

Embracing Equity

The theme for this year's International Women's Day is #EmbraceEquity. Inequity affects many people, but historically it has often marginalised women, culturally diverse communities, people with disabilities, people who are economically disadvantaged, and those from the LGBTQIA+ community.

The goal of equity is to create equal opportunity for all people by providing them with appropriate resources to suit their needs in a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. At WentWest, this means challenging and changing health systems so that all members of our community have access to quality, culturally appropriate, respectful, and affordable care, and that our workplace provides equitable opportunities and a supportive culture for all of us.

Historically, medical research and health services have focused on male patients. This has created a gender gap in health statistics, health literacy, and health care. Our role is to ensure all genders have a voice and choice in their health care, they are informed, and their individual needs are met.

We all need to take action and #EmbraceEquity, not just on International Women's Day and for women, but always for all genders.

What is Equity?

Equality means each individual or group is given the same resources or opportunities.

Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the appropriate type and quantity of resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.



What does Equity Look Like at WentWest?

Women represent 47.9% of employees in Australia, yet, despite making up almost half of the workforce, women hold only 17.6% of chair positions, 31.2% of directorships, 19.4% of CEOs and 34.5% of key management roles. Over a fifth of boards and governing bodies have no female representation, yet only 0.6% have no male directors.

At WentWest however, these statistics are very different. 72% of our staff identify as women and 2.7% self-describe in another way. Over half of our Senior Management Team and half of our Board are women. 21 out of 31 of our people leaders are women and we've supported 25 women through our Ignite Leadership Program.

We're really proud of our focus on building culture and inclusion at WentWest and were pleased to see that in the 2022 Best Practice Australia (BPA) survey, 100% of you said that our workplace was free from sexual harassment and 96% felt it was free from gender-based discrimination.

We're constantly thinking of ways to build a safer more equitable workplace and have been busy in the background working on diversity and inclusion policies and memberships which we will share with you shortly.

National Shifts

Although there is still a long way to go in achieving equity across Australia, we can already see some positive changes to fair work policies and the gender pay gap:

- The **Respect@Work** legislation changes recently introduced aim to significantly progress gender equality by ensuring women are able to earn a living in safe, sexual harassment-free workplaces
- **Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave:** In February, the Fair Work Act and National Employment Standards were amended to give employees entitlement to 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave per year. This will better protect the safety of employees and their families, and provide the time to access health, financial and legal support services. 1 in 3 women in Australia has experienced violence since the age of 15ⁱ
- **Gender Pay Gap:** The gender pay gap has dropped to 13.3% in Australia, which is a positive step in the right direction. However, women still earn on average 87 cents for every \$1 earned by a male in the same roleⁱⁱ

Equity For Everyone

We are fortunate at WentWest to see an equal balance of genders in leadership roles higher than in other organisations. Our hope is that this helps all staff to feel supported and represented and that they have mentors and role models to look up to. There is still a long way to go on the road to equity, particularly within the health space, but if we all #EmbraceEquity we are making steps towards a more inclusive, healthier, happier world.

Kind Regards,

The Senior Management Team

ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) *Personal Safety Survey, Australia 2016*, ABS cat. no. 4906.0, Canberra, ACT: ABS

ⁱⁱ HR Daily (2023), *Gender Pay Gap Falls to Lowest Point on Record*, available from: <https://www.hrdaily.com.au/news/gender-pay-gap-falls-to-lowest-point-on-record-11084>