



# Gender Equity Action Plan 2025

Research shows that gender balanced teams tend to be more innovative, collaborative and produce stronger outcomes.

In 2015 the ACCC/AER introduced an 'Advancing Gender Balanced Leadership' initiative with the ultimate aim of improving flexible working arrangements for all employees, supporting them to maintain and progress their careers and improving representation of women in the Senior Executive Service (SES). The goal by 2020 was to achieve 40% representation of women, 40% of men and 20% of either. In 2015, 26% of our SES was female.

Our 2020 APS Employee Census results indicate that we have achieved the 40:40:20 composition of our ACCC and AER workforce except for the SES Band 2 classification which sits at 30%. Since the implementation of our gender balanced leadership initiative in 2015 we have progressed a number of new programs to improve gender imbalance:

- reduced gender biases, gendered language and terminology in agency policy and guidance material
- implemented methods to reduce unconscious bias in our recruitment
- increased flexible working arrangements and promoted this when advertising vacancies
- introduced a requirement for at least one male and one female on recruitment panels
- invested in technology accessibility to work remotely
- introduced pay gap strategy to reduce gender pay inequities
- introduced and embedded an 'if not, why not' policy to increase flexible working arrangements, including 50% remote working for all employees
- developed job share policies and guidance and developed a returning from extended leave pack including focusing on those going on and returning from parental leave.

In 2018, women at the ACCC/AER as a group on average earned 9.3% less than men. This gap was wider than that of the average Australian Public Service (7.8%) and narrower than that of Australia (14%). The 2018 pay gap is largely attributable to relatively more females at lower classifications and relatively more males at higher classifications.

**ACCC/AER gender pay gap from 2018 to 2020**



# Gender Equity Action Plan 2025

The ACCC/AER Gender Equity Action Plan 2025 is a deliverable under our Inclusion Strategy. It outlines our ongoing commitment to a gender balanced workforce.

Responsibility for the delivery of this plan rests with SES leadership of the ACCC/AER in conjunction with the ACCC/AER Gender Network.

The plan aims to build contemporary practices to provide greater equality and support for employees under 3 key themes:

1. Promoting pay equity and reducing the gender pay gap
2. Creating and sustaining a safe work environment for all gender identities and working to eliminate gender-based and intersectional harassment, discrimination and bullying
3. Raising awareness about and addressing gender imbalance, the existence of gendered unconscious bias, and inclusion of all gender identities, including non-binary and those employees that prefer not to say or identify

## Drivers

*'2018 pay gap is largely attributable to relatively more females at lower classifications, and relatively more males at higher classifications'*

2018 pay gap findings

*'In 2020 3% of employees experienced discrimination on the basis of gender. Of the people that identified as prefer not to say - 46% indicated that had experienced bullying or harassment in the past 12 months. 15% experienced discrimination.'*

as identified by respondents in the 2020 APS Census

*'The ACCC and AER had a workforce composition of 55% female, 42% male and 31 employees who are indeterminate/intersex or prefer not to say.'*

as identified by respondents in the 2020 APS Census

## Actions

**1**

Advocate contemporary employment conditions

Defy stereotypes and celebrate role models

Entrench inclusive behaviours

Review and address historic pay inequity

Address known under-representations

Senior Gender Co-Champions

Action recommendations out of pay equity audit

**2**

Apply a gender and intersectionality lens to all policies and procedures

SES to respond and address all reported bullying, harassment and discrimination concerns

Communicate standard expectations of behaviour for all suppliers/panels

Mainstream commonly adopted practices (flexible work, parental leave)

Bystander action and respect training

Support and action for employees effected by domestic and family violence

**3**

Active and engaged gender network

Develop a library of articles and resources for gender related matters

Celebration of gender events

Achieve 40:40:20 gender composition at all levels including Board/Commissioner and SES Band 2 and 3 by 2023

Lead SES Women's network

Understand gender and supporting those employees that prefer not to say

Lead Men's leadership network

Mentoring arrangements

## Success measures

Annual pay gap analysis

Zero-tolerance for discriminatory behaviour

APS Employee Census

Whilst we have achieved a lot in 5 years, there is still more to do. The 2025 Gender Equity Action Plan aims to build contemporary practices to provide greater equality and support for employees under 3 key themes:

1

### **Promoting pay equity and reducing the gender pay gap**

Since 2018 the ACCC/AER has been reporting on the gender pay gap as part of our commitment to improving inclusion. To reduce the pay gap the ACCC/AER will:

- advocate for changes to the Maternity Leave Act and the Australian Government Employment Bargaining Framework so that we are able to introduce gender neutral parental leave for the ACCC/AER
- maintaining best practice selection processes, including multiple points of objective assessment and incorporating selection experts
- explore SES Band 2 secondments. This may include reciprocal and non-reciprocal secondments with partner organisations (e.g Treasury, ASIC, RBA, etc)
- continue investment in development programs such as the Future Leaders Program and APS Leadership programs and ensuring ACCC/AER participants are from diverse backgrounds
- actively attract and encourage males to apply for support roles with the ACCC/AER
- engaging third party providers to assist with understanding any pay inequity that may be occurring.

2

### **Creating and sustaining a safe work environment for all gender identities and working to eliminate gender based and intersectional harassment, discrimination and bullying**

The development of inclusive values, behaviours, attitudes, and practices will contribute to employees feeling psychologically safe, valued, respected, and working more effectively. It also demonstrates our enduring priority to serve our diverse consumer welfare. The ACCC/AER commits to:

- applying a gender and intersectionality lens to all policies, procedures and practices
- SES to respond and address all reported bullying, harassment and discrimination concerns
- creating terms of engagement for acceptable behaviour for all suppliers/panel standards and contracting companies
- mainstreaming commonly adopted practices (flexible work, parental leave)
- undertaking bystander action and respect training, and creating a culture of calling out inappropriate behaviour
- providing safe avenues to report and support employees effected by domestic and family violence.



### **Raising awareness about and addressing gender imbalance, the existence of gendered unconscious bias, and inclusion of all gender identities, including non-binary and those that prefer not to say or identify**

Creating awareness of the barriers and issues facing gender imbalance will strengthen the cultural competence of our people and provide opportunities to share experiences, address biases, and develop our people. The ACCC/AER commits to:

- achieve 40:40:20 gender composition at Board/Commissioner and SES Band 2 and 3 levels by 2023
- greater investment in gender, senior leadership and interagency networks
- creating a bank of articles and resources for gender related matters
- celebrating gender related events
- understanding gender and supporting all gender identities including non-binary and employees that prefer not to say or identify
- creating mentoring opportunities.

### **Measures of success**

The ACCC/AER SES leadership, in conjunction with the Gender Network will be accountable for:

- closing the gender pay gap
- facilitating a culture where bullying, harassment and discrimination is not tolerated in any way. This type of culture will be measured by a reduction of inappropriate behaviour from 2020 census scores related to discrimination:
  - 6% of the organisation reported experiencing discrimination of those, 50% was attributed to gender
- maintaining gender composition of 40:40:20 at Board/Commissioner, SES and all levels
- increasing engagement for our prefer not to say demographic as recorded in APS Employee Census and Aurion.

**Gender equality is everyone's responsibility**