



How can gender equality help my organisation?

Information for businesses and organisations that supply works, goods and services or community services to the Western Australian public sector.

What does gender equality mean?

Gender equality means that all people, regardless of their gender, have the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections.

Historically, beliefs about gender roles meant that men in Australia and many other countries had more legal rights, more access to resources and more opportunities to follow their chosen pathways than women. While there has been considerable progress towards gender equality, there is still a long way to go in achieving gender equality.

Workplace gender inequality

Women account for fewer than 1 in 5 CEOs or board chairs, and 1 in 3 board members.¹

2 in 5 Australian women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.²

Women perform around 75 per cent of all unpaid work, including providing care for children and others, housework and administration and volunteering.³

¹ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022), Australia's gender equality scorecard. [2020-21 WGEA SCORECARD.pdf](#)

² Australian Human Rights Commission (2020), Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report [Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report \(2020\) | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

³ 2019 Women's Report Card (2019), Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, Department of Communities, [womens-report-card-2019_0.pdf \(www.wa.gov.au\)](#)

Stronger Together: WA's Plan for Gender Equality

Stronger Together: WA's Plan for Gender Equality (Stronger Together) is a framework for coordinated action across Government, business, industry and the community to address gender inequality and drive improved outcomes for women over the next 10-years.

Stronger Together includes a key action to use the purchasing power of the WA Government to improve gender equality by supporting suppliers to implement gender equality practices.

Gender Equality in Procurement

The Western Australian (WA) Government is a major purchaser of works as well as goods and services from WA businesses of all sizes. Community services are also purchased from non-government organisations. The Government has made a commitment to ensuring that the procurement process can achieve social benefits for the community, as well as supporting the WA economy.

Western Australian Social Procurement Framework

The Western Australian Social Procurement Framework (the Framework) was released by Department of Finance (Finance) in 2021 as part of broader procurement reform to improve efficiencies across the public sector.

The Framework has been developed to enable improved social, economic and environmental benefits across the State by leveraging government's procurement activity to achieve community outcomes.

Two of the community outcomes included in the WA Social Procurement Framework are improved gender equality in the workplace and increased compliance with the relevant legislation.

The procurement process is an opportunity to focus on gender equality and encourage organisations that supply to Government to take steps to improve workplace gender equality. If all suppliers took positive action to introduce gender equality policies and initiatives the collective impact on women, men and the community could be significant.

How does it work?

The Gender Equality in Procurement: WA Public Sector Pilot is the first step. Nineteen WA public sector agencies are taking part in the initiative, which was initially a one-year Pilot and has now been extended by a further year until June 2024.

A few basic questions about gender equality have been included in the procurement form through Tenders WA for organisations that want to supply to the public sector. Organisations will be asked a few questions about their policies and practices that support gender equality. However, they will not miss out on public sector contracts just because they don't have gender equality measures in place.

The pilot contributes to the WA Government's work to improve gender equality across the community. The results of the pilot will contribute to future work to further advance gender equality in WA.

How do we know it will work?

Evidence shows that there are positive outcomes for businesses and organisations once they take action to introduce specific gender equality policies and initiatives into the workplace. Australian employers with 100 or more staff are required to submit a report each year to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*. The report includes information about the workforce such as the type of industry, the number of employees at each level, gender and salaries. The number of staff who were promoted, resigned or took parental leave are also examples of the information that must be reported. Organisations that are required to report to WGEA but have not done so may not be eligible to tender for contracts from the Commonwealth Government.

The data collected by WGEA is analysed each year and a report is released which shows any significant changes over time and identifies which policies and actions those organisations that report have taken. Since the first report was published in 2016, the data has shown that organisations which report to WGEA have improved their gender equality, simply by reporting.

Many organisations have also introduced specific actions, such as mentoring programs to support women to enter leadership roles or support for parents returning to work after parental leave.⁴ In 2020, the WGEA report demonstrated that organisations which increased the number of women in leadership positions experienced better production and bigger profits. Importantly, organisations which reduced the number of women in leadership were likely to have worse business outcomes.⁵

Benefits of gender equality in procurement

Gender equality in procurement is a powerful tool to boost women's economic security, advance workplace gender equality and create safer and more gender-equal communities. Gender equality in procurement is a win for individuals, businesses, the community and the WA economy.

⁴ [Case studies | WGEA](#)

⁵ [Gender Equity Insights series | WGEA](#)

Economic benefits for businesses and organisations

- Improved financial performance
- Improved reputation amongst staff and external stakeholders
- Diversity of staff at all levels which helps to promote innovation and drive competition.

Benefits for individuals and community

- Increased women's workforce participation, including at leadership level
- Better work/life balance for men and women
- Less bias against women entering industries such as mining and construction and less bias against men entering sectors such as health and community care
- Reduced gender pay inequality

What about organisations that employ more women than men?

The data from WGEA reports clearly shows that industries and sectors which employ more women than men often have relatively low rates of women in leadership. This includes the health care and social assistance sector and retail. There are actions that these organisations can take to create better gender balance at all levels and also ensure that all staff are supported through gender equality policies.

All businesses and organisations can benefit from regularly examining their policies and actions to make sure they continue to contribute to advancing gender equality.

What else can we do to improve workplace gender equality in WA?

Improving workplace gender equality takes time and commitment. Even small changes to workplace policies and actions can make a significant difference to gender equality.

Please visit our [Gender Equality in Procurement website](#) for a suggested list of actions that organisations of different sizes can take to work towards improving gender equality. The list will support you to identify actions that can help your business, your staff and the community by improving gender equality.

Contact

For further information on using this resource please contact the Department of Communities Women's Interests team.

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