

2022



Gender Equality Action Plan

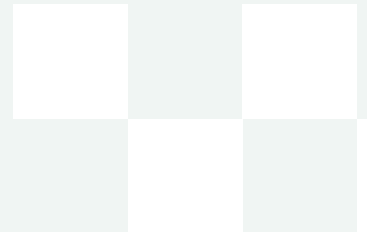




Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Victoria State Emergency Service acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands and waters upon which we live and recognises their continuing connection to the land, air, and waterways.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.



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Executive Summary

The Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) is committed to driving a truly inclusive and equitable workplace that enables our people to achieve their best, regardless of gender. Consultation with our Executive Management Team, key leaders, employees, volunteers and the Community and Public Sector Union, together with the results of the *People Matter Survey 2021* and the workplace data audit completed in November 2021 for the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, identified key areas that VICSES can focus to take positive action towards achieving this vision. These are to increase recruitment of women to leadership roles, normalise flexible work and caring, and address data gaps in our systems and reporting.

VICSES has identified three key themes to focus on over the next three years. These are:

1. Creating a diverse workforce,
2. Creating an inclusive culture, and
3. Building awareness and understanding of gender inequality in the workplace to identify and remove systemic barriers to achieving gender equality.

The actions included in our Gender Equality Action Plan and our partnerships with other Emergency Management agencies and peak bodies will enable our progress to gender equality.

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* sets out obligations for the achievement of gender equality for employees of defined entities. The commitments in this Gender Equality Action Plan will promote gender equality for our employees, and VICSES will continue to partner with our volunteers to progress initiatives that support our female and gender diverse volunteers. Together we are VICSES.



Definitions

VICSES recognises the importance of language when describing gender and gender equality. As such, the following terms have been defined below to create clarity and reduce miscommunication.

- Gender:** Refers to the socially constructed differences between women and men, as distinct from 'sex', which refers to their biological differences.
- Gender Equality:** Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, trans and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
- Gender Equity:** Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.
- Gender Identity:** A person's deeply felt, inherent sense of being a girl, woman, or female; a boy, a man, or male; or an alternative gender (e.g. gender fluid, gender queer, gender nonconforming, gender neutral).
- Intersectionality:** A method of studying the overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.
- Man:** A person who identifies as a boy, man, or as male.
- Woman:** A person who identifies as a girl, woman, or female.
- Self-Described Gender:** A person whose gender identity does not align with a binary understanding of gender (i.e. identifies with neither female or male genders; or with both). Also described as gender diverse.
- VICSES Member:** The term 'member' is used to describe both the VICSES employee and volunteer workforce, and VICSES recognises the vital contribution of all its members and many of the actions outlined in this Gender Equality Action Plan are inclusive of all VICSES members.

References:

- Safe and strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy
- American Psychological Association. (2015). Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People. *American Psychologist*, 70(9), 832-864. doi.org/10.1037/a0039906
- American Psychological Association. (2015). *APA dictionary of psychology* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Principles of the Gender Equality Act 2020

The following principles are outlined in the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (the Act) (Part 1, section 6) and have been used as a guide throughout VICSES's approach to completing the Gender Equality Audit and in creating the below Gender Equality Action Plan.

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.

In line with the Act's principles, VICSES's vision is to create a culture of gender equality and more broadly of authentic diversity and inclusion. VICSES also recognises the compounding nature of intersectional factors and aims to continually identify and eliminate barriers to all people engaging with and finding success within VICSES.

A note on volunteer inclusion

The 2022 VICSES Gender Equality Action Plan focuses on employee data, in accordance with our obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

However, VICSES would like to acknowledge our intention for all future Action Plans to be inclusive of both employee and volunteer data, experience, and actions. This is because VICSES values the diversity and success of all our workforces.

VICSES would like to acknowledge that many of its current 2022 actions are already inclusive of volunteers, including proposed system improvements, such as better diversity data capture, as well as development and culture-focused actions.

These volunteer-inclusive actions will be highlighted below to emphasise VICSES's commitment to the diversity and inclusion of all members.

1. Meaningful consultation and engagement

In early 2021, VICSES engaged Right Lane Consulting to facilitate a process of consultation to support development of the VICSES GEAP. This consultation consisted of:

- An Executive check in
- Interviews with key leaders
- A survey for Gender Equality Workshop participants
- Facilitation of two Gender Equality Workshops

Prior to the Gender Equality Workshops, participants were asked to respond to a Slido poll to identify the key workshop topics. 24 (61%) respondents completed the survey. In response to the question 'Which of the following areas do you think VICSES most needs to improve, to progress gender equality at VICSES?', 46% of respondents answered 'Support, promote and retain women' and 33% said 'Address inappropriate behaviour, including sexual harassment'.

Two Gender Equality Workshops were held on 24 and 30 March 2021 and brought together 39 VICSES members that included key leaders and VICSES Gender Equality Champions. The top two responses from the survey above became themes for the workshop. During the workshop, participants were asked to identify a moonshot statement of what success looks like by 2025 for each of these themes. These statements and the specific actions identified to achieve success have been used to develop this GEAP.

The themes and actions set out in this action plan have been provided to the following groups for consultation, and their feedback has been incorporated.

- VICSES Board Committee - People Culture and Remuneration
- VICSES Executive Management Team
- VICSES Senior Managers Forum
- Staff Consultative Forum with Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) representatives and delegates
- VICSES Gender Equality Champions

At each of these forums, the GEAP was provided in advance for review and discussion invited at the meetings. Feedback was collated and considered when finalising the GEAP.

We will consult with our volunteer groups including the *Women in Rescue* working group and the *Emergency Management Pride Network Victoria* as we develop and implement the strategies and actions outlined in this GEAP.

To mitigate the risks of causing harm and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our employees that participated in this consultation, support mechanisms were communicated before, during and after each session including availability of the Employee Assistance Program, access to VICSES Psychologists, and the grievance reporting process to People and Organisation Development.

2. Case for change

VICSES is committed to driving a truly inclusive and equitable workplace that enables our people to achieve their best, regardless of gender. We believe strongly in the value of a diverse workforce in driving better reputational, cultural and employee and volunteer experience outcomes.

VICSES will undergo honest and transparent examination of its organisation and practices. Key to this will be to clearly define our success measures. In doing so, it is hoped that we will have a defined baseline from which to build, improve, and celebrate a culture of gender equality.

Positively, the above analyses have shown that some indicators of gender equality are being met, namely the high volume of women in senior leadership and board positions. However, there is still progress to be made to create a universally positive and sustainable culture of gender equality. VICSES currently has a disproportionate number of men compared to women and people with a self-described gender in full time ongoing leadership positions, particularly in our specialist operations leadership roles.

Of the 52 leadership roles at VICSES – CEO, Director, Manager – 35 (67%) are occupied by men and 17 (33%) by women.

This remains the case when considering employment of women across age ranges. Men occupy more leadership roles across each age range, while women occupy more full-time ongoing staff roles up to the age of 45 years, and then men hold higher numbers of ongoing roles from 45+ years of age. Women, however, hold the vast majority (94%) of part time roles compared to men (6%). Notably, no women that occupy leadership positions are employed part time.

VICSES aspires to recruit, support, promote and retain women and people of all gender identities to become a leader in diversity and the Emergency Management Agency of choice. The success of this goal would not only eliminate barriers to the long-term success of all our valued staff but would ultimately help VICSES provide better community support and engagement to all Victorians, achieving our core vision of creating safer communities together.

To achieve this aspiration, we need to review our recruitment practices and assumptions, removing barriers to recruitment and career progression pathways to increase the appointment of women and people with self-described genders, particularly to leadership and specialist operations roles across the organisation. We also need to consider how we are promoting and accommodating flexible work arrangements for staff of all genders. Our goal is to secure our female and gender diverse workforce in meaningful employment, so our workforce reflects the diversity of the Victorian community that we serve.

VICSES will create a workplace culture that is inclusive, collaborative, accountable and leverages the talents and diversity of our people, regardless of gender. We will support our employees and volunteers with an open and safe culture underscored by our Values with a reputation for zero tolerance of sexual harassment or discrimination. While our workforce data tells us we only had one reported case of sexual harassment in the reporting period, our employee experience data identifies that 7% of women and 18% of people with self-described genders have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. We need to continue to build on the work of the *Be heard* program and develop and implement our Psychosocial Health and Safety plan so that all staff feel safe to speak up about negative behaviours, including bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

The VICSES Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap sets a focus on four key diversity areas to enable real, sustainable, and accelerated change. The four key diversity areas are:

1. Gender
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
3. LGTBIQ+
4. Disability

The initiatives and actions identified in this GEAP build on the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap around gender and will foster an inclusive work culture and practices for everyone. This work will benefit all under-represented groups, and the workforce as a whole. An inclusive and diverse workplace is better for all of us.

3. Actions completed to date

As evidence of VICSESs commitment to a safe and equitable culture, several actions have already been completed that aim to support and empower a diverse workforce. These actions are seen as first steps, but work to lay a foundation of systems, processes, and resources that promote inclusion and psychological safety for all VICSES members.

These include:

- 1.** The launch of the *Be heard* program in 2021, which provides online resources, training, support and access to confidential reporting options. This program aims to target issues of bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment by educating and empowering our members, and has already seen over 50% of staff members complete the first stage of training.
- 2.** The VICSES Volunteer Conduct (regulatory review) process was revised in 2021. The process was rebuilt to better address the management of volunteer conduct matters under the current VICSES Regulations. It was built collaboratively with input from multiple member networks and volunteer stakeholders.
- 3.** Development of the VICSES 2020 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. The agreement has several unique provisions for VICSES employees and aims to improve diversity and inclusion across the organisation by removing structural issues that could previously have limited women and diverse people engaging with VICSES. Specific, these provisions follow two main themes:
 - a.** Increased flexibility and agility: new clauses allowing for improved flexible working arrangements and recording of ordinary hours of work have been added. This allows for easier negotiation of flexible work hours in recognition of other obligations employees may have. Additionally, a generous parental leave provision has been added, which allows for continued payment of superannuation while on unpaid parental leave.
 - b.** Increased attention to gender equality: an anti-discrimination clause ensures that every interpretation and application of the Agreement cannot be read down to the detriment of gender equality. Furthermore, employees can request review panels, consisting of leadership and Gender Equality Champion representatives, to review any organisational decision that might be seen as detrimental to gender equality.
- 4.** A Diversity and Inclusion page has been set up on the online member Hub to celebrate and communicate all D&I initiatives within the service. This page is a key source of connect, education, and support for diverse members.

4. Future strategies and measures

Analysis of the VICSES workforce gender audit and consultation undertaken across the organisation identifies three key themes for the strategies and measures VICSES will undertake to make reasonable and material progress toward achieving gender equality.

The three key themes are grounded in VICSES’s commitment to the continued improvement of our culture towards one whereby people of all genders, cultures, abilities, and ages will be able to thrive. They are:

- 1. Creating a Diverse Workforce; we will recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce
- 2. Creating an Inclusive Culture; we will create a safe, welcoming and inclusive culture where our people are valued
- 3. Building Awareness and Understanding; we will create shared understanding of gender equality and inclusion across VICSES.

These themes are also informed and underpinned by VICSES values.

Our values inform everything we do and were developed with a focus on true and sustained diversity, inclusion, safety and success. We are proud that our values align closely with and support our below gender equality action.

VICSES Values



We pride ourselves on our credibility



We are part of our community



Safety drives our decisions



Focused and adaptable



Together we are VICSES

The strategies identified have been mapped to the gender equality indicators in the table below.

Strategic theme	Gender Equality Indicator
<p>A Diverse Workforce</p> <p>Recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce</p>	<p>Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce</p> <p>Indicator 2: Gender composition of governing bodies</p> <p>Indicator 3: Gender pay equity</p> <p>Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace</p> <p>Indicator 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace</p>
<p>An Inclusive Culture</p> <p>Create a safe, welcoming and inclusive culture where our people are valued</p>	<p>Indicator 4: Sexual Harassment in the workplace</p> <p>Indicator 6: Leave and flexible working arrangements</p>
<p>Awareness and Understanding</p> <p>Create shared understanding of gender equality and inclusion across VICSES</p>	<p>Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce</p> <p>Indicator 2: Gender composition of governing bodies</p> <p>Indicator 3: Gender pay equity</p> <p>Indicator 4: Sexual Harassment in the workplace</p> <p>Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace</p> <p>Indicator 6: Leave and flexible working arrangements</p> <p>Indicator 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace</p>

A Diverse Workforce: Recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce

VICSES aims to attract, support and retain a diverse workforce, including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and ages.

Strategy	Action	Measure
Map and improve our current and future members experience of attraction, recruitment, development and retention	1. Implement a member life-cycle experience survey that has a diversity and inclusion focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Survey completed and administered to all members in 2022. ■ Analyse survey results to better understand the experiences of members in relation to attraction, recruitment, development and retention. ■ Long term goal: for all member's experience ratings in the survey to improve.
	2. Develop and implement strategies to enhance our attraction, recruitment, on-boarding and development processes for under-represented groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review of promotion and upgrading decisions over the past 24 months to identify any trends demonstrating unconscious bias, if present. ■ Review of policy and process guidelines around bias-managed recruitment and selection, such as ensuring there is equal weighting on skills and experience to qualifications. ■ Review of exit interview data to understand reasons for leaving and identify trends demonstrating barriers for women and diverse peoples. ■ Clearly communicate review findings to all employees and volunteers and include actions that will reduce any barriers to the recruitment and selection/promotion of diverse applicants. Ensure policy information is readily accessible. ■ A percentage improvement of diverse applicants being interviewed for vacant roles, including leadership roles.
	3. Develop and implement strategies to increase retention of employees, with a focus on increasing the culture of flexible work arrangements at VICSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review of all existing and/or upcoming position descriptions for a) capacity to offer flexible arrangements, such as job-share or part-time, and b) to see if language or requirement descriptions might act as a barrier to applications by diverse people. ■ Communication program to all employees to build awareness of flexible work policies, opportunities, and benefits (such as male parental leave, and flexible options for management). ■ Training for managers on the expectations and allowances for flexible work arrangements, with a focus on building awareness of policy and communication skills.
	4. Develop and implement strategies to increase retention through reducing the current pay gap between genders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review pay gap by pay grade to determine accurate depictions of the gap at all levels. ■ Review all positions to ensure equal pay for equal work. ■ Clearly communicate review findings to all employees and include actions that will reduce the pay gap and promote equal pay for equal work.

<p>Provide learning and development opportunities to women and gender diverse people across all VICSES members</p>	<p>1. Support the Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) Pilot Program: Sponsorship of Diverse Talent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communicate the program to employees and volunteers to build awareness of sponsorship opportunities. ■ Nominate and host a minimum 1 leader and 1 member to participate in the program. ■ Continue to partner with EMV to sustain and refine the Sponsorship program, to enable more members to participate.
	<p>2. Dedicated technical training for women and gender diverse people delivered by Women in Rescue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue and expand participation in Women in Rescue training and events across all of VICSES ■ Formalise and communicate the Women in Rescue training and events as a pathway to employee and volunteer leadership roles.
	<p>3. Rollout of a Future Leaders Program focused on preparing diverse talent for key leadership roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop and implement Future Leaders program to increase participation by diverse groups in leadership roles in Emergency Services.
	<p>4. Refine and communicate diverse career pathways available through the VICSES Career and Development Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review the VICSES Career and Development strategy to ensure that a range of flexible career pathway opportunities are possible, and development options are inclusive of diverse needs and availabilities. ■ Communicate the Strategy and diverse pathway options to members to build knowledge and promote personally tailored development.
<p>Positive delivery of responsibilities under the Gender Equality Act</p>	<p>1. Submit Gender Equality Data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gender Equality Data submitted to meet obligations under the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>. ■ Strategies and initiatives in the 2022 GEAP are developed and implemented with a continuous improvement focus to build on this work.
	<p>2. Implementation of Gender Impact Assessments across VICSES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development of training for management on administering Gender Impact Assessments. ■ Completion of actions identified through Gender Impact Assessments. ■ Communication of outcomes and any changes to all employees and volunteers through visibility of outcomes on the online Hub. ■ Long term goal: A percentage improvement in the volume of employees and volunteers responding positively to gender and diversity questions on future gender equality audits and Victorian Public Sector <i>People Matter</i> surveys.

An Inclusive Culture: Create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive culture where our people are valued

VICSES aims to consciously and proactively build a culture where diverse people of all social and ethnic backgrounds, and of all genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and ages feel supported and encouraged to present their authentic selves. Our goal is to create a culture where this expression of diversity is celebrated.

Strategy	Action	Measure
Culture roadmap with a focus on diversity and inclusion for all members	1. Identify desired cultural future state, including a focus on diversity and inclusion for members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Define future state cultural attributes that support a safe, welcoming and inclusive culture for all people; developed through consultation with relevant employee and volunteer networks to ensure attributions are relevant. ■ Survey to aim to measure attitudes, as well as equipment and environmental factors; such as uniform design and accessibility.
	2. Complete Culture Survey to measure and identify gaps in current state versus desired future state for diversity and inclusion at VICSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create a survey tapping into the identified cultural attributes. ■ Distribute survey to all members in 2022 and communicate broadly to encourage participation in the survey, highlighting VICSES commitment to confidentiality.
	3. Ongoing review and enhancement of diversity and inclusion initiatives in the cultural roadmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop and implement an action plan to enable achievement of desired future state cultural activities. ■ Communicate the action plan to all members and post the plan on the D&I page of the online members Hub to ensure visibility and accountability. ■ Schedule regular review of the implementation plan and include any new data from relevant reviews and surveys of staff/members, to ensure that activities remain relevant and comprehensive.
	4. Deep dive of <i>People Matter</i> Survey results – Qualitative Culture Review and improvement plan to improve culture & psychosocial risk with a focus on employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engagement of independent external to undertake a review of culture and psychosocial risk. Making recommendations for improvements. ■ Implement actions to address identified improvement to the workplace.

Strategy	Action	Measure
Drive culture & conduct improvements; targeting sexual harassment, discrimination, and bullying	1. Launch and communicate <i>Be heard</i> program to improve culture & conduct, removing sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying within VICSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implementation of the <i>Be heard</i> program initiatives to members to build awareness about sexual harassment, bystander intervention, and relevant policies and internal complaints mechanisms. ■ Continued communication of the <i>Be heard</i> program, to encourage more safe and confidential reporting of discrimination and sexual harassment, with commitment to acting on issues raised.
	2. Rollout and maintenance of <i>Be heard</i> training for all members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completion of <i>Be heard</i> training for all members. ■ Implementation of measures to track progress in reducing negative behaviour within the workplace.
	3. Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete VEOHRC engagement to drive improvement in culture, including best practice outcomes to reduce sexual harassment, discrimination, and bullying in the workplace. ■ Implement actions to address identified improvement to the workplace.
	4. Learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review of learnings from grievance case management and identification of cultural contributions to the experience of negative behaviours to better identify risk factors for discrimination and sexual harassment. ■ Review disparities between formal and informal reporting of negative behaviours, to understand barriers to formal reporting. ■ Ensure learnings are captured and communicated in future <i>Be heard</i> initiatives to drive a continuous improvement culture.
Improve our systems and processes to gather, report and measure diversity and inclusion across VICSES members	1. Understand current process and gaps for capturing diversity data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult with relevant staff and volunteer networks, and review exit interview and process data to identify gaps.
	2. Modify systems to ensure all relevant diversity data can be captured and reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review and modify/enhance HRIS system to ensure all relevant diversity data can be recorded and reported. ■ Review on-boarding processes to better capture gender and intersectional data. ■ Communications to all members encouraging them to self-identify along all diversity and intersectional areas, developed in consultation with relevant member networks. ■ Implement system enhancements for recording and managing complaints of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination to ensure a victim-centric approach to case management. ■ Increased data captured, generating better insights into member demographics and experience.

Strategy	Action	Measure
	<p>3. Ongoing review and enhancements of data, reporting and measurement practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify opportunities for ongoing data review and consultation with intersectional member groups to ensure needs are being met. ■ Regular reporting to Executive Management Team and Board Committee of negative behaviours as a standing workplace health and safety agenda item. ■ Communications to all members updating on diversity and inclusion outcomes, likely to be the online Hub.
	<p>4. Continue to refine the Volunteer Conduct process under the current VICSES Regulation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gather data on the current revised Conduct management process and report findings and recommendations for continued improvement.
<p>Facilitating sharing of best practices and cross agency and industry collaborations on diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>1. Maintain representation on EMV, Australian and New Zealand National Council for fire and emergency services (AFAC), Women in Emergency and other relevant agency groups to access and share information that will enable gender equality at VICSES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Active engagement with the EMV Events Project group on diversity and inclusion opportunities. ■ Active involvement in AFAC Gender Equality workshop group. ■ Active engagement with Women in Emergency.
	<p>2. Rollout of diversity and inclusion measures for all leaders in their annual performance plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify and establish core VICSES diversity and inclusion outcomes, through consultation with relevant member networks. ■ Identify relevant diversity and inclusion measures, to indicate progression toward outcomes, and link to performance plans and organisation reporting. ■ Develop and implement leadership development training across VICSES that increases awareness and accountability for the diversity and inclusion outcomes and awareness of new performance plan and reporting requirements.
	<p>3. Update our position descriptions template to embed our commitment to diversity and inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Design and implement a new position description template, with specific reference to identifying any historical content or accountability outlines that might act as a barrier to diverse people applying for the roles.



Awareness and Understanding: Create shared understanding of diversity and inclusion across VICSES

VICSES defines diversity as the willing and supported inclusion of people from all social and ethnic backgrounds, and of all genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and ages. Building an understanding, an awareness, and an appreciation of diversity across all VICSES employees and volunteers is a core goal of the organisation.

Strategy	Action	Measure
Diversity and Inclusion communication and events plan shared with all members	1. Implementation of an annual diversity and inclusion event plan to educate members and communities on the value of diversity, VICSES initiatives to improve diversity, and to celebrate diversity and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop events and training calendar, in consultation with relevant member networks, that promotes meaningful gender and diversity equality across VICSES. Events planned to increase participation from diverse member groups and across the organisation. ■ Regularly communicate the calendar to all members through the online member Hub and in email communications.
	2. Engage and support Emergency Management Victoria's events projects, e.g. LGBTIQ+ EM Pride Network and Women in Emergency Management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote diversity and inclusion events coordinated by external emergency services agencies on the online member Hub and encourage members participation.
	3. Update our external/internal websites and collateral to ensure that inclusive language is used throughout the site and our commitment to diversity is clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review and enhance the VICSES website and online member Hub to ensure language and images are inclusive and gender neutral. ■ Link VICSES values back to initiatives to improve diversity across VICSES. ■ Develop guides for members explaining inclusive terms such as diversity, intersectionality, LGBTIQ+, and host on the online member Hub.
Ongoing support and development for internal diversity and inclusion working groups	1. Introduce quarterly forums for the VICSES Gender Equality Champions to drive improvement opportunities in gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review the role of the Gender Equality Champions and explore options to incorporate internal advocacy and peer-support. Once defined, communicate clearly and ensure Champions are supported to meet role requirements. ■ Develop and implement a calendar of meetings and training events to maintain skills and information for Gender Equality Champions. ■ Monitor and review Gender Equality Champion engagement and representation, seeking applicants from volunteer and employee pools where necessary.

Strategy	Action	Measure
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<p>Ongoing support and development for internal diversity and inclusion working groups</p>	<p>1. Introduce quarterly forums for the VICSES Gender Equality Champions to drive improvement opportunities in gender equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review the role of the Gender Equality Champions and explore options to incorporate internal advocacy and peer-support. Once defined, communicate clearly and ensure Champions are supported to meet role requirements. ■ Develop and implement a calendar of meetings and training events to maintain skills and information for Gender Equality Champions. ■ Monitor and review Gender Equality Champion engagement and representation, seeking applicants from volunteer and employee pools where necessary.

Strategy	Action	Measure
<p>Training for all members to create understanding and awareness around diverse groups, importance of inclusion, unconscious bias and mindset.</p>	<p>1. All members to complete learning and development programs covering inclusion, gender-specific issues, disability, unconscious bias, micro-aggression, and mindset.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completion of <i>Be heard</i> training and other relevant diversity, psychosocial health and wellbeing training options for all members.
	<p>2. Develop and rollout a program on gender and family-based violence for staff, focusing on raising awareness and highlighting support options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development and implementation of a training development program across VICSES on gender-based violence, building awareness of risk and support factors. ■ Review and enhance the VICSES website and online member Hub to ensure information and support options on gender-based violence are visible and easily accessible, and link in with the <i>Be heard</i> program resources.
	<p>3. Rollout and continually enhance the Leadership Capability Framework across VICSES to ensure gender equality and diversity and inclusion content is embedded</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Roll-out of the Leadership Capability Framework, with communication to all relevant members about changes and updates to the framework. ■ Identify opportunities for ongoing review of the framework, in consultation with intersectional groups to ensure the framework remains effective.
	<p>4. Long term goal: Review and identify further training and development opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review training gaps, with a focus on identifying opportunities for capability and awareness raising regarding disability and/or cultural safety in the workplace. ■ Where development gaps are identified, develop a calendar of development/awareness raising activities, being mindful maximising participation through offering flexible delivery methods. ■ Communicate the training and development plan to all members. ■ For each training and development activity, develop it in consultation with relevant member networks to ensure relevance to intended audience.



Volunteer inclusive actions

To highlight VICSES's commitment to diversity and inclusion across both its employee and volunteer workforces, the following actions have been designed to support and improve the experience of volunteers as well as employees.

While detailed above in the over-arching plan, the following actions are inclusive to our employee and volunteer workforce:

A Diverse Workforce

Recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce

- Map and improve our current and future employees and volunteers experience of attraction, recruitment, development and retention.
- Provide learning and development opportunities to women and gender diverse people across employee and volunteer workgroups.
- Positive delivery of responsibilities under the *Gender Equality Act*, with an ongoing commitment to increased volunteer data inclusion from 2023.

An Inclusive Culture

Create a safe, welcoming and inclusive culture where our people are valued

- Culture roadmap with a focus on diversity and inclusion for all people.
- Drive culture and conduct improvements through our *Be heard* Program; targeting sexual harassment, discrimination, and bullying.
- Improve our systems and processes to gather, report and measure diversity and inclusion across VICSES.
- Facilitating sharing of best practices and cross agency and industry collaborations on diversity and inclusion.
- Leadership engagement and accountability for diversity and inclusion across VICSES members.

Awareness and Understanding

Create shared understanding of gender equality and inclusion across VICSES

- Diversity and Inclusion communication and events plan for employees and volunteers.
- Ongoing support and development for internal diversity and inclusion working groups, with employee and volunteer representation.
- Training for all members to create understanding and awareness around diverse groups, importance of inclusion, unconscious bias and mindset.

5. Leadership and resourcing

The VICSES Board and Executive Management Team (EMT) are committed to the achievement of the strategies and initiatives set out in this GEAP. To support this important change program, a dedicated Organisational Development advisory position has been introduced to the People and Organisation Development structure to drive these initiatives.

Commencing in February 2022, the Senior Organisation Development (OD) Advisor, supported by the Director, People and Organisation Development and Manager, People Culture and Development, will set the foundations of the gender equality work and diversity and inclusion work more broadly at VICSES, and undertake a gap analysis to identify the capacity building required to support the delivery and ongoing development of this GEAP.

The Senior OD Advisor will engage the VICSES Gender Equality Champions and work with them to further enhance their role as change agents. Regular meetings, training and support will be provided to enable this important function.

VICSES will establish a Diversity and Inclusion working group comprised of leaders, employees, and volunteers to monitor the achievement of the strategies and measures set out in this GEAP.

For the strategies in this GEAP to be successful and the measures achieved, a leader lead approach will be required. Leadership training will be developed and provided to VICSES leaders as part of the VICSES Leadership Capability Framework implementation.

The Diversity and Inclusion workgroup will partner with VICSES leaders to get key D&I projects that will enable the achievement of gender equality to be funded through internal funding mechanisms, for example, the *Be heard* program, Culture program, etc. This training will raise awareness of the barriers to gender equality and support continuous improvement to systems, policies, process and guidance materials.



6. Measuring progress

Our primary focus in measuring the achievement of a diverse and inclusive culture, will be to create clearly defined success outcomes and measures. This clarity will support objective and accountable progress towards an improved culture of diversity and inclusion for all VICSES members.

Success measures may include, but will not be limited to:

- Decrease in reported pay inequality
- Increase in the number of employees engaging in flexible work arrangements
- Percentage increased in members responding positively to culture and diversity and inclusion items on all surveys and gender equality audits
- Percentage increase in the participation and retention of diverse members across VICSES
- A short-term increase in reporting of gender and diversity related grievances, with a long-term and sustained reduction in reporting both informally and formally

Once clearly defined and communication, regular tracking and reporting of progress can be achieved. Measures for monitoring and reporting on actions set out in this GEAP will be incorporated into VICSES HR reporting and metrics. This will include:

- Organisational Reporting
 - A percentage complete measure will be used in corporate reporting to demonstrate the progress toward plan completion. This will be visible to all members, management, and the board.
- Executive Management Team
 - Key gender and intersectional metrics will be provided to the EMT and senior leaders quarterly.
- Board and People, Culture & Remuneration Committee
 - Progress report against key measures and any key risk and issues twice yearly through the People Culture and Remuneration Committee.
 - Quarterly HR metrics summary and insights report – which will include gender and intersectional data updates.
- VICSES Gender Equality Champions
 - Quarterly meeting of Champions, comprised of employees and volunteers, to review action progress and seek consultation as required.
- Staff Consultative Forum
 - Implementation progress reports to be included as a standing item in monthly meetings with the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) representatives and delegates.
- Annual Report - VICSES will provide an overview of progress towards improved gender and diversity & inclusion outcomes in our Annual Report each year.

Progress over time will be reported to the Commission biannually.