



GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2021-2025



1. Introduction

The Gender Equality Act 2020 (the Act) took effect as of 31 March 2021. The main purposes of the Act are:

1. to require the public sector, Councils and universities to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality; and
2. to require the public sector, Councils and universities to promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services; and
3. to establish the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.

Under the Act, Council has the following obligations:

- To promote gender equality;
- To conduct gender impact assessments when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public;
- To develop a workplace Gender Equality Action Plan that includes the results of a workplace gender audit and strategies and measures for promoting gender equality in the workplace (every 4 years);
- To ensure adequate resources are allocated to developing and implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan, and;
- To report on the progress of the above (every 2 years).



2. Gender Equality Commitment

Council aims to create a supportive workplace culture, to build employee capacity to support gender equality and to embed gender equality into organisational policies, systems and processes. This plan, along with our 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 of this Plan

This four year plan has been developed over a period of six months.

Our consultation process reflects the requirements set out in the Victorian Gender Equality Act (2020).

As part of this process we consulted with, and sought input into, the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan from Councillors, employees, and relevant trade unions and/or their employee representatives.

Promotion of the Act, Gender Audit and this plan has, and will continue to occur through various mediums including email 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 in relation to the Act. The survey was modified specifically for this need 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 2021.

The key finding to come out of our first gender audit (based on data as of 30 June 2021) was 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 concept is referred to as “intersectionality gender inequality”.

This lack of diversity data is evident in Council’s systems and processes and could not be extracted from the 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).



5. Audit Analysis

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

5.1 Gender composition of the workforce

	Full Time	Part Time	Casual
Female	39	105	86
Male	63	10	22

Council's gender composition, based on employment status, continues to reflect the predominance of women in part time and casual positions.

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

Male	Female	
81%	70%	There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders.

5.2 Gender composition of the governing body (Councillors)

	Councillors
Female	1
Male	6

5.3 Pay equality

Overall the average annualised full-time base salaries (or total remuneration) of men are 4.4% greater than women.

5.4 Sexual harassment

Whilst no formal sexual harassment complaints were received by Council in the 12 month reporting period, the results of the survey indicate that 7% of women and 0% of men have experienced sexual harassment in some form in the preceding 12 months.

Male	Female	
59%	62%	<i>Agee that they feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work</i>
66%	61%	<i>Agree that the organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination</i>
72%	76%	<i>Agree that the organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours</i>

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	
56%	46%	<i>My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit</i>
50%	48%	<i>I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation</i>
88%	79%	<i>Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i>
56%	77%	<i>Being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i>
75%	82%	<i>Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i>
88%	83%	<i>Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i>
66%	63%	<i>Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i>
81%	83%	<i>Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i>

5.6 Leave and flexibility

Six female employees and six male employees had formal flexible work arrangements in place as of 30 June 2021. 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.

Five female employees and three male employees have accessed parental leave in the 12 months of the reporting period. These employees have all returned to work following their periods of parental leave.

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

Male	Female	
81%	83%	<i>My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave</i>
69%	70%	<i>I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration</i>
94%	84%	<i>My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender</i>

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	Women	Men
1. Managers	7	12
2. Professionals	71	7
3. Technicians & Trades	0	7
4. Community & Personal Services	94	24
5. Clerical & Administrative	39	6
6. Sales	0	0
7. Machinery Operators & Drivers	0	0
8. Labourers	19	39
Total	230	95



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
- 2. Gender composition of governing bodies**
 - Increase the visibility of women as Coucillors
- 3. Equal remuneration**
 - Increase the transparency of progression and remuneration increases
 - Review equity of management structure
- 4. Sexual harassment in the workplace**
 - Develop and implement a sexual harassment policy
 - Develop 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
- 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

7. Resourcing the Action Plan

Council is required to have a strategic resource plan that outlines how the development and implementation of this Plan will be resourced.

The development and implementation of the majority of the plan will be absorbed as part of Council's existing Human Resource function.

Many of the system changes noted as actions, will form part of the pending system reviews already scheduled and budgeted for as part of Council's ICT strategy and budget.

8. Further Information

For further information on Gender Equality please refer to:
www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au





Gannawarra Shire Council

Patchell Plaza

47 Victoria Street, Kerang VIC 3579

Phone: (03) 5450 9333

Email: council@gsc.vic.gov.au



[gannawarra](#)



[gannawarrashire](#)



[thegannawarra](#)