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Embracing equity

By Paul Verschuer, Executive General Manager, AEMO Services

Each year, International Women's Day provides a timely reminder of the importance of equity in the workplace, and the crucial role we play as leaders in building diverse workplaces, creating equal opportunities, and fostering inclusive work cultures.

Despite abundant evidence that gender equality in leadership is good for business, in almost all industries in the Australian workforce, women are underrepresented in key decision-making roles. According to research conducted in 2022 by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), only 25% of leadership teams and 20% of boards have gender balance. This means many organisations are missing a valuable opportunity, with research showing that gender diversity in key decision-making positions contributes to improved company performance.

I'm proud to lead an organisation that is bucking this trend, with 50% female representation on both the AEMO Services Executive Team and our Board. Of course, gender equality is only one facet of building a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce.

As a relatively new organisation, we considered what we wanted our culture and values to look like and embedded these principles right from the start. We have made a conscious effort to build our organisation's capacity and capability with diversity, equity, and inclusion at the centre of our organisational planning and design. For us, our focus is about having the right people in the right roles and setting them up for success. We recognise that workplace equality is achieved when **all** people have access to and enjoy the same rewards, resources, and opportunities regardless of gender, age, culture, or background.

AEMO and AEMO Services support equity in our organisation by providing:

- recruitment programs and standards to attract diverse applicants
- equal pay for work of equal or comparable value and skill level
- annual salary benchmarking to ensure parity
- flexible, hybrid work arrangements to support work-life balance, and family and caring responsibilities
- paid parental leave for both women and men
- career development, internal secondment, and leadership rotation opportunities
- opportunities for employees to drive company initiatives through voluntary participation in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committees, and
- access to employee-driven diversity, equity and inclusion communities that provide learning, event panels and networking opportunities.

I am proud of how our organisation embraces and celebrates our differences. It is only through cultivating diversity, equity and inclusion that we can deliver upon the challenging and complex objectives we have as an organisation and deliver value to our people and our stakeholders.

-ENDS-

About the author

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Paul leads AEMO Services, a subsidiary of the Australian Energy Market Operator

Prior to joining AEMO Services in June 2021, Paul spent more than 35 years in senior governance and management roles across the financial, government and energy sectors. This includes working with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Westpac, the Commonwealth Treasury and NSW Treasury.

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