

Gender Equality Action Plan – 2023 Progress Report

Supporting Statement

Since the commencement of OVIC’s Gender Equality Action Plan (**GEAP**) OVIC has continued to build on existing gender equality frameworks and introduced new ways of understanding and applying gender equitable policies and procedures across our work. While OVIC is proud of the work achieved to date, and the network of support we foster, achieving a safe and equitable workplace environment requires us to reflect on how we can further our gender equality strategy in years to come.

In this reporting period OVIC prioritised commitment from all areas of the organisation to its GEAP, with consultants engaged to assist in updating policies and procedures through an intersectional gender lens. Employees with management responsibilities are now required to identify how their professional development can achieve or contribute to the goals from OVIC’s GEAP each year through OVIC’s performance and development process.

OVIC recognises the need to promote the culture of inclusivity at every stage and level of employment. Further expectations for our leaders and additional training for all staff continues to be a focus so employees can recognise areas where there is room for intersectional input for the current financial year.

Given recent reductions in staff numbers, it is currently unlikely that OVIC will meet the threshold requiring a GEAP audit and progress report for 2024-25. However, OVIC remains committed to achieving the goals set out in its GEAP and to continuing to foster a safe workplace environment for all employees.

In preparing this statement OVIC has reflected on the progress report submitted in February 2024 by the then Acting Information Commissioner and has further expanded on the progress descriptions related to five of the seven indicators in that report.

Indicator 1: Gender Composition of all levels of the workforce

During the reporting period OVIC sought clarification from the Gender Equality Commission (**Commission**) in relation to the inclusion of statutory appointees in workforce audit data. The Commission advised that data relating to statutory appointees was not to be included, however this advice was received after the submission deadline.

Excluding statutory appointees, OVIC's 2021 data showed an overall gender composition of 36% men and 64% women, 2023 data showed and increased skew towards female employees with data showing 29% men and 71% women. While an over representation of women is not deemed as 'progress' for the purposes of this progress report, OVIC notes its commitment to recruiting staff with the most relevant experience, appropriate skillset and optimal organisational fit at all levels across OVIC.

At 30 June 2023, it was at the VPS4 level that OVIC noted the greatest disparity of male vs female employees with a skew of 91% female staff. OVIC's executive leadership team is comprised of two VPS staff of equal gender balance, and three statutory appointees. At the VPS5 and 6 levels, the positions with staff management responsibilities saw a gender composition of approximately 30% male vs 70% female.

OVIC has begun collecting data with respect to the pool of applicants received for all roles at all levels, including how many applicants of each gender are subsequently shortlisted for interview with a view to analysing any trends to identify any potential contributing factors to the over representation of women in OVIC's staff profile.

Indicator 2: Gender Composition of Governing Bodies

With the Commission's approval OVIC has amended the progress report submitted to the Commission in February 2024 to clarify that this indicator is not applicable, as OVIC does not have a governing body. This was accepted by the Commission and is included in the progress report published on both the Commission's and OVIC's websites.

Indicator 3: Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender

Similar to indicator 1, during the reporting period OVIC sought clarification from the Commission in relation to the inclusion of statutory appointees in workforce audit data. The Commission advised that data relating to statutory appointees was not to be included, however this advice was received after the submission deadline.

When correctly using data that excludes the three statutory appointees OVIC's pay gap decreased to 15.47% in 2021 and 15.56% in 2023. The pay gap exists primarily at the VPS6 level and is attributed to the length of service that staff have in the VPS as a whole, not the length of service solely at OVIC. At 30 June 2023, at the VPS6 level, the average difference in length of service in the VPS was 7.5 years and the average difference in FTE salary was \$33,459 between male and female staff. Reflecting general progression, based on years of service, male staff would have received an additional 7 progression steps compared to female staff, attributing directly to the gender pay gap at this level.

At 30 June 2023 the VPS5 level had a similar composition, with similar disparity with respect to length of service in the VPS, while VPS 4 and below saw <1% pay gap. OVIC continues to investigate any contributing factors to the gender pay gap and has implemented additional rigour around requests for salary negotiations, including ensuring that all new starters are provided an opportunity to negotiate their starting salary.

Indicator 4: Sexual Harassment in the workplace

There has been no change in data in relation to sexual harassment in the workplace, with OVIC continuing to formally report zero instances of sexual harassment. OVIC reported zero instances of sexual harassment in its annual People Matter Survey's from 2021 to 2023. OVIC also confirms zero reports of sexual harassment anonymously or informally.

Regardless of the lack of sexual harassment in the workplace, OVIC is committed to providing a safe workplace for all staff and takes its obligations with respect to sexual harassment seriously. In 2023 OVIC arranged for a facilitated workshop targeted at managers on responding to disclosures of sexual harassment, as well as a session for all staff on workplace sexual harassment. Formal staff training and resources continue to be made available to all staff.

Indicator 6: Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to: - family violence leave; flexible working arrangements; working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities

Availability of these leave types has remained the same, and additional communication and presentations to staff have been made to promote the availability of these types of leave/flexible work arrangements, including provision within OVIC's PDP templates to prompt annual discussions between staff and managers.

OVIC received and approved three applications for the use of family violence leave in 2023, this was the first instance of this leave type for OVIC. OVIC promoted the availability of family violence leave specifically at All Staff meetings in 2023.

In 2023, OVIC saw the first instances of the uptake of additional secondary caregiver leave to support family and caring responsibilities. This leave was utilised by two male staff members (12% of male staff), in 2023.

OVIC saw an increase in the use of formal flexible working arrangements with 26% of staff utilising these arrangements in 2023, an increase of 5% from 2021. In 2023, 66% of staff on formal flexible work arrangements were on these arrangements due to family or caring responsibilities, an increase from 60% in 2021.

To date, OVIC has approved every request for flexible working arrangements received.

Gender Impact Assessments

The progress report does not identify any Gender Impact Assessments as being completed as OVIC has not delivered any policies, programs or services that would meet the threshold to require a Gender Impact Assessment..