



# Echuca Regional Health

*Supporting everyone to be healthy and live well*

## **Echuca Regional Health Gender Equality Progress Report 2024**



# Background

Gender equality is achieved when women, men and gender diverse people can all access and enjoy resources and opportunities regardless of gender. As a defined entity under the [Gender Equality Act \(2020\)](#), Echuca Regional Health is obligated to play a key role in advancing towards gender equality in Victoria.

As part of our obligations, Echuca Regional Health must complete 5 key activities to meet requirements under the Gender Equality Act 2020.

1. Promote gender equality
2. Conduct gender impact assessments
3. Undertake a workplace gender audit
4. Create a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)
5. Report on progress

To view ERH's Gender Equality Action Plan and gender equality data insights please click the link below:

[Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector - Insights Portal - Dashboard Form - Homepage Tab Homepage Page](#)

ERH is committed to achieving gender equality through a number of strategies which align with the Gender Equality Act:

1. Gender composition of governing bodies
2. Gender composition at all levels of the workforce
3. Gender pay equity
4. Workplace sexual harassment
5. Recruitment and promotion
6. Leave and flexibility
7. Gendered workforce segregation

ERH's progress within the above indicators highlights where gender inequalities exist and where progress is needed.

Over the past 2 years ERH has made significant progress towards promoting gender equality in the workplace. In February 2024, ERH was required to submit a progress report to demonstrate what actions have been taken towards achieving workplace gender equality. The Gender Equality Commissioner performed a review of this report and found that ERH had met requirements under the Gender Equality Act 2020 and our progress report was deemed compliant.

# Measures Against the 7 Gender Equality Indicators

1

## Gender composition of governing bodies

In 2021, the composition of the ERH Board of Directors maintained a balanced 50/50 split between genders, a pattern which persists through 2023. Similarly, the executive team exhibited a notable representation of 71% women in 2021, a figure that has since risen significantly, with 100% female representation in 2023.

2

## Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

In 2021, ERH disclosed that out of 842 employees, 84.4% were women, with a significant portion—94.3%—of these women engaged in part-time or casual positions. However, by 2023, ERH has observed a rise in female employment, now constituting 87% of the workforce, coupled with a decline in women occupying part-time or casual roles, which now stands at 86.6%.

This trend suggests a notable shift towards full-time employment for women within ERH. Our analysis indicates that the enhanced provision of flexible work arrangements, including remote work options, has been instrumental in facilitating this positive transition.

We note that our workforce is predominately female so have a strong and large pool of candidates to enable promotions for women. With this in mind we always strive to ensure our processes are positioned to encourage an inclusive and equal employment opportunity for all.

### 3

## **Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender**

GEAP indicators highlight a gender pay gap of 10.6% when considering median base salaries, with women earning \$89 for every \$100 earned by men. Discrepancies in remuneration for positions at Level 5 and below (non-management) predominantly stem from nuances within the EBA pertaining to years of service and qualifications.

At Level 4 (middle management), the demographic composition reflects 61% female and 39% male employees. However, notable disparities persist, with male employees receiving an average base full-time wage exceeding \$110,000 per annum, while their female counterparts receive an average base full-time wage below \$100,000.

Levels 3 and 2 (Director and Executive) exhibit a marked gender imbalance, with 98% female representation. It's worth noting that the sole male member in senior management receives 14% higher base salary than female counterparts at the director level, despite being subject to the same EBA.

Immediate work shall be undertaken in this area to ensure further legacy issues do not continue to emerge and we do not find ourselves in an unexplainable gender pay gap disparity.

### 4

## **Sexual harassment in the workplace**

An analysis of our People Matter Survey reveals a slight improvement in reported incidents of sexual harassment. In 2021, the figure stood at 7%, which marginally decreased to 6% by 2023.

Of those who reported experiencing sexual harassment, a significant majority, accounting for 54%, identified the source as a colleague. However, it is concerning to note that an overwhelming 97% of these incidents went unreported.

It is also worth noting the 2021 PM Survey had an update rate of 31% with the 2023 uptake rate at 62%. The volume of information now provides a clearer view of the majority of the workforce.

We note we have significant work to undertake in this area including an alternate path to reporting that is considered safe and reliable as well as education. Our resources in the people and culture team (HR, education and OHS) have not enabled this work to be carried out as yet.

## 5

**Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace**

ERH conducted a thorough spot audit encompassing 24 positions filled in 2023, revealing an average candidate composition of 33.75% male across these roles.

In conjunction with this audit, our PMS data has provided valuable insights:

- A noteworthy 9% increase in employee agreement regarding ERH's impartial allocation of work, irrespective of gender.
- A substantial 17% increase in employee agreement regarding the fairness of ERH's recruitment processes.
- An encouraging 9% rise in employee concurrence regarding the fairness of ERH's promotion processes.

To fortify our commitment to inclusivity, ERH has diligently embedded inclusive practices within our HR policies and systems. These measures ensure the accessibility and equity of ERH entitlements, systems, and practices for all employees.

## 6

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

The results of the 2021 PM survey revealed that 69% of employees acknowledged ERH's support for individuals requiring Family Violence Leave. Notably, by 2023, this figure had risen to 83%.

Furthermore, when surveyed about their confidence in ERH's support for and consideration of flexible work options, 64% of employees expressed agreement—a notable increase of 13% from 2021.

Additionally, our PMS data indicates that 79% of employees availed themselves of some form of Flexible Work arrangement in 2023.

Prior to 2023, the formal recording of flexible work arrangements within a reportable system was not a standard practice at ERH. However, the recent emphasis on promoting Flexible Work and the equitable rewriting of policies have significantly bolstered the prevalence of requests for FWA in 2023.

## 7

### **Gendered segregation within the workplace**

Our data continues to demonstrate we have strong representation of women across the majority of our workplace including in leadership positions, noting our Board Chair, CEO and entire executive team are female. We also have a 50% female representation of Board members and 90% across our manager group.

We have limited data available regarding identified non-binary and broader intersectionality diversity that has affected our ability to specifically implement improvements and track progress.

Careers in engineering, maintenance and ICT continue to be male dominated both at industry sector level and locally at ERH. Further work to attract entry level candidates into these career opportunities is planned for 2024 and 2025.

### **Detailed progress report**

Progress Report June 2023



## Echuca Regional Health's next areas of focus

- Continue to promote gender equality throughout the ERH workspace, including staff education and embedding of Gender Impact Assessments for new policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public.
- Continue to educate staff and improve on providing a safe and supportive system for reporting of sexual harassment
- Focus on gender balanced recruitment, including attracting more female candidates to careers in engineering, maintenance and ICT, which continue to be male dominated
- All recruitment promotions and processes include strong messaging regarding flexible work options including providing part-time management roles. Managers are encouraged to be flexible in their thinking and workforce structures that enable this flexibility. This is important as a majority female workplace and capitalising on our 24/7 industry and the opportunity that provides for work/life balance options.
- Improve diversity and inclusion data collection



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