

9 June 2023

Gender Equality Commission

Via [enquiries@genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au)



To the Commission

**RE: VTHC SUBMISSION ON GENDER EQUALITY AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2023 - PROPOSED REGULATIONS**

The Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on Gender Equality Amendment Regulations 2023 - Proposed Regulations.

VTHC was founded in 1856 and is the peak body for unions in Victoria. VTHC represents over 41 unions and more than 500,000 workers in the state. These workers are members of unions that reach into every industry across Victoria, including in the public sector, who fight for gender equality at work every day.

Since winning the Eight Hour Day in 1856, VTHC has had a long history of fighting for and defending the rights of all workers in Victoria. This includes leading grassroots campaigns for gender equality in Victorian workplaces, delivering programs that break down barriers for women to start careers in male-dominated industries, and advocating for stronger legislation to promote gender equality.

*Victorian Trades Hall Council supports the prescription of the method and format for gender equality progress reports; as well as the prescription of existing regional libraries as defined entities and designated bodies.*

The proposed regulations ensure consistency across gender equality reports, making it easier to map out paths of improvement. The proposed regulations include the requirement that progress reports must be in the format approved by the Commissioner; that information collected must relate to the workplace gender equality indicators; and that a comparison is made between the indicators of the current and previous reporting period.

Public sector workers are passionate advocates for gender equality, and gender equality reporting regulations must reflect this. By ensuring that the method and format for gender equality progress reports are consistent, public sector workers and their unions are better able to identify progress on gender inequality in their workplace and negotiate

**Luke Hilakari**  
Secretary

**Amanda Threlfall**  
Assistant Secretary

**Wilhelmina Stracke**  
Assistant Secretary

**Trades Hall**  
54 Victoria Street  
Carlton 3053

**Ph: 03 9659 3511**  
**[info@vthc.org.au](mailto:info@vthc.org.au)**  
**[weareunion.org.au](http://weareunion.org.au)**

for improvements. The new regulations will also give public sector workers and their unions the information they need to compare the progress of their workplace to others in the public sector.

The inclusion of regional libraries is also both logical and necessary. Public libraries play an invaluable role in regional communities, bringing diverse community members together and delivering important outreach services. That is why it is so important for libraries to reflect community expectations on gender equality at work. This is also especially important as public libraries are also workplaces often dominated by women. All aspects of the public sector should be included to ensure that workers and decision-makers in Victoria can get a clear picture of the progress of gender equality across the entire sector.

Importantly, the Victorian Government needs to work with trade unions with coverage of public sector workers, especially the Australian Services Union (ASU) with the inclusion of regional libraries, in implementing new regulations to improve gender equality in Victorian workplaces. Trade unions understand best the mechanisms that workers need to improve gender equality in their workplaces. The Victorian Government must continue to consult with trade unions as a primary stakeholder on workplace gender equality as it makes continuous improvements to gender equality legislation and regulation.

This submission is intended to be read in conjunction with any submissions made by affiliated trade unions with coverage of workers in the public sector.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Politics and Research Lead, Ted Sussex, at [tsussex@vthc.org.au](mailto:tsussex@vthc.org.au).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. Stracke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wil Stracke

**Assistant Secretary**

Ref: WS:JK 91.143