

The Starts With Us Organisational Readiness Checklist

LAY FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

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.

This resource supports **Step 1: Start from strong foundations**. Step through the questions in this checklist and take steps to address any 'must have' foundation gaps.

It is essential for organisations to have the following in place to begin work to prevent gendered violence:

- **safety first:** organisational policies and procedures to respond appropriately and safely manage disclosures of gendered violence (including sexual harassment and discrimination) and family violence.
- **leadership commitment:** organisational leadership that is accountable, supports, enables, endorses and authorises sustained action to prevent gendered violence in the workplace.

- **resourcing:** a team or working group with allocated time and budget to plan and deliver a plan of action. This working group must include a decision-maker, someone who is accountable to organisational leaders, and people with relevant experience. Involvement in the working group needs to form part of the working group members' roles in the organisation and not be undertaken on top of existing workloads.

In small organisations, setting up a working group may not be feasible, but you will need individuals with responsibility to progress the work involved such as staff from People and Culture. Consider advocating for a dedicated role or part of an EFT to coordinate the work.

Template

Safety: Your organisation safely manages disclosures of gendered violence in the workplace (including sexual harassment and discrimination) and family violence.

Why it matters: Workplace action to address drivers of gendered violence will commonly increase disclosures, reports and help-seeking. An increase in reports can be a positive early indicator that your efforts are working, as it suggests growing confidence in your organisation's response and commitment to safety and equality in the workplace.

You will need	Actions to achieve this	Importance
Policies and procedures that enable staff to report and seek help if they have experienced gendered violence in the workplace or family violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm policies and procedures are up to date. <input type="checkbox"/> If not up to date, review or develop policies and procedures outlining the organisation's legal obligations in responding to workplace violence, how staff can report, the process that will be followed, and the support available to staff. 	Must have

	<p>When reviewing or developing policies and procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Draw upon templates, for example those provided by your peak organisation or professional association, to support adoption of best practice. <input type="checkbox"/> Work with your people and culture team to draft your organisation's policies and procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide staff with an opportunity to input on draft or proposed changes to policies and procedures. This will help you identify the best ways for staff to have confidence in reporting and/or seeking help. 	
Robust processes to respond safely and appropriately to reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure your organisation's processes protect staff who report and/or seek help. <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm you have appropriate support available for staff who seek it. <input type="checkbox"/> Check what training has been provided or needs to be scheduled for key staff (e.g., health and safety representatives) on the impacts of workplace gendered violence, the organisation's obligations and the legal rights of staff, and supports available. 	Must have
Safe processes for staff to raise issues that indicate problems with culture or unfair treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm, or develop if not in place, a safe and anonymous mechanism for staff to disclose experiences of gendered violence in the workplace and other relevant concerns experienced or observed. 	Advantageous, work towards achieving

*If your workplace is small and relies on external providers for human resources support or management of reports or complaints, make sure they are qualified and skilled in providing conversations and supervision. Having independent support available may increase staff confidence in the process and support staff to have confidence in the safety of the process.

<p>Leadership: Organisational leaders champion, resource and drive workplace action to address the drivers of gendered violence in the workplace.</p>		
<p>Why it matters: Effective leadership goes beyond making a commitment to prevent gendered violence. To achieve meaningful and sustainable change, organisational leaders must champion, resource and authorise prevention of gendered violence action in the workplace.</p>		
You will need	Actions to achieve this	Importance
Leaders that are committed to doing the work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Build the knowledge and commitment of your organisation's leaders to prevent gendered violence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and present the business case for why this work is important to your organisation. <p><i>See The case for prevention of gendered violence, to help prepare your organisation to take action.</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Invite a leader from the legal and justice sector to speak to your organisational leaders, sharing their experiences of undertaking prevention of gendered violence action in their workplace. 	Must have

Leaders that allocate resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a case for resourcing requirements in time for annual budget processes. This includes resource allocations for staff hours, external resources, operational costs and project costs. 	Must have
Leaders that are accountable for driving organisational change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm an organisational leader or decision-maker who will be the accountable person for this work. Ensure responsibilities include reporting on progress, involvement in each step of the <i>Starts With Us</i> Framework, and participation in decision-making on action prioritisation and implementation, and input into future work. 	Must have
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This responsibility is relected in the organisational leader or decision-maker's KPIs. 	Advantageous, work towards achieving
Leaders that are role models and spokespeople.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key communications messages are drafted with your communications team to support organisational leadership to take up their role in this work. Brief organisational leaders to speak at internal and stakeholder events, relevant governance meetings and public facing opportunities. Support provided to organisational leaders to reflect on their own values and behaviours, and how best to role model what is expected of staff. 	Advantageous, work towards achieving
Leaders that encourage openness to genuine self-reflection and take note of feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular forums are convened to update staff and provide staff with opportunities to engage. Options are provided to staff to contribute anonymously and without repercussions. 	Advantageous, work towards achieving

Operational: An adequately resourced working group to develop and deliver a plan of action to prevent gendered violence.

Why it matters: Resourcing means staff are allocated time to fulfill roles and budget is provided for activities. This is essential to supporting the steps in the Framework and the development and implementation of an action plan.

You will need	Actions to achieve this	Importance
A staff member responsible for coordinating development and implementation of the action plan. It is recognised as core work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A staff member who has capacity, skills and commitment to coordinate this work. Responsibilities included in their work plan to support sustainability. 	Must have
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider recruiting for this role if it isn't possible to include responsibilities in an existing role. You may need to make a resourcing proposal as part of the budget process to secure resourcing. 	Advantageous, work towards achieving

<p>Establish a working group to oversee the development and delivery of the action plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ When establishing the working group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ consider making this a subgroup of an existing committee, for example the Diversity and Inclusion committee. ❑ if incorporating into an existing committee, ensure that resourcing is adequate. ❑ ensure potential members are aware of the time commitment and have management support for their involvement. ❑ include participation and responsibilities of each working group member in their position description, workplan and KPIs. ❑ Assess training needs of working group members and provide training, for example, on key principles of prevention of gendered violence and responding to disclosures of discrimination, sexual harassment, and family violence. 	<p>Must have</p>
<p>A working group with a formalised structure and recognition within your workplace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Establish terms of reference for the working group that includes regular meeting times, reporting mechanisms, and roles and responsibilities. ❑ Connect this work to your existing organisational strategy to ensure objectives align and that this it is viewed as core business. This includes updating the organisation’s risk register to capture behavioural, legal and financial risks that can result from gendered violence in the workplace. 	<p>Must have</p>
<p>A member of the working group with decision-making and authorising responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reserve a position on the working group for an organisational leader with decision-making and authorising responsibilities that will report to your organisation’s leadership and/or decision-maker(s). 	<p>Must have</p>
<p>A working group that reflects the diversity of people who make up your workforce. The working group should be made up of a mix of staff from across the organisation, levels of seniority, those who have lived experience of gender inequality and other forms of discrimination, and allies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Engage with staff on the establishment of the working group, including using an expression of interest process communicated via a variety of engagement strategies (e.g., online EOI process, provision of information at team meetings, use of intranet posts). ❑ In the communications, be clear about who the organisation wants to be involved in the working group and why. Take positive steps to encourage involvement from a diversity of staff who may have a variety of experiences. ❑ Ensure the responsibilities of working group members are fairly distributed, and that those with lived experience of gender inequality and other forms of discrimination, don’t disproportionately bear additional burden. 	<p>Must have</p>