



Australian Skills Guarantee Gender Equality Action Plan

Overview

This document is for potential suppliers who are preparing to respond to an approach to market for a procurement that meets the Australian Skills Guarantee (Skills Guarantee) requirements. It provides guidance on what a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) is, instructions on how to draft a GEAP and a GEAP template (see Appendix A) to assist potential suppliers in drafting a GEAP to include in their tender response.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Australian Skills Guarantee Procurement Connected Policy (PCP). All relevant definitions used below can be found within the Skills Guarantee PCP.

Who needs to fill out a GEAP?

Potential suppliers for flagship construction projects must submit a GEAP as part of their tender submission. Potential suppliers for major construction projects and major ICT projects are also encouraged to submit a GEAP as part of their tender submission.

What is the purpose of a GEAP?

A GEAP outlines key actions that potential suppliers will undertake to ensure the Skills Guarantee targets for women are achieved and sustained, should their tender be successful. Where a supplier has been successful in their tender, they should adhere to the actions stated in their GEAP and share their GEAP with any sub-contractors to ensure sub-contractors are aware of the actions they will need to undertake for this procurement to promote gender equality.

The key actions outlined in the GEAP, while designed to help a supplier meet the Skills Guarantee targets for a specific procurement, may include both actions and policies undertaken at an organisational level or only for a specific procurement. Suppliers should set out in their GEAP how an organisational level action or policy will apply at the procurement level. A GEAP will provide relevant entities and suppliers with a shared understanding of what actions a potential supplier has agreed to undertake.

While targets for women will provide incentives for employers to make changes to their recruitment and retention policies, it is noted that changes to workplace culture and practices can take time and

commitment to fully implement. Suppliers are encouraged to think about how they can drive both short and long-term outcomes in their GEAP.

How can my GEAP help me meet the targets for women?

Increasing the number of women entering the construction and ICT industries could play a significant role in combating skills shortages and building a future pipeline of women role models and mentors to encourage more women to work in male-dominated industries. Currently, women face a range of barriers when entering the construction and ICT industries. In the construction industry, women in trades and semi-skilled roles face high rates of discrimination and often lack workplace support.¹ It is estimated that 29% of women working in the construction sector have been sexually harassed.² Women are also underrepresented in the construction industry, only making up 26% of all occupations, 19% of managers and 16% of board members.³ As at September 2023, only 4.9% of apprentices and trainees in training in the construction industry are women.⁴ As at September 2023, only 8.8% of apprentices and trainees in training in the ICT sector are women.⁵

The Skills Guarantee works to address the lack of representation of women by setting workforce participation targets. A GEAP is designed to help organisations develop and implement purposeful actions that will aid in the attraction and retention of women to meet the workforce targets set out in the Skills Guarantee PCP. This provides organisations the opportunity to think critically about how they can act to address some of the barriers women face when entering and working in the construction and ICT industries on individual procurements. Developing a project-specific, evidence based GEAP will give suppliers the tools and strategies with which to meet Skills Guarantee targets by highlighting what actions they will take to create a more gender equal workplace.

It is acknowledged that gender inequality is compounded with other forms of discrimination, such as racism, homophobia or ableism, and that tackling discrimination for one group may not address discrimination and marginalisation experienced by all other groups. Therefore, when designing their GEAP, potential suppliers are encouraged to take a nuanced approach to tackling gender inequality, acknowledging that work to prevent gender-based inequality cannot be completed in isolation from work to address other forms of discrimination.

What should my GEAP include?

GEAPs will outline supplier recruitment and retention strategies that will be put in place to ensure the targets for women are achieved and sustained. Focus on these two key areas is critical to encouraging greater participation of women in the construction and ICT sectors. The GEAP should outline strategies that will be adopted to ensure all parties associated with the procurement deliver more equitable, safe, and respectful workplaces free from harassment.

¹ RMIT, *Women in Construction: Exploring the Barriers and Supportive Enablers of Wellbeing in the Workplace, 2020*

² Australian Human Rights Commission, *Time for respect: Fifth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian Workplaces, 2022*, p 14 <https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/2022.11.25_time_for_respect_2022_final_digital.pdf>.

³ [WGEA Data Explorer as at 12 June 2024](#)

⁴ NCVET 2024, Australian vocational education and training statistics: apprentices and trainees 2023 September quarter, NCVET, Adelaide

⁵ NCVET 2024, Australian vocational education and training statistics: apprentices and trainees 2023 September quarter, NCVET, Adelaide.

Preparing your GEAP

You may wish to take the following steps when developing your GEAP. Note, the following information may not be available for a potential supplier's specific tender but rather the data from the organisation as a whole or a previous procurement completed with a similar workforce could be used to get a basic understanding of any potential issues that the potential supplier may want to focus on in their GEAP.

1. Determine whether your organisation is required to develop a GEAP (see 'Who needs to fill out a GEAP?' section above).
2. Consider information such as:
 - a) Workforce participation data – rates of women's participation across your organisation's workforce/for the procurement (entry level staff, managers, board members etc).
 - b) Policy, programs and services – what policies, programs and services does your organisation currently have to support women in the workplace?
 - c) Other data – is there any data showing rates of harassment, sexual assault, suitable facilities for women (e.g. toilet spaces) or work options (part-time or flexible hours), or other data highlighting factors that may influence recruitment and retention? Do you have any survey results or informal feedback from women about their experience in the workplace that may help highlight any issues that should be addressed?
3. Analyse performance to identify strengths, weaknesses, barriers and gaps for gender equality:
 - a) What is working well? Where there are high levels of participation by women in the workforce? What policies, programs or services are driving better recruitment and retention of women? What has driven their success? What could be done to improve them?
 - b) Where are there potential areas for improvement? What are the key barriers to participation for women? What areas have you or your staff identified that could use new strategies to better achieve gender equality? Is your organisation striving to achieve any particular goals to create a more gender equitable workplace? You may find it helpful to undertake a Gender Pay Gap Analysis (basic guide can be found on WGEA's website here) to determine the drivers of gender inequality.
4. Identify and define outcomes:
 - a) How can you improve recruitment and retention of women in your organisation? What goals will your organisation aim to achieve?

- b) For additional guidance on gender-equal recruitment and promotion see the 'Further helpful resources' section below, including WGEA's new Action Planning Tool that can help identify actions an organisation can take to improve gender equality in their workplace.
5. Plan how the outcomes will be delivered, implemented and how you will track the success.
 6. Set time frames for goals and monitor progress.
 7. Fill out the GEAP template (Appendix A) or prepare your own.
 8. Have a look at the 'Further helpful resources' section below or visit the Australian Skills Guarantee [website](#).

Interaction with other reporting requirements

The GEAP required for the Skills Guarantee is separate to any requirements under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Cth). It is noted there may be some overlap between the Skills Guarantee and Workplace Gender Equality Agency requirements.

Further helpful resources

- WGEA Action Planning Tool – <https://www.wgea.gov.au/take-action/action-planning-tool>
- WGEA Employer guidance on developing policies and strategies for the six Gender Equality Indicators – <https://www.wgea.gov.au/take-action/policy-and-strategy-guidance>
- WGEA Policy and strategy guidance: Gender composition of the workforce – <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Policy-and-strategy-guidance-gender-composition-of-the-workforce.pdf>
- WGEA Policy and strategy guidance: Sexual harassment, harassment on the grounds of sex or discrimination – <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/6-Policy-and-strategy-guidance-Sexual-harassment-harassment-on-the-ground-of-sex-and-discrimination.pdf>
- WGEA Gender Pay Gap Analysis Guide – <https://www.wgea.gov.au/take-action/gender-pay-gap/employer-gender-pay-gap-analysis-guide>

Australian Skills Guarantee Gender Equality Action Plan [template]

Organisation name: *organisation name*

Project name: *project name*

AusTender Approach to Market ID: *XXXXX*

This project meets the definition of a:

- Major construction project
- Major ICT project
- Flagship construction project

Our organisation, and any sub-contractors, will meet the following targets:

Specify the level of workforce targets you will meet, as set out in section 4 of the [Australian Skills Guarantee Procurement Connected Policy](#).

For construction projects:

- *overarching apprentice target*
- *overarching apprentice target for women*
- *trades-specific apprentice target for women*

For ICT projects:

- *overarching apprentice/ICT cadet target*
- *overarching apprentice/ICT cadet target for women*

Note flagship construction projects are required to propose higher targets for women (overarching and trade-specific targets for women) than the minimum targets contained in section 4 of the [Australian Skills Guarantee Procurement Connected Policy](#).

Please use this section to specify the level of targets you are proposing, and (if the project spans more than one financial year) the level of the targets for each financial year for the life of the project.

Further information on the minimum target levels can be found at section 4 of the [Australian Skills Guarantee Procurement Connected Policy](#).

Provide details of the strategies/actions your organisation, and any sub-contractors, will undertake to specifically support:

1. Gender equality in recruitment

Provide details here

Goal: *specify what your organisation aims to achieve to improve gender equitable recruitment throughout this project, e.g. “We commit to emphasising fair, skill-based recruitment and providing equal access to opportunities for all, regardless of gender.”*

Actions and strategies	Intended purpose/rationale of policy	Timing, measures and milestones
<p><i>Highlight the policies you have/will put in place and what they aim to do. Include the name of the policy and specifically what it does.</i></p> <p><i>This may include gender-neutral hiring criteria or asking for post-interview feedback.</i></p> <p><i>Each action/strategy should be listed in its own row.</i></p>	<p><i>Specify the intent of the policy, how it aims to improve gender equality in recruitment and link this to the broader goal detailed above. This could include evidence supporting the intended actions.</i></p> <p><i>If this is an organisational level policy, outline how this policy will this impact at the procurement level.</i></p> <p><i>Is this a new policy and if so, why are you introducing this new policy. Have you adapted or expanded an old policy? What did the old policy do?</i></p>	<p><i>Specify when the action/strategy will occur, how often progress will be assessed and how progress will be assessed e.g. policy was implemented on 1 July 2025 and will be evaluated every 6 months by HR representative to determine whether it is meeting intended purpose.</i></p>
<i>Action 1...</i>		
<i>Action 2...</i>		

2. Gender equality in retention

Provide details here.

Goal: *Specify what your organisation aims to achieve to improve gender equitable retention of employees throughout this project, e.g. “Maintain a workplace culture that values gender equality to ensure the retention of valuable employees.”*

Actions and strategies	Intended purpose of policy	Timing, measures and milestones
<p><i>Highlight the policies you have/will put in place and</i></p>	<p><i>Specify the intent of the policy, how it aims to improve</i></p>	<p><i>Specify when the action/strategy will occur,</i></p>

<p><i>what they aim to do. Include the name of the policy and specifically what it does.</i></p> <p><i>This may include creating a mentoring program or ensuring appropriate facilities.</i></p> <p><i>Each action/strategy should be listed in its own row.</i></p>	<p><i>gender equality in retention and link this to the broader goal detailed above. This could include evidence supporting the intended actions.</i></p> <p><i>If this is an organisational level policy, outline how this policy will impact at the procurement level.</i></p> <p><i>Is this a new policy and if so, why are you introducing this new policy. Have you adapted or expanded an old policy? What did the old policy do?</i></p>	<p><i>how often progress will be assessed and how progress will be assessed e.g. policy was implemented on 1 July 2025 and will be evaluated every 6 months by HR representative to determine whether it is meeting intended purpose.</i></p>
<i>Action 1...</i>		
<i>Action 2...</i>		

3. Other [optional]

OPTIONAL: Provide details of any other relevant actions/strategies your organisation has in place