

**JUNE
2021**

RESPECT AND EQUALITY IN TAFE

**Building a TAFE environment that
promotes gender equality and respect**

VICTORIAN GUIDE

**Our
WATCH**
End violence against
Women And Their Children

Acknowledgements

Five TAFEs participated in the Respect and Equality in TAFE pilot:

- Chisholm Institute
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- Melbourne Polytechnic
- Bendigo Kangan Institute
- SuniTAFE.

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TAFEs and dual sector institutions with legal obligations, including under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) and Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth), should refer directly to that legislation and its associated resources to ensure they are meeting these obligations.

Our Watch acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



Acknowledgement of Country

Our Watch acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present.

This guide includes an overview of:

- the role of TAFE in preventing violence against women
- a whole-of-TAFE approach to preventing violence against women
- where to start your prevention work
- where to focus your work
- how to implement a whole-of-TAFE approach
- tools and resources to support implementation.

Contents

Part 1

Understanding violence against women	6
What we currently know about violence against women	7
Violence is preventable	7
Multiple forms of inequality contribute to violence against women	11
What does this mean for the prevention of violence against women?	12
Engaging men and boys in this work	12
Gender equality benefits TAFE and the community	13
Getting started	15
Securing leadership commitment	15
Appointing a gender equality lead	16
Applying a whole-of-institution approach	16
Ensuring the safety of staff and students	17
Increasing staff understanding of the prevention of violence against women	19
A whole-of-TAFE approach to prevent violence against women	20
Bringing it all together	27

Part 2

Implementing Respect and Equality in TAFE	29
Meeting your obligations under the law	32
Alignment to the Gender Equality Act 2020	32
Eight steps for implementation	35
Step 1. Connect and align	35
Step 2. Gather information	36
Step 3. Complete the self-assessment	41
Step 4. Develop an action plan	43
Step 5. Develop your monitoring plan	46
Step 6. Establish partnerships	47
Step 7. Implement your action plan	49
Step 8. Monitor and review action plans	50
Tools and resources	51
Glossary	53
Endnotes	56

TAFE is key to Victoria’s social and economic success. As such, TAFE has a vital role to play in creating a society which is respectful, equitable and free from violence.

This guide outlines the Respect and Equality in TAFE approach, which supports TAFEs to build environments where staff and students feel safe, respected and valued.

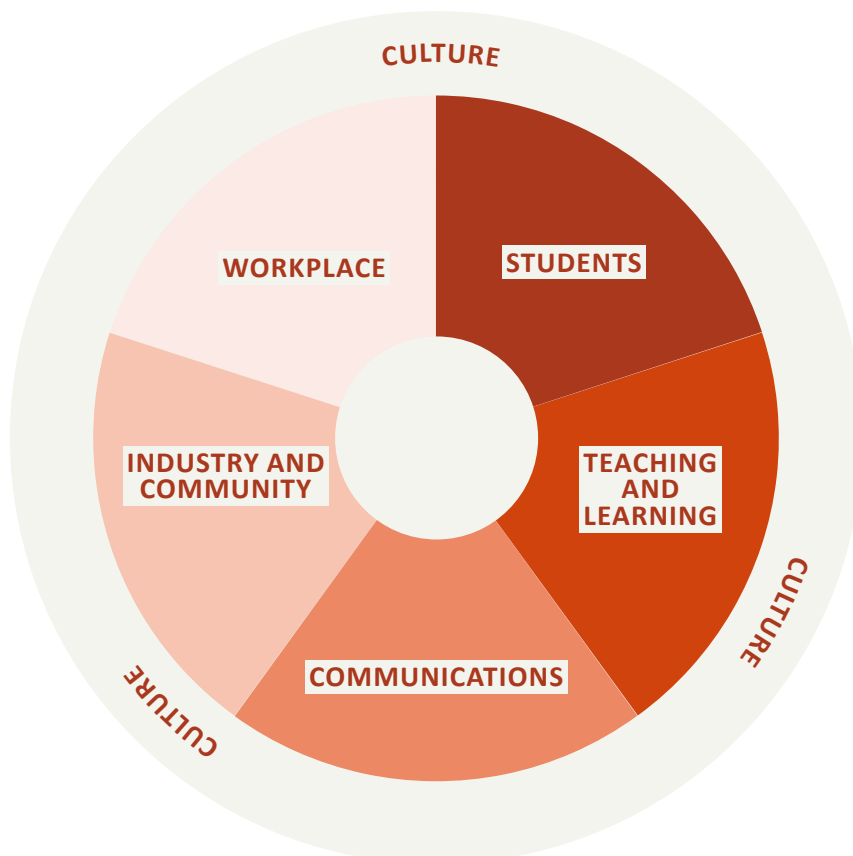
Research and evidence tell us that violence against women can be reduced by increasing gender equality in everyday life.¹ By engaging with the Respect and Equality in TAFE approach, your TAFE can help prevent violence against women by actively promoting and modelling gender equality.

This guide recognises that everyone at TAFE has a role to play in promoting gender equality, from boards, CEOs and senior executives, to managers, Human Resources staff, educators, Student Services and students, and industry and community partners.

It has been designed to support the staff or departments who are assigned to lead respect and equality work.

The Respect and Equality in TAFE approach has been divided into five key domains: **workplace, students, teaching and learning, communications, and industry and community.** Taking action in each of the domains can support TAFEs to build a **culture** of respect and equality across the entire institution.

BELOW: The five key domains of the Respect and Equality in TAFE approach.



PART 1

**Understanding violence
against women**

What we currently know about violence against women

Violence is preventable

Violence against women in Australia is a national epidemic. One in three women have experienced physical violence² and on average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner.³ However, it is not an inevitable or intractable social problem. Rather, it is the product of complex yet modifiable social and environmental factors. Put simply, violence against women is preventable.

Preventing violence against women involves more than just changing people's minds. It's about changing the society and culture in which individuals develop attitudes and behaviours related to gender, power and violence.

International and Australian research clearly demonstrates that violence against women is driven by gender inequality.⁴ The four expressions of gender inequality (see following page), called 'gendered drivers', increase the likelihood of violence against women occurring. To stop violence against women, we need to take action on each of these drivers.

By challenging all four gendered drivers, we can improve gender equality in all elements of everyday life and prevent violence against women.

In times of crisis, women are often disproportionately affected, including an increased burden of unpaid work and reductions to their economic security. Crises can have long-lasting impacts on gender equality and can threaten to reverse the gains that have been made to address this issue in Australia. Gender equality is crucial to the strength of economic and social recovery from COVID-19.⁵

In Australia, on average one woman is killed by her partner or ex-partner every week.

GENDERED DRIVERS

OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1. **Condoning** of violence against women
2. **Men's control** of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships
3. **Rigid gender roles** and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
4. Male peer relations that emphasise **aggression and disrespect** towards women



ESSENTIAL ACTIONS

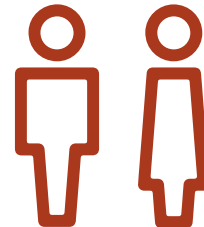
TO REDUCE THE GENDERED DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1. **Challenge** condoning of violence against women
2. **Promote** women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships
3. **Foster** positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles
4. **Strengthen** positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys
5. **Promote and normalise** gender equality in public and private life

Gender inequality sets the necessary social context for violence against women to occur.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN AUSTRALIA

WHERE WE
ARE NOW



Despite progress in recent years, education institutions and workplaces can still be sites of inequality.

85% of Australian women over the age of 15 have been sexually harassed at some point in their lives.⁶

The average weekly wage for a woman is **17.2%** less than for a man.⁷

Women represent only **2%** of qualified trade workers, but comprise almost half of all employed persons in the labour force in Australia.⁸

Gender stereotypes as well as industrial and economic barriers inhibit the entry of women into male-dominated VET courses and jobs.⁹

Male-dominated trades are generally **higher paid** than the female-dominated trades and can offer opportunities for enhanced economic security for women.¹⁰

A VISION FOR RESPECT AND EQUALITY IN TAFE

WHERE WE
WANT TO BE

Across our society, if we all work together, as educators, as employers and as a community, we can change this picture of gender inequality in Australia and stop violence against women before it starts. In achieving the vision of an Australia free from violence, every TAFE has a role to play.

Vision

TAFEs are future-focused in the delivery of value to students, industry and government and actively support gender equality in Australia by ensuring equality of opportunity in vocational education and employment.

Objective

Transforming business as usual to ensure gender equitable, safe and respectful TAFE communities.

Long-term goals

TAFEs enable gender equality in first- and second-chance education over the life course.

TAFEs are vocational educators and employers of choice for women, men and gender diverse people.

TAFEs' ability to eliminate discrimination, sexism, racism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, harassment and violence against women is strengthened.

TAFE campuses are safe places where students and staff are treated with respect.

Multiple forms of inequality contribute to violence against women

This guide aims to address the drivers of all violence against women, including family violence, sexual assault, workplace harassment and street harassment. It also recognises that violence is experienced by people whose identity does not conform to binary definitions of sex and gender and therefore covers violence experienced by the lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer and intersex communities.

People experience different forms of power, privilege and oppression, based on their identity and social status.

Women do not only experience sexism. Women may also experience racism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, colonialism, ageism and more.

These multiple forms of discrimination interact and intersect, so there are not only inequalities between women, men and gender diverse people, but also inequalities between groups of women, men and gender diverse people.

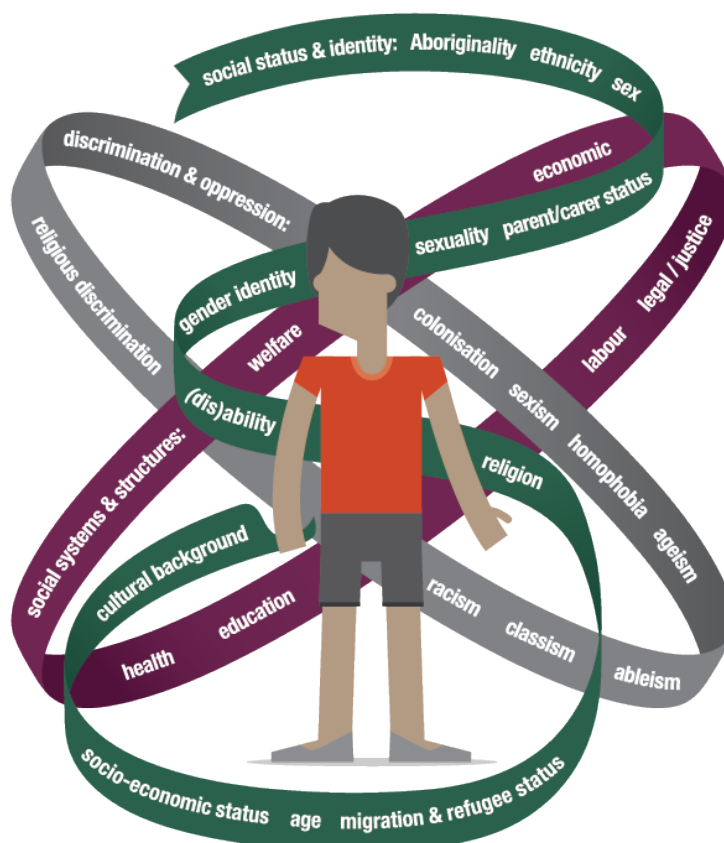
Power, privilege and oppression are reinforced by social systems and structures such as health, education, welfare and legal systems.

Gender inequality is a necessary condition for violence against women to occur and to be so prevalent. But it is not the only, or the most prominent, factor to influence violence in every context.

BELOW: Systems and structures of oppression and discrimination can affect people differently.

RESOURCES

- [Changing the picture:](#) A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children (Our Watch resource)
- [Putting the prevention of violence against women into practice: How to Change the story](#) (Our Watch resource)



What does this mean for the prevention of violence against women?

The gendered drivers of violence against women are often experienced in combination with other forms of structural inequality and discrimination. This helps explain why there are different rates and types of violence experienced by different groups of women. Women who face multiple forms of discrimination and oppression may experience violence more frequently, or of greater severity.

Through the implementation of the Respect and Equality in TAFE approach there are opportunities to consider and address:

- other forms of inequality and discrimination that can intersect with gender inequality to exacerbate violence;
- the need to partner with community organisations to ensure you have the specialist knowledge and advice you need to do prevention work effectively;
- the attitudes, behaviours and systems that drive other forms of inequality so that we can create gender equality for all; and
- how to deal with resistance and backlash.

Engaging men and boys in this work

The drivers of violence impact everyone, no matter your gender. Men are negatively impacted by the gendered drivers of violence, with research and evidence demonstrating dominant patterns of masculinity have been found to produce:

- negative health and wellbeing outcomes for men, including suicide and depression;
- poor mechanisms for coping and for seeking help; and
- more frequent involvement in incidents of violence and bullying.¹¹

It is important to note that not all men experience power and privilege in the same way. Men too experience intersecting forms of oppression such as ableism, colonialism, racism and homophobia. The way you engage with men and boys should take this into consideration. We also know that men who are negatively impacted by other systems and structures of discrimination and disadvantage suffer disproportionate negative impacts to their health and wellbeing compared to other men.¹²

The Respect and Equality in TAFE approach demonstrates opportunities for male staff and students to increase their awareness and knowledge about how they can actively promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. There are things all men can do to end the culture of violence against women.

Through the delivery of apprenticeships, TAFEs are ideally placed to address some of the drivers of violence against women at an educational and industry level (TAFEs deliver around 70% of all apprenticeships). Many trades, STEM and IT industries are male-dominated or do not traditionally feature women in leadership positions. Many nursing, aged care and child care industries are female-dominated. Such historical gender divisions in industries will need to break down if future industry needs are to be met.¹³

TAFEs have a chance to build cultures where gender stereotypes are challenged, sexism and discrimination is not tolerated, and gender equality is promoted and modelled. In this way, our workplaces and educational settings become safer, we have more skilled workers for the community and employers, skill shortages can be addressed, and economies will be supported by businesses that reflect the community that they service.

Gender equality benefits TAFE and the community

Gender equality delivers positive outcomes for students, teachers, the TAFE community and TAFE business. We know that we have better outcomes for employees, potential and future workers, local industry and the broader economy when we have a safe community.¹⁴ There are strong business and social reasons to prevent violence against women and promote gender equality.¹⁵

This guide outlines planned and coordinated actions that require TAFEs to make a commitment of time, skills and resources. The return on this investment includes many benefits:

Individual and relationship

- Staff and students' performance is enhanced by working and learning in environments where they feel safe, respected and valued.
- Staff and students experience improved health, wellbeing and economic results if they are safe in their relationships.

Organisational and community

- Being an employer and learning institution of choice influences the recruitment and retention of staff and students. 'Workplace policies that support gender equality are a crucial tool for attracting and retaining talented employees. High-performing employees are attracted to companies that have a positive reputation for promoting gender equality.'¹⁶
- Requirements under federal and/or state laws to promote workplace gender equality and alignments, such as in the Victorian Gender Equality Act, are adhered to.

System and institutional

- Meeting the growing demand across industries for workers who have a strong understanding of gender equitable work practices meets legal and ethical obligations.
- It also helps to transform the highly gender-segregated workforce, thereby attracting more females into male-dominated industries and occupations and more males into female-dominated industries and occupations.

Societal

- Women and men experience equal employment opportunities across the wide range of professions and industries that TAFEs feed into, which contributes to closing the gender pay gap.
- Women and girls being safe and having their human rights respected in TAFE contributes to a Victoria free of violence against women where women are respected, valued and treated as equals.

Economics

- It will address the cost to the economy of violence against women, which in 2014—15 is calculated to be \$21.7 billion — this includes the cost of pain, suffering and premature mortality.
- Reducing violence against women is anticipated to result in a benefit of \$18 million to \$36 million over 10 years, and over a lifetime a potential gain of \$35.6 to \$71.1 million to the economy.¹⁷
- Reducing violence against women through the promotion of gender equality is associated with improved national productivity and growth and future proofing the economy.¹⁸

Employers

- Gender equitable organisations save money and increase profits. Gender and cultural diversity are correlated with profitability.¹⁹
- There is a positive impact on occupational health and safety as diversifying the workplace and addressing poor behaviours that are encouraged by gender stereotypes can lead to safer workplaces.²⁰
- For employers, reducing violence against women through gender equality will increase organisational performance, enhance the company's capacity to attract talent and retain employees, and enhance the reputation of their business.²¹

Taking a planned approach to preventing violence against women by promoting gender equality will assist TAFE to:

- add value to the experience and learning of students
- support and provide a better employment environment for staff
- provide evidence for TAFE to meet regulatory obligations
- position Victorian TAFE to be leaders in meeting changing market demand and providing positive learning environments
- enable TAFE boards and executive teams to effectively plan for better use of resources to better meet the needs of employers, students and the community.

Getting started

While no two organisations' journey regarding gender equality will look identical, there are some things each and every organisation should consider prior to jumping into action, to ensure you set your organisation up for the best outcomes possible.

The characteristics listed below provide the foundations any TAFE engaging in organisational change to promote gender equality should have in place. Securing these foundational pieces is key to setting your TAFE up for success, as it can streamline actions and minimise resistance, and prioritises safety.

The essential foundations to work on before you start implementing the Respect and Equality in TAFE approach include:

- securing commitment from leadership
- appointing a gender equality lead
- understanding a whole-of-institution approach across the five domains
- establishing policies and practices to prioritise the safety of staff and students
- increasing key staff's understanding of violence against women.

Securing leadership commitment

The success of the Respect and Equality in TAFE approach relies on formal support from TAFE leadership, including the CEO, board, senior executives and other members of the executive team. A commitment from the CEO and leadership provides legitimacy to the work, encouraging buy-in from staff and students, which can enhance participation in activities and minimise resistance. For leaders to support the use of time, energy and resources to achieve equality and respect in their TAFE, they need time to reflect on their own perspectives and possible biases, explore new ways of thinking, and consider how things like gender targets or new policies could impact the business or organisation. Therefore, it is worth investing time to secure genuine senior leadership commitment.

RESOURCES

- [Respect and Equality in TAFE Key messages](#) (Our Watch resource)
- [Family violence commitment statement](#) (City of Port Phillip resource)
- [Respect and responsibility: Statement of intent](#) (AFL resource)
- [Engaging leaders and securing commitment](#) (Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect webpage)
- [How it might look in my workplace](#) (Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect webpage)

Appointing a gender equality lead

Identifying and appointing an individual or department to take the lead on Respect and Equality in TAFE, with support and resourcing from leadership to coordinate the work, is critical. This individual or department is referred to as the gender equality lead in this guide. The gender equality lead provides oversight of the implementation of the approach, coordinates actions across the TAFE, holds the vision for gender equality, and communicates how to get there.

But one person or department cannot do it alone. The gender equality lead will need to work closely with staff across the five domains. The gender equality lead will oversee and support each domain to undertake various activities and will lead some components of the work. With guidance and support from the gender equality lead and authorisation from the executive, allocation of work across domains creates ownership, responsibility, accountability and impact.

It is imperative that the team and individuals who lead the work have sufficient time and resources to enable them to carry out the activities. Without sufficient time or resources to conduct activities, the initiatives may not reach as many staff as desired, or may not be as impactful.

RESOURCES

- Respect and Equality in TAFE domains - [see page 20](#)

Other whole-of-institution models in learning environments:

- [A whole-of-school approach](#) (Our Watch respectful relationships education webpage)
- [Respectful Relationships](#) (Victorian Government webpage)
- [Change the story at your university](#) (Our Watch *Educating for Equality* webpage)

Applying a whole-of-institution approach

Respect and Equality in TAFE takes a whole-of-TAFE approach to preventing violence against women, because evidence tells us that we need to work across all areas of an institution to make lasting change. Complex issues such as violence against women cannot be addressed with one activity. All efforts undertaken by TAFEs need to sit within a broader, institution-wide strategy that addresses the drivers of violence against women. This whole-of-TAFE approach is not intended to replace or duplicate existing work. Rather, it aims to:

- draw together the entire TAFE community in a joint commitment to the prevention of violence against women
- support a primary prevention approach in TAFE that is holistic and underpinned by a long-term strategy and sector coordination
- highlight the role everyone within a TAFE has in creating a culture where gender stereotypes are challenged, gender-based discrimination is unacceptable, and gender equality is actively promoted and modelled
- provide practical tools and resources to support TAFEs.

Prior to implementation, it is helpful for the gender equality lead to have a good understanding of each of the five domains, and what challenging gender inequality looks like in each of the domains. Actions to challenge gender inequality in each of the domains are discussed further in the [section on a whole-of-TAFE approach](#) to preventing violence against women.

Assigning a lead or key contacts in each of the five domains is important to ensure there is someone who can support the gender equality lead in implementing actions and sourcing information.

Ensuring the safety of staff and students

For primary prevention activities to be delivered safely, appropriate response policies, procedures and services must be in place. Evidence shows that when we openly discuss and show that a workplace supports the prevention of violence against women, staff and students may feel safe to disclose their own experiences of violence. Therefore, response systems and referral pathways to family violence and sexual assault services must be established before action to prevent violence is undertaken.²² Some students will be under 18 years of age and TAFEs are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards.²³

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)²⁴ states that professionals across a broad range of services, organisations, professions and sectors have a shared responsibility for identifying, assessing and managing family violence risk, even where it may not be core business.²⁵

It is essential that TAFEs are respectful and safe environments for people who may be enduring or escaping violence. Not all TAFE staff are expected to become experts at responding to violence — but everyone has a role to play.

Key staff and educators should be trained in responding to disclosures.²⁶ These staff members need to be aware of how and where to refer students or colleagues who disclose being a victim or a perpetrator of violence. It is important that individuals are connected to the service system through referral to TAFE Student Services and/or local family violence and sexual assault services. If there has been a disclosure of someone using violence, they can be linked to the perpetrator intervention services.

Additionally, TAFEs need protocols in place to ensure that no student or employee faces a penalty for circumstances related to experiencing violence (for example, missing a deadline, absence from work, or needing to disclose that another staff member or student perpetrated violence towards them). TAFE processes and systems, such as complaints processes, mechanisms for handling misconduct, and Human Resources units, have a significant role in ensuring the safety of students and staff. Processes must be confidential, safe and timely. It is recommended that student-facing staff, Human Resources staff and counsellors consider completing [Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk 22510VIC](#). This course will look different across the different TAFE providers, so it will be essential to find the course that best meets the needs of your TAFE.

RESOURCES

For staff training:

- [Prevention and Response Training](#) (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria course)
- [Course in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk 22510VIC](#) (nationally recognised training course)
- [Effectively preventing and responding to sexual harassment: A quick guide](#) (Australian Human Rights Commission resource)
- [Practice guidance: Responding to disclosures](#) (Our Watch resource)

RESOURCES

Organisational focused resources:

- [MARAM practice guides and resources](#) (Victorian Government webpage)
- [Responsibility 1: respectful, sensitive and safe engagement](#) (Victorian Government resource)
- [Practice guidance: Workplace support for staff who experience family violence](#) (Our Watch resource)
- [Practice guidance: Workplace responses to staff who perpetrate violence](#) (Our Watch resource)
- [Practice guidance: Working in regional, rural and remote workplaces to prevent violence against women](#) (Our Watch resource)
- [Employees who use domestic & family violence: A workplace response](#) (Male Champions of Change resource)
- [Workplace family violence: Policy template](#) (North West Metropolitan Region Primary Care Partnerships resource)

Increasing staff understanding of the prevention of violence against women

As discussed on [page 7](#), violence against women is driven by gender inequality. While not every person in the organisation needs to have a thorough understanding of the drivers of violence against women and the reinforcing factors (outlined on [page 8](#)) it is important that key staff have this knowledge. This will allow those key staff to impart this information to fellow colleagues, build a shared understanding, lead actions that will challenge gender inequality, ensure actions are evidence-based and do no harm, and build your capacity internally, thus enhancing sustainability.

Professional development may be required for staff to deepen their knowledge of the prevention of violence against women. Organisations that specialise in the prevention of violence against women regularly host training sessions that would be beneficial for key staff to attend. Or these organisations may be able to deliver an internal training session for the Respect and Equality in TAFE Taskforce at a cost. Workshop materials can be found on the [Respect and Equality in TAFE website](#).

Our Watch has also developed a number of free, accessible evidenced-based resources that can support the gender equality leads to build their understanding of the issue, and gain insight into how organisations can effectively challenge gender inequality in their environment.

TRAINING

Non-accredited training:

- [Prevention and Response Training](#) (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria course)
- [Introduction to Preventing Violence Against Women](#) (GenVic eLearning module)
- [Gender Equity Microcredentials](#) (Women's Health Victoria online course)
- [Pathway course](#) (Women's Health Victoria online course)

RESOURCES

- [Change the story:](#) *A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (Our Watch resource)
- [Changing the picture:](#) *A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children* (Our Watch resource)
- [Quick facts](#) (Our Watch webpage)
- [Prevention Handbook](#) (Our Watch website)

A whole-of-TAFE approach to prevent violence against women

Effective efforts to prevent violence against women engage people across the many different places where they live, work, learn and socialise. TAFEs play various roles as employers, educators, community members and industry partners, all of which make them a key player in influencing attitudes, behaviours and systems that help to address the drivers of violence. TAFEs are leaders in the local community and can also set the standard for positive behaviours and equality across the local economy.

The prevention of violence against women focuses on stopping violence from occurring in the first place by addressing the underlying drivers of violence. This means working with all people, across all levels of the TAFE, to transform the social context in which violence against women occurs. It also means ensuring the systems, processes and culture are in place to respond appropriately to any staff or students who experience violence, at home, at TAFE or in the community.

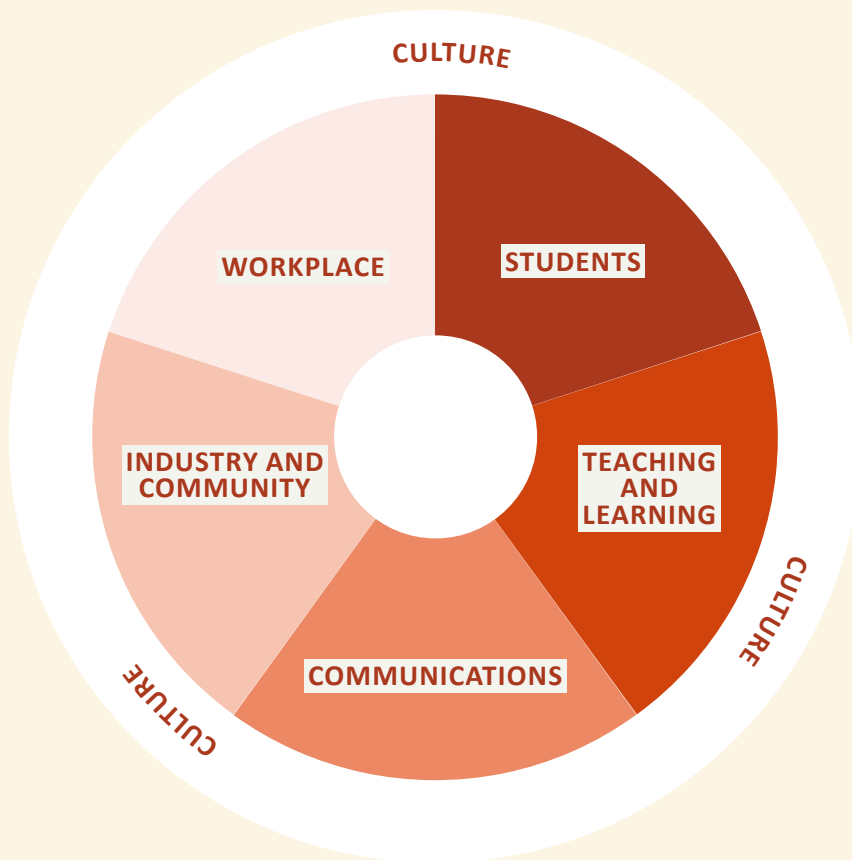
An effective whole-of-TAFE approach requires focusing on all aspects of how a TAFE operates, to build a culture among staff and students where gender equality and respect is promoted and modelled. Across the TAFE, multiple staff have a key role to play, including TAFE boards, directors, executives, senior managers, Human Resources, educators, students, Student Services and communications.

A whole-of-TAFE approach requires planned and coordinated actions across **five domains**:

- [workplace](#)
- [students](#)
- [teaching and learning](#)
- [communications](#)
- [industry and community](#).

The term 'culture' encompasses all the domains. All domains need to be addressed to ensure TAFEs are respectful and gender equitable.

RIGHT: The five key domains of the Respect and Equality in TAFE approach.



DOMAIN: WORKPLACE

Lead: Board/Senior Executives/Business and Operations/Human Resources



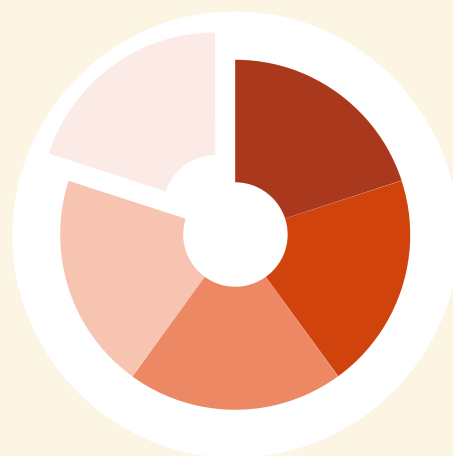
RESOURCES

Refer to the [*Respect and Equality in TAFE Self-assessment tool*](#). The self-assessment tool will assist with determining where your TAFE is in relation to gender equality so you can tailor your approach to address any opportunities for improvement.

All workplaces have the power to make changes that will support progress towards gender equality in our society. Every workplace conversation, policy and action has the potential to either reinforce or challenge gender inequality and the kinds of attitudes and norms that drive violence.

All TAFE employees including contractors have the right to be safe, respected and to have equal opportunity at work. Building a TAFE work environment and culture that promotes gender equality and respect can involve the following elements:

- Establishing structures, strategies and policies that explicitly promote gender equality and respect.
- Ensuring leaders and board members understand the drivers of violence against women and know their legal obligations in relation to gender equality.
- Supporting TAFE board members and staff in rejecting all forms of violence within and outside the workplace and modelling a workplace culture of gender equality and respect.
- Demonstrating that you are a gender equitable institution by proactively reporting to the board on the workplace gender equality indicators (if you are a dual sector institution).
- Embedding the principle of gender equality in staff recruitment, remuneration and promotion processes.
- Ensuring equal access among staff to flexible work options.
- Ensuring staff feel safe to raise concerns about gender inequality and discrimination without adverse consequences.
- Establishing clear policies and procedures to provide on campus support for staff and students who experience violence, bullying or harassment.
- Ensuring that response systems are established for staff and students enduring or escaping family violence or other types of violence (it is important that this is in place prior to implementing this approach).



DOMAIN: STUDENTS

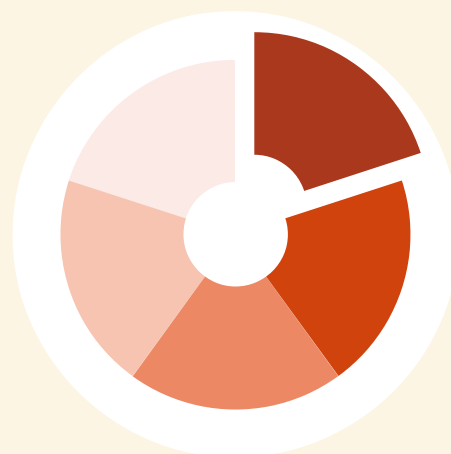


Lead: Student Services/Human Resources (OHS)

Students have the right to a learning environment where they feel safe and respected, and where they have equitable access to TAFE opportunities and resources. Students should feel confident to express concerns about violence, and to challenge gender stereotypes, roles and norms.

To engage students with Respect and Equality in TAFE, actions include:

- Investigating the students' needs, making an effort to capture diverse views and experiences of gender stereotyping and gender inequality from a wide range of students.
- Ensuring structures are in place to respond appropriately to students who experience violence, bullying and sexual harassment.
- Establishing policies and procedures that enable students to raise concerns about gender inequality, violence, harassment or discrimination without adverse consequences.
- Building the confidence of students in using these structures and enacting the policies and procedures.
- Providing opportunities to enhance students' leadership skills in gender equality, for example by seeking student representation in relevant working groups.
- Seeking student input on student-facing policies and decisions about students' rights, respect and gender equality, including opportunities to involve students in the co-design of activities to prevent violence against women.
- Ensuring the student code of conduct makes clear that sexist language, comments, gestures and images are unlawful and unacceptable.
- Empowering students to become gender equality voices for change within the TAFE and within the industries they are entering.
- Reviewing student enrolment processes to identify barriers to accessing and participating in training at TAFE.



DOMAIN: TEACHING AND LEARNING



Lead: Educators

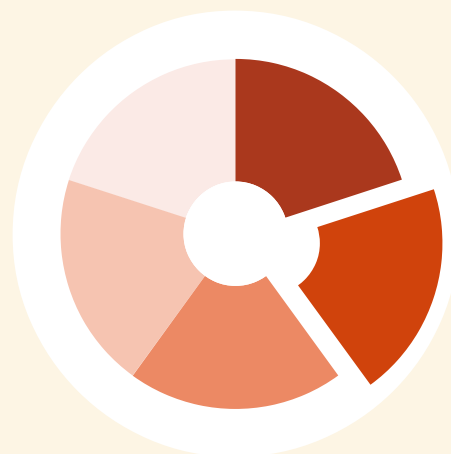
TAFE educators have influence over the way students learn, what they learn, and the environment in which they learn. They have an important role to play in creating equal and respectful classroom cultures where all students can freely participate. Teaching practice that promotes gender equality, inclusivity and respect can have a profound impact on students' classroom experience. Each method and mode of course delivery needs to be included when reviewing teaching practice with a gender lens, for example apprenticeships, traineeships, on-campus and online delivery.

With adequate support and resourcing from leaders, educators can apply the principles of gender equality and respect by:

- Examining units of competency and curriculum for gender bias and adapting accordingly where possible.
 - Addressing gender, sexuality and racial stereotypes in course curricula to reflect the experiences of diverse populations.
 - Reinforcing the importance of respectful relationships, challenging sexism and role modelling gender equitable practices, both in the formal learning environment and outside the classroom.
 - Incorporating prevention of violence and gender equality skills and knowledge into the development of new or updated units of competency where an understanding of gender equality is required, such as Health and Community Services, Family Violence, Disability, Aged Care and Child Care, Human Resources, Business Services, Trades, Information Technology and STEM.
 - Making new, accredited gender equality and violence prevention training available to students, such as the course in [Gender Equity](#) and the course in the [Prevention of Family Violence and Violence against Women](#).
- Considering opportunities to embed gender equality and violence prevention messages into curriculum content, assessments and field work placements.
 - Identifying and creating opportunities to increase students' understanding and awareness of gender inequality and the prevention of violence against women.
 - Explaining to students why gender matters in the workplace and at TAFE.

RESOURCES

Refer to [Respect and Equality in TAFE Promoting gender equality: A practice guide for TAFE educators](#) for tips and advice on examining units of competency, classroom delivery, practical placements and assessment using a gender lens.



DOMAIN: COMMUNICATIONS

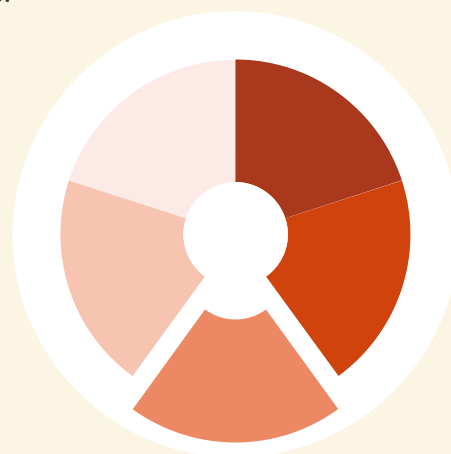
Lead: Communications/Marketing



Communication staff can create an organisational understanding of gender equality and the prevention of violence against women across the entire TAFE community, through the promotion of consistent key messages. Ensuring all communication processes explicitly reflect the principles of gender equality and respect, and challenge gender stereotypes, is key to creating a safe, equitable and respectful culture.

Relevant actions for communications and marketing teams include:

- Ensuring all communications and marketing staff understand and are trained in the principles that underpin effective communication to promote gender equality.
- Providing consistent messaging that promotes gender equality and challenges stereotypes using multiple communication strategies via student and staff portals, intranets, newsletters, social media, blogs, student and staff recruitment materials and websites.
- Using accessible and inclusive language in all communications in referring to people of all genders and sexualities without reinforcing biases or gender stereotypes.
- Supporting attitude and behaviour change by promoting gender equality social norms and raising staff and student awareness of the gendered drivers of violence and bystander approaches.
- Ensuring communication strategies engage with and meet the needs of all people and actively address forms of discrimination such as racism, homophobia, sexism and ableism.
- Creating opportunities for students to have active input into social marketing and violence prevention campaigns.
- Considering the genders of student enrolments when developing the digital marketing and advertising strategy for student recruitment, with a view to attracting more women and gender diverse people into male-dominated courses and more men and gender diverse people into female-dominated courses.
- Regularly reviewing student recruitment practices to ensure they do not reinforce harmful gender stereotypes through language and imagery used in communications.



DOMAIN: INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY

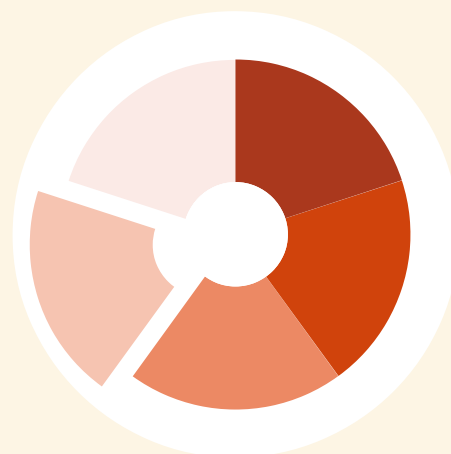


Lead: Student Services/Human Resources/
Skills and Jobs Centres

TAFEs are a trusted and respected part of their local communities and are able to contribute to positive social change. TAFEs have a broad range of successful partnerships and linkages with industry which help drive innovation and therefore are influential in relationships with the sectors they serve and the communities who use their services.

There are many opportunities for TAFEs to influence industry and community partners to help create a more gender equal future. Relevant actions TAFEs can take include:

- Seeking opportunities to connect with industry reference committees and providing input into the training package content and review processes.
 - Supporting industry to recruit and support student placements and apprenticeships in non-traditional gendered work.
 - Establishing partnerships with local services that provide family violence support, prevention of violence against women and gender equality programs.
- Preparing future workforces to prevent and respond to family violence.
 - Recognising that every industry has a role to play in changing structures, attitudes and norms that perpetuate gender inequality.
 - Creating opportunities to engage with industry to address challenges and seek industry buy-in for gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.
 - Inviting lead industry partners to be part of the Respect and Equality in TAFE Taskforce.



Bringing it all together

Across our society, if we all work together, as educators, as employers and as a community, we can change this picture of gender inequality and stop violence against women before it starts. In achieving the vision of a Victoria free from violence, every TAFE has a role to play.



VISION

FOR RESPECT
AND EQUALITY
IN TAFE






TAFEs are future-focused in the delivery of value to students, industry and government and actively support gender equality in Australia by ensuring equality of opportunity in vocational education and employment.

1. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Appoint an individual or department with seniority and adequate support to lead and coordinate a whole-of-TAFE approach across the five domains.



2. TAKE ACTION AND TRACK PROGRESS

					
DOMAIN	WORKPLACE	STUDENTS	TEACHING AND LEARNING	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY
LEAD	Leaders/ Business and Operations/HR	Student Services/ HR (OHS)	Educators	Communications/ Marketing	Student Services/ HR/Skills and Jobs Centres
ACTION	TAFE workplace structures, strategies and policies that promote gender equality are established and reviewed.	With active involvement from students TAFEs are gender equitable environments where students are safe and respected.	Course delivery modes incorporate and promote gender equality and respect into teaching practice.	Gender equality and respect are integrated into TAFE communications.	TAFE actively engages with industry and community partners for a gender equal future.

3. TRANSFORM BUSINESS AS USUAL

1. TAFEs enable **gender equality** in education over the life course.
2. TAFEs are vocational-educators and **employers of choice** for women.
3. TAFEs **say no** to discrimination, sexism, harassment and violence against women.
4. TAFE campuses are **safe places** where students and staff are treated with respect.

PART 2

Implementing Respect and Equality in TAFE

An effective approach to preventing violence against women and promoting gender equality in TAFE needs to be:

- ✓ tailored to suit the individual resources, capacity and needs of the TAFE
- ✓ owned and driven by the TAFE
- ✓ supported by a long-term strategy
- ✓ evidence-based
- ✓ focused on changing organisational culture
- ✓ a process of continual improvement
- ✓ supportive of meeting the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020.

Building on one another, the eight steps in this approach will guide you in the development, implementation and monitoring of a Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan that is tailored to the needs and context of your TAFE.

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION



- STEP 1.** Connect with staff assigned to lead the work and align with existing objectives
- STEP 2.** Gather information about gender equality
- STEP 3.** Complete the Respect and Equality in TAFE self-assessment process
- STEP 4.** Develop a Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan
- STEP 5.** Develop a monitoring plan
- STEP 6.** Establish partnerships with staff and departments across your TAFE and with industry and community
- STEP 7.** Implement your Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan
- STEP 8.** Monitor and revise action plans.

Meeting your obligations under the law

In Victoria your legal requirements include:

- [The Sex Discrimination Act](#) 1984 (Commonwealth)
- [The Equal Opportunity Act](#) 2010 (Victoria)
- [The Victorian Charter of Human Rights](#) (public service bodies)
- [The Gender Equality Act](#) 2020 (Victoria).

For dual-sector institutes there are obligations to report to the [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) (WGEA) under the Commonwealth [Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012](#).

According to the [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#) employers have a responsibility to recruit staff in a non-discriminatory way and maintain a workplace that is safe and free from discrimination. Employers also have a responsibility to make sure their workplace is safe and free from sexual harassment or victimisation.

Under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010, organisations have a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as far as possible. This means that positive action should be taken to prevent these behaviours — regardless of whether someone has made a complaint.

The Respect and Equality in TAFE approach will assist you to meet many of your legal workplace requirements. The [eight steps for implementation](#) encompass actions in each of the five domains of the whole-of-TAFE approach. Following these steps will assist you in your work to support alignment to the Gender Equality Act 2020.

The Gender Equality Act aims to improve workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector, including TAFEs, to lead to better results for the Victorian community through improved policies, programs and services.

Under the Act, TAFEs are required to develop a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) every four years and report publicly every two years on progress. The [Commission for Gender Equality](#) in the Public Sector provides a range of implementation and support guidance materials to aid in understanding and meeting the planning and reporting obligations, including practice guidelines, toolkits and regulations.

Alignment to the Gender Equality Act 2020

The Respect and Equality in TAFE approach supports you to meet your obligations under the Gender Equality Act by:

- defining the issues and challenging assumptions about gender
- conducting a workplace gender audit and Respect and Equality in TAFE self-assessments
- undertaking a gender impact assessment of policies, programs and services that impact the public
- developing and implementing an action plan, and
- reporting on the implementation.

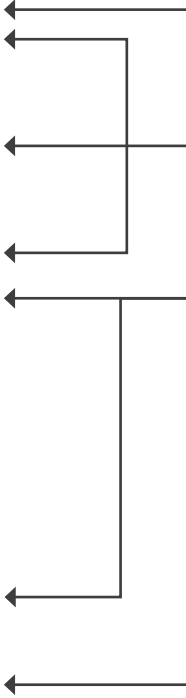
STEPS
TO ACHIEVE
RESPECT AND
EQUALITY IN TAFE



REQUIREMENTS
UNDER THE
GENDER
EQUALITY
ACT

1. Connect with key players and align with existing objectives
2. Gather information about gender equality
3. Complete the self-assessment
4. Develop an action plan
5. Develop a monitoring plan
6. Establish partnerships
7. Implement your action plan
8. Monitor and revise plans

- Conduct a workplace gender audit
- Complete gender impact assessments of policies, programs and services
- Develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan
- Report on progress



— DUTY TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY —

Gender Equality Act — timelines and key dates

31 March 2021

TAFE's obligations under the Gender Equality Act commence, including the duty to promote gender equality and gender impact assessments.

30 June 2021

Capture data for a workplace gender audit to assess the state and nature of gender inequality in the workplace.

31 October 2021

Submit the first Gender Equality Action Plan, informed by the results of the workplace gender audit, to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.

31 October 2023

Submit the first progress report to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.

31 October 2025

Submit the second Gender Equality Action Plan and second progress report informed by the results of a workplace gender audit.

31 October 2027

Submit the third progress report.

Eight steps for implementation

Step 1. Connect and align

A range of different staff will be key in leading planned and coordinated actions across the five domains. It is essential that these staff members are engaged from the very beginning.

CONNECTING WITH STAFF ASSIGNED TO LEAD THE WORK

To lead and coordinate work across the TAFE, it is a good idea to establish a Respect and Equality in TAFE Taskforce. The Respect and Equality in TAFE Taskforce should have representation of staff from each of the five domains, and comprise executive members, managers and leaders from across the TAFE. Understanding their perspectives, unique barriers and opportunities and the support they might need along the way is key to success and sustainability. As the Respect and Equality in TAFE Taskforce is brought together, it can be helpful for the group to review existing initiatives to support work on gender equality, both within your TAFE and with your partners in the community.

Investing time and effort early into building relationships and capacity with these leaders across the TAFE will help to increase readiness for change, build support for action, and manage resistance. Leaders may need support to make the link between gender inequality, gender stereotypes, individual attitudes, social norms and violence against women.

It can also be helpful to develop and share a business case that outlines the benefits for TAFE and specific departments engaging in this work. You can draw on the [Respect and Equality in TAFE Key messages](#) to support your business case.

To assist you with building the knowledge of your leaders and your taskforce about gender equality, the prevention of violence against

women and the key elements of the approach, you can use the Respect and Equality in TAFE capability workshop materials designed for:

- TAFE leaders and taskforce members
- Educators and education leaders
- Administrative staff.

For effective delivery of these workshops, link with an expert in gender equality and family violence prevention who can facilitate the workshops. These workshop PowerPoints and facilitator notes are available on the [Respect and Equality in TAFE website](#).

ALIGNING WITH EXISTING OBJECTIVES

Undertaking organisational change to promote gender equality can be a complex process, requiring the involvement of all staff members, and student participation. Leveraging off existing pieces of organisational activity and strategic directions, as well as broader state-wide or national initiatives, can enhance buy-in and outcomes. The more you can highlight how your work can feed into or complement existing commitments and strategies, or support reporting requirements, the easier it will be to get others on board. This could include reviewing the stated commitments of your TAFE (including mission statements, strategic plans, value statements and principles, etc.) or the requirements under current legislation and the standards of the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

Step 2. Gather information

As you engage leaders across the TAFE, you should also be conducting a gender equality 'stocktake' of your TAFE, to understand what already exists and identify where opportunities may lie for improvement.

You will need to collect and review data about gender equality within your TAFE. This is likely to require a desktop review of policies and procedures as well as consultation with key Human Resources, data custodians and Student Services staff.

Numbers rarely tell the whole story, but they do offer a way to identify where attention is needed. Collecting data can support you in:

- reflecting on the status of gender equality in your organisation
- establishing a baseline to enable you to track your progress
- engaging in critical discussion of barriers in your workplace
- making the case for resourcing needed to promote gender equality
- developing a good understanding of the student cohorts attending your TAFE
- understanding and monitoring gender segregation in particular courses by reviewing student gender-disaggregated data in course enrolments and completions, and to develop actions based on this data
- meeting many of the gender audit requirements of the Gender Equality Act.

The Respect and Equality in TAFE approach recommends that the first step is to complete a desktop review of policies, procedures and practices and then undertake a self-assessment. This work will also assist TAFEs to meet the requirements of the Gender Equality Act by gathering information on key [gender equality indicators](#) to help you assess where you can improve gender equality in your workplace. The Respect and Equality in TAFE approach can also guide you in [how to conduct a workplace gender audit](#).

Dual-sector institutions

Dual-sector institutions will already be collecting data to meet the WGEA requirements.

Similarly, universities may be collecting additional data as part of a [SAGE Athena SWAN Award](#) application that can also be used.

For advice for dual-sector institutions on complying with the Gender Equality Act refer to the [Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector](#).

GENDER EQUALITY DATA COLLECTION — WORKPLACE DOMAIN (STAFF)

It's important to complete the data collection process outlined in this approach to create a baseline of gender equality across your TAFE.

The collection of this data will also assist in meeting the workplace gender audit requirements of the Gender Equality Act.

In order to meet planning and reporting obligations under the Act in 2021 and every two years thereafter, TAFEs will be required to undertake a workplace gender audit against a series of workplace gender equality indicators. The Act requires TAFEs to collect, investigate and respond to audit data collected against the following workplace gender equality indicators, including reporting on progress:

- gender pay equity
- gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- gender composition of governing bodies
- workplace sexual harassment
- recruitment and promotion
- gendered work segregation, and
- leave and flexibility.

While conducting the audit it is important to consider intersectionality. Gender inequality may be compounded by the impacts of disadvantage or discrimination someone might experience on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, and other factors.

Gender equality data can be gathered via your workforce data from payroll, HR or case management systems. Employee experience data can be sourced via existing staff surveys such as the People Matters Surveys (or equivalent); an analysis of your existing staff data, such as employment status by gender and age; complaints data; board and committee composition by gender; and through the self-assessment process.

You may wish to download the [Workplace Gender Audit template](#) from the Gender Equality Commission website.

You can also refer to the [Workplace Equality and Respect survey](#) as a guiding mechanism for staff to give feedback on their experiences in the workplace.

Workplace gender audits

The [Gender Equality Act 2020](#) requires organisations to regularly collect and report on data regarding gender equality in the workplace by conducting workplace gender audits. Data helps us understand where change is needed and what's changing over time. By publicly reporting on your workplace data, you can be transparent and accountable to your employees and the community.

Collecting this data means you can see where gender inequality is present and persisting. This data will assist you in deciding what actions need to be taken, and can demonstrate what is working and what is not.

For further information from the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector on workplace gender audits, see [Workplace gender auditing](#).

You must include the results of the workplace gender audit in your Gender Equality Action Plan and develop strategies and measures to make change based on the results. Workplace gender audits must be done in every year that you do your Gender Equality Action Plan.

The first workplace gender audit must be based on data as at 30 June 2021. You must include the results of the workplace gender audit in your Gender Equality Action Plan and develop strategies and measures to make change based on the results.

The results will need to be de-identified and submitted to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner as part of your Gender Equality Action Plan on or before 31 October 2021.

GENDER EQUALITY DATA COLLECTION — STUDENT DOMAIN

The Respect and Equality in TAFE approach recognises the importance of gathering and reviewing data about gender equality for students in your TAFE. A desktop review of student enrolment and completion data, enrolments in specific courses by gender, numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, etc., can provide you with insight into the student cohorts and demographics. Demographic data can help you to better understand the student cohort — for example you may want to look at people of different ages, international students, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ people, or students with disability.

Our Watch recommends that gathering student data include, at a minimum:

- the percentage of male, female and gender diverse students, overall and by course enrolment and completion.
- student demographics: Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race and sexual orientation.
- gender disaggregated data, if available, on the number of students who are balancing caring commitments or returning to study following parental leave.
- student perceptions of TAFE culture as measured by annual surveys such as ‘student experience surveys’, if available.
- student perceptions on educators applying a gendered lens to their teaching practices.

You may wish to review and update your existing ‘student experience surveys’ to ensure they include questions about gender, cultural identity, disability and age and how gender impacts their experience at TAFE.

FURTHER APPROACHES TO COLLECTING DATA

Staff and students’ gender can affect their needs and experiences at TAFE. Your TAFE’s policies, programs and services can impact people of different genders in different ways; therefore, it is important to conduct gender impact assessments.

The Gender Equality Act requires TAFEs to conduct a gender impact assessment when delivering new or up-for-review programs, services and policies that have a direct impact on the public.

Undertaking gender impact assessments can support your TAFE in understanding how policies, programs and services are accessed and experienced by students and other stakeholders. This is an important data source to inform future actions that your TAFE can take to promote gender equality. For information from the Commission, see [Gender impact assessments](#).

WHAT DO POLICY, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES LOOK LIKE IN TAFE?

Some examples:

Policies – Student sexual harassment policy; equal access policy.

Programs – Vocational education courses provided; educators' delivery and assessment pedagogy.

Services – Student Services; ESL supports.

Consider how your TAFE currently promotes equality and addresses inequality. To undertake this data collection, you can include:

Policies

- Map existing policies, operating structures and partnerships that present an opportunity to promote or influence gender equality within the organisation or the community.
- Undertake a review of current resources, supports, relevant policies and procedures for staff and students, to look for differences in the way processes and policies are likely to impact differently on women, men and gender diverse people.
- Consider if staff and students who are impacted by the policies and procedures are included in the decision making around the issues that affect them.
- Review sexual harassment policies, including safe reporting and referral pathways for staff and students who experience sexual harassment.

Programs

- Consider what type of assumptions are made about women, men and gender diverse people in the TAFE's vocational education learning programs and how they are delivered by educators.
- Map existing student and staff groups, collectives, online forums, events and activities that focus on equality and social justice.
- Seek staff and students' views on the differences in how women, men and gender diverse people undertake and benefit from the units of competency they undertake.

- Apply a gendered lens to investigate and analyse the underrepresentation of women and gender diverse people in male-dominated courses, and of men and gender diverse people in female-dominated courses.
- Seek gendered information on your student outcomes following course completion, such as employment, pay gaps, work role status (some of this information can be obtained via National Centre for Vocational Education Research [student outcomes data](#)).

Services

- Investigate the internal family violence support services for staff and students, and the local service system.
- Investigate how accessible and inclusive the internal support services are to students.
- Investigate the barriers students may face in accessing TAFE and completing courses (fee structures, student loans, family commitments, ESL supports, etc.).
- Conduct research/reviews on students' experiences of sexual harassment and assault on campus or within their industry placements.

Leadership

- Seek leaders' views on the most significant issues for staff and students in relation to respect and gender equality.
- Undertake a training needs analysis with members of your Respect and Equality in TAFE Taskforce and arrange training for the members if needed.
- Find evidence of your TAFE's commitment to promoting gender equality and respect through engagement with students, staff, industry partners and the community.

CONSULTATION AS YOU UNDERTAKE THIS PROCESS

Consultation is essential so that everyone in the TAFE community has opportunities to provide feedback on their experiences at TAFE, to identify the ways gender influences and shapes their work and study lives, and to provide feedback on their experience of the Respect and Equality in TAFE approach.

As you collect data, it is important to create space to learn about the way that factors other than gender may also impact on someone's experience in TAFE, including discrimination and disadvantage that they encounter due to these factors. This will help you to ensure that the actions you take are meaningful, accessible and responsive to the experience of the student and staff community.

To understand what needs to change and why, staff and students should be asked about the current situation and what they would like the future to look like. Without feedback and input, some aspects of gender inequality may remain hidden, and you could end up prioritising inappropriate and ineffective actions. As part of this process, you may decide to consult with stakeholders outside your TAFE, such as key partners in industry and the local community, to understand their experiences of your TAFE's culture and practices.

All the information collected so far will help you prepare for the next step, which is to assess your TAFE under the five domains.

Safely engaging with staff and students

Throughout any change process, meaningful engagement with staff and students is critical. Consultation and engagement processes can be great opportunities to raise awareness and increase understanding of violence against women and to positively influence TAFE culture.

While these conversations about gender equality and violence are necessary and useful, they can be uncomfortable and bring up sensitive issues. It's important, therefore, that you ensure confidentiality where needed and provide safe and supportive opportunities for people to speak frankly. You should also make sure that anyone gathering information is equipped to answer common questions and concerns that arise, has the backing of leaders and is provided with opportunities to debrief.

Step 3. Complete the self-assessment

This section asks you to consider where you are now, where you want to be and how you will get there. The aim of the self-assessment is to establish where your TAFE is in relation to gender equality so you can then tailor your approach to address any opportunities for improvement.

Now that you have gathered desktop data, conducted surveys and consulted with key people, completing the self-assessment across the five domains will help you understand where good practice is currently happening and where further action is needed. It will focus your planning in the areas most likely to yield the results needed to create a TAFE that actively promotes gender equality and respect and the prevention of violence against women.

A self-assessment tool has been developed specifically for TAFEs to support reflection on the experience of preventing violence against women and promoting gender equality. The tool outlines how to go about undertaking the self-assessment in your TAFE. It provides information about what to look for under each of the domains, as well as examples of actions you can take to progress your work.

The self-assessment tool on the [Respect and Equality in TAFE website](#) will guide you through this process, including setting up assessment workshops and conducting the self-assessment. The workshops provide an opportunity to engage staff (and students, when assessing the student domain) from different departments and levels of your TAFE so that you can capture a range of experiences and better understand the factors that may enable or impede change. The group that undertakes the self-assessment might be from the Respect and Equality in TAFE Taskforce, or it may involve others.

You may wish to have someone within the TAFE facilitate the self-assessment process, or to seek support from a gender equality expert to assist you. Contact Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria or your local women's health service for assistance in identifying an appropriate facilitator. The facilitator will help your group stay within the allotted time, provide additional information and steer you through tricky discussions. An external facilitator can challenge usual ways of thinking, to overcome power imbalances and to bring expertise and examples to enrich discussions. Whoever is chosen as a facilitator should be familiar with the gender data that you have collated during Step 2.

The findings from the Respect and Equality in TAFE self-assessment may assist you to identify where there is a need to develop or review policies, programs or services, based on the areas for improvement that have been identified. The self-assessment process will assist you to collect data needed to meet many of the obligations under the Gender Equality Act for gender impact assessments.

All the information you have gathered so far will inform the development and directions of your Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan across each of the domains.

Gender impact assessments — Gender Equality Act 2020

As a defined entity, the Gender Equality Act requires your TAFE to conduct gender impact assessments of all new policies, programs and services that directly and significantly impact the public, as well as those up for review.

A gender impact assessment must:

- Assess the effects that the policy, program or service may have on people of different genders.
- Explain how the policy, program or service will be changed to better support Victorians of all genders, address gender inequality and promote gender equality.
- Where practical, apply an intersectional approach to consider how gender inequality can be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of other factors such as age, disability or ethnicity.

The gender impact assessments are due to commence on 31 March 2021.

For further information from the Commission, see [Gender impact assessments](#).

Step 4. Develop an action plan

The results of the work that you have undertaken in steps 1—3 of this approach will indicate the current status of gender equality in your TAFE. This will provide a basis for you to plan strategies, actions and measures that both build on your strengths and address areas that need improvement.

Planning processes are as diverse as TAFEs themselves, so it's up to you how to develop your Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan. An action plan template is available from the [Respect and Equality in TAFE website](#).

When developing your action plan, it might be tempting to select a few actions that sound easy to achieve, but it's important your choice of actions is deliberate and appropriate for your TAFE. You'll need to base your actions on the consultations, data collection and the self-assessment you have completed.






Mapping out how one action or achievement leads to the next will show whether you're on track to meet your long-term goals. Consider which actions might support other actions — for example, making sure that changes to one policy are reflected in other relevant policies. It's also important that you plan for change that builds over time. Once you identify your goals and gaps, use available evidence about what works to plan how you will achieve the desired outcomes.

The Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan may assist in meeting your workplace obligations under the Gender Equality Act to develop a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) and may qualify as a GEAP if it meets all the requirements under the Act.

RESOURCES

[Respect and Equality in TAFE Action Plan](#)

BELOW: Examples of key actions under the domains.

DOMAIN	EXAMPLE ACTION	
WORKPLACE	Review recruitment and promotion practices with a gender and diversity lens, ensuring practices are cognisant of and challenge biases and assumptions.	
STUDENTS	Enable student engagement by involving students in the co-design of family violence prevention activities.	
TEACHING AND LEARNING	Provide professional development opportunities for educators to learn how to apply a gender lens to their teaching practices.	
COMMUNICATIONS	Review and update your communications strategy to promote gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.	
INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY	Create opportunities for industry and partners to get involved in addressing gender inequality in their own work environments.	

Gender Equality Action Plans

TAFEs are required to prepare and submit a Gender Equality Action Plan to the Commission every four years and report on progress in relation to the action plan every two years. The first GEAP is due by 31 October 2021 and the second is due on or before 31 October 2025.

A GEAP needs to include:

- the results of a workplace gender audit, to assess the current state of gender equality in the workplace
- strategies and measures to improve gender equality in the workplace, based on the results of the audit.

The key areas a GEAP must cover:

- baseline audit analysis
- meaningful consultation and engagement
- the case for change
- strategies and measures to be taken
- leadership and resourcing your GEAP
- measuring progress.

If you have already prepared a plan, for example your Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan, you can apply to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner to determine whether your plan can be considered a GEAP under the Act if it meets all the requirements under the Act. If it does not meet the requirements, you will need to prepare a new GEAP.

For further information from the Commission, see [Gender Equality Action Plans](#).

Reporting on progress required by the Gender Equality Act

Your organisation will be required to submit a progress report to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner every two years after submitting your Gender Equality Action Plan. The first progress report is due on or before 31 October 2023 and the second is due on or before 31 October 2027.

Progress reports must include:

- what policies, programs and services were subject to a gender impact assessment
- what actions you took as a result of the gender impact assessment
- your progress in relation to the measures and strategies set out in your Gender Equality Action Plan
- your progress in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators
- whether you met any relevant targets or quotas prescribed in regulations in relation to your organisation.

For details, see the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector's resources for [Reporting on gender equality progress](#).

Step 5. Develop your monitoring plan

Monitoring and reflection is an important part of understanding your progress and will help guide adaptations as you implement your Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan.

Attitude and behaviour change can be a slow process, and transforming structures that give rise to gender inequality takes time. Each individual, team and department of your TAFE will go through different stages of change, so regular monitoring and reflection will help make sure your actions are appropriate to support sustained change.

It is important to consider what outcomes could be reasonably achieved over a period of time and to document the steps taken to achieve this outcome. This might include, for example, the establishment of governance structures to support gender equality, or the identification of staff who have a leadership role in promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women in TAFE.

For guidance on how to develop a simple monitoring plan see the [Respect and Equality in TAFE Monitoring guide](#).

RESOURCES

[Respect and Equality in TAFE Monitoring guide](#)

Step 6. Establish partnerships

Effective partnerships are a central ingredient to the success of the whole-of-TAFE approach and to implementing your Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan. Partnerships include internal partners, external stakeholders, community, industry and students.

INTERNAL COLLABORATIONS

TAFE staff and the departments they represent are major contributors to the success of the program. The gender equality lead will assist in coordinating and implementing the action plan in partnership with your TAFE leadership team, senior managers, Human Resources, educators, students, Student Services and communications teams.

STUDENTS

Engaging students as partners will help ensure that actions are relevant and engaging for this audience. Consider early how you will engage students and who else may need to support this process. You may need to work closely with Student Services, or partner with educators to integrate new content into classroom activities, curriculum, assessment and fieldwork opportunities.

Engaging students as partners

Suggestions:

- Set up a student working group enabling students to have input in the design, direction and implementation of relevant activities.
- Engage students by using a co-design approach to work together on prevention campaigns such as 16 Days of Activism and those connected to International Women's Day.
- Invite the student group to review, analyse and contribute to an update of student-facing policies and procedures.
- Identify opportunities to influence curriculum by working with educators and students to incorporate knowledge of gender equality and prevention of violence against women into the curriculum and assessments.
- Invite contributions from media and communications students to assist with designing and delivering relevant elements of the gender equality communications plan.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Ultimately our goal in this work is to provide a safe, inclusive and respectful place for all members of the community, regardless of age, race, ability, socioeconomic status or gender. While this may seem overwhelming, it is not necessary for one organisation to be an expert on all these social issues. Having a relationship or partnerships with a specialist organisation can be a way to gain expert advice, ensure strategies are relevant to the population at hand, and build your own skills and knowledge.

TAFEs can establish and nurture connections with external specialist agencies in the local area by:

- Developing relationships with external partners that specialise in gender equality and the prevention of violence against women, such as your local [women's health service](#).
- Joining a local area gender equality or primary prevention of violence against women program such as Communities of Practice, to enable increased capacity in gender equality and create opportunities for shared activities and collaborative efforts. Contact Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria — [Partners in Prevention](#) network Partners in Prevention or your local women's health service.
- Raising the profile of your TAFE and contributing expertise to the local primary prevention regional planning and implementation processes. To be part of your regional prevention network, contact your local women's health service.
- Seeking partnership with local family violence and sexual assault services. Hearing from response services can help prevention workers keep sight of people's lived experiences of family violence and other forms of violence against women.

- Connecting with specialist services, to provide vital supports to the diverse population of staff and students within your TAFE. For example, connecting with specialist services that support people with disability, LGBTIQ people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or migrant and refugee communities can support you in better understanding your staff and student cohort.

LOCAL INDUSTRY

Where possible, engage with local industry and include them on relevant working groups and program activities. Seek opportunities to engage with industry representatives such as unions or industry peak bodies.

Some ideas:

- Explore how your TAFE and industry can work together to desegregate specific professions and industries that tend to be dominated by one gender, and how to increase the gender balance in that workforce.
- Promote workplaces that are safe and inclusive for all people.
- Study the pay and working conditions in female-dominated industries, especially those occupied by women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Step 7. Implement your action plan

Once you have consulted staff, students and industry and community partners, collated the information gathered, and developed a robust Respect and Equality in TAFE action plan and accompanying monitoring framework, the next step is implementation.

As you take action, remember the importance of partnerships with students, staff and other stakeholders and of communicating your work internally and externally. Connecting with others leading prevention work in TAFEs, schools or workplaces can support your work. Refer to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector for additional information on how they can support you via their [support page](#).

The Our Watch [Workplace Equality and Respect website](#) contains examples of good practice in workplace equality and provides guidance materials on a range of areas including:

- [engaging leaders and securing commitment](#)
- [supporting cultural change](#)
- [communicating with staff and stakeholders](#)
- [responding to staff who experience violence or harassment](#)
- [dealing with backlash and resistance](#).

Working towards gender equality and the prevention of violence against women is a long-term process requiring cultural and structural change. Your action plan is a part of a long-term process, requiring you to review and report on your progress each year to evaluate what impact your efforts are having, and adjust your action plan accordingly. The Gender Equality Act requires your reporting to be publicly available every two years and published on your website.

Step 8. Monitor and review action plans

Once you have collected and analysed monitoring data, it's important to interpret the results and reflect on what this means for the activities you have implemented, the adaptations required and the next steps you should take.

TAFEs should consider how to bring together key stakeholders and different perspectives when reflecting on and interpreting the monitoring data. The Respect and Equality in TAFE Taskforce plays an important role in contributing to the analysis of, and reflection on, data collected. This group can provide valuable insights into refining your approach in response to lessons learned, and how to report and share your learnings with a wider audience.

It's also critical to pause and recognise success. Celebrating and communicating the gains you have made will increase people's engagement with the work and help support further work. Reflecting on what has worked and what has not will support the formulation of more effective actions and support continuous improvement and more effective change in the long term.

Tools and resources

Building capability among leaders and staff

Our Watch resources:

- [*Change the story*](#): a shared framework for the prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia
- [*Changing the picture*](#): a national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children
- [*Men in focus*](#): Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women

Our Watch webpages:

- [Quick facts](#) about violence against women
- [Prevention Handbook](#)

Training opportunities:

- [Course in Gender Equity – 22521VIC](#) (nationally recognised training course)
- [Course in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk – 22510VIC](#) (nationally recognised training course)
- [Introduction to Preventing Violence Against Women](#) (GenVic eLearning module)
- [Prevention and Response Training](#) (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria course)
- [Women’s Health Victoria](#) training

Training tools:

- [Be an Active Bystander](#) – A guide to helping when you see family violence and abuse (SafeSteps)
- [Respect and Equality in TAFE](#) capability workshop materials (Our Watch)

Evaluation and monitoring tools:

- [Evaluating Victorian projects for the primary prevention of violence against women: A concise guide](#) (VicHealth)
- [Respect and Equality in TAFE Monitoring guide](#) (Our Watch)
- [SAMPLE Respect and Equality in TAFE Action Plan](#) (Our Watch)

Workplace

Websites:

- [Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector](#)
- [Male Champions of Change](#)
- [Workplace Equality and Respect](#)
- [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#)

Resources:

- [Preventing and responding to sexual harassment: A quick guide for employers](#) (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission)
- [Respect and Equality in TAFE Key messages](#) (Our Watch)
- [Respect and Equality in TAFE Self-assessment tool](#) (Our Watch)
- [Sex discrimination](#) (Australian Human Rights Commission)
- [Workplace equality: A model for preventing violence against migrant and refugee women](#) (Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health)

Students

Professional development for Student Services:

- [MARAM Collaborative Practice Training](#)
- [Family Violence Regional Integration Committees](#)

Teaching and learning

Resources:

- [No limitations: Breaking down gender stereotypes in the early years](#) (Women's Health East)
- [Older, better, together: The primary prevention of elder abuse by prevention networks](#) (Seniors Rights Victoria)
- [Promoting gender equality: A practice guide for TAFE educators](#) (Our Watch)
- [Teaching gender equity: a toolkit for teaching gender equity units of competency](#) (Women's Health Victoria)

Websites:

- [Equality and Respect in Sport](#) (Our Watch)
- [Media Making Change](#) (Our Watch)
- [Preventing Violence against Women with Disabilities: Resources to support prevention, social services and disability workforces](#) (Women with Disabilities Victoria)
- [Respectful Relationships](#) (Department of Education and Training Victoria)
- [Respectful Relationships Education](#) (Our Watch)

Communications

Websites:

- [16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence](#) (UN Women)
- [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) (United Nations)
- [The Line](#) (Our Watch)

Resources:

- [Communications Guidelines for Preventing Violence Against Women](#) (Women's Health in the North)
- [Framing masculinity: Message guide](#) (VicHealth)

Industry and community

Websites:

- [Gender Equity Victoria](#)
- [Women's Health Victoria](#)
- [Adult and Community Education Victoria](#) (ACEVic)
- [We Are Union Women](#)

Policy

Victorian Government webpages:

- [Building from strength: 10-year industry plan for family violence prevention and response](#)
- [Safe and strong: A Victorian gender equality strategy](#)
- [Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence](#)

Glossary

Ableism — the institutional, cultural and individual set of beliefs, attitudes and practices that perceives and treats people with a disability as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, or of less inherent value than able-bodied individuals. Ableism results in the systematic and institutional exclusion and marginalisation of people with disability.

Ageism — the process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people based on their age. Although ageism is more generally used in relation to the discrimination against older people, ageist attitudes and norms also adversely affect younger people.

Backlash — the resistance, hostility or aggression that gender equality or violence prevention strategies are met with by some groups. Backlash can include attempts to discredit arguments about gender equality or the gendered nature of violence, and efforts to preserve male dominance, power or status and to defend existing gender norms and hierarchies. In some cases backlash can lead to a further increase in actual violence.

Bystander — someone who sees or hears about an act of sexism, harassment, discrimination, or any other form of inappropriate or violent behaviour. People who witness such behaviour (but who are not involved either as perpetrators or victims/survivors) are in a position to be powerful allies in challenging sexist and discriminatory behaviours and attitudes.

Bystander intervention — bystander approaches focus on the ways in which those who are not themselves direct targets of sexism, abuse or disrespect can identify, intervene and engage others in challenging such attitudes, practices and behaviours. Bystander intervention is a primary prevention approach because it aims to help reduce the social sanctioning or condoning of the attitudes, behaviours and practices that drive violence against women.

Colonisation — refers to the historical act of the British invading and claiming the land now called Australia, thereby dispossessing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had previously lived on and been custodians of these lands for thousands of years. It also refers to the ongoing settlement and establishment of British colonies, and later the Australian nation. It is not only a historical act but also an ongoing process, in particular because there has been no treaty or other form of settlement or agreement, and because many contemporary laws, policies and practices fail to recognise the specific status and human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Indigenous peoples; but also because it continues to have significant impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today.

Disclosure — when someone tells another person about violence they have experienced, perpetrated or witnessed. Undertaking activities to prevent violence against women can often lead to an increase in disclosures. This is because effective primary prevention initiatives raise awareness about harmful attitudes and behaviours, and create a safe space for people to discuss their experiences.

Domestic violence — refers to acts of violence that occur in domestic settings between two people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse.

Evidence-based — models, approaches or practices found to be effective through evaluation or peer-reviewed research. Evidence is usually published and may be found in full or summarised in academic research documents, organisational reports, program evaluations, policy papers and submissions. There is a strong evidence base for strategies to prevent violence against women. As our understanding of what drives violence against women in different population groups and settings increases, the evidence base will continue to evolve.

Family violence — a broader term than ‘domestic violence’, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also violence between family members. This includes, for example, elder abuse and adolescent violence against parents. Family violence includes violent behaviour and any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful.

Gender — the socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.

Gender-based violence — violence that is specifically ‘directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately’.

Gender equality — involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. It is about recognising diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all and therefore often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.

Gender initiatives — the process to achieve gender equality. Gender initiatives recognise that women and gender diverse people are not in the same ‘starting position’ as men, and that treating people the same way may not result in fairness.

Gender roles — functions and responsibilities expected to be fulfilled by women and men, boys and girls within society or culture.

Gender disaggregated data — data that is broken down separately for women, men and gender diverse people.

Intersectionality — a theory and approach that recognises and respects that our identities are made up of multiple interrelated attributes (such as race, gender, ability, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity and socio-economic status), and understands the intersections at which people experience individual, cultural and structural oppression, discrimination, violence and disadvantage — or conversely privilege — based on these attributes.

Intimate partner violence — any behaviour by someone within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages, domestic

partnerships, familial relations, people who share accommodation, and dating relationships) that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship. This is the most common form of family and domestic violence and the most common form of violence against women.

Leaders — anyone within the TAFE with formal responsibility for leading groups of people and the power to influence them. Leaders can be from all levels and all areas of the TAFE. Some TAFEs may find separating out the types of leaders across their TAFE beneficial when conducting the self-assessment and developing their actions plan.

Resistance and backlash — resistance, hostility or aggression that occurs in response to efforts to advance gender equality and prevent violence against women. Challenges to established gender norms and identities, and to entrenched ideas about the roles of men and women, are often resisted by those who strongly adhere to such norms and see them as traditional or natural. From a feminist perspective, backlash is an inevitable response to challenging male dominance, power or status, and is often interpreted as a sign that such challenges are proving effective. Resistance can range from denial and attempts to discredit arguments about gender inequality or the gendered nature of violence, to strategies that undermine or co-opt change, to concerted efforts to preserve existing gender norms and hierarchies. The term ‘backlash’ is commonly used to describe the more extreme, aggressive and organised forms of opposition, with the result that progress towards violence prevention and gender equality can be slowed or even reversed. In some cases, backlash can lead to or reinforce violence against women.

Sexism — discrimination based on gender, and the attitudes, stereotypes and cultural elements that promote this discrimination.

Violence against women — any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others) that are gender based.

‘Whole-of’ approach — a ‘whole-of’ approach to prevention means that your strategy aims to engage everyone in the population, community or organisation. For TAFE this means working with and across the entire TAFE population. This includes TAFE boards, directors, executives, senior managers, Human Resources, educators, students, etc. A ‘whole-of’ approach recognises that change is complex and requires actions to embed prevention across all areas of an organisation.

Endnotes

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