

# Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

## 2021-24

Choosing to challenge and lead



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## Acknowledgement

**Westernport Water acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as First Nations People and that the land, sea and water are of spiritual, cultural and economic importance. We recognise that we provide services on the traditional lands of the Bunurong Peoples of the Kulin Nation. The Bunurong Peoples have managed the resources on Millowl for thousands of years. We acknowledge them and their continued connection to this place, as we go about managing the water resources today.**

## Our commitment

Diversity and inclusion is an intrinsic part of how we do business at WPW. It is woven through all that we do. It links our strategies and plans, guides our behaviours and values, and drives our relationships with our community.

Over the next three years, we choose to challenge ourselves and our practices. We will question, examine and test ourselves, always looking for opportunities to do better and be better. We will be a leader in our industry.

### A shared responsibility

Delivery of this strategy is the responsibility of all WPW employees. Role models are welcomed but not assumed, and together we choose to challenge our beliefs and biases, adapting our practices and holding ourselves to account every day.

Our People and Culture team, together with our leaders, will continue to drive change, however it is the acceptance and understanding of each employee's role that will ensure our workplace is a true leader in this space.

# Our progress so far

The *Westernport Water Diversity & Inclusion Plan 2016-20* defined Westernport Water’s commitment to a range of targets reflective of the Victorian Government’s Strategy and of our community.

The four year program of work focused on making changes to ensure an inclusive work environment where all employees are treated with respect, and feel valued and supported.

Through the implementation of this plan, Westernport Water gained an honest understanding of the barriers to a diverse workforce, and identified opportunities, strategies and programs to increase workforce diversity and create an inclusive culture.

Over the last four years, we have transitioned away from a compliance culture towards equitable and inclusive practices and a truly diverse workplace.

## Our people

### Where we were at 30 June 2020

| Target Area  | Workplace Representation |       |
|--|--------------------------|-------|
| Senior leadership positions held by women  | 47%                      |       |
| Female employees in STEM roles (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) | 12%                      |       |
| Employees with flexible work arrangements  | 53%                      |       |
| Employees with caring responsibilities outside of the workplace                    | 66.67%                   |       |
| Employees who speak a language other than English                                  | 11%                      |       |
| Employees who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander                     | 4.1%                     |       |
| Employees identifying as a person with a disability                                | 3.3%                     |       |
| Employees who identify as belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community                       | 0%                       |       |
| Generational diversity (by age)  | <25                      | 5.6%  |
|  | 26-35                    | 14.4% |
|  | 36-45                    | 27.8% |
|  | 46-55                    | 27.8% |
|  | 56-65                    | 22.2% |
|  | 65+                      | 2.2%  |

## Our workplace

All WPW facilities projects are designed with diversity and inclusion in mind. Legislation has always been used to guide projects for baseline requirements to ensure the minimum standard is adhered to, but we also apply our own best practice and common sense approach to ensure facilities are accessible and fit for purpose in an unbiased, equitable and inclusive manner. Over the past two years we have completed works at our Newhaven HQ Office and depot as well as the Ian Bartlett Water Purification Plant.

Westernport Water is committed to making ongoing modifications to systems and buildings as identified to support all employees.

# Taking the next steps

In delivering on our commitment to challenge ourselves and be an industry leader as a truly diverse and inclusive workplace, we will focus on four key areas:

## Key focus area 1

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability

We strive to build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability of WPW at individual, managerial and whole-of-organisation levels. We support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination, and work to enhance the career options and experiences of our current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

In undertaking our reconciliation journey we have made positive progress towards developing genuine, trusting relationships with the First Nations people, and have gained a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements thereby creating an understanding, welcoming and culturally inclusive workplace.

Using the Innovate Reconciliation Plan 2020-22 as our guide, we will continue to work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to implement and promote employment programs that support the development and recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and strengthen our capacity to provide a culturally safe workplace.

We are committed to consulting current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to identify what we have done well and what could be improved for the future.

### Delivery tools

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <h3>Innovate Reconciliation Plan 2020-22</h3> |
|  | <h3>Social Procurement Strategy 2021-24</h3>  |

| 2021-24 Deliverables: Key focus area 1 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability   | Timeframe        |
|--|------------------|
| Deliver the WPW Innovate Reconciliation Plan 2020-22   | 30 June 2022     |
| Develop the WPW Stretch Reconciliation Plan 2022-24  | 31 December 2022 |
| Actively participate in water sector initiatives and streamline engagement with Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owners   | Ongoing          |
| In line with the WPW Innovate Reconciliation Plan 2020-22, develop an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Staff Review Program to ensure staff experiences and challenges influence future cultural programs and policies. | 30 June 2022     |

*\*All deliverables are contingent on the successful allocation of appropriate budget*



## Key focus area 2

### Gender equity

We are dedicated to maintaining a positive workplace, and to building on our success so far by supporting women's participation, recognition and influence in the water sector.

In February 2021, Monash University delivered the Women in Leadership Review for Westernport Water, concluding that we are 'a high performing organisation in advancing gender diversity and inclusion at senior levels in the water sector'<sup>1</sup>. Looking ahead, we now have the opportunity to build on this success by developing and implementing a transformative agenda with 'some bold initiatives that fundamentally challenge existing structures, cultures and practices, and reconfigure systems to deeply embed equity in women's leadership aspirations, opportunities and experiences'<sup>1</sup>.

In the creation and implementation of a Gender Equality Action Plan, we will strive to 'further develop the culture, structures and systems that encourage women to stretch their leadership ambitions and support them in their professional and personal development. A flexible working environment, inclusive culture, visible role modelling, and bold transformative practices will assist us in attracting and retaining talented people and supporting them to progress their careers while meeting their aspirations for family and community'<sup>1</sup>.

We will also continue to follow our path in support of the elimination of violence against women by adopting and embedding the Government's Our Watch framework into our practices.

### Delivery tool



## Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-25

| 2021-24 Deliverables: Key focus area 2 - Gender equity   | Timeframe       |
|--|-----------------|
| Undertake gender impact assessments of all new policies, programs and services that directly and significantly impact the public, as well as those up for review | Ongoing         |
| Complete a workplace gender audit based on data as at 30 June 2021   | 31 October 2021 |
| Develop a Gender Equality Action Plan  | 31 October 2021 |
| Implement a Gender Equality Action Plan  | 30 June 2024    |
| Broaden the Graduate Engineer Program to include STEM opportunities for young women  | 30 June 2023    |

*\*All deliverables are contingent on the successful allocation of appropriate budget*

1 - Women in Leadership Review 2021, Monash University



## Key focus area 3

### Generational diversity

Westernport Water is committed to developing and supporting a multigenerational workforce. We recognise that employees of all ages and at different stages in their lives bring individual and multi-layered benefits to our workplace. We seek to meet the needs of our workforce by assisting those in the later years of their career to transition to retirement in a meaningful way, and we look to encourage more young people to start their water careers with us.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that traditional ways of working are not necessarily the way forward, and we seek to explore a smarter and more flexible workplace while still delivering on the operational requirements of our business.

We will provide a workplace where our employees have access to flexible work arrangements that meet needs across all generations. This not only includes those with caring responsibilities and those nearing the end of their career, but all employees across the organisation.

Our focus over the next three years will be to further improve the health and well-being of our employees through a sustainable balance between work and lifestyle.

### Delivery tools

|   |   |
|---|---|
|    | <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Plan</b>                    |
|   | <b>Organisational Succession Planning Framework</b>   |
|  | <b>Workplace Health &amp; Safety Strategy 2021-24</b> |

| 2021-24 Deliverables: Key focus area 3 - Generational diversity   | Timeframe    |
|---|--------------|
| Develop a phased retirement program as part of our organisational succession planning framework that allows employees to arrange an exit plan giving them work opportunities that are not full time whilst remaining in the workforce | 30 June 2022 |
| Develop and implement a program involving a two-way intergenerational mentoring arrangement as part of our organisational succession planning framework that facilitates knowledge transfer and builds capability                     | 30 June 2022 |
| Develop partnerships with local schools to create pathways for young people to start their careers in the water industry  | Ongoing      |

*\*All deliverables are contingent on the successful allocation of appropriate budget*





**IT HAS TO END**

**We must end violence against  
women and children**



**“Over the next three years, we choose to challenge ourselves and our practices. We will question, examine and test ourselves, always looking for opportunities to do better and be better. We will be a leader in our industry.”**

## Key focus area 4

### Breaking down the barriers

Westernport Water is made up of people from a wide range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. We celebrate this often and we encourage our employees to recognise both individual and cultural differences.

Despite significant efforts over the past four years, we still have some work to do in relation to breaking down barriers for those with disability and people who identify as LGBTIQ+. We seek to foster a culture where employees with diverse sexuality and/or gender feel respected, valued and empowered, and we encourage

our LGBTIQ+ employees to identify. We are committed to finding more ways to ensure a safe space for all.

We also recognise that there is more we can do to encourage people with disability who may already be in our workplace to identify, along with encouraging applications from prospective employees. We are committed to building a disability confident culture through developing the right attitudes, behaviours, systems and knowledge to support the inclusion of all current and prospective employees with disability.

### Delivery tools

|   |   |
|---|---|
|    | <b>Mentally Healthy Workplace Strategy 2020-23</b>              |
|    | <b>Social Procurement Strategy 2021-24</b>                      |
|  | <b>Learning &amp; Development Plan</b>                          |
|  | <b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Building Asset Management Plan</b> |
|  | <b>Disability Recruitment Strategy</b>                          |
|  | <b>Recruitment &amp; Selection Policy and Procedure</b>         |

| 2021-24 Deliverables: Key focus area 4 - Breaking down the barriers   | Timeframe    |
|---|--------------|
| Actively participate in the Pride in Water and WaterAble Networks   | Ongoing      |
| Partner with external organisations and providers to provide employment opportunities for people with disability  | Ongoing      |
| Implement a Workplace Adjustment Policy and guidelines that make it easier to request, access and implement workplace adjustments and assist employees with disability to perform at their best             | 30 June 2022 |
| Implement measures that foster a culture of trust and inclusion, where employees feel comfortable to share their disability information and supervisors are responsive to accommodating accessibility needs | Ongoing      |
| Implement internal and external communication activities to promote LGBTIQ+ awareness and inclusion   | Ongoing      |
| Nominate and promote an internal executive champion to promote and drive LGBTIQ+ inclusion  | 30 June 2022 |

*\*All deliverables are contingent on the successful allocation of appropriate budget*





| 2021-24 Deliverables: All key focus areas  | Timeframe    |
|--|--------------|
| Create an area on the Westernport Water website targeted at both our community and prospective employees promoting our commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace | 30 June 2022 |
| Continue to develop and refine the annual Diversity & Inclusion Event Calendar to celebrate events of significance   | Ongoing      |
| Provide annual training for staff across all key focus areas as part of the Learning & Development Plan  | Ongoing      |
| Review and improve our recruitment practices to maximise opportunities in recruiting for diversity   | Ongoing      |
| Work with regional partners to undertake a strategic approach in support of all key focus areas  | Ongoing      |

*\*All deliverables are contingent on the successful allocation of appropriate budget*



# Our targets

In keeping with the collective water industry commitment to build diverse workforces with inclusive cultures across the sector, WPW has aligned this strategy to the agreed industry targets, adjusted where appropriate for our local community.

## By 2024:

- **3%** of our workforce will identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander
- There will continue to be a **50/50** gender balance in senior leadership positions
- Greater than **35%** of our workforce will identify as carers
- Flexible work arrangements will be available to **all employees** unless there is a specific operational constraint
- **80%** of our employees will work flexibly
- **5%** of our workforce will identify as a person with disability
- **15%** of our workforce will speak a language other than English
- **4%** of our workforce will identify as belonging to the LGBTIQ+ communities.

These targets however, are not the key focus of the strategy. Rather, we will focus on conversations that improve our understanding and tolerance of others, activities that promote respect, and behaviours that create a culture that we can all be proud of.

# Accountability

This strategy outlines our strong commitment to diversity and inclusion at Westernport Water. We will meet our industry and government obligations and hold ourselves to account in the delivery of our strategy by doing the following:

| Industry and government obligations  | Timeframe          |
|--|--------------------|
| Participate in the annual VPS People Matter Survey   | May (annual)       |
| Conduct our annual internal Diversity & Inclusion Survey (re-imagined for 2021-24) to assist in measuring our success against our targets  | June (annual)      |
| Provide an annual dashboard of Diversity & Inclusion progress to the People, Diversity & Community Committee, the Board, the Workplace Consultative Committee and the Leadership Group | September (annual) |
| Provide our annual diversity and inclusion data to VicWater  | December (annual)  |
| Provide a progress report on the Gender Equality Action Plan to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector  | 31 October 2023    |

# Definitions

## **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander**

Members of the population who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

## **Carers**

Carers have responsibility for the care of a child of school age or younger or provide personal care, support and assistance to someone in need of support due to disability, medical condition, terminal illness, mental illness or being frail and aged.

## **Cultural and linguistic diversity**

Cultural and linguistic diversity refers to those parts of our identity that stem from where our parents were born and the languages they speak, where we were born and the languages we speak, our ancestries and our religious identity. For data purposes the definition is usually people whose first spoken language is not English.

## **Disability**

A disability is any condition that restricts a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions. It may be caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, visible or invisible. A person has a disability if they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

## **Flexible work arrangements**

Flexible work arrangements include changes to hours of work, patterns of work, such as part time work and job shares, and locations of work, such as working at home or at an offsite location.

## **Gender equity**

Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

## **LGBTIQ+**

LGBTIQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender Diverse, Intersex, Queer and Questioning is an inclusive umbrella abbreviation to encompass a range of diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics.

## **STEM**

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

# Related documents

- WPW Innovate Reconciliation Plan 2020-22
- WPW Social Procurement Strategy 2021-24
- Water Industry Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019-23 (VicWater)
- Barring Djinang Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the Victorian Public Sector 2017-22
- 1 Women in Leadership Review 2021, Monash University
- WPW Mentally Healthy Workplace Strategy 2020-23
- WPW Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-25
- WPW Health & Wellbeing Plan
- WPW Organisational Succession Planning Framework
- WPW Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure
- WPW Disability Recruitment Strategy
- WPW Workplace Health & Safety Strategy 2021-24
- WPW Learning & Development Plan
- WPW Diversity & Inclusion Building Asset Management Plan.



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