2026 Progress report for:

Victorian Fisheries Authority

Cover page

Organisation name (required)	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Total number of employees (and full-time equivalent FTE), as at 30 June 2025	Total employees: 192 Total FTE: 182
Response rate to employee experience survey	The VFA received from the Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, an exemption from participating in an employee experience survey in 2025. Therefore, there is no employee experience data available for the 2025 reporting period.
Contextual information	• The VFA is a statutory authority governed by a Board, which is appointed by the Minister for Outdoor Recreation. The VFA is a relatively small to medium defined entity with a headcount of 192 at the time of the gender audit 30 June 2025. • The Victorian Government endorsed a range of budget initiatives which necessitated reprioritisation of existing activities and resources across the Victorian Public Service (VPS). For the VFA this also resulted in a restructure. The timing of this, including the planning and consultation with employees took over six months towards the end of the reporting period with the implementation of separation packages occurring post the reporting period. • Organisation resources, particularly Senior Management and the People and Culture Team were focused on delivering the change while maintaining business as usual activities for a significant part of the reporting period. • In this context, the VFA continued to implement strategies to progress towards gender equality and made progress on some of the workplace gender equality indicators. The overall progress is not linear and has felt at times like it has stalled. However, the VFA is still moving forwards to our gender equity goals with long term learning and adaptation.
Location (metropolitan, regional or rural. If other, please specify)	Central office: 1 Spring Street Melbourne Metropolitan and regional

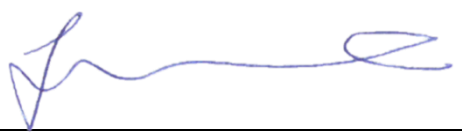
Attestation by head of organisation (required)

I confirm that:

☒ I am the head of organisation (CEO or equivalent).

☒ I have reviewed and approved the submission of this progress report on behalf of my organisation (as named above). I attest to providing truthful and accurate information.

☒ I attest that my organisation has completed all relevant gender impact assessments under the Gender Equality Act 2020, or I have explained why not in the comment box below.

Any comments?	While undergoing significant change during the reporting period, as summarised above, the VFA has continued to implement the strategies of the GEAP 2021 – 2025. Numeric progress may not have occurred for some of the seven gender indicators, however, we are building a strong foundation of continuous learning and applying those learnings to achieve greater gender equity.
Name	Travis Dowling
Role title	Chief Executive Officer
Signed	
Date	13/04/2026

Step 1: Reporting on gender impact assessments (GIAs)

Section 1.1 Confirming GIA exemptions (required)

If you have not listed any GIAs, please choose one or more permitted reason:

☐ Reporting on the GIA(s) would make the progress report an exempt document. This is within the meaning of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

☐ Reporting on the GIA(s) would result in a disclosure prohibited by a different Act.

☒ Reporting on the GIA(s) would reveal confidential information.

☐ Your organisation had no policies, programs or services requiring a GIA. This is under the parameters of the *Gender Equality Act 2020.*

☐ None of these apply (**go to 1.2**).

For GIAs done on policies, programs, and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public we cannot report on two of the VFA's six completed GIAs undertaken during the reporting period as they are 'Cabinet in Confidence'.

Section 1.2 Describing policies, programs and services subject to a GIA (required and recommended)

Ref #	A: Title (required)	B: Subject (required)	C: Description of the policy, program or service (required)	D: Status (required)	E: Description of gendered impacts (recommended)
1.	VFA Events Program 2025-2026	Program	The VFA's Events Program is developed annually based on funding from the Recreational Fishing Licence trust and VFA base funding. The VFA's annual Events Program has a significant impact on the public with over 20,000 people collectively attending and participating at VFA-led events across the year. At these events, people are provided with recreational, commercial, aquaculture, fish science and other information related to the fishing and boating sectors to educate and promote initiatives the VFA is delivering and to increase understanding, support, skills and participation in fishing and boating experiences.	Up for review	Fishing, traditionally, has involved many more men than women, and involvement in the VFA's community engagement events has previously been similarly dominated by men. Men, women and non-binary people may have different needs and priorities when accessing and attending events and are likely to access events at different rates. Fishing has different meanings and values to different genders and cultural communities. People may access events to learn a new skill, to socialise, to introduce family and friends to fishing. The way in which the Events Program is curated can have a gendered impact. It's important to provide dedicated opportunities to address the potential barriers to women such as women-only activities like fishing clinics at events. Maintaining a focus on removing potential barriers such as location of event, language used, timing of events and enabling minority groups through partnering with support groups/organisations to reach all abilities, community groups and culturally diverse groups has a positive impact.
2.	Recreational Fishing Small Grants Program	Program	This program uses recreational fishing licence funds to support grants of up to $5,000 (GST exclusive) for small projects that benefit public recreational fishing in Victoria. Organisations can apply for funding year-round through the SmartyGrants online portal, accessed via the VFA website. Most applications come from angling clubs with others being received from not-for-profit organisations, schools, government agencies and incorporated bodies and associations.	Up for review	The small grants program aims to support projects that benefit public recreational fishing. Since men participate in recreational fishing at a higher rate than women, these projects tend to support men to participate in fishing rather than women. The program primarily supports angling clubs which are mainly comprised of men, therefore the projects created are often tailored to the needs of men. When the projects do not adequately tailor to the needs of women the projects can further discourage the participation of women in the small grants program and recreational fishing. For example, women and non-binary genders may benefit from recreational fishing projects that increase safety, accessibility and inclusiveness at angling clubs and fishing in general.
3.	VFA External Communications	Service	The service involves communicating directly with the public on a large scale. VFA social media posts reach millions of people regardless of whether they follow our pages. We have a direct audience of about 300,000 people through social media, email and media mailing lists. Our media releases are published on high-profile news sites regularly.	Up for review	VFA's social media followers are made up of 75% men and 25% women. We know less about the gender of people who use our website or read stories in public media stemming from our media releases. Our communication can encourage participation in fishing and boating from people of different genders by highlighting the great experiences available to everyone. By depicting women, people of different cultural groups and with different abilities, it can inspire others to become involved and reduce perceived barriers to entry. This includes how people communicate with us via social media.

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4.	Fisheries Officers Recruitment Campaign	Program	Recruitment of Fisheries Officers into vacancies in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria with a focus on recruiting women and members of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities.	New	Through knowledge of VFA's communication and engagement with the public, including events and social media, it is known that more men access information through channels such as social media, the website, fishing groups/clubs/organisations. Women and members of CaLD communities may not access information on fishing or relate to the type of work that is undertaken by the VFA. Potential barriers to women and members of CaLD communities applying for roles can include the language used in advertisements and position descriptions, the application process and the physical aspects of the role. Cultural attitudes and perceptions of roles like a Fisheries Officer, can also influence applicants.

Section 1.3 Describing actions taken as a result of a GIA (required and recommended)

Ref #	F: Were actions taken as a result of the GIA? (required)	G: Describe the actions taken as a result of the GIA in order to: • Meet the needs of people of different genders; and/or • Promote gender equality; and/or • Address gender inequality. If you did not take action, write N/A here and explain why in (H). (required)	H: If you did not take action, explain why. If you did take action, describe it in (G) and write N/A here. (required)	I: Describe: How and why intersectionality was considered (or not) (required)	J: Describe any actions taken specifically designed to address intersectional inequalities (compounded gender inequalities)? (recommended)
1.	Yes (go to column G)	It was decided to incorporate some new approaches in the Events Program for 25/26 and continue some existing actions as outlined below • All abilities Fishing Day – continue to work with our Women in Recreational Fishing and Boating (WIRFaB) leaders to connect us with more special needs students and schools so that we can deliver 'learn to fish' clinics to more students in the sector. • Continue to build our partnership and support for the annual multicultural Zinda Festival in Bendigo and continue to work with Community Engagement & Major Crimes Division to brainstorm ideas on how we can continue to grow our engagement presence in CaLD communities. • Continue regular engagement with WIRFaB leaders to discuss WIRFaB presence at events; how can we encourage women to attend events and participate in the fishing skill-based activities. • Rather than segmenting events, look at how we can make all our events as inclusive as possible – gender, culturally diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, very young children/families. This will be included as an item in the planning phase in the event checklist • Continue to work with the VFA Communication and Boating teams, and external stakeholders such as Boating Industry Association Vic, Safety Transport Vic, Australian Fishing Trade Association to include inclusive imagery from different gender and cultural groups in marketing material when promoting projects, events and general posts in social media. • Plan to implement a second round of the *Inclusive Culture Program* in the future, where the VFA would be inviting fishing and boating clubs to	N/A	From our work with stakeholders like Fishcare (which runs its own program for people with disabilities) and Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (which runs an annual multicultural event), we understand that groups have varying needs and priorities which is likely to have different impacts. Based on our important partnerships with these 2 stakeholders, it supports our rationale to continue to grow our partnership in creating experiences that cater to their specific needs and drivers. In addition to standalone curated events VFA needs to look at how to make all events as inclusive as possible. For example, offering Indigenous themed activities at some of our events, rostering staff who can speak a second language. It is important to welcome and foster involvement of different genders, cultural backgrounds, skill levels and other diverse attributes.	The decision to: • create a dedicated event for people with a disability. • support a community led multicultural event. (Detailed in column G) By including this thought process in the planning phase for an event will increase the likelihood of creating more inclusive experiences.

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		participate to develop an inclusive strategy to attract and engage with a more diverse range of people.		Seeing people of different genders and diverse attributes engaging in fishing and boating may break down the potential barriers to accessing fishing and boating.	Working with the VFA Communication Team to continue more inclusive imagery in media (social media, written media etc) of different genders and diverse groups.
2.	Yes (go to column G)	The actions that were taken as a result of our GIA are listed below: 1. Highlight a range of successful grant applications from diverse groups on the VFA website, promoting successful applications from diverse groups, showing what types of projects/events can be funded and encourage applications 2. Distribute a small grants information and promotional flyer amongst CaLD groups enabling targeted promotion to groups who may not otherwise know about the program and who may need help with the submission process 3. Increased portrayal of diverse small grant funded events on social media 4. Include all-abilities access and gendered impact as part of the assessment criteria for small grants applications 5. Deliver an information session for assessors to provide insight on gender equity, unconscious bias and inclusive assessment practices. Actions 5 and 6 were not completed by 30 June 2025 but will still deliver an important and measurable impact for participation of gender diverse, CALD communities and those living with a disability in the small grants program. Program applications that target these groups will have a higher likelihood of being funded through the program. Coupling this with an information session for assessors will help make the assessment of small grants more inclusive.	N/A	It is understood that gender diverse people who have a disability or are from another marginalised or disadvantaged group will be impacted differently in the Small Grants program. Accessing the small grants program requires applicants to fill out an extensive online application form in English. This may disadvantage applicants who are members of the CaLD community and those who have difficulty with written applications Also gender diverse people and from a marginalised disadvantaged group may avoid applying for the small grants program due to stereotypes around fishing participation. Through believing they are not the typical type of person who goes fishing they may be discouraged from applying for the program.	A small grants flyer was created and distributed to CaLD groups and other under-represented groups. The flyer advertised the small grants program and highlighted ways in which applicants can get support with their application. This aims to increase applicants from diverse groups.
3.	Yes (go to column G)	• Depiction of all Victorians regardless of their gender, mobility, ability, sexuality, age or ethnicity in our communications. • Moderate social media posts that ○ Feature staff to protect their well-being and personal reputation, ○ Contain offensive language that marginalises groups to provide a safe space for everyone to engage in a respectful manner	N/A	Fishing and boating should be accessible to everyone, and gender, race or physical ability need not be a barrier to entry. Many cultures are passionate about fishing as a source of food and sign of prosperity. Marginalised and minority groups may not identify with the VFA and its communications.	Examples of actions: ○ Stories and images selected for VFA social media include people of all genders and where possible, people of different cultural backgrounds. ○ The front cover of the 2026 Recreational Fishing Guide will feature a woman angler of mixed heritage. ○ Social posts have included Indigenous Australians, old and young anglers, anglers with limited mobility and people of different cultural backgrounds

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4.	Yes (go to column G)	1. Apply special measures for: • Women applicants for the three northern Victorian vacancies, • Chinese and Vietnamese applicants for the four Metropolitan vacancies 2. Continue to undertake actions used in previous campaigns to attract women to apply for roles including: • Having current staff visible in the field/media/communications, which gives people the opportunity to see themselves in the role resulting in an increase of women applying for roles in the future. **3.** Continue with actions taken in previous campaigns to attract CaLD communities: • Send position information to partner organisations like VicPol, Fire Rescue Victoria, Jesuit employment program and VMC and our own networks to promote the role within their contact groups. • Attending community events and sessions raising the profile of the VFA • Changes to the web pages to make the information more accessible and visually appealing, and then have translated • Review, simplify and translate current recruitment information to ensure it addresses feedback from community eg: career path, flexible work arrangements etc 4. Undertake a more streamlined marketing process to advertise the vacancies: • Marketing of roles through VFA's Communication team • Engaging with the Women in Recreational Fishing and Boating group • Engage a marketing organisation to run a campaign targeting Chinese and Vietnamese communities. 5. Provide 'how to apply for a government job' session for all applicants. NB: Recruitment was put on hold due to the restructure.	N/A	Intersectionality was considered noting that special measures were applied. Recruitment for the three northern Victorian vacancies were specifically targeted at women. Recruitment for the four Metropolitan roles were specifically targeted at the Chinese and Vietnamese communities.	Examples of actions: • Attending community events and sessions raising the profile of the VFA • Changes to web pages to make the information more accessible and visually appealing, and then have materials translated • Review, simplify and translate current recruitment information to ensure it addresses feedback from community • Provided 'how to apply for a government job' session for all applicants

Step 2: Reporting on progress against the indicators

Section 2.1 Describing progress against the workplace gender equality indicators (required and recommended)

K: Indicator *	L: Progress data (required)	M: Additional progress data (recommended)	N: Has progress been made? (required)	O: Explain how the data does (or does not) demonstrate progress. (required)

1	**Critical performance measures**
	1.1 Gender composition of the VFA's workforce:
	• 2021: Women 35.0% Men 65.0%
	• 2023: Women 36.9% Men 63.1%
	• 2025: Women 35.9% Men 64.1%
	
	1.2 Gender composition of part time workers in the VFA:
	• 2023: Women 25% Men 1.6%
	• 2025: Women 29% Men 2.4%
	
	1.3 Gender composition of senior leaders in the VFA:
	• 2023: Women 32.4% Men 67.6%
	• 2025: Women 0% Men 100%
		Note: In both the 2025 and 2023 gender audits, diversity data in HR systems did not show any people of self-described gender in the VFA.
		
		Composition of workforce by level to the CEO (women %)
		
		Level 2023 2025
		-1 33% 0%
		-2 0% 33%
		-3 17% 44%
		-4 38% 29%
		-5 31% 25%
		-6 32% 53%
		-7 53% 53%
		
		Composition of workforce by age group (women %)
		
		Age 2023 2025
		<25 0% 43%
		25-34 51% 47%
		35-44 39% 38%
		45-54 31.5% 34%
		55-64 38% 34%
		65+ 30% 27%
			No	• Over the reporting period from 2023 to 2025, overall numerical progress has not been made. However, slight numerical progress has been made since 2021.
				  • There has been a decrease in women in the organisation (36.9% to 35.9%) over the reporting period from 2023 to 2025. This has brought the overall gender composition back to a slightly better position than in 2021 (35%).
				  • Revised recruitment processes have led to more women than men being hired in both the 2025 and 2023 reporting periods, however more women have exited the organisation relative to composition in the period. Further analysis is needed to understand why more women are exiting.
				
				• The proportion of women working part time has increased with 29% of women working part time compared with 25% in 2023. The representation of part time women by reporting level to the CEO covers levels -2 to -7 while for part time men it covers levels -4 to -6. This data may assist in identifying potential barriers to pay equity and career progression.
				
				• There are no women senior leaders (executives) in 2025. There was some progress in the composition of women at levels -2 and -3, that is, two and three reporting levels below the CEO. The under-representation of women senior leaders means there is not a full range of perspectives at the decision-making table. It also impacts the gender pay gap. There is an opportunity to develop women at levels -2 and -3.
				
				• The composition of women is much higher in the younger age groups, showing that young women less than 34 years are attracted to working at the VFA. Further analysis is needed to understand how best to remove any barriers to development opportunities for women and provide career support to women so that it is attractive to build a career.

2	**Critical performance measures** 2.1 Gender composition of VFA's governing body: • 2023: Women 50% Men 50% • 2025: Women 62.5% Men 37.5%	There were three new Board Director appointments during the reporting period. The data does not contain people of self -described gender and diversity data was unavailable.	Yes	• The representation of women has increased with 5 of the 8 Board Directors being women. • Since the Board was established in 2017 and up until 2024 it achieved a 50:50 ratio of men to women. • The recruitment process for Board members is undertaken outside of the VFA and managed by its portfolio department. The Board directors are appointed by the Minister for Outdoor Recreation and can either be appointed directly or appointed through a competitive process. • While the VFA has not collected diversity data on its Board members, one director shared with the Board and VFA employees that he is a Trawlwulwuy man from Tebrakunna country. • How best to collect diversity data on Board Directors at the time of recruitment needs to be explored with the portfolio department managing director recruitment. The information would be helpful in understanding the intersectional diversity of the Board.

K: Indicator *	L: Progress data (required)	M: Additional progress data (recommended)	N: Has progress been made? (required)	O: Explain how the data does (or does not) demonstrate progress. (required)
3	**Critical performance measures** 3.1 Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group: • 2023: Managers 9.5% Professionals 5.4% Technicians and Trade Workers 8.3% Community and Personal Services Workers N/A Clerical and Administrative Workers 17.2% Sales Workers N/A Machinery Operators and Drivers N/A Labourers 8.8% • 2025: Managers 16.7% Professionals -0.7% Technicians and Trade Workers 13.6% Community and Personal Services Workers N/A Clerical and Administrative Workers 12.5% Sales Workers N/A Machinery Operators and Drivers N/A Labourers -4.3% 3.2 Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap: • 2023: 3.5% • 2025: No women **Supplementary measures** 3.3 Mean base salary pay gap: • 2023: 5.7% • 2025: 6.7% 3.4 Median total remuneration pay gap: • 2023: 4% • 2025: 8.8% 3.5 Median base salary pay gap: • 2023: 7.9% • 2025: 5.9%	Mean total remuneration pay gap: 2023: 5.3% 2025: 11.1% In 2021 the gender pay gap was: • Mean base salary 8.6% • Median base salary 8.2% • Median total remuneration 11.8% • Mean total remuneration 12.6%	No	• Since 2021 overall mean total remuneration pay gap has improved from (12.6% to 11.1%). However, the data indicates that there has been an increase in the total remuneration pay gap between the two reporting periods 2023 to 2025 (5.3% to 11.1%). • The VFA has employees in 5 occupation groups: Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Trade Workers, Clerical and Administrative Workers and Labourers. ○ The mean total remuneration gender pay gap decreased for women in three of the groups: Professional, Clerical and Administrative Workers and Labourers. ○ In the other two groups Managers and Technicians and Trade Workers the pay gap widened, particularly for Managers. Further and continued analysis is needed for areas where the uptake of overtime, higher duties, shift allowances, duty officer and other allowances differ for men and women. • There was no pay gap calculation for the mean total remuneration for senior leaders for 2025 as there were no women classified as senior leaders. Having no women senior leaders impacts also on the overall pay gap of the VFA. • Supplementary measures Two of the three supplementary measures showed a widening of the pay gap between 2023 to 2025 with one Median base salary pay gap showing an improvement (7.9% to 5.9%). There has been some progress in closing the pay gap over the life of the GEAP 2021-2025 for overall measures. • Mean base salary pay gap 2021 (8.6%) to 2023 (5.7%) to 2025 (6.7%) • Median base salary pay gap 2021 2%) to 2023 (7.9%) to 2025 (5.9%) • Mean total remuneration 2021 (12.6%) to 2023 (5.3%) to 2025 (11.1%) • Median total remuneration pay gap 2021(11.8%) to 2023 (4.0%) to 2025 (8.8%) .
4	**Critical performance measures** 4.1 Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment: • 2023: Women 10.3% Men 2.0% • 2025: Data not available 4.2 Number of formal reports of sexual harassment: • 2023: Data not available • 2025: Data not available	2025 Employee Experience not available. 2024 People Matter Survey Employee Experience Data showed that 4% of respondents said they had experienced sexual harassment. No further data was available.	No	**Stable progress** • The VFA did not receive any formal reports of sexual harassment in both the 2025 and 2023 reporting periods. This does not necessarily mean that a problem doesn't exist as there may be reasons reports haven't been made, for example, not feeling safe to speak up.

K: Indicator *	L: Progress data (required)	M: Additional progress data (recommended)	N: Has progress been made? (required)	O: Explain how the data does (or does not) demonstrate progress. (required)
	Supplementary measures 4.3 Survey Participants who said they reported sexual harassment: • 2023: Data not available • 2025: Data not available 4.4 Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint: • 2023: Data not available • 2025: Data not available 4.5 Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint: • 2023: Data not available • 2025: Data not available 4.6 Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint: • 2023: Data not available • 2025: Data not available			• The VFA received from the Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, an exemption from participating in an employee experience survey in 2025. Therefore, there is no employee experience data available for the 2025 reporting period. • For both the 2023 and the 2024 People Matter surveys five people indicated they had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months. Further information was not published by the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) as it protects anonymity when there is less than 10 people responding to a question.
5	**Critical performance measures** 5.1 Gender composition of recruited employees: • 2023: Women 58.6% Men 41.4% • 2025: Women 55% Men 45% 5.2 Gender composition of employees who were promoted: • 2023: Women 38.5% Men 61.5% • 2025: Women 33.3% Men 66.7% 5.3 Perceptions of recruitment, by gender: • 2023: Women 37.9% Men 40% • 2025: Data not available 5.4 Perceptions of promotion, by gender: • 2023: Women data not available Men 40% • 2025: Data not available	The gender composition of employees who exited was: 2023: Women 54% Men 46% 2025: Women 47.2% Men 52.8% Career Development Training 2023-24: 27 employees (15 women 55.5%) 2022-23: 8 employees (3 women 37.5%) Higher Duties 2025: Women 22.2% 2023: Women 26%	No	**Stable Progress** • More women were recruited than men (55%/45%). There was a slight decrease in the percentage of women being recruited between the 2023 and 2025 periods (58.6% to 55%). When compared with the overall workforce composition, recruitment is helping shift the balance. • There was a slight decrease in the percentage of promotions who were women (38.5% to 33.3%). Noting that only 6 people were promoted in the 2025 reporting period compared with 26 people in 2023. • The VFA received from the Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, an exemption from participating in an employee experience survey in 2025. Therefore, there is no employee experience data available for the 2025 reporting period on the perceptions of recruitment and promotion. • In relation to exits during the reporting period there remains a high proportion of women exiting compared with the proportion of women making up the gender composition. Further analysis is needed to understand why more women are exiting. • Career Development training was put on hold for part of the reporting period, however for FY23/24 55% of employees undertaking career development training were women. • The percentage of women undertaking higher duties is disproportionate to the gender composition of women.

6	**Critical performance measures**
	6.1 Average weeks of parental leave, by gender:
	• 2023: Women 22.5 weeks Men 6.3 weeks
	• 2025: Women 36.8 weeks Men 8.30 weeks
		Number of employees taking parental leave:
		• 2023: Women 4 Men 7
		• 2025: Women 4 Men 9
			Yes	• Parental leave
				  ○ The number of men taking parental leave increased by 2 while women remained the same compared with 2023.
				  ○ More men than women took parental leave.
				  ○ For both women and men, the average weeks of parental leave increased between 2023 and 2025.

K: Indicator *	L: Progress data (required)	M: Additional progress data (recommended)	N: Has progress been made? (required)	O: Explain how the data does (or does not) demonstrate progress. (required)
	6.2 Uptake of flexible work, by gender: • 2023: Women 73.3% Men 43.1% • 2025: Women 25.9% Men 2.1% 6.3 Perceptions of flexible work culture, by gender: • 2023: Women 69% Men 62% • 2025: Data not available **Supplementary measures** 6.4 Gender composition of parental leave takers: • 2023: Women 36.4% Men 63.6% • 2025: Women 30.8% Men 69.2% 6.5 Gender difference in carer's leave: • 2023: Women 20.9% Men 32.8% • 2025: Women 7.1% Men 9.2%	Number of employees taking unpaid parental leave • 2023: Women 4 Men 0 • 2025: Women 4 Men 0		○ Over both reporting periods, only women took unpaid parental leave. There could be gendered differences in the perception of taking unpaid parental leave. ○ Note also that an increase to paid parental leave entitlements from the Australian Government came into effect in the reporting period. ○ In both the 2025 and 2023 reporting periods one woman voluntarily exited while on parental leave. • Flexible Work ○ The record of the number of employees taking up flexible work has decreased significantly between the two reporting periods. This is a result of flexible working arrangements involving working from home not being re-entered into the new HR system in late 2023. Revised policies and procedures relating to the recording and approval of formal flexible work arrangements need to be put into place. ○ The data does not reflect: ▪ the high proportion of non-rostered staff on flexible work arrangements, namely working from home 2 to 3 days a week. ▪ there is also an element of flexibility available for rostered employees through rostering for some flexibility while still meeting business delivery needs. ○ The VFA received from the Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, an exemption from participating in an employee experience survey in 2025. Therefore, there is no employee experience data available for the 2025 reporting period on the perceptions of flexible work culture. For the 2023 period, 69% women and 62% men participating in the survey agreed if requested a flexible work arrangement would be given due consideration. Further analysis in the absence of 2025 experience data is needed to see if perceptions have remained positive. • Carer's leave ○ The uptake of carer's leave has decreased for both women and men between the two reporting periods with more men taking carers leave than women in both 2023 and 2025. The reason for the higher uptake in 2023 is likely due to this time including COVID-19 lock down periods.
7	**Critical performance measures** 7.1 Occupational gender segregation: • 2023: Managers – Women 47.4% Men 52.6% Professionals - Women 42.1% Men 57.9% Technicians and Trade Workers - Women 25.8% Men 74.2% Community and Personal Services Workers N/A Clerical and Administrative Workers – Women 47.4% Men 52.6% Sales Workers N/A Machinery Operators and Drivers N/A Labourers – Women 20% Men 80% • 2025: Managers – Women 31.3% Men 68.7% Professionals - Women 55.6% Men 44.4% Technicians and Trade Workers - Women 25.8%		No	• The change in both the Professionals and Managers groups may be partly due to the re-classification of some roles between the two occupation groups. When both groups are combined the composition of women is 42.4%. For each group the number of women has: ○ Increased in the Professionals group (42.1% to 55.6%). ○ Decreased in the Managers group (47.4% to 31.3%). • Technicians and Trade Workers have stayed the same 25.8% women. This group represents the VFA's Fisheries Officers. • There has been a slight decrease in women for: • Clerical and Administrative Workers (47.4% to 43.5%) and • Labourers (20% to 18.8%). • The graduate intake on 1 July 2024 consisted of 6 women and 2 men. They have been grouped in the Clerical and Administrative Workers occupation group.

K: Indicator *	L: Progress data (required)	M: Additional progress data (recommended)	N: Has progress been made? (required)	O: Explain how the data does (or does not) demonstrate progress. (required)
	Men 74.2% Community and Personal Services Workers N/A Clerical and Administrative Workers – Women 43.5% Men 56.5% Sales Workers N/A Machinery Operators and Drivers N/A Labourers – Women 18.8% Men 81.2%			

*Indicators (column K)

1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce
2. Gender composition of the governing body
3. Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
4. Sexual harassment in the workplace
5. Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace
6. Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to: family violence leave, flexible working arrangements, and working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
7. Gendered segregation within the workplace

Section 2.2 Describing factors limiting and contributing to progress (required)

P: Indicator	Q: Did any of the factors listed below limit or contribute to your progress?* (required)	R: Explain how any factor(s) limited or contributed to your progress. If 'none' is selected, write N/A and move to (S) (required)	S: List the strategies implemented that contributed to or aligned with the indicator. (required)
1	☐None ☐ a ☒ b ☐c ☒d ☐e ☐f ☒g	• (b) The Victorian Government endorsed a range of budget initiatives which necessitated reprioritisation of existing activities and resources across the VPS. For the VFA this resulted in a restructure. The timing of this, including the planning and consultation with employees took over six months towards the end of the reporting period. A significant recruitment campaign using special measures was put on hold due to the reprioritisation and restructure. • (d) Organisation resources, particularly Management and People and Culture were focused on preparing for and delivering the change while maintaining business as usual activities. • (g)Genuine attempts have been made by the VFA to make progress through the implementation of strategies listed in column S and through the continued application of policies and processes that were put in place in the 21-23 period that laid a foundation for ongoing progress.	**Strategies implemented in 2023-2025:** *1.1 Identify and develop talent within the VFA* – Actions: Develop a Talent Strategy and implement that supports gender, diversity and inclusion, and considers intersectionality. While a pilot program was trialled in 2021-2023 period this strategy was put on hold due to limited resources. *1.5 Continue to learn about the barriers to achieving greater gender composition* – Action: Work with portfolio department systems to ensure intersectional data is collected in HRSystem. Through regular communication employees were encouraged to update diversity information in the HR System. The number of employees providing some level of diversity data increased from 14% to 44%. **Strategies implemented in 2021-2023 that have ongoing impact** *1.2 Ensure our recruitment attracts and promotes diversity* – Actions: Update our VFA branding and supporting documentation to ensure it is inclusive through consultation with intersectional groups. In recruitment advertisements and position descriptions, be open and transparent to all in our aspirations to become more diverse *1.3 Improve gender balance at senior management level (SES, Principal Scientists, STS, and VPS6)* – Action: Actively recruit for gender balance *1.4 Promote diversity into VPS5 and above roles* - In addition to internal candidate pool, explore opportunities for more lateral and external candidates for roles at VPS5 and above, which includes identifying opportunities for flexible working arrangements (job sharing, part time etc) *1.5 Continue to learn about the barriers to achieving greater gender composition* – Action: Gather and analyse information on barriers to achieving gender composition, using tools such as the People Matter Survey, exit interviews when they occur, Gender Working Group feedback.
2	☐None ☐ a ☐ b ☒c ☐d ☐e ☐f ☒g	• (C) The Board directors are appointed by the Minister for Outdoor Recreation and can either be appointed directly or appointed through a competitive process. The recruitment process for Board directors is undertaken outside of the VFA and managed by its portfolio department on behalf of the Minister. • (g) The VFA has made genuine attempts to provide support to the Minister and portfolio department in Board recruitment.	**Strategies implemented in 2021 – 2023 that have ongoing impact** *2.1 Continue to support the Minister and Board Chair to achieve greater intersectional diversity* – Action: continue to ensure diversity is a focus for those involved in advertising and recruiting for Board directors.
3	☐None ☒ a ☒ b ☐c ☐d ☐e ☐f ☒g	• (a) The VFA is a relatively small to medium organisation with some occupation groups consisting of a variety of roles that may differ significantly and may also be different VPS levels. There is also the possibility of some reporting levels (to the CEO) having different levels of responsibility. For example, an Executive (-1) might have employees who are VPS7s and VPS6s but are classified as (-2). • (b) The nature and circumstances of the VFA is that field staff including, for example, hatchery employees and Fisheries Officers are predominantly men. Fisheries Officers work to a roster with shift work, weekend work etc that attracts allowances and overtime. Hatchery workers including drivers may need to work outside ordinary hours for fish production and delivery. • (g) The VFA has made genuine attempts to reduce the pay gap over the four years of the GEAP. The absence of women in senior leadership roles and roles at VPS7 level over 2023-2025 has impacted on the pay gap.	**Strategies implemented in 2021 – 2023 that have ongoing impact** *3.1 Ensure the updated parental leave progression entitlements in the 2020 EBA and its successor are being applied and communicated to staff* – Action: Communicate updates and reminders of parental leave and its associated entitlements to staff on an annual basis *3.2 Evaluate overtime amounts in 'COVID-normal' business operations* – Action: Analyse and compare overtime amounts when a full year of events has resumed to validate if a gender difference exists 3.3 *Provide fair and equitable opportunities for all staff to undertake higher duties* – Action: Ensure that higher duties opportunities are aligned with the Recruitment Policy and Procedure *3.4 Ensure that all recruitment and reclassifications have salaries that are benchmarked with experience and comparable roles* Actions: Managers continue to work with People &Culture on benchmarking salaries; Create a remuneration panel (two people) for recruitment of staff into VPS5 and above; Review Recruitment Policy and Procedure to include a process that ensures recruitment and reclassifications receive salaries benchmarked against experience and comparable roles

P: Indicator	Q: Did any of the factors listed below limit or contribute to your progress?* (required)	R: Explain how any factor(s) limited or contributed to your progress. If 'none' is selected, write N/A and move to (S) (required)	S: List the strategies implemented that contributed to or aligned with the indicator. (required)
4	☐None ☒ a ☒ b ☐c ☐d ☐e ☐f ☒g	• (a) The VFA is a relatively small to medium organisation which means that employee experience data is not always available as there may be a small number of survey respondents answering a question relating to sexual harassment. • (b) The Victorian Government endorsed a range of budget initiatives which necessitated reprioritisation of existing activities and resources across the VPS. For the VFA this resulted in a restructure. The timing of this, including the planning and consultation with employees took over six months towards the end of the reporting period. The VFA received from the Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, an exemption from participating in an employee experience survey in 2025. Therefore, there is no data available for the 2025 reporting period. • (g) Genuine attempts have been made to make progress through the ongoing actions to reduce the incidence of sexual harassment and provide the supports needed for those experiencing the negative behaviour.	**Strategies implemented in 2021 – 2023 that have ongoing impact** *4.1 Raise awareness of contact points and resources for those who may have experienced, or are experiencing, sexual harassment* – Actions: Source an anonymous whistle-blower program for staff; Analyse People Matter Survey results, address trends and assess the need for further risk treatments; and Promote current available resources for staff seeking advice or assistance on matters relating to sexual harassment in the workplace. *4.2 Implement the VFA's sexual harassment risk treatment plan* – Actions: Embed into all communications that we communicate in line with our values, that we are all accountable to ourselves, our team, the VFA and our community to provide a safe and respectful environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment; Add a statement regarding values and acceptable behaviour to a template agenda for all meetings; For incidents that are handled informally, explore methods to identify patterns, recognise causes and identify if any further treatment is needed; Develop a plan to prevent and mitigate sexual harassment when dealing with stakeholders and members of the public, utilising anonymous feedback mechanisms for staff, plus other enforcement agency processes as reference; and Review the VFA's Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure *4.3 Maintain biannual sexual harassment training* – Action: Plan, source and implement sexual harassment training
5	☐None ☒ a ☒ b ☐c ☐d ☐e ☐f ☒g	• (a) The VFA is a relatively small to medium organisation with many long-term employees which means that opportunities for promotion can be limited. • (b) The Victorian Government endorsed a range of budget initiatives which necessitated reprioritisation of existing activities and resources across the VPS. For the VFA this resulted in a restructure. The timing of this, including the planning and consultation with employees took over six months towards the end of the reporting period. The VFA put recruitment on hold for a period. • (g) Genuine attempts have been made to make progress through recruitment and promotion practices, education and career support practices.	**Strategies implemented in 2023-2025:** *5.4 Ensure that internal secondments or reclassifications are recorded and analysed for gender differences* – Actions: Explore and analyse options to collect both internal secondment and promotion (reclass) data through the existing HR management system; and when data is available to collect, ensure it is shared with staff and that actions developed if required. **Strategies implemented in 2021 – 2023 that have ongoing impact** *5.1 Identify job specific development needs targeted at bridging capability gaps for staff newly appointed into roles* – Action: Develop a template to support the creation of individual development plans for staff newly appointed into roles to ensure the development of the knowledge and skills needed for the role, where required. *5.2 Eliminate potential unconscious bias in our recruitment processes* – Action: conduct training for hiring managers on processes, unconscious bias, raising awareness and building a diverse workforce. *5.3 Review recruitment processes to attract greater diversity in candidates* – Actions: Review language in job descriptions and advertisements in consultation with specialists in diversity and inclusion to ensure they are accessible to all; and implement appropriate wording and guidance; and apply special measures to recruitment processes for identified roles.
6	☐None ☐ a ☐ b ☐c ☐d ☐e ☐f ☒g	• g) Genuine attempts have been made to make progress through focusing on education, communication and increased supports for both managers and employees.	**Strategies implemented/started in 2023-2025:** *6.2 Provide training to managers in supporting those experiencing family violence* – Action: Commission a specialist organisation to facilitate ongoing training programs for managers *6.4 Provide opportunities for job-sharing, part-time and flexible working arrangements, where applicable* – Action: Undertake an assessment to identify flexible options for roles (link to the Recruitment Policy) *6.5 Gain insight into initiatives and programs for supporting the individual needs of staff returning to the workplace after a career break* – Action: Develop a template to support managers and staff through the process leading up to, during and returning to the workplace from a career break **Strategies implemented in 2021 – 2023 that have ongoing impact** *6.1 Raise awareness on family violence leave policy and processes and contact officers* – Action: Promote current available resources for staff seeking advice or assistance on matters relating to family violence leave

P: Indicator	Q: Did any of the factors listed below limit or contribute to your progress?* (required)	R: Explain how any factor(s) limited or contributed to your progress. If 'none' is selected, write N/A and move to (S) (required)	S: List the strategies implemented that contributed to or aligned with the indicator. (required)
			6.3 Improve education around access to flexible working arrangements for those seeking it – Actions: Include flexibility in our recruitment material and discuss as part of recruitment process (position description, interview guide, offer); Maintain communications around available flexible working arrangements; and Educate leaders to support flexible working arrangements *6.6 Manager and staff member understand individual workload challenges and pressures* – Action: As part of the PDR process, individual workload challenges and pressures are discussed at the commencement, midcycle and end-of-PDR cycle
7	☐None ☐ a ☒ b ☐c ☒d ☐e ☐f ☒g	• (b) The Victorian Government endorsed a range of budget initiatives which necessitated reprioritisation of existing activities and resources across the VPS. For the VFA this resulted in a restructure. The timing of this, including the planning and consultation with employees took over six months towards the end of the reporting period. • (d) Organisation resources, particularly Management and People and Culture were focused on delivering the change while maintaining business as usual activities. • (g)Genuine attempts have been made by the VFA to make progress through the implementation of strategies listed in column S and through the continued application of policies and processes that were put in place in the 21-23 period that laid a foundation for ongoing progress.	**Strategies implemented in 2023-2025:** *7.1 Embed gender impact assessment in decision making* – Action: Implement training for all staff so that any decision-making process i) considers how the policy/program/service can better meet the needs of different genders, ii) addresses gender inequality that may be shaped by other aspects of identity, and iii) promotes gender equality *7.2 Generate collaboration during the implementation of the GEAP* – Action: Establish a cross-functional cross-level diverse working group to operate as key influencers and advocates *7.4 Launch a new Women in Recreational Fishing (WIRF) Strategy by March 2022* – Action: Use surveys from the WIRF community and the Victorian public to inform our knowledge of the external perception of the VFA brand **Strategies implemented in 2021 – 2023 that have ongoing impact** *7.1 Embed gender impact assessment in decision making* – Actions: Identify programs, policies and services that have direct and significant public impact; and Implement training in conducting gender impact assessments for managers developing or reviewing policies, programs or services that directly and significantly impact on the public. *7.3 Attract diverse groups to work in the VFA* – Actions: Undertake targeted Fisheries Officer recruitment drives to improve our diversity; and Implement the GoTafe Arcadia hatchery employment strategy to achieve 50% Indigenous employment at the hatchery *7.4 Launch a new Women in Recreational Fishing (WIRF) Strategy by March 2022* – Action: Use surveys from the WIRF community and the Victorian public to inform our knowledge of the external perception of the VFA brand. *7.5 Improve engagement with diverse communities* -Actions: Establish a Community Reference Group as a platform for assisting Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities to engage with the VFA and contribute to fisheries resource management discussions; and Continue to implement initiatives from the VFA Accessibility Action Plan to engage with people of all abilities *7.6 Utilise whole-of-government surveys to improve our knowledge, understanding and awareness of gendered segregation in the workplace* – Actions: Encourage staff participation in the annual People Matter Survey; Encourage staff participation in government surveys such as Whole-of-Victorian Government pulse surveys and the Australian Workplace Equality Index Employee Survey; and Communicate results of all surveys involving the VFA to staff.

*Factors (column Q):

a. the size of the organisation, including the number of employees
b. the nature and circumstances of the organisation, including any barriers to making progress
c. requirements that apply to the organisation under any other Act, including an Act of the Commonwealth
d. the organisation's resources
e. the organisation's operational priorities and competing operational obligations
f. the practicability and cost to the organisation of making progress; and
g. genuine attempts made by the organisation to make progress.

Step 3: Reporting on GEAP strategies

Section 3.1 Explaining incomplete strategies (if any) (required)

Overall, there were six strategies that had incomplete actions.

Talent Strategy

Two of the incomplete strategies related to the development of a talent strategy

- ***1.1 Identify and develop talent within the VFA –*** *Actions: The development and implementation of a talent strategy that supports gender, diversity and inclusion and considers intersectionality.*
- ***5.5 Explore options for leadership programs and formal and informal mentoring programs*** *Action: Following the development of the Talent strategy, a leadership program and formal and informal mentoring opportunities were to be planned.*

  It was decided that a Workforce Strategy incorporating a talent strategy, leadership program and mentoring was needed. While this has not been developed yet due to Whole of Government budget re-prioritisations and limited People and Culture resources, some actions were undertaken to help inform the development of a workforce strategy. Several talent development actions were undertaken and/or piloted, including a development program for Fisheries Officers which led to a slight increase in women in senior roles in the division. Graduate recruitment (6 women, 2 men) was undertaken in 2024 in Fisheries Management with a two-year development program. Staff at VPS levels 1 to 4 were provided an opportunity to attend the Emerging Professional network.

Flexible Working Arrangements

- ***6.3 Improve education around access to flexible working arrangement for those seeking it –*** *Action: Undertake a gender impact assessment on the uptake of flexible working arrangements.*
  There were several HR system changes and limitations that delayed this action. Given the limited People and Culture resources and the restructure that was undertaken in 2025 it was decided to put this action on hold. This strategy will be revisited in the future.

Education and Training

Three of the six strategies with incomplete actions were training related:

- ***4.1 Raise awareness of contact points and resources for those experiencing sexual harassment –*** *Action: Train additional contact officers to ensure widespread representation across the VFA*.
  A decision was made to stay with the two existing contact officers as an anonymous whistleblower program had been introduced and the access to information on the intranet streamlined and improved. The need for additional contact officers will be revisited in the future.

- ***4.3 Maintaining biannual sexual harassment training –*** *Action: Plan, source and implement sexual harassment training for 2023 and 2025*
  The implementation of biannual sexual harassment training was not maintained in 2025 as VFA undertook a restructure in 2025 and the timing needed to be reviewed. A training provider has been identified, and training is being planned.

- ***6.1 Provide training to managers in supporting those experiencing family violence –*** *Action: Commission a specialist organisation to facilitate ongoing training programs for managers*
  The VFA People and Culture Manager reviewed several courses available, and a specialist training provider has been identified to deliver training to managers who are supporting staff experiencing family violence. The tailored program is planned for delivery in FY25/26.

Section 3.2 Describing achievements, challenges and learnings (recommended)

Key Achievements in the reporting period 2023 - 2025

The VFA had key achievements across all four focus areas of its GEAP 2021-2025 during the reporting period 2023-25.

Focus Area - Attraction and Recruitment: We will focus on ensuring our attraction and recruitment processes have a diverse and intersectional lens, reducing the impact of conscious and unconscious bias and leading to greater gender diversity across all levels of staff including senior leadership.

- *Strategy 1.5 Continue to learn about the barriers to achieving greater gender composition – Action: Work with DoT systems to ensure intersectional data is collected in the new HR system*
  - The process to collect demographic data in the HR system was established. Through quarterly communications encouraging staff to complete diversity data in the HR Employee System (HRESS) there has been an increase in the number of employees providing some diversity information – March 2024 (14%) to June 2025 (45%). While much of this information is incomplete in terms of the level of information provided it has still led to an increase in diversity data in HRESS.
- *Strategy 5.4 Ensure that internal secondments or reclassifications are recorded and analysed for gender differences – Actions: Explore and analyse options to collect both internal secondment and promotion (reclassification) data through existing HR management system; and When data is available to collect, ensure it is shared with staff and that actions developed if required.*
  - Created a manual Excel database and established an ongoing process where data is maintained for internal promotions through recruitment processes and reclassifications.
  - Established a process to communicate to employees on a periodic basis regarding gender differences in internal promotions via formal recruitment and reclassifications.

Focus Area - Career Development and Support: We will focus on developing talent and providing support through various forms of flexibility and ensuring equitable pay conditions and access to training and development that supports our staff in their career progression.

- *Strategy 6.4 Provide opportunities for job sharing, part time and flexible working arrangements, where applicable – Action: Undertake an assessment to identify flexible options for roles (and link to Recruitment Policy)*
  - Recruitment templates including Position Descriptions, interview template and selection report cover flexibility considerations.
  - The use of the templates and the process in place means each time a role comes up for recruitment an assessment of flexible options is undertaken as business as usual.

- *Strategy 6.5 Gain insight into initiatives and programs for supporting the individual needs of staff returning to the workplace after a career break – Action: Develop a template to support managers and staff through the process leading up to, during and returning to the workplace from a career break*
  - The development, publication and communication of guidelines to support managers and staff through the process leading up to, during and returning to the workplace from a career break and parental leave undertaken and in place.

Focus Area - Education and Awareness: We will focus on educating staff on how they can promote gender equality in their everyday work and lives. We will continue to collect and analyse gender disaggregated data and use it to inform our decision making and raise awareness.

- *Strategy 3.2 Evaluate overtime amounts in 'COVID-normal" business operations – Action: Analyse and compare overtime amounts when a full year of events has resumed to validate if a gender difference exists.*
  - Overtime data could not be provided by Payroll for just events so all overtime data was considered. Initial high-level analysis shows a higher uptake by men across all Divisions compared with gender composition. Areas for greater analysis to be planned and undertaken.

- Strategy 7.1 *Embed gender impact assessment in decision making – Action: Implement training for all staff so that any decision-making process i) considers how the policy/program/service can better meet the needs of different genders, ii) addresses gender inequality that may be shaped by other aspects of identity, and iii) promotes gender equality.*
  - Following the delivery of externally sourced Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) training to selected Managers, GIA in-house VFA training was developed and piloted with VFA tools and templates in late 2024. Two more groups were trained to further test the tools and templates. The VFA intranet has been updated to provide access to the VFA tools and templates for all employees to use in undertaking a gender impact assessment. A library of VFA GIA examples has been created. Inhouse VFA GIA training will continue to be delivered.

Focus Area - Communication Internal and External: We will partner with key stakeholders to promote gender equality and respect. We will ensure that effective two-way communication channels are established to promote the actions of the plan and seek feedback on its progress. We will advocate for gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

- *Strategy 7.2 Generate collaboration during the implementation of the GEAP – Action: Establish a cross-functional cross-level diverse working group to operate as key influencers and advocates*
  - The establishment of an organisation wide staff *Respect and Inclusion Focus group*. The group consists of nine representatives from across the three divisions of the organisation at varying VPS grades which meets 4 - 6 times a year. The Focus Group and its members:
    - advocate and support respect, inclusion, diversity and equality across the VFA by:
      - considering the existing VFA directions/actions/activities and identifying potential changes or additions that could achieve improvements
      - promoting diversity activities to teams, staff-led networks and/or groups and gather feedback as needed, and
      - providing feedback on the diversity related implementation plans and upcoming activities which will also inform future activities.
    - champion key diversity initiatives including the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) deliverables. This can include any key actions that the Focus Group has special interest and influence on across the VFA.
    - support two-way communication on relevant matters and actions.

- *Strategy 7.4 Launch a new Women in Recreational Fishing and Boating (WIRFaB) Strategy*

  - A new strategy, incorporating boating and developed using workshop consultation and survey data was finalised and launched in the reporting period. The WIRFaB online network has over 4,300 members.

Challenges in the reporting period 2023 - 2025

- Integrating effective initiatives into broader strategies and general practice that achieves lasting change, particularly when employees and leaders change.
- Effective and informative intersectional data has not been collected and/or is not easily accessed.
- Recognising that although changes occurred with lots of initiatives put in place as shown in the 21-23 indicators; focus and momentum needs to be maintained as things change and strategies and actions sometimes need to be reshaped.
- There appears a level of discomfort for some leaders and employees in relation to challenging social norms which can lead to resistance to change.
- The VFA is a relatively small to medium organisation with limited resource capacity that went through a restructure in 2025.
- Long-held perceptions by some, for example:
  - changes need to be driven by women and focused on women,
  - the implementation of the GEAP is seen as a compliance exercise to be undertaken by People and Culture rather than a set of strategies and actions that everyone has a role in helping to implement and/or progress and that will benefit the VFA and its stakeholders.

Lessons Learned in the reporting period 2023 - 2025

- Communication
  - Leadership needs to be more visible with communication and actions that help ensure that employees understand everyone's role in progressing gender equity.
  - More regular communication is needed and must be maintained across all initiatives and reports by executives, senior management and team leaders. Need to ensure that the Respect and Inclusion Focus Group and employee surveys continue to be utilised for engagement and two-way communication.
- Data and Monitoring
  - Regular monitoring of data around key measures, perhaps annually/six monthly is needed so that the most current information is known to not only measure progress but importantly to inform or reshape strategies and actions.
  - The VFA acknowledges that gender inequality is compounded by race, age, and ability, but it lacks intersectional data. We need to continue to ensure that an intersectional approach is used in gender impact assessments.
- Strategies and actions
  - Consider strategies and actions in terms of their short- and longer-term impacts, given progress is not going to be linear.

Section 3.3 Providing other updates on implementation (recommended)

- The GEAP implementation during the 2023 – 2025 reporting period has been undertaken in a time of change for both the VPS and the VFA. The Victorian Government endorsed a range of budget initiatives which necessitated reprioritisation of existing activities and resources. The VFA put recruitment of some vacancies on hold for a period. The VFA also underwent a restructure, the process of which impacted approximately six months at the end of the reporting period. The time commitment to leading this for Senior leaders and the People and Culture Team was significant.

- The VFA underwent two portfolio department HR system changes/implementations in 12 months with the second one occurring in late 2023, impacting resources and data.

Section 3.4 Describing resourcing allocation (required)

Resources

- People resources
  - The VFA had a workforce headcount of 192 at 30 June 2025.
  - To facilitate the implementation of the VFA's first GEAP the VFA relied on its inhouse People and Culture Team which consists of two FTE – the People and Culture Manager and People and Culture Advisor. It was undertaken in conjunction with their substantive roles.
  - The VFA utilised existing people resources where possible. For specialist advice, subject matter expertise and training delivery the VFA utilised where appropriate sources from a VPS Community of Practice and/or external providers.
  - To ensure ongoing implementation in 2023-2025, particularly with the need for greater focus on gender impact assessments a VFA senior management resource took on leadership of the implementation in conjunction with their substantive role and worked closely with the People and Culture Team.
- Financial, Technological, Physical and Time resources
  - Any external training was funded through Organisation/Division budgets along with other training initiatives.
  - The VFA underwent two portfolio department HR system changes/implementation in 12 months with the second one occurring in late 2023.
  - The process of the restructure of the VFA impacted all employees. It impacted the responsibilities and available time of Senior leaders and the People and Culture Team in implementing GEAP strategies.

While adequate resources were allocated, in the context of an organisation the size of the VFA, there was no contingency to help cope with the significant changes that the VFA experienced in FY24/25 and the strain placed on resources. Contingency planning is needed in the future.

Any other additions or comments (optional)