

The Starts With Us Action Library

TO GENERATE IDEAS FOR ACTION IN YOUR WORKPLACE

This resource supports **Step 4: Develop an action plan, with the Action Library providing a range of example actions and suggested measures to ensure your workplace has:**

1. an organisational culture that reflects gender equitable behaviour, attitudes, and expectations, internally and in work with the community, with clients and with stakeholders.
2. systems, structures, and processes that support gender equality, fairness, and safety.
3. robust and effective reporting systems that ensure safety, compliance and consequences for perpetrators.

These are suggested actions and measures designed to generate ideas and will not be appropriate for every organisation. In some cases, simpler or 'start' up actions are included for small organisations. Tailor the measure to your organisation.¹

Remember that addressing gender inequality is an ongoing process that requires continuous effort, commitment, and a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances and perspectives. Your action plan will change over time to adapt to progress made and other internal and external circumstances, as will the measures used to assess your progress.

The Starts With Us Framework

A guide to create gender equitable and safe legal and justice workplaces is by and for Victoria's legal and justice workforce.

It is part of the *Starts With Us* Project - a cross-sector initiative to prevent gendered violence in Victoria's legal and justice sector.

This Framework provides 'how to' guidance and supporting resources - informed by the latest research and best practice - on practical steps your organisation can take to prevent gendered violence in the workplace.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Encourage members to publish their action plan or a version of the action plan on their website. Consider making this a condition of membership. This helps to increase transparency across the sector. It also helps foster a practice of sharing amongst members who may be at different stages with their work to prevent gendered violence. Use this information to collate or build on the action plan library (below) so that good practice is promoted across your member base.

¹ For further examples or advice on setting appropriate measures see Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Target setting toolkit (11 March 2023), <https://www.wgea.gov.au/tools/gender-targets-toolkit>.

Action Library

Outcome 1: Actions to create an organisational culture that reflects gender equitable behaviour, attitudes, and expectations, internally and in work with the community, with clients and with stakeholders.	
Action	Measure
Organisational leadership undertakes “leading a whole of organisation approach to preventing gendered violence” (or equivalent) training.	X per cent of organisational leadership have completed training within a six-month period. X per cent of all new organisational leaders undertake training, as a rolling action, within three months of beginning employment.
Organisational leaders undertake critical self-reflection workshops to understand the ways that power and privilege impact on inequality. <i>Small organisations can first consider – invite a speaker to promote understanding of the ways that power and privilege impact on inequality in the workplace.</i>	X per cent of organisational leadership have attended workshops within a six-month period. X per cent of all new organisational leaders undertake this workshop, as a rolling action, within three months of beginning employment.
Introduce a recurring agenda item at staff meetings to update staff on prevention of gendered violence, gender equality and other inclusion actions.	Included as standing agenda item at staff meetings. Announcements and reports are included in minutes or records of the meeting.
Publish progress reports on action to prevent gendered violence on your organisation’s website.	Progress reports published or annual report includes summary of prevention of gendered violence action plan progress.
Implement transformative leadership, mentorship and career progression programs to support the professional development of women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds in the organisation. <i>Small organisations can first consider – review or update relevant policies and processes to support leadership and progression of women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds.</i> Support for women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds to participate in external leadership and mentoring programs.	Transformative leadership and mentoring program established. Recruit and train X number of staff of diverse backgrounds across the organisation to be trained as mentors or coaches. Communications on the program to all staff and engagement with a range of staff on becoming mentees and receive coaching. Monitor take up by gender and other equality and diversity indicators.
Develop and deliver training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › respectful workplace behaviours (including the workplace sexual harassment policy). › reporting process and supports. › unconscious bias. › prevention of workplace gendered violence. Deliver training to people managers and new staff, with annual refresher training provided.	Training calendar enacted and reported on to organisational leadership. Training participant feedback on improved knowledge and changes in perceptions/attitudes.

<p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – engage an external training provider to deliver foundational training in workplace gendered violence. When organising the training, ensure supports are available for staff and organisational-specific information is provided on processes for reporting gendered violence.</p> <p>If training is not feasible, provide staff with learning resources and information on prevention of gendered violence and your organisation’s action plan.</p>	
<p>Establish or join a community of practice with other organisations and experts to gain insights into best practices for gender equality in the legal and justice sector.</p>	<p>Organisational leadership of all genders and a diversity of backgrounds and experiences attend community of practice. Participation recorded.</p> <p>Monitor impact and demographic characteristics of the members of the community of practice.</p> <p>Adopt three key actions from best practice sharing within 18 months.</p>
<p>Develop a communications package including your organisation’s prevention of gendered violence key messages, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › the problem you are seeking to address along with key data from the sector on impacts of gendered violence. › how to prevent workplace gendered violence. › the role of your organisation and your organisation’s action plan. › how staff can contribute to this work. <p>Use <i>Starts With Us</i> Framework and resources to help with forming messages.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – draft an email communication from your organisational leadership to outline the work your organisation is doing and why.</p>	<p>X per cent of staff report recognition and support of the messages, tested within 12 months through questions in a staff engagement survey.</p>
<p>Develop and implement an inclusive language guide that provides a framework for policy, communications (formal and informal) and training across the organisation to educate and empower all employees on how to use the guide.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – review your organisation’s policies and procedures related to gendered violence and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality to reflect inclusive language.</p>	<p>Policies and procedures have consistent terminology and reflect inclusive language.</p> <p>X per cent of staff report referring to the guide within the first six months of implementation. X per cent of staff report referring to the guide within 18 months of implementation.</p>
<p>Set up a mechanism for staff to submit anonymous questions to the organisational leadership. Organisational leadership commits to answering or addressing questions or concerns.</p>	<p>Process or platform established to submit and respond to anonymous questions.</p> <p>Organisational leadership reports on themes and responses to questions.</p>

<p>Develop and implement an annual campaign for 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (this could, for example, draw from Respect Victoria’s toolkit² and adapting for your organisational needs).</p>	<p>Implement 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign and seek feedback from staff about your organisation’s participation.</p>
<p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – get involved in 16 Days of Activism event connected to your organisation’s work or organised by another organisation. Promote your support via social media platforms.</p>	<p>Each year, assess staff awareness and knowledge of gendered violence, including intersectional experiences of gendered violence. Aim for a X per cent increase in awareness and knowledge in 12 months.</p>
<p>Expand your staff engagement survey to include specific questions about experiences of your organisation’s culture. Publish the results.</p>	<p>Report back to staff on data on perceptions after each staff engagement survey.</p>
<p>Use a variety of engagement techniques to encourage greater participation in staff engagement surveys, along with messages on the benefits of survey data to target action.</p>	<p>X per cent increase in response to staff survey, increasing annually.</p> <p>X per cent increase in response to questions about workplace culture and safety, equality and questions about confidence in reporting.</p>
<p>Communicate to staff the benefits of providing demographic information as part of equality monitoring. Be clear on why this information is being asked for and the confidentiality of this information.</p>	<p>X per cent increase in demographic data provided after first staff engagement survey.</p>
<p>Provide trauma-informed care and practice training and support to communications staff, who may be at risk of experiencing resistance and backlash to change, or disclosures of violence from staff.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – ensure staff responsible for delivery of actions focused on prevention of gendered violence have access to debriefing and mentoring to support their role.</p>	<p>At least X debriefing sessions per year delivered.</p> <p>X per cent increase in confidence from communications staff about engaging with content that focuses on gendered violence.</p>
<p>Introduce a code of conduct, outlining your organisational approach to gendered violence and expected behaviour of clients and stakeholders you work with. Consider providing incentives for those organisations/stakeholders who sign up to your code of conduct.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – promote your approach to gender equality and prevention of gendered violence in a communication to your stakeholders.</p>	<p>X per cent of clients or stakeholders sign up to the code within 12 months of introduction.</p> <p>Signatories of the code acknowledged in annual reporting.</p>

² Respect Victoria, *16 Days of Activism Toolkit - Respect Women 'Call it out'* (2022), <https://safeandequal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/16-Days-2022-Toolkit-Accessible-PDF.pdf>.

Sign up to the Law Council of Australia's Equitable Briefing Policy ³ or introduce an equitable briefing policy for your organisation aimed at supporting the progression and retention of women barristers. This includes reporting on briefing practices and the measures taken to implement the policy on an annual basis.	Equitable briefing policy introduced and reported against to organisational leadership. Publish progress on policy implementation.
Introduce a requirement that all decisions made by organisational leadership, including new or renewal of contracts with external stakeholders, include a gender equity and diversity impact assessment to ensure business decisions are made with diversity and gender equality in mind.	Introduce gender impact assessment template into decision making processes. Record gender and diversity impact assessment results with outcomes of decisions.

Outcome 2: Actions to create or maintain systems, structures and processes that support gender equality, fairness and safety in the workplace.	
Action	Measure
Establish and allocate resourcing to set up a working group, made up of staff from a variety of levels of seniority, backgrounds, lived experience and with a diversity of skills. Ensure this group has a mandate for change. <i>Small organisations can first consider – allocate EFT hours within the role of a suitably skilled staff member to drive gender equality, fairness and safety action in your workplace.</i>	Working group members have their role included in their job description and are given time within existing working hours to fulfil this role.
Encourage organisational leaders to sponsor and advocate for women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds to take up leadership positions.	All organisational leaders have a KPI on nominating staff from diverse backgrounds, including gender, for new roles and dedicated time supporting staff to apply for more senior positions. X per cent increase in women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds applying for more senior roles. X per cent success rate for women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds who have applied for more senior roles.
Apply a gender and equality lens to internal planning and policy decision making, to demonstrate the impacts (both positive and negative) of policies and initiatives on women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds. If applicable, make recommendations on how to address these impacts. <i>Small organisations can first consider – introduce gender impact assessments into briefing/proposal documents.</i>	Monitor gender and equality outcomes in internal planning and policy decision-making. Identify themes or key priority areas that need to be addressed in developing policies and internal initiatives.

³ Law Council of Australia, *Equitable Briefing Policy*, 2022, <https://lawcouncil.au/files/pdf/policy-guideline/Equitable%20Briefing%20Policy%20%20updated%20Nov%202022.pdf>

<p>Recommend the introduction of diversity and inclusion requirements into your organisational leadership's terms of reference to ensure diversity of background and experience is reflective of those in the organisation and the community.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – collect and share data on diversity indicators in your organisational leadership.</p>	<p>All internal policies and procedures are updated to reflect the change.</p> <p>Changes introduced through your organisation's governance processes.</p> <p>Monitor the diversity and experience of the organisational leadership over time.</p>
<p>Implement a sponsorship/mentoring program with a diverse range of organisational leaders with more junior staff to focus on building essential skills and capacity for leadership roles.</p>	<p>Attract X sponsors (representing the diversity of your workforce) to the program.</p> <p>X per cent completion of the mentoring program.</p> <p>Conduct a survey of participants in the program, aiming for an X per cent response rate to the survey, with a X per cent satisfaction rate in the first year of the program.</p> <p>Increase the number of mentors and participants by X per cent in year two.</p>
<p>Conduct a series of interviews with staff, including men, to develop case studies of employees taking parental leave, other leave entitlements and adopting flexible work practices.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – highlight story/stories in internal communications of role models taking parental leave, other leave entitlements and adopting flexible work practices.</p>	<p>Share at least X case studies across the workplace from staff, with at least one case study of a male staff member, who have taken up parental leave or flexible work practices.</p> <p>X per cent increase in awareness of flexible work and parental leave policies in the next staff engagement survey, and following communications on the policies.</p> <p>X per cent decrease in the number of staff agreeing with the staff survey question that "there are barriers in place for staff to take up parental leave based on gender".</p> <p>X per cent increase in take up of flexible work arrangements across the organisation within 12 months.</p>
<p>Conduct focus groups to understand barriers faced by staff to take up of flexible work practices and special leave and parental leave options.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – include questions about barriers and enablers to flexible working arrangements and types of leave in staff engagement survey.</p>	<p>Conduct X focus groups with staff over a six month period.</p> <p>Analyse the results and develop X key priority actions to be funded over the coming 12 months.</p> <p>Adequate resourcing secured.</p>
<p>Review recruitment, reward and recognition policies and processes to address any biases, conscious or unconscious, regarding gender diversity and inclusive workplace practice.</p>	<p>Policies reviewed within six months.</p> <p>X per cent increase in confidence of those responsible for recruitment, reward and recognition activities to identify and address barriers for women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Monitor application and success rates by gender and other equality indicators.</p>
<p>Set up minimum standards for diversity on recruitment panels.</p>	<p>Monitor and report against indicators of women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds participating on recruitment panels.</p>

<p>Update recruitment policies to include your organisation's diversity and equality values, including statements in job advertisements encouraging people from diverse backgrounds to apply and highlighting flexible work practices and leave provisions.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – include your organisation's equality statement in job advertisements and encourage applications from people from diverse backgrounds.</p>	<p>Policy reviewed and updated within six months.</p> <p>All job advertisements include diversity/equality statement.</p>
<p>Adopt gender-blind recruitment processes, where the name of the individual and gender is removed from the application process to limit unconscious bias that may occur when assessing applicants.</p>	<p>X per cent increase in short listing of applications from women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds within 12 months of the process being introduced.</p>
<p>Train staff to be unconscious bias observers and part of unconscious bias training to be part of recruitment panels to challenge decision-making and remove bias as much as possible.</p>	<p>X per cent of recruitment panels to include unconscious bias observers within 12 months.</p> <p>Monitor the impact after each panel e.g., a mini reflection.</p> <p>Report on impacts on recruitment decisions.</p>
<p>Regularly conduct remuneration audits to identify and rectify any gender-based pay disparities. Consider signing on to a pledge such as the Victorian Government Gender Equality Pledge⁴ to reduce the gender pay gap in your workplace.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – collect data on pay gaps against organisational demographics and report to your organisational leadership.</p>	<p>Conduct audits annually.</p> <p>X key actions to be prioritised over the next 12 months, with clear measures.</p>
<p>Allocate a discretionary remuneration budget to adjust salaries during the remuneration audit in order to reduce gender pay gaps identified.</p>	<p>Introduce discretionary remuneration budget within six months.</p> <p>Monitor and report on the impact of the initiative on the gender pay gap in your organisation.</p>
<p>Abolish pay secrecy and adopt a pay transparency policy across all levels of the organisation to promote equal pay for equal work.</p>	<p>Communicate pay transparency policy to staff within six months.</p> <p>X per cent of staff report awareness and support for the pay policy after 12 months.</p> <p>X per cent agreement from staff that the pay policy is fair at 24 months.</p>
<p>Report annually on actions taken following the remuneration audit analysis and progress towards reducing the gender pay gap.</p>	<p>Include information on the gender pay gap and actions taken to address any gap in your organisation's reporting on its action plan.</p>

⁴ Victorian Government, Equal Workplaces Advisory Council (11 February 2021), <https://www.vic.gov.au/equal-workplaces-advisory-council>.

⁵ Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Equal Pay Day*, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/terms/equal-pay-day>.

<p>Communicate the benefits of addressing pay equity to your organisation on an annual basis, e.g., on National Equal Pay Day.⁵</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – post your support (and relevant actions) on your social media channels.</p>	<p>X number of internal or external communications.</p>
<p>Train managers in managing flexible teams and individuals who work flexibly.</p> <p>Monitor to ensure this is implemented consistently and fairly.</p>	<p>X per cent of staff report having had a conversation about flexible work with their manager within 12 months, with X per cent reporting conversations with their manager within 18 months of training.</p> <p>There is an X per cent increase in uptake of flexible working arrangements.</p>
<p>Create communications to promote policies and practices that promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › flexible working. › promotion and recruitment policies. › pay transparency. › sponsoring and mentoring. › use of leave provisions, including parental and carer's leave and family violence leave. <p><i>Small organisations can first consider</i> – set up regular email updates to the organisation on practices and policies that support gender equality. Include messages about your organisation's overall aims of safety, fairness and equality in your organisation.</p>	<p>X per cent of staff report awareness of these policies and practices.</p> <p>Qualitative data on perceived barriers to uptake of these policies.</p> <p>In staff engagement survey, include measures such as X per cent agree or strongly agree with the following statement "taking up parental leave arrangements does not exclude staff from leadership or career progression opportunities" and "taking up parental leave is not a barrier to accessing professional development opportunities on return to work".</p> <p>X per cent of staff agree or strongly agree with the following statement "all staff are supported to take up flexible work arrangements/leave options".</p> <p>Monitor uptake of policies and practices (if appropriate) and analyse by gender.</p>
<p>Set up transparent and robust systems to ensure staff engagement survey data are reflected back into planning processes and for the development and review of your organisation's action plan, ensuring strategies are informed by lived experience of employees.</p>	<p>Document data and how it is used to inform decisions.</p> <p>Present the information to organisational leadership.</p> <p>Report back to the organisation on actions and decisions informed by the data.</p>

Outcome 3: Actions to build robust and effective reporting systems that ensure safety, compliance and consequences for perpetrators.

Action	Measure
<p>Introduce a policy that includes preventing gendered violence, along with other forms of harassment, bullying, and discrimination, that outlines the behavioural expectations of staff, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › clear guidelines on the process followed when the policy is breach. › consequences for those found in breach of the policy. › support available to staff making a report. <p><i>Small organisations can first consider – update existing related policies on harassment, bullying and discrimination to include expectations of behaviours and consequences for a breach in the policy. Policy includes information on support available to staff making a report.</i></p>	<p>Policy drafted and implemented within 12 months.</p> <p>Within six months of implementation, X per cent of staff know the policy and where to access it.</p> <p>In the next staff engagement survey, there is a X per cent increase in agreement with the statement that there are “adequate and appropriate policies to prevent and respond to harassment, discrimination, and violence”.</p>
<p>Put in place a mechanism for anonymous reporting of gendered violence, along with other forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination.</p> <p>The mechanism introduced (or reviewed) is easy to understand and communicated through, for example, a process map.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider – ensure the reporting mechanism enables staff who report to remain anonymous.</i></p>	<p>An increase in anonymous reporting by X per cent within the first 12 months, and increased to X per cent within two years.</p> <p>Regular reporting conducted to identify any concerns with the mechanism and addressed within two months.</p> <p>The reporting rate plateaus and then declines over time following implementation of actions in your organisation’s plan.</p>
<p>Introduce Recognise, Respond and Refer training for staff whose role it is to recognise, respond and refer people to the complaints process. For example, staff from People and Culture, workplace Contact Officers or health and safety representatives.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider – organise recognise, respond and refer training for your organisation’s health and safety representatives.</i></p>	<p>X per cent of Contact Officers or health and safety representatives are trained.</p> <p>X per cent of Contact Officers or health and safety representatives have completed refresher courses 18 months following completion of initial training.</p>
<p>Develop a resource for staff who are responsible for recognising and responding to complaints to make uniform referrals, provide consistent information about supports on available referrals. Include a record keeping template.</p>	<p>All staff responsible for recognising and responding to complaints and reports use the template to document instances of gendered violence.</p> <p>Develop a baseline understanding of the staff satisfaction level with the consistency and continuity of support offered by the organisation when making a complaint.</p> <p>Increased satisfaction with the complaints process by X per cent after the introduction of the record keeping template.</p>

<p>Introduce debriefing sessions for staff involved in managing reports to review the process and if anything can be improved in the policy or organisational practice to ensure it is more trauma-informed, responsive and effective.</p>	<p>Deliver X debriefing sessions per year.</p> <p>X per cent increase in confidence from staff involved in managing reports.</p>
<p>Store complaint information securely and identify if there are ways to provide supports that limit the need for disclosure multiple times.</p> <p>Understand how/if support services can collaborate to provide high quality support that staff need.</p> <p>Trial a new wrap-around support process and monitor the impact for those seeking help.</p>	<p>Review of the complaints process, including confidentiality and how support is offered to staff.</p> <p>A X per cent increase in satisfaction with the support offered.</p>
<p>Communicate reporting and support options to staff.</p> <p><i>Small organisations can first consider – communicate processes for reporting and support options regularly.</i></p>	<p>X per cent improved awareness of the reporting process and available supports tracked via responses in the staff engagement survey.</p> <p>Monitor number of reports and take up of supports over a 12 to 24 month period.</p> <p>X per cent of staff agree or strongly agree with the following statement “I feel confident that if I report an incident of harassment (including sexual harassment or bullying), it will be handled confidentially and taken seriously”.</p> <p>Reporting rates and uptake of support monitored by gender and other diversity indicators.</p>
<p>Track and monitor complaints, behaviour, outcomes and complainant satisfaction with the process and outcome.</p>	<p>Analyse data every quarter (if large organisation) or every six months, including number of complaints by gender and other diversity indicators to identify any trends or concerns. Include time taken from date of complaint to achieving an outcome.</p> <p>Report on this data as part of your organisation’s annual report or other relevant reporting channels (see the Starts With Us Reporting on Success Template,) to build transparency and trust.</p>
<p>Provide opportunities (e.g., confidential interview) for those who have made a formal complaint to give feedback on the degree to which they felt supported, satisfaction with the outcome and how the process could be improved.</p>	<p>Conduct interviews with staff who have made complaints.</p> <p>Actions identified and implemented to address feedback within six months of interviews.</p>