

Gender Equality + Workplaces

An overview of Victoria's Gender Equality Act



Did you know we can reduce violence against women in Australia by increasing gender equality in every aspect of our lives, including our workplaces?

But what do we mean when we refer to gender equality?

Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

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EVERYONE IS AFFECTED BY GENDER INEQUALITY - WOMEN, MEN, TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. IT IMPACTS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND BACKGROUNDS.

In 2020, the Victorian Government introduced new reforms through the Gender Equality Act to address this serious issue and support women and girls to be safer in their homes, workplaces and communities. Working together towards gender equality is important because:

- ✓ It prevents violence against women and girls.
- ✓ It is essential for economic prosperity.
- ✓ Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier.
- ✓ It is a human right.
- ✓ Everyone benefits from gender equality.

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IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER GENDER EQUALITY DOES NOT MEAN ERASING GENDER DIFFERENCES, BUT THAT PEOPLE'S RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOT DEPENDENT ON THEIR GENDER.

WHAT DOES THE GENDER EQUALITY ACT SAY?

From 31 March 2021, public sector organisations with 50 or more employees such as local councils, health services, universities and emergency services must begin reporting on what they are doing to meaningfully progress gender equality in their workplace. Any policies, programs or services seeking funding in Victorian budgets will also be subjected to gendered analysis.

WHY DOES THE ACT FOCUS ON WORKPLACES?

Workplaces are crucial to preventing violence against women not only because violence can occur within the workplace but also because workplaces can significantly influence our attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in both our personal and professional lives. By implementing programs and policies to prevent violence against women, workplaces stand to benefit through:

- ✓ Increased productivity.
- ✓ Reduced absenteeism.
- ✓ Decreased staff turnover.
- ✓ Improved staff health and wellbeing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Family violence costs the Victorian economy more than **\$3.4 BILLION** per year and gender inequality is one of the key drivers.



Australia's full-time gender pay gap is **14%**, with women earning on average **\$241.50 PER WEEK LESS** than men.



If the Act applies to your workplace, you must:

2021

31 MARCH 2021

- Begin promoting gender equality
- Begin gender impact assessments

30 JUNE 2021

- Assess the state and nature of gender inequality in your workplace through a workplace gender audit

31 OCTOBER 2021

- Submit your first Gender Equality Action Plan to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner

2023

31 OCTOBER 2023

- Submit your first progress report to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner

2025

30 JUNE 2025

- Assess the state and nature of gender inequality in your workplace through a workplace gender audit

31 OCTOBER 2025

- Submit your second Gender Equality Action Plan to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner

2027

31 OCTOBER 2027

- Submit your second progress report to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner

WHO CAN HELP OUR WORKPLACE COMPLY WITH THE ACT?

Even if the Act does not apply to your workplace, WHWBSW can:

- Present to your Board and or senior leaders.
- Provide one-on-one consultations to help answer any questions you have and work through any issues you might encounter.
- Run training sessions for small groups.
- Provide evidence-based resources and practical examples of how your workplace can meet its obligations under the Act.



ORGANISATIONS IN THE BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION ARE AT DIFFERENT STARTING POINTS WHEN IT COMES TO MEETING THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE ACT. THAT'S OKAY AND WHWBSW ARE HERE TO HELP YOUR WORKPLACE GET STARTED AND FIND THE INFORMATION IT NEEDS TO KEEP ON TRACK TO MEET THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE ACT.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Definitions, tools and templates can be found on the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector's website - genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au

A workplace equality and respect implementation guide and other resources can be found on the Our Watch website - ourwatch.org.au