



Fact Sheet:

Gender inequality in Australia

Across the world, evidence shows that gender-based inequalities continue to have profound consequences on the lives of women, men and gender diverse people (WEF 2021). 'Gender inequality' refers to the unfair distribution of power, resources, opportunities and value in society based on gender (Our Watch et al 2015). This unfair treatment leads to unequal health, social and financial outcomes for women, men and gender diverse people.



Examples of gender inequality

- A Gender Pay Gap of 14.2%, measuring the difference between the average earnings of women and men in the workforce. This means women must work an additional 61 days a year on average to earn the same as men (WGEA 2021)
- Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15-44 (Webster 2016)
- Australia ranks 48th in the world for gender diversity in parliament (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019)
- Women have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, experiencing higher job losses and reduced work hours as well as shouldering the majority of increased unpaid work such as childcare (Wood, Griffiths & Crowley 2021).

In Australia, progress towards gender equality has faltered recently, with the COVID-19 pandemic and its response worsening the situation for women. Prior to the pandemic, Australia ranked 15th in World Economic Forum's 2006 Global Gender Gap Index. However by 2021, this ranking had dropped considerably to 50th place (WEF 2021).

What is needed to advance gender equity in Australia?

Achieving gender equality means a world where women, men and gender diverse people are able to enjoy the same opportunities, resources, power and value in society. It means no one is disadvantaged because of their gender and is a fundamental human right. In order to achieve gender equality, action is needed to advance gender equity. If gender equality is the destination, gender equity is the road that leads there.

Gender equity is the process of identifying existing disadvantage and unequal distributions of power and resources, and then taking action to rectify this. It means understanding that in order to achieve a world where everyone is equal, we need to address existing gender-based power imbalances. It isn't simply a matter of 'treating everyone the same', but recognising that because of the current unequal playing field, more resources and attention need to be directed towards those who are disadvantaged so that the playing field can be levelled.



Equality



Equity

Source: MCPA Photos

A gender equity approach recognises that gender inequality does not impact all people in the same way. Sexism intersects with other forms of discrimination such as racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia compounding experiences of disadvantage.

For instance:

- Women with disabilities are less likely to be in paid employment and are paid less than both men with disabilities and women without disabilities (DPC 2016).
- Compared to non-Aboriginal women, Aboriginal women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence (Productivity Commission, 2016)
- Trans women experience higher rates of sexual violence than cisgender women, with trans women of colour at highest risk (ANROWS 2020)

Advancing gender equity requires considering and addressing how other forms of discrimination are also at play to ensure that no one is left behind. A best practice approach to advancing gender equity incorporates:

- the principles of effective health promotion
- an intersectional feminist approach

What is happening in the Barwon South West region to advance gender equity?

Work to advance gender equity is taking place across a range of settings in the region including local government, schools, TAFE and universities, community organisations, sporting associations and the business sector. Respect2020 is the collective gender equality partnership movement for south-west Victoria www.respect2040.com

Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West is the region's lead organisation for promoting gender equality. We support our region to deliver coordinated, best practice activities through the Respect2020 partnership and provide primary prevention capacity-building training, organisational development and expert advice.

Get in touch to find out more about how you can take action to advance gender equity www.womenshealthbsw.org.au

References:

- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2020). Crossing the line: Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Australia (Research to policy and practice, 14/2020). Sydney: ANROWS.
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (2016), Safe and Strong: A Victorian gender equality strategy, Victorian Government, Melbourne.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (2019), Women in National Parliaments <http://archive.ipu.org/wmne/arc/classif010119.htm>
- Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth (2015), Change the Story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia, Our Watch, Melbourne.
- Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2016), Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016, Productivity Commission, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- Webster K (2016) A preventable burden: measuring and addressing the prevalence and health impacts of intimate partner violence in Australian women. ANROWS, Sydney. (Compass, 07/2016).
- Wood, D., Griffiths, K., and Crowley, T. (2021). Women's work: The impact of the COVID crisis on Australian women. Grattan Institute.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2021), The Gender Pay Gap, www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap
- World Economic Forum (2021), Global Gender Gap Report 2021.