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# FOREWORD FROM THE MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY







Hon. Ben Carroll MP



Hon. Melissa Horne MP



Vicki Ward MP

The transport sector is key to how our community and economy functions. It's a dynamic sector and needs a diverse and dynamic workforce, particularly as Victoria pursues an ambitious program of infrastructure upgrades, planning, reform, and operational changes to transform Victoria's transport network now and for future generations.

We want the best people for the transformative infrastructure task and to plan and operate our network as it delivers safe, simple, connected journeys.

A great workforce reflects the people it serves and there's never been a better time to be a woman in transport.

The Women in Transport program was established in 2017 to make sure we draw on the skills and talent of all members of the community to underpin this massive task.

It was the first program of its kind in Australia to take a strategic and comprehensive approach to shifting the dial within a sector in which men have been traditionally over-represented. The program is sector and portfolio-wide and includes our public transport operators and infrastructure partners in a joint effort to boost the number of women in roles at all levels of seniority.

Over the past four years there has been exciting progress, as the Women in Transport program has expanded its scope and ambition. For example, our mentoring program which began with a focus on engineering careers now includes the full breadth of transport opportunities, from strategic communications to rail signalling, asset management and transport planning.

Despite major advances, we know women still face significant barriers to entering the transport industry. We know we can do more, and we have drawn on extensive research and stakeholder feedback to develop the next Women in Transport strategy.

These are concrete, practical steps to get more women into the industry at all stages of their careers – and to provide even more opportunities to make their mark.

We want you to focus on how far your career can take you in this critically important and dynamic sector that keeps all of us connected.

#### Hon. Jacinta Allan MP

Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop

#### Hon. Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Minister for Fishing and Boating

#### Hon. Ben Carroll MP

Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety

#### Vicki Ward MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Transport

# MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT



**Paul Younis** 

It is with enormous pleasure that I present the new Women in Transport (WiT) Strategy 2021-2024. The first three-year WiT Strategy was launched in 2017 by the then Minister for Public Transport the Hon. Jacinta Allan MP.

It was a strategy that arose from the Minister's own drive to improve gender diversity in the sector that she continues to lead for the government, now as the Minister for Transport Infrastructure and the Suburban Rail Loop.

The inaugural strategy was a collaboration across the transport sector, drawing on each transport entity's efforts to improve gender diversity. Although this resulted in significant improvement, together, the sector believes there is more we can and must do.

Why do we have a WiT Strategy? Recent targeted initiatives to increase the participation of women in the Victorian public transport sector have seen some success, but there continues to be a lack of workplace gender diversity, with women and people of diverse gender identities representing only 21% of the total workforce, up from 16% in 2017.

This has significant implications for gender equality and freedom for people of all gender identities to fully participate in the sector.

While the transport sector is one of many sectors that is over-represented with men in Australia, we know that our workforce needs to be representative of the Victorian community to ensure that our services and policies meet the needs of that community.

Gender equality in our workforce will improve the way services are provided to the community, as well as expand access to employment, education and healthcare for people of all gender identities. In order to achieve this, action needs to be taken to identify and address barriers to the participation of women, and all people of diverse gender identities, in the sector.



In this new strategy, we aim to remove the barriers that have limited diverse gender representation in the sector to improve outcomes such as participation and earnings for women, as well as our own business performance.

In 2020, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic devastated the global economy with particularly adverse effects on women. Recent data from the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet indicates that in Victoria:

- Young women (aged 22-29)
   have faced the highest increase
   in unemployment
- Women (particularly part-time workers) have experienced bigger rises in unemployment and greater declines in participation rates compared to men
- Women have had proportionally more work hours cut than men in those industries worst affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) (e.g. administration, hospitality, tourism).

As a result, the Victorian Government has funded many initiatives to get more women back in work including the allocation of \$2.404m over three years in the 202-21 budget to the WiT Program as part of its coronavirus

(COVID-19) economic response to create job opportunities for women in the transport sector and take action to attract and retain women into the sector.

This is in the same year that the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 was made law in this state, obliging all of us in the public sector to bring about gender equality.

This funding will provide an enormous boost to our collective effort to achieve gender diversity in our sector, but the real difference will be made when all of us, particularly those of us in leadership positions, take personal accountability for gender diversity and equity in our workplaces. To ensure this accountability, a sector steering committee of transport sector entity leaders will be established, to be chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport. This Steering Committee will govern and drive the initiatives under the Strategy.

I commend this Women in Transport Strategy 2021-24 to you, and urge everyone, including men, to get involved in bringing about change.

Paul Younis
Secretary of Transport

# WOMEN IN TRANSPORT PROGRAMS 2017-2020

During the course of the WiT Program 2017-2020, the sector reported twice annually to the portfolio ministers against targets to improve gender diversity. In 2017, the aggregated gender breakdown across the Transport Operators was 16 per cent women and 84 per cent men.

We set an aggregated target of 25 per cent women by the end of 2020, and while we did not achieve this target, our initiatives led to this representation growing to 21 per cent overall.

Research conducted through the WiT Program 2017-2020 highlighted two key themes: women are attracted to the opportunities within the transport sector; and, despite enjoying the work, many are challenged by the cultures of a sector that is historically overrepresented by people who identify as men.

The WiT Strategy uses a collective impact approach to achieve systemic change across the sector. Through collaboration and engagement with both government partners and private providers, the strategy expresses an industry-wide commitment to increase gender diversity in the sector.

The WiT Strategy encompasses organisations in:

- the public transport sector which includes operators: Metro Trains, V/line, Yarra Trams, Dyson, Transdev and CDC Bus Victoria.
- The public-sector workforce which includes: DoT (incorporating the former VicRoads, Public Transport Victoria) and transport agencies; VicTrack, the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (MTIA) and the Suburban Rail Loop Authority.

 Other stakeholders to the Women in Transport Strategy include the Freight and logistics industry, the Office for Women and the Department of Education and Training.

The Department of Transport (DoT) is responsible for bringing together these sector partners to achieve the aims of the strategy. The governance of this partnership will be formalised through the establishment of the Women in Transport Sector Steering Committee.

DoT will coordinate the implementation and monitoring of programs and initiatives within the WiT Strategy. Program outcomes will be tracked bi-annually at both a population level (to measure real-world impact) and a performance level (to assess how well programs are delivered).

Each partner in the WiT Strategy is an employer entity with the full range of independent strategies to support the objectives of their organisation. As a collective, the sector has committed to ensuring the alignment of the WiT Strategy with individual internal inclusion and diversity strategies, so that the approach remains consistent across partners.

Each sector partner has been involved in the development of this new strategy. This means that they have agreed to implement the targets and initiatives in the strategy and to report to the portfolio ministers twice a year on their progress towards meeting the targets.





# THE VICTORIAN GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

As of 31 March 2021, Victorians of all gender identities will benefit from the introduction of *The Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020* (the Act), which also underpins the new WiT Strategy. The purpose of the Act is to:

- 1 require the public sector, councils and universities to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality; and
- 2 require the public sector, councils and universities to promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services.

The Act explicitly states that: a defined entity must, in developing policies and programs and in delivering services that are to be provided to the public, or have a direct and significant impact on the public:

- consider and promote gender equality; and
- 2 take necessary and proportionate action towards achieving gender equality.

While most of the public transport sector operators are private companies not bound by the Act, the public agencies in the sector have chosen a model for service delivery to the public, which is primarily outsourced to the private sector. As a result, the sector as a whole is choosing to be actively guided by the purpose, objectives and principles of the Act in the development of this new WiT Strategy.

The core principles of the new WiT Strategy acknowledge that progress for women and people of diverse gender identities in transport must involve the cultural change and structural transformation that are underlying principles of the Act.



### STATE OF PLAY

Throughout the duration of the WiT Program 2017-20, progress on the participation of women was monitored and evaluated by the sector, with all organisations and agencies reporting against key demographic and gender indicators every six months.

There was also extensive consultation with sector leaders, specialists and employees across the sector on gender and issues associated with gender equality and the persistence of the under-representation of women, particularly around gender composition of occupations, gender role attitudes and stereotypes, and equality of opportunity and treatment in employment.

In addition to this evaluation, a key initiative of the WiT Program 2017-20 was a DoT-sponsored PhD research project titled "Understanding and Improving Gender Diversity in the Public Transport Workforce", the findings of which have helped to guide the development of this strategy.1

The new WiT Strategy has been informed by consultation and evaluation of the current WiT programs. Feedback from this research centred around structural barriers to change and consequences of the current workplace culture.

The feedback and research findings can be summarised as follows:

# STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO CHANGE

- Inadequate facilities (e.g. toilets and showers) for frontline workers
- Inflexible conditions which make it difficult for many women to work in public transport, particularly in non-traditional roles
- Recruitment practices which reinforce the status quo
- Lack of understanding of intersectional issues and their impact on the participation of women of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, LGBTIQ+ people, women with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women.

#### **CULTURAL LEGACIES**

Gender equality continues to be perceived as a women's issue, with consequences for the status and treatment of women within the sector

- Organisational culture and processes can reinforce gender inequalities
- Many men are unaware of how to support and participate in WiT strategic directions.

This project was undertaken by Rachel Mence, a research student from the Monash University Public Transport Research Group. Her doctoral thesis is due for submission in 2021. Preliminary findings from this research support and further validate the themes which have emerged from the sector feedback.



# OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To address the themes that emerged from consultation and evaluation of the current situation for women within the Victorian public transport sector, the following strategic objectives for this new WiT Strategy have been developed:

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: DISMANTLE THE STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

This strategy recognises that transport has traditionally employed mostly men, particularly in technical, operational and leadership roles. As a result of this, structural changes will be required to improve access to employment opportunities for women and people of diverse gender identities.

For this strategy to be successful and sustainable, it must focus on reducing or removing the structural barriers to participation.

Some of the barriers that the strategy will address are:

- Workplace facilities
- Flexible working arrangements and seniority
- Recruitment practices.

The removal of these structural barriers is critical to making any significant progress toward achieving gender balance and equity at all levels in our sector

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: CHANGE THE CULTURE

Transport is traditionally over represented by men and research into the sector has demonstrated that organisational culture and processes can unintentionally reinforce gender inequalities. For this strategy to be successful and sustainable, it must focus on supporting a gender-inclusive culture.

This strategy acknowledges and values the role men play, and will provide support to and opportunities for the participation of men in culture change.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

Improving access to employment and career advancement for women and people of diverse gender identities is fundamental to achieving social and economic empowerment, which will lead to increased gender diversity in the sector.



# KEY PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGE

This new strategy is underpinned by the following key principles:

#### **INTERSECTIONAL NEEDS**

The development of this strategy has been undertaken with sensitivity to the differing perspective and needs of women and people of diverse gender identities from diverse backgrounds. Decision-makers will listen to diverse groups of women and people of diverse gender identities, and ensure programs and outcomes address the specific intersectional needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- LGBTIQ+ people
- Women with disability
- CALD women
- Women of all socio-economic circumstances
- Women in regional Victoria
- Young, ageing and women new to the sector.





# KEY PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGE

## EVIDENCED-BASED SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

An evidence-based approach will ensure that the WiT actions and initiatives represent the best allocation of resources to meet the goals of this strategy.

#### STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

The whole transport sector are active participants in establishing the objectives of this strategy. Where possible, organisations will be encouraged to identify their own targets. The overall target will then represent an aggregation of the collective intentions of each participating organisation.

#### AN INTERVENTIONIST APPROACH

An interventionist approach will be adopted for future transport contracts, including service agreements and franchise agreements between public transport operators and all other contractors providing transport services to the Victorian Government.

To support this objective, DoT will explore the possibility of outlining gender equity requirements into future commercial contracts.

An action plan has been developed to realise the strategic objectives and principles for change set out in the WiT Strategy. The key focus areas of the action plan are as follows:





# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The WiT Program 2017-20 included initiatives aimed at improving the social and economic status of women by providing education and career development opportunities to both attract and retain women in the sector.

WiT will continue to support existing sector-wide programs and add further initiatives to this focus area.

The transport sector will also be more collaborative and proactive in the development of programs, including:

- a sector-wide secondment program
- a program to support women from service and care industries who have lost their jobs due to coronavirus (COVID-19) to transition into transport jobs
- an outreach program for secondary schools to educate girls about transport careers
- promotion of opportunities to graduate organisations and university open days
- a partnership with the AFLW to develop an employment program with the public transport sector for AFLW players.

The WiT Network is a sector-wide, membership-based organisation open to anyone working in transport with an interest in gender equity and diversity. With a view to creating a professional support network, the network will play a leading role in coordinating activities on behalf of the transport sector, providing peer support, networking opportunities, professional development, social events, training, communications and external activities such as transport site visits.

The WiT Network is responsible for the following:

- Up to three WiT Network events
- Outreach programs to secondary schools
- WiT representation at university open days
- Professional development and training events for WiT Network members

Other sector-wide programs and events as determined by the WiT Sector Steering Committee.

## MARY JANE LEWIS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION PROGRAM

The Mary Jane Lewis Scholarship Foundation (MJLSF) provides scholarships of \$10,000 a year for three years for disadvantaged young women to undertake an undergraduate degree.

As part of the WiT Program, DoT has partnered with the MJLSF to provide scholarships to provide women with assistance to complete a university degree in a transport-related field.

The intention of the program is to attract young women to the transport sector as an employer at the completion of their studies.

A total of 18 undergraduate scholarships have been awarded since March 2017. Additional funding for 11 new scholarships has been committed by the sector, and the State Government has committed to fund a further 11 scholarships.

The MJLSF Program will continue with the following objectives, which will be reviewed and evaluated annually:

- There will be transport sector representatives on the selection panel for scholarships
- MJLSF scholars will be invited to at least two transport site visits annually, coordinated by DoT
- MJLSF scholars will be invited to join the Young Transport Professionals Network and the WiT Network
- The DoT manager of the MJLSF Program will liaise with each donor organisation to arrange communications with MJLSF scholars about organisational internships, cadetships, graduate and other employment programs.

By the end of 2024, the sector target is for 10 MJLSF scholars to be employed within and/or have undertaken a vocational placement within the transport sector.

#### WIT MENTORING PROGRAM

The WiT Mentoring Program is creating an empowered, enduring and energetic future for women in Victoria's transport industry.

Women mentees are custom-matched with industry leaders, experts and peers based on needs, goals, preferences and location. Both mentees and mentors benefit from personal and professional development, while contributing to a culture that supports the capability of women in transport, both now and in the future.

The program was originally focused on women in engineering, expanding to include women working in all disciplines over time.

The reach of this mentoring program has also grown, with commercial transport alliance partners now participating. Further evaluation of retention and promotion outcomes of those participating compared to those not participating is required.

This program has welcomed 1,071 women (549 mentoring pairs) participants to date.

The mentoring program will continue, with an annual survey to determine the:

- Number of women participants who are promoted internally and within the sector
- Retention of women participating in the program
- Number of women participants who change to a preferred job stream
- Likelihood of women participants remaining in transport
- Likelihood of women participants recommending the program to others.

#### WIT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The WiT Program offers customised leadership development programs to women working within the transport sector, with 36 women participating in these programs so far.

Program evaluation indicates the programs have been received well and are making a difference to women's experience at work.

Support for the sector-wide program will continue with a focus on intersectional women participants.

The WiT Leadership Program will continue with an annual survey to determine the:

- Number of participants who have been promoted internally (within two years of completion)
- Likelihood of participants favourably promoting their employer to others.
- Relevance/use of the program.

#### **GENDER ETHICAL PROCUREMENT**

Over the course of the WiT Strategy 2017-20, a pilot was run for a gender ethical procurement policy on major transport contracts, including organisations, suppliers and funded agencies.

Procurement is a powerful tool to cultivate gender diverse workplaces, which will in turn contribute to the attraction and retention of women to the sector.

A working group will be established in early 2021 to develop gender ethical procurement policy guidelines which the sector will commit to implementing.

# 2 LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This strategy will have robust and transparent governance arrangements, with a new WiT Sector Steering Committee to be established in the first half of 2021.

This committee will be an advisory body that will be responsible for recommending industry targets and benchmarks, monitoring progress and endorsing sector-wide campaigns.

# 3 SETTING INDUSTRY STANDARDS

To promote consistency across the sector, a set of industry standards will be developed in collaboration with the sector to help achieve sector-wide change in the overall representation of women.

During 2021, sector working groups will be established to develop standards on the following areas:

- Facilities for frontline workers
- Workplace flexibility
- Alignment with our industry partners and key influencers about employment conventions and gender equality
- Recruitment practices
- Embedding a gender lens into decisions regarding corporate events to attend and sponsor.

# 4 CHANGING THE CULTURE

The sector has acknowledged that the existing cultural legacies within the transport industry need to be collectively and collaboratively addressed.

The gender equality principles, which underpin the Act, can provide key guidance for the transport sector here. It states:

- 1. All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- 2. Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- 3. Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- 4. Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
- 5. Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.

- 6. Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- 7. All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.
- 8. Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.

The transport sector is committed to these principles.

Sector working groups will be established to develop policies and training programs to apply across transport organisations in the following areas:

- Creating a Male Allies Program
- Workplace equality, respect and family violence
- Managing a diverse and inclusive workforce
- Everyday sexism and taking bystander action
- Intersectional needs



# COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNS

Organisational differences within the sector have presented a challenge to reaching gender equality. The sector has committed to working more collaboratively and speaking with one voice about gender equality. It is important for the sector to present a consistent message both internally and externally about the importance of gender equality to social and economic inclusion, and the importance of actions taken to achieve a more gender inclusive public transport sector.

The transport sector will work together to shift the way the industry is perceived by the community, to highlight the sector's focus on people. This will have a significant impact on the attraction and retention of women to the industry.

The WiT Sector Steering Committee will identify campaigns the industry can launch together under one banner of the Victorian transport sector. At least two community campaigns will be run per year of the strategy.

Community campaigns may include topics such as:

- Why transport needs more gender diversity
- Promoting transport careers to women
- Women, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and transport
- Equality and respect for women
- Safety for women and girls



# TARGETS AND REPORTING

The sector will continue to work towards targets for gender equality. Progress toward these targets will be reported to Ministers. Particular attention will also be given to intersectional disadvantage in any targeted recruitment and reporting.

Aggregated data from preferred recruitment services will inform actions to attract diverse talent, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- LGBTIQ+ women and people of diverse gender identities
- Women with disabilities
- CALD women
- Women in regional Victoria
- Young, ageing and women new to the sector
- Women of all socio-economic circumstances.

Leadership on and accountability for targets in individual entities will be reported to the ministers as well as internal governing bodies, such as boards and executive leadership teams.

To help inform the effectiveness of the strategy, surveys about worker experience will be conducted, targeting the following groups:

- Frontline workers e.g. bus, train and tram drivers, customer service staff
- Trades and maintenance workers
- Technical workers e.g. engineering departments, asset management, planning, project management, data analysts
- Management, corporate support workers.

The outcome of these surveys will be submitted to the ministers twice a year, and the data will be used to refine the initiatives in this strategy.



#### LAGGING INDICATOR TARGETS

- Aggregated sector target: 30% women across the sector by end 2024.
- 50% women in senior roles in the public sector agencies by end 2024.
- 30% women in senior roles in private operators by end 2024.
- Maintain 50% women on boards in all public sector entities.
- Private sector entity boards to work towards gender balance.
- Aggregated sector target: 10% per year increase in women and people of diverse gender identities for areas heavily overrepresented by men as follows:
  - engineering,
  - project management,
  - asset management,
  - driving, yard work and cleaning,
  - technical and trades, planning, data analysts.

#### **LEADING INDICATOR TARGETS**

- Target for likelihood of women favourably promoting their organisation to others, for each entity.
- Target number of women in each entity promoted internally.

#### **PROGRESS TARGETS**

- By the end Q4 2021, 10 MJLF scholars will be employed within and/or will have undertaken a vocational placement within the public transport sector.
- By end Q4 2021, working group established to set clear objectives for the next WiT Leadership Program to determine how the provider for this program will be procured.
- By end Q4 2021, working group established to develop guidelines for sector-wide gender ethical procurement policy.
- WiT Sector Steering Committee to be established and met by end Q2 2021.
- Sector-wide working groups established for industry standards by end Q4 2021. Standards agreed by end 2021.
- Sector-wide working groups established for changing the culture by end Q4 2021.
   Guidelines and toolkits developed by end 2021.
- Two sector-wide community campaign topics to be established each year by end Q4 2021.
   Two campaigns to be run per year.
- Heavy Vehicle Licence Pilot established by Q4 2021 and 300 women have completed the course and been employed across the bus and freight and logistics industries by end 2024.

- 40 women completed the EPIC Engineering Pathways program by end 2024.
- By end 2024, 20 women have completed a 3-year apprenticeship in Automotive
   Diesel Engine Technology with the assistance of a Victorian Government scholarship under the WiT Program.
- By end 2024, 11 young women have received a Victorian Government scholarship to complete an undergraduate degree in a transport related discipline through the Mary Jane Lewis Transport Scholarships Program.
- By end 2024, 9 women working across the transport sector have been awarded a scholarship under the WiT Post-graduate Scholarships Program.
- By end 2024, 15 women completing a PhD as part of the DoT and Monash (Sustainable and Effective Public Transport (SEPT)
   Graduate Research Industry Partnership (GRIP), will have received a vocational placement across the transport sector.



We want you to focus on how far your career can take you in this critically important and dynamic sector that keeps all of us connected.

Hon. Jacinta Allan MP Minister for Transport Infrastructure

