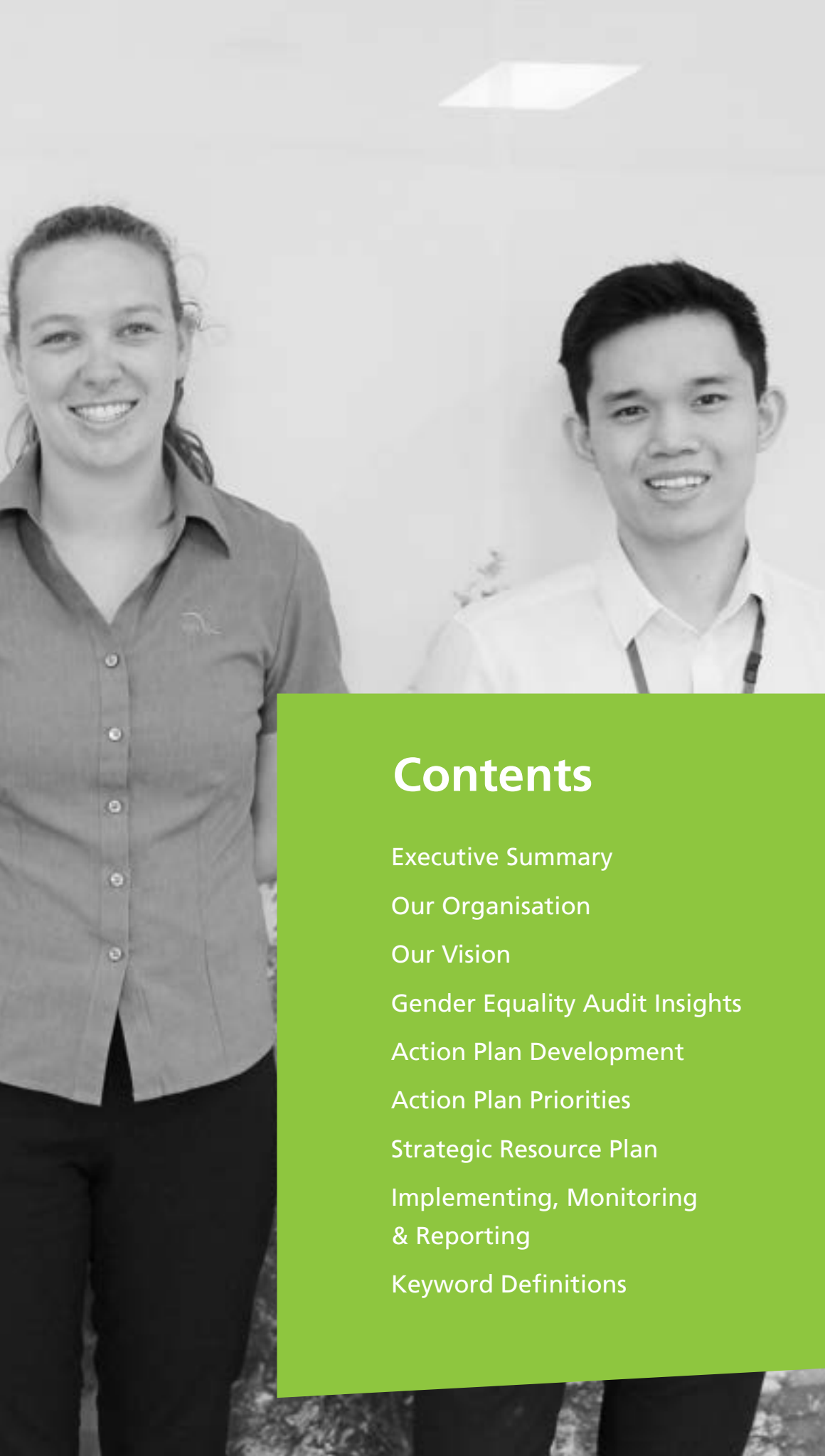


GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2021-2025







Contents

Executive Summary	5
Our Organisation	6
Our Vision	8
Gender Equality Audit Insights	12
Action Plan Development	15
Action Plan Priorities	16
Strategic Resource Plan	20
Implementing, Monitoring & Reporting	20
Keyword Definitions	20



Executive summary

The 2021–2025 Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) Gender Equality Action Plan represents a new journey for LRH. Over the life of this plan, LRH will take necessary steps to create an environment and culture where diversity and equality are embedded.

In March 2021, the Victorian *Gender Equality Act 2020* (The Act) came into effect. The Act promotes, encourages and facilitates the achievement of gender equality within Victorian communities and organisations. The Act introduces new responsibilities for certain Victorian employers to implement, monitor and report on progress towards achieving gender equality in their workplace.

As the Gippsland region's largest employer, LRH must take a significant leadership role in gender equality within the region and welcomes these new obligations as a major stepping stone to address known issues within the sphere of gender equality.

LRH's initial action has been to convene a working group of representatives from across the organisation to consider and make recommendations to LRH's Executive and Board, relating to gender equality.

The working group has undertaken an environmental scan to review the wider policy context in action globally and identify sector-wide trends and opportunities including:

- researching gender equality global best practice
- conducting an internal gender equality audit
- consulting with LRH staff on matters relating to gender equality
- analysing staff feedback from the annual 'People Matter Survey' relating to gender and equality
- consulting with other Gippsland and Victorian Health Services, and invited consultation and input from relevant Health Unions.

“ Latrobe Regional Hospital values our community's diversity. We are committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming and safe service and workplace for everyone who engages with our organisation regardless of race, culture, religion, sexuality, gender identity, age or ability.

- *LRH Inclusivity Statement*

Throughout this work an intersectional lens has been applied, recognising that gender inequality is compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination experienced by particular groups or individuals.

Anecdotally the working group has identified notable deficiencies in our ability to accurately identify staff diversity. Data gathering methods at LRH have not historically, nor do they currently, provide insight to the level required to accurately report on the information to align with The Act. The working group have identified ways to improve access to intersectional data through the Action Plan.

LRH recognises that gender equality in the workplace has a flow on effect to our consumers and more broadly throughout the community we serve. By building a vibrant and inclusive workplace culture that values difference and diversity, we are investing in the wellbeing of our staff and community.

Our Organisation

Latrobe Regional Hospital is Gippsland's specialist referral and trauma centre, located 150km east of Melbourne. We are a purpose-built teaching hospital caring for a population of more than 260,000 people in a geographic region spanning 41,556km².

Our comprehensive range of services include:

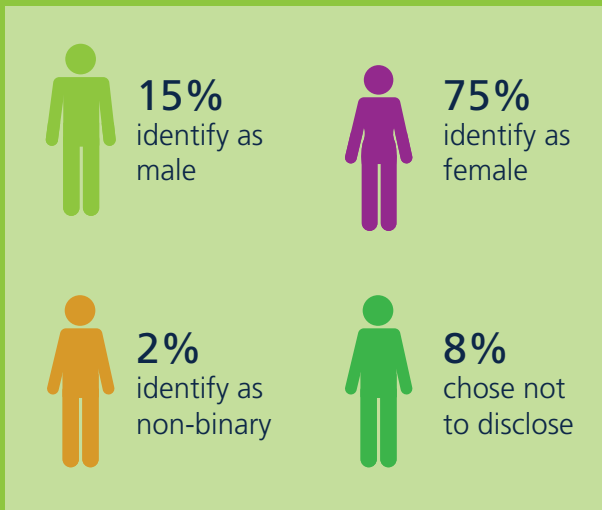
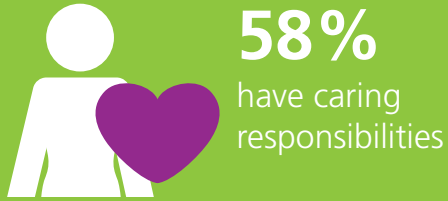
- emergency and trauma care
- intensive care
- elective surgery
- allied health
- obstetrics
- medical and radiation oncology
- dialysis
- aged care
- acute and community mental health services

LRH employs more than 2300 staff, including medical and clinical healthcare professionals, operational and administrative support staff and management, based at nine sites across Gippsland.

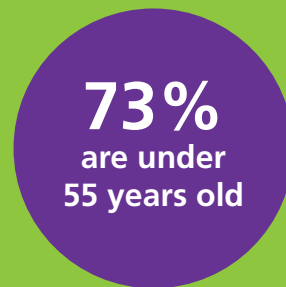
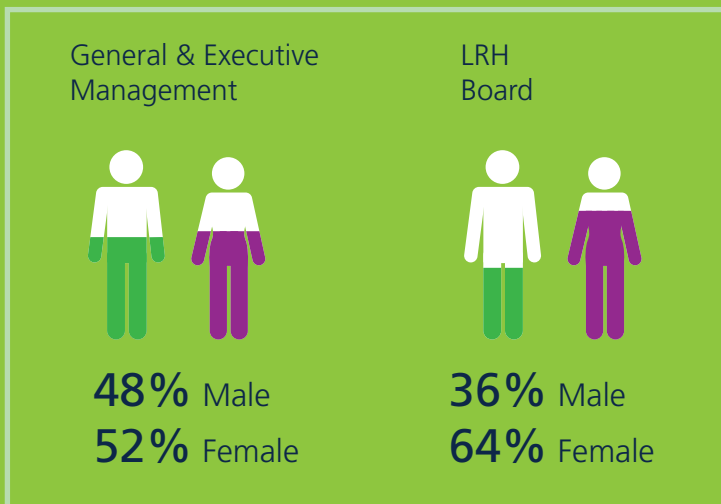


² As at December 2021

The following statistics provide a snapshot of our workforce:



LRH Leadership Profile²



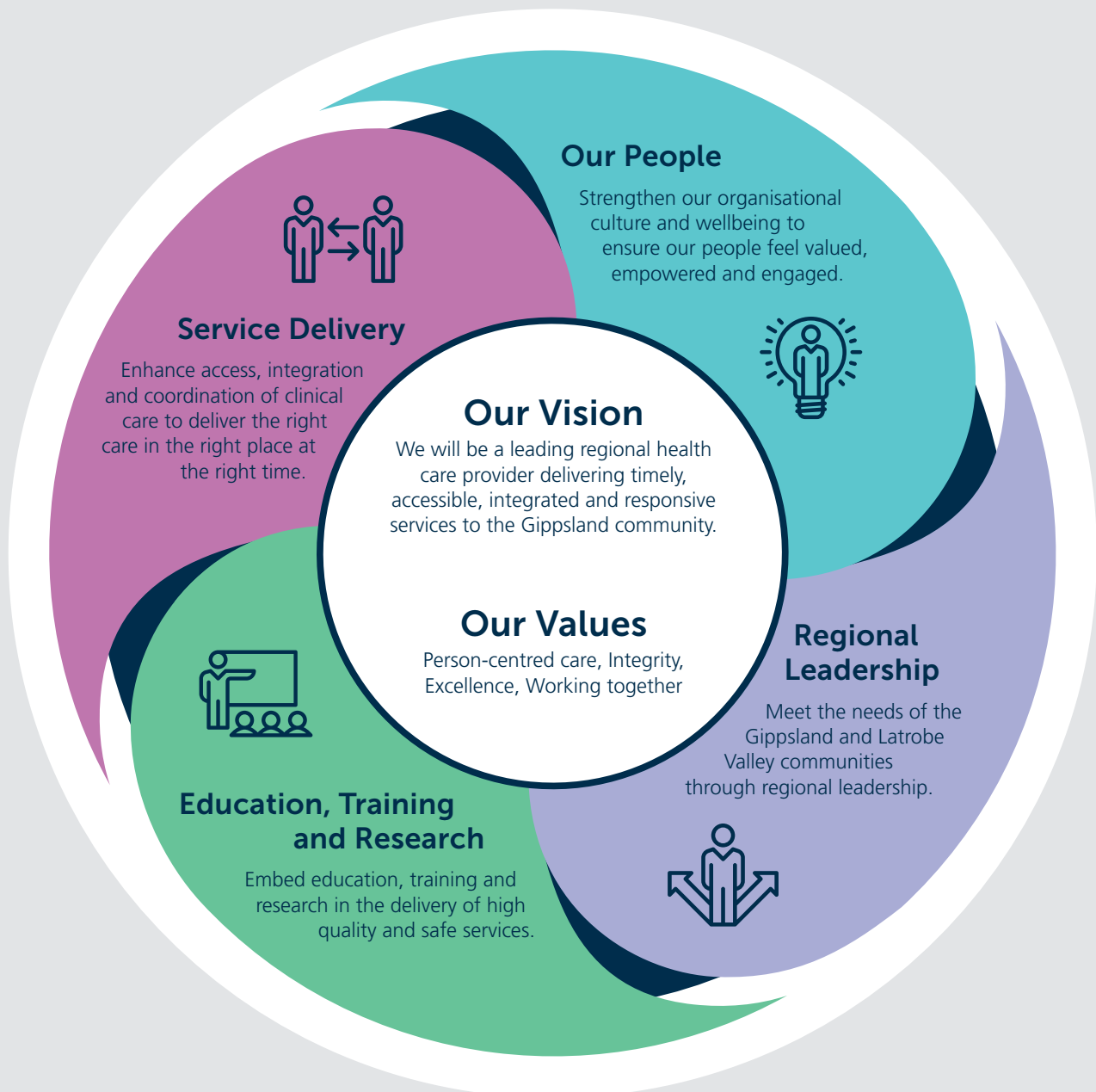
(Source: 2021 People Matter Survey¹)

¹ The People Matter Survey (PMS) is the Victorian public sector's annual employee opinion survey

² As at December 2021

Our Vision

Our vision at LRH is to be a leading regional healthcare provider delivering timely, accessible, integrated and responsive services to the Gippsland community.



Gender Equality and Our Vision

Implementation of a Gender Equality Action Plan aligns with the LRH vision by:

- ✓ **Reflecting the breadth of diversity in the community**
- ✓ **Ensuring non-binary, transgender or gender fluid patients do not face any barriers to accessing clinical care and services**
- ✓ **Providing a safe and inclusive environment for all staff**
- ✓ **Eliminating discrimination and intersectional disadvantage for patients and staff**
- ✓ **Increasing employee engagement and job satisfaction through more inclusive systems, policies and protocols**
- ✓ **Attract and retain high quality healthcare professionals who recognise and value difference**
- ✓ **Model inclusive practice as leaders in our own communities**

In developing our Gender Equality Action Plan, LRH commits to the Victorian Gender Equality Principles – *'To live in a safe and equal society, with equal access to power, resources and opportunities'*.

LRH recognises gender equality as a human right and strives to treat all people with dignity, respect and fairness. We understand gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of all forms of gendered violence, including family violence. Gender equality is a responsibility we share across our communities.

Research indicates that women and individuals who experience other forms of discrimination often experience gender based disadvantage in higher numbers than others. Application of an intersectional approach to Gender Equality in our workplace enables us identify and remove opportunity for compounded disadvantage or discrimination, so that people do not experience inequality as a result of their particular individual attributes.

Gender Equality and Our Strategic Priorities

The key strategic priorities for LRH in working towards Gender Equality in the workplace are:

Understanding the collective identity our workforce

We will encourage our staff to be proud and open about their identity in the workplace, by creating a safe space to share uniqueness. LRH will invite all staff to self-identify and celebrate their culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Island identification and status, or if they are gender diverse or a person living with a disability.

Developing the 'collective identity' of the LRH workforce will enable us to truly appreciate and benefit from our diversity, whilst identifying and removing barriers to individual success, intersectional disadvantage and/or discrimination.



Providing flexibility in the workplace

LRH recognises the importance of flexibility in the workplace to support gender equality. Staff with health challenges or those with family or carer responsibilities can often experience disadvantage at work due to

- absence from work
- career breaks
- higher rates of part time / casual participation
- lower overall income
- less promotional opportunity
- reduced access to training and professional development.

Anecdotally we are aware of many informal flexible work arrangements between staff and managers, these are rarely documented through formal channels. Developing better ways of capturing flexible work requests and agreements will increase our capacity to anticipate and respond to increasing staff expectations for flexible work options.

Working towards pay equity

Understanding the complexities of the gender pay gap in a large and professionally diverse organisation isn't easy. To create strategies that will result in effective and sustainable progress towards equity in pay, requires in depth analysis of the internal and sector wide drivers of the gender pay gap. Preliminary audit results provided some interesting insight to drivers of the pay gap, however, further work is required to identify and address the root causes across various levels and disciplines within the organisation.

Establishment of a working group with the sole purpose of undertaking this review and making recommendations for closing the gender pay gap is a critical component of the Action Plan, and is anticipated to result in significant strides forward in gender equality at LRH.

Equitable Recruitment and Career Development

Whilst gender equality is often focused on increasing the workplace participation and outcomes for women, LRH's demographic profile and insights from the gender audit present unique opportunities to respond to challenges around gender diversity; in what have traditionally been heavily female dominated professions, such as nursing.

Current career development opportunities are primarily focused on upskilling our clinical workforce, resulting in employment disadvantage outside of this particular cohort. Equitable recruitment practices help to eliminate unconscious bias and ensure merit based candidate selection, increasing diversity in the workplace. Similarly, pre-defined merit based criteria and tools for career opportunity and development will help ensure equality for all staff throughout their career at LRH.

Building an inclusive culture

A notable finding of the Gender Equality audit was that staff who have negative workplace experiences, such as discrimination and disadvantage, tend not to report these at the time they occur and rarely report them unless there is a significant impact to the individual.

LRH is working to establish a 'Just Culture' in the organisation, requiring a review of processes and systems to build trust within the workforce, empowering staff to raise issues in a timely, appropriate and supportive way; responses to such issues are provided in the same manner. Staff at all levels are encouraged to maintain inclusive and respectful relationships through the just culture framework, the foundation on which we will build truly sustainable workplace equality.



LRH 2021 GENDER EQUALITY AUDIT INSIGHTS



LRH BOARD GENDER REPRESENTATION

36% Male
64% Female

Demographic Breakdown*

*source = pay records

LRH WORKFORCE

22% Male
78% Female

LRH GENERAL AND EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

52% Female
48% Male

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF



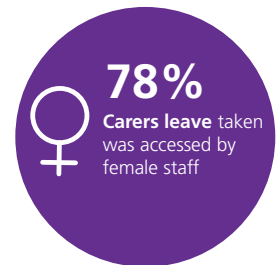
GENDER PAY GAP



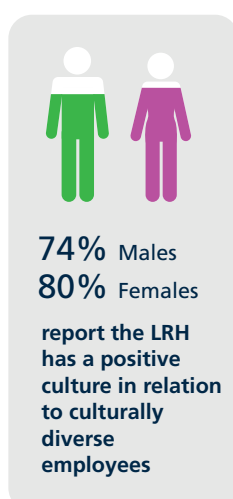
21.3% National average for Healthcare sector

12.7% LRH average

LRH pay gap is higher for full time and fixed term part time workers than it is for permanent part time and casual workers



INSIGHTS FROM THE 2021 PEOPLE MATTER SURVEY



OPPORTUNITIES FOR GATHERING GREATER INSIGHTS ON GENDER & THE WORKPLACE



Formal / informal flexible work arrangements



Self-identification of gender and disability status



Training and Education participation by gender

2021 Gender Equality Audit Results

Our organisation has a largely female workforce, resulting in potential for gender inequality, both in the experience of work, and salary for performance of work. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency reports that the average gender pay gap in the health and social services sector is 20.1%, significantly higher than the average pay gap at LRH.

Most notably, the highest average gender pay gaps at LRH are experienced at managerial and specialist level, part time and casual workers are more significantly impacted by gender pay gap than their full time counterparts.

The People Matter Survey (PMS) is the Victorian public sector's annual employee opinion survey, with LRH employees encouraged to participate and share their experiences of working within the organisation. The 2021 results of the PMS indicate that female respondents perceived disadvantage than their male counterparts, particularly in relation to workplace bullying and career barriers from family responsibilities.

The PMS results also identified that male respondents experience more disadvantage on the basis of cultural identity, career barriers as a result of sexual orientation and have lower levels of uptake with learning and professional development opportunities.

We know that family violence leave at LRH is currently only accessed by female employees, whilst men account for just 22% of carers leave, and 39% of purchased leave taken over the past 12 months. The PMS confirms that male employees believe flexible work provisions are less readily available to them, in comparison to their female counterparts.

A highlight from the PMS is that the LRH Board far outperforms in the space of gendered representation in comparison to the national average for Australian Not for Profit Boards (ANFP). Over half of the LRH Board is female (68%) in comparison to the ANFP average of 40%.

Further, whilst LRH Board is led by a female chair, only 32% of ANFP counterparts have female chairs.

In 2021, LRH experienced very minimal instances of sexual harassment in the workplace (both perceived and reported) which indicates healthy levels of sexual safety between men and women in the workplace. This is an encouraging indicator of positive attitudes towards gender respect and equality in the workplace.

Although current data is somewhat limited, LRH welcomes opportunity for culture improvement in relation to employees with a disability, those who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, gender diverse and employees of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

2021 Gender Equality Audit Limitations

Quality research produces quality results, so LRH has leveraged as many available data points for use in the Gender Equality audit as possible, backed further by direct consultation and input from staff. However, given this is a new requirement, there were limitations to our ability to gather and source information relevant to this work, therefore this action plan also includes the introduction of new resources and procedures to further inform our gender equality work in future.

In particular, we are introducing formal pathways for employees to self-describe their gender identity and sexual preference, disability status and cultural identity, both upon commencement and throughout their employment with LRH.

The other notable challenge for LRH in completing our first Gender Equality Audit was availability of suitably experienced and available working group participants. At a time where the health sector is under significant workforce pressure due to pandemic impact, the lack of a dedicated resource to lead this work precluded a 'deep dive' approach into audit findings.

In particular, the working group lacked the skills and experience to undertake complex data analysis, and the required systems knowledge to manipulate, interrogate and integrate available data from multiple sources.

It is important that diversity and inclusion activities reflect the community in which we operate, however the audit failed to take into account regional demography due to the lack of readily available data and resourcing to analyse this within the context of the gender equality audit.

Whilst LRH employs a merit based recruitment process supported by standardised processes, tools and resources, our ability to track and report these activities by gender or other intersectional groupings is limited.

We deliberately avoid seeking personal and identity related information from candidates during recruitment processes, in order to limit possible bias on employment decisions. Whilst we can see the potential benefits of understanding the demographics of employment candidates from a diversity and inclusion perspective, this is likely to have unintended impacts in terms of decision bias (conscious and unconscious), so continuation of a minimalist approach to gathering personal candidate information is recommended moving forward.

Finally, low response rate of LRH employees to the PMS survey may have resulted in under-representation from particular employee groupings, and a significant gap in the depth and quality of information gathered from the survey.

Action Plan Development

In early 2021, LRH formed an internal working group to develop our first Gender Equality Action Plan. The GE Working Group consists of staff from across the organisation to contribute diverse perspectives, ideas and knowledge in the development of this plan.

All staff at LRH were invited to contribute to this plan, through insights offered through the 2021 People Matters Survey, group and individual consultation activities and informal discussions with Working Group members. Unions were also invited to participate in the consultative process.

Throughout the year, the working group has consulted widely across the Victorian health services to understand issues unique to the sector. Responses to this consultation shape and inform this plan.

The result of this work is an Action Plan that reflects the priorities and opportunities unique to LRH. This plan has been developed by LRH staff, and for the benefit of all.



Action Plan Priorities

Understanding the collective identity our workforce

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURE
Add candidate gender field in e-recruit to facilitate capture gendered information on applicants and new hires	People & Culture	March 2022	Online recruitment data base allows for capturing of this information
Encourage the addition of pronouns to email signature and use of these in general conversation	e-Quality Working Group	March 2022	Presenting with email signature information upon commencement. Pulse (internal intranet) information
Create standard GE report mapped to SAP fields to facilitate future gender audits	Payroll	September 2024	Implementation of custom report
Develop process for new and existing staff to self-identify disability status, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation and nationality to facilitate capture of intersectional information on employees	People & Culture	June 2022	100% of staff given the opportunity to update data
Once intersectional workforce identity has been established, analyse this information to understand impacts of this on equality in the workforce and make recommendations to CEO to address	People & Culture	June 2023	Report and recommendation
Establish and document inclusion and diversity monitoring and reporting protocols	People & Culture	June 2023	Report and recommendation
Define and implement process for board members to self-identify disability status, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation and nationality to facilitate capture of intersectional information on board participants	Chair of LRH Board of Directors	June 2022	
Conduct annual payroll audit to ensure employee files are updated accurately following a variation of employment	Payroll	December 2022	Audit report
Ensure data cleanse is included in the transition plan for SAP to enhance data quality through system upgrade process	Payroll	TBC	Project plan scope

Providing flexibility in the workplace

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURE
Add flexible work field to SAP and create report to quantify flexible work uptake and type	People & Culture	March 2022	Report update
Update leave application form removing gendered language and add carers leave as a selection	People & Culture	March 2022	Template update
Proactively promote leave and flexibility entitlements to staff on an annual basis	People & Culture	March 2023	Promoting flexible arrangements. Employee engagement and applying
Document and promote flexible work options, with review of policy to broaden the scope of availability	People & Culture	September 2023	Promoting flexible arrangements
Develop a parental leave report capturing duration, type of absence and return / exit rates of staff on parental leave	Payroll	September 2023	Report
Review EBA parental leave provisions and make recommendations to enhance support to working parents through internal policy	People & Culture	June 2024	Report and recommendation
Research health services with onsite childcare centre and provide discussion paper for consideration in future site expansion	Project Management	June 2024	Report and recommendation

Working towards pay equity

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURE
Establish a pay equity working group to analyse pay gap and make recommendations to CEO to address	Finance / Pay Equity Working Group	September 2022	Report and recommendation
Conduct payroll review to ensure all 'fixed remuneration/ above award' provisions are captured within sap	Payroll / People & Culture	September 2022	Report and recommendation
Develop remuneration policy for LRH including the establishment of set equal pay targets and timeline	Pay Equity Working Group / People & Culture	March 2023	Report and recommendation
Develop annual pay gap report and recommendations to CEO	Pay Equity Working Group	December 2022	Report and recommendation

Equitable Recruitment and Career Development

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURE
Design and implement merit based recruitment selection toolkit for managers	People & Culture	June 2022	Implementation and manager engagement
Work with federation university to encourage more aboriginal nurses through establishment of a scholarship or mentoring program	Aboriginal Liaison	December 2023	Updated aboriginal employment plan
Provide leadership training on respectful relationships, inclusion and promoting equality in the workplace	People & Culture	September 2023	Delivery of 6 wellness Wednesday sessions in relation to gender equality in a 12 month period
Review recruitment policy and include gendered recruitment targets to increase diversity in the workplace	People & Culture	June 2022	Reviewing gender policy through gender impact assessment
Develop an internal mobility report capturing internal appointments (temp and perm)	People & Culture	June 2023	Report and recommendation
Establish leadership pathways through internal committees and working groups to develop young staff (under 30)	ODC	March 2024	Intersectional recommendation for committee profile
Develop report on training and education engagement by gender	ETU	June 2023	Report and recommendation



Building an inclusive culture

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURE
Create staff app polls and resources to promote gender and inclusion	ODC	September 2022	Staff engagement with the staff app
Develop gender impact assessment process and implement as part of policies and internal documents reviews	People & Culture	September 2022	Implementation and compliance rates
Review uniform range to provide gender neutral options	People & Culture	March 2022	Non-gendered uniform options
Provide resources on gender diversity and equality on Pulse to empower personal learning	Wellbeing Coordinator	September 2022	Updating initiatives as created
Deliver Wellness Wednesday sessions to reflect on equality, diversity and inclusion	Wellbeing Coordinator	December 2022	Delivery of multiple sessions in collaboration with Rainbow eQuality Working Group members
Promote employment opportunities for people with a disability, and educate internally on positives of working with people who have disabilities	People & Culture	March 2024	Development of internal disability action plan
Review Workplace Support Officer Program to identify and remove barriers to incident reporting	Wellbeing Coordinator	June annually	Report and recommendation
Develop an overarching Diversity & Inclusion strategy with links to existing plans	People & Culture	September 2023	Development and implementation
Review visa protocols/processes to encourage cultural diversity	People & Culture	December 2023	Document of visa processes
Set target, metrics and timeline for the achievement of bully free workplace	People & Culture	September 2022	Bully free statement of intention
Create gender diversity pathways specifically targeted at gender dominated disciplines	Clinical / ETU	September 2023	Meet gender targets for student, graduates, interns
Achieve recognition as a 'Rainbow Tick' accredited organisation	eQuality Working Group	December 2024	Implementation and achievement

Strategic Resource Plan

The LRH Executive Leadership Team, through development and endorsement of this Action Plan, is also making a firm commitment to supporting its successful implementation through appropriate and timely resourcing of action plan items.

In most cases, this will be in the form of allocation of internal human resources to deliver proposed action, in addition to the ongoing 'in kind' commitment of up to 2 days paid time per month for the Working Group to coordinate and advance this work.

Financial resourcing for action items will be considered on a case by case basis, with a contingency budget allocation of up to \$20k over the duration of this plan, committed to support delivery of identified actions.

LRH welcome further funding from the Gender Equality Commission, or other relevant agencies, as available, to additionally support this work moving forward.

Implementation, Monitoring & Reporting

Actions contained within this plan will be implemented in accordance with the allocated timelines, and oversight by the Gender Equality Working Group.

The Gender Equality Working Group will continue to meet post implementation, and will review progress of the action plan on a quarterly basis. A dashboard report will be presented to the Executive Management Team in March and September annually, with a formal progress report to the Gender Equality Commission submitted by October 31 each year, commencing in 2023.

Key word definitions

Gender Equality: the state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender.

Gender identity: an individual's personal sense of having a particular gender.

Sexual orientation: a person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted

Gender diversity: the extent to which a person's gender identity, role, or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for people of a particular sex.

Cultural identity: the shared characteristics of a group of people, which encompasses place of birth, religion, language and social behaviours,

Intersectionality: A methodology of studying the overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination





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Latrobe Regional Hospital is located on the traditional land of the Braiakaulung clan of the Gunaikurnai Nation.