

A woman with red hair is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She is wearing a white shirt. In the background, there are several white sculptures of human heads, some of which are partially visible and out of focus. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the woman's features and the texture of the sculptures.

# PARTNERING FOR IMPACT

Fostering Gender Equality in Regional  
Arts, Festivals and Event Planning

A Women's Health Goulburn North East and Strathbogie Shire collaboration

We are intersectional in our approach and are proud to stand beside generations of great women whose work has brought us closer to equality for all.

We acknowledge the wisdom, living culture and connection of the Traditional Custodians of the unceded lands on which we work, and acknowledge the profound disruption of colonisation and the Stolen Generations on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We respect Aboriginal rights to self-determination, and take seriously our responsibility to ensure our work, policies and collaborations all enable and strengthen these rights.

We believe in shared and just cultural transformation that embraces diversity, and these acknowledgements are part of the ethical principles that guide our work and conduct.

We're listening to your feedback on our work – [please let us know how we're doing.](#)

*This resource has been funded by Strathbogie Shire as part of its commitment to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.*





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# Glossary

## A

**All-abilities** recognises able-ism by reframing disability/ non disability

## B

**Binary/non-binary** gender identification recognises that the gender exists on a continuum rather than only women/girl and man/boy

## C

**CALD** - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

## D

**Disability** see All-abilities

**DHHS** - Department of Health and Human Services (Vic)

**DHS** - Department of Human Services (Federal)

## E

**Equality** is outcomes-focused and treats everyone the same regardless of need or circumstance

**Equity** is process-focused and about thinking through fairness and justice, given relative access to opportunity

## F

**FSV** - Family Safety Victoria

## G

**Gender** describes the way a person self-identifies as a man, woman or non-binary other

**GenVic** - Victoria's peak body for gender equality

**GV** - Goulburn Valley region of Victoria

## I

**Indigenous**, spelt with a capital "I", denotes Australian Aborigines

**Intersectional feminism** refers to the feminist analysis of the ways in which multiple forms of oppression impact on a given individual in a given context

## K

**#KnowMyName** is a campaign being run by Australia's National Gallery to address historic gender discrimination resulting in an over-representation of men in their collection (75 per cent to 25 per cent women)

**L** **LGBTIQIA+** - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, etc

**M** **#MeToo** refers to the movement started by Tanara Burke, which has its own Twitter account, that named perpetrators of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace

**O** **Our Watch** - the national peak body for the prevention of violence against women and their children  
**OM** - Ovens Murray region of Victoria

**P** **PoA** - Principles of Agreement

**S** **Sex** is biological identity: male, female, intersex  
**SME** - subject matter experts/ise

**T** **TWC** - The Wheeler Centre  
**Transgender** describes someone whose sex and gender identity are not the same

**V** **VicHealth** - Victoria's health promotion agency

**W** **WHGNE** - Women's Health Goulburn North East

## 40/40/20 Rule

refers to a guide to gender representation on board and in leadership roles: 40 per cent men, 40 per cent women and 20 per cent other, which leaves room for gender diverse people and a strong representational culture.

**The arts, festivals  
and events have  
a role to play in  
shaping and  
challenging the  
beliefs and  
behaviours that  
drive inequality.**

# This is why we are launching Partnering for Impact.

In late 2019, Women's Health Goulburn North East partnered with The Wheeler Centre to deliver a series of literary events, forums and shows to roll out across Goulburn and north-east Victoria. Designed to showcase the power of regional arts, festivals and event programming to platform the cultural change we want to see in our towns and cities, the events (like so many events during the period 2020-2021) took a little longer to deliver than planned.

With some help along the way, our series of events have culminated in the final event, The Gender-Binary and Beyond. You can read about all of our events in this series [here](#). In the spirit of asking better questions, sharing powerful ideas and telling the stories we need to hear to build respect and equality, we have used our learning from these events and with the support of the Strathbogie Shire Council, developed this toolkit.

Collaborations like this are a great way to examine questions of equality, to increase impact and reach new audiences.

As The Wheeler Centre case study demonstrates, this work is a challenge for organisations, regardless of size.

But, in the age of #MeToo and #KnowMyName, we know that women's experiences of harassment, violence and discrimination; representation of and by women; and women's pay all need attention.

The Partnering for Impact Blueprint and Toolkit provides tips, considerations and tools for your organisation. The resource translates the latest research and insights from the process of working together on Women at the Edge.

It is in two parts. The first section is a toolkit that provides 10 steps to take now to do better on gender equality. The second section is a blueprint for broader change in rural arts and event settings and some considerations for partnering on Women at the Edge. While the toolkit and blueprint can be used as stand-alone resources, they work better together.

This work is not always easy, so for support to use this resource well, contact Women's Health Goulburn North East.



# Toolkit

## For doing better together

**Even small organisations can increase gender equality and women's safety in event planning, arts programming and festivals**

Before beginning this work, it is important to recognise this work takes time.

Consider allocating time to implement the ideas in this resource.

The toolkit provides some first steps and the blueprint has detailed information about why these changes are important, and sometimes difficult to achieve.

## Increase gender equality

- Aim for 40/40/20 Representation on your platforms: 40 per cent women; 40 per cent men; 20 per cent other. Hopefully you are there already, if not, it might take some doing, but that's what fairness actually looks like - representation across the board.
- Also pay your women artists, speakers and thinkers the same as their male peers.

## Increase safety

- Safety statements that are clearly visible at your events and venues set the tone for behaviour. These safety statements may be included on tickets, in promotional material or in printed programs. Examples of safety statements are included in this resource on page 30.

### Learn and act

- Consider the [#knowmyname](#) approach to addressing historical gender imbalance.
- Read the [Skipping a Beat report](#) on gender equality in the Australian music industry.
- Read the [recommendations](#) from the research and report on museums, galleries and the visual arts in Australia.

# THE POOL OF ARTISTS

more prize winners

LESS prize \$\$

34% of museum exhibitions

34% reviews

3 women artists = 1 male artist

40% gallery representation

74% Visual art graduates

**WOMEN**



26% Visual art graduates

**MEN**



53% prize \$\$

60% solo museum shows

monographs

reviews

50% public galleries

60% gallery representation

important

53% museum acquisitions



IN THE POOL OF ARTISTS THERE ARE A LOT MORE WOMEN THAN MEN. YET THERE ARE MANY MORE MEN SHOWING IN OUR GALLERIES + MUSEUMS

## COUNTESSES

Women count in the artworld

[www.countesses.blogspot.com.au](http://www.countesses.blogspot.com.au)

## Increase gender equality

- Do you have gender-neutral toilets at your event? Gender-neutral toilets increase the cultural safety of non-binary patrons, and they can help with the disproportionately longer lines for women's bathrooms.

## Increase safety

- Sexual harassment and assault are crimes that disproportionately affect women. They happen in public, at events, and in the home. Your organisation should have policies and procedures in place.
- Policies and procedures should also guide the behaviour of security staff at events, as they may be called on to intervene to increase women's safety.

## Learn and act

- Gender-neutral bathroom policy example
- Printable signs examples

- When there is a disclosure, it is not your job to judge or decide on the truth. Connect people experiencing harassment, family violence or sexual assault to the experts.

### **CASA Goulburn Valley:**

1800 112 343,  
a/h 1800 806 292

### **Centre Against Violence**

#### **Ovens Murray:**

(03) 5722 2203

#### **SafeSteps:**

1800 015 188 (24/7)

#### **1800RESPECT:**

1800 737 732 (24/7)

## Increase gender equality

- How does your festival represent women in your promotion and communications material? Not representing women at all is a problem, however, women are also diverse: not all women are mothers or wives, not all women are heterosexual or white.

## Increase safety

- Have you consulted with your local experts to see how you can increase women's safety?
- Consider having an expert on gender equality and women's safety on your advisory board for your festival or event, or engaging an expert to review your practice.

## LEARN AND ACT

- Consider featuring diverse representations of women from your communities when developing communications and promotion material. Keep in mind that no one woman speaks for all women when representing women's views.
- This report on the impacts of gender inequality in advertising contains an overview of the issues for your communications team.

## Increase gender equality

- Do you have women represented on your staff and on your board? If this representation is at less than 40 per cent for women and more than 50 per cent for men, the question should be why?
- Changing this can take some time, but admitting you have a problem is the first step.
- In small or volunteer organisation, as well as bigger organisations, unconscious bias in recruitment can be a problem.

## Increase safety

- Are you meeting your obligations under the law when it comes to sexual harassment and sex discrimination? This set of [toolkits and guidelines](#) should help.
- Are the relevant staff in your organisation trained to identify violence against women, family violence and sexual assault, and refer to the appropriate services? This includes training first aid staff who may receive disclosures or be first responders, and your HR staff.

### Learn and act

- Watch this [video](#) with all your staff to better understand unconscious bias.
- See [gender-neutral hiring guidelines](#) in this toolkit, the [Gender Equality in the Workplace](#) toolkit and this [Gender Equality Policy](#) tips sheet for more ideas on how to address representation.
- See Useful Resources on page 47 for more information on meeting your obligations under the law when it comes to sexual harassment and sex discrimination.

## Increase gender equality

- Gender inequality is a causal factor driving violence against women. Watch this [video](#) to make sure you understand the link. When our stories about public life ignore women artists and women in general, we send the message that women aren't important.
- Consider opening your event or festival with statements that include and recognise the achievements of women not just the achievements of men: women' artists, dancers, painters and writers, administrators and managers are already there, the failure to tell their stories reflects on our institutions and culture not on women's contributions.
- If you have followed the tips above, it should not be hard to tell strong stories about women's roles and contribution as artists, leaders, innovators, administrators and contributors.

## Increase safety

- Acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which you are conducting your work. Gender inequality occurs in the context of other kinds of inequality. Inequality is one side of the coin, privilege is the other. When we get better at recognising privilege we get better at addressing all forms of inequality.
- In Australia, our history of violence and dispossession, the lack of Treaty, and the deliberate forgetting of black history privileges non-Aboriginal people. One consequence is horrifically high rates of violence against Indigenous women. We cannot undo this history but we can make changes that recognise the impacts of the past on the present.

### Learn and act

- This [resource](#) from Aboriginal Victoria provides information on acknowledgement and how to contact your local traditional owners.

**When our stories  
about public life  
ignore women artists  
and women in  
general, we send the  
message that women  
aren't important.**

# Principles

## for Partnering for Impact

*Women at the Edge* is one of many regional arts, festivals and events.

Through it we are capturing the unique stories of our regions, bringing powerful voices to new audiences, crafting experiences and events that showcase local innovation and beauty and delivering under our organisation's obligations or funding requirements.

We believe that working together increases the impact that strengthens equal power, respect and recognition for women creators.

Are you or have you used the toolkit for your own event?

Have a look at the following set of principles for participating at the edge. These focus on the ways we work differently to increase equal power, respect and recognition for women creators.

Each principle has a brief explanation.

### **Principle 1:** **A feminist project**

Partnering for Impact on gender equality in the arts and event management is a feminist project. Feminism is a broad church, there are many versions, however, at the core of feminist practice is an understanding of women's rights as human rights and the power of a gendered analysis to reveal patterns and privilege. One principle for partnering on *Women at the Edge* is that feminism, as a way of thinking about the world, generates important insights.

### **Principle 2:** **Working at the edge**

Partnering for Impact might mean working in new ways, which isn't always comfortable. It may be that we are working at the edge of our known practice; bringing together skills as arts practitioners with skills as gender equality experts. These skills are tools for a shared project of cultural contribution that aims to recognise privilege in our institutions, and consider its role in opportunity. Being a bit uncomfortable might mean we are doing something right.



### **Principle 3: Process as project**

How we work is important. Processes influence the final product. Ensuring our processes are part of the project means focusing on how the ways we do things impact on the end result: this includes how we organise, who we ask, to whom we listen, how we remunerate, communicate and celebrate the projects. Consideration for gender equality in these processes is one of the principles for partnership.

### **Principle 4: Working together from the beginning and recognising each other**

We understand that representation is important. Working together is important. Working together from the start, which requires including the relevant groups in the development of ideas, is even better. It allows exchange and learning to occur, this learning might include course-correction and checking-in against values and expertise. Recognising each other's contributions is an expectation of Partnering for Impact. It makes sure that we do not appropriate or co-opt each other's work. Recognition and working together are core principles of partnership.

## **Principle 5: Surfacing the clear idea**

Partnering for Impact will present events that connect gender equality and arts practice. In this way, the work is surfacing ideas from the stream of ongoing traditions, including cultural traditions that reach back tens of thousands of years in this country.

This work has a history and future, and is being undertaken all over the world to address women's rights and gender equality.

An idea may require some polish, and this may take a little time and require that we fearlessly let people with a different skill set into the messy process of development, but this process aims to present an elegant experience for our audiences, an experience that is future-looking while making sense of complex traditions and history.

## **Principle 6: Setting the expectations around behaviour and practice**

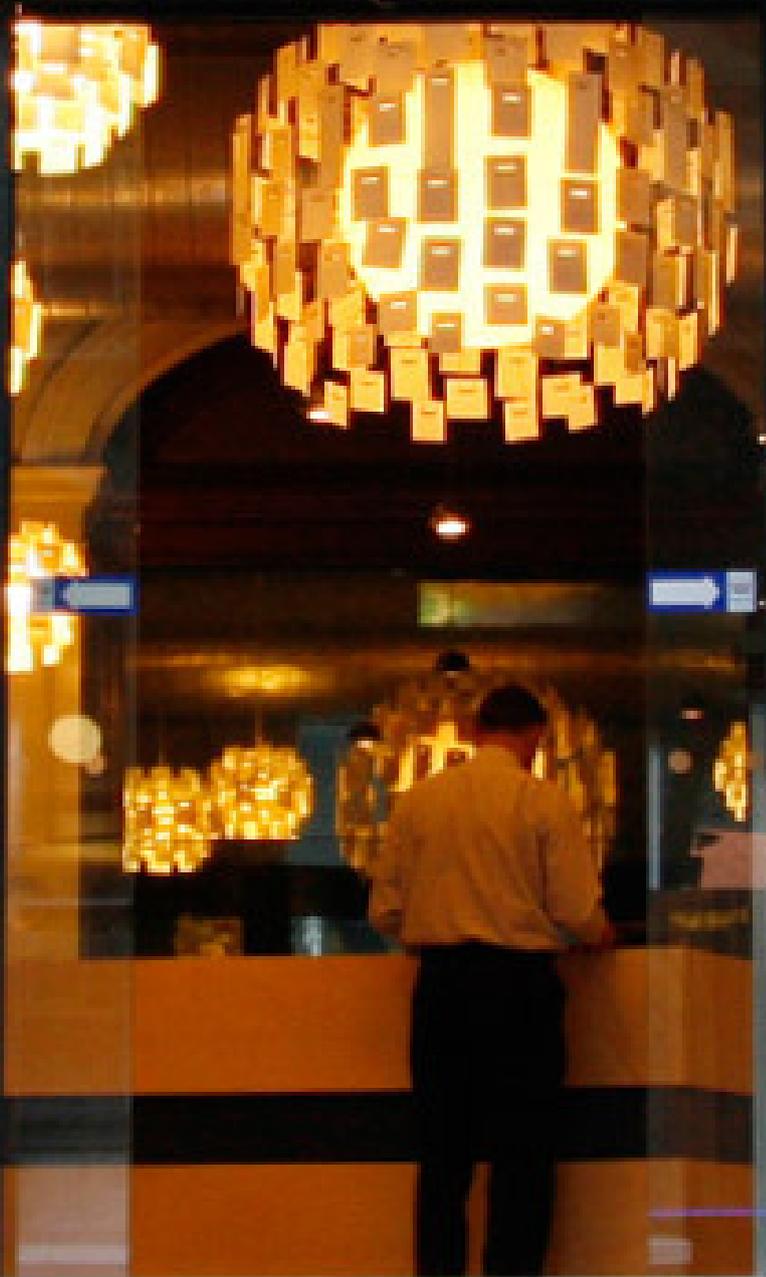
The principles are designed to provoke discussion, and can be interpreted in many ways.

Your organisation may already have a set of principles contained in a memorandum of understanding for working on collaborative projects. Typically a memorandum of understanding will be quite detailed with technical information describing deliverables.

These principles of agreement could be added to the memorandum as a way of framing the spirit with which the MOU would be enacted. Where conflict, disagreement or misunderstandings occur, these principles are useful for framing a discussion about how to get back on track.

Women at the Edge's focus is on cultures of respect, and your organisation may also be working on this theme in one way or another. Consider how your organisation articulates work on gender in the arts; these principles are one example of that articulation.

# The Wheeler Centre



# Case study

## Partnering with The Wheeler Centre

**The Wheeler Centre exists to drive the development and celebration of literature in Melbourne and beyond, and to foster broad public engagement in books, writing and ideas.**

Across 180+ events each year, and a unique collection of videos, podcasts and original writing, you'll find some of the finest local and international writers and thinkers sharing their expertise, their imaginations and their ideas.

As part of the yearly program, TWC collaborates with rural Victorian arts, local councils and community organisations to present events across different regions in the state.

This has included partnerships with organisations including Warrnambool Art Gallery, Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre, Bendigo

Writers Festival, Clunes Booktown Festival and Lighthouse Theatre Warrnambool.

Through a variety of activities including conversations, panels and workshops, these events seek to create meaningful spaces for community participation in civic and literary discussion through fostering engagement with books, writing and ideas with prominent authors, thinkers and leaders.

WHGNE approached TWC in 2019 about the possibility of collaborating on events and activities that utilised TWC's event-producing expertise, while platforming issues impacting women living in the GNE region and demonstrating regional Victoria's capacity to grow thoughtful women leaders and contribute to culture.

While WHGNE initially approached TWC around partnering on a single event for International Women's Day, it quickly became apparent there was an appetite for a series of events to provide a nuanced consideration of issues instead.



# The process

Extensive discussions and meetings were held between both organisations during a period of 12 months to devise a project plan around a clear collective vision and cohesive outcomes and events.

This included two full-day development workshops with WHGNE staff and a member of the TWC programming staff.

The workshops provided a space in which ideas, goals and challenges were recorded and discussed to

ensure all possibilities were explored and tested.

Key outcomes from the workshops were:

- Establishing common values and goals for the project;
- Understanding the resources and limitations of each organisation;
- Clarifying roles and expectations of each organisation and individual project staff; and
- Brainstorming and curation of ideas for a series of events and activities.

**Underlying the events will be a recognition that women have been underrepresented and their contributions substantially uncelebrated, beyond the walls of our institutions.**

# The project

The development process enabled the creation of a clear vision and event structure of a year-long series of five events to be rolled out across the Goulburn Valley and North East Victoria.

The events will bring together big thinkers, small makers, farmers, artists, engineers, experts, amateurs,

young people and communities to ask some burning questions about our time.

Through conversations, presentations and performances, the event series will platform a range of issues including respect and equality, accessibility and gender and disaster relief.

What would our region, our country, our world look like if we viewed them through the lens of equality?



The Wheeler Centre  
Books Writing Ideas

Let's find out...

**Promotional material for the Women's Health Goulburn North East and the Wheeler Centre event, *Women at the Edge*.**

# Initial learnings

The initial development process raised some key considerations and outlining of guiding principles. In particular, there has been an emphasis on the importance of process as key to the project, rather than purely the public-facing outcomes.

In developing these events a process was undertaken in which specialised skills and knowledge were shared - across community development to event production - that work towards both organisations being more equipped and strengthened in their individual goals.

TWC's events and arts expertise have provided WHGNE with new understandings of strategies to amplify their insights to a broader audience. While WHGNE's practices in capacity building for gender equity, particularly in rural contexts, have provided TWC with new perspectives to consider capacity building practices and methodologies in arts contexts.

This has encouraged both organisations to work at the edge of their known practice and learn about what it takes to make programming using collective knowledge of arts practice and capacity building for gender equity as tools for a shared project of cultural contribution.

Driven by shared values of platforming important community issues and perspectives, this process has laid the foundations for a process that continues to expand each organisation's skills set.

Some key insights learned from the process for future projects are:

- Gender equity work requires reflection on our existing practices to check for unconscious bias/barriers;
- Collaborating on gender equity takes time - something to factor in to programming; and
- Relationships are important to ensure the translation of work is respectful and avoids appropriation.

# Considerations

## For gender equality in rural arts and event management

The following 10 considerations are for arts and events administrators. The first four considerations are designed to create lasting change in your organisation, and the second six to increase equality in your public-facing work. These considerations are not an exhaustive list, but rather a set of thinking tools to support the work of addressing inequity, specifically in the arts and events setting.

The considerations draw on work happening at the local, regional, state and national level. They bring together the principles in the Regional Strategy for Respect and Equality for All in Goulburn Valley and North East Victoria; align with Safe and Strong, the Victorian strategy for gender equality; and Change the Story, the national framework for preventing violence against women and children.

They also draw on work done by VicHealth to research and document gender inequality in the arts, and our own experiences in the creative development of Women at the Edge.

### A quick note on the evidence

We are still learning about what works for increasing equal respect, power and recognition for women creators.

However, gender equality in these settings is not only about increasing representation, because these settings (along with others like sports and workplaces) frame the conversations we have around discrimination and opportunity.

VicHealth, in its report [Promoting Gender Equality Through Arts and Creative Industries](#), catalogues many wonderful creative projects that engage with questions of power and privilege.



# Art can:

- **provide a way to experience what it's like to be an 'other'**
- **disrupt gender stereotyping, e.g. the idea that someone must be a man or woman, and explore what it's like to be a man or woman**
- **help us tell stories about our past, present and future, stories that include diverse gender experiences, to promote gender equality**
- **reveal aspects of culture and behaviour that might otherwise be taken for granted or hidden, e.g. unhealthy and unsafe male-dominated environments, entitlement, roles and norms**
- **provide a way for individuals and groups to express themselves and be heard, fulfilled and validated (VicHealth, 2019)**

# Considerations

## Your organisation

### Consideration 1: Where is your organisation at?

What does your organisation already know and do about gender equality, women's rights and safety?

It might be important to take a moment to understand where your organisation 'is at' before you proceed. This [Our Watch video](#) helps frame the challenge of gender equality.



***This video explains the way that violence against women in Australia starts with gender inequality, gender stereotypes and sexist structures and practices.***

There are formal processes for checking your current practice. Your organisation can engage in a comprehensive review through the [Workplace Equality and Respect](#) standards, and gender equality training is being rolled out across Victoria, find your local provider [here](#).

## Consideration 2: Safety statement, values and culture

What is your safety statement for staff working in your organisation that sets expectation around culture and behaviour?

Football teams have these, corporate organisations have these, churches, children's groups and organisations working at the intersect of colonisation, family violence and sexual assault, have these. Increasingly, venues are thinking about keeping their patrons safe, and organisations are putting in place statements that clearly articulate their approach to gendered violence and cultural safety.

It is important to anticipate backlash. When asking staff to work on something as complex as addressing gender inequality, there needs to be support in place when confronting biases, experiencing resistance and backlash. VicHealth's [\(En\)Countering Resistance](#) is a great guide to backlash.

To talk through writing your own safety statement, and your organisational approach to backlash, you may want to get in touch with your local women's health or sexual assault services: [Women's Health Goulburn North East](#), [Goulburn Valley Centre Against Sexual Assault](#), and [Ovens Murray Centre Against Violence](#).

### **Consideration 3: How is your particular industry doing?**

What data already exists, what work has already been done in your industry?

Generations of women and men have been working on gender equality. This [timeline](#) and this [timeline](#) can be very useful for contextualising the history of gender inequality in Australia, but how is your particular industry doing?

Consider what data already exists in your sector, and how it might inform your development of a strategic approach to long-term change. We need a long-term plan to ensure that this work is respected and progressed.

See the Useful Resources section for a list of data that exists for particular arts practices in Australia, and this recent report on [gender equality and arts practices](#).

### **Consideration 4: How does your current funding and practice align in the policy environment?**

The policy environment for arts and gender equality is changing.

Arts funding bodies are increasingly asking how projects will demonstrate representation, and gender equality projects are increasingly asking how projects will demonstrate engagement across the critical settings identified in Change the Story.

See the policy environment section of this toolkit to find out more about the relevant strategies, documents and action plans.

Locating the work in this context promises to create a line of sight from your organisation to government or philanthropic funders, connecting up best practice.

# Considerations

## Programming events and artist safety

### Consideration 5: How are you using your platform?

#### Gender-parity platforming and pay

One simple step that you can take to increase gender equality in your programming is to adopt a policy of gender-parity platforming. When hosting a panel, ensure that women and men are represented in equal numbers, or better yet use the [40/40/20 rule](#), which makes space for gender diversity.

When reviewing your annual program ask the question: what percentage of these artists/performers/speakers are men? Why?

There may be a good reason, or it may be privilege and bias operating to influence decision-making. Some arts institutions have chosen to address historic discrimination by focusing on women – see for example the National Museum’s [#KnowMyName](#) campaign.

It is important to remember that women are a diverse group that includes women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women of all abilities, of all ages and life stages, LGBTIQ+ women, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. It also includes rural women.

#### Think global, platform local

Rural communities are full of creators. Consider the mix of local talent in your programming: can you foster new and emerging artists, no matter their age; and continue to cultivate existing artists who have a connection to your region? Are there innovative ways of matching local and national or global talent?

This is not an invitation to apprentice local women artist to a out-of-town male artist, but rather to consider rurality in the programming mix. This is a particularly important consideration for local artists who may not be well-recognised by their community for the unique talents they bring to making our regions great, raising challenging issues in their work or speaking back to stereotypes.

## **Consideration 6: Partnering for Impact**

Partnership as a means of avoiding the reinforcement of structures that drive inequality

Bringing gender equality, arts and event management together promises a rich exchange of ideas and information.

Partnering for insight and impact is one very helpful way to move the work forward, rather than rehashing old or tired ideas, and to protect against risk.

There is a section in this resource on backlash, however, risk comes in many forms, including that projects inadvertently reinforce the drivers of gendered violence, and that work is 'undercooked'.

Partnerships are productive and they can be fraught. The principles of agreement are specifically coded to ensure that partnerships do not reinforce the structures that drive inequality and gendered violence.

## **Consideration 7: Safe spaces and reporting procedures at your venues and events**

Have you considered safe spaces for reporting sexual harassment and assault? This is relevant to everyone, but may be particularly important for festivals that run over 24 hours.

Have you considered a clearly visible statement about gender equality for artist participating in your events, detailing where and to whom they can report?

These artists are at work, and if their workplace is unsafe they need to know how to address concerns.

Consider a statement that clarifies your organisation's position on respect, harassment and reporting processes (a safety statement).

Consider including gender-neutral toilets at your events. There are resources in the Toolkit including printable signs and draft policies for creating safe spaces and reporting procedures, see pages 9 to 13.

## Consideration 8: Understanding your audience

Audience profiles and an understanding of barriers to participation can help you plan your event

You may already collect significant data on your audiences. If you collect sex-disaggregated data, consider reviewing your audience profile. Is there a gender disparity? What about other forms of discrimination – do these show up in your audience profiles?

Consider women/men/others from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds; women/men/others with disabilities; women/men/others from CALD backgrounds; women/men/others from LGBTIQ+ communities; consider rurality and remoteness.

What kinds of events are popular and with whom? What are the barriers? How can this information help you plan?

The following is a non-exhaustive list of some suggested practices and

strategies that might impact audience attendance:

### Practices

- Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners
- Venue choice/translation for accessibility
- A variety of show times to ensure a broad audience can attend
- Training in language and resistance for your communications teams
- Clear welcoming signals to LGBTIQ+ communities
- Streaming/recording the event for those for whom geography is an issue

### Strategies

- Reconciliation action plan
- Accessibility/universal design strategy
- Gender equality communications strategy
- Diversity/inclusion strategy
- Remote and rural engagement strategy

These interventions help you learn more about audiences and their contribution to cultural life, as well as enabling you to gauge their interest in your cultural work and their preparedness to participate in your programming.



## **Consideration 9: Documentation, reach and legacy**

'Art projects can have long-term impact through leaving a legacy of skill and/or infrastructure that is enjoyed and deployed far beyond the life of the immediate project.'  
(VicHealth, 2018)

The nature of events is ephemeral. Consider ways of documenting projects and leaving a legacy of the work.

This includes:

- Evaluation (see the section on Evaluation page 39);
- Documentation like filming, photographing, and press coverage;
- A digital presence and archive of the event/s; and
- Written reflection of the event published in publicly accessible journals or reports.

These practical steps can ensure that those who are not able to attend are able to engage with the work, and those who come after you can see what has come before.

<p><b>DENIAL</b></p> <p><i>"There's no problem here."</i></p> <p>Denial of the problem or the credibility of the case for change. Blame the victims.</p>	<p><b>DISAVOWAL</b></p> <p><i>"It's not my job to do something about it."</i></p> <p>Refusal to recognise responsibility.</p>	<p><b>INACTION</b></p> <p><i>"It's not a priority right now."</i></p> <p>Refusal to implement a change initiative.</p>	<p><b>APPEASEMENT</b></p> <p><i>"Yes. Yes. We must do something (one day)."</i></p> <p>Efforts to placate or pacify those advocating for change in order to limit its impact.</p>
<p><b>APPROPRIATION</b></p> <p><i>"Of course we'd appoint more women, if only they were more experienced."</i></p> <p>Simulating change while covertly undermining it.</p>	<p><b>CO-OPTION</b></p> <p><i>"What about men's rights? Men are victims too, you know."</i></p> <p>Using the language of progressive frameworks and goals for reactionary ends.</p>	<p><b>REPRESSION</b></p> <p><i>"We tried that once and women didn't want to take up the promotion/training/opportunity."</i></p> <p>Reversing or dismantling a change initiative.</p>	<p><b>BACKLASH</b></p> <p><i>"These feminists deserve all the abuse they get."</i></p> <p>Aggressive, attacking response.</p>

VicHealth, (En)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives 2018

## Consideration 10: Backlash

Backlash is to be expected at events that bring gender into focus.

Dealing with backlash and resistance may be very familiar to your organisation, or this may be the first time you have experienced it. It can be distressing, frightening and dangerous. Talk with your local women's health service to develop a plan for how you want to respond. The above table helps unpack different types of resistance and backlash.

It is important to have a plan for backlash, particularly if social media channels like Facebook and Instagram are deployed. There are useful resources in this toolkit, including: [Women's Health West Guide to Speaking Publicly About Men's Violence Against Women](#), which has tips for answering questions and a guide to language use, and VicHealth's [\(En\)Countering Resistance](#), which summarises the challenges and some strategies for responding.

# Communications

## How we communicate about gender equality makes a difference

What we say, the language we use and stories we tell are a record of our culture. When we use the active or passive voice, rely on cultural understandings of stereotypes to make our point, or couple text with images that reinforce unhealthy or unfair cultural norms, we do so with the explicit purpose of public engagement.

While we inherit practices and culture, we also have choices about how we decide to represent, promote and discuss the work of gender equality in the arts. The best way to ensure that communication materials follow best practice is to have them reviewed by a subject matter expert in gender equality.

There are a number of core practices in communications that promote gender equality, including:

- Recognising rather than minimising the challenge;
- Representing a practice of hope for change;
- Practising the power of language to accurately describe barriers, choices and options; and
- Using storytelling as a critical tool of culture.

There are things that you can do in-house to review your communications. They are called out below as dos and don'ts.

### **Don't reinforce rigid gender stereotypes or hetero-normative tropes.**

- Do use appropriate language, using gender neutral-terms where appropriate (e.g. firefighter rather than fireman, staffing stalls rather than manning stalls).
- Do use appropriate images displaying women and men in all kinds of roles including non-traditional gender roles, non-binary representation and a variety of relationship types including LGBTQ relationships.

### **Don't excuse or trivialise violence against or harassment of women.**

- Do recognise that gender inequality is a problem in our community. While both men and women experience negative impacts of strict gender norms and stereotypes, it is not accurate to suggest equivalence between these impacts of gender inequality on men and women.
- Where appropriate, do recognise the links between gender inequality and gendered violence.

**Don't suggest your organisation has a simple correct answer. This is a complex problem.**

- Do recognise the historic context; recognise and attribute success to women, men and communities who have fought for equality; do recognise the context of current structural barriers to equality.
- Don't co-opt other people's work without attribution or recognition. Always provide references for work where appropriate. Contact and ask people's permission. If they have a great idea, they may be willing to let you use it. It is not appropriate to take credit for work that is not yours.

**Don't suggest that gender inequality is more likely to be perpetrated by 'the other' e.g. poor people, CALD communities, Aboriginal communities, people with disabilities, etc.**

- Gender inequality is factually the norm in our community, across cultures, so it is inaccurate to represent it as rare or abnormal, even we'd like this to be the case.
- Because of this norm, individual cases or examples that refute structural inequality with stories of success can be misleading.
- Do pay careful attention to how cases are presented. When you would like to present positive examples of women's success, perhaps include an introductory paragraph that calls out the positive example of good practice.



*OurWatch, Unpacking Violence: Selling Up video*

## Thinking about language, the media and your communications

This [storytelling resource](#) may be useful. There are comprehensive guidelines for [media standards](#) from Our Watch, mostly pertaining to the coverage of violence against women. This [Women's Health West resource](#) also has some useful information.

For training in language and resistance focused specifically on gender equality in communications, contact [Women's Health Goulburn North East](#).



# Evaluation and data collection

**Collecting better data and incorporating evaluation with a gendered lens allows us to learn and improve the delivery of projects in the arts and in events management**

The power of data is in its capacity to reveal patterns and insights. It is most useful if we are using the same indicators to measure impact, and the same method to capture and analyse the data.

How you decide what to count, and how to count it, will have a significant impact on what you will be able to say about your event. It's useful to have demographic data and impact data like reach and social media activity.

However, the methodology for your evaluation should enable data collection on the social change outcomes, attitudes and motivating values of the audience.

Aggregated data is valuable and, if you intend to share your data with anyone beyond your organisation, permission should be sought from participants.

## The five key indicators that WHGNE would recommend you incorporate into your work to measure change are the following:

- **Gender-disaggregated data:**

1. Woman 2. Man 3. Other

- **A demography question that might help understand your audience like:**

What is your work sector?

1. Health and community
2. Public service
3. NGO
4. Private – small business
5. Private –medium to large business
6. Currently not in the work force

- **A Likert scale question rating before and after knowledge, for example:**

Using this scale below, how strongly would you agree with the following statement?

I know a lot about gender issues.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

As a result of tonight's event, I learnt something more about gender issues:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

- **A question that helps understand access and barriers like:**

How did you travel to tonight's event?

1. By public transport
2. By car – drove myself/myself and others
3. By car – someone drove me
4. By bike/walking

- **A values question like:**

How important was tonight's event to you?

1. Unimportant
2. Not important, I may not have come
3. Not important, but I'm glad I came
4. Important, I'm interested in the content
5. Very important, I'm passionate about this issue

There are several resources for incorporating indicators for gender equality work into your current data collection habits.

For a fact sheet on evaluation strategies for gender equality projects see this useful [four-page summary](#) from GenVic.

For a comprehensive guide to incorporating prevention data collection into your ongoing practice see [Counting on Change](#) produced by Our Watch.

For examples of the kind of data collected by other arts sectors see:

- Visual arts – [The CoUNTess Report](#)
- Literary endeavours – [The Stella Count](#)
- Film and television – [Bechdel test](#)

# Policy settings and funding opportunities

During the past five years there has been significant movement in Victoria and Australia on issues of gender equality and violence against women, including domestic and family violence.

As of 2021 the following legislation, strategies or plans were in place, impacting on work in gender equality:

## **State**

### **Gender Equality Act 2020**

In February 2020, the Victorian Government was the first government in Australia to pass gender equality legislation, in the form of the Gender Equality Act 2020.

This legislation expressly aims to improve workplace gender equality across the state's public sector, universities and local government bodies (defined entities).

It enshrines in law people's right to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities in a workplace setting, regardless of their gender.

The Act aims to address key drivers of gender inequality in the workplace, requiring that each organisation plan, measure and track progress towards



*Under the Gender Equality Act (2020) defined entities are required to develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan*

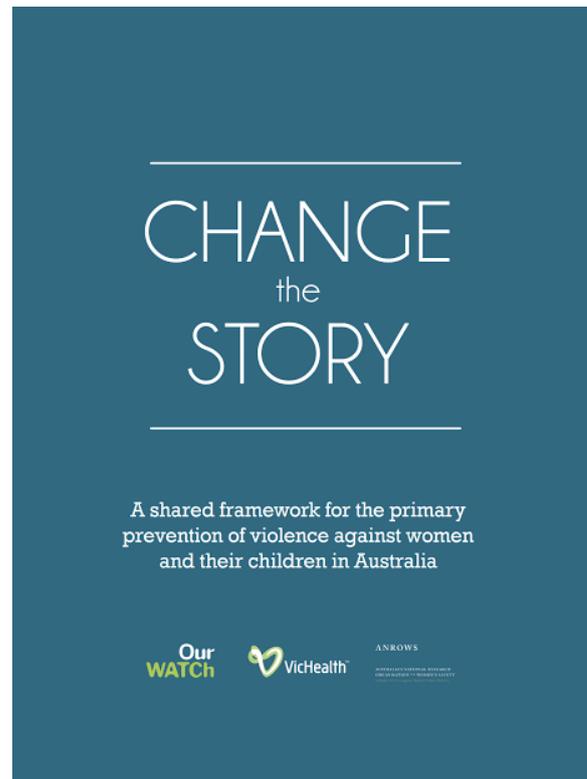
workplace gender equality. It will do this by ensuring workplace transparency and accountability on a range of gender equality indicators.

It also aims to improve gender equality in the wider community by considering the gendered impacts of policies, programs and services delivered – supporting better outcomes for people of all genders.



### **Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy**

This strategy is to support state-wide action through alliances and partnerships to deliver gender equality. It recognises family violence and sexual assault as gendered, and recognises that an intersectional approach to oppression is need to understand the disproportionate impact of inequity on Aboriginal women, women from culturally diverse communities, women in rural and regional settings, women with disabilities, and trans and gender diverse people (Victorian Government 2016).



### **National Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children**

Our Watch is the national prevention agency, and works under the National Plan to end violence against women and their children. Change the Story outlines the evidence about the causes of violence against women, and identifies key settings that can influence change. The arts is identified as an important setting for the cultural shift towards gender equality (Our Watch 2015, p. 38).

## Potential funding sources

**VicHealth** - <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding/>

**Respect Victoria** - <https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au>

**Municipal Association of Victoria** - <http://www.mav.asn.au/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/social-community/gender-equality>

**Victorian Women’s Trust** - <https://www.vwt.org.au/grants/>

# Self-assessment checklist

Use this checklist to review your practices around gender-equality in the arts space.

Domain	Key point	Opportunity	Resources	Check
<b>Case study</b>	Case studies allow reflection, consolidation of learning and are a good organisational communications tool.	Case studies build a trace of gender equality practice in the arts; this evidence is critical for improving practice.	See the Wheeler Centre case study for inspiration	Allocate staff time to writing a case study.  Consider sharing your case study with <a href="#">WHGNE</a> .
<b>Principles of agreement (PoA)</b>	Partnerships are rich and challenging.	Beyond a detailed contract or MOU of roles and responsibilities, PoA create a conversation about the spirit of implanting change.	The Women at the Edge principles in this document, are useful examples of principles that consider historic and current inequality and set the standard for respectful project management.	Explore <a href="#">these resources</a> about different collaborative models.

Domain	Key point	Opportunity	Resources	Check
<b>Considerations</b>	<p>There are several straightforward things that can be done to improve gender equality in these settings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gender-parity platforming and commit to equal pay</li> <li>2. Understand your audience</li> <li>3. Partner for impact</li> <li>4. Connect actions that increase safety and participation to strategies</li> <li>5. Document and evaluate</li> <li>6. Plan for backlash</li> </ol>	<p>Deeper changes are needed and these require an organisational approach.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How is your organisation doing: unconscious bias training, gender equality training/audits and the representation of women in leadership</li> <li>2. Culture values and respect - safety statements</li> <li>3. How is your industry doing?</li> <li>4. Funding/policy context</li> </ol>	<p>See relevant sections in this resource. Call your local gender equality experts: WHGNE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation-wide training and gender audits</li> <li>• Safe and respectful workplace cultures</li> <li>• Check against industry standards for gender equality</li> <li>• Align with the existing policy context</li> <li>• Gender parity platforming and equal pay</li> <li>• Audience segmentation</li> <li>• Partner</li> <li>• Actions to strategy</li> <li>• Document and evaluate</li> <li>• Plan for backlash</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	<p>Our communications materials are cultural documents that reinforce or disrupt gender stereotypes. Use the checklist in this section to identify dos and don'ts.</p>	<p>Engage a gender equality Subject Matter Expert (SME) to review communications before they go public.</p> <p>Organise training for communications teams on language and resistance.</p>	<p>Women's Health West's <a href="#">Curly Questions</a></p> <p>Our Watch <a href="#">media guidelines</a></p> <p>WHGNE <a href="#">language and resistance training</a></p>	<p>Has all communications material been SME reviewed?</p> <p>Has the communications team been trained in language and resistance?</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>What we decide to measure, and how we measure it has a profound impact on what we can say about our events.</p>	<p>Collect sex and gender-disaggregated data.</p>	<p>GenVic <a href="#">evaluation fact sheet</a></p> <p>Our Watch <a href="#">evaluation tools</a></p>	<p>Have you included permission to share with WHGNE in your data collection tool?</p>





# Conclusion

This toolkit and blueprint support gender equality in the arts and event management setting.

You may want to use this resource to strengthen your existing practice in the area of gender equality, or you may want to start your journey. There are many regional arts, festivals and events run by extraordinary local arts administrators, event coordinators and community groups.

Together we are capturing the unique stories of our regions, bringing powerful voices to new audiences, crafting experiences and events that showcase local innovation and beauty, and delivering under our organisation's obligations or funding requirements.

So much good work is being done. We believe that by working together we will increase the impact of our efforts to strengthen equal power, respect and recognition for women creators. This toolkit and blueprint support that collaborative work.

While the Toolkit and Blueprint can be used as stand-alone resources, like us, they work better when they work together.

**For more information contact:**

Women's Health Goulburn North East  
[whealth@whealth.com.au](mailto:whealth@whealth.com.au)

# Useful resources

A list of other useful resources for improving gender equality in the arts and event management setting

## Strategies

[Women's Health Goulburn North East](#)

[Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy](#) (Victoria Government)

[National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children](#) (Australia Government Department of Social Services)

[National framework for the prevention of violence](#) (Our Watch)

## Australian research

[Gender Equality in the Arts](#) (VicHealth)

## Resources for specific arts sectors - data

[Theatre](#)

[Visual arts](#)

[#knowmyname](#) campaign

[Literature](#)

[Does gender equality matter in art?](#) A panel discussion from Sydney Contemporary International Art Fair

