – Promote DEECA as an employer of choice and leverage existing internal talent pipelines.

#### Responsible

Talent Programs, Diversity and Inclusion.

#### Timeline

2022 - 2025

#### Status

Ongoing.

#### Status Description

DEECA is actively working on initiatives to harness talent pipelines for greater gender balance and position itself as an employer of choice. DEECA's Employment Programs have provided valuable opportunities for interns and graduates. DEECA has facilitated the placement of talented individuals in the following programs between 2021-2024:

* Australian Network on Disability Stepping Into - 12 Interns Placed
* Barring Djinang - 8 Interns Placed
* Digital Jobs Internship - 16 Interns Placed
* Refugee & Asylum Seeker Program - 12 Interns Placed
* Science and Planning Graduates - 51 Graduates Placed
* Victorian Government Graduate Program - 64 Graduates Placed
* Youth Employment Scheme (YES) - 5 Interns Placed

Status Update:

* + 1. Employee Spotlight Stories: Our YES campaign is targeting youth aged 15-29, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds, including single parents. A new campaign will be launched in February 2024 that will spotlight YES employee stories on our intranet, Ada. DEECA is also taking the same approach to featuring participants from three distinct Summer Internship pathways. These stories will bolster uptake of our talent programs by hiring managers and attracting diverse and top-tier talent.
    2. Science and Planning Graduate Program: Following tailored communications and job advertisements that promote DEECA as an inclusive employer, our Science Graduate Program has received applications from a diverse pool, with 54% of applicants identifying as female and 2% self-describing as gender diverse. This gender balanced intake demonstrates our commitment to fostering gender diversity in STEM roles.
    3. Victorian Government Graduate Program: In 2024 (recruited in 2023), 65% of successful applicants to the Victorian Government Graduate program are female. Looking ahead to 2025, we are introducing a Special Measures pathway to specifically target and empower women, further enhancing our efforts to promote gender diversity within our workforce.

#### Evaluation of Success

These success measures collectively reflect our commitment to attracting a more diverse pool of talented women to join DEECA.

* + 1. Established Baseline Data: We have successfully established a baseline for measuring and increasing the number of diverse women applicants to DEECA's employment programs. This foundational step allows us to benchmark, track progress and set targets for further diversity in our applicant pool.
    2. Website Updates: By 2025, we aim to implement updates to our website, making the branding and content more inclusive and engaging for potential applicants, particularly women from diverse backgrounds.
    3. Intersectionality: Success would also indicate recruitment data showing an increase in the number of diverse women actively applying for positions within DEECA. We aspire to leverage data collection systems that allow us to collect intersectionality attributes during the recruitment process. This outcome would demonstrate the effectiveness of strategies to attract a broader and more inclusive range of candidates.

## Indicator 6

Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities (leave and flexibility)

### **Action 15** – Showcase DEECA staff and leaders thriving through flexible working.

#### Responsible

Diversity and Inclusion, Digital Communications.

#### Timeline

2023 - 2024

#### Status

Void/cancelled.

#### Status Description

This action has been merged with Action 17: Develop a multichannel campaign depicting men role modelling work-life integration. This will allow for efficiencies in using resources and budget to offer more value and a stronger outcome. See Action 17 for further details.

#### Evaluation of Success

Evaluation has been combined with Action 17.

### **Action 16** – Enhance existing training on leading flexible teams to address bias and shift stereotypes.

#### Responsible

People and Culture, Diversity and Inclusion.

#### Timeline

2023 - 2024

#### Status

In Progress.

#### Status Description

As a department we aim to address bias and shift stereotypes by making information about employee's entitlements and the benefits of flexible teams easily accessible to encourage increased use. We have made good progress on this by enhancing existing learning offerings and building capability and awareness in leading flexible teams more inclusively.

Status Update:

* + 1. Employee Lifecycle: We champion flexible working entitlements to all employees from the outset of the employee lifecycle, and aim to improve gender balance in the uptake of flexible work arrangements and part-time work. Furthermore, new staff are required to attend an orientation session that outlines DEECA's flexible work and workplace adjustment policies and processes. They also receive resources on gender equality, flexible work and workplace adjustments.
    2. Tailored Support and Education: Staff who require flexible working arrangements due to being a carer, a person with disability or chronic health condition, or being neurodiverse use DEECA's workplace adjustment procedure. This includes tailored one-on-one coaching sessions for staff with a disability, neurodiverse staff, carers, and their people leaders to work more effectively as a flexible team. DEECA also promotes how flexible teams and workplace adjustments contribute to a thriving and inclusive workforce through regular communications and events, dispelling common biases against flexible working.

#### Evaluation of Success

Success is evaluated through the uptake of flexible work options. Firstly, an increase in the number of men participating in flexible work arrangements reflects progress in promoting gender-inclusive flexibility. 2023 PMS results indicate 39% of people using flexible working arrangements were men, compared to 40% in 2021. Secondly, an increase in women using flexible work arrangements reflects robust flexible work policies that support women participating fully in the workforce. 2023 PMS results indicated 49% of women used flexible working arrangements, compared to 42% of women in 2021.

### **Action 17** – Develop a multichannel campaign depicting men role modelling work-life integration.

#### Responsible

People and Culture, Digital Communications.

#### Timeline

2024 - 2025

#### Status

Not Started.

#### Status Description

We are dedicated to reshaping perceptions of carer's roles, emphasising that caregiving is not exclusively a woman's responsibility. Combined with Action 16, to ensure a more intersectional approach, we are amending our action plan to showcase staff, particularly men and gender diverse staff, using flexible work options and workplace adjustments to balance their careers and caregiving responsibilities. Our campaign work is planned for mid-2024 onwards and will be a platform to champion non-traditional and marginalised families facing unique caregiving circumstances.

Status Update: Our partnership with Grace Papers, experts in workplace gender equality with a focus on parents and carers, is a pivotal part of our strategy. Through this partnership, all DEECA staff gain access to a wealth of resources, workshops, and live coaching sessions that also target increasing men's use of flexible work arrangements. We are also collaborating with diversity and inclusion staff across DEECA to showcase non-traditional caring arrangements in the campaign by 2025. This approach reflects our commitment to fostering work-life integration and challenging stereotypes surrounding caregiving roles.

#### Evaluation of Success

A key measure of success is for the campaign to effectively normalise diverse, intersectional cohorts of men and gender-diverse staff embracing flexible work practices. This normalisation is visibly championed, breaking stereotypes surrounding caregiving roles - evident in employee sentiment results in the People Matters Survey (PMS).

PMS results from 2021 and 2022 reported 48% of all respondents who identified caring for children, were men. This compares to 44% women in 2021 and 46% women in 2022. While 2023 result remained the same for men, there was an increase in women to 51%. This increase is perceived as positive, as aforementioned data indicates the department's flexible work policies provide robust support to our staff and represents an organisational culture that is supportive of flexible working. Further to this, widespread awareness among staff regarding DEECA's partnership with Grace Papers and the associated employee benefits would also be a positive indicator. We would measure this from increasing membership numbers to Grace Papers' platform that would indicate staff are leveraging resources and supports for flexible work arrangements.

### **Action 18** – Review DEECA’s policies relating to Leave, Flexible working, Cultural Leave and Family Violence with a gendered lens.

#### Responsible

People and Culture.

#### Timeline

2024 - 2025

#### Status

Not Started.

#### Status Description

Our approach to this action prioritises establishing a strong baseline that values policy equity and staff consultation, ensuring that any future policy changes are informed by a deep understanding of our staff's needs and experiences. We face the challenge of collating a wide range of policies across new business groups post MoG changes, taking a ONE DEECA approach to ensure that our policies are aligned and do not disadvantage women from diverse and intersectional backgrounds.

Status Update: We aim to allocate the appropriate resourcing and expertise to apply a gendered lens to this work set to finish by 2025.

#### Evaluation of Success

Measure of success is DEECA's cultural leave and family violence policies have undergone gender impact assessment. Staff feel more confident and supported that leave and flexible working policies reflect their individual needs, positive indicators of sentiment towards flexible working is maintained as per PMS trends.

### **Action 20** – Increase the representation of women from diverse and intersectional backgrounds in our early career programs.

#### Responsible

Talent Programs, Diversity and Inclusion.

#### Timeline

2021 - 2025

#### Status

Ongoing.

#### Status Description

Our commitment to increasing diversity and inclusion in early career programs is evident through our active engagement with various initiatives and support mechanisms that ensure equitable opportunities for diverse cohorts, including women from marginalised communities.

Status Update:

* + 1. Summer and Winter Internships: We have actively participated in three key internship programs: Barring Djinang, Stepping Into (Australian Network on Disability), and Refugee and Asylum Seekers. These internship programs are aimed at fostering greater representation of women from diverse and intersectional backgrounds.
    2. Youth Employment Programs: Both the Youth Employment Program (YEP) and the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) have been instrumental in targeting disadvantaged cohorts, including women from diverse backgrounds. DEECA has successfully engaged with these programs, providing mentorship, guidance, and qualifications to enhance participants' future job prospects within the VPS and beyond.
    3. Victorian Government Graduate Program: The Victorian Government graduate program features a dedicated pathway for people with Disability and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. These pathways provide supportive entry points for participants and managers. In 2025, we plan to expand these streams to include Special Measures and Sensitive Roles, further diversifying our early career programs.
    4. Science Graduate Program: While the Science Graduate program does not have specific pathways due to its smaller size, we actively attract and support candidates through the recruitment process. This includes outreach efforts, adjustments, and targeted feedback to candidates, even if they are unsuccessful in securing a position. This approach has led to DEECA being an employer of choice for graduates.

#### Evaluation of Success

One of the primary measures of success is achieving a consistent intake of 20% women graduates and interns from intersectional backgrounds in DEECA's employment programs by 2025. This target reflects our proactive efforts to ensure a balanced and representative workforce. As we continue to improve our data collection systems on diversity attributes, we hope to further progress towards this target.

### **Action 21** – Develop a ‘Pipeline Plan’ to increase the number of women studying STEM subjects at Secondary School level, and surveying, spatial and valuing pathways.

#### Responsible

N/A

#### Timeline

N/A

#### Status

Void/cancelled.

#### Status Description

This action was originally assigned to Land Use Victoria, which has since moved to the Department of Transport (DTP) following a Machinery of Government (MoG) change. We plan to revisit this action and explore opportunities to leverage existing programs targeting women in STEM. Any updates will be communicated to the Commission and reflected in future progress reports on the GEAP.

#### Evaluation of Success

Not applicable.

### **Action 22** – Undertake regular deep-dive analysis into areas with the highest gender segregation to identify issues, prioritise meaningful action, and track progress.

#### Responsible

Culture, Change & Capability – Bushfire and Forest Services Group, Diversity and Inclusion.

#### Timeline

2021 – 2025

#### Status

Ongoing.

#### Status Description

We have made substantial progress in addressing gender segregation through a series of strategic initiatives and tools:

Status Update:

* + 1. The Bushfire and Forest Services (BFS) Group's Gender Equity Research Project has yielded valuable insights into gender-related challenges within the organisation.
    2. PowerBI Reports are being developed with a specific focus on deployments and Emergency Role Development Plans which provide the department with data-driven insights to address gender segregation effectively.
    3. The Annual Comparison report, which evaluates emergency management capability across the state, now includes a gender breakdown for each role. This enhancement has been pivotal in identifying areas with pronounced gender segregation.
    4. Our efforts to develop the FFMVic Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes Framework have progressed significantly, with a particular emphasis on addressing gender segregation in areas such as Duty Officer rosters.
    5. Our active participation in the AFAC Champions of Change reporting program underscores our commitment to transparency and accountability in tackling gender segregation.

These collective initiatives demonstrate our commitment to proactively combatting gender segregation, prioritising impactful actions, and systematically tracking our progress within the organisation.

#### Evaluation of Success

The success of this action can be measured through several key outcomes:

* + 1. Delivery of the BFS Gender Equity Research Report: The successful delivery of the report, followed by proposed actions, signifies a critical milestone. This outcome demonstrates our commitment to research-backed strategies for achieving gender equality. Additionally, clearly identifying and effectively tracking targeted interventions based on data-driven insights, has resulted in measurable progress.
    2. Regular Progress Reporting: Progress reports to senior leadership on a regular basis represents a commitment to transparency and accountability. Success is reflected in the consistent and informative reporting on the status of gender equality efforts to ensure we stay on course.

## Indicator 7

Gendered segregation within the workplace.

### **Action 19** – Build leadership capability to overcome mindsets perpetuating gender discrimination.

#### Responsible

Culture, Change & Capability - Bushfire and Forest Services Group Diversity and Inclusion.

#### Timeline

2021-2025

#### Status

Ongoing.

#### Status Description

Our leadership training to date has yielded positive outcomes, fostering a more inclusive and equitable organisational culture, and actively mitigating gender discrimination mindsets among leaders in highly gender segregated areas of the business.

Status Update: Implementing inclusive leadership training was pivotal in progressing this action. DEECA's Bushfire and Forest Services Group successfully delivered unconscious bias training to approximately 400 leaders across the organisation, including partners Parks Victoria, VicForests, and Melbourne Water. This training, conducted as part of the Inclusion Safety program, was extensive involving around 20 hours of interaction for each of the 330 participants (out of the 400) who 'graduated' from the program.

#### Evaluation of Success

A notable success of the program was the significant male representation, with over 70% male participation. We encouraged groups to match the overall gender balance within their regions/agencies. This highlighted the commitment to involving male leaders as allies in driving gender equality outcomes. The training program also resulted in the implementation of over 1000 'inclusion actions' throughout the Bushfire and Forest Services Group.

This demonstrates tangible progress in equipping leaders with the capability, confidence, and tools to uncover biases that perpetuate gender inequality. The success of the Inclusion Safety program was also acknowledged at the prestigious 2023 Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council Conference, further highlighting the impact of our efforts in promoting inclusive leadership. Moving forward, we will continue to monitor organisational inclusion trends and employee sentiment metrics in the People Matter Survey.

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# **Resourcing your GEAP**

## Allocation of resources to implement the strategies and measures in your GEAP

DEECA's GEAP is led by a VPS 5 Strategy and Program Lead, Diversity and Inclusion (1FTE) and supported by a VPS 4 Advisor, Policy Development (1 FTE). The Strategy and Program Lead role reports to the Manager, Diversity and Inclusion, and is focused on the development and delivery of the department's GEAP and Gender Impact Assessments (GIA). Along with the Advisor, Policy Development, they also support broader diversity and inclusion initiatives within DEECA.

Machinery of government changes and internal resourcing constraints have impacted our capacity to deliver on our GEAP and GIA actions as per the timeframes initially planned in 2021 - 2023. To address this, we are expanding our team, ensuring that we are positioned well to deliver on our GEAP and GIA committments 2024 and beyond.

DEECA prioritises embedding GIAs into its public policies, programs, and services to ensure they positively affect the community. To streamline this process, we've invested in the design and development of a GIA app, a digital tool to automate and centralize GIAs, enhancing efficiency and accuracy. Additionally, we support this technological advancement with expert-led GIA training, reinforcing our commitment to gender-inclusive practices.



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