



Gender Equality Action Plan progress report

2021–23

Acknowledgement

South East Water proudly acknowledges the Bunurong, Gunaikurnai and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and live, and pay respects to their Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge their songlines, cultural lore and continuing connection to the land and water.

We acknowledge and value their rich cultural heritage and continued contributions of Aboriginal people and communities to our society in Victoria.

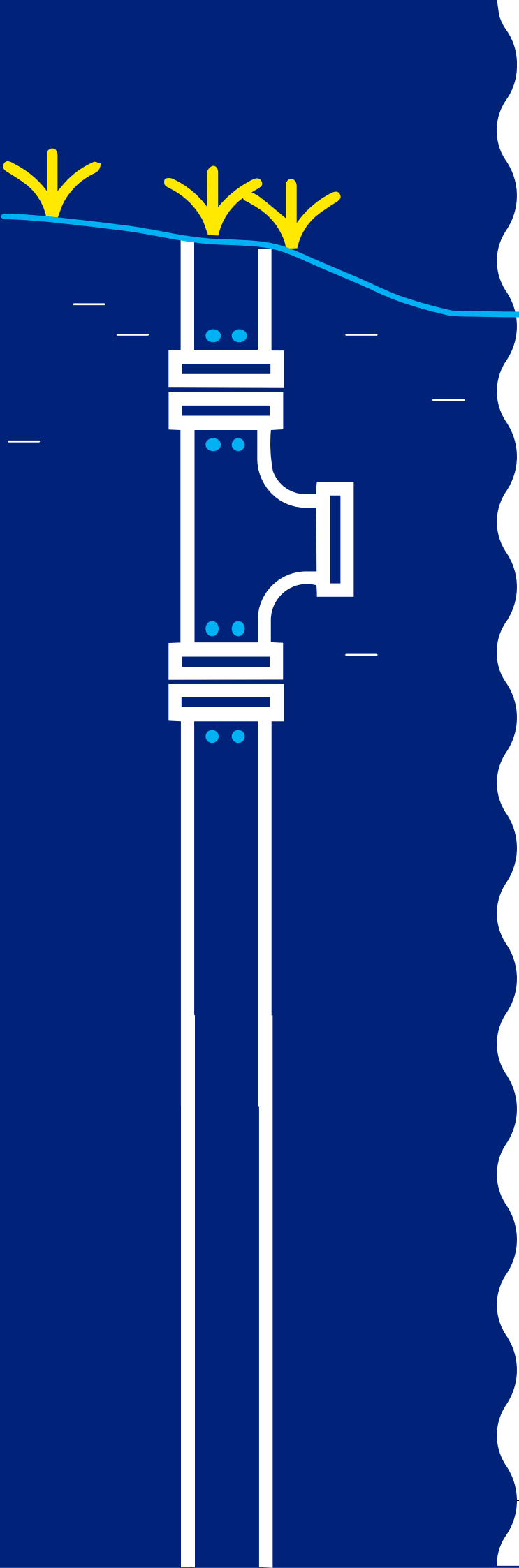


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About us

Supporting healthy and liveable communities

We support healthy and liveable communities by delivering water, sewerage and alternative water services to our customers all day, every day. We develop and implement new technologies that allow us to do this in more efficient, economical and environmentally friendly ways.

Our workforce is made up of the full-time equivalent of around 790 employees working as engineers, scientists, analysts, technicians, information technology and customer support people.

Our service area stretches across more than 270 km of coastline and covers a land area of 3,640 km² from Port Melbourne to Portsea and approximately 30 km east of Pakenham.

It spans across the lands and waters of the Bunurong people, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, the Gunaikurnai people and an area in our far north-east around Longwarry that currently has no Registered Aboriginal Party.

Each year we deliver 138 billion litres of drinking water and collect and treat more than 152 billion litres of wastewater at our local water recycling plants and at Melbourne Water's Eastern and Western Treatment plants.

From our water recycling plants, we produce around 1.6 billion litres of recycled water used for homes, businesses, agriculture and open spaces.

Delivering for 1.8 million customers in one of the most diverse regions in Australia

Customers



To deliver for our customers, we manage more than 27,400 km of pipeline. We own, operate and maintain \$5.2 billion of assets including water, recycled water and sewerage networks.

A water corporation under the *Water Act 1989*

The Water Act 1989 and the Statement of Obligations issued by the Minister for Water under Section 41 of the Water Industry Act 1994 govern the activities of our organisation.

We work in partnership with Melbourne Water, the bulk supplier of water and sewage treatment in Melbourne.

The Victorian Government's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) govern our activities.

Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) and the Victorian Government's Department of Health oversee our recycled water quality and drinking water quality respectively.

The Essential Services Commission (ESC) is our economic regulator.

A message from South East Water

We're committed to building a workforce that reflects the diversity of our community and our customers. We value the broad range of backgrounds and experiences of our people, equally embracing their unique qualities independent of ethnicity, Indigenous background, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or physical and mental abilities.

Our vision for gender equality is to be a safe, progressive equal opportunity employer where you're valued and respected for who you are and where your rights, talents and expertise are embraced, celebrated and rewarded without discrimination, prejudice or unconscious bias.

This vision is encapsulated in our first Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), launched in 2021.

Our GEAP helps us plan, implement and measure change in our workplace – so we can make it a great place to work.

Developing our GEAP

To develop our plan, we empowered our people to come up with the areas of focus that would help make drive positive change. These included:

1. Equal workplace composition
2. Learning and development to support careers
3. Understanding flexible ways of working
4. Transparency in recruitment and selection
5. Building confidence to report experiences of sexual harassment.

We listened to what they told us, incorporating these into objectives that we report against and actions we prioritise. In that way, our employees tangibly helped shape our GEAP.

Reporting on our progress

Two years on, we're excited to present our progress report against these key objectives and various actions we committed to, honouring what our people told us.

So how did we go? We're proud of what we've achieved in some areas, at the same time acknowledge we still have a way to go in others.

We hope this first GEAP progress report continues to provide a catalyst for conversation that will help drive positive change, helping to achieve true gender equality in our workplace. This will in turn help build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our community and our customers, and make South East Water a great place to work.

48% gender balance - target 50%
(up from 46% in 2021)

37% women in leadership - target 45%
(up from 35% in 2021)

We still have some work to do with 49% (62% in 2021) of males and 51% (65% in 2021) of females feeling they have an equal chance of promotion at South East Water.

Given the decreases in 2 years, we'd like to understand what the results are based on and why they're not closer to 100%.

Gender equality employee experience survey process and highlights

2021 - 366 of our people responded (a 48% participation rate)

2023 – 210 of our people responded (a 25.49% participation rate)

In October 2023, we invited our employees to have their say on gender equality at South East Water. The survey responses complement the workforce data we compiled as part of the gender audit. Together, this information gives a more complete picture of

gender equality at our organisation and allows us to understand how much progress we've made and the areas in which we can improve on, against the 7 workplace gender equality indicators.

With our survey participation rate decreasing by 22.51% from the previous survey in 2021, it's challenging to draw valid comparisons from the data we received in 2023. While we've included the survey data in our reporting, we note that in areas it may not be an accurate representation.

What our people told us

During the past 12 months

- 9% of women and 1% of men felt they experienced caring responsibilities being a barrier to their success at work
- 8% of women and 3% of men felt they experienced their mental health as a barrier to their success at work
- 3% of women and 1% of men felt they experienced their race as a barrier to their success at work
- 15% of women and 13% of men felt they experienced their sex as a barrier to their success at work
- 74% cent of men and 59% of women felt they had no barriers to their success at work

Areas in which we're doing well

- 93% of respondents agreed that South East Water would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
- 91% of respondents agreed that their manager supports them working flexibly
- 90% of respondents are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration
- 89% of respondents agree that their manager treats employees with dignity and respect
- 85% of respondents agree that in their workgroup work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender



**Progress
against our
action plan
2021-23**

Gender Equality Indicator 1: Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

This indicator helps show where we can benefit from greater diversity. It highlights whether there is equality of representation across all levels of the workforce.

Workplace gender equality indicators progress

Gender composition of our overall workforce has increased by 3% for women since our last audit in 2021. In 2021 we were 45% women and 55% men, now in 2023 we're 48% women and 52% men. We're unable to directly compare gender composition at individual level as the way we've collected level data has changed.

We've seen in an increase in the number of women (4% increase) and men (1% increase) with disabilities in the business from 2021 to 2023. This is a positive result for the work that has been done as a whole across our Diversity and Inclusion and Talent teams.

Objectives	Action	Measure	Timeframe by financial year	Responsibility	Status	Description	Evaluation of success	
Equal workplace composition	Continue with existing actions and review learnings annually to increase opportunities for women in senior leadership positions (L6+)	42% representation	2022	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity	In progress	<p>We continue to action our existing strategies to increase opportunities for women in senior leadership positions (L6+) and measure our success annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2022 we fell 6% under our target of 42% representation. In 2023 we had increased our representation by 1%, still falling 8% short of our new target of 45% representation. <p>As part of our strategy to increase opportunities for women in senior leadership positions, we've committed to the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Striving for gender balanced shortlists in our recruitment processes using 	Representation of women in senior leadership roles:	
		45% representation	2023				2022:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target: 42% representation Actual: 36% (at 30 June 2022)
		50%+ representation	2024–25				2023:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target: 45% representation Actual: 37% (at 30 June 2023).

						<p>proactive sourcing to target female talent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running and promoting early career programs in STEM • Offering memberships to women's networking and development programs such as Remarkable Women for our emerging leaders. • Ensuring our leadership development programs have an equal gender participation. • Quarterly Inclusion and Diversity Executive sub-committee meetings to monitor progress. 	
	<p>Continue with existing actions and review learnings annually to increase the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our workforce aligned with our talent strategy</p>	<p>1% representation</p> <p>2% representation</p>	<p>2023</p> <p>2025</p>	<p>People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity and Talent</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>External review undertaken in 2022 into our Aboriginal engagement and employment practices.</p> <p>As a result, we developed a new governance process and 2 new identified roles recruited to enhance our internal education and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target: 1% representation. • Actual: 0.7% representation (at 30 June 2023) <p>Target increasing to 2% representation.</p>

						<p>internal/external engagement practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 30 June 2023, we had 0.7% representation (slightly below our target of 1%). We're increasing our target to 2% for 2025. 	
	Continue with gender balanced shortlists and interview panels unless an exemption is granted	Ongoing	2021–25	Hiring people leaders and talent	Ongoing	<p>Where practical, our talent team continues to proactively source talent to support gender- balanced shortlists to present to hiring managers. The results of these efforts have been positive despite facing challenges with a tight candidate market and lack of gender balance in some of our target markets, such as technology and engineering.</p> <p>Our best practice is to ensure gender balance on all interview panels unless an exemption is granted.</p> <p>We've seen positive outcomes from this strategy, with benefits of having varied background and skillsets on the panel providing a great candidate experience and overall</p>	Measuring success through candidate and hiring manager experience surveys.

						promoting good recruitment outcomes.	
	Continue to measure and report on gender diversity in identified top talent	Talent dashboard	2021–25	People and Safety – Talent	Ongoing	<p>We measure gender diversity in identified top talent through our quarterly talent dashboard. It's reviewed, along with discussion of any specific actions taken, by a sub-committee of the board.</p> <p>At 30 June 2023, 45% of our top talent are females, over-represented as only 15% of females at South East Water have gone through talent review process (compared with 17% of men) - both populations mainly within middle and senior leadership positions.</p> <p>We have plans in place to expand our review processes to more levels across the organisation, with a focus on groups where females are underrepresented in leadership.</p>	At 30 June 2023, over 30% of all roles in the organisation were part of annual succession discussions. Of these, 45% had identified female successors.
	Use data to understand where diversity is underrepresented and work towards	Quarterly	2023	Executive, Branch/ Group Leaders and People and Safety	In progress	Our Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) dashboard provides insights on gender diversity	We're actively working with our insights team to enhance the dashboard to provide a report at branch (large team) level, digging

	all teams having a 40/40/20 split (minimum 40% females or males)			– Governance and Insights		at group (divisional) level on a quarterly basis. At group level, for 2022–23, we’re achieving the 40/40/20 split for 7 of 9 business groups (Customer and Community, Liveable Water Solutions, Finance and Technology, People Safety and Governance, Digital Utility, Iota and Board of Directors).	deeper to allow branch people leaders to have visibility over diversity within their teams. We’ll complete this dashboard refresh in late 2023.
	Launch an inclusive language guide, promoting respectful behaviours and embed into our everyday language	Once-off	2022	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity	Not started	We’ve paused this activity while we focus on embedding existing I&D initiatives to ensure they’re successful.	Although the inclusive language guide was scheduled to be developed and rolled out in 2022, we’ve prioritised some of the existing strategies within our GEAP and have rescheduled this work to be completed in early 2024.
	Continue to promote the benefits of inclusion and diversity by celebrating up to three gender related events	Continue annually	2021–25	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity	Ongoing	In 2022–23, events we celebrated included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Day of Women and Girls in Science • Two events for International Women's 	We successfully promoted and celebrated 3 or more gender-related events with good participation across the organisation.

	each year with guest speakers					<p>Day (The Remarkable Women and Break the Bias lunch and learn)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • InterEngineer and Pride in Water panel discussion, "Being Better Allies - Supporting our Trans and Gender Diverse", to understand how to be better allies to our trans and gender diverse community. <p>In 2023–24, events we celebrated included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Men's Day (barbecue breakfast) • information session "Empower Women and Superannuation" (information session) • International Day of Women and Girls in Science • International Women's Day (morning tea and livestream event). 	<p>In support of this action, in the March 2023 <i>Have your Say</i> survey, 81% of employees agreed that 'people from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to succeed at South East Water.</p> <p>This is an ongoing strategy and continues as a focus for us for the remainder of our GEAP.</p>
	Continue to recognise 30 dates of significance to increase	Continue annually	2021–2025	People and Safety – Inclusion and	Ongoing	Since 2021, we've recognised 42 dates of significance through promotion on our website,	In March 2023, 81% of employees agreed they can be their authentic self at work, and 80% agreed

	awareness for the inclusion of gender identity, cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, religion, and disability, and collaborate across the organisation to develop and deliver an annual event plan			Diversity and Communications		<p>LinkedIn and social media channels as well as through internal workshops and events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021–22, we recognised 24 dates, a lower number than our goal due remote working impacts. • In 2022–23, we recognised 28 dates of significance. • We’ve finalised our event plan for 2023–24, which includes a number of new dates we’ll be recognising and raising awareness for. 	they belong at South East Water. That represents an increase in both scores by 6% and 4% respectively from March 2022.
Improve reporting for transparency	Improve the Inclusion and Diversity dashboard recruitment data and include additional data for all levels of the workforce for gender pay gap, turnover and gender representation in branches, and diversity demographics such	Quarterly	2023	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity and Governance and Insights	In progress	<p>Activities in this area are currently in progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We’re exploring opportunities to manipulate our data down to branch level for both turnover and gender representation in the I&D dashboard. • We’ve reduced the demographic data in recruitment applications to reduce the perception and possibility of any 	Not yet implemented

	as cultural identity, country of birth, languages, and religion and provide access to all employees					<p>possible biases based on diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We're looking to share the dashboard across the organisation, with insights already being shared through annual updates on our intranet articles and our annual report. 	
	<p>Develop a plan for collecting more intersectional data</p> <p>1) in our People Central HRIS system and 2) increase transparency on the way data will be used and the benefits of disclosing so employees feel safe to share. Overall reducing the number of 'prefer not to say' demographic responses in engagement surveys from 10% down to 7%</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>1) People Central</p> <p>2) <i>Have Your Say</i> engagement survey</p>	2021–2025	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity	In progress	<p>We currently collect intersectional data through the demographics questions in our <i>Have Your Say</i> survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the March 2023 employee experience survey, 'prefer not to say' was an average of 10% of the responses we received. Inclusive of those who skipped the question, the average sits at 12%. <p>We've changed our approach, identifying an opportunity to focus on increasing trust with the business on how we use our engagement survey demographics, rather than a focus on collecting the data through the HRIS.</p>	<p>Our target was to collect the intersectional data annually, via</p> <p>1) People Central</p> <p>2) <i>Have Your Say</i> engagement survey</p> <p>We're exploring options to capture this information and report annually via People Central (HRIS).</p> <p><i>Have Your Say</i> engagement survey demographic data is captured and utilised currently.</p>

<p>Apply a gender equality lens into our practices and processes</p>	<p>Continue to ensure a gender impact assessment is implemented into relevant policy creation and review processes as per CGEPS requirements</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>2021–2025</p>	<p>People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All executive and board paper templates ask if a gender impact assessment (GIA) has / needs to be completed. This is an ongoing strategy, given our obligation under the Gender Equality Act to complete a GIA for any policies, programs and services will have a 'direct and significant impact on the public'. • Across the organisation, 8 GIAs have been completed during the reporting period. Further projects have explored if a GIA is required, even if they haven't met the threshold for 'direct and significant impact'. • We're currently developing a central process for storing all GIAs undertaken to ensure we're accurately capturing the information required for reporting purposes. We expect to complete this by end of August 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial embedding of GIAs for new or for reviewed policies has been successful, with 8 completed. • We'll continue to enhance our processes and apply learnings across our programs and services, in collaboration with other water corporations.
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	Establish a gender impact assessment register for reporting	Each year in the Annual Report GEAP progress report	Completed by end of June every year Completed by October 2023	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity	In progress	This action is currently in progress. We're working to roll out a dedicated Gender Impact Assessment register and collection point. We expect this to be completed in Q1 of 2023–24.	Currently being implemented
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Gender Equality Indicator 2: Gender composition of our board

This indicator reports on female representation in our board.

The Victorian Government oversees the activities of all water corporations, including appointing non-executive directors to water corporations' boards.

Board directors come from all walks of life, bringing a range of different experiences and skills.

The gender composition of our board at 30 June 2023:

We have 9 non-executive directors including the chair, and a managing director on our board

The chair is a woman.

The managing director is a woman.

There is 60% women and 40% men which does not include the managing director as defined by CGEPS reporting.

Workplace gender equality indicators progress

Gender composition of our board has increased by 6% for women. In 2021 there was an even gender split of 50% across board members, whereas in 2023 we are 56% women and 44% men.

Objectives	Actions	Measure	Timeframe by financial year	Responsibility	Status	Description	Evaluation of success
Demonstrating leadership in the inclusion of diversity	Internal feature articles on the diversity of our board members	Annually	2023–2025	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity and Communications	Not started	In 2022 and 2023, seven employees and an executive with culturally diverse backgrounds contributed to two	Not yet implemented

						<p>feature articles. We'll continue our invitation to the board annually as part of cultural diversity week.</p> <p>We're planning to revisit the viability of this action.</p>	
Demonstrating leadership in LGBTIQ+ inclusion	Continued participation in the WSAA Pride in Water network as board ambassador	Once-off	2022–2023	Managing Director	Complete	Our Managing Director, Lara Olsen, continues as WSAA Board Ambassador for Pride in Water. Lara participated actively in events e.g. Midsumma Pride March alongside our Victorian water industry colleagues as part of Pride in Water in February 2023.	Demonstrates a strong advocacy role for our employees
Improve reporting for transparency	Map out reporting on the diversity of our Board against the requirements of the CGEPS GEAP progress report	Once-off	2023	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity and Governance and Insights	Void/cancelled	We report gender diversity on our quarterly I&D dashboard. This includes representation from our board. Moving forward we'll focus on sharing lived experiences of our leaders, rather than reporting specific demographic statistics of such a small group.	Action re-evaluated

Gender Equality Indicator 3: Gender pay equity

This indicator is about equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender.

Workplace gender equality indicators progress

Based on our workforce data and the improvements we've made to our internal pay parity analysis process, we've made good progress from 2021. In analysing our workforce audit data, women remain at a 10% pay gap in 2023 as they were in 2021 based on the mean base salary calculation. Self-described employees pay gap has decreased from 21% to 13%.

Biannually we conduct a thorough pay parity analysis, comparing compensation for employees in similar roles across the organisation. This involves categorising each employee, determining a median salary, and applying a 10% range. Once we identify outliers beyond this range, we investigate potential variations based on factors such as gender, tenure, experience, and qualifications. Subsequently, we address any disparities as necessary. We're currently conducting this analysis on Senior Officer level positions with an intention of covering all levels in the future.

Objectives	Actions	Measure	Timeframe by financial year	Responsibility	Status	Description	Evaluation of success
Improve reporting for transparency	Improve the collection of quarterly data by reporting the gender pay gap for all levels of the workforce (currently just focused on senior leadership roles at level 6+)	I&D dashboard	2023	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity and Governance and Insights	In progress	<p>From 2023–24, we'll collect gender pay gap data across the organisation on a quarterly basis to present on our I&D dashboard.</p> <p>Biannually, we conduct a thorough pay parity analysis, comparing compensation for employees in similar roles across the organisation.</p> <p>This involves categorising each employee, determining a median</p>	Gender gap needs to be reported internally quarterly both via our current method and as per how the Gender Commissioner evaluates to look at total pay gender discrepancy.

					<p>salary, and applying a 10% range. Once we identify outliers beyond this range, we investigate potential variations based on factors such as gender, tenure, experience, and qualifications. Subsequently, we also address any disparities as necessary.</p> <p>We currently conduct this analysis on senior officer level positions, with an intention of covering all levels in the future.</p>	
	<p>Undertake a deep dive into roles where there is a gender pay gap present in levels 1-5 including allowances, overtime and shift work to understand if there is a gender bias. Develop a plan to improve gender pay equity at these levels</p>	Once-off	2023	<p>People and Safety Inclusion and Diversity and Governance and Insights and People Leaders</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>In 2023 we completed a review of differences in pay for genders in equivalent roles across all levels of the organisations.</p> <p>Next phase is to undertake an analysis of different areas of the business that are utilising time in lieu versus paying overtime. This will look at the impact the different streams of overtime will have on employees' take-home pay. From our learnings, we're looking at improvements that can be made to improve equity across these parts of the business.</p> <p>We found no significant pay anomalies through the first phase of this project.</p>	Once-off

Gender Equality Indicator 4: Workplace sexual harassment

This indicator tracks the workplace environment and enables equality more broadly. Consistent collection and reporting on data leads to transparency and accountability.

Workplace gender equality indicators progress

When analysing our workforce data, it's clear there was an increase in the number of sexual harassment complaints from 2021 (0 complaints) to 2023 (2 complaints). Both complainants in the 2023 period were the subject of harassment and were women. Both resulted in an outcome.

In 2021, 30% of women and 39% of men felt safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work. This figure jumped to 64% of women and 77% of men in the 2023 survey. In 2021 39% of women and 46% of men agreed that our organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours, which increased to 81% of women and 92% of men. Again, numbers had a big jump for the trust for the organisation to take steps to eliminate bullying, harassment, and discrimination; in 2021 30% of women and 38% of men agreed, in 2023 70% of women and 75% of men agreed. These results are hugely positive for us and are potentially a result of our ongoing initiatives to reinforce positive behaviours, including above and below the line behaviour awareness sessions and the improvements made to our investigation and grievance process.

Although we saw an increase in formal complaints, we've seen positive results in survey results for employees feeling safe to challenge behaviour. We've improved our reporting processes ensuring that we're capturing all complaints. We feel we have made progress and are continuing the work in this area.

Objectives	Actions	Measure	Timeframe by financial year	Responsibility	Status	Description	Evaluation of success
Building confidence to report experiences of	Launch an awareness campaign on our anti-discrimination, harassment and bullying	Number of employee sessions delivered	2022	People and Safety – People Partnerships and Inclusion and Diversity	In progress	In 2023 we launched our "Upholding our values" campaign, led by Managing Director, Lara Olsen, and General Manager People, Safety	Too early to evaluate

<p>sexual harassment</p>	<p>policy and grievance procedure:</p> <p>1) to encourage reporting sexual harassment</p> <p>2) support employees to feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviours</p> <p>3) reinforce the importance this can have on impacted employees and inform all the different pathways and support for reporting</p>	<p>All complaints are comprehensively investigated in a timely manner</p>	<p>2024</p>		<p>and Governance, Kathy Bremner. The campaign included a video addressing the organisation, distributed by email, to directly address risks of bullying and harassment behaviour. Senior leaders followed up with discussions with their teams.</p> <p>In 2023 we acknowledged the National Day Against Bullying and Violence, taking this as an opportunity to share information regarding One Stop One Story, the enforceable undertaking, family and domestic violence, support for our staff and highlighted our anti-discrimination, harassment and bullying policies.</p> <p>We're currently running ongoing initiatives to reinforce positive behaviours, including above and below the line behaviour awareness sessions and our investigation and grievance process.</p>	
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	<p>Create a 'BOLD' campaign on behaviour that is not acceptable by relaunching our code of conduct policy and values</p>	<p>Once-off</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>People and Safety – People Partnerships and Inclusion and Diversity</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Along with launching the "Upholding our Values" video and conversation guide in June 2023, we're facilitating above and below the line training, which will be undertaken by all senior leaders and across the organisation.</p> <p>We've enhanced our code of conduct training by introducing a new piece of e-learning. Previously, there was no training in this space, only a requirement to read the policy and acknowledge the reading of it. The team used the code of conduct itself to build out the training and worked with our Legal and People Partnerships teams to create the scenarios to ensure understanding.</p> <p>Eight-hundred and three employees have completed the mandatory training (with 51 remaining). This training is assigned for employees to complete annually as a refresher.</p>	<p>Too early to evaluate. Will adjust actions based on engagement survey insights and trends in investigation incidents.</p>
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<p>Improve transparency for reporting</p>	<p>Improve reporting categories so they're more specific for capturing accurate sexual harassment incident reporting</p>	<p>Once-off</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>People and Safety – People Partnerships and Inclusion and Diversity</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>In the last reporting period, we improved reporting categories with the inclusion of a specific sexual harassment category in the employee relations register. This allows us to split the data to provide accurate insights so formal grievances can be included in monthly business performance reporting to our executive, helping manage ongoing risks.</p>	<p>Executive can now see this data in our monthly people dashboard and ask questions (where appropriate) to help manage any ongoing risks</p>
<p>Take an industry approach to the prevention of sexual harassment</p>	<p>Continue to collaborate with VicWater and the wider Victorian water sector to share information and resources and identify further opportunities to partner on projects responding to sexual harassment and addressing gender inequality</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>2022–2025</p>	<p>People and Safety – People Partnerships, Leadership and Culture and Inclusion and Diversity</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>We actively collaborate with I&D leads of each Victorian water corporation, through VicWater Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee meetings. This includes deep dive sessions on focus areas. We also meet regularly with other I&D leads to work collaboratively on common interests.</p> <p>The VicWater Annual Performance Report captures our collective targets and actions taken to achieve them.</p>	<p>Reduced cultural load on volunteer employee groups organising events locally, these events are shared across different water corporations</p>

	Participate in the Victorian water industry Respect@Work discussion forum to share experiences, challenges and successes in addressing sexual harassment	Ongoing	2022–2023	People and Safety – People Partnerships and Leadership and Culture	Void/cancelled	The Respect@Work Group is no longer active. Through our initiatives, like 'Upholding our values', and by proactively managing wellbeing risks and enhancing psychological safety, we're continuing to drive similar activities.	
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Gender Equity Indicator 5: Recruitment, promotion, learning and development

The objective of this indicator is to uncover possible biases in recruitment, promotion and professional development processes. Gender bias and stereotypes can influence recruitment, promotion and career progression practices.

Workplace gender equality indicators progress

Our workforce audit data from 2021 and 2023 is similar. Both reporting periods showing that 45% of our new recruits were men. In 2021 we recruited 55% women, and 2023 54% women and 1% self-described.

Data shows that we had more women than men exit the organisation in the 2023 reporting period than in the 2021 reporting period. In 2021, 44% of exiting employees were women, in 2023 this increased to 54%.

Women receiving promotions dropped from 58% in 2021 to 42% in 2023 reporting periods. Looking at survey data, in 2021 31% of women felt they had an equal chance at promotion at South East Water which increased to 51% in 2023.

In 2023, 60% of women made up those who were awarded internal secondments which is an increase from the 2021 reporting period which was 58%. In 2021, we didn't collect higher duties data in the workforce audit, however in 2023 we can see 58% of women made up those who were awarded higher duties. Looking at our employee experience data, in 2023 55% of women and 66% of men agreed to being satisfied with the way their learning at development needs were addressed in the last 12 months, an improvement from 2021 where we saw 30% of women and 34% of men agree.

We had a good balance of gender when it comes to those who participated in career development training in the 2023 reporting period, with 48% men and 52% women and the bulk of employees at level -6 to MD.

With many things to consider when analysing progress made, overall, we've seen some positive results from both our workforce data and what our employees told us in the recent employee experience survey. Our increased resources in the talent team have allowed us to focus more on some of our recruitment focused strategies within the GEAP, such as increasing women in leadership roles and traditionally male dominated areas of the business. Learning and development initiatives from the Employee Experience team are making an impact in this space and contributing to the success we are seeing against a number of GEAP strategies.

Objectives	Actions	Measure	Timeframe by financial year	Responsibility	Status	Description	Evaluation of success
Learning and development to support careers	Increase the coaching skills of people leaders so they have regular performance planning and development discussions with team members	<p>Number of employees with performance goals in People Central</p> <p>Annual performance reviews</p> <p><i>Have Your Say</i> engagement survey question “do you have regular one on ones with your people leader”.</p>	2023	People and Safety – Leadership and Culture and People Leaders	Complete	<p>Throughout 2022 and 2023, we've met our target to increase coaching skills of our people leaders, through leadership training and development initiatives. That included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 technical experts, emerging and current leaders, participate in internally developed leadership training • 68 people complete a leadership program during 2022–23 • A further 36 people commence a leadership program in May 2023, that's currently still running 	<p>"I have regular 1-on-1 performance and development focused conversations with my people leader" 79% favourable in March 2022 “My people leader has regular conversations with me about my career and development” - 76% favourable in March 2023</p> <p>In 2023, we sat with the top quartile (25%) of Australian businesses for “My people leader gives me useful feedback on my performance”, with 86% of employees agreeing.</p>

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 people go through the Coaching for Performance program. <p>To support the progress we've made in this area are the following results from our <i>Have Your Say</i> survey in March 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My people leader gives me useful feedback on my performance – 86% favourable (up 4% on previous year) • My performance is evaluated fairly – 81% favourable (up 3% on last year) • I receive appropriate recognition for good work at South East Water – 70% favourable (up 4% on last year). 	
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	Leadership support the mentorship program as mentors by making time for having at least one mentee	Mentorship program	2023	Senior Leadership and People and Safety – Talent	Ongoing	<p>We've continued our mentoring program. with voluntary participation from both mentors and mentees across the business, facilitated through our HRIS system.</p> <p>The mentoring program will be relaunched in August 2023 with a call to all senior leaders encouraging mentor sign up and for the message to be cascaded down. We'll communicate specifically with those who participated in a leadership program in 2022–23 to encourage participation in the program as mentors.</p>	<p>Our employee experience survey results for development and growth are continuing to trend up, sitting at 73%, and sitting 3% under the top quartile of Australian employers.</p> <p>9% favourable increase from March 2022 to March 2023 for “I believe there are good career opportunities for me at South East Water”</p> <p>12% increase from March 2022 to March 2023 for “I have access to the learning and development I need to do my role well”</p>
	Develop a reverse mentoring program	Mentorship program	2024	People and Safety – Talent	Not started	We're planning to revisit the feasibility of this action.	
	Next up people leaders to conduct six monthly skip meetings focused on listening,	Annual performance planning and reviews	2023	Senior Leadership and People and Safety – People Partnerships	Void/cancelled	We've shifted our focus to direct people leaders having regular conversations with their team members and following through	We're performing in the top quartile of Australian employers for “My people leader gives me useful feedback on my performance” at 86% of

	development and career progression					on talent outcomes discussions from succession planning. Our aim was to get to the top quartile employers of regular growth and development conversations. We achieved this, with career development conversations at 76% favourable.	employees providing a favourable score.
	Launch an e-learning module for all hiring people leaders to complete on unconscious bias, its effect on recruitment and working relationships	Leadership essentials program New People Leaders learning pathways	2023	People and Safety – Leadership and Culture	Complete	We launched an interactive unconscious bias course on our e-learning platform in 2023. The course introduces unconscious bias and explains how this can affect the outcome of our decisions. All people leaders involved in recruitment are prompted to complete.	Too early to evaluate
Transparency in recruitment and selection	Create and formalise our Technical Pathways program	Number of employees accessing the program	2022	People and Safety – Talent	Complete	The initial rollout of our Technical Pathways program took place in 2022. The program has seen success and has grown to include	16 technical experts appointed in the reporting period

						up to 16 Technical Experts in 'Director' or 'Principal' roles.	
	Increase transparency of career paths particularly for technical roles	<i>Have Your Say</i> engagement survey	2022 – 2025	People and Safety – Talent	In progress	<p>We've continued to roll out and promote our Technical Pathways program. This includes sharing existing employees' career stories, through our internal channels such as our 'Tap into Talent' articles on our intranet.</p> <p>Since its implementation, we've seen an increase in satisfaction of career development and growth opportunities from employees in groups with predominately technical roles (based on employee experience survey results). Overall, for development and growth questions in the <i>Have Your Say</i> survey, we saw a 6% increase in favourable responses from March 2022 to March 2023.</p>	We've seen an upwards trend in favourable scores from employees to the question "I believe there are good career opportunities for me at SEW" in our employee experience surveys from March 2022 to March 2023, with a 4% increase from women, and 15% increase from men.

						In March 2022, 59% of employees in the identified technical groups, agreed "there are good career opportunities for me at SEW", which then increased to 62% in March 2023.	
	Continue to ensure feedback for unsuccessful internal candidates is more specific with actions to support their personal development	Continuous listening survey	2021–2025	Hiring People Leaders, supported by Talent	Ongoing	<p>Our Talent team continue to focus on coaching people leaders and interview panel members to provide constructive, targeted feedback to candidates directly.</p> <p>People leaders have demonstrated an 11% increase in feeling supported through all stages of the recruitment process comparing 2021–22 and 2022–23.</p>	With 57% of candidates providing an unfavourable response to the question "I was provided with details as to why I was unsuccessful for the position on this occasion", we have work to do to make progress on this action in the next period.
Improve reporting for transparency	Align methods of tracking data with the way the CGEPS requires data to be reported for:	GEAP progress report People Central	2023 2021–2025	People and Safety – Leadership and Culture Governance and Insights	Not started	We're yet to take action to align our methods of tracking employee career development training. The way in which CGEPS requires this data has also changed	

	<p>1. career development training</p> <p>2. separate higher duties and internal secondments</p>	Once-off	2023		<p>between the audit in 2021 and the 2023 audit.</p> <p>A learning for us is to explore whether we can tag e-learning and in person training and development within our system, to identify whether the training is specifically designed to further develop career (such as leadership courses or training to build new skills such as project management or public speaking), mandatory for the role being performed (such as routine training required to maintain an existing professional or trade certification), or personal development.</p> <p>The ability to filter the training by these 3 key areas will allow us to easily pull the data required to report back to CGEPS in the GEAP review in 2025.</p>	
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Gender Equality Indicator 6: Leave and flexibility

This indicator relates to the availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities.

Workplace gender equality indicators progress

Based on our workforce data collected for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, 50% of our employees had a formal flexible working arrangement in place. This aligned with the results from the employee experience survey of 60% of respondents having caring responsibilities. Having a truly flexible hybrid working model at our organisation, we had just 11% of respondents in the survey that didn't utilise any flexible working arrangements.

We've put a lot of work into our parental leave program and are pleased that the leave is being utilised well by both women and men. We had no employees exit the business whilst on parental leave in the 2023 report period. In 2021, we had 63 employees access parental leave; 30 men and 33 women. In the 2023 period we saw a reduction in the number of employees accessing parental leave, with a total of 41—19 men and 22 women. We're happy to see such equality represented when it comes to accessing the flexibility and security our parental leave policy provides.

Previously we have not captured carer's leave or family violence leave but improvements in securely collecting this information mean we've been able to report back to the Commission in the 2023 reporting period.

Objectives	Actions	Measure	Timeframe by financial year	Responsibility	Status	Description	Evaluation of success
Understanding flexible ways of working	Continue promotion of the flexible working options available to employees through regular communications	<i>Have Your Say</i> engagement survey	2022–25	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity	Ongoing	<p>We've promoted flexible work arrangements through articles on our intranet including purchased leave arrangements, working at home safely, and hybrid working. We're continuously reviewing our flexibility and time off information page to ensure clarity to employees of all flex work options.</p> <p>Our current position on hybrid working is the expectation of a minimum of 1 day in the office for employees (ideally 2-3 for full-timers), to align with our workplace flexibility employee value proposition. Results from our <i>Have Your Say</i> (employee experience) survey indicate the work we're doing to continue embedding flexibility in roles across the business is having a positive impact. In March 2023, 91% of employees provided a favourable score to "We are genuinely supported if we choose to make use of</p>	<p>We're tracking slightly behind (3%) the top quartile of Australian employers for work and life blend, sitting at 84% as at March 2023. This is an increase on the 77% favourable score we received for flexibility in March 2022.</p> <p>We're sitting in the top quartile of Australian employers for "I am able to arrange time out from work when I need to", with 94% of employees providing an agreeable score.</p>

						flexible working arrangements”.	
	Provide more training for leaders on managing flexible teams and ensure its easily accessible	Leadership essentials program via face to face and online training, and access to a resource library	2023	People and Safety – Leadership and Culture	Completed	<p>We developed a hybrid working toolkit for our people leaders in 2023. The resource library includes a return to hybrid work information pack and a toolkit on establishing team hybrid working principles, along with links to useful articles.</p> <p>Our Leadership Essentials program, run online in 2022–23, features content on leading hybrid teams.</p>	Thirty-six leaders completed the Leadership Essentials course in 2022-23. In the 2023 <i>Have Your Say</i> survey, 91% of employees responded in agreement to “We are genuinely supported if we choose to make use of flexible working arrangements”, indicating a positive result from the additional training provided on hybrid working.
	Normalise flexibility through a campaign to promote the benefits and flexible working options for men and field-based employees to work flexibly	People Central	2023	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity	Complete	<p>Through a refresh of our flexibility guidelines, we've created new pages on our intranet to simplify and collate information relating to benefits and flexibility. We've updated our Flex @ SEW Framework to clarify options available to all employees.</p> <p>Our Employee Experience team engaged with parts of the organisation that have fixed roster and onsite workers, to understand what flex work looks like. We've now explicitly highlighted flexibility for these parts of</p>	<p>Overall, the total number of employees accessing formal flexible working arrangements increased by 4% from 2021–22 to 2022–23.</p> <p>We saw a 4% increase in men accessing flexible working arrangements in the same year, and 3% increase in women accessing flexible working arrangements.</p>

					<p>the organisation in the new guidelines, encouraging men and field-based workers to work flexibly.</p> <p>An internal communications campaign on benefits and flexibility, applying to all employees, took place in 2022–23.</p> <p>We have plans to share employee personas/stories in 2023–24 to again promote these groups and what flexibility can look like.</p>	
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Gender Equality Indicator 7: Gendered work segregation

This indicator looks at gendered segregation in the workplace, aiming to uncover any professions or roles within the organisation that were particularly gender-imbalanced in our previous workplace gender audit.

Workplace gender equality indicators progress

Our workforce data shows we've made progress in balancing our occupational gender balance. In 2021, 31% of managers were women which has increased to 34% in 2023. In 2021 we reported that 43% of professionals in the business were women which has increased by 2%. Clerical and administrative workers are starting to balance, with 32% of employees being men in 2021, and 36% in 2023. We've had some positive results when it comes to some traditionally male dominated areas of the organisation. We saw a small increase in machinery operators and drivers, which relates to waste water or water plant operators. Women made up 28% of technicians and trade workers in 2021 which has increased to 34%.

From our employee experience data we can see that as at October 2023, 4% of men and 3% of women that responded were actively experiencing workplace bullying. These results change dramatically when we look at employees who have experienced workplace bullying previously within the organisation between November 2022 and October 2023. Around 14% of women say they've experienced this behaviour, and 4% of men, with 25% of women calling out the behaviour and telling the person the behaviour wasn't OK. Around 5% of those women didn't tell anyone about the bullying, 35% told a colleague, 40% told a family member, half told a manager, 25% told HR, 10% told EAP or peer support and 15% submitted a formal complaint. Around 50% of women say a manager or supervisor was the person behaving in that way.

The recent employee experience data tells us that between November 2022 and October 2023, 8% of men and 5% of women personally experienced discrimination at South East Water. Around 81% of women and 88% of men believe people in their workgroup treat each other with respect.

In October 2023, 78% of men said they can be themselves at work, while just 70% of women agreed. 75% of women and 78% of men said they feel as if they belong at South East Water. Around 78% of women and 90% of men feel culturally safe at work, with 81% of women and 87% of men agreeing we use inclusive and respectful images and language.

When looking at results for work allocation, 85% of women and 90% of men feel work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender in their workgroup.

Objectives	Actions	Measure	Timeframe by financial year	Responsibility	Status	Description	Evaluation of success
Valuing diverse teams	Develop gender targets across all functional areas of the organisation ideally reflecting 40/40/20 split	I&D dashboard	2023–25	People and Safety – Inclusion and Diversity	Complete	We measure our gender split is quarterly in our I&D dashboard and it's discussed quarterly by an executive sub-group. All groups have a 40/40/20 split target.	I&D dashboard refreshed quarterly to monitor gender split target.
	Identify employees approaching retirement, develop transition plans that include six months plus overlap with transitioning new people into roles with support from retiring mentors with a focus on supporting females into male dominated teams	Mentorship program	2023	People and Safety – People Partnerships, Talent and People Leaders	Not started	We've placed this strategy on hold while we focus on fully embedding our existing initiatives	
	Continue to explore opportunities to partner with universities for roles/teams that are traditionally	Graduate program	2021–2025	People and Safety – Talent	Ongoing	Our technical directors actively partner with universities, to build solid relationships and opportunities around internships and vacation programs.	

	dominated by males					<p>We're currently partnering with an external engineering consultancy to encourage females in high school to consider careers in STEM and in the water industry in particular. To support this, we're hosting lunch and learn sessions and offering 2 vacation positions during the first summer semester break for these students.</p> <p>We trialled a pilot summer intern program with iSTEM Co., encouraging teams to take on board a paid intern for a period of 3 months. We also successfully recruited 4 interns within science roles.</p>	
	Explore new Australian migrant work sponsorship opportunities for roles/teams that are traditionally dominated by males	I&D dashboard	2023	People and Safety – Talent	In progress	We're developing a more flexible visa policy which we expect to be completed by September 2023. This will provide the opportunity to sponsor under the right talent market circumstances.	



**Our resources
plan
2021–23**

Our resources plan 2021–23

Our strategic resource plan outlines how we'll implement the GEAP, with key accountabilities for each of the stakeholder roles. We'll also leverage our internal teams for support as required.

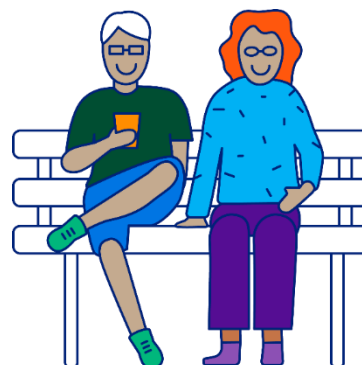
Implementation

Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) Coach

Our I&D Coach drives implementation. This role is 0.8 FTE and positioned at MD-3 in the organisation.

The coach is supported by:

1. the I&D Executive Steering Committee
2. the broader Employee Experience and Talent teams
3. our volunteer employee diversity social connection groups.



Our volunteer social connection groups

Parents group

An informal group set up to provide a space for parents/stepparents/grandparents to connect and chat openly about parenting life, share advice or seek support.

Pride group

Acts as a voice, contact point and support mechanism for both LGBTIQ+ people and allies.

This network is an opportunity to create a more inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ+ employees and contractors through active engagement of our people.

EMBRACE group

Advocates for and influences positive change, to continue to evolve our inclusive culture where everyone feels they belong and can thrive.

EMPOWER group

Advances gender equality by creating opportunities for our people to grow, connect and be supported.

We do this by providing a safe space to share experiences and knowledge, while also building confidence. Our vision is that we are empowered by strong connections, inclusive culture and diversity of thought that delivers better outcomes for all.

Aboriginal Staff Network

- A network for our people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to connect, support and yarn.
- Meetings are held monthly to allow our staff to come together for shared learning experiences and networking in a culturally safe environment.

Resourcing

We've increased resourcing in the Talent team to allow focus on proactive sourcing. This helps to ensure gender balanced shortlists in STEM and leadership roles.

Capturing and displaying data in a transparent, easily accessible format has been a constraint, which is being looked into by the broader People, Safety and Governance Group.

When the I&D Coach role was vacant for a number of months during early 2022-23, the progress of the GEAP and broader I&D projects outside of the Talent team stalled.

The replacement I&D Coach was appointed in April/May 2023 and the role is ongoing.

In addition, in July 2023, we appointed a part-time project lead in for 6 months to complete GEAP progress report and workforce audit.

Once we complete the GEAP review and audit, we'll reassess actions and the resourcing we'll need to achieve the remaining 35 GEAP actions by 2025. The review has highlighted the need to address adequate resourcing, so we can deliver on the commitments we've made.

Gender Impact Assessments

Gender impact assessments are designed to help organisations think critically about how policies, programs and services will meet the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people.

The purpose of gender impact assessments is to create better and fairer outcomes, and make sure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources.

During the reporting period, we carried out gender impact assessments on the following policies:

Title	Subject	Description	Status	Confirm if actions taken	Describe actions taken
Finance Policy	Policy	<p>The purpose of the Finance Policy is to ensure we manage our finances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in an economically responsible manner • as efficiently as possible and consistent with commercial practice • in compliance with all the relevant legislation, standards and policies • in a manner that promotes a culture of financial responsibility in all decision-making. 	For review	No action taken	No action required
Environment Policy	Policy	<p>Our Environment Policy guides our approach and makes commitments to strive for environmentally responsible and sustainable outcomes in all the things we do. It provides a high level of direction, establishes key principles, sets</p>	For review	No action taken	No action required

		fundamental requirements and limits and allocates responsibilities for how the organisation operates.			
Corporate Strategy	Policy	Our corporate strategy provides clear and consistent direction to our people, partners and stakeholders about what we need to deliver by 2028, in order to ensure we fulfil our purpose and make progress toward our vision.	New	No action taken	No action required
2023 Customer Charter	Policy	<p>The Customer Charter outlines the rights and responsibilities of our customers. It also sets our organisational rights and responsibilities as a water, recycled water and sewerage provider.</p> <p>Having a publicly facing charter is a requirement of the Essential Services Commission (ESC). The charter is based on the ESC's Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service (the Industry Standard).</p>	For review	No action taken	No action required
Treasury Policy	Policy	The purpose of the Treasury Policy is to provide a framework for our treasury function. The scope of this policy document applies to all treasury risk management activities of South East Water and Iota.	For review	No action taken	No action required

Entertainment, Hospitality and Expenditure Policy	Policy	This policy ensures that the provision of entertainment, hospitality and expenditure reimbursements are appropriate; that standards of accountability and prudent financial management practices are maintained; and to minimise the risk of misconduct, or the perception of misconduct.	For review	No action taken	No action required
Privacy Charter	Policy	<p>Our Privacy Charter establishes the policy that describes how we manage personal information. It provides an outline for individuals who provide personal information to us in relation to how their personal information will be used, what and why personal information is collected and how the personal information will be stored.</p> <p>In 2021, we undertook a process to update the charter to ensure it continues to be relevant and meet the needs of our organisation and our customers (Updates).</p>	For review	No action taken	No action required
Domestic Family Violence Policy	Policy	The purpose of the policy is to outline our commitment to supporting employees and customers who may be experiencing or are affected by domestic and family violence.	For review	Yes	<p>We'll conduct a gender analysis within 2 months.</p> <p>This analysis will include a stakeholder mapping exercise. We'll consider as part of this exercise, the relevant people and any</p>

					<p>affected processes and procedures that will support the policy.</p> <p>This exercise will also identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what training is required• where and/how information flows• accountability frameworks• feedback mechanisms to ensure success of the policy.
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Healthy Water. For Life.

How to get in touch

Email support@southeastwater.com.au

General account enquiries 13 18 51

South East Water Assist 03 9552 3540

Hearing and speech impaired services

TTY 13 36 77 (ask for 13 18 51)

Interpreter service (all languages) 03 9209 0130

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