



Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

ATO Gender Equality Action Plan

2017–19

Contents

Deputy Commissioner’s message	3
Gender Equality in the ATO	4
The case for change	5
Our Commitment	6
ATO’s Gender Equality Action Plan	7

Deputy Commissioner's message

I am pleased to present the launch of the ATO's Gender Equality Action Plan 2017–2019. This plan represents our formal commitment to the actions we will take as an organisation to work towards reaching gender parity.

Consistent with the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy: [Balancing the Future](#), the ATO has recognised the need to address gender inequality to help meet our vision to be a contemporary, professional, productive, and service-oriented organisation.

The [ATO Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2017-19](#) identifies gender equality as both a social and business imperative, critical to organisational sustainability.

Implemented as a priority from the ATO Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2017-19, the ATO Gender Equality Action Plan outlines how the ATO will embed long term cultural change through innovative, flexible work practices and leadership to drive and sustain gender equality.

As an organisation we have a responsibility to create an inclusive workplace, where assumptions are questioned and barriers removed to ensure equitable outcomes, regardless of gender.



Brad Chapman
Deputy Commissioner
ATO People
Australian Taxation Office

Gender Equality in the ATO

We need a workforce that reflects and embraces the diversity of the Australian community to continue to effectively manage and shape the tax and superannuation systems that support and fund services for Australians.

Our current workforce provides a gender balance where women represent 56.1 percent and men form 43.9 percent of the workforce.

Despite the over representation of women, the higher you look up in leadership, the fewer women you see. Conversely, significantly fewer men have access to flexible working arrangements, compared to females. This is a gender challenge for us to address.

The ATO's Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) outlines the actions that will be taken as an organisation to work towards reaching gender parity.

The aim is to reach a 50/50 men to women ratio at senior levels of the agency by 2019 and to increase the use of flexible work arrangements to more than 25% of staff¹. The GEAP outlines how we will embed long term cultural change through innovative, flexible work practices and leadership to drive and sustain gender equality.

Everyone has a role to play to create an inclusive workplace, where assumptions are questioned and barriers removed to ensure equitable outcomes, regardless of gender.

Successful cultural change in the ATO will require; men and women being seen equally as capable leaders; openly available flexible work arrangements for both men and women without risk to career progression; and overcoming outdated assumptions about gender roles.

¹ This target reflects APS policy and other literature which suggests there is unmet demand for male employees to utilise flexible working arrangements, as it is believed it will have a detrimental career implications. A 25% target would mean the number of male employees utilising flexible working arrangements match current female numbers. This target will be tested during the life of the GEAP to define what arrangements are covered by "flexible working arrangements" and how we capture current informal arrangements (e.g. job sharing, working from home arrangements, purchased leave utilisation, etc).

The case for change

A growing body of research shows that organisations with the most gender equality outperform those with the least, and gender equality in teams promotes an environment where innovation can flourish.

We must recognise the real commitments facing the modern day male and female and understand how to support employees to achieve a healthy balance. Collectively, through the emergence of attitudes, policies, work practices, systems and resources, we can enjoy the rewards that come with the social benefits of equality and business gains of flexibility.

Besides being the 'right thing to do', gender equality brings about benefits to both the people and the business. It is important to understand and appreciate the following principles for us to effectively engage in gender equality:

Define

Gender is socially shaped and constructed; it is not a synonym for women or women's issues and refers to the cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female.

Balance

Flexible work offers the provisions around when, where and how work is performed through viable options e.g. part-time hours, job sharing & locations of work, to support employees achieve an appropriate balance between work and personal needs, with a focus on outcome.

Support

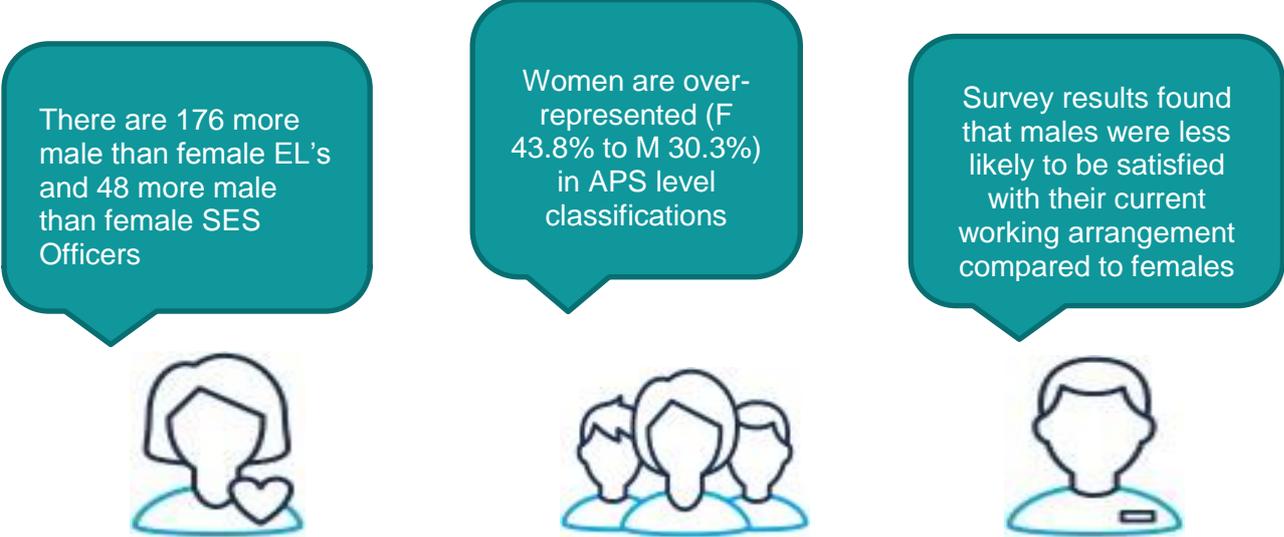
Supporting gender equality is not about holding men back, it is about ensuring every employee has the ability to access opportunities equally.

Act

Actions towards gender equality will enable us to tap into new pools of talent, unlock potential, identify staff for further development, and retain existing staff.

Create

In a competitive recruitment market, it makes business sense to create a culture of inclusion, challenging the preexisting attitudes and unconscious biases associated with gender in the workplace.



Our Commitment

To promote and support gender equality within the ATO, we commit to:

Govern

The establishment of governance arrangements led by the Optimising Workforce Capability and Culture Board (OWCC) will:

- support and monitor progress against the plan;
- champion efforts to raise the profile of gender equality in the ATO;
- challenge organisational barriers to gender equality.

Report

The creation and implementation of gender based reporting to monitor progress against key metrics. Where gender imbalance is identified, responsible areas will engage to develop mitigation strategies.

Communicate

Develop a communication and culture strategy to engage with employees and engender cultural change; to educate and consistently inform employees on the narrative and business case for 'why'.

Promote

Promote case studies and use of role models to demonstrate gender equality. These will include women in senior leadership positions, men and women that access or support flexible work arrangements and good news stories from business lines that have success working towards gender parity.

Innovate

Source best practice strategies for gender equality from across the APS, public and community sectors, in Australia and overseas. The GEAP is not static and will evolve as new and innovative approaches are identified.

Investigate

During the life of the GEAP, the ATO will investigate systems solutions to incorporate Diversity targets and cultural inclusion expectations into the KPI's of all employees with line management responsibilities, particularly SES.

Review

We will review procurement practices to ensure external service providers meet the requirements of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*.

Achieve

We will consider seeking a citation of Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) through the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

ATO's Gender Equality Action Plan

We will monitor our progress towards gender equality through these key targets and actions:

Target 1

Increase the take-up of flexible work arrangements to >25% of the workforce

Action	Timeframe	Responsibility (Branch)	APS Strategy Element
Undertake a survey to gauge the current utilisation of flexible work practices, barriers that might be preventing staff from utilising the arrangements available, the suitability of the existing arrangements and areas for potential improvement.	Completed	Workforce Strategy	4 & 5
Improve the collection and reporting of data relating to flexible work practices (particularly utilisation of Regular Hours Agreement, job share and Home Based Work).	Q1 2017/18	Workforce Strategy Establishments	4 & 5
Conduct a pilot of the “flexible by default” approach. • Apply the <i>Workforce and Technology Framework</i> to provide staff with relevant technology and enable flexibility aligned with job clusters (Mobile, Collaborative, Desk-top). • Conduct an evaluation to assess business and personal outcomes of “flexible by default” pilot.	Q4 2016/17 – Q2 2017/18	Workforce Strategy Design & Change Management EST	4 & 5
Review current policy relating to flexible work arrangements, identify gaps in policy arrangements, and develop a flexible work arrangements policy in line with the “flexible by default” approach. Subject to pilot results, consider adopting “flexible by default” corporately.	Q1 2017/18	Workforce Strategy	4
Develop line manager capability in managing and supporting flexible workers and teams.	During pilot and ongoing	Learning & Development Workforce Strategy	4

<p>Actively promote, facilitate and coordinate access to flexible work arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promote the uptake of flexible work arrangements by men via targeted promotion and case studies. •Scope the introduction of a job-share register. <p>Target Branches with low utilisation of flexible work arrangements to overcome localised barriers/challenges.</p>	ATO wide rollout post – pilot Q3 2017/18	Workforce Strategy	1 & 4
<p>Incorporate flexibility considerations into workforce planning practices including job design.</p>	Ongoing	Workforce Strategy	3
<p>Test initiatives to gauge the suitability of existing and emerging technology to support flexible working outcomes consistent with the <i>Workforce and Technology Framework</i>.</p> <p>Enable the use of remote access, working from home, working from sites other than their home site (including flexible work spaces) and Wi-Fi on portable devices.</p>	Q4 2016/17 and ongoing	Staff Experience EST	3
<p>Domestic and Family Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop and implement a contemporary Domestic and Family Violence Policy. •Gauge interest in a Domestic and Family Violence Support Network (for victims, affected persons or supporters of the cause). •Introduce Domestic and Family Violence awareness and support training. 	Q4 2016/17 Q1 2017/18 Q4 2016/17 Q1 2017/18	Workforce Strategy Learning & Development Workforce Strategy, EST, Workplace	1 & 4
<p>Develop initiatives to enable staff on long term leave with opportunities to keep in touch. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Retaining building access (House Pass) •Keep in touch days •Invites to planning days/seminars, •Notice board for people looking for part time or job share arrangements •Recruitment opportunities <p>Through myATO app for Corporate updates.</p>	Q1 2017/18	Internal Security Workforce Strategy	1

Target 2

The rate of female representation at EL and SES levels is approximately 50/50

Action	Timeframe	Responsibility (Branch)	APS Strategy Element
Identify SES sponsors (male and female) to visibly advocate gender equality in the ATO.	Q3 2016/17	Workforce Strategy	1
Identify resources and tools to assist the ATO leadership cohort to build their understanding of gender equality issues and to identify opportunities to remove gender barriers.	Q3 2016/17 and ongoing	Workforce Strategy Leadership & SES Services	1 & 2
Introduce contemporary leadership programs for high potential EL2 and SES B1 employees, ensuring gender balanced participation rates. The programs will include opportunities for shadowing, coaching and mentoring by senior leaders.	Introduced Q1 2016/17 and ongoing	Learning & Development	2 & 5
Monitor results of annual talent management assessments (against the 9 box grid) for gender balanced outcomes. Educate SES on the potential for gender bias in assessment. Address outcomes where gender imbalance is identified.	Annually	Leadership & SES Services Workforce Strategy	2 & 3
Introduce exchange programs for SES between agencies or functional areas affected by gender imbalance, in a way that is sensitive to individual's needs (pending guidance from APSC).	Annually	Leadership & SES Services	2
Monitor and report on commencements, higher duties and promotion gender ratios at EL and SES levels.	Quarterly	Workforce Strategy	2 & 5
Introduce a network to consider gender issues in the ATO. This could include networking opportunities, peer support and information sharing.	Q2 2017/18	Workforce Strategy	1, 2, 3 & 4
Ensure gender balanced access to high profile capability development opportunities (including TAP, ANZOG, JAWUN, internal leadership programs and others). Monitor application and selection processes.	Ongoing	Learning & Development Workforce Strategy	2 & 5

<p>Leadership and management training initiatives continue to embed the concepts of Inclusive Leadership. Identify and create opportunities to profile leaders (male and female) who exemplify inclusive leadership styles.</p>	Current and ongoing	Learning & Development	4
<p>Ensure the ATO Employment Value Proposition (EVP) continues to focus on attracting candidates across a more diverse range of backgrounds, with different needs, and through different mechanisms.</p>	In progress and ongoing	HR Operations	3
<p>Pilot initiatives to recruit specialist skills under flexible working arrangements (e.g. Opening Doors and ATO-50).</p>	In progress and ongoing	HR Operations	3 & 4
<p>Work toward a gender balance of 50/50 on Boards, Committees and Panels (subject to role specific composition and staffing availability).</p>	Q4 2018/19	HR Operations ATO Corporate	3 & 5
<p>Introduce bias mitigation strategies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing recruitment content to minimise language with traditionally masculine or feminine connotations. • Introducing Unconscious Bias training for Recruitment panels, with a priority focus on panels assessing EL1 positions and above. • Conducting a trial of ‘blind recruitment’. • Monitoring each stage of the recruitment process for gender balance amongst candidates. • Monitoring the utilisation of merit pools for gender balance. 	Q1 2017/18	HR Operations Leadership & SES Services Learning & Development	3 & 5
<p>Participate in a whole of APS trial to examine APS Recruitment practices.</p>	Completed 14-18 Nov 2016	HR Operations	3 & 5

