

## PREAMBLE

---

Improvements in the status of women and increased opportunities for their participation in economic and social life have been achieved. However, despite many years of equal opportunity laws, women still have lower incomes and less job security than men, and still suffer from sexual harassment.

In addition, representation of women in key decision making positions remains far below that of men. In this context, AGV policy on women promotes respect for women and their equal access to and voice in all aspects of Victorian life.

## PRINCIPLES

---

1. Women should enjoy equality to men in all spheres of society and their human rights, experience, knowledge, work and other contributions to society should be recognised and valued equally to men's.
2. Women should have equal representation and participation in decision making processes in all areas of political, social, cultural, intellectual and economic life.
3. All women should have the right to make informed choices about all aspects of their lives, including education, health, sexual identity and reproduction.
4. Women should receive equal pay for work of equal value, and their unpaid caring responsibilities should be acknowledged and properly valued throughout their lifetime.
5. Women should live free of direct, indirect and systemic discrimination.
6. Women should live free from harassment, fear, violence and abuse.

## AIMS

---

### Equity for Women

1. A community which is fully aware of and conforms to international standards, conventions and treaties which aim at eliminating discrimination against women.
2. To facilitate reform of political processes to remove barriers to women's participation in order to achieve a society in which the voices and perspectives of all Victorian women can be heard.

3. Ongoing monitoring, research and analysis of women's status in society and re-establishing an independent State government office for the status of women.
4. Affordable, accessible and quality childcare and incentives for on-site childcare facilities in workplaces.
5. Family-friendly and caring-friendly and flexible workplaces, including flexible working hours and possibility of working from home.
6. Equal funding in support of women's participation in all leisure, sporting, music and artistic endeavours, including by provision of equal or similar facilities and award opportunities.
7. To provide positive discrimination programs where necessary to support the equal participation of women in sporting, recreational, music and artistic opportunities.
8. Women's only swimming and other sporting and recreational programmes where necessary, in consultation with local communities.

### Women and Education (see also Education Policy)

9. Provision of life-long education opportunities that are responsive to women's particular circumstances, including caring responsibilities and late entry to study.
10. Provision of specific initiatives that increase female participation and success in non-traditional career options in schools, VET, and in universities.
11. Provision of centres for continuing education and training for women, including training to facilitate promotion opportunities for part-time and temporary workers and return to work of women who were outside the workforce for extended periods.

### Women's Health (see also Health Policy)

12. Full implementation of the Victorian Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2010-14.
13. Enhanced community-based women's health and sexual health services, including provision of accurate information on women's health issues at all life stages. This includes access to legal, free and safe pregnancy termination services, including unbiased counselling.

14. Provision of free and safe pregnancy, maternity, childbirth and early childhood services, proactively inform women about the available choices of care, including support for home birth and for midwife based services.
15. To enact legislation making forced sterilisation illegal, and enforcing legislation prohibiting female circumcision.

## **Women and the Law (see Justice Policy)**

16. To initiate relevant inquiries on women's issues including sexual harassment, trafficking of women and girls, pregnancy discrimination, and domestic violence.
17. To expand the definition of self-defence in cases of murder in domestic situations.
18. To provide a supportive and appropriate environment for women with infants in prison.
19. Better gender training for all personnel in the justice system, especially those personnel responding to domestic violence, rape and other gender related crimes.
20. To increase criminal compensation (through VOCAT) for victims of violent crime and abuse.
21. Decriminalisation of consensual adult sex work.

## **Women's Safety**

22. A whole of government approach to minimising and managing family violence.
23. To provide adequate women's support services, including sexual assault centres, in metropolitan, regional and remote communities; also catering for women with special needs such as those from CALD and Indigenous backgrounds and women with disabilities.
24. To initiate a national inquiry into sexual assault, and bringing about uniform sexual assault laws.
25. To increase availability and access to safe and secure accommodation for women at risk of sexual assault or domestic violence.
26. To increase funding and support for activities related to the prevention and elimination of intimate partner violence, including providing ongoing funding for school and community education programs involving men and boys to address the issue of violence against women.

## **The Portrayal of Women**

27. To provide strong, ongoing support for a culture of respectful and empowering messages and images about women.
28. To support a positive and respectful view of women in advertising and other media, including the fashion industry; advocating a portrayal of a range of women's body types as healthy and normal.
29. To ensure Victorian compulsory school curricula include the analysis of popular culture, with respect to its role and impact in creating, perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes.
30. Work to inform and educate the community, including through school curricula, about the social and personal impacts of material that presents women as objects of sexual exploitation, abuse, denigration and violence, including internet pornography which has proliferated over the recent years.