

Gender equality

Action Plan 2022-25



**Macedon
Ranges**
Shire Council

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgment of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this country and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

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Message from the CEO

Thank you to all our staff members of Macedon Ranges Shire Council for your invaluable input that has led to the culmination of the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2022-2025.

The strategies listed in the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 are based on consultations and collaborations with staff members across our whole organisation.

These strategies are framed around our three main priority areas of:

1. Leadership in the promotion of diversity and inclusion and offering equal opportunities for all genders
2. A gender-balanced workforce that supports our staff members through our flexible work options
3. Zero tolerance towards bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment of our staff members

During the COVID-19 crisis, we have supported each other throughout the challenging times and have adapted swiftly with changes to the traditional working arrangements and some of the social issues that have impacted the lives of our staff members. We will continue to work with our staff and the local community to prevent violence against women and advance gender equality through:

- A Prevention of Violence Statement of Commitment endorsed by Council;
- Signatory to the Loddon Mallee Regional Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence Against Women with an ongoing role on the Stewardship Group;

- A Family Violence clause included in our Enterprise Agreement;
- Supporting Macedon Ranges Family Violence Network initiatives including HERstory leadership forum (promoting girls' leadership), primary school career expo (challenging gender stereotypes) and Beyond the Superhero Forum (healthier masculinities in schools);
- Annual Prevention of Violence Against Women in Emergencies Action Plan;
- 16 Days of Activism and other social media campaigns e.g. Respect Women: Call it Out;
- Rural Challenge Gender Equality Leadership Program (with sporting clubs and CFA brigades).

In addition, Gender Equality has been incorporated into our Council Plan, Disability Action Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Positive Ageing Plan, Sports and Active Recreation Strategy, Youth Strategy and Reconciliation Action Plan.

The implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 will assist with making the Macedon Ranges Shire Council a workplace of choice that is a leader in gender and intersectional equality.



Bernie O'Sullivan

Chief Executive Officer

Safe and Strong

The Royal Commission into Family Violence revealed that 75 per cent of family violence is perpetrated by men against women.

The Gender Equality Act 2020 and the Gender Equality Action Plan are a means of addressing longstanding gender inequalities within the Victorian community. At the heart of gendered violence is gender inequality. Violence towards women starts with negative attitudes. The Gender Equality Act recognises that gender inequality is cultural and is not confined to the home but also occurs in the media, schools, sport and workplaces.

Gender inequality causes personal, family, social and economic harms and hardship for the entire community. Entire communities are negatively impacted with a whole of community response required.

Boys and men experience negative impacts of gender inequality through gender-based attitudes, stereotypes and expectations. They are also subject to domestic violence and suffer from gender inequality. These negative impacts include poor mental health and fewer opportunities for flexible work arrangements to support caring roles.

The Victorian Government recognises that these harms escalate when gender inequality intersects with other forms of disadvantage and inequality. These are referred to as intersectional factors and

include: gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, aboriginality, ethnicity, socio-economic status and rurality.

There is no standardised approach for all organisations to adopt to address gender and intersectional inequality; local community responses are required.

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 aims to address barriers that act as disincentives to the full participation of women in the workforce¹.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence and Our Watch have identified four gender-based drivers of family violence that must be addressed to prevent violence against women and girls:

1. Rigid gender roles and identities
2. Condoning of violence against women
3. Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence
4. Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence concluded:

“There is a need to implement primary prevention strategies that are designed to dismantle harmful attitudes towards women, promote gender equality and encourage respectful relationships.”²

The Gender Equality Action Plan is the enactment of this recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and links to the Victorian government Family Violence Action Plan.

1. Victorian government (2016). *Safe and Strong*. Melbourne: Department of Premier and Cabinet. Retrieved from <https://engage.vic.gov.au/gender-equality>

2. Citations in Victorian government (2016). *Safe and Strong*. Melbourne: Department of Premier and Cabinet. Retrieved from <https://engage.vic.gov.au/gender-equality>

Legislative context

The development of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 was guided by the **Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020**. In accordance with the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 [(6):1-10]:

- (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; (and)
- (10) Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.



Workplace gender equality indicators

The Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 identifies seven workplace gender equality indicators of:

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

Intersectional characteristics

The Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 recognises that for many Victorians, gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience due to other intersectional characteristics such as:

- » Race
- » Aboriginality
- » Religion
- » Ethnicity
- » Disability
- » Age
- » Sexual orientation
- » Gender identity

Implementation, Measuring Progress and Reporting

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 includes priorities, actions, targets, responsibility for implementation and a timeline.

The next step is to develop strategies and measures to implement the GEAP in a timely manner.

In accordance with 19(3)(b) of the Gender Equality Act 2020, progress reporting on implementation strategies and measures is required bi-annually after 2021.

Recommended:

- » Track progress on each of the GEAP measures annually
- » Outline how progress on the GEAP will be reported internally, to whom, and how frequently
- » Start an achievement register to assist with progress reporting
- » Provide an overview of an implementation plan which includes communication with your employees and employee representatives³

3. Victorian State Government, Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 Guidance for Defined Entities. Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector.



Macedon Ranges Shire Council Core values

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 is consistent with core values of **respect, honesty, accountability, working together and innovation** that underpin the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Plan 2021-2031 vision and strategic objectives.

Strategic objectives

1. Connecting communities

Council will continue to maintain all the roads, paths, buildings and open spaces in our built environment in a financially, environmentally and socially sustainable way;

2. Healthy environment, healthy people

To promote a healthy environment, healthy people, Council aims to support mental health, prevent violence against women, and improve healthy lifestyles, social connection and inclusion, community safety, and arts and culture;

3. Business and tourism

Council will provide an economic environment that promotes business diversity, tourism, housing, transport, information technology and communications, and employment opportunities;

4. Deliver strong and reliable government

Council will provide good governance, with a clear vision and culture, transparency, respect, consistency, accountability and responsiveness.

Theme 1:
Connecting
communities

Theme 4:
Delivering
strong and
reliable
government

With our unique regional identity, Macedon Ranges Shire embodies a caring, resilient approach to community through our robust local economy, protection of the natural environment and a collaborative commitment to inclusivity for all.



Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures to support gender equality, staff wellbeing and to eliminate violence include:

- » Equal Opportunity
- » Occupational Health and Safety
- » Occupational Violence and Aggression
- » Code of Conduct; Recruitment and Selection
- » Conflict of Interest and Sexual Harassment

GEAP Methodology

Stage 1

Stage 1 of the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) development involved the analysis of:

Strategic documents

Macedon Ranges Shire Council's action plans, strategies, frameworks, policies, People Matter Survey and gender audit data. These documents were mapped to MRSC's strategic objectives and priorities. The data analysis process took place from the 22nd of November 2021 to the 8th of December 2021.

Audit data

The gender audit data comprised of headcount, band (classification), level of appointment, employment basis, gender (Female, Male or Gender-diverse), base salary, total package, age, reporting level, hire date, contract end date, workforce exit, leave details, leave request and leave status. However, data was not available on intersectional characteristics such as LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, race, ethnicity, and culture, disability and religion.

People Matter Survey data

The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector developed The People Matter Survey for local government to assist local councils to gain an increased understanding of gender equality in their workplace. In order to protect staff privacy and anonymity, all survey responses provided to organisations were de-identified. Identifying data such as date of birth and employee identification were not collected. Free text comments were not linked to any other survey information.

Findings

Four key themes were identified in the audit data analysis:

1. Leave and Workplace Flexibility

Leave types recorded on the system indicate that staff were applying for carers leave. Even though there is support available for staff members to apply for family violence leave, uptake of this leave was not evident. This is possibly due to fear of discrimination and staff highlighted the need for a balance between privacy, respect, awareness and sensitivity as it is very confronting for staff members to disclose such personal issues.

Staff members welcomed the option of flexible work arrangements and indicated the need for work-life balance.

2. Recruitment and Promotion

Limited opportunities were evident for career advancement through secondments and training development for staff members as this data was not recorded. Staff members identified a need to improve diversity for senior positions.

3. Inclusion and Diversity

Intersectional characteristics data was limited to available data collected and recorded. A need to employ people from different ethnic backgrounds, people with disability, Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, people from disadvantaged background and gender-diverse people was identified.

4. Workplace Behaviours

There were mixed reviews from staff members regarding workplace behaviours. Some staff indicated their teams were respectful and inclusive, whereas, on the other hand, others expressed having experienced bullying and racial discrimination.

Stage 2

Focus Groups

Stage two of the GEAP development was focus groups with staff members employed by Macedon Ranges Shire Council. Staff consultation is a mandated requirement of the Victorian Government in the preparation of the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).

Focus group consultations with the workforce provided greater insights and depth of understanding to inform further development of the targets, actions and implementation planning identified in Stage 1 of the drafting of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025.

All Macedon Ranges Shire Council staff were invited to participate in focus groups hosted on the Federation University TEAMS network to protect the privacy of participants. Focus groups were conducted over three days from the 17th to the 19th of January 2022 with 12 one-hour sessions in total. The total number of focus groups participants was 36. Saturation was reached in the final focus group session with no new information arising in the focus group discussion. There was an option to extend the focus groups beyond 12 sessions if saturation was not reached. Federation University Human Research Ethics approval was obtained to protect the privacy and confidentiality of staff members participating in the focus groups with no identifying participant information collected (Ref: A21-171).

Focus group participants represented workplace areas that were male dominated, female dominated and gender-balanced.

The focus group planning was guided by four main themes identified from the Stage 1 audit data analysis that required further depth of knowledge and understanding in relation to gender and intersectional factors in the workplace:

- » **Leave and workplace flexibility**
- » **Recruitment and promotion**
- » **Inclusion and diversity**
- » **Workplace behaviours**

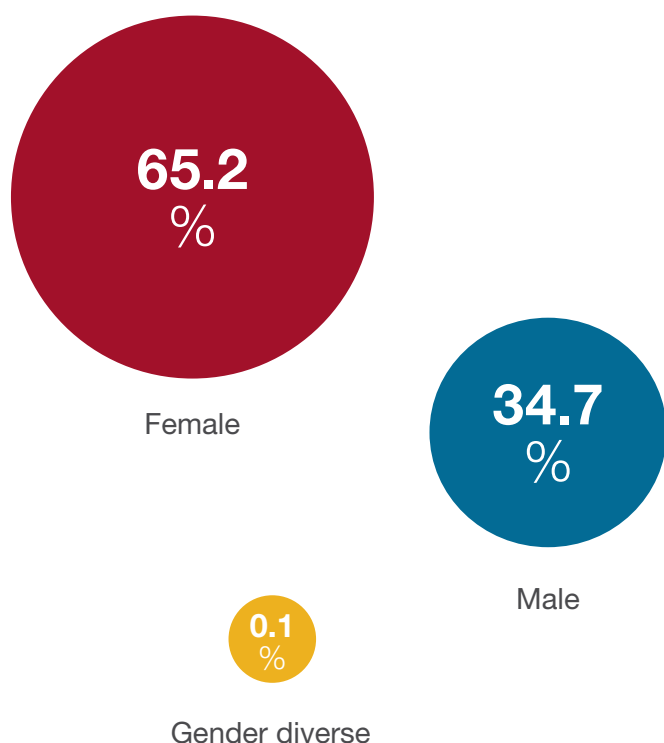
Focus group discussions were guided by the following questions related to each theme:

1. What more can you tell us about **leave and workplace flexibility** in relation to gender equality and intersectional factors? What should be in the GEAP?
2. What more can you tell us about **recruitment and promotion** in relation to gender equality and intersectional factors? What should be in the GEAP?
3. What more can you tell us about **inclusion and diversity** in relation to gender equality and intersectional factors? What should be in the GEAP?
4. What more can you tell us about **workplace behaviours** in relation to gender equality and intersectional factors? What should be in the GEAP?



2021 Workplace Gender Audit

Gender breakdown of Workforce

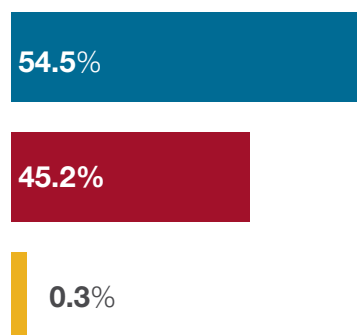


Several staff identified as 'gender diverse' in the gender equality staff survey, so the workplace gender data may not accurately reflect the gender identity of all staff.

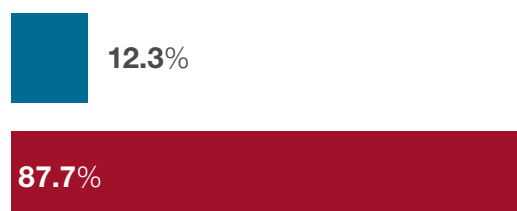
Data Source: Macedon Ranges Shire Council, workplace gender data 30 June 2021.

Gender breakdown by Work type

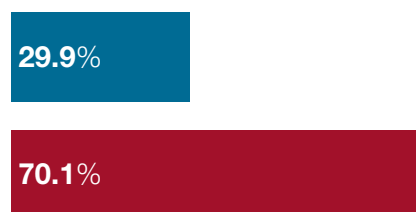
Full time



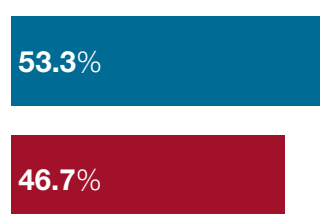
Part time



Casual



Leadership





Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025

Priority 1: Macedon Ranges Shire Council is a leader in the promotion of diversity and inclusion and equal opportunities for people of all genders and intersectional characteristics

Indicator	Action	Target	Who	When
Recruitment and promotion	Promote diversity and inclusion	Employ a Gender Equality Officer to implement the GEAP and to oversee the development of data collection and reporting systems and software requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing ELT 	2024
		Target advertising of employment opportunities to attract diverse applicants in areas that do not currently have a gender-balance or intersectional diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing Direct Manager 	2022 / Ongoing
		Provide fractional and job-sharing recruitment opportunities for senior management positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELT People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
		Ensure interview panels include diverse membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Manager 	Ongoing
		Recruit based on merit and achievement relevant to opportunity; employ people from diverse gender and intersectional backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Manager People and Wellbeing 	Ongoing
		Respect privacy of staff who prefer not to disclose their gender identity or intersectional characteristics; promote disclosure as optional on personnel forms and email signatures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
		Treat people of all genders and intersectional characteristics equally for recruitment, workplace opportunities and remuneration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing Direct Manager 	2022 / Ongoing
	Equal employment opportunities	Improve gender diversity for senior positions by allowing for flexible working arrangements and fractional and shared appointments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELT Direct Manager People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing

Indicator	Action	Target	Who	When
	Learning and development	Include gender equality, intersectionality and cultural safety in induction programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2023
		Provide suitable training opportunities, supervision and support for all staff regardless of fraction of employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing Direct Manager 	2022 / Ongoing
		Provide opportunities for staff members who are on long-term leave to remain connected and up to date with training and other opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Manager People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
Governance	Organisational integrity	Uphold and actively promote MRSC's core values of respect, honesty, accountability, working together and innovation with consistent messaging in all Council policy and operational procedures, including employees' rights and entitlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All leaders Document Authors Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee People and Wellbeing 	2022 – 2025
		Promote staff sense of value and recognition through benefits and rewards programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing All Leaders 	2023-2025
		Ensure timely processes for decision-making and communication regarding contract renewal or extension with external contract staff members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing Direct Manager 	2022
	All leaders	Consult widely with staff on policy review and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy “owners” Direct Manager Staff Consultative Committee OHS Committee 	2022
		Provide regular and specific feedback for all staff in performance appraisals and reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Manager 	2023 / 2025

Indicator	Action	Target	Who	When
	Senior leadership	Establish a Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (GEDI).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELT • SLT 	2022
		Promote gender equality and diversity, cultural safety and transparency through modelling and key messaging to staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Leaders • GEDI Committee • Communications and Engagement 	2022
	Promote secondment opportunities	Provide short-term projects and opportunities that align with staff members' interests, knowledge, skills and goals (EOIs & HDs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Manager • People and Wellbeing 	2022
		Assist all staff to develop and implement a plan to learn new knowledge and skills for career advancement via the Performance and Development Process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Manager • People and Wellbeing 	2023
	Increase age diversity	Attract younger staff through collaborating with educational institutions by offering graduate programs, traineeships, placements and work experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Wellbeing • All leaders 	2024
		Reduce time fraction for management roles to attract greater gender and age diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELT • Direct Manager • People and Wellbeing 	2022
Gender composition of governing bodies	Use appropriate gender and intersectional language and images	Ensure language and images in all MRSC's internal and external documents and communications are diverse and follow LGBTIQ+ inclusive language and images.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and Engagement • Document authors 	2023
Gendered work segregation	Address gender imbalance in certain parts of the workforce	Proactively seek to employ people of diverse genders and intersectional characteristics; work with local employment networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All leaders • People and Wellbeing 	2023
		Introduce initiatives to improve gender balance and intersectional characteristics within gender and intersectionality homogenous areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All leaders • GEDI Committee • People and Wellbeing 	2023

Indicator	Action	Target	Who	When
		Use inclusive language, imagery and subtle cues, to promote positions vacant in single gender dominated work areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Wellbeing • Direct Manager • Communications and Engagement 	2023
Gender composition at all levels of the workforce	Provide increased opportunities for women in part-time positions in senior roles	Review recruitment processes and guidelines to ensure they are gender equitable and actively reduce unconscious bias.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Wellbeing 	2022
		Actively recruit and support women on fractional appointments into senior roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELT • Direct Manager • People and Wellbeing 	2022

Priority 2: Macedon Ranges Shire Council provides a gender-balanced workplace that supports flexible work options

Indicator	Action	Target	Who	When
Leave and flexibility	Promote flexible work arrangements	Develop flexible work policies and procedures to ensure consistency across managers and team leaders to avoid uncertainty arising from manager discretion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2022
		Implement flexible work arrangements based on individual needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing Direct Manager 	2022
		Support and encourage work-life balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All leaders People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
		Promote options for staff members to work remotely/offsite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Manager People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
	Support different types of leave	Support leave for mental health and wellbeing, chronic illnesses and other health related issues; provide flexibility for attendance at medical appointments and time off for procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise Agreement (EA) negotiations Direct Manager People and Wellbeing 	2022 - 2025
		Provide leave for days of significance in diverse faiths and cultures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EA negotiations People and Wellbeing Direct Manager 	2023
		Promote options to purchase additional leave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All leaders People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
	Support staff members with accessibility issues	Assess workspaces according to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing Facilities and Operations 	2023 - 2025
		Actively promote employment opportunities to people with disability/ accessibility issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing Direct Manager Communications and Engagement 	2022 - 2025

Indicator	Action	Target	Who	When
		Implement Disability Discrimination standards and guidelines to ensure staff members have equal access to: areas of employment, to premises and other services and amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities and Operations GEDI Committee Direct Manager People and Wellbeing Customer Service 	2022 - 2025
	Develop and promote policy and procedure to support the Family Violence Leave clause in the Enterprise Agreement	Ensure application and approval process to access Family Violence Leave is respectful, supportive and maintains the dignity and privacy of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing ELT 	2022 / Ongoing
		Ensure privacy and respect for staff members who take Family Violence leave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Manager People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
		Provide support to staff members accessing Family Violence leave that demonstrates both awareness and sensitivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Manager People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
Built environment	Physical amenities	Provide amenities across workplaces such as disability access, gender-neutral toilets, designated feeding rooms, women's room, prayer room etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities and Operations GEDI Committee 	2023 - 2025
Gender pay equity	Redress gender pay gap	Benchmark salary packages, leave and other entitlements with other Councils and private sector in order to stay competitive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2022 - 2025

Priority 3: Macedon Ranges Shire Council has zero tolerance for bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment

Indicator	Action	Target	Who	When
Code of conduct	Appropriate behaviour	Reinforce appropriate behaviours and actions through staff development workshops to promote inclusion and respect (zero tolerance for offensive behaviours).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
		Set behavioural guidelines for both employees and the public/ community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELT People and Wellbeing Customer Service 	2023 - 2025
		Reward staff for appropriate behaviours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All leaders 	2022 / Ongoing
	Education and training	Conduct staff development workshops to educate staff members regarding gender and intersectional equality, and appropriate ways to communicate with people from (1) cultural backgrounds different to their own; (2) LGBTIQ+ communities; and (3) women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2023 - 2025
		Provide education and training on conscious and unconscious bias and by-stander awareness and intervention at basic, intermediate and advanced levels for all staff with online delivery best suited to basic concepts to prepare staff for more informed discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2022 / Ongoing
Complaints	Appropriate processes	Ensure policies and procedures promote accountability and transparency for the reporting of inappropriate workplace behaviours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2023
		Ensure complaint processes are clear and managed in a timely manner with effective communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing Customer Service All leaders 	2023
Workplace culture	Safe work culture	Promote Council's values and demonstrate a strong commitment to this in workplace practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All leaders Risk and OHS 	2022 / Ongoing

Indicator	Action	Target	Who	When
		Promote a positive and safe workplace environment for staff members to feel empowered to speak up against inappropriate behaviours, issues and concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All leaders 	2022 / Ongoing
		Conduct exit interviews with staff who are leaving to learn about their gender equality and intersectional experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Wellbeing 	2023 - 2025
	Celebrate diversity	Promote diversity by celebrating cultural days that are reflective of the wider community including National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week, International Women's Day and LGBTIQ+ festivals and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEDI Committee All leaders Staff Consultative Committee People and Wellbeing 	2023 – 2025

Definitions⁴

Gender

The socially-constructed differences between men and women, as distinct from 'sex', which refers to their biological differences.

Gender equality

The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and 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 norms and structures

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.

Gender stereotypes

Simplistic generalisations about the gender attributes, differences and roles.

Intersectionality

A methodology of studying the overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination or discrimination.

Trans and gender diverse

Transgender (often shortened to 'trans') refers to a person whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not align with their sex assigned at birth. In Australia, children are assigned as male or female at birth. Male children are raised as boys and female children are raised as girls. A person classified as female at birth who identifies as a man may use the label trans, transman or man. Similarly, a person classified as male at birth who identifies as a woman may use the label trans, transwoman or woman. Gender diverse and non-binary refers to people who do not identify as a woman or a man. In the same way that sexual orientation and gender expression are not binaries, gender identity is not a binary either. It is important to challenge our thinking beyond the binary constructs of male and female.

Intersex

This refers to the diversity of physical characteristics between the stereotypical male and female characteristics. Intersex people have reproductive organs, chromosomes or other physical sex characteristics that are neither wholly female nor wholly male. Intersex is a description of biological diversity and may or may not be the identity used by an intersex person.

4. Victorian government (2016). *Safe and Strong*. Melbourne: Department of Premier and Cabinet, p.40. Retrieved from <https://engage.vic.gov.au/gender-equality>



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