Greater Western Water



Gender Equality Action Plan 2026-30



Acknowledgement of Country

Greater Western Water respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters upon which we work and operate, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, Wadawurrung, Taungurung, Djaara, and Bunurong peoples. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past and present who continue to forge the way ahead for their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the continued cultural, social, and spiritual connections that First Nations people have with the lands and waters. We also recognise and deeply value the care and protection Traditional Owners have brought to Country for thousands of generations. Our vision is that the way we deliver water services will heal and care for Country, and we are committed to walk alongside and learn from Traditional Owners on this journey.

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Message from our Managing Director

I am proud to share our second Gender Equality Action Plan to progress gender equality for our people, our customers and our community.

We have made significant progress as we implemented our first Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). We strengthened our foundations, deepened understanding of where inequality shows up, and expanded the systems and capability needed for long-term change. This next phase builds on that momentum.

Gender equality is not a static achievement. It is dynamic, evolving, and shaped by decisions we make every day. Maintaining our focus is critical for our culture, our workforce, our people, and our ability to deliver trusted water services for generations to come.

At Greater Western Water (GWW), our commitment to gender equality is unwavering.

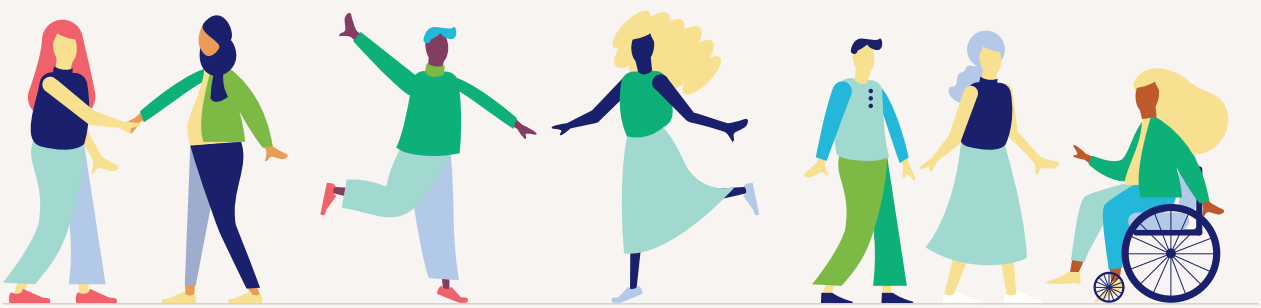
We know that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a foundation for a healthy, high performing and trusted organisation. When people of all genders, including women, men and non binary people, have equitable access, opportunity and safety, our organisation becomes stronger. Equality and diversity fuel innovation, lift performance, and better equip us to meet the complex challenges of our rapidly growing region.

To attract and retain women at GWW and in the water sector, we need to foster an inclusive workplace that supports women's wellbeing and success. We also need to support women already in the industry in progressing their careers and consider the diverse needs of women across different age groups and backgrounds.

Our Gender Equality Action Plan 2026–2030 reaffirms our commitment to progress with integrity, ambition and care. I am proud of how far we have come, and I am confident in the work ahead. Together, we will continue shaping a workplace where gender equality is not only expected but lived every day.



Cameron FitzGerald,
Managing Director
Greater Western Water



Leadership commitment

I am personally committed to advancing gender equality at GWW because it strengthens our organisation, supports our people, and delivers better outcomes for our customers, the environment and the communities we serve.

Gender equality is everyone's responsibility at GWW, and as leaders we play a critical role in setting the tone, driving accountability, and championing the change we want to see.

We operate in one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, supporting diverse metropolitan and rural communities. As we continue to develop our organisation, we know that an equitable and inclusive workplace is fundamental to our success. When our workforce reflects the diversity of the community, we are better equipped to think differently, respond effectively, connect with our customers and stakeholders, and innovate with purpose.

We also recognise that progressing gender equality is complex work. Some parts of our sector have fewer women because, historically, certain jobs were seen as "men's roles." This has limited opportunities for women and reduced the talent available to our water industry and infrastructure sectors. Addressing this requires persistence, curiosity, courage and, importantly, leadership. We must continue to challenge assumptions, open pathways, and create a culture where everyone can thrive.

In our technical and operational areas, we know we are not accessing the full spectrum of talent available to us. Australia is in a period of major infrastructure investment that continues over the next decade, particularly across the eastern seaboard. To deliver on our capital program, deliver technical services and meet growing customer needs, we simply cannot afford to miss out on half of the talent pool. Securing, developing and retaining a gender diverse workforce is essential to sustaining our capability and reducing our gender pay gap.

I look forward to sponsoring GWW's second Gender Equality Action Plan where we will continue to implement targeted actions that will help us achieve better gender balance, reduce our gender pay gap and build a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace.



Ian Burton,
General Manager, Asset Planning and Delivery and Executive Sponsor of the GEAP 2026-2030



Gender equality principles

The gender equality principles have guided every stage of developing the Gender Equality Action Plan 2026–2030.

Throughout consultation, to develop this plan, we consistently began discussions by grounding participants in the 'why'– reinforcing that gender equality is a fundamental human right, a legislative requirement under the Act, and essential to GWW's ability to deliver trusted water services for our diverse customers and communities. This framing ensured that people leaders and employees understood both the legal and moral imperatives for change.

We used a combination of audit data, lived experience insights and real-world examples to bring the principles to life. Illustrations such as crash test dummies designed on men's bodies, ill fitting safety equipment for women, and inequitable bathroom design, helped participants understand how gender inequality is embedded in everyday systems.

These examples, along with GWW's own data (such as the disparity between 16 People Matter Survey respondents stating they have experienced sexual harassment and only one formal complaint made) highlighted the ongoing structural and cultural barriers that must be addressed.

The principles also shaped the design of the strategies and actions in the GEAP. This included recognising that gender equality benefits people of all genders and ensuring actions support equitable outcomes across the entire employee lifecycle. This has led to key actions around further improving our data collection for career development training and how we now need to implement the plan to collect intersectional data. We also have included actions to continue to build awareness and prevention of violence against women, acknowledging that gender inequality is a key driver of family and domestic violence.

In gaining Executive Leadership Team (ELT) endorsement, we reinforced that investment in gender equality is central to compliance, culture, innovation and performance. As a result, the final GEAP reflects the Gender Equality Principles not only in its major programs of work, but also in the smaller, practical actions designed to create lasting systemic change.



Gender pay equity principles

We applied the gender pay equity principles to ensure our approach is evidence based and focused on addressing both the symptoms and the underlying drivers of pay inequity.

Our 2025 audit findings highlighted several structural and systemic factors that could be contributing to GWW's gender pay gap. In response, one of our three strategic priorities is a clear and measurable commitment to "reduce the gender pay gap year on year."

We recognise that the gender pay gap is influenced by multiple factors, including occupational segregation, underrepresentation of women in higher paid functions, the impact of part time work and parental leave, and historical progression patterns. Our GEAP therefore includes actions that not only improve our capacity to analyse, monitor and remediate pay gaps, but also prevent them by strengthening gender equality across the full employee lifecycle.

Of the 29 actions in this GEAP, five directly target improving pay equity: focusing on improved data analysis, strengthened remuneration governance, removing bias in progression and recruitment processes, and ensuring transparent and equitable benchmarking. A further eight actions support pay equity indirectly by addressing talent pipeline issues, representation, and culture and flexibility, and ensuring we intervene where inequality can emerge or compound.

We also identified the need to improve awareness and understanding of the gender pay gap across GWW. Throughout consultation, from ELT through to employees, the pay gap generated significant interest and questions.

In response, we included actions to build organisational literacy on what drives the pay gap, how different employee experiences intersect with it, and what steps leaders and teams can take to prevent inequity over time.

Taken together, these actions ensure we are addressing pay equity holistically by strengthening our systems, lifting capability and influencing the cultural and structural conditions needed for sustained progress.



Intersectionality considerations

We have been guided by the intersectional gender inequality principles, recognising that gender inequality is experienced differently depending on a person's overlapping identities, including Aboriginality, culture background, disability, age, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities and employment type including part time.

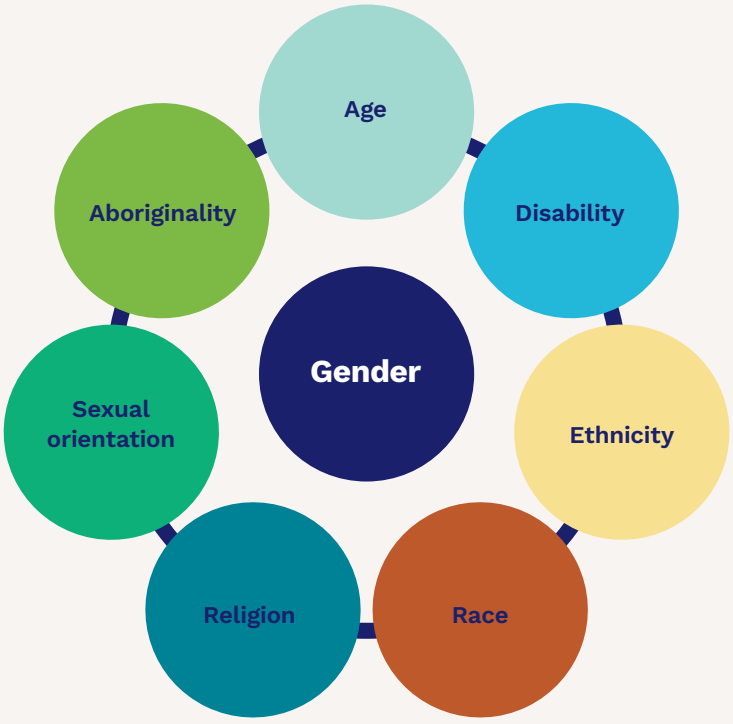
While we don't yet collect full intersectional workforce data, the plan to collect intersectional data was completed in our GEAP 2021-2025. We will now implement this plan as an action in the new GEAP. We acknowledge that building trust and creating safe processes for employees to share aspects of their identity takes time, and meaningful analysis will only be possible once sufficient data is available.

In the absence of comprehensive intersectional data, we have intentionally embedded intersectional considerations into the design of our strategies and actions. For example, one action aimed to progress representation of women on boards, to sponsor a woman to complete the Australian Institute of Company Directors program, we have explicitly stated in the action to 'prioritise candidates with intersecting identities and women who work part time'. This ensures our actions reach those who may face compounded barriers to progression.

Throughout consultation, we reinforced our commitment to intersectionality, using clear explanations and real life examples to support understanding of what this means in easy-to-understand language, using data where available. We sought feedback from employees with diverse lived experiences, particularly through the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group and the Accessibility Working Group. We ensured the Leadership Committee represented women with intersecting identities and could bring lived experience. These groups brought insights that validated where systemic barriers may be compounded, and informed refinements to actions to ensure they reflect a broader range of needs.

The request and subsequent support from GenWest also helped build our learning, inclusion and refinement of actions to progress intersectional gender equality.

By applying the intersectionality principles from the outset, the GEAP aims to deliver strategies that are more inclusive, more responsive, and better able to address the varied experiences of inequality across our diverse workforce and community.



Indicator 1:
Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

Gender balance in organisations across different roles and leadership indicates that people have access to equal power, resources and opportunities, regardless of their gender. A more gender balanced workforce also supports progress to narrowing the gender pay gap.

External research tells us that gender balanced leadership teams don't just support women and reduce the gender pay gap, they also deliver stronger results by fostering better decision making, greater innovation and capacity to navigate change.

Our findings

Women represent 48% of the GWW workforce, up 1% from 2023, and 62% of the ELT. This is a strong result, and we will focus on maintaining this through ongoing inclusive recruitment, career progression and flexible work.

Gender composition across GWW's business functions and teams highlights that gender segregation continues to show up, with fewer women represented in our engineering and technical function (38% women in Asset Planning and Delivery) and field and operations function (24% women in Service Delivery). These functions do show a proportionate representation of women in leadership, indicating equity of recruitment and promotion in these areas.

This overall imbalance reinforces gender stereotypes, contributes to our gender pay gap and may limit GWW's performance as we do not have the greater diversity of thinking and decision making in these specific areas. Therefore, we have developed key actions to specifically target women's representation in the underrepresented areas of our organisation.

Our part-time workforce has reduced from 13% to 12%, with 19% of women working part time and 4% of men working part time, a decrease of 1% for men from 2023. Our employee experience data indicates that people who work part time have a less favourable experience overall when compared to the full-time workforce. This overrepresentation of women in part-time roles can hinder career progression for women and contributes to the gender pay gap. Supporting men to work part time can help challenge the uneven distribution of caring responsibilities in the home and support men's health and wellbeing by breaking down gender stereotypes. We have factored in part-time employees across multiple actions in our GEAP to improve representation and experience.

GWW does not currently collect intersectional data. Intersectional inequalities are not identifiable in the 2025 data but will be implemented as part of the new GEAP.

Critical performance measures:

Gender composition in 2025:
48% women

Gender composition of part time workers in 2025:
4% men
19% women

Gender composition of GWW ELT in 2025:
62% women





Strategy	Responsible	Timeline
1.1 Governance, Data and Accountability: Set and embed function-level gender targets, across all levels, where women's representation is <40%. Integrate into workforce plans, with an intersectional focus where data available, and publish on quarterly dashboards.	ELT	FY26-27
1.2 Governance, Data and Accountability. Phase in collection of intersectional employee data (including First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse, disability, LGBTQIA+) on an opt in basis for candidates and existing employees.	People Operations & Services	FY26-30
1.3 Governance, Data and Accountability: Expand analysis and internal reporting of key workforce gender and other diversity metrics - include work pattern (part time/full time, flexible arrangements) by function, section and level - to Board annually, ELT twice yearly and senior leaders to share highlights with teams quarterly.	People Operations & Services	FY26-27 & FY27-28

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of the duty holder organisation. Gender composition of part time workers in the duty holder organisation. Gender composition of senior leaders in the duty holder organisation. **Additional measures:** Gender Composition across GWW functions and levels. Gender Composition of GWW leaders, including ELT, senior leader and all leadership measures. Gender Composition of GWW leadership pipeline (Including team leaders and specialist roles).
Targets	Achieve gender representation of GWW and Women in Leadership to meet GWW targets of 40 40 20. Increase representation of women year-on-year in Service Delivery and Asset Planning and Delivery by 2030. Collection of intersectional data commenced with percentage point increase year on year from commencement by 2030. Annual reporting to Board of GEAP progress.

Indicator 2:
Gender composition of the governing body

The Victorian Public Sector Commission has committed to a 50/50 representation of women and men on their Advisory Board.

Gender balance on boards is good for business. Research shows that when women hold 20% or more board seats; this is associated with broader effects on workplace gender equality outcomes and improved company performance.

At GWW, board recruitment is managed by the VPSC, however we can influence building women's capability to get board ready, so have included this action in our 2026-2030 GEAP.

Critical performance measure:

Gender composition of the governing body in 2025 is **67% women**

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline
2.1 Sponsor one woman (prioritising intersectional candidates and women working in Part Time arrangements) for the Australian Institute of Company Directors course (AICD) each second year.	Organisational Development & Performance	FY27-28 & FY29-30
Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of the duty holder organisation's governing body.	
Targets	One woman every two years has attended the Australian Institute of Company Directors Program.	





Indicator 3:
Gender pay equity

Gender pay equity is a key indicator of gender inequality across workplaces.

Our findings

Gendered occupational segregation remains a key driver of the pay gap. We note that at GWW we have lower representation of women in our engineering and technical function (38% women in Asset Planning and Delivery) and field and operations function (24% women in Service Delivery). Conversely, we have a higher concentration of women in Customer Experience, an area with lower average remuneration. This distribution contributes directly to GWW's gender pay gap.

The average total remuneration pay gap has seen a slight decrease of 0.1% from 2023, and a positive drop overall from 2021 where it was 12.6%. The gender pay gap persists at GWW, despite some pockets where the pay gap is in favour of women, with senior leaders (ELT) -12.1% and Managers (as defined by ANZSCO codes) at -5.1%.

On looking at specific occupations defined by ANZSCO codes, the highest pay gaps are seen in two occupation groups "Technicians and Trades" and "Machinery Operators and Drivers", reflecting the outdated gender stereotypes or assumptions about the types of roles that are suitable for women or men. This occupational pay gap is aligned to gender composition in the related GWW functions and to the gender segregation data. These occupation groups in GWW are operational and field roles which attract overtime and allowances, and impact the total remuneration pay gap.

Administrative and Clerical employees are a large cohort of the GWW workforce with 308 people, of which two thirds are women. Here, there is a total mean pay gap of 13%, which has increased since 2023. Given the move to the OSCA framework for classifying data for the audit in 2027, we will use this new framework to set a baseline to understand, remediate and monitor the occupational gender pay gap.

Critical performance measures:

Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group in 2025: **7.9% total for all occupations**

Managers
-5.1% (in favour of women)

Professionals
6.3%

Technicians and Trades
14.9%

Clerical and Administrative workers
13%

Machinery Operators and Drivers
26.7%

Mean total remuneration senior leader (ELT) gender pay gap in 2025: **-12.1% (in favour of women)**

Supplementary measures:

Mean base salary pay gap in 2025: **4.1%**

Median total remuneration pay gap in 2025: **14.3%**

Median base salary pay gap in 2025: **9.6%**



Strategy	Responsible	Timeline
3.1 Systems and Process: Review and update the remuneration policy and procedure to strengthen pay setting, overtime and allowances allocation, embed parental leave equity measures and how we deliver equity through the employee lifecycle (including how salaries are advertised, how salary is discussed through the recruitment process, and negotiated, offered and reviewed as part of salary reviews).	People, Operations & Services	FY26-27, FY27-28 & FY28-29
3.2 Governance, Data and Accountability Document and implement the process for conducting, analysing and reporting gender pay gaps: implementing annual pay gap audit (total remuneration and base) at organisation, function, senior officer and occupation levels. Audit outcomes will be reviewed with an agreed remediation plan where applicable, and reported annually to Board, and every 6 months to ELT, SLT and PCSLT.	People Operations & Services	FY27-30
3.3 Systems and Process: Revise the senior officer remuneration review process to include enhanced bias checks to identify and correct gender based and other bias (Including FT/Part Time/Parental Leave/Other identity factors) in salary recommendations and adjustments.	People, Operations & Services	FY27-28 & FY28-29
3.4 Capability: Build literacy and awareness of the Gender Pay Gap. Build specialist knowledge for HR and People Leaders to understand the impacts, drivers and ways to mitigate the gender pay gap, and build general awareness for all employees.	Organisational Development & Performance	FY27-28, FY28-29 & FY29-30
3.5 Capability: Offer twice yearly financial literacy sessions for women, including superannuation focus and pre-retirement), and content to support women's economic security.	Organisational Development & Performance	FY26-30

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group. Mean total remuneration senior leader (ELT) gender pay gap. **Supplementary measures:** Mean base salary pay gap. Median total remuneration pay gap. Median base salary pay gap. **Additional measures:** GWW Senior Officer (SLT) gender pay gap.
Targets	Reduction of mean total remuneration pay gap by 2030. GWW gender pay gap audit implemented and reported annually. Independent external validation of gender pay gap completed every two years.

Indicator 4:
Sexual harassment in the workplace

Violence against women, including sexual harassment, is preventable. Research shows that sexual harassment in workplaces is driven by gender inequality.

Our findings

At GWW, reported instances for sexual harassment are unchanged from 2023, with one formal complaint recorded. However, 2% of our workforce, 16 people, reported experiencing sexual harassment via the People Matter Survey. We know that any workplace sexual harassment causes harm. GWW has a responsibility to create a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace for women to work, free of sexual harassment and in doing so will ensure we will attract and retain our employees, especially diverse women.

Any occurrence of sexual harassment remains unacceptable, reinforcing the need for prevention, early intervention, improved data collection and increased reporting confidence. We acknowledge that progress doesn't always mean fewer complaints and in fact more reporting may reflect greater trust and confidence in our systems and support. Our new GEAP will expand sexual harassment to also include everyday sexism, to build awareness, prevention and response systems

GWW does not currently collect intersectional data, and intersectional inequalities are not identifiable for the 2025 data.

Critical performance measures:

Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment in 2025: **2%**
(2% women, 1% men, 3% self-described, 16 people in total)

Number of formal reports of sexual harassment in 2025: **1 woman**

Supplementary measures (from People Matter Survey):

Participants who said they reported sexual harassment in 2025: **6%**

Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint in 2025:



40% said they didn't think it would make a difference



33% said they didn't think it was serious enough



27% said they believed there would be negative consequences for their reputation



13% believed there would be negative consequences for the person they were going to complain about



13% believed there would be negative consequences to their career



13% said "other"



7% said they didn't know who to talk to



7% said they didn't need to because they made the harassment stop



7% said they thought the complaint process would be embarrassing or difficult

Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint in 2025: Data not available.
Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint in 2025: Data not available.

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline
4.1 Systems and Process: Review and strengthen organisational approach to reporting and response systems regarding sexual harassment, including anonymous reporting and a feedback mechanism for employees to share what barriers prevent them from reporting; expand scope to everyday sexism/non-inclusive conduct.	People, Operations & Services	FY27-28 & FY28-29
4.2 Governance, Data and Accountability: Report sexual harassment metrics twice yearly to ELT and annually to board.	People Operations & Services	FY26-30
4.3 Capability: Develop additional resources and training for leaders to enable them to deliver on their responsibilities to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and everyday sexism in the workplace, and embed into key leadership programs.	Organisational Development & Performance	FY26-27
4.4 Capability: Run an annual all employee campaign on everyday sexism, sexual harassment, racism, ableism and how to report; include practical bystander tools and site based toolbox talks.	Organisational Development & Performance	FY26-30
4.5 Systems and Process: Embed culture & gender equality standards with delivery partners; establish escalation pathways for GWW employees on partner sites; audit annually.	Executive	FY27-28 & FY28-29

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment. Number of formal reports of sexual harassment. **Supplementary measures:** Participants who said they reported sexual harassment. Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint. Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint. Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint.
Targets	Improved data collection of complaints received, to collect beyond 'formal' complaints and include expanded definition of sexual harassment to include everyday sexism. Annual reporting to Board and twice yearly to ELT. Sexual harassment prevention training for leaders with 80% leader attendance by December 2027. Gender equality and culture standards expectations established and maintained with delivery partners.

Indicator 5:
Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Research shows the main driver of gender inequality in recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace is gender bias. This includes unconscious biases, gender-based stereotypes, norms and discrimination that negatively affect women, and is where intersectional inequality is seen.

This bias can appear at each step of the employee lifecycle, from the way jobs are advertised, and candidates are attracted, to how candidates are recruited and selected and how salaries are negotiated. This continues into the way performance reviews are conducted, career development opportunities are provided and promotion opportunities, often leading to systemic disadvantages for women throughout their careers.

Our findings

One significant area of improvement from 2023 is women undertaking higher duties at 62%, up by 19% in 2025. Whilst all other measures showed an increase, promotion opportunities showed a slight decrease by 1%, down to 45% for women. This indicates that although women are gaining valuable career development opportunities, this is not yet translating into promotions.

Our employee experience data tells us that our people do not believe our recruitment and promotions processes are fair, with women feeling less positive than men.

- 39% of women and 45% of men agreed with the statement, 'I believe the promotion processes are fair'
- 59% women and 63% of men agreed to the statement 'I believe recruitment processes are fair'.

This experience can impact engagement and ultimately retention of our employees.

GWW does not currently collect intersectional data, and intersectional inequalities are not identifiable for the 2025 data.

Critical performance measures:

Gender composition of recruited employees in 2025:

- **Increased from 47% to 49%** for women
- **Decreased from 53% to 51%** for men

Gender composition of employees who were promoted in 2025:

- **Decreased from 46% to 45%** for women
- **Increased from 54% to 55%** for men

Perceptions of recruitment and promotion

The proportion of employees who agreed that recruitment processes are fair at GWW: For women, 68% in 2023 down to 59% in 2025. For men, 66% in 2023 down to 63% in 2025.

The proportion of employees who agreed that promotion processes at GWW are fair: For women, 44% in 2023 down to 39% in 2023. For men, 51% in 2023 down to 45% in 2025.





Indicator 5:
Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace (continued)

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline
5.1 Systems and Process: Revise the values that underpin 'cultural fit' and 'merit' in GWW attraction, recruitment and promotion policies, processes, and train HR and leaders to embed new practices.	People, Operations & Services	FY27-28
5.2 Systems and Process: Implement gender balanced shortlists and selection panels for all recruitment and promotion processes in areas where women represent fewer than 30%. Report shortlist composition, panel composition, and final hiring outcomes to the SLT/ELT, with a specific focus on intersectionality and gender diversity.	People Operations & Services	FY26-27 & FY27-28
5.3 Systems and Process: Build and embed clear process and guidelines for HR and Leaders to communicate internal opportunities and appointments for promotion, higher duties and secondments to improve transparency of decisions.	People Operations & Services	FY26-27 & FY27-28
5.4 Systems and Process: For attraction and recruitment processes, for internal and external roles, implement tactics that support all candidates, and mitigate barriers to employment experienced by women, self-described applicants, people from underrepresented groups and caregivers. Including support for interviews, how to promote skills and experience, know their worth, salary negotiation, discussing flexibility and part time.	People Operations & Services	FY28-29 & FY29-30
5.5 Governance, Data and Accountability: Set and publish targets for core pipeline programs and key talent programs: ≥40% women, and target under represented groups; include flexible work options in program design.	ELT	FY26-27
5.6 Governance, Data and Accountability: Implement improved career development tracking data across genders, priority/underrepresented groups and flexible work patterns including training, conferences, talent program participation and report annually to ELT and Board.	Organisational Development & Performance	FY27-28
5.7 Knowledge and Capability: Co-create a water sector gender equality Employee Value Proposition with other water corporations; develop shared assets.	Organisational Development & Performance	FY27-28

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of recruited employees. Gender composition of employees who were promoted. Perceptions of recruitment by gender. Perceptions of promotion by gender. **Supplementary measures:** Higher duties by gender. Internal Secondments by gender. Career development training opportunities by gender.
Targets	Achieve minimum of 40 40 20 gender balance for recruitment, promotion, higher duties, secondments and career development. Gender balance of recruitment panels achieved for recruiting into teams with less than 40% women, nonbinary or prefer not to say. Improved career development training data collection to capture all significant career development training by 2030. Uplift in People Matter Survey results for perception of recruitment and promotion by percentage point year on year to 2030 for women, men and self-described gender. Achieve 40 40 20 for core pipeline programs and key talent programs.



Indicator 6:
Leave and flexible working arrangements

Flexible work is key to workplace gender equality, as it supports those balancing caring and other responsibilities with work, who are more often women.

Unpaid care work is a key reason employees cannot participate in traditional work structures, such as fulltime work. Women are more likely to shoulder these responsibilities and are more likely to utilise part-time work, parental leave, and other flexible working patterns. When workplaces do not offer flexibility, this can be a barrier to women's workforce participation.

Research tells us that some of the barriers to men working flexibly can include lack of support from managers and coworkers, fears about missing out on promotions and pay rises, and gender norms that cast men as the 'bread winners' and women as the 'carers'.

Organisations who promote quality flexible work for all employees and at all levels of the organisation enable more equitable division of paid and unpaid responsibilities between women and men, and more equitable workforce participation and career progression, both of which can lead to reduced gender pay gaps.

Our findings

At GWW in 2025 we saw an increase in the average weeks of men taking parental leave from 8.9 weeks in 2023 to 9.1 in 2025. Women are still taking significantly more leave than men, with 29.3 weeks in 2025.

We also see a positive uplift in the gender composition of parental leave takers, with men increasing from 40.6% to 53% in 2025, and also in gender composition of carers leave, with men representing 45% of carers leave takers in 2025 up from 35% in 2023.

This uptake indicates cultural progress towards promoting and normalising shared caring responsibilities, supported by the Parental+ Leave Policy implemented as part of our first GEAP, which removed primary and secondary carers, enabling men and gender diverse parents to take 16 weeks of paid leave and other benefits.

For men and women overall taking up flexible work, we are still seeing high percentages of both genders, and so a positive result in 2025, with women remaining at 97% and men at 82% (a 2.5% drop for men from 2023).

On flexible work culture, although a slight percentage drop in positive perception from 2023 to 2025, the positive sentiment remains high for both men and women at 85%.

GWW does not currently collect intersectional data, and intersectional inequalities are not identifiable for the 2025 data.

Critical performance measures:

Average weeks of parental leave by gender in 2025:
29.3 for women
9.1 for men

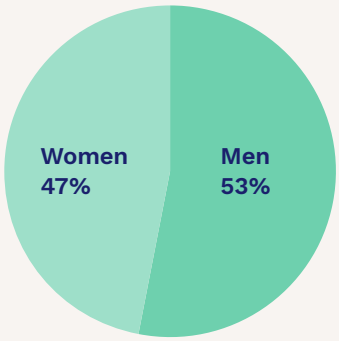
Uptake of flexible work by gender in 2025:
97.5% for women
81.8% for men

The proportion of employees who believed that requests for flexible work arrangements would be given due consideration in 2025:
85.3% for women
84.6% for men



Supplementary measures:

Gender composition of parental leave takers in 2025:



Gender gap in carers leave - Proportion of employees who took carers leave in 2025:

Women: **49.6%**

Men: **44.8%**

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline
6.1 Knowledge and Capability: Promote flexible work options, including parental leave and part time options for men, to reduce the stigma of men accessing flexibility through annual campaigns and communication.	Executive Sponsor	FY26-30
6.2 Knowledge and Capability: Conduct annual toolbox updates for field and operational employees on responding to customers who disclose or are impacted by Family and Domestic Violence (FDV).	Health, Safety, Environment & Quality	FY27-28, FY28-29 & FY29-30
6.3 Knowledge and Capability: Run annual FDV awareness and support campaign; promote leave and EAP, include how to respond to employee disclosures.	Executive Sponsor	FY26-30

Measures

Critical performance measures:

Average weeks of parental leave by gender.

Uptake of flexible work by gender.

Perceptions of flexible work culture by gender.

Supplementary measures:

Gender composition of parental leave takers.

Gender gap in carer's leave.

Additional measures:

Family and Domestic Violence Leave taken.

Indicator 7:
Gender segregation within the workplace

Gendered segregation remains persistent across industries and segregation is one of the major causes of gender inequality in the workplace.

Although the gender pay gap results from a range of complex factors, occupational segregation is an important driver. Occupational segregation reflects entrenched cultural norms, recruitment practices and workplace cultures that discourage balance, and they will not change without deliberate intervention.

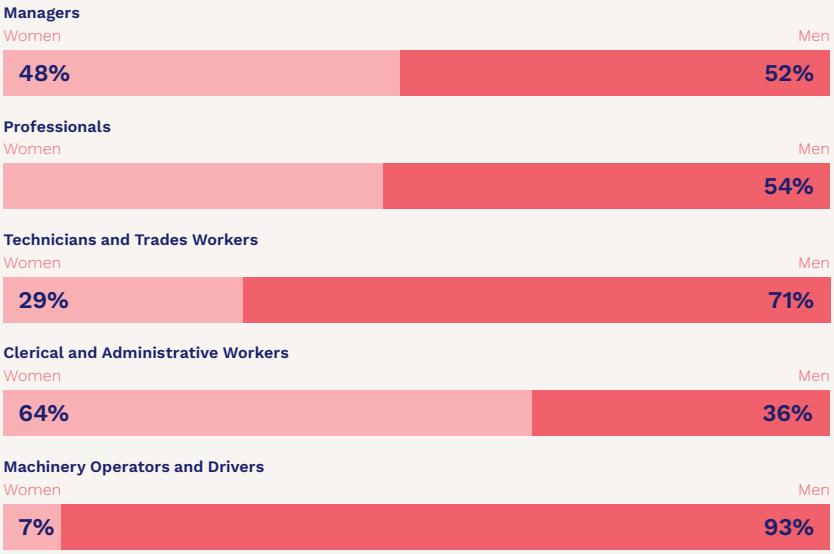
Our findings

At GWW, our data shows evidence of these entrenched norms. While we have achieved a relatively balanced representation of women and men in management and professional roles, and seen modest overall improvement since 2023, men continue to dominate operational and technical roles, while women remain concentrated in professional and support positions. This imbalance is a contributing factor to our organisational gender pay gap.

Recognising this, the new GEAP includes targeted strategies aimed at increasing women's participation and retention in technical and operational functions, where representation remains lowest and where change will have the greatest impact on reducing inequality.

Critical performance measures:

Occupational gender segregation in 2025:



Four of the five occupation groups increased representation of women since 2023, and the area of decrease was in admin and clerical, which is an area where traditionally women are overrepresented.

- **Managers: 3.5% increase** of women since 2023, to 48.4% 2025, showing gender balance
- **Professionals: 3.9% increase** of women since 2023, to 46% 2025, showing gender balance
- **Technicians and Trades Workers: 0.6% increase** of women since 2023 to 29.2% 2025
- **Clerical and Administrative Workers: 0.9% decrease** for women since 2023 to 64.4% in 2025
- **Machinery Operators and Drivers:** a positive **5.8% increase** of women since 2023 to 7.4% in 2025



Strategy	Responsible	Timeline
7.1 Systems and Process: Design, pilot, and scale targeted sourcing and entry pathways to increase the number of women–including those with intersecting identities–entering STEM and field roles. This includes implementing non traditional recruitment channels, partnering with community and education organisations, and embedding flexible work options to remove barriers to attraction and hire.	People, Operations & Services	FY26-27 & FY27-28
7.2 Systems and Process: Establish process for inclusion audits and feedback for depots and operational sites (including review with procurement of PPE and uniforms, amenities including signage, sanitary items). Ensure inclusion for women, trans and gender diverse employees and underrepresented groups.	Business Services	FY27-28 & FY28-29
7.3 Women in Operations: establish a Women in Operations network, listening to inclusivity challenges, build professional development, and build insights to action with clear accountability. Establish programs tailored to support women in ops' career development and advancement.	Executive	FY26-27
7.4 Sponsor two men to attend male allyship program per year and two women for Women in Leadership program.	ELT	FY27-28 & FY29-30

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Occupational gender segregation.
Targets	Gender inclusion audits of operational sites completed with improvement actions implemented. *Refer to target in Indicator 1 - Increase representation of women year-on-year in Service Delivery and Asset Planning and Delivery.*

Additional area of focus: Equity Impact Assessments

Over the next four years, we are committed to significantly strengthening and embedding our Equity Impact Assessment (EIA) process across the organisation.

To date, EIAs have been primarily led and delivered by the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) team. While this centralised approach has enabled us to build foundational awareness and capability, particularly within our Community Engagement team, our next stage of maturity requires EIAs to be owned and driven by business leaders across all functions.

To achieve this, we will focus on:

- Streamlining and simplifying the EIA process so it is practical, user friendly, and integrated into existing business workflows.
- Further embedding EIA triggers at key decision making points, ensuring assessments happen consistently and proactively.
- Building capability across teams through targeted guidance, tools, and support that enable leaders to confidently complete EIAs.
- Leveraging sector-wide learning, drawing on insights gained through collaboration across the water industry to strengthen our internal practices and ensure alignment with emerging best practice.

This commitment will ensure EIAs become embedded in how we design, plan, and deliver work – driving more equitable outcomes for our people, customers, and communities.

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline
8.1 Embed ownership and operationalise Equity Impact Assessments when developing new and reviewing any policy, program or service which has direct and significant impact on the public.	Executive Sponsor	FY26-30
Measures	Improve process and resources to support EIAs to be completed. Increase number of EIAs initiated for completion by business leaders.	



Consultation and engagement

GWW undertook a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process to shape the Gender Equality Action Plan 2026–2030.

We brought together leaders, employees, advisory groups, union representatives and external experts to ensure the plan reflects broad organisational input and lived experience. Pre-reading was provided for key meetings to allow time for review and reflection during consultation, with key groups included as follows:

The Gender Equality Leadership Committee comprised 11 members representing all GWW business functions, including six senior leaders, workforce management, HR business partners, First Nations Partnerships and Internal Communications. The Committee met eight times in both face-to-face and hybrid formats. The Committee began by reviewing legislative requirements, our existing commitments and the principles and benefits of gender equality. The Committee conducted deep dives into audit data, workshopped insights to determine priorities, refined the proposed actions and supported preparation for ELT discussions. Engagement continued between meetings through a dedicated Teams channel.

The People, Culture & Safety (PCS) leadership team included the Chief People Officer and senior leaders. They contributed through two sessions where audit data was shared and proposed actions were explored. Alongside this, the Chief People Officer participated in three one-on-one meetings to track development of the plan, clarify accountability and confirm timelines and budget prior to ELT review. Heads of PCS were also engaged across multiple meetings to review content, assess feasibility and provide input.

Across the broader PCS function, two 90-minute focus-group sessions were held with 25 members. This provided a forum to share audit data and collaboratively generate actions to strengthen gender equality.

The ELT engaged in three separate meetings, each focused on an important stage of development: understanding the audit results, reviewing the draft GEAP, and finally considering the completed plan and confirming an executive sponsor. Individual executives from each GWW function had a one-on-one with a leadership committee member to review the draft plan and offer tailored feedback.

Further oversight and endorsement were provided by the GWW Board, who received a briefing on the 2025 audit data and key insights at the end of 2025, and reviewed the draft GEAP in 2026.

Consultation extended to an online workshop attended by over 100 employees. This session highlighted achievements from the first GEAP, shared audit findings and outlined the areas of focus for the new plan. All employees were invited to that session with an option to provide anonymous feedback through a survey created in Microsoft Forms, resulting in 14 responses. A follow-up intranet article summarised the session and contained a link to the anonymous survey.

Through two meetings with the Staff Consultative Committee (union delegates), GWW shared audit data, draft content and the four-year goals and the draft GEAP strategies and actions. Pre-reading materials supported both sessions.

Members of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group, who bring lived experience to their roles, contributed through two hybrid meetings focused on reviewing audit insights and draft content. The Accessibility Working Group, also comprising members with lived experience, reviewed audit data and the plan.

Important intersectional alignment was ensured through three one-on-one meetings with the Team Leader, First Nations Partnerships, who is a First Nations Elder and a member of the gender equality leadership committee.

External gender-equality experts GenWest undertook a full review of the audit data and draft plan, offering detailed feedback and recommendations.

Findings from the consultation process

Consultation across GWW played a critical role in shaping the GEAP 2026–2030. The insights gathered through workshops, leadership discussions, employee engagement sessions, union consultation and external expertise helped deepen understanding of the audit data and directly informed the design, focus and sequencing of the strategies and actions in this plan.

Leadership Committee (the Committee)
The Committee was central to developing a GEAP that is fit for purpose and aligned with GWW's unique context, challenges and opportunities. Through a series of deep dive sessions, members interrogated the audit data, asked constructive questions and debated root causes, drawing on learnings from the first GEAP and the organisation's current culture and future ambition. Their analysis led to the development of GWW's three key outcomes and three core enablers, which now form the strategic foundation of the GEAP. This enabled the identification of clear priority areas and the targeted actions mapped across the seven Workplace Gender Equality Indicators (WGEI). Committee members played an important role in engaging their respective ELT and SLT leaders, strengthening organisational buy in and shared ownership for the work ahead.

Employee consultation
Feedback from employees validated the direction of the draft actions and reinforced that the audit data, particularly insights from the People Matter Survey, accurately reflected employee experience. The large turnout and high engagement in the all employee workshop highlighted a strong interest in gender equality, with meaningful questions asked about the gender pay gap, experiences of part time employees, and opportunities for more transparent progress updates. This reinforced the importance of strengthening communication, visibility and ongoing sharing of results and actions throughout the GEAP cycle.

People Culture and Safety (PCS) Leadership Team and people leaders
Input from PCS leaders helped ensure that the proposed actions were both evidence based and operationally feasible. Through reviewing audit insights and emerging operational priorities, PCS confirmed the need for clear accountability, strengthened measurement and appropriate pacing across the four year plan. As PCS holds responsibility for most policies, procedures and frameworks linked to the seven Workplace Gender Equality Indicators (WGEIs), their input was essential in shaping realistic sequencing and ensuring resourcing and implementation planning reflected organisational capacity.

Executive Leadership Team (ELT)
ELT endorsed the plan and confirmed the focus on the actions to uplift the representation of women in underrepresented areas of the business. Their feedback strengthened the plan by prompting the inclusion of tighter and more targeted entry pathways to GWW and stronger leveraging of existing external partnerships.

Staff Consultative Committee
Union delegates engaged constructively, seeking clarification on gender pay gap data. No improvement feedback was raised, indicating alignment with the proposed strategy.

GenWest
GenWest was engaged to review the draft GEAP actions and assess whether, based on our audit findings, they represented high-impact strategies capable of driving meaningful progress on gender equality at GWW. We specifically sought GenWest's advice on three areas: the strength and clarity of the proposed actions, any gaps where additional actions were required, and opportunities to better embed intersectionality into our approach.

GenWest provided detailed and constructive feedback that significantly strengthened the quality and focus of the plan. Their review confirmed that most of our proposed actions aligned well with the audit insights and represented evidence-based levers for change. They also offered recommendations for clearer wording, stronger alignment between actions and measures, and improved articulation of the intent behind several strategies to ensure they could be implemented effectively.

Crucially, GenWest's expertise supported our understanding of where we could build in more specific measures to build greater impact where intersectional gender inequality presents. Their insights helped refine actions to better consider the experiences of women who face multiple forms of disadvantage, including First Nations women, culturally diverse women, LGBTQIA+ employees and people with disability. All relevant recommendations have been incorporated directly into the GEAP. GenWest's more detailed suggestions, particularly those relating to measurement and activity-level detail, will be integrated into the operationalisation phase of the plan to ensure strong delivery.

Resourcing

GEAP implementation for 2026-2030 is supported by the following groups:

Executive Sponsor:
The nominated ELT member is responsible for oversight of GEAP progress, challenging and escalating where required to maintain progress, ensure project's resources, budgets, and expenditure are aligned to the delivery of the outcomes being sought, being a role model for gender equality and championing key updates across the organisation and at events.

Senior Specialist, Diversity & Inclusion (FTE):
Will facilitate the development of the annual plan, support GEAP action owners with DEI subject matter expertise and insights, annual reporting to Board Committee and Board and manage biennial compliance reporting to the Commission.

Accountability owners of actions:
To project manage, resource, achieve success measures and reporting of progress.

People Culture and Safety (PCS):
PCS will be accountable for many of the GEAP actions, as it owns the key policies, systems and processes that will progress gender equality. They play a key role to build capability, facilitate data collection and reporting.

GEAP Leadership Committee:
This group consists of senior leaders representing all functions at GWW. It is responsible for oversight of GEAP quarterly progress and report twice a year to ELT, review progress and support where needed to escalate, support resourcing for GEAP within functions and communicate progress to their respective functional leadership teams.

Executive Leadership Team:
Will oversee the progress of the GEAP and provide support with any challenges that may arise, partnering with the ELT sponsor as needed.

Senior leaders:
The Equity Impact Assessment (EIA) work will require extensive collaboration with our key stakeholders across the organisation, to continue to build awareness and embed into everyday practices.

External subject matter expertise:
Some of our strategies may require external subject matter expertise which we have estimated budget for.

References

Time for Respect

Fifth National Survey on Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces (AHRC, 2023b)

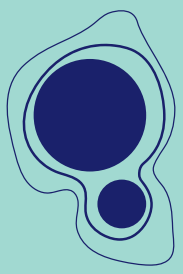
OurWatch.org.au

Gender Equity Insights 2025 The Power of Balance BCEC WGEA

Insights Report

Sexual Harassment 2025 and Insights report; pay gap 2025 Insights and Evidence Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector





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