

# VESPIIA ACCESS EQUITY POLICY



The Access and Equity Policy set out in this document is drawn up on the model of the Australian Government's Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society. The Charter is the key document guiding the Australian Government's Access and Equity strategy. It helps to ensure that government programs (and those programs funded by the government but delivered by contractors, including not-for-profits) meet the needs of our culturally and linguistically diverse society.

## PURPOSE

VESPIIA acknowledges that its legal and moral responsibilities cover the areas of:

- access in the provision of services offered by VESPIIA
- access in employment by VESPIIA
- access in the provision of information offered by VESPIIA
- access to any training and development offered by VESPIIA
- access to events hosted by VESPIIA

The Charter integrates a set of service delivery principles concerning cultural diversity into the strategic planning, policy development, budget, and reporting processes of service delivery, irrespective of whether these services are provided by government agencies, community organisations, or commercial enterprises

## POLICY

### Access

As a service provider, VESPIIA will make services available to everyone who is entitled to them, free of any form of discrimination on the basis of a person's country of birth, language, culture, race or religion.

### Equity

As a service provider, VESPIIA will develop and deliver services on the basis of fair treatment of all those clients who are eligible to receive them.

### Communication

As a service provider, VESPIIA will use all necessary strategies to inform eligible clients of the services available, their entitlements, and how they can obtain them. Providers shall also consult with their clients regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of services.

### Responsiveness

As a service provider, VESPIIA will be sensitive to the needs and requirements of clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and be responsive as far as practicable to the particular circumstances of individuals.

### Effectiveness

As a service provider, VESPIIA will be focused on meeting the needs of clients from all backgrounds.

### Efficiency

As a service provider, VESPIIA will optimise the use of available public resources through a user-responsive approach to service delivery that meets the needs of clients.

### Accountability

As a service provider, VESPIIA will have a reporting mechanism in place which ensures it is accountable for implementing access and equity objectives for its clients.

### Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the CEO to implement this policy and to report to the Board annually on its progress.

### PROCEDURES

All VESPIIA staff shall, wherever feasible, have adequate support and training to provide services and information accessible to all people.

VESPIIA will ensure its programs are designed and constructed to provide equal access for all users.

VESPIIA, in its role as an employer, will ensure all people have equal access to advertised positions, interviews, equipment, office accommodation, staff training and promotion.

VESPIIA shall, wherever feasible, assess proposals for any new (or substantially revised) policies or programs for their direct impact on the lives of people from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds prior to any decision to pursue such proposals.

Any new (or substantially revised) policies or programs that impact in different ways on the lives of people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds shall, wherever feasible, be developed by VESPIIA in consultation with people from those backgrounds.

VESPIIA shall, wherever feasible, for any new (or substantially revised) policies or program initiatives have a communication strategy developed and sufficiently resourced to inform people from relevant cultural and linguistic backgrounds of these changes.

VESPIIA shall provide resources so that publicly available and accessible information on its policies and programs is where necessary communicated appropriately to people from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and especially to those identified as having a high level of non-compliance.

VESPIIA shall institute complaints mechanisms that enable people (regardless of cultural and linguistic backgrounds) to address issues and raise concerns about its performance.

VESPIIA shall require that any agents, contractors, or partners of VESPIIA deliver outcomes consistent with this policy, and shall, in bidding for tenders or contracts, budget, where appropriate, for special provision for linguistic and cultural diversity.

VESPIIA shall, where necessary and feasible, provide for the special needs of clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds by providing language assistance through the use of interpreters or facilitators.

VESPIIA shall, where necessary and feasible, provide for the special needs of clients in remote areas through developing outreach and community liaison arrangements.

VESPIIA shall consider cultural diversity issues in the design and delivery of any training programs it provides.

VESPIIA staff shall, where necessary, receive ongoing cultural diversity training so that they develop knowledge and skills to work effectively from a cultural framework.



VESPIIA shall, where necessary and feasible, provide information in languages other than English, and through print, electronic media, and disability-appropriate methods of communication.

VESPIIA shall, where appropriate, consult with other providers and government agencies to ensure co-ordination of services appropriate to clients' needs.

VESPIIA shall promote diversity in the membership of its boards, committees and working groups.

VESPIIA shall keep in its client data collection record, where appropriate, such data as birthplace; whether a person's first language spoken was English; Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background; Australian South Sea Islander background; date of birth; year of arrival in Australia; birthplace of parents; sex; and religion (the collection of data will not always include all these items, as the relevance of these data items will vary depending on the service delivery context).

VESPIIA shall protect the privacy of individual clients when collecting this data. Consideration will be given to:

- collecting only data essential to the particular service delivery or evaluation purpose;
- guaranteeing anonymity; and
- ensuring that all data collection proposals are non-intrusive.



# VESPIIA GENDER EQUITY POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

As an organisation, VESPIIA strives to be the trusted voice of ESO's by championing the role of the profession through strong leadership, advocacy, and education.

VESPIIA acknowledges that there are a tremendous number of women working in organisations supporting serving persons and their families and that while they are often overrepresented in support roles, are underrepresented in leadership.

Many systemic, often unintended, and largely invisible effects continue to impact on the participation and progression of women within the Australian workforce. While our organisation has equal representation in our leadership, our sector is not reflective of this, where there are still differences in leadership roles, pay rates, and access to opportunities.

The impacts go beyond our profession, as the historical lack of women planners is reflected in our cities and regions. From transport, housing and public safety to childcare, workforce and civic participation, the built environment can be experienced very differently depending on gender, particularly in combination with factors such as age, disability, income, education, and cultural background.

VESPIIA accepts the diverse nature of gender and are committed to ensuring that every member of the organisation, our staff and our board, find the safety and support to be their authentic selves in any way they identify.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Acknowledging that gender equity is a whole-of industry issue, and not something that can be solved by VESPIIA and VESPIIA members alone, it is still important for VESPIIA to act at a national level and lead the sector in the discussion on gender equity.

This gender equity policy is a crucial first step and focuses on the measures that VESPIIA can take across multiple levels:

- Leadership as an organisation and its own activities
- Leadership and representation in the sector
- Leadership in relevant policy and achieving gender equitable outcomes

## DEFINITIONS

**Employee** means any person who is a current employee of VESPIIA, and includes permanent, fixed-term, fulltime, part-time, casual and contracted staff, and volunteers;

**Gender** refers to the social, behavioural and cultural attributes, expectations, and norms associated with being female, male, intersex, transgender or gender diverse;

**Gender Equality in the workplace** means ensuring all employees are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of their gender.

**Gender Equity** means fair treatment for all according to their respective needs. It may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities;

**Unconscious Bias** means a bias an individual may have towards an individual or a group without being consciously aware they do so.

## POLICY

### 1. VESPIIA will ensure gender equitable outcomes in all VESPIIA policy, initiatives, and activities.

This includes representation on VESPIIA's National Board and committees, providing membership options, professional development, and representation at VESPIIA and related industry conferences and forums. This representation should follow the guidance of a 40-40-20 representation (40% female, 40% male, 20% open).

### 2. VESPIIA will support gender equity within the sector.

This includes increasing understanding about gender equity across career stages, roles, and sectors, and working to examine, monitor and advocate for gender equity within the sector.

### 3. VESPIIA will promote diverse career paths, leadership, and business ownership.

This includes advocating for the specific benefits of a gender balanced approach and issues such as equal pay, equal responsibility, meaningful part-time work, more flexible career pathways, flexible working conditions, supporting women-led businesses and retention of women in the sector.

### 4. VESPIIA will advocate to government, business, and the community to achieve gender equitable outcomes within the places and communities for which we work.

This includes advocating for diverse representation on review panels, advisory boards, and leadership roles in government, as well as and advocating for the development of policies, plans and projects that create inclusive places and consider issues through a gender lens.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The priority actions include:

1. Establish a national gender equity working group, with representation from female and gender diverse members to develop an action plan and lead on actions to deliver on the policy principles.
2. Undertake a review to see how compliant VESPIIA and the profession are with this policy.
3. Create an action plan to help address any deviations from this policy.
4. Review the policy in 2-year intervals.