



Gender Pay Gap Employer Statement 2023

About Youth Focus

For 30 years we have worked to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young Western Australians aged between 12 and 25 by providing services, at no cost, when and where young people need them. As the only youth specialist, for purpose mental health organisation in Western Australia we aim to build capacity within the community so that young people feel safe reaching for support, and that high-quality services are available when they do.

We provide services from eight metropolitan and regional offices, in Burswood, Bunbury, Peel, Albany and Meekatharra and as the Lead Agency at headspace sites in Albany, Midland, Geraldton and Northam. We also deliver services in schools, and in other locations in partnership with the communities in which we work.

We recognise inclusion can mean many things to many people, and with offices, teams and practitioners spread right across the State it is fundamental that we are united in approach to what this looks like day-to-day. Our **Guiding Principles, Statement of Commitment to Youth Safety and Wellbeing** and **The way we work** documents lay the road map for what inclusion means to us and is best summed up in our Statement of Inclusion:

"We are committed to ensuring every individual that interacts with us feels safe and is able to bring their whole selves, being welcomed with equity, dignity and respect. In doing so, we understand that we must first include, listen, and reflect in order to build trust, connect, and partner. We celebrate individuality and are guided by the stories and journeys of the communities in which we live and work."

Our Drive for Equity

Within our society there are systems and mindsets that can perpetuate experiences of inequity, exclusion and barriers to individuals being able to succeed in their chosen paths, or even feeling they have clear agency to make choices. The consequences of this reality are present in the stories of the young people we support, the challenges in the communities we work in and the inherent desire for change that drives many passionate and dedicated people to work in our sector.

We are driven to create a world where a young person's mental health does not get in the way of them being who they want to be. This desire to empower authenticity and individuality directly correlates to our respect for equity and celebration of people, as their whole selves. We exist to champion the mental health needs of young people so

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they can thrive in their communities and to ensure our staff have the opportunity to do the same. To us, this means feeling valued for who we are and what we bring in a way which energises us to be productive, open to challenges and have the opportunity to continuously learn and grow (1).

In order to do this, we know that we must create environments which are safe, inclusive and equitable.

¹ (Spreitzer, G., Sutcliffe, K., Dutton, J., Sonenshein, S., & Grant, A. M. (2005). A socially embedded model of thriving at work. *Organization Science*, 16(5), 537-549.)

Our Gender Pay Gap

We welcome and support the need for greater transparency to address inequities in our society and are proud to be able to share some of our actions to support gender equity, including our gender pay gap journey.

For us, this analysis is a valued contribution to our ongoing internal reflection of how we can do better in creating an environment for everyone which is inclusive, safe and conducive to supporting wellbeing. As such, we are grateful for the opportunity to discuss both current and future equity initiatives.

Based on our 2022-2023 WGEA reporting, our gender pay gap is as follows:

Category	Definition	Australia*	Youth Focus
Median base salary	Considers the fixed base salary an employee earns each year.	19.0%	7.7%
Median total remuneration	Considers the total remuneration package an employee earns each year, including salary packaging, higher duties/secondment, superannuation, and allowances.	14.5%	4.2%

* As published on the WGEA [website](#) and industry report.

Note: The difference between our 'median base salary' GPG and 'median total remuneration percentage' GPG is as result of:

- Employee wage fluctuations across the year for example as a result of higher duties or secondment (17 total adjustments over the 12-month period)
- Additional allowances for staff including site and travel payments.



- The 'total remuneration' factoring in use of salary packaging (65% of employee body currently access this benefit)

Over the last two years we have also made significant progress towards reducing our gender pay gap, with a favourable position compared to the national percentage.

Category	2021-22	2022-23
Median total remuneration	19.9%	4.2%
Median base salary	12.3%	7.7%

Workforce gender composition

As part of reviewing our WGEA data, an interesting point for reflection was the difference in proportionate gender distribution across our management and leadership roles in contrast to our industry comparison group. The data indicates that while males make up a total of 25% of our overall workforce, they constituted proportionately more (35%) of our "top quartile" earners and less (19%) of our "bottom quartile" earners.

It is important to acknowledge that a movement in salaries of just two female staff into the top quartile bracket would swing our performance in relation to this indicator in favour of a "negative gender pay gap". As such, while we take results seriously, we caution against making generalisations as an indicator of practice or bias owing to the fact that overall, our workforce numbers are low.

In 2022/23 62% of our internal promotions and 52% of our management appointments were filled by women supporting an increase to the representation of women in the "upper" and "upper middle" pay quartiles. At time of writing, women now account for 80% of the organisation's Executive Leadership Team and 60% of the broader Senior Leadership Team. As a total leadership percentage, this means 66% of leadership positions are occupied by women in the organisation which is up from 47% the year prior.

In similar fashion, we are heartened to see progress in the gender composition of our board which is now balanced at 50:50 and up from a 30% female and 70% male split the year prior.

As a result, we now track a variance of approximately 10% when comparing our total organisational gender composition to that of our leadership roles. Adjustments to allow for greater flexibility within roles (eg. part time and task distribution) have been impactful, along with a focus on the career development planning of staff within

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proximity to this cohort. These changes have specifically created greater opportunities for women to return to work in senior and management capacities, befitting their skills and experience that may have previously faced barriers to doing so. This will continue to be an area we reflect on when assessing our equity progress.

Equal position-based pay

It is important to specify that as the gender pay gap is calculated on the basis of taking an average of all male salaries and comparing them to all female salaries, it is not a measure of internal consistency within roles. That is, the reported gender pay gap does not measure whether a male is any more or less likely to get paid a higher salary for doing the same job as their female counterpart.

This type of analysis requires a like-for-like pay calculation comparison which the organisation has taken the time to conduct for positions in which it was possible to do so. This work has indicated that in relation to the roles of Youth Counsellor, Community Engagement Worker and Clinical Lead, there was a 0% gender pay gap evident.

Overall, we also pay higher than our NFP industry comparators, according to the SalaryOne NFP Remuneration Report 37.5% of the sector are paid less than \$60,000 per year. As at 2023 we have no staff paid below this amount.

Further, data suggests that relative to our competitors, our service delivery personnel are also much more likely to be part-time and much less likely to be casual.

Our Equity Initiatives

As an organisation within a 'care' sector, we see a number of factors within our workforce composition that are historically social determinants of pay inequity and recognise that many of our staff are members of traditionally marginalised or disempowered societal groups.

Quick statistics about our workforce:

- 75% are women;
- 60% are younger than 40;
- 52% are part time;
- 23% are members of the LGBTQI+ community;
- 40% have caring responsibilities and
- 14% live with a disability.

As a result, our obligation to ensure we create equity via the use of formal structures and processes become all the more important and we are committed to ensuring our practices do not perpetuate biases.

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For sustainability, we must also have capacity within our attraction, retention and remuneration approaches to flexibly respond to factors such as: skills shortages, clinical specialities, outreach services and regional environments, cultural requirements and market competitiveness.

Below are a number of initiatives we have put in place in recent years to foster, support and nurture equity and inclusion within our workplace.

A push to support the work-life harmony of staff

A key area of focus for the organisation over recent years has been around developing structures and frameworks that support staff to achieve work-life harmony. Within these documents, “gender equity” has been explicitly called out as a key objective in recognition of the supporting roles that workplace flexibility has on empowering women to participate fully in the workplace. Notable progress includes but is not limited to:

- The implementation of policy/procedure in relation to Flexible Working Arrangements, Leave, Time off in Lieu, Parental leave and Study Leave in a way which:
 - Empowers staff to understand their legal rights and their additional Youth Focus entitlements as well as how to best navigate systems and maximise these benefits in a way that works for them.
 - Fosters transparency and consistency across the organisation whereby decision making remains fair and equitable regardless of location, manager, role or individual circumstance.
 - All policies are gender neutral in their language and recognise the diverse nature of circumstance, identity and family units to promote equal access opportunities.
 - All policies headline feedback mechanisms and commitment to equal opportunity.
- The paid parental leave scheme now includes:
 - 13 weeks paid parental leave for primary carers as well as 4 weeks paid parental leave for secondary carers and 6 weeks surrogacy leave for gestational carriers.
 - Support for employees seeking to attend pre-adoption appointments, or in relation to proactive fertility.
 - Paid leave entitlements for employees who have experienced stillbirth or miscarriage.
- Our leave provisions for staff to support greater flexibility now include:
 - Access to paid ‘unique circumstances’ leave, this caters for the moments in life not strictly defined and can include things like grief, cultural responsibilities, significant health challenges or family crisis





- Flexible Public Holiday Leave, allowing staff to 'swap' public holiday days where the designated public holiday does not align with their cultural or other values and beliefs
- A broadening of the definition of personal/carers leave to include leave to support mental health and attendance at medical appointments for both employees and their dependents.
- Study and Exam Leave to support staff to pursue their career goals alongside their employment
- The provision of in-house training to all managers on their roles and responsibilities in encouraging, discussing and enabling work-life harmony and the associated equity benefits within their teams.
- A sustained focus towards supporting staff to successfully work remotely via the improvement of resources and work processes as well as IT and facilities systems.

A zero-tolerance to gender-based violence

This year, we launched a Family and Domestic Violence Staff Support Guide which seeks to ensure that staff who may need support are actively and sensitively empowered and supported to maintain their employment and participate safely in work. This document also spells out the zero-tolerance we have for FDV and the role we are committed to playing in eliminating gender-based violence.

Creation of a formal remuneration strategy which focuses on eliminating systemic and unconscious bias

The ability to consistently ensure a fair and equitable wage for staff as part of a formal, structured and unbiased pay determination process is an ongoing priority. Notable progress includes but is not limited to:

- Implementation of a salary banding process for all employees which ensures relativity across positions as well as wage competitiveness with market comparators. This has also resulted in the removal of 'grandfathered' structures that created inequity between new and long-term employees.
- Implementation of a formal and structured remuneration review process for staff to request a review of their salary that involved impartiality in review process and a transparent and multi-person panel.
- Ongoing, we now undergo annual reviews of wages and CPI utilising Salary One services as well as WGEA reporting to ensure our salaries are keeping pace with market and our gender pay gap is improving in response to our initiatives and raising discussions around where challenges may arise.

Ongoing measurement, listening and learning

To improve our ability to measure our equity progress, adjustments to our feedback mechanisms were required. This work progressed across 2022 to 2023, with

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improvements to Exit Interviews, the use of an anonymous feedback portal along with the commencement of an internal Employee Experience Survey and workshop process. These measures complemented the existing monitoring mechanisms such as tracking internal promotion rates to lessen the pattern of “hiring in” leadership roles from labour market and our HR KPI reporting provided to the Board on a bi-monthly basis.

In 2023 we also participated in the Diversity Council of Australia Inclusion Survey and through achieving higher than the national index across a range of metrics, were identified as a DCA Inclusive Employer 2023- 2024. Some key learnings from engaging in this survey in relation to gender equity include:

- 97.1% feel that gender based and sexual harassment is not tolerated in our organisation;
- 90% feel they have the flexibility to manage work and other commitments;
- 91.7% feel their immediate supervisor/ manager genuinely supports equality between genders;
- 90% feel we have an inclusive culture where diversity is valued and respected
- 95% feel they work in teams that treat each other with respect; and
- 87% agree they have the same opportunities as others, regardless of age, culture/ ethnicity, disability, gender indigenous background or sexual orientation.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Whilst we are proud of how we have come, we have both the opportunity and the intent to continue our progress through, but not limited to, the following measures:

- Continue to monitor our gender pay gap, reflect on our data and measure our position vs position findings to maintain momentum on our progress;
- Continue to support alternative approaches to leadership positions, traditionally restricted to full time only through task and time splits so care or other responsibilities are not barriers to anyone’s progression;
- Ensure we create extension and development opportunities internally for future managers to gain experience, such as acting positions or leadership of key projects and encourage opportunities to support internal promotion and secondment;
- Promote the opportunity for more men to engage in part time work, take parental leave and engaging in flexible work arrangements;
- Develop our Statement of Commitment to Gender Equity and to end Gender Based Violence;

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- Continue to deliver coaching to managers that reduces the potential for bias to impact equitable decision making;
- Deliver staff training and policy to support respect@work legislation; and
- Utilise discussion, reflection and data to develop further sustainable, socially reflective and organisationally bespoke ways to champion equity.

Reach Out

Should you wish to understand more about our gender pay gap journey, equity initiatives or who we are, please reach out to one of our HR team at humanresources@youthfocus.com.au.

Notes:

Gender identity- Data for the purposes of WGEA is provided in the binary of "women" and "men". We recognise that for some, this may be a declaration of their sex assigned at birth and not their gender identity. While the Workplace Gender Equality Agency establishes a baseline for non-binary employee data, The Agency have excluded reported data on non-binary employees.

Data variance- Changes in workforce composition have occurred since the March 2023 census information utilised by WGEA. All organisational reflections included in commentary below refer to our internal data sources, accurate as at December 2023.



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