

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Women



Thursday, 10 September 2020

BREAKING NEW GROUND FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN VICTORIA

The Victorian Government has taken a critical step toward gender equality with the appointment of the state's first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.

Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams today announced Niki Vincent to the position, which will provide independent oversight of Victoria's *Gender Equality Act 2020* and play a key leadership role in promoting gender equality across the Victorian community and workplaces.

The Act – the first of its kind in Australia – aims to improve outcomes for women working in higher education, local government and the public sector, including nurses, teachers and emergency service workers, by breaking down discrimination and gender barriers.

It requires over 300 Victorian organisations to show meaningful progress on gender equality, such as reducing the gender pay gap and rates of sexual harassment – and also subjects any policy, program or service that seeks funding in Victorian budgets to gendered analysis.

While progress has been made to improve gender inequality across the public sector, with women now holding 54 per cent of executive roles and the gender pay gap narrowing, there is still work to be done.

Dr Vincent – who starts as the Commissioner next month – brings a wealth of experience in gender equality and organisational leadership, having most recently served as Commissioner for Equal Opportunity in South Australia and as a former CEO of the Leaders Institute of South Australia.

In that role, she led a major independent review into sex discrimination, sexual harassment and predatory behaviour in the South Australian Police Force. Dr Vincent also conducted a three-year program across all government agencies to promote workplace gender equality and prevent violence against women.

The *Gender Equality Act* was enacted in February 2020 and will cover 11 per cent of the Victorian workforce.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams

"We're breaking new ground with Dr Vincent's appointment as our first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner – this is gender equality reform that sets a new standard not just in Australia, but across the world."

"We'll be looking to Dr Vincent's professional and academic insights to help benefit women across Victorian workplaces – as well as inspire Victorian employers to get behind these landmark reforms."

Quotes attributable to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner Niki Vincent

"I am dedicated to pursuing and promoting equality in Australian workplaces and believe the Victorian Government's work to address gender inequality is nation leading."

"By requiring public sector organisations to demonstrate meaningful progress towards gender equality, the Gender Equality Act will inspire and influence action across all Victorian sectors and communities around the country."

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