

Gender Equity Quality Standards

A Resource
for Organisations



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Gender Equity Quality Standards: Organisational Resource

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Foreword

from the Executive Officer

In 2012 the Federal Government passed the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012. This legislation is designed 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 family and caring responsibilities);
- foster workplace consultation between employers and employees on issues concerning gender equality in employment and in the workplace; and
- improve the productivity and competitiveness of Australian business through the advancement of gender equality in employment and in the workplace¹.

Within the workplace, achieving gender equity can boost productivity, create stronger leadership, and help retain staff, increase the competitiveness of your organisation and become an employer of choice. The World Economic Forum has recognised that “there is a strong correlation between the gender gap and national competitiveness ... a nation’s competitiveness depends significantly on whether and how it educates and utilises its female talent”².

Attention is increasingly being paid to understanding the enablers and inhibitors of gender equity in the workplace. Key enablers include equal opportunity policies, flexible work options, mentoring of female staff, and leadership, career training and planning for women in the workplace, increasing numbers of men taking responsibility for caring responsibilities. Inhibitors include negative discrimination and stereotyping, “boys’ club culture”, isolation, and tension between personal and professional life (e.g. responsibility for caring for children or ageing parents, career breaks for child-rearing).

Gender equity is a core component of the work of Women’s Health Loddon Mallee. We have developed this resource to guide organisations to respond to such legislation and improve their gender equity; to discover the dimensions of gender equity and how it plays out; what cultural and systemic qualities impact on it and what can be done.

I hope you find it useful and of value to your organisation.

Linda Beilharz
Executive Officer, Women’s Health Loddon Mallee

¹ For further information, see: www.fahcsia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11_2012/factsheet_amended_201112.pdf

² Hausmann, R., Tyson, L.D., and Zahidi, S. (2008). The Global Gender Gap Report 2008. World Economic Forum.

About Women's Health Loddon Mallee

Women's Health Loddon Mallee is a small Victorian non-government organisation that works alongside community health and other health providers to improve the status of women's health in the region. We are a feminist service that provides choices and information to women. We provide services to women both directly and through others. Our client base is therefore women, health service providers and organisations that work with women and organisations that influence women's health services and policy.

The majority of our work is directed at assisting women to make choices which will maintain or improve their social, emotional and physical health and improving the conditions of women's lives in order to promote health. The work is project based with some community development and service delivery.

We have offices in Bendigo and Ouyen. Our staff have health promotion, marketing, research, social work, teaching, counselling, nursing and natural therapy qualifications and skills. Our small range of services include pap screening, elder abuse prevention, prevention of violence against women, local government advocacy, sexuality and relationships education in schools, community capacity building and gender equity.

Introduction

Gender equity is the ‘process’ of being fair to men and women. It recognises the power imbalance between men and women and is most often focused on ways in which women’s participation and self-determination can equal that of men. It does not mean that women and men should be the same but that they both have the same opportunities. What is ‘normal’ is often ‘not fair’. Discrimination can be found in social structures, culture and individual behaviour. With gender equity, women and men will be healthier, women’s skills will be more available in decision making, policy development and in leadership and violence against women will be reduced. Gender equity is good for the whole community.

A healthy organisational culture, one in which men and women are respectful of each other’s roles, skills, responsibilities and needs, creates employer loyalty and allows workers to fully utilise their skills for the benefit of the organisation, themselves and their families.

These quality standards are designed to create awareness of gender equity and support organisations to work towards achieving a more equitable workplace for women and men.

“A healthy working life is important to everyone- employees, employers, and our community as a whole. ‘Healthy work’ impacts on the quality of our working and non-working lives and contributes to the level of health and wellness of populations”

Source: Vic Health, 2010

Gender Equity is Good for Business

Gender equity improves:

- Productivity
- Risk management
- Quality of leadership
- Compliance
- Organisational image – ‘the brand’
- Corporate Social Responsibility

Some of the benefits to productivity that your organisation can expect to see include being an employer of choice for high calibre candidates, staff retention by building increased loyalty, increased performance and productivity, lower absence rates (sick leave, child care), increased team effectiveness and reduction in worker stress. These have been well articulated by the Melbourne Business School’s Gender Equality Project³ and the GenderWorx Business Case for Diversity⁴.

An increased capacity to utilise all of the strengths, experience and skills that women employees bring, such as skills in communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, decision making, leadership and team work will contribute to increasing the organisation’s quality of leadership.

A gender equity policy or approach improves the organisation’s ability to meet quality assurance standards. It is a risk management strategy and demonstrates that the organisation is up to date in relation to new legislation e.g. Fair Work Australia and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, and meets affirmative action expectations e.g. gender balance on boards and pay equity.

Gender equity supports organisations to become

positive role models and works as a positive engagement process. Clients, partners and other stakeholders from the general community will experience the organisation as affirming of women’s rights and strengths.

The organisation will add to its social responsibility profile as a role model for social justice and gender equity. This is of particular value in organisations for which social justice may not be an inherent part of their work.

Behaviour is influenced by environment, and the behaviour of individuals and groups, in turn, shapes the environment. Innovative gender equity practice will positively influence both workplace and program environments and also the behaviour and attitudes of individuals and groups within those environments.

³ Wood, R. (2012). Gender Equality Project- Building a Better Business Case for Diversity Centre for Ethical Leadership, Melbourne Business School

⁴ Morley, K (2010). Working Paper No. 1: Business case for diversity. GenderWorx. Insync Surveys

Mandating Equity

Equity is mandated in several ways for organisations in different states and territories. For example:

Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

This legislation promotes and improves workplace gender equality, with specific recognition that equal remuneration and support for family and caring responsibilities are central to improving the workforce participation of women. It applies to both men and women in the workplace. The legislation includes the development of gender equality indicators and related industry-based benchmarks and a reporting framework requiring relevant employers to report against gender equality indicators.

Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Some organisations with 100 or more people must report annually to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (formally the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency). They are expected to have a workplace program to remove the barriers to women entering and advancing in the organisation. The types of organisations this applies to are:

- Private sector companies
- Not-for-profit/Community organisations
- Non-government schools
- Unions
- Group training companies, or
- Higher education institutions

As a public authority, local councils have an obligation to ensure that:

- all council decisions give proper consideration to human rights;
- all actions, policies and services are compatible with human rights; and
- local laws are interpreted and applied consistently with human rights people who work on their behalf and do so in a way that respects human rights.

In addition, Victorian councils need to ensure they are compliant with the Local Government Act (1989) and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008) in supporting the health and wellbeing of communities. Councils in other jurisdictions may have similar responsibilities.

Many health issues are socially determined by structures, systems and cultural attitudes. Gender is a determinant of health by virtue of social expectations about what it means to be a woman or a man. Opportunities, role expectations and subsequent consequences of gendered responsibilities make a difference to health.

Some examples include:

- Only 57 per cent of women participate in the paid workforce (compared to 72 per cent of men).⁵
- Across Australia, women's average full-time weekly earnings are 17.4 per cent less than men's, with the gap increasing over the last year. When part-time and casual work is taken into consideration, the total earnings gap between men and women is 35 per cent.⁶
- Women have significantly less rates of superannuation savings than men, as well as lower median amounts - \$13,400 for men compared \$6,400 for women.⁷
- 71 per cent of primary carers in Australia are women.⁸
- For Victorian women under the age of 45, violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness.⁹

By applying gender equity quality improvement processes, you will assist your organisation to actively impact on those determinants, thereby enhancing overall workplace health.

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009). Labour Force, September 2009, Cat. 6202.0. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

⁶ ABS, Category 6302.0, Average Weekly Earnings, May 2009.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001). Superannuation: Coverage and Financial Characteristics, Australia, Jun 2000, Cat. 6360.0. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004). Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003, Cat. 4430.0. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

⁹ VicHealth (2004). The Health Costs of Violence: measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence. VicHealth, South Carlton.

How to use the Gender Equity Quality Standards

Quality Improvement Process

Effective workplaces actively utilise the concepts of best practice and continuous improvement. They reflect on their work regularly, and set goals and standards to achieve in the future. An effective workplace sets benchmarks for excellence, evaluates progress, and seeks to improve on the past. This kind of quality improvement practice creates an ongoing cycle of planning and evaluation, and it is necessary that all staff participate in and contribute to this ongoing process.

To ensure that changes and improvements made within your organisation are indeed ongoing, new practices need to be embedded in all levels of the organisation and reflected in clear policy, protocol and organisational process.

The Gender Equity Quality Standards will enable you to collectively explore current practice and future innovation across a wide range of organisational areas:

- Governance
- Gender Equity Policy
- Capacity-building
- Culture
- Remuneration and Promotion
- Working conditions support flexibility for staff
- A workplace which is healthy and safe and free from violence

There are a number of ways organisations can engage with this tool, and you will need to adapt it to your own workplace. The methods you choose will reflect the nature of your organisation such as size, staffing or available time. You may choose to integrate the standards within the model of quality improvement that operates more generally in your organisation or to use a discrete approach.

Make resources available and designate leadership

Invest in success in making your organisation an effective workplace. Don't make this work 'one person's crusade or hobby horse'. Make an organisational commitment through making it everyone's business, committing resources and building gender equity work into your other business processes.

Begin at the most logical place for your organisation

The process of considering gender equity in your workplace is not linear and these standards do not need to be applied in any particular order. Therefore, you should begin where it is relevant for your organisation, noting however that high level leadership is a critical element of success. Here are some ideas of the process, including how you might measure, learn and reflect, and respond to building gender equity in your organisation and with staff.

Language

Consider what language will be appropriate for your organisation. These quality standards apply to government and non-government organisations, the private and community sectors. Within this document, language is used that may be different from that currently used in your organisation or industry. Try to move past any objections of differences in language to embrace the concepts. You may find it helpful to familiarise yourself with the definitions of words included in this document (see page 13) and where appropriate, adapt the language to best suit your organisation and purposes.

Measure - Find out the gender equity facts

You will want to know whether there is equity or not in your organisation and you may find varying levels of equity exist across different parts of the organisation. Key areas to measure include:

- Pay
- Conditions
- Gender diversity in levels and roles
- Development opportunities, and
- Career advancement.

The gender balance of senior positions and your board, with a comparison to the gender balance of the workforce and/or client group will indicate how representative the leadership is.

If you are interested in investigating the impact of caring responsibilities on your workforce you might like to find out the number of parents of children under 5, the number of women and men returning to work after the birth of a child, how long those parents stay in their position upon returning and the number of employees who are caring for dependent adults.

You may find differences in levels of equity that arise from unconscious or subtle bias. Even when gender based bias may be unintentional, identifying and responding to it is an important step to achieve gender equity in your organisation.

Learning and Reflection

Bring staff along in the learning about the impacts of gender and the subtleties of inequity, as well as providing safe opportunities to learn and reflect. Engage staff in discussion that contributes to building gender equity policies or using a gender lens to analyse other policies.

Learn and reflect on attitudes and understandings of gender equity facts, peoples' awareness and commitment to gender equity, and building the capacity of gender equity within your organisation.

Don't avoid the difficult topics. Strategies to improve female advancement or representation at leadership level will be implemented with greater acceptance in the organisation that has had a robust discussion about, for example, 'merit vs quotas' for selection of senior staff.

Responding

An approach to responding will be most successful if it:

- Starts in a place that is most logical for the organisation
- Considers systems and individual factors together
- Uses organisational facts to determine what change is needed
- Has strong leadership support
- Includes a balance of women and men in undertaking work on investigating organisational facts, developing new policies and reviewing systems
- Communicates with staff and uses opportunities to increase organisational understanding

Unconscious Bias

There is an increasing awareness that unconscious gender bias impacts decisions relating to men and women in organisations and that this is an important area for change, but less is known about what gender unconscious bias actually is, how it works and what it takes to change it.

Bias is unfair, illegitimate or unjustifiable judgement which goes beyond the objective needs of evidence in a particular situation.

As humans, we have many unconscious biases, and in organisations, our leadership decisions are subject to these biases. Biases like confirmation bias, which leads managers to ignore evidence that doesn't fit their views, or loss aversion that makes them too cautious, lead to sub-optimal business decisions. Having these biases is simply a normal part of the human condition.

Gender biases lead managers to view talent in pre-determined ways, which leads to inequities and a loss of current and future capability and

commitment. Bias based on gender plays out in three main domains: the person, the group and society. At the personal level it impacts expectations and behaviours of others and us in our capacity as men and women. At the level of the group, bias favours dominant group members, men, over non-dominant group members, women. At the level of society, gender biases drive culturally held power disparities between men and women.

Bias against women may be consciously held and openly expressed. However, most people are aware that the open expression of bias against women is not always socially acceptable.

What they are less aware of is the impact of unconscious bias, which affects decisions without awareness. Even more challenging is that both women and men can demonstrate the same unconscious bias against women in leadership, and even those who openly express egalitarian attitudes can demonstrate the same unconscious bias. On the plus side, having unconscious bias doesn't necessarily lead to discrimination.

Source: GenderWorx (www.insyncsurveys.com.au/surveys-consulting/other-specialties/gender-diversity-survey/unconscious-gender-bias/)

The Quality Standards

You may choose to work on one standard at a time, setting yourself a time period to review your practice and to generate innovative new practice where gaps are identified.

Alternatively, you may choose to simultaneously work on more than one standard at a time, by creating a number of small working groups, each allocated a specific standard.

The **Standard** defines the key issue.

The practice and process statements are a guide to analysing your organisation's situation and opportunities for improvement. Work through each of these, reflecting on the experience, practices, culture and processes of your organisation. These statements are designed to help you to identify both strengths and good practice in your organisation and gaps or areas which are currently not well covered. Record your responses as a way of demonstrating what you currently do and as a springboard for collaboratively creating ideas for better practice.

The practice and process statements are a guide. Some may not be as relevant to your organisation as others.

Information in the **text boxes** under each Standard are examples of putting gender equity into practice. They are designed to get you thinking. You will generate your own ideas which will be tailored to the specific needs and workings of your workplace.

Familiarise yourself with the **tools and resources**, which illustrate what some workplaces have done to address gender inequity.

Occasional evaluation will let you know whether changes have made a difference. Remember to survey staff and celebrate achievements.

A reflective process is useful if you find your policies are not being used due to cultural factors that undermine their intended impacts. For example, some organisations report that women are not taking advantage of flexible working hours because they believe (or it really happens) that not being around for the long working day decreases their opportunity to impact on decisions or creates a perception they are not as committed to their work.

Terms used in this resource

Corporate Social Responsibility	The commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development—working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve the quality of life, in ways that are both good for business and good for development.
Discrimination	When someone, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin; sex, pregnancy or marital status; age; disability; religion; sexual orientation; trade union activity; or some other characteristic specified under anti-discrimination or human rights legislation.
Diversity	Individuals and groups differ from each other according to a range of factors: gender, ability, Aboriginality, religion and belief, cultural and linguistic diversity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, geography and age. Identity, circumstances and opportunities can be influenced by a combination of these factors; some are fixed, some can change
Domestic violence	Occurs when a family member uses violent and/or abusive behaviour to control another family member or members. Domestic violence can include physical, verbal, emotional, economic or sexual abuse. For example: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, damaging property, yelling, insults, threats, bullying, withholding and controlling finances, unwanted sexual acts, forced sex.
Equal Pay	Equal pay for men and women workers for work of equal value (also known as pay equity or pay gender gap). This is different from equal remuneration which includes salary plus benefits eg: access to work car
Flexible work	Arrangements which vary the standard working day and week of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Flexible work practices include: variations to working days (e.g. working part-time and job-sharing), working location (e.g. working from home), working hours (e.g. working 8am to 4pm, instead of 9am to 5pm; or working condensed hours e.g. working a full week in a shorter number of days); and annualised hours (e.g. 48/52 in which 4 additional weeks of leave are taken, and the reduced salary spread across working 52 weeks).
Gender	Gender does not mean ‘sex’, or ‘women’. It refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.
Gender analysis	Involves the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data in order to reveal any differential impact of an action on women and men, and the effects of gender roles and responsibilities. It also involves qualitative analyses that help to clarify how and why these differential roles, responsibilities and impacts have come about.
Gender equity	Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. Women and men, and diverse groups of women and men, have different life experiences and access to resources and measures must often be made to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent them from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

Gender relations	Refers to economic, social and power relations between men and women. Three structures are central to gender relations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gendered division of labour, for example, women earn less than men, do more unpaid work 2. Personal relationships, for example, rules of masculinity and femininity, men as head of the family, care expectations and assumption of heterosexuality as the norm 3. Citizenship, for example, assumptions of productivity, independence and autonomy, thereby disregarding unpaid work, vulnerable and dependant members of society.
Gender roles	Learned behaviours in a given society/community, or other special group, that condition which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as male and female (also known as gender responsibility)
Gender sensitivity	Encompasses the ability to perceive, acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities and to incorporate a gender perspective into strategies and actions.
Gender stereotypes	Generic attitudes, opinions or roles applied to a particular gender and which function as unjustifiably fixed assumptions (also known as gender bias)
Gendered violence	An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will based on socially-ascribed (gender) differences between males and females.
Sexual harassment	Unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written. It can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comments about a person's private life or the way they look • sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring • brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging • sexually suggestive comments or jokes • displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects • repeated requests to go out • requests for sex • sexually explicit emails, text messages or posts on social networking sites.
Unconscious bias	Attitudinal biases about gender, age, race, etcetera, that we are unaware we have and are unaware we act upon. unconscious bias results in people who are perceived to be 'different' receiving frequent negative 'micro-messages' at work as a cumulative pattern of behaviour. These are subtle workplace behaviours that devalue, demotivate or exclude people. The senders are often unaware they are doing it, but the recipients feel and recognise the behaviour as non-inclusive.

Quality Standard 1: Governance

Gender equity is acknowledged and promoted by the governance of the organisation.

Practice and Processes in meeting the Standard

1. Gender equity is a goal in the organisations strategic plan.
2. There is high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equity and human rights.
3. The organisation upholds gender equity principles and makes this explicit through its policies and practice and sets agreed success measures.
4. There is an active process to mentor, recruit and retain significant numbers of women on the organisations board.
5. All organisational policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion and flexibility in working conditions for all.
6. Budget allocation and implementation plans that advance equity are evident in development of organisation policies, programmes and services.
7. Company-wide workforce goals and targets for gender equity are evident and implementation progress is a factor in managers' performance reviews.
8. The organisation demonstrates delegated responsibility, capacity and resources to lead implementation, auditing and reporting of progress against gender equity standards.
9. Organisations can demonstrate the effectiveness of their workplace program to remove barriers to women entering and advancing in the organisation. This facilitates reporting annually to Workplace Gender Equality Agency in those organisations that are required to do so.
10. Policy breaches and incidents are reported to the organisations governance body.

Tomorrow's boards: Creating balanced and effective boards, is the first Australian book to bring together key research on the positive correlation between diversity on boards and in management and improved corporate and financial performance, as well as offering practical guidance on the process for selecting the best directors and the importance of considering diversity as part of the board selection process.

“Companies that take proactive steps now to avail themselves of a broader mix of skills, experiences and backgrounds on their boards and among their executive ranks will have a competitive edge,”
“Boards should adopt a range of measures for achieving greater diversity which are tailored to the needs of the company, including setting relevant targets, reviewing board selection practices, critically examining selection and promotion criteria, ensuring the appointment process is rigorous and objective, challenging any unconscious biases, and assisting women in senior positions by shaping an organisational culture that supports the ongoing career development of women in management.”

Source: Australian Institute of Company Directors (Aug 2011)

Australia is a nation that prides itself on being a leading world economy and democratic society, and would generally see itself as being ranked among the top five of any major economic and social indicators of a developed country.

Our scorecard on gender equity is a principal exception to this considerable, and usually well-justified, image. While Australia is ranked number one for female educational participation by the 2010 World Economic Forum report, we find ourselves ranked 44th on female workforce participation in the same publication. On gender equity at work, Australia is effectively world's worst practice among modern, mature and developed countries.

Source: Communiqué of the Gender Equity in the Workplace Summit March 2011 Sydney 4

Tools and resources

- Gender agenda: Unlocking the power of diversity in the boardroom
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency requirements (see Appendix 1)
- Gender Equity Principles
- National Tertiary Education Union Gender Equity Audit Tool

To strengthen the representation of women at decision-making levels:

- a minimum target of 40% representation of each gender on all Australian Government Boards within three years should be set, publicly announced and progress should be reported annually
- a minimum gender equality target in the Senior Executive Service in the Australian Public Service should be set, publicly announced and progress should be reported annually
- all publicly listed companies providing goods or services to the Australian Government should be certified by the Equal Opportunity in the Workplace Agency
- A target of 40% representation of each gender on all publically listed Boards in Australia, to be achieved over five years should be promoted. If progress is not made, the Australian Government should consider legislating to require publicly listed companies and other large employers to achieve a mandatory gender diversity quota of a minimum of 40% of both genders within a specified timeframe, failing which penalties will be imposed.

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, (2010). Gender Equality Blueprint.

Quality Standard 2: Capacity Building

The organisation's processes and programs actively support staff to improve their gender equity competency and sensitivity.

Practice and Processes in meeting the Standard

1. Gender equity training is mandated for all staff.
2. Formal and non-formal training opportunities are provided for staff in areas such as assertiveness, negotiation, conflict resolution and leadership.
3. Recognition and reward is given to good practice in gender equity.
4. Capacity building incorporates sharing case studies and looped learning.
5. Performance appraisal processes include an assessment of competence in understanding and applying gender equity and identifying strategies for improving staff capacity.
6. Recruitment processes and appointment decisions reflect the organisations gender equity commitment.
7. All position descriptions include responsibility for the promotion of gender equity and list gender analysis skills as desirable criteria.
8. Recruitment applications are assessed with a gender equity approach.

Tools and resources

- Gender Audit Handbook- A Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation. [www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/Gender Audit Handbook 2010 Copy.pdf](http://www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/Gender%20Audit%20Handbook%202010%20Copy.pdf)
- Gender Equity in Local Government Fact Sheets. [www.lgpvaw.net.au/admin/file/content100/c4/FINAL FactSheets v4.pdf](http://www.lgpvaw.net.au/admin/file/content100/c4/FINAL%20FactSheets%20v4.pdf)
- Guidelines for writing and publishing recruitment advertisements. http://humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/workplace/advertising.html

Automotive manufacturer, GM Holden Ltd has a predominantly male workforce. Since 1999 when the 'Diversity at Holden' policy was launched, there has been a concerted effort to attract and retain more women, especially into non-traditional roles. The company's strategy has been driven by the need to address the growing shortage of skilled workers, a recognition that attracting and retaining more women will be a key factor in their ongoing sustainability and the need to demonstrate that Holden is committed to supporting women in the workplace.

Initiatives

- Contracts with preferred recruitment suppliers stipulate that they must adhere to Holden's Diversity Policy, policies on EEO, Discrimination, OH&S and privacy legislation
- All Hiring Managers undertake in-house training
- Promotions, advertising materials and the company's website feature images of women as well as men working in a broad range of roles at GM Holden.
- In 2005 and 2006, the CEO included a 30% gender hire target for each Executive Director's
- In 2006, the Engineering Division re-introduced a Graduate Program aimed at female engineering graduates

Results

- 3 of 12 members on the senior leadership team are women.
- Women constituted 22% of all new hires (Jan – Sept 2006) up from 16% in 2004.
- Of all new hires into salaried roles, 27% were female (up from 25% in 2004).
- 8% of the hourly workforce (predominantly in engineering and manufacturing) are women. New hires into vacant hourly roles have increased to 16% in 2006 from 14% in 2004.

Source: Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, (2010). Case studies. GM Holden.

Quality Standard 3: Culture

The organisations gender equity commitment is reflected in all organisational behaviours.

Practice and Processes in meeting the Standard

1. The organisation invests in seeking and maintaining a reputation of integrity and competence on gender issues amongst other organisations and in the community.
2. Annual staff perception survey on gender diversity and the effectiveness of initiatives is undertaken which measures percentage improvement in the alignment of the 'gap' perspectives of men and women.
3. The organisation makes material publicly available; ideally by posting it to its website in a clearly marked corporate governance section any applicable code of conduct or gender equity policy or a summary.
4. The organisation has a gender sensitivity code of conduct in place in terms of unacceptable language, jokes and comments made, images and materials displayed, and action taken around sexual harassment.
5. There is investment in building organisational behaviour in talking about shared experiences, role modelling, recognition systems, cultural interventions and the naming of behaviours and when subtle or unconscious bias is operating.
6. The organisation ensures that allocation of workload and tasks is not gender biased so that women are not marginalised into administrative or 'stereotyped female' roles (e.g. Unloading dishwasher, taking home the tea-towels, food catering).
7. The organisation recognises that gendered violence exists (at work or at home) and addresses safety, risk analysis and responsiveness. (See also Quality Standard 6).
8. Planned events occur that celebrate and recognise diversity.
9. Milestones are set and reviewed at regular intervals.

Perhaps the greatest prejudices women encounter throughout their career cycle (and the hardest to address), are the residual cultural beliefs and behaviours in the workplace. Equally, it is difficult to measure real change in organisational culture, yet it undoubtedly has a huge impact on the success of any initiatives in making genuine change.

Financial Services Institute of Australia
'Promoting gender Equity Through Transparency'
May 2011

Quality Standard 3: Culture Continued

Coles Group has significantly revised and upgraded its Equal Opportunity program and integrated it into its overall Diversity Strategy. This change came about as a result of extensive data collection and consultation throughout the organisation, as well as the active interest of the CEO and Leadership Team.

The Diversity strategy has been linked to the goals, values and behaviours of the business. Its focus was determined by the desire to make Coles a place where people want to work and an awareness that the workforce needs to reflect the diversity of both customers and the wider community.

Diversity is increasingly being melded into the culture of the organisation, thanks to a clearly defined strategy with accountability at executive level and the integration of diversity into a range of cultural programs, as well as recruitment and development.

Source: Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, (2010). Case studies. Coles Group.

Identifying and challenging covert messages in the workplace.

“Even where first-class policies are in place, a workplace’s culture will often be the single biggest determinant-or barrier-to women succeeding. As you well know, the culture of a workplace includes the beliefs, attitudes, norms, and customs of the employees. It’s ‘how things are done around here’. Often there are very subtle signals about what is appropriate or required.

Employees may perceive that, for example, you can’t say no to interstate work trips even though they mean being away from loved ones, that leaving work on time shows a lack of real commitment, or that taking leave to care for a family member is just an excuse to get a day off.....Are staff rewarded for working frequent or unplanned overtime? Are those earmarked for senior management, people with unbroken experience and a career path in graduated ascent? While applying to everyone equally, such requirements for career progress will, of course, impact most heavily on women with family or caring responsibilities.

Source: Elizabeth Broderick, (2008). ‘Best practice in workplace culture for the attraction and retention of women’. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination, 24th June, 2008.

Tools and resources

- Gender Equity in the Workplace Research Report
- Everybody’s Business- A guide to developing workplace programs for the primary prevention of violence against women
- Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know – refer specifically to page 19

Quality Standard 4: Remuneration and Promotion

The organisation aligns its organisational development and human resources processes to support all staff to reach their full potential in the workplace and be equally rewarded without gender-based discrimination.

Practice and Processes in meeting the Standard

1. The organisation ensures equal pay and other benefits, between women and men, for equal work (other benefits may include provision of a work phone, car etc. It is important to ensure these are allocated to staff based on need and alignment with position rather than seniority or gender).
2. Areas of pay inequity are identified, and actions to address inequities are included in the Gender Equity Policy Implementation Plan (also see Quality Standard 2).
3. There is equal gender representation in management positions. Actions to address inequities are included in the Gender Equity Policy Implementation Plan.
4. Organisational processes actively monitor and report on women's progress through the organisation (so that women are encouraged to move into middle and senior levels in the organisation). Actions to address a lack of progress are included in the Gender Equity Policy Implementation Plan.
5. Allocation of career training and development opportunities is transparent and equally applied.

On average, women earn 17.2% less than their male counterpart, that's just over \$200 less than men per week based on average weekly time earnings.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009

Quality Standard 4: Remuneration and Promotion Continued

NAB Australia gender pay equity audit highlighted women’s inability to negotiate satisfactorily start or transition rates and lack of career progression for women through NAB. The Audit recommended NAB:

- Require leaders to monitor and report on start rates by gender
- Train leaders to understand indirect discrimination as it relates to setting start rates
- Train employees in negotiating pay ranges targeted to the needs of specific groups of staff, specifically women
- Diversity team will work with leadership teams and specialist areas to implement and monitor equity programs:
- The team will identify senior jobs where women are under-represented and target women in related roles to offer specific mentoring and coaching to enable women to progress into more senior roles
- Length of time in role and career progression of women compared with men will occur.
- Any issues regarding indirect discrimination criteria used to appoint/promote to target jobs will be investigated

Actions underway at NAB

- Support for women will be provided on negotiating pay rates.
- Training to be provided to Managers will specifically address approaches for determining pay rates without gender bias.
- A data system will be provided to assist them in monitoring and reporting on start rates by gender

The audit also identified gender inequity in access to short-term incentives. The NAB plans to address this issue by training managers to understand and report on indirect discrimination as it relates to rewarding performance.

Source: Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, (2010). Case studies. National Australia Bank.

Tools and resources

- National Tertiary Education Union Gender Equity Audit Tool
- Best Practice Guide Gender pay equity
- Gender Equity in the Workplace Research Report

Quality Standard 5: Working conditions support flexibility for staff

The organisation's working conditions reflects the diversity of the workforce and supports staff in meeting their personal responsibilities

Practice and Processes in meeting the Standard

1. Organisational policies and procedures provide flexible work arrangements for all staff (and benefit both women and men) and these are reflected in Position Descriptions and Performance Development Reviews.
2. Working conditions policies and practices reflect the variety of caring responsibilities and arrangements all staff may have including caring for partners (same-sex and heterosexual), parents and children. These arrangements are valued as a positive contributor to workplace culture.
3. Linkages between home and work are facilitated, including working from home policies and procedures, computer and phone access.
4. Provision exists for variations to leave arrangements such as 48/52 leave arrangements (where an employee can purchase up to four weeks additional leave per year), carer's leave and family leave.
5. Parents are supported in the workplace through support of childcare. For example paid parental leave, childcare as an option for salary packaging, provision of organisational childcare.
6. Parents are supported in the workplace through appropriate infrastructure. For example a breastfeeding/expressing room, a carer's room with bed and work station.
7. The organisation has a clear breastfeeding policy which supports women to breastfeed in the workplace in an atmosphere of acceptance and comfort and without discrimination.

In a week where 3.2 million employees provided unpaid care to someone, only 15% used flexible working arrangements to help them provide that care.

Source: ABS, 2007

Quality Standard 5: Working conditions support flexibility for staff Continued

ANZ to pay working mums \$4000 childcare allowance

ANZ says it will pay primary-caregivers a \$4000 childcare allowance as part of new measures designed to improve gender diversity at senior levels. The measures will also include superannuation on all forms of paid parental leave, Melbourne-based ANZ said.

ANZ chief executive Mike Smith said the 2010 EOWA Women in Leadership census, launched today, showed little progress to improve the representation of women in senior executive roles and on boards among Australian companies. “Clearly there’s a need for a new way forward,” Mr Smith said. “One issue is to address the reality of what happens to women in business when they take time off to have children. We need to stop penalising mothers.”

The bank is hoping its approach will encourage women back to work after the birth of a child and increase the representation of women in senior management positions. “The measures we’ve announced are intended to have an immediate impact on our ability to retain talented women and over time help increase the number of senior women at ANZ,” Mr Smith said. ANZ’s \$4000 childcare allowance will be paid to Australia-based primary caregivers on their return to work.

In Australia, ANZ offers 12 weeks paid parental leave at full pay with no qualifying period. In New Zealand, ANZ will extend its top-up parental leave payment to 14 weeks from 12.

Source: The Daily Telegraph, October 06, 2010

Tools and resources

- Fair Work Australia National Employment Standards
- Policy template: Flexible work arrangements
- Example: Hours of duty and flexible working arrangements
- Example: Breastfeeding Policy

Quality Standard 6: A workplace which is healthy, safe and free from violence

The organisation creates an environment where staff feels physically and emotionally safe at work. There is zero tolerance of violence.

Practice and Processes in meeting the Standard

1. Occupational health and safety guidelines and audits reflect an understanding of specific gendered risks and needs. This includes for example:
 - protect the health of pregnant women;
 - sufficient night lighting around the building;
 - safe parking facilities;
 - staff provided with personal alarms to carry when necessary; and
 - protocols exist which recognise staff working alone in potentially risky situations, for example working alone in the building or on home visits.
2. Sexual harassment policies and procedures are in place and claims are responded to promptly and appropriately.
3. Policy and strategies exist which prevent violence in the workplace.
4. Workplace support exists for workers who are experiencing or witnessing violence.

Tools and resources

- Writing an effective sexual harassment policy
- Safe at Work, Safe at Home. How to guides: Model policies, procedures and safety plans
- Working Together Against Violence
- Domestic and family violence clauses in EBAs
- Example: Home Safety Checklist and Risk Report

Quality Standard 6: A workplace which is healthy, safe and free from violence Continued

Why is domestic violence an issue for business and the workplace?

The health and safety of employees at home affects their health and safety at work. Domestic violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15 to 44 years. Of the Australian women who report violence by a current partner, nearly two thirds are in paid employment.

Workplaces have a key role in influencing the behaviour of individuals and groups. They can reinforce or challenge normative beliefs and can also model non-violent, equitable and respectful gender relations.

Workplaces are directly impacted by instances of domestic violence. Whether the employee is a victim or perpetrator, the workplace is impacted through absenteeism, staff turnover and lost productivity. Acts of domestic violence can also occur at work, and colleagues are also affected. The impact of violence against women in terms of productivity, employee health and occupational health and safety are outlined below:

Impacts on productivity

- A 2004 study estimated that domestic violence in Australia costs employers approximately \$175 million annually. This figure represents instances where employees reported their absence from work as a result of a domestic violence incident – the real cost to employers is likely to be much higher due to under-reporting.
- Employee absence from work can include victims taking time off work because of injury, emotional distress, attendance at court, and perpetrator absenteeism due to stalking or criminal justice processes. Victims may also report an inability to concentrate or perform tasks, leading to lower organisational output. Employees who have experienced domestic violence in the past are more likely to be absent than employees with no such history.
- Costs incurred by employers due to employee absence include wages, onsite costs, hiring and training replacement workers, and the cost of overtime paid to other workers.

Source: Women's Health Victoria A guide to developing workplace programs for the primary prevention of violence against women (2010)

Quality Standard 7: Working with clients and customers

The organisation invests in seeking and maintaining a reputation of integrity and competence on gender issues in the community.

Practice and Processes in meeting this standard

1. Gender sensitivity is included in client/customer practice principles.
2. Women's capacity to participate is enhanced by organisational policy and practice.
3. In representing the organisation language used avoids pejorative, minimising or stereotyping words and innuendo about women.
4. All organisation marketing and promotion material, information and resources use gender sensitive and respectful language, symbols, images and examples.
5. All promotion and educational materials depict visual images of men and women in non-gender stereotyped roles.

Tools and resources

- Australian Psychological Society. Guidelines for psychological practice with women
- Community perceptions of sex sexuality and nudity in advertising
- Australian Association of National Advertisers Code of Ethics

'Fair Game – Respect Matters' (FGRM), an AFL initiative, began in 2007 and has continued to grow and develop since. The key objective is to address violence against women, and discrimination against women and girls. Action has included encouraging cultural change through various marketing strategies such as placing articles in the Football Records; FGRM material in all coaches, management and committee training; DVD's; announcements during games; in newsletters etc.

As a result of such initiatives, clubs report that:

- Females feel safer and more respected and valued in the clubs.
- Membership numbers have grown, as more families have felt comfortable to become involved. This has the spin-off of making the club more stable and financially stronger.
- More women are playing football and netball in the club, and attending social events.
- The increased presence of women and children in the club and at social events has resulted in a reduction in abusive language, harassing behaviour, behaviour demeaning women etc.
- More women are volunteering for and working in leadership and committee roles within the club.

Source: Australian Football League (AFL), (2010). Fair Game – Respect Matters.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Workplace Gender Equality Agency requirements

Listed below are the six EOCFW criteria. The full requirements, including a Workplace Profile and questions under each criterion in this application, must be met in order to achieve the Workplace Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice for Women citation. Supporting statistics must be provided for all claims made in relation to the six criteria.

Criterion 1: An organisation **must** have policies in place (across the seven employment matters) that support women across the organisation.

Criterion 2: An organisation **must** have effective processes (across the seven employment matters) that are transparent and gender inclusive.

Criterion 3: An organisation **must** have strategies in place that support a commitment to fully utilising and developing all staff, removing barriers to women.

Criterion 4: An organisation **must** educate all employees (including managers, casuals and contract staff) on their rights and obligations regarding sex-based harassment including having in place:

- a comprehensive and transparent sex-based anti-discrimination policy (covering discrimination, harassment and bullying), including an email and Intranet/Internet policy and grievance handling procedure, and
- sex-based harassment prevention training provided at induction for all staff and all staff must have received refresher education within the last two years.

Criterion 5: An organisation **must** have a gender inclusive organisational culture that is championed by the CEO, driven by senior executives and holds line managers accountable. The organisation must:

- include equal opportunity for women as a standing agenda item on a committee chaired by the CEO or his/her direct report;
- include equal opportunity for women as a standing agenda item at Executive meetings; and
- include equal opportunity for women as a standing agenda item at Board meetings

and; the **CEO must demonstrate:**

- his/her commitment to staff in addressing gender pay equity and the representation of women in senior management; and
- that s/he is a visible champion for equal opportunity for women in the organisation.

Criterion 6: An organisation **must** deliver improved outcomes for women and the business which must include (but is not limited to):

- a minimum of 6 week' paid parental leave after a maximum eligibility period of 12 months service;
- female managers being able to work part-time; and
- conducting a detailed analysis of the remuneration of its entire workforce to demonstrate whether there are gender pay equity issues in their workplace.

Appendix 2: Source of definition of terms

Definitions of terms have been adapted from the following sources:

- Gender and diversity lens for health and human services. State of Victoria, Department of Human Services, 2008.
- Glossary of Gender-related Terms. Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2009.
- Glossary of Gender-related Terms and Concepts. United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.
- Public Policy for Corporate Social Responsibility. World Bank Institute, 2003.
- Information for Employers. Australian Human Rights Commission.
- Domestic Violence. Domestic Violence Crisis Service ACT.
- Glossary on Gender-Related Terms. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2006.
- Workplace Flexibility.com.au
- Women in professional firms: unconscious bias — busting myths and stereotypes. Workplace Info, NSW Business Chamber, 2012.

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