

## PART TWO

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# ORGANISATIONS

*This part of the manual will help you understand what we mean by a 'whole of organisation approach' to gender equality and provides you with some useful ways to start your journey.*

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It is divided into four key sections:

1. **Introduction:** some useful background information
2. **Preparation:** practical information to help you get started
3. **Action:** step-by-step guidelines on how to roll out the 'Equal Footing' program within your organisation
4. **Future Focus:** information on how to develop strategy and a business case in the longer term



# 1. INTRODUCTION

Most organisations want to:

- cultivate more equal and respectful relationships between men and women
- improve the productivity and morale of all staff
- increase career opportunities and improve the retention of women
- promote attitudes that are supportive of gender equality.

Unfortunately, many organisations don't really know how to achieve these things. The information that follows will help you get started. Let's begin by learning about what we mean by a 'whole of organisation' approach.

## WHAT IS A 'WHOLE OF ORGANISATION APPROACH' TO GENDER EQUALITY?

The best way to achieve widespread and lasting change at your workplace is to implement it on a broad organisational level. This is called a 'whole of organisation approach', and it is when most people at your workplace are united behind a common aim, or an agreed course of action – in this instance, achieving gender equality.

The best way to apply this approach is to ensure that everybody is clear about, and shares:

- a sense of the overall purpose
- knowledge about the specific steps and priorities that will help achieve that purpose
- a set of guidelines, policies or principles that will help guide the organisation's approach to achieving that purpose.

But let's be more specific. When the purpose is to achieve gender equality, a 'whole of organisation' approach would look at the most effective ways to:

- promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women at work
- promote gender equal norms and prevent sexual discrimination or harassment
- improve access to resources and systems of support.

Imagine the shared goal of gender equality runs through your workplace like a river. When a 'whole of organisation' change is introduced (a policy about gender equality, for example), it creates a current in this river. As your processes and procedures improve, when key leaders act as role models and talk about equality and respect, managers make inclusivity a priority, and surveys or working groups are conducted, this current becomes one of equality and respect. Individuals within the organisation can't help but be swept up by this current – it becomes "the norm" and "the way we do

things". Some will swim with the current, most will just be swept along, and some may actively try to swim against it – but the flow is irresistible, and everyone will end up downstream eventually.

Taking a 'whole of organisation' approach to equality and respect means not focusing too intently on giving individuals swimming lessons. Instead, it means keeping your eye firmly on the big picture and doing structural things (like including equality in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and thinking about setting diversity targets) to make the river flow freely.

A big part of a whole of organisation approach is to look at and change processes. This involves being both reflective (looking at the way things have always been done) and anticipatory (working out the best ways to solve future problems or issues).

For example, imagine Leila has worked for a company for three years and is about to go on parental leave. Instead of scrambling to find a suitable replacement for Leila and then expecting things to magically revert back to normal when she returns, an organisation with foresight would consider introducing a policy or program that incorporates succession planning to make temporarily losing an employee a more seamless process. They may have a plan for staying in touch with people on leave, as well as including strategies to make it easier for employees like Leila to re-enter the workplace and access opportunities as they resettle. With policies like this in place, everyone who comes after Leila will also benefit.

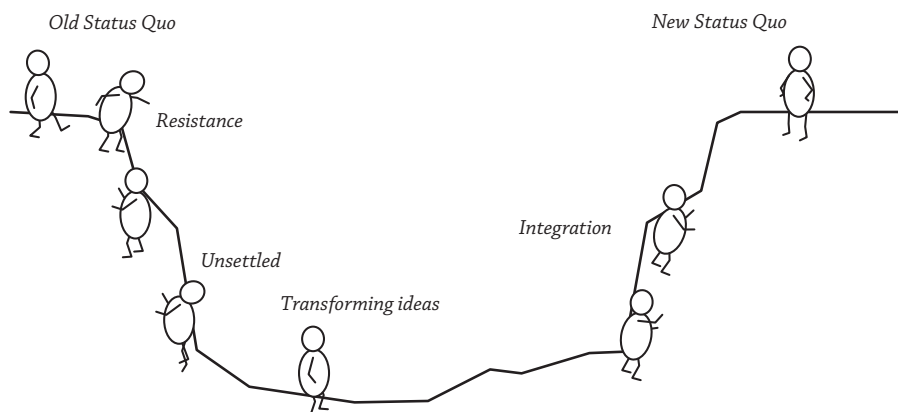
If Leila has a great manager who skilfully oversees her individual situation, there's a risk that the need for long term policies and programs is overlooked. We can become reliant on key individuals to do the right thing. While it's important that individual managers champion gender equality, the reality is that key people move on, priorities within the business change, and positive attitudes and momentum can easily be lost. Long-term structural and policy changes are more sustainable and more effective in transforming assumptions and behaviours at work. This is a great place to invest time and money. Cultural change occurs when people come to think, "that's just how things are done around here".

When good practice that promotes gender equality becomes the norm in your organisation, you will see real progress.

## IT WON'T HAPPEN QUICKLY

No matter what the change, the process usually takes time in any workplace. There will be people who are very attached to familiar ways of thinking and acting. They may see suggestions of change as a criticism and feel defensive about changing. It's good to try to position the changes as non-personal and organisation-wide.


The diagram below reflects a common pathway as people who are resistant to change come to terms with new ways of thinking:



These changes take time and can't happen if employees don't understand how their workplace operates when it comes to gender. Most people need to be helped to see that the many assumptions they make each day about men and women can have a negative impact - only then can they start to think twice before making judgments and decisions and have new kinds of conversations.

The first step is to move your organisation in the right direction. Momentum will build over time and more people will come on board to help you. Don't expect a complete turnaround - ideally, you'll be thinking in terms of a 3-5 year plan. But each organisational decision, each step, each year should yield some noticeable changes.





*We had a great situation unfold at the office the other day. There were a few of us in the boardroom, setting up a morning tea for some visitors. Someone said,*

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***‘Why don’t we grab some of the girls off the phones to help out?’***

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*One of my male colleagues said, ‘We don’t say stuff like that anymore. Why wouldn’t we ask some of the guys to help us?’*

*It was fantastic!*

*– Mel, 37*

## ENLISTING THE SUPPORT OF SENIOR LEADERS

You will need to spend some time thinking about the best ways to engage the people who make the big decisions in your organisation, including senior leaders like the CEO and CFO. Gaining support at an executive and board level is crucial, as these leaders can champion gender equality to management and a trickle down effect will occur across your entire organisation.

Of course, seeking the support of 'leaders' still overwhelmingly means seeking the support of men. Only 3.5 per cent of CEOs in Australia's top 200 companies were female in 2012, and women held approximately 10 per cent of executive management positions – so it's important to realise it's predominantly men you will be asking to help you drive organisational change.<sup>35</sup>

Why is this important to know? It will inform the way you approach this issue. The truth is that it's very easy to turn gender equality into an "us and them" situation and paint all men as the oppressors of women. The statistics about inequality are very damning and certainly help support this stance. But it's obviously a mistake to cast all men as villains and all women as victims. As you will learn, gender bias, gender expectations, and gender inequality are deeply entrenched in our society and they mostly occur unconsciously, without men (and women) even realising it.

Gender inequality isn't anybody's fault – and it would be a huge tactical error if you approach your initiative for change by pointing the finger at men. Being accusatory is only going to make people defensive and they may disengage. Remember: this is all about equality, and you're pursuing it so that both sexes will benefit from a more fair and equal workplace. You need men on side to make this work.

There is another important factor to take into account: many people mistakenly believe gender equality has already been achieved, and is no longer an issue in the 21st century. Sometimes inequality is subtle or hidden, so it's easy for a senior leader to look around their

workplace, see a lot of women at desks, observe both sexes working harmoniously together, and dismiss gender discrimination and inequality as a past problem that has been "fixed".

Younger men are particularly likely to believe this, as it simply hasn't been their experience. They may have had more female than male classmates at university as women's participation in higher education continues to increase. And they probably also entered the workforce with a solid representation of women at the graduate level. You may need to show them that these perceptions are illusory and, in fact, the foundations for gender inequality are laid early. For example, there is a very high probability that the female graduates they started work with are actually earning less money than they are, for doing the same job.<sup>36</sup>

When talking to leaders and management about gender equality, you'll need to:

1. Show them that gender inequality exists
2. Make it personal in some way, so they engage
3. Show that achieving equality is good for business
4. Reiterate that gender equality benefits everyone
5. Explain that it's a process.



All five of these points are explained fully in a tip sheet called 'How to Bring Leaders (Especially Men) on Board', which is document **A02** in the Resources Pack.

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*Too many organisations look to women alone to change the organisational practices that maintain the status quo. Such an approach fails to recognise the site of most organisational power. The fact is that in most businesses both the human and financial resources are controlled by men. Creating change therefore requires men to take the message of gender equality to other men. It requires men to get on board, to take action and to encourage their peers to do likewise.*

– Elizabeth Broderick, Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner, speaking at the UN Women National Committee Japan Symposium, December 2013

## ENLISTING THE SUPPORT OF THE WGEA

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is an Australian Government statutory authority created by the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*. The Agency is charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces, so it is useful for you to talk with them before you try to secure a commitment from leaders within your organisation. The WGEA works collaboratively with employers, providing advice, practical tools and education to help them improve their gender performance. Their staff members are workplace gender equality specialists and can provide industry-specific advice.



See the WGEA website at [www.wgea.gov.au](http://www.wgea.gov.au) or call them on (02) 9432 7000 or 1800 730 233.

*Achieving gender equality is important for workplaces not only because it is 'fair' and 'the right thing to do', it is also vitally important to the bottom line of a business and to the productivity of our nation.<sup>37</sup>*

## 'THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY': A USEFUL DOCUMENT

There is also an extremely useful document by WGEA titled *'The Business Case for Gender Equality'*, and this will really help you frame conversations with senior leaders and managers at your organisation.

The document talks about how improving gender equality allows organisations to:

- attract the best employees
- reduce cost of staff turnover
- enhance organisational performance
- improve access to target markets
- minimise legal risks
- enhance reputation
- engage men.

All these topics are certain to pique the interest of leaders in your workplace. Talk to them about the positive results they'll achieve by choosing the path towards gender equality. They're sure to sit up and take notice.



You can find a fact sheet about *'The Business Case for Gender Equality'* in the Resources Pack. Refer to document **A03**.



The business case can also be viewed online at: [www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/business\\_case\\_for\\_gender\\_equality.pdf](http://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/business_case_for_gender_equality.pdf)

## THE WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY ACT

It's helpful that the principles of gender equality at work are upheld by legislation. In Australia, we have the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, which is a great motivator for senior people to take action.



A government fact sheet about the *Act* can be found in the Resources Pack. Refer to document **A04**: *'Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012'*.

The principal aims of the *Act* are to:

- promote and improve gender equality (including equal remuneration between women and men) in employment and in the workplace
- support employers to remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce, in recognition of the disadvantaged position of women in relation to employment matters
- promote among employers the elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender in relation to employment matters (including in relation to family and caring responsibilities)
- foster workplace consultation between employers and employees on issues concerning gender equality in employment and in the workplace
- improve the productivity and competitiveness of Australian business through the advancement of gender equality in employment and in the workplace.<sup>38</sup>

## 2. PREPARATION

You've read the first part of this manual titled 'The Basics', so you should already be familiar with some terms, issues and concepts relating to gender equality. But there are some further questions you need to ask of yourself and your organisation before you can move into 'action mode'.

### WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO EDUCATE MYSELF?

Another effective way to ensure you are up to date with the issues is to complete some online learning. It doesn't have to take long: modules on this topic are very concise.

The WGEA has an e-learning module called '*What is Workplace Gender Equality?*' This provides an overview of the key concepts of workplace gender equality, the current state of gender equality in Australia, why these issues exist, and why they are important to address.

[www.wgea.gov.au/learn/elearning-modules](http://www.wgea.gov.au/learn/elearning-modules)

The Australian Human Rights Commission have made gender equality a key action area, with the aim of removing the inequality and discrimination faced by women. They have published numerous reports and guides on their website, covering issues such as pregnancy and parental leave, sexual harassment, male dominated industries and women in leadership. These resources can be accessed on their website:

[www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination)

These are useful resources for anybody who is interested in understanding and removing the barriers to gender equality we are facing in Australia.

### WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING ORGANISATIONALLY?

Before you leap into action or even consider a business case, you need to ask and answer this question. Your organisation probably already collects some kind of data on gender: this will help you create a clear picture of where you're presently positioned, and also help inform what still has to be done. To move forward towards gender equality, you first need to build an accurate profile of where the business currently sits in regard to it.

There are many ways of gathering information. Try to see it as a "stocktake", rather than a criticism of what might be missing. Your findings will make writing a compelling business case that much easier.

You can:

- **Talk to senior leaders** about their impressions of where the business currently stands in achieving gender equality and their hopes for the future (confirming their buy-in is essential, so it's great to do this first)
- **Brainstorm a list of what's currently happening with key people** to identify what already exists to support equality in your workplace. Find out what's going on by asking the following questions:
  - is gender equality mentioned in our existing policies and procedures?
  - do we currently have targets or a quota to ensure equal gender representation?
  - is gender equality mentioned in our existing induction training?
  - is gender bias ever discussed or considered during recruitment or promotion?
  - is gender bias an issue when selecting people for training and development opportunities?
  - is our access to workplace flexibility or parental leave free from assumptions about gender roles?
  - do we have women in senior positions who can act as mentors (or aspirational examples) for our female employees?
  - is gender equality built into existing Key Performance Indicators?
- **Send an open invitation for all staff to share their thoughts on the topic.** Ask staff to email their observations and opinions about what the organisation currently does, how well they think it's working, and suggest ideas about what they would like to see happen next. This kind of freeform invitation to "have a say" can be a real eye-opener. Don't be worried about complaints: even negative comments will help build the picture
- **Run focus groups.** Invite a few people from every level of the organisation to have their say via focus groups. Here are some questions that you might think about asking:
  - are you familiar with the goals of the organisation in regard to gender equality?
  - do you know which policies and procedures exist to support equality?
  - have you discussed appropriate behaviours with your team?
  - do you consciously manage your teams with a view to gender equality - and, if so, in what ways?
  - how often have you witnessed behaviours that undermine equality?



- how are these addressed?
- what is the outcome?
- how would you describe the attitudes of most people to the aim of achieving gender equality in the organisation?
- do bystanders tend to step up and say something if there's an equality issue?
- what do you want to know more about?

Make sure that all responses are recorded by an observer in the room and remember to watch out for possible bias. There's also an issue of some people just agreeing, or some more strongly spoken individuals answering for the whole group.



The Resources Pack includes a 'Focus Group Sessions Plan' and some ideas for the questions you can pose (document **A05**).

- **Send out a survey** to formally ascertain how your people perceive levels of gender equality and respect. The benefit to this more structured approach is that the data helps you build a business case for investing in changes that will achieve equality. You can build an evidence-based approach and accurately report on progress along the way. You can use the same measure again (perhaps after 12-18 months) after you have rolled out some training, policy revision and a poster campaign, etc.



You can find information about the 'Equal Footing' pilot program survey in a fact sheet, which is document **A06** in the Resources Pack.

This is a useful diagram adapted from the Diversity & Inclusion Pathway© model, for thinking about where your organisation currently sits:

**Figure 3: Gender equality roadmap**



\*Adapted from the Diversity & Inclusion Pathway© model developed by Diversity Partners Pty Ltd ([www.diversitypartners.com.au](http://www.diversitypartners.com.au)) and shared with their permission.

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE IN OUR ORGANISATION?

Begin by developing your vision: paint a broad picture of how much better things could be. Have a think about what true gender equality in your organisation might look like. How would you know when you've achieved it? What would be different?

Gather together some people to help you explore this question before you start setting targets or goals. This may result in you creating a working group.

For example: you might decide that if you worked in a genuinely gender equitable organisation, it would be a place where

- there is explicit leadership endorsement of gender equality as a priority in the business
- there is an agreed understanding that achieving gender equality is a major strategic goal and people are aware of the documented steps being taken and how they can get involved
- people are aware of clear policies that demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination and promoting equitable work practices
- women and men have equal access to and appropriate supports to ensure they can raise families and take on carer responsibilities at different times of their lives
- people reach their professional goals, access training and mentorship opportunities regardless of gender
- there is zero tolerance for sexual harassment, sexist comments or put downs
- people question, think twice and speak up when gender based assumptions are made
- people report that they feel confident to speak up against sexist comments, and feel they can question or complain about how gender issues are managed
- recruitment is handled in ways that avoid unconscious bias and promote access for women and roles are created without any gender attached to them (either overtly or more subtly)
- the gender pay gap is quantified and eliminated
- gender equity is considered and reflected in all work with clients and all aspects of service delivery (this is not just an internal issue).

You will have your own style and priorities - these are just examples.

Remember: you might have 10 aspects to your vision, but only decide to work on 3 in the first year of your initiative. That's okay.



You can find an example of a template in the 'Future Plans: What Next?' fact sheet, which is document **A07** in the Resources Pack.

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## WHAT MIGHT CULTURAL CHANGE ENTAIL?

Sometimes it's hard to see the patterns that already exist in our workplaces. This excerpt is from 'Genders at Work', a report that examines the role of workplaces in preventing men's violence against women, compiled by Scott Holmes and Michael Flood. It will get you thinking.

*Contemporary workplaces continue to be organised in ways which reflect and reinforce gender inequalities. These are evident, for example, in the timing of work and norms of leadership and management. Despite the move to 24/7 retail trading, and some other factors such as continuous manufacturing lines, the vast majority of workplaces still operate on a 9am to 5pm basis – a pattern that, in most places, is not aligned with school operating hours.*

*This pattern assumes that the worker has no responsibility for delivering children to school or picking them up again. Factoring in the time that is often taken in travelling to and from the workplace, it may well mean that the worker is also unable to participate in the daily routines of young children. It is, in other words, a pattern that assumes the traditional gendered division of labour.*

*This pattern is also discernible in the number of hours worked per week, with men more likely to be working full time, and women more likely to be working part-time or casually... Women's participation in the workforce has generated adaptations to this gendered pattern in the form of flexible working arrangements. Interestingly, numbers of reports suggest that both men and women are reluctant to make use of these arrangements, recognising that there could be penalties for using them because they are contrary to the acceptable norm.*

– Scott Holmes and Michael Flood, 'Genders at Work',  
University of Wollongong, 2013



You can read the full article at:

[www.whiteribbon.org.au/uploads/media/Research\\_series/WRIB-470\\_Genders\\_At\\_Work\\_Paper\\_v03.pdf](http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/uploads/media/Research_series/WRIB-470_Genders_At_Work_Paper_v03.pdf)

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Clearly, lots of things will need to change if you are aiming towards a culture where both men and women negotiate appropriate flexibility, meetings and events are scheduled for when most people can attend, and women are better supported to work full-time if they want to. Don't try to tackle everything at once – make gradual moves in the right direction.

## WHO CAN I ENLIST TO HELP?

As already mentioned, it's imperative to seek and receive the support of senior leaders and other managers within your organisation. Get them involved very early on.

Keep in mind that you need to be specific with the leadership group about their level of support. They may tell you that your push for equality has their full support, but that might mean they are solely interested in:

- starting conversations about gender in the business
- gathering baseline data about what's currently happening
- training managers in gender equality best practice.

These alone are significant changes and it would be a tremendous kick-start to your initiative if you receive commitment at a leadership level to try to achieve them. But it's important not to automatically assume the decision-makers are also on board to close the gender pay gap, or to transform the way people work by bringing in new flexible work practices, or to set targets for increased participation for women. There are lots of different elements on the road to gender equality and you need to make sure you move slowly and keep management informed of your progress. Some things are harder to achieve than others, but they will happen if you maintain momentum. Something like introducing extra flexibility at work (how and when people meet targets and report to management) has far ranging and multi level consequences. It needs to be planned for and thought through over time.

You will need help, as organisational change can be slow and it's normal to be met with some resistance from time to time.



There is a tip sheet titled '*How to Manage Resistance to Change*', which will help you out further. Refer to document **A08** in the Resources Pack.

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*People said, 'But we covered gender equality about 5 years ago', as if it was a done deal. I pointed out that nothing much had changed in 5 years: we still had our senior management meetings at 8.30am and not one woman had been appointed in a senior role in all that time. People need to see this as an ongoing commitment to equality, just like ensuring people aren't discriminated against because of their cultural background. It's ongoing.*

– Renata, 26





You can also try contacting groups and forums that specialise in workplace gender equality:

The WGEA

[www.wgea.gov.au](http://www.wgea.gov.au) or call them on (02) 9432 7000 or 1800 730 233

Australian Women Lawyers

[www.australianwomenlawyers.com.au](http://www.australianwomenlawyers.com.au)

Australian Businesswomen's Network

[www.abn.org.au](http://www.abn.org.au)

Australian Women's Sport & Recreation Association

[www.australianwomensport.com.au](http://www.australianwomensport.com.au)

National Association of Women in Construction

[www.nawic.com.au](http://www.nawic.com.au)

Australian Women in Resources Alliance

[www.amma.org.au/awra](http://www.amma.org.au/awra)

Australian Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry

[www.awcci.org.au](http://www.awcci.org.au)

Females in Information Technology & Telecommunications

[www.aiia.com.au/?page=FITT](http://www.aiia.com.au/?page=FITT)

Women and Leadership Australia

[www.wla.com.au](http://www.wla.com.au)

Working Women's Centres

[www.wwc.org.au](http://www.wwc.org.au)

Women in Mining & Resources (WA)

[womeninmining.com](http://womeninmining.com)

Women's Health Practice Group

[www.aasw.asn.au/victoria/womens-health-practice-group](http://www.aasw.asn.au/victoria/womens-health-practice-group)

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*I am interested in removing the barriers to full participation for women. That could mean overhauling recruitment or ensuring genuine mentoring relationships are initiated – it means very different things in different industries. I use industry groups for advice.*

*– Clay, 49*

*Gender diverse teams are more innovative, because they draw on greater diversity of thinking and a range of cognitive approaches...*

*– The WGEA Gender Strategy toolkit<sup>39</sup>*

## WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO PLACE EQUALITY ON THE AGENDA?

After you've secured the support of leaders and management, you can start to look more broadly.

Ideally, it's good to prepare people at all levels of the organisation for a growing focus on gender equality and raise awareness before you start trying to build skill levels. This is much better than leaping into a training program. If you suddenly start delivering training or put up posters without any context, you may trigger initial resistance or negativity towards the program (e.g. "Why are women getting all this attention?"). Even though most people do want a fair and equal workplace, there can be some fears around changes of this kind. A gentle launch involving senior leaders and managers as champions is a much wiser initial step.



When you're ready, there's a tip sheet titled 'Suggested Comms' in the Resources Pack. Refer to document **A09**.

## GETTING THE WORD OUT

Think about how you will elevate the issue of gender equality and ensure people see it as an ongoing priority.

- **having key leaders talk about the commitment to gender equality** in the organisation (and what they hope to achieve) is a great start – if people can view these changes as part of broader organisational strategy and see genuine senior level commitment, they make more sense
- **circulating small and easily digestible snippets of information** – ensure that the topics of equality and respect feature in newsletters or email bulletins, explaining how making changes creates a more successful, productive and healthier workplace. It's most effective if this information is dispersed in small chunks – long articles with too much detail or lists of stats and facts can be overwhelming, and are less likely to be read and absorbed. Short case studies or infographics work really well.
- **enlisting champions of change is also effective** – there will be some people in your organisation who are already committed to equitable work practices, who negotiate flexible arrangements, and avoid making gender based assumptions. Utilise these people and use them as role models. If you can get them on board, invite them to contribute to your plans and ask them to start some positive conversations.

*Jim had an all-female finance team for years and was a very popular manager. People worked hard and he offered flexibility and had a few job share positions that lasted over a decade. Now he has 4 males on his team and he is still offering that flexible approach and bringing out the best in people. He is a champion in our organisation in the way he motivates people and takes a fair approach.*

– Mal, 50

- **starting a Working Group** – this needs some consideration, as it's not always a great idea to place gender equality in the hands of a few keen people in the long term. Instead of your entire organisation learning to use a gender aware lens in everything it does, individual staff may think: "Oh, that committee will look after this stuff. We don't need to worry about it". However, an initial working group to get the program moving is a good idea.

Ensure that each member of the group has a plan for communicating back to their wider team the work that's being planned. Their role should be to start conversations that question stereotypes and raise awareness, engage people actively in making small changes right across the organisation, and help ensure their colleagues fill in surveys, contribute and attend events as required.

If you do start a Working Group or Committee, developing some clear 'Terms of Reference' (TOR) is wise. Here are some examples below:

- to develop and implement a strategy across the organisation to achieve gender equality
- to ensure gender equity through increased representation of women in senior and technical roles
- to grow an organisational culture that embraces gender equality
- to provide an environment where women can fully participate, contribute, where their work and life needs are valued and career aspirations are supported
- to provide an environment where men can negotiate appropriate flexibility and play a more hands on role at home
- to work towards becoming an employer of choice for women as measured by WGEA criteria.<sup>39</sup>

You might also plan for this to be a short to medium-term group – perhaps for 12 months. This allows an opportunity to review and enlist new people when enthusiasm may start to flag. Ongoing open-ended groups tend to become stale after a year or so, even when they have an important agenda.

Eventually, you will be able to establish a formal body (ideally led by male and female leaders with influence) that can take your more formalised future strategies forward and communicate progress throughout the organisation. Remain optimistic that this won't always feel like an uphill battle.

- **sustaining a positive approach** – gender can be a contentious issue for some people. They can respond with comments like:

*Don't we already bend over backwards for the women in this place?*

*Can't we have a break from this feminist stuff?*

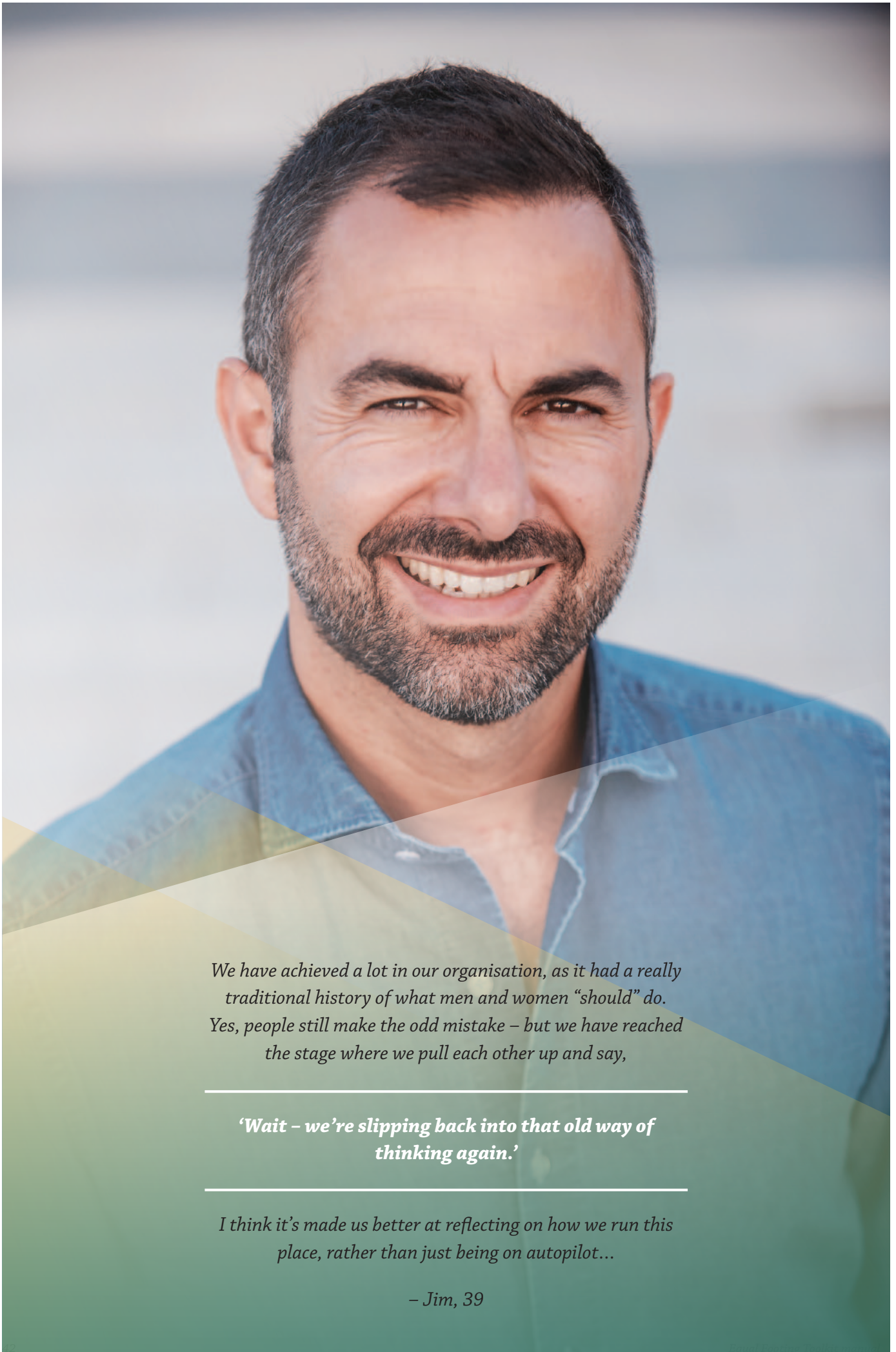
*Is this really a good use of our money?*

*What about some initiatives that support men?*

When you are driving change, it's easy to become frustrated and push hard when you meet with resistance. Remember that a positive, solution-focused “we can get there if we work together” approach will be most effective. If you find yourself becoming angry, talking in punitive ways, or accusing people of sexism, you'll be undermining the success of your initiative.

*When running the 'Equal Footing' program, we had some managers who were concerned about some of the posters. They thought they would get their male staff offside. I tried to talk to them about a bit of discomfort being helpful, as it starts conversations and actually makes people think. I eventually compromised and gave them a choice of which posters they would use. Sometimes people just want to have a say: they aren't necessarily implying that you're wrong.*

*– Donna, 25*



*We have achieved a lot in our organisation, as it had a really traditional history of what men and women “should” do. Yes, people still make the odd mistake – but we have reached the stage where we pull each other up and say,*

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***‘Wait – we’re slipping back into that old way of thinking again.’***

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*I think it’s made us better at reflecting on how we run this place, rather than just being on autopilot...*

*– Jim, 39*

## 3. ACTION

### HOW TO ROLL OUT THE 'EQUAL FOOTING' PROGRAM IN YOUR ORGANISATION

Here is everything you need to know to conduct your own 'Equal Footing' program – you can choose the parts you like, or run the whole thing. This program is designed to raise awareness, improve respectful behaviours and set you on the right path to achieving gender equality.

This table represents the entire 8-step program at a glance. Detailed information about each step can be found on the pages that follow.

<i>Step</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. Initial launch morning tea	Staff members are invited to a 30 minute get together, where they learn about the 'Equal Footing' program. This provides an opportunity to collect baseline data about their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours about gender equality and your workplace. For example you may wish to use a pre-program survey.
2. Focus Groups	If you used a pre-program survey, you may want to follow up your data collection by finding out more about a few issues with groups of 8-10 people. Focus groups will help you drill down and find out people's experiences and responses to these issues.
3. Poster campaign	You can choose from our collection of thought provoking posters to be displayed around your workplace. These are certain to start conversations.
4. Face-to-face training sessions <i>(90 mins for staff and 2 hours for leaders)</i>	Engaging, activity-based training sessions to help skill people up to effect change. Participants will learn what terms like equality, equity, and bias actually mean and understand how these issues impact lives. The sessions include practical skills in making changes at work for a more equitable playing field and how to speak up as a bystander. The leaders' session has an extra 30 minutes at the end that covers how to lead teams with a gender lens and how to apply it more broadly across the organisation.
5. Work on improving your policies and procedures	By having a few people work together to identify which policies need adjusting to better promote gender equality, you'll gain different perspectives and will be better placed to make some long-term sustainable changes.  Meet regularly and make adjustments. Remember: there are opportunities to seek help if necessary – why reinvent the wheel?
6. Email bulletins and downloadable tip sheets for staff to take home	These engaging bulletins are emailed out so people can send them on to family and friends, or print and take home. They pick up some key themes from the face-to-face training, and help to continue raising awareness.
7. On a Roll 21™ workplace game	This game takes 3 minutes a day for 21 days and helps people practise some of the key messages from the face-to-face training day to day in their workplace. People can take part in On a Roll 21™ via their smart phone, tablet or on their computer. (This is the only element not included in this toolkit, it must be purchased separately from En Masse on (03) 9827 1388 if you are interested.)
8. Post program data collection	All those who completed the pre-survey are invited to complete the post-survey as described in the Resource Pack document A06.



# EXPLORING EACH STAGE OF THE 'EQUAL FOOTING' PROGRAM IN DETAIL

## 1. INITIAL LAUNCH MORNING TEA

### *Overview*

Staff are invited to a 30 minute get together to launch the program where they:

- share morning tea together
- hear from key leaders about the program and why it's important to the business
- take part in an activity to get them talking
- fill in a pre-survey to gather baseline data.

### *Tasks To Complete To Make It Happen*

- invite key leader to speak
- book room and catering
- send invitations (asking staff to bring smart phones if they have them)
- provide pens and printed surveys for those without smart phones.

### *Resources That Will Help Bring It Together*



See a complete overview of 'How to Launch 'Equal Footing' at Your Workplace' in the Resources Pack. Please refer to document **A10**.



Information about a pre-survey is in the Resource Pack. Please refer to document **A06**.

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For more information on creating your own surveys see Section 8, Post-Survey Data Collection.

## 2. FOCUS GROUPS

### *Overview*

If you used a pre-survey, you may want to follow up your data collection by exploring a few issues in more depth with groups of 8-10 people.

### *Tasks to Complete to Make It Happen*

- book rooms
- issue invitations
- have two people running the focus group (one to take notes).

### *Resources That Will Help Bring It Together*

It's good to have some issues ready to discuss as a group, plus some opportunities for participants to fill in some answers privately and anonymously. Set aside 50-60 minutes in a private area for the focus group.

Here are seven steps to follow when meeting as a focus group.

#### 1. **Give participants some context:**

"You'll be aware that we are aiming to boost respect and equality here in order to achieve gender equality. A while ago, we collected information about gender equality and people's beliefs and attitudes and what they think happens here in a survey app. We gained some really interesting and useful information from this survey, such as [number] per cent of people believe [belief] and [number] said [belief]. This focus group is a chance for us to hone in on a few of these issues and find out more."

#### 2. **Remind people about confidentiality:**

"What you say will remain confidential and any of your comments we record will not be attributed to you. We expect you to maintain confidentiality as to what is said in this session, too."

#### 3. **Start with an icebreaker or warm up activity:**

"If an alien were to come to earth, how would you explain cats and dogs to them?"

#### 4. **How would you explain the differences between men and women?**

You should gently start the conversation about sex vs. gender and highlight what's actually socially constructed. Reiterate that it's good to acknowledge differences, but inclusion and fairness are the best keys to advancing gender equality.

#### 5. **Move on to some general questions like:**

"Do you believe we currently have an equal playing field for men and women at our workplace? If not, why not?"

#### 6. **Then ask something more specific like:**

"What happens when people make sexist or unhelpful remarks that relate to gender while at work? Who speaks up? Who doesn't? How harmful is it? What needs to change?"

#### 7. **Offer people a chance to answer some questions:**

Do this as a group and give them a chance to answer anonymously.

### 3. POSTER CAMPAIGN

#### Overview

The concept behind the 'Equal Footing' poster campaign was to take a series of gender-biased comments that could realistically be overheard at any workplace – typical “water-cooler” conversation – and then subvert them, swapping one sex for the other, to highlight the gender inequality embedded in each message.

Ideally, a selection of the nine posters should be displayed around your workplace throughout the four-week period before the 'Equal Footing' training. They are designed to be conversation starters – so you should change the displayed posters regularly, to keep people thinking, talking and intrigued about the upcoming training.

#### Tasks to Complete to Make It Happen

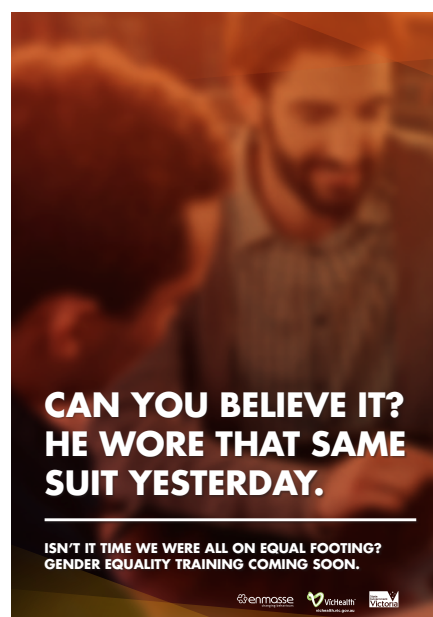
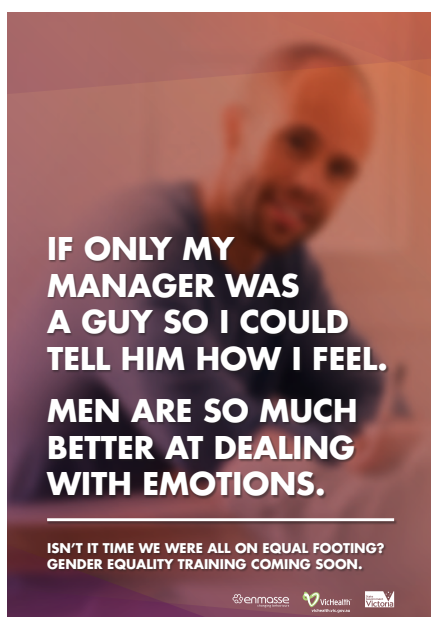
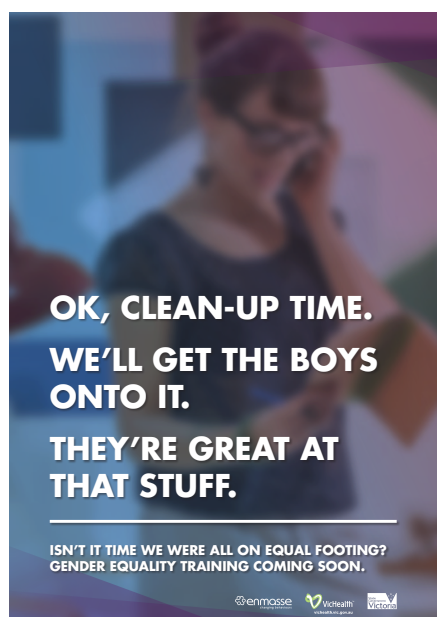
- seek opinions and decide which posters will best suit your workplace (but check with senior leaders and managers before displaying them)
- decide on the best positions for display (common areas including bathrooms and lunch rooms, your staff intranet, etc).

#### Resources That Will Help Bring It Together

You can find small versions of the nine posters on this and the next page.



There are high-resolution PDFs of all the 'Equal Footing' posters available on the VicHealth website: [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)





**HE'LL BURST INTO TEARS IF YOU MENTION THAT. YOU KNOW WHAT MEN ARE LIKE.**

---

ISN'T IT TIME WE WERE ALL ON EQUAL FOOTING?  
GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING COMING SOON.

enmasse | vHealth | vWork

**DID YOU HEAR? HE'S EXPECTING ANOTHER BABY. THERE GOES HIS CAREER.**

---

ISN'T IT TIME WE WERE ALL ON EQUAL FOOTING?  
GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING COMING SOON.

enmasse | vHealth | vWork

**THESE MEN DON'T KNOW HOW LUCKY THEY ARE. THEY GET TO WORK PART-TIME AND PICK UP THEIR KIDS.**

---

ISN'T IT TIME WE WERE ALL ON EQUAL FOOTING?  
GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING COMING SOON.

enmasse | vHealth | vWork

**NO, DON'T BOTHER INVITING HIM. HE'S ONLY HERE TWO DAYS A WEEK.**

---

ISN'T IT TIME WE WERE ALL ON EQUAL FOOTING?  
GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING COMING SOON.

enmasse | vHealth | vWork

**HE CAN'T BE A GOOD LEADER IF HE'S JUGGLING TWO KIDS AND WORK.**

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ISN'T IT TIME WE WERE ALL ON EQUAL FOOTING?  
GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING COMING SOON.

enmasse | vHealth | vWork

**SHE'S TOO EXPENSIVE. HIRE HIM, INSTEAD.**

---

ISN'T IT TIME WE WERE ALL ON EQUAL FOOTING?  
GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING COMING SOON.

enmasse | vHealth | vWork

## 4. FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING SESSIONS

### *Overview*

This training has been designed for both staff and leaders/managers, and the initial 90 minute session can be attended by both groups. At the completion of the 90 minutes, the leaders should step outside for a 5 minute break while the remaining participants finish up and complete evaluation forms. The leaders then return and complete an additional 30 minutes, focusing on how they can pass on what's been covered to their teams.

### *Tasks to Complete to Make It Happen*

If you plan to facilitate the training yourself, it's highly advisable you attend a 'Train the Trainer' workshop beforehand. To register interest in a fee-for-service workshop please email VicHealth through the website: [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

### *Resources That Will Help Bring It Together*

The 'Equal Footing' training is very adaptable, and you can adjust or omit aspects you feel may be too challenging for your group. It's better to aim to get some conversations started and manage the group well, rather than test your comfort zone and end up in a difficult situation. Remember that the whole issue of gender can be contentious in workplaces. This is usually due to people:

- being nervous about changes
- thinking equality will make their job less secure
- feeling criticised or blamed
- being very attached to the makeup of their teams and the status quo
- genuinely believing gender equality is a non-issue.

### *Additional Advice and Preparation*

In order to facilitate these sessions, the trainer will need to:

- be confident about explaining the concepts of stereotyping, gender and equality vs. equity
- be able to calmly manage people who say things like, "But what about men? They don't get any of the benefits", or make disparaging comments about feminists or people being too politically correct
- know the content well enough to explore it with the group, rather than just present it
- have a sense of humour and remember it's okay for people to disagree and debate.

It is ideal to have two facilitators - a male and female - presenting.



To register your interest in the 'Equal Footing' training materials, please email VicHealth through the website [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

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## 5. WORK ON IMPROVING YOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### *Overview*

All your efforts to achieve fairness and equality in your workplace are unlikely to succeed unless they are supported by clear policy: this needs to be developed, written down, explained to all employees, and then put into everyday practice.

Research by the ASX Corporate Governance Council shows that companies with diversity policies report improved corporate image as well as increased profits, greater opportunities to engage with a better and broader talent pool, and a more creative and ideas-driven working environment.<sup>40</sup> All these things will obviously benefit your organisation enormously – so it's time to get your head around policy and start writing.

When developing policy, you should aim to encapsulate gender equity and diversity principles and practices that will improve gender equality outcomes in your workplace. Policies about disability and cultural diversity may already exist at your organisation, possibly under a broader diversity policy or statement, which acts as a general umbrella. Your aim is to add a statement and list some objectives about gender equality to this list.

Your gender equality policies need to clearly outline what is expected of employees and who is responsible for policy governance. Your policies can include objectives and suggestions about how things can be measured, or they may just outline the intent and the aspects your organisation is prioritising. Be sure to have an organisation-wide focus, rather than looking only at the recruitment phase.

Here is some “best practice” advice you should follow:

- have two or three people (rather than the whole working group) work together to identify which policies need adjusting to better promote gender equality
- meet regularly and make adjustments – don't hesitate to seek help, if necessary
- consider good examples of gender equality policies that already exist in other organisations
- set a timeframe for completion and implementation – include future benchmarking and review processes
- plan how your staff will be informed of the policy changes.

## Tasks to Complete to Make It Happen

- write or revise a gender equality policy
- update existing key documents to feature gender equality
- develop a goals document
- develop a gender equity principles document
- look at updating your current processes and procedures.

## Writing Policy

When it comes time to actually write gender equality policy, these 10 tips can help:

1. ask people to be involved, consult and form a working group – don't go it alone
2. make a statement about why your organisation prioritises gender equality and how this fits in with your strategic direction
3. use clear definitions so everyone knows what the key terms like 'diversity' and 'equality' mean
4. use an objective that is clear and simple
5. state your strategies and expected outcomes in clear terms (could include targets here)
6. state who is responsible for making this happen (implementation)
7. be clear about any consequences if the policy is breached
8. link it to other relevant policies so they dovetail (discrimination, code of conduct, recruitment)
9. include how you intend to measure the policy's effectiveness (including monitoring, reviewing and reporting)
10. run it past at least one policy consultant of good standing to ensure you've got it right.

## Resources That Will Help Bring It Together

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There is a detailed fact sheet titled '*Developing a Workplace Gender Equality Policy*' in the Resources Pack. Refer to document **A11**.



Additionally, if you want to join the Diversity Council of Australia, you can use their Guide to Policy Writing: [www.dca.org.au](http://www.dca.org.au) or phone (02) 9322 5197

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## Checklist

- do our new policies actively promote gender equality?
- do they mention things like unacceptable sexist comments and behaviour, gender bias, and discriminatory practices and attitudes?
- do they address equal pay for women, or mention equal access to work flexibility?
- will it be easy for our people to find and understand our policies and procedures about gender equality?
- do our policies include a list of people and organisations that employees can contact if they want help to deal with gender-based inequality?
- have we organised a timeframe to train and regularly remind our people about these policies?
- have we included these policies in our induction training process?

## Featuring Gender Equality in Key Documents

It's likely that your organisation has a mission statement, or vision statement, or statement of strategic intent – you will need to start some conversations about including your gender equality goal as part of it. The statement can be as simple as:

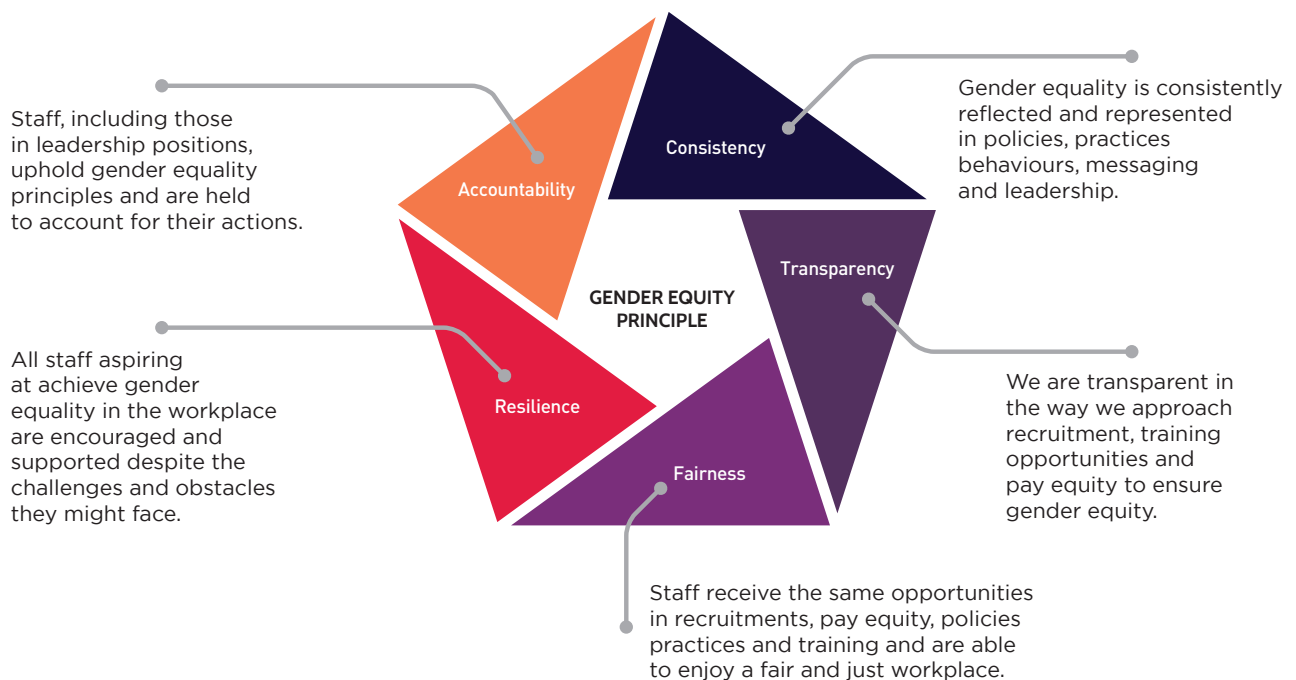
*Our vision is for all employees of this organisation to access and enjoy the same rights, responsibilities, resources and opportunities regardless of their sex. We will help to achieve this by embedding gender equity principles across every level of our business.*

It's wise to have this broad kind of statement about gender in a few documents, as well as having some updated policies in areas like equal opportunity, parental/carers leave, bystander action, and code of conduct.

## Principles

You may wish to create a document of 'Gender Equity Principles', and this is a good task for a working group.

The City of Yarra has developed an excellent, simple diagram that may inspire you:



\*Used with permission from the City of Yarra's 'Gender Equity: Strategy for a Respectful, Just and Fair Yarra 2013-2016' resource.<sup>41</sup>

## Goals

It's helpful to develop a goals document before you start working on your policies. These goals may include things like:

- gender will be considered in all planning and future policy development
- we will prioritise the representation of women in leadership
- we will eliminate the gender pay gap
- we will clearly define flexible work practices and apply them to all employees equally
- we will address gender bias in the business
- we will ensure all employees have equal access to professional development, mentoring and other opportunities.<sup>42</sup>

## Processes and Procedures

You will also want to consider your current processes and address “the way things are done around here”. This will entail looking through a gender lens at how the workflow is presently managed, who decides who does what, and how clients are approached, engaged, and serviced (and by whom). You may want to look at your common methods of allocation of work, projects, customers/ clients procurement, and overall decision-making.

## 6. EMAIL BULLETINS AND DOWNLOADABLE TIP SHEETS FOR STAFF TO TAKE HOME

### Overview

Learning about gender equality in the face-to-face training is one thing, but the messages conveyed in it need to be reiterated for the concept to really take hold.

### Tasks to Complete to Make It Happen

Momentum is key here, and a great way to keep it going is to send out engaging email bulletins on gender equality, picking up on some key themes from the training.

### Resources That Will Help Bring It Together

The bulletins should be short and informative but still pack a punch. Remember to attach a downloadable tip sheet, covering a particular aspect of gender equality.



You can consider the information below, and there are additional examples in document **A12** of the Resources Pack.

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### A Glimpse of Global Gender Issues

*Worldwide, you're more likely to be poor if you're female.*

*That's a fact. It's also highly likely you're doing most of the work:*

- *discrimination and injustice are major causes of poverty worldwide, and women and girls bear the brunt of it in every aspect of their lives*
- *around 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people who live in extreme poverty are women and girls<sup>42</sup>*
- *about two-thirds of the 759 million adults who lack basic literacy skills are women<sup>43</sup>*
- *more than 350,000 women die each year from complications during pregnancy and childbirth — 99 per cent of these are in developing countries<sup>44</sup>*
- *women perform 66 per cent of the world's work and produce 50 per cent of the world's food, yet earn only 10 per cent of the world's income and own 1 per cent of the world's property*
- *women hold only 19.7 per cent of parliamentary seats worldwide, and only 16.7 per cent of ministerial posts. Globally, only one quarter of senior officials or managers are women.<sup>45</sup>*

## 7. ON A ROLL 21™ WORKPLACE GAME

### Overview

This game takes approximately three to five minutes a day for 21 days and helps people stretch a little out of their comfort zones and put into practice some of the key messages from the face-to-face training in their workplace.



Here's a summary of how On a Roll 21™ works.

On day one, participants are sent an email inviting them to start playing by clicking on a link. This web link can then be saved as a favourite on their device (whether that be a smartphone, phone, iPad or laptop), so they can access it each day for three weeks. The game can be easily done on the train, while waiting in queues, or first thing each morning. Once on the app page, participants are asked to sign in using a simple login of their email address. They are then guided to roll a 21 sided virtual die, which will tumble across their screen and stop on a random number. That number will be linked with a task or mission for the day, which will pop up on their screen.

This mission will involve talking about how respect is shown in small ways at their workplace, or taking a photo of something they like to do that doesn't necessarily fit with gender stereotypes, or another simple challenge. They can then scroll through their colleagues' missions and see what has been posted, reply or comment on posts, and get a sense of what respect and equality means to those they work with.

*This game was so much fun and people posted some great pics. It helped us move out of our daily routines and take the time to notice and acknowledge each other more. We had dropped that habit a bit over the years. There were some tasks that questioned assumptions around gender, and some just showing respect in simple ways at work. By day 21, I think we are more likely to step in if we see gender based assumptions occurring or anything we're not happy with.*

*– Deb Holder, Department of Transport*

To register your interest in purchasing On A Roll™, please email VicHealth through the website [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

### Tasks to Complete to Make It Happen

- arrange access via VicHealth
- send an email invitation to participants.



## 8. POST-SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

### *Overview*

At this stage you should consider inviting all those who did the pre-survey during the program launch to complete the survey again. You could, for example, send the survey around in an email, or offer an incentive for people to complete the survey.

During the 'Equal Footing' pilot program the survey was designed to capture changes in knowledge and attitudes. You can check it out in the Resource Pack (A01) however your survey should be designed to reflect the changes you are trying to achieve in your organisation.

### **Options for Measuring What You Do**

Even if you are only rolling out one aspect of the 'Equal Footing' program, it is a great idea to measure the impact of what you do. There is a genuine lack of evaluation in this area, so everything you find out will be useful. It is also important to collect and keep evaluation data, because:

- evaluation can be used as an ongoing management and learning tool to improve a program's effectiveness
- program evaluation, conducted on a regular basis, can greatly improve the management and effectiveness of not only the 'Equal Footing' program but your organisation as a whole
- effective programs are those that can demonstrate the achievement of results. Results are important, especially when trying to secure future funding or commitment from leaders.

### **Creating Your Own Surveys**

You can, of course, choose to create your own surveys. Your first step is to come up with some core evaluation questions. What do you want to see once your interventions have been implemented? When you know what you want your results to look like, consider what type of questions would be able to represent this. Also consider who you will seek information from – for example, employees, managers or other stakeholders. In designing your survey or any other measurement tool you will need to consider the audience to whom you might be presenting the results. A staff committee, for example, might be looking for different kinds of data compared with an executive team.

### *Resources That Will Help Bring It Together*

We suggest using a tool like Survey Monkey to help you [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). It's really simple and fast to learn (and use) and you can specifically design your own individual survey.

However, it's important to remember that while surveys may be able to tell you what has changed, they are limited in being able to tell you why or how those things have changed and whether or not they changed as a result of your interventions. For that kind of analysis you may need to consider the involvement of a consultant or specialist.

### **Some Final Things to Remember About Evaluation**

Evaluation and the dissemination of its findings are vital, as this will help you to understand what important factors shaped your project, how it was implemented, identify and analyse the results, and decide whether it can be sustained. This will then help others to learn from its lessons and assist to allocate resources accordingly.



## 4. FUTURE FOCUS

The 'Equal Footing' program is a great kick-start towards achieving gender equality in your workplace. It ticks the following boxes:

- evidence-based training
- policy-driven sustainable change
- skilling up leaders to be better role models
- resourcing staff to raise awareness and have useful conversations about gender equality.

Hopefully, the 'Equal Footing' program has inspired the decision-makers in your organisation to provide a version of the training to all new staff, and/or to start a working group to lead future organisational change activity.

It's important to remember that the 'Equal Footing' program is just a first step and gender equality needs to become part of your ongoing workplace strategy, rather than just being explored in this training and then put on the backburner. There are undoubtedly other areas that you are yet to address, like looking at the best ways your organisation can close the gender pay gap, or whether you should introduce more flexible ways for people to complete their work.

To keep moving forward, you'll need to get strategic about gender equality, and consider building a business case to support future initiatives.

### HOW DO I DEVELOP A STRATEGY AND BUSINESS CASE LONGER TERM?

Rather than just listing the initiatives you'd like to continue with, try developing a future plan that clearly identifies what you'd like to do and how these actions will benefit the business. Remember that people at all levels of the organisation will want to know how the plan benefits them - and make sure you highlight what you have already achieved, rather than only looking forward.



It's helpful to get some advice from the WGEA if you'd like to make a firm plan for the future. See their website at:

[www.wgea.gov.au](http://www.wgea.gov.au) or call them on (02) 9432 7000 or 1800 730 233.

### WHAT ABOUT BENCHMARKING?

If you regularly submit reports to the WGEA, you'll also have some more data to utilise in your forward planning. Following the first year of full reporting against the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, the WGEA is providing all compliant reporting organisations with confidential customised benchmark reports.

The benchmark data provided in these reports is unlike any other data available around the world. Each reporting organisation is now able to understand their relative performance against different comparison groups: the Australian industry overall (all reporting organisations), organisations within the same industry, and others.

*Understanding your performance – and relative performance in particular – is a critical step in setting goals to improve your gender equality performance, identify your strengths and areas for improvement, and develop tailored and specific strategies and actions. As you gain insights about your organisation's performance, the WGEA will provide employers with ongoing support to assist them to improve performance over time.*

– Helen Conway, Director, WGEA



You'll find a document called 'The Benchmarks Insights Guide' on the WGEA website, which provides further details:

[www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Benchmarks\\_Insights\\_Guide\\_final.pdf](http://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Benchmarks_Insights_Guide_final.pdf)



*I was rapt to hear our CEO announce that, in the spirit of our company's commitment to equality,*

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***HR was reviewing the process for returning to work after parental leave.***

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*And not just for women, but for men, too!*

*– James, 48*





