

# Belonging Action Plan

2026–2030

Melbourne Water  
Intersectional  
Diversity and  
Inclusion Roadmap



# Acknowledgements

## Acknowledgment of Country

Melbourne Water respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woiwurrung peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways on which we rely and operate. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past and present. We demonstrate our ongoing commitment to reconciliation through our partnerships with Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as we work together to care for land and water now and into the future, while maintaining and respecting cultural and spiritual connections.

## Acknowledging Contribution and Lived Experience

We acknowledge those who have come before us, whose courage, advocacy, and persistence laid the foundations for the rights, protections, and opportunities we have today. Their efforts have shaped the systems, standards, and expectations that continue to influence how we work toward equity, fairness, and belonging.

We also sincerely thank the employees, community members, and stakeholders who shared their time, insights, and lived experience stories to inform the development of this plan. Their generosity, trust, and commitment have strengthened this work. Their input will continue to guide our collective progress toward a more equitable, inclusive, and respectful workplace for all.

**ISBN:** 978-1-921911-13-2

**Organisation Name:** Melbourne Water

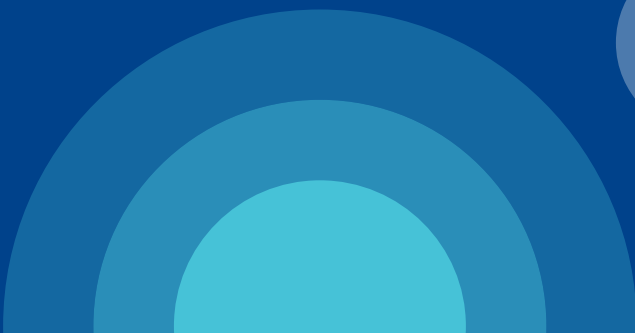
**Location:** Melbourne Metropolitan

**Total number of employees as at 30 June 2025:**

Total Employees: 1477 | Total FTE: 1,408.8



Gerard Black, *We Will Walk Country Together*.




# Statement of Commitment from the Managing Director

## GEAP alignment: Section 3



Fostering a sense of belonging in our workplace supports our people to be at their best. At Melbourne Water (MW), we are committed to creating a workplace where every person, across all identities and experiences, feels safe, respected, and empowered to thrive. The Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 marks a significant evolution in our approach to equity and inclusion. It brings together all existing Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging action plans into a single, intersectional framework that maintains distinct focus areas while reflecting the complexity of lived experience and the systemic barriers that persist across our workforce and communities.

This plan is not simply a continuation of our Gender Equality Action Plan; it represents a strategic shift. It integrates our commitments to First Peoples, gender equity, accessibility, cultural safety, LGBTIQ+ inclusion, and social justice into one cohesive roadmap. It has been designed to meet all legislative obligations across our focus areas, including the Gender Equality Act 2020, Equal Opportunity Act 2010, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and broader responsibilities relating to psychosocial safety and workplace respect. It reflects our commitment to not only meet regulatory requirements, but to exceed them through meaningful, sustained action.



Developed through a comprehensive co-design process, this plan is shaped by the voices of our employees, leaders, unions, and community partners. It is grounded in data, informed by lived experience, and aligned with our purpose to serve the people and places of Melbourne with integrity and care.

As Managing Director, I fully endorse this plan and affirm Melbourne Water's commitment to resourcing its implementation. Our Executive Leadership Group will continue to lead with accountability, transparency, and courage, ensuring that the actions within this plan are not only delivered, but embedded into the way we work.

Belonging is not a program. It is a principle. It is how we build trust, foster innovation, and create a future where every person at Melbourne Water can thrive: not in spite of their identity, but because it is recognised, respected, and celebrated.



**Nerina Di Lorenzo**

Managing Director  
Melbourne Water

16th April 2026

**I confirm that:**

- This Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 is submitted as Melbourne Water's Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) for the 2026–2030 cycle.
- I have reviewed and approved the submission of this gender equality action plan (GEAP) on behalf of my organisation, and I attest that the implementation of the GEAP will be adequately resourced as required under the Gender Equality Act (2020).





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# Introduction – The Case for Belonging: Why it matters

## GEAP alignment: Section 10

The Melbourne Water Belonging Action Plan recognises that identity is multidimensional and that systemic barriers often intersect. It moves beyond compliance to embed equity and belonging for all, ensuring that our actions respond to overlapping experiences of systemic disadvantage rather than treating diversity dimensions in isolation. This approach is grounded in data and co-design, with a focus on meaningful, sustained change for our people and the communities we serve, informed by human-centred design principles.

Melbourne Water has a longstanding commitment to diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Over many years, we have improved representation, strengthened psychological safety, and created more inclusive systems and spaces. These efforts provide a strong foundation. This plan builds on that work to drive deeper, more consistent change across the organisation.

Belonging means that every person, regardless of gender, identity, background, or lived experience, feels safe, respected, and empowered to thrive. It asks people to be who they are, not change who they are. This work moves beyond equality, which treats everyone the same, to equity, which recognises different starting points and provides tailored support to achieve fair outcomes. Belonging is collective. If one person feels included but the next does not, belonging is broken. True belonging exists when systems work for everyone, not just some.

Equity and fairness are central to this work, and evidence also shows that belonging strengthens engagement, productivity, innovation, and outcomes that directly support our purpose and our ability to serve the people and places of Melbourne.

Our HR data audit, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Census insights, and codesign data show that inclusion is not yet experienced equally. First Peoples women, women with disability, and gender diverse employees report lower levels of psychological safety and fairness. Employees from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds face barriers to leadership presence and progression. Carers and employees at different life and career stages describe obstacles to career development. These gaps reflect structural inequities that require a whole-of-organisation response: a response that protects wellbeing as much as it promotes inclusion.

Through our Belonging Framework, this plan focuses on six areas where barriers remain most pronounced: First Peoples, Gender Equity, LGBTIQ+, Disability, Culturally and Racially Marginalised communities, and Social Disadvantage. When referring to culturally and racially marginalised experiences, this includes discrimination linked to linguistic identity, such as language or accent. These focus areas guide our actions and accountability, ensuring that we prioritise those who continue to experience disproportionate inequity, while affirming that belonging is for everyone.

The Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 sets out a clear roadmap for cultural transformation. It embeds equity and safety across recruitment, leadership, infrastructure, policy, and organisational culture. It also supports Melbourne Water’s Corporate Plan 2025–26 to 2029–30 by advancing our strategic focus on resilience, transition, and partnerships through stronger core services, inclusive innovation, and deeper relationships with employees, communities, and Traditional Owners. Despite progress, belonging is not yet universal, and too often the burden of navigating exclusion falls on those who are already marginalised. This plan exists because systemic change requires persistence, collective effort, and the active protection of psychosocial and cultural safety.



## Our Vision for Belonging

A workplace where every person feels safe, respected, and valued, not as an initiative, but as a way of working. Where equity shapes every decision and systemic barriers are dismantled. Where belonging is shared, not conditional, and diversity is celebrated as a source of strength and innovation.



# Insights from previous Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Action Plans

## GEAP alignment: Section 1

Recent achievements demonstrate that Melbourne Water is ready to deliver on the project of enhanced belonging. Over the past year, we have strengthened demographic diversity in leadership, expanded belonging-related employee-led initiatives in field environments, and received external recognition for women's operational excellence.

Our Executive Leadership Group now includes strong representation of women, our Females in the Field group has grown its membership and participation across Service Delivery, and Melbourne Water leaders have been recognised for sector-leading practice. We have also strengthened the diversity and cultural knowledge of our Board to include Traditional Owner expertise, reinforcing our commitment to partner with First Peoples and embedding cultural safety in decision-making. Together, these outcomes demonstrate momentum, capability, and cultural readiness to deliver upon this plan.





The Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 builds on the insights, outcomes, and lessons learned through Melbourne Water’s Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2020–2025, alongside completed and aligned strategies across our six Belonging Framework focus areas.

A key insight from the previous plan was the importance of intersectional data in understanding workforce composition and equity gaps. Tools such as the Voluntary Diversity & Inclusion Information Form and the Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Census improved our awareness of gendered and overlapping experiences of inequity. The data highlighted disparities in promotion fairness, psychological safety, and representation, particularly for women with disability, gender diverse employees, and women from culturally and racially marginalised communities. In response, this plan strengthens data integration across HR systems, recruitment processes, and leadership reporting to ensure that actions are informed by lived experience and targeted where impact is greatest.

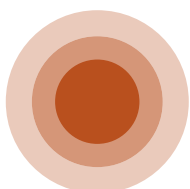
The previous GEAP also demonstrated the value of distributed leadership throughout the Belonging Framework. Moving from a single executive champion to a network of Belonging Ambassadors strengthened shared ownership and accountability. This model is retained and expanded in this plan, with Belonging Ambassadors continuing to lead initiatives across all six focus areas. This ensures that gender equity is addressed within a broader, intersectional inclusion context.

Audit insights into occupational segregation, particularly the underrepresentation of women in technical, operational, and maintenance roles, shaped our focus on inclusive job design, targeted outreach, and sector partnerships. Initiatives such as Women in Water Operations, Females in the Field, leadership pathways for women over 55, and the WaterAble Leadership Program for people with disability supported equitable entry, progression, and leadership development. Learnings from these initiatives are embedded throughout this plan.

Progress in normalising flexible work, including increased uptake of parental leave by men, informed our approach to embedding flexibility across recruitment, onboarding, and performance processes. This plan raises the profile of flexible and part-time roles (including job-share where appropriate), strengthens related managerial capabilities, and continues to monitor gendered impacts on career progression.

Sector collaboration and shared learning were also strengths of the previous plan. Continued engagement with VicWater, Water Services Association Australia, Australian Water Association, and other water authorities ensure that Melbourne Water continues to contribute and remains connected to sector-wide progress.

These insights reflect progress across the Gender Equality Act’s workplace gender equality indicators. They have informed where strategies were strengthened, redesigned, or embedded in this plan, ensuring continuity, responsiveness, and sustained progress toward equity and belonging.





# Development of the Belonging Action Plan

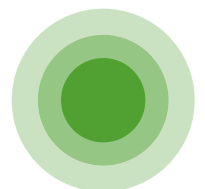
## GEAP alignment: Sections 2, 4, 5 & 6

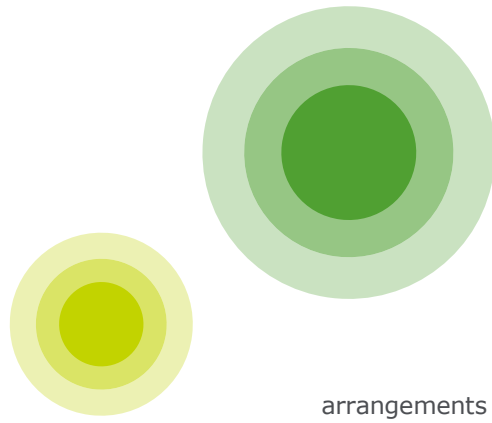
The Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 was developed through a structured and inclusive codesign process, supported by appropriate governance and wellbeing assurance.

### Inclusive and safe consultation

To ensure psychological and cultural safety, Melbourne Water engaged an external consultant to design and facilitate consultation. This provided a neutral environment for open dialogue and reduced psychosocial risk. Consultation methods included facilitated workshops (in-person and online), confidential interviews, and anonymous feedback mechanisms. Consultant recommendations informed the final plan, which was authored internally to align with organisational strategy while honouring participant voices.

Consultation included employees across all occupational groups. People Leaders, Senior Leaders, the Executive Leadership Group (ELG), and Board members were involved via our People, Engagement, Customers, Community and Safety Committee (PECCS). Employee representatives (including relevant unions), community organisations, and subjectmatter experts across all six focus areas were also engaged to inform the best-practice development of intersectional actions. Consultative participation was supported through targeted communications, including direct outreach and QR-coded materials at worksites. Where initial engagement from field teams was low, additional executive-led communication increased participation. In total, 57 employees participated, including employees with lived experience across all six focus areas. Consultation records and drafts were securely retained, with a structured review enabling feedback prior to Managing Director endorsement.





## How insights shaped the plan

Codesign translated audit and census data into actionable insights, adding depth to quantitative findings. Participants validated the disparities identified in audit data and provided enhanced context, particularly around psychological safety, representation, and access to inclusive practices. While data showed general trends (such as lower safety outcomes for gender diverse employees and employees living with disability), consultation highlighted specific dimensions (such as barriers to reporting harm, limited access to trauma-informed support, and inconsistent access to workplace adjustments). These insights informed actions relating to inclusive infrastructure, feedback pathways, gender-affirming leave, and mental health support.

Audit data showed improved gender balance at senior levels. However, consultation identified the ongoing underrepresentation of women, particularly those from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds and those women with disability, in operational roles. This informed actions on inclusive job design, targeted outreach, and leadership pathways. Consultation also clarified challenges with flexible work. While formal uptake of flexible work was high, informal

arrangements lacked consistency and recognition. Actions were developed to strengthen manager capability and raise the profile of flexible and part-time options, including job-share. Emerging priorities included perimenopausal and menopausal impacts; career progression for women over 55 and for employees with disability; and culturally safe spaces for First Peoples. These priorities informed new measures and policy updates. Stakeholder review strengthened implementation planning, ensuring that actions are feasible, measurable, and embedded within organisational systems.

## Governance and implementation oversight

Implementation of the plan is governed through the Belonging Framework, comprising six Working Groups and Connect Groups aligned to each focus area. Each group includes Belonging Ambassadors supported by Senior Leaders and People Leaders. Progress will be reported quarterly to the ELG and annually to the Board through PECCS. From 2027, an Annual Belonging Summary will be endorsed by the ELG and published internally and externally to provide transparency on progress and priorities.



# Consideration of (intersectional) gender equality and pay equity principles

## GEAP alignment: Sections 7, 8 & 9

The Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 is grounded in a commitment to equity, safety, and dignity for all. It was developed on the basis that gender equality cannot be achieved in isolation and must be addressed alongside other forms of disadvantage and discrimination.

Co-design participants consistently reinforced that people should be free to pursue careers and life choices without being limited by stereotypes, assumptions, or prescribed roles based on gender, disability, culture, age, or caring responsibilities. This principle shaped actions focused on removing barriers that funnel people into certain roles (occupational segregation), strengthening inclusive job design, and embedding flexible work across roles, levels, and life stages.

The plan recognises that gender inequality is often compounded for First Peoples women, women with disability, and gender diverse employees. These intersecting experiences informed targeted strategies including trauma-informed support, culturally safe spaces, inclusive infrastructure, and leadership pathways for underrepresented cohorts. Gender equality is treated as a human right and a foundation for social justice, reflected in actions designed to improve psychological safety, representation, and access to career progression.

Consistent with the gender equality principles, this plan promotes shared responsibility and leadership. Actions include normalising flexible work for men, supporting allyship, elevating a diverse range of voices including those that have been marginalised, and embedding equity considerations into procurement, partnership, and community engagement.





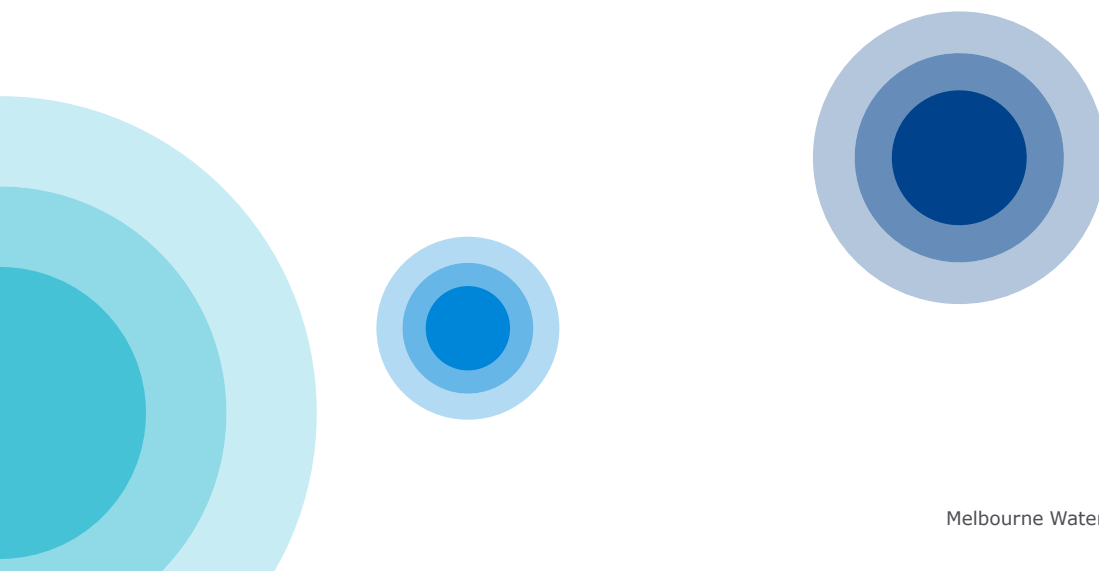
Where historical disadvantage persists, special measures are required to achieve equal outcomes. This is reflected in targeted recruitment approaches, inclusive policy updates, and monitoring mechanisms designed to track progress and address barriers over time.

The plan is aligned with the gender pay equity principles and applies an intersectional lens to pay equity decision-making and monitoring. Audit and census data showed minimal gender pay gaps in base salary, but broader disparities in total remuneration and career progression: particularly for part-time employees, those in operational roles, and employees with intersecting identities such as disability, culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds, or gender diversity.

Codesign participants helped interpret these findings, highlighting how assumptions about availability, leadership potential, and flexibility can disadvantage women and gender diverse employees, particularly those undertaking unpaid or caring work. These insights informed actions to improve transparency of career pathways, strengthen succession planning, and embed inclusive job design.

Melbourne Water's annual pay equity analysis now includes business-unit-level data and is expanding to consider multiple demographic characteristics alongside pay and progression data. Pay practices are reviewed for bias and supported by structured interviews, bias-mitigation training, and transparent reporting to the Executive Leadership Group and Board. Measures also promote flexible, job-share and part-time roles at senior levels, and monitor progression for employees using flexible arrangements to address structural barriers to pay equity.

Intersectional gender inequality informed decisions across design and governance. Audit and census data were analysed across multiple attributes to understand patterns of representation, progression, and experience, and to identify where disparities persist. Co-design activities were deliberately structured to surface nuanced and intersecting experiences, complementing quantitative findings with lived experience insights.





# Intersectional Data Analysis: Identifying forms of inequity

## GEAP alignment: Section 11

### Understanding Intersectional Inequity

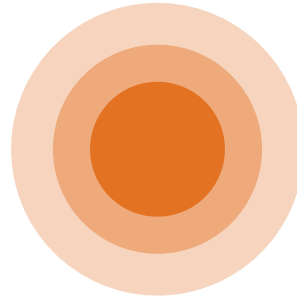
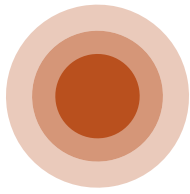
**Data note:** Unless otherwise stated, demographic percentages within this section refer to Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Census respondents rather than the full workforce population. Where leadership representation is based on survey respondents (e.g., senior leaders), the respondent base is listed in brackets to ensure clarity between census-derived and Human Resources (HR) headcount data.

This plan is grounded in comprehensive analysis of audit data, insights from our Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Census (DIB Census), and codesign activities across our six focus areas. This intersectional analysis identifies how different forms of discrimination show up in our workplace and confirms that inequality is not experienced uniformly. Instead, it is often compounded by intersecting identities. These overlapping factors create systemic barriers in representation, progression, psychological safety, and access to inclusive practices.

**First Peoples:** First Peoples employees report strong positive perceptions of recruitment fairness

and safety in calling out inappropriate behaviour. However, representation remains low, with only 1.3% of census respondents identifying as First Peoples, none of whom hold senior leadership roles. Scores for promotion fairness and cultural safety are well below average, indicating persistent barriers to progression and representation. Co-design surfaced the need for culturally safe spaces, trauma-informed support, and career pathways that uphold self-determination. Actions include embedding cultural markers in physical environments, expanding ceremonial leave awareness, and creating targeted leadership programs.

**Gender:** Women remain underrepresented in technical, operational and maintenance roles, despite achieving parity at the Executive level. Among senior leader respondents, 48.1% identified as women (13 of 27). Women with intersecting identities remain underrepresented in senior leadership, and 76.8% of part-time roles are held by women. Women with intersecting identities report lower satisfaction with promotion fairness and psychological safety. Census comments highlight unclear career pathways, limited leadership representation, and perceived devaluation of contributions. Co-design participants reinforced these findings, calling for inclusive job design, targeted



outreach and leadership development pathways for women and those over 55 in operational roles. Emerging themes included the impact of menopause and perimenopause on workplace experience, prompting actions to review uniform design and embed flexible options.

**Disability:** Employees with disability report significantly lower scores in promotion fairness, learning and development, and psychological safety. Only 4% of participants with disability are in senior leadership roles. Census comments highlight inconsistent workplace adjustments, inaccessible systems, and the need to self-fund development opportunities. Co-design participants described frustration with processes that require the provision of excessive evidence for adjustments. Actions include embedding the Inclusion Passport, improving manager capability, and auditing adjustment processes to remove structural barriers.

**LGBTIQ+:** Transgender, gender diverse, and non-binary employees report engagement scores up to 55% lower than company averages. Representation in leadership is limited, and only 0.2% of People Leader roles are held by transgender or non-binary employees. While some members of this cohort feel respected in their workgroups, scores for career progression, belonging, and safety remain low. Co-design informed actions such as gender-affirming leave, inclusive infrastructure, and visibility campaigns to normalise allyship and representation. Participants also called for clearer reporting pathways and trauma-informed support to address psychosocial risk.

**Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM):** CARM employees are well represented across the workforce, but remain underrepresented in leadership. Their promotion fairness and career progression scores are among the lowest. Census comments reveal concerns about bias, lack of recognition, and exclusion from decision-making. Infrastructure and systems often lack cultural responsiveness, and religious and cultural needs are not consistently accommodated. These experiences reflect the broader patterns of racialisation and cultural marginalisation described in our updated CARM definition, which identifies potential barriers linked to cultural, racial, or linguistic identity. Actions include embedding cultural markers in physical environments, improving inclusive procurement, and strengthening leadership pathways. Co-design also

highlighted the need for culturally safe mentoring, and clearer communication about inclusion initiatives.

**Social Disadvantage:** Employees experiencing social disadvantage, including carers and those from lower-income backgrounds, face barriers to progression, representation, and psychological safety. While carers report strong scores in manager support and respectful behaviours, they also report low satisfaction with career progression. Enterprise Agreement (EA) employees cite limited career pathways, lack of transparency, and undervaluing of technical expertise. Psychological safety indicators are mixed, and confidence in flexible work arrangements is lower among EA employees. Actions include improving flexibility, auditing job-share opportunities, and embedding financial wellbeing initiatives to address economic stress.

## Intersectional Problem Statement

Across all focus areas, employees with overlapping identities, such as First Peoples women, women with disability, carers from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds, and gender diverse employees experience compounded exclusion. These experiences reflect systemic barriers that require a strategic, intersectional approach.

*From 2027, Melbourne Water will use the **People Matter Survey (PMS)** for organisation wide employee insights. PMS results are reported at the organisation level, with demographic breakdowns where confidentiality thresholds allow. To deepen intersectional insights (e.g., for small cohorts or multi attribute analyses), Melbourne Water will supplement PMS with deidentified qualitative methods and administrative HR data, and, where appropriate, request PMS custom questions in line with VPSC guidance.*



# Diversity Demographics at all levels of the workforce

## GEAP alignment: Indicator 1

### What we know

Melbourne Water's 2025 workforce diversity audit (HR data) and Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Census insights highlight persistent disparities in workforce representation. Significant disparity is experienced by First Peoples, women, gender diverse people, people from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds, people with disability, and those who identify as LGBTIQ+. Caring responsibilities and employment classification also inform disparity in workforce representation. While progress in addressing disparity has been made through targeted action plans and the Belonging Framework, gaps remain, particularly in operational and leadership roles.

Human Resources (HR) data shows that women comprise 41.4% of the workforce, with 42.9% representation in the Senior Leadership Group and 41.6% among People Leaders. Women occupy 30.2% of operational roles within the Service Delivery Portfolio. Current HR data also shows that leadership representation varies across different workforce groups. Women represent 40.8% of Enterprise Agreement employees, 41.6% of People Leaders and Technical Leaders, 42.9% of the Senior Leadership Group, and 55.6% of the Executive Leadership Group. First Peoples representation is 1.3% overall, with no presence in senior leadership.

Our Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging census informed us that employees with disability represent 11.7% of the workforce and 15% of senior leaders. LGBTIQ+ employees make up 10.3% overall, with 14.8% in senior leadership. Carers, culturally diverse employees, and those born overseas are strongly represented overall and within leadership, though representative gaps remain for First Peoples, people with disability, and gender diverse employees. Compared to national benchmarks, such as First Peoples at 3.2% and disability

at 21.4%, these figures highlight areas for improvement and inform our equity targets. Part-time roles are disproportionately held by women (76.8%), and uptake of flexible work arrangements is more common among carers and employees with disability. However, part-time and flexible roles are often concentrated in lower-level positions, limiting career progression. Promotion and progression remain key equity challenges, with only 44–49% of employees agreeing they have an equal chance at promotion. Agreement is particularly low among First Peoples (45%), employees with disability (between 33% and 48% across business groups), and LGBTIQ+ employees (between 33% and 48% across business groups).

To address these gaps, Melbourne Water uses the Voluntary Diversity & Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF) to better understand workforce demographics. The form enables employees to share aspects of identity, such as First Peoples identity, cultural background, disability, LGBTIQ+ status, caring responsibilities and age, providing a clearer, more inclusive view of our workforce. However, uptake of the VDIIF remains low, with only 73 employees completing the form as of June 2025. This limits the ability to analyse workforce trends and intersectional experiences.

The Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 will strengthen demographic audits and improve data collection through targeted communications, leadership support, system prompts, and onboarding integration. The VDIIF form will be reviewed for inclusive language and best practice, and collected data will inform workforce planning, equity impact assessments, and leadership development. These actions reflect Melbourne Water's commitment to building a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the communities it serves and creating a culture where all employees feel respected, empowered, and valued.

## What we will do

### Measures

- Gender (women, men, transgender, non-binary) and diversity composition of the organisation, reported as proportions across all levels and streams, including part-time roles and senior leadership positions.
- Uptake and use of the Voluntary Diversity & Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF), including onboarding compliance and annual prompts.
- Organisational understanding of diversity benefits (>80% favourable score).

### Strategies

#### S1.1 Improve the Collection, Analysis, and Use of Diversity Demographics data.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S1.1.1</b> Conduct annual reviews & updates of the Voluntary Diversity & Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF) to optimise the mechanism and improve user experience.	People & Transformation	2026-2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S1.1.2</b> Investigate and if possible implement automated People system reminders for employees to annually verify and update their details using the Voluntary Diversity & Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF). <i>All reminders will clearly state that sharing demographic information is voluntary and protected by strict privacy and confidentiality controls.</i>	People & Transformation	2026-2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S1.1.3</b> Use multi-platform, measurably impactful communications to promote the purpose and benefits of gathering diversity data and building a more diverse workforce reflective of the communities we serve.	People & Transformation	2026-2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S1.1.4</b> Monitor and report on uptake of the Voluntary Diversity & Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF) annually (at minimum), with results disaggregated by portfolio and focus area. <i>All reporting will use de-identified data and apply role-based access and minimum cell size safeguards to uphold data governance obligations.</i>	People & Transformation	2026-2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S1.1.5</b> Annually audit and analyse intersectional diversity data from all workforce levels, occupational groups, and contract types, including length of tenure. Findings will be analysed and reported by relevant managers in appropriate forums, tailored to different cohorts, and shared with Executive and Senior Leader Groups.	People & Transformation	2026-2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S1.1.6</b> Use intersectional diversity data to identify gaps, tailor interventions, and actively inform enterprise-wide planning and equity initiatives.	People & Transformation	2026-2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas

### Targets

- Achieve and maintain gender balance across the organisation and leadership levels by demonstrating measurable progress toward a 40:40:20 composition (40 % women, 40 % men, and 20 % people of any gender identity, including non-binary and gender diverse employees), while increasing representation of gender diverse and other underrepresented groups at all levels.
- 70% VDIIF completion by June 2030 (incremental: 40% by 2027, 50% by 2028, 60% by 2029, 70% by 2030); ≥ onboarding prompt compliance for VDIIF.
- Achieve ≥80% favourable People Matter Survey results on items related to diversity, inclusion, and respect, with demographic cuts reported where systems and confidentiality thresholds permit.

# Diversity Segregation within the workplace

## GEAP alignment: Indicator 7

### What we know

Gendered segregation refers to the clustering of women and men across different occupations and job types, both horizontally across job families and vertically within levels of the same stream. Melbourne Water's analysis shows that while overall gender representation is improving, segregation persists in operational and technical roles. Women comprise 41.8% of the workforce overall but remain underrepresented in field-based, maintenance, and service delivery positions, where representation is 30.2%. Leadership within these streams also reflects vertical segregation, with fewer women in senior technical and supervisory roles.

Part-time and flexible arrangements are disproportionately held by women (76.8%) and are concentrated in lower-level positions. This pattern limits progression and reinforces occupational clustering. Job design factors such as rostering, shift patterns, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements continue to influence accessibility for women and other diverse cohorts.

Our current segregation analysis is primarily gender-based due to data limitations. While census data provides insights into representation for First Peoples, employees with disability, LGBTIQ+ employees, and culturally and racially marginalised groups, it does not yet allow detailed analysis of clustering across job families. Increasing uptake of the Voluntary Diversity & Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF) is a priority action in this plan to enable intersectional segregation analysis in future reporting.

Segregation limits access to higher-paid and higher-status roles, reinforces stereotypes about who does which jobs, and contributes to pay gaps and uneven career pathways. Addressing segregation requires redesigning roles, improving access to entry pathways, and embedding more widespread flexibility so that all streams are accessible and inclusive.

To reduce occupational segregation, Melbourne Water will configure people systems to capture gender and diversity segregation data by business unit, job type, and level, and use these insights to set equity targets. We will analyse qualitative experiences of underrepresented groups in areas with low diversity, participate in the VicWater Diversity, Inclusion and Steering Committee (DISC) initiative to address sector-wide barriers, and collaborate with the Females in the Field Committee

at Melbourne Water to guide targeted actions in male-dominated work areas. Leaders will receive training to strengthen understanding of segregation and implement equitable interventions, supported by the use of an intersectional decision-making guide during organisational change. Accountability measures and regular reporting cadences will track progress and communicate outcomes across the organisation.

### What we will do

#### Measures

- Occupational gender (women, men, and people of any gender identity, including transgender and non-binary employees) and diversity segregation across job types, occupational groups, and organisational levels, reported as proportions and tracked for year-on-year change.
- Experiences of underrepresented groups via People Matter Survey (where reported and available) and Culture and Engagement Survey.
- Uptake of career pathways for women and underrepresented groups in Operations, Maintenance and Technical roles.

#### Targets

- Establish annual auditing and reporting cadence and implement the intersectional matrix tool by June 2027, integrate intersectional analysis into HR systems by 2028, and embed equity targets and strategies across all portfolios by 2030.
- Increase representation of women and other underrepresented groups year on year in operational, maintenance and technical roles, and achieve sustained growth in representation across all tiers of leadership by 2030.
- Increased uptake of career pathways by women and underrepresented groups; progressing toward 40:40:20 gender representation in Service Delivery by 2030.
- Year on year improvement in People Matter Survey favourability at the organisation level, with cohort improvements reported where confidentiality thresholds permit.



## Strategies

### S2.1 Identify and Work to Rectify Areas of Gender and Diversity Segregation.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S2.1.1</b> Configure People Systems and develop reporting to capture gender and diversity segregation data by business unit and job type and level. Use resulting insights to develop targets for decreasing occupational gender and diversity segregation from an intersectional lens.	People & Transformation: Service Delivery	2026-2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S2.1.2</b> Use People Matter Survey results (organisation-level and permitted demographic breakdowns), and supplement with de-identified qualitative methods to understand experiences in areas with low diversity.	People & Transformation: Service Delivery	2026-2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S2.1.3</b> Actively participate in the VicWater DISC initiative to scope and develop sector-wide recommendations for removing barriers to equity and improving gender balance in operational, maintenance and technical roles, and collaborate across the sector to implement agreed actions based on these findings (anticipated focus areas may include flexibility, flexible and part-time role design, including job-share, and workplace adjustments).	People & Transformation: Service Delivery	2026-2029	All Focus Areas

### S2.2 Enhance Intersectionally-Informed Decision-Making and Accountability for the Reduction of Occupational Segregation.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S2.2.1</b> Collaborate with the Females in the Field Committee (FiFC) as a partner to inform and guide the implementation of targeted actions that advance gender equity and inclusion in male-dominated work areas.	People & Transformation: Service Delivery: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026-2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S2.2.2</b> Design and deliver training for leaders to uplift knowledge of occupational gender and diversity segregation and support engaged implementation of practicable, equitable interventions.	People & Transformation: Service Delivery: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026-2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S2.2.3</b> Develop an intersectional decision-making guide for use during organisational change to support leaders to consider impacts of decision-making on employees in their work area from underrepresented groups.	People & Transformation: Service Delivery: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026-2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S2.2.4</b> Establish accountability measures and regular reporting cadences to widely communicate our progress toward reducing occupational gender and diversity segregation. Track gender and diversity segregation to assess progress towards equity targets in all areas and levels of the organisation.	People & Transformation: Service Delivery: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026-2029	All Focus Areas



# Diversity Composition of the Governing Body

## GEAP alignment: Indicator 2

### What we know

Melbourne Water’s Board composition reflects a strong commitment to diversity, supported by the ongoing directive from the Minister for Water and the government that at least 50% of appointments to paid boards be women.

As of 30 June 2025, the Board comprised 60% women and 40% men, there being no change since Board appointments made on 1 October 2023. This is an increase in balanced composition up from 55% women and 45% men in 2023. Since this time the Board has maintained gender representation in leadership appointments within its direct responsibility, with one Committee Chair position held by a male appointee and the Managing Director, Deputy Chair, and two Committee Chair positions held by women.

The Minister for Water appoints the Board Chair and this position, as at June 2025, was held by a male appointee. Our current Managing Director, appointed in December 2021, is the first woman to hold this role at Melbourne Water and brings to the role an intersectional lens informed by her cultural background.

As a collective, the Board of Directors comprises 60% women and 40% men and includes representation of people who identify as First Peoples, LGBTIQ+, living with a disability, and Culturally and Racially Marginalised.

The process to update the Board Skills and Diversity Matrix highlighted representation across all six Belonging Framework focus areas and reflecting Board’s commitment to the Belonging Framework focus areas in the Board Charter. The Melbourne Water Board currently meets the intent set by the Victorian Government through its Women on Boards commitment and the intent that appointments to Victorian Boards should reflect the rich diversity of the Victorian community.

### Gender composition of the Melbourne Water Board in 2025:

- As at 30 June 2025 – 60% women, 40% men, 0% gender diverse, non-binary or transgender representation.
- As at 1 October 2025 – 70% women, 30% men, 0% gender diverse, non-binary or transgender representation.

Figure 1: Gender composition of the Board



## What we will do

### Measures

- Gender and diversity composition of the governing body, including intersectional representation.
- Board maintenance and monitoring of a Skills and Diversity Matrix aligned with Victorian Government guidelines.

- Public reporting on Board diversity through the Statement of Corporate Governance in the Annual Report.

### Targets

- Maintain commitment to diversity by providing advice to the Minister for Water to support appointments that reflect the community served.
- Ensure Board diversity reporting is included in the Annual Report starting 2025–2026.

## Strategies

### S3.1 Strengthen Board Diversity and Representation.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S3.1.1</b> Extend the Board Diversity Matrix to assess all six focus areas of the Belonging Framework and include both direct and indirect lived experience.	Company Secretary & Board	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S3.1.2</b> Provide advice to the Minister for Water to support appointments that ensure the Board reflects the community it serves.	Company Secretary & Board	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S3.1.3</b> Report publicly on Board diversity in the Statement of Corporate Governance, published in the Annual Report (commencing 2025–2026).	Company Secretary & Board	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas





# Fair Hiring & Career Progression

## GEAP alignment: Indicator 5

### What we know

The 2025 audit data reveals nuanced patterns in recruitment and promotion across Melbourne Water, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement in equity and inclusion. While gender representation in recruitment and promotion is broadly balanced, with 42% of recruited employees identifying as women and 58% as men, and 54% of promoted employees identifying as women and 46% as men, disparities emerge when analysing census data where gender intersects with other identity markers. Our Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Census showed that perceptions of fairness in recruitment and promotion vary significantly depending on whether an employee identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and depending on their gender, cultural identity, disability status, sexual orientation, and age. Employees identifying as culturally and racially marginalised, LGBTIQ+, or living with disability reported notably lower satisfaction with promotion opportunities and career development support. In contrast, First Peoples employees reported higher agreement with recruitment fairness but lower agreement with progression and promotion. Gender diverse employees reported the lowest agreement rates across all five measures, indicating significant barriers to equitable advancement. This suggests systemic issues in progression pathways and access to learning and development.

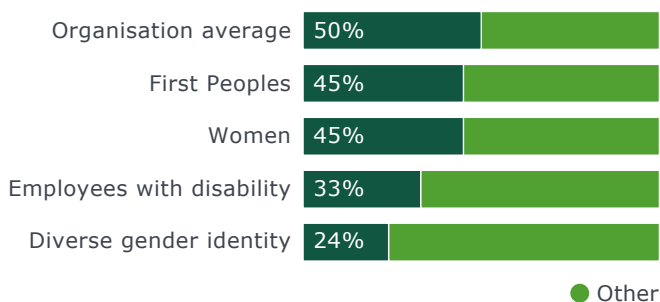
#### Key intersectional findings include:

- First Peoples employees showed high confidence in recruitment fairness (82%, +17% compared to the broader organisation) but lower agreement on progression and promotion (both 45%), suggesting that while entry pathways may be inclusive, advancement pathways require strengthening.
- Women employees reported slightly higher agreement than average on recruitment and promotion fairness, but lower satisfaction with progression opportunities (45%), suggesting a disconnect between perceived fairness and actual career mobility.

- Employees of diverse sexual orientation expressed strong confidence in recruitment fairness (75%, +10% compared to broader organisation) but lower satisfaction with progression (42%) and learning and development (48%, -6% compared to broader organisation), indicating potential bottlenecks post-recruitment.
- Gender diverse employees reported the most significant disparities, with agreement rates 21–32% below average across all measures. Only 19% believed promotion processes were fair, and just 24% felt they had an equal chance at promotion, highlighting urgent equity gaps.
- Employees with disability also reported consistently lower agreement across all measures, particularly in progression (33%) and learning and development (40%), reinforcing the need for targeted support and barrier removal.
- Employees with culturally and racially marginalised identities and employees with caring responsibilities reported agreement levels largely in line with organisational averages, though employees with culturally and racially marginalised identities noted lower satisfaction with progression pathways. Broader research highlights that linguistic identity, including language or accent-based bias, can shape progression experiences.

While gender-based recruitment and promotion data is available, limited data exists to analyse these practices across the other five focus areas, including First Peoples, Cultural and Racial Marginalisation, LGBTIQ+, disability, and age, until such a time that the Voluntary Diversity and Inclusion Information Form targets are achieved or progressed.

Figure 2: Perceptions of fairness in career progression



# What we will do

## Measures

- Gender and diversity composition of interviewed, recruited and promoted employees.
- Employee perceptions of fairness, transparency, and opportunity in recruitment, promotion, progression, and development, including cultural and psychological safety throughout recruitment and onboarding.
- Uptake of career development opportunities and progression rates, including representation of women and all focus area groups in leadership development pathways.

## Targets

- Overall annual recruitment aligns with our gender balance target of 40:40:20, with measurable increases in the representation of women and other underrepresented groups.
- Year-on-year increases from audit-specified baselines in People Matter Survey items covering opportunity and fairness in recruitment, promotion, progression, and learning support, reported at organisation level and by diversity demographic where system-enabled disaggregation and confidentiality thresholds permit. Where PMS suppression applies, these insights are supplemented with targeted qualitative methods. Improvements are monitored to ensure consistency across available age-based disaggregation, subject to confidentiality requirements.
- Increase in documented uptake of career development opportunities and participation in leadership development programs by women and employees across our six focus areas, with at least two employees per focus area per year engaged in targeted leadership development opportunities.

## Strategies

### S4.1 Make Recruitment Processes more Inclusive and Accessible.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S4.1.1</b> Review and update recruitment processes to ensure that job postings inclusively encourage a range of applicants to apply by highlighting tangible supports and relevant benefits. Foreground policies, procedures, and practices that increase equitable safety and inclusion across all six Belonging Framework focus areas (and intersectionally). Use plain, progressively inclusive language, recognise transferable skills, and advertise / provide accessibility adjustments for recruitment and onboarding.	People & Transformation: Corporate Services: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S4.1.2</b> Increase internal advertising of roles broadly, including secondments longer than three months where practical. This will be supported by reviewing and updating the Temporary Move Policy.	People & Transformation: Corporate Services: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S4.1.3</b> Ensure preferred names, pronouns, and pronunciation are captured and where possible used across application, recruitment, and onboarding communications and systems.	People & Transformation: Corporate Services: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S4.1.4</b> Include a refreshed flexibility statement on all job advertisements, outlining Melbourne Water’s commitment to flexible work where operationally feasible.	People & Transformation: Corporate Services: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas

#### S4.2 Continue, expand, and further embed Diversity and Equity in Recruitment Practices.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S4.2.1</b> Provide guidance to panel members on how to practice inclusive and safe interviewing techniques; provide equitable adjustments for different candidates; mitigate unconscious bias; and recognise how standard processes may disadvantage some candidates, including potential age bias.	People & Transformation: Corporate Services: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027	All Focus Areas
<b>S4.2.2</b> Review traditional interview methods (e.g., STAR) through an access, equity, and cultural safety lens and where practical, trial alternative approaches.	People & Transformation: Corporate Services: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027	All Focus Areas
<b>S4.2.3</b> Ensure that any AI technologies considered and/or implemented within Talent Acquisition are assessed for diversity and inclusivity principles.	People & Transformation: Corporate Services: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027	All Focus Areas

#### S4.3 Improve Onboarding and Career Progression Transparency.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S4.3.1</b> Review onboarding and induction processes to include information relating to the Melbourne Water Enterprise Agreement and how it is updated; the HAY Grade framework, Annual MW Remuneration review processes, and EA progression information. (This step may also advance progress towards our targets for GE Indicators 1 and 7).	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2027–2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S4.3.2</b> Review the Recruitment and selection policy and procedure, and the Employee Recognition Program policy, to identify any unknown biases and provide recommendations for improvement. (This step may also advance progress towards our targets for GE Indicators 1 and 7).	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2027–2029	All Focus Areas

#### S4.4 Remove Barriers to Progress and Embed Accessible Flexibility into More Roles.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S4.4.1</b> Analyse available data to identify any structural barriers to career progression for underrepresented groups. Provide recommendation for removal of any identified barriers through the provision of targeted support and the mitigation of bias.	People & Transformation	2027–2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S4.4.2</b> Promote flexible and part-time opportunities, including at leadership level, by showcasing role models and sharing success stories.	People & Transformation	2027–2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S4.4.3</b> When vacancies arise, review each role, including leadership positions, for suitability for job sharing, part-time, and other flexible work arrangements during the position description review and subsequently advertise as such.	People & Transformation	2027–2029	All Focus Areas

## S4.5 Increase Representation of Under-represented Group.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S4.5.1</b> Develop and implement a targeted advertising approach that includes job boards, networks, and platforms aimed at underrepresented groups to improve reach and representation in recruitment in each advertised role.	People & Transformation: Customer, Community & External Affairs: Service Delivery	2027–2029	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S4.5.2</b> Explore and where practical develop partnerships with external recruitment organisations to create opportunities for new career pathways for underrepresented groups (prioritising First Peoples), especially in gender segregated work areas.	People & Transformation: Customer, Community & External Affairs: Service Delivery	2027–2029	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S4.5.3</b> Identify potential roles and succession opportunities for First Peoples candidates with a clear recruitment plan, and present findings and opportunities to ELG.	People & Transformation: Customer, Community & External Affairs: Service Delivery	2027–2029	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S4.5.4</b> Explore secondment opportunities (reciprocal where possible) with Traditional Owners and First Peoples Community Organisations/ partnerships.	People & Transformation: Customer, Community & External Affairs: Service Delivery	2027–2029	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S4.5.5</b> Leaders to engage each new First Peoples employee with a mentor (identifying where possible), meeting at regular intervals.	People & Transformation: Customer, Community & External Affairs: Service Delivery	2027–2029	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S4.5.6</b> Create a culturally safe career development template and coaching guidelines that support self-determination and reflect the aspirations, strengths, and needs of First Peoples employees, for use by all leaders working with identifying employees.	People & Transformation: Customer, Community & External Affairs: Service Delivery	2027–2029	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S4.5.7</b> Identify and trial innovative First Peoples Land Management Team and trainee model to grow First Peoples field staff by 2030. Explore grant opportunities to fund ongoing opportunities.	People & Transformation: Customer, Community & External Affairs: Service Delivery	2027–2029	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S4.5.8</b> Define, develop and promote Melbourne Water's Employee Value Proposition (EVP) for First Peoples employees, through consultation with identifying employees and partners.	People & Transformation: Customer, Community & External Affairs: Service Delivery	2027–2029	All Focus Areas First Peoples



# Pay Equity

## GEAP alignment: Indicator 3

### What we know

Melbourne Water is committed to ensuring that all employees are remunerated fairly for work of equal or comparable value, irrespective of gender or any aspect of their identity. This intersectional Belonging Action Plan builds on our Gender Equality Act reporting obligations by broadening the focus on gender pay equity to include other key dimensions of identity, including whether a person is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or identifies as LGBTIQ+, culturally and racially marginalised, living with disability, or upholding caring responsibilities. Pay equity is a critical enabler of inclusion and belonging, and addressing systemic inequities in remuneration is essential to creating a fair and equitable workplace for all.

The 2025 audit shows measurable progress in gender pay outcomes across leadership and operational cohorts. Compared to the 2023 progress audit, where overall variances were 1.4% for base pay and 5.2% for total remuneration in men's favour, the 2025 results indicate a significant shift. The mean total remuneration gender pay gap for EA employees is -6.4%, in People/Technical Leadership is -3.6%, and in Senior Leadership is +2.9%. Supplementary measures show a mean base salary pay gap of 0.4%, a median total remuneration gap of -3.5%, and a median base salary gap of 0.0%.

A note on interpreting these figures: positive figures indicate a gender pay gap in women's favour, while negative figures indicate a gap in men's favour. These changes reflect structural factors, such as increased female representation in leadership roles, adjustments during organisational redesign, and the reduction of allowances and overtime that previously skewed

results toward men. Melbourne Water applies rigorous benchmarking and job evaluation processes to ensure equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender.

At leadership levels, the 2025 audit indicates continued movement toward parity rather than a single point of correction. Senior Leadership outcomes, which were already close to balance in 2023, now sit at 2.9 percent in women's favour on a mean total remuneration basis. This shift reflects structural workforce changes, including increased representation of women in senior roles and remuneration impacts associated with organisational redesign.

At the Enterprise Agreement level, total remuneration gaps have historically been influenced by overtime and annualised allowance arrangements in operational roles. In 2025, some of these gaps have narrowed materially, demonstrating progress toward equity, while others remain persistent and require ongoing focus. These results underscore both the impact of earnings structures beyond base salary and the dynamic nature of workforce composition, reinforcing the importance of continued monitoring at occupational and business unit levels.

However, the audit also reveals a limitation: Melbourne Water cannot yet assess pay equity across other diversity dimensions due to low uptake of the Voluntary Diversity and Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF). To address this, Melbourne Water has set a target of achieving 70% VDIIF participation by 2030, enabling robust analysis of pay equity across all six focus areas and supporting targeted strategies to address any disparities. In the interim, we will continue to monitor gender-based pay equity and embed equity considerations into remuneration reviews, job evaluation processes, and workforce planning.

## What we will do

### Measures

- Mean total remuneration pay gap by occupation group and senior leader level, disaggregated by gender, age, and diversity demographics.
- Mean base salary pay gap, disaggregated by gender, age, and diversity demographics.
- Median total remuneration pay gap, disaggregated by gender, age, and diversity demographics.
- Median base salary pay gap, disaggregated by gender, age, and diversity demographics.
- Intersectional pay equity analysis completed and reported internally.
- Development and publication of pay matrix and promotion criteria.

### Strategies

#### S5.1 Identify and address Intersectional Pay inequity.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S5.1.1</b> Continue to collect, analyse, and report annual pay equity data across all workforce levels and employment types, disaggregated by gender and diversity demographics. Include pay gap metrics: mean total remuneration, mean base salary, median total remuneration, and median base salary.	People & Transformation	Commence 2026–2030	Gender All Focus Areas
<b>S5.1.2</b> Promote awareness of pay equity through participation in Equal Pay Day activities (internal and external).	People & Transformation	Commence 2026–2030	Gender All Focus Areas
<b>S5.1.3</b> By 2030 Develop a plan to address identified pay gaps, including intersectional disparities that consider a discretionary remuneration budget to correct salary inequities.	People & Transformation	Commence 2026–2030	Gender All Focus Areas

#### S5.2 Provide Pay Transparency.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S5.2.1</b> Periodically communicate where to find salary tables, remuneration-related information, and the annual remuneration increase process for both Enterprise Agreement (EA) and HAYS employees.	People & Transformation	2027	All Focus Areas
<b>S5.2.2</b> Increase transparency of remuneration processes by clearly explaining: how pay is set for EA and HAYS roles; how progression works within EA grades; and how remuneration decisions are made during recruitment and the annual remuneration review. Ensure this information is easy to locate in internal channels	People & Transformation	2027	All Focus Areas
<b>S5.2.3</b> Ensure that communications and guidance materials about remuneration proactively address common employee questions identified through consultation, including fairness, progression, comparability between EA and HAYS roles, and how intersectional pay disparities are monitored and considered.	People & Transformation	2027	All Focus Areas

### Targets

- By 2030, reduce the organisation-wide mean total remuneration gender pay gap by at least 50%.
- By 2030, develop a plan to eliminate pay gaps greater than 5% for any occupation group (with diversity demographic analysis applied), supported by annual pay equity reviews and reporting to the Board.
- By 2028, annually communicate where to find salary tables and the annual remuneration increase process.
- By 2027, achieve 90% employee awareness of pay equity principles and transparency measures (via survey).



# Respectful & Safe Workplace Culture

## Addressing harassment, bullying & discrimination

### GEAP alignment: Indicator 4

#### What we know

Melbourne Water is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace, free from sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination. This Belonging Action Plan expands the Gender Equality Act’s focus on sexual harassment to include broader experiences of harm that disproportionately affect employees across our six focus areas.

The 2025 Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (DIB) Census revealed that:

- 2.2% of respondents experienced sexual harassment, down from 3.2% in 2024;
- 8.1% experienced bullying, down from 10.3% in 2024, and;
- 3.4% experienced discrimination, down from 7.3% in 2024.

While these figures are consistent with or slightly below sector experiences, they remain a concern. Only five formal complaints were made, despite anonymous reporting made via our Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) census, where 68 people reported, 29 reported discrimination, and 19 reported sexual harassment. Of the 19 anonymously reported sexual harassment cases in the DIB Census, only two advise that they (also) formally reported. Just seven of the 68 people who experienced bullying felt able to stop the behaviour themselves, and no respondents reported being able to stop discrimination independently. This gap highlights a lack of psychological safety and trust in reporting processes.

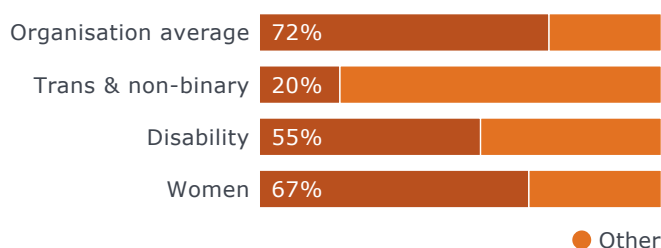
Satisfaction data on how formal complaints were handled is not yet available, limiting understanding of how well current systems work. Employees told us in the DIB Census that they often choose not to report

due to fear of career consequences, reputational damage, or a belief that nothing will change, in line with broader societal reporting hesitancy. Only two of the 19 people who anonymously reported experiencing sexual harassment our census advised in the census that they also reported it to a manager, HR, or the person responsible. Some who did report said they experienced retaliation or felt dismissed, especially when senior employees were involved.

Our DIB census shows that harm is not experienced equally. First Peoples employees reported the highest percentage rates of bullying, discrimination, and sexual harassment. LGBTIQ+ employees also reported high rates of harm, while employees with disability experienced elevated levels of bullying and exclusion. Carers and Enterprise Agreement employees reported slightly above-average bullying rates, suggesting that harm also affects roles with lower visibility or support.

Psychological safety scores vary across groups. While the organisational average for feeling safe to call out inappropriate behaviour is 72% favourable, transgender and non-binary employees scored a low 20%, people with disability 55%, and women 67%. In contrast, higher favourability was reported on this question amongst First Peoples (at 82%), carers (at 73%), and CARM employees (at 74%). Employees identifying as having diverse sexual orientations scored close to the organisational average on this question, at 71%. These findings highlight the need for trauma-informed, culturally safe systems that build trust, support safe reporting, and ensure accountability across all levels of the organisation.

**Figure 3:** Employees who feel safe to speak up





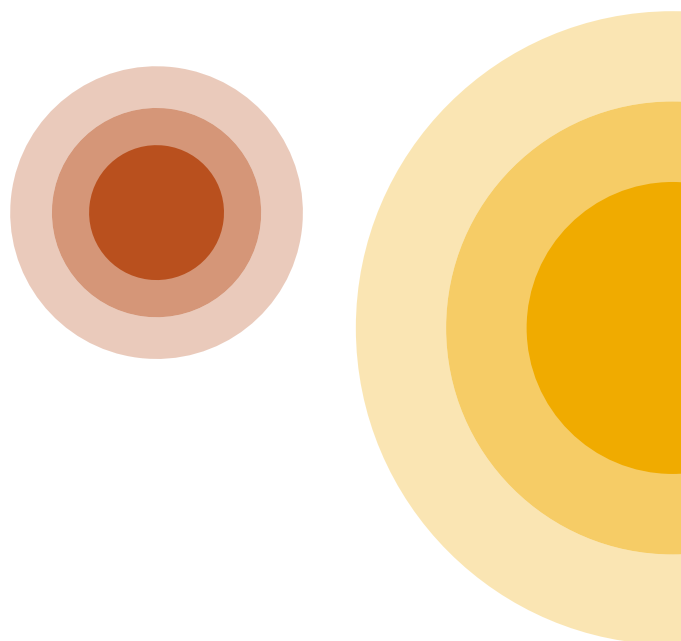
## What we will do

### Measures

- Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination, disaggregated by gender and diversity demographics.
- Number of formal reports of sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination, disaggregated by gender and diversity demographics where available.
- Employee satisfaction with reporting pathways and complaint handling for sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination.
- Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint (expanded to include bullying and discrimination).
- Annual reporting of key themes from anonymous feedback mechanisms and investigations into inappropriate behaviour.
- Availability and accessibility of confidential, trauma-informed reporting pathways for sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination (annual review).
- Awareness of reporting pathways and psychosocial hazard controls (via survey).
- Number of trained and active Contact Officers, representation across portfolios and focus areas maintained.
- Delivery of bi-annual Respect and Safe Workplace "Ask Anything" sessions with Executive participation.

### Targets

- By 2030, reduce the anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination by at least 50% (baseline: current audit data).
- By 2030, increase formal reporting of sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination by 30% from the FY2025 baseline, indicating improved trust and accessibility of reporting pathways.
- By 2028, achieve 90% employee awareness of reporting pathways and psychosocial hazard controls.
- By 2027, maintain a minimum of 15 trained Contact Officers with representation across all portfolios and focus areas.
- By 2026, implement an anonymous feedback channel for concerns about exclusion, inappropriate behaviour, and psychological safety.
- By 2027, deliver bi-annual Respect and Safe Workplace "Ask Anything" sessions with Executive participation.



## Strategies

### S6.1 Strengthen Intersectional Psychological Safety and Inclusive Feedback Mechanisms.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S6.1.1</b> Embed diversity demographic indicators, intersectional considerations, principles, and controls into the psychosocial hazards framework.	People & Transformation	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S6.1.2</b> Create a safe and anonymous feedback channel for employees to share concerns about exclusion, inappropriate behaviour (including racism), breaches of the Code of Conduct, and risks to psychological safety (including subtle behaviours).	People & Transformation	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S6.1.3</b> Monitor and report annually to Executive and Senior Leaders on key themes emerging from the anonymous feedback mechanism, highlighting trends and areas for improvement in inclusion, conduct, and psychological safety.	People & Transformation	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas

### S6.2 Improve Reporting Pathways and Transparency.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S6.2.1</b> Ensure accessible, confidential, and trauma-informed formal pathways for reporting discrimination, harassment, exclusion, or bullying. Review current systems for accessibility and psychological safety, and provide flexibility through multiple reporting channels.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S6.2.2</b> Develop & deliver a communications plan to promote improved formal, informal and anonymous reporting pathways, including outlining of potential outcomes of report, increasing transparency.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S6.2.3</b> Continue transparency of reporting processes by internally publishing de-identified summary of the number of formal complaints and anonymous psychosocial hazard reports related to sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination, utilising comparison with People Matter Survey negative behaviour results (bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination), noting differences due to PMS confidentiality and rounding rules. <i>We will report annually to the Executive Leadership Group and Board on S6 outcomes, aligned with the Respect@Work seven Standards framework, to support transparent monitoring and improvement.</i>	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S6.2.4</b> Include an anonymous employee feedback mechanism as part of the formal complaints process post engagement.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas
<b>S6.2.5</b> Review and refresh resources (It stops with me!) on gendered violence, discrimination, and bullying, including referral pathways to support employees.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026	All Focus Areas

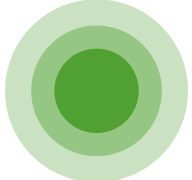
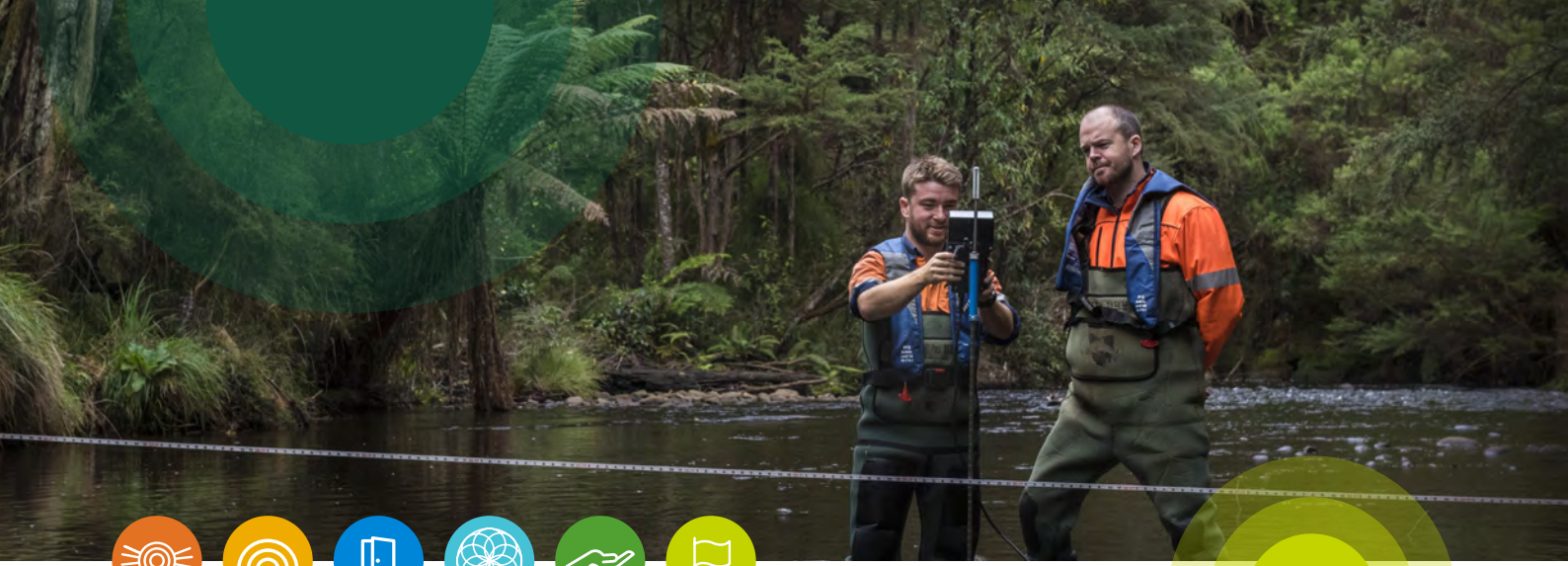
### S6.3 Strengthen Contact Officer Capability and Representation.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S6.3.1</b> Provide extended training for Contact Officers to equip them to support employees experiencing psychosocial hazards, gendered violence, family violence, sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination.	People & Transformation	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S6.3.2</b> Maintain a minimum of 15 Contact Officers with representation across all portfolios and focus areas, and run annual campaigns to promote their role in supporting employees.	People & Transformation	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas

### S6.4 Empower Leaders to Drive Respectful Workplace Culture.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S6.4.1</b> Equip Belonging Ambassadors to become an Upstander Action Group that role models active upstander behaviour.	People & Transformation: Managing Director: Executive Leadership Group (ELG): Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2027	All Focus Areas
<b>S6.4.2</b> Belonging Ambassadors to lead bi-annual Respect and Safe Workplace “Ask Anything” sessions, with the Managing Director and Executive Leadership Group present to address anonymous employee questions. Learnings from these sessions will inform continuous improvement actions.	People & Transformation: Managing Director: Executive Leadership Group (ELG): Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2027	All Focus Areas





# Intersectional Leave Entitlements: Availability and Utilisation

## GEAP alignment: Indicator 6

### What we know

Melbourne Water’s leave and flexibility policies are designed to support employees across identities, life stages, and circumstances. This section draws on HR data from 2023–2025 and insights from the 2025 Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Census. While policies are inclusive in design, low uptake of the Voluntary Diversity and Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF) limits deeper analysis across demographic groups.

Flexible working arrangements remain the most accessed support, with 76% of employees (629 of 824 census participants) reporting they use flexible work. Uptake is strong among employees who identify as women or men, but is lower among First Peoples (64%) and those who identify as transgender or non-binary (60%). Confidence in access is critical: 75% of employees agreed they would be given due consideration if requesting flexibility. Confidence was highest among employees reporting diverse sexual orientation (82%), carers (78%), and people with disability (77%). Women (77%) and men (75%) were close to the average, while First Peoples (64%) and transgender and non-binary employees (60%) reported significantly lower confidence. Perceptions of manager support were stronger overall (86% favourable), with women (87%), carers (89%), and employees reporting diverse sexual orientation (88%) scoring above average. However, First Peoples (73%) and transgender/

non-binary employees (60%) again reported gaps, highlighting an opportunity for targeted action.

Carer’s leave is widely used, with 828 employees accessing it, though perception data is limited. Parental leave shows shifting norms: 62% of paid leave users were men, yet women take longer unpaid leave, suggesting gendered patterns persist despite inclusive policy design.

Family Violence Leave was accessed by six employees. Support is rated highly, with favourability at 90% overall, at 92% among women, and at 93% among LGBTIQ+ employees. However, transgender and non-binary employees report lower confidence (60% favourable), signalling a need for targeted support. Gender Affirming Leave, introduced recently, offers up to four weeks paid and 48 weeks unpaid leave for gender affirmation. No usage data is available yet, and census questions did not capture perceptions.

Other entitlements include Sorry Business, Cultural, and Ceremonial Leave for First Peoples (9 days used last year), Public Holiday Substitution (noting that operational requirements may limit access; 18 requests to date, mostly for Australia Day, Easter, and Anzac Day), and workplace adjustments (47 requests, with mixed satisfaction). Across all leave types, improving intersectional data collection remains key to ensuring that policies are not only available but equitably accessed and trusted.

# What we will do

## Measures

- Proportion of employees who used parental leave, disaggregated by gender and diversity demographics aligned with our six focus areas.
- Proportion of employees who used flexible work arrangements, disaggregated by gender and diversity demographics.
- Employee satisfaction with access to leave and flexible work options (including parental leave, carers leave, and flexible arrangements).
- Uptake of expanded leave provisions (menstruation, menopause, chronic health conditions, gender affirmation, cultural/religious observances, extended caring responsibilities).

- Regular review and update of policies to support family, carer, and inclusive leave provisions.
- Representation of employees from all levels and demographics in flexible work case studies and campaigns.
- Monitoring barriers and improvements for operational and maintenance roles accessing flexible and part-time work arrangements.

## Targets

- By 2027, achieve 90% employee awareness of inclusive leave provisions and flexible work options (via survey).
- By 2026, establish and communicate an anonymous feedback mechanism on leave and flexibility barriers.
- Annual target: Review and update policies on family, carer, and inclusive leave provisions, and report uptake trends to Executive.

## Strategies

### S7.1 Strengthen Family and Carer Support.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S7.1.1</b> Scope, develop, and communicate ways to support carers leave and flexible working options for school pick-ups and school holidays.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027	Gender & LGBTIQ+
<b>S7.1.2</b> Update the Parental Leave Policy to encourage men to take parental leave, allow unpaid portions to be taken flexibly within 24 months of birth or placement, and include provisions for Assisted Reproductive Technology and kinship care for all employees.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027	Gender & LGBTIQ+
<b>S7.1.3</b> Recognise and respond to challenges faced by employees returning from parental leave by embedding insights from MW Parental Leave Experience Survey.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027	Gender & LGBTIQ+

### S7.2 Enhance Awareness of Inclusive Leave Provisions.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S7.2.1</b> Incorporate clear guidance into the Melbourne Water DIB Policy Hub on how employees can access and use personal leave to support physical health needs (such as menstruation, menopause, and chronic health conditions) and extended caring responsibilities.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2028	All Focus Areas

### S7.3 Enhance Flexible Work Practices.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S7.3.1</b> Recruit employees from all levels and demographics to model and normalise flexible work practices and share case studies through delivery of a communications plan organisation wide.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2027–2028	All Focus Areas

# Facilities & Physical Workplace Environments/Conditions

## GEAP alignment: Additional area of focus

### What we know

Melbourne Water’s intersectional site audit and qualitative insights from field-based roles highlight the critical influence of physical environments on safety, inclusion, and belonging. While some inclusive infrastructure exists across our sites, access remains uneven and often fails to meet the needs of employees across gender, cultural, disability, and socio-economic dimensions.

From an accessibility standpoint, features such as accessible bathrooms, meeting rooms, and parking are present at many sites, but lack consistency in design, usability, and booking systems. Sensory-friendly spaces and multi-purpose wellbeing rooms are available but limited, and can lack privacy, appropriate furnishings, or cultural markers. These gaps disproportionately affect employees with disabilities, neurodiverse needs, and chronic health conditions.

Gendered experiences in field environments reveal systemic barriers. Women in field-based roles report inconsistent access to bathrooms with varying hygiene levels, especially during menstruation, and a lack of private, comfortable spaces for expressing milk. Feedback has also highlighted issues with the fit of Personal Protective Equipment and uniforms, limited tools to support physical strength differences, and restricted access to showers and breast/chest feeding facilities.

Cultural safety for First Peoples employees is also limited. Acknowledgement of Country signage is inconsistently displayed, and only one site (head office) currently offers a dedicated yarning circle or known access to a local public one. While some sites include culturally respectful artwork, these elements are often peripheral rather than embedded.

Employee perception data from the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Census reinforces these findings. While overall agreement with the statement “My organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language” is high, there are notable disparities across focus areas, particularly among First Peoples employees, transgender and non-binary employees, and employees with disability. These gaps suggest that while inclusion is apparent to many, it is not yet equitably experienced by all.

Overall, the data underscores the need for a more intentional, intersectional approach to workplace design. Physical environments need to evolve to support diverse identities, life stages, and lived experiences, not only through infrastructure, but through cultural markers, inclusive signage, and equitable access to facilities.

Figure 4: Workplace environments are not experienced equally

Inclusive workplace	Current gaps
Accessible, clean bathrooms	Inconsistent bathroom access and hygiene
Private wellbeing and lactation spaces	Limited private spaces for breastfeeding
PPE and uniforms that fit all bodies	Poor PPE fit and limited equipment options
Cultural elements built into spaces	Cultural elements not embedded
Sensory-friendly and quiet areas	Limited sensory and wellbeing spaces





# Protecting the wetlands for birds

**Ramsar site listing of the Western Port Wetlands**

The Convention of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar, Jan 1971) was aimed to stop the loss of wetlands and their management.

The Western Port Wetlands Ramsar site, which was listed in 1985, is a Ramsar site of international importance.

**Internationally significant**

The Western Port Wetlands Ramsar site is a Ramsar site of international importance. It is a Ramsar site of international importance.

**Working with other countries**

Ramsar Migratory Bird Agreements and their national implementation plans are in place. We work with other countries to protect and manage wetlands.

Photograph by: [Name]

## What we will do

### Measures

- Completion of biannual intersectional site audits across all locations, assessing inclusive infrastructure and cultural markers.
- Percentage of building upgrades, refurbishments, leases, and infrastructure projects that embed intersectional consultation aligned with Melbourne Water’s Intersectional Site Audit metrics.
- Availability and visibility of inclusive facilities (e.g., wellbeing rooms for prayer, chest/breast feeding, and overall wellbeing) via intranet mapping.
- Employee perceptions of safety, accessibility, and inclusion in physical environments (via survey).
- Availability of sanitary products in all bathrooms, including packs for pool cars, and provision of toilet mapping and travel kits for remote work.
- Review and improvement of hot desking conditions, including options for designated desks or permanent storage spaces.
- Representation of diversity through visual materials and signage (e.g., chest/breastfeeding welcome, trans-affirming posters, Indigenous artwork).

### Targets

- By 2027, complete biannual intersectional site audits across 100% of locations and publish findings internally.
- By 2028, ensure 100% of building upgrades and infrastructure projects embed intersectional consultation and inclusive design principles.
- By 2027, provide intranet access to inclusive facility mapping for all employees.
- By 2028, achieve 90% positive employee feedback on safety, accessibility, and inclusion in physical environments (via survey).
- By 2027, sanitary products provided in all bathrooms and packs available for pool cars, and implement toilet mapping and travel kits for remote work.
- By 2027, review hot desking practices and implement improvements for employee wellbeing.
- By 2027, display inclusive visual materials and signage across all sites reflecting all six focus areas.



## Strategies

### S8.1 Enhance Inclusive Infrastructure and Site Audits.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S8.1.1</b> Conduct biannual intersectional site audits across all locations to assess inclusive infrastructure and cultural markers, using findings to drive continuous improvement for safety, access, and belonging.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S8.1.2</b> Embed intersectional consultation into all building upgrades, refurbishments, leases, and infrastructure projects, guided by Melbourne Water’s Intersectional Site Audit metrics (including wellbeing rooms for prayer, chestfeeding, and overall wellbeing).	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S8.1.3</b> Create an intranet page showing the location of inclusive facilities identified in the intersectional site audit, ensuring employees can easily access nearby amenities.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027 ongoing	All Focus Areas



### S8.2 Improve PPE, Uniforms, and Workplace Wellbeing.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S8.2.1</b> Undertake an audit of tools and PPE/uniforms originally designed for male users, and review uniform options to ensure inclusivity for diverse needs, including breathable and cooling fabrics for menopause, and natural fibres with minimal tags and seams for neurodiversity and hypersensitivity.	People & Transformation: Service Delivery	2026 ongoing	Gender, LGBTIQA+, All Focus Areas
<b>S8.2.2</b> Review perceptions of hot desking work conditions and the impact on employee wellbeing. Consider entitling all employees to a designated desk upon request, or spaces and ability to store personal items on a permanent basis.	People & Transformation: Service Delivery	2026 ongoing	Gender, LGBTIQA+, All Focus Areas

### S8.3 Provide Essential Facilities and Amenities.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S8.3.1</b> Provide sanitary products in bathrooms, prioritising main sites initially, with future expansion to include packs for pool cars. Packs will be made available for employees to collect from site offices and place in pool cars as needed, subject to budget availability.	Service Delivery; People & Transformation: Corporate Services	Commence scoping & planning 2026	Gender, Social Disadvantage, LGBTIQA+, All Focus Areas
<b>S8.3.2</b> Enhance existing toilet mapping and provide travel kits for remote work (sanitary products, portable toilets).	Service Delivery; People & Transformation: Corporate Services	Commence scoping & planning 2026	Gender, Social Disadvantage, LGBTIQA+, All Focus Areas
<b>S8.3.3</b> Identify sites where washing machines are required for multipurpose use (e.g., uniforms and garments) and implement rollout accordingly.	Service Delivery; People & Transformation: Corporate Services	Commence scoping & planning 2026	Gender, Social Disadvantage, LGBTIQA+, All Focus Areas

### S8.4 Promote Inclusion Through Visual and Hygiene Standards.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S8.4.1</b> Display a broad variety of visual materials/signage that reflect the diversity of employees, their interests, respect for others, such as Chest/breast Feeding welcome / trans affirming posters and First Peoples artwork.	Service Delivery: People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027	All Focus Areas
<b>S8.4.2</b> Monitor cleanliness of all bathrooms and develop checklists, etiquette, benchmarks, and signage to uphold comfort and dignity standards, particularly in all-gender and accessibility bathrooms. Additionally, ensure signage in accessible bathrooms clearly indicates they are for use by people with impaired mobility, addressing misuse observed across multiple sites.	Service Delivery: People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2027	All Focus Areas

# Workplace Systems & Habits: Policies, Procedures and Practice

## GEAP alignment: Additional area of focus

### What we know

Melbourne Water’s analysis of workplace systems and habits highlights that while inclusive policies are in place, their consistent application in practice remains a challenge. Across all six focus areas, gaps exist between policy intent and how procedures and habits are experienced by employees in their day-to-day work.

To address this, Melbourne Water will undertake a review of key Human Resources policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect inclusive language, equitable processes, and intersectional practice. This work will focus on identifying where current systems may unintentionally reinforce bias, exclusion, or unequal access to opportunity, particularly for employees whose experiences are shaped by multiple, overlapping forms of disadvantage.

Review processes will also consider linguistic accessibility to ensure policies and digital content are inclusive of employees with multilingual backgrounds or varying levels of English proficiency.

An intersectional approach will be applied to examine how policies are written, interpreted, and enacted across different roles and contexts. This includes ensuring that language is inclusive and respectful, that procedures are adaptable to diverse needs, and that practices are consistently applied across teams and locations.

In parallel, we will assess the accessibility of digital systems and platforms, recognising that these are central to how employees engage with workplace processes. This includes ensuring that internal systems are usable by people with disability, neurodiverse employees, and those with varying levels of digital literacy, so that access to information, tools, and support is equitable across the organisation. We will also extend this focus to public-facing platforms, including Melbourne Water’s website, to ensure that customers and community members can access information and services in ways that are inclusive, accessible, and culturally respectful.

As we expand the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across workplace systems, Melbourne Water recognises the need to embed diversity, inclusion, and accessibility into all AI initiatives. While current training focuses on safety and security, considerations of fairness, ethics, and bias mitigation are not yet deeply embedded. A community of practice is in development to ensure AI is approached holistically, dismantling human bias rather than amplifying it, through procurement, data selection and learning models, and end-user applications. This commitment will help ensure that AI-driven systems uphold equity and inclusion at every stage of procurement, design and implementation.

Census data and lived experience insights have shown that while many employees perceive Melbourne Water as inclusive, disparities remain, particularly among First Peoples employees, transgender and non-binary employees, and people with disability. In addition, new questions have been embedded into external customer and community surveys to better understand customer and community experiences of inclusion and accessibility. These results will be monitored over time and used to inform future measures and targets. Together, these insights reinforce the need to move beyond policy statements and embed inclusive practice into the systems that shape everyday working life.

**Figure 5:** Inclusive policies vs everyday experience

<b>Policy</b> <i>What is designed</i>	<b>Practice</b> <i>What employees experience</i>
Inclusive policies in place	Inconsistent application across teams
Fair and equitable processes	Barriers for some groups
Accessible digital systems	Digital systems not always accessible
AI designed to support fairness	Risk of bias in systems and AI
Commitment to inclusion across all areas	Inclusion not experienced equally



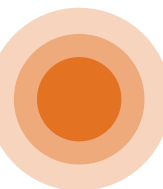
## What we will do

### Measures

- Completion of Digital Accessibility Maturity Assessment for internal and external platforms, including websites, software systems, artificial intelligence, and customer-facing technologies.
- Development and implementation of a prioritised roadmap based on Digital Accessibility Maturity Assessment recommendations.
- Percentage of key HR policies reviewed and updated to ensure inclusive language, equitable processes, and alignment with intersectional principles.
- Adoption and integration of Victorian Government inclusive language guidelines into the Governance Framework.
- Availability of a searchable, plain-language policy hub for Diversity and Inclusion related policies on the intranet, including case studies demonstrating policy application.
- Frequency of leader communications promoting updated policies and monitoring consistent application.
- Awareness and understanding of Workplace Adjustments Policy and its alignment with the social model of disability (via survey).

### Targets

- By 2027, complete Digital Accessibility Maturity Assessment and publish findings internally.
- By 2028, implement at least 80% of prioritised recommendations resulting from the Digital Accessibility Maturity Assessment.
- By 2029, review and update 100% of key HR policies to ensure inclusive language and equitable processes.
- By 2027, embed Victorian Government inclusive language guidelines into Governance Framework.
- By 2027, launch a searchable, plain-language policy hub on the intranet with at least 10 case studies.
- By 2028, achieve improved employee awareness of diversity and inclusion related policies (via survey)
- Annual target: Communicate policy updates and inclusive language guidance to employees and leaders, and monitor consistent application.





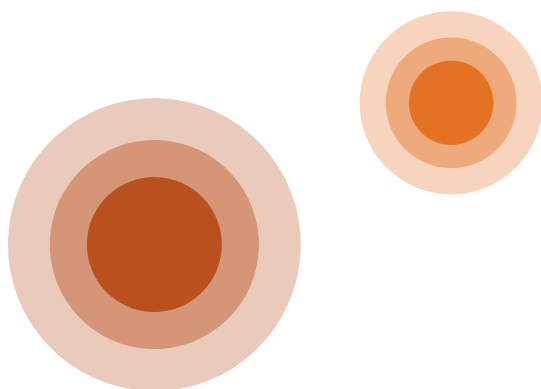
## Strategies

### S9.1 Advance Digital Accessibility and Inclusive Design.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S9.1.1</b> Conduct a Digital Accessibility Maturity Assessment of Melbourne Water’s internal and external digital platforms—including software systems, Artificial Intelligence, websites, and customer-facing technologies—to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improving accessibility and inclusive digital service delivery.	Corporate Services: Customer, Community & External Affairs; People & Transformation	2026 (Commence for second action)	Disability, CARM & Social Disadvantage
<b>S9.1.2</b> Review and assess the recommendations arising from the Digital Accessibility Maturity Assessment, develop & deliver a prioritised roadmap.	Corporate Services: Customer, Community & External Affairs; People & Transformation	2026 (Commence for second action)	Disability, CARM & Social Disadvantage
<b>S9.1.3</b> Explore and implement a technology enabler that allows employees to record and embed the pronunciation of their name in email signatures, Microsoft Teams profiles, and other internal systems where possible, supporting linguistic inclusion and reducing barriers linked to language or accent.	Corporate Services: Customer, Community & External Affairs; People & Transformation	2026 (Commence for second action)	Disability, CARM & Social Disadvantage

## S9.2 Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Policy Frameworks.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S9.2.1</b> Belonging Framework Working groups will identify policies, processes, and procedures where gaps to equity and inclusion exist. They will provide recommendations to policy owners for consideration and potential updates.	Corporate Services: Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation; Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026–2029	All Focus Areas Disability
<b>S9.2.2</b> Create a searchable, plain-language policy hub on the new intranet, incorporating case studies to demonstrate positive outcomes. Develop and implement a communications plan to promote awareness of updated policies, including Workplace Adjustments and their alignment with the social model of disability.	Corporate Services: Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation; Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026–2029	All Focus Areas Disability
<b>S9.2.3</b> Develop inclusive language guidance for developing or reviewing policies and embed into the Governance Framework. Adopt Victorian Government’s inclusive language guide recommendations and embed in policies and communications.	Corporate Services: Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation; Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026–2029	All Focus Areas Disability
<b>S9.2.4</b> Communicate the HR Policy & Procedure Navigation process for enquiries, reporting, and addressing policy interpretation. Monitor for inconsistencies in implementation across teams and work areas and notify policy owners to initiate training or support where required.	Corporate Services: Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation; Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026–2029	All Focus Areas Disability
<b>S9.2.5</b> Embed the Inclusive Language and Practice Guide into the business-wide engagement strategy and business-as-usual (BAU) communications practices, to support all employees to communicate and engage in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, and respectful. This includes updating the current Guide to Inclusive Communications and Engagement and ensuring it is available to all employees. The guide will be regularly reviewed, easy to access, and embedded into internal and external communication and engagement practices.	Corporate Services: Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation; Supported by Belonging Framework	Commence 2026–2029	All Focus Areas Disability



# Inclusive Workplace Culture, Capability & Leadership

## GEAP alignment: Additional area of focus

### What we know

Melbourne Water's audit of workplace culture, capability, and leadership reveals strong foundations in respect and team connection, alongside persistent gaps in inclusion and belonging. Most employees report positive experiences within their immediate workgroups, supported by high agreement that managers treat employees with dignity and respect (89%) and that workgroups treat each other respectfully (87%). However, these experiences are not universal. Census and engagement survey data show inclusion varies significantly across identity groups, roles, and locations, suggesting cultural safety and belonging are unevenly embedded.

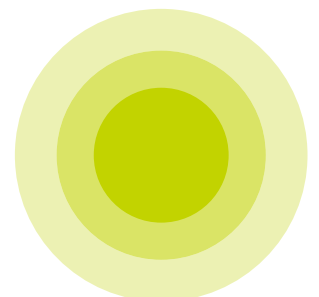
Disparities are most pronounced among transgender and non-binary employees and people with disability, who report lower agreement on authenticity, cultural safety, and feeling valued. 82% of employees overall feel culturally safe at work, 71% feel they belong, and First Peoples employees report 82% for both measures. However, these scores drop to 55% for employees with disability and 66% for transgender, non-binary and gender diverse employees. Respect and dignity perceptions also vary: while men (92%) and carers (91%) report strong confidence in their manager's respect, transgender, non-binary and gender diverse employees score just 60%. For workgroup respect, diverse sexual orientation employees (91% favourable) and carers (89%) rate highly, compared to 80% for transgender, non-binary and gender diverse employees. These gaps highlight that inclusion is shaped not only by identity but also by leadership and team behaviours.

Broader research also shows that cultural safety can be influenced by linguistic identity, including how language and accent shape everyday interactions. Strengthening cultural safety at Melbourne Water will therefore benefit from recognising linguistic diversity as part of inclusive practice.

Leadership capability is emerging as a critical factor. Intent is strong, yet inconsistent modelling of cultural humility and psychological safety creates uneven experiences and reinforces perceptions of exclusion. Gendered assumptions about leadership style and ambition persist, influencing progression and representation. While gender parity at the Executive level (66.7% women) signals progress, only 45% of women across other levels believe they have an equal chance at promotion, with lower scores for women with disability, culturally diverse women, and gender diverse employees. Capability uplift is underway, supported by mandatory e-learning modules: Code of Conduct (97.2% completion rate), First Peoples Cultural Awareness (90%), Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion (83%), and both Family and Domestic Violence and Accessibility Inclusion (77%). However, high participation does not automatically translate into consistent behaviour change, and feedback suggests inclusive practices remain optional rather than integral to everyday work.

Accessibility gaps persist, with employees with disability reporting lower cultural safety and belonging, reflecting systemic and attitudinal barriers. Financial stress linked to external economic factors also intersects with other vulnerabilities, amplifying disadvantage for carers, women, and employees experiencing social disadvantage.

Overall, Melbourne Water's culture is respectful and collaborative, yet inclusion is uneven. Closing gaps in belonging, leadership representation, and psychological safety requires embedding inclusive behaviours and systems, not just intent. These insights directly inform Strategy S10, which focuses on cultural safety, inclusive behaviours, accessibility, financial wellbeing, and leadership accountability to create a workplace where every employee can participate fully and authentically.



# What we will do

## Measures

- Employee perceptions of psychological safety, respectful behaviours, cultural safety, and belonging (via PMS and engagement survey)
- Participation in intersectional learning and leadership capability programs (Executive, Senior and People Leaders).
- Implementation and usage of the Inclusion Passport.
- Representation of Executive and Senior Leaders at Days of Significance and intersectional events.

## Targets

- By 2028, achieve ≥80% favourable responses on questions relating to psychological safety, respectful behaviours, cultural safety, and belonging in PMS and engagement surveys
- By 2028, achieve 80% participation in intersectional training and events for Executive, Senior and People Leaders combined.
- By 2027, fully implement the Inclusion Passport and achieve 80% awareness and usage among eligible employees (via survey).

## Strategies

### S10.1 Enhance Employee Experience and Cultural Safety.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S10.1.1</b> Explore embedding intersectional, cultural and psychological safety questions into Exit Interview surveys and in person exit interviews, with themes utilised to inform continuous improvement.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2028 ongoing	All Focus Areas
<b>S10.1.2</b> Develop opportunities for employees with lived experience to share in their experience in ways that assure they are safe and respected (e.g., Days of significance, intersectional trainings, podcast).	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2028 ongoing	All Focus Areas

### S10.2 Support Financial Wellbeing and Inclusive Behaviours.

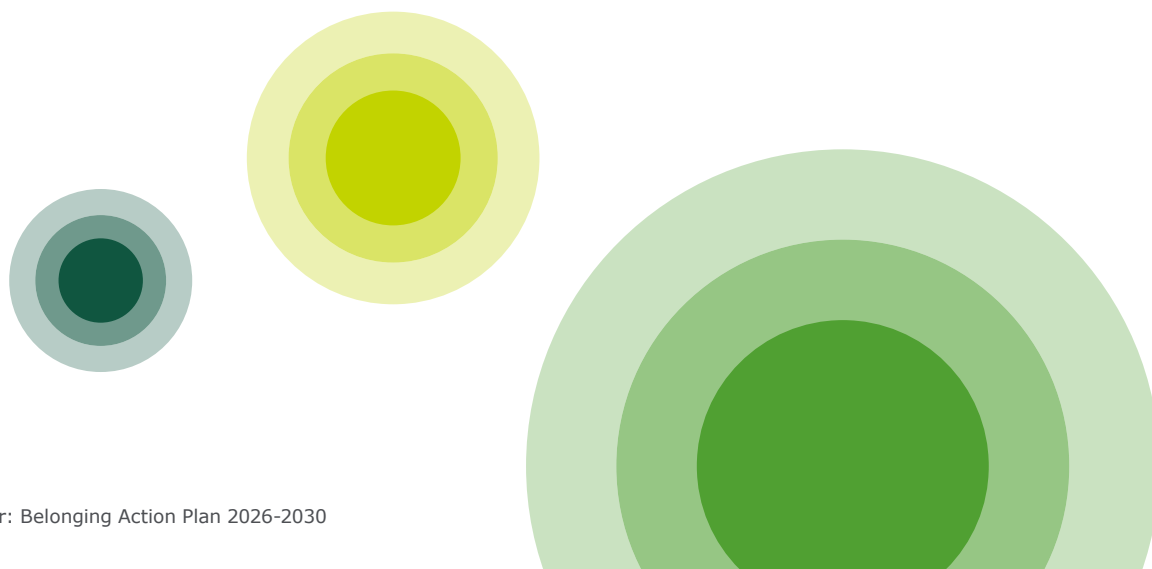
Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S10.2.1</b> Design and implement targeted initiatives that both support employees experiencing financial hardship and promote financial literacy across the employee lifecycle.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2028 ongoing	Social
<b>S10.2.2</b> Develop and publish a set of inclusive behaviours in alignment with MW values with tangible examples that demonstrate ways to enact those values, across the organisation.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2028 ongoing	Social
<b>S10.2.3</b> Support operation of the Early Career Network to strengthen connection, amplify engagement, and foster a culture of inclusion across Melbourne Water and the broader water sector	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2028 ongoing	Social

### S10.3 Advance Workplace Adjustments & accessibility.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<p><b>S10.3.1</b> Embed the Victorian Public Sector Commission’s Workplace Adjustment and Arrangement Passport (Inclusion Passport) into workplace practices to support inclusion for employees with disability, neurodivergence, caring responsibilities, and other diverse needs. (Supported by a targeted communications campaign and integrated into onboarding, flexible work, and return-to-work processes). We will provide workplace adjustments to enable employees to perform their roles, only declining where an adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship under the Disability Discrimination Act.</p>	<p>People &amp; Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework</p>	<p>2026 ongoing</p>	<p>Disability &amp; CARM</p>

### S10.4 Embed Intersectional Learning and Inclusive Practices.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<p><b>S10.4.1</b> Embed Intersectional Learning Across the Organisation by delivering annual training across all six focus areas (including Respect at Work, family &amp; domestic violence, prioritising neurodiversity, personalising Acknowledgement of Country, pronouns campaign, AI and DIB), ensuring participation across all portfolios, levels, and demographic groups. Formal foundational training will be delivered through bite-size sessions co-designed &amp; delivered by the DIB team and Belonging Framework Working Groups, and advanced sessions available annually. Informal learning will be delivered through podcasts.</p>	<p>People &amp; Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework</p>	<p>2026 onwards</p>	<p>All Focus Areas First Peoples</p>
<p><b>S10.4.2</b> Annually monitor and report on participation in intersectional training, including e-learns, by occupational group, with a specific focus on tracking attendance of Senior and People Leaders. Insights will inform targeted engagement strategies and support accountability for inclusive leadership development across all portfolios.</p>	<p>People &amp; Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework</p>	<p>2026 onwards</p>	<p>All Focus Areas First Peoples</p>
<p><b>S10.4.3</b> Uplift leader capability to ‘builds engaged, connected, and effective teams’ as part of the Leadership Framework through leaders completing at least one intersectional event or training activity per year.</p>	<p>People &amp; Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework</p>	<p>2026 onwards</p>	<p>All Focus Areas First Peoples</p>
<p><b>S10.4.4</b> Deliver at minimum one larger scale day of significance event per focus area, incorporating intersectionality in design and topic content, inclusive of calls to action.</p>	<p>People &amp; Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework</p>	<p>2026 onwards</p>	<p>All Focus Areas First Peoples</p>



## S10.5 Executive and Senior Leadership Engagement.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S10.5.1</b> Melbourne Water Executive and Senior Leadership will be represented at Days of Significance Events & Intersectional Trainings across all six areas of focus.	Senior Leadership Group (SLG): Executive Leadership Group (ELG)	2026–2028	All Focus Areas
<b>S10.5.2</b> Melbourne Water Executive and Senior Leaders continue to support and be involved with operations of the Belonging Framework.	Senior Leadership Group (SLG): Executive Leadership Group (ELG)	2026–2028	All Focus Areas
<b>S10.5.3</b> Leaders role model Belonging values at public events, when working with stakeholders and at employee events (such as end of year celebrations, family days, team building events).	Senior Leadership Group (SLG): Executive Leadership Group (ELG)	2026–2028	All Focus Areas

## S10.6 Embed Inclusive Leadership into Performance and Development.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S10.6.1</b> Integration of leadership expectations into the 'Performance, Opportunity & Development' framework, with clear measures and targets related to this plan, ensuring that the philosophy of belonging and connection is embedded. A concise one-page summary of these expectations will be developed and circulated to leaders to provide transparency and reinforce accountability.	People & Transformation	2026–2029 commence	All Focus Areas
<b>S10.6.2</b> Include a standard leadership behaviour in all leadership role mandates that focuses on building engaged, connected, inclusive, and effective teams, and, where applicable, delivering on actions assigned within organisational plans (e.g., Belonging Action Plan).	People & Transformation	2026–2029 commence	All Focus Areas
<b>S10.6.3</b> Integration of inclusive leadership expectations into leadership development initiatives, monitoring and reporting on attendance.	People & Transformation	2026–2029 commence	All Focus Areas
<b>S10.6.4</b> Create dedicated learning and development opportunities that support diverse and underrepresented people to enhance career pathways into leadership, these opportunities will align with the philosophy of experience, exposure and education (70:20:10 model).	People & Transformation	2026–2029 commence	All Focus Areas

## S10.7 Advance Progress, Inclusive Recognition and Benchmarking.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S10.7.1</b> Explore external recognition opportunities across each of our six focus areas — including the Australian Workplace Equality Index (Foundational level), the Access and Inclusion Index, the Indigenous Works Employer of Choice accreditation, the Carer-Inclusive Workplace accreditation, the Diversity Council Australia Inclusive Employer Index, the Menopause Friendly Workplace accreditation, and the Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace accreditation.	People & Transformation	2030	
<b>S10.7.2</b> Develop and publish an Annual Belonging Summary from 2027, providing a snapshot of progress and next steps.	People & Transformation	2027	All Focus Areas

# Community & Sector Impact

## GEAP alignment: Additional area of focus

### What we know

Melbourne Water’s commitment to community impact recognises that our influence extends beyond infrastructure and service delivery. In particular, we are committed to supporting communities, including regional areas, that may have limited access to resources. As a large organisation, we have a responsibility to promote equity, wellbeing, and inclusion within our workforce and across the communities we serve.

Insights from the Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Census and the Social Disadvantage Working Group show that financial stress, social isolation, and limited access to support disproportionately impact women, carers, and those with intersecting experiences of disadvantage – in and beyond the workplace. Gender inequality is evident in financial pressures faced by women in lower-paid roles outside of work, and in the limited presence of women-led partnerships and procurement decisions.

#### To strengthen community impact, Melbourne Water will focus on five strategies:

1. Increase uptake of volunteer leave: All permanent full-time employees are entitled to two days of paid volunteer leave annually, totalling 2,532 days across the organisation, yet only 95 days were used in Financial Year (FY) 2024 and 131 in FY2025. We will promote volunteering aligned to our six focus areas, partner with relevant organisations, and share impact stories to build a culture of giving back.

2. Uplift social procurement practices: We will prioritise suppliers aligned with our Belonging Framework, including social enterprises such as Little Social, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, All Things Equal, STREAT, First Peoples-led providers, and women-led businesses. Everyday procurement, like catering and consulting, will support inclusive economic participation.
3. Support inclusive decision-making through Equity Impact Assessments (EIA): Our EIA tool assesses public-facing projects through an intersectional lens. The next phase will focus on embedding the tool, increasing understanding and uptake across the organisation.
4. Align with Melbourne Water’s Vulnerability Commitment: We will embed vulnerability awareness into internal practices and external partnerships to help build a fairer, more inclusive, and resilient water sector.
5. Improve visibility of social impact: We will share stories of volunteering, partnerships, and inclusion through internal communications, social media, and community events to build pride, trust, and support.

Melbourne Water also plays a role in influencing inclusion across the national water and public sector through collaboration and shared learning.

Figure 6: Volunteer leave: available vs used





## What we will do

### Measures

- Employee awareness, participation, and uptake of volunteer leave through the Belonging Volunteering Program, disaggregated by gender and diversity demographics (via survey and HR data).
- Number of community partnerships and sector collaboration initiatives established to advance diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Completion and integration of Equity Impact Assessments into major projects and policy decisions.
- Implementation of social procurement practices, including supplier diversity and spend aligned to six focus areas.
- Melbourne Water aligns its approach to Family and Domestic Violence with the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) Family and Domestic Violence Framework through a sector-aligned self-assessment and priority improvement plan across the Customer and Employee streams.

### Targets

- By 2030, increase uptake of volunteer leave by 50% compared to baseline, with representation across all focus areas, supported by improved employee awareness and engagement in community and volunteering programs.
- By 2028, establish at least 7 community partnerships and five sector collaboration initiatives.
- By 2027, integrate Equity Impact Assessments into >80% of major projects and policy decisions.
- By 2029, embed social procurement and responsibility requirements into 100% of new or materially varied procurement policies and contracts.
- A WSAA-aligned Family and Domestic Violence self-assessment is completed by 2027, with identified priority improvements agreed and scheduled for implementation by 2028.

## Strategies

### S11.1 Strengthen External Influence and Sector Collaboration.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S11.1.1</b> Strengthen Melbourne Water’s external influence by continuing to lead and participate in collaborative diversity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives across the water sector and Victorian Public Sector (with a strong focus on regional). This includes sharing tools, resources, and learnings; co-hosting inclusive events; and contributing to sector-wide strategies, benchmarks, frameworks and reports that promote equity and belonging.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S11.1.2</b> Annually monitor and report on customer and community perceptions of MW being a diverse, inclusive and respectful organisation.	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas First Peoples
<b>S11.1.3</b> Write annual collaborative national features piece for the Koori Mail, Aboriginal Times, Victorian Aboriginal News or 3 Kook 'N Deadly (3KND).	People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas First Peoples

### S11.2 Advance Equity Impact Assessment Practices.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S11.2.1</b> Undertake a review of the current Equity Impact Assessment platform to evaluate its usability, accessibility, and integration within existing workflows.	Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation	2026–2027	All Focus Areas
<b>S11.2.2</b> Strengthen organisational understanding and application of Equity Impact Assessments by embedding targeted education, leadership modelling, and accountability mechanisms.	Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation	2026–2027	All Focus Areas

### S11.3 Embed Social Procurement and Responsibility.

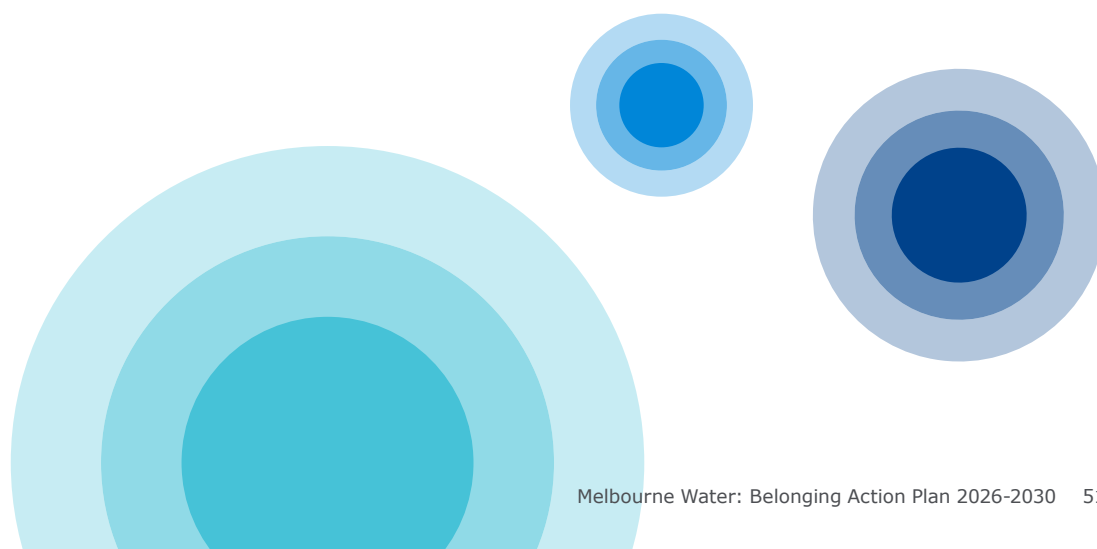
Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S11.3.1</b> Undertake foundational work to support the launch of the Procurement with Purpose campaign by identifying and onboarding new suppliers aligned with Melbourne Water’s six focus areas.	Corporate Services: People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S11.3.2</b> Implement and monitor the Procurement with Purpose campaign to uplift inclusive and socially responsible procurement practices, particularly in lower-value categories. Track supplier diversity, spend, and social impact across key focus areas, and report annually on outcomes to inform continuous improvement and demonstrate social value.	Corporate Services: People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2029	All Focus Areas
<b>S11.3.3</b> Expand social procurement and responsibility in Melbourne Water’s procurement policy and framework to include the six areas of focus, beyond gender equality. Consult with the Social Enterprise Community of Practice, where possible, on defining further diversity, accessibility, and inclusion metrics across contracts and tender criteria.	Corporate Services: People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2029	All Focus Areas

#### S11.4 Promote Community Engagement and Volunteering.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S11.4.1</b> Establish and promote an intersectional Belonging Volunteering Program that increases uptake of volunteer leave through partnerships with community organisations and schools, and targeted communications.	Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2030	All Focus Areas
<b>S11.4.2</b> Establish a MW Belonging philanthropic fund to resource local projects that support organisations that represent all six focus areas (minimum one organisation per focus area).	Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2030	All Focus Areas
<b>S11.4.3</b> Include key information about community events, funding opportunities, days of significance, MW volunteer activities and opportunities to get involved in a community newsletter, social media, and external website news stories, monitoring engagement.	Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation: Supported by Belonging Framework	2026–2030	All Focus Areas

#### S11.5 Strengthen Melbourne Water’s response to Family and Domestic Violence for employees, customers and communities.

Steps	Accountabilities	Timelines	Focus
<b>S11.5.1</b> Work with the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) and sector partners to implement and progressively uplift sector and Melbourne Water’s approach to Family and Domestic Violence (FDV), guided by the WSAA Family and Domestic Violence Framework and Toolkit. This includes undertaking a self-assessment across the Customer and Employee streams, identifying priority improvements, embedding Safety by Design principles, and strengthening support pathways for employees, customers and communities experiencing FDV.	Customer, Community & External Affairs: People & Transformation	2026 ongoing	All Focus Areas







# Appendix 1: Resourcing

## GEAP alignment: Sections 13 & 14

### Resourcing and delivery approach

The Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 is delivered through Melbourne Water’s Belonging Framework, an organisation-wide model supporting action across six focus areas: First Peoples, Gender Equality, Disability, LGBTIQ+, Culturally and Racially Marginalised communities, and Social Disadvantage. The framework embeds responsibility for delivery across the organisation, supported by dedicated capability, governance, and reporting.

### Governance and accountability

#### Accountability for delivery sits at multiple levels:

- Executive General Managers are responsible for leading inclusion within their portfolios and embedding actions into business planning.
- Belonging Ambassadors (People Leaders and Senior Leaders) guide implementation and support delivery across focus areas.
- The Executive Leadership Group provides oversight, with formal reporting to the Board through the People, Customers and Community Committee.
- The Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) Team maintains the framework, coordinates delivery, and provides advisory support.

### Dedicated and embedded resources

#### Melbourne Water has allocated dedicated resourcing to support implementation, including:

- Two permanent DIB roles (Manager and Advisor)
- An annual operating budget to support codesign, engagement, data analysis, monitoring tools, and communications

In addition, delivery of actions is embedded within core business functions, including people systems and payroll, talent and workforce planning, learning and development, facilities and works delivery, health and wellbeing, communications, procurement, Aboriginal engagement, and digital systems. This ensures actions are integrated into existing roles, budgets, and operational processes.

### Monitoring and adjustment

#### Progress is monitored through:

- Quarterly reporting to the Executive Leadership Group
- Annual reporting to the Board
- Ongoing review of audit data, People Matter Survey results, and workforce metrics
- A digital dashboard tracking delivery and outcomes of actions

Where resourcing gaps are identified, Melbourne Water will address these through internal reprioritisation, business planning processes, or strategic partnerships. This approach ensures the plan remains adequately resourced, responsive, and embedded across the organisation.

# Appendix 2: Definitions

<b>Belonging Framework</b>	Melbourne Water’s operating model for delivering diversity, inclusion and belonging.
<b>Contact Officer</b>	An employee providing confidential resource support.
<b>Cultural Safety</b>	Feeling respected and able to express cultural identity without discrimination or harm.
<b>Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	A tool to assess whether programs, projects or services have fair impacts.
<b>Focus Areas</b>	<p>Relates to our six areas of focus and also referred to within this document as diversity demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander peoples: First Peoples</li> <li>• LGBTIQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, and Asexual (Language &amp; Terminology – Pride in Diversity)</li> <li>• Gender Equality: It is the equal treatment of all genders. It means all genders will enjoy the same rights, opportunities, responsibilities and protections.</li> <li>• Disability: Including Physical, Intellectual, Sensory, Neurological, Learning, Immunological disability, Mental illness and Physical disfigurement.</li> <li>• Social Disadvantage: People and/or communities that experience inequitable access to financial, employment, or social opportunities, resulting from the multitude of circumstances that can culminate in disadvantage.</li> <li>• Culturally and racially Marginalised (CARM): As defined by the Diversity Council Australia, this term refers to people who experience racialisation and marginalisation because of their perceived race, ethnicity, culture, cultural background or related identity markers. This includes people whose cultural, racial, or linguistic identities place them at risk of discrimination, prejudice or exclusion within Australian society. The inclusion of “culturally” recognises that marginalisation can occur not only on the basis of race, but also through cultural heritage, practices, or language and accent.</li> </ul>
<b>GE Indicator</b>	Gender Equality Indicator: measures defined in the Gender Equality Act 2020
<b>Gender Affirmation</b>	The personal process of living as one’s affirmed gender.
<b>Inclusive Language</b>	Language that avoids bias and respects all identities, including linguistic identity (e.g., language and accent).
<b>Inclusive Leadership</b>	Inclusive leadership is a leadership approach that actively seeks to value, respect, and leverage the full diversity of people. It’s about creating an environment where everyone feels safe, supported, and like they belong and are encouraged to contribute – regardless of background, identity, role, or perspective.
<b>Intersectionality</b>	Recognising overlapping forms of advantage or disadvantage based on combined identity.



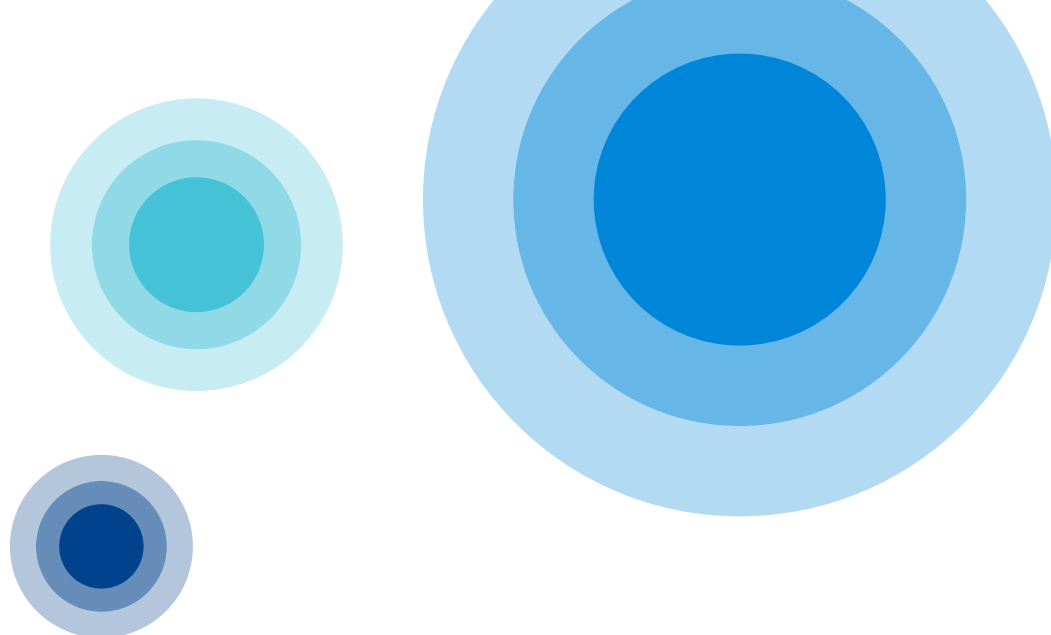
<b>Occupational Group</b>	Categories of roles with similar functions or conditions.
<b>Occupational Segregation</b>	When certain jobs are dominated by one gender or group due to systemic barriers.
<b>Protected Attributes</b>	Protected attributes are aspects of identity that are protected under Victorian and Commonwealth anti-discrimination law, including gender, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, cultural or linguistic background, First Peoples identity, disability, age, religious belief, parental or carer status, marital status, pregnancy, breastfeeding, industrial activity, and political belief.
<b>Psychological Safety</b>	Feeling safe to speak up without fear of blame or punishment.
<b>Psychosocial Safety</b>	Refers to how well work systems, practices, and behaviours protect people from psychological harm.
<b>Social Model of Disability</b>	Recognises people are disabled more by societal barriers than impairment.
<b>Trauma-Informed</b>	An approach that recognises past trauma and prioritises safety and empowerment.
<b>Upstander Behaviour</b>	Actions taken to challenge disrespectful behaviour or support others.
<b>Voluntary Diversity &amp; Inclusion Information Form (VDIIF)</b>	A confidential form to share identity information to identify equity gaps.



# Appendix 3: Gender Equality Action Plan Compliance Mapping

This appendix outlines how the Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 aligns with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020 and the 2026 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) guidance and assessment rubric. The plan is submitted as Melbourne Water’s GEAP for the 2026–2030 cycle. The references below indicate where each GEAP section, workplace gender equality indicator, and permitted additional focus area is addressed within the plan.

<b>GE Section 1:</b>	<u>Insights from previous Diversity, Inclusion &amp; Belonging Action Plans.</u>
<b>GE Section 2:</b>	<u>Development of the Belonging Action Plan.</u>
<b>GE Section 3:</b>	<u>Statement of Commitment from the Managing Director.</u>
<b>GE Section 4:</b>	<u>Intersectional Data Analysis: Identifying forms of inequity.</u>
<b>GE Section 5:</b>	<u>Intersectional Data Analysis: Identifying forms of inequity.</u>
<b>GE Section 6:</b>	<u>Development of the Belonging Action Plan.</u>
<b>GE Section 7:</b>	<u>Consideration of (intersectional) gender equality and pay equity principles.</u>



<b>GE Section 8:</b>	<u>Consideration of (intersectional) gender equality and pay equity principles &amp; Pay Equity.</u>
<b>GE Section 9:</b>	Embedded throughout the plan and explicitly addressed in <u>Consideration of (intersectional) gender equality and pay equity principles</u> and <u>Intersectional Data Analysis: Identifying forms of inequity.</u>
<b>GE Section 10:</b>	<u>Introduction – The Case for Belonging: Why it matters.</u>
<b>GE Section 11:</b>	<u>Intersectional Data Analysis: Identifying forms of inequity.</u>
<b>GE Section 12:</b>	All GE Indicator sections and additional focus areas, including strategy tables with measures, targets, accountabilities and timelines.
<b>GE Section 13:</b>	<u>Appendix 1: Resourcing.</u>
<b>GE Section 14:</b>	<u>Appendix 1: Resourcing.</u>
<b>GE Indicator 1:</b>	<u>Diversity Demographics at all levels of the workforce.</u>
<b>GE Indicator 2:</b>	<u>Diversity Composition of the Governing Body.</u>
<b>GE Indicator 3:</b>	<u>Pay Equity.</u>
<b>GE Indicator 4:</b>	<u>Respectful &amp; Safe Workplace Culture: addressing harassment, bullying &amp; discrimination.</u>
<b>GE Indicator 5:</b>	<u>Fair Hiring &amp; Career Progression.</u>
<b>GE Indicator 6:</b>	<u>Intersectional Leave Entitlements: Availability and utilisation.</u>
<b>GE Indicator 7:</b>	<u>Diversity Segregation within the workplace.</u>
<b>Additional focus area:</b>	<u>Facilities and physical workplace environments and conditions.</u>
<b>Additional focus area:</b>	<u>Workplace systems, habits, policies and procedures.</u>
<b>Additional focus area:</b>	<u>Inclusive workplace culture, capability and leadership.</u>
<b>Additional focus area:</b>	<u>Community and sector impact.</u>

# Appendix 4:

## Legislative Alignment

The Melbourne Water Belonging Action Plan 2026–2030 functions as a single, integrated framework that brings together Melbourne Water’s diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging commitments. It enables coordinated, parallel action across the organisation while maintaining distinct focus areas to ensure that the experiences, outcomes, and progress of different communities remain visible, measurable, and accountable over time.

This plan is submitted as Melbourne Water’s Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) for the 2026–2030 cycle. It also fulfils the requirements of Melbourne Water’s Disability Action Plan for the purposes of section 38 of the Disability Act 2006 (Vic), and serves as an Accessibility Action Plan aligned with the Victorian Public Sector Commission’s accessibility focus areas. Each section of the plan includes a reference to its alignment with the GEAP template, with detailed compliance mapping provided in [Appendix 3: Gender Equality Action Plan Compliance Mapping](#).

In addition, the plan operates as a central enabling framework that supports compliance with a broader suite of legislation, reforms, standards, and regulatory obligations, listed below, that shape safe, fair, inclusive, and equitable workplaces.

### Workplace equality, inclusion and human rights

- Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), including *Respect@Work* reforms
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

### Workplace health, safety and wellbeing

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic), including psychosocial health and safety
- Victorian Government Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework
- Australian Human Rights Commission guidance on harassment prevention, accessibility, and discrimination

### Employment, governance and public sector standards

- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic), including public sector values and employment principles
- Victorian Public Sector Commission policies and guidance relating to inclusive workplaces, accessibility, and workforce capability

### First Peoples, community and social responsibility

- First Peoples Self Determination and Treaty Frameworks (Victoria)
- Victorian Government Social Procurement Framework
- Child Safe Standards (where applicable)

### Privacy and data protection

- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

*Post-publication, Melbourne Water may also choose to lodge this plan with the Australian Human Rights Commission’s Disability Action Plan Register to support transparency and sector best practice.*



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