

Emergency Services
Telecommunications Authority

Gender Equality Action Plan

2021–2025





Working Together

Rickiesha Deegan

The artwork represents the merging of thoughts, ideas and opinions when all voices are heard equally, regardless of gender identity. It represents individuals and communities working together to achieve this mission, allowing for the abundance of opportunities to flourish, and breaking down the pre-existing notions of disadvantage and discrimination to allow for an equitable future for generations to come.

ESTA respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land throughout Victoria on which we live, work and provide service to the community. We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present, and recognise the continuation of the cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise the contribution of Aboriginal people and communities in shaping Victorian life, and we continue to learn from our Aboriginal leaders who have come before us. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples human right to self-determination, and we commit towards a future of equality, justice and strength.

As we launch our Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 we commit to working in solidarity and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve workplace gender equality for women as well as safety and wellbeing outcomes at ESTA.

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Stephen Leane
Interim CEO



Message from the CEO

At ESTA, we are the critical link between the community and the emergency services agencies. Everyday our people receive over 7000 emergency calls for help, and we dispatch over 6000 emergency response services to those in need. We work in close partnership with the emergency services agencies to ensure the community receive the right emergency response, in the fastest time possible. To do our job effectively it is imperative that we are trusted by both the community and our agency partners.

In 2019 ESTA drafted its first Gender Equality Action Plan as we recognised that all our employees must be treated equally, and be given equal opportunity to career opportunities, access to leave and flexibility and of course pay. The plan was established as ESTA recognises that gender equality is needed urgently to ensure that gender discrimination is addressed as a priority issue within ESTA. Gender Equity will continue to be a key focus area for ESTA, and in order for us to build and maintain a high level of public trust, it is essential that our workforce reflects the diversity of the community we serve, and the agencies we partner with.

Our Gender Equity Action Plan 2021-2025 sets out how we will move towards gender equality over the next four years and how we will improve intersectionality. Although ESTA's workforce is mostly women, with 68 per cent of our workforce being women, we see that they are underrepresented in senior leadership positions and within certain areas within the business. We also see that we have further work to do to eliminate sexual harassment, and build a safe and inclusive environment in which all people are supported and have equal opportunity to reach their full potential. It is only through embracing diversity, and building an inclusive culture that we can create an environment where talent, drive innovation are recognised and rewarded to meet the expectations of the community now and into the future.

At ESTA our values are Bold, Kind and Better Together. Our values underpin everything that we do, and help us build an inclusive culture through valuing the diversity each person brings, creating a sense of belonging, and leveraging diversity of thought to drive innovation and change.

Together we will implement our Plan as we work towards improving gender equity at ESTA and we will continue until we achieve gender equality. Specifically, we are committed to improving the representation of women in senior leadership positions, enhancing career opportunities for women, driving gender balance and intersectionality across all departments and eliminating sexual harassment towards women. We will be taking measurable actions to drive a positive shift in these areas, and will be holding ourselves to account for our progress over the coming years.

Stephen Leane
Interim CEO

Angela Williams
ESTA PCCC Chair



Message from the Board

We are proud of the work, analysis and consideration that has occurred to realise our Gender Equality Action Plan. It helps us see where we are doing well; female leadership development program, positive culture shift, and the commitment to diversity and inclusion ensuring staff can bring their whole selves to work. We pay tribute to the amazing women who work at ESTA and acknowledge the contribution that they make in their families, communities and every day at work.

However, it is also a reminder that more work needs to be done. Gender inequality will not suffice in a modern ESTA workforce where we are kind, bold and better together. There is no room for exclusion or discrimination of any kind. As such, and with our values and purpose, we will welcome diversity, celebrate differences, embrace discovery and empathy, and embed gender equality in everything we do.

Angela Williams
ESTA PCCC Chair

Flavia Gobbo
ESTA Board Chair

Flavia Gobbo
ESTA Board Chair



Where We Are Now



Our Journey

The composition of our workforce at ESTA is largely female, with 68% female compared to 32% male. This trend is most pronounced for Emergency Communications Services with 72% female, whereas support functions have a greater gender balance with 53% female. The trend of over-representation of women at ESTA reflects traditional gender stereotypes in the emergency services, wherein males have historically held frontline positions such as police officers and firefighters, and women have contributed through support roles such as call-taking and dispatch.

Although overall our workforce is comprised of significantly more women than men, we see women being underrepresented in leadership positions, and in certain areas of the business. These areas of underrepresentation will be of key focus within our plan, and targeted initiatives will be implemented to address these.

Figure 1
Overall ESTA Workforce Composition

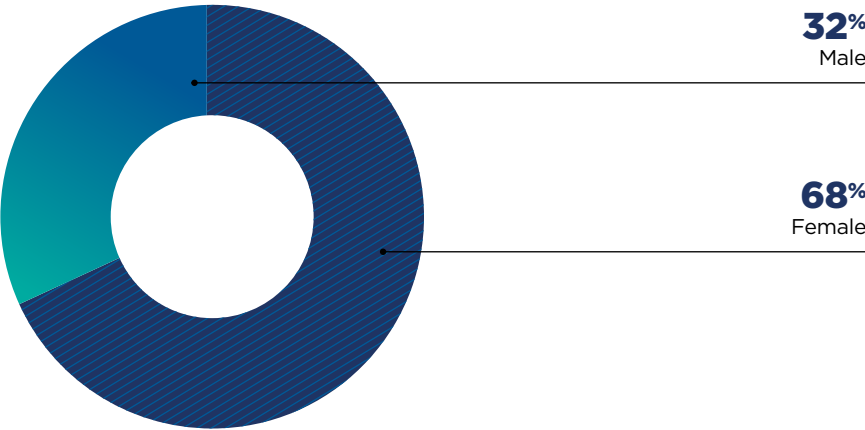
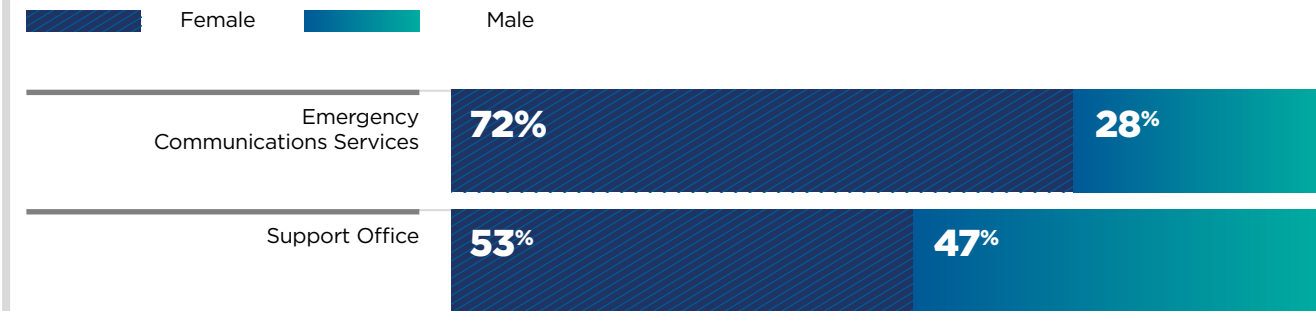


Figure 2
ESTA Workforce Composition by Service

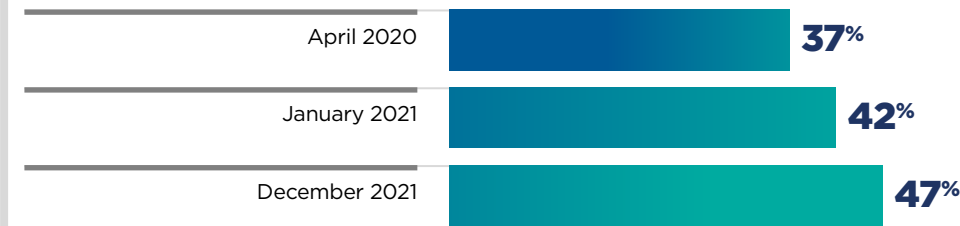


Our Progress

Gender Representation in Leadership

ESTA has made significant progress over the past two years, with the gender balance in senior leadership positions (Band 5+) increasing from 37% in April 2020 to 47% in December 2021. This progress has been supported by a number of initiatives including a targeted development program for high potential female leaders, the launch of a new leadership program across the organisation which aims to build capability in leading a diverse workforce, and strategies to reduce bias in the recruitment and promotion process.

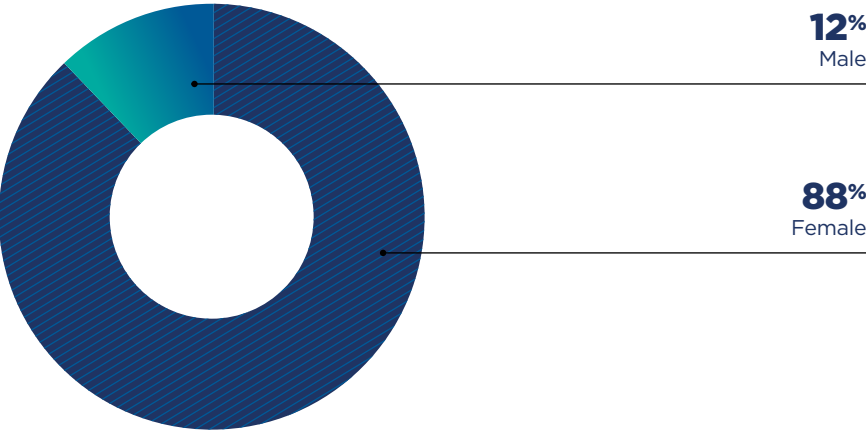
Figure 3
Female Representation in Senior Leadership Roles (Band 5+)



Flexible work uptake

Overall, 88% of the casual and part-time workforce at ESTA is comprised of women with only 12% of men working on these arrangements. While this indicates good accessibility to non-traditional work arrangements for women and supports work/life balance, it highlights that further work is needed to encourage and support greater flexibility for males within the organisation. Research shows that working on a part-time or casual basis can slow career progression, and therefore this imbalance may impact career growth for women and potentially re-enforce gender imbalance in senior leadership positions.

Figure 4
Part-time/Casual Representation



Gender representation by department

In December 2021, the percentage of women in senior leadership positions (Band 5+) in each department varied between 12% and 80%. While female representation was strong in traditionally female-dominated fields such as Human Resources (People & Culture), women were most significantly underrepresented in Information Technology (i.e. Emergency Communication Information Services – ECIS), with only 12% senior leadership roles held by women in this area. While this trend is reflective of an underrepresentation of women in technology in society more broadly, given ECIS is one of the largest departments in support office, targeted initiatives will be implemented to support the development and career growth of women in this area.

Culture & Engagement

In the 2021 People Matter Survey ESTA performed strongly on gender equality, with 71% positive ratings, in line with the sector average. In addition, equal employment opportunity in relation to gender was a strength for ESTA in comparison to the other emergency service organisations, with 68% positive ratings (24% above the sector average). These findings provide evidence of a positive cultural shift in relation to gender Equality at ESTA, and support for the efficacy of recent interventions. Further work is needed to sustain and build on this positive cultural shift.

Although measures of gender Equality were rated positively, in relation to behaviour and conduct sexual harassment was a key area of concern, with 10% respondents identifying that they had experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months (2% higher than the sector average). Targeted strategies will be implemented with the aim of preventing, addressing and eliminating instances of sexual harassment at ESTA.

Progress on Broader Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives

As previously mentioned, intersectionality acknowledges that gender inequality is compounded by the overlapping effects of other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience due to characteristics such as: race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Furthermore, ESTA is committed to improving diversity and inclusion more broadly, to create a working environment where each person can bring their whole selves to work and reach their full potential. ESTA has delivered a range of additional initiatives to support building an inclusive culture such as targeted education and training programs, addition of Aboriginal flags at each centre and ongoing participation in annual events to celebrate all forms of diversity.

Our Vision



With substantial progress already achieved, ESTA's aim is to continue the integration of gender, intersectionality and equality in our business practices, policies, systems and behaviours.

This effort is underpinned by ESTA's values of:

BOLD | KIND | BETTER TOGETHER

The following gender equality principles in the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 have informed the preparation of ESTA's Gender Equality Action Plan:

1. 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.
2. Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
3. Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
4. Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
5. Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
6. Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
7. All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.
8. Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.
9. Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
10. Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

These principles are supported by the workplace gender equality indicators of:



Gender composition of all levels of workforce



Leave and flexibility



Gendered segregation in the workplace



Sexual Harassment in the workplace



Gender Pay Equality



Gender composition of government bodies



Recruitment and promotion

Gender Equality Strategy



Our vision is for an integrated and sustainable whole of organisation approach that sees gender equality principles and intersectional factors embedded into our culture and across all practices at ESTA by 2025.

Gender Equality and Gender Transformative Practice

Socially and historically, there has been an imbalance in the opportunities available to women and men – we don't operate on a level playing field.

To achieve fairness, we commit to redressing the imbalance with strategies that help compensate for that disadvantage that women have faced.

By striving for gender-transformative practice, we will think deeply about the impacts of gender and seek new, innovative solutions to achieving gender equality.

Gender Data

Consideration of intersectional factors have been key to the development of ESTA's Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025. This is an acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression. Intersectionality acknowledges that gender inequality is compounded by the overlapping effects of other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience due to characteristics such as: race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability, age; sexual orientation, or gender identity.

We commit to applying an intersectional approach to promoting gender equality and to tailored and responsive strategies for specific groups of people who may be at greater risk of discrimination.

Preparation of the Gender Equality Action Plan has involved an audit of the current Gender Equality Action Plan, a review of our current policies and procedures, People Matter survey data, analysis of a Diversity & Inclusion Employee Survey, and the analysis of our Workplace Gender Audit results.

The baseline audit data analysis from the Workplace Gender Audit for the period of 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 identified areas for further improvement in our data collection and analysis. Our priority is to progressively build our capacity and capability to collect gender disaggregated data across all people metrics. We will start to collect disaggregated data by other diversity and inclusion variables. This information will better support our gender equality initiatives.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement for ESTA was undertaken in the following way:

The People Matter Survey was completed in July 2021 with 479 responses received. 7 Roadshows were held with our team members throughout October 2021 across each department on the People Matter Survey Results to gather feedback and to inform department Plans. The Workforce Gender Audit templates were populated with 1,044 employee profiles against seven indicators:

- Gender composition of governing bodies
- Gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- Gendered work segregation
- Recruitment and promotion
- Gender pay Equality
- Leave and flexibility
- Workplace sexual Harassment

November 2021 a Survey Monkey was sent to 1,044 team members consulting on all seven indicators and was asked to provide feedback. We had responses from 15 team members. This has informed our Plan. The Development of the Gender Equality Action Plan involved extensive consultation with our team members at all levels, from male and female team members to the Union, Executive Leadership Team and Board Members.

Audit Findings



The audit identified four key themes to focus our workforce consultation on. These include:

- **Flexibility**
- **Intersectional and Sexual Harassment Data**
- **Gender Composition**
- **Leave Arrangements**
- **Flexibility**

Through the audit it has been identified that 73% of individuals at band 5 or above accessing flexible work arrangements are women. Men only represent 27% of team members who work part time, casually or have accessed a more flexible pattern of work.

Our Executives and Senior managers are majority full time.

Intersectional and Sexual Harassment Data

The collection of intersectional and sexual harassment data was not possible to capture as ESTA does not currently have the systems and process to capture and record this data. It is recommended that disaggregated data on intersectional factors and sexual harassment reporting be collected moving forward from 2021-2025 in order to meet our obligation under the Act.

Gender Composition

The workforce data suggests gender imbalance in specific areas of the business. The challenging areas are Band 5+, where 46.81% are women and ICT positions are predominantly men. Band 1 have 73% women. The audit revealed that our PA, Reception and Administration roles are all held by women.

Leave Arrangements

The Leave arrangements data showed that due to the capabilities within of our payroll system, our leave types for Family Violence are recorded as miscellaneous for privacy reasons, creating a challenge extracting any information for Family Violence Leave. This raises the challenge of ensuring all team members are aware and supported to apply under this leave category, without fear of discrimination or breach of privacy.

Gender Equality Action Plan Resourcing



ESTA is committed to implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan and ensuring that the necessary resources are allocated to implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Plan as required.

Additional resourcing has been allocated to our Talent Team in addition to a full time Diversity and Inclusion resource to our Organisational and Development Team to ensure the ongoing monitoring and progress on initiatives.

Ultimately, all team members will implement the Gender Equality Action Plan in all culture, values and practices. We will ensure that appropriate systems are put in place to collect and report on the level of data required to measure progress. This will ensure reliable reporting of statistics and commentary on workforce participation and experience, according to the workplace principles of gender equality and intersectional characteristics, required under the Act.

Gender Equality will be seen as a key business and strategic focus and driver for improved organisational performance and engagement. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will champion initiatives and have increased leadership and accountability to drive and accelerate gender Equality initiatives, and be encouraged to sponsor Employee Resource Groups.

Ongoing training and development through our Learning and Development department and external providers will further develop Gender equality and inclusion knowledge and create a culturally safe workplace.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting



ESTA will develop an evaluation framework designed to ensure we continuously reflect on and learn from the work undertaken for the Gender Equality action Plan.

ESTA's Gender Equality Action Plan outlines a number of goals and strategies which will be undertaken over the next four years. Actions will be reviewed and updated annually with progress continuously driven and managed, and ongoing actions reported monthly to the Executive Leadership Team and ESTA Board.

The Gender Equality Action Plan strategies are designed to be mutually reinforcing, recognising that multiple strategies and a long-term approach is required to achieve gender equality.

The Gender Equality Commissioner has provided guidance and advice regarding obligations to promote gender equality, conduct gender impact assessments when developing policies and programs and delivering services to the public and to monitor and evaluate through two yearly progress reports and four-yearly workforce gender audit reports.

ESTA will utilise and understand the lived experience of team members through Employee Resource Groups to gauge where efforts could be strengthened, encouraging robust feedback mechanisms from our employee networks and Gender Equality Champions.

Success will be achieved when data collection, monitoring and reporting is in place for all intersectional data and when the status of gender equality within ESTA is well documented and processes are in place and when people of all genders feel like they are treated with respect and have equal opportunities, decision-making power and responsibilities, regardless of their gender.

Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–2025



Indicator	Objective	Strategy	Responsible	When
Gender Composition of governing bodies	Increase Leadership Commitment to gender and intersectionality equality	– CEO and ELT to champion gender equality initiatives and to report annually on gender Equality.	CEO ELT PC&R	Ongoing
		– Review policies, processes and systems and ensure that they promote gender equality, diversity and inclusive practices throughout the employment life cycle.		2022 Ongoing
		– Ensure that ESTA policies, procedures and practices are inclusive and show no barriers for women		2022 Ongoing
	Ensure an inclusive and gender equitable Learning Centre Environment	– Review and embed gender Equality and inclusion principles and examples in training and assessment materials and practices	ESTA Learning Centre	2022 Ongoing
		– Develop trainer competency in gender Equality and inclusive practices		2022 Ongoing
	Appropriate use of gender neutral and inclusive language and diverse images in ESTA policies and procedures and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure language and images in all ESTA's internal and external documents and communications are diverse and follow LGBTIQA+ inclusive language guidelines. – Continue to implement language that is gender-neutral and inclusive (gender-decoder) when writing positions descriptions and advertisements 	PC&R CORP AFF	2022
	Achieve gender Equality for Band 5+ positions	– Strive for gender-balanced composition of executive, senior managers, total workforce (by team/ location)	CEO PC&R ELT	2023 Ongoing
		– Set representation targets on all gender identities as data on broader gender identities is collected	PC&R ELT	2022 Ongoing
		– Monitor gender data on applications received, shortlisted candidates, and offers for Support Office positions at Band 5 and above.	PC&R ELT	2023 Ongoing

Indicator	Objective	Strategy	Responsible	When
Gender Composition of governing bodies	Strive for gender Equality and intersectional representation in career development and career progression opportunities in Senior Leadership	– Continue to identify High Potentials to undertake leadership development training, support with Development Plans, with the aim of attracting a broader gender and intersectional representation	PC&R Hiring Manager	Ongoing
		– Continue to establish a formal Executive Leadership Team Secondment Program to provide opportunities for identified talent	PC&R	Ongoing
		– Utilise upward relieving higher duties opportunities to increase exposure	ELT Executive Managers PC&R Support	Ongoing
Gendered Segregation within the Workplace	Strive for gender Equality and intersectional representation across all occupations within ESTA	– Target specific cohorts as part of recruitment and secondment arrangements e.g. through STEM program (women in ECIS), seek to grow the skills of internal women within ESTA into new career pathways, such as ICT, women in ECS seconded into Support Office, Internal recruitment of women with ECIS knowledge, targeted Tafe and Uni recruitment campaigns- women IT graduates, disability and Indigenous recruitment	PC&R Executive Managers CORP AFF	2023 Ongoing
		– Create an internal awareness campaign to help people understand the gendered segregation of occupations within the workplace, and industry and the impact gender stereotypes can have on decisions about role type and levels.	CORP AFF PC&R	2022 Ongoing

Indicator	Objective	Strategy	Responsible	When
Leave and Flexibility	Strive to ensure that flexibility is embedded and seen as business as usual so our people feel supported and empowered to successfully manage work and life commitments	– Set a policy for all Support Office roles to be offered on a flexible basis by default (or 'if not, why not' basis)	CEO Managers & Team Leaders PC&R	2022
		– Create a campaign to encourage the use of flexible working (beyond remote working) to increase access and utilisation of flexible working where possible		2022 Ongoing
		– Build people leader capability to promote, provide and effectively manage requests for flexible working arrangements		2022 Ongoing
		– Explore Job Design options in ECS that allows for flexibility, including part time and job-share		Next Ops EA 2023
		– Ensure parental leave policies do not discourage a particular gender from taking up parental leave		2022
		– Ensure there are processes in place to encourage people of all genders to take carers leave as required		2023
		– Conduct focus groups to examine potential barriers, opportunities, intersectional or gender Equality issues in relation to career advancement, retention, job design etc	PC&R	2022 Ongoing
	Ensure our workforce and culture data shows a greater awareness and understanding of intersectional and gender Equality principles with key issues identified and addressed	– Create Employee Resource Groups sponsored by ELT and Executive Managers and led by groups of team members with shared characteristics or lived experiences with the aim of fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace.	PC&R	2022
	Ensure our Managers and Team Leaders have a good proficiency in intersectional and gender Equality knowledge.	– Executive leadership team, managers and team leaders to undertake refresher unconscious bias and diversity training	CEO ELT Managers Team Leaders PC&R	Ongoing
	Inclusive practise is seen as a key management attribute.	– ESTA to celebrate International Women's Day annually with CEO and ELT participation		Annually
		– CEO to actively participate in the Emergency Management Victoria Sector Diversity Council		Quarterly

Indicator	Objective	Strategy	Responsible	When
Workplace Gender Auditing, Gender Impact Assessments (GIA), review, implementation, monitoring and reporting	Develop monitoring and evaluation framework for Gender Equality Action Plan over the next 4 years (2021-2025)	– Review and expand current D&I key performance indicators	PC&R Executive Managers	2022-2025
		– Consult with internal stakeholders in the development of key evaluation questions		2022
		– Review gaps identified in Gender Audit to allow improvements in data collection capabilities to build capacity for Workplace Gender Audit		2022
		– Implementation of HRIS system with functionality to capture data		Ongoing
	Ensure our Gender Impact Assessment Process meets the requirements under the Act	– Consult with Stakeholders	PC&R Executive Managers	
		– Facilitate training to key stakeholders on undertaking GIA		2022 Ongoing
		– Continue to complete gender impact assessments on policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public		2022 Ongoing
Recruitment and Promotion	Increase attraction and recruitment of women and the diversity of the workplace	– Leverage Women in Emergency Services and ICT networks and social media to promote ESTA as an employer of choice for gender equality to attract women into ESTA	Hiring Manager PC&R	Ongoing
		– Develop a diversity and gender Equality statement selection statement for recruiters		2022
		– Maintain process to ensure interview panels are gender-balanced and when using recruitment agencies, ensuring they adhere to ESTA's gender equality requirements and report gender splits in the shortlisting and interviewing process		Ongoing
		– Continue to establish the recruitment process with Job Access providers and to recruit people with disability, removing any barriers to employment	PC&R	Ongoing

Indicator	Objective	Strategy	Responsible	When
Workplace Sexual Harassment	All team members are committed to a workplace free from sexual harassment, bullying & discrimination	– Ensure that all Team Members are aware of ESTA's Zero Tolerance Bullying and Harassment Procedure	PC&R ESTA Learning Centre	2022 Ongoing
		– Management will support employees through any complaint of sexual harassment, bullying or discrimination and investigate complaints	Managers	2022 Ongoing
		– Promote on-going elimination of discrimination, sexual harassment and sexism through annual training for all team members	Managers PC&R	2023 Ongoing
		– Ensure a psychologically safe reporting culture for team members that have experienced harassment, discrimination or bullying	Managers PC&R	Ongoing
	Ensuring our employees who are either impacted by or experience domestic or family violence are supported	– Incorporate information on family violence into employee touchpoints e.g., induction and manager inductions	Managers Team Leaders PC&R	2022
		– Organise and promote annual events that help educate and raise awareness on the impact and prevention of family and domestic violence	PC&R	2022 Ongoing
Gender Pay Equality	Remove Gender Pay Gap	– Conduct regular gender pay Equality analysis to ensure clear understanding of overall pay gaps	PC&R	2023 Ongoing
		– Analyse and monitor pay gaps annually and address imbalances		2023 Ongoing
		– Report pay Equality metrics to the ELT		2023 Ongoing
	An accurate workplace profile is established and gender Equality performance data measured and reported to ELT each quarter showing continuous improvement	– In the first 12 months of the plan develop strategies to address the gender pay gap	PC&R	2022
		– Report representation of women in leadership positions each quarter and addresses any imbalances		2022 Ongoing
		– Apply consistent job analysis and job evaluation and methodology		Ongoing

