



Gender Equity Action Plan 2025-2028



Acknowledgement of Country

TAFE NSW and the NSW Department of Education (the department) acknowledge Aboriginal Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our campuses are located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas, as well as their rich contribution to society.

We recognise that Aboriginal cultures and communities form the foundation of cultural diversity within NSW. Hundreds of cultures, languages and kinship structures have long been embedded in the lands of Aboriginal Countries throughout the state. We acknowledge and celebrate these diverse traditions, customs and cultures that have existed since the beginning of time.

We will continue to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and promote their rights and interests. In doing so, we acknowledge the wrongs of the past, respect the cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and commit to embedding equality and equity throughout all areas of our organisations by integrating inclusive and innovative opportunities that will result in stronger relationships built on respect and trust.

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Foreword – NSW Department of Education



Equity is essential in delivering on Our Plan for NSW Public Education. We are committed to advancing equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences for our learners across the state. This can only be achieved by having an engaged workforce with a strong sense of belonging. Ensuring our workforce has equitable experiences and access to opportunities will further enhance engagement and belonging.

Students can't be what they can't see. We are responsible for showcasing what is possible to our learners when equity is a key consideration in all decisions, policies and practices.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all who have contributed to the development of this action plan. My leadership team and I look forward to working together to identify and remove barriers to facilitate equitable experiences and opportunities for every learner, educator and support staff member.

Murat Dizdar
Secretary, NSW Department of Education

Equity and inclusivity lie at the heart of public education. We are committed to developing an equitable and outstanding education system marked by equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences for every learner and colleague, regardless of gender.

In partnership with TAFE NSW, we are honoured to launch our first Gender Equity Action Plan, which will guide our work towards removing gender barriers to participation and advancement for every learner and colleague. We are joining forces with TAFE NSW to ensure learners and educators across the state feel valued and respected and have a sense of belonging.

This plan marks a significant milestone for the department. It is the first formal action plan to guide our approach to improving gender equity for our learners, educators and support staff. It represents the culmination of sustained and passionate efforts by my colleagues across the department over many years.

Foreword – TAFE NSW



I am pleased to introduce the Gender Equity Action Plan, developed in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education. Aligned to the NSW Government's broader vision in the NSW Women's Strategy 2023–2026, this plan reflects our deep commitment to advancing gender equity. It outlines clear actions to guide us toward achieving these important goals.

At TAFE NSW, we recognise the critical role of gender equity in building a fair and just society and workplace. This plan aims to address gender-based disparities by creating opportunities, removing barriers, and ensuring that all employees, students, and members of the NSW community have equitable access to opportunities, choices and outcomes.

Over the next three years, the plan will guide our efforts to promote gender equity through measurable goals that focus on equitable access, fair treatment, and expanded opportunities for women, men, trans, and gender-diverse individuals. Our primary objective is to foster safe and inclusive environments, improve economic empowerment, and promote leadership, recognition and participation for people of all genders.

Gender equity is more than just a goal for us. Implementing this plan is a part of our commitment to creating an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and able to succeed. Achieving true equity goes beyond offering equal opportunities; it requires initiatives that address the unique challenges different genders face. I know first-hand how important this can be in the workplace and how much better everything is when we create conditions that support everyone to succeed.

This plan is aligned with our broader commitment to equity, focusing on fairness and justice in our policies and practices. Recognising the importance of intersectionality, we ensure that our initiatives consider the diverse experiences and identities of individuals. In prioritising gender equity, we seek to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all. We know that diverse perspectives and experiences enrich our community and enhance our ability to serve effectively.

The journey towards gender equity requires the active participation and engagement from all of us. I encourage all students, employees and community members to embrace this plan, provide feedback, and actively participate in its initiatives. Together, we can create an environment where everyone can thrive.

Chloe Read (she/her)
Managing Director, TAFE NSW

Statement-NSW Department of Education



For too long, gender and gender-related characteristics have inhibited participation, opportunities and experiences. This inequity will only continue if we don't address it. We are committed to ensuring that every learner, educator and support staff member is respected, valued and empowered to achieve their best.

True change needs intentional action. Intentional action through this plan ensures that gender equity is embedded in everything we do. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues as we progress towards incorporating a gender lens into all our policies, programs, decisions and discussions.

We need to get this right to ensure every learner, educator and support staff member is best placed to reach their full potential. By creating an even playing field, our learners will be free to realise their dreams.

Fiona Glendinning (she/her)
Executive Director, People, Culture and Capability and Co-executive Sponsor, NSW Department of Education

We want every learner and staff member to have equitable experiences and opportunities regardless of gender. I am pleased to be the co-executive sponsor of our first Gender Equity Action Plan, which provides the framework to identify, address and overcome gender-related barriers to opportunities.

We are committed to fostering an education system where everyone, regardless of gender, has equal opportunities, resources and supports. This enables our learners and staff to thrive, free from gender-related bias and discrimination.

Equity is essential to having a world-class education system. We want every learner, educator and support staff member of every gender to have the opportunities and experiences to reach their potential.

Statement-TAFE NSW



TAFE NSW is committed to building an organisation where everyone can thrive, regardless of gender. Our collective passion for learning and making a positive impact on communities is what drives us forward. The Gender Equity Action Plan provides a strategic roadmap to dismantle barriers and create opportunities for all genders, ensuring that every individual can achieve their full potential.

Through this plan, we aim to foster safe and inclusive environments, promote economic empowerment, and encourage leadership and participation for all genders. By embedding gender equity into our workplace culture, we are shaping a future in which everyone feels empowered to bring their true, authentic selves to work every day.

This commitment to gender equity is not just a strategic priority; it reflects our core values at TAFE NSW.

As the Chief People Officer, I am personally committed to driving the success of our Gender Equity Action Plan and look forward to sharing this journey with all of you. Together, we can create a truly equitable and inclusive environment for everyone.

Julie Tickle (she/her)
Chief People Officer and Co-executive Sponsor, TAFE NSW

Gender Equity Action Plan

The Gender Equity Action Plan (GEAP) is a strategic initiative by TAFE NSW, in partnership with the NSW Department of Education (the department), that supports the NSW Government's commitment to advancing gender equity. The GEAP aims to improve outcomes for all genders by creating opportunities and removing barriers.

At TAFE NSW and the NSW Department of Education, our learners, employees and communities – along with their diverse lived experiences shaped by the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, living with disability and other identities – are integral to our identity and inclusive culture. We prioritise equity over equality to address the unique challenges and barriers different genders face, especially people experiencing compounded discrimination due to intersecting identities.

A diverse and inclusive workplace and culture not only strengthens our connection with the broader community as a public education provider but also nurtures a sense of belonging among our learners, employees and communities.

This plan has been co-designed with our employees from staff networks, diversity and inclusion teams, industry partners and key internal stakeholders. It outlines what an equitable, safe and inclusive environment means for our learners, employees and communities. Our goal is to enhance outcomes by promoting safe and inclusive spaces, economic empowerment, financial security, health and wellbeing support, and fostering leadership, recognition and participation for all gender identities and expressions, guided by evidence-based decision-making and ongoing evaluation to ensure continuous improvement.

We want to create a barrier-free environment where everyone is valued and respected and has a sense of belonging. Our commitment is to ensure everyone can participate freely and safely, creating a more equitable educational and work environment for all, regardless of gender identity or expression.

Through stakeholder feedback, data collection and audits of our workforce profile, policies, programs and services, we have identified four key focus areas:

- 1. Leadership**
- 2. Systems and processes**
- 3. Our people**
- 4. Support and wellbeing.**

These focus areas help us offer a more equitable and safer environment for all individuals, enhancing experiences for our learners, employees and communities. By implementing these, we will ensure people of all genders:

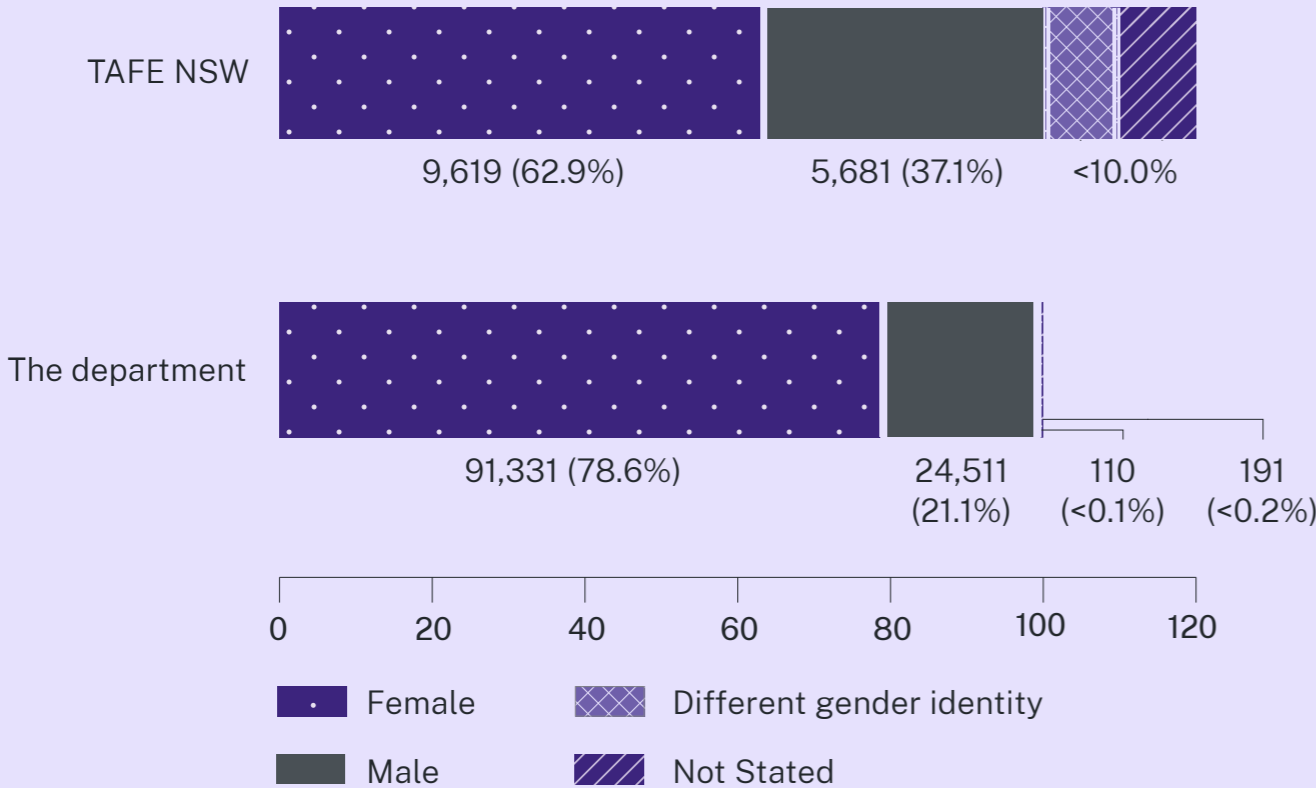
- have equal access to work and economic opportunities, and financial security and wellbeing throughout their life stages
- feel safe in their relationships and communities, and have access to services and support that meet their needs
- experience equal status, are recognised for their leadership, and are valued and respected for their diversity.



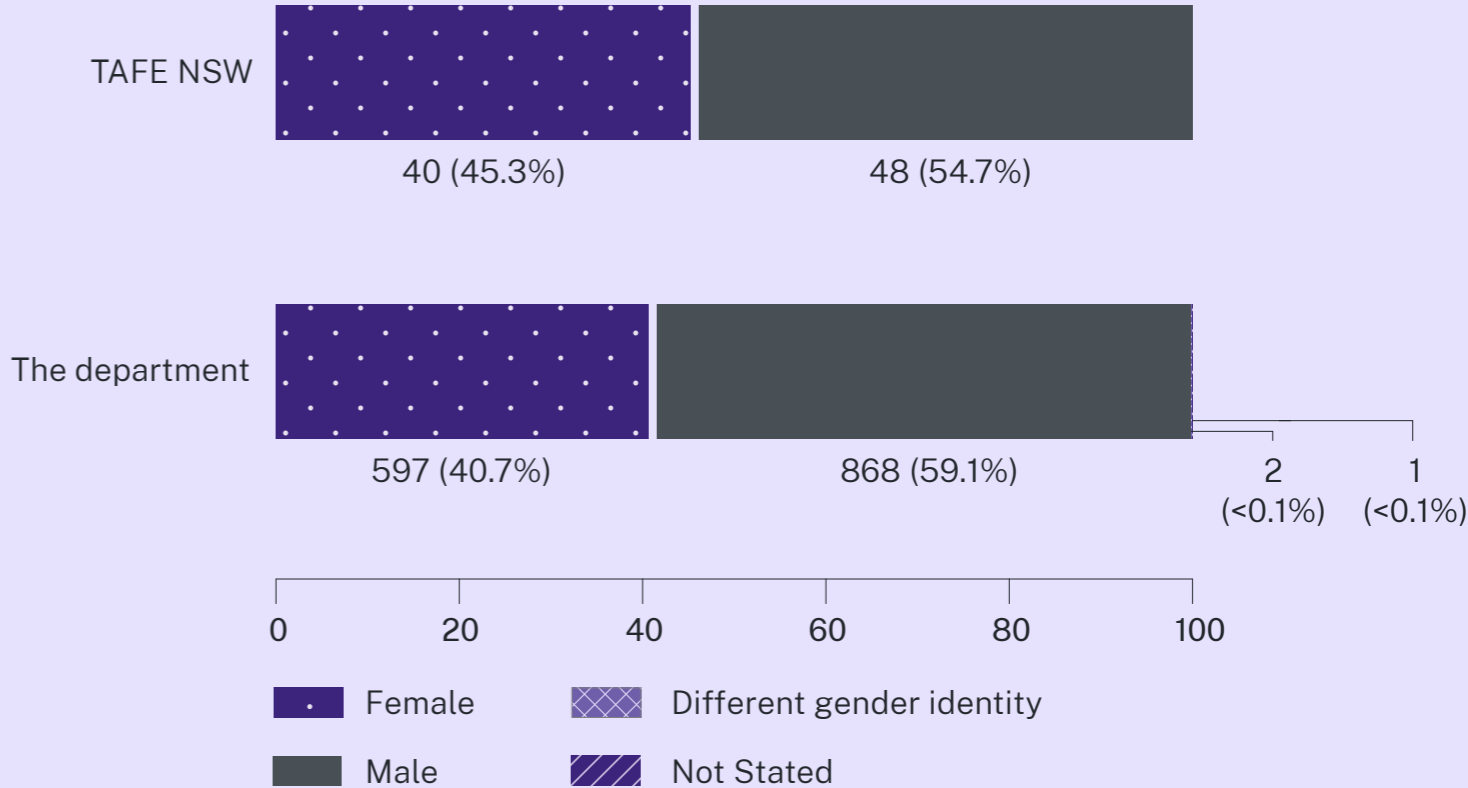
Diversity representation – Our people

The data points shared in our Gender Equity Plan highlight critical areas where we can remove barriers and advance equity for our employees and learners. These insights demonstrate the opportunities to create a more inclusive and supportive environment, ensuring equitable access and treatment for all individuals.

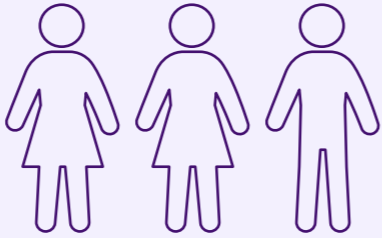
Overall Workforce: numbers and percentages



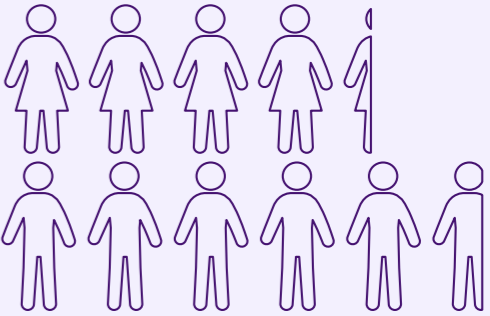
Senior Leaders numbers and percentages*



More than **two thirds** of our combined workforce identify as female...



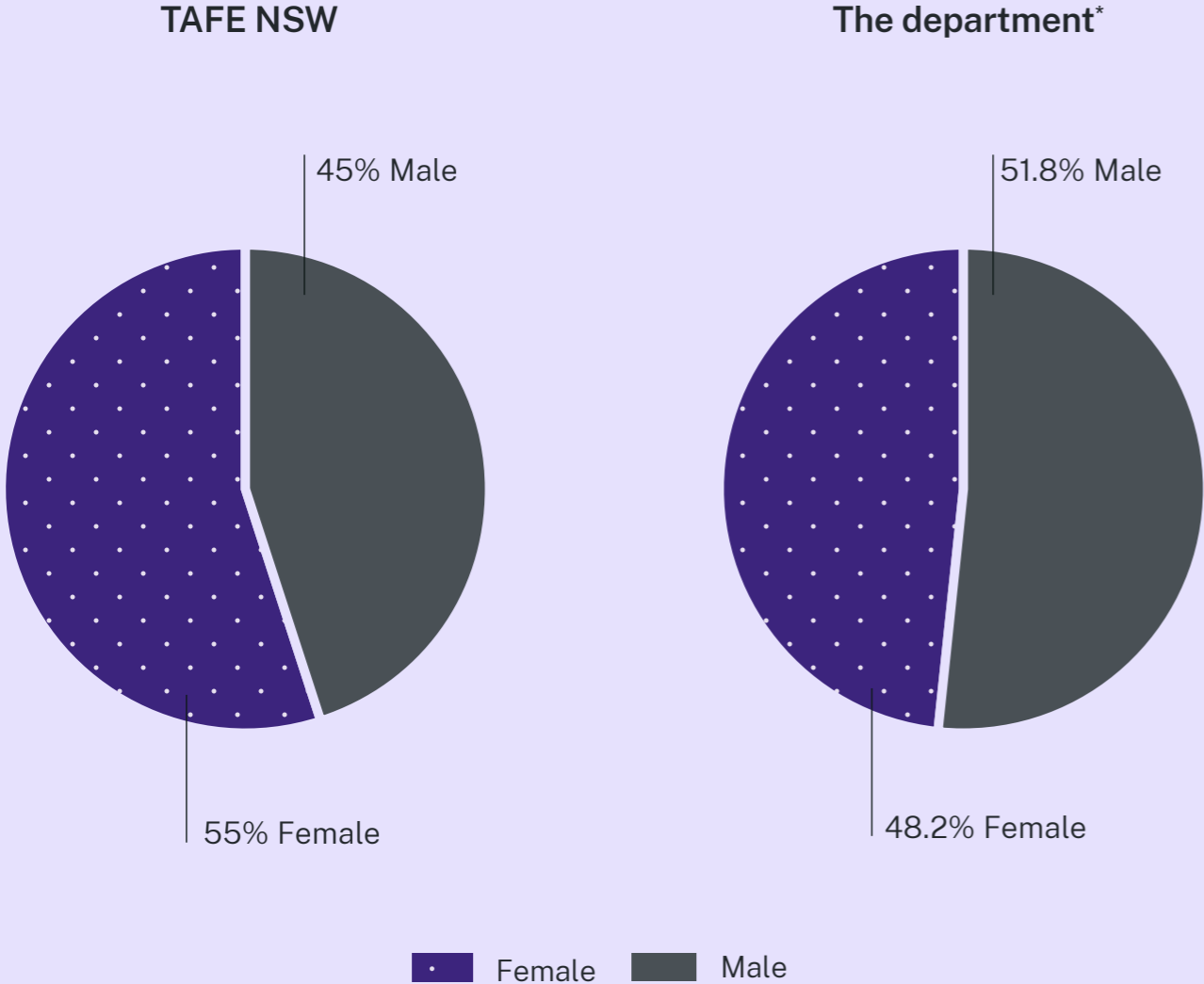
...although **less than half** are represented in senior leadership roles.



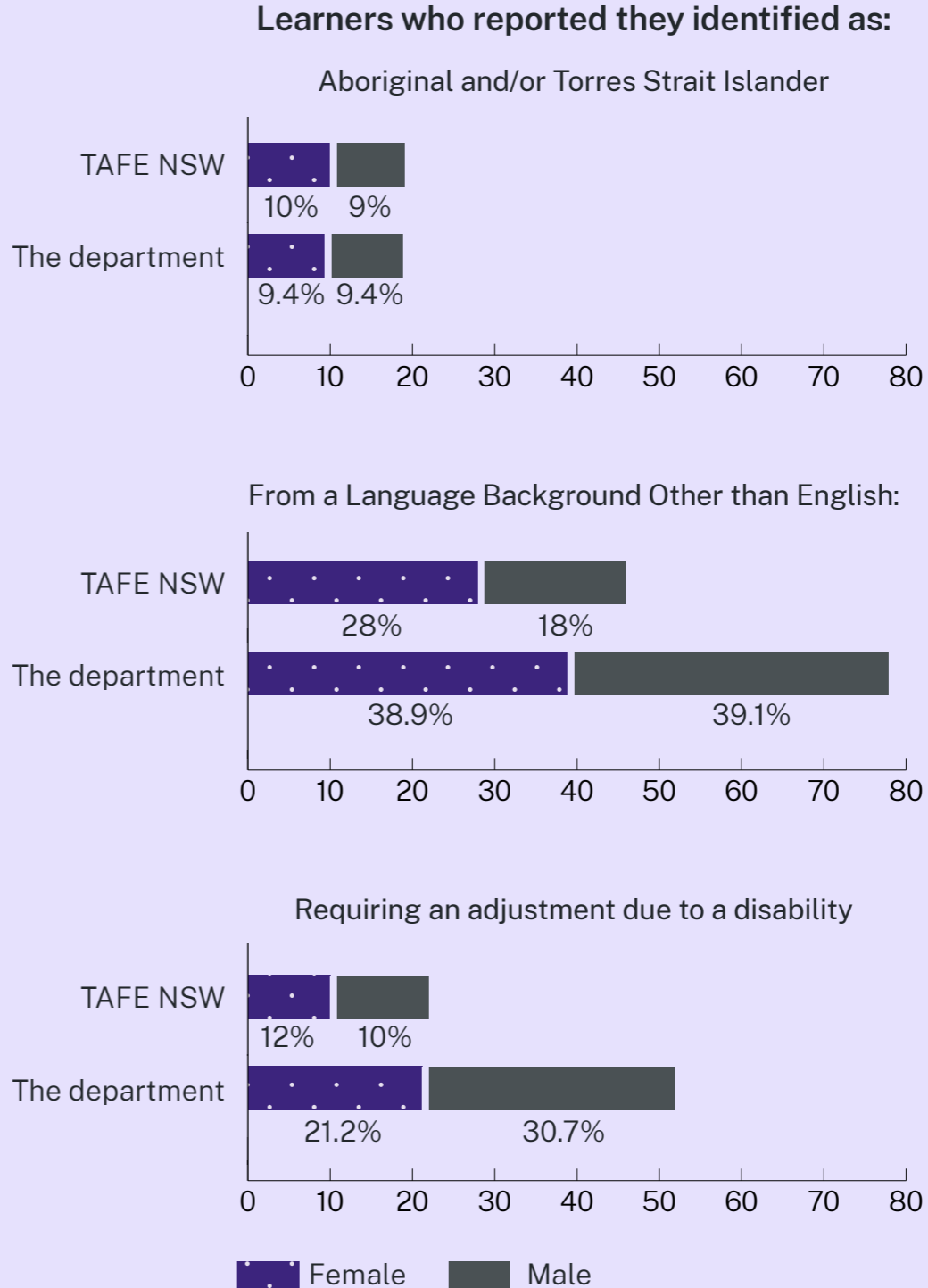
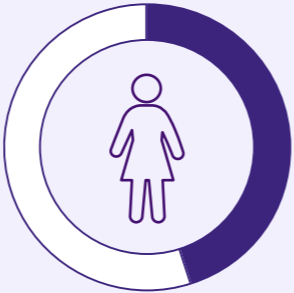
*PSSE – Public Service Senior Executive and above.

TAFE NSW and The NSW Department of Education are currently collating data to represent the intersectionality of the workforce and will continue to build on our diversity representation into the future.

Diversity Representation–Our Learners



In CY23 TAFE NSW had **7.2%** Enrolments for the age group 15-17 (No - Attends School) of total Enrolments and **45.4%** of the 7.2% were Female.



A note on data: The data contained in the above tables is currently being verified by the respective data holders. Due to data collection constraints, the reported data primarily reflects sex rather than gender. The terms 'female' and 'male' are used to present data collected based on biological sex. We recognise that this approach may reinforce a binary perspective of gender and does not fully encompass the diversity of gender identities and experiences.

People Matter Employee Survey 2023 results

My manager supports flexible working in my team.



TAFE NSW
73%

The department
50%

Personal background is not a barrier to participation in my organisation (e.g. cultural background, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender).



TAFE NSW
81%

The department
83%

There are effective resources in my organisation to support employee wellbeing.



TAFE NSW
67%

The department
56%

I feel that I belong in my organisation.



TAFE NSW
72%

The department
71%



Statement of commitment

TAFE NSW and the NSW Department of Education are committed to fostering a culture of gender equity and inclusion, ensuring that every individual feels valued, respected and empowered to achieve their full potential. As public education providers, we recognise that gender equity goes beyond the needs of any one group; it requires creating an environment where all individuals can thrive.

Our Gender Equity Action Plan (GEAP) outlines our strategic framework to dismantle systemic barriers and promote equal opportunities for all genders. This plan is informed by a deep understanding of the diverse experiences and challenges our community members face, particularly those encountering intersecting forms of discrimination. We are committed to advancing gender equity through transparent data collection, inclusive policies and the promotion of gender-diverse leadership at all levels of our organisations.

Informed by evidence-based decision-making and ongoing evaluation, we aim to ensure that our actions lead to measurable improvements. A gender-equitable workplace and learning environment is not just a goal but a fundamental right. To realise this, we will engage in continuous learning, hold ourselves accountable and collaborate to create a safe environment where everyone can fully participate.

Our GEAP aligns with the NSW Government’s broader commitment to gender equality, as outlined in the NSW Women’s Strategy 2023-26 and the annual Gender Equality Budget Statement.

All NSW Government departments are required to have a Gender Equality Action Plan to champion gender equality in workforce strategies, policies, programs, services and legislative development and delivery. Success relies on a long-term commitment with clear actions and measures to address both intentional and unintentional gender inequity.

At TAFE NSW, the GEAP is key to achieving our strategic goals and aligns with broader Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) plans. Similarly, at the NSW Department of Education, the GEAP supports the core values of Our Plan for NSW Public Education by removing gender-related barriers, essential for an inclusive education system where every student can learn, grow, and belong.

For you:



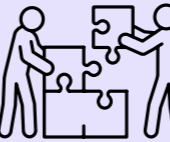
“I can pursue my goals, be respected for who I am, and thrive without barriers. I can be part of a community where everyone is empowered to succeed.”

For our teams:



“We embrace diverse perspectives, collaborate as equals, treat each other with respect and create a supportive environment where every team member can excel, have equal opportunity to participate and contribute to our shared success.”

For our community:



“We strengthen the fabric of our communities by promoting gender equity in education and employment, driving positive social change and empowering people of all genders to contribute to a thriving and inclusive NSW.”



Strategic activities

Through evidence-based decision-making and evaluation, the next stage of our journey will ensure continued growth to meet the future needs of our communities.

To address the complex gender equity issues that arise from systemic barriers, social disparities and a lack of inclusion, we have developed a comprehensive approach centred around four key focus areas:

- 1. Leadership**
- 2. Systems and processes**
- 3. Our people**
- 4. Support and wellbeing.**

These focus areas are designed to breakdown the barriers caused by the intersecting factors – such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and living with disability – that compound gender disparities. By increasing gender-diverse leadership, enhancing awareness, fostering psychological safety and ensuring transparent data practices, we aim to create a more inclusive, equitable environment in which every individual can thrive, free from the constraints of gender-based inequities.

The GEAP is grounded in a Theory of Change (TOC) approach, ensuring that each initiative is driven by a clear path to impact. By first identifying the core issues and defining our desired outcomes, the GEAP sets out strategic actions and measurable outputs. This approach allows us to track progress; assess social, cultural and economic impacts; and maintain focus on achieving meaningful and sustainable gender equity.

Our Problem Statement

Gender equity issues stem from systemic barriers, social issues and disparity in inclusion compounded by intersecting factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and living with disability. Insufficient data and transparency, gender disparities and a culture lacking psychologically and culturally unsafe environments discourage open dialogue about gender-related experiences.

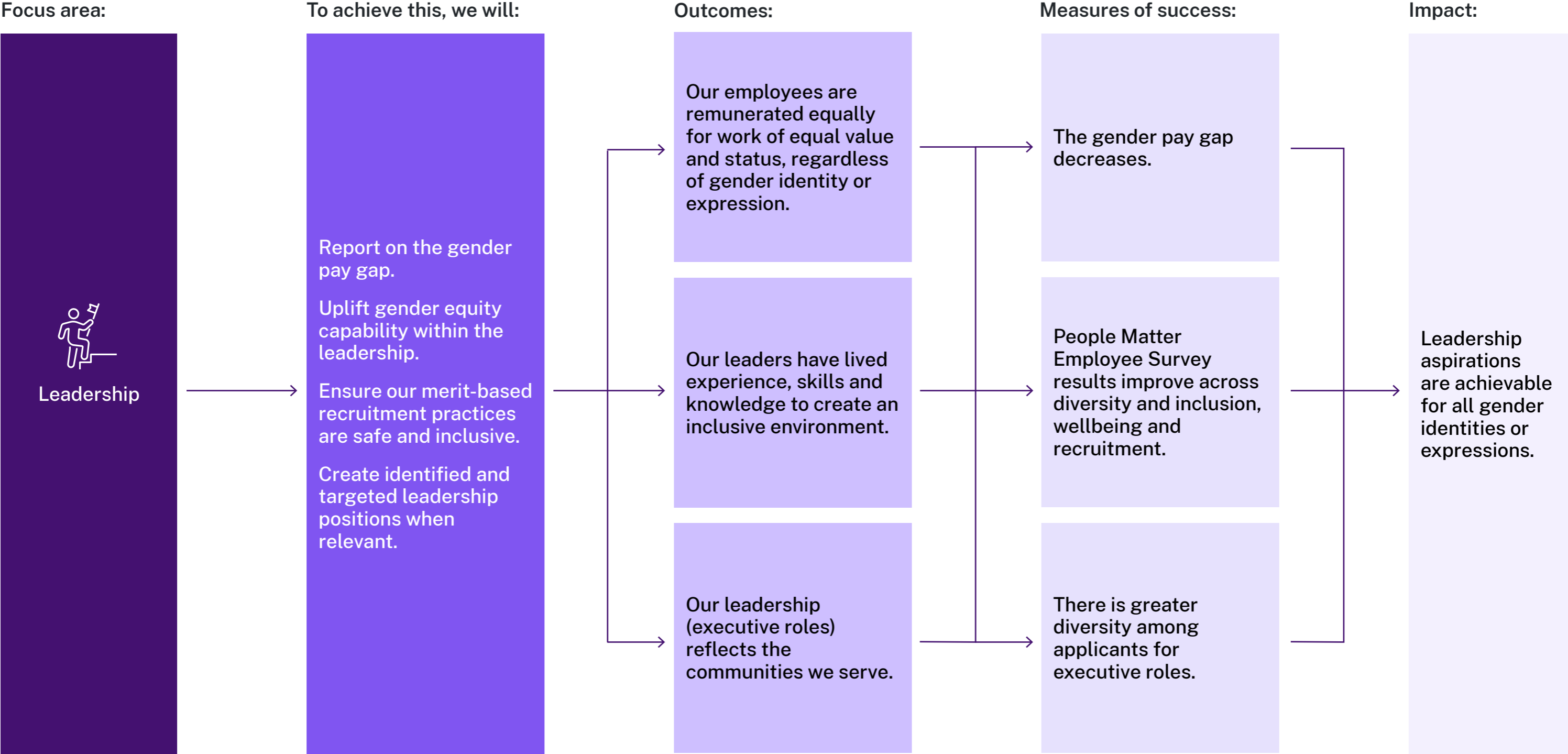
The underrepresentation of gender-diverse leadership, combined with inadequate awareness and procedural understanding, perpetuates these inequalities.



Focus area: Leadership



We are committed to ensuring leadership opportunities are accessible to all, regardless of gender identity or expression. By addressing the gender pay gap and diversifying leadership, we aim to reflect the communities we serve.



I am a leader, not a female leader.



As the first female deputy at my school and now the Executive Director of Rural North, I have experienced the value of leadership opportunities firsthand. Starting my career in rural schools, I faced challenges balancing career growth and motherhood in an environment with limited female role models. Thanks to a supportive principal who pushed our school leadership team beyond our comfort zones, I was empowered to carefully consider evidence, make decisions and learn from the outcomes, whether good or bad. His generosity with his time and sharing his leadership strategies left a lasting impact on me as I progressed through my career.

Today, I focus on creating equitable opportunities for regional students and am committed to supporting other women in leadership roles. My journey highlights the importance of seizing opportunities and fostering an inclusive leadership culture where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive.

Meghanne Wellard PSM (she/her)

**Executive Director, Public Schools,
Rural North Directorate**



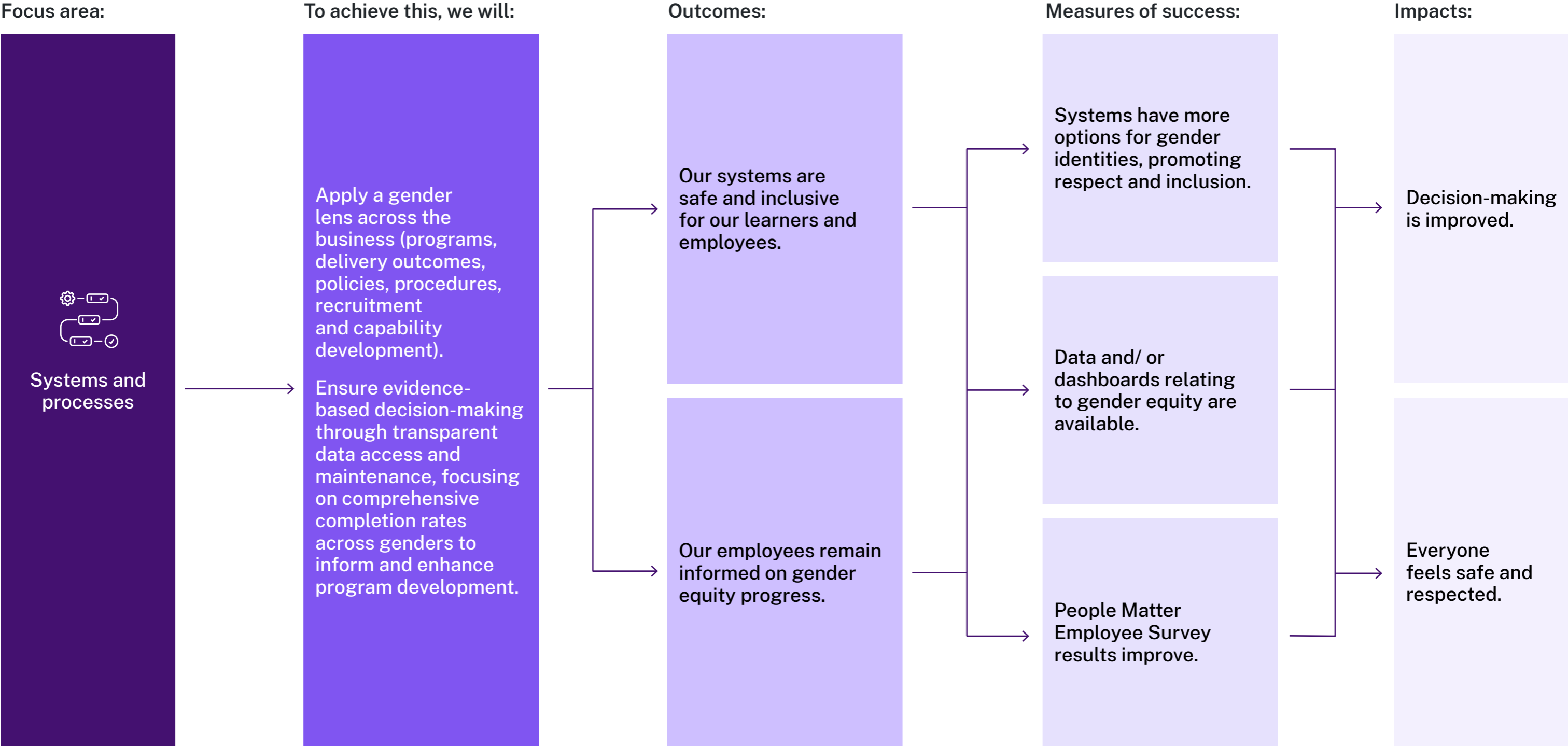
I would like us to stop saying female leader. I am a leader, and the NSW Department of Education is a wonderful place to be a leader and to make a massive difference.



Focus area: Systems and processes



We are committed to embedding a gender lens into our systems and processes to ensure inclusivity and equity. By prioritising transparency and applying this lens to our policies, programs and functions we aim to create a safe, supportive environment for everyone.



Balancing family and career through flexible work



I became aware of the NSW Government's paid parental leave in 2021, just as my wife and I were talking about starting a family. My manager was quick to provide support, and I took parental leave from August 2023 until December 2023 which enabled me to create a strong bond with my daughter. My experience at TAFE NSW is that they are a very supportive workplace which provided me comfort in taking my paid parental leave benefits. The leave also provided opportunity for someone to step in my role. This allowed for growth in their capabilities and was an easy transition for me to return to work.

Flexible work arrangements at TAFE NSW have allowed me to have a mix of campus days and work from home. TAFE NSW knows the importance of having arrangements that work for you as an individual, your family, and work colleagues.

Simon Clifford

**Financial Controller
TAFE NSW**



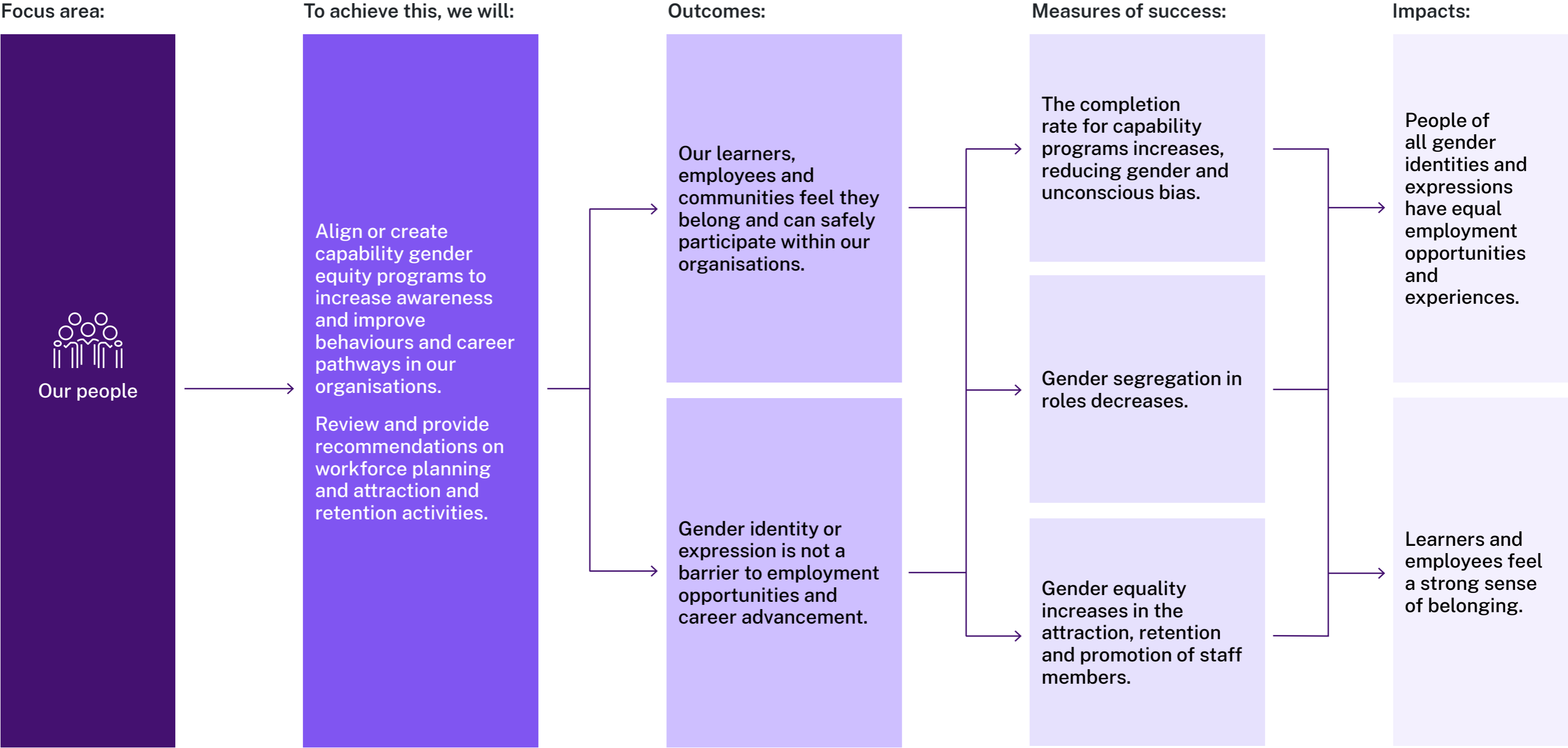
My experience at TAFE NSW is that they are a very supportive workplace which provided me comfort in taking my full paid parental leave benefits.



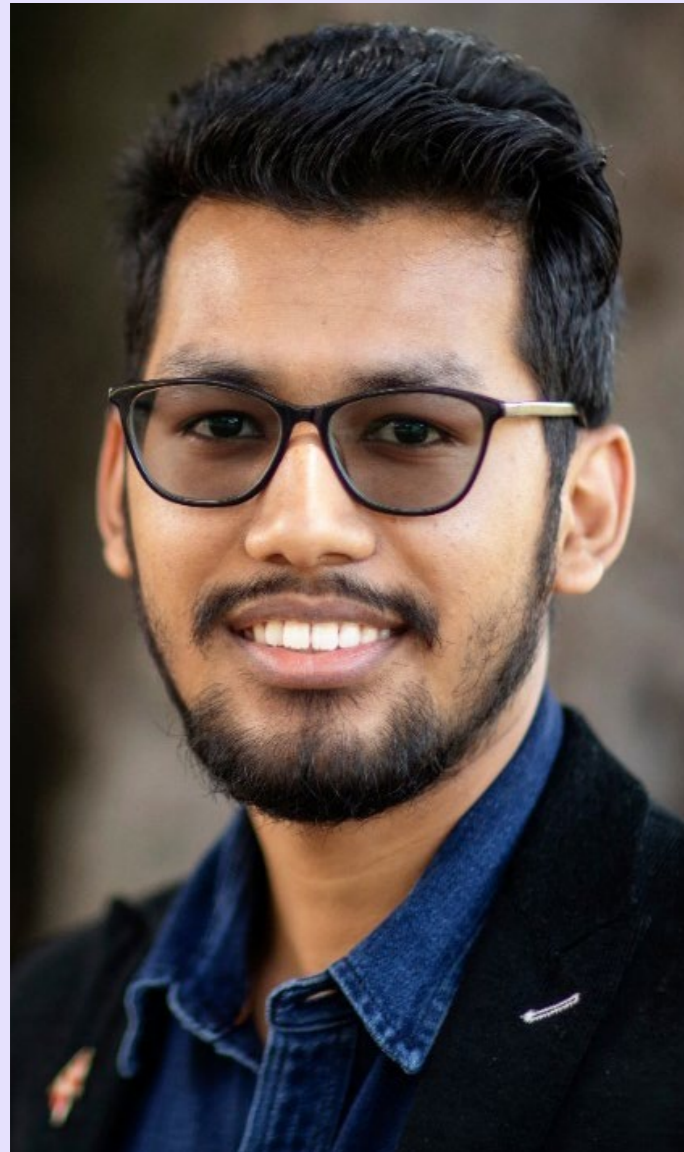
Focus area: Our people



We are committed to removing gender barriers, fostering a workplace where everyone feels safe, supported and that they belong. Through equitable programs, equal employment opportunities and workforce practices, we ensure equal opportunities for all to thrive.



Increasing male representation in early childhood education



Upon coming to Australia from Nepal in 2017 I enrolled in a Bachelor of Early Childhood, at TAFE NSW Nirimba campus. The class of 33 only had two males. The first question I asked was “do males tend to finish this course as it’s going to be a quite a lonely journey with just two male student? She answered ‘yes’. Out of the eight of us graduated and I was the only male. With only 3% of male educators in early childhood, it was challenging and isolating, but there were opportunities and I saw room for growth. With the great support from my teachers I was able to complete my studies.

Throughout the 4 years, they were so supportive, always very encouraging and provided me with the pathways to make a difference. It was a great journey to be a student, which is the reason I come back as an employee and continue my journey in Early Childhood at TAFE NSW.

Ramesh Shrestha (he/him)

**Education Support Officer,
TAFE Digital Early Childhood**



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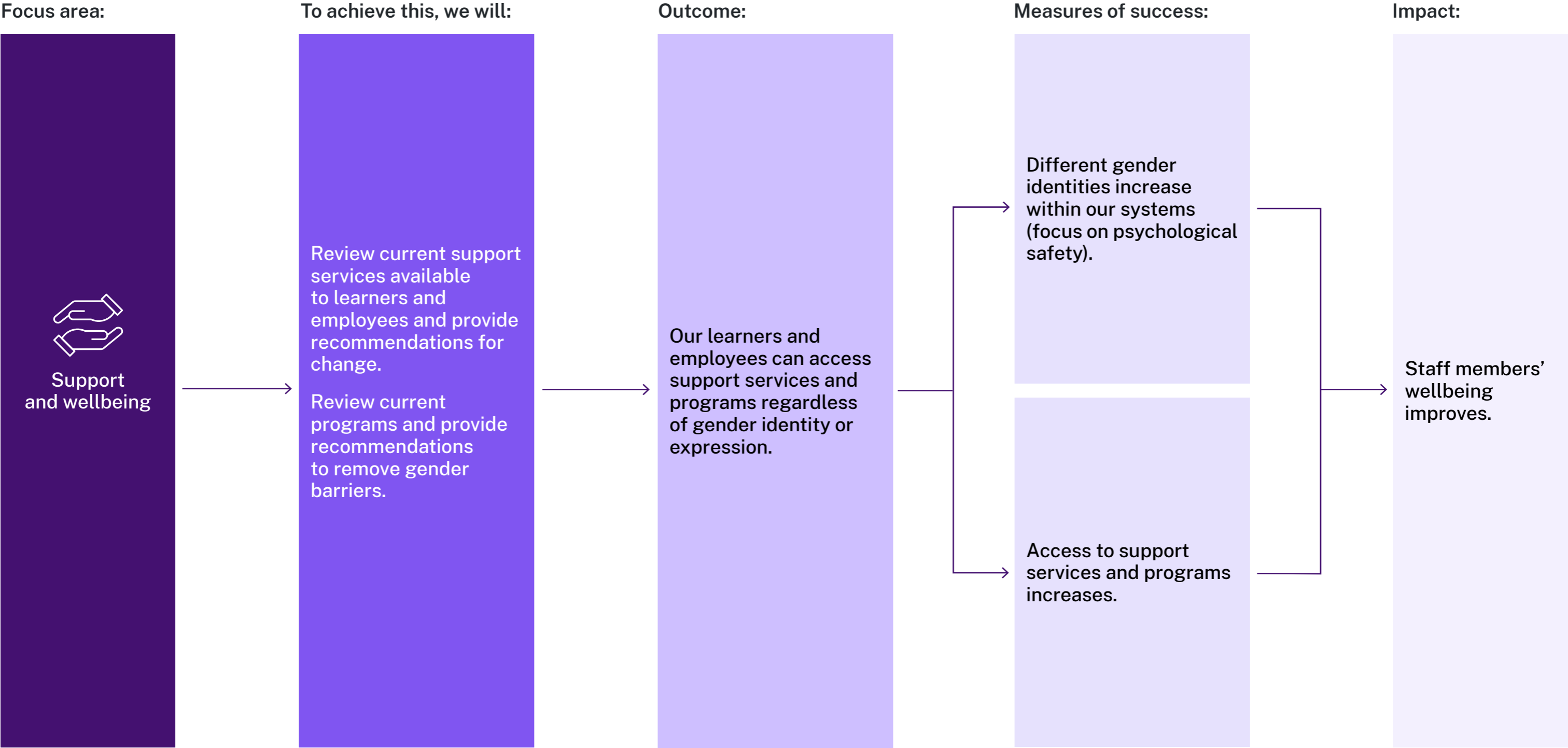
One of my goals is to increase the retention of male students in early childhood and care.

”

Focus area: Support and wellbeing



We will provide equal access to support services for all, regardless of gender identity or expression. By enhancing psychological safety, we create a healthier, more equitable community for all.



Job-sharing for work-life balance



For over four years, we have been job-sharing a managerial role, balancing our professional responsibilities with our lifestyle and family demands. We initially teamed up when both of us sought part-time work, and we later successfully applied for a director role. Job sharing allows us to spend more time with our children while contributing different perspectives and skills to the organisation. Despite slightly higher costs for the department, the benefits of having two problem-solvers with different work histories, qualifications, and perspectives, delivers great outcomes for our learners. Job sharing has allowed us to make some great memories with our children while progressing our careers.

**Taryn Dilly (she/her)
and Cassandra May (she/her)**

**Directors, Regulatory Strategy, Policies
and Programs**



“

It [job-sharing arrangements] helps greatly. I enjoy taking my kids to school and preschool a couple of days a week. I can pick them up, take them to swimming lessons and do extracurricular activities with them on the two days that I'm not working.

”

Measurement of Progress

To monitor and report progress, we will report annually to Women NSW and internal governing bodies across both departments. As we progress on our journey, close collaboration with learners, staff networks, internal councils and NSW Government agencies will be essential to incorporating diverse perspectives and addressing intersectionality.

The qualitative and quantitative measures will reflect those measures of success outline across the four focus areas including:

- successfully implementing actions from 2025–2028
- seeking regular feedback from our employees, learners, communities and industry
- reviewing and analysing the People Matter Employee Survey results
- auditing and reviewing workforce data sources, programs, services and functions to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- submit an annual progress plan to Women NSW in accordance with the NSW GEAP Guidelines.





Acknowledgement

TAFE NSW and the NSW Department of Education developed the GEAP using a modern human-centred design approach. In this process, we engaged with colleagues across both organisations to ensure that the diverse thoughts, voices and experiences within our communities were captured.

We extend our thanks to all contributors, including the project team and relevant internal and external stakeholders.

This approach allowed us to gather invaluable insights from more than 150 individuals through surveys and audit feedback. We appreciate their individual and collective efforts, which have been instrumental in shaping the actions and initiatives outlined in this plan.

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