

East Gippsland Water



Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2019 – 2023

Aboriginal Acknowledgement

East Gippsland Water acknowledge the Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and water on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We commit to working respectfully to honour their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to this country. We recognise the role and value of their culture in our community.

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Document Status

Rev No	DOC No	Change Description	Issue Date	Author	Approved By
A	DOC/19/55342(v1)	New document	22 Nov 2019	Tara Woods	Jenny Gregory
B					
C					
D					



Enablers Network

A water industry support network for those with differing abilities



EAST GIPPSLAND WATER'S VISION

Sustainability and resilience through leading and innovative water solutions

We are an industry and community leader, driven to future-proof services using customer-focused water and wastewater solutions, which are efficient, affordable and represent value for money.

Our people are inspired to work within a strong values-focused organisation, with safety at its core. Our water solutions contribute to making us a location of choice, which is at the heart of the region's attraction and what makes East Gippsland a great place to live and work.

OUR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION VISION

To engender a spirit of inclusivity in everything we do through developing a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusion in all areas of our business.

We value social and professional identity, alternative thoughts, backgrounds, experiences, uniqueness and creativity. We will do this as a reflection of community diversity. Building a diverse and inclusive workforce is how we can demonstrate the highest value for our people, our stakeholders and our community. We need people who think and approach problems differently, who are willing to challenge the status quo, and who come from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

The community we live and work in is becoming increasingly diverse, represented by significant Indigenous culture, multicultural groups from across the globe and a strong farming community. Historically, diversity was about gender, age, disability, race or nationality. Diversity and inclusion has broadened the scope to think more holistically about the strengths that can be leveraged from people with different backgrounds, lifestyle, abilities and opinions from our own.

For us, inclusion is about giving our people a real voice and a sense of being valued for their difference of opinion, style and approach in order to achieve improvements in the way we do business. There is no "one size fits all" approach; it is going to take a lot of different strategies to drive sustainable and real change in this space. It is our aim to get it right and continue to move forward and encourage people of all abilities and backgrounds to build a rewarding career, achieving their full potential.

OUR ROLE

To meet or exceed the targets of the water industry and lead excellence in the initiatives we commit to by embracing community groups, diverse interest groups and those who have lived the experience to join us in our journey.



THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity provides an opportunity for new and better ways of doing things; helps us to harness benefits and improve the efficiency and quality of our services. Inclusion is the key to unlocking potential. When we value workplace diversity and inclusion, we see benefits such as higher employee engagement, improved performance, greater innovation, retention of talent, improved employee wellbeing and lower levels of unlawful and unwelcome behaviour such as harassment, bullying and discrimination.

BACKGROUND

We have been working towards improving diversity and inclusion within East Gippsland Water for four (4) years. Our journey started with recognising difference locally; driven by government policy for change so we could reflect the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

We are now proud to be involved in initiatives such as Pride in Water, Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) and Gippsland Environment Agencies (GEA) Partnership Agreement, Gippsland East Mentoring Program through partnerships to achieve sustainable and opportune outcomes for those that are marginalised and disadvantaged in our community.

We believe that working together with our community, their representatives, industry and government, creates the best opportunity for us to add value. Our work in this area recognises the efforts of our stakeholders, including:

- Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)
- Minister for Water
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Water Industry
- Local Business Partners
- Community
- Clontarf Foundation
- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative



OUR PHILOSOPHY BEHIND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity is about our individual differences and leveraging strength from the unique blend of knowledge, skills and perspectives people bring to the workplace. Diversity includes characteristics such as cultural background and ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, language and education. Diversity also includes characteristics such as professional skills, working style, location and life experiences.

A culture of Inclusion is one where everyone feels valued and respected and is able to fully contribute. Inclusion is about empowering people to contribute their skills and perspectives for the benefit of organisational performance, business outcomes and creating a rewarding career for themselves and those they work with.

The Principles

Our diversity and inclusion culture starts with you. We are creating an inclusive environment through our Values and Behaviours and through the principles identified in The Charter of Human Rights and the Code of Conduct (SOP 005).

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the Charter) is a Victorian law that sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. It is about the relationship between government and the people it serves (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2019)

The Charter establishes a “dialogue model” which seeks to ensure human rights are considered in all conversations and decision-making practices in East Gippsland Water. We do this through our Values and Behaviours by asserting the four (4) principles of FRED:

- Freedom – **Openly Accountable**
- Respect - **Proudly United**
- Equality – **Passionately Innovative**
- Dignity – **Truly Authentic**

Through practicing behaviours of FRED including our Values and Behaviours, we can focus on creating a positive experience for everyone to *Live, Work and Play* safely at work, at home and in our community. We encourage our people to challenge the norms and to “*think outside the box*” while respecting and valuing our commitment to these principles.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PRIORITIES

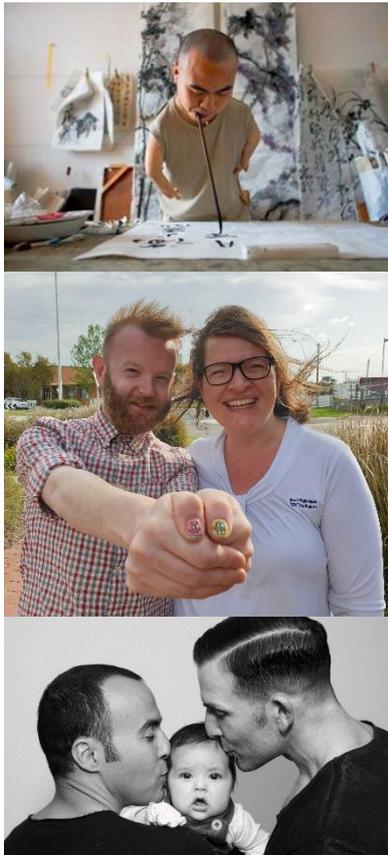
The following four (4) areas provide a holistic approach to equity, diversity and inclusion and align with VicWater priorities for water corporations. These priorities will be reviewed annually in line with progress towards targets.

Gender Representation

Achieving state-wide targets for gender equity is a challenge for East Gippsland Water as we reflect on our workforce profile to date, however the focus on development of women into leadership roles has resulted in a positive gender balance ratio. Our Board composition role models women in leadership, providing inspiration to our employees for career pathways and opportunities to decrease the gender pay gap in Australia.

Indigenous Participation

As an organisation, we work closely with our Indigenous community in project planning and decision making, helping build a relationship based on shared knowledge and trust. Through this relationship, and an increase in cultural awareness, competency and engagement, we aim to increase Indigenous representation in our workforce.



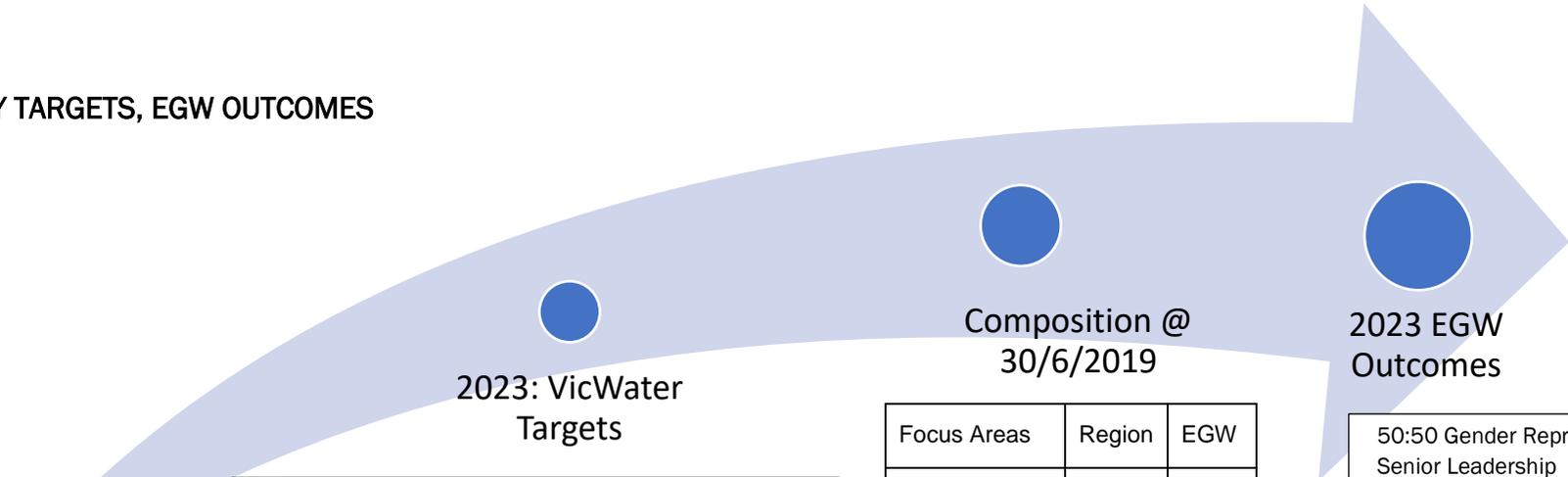
Differing Abilities

We will continue to work with organisations to improve the lives of Australians living with differing abilities in our community. We will aim to work closely with not-for-profit organisations focused on the integration of adults with differing abilities into the workforce and/or community through social procurement practices and an ethical understanding of differing abilities and change.

LGBTIQ+

An inclusive work environment is one where you can be open and honest about who you are, including who you support, enabling all of us to perform at a higher capacity. We are commencing our journey with LGBTIQ+ and will continue to improve our involvement with our community and LGBTIQ+ organisations and networks to ensure we make a difference in the lives of LGBTIQ+ employees and the wider community.

INDUSTRY TARGETS, EGW OUTCOMES



EGW Focus

- Gender Representation in Senior Leadership
- Differing Abilities
- Multicultural Inclusion
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment
- LGBTIQ+ safe self-disclosure
- Flexibility

2023: VicWater Targets

50:50 Gender balance in senior leadership positions

10% of our workforce identify as a person with a disability

20% of our workforce speak a language other than English

3% of our workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

35% of our workforce identify as carers, with caring responsibilities for children, elderly family, a person with a disability or other caring responsibility

7% of our workforce identify as belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community

Flexible work arrangements are available to all employees unless there is a specific operational constraint

35% of employees work flexibility (through informal and formal flexible work arrangements)*

*Flexible work arrangements include changes to work days, times and locations of work. Formal arrangements might include regularly working from an alternative location, part time work, 9 day fortnight, purchased leave and time off in lieu. Informal arrangements include changes to start and finish times and work locations on an irregular or ad-hoc basis.

Composition @ 30/6/2019

Focus Areas	Region	EGW
Gender Representation in Senior Leadership (M:W) Note: first 3 levels of org	49:51	58:42
Differing Abilities	7%	2%
Multicultural Inclusion	12%	9%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	3%	7% ¹
LGBTIQ+	3.2%	6%
Flexibility	No Data	13%

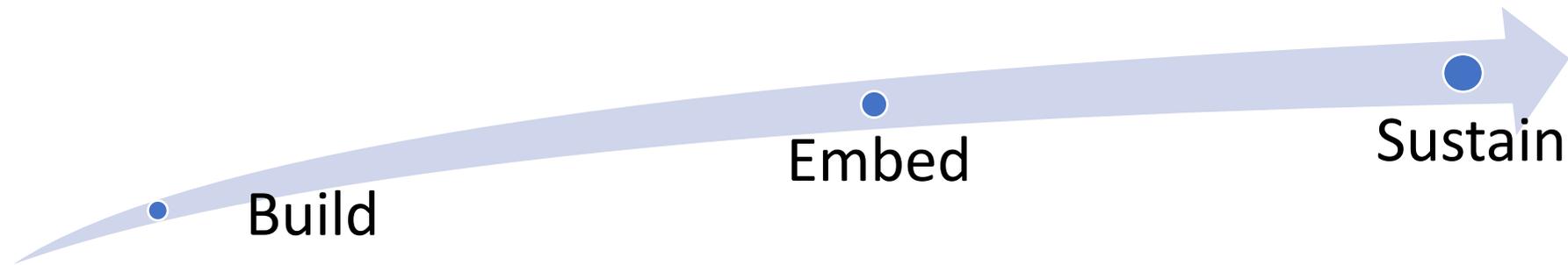
¹ sourced from People Matter Survey

2023 EGW Outcomes

- 50:50 Gender Representation in Senior Leadership
- 7% Differing Abilities²
- 14% Multicultural Inclusion²
- 3% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 7% LGBTIQ+
- All Roles Flex with 35% staff utilising informal and formal flexibility arrangements

²the target in this instance reflects the regional multicultural and differing abilities representation within East Gippsland, rather than the generic state based VicWater target

OUR CHALLENGES, OUR ACTIONS



East Gippsland Water has actively been involved in supporting diversity and inclusion in our local community and developing workplace initiatives to meet the needs of business and community. We will continue to work hard to *Build, Embed and Sustain* initiatives that improve diversity and inclusion not only in the workplace, but in the lives and mindsets of those around us.

Our Challenges

Our challenges create opportunity to engage with our people and develop actions that are real, achievable and reflect the lives of those around us. Upon commencing this journey, the key challenges we face include:

- Disclosure of personal information to guide the direction of our Strategy
- Shortage of skilled labour to meet identified diversity targets set by Government
- Availability of community data to clearly define diversity and inclusion parameters for workforce composition
- Create an inclusive culture of “thinking outside the box” to promote sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all

Nothing is unachievable and the challenges we face, will only drive us to improve our actions and approach to equity, diversity and inclusion.



Our Actions

The following table details the actions East Gippsland Water will undertake to improve diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

STAGE 1	BUILD
	<p><i>The Social Procurement Framework and Local Jobs First</i> built into major projects identified in the Pricing Submission and Corporate Plan</p> <p>Development of a Workforce Capability Framework to provide a transparent approach to equity in attracting and retaining our people</p> <p>Development of a Resourcing Strategy to drive performance outcomes against the D&I Strategy</p> <p>Identify Community support networks to improve employee support systems for psychosocial safety and wellbeing</p> <p>Assess remuneration of employees to identify any gender based gaps</p> <p>Increase participation in regional diversity and inclusion networks to support education and improve awareness</p> <p>Encourage and support staff to participate in celebrating diverse cultures through shared activities</p> <p>Promote LGBTIQ awareness and inclusion through water industry initiatives such as Pride in Water, and other regionally based initiatives</p> <p>Ensure people with disabilities are not disadvantaged by our policies, procedures and systems</p> <p>Support our established and emerging female leaders through participation in Leadership Programs such as Peter Cullen, Laurie Gleason & DELWP Insight Executive Leadership Program</p> <p>Implementation of the talent and succession planning module to provide career and succession planning for employees to achieve their full potential and grow towards non-traditional occupations and leadership roles</p> <p>Undertake facility and depot review to enable an environment conducive to people being able to do their best work irrespective of gender, ethnicity or ability</p> <p>Develop leave SOP that provides for cultural leave and other significant ethnic events,</p> <p>Identification and articulation of EGW uniqueness and workplace culture, to underpin the development of an Employee Value Proposition to be used in the attraction and retention of talent irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity or ability</p> <p>Review workplace opportunities that may be either short or long term roles for long term unemployed or people with differing abilities, build relationships with community partners that assist people with differing abilities (for example trial catering and landscaping suppliers that utilise and employ Aboriginal and disadvantaged personnel)</p> <p>Working groups established to identify ways in which people can transition to retirement so that skills and knowledge transfer can occur and potential retirees' wellbeing maintained</p> <p>Work with GLaWAC to provide economic benefit in such areas as water reuse, bush tucker and aboriginal art</p> <p>Implement the recruitment 'decoder' tool for job advertisements to ensure our language has no inadvertent bias regarding gender or ability</p>

STAGE 2

EMBED

Based on the outcome of the review, build or modify facilities for women and those with differing abilities to feel safe to be able to work in multiple workplaces

Encourage office based employees to spend a day a week/fortnight/month at a depot or treatment facility, breaking down silos, embedding inclusion principles in all areas of our business thus paving the way for recruitment of new entrants into the water industry focusing on women in non-traditional roles and having a readymade support network available.

Encourage initiatives that reinforce our Employee Value Proposition and promote to attract and retain diversity within East Gippsland Water

Promote a culture of *All Roles Flex*, where practical to do so and *Learn & Develop Through Others (70:20:10 model of learning)*

Provide a self-service means for identification in which our people feel safe to identify their diversity (LGBTIQ, ATSI, Gender, differing ability)

A respectful and safe workplace to bring your whole self to work and feel comfortable to have a voice and be heard for your value to business outcomes

Ensure no gender based pay gaps exist for all new employees of EGW and work towards closing any gaps identified in the initial assessment

Trial the outcomes identified in the workgroups transition to retirement

Identify STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) opportunities as part of the resourcing strategy and promote STEM career options with universities and schools

Conduct benchmarking exercise with industry leaders to identify initiatives and processes to improve our inclusivity and diversity and ensure equity for all concerned

Identify what barriers exist within the industry, the community and region in which we operate to people gaining employment and progressing within our organisation, and work to remove them from our processes, embedding practices that support equity, diversity and inclusion through collaboration and knowledge sharing with our local business partners.

Utilise the Talent and Succession Planning module in PeopleStreme to ensure development plans and training needs are identified and met to create equity of training across our diverse workforce; generating skills development for those identified as future leaders and removing barriers based on gender, age, differing ability and ethnicity

STAGE 3

SUSTAIN

Zero gender based pay gaps exist within EGW

Embed the successful trial outcomes from the transition to retirement workgroups and encourage long term planning for retirement to enable sufficient time for transfer of knowledge and skills

Develop clear career pathways for new entrants from the STEM programs

Implement the improvement actions and initiatives identified in the benchmarking exercise that are applicable to EGW

Maximise the use of PeopleStreme to identify high potential and high performing employees and provide equitable career paths irrespective of gender, age or differing ability

Best practice recruitment(with no gender bias) that attracts a diversity of talent into our workplace, including women in non-traditional roles and having meaningful employment opportunities for people with differing abilities

Strong partnerships with community organisations and business to increase employability of people with differing abilities

Continue to drive education in diversity and inclusion principles to improve our culture and workplace environment and meet the needs of the wider community and water industry

An organisational culture of inclusion in all areas of decision making as reflected in our ability to achieve D&I outcomes

All employee's remuneration is based on skills, experience, performance with no differentiation relating to gender, ethnicity or age

Leverage our collective knowledge, connect and collaborate across our industry

We gather and report on data to enable evidence –based decision making and tracking of progress over time

Develop PeopleStreme Learning to provide diverse delivery methods and access anywhere, anytime

Develop IT platforms that enable people with visual or audio impairment to apply for positions within EGW (based on the work being done at VPS and Melbourne Water) utilising our participation in the Enabler network

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Annual Report will provide the basis for performance reporting against the targets and outcomes identified in the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Strategic Plan.

Progress towards achieving success of the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy will be monitored and reported at the People and Remuneration Committee twice yearly.

An annual review of the EGW Outcomes will be conducted each year with changes to actions and performance indicators being approved and led by our Executive Management Team.

The People Matter survey will provide feedback and comparative measuring against other water corporations with regard to diversity and inclusion.

REVIEW

This Diversity & Inclusion Strategy will be reviewed in line with the Pricing Submission at least every five years and re-approved by the Board. Milestones and actions will be reviewed annually to ensure they continue to be aligned with industry initiatives and best practice. Each review will include consideration of Government policy and community expectations, with a view to EGW remaining compliant.

DEFINITIONS

Differing abilities

We use this term instead of disability. The term disability, defined as a limitation in the ability to pursue an occupation because of a physical or mental impairment; a disqualification, restriction or disadvantage and a lack of legal qualification to do something, was an inadequate or limiting “label” for a cross section of people.

Differing ability is a much more accurate portrayal of individualism and personal capabilities.

We use differing abilities to remove any perceived stigma or isolation from our workplace so we can engage in inclusive behaviours and recognise the extraordinary capabilities we all have

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Water Industry Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023, VicWater

IWA Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee, D&I Strategy – Annual Performance Report

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020, DELWP

[Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#), 2019

Code of Conduct (SOP 005)