

# GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN



## 2021-2025



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# Foreword

In March 2021, the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 (The Act) came into effect. The Act promotes, encourages and facilitates the achievement of gender equality within Victorian communities and organisations. The Act introduces new responsibilities for defined entities to implement, monitor and report on progress towards achieving gender equality in their workplace.

South Gippsland Hospital as a defined entity understands its role in gender equality and welcomes these legislative obligations to address known issues within the sphere of gender equality.

Our 2021–2025 Gender Equality Action Plan represents a commitment to strengthen our existing workplace culture, where diversity and equality is respected and valued. We have worked, and will continue to work, with representatives from across the organisation to consider and make recommendations to the SGH Board, relating to gender equality.

We commenced this important journey when the 2021 People Matter Survey results were released, alongside our Gender Audit data, and acknowledge that there is a need for ongoing monitoring and review of the actions within the plan.

Some other steps that have already been taken include:

- consulting with SGH staff on matters relating to gender equality
- consulting with other Health Services, and
- inviting consultation and input from relevant Health Unions.

Throughout all our work an intersectional lens is applied, recognising that gender inequality is compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that may be experienced by particular groups or individuals, relating to Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.

As we look forward we must address deficiencies in our ability to accurately identify staff diversity, as Historical data gathering methods provide insight regarding gaps and the level now required, to accurately report on the information to align with The Act. We will look for ways to improve access to intersectional data through implementation of the Action Plan.

SGH recognises that gender equality in the workplace has a flow on effect to our consumers and more broadly throughout the community we serve. By continuing to build a vibrant and inclusive workplace culture that values difference and diversity, we are investing in the wellbeing of our staff and the local community.



Paul Greenhalgh  
Chief Executive Officer  
June 2022

# Our Organisation

South Gippsland Hospital (SGH) is a public small rural health service, which combines an acute hospital with integrated community care services. SGH serves the community of Foster, Corner Inlet, and surrounding areas in acute, centre based, home based and community settings in the following service areas:

- Urgent Care
- Maternity Care
- Acute Care
- Perioperative Care
- Transitional Care
- Community Nursing
- Allied Health
- Respite Care
- Palliative / End of Life Care
- Home Care (Packages)

## Our Board

- Female Board Chair
- Director composition: 50% Male/50% female

## SOUTH GIPPSLAND HOSPITAL ○ STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022

**VISION:** Create the Healthiest Community in the State

**MISSION:** Provide and promote the best health services for our community, using safe and caring practices, through strong collaborations with all our partners

Strategic Priority 1	Strategic Priority 2	Strategic Priority 3	Strategic Priority 4	Strategic Priority 5
<i>Offer the best, safest and most caring health service possible</i>	<i>Seek and support health initiatives which focus on prevention</i>	<i>Offer services to the community to help with recovery, rehabilitation and quality of life, even after they leave our facility</i>	<i>Be a wonderful place to work which attracts the best talent, promotes a learning culture and ensures a great team environment</i>	<i>Diversify our sources of funding and revenue to ensure the sustainability of our services to the community</i>
Be the experts on our community's demographics, needs and health service gaps	Continue and build upon existing preventative programs	Continue and build upon existing programs	Live our values – ensure they are promoted, rewarded and embedded in our daily actions.	Explore more fee for service opportunities
Optimise new theatre and maternity suite when available	Look for ways to include new preventative programs	Introduce new services in response to community needs	Provide diverse and rewarding professional opportunities	Leverage new theatre facilities to include additional theatre sessions on fee for service basis
Leverage the skills of our local medical and health practitioners	Support CSP initiatives to create an integrated prevention partnership		Provide new opportunities for learning and professional development	Identify non-clinical funding sources
Consider innovative models of care to best draw upon skills and services of our regional partners	Encourage active lifestyles in the community		Identify improvements to further promote teamwork	
Actively encourage staff to identify service improvements and emerging risks			Operate our workplace with a sense of social responsibility	
Use local knowledge and contacts to provide individualised care				
Meet SoP deliverable - NSQHS Standards V2				



## A TEAM

Adaptability ○ Trust ○ Excellence ○ Accountability ○ Mutual respect



## Our Workforce

	Male	Female
Workforce composition – 138 workers	8%	92%
Full time – 6 workers	33%	67%
Part time – 111 workers	7%	93%
Casual – 21 workers	5%	95%
Senior Executive Team – 3 workers	33%	67%
Executive Management Team – 7 workers	42%	58%
Operational Management Team – 13 workers	18%	82%
Have caring responsibilities	55%	
Born in Australia	86%	
Identity as non-binary	0%	
Identify as ATSI	0%	
Identify as living with a disability	8%	
<b>Age</b>		
15-34 years	21%	
35-54 years	41%	
55 years plus	30%	
Prefer not to say	8%	

### People Matter – some of the data

- 96% of staff feel that SGH encourages employees to act in ways that are consistent with human rights
- 95% of staff feel senior leaders actively support diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- 93% of staff feel that gender is not a barrier to success at SGH
- 93% of staff feel that SGH respects the human rights of employees
- 92% of staff feel SGH supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender
- 92% of staff feel that there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees of different sexes/genders
- 92% of staff feel that in their workgroup, work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender
- 90% of staff feel that SGH would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
- 86% of staff feel there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees who have family responsibilities
- 85% of staff feel there are adequate opportunities for them to develop skills and experience in my organisation
- 74% of staff feel that SGH makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit
- 74% of staff feel that having family responsibilities is not a barrier to success at SGH
- 73% of staff feel they have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation

### Intersectional lens....

- 92% of staff feel culturally safe at work
- 90% of staff feel that their manager works effectively with people from diverse backgrounds
- 89% of staff feel that there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds
- 88% of staff feel that there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees of different age groups
- 84% of staff feel that there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+
- 79% of staff feel that there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander
- 75% of staff feel that there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees with disability

Source: 2021 People Matter Survey results

# Data helping to Inform Actions –

## Gender Equality Audit, People Matter Survey and Best Practice Clinical Learning Environment

SGH has a largely female workforce, resulting in potential for gender inequality, both in their experience of work, and the salary for performance of work. That said, wages are determined by industrial instruments such as several Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBA) and employees, regardless of gender, are paid based on the relevant classification within an EBA.

The People Matter Survey (PMS) is the Victorian public sector's annual employee opinion survey, with SGH employees encouraged to participate and share their experiences of working within the organisation.

The results of the 2021 PMS indicate that there is a strong culture at SGH with 93% of staff indicating that gender is not a barrier to success, 92% of staff indicating that SGH supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities (regardless of gender), 92% of staff feel that work is allocated fairly (regardless of gender), and 86% of staff indicate there is a positive culture at SGH, in relation to employees who have family responsibilities.

Whilst the above indicators are very strong, others still need a focus despite being higher than other health services in our comparator group. SGH will need to find additional ways to ensure staff feel:

- there are adequate opportunities for them to develop skills and experience,
- they have an equal chance at promotion,
- that recruitment and promotion decisions are based on merit and
- that having family responsibilities is not a barrier to success.

The 2021 PMS results also identified strong performance in relation to avoiding compounding gender inequality by SGH demonstrating anti-discrimination. Almost all SGH staff (> n=60 of 67 who participated in the PMS or >88%) report that:

- they feel culturally safe at work
- their manager works effectively with people from diverse backgrounds,
- there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds
- there is a positive culture at SGH in relation to employees of different age groups.

***An audit of gender equality (June 2021) demonstrated a gender pay gap of 2.1% of the median total remuneration.***

***This is significantly lower than the National average for healthcare sector of 21.3%.***



The Best Practice Clinical Learning Environment (BPCLE) Framework is a guide for health and human services organisations, in partnership with education providers, to coordinate and deliver high-quality training for learners. Whilst the BPCLE data does not relate to staff opinion, these indicators add to the evidence with regard to the positive culture of support, safety and wellbeing evident at SGH.

The 2021 BPCLE survey responses from learners placed at SGH indicate strong performance from professional entry learners (Nursing students) in the following areas:

- 100% (15 of 15) of learners were satisfied or very satisfied with respect to the welcome they receive
- 95% (18 of 19) of learners were satisfied or very satisfied with their feeling of safety
- 100% (19 of 19) of learners were satisfied or very satisfied with their sense of wellbeing

SGH must continue to provide leadership in the above areas, as well as strengthen efforts to support a culture that values and celebrates employees who identify as LGBTIQ+, and/or who are Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander, and /or employees with disability through implementation of our diversity plan.

Of interest, the SGH Board outperforms in the space of gendered representation in comparison to the national average for Australian Not for Profit Boards (ANFP). Half of the Board is female in comparison to the ANFP average of 40%. Further, whilst SGH Board is led by a female chair, only 32% of ANFP counterparts have female chairs.

In 2021, SGH experienced no instances of sexual harassment in the workplace (both perceived and reported) which indicates healthy levels of sexual safety between employees in the workplace. This is an encouraging indicator of positive attitudes towards gender respect and equality in the workplace.





# Action Plan Development

*In developing our Gender Equality Action Plan, we have committed to the Victorian Gender Equality Principles –*

*‘To live in a safe and equal society, with equal access to power, resources and opportunities’.*

*The case for change is obvious.*

Implementation of a Gender Equality Action Plan aligns with the SGH vision to be the healthiest community in the state by:

- *Reflecting the breadth of diversity in the community*
- *Ensuring non-binary, transgender or gender fluid consumers do not face any barriers to accessing clinical care and services*
- *Providing a safe and inclusive environment for staff, visitors and consumers*
- *Eliminating discrimination and intersectional disadvantage for staff, visitors and consumers*
- *Increasing employee engagement and job satisfaction through more inclusive systems, policies and protocols*
- *Attracting and retain high quality healthcare professionals who recognise and value difference*
- *Modelling inclusive practice as leaders in our own communities*

***“SGH is committed to providing employment, health care and all related business based on the principles of access, equity and respect. Staff are expected to provide excellence in care and a safe, welcoming and inclusive health service by respecting and appreciating what makes each individual different, including Aboriginality, age, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education and national origin.”***



# Priorities

## *Understanding our Workforce*

SGH encourages our staff to be proud and open about their identity in the workplace, by creating a safe space to share uniqueness. SGH will invite all staff to self-identify and celebrate their culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Island identification and status, or if they are gender diverse or a person living with a disability.

Developing the identity of the workforce will enable us to celebrate and benefit from our diversity, whilst identifying and removing remaining barriers to individual success, intersectional disadvantage and/or discrimination.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Success /Measure
Establish gender composition rates of all levels of the workforce and the governing body	Business Manager	December 2021	Baseline and annual comparative data
The addition of pronouns to email signature and use of these in general conversation.	CEO	April 2021	Rate of staff using pronouns in email.  2022 to 2025 PMS results
Develop process for existing staff to voluntarily self-identify disability status, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation and nationality to facilitate capture of intersectional information on employees to further inform actions towards gender equality.	CEO	July 2022	100% of existing staff given the opportunity to update data.
Update SGH Staff Member Personal Details Form 464 to include more volunteered information about employees (as above)	CEO	July 2022	100% of new staff given the opportunity to update data.
Establish and document inclusion and diversity monitoring and reporting protocols	CEO	July 2022	Reporting process embedded
Conduct annual payroll audit to ensure employee files are updated accurately following a variation of employment	HR Manager	December 2022	Audit report
Create a standard Gender Equality report mapped to SAP (payroll) to facilitate future gender audits	HR Manager	September 2024	Implementation of custom report
Ensure students / learner surveys include measures relating to Gender Equality	L&D team	June 2023	Students become employees
Document what are considered below the line behaviours	HR Manager/ OMT	June 2023	Document linked to code of conduct

# Flexibility for our Workforce

SGH recognises the importance of flexibility in the workplace to support gender equality and a positive workplace culture broadly.

Staff with health challenges or those with family or carer responsibilities can often experience disadvantage at work.

In 2021, SGH commenced a process to formalise flexible work arrangements for staff and managers.

Developing better ways of capturing flexible work requests and agreements has (and will) increase our capacity to anticipate and respond to increasing staff expectations for flexible work options.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Success / Measure
Update Flexible Workplace Arrangements Policy and Procedure	HR Manager	December 2021	Policy updated and number of staff with FWA reported to executive in HR Manger Report
Update Leave application to include approval for FWA, signed off by CEO	HR Manager	December 2021	Form updated. Staff files audit of compliance.
Promote leave and flexibility entitlements to staff	Department Managers	Ongoing	Meeting minutes Informal dialogue FWA applications and approvals
Keep abreast of EBA and legislation relating to FWA	HR Manager	Ongoing	HR Manager Report
Create recruitment video promotion outlining SGH culture in relation to FWA and other indicators	CEO	July 2023	Completed video
Research health services with onsite childcare centre and provide discussion paper for consideration in future establishment and/or approach local centres to establish a partnership agreement	Business Manager	December 2023	Report with recommendations to Board
Provide training to OMT regarding benefits of FWA's and ways to promote	DCH	Dec 2022	100% OMT attendance

# Pay Equity in our Workforce

Understanding the complexities of the gender pay gap isn't easy considering the majority (92%) of staff identify as female.

To create strategies that will result in effective and sustainable progress towards equity in pay, requires in depth analysis of the internal and sector wide drivers of the gender pay gap.

External support will be enlisted to assist SGH to understand where there are pay inequities that need resolving.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Success / Measure
Establish a pay equity working group to analyse pay gap	CEO	December 2022	Report to Board Finance Committee
Conduct payroll review to ensure all fixed remuneration and above award provisions are captured/gender identified	HR Manager	December 2022	Report to Executive
Develop remuneration policy	CEO	December 2022	Report to Executive
Enlist external analyst to support SGH with the above actions	CEO	December 2022	Report to Board Finance Committee



# Recruitment and Career Development

## Equity in our Workforce

The focus is on increasing access for employment, workplace participation, and outcomes for women to develop career opportunities by upskilling and progressing their preferred careers.

That said, there needs to be a broader focus outside of our clinical workforce, as this traditional approach results in employment disadvantage outside of this particular cohort.

Equitable recruitment practices help to eliminate unconscious bias and ensure merit-based candidate selection, increasing diversity in the workplace is paramount.

	Responsibility	Timeline	Success /Measure
Update recruitment policy and include gendered recruitment targets to increase diversity in the workplace	HR Manager	July 2022	Implementation and manager engagement
Design and implement merit based recruitment selection toolkit for managers	HR Manager	July 2022	Implementation and manager engagement
Continuation of Workplace Trainer role	HR Manager	Ongoing	Employed to assist non clinical staff to develop skills and knowledge to advance careers
Professional Development opportunities linked to Annual Performance Development Reviews	Department Managers	Ongoing	PMS results
Post Graduate learning through Graduate Nurse and Midwifery Programs	Director Of Nursing	Ongoing	PMS results
Provide leadership training on respectful relationships, inclusion and promoting equality in the workplace	CEO	December 2022	Training conducted PMS results
Explore the development of an Allied Health Graduate Program	DCH	December 2022	
Seek and support women to access targeted scholarship/financial support opportunities	HR Manager	Dec 2022	Resources identified
Develop internal career development pathways where relevant eg. Pathway to management/pathway to nursing etc	HR Manager	Dec 2023	Pathways established



# Sustaining an inclusive culture

SGH aims to maintain its fair and kind culture by reviewing processes and systems to strengthen trust within the workforce and empower staff to raise issues in a timely, appropriate and supportive way.

Staff at all levels are encouraged to maintain inclusive and respectful relationships to build truly sustainable workplace equality. We are aware that some staff have negative workplace experiences, such as discrimination and disadvantage, yet may not reported it. This needs to change.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Success / Measure
Develop and implement a gender impact assessment process and implement as part of policies and internal documents reviews	Business Manager	July 2021	Policy/Procedure and accompanying form.
Provide resources on intersectionality, diversity and equality	DCH	Ongoing	Promotion of resources and significant events
Actively promote employment opportunities for people with a disability, and educate internally on positives of working with people who have disabilities	DoN HR Manager	Ongoing	Recruitment data
Maintain Workplace Support Officer Program	HR Manager	Ongoing	Appointment in place
Implement Diversity & Inclusion strategy with links to existing Diversity plan	DCH HR Manager	Ongoing	Documented via Diversity Action Plan
Encourage, value and celebrate cultural and other diversity	EXEC Department Heads	Ongoing	PMS results
Regularly promote SGHs zero tolerance to discrimination and disadvantage.	Exec OMT	Ongoing	PMS results

## Strategic Resource Plan

The Executive Team, through development and endorsement of this Action Plan, has made a firm commitment to implement it through appropriate and timely resourcing of action plan items.

Internal human resources will be allocated to deliver proposed actions.

SGH will look to partner with Gippsland Regional Health Services and would welcome further funding from the Gender Equality Commission, or other relevant agencies, as available, to additionally support this important work.

## Implementing, Monitoring & Reporting

Actions contained within this plan will be implemented in accordance with the allocated timelines, and oversight by the Operational Management Team (OMT).

The OMT will review progress of the action plan on a quarterly basis. A dashboard report will be presented to the Board annually, in June, with a formal progress report to the Gender Equality Commission submitted by 31 October each year, commencing in 2023.

# Keyword Definitions

**Gender Equality:** the state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender.

**Gender identity:** an individual's personal sense of having a particular gender.

**Sexual orientation:** a person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted

**Gender diversity:** the extent to which a person's gender identity, role, or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for people of a particular sex.

**Cultural identity:** the shared characteristics of a group of people, which encompasses place of birth, religion, language and social behaviours.

**Intersectionality:** A methodology of studying the overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination

