

Gender equality strategy guide

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Introduction

The comprehensive WGEA Gender equality strategy suite covers the 'Gender Equality Strategy Guide' and the 'Gender Equality Diagnostic Tool'. This suite will help organisations to achieve workplace gender equality, where people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of gender.

The Gender Equality Strategy Guide (Guide) equips you with the skills and resources to start and/or continue the change process towards greater gender equality in your organisation. The change process involves evaluating the current status of gender equality in your organisation, planning your organisation's future gender equality objectives and actions as well as tracking your organisation's progress over time.

The Gender Equality Diagnostic Tool (Diagnostic Tool) enables and assists any organisation, regardless of industry, size or context across both public and private sectors, to develop a strategy to address and improve gender equality in their workplaces. With 17 gender equality focus areas, the Diagnostic Tool comprehensively covers gender equality within an organisation. Organisations may need to use their judgement to adapt some or all of the key focus areas for their specific circumstances. Small and medium businesses in particular may wish to start with a few focus areas and continue to engage with additional areas over time.

While an organisation-wide approach to gender equality is recommended wherever possible, at times it may be more reasonable or practical to implement your gender equality strategy in a segmented way. This may mean addressing certain areas of your organisation and/or tackling certain issues focus area by focus area. It is important that any action taken by your organisation is meaningful and achievable. In this way, you may need to use your judgement when it comes to prioritising and planning for implementation of your gender equality strategy.

Addressing gender equality within your organisation requires a strategic and systematic approach and it is a process that takes time. The aim of gender equality in the workplace is to achieve broadly equal outcomes for women and men, not necessarily outcomes that are the same for all.

Research shows that workplace gender equality is associated with :

- increased organisational performance,
- enhanced ability to attract talent,
- enhanced ability to retain employees, and
- enhanced organisational reputation.

Taking a strategic approach to gender equality is not just the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense. More information: www.wgea.gov.au

The change process

Moving towards gender equality in an organisation involves a process of change and there are many different models and tools for managing organisational change. This guide is not intended to substitute these. Instead it reflects established change management principles and provides a simple, strategic framework that can be integrated into a change process already in use by an organisation.

The guide is structured around the four steps which typically guide change programs.

Figure 1: The change process in steps



- Analyse: the Diagnostic Tool provides a framework for determining where an organisation is on its gender equality journey and helps to identify challenges and opportunities for making progress.
- Design: each organisation needs to design a gender equality strategy tailored to its own circumstances. It should be informed by the analysis drawn from the Diagnostic Tool and this guide. Consider drawing on collaboration to design the gender equality strategy.
- Implement: to achieve each strategic objective, each activity, program or initiative identified in the gender equality strategy and agreed to by stakeholders should be implemented through an action plan. We know that what gets measured, gets done. A carefully laid out action plan will help others understand the flow of changes the organisation will go through.
- Review: Annual Competitor Analysis Benchmark Reports provided by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (Agency) provide insights for each reporting organisation to help assess its progress relative to industry or other external comparators.

The Diagnostic Tool can also be used at any time as a means of re-evaluating progress relative to gender equality best practice. While the review step appears last, it should be incorporated at each stage of the process.

Reviewing, testing and receiving feedback are all key to being able to modify and adapt your approach to suit your organisation. This will also involve regular consultation with stakeholders at each stage of the process.

Why is a gender equality strategy important?

A strategy provides a foundation for a plan of action to achieve a range of objectives. It provides a blueprint for accountability against measurable objectives – outlining who will execute tasks and by when. A strategy helps to create specific project plans for discrete initiatives and it can provide detail about how to prioritise actions.


Without a strategy, it is very difficult to gauge whether day-to-day activities and decisions are helping the organisation effectively progress towards the desired end-goal. A gender equality strategy enables organisations to move beyond an ad-hoc (programmatic) approach to gender equality and ensures investment in gender initiatives is targeted. Having a shared understanding of the strategy increases commitment to the initiatives and enables all parts of the organisation to work together towards the achievement of the objectives.

A gender equality strategy:

- outlines a gender equality vision for an organisation
- links to a business or organisational strategy
- identifies practical goals
- includes measurable objectives linked to goals
- promotes active and inclusive leadership
- is easy to communicate
- holds an organisation accountable for its gender equality progress
- follows a transparent governance process
- goes beyond gender equality to consider other elements of inclusion, diversity and intersectionality (social stratification linked to class, race, sexual and gender diversity, age, religion, disability etc.)
- is integrated with all functions and levels of an organisation.

The underlying assumption of the Guide is that when an organisation takes a strategic approach to gender equality, the resulting strategy will link to, and support, broader business strategies and objectives.

For more information about the drivers of gender inequality in the workplace, visit www.wgea.gov.au




Policies are the guidelines, rules and procedures an organisation develops to govern its actions and outline decision making dos and don'ts. They are widely communicated, available and accessible by all staff.

A strategy is an action plan an organisation creates to achieve one or more goal/s and bridge the gap between where it is and where it wants to be. It:

- relates to how you allocate and use materials, and human resources
- requires an executive decision

Formal policies and strategies are written documents approved by human resources or management. A strategy can exist without a policy and a policy without a strategy – both can coexist and support each other.



The gender equality strategy process provides a good opportunity to review and ensure that your organisation is compliant with all relevant state, territory and federal legislation related to gender equality in the workplace. At a federal level, this may include any obligations outlined in the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, the *Fair Work Act 2009* and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. Organisations may also be legally obligated to comply with relevant state and territory legislation.



Eight-step gender equality strategy

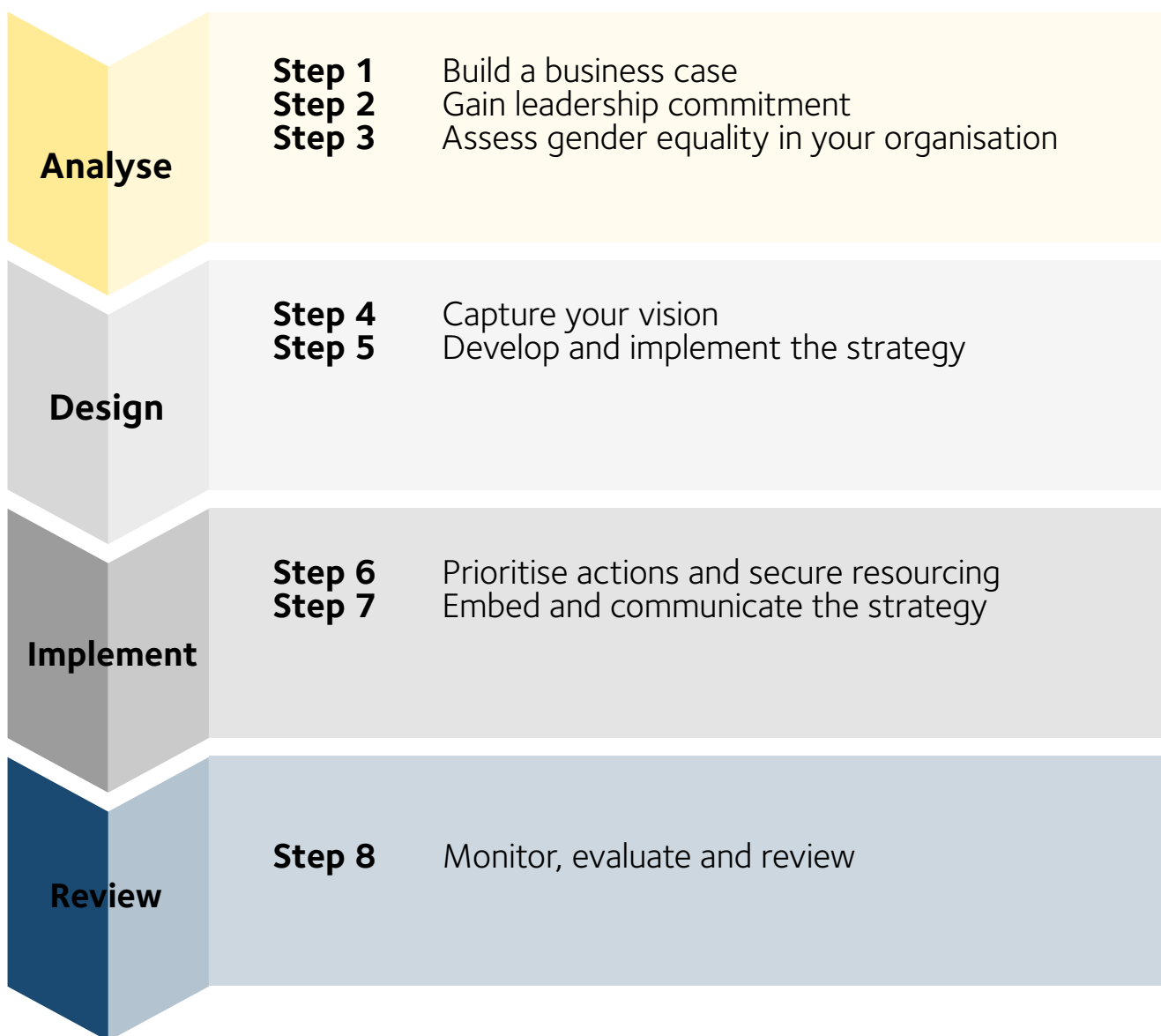
A gender equality strategy is simply a plan that brings together critical information in one place. It is connected by an action plan outlining the how, what and when of your strategy.

The eight-step process outlined in this guide provides guidance for building a strategy. It does not need to be followed in a linear fashion, as each organisation has its own individual circumstances, challenges and strengths.

For example: If you have already established a business case and have leadership commitment – (Steps 1 and 2 of this process) – you can move straight to Step 3: Assess gender equality in your organisation.

This process will help identify avenues for action including some that you may not have previously considered. The eight-step process covers each of the four change steps mentioned above.

Figure 2: Eight steps to designing and implementing a gender equality strategy



1. Build a business case

A gender equality strategy will be most effective when gender equality has support and commitment from your leadership team and other stakeholders. Developing a detailed business case tailored specifically to your organisation will help secure that crucial leadership commitment. It should highlight the “why” your organisation believes addressing and improving gender equality will be beneficial, and also underscore that it is the right thing to do.

A gender equality strategy can support your business case for gender equality and it may:

- improve the wellbeing of staff
- affect your bottom line
- enhance your organisation’s external image and brand
- improve your organisation’s competitiveness
- help your organisation attract and retain talented staff
- reduce costs associated with staff turnover
- enhance productivity
- help future-proof your organisation
- reflect your customer base.

The [business case for gender equality](#) offers instructive ideas for developing a tailored business case. It is important also to consider the cost of inaction as the drive towards workplace gender equality gains more momentum nationally and internationally.

Resources to help you to identify the benefits of gender equality for your organisation can be found at: the [WGEA website](#), [Diversity Council Australia](#), [Fair Work Ombudsman](#), [Male Champions of Change](#) and the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#). [WGEA’s Data Explorer](#) provides data on the status of workplace gender equality in non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees.

2. Gain leadership commitment

Once you have developed the business case, explain the benefits to your leadership team.

The executive leadership group will decide whether developing a gender equality strategy is a priority for the organisation. For a successful strategy, leadership commitment and ownership will be crucial from the beginning of the process. You will need their support and input when it comes to developing your organisation’s vision for gender equality.

Once the strategy begins to be rolled out, leaders at all levels, from the board, the CEO and senior leaders will need to commit to the strategy and actively engage not just all employees, but also clients and suppliers, such as recruiters.

Leadership commitment is also crucial to enable adequate resourcing of time, personnel and financial investment.

Use these points as guidance for proposals, papers or conversations aimed at securing leadership commitment:

- Find out what objectives the board, CEO or senior leaders would like to achieve and in what time frame
- Help leadership understand the different ways to measure gender equality progress in the workplace – metrics, data and indicators, which measure and compare changes – and help leadership define which of these best align with organisational objectives
- So that your business case is clear, be specific about resourcing requirements – outline what human and financial resources you will need and what time frames are realistic for the execution and the alignment of the strategy with overall business and people strategies.

Your leaders should be the core champions of gender equality in your organisation. They can help you maintain buy-in within the leadership group, throughout your organisation and among external stakeholders. Your leadership should:

- be vocal about your organisation's business case for gender equality – internally and externally
- act on their own needs for flexibility at work and role model this for others
- bring gender equality considerations to the forefront of leaders' discussions on talent, promotions, remuneration and structural changes
- foster ongoing understanding and capacity to communicate the metrics (representation, recruitment, exits, promotions, pay equity) and other data that relates to gender equality initiatives
- articulate how the organisation is tracking on gender equality compared to others in the same industry or of the same size using the [WGEA Competitor Analysis Benchmark Reports](#) and the [Data Explorer](#).

It is a good idea to start talking to leaders about resourcing for action on gender equality early in the process. You will know more about your resource requirements as you make more progress towards a fully developed strategy.

3. Assess gender equality in your organisation

To develop a successful strategy you need to have a clear picture of the current status of gender equality in your organisation. You will need to collect and analyse current data and conduct a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of existing policies and practices.

The Diagnostic Tool will help to give you an understanding of your organisation's gender equality status. The diagnostic process involves answering yes/no questions against 17 gender equality focus areas and calculating an overall score which indicates where the organisation is placed between 'meeting minimum requirements' and 'leading practice'. Using the Diagnostic Tool will help you determine where your immediate focus needs to be and how to build from it. In addition, if your organisation reports to the Agency, you may also find it useful to consider the confidential Competitor Analysis Benchmark Report provided by the Agency.

The data collected from the diagnosis will form the basis for building your strategy by highlighting what your organisation does well, and identifying gaps and areas of weakness.

Each focus area has a list of suggested resources to help you build your goals and objectives. You can use the Diagnostic Tool before you begin developing your gender equality strategy or as a review process any time afterwards. You can also conduct a diagnosis using your own methodology.

As part of the process, it is likely that you will need to review your existing policies and procedures for gender bias.

Another example of assessing gender equality is to run focus groups where participants are invited to share their thoughts and insights on where the organisation is today and what needs to change in the future.

Remember: Some focus areas might not be applicable to your organisation, or may be a low priority at this stage. If you are at the beginning of the strategy development process, it is recommended that you prioritise the key focus areas that have the greatest potential to impact on improving gender equality in your workplace.



Gender Equality Focus Areas

- 1 Strategic alignment of gender equality with business priorities
 - 2 Leadership and accountability
 - 3 Gender pay equity
 - 4 Gender composition of the workforce
 - 5 Support for caring
 - 6 Mainstreaming flexible working
 - 7 Preventing gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying
 - 8 Support for employees experiencing domestic and family violence
 - 9 Professional development, networking, mentoring, sponsorship
 - 10 Applying a gender lens to all policies and strategies
 - 11 Recruitment, selection and promotion
 - 12 Talent management and succession planning
 - 13 Workplace gender equality training
 - 14 Applying a gender equality lens to everyday operations
 - 15 Applying a gender equality lens to casual, contract and short-term, task-based employment
 - 16 Driving change beyond the workplace
 - 17 Applying a gender equality lens to mergers, acquisitions and restructures
-

4. Capture your vision

Before you begin to separate out issues to address, capture a gender equality vision for your organisation. A vision can be a starting point for developing a gender equality strategy.

It is important to consult widely with stakeholders and use a variety of methods to gain input from all employees. This could be done through a general employee survey and/or workshops or focus groups.

The consultation process is a public commitment to improving gender equality in your organisation and is also a forum to raise awareness of the issues and reasons for a focus on gender equality.

There are numerous ways to capture your organisation's vision but the most common method is to create a mission statement, which usually comprises a short statement with realistic, achievable goals. It does not need to be detailed but it is important the statement is developed as part of a collaborative process with key stakeholders. This can be achieved through collaborative workshops with leaders and employees to get their buy-in and help build up a common vision that is shared across the organisation.

The mission statement process can start with blue-sky thinking but should continue to be refined until the vision is practical and achievable for your organisation.

5. Develop and implement the strategy

Once you have completed the diagnosis, you will be in a good position to develop your goals and objectives for the strategy. You can use your results to benchmark your organisation against the 17 gender equality focus areas in the Diagnostic Tool as a guide.

The gender equality strategy is your foundation document, but it is also a working document which will grow and change with your organisation.

For organisations just beginning to prioritise gender equality, it is commendable to aim for an ambitious strategy, but it must also be realistic. If you are a long way from answering 'yes' to all of the questions in many of the gender equality focus areas, you may want to invest your energy into a few of the most relevant areas at first.

Your strategy should address:

- Why is gender equality important to our organisation?
- What is our vision?
- How will we achieve our vision?

Any employee or stakeholder should be able to look at your strategy and understand your organisation's level of commitment and the tangible steps you are taking towards the organisation's vision of gender equality.

You can follow a simple process to develop goals and objectives:

1. Design objectives that are practical and measurable using input from stakeholder consultation and diagnostics.
2. Identify who will be affected by each goal – make sure this group has been consulted.
3. Identify risks that may be associated with your goals and objectives and create a risk-mitigation plan.
4. Identify relevant metrics and indicators for collection and monitoring.

To monitor each of your objectives, you will need to designate specific metrics that can be collected and measured. For example, your objective could be to increase the uptake of flexible working arrangements – this can be measured by the number of formal flexible working arrangements.

Once the goals and measurable objectives have been developed, link these with your vision statement document to form your complete gender equality strategy document.

When the goals and objectives have been endorsed by leadership, the rest of the strategy can be completed. There is no prescriptive way to document a strategy. However it is advisable to keep it short and simple to encourage more people to engage with it. You may even choose to display the strategy on a single page (see Appendix C for examples).

You can review your strategy and realign your goals against leading practice when you are further along the process.

It is important that you stage the implementation of your gender equality strategy carefully, engaging in regular organisational communication (both internal and external where appropriate) at every step of the process. In order to ensure that the strategy is implemented effectively, it is important that steps are taken first to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have received the appropriate training and preparation. Likewise, it is crucial that stakeholders have the confidence and authority to appropriately respond to any resistance or backlash if or when it emerges.

Resistance to Change:

Backlash and resistance to change can occur at any level of an organisation but understanding where the response comes from can help you to drive buy in.

For more information, see the Male Champions of Change guide to [Backlash and Buy In](#) and the report by VicHeath (En)[countering resistance – Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives](#)

6. Prioritise actions and secure resourcing

A strategy is critical for the direction, accountability and achievement of objectives. However, the strategy will only come to life when the actions – policies and practices – supporting the objectives are implemented. This means a relentless and consistent focus on the execution is central to the success of the strategy.

A strategy also provides the all-important roadmap for execution, and helps to identify core priorities when resources are limited.

The next step is to develop an action plan, outlining the policies and practices that will be implemented to realise the gender equality vision.

For the development of the action plan, first decide which focus areas to target. You will also need to ensure that you have the required resources to execute any actions.

To help guide execution, we suggest the following steps:

Decide on a time frame to implement actions under each focus area

A typical strategic time frame will span three to five years. Actions and initiatives need to be distributed over the time frame to ensure cost-effective delivery outcomes, and time frames need to be identified for each action.

Prioritise your actions and consider these dynamics:

- potential impact and likely return on investment
- level of stakeholder support and how this might change over time
- timing of, and relationship with, HR, business or other change initiatives
- availability of resources
- regulatory and other external drivers.

Secure a budget and resourcing

Finalising a budget will require extensive stakeholder engagement and careful planning. Make sure you budget for unexpected bumps in the road.

Develop an action plan for each key focus area which details:

- outcomes and deliverables
- time frames with milestones
- resources required
- approaches and methodologies
- roles and responsibilities
- work streams – progressive completion of tasks by different groups

7. Embed and communicate the strategy

Once your organisation's vision, strategy and actions are ready, it is time to communicate your strategy to employees and other stakeholders. It is important for the organisation to have clear and consistent messages outlining the data analysis, business case and vision. All leaders should understand and communicate consistent messages.

Communication and engagement with stakeholders is essential for the success of the strategy, as stakeholders often appreciate being asked for their input, which can make them more supportive of change.

Communicating and implementing gender equality policies and strategies is the foundation for change. However cultural change can be slow and complex. The organisational change process towards gender equality will be the longest step in the process and requires constant maintenance to ensure the process does not lose momentum.

The success of your strategy also depends on visible and ongoing leadership commitment. Research shows it is important for leaders to model positive behaviours in order to encourage all stakeholders to embrace cultural change.¹

Before you release any details of the change process it is crucial that all policies and actions must be ready for execution. For example, all documentation and support to roll out flexible work or parental leave should be in place. Once the strategy has been announced, employees and other stakeholders will start to form expectations and your organisation must be ready to begin the execution in key gender equality focus areas. It is also important that plans are in place to manage any backlash that may arise.

The release of the strategy is an important moment and can be accompanied by an event or organisation-wide meeting to highlight that it is a significant initiative which involves staff at all levels.

Things to consider for your communication strategy:

- Will you use social media? If so, which channels and who will you target?
- Are there internal networks you should reach out to?
- Will formal language or a more conversational style be most effective?
- Is there a key event, a product launch or strategic milestone that you can leverage as an opportunity to communicate your gender equality work?
- How best to handle any further communication from stakeholders. For optimal engagement, your strategy should not just be announcements, but rather a two way flow of messages, inputs, debate and discussion. Consider creating steering groups or committees to encourage employee participation and buy in.
- Whether large or small, activity in all organisations runs on incentives. Incentives can include financial rewards, linking outcomes to remuneration, recognition via rewards programs, or other employee benefits that recognise participation and impact. Consider what rewards or sanctions are available to incentivise leaders and other employees to dedicate their time, energy and influence to bring your gender equality strategy to life. What do your people have to offer, and what incentives are needed to get them involved?

A communications plan should include:

- key messages
- target audiences
- lines of responsibility for communications
- time frames / scheduling / frequency of messaging
- any communications for media.
- a plan for managing backlash.

¹ Kotter, John P. 1995, Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail, Harvard Business Review, Issue: March-April, pp. 59-67

The communication objectives supporting the gender strategy should:

- explain – articulate the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the gender strategy
- educate – equip stakeholders with the knowledge and confidence they need to articulate and promote the gender strategy
- engage – motivate and inspire stakeholders to actively contribute to the gender equality journey
- convey – a sense of ownership for successful outcomes at all levels.

Examples of key messages

Communications need to be tailored to specific individuals and groups of stakeholders, outlining the benefits of the gender equality strategy and expected roles and responsibilities in supporting progress on gender equality.

Audience	Key Messages
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reinforce evidence-based business benefits – benefits include better decision-making and risk management • the leadership role of directors in promoting gender equality at the board level • the ambassadorial role of board members in relation to gender equality • the board should set expectations of executives to drive gender equality • the board should role-model gender-inclusive recruitment and composition • communicate to external stakeholders (including shareholders) the commitment to gender equality and its benefits
CEO/Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate accountability for gender equality to the board • consistently advocate the business case for gender equality • drive gender strategy and own progress and outcomes • cascade accountability for gender equality through direct reports • ensure that gender equality strategy and policies align with expectations of internal stakeholders (including employees), shareholders, customers and suppliers • executives to role-model gender-inclusive leadership • reinforce business benefits of gender equality (improved engagement and performance)
Human resource and/or diversity practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate (not own) gender solutions (project management, subject-matter expertise) • coach, influence and appropriately challenge leaders and managers • act as change agents in the organisation • articulate and promote the business case for gender equality • role-model gender equality best practice and gender inclusive behaviour • responsible for ensuring gender equality compliance obligations are met
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why gender equality is a ‘win-win’ for employees and the organisation • everyone has a role in creating and maintaining a gender-inclusive culture – through inclusive and collaborative behaviours • ideas and feedback on the change process and how the organisation can become more gender equitable will be welcomed and taken seriously • everyone should have the same opportunity to contribute, succeed, realise their potential, and be fairly rewarded, irrespective of gender or other differences • how people can get involved in making a difference
External stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begin engaging with individuals and groups of stakeholders on the topic of gender equality. Refer to positive internal and external developments involving clients, competitors and industry groups • ask supportive, credible leaders among your stakeholders to influence their peers • embed gender equality messaging into regular, routine business communications from leaders, highlight role-models and position the organisation as an industry leader and shaper • develop a social procurement policy.

8. Monitor, evaluate and review

Regular monitoring, evaluation and review of your objectives, time frames and milestones will help ensure that your organisation's gender equality strategy stays on track. Evaluations make it possible to assess whether and why some objectives take longer than others to flourish.

A primary method of assessing whether the execution of a gender equality strategy is producing the intended impact will be to monitor, measure and regularly report the outcomes of processes over specific time frames. Ideally, the mechanisms to track and report should be in place before the strategy implementation begins, to enable measurement of results before, during and after specific initiatives and interventions.

A gender equality strategy should also include some detail on how, when and by whom it will be evaluated and reviewed, including how measures of progress will be communicated.

The diagnostic process will enable your organisation to establish a benchmark against which performance can be measured over time. Just as you use data to complete the diagnostic process, it is also important that you continue to collect and expand your data collection. Data analysis is a core component of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process.

Different objectives might have different evaluation time frames. For example, for some indicators ongoing evaluation and review can occur in micro stages such as monthly, quarterly, or at key cyclical stages such as annual review, pre-budgeting and annual reporting.

Review continues throughout your overarching strategy time frame. Three to five years is usual, and each cyclical review, such as an annual review, can feed into adjustment and improvement of the strategy. There are some questions below that may help to guide your review. The Diagnostic Tool can be used at any time to help you benchmark and track your progress.

Questions to help guide your review:

- How is the organisation progressing with each of the measurable objectives in the strategy?
- Is there enough data to reliably assess progress?
- Where lack of progress or other issues are identified, how can these be addressed or overcome through adjustment of priorities or resourcing?
- What activities or actions should we stop, start, change or continue?
- Does the strategy (or do the individual objectives) need to be adjusted in light of experience? What are the implications of these adjustments?

What next?

- Reprioritise initiatives due to changes in business strategy, funding, customer need or new opportunities
- Reset resourcing because of funding changes or team changes
- Celebrate completion of an initiative or program
- Add an entirely new idea that has come out of your consultations or an emerging opportunity.

Appendix B sets out examples of metrics to support the measurement of the strategy's effectiveness.

Evaluation

An evaluation occurs after the deadline for achievement of each objective.

Questions to ask include:

- Has the organisation achieved the objectives within the gender strategy?
- If not, why not – and what is the lesson from each success, partial success or failure?
- How should the next gender strategy be adapted to include previous lessons to maximise the chances of success?

It may also be helpful to cross-reference gender strategy outcomes with performance in:

- WGEA Gender Equality Indicators (GEIs), and minimum standards (applicable to non-public sector employers with 500 or more employees in their corporate structure)
- Competitor Analysis Benchmark Reports
- WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) submission
- Diversity and Inclusion Awards (International and National)
- Support from advocacy groups.

There is no correct way to document and display your gender equality strategy. Some organisations may produce a detailed, multi-page document while others will elect to produce a high-level strategy on a page. Some organisations may do both. Condensing your strategy into a summary version makes it easy to read and use by all stakeholders. Appendix C includes examples of using one type of format: a strategy on a page.

Disclaimer and acknowledgements

Copyright and disclaimer

This gender equality strategy guide (Strategy Guide) and the gender equality diagnostic tool (Diagnostic Tool) (collectively referred to as the 'Strategy Toolkit') are shared openly with the intent of promoting progress towards workplace gender equality. Ownership of the intellectual property within the Strategy Toolkit rests with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

The ideas and recommendations contained within the Strategy Toolkit are used or adopted entirely at the discretion and own risk of employers. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency cannot accept any responsibility or liability for outcomes resulting from the use of the Strategy Toolkit, either directly or indirectly.

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Lyndoch Living

The South Australia Office for Women

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

Women's Health Victoria

Appendix A: Examples of Objectives

A gender equality strategy should include clear and measurable objectives that can be achieved within realistic timeframes. Below are examples of possible gender equality strategic objectives for a selection of focus areas, together with supporting information. The content of each example is intended to be indicative, not exhaustive.

Example - stakeholder engagement

Objective	Build engagement around gender equality amongst middle managers
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a 'roadshow' targeted at middle managers (for use in team meetings or stand-alone) which presents the specific business case for gender equality (in organisation / business unit / team) and provides a 'safe space' for feedback and discussion.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visible commitment to gender equality from executive and senior leadership business case for gender equality (specific to organisation) articulated and endorsed current, reliable and compelling data (quantitative and qualitative) to underpin the business case two-way interaction in roadshows (explain and listen).
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low interest / attendance resistance and negativity from minority of attendees derails / displaces message.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> middle managers feel recognised and listened to consultation is first step in support-building process rich data gathered on issues and resistance points which can be factored into implementation and communications planning.
Measurement of impact / Return on Investment (ROI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feedback / evaluation gathering at end of roadshow test engagement / support levels through short e-mail survey to participants.

Example - gender composition¹

Objective	Increase the gender diversity of the executive leadership team (ELT) until it is sustainably gender-balanced
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conduct modelling of ELT member inflows and outflows by gender use model to develop a stretching but achievable gender target socialise, test and finalise target amongst key stakeholders (including CEO and individual board and ELT members) communicate target and rationale widely – internally and externally monitor and report progress against target, regularly and transparently take remedial action as necessary or reset target if achieved early.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stakeholders are engaged in the target-setting process from the outset the target is realistic and based on credible modelling robust action plans are developed to support achievement of the target clear leadership accountability for achievement of the target is defined and allocated.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> target represents unrealistic stretch target timeframe is too long which undermines urgency and ownership
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus, energy, urgency, and concerted action accelerate change and achieve gender balance on a faster trajectory.
Measurement of impact / Return on Investment (ROI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gender composition of ELT every quarter and annual and quarterly variance.

Example - gender pay equity

Objective	Reduce the organisation wide gender pay gap year-on-year
Action / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research and identify barriers to gender diversity in the pipeline to leadership and equitable progression of female and male talent progressively address barriers and monitor impact (e.g. gender diversity of talent pools) review overall gender pay gap annually and analyse trends report results of gender pay gap analysis to the board regularly conduct audits of pay disparity between roles of equal or comparable value and address anomalies.
Success factors / enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurate and accessible fixed and variable pay data across business / sub-units and locations. ability to minimise unconscious bias through process / decision-making safeguards and decision-maker (people leader) awareness-building.
Risks / barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decision-makers (for performance, reward, promotion and talent etc.) fail to recognise and challenge their own and each other's gender biases inequitable decisions (performance, reward, promotion and talent etc.) are retrospectively 'justified' mechanisms for pay data-gathering, analysis and reporting produce unreliable or inconsistent results.
Outcomes / benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved gender pay equity outcomes drive improvements in ability to attract, engage and retain the best female and male talent.
Measurement of impact /Return on Investment (ROI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> progressive reductions in overall gender pay gap until it is statistically negligible on a consistent basis.

¹ A number of the objectives in this example relate to target setting. For more information on setting targets, [the WGEA has some resources that explain the target setting process in more detail](#)

Appendix B: Suggested metrics

Like any other strategic objective for your organisation, it is important to measure your progress towards gender equality. Metrics are a system or standard of measurement. Some suggested metrics have been included below. These metrics can be linked to your strategic objectives for gender equality and will help you to monitor and evaluate your progress:

Employee and customer engagement

- employee engagement results by gender (engagement / culture / pulse surveys)
- customer gender composition and engagement (customer / market surveys).

Leadership accountability

- achievement against gender targets, business scorecards and individual KPIs.

Strategy and business case

- employee / manager awareness of gender strategy and business case.

Measurement and reporting

- achievement rates of post-reporting action items / plans.

Policies and processes

- improvements in process outcomes from a gender equality / diversity / inclusion perspective (e.g. allocation of key project work / assignments or customer / client accounts by gender)
- redundancy / involuntary exits by gender
- frequency of policy / process audits.

Supply chain

- gender of ownership / leadership of external suppliers / providers (by small / medium / large enterprises).

Gender composition

- gender composition of board, executive, senior managers, managers, total workforce (by business units / team / location)
- workforce composition by occupational category and job level.

Gender pay equity

- pay disparity between roles of equal or comparable value and address anomalies
- gender pay gaps (by level and organisation wide) for base salary and total remuneration.

Flexibility

- utilisation of flexibility policy options by gender
- proportion of flexibility requests declined
- parental leave return rate
- parental leave retention rate (1 and 2 years post return to work).

Talent pipeline

- gender of external (experienced) job candidates (long-list, short-list, interviewee, new hires)
- gender composition of graduate recruits
- gender composition of talent and promotion pools or leadership development participant groups
- outcomes from potential and succession readiness assessments by gender
- rates of progression and promotion by gender
- performance ratings by gender

Leader and manager capability

- improvements in performance ratings against key capabilities e.g. gender inclusive leadership behaviours for managers and employees with gender-related responsibilities / accountabilities.

Gender inclusive culture

- positive response rates and trends against benchmark inclusion question(s) in employee engagement survey
- incidence and resolution rates of discrimination / harassment complaints by gender.

Appendix C: Examples of strategies on a page

There is no correct way to document and present your gender equality strategy. Some organisations may produce a detailed, multi-page document while others will elect to produce a high-level strategy on a page. Some organisations may do both. Below there are two examples of Gender Equality Strategies on a page.

The example of a gender equality strategy on a page below is in a 'holistic' format. This example includes a vision as well as a mission statement, followed by substantiating information including the levers that have been identified (focus areas) and the measurable actions that will be implemented within the timeframe.

Figure 3: Example of a holistic strategy on a page

Vision	To be an international industry benchmark and role model business in the utilisation of gender equality as a business enabler			
Mission	To build a gender inclusive culture that empowers our people and harnesses their differences to create innovative, market leading customer solutions and grow our business			
Values	Gender equality, diversity and inclusion are an intrinsic part of who we are: they drive how we work together, how we do business, how we serve our customers and how we contribute to our communities			
Benefit	Gender equality, diversity and inclusion add value to our business and all our stakeholders: they support higher performance, deliver stronger outcomes, and help us build competitive advantage			
Enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workplace and culture which is intuitively flexible, agile and adaptable • A workforce which is fully equipped at all levels to build and maintain gender equality 			
Levers	Leadership accountability	Talent pipeline	Building capability	Flexibility
Actions in [insert year]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender equality built into business scorecards • senior leader gender KPIs piloted in Q4 then cascaded to all managers • gender KPIs linked to reward outcomes in [insert year] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • audit of talent processes for bias risk and remediation • talent pool gender target • external mentoring and sponsorship program design • gender diversity of all job candidate pools mandated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roll-out of inclusive leadership program • executive coaching includes gender equality • mentoring and sponsorship program designed and piloted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design pilot for expanded/new flexibility options • identify pilot sites • conduct whole-team flexibility pilots in [insert year] • develop flexibility tracking mechanisms
Measures	Scorecard and KPI outcomes vs. target	Gender diversity of all job and talent pools	Leader performance against key capabilities	Increased flexibility use by both genders

The example of a strategy on a page below is in a 'key focus area' format. This example places the levers (focus areas) at the top of the page and then details long-term objectives, measurable actions that are being taken, as well as future actions. Note that only a few focus areas have been selected as an example.

Figure 4: Example of a key focus area strategy on a page

Priority levers	Leadership accountability	Talent pipeline	Building capability	Flexibility
Strategic long-term objective	Increase visible leadership accountability for gender equality	Build a representative and sustainably gender diverse talent pipeline to leadership	Grow leader and manager capability to deliver our gender equality vision	Develop a workplace and culture which fully leverages flexibility as a business enabler
Current actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality diversity dashboard in place executive team quarterly diversity review established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> our definition of 'Talent' and 'high potential' is defined and communicated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inclusive leadership and unconscious bias awareness program piloted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexibility research conducted across all business units and support functions
Future actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gender diversity metrics to be integrated into business scorecards senior leader gender KPIs to be piloted in Q4 gender KPIs to be cascaded to all managers once process finalised gender KPIs linked to reward outcomes in {insert year} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> audit of Talent identification and development processes for bias talent pool composition target set for each level external mentoring and sponsorship program design in place gender diversity of internal and external candidate pools mandated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisation-wide roll-out of above program in {insert year} according to agreed schedule integrate gender equality into executive coaching program executive coaches required to submit gender equality capability statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> design a framework for piloting expanded or new flexibility options identify supportive teams for piloting across Australian sites conduct whole-team flexibility pilots staggered throughout {insert year} develop mechanisms to track utilisation of all flexibility options



Australian Government



**Workplace
Gender Equality
Agency**

Advice and assistance

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