



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

March 2025



VICTORIAN  
WOMEN'S TRUST



Above image: Leanne Miller AM and Duré Dara OAM celebrating the long-standing partnership of VWT and Koorie Women Mean Business.  
Cover image: Manahil playing dress-ups at the launch of the Her Place Feminist Children's Library  
Images by Breeana Dunbar

## Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the Victorian Women's Trust stands. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



# Key Background Information

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## Mission, vision and focus

The Victorian Women's Trust (VWT) was established in 1985. It comprises three entities all working towards the goal of gender equity: The Victorian Women's Trust Ltd; the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust (VWBT); and the Dugdale Trust for Women & Girls (DTWG).

The VWT is a proud feminist organisation that prizes its independence.

Our feminist vision is a world where women, girls and gender diverse people take up all of life's opportunities with respect, safety and dignity. We focus on:

- Tackling deep structural social and economic disadvantage that unfairly limits the life chances and experience of women and girls, increasing poverty and economic insecurity
- Advocating for the full realisation of women's rights
- Reducing harm and increasing women's safety, control over their reproductive rights, and equality at law
- Strengthening women's representation and participation
- Elevating and amplifying women's voices
- Placing women's contribution on the public record

We have enjoyed a long and respectful partnership with Koorie Women Mean Business, with which we share our office. This partnership means a great deal to VWT: two women-led organisations walking together, respectful of the knowledge, wisdom and practices of Australia's First Nations peoples.

We have a small staff, commonly around 8 people. We place a premium on staff who are committed to feminism and gender equality, as well as being strategic thinkers, problem-solvers, team players, semi-autonomous professionals, and ethical in their conduct.

The next Executive Director will be the fifth over the life of the organisation:

1986 - 1992	Jenny Florence
1992 - 1996	Lesley Podesta
1996	Natalie Savin (Acting)
1996 - 2025	Mary Crooks AO

## A tradition of major initiatives

For close to 40 years, VWT has explored the potential for social change and gender equality through major public initiatives, policy and advocacy, research, showcasing women's capacity and talents, and building the public record of women's achievements and civic contributions.

Raising over \$30m from private donations to undertake its grant making and advocacy, VWT has built a strong reputation for delivering innovative projects and initiatives across Victoria and nationally.

f. Kim Rubenstein

Grace Tame

Edith Cowan

Hannah Gadsby

Dorothy Tangney

ny Wong

Stella Young

# Madam Speaker

[www.madamspeaker.com.au](http://www.madamspeaker.com.au)

udron

Prof. Alice Tay

the Tarnsey

Diana Bryant

Miles Franklin

Elizabeth Hastings

Senator Patricia

Madam Speaker. Image Your Creative

This approach to major public initiatives has enabled VWT to be influential and achieve social change across a range of focus areas. Examples of these large-scale initiatives include:

1988	<i>Guaranteed Loan Fund</i>
1992	<i>Completing the Picture: The Lost Women of the Heidelberg Era</i>
1992	<i>Women's Enterprise Connection (WEC)</i>
1997	<i>Business Matrix</i> business incubator for women
1998	<i>The Purple Sage Project</i>
2001	<i>Ordinary Women Extraordinary Lives</i> exhibition
2001	<i>Watermark Australia Project</i>
2007	<i>Be The Hero boys'</i> anti-violence program
2007	<i>Paradox of Service</i> providing redress for former religious women
2008	<i>Love Justice and Equality Women's Anthem</i>
2010	<i>Vida's Voices</i> public speaking competition for secondary schools
2012	Publication of <i>A Switch in Time</i>
2013	<i>Here She Is!</i> register of women
2013	<i>Credit Where Credit is Due</i> advertisement saluting Julia Gillard
2014	<i>Rosie</i> website for girls and young people
2014	<i>The Monster Climate</i> Petition
2016	<i>Breakthrough: The Future is Gender Equality</i> Conference
2018	<i>Club Respect</i> building respect in community sports clubs
2019	<i>Money Power Freedom</i> podcast
2019	Publication of <i>About Bloody Time</i>
2020	<i>Between the Leaves</i> feminist poetry podcast
2021	<i>The Trap</i> : a 10-episode podcast about love, abuse and power
2021	Publication of <i>Ourselves at Work</i>
2022	<i>Matters That Count</i> federal election initiative
2022	<i>Rural Women Online</i> digital inclusion project
2023	<i>Together, Yes</i> national campaign for The Voice referendum
2024	<i>Madam Speaker</i> growing digital archive of women's speeches



Rural Women Online project. Image by Jason Robins

## Digital and face-to-face delivery

Since 2016 especially, VWT has embraced digital and face-to-face delivery in bringing ideas to reality and value-add to debate and action on gender equality. We produce quality communications, webinars, design and branding. This approach has helped finesse our other online initiatives, such as Rosie, Here She Is! and Club Respect.

Online delivery now frames (much, but not all) of our core business as a gender equality advocate and change maker and is a clear window into the future - VWT as an increasingly nimble, agile organisation delivering quality gender equality offerings across digital platforms. Our improved data management systems support and enhance this direction, guaranteeing greater reach and impact.

## Organisational and financial sustainability

Our grant making entity, the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust (VWBT), has been making grants across the Victorian community since 1986. From the outset, this grant making relied on receiving regular donations from the public.

In 2010, to guarantee our feminist grant making in perpetuity, we fashioned a new model, based on creating Sub-Funds. Each of these is established with a minimum endowment of \$100k; named in honour of family members/someone special in the life of the donors; negotiated purposes; and open to donations from the wider public as well.

At present, we have 17 Sub-Funds.

In 2013, we launched the Dugdale Trust for Women & Girls, a national harm-prevention charity listed on the Harm Prevention Register. This registration provided us with deductible gift recipient (DGR 1) status, which means that tax-deductible donations can be used to directly resource our harm-prevention initiatives.

In 2022, thanks to one of our great supporters, we were able to purchase a property on Queens Parade Clifton Hill, creating a permanent home for VWT.

In July 2025, we will reach the position where we can cover core costs within annual budgets based on known income, and where fundraising aims to support extra activity and growth.

# Executive Director

<b>Title</b>	Executive Director
<b>Employment Status</b>	Four days per week
<b>Salary Level</b>	\$130K + Superannuation ( <b>SCHDS Award Paypoint 8 level 3</b> )
<b>Date finalised</b>	4 March 2025
<b>Location</b>	137a Queens Parade, Clifton Hill (70%) and WFH (30%)

## Overview of the Role

VWT is an advocate, an initiator and a grant maker. It identifies, crafts, develops and delivers a range of high-standard advocacy campaigns and initiatives that carry our vision of gender equality into homes, communities, organisations and governments across the state and country. It is also one of the few feminist grant makers in Australia, proudly building its philanthropy for close to forty years.

The Executive Director leads three inter-related entities and is ultimately responsible and accountable to the Board for their respective operations.

The Board approves strategic objectives for the Executive Director to satisfy and, jointly with the Executive Director, reviews progress against these objectives.

The Executive Director has responsibility for:

- Developing strategic and business plans for input and approval by the Board
- Implementing strategic and business plans
- Managing staff, interns, and volunteers
- Being the public face and speaking for all three entities
- Liaising with donors and supporters
- Maintaining an effective organisational structure that clearly assigns responsibility and reporting relationships
- Developing and implementing appropriate risk management strategies
- Developing staff capacity, measuring performance, and setting staff remuneration levels (other than the remuneration of the Executive Director)
- Providing regular reports to the Board to monitor performance and management of the three entities and respond to requests from Board members for additional information when requested.





Ajak Kwai performing at the launch of the Humanitas Sub Fund, 2018. Image by Breeana Dunbar

## Core Attributes

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The Executive Director will bring the following core attributes to the position:

- A feminist commitment to gender equality, helping build a world in which women, girls and gender diverse people can take up all of life's opportunities with respect, safety and dignity
- An ability to build and maintain quality teamwork
- A commitment to acting ethically, with integrity and with discretion in relationships with individuals and organisations
- Practiced in respectful behaviour towards all – other staff, the Board, volunteers, and external parties
- Prepared to share and further develop VWT's vision of a world where there is gender equality
- Relishing opportunities to bring imaginative, smart ideas into reality
- A collaborative approach to leadership and project management
- Proactive and organised
- Accepting of accountability and able to reflect on actions and behaviours
- Striving for excellence and real-world impact
- A willingness to serve to the fullest capacities in meeting VWT objectives and priorities



Women for Yes green room, August 2023. Image by Breeana Dunbar

## Experience and Skills

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The Executive Director will demonstrate the capacity to:

- Think strategically and bring new ideas into reality
- Engage and manage staff, interns, and volunteers, thoughtfully and creatively
- Work effectively with a Board of Directors
- Embrace technology and digital delivery of projects and initiatives
- Undertake some direct management of selected projects
- Manage sensitively and with respect, donor relationships and communications
- Oversee VWBT's grants program across the year
- Fundraise for capital gifts into the Equal Futures Endowment Fund as well as into VWBT's Sub-Funds and create possible new Sub-Funds
- Handle bequest inquiries and manage sensitively VWT's bequests
- Write and speak persuasively and with clarity, inclusive of all people
- Establish extensive, strong, and productive working relationships with people at the grass roots and across community organisations, the business world and government
- Establish personal and project targets and measure performance and impact
- Ensure cost-recovery in the management of project budgets
- Meet the demands of property ownership and management
- Identify and assess risks as they relate to project delivery and grant making, proactively address challenges as they present themselves, and course-correct when necessary





VWT Executive Director, Mary Crooks AO and VWT Chair, Alana Johnson AM. Image by Bri Hammond

## Key Working Relationships

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The Executive Director will be expected to work constructively and effectively with:

- Staff, interns and volunteers
- Directors and trustees
- Donors and supporters
- The leadership of Koorie Women Mean Business
- VWT's leadership team (Advocacy/Communications and Digital Marketing), the Finance Manager and other staff
- Recipients of grants from the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust
- Stakeholders, funders and delivery partners as they relate to projects and initiatives
- External parties, including media, government, community and philanthropic organisations
- Project and event participants
- Online visitors and users

# Key Selection Criteria

<p><b>Feminist commitment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a coherent feminist ethos including a commitment to gender equality and inclusion</li> <li>• Maintain a considered, authoritative voice on pertinent issues affecting women, girls and gender diverse people</li> <li>• Prepared to speak out on gendered injustice</li> <li>• Display a clear-sighted vision for achieving full gender equality: a world where women, girls and gender diverse people take up all of life’s opportunities with respect, safety and dignity</li> <li>• Demonstrate a capacity for constructive and nuanced ideas around creating social change and the ability to transition these into actionable strategic organisational plans</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advocacy and communications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver advocacy, research, communications and other initiatives which are consonant with VWT’s mission, governance and charitable limitations and which resonate with VWT’s constituency</li> <li>• Develop and maintain effective relationships with external parties, including government, recipients of VWBT grants, funders, and project delivery partners</li> <li>• Represent VWT within government and non-government sectors on issues regarding gender equality, harm prevention, social progress and change</li> <li>• Influence positive reforms for gender equality through anticipating issues and actively engaging with key stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advocacy using digital platforms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and ability to adopt digital platforms in driving VWT’s agenda for feminist social change</li> <li>• Skills and capacity to manage these thoughtfully, ethically and creatively</li> <li>• Work closely with the leadership team and the Board to identify opportunities and develop advocacy campaigns and initiatives</li> <li>• Use digital technology to innovate and further enhance VWT’s reputation as a gender equality agency</li> </ul>
<p><b>Management of office program and staff</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display an empathetic, people-centric management style, including close teamwork with staff engaged in communications, technology, finances, human resources, and records management</li> <li>• Actively promote a health, safety and wellbeing culture within a hybrid office model, and ensure that staff are aware of, and comply, with their responsibilities</li> <li>• Maintain and regularly review policies and procedures</li> <li>• Secure program funding and/or fundraise in other ways to bring on new initiatives on a cost-recovery basis</li> <li>• Be accountable for strategic projects, regulatory, service delivery and/or program initiatives</li> <li>• Manage Interns and volunteers in ways to value-add to both the organisation and the individuals involved</li> </ul>

# Key Selection Criteria

<p><b>Finance and budget</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for Board approval, annual budgets based on known income</li> <li>• Manage financial planning and compliance; monitor and report on performance outcomes; risk management and governance arrangements</li> <li>• Deliver reports to Board accurately, efficiently and in a timely manner in accordance with relevant statutory, regulatory and organisational requirements</li> <li>• Manage staff and resources including setting and operating within operational and capital budgets, project/program/grants funding, overseeing the investment portfolio</li> <li>• Manage VWT’s Queens Parade property, including Body Corporate obligations</li> <li>• Manage future assets including bequests and other gifts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fundraising and donor relations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage fundraising into the Equal Futures Endowment Fund, the Victorian Women’s Benevolent Trust, Sub-Funds and prepare grant applications to support additional advocacy efforts</li> <li>• High level oversight of donor relations and reporting regarding the annual pledged commitments from major donors as well as relations with donors to existing and potentially new Sub-Funds and people planning bequests</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnerships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and maintain quality relationships with stakeholders, including VWBT grant recipients, funders and project delivery partners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership and governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead and model exemplary standards of behaviour by responding with strength and resilience to external pressures; and using fair minded, rigorous and evidence-based approaches</li> <li>• Work with the Chair and Board to establish and shape VWT’s strategic direction and manage the implementation of strategic, business and operational plans</li> </ul>



# Knowledge and Qualifications

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- Knowledge and skills acquired through formal (tertiary) training or relevant significant professional, specialist or management experience, including a broad range of activities and/or deep technical and specialist knowledge equating to a senior expert in a field
- Expertise in policy, service delivery, regulatory, and/or legislative processes gained through substantial experience in public or private sector senior management or specialist roles
- A strong theoretical and practical understanding of gender equality/inequality within social, political, environmental and economic contexts
- Expertise in managing organisations including engagement and collaboration in a politically, socially and commercially sensitive environment

## Other Information

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The VWT embraces diversity amongst its staff and strongly encourages any suitably qualified people to apply.

VWT employees are required to abide by the VWT Code of Conduct and all other relevant policies.

The appointment of the VWT Executive Director will be subject to reference checks and criminal record checks.

## How to Apply

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Applicants must provide a cover letter, a detailed curriculum vitae and a statement addressing each of the Key Selection Criteria.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read about the activities and orientation of VWT as outlined in the publication *38 Years of Gender Equality History*, available at [www.vwt.org.au/about/38years](http://www.vwt.org.au/about/38years)

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Your application needs to be lodged by the close of business on Tuesday 8 April.

It must be emailed to: [recruitment@vwt.org.au](mailto:recruitment@vwt.org.au)

Inquiries can be made to the Chair, Alana Johnson AM (0427 624 214)



**Victorian Women's Trust**

137a Queens Parade, Wurundjeri Country, Clifton Hill, VIC 3068

P: 03 9642 0422 F: 03 9642 0016 E: [women@vwt.org.au](mailto:women@vwt.org.au)

[www.vwt.org.au](http://www.vwt.org.au)