



Workplace Gender Equality Report

January 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Housing Choices Australia (HCA) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we operate, recognising their strong connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and honour their rich cultural heritage and spiritual ties to these lands.

We recognise forced colonisation, stolen lands and failure of cultural recognition has an enduring impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ability to have a home they can call their own. Our vision is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a home and have life opportunities that they value, in communities that are inclusive and resilient. We are dedicated to integrating the principles of reconciliation into our services, our ways of working and the relationships we have with our residents, communities and partners.

Message from our CEO

We are dedicated to promoting gender equality and fostering an inclusive workforce as we believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion are fundamental to our successful culture.

As a proud employer dedicated to advancing workplace gender equality, we are committed to fostering an environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to their fullest potential. This is reflected in our values and how we work together.

Achieving gender equality is not just a goal—it is an ongoing journey that requires intentional action and accountability. We have made significant progress, but we acknowledge that there is always more to do. Our organisation is focused on driving success, with a commitment to closing the gender pay gap.

To advance this goal, we have conducted a comprehensive remuneration review, focusing on identifying and addressing any gender pay disparities. Additionally, we have implemented inclusive and equitable strategies, policies, and benefits designed to support a diverse workforce. These actions ensure equal access to career development, training opportunities, and a transparent, fair pay structure—all aimed at promoting gender equity now and into the future. HCA will continue to participate in the Workplace Gender Equality survey and note the progress we have made over the last year with a reduction in the median Gender Pay Gap to 6.00%. We remain steadfast in our commitment, striving to integrate inclusive practices into every facet of our organisation. We know that achieving sustainable change takes time and we are confident that, with clear strategies and a unified effort, we are making meaningful progress toward our goals.

In partnership with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), we reaffirm our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement. The data presented in this report underscores our dedication to fostering a workplace where every individual is valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

Together, we will persist in breaking down barriers, advocating for equality, and creating meaningful opportunities for everyone.

David Fisher
CEO, Housing Choices Australia

About our report

The gender pay gap represents the percentage difference in average earnings between women and men at HCA. It is distinct from the concept of equal pay, which refers to women and men receiving the same pay for the same or comparable work—a legal requirement since 1969. Factors such as a higher concentration of women in lower-paid roles, men in senior or highly paid positions, and gender imbalances in management can contribute to an organisation's gender pay gap.

At HCA, the gender pay gap serves as a valuable metric for assessing and tracking gender equality within our organisation. Reducing this gap is a priority for us and underscores our commitment to being an equitable and fair employer for all.

The **median gender pay gap** refers to the middle value when sorting the gender pay of organisations in the comparison group from lowest to highest. If the comparison group has an even number of values, the median is calculated as the average of the two middle figures.

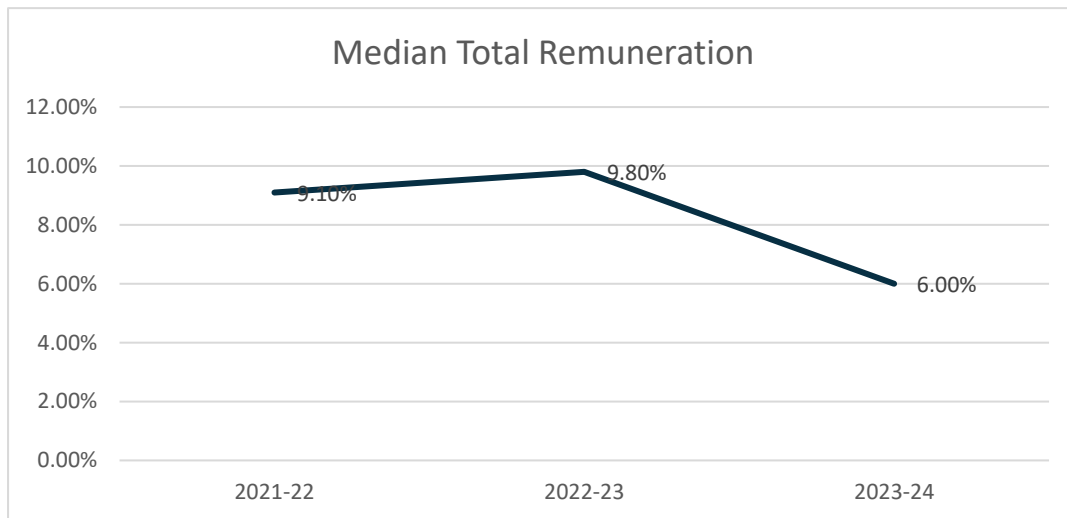
Our organisational processes and policies are designed to identify and mitigate factors such as unconscious bias in hiring, remuneration, and promotion decisions. We are actively reimagining and reshaping workplace flexibility, particularly in senior and leadership roles, where we promote flexible work arrangements regardless of gender.

We recognise the financial impact that caring responsibilities and career breaks can have on women and are committed to addressing these challenges. Our parental leave policies and flexible working options are tailored to support equitable financial outcomes for women who are parents, ensuring a fairer and more inclusive workplace for all.

Our data reflects HCA's gender pay outcomes and is based on the key findings from our April 2024 submission to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) annual Gender Equality Census, as required by the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012.

An overview of our data

HCA's **Median Gender Pay Gap** is 6.0%.



A positive percentage indicates men are paid more on average than women at HCA however our gap is shrinking.

What about non-binary employees?

Employees identified as non-binary are not included currently while the WGEA establishes the baseline level for this information.

Our gender pay gap analysis

A concentration of one gender in lower-paid roles and the other in more senior and highly-paid roles can increase the gender pay gap; so, too can a gender imbalance in management. Over the last year, our recruitment practices have supported a shift in roles across senior leadership and management roles which has helped close the pay gap. Our workforce is currently made up of 69% women and 31% men, evenly spread across all roles.



At HCA there is a higher proportion of women in part-time and casual roles which are often lower paid. An imbalance in the composition of employees in these roles can be a driver of the gender pay gap.

There is still work for us to do to ensure a balanced composition for part-time and casual roles. Women are also more likely to work part-time. At HCA management and leadership roles are available on a part-time or flexible basis and we are working towards promoting this.

HCA has a larger concentration of women in the Key Management Personnel and Manager groups. There is however also a larger concentration of females in non-management roles which are lower-paid. This is what contributes to the gender pay gap at HCA.

Change and progress

Over the past year, HCA has actively pursued initiatives to close the gender pay gap, reinforcing our commitment to workplace equity and inclusion. Through targeted policies, transparent pay structures, and continuous review processes, we have made measurable progress in reducing wage disparities and fostering a fairer workplace. The following summary outlines the key actions taken towards achieving greater gender pay equity at HCA.

Embed a gender informed approach to job advertising

- A gender-informed approach acknowledges that considering the needs of all genders leads to better gender equality outcomes. The language used in job advertisements plays a crucial role, as it can either attract or discourage applicants, ultimately influencing an organisation's gender composition over time. In May 2024, HCA adopted a gender-informed approach to job advertising. This shift has expanded and diversified recruitment candidate pools by generating interest and encouraging targeted groups to inquire and apply.

Use sponsorship and mentorship programs to improve workforce gender composition

- Mentorship is a formal or informal relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced individual. Sponsorship involves proactive and instrumental action to advance a person's career that can take place in formal or informal ways. In late 2024 HCA sponsored two women from Melbourne Polytechnic as part of the Overseas Qualified Professionals (OQP) Victoria Practical Placement Program. OQP Victoria provides skilled migrant professionals with an introduction to Australian labour market and workplace culture, communication skills and management concepts. This assisted to guide these individuals towards opportunities that can maximise movement towards their career goals.

Implement processes to support effective referrals for employees experiencing or supporting victim survivors of domestic violence

- Family and domestic violence is a significant workplace issue, affecting individuals across all demographics. It can impact employee's performance, productivity, mental health, well-being, and workplace safety. HCA has taken meaningful steps to support employees by establishing processes that facilitate effective referrals for those experiencing family and domestic violence or supporting victim-survivors.

Employee consultation

- Meaningful consultation has been instrumental in guiding HCA's gender equality journey, fostering employee engagement and ensuring that our policies, strategies, and initiatives align with their needs and priorities. By actively consulting with employees through an Engagement Survey, we have gained valuable insights into their perspectives on the workplace, identifying what is working well and areas for improvement.

Sex based discrimination and harassment

- HCA has a positive duty to prevent unlawful behaviours, including sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex and discrimination in connection with the workplace, under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*. Sexual harassment is also prohibited under the *Fair Work Act 2009*.
HCA developed and introduced a new Sexual Harassment Policy covering all six gender equality indicators that are fundamental to workplace gender equality. All staff have also undertaken training on Appropriate Workplace Behaviour. This course explains the types of behaviours that are not conducive to a respectful and inclusive workplace and details the impacts of these behaviours. The course explains what you can do if you witness or experience behaviours that are inappropriate. This training is also issued to all new staff at HCA during onboarding.

Our commitment to closing the gap – evidence informed actions

At HCA, we recognise that there is still work to be done to achieve full gender pay equity. In the coming year, we are committed to taking meaningful steps to further reduce the gender pay gap and create a more inclusive, equitable workplace.

One of our key initiatives will be the establishment of a Talent Management Framework—a strategic approach to attracting, developing, retaining, and optimising our workforce. This framework will align People & Culture strategies with business objectives, ensuring our team members are engaged, skilled, and supported in their career progression. By driving greater visibility across job roles, organisational levels, and workforce types, we will enhance Performance Management, Learning & Development, Strategic Workforce Planning and Succession Planning. With a strong focus on inclusive policies, equitable pay structures, and career development opportunities, this initiative will be instrumental in advancing gender diversity and closing the pay gap.

We are also introducing a Leadership Development Program to provide comprehensive training and development across the organisation, supporting a pathway for equitable career progression within leadership roles in the organisation.

Additionally, we will invest in a cutting-edge HR Analytics Platform to provide real-time workforce demographics, pay equity insights, and workforce planning analytics. This data-driven approach will enable us to better target and refine our actions, ensuring that every team, at every level of the organisation, benefits from transparent and fair pay practices.

While these actions and commitment to continuous improvement are key priorities for HCA, we recognise that meaningful and lasting change takes time. Some initiatives may extend beyond the coming year as we focus on implementing them thoughtfully and effectively. Our commitment remains strong, and these initiatives mark a significant step forward in our ongoing journey towards workplace equity, closing the gender pay gap and fostering a more inclusive workplace.

Use job redesign to deepen our recruitment pool

- Applying a gender lens to job design will enhance our ability to attract and engage a broader range of candidates. By adapting the design of roles, we can appeal to new groups of potential applicants who may not have previously considered these

opportunities. Understanding how various job structures impact different genders will enable HCA to redesign roles strategically, helping to expand our talent pool and address gender composition imbalances.

Use talent and succession planning frameworks to improve our workforce gender composition

- Succession planning involves identifying critical roles within HCA and creating long-term strategies to fill them with high-performing, high-potential talent from within the organisation. By incorporating a gender lens into our talent and succession planning, we can improve retention, promotion, and engagement within targeted groups, supporting the achievement of our gender composition goals.

Undertake a gender impact assessment of performance evaluation process and recruitment and promotion policies

- Gender can significantly shape employee's experiences and outcomes in performance evaluations, career progression, and promotion processes. Differences often emerge between men and women in areas such as promotion rates and roles, access to development opportunities, rewards and recognition, and individual performance ratings. Conducting a gender impact assessment helps identify potential biases and structural disadvantages that may contribute to these disparities.
- By undertaking a gender impact assessment of HCA's recruitment and promotion practices, we can address how these processes affect men and women differently. Without such analysis, unexamined practices may lead to gendered outcomes and disadvantages that compound over time.

Embed a skills-based assessment process into our recruitment practices

- A skills-based assessment approach to recruitment prioritises candidate's abilities and expertise. When paired with structured interviews, this method reduces subjectivity and enhances the alignment between the candidate and the role, ensuring more successful hires. This approach will add rigor to the recruitment process across HCA and will be particularly effective in promoting gender equality by mitigating the unconscious gender biases often present in traditional interview-only practices.

Apply a gender lens to exit processes

- This is the process of deliberately and carefully examining the gender implications for exiting staff. Tracking feedback and reasons for exiting HCA by gender will provide insight into the gendered experiences of employees which can then be used to inform future strategy.

Increase part-time and job share options for all employees

- Research shows that both women and, increasingly, men are seeking to reduce work hours to accommodate responsibilities outside of work. These needs often vary by gender and across different stages of the employee lifecycle. While HCA already offers flexibility to all employees, creating meaningful opportunities for flexible work patterns will provide a significant advantage in attracting and retaining talent, helping to address workforce composition challenges.

To support this, HCA will provide training for our people leaders on applying a gender lens to caregiving and flexibility. As key influencers, our leaders play a crucial role in fostering a gender-equal employment experience and championing a wide range of flexible work practices for our workforce.

Embed an opt out approach to parental leave for all parents

- An opt-out approach to parental leave assumes that all eligible employees will take their full entitlement to care for their child unless they choose otherwise. This approach is designed to naturally increase parental leave participation across HCA

while sending a strong message of support and expectation. By actively encouraging fathers to take on caregiving roles, it helps challenge traditional "ideal worker" and "primary carer" norms, fostering a culture where fathers are fully supported in balancing caregiving responsibilities with their careers.