



## Media Release

28 April 2023

### Overwhelming response by DCA members to National Strategy for Gender Equality

DCA has today submitted its response to the government's consultation on the *National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality*.

In preparing this submission, DCA surveyed employees from our 1,200 member organisations, asking them to share their views on how the *National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality* could support and progress workplace gender equality.

The survey was conducted over one week and we received a total of 807 responses from DCA members across a wide variety of industries.

DCA CEO, Lisa Annese said that the engagement in this consultation by DCA members showed just how important gender equality was to Australian businesses.

"We received an unprecedented response to our member consultation survey with over 800 member employees responding," said Ms Annese.

"Achieving workplace gender equality is evidently an important issue for our members, many of whom have been working towards equity for a long time.

"We believe a *National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality* could be a powerful tool supporting and progressing gender equality in the workplace, and we commend the government for taking action to develop it.

"As our submission outlines, there are many systemic and cultural barriers preventing Australian workplaces from progressing gender equality. To address these issues, the Strategy must take an intersectional approach that centres the voices of marginalised groups.

"We have made a number of recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will help the Strategy to deliver real change for workplace gender equality.

"In particular, we are calling for a universal early childhood education and care system to ensure families have better access to quality, affordable care, and addresses pay inequity for the mostly female workforce. As well as improvements to parental leave, and more work to address gendered violence and harassment."

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DCA's submission is available at: <https://www.dca.org.au/submissions/national-gender-equality-strategy>.

## Table of Recommendations

FOCUS AREA	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>The role of government, business and the community in achieving workplace gender equality</b></p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 1: Given that the Minister for Women also has ministerial responsibility for the Australian Public Service, there is an opportunity for Government to be a leader in workplace gender equality, including piloting programs or initiatives for public sector employees.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 2: Noting that the Productivity Commission is set to examine Australia’s childcare system, DCA recommends that the Strategy should also further investigate creating a universal early childhood education and care system, which addresses pay rates for the sector’s mostly female workforce, and accessibility for families.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 3: Families should also be better supported through improvements to parental leave, and encouraging and supporting men to take on more childcare responsibilities.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 4: The government, business and community should work together to close the gender pay gap.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 5: The Strategy should acknowledge that it is the role of government to create systems for accountability and compliance for workplace gender equality.</p>
<p><b>Priorities for achieving workplace gender equality</b></p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 6: DCA recommends that priorities under the Strategy should include a focus on: understanding and reporting on industrial and occupational segregation and how this contributes to the gender pay gap; women’s leadership; and pay equity – particularly in ‘feminised’ industries.</p>
<p><b>Underlying challenges for women’s economic equality</b></p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 7: The Strategy should address the gender superannuation gap and lack of superannuation payments on parental leave.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 8: The Strategy should include plans to improve Australia’s parental leave offering.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 9: The Strategy should include a plan to improve access to universal early childhood education and care</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 10: The Strategy should aim to break down traditional gender norms concerning work and care.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 11: The Strategy should aim to improve the availability of flexible work options that allow workers to balance work and care responsibilities.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 12: The Strategy should address the undervaluing of feminised or caring occupations.</p>
<p><b>Addressing gendered violence and</b></p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 13: The Strategy should include plans for evidence-based education on gendered violence and harassment.</p>

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<b>harassment</b>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 14: Efforts to address gendered violence and harassment should focus on engaging men.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 15: The Strategy should aim to improve complaints and reporting mechanisms for gendered violence and harassment.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 16: The Strategy should consider how to hold perpetrators accountable for gendered violence and harassment in the workplace.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 17: DCA recommends that the Strategy be aligned with the work of Respect@Work and the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–32.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 18: The Strategy should ensure that appropriate funding is allocated to prevention and response agencies such as ANROWS, Our Watch, the Full Stop Foundation, and others.</p>
<b>How can the Strategy take an intersectional approach to gender equality?</b>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 19: Australia does not currently collect data that enables us to understand how different marginalising characteristics impact gender equality. DCA is of the view that having more nuanced data collected would enable policy makers to design interventions that are more appropriate to the experiences of a diversity of men, women and non-binary or gender diverse people, particularly those from marginalised groups.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 20: The Strategy should ensure that programs and initiatives are designed in a way that centres the voices of people from marginalised groups, for example First Nations people, culturally and racially marginalised people, people with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ people.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 21: When discussing intersectionality, DCA is of the view that it is important to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the term. In our experience, while the term is increasingly used in policy discussions, there is not always an agreed definition or understanding of the term.</p>
<b>Underlying challenges in the way we value and allocate paid and unpaid care</b>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 22: The government should consider ways to address the insufficiency of current paid leave provisions for those with caring responsibilities.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 23: The Strategy should include provision to promote shared care for parental leave.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 24: The Strategy should aim to improve the availability of flexible work options that allow workers to balance work and care responsibilities.</p> <hr/> <p>RECOMMENDATION 25: The Strategy should support flexible work and improving work life balance for all.</p>

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<b>Barriers to gender equal leadership and representation</b>	RECOMMENDATION 26: The Strategy should address the undervaluing of feminised or caring occupations.
	RECOMMENDATION 27: The Strategy should include specific funding for leadership programs and initiatives that centre women from marginalised groups, including First Nations women, culturally and racially marginalised women, women with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ women.
	RECOMMENDATION 28: The Strategy should emphasise how diverse and inclusive workplace are beneficial for all.

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**About DCA:** Diversity Council Australia is the independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We provide unique research, inspiring events and programs, curated resources and expert advice across all diversity dimensions to a community of over 1,200 member organisations. Our member organisations are estimated to employ nearly two million Australians, representing more than 20% of the workforce.