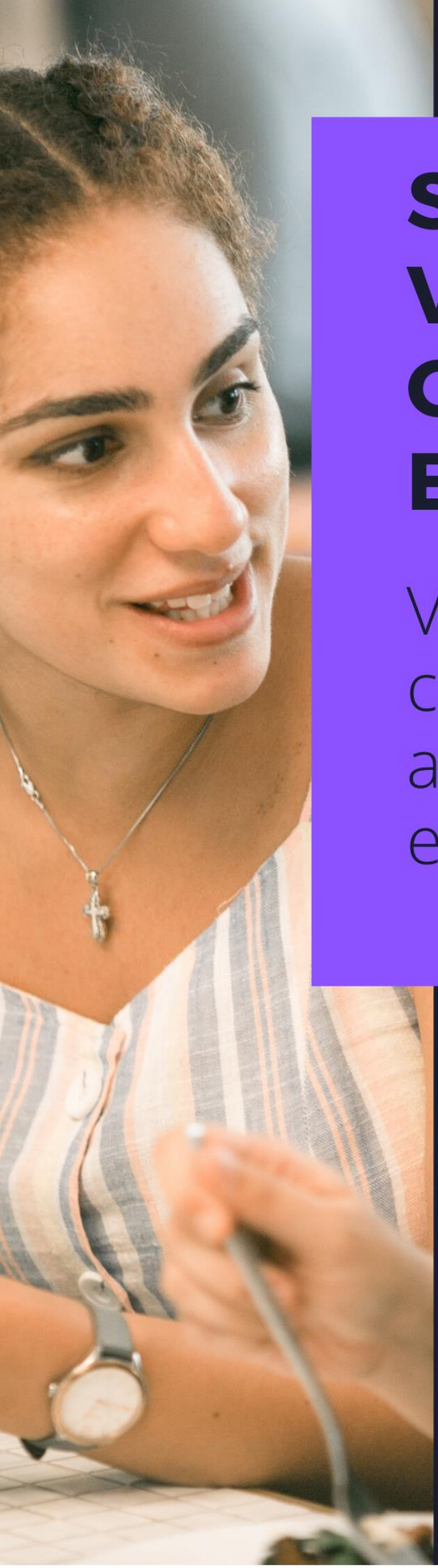

JUNE 2020

SKILLS FOR VICTORIA'S GROWING ECONOMY

Victoria's skills system creating prosperity for all through gender equality

SUBMITTED BY

Gender Equity Victoria
WAVE - Women in Adult & Vocational Education
Gender Equity Accredited Training Project (WHV)

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Who are we?

Gender Equity Victoria

Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC) is the Victorian peak body for gender equity, women's health and the prevention of violence against women. We evolved from the Women's Health Association of Victoria (WHAV), which was formed in 1994 as a peak body for the women's health sector. Our purpose is to advocate, influence and collaborate to improve outcomes in gender equity, women's health and in the prevention of violence against women.

Now, GEN VIC works with a broad array of organisations across Victoria – including government, peak bodies and public, community and private organisations – to advance a shared vision of gender equality, health and freedom from violence for every woman and girl in every community across Victoria.

WAVE – Women in Adult and Vocational Education

WAVE is a national network of women involved in VET, adult education and the broad field of work-related education and training. WAVE provides seminars & workshops, research, policy advocacy and advice, as well as networking on an international, national and state basis. We are supported within each state by local representation that in turn contributes collaboratively to national events and governance. WAVE was formed in 1985, the first and only national and autonomous non-government organisation for Australian women in the adult, community and vocational education and training sector.

Gender Equity Accredited Training Project (WHV)

In July 2018, Women's Health Victoria was funded by the Victorian Government to develop an accredited course in Gender Equity.

In conjunction with RMIT, Monash University, Knox City Council, Women with Disabilities Victoria, ACEVic and two adult community education providers Coonara Community House and Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House, the project to date has produced:

- Eight accredited units of competency which form the Course in Gender Equity 22521VIC which is registered on the VRQA list of accredited courses
- A research report by Monash University on the pedagogical approaches required to teach the gender equity units of competency
- A Teaching Toolkit supporting the delivery of the gender equity units of competency
- Pilot of the accredited course and development of six Microcredentials and a Virtual Workplace to support workplace context of gender equity.

Summary: Findings & recommendations

Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy Review (the Review) advocates for a vocational education and training system that is for every Victorian, that is trusted and that delivers prosperity for all Victorians.

Our submission makes recommendations drawing on a wealth of evidence that supports that this is not possible until inequity in our society and economy is addressed – specifically gender equity.

We argue that Victoria's VET sector is well placed to address this inequity and to support the transformational change required to achieve gender equality while working as part of a broader Victorian Government economic and social change agenda, seeking to enact social and economic reform. Building the workforces for tomorrow requires whole of government collaboration. There is a real opportunity for that collaboration in Victoria – the forthcoming implementation of the Gender Equality Act will provide a real and timely lever to address a major driver of inequality that exists in VET and address a barrier to prosperity for all Victorians.

Australia and indeed Victoria has a unique workforce – it is uniquely segregated by gender. This entrenches pay gaps, reduces living standards for many, reinforces gender stereotypes and limits the ability for all Victorian's to reach their full potential. This segregation is further reflected in the VET system where entrenched inequities in skill pathways are present.

We further argue that gender inequality exists in current VET pedagogy and teaching practices that is enabled by a VET system and VET funding and compliance policy environment that does not consider the impact of gender inequality in its application. Our research shows that women have different levels of participation in different learning settings and programs which we believe provides a clear opportunity for VET to learn and understand more about how it can create more equitable learning environments.

Finally, we highlight that the VET sector itself has ingrained gender inequality within its workplace systems and structures, and that the VET workforce and providers themselves need to address this systemic inequality in order for the Victorian VET system overall to become a gender equitable environment that enables all Victorians to realize their full potential.

Our recommendations are based on our combined 90 years of work for women and gender equity and are in two parts:

1. For students and community, that reforms result in an intersectional gender lens being applied to VET, that engages the diversity of all women. This needs to be applied to VET policy to ensure VET delivery and the systems around it, deliver equality for all, socially and economically. We further advocate that the participation of women across VET needs to be further investigated to inform committed action for change.
2. That the culture and structures of VET as a sector and a workforce needs to be changed. We recommend an approach that includes appointing a Gender Equality Advisor who works for and within the Department in partnership with the incoming Public Sector Gender Equity Commissioner to implement the Gender Equity Act in Victoria's skill system and government funded providers, with a particular emphasis on TAFE as the key enabler for both economic *and* social change

In conclusion we fully appreciate that our submission has not provided specific responses to the questions that the Review asks. Our strong view is that the reform required to achieve prosperity and deliver future workforces will mean VET policy and system needs to work through transformational change to achieve this, which we have faith it can do.

The good news is that our experience tells us this is possible, and that Victorian VET has many supporters and partners across Victoria who are willing and able to support this journey.

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Introduction

For every Victorian to have 'a stake in the future of post-education and training' and, for every Victorian to 'trust' the Victorian VET system and access further education that will enable them to get the skills they need for jobs of the future, **then** Victoria's VET system must, in its design and implementation, address the drivers that lead to inequality in our community and economy.

The Victorian VET system must through its design and implementation contribute to economic growth and community wellbeing by driving gender equality and equity.

This submission from three leading groups and organisations on gender equality and education advocate that the *Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy Review (the Review),* needs to take an approach to reforming Victorian skills policy that integrates post-secondary education and training system within a broader social and economic remit. One that starts with gender equality.

Our skill system needs to act as change agent to social and economic reform as they are interconnected and needs to build workforces by recognising the diverse nature of Victorian's lives.

Broadly our recommendations are informed by the following realities:

1. Gender equality is a real driver of prosperity and conversely gender inequality underpins many of the disadvantages and issues highlighted in the review
2. Gender segregated labour markets are reflected in gender segregated skills and education systems where pedagogy, structures, culture and attitudes to gender and work are entrenched at the start of a person's post-secondary school educational journey and working life.
3. The launch of the Victorian Gender Equality Act in 2021, provides the Victorian Department of Education and Training with a real opportunity to address inequality in the Victorian VET system, in funded training provision, in support and engagement of students and across community mainly through driving cultural and systemic change in the public provider/TAFE as a leader of best practice.

Context

Economic security means having a stable income, affordable shelter and income for food and basic living expenses. It also means having opportunities to thrive through education, training and employment. A gender equal economy is a human right, but it is also essential for prosperity.

Research from across the world has shown gender equity delivers greater productivity, higher profits and economic growth. It prevents violence against women and girls and diminishes corruption. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier.[1]

For the Review, recognising the opportunity to embrace the Victorian Government's gender equity reforms, and partner with it to achieve the change in lives, communities, economies and society, that we know occurs through equity is an important first step.

This Review seeks to create a quality vocational education and training (VET) system for Victoria, ready to equip Victorians with the skills they need for current and future jobs, with strong connections and pathways between VET and Higher Education as well as schooling. To achieve this the VET system has to be enabled to address an inequality that is globally recognised as constraining economic prosperity, if not managed appropriately.

By making these recommendations to the Review, our submission recognises that one size does not fit all, and that skills systems – educators training providers, policy owners, funders, leaders, industry partnerships, schools and strategy – have a role to create prosperity by creating skilled workers who can create both social and economic change, and supports those that live with the daily reality of inequality and inequity to become part of a prosperous and equitable society.

Gender Equality is a priority of the Victorian Government

Victoria's gender equality strategy *Safe and Strong*, also highlights that "Victoria's labour markets remain divided along gender lines". Noting the barriers that women face in participating fully in the labour force, the Victorian strategy provide a range of strategies for action including access to early childhood education and care, making more work flexible across the Victorian public service and addressing the

[1] Please see WGEA The Business Case - https://www.wgea.gov.au/topics/workplace-gender-equality/the-business-case,

International Monetary Fund "Economic Gains from Gender Inclusion: New Mechanisms New Evidence) October 2018 Victorian Government "The benefit of gender equality" December 2019 https://www.vic.gov.au/benefits-gender-equality

World Health Organisation Gender Equity and Human Rights https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/gender-equity-and-human-rights

Goldman and Sachs & JBWere (2009), Australia's hidden resource: the economic case for increasing Female Participation, viewed 17 September 2018, https://www.asx.com.au/documents/about/gsjbw_economic_case_for_increasing_female_participation.pdf

Noland, M., Moran, T., & Kotschwar, B. R. (2016), Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey. Peterson Institute for International Economics Working Paper,

Gratton, L, Kelan, E, Voigt, A, Walker, L and Wolfram H-J (2007), Innovative Potential: Men and Women in Teams, Executive Summary; Credit Suisse (2012), Gender Diversity and Corporate Performance, Credit Suisse Research Institute.

under representation of women in industries such as finance, construction, utilities science and technical skills. The strategy also speaks to the gendered discrimination that 62% of working women face. [2]

Victoria's own *Safe and Strong* Gender Equality Strategy highlights the significant differences in participation and engagement in education and training from a gender perspective.

> *Women account for less than 4 per cent of Victorian VET enrolments for construction, engineering and trades courses and less than 10 per cent of apprenticeships. Men comprise only 16 per cent of Victorian VET enrolments for the caring industries, including nursing, early childhood, aged and disability care.*
>
> *Compared to male early school leavers, women are less likely to find full-time work and more likely to go into lower paid work. This reflects that women are 48 per cent less likely to re-engage with study following the birth of a child.*[3]

We note that The Review opens by framing first up the "importance of post-secondary education and training to our social and economic growth."

> While the review does provide insight into the changing workforce, the growing economy (including priority sectors) and changing society, what it **does not do** is address the key barrier to releasing our Victorian workforce's potential – gender inequality. Creating prosperity will be about addressing gender inequality that is inherent in our society and economy via the skills system.

We agree that there is a "divide between high-skilled, knowledge intensive and low-skilled low wage" [4]workers. Our view, and the evidence that is presented, is that this divide is actually gendered, and that VET has a role to address this. [We would also argue that this is particularly so, if we include the role of VET to develop skills through short courses and skill sets]. In addition to this the review fails to highlight that gender inequality is driving poverty and limiting opportunity despite economic success. Further we argue that VET only delivers modern high-skill high-wage outcomes for some – not all, and looking forward this outcome will continue to be limited by gender inequality. The role of VET, in particular the TAFE, has been narrowed in recent years as a result of the creation of a marketised system. Primarily delivering what can be economically profitable has not enabled public VET providers to give significant focus to programs that ensure social inclusion and address gender equity. This needs to be redressed.

Gender Equality Act

Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020 was enacted on 25 February 2020 and it aims to improve workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils. It will also lead to better results for the Victorian community through improved policies, programs and services. Furthermore, the

[2] Victorian Government, *Safe and Strong: a Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality#education-and-training
[3] Victorian Government, *Safe and Strong: a Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality#education-and-training
[4] Victorian Government, Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy (Issues Paper) March 2020

Act aims to level the playing field so that Victorians can have equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes.

The Act and ensuing regulations will apply to all public organisations that have over 50 or so employees. This means that the Act will apply to all 4000 plus employees currently working with Victoria's Department of Education and Training and through them around 75,000 employees in the education facilities around Victoria.

The Act is due to commence on the 31 March 2021 and will put in place rights and obligations for public organisations to plan, measure and track their progress towards gender equality as well as encourage cultural change that creates benefits for the organisation, and through them the employer.

Importantly for this submission, the act enshrines a set of Gender Equality Principles that embed the benefit of gender equality for all Victorians, that it is a human right, brings social economic and health benefits and is a shared responsibility.

In doing this the Act recognised that through organisations addressing their own barriers to gender inequality, they are also empowering the community.

Our submission recognizes the opportunity provided in the delivery of the Act to both the Victorian Department of Education and Training, the public education providers and through them, the community as a whole. It recognizes that through the work of VET we are able to address gender inequity and work hand in hand with the overall social and economic goals of the Victorian Government and, the community that elected them.

The authors of this submission put forward their recommendations with the full recognition that women are not one homogenous group. That all genders have intersectional needs and circumstances to their lived experience that need to be acknowledged and worked with especially when it comes to VET systems, delivery funding and policy making. While this submission speaks directly to the key driver of inequality worldwide – gender – we also need to work with an intersectional lens.

The reality of inequality

Our recommendations are built on our communities' expectation that a social contract exists with its training and education. This expectation is regularly highlighted – through such things as significant concern and outrage at poor quality providers, to disquiet about our nation's inability to deliver the skills that we need for our future. The ongoing concern about the efficacy of our system is also shown in the innumerate number of reviews and reforms of VET. [5] We would argue that what is lacking in all the analysis that is being conducted is the naming and responding to the hope and trust that is held in our community that education does deliver to both economic growth, and social cohesion needs. We contend that this social contract has been broken to a point where current policy and practice, including that in education and training, entrenches inequality. Particularly gender inequality.

We can see this in the following reality:

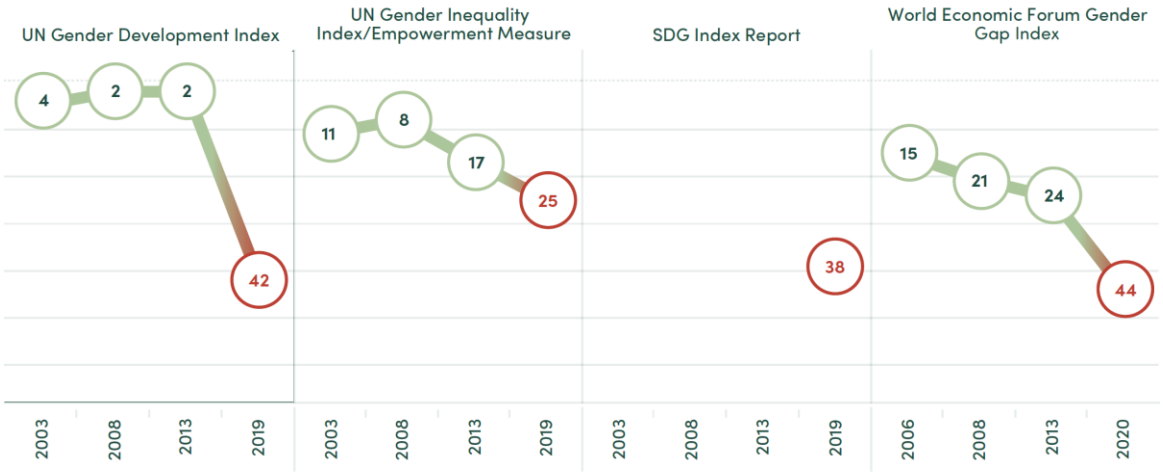
- Victorian women are over-represented as part-time workers in low-paid industries and in insecure work, and continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles in the private and public sectors [6]

[5] We acknowledge recent work through COAG's VET reform roadmap and note that one aspect is to see that (destination 4) "All learners access and thrive in training that is right for them". (Skills Senior Officials Network Vocational Education and Training Reform Roadmap: Consultation Copy 21 Feb 2020

[6] www.humanrights.gov.au/education/face-facts/face-facts-gender-equality-2018

- Women are more likely to be in casual employment than men: 25.5 percent of all female employees in Australia are casual compared to 19.7 percent of male employees.[7]
- Employees in female-dominated industries such as health care and social assistance are paid significantly less than employees in male-dominated industries[8]
- Australia's current gender pay gap for full-time work is 15.3 percent. Women earn on average $253.70 a week less than men[9]

In addition to this, a snapshot of Australia using international gender equality markers and tools shows that rather than maintaining or even improving gender equity in our community, we are actually falling behind.



A snapshot of Australia's Current gender inequality performance as provided in Dawson, Kovac and Lewis *Measure for Measure: Gender Equality in Australia* Per Capita March 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on Women's Economic Participation

Further, evidence from the current COVID-19 pandemic shows how at risk any gains in equality are.

Evidence summarised by Gender Equality Victoria shows us that Victorian women have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic with higher unemployment rates, less access to JobKeeper, greater responsibility for caring and unpaid work and significantly poorer mental health outcomes, specifically:

- More women than men have become unemployed. Overrepresented in part-time and casual roles, and in low-paid sectors such as hospitality, tourism and the arts, 55% of people in the unemployment line because of the COVID-19 pandemic are women.
- For those still in paid work, 11.5% of women have reduced their hours compared to 7.5% of men. More women than men work as casuals with less than 12 months continuous employment making them ineligible for JobKeeper payments.
- Casual women workers are missing out on Job Keeper payments. Most of the workers with less than 12 months continuous employment are women returning to work after child-raising. Without government support, businesses relying on the casual labour of women are unlikely to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, creating indefinite job loss.
- Women are disproportionately represented on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic in the health, aged and disability care, early childhood, education and food retailing industries. Despite

[7] https://www.actu.org.au/media/349417/lives_on_hold.pdf

[8] https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/BCEC%20WGEA%20Gender%20Pay%20Equity%20Insights%202017%20Report.pdf

[9] https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/gender-pay-gap-statistics.pdf

keeping the country running in essential service workforces, women in these industries are poorly paid because of gendered attitudes towards feminized work.

Gender Equity Victoria *Gender Disaster and Resilience: Towards a Gender Equal Recovery "Factsheet Gender Equity and COVID-19* 2020 [10]

Not only have women been most affected by the COVID-19 crisis, but current Federal Government programs and plans do not seek to address this inequity. Increased funding for industries such as construction appear to be created without considering the need to build greater opportunities for women and girls in the workforce. VET has the capability to play a significant role in developing programs that meet the needs of many women and enable them to take up job opportunities.

Getting women back into the workforce (and sustained meaningful work) will require deliberate and targeted investment by Governments – and those decisions and investment will need to occur immediately. Existing policy and programs – such as Victoria's *Free TAFE* – could include additional incentives to enrol women in qualifications and short courses in specific industries. We would also highlight that given the gendered impact of COVID-19 on the economy, the VET system, through funding policy, can also play a role in incentivising and maximising the engagement of women and girls in VET to assist in stimulating workforce capacity in our recovery from the pandemic.

[10] https://www.genvic.org.au/resources/covid-19-resources/

Why gender equality matters

Gender inequality is any structure, social norm, behaviour, attitude, cultural setting or otherwise that results in different rights and dignity for women and men. This is reflected in unequal access to an enjoyment of human results. It is driven by deeply ingrained systemic attitudes, values and beliefs that together with unequal structures and practices emphasise stereotypes of femininity and masculinity, poor and negative attitudes towards women, and perpetuates poor "rules" about how all genders should behave and what their place in society is. It starts at birth and runs through to death – it covers all classes, all cultures and all language groups. It limits potential, stifles wellbeing, curtails economic growth, perpetuates violence and prevents all of us living up to our potential.

The Victorian government advocates for gender equality. Stating clearly that gender equality is a human right, the government also promotes that gender equality benefits the economy and society. The government's own website states that for Victoria "Every day that we fail to deliver gender equality, we pay the price." [11]

> *Australia's GDP would increase by 11% if the gender employment gap was closed.*
>
> *The Australian economy would gain $8 billion if women transitioned from tertiary education into the workforce at the same rate as men.*
>
> *Businesses with at least 30% women in leadership positions are 15% more profitable.*
>
> *Family violence costs the Victorian economy more than $3.4 billion a year and takes up 40% of police work.*
>
> *Women do most unpaid care work. This has major costs - the unpaid care economy in Australia is nearly six times larger than the paid economy.*

Economically it matters

The 2019 update to KPMG and Diversity Council's *She's Price(d)less* [12] takes the drivers of gender inequality and ascribes them with a contribution to the hourly rate pay gap. Overall the economic value of addressing the pay gap is significant;

> …Closing the primary drivers of the gender pay gap is equivalent to $445 million per week, or almost $23 billion per year. …
>
> KPMG and Diversity Council of Australia She's Price(d)less 2019 Update [13]

Using data from the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, in 2019 they have found that the hourly gender pay gap in Australia has reduced (from 3.05AUD/p/hr to 2.43AUD/p/hr). However, the drivers of this discrimination persist – gender discrimination, care family

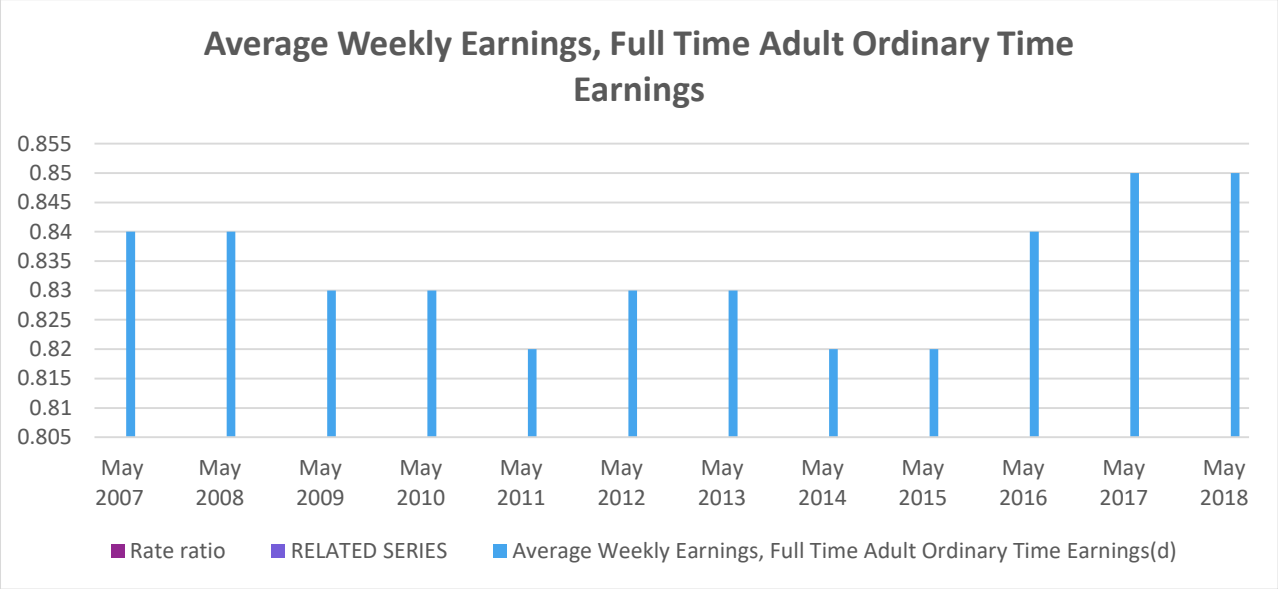
[11] https://www.vic.gov.au/benefits-gender-equality
[12] KPMG Diversity Council of Australia *She's Price(d)less: The economics of the gender pay gap 2019* https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/shes-pricedless-2019-update-report#:~:text=She's%20Price(d)less%20is,to%20the%20gender%20pay%20gap.
[13] https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/shes-pricedless-2019-update-report

and workforce participation and finally, occupational and industrial segregation. On this last point KPMG estimate that this segregation contributes some 17% to the gender pay gap.[14]

Where data and research do recognise the impacts of gender equality on our economy, rarely are the connections with education and training, particularly VET, also made.

In addition to this, research just released by the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (BCEC) and WGEA found that "an increase in the share of female 'top-tier' managers by 10 percentage points or more led to a 6.6 per cent increase in the market value of Australian ASX-listed companies, worth the equivalent of AUD$104.7 million."

Further, the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018 Gender Indicators data shows that from 2007 to 2018 women's average weekly earnings, full time adult (ordinary) were persistently below that of men.



(a) The rate ratio is calculated by dividing female earnings for each respective year and industry by male earnings for the same year and industry. A rate ratio of 1.0 indicates parity between female and male earnings, whereas a rate ratio greater than 1.0 indicates an earnings inequity in favour of females, and a rate ratio less than 1.0 indicates an earnings inequity in favour of males.

Socially it matters

Women are just over half the population in Victoria, and yet[15]:

- Family violence is the most pervasive and common form of men's violence against women in Victoria. It is the leading cause of death and disability in women aged 15-45 years and is the biggest contributor to women's ill-health including poor mental health.
- In Victoria, female victim reports of family violence outnumber male victim reports by a ratio of 3 to 1. In 2019 there were 84,550 family incidents logged by Victoria Police comprising 63,465 female victims, and 20,969 male victims.
- Family violence is the single largest driver of homelessness for women, a common factor in child protection notifications, and results in a police call-out on average once every two minutes across Australia

[14] [14] KPMG Diversity Council of Australia *She's Price(d)less: The economics of the gender pay gap 2019* https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/shes-pricedless-2019-update-report#:~:text=She's%20Price(d)less%20is,to%20the%20gender%20pay%20gap.

[15] Women's Health Atlas, 2020 Women's Health Victoria

- In 2015, the perception of safety average for women was only 44.0% compared with 78.8% for men.
- On average, 1 in 3 Australian women and 1 in 5 men will experience an anxiety disorder at some stage in their life. The Victorian Population Health Survey in 2017, reported 29% of Victorian adults reported ever being diagnosed with anxiety or depression by a doctor (average of all local government areas). - an average of 33.6% of women and 21.0% of men reported having ever been diagnosed with depression or anxiety.
- In 2017 the Victorian Admitted Episodes Dataset recorded 6,347 self-harm admissions of which 4,282 were for females and 2,065 were for males. Compared with 2016, female admissions increased by 170 (up from 4,112) and male admissions increased by 8 (up from 2,053).

Research has outlined many benefits to the wellbeing of women through specific VET programs, including the South Australian TAFE-run women's courses. Such courses ensure strategies and pedagogy that meet diverse needs of women and girls. VET does have a role in wellbeing, and we would add, that to enable gender-sensitive pedagogy to occur, systemic change across the vocational system needs to be enacted.

The same drivers that negatively impact women, impact men. We know from recent research undertaken by Jesuit Social Services through the Man Box project that:[16]

- Living up to the pressures of male stereotypes causes harm to young men and those around them, particularly women.
- Young men who most strongly agree stereotypes of male behaviour, report poorer levels of mental health, engage in risky drinking, are more likely to be in car accidents and to report committing acts of violence, online bullying and sexual harassment including perpetuating verbal bullying, online bullying and physical bullying
- Men with strong alignment to male gender stereotypes are also likely to report having feeling depressed and hopeless and thoughts of suicide

Our submission highlights a real and urgent need for the Victorian VET system to have a strong and transparent gender lens applied to policy and practice to reduce the impact of gender inequality on Victorians.

[16] Jesuit Social Services, *The Men's Project* https://jss.org.au/what-we-do/the-mens-project/research/

Gender segregated labour markets

A 2017 Commonwealth Senate inquiry into gender segregation in the workplace sought to identify and address the causes of gender segregation in the workplace and its impact on women's economic equality. It found that despite increased participation in the workforce, women have been concentrated into particular jobs and sectors – where they do work side by side, "they are likely to be working for (men) as women find themselves restricted to more junior or poorly paid roles"[17] Not only this but the inquiry found entrenched forms of horizontal[18] and vertical[19] gender segregation, noting that horizontal segregation is more entrenched "because it plays to our basic understandings of gender roles" [20]

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) tells us that the "majority of Australian employees continue to work in industries dominated by one gender" with "only 46.5% of employed Australian's work(ing) in gender mixed organisations".[21] Further, the same analysis also shows that "Female employees are paid less than male employees across all gender dominant classifications" and that "Employees in female-dominated organisations have lower salaries on average, for base salary and total remuneration, when compared to male-dominated organisations." We also know that while gender pay gaps across female – dominated, male-dominated, and mixed organisations vary, these gaps consistently favour men.[22]

The data from WGEA also tells us that gender segregated labour is persistent in Australia, noting that between 1998 and 2018:

- The Health Care and Social Assistance and Education and Training industries are increasingly dominated by women.
- Many of the male-dominated industries, including Wholesale Trade, Manufacturing, Electricity, Gas and Water and Waste Services and Mining have seen an improvement in female representation.
- Declines in female representation are recorded in two male-dominated industries: Construction and Transport, Postal and Warehousing, Information Media and Telecommunications and the mixed industry: Financial and Insurance Services.

If we look specifically at trades, this persistent segregation becomes more pronounced. Women comprise 51.4% of all non-manager roles they comprise 14.6% of technicians and trade workers and 12.6% of machinery operators and drivers. (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, November 2018) Further, of those

[17] Senate Standing Committees on Finance and Public Administration *Gender Segregation in the workplace and its impact on women's economic equality"* 7 June 2017

[18] Horizontal segregation is under- or over-representation of women and men in certain occupations or industries

[19] Vertical segregation is the imbalance between women and men in leadership categories (occupational hierarchies)… men dominate leadership categories while women are concentrated in non-management roles

[20] Senate Standing Committees on Finance and Public Administration, 2017 2.9

[21] https://www.wgea.gov.au/data/fact-sheets/gender-segregation-in-australias-workforce#:~:text=The%20data%20shows%20that%20the,work%20in%20gender%20mixed%20organisations.

[22] ibid

that are in construction, 12.1% are managers, up from 10.8% in 2013-14.[23] (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, November 2018) The agency concludes that women are least represented in Construction and Mining (however mining is one of two industries where women are not under-represented in management). In addition to this, the pay gap between women and men in the construction industry is 29.4% and is increasing. This is unique across all industries. (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, November 2018) By way of contribution, a 2013 report by the NSW Office for Women highlights that income distribution in trades is gendered with "men (being) over-represented at the top end of the income spectrum.. (and) women over represented .." at the lower end of the income spectrum. (Women NSW, March 2013) It is worth noting that the NSW analysis includes hairdressing trade, but even when this is removed the gendered pay gap is not eliminated.

The Australian Human Rights Commission in February 2017 put forward reasons and rationale for addressing gender segregation in workforces.

> *An increased focus on increasing gender balance in male-dominated industries, as well as improving pay and conditions in female dominated industries, will be a key to addressing the negative impacts on women, the community and the economy in the long term. … The motivation for change in those industries (supported by authoritative research) has been recognition of business benefits for those organisations, whether through:*
>
> - *the diversity and increased talent in their employee and management pool,*
> - *improved performance and innovation in key business areas, and/or*
> - *enhanced capability to meet customer and community wants and needs.*

They also sought to specifically address the case for improving gender balance in female-dominated industries. The AHRC highlighted the reality that care work is not valued by society despite its significant contribution to the economy and society. The Commission highlights that:

> *There are … some very significant consequences for those industries/sectors where women have disproportionately high representation, and this can have an impact on the broader economy and community. For example: the paid parental leave 'burden' falls disproportionately on those sectors and is relatively light in businesses that mainly employ men; and female-dominated businesses are more likely to have their workers taking leave to care for children. [24]*

The Commission's own research showed that there are positive stories about men becoming aware and keen to improve balance of caring responsibility but noted that there has not been a significant shift in caring responsibility resulting in the maintenance of the "man as breadwinner" stereotype. Their evidence shows that gender segregation in skills and work causes other social impacts:

> *Female-dominated industries often create or perpetuate vulnerability of female workers and are prone to intersectional disadvantage and sexualisation.*

[23] This is in comparison to Public Administration and Safety who have seen an increase of women in management roles from 16.9% in 2013-14 to 20.3% in 2017-18 and, Mining who have increased women in management from 14% in 2013-2014 to 1702% in 2017-18.

[24] Australian Human Rights Commission, *Gender Segregation in the workplace and its impact on women's economic equality* February 2017

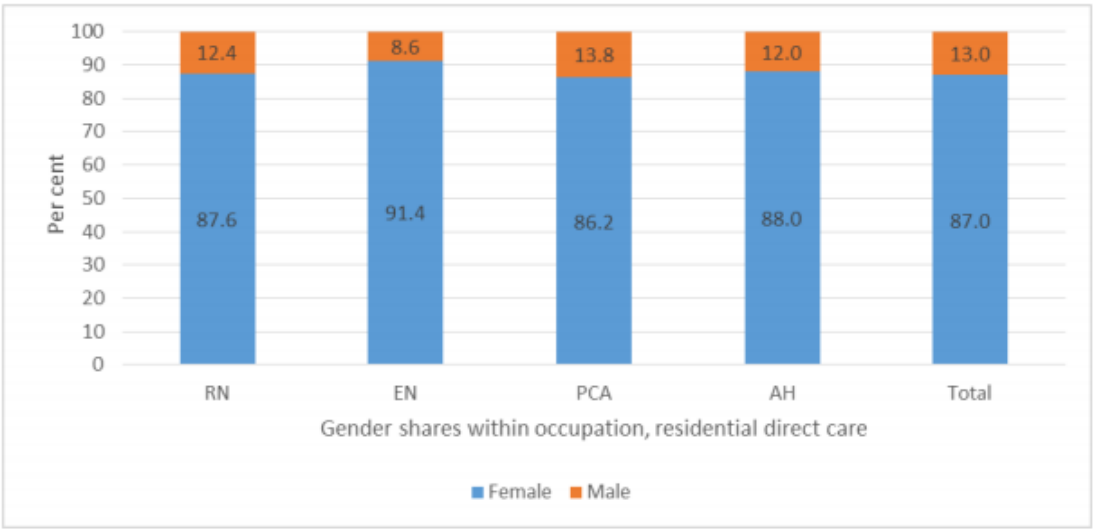
> *Industries with male-dominated management and executive leadership can be prone to sexual harassment and sex discrimination.* [25]

Changing workforce and Labour Market Dynamics

The Review highlights Victoria's rapidly changing labour market noting growth in particular priority sectors (nursing and aged care, childhood education and disability services). These workforces, as well as sales assistants are highlighted as needing more training in 2020, with other sectors being identified as having significant growth and short-term skill needs.

Noting the previous advice provided we would highlight that women make up the overwhelming majority of workers in **aged care**:

Figure 3.4: Gender distribution of the residential aged care workforce: 2016 (per cent)

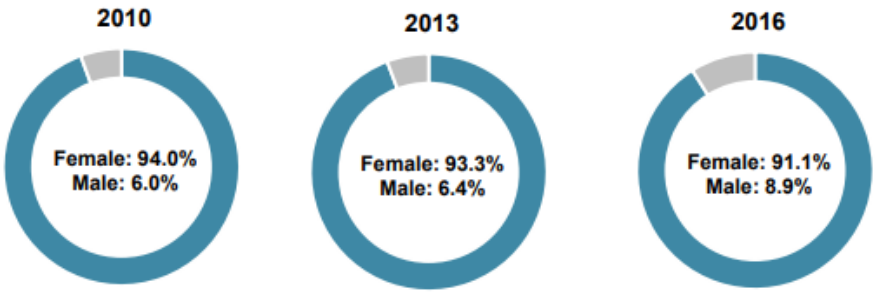


Australian Government, Department of Health *The Aged Care Workforce 2016* (March 2017)[26]

88.7% of generally registered **nurses** in Australia are women and 91% of non-practicing registration are women[27]

With regard to **childcare**, 1 in 5 workers in outside school hours care and vacation care were male, nearly all workers in home care and occasional care and long day care services were female.

Figure 4 Gender of workforce, 2010 to 2016



[25] ibid

[26] https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/www_aihwgen/media/Workforce/The-Aged-Care-Workforce-2016.pdf

[27] AHPRA Nursing and Midwifery Board Registrant Data 01 Jan 2020 to 31 March 2020

Social Research Centre, ANU *2016 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census* (September 2017) [28]

The Australian Retail Association report that women make up some 57.7% of the industry[29]

> Our submission highlights the gendered nature of Australian and Victorian workforces. We seek for The Review to include in its final recommendations the implementation of gender equitable strategies to address inequity that is entrenched in workforce positioning and through this, assist in changing our labour markets.

Career aspiration and VET positioning

As highlighted above Australia and Victoria have a gender segregated workforce. However, we believe that it is within the power of the Victorian VET system to either perpetuate or disrupt this.

A Victorian VET system that will support gender equality needs to look at not only the structures that support the system but also the policy and practice.

A practice that is worth highlighting and in need of a gender lens is the positioning by the Victorian government and the Victorian TAFE network of career pathways. Advertising by the Victorian TAFE network continues to support gender segregated pathways which have the potential to restrict career aspirations for all young Victorians. The Victorian VET system needs to transform its approaches to career pathways and VET engagement dialogue in order to disrupt these long held gendered perceptions that maintain and reinforce a gender segregated workforce. This could be achieved through VET policy which motivates providers to demonstrate how they have considered and addressed gender segregated workforces in such things as advertising and marketing[30]. The same policy settings could also motivate providers to demonstrate that career pathways are not gendered and are available for all Victorians through VET programs. Supported by programs that develop the capacity of providers to understand and recognised the drivers of gender inequality and its impact, as well as supporting the building of equity in VET itself, this would be a strong framework for change.

Current and recent *Free TAFE* advertising and *Chase your calling* advertising supports the gendered positioning of trades for boys and men and health care roles for girls and women. [31] This needs to stop if we are to disrupt this gendered view of careers and workforces and maximise economic participation by all in the future workforce.

Despite a number of reports highlighting strategies that can enable and encourage women and girls into a wider variety of careers[32], little appears to have changed. There remains a need for early and staged

[28] https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/2016_ecec_nwc_national_report_sep_2017_0.pdf
[29] https://www.australian-retailers-association.com/women-in-retail-series
[30] The authors to this submission would highlight the current gendered advertising that TAFE use in their marketing and advertising to recruit students. Many of these campaigns use images that further entrenched ideas about gender stereotypes in work and skills.
[31] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7-lr1saM9s, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmnlFtzyLtM, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2304m9Z6LI and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FzSUVrl81c

[32] Butler E, Clarke K & Simon L 2014, *Hard Hats, Robots and Lab Coats: Broadening the career options of young women* eS4W/WAVE

career exploration opportunities in schools, taster opportunities for girls in a variety of job roles, industry engagement and more role models including VET teachers.

This submission highlights the role that VET policy can play in perpetuating or disrupting gendered workforce stereotypes. We position that it is the role of government to disrupt such patterns of behaviour which further limit girls and women's career aspirations and pathways to employment.

Gender in VET

We know that men persistently have higher numbers of enrolment and participation in VET than women.

> Amongst all VET qualification holders, the share of men having a VET qualification has been higher than women in the past three decades. By 2016, the share of females with a VET qualification was 44 per cent. [33]

This persistent reality is again highlighted by Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy own Issues paper which tells is in 2018, 45% of VET enrolments were female.[34] Addressing this entrenched segregation will require specific strategies especially (as evidence shows) to attract and retain women into non-traditional careers where women's participation in VET is substantially lower. The evidence from enrolments tells us is that gendered segregation in skills development is a longstanding issue which requires systemic change. It will require VET funding to support women wishing to engage in what has historically been seen as 'non-traditional' career pathways, for example, through specific incentives to fund support programs so that providers can offer women specific programs.

A note on Higher Education

It is worth noting that what is often mentioned alongside the unequal enrolments in VET are the unequal enrolments in Higher Education – that more women than men enrol in higher education (university). However, this reality does not mean that it results in pay equity. The latest Graduate Outcomes Survey National Report tells us that "Female undergraduates continue to earn less than male undergraduates in 2019, $61,500 compared with $64,700 respectively, a difference of $3,200. This equates to a gender pay gap of 4.9 per cent, increasing slightly from 4.8 per cent in 2018." The gender pay gap of graduate salaries is even more marked – women who graduate with postgraduate coursework degrees are reported to be $13,700.00 (14.4%) worse off than their male peers. The pay gap has persisted since 2009.[35]

With many in the Victorian TAFE network being dual sector providers it is important for this shared inequality to be acknowledged.

Gender segregation in skills development

Gender disparity in education is well documented. It is particularly discussed in relation to gender equality in secondary schools and higher education where, women and girl's participation in STEM subjects is readily discussed. This submission has already suggested that VET system policies can perpetuate this gendered approach to VET engagement through its positioning of career pathways, and the impact of this can be readily seen in enrolment data.

> This submission highlights the often-overlooked gender inequity in VET specifically with regard to gendered enrolments

[33] Victorian Department of Education and Training *Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration Inquiry into gender segregation in the workplace and its economic impact on women's economic equality,* February 2017

[34] Victorian Government *Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy, 2020* p. 11

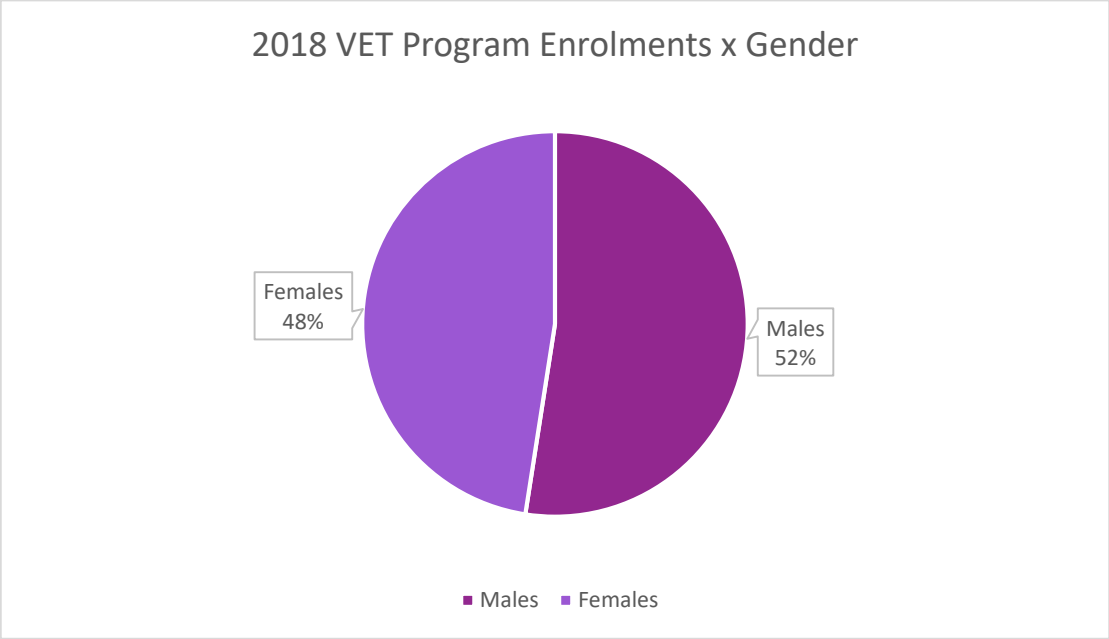
[35] Australian Government, Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching Graduate outcomes Survey October 2019

in VET. We further highlight that this entrenched gender-disaggregated participation in training mirrors the recognised labour market gender segregation.

According to 2018 NCVER data on student outcomes:

- Women are less likely than men to be not employed before training but employed after (men 50.4% and women 46.9%). For TAFE specifically, this figure is 46.5% for men and 40.8% for women.[36]
- Women are also less likely to report an improved employment status after training (61.3% for men and 56.9% for women). For TAFE specifically this is 61.2% for men and 52.9% for women).[37]
- There is a marked gender difference in the annual median incomes for graduates employed in their first full time job after training with men paid $49 400 and women $41 000. [38]

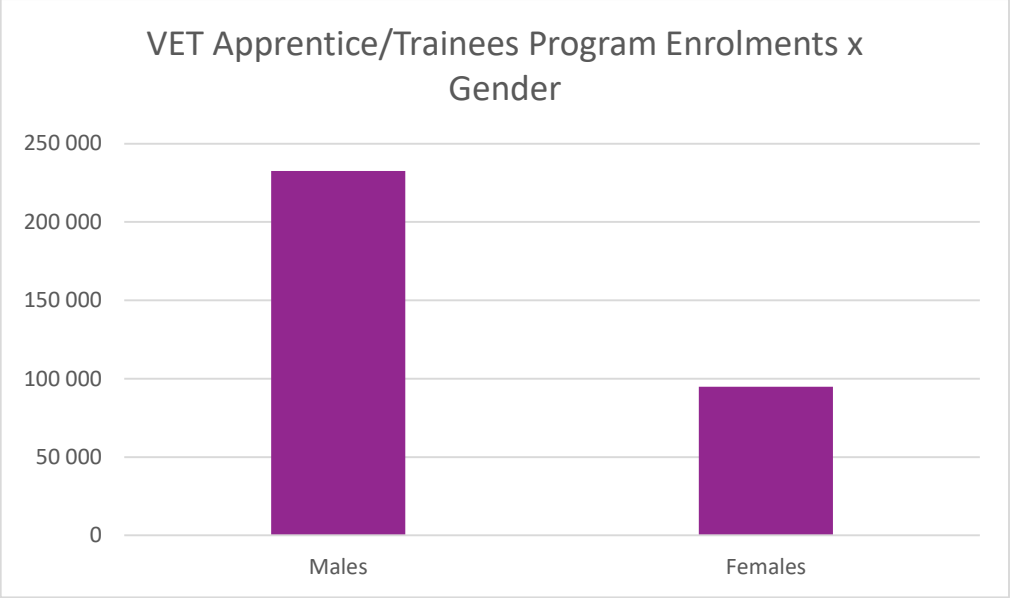
We know that more males than females enrol in VET across Australia.



NCVER , Data Slicer TVA Students and Courses 2018 – Gender x Total Program Enrolments

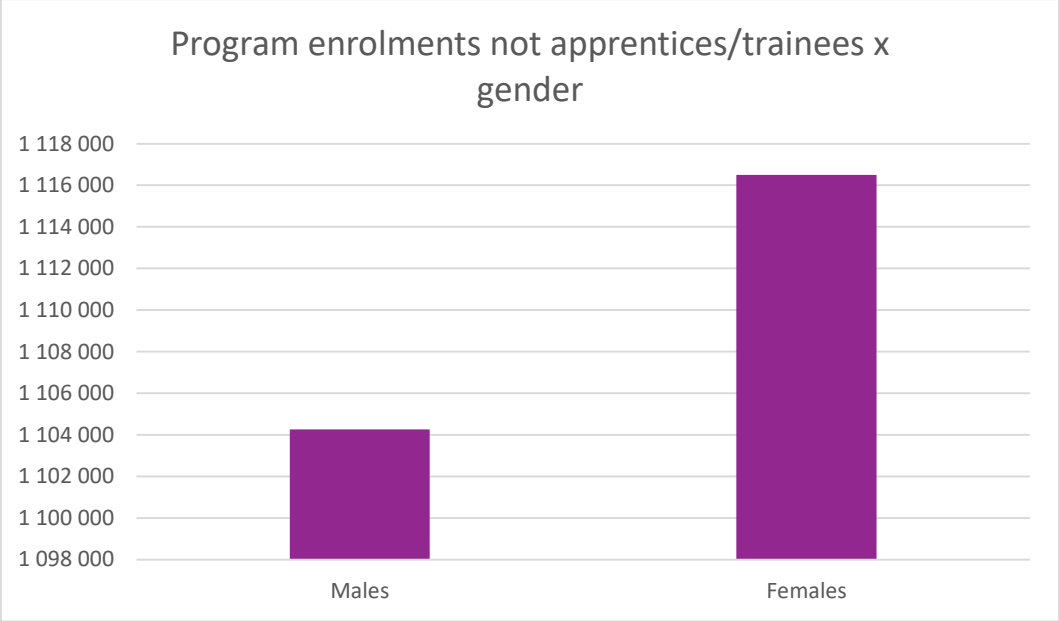
We also know that more males than females enrol in apprentice/traineeship programs

[36] NCVER (2018, December 6). VET student outcomes 2018: data slicer. Retrieved 22 January, 2019, from https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/all-data/vet-student-outcomes-2018-data-slicer
[37] NCVER (2018, December 6). VET student outcomes 2018: data slicer. Retrieved 22 January, 2019, from https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/all-data/vet-student-outcomes-2018-data-slicer
[38] NCVER (2015). Women in vocational education and training: participation and outcomes. Document prepared by NCVER for the Women in Adult and Vocational Education 2015 National Conference.



NCVER , Data Slicer TVA Students and Courses 2018 – Gender x VET Apprentice/Trainee Program enrolments

Yet more females than males enrol in VET programs not linked to an apprentice/trainee

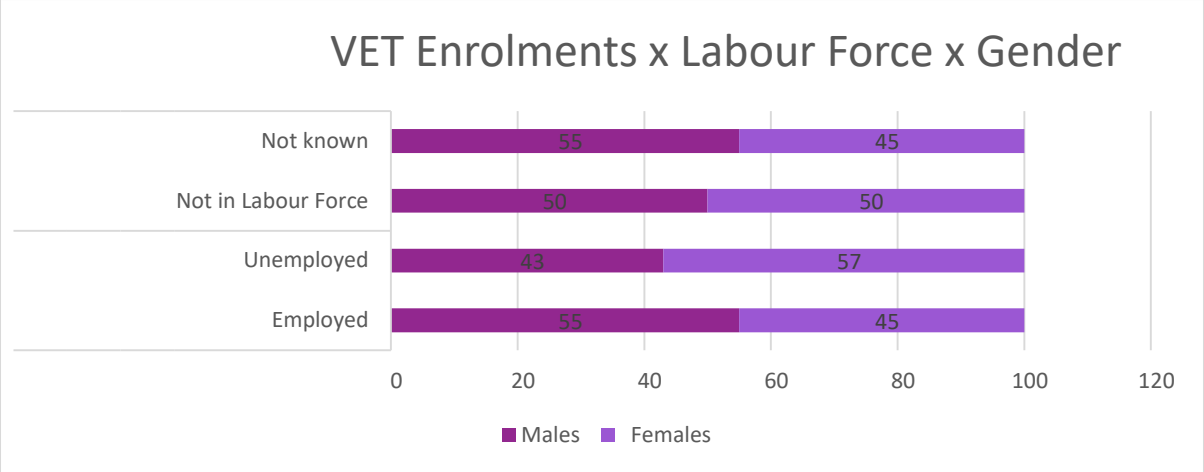


NCVER, Data Slicer TVA Students and Courses 2018 – Gender x program enrolments *not* apprentice/trainees

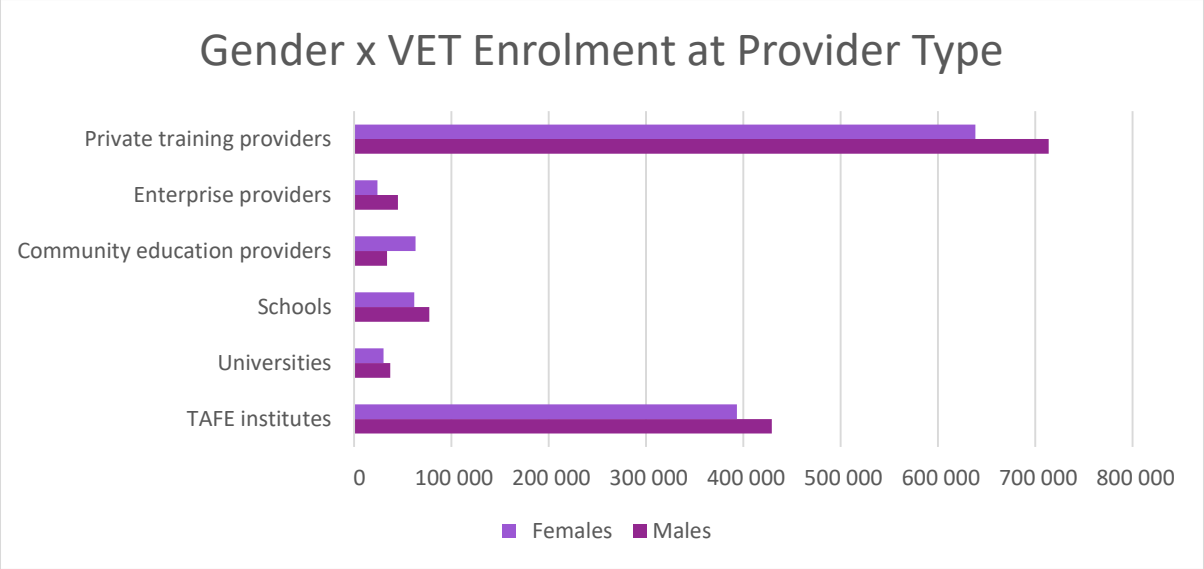
In addition to this around 47% of women in 2018 enrolled in training package qualifications, 53% of women enrolled in accredited qualifications and 54% in accredited courses across Australia. NCVER's 2018 analysis of government-funded students and courses tells us that in 2018 50.8% of students were males and 49% were females.[39]

Depending upon labour force type we also know that more women than men who are employed will participate in VET, whereas more men than women will participate in VET if they are unemployed with those not in the labour force equal participation.

[39] NCVER, Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics, Government Funded students and courses 2018 https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/government-funded-students-and-courses-2018



Further there is evidence based on 2018 participation and enrolment data that more women prefer to learn vocational skills outside of the public provider with higher participation rates in community education providers. Overall though, there is less participation in education (VET) by women than men across all provider types.



NCVER , Data Slicer TVA Students and Courses 2018 – Gender x VET Enrolment at Provider Type

Further to this 2019 analysis by NCVER on dynamics of qualifications showed that skilled pathways were gendered – the analysis somewhat wistfully concludes that "Even if an occupation is dominated by one gender or the other, the distribution of qualifications between each gender is usually similar". We however would highlight how the entrenched inequities in our labour market and subsequent problems for our society, are reflected in our VET participation rates. For the reference of the review, we again highlight the key industry priority areas noting the significant number of women participating in VET in these sectors.

Distribution of gender with each qualification group within the 20 largest occupations (ANZSCO 4-digit), 2006 and 2016[40]

[40] Lisel O'Dwyer and Ian White, *The Dynamics of qualifications: implications for VET* NCVER 2019 https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/the-dynamics-of-qualifications-implications-for-vet

This submission wishes to highlight the following points:

- There is gender segregation in skills development systems themselves. Labour market segregation is reflected in vocational pathways – gender inequality is evident in education and training
- While attention on gender and education has been focused on girls and women's participation in science technology and mathematics education in secondary schools and higher education – it is missing from VET.
- Women are disadvantaged by current traineeship and apprenticeship policies. A gender analysis should be made to remove barriers to women enrolling in all VET pathways and ensuring positive strategies.
- A gender lens needs to be applied to the participation levels in different provider types of VET – for instance, how can we ensure the environment provided in Adult Community Education (ACE) settings that benefits women, is also available in TAFE.

Gender and Pedagogy

Often conversations and narratives around gender and pedagogy (with regard to women) are centred around increasing the stream of women into STEM learning and job roles. Further, the evidence of the value of education of women is internationally proven – returns to community, society and economy are well established when sovereign nations invest in the education of women.

In 2019 as part of a major project to develop an accredited course in Gender Equity, the *Gender Equity Accredited Training* Project, led by Women's Health Victoria, commissioned Monash University to research the pedagogical approaches required to deliver the said course in gender equity. The course was thought so new, that trainer competency would need to be developed further to deliver this new course to a broad audience. [41] More particularly, the report sought to develop a framework for building skills in gender equity that seeks to transform practice and values. The research recognised that there are limitations to the current approaches to VET in order to use VET to deliver skills in gender equity:

> *To achieve this within the current vocational education and training context, the report provides a brief background to the evolution of competency-based education in Vocational Education and Training in Australia so that the spaces for this rich*

[41] Clemans A, Subban P, Gleeson J, Komarzynski L (2019) Supporting gender equity education: a research project to inform gender equity units of competency. Women's Health Victoria. Melbourne. *(Gender Equity Accredited Training Project Research Paper)*

> *understanding can be effectively located. This means* ***it identifies where, according to previous research, limitations to achieving this richer understanding may lie and where there are areas that offer potential****.* [42]

The research found that Australia's predominant model of education practice in VET is – "focused on technical specific and generic skills. Gender equity relies on educational approaches that seek to transform learners understanding… ".

The new teaching model was developed on the basis that vocational education of gender equality requires more educators with the ability to adapt to complex situations and tasks and requires educators to act with reflection and "to shift from performing habitually or subconsciously to being alert and aware to.. practice different behaviours or be open to transforming perspectives and behaviours". The research emphasises the role of critical reflection as a core part of transformational practice.

The findings from this research into the pedagogical implications of gender equity force us to raise the reality of the transformational nature of gender equality in VET.

> Research supports that the practice of educating others on gender equity requires that more VET educators change their education practice from functional to transformational pedagogy, therefore this submission proposes that the creation of a gender equitable Victorian VET system will similarly require the same transformation practice – across systems, culture and practices as well as structures.

Gender and Teaching Practice

Great educators know that different people have different learning styles. The same research from Monash University and the Gender Equity Accredited Training Project puts forward the evidence around preferred learning styles that tend to be aligned to women. "There are suggestions that women possess a preference for subjective and affective methods, with others intimating that women opt for learning in a relational context"[43] Again research around the benefits of VET programs designed for women, has highlighted these preferred learning styles and opportunities.

The work also notes the evidence suggesting greater completion rates of female students participating in online education, compared to men noting that "would appear that the reflective nature of online learning acts as a better facilitator for female participants, as they believe they can manage the learning experience better" [44] Such suggestions tend to mirror evidence about preferred learning styles in boys/men whereby pedagogical research suggests that transitional classroom environments are contrary to the learning needs of girls.

While this submission will not go into the specifics and details of this debate, we only note that the following is worthy of consideration if the key driver for inequity, gender, is going to be addressed through a revitalised Victorian VET system. Educator capability and capacity is key in this.

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[42] ibid

[43] Hayes, E. (2001). A new look at women's learning. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 89, 35-42. in Clemans A, Subban P, Gleeson J, Komarzynski L (2019)

[44] Anderson, D. M., & Haddad, C. J. (2005). Gender, voice, and learning in online course environments. Journal of Asynchronous Learning Network, 9(1), 3-14. in Clemans A, Subban P, Gleeson J, Komarzynski L (2019)

A recent piece of research undertaken by Sally Thompson, may provide some insight into some barriers that educators are faced with. The research focuses on a case study of a team of VET teachers, researchers and users of social services to develop a better qualification in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry. The research[45] articulates that:

- The experience of adapting and structuring learning to meet the needs of students is, while technically possibly, unrealistic given cost, regulatory and other practical barriers
- There is evidence, that, for low-paid workers, financial return on VET is limited or non-existent – "*training often made life harder for low paid workers by consuming time and money while raising unrealised expectations, particularly if that training 'merely "ticks the box is not associated with genuine learning; is of poor quality; is not integrated into work processes; and creates new money and time strains, without generating rewards, in terms of new skills or better pay or prospects'* [46]
- There is a disconnect between the stated flexibility of training packages and the actual flexibility to customise learning to meet student needs

In summary, the "rigidity and complexity" of current structures in VET policy (Training packages and regulatory regimes are named) "restrict teaching and assessment to narrow atomised, repetitive components". Further Thompson concludes that:

> *The case study also highlights the illusion of choice and flexibility of training package qualifications.. (and) that choices are limited by available funding, an administratively burdensome regulatory approach and by the complexity of the packages themselves.*[47]

While this submission does not seek to challenge the role of Training Packages, nor the value of nationally recognised qualification, what Thompson does highlight, that requires consideration by The Review, is ***the effort required to customise and meet student needs and create VET programs that will lead to sustained economic participation*.** Current discussion in the VET sector has however reinforced the need for many VET qualifications to be developed to meet local industry and community needs, and the diverse requirements of students.

This submission wishes to highlight that within the current Victorian VET system, internal advocacy by teachers and students is still required to address inequality, and in particular gender inequality for students. Furthermore, that current funding models supporting VET delivery need to be reviewed to enable both the student and the workplace expectations to be met, and not just meet the training package rules for VET, to result in sustainable work outcomes for graduates.

[45] Sally Thompson *A Vocational stream for social care workers: A case study* Australian Journal of Adult Learning Vol 60, Number 1 April 2020

[46] Pocock, B., Skinner, N., McMahon, C., & Pritchard, S. (2011). *Work, Life and VET Participation amongst Lower-Paid Workers*. NCVER Monograph Series 05/2011: ERIC.in Thompson, April 2020

[47] Thompson S April 2020

Gender Equality within VET as a Workplace

Finally, it is important to highlight that the VET sector itself is still working towards becoming a gender equal workplace.

WGEA data tells us that within the category of Adult, Community and Other Education in 2019[48]:

- 34% of Directors and 21% of Board Chairs are women
- 33% of CEOs/Head of Business are females – positively 53% of key management personnel are women an increase of some 13% of previous years
- 81% of clerical staff are women, 67% of community and personal care wand women but 7% of machinery operators, drivers are women and 9.3% of Technicians and trade workers within Adult Community and Other education are women
- The gender pay gap (overall) is at -19% across all roles (base salary) with 31% of employers in the sector having a policy/strategy on remuneration containing specific gender pay equity objectives
- Interestingly, 80% of employers however report that they have an overall gender equality policy or strategy

The Victorian Department of Education and Training can play a large part in moving the VET sector towards becoming a gender equal workplace through policy applications supporting funded and public provision of VET.

> It is our belief that applying a gender lens and creating gender equity within the Victorian VET system starts with the workforce of VET in Victoria. The incoming Gender Equality Act offers the perfect opportunity to address these inequities in the workforce.

We look forward to the implementation of the Gender Equality Act and its regulations in full under the direction of the Office for Women and the Gender Equality Commissioner. We hope that the Act is not simply applied as a compliance exercise, but rather, in the spirit of the Gender Equality Principles that the Act names – that it is about creating long lasting sustainable equity for the benefit of all Victorians.

[48] https://data.wgea.gov.au/industries/104#summary_content Adult, Community and Other Education has 12,762 employees within 35 organisations* of any size

Recommendations

Women are important to our economy.

Women are entering the workforce in record numbers. Women currently comprise 47.4% of all employed persons in Australia and are 37.7% of all full-time employees and 68.2% of all part-time employees. The current COVID-19 pandemic notwithstanding, in Victoria women's employment to population ratio is at 63.1% (with men at 68.1)[49].

While women's entry into the workforce is one of the greatest shifts in the last 30 years, women continue to be disadvantaged and segregated in both industry and sectors, and in the education settings.

If we are to address segregation and create prosperity, we must create a gender equal Victorian VET system – we must address the systems, structures, attitudes and norms that drive gender inequality and utilise the forthcoming implementation of the Gender Equality Act to help Victoria's VET providers to do this.

Our recommendations in light of our submission are that the Victorian Department of Education and Training, in reviewing the Victorian VET system reflect against two strategic prisms within which gender equality reform will be needed – for students and community and across the VET sector itself.

I. For students and community.

That an intersectional gender lens, informed by consultation that engages the diversity of all women, be applied to VET policy to ensure VET delivery and the systems around it, deliver equality for all, socially and economically. Specifically, we recommend that the participation of women across VET needs to be further investigated to inform committed action for change, this should include:

a. Investigating why labour market segregation is reflected in VET enrolments and identifying what the role of the VET sector is to address this issue. This may include addressing what additional incentives and support mechanisms are required to attract and retain women in VET.

b. Identifying what barriers and enablers to women's participation exist in VET qualifications and programs including traineeships and apprenticeships and what can be done to address the barriers and replicate enablers across the VET sector. (For instance, funding to support contextualisation of training package qualifications, or skills sets to enable work opportunities.)

c. Identifying why women face greater barriers to participation in VET specifically as it relates to the application of VET funding models and policy that impact women's engagement and completion (retention rates), examine and break down these barriers which are a particular issue for unemployed and underemployed women and identify ways to address these barriers and improve women's participation in VET.

Note: these issues have currently been exacerbated due to COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the economy, society and labour markets, and we recognise that this impact may continue for some time into the future, this recommendation therefore speaks to the importance for VET reform to address women's participation as part of the COVID-19 recovery as a priority.

[49] ABS 6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, Nov 2019 Labour force status by Sex (Victoria)

d. Understanding the way in which learning environments can present barriers or enablers to women's participation in VET noting higher levels of participation of women than men in Adult Community Education (ACE) settings and identify solutions to address this imbalance. Targeted approaches and funding should be applied for specific industry areas such as increasing equity in construction and trade. These industries that require targeted gender equity strategies and programs to address existing barriers to women's participation. Whole of government approaches to embed this reform could include government to use their purchasing infrastructure programs to encourage equitable employment practices in industry.

e. Identifying how VET policy (including funding) can be improved to ensure funded training providers hold workforce expertise, facilities and services that are appropriate for the provision of gender equitable VET with structures and practices that support gender equality in the workplace and uphold the principles of the Victorian Gender Equality Act VET policy can be improved to ensure providers hold workforce expertise, facilities and services that are appropriate for the provision of gender equitable VET. Change requires us to create structures and practices that support gender equality in the workplace and uphold the principles of the Victorian Gender Equality Act. Appropriate levels of funding is needed to achieve the transformational change required.

II. For the Victorian VET system.

Appoint a Gender Equality Advisor that can work across the Victorian VET system with the newly appointed Commissioner for Gender Equality, and is empowered to advocate and support the implementation of the Gender Equality Act through the Victorian TAFE network, and the Victorian VET system as a whole – its staff, leaders and students. This should include:

a. Development of a strategic framework for women in VET with a clear set of priorities and targets with performance accountability mechanisms for VET that aligns with the Victorian Government's gender equity and prevention of violence policies and considers the changing workforce needs in a post-COVID-19 environment.

b. Building the capacity of government funded VET providers to address the gender impact of skills development and the benefits of equitable approaches to promoting and building skills across communities. This could include maintaining and expanding the current Prevention of Family Violence Officers already in some public providers, and making them Gender Equity Change Leads, to work with the proposed Advisor to support cultural change. TAFE would take a leadership position modelling gender equitable education and training practices supported by the requirements and expectations of the Gender Equality Act

c. Build capacity of government funded training providers by supporting workforce capacity building of gender equity knowledge and skills, for example, through funding accredited gender equity training for the workforce. Work with existing organisations proficient and skilled in gender equity (such as Women's Health Services) to provider systemic support for gender equity change across VET.

d. Apply and tailor implementation of the Gender Equality Act to the Victorian TAFE Network in a way that embraces the provider's role to create equity both within its workforce and in the communities they serve. Establish formal partnerships between the TAFE and Women's Health Services to build capacity and capability of all TAFEs to implement the Gender Equity Act, undertake transformational change, and create specific strategies to build greater

equity in course offerings and student recruitment and retention. Implement gender equality/equity targets that will evidence the transformative change required e.g. targets for gender equity in local skills priorities, including monitoring the promotion and accessibility of VET programs so that all girls and women can fully engage with VET. This will necessitate Government's recognition of the role of VET providers in supporting gender equality and social inclusion across Victoria, and ensuring that they are appropriately funded to do so

e. Evaluate the outcomes from VET public policy from an equity perspective, including use of gender-disaggregated data. Collect, analyse and publish performance and outcome data on women's participation in VET, that include trends over time that are disaggregated by gender, and what steps have been taken to address shortcomings.