



Belonging @

South Gippsland Water

**Gender Equality
Action Plan 2026-2030**



Acknowledgement of Country



South Gippsland Water acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's First Peoples and the Original Custodians of the land and waters on which we live and work. We pay our deepest respects to Elders of all genders, past, present and emerging, recognising their enduring leadership, wisdom and guidance. We honour the continued cultural, social and spiritual connections that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain with Country, and we recognise and value the care they have taken to protect land and water for tens of thousands of generations. We also acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the first storytellers, whose stories, knowledge and traditions continue to shape understanding, identity and connection to Country. In the spirit of reconciliation, South Gippsland Water is committed to respectful partnerships that champion equality, inclusion and shared decision-making. We remain committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in our region to support gender equity and ensure their ongoing contribution to the future of water management, while maintaining their cultural and spiritual connections to Country.





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Statement of Commitment from the Managing Director

Gender equality is not only the right thing to do, it makes us a stronger and more effective organisation. Our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) demonstrates our clear and ongoing commitment to advancing gender equality and fostering an inclusive and respectful workplace. We recognise that gender equality is core to our values, performance and long-term success, and we are committed to embedding equitable practices into our policies, decision making and culture. Senior leaders actively champion inclusive leadership, support flexible and fair work practices, and promote a workplace where diverse perspectives are valued. As Managing Director, I affirm this commitment.

Gender equality is fundamental to who we are as an organisation and to how we operate. We are committed to leading by example, addressing gender-based barriers and ensuring all our employees have equal access to opportunities and a safe, supportive working environment. We want South Gippsland Water to be recognised as an employer of choice, one that attracts diverse candidates across all roles, including those historically under-represented in the water and wider utilities sectors.

The Managing Director and executive leadership team will continue to provide visible sponsorship of the GEAP, oversee its implementation, and regularly review progress against actions and outcomes.



We will ensure appropriate resources are allocated and will encourage accountability at all levels. Through this GEAP, our leaders reaffirm our commitment to transparency, continuous improvement and shared responsibility in building a workplace where gender equality is not just a goal, it is lived and embedded in how we work every day.

Managing Director
Robert Murphy

☒ I have reviewed and approved the submission of this gender equality action plan (GEAP) on behalf of my organisation, and I attest that the implementation of the GEAP will be adequately resourced as required under the Gender Equality Act (2020).





Making a case for change

Our Vision Statement

A workplace where all employees, regardless of gender or background, have equitable access to opportunities, are fairly remunerated, and can thrive in safe, flexible, and inclusive roles. We champion a culture where diversity is visible, leadership is accountable and gender equality drives both individual and organisational success.

Why Gender Equity Matters

Gender equality is important to South Gippsland Water because it directly strengthens how we attract, support and retain a capable and diverse workforce. It is not a standalone initiative, but a core part of building a high-performing, resilient organisation that can deliver for its community. Our data shows there are still gaps to address, including differences in representation across roles, pay inequities, and uneven access to flexible work. These challenges can limit career opportunities, affect employee experience and reduce our ability to fully utilise talent across the organisation. Addressing them helps create a fairer workplace where everyone has the opportunity to contribute and succeed. A more inclusive workplace also brings clear benefits. It supports employee wellbeing by enabling people to balance work, family and personal commitments, and helps reduce the impacts of stress or inequity. It strengthens recruitment and retention, challenges outdated role stereotypes, and fosters a culture where people feel respected and valued.

This work is closely aligned with our organisational values, including inclusion, respect and safety. Importantly, gender equality also has a broader impact beyond our workplace. It contributes to stronger, healthier communities and plays a role in reducing gender-based violence by promoting fairness and balance in relationships and systems. By continuing to focus on gender equality, we are building an organisation that is adaptable, innovative and one where all employees can thrive.





Reflecting on what we've Achieved and Learned

At South Gippsland Water, we've made a solid start in building a fairer and more inclusive workplace. We've introduced tools like our Gender Impact Assessment to help guide better decisions, delivered training to build awareness, and updated our Enterprise Agreement to better support things like reproductive health, family violence, and workplace safety. We've also strengthened our understanding of diversity and culture across our Board, leaders, and teams, including working with Traditional Owners to help us create a more culturally safe and inclusive organisation.

As we move into our next plan, we're building on what we've learned. One of the big takeaways is that looking at overall numbers isn't enough we need to understand people's different experiences at work. Our data showed that some groups, including women with disability, gender diverse employees, and women from culture, can face extra challenges when it comes to fairness, safety, and opportunities. That's why we're improving how we use data, so we can focus our efforts where they'll have the most impact.

We've also learned that leadership plays a big role in driving real change. When leaders set clear expectations and lead by example, it makes a difference. This plan puts a stronger focus on leadership accountability to help make sure fair practices are consistently applied. Our data also highlighted areas where we can improve, like increasing the number of women in technical and operational roles.

At the same time, we've seen positive progress with flexible work, including more people, especially men taking parental leave. We want to keep building on this by making flexible work a normal and supported part of working at South Gippsland Water.

We also know we don't have to do this alone. Working with others across the water sector helps us learn, share ideas, and stay connected to what's working elsewhere. Importantly, we've learned that training alone isn't enough to create lasting change. Real progress takes time, ongoing effort, and a willingness to challenge old ways of thinking.

This means supporting our people, addressing barriers when they arise, and staying focused on creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and included.

These learnings are shaping our next steps, helping us focus on what matters most and continue moving towards a workplace where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.





Development of our Gender Equality Action Plan

Our Approach to Safe and Inclusive Consultation

Developing our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) has been a structured and evidence-based process, grounded in a strong commitment to safe and inclusive consultation. We adopted a staged approach to ensure diverse voices across the organisation were heard, respected and reflected in the final plan. The first phase of consultation focused on understanding our workforce data audit. Findings were shared in advance with key groups, including the DIVE (Diversity, Inclusion, Values and Equity) Champions, Executive Leadership Team, and the People, Safety and Culture Board Committee. Dedicated sessions and confidential discussions enabled participants to explore the underlying drivers of gender equality results and identify priority areas for action. We also engaged employees from across the organisation, including those in operational roles, through one-on-one conversations and written feedback opportunities. Union representatives were similarly consulted and supported to contribute informed input.

This approach ensured consultation was conducted in a way that prioritised psychological safety, confidentiality and accessibility, enabling participants to share candid insights and lived experiences. It also helped build awareness and accountability by increasing understanding of the data, highlighting areas of progress and identifying where action was needed to address structural and cultural barriers.

Importantly, our data insights played a central role in shaping the GEAP. Quantitative workforce data, combined with qualitative feedback, provided a deeper understanding of contributing factors to issues such as pay inequity, access to higher duties, and differences in workforce experiences across roles. Consultation highlighted practical challenges, including how role design, overtime access and classification structures can influence equitable outcomes. It also validated areas of strength while prompting further exploration, such as ensuring there are no barriers perceived or actual to reporting inappropriate behaviours.

The second phase of consultation focused on testing proposed strategies and targets with all employees. Through an organisation-wide survey, participants were provided with clear context on how the strategies had been developed, supporting informed and meaningful feedback. Responses demonstrated strong support for the overall direction of the GEAP and reinforced the importance of practical, evidence-based actions, visible leadership commitment, and inclusive framing. Feedback from both phases has been carefully considered and directly informed the final GEAP. Ongoing implementation will be supported by a Gender Impact Assessment process and robust governance through established committees, ensuring progress is monitored, actions remain aligned to organisational priorities, and accountability is maintained.





Intersectionality, gender equality and pay equity principles

Considering Intersectionality

In developing our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), we have recognised that gender inequality does not occur in isolation. Employees may experience overlapping forms of disadvantage influenced by factors such as age, career stage, caring responsibilities, disability, and cultural background. These intersecting factors can shape access to opportunities, progression pathways, and overall workplace experience.

Our workforce data highlights structural barriers in areas such as participation in operational roles, access to flexible work, and career progression. These barriers can have a greater impact on individuals balancing caring responsibilities, transitioning through different life stages, or experiencing other forms of disadvantage.

To address this, we are redesigning roles to be more flexible and inclusive, particularly in operational settings. By increasing access to part-time work, job sharing and varied rosters, we aim to make these roles more accessible to a wider range of employees.

This approach helps create opportunities for employees returning from leave, older workers, and those managing health or caring commitments, while also challenging traditional workforce patterns.

We are also working to strengthen inclusive practices in recruitment, promotion and workplace culture. Promoting diverse role models and case studies helps challenge assumptions and reduce bias, while improved transparency and consistency in decision-making reduces the risk of compounded disadvantage.



Embedding Gender and Pay Equity Principles

Our GEAP is informed by a strong commitment to gender equity and fair pay. Analysis of our workforce data identified differences in remuneration across several occupational groups, as well as an emerging gap at senior leadership level. These differences are influenced not only by base salary, but also by access to overtime, higher duties opportunities, and progression pathways.

In response, our strategies focus on improving the fairness and transparency of all aspects of remuneration. This includes reviewing how higher duties and overtime are allocated and ensuring consistent approaches to salary setting and progression. We are also undertaking targeted audits of areas where pay gaps exist to better understand decision-making patterns and identify practical improvements.

Recognising that workforce participation patterns can influence earnings; we are reviewing processes to ensure employees working part-time or in non-traditional arrangements have equitable access to additional opportunities. This supports fairer outcomes regardless of working pattern or role type.



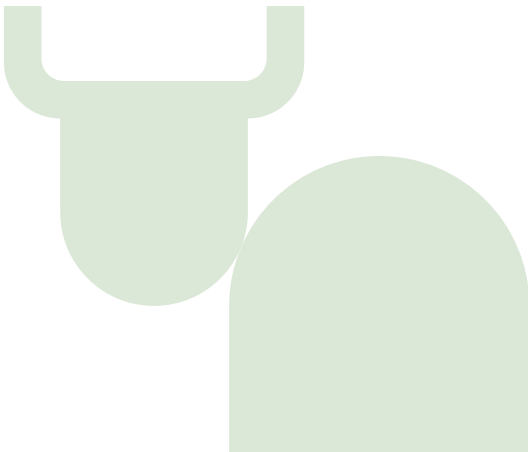
Intersectionality, gender equality and pay equity principles

Building Accountability and Capability

Achieving gender and pay equity requires shared responsibility across the organisation. We are embedding accountability through clear governance and by incorporating equity expectations into leadership roles. Education and guidance for leaders will strengthen understanding of systemic factors that contribute to inequality and support more consistent, equitable decisions. We are also engaging with broader sector initiatives and networks to support learning and ensure our approach reflects better practice.

A Practical and Inclusive Approach

Together, these actions reflect a practical and inclusive approach to advancing gender equality. By addressing structural and cultural barriers, improving transparency, and recognising the diverse experiences of our workforce, we aim to create a workplace where all employees have fair access to opportunities, feel valued, and are supported to succeed.





Understanding Our Data:

Identifying forms of inequality

Understanding Gender Inequality in Our Organisation

Our approach to gender equality starts with understanding what our data tells us. By analysing workforce trends, we can identify where inequalities exist and, importantly, the underlying factors contributing to them. This allows us to develop targeted and practical strategies that address the root causes, rather than just the symptoms.

Identifying the Underlying Causes

We recognise that gender equality outcomes are shaped by a combination of cultural, structural and societal influences. Traditional views about the types of work men and women perform continue to affect how roles are perceived, particularly in operational and field-based areas. These long-standing assumptions can influence who applies for roles and how career pathways develop, even when there are strong examples of people succeeding in non-traditional roles. Workforce composition, pay outcomes and access to flexibility are also influenced by how work is organised. Factors such as role classifications, overtime availability and the differences between office-based and field-based work all play a role in shaping employee experiences and opportunities. As a smaller organisation, opportunities for internal promotion can be limited. However, this also creates a valuable opportunity to focus on building capability, designing roles thoughtfully and ensuring fair access to development experiences. We also acknowledge the importance of roles that have traditionally been female-dominated, such as administration, human resources and customer service, and the need to consistently recognise their value alongside technical and operational work.

Challenging Assumptions and Building Awareness

Cultural norms and unconscious bias can influence how we view job suitability, the value of different types of work and the importance of gender equality. Increasing awareness and understanding across the organisation is key to challenging these assumptions. Through ongoing education and leadership engagement, we are working to create a more inclusive environment where all contributions are recognised and valued.

By addressing these underlying factors, we are better positioned to strengthen inclusion, support diverse career pathways and achieve more balanced outcomes across the organisation.

Key Concepts Explained

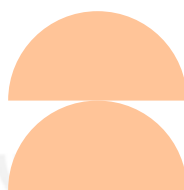
To support a shared understanding, it is helpful to clarify some key terms:

Occupational segregation refers to the concentration of different groups of people in particular types of roles or industries. This can lead to differences in pay, opportunities and career progression.

Structural factors are the formal systems and frameworks that shape how work is organised and rewarded, such as job design, classification systems and overtime rules.

Systemic factors are the broader patterns and behaviours that influence how those structures operate in practice, including assumptions about who takes on leadership roles or who is available for additional work.

Together, structural and systemic factors interact over time and can contribute to gender inequality if not actively addressed.





The Gender Equality Indicators

Diversity Demographics at all levels of the workforce 	At South Gippsland Water, building a balanced workforce means making sure women and men are represented at all levels, including leadership roles. We know that women are often underrepresented in senior positions, which can limit diverse perspectives and contribute to the gender pay gap. By regularly reviewing our workforce data, we can identify gaps and take practical steps to create a more inclusive and balanced organisation.
Diversity composition of the Governing Body 	South Gippsland Water recognises the importance of having diverse perspectives in decision-making roles, including boards and committees. A balanced mix of genders helps improve the quality of decisions and ensures a wider range of views are considered. By tracking and strengthening gender representation in these groups, we are working towards more inclusive and effective leadership.
Pay Equity 	South Gippsland Water is committed to ensuring employees are paid fairly for the work they do, regardless of gender. We recognise that pay differences can arise due to factors like caring responsibilities, industry trends, and unconscious bias. By regularly reviewing our pay data, we can identify any gaps and take action to ensure fair and equitable pay across our workforce.
Respectful & Safe Workplace Culture 	Creating a workplace where everyone at South Gippsland Water feels safe, respected, and supported is a top priority. We acknowledge that sexual harassment can be underreported, often due to fear or lack of confidence in reporting processes. By strengthening our systems, increasing awareness, and encouraging open conversations, we aim to build trust and maintain a workplace where everyone feels secure.
Fair Hiring & Career Progression 	South Gippsland Water is committed to fair and inclusive hiring and career development practices. We understand that bias and stereotypes can sometimes affect decisions around recruitment and promotions, which may limit opportunities for some employees. By reviewing our processes and outcomes, we can remove barriers and ensure everyone has equal access to grow and progress in their career.
Intersectional Leave Entitlements: Availability & Utilisation 	We support flexible working and leave options at South Gippsland Water to help employees balance work with their personal and caring responsibilities. We recognise that these options are often used more by women, which can impact career pathways and workplace balance. By monitoring how these benefits are used, we can better support all employees and encourage more equal access and uptake.
Diversity Segregation within the Workplace 	At South Gippsland Water, we want to ensure that all roles are accessible to everyone, regardless of gender. We recognise that some roles and areas of work are traditionally dominated by one gender, which can limit diversity and contribute to pay differences. By understanding these patterns, we can take steps to encourage broader participation across all parts of our organisation.

Diversity Demographics at all levels of the workforce

Understanding Our Workforce Data

Our workforce data from 2023 to 2025 shows steady, positive progress toward improved gender balance across the organisation. Over this period, the representation of women increased from 33.9% to 37.7%, while the proportion of men decreased from 66.1% to 62.3%. Although this change is encouraging, it also highlights that there is more work to do to achieve a more balanced workforce.

Flexible Work and Participation Trends

More noticeable change has occurred in access to part-time work. The proportion of women working part-time increased from 31% to 40.4%, while men working part-time rose from 8.5% to 10.6%. It is positive to see more men taking up flexible work arrangements, reflecting a shift in how caring responsibilities and work are shared.

However, women continue to make up the majority of part-time employees. This reflects broader workforce patterns, where women are more likely to take on caring responsibilities, and it can have longer-term impacts on income and career progression. It also highlights the ongoing challenge of ensuring flexible work options are available and accessible across all roles.

Ongoing Challenges

These trends point to some persistent structural issues. In particular, access to part-time and flexible work can be more limited in operational and shift-based roles, which are



common in trades and machinery-focused environments.

This can make it harder to attract and retain a diverse workforce in these areas, including people balancing caring responsibilities, older workers, or those seeking different working arrangements.

More broadly, our data reflects patterns of occupational segregation, where men and women are concentrated in different types of roles as well as an uneven distribution of caring responsibilities. These factors continue to influence workforce composition and access to opportunities.

Key Insights

By understanding these patterns, we can better target our actions. Increasing flexibility in operational roles and continuing to challenge traditional workforce assumptions will be key to creating a more inclusive and balanced organisation.



Diversity Demographics at all levels of the workforce

Snapshot of 2025 Data

Overall workforce composition: 37.7% women and 62.3% men
Part-time workforce composition: 40.4% women and 10.6% men
Senior leadership representation: 50% women and 50% men
These results show progress, particularly in leadership representation, while reinforcing the importance of continued focus on workforce participation and equitable access to flexible work.

Measuring Our Progress

Core measures

Focus on workforce representation, including:

- Overall gender composition of the organisation
- Gender composition of part-time employees
- Gender balance within senior leadership roles

Additional insights

Help us better understand workforce patterns, including:

- Gender distribution in operational roles
- Uptake of part-time and flexible working arrangements
- Representation of women, men, transgender and non-binary employees across all levels

A balanced approach

Ensures we combine high-level indicators with detailed insights, providing a clear and practical view of progress and areas for improvement.



Our Targets

Leadership Accountability

By 2027, the Executive will sponsor and report on at least two gender equality actions each year.

Success looks like:

- Visible Executive support
- Increased staff awareness
- Ongoing prioritisation of gender equality

Flexible Operational Roles

By 2028, at least 30% of operational roles will be reviewed for flexibility, with at least two roles implemented or trialed.

Success looks like:

- Flexible options in operational roles
- Improved access for diverse employees
- Stronger attraction and retention

Visible Role Models

Each year, share at least three employee case studies highlighting diverse roles and flexible work. Aim for ≥70% staff awareness by 2028.

Success looks like:

- Greater visibility of diverse role models
- Shifting perceptions of roles and caring responsibilities
- Increased confidence in requesting flexible work arrangements



Diversity Demographics at all levels of the workforce



Strategies	Accountability	Timelines	Indicators
Executive Leadership: Appoint an Executive Lead to provide clear leadership and visible sponsorship of initiatives.	Managing Director	Year 1	
Flexible Role Design: Review operational and technical roles to identify flexible work opportunities (e.g. part-time, job-share and rostered options) while maintaining service delivery standards. Aim: Increase uptake of caring responsibilities among men and attract a more diverse applicant pool, including women and older employees.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Years 1-2	Indicator 5, 6, 7
Internal Promotion and Awareness: Promote at least three annual case studies across internal channels (e.g. intranet, email, posters and site materials) highlighting non-traditional roles, male caregivers and flexible work. Ensure representation of age diversity and actively promote VicWater Able and Pride in Water initiatives across the organisation.	Organisational Development Lead	Years 1-4	Indicator 5, 6, 7
Collaboration and Sector Engagement: Engage collaboratively with key sector groups and initiatives, including VicWater, the GEA WLT the RAP Working Group, and the VicWater ED&I DISC or CoP Participate in a minimum of three meetings annually to support sector-wide diversity and inclusion outcomes	Organisational Development and Executive Sponsor	Years 1-4	Indicator 5, 6, 7





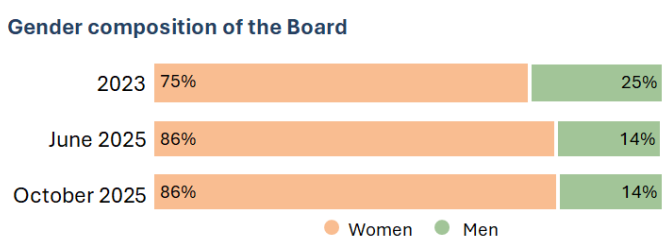
Diversity Composition of the Governing Body

South Gippsland Water’s Board composition reflects a strong and ongoing commitment to diversity. This aligns with the Victorian Government’s policy, supported by the Minister for Water, which aims for at least 50% representation of women on all paid government boards.

As at 30 June 2023, the Board comprised 75% women and 25% men, including the Board Chair. Following a refresh of Board membership and new appointments effective 1 October 2025, female representation increased to 86% women and 14% men.

Since that time, the Board has continued to demonstrate its commitment to inclusive leadership across the roles within its responsibility. The position of Board Chair, Deputy Chair and three Committee Chair roles are held by a female appointees, while the Managing Director, and one Committee Chair role are held by men.

Overall, the Board reflects a diverse and balanced mix of skills, experience and perspectives. As a collective, the Board of Directors comprises 86% women and 14% men, supporting strong governance through inclusive and representative leadership.





Pay Equity

Understanding Our Pay Equity Data

Our latest data shows that the overall gender pay gap has widened slightly, increasing from 5.8% in 2023 to 7.7% in 2025. While this highlights a need for continued focus, it also reflects a mix of progress and ongoing challenges across different parts of the organisation.

Trends Across Occupational Groups

The data shows growing pay gaps in several key areas. Among Professionals, the gap increased from 17.7% to 21.2%. Clerical and Administrative roles saw a shift from -4.1% to 16.1%, and Machinery Operators and Drivers moved from -1.7% to 20.2%. At the same time, there has been a significant improvement for Labourers, where the gap reduced from 44.9% to 1.7%. This positive change reflects the impact of targeted work to review and improve pay equity within operational roles.

Leadership Insights

At the senior leadership level, the pay gap has shifted from -0.8% in 2023 to 7.8% in 2025. This change has occurred despite equal representation of women and men in leadership roles. It reflects recent structural changes, including the creation of new senior roles that are currently more likely to be held by men.

Understanding the Drivers

Further consultation has helped identify some of the underlying factors contributing to pay differences. Access to overtime and higher duties opportunities plays an important role, but these are not always consistently available or applied across all roles. In particular, employees in non-operational roles are less likely to access overtime or receive additional payments for higher duties. As these roles are more commonly held by women, this can contribute to differences in overall earnings.

What This Means for Our Approach

These insights highlight that pay equity is influenced by more than base salary alone. Addressing the gap will require a focus on how opportunities such as overtime, higher duties and career progression are distributed across the organisation. By improving transparency and consistency in these areas, we can work toward fairer and more equitable outcomes for all employees.

Measuring Pay Equity

We use a set of clear measures to understand and track gender pay equity across the organisation. These indicators help us identify where gaps exist and guide our actions to improve fairness over time.





Pay Equity

Key Pay Gap Measures

Our primary focus is on the mean total remuneration gender pay gap across different occupation groups. This measure considers all components of pay, including salary, overtime and allowances.

In 2025, the pay gap across occupation groups is as follows:

- Managers: 5.7%
- Professionals: 21.2%
- Technicians and Trade Workers: 3.5%
- Clerical and Administrative Workers: 16.1%
- Machinery Operators and Drivers: 20.2%
- Labourers: 1.7%

(Data for Community and Personal Service Workers and Sales Workers was not available.)

At the senior leadership level, the mean total remuneration gender pay gap is 7.8%.

Additional Measures

To provide a more complete picture, we also track supporting indicators, including:

- Mean base salary pay gap: 1.9%
- Median total remuneration pay gap: 10.4%
- Median base salary pay gap: 2.6%

Understanding the Measures

Looking at both mean and median figures, as well as base salary and total remuneration, helps us better understand how pay differences occur. While base salary gaps are relatively small, differences in total remuneration highlight the impact of additional payments such as overtime and higher duties.

A Clear Focus

Together, these measures give us a balanced and transparent view of pay equity across the organisation. They allow us to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure our actions are focused where they are needed most.

Our Targets

Leadership Accountability

By 2027, all leaders will have clear responsibility for gender and pay equity, supported by annual discussions and ongoing Executive leadership. Most leaders will also receive guidance on equitable pay practices by 2028.

Success looks like:

- Clear accountability for fair pay
- Leaders understand and apply equitable practices
- Pay equity embedded in everyday management

Consistent Pay Practices

By 2028, we will review all occupational groups with pay gaps and implement improvements to ensure more consistent remuneration decisions, aiming to reduce gaps by at least 5 percentage points.

Success looks like:

- Better understanding of pay gap drivers
- More consistent decision-making
- Reduced inequity over time

Transparent Opportunities

By 2028, we will improve transparency around access to higher duties and overtime, with clear communication and regular monitoring to ensure fair access.

Success looks like:

- Open and consistent processes
- Reduced reliance on informal decisions
- Improved ability to identify and address inequities





Pay Equity



Strategies	Accountability	Timelines	Indicators
Executive Leadership: Appoint an Executive Lead to provide clear leadership and visible sponsorship of initiatives.	Managing Director	Year 1	
Pay Equity Audit: Conduct a targeted audit of selected occupation groups where a significant pay gap exists. This review will examine remuneration practices from commencement of employment through to the GAP process, to identify key drivers of pay inequity.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Year 2	
Higher Duties Review: Review current processes and practices relating to higher duties opportunities and the payment of associated allowances for non-operational roles, with the aim of ensuring consistency and fairness.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Year 2	
Overtime Access Review: Review processes and practices governing access to overtime payments for non-operational roles to ensure equitable access and transparency.	People & Culture	Year 1-2	
Leadership Accountability: Incorporate responsibility for gender equity and gender pay equity into position descriptions for people leaders as follows: a) By September 2026 for all new position descriptions b) By December 2027 for all existing position descriptions	People & Culture	Year 1-2	Indicator 5
Leader Capability Building: Provide targeted education and guidance to people leaders to: a) Improve understanding of systemic and structural factors that contribute to pay inequity b) Strengthen knowledge of pay equity principles c) Support accountability for addressing bias and inequity in remuneration within their areas The aim is to ensure that at least 80% of people leaders receive this education or guidance by 2028	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Year 1-3	Indicator 5



Respectful & Safe Workplace Culture:

Addressing harassment, bullying & discrimination

Understanding Our Data

Our data shows stable and consistent progress across most measures. Results from the People Matter Survey align with our internal data, which is reassuring given the survey is anonymous and provides an independent perspective on workplace experiences.

Interpreting the Results

While the results appear positive, we recognise that low reporting rates do not always mean issues are not occurring. They can also indicate that employees may face barriers to reporting or feel uncertain about the process.

Ongoing Focus

This highlights the importance of continuing to build a safe and supportive environment where people feel confident to speak up.

We remain focused on:

- Promoting awareness of appropriate and inappropriate workplace behaviours
- Ensuring any concerns are addressed promptly and taken seriously
- Strengthening trust in reporting processes and in how the organisation and its leaders respond.

By maintaining this focus, we aim to ensure our workplace is not only safe, but also open, transparent and supportive for all employees.

Measuring a Safe and Respectful Workplace

We track a range of measures to understand both the prevalence of sexual harassment and how safe and supported employees feel in raising concerns. These measures help ensure we maintain a workplace that is respectful, safe and responsive.

Key Measures

Our primary indicators focus on:

- The anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment
- The number of formal reports made

In 2025, both the reported experience rate and the number of formal reports were zero.

Supporting Insights

To better understand reporting behaviours and employee confidence in the system, we also monitor:

- Whether participants reported incidents
- Reasons for not making a formal complaint
- Satisfaction with how informal and formal complaints are handled

In 2025, these measures also recorded zero responses, reflecting no reported experiences or complaints during this period.



Respectful & Safe Workplace Culture:

Addressing harassment, bullying & discrimination

What This Means

While these results are positive, we recognise that low reporting may not always reflect the full picture. Ongoing focus is placed on ensuring employees feel safe, supported and confident to report concerns, and that processes are clear, accessible and trusted.



Our Targets

Leader Capability

By 2027, all leaders will be trained to identify and respond to inappropriate behaviour, supported by visible Executive communication.

Success looks like:

- Consistent understanding across leaders
- Confidence in responding to concerns
- Clear leadership commitment

Employee Awareness

By 2028, most employees will understand expected behaviours and how to report concerns, supported by training and regular communication.

Success looks like:

- Shared understanding of workplace standards
- Increased confidence to act
- Earlier issue resolution

Safe Reporting

By 2027, introduce an additional confidential reporting option and build awareness across the organisation.

Success looks like:

- Employees feel safe to speak up
- Fewer barriers to reporting
- Stronger trust in responses**



Respectful & Safe Workplace Culture:

Addressing harassment, bullying & discrimination



Strategies	Accountability	Timelines	Indicators
Executive Leadership: Appoint an Executive Lead to provide clear leadership and visible sponsorship of initiatives.	Managing Director	Year 1	
Leadership Expectations and Accountability: Continue to work with leaders at all levels to clearly define and reinforce their responsibilities, including expectations for addressing inappropriate behaviour, supporting safe reporting of sexual harassment, and ensuring appropriate and safe responses to all reports.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Years 1-2	
Workplace Behaviour Awareness: Strengthen organisation-wide understanding of respectful workplace behaviour by providing clear guidance, including practical examples of inappropriate conduct and appropriate ways to respond.	Organisational Development Lead	Years 1-4	
Confidential Reporting Pathways: Explore and implement alternative reporting options to enhance confidentiality and reduce concerns about reprisal. This will take into account the size of the workforce and the potential for individuals to be identified through anonymous reporting.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Year 1	
Intranet Resources: Develop and maintain a dedicated intranet FAQ page outlining inappropriate behaviours and providing clear guidance on how to respond to and report incidents.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Years 2-3	





Fair Hiring & Career Progression

Understanding Our Recruitment and Promotion Data

Our data from 2023 to 2025 highlights some emerging challenges in achieving equitable outcomes in recruitment and promotion.

Recruitment Trends

Over this period, the proportion of women recruited has slightly declined, from 47.4% in 2023 to 45.8% in 2025, while the proportion of men has increased. While this change is modest, it indicates a shift away from previous progress toward balanced recruitment outcomes.

Promotion Trends

More significant changes are evident in promotion outcomes. The proportion of women receiving permanent promotions decreased from 40% to 30%, while men increased from 60% to 70%. This suggests a growing gap in career progression opportunities.

Employee Perceptions

Employee perceptions also provide important insight. Views on recruitment fairness have remained steady for women and improved for men. However, perceptions of promotion fairness have declined for both groups, with a greater decline reported by women. This indicates a need to strengthen confidence in how progression decisions are made.

What This Tells Us

These patterns suggest that there may be systemic and structural factors influencing recruitment and promotion outcomes. In particular, decision-making at the hiring manager level and broader recruitment and promotion processes may be contributing to unequal progression across genders. Understanding these trends helps us focus on improving consistency, transparency and fairness in how we attract, select and develop talent across the organisation.

Measuring Recruitment and Promotion

We track a set of key measures to understand how fair and inclusive our recruitment and promotion processes are across the organisation.

Key Measures

Our focus is on both outcomes and employee perceptions, including:

- The gender composition of newly recruited employees
- The gender composition of employees who are promoted
- Employee perceptions of fairness in recruitment processes
- Employee perceptions of fairness in promotion decisions





Fair Hiring & Career Progression

What This Tells Us

These measures provide a balanced view of both what is happening and how it is experienced by employees. While perceptions of recruitment fairness are relatively consistent across genders, the gap in promotion outcomes and perceptions highlights an area for continued focus to ensure equitable career progression opportunities.

2025 Snapshot

- Recruitment outcomes: 45.8% women and 54.2% men
- Promotion outcomes: 30% women and 70% men
- Perceptions of recruitment fairness: 71.4% women and 71.6% men
- Perceptions of promotion fairness: 40.5% women and 50.7% men

Our Targets

Balanced Recruitment Panels

By 2027, all recruitment panels will include gender diversity, with annual reporting to ensure accountability.

What success looks like:

- Balanced representation on interview panels
- Increased confidence in fair recruitment processes
- Clear accountability for how recruitment decisions are made

Inclusive Recruitment Capability

By 2027, all hiring managers and panel members will complete training on inclusive recruitment practices, including bias awareness and fair assessment of candidates.

What success looks like:

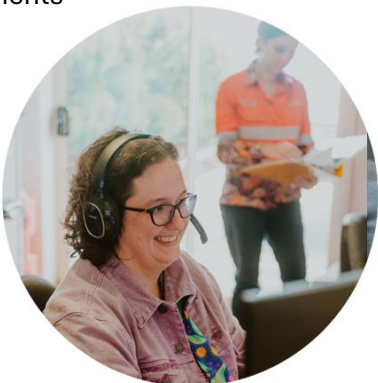
- Strong understanding of inclusive recruitment principles
- Fair and consistent treatment of all candidates
- More transparent and reliable recruitment decisions

Fair and Transparent Promotions

By 2027, clear guidance will be provided to support internal candidates and panel members, including expectations for interviews and managing bias. Progress will be tracked through an annual staff survey, aiming for at least 80% of employees to view promotion processes as fair by 2028.

What success looks like:

- Employees feel informed and confident about promotion opportunities
- Greater transparency in promotion processes
- Clear insights to support ongoing improvements





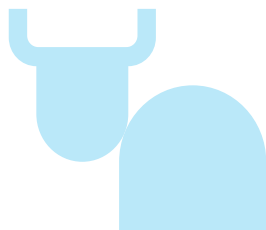
Fair Hiring & Career Progression

Strategies	Accountability	Timelines	Indicators
Executive Leadership: Appoint an Executive Lead to provide clear leadership and visible sponsorship of initiatives.	Managing Director	Year 1	
Interview Panel Representation: Update recruitment policies to require that all interview panels include at least one female representative, ensuring balanced and inclusive selection processes.	People & Culture	Year 1	
Inclusive Recruitment Training: Develop and implement an “Inclusive Recruitment” module within the Litmos system. This training will cover gender bias, unconscious bias (including for internal candidates), and the use of inclusive language in recruitment. It will be rolled out to all hiring managers and employees involved in recruitment processes.	Organisational Development Lead	Years 2-3	
Guidance for Internal Recruitment Processes: Develop clear guidance for internal candidates and panel members on interview expectations, including professionalism, managing familiarity, minimising bias, and ensuring equitable assessment.	Organisational Development Lead	Years 2-3	
Data Collection on Promotion Perceptions: Undertake further data collection to better understand employee perceptions of promotion processes. This will inform targeted actions, as current insights are limited and do not allow for effective remediation.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Years 2-3	
Flexible Role Design: Review operational and technical roles to identify opportunities for flexible working arrangements, including part-time, job-share, and rostered options, while maintaining service delivery standards. Aim: To encourage increased participation of men in caring responsibilities and to attract a more diverse range of applicants, including women and older employees, into operational and technical roles.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Years 1-2	Indicator 1, 6, 7.



Fair Hiring & Career Progression

Strategies	Accountability	Timelines	Indicators
Leadership Accountability: Incorporate responsibility for gender equity and gender pay equity into people leader position descriptions as follows: a) By September 2026 for all new position descriptions b) By December 2027 for all existing position descriptions	People & Culture	Years 1-2	Indicator 3
Leader Capability Development: Provide education and guidance to people leaders to: a) Improve understanding of systemic and structural drivers of pay inequity b) Strengthen knowledge of pay equity principles c) Support accountability for addressing bias and inequity in remuneration The aim is for at least 80% of people leaders to have received this education or guidance by 2028.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Years 1-2	Indicator 3
Internal Communication and Awareness: Promote at least three case studies annually through internal communication channels (including posters, intranet, email, and site-based materials). These case studies will highlight examples such as women in non-traditional roles, men in non-traditional roles, and men as primary caregivers. Diversity, including age, will be reflected in all case studies.	Organisational Development Lead	Years 1-4	Indicator 1,6,7
Collaboration and Sector Engagement: Engage collaboratively with key sector groups and initiatives, including VicWater, the GEA WLT the RAP Working Group, and the VicWater ED&I DISC or CoP. Participate in a minimum of three meetings annually to support sector-wide diversity and inclusion outcomes.	Organisational Development and Executive Sponsor	Years 1-4	Indicator 1,7





Intersectional Leave Entitlements: Availability and Utilisation

Understanding Our Flexible Work and Parental Leave Data

Our data highlights some important shifts in how employees are accessing flexible work and parental leave across the organisation.

Parental Leave Trends

Parental leave is available to all employees, and there is equal opportunity for both women and men to access it. By 2025, the overall gender balance of employees taking parental leave had reached parity, which is a positive outcome.

However, overall uptake among men has declined, suggesting there may still be barriers or perceptions influencing decisions to take leave.



Flexible Work Trends

Use of flexible work arrangements has decreased for both women and men, with a more significant decline among women. This has been accompanied by a drop in positive perceptions of flexible work culture, indicating that employees may feel it is more difficult to access or utilise flexible options than in previous years.

Understanding the Challenges

While flexible work is well established in office-based roles, and initiatives such as 4-day weeks and 9-day fortnights have been introduced for field-based roles, uptake remains uneven.

This suggests that structural and systemic factors — such as how roles are designed, operational requirements, and workplace expectations — may be limiting how accessible and practical flexible work arrangements are across different parts of the organisation.

What This Means

These insights highlight the need to continue strengthening how flexible work is designed, communicated and supported, ensuring all employees can access and benefit from these arrangements regardless of their role.





Intersectional Leave Entitlements: Availability and Utilisation

Measuring Flexible Work and Parental Leave

We track a range of measures to understand how employees access parental leave and flexible work, and how these experiences differ across the organisation.

Key Measures

Our primary focus is on:

- The average number of weeks of parental leave taken, by gender
- Uptake of flexible work arrangements, by gender
- Employee perceptions of flexible work culture

In 2025:

- Average parental leave taken: Women 36 weeks; Men 2 weeks
- Flexible work uptake: Women 31%; Men 52.5%
- Positive perceptions of flexible work culture: Women 88.1%; Men 74.6%

Additional Insights

To provide a broader view, we also monitor:

- The overall gender balance of employees taking parental leave
- Differences in use of carer’s leave
- In 2025:
 - Parental leave uptake: 50% women, 50% men
 - Carer’s leave usage: Women 37.9%; Men 43.6%

What This Tells Us

These measures help us understand not just access, but how flexible work and leave are experienced in practice. While overall participation is balanced in some areas, differences in duration, uptake and perceptions highlight opportunities to ensure equitable access and support for all employees.





Intersectional Leave Entitlements: Availability and Utilisation



Strategies	Accountability	Timelines	Indicators
Flexible Role Design: Review operational and technical roles to identify opportunities for flexible working arrangements, including part-time, job-share, and rostered options, while maintaining service delivery standards. Aim: To encourage increased participation of men in caring responsibilities and to attract a more diverse range of applicants, including women and older employees, into operational and technical roles.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Years 1-2	Indicator 1, 5, 7.
Internal Communication and Awareness: Promote at least three case studies annually through internal communication channels (including posters, intranet, email, and site-based materials). These case studies will highlight examples such as women in non-traditional roles, men in non-traditional roles, and men as primary caregivers. Diversity, including age, will be reflected in all case studies.	Organisational Development Lead	Years 1-4	Indicator 1, 5, 7





Diversity Segregation within the workplace

Understanding Occupational Segregation

Our data from 2023 to 2025 shows steady progress in improving gender balance across the organisation, alongside some ongoing challenges.

Positive Progress

The overall representation of women has increased from 33.9% to 37.7%, with strong gains seen in managerial and professional roles. Encouragingly, there has also been an increase in women working in traditionally male-dominated roles such as trades, machinery operations and labouring roles. This reflects early progress in broadening participation and challenging traditional workforce patterns.

Ongoing Imbalances

Despite these improvements, many operational roles remain heavily male dominated. At the same time, clerical and administrative roles continue to be predominantly female, although there has been a slight increase in male representation in these areas.

What This Means

These trends show that while progress is being made, patterns of occupational segregation still exist. This refers to the concentration of men and women in different types of roles, which can influence access to opportunities and career pathways.

Areas for Focus

The data suggests that gender segregation in operational roles is still influenced by factors such as traditional perceptions of certain jobs, challenges in attracting diverse candidates, and structural barriers to entering non-traditional career paths. Addressing these barriers will be key to continuing progress, helping to create a more balanced workforce and expanding opportunities for all employees.

Measuring Occupational Gender Balance

We track occupational gender segregation to understand how men and women are represented across different types of roles within the organisation. This helps identify where imbalances exist and where efforts are needed to create a more diverse workforce.2025





Diversity Segregation within the workplace

What This Tells Us

The data highlights a more balanced gender mix in leadership and professional roles. However, there are still strong concentrations of men in operational and trade-based roles, and women in clerical and administrative roles. These patterns reinforce the importance of continuing to broaden opportunities across all occupational groups, supporting a more balanced and inclusive workforce over time.

Workforce Snapshot

The 2025 data shows how gender is distributed across key occupational groups:

- Managers: 48% women, 52% men
- Professionals: 54.5% women, 45.5% men
- Technicians and Trade Workers: 4.3% women, 95.7% men
- Clerical and Administrative Workers: 84% women, 16% men
- Machinery Operators and Drivers: 8.2% women, 91.8% men
- Labourers: 26.7% women, 73.3% men
- All roles overall: 37.7% women, 62.3% men

(Data for Community and Personal Service Workers and Sales Workers was not available.)





Diversity Segregation within the workplace



Strategies	Accountability	Timelines	Indicators
Flexible Role Design: Review operational and technical roles to identify opportunities for flexible working arrangements, including part-time, job-share, and rostered options, while maintaining service delivery standards. Aim: To encourage increased participation of men in caring responsibilities and to attract a more diverse range of applicants, including women and older employees, into operational and technical roles.	Organisational Development Lead and People & Culture	Years 1-2	Indicator 1, 5, 6
Internal Communication and Awareness: Promote at least three case studies annually through internal communication channels (including posters, intranet, email, and site-based materials). These case studies will highlight examples such as women in non-traditional roles, men in non-traditional roles, and men as primary caregivers. Diversity, including age, will be reflected in all case studies.	Organisational Development Lead	Years 1-4	Indicator 1, 5, 6
Collaboration and Sector Engagement: Engage collaboratively with key sector groups and initiatives, including VicWater, the GEA WLT the RAP Working Group, and the VicWater ED&I DISC or CoP Participate in a minimum of three meetings annually to support sector-wide diversity and inclusion outcomes	Organisational Development and Executive Sponsor	Years 1-4	Indicator 1,5





GEAP alignment to Section: 13, 14

Resourcing & Accountability

Resourcing

Delivering our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) is supported by a clear and sustainable resourcing approach. A dedicated Organisational Development lead within the People & Culture team is responsible for coordinating implementation, including driving actions, managing reporting, engaging stakeholders and supporting change across the organisation. This role is supported by resourcing aligned to our size and workforce, along with investment in building internal capability through training, development and change champion networks. External expertise is also used where needed to provide specialist advice and strengthen our approach.

Leadership and Accountability

Executive Sponsors provide visible leadership and strategic oversight, championing initiatives, addressing barriers and maintaining organisational focus.

Leaders across the organisation are responsible for embedding gender equality into everyday practices, including decision-making, team leadership and workplace culture. The Diversity, Inclusion, Values and Equity Group (DIVE) further supports this by working closely with teams to drive engagement and practical change..

Governance and Oversight

Clear actions, roles and responsibilities have been established to support delivery. Progress is monitored through structured governance processes, with regular reporting to the Executive Leadership Team, Board committees and the South Gippsland Water Board.

This ensures strong oversight, supports informed decision-making and enables early identification and resolution of challenges.



Implementation and Continuous Improvement

Implementation

At South Gippsland Water, we are committed to embedding gender equality into our everyday work. Our focus is on practical actions, clear accountability and continuous improvement, ensuring gender equality is reflected in how we hire, lead, make decisions and support our people.

Our Approach to Implementation

Our approach is practical and focused on the key factors that influence gender equality outcomes. This includes reviewing policies and processes to address structural barriers, strengthening communication and engagement to challenge traditional workforce patterns, and building understanding through targeted education.

We also recognise that meaningful progress requires cultural and systemic change, supported by strong leadership accountability to drive and sustain outcomes. While our plan is ambitious, many actions are interconnected, meaning progress in one area will support improvements across others.

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Progress is tracked through regular reporting and governance processes, including quarterly updates on GEAP actions and reviews against Executive targets.

This approach allows us to measure effectiveness, maintain accountability and make adjustments where needed, ensuring continued progress over the life of the plan.

Our Values and Gender Equality

At South Gippsland Water, our values are at the heart of how we work. They guide our decisions, shape our workplace culture and help create an environment where people feel valued, supported and able to contribute their best. Our commitment to gender equality reflects these values in action.

By fostering an inclusive and respectful workplace, providing equitable opportunities and creating a safe environment where everyone can be themselves and speak up, we are strengthening a culture where diversity is valued and everyone has the opportunity to succeed. Through our Gender Equality Action Plan, we are taking sustainable steps to remove barriers, promote fairness and create a workplace where all employees feel a genuine sense of belonging.





Our Communications Plan

Turning Our Commitment into Action

Keeping our people informed and involved is a key part of this work. We share progress through team meetings, our staff intranet, leadership updates, and organisation-wide forums, along with training and opportunities for staff to have their say. This helps ensure everyone understands their role in building a more inclusive workplace.

We also draw on external expertise when needed to support our approach and strengthen long-term change. By combining clear direction, open communication, and active involvement from our people, South Gippsland Water is committed to achieving real, lasting progress where everyone feels valued, respected, and has equal opportunity to succeed.

Supporting Documents

Our Gender Equality Action Plan 2026-2030 is supported by the following documents:

- SGW Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028
- SGW People Plan 2026-2030
- SGW Strategic Plan
- SGW Equity Inclusion & Diversity Policy
- SGW Respectful & Fair Workplaces Policy
- SGW Occupational Health & Safety Policies and Procedures
- SGW Recruitment Policy





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