





Gender Equality Action Plan

2021-25





Aboriginal Acknowledgement

Coliban Water proudly acknowledges our region's Aboriginal community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely, and further extend our appreciation to the four main rivers that flow through Country – the Loddon, the Campaspe, the Avoca and the Coliban. We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

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Introduction

Coliban Water is committed to improving the gender equality of its workforce and creating a work environment that is safe, inclusive and respectful. We are committed to creating a workplace that is reflective of the diverse community we serve and where the culture ensures that there are no barriers to accessing equal power, resources and opportunities.

As part of the Water Industry, the Coliban Water workforce has traditionally been male dominated. Achieving greater gender diversity will help in a number of ways, the most obvious of which is it will balance a currently skewed demographic. It will be a contribution also in redressing gender stereotypes and stigma which exacerbate violence against women. We want to ensure that all people, no matter what their background or circumstance, feel welcome at Coliban Water. We respect the diversity of our stakeholders, customers and employees and aim to deliver appropriate services, communications and engagement opportunities that meet their needs, requirements and expectations.

As a regional organisation we are impacted by the realities of an increasingly competitive marketplace and significant global trends. We are building and innovating in order to attract and retain talent to deliver the services our community expects of us. Coliban Water faces the challenge of a changing environment and we are guided by our corporate direction, Strategy 2030, to address our future challenges and opportunities in achieving our vision.

Strategy 2030 four strategic directions:

- 1. WATER SECURITY AND ZERO CARBON
- 2. HEALTHY PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT
- 3. PROSPEROUS ECONOMIES
- 4. GREEN AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES





Our culture

Earn the customer

Own the risk

Act

While living the Victorian Public Sactor Values

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Coliban Water Vision

Strategy 2030

Coliban Water Culture

Whilst Strategy 2030 has an external focus – our people are critical to its delivery. Internally our staff are guided by our culture: **Earn the customer | Own the risk | Act** while living the Victorian Public Sector Values: Responsiveness | Integrity | Impartiality | Accountability | Respect | Leadership | Human Rights.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion Plan

The objects of the Gender Equality Act are consistent with work already underway within Coliban Water in the Diversity and Inclusion space. The guiding principles of the Coliban Water Diversity and Inclusion Plan align with our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).

Guiding Principles:

- · All our employees are valued and respected
- Be bold to achieve genuine change
- We are a flexible and empowering workplace
- Fairness and equity for all

This Diversity and Inclusion work involved establishing baseline data and identifying areas of improvements with identified specific measurable targets for improvement.

Indigenous Engagement

We continued to implement two service agreements with Dja Dja Wurrung, including Land Management Services and Pest Plant Management. We also engage Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation to conduct site investigations and develop Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) to protect identified sites of significance. Other services are provided where opportunities arise.

Dja Dja Wurrung (Djandak) is a diversity employer with a skilled local work crew and qualified technical experts in Environmental Sciences, Conservation Management and Cultural Heritage. Djandak's mission is to provide a platform for the development of the Dja Dja Wurrung people and their lands, and for the knowledge and culture of the Dja Dja Wurrung People to be recognised and incorporated into the management of the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks (DDW Parks). Coliban Water seeks to provide opportunities to assist them to achieve their vision.

Dja Dja Wurrung has been involved with Coliban Water's Rural Services team for a number of years and the relationship continues to strengthen. Coliban Water participated in progressive years in the employment of Aboriginal School Based Apprenticeships / Traineeships (SBAT) program by being the host employer for students in this program. The current SBAT trainee will be with the People and Capability team until 2022 completing a certificate III in Business Studies.

Training

Our commitment to training and development of staff has included annual *Bring Your Best Self to Work* training sessions. This workplace behaviours training covers Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) legislation and broader relevant policies which influence the expected standards of workplace behaviour. The training sessions have been tailored to incorporate, in addition to EEO legislation, the *Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct*, the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights* and Coliban Water's Culture Statement.

The emphasis for the sessions is understanding the rights and responsibilities; an individual's rights in respect to having a work environment free of harassment, bullying and inappropriate behaviours. Equally, the training emphasises, that while each of us as individuals has an expectation about how we will be treated, we have a responsibility to consider how our own actions may be impacting others and to reflect on how others may see our conduct. More subtle and nuanced behaviour is also examined in these sessions.

- All staff during induction complete an online Cultural Awareness module, and an annual refresher.
- The Board and ELT completed unconscious bias training.
- Addressing Family Violence is delivered to relevant cohorts of staff and Don't be a Bystander training is
 available to all staff.

The Coliban Water Enterprise Agreement 2017 outlines support for staff experiencing family violence. Enterprise Agreement 2021 has maintained these supports.

Consultation and Engagement

Staff have been involved in the development of the GEAP and have been encouraged to provide open and honest feedback throughout the process. Communication, engagement and consultation has included;

Promotion

Promotional material included an overarching article of explanation about the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and its importance and intentions. Progressive updates about the work done and invitation for involvement were posted via the Coliban Water intranet. At weekly All Staff Briefings involving the entire staff cohort, the Managing Director periodically reminded staff of the Gender Equality work underway and pointed to specific meetings occurring.

Gender Equality Working Group

In 2021 a working group made up of both employees and Managers reconvened, which has previously been the nascent Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the group meet exclusively via Microsoft Teams to discuss the gender equality data analysis, focus areas and targets.

Committees

Presentations were provided to both the People and Safety sub-committee of the Board and the Coliban Water Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee. Presentations via Microsoft Teams included an overview of the *Act* and obligations, together with the work being undertaken, including focus areas and targets. A formal briefing paper was provided to the former committee, attended by the Managing Director and Board Members, to keep them informed of this important work. Those present indicated support and encouragement for the initiative.

Leadership

At progressive meetings with the Executive Leadership Team, the Gender Equality audit data and targets were discussed. The audit summary was provided to the leadership group prior to meeting for consideration and their feedback and input was sought and included. In addition, a meeting was convened with the Chair of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, the Managing Director and Executive General Manager Governance, Legal and Safety to review the draft targets. The Senior Leadership Team were similarly engaged and the material made available to them. Following the group meeting, a number of one on one sessions were conducted in relation to the presented audit data and draft targets.

Employees and Unions

Drop-in sessions were conducted with employees via Microsoft Teams to which the Australian Services Union (ASU) and the Professionals Australia (PA) were invited but not able to attend, however presentations were sent to the unions for feedback. The sessions included a presentation of the draft GEAP and provided the opportunity for feedback. Employees were invited to provide feedback after the sessions should they prefer. A number of follow up individual conversations were had. The process was extremely valuable and participation was 60 per cent female and 40 per cent male.

Our Vision - The Case for Change

We see that earning our customers is recognising that gender equality helps prevent violence against women and makes our communities safer and healthier. We are acting knowing that this is a human right and it is good for the economy. A gender inclusive workplace is welcoming to all people and ensures the systems, policies and practices promote equality and remove factors that may bias towards any particular gender.

The steps we are taking seek to address structural systemic gender disadvantage. We are seeking also, via data gathering, to better understand intersectional discrimination and disadvantage that may compound gender inequality of staff. Attributes including Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation requires greater focus and attention to ensure we can remove any barriers to employees succeeding at Coliban Water.

Leadership Commitment and Resourcing

Commitment and support from Board, Executive and Senior Leadership is essential to the success of the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan this year, and in the years ahead. There is passionate and conscious support and commitment to achieving workplace equality and committing to the targets that have been identified. There is a genuine and nuanced understanding of the intention of the *Act*. Endorsing and supporting the application of actions are ways Coliban Water leaders will need to continue to contribute. This initiative has had input and sponsorship at each tier of the organisation and has some powerful champions. The Executive and Senior Leadership are the enablers to ensure the appropriate governance structures are in place and that decisions regarding changes to strategies, policies and procedures can be made to facilitate lasting change.

It is acknowledged that in order to achieve the targets mapped out in our GEAP, will require resources; an investment of time and budget. We will largely be drawing on existing organisational structures to achieve the GEAP.

The existing resources and key employee/roles will be working to implement and achieve the targets, as the specific actions identified in the plan are relevant to their role. The People and Safety sub-committee of the Board and the Coliban Water Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will be providing valuable feedback and oversight on an ongoing basis in order to achieve targets and will provide the monitoring and checking to ensure we are meeting the necessary reporting against targets required by the Commission. In addition, there is considerable time devoted to the Gender Equality Action Plan and what will also be required for the Gender Impact Assessments (GIA). This has begun and feedback sought via the Senior Leadership Team who have communicated with their managers to understand the work that they are doing which will be reviewed as part of the GIA.

To date the People and Capability team have dedicated 0.5 FTE to ensure the resourcing of this work. Going forward the GEAP will reflect this. Specifically, the resourcing commitment and structures are:

- The Board
- Executive Leadership Team (ELT)
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- People and Safety Committee
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee
- Gender Equality Working Group
- Corporate Communications
- Employee/roles as required against targets
- 0.5 FTE People and Capability Team

Core training as mentioned above represents an ongoing budgetary commitment:

- Unconscious Bias Board and ELT
- Addressing/Awareness Family Violence
- Bring Your Best Self to Work
- Cultural Awareness
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Cultural Awareness

It is envisaged that in order to achieve some targets there may be a requirement to consult external experts:

- Miscellaneous for subject matter experts as needed
- Participate with the Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity

Ongoing subscription associated with this topic contribute to the resourcing in addition:

Diversity and Inclusion Australia

Key Data Analysis

The data provided some unique insights for Coliban Water but at the same time, results were not altogether surprising.

Workforce composition by gender and role

The data highlighted that across the board, in almost all areas, men outnumber women as managers in the nominated specialist manager area and in roles categorised as professional roles.

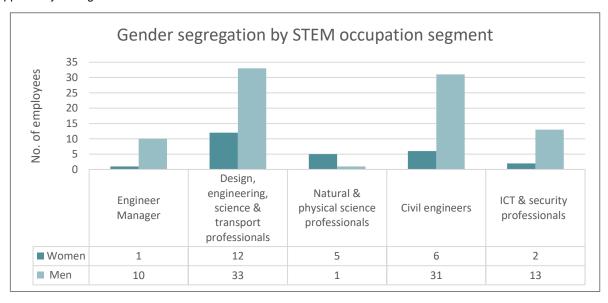




*per ANZCO segmentation – Australia and New Zealand Classification of Occupation

Gender segregation by occupation segment

The data for Coliban Water indicates that in relation to employing women in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematic (STEM) roles there is a gender disparity. These statistics are somewhat of a theme in the Water Industry and represent a real and significant challenge. Equally they provide an incentive for change and an opportunity for a genuine cultural shift.

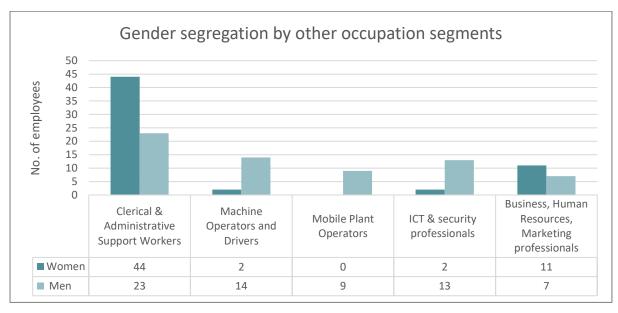


*per ANZCO segmentation – Australia and New Zealand Classification of Occupation

Each year in Australia over 18,000 students graduate from engineering and related technology subjects. Of these graduates, 18 per cent* are female. In that respect, one way to consider Coliban Water's STEM gender disparity is 26 women to 88 men (29.55 per cent women), compared with 18 per cent of available graduates and in that light, it is more encouraging. The article, linked below, makes the point that just because you have some doesn't mean you can't have more. Coliban Water is innovating and competing to attract this talent to the region.

*Source: Benita_Pipeline.pdf, engineersaustralia.org.au

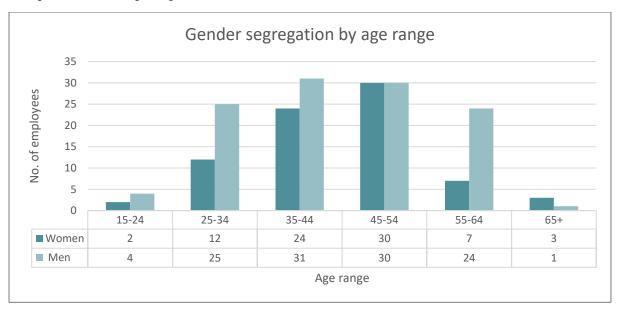
The gender segregation by other roles also serves to highlight that at the staff level as an organisation we are following traditional gender roles to some extent.



*per ANZCO segmentation – Australia and New Zealand Classification of Occupation

Workforce composition by gender and age and examination of the distribution at each classification level

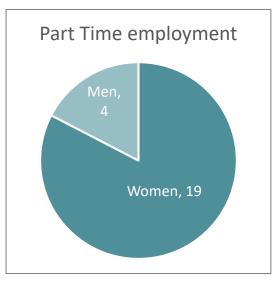
Across the organisation, there remains a relatively consistent bias toward male staff. This remains consistent throughout levels and age ranges.



The greatest difference was at the 55-64 age range, but perhaps the most significant data is the margin at 25-34 age range. While not numerically the biggest, the data is clumped in the middle age range for women. Both of these age ranges represent a stage at which a woman is able to make a significant contribution to their superannuation payments, at entry to the workforce and 'topping up' prior to retirement.

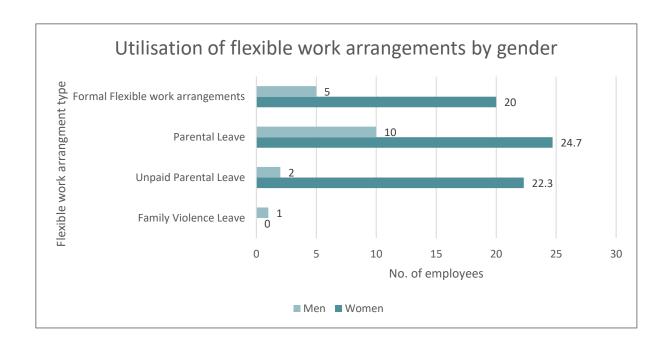
Comparison of the gender representation at each level who work full-time and part time

The data indicated that there was a relatively low uptake of part time work, a gender bias in favour of women and low uptake at senior levels.



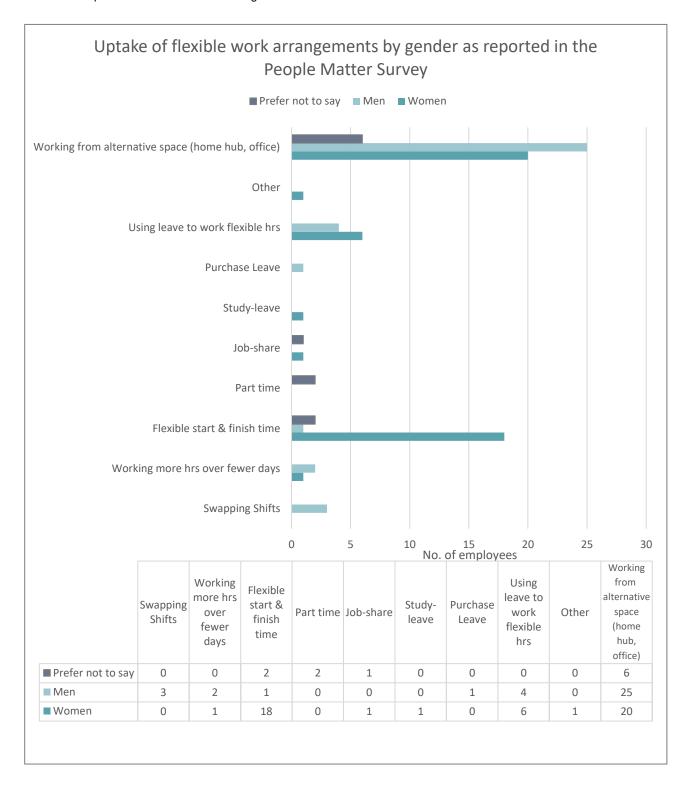
Flexible Work - Comparison of overall gender composition of those in some form of flexible work arrangement at each classification level

The workforce/payroll data in relation to some type of flexible work entitlements reveals that flexible arrangements are generally not being utilised across the organisation to any great extent.



The People Matters Survey Gender Intersectionality report provided additional detail:

The uptake is generally low, with 44 per cent of women using entitlements, 27 per cent of men and 9 per cent of those who preferred not to indicate their gender.

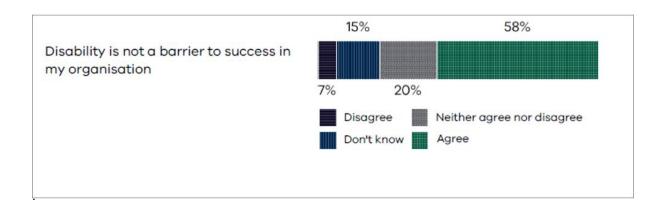


The higher responses around working from home are likely affected by COVID-19.

The People Matters Survey, Organisational Climate Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) questions provide some data in relation to staff views, in the absence this year of intersectional workforce data.

In this section, employees were asked if they perceived if various diversity elements were a barrier to success in their organisation (e.g. age, ATSI, culture, gender, sexual orientation and disability). In general, the responses reflected a positive view of EEO at Coliban Water. Following are the percentages that disagreed that disability presented barriers to success at Coliban Water.

These responses indicate a strong perception among employees of an organisation climate of equal employment opportunity. The exception being disability where there were lower positive responses (58 per cent) and higher levels of uncertainty (20 per cent).



Of the 58 per cent of employees who disagreed that disability presented barriers to success, the data indicates a slightly stronger perception among men than women. Of all women who responded to the survey (41), 68 per cent disagreed that disability presented barriers to success, compared to the men who responded to the surveyed (60), where 53 per cent disagreed that disability presented barriers to success. The lowest view about possible barriers in the work place was held by those who 'preferred not to say' their gender, of the 22 employees who responded to the survey and chose not to disclose their gender, 50 per cent disagreed that disability presented barriers to success.

The disability data specifically from the People Matters Survey indicated that 100 of the 123 respondents replied that they did not have a disability and 5 (4 per cent) responded that they did, with 11 reporting that they would prefer not to say. Combining the above data would indicate that disability is very much in the minority and not much known at Coliban Water and would perhaps account for staff uncertainty for how the workplace may respond to this perceived challenge.

Comparison of the number and type of complainants by gender

During this reporting period there were no formal complaints. The People Matters Survey had questions that relate to the topic of negative workplace behaviours.

Responses - have you experienced negative behaviour in the workplace?

Behaviour	Total Result	Women	Men
Bullying	8%	3%	5%
Discrimination	2%	2%	0%
Violence or aggression	6%	1%	5%
Sexual harassment	2%	2%	0%

While there was no formal complaint there was still data in this section. More detailed data was not included in the report as there were less than 10 responses, and it was withheld to protect their privacy. The information provided would suggest that the incidents did not warrant a formal response, as results for the 'Safe to Speak Up' scorecard in the People Matters Survey indicated 72 per cent of employees responding to the survey answered the Safe to Speak Up questions positively.

Workplace Culture and Diversity

Survey questions that related to perceptions of the culture and attitudes within the workplace, elicited the following:

- There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+. 76 per cent of survey respondents agreed, which was 5 per cent greater than our comparator group (average survey results from comparison organisation to Coliban Water).
- My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours ranked a response where 90 per cent of survey respondents agreed.

In general, it is heartening that there are such low numbers of instances of negative behaviours and such high comparative responses in relation to culture. There is a lack of intersectional data and a lack of available data due to low numbers and privacy, to understand more about the cohort or those reporting against these fields or any trend that may be informative. Further assurance might be achieved that staff are comfortable to use to use the formal complaints process.

Data Gaps

The requirements to provide intersection data was not able to be met in this report with some categories not presently captured. The specifics are as follows:

Workforce composition by gender and cultural identity

In this initial report Coliban Water was not able to provide data in response to 1.1.4 'composition of workforce by levels to the CEO, employment basis, cultural identity & gender', and 1.1.6 'composition of workforce by levels to the CEO, employment basis, sexual orientation & gender'. The gaps in the GEAP this year are outlined below and relate to the collection of data occasioned with intersectionality. Coliban Water collected data from new starter employees at the onboarding stage and we are taking this opportunity to update this process to include intersection data to allow us to more accurately and thoroughly respond to *The Act.* Via our Human Resource Information System (HRIS) we will be introducing a new onboarding module which will include a broader set of new starter demographics.

How diverse is your governing body?

This year we were able to provide data in response to 2.1 'composition of governing body by gender' and 2.1.2 'composition of governing body by age and gender'. The remaining questions in this section, which ask about the cultural diversity of the Board, were not able to be answered:

- 2.1.1 composition of governing body by aboriginality and gender
- 2.1.3 composition of governing body by disability and gender
- 2.1.4 composition of governing body by cultural identity and gender
- 2.1.5 composition of governing body by religion and gender
- 2.1.6 composition of governing body by sexual orientation and gender

An online questionnaire is being designed to mirror these questions and will be built and administered via our internal HRIS. It is suggested that at the time of the rollout of the People Matters Survey, the Board are similarly surveyed.

Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender

This year we were able to provide data in response to 3.1 'Mean and Median salary and remuneration by level to CEO, employment basis and gender' and 3.1.2 'Mean and Median salary and remuneration by level to CEO, employment basis, age and gender'. The remaining questions in this section, which ask about the cultural diversity of the workforce in terms of payment, we were not able to answer:

- 3.1.3 Mean and Median salary and remuneration by level to CEO, employment basis and aboriginality and gender
- 3.1.3 Mean and Median salary and remuneration by level to CEO, employment basis and disability and gender
- 3.1.4 Mean and Median salary and remuneration by level to CEO, employment basis and cultural identity and gender
- 3.1.5 Mean and Median salary and remuneration by level to CEO, employment basis and religion and gender
- 3.1.6 Mean and Median salary and remuneration by level to CEO, employment basis and sexual orientation and gender

The collection of demographic information at onboarding, as described above, will address this issue.

Gendered difference in perception to leadership?

This year there was a gap in available data for disaggregate intersectional responses and analysis in relation to gendered differences in perceptions of leadership support for workplace diversity and inclusion, access to equal employment opportunity and learning and development. Similarly, the requirement for intersectional data collection will be addressed as described above.

Communication and Engagement

In order to successfully implement the GEAP, the Gender Equality Working Group will be expanded with volunteers being requested to join the group from across the business. An ELT champion will also be included as a strategic enabler.

Corporate Communications will be engaged to assist with the promotion of the GEAP as a whole and with key strategies as identified in the GEAP.

Strategies and Measures

Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-25 (in summary)

- Promoting and seeking to increase female participation in professional and STEM roles
 - Promoting and seeking to increase the uptake of flexible workplace arrangements for all staff
 - Promoting and seeking to increase employment of people with a disability
 - Promoting and seeking to increase safety to speak up about any occurrence of negative workplace behaviours; sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination and violence/aggression

Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-25

R	ef Objective	Actions	Actions	Current Data 2020/21	Progress Report 31 Oct 2023	GEAP 2025
	1 Promoting and seeking to increase female participation including in professional and STEM roles.	CW School promotion female participation in STEM & Professional roles CW participation in School/Smith Family Work Inspiration Program- focus on women in STEM & Professional roles CW participate in Careers Expo e.g.; Tomorrow Bound-STEM/Professional Women in Water focus Update Website info/resources Graduate Program Vacation Program Education Program Secondary school students) https://coliban.com.au/community/education/secondary Update Social media promotions – photos of female STEM/Professional staff in uniform on site or at Reservoirs, treatment plants etc	 Graduate Program- review and liaise with Partner providers Vacation Program Education Program (secondary school students) Internal: establish informal women in STEM & Professional support group-Internal buddy/mentoring system External: school-CW women in STEM contact/mentoring system Women in STEM scholarship program Emerging Leaders program- for all staff Support participation in external Women in Leadership program 	Specialist Managers 7 Professionals 27 STEM 26 27.5% *per ANZCO segmentation – Australia and New Zealand Classification of Occupation	Increase 2.5% (30%)	Increase 2.5% (32.5%)

R	ef Objective	Actions	Actions	Current Data 2020/21	Progress Report 31 Oct 2023	GEAP 2025
		 Create CW women in STEM/ Professional video 				
2	Promoting and seeking to increase the uptake of flexible workplace entitlements for all staff.					
	Men's use of flexible work arrangements	Strong messaging of support from ELT for a promotion of flexibility Stronger Flexibility Statement added to all recruitment advertisements Stronger Flexibility Statements included in Position Descriptions and as part of interview discussion	 Support/Education Upskill training interview skills for panel members around flexibility Upskill conversations for managers conversations with staff around flexibility Undertake review of Organisation-wide PD's to consider suitability of job-share of roles Upskill/training How to Make Flexibility Work Effectively Review resources/FTE/backfill 	Currently 27.6% men utilising flexible work arrangements	increase 2.5% (30.1%)	increase 2.5% (32.6%)
	Employment of women aged 25-34	Strong messaging of support from ELT for a promotion of flexibility Recruitment advertising- as above	Support/Education As above	Currently 12 women aged 25-34 (32.5%)	increase 2.5% (35%)	increase 2.5% (37.5%)

Ref	Objective	Actions	Actions	Current Data 2020/21	Progress Report 31 Oct 2023	GEAP 2025
3	Promoting and seeking to increase employment of people with a disability.	Recruitment intranet notifications updated to ensure provider is informed of vacancies Showcasing Coliban Water in WaterAble 2024	 Support/Education Partner with disability employment support provider (procurement approved) Partnership involvement-Onboarding and ongoing support for disabled employees Meetings with Partnerships to involve them in GIA recruitment review Implement resulting policies and processes 	5 self-identified people with a disability (4%) Currently 58% agree disability is NOT a barrier	5% 65%	70%
4	Promoting and seeking to increase safety to speak up about any occurrence of negative workplace behaviours; sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination and violence/aggression.	 Renewed promotion of contact officers = feature intranet article All Staff Briefing update re: contact officers 	 <u>Bring Your Best Self to Work</u> training. Focus on available informal and formal channels for raising issues. Scenarios around speaking up. What might affect willingness and capacity to do this? People Matters survey 'Safe to Speak Up' questions Refresher training - People@Coliban module Workplaces Legislation informal support and reporting process 	 Safe to speak up scorecard 72% Bullying 8% Discrimination 2% Violence or aggression 6% Sexual harassment 2% 	Increase by 3% to 75% Monitor	Increase by 3% to 78% Monitor

Ref Objective	Actions	Actions	Current Data 2020/21	Progress Report 31 Oct 2023	GEAP 2025
		 Consideration of OHS Act Risk Assessment/Hazard management approach to complaint management Review existing support processes, reporting mechanisms & policies 			