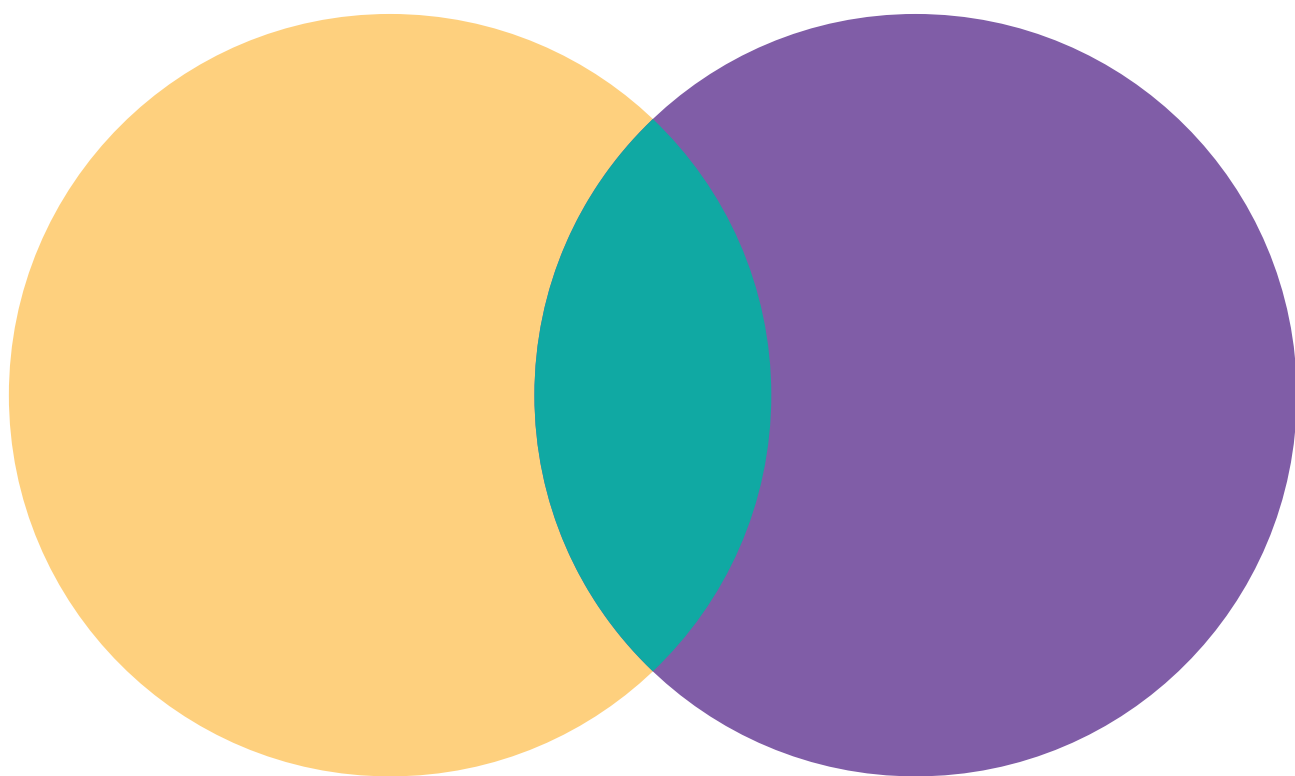




# Gender Equality

## Action Plan 2022 - 2026





Northeast Health Wangaratta acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and live, and pays respect to the Elders – past and present – for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our region.

We are proud and committed to embrace the spirit of reconciliation and learn more from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community about how best to improve the health, social and economic outcomes of First Nations' people.

We are committed to LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusive practice for LGBTQIA+ patients, carers, visitors and our team.

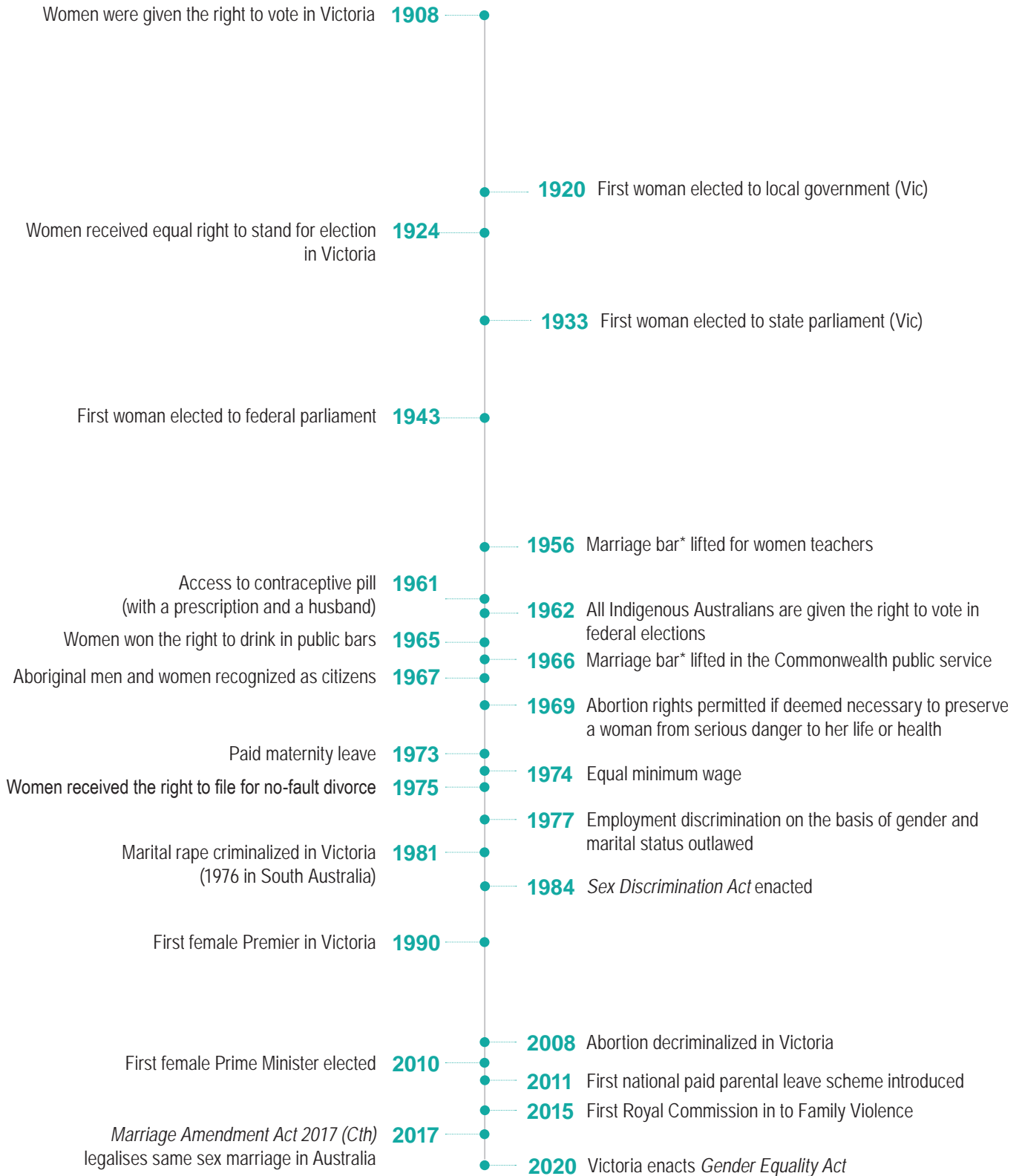
Northeast Health Wangaratta respects and celebrates all forms of diversity. We welcome and value people from all walks of life to access our services and join our team.



# Introduction

There has been significant progress in achieving Gender Equality for many decades. Despite this work there are still many aspects of gender inequality within our society. Gender pay gaps, disproportionate unpaid caring responsibilities and the experience of family violence are some of the significant inequalities.

## Some of the key gender equality achievements:



\*Marriage bar required women in the identified roles to resign once they became married.

In 2015, the first Royal Commission into Family Violence was completed following a number of deaths related to family violence. The Royal Commission outlined 277 recommendations in the prevention, response and management of family violence.

In the prevention of violence, the report states:

“If we are to prevent family violence we must change the attitudes and social conditions that give rise to it. There is a need to implement primary prevention strategies that are designed to dismantle harmful attitudes towards women, promote gender equality and encourage respectful relationships”

(Royal Commission into Family Violence, 2016)

In December 2016, the Victorian Government released its first Gender Equality Strategy *Safe and Strong*. The development of the strategy was a recommendation from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The strategy sets out a number of actions that will be taken to improve gender equality for all Victorians.

*Safe and Strong* outlines how public services, as workplaces, can and should take action to improve gender equality. The development of a Gender Equality Act was identified as an integral legislative step towards gender equality.

In February 2020, the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (the Act) was passed through Parliament and has been developed to improve workplace gender equality in the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils (State Government of Victoria, 2020). The Act outlines at a minimum what defined entities are required to have in place to improve gender equality. The main actions required are:

- Gender Equality Action Plan
- Gender Impact Assessments for all new and revision policies, programs and strategies with direct impact on the public
- Workplace Gender Audits



## About us

A hospital was first established on our current site in 1872. Through decades of commitment, connection, investment, and the passion of our community and region, a district base hospital evolved into today's modern health service of Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW).

Today the hospital is the largest employer in North East Victoria and employs over 1,500 people across our region. We also engage more than 340 volunteers, who are a critical part of both our team and our community.

We operate an extensive range of healthcare services and supports for people of all ages living in North East Victoria. We deliver our services from our sites in Wangaratta, in people's homes and, more recently through telehealth with our healthcare partners and in the community.

The 2021 Workplace Gender Audit found that of our 1,585 staff, 80% were female, 20% were male.

## Gender Equality Principles

We are committed to using the gender equality principles as outline in The Act by implementing actions that contribute to the societal changes these principles strive to achieve.

The Gender Equality Principles as outlined in the Act are:

- All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
- Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.
- Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
- Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

(State Government of Victoria, 2020)



## Workplace Equality and Respect Standards

In 2018, Our Watch developed the *Workplace Equality and Respect Standards* to provide guidance and a process for organisations to improve gender equality.

The five standards are:

### Commitment

We are committed to preventing violence against women and we have structures, strategies and policies that explicitly promote gender equality

### Conditions

We embed gender equality in our recruitment, remuneration and promotion processes, and men and women utilize flexible work options without penalty

### Culture

All staff feel safe and confident in the workplace, and we actively challenge gender stereotypes, roles and norms.

Staff can raise concerns about gender inequality and potential discrimination without adverse consequences.

### Support

We have the structures, practices and culture to respond appropriately to staff and stakeholders affected by violence, bullying and sexual harassment.

### Core business

The work we do and the way we promote it aligns with our commitment to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

(Our Watch, 2021)

# Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with NHW staff, Board of Directors and relevant unions. Each consultation step is outlined on the following pages.

## People Matter Survey

In June 2021, NHW conducted the People Matters Survey, including the workplace gender equality indicators.

People Matter Survey participants



People Matter Survey results:

Statement/Indicator	NHW 2021	NHW previous	Comparator group
My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours	73%	88% (2019)	74%
Senior leaders actively support diversity and inclusion in the workspace	66%	83% (2019)	65%
Experienced discrimination	7%	6%	6%
Experienced sexual harassment	8%	7%	7%
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different age groups	70%	89%	70%
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders	77%	88% (2019)	74%
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+	75%	77% (2019)	64%
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds	76%	88% (2019)	74%
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	73%	82% (2019)	70%
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees with disability	67%	80% (2019)	58%
Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation	69%	82% (2019)	69%
Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation	76%	-	75%
Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation	75%	82% (2019)	74%



Statement/Indicator	NHW 2021	NHW previous	Comparator group
Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation	72%	84% (2019)	74%
Being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in my organisation	66%	-	70%
Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation	62%	75% (2019)	58%
My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave	69%	-	70%
My organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language	79%	-	79%
In my workgroup work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender	79%	-	79%
Using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success in my organisation	47%	-	49%
Having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation	54%	78% (2019)	55%
I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration	59%	59% (2020)	60%
My manager works effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	84%	89% (2019)	82%
I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behavior at work	52%	-	56%
My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination	54%	74% (2019)	58%

Note: Green = NHW is better than our comparator group, Red = NHW is worse off than our comparator group

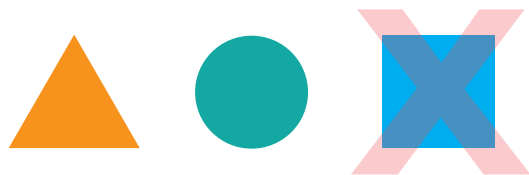




# Workplace Gender Audit

In December 2021, the Workplace Gender Audit was completed for Northeast Health Wangaratta as of 1 July 2021. Some of the key findings of the audit were:

## NHW Workforce

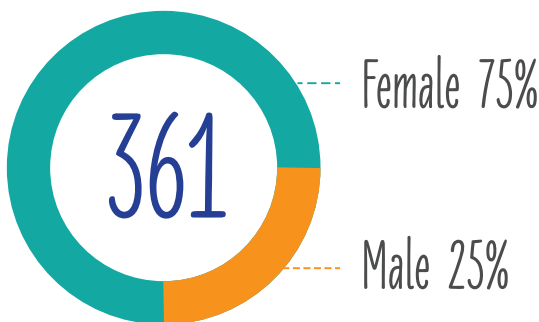


Only Male or Female gender options  
on current payroll system

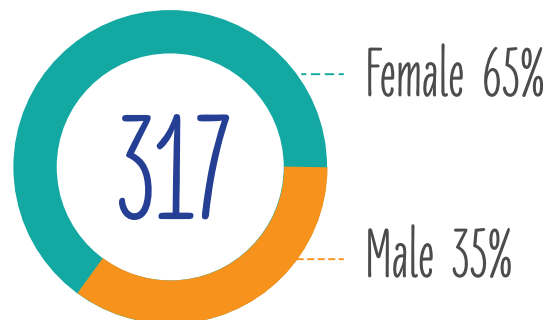


Male 20%      Female 80%  
(>1,200)

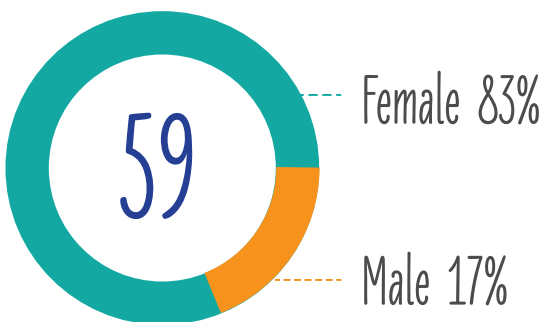
## Recruitments



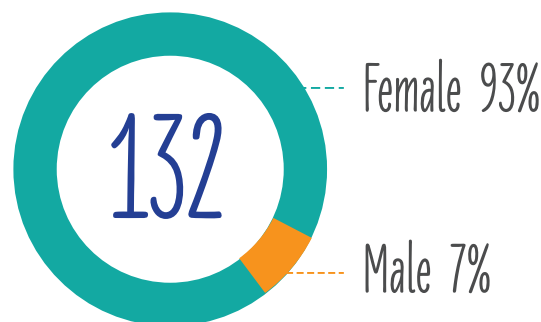
## Exits



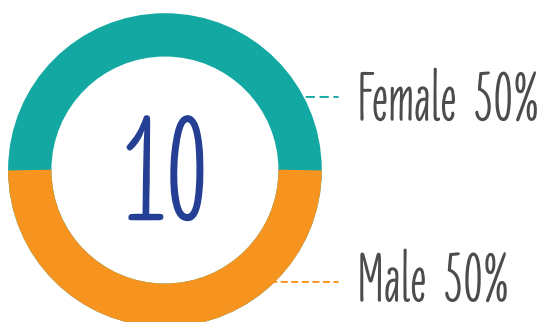
## Parental Leave



## Carer's Leave



## Board of Directors



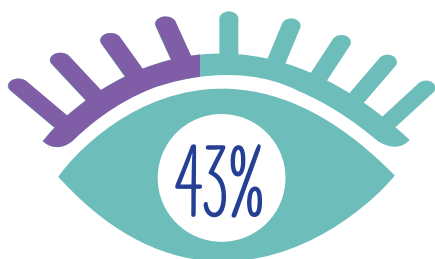
## Sexual Harassment



## Staff survey

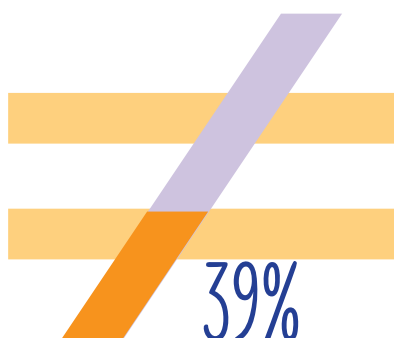
In December 2021 and January 2022, a staff survey was completed. Of the respondents:

- 98% agreed to the statement 'I understand why NHW has a role to improve Gender Equality'
- 58% agreed that 'As an organization, we challenge gender stereotypes'
- 65% agreed that 'Support for all parents, regardless of gender, is clear in our policies and procedures'



43% of respondents indicated they have noticed something that contributed to gender equality at NHW. The comments included:

- Female staff in leadership roles
- Rainbow Tick initiatives
- Flexibility for parents
- Employment and recruitment policies
- Education opportunities
- Posters throughout the organization



39% of respondents indicated they have noticed something that contributed to gender inequality at NHW. The comments included:

- Lack of staff education
- No parent room or breastfeeding area
- Female dominated workforce but large number of males in leadership
- Gender stereotypes (e.g. referring to a doctor as male and nurse as female)
- Most toilets are gendered (male or female)



38% of respondents had ideas to improve gender equality at NHW. The suggestions included:

- Incorporate all genders in equity planning
- Education and training
- Normalise flexible work options
- More gender neutral communication and facilities
- Improve processes for reporting and calling out behaviours
- Continue conversations about diversity
- Challenge engrained attitudes and culture

In addition to this, a number of staff made comment on not knowing what is being done to improve gender equality in the workplace. Suggested actions have been identified with considerable feedback stating visibility of action, training and breaking gender stereotypes. Following the People Matter Survey results (2019), a Diversity and Inclusion Manager has been appointed at NHW to support these actions.

## Feedback on draft Gender Equality Action Plan

An opportunity to provide feedback on the draft GEAP was provided to the Board of Directors, staff and relevant unions. Feedback could be provided either via return email or survey monkey.

The majority of the feedback received was complementary and encouraging. Some of the feedback led to changes to drafted actions and the inclusion of two additional actions.

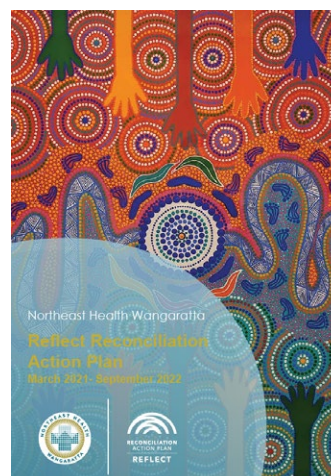
## Intersectionality

We know that Gender Inequality and Family Violence affects some women disproportionately.

Aboriginal women, women living in rural and regional Victoria, women from culturally diverse communities, women with disabilities and trans and gender diverse people are more likely to experience gender inequality than other women. This may present as higher rates of violence, lower employment rates, higher rates of sexual assault, lower education level and opportunities and social isolation. (State Government of Victoria, 2021)

Other action plans developed by NHW which contribute to more equitable health outcomes include:

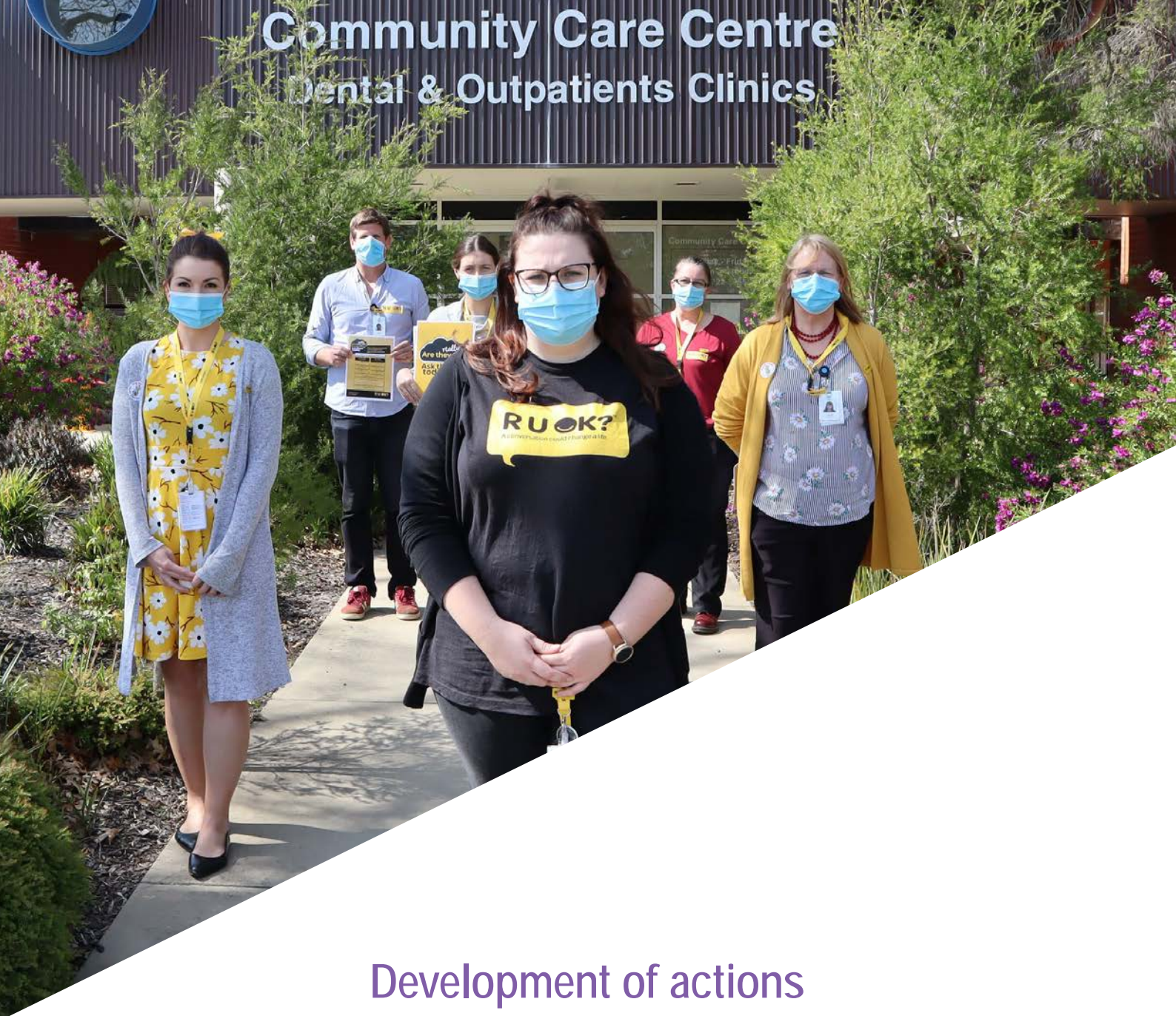
- Disability Action Plan
- LGBTQIA+ Health Action Plan
- Reconciliation Action Plan



This Gender Equality Action Plan will be implemented in partnership with these action plans, considering the intersection of gender equity with people with disability, LGBTQIA+ communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



# Community Care Centre Dental & Outpatients Clinics



## Development of actions

Following the completion of the workplace gender audit, staff survey, reviewing research and best practice methods, the following actions were identified as initial actions to progress gender equality at NHW.

These actions will be overseen by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, with governance oversight provided by the Workforce Governance Group. Progress of the actions will be reported to the Board of Directors in the monthly board report. A formal annual review will take place with a report published on the NHW website annually.

Action Plan				Workplace Equality and Respect Standard				
Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Commitment	Conditions	Culture	Support	Core business	
Structures								
1. Redesign new employee forms to allow for the collection of diversity indicators	People and Culture Team	1 May 2022		●	●		●	
2. Ensure that all new strategies and action plans consider gender inequalities in actions	Leadership Team	Ongoing	●				●	
3. Review policies to ensure there are no gendered references contributing to gender inequality	Diversity and Inclusion Team	30 June 2023	●	●	●		●	
4. Complete the Workplace Gender Audit	People and Culture Team & Education and Research Unit	July 2023	●			●		
5. Develop a policy/procedure on breastfeeding for staff returning from parental leave	People and Culture Team	30 September 2022	●	●	●	●	●	
6. Implement breastfeeding spaces at all NHW campuses	People and Culture Team	30 June 2023	●	●	●	●		
7. Actively challenge gender stereotypes by ensuring all publications showcase all genders in roles	Marketing & Media Team	Ongoing	●		●	●		
8. Develop a process for people to report problems or concerns surrounding gender equality	People and Culture Team	30 December 2022		●	●	●	●	

# Action Plan

Workplace Equality and Respect Standard

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Commitment	Conditions	Culture	Support	Core business
<b>Education and Training</b>							
9. Deliver a campaign to support workforce identification and reporting of sexual harassment	People and Culture Team	Annually	●	●	●	●	
10. Deliver training to all intake staff on the difference between sex and gender	Diversity and Inclusion Team	1 July 2022	●		●		
11. Deliver training to all relevant staff on the difference between sex and gender	Diversity and Inclusion Team	30 June 2024	●		●		
12. Support staff in the use of Gender Impact Assessments	Diversity and Inclusion Team	Ongoing		●			●
13. Develop resources to assist staff in developing resources and programs that improve gender equality	Diversity and Inclusion Team	30 June 2022		●			●
14. Deliver Gender Equality 101 training	Diversity and Inclusion Team	Annually	●	●	●		●
15. Deliver training on the connection between gender inequality and gender based violence	Diversity and Inclusion Team	Annually	●		●	●	●
16. Deliver Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework training to all relevant staff as per the strengthening hospital response to family violence model	Education and Research Unit	Ongoing	●		●	●	●



Action Plan			Workplace Equality and Respect Standard				
Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Commitment	Conditions	Culture	Support	Core business
17. Ensure that Best You Champions receive training on gender equality and family violence	People and Culture Team	Annually during induction	●		●	●	
18. Host regular conversational learning opportunities	Diversity and Inclusion Team	Monthly	●		●	●	●
19. Share the outcomes of the Workforce Gender Audit in an educational way	People and Culture Team	February 2022 – July 2022		●	●	●	
20. Deliver unconscious bias training to areas with high turn over rates	People and Culture Team	Annually	●	●	●		
21. All staff complete relevant e-learning related as part of the strengthening hospital response to family violence model	Education and Research Unit	At start of employment	●	●	●	●	●
22. Incorporate gender equality in to staff induction and orientation program	Diversity and Inclusion Team & Education and Research Unit	By January 2023	●		●		●
23. Incorporate gender equality into the Leadership Education Program covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what to be aware of as a leader</li> <li>• how to promote gender equality</li> <li>• how to ensure you are contributing to our compliance</li> </ul>	Diversity and Inclusion Team & Education and Research Unit	By January 2023	●	●	●		●

# Action Plan

## Workplace Equality and Respect Standard

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Commitment	Conditions	Culture	Support	Core business
24. Develop education packages on gender equality with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginality</li> <li>• Ageism</li> <li>• Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities</li> <li>• LGBTQIA people</li> <li>• People with disability</li> </ul>	Diversity and Inclusion Team & Education and Research Unit	By December 2023		●	●		●
25. Develop local case studies on Gender Impact Assessments	Diversity and Inclusion Team & Quality and Safety Team	December 2022	●		●		
26. Hold educational sessions about the Gender Equality Action Plan	Diversity and Inclusion Team	By 30 June 2022	●		●		●
<b>Events, Campaigns and Advocacy</b>							
27. Deliver a campaign for staff to change their personal details on our payroll system	People and Culture Team & Marketing and Media Team	By July 1 2022	●	●	●		●
28. Promote parental leave entitlements to all staff	People and Culture Team	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●
29. Celebrate International Women's Day	Diversity and Inclusion Team	Annually	●		●		
30. Participate in local 16 Days of Activism activities	People and Culture Team & Education and Research Unit	Annually	●		●	●	●
31. Develop easy to understand processes for parents returning from maternity leave outlining all steps and responsibilities	People and Culture Team	By December 2022	●	●	●	●	●



## Evaluation of our Gender Equality Action Plan

Understanding the benefits and success of this action plan requires process and impact evaluation measures. Process evaluation will measure how actions are implemented and may change how actions are delivered in the future. Impact evaluation measures what change the actions make.

### Measures of success:

- We will see a decrease in difference between People Matter Survey and Workplace Gender Audit results in sexual harassment indicators
- Staff personal details are up to date on employee systems
- Staff understand the role NHW has to play in gender equality
- Improve People Matter Survey indicators related to gender equality
- The number of staff participating in training
- The number of policies updated



# Definition of terms

## Gender

The socially constructed differences between men and women, as distinct from 'sex' which refers to their biological differences.

## Gender equality

The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, and trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

## Gender equity

Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognizes that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.

## Gender norms and structures

Ideas about how people should be and act according to the gender they are assigned or identify with. We internalize and learn these 'rules' early in life. This sets up a life-cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping.

## Gender stereotypes

Simplistic generalisations about the gender attributes, differences and roles.

## Family Violence

Any threatening, coercive, dominating or abusive behavior that occurs between people in a family, domestic or intimate relationship, or former intimate relationship, that causes the person experiencing the behavior to feel fear.

## Intersectionality

A methodology of studying the overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination or discrimination.

## Unconscious bias

The influence of mental processes over which the individual does not have conscious control. Unconscious bias may be based on preconceived attitudes and impressions, stereotypes and social perceptions.





Northeast Health Wangaratta  
PO Box 386, Wangaratta Victoria 3676  
Phone: 03 5722 5111  
Web: [www.nhw.org.au](http://www.nhw.org.au)  
Email: [enquiries@nhw.org.au](mailto:enquiries@nhw.org.au)

