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# Rail Gender Equity Charter

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**Australasian  
Railway  
Association**





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# Introduction

**The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) believes that employment in the rail industry should offer a fulfilling career journey of growth and satisfaction, and that the industry should reflect the diverse communities that we serve.**

Gender equity represents a key opportunity to unlock the skills and capabilities from all of the population, improving outcomes for business and communities alike.

A truly innovative and successful industry is built on the strengths and diversity of all our people. Through the commitments outlined in this Charter, rail organisations can demonstrate their prioritisation of improving gender equity within their businesses. Together, we can make the rail industry an industry of choice for people of all genders seeking employment.

## Objectives

The five commitments below provide a statement of intent from all Charter signatories, demonstrating their pledge.

# Commitments



**We commit to fair and unbiased recruitment processes, to enable equal opportunity for candidates of all genders to start their career in rail.**



**We commit to offering all employees equitable opportunity for career development and leadership.**



**We commit to providing policy which supports and enables our gender equity commitments.**



**We commit to “walk the talk” of gender diversity and inclusion, with executive leadership support and engagement in diversity initiatives.**



**We commit to fostering a culture of inclusivity in the workplace, backing up our commitment with behaviours which make our employees feel valued and able to present their authentic selves.**

# Approaches & Measurements

**Each commitment in this Charter is followed by a series of suggested approaches, metrics for measurement, and supporting resources.**

It is understood that not all organisations are at the same starting position when it comes to inclusion practices and resourcing. The suggested approaches are intended to be elective and scalable, based on an organisation's capacity. The measurement metrics provide options for recording data and tracking improvement over time. The resources offer additional supporting information, tools, and evidence to help along the journey.

# 1. Inclusive talent acquisition

## Commitment

**We commit to fair and unbiased recruitment processes, to enable equal opportunity for candidates of all genders to start their career in rail.**

## Suggested approaches

- Proactively engage with diverse networks to reach candidates outside traditional recruitment pools.
- Use a gender balanced hiring panel, wherever possible.
- Screen job advertisements for inclusivity and use non-gendered language before publicising.
- Use non-gendered language when writing position descriptions.
- Train and educate recruitment teams, hiring managers and HR managers on inclusive hiring.
- Recognise transferable skills, beyond technical requirements.
- Provide robust post-interview feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

## Measurement

- Percentage of new hires by gender.
- Percentage, by gender, of applicants, shortlisted, and withdrawn applications.
- Application of policies or evidence of policies in action. For example, hiring panel gender ratio, percentage of job applications screened for gendered language, percentage of hiring managers receiving inclusive hiring training.

## Resources

- Diversity Council Australia suggest nine tips for **inclusive interviewing**.
- Diversity Partner's guide on **Fair and Objective Recruitment** for Hiring Managers.
- Screen your advertisements for gendered language using a **gender decoder**.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA's) Gender Equitable **Recruitment and Promotion Guide**.

## 2. Equitable promotion and retention

### Commitment

**We commit to offering all employees equitable opportunity for career development and leadership.**

### Suggested approaches

- Establish clear and transparent promotion pathways.
- Offer equal opportunity for training and professional development.
- Use gender balanced panels to assess for promotions, wherever possible.
- Invest in leadership development, mentorship and sponsorship opportunities for women.
- Provide secondment or rotation opportunities for women to gain experience outside their established role.
- Regularly review remuneration data to identify and address inequalities in career progression or remuneration.
- Calculate the gender pay gap within the organisation.
- Conduct regular career interviews with all employees to identify and resolve challenges or conflicts before they lead to resignations.
- Conduct exit interviews to capture feedback.

### Measurement

- Percentage, by gender, of current leadership and management roles.
- Percentage, by gender, of promotions.
- Relative retention, by gender.
- Compare employment and remuneration data with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) published metrics.

### Resources

- **WGEA's Gender Pay Gap Analysis Guide** – for steps on how to collect wage gap data, ensure its accuracy, and calculate the pay gap at your organisation.
- WGEA's guide to designing an equitable **remuneration policy**.
- WGEA's Gender Equitable **Recruitment and Promotion Guide**.
- **Benchmark** your organisation's policies using the self-assessment from Family Friendly Workplaces.
- Get a better understanding of the positive impact of flexible work arrangements by reading some **case studies**.

# 3. Embed policies

## Commitment

**We commit to providing policy which supports and enables our gender equity commitments.**

## Suggested approaches

- Apply a policy commitment that all complaints of harassment and bullying will be responded to.
- Establish a safe complaints or whistleblower process for reporting negative behaviour or violations of diversity policies, without fear of retaliation.
- Offer equal access to flexible work options and equal parental leave for all genders.
- Reduce the stigma associated with utilising flexible work arrangements.
- Showcase, both internally and externally, examples of employees utilising flexible work and/or parental leave.
- Continue engagement and mentorship opportunities for those on parental leave to maintain connection to industry.
- Provide access to adequate facilities and amenities for the female workforce, including on site and in remote areas.
- Establish a formal policy or strategy for equal remuneration between women and men.
- Ensure reporting and addressing non-compliances of all levels.

## Measurement

- Review existing policies and update or develop additional policies as required. Track amendments made or new policies developed as a result of the review process.
- Record uptake of flexible work arrangements, by gender.
- Record incidents of non-compliance, and number of completed action plans as follow up to non-compliances recorded (closing the loop)\*.

## Resources

- WGEA's guides to **gender equitable** and **leading practice** parental leave.
- WGEA's guide to building a **Workplace Flexibility Strategy**.
- The Fair Work Ombudsman's best practice guide to **flexible work arrangements**.

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\* It is acknowledged that organisations of different sizes will record different numbers of incidents, and internal classifications or language describing "major" or "minor" incidents may differ. These records are not intended for comparison between organisations, but rather so an organisation can internally track its own progress and improvements.

## 4. Visible leadership

### Commitment

We commit to “walk the talk” of gender diversity and inclusion, with executive leadership support and engagement in diversity initiatives.

### Suggested approaches

- Executive leadership team members to participate in genuine public-facing gender equity activities, above and beyond the typical International Women’s Day initiatives or similar.
- Leadership teams to prioritise attendance at events which provide gender balance. For example, gender balanced panels or 40/40/20 speaker makeup.
- Achieve balanced gender representation on Boards and/or among the leadership team.
- Leaders to actively seek feedback from their teams and engage in feedback opportunities whenever possible, such as leadership shadows or listen and learn sessions.
- Share case studies both internally and externally to demonstrate the organisation’s culture of inclusion.
- Leaders to actively educate themselves on gender inequality and their own privileges and unconscious biases.
- Demonstrate what “good” looks like – leaders to use respectful language, call out poor behaviour, acknowledge good practices and facilitate inclusive meetings.

### Measurement

- Proportion of public-facing statements and appearances (conferences, LinkedIn, corporate webpages) for leadership team promoting or supporting diversity initiatives.
- Number of leadership team members utilising inclusion policies (such as parental leave and flexible work).
- Gender balance in internal communications coming from senior leaders.
- Percentage of women in leadership roles.

### Resources

- Diversity Council Australia outline an **Inclusive Leadership model** with five tiers to strive towards.
- WGEA’s strategy guidance for **gender composition of governing bodies**.
- Understand your **leadership shadow** and how to ask for feedback.
- Ask your leadership team to take the **Panel Pledge** to encourage more gender diverse speaking engagements.
- Review the National Women in Transport’s **Speaker Bureau** for women in the transport sector to speak at your next event.



# 5. Respectful behaviours

## Commitment

We commit to fostering a culture of inclusivity in the workplace, backing up our commitment with behaviours which make our employees feel valued and able to present their authentic selves.

## Suggested approaches

- Identify and mitigate psychosocial hazards which are known to disproportionately impact women, such as bullying, isolation, and high job demands.
- Offer annual training in addition to that which is legally required under respectful workplace legislation.
- Focus on training which is engaging, interactive, and high-impact as opposed to box-ticking.
- Conduct employee culture and safety surveys to gain insights on workplace culture and areas for improvement, and share the results with employees. Monitor the survey results for improvement.
- Extend “Respect at Work” training to the wider supply chain, such as suppliers or contractors, so that the culture of inclusion is shared.
- Collaborate and share resources across industry to broaden access to engaging and impactful training programs or facilitators.
- Invest in training for employees responsible for responding to and managing behaviour complaints.

## Measurement

- Percentage of employees who complete respectful behaviour training.
- Track changes in employee cultural survey responses over time.
- Monitor disrespectful behaviour complaints and record actions taken in response.
- Record both reactive responses to the incident, as well as proactive initiatives implemented to prevent recurrence of similar situations, to demonstrate appropriate actions taken.

## Resources

- WGEA's guide on **conducting an effective workplace survey**.
- Undertake the ARA's free online **Respect in Rail** course and share it with your colleagues.
- Safe Work Australia's guide to **preventing and responding to workplace bullying**.
- The Fair Work Ombudsman's resources on **bullying and harassment**.

# Appendix

Language is constantly evolving, and appropriate language can change with context and tone. At the time of preparing this Charter, the following definitions apply<sup>1</sup>:

## Definitions

### Gender

The socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of people. Gender influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender identity is not confined to a binary, nor is it static; it exists along a continuum and can change over time. This Charter sometimes uses binary language. This is deemed necessary to convey the gendered nature and dynamics of society and the workplace.<sup>2</sup>

### Diversity

The mix of people in an organisation, including all the differences between people in how they identify.<sup>2</sup>

### Inclusion

Getting the mix of people in an organisation to work together to improve performance and wellbeing.<sup>2</sup>

### Equality

The practice of ensuring equal treatment to all people, without consideration of individual and group diversities.<sup>3</sup>

### Equity

The practice of ensuring fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people, with consideration of individual and group diversities. Equity honours and accommodates the specific needs of individuals/groups.<sup>3</sup>

### Bullying

Bullying happens at work when a person or group of people repeatedly behave unreasonably towards another worker or group of workers, and, the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.<sup>4</sup>

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment at work happens when a worker or group of workers makes an unwelcome sexual advance, makes an unwelcome request for sexual favours, or engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to another worker. To be sexual harassment, it has to be reasonable to expect that there is a possibility that the worker being sexually harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.<sup>4</sup>

## Intersectionality

While this document primarily focuses on gender equity, it is understood that experiences of discrimination and isolation are often magnified for those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who identify as LGBTQI+, or those with a disability. These intersecting identities should be considered when adopting mechanisms or measurements suggested in this Charter.

## Positive Duty Requirements

Positive Duty in Australia was introduced in 2022 as part of the Sex Discrimination Act. This legislation requires organisations and businesses to take proactive measures to prevent unlawful conduct such as sexual harassment and discrimination. It is no longer sufficient to simply address complaints and incidents when they arise, employers now have a duty to prevent them from occurring in the first place.

This Charter is intended to encourage action above and beyond the minimum legal requirements, demonstrating leadership and initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> It is recognised that organisations may have their own established definitions for some of these terms. Where organisations do not, these definitions are suggested as an appropriate option.

<sup>2</sup> Diversity Council Australia, Gender resources, Diversity Definition and Inclusion Model, 2017.  
<https://www.dca.org.au/resources/di-planning/what-is-diversity-inclusion-intersectionality>

<sup>3</sup> The 519, Glossary of terms, 2020. <https://www.the519.org/education-training/glossary/#E>

<sup>4</sup> Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman, bullying in the workplace.  
<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employment-conditions/bullying-sexual-harassment-and-discrimination-at-work/bullying-in-the-workplace>



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