

**ATTACHMENT SO-1**

This is the attachment marked "**SO-1**" referred to in the witness statement of Stephen Patrick O'Malley dated 7 August 2015.



# Gender Inclusion Action Plan [2010-2013]





# Foreword

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This is a publication of the  
Metropolitan Fire and Emergency  
Services Board (MFB)  
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Copies of the Gender Inclusion Action Plan  
are available from:  
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The MFB is proud to present its inaugural Gender Inclusion Action Plan (GIAP). The plan is intended for both male and female employees and all its strategies, actions and programs will ultimately benefit all MFB employees.

The firefighting industry is characterised by its male dominated workforce and fire services across the Western world have recognised the value of having a diverse workforce in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, age and abilities. At the MFB the first female firefighters were recruited in 1988, but in Australia the history of women's involvement in the fire service dates back to the early 1900s with NSW Fire Brigades having a female dedicated fire crew known as "The Amazons", the first ladies fire brigade, in Armidale, NSW (Childs, M. [www.Firegirls.info](http://www.Firegirls.info)).

In October 2009, women at the MFB constituted 8.5 % of the total number of employees and 3.2% of the operational workforce. The MFB GIAP acknowledges the minority status of women and incorporates actions and measures to ensure that the MFB workplace environment is conducive to both males and females and that everyone is encouraged and able to perform at his/her optimum level.





“The firefighting industry is characterised by its male dominated workforce and fire services across the Western world have recognised the value of having a diverse workforce in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, age and abilities.”

The work on gender equity started in 2004 when a Gender Equity Research program was commissioned. This included extensive consultations, workshops and interviews with internal staff between 2004 and 2006. Then, in 2008, the MFB endorsed a Diversity Development Framework that is actioned by four action plans covering, Disability, Aboriginal, Multicultural and Gender issues. The development of the MFB Gender Inclusion Action Plan (GIAP) coincided with the newly released Fair Work Act 2009 which mandates the rights for employees to request flexible working arrangements.

The plan aims at reducing barriers to gender inclusion and acknowledges the importance of not only increasing the diversity of the workforce but also putting in place policies and programs that nurture, protect, and harness the diversity within. Increased representation of women amongst firefighters will benefit the MFB’s responsiveness and relevance to the community it serves. Gender diversity will lead to broader access to different

perspectives, more creative solutions and innovative ideas. Adopting best practices for gender inclusion will improve employment outcomes and increase the diversity profile of the MFB, thus enabling the MFB to better serve the interests of the Victorian community.

The MFB wishes to thank all the staff who provided their views and input into the development of the Gender Inclusion Action Plan (GIAP). Thanks to Diversity@work and in particular to Moira Rayner for the development of the GIAP and to Susanne White of The Resolutions Group for working on the final stages of the GIAP. The progress we make in implementing the GIAP will be reported to State Government and published in our annual report.

The GIAP was formally endorsed by the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board on 27 January 2010.

**Ken Latta**

Chief Executive Officer  
and Chief Officer

**Adrian Nye**

President



# Federal and State Government Context

Since the early 1970s, first the State and then the Commonwealth and Territory governments have enacted legislation to prohibit sex discrimination against both women and men, on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation and transgender status, and have implemented initiatives to:

- Eliminate discrimination against people based on their sex and related characteristics such as pregnancy, maternity and parental leave, breast-feeding, marital status, status as a parent or carer, carers' responsibilities, and (in 2008 in Victoria) specifically protected rights of people to seek and have fairly assessed a request for accommodation in employment of their family responsibilities.
- Promote community acceptance of the principle that women and men have the same fundamental rights as all members of the community, and ensure as far as practicable that women and men, gays and lesbians, bisexuals and heterosexuals and transgender people all have the same rights to equality before the law.
- Embed these non-discriminatory principles in employment contracts and workplace laws.

Over the years courts and tribunals and anti-discrimination office holders have developed a broad range of case law principles and guidelines aimed at 'embedding' the acknowledgement (and reality) of gender equality and inclusion in all areas of public life, which is, consequently, relevant to all the organisation's functions.

This Gender Inclusion Action Plan takes account of a range of Commonwealth and Victorian State Government initiatives which prompt all employers and service-providers in Australia, and particularly Government bodies such as the MFB, to acknowledge and take account of the needs and rights of people in the community to participate and be included in community and public life equally whatever their gender or characteristics of their gender, gender identity or sexual identity and related characteristics, and relevantly in the MFB's organisational development, planning and service provision.

This includes reporting bodies such as the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace and enforcement and public educational bodies such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, and governmental policies and programs.





# Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 sets out the rights and freedoms to which all Victorians are entitled, and the responsibilities that go with them. The Charter focuses on civil and political rights, and includes well known democratic rights such as the right to vote and freedom of expression. Other rights protected by the Charter include:

- Protection from discrimination
- Participation in public life
- Protection of the family and children
- The right to privacy
- Cultural rights

The Charter is an agreed set of human rights, freedoms and responsibilities protected by law. Government departments and public bodies must observe these rights when they create rules, set policies and provide services. Laws, policies and the justification for particular practices must be interpreted so that they are consistent with the rights protected under the Charter.

This means that the MFB must act in a way that is consistent with the human rights protected under the Charter, comply with the Charter and take human rights into account in their day-to-day operations.







# The Victorian Women's Policy Framework 2008-11

The Framework has been developed to build on the strengths of existing Victorian policies and programs on gender equality. The Framework outlines achievements to date, future policy directions, and provides a structure for Government and its community partners to work towards equality for all women.

The Framework establishes four priority areas for improving the lives of women:

- 1 Justice and safety
- 2 Education, work and economic independence
- 3 Health, wellbeing and community strengthening
- 4 Representation and equity

## Reporting to Victorian Government

The MFB reports annually to the Victorian Government on the efforts made to fulfil the Government's priorities as articulated in the Women's Policy Framework

The MFB will identify and work towards removing barriers experienced by diverse communities in accessing MFB services and employment opportunities.

## The MFB Diversity Statement

The MFB acknowledges the diversity of the population it serves and the expectations that communities have of the MFB in relation to service provision and organizational performance and management. The MFB is committed to the on-going development of an inclusive and accessible organisation that delivers inclusive and accessible services to the communities it serves. The MFB will identify and work towards removing barriers experienced by diverse communities in accessing MFB services and employment opportunities.

## Implementation and Monitoring



The implementation and monitoring of the Gender Inclusion Action Plan will be overseen by the MFB's Diversity Management Committee which is chaired by the Chief Executive and Chief Officer of the MFB and includes Directors and Executive Managers. Progress on the implementation of the GIAP will be reported annually to the Board with a summary of achievements published in the MFB's annual report.

Proposed initiatives in the plan which constitute a change as defined in the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement signed between the United Firefighters Union and the MFB, will be referred to the Enterprise Bargaining Implementation Committee for consultation prior to implementation.



# Inclusive and Accessible Organisation

GOAL

STRATEGIES

## 1 Recruitment

## 2 Retention and Training

OBJECTIVES

ACTIONS

**To ensure that the MFB as an organisation is a genuine equal opportunity employer**

**The MFB will**

- Develop and implement a range of strategies to increase the number of diverse women applying for operational roles
- Collect and analyse data and report regularly on diversity profile of successful and unsuccessful applicants
- Aim for a minimum of 20% female participants in MFB pre-employment training and mentoring programs
- Establish an internal advisory group of operational and other staff willing to contribute to a range of active recruitment programs to increase MFB's diversity
- Continue to encourage the involvement of female firefighters in public events, conferences, seminars and expos to provide a role model for female recruits
- Investigate databank models for capturing aspirants from underrepresented groups for future recruitment drives
- Continue to deliver a training program for interview panel members which promotes an understanding/ clarification of:
  - o equal opportunity requirements
  - o the cultural variables that impact on people's performances in job interviews, and
  - o the essential requirements of job roles
- Develop an engagement strategy for MFB with diverse women's sporting organisations to attract participants to firefighting as a career
- Review the number of successful women applicants in 2010 intake and explore the feasibility of introducing recruitment targets

**To develop and maintain an internal environmental culture that is appreciative of diversity in all its forms, and supports staff to address gender inclusion**

**The MFB will**

- Introduce into the Operational Staff Agreement and the Modern Award, Flexible Working Conditions which address Parental Leave, Return to Work, temporary part time and job share for firefighters as required by the Fair Work Act (2009)
- Inform all managers and senior staff on the application of the Flexible Working Policy, procedures and guidelines
- Explore available programs that support childcare needs of MFB Staff and foster a family-friendly workplace
- Continue to consider gender appropriate uniforms for female firefighters
- Develop a merit-based succession plan that promotes gender inclusion amongst senior positions in the organisation
- Include consideration of diversity and gender equity within training review which MFB is currently undertaking
- Include in relevant staff surveys questions on EEO, bullying and diversity to identify any emerging trends in the workplace
- Continue to deliver Workplace Behaviour Program training for new employees
- Continue to promote the availability of coaching opportunities to improve confidence and skills in people management and identifying and redressing negative gender dynamics
- Train all trainers to ensure they apply adult learning principles and have a thorough understanding of gender diversity
- Incorporate support and training for Station Officers and Senior Station Officers in addressing inappropriate workplace behaviour in officer promotion and refresher courses



## 3 Public Image

## 4 Internal Communication

**To promote MFB's public image and reputation as an inclusive organisation that supports and values gender inclusion**

### The MFB will

- Encourage senior women to participate in peer support
- Explore ways of incorporating diversity-sensitive approaches in providing emergency management
- Review and document approaches which enable gender-sensitive and dignified decontamination for community members in Hazard cleanup processes
- Review the current committees and working groups with impact on gender inclusion outcomes (e.g Privacy Committee, Uniform Committee, Station Design Committee)
- Explore the need for development of supportive programs for corporate and operational female employees in recognition of their minority status within the organisation

- Continue to develop the MFB website to highlight the MFB's commitment to diversity and to serve a diverse population
- Use most up-to-date electronic technology such as pod casts and video streaming to provide information about the MFB and its staff and values, and promote careers for diverse candidates including women.
- Continue to include female firefighters in MFB publications, promoting their role to the general community

**To link the organisation's Gender Inclusion Action Plan to MFB's values and ensure all staff are aware that gender and all other diversity inclusion is a fundamental element of MFB's purpose and values**

### The MFB will

- Develop a communication program to assist the implementation and marketing of the Gender Inclusion Action Plan which will also benefit other Diversity Plans
- Review the Gender Inclusion Action Plan and adjust, identifying progress and obstacles in MFB Annual Report
- Develop and promote the rationale and underpinning principles for including gender balanced images in MFB literature
- Develop guidelines for gender-inclusive language for internal staff and external stakeholders





# Inclusive and Accessible Services

GOAL

STRATEGIES

## 5 External Communication

## 6 Physical Environment

OBJECTIVES

ACTIONS

**To demonstrate the MFB commitment to inclusion through accessible communication and information provided for the public**

**The MFB will**

- Publicly launch the Gender Inclusion Action Plan as the commitment of the whole organization to an inclusive MFB
- Explore a number of different and innovative ways to portray the MFB as an organisation with commitment to diversity
- Develop a Diversity Scorecard which tracks MFB progress on diversity and publish as part of the MFB Annual Report
- Explore development of corporate products that promote fire fighting to women

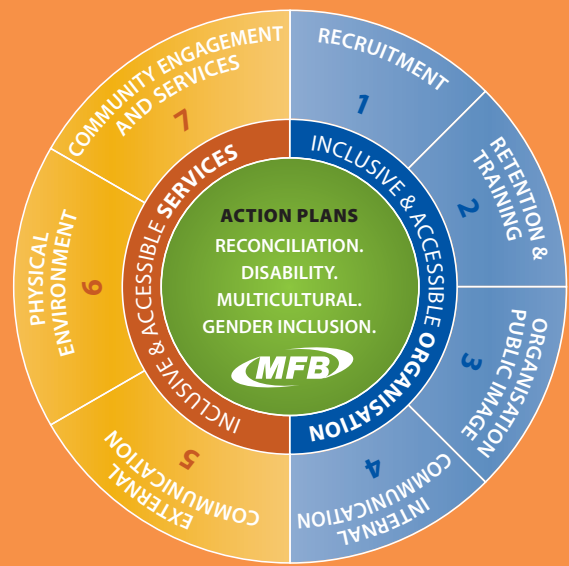
**To make MFB's physical environment welcoming and suitable for the needs of all male and female employees**

**The MFB will**

- Implement the current station refurbishment program which incorporates design to achieve privacy for all
- Develop measures that ensure all stations and MFB workplaces are free from any offensive, sexist or racist material
- Investigate approaches to appliance design to enable operation by a diverse range of physical types employed within the fire service



To make MFB's physical environment welcoming and suitable for the needs of all male and female employees



## 7 Community Engagement and Services

**To foster partnerships between MFB and special interest, user groups and individuals**

**The MFB will**

- Include and celebrate International Women's Day on the MFB Events calendar
- Establish a Women's Advisory Committee which includes women of diverse backgrounds to provide advice to the MFB on women's issues
- Encourage operational staff to attend diversity forums and conferences
- Explore partnerships with a range of organisations which will support / foster the diversity of the MFB
- Strengthen the MFB's commitment and support for the White Ribbon Campaign
- Continue the MFB's sponsorship of the Women of Note Mentoring Breakfast







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