



Economic Regulation Authority

Workforce Plan

2019-2022





Executive summary

The Economic Regulation Authority has gone through changes in the last few years, some of which were driven by the proposed transfer of energy access regulatory functions to the Australian Energy Regulator in 2016. Once it was determined that transfer would not occur, the ERA undertook an organisational restructure. This was followed by a change in leadership of the ERA's Secretariat. The current workforce challenge for the leadership is to bed down the structure and ensure stability.

The Governing Body's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 includes the goal of "Valuing our people". This Workforce Plan intends to ensure that this goal is realised.

Quarterly employee data gives Corporate Executive insight into where the workforce is positioned.

This Workforce Plan focusses on attracting and retaining quality people and building a cohesive high-performance culture.

Our business

The ERA is Western Australia's independent economic regulator, established under the *Economic Regulation Authority Act 2003*. We aim to ensure the delivery of water, electricity, gas and rail services in Western Australia is in the long-term interests of consumers.

We regulate the gas, electricity and rail industries, and license providers of gas, electricity and water services. We also conduct inquiries into economic matters referred to us by the State Government and have a range of responsibilities in the retail gas market and Wholesale Electricity Market in Western Australia.

Value statement of this plan

We value our people who are capable, resilient, well-resourced and motivated.

Our purpose

The purpose of the ERA is to promote the interests of Western Australian consumers through independent regulation, analysis and advice, now and into the future.



Our current workforce

The ERA has 60 employees. The following data represents the workforce as at July 2019.

Gender profile

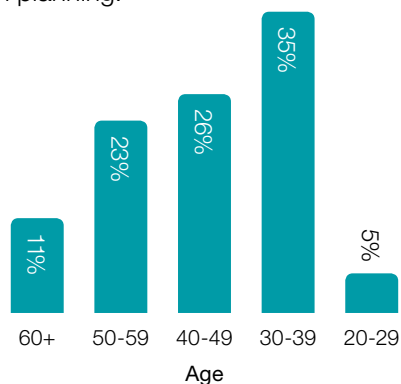
Fifty-three per cent of our workforce is female and 47 per cent is male.

Female (53%)
Male (47%)



Age profile

The majority of the ERA's workforce is in the 30 to 49 year age range. However, having 33 per cent of staff above the age of 50 indicates an ageing workforce and the need to focus on knowledge retention and succession planning.

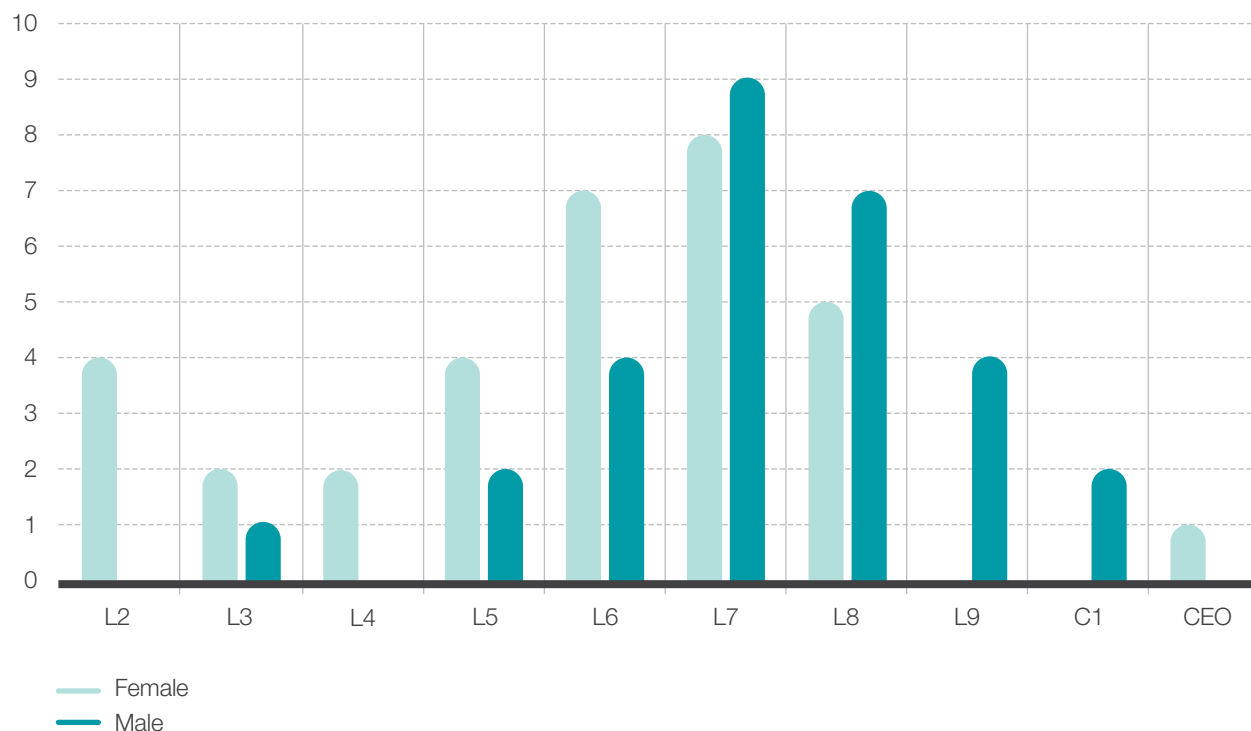


Gender pay gap

There is a high concentration of male staff at higher pay levels. This results in a gender pay gap of 13.5 per cent.

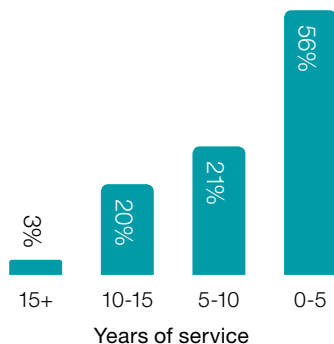
The highest represented classification at the ERA is PSGOGA CSA Level 7 (27 per cent). Fourteen per cent (Level 2 to 4) of our staff are in support roles.

Gender by PSGOGA salary bands



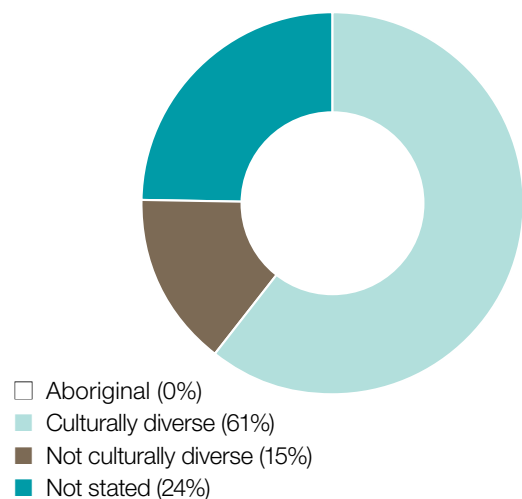
Staff tenure

The ERA has a workforce that is relatively new to its business. Fifty-six per cent of the workforce have been at the ERA for less than five years.



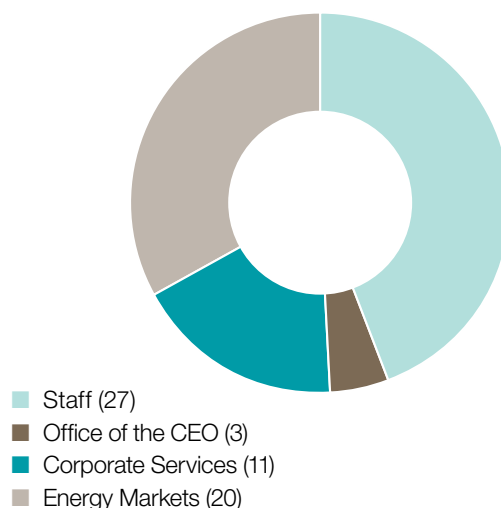
Diversity

The ERA is a culturally diverse organisation, with 61 per cent of staff from non-English speaking backgrounds. The ERA has not successfully recruited candidates with an indigenous background. All vacant positions are advertised on the Aboriginal Services jobs board.



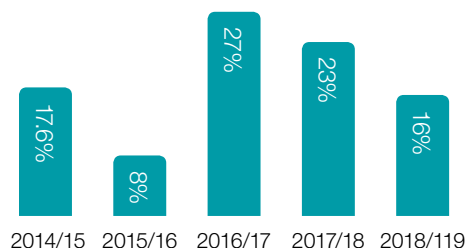
Divisional breakdown of staff

The ERA Secretariat has four divisions: Regulation and Inquiries, Energy Markets, Corporate Services and Office of the CEO. The Regulation and Inquiries division has 27 staff, followed by 20 in Energy Markets, 11 in Corporate Services and three in the Office of the CEO.



Staff turnover

Staff turnover peaked between 2016 to 2018 while functional changes were proposed and then dropped.



Retention challenges that we face

1. Our staff are highly skilled and valued by other employers such as consultancies, government agencies and regulated utilities.
2. We have budget constraints leading to not being able to recruit required number of staff.
3. As regulators we may sometimes have difficult relationships with stakeholders.
4. Uncertainty about additional functions coming out of the energy market reform program still looms over the ERA.
5. We do have additional resources being recruited, however do not have adequate accommodation.
6. We have an ageing workforce. Corporate knowledge management is a challenge.
7. We have to work on the public perception of the ERA's role in the community.

Staff survey

A staff survey was conducted in November 2018. Ninety-five per cent of staff responded. Questions covered organisational purpose, culture, workplace behaviour, professional development, work-life balance and others. The survey also included a section on interaction with the Governing Body. Some of the key findings of the survey are summarised below.

Areas of strength

- The vast majority of staff are committed to the agency and wish to remain at the ERA.

- Staff overwhelmingly believe they have the necessary resources to effectively do their jobs.
- Staff overwhelmingly feel the Secretariat has a clear role – and the vast majority believe in that role.
- Staff are very satisfied with the flexible working arrangements on offer at the ERA.
- Staff are very satisfied with the physical environment in which they work.
- Staff feel that office facilities are ‘up to scratch’.
- The vast majority of staff are satisfied with the amount of teamwork that happens at the ERA.

Areas of weakness

- More than half of ERA staff feel that there are not enough employees to do the work required.
- More than half of staff feel that some roles or parts of the Secretariat are valued less than others.
- Almost half of staff feel that they should be better informed about decisions that affect them.
- Almost half of staff believe there is too much time-consuming ‘red tape’ at the ERA and that they spend too much time doing things for the Governing Body that do not add value.
- More than one-third of staff feel that changes to Secretariat policies and process are not well communicated.
- More than one-third of staff feel that the Governing Body’s views and priorities are not clear to them.

Inter-agency mentoring program

The ERA participates in the inter-agency mentoring program coordinated by the Department of Finance. Participating staff network with other public sector employees and widen their understanding of the public sector. The program provides valuable mentoring for mentees outside of their own agency and an opportunity for mentors to develop their leadership capabilities. Staff who have previously participated in the program have progressed to taking higher opportunities with other public sector agencies.

360-degree feedback program

During 2018/19, a 360-degree feedback program was offered to all line managers and executives. Those who completed the program were offered coaching to improve their leadership skills where required.

Capability building

Staff are given unlimited opportunities to attend external training programs. If a skill gap is recognised by the agency, then training programs are also organised internally. Certain programs are classified as mandatory.

Wellness program

The ERA has a holistic wellness program. An OSH and Wellness week is celebrated annually with flu vaccinations, skin checks, mental health information and meditation. The ERA also runs a confidential employee assistance program through an external provider.



Attraction and retention

This workforce plan contains initiatives to attract and retain employees. Our employees are very much valued by organisations that we regulate and also by other public sector agencies. The ERA’s flexible working environment and robust learning and development program, as well as continued efforts to foster a culture of passion, community-mindedness and high-performance help to attract and retain employees.

Regular workforce reporting

The quarterly reports discussed by Corporate Executive provide an understanding of where the workforce of the ERA is positioned. Any non-compliance issues are immediately addressed or strategies implemented that add value to the work culture of the organisation.

People plan for 2019-2022

Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timing	Actions
Culture transformation			
Staff Survey	Human Resources	Every Year	Questions are developed to track progress and assess employee engagement.
Staff engagement initiatives as a result of the survey	Human Resources	Ongoing	
Promptly address any conflicts	CEO / Human Resources	Ongoing	Training is provided to staff to handle conflicts
Zero Tolerance for harassment and bullying	CEO	Ongoing	Any grievances are promptly addressed as per procedure
A mentally-safe work place for all staff	CEO / Human Resources	Ongoing	Conduct mental health programs
Encourage and actively enable access to flexible work and a reasonable hours culture	CEO / Human Resources	Ongoing	Ensure staff are familiar with flexible work arrangements on offer. Promote and encourage the use of flexible work and a reasonable hours culture through modelling and discussion in workplace – led by CEO. Identify and address staffing shortages (where possible) and minimise excessive workloads through discussion with senior staff and Governing Body.
Leadership and management			
Programs for improved leadership and management practices to drive performance	Human Resources	2019/20	Executive leadership programs as per training plan
360 degree feedback profile tool for senior managers	Human Resources	January 2021	Tie up with AIM WA to conduct the program and see how Senior Managers are progressing.
Support contemporary future leadership and management trends	CEO	Ongoing	Look out for programs or coaching that can assist in this process
Performance management			
Review our current performance management system	CEO / Human Resources	July 2019	Finalise revised PDMP form
Provide a platform for honest and transparent discussion to take place		July 2019	Question to be framed that trigger such conversations
Ensure clear linkages between individual goals to the ERA's strategic objectives		July 2019	Questions to be framed that trigger such conversations

Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timing	Actions
Succession Planning			
Adopt a people centred approach to succession planning which is not threatening	CEO / Executive Directors / Human Resources	Ongoing	Identify staff who have the potential to take on higher responsibilities
Develop and implement succession planning process, policies and resources			
Develop an internal coaching arrangement			Guidelines and resources are available for this process
Regular on the job training			Provide right set of experiences to identified staff.
Capability-building			
A robust training program for line managers to help manage teams	Human Resources	Every Year	Executive leadership programs as per training plan
Embed 70:20:10 learning approach	Executive Directors / Line Managers	Ongoing	Tie up with AIM WA to conduct the program and see how Senior Managers are progressing.
Develop a culture of continuous improvement for high performance		Ongoing	Look out for programs or coaching that can assist in this process
JDF/competency framework	CEO / Human Resources	February 2020	
Effective use of technology			
Embrace current and new technology	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Explore innovative methods of using technology
Organise training programs that support use of technology	Human Resources	Every Year	Factor this into the training plan
Use online learning platforms to support use of systems	Human Resources	Every Year	



Economic Regulation Authority

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