

People and culture plan

2024–26



Victorian Equal Opportunity
& Human Rights Commission

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The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission acknowledges that we work on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We also work remotely and serve communities on the lands of other Traditional Custodians. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Artwork: Madison Connors (2023), Gorakor Wunbuni Yingurni ('Walk gently today')

Foreword

At the heart of the Commission's work is our vision for a fair, safe and inclusive state, where every person is respected and treated with dignity.

Achieving this vision relies on our organisation having a deep understanding of the lived experience of Victoria's diverse community, including those who are marginalised, vulnerable to discrimination or under-represented in public life.

The Commission is made up of motivated, passionate and collaborative people who love what they do and hold a shared commitment to equality for all Victorians. We are proud to celebrate the varied backgrounds, identities and experiences of our team, and we strive to ensure our workforce represents the diversity of the community.

Historically, our work has been underpinned by obligations under multiple diversity and inclusion action plans, including a *Gender equality action plan*, *Sexual harassment prevention plan*, *Disability action plan* and *Aboriginal community engagement strategy*. While these action plans share many common elements, we identified an opportunity to consolidate our actions into a streamlined and intersectional *People and culture plan 2024–26*, designed to ensure our efforts to build a positive workplace and culture has as much impact as possible.

Focused on creating a thriving workforce and an inclusive workplace culture, the *People and culture plan* will serve as a cohesive and holistic umbrella for the Commission's key people objectives. Crucially, the implementation of the *People and culture plan* aligns with the Commission's *Strategic plan 2024–26*, positioning our organisation to deliver its key projects and services in the years ahead.



This *People and culture plan* embodies our collective vision to cultivate an environment where every individual feels valued, empowered and inspired to contribute their best. The plan groups our actions under four pillars, focused on championing belonging and inclusion; driving a culture of respect; enhancing our team's health, safety and wellbeing; and prioritising openness and trust. Across each of these pillars, we maintain our long-term focus on understanding the needs of Victorians and shaping our workforce and its skills to deliver work that has a positive impact on their lives.

As we embark on this transformative journey, every member of our team has a role to play in shaping the organisation's culture and embedding the *People and culture plan* in our day-to-day work. Together, we have the power to build an organisation where respect, integrity and empathy form the foundation of everything we do.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ro Allen'.

Ro Allen
Victorian Equal Opportunity
and Human Rights Commissioner

About the plan

Our *Strategic plan 2024–26* identifies ‘be the best we can be’ as a key principle guiding our functions and actions. This plan sets out how we will give life to this principle, including taking steps to ensure we are an inclusive, safe and thriving workforce.

We have a strong history of leading by example in developing and progressing ambitious people and culture action plans, including our *Gender equality action plan*, *Sexual harassment prevention plan*, *Disability action plan* and *Aboriginal community engagement strategy*.

While sharing many common elements, these actions have not always been overseen or updated in a centralised and consistent way. This plan brings the actions from these individual documents together in a unified and streamlined way, supported by overarching focus areas and centralised governance and oversight.

Be the best we can be: We will develop and maintain a high performing team that thinks critically and carefully about all of its work. We will lead by example by nurturing a diverse and respectful workplace. We will invest in our organisation and staff to build capability, be creative and ensure strong governance and operations.

—*Strategic Plan 2024–26*

Careful research, integration, analysis and consultation has shaped the four pillars and road map for delivery of our people and culture objectives:

1. Collation and analysis

We began by collating all 112 action items across the individual action plans and identified common themes, duplication and interdependencies.

2. Benchmarking

Next, we assessed each action item for currency, relevance and best practice. This included conducting research to allow us to measure our approach against comparable organisations and best practice in human resources strategy. We also analysed each action item to ensure it had an intersectional lens.

3. Reviewing compliance

We also assessed each action to ensure we were complying with our legal obligations under workplace health and safety legislation, the Gender Equality Act and the Equal Opportunity Act – including ensuring the actions aligned with our own minimum standards for compliance with the positive duty.

4. Prioritising and sequencing

We developed an assessment matrix to assist us in deciding how actions should be prioritised and sequenced. This matrix captured critical factors such as the likely impact of the action item and alignment with our strategic objectives.

5. Consultation

We spoke with Commission leaders, staff and the representatives from the staff-led diversity and inclusion networks to hear their views, including where action items should be placed on our prioritisation matrix. Once we had collected and incorporated this feedback, we met with team leaders again to understand how responsibility for key actions should be assigned and shared across the Commission.



The *People and culture plan 2024–26* connects the Commission’s action plans and consolidates our objectives into four overarching pillars:

- **Champion diversity, belonging, inclusion and equality**
- **Build organisational capability and capacity**
- **Enhance health, safety and wellbeing for our people**
- **Build a culture of respect and trust, where our people feel empowered and engaged**

Under each of these pillars, the plan sets out the actions we will undertake over the next three years, along with the indicators and measures that will tell us whether we are progressing well and moving towards our desired outcomes.

Importantly, this plan provides a consolidated framework and ensures we are delivering this work with an intersectional approach.

Underlying the plan are our values, aligned with the Victorian public sector values, which remind us what is important and how we will achieve our objectives.

Everyone at the Commission – leaders *and* staff – has a role to play in achieving the objectives set out in this plan. This shared responsibility and ownership will ensure this plan is embedded across the Commission, including in our team and individual work plans.

The Commission continues to operate within a changing environment, with new and emerging challenges ahead. Attracting, retaining and supporting high-performing individuals and teams to meet these challenges and continue to deliver exceptional work is more important than ever.

Pillars of our plan

The People and culture plan 2024–26 is a critical enabler for the delivery of our Strategic plan 2024–26.

It is through our people that we will deliver on the Commission's strategic priorities:

- Embed a culture of human rights
- Prevent inequality
- Eliminate racism and hate speech
- Promote the rights of First Nations people.

As we continue working through ongoing periods of change, we need to have a clear and overarching plan for building and supporting our workforce.

The People and culture plan 2024–26 identifies actions under four pillars that underpin the people strategy.



PILLAR 1

Champion diversity, belonging, inclusion and equality

- Promote intersectional inclusion
- Foster diverse talent acquisition
- Strengthen existing policies, frameworks and documentation
- Embed equitable processes and systems
- Build and embed cultural safety standards

PILLAR 2

Build organisational capability and capacity

- Invest in developing our people
- Build our team's skills and capability
- Encourage collaboration and knowledge exchange
- Reward performance and maintain motivation
- Build inclusive leadership and management capability
- Create flexible and adaptable workforce strategies

PILLAR 3

Enhance health, safety and wellbeing for our people

- Nurture wellbeing
- Empower mental health
- Ensure work-life balance
- Build resilience for success
- Sustain a healthy physical environment
- Develop pathways for reporting inappropriate behaviour

PILLAR 4

Build a culture of respect and trust, where our people feel empowered and engaged

- Foster a positive and inclusive work culture
- Enhance employee engagement and satisfaction
- Encourage collaboration and teamwork
- Recognise and celebrate achievements
- Promote open communication and transparency
- Embed a continuous improvement culture



Monitoring our progress

Our *People and culture plan 2024–26* is underpinned by a robust governance model and detailed implementation plan that outlines the priorities for delivering each outcome.

The *People and culture plan 2024–26* implementation plan sets out the activities and measures of success so we can proactively monitor our progress over the next three years.

Critical to the success of the *People and culture plan 2024–26* is a dynamic approach to review and adaptation.

Governance of the plan – reporting to board and employees

- Monitor and report on the progress of the plan's implementation.
- Conduct an annual review of the plan's implementation and establish priorities and activities for the following years (to coincide with the Commission's business planning cycle).
- Consistency with six minimum standards for implementing the positive duty under the Equal Opportunity Act:
 - Standard 1: Knowledge
 - Standard 2: Prevention plan
 - Standard 3: Organisational capability
 - Standard 4: Risk management
 - Standard 5: Reporting and response
 - Standard 6: Monitoring and evaluation.

An intersectional approach: Aligning actions with our existing strategies, action plans, reviews, guidelines and audits

The *People and culture plan 2024–26* consolidates individual actions from a range of existing strategies, action plans, reviews, guidelines and audits.

GEAP	Gender equality action plan	ACES	Aboriginal community engagement strategy
SHPP	Sexual harassment prevention plan	BR	Benchmark report
CSS	Child safe standards	HSWP	Health, safety and wellbeing plan
DAP	Disability action plan	GRDW	Guideline: Race discrimination in the workplace
PMS	People matter survey		
REA	Race equality audit		

About the Commission

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory body that protects and promotes human rights in Victoria.

We have responsibilities under Victoria's key human rights laws – we help Victorians understand their rights and help resolve complaints when people have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, vilification and other unfair treatment.

We also conduct research, reviews and investigations into systemic issues and advocate for more effective protections for all Victorians.

Our legislation



Equal Opportunity Act 2010



Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001



*Charter of Human Rights
and Responsibilities*



*Change or Suppression (Conversion)
Practices Prohibition Act 2021*





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