

A black and white photograph of a person walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk through a forest of tall, thin trees. The person is wearing a puffy jacket and dark pants. The boardwalk is made of wooden planks and has low wooden railings on either side. The trees are tall and thin, with some showing peeling bark. The ground is covered in grass and fallen leaves. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

**Gender Equality**

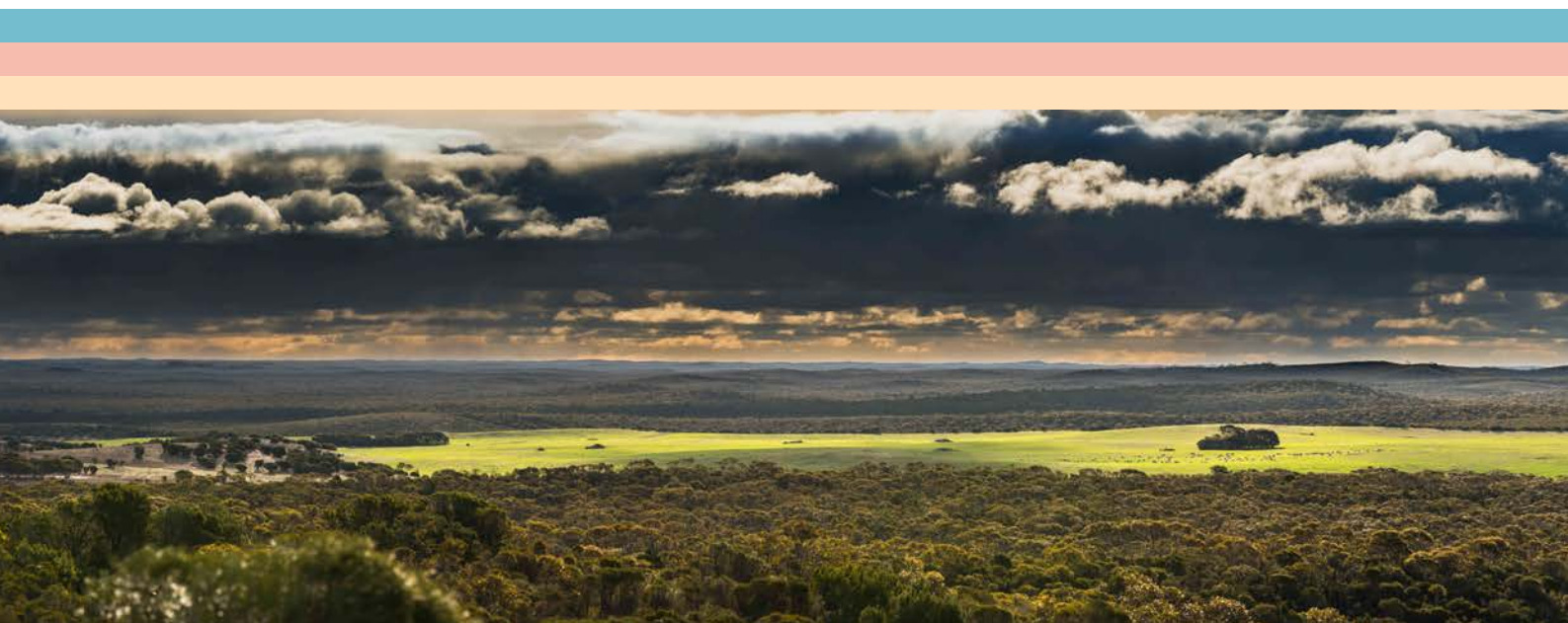
**Action Plan**



**Hindmarsh**  
Shire Council

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## Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

Hindmarsh Shire Council acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations as Traditional Owners of Country.

We recognise the important ongoing role that Indigenous people have in our community and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

## Introduction

This Gender Equality Action Plan (**GEAP**) is an organisational commitment to improving gender equality in the workplace. Workplace gender equality is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of gender.

Our consultation process reflects the requirements set out in the Victorian Gender Equality Act (2020). As part of this process, our team consulted with, and sought input into, the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan from Hindmarsh Shire Councillors as its governing body, employees, and employee representatives.

The GEAP should be read in conjunction with Council's Workforce Plan.

## Case for Change

While Australia has made significant progress toward gender equality in recent decades, there is still a prevalent gender gap in Australian workforces. Women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to advance their careers as far as men, and accumulate less retirement or superannuation savings. At the same time, men continue to have less access to family-friendly policies such as parental leave or flexible working arrangements than women.

Hindmarsh Shire Council acknowledges that gender-based inequality is compounded by other forms of discrimination and disadvantage that a person might experience. This means that in order to achieve gender equality in our workplace, all forms of discrimination and disadvantage must be prevented. Factors such as Aboriginality, age, disability, LGBTQIA+, and cultural diversity can serve as indicators for the level of workplace participation, workplace aspirations and workplace opportunity. —→

***Hindmarsh Shire Council is committed to addressing how gender inequality can interact with other inequalities by:***

- Analysing workplace gender audit data to identify systemic barriers to access, inclusion and equity for people who experience intersectional gender inequality
- Identifying areas for improved intersectional data collection
- Consulting with and incorporating feedback from staff who experience intersectional gender inequality in the development of the GEAP.
- Developing strategies and measures to specifically address how gender inequality affects diverse staff who face more than one type of inequality.



***Hindmarsh Shire Council strives to improve gender equality and is committed to the Gender Equality Principles:***

- All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness
- Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender
- Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice
- Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits to Victoria
- Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls
- All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices
- Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage based on sex and gender
- Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality



**The Workplace Gender Equality Agency states that workplace gender equality is associated with the following outcomes:** <sup>1</sup>

*Improved national productivity and economic growth*



- Increasing female workforce participation will boost Australia's overall productivity and innovation

*Future proofing the Australian labour force*



- Lifting female labour force participation to assist with offsetting the effects of our aging workforce

*Increased organisational performance*



- A diverse and inclusive workforce, regardless of size and industry, generates tangible benefits, such as increased efficiency, productivity, innovation, creativity and improved employee engagement.

*Enhanced ability of companies to attract talent and retain employees*



- Increased talent pool
- Flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies becoming increasingly important for people in the workforce

*Enhanced organisational reputation*



- Organisations with gender equality policies and strategies that include family friendly workplace policies and that address sex-based harassment and discrimination against employees are reducing the risk of workplace discrimination cases, which can potentially be damaging for a company's reputation

## Our Vision & Objectives

**HINDMARSH SHIRE COUNCIL IS A WORKPLACE WHERE ALL PEOPLE ARE VALUED AND RESPECTED.**

1. Leadership **champions gender equality** and is measured on its success.
2. **Staff culture is inclusive** and demonstrates gender equality and leadership is committed to **continuous improvement**.
3. Systems and structures of Hindmarsh Shire Council are **gender-equal**.
4. **Improve gender-segregated workforces**.
5. Increased capacity to **identify and respond to issues and barriers that inhibit gender equality**.

<sup>1</sup> The Business Case of Gender Equality, November 2018, Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Page 2.

# Council

Hindmarsh Shire Council has six Councillors representing three different wards:



**Cr Melanie Albrecht**  
Mayor  
*West Ward*



**Cr Brett Ireland**  
Deputy Mayor  
*North Ward*



**Cr Wendy Bywaters**  
*East Ward*



**Cr Deb Nelson**  
*East Ward*



**Cr Ron Ismay**  
*North Ward*



**Cr Rob Gersch**  
*West Ward*

## Our Organisation

Hindmarsh Shire Council has 121 employees covering a range of services including community care, libraries, community development, environment and local laws, planning and building, parks and gardens, caravan parks, capital works, strategic management and maintenance of all assets and corporate services.

Hindmarsh Shire Council is led by its Chief Executive Officer. There are two directorates, Corporate and Community Services and Infrastructure Services.



## Organisational Structure

### EXECUTIVE OFFICE

- Council Meetings
- Council Support

### CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Customer Service
- Human Resources and Safety
- Governance
- Community Care
- Risk and Insurance
- Contract Management
- Information Technology
- Tourism
- Finance and Payroll
- Economic and Community Development
- Local Laws
- Environmental Health
- Libraries
- Early Years

### INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

- Asset Management
- Planning and Building
- Capital Works
- Operations
- Facilities and Environment



# Current Council Programs

Hindmarsh Shire Council has participated in the Women's Health Grampians' Act@Work program which aims to:

- increase awareness of the extent, prevalence and causes of violence against women
- change behaviours and attitudes
- increase bystander action in the workplace and socially
- enable organisations to support staff members that are affected by family violence
- enable organisations to identify what they can do to advance and promote gender equality through their work
- establish systems to ensure the sustainability of this work in the longer term.

In 2017 an Act@Work Action Plan was developed by the Act@Work Action Group. The Act@Work Plan contained actions split into four categories:

- Workplace Culture;
- Physical Environment;
- Community Connections; and
- Health and Wellbeing Opportunities.

In 2021, Council committed to the second iteration of the CoRE Strategy.



## Workplace Gender Audit

Hindmarsh Shire Council completed a Workplace Gender Audit which collected gender disaggregated data against the gender equality indicators.

The workplace gender equality indicators are:

- gender pay equity
- gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- gender composition of governing bodies
- workplace sexual harassment
- recruitment and promotion
- gendered work segregation
- leave and flexibility.

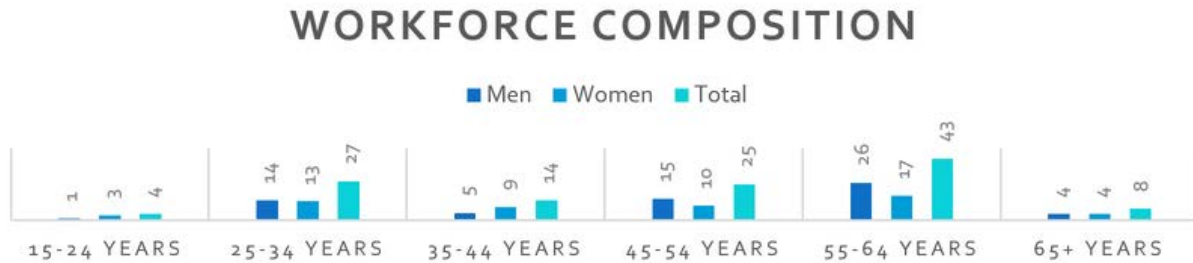




## Workforce Composition

Hindmarsh Shire Council has 121 employees (as at 30 June 2021). 56 employees identify as women and 65 employees identify as male.

We have a wide spread of staff across the age ranges with the majority of our staff falling into the 55-64 years category.



### Data Gaps

Our systems have significant data gaps. We don't collect data regarding, disability status, aboriginality, religion, cultural heritage or sexual orientation.

Our employee details form also does not include a section for people who prefer to self-describe/identify their gender or to leave the gender section blank.

## Gender Pay Gap

Based on the Mean Total Remuneration, we calculated a -1.1% pay gap between men and women at Hindmarsh Shire Council.

## Sexual Harassment

Council has collected no data on sexual harassment complaints.

Council's Bullying and Harassment Policy addressed sexual harassment, however, there was no clear and detailed procedure included as to how employees could make a sexual harassment complaint.

Council also did not have an internal complaints procedure to manage internal complaints (including sexual harassment complaints). This has now been rectified and an Internal Complaints and Issue Resolution Procedure has been developed and implemented. The Procedure provides that de-identified data must be kept in relation to sexual harassment complaints.



## Review of Policies and Procedures

Council has many different policies and procedures which effect Council employees in different ways. Council aims to ensure that all policies and procedures are fair and do not unfairly disadvantage any employees based on their gender. Council has made efforts to reduce gender stereotypes and gendered language from policies and procedures.

### Parental Leave

Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (2019) provides for 14 weeks of Primary Carer's leave and 2 weeks of Secondary Carer's leave.

### Sexual Harassment Policy

Following the VAGO report into Sexual Harassment in Local Government, Council implemented a standalone Sexual Harassment Policy.

### Flexible Work

Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (2019) provides for flexible working arrangements.

Staff utilise the flexible working arrangements within the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement to enter into individual arrangements that best suit the employee.

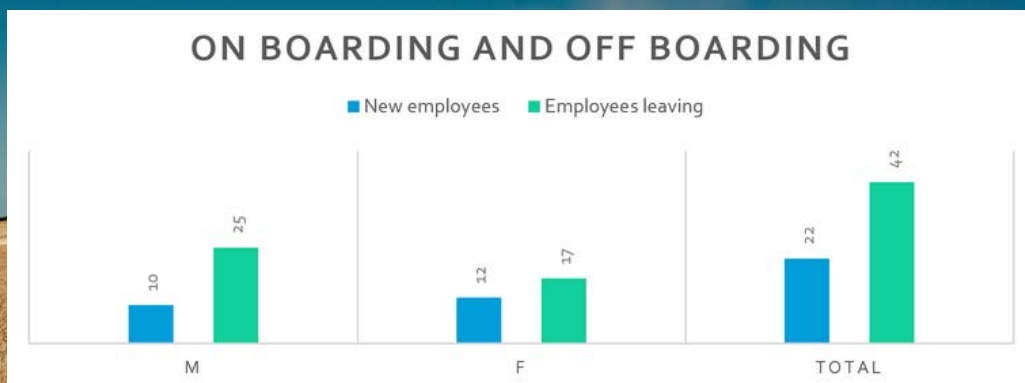
### Family Violence Support

Council's EBA (2019) provides for 20 days per annum non-cumulative family violence leave. Council also has an Employee Assistance Program in place for staff to use.

### Consultation

Council's main form of receiving/engaging with employees is through the consultative committee followed by feedback through exit interviews. A formal feedback mechanism also comes out of the annual performance review process. There is no specific consultation approach to target specific cohorts in the organisation.

## Recruitment, Retention and Succession Planning



From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2021 Council recruited 22 people. 12 of which identified as women and 10 of which identified as men. The year was an unusual year for Council due to the Working for Victoria program which saw Council funded for thirteen six-month positions to help with addressing any job losses due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Council had 42 people leave the organisation. 13 of whom were employed as part of the Working Victoria program.

## Recruitment Procedure

Council's Recruitment Procedure outlines how Council will recruit employees. Council's recruitment procedure was implemented in 2018 and was reviewed in 2019. The procedure uses non-gender specific language. The procedure provides that Council will maintain a gender balance on our recruitment panels and also gives a diversity guaranteed interview commitment for one person that closely meets the key selection criteria.

One of the key purposes of the Recruitment Procedure is to promote equal opportunity.

## Exit Interviews / Exit Interview Data

Council collects data from employees during the off-boarding process. This data is reviewed on an adhoc basis.

## Promotions

There have been a total of eight internal promotions. Men have received five internal promotions and three women have received an internal promotion. All internal promotions have been done through a formal recruitment process.

## Higher Duties

Twelve employees were awarded higher duties during the reporting period. Eight men were awarded higher duties and four women were awarded higher duties.

## People Matter Survey

The People Matter Survey was made available to all Hindmarsh Shire Council Employees from 31 May 2021 until 16 June 2021. The survey deadline was extended until 25 June 2021.

Council received 60 responses from a total pool of 121 staff members which equates to a 49.6% response rate. Considering the survey went out to staff during a COVID-19 lockdown, Council is satisfied with the response rate.

### Results

Council scored slightly below the Local Government benchmark in most areas, with the exception of "Recruitment and Promotion", where Council scored equal to the benchmark, and "Workplace Sexual Harassment", where Council scored 2% above the benchmark.

The areas that Council scored below the benchmark include "Gender Composition", "Gendered work segregation", and "Leave and flexibility".

65% of respondents felt that *"People in my workgroup actively support diversity and inclusion in the workplace"*, this was 15% lower than the Local Government benchmark (81%).

Another area of note was people being rejected for being different. Council's 70% positive response rate to *"People in my workgroup often reject others for being different"* was 11% below the 81% Local Government benchmark, and *"Bullying"* showed room for improvement with a 67% positive response, 11% below the Local Government benchmark (78%). 73% of employees felt that *"In my workgroup work is allocated fairly regardless of gender"*, which was 8% below the Local Government benchmark.

Council will use the results of the People Matter Survey to look at current practices to try to improve, in particular the areas where the score was below the benchmark. Council will strive towards becoming an organisation that makes all of its employees feel positive, supported and encouraged.

### Gender Composition

Overall 63% of Council employees responded favourably to Council in the Gender Composition category. 33% responded neutrally and 4% responded negatively to Council.

The Local Government benchmark in this category is 69%.

	Positive response	Neutral response	Negative response	LG benchmark
There is a positive cultural within Council in relation to employees of different age groups	78%	15%	7%	72%
There is a positive culture within Council in relation to people of different sexes / genders	70%	25%	5%	76%
There is a positive culture within Council in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+	45%	52%	3%	66%
There is a positive culture within Council in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds	70%	27%	3%	77%
There is a positive culture within Council in relation to employees who are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent	55%	40%	5%	64%
There is a positive culture within Council in relation to employees with a disability	57%	40%	3%	61%

The high neutral response rates, particularly in relation to the workplace culture for LGBTQIA+ people, people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent or people with a disability indicate that we could do more to communicate and promote a positive workplace culture for people who fall into one of those categories.



# Resourcing

Hindmarsh Shire Council's Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 (GEAP) aims to promote gender equality within our workforce and improve outcomes for people of all genders.

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) Hindmarsh Shire Council is required to ensure adequate resources are invested to implement its GEAP. Properly resourcing the implementation of the GEAP is critical to delivering on our commitments to staff and meeting our obligations under the Act to make reasonable and material progress towards workplace gender equality.

The delivery of this plan will be overseen by the Director Corporate and Community Services and resourced through the OHS and Human Resources Team (2 FTE).

Several actions identified in the GEAP include the participation of employees from across the business in activities to raise awareness, increase knowledge, and promote skill development.

Funding for the GEAP actions that have a cost will be allocated depending on the nature of the action or activity. Council has ensured that it has allocated a sufficient budget in all relevant areas to deliver the items in the plan.

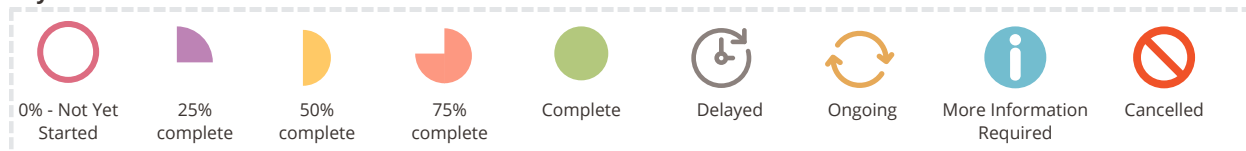
A significant number of actions within the GEAP will be delivered by our Human Resources team. If required, we will allocate additional funding to meet commitments set out in this GEAP.

All staff will be required to participate in annual training as required by the GEAP.



# Strategies and Measures

## Key










### Objective: Leadership champions gender equality and is measured on its success.

ACTIONS	WHEN	STATUS	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
Review Act@Work Leadership Statement and develop into Gender Equality Leadership Statement	June 2022		Increased focus on gender equality from the Executive and Management teams as key influencers of workplace culture	Gender Equality Leadership Statement update completed
Display Gender Equality Leadership Statement in prominent work locations	June 2022		Increased awareness and understanding of the extent and impact of gender inequality and Council's organisational commitment to combatting gender inequality in the workplace	Leadership statement published on Council's SharePoint site and displayed in depots, offices and workshops
Include Leadership Statement in employee inductions	March 2023		Increased awareness and understanding of the extent and impact of gender inequality and Council's organisational commitment to combatting gender inequality in the workplace	Leadership Statement provided to new employees during induction
Memo from CEO re Council's commitment to gender equality	Annually in March		Increased focus on gender equality from the Executive and Management teams as key influencers of workplace culture.	Memo produced and distributed
Memo from HR re Family Violence leave	Annually in October		Workplace policies reflect the needs of all genders, and appropriate leave and flexible working arrangements are available to support workers of all genders.	Memo produced and distributed

### Objective: Staff culture is inclusive and demonstrates gender equality and leadership is committed to continuous improvement

ACTIONS	WHEN	STATUS	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
Gender Equality Training for all staff, including information regarding sexual harassment prevention and gender-based discrimination	Every 2 years		Increased culture of challenging gender inequalities, across all settings and across all life stages	Training modules undertaken Ratio of male, female and self-described undertaking training
LGBTIQA+ Training undertaken by staff	Every 2 years		Increased awareness and understanding of factors that impact inequality and the impact of intersectionality on access, opportunity and participation	Training modules undertaken Ratio of male, female and self-described undertaking training

ACTIONS	WHEN	STATUS	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training undertaken by staff	Every 2 years		Increased awareness and understanding of factors which impact inequality and the impact of intersectionality on access, opportunity and participation	Annual employee survey indicates Improvements in cultural understanding, inclusion and equality.
Internal employee experience survey	Annually in July		Improved consultation with the workforce  Increased capacity to identify and respond to issues and barriers that inhibit gender equality	Annual survey undertaken that identifies trends and issues for action
Continued participation in the People Matter Survey	Annually		Improved consultation with the workforce  Increased capacity to identify and respond to issues and barriers that inhibit gender equality	Annual survey undertaken that identifies trends and issues for action
Include information hub re gender equality in new SharePoint site	June 2022		Improved consultation with the workforce  Increased capacity to identify and respond to issues and barriers that inhibit gender equality	Resources and guidance are available to all employees on SharePoint
LGBTQIA+ recognition should be strongly demonstrated on LGBTQIA+ days of significance*	Annually		Improved recognition of the dignity, successes, historical contributions and experience of LGBTQIA+ people.  Increased awareness and understanding of factors which impact inequality and the impact of intersectionality on access, opportunity and participation	Recognition of days/events demonstrated  Level of attendees/engagement monitored
Celebrate women's achievements and promote gender equality as part of International Women's Day (IWD) and 16 Days of Activism	Annually		Increased promotion of gender equality and gender-based issues in internal and public settings	IWD and 16 Days of Activism events held  Level of staff/community engagement monitored to assist in improving future events and engagement
Annual review of employee exit interview data	Annually in February		Increased capacity to identify and respond to issues and barriers that inhibit gender equality	Exit data collated and presented to Senior Management Team for review and action

\*Mardi Gras and Pride Marches; Wear it Purple Day; Intersex Awareness Day; Intersex Day of Solidarity; Celebrate Bisexuality Day (aka Bisexual Visibility Day); International Lesbian Day; Transgender Awareness Week; Transgender Day of Visibility, Transgender Day of Remembrance; Asexual Awareness Week, and IDAHOBIT






**Objective: Systems and structures of Hindmarsh Shire Council are gender equal**

ACTIONS	WHEN	STATUS	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
Review parental leave provisions in EBA during EBA negotiations	July 2022		Workplace policies reflect the needs of all genders, and appropriate leave and flexible working arrangements are available to support the diverse needs of employees	Parental leave provisions reviewed and negotiated with Union members and representatives
Review Policy Framework to ensure that gender is something that is considered when reviewing or developing external or internal policies	January 2023		Increased focus on gender equality when making decisions or taking action, including during procurement, recruitment, budgeting and policymaking processes	Policy development and review procedure are reviewed and all policy reviews undertaken from March 2022 include a review of provisions that may impact gender equality
Review and update employee details form to ensure that the form is inclusive to gender diverse people	March 2022		All workplace environments are equitably safe and accessible to all genders	Employee forms updated
Council forms utilised by members of the community are reviewed and updated to ensure the form is inclusive to gender diverse people	September 2022		All workplace environments are equitably safe and accessible to all genders	Council forms updated
Use Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) to provide a gender lens to Council policies, projects, programs and services.	Ongoing		Improved understanding and application of Gender Equality Act principles	GIAs are in place for in-scope policies, programs, projects and services GIAs meet commission requirements
Unconscious bias / interview training for staff who are regularly on interview panels	Annually		Employees are equipped to identify and respond to biases, barriers and stereotypes that may contribute to gender inequality in the workplace	Training modules undertaken Ratio of male, female and self-described undertaking training
Identify and remove participation barriers to ensure community engagement and consultation are inclusive and accessible for all genders	Ongoing		Council's commitment to gender equality is embedded in its community engagement practices	Policies and processes incorporate gender and inclusion considerations














## Objective: Improve gender segregated workforces

ACTIONS	WHEN	STATUS	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
<p>Undertake an audit or facilities checklist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Service Centres</li> <li>• Workshops and Depots</li> </ul> <p>Audit to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the facilities accessible and equitable for both females and males?</li> <li>• Is there sufficient light to ensure that people can safely enter and leave after dark?</li> </ul>	June 2022 and then Annually		All workplace environments are equitably safe and accessible to all genders	Annual surveys, audits and assessments indicate improved de-segregation of the workforce and improved safety and accessibility of Council facilities
Actions arising out of audits to be outlined in order of priority and presented to SMT	September 2022		Increased focus on gender equality from the Executive and Management teams as key influencers of workplace culture.	Annual surveys, audits and assessments indicate improved de-segregation of the workforce and improved safety and accessibility of Council facilities
Create an internal awareness campaign to assist staff in understanding the gendered segregation of occupations within the workplace, workforce and industry and the impact that gender stereotypes can have on staffing decisions	March 2023 and then Annually		Employees are equipped to identify and respond to biases, barriers and stereotypes that may contribute to workforce segregation	<p>Communications campaign distributed to all staff annually</p> <p>Campaigns are annually reviewed and updated according to the findings of surveys, audits and assessments</p>

### Key

								
0% - Not Yet Started	25% complete	50% complete	75% complete	Complete	Delayed	Ongoing	More Information Required	Cancelled



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