



Gender Equality Action Plan 2026-2030



Disclaimer: This Gannawarra Gender Equality Action Plan has not been checked for compliance by the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner and may be subject to change.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Gannawarra Shire Council acknowledges the Barapa Barapa, Yorta Yorta and Wamba Wamba peoples as the traditional owners of the land now known as Gannawarra. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge their rich culture and connection to Country.

Front Cover: Council staff with the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner, Dr Niki Vincent - November 2025



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Introduction

The Gender Equality Act 2020 (the Act) came into effect on 31 March 2021 and establishes a legislative framework for advancing gender equality across the Victorian public sector, including councils and universities. The key purposes of the Act are to:

- Require public sector organisations to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality;
- Require public sector organisations to promote gender equality in the development and delivery of policies, programs and services; and
- Establish the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.

Under the Act, Gannawarra Shire Council is required to:

- Promote gender equality;
- Undertake gender impact assessments on policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant public impact;
- Develop and implement a Workplace Gender Equality Action Plan every four years informed by a workplace gender audit;
- Allocate adequate resources to implementation; and
- Report on progress every two years.

Gender equity is the principle of fairness for women, men and gender diverse people. It recognises that people of different genders have historically experienced unequal access to power, resources, opportunities and responsibilities. While gender equality refers to equal rights and opportunities, gender equity acknowledges that targeted strategies may be required to address historical and structural disadvantage and achieve fair outcomes.

Gender inequality can be compounded by intersecting factors such as age, disability, Aboriginality, cultural background, socioeconomic status and geographic location, requiring an inclusive and intersectional approach.

The Gender Equality Action Plan 2026–2030 demonstrates Gannawarra Shire Council’s commitment to advancing fairness and inclusion in its role as both an employer and a service provider, supporting equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for people of all genders and improved outcomes for the community.



Purpose

This Gender Equality Action Plan forms part of Council's obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020, which requires Council to develop and implement a Workplace Gender Equality Action Plan every four years informed by a workplace gender audit.

This Gender Equality Action Plan builds upon the previous 2021-2025 plan and compliments Council's community facing gender equality strategies and initiatives, including:

- 2025 - 2029 Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Gannawarra Community Vision 2040
- Thriving Together 2026-2030 - a plan for a diverse, inclusive and resilient Gannawarra
- Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2029
- Being a signatory to the Women's Health Loddon Mallee CARE (Collective Action for Respect and Equality) Partnership
- Leading the Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting (GLAM) Partnership
- Re-signing the Partnership Agreement with Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
- Reviewing the Gannawarra Free from Family Violence Action Plan 2025 -2029
- Developing the Gannawarra Family and Community Engagement Action Plan 2026-2030
- Participating in local campaigns such as:
 - International Women's Day
 - IDAHOBIT Day
 - 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence
 - Reconciliation Week
 - NAIDOC Week
 - National Women's Health Week
 - National Men's Health Week



1. Consultation

The Gannawarra Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan draws on a range of information sources to ensure that the strategies and actions are measurable and relevant to the organisation.

WORKPLACE GENDER AUDIT

The initial workplace gender audit in 2021 aimed to establish baseline data on gender equality so that the organisation could identify critical gaps and areas of improvement. The baseline data also enabled the organisation to monitor and assess progress made in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators, including whether strategies and actions were effective.

A repeat of data collection in 2025 has contributed to the actions contained in this Gender Equality Action Plan 2026-2030.



PEOPLE MATTER SURVEY

The People Matter survey is the annual Victorian Public Sector survey of staff. The 2025 survey asked specific questions relating to gender equality, including equal employment opportunity, career development, diversity and inclusion, flexible working, and cultural safety, as a means to collect information relevant to the Workplace Gender Audit and Gender Equality Action Plan. The number of respondents, 44 in relation to the total number of staff 241 was relatively low (18%). Given this, the use of the data from the People Matter survey for the purposes of the Gender Equality Action Plan is somewhat limited.

STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Staff Consultative Committee met to review and consider the findings from the People Matter Survey. Following this review, the Committee identified the need for broader consultation with staff across the organisation to inform the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan actions.

This consultation sought feedback on proposed initiatives aimed at progressing gender equality across the organisation and identified perceptions relating to career development and equal employment opportunities. Insights gathered support the refinement of actions to ensure they are responsive to staff experiences and contribute to meaningful and sustainable organisational change.

2. Gender Equality Commitment

Council aims to create a supportive workplace culture, build employee capacity to support gender equality, and to embed gender equality into organisational policies, systems and processes. This plan, along with Council’s commitment to the Gender Equality Principles (listed below), will lead the way to a better and more inclusive workplace for our employees.

The 10 Gender Equality Principles

1. 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.

2. Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.

3. Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.

4. Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.

5. Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.

6. Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.

7. 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.

8. Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.

9. Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.

10. Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.





3. Development and Review

This four-year Gender Equality Action Plan has been developed over a period of six months.

The consultation process reflects the requirements set out in the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020.

As part of this process, the organisation sought input into the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan by consulting with Council employees, Staff Consultative Committee, relevant trade unions and/or their employee representatives.

Promotion of the Gender Equality Act, gender audit and this plan has occurred and will continue to occur through various mediums including via email, workplace noticeboards and the staff newsletter.

The plan has been developed alongside Council's Workforce Plan with some of the actions overlapping both plans. Reports on the progress of this plan will occur every two years and a complete review of the plan conducted every four years.

4. Gender Equality Audit

In mid-2021 the Victorian Public Service "People Matter Survey" was made available to Victorian councils for the first time. This occurred in order to assist local councils with their Gender Equality Audit reporting obligations required under the Gender Equality Act. The survey was modified and resulted in a reduced survey of approximately 80 questions specifically for Victorian local government employees.

Data from this survey, along with employee data held by Council, combined to form the Workplace Gender Audit required as part of Council's reporting obligations to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector. The full audit was submitted to the Commission on 1 December 2025.

A key finding from the 2025 Workplace Gender Audit was that Council had no data on employee career development, training, parental leave, carers leave, higher duties and formal flexible work type and arrangements. The Gender Equality Commissioner requires this data to be addressed in the 2027 audit to achieve compliance.

The Workplace Gender Audit also flagged Council's lack of employee diversity data. Section 6(8) of the Act states that 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. This is referred to as "intersectional gender inequality".

Diversity data could not be extracted from Council's survey data due to the low numbers of respondents in those categories (where there are insufficient responses to ensure anonymity the data is not released).

Council is continuing to expand its human resource systems to collect diversity data in line with the Gender Equality Commissioner's recommendation to provide accurate and complete results where possible to maximise the value of Gannawarra's audit.



5. Audit Analysis

5.1 Gender composition of the workforce

The following is a snapshot of baseline audit results as of 30 June 2021, 2023 and 2025 and associated analysis/comments:

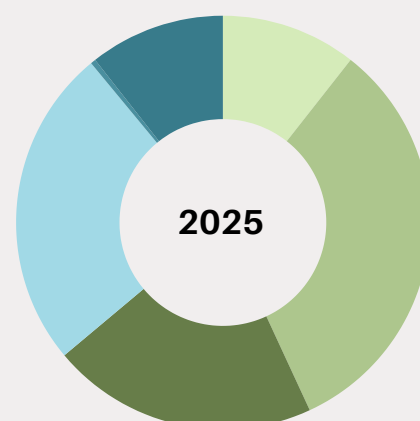
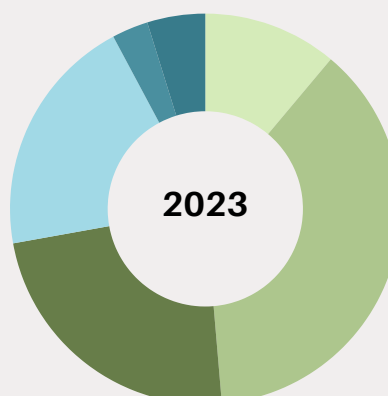
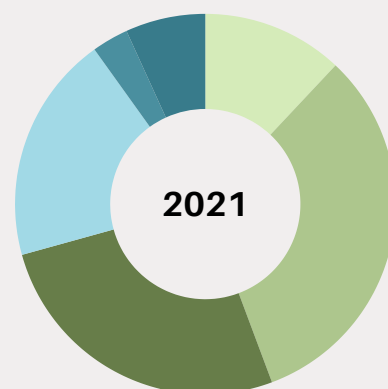
Council's 2025 gender composition, based on employment status, reflects the predominance of women in part time and casual positions and an increase of men in casual positions.

2021	Full Time	Part Time	Casual
Female	12%	32.3%	26.4%
Male	19.4%	3.1%	6.8%

2023	Full Time	Part Time	Casual
Female	11.1%	37.5%	23.5%
Male	20%	3%	4.8%

2025	Full Time	Part Time	Casual
Female	10.6%	32.5%	20.8%
Male	25.1%	0.4%	10.6%

Gender composition of total workforce



When asked about Council's overall gender culture, the following percentage of employees responded that they agree to the following statements:

There is a positive culture within my organisation, I feel culturally safe at work.

2021

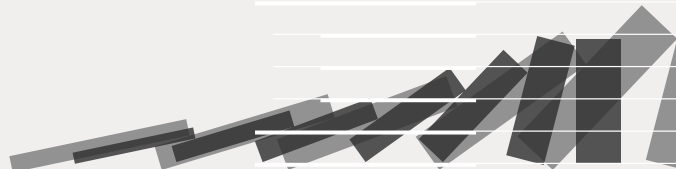
Male	Female
75%	77%

2023

Male	Female
76%	76%

2025

Male	Female
92%	77%



5.2 Gender composition of the governing body (Councillors)

2021		2025	
Female	1	Female	1
Male	6	Male	6

The gender composition of Councillors remains unchanged following the 2025 Council elections.

5.3 Pay Equality

Overall, the median base salaries for men was 4.4% greater than women in 2021 and 8.1% greater in 2023. A change occurred in the 2025 audit where the median base salaries for women was 31.6% higher than men. This is due to the transition of Community Care Services to an alternative provider in October 2023 where a significant number of low-paid, female dominated roles exited the organisation. As a result, the remaining female workforce has become more concentrated in higher paid roles.

5.4 Sexual Harassment

Whilst no formal sexual harassment complaints were received by Council in the 12 month reporting periods 2021, 2023 and 2025, the results of the People Matters Survey indicated that 7% (2021) and 8% (2023) of women and 0% (2021) and 4% (2023) of men had experienced sexual harassment in some form in the preceeding 12 months. For 2025, 0% of women and 0% of men experienced sexual harassment behaviours in the previous 12 months.

When asked about Council's workplace sexual harassment, the following percentage of employees responded that they agree to the following statements:

Male %			Female %		
2021	2023	2025	2021	2023	2025
59	84	92	62	68	74
66	68	92	61	68	61
72	88	92	76	71	74

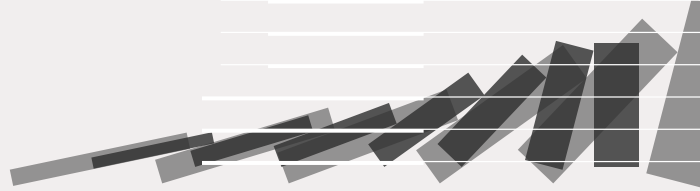
They feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work

That the organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination

That the organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours

Key Trends

- Male perceptions of safety and organisational responsiveness have improved markedly across all measures.
- Female perceptions have improved modestly in some areas but plateaued or declined in others.
- The most concerning gap relates to women’s confidence that the organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Despite zero formal complaints and no reported incidents in 2025, perception data suggests women have less confidence in systems and responses than men.



5.5 Recruitment and Promotion

When asked about Council's recruitment and promotion process, the following percentage of employees responded that they agree to the following statements:

Male			Female			
2021	2023	2025	2021	2023	2025	
**	76	92	**	57	48	<i>My organisation has fair recruitment processes</i>
50	64	85	48	38	42	<i>I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation</i>
**	56	85	**	42	35	<i>I believe the promotion processes are fair in my organisation</i>
56	60	77	55	55	71	<i>I am satisfied with the way my learning and development needs have been addressed in the last twelve months</i>
**	64	85	**	49	42	<i>I am satisfied with the opportunities to progress in my organisation</i>

** Question not asked

The 2025 Survey results indicate a widening gap in perceptions of fairness and career progression within Council.

1. Perceived Fairness in Recruitment

- Male agreement increased significantly from 76% (2023) to 92% (2025)
- Female agreement declined from 57% (2023) to 48% (2025)
- This represents a 44-point gender gap in 2025

2. Equal Opportunity for Promotion

- Male agreement rose from 64% (2023) to 85% (2025)
- Female agreement rose slightly from 38% (2023) to 42% (2025), remaining substantially lower
- Women are half as likely as men to perceive equal promotion opportunity

3. Fairness of Promotion Processes

- Male agreement increased from 56% (2023) to 85% (2025)
- Female agreement declined from 42% (2023) to 35% (2025)
- This signals declining confidence among women in procedural fairness

4. Learning and Development Support

- Both genders reported improvement by 2025
- This is the only area showing positive movement for both groups

5. Opportunities to Progress

- Male agreement increased from 64% (2023) to 85% (2025)
- Female agreement declined from 49% (2023) to 42% (2025)
- Women report being approximately half as satisfied as men regarding progression opportunities

The data suggests a perception divide where men experience increasing confidence in systems while women experience decreasing trust.

5.6 Leave and Flexibility

Six female employees and 1 male employee had formal flexible work arrangements in place as of 30 June 2025. Whilst this figure appears low, it does not include the many part time or casual work arrangements or the many informal local arrangements that are in place to support employees to balance their work and personal lives.

Two female employees have accessed parental leave in the 12 months of the reporting period. These employees have returned to work following parental leave.

When asked about Council's leave and flexibility options, the following percentage of employees responded that they agree to the following statements:

Male			Female			
2021	2023	2025	2021	2023	2025	
81	96	92	83	88	84	<i>My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave</i>
69	72	85	70	67	77	<i>I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration</i>
**	80	85	**	73	81	<i>My direct line manager supports working flexibly</i>

** Question not asked

5.7 Gendered Segregation

Gender composition of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) code major groups in the organisation:

ANZSCO code major groups	Male			Female		
	2021	2023	2025	2021	2023	2025
1. Managers	12	10	13	7	7	7
2. Professionals	7	5	8	71	76	80
3. Technicians & Trades	7	7	7	0	0	0
4. Community & Personal Services	24	18	19	94	70	29
5. Clerical & Administrative	6	4	5	39	37	32
6. Sales	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. Machinery Operators & Drivers	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Labourers	39	42	44	19	18	21
Total	95	86	96	230	208	169

6. Strategies and Actions

There are two key strategies for our Action Plan:

- *To improve our understanding of the gender and diversity profile of our workforce; and*
- *To raise awareness of gender equality and intersectional gender inequality*

To support these strategies the following actions will occur:

1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

- Expand Human Resources (HR) systems to collect and report on gender and diversity data
- Identify and assess barriers preventing women from accessing full-time roles (rostering, job design, caregiving impacts)
- Explore consultation methods to encourage greater participation in the People Matters Survey across the organisation

2. Gender composition of governing bodies

- Increase the visibility of women as Councillors
- Plan and host pre-election workshops for women, young people, and diverse candidates

3. Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value

- Monitor the gender pay gap analysis annually (base salary, total remuneration)
- Ensure that there is equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across the organisation

4. Sexual harassment in the workplace

- Review the sexual harassment policy
- Deliver sexual harassment training
- Deliver ongoing communication and awareness campaigns on sexual harassment, expected standards of behaviour, and a respectful workplace culture
- Promote and educate staff on confidential reporting pathways, including how to report sexual harassment and available supports

5. Recruitment and promotion

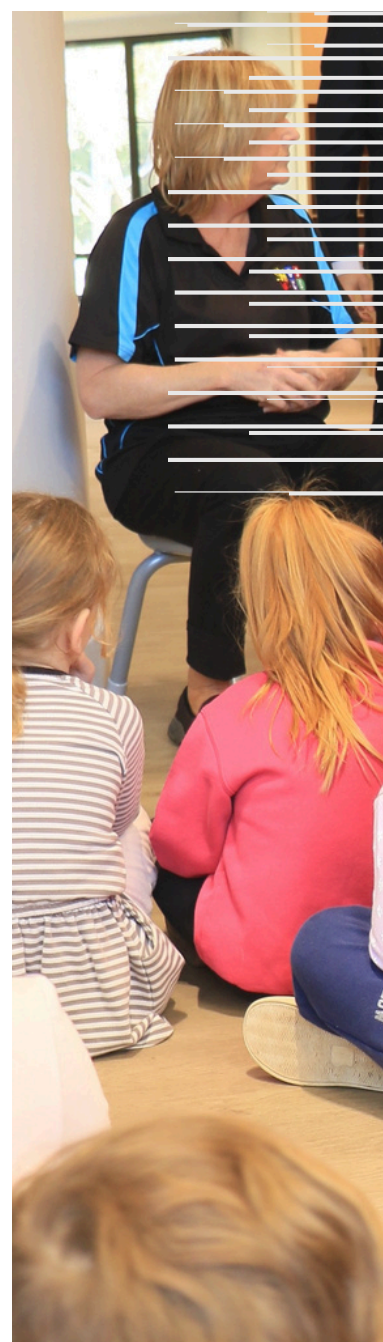
- Review and implement Recruitment Policy to ensure gender diversity in applicants
- Introduce transparent promotion criteria and recruitment processes
- Monitor HR systems to collect gender-disaggregated data, support recruitment outcomes, promotion, and acting opportunities and report on outcomes

6. Family violence, flexible working arrangements and support for family and caring responsibilities

- Promote all forms of leave options and flexible working arrangements to staff of all genders

7. Gender segregation

- Develop strategies to increase the gender diversity of our teams
- Ensure inclusive job design, recruitment practices and safe workplace culture for all genders in all roles



7. Resourcing the Action Plan

Council is committed to ensuring the effective development and implementation of this Gender Equality Action Plan through the allocation of appropriate and sustainable resources. This commitment reflects Council's recognition that meaningful progress in gender equality requires both strategic leadership and adequate operational support.

Responsibility for coordinating the development and delivery of this Gender Equality Action Plan will sit with Council's recently established Coordinator Inclusive Communities position. This role will lead and guide implementation, working in close collaboration with relevant departments across the organisation. The Plan will be embedded within, and supported by, Council's existing People and Culture function, ensuring alignment with broader workforce strategies, policies, and practices.

Council acknowledges that a number of actions outlined in this Plan are contingent upon the enhancement and expansion of existing Human Resources systems. These improvements will be undertaken in partnership with Council's Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) team to ensure systems are fit-for-purpose, enable effective data collection and reporting, and support the monitoring of progress against gender equality objectives.

8. Further information

For further information on Gender Equality please refer to:

www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au





GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL

Kerang - Main Office

Patchell Plaza,

47 Victoria St, Kerang VIC 3579

T. (03) 5450 9333

Office hours: Monday-Friday 8.30am - 5.00pm

Cohuna Office

23-25 King-Edward St,

Cohuna VIC 3568

T. (03) 5456 5222

Open Monday-Friday 10.00am - 4.00pm

(Note: Closed from 12.30pm - 1.15pm every day)

Postal address for all correspondence:

PO Box 287, Kerang, VIC 3579

E: council@gsc.vic.gov.au

W: www.gsc.vic.gov.au



www.facebook.com/gannawarra

6. Strategies and Actions

There are two key strategies for our Action Plan:

- *To improve our understanding of the gender and diversity profile of our workforce; and*
- *To raise awareness of gender equality and intersectional gender inequality*

To support these strategies the following actions will occur:

1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

- Continue to develop HR systems to collect and report on diversity data
- Expand HR systems onboarding process to collect gender and diversity data
- Identify and assess barriers preventing women from accessing full-time roles (rostering, job design, caregiving impacts)
- Encourage participation in and explore consultation methods for the People Matters Survey across the organisation

2. Gender composition of governing bodies

- Increase the visibility of women as Councillors
- Plan and host preselection workshops for women, young people, and diverse candidates

3. Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value

- Ensure compliance with EBA Clause 20: Gender Equality
- Conduct further analysis on the gender pay gap within the organisation to understand if any action needs to be taken.

4. Sexual harassment in the workplace

- Review and implement sexual harassment policy and procedure including proactive prevention.
- Review and deliver sexual harassment training.

5. Recruitment and promotion

- Review and implement Recruitment Policy to ensure gender diversity in applicants.
- Explore ways to strengthen transparency and accountability in recruitment and promotion processes.
- Monitor HR systems to collect gender-disaggregated data, recruitment outcomes, promotion, and acting opportunities.

6. Family violence, flexible working arrangements and support for family and caring responsibilities

- Promote all forms of leave options and flexible working arrangements to staff of all genders.

7. Gender segregation

- Increase staff awareness of gender stereotyping and the impacts this can have on decision making.
- Develop strategies to increase the gender diversity of our teams.



6. Strategies and Actions

There are two key strategies for our Action Plan:

- To improve our understanding of the gender and diversity profile of our workforce; and
- To raise awareness of gender equality and intersectional gender inequality

To support these strategies the following actions will occur:

1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

- Review payroll system to determine options to collect and report on diversity data
- Review and update employment forms to allow for gender and diversity data collection
- **Encourage participation in and explore consultation methods for the People Matters Survey across the organisation.**

Continue to develop HR systems to collect and report on diversity data

Expand HR system's on boarding process to collect gender and diversity data

Audit barriers preventing women from accessing full-time roles (rostering, operational design, caregiving impacts).

2. Gender composition of governing bodies

- Increase the visibility of women as Councillors



3. Equal remuneration

- Increase the transparency of progression and remuneration increases
- Review equity of management structure

Conduct a comprehensive gender pay gap analysis (base salary, total remuneration, allowances, overtime).



4. Sexual harassment in the workplace

- Develop and implement a sexual harassment policy
- Develop and deliver sexual harassment training

Review and implement sexual harassment policy and procedure including proactive prevention.

Review and deliver sexual harassment training.

5. Recruitment and promotion

- Review advertising to attract greater gender diversity in applicants
- Implement new recruitment system to allow for greater diversity data collection and reporting

Review and implement Recruitment Policy to ensure gender diversity in applicants

Explore ways to strengthen transparency and accountability in recruitment and promotion processes.

Monitor HR systems to collect gender-disaggregated data, recruitment outcomes, promotion, and acting opportunities.

6. Family violence, flexible working arrangements and support for family and caring responsibilities

- Promote leave options and flexible working arrangements to staff of all genders



7. Gender segregation

- Increase staff awareness of gender stereotyping and the impacts this can have on decision making
- Develop strategies to increase the gender diversity of our teams



AI suggestions

1 Gender composition of the workforce

Context alignment: Audit shows women are overrepresented in part-time/casual roles and men in full-time roles

Actions:

- Develop a workforce gender targets strategy to increase gender balance across employment types and key occupational streams.
- Audit barriers preventing women from accessing full-time roles (rostering, operational design, caregiving impacts).
- Set a measurable target (e.g., reduce gender gap in full-time roles by X% by 2028)
- Implement targeted attraction and recruitment initiatives (gender-neutral advertising, diverse panels, structured shortlisting).
- Create internal career progression pathways to support women transitioning from part-time/casual to full-time and leadership roles.

2 Gender composition of governing bodies

Context alignment: Governing body composition shows significant imbalance (1 female, 6 male councillors)

Actions:

- Introduce a governing body diversity commitment statement with measurable gender representation goals.
- Advocate for and support candidate development programs for women and gender-diverse community members.
- Embed gender equality principles into councillor induction and governance training.

3 Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value

Actions:

- Conduct a comprehensive gender pay gap analysis (base salary, total remuneration, allowances, overtime).
- Review classification and role evaluation processes to ensure bias-free job grading.

Develop a transparent pay review and reporting framework to monitor annual progress.

4 Sexual harassment in the workplace

Actions:

- Implement a proactive prevention strategy (risk assessment, bystander training, leadership accountability).
- Strengthen confidential reporting mechanisms with multiple access pathways.
- Conduct regular climate surveys to measure prevalence, awareness and trust in reporting systems.

5 Recruitment and promotion practices

Actions:

- Standardise structured, bias-aware recruitment processes (gender-balanced panels, scoring matrices).
- Introduce succession planning and talent identification programs for underrepresented genders.
- Monitor and report promotion rates by gender and employment status annually.

6 Availability and utilisation of flexible working arrangements

Actions:

- Promote flexible work as a standard practice for all genders, including senior roles.
- Track and report flexible work uptake by gender and employment level.
- Train managers to ensure consistent and equitable decision-making on flexible work requests.

7 Gendered segregation (occupational and employment status)

Context alignment: Data shows gendered patterns in full-time vs part-time/casual employment

Actions:

- Develop a segregation reduction plan targeting male-dominated and female-dominated roles.
- Introduce job redesign and development opportunities to broaden participation.
- Partner with education and community organisations to build non-traditional career pipelines.

Graduates of Fauget SChool will emerge as confident, competent, and compassionate individuals ready to excel in high school and take on future challenges with resilience and purpose.

For inquiries or to schedule a school tour, please contact



Brocelle School

Address	123 Anywhere St., Any City, ST 12345
Phone	123-456-7890
Email	hello@reallygreatsite.com
Website	reallygreatsite.com