

Message from the Commissioner



I am very pleased to be launching the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector's PhD program.

As Victoria's first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner, I am proud to support research that grows the evidence-base to drive intersectional gender equality. I am also delighted to contribute to growing the community of researchers in this area.

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* is a ground-breaking piece of legislation. Supporting targeted research is crucial to deepen our knowledge on how we can best work towards achieving intersectional gender equality in public sector workplaces, communities, policymaking and beyond.

The Commission's PhD program will play a vital role in ensuring that the goals of the Act, and the ambition of Victoria to continue to lead the nation in gender equality policy and outcomes, are fulfilled. By better understanding how to achieve intersectional gender equality, we can inspire other jurisdictions and sectors to follow Victoria's lead.

Successful applicants will undertake research that directly supports the objects of the Act whilst also gaining exposure to the Victorian public sector and government policy making.

I look forward to welcoming successful students to the CGEPS PhD program. I also look forward to the insights that their research will generate to pave the way for a gender-equal future for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Niki Vincent', written over a white background.

Dr Niki Vincent

Commissioner

Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector



Accessibility

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enquiries@genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au

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The information we ask of you is needed for the purpose of administering your application and informing the public of successful applications. If you do not provide us with all the information asked of you, we may be unable to progress with your PhD program application.

For us to administer your PhD program application effectively and efficiently, we may need to disclose some of the personal information you have disclosed with others for the purpose of assessment, consultation, and reporting. Information we may need to disclose includes your name and contact information. The people we may need to disclose the information to includes departmental staff, Members of Parliament and their staff, external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other government departments.

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<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-freedom-information-request>.

Should you have any privacy queries or a complaint about the way your privacy has been handled, please contact the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (CGEPS) here:

enquiries@genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au or email privacy@dffh.vic.gov.au.

This privacy statement is to be read in conjunction with the department's privacy policy which can be accessed here: <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/privacy-policy> and the collection notice which you will see when you submit your PhD program application.

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About the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector

The [Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector](#) (the Commission / CGEPS) was established after the [Gender Equality Act 2020](#) (the Act) passed in February 2020. The Commission supports the [Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner](#) (the Commissioner) to oversee the implementation of the Act and promote gender equality in the public sector workforce and the broader Victorian community.

The Act is a ground-breaking piece of legislation that requires certain public sector organisations in Victoria to take positive action towards achieving gender equality in their workplaces and communities. It does so by requiring these organisations to:

1. report on key gender equality measures;
2. demonstrate how they plan to improve gender equality in their organisation;
3. account for the gendered impacts of all policies, programs and services with a direct and significant public impact; and
4. make measurable progress towards gender equality.

The Objects of the Gender Equality Act 2020

The objects of the Act are broad ranging in their pursuit of equality. Most notably, while identifying the importance of driving gender equality and improving women's status, the Act is nation-leading in its explicit recognition of the ways in which multiple forms of disadvantage and discrimination can shape or compound the experience of gender equality.

The objects of the Act are:

1. to promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women; and
2. to support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services in workplaces and communities; and
3. to recognise that 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; and
4. to redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence, and accommodate persons of different genders by way of structural change; and
5. to enhance economic and social participation by persons of different genders; and

6. to further promote the right to equality set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Act's primary areas of focus include structural and systemic inequalities, intersecting forms of disadvantage and discrimination, and the promotion of human rights and equalities. Not only does the Act pursue organisational gender equality via its public sector focus, but it extends this ambition to cover the pursuit of gender equality in the broader Victorian community, particularly through public sector policymaking and service-delivery.

The Commissioner's research function

The Act provides for the Commissioner to undertake research into any matter related to the operation and objectives of the Act. Research is thus invoked within the legislation as one of the core functions of the Commissioner and centralised as vital to the successful operation and implementation of the Act.

To both support progress towards gender equality in Victorian public sector organisations and the community, and to be effective leaders in driving gender equality, the Victorian Government, the Commission and defined entities require rigorous, relevant research. This research must then be effectively translated into policy and practice.

There is a growing body of research knowledge regarding organisational gender equality, as well as its relationship to gender equality in the wider community. However, research targeted at what works in the Victorian context – and in particular research translation – is still required to support effective implementation of the Act and to strengthen Victoria's role as a leading jurisdiction in this area. Research is thus vital to ensure that:

1. the goals of the Act are fulfilled;
2. the Commissioner is supported to perform their role effectively;
3. the actions of defined entities to promote intersectional gender equality are underpinned by cutting-edge knowledge and practice in the field;
4. the Commission effectively translates cutting-edge knowledge and practice to defined entities and the wider Victorian community;
5. gender equality is progressed throughout Victoria; and
6. Victoria's experience is well-documented so that it can lead the way for other jurisdictions.

The CGEPS PhD Program

In 2025, the Commission launched a PhD program to facilitate in-depth, rigorous knowledge-building to aid the achievement of the above-listed research aims and the objects of the Act. Applicants will commence the CGEPS PhD Program in alignment with their commencement of candidature, in either semester 1 or



semester 2 of any given year. The Commission expects to induct 1 or 2 students per year.

The CGEPS PhD program will contribute to growing the community of researchers whose work is focussed on the Act and its aims. It will also provide a robust mechanism for producing high-quality, evidence-based and actionable research for progressing intersectional gender equality. Successful applicants will work closely with Commission and have the opportunity to build connections with the existing network of organisations at the state, national and international level engaged with research and evidence-building on violence against women and gender equality.

Benefits of joining the program

As a participant in the CGEPS PhD program, you will play a crucial role in driving evidence-based and innovative approaches to progressing intersectional gender equality across organisations, the broader Victorian community and beyond. CGEPS PhD program participants will undertake crucial research to help the Commission understand what works (and in what situations), what requires adjustment and what gaps remain in the evidence base where we must target our ongoing research efforts.

The CGEPS PhD program will provide successful applicants with the opportunity to undertake research that is directly applicable in public sector organisations and government policy making. Participation in the program will also prepare the successful applicant for a rewarding career in research, the public sector, government policy making or industry. Specifically, the successful applicant will be provided with:

- the opportunity to develop research which will be translated to actionable outcomes to drive progress towards a gender-equal Victoria;
- access to regular meetings with the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner throughout their candidature;
- access to PhD supervision from a qualified member of CGEPS staff. The Commission will contribute up to 20% external research supervision to the successful applicant's supervisory panel;
- access to a desk space in the office of the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in the Melbourne CBD;
- the opportunity to build knowledge and capability regarding public sector regulation and policymaking;
- access to the Commission's data and facilitated access to key stakeholders, including defined entities and inter-governmental partners;
- exposure to the Victorian public sector and government policy making;
- potential to apply for a small professional development grant to be used for fieldwork, research translation activities and/or conference attendance.

Eligibility

To participate in the CGEPS PhD Program applicants must be:

- Enrolled, or in the process of enrolling, in a PhD program at an Australia-based university. It is preferred that you apply to the CGEPS PhD Program prior to commencing your candidature.
- Able to self-fund their research. Recipients of an [Australian Government Research Training Program scholarship will be looked upon favourably.](#)

CGEPS PhD program applicants will be able to *apply* for the program while applying concurrently for a PhD place at an Australian-based university. However, they will not be able to *commence* their engagement with the Commission prior to commencing their candidature at an Australian-based university. Applicants are expected to complete their PhD full time, within a maximum of 3.5 years (excluding any leave of absence). The successful applicant will be provided with a desk space in the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in the Melbourne CBD and be expected to utilise this space on a regular basis throughout their candidature.

The Commission welcomes applications from candidates studying within relevant disciplines across the social sciences, psychology, law, and business, human resources and industrial relations. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, people with disability, and people from LGBTIQ+ communities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Applicants are invited to propose their own PhD project that aligns with the goals and values of the Gender Equality Act 2020 and/or the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector. Proposed projects should demonstrate clear links to the Victorian context. Students whose projects analyse the workplace gender audit data collected under the Act will be viewed favourably. Specific research priorities for the Commission include, but are not limited to:

- Research that draws on or investigates the workplace gender audit data, progress reports, gender impact assessments and/or Gender Equality Action Plans reported under the Act.
- Research that supports the monitoring and evaluation of the Act.
- Research that builds the evidence base for effective interventions to promote intersectional gender equality.

Assessment criteria and process

Applicants are expected to discuss their application further with the Commission team before they apply. To do this, or if you have any questions, please contact Dr Kate Farhall and Dr Jessica Megarry via enquiries@genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au

Assessment will be based solely on the information supplied in your application documentation.

Applications will be assessed by a panel of gender equality experts including the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.

Shortlisted applicants may be invited to interview.

Assessment criteria

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1. Project quality, viability and alignment with the goals and values of the Act and the Commission:
 - Your application must demonstrate your ability in academic writing and provide a cohesive project design which demonstrates your understanding of the research question to be explored.
 - Your application must demonstrate the alignment between your project, the core principles of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, and the role of the Commission and Commissioner. Your project must clearly align with the publicly stated goals and values of the above and demonstrate clear links to the Victorian context.
 - Your proposed project must apply a structural gender lens in its approach and address relevant questions of intersectionality.
2. Track record and capability:
 - You must demonstrate the relevant expertise to successfully execute your proposed project. You will be assessed based upon your prior academic performance, and, if relevant, your professional qualifications and experience.
 - You must demonstrate gender equality expertise and ideally a sound understanding of workplace gender equality. Evidence of your understanding of intersectional gender equality will be looked upon favourably.
3. Motivation and capacity to complete candidature in a timely manner.
 - If not already secured, your application must demonstrate your competitiveness for enrolment in a PhD course at an Australia-based university.
 - Your application must demonstrate your ability to self-fund your research and/or your competitiveness for an [Australian Government Research Training Program scholarship](#).

Criterion	Weighting
Project quality, viability and alignment with the goals and values of the Act and the Commission	50%
Track record and capability	30%
Motivation and capacity to complete candidature in a timely manner	20%



Onboarding

Prior to commencing their engagement with the Commission, the successful applicant will need to complete DFFH induction paperwork and provide documentation including a valid police check certificate.

The university in which the successful applicant is enrolled will also need to sign a Student Placement Agreement with DFFH. This process will be led by DFFH and commence once the successful applicant is notified.

Key Dates

Applications to the CGEPS PhD program are welcome at any time and applicant assessment will occur on a rolling basis.

However, it is preferred that candidates align their application to the CGEPS PhD Program with their candidature commencement date.

Applicants beginning their doctoral degree in semester 1 of any given year should submit their application by 31 October the year before, and applicants beginning their doctoral degree in semester 2 of any given year should submit their application by 30 April in the same year.

Acceptance to the CGEPS PhD Program at other times is at the discretion of the Commissioner.

How to apply

Applicants are expected to reach out to the Commission's research team to discuss their application. Please contact Dr Kate Farhall and Dr Jessica Megarry via enquiries@genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au in the first instance.

Applicants must submit, as a single PDF:

- the CGEPS PhD Program Application Form, [available here](#);
- a full academic transcript;
- a CV (maximum 2 pages);
- a short writing sample (maximum 5000 words). Please provide a sentence outlining the context, i.e., whether the sample is taken from your Honours or Masters thesis, or a recent essay or paper demonstrating your academic abilities.

Applicants should complete all parts of the CGEPS PhD Program Application Form, adhering to word limits where given, as well as all other directions stated on the form. All information on the application form must be correct at the time of submission.



Applications will be assessed based solely on the information contained in the application. Any further information contained in URLs embedded within applications will not be assessed.

Please combine your application form, your academic transcript, your CV and your writing sample as a single PDF.

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Please email your completed application to:
enquiries@genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au