



Bolga Court- Autumn Tree

Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025



Tallangatta Health Service acknowledges the traditional owners of this land on which we stand and pay our respects to the elders, past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions and the culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Gender Equality Vision

Tallangatta Health Service strongly supports equality for all. We embrace diversity and condemn any kind of discrimination.

Message from Vicki Pitcher, Chief Executive Officer

Commitment

“Tallangatta Health Service has undertaken a Gender Equality Audit and is now preparing an Action Plan to help us implement strategies to achieve workplace gender equality.

All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives, without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.”

Introduction - Our why

Tallangatta Health Service (THS) has been delivering health care services to communities in the Towong Shire for over 100 years and is one of the largest employers in the area. Services are delivered in the home, aged care, and acute hospital settings, with a medical practice to support our services and the community as the local GP Practice.

Our vision of '*Empowering people for health*' is committed to relevant, safe, high-quality responsive care and a workforce that is adaptive, skilled, and compassionate. Our standard of care is reliant on the design of our services, the people delivering the services, and the culture of our organisation. Gender equality means "equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities, and outcomes between persons of different genders" and is critical to achieving our vision. THS recognises the importance of gender equality and will continue to strive for gender equality in its actions.

Gender equality has been a long-standing issue within our society and it continues today with issues such as gender pay gaps, recruitment inequity and experience of family violence.

In 2016 the Victorian Government held a Royal Commission into family violence. The report highlighted that addressing gender inequality was required to reduce family violence and all forms of violence against women.

The Victorian Government in 2016 released its first gender equality strategy, Safe and Strong. The strategy sets out a framework of founding reforms to support improved gender equality that will be enduring and sustained action, and recognises this will take time. We must also remember that gender inequality can affect men as well.

"We aim to progressively build the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and deliver gender equality."

(Safe and Strong Strategy)

The development of gender equality legislation was identified in the Safe and Strong strategy as an integral legislative step towards gender equality and in February 2020 the Gender Equality Act 2020 (*The Act*) passed through parliament.

THS understands the important role this legislation plays and the positive influence it can have on our workplace, influencing the services we provide and importantly the people; the people who receive our service and our people, our workforce who deliver the service.

We all have diversity which should be respected, valued and lived. Each person's diversity contributes uniquely and there is much to be gained by inclusiveness. We all deserve equality, we understand this is a shared responsibility by us all and it enables our vision of '*Empowering people for health*.'

Gender Equality in Action @THS

The Act requires THS as a defined entity to *The Act*, to complete, as a minimum, five key tasks to meet our obligations, these are addressed within this plan.

1. Promote Gender Equality

THS is committed and will strive to ensure that the gender equality principles, as defined in *The Act are promoted*:

- All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
- Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.

Our organisational vision of *'Empowering people for health'* and our values of Integrity, Caring, Adaptable, Respect and Excellence lead our culture and guide our commitment to promotion of gender equality and the reforms required. Our gender equality vision links well with our organisation's intent and sets a clear expectation of gender equality.



2. Conduct Gender Impact Assessments

It is a legislative requirement that policies, programs and services that are to be provided to the public or have a 'direct and significant impact on the public' will have a Gender Impact Assessment and in doing so consider and promote gender equality and take necessary and proportionate action towards achieving gender equality. A 'direct' impact is where the primary focus or target of the policy, service or program is the public. A 'significant public impact' is one which is important, notable, or of consequence, having regard to its context or intensity.

[Gender impact assessments](#) (GIAs) are designed to help THS think critically about how our policies, programs, and services will meet the needs of women, men, and gender-diverse people. Gender impact assessments will become business as usual as THS creates and reviews policies, programs, and services that we provide and have a direct and significant impact on the public. We know these assessments will improve gender equality, support gender equality principles, help THS ensure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources and therefore outcomes for people.

3. Undertake a Workplace Gender Audit

Our workplace gender audit must measure THS against the Workplace Gender Equality Indicators as listed below.

- Indicator 1: gender pay equity
- Indicator 2: gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- Indicator 3: gender composition of governing bodies
- Indicator 4: workplace sexual harassment
- Indicator 5: recruitment and promotion
- Indicator 6: gendered work segregation
- Indicator 7: leave and flexibility

This has been completed and we have used two types of data sets as a baseline:

1. Workforce data – this was undertaken in November 2021 with data from our human resource system for the financial year July 2020 - June 21 (Appendix 1).
2. Employee experience data – this is based upon survey feedback undertaken in May 2021. This data complements our workforce data to help us better understand gender inequality and identify opportunities for improvement (Appendix 2).

4. Create a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)

THS has the responsibility to ensure that our GEAP recognises our obligations required under *The Act*. In this, our first GEAP, we have consciously been structured and explanatory in our approach to aid understanding of requirements under the new legislation. The GEAP has a series of steps that we have addressed below. The GEAP is a living document and will be updated based on future data collections, consultation with key stakeholders, legislative requirements, and feedback channels.

Baseline audit results

As previously outlined our baseline audits in this plan are the Employee Experience Survey and Workplace Gender Audit (Appendix 1 & 2). These baseline audits have measured us against the gender equality indicators and have been used to inform our GEAP strategies.

THS takes the privacy and confidentiality of data collected seriously. All data collected from THS staff has been de-identified so that all privacy and confidentiality concerns are eliminated.

In analysing the data THS has been mindful of small datasets and has been careful with assumptions/insights that the small datasets may not represent the broader identity groups. Our analysis has helped us identify our strengths and areas where we have opportunities to improve. This analysis will be reflected in our strategies.

Meaningful consultation and engagement

THS is very conscious that consultation is a critical part of development of our GEAP and have strived to ensure that opportunities for consultation have occurred.

Consultation has included a variety of mediums. Surveys, audits, through departmental meetings, internal communications streams, face-to-face opportunities, board meetings, departmental meetings, and key committees; Tallangatta and Surrounds Prevention of Family Violence Committee, OHSE Committee, Staff Health and Wellbeing Committee. Our baseline audits have been shared with key stakeholders across the organisation.

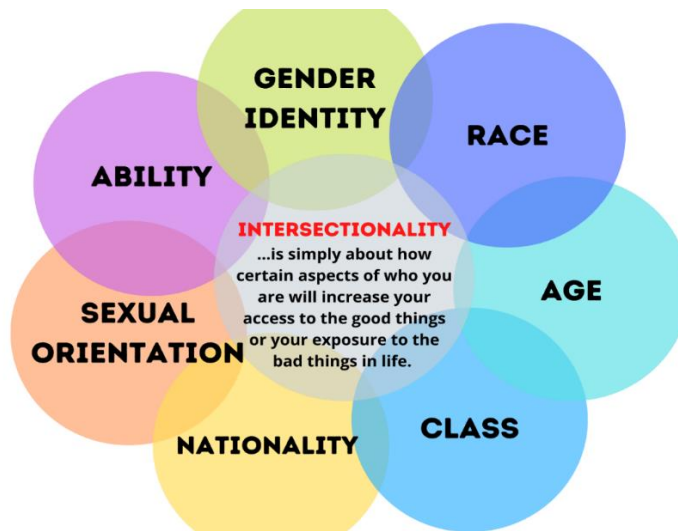
Our recent Gender Equality/Diversity Pulse Survey 2022 (Appendix 3) has formed part of our recent consultation and feedback from the survey has been incorporated into our strategies.

Case for change

The analysis of our surveys, audits, and consultation has highlighted the areas where THS does well and where there is an opportunity for change. THS has several indicators that evidence gender equality such as our female workforce has promotion opportunities in leadership and management, THS Board has women representation at 56% and pulse survey data evidence has some positive results in acknowledgment of why gender equality is important and THS's positive action so far, as evidenced in Appendix 3.

Our current data has limited data capture on the key intersectionality demographics. For example, our payroll system cannot collect gender-diverse people data, disability or race. We have relied on our Employee Experience Survey for this data.

Intersectionality is an important factor in the case for change. The concept of intersectional disadvantage or discrimination is sometimes called “Intersectionality”. It explains how people may experience overlapping forms of discrimination or disadvantage based on attributes such as Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation. Intersectionality is simply about how certain aspects of who you are will increase your access to the good things or your exposure to the bad things in life (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality recognises that the causes of disadvantage or discrimination do not exist independently, but intersect and overlap with gender inequality, magnifying the severity and frequency of the impacts while also raising barriers to support.



Intersectionality gender inequality is an area where THS has shown leadership, evident in activities below:

- Acknowledgement to country and our gender equality vision occurs before all meetings and is in our signature band in emails.
- Family violence policy and procedures, staff training in recognising and responding to family violence, and our leadership in the Tallangatta and Surrounds Prevention of Family Violence Committee
- THS Access and Inclusion Plan
- THS Aboriginal Health Cultural Competency Action Plan
- THS LGBTI Working Group
- THS Reconciliation Action Plan (in draft)

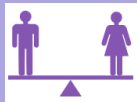


Our GEAP links closely with and complements these current organisational strategies and plans. Analysis of our local data and reflecting on the history through time of gender inequality, THS understands there is a case for change and our strategies and measures will address the required actions for THS.





Strategies and measures


THS' strategies and measures are based on data collected, consultation with key stakeholders, and the gender equality principles and indicators and will be the influencer of our actions and agenda catalysts. The gender equality principles as reflected in our strategies will lend themselves to making a difference in our community and the broader society. THS will consider any best or emerging practice when developing strategies and measures (<https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/leading-practice-resources>).

As with any plan it is purposely developed with responsibility, resourcing and timelines that THS believes it can achieve. A Gender Equality Strategies Register has been developed and will keep track of our strategies and progress. Our progress will be visible to key stakeholders. Our strategies and measures have also been formulated into an easy read table for consumers and staff (Table1).

Table 1: Strategies and Measures

Workplace Gender Equality Indicator	Strategies & Measures	When
Indicator 1: Gender Pay equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Monitor pay equity data ▶ Report gender composition of workforce findings back to key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Annually ▶ Annually
Indicator 2: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Monitor recruitment/promotion decisions to ensure free from bias and discrimination ▶ Monitor opportunities for diversity in leadership and management roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Quarterly ▶ Annually
Indicator 3: Gender composition of governing bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Board will recruit and advocate to Government for diverse representation on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increase in diversity/50% women on board

<p>Indicator 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Monitor sexual harassment reporting and action negative variances from baseline data ▶ Create an internal awareness campaign about sexual harassment policies and internal complaint mechanisms, develop contact/support officer roles ▶ Act on PMS anonymous reporting of instances of sexual harassment in the workplace and ensure that adequate response and support mechanisms are available ▶ Embed 'safe to report' culture for staff to report incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Monthly ▶ June 22 ▶ July 22 ▶ Ongoing
<p>Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communicate a transparent process for higher duties opportunities ▶ Identify and implement advancement strategies, such as mentoring, scholarships, development and education pathways, secondment opportunities ▶ Review recruitment and promotion policies to attract greater gender diversity including communicating a transparent process for acting opportunities ▶ Improve collection of intersectional data via payroll and/or internal systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ June 22 ▶ Dec 22 ▶ Sept 22 ▶ Sept 22
<p>Indicator 6: Gendered segregation within the workplace</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Create an internal awareness campaign to help people understand the impact of gender stereotypes on roles and workplace culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dec 22
<p>Indicator 7: Leave and flexibility relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities</p> 	<p>Family Violence Leave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Build a culture of checking-in consistently to ensure that staff making complaints or disclosures are supported, that issues raised are always taken seriously and dealt with appropriately and effectively ▶ Continue training for managers, people and workforce, and other key staff on how to support and respond to an employee experiencing family violence <p>Flexible working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review policy for all roles to be offered on a flexible basis by default (or 'if not, why not' basis) ▶ Create a campaign to encourage the use of informal flexible working (beyond remote working) to increase access and utilisation of flexible working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ June 22 ▶ Ongoing ▶ Sept 22 ▶ Dec 22

	<p>Family or Caring responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure there are processes in place to encourage people of all genders to take carers leave as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sept 22
<p>Leadership</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to promote and embed a positive culture where diversity in the workforce is valued and seen as a key improvement ▶ Seek key influencers at all levels across THS to be advocates for GEAP within their dept ▶ GIA - Develop policy and procedure including a register of GIA and actions ▶ Review existing policies and remove any gendered references that contribute to gender inequality ▶ People Matter Survey responses are correlated with GEAP and responded to ▶ Identify any gaps in high-level gender equality policy and procedures and action ▶ Develop training schedule based on Gender Equality Diversity Pulse Survey for staff and implement ▶ Link with internal and external initiatives that target gender equality e.g. Family Violence - 16 Days Activism / Healthy Communities Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ongoing ▶ May 22 ▶ Sept 22 ▶ Sept 22 ▶ Annually ▶ Sept 22 ▶ June 22 ▶ Ongoing

Leadership and resourcing

The Tallangatta Health Service Executive team will work with our staff to understand any barriers that currently exist in realising equity and are committed to creating a just environment.

Strategic resource planning is a key aspect of the achievement of the strategies in this plan. The plan will be communicated with key stakeholders throughout its life. The approach to strategic resourcing will include, but not limited to:

- Executive sponsorship by the Chief Executive Officer
- Governance operationally by the Leadership Team and strategically at Board level

- Commitment from the Executive team with support from People and Workforce
- Links with key operational groups to support implementation e.g. Staff Health and Wellbeing Committee/OHS
- Communication regularly across all platforms to key stakeholders to keep them up to date with progress
- Socialisation is supported by key messages/documents/flyers/events internally and within the broader community

Measuring progress

It is critical that THS tracks progress of our strategies to enable success to be measured. Our overall measure of success will be in how our culture is enhanced when we pay attention to ensuring gender equality is lived, not just talked about and therefore our gender equality vision is tangible across all domains.

THS will have an evaluative outcomes approach so that tangible outcomes are achieved. Each strategy has an evaluative measure that is process evaluation or impact evaluation. These will ensure that actions are effective.

Our progress will be tracked in our Gender Equality Strategies and GIA Register and monitored regularly with Executive and Board governance. Progress will be shared with key stakeholders.

5. Reporting Progress

THS is required to submit a progress report to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner every two years. Progress reports must show that THS has made 'reasonable and material progress' towards gender equality. THS will meet these requirements with our gender equality strategies and measures as contained in this plan.

Progress reports to meet legislation will include:

- the policies, programs and services that were subject to a GIA
- the actions taken as a result of the gender impact assessment
- our progress in relation to the measures and strategies set out in our GEAP
- our progress in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators
- whether we have met any relevant targets or quotas (note there are currently no targets and quotas regulated)

Definition of terms

Gender

The socially constructed differences between men and women, as distinct from 'sex' which refers to their biological differences.

Gender equality

The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, and trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

Gender equity

Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognizes that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender-related imbalances.

Gender norms and structures

Ideas about how people should be and act according to the gender they are assigned or identify with. We internalize and learn these 'rules' early in life. This sets up a life-cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping.

Gender stereotypes

Simplistic generalisations about the gender attributes, differences and roles.

Gender Diverse

You identify with a gender or genders outside of male or female and do not align with the person's birth-assigned sex.

Family Violence

Any threatening, coercive, dominating or abusive behavior that occurs between people in a family, domestic or intimate relationship, or former intimate relationship, that causes the person experiencing the behavior to feel fear.

Intersectionality

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

Process evaluation

Measure how actions are implemented and may change how actions are delivered in the future.

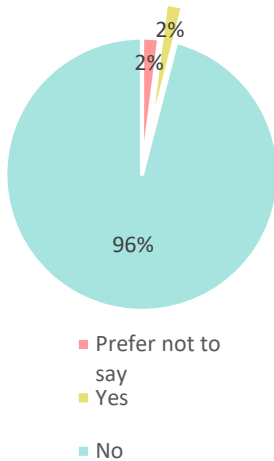
Impact evaluation

Measures what change the actions make

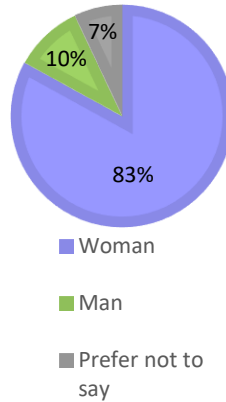
Appendix 1

Gender Equality Employee Experience Survey 2021

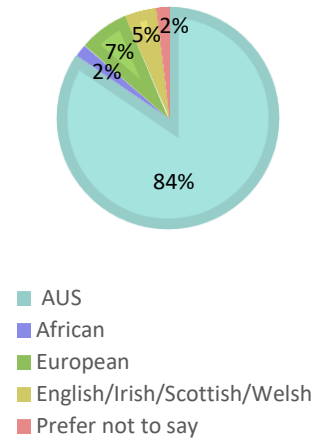
Aboriginality



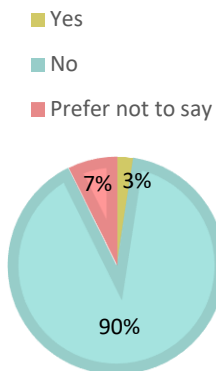
Gender Identity



Cultural Identity



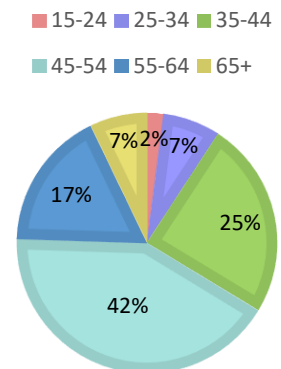
LGBTIQA+



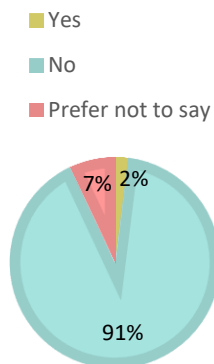
Sexual Harrassment

ZERO
formal complaints

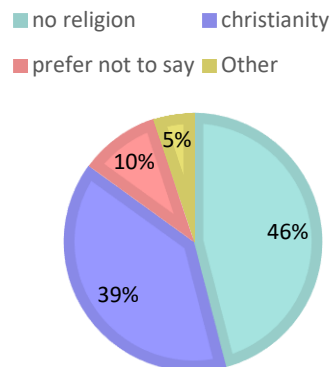
Age



Disability



Religion

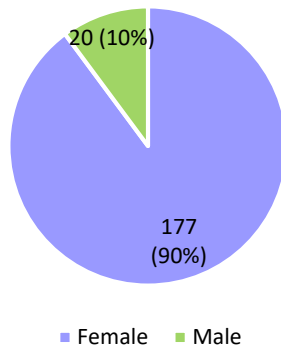


KEY QUESTIONS	Agreed Response %
My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours	71
My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination	64
My organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language	78
My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit	58
My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave	78
My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender	70
Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation	84
Using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success in my organisation	57
Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation	84
Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation	61
Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation	80
Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation	80
Having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation	66
Having family responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation	68
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders.	86
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who use flexible work arrangements	46
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ	73
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees with disability	64
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different age groups	81
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who have caring responsibilities	66
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds	75
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who have family responsibilities	68
There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	77
I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and non-work activities and responsibilities	68
I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation	66
I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work	76
I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration	66
In my workgroup work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender	78

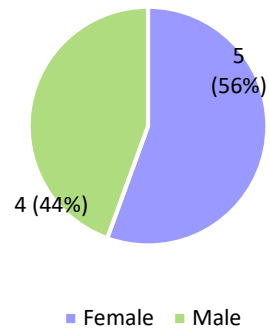
Appendix 2

Workplace Gender Audit 2021

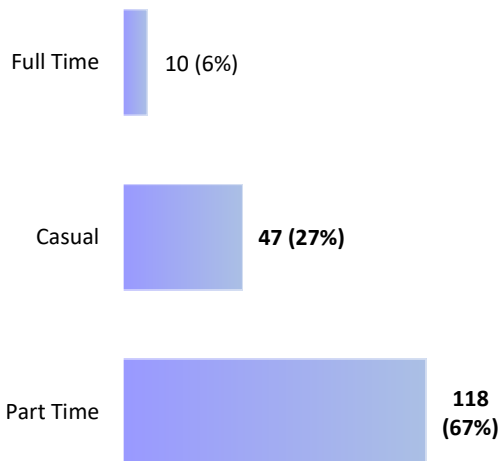
Gender Composition of Total Workforce



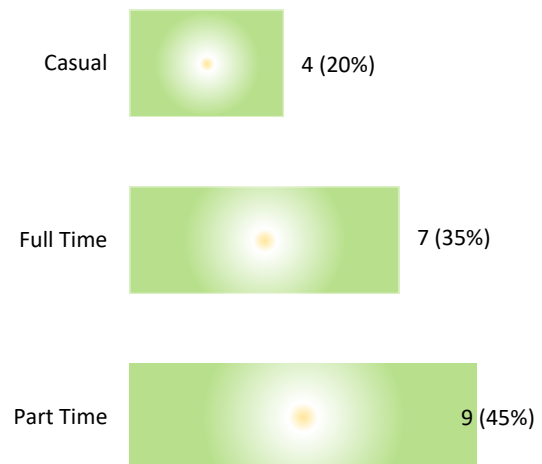
Governing Body - Gender Composition



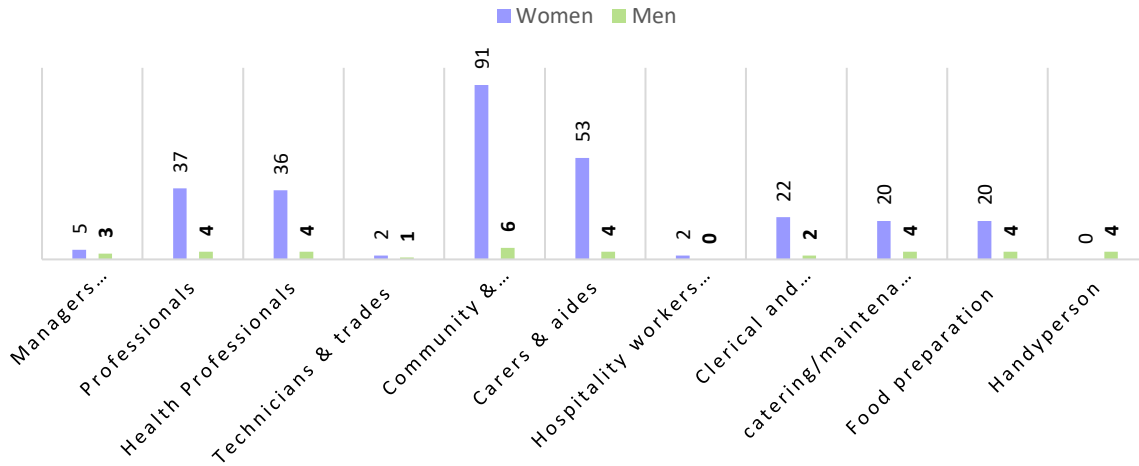
Employment Type - Female



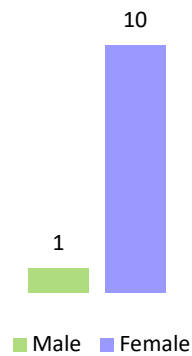
Employment Type - Male



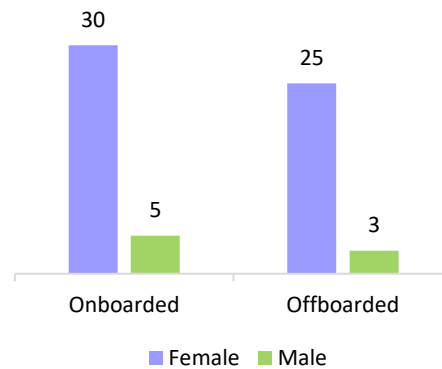
GENDERED SEGREGATION IN THE WORKPLACE



Internal Promotions



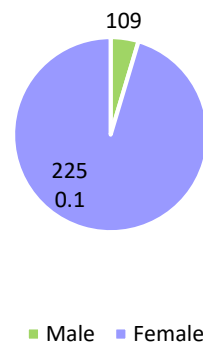
Onboard / Offboard - Gender Composition



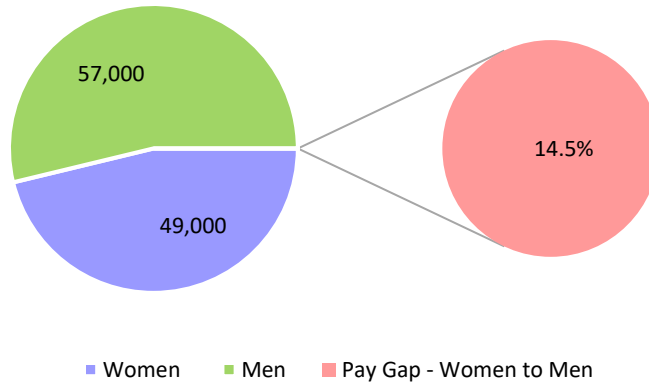
Parental Leave



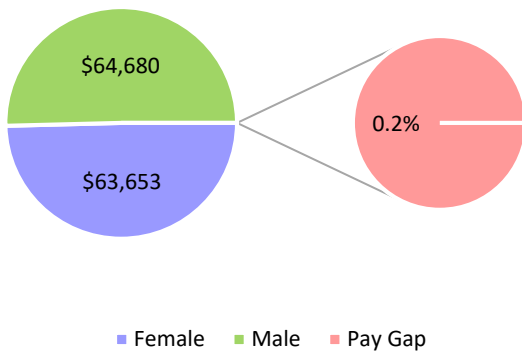
Family Leave (Hours)



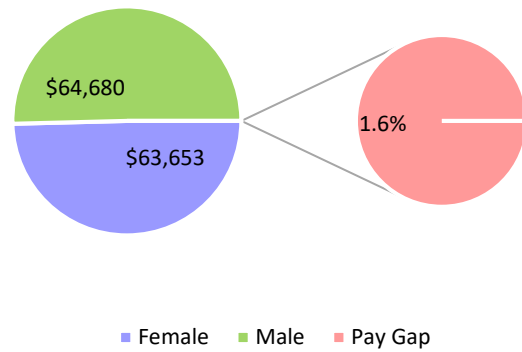
Remuneration for Work of Equal or Comparable Value



Median Remuneration Gap



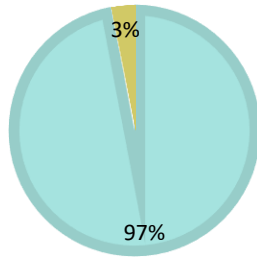
Median Base Salary Gap



Appendix 3

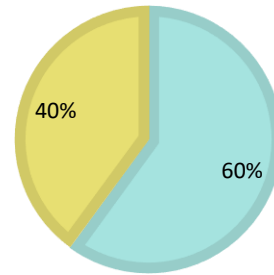
Gender Equality/Diversity Pulse Survey 2022

I understand why THS has a role to play in gender equality?



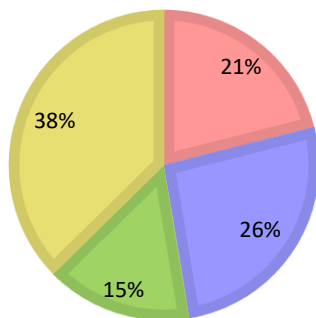
agree disagree

As an organisation THS challenges gender stereotypes?



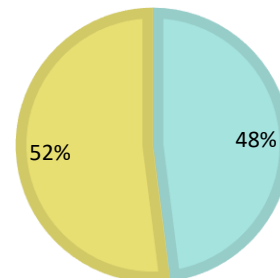
agree disagree

Gender equality training requested by popularity



Gender equality the basics
 Leading change in gender equality
 Connection between gender inequality and family violence
 Diversity in the workplace

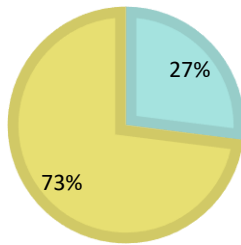
Have you ever noticed anything that improves gender equality @THS?



yes no

Have you ever attended gender equality training?

■ yes ■ no



Have you noticed anything @THS that contributes to gender inequality?

■ yes ■ no

