

A woman with dark hair, wearing a high-visibility vest, is looking directly at the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a construction site.

# Women in construction strategy

---

- Victoria's first Women in Construction Strategy was launched in 2019.
- The Strategy was developed to increase the number of women in trades and semi-skilled roles to diversify the male-dominated industry. It is based on a four-year work program with actions at three key points of intervention: attract, recruit and retain.
- The Strategy includes an action that required the Victorian Government to consider how procurement practices could be used to promote gender equality.
- To advance this action the Building Equality Policy was developed to create training and employment opportunities for women through government procurement.

“

**Young girls need to be able to see it's a viable option”**



# Building equality through procurement

---

- The BEP has been developed to create training and employment opportunities for women through government procurement. It is comprised of three actions:
- **Action 1** requires suppliers to meet minimum onsite targets:
  - at least **3 percent** for each trade position
  - at least **7 percent** for each non-trade Construction Award covered position
  - at least **35 percent** for each management/supervisory and specialist labour position.
- **Action 2** requires at least **4 percent** of the contract works' total estimated labour hours for building and construction works to be performed by registered apprentices or trainees.
- **Action 3** requires suppliers to develop project specific and organisation wide Gender Equality Action Plans.

# Key definitions

## Building Equality Policy

---

- For the purpose of the policy:
  - **Trade covered labour means:** building /construction qualified trades and apprentices engaged by the Principal Contractor or sub-contracted to perform work.
  - **Non-trade covered labour means:** trainees and ancillary workers engaged by the Principal Contractor or sub-contracted to perform work.
  - **Onsite managerial, specialist and supervisory means:** People that spend 80 per cent of their time dedicated to a specific project, they may be engaged by the Principal Contractors or sub-contracted to perform the work. Backoffice workers, managers and other professionals who are not onsite project-based workers of Principal Contractors or subcontractors are not to be counted towards the targets.

“

**The boys in my VCAL class didn't want me to do it so I wasn't allowed to do the course”**

Female Focus Group Participant



# Implementation mechanism

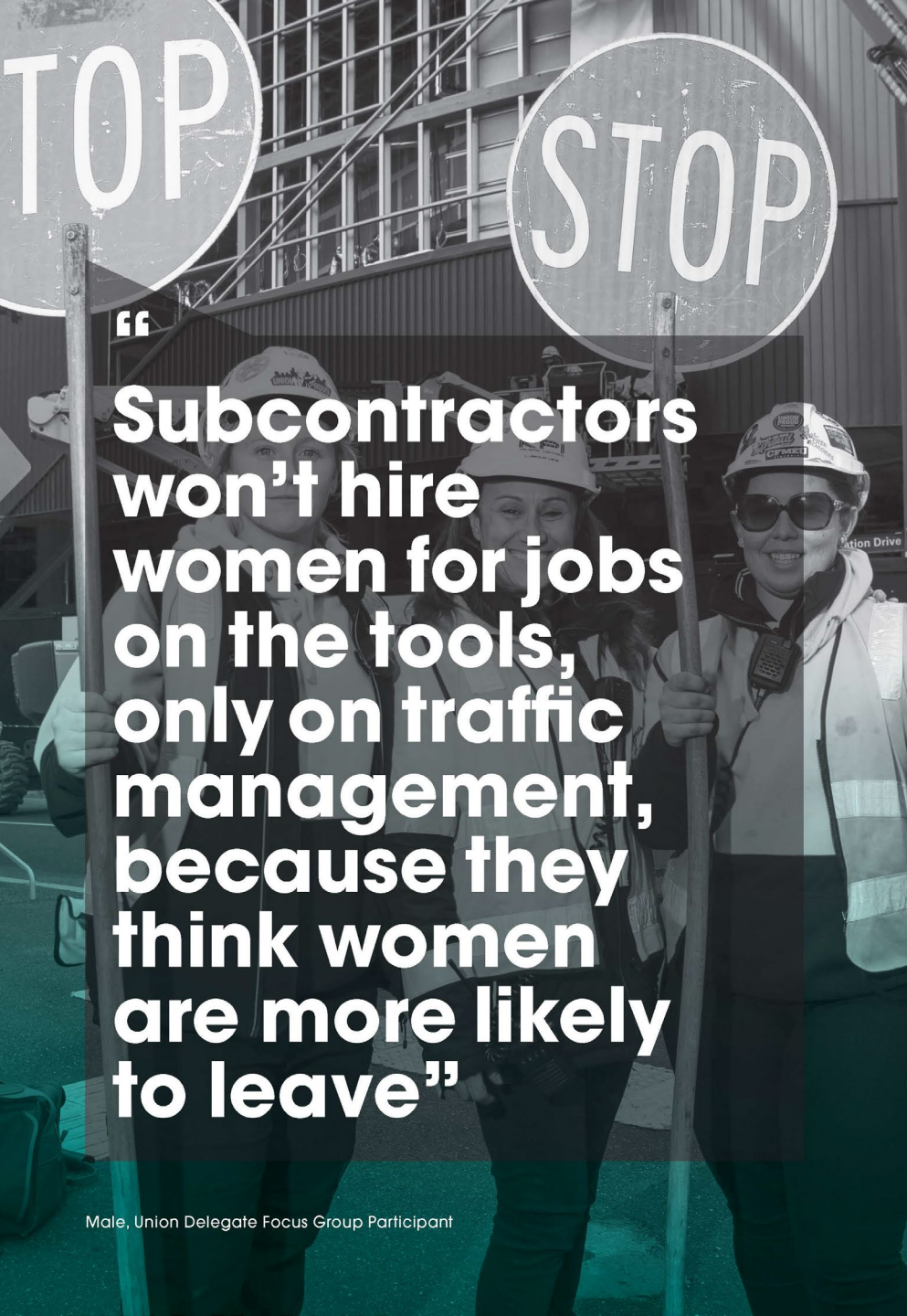
## Social Procurement Framework

---

- The policy came into effect on 1 January 2022 and will apply to construction projects valued at \$20 million or more.
- The policy has a transitional compliance period over the 2022 and 2023 calendar years with a focus on education and awareness.
- From 1 January 2024, contract provisions will provide remedies for non-compliance with the policy.

“

**Guys are bound to know more people in the industry through the footy club or mates of mates”**



“  
**Subcontractors  
won't hire  
women for jobs  
on the tools,  
only on traffic  
management,  
because they  
think women  
are more likely  
to leave”**

Male, Union Delegate Focus Group Participant

## Evaluation of the BEP

---

- To ensure the BEP keeps pace with the number of women workers, an annual evaluation will be undertaken in 2022 and 2023.
- An independent person drawn from academia will be appointed to develop the monitoring and evaluation framework. An increase in the participation rate of women in onsite roles is expected to be slow initially but is expected to accelerate as the supply of skilled women workers grows. The evaluation will be used to:
  - increase the labour targets for trade, non-trade Award covered management/supervisory and specialist roles
  - increase the targets for women apprentices and trainees
- identify changes that are required to the GEAPs.



# Women in Construction Strategy

---

To address the broader cultural and structural barriers women face in the sector the Government has allocated \$2 million to implement the actions in the Strategy.

The actions that have been implement include:

- Building Futures website which provides information and resources about the construction industry for students, parents, teachers, employers, and women already in construction
- customised online job support service to match women looking for work with employers wanting to recruit more women
- set of recruitment standards and practices for the industry
- training programs that aims to create respectful relationships on work sites and raise awareness about gendered violence
- research has been undertaken by RMIT on women's wellbeing in the industry
- respectful workplaces code of practice

“  
**Subcontractors won't hire women in roles other than traffic management because they don't think they are capable of manual labour**”

# Benefits of more equitable workplaces

---

The key benefits of making male-dominated industries like the construction sector accessible to women include:

- drawing from a wider talent pool, broadening perspectives and ideas, stimulating innovation, and improving staff retention
- addressing the medium to longer term skills gap that the industry is facing based on current workforce settings
- addressing occupational segregation with the potential to narrow the gender pay gap and strengthen the economic security of women and their families.



“  
**Subcontractors  
are going to rely  
on people who  
don't have caring  
responsibilities”**