

Victorian Water Industry
**Equity, Diversity
& Inclusion**

Annual Performance Report
February 2020



VicWater
BETTER TOGETHER

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	5
Water Industry Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023	5
‘Better Together’ – collective Diversity & Inclusion initiatives	5
Content of this report	7
1 Gender	8
Case Study – Gender Equity at City West Water	9
Case Study – Gender Equity at Melbourne Water	12
Case Study – Women’s Leadership and Development programs	12
Case Study – Gender pay equity	13
Case Study – Gems in STEM Program	14
2 Disability	15
Case Study – How Short Term Opportunities can lead to Full Time Employment	16
Case Study – Disability Recruitment at Lower Murray Water	18
3 Language other than English	19
Case Study – Breaking Down Barriers for Skilled Migrants	20
4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	21
Case Study – Learning Together	22
5 Carers	24
Case Study – Caring Responsibilities	25
Case Study – Keeping in Touch on Parental Leave	26
6 LGBTIQ+	27
Case Study – Pride At Yarra Valley Water	28
7 Flexible work	29
Case Study – Flexibility In Action – Job Share Solutions	31
Conclusion	34

Executive Summary

The Water Industry Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023 (the Strategy) was developed during 2018-19 to demonstrate the industry's commitment to build a diverse workforce and inclusive culture across the Victorian water sector.

This report has been prepared by the Water Industry Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee, comprising representatives of all 19 water corporations and supported by VicWater. It provides a snapshot for the 2019 calendar year of the Victorian water sector's performance and progress against the collective target areas outlined in the Strategy.



26.3% of Managing Directors are female

INDUSTRY AVERAGE

38.3% of Tier 1 managers* are female

33.5% of Tier 2 managers* are female

Target: Gender balance (50:50) in senior leadership positions



INDUSTRY AVERAGE

4.2%
(18 out of 19 water corporations)

of our workforce identify as a person with a disability

Target: 10% of our workforce identify as a person with a disability



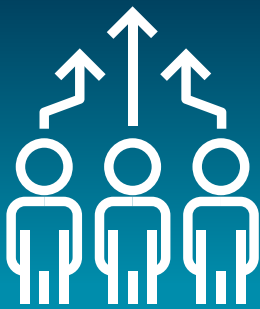
INDUSTRY AVERAGE

12.5%

of our workforce speak a language other than English

Target: 20% of our workforce speak a language other than English

* In general, Tier 1 managers report to Managing Director, Tier 2 managers report to Tier 1.



INDUSTRY AVERAGE

1.6%

of our workforce identify as
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait
Islander

Target: 3% of our workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



INDUSTRY AVERAGE

44%

(10 out of 19
water corporations)

of our workforce identify
as having flexible working
arrangements to include
caring responsibilities
for children, elderly
family, or a person with
disability

Target: 35% of our workforce identify as
having flexible working arrangements
to include caring responsibilities for
children, elderly family, or a person with
disability

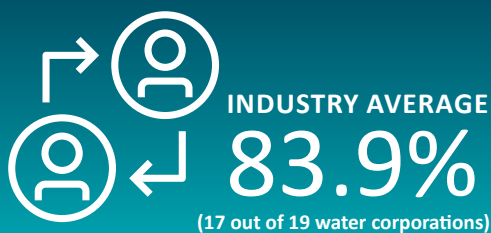


INDUSTRY AVERAGE

3%

of our workforce identify
as belonging to the
LGBTIQ+
(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender and Intersex)
communities

Target: 7% of our workforce identify
as belonging to the LGBTIQ+
(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
and Intersex) communities



of employees have flexible work arrangements unless there is a specific operational constraint

Target: Flexible work arrangements are available to all employees unless there is a specific operational constraint



of employees work flexibly (through informal and formal working arrangements)

Target: 35% of employees work flexibly (through informal and formal working arrangements)

For each of the target areas we have included the industry average range (high and low figures) and the industry average figure across all participating water corporations.

To provide context to the statistics and tell a more complete story about diversity and inclusion across the sector, we have also included one or more case studies for each of the target areas which highlight the positive outcomes that are being achieved for individual employees and workplace culture within the industry.

Allowing for local differences between water corporations, overall we are on track to meet the collective targets over the remaining four years of the Strategy. In particular, the sector is performing very strongly in the area of flexible work, with an average of 83.9% of roles able to be worked flexibly, and average of 47.5% of employees on flexible work arrangements (formal and informal).

While the industry is making good progress, we know that there is still more to be done to achieve the collective targets for gender balance, disability, language other than English, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTI+.

Over the next 12 months, Victorian water corporations will continue to identify and implement initiatives to improve performance in these target areas, within their own organisations and through working collaboratively across the industry.

Introduction

Water Industry Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023

The Water Industry Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023 (the Strategy) was developed during 2018-19 to demonstrate the industry's commitment to build a diverse workforce and inclusive culture across the Victorian water sector.

We know that organisations which reflect the diversity of the communities they serve are better placed to build trust and gain greater insights into their customers' needs. We also know that creating an inclusive work culture will enable us to attract and retain the talent that our industry needs to keep innovating and improving our performance.

All 19 Victorian water corporations have committed to the industry Strategy, in addition to developing and implementing their own strategies to increase diversity and inclusion within their organisations.

'Better Together' – collective Diversity & Inclusion initiatives

Through VicWater, all 19 water corporations are able to participate in collaborative initiatives that help to promote and drive diversity and inclusion across the sector – knowing that we are 'better together'.



Women in Water Directors Network

The Women in Water Directors Network (WWDN) was established in 2018 to create a positive and enabling environment so women directors can thrive and be successful in the Victorian water industry.

It aims to provide a place and space for women directors of water corporations to network, collaborate, mentor and support each other to ensure the Victorian water industry can achieve a truly diverse and equitable water sector.

During 2019 the WWDN held four networking events featuring guest speakers and panel discussions on the challenges and opportunities that exist for women at all levels of the water sector. The WWDN also runs a mentoring program for women directors to build knowledge and connections, and to share valuable insights, advice and guidance with each other.



Pride in Water Network

The Pride in Water Network was formed during 2019 to connect LGBTIQ+ employees and allies across the Victorian water industry. The purpose is to create a better practice model for LGBTIQ+ inclusion by:

- building a strong culture of respect, inclusion and connection for LGBTIQ+ people both within workplaces and the broader community
- raising awareness of LGBTIQ+ issues through education to promote inclusion
- sharing resources and experiences between organisations for LGBTIQ+ inclusion through training, communications and events
- helping the industry to become a leader in valuing diverse thought.

The soft launch of Pride in Water on Wear it Purple Day (30 August 2019) received support from all 19 water corporations, VicWater and DELWP. Following this success, Pride in Water attracted interest from public and private sector water organisations around Australia. A Pride in Water Co-Design Forum held in October 2019 was attended by 30 people from 25 organisations across five states, and the first industry-wide contingent marched at the 25th Midsumma Pride March in February 2020.

Content of this report

This report has been prepared by the Water Industry Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee, comprising representatives of all 19 water corporations and supported by VicWater. It provides a snapshot for the 2019 calendar year of the Victorian water sector's performance and progress against the collective target areas outlined in the Strategy.

For each of the target areas we have included the industry range (high and low figures) and the industry average figure across all participating water corporations. It is important to note the following qualifiers:

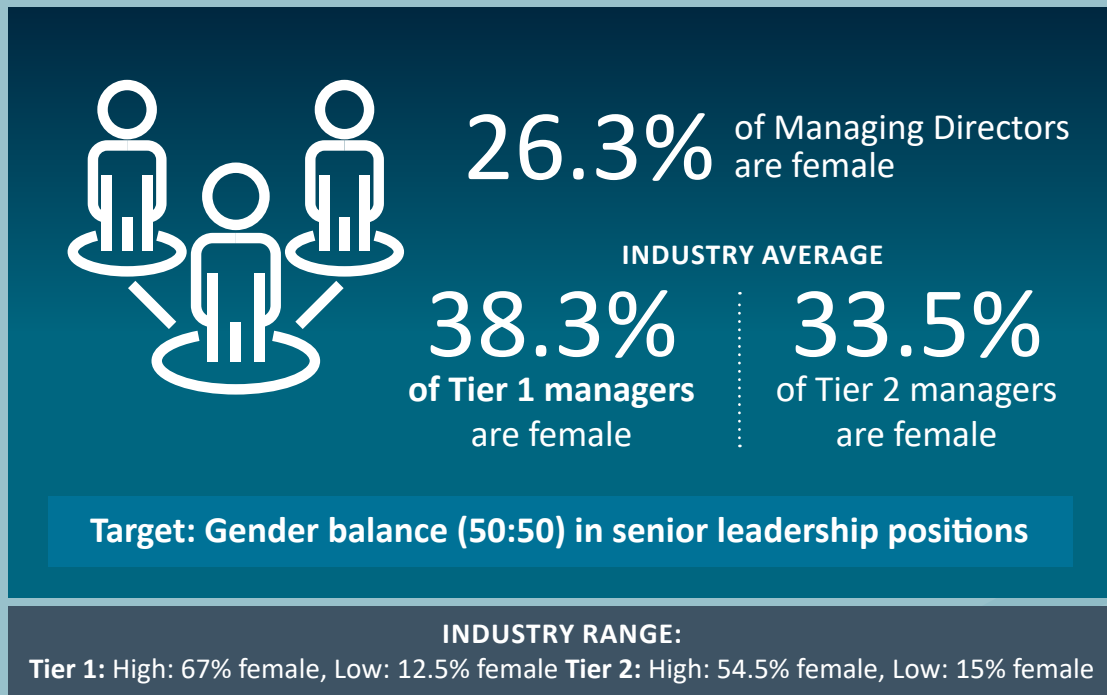
- Not all water corporations currently collect data for each target area. Therefore, for some targets the average percentage figure has been calculated across a smaller number of organisations – this is noted in the report.
- The timing of data collection varies across water corporations, and across target areas. While most water corporations have provided data as at 30 June 2019, some have used alternative dates to align with their internal data collection cycle. Additionally, in some cases the most recent available data was actually collected 12-18 months prior to 30 June 2019.
- The method of data collection also varies across water corporations, and across target areas. Many, but not all, water corporations use the People Matter Survey run by the Victorian Public Service Commission. Some water corporations use their own internal diversity census, culture survey or other methods of data collection.
- Data collection for most target areas relies on voluntary participation and self-disclosure by employees. There are many reasons why employees may choose not to disclose what they consider to be sensitive personal information about themselves, and water corporations respect the right of employees not to disclose.

For these reasons, the average percentage figure for each target should be regarded as indicative only.

To provide context to the statistics and tell a more complete story about diversity and inclusion across the sector, we have also included one or more case studies for each of the target areas. The case studies highlight the range of considered and innovative actions being taken by water corporations to improve diversity and inclusion in their workplaces, and also illustrate the significant benefits to be had for both the individual employees and for the business.

INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

1. Gender



Promoting gender equity has been on the water sector’s radar for a number of years, with water corporations working to fulfil the Government’s commitments as outlined in *Water for Victoria*¹. Water corporations provided figures for three levels of senior management (Managing Director, Tier 1 and Tier 2) to indicate the strength of the female leadership pipeline across the industry. While the number of women at Managing Director level has increased over the past two years, the number of women at Tier 1 and Tier 2 manager levels has remained almost the same².

Recognising the need to be more pro-active if the 50:50 target is to be achieved, water corporations are taking a range of actions to attract and retain more women, including

addressing gender pay equity, changing recruitment practices, supporting education and training at secondary and tertiary levels, and providing professional learning and development opportunities – some of these are highlighted in the case studies.

Leadership programs specifically tailored for women in the water industry, such as DELWP’s Insight program and the Peter Cullen Trust Women in Water Leadership program, are helping to develop and promote women into senior management roles. However, initiatives aimed at the pipeline will take some time to produce results, due to slower rates of mobility at lower levels and thus fewer opportunities to directly target through recruitment.

¹ Water for Victoria, Chapter 10, Action 10.7.

² VicWater ‘Gender Equity, Diversity & Inclusion’ report 2016-17 indicated 16% female Managing Directors, 38% female Tier 1 managers and 32% female Tier 2 managers.

Case Study – Gender Equity at City West Water

City West Water is committed to gender equity and improving the representation of women in the water industry and other STEM-related industries, and we are working hard to ensure we can attract and retain the immense talent that females contribute. A number of initiatives and programs of work have been trialled over the past three years to increase women in leadership positions from 26% in 2016 to 45% in 2019. This includes:

Sponsorship and events

- Executive Sponsorship of gender equity including the development of a gender equity action plan.
- Internal events that focus on gender equity including the celebration of International Women’s Day with a Great Debate event.
- Providing a ‘Celebrating Women in STEM’ scholarship with Victoria University aimed at supporting the education of a female future engineer which includes mentoring by senior City West Water staff about career opportunities in the water industry. Three other female engineering students also receive mentoring support from CWW executives as part of the program.



Reporting

- Gender pay equity reviews conducted bi-annually.
- Quarterly reporting to the Board and Executive Leadership Team of how we are tracking to targets for gender equity.



Amanda Smith, General Manager, Strategy and Planning, City West Water was awarded as one of the Top 50 Public Sector Women 2019 in the established category.

Leadership and talent

- Gender balance on all succession plans.
- Gender talent pipeline – recruitment team proactively contacting women to create a gender pipeline for hard to fill roles – i.e. engineering, project roles.
- Proactively support women in leadership programs including Peter Cullen Trust and Women in Leadership Development (WILD program).
- Eight nominations and five achievements of the Top 50 women in Public Sector awards, recognised for their leadership, inspiration and accomplishment.

Process

- For all committees, councils, groups, bodies we are always seeking a gender balance.
- Changes to recruitment practices – language has been adjusted in all position descriptions to ensure they are more inclusive (including removing jargon, removing requirement of years of experience, including flexibility), 50:50 shortlisting and gender balanced interview panels, blind recruitment trials where all identifying data is removed and provided to recruitment team, proactive profiling of our female engineers which we use across SEEK and LinkedIn.
- Policy and procedure development and execution on how we will support employees and customers facing family violence including adoption of family violence leave.
- Gender equality within Victorian Government supplier's commitment as part of our new social procurement policy.
- When realignments are undertaken, we ensure a gender review is undertaken to ensure we are not subconsciously impacting a disproportionate number of roles held by women.
- End of year process performance we also look at split – are we finding more men are at top end? Gender lens and review of performance outcomes.

Case Study – Gender Equity at Melbourne Water

Melbourne Water has been on a journey to understand and address barriers to gender equity, to support and grow a more gender-balanced workforce at all levels. Using the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) calculator tool, Melbourne Water has defined aspirational but achievable targets for the corporate and operational areas of the business.

While Melbourne Water has achieved gender balance across its corporate workforce, operational areas have proven more challenging due to the limited pipeline of women in STEM areas, pervasive societal views on stereotypically male and female work, and a low level of awareness of the types of roles available in operational environments. The following case studies provide insight into the kinds of work Melbourne Water is doing to support gender equity and gender balance across the employee life-cycle.

Women's Leadership and Development programs

Melbourne Water is strongly committed to supporting a gender balanced workforce in all areas and at all levels of the business. We are now in our second year of delivering an annual leadership and development program for female-identifying employees. Since 2018, 42 talented female employees have participated in an extensive leadership program, with a priority of ensuring strong representation of women in STEM roles.

Last year's six month program 'Elevate' was run in partnership with Inkling Women and was designed to increase the leadership readiness of middle-level managers (Tier 3 leaders; predominantly people leaders) through building and leveraging networks and strengths to optimise career movement opportunities. Program reviews revealed that during the six month program, 30% of participants moved into an acting or permanent promotion opportunity, increasing to 57% within a year of the program.

This year, Melbourne Water took the program in-house to promote the program's sustainability. The 'Unite' program has a mix of Tier 2 and Tier 3 females, aiming to support Melbourne Water's female talent pipeline across the organisation. Building on the success of the Elevate Program, 'Unite' aims to further career movement, and enable participants to plan their career pathways and identify their strengths and leadership style.

'Unite' aims to create a 'ripple effect' of inclusive behaviours and sponsorship of diverse talent through engaging line managers and senior leaders as sponsors (38 and 36 respectively over two years). The program is well-supported throughout the business, with Michael Wandmaker (MD) and a number of General Managers currently sponsoring a program participant.

Gender pay equity

Melbourne Water is committed to pay parity across all levels of the business, ensuring that we remove any barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workplace, in particular within traditionally male focussed areas, such as engineering and operations, and also for males in traditionally female focussed areas.

Annual pay equity reviews have been conducted at Melbourne Water since 2017, with the most recent review in February 2019. Utilising the WGEA guidelines to shape our approach in collection and analysis, Melbourne Water actively seeks to identify any gender pay gaps across the organisation for like roles/job bands, and to rectify the identified causes.

The 2019 review highlighted that the Melbourne Water Recruitment Policy was impacting pay equity, with a capped % salary increase perpetuating, and in some cases inflating, the minor gender pay inequities already in existence for females who are newer to a role. As a result, the Recruitment Policy was updated in March 2019 to provide greater flexibility in salary recommendations on promotion, allowing for appropriate acknowledgement of capability and skill regardless of time in the role. In addition, remuneration for all individuals previously impacted by the policy were adjusted for fairness.

Another learning highlight from this review was acknowledgement that availability of real-time assessment tools would be beneficial in enabling pay equity to be measured in a timely manner, to impact decision making.

As a result, the industry-endorsed WGEA pay equity validation tool was introduced at Melbourne Water. Used in conjunction with our current pay data, this instrument assists People & Capability staff to consistently assess pay equity prior to negotiating new contracts, promotion salaries or annual salary review increases. Acknowledged as the main tool used for industry comparison, this tool has enabled Melbourne Water to achieve a 98% pay equity overall as at November 2019.

Continuing our commitment into 2020, Melbourne Water will undertake a full review of Remuneration strategy and policy, engaging expert industry consultants to analyse and benchmark Melbourne Water's compensation for market position competitiveness and equity across the Water Industry, Victorian Government and private sectors. This will provide critical insights and advice to inform future best practice remuneration policy and practice, incorporating gender equity considerations.

Case Study – Gems in STEM Program

(supported by City West Water, Melbourne Water, South East Water, Yarra Valley Water and Engineers Australia)

There is currently a low number of both girls and boys studying physics and math at Year 12 level, limiting the pipeline of future engineers. Less than 7% of girls study physics and advanced math in Year 12, and less than 11.5% of boys study advanced math in Year 12.

The Gems in STEM Program aims to inspire young people through promoting engineering, the water industry and STEM across schools in Victoria. At this crucial stage, it is critical that industry plays a role in highlighting opportunities and encouraging students to continue their studies in STEM.

The program was initiated by CMP Consulting Group and received early support from Melbourne Water followed by the metro water retailers. Melbourne Water and the water retailers have supported through enabling employees to contribute within all parts of the program, through presentations and coaching.

In 2018-19 the Gems in Stem program was delivered to over 1,300 Year 10 students in seven schools: Sacred Heart Girls’ College, Waverley Christian College, Dandenong High School, Glen Waverley Secondary College, Noble Park Secondary College, Bentleigh Secondary College, and Mazenod College.

Secondary School Programs

PART ONE	PART TWO	PART THREE
What we do and why?	How do we get there?	Coaching
<p>3-4 Key Speakers (5-7 minute presentations)</p> <p>Panel Q&A session</p>	<p>3-4 Facilitators</p> <p>‘MAP’ Activity</p> <p>Interactive Q&A session</p> <p>Fireside chat session</p>	<p>Engineers, Scientists and Water Professionals available for Coaching</p> <p>GEMSinSTEM@cmpgroup.com.au</p>

This program and model could be applied to regional areas and adopted across the Victorian water sector.

2. Disability



Disability is one of the more challenging target areas to measure and address, due to the wide range, variation and complexity of people’s lived experience. Some conditions may not be recognised as being a disability by the employer, or even by the employee themselves – this is particularly the case with non-visible disabilities, chronic illness and mental health disorders.

There are pockets of excellent practice and much progressive work is being done by water corporations, especially in relation to mental health awareness and reasonable adjustments. The experience of partnering with specialist disability agencies has had positive outcomes for some – as highlighted in the case study.

Despite the progress that has been achieved to date, we know that a more dedicated focus is needed if the industry is to reach the 10% collective target for disability. Work is progressing through VicWater to set up ‘WaterAble’, a network for people with disabilities and their allies to promote and support disability inclusion and employment in the Victorian water industry.

Case Study – How Short Term Opportunities can lead to Full Time Employment

Gippsland Water is creating a high performing inclusive working environment that values diversity and promotes equality and inclusion. To assist them on this journey, Gippsland Water has built a successful relationship with local disability employment services provider, Work Solutions Gippsland (WSG). Last year, Gippsland Water took part in a WSG's Job Shadow Day (JSD) initiative. JSD is aimed at Gippsland employers and provides people with disability the practical experience of working life. Under the initiative, employers host a participant who shadow employees as they go about their work for the day. The program allows participants to experience the world of work and different roles first hand, and provides employers and their staff the opportunity to appreciate having a person with a disability, injury or health condition in their workplace.

Having had the opportunity to take part in JSD and get to know the types of skills and interests that the participants possessed, Gippsland Water quickly identified a short-term employment opportunity through a process called 'job-carving' and invited three JSD participants to express their interest. Following this process, Hayden was the successful candidate and took up a systems administrator role in the Major Systems team. Job-carving is an employment strategy which involves creating, modifying, or customizing a job such that it can be successfully performed by an individual with disabilities, while simultaneously meeting the needs of an employer.

Prior to Hayden commencing with Gippsland Water a detailed pre-commencement plan and post placement support plan was developed between Hayden, Hayden's supervisor, Hayden's job coach from WSG and a member of the human resources team. Some examples of the strategies put in place included Hayden's job coach providing disability awareness and confidence training to the immediate workgroup, an ergonomic assessment of the work area and work station, assigning a 'buddy' and flexibility with start and finish times.

Following Hayden's very successful time in the Major Systems team, he was then offered a further short-term opportunity in the Assets Information team undertaking similar work. During this time, the Assets Information team went to market for a full-time permanent Asset Information Officer role which Hayden won over a very competitive field.

Gippsland Water has now established an on-going process with WSG to assess and screen 'job ready' candidates in order for the human resources team to 'reverse market' to the business for short-term opportunities. Through their

experience with Hayden, Gippsland Water has identified the difference that such opportunities can make for job seekers with a disability and the human resources team is now actively promoting this talent pool to line supervisors for either short-term back-fill arrangements or job-carving opportunities as in Hayden's example. Gippsland Water recognises that even a short-term opportunity provides the job seekers with much needed experience and resume building and allows them to demonstrate their skills and work ethic.



CASE STUDY – Disability Recruitment at Lower Murray Water

During our recent recruitment for three roles within Lower Murray Water we identified all roles would be suitable to use WDEA Works recruitment services. WDEA Works is a provider of disability employment services in our community.

The recruitment was very successful with WDEA attending our office to understand the roles, meet with the managers and get a real feel for the skills the ideal candidate would possess. All candidates sent for interview would have been appropriate for the role which left the hiring managers spoilt for choice.

This is the first time we have used WDEA and will certainly be engaging them in the future and hope to work on a job placement program in the near future to support applicants gain more experience in the workforce.

3. Language other than English



Water corporations measure this target area in different ways – for example, asking whether the employee speaks another language, or asking where the employee was born, or sometimes where the employee’s parents born. This has resulted in significant variations in data across the industry.

Leaving aside inconsistencies in how the data is collected, in general, water corporations with larger migrant populations in their local area recorded higher numbers of employees who speak a language other than English – this includes recent overseas migrants as well as second and third generations from previous waves of migration (for example, the Italian migrants who settled in the Sunraysia district in the 1950s).

With Victoria’s overseas migrant population predicted to continue increasing into the future, we recognise that water corporations will need to have a culturally diverse workforce that can deliver good service and engage effectively with their equally culturally diverse customer base. People from non-English speaking backgrounds often face barriers to employment which water corporations are addressing through cultural awareness training and targeted employee support programs – such as the one featured in the case study.

Case Study – Breaking Down Barriers for Skilled Migrants

Melbourne Water's Pathways Program provides supported employment and training for culturally diverse skilled migrants who experience barriers to employment in Australia. The minimum three years paid employment with Melbourne Water and its partner organisations provides participants with vital experience in their field of expertise.

It's part of Melbourne Water's commitment to growing the diversity of our workforce and contributing to a more inclusive organisation and society.

“Recruiting staff from culturally diverse backgrounds benefits our wider workforce. It gives us access to a talented pool of people that have struggled to find roles for some time, despite their technical skills and qualifications. Programs like these are part of our commitment to tackling barriers to employment, growing the diversity of our workforce and becoming a more inclusive organisation that leverages the talents of our different backgrounds and skillsets.”

Michael Wandmaker, Managing Director at Melbourne Water

Eight qualified participants from migrant backgrounds have joined Melbourne Water for an initial 12 months to gain valuable skills and Australian work experience. Participants will then complete a further two rotations over two years with partner organisations Downer, Abergeldie, Stantec and Aqua Metro Services.

The program is being run in collaboration with Jesuit Social Services (JSS), an organisation that sources and supports skilled migrants and increases their readiness to work within Australian organisations. JSS provided training to both participants and managers and is continuing to provide support as participants progress through the program.

The aim is to build participants' skills and broaden their professional networks throughout the water industry, leading to ongoing and sustainable employment. The program also facilitates an uplift in the capability of managers, mentors and employees to work with others from diverse backgrounds.

Organisations benefit from access to a previously untapped talent pool, along with the benefits from participants' diverse experiences, perspectives and backgrounds, while the program supports the water industry to reflect the wider communities in which we operate and serve.

4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



Water for Victoria outlines the Government’s commitment to increasing Aboriginal inclusion in the water sector³, including providing training and employment opportunities. Many water corporations have established traineeships or internships to encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into water sector jobs – as described in the case study.

While there is still more work to be done, increased representation on water corporation boards is providing greater visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the industry, and leadership cultural awareness training is also helping to focus senior level attention on this target area. Enhanced engagement with Traditional Owner groups and projects designed to incorporate Aboriginal values into water planning and management provide additional opportunities for water corporations to make their workplaces culturally safe and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

³ Water for Victoria, Chapter 6, Actions 6.1-6.4 and Chapter 10, Actions 10.8-10.9

Case Study – Learning Together

Westernport Water recognises the importance of creating career paths for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the water industry. In 2017, Westernport Water created its first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship to build capability and better reflect the diversity of the community we serve.

Sam Weston commenced his traineeship with Westernport Water in 2017 and has been an integral part of the Environment and Product Performance Team.

Sam completed his qualification in Conservation and Land Management in 2018 and while working Sam has progressed towards completion of his university degree in Fisheries and Aquaculture. Since completing his studies in 2018 and finishing his traineeship, Sam has been promoted to the position of Land and Water Officer with Westernport Water.

“Westernport Water has provided me with great mentors in the water industry that have allowed me to succeed in both my studies and my work. In my new role, I hope to contribute to the ongoing success of our organisation. My passion lies with our ability to be able to manage our land and water resources in a sustainable manner, much like the Bunurong Peoples of the Bass Coast have done for many, many generations.”

“I feel privileged to be able to come into work every day, knowing that I’m caring for country like my ancestors would have done before me. I look forward to the challenge of how we manage our resources in the future, focusing on sustainability through wastewater reuse and reducing our carbon footprint to combat climate change.”

“I’m delighted to continue with the great work we are doing on our reconciliation journey as we work towards unity within our community. Working alongside our passionate reconciliation friends and creating ways of incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultural values in how we operate. I acknowledge that the Traditional Custodians here have cultural, spiritual and economic connections to land and water resources and that these connections are vital for their individual and community health and wellbeing.”



“For me, Nation Dance was a moment to acknowledge my spiritual connection to country and my ancestors. A moment to heal my mind and spirit. A moment to gain strength, pride and confidence and a moment to wish water for my country back home. The rains came in shortly after we danced here on Millowl and it felt surreal!”

Sam Weston, Westernport Water

5. Carers



INDUSTRY AVERAGE

44%

of our workforce identify as having flexible working arrangements to include caring responsibilities for children, elderly family, or a person with disability

Target: 35% of our workforce identify as having flexible working arrangements to include caring responsibilities for children, elderly family, or a person with disability

INDUSTRY RANGE: High: 62.7% Low: 13%

Data collection for this target area is variable across the industry, and the link between having caring responsibilities and having flexible work arrangements is not always clearly identified. Nearly half of water corporations do not currently collect this data. In some water corporations, in some areas, flexible working arrangements are deliberately informal and unrecorded so as not to create an administrative burden which undermines genuine flexibility.

For this reason, the fact that all water corporations have established policies and procedures around parental or carers' leave is a more relevant indicator of industry progress. In addition, some water corporations have specific programs in place to support employees on extended carers' or parental leave to stay in touch and ease their transition back to the workplace – as highlighted in the case studies provided.

Case Study – Caring Responsibilities

When commencing work with Wannon Water, Ian Barnes had few caring responsibilities. After six years of employment, Ian's wife Nicole became very ill and required extensive and prolonged care in Melbourne – three hours from home. Wannon Water allowed Ian to fulfil these new caring duties through accessing annual leave, sick leave and carer's leave. His long service leave was awarded early, which assisted the couple greatly financially in those early months.

At times Ian was able to work remotely with the provision of a laptop and access to the relevant systems. This enabled him to feel he was contributing to the workplace, and he was well supported by his manager and colleagues through the awareness of workloads and often included in meetings via FaceTime. He also felt supported by the broader organisation's management and available services, such as the offer of the Employee Assistance Program.

As Nicole's condition improved, Ian was encouraged to work when he could, and still support and care for Nicole by attending appointments and working from home if necessary. It became apparent to Ian when talking to other carers that their workplaces were not always as flexible as Wannon Water. Nicole is now home and has returned to work on a part-time basis, and Ian believes that support from Wannon Water has assisted with the positive outcomes of Nicole's health.



Case Study – Keeping in Touch on Parental Leave

Melbourne Water is committed to ensuring both men and women are able to access parental leave, and ensuring our employees feel supported when planning leave, during parental leave, and when they transition back into the workplace.

Research conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission reveals that one in two women experience pregnancy-related discrimination, and of those, 32% resigned. Fathers also report discrimination, with one in four experiencing discrimination when requesting parental leave. 18% of employees lose their job while on parental leave.

Keeping in Touch programs lead to better outcomes for employees and the organisation, contributing to more positive experiences and increased retention post leave.

The Melbourne Water Keeping in Touch program comprises:

- Bi-annual Keeping in Touch events, which provide employees on parental leave the opportunity to network with senior leaders, keep up-to-date on key projects and initiatives via a business update, and provide feedback to the organisation. We provide on-site childcare and parking to ensure all employees on leave can participate.
- Access to ten paid Keeping in Touch days
- Access to up to six hours of tailored coaching sessions that they can use at any stage of their journey
- Ability to create a transition plan with their manager to slowly return to work, and access to a variety of flexible working arrangements
- Access to Grace Papers – an online platform designed to support employees and Managers throughout their parental leave journey.

In 2019, Melbourne Water's Diversity and Inclusion team ran a communications campaign to increase awareness and uptake of the Keeping in Touch program. This has resulted in increased uptake of the program, in particular the tailored coaching element. The program has received positive feedback internally and externally and has resulted in increased retention of employees post parental leave.

6. LGBTIQ+



Measurement of this target area is entirely dependent on self-disclosure by employees, so the focus for industry action is on creating safe and inclusive workplaces that make employees feel confident and comfortable to identify as LGBTIQ+. Water corporations are doing this through a combination of awareness training, celebration days, executive sponsorship and prominent display of rainbow flags and posters – as described in the case study.

2019 has seen significant progress in this target area, with all 19 water corporations supporting the launch of the Pride in Water network (referred to in the Introduction). The value of Pride in Water is the inclusive message it sends not just to employees but also to their family members and the broader community, especially in regional areas.

Case Study – Pride At Yarra Valley Water

Yarra Valley Water ran its first anonymous diversity census in 2015 with the results indicating that 3.6% of the workforce, or 16 people, identified as LGBTIQ+. An LGBTIQ+ Diversity Working Group was set up in 2016-17 (along with a number of other staff-led diversity groups) with a focus on opening up internal dialogue around inclusion and acceptance.

For International Day Against Homophobia Biphobia and Transphobia (or IDAHOBIT day) staff were asked to dress in rainbow clothing as well as entering a photo competition with a theme of family – this was very powerful and led to great conversations and photos being shared of staff and their LGBTIQ+ family members, and resulted in many people indicating how proud they were to work for a company which supported their loved ones. Other events included a bake sale on Wear it Purple Day which raised funds in support of LGBTIQ+ youth, with Yarra Valley Water’s executive team matching donations dollar for dollar. Staff were encouraged to dress in their

favourite footy team colours for the AFL Pride Match to celebrate inclusion in sport. The Working Group also held a slew of morning teas, wrote numerous blog posts and intranet stories and plastered posters around the Yarra Valley Water head office.

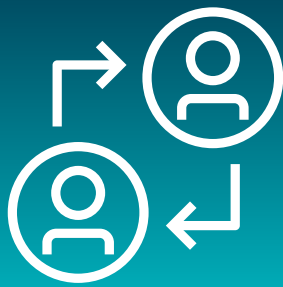
External activities included participation in the Yarra Valley Ranges AFL Pride Cup and reaching out to the Victorian Public Sector Pride Network to learn and share experiences. On the back of this hard work the Working Group was nominated for two Victorian Public Sector PRIDE awards.



The efforts to engage with staff and encourage participation were successful beyond expectations – dialogue was more open, people were wanting to learn and a shift in the culture encouraged some to come out at work, staff who have worked at Yarra Valley Water for years and never shared that secret until a group like this existed. One of the crucial factors to the success of the Working Group was the support of the Yarra Valley Water executive team at events and by providing a sponsor to our group. This level of support showed the official backing of the company and amplified the voice of the Working Group so staff could hear the message that we were trying to share.

When the Yarra Valley Water diversity census was re-run at the end of 2017 there was a significant jump in the number of people responding as LGBTIQ+ from 16 to 27, and a corresponding increase in the percentage of the workforce from 3.6% to 6.7% (the percentage of workforce is slightly inflated by the fact that overall there were fewer survey respondents in 2017 as participation in the census is voluntary). As the census is anonymous, it is not known whether the 11 extra people who identified in 2017 were existing staff who felt more comfortable or new hires who felt automatically accepted at Yarra Valley Water, but either way it's a positive step for the company.

7. Flexible work



INDUSTRY AVERAGE

83.9%

(17 out of 19 water corporations)

of employees have flexible work arrangements unless there is a specific operational constraint

Target: Flexible work arrangements are available to all employees unless there is a specific operational constraint

INDUSTRY RANGE: High: 100% Low: 19%



INDUSTRY AVERAGE

47.5%

of employees work flexibly (through informal and formal working arrangements)

Target: 35% of employees work flexibly (through informal and formal working arrangements)

INDUSTRY RANGE: High: 100% Low: 20%

The majority of water corporations have 100% of roles available to be worked flexibly unless there is an operational constraint, and the industry average of 47.5% of employees working flexibly exceeds the target of 35%. This is being achieved through a range of workplace solutions, such as job share arrangements – as featured in the case studies.

Even though the industry is performing well against the flexible work targets, we are aware that it is likely to be mostly for office-based roles. There are still challenges to be addressed in relation to operational and outdoors roles, especially in regional and remote areas where formal flexible work arrangements are not always feasible (although noting that in these roles job flexibility is often managed informally by the staff themselves as needed).

Case Study – Flexibility In Action – Job Share Solutions

Job share arrangements can assist organisations to ensure the best available talent can access senior roles, particularly when these roles have been deemed as requiring a full time commitment. There are two basic models for job share arrangements:

- The twin model (also known as ‘job share’) involves two employees sharing a position and its workload – completing the same tasks but working on different days. They are jointly responsible for all duties and act as a team to complete them.
- The islands model (also known as ‘job split’) involves two employees sharing a position, but not its workload. Duties are split up between the employees, allowing them to focus and specialise in different areas of the role, taking advantage of each person’s different skill set.

Melbourne Water has women successfully working part time in senior roles using both of these job share models.

Eleanor McKeough and **Christine Jones** have held the position of Team Leader Innovation and Business Planning in Integrated Planning for over 18 months, using a mixed job-share model. Both Eleanor and Christine work three days per week, with two days of overlap (1.2 total FTE). They split their reporting lines, while ensuring they have sufficient knowledge of each other’s projects that they can step in if required. Eleanor and Christine highlighted their key factors for success in their job share:

- Leadership support: Strong role-model in their manager (Kate Nagato), who was already working part time (.8), identifying them as the top two candidates for the role and suggesting the potential of a job share.
- Understand each other’s strengths and working styles: they put time into this from the outset (e.g. using the Clifton Strengths Finder, Hogan reporting and 360s), which provided a clearer picture of each other’s work styles, and assisted them to identify complementary strengths and skillsets to leverage upon.



- Previous management experience: Christine had already worked in a different Team Leader role, while for Eleanor this was a first.
- The benefits of diverse perspectives: having taken the time to learn about the other's work style, they have since been able to leverage these differences and even adopt some of the other's styles. For example, Eleanor is strong in investigation and research, and brings this knowledge to frame a conversation or project, while Christine is strong on planning and methodology.
- Strong communication: taking time and placing a high priority on communication has enabled them to plan how work will be allocated and structured. This also brings the benefit of having a peer who really understands the role to discuss challenges and opportunities with.

Sara Johnson and **Kathy Preece** are job-sharing the role of Senior Asset Practitioner (Growling Grass Frog Program) in Asset Management Service's Catchment, Land and Water Services Team. Their job share opportunity was identified through the recruitment process; the hiring manager identified their complementary skillsets, strengths, and mutual passion for the new program. Kathy brought expertise in Growling Grass Frog habitat requirements to the organisation, and Sara has extensive knowledge of

Melbourne Water's processes and people – a great combination of skills, problem solving approaches and networks. They both leapt at the chance to share the role despite not having met (Sara calls it the "blind date" job share!). A critical factor was obtaining resourcing for both of them to work three days per week so that they could overlap for a day, and fortunately Kathy was able to retain two days per week with her existing employer.



Sara and Kathy quickly developed a program logic and project plan that underpins their process of identifying their roles and interactions for each major topic area. Where one person has expertise that the other doesn't need to acquire at this stage, they carry out tasks individually (the "island" model) for efficiency's sake. Some other tasks can be done by either of them – whoever is available at the time (the "twin" model).

Where a topic would benefit from close collaboration, but one person currently has critical skills, they identify that person as the "leader" and the other as the "seconder" to ensure accountability for any decision-making. It also helps them clearly communicate their roles to colleagues. They've nicknamed this work process a "tango": so expertly coordinated that an outside observer might not know who is leading! Sara and Kathy anticipate that they will learn so much through this process that many tasks will shift from "tango" to "twin" over time.

The next step is to address their performance monitoring approach so that they get useful feedback on the job share as well as individual and program achievements. They have already established a quarterly job share review process with their team leader. Coaching could facilitate a deeper understanding of their different personal styles and help anticipate and resolve any potential areas of tension.

Four months into the role, Kathy and Sara are enthusiastic advocates for job share and flexible working arrangements. They agree that it is a really efficient, effective, motivating and enjoyable way to work. It also allows Melbourne Water greater flexibility in resourcing business priorities and could open up more opportunities for our employees.

Conclusion

This first annual performance report for the Water Industry Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023 demonstrates the progress that Victorian water corporations are making towards building diverse workforces and inclusive workplaces.

Allowing for local differences between water corporations, overall we are on track to meet the collective targets over the remaining four years of the Strategy. In particular, the sector is performing very strongly in the area of flexible work, with an average of 83.9% of roles able to be worked flexibly, and average of 47.5% of employees on flexible work arrangements (formal and informal).

The case studies highlight just some of the initiatives that water corporations are undertaking with respect to the Strategy target areas, and the positive outcomes that are being achieved for individual employees and workplace culture within the industry.

While the industry is making good progress, we know that there is still more to be done to achieve the collective targets for gender balance, disability, language other than English, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTIQ+.

Over the next 12 months, Victorian water corporations will continue to identify and implement initiatives to improve performance in these target areas, within their own organisations and through working collaboratively across the industry.





VicWater
BETTER TOGETHER

L2, 466 Little Lonsdale St Melbourne 3000
03 9639 8868 | vicwater.org.au