

# Bayside City Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025



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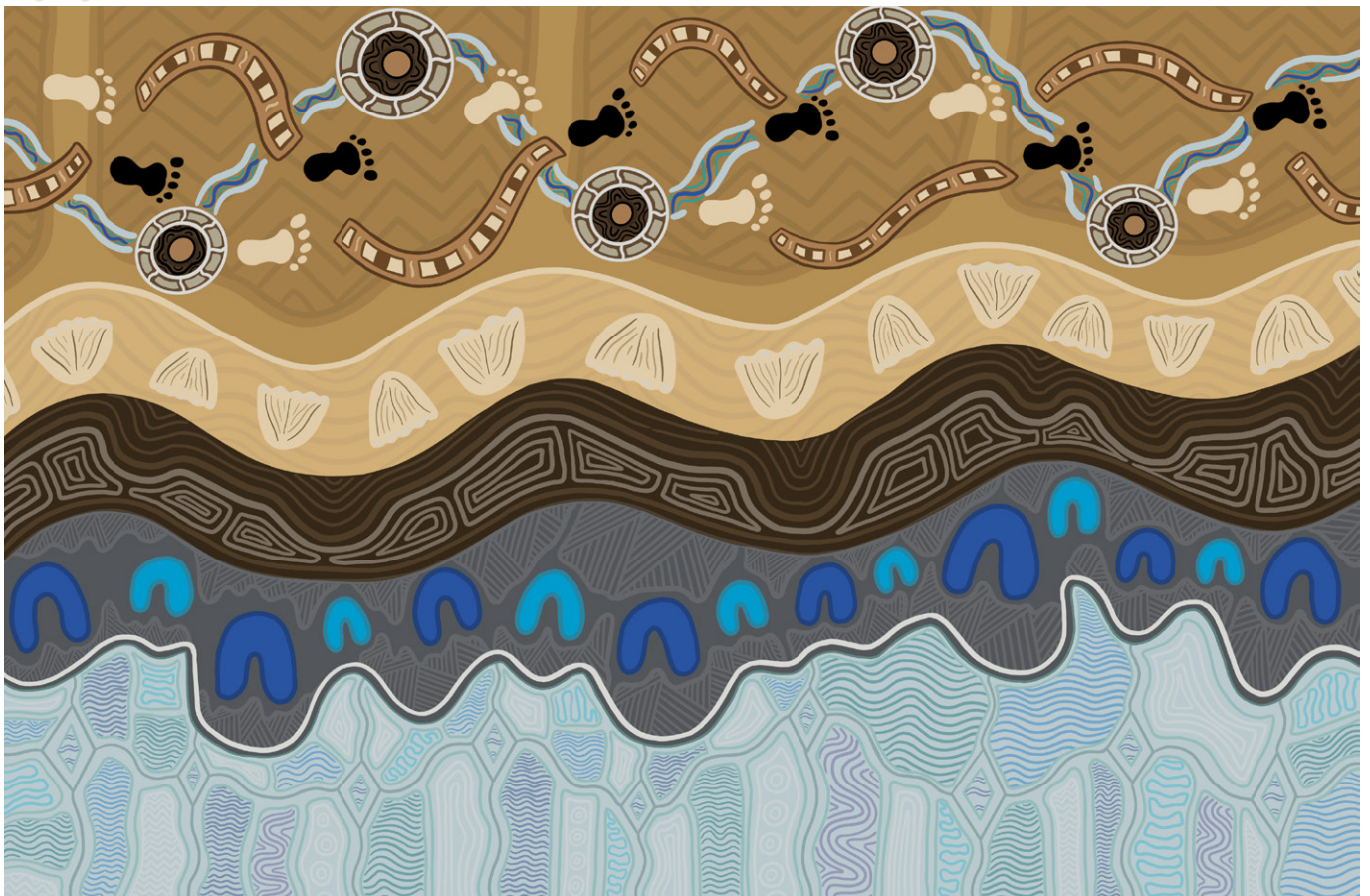
## Part A

### Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Bayside City Council proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Council acknowledges the Bunurong's continuing relationship to the land and waterways and respects that their connection and spiritual identity is maintained through ancient ceremonies, songlines, dance, art and living culture.

Council pays tribute to the invaluable contributions of the Bunurong and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders who have guided and continue to guide the work we do.



Artwork by Nakia Cadd (Yorta Yortam Dja Dja Wurrung, Bunitj & Boon Wurrung)

# Executive Summary

The Gender Equality Act (the Act) came into effect on March 31, 2021 and requires all defined entities, including Bayside City Council (Council), to take meaningful steps towards gender equality. The Act required Council to conduct an internal workforce and stakeholder consultation to better understand the experiences of our people through an intersectional gender lens. This Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) is informed by that data and seeks to address inequalities that stem from seven persistent areas of workplace gender inequality identified by the Gender Equality Commission (Commission). Council will work with the Commission's Gender Equality Principles (see Appendix 1) in mind to embed gender equality within our organisation and model and lead change in our community.



# Message from the CEO

**At Bayside City Council, we seek to be the sector-leading organisation delivering outstanding customer experience and community outcomes. We understand that this vision is achieved by delivering inclusive practices that attract, develop and empower extraordinary people in a workplace that is truly safe, equitable and inclusive for everyone.**

Having completed our workforce audit, and through engagement with our staff, it's clear that, continuing to develop our culture to one that is a safe, equitable and inclusive place for everyone, we need to take a combination of individual and collective actions. As we move through the process of becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive Bayside, it's critical that we live by our values: respect each other, own it, work together and find better ways.

The strategies and measures outlined in this plan aim to build our organisation's awareness and understanding of gender equality and other intersectional factors. We want our people, and our leaders, to feel equipped to speak up when they see something that doesn't fit with our values and we want to see a genuine shift towards more respectful and inclusive behaviours.

As CEO, I am committed to leading the way towards becoming a more equitable organisation. I want everyone to understand why working towards gender equality is critical to building the foundations of greater equity, safety, and respect – both within our organisation and in our community.

This is our first Gender Equality Action Plan, and we want it to be a strong foundation to build our future actions to achieve gender equality and facilitate effective and transformational cultural change.



**Mick Cummins**  
Chief Executive Officer





# Part B

## 1. Purpose

To promote and advance gender equality within our organisation by planning, implementing and measuring our progress towards a more equitable Council.



## 2. Case for change

### Vision

Bayside is a place that supports and enables all people, regardless of their gender, to reach their full potential. We actively apply a gender lens to the work that we do and implement strategies to promote a safe, flexible and equitable workplace that is free from harassment and discrimination.

### Our commitment to the Gender Equality Principles

We believe that all members of our community should live in a safe and equal society, have access to resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. We are committed to promoting gender equality within our workplace and community as we know that this benefits all people, regardless of gender. In conducting our Workplace Gender Audit, the People Matter Survey, and our staff consultation, we examined our current state and what we need to do to provide a safe and equitable workplace for our staff.

Advancing gender equality is a responsibility that we share with our staff and community and we acknowledge that special measures to promote gender equality may be required. We know that historically women and other members of our diverse workforce and community have experienced discrimination and we understand that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage, difference, and discrimination. We recognise the importance of capturing intersectional data to ensure we are informed and able to meet the needs of all our employees and community members.

### 3. Legislative and policy and context

On March 31, 2021, the Victorian Government commenced the Gender Equality Act 2020, to 'improve workplace gender equality in the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils'<sup>1</sup>. The 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence identified that to reduce family violence and all forms of violence against women, Victoria needed to address gender inequality<sup>2</sup>. In response, the Safe and Strong strategy (the first gender equality strategy in Victoria) was released in December 2016, which also incorporated a commitment from the Victorian Government to legislate to promote gender equality. In response the Gender Equality Act 2020 was formed following extensive stakeholder and public consultation and was passed through Parliament in February 2020. The Department of Premier and Cabinet became responsible for implementation and established the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector<sup>3</sup>.

The Act promotes gender equality by requiring public sector organisations to explore where gender inequality may exist within their workplace and to develop tailored solutions informed by staff consultation. In doing so, the Act requires and supports organisations to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and ensures organisations are applying a gender lens to their policies, programs, and services. In establishing the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner, the Act is also supporting organisations through this journey by providing education and support and ensuring compliance with the Act<sup>4</sup>. Under the Act, defined entities are required to<sup>5</sup>:

- develop and implement a GEAP, which includes:
  - results of a workplace gender audit
  - strategies for achieving workplace gender equality
- publicly report on their progress in relation to workplace gender equality
- promote gender equality in policies, programs and services that impact the public
- complete gender impact assessments

In doing so, the Commission's Gender Equality Principles (see **Appendix 1**), Pay Equity Principles (see **Appendix 2**) and Objects of the Act (see **Appendix 3**) will be upheld.

#### Other legislative and regulative considerations

In the development of the GEAP, Council has considered the following Victorian and Commonwealth legislation and industrial instruments, including but not limited to:

- The Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Charter of Human rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)
- Bayside City Council Enterprise Agreement

<sup>1</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021)

<sup>2</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021)

<sup>3</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021)

History of the Gender Equality Act. Available at:  
<https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/history-gender-equality-act-2020>

<sup>4</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021)

<sup>5</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021)

### 4. Development of Our Plan

**Council's consultation process for its first GEAP comprised two key factors:**

- 1 Drawing on data inclusive of inputs from the Workplace Gender Audit, People Matter Survey 2021 and series of face-to-face staff focus group sessions. The 2020 Victorian Auditor General's Office Report on Sexual Harassment in Local Government was also used as a key input.
- 2 A series of virtual briefing sessions to share audit findings and collaborate on the vision, case for change and action planning.

**To support the consultation and GEAP development project, the following external consultants and advisors assisted the internal project team:**

- 1 Nell Wilson Consulting – hosted, in partnership with Council Officers, staff focus groups with over 120 staff and the Senior Leadership Team, to explore themes of safety, respect and overcoming barriers to gender equality through brainstorming and small group discussion (May-July 2021)
- 2 Right Lane Consulting – undertook an analysis and report on the raw workplace gender audit data and, produced products to use in further consultation (July-August 2021)
- 3 Women's Health in the South East – Local women's health service and partner of Council who as part of the Commissions approved panel of providers (Action for Gender Equality Partnership) provided support to design and facilitate consultations with staff. These consultation sessions included briefings with staff from across the organisation on the Workplace Gender Audit and the development of a draft set of strategies and measures with key internal stakeholders based on consultation.

**Consultation sessions were held with a wide variety of internal groups including the:**

- Bayside Pride Group
- Staff Consultative Committee (including Union representatives)
- CEO, Directors, and People Leaders
- Reconciliation Project Officer
- Inclusion Officer of Open Space, Recreation and Wellbeing (with a focus on disability and preventing men's violence against women), and
- key internal enabling areas such as Communications, Governance and People and Strategy.

It was critical to collaborate and partner with external consultants and providers to ensure our approach was based on emerging research and practice and will deliver the best outcomes for our people and community. Interviews were also held between Councillors and Council Officers to gain insights into their experiences around gender and participating in local government.

## Workforce and survey data

The People Matter Survey (PMS) and Workplace Gender Audit provided useful insights into the gendered and intersectional experiences of our workforce. 216 people responded to the PMS (approximately 33 per cent of the organisation), providing meaningful and representational data for analysis.

The Commission required the collection and analysis of data based on seven key indicators of common and persistent workforce gender inequality. These were:

- 1 gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- 2 gender composition of governing bodies
- 3 gender pay equity
- 4 workplace sexual harassment
- 5 leave and flexibility
- 6 recruitment and promotion, and
- 7 gendered workforce segregation.

Each of these indicators were explored through both a gender and intersectional lens where our workforce data allowed.

### Intersectional Data

Our systems do not currently support the collection of adequate intersectional data in the fields of sexual orientation, race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability and gender identity. As such, age was the key piece of intersectional data able to be analysed at this time. We recognise that understanding other compounding factors that may contribute to gender inequality is essential to addressing disadvantage and discrimination.

Our organisation is committed to addressing the lack of available intersectional data through amendments to our internal HRM systems and standard surveys as part of our GEAP. The ability to add information to new intersectional data fields will also be promoted to existing and new employees.

## Consultation themes

Having reviewed and consulted with staff on the workforce data, our people have told us that the critical themes to achieve our GEAP outcomes are to:

- Demonstrate zero tolerance to all forms of harassment and discrimination and confront inappropriate behaviours from staff and leaders head on, regardless of position or status.
- Celebrate, encourage, and focus on gender equality – ensuring that this is visible throughout the organisation and to the public.
- Ensure our language, behaviours and processes are inclusive and foster a sense of belonging for all people, regardless of gender.
- Recognise that senior leaders play a critical role in setting our culture, role modelling positive behaviours and a growth mindset.
- Provide better recruitment, development, and promotion opportunities for all staff members by actively checking for unconscious bias and barriers.
- Ensure all staff feel supported to access flexible work arrangements that are suitable for both them and their role.
- Communicate regularly about our gender pay gap and take steps to address this over time.
- Ensure our systems, policies and procedures are inclusive and support and promote equality for everyone.
- Ensure our attitudes, language and behaviours are respectful and inclusive, creating a safe environment that supports everyone, regardless of their gender, to reach their full potential.
- Understand the composition and intersectional experiences of our workforce and commit to taking meaningful steps to ensure equity for all.

While we are required to comply with the legislative requirements of the Gender Equality Act, our commitment to gender equality goes beyond compliance. It is critical for us to lead in this space and take the necessary steps towards equality, not only because it is the right thing to do, but to ensure we deliver the best possible outcomes for our community. See the Action Plan for further details.

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## Our commitment to gender equality goes beyond compliance



## 5. Background

### Our commitment to the act

In recent years, Bayside has increasingly recognised the need to take action to actively promote gender equality within our organisation. Some examples of prior and existing work in this space include, but are not limited to:

- The Women's Charter Action Plan 2018-2020 – where Council had committed to advance gender equity, diversity and active citizenship (these commitments will now be carried on through the GEAP).
- Commitment to all twelve VAGO Sexual Harassment Recommendations.
- Our Organisation Strategy - Council's Executive Team prioritised 'Inclusion and Voice' as a strategic focus which seeks to ensure inclusivity is an unconscious standard practice at Bayside. This focus will enable us to work towards our strategic goal of 'We are Leaders: We lead through creative, inclusive and sustainable practices. We attract, develop and empower extraordinary people. We are agile in responding to challenges.' It also supports our commitment to provide a 'psychologically safe culture where people feel respected and safe to speak up'.
- A dedicated role for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - In response to the announcement of the Act and to the identified need to develop our actions for diversity and inclusion, a 12-month Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisor (DEI Advisor) position was created to support the delivery of this GEAP in addition to delivering broader diversity and inclusion commitments. The Bayside community has also demonstrated its expectation that diversity and inclusion will be embraced in community initiatives, as indicated in the Council 2050 Community Vision.
- Establishment of the Bayside Pride Group - On IDAHOBIT<sup>1</sup> Day 2021, Council flew the 6-colour Pride flag. This prompted strong engagement across the organisation and resulted in the formation of the Bayside Pride Group in May 2021. The Pride Group has decided to focus primarily on raising awareness and building knowledge within the organisation before taking action more broadly in our community. The Pride Group will act as a key stakeholder in the governance of the GEAP and offer advice on intersectional, gender and LGBTQIA+ initiatives. It will also support an internal communications function to promote LGBTQIA+ inclusion and awareness and to work on developing LGBTQIA+ focused events.
- A dedicated role to support the development and delivery of the Innovate RAP – we recently appointed a Reconciliation Project Officer to oversee the development of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), whilst building strong and sustainable relationships between Council, Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This position is a designated position for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (under the s. 12 Special Measures of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010) in recognition of the importance of self-determination and the criticality of this initiative being guided by First Nations Peoples in strong partnership towards reconciliation. The RAP Working Group is identified as a key stakeholder in the governance of the GEAP and the DEI Advisor co-chairs the working group with the Reconciliation Project Officer, ensuring opportunities for collaboration and joint action are identified.

## 6. Leadership Commitment

Our consultation with staff indicated that the success or failure of the GEAP relies on the commitment and accountability of our leaders. In response, Council has developed the following leadership commitment:

As a leader I will embody, support and be accountable for embedding and achieving gender equality at Council. I will:

- Lead the implementation of initiatives emerging from the GEAP and support the implementation of Gender Impact Assessments and any recommendations that emerge from them.
- Promote and engage in trainings with staff and adopt and model desired behaviours myself.
- Be brave and hold space for discomfort and manage resistance and push back as we change our culture, including addressing discrimination and problematic behaviours in a transparent way.
- Prioritise gender equality initiatives in our strategic resource planning.



<sup>1</sup> International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia.

## 7. Action Plan

### Indicator 1: Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

#### The case for a gender diverse workforce

Having a diverse workforce is critical to fostering an inclusive culture where employees feel able and encouraged to bring their whole selves to work<sup>1</sup>. Women are often underrepresented in leadership roles and overrepresented in lower-banded and lower paid roles<sup>2</sup> which contributes to the gender pay gap and may result in organisations missing out on important skills and expertise that female or gender diverse candidates could bring. Equitable and diverse workplaces have also been found to outperform their peers on several measures including profitability<sup>3</sup>.

The key benefits of gender diversity and inclusion for Bayside include:

- representative, creative and innovative solutions as a result of diverse perspectives in analysis, planning and execution of policies, strategies, programs and services
- solutions that are better tailored to consider and meet the needs of our diverse workforce and community<sup>4</sup>
- a psychologically safe culture where our people feel supported to bring their full selves to work and that their background and experiences are valued and recognised.
- improved access to and retention of talent by promoting development and leadership opportunities equitably and through the alignment of our organisational values with our everyday practices<sup>5</sup>.

Bayside's workforce composition by employment basis indicates that women are more likely than men to work in a part-time or casual capacity, while men are more likely to work full-time. This is consistent with the Commission's assertion that 'women are far more likely than men to work flexibly, especially by working part time and taking longer parental leave'<sup>6</sup>.

#### Overall gender composition of the workforce by employment basis

	Female (%)	Male (%)
Whole of organisation	69%	31%
Full-time employment basis	56%	44%
Part-time employment basis	80%	20%
Casual employment basis	83%	17%

The People Matter Survey highlighted the diversity that exists in our workforce. We now know that of the respondents:

- 69% identify as female and 31% as male
- 10 per cent identify as LGBTQIA+\*\*
- 5 per cent have a disability\*\*
- 13 per cent speak a language other than English with their family or community\*\*, and
- 23 per cent were born outside of Australia\*\*.

When asked if they feel there is a positive culture within our organisation in relation to employees of different sexes and/or genders 78% of staff agreed.

A small percentage of our workforce indicated that they use a different term (to male or female) to describe their gender, and a similarly small percentage indicated that they would prefer not to disclose their gender. To protect the privacy of these respondents, their data has not been disaggregated as part of the Workplace Gender Audit. Therefore, the data appears as binary (male / female). Understanding the experiences of all people in our workforce is critical and Council will explore opportunities to better understand the experiences of people who identify across the gender spectrum without compromising their privacy.

Staff expressed their desire to see a workplace that celebrates and values diversity. They indicated that Bayside could be more inclusive, particularly of LGBTQIA+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and staff. It was also common for staff to indicate that they would like to see more women and gender diverse people in senior roles. Our actions throughout the plan seek to ensure our workplace provides equal opportunity by addressing unconscious bias in our recruitment and promotion practices and flexible leave policies. The goal is to continue to work towards a leadership workforce composition of 40 per cent female, 40 per cent male and 20 per cent female, gender diverse employees or male employees.

1 McKinsey & Company (2020) Diversity wins: How inclusion matters. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>

2 Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021) Workplace Gender Equality Indicators. Available at: <https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/workplace-gender-equality-indicators>

3 McKinsey & Company (2020); Culture Amp (2022) How to prioritize (and maintain) diversity in leadership. Available at: <https://www.cultureamp.com/blog/diversity-in-leadership>

4 Harvard Business Review (2019) Research: When Gender Diversity Makes Firms More Productive. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2019/02/research-when-gender-diversity-makes-firms-more-productive>

5 Harvard Business Review (2019)

6 Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021).

## Indicator 1: Gender composition at all levels of the workforce (continued)

Measure	Current Result	Data Source
Maintain 40% female, 40% male and 20% female, male or gender diverse representation at senior levels (-1 Level).	40% female, 60% male, 0% gender diverse.	Workforce Data
Increase from baseline of employees completing the intersectional data sections in our HRM system.	Only intersectional data relating to age was captured.	Workforce Data
Improvement from baseline in response to 'There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees...':	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age: 74% agree</li> <li>• Different sexes / genders: 78% agree</li> <li>• LGBTQIA+: 63% agree</li> <li>• With disability: 67% agree</li> <li>• Varied cultural backgrounds: 76% agree</li> <li>• Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander: 58% agree</li> </ul>	People Matter Survey

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe			
			21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
All employees gain the experience they need to step into senior roles regardless of their gender.	Create pathways for female and gender diverse employees to learn and gain experience for senior roles (such as a mentoring program).	P&C Coordinator				
Council understands the intersectional experiences of its staff.	Improve intersectional data collection in HRM systems and promote to staff to update their details, including data about the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexual orientation</li> <li>• race</li> <li>• Aboriginality</li> <li>• religion</li> <li>• ethnicity</li> <li>• disability, and</li> <li>• gender identity</li> </ul>	Payroll Coordinator				
Trans and gender diverse staff know that they will be supported to affirm their gender at work.	Develop a gender affirmation plan to support employees affirming their gender at work.	DEI Advisor				



## Indicator 2: Gender composition of governing bodies

### The case for a gender diverse governing body

Our Councillors make important decisions about the strategic direction, finances, projects, programs and services that contribute to the wellbeing of our communities and the work of our organisation. It is critical that the voices in the room represent and share diverse perspectives, experiences and ideas to ensure the best possible outcomes for our community.

Currently Bayside has four male and three female Councillors elected for the 2020-2024 Council term. This is an improvement on gender composition compared to the 2016-2020 Council where only one female was elected. In the lead up to the 2020 Council election, Council officers delivered the 'Changing Faces: Reframing Women in Local Democracy' initiative to encourage women to get involved in local democracy and address the historic under-representation of females on Council. The initiative garnered wide-spread local attention and highlighted that in Council's 161-year history, only 15 female Mayors have been elected. In the 2020 Council elections 38 per cent of Bayside candidates were women, up from 30 per cent in 2016.

Interviews were conducted with current Councillors as part of the GEAP consultation. The following themes were identified:

- Challenges balancing personal commitments and Council commitments, compounded by family and caring responsibilities. The flexibility to conduct Council meetings virtually has been useful during the pandemic.
- Instances of harassment from members of the public on social media for contentious community issues, disproportionately target female Councillors.
- A strong desire to encourage diverse candidates at the next Council election through signalling that Council values diversity, equity and inclusion as well as encouraging diverse community leaders to stand for election.

Measure	Current Result	Data Source
Continued or increased representation of women and/or gender diverse candidates from the 2020 baseline (Workforce Data).	3 females	Workforce Data
Councillor's report having more positive experiences whilst serving their term as representatives of Council.	Anecdotal, qualitative statements	Interviews

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe			
			21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Councillors are supported through experiences of social media harassment.	Address gendered social media harassment of Councillors by members of the public.	Manager Governance				
Councillors are able to balance personal and Council commitments.	Continue to deliver informal Council meetings in hybrid formats.	Manager Governance				
	Advocate to the Victorian Government through the MAV to continue formal Council meetings in hybrid format.	Manager Governance				
A diverse group of candidates stand for Council in the Bayside 2024 election.	Focus on attraction of female and diverse candidates in the 2024 Council election campaign.	Manager Governance				

## Indicator 3: Pay Equity

### The case for pay equity

The gender pay gap is persistent throughout Australia, favouring men in all industries and occupations.<sup>1</sup> The gender pay gap measures the difference between the average earnings of women and men and is the result of a combination of social and economic factors that reduce women's earning capacity over their lifetime<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, women are less likely to progress as far as men in their careers and will accumulate less money for retirement<sup>3</sup>. The gender pay gap is perpetuated through several factors such as higher rates of pay in male-dominated industries, unpaid care work and discrimination.

Bayside has a 17.7 per cent pay gap when comparing the median male and median female salary. This means that for every \$100.00 the median man earns the median woman earns \$82.30. This is because there is a significant concentration of women in lower banded and lower paid roles (e.g., 87 per cent of carers/aides and 84 per cent of clerical workers at Council are female). The gender segregation of our workforce perpetuates gender norms and is a key driver of our gender pay gap. Council also outsources several services, including labour and maintenance roles (lower banded and lower paid roles) which are typically male dominated. The absence of employees in this field is likely a contributing factor to our feminised workforce and gender pay gap. However, despite being a highly feminised workforce (69 per cent female), our Senior Employee roles are predominantly filled by men (14 males to 10 females as of 30 June 2021). This has implications for development and promotion opportunities and contributes

to the concentration of men in higher paid senior roles. Our gender pay gap does not play out at a banded level where we have nominal to no pay gap (between -0.93 per cent -2.73 per cent at each level, largely sitting at 0 per cent).

Our gender pay gap was of significant concern to staff, although there was some relief that the pay gap doesn't play out in like-for-like roles. Staff requested that our organisation continues to be transparent about the gender pay gap and asked that this data be shared and explained regularly and across the organisation. In response, the Senior Leadership Team was provided relevant information to pass on to interested staff. A series of FAQs were created which have been provided on the Intranet for all staff to access and promoted via our internal communications channels. It was the request of our staff that we actively promote and value work that has often been seen to be feminised.

Council is committed to reducing the gender pay gap. However, this may prove challenging due to the opportunity for Council to strategically enter a new market where positions are likely to be at a lower banded levels and in an area that is traditionally highly feminised. As articulated in the Action Plan, Council will seek to mitigate this through deliberate strategies and actions to attract a more diverse pool of candidates.

<sup>1</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2020) This is why you should care about the gender pay gap. Available at: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/this-is-why-you-should-care-about-the-gender-pay-gap>

<sup>2</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2020)

<sup>3</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2020)



### Indicator 3: Pay Equity (continued)

Measure	Current Result	Data Source
Reduction in gender pay gap across all staff (excluding casuals).	17.7% gender pay gap	Workforce Data
Reduction in gender pay gap across all staff (including casuals).	9.6% gender pay gap	Workforce Data
Reduction in gender pay gap at Senior Employee level.	Level -1 = 7.6% gender pay gap Level -2 = 4.4% gender pay gap	Workforce Data

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe			
			21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Transparent and accessible communications for staff and leaders about the gender pay gap.	Track Council's pay equity progress annually.	P&C Coordinator				
	Communicate pay equity data with the Senior Leadership Team and broader staff annually.	DEI Advisor				
Salary negotiation, banding and recruitment practices are free from the effects of unconscious bias and discrimination.	Conduct an annual review of Senior Employee salaries to identify any gender pay gap trends.	Payroll Coordinator				
	Use Senior Employee salary data to inform Senior Employee salary negotiations.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
	Review and update the classification statements for banding positions to check for unconscious bias and ensure equal pay for work of equal or comparable value).	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
	Identify opportunities to promote advertised roles in gender segregated fields to diverse candidates.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				



## Indicator 4: Workplace Sexual Harassment

### The case for addressing workplace sexual harassment

Sexual harassment can cause psychological and physical harm to the person who experiences it directly or to others who witness the behaviour<sup>1</sup>. It also carries significant costs for organisations and the community<sup>2</sup>. Most people who have experienced sexual harassment don't make a formal report, often due to a lack of confidence in action being taken and fear of negative consequences. In 2020, 29% of Victorian Local Government workers indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment at work<sup>3</sup>.

#### The benefits of Bayside taking positive action towards addressing and preventing sexual harassment include:

- Reducing the risk of employees experiencing sexual harassment and consequent negative effects to their physical, mental and/or financial wellbeing.
- Meeting Council's positive duty to prevent sexual harassment.
- Reducing employee turnover by improving the workplace culture.
- Reducing the risk of employees missing work due to workplace related stress.
- Bayside is committed to addressing sexual harassment and has begun to do so through the implementation of VAGO's Sexual Harassment Recommendations (2020).

#### At Bayside:

- 33 per cent of respondents to the VAGO Sexual Harassment survey had experienced sexual harassment over a 12-month period to June 2020 (compared to a 28 per cent local government average)<sup>4</sup>.
- 17 per cent of respondents to the People Matter Survey (PMS) had experienced sexual harassment in the 12 months to August 2021 (a significantly higher percentage than the 7 per cent local government average).

The variance in Council respondents indicating experiences of sexual harassment may not indicate a true reduction in instances of sexual harassment and is likely reflective of a different cohort of individuals responding to the surveys. A lower percentage of respondents indicating that they have experienced sexual harassment in the PMS, compared to the VAGO sexual harassment survey, was also consistent across other councils.

Survey respondents indicated that most instances of sexual harassment were perpetrated by either a co-worker of the same level or a senior co-worker (VAGO 2020) and involved predominantly intrusive questioning (21 per cent) and sexually suggestive comments or jokes (19 per cent) (VAGO 2020). Some respondents also experienced inappropriate physical contact and unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering, or kissing, amongst other behaviours (VAGO 2020).

No formal reports to Council were made, with 47 per cent indicating that they didn't think it would make a difference (compared to 38 per cent local government average, PMS) and 44 per cent believing that making a complaint would have negative consequences for their reputation (compared to 37 per cent local government average, PMS). Sexual harassment was experienced predominantly by women and when asked if it 'feels safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work' only 63 per cent of women agreed, compared to 87 per cent of men. 90 per cent of staff felt that Bayside encourages respectful workplace behaviours, however this differed by gender with 97 per cent of men agreeing compared to 89 per cent of women. 71 per cent of staff felt that our organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Council recognises that we must continue to collect data about employees' experiences of sexual harassment, review our policies and procedures, and work towards creating a psychologically safe culture where people feel safe to 'speak up' either for themselves or others. Based on consultation, we have committed to a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment in our new standalone Sexual Harassment Policy. Council's zero tolerance position against sexual harassment, as well as other forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination, dictates that any allegations are taken seriously, handled confidentially and sympathetically, will be investigated and that action will be taken. This also means that Council considers the safety and wellbeing of the person disclosing their experience of harassment to be the priority, and that Council is committed to supporting them and providing a psychologically and physically safe and respectful workplace.

Staff consultation indicated that addressing sexual harassment is of high priority and that it is critical that our leadership team is held to the same standards as other staff and is seen to be modelling positive behaviours and calling out incidents of sexual harassment. Council has identified several strategies in our GEAP that demonstrate its commitment to taking action to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment within the organisation.

1 Safe Work Australia (2021) Preventing workplace sexual harassment: National guidance material. Available at: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-01/Guide%20for%20preventing%20workplace%20sexual%20harassment%20-%20for%20publishing.pdf>

2 Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021)

3 VAGO (2020) Sexual harassment in Local Government: Are Victorian local councils providing workplaces that are free from sexual harassment? Available at: <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/sexual-harassment-local-government?section=#33710--3-preventing-sexual-harassment>

4 VAGO (2020) Sexual harassment in Local Government: Bayside City Council Report

## Indicator 4: Workplace Sexual Harassment (continued)

Measure	Current Result	Data Source
Decreased rates of sexual harassment over the duration of the 2021-2025 GEAP	17% of respondents had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months.	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreeing that our organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours (by gender).	90% of respondents agree with this statement; 97% of males, 89% of females.	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff feeling that they can call out inappropriate behaviour at work (by gender).	87% of men and 63% of women agreed.	People Matter Survey
Reduced rates of sexual harassment by members of the public	8% of incidents were perpetrated by a member of the public	People Matter Survey
Reduced rates of sexual harassment by a colleague	67% of incidents were perpetrated by a colleague	People Matter Survey
Reduced rates of sexual harassment by a senior manager	33% of incidents were perpetrated by a senior manager	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that the organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination.	66% of respondents agree	People Matter Survey

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe			
			21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
The organisation's expectations and position against sexual harassment is clear.	Update Code of Conduct to incorporate zero tolerance messaging.	DEI Advisor				
	Register sexual harassment on the risk register and review annually.	DEI Advisor				
All staff know how to and feel psychologically safe and supported to report and respond to incidents of sexual harassment.	Develop and implement a standalone sexual harassment policy.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
	Develop and embed a sexual harassment reporting procedure, including a function for anonymous reporting.	DEI Advisor				
	Improve record keeping of sexual harassment reports by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>keeping complete records of all interactions relating to a report</li> <li>documenting decisions to not investigate reports or to stop investigations, including the rationale for the decision and the name and role of decision makers.</li> </ul>	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
	Review reporting procedures to ensure they include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a requirement to inform the person who reported of the outcome of the report</li> <li>guidance on how investigators can support reluctant reporters.</li> </ul>	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				

## Indicator 4: Workplace Sexual Harassment (continued)

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe			
			21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	Develop and deliver sexual harassment training (all staff; live every two years; online as part of induction; and, incorporating bystander intervention training).	DEI Advisor				
The risk of sexual harassment by members of the public is recognised and mitigated.	Ensure sexual harassment policies, procedures and training explicitly cover sexual harassment from the public.	DEI Advisor				
	Communicate regularly to customers and staff that the council does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment from the public.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
Council understands the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace, the rates of reporting and the reasons why staff are choosing not to report.	Deliver People Matter Survey or equivalent bi-annually to obtain intersectional data (including sexual harassment questions in line with VAGO Sexual Harassment recommendations).	DEI Advisor				
	Briefing sessions are hosted to unpack the data and gain anecdotal feedback with: ET; SLT; interested staff; and in CEO Reflections (short-form version).	DEI Advisor				
Councillors are aware of the importance of addressing sexual harassment at Council and are aware of the supports available to them should they experience sexual harassment.	Ensure councillors receive training on sexual harassment at least twice per council term.	Manager Governance				
	Ensure councillors are informed of their internal and external options for sexual harassment support and reports, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Council's employee assistance program</li> <li>Councillor Code of Conduct dispute resolution processes</li> <li>external complaint bodies.</li> </ul>	Manager Governance				



## Indicator 5: Recruitment & Promotion

### The case for ensuring we have equitable recruitment and promotion practices

Gender inequality can play out at many points throughout the employment cycle. Gender bias and gender stereotypes can be particularly influential in informing recruitment, promotion and career progression decisions. For example, women may not be considered for the same career opportunities as men due to concerns and assumptions around them taking parental leave. Research suggests that women are more likely to face greater scrutiny and tougher evaluation standards when interviewed. Unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion activities can also play out in relation to intersectional factors such as age, sexual orientation, race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability and gender identity. Male applicants may also be disadvantaged when applying for roles in female-dominated occupations and industries.

When asked if employees felt they have an equal chance at promotion at Bayside, only 49 per cent of women agreed (compared to 69 per cent of men). A similar gap exists in perception around organisational decisions to recruit and promote based on merit with only 61 per cent of women agreeing, compared to 79 per cent of men. When asked about perceived barriers to success at Bayside we found:

- 69 per cent believe that age is not a barrier to success
- 62 per cent believe that aboriginality is not a barrier to success
- 75 per cent believe that cultural background is not a barrier to success
- 67 per cent believe that disability is not a barrier to success
- 74 per cent believe that gender is not a barrier to success
- 75 per cent believe that sexual orientation is not a barrier to success

It is important that Council ensures gender bias does not influence recruitment and promotion activities and that Council is promoting people who are contributing positively to our culture and performance.

Staff consultation produced several suggestions to ensure we have systems in place to address unconscious bias; and to ensure we provide support to female and gender diverse employees to enable them to obtain the skills and experience necessary to apply for senior roles. Staff also highlighted that it is critical that we hire and promote people not only because of their technical abilities, but for their values, leadership capability and cultural fit.



## Indicator 5: Recruitment & Promotion (continued)

Measure	Current Result	Data Source
Increase in staff agreement that senior leaders actively support diversity and inclusion in the workplace.	Average: 73% Female: 70% Male: 88%	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds.	76% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees from different age groups.	74% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders.	78% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.	58% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTQIA+.	64% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees with disability.	67% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that age is not a barrier to success in our organisation.	68% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in our organisation.	62% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that their cultural background is not a barrier to success in our organisation.	75% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that disability is not a barrier to success in our organisation.	67% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that gender is not a barrier to success in our organisation.	74% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in our organisation.	75% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that our organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions based on merit.	63% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that they feel they have an equal chance at promotion in our organisation.	54% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there are adequate opportunities for them to develop skills and experience in our organisation.	71% agree	People Matter Survey

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe			
			21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Our recruitment and promotion processes are inclusive and consciously seek to address biases.	Apply an intersectional gender lens to recruitment and promotion processes to identify improvements.	P&C Coordinator				
	Compile data about acting arrangements and secondments by gender.	Payroll Coordinator				
	Analyse acting arrangements and secondment data to determine if there are any biases and address gaps.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				

### The case for flexible leave and work options for our people

Flexible work arrangements and leave entitlements (such as parental or cultural leave), help people of all genders balance paid work with other responsibilities and priorities in their lives. Women are more likely to work flexibly, particularly on a part time basis, and often take up parental leave at higher rates than men. In addition, women on average do nearly twice as much unpaid work as men<sup>1</sup>. Studies suggest that normalising flexible work is a key factor in improving women's career progression and increasing the representation of women in leadership<sup>2</sup>. Normalising and encouraging men taking up flexible work and leave arrangements is an important way to reduce the burden of unpaid caring work on women and to promoting positive outcomes for men.

By supporting our employees to take flexible work and leave options we can improve our culture, attract a diverse and competitive range of candidates and ensure we are supporting our people to live well balanced lives.

The workforce data indicates that female staff at Council are far more likely to use caring and parental leave than male staff (80 per cent of parental leave takers are female and 71 per cent of women have taken carers' leave). Three people exited the organisation during parental leave, all of whom were women. The disproportionate burden of unpaid care carried by women imposes major economic costs nationally. From 2009-2010, the value of the unpaid care sector (\$650 billion) was nearly six times larger than the paid care sector (\$112.4 billion)<sup>3</sup>. 46% of Bayside's staff are on formal flexible work arrangements,

including 45% of women and 49% of men. Staff consultation identified that support for flexible work arrangements was seen to be critical to ensuring people can balance their family and working life, for example:

- 86 per cent of men agreed with the statement 'flexible work is not a barrier to success at my organisation,' compared to 68 per cent of women, indicating that women are more likely to believe that utilising flexible working arrangements acts as a barrier to success, despite also being more likely to use flexible work.
- 90 per cent of staff agreed that Council would support them if they needed to take family violence leave
- 83 per cent agreed that they were confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration
- 75 per cent of staff felt that Council is supportive of flexible work arrangements
- 85 per cent of staff felt that Council is supportive of family and caring responsibilities.

By continuing to support our staff to use flexible work arrangements, we can ensure all people feel supported to balance work with their lives outside of Bayside. For example, by encouraging men to work flexibly and take carers' leave, we can contribute to promoting a greater gender balance in unpaid work. And, by enabling people in more senior roles to work flexibly, we can attract and support more women to leadership positions.

1 Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021)

2 Diversity Council Australia (2012). Men get flexible! Mainstreaming flexible work in Australian business. DCA: Sydney.

3 Victorian Government (2021). Safe and Strong Strategy. Available at: <https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality>



## Indicator 6: Leave & Flexibility (continued)

Measure	Current Result	Data Source
Increase in number of staff utilising flexible work.	46% of employees use flexible work arrangements	Workforce Data
Increased number of men taking caring and parental leave.	29% of carers leave was accessed by men. 3 weeks of paid parental leave were taken by men on average (compared to 19.09 weeks taken by women). 0 weeks of unpaid parental leave were taken by men (compared to 54.14 taken by women).	Workforce Data
Increase in staff agreement that Council would support them to take family violence leave.	85% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success in our organisation.	50% agree 20% strongly agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that they are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration.	41% agree 42% strongly agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that our organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender.	52% agree 35% strongly agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there is a positive culture within our organisation in relation to employees who have caring responsibilities.	54% agree 23% strongly agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that there is a positive culture within our organisation in relation to employees who have flexible work arrangements.	53% agree 22% strongly agree	People Matter Survey

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe			
			21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
All people feel supported to work flexibly regardless of their gender or position.	Promote flexible work and leave options in onboarding.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
	Promote flexible work and leave options in a communications campaign, targeting male employees and areas with low uptake.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
Council's policies and industrial instruments promote the advancement of gender equality.	Explore including clauses in Enterprise Agreement negotiations to promote gender equality.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
	Promote the leave and support available for those experiencing family violence.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				
	Review new and up for review internal Council policies with a gender lens.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				

## Indicator 7: Workforce Segregation

### The case for addressing workforce segregation

The Australian workforce is highly segregated by industry and occupation and has been for the last 20 years<sup>1</sup>. The implications of workforce segregation are vast and can impact wages, representation in leadership and the ways we value different professions societally. For example, the average remuneration for female-dominated organisations has been found to be lower than male-dominated organisations<sup>2</sup>. Men are also more likely to hold a majority of leadership roles across all industries (including female dominated industries)<sup>3</sup>. Workforce segregation is largely informed by gender stereotypes that exist within our society such as women being better suited to caring roles such as nursing or aged care, while men are better at work involving physical labour such as construction. Other contributing factors include women commonly being responsible for a majority of unpaid domestic and caring responsibilities in the home, meaning that they require a greater level of flexibility in their work to balance these demands, thus impacting on their career opportunities<sup>4</sup>.

At Council, women are overrepresented in the community and personal services roles (88 per cent), and clerical and administrative occupations (71 per cent), while men represent the majority of technicians and trade workers (75 per cent). As discussed in the Gender Pay Gap section, this is a key contributing factor to the 17.7 per cent gender pay gap at Council.

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- 1 Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2019) Gender segregation in Australia's workforce. Available at: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/gender-segregation-in-australias-workforce>
- 2 Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2019)
- 3 Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2019)
- 4 National Foundation for Australia Women (2017) Gender Segregation in the workplace and its impact on women's equality. Available at: [https://www.afp.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance\\_and\\_Public\\_Administration/Gendersegregation](https://www.afp.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/Gendersegregation)



## Indicator 7: Workforce Segregation (continued)

Measure	Current Result	Data Source
Workforce data indicates that there is a greater balance in gender across traditionally segregated work areas and job types.	<p>Carers &amp; Aides: 87% Female, 13% Male</p> <p>General Clerical Workers: 84% Female, 16% Male</p> <p>Other clerical and administrative workers: 64% Female, 36% male</p> <p>Business, Human Resources and Marketing Professionals: 78% Female, 22% Male</p> <p>Health professionals: 90% Female, 10% Male</p> <p>Other Labourers: 53% Male, 47% Female</p> <p>Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals: 55% Male, 45% Female</p> <p>ICT Professionals: 59% Male, 41% Female</p> <p>Engineering ICT and Science Technicians: 82% Male, 18% Female</p> <p>Clerical and Office Support Workers: 60% Male, 40% Female.</p>	Workforce Data
Increase in staff agreement that work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender in our organisation	87% agree	People Matter Survey
Increase in staff agreement that our organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language.	56% agree 28% strongly agree	People Matter Survey

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe			
			21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Women, men and gender diverse people are represented and able to access roles that are not stereotypically considered to correspond with their gender.	Identify opportunities to attract and engage women and gender diverse employees to traditionally male dominated work areas, and men and gender diverse employees to typically female dominated work areas.	P&C Business Partnering Coordinator				

## 8. Resourcing & Implementation

### Strategic Resourcing Plan

Significant consideration has been applied in determining how Council will appropriately assign resources, including staff and budget, to implement the strategies and actions of the GEAP.

It is anticipated that the staff identified as responsible for each action will be required to dedicate the following amount of hours, at a minimum, for successful delivery of the strategy.

Stakeholder	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
Governance	24	9	95	6	<b>134</b>
Payroll	34	24	24	16	<b>98</b>
People and Capability	159	154	142	297	<b>752</b>
Strategy and Improvement	224.5	17.5	79.5	9.5	<b>331</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>441.5</b>	<b>204.5</b>	<b>340.5</b>	<b>328.5</b>	<b>1315</b>

In addition to the above commitments, the DEI Lead will provide oversight and support to all GEAP actions. The consultation required and discussions with all stakeholders, and associated time commitments, has been considered below.

Stakeholder	Hours
DEI Advisor	315
Coordinator Strategy & Improvement	182
Communications	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>588</b>

Furthermore, it is recognised that the training and consultation that all staff will be required to participate in to meaningfully effect the actions is a significant time commitment.

Stakeholder	Hours
Training	6220
Consultation & Engagement	2916
Gender Equality Working Groups	424
<b>Total</b>	<b>9560</b>

The allocation of dedicated resources, including identifying a specific budget for the implementation of actions designed to create structural and cultural change, will be an important means of driving progress within Council. The main sources of expenditure are estimated to be training and development, consultancy fees, council election promotion and marketing materials.

### GEAP Implementation Working Group

A cross functional GEAP implementation working group will be formed including those identified as 'responsible' for the delivery of actions (see the Action Plan). This group will meet quarterly and be supported by the attendance of staff representative groups. This group will be co-chaired by the Executive Manager People & Strategy and Director of Corporate Services and supported by the DEI lead. The group includes:

- Manager Governance
- Payroll Coordinator
- P&C Business Partnering Coordinator
- Business Partners (BPs)
- Internal Comms Officer
- People and Capability Coordinator (P&C Coordinator)
- People and Capability Support Officer (P&C Support Officer)
- Learning & Growth Specialist
- Rotating member of the Pride Group (optional attendance)
- As required, 'partners' to the delivery of specific actions may be invited to attend by the GEAP Working Group members to assist in collaboration

### Champions and partners

Council's champions and partners will play a critical role in supporting the implementation of the strategies and measures and ensuring the overall success of the GEAP by demonstrating leadership and promoting gender equality initiatives.

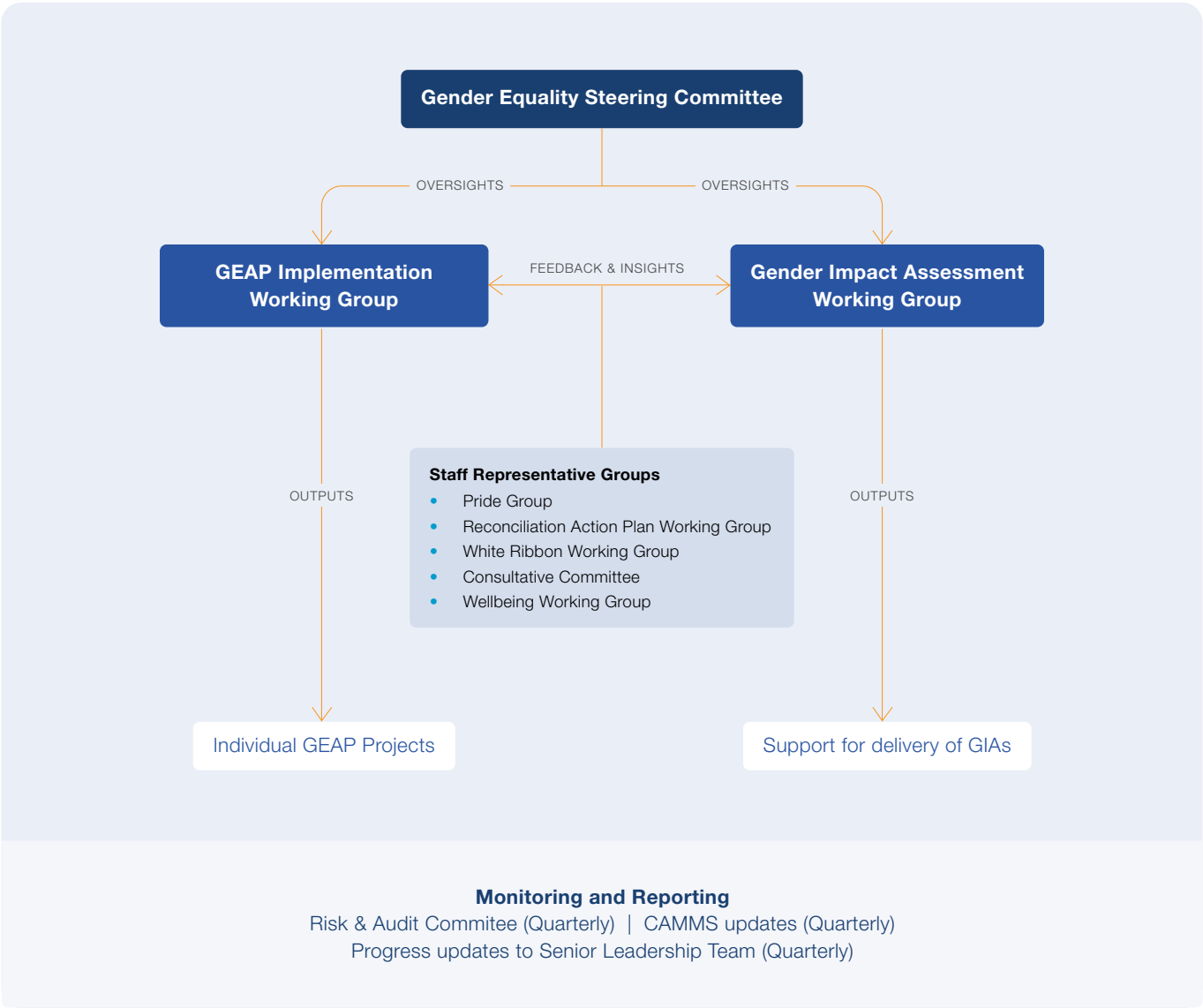
- Chief Executive Officer
- Executive Manager People and Strategy
- Director Environment, Recreation and Infrastructure
- Director Community and Customer Experience
- Director Corporate Services
- Director City Planning and Amenity
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead, People and Strategy
- Coordinator Strategy and Improvement, People and Strategy
- Coordinator People and Capability, People and Strategy
- Business Partners, People and Strategy
- Bayside Pride Group
- Reconciliation Action Plan Officer
- Inclusion Officer Open Space, Recreation and Wellbeing
- Gender Equality Working Group
- Learning and Growth Specialist, People and Strategy
- White Ribbon Working Group
- People and Capability Support Officers
- Senior Leadership Team / People Leaders
- Enterprise Agreement / IR Lead
- Payroll Coordinator
- Manager Governance
- Internal Comms Officer
- Manager Communications, Engagement and Customer Experience
- Manager Information and Technology
- Team Leader Support Desk, Information Technology



## 9. Governance Structure

The governance structure will be reviewed annually to ensure it is meeting the needs of our organisation and effectively supporting compliance with the Act.

The following diagram describes the relationships between each of our committees and working groups, supported by our monitoring and reporting systems underneath. A description of each group and its function can be found in the tables below.



### Gender Equality Steering Committee

<b>Purpose</b>	To sponsor change, manage risks and ensure the strategic alignment of gender equality work with other initiatives across the organisation.
<b>Chair</b>	The Gender Equality Steering Committee will provide oversight and guidance to the GEAP Implementation Working Group and the Gender Impact Assessment Working Group.
<b>Members</b>	CEO
<b>Support</b>	Executive Team, Manager Comms & Engagement

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## GEAP Implementation Working Group

<b>Purpose</b>	To provide updates on GEAP actions, forward plan integration opportunities between actions and other initiatives and identify and mitigate risks.
<b>Co-Chairs</b>	Executive Manager People & Strategy, Director Corporate Services
<b>Members</b>	GEAP Action Owners, Staff from Representative Groups as required
<b>Support</b>	Coordinator Strategy & Improvement, DEI Advisor
<b>Frequency</b>	Quarterly meetings
<b>Outputs</b>	Individual GEAP Projects

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## Gender Impact Assessment Implementation Working Group

<b>Purpose</b>	To oversee program of works and ensure administration of GIAs, sharing of insights and building of capability.
<b>Rotating Chairs</b>	Director ERI, Director CCE, Director CPA
<b>Members</b>	Sponsors and Project Managers of GIAs per the program of works.
<b>Support</b>	Coordinator Strategy & Improvement, DEI Advisor
<b>Frequency</b>	Quarterly meetings
<b>Outputs</b>	Individual GEAP Projects

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## Staff Representative Groups

Groups	Purpose
<b>Pride Group</b>	To take a proactive approach to inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community through strategy, planning, advice and representation.
<b>White Ribbon Working Group</b>	To support the prevention of violence against women.
<b>Consultative Committee</b>	To discuss, monitor and implement issues in relation to the Enterprise Agreement.
<b>Occupational Health and Safety Committee</b>	To provide opportunities to meet with staff representatives to discuss occupational health, safety and wellbeing matters.
<b>Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group</b>	To support the implementation of Council's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

**Note:** Staff from all divisions will be encouraged to participate in the gender equality work via these groups.

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## Monitoring and Reporting

Function	Purpose	Frequency
<b>CAMMS updates</b>	To ensure accountability and facilitate project management and reporting a CAMMS report will be compiled quarterly and taken to the Risk and Audit Committee and Senior Leadership Team as an update.	Quarterly
<b>Risk and Audit Committee</b>	To provide updates regarding progress with the GEAP and GIAs and ensure accountability and risk management relating to actions and delivery.	Quarterly
<b>Senior Leadership Team</b>	To engage senior leaders in promoting gender equality, ensure they are across the latest information and are able to drive organisational change.	Quarterly

## 10. Measuring and reporting

### Strategic Resourcing Plan

The Act requires that Council reports on its progress against the GEAP every two years following submission to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner. This ensures Council is making demonstrated progress towards workplace gender equality and is effectively promoting gender equality in policies, programs and services. It also requires that Council completes a Workplace Gender Audit and new GEAP every four years. The following key dates apply:

<b>31 October 2023</b>	Submit our first progress report to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner by this date. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• what policies, programs and services were subject to a <a href="#">gender impact assessment</a></li><li>• what actions you took as a result of the gender impact assessment</li><li>• your progress in relation to the measures and strategies set out in your <a href="#">GEAP</a></li><li>• your progress in relation to the <a href="#">workplace gender equality indicators</a></li></ul>
<b>30 June 2025</b>	Capture data for workplace gender audit to assess the 'state and nature of gender inequality' at Council.
<b>31 October 2025</b>	Submit our second GEAP to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner. Workplace gender audit data must also be submitted by this date.
<b>31 October 2027</b>	Submit our second progress report to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner by this date.

Making reasonable and material change towards gender equality at Council means achieving marked improvement across the 7 Indicators as demonstrated in our surveys and Workplace Gender Audit data. Council commits to incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion questions in our regular Employee Engagement Surveys to conduct pulse checks across our organisation in addition to the biennial People Matter Survey (or equivalent).

Council will use its corporate planning and reporting system to monitor progress against actions, with the DEI Advisor administering an annual progress review with the GEAP Working Group. The outcomes of this report will be communicated to staff, advisory committees and groups as detailed in our governance structure.

## 11. Safety

If the content of this report has raised any issues or concerns for you, please reach out to your Manager or a trusted colleague or friend. Alternatively there are a number of external supports available such as:

- Acacia's Employee Assistance Program
- Phone: 1300 364 273
- SMS: 0401 337 711
- Email: [info@acaciaconnection.com](mailto:info@acaciaconnection.com)
- [Employee Portal](#) – username: BaysideCC and password: Acacia
- 1800 RESPECT (call 1800 737 732)
- LIFELINE (call 13 11 14)
- or contact any Centre for Sexual Assault via [www.casa.org.au](http://www.casa.org.au)

# Part C

## 1. Appendices

### Appendix 1: 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 for Victoria.
- Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- 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 on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
- Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

### Appendix 2: Pay Equity Principles

The Commission recommends considering the following gender pay equity principles (which were developed by the Equal Workplaces Advisory Council) when developing the strategies and measures in your GEAP:

- Establishing equal pay for work of equal or comparable value: Equal or comparable value refers to work valued as equal in terms of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. This includes work of different types.
- Freedom from bias and discrimination: Employment and pay practices are free from the effects of unconscious bias and assumptions based on gender.

- Transparency and accessibility: Employment and pay practices, pay rates and systems are transparent. Information is readily accessible and understandable.
- Relationship between paid and unpaid work: Employment and pay practices recognise and account for different patterns of labour force participation by workers who undertake unpaid and/ or caring work.
- Sustainability: Interventions and solutions are collectively developed and agreed, sustainable and enduring.
- Participation and engagement: Workers, unions and employers work collaboratively to achieve mutually agreed outcomes.

### Appendix 3: Objectives of the Act

- promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women
- support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services in workplaces and communities
- recognise that 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
- redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence, and accommodate persons of different genders by way of structural change
- enhance economic and social participation by persons of different genders
- further promote the right to equality set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- practices are free from the effects of unconscious bias and assumptions based on gender



## Appendix 4: The Workplace Gender Equality Indicators

The Gender Equality Act 2020 sets out seven workplace gender equality indicators. They represent the key areas where workplace gender inequality persists – and where progress towards gender equality must be demonstrated.

Defined entities must collect and report data against these indicators in their workplace gender audit. Defined entities are required to make reasonable and material progress in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators. These include:

### Gender Composition At All Levels Of The Workforce

Women are often underrepresented in leadership roles, and overrepresented in lower level roles. This contributes to the gender pay gap and means that organisations may be missing out on the expertise and skills of women at senior levels.

By collecting and reporting data on gender composition at all levels, organisations can see where they could benefit from greater gender diversity and take action to support women into senior roles.

### Gender Composition Of Governing Bodies

Boards, councils, committees of management and other governing bodies make important decisions about finances and strategy. It's important that governing bodies have diverse voices at the table.

The Victorian Government has made a commitment that at least 50 per cent of all new appointments to courts and paid government boards will be women.

Consistently collecting and reporting this data will help ensure more gender-balanced boardrooms.

### Gender Pay Equity

The gender pay gap is persistent in Victoria and as at November 2019 stands at 9.6 per cent. In the Victorian public sector it is 10 per cent.

The gender pay gap is driven by several factors, including the unequal distribution of unpaid care work, higher rates of pay in male-dominated industries, and gender discrimination.

By collecting and reporting pay data, organisations can see where pay gaps are largest and identify the underlying causes.

### Workplace Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment in the workplace is common in Australia, including Victoria. It causes financial, psychological, and physical harm to victim survivors. It also has a significant economic cost to organisations and the community.

Often, victim survivors don't make a formal report of their experience of sexual harassment. Barriers to reporting include fear of reprisals or other negative consequences, lack of confidence in the reporting system, and a limited understanding of what sexual harassment is.

By consistently collecting and reporting data on workplace sexual harassment, organisations will be more transparent and accountable to employees and the community. This will build confidence to report experiences of sexual harassment.

### Recruitment and Promotion

Gender bias and gender stereotypes can influence recruitment, promotion and career progression practices. This means that women may not have access to the same career opportunities as men. Other forms of disadvantage and discrimination can also have an impact, limiting career opportunities for women from different backgrounds, such as women with disability or older women.

Data on recruitment and promotion outcomes can show where women's careers are stalling and help identify strategies to create more equal opportunities.

### Leave and Flexibility

Flexible working arrangements and leave entitlements including parental leave help Victorians of all genders balance paid work with other responsibilities. But structural and cultural factors mean women are far more likely than men to work flexibly, especially by working part time, and taking longer parental leave. On average women do nearly twice as much unpaid work as men.

It's important that defined entities collect clear data on who is accessing flexible work so they can see what extra support might be needed. By encouraging more men to work flexibly and take leave to care for children or others, organisations can contribute to a more equal gender balance in unpaid work.

### Family violence leave

Family violence causes significant trauma to a victim survivor, which can affect their ability to work. Victim survivors may worry about consequences if they try to remove themselves from the violent situation. This may include the perpetrator attending the workplace, or missing work to attend to housing and legal matters.

Family violence leave supports victim survivors to manage the impacts of their experience. It also promotes an organisational culture that does not accept family violence.

### Gendered Work Segregation

Women make up a higher proportion of certain occupations and industries, while men are more represented in others. This gendered segregation is driven by gendered norms and stereotypes about what work is appropriate for men and women, as well as structural factors including access to flexible working arrangements. Gendered workforce segregation reinforces gender inequality and widens the pay gap, as the average pay is lower in industries and occupations dominated by women.

Organisations can use data on their workforce composition to see which roles and areas have more women or more men, and consider how to achieve better gender diversity.

## 2. Resources

Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021) Gender Equality Act 2020. Available at: <https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/about-gender-equality-act-2020>

Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021) Workplace Gender Equality Indicators. Available at: <https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/workplace-gender-equality-indicators>

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Safe Work Australia (2021) Preventing workplace sexual harassment: National guidance material. Available at: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-01/Guide%20for%20preventing%20workplace%20sexual%20harassment%20-%20for%20publishing.pdf>

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Victorian State Government (2021). Safe and Strong Strategy. Available at: <https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality>

Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2019) Gender segregation in Australia's workforce. Available at: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/gender-segregation-in-australias-workforce>

Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2020) This is why you should care about the gender pay gap. Available at: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/this-is-why-you-should-care-about-the-gender-pay-gap>

Zoe Belle Gender Collective (2021) Identities and Experiences. Available at: <https://zbgc.org.au/resources/zbgc-resources/identities-and-experiences/>

### 3. Key terms and definitions

#### Gender

Refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. A person's gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex.<sup>1</sup>

#### Gender Affirmation

Describes the process of affirming one's gender identity to match one's internal sense of self. There are many different ways trans and gender diverse people may affirm their gender identity and each are equally valid as the other. Some people also refer to these processes as 'transitioning'.<sup>2</sup>

#### Gender Equality

Is defined as the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

#### Gender Equity

Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.

#### Gender stereotypes

Ideas about how people should be and act according to the gender they are assigned or identify with. We internalise and learn these 'rules' early in life. This sets up a life-cycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping.

#### Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience due to other characteristics, such as:

- race
- Aboriginality
- religion
- ethnicity
- disability
- age
- sexual orientation
- gender identity<sup>3</sup>

#### Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment in the workplace may take various forms and can be directed at, and perpetrated by, all people including male, female, transgender and gender diverse people. It may be physical, spoken or written and may include, but is not limited to:

- unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature;
- comments or questions of a sexual nature about a person's private life or their appearance;
- sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring or offensive gestures;
- brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging;
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes;
- displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects;
- repeated requests to go out;
- unwanted displays or declarations of affection;
- requests for sex;
- sexually explicit emails, text messages or posts on social networking sites;
- sexual assault, indecent exposure, physical assault and stalking (which are also criminal offences); and
- actions or comments of a sexual nature in a person's presence (even if not directed at that person).

#### Trans and gender diverse

A broad term referring to any individuals who do not exclusively identify with their gender assigned at birth. Sometimes shortened to 'trans'. Trans and gender diverse people who are assigned female at birth might identify with the terms trans man, man, trans masculine, trans masc, non-binary etc. Trans and gender diverse people who are assigned male at birth might identify with the terms trans woman, woman, trans feminine, trans femme, non-binary etc.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Victorian State Government, Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Zoe Belle Gender Collective (2021) Identities and Experiences. Available at: <https://zbgc.org.au/resources/zbgc-resources/identities-and-experiences/>

<sup>3</sup> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (2021)

<sup>4</sup> Zoe Belle Gender Collective (2021)