

Commission for Gender
Equality in the Public Sector

2025-2028 Strategic Plan



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Note from the Commissioner



I am pleased to share the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan for the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector.

Our vision is for a gender-equal Victoria for everyone. All Victorians, regardless of gender, deserve to be treated fairly. That's why we are working with duty holders, government and stakeholders, to lead the way towards gender equality in Victoria and beyond.

In its first 4 years, the Commission has laid the foundations to implement the groundbreaking *Gender Equality Act 2020*. We've built the systems, workforce and processes needed to lead this work. Most duty holders are now halfway through their first reporting cycle. They are taking steps towards gender equality in their workplace and public policies, services and programs.

But gender inequality is a wicked problem that needs ongoing leadership, accountability and action – and there is much more to be done.

While most of us value fairness as individuals, we live and work in systems that are unequal. Gender inequality still shows up in the gender pay gap, a lack of women in leadership, gendered segregation in the workforce, and sexual harassment.

So, over the next four years, the Commission will refine and strengthen its approach as a leading practice regulator. We will lift the bar for compliance with the Act. And we'll focus on activity that will have the greatest impact on reducing gender-based harms.

This 2025-2028 Strategic Plan sets out the strategic pillars that will guide our work. It describes the areas we will focus our attention on, and the ways we will measure our success.

This Plan provides transparency for our stakeholders - who each play an important role in driving gender equality. It shows our commitment to working closely with duty holders, leaders and government to realise our vision.

It is a privilege to lead this powerful and important work with my small but mighty team at the Commission. Together, we're building a fairer, more equal future for all Victorians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Niki Vincent', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Niki Vincent

Commissioner, Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector



2025–2028 strategy

Vision

A gender-equal Victoria for everyone – inspiring change

Values

- Responsiveness
- Integrity
- Impartiality
- Respect
- Accountability
- Leadership
- Human rights

Strategy statement

The Commission will drive improved compliance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* across all obligations, to strengthen intersectional gender equality in Victorian Public Sector workplaces and in the public programs, policies and services they deliver.

Strategic pillars



1.

Build and translate the evidence base for intersectional gender equality in Victoria's public sector workplaces



2.

Support duty holders to enhance their capability to meet their obligations under the Act



3.

Perform as a 'leading practice regulator'

Enabled by a stakeholder relationship driven, high performing, sustainable Commission.

Key activities and measures of success



Build and translate the evidence base for intersectional gender equality in Victoria's public sector workplaces

Key activity areas:

- ▶ Expand, translate, and communicate evidence about what works to improve workplace gender equality.
- ▶ Deepen our analysis and reporting on workplace gender audit data to highlight where inequality gaps are being closed or persist and to drive conversations about gender equality among duty holders and the public.
- ▶ Fund and support research that will fill knowledge gaps about how to progress intersectional gender equality in Victoria's public sector workplaces and beyond.
- ▶ Identify and showcase leading practice to encourage duty holders to take action.
- ▶ Produce and regularly update on our website, evidence-based guidance on what works to drive gender equality on each of the workplace gender equality indicators under the Act.

Measures:

- ▶ An increase in duty holders reporting that they use guidance issued by the Commission and/or other Commission research to help them meet their obligations.
- ▶ Partnerships established with high quality researchers and research teams, as well as PhD students, to fill evidence gaps and deepen data analyses.
- ▶ Consistent demand for Commissioner engagements (speeches, media, advice, submissions) from other national and international jurisdictions and beyond the public sector. This serves as an indicator of the spread of awareness of Victoria's legislation, data and outcomes.



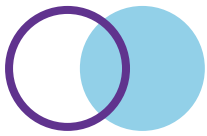
Support duty holders to enhance their capability to meet their obligations under the Act

Key activity areas:

- ▶ Regularly assess duty holder training needs to better target support to those who need it most.
- ▶ Ensure all written guidance is timely and provided in clear, accessible, and concise format.
- ▶ Provide support and advice to duty holders via website content, enquiries system, and Commissioner visits to meet immediate, short-term and longer-term support needs.
- ▶ Strengthen our evidence-based education, training, resources and advice to support duty holders to build the knowledge and capability to meet their obligations under the Act.
- ▶ Ensure our staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to help duty holders to understand obligations and compliance requirements.

Measures:

- ▶ Substantial improvements in duty holder compliance rates across all indicators and GIAs in 2026 and 2028 progress reports.
- ▶ Reduce by 50% the rate of poor-quality data submitted in each workplace gender audit.
- ▶ A minimum of 80% satisfaction with all resources provided by the Commission and with the support provided by our team members.
- ▶ 100% of incoming enquiries are appropriately responded to within five working days.



Be a 'leading practice regulator'

Key activity areas:

- ▶ Establish, refine, and effectively communicate our approach to minimising gendered harms and targeting regulatory effort based on risk of harm
- ▶ Develop and communicate regulatory priorities every two years
- ▶ Support duty holders to understand how their actions/compliance contributes to broader regulatory outcomes.
- ▶ Reduce barriers to compliance through the design of our regulatory requirements, recognising the differing capabilities and needs of duty holders.
- ▶ Deliver timely assessment and communication of compliance outcomes to duty holders.
- ▶ Produce timely analysis of audit data and reporting on progress towards gender equality in Victorian public sector workplaces.

Measures:

- ▶ Complete compliance assessment and provide feedback to duty holders on obligations within five months of submission.
- ▶ Publish comprehensive progress insights for the sector within ten months of audit data submission.
- ▶ Achieve a satisfaction rate of 80% or more by stakeholders against Better Regulation Victoria criteria.
- ▶ Publish details of our performance against our commitments biennially. This will include relevant feedback from duty holder surveys, and summary data of complaints and decision reviews.



The Gender Equality Act 2020 and its reporting requirements

The Gender Equality Act 2020 is:

- ▶ Groundbreaking: It is the first legislation of its kind in Australia.
- ▶ Independent: The Commissioner is an independent statutory officer, reporting directly to the Minister for Women.
- ▶ Comprehensive: Covers over 300 public sector organisations, which employ approx. 12% of Victoria's workforce.
- ▶ Intersectional: Recognises that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination, like race, disability, sexuality.
- ▶ Transparent: Mandates public reporting, which increases transparency and ensures public accountability.
- ▶ A structural change: Aims to address the root causes of gender inequality in the public sector and beyond.

Public sector industry groups include:



Higher education:
Universities and TAFEs



Police and emergency services:
All police, fire and emergency services



Water and land management:
Water corporations and alpine resorts



Public health:
Public hospitals and health services



Local government:
Local councils across Victoria



Transport, building and construction:
Road, rail and ports bodies

Organisations in these groups are required to:

- ▶ Undertake a workplace gender audit (every 2 years)
- ▶ Develop and implement a gender equality action plan (every 4 years)
- ▶ Conduct gender impact assessments across programs and service delivery (ongoing)
- ▶ Publicly report on progress and promote gender equality (every 2 years).



Overview of the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector

Dr Niki Vincent commenced as Victoria's first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner in October 2020. She was reappointed for a second 4-year term in October 2024.

The Commissioner is an independent statutory officer, reporting directly to the Minister for Women.

The Commissioner's functions are:

- ▶ to promote and advance the objects of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* throughout the public sector
- ▶ to support defined entities to comply with the Act
- ▶ to provide advice to defined entities about the operation of the Act
- ▶ to establish and undertake information and education programs for defined entities in order to encourage best practice and facilitate compliance;
- ▶ to undertake research into any matter related to the operation and objectives of the Act.

The Commissioner's Office, known as the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (the Commission) was established in 2021. Commission staff support the Commissioner to oversee implementation of the Gender Equality Act and promote gender equality in the public sector workforce and the broader Victorian community.

