

FRV Gender Equality Action Plan 2022 - 2025

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Fire Rescue Victoria acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as traditional custodians of the lands on which we live and work and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

Message from the Fire Rescue Commissioner

It gives me great pleasure to present Fire Rescue Victoria's first *Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025* (GEAP). The GEAP provides us with an opportunity to create the FRV we want for our future – a modern and contemporary fire and rescue service that is inclusive and represents the community we serve.

The engagement and input from our employees and employee representatives has directly shaped the objectives and priority actions identified in our plan. It is important that this plan recognises the experiences of our people. By applying an intersectional lens, the plan outlines our journey towards gender equality, as a modern fire and rescue service that meets the needs of all Victorians.

The GEAP aligns with our organisation wide draft FRV Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan. It also aligns with, complements and will bring to life our FRV Values. The GEAP provides us with an opportunity to create the FRV we want for our future – a modern and contemporary fire and rescue service. Together, this will enable FRV to attract, retain and develop a workforce that is reflective of the community we serve, and responsive to the needs of all Victorians.

Victoria's fire services have a proud history of serving the community. When reflecting on this history and how it connects with our current state of gender equality, it is important to acknowledge that it was only in the late 1980s – 1990s where women were first able to become career firefighters in Victoria. We therefore recognise that our current state of gender equality stems from a range of complex factors that have intersected, including societal and other factors that have been out of our control. The GEAP represents our opportunity to take control of this narrative and to create the FRV we want for our future.

FRV fully supports the aims of the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)* and the goal of improving gender equality for our employees and in the services we provide to the Victorian community. All FRV members have a role to play in assisting us to achieve our gender equality commitments. We're confident, that if we all work together, we will achieve a respectful, safe and inclusive environment for all.



Ken Block
Commissioner
Fire Rescue Victoria

About Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) is a new organisation, established on 1 July 2020 and builds on the accomplishments of Victoria's fire and rescue services that have been delivered to the community for more than a century.

FRV Purpose

Our purpose is to keep Victorian communities safe from fire and other emergencies.

We achieve this through:

- driving systemic change to the built environment through reforms to building design, regulations and legislation, and
- educating the community through fire prevention programs that improve community safety and build resilience.

FRV People

FRV consists of 85 fire and rescue stations across metropolitan Melbourne, the greater metropolitan area and major Regional centres. FRV has over 4,500 operational and corporate employees, from all walks of life. As a career firefighter in Victoria, no shift is the same. This is a role best suited to people with a genuine desire to serve their community. There are career pathways, regardless of your previous experience or background. FRV's corporate and technical employees deliver vital work alongside firefighters to keep the community safe. A wide range of opportunities are on offer across many business units.

We work as one in the emergency services sector, working proudly with other agencies, including the Country Fire Authority (CFA), in response to fires, complex rescues, road crashes, emergency medical calls and hazardous chemical spills. We aim to improve firefighter and community health, safety and wellbeing by:

- increasing community resilience by prioritising safety
- providing a safer built environment
- enhancing safety through legislation, regulation and policy reform
- providing advice to major community projects, developments and precincts to ensure safety is prioritised
- improving safety through strategic partnerships including government departments, partner agencies, key stakeholders, business and the community
- coordinating multi-departmental expertise and advice to maximise community and firefighter safety, and
- advocating for safety on behalf of the Victorian community.

Our people are highly trained and ready to respond to emergencies across Victoria, Australia, and the world.

The Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)

On 31 March 2021 an important milestone for gender equality in Victoria was achieved with the commencement of the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)* (the GE Act).

The purpose of the GE Act is to ensure that organisations, including FRV, take positive action towards workplace gender equality and promote gender equality in policies, programs and services. The GE Act also recognises that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.

The GE Act requires FRV to:

- Undertake Gender Impact Assessments on any new policy, service or program that has a direct and significant impact on the public
- Complete a workplace gender audit analysis
- Develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan
- Provide regular progress reports to the Gender Equality Commissioner

Some Key Concepts

What is Gender Equality?

The GE Act defines this as “**equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes between persons of different genders.**”

You should be free to develop your personal abilities, pursue professional careers and make life choices free from gender stereotypes, roles or prejudices. Gender equality is a human right and a precondition to social justice. Removing limiting gendered expectations creates psychologically safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces.

Gender Equality Doesn't Impact Everyone in the Same Way

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

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

In the spirit of self-determination, **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees** together with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, are best placed at the centre of this work to ensure initiatives are culturally appropriate and addressing the unique barriers of racism and sexism experienced by our First Nations people. FRV is committed to strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal communities, building culturally safe workplaces and increasing Aboriginal employment. We demonstrate this commitment through our 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

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

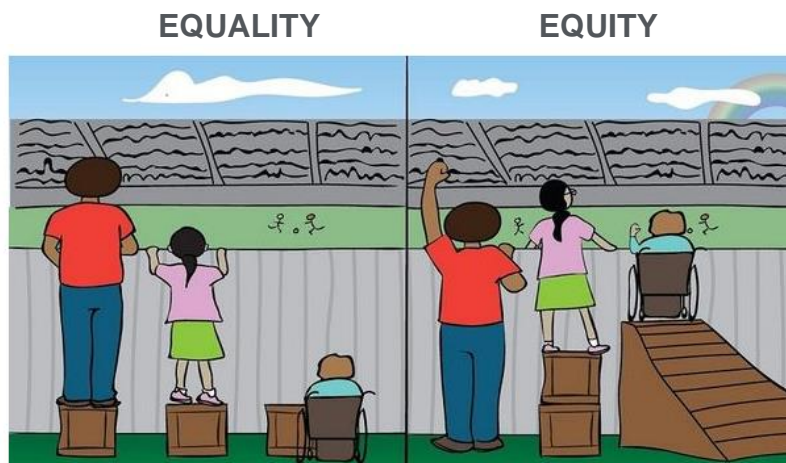
Employees with disability can face various attitudinal and environmental barriers hindering their full potential. FRV has committed to offer meaningful employment opportunities that are equally accessible for people with differing abilities.¹

The difference between equality and equity

Equality is treating every individual in the same way, irrespective of requirements and circumstances. The problem is that equal treatment of everyone can only promote fairness if everyone starts from the same place, which is traditionally not the case for those who belong to traditionally marginalised groups.

Equity provides everyone with what they need to be successful. It involves treating everyone fairly, based on their requirements and circumstances. Some examples include: providing workplace adjustments for FRV employees, creating specific support groups, special measures positions, employment programs for specific groups of people, and providing mentoring and/or sponsorship opportunities for specific groups of people who are traditionally marginalised.

Figure 1: The difference between equality and equity



A version of the equality vs. equity picture that highlights the importance of inclusion of people with disabilities. Image courtesy [Maryam Abdul-Kareem](#).

¹ Adapted for FRV from 'Equal, Safe and Strong – Victoria Police Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2030

FRV Organisational Maturity

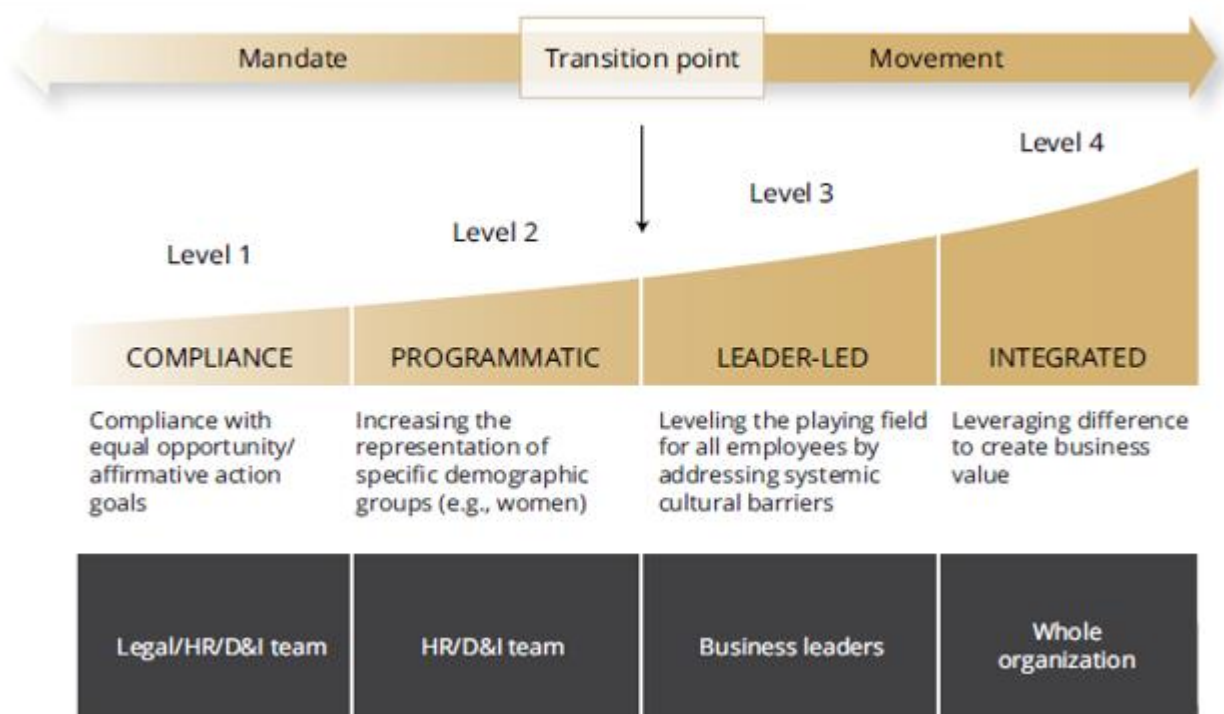
Organisations typically go through a maturity process in their approach to Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) more broadly (see Figure 2 below).

Being a new organisation, in 2022, FRV's focus is on being compliant with relevant legislation and prioritising a small number of initiatives that will create solid foundations for our future success.

Our aim is to work towards reaching the "transition point" in coming years.

Given that FRV is currently at a foundational level of organisational maturity, our initiatives need to be aligned to this level. Over time, we want to move towards the transition point, where we see this work going from being led by Human Resources to being leader led, and eventually led by the whole organisation.

Figure 2: Deloitte diversity and inclusion maturity model



Baseline Workplace Gender Audit

In line with the requirements of the GE Act, FRV has undertaken a baseline workplace gender audit, for the period of 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

The purpose of the audit is to establish a baseline of workplace gender equality from which to build from, measured against seven (7) key indicators as outlined in the GE Act (detailed explanation of each indicator is provided in **Appendix A**):

1. Gender composition at all levels of the workforce
2. Gender composition of governing body
3. Gender pay gap
4. Workplace sexual harassment
5. Recruitment and Promotion
6. Leave and Flexibility
7. Gendered Workforce Segregation

The workplace gender audit consists of two components that enable organisations to gain a holistic understanding of gender representation and employee experience in the workplace:

- Analysis of workforce data available from human resources/ personnel and payroll systems; and
- An employee experience survey – either the People Matter survey, or independently administered employee experience survey.

FRV completed and submitted Part One (HR systems) of the Workplace Gender Audit to the Gender Equality Commission on 10 December 2021. A summary of the key findings from Part One of the Audit are presented in *Figure 3* on the next page. In analysing these results, we again recognise the historical limitations and external factors experienced by the fire services in achieving a more balanced gender representation across our firefighting workforce.

In conducting our analysis, we also recognise that FRV and CFA are inextricably linked in delivering fire and rescue services to the Victorian community. Approximately 283² FRV employees on the operational employees agreement are seconded to CFA in a variety of leadership and management roles, i.e. Commanders, Assistant Chief Fire Officers, instructors, etc.

FRV does not currently participate in the People Matter Survey, administered by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. FRV together with employee representatives including the United Firefighters Union (UFU), will work on developing and administering an employee experience survey in line with legislative, FRV and industrial requirements in the period April to June 2023. This is intended to align with the first reporting period under the GE Act.

FRV workplace gender equality may have an impact on the CFA employee/member experience, leading to a community expectation of increased gender diversity in our FRV cohort, including those seconded to CFA.

² As at 30 June 2021

Figure 3: Key highlights of the Workplace Gender Audit



Meaningful Consultation and Engagement

FRV has an extensive internal consultation process to ensure effective outcomes for FRV. To inform the development of this plan, the following engagement activities took place:

- 7 x online and interactive employee focus group sessions, including 1 session for men only
- 60 participants
- 1 x session with employee representatives (union)
- 11 x one-on-one conversations with FRV Executive Leadership Team members
- Extensive consultation with employee representatives through discussions and feedback at Consultative Committee meetings throughout 2021 and 2022, with membership and attendance from union representatives – United Firefighters Union, Australian Services Union and Australian Mechanical Workers Union.
- Anonymous online form option for employees to provide feedback in response to the workplace gender audit results. This format was to offer a mechanism to collect feedback from employees who were unable to attend a focus group discussion, for those who attended a focus group and wanted to share additional feedback or who did not want to contribute in a public forum. Eight (8) submissions were received through this mechanism.
- Anonymous online poll to contribute ideas for solutions, as well as up-vote option to help with priority setting. This activity was planned for during the focus group discussions, however due to time constraints, was offered only to focus group participants after the workshops
- Engagement with FRV Strategic Advisory Committee and Audit and Risk Compliance Committee, as FRV's governing body defined in our workplace gender audit
- Organisation wide communication from the Fire Rescue Commissioner highlighting the importance of the GE Act and FRV's commitment to meeting the requirements
- Dedicated intranet page featuring information and updates on FRV's progress towards gender equality
- Regular engagement with the office of the Gender Equality Commissioner to discuss FRV's progress

A summary of key outcomes and themes arising from the engagement activities is provided at **Appendix B**.

FRV also has and has met its obligation for industrial consultation between unions and employees to ensure effective outcomes at FRV. Actions identified in the plan may be subject to the consultative committee process on implementation.

Case for Change

Gender equality is the process of being fair. It is a human rights issue that describes the provision of the same resources, opportunities and rewards to everyone regardless of whether they identify as being man, woman or a self-described identity. We recognise that gender inequality negatively affects people of all gender identities. Stereotypes or 'rules' about how specific genders should act and behave start in childhood and continue through our lives.

At FRV, in the words of those who shared their insights during our first round of engagement, it means:

SAFE & INCLUDED

It is feeling safe, respected and included; not standing out for being different; that no individual experiences or feels disadvantaged, or not included, based on their gender (identity); being listened to and heard – a point we arrive at where we see each other as people, rather than men and women.

SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

It is about getting the right voices at the decision-making table; having equality in all organisational layers, structures, norms and customs; identifying and, if required, removing barriers that restrict people of different genders.

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

It means equity in opportunity, access and treatment. It's about having a workforce that is representative of our community; a workplace that is free from conscious, unconscious and systemic bias; providing accommodations and support to enable people to do their roles and perform at their best.

EQUAL TREATMENT

Equality in all areas, mutual respect and understanding; we are respected; generally treating people equally but knowing we may need to do more for some groups for them to be treated equally.

Why Gender Equality is important at FRV:

COMMUNITY & SERVICE DELIVERY

We're a public service organisation, and it's important to reflect society; diversity increases resilience both in the community and at work; it makes FRV more capable, more relevant and more efficient to serve the community in every aspect; for FRV to succeed in future, the staff demographic needs to reflect the community it serves; we rely on the trust the community have in us.

INNOVATION

Gender diversity drives innovation and success; operationally, diverse groups are far more creative in the solutions they come up with; it improves not only our workplace experience, but also our work outcomes.

PEOPLE

Where people can be their authentic selves at work, we can really move forward as an organisation.

CULTURE

Gender equality is important for both for the individual and the organisation.

Our Commitment

FRV fully supports the aims of the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)* and improving gender equality for our employees and in the services we provide to our community. Through the successful implementation of this plan, we aim to:

- Develop a strong foundational understanding of equality, equity and inclusion that enables the creation of a psychologically safe, inclusive and respectful workplace
- Identify barriers, if any, to our systems and processes, enabling equitable access to leave requirements, development opportunities, recruitment and promotion and a reduction in the gender pay gap
- Breaking down unhelpful gender stereotypes that prevent FRV from being a contemporary fire service that is reflective of, and responsive to, the community it serves.

Gender equality principles

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

Our Approach

The actions and initiatives identified in this plan are aligned to the pillars in FRVs Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan:

- **Leadership:** Strong and courageous leadership, including role modelling desired behaviours and holding FRV members accountable for delivering on actions within this plan
- **Culture:** FRV is a psychologically safe and inclusive workplace where everyone can be themselves and feel confident to contribute diversity of thought, experience, skill and perspective
- **People:** We have a diverse workforce that represents the community we serve so we can be relevant and responsive to the increasingly diverse needs of Victorian communities
- **Community:**

Given the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) requires us to look internally at our own data, processes and practices in the first instance, initiatives clustered under this pillar will be added at a later date.

Addressing gender equality benefits everyone, including men, women and gender diverse people, and so we expect that the positive impacts of this Gender Equality Action Plan will be felt by all employees, not just women.

Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025

LEADERSHIP

- **What are we trying to achieve?**
 - Whole of leadership team responsibility for improving gender equality at FRV
 - Increased understanding of key concepts in people leaders
 - Improved user experience of, and employee confidence in, the complaints system
- **How will we measure success?**
 - Increased confidence in reporting inappropriate behaviour
 - Improved data availability for the 2023 Workplace Gender Audit
 - Quarterly reporting to ELT and the SAC/ARC shows improvement in a variety of diversity and inclusion metrics

No	Objective	Key Actions	GEI	Accountability	Year/s				D&I Strategy alignment
					2022	2023	2024	2025	
1.1	FRV ELT are held accountable for successful delivery against this GEAP	<p>This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of, and regular meetings of the GEAP Implementation Group • Quarterly traffic light reporting to ELT and requests for additional support where required • Requirement to complete Gender Impact Assessments on any new or up for review service, program or policy that has a direct and significant impact on the public, is embedded in to business as usual processes • Compliance reporting to Gender Equality Commissioner 	All	Executive Leadership Team supported by GEAP Implementation Group and the Diversity & Inclusion Team					1.1
1.2	Senior Leaders to help build confidence in the complaints system	<p>This could be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRV Commissioner and Senior Leaders regularly communicating FRV's zero-tolerance approach to bullying, sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, discrimination, and victimisation • Senior Leaders talking regularly to their employees about the importance of taking action against inappropriate behaviours • Sharing de-identified information about situations that demonstrate they take reports of inappropriate behaviour seriously and will take action to address inappropriate behaviours • Tracking completion of compliance Workplace Behaviour Training broken down by each Directorate 	4	Executive Leadership Team supported by Workplace Relations and Health, Safety & Wellbeing Teams					2.1, 2.2
1.3	Improvement in psychological safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of FRV Employee Voice Survey data broken down by Directorate to track and improve psychological safety over time. • Tailored plans to improve psychological safety developed and implemented for each Directorate. 	All	Executive Leadership Team, supported by Diversity & Inclusion Team and HRBPs					3.3
1.4	80% of people-leaders participate in bite-sized informal training on relevant topics and promotion of the importance of implementing an equitable approach at FRV.	<p>Indicative topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality versus equity • Bias – conscious, unconscious and systemic • Psychological safety and inclusive behaviours • Options to take effective bystander action • Everyday sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, casual racism, and microaggressions • Impact of privilege • Inclusive language and behaviours 	All	People leaders, supported by Diversity & Inclusion Team					1.3, 2.1

No	Objective	Key Actions	GEI	Accountability	Year/s				D&I Strategy alignment
					2022	2023	2024	2025	
1.5	30% of middle managers complete relevant in-depth training	Indicative topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Foundations • Inclusive Leadership • Aboriginal* Cultural Safety • Cultural Intelligence • Disability Confidence • LGBTIQ+ awareness 	All	People leaders, supported by Diversity & Inclusion Team					1.3, 2.1
1.6	Prioritise the development and implementation of a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) with the capability to accurately capture intersectional data for all employees and meets legislative reporting requirements under the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> (Vic)	This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender identity, including man, woman, self-described, prefer not to say • Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander • LGBTIQ+ people • People with disability • Culturally and linguistically diverse people 	All	Executive Leadership Team, supported by HRIS Team					3.3
1.7	FRV HR policies and ELT Briefs are inclusive of people who are traditionally marginalised in society and those with intersectional identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All HR policies are reviewed with an intersectional lens • Explore options to embed Gender Impact Assessments in business as usual, including FRV Doctrine, Project Management Office, and ELT Briefing Papers 	All	Executive Leadership Team, supported by Diversity & Inclusion and Workplace Relations Teams					2.3
1.8	Gender balance in governing body (SAC/ARC) maintained throughout the life of this GEAP	This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being mindful of gender balance when selecting SAC/ARC appointments • Gradually assessing other intersectional aspects of identity in SAC/ARC members 	2	FRV Commissioner					2.3

CULTURE

- **What are we trying to achieve?**
 - A psychologically safe and inclusive workplace culture where everyone is supported to achieve their potential
 - An empowered organisational culture, where people feel safe and comfortable to contribute fully to FRV's success
 - Improvement in organisational maturity and understanding that one size does not fit all
- **How will we measure success?**
 - Increase in number of reports of inappropriate behaviour
 - Increase in employee satisfaction of how the complaint was handled
 - Increasing number of employees participating in awareness raising activities
 - Increase in effective bystander action being taken
 - Increase in number of employees utilising flexible work and leave options to support their wellbeing
 - Establishment of a reliable gender pay gap calculation and reduction over time

No	Objective	Key Actions	GEI	Accountability	Year/s				D&I Strategy alignment
					2022	2023	2024	2025	
2.1	Scope, develop and implement a transparent complaints policy and system, enabling quarterly dashboard reporting to ELT/SAC/ARC on number of cases, open/closed status, time to close-out, outcomes, etc, overall and broken down by each Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the user experience and suggestions for improvement by interviewing those who have been through the complaints system (voluntary) • Possible establishment of Sexual Harassment Contact Officers <p>The complaints system will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal reporting options • Formal reporting options • Information on external reporting avenues • Clear information about the limits of confidentiality for each reporting avenue • Adoption of a person-centered approach <p><i>NB: Although the GEI is limited to sexual harassment, FRV will adopt a broader approach to this action and include data on bullying, other forms of harassment, discrimination and victimisation.</i></p>	4	Executive Leadership Team supported by Workplace Relations, Organisational Development and Business Partnering and Health, Safety & Wellbeing Teams					2.1, 2.2
2.2	30% of operations and 30% of corporate/ technical employees participate in awareness- raising activities designed to improve understanding of foundational key concepts	<p>Indicative topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality versus equity • Bias – conscious, unconscious and systemic • Options to take effective bystander action • Everyday sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, casual racism, and microaggressions • Impact of privilege • Inclusive language and behaviours <p>Bite-sized awareness-raising methods may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Station and workplace drop-in sessions • Behavioural nudges 	All	Diversity and Inclusion Team, supported by Organisational Development & Culture Team and all people leaders					2.1
2.3	Create an avenue for employees to ask inclusion-based questions / provide thoughts / suggestions / feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an agreed method for employees to submit questions/feedback/suggestions and then provide information on the questions and answers via a regular "Inclusion Corner" feature in FRV News. • Provide quarterly reports to ELT and Consultative Committees as to the themes coming through. 	All	Diversity & Inclusion Team supported by Media & Communications Team					2.3

No	Objective	Key Actions	GEI	Accountability	Year/s				D&I Strategy alignment
					2022	2023	2024	2025	
2.4	Develop and implement a transparent and consistent policy and process for flexible working arrangements for Corporate and Technical employees	<p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Policy and Organisational Practice that is aligned with the Victorian Public Sector Towards Common Practice Flexible Working Policy. • Development and implementation of a system to track and report quarterly on Flexible Working Arrangements broken down by gender and level • Good news stories shared with the workforce to raise awareness of the different types of flexible working arrangements available and how they can benefit both the employee and the organisation • Reviewing data to ensure that flexible working arrangements do not undermine career progression, pay or other development opportunities • Encouraging more men to take parental leave and to consider a flexible working agreement 	6	Diversity & Inclusion Team supported by Employee Advisory Services and Organisational Development and Culture Teams					2.3
2.5	Empower employees to leverage leave entitlements to support their wellbeing and work/life balance	<p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to monitor and track the number of people taking parental, carers, and family violence leave, broken down by gender identity • Liaising with those employees taking these types of leave to better learn about and eliminate barriers to taking this type of leave • Continued support of the Family Violence Contact Officers • Exploring ways to ensure that taking parental leave does not negatively impact on career advancement • Promotion of good news stories <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a <i>Staying in Touch Program</i> for those on extended leave for three (3) months or more (including WorkCover, sick leave, and long service leave) • Delivering training to people managers on Family Violence and how to best support employees who may be experiencing family violence 	6	Diversity & Inclusion Team, supported by HRIS and Media and Communications teams and the FRV Family Violence Contact Officers					2.3
2.6	Work towards a zero gender pay gap at FRV	<p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing systems and reporting to accurately analyse pay data to identify potential gender pay gaps, if any. • Raise awareness as to how the gender pay gap is calculated and some of the reasons why FRV may be experiencing a gender pay gap • Twice yearly reporting to ELT/SAC/ARC on the gender pay gap and initiatives that are being implemented to help reduce the gender pay gap 	3	Diversity & Inclusion Team, supported by HRIS and Media and Communications teams					2.3

PEOPLE

- What are we trying to achieve?
 - Increase in number of women firefighters at all levels
 - Transparent development opportunities and promotions
- How will we measure success?
 - Increase in the number of women and those with intersectional identity in operational and leadership roles
 - Increased engagement/networking opportunities for women
 - Increase in women accessing career progression and promotional opportunities
 - Reduction in regrettable exits across FRV workforce

No	Objective	Key Actions	GEI	Accountability	Year/s				D&I Strategy alignment
					2022	2023	2024	2025	
3.1	Work towards an increase of women firefighters	This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted recruitment campaign (e.g., CFA and Life Saving Victoria women volunteers) • Continued support and promotion of the Women’s Support Coordinators • Exploration of introducing additional tailored support initiatives designed to assist people in the workplace. • Updated training delivered to those who sit on recruitment panels, including developing awareness of personal biases and the merit paradox • Gender balance in firefighters who represent FRV at public events 	1, 5, 7	Talent Acquisition, supported by Diversity & Inclusion and Workplace Relations Teams					3.1
3.2	Increase in women firefighters at all ranks	This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-balanced recruitment panels at all levels 	1, 5, 7	Talent Acquisition, supported by Diversity & Inclusion and Workplace Relations Teams					3.1
3.3	Raise awareness of, and work towards eliminating, glass ceilings and assess for other types of ceilings (e.g., bamboo ceiling, pink ceiling, etc).	This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender/culture blind recruitment processes • Bias training for hiring managers • Running job advertisements through the “gender decoder” and similar decoders for other marginalised groups 	1, 5, 7	Talent Acquisition, supported by the Diversity & Inclusion Team					3.1, 2.3
3.4	Transparent selection processes for development opportunities	This may include review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional processes and courses, including candidate selection and training content to include people-management topics as well as technical aspects • Higher Duties appointments and associated processes • Selection processes for internal and external courses • Transparent selection of firefighters for participation in inter-agency drills 	5	VEMTC and Organisational Development and Culture Team, supported by the Diversity & Inclusion Team					3.1
3.5	Remove gender bias from the attraction and recruitment process and build capability for effective onboarding of new employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media campaigns that break down gender stereotypes for firefighters • Incorporate information on FRV’s Gender Equality work, during onboarding process for all employees • Create a professional engaging video about gender quality that is a compulsory station drill for all firefighters to view with questions included for discussion 	5,7	VEMTC and Organisational Development and Culture Team, supported by the Diversity & Inclusion Team					3.1
3.6	Better understanding of why employees exit FRV, particularly “regrettable exits”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue tracking the number and reason for exits in both operational and corporate/technical employees and report trends to ELT/SAC/ARC bi-annually 	All	Employee Advisory Services, supported by Strategic Workforce Planning Team					3.1

No	Objective	Key Actions	GEI	Accountability	Year/s				D&I Strategy alignment
					2022	2023	2024	2025	
	and implementation of initiatives to reverse any trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement strategies to reduce “regrettable exits” and assess if they are working over time 							
3.7	Women at FRV feel supported, have opportunities to network with other women, and have an avenue to raise issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the establishment of an all-inclusive support network for all women at FRV, regardless of whether they are operational or corporate/technical staff. Goal of the network would be to provide support and advocacy for women throughout FRV 	All	Diversity & Inclusion Team, supported by Media & Communications Team					3.2
3.8	Positively influence gendered stereotypes and promote firefighting and corporate/technical roles as being accessible to people of all gender identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop promotional materials that challenge gender stereotypes Trial tailored attraction and recruitment strategies to reduce gendered workforce segregation, e.g. women technicians, men in clerical roles 	7	Diversity & Inclusion Team, supported by Media & Communications Team					3.1, 4.3

Leadership and Resourcing the GEAP

To support activities aligned to our obligations under the GE Act, FRV's Diversity and Inclusion Team has established a Gender Equality Action Plan Implementation Group, which consists of directorate representatives with actions allocated to them under this GEAP.

When read in parallel with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, FRV's Gender Equality Action Plan empowers FRV members at all levels to take positive action towards gender equality. Building the capability of our Senior Leaders ensures they have the confidence, capability and authorising environment to make positive change across their teams and business units.

FRV's Diversity and Inclusion Team will support our leaders and key stakeholders to achieve the actions outlined in this plan, by providing support, education and guidance.

Measuring Progress

FRV is committed to gender equality. We will hold ourselves accountable for the actions and initiatives outlined in our GEAP. We will demonstrate our commitment and measure our progress through:

- Making our GEAP publicly available so our workforce and the communities we serve can see our commitment to gender equality;
- Reporting to the Fire Services Reform Implementation Monitor on our progress towards a gender diverse firefighting workforce;
- Being responsive to the Ministerial Statement of Expectations;
- Aligning our actions and reporting to FRV's Outcomes Framework and the FRV Annual Plan;
- Quarterly progress reports will be provided to the Executive Leadership Team and our Consultative Committees, by way of a briefing paper;
- Actions identified within specific work groups or directorates will be incorporated into business plans, to ensure quarterly reporting on progress is maintained;
- A detailed progress report will be submitted to the Gender Equality Commissioner every 2 years

Additional specific measures are outlined in the GEAP action tables.

This is a living document and we will be reviewing and updating this document at regular intervals between now and 2025. We therefore we welcome your feedback at any time.

Please send your thoughts to: genderequalityact@frv.vic.gov.au

Relevant Legislation and Supporting Guidelines

The relevant laws, standards and guidelines considered in the development of FRV's Gender Equality Action Plan include:

- [Gender Equality Act 2020 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Age Discrimination Act 2004 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)
- [The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Safe and strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy \(2016\)](#)

Contact

For more information about the GEAP, please email: genderequalityact@frv.vic.gov.au

For further information about Diversity & Inclusion at FRV, please email: inclusion@frv.vic.gov.au.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Workplace Gender Equality Indicators

1. Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

Women are often underrepresented in leadership roles, and overrepresented in lower level roles. This contributes to the gender pay gap and means that organisations may be missing out on the expertise and skills of women at senior levels.

By collecting and reporting data on gender composition at all levels, organisations can see where they could benefit from greater gender diversity and take action to support women into senior roles.

2. Gender composition of governing body

Boards, councils, committees of management and other governing bodies make important decisions about finances and strategy. It's important that governing bodies have diverse voices at the table.

The Victorian Government has made a commitment that at least 50% of all new appointments to courts and paid government boards will be women.

Consistently collecting and reporting this data will help ensure more gender-balanced boardrooms.

3. Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is driven by several factors, including the unequal distribution of unpaid care work, higher rates of pay in male-dominated industries, and gender discrimination.

By collecting and reporting pay data, organisations can see where pay gaps are largest and identify the underlying causes.

4. Workplace sexual harassment

Sexual harassment in the workplace is common in Australia, including Victoria. It causes financial, psychological, and physical harm to victim survivors. It also has a significant economic cost to organisations and the community.

Often, victim survivors don't make a formal report of their experience of sexual harassment. Barriers to reporting include fear of reprisals or other negative consequences, lack of confidence in the reporting system, and a limited understanding of what sexual harassment is.

By consistently collecting and reporting data on workplace sexual harassment, organisations will be more transparent and accountable to employees and the community. This will build confidence to report experiences of sexual harassment.

5. Recruitment and Promotion

Gender bias and gender stereotypes can influence recruitment, promotion and career progression practices. This means that women may not have access to the same career opportunities as men. Other forms of disadvantage and discrimination can also have an impact, limiting career opportunities for women from different backgrounds, such as women with disability or older women.

Data on recruitment and promotion outcomes can show where women's careers are stalling and help identify strategies to create more equal opportunities

6. Leave and Flexibility

Flexible working arrangements and leave entitlements including parental leave help Victorians of all genders balance paid work with other responsibilities. But structural and cultural factors mean women are far more likely than men to work flexibly, especially by working part time, and taking longer parental leave.

It's important that defined entities collect clear data on who is accessing flexible work so they can see what extra support might be needed. By encouraging more men to work flexibly and take leave to care for children or others, organisations can contribute to a more equal gender balance in unpaid work.

Family violence leave

Family violence causes significant trauma to a victim survivor, which can affect their ability to work. Victim survivors may worry about consequences if they try to remove themselves from the violent situation. This may include the perpetrator attending the workplace, or missing work to attend to housing and legal matters.

Family violence leave supports victim survivors to manage the impacts of their experience. It also promotes an organisational culture that does not accept family violence.

7. Gendered Workforce Segregation

Women make up a higher proportion of certain occupations and industries, while men are more represented in others. This gendered segregation is driven by gendered norms and stereotypes about what work is appropriate for men and women, as well as structural factors. Gendered workforce segregation reinforces gender inequality and widens the pay gap, as the average pay is lower in industries and occupations dominated by women.

Organisations can use data on their workforce composition to see which roles and areas have more women or more men and consider how to achieve better gender diversity.

Appendix B: Workplace Gender Audit- Focus Group Overview

Gender Equality Act Focus Groups Overview

As at 28 April 2022

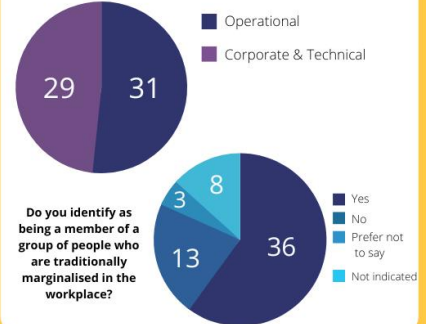


60 participants
11 ELT 1:1s
7 sessions
1 of 3 Employee rep sessions

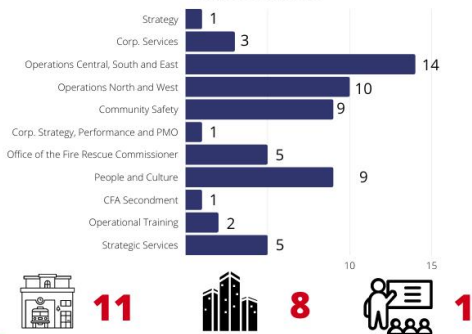
Gender Representation*



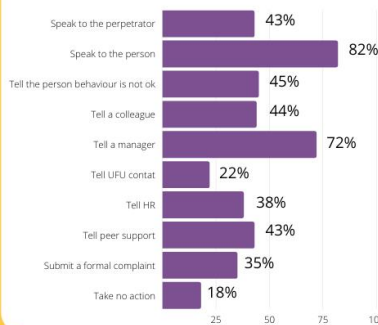
Role Status



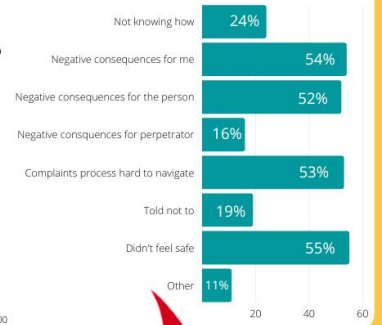
Directorate



What action would you take if you witnessed inappropriate behaviour? (n=43)



What would influence your decision to take action against inappropriate behaviour? (n=43)



Employee Voice & Emerging Themes

"Having the right people, structures, policies and culture to enable a diverse and capable workforce"

"Because we have a 'world leading service' and our approach to gender could be pioneering too"

"Every child I've had has cost me a rank in my career"

"For FRV to succeed in the future, staff demographic needs to reflect the community it serves"

"Equity is not villainy"

"They (Manager) try, but they don't know how to ask me what I need"

"I can't wait to get home to tell my Dad that women can be firefighters"

"Lack of knowledge of leave, complaints management process may prevent action being taken"

"I think men taking parental and carers leave is great and should be encouraged"

"Womens voices are not being heard through genuine consultation with the workforce"

"Catch low level inappropriate behaviour early - By stander action"

"The impacts of FRV being gender diverse are all positive"

"Everyone can bring something to the table"



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Gender Equality Act Focus Groups Overview

As at 28 April 2022



Employee Voice - Focus Group Contributions

"Why wouldn't you have gender equality?"

"Gender equality means fair and equitable treatment for all people, with a focus on providing equity and support for persons who have been disadvantaged in the past"

"Gender equality means a recognition that issues may exist that you are blind to"

"It is nearly impossible to recognise discrimination/inequality/inequity if you have never experienced it."

"The culture of the organisation needs to change. FRV has a conservative mind set. Staff education is very important and challenging people's thinking and assumptions"

"Organisational immaturity reflects in people's understanding"

"Old school entrenched thinking and unconscious bias"

"(We still encounter) societal ideologies that people have grown up with"

"Explore why things are set up the way they are, i.e. at a point in time to suit a certain need. We need to review regularly for change/ unintentional consequences reinforcing inequality"

"The organisation is engaging the workforce and providing a safe platform for discussion (rather than making assumptions and enforcing them)"

"Our teams are working hard to educate us and seek our feedback/insights"

"The conversations are becoming more frequent and less bigoted"

"Listen to our people. Encourage these conversations and implement the change required"

"We need better support for returning parents, mentoring program, consideration for progression opportunities to ensure that returning parents are given the same opportunity and are not disadvantaged"

"Equal access, opportunities, support, encouragement, and career progression regardless of gender."

"Equal freedom from harassment and judgment regardless of gender or other minority alignment"

"Deep-rooted traditions. While people acknowledge change is needed, changing entrenched practice is not always easy, and it can still be difficult for people to openly question and challenge"

"It is important at FRV that a workplace that embraces gender equality creates an environment that allows its people to be the best they can be without barriers and to provide the best outcomes to the community we serve"

"Leadership (need) to believe in what we are doing – not just because of legislative compliance"

"Middle management need to sell it to the organisation"

"Instead of focusing on recruiting women, we should be looking into our organisational culture and HR policies to make our work place more inclusive and safe for all, regardless of their gender identity or race."

"The fear of what will happen to your career progression if you bring issues to light that may be uncomfortable for people (men) to hear"

"Everyone knows who we are because there are not many of us. It can make women feel self-conscious, like we need to work harder on our fitness or our skills. We don't want to be the one woman who stuffed it up and make people think that other women won't be able to do it either."

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