

# Fair Work Ombudsman **Gender Equality Action Plan**

2018 - 2021



Australian Government

**Fair Work**  
OMBUDSMAN

## **FOREWORD**

I am proud to present the Fair Work Ombudsman Gender Equality Action Plan 2018-21.

This plan is the outcome of an extensive review of gender equality across the agency in a range of areas.

We excel in many areas including our leading approach to family and domestic violence, and our overall percentage of women which at 62% is higher than the Australian Public Service (APS) average of 59%.

However, we recognise that more needs to be done.

This action plan sets out our next steps to achieving gender equality at the Fair Work Ombudsman. Our objectives and stretch targets reflect the action areas outlined in Balancing the future: the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-19 (APS Strategy).

Achieving gender equality in the Fair Work Ombudsman will be driven by the three principles outlined in the APS Strategy:

1. **Transformational change** – our leaders, managers, and supervisors will be bold in creating inclusive workplace cultures.
2. **Commitment** – our leaders will give priority to ensuring gender equality at the Fair Work Ombudsman and will allocate resources accordingly.
3. **Accountability** – our leaders at all levels are accountable for driving gender equality at the Fair Work Ombudsman.

This action plan puts forward an approach to embed gender equality across our agency in our culture, leadership and systems.

To ensure gender equality is given a continued and consistent emphasis, we will frequently measure and evaluate our approach, reporting regularly to our Executive Committee.

By taking this approach, we will exemplify the model contemporary workplace – one which is inclusive, embraces diversity and recognises the skills and potential of all employees, regardless of their gender.

I encourage all staff to consider how they can personally contribute to the achievement of gender equality at the Fair Work Ombudsman.

### **Janine Webster**

Fair Work Ombudsman Gender Equality  
Network Sponsor  
June 2018



## This action plan is guided by the APS Strategy and sets out our approach to progressing gender equality at the Fair Work Ombudsman.

### Current state



#### CULTURE

**87%** of employees think we are committed to creating a diverse workforce.

**85%** of employees think our workplace culture supports people to achieve a good work-life balance<sup>1</sup>.



#### LEADERSHIP

**We have higher participation by women at all classification levels** except for EL2 (38%), SES Band 1 (44%) and SES Band 2 (33%)<sup>2</sup>.

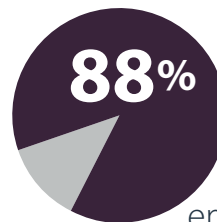


#### EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Gender imbalance exists in some branches.



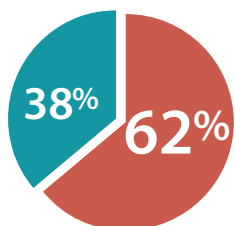
#### FLEXIBILITY



**88%** of employees are satisfied with their non-monetary employment conditions such as leave, flexible work arrangements and other benefits<sup>1</sup>.



#### MEASUREMENT



We are **62% women** and **38% men**, and no employees have identified as gender X<sup>4</sup>.

**25%** of employees work on a part-time basis, made up of 90% women and 10% men<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Agency 2017 APS Employee Census results. Note that percentages relate to employees who responded to the survey.

<sup>2</sup> Substantively, there are 37 Executive Level (EL) 2, nine Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 1, and three Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 2 employees as at 31 December 2017.

<sup>3</sup> As at 31 December 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Collection of data on gender X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified) commenced on 1 July 2016 as recommended by the [Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender](#). As this is a recent change gender X is likely to be under-represented in staffing data, taken at 31 December 2017.

# Our objectives

The action areas in the APS Strategy have been considered in the context of our current environment at the Fair Work Ombudsman, and the following objectives have been identified as the biggest contributors to our gender equality progress. Stretch targets have been set for each objective to indicate how we will measure success. Our action plan sets out how we will achieve these objectives.

<b>Our objectives</b> What we aim to achieve	<b>Our stretch targets</b> How we will measure success
1. Drive a culture where gender equality is valued and considered in planning and decision making	90% positive responses to relevant workplace culture questions in 2021 APS Employee Census.
2. Achieve greater gender equality in senior leadership (EL2 and above)	Approximately 50% representation of women in substantive EL2 and SES1 positions by 31 December 2021 <sup>5</sup> .  90% positive responses to relevant manager and SES questions in the 2021 APS Employee Census.
3. Increase the take-up of flexibility arrangements amongst all employees	90% positive responses to relevant workplace conditions questions in 2021 APS Employee Census.  An increase of 10% of staff regularly accessing flexible work arrangements, with a significant increase in usage by men by 31 December 2021.
4. Incorporate measurement and evaluation of our progress into current reporting and communicate progress to the agency annually	Reporting captures progress against Gender Equality Action Plan from January 2019.  Reporting mechanisms for flexible work arrangements, recruitment and gender are enhanced and embedded by 31 December 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Gender representation targets at the EL2 and SES1 levels recognise that this cohort may include employees identifying as gender X.



## Our action plan

### Drive a culture where gender equality is valued and considered in planning and decision making

We will achieve 90% positive responses to relevant workplace culture questions in the 2021 APS Employee Census.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Integrate a focus on gender equality into agency planning, strategy and governance.	a) SES focus on gender equality in organisational planning.	Ongoing	All SES as part of Executive Committee, and Fair Work Ombudsman and Deputy Fair Work Ombudsman Forum
	b) Gender equality is identified as a consideration in strategy and governance documents, including the Fair Work Ombudsman Strategic Intent.	By December 2018	All SES as part of Executive Committee, and Fair Work Ombudsman and Deputy Fair Work Ombudsman Forum
2. EL and SES to shape all communications to show support, clearly and publicly, for an inclusive workplace.	a) EL and SES employees show support for gender equality in their communications with staff and in external forums.	Ongoing	All EL and SES, supported by the Fair Work Ombudsman Gender Equality Network Sponsor, Executive Director, People Branch and Executive Director, Communications
	b) Case studies of senior staff achieving work-life balance, managing workloads and utilising flexible work arrangements are incorporated into existing regular intranet articles.		

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Maintain the focus on domestic and family violence, recognising that it is a workplace issue.	a) Our domestic and family violence policy is reviewed at least once per year to ensure impacted staff are able to access support.	December 2018, 2019 and 2020	Executive Director, People Branch
	b) The policy and ways to access support are promoted regularly by managers and via intranet articles.	Ongoing	All managers, Executive Director, People Branch, and Executive Director, Communications
	c) All managers complete domestic and family violence training.	By December 2018	All managers
4. Promote importance of having open-minded career conversations with all employees.	a) Existing communication channels are used to encourage increased discussions about career aspirations, access to opportunities and desired work-life balance throughout the performance cycle.	By December 2019	Executive Director, People Branch
	b) Fair Work Ombudsman Gender Equality Network continues to encourage and support the career progression of women.	Ongoing	Fair Work Ombudsman Gender Equality Network
5. Reduce impact of unconscious bias on recruitment, promotion, performance and career progression decisions, and ensure managers have the skills and behaviours to build gender equality.	a) All managers complete unconscious bias training.	By December 2018	All managers
	b) Selection panels will include at least one person who has completed unconscious bias training.	Ongoing	Executive Director, People Branch

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Improve recruitment processes to enhance gender equality at all stages of recruitment including longer term acting opportunities.	a) Opportunities to collect gender data from various stages of the recruitment process are enhanced.	By December 2018	Executive Director, People Branch
	b) Advertising and position descriptions are gender neutral, ensuring flexible work options and required competencies are clear.	Ongoing	Selection advisory committee chair supported by People Branch
	c) Selection panels have appropriate gender balance.	Ongoing	Selection advisory committee chair supported by People Branch
	d) Objective testing <sup>6</sup> is used more effectively and frequently in the recruitment process.	Ongoing	Selection advisory committee chair supported by People Branch

<sup>6</sup> Objective testing includes psychometric (cognitive ability and behavioural aptitude) and comprehension tests etc.

## Achieve gender equality in senior leadership (EL2 and above)

We will achieve approximately 50% representation of women in substantive EL2 and SES1 positions by 31 December 2021, and receive 90% positive responses to relevant manager and SES questions in the 2021 APS Employee Census.

Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Collaborate with the Manager Academy project to ensure opportunities are taken to enhance gender equality.	a) Senior leaders are encouraged to mentor someone 'not like me' to increase the diversity of future leaders by incorporating 'not like me' principles into the proposed Manager mentoring and buddy facilitation initiative.	From June 2019	Executive Director, People Branch
	b) Through the Manager Academy statement of expectations, managers understand for themselves and their staff, expectations around out-of-hours work, use of TOIL, prioritising tasks and the use of flexible work arrangements.	December 2018	All SES
8. EL and SES support gender balance at internal and external speaking panels, forums, committees and events by committing to the 'panel pledge'*.	a) EL and SES choose to commit to the 'panel pledge' in their performance agreements. They will take steps to ensure broadly equal gender representation at internal and external panels, forums, committees and events in which they are involved. This includes requesting confirmation of how gender balance will be achieved on a panel and making their participation conditional on meaningful participation by women.	Ongoing	All EL and SES

\* For further information see [Male Champions of Change – Gender balance at every forum](#)



## Increase the take-up of flexibility arrangements amongst all employees

We will achieve 90% positive responses to relevant workplace conditions questions in the 2021 APS Employee Census, and by 31 December 2021 there will be an increase of 10% of staff regularly accessing flexible work arrangements, with a significant increase in usage by men.

Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Overcome technological barriers to the take-up of flexible work arrangements.	a) Opportunities are identified to raise awareness of existing technology and overcome real or perceived barriers to successful off-site work.	By December 2018	Executive Director, People Branch Executive Director, Technology & Innovation
10. Flexible working guidelines redesigned to be team-based and gender-inclusive in that they consider the needs of all team members and the achievement of business outcomes.	a) Flexible working guidelines revised to support conversion of roles to part-time, job redesign and job share, particularly at the EL2 level.	By December 2018	Executive Director, People Branch supported by all SES
	b) New jobs are designed in accordance with flexible working guidelines.	Ongoing	All EL2, SES supported by People Branch
11. Increase take-up of flexible work arrangements.	a) Promote and support the take-up of flexible work arrangements by all staff through formal and informal communication channels.	Ongoing	Executive Director, People Branch and Executive Director, Communications
	b) Improve the ability to capture and report on flexible work arrangements.	Ongoing	Executive Director, People Branch and Executive Director, Communications
	c) A 10% increase in staff regularly accessing flexible work arrangements, with a significant increase in usage by men.	By December 2021	All SES

## Incorporate measurement and evaluation of our progress into current reporting and communicate progress to the agency annually

We will report progress against the actions and deliverables of the Gender Equality Action Plan from January 2019, and enhance reporting mechanisms for flexible work arrangements, recruitment and gender by 31 December 2019.

Actions	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Action plan progress evaluated and incorporated into current reporting and new bi-annual report provided to senior leadership.	a) Data reported to senior leadership, including to branch level, biannually.	Ongoing	Executive Director, People Branch
	b) Staff made aware of action plan implementation at least annually through intranet articles.	Ongoing	Executive Director, People Branch

For more information, please contact the FWO People Branch at [hr@fwo.gov.au](mailto:hr@fwo.gov.au)