

East Wimmera Health Service

GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN
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INTRODUCTION

East Wimmera Health Service (EWHS) is a fully accredited small rural health service consisting of 40 Acute and 95 Aged Care beds across five campuses in the Buloke and Northern Grampians Shires in North Western Victoria. Covering the land first inhabited by the Dja Dja Wurrung, Barengi Gadjin, and Jaara Jaara people. EWHS encompasses the townships of Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Wycheproof and St Arnaud. EWHS provides a broad range of Acute, Community Based and Aged Care services integrated with local General Medical Practices. Additionally EWHS manages a number of other local services in post-acute care, planned activity groups and infection control.

Vision To see sustainable improvement in the health and wellbeing of our community.

Purpose To work together with our community to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes.

Values Together, Honest, Empathy, Community, Open, Respect, Excellence.

The purpose of this plan is to provide the foundation for improving discrepancies in gender equality identified in the organisational audit conducted in 2021. This plan is the framework on which to build the beginnings of a robust system that aligns with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2021

Goals from our current Strategic plan that feed our other plans

- Embed our values based culture that embodies THE CORE values of EWHS
- Develop and implement a staff health and wellbeing plan
- Defined improvements in the results of the People Matters Survey
- The Disability Action Plan and the Diversity Action Plan actions are implemented improving the experience for individuals with a disability and those from diverse backgrounds
- Collaborate with consumers and communities to co-design and deliver culturally appropriate safe and accessible services

Links with Consumer Partnership Committee Plan; Aged Care Diversity plan; Strategic Plan

BACKGROUND

East Wimmera Health Service (EWHS) provides acute bed based, urgent care, residential aged care and primary health care services via 5 campuses. These campuses are situated in the townships of St Arnaud, Donald Birchip, Wycheproof and Charlton. EWHS crosses the two municipal boundaries of Buloke and Northern Grampians. EWHS works in partnership with Grampians Health Service Partnership, Loddon Mallee Hospital Partnership, Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health Leadership Network, Buloke and Northern Grampians Shires, Loddon Public Health Unit and Grampians Public Health Unit, local Aboriginal Communities, Grampians Rural Health Alliance (Information Technology), Murray Primary Health Network, West Vic Primary Health Network, Ambulance Victoria.

Our catchment areas experience some of the state's highest levels of Cancer, Diabetes and Heart Disease along with associated risk factors for chronic diseases such as poor diet and low levels of exercise.

BASE LINE GENDER AUDIT

People Matter response rate was 52%

Key Message from People Matter Survey

Indicator 1 - Gender Composition of all levels of the workplace – EWHS is predominantly a female gender dominant workplace which is reflected across all sectors of employment. The CEO is male, the Executive Management team

is 50/50% female and male. Campus Managers are 100% female, with HR Manager being female, Payroll Manager male, Support Services Manager male and Maintenance Manager male. **Indicator 2** - Gender Composition of Governing Body – Gender balance of EWHS Board is 90% female 10% male with the Chair being female.

Indicator 3 - Pay Gap – All Award payments have gender pay parity.

Indicator 4 - Sexual Harassment in the workplace – EWHS PMS results sits at a three year trend low of 2% down from 8 % in 2019. This represent a 3% and 4 % lower occurrence than either Comparative Service or Public Sector averages.

Indicator 5 - Recruitment and Promotion Practices in the Workplace – All recruitment is open to all persons. All promotion within EWHS is in accordance with HR policy.

Indicator 6 - Flexible Working Arrangements -EWHS PMS results recorded above Public Sector average and either above or within <5 percentage points of Comparative Services across Victoria.

Indicator 7 - Gendered Segregation in the workplace – Maintenance is the only sector within EWHS to be 100% male, that being six persons. All other sectors with the exception of Maintenance have a spread and gender mix that is predominantly female. No sector is segregated, as all elements of EWHS are required to interact on a daily basis to achieve the outcomes of the Service.

STAFF CONSULTATION

Our consultation process reflects the requirements set out in the Victorian Gender Equality Act (2020).

As part of this process, our team consulted with, and sought input into, the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan from the EWHS Board as its governing body, employees, and relevant trade unions and/or their employee representative.

INVITATION

Invitations to Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF), Australian Services Union (ASU) Branch and Health Workers Union to take part in the consultation process for the East Wimmera Health Service Gender Equality Action Plan. No responses were received.

CASE FOR CHANGE

1. What we have done so far - organisational Gender Equality journey to date

Gender equity initiatives undertaken to date include:

- EWHS has been a member of the CoRE Alliance Since July 2019
 - As part of this alliance, we attend regular meetings, celebrate, and promote diversity. Promote education on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples culture/safety training; creating an inclusive service for LGBTIQ consumers through training on LGBTIQ+ Inclusivity within Healthcare eLearning module, mandatory education for all EWHS staff via Grampians Learning Hub
 - MARAM training undertaken by all executive
- Support for initiatives – e.g. International Women’s Day; 16 days of activism
 - Our Service coordinator flags diversity initiative/special days across the calendar
- Links to other organisational strategies / how this plan complements them
- Membership of any other relevant Alliances / networks / charters
 - EWHS is a member/attendee of the following meetings:
 - Grampians Regional LGBTIQ Network
 - Rainbow Network Community of Practice
 - Loddon Mallee LGBTIQ Community of Practice
 - Buloke Wellbeing and Equity Network

- WHLM Community of Practice
 - Grampians Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Reference Group
 - North Central LGBTIQ Network and Rural Rainbows.
- CDW Service Coordinator is the Treasurer and Founder of the North Central LGBTIQ Network and Rural Rainbows.

Policies and Procedures

- Choice and Decision Making Policy
- Cultural Care and Interpreter Services Procedure
- Family Violence - Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Procedure
- Working from Home policy and procedure
- Equal Employment Opportunity policy – identifies protected attributes in document
Protected Attributes are:
 - Age
 - Gender identity
 - Disability / impairment
 - Industrial activity
 - Lawful sexual activity
 - Marital Status
 - Physical features
 - Political belief / activity
 - Social origin
 - Race
 - Sex
 - Employment activity
 - Irrelevant criminal conviction.
 - Religious belief or activity.
 - Pregnancy / breastfeeding
 - Sexual orientation or preference
 - Status as parent or carer.

EWHS is undertaking the GEAP work to improve equality for all who work in and access the organization. EWHS recognises the right of people to live in a safe and equal society and be treated with dignity and respect. EWHS acknowledges that inequality has a negative effect on the health and wellbeing of marginalised groups and perpetuates the ongoing issues of inequality among the general population.

Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.

In acknowledging these issues, EWHS believes that change is necessary, and commits to implementing strategies that allow for a healthy and productive workplace for all current and potential staff members, along with community members accessing services.

VISION STATEMENT

To see sustainable improvement in the gender balance of our workforce, equal opportunity for advancement in career and a safe workplace for all staff and community members

2 Actively increase diversity in the EWHS workforce	2.1 Marketing strategy relating to recruitment and diversifying roles e.g. men into nursing field or women into mechanical roles e.g. Maintenance (links to and supported by indicator 5)	Change in gender balance	June 2023	DP&C
	2.2 review recruitment pathways and process, training opportunities, lead by example or mentoring programs.	As above	June 2023	DP&C and HR Manager
	2.3 reinstate careers days in schools to promote all roles in health sector in conjunction with sector agencies	As above		
3 Actively challenge traditional workplace stereotypes and gender roles.	3.1 Review organisational language used in recruitment advertising. Ensure language is gender neutral.	Future advertisement is gender neutral	June 2023	HR
	3.2 Complete an image audit to ensure visual collateral represents diversity of genders, ages, and identities.	Diversity is depicted in all visual collateral	June 2023	??
4 Improve data collection to ensure a complete data set for the EWHS gender audit	4.1 Identify how and when intersectional data will be collected from existing staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with staff to understand how this can happen and the best process Ensure staff are fully informed and understand the reasons and are kept up to date about the process 	Data gained through specific gender audit questions in the annual People Matter Survey (PMS has the facility for bespoke questions to be included in EWHS PMS survey)	June 2024	HR/Payroll
	4.2 Identify how and when intersectional data will be collected from new recruits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an audit of the recruitment process to understand where data collection can be improved. Modify forms, policies, online information gathering, PMS bespoke questions, to ensure improved data collection is supported. 	Data available to identify gaps in recruitment process Forms, policies and online information gathering	June 2024	HR Payroll

Indicator 2 Gender Composition of Governing B

Strategy <i>(What we will do in direct response to the results of the audit)</i>	Action	Measurement <i>(How we will know we have made a difference and can report on 'reasonable and material' progress in two years' time)</i>	Timeframe <i>(Completed by NB. a four-year plan)</i>	Accountability <i>(Role of person(s) who is accountable.)</i>
1 Support diversity and broader representation on the EWHS Board	1.1 Review how EWHS advertises for Board members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a diversity of community members with diverse skills to consider applying • Seek opportunities to provide training or mentorship for prospective Board members • Information events 	Maintain the current positive gender balance Continue to support the Victorian Government promotional material that encourages applications from diverse groups Support is offered for prospective or new Directors to receive training or mentorship	June 2024 June 2024 June 2024	CEO and Board Chair CEO and Board Chair CEO and Chair Board
2 Support the EWHS Board to demonstrate leadership in gender equality	2.1 Consider the inclusion of the following on the Board Professional Development calendar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender equality • diversity and inclusion • intersectionality 	Training has been delivered to Board Directors	June 2023	CEO and Board Chair

Indicator 3 Pay Gap

Strategy <i>(What we will do in direct response to the results of the audit)</i>	Action	Measurement <i>(How we will know we have made a difference and can report on 'reasonable and material' progress in two years' time)</i>	Timeframe <i>(Completed by NB. a four-year plan)</i>	Accountability <i>(Role of person(s) who is accountable.)</i>
1 EWHS has transparent processes relating to salary and has processes that support pay equity principles	1.1 Review polices / procedures surrounding salary and contract negotiation with a gender lens. Ensure managers are trained to be aware of negotiation procedures and options available. 1.2 Implement policy of like pay for like work to ensure this approach is in line with EBA's.	Policies and procedures reflect gender neutral pay and contract negotiation processes	June 2024 June 2024	CEO/Director of Finance/HR
	1.3 Ensure employee contracts are current and workplace agreements, and awards are up to date and reviewed to ensure equal pay under fair work act employment awards	Data base of contracts and workplace agreements are up to date Awards are up to date and regularly reviewed to ensure equal pay in line with EBA's	June 2023	HR

Indicator 4 Sexual Harassment in the workplace

Strategy <i>(What we will do in direct response to the results of the audit)</i>	Action	Measurement <i>(How we will know we have made a difference and can report on 'reasonable and material' progress in two years' time)</i>	Timeframe <i>(Completed by NB. a four-year plan)</i>	Accountability <i>(Role of person(s) who is accountable.)</i>
1 Ensure EWHS processes and procedures for reporting sexual harassment in the workplace are victim focused, safe, confidential and easily accessible	1.1 Provide education to all staff on how to report sexual harassment	Improvement in audit results	June 2023	Director of People and Culture Education Manager
	1.2 Ensure that staff know they have a safe space in which to report sexual harassment – Confidentiality	Alignment with survey results and complaints made	June 2023	Exec, Campus Managers
	1.3 Review the policy and process to ensure that it is fit for purpose and user friendly	Updated policies and procedures reflecting changes	June 2023	DP&C
	1.4 Provide training to staff to ensure there is broad awareness of what constitutes sexual harassment in the workplace	# staff completing training Results in future surveys more accurately recording issues	June 2023	Exec Education Manager
	1.5 Consider active bystander training to support staff and leadership to challenge inappropriate workplace behaviours.	# staff completed training Survey results reflecting improved practice re challenging	June 2023	Exec Education Manager
		inappropriate workplace behaviour		

Indicator 5 Recruitment and Promotion Practices in the Workplace

Strategy <i>(What we will do in direct response to the results of the audit)</i>	Action	Measurement <i>(How we will know we have made a difference and can report on 'reasonable and material' progress in two years' time)</i>	Timeframe <i>(Completed by NB. a four-year plan)</i>	Accountability <i>(Role of person(s) who is accountable.)</i>
1 Ensure EWHS has a robust succession strategy across all sectors of organisation	1.1 Provide information on upcoming education /upskilling opportunities to all staff/succession planning	Staff retention compare loss of staff to previous years without succession planning	June 2024	Directors and management in all sectors of organisation
	1.2 Provide training on Unconscious Bias for all staff, particularly management and recruitment staff	Change in profile of staff recruited post education	June 2024	Directors and management in all sectors of organisation

Indicator 6 Flexible Working Arrangements

Strategy <i>(What we will do in direct response to the results of the audit)</i>	Action	Measurement <i>(How we will know we have made a difference and can report on 'reasonable and material' progress in two years' time)</i>	Timeframe <i>(Completed by NB. a four-year plan)</i>	Accountability <i>(Role of person(s) who is accountable.)</i>
1 Ensure EWHS is a flexible work place and can provide the necessary structure, policy and procedures to support flexibility.	1.1 Review policies and procedures reflecting flexible workplace processes	Policies and procedures align with intent of flexible workplace ideals	June 2024	DP&C1

Indicator 7 Gendered Segregation in the workplace

As per Indicator 1

Strategy <i>(What we will do in direct response to the results of the audit)</i>	Action	Measurement <i>(How we will know we have made a difference and can report on 'reasonable and material' progress in two years' time)</i>	Timeframe <i>(Completed by NB. a four-year plan)</i>	Accountability <i>(Role of person(s) who is accountable.)</i>
1 EWHS will work towards a workplace culture that promotes gender equality in the workplace.	1.1 EWHS will support its staff and leaders to challenge gender stereotypes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of The Resilience Project Suite of Wellness and Wellbeing programs to create a focused, shared culture • Develop a robust Workforce Plan that incorporates all aspects of gender equality, ageing workforce and career growth 	Workforce plan that has key steps incorporating actions required to all diversity issues	June 2024 June 2025 June 2024	DP&C Directors and Campus Managers
	1.2 Introduce an EWHS wide underlying employee and management training system	E.g. Increased knowledge and application of SLII® - A Situational Approach to Leadership (kenblanchard.com)	June 2024	All of Management
2 Actively increase diversity in the EWHS workforce	2.1 Marketing strategy relating to recruitment and diversifying roles e.g. men into nursing field or women into mechanical roles e.g. Maintenance 2.2 (links to and supported by indicator 5) 2.3 review recruitment pathways and process, training opportunities, lead by example or mentoring programs 2.4 reinstate careers days in schools to promote all roles in health sector in conjunction with sector agencies	Change in gender balance	June 2026	HR
3 Actively challenge traditional workplace stereotypes and gender roles.	3.1 Review organisational language used in recruitment advertising. Ensure language is gender neutral. 3.2 Complete an image audit to ensure visual collateral represents diversity of genders, ages, and identities.	Organisational language is gender neutral	June 2024	DP&C HR

4 Improve data collection to ensure a complete data set for the EWHS gender audit	4.1 Identify how and when intersectional data will be collected from existing staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with staff to understand how this can happen and the best process Ensure staff are fully informed and understand the reasons and are kept up to date about the process 	Data gained through specific gender audit questions in the annual People Matter Survey (PMS has the facility for bespoke questions to be included in EWHS PMS survey)	June 2024	HR
	4.2 Identify how and when intersectional data will be collected from new recruits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an audit of the recruitment process to understand where data collection can be improved. Modify forms, policies, online information gathering to ensure improved data collection is supported. 	Data available to identify gaps in recruitment process	June 2024	HR
		Forms, policies and online information gathering	June 2024	HR

LEADERSHIP AND RESOURCING OF THE GEAP

Strategic Resourcing

The East Wimmera Health Service (EWHS) Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 (GEAP) aims to promote gender equality within our workforce and improve outcomes for people of all genders.

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) EWHS is required to ensure adequate resources are invested to implement its GEAP. Properly resourcing the implementation of the GEAP is critical to delivering on our commitments to staff and meeting our obligation under the Act to make reasonable and material progress towards workplace gender equality.

Several actions identified in the GEAP include participation of employees from across the organisation in activities to raise awareness, knowledge, and skill development.

Gender Equality Working Group (GEWG) will oversee the delivery of this plan. This group will report to Director of Primary Care. Recommendations for costed and budgeted initiatives would come from the Gender Equality Working Group in consultation with finance department.



Our organisation **East Wimmera Health Service** commits to being a member of the Grampians CoRE (Communities of Respect and Equality) Alliance.

We believe in a safe, equal and respectful society for everyone.

We believe in a community where women and their children live free from gender-based violence and every person is valued, heard, respected and empowered.

We believe we can take meaningful action together to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence.

We will undertake activity to:

- Challenge attitudes and beliefs around violence and inequity
- Improve practices, policies and systems to eliminate gender inequality
- Work collaboratively with CoRE Alliance partners to build momentum, gain strength and share knowledge, resources and ideas
- Communicate what is working and what isn't and monitor our progress

Trevor Adem

East Wimmera Health Service

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trevor Adem".

Date

September 2021