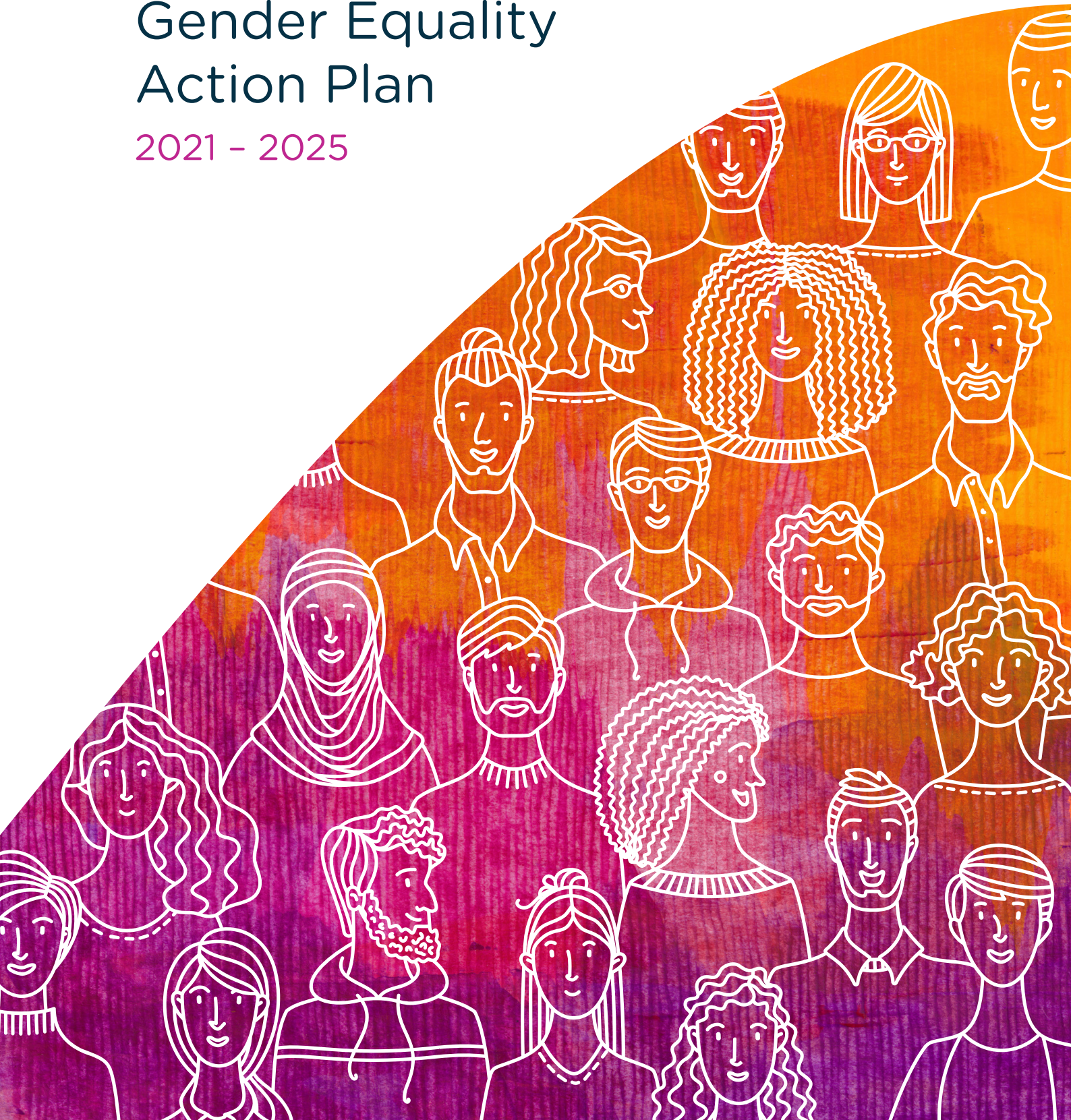


Gender Equality Action Plan

2021 - 2025



Gender Equality Action Plan

2021 – 2025



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Message from the CEO



I am proud to present Moira Shire Council's first Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-25.

This Plan details Council's commitment to embed gender equality in all facets of our business and community leadership.

The benefits of providing an inclusive workplace have been well documented. Inclusive workplace cultures, where all employees are valued and included, result in a more engaged, motivated and productive workforce. Diverse and inclusive teams are also more innovative, able to draw upon a wider set of experiences, approaches and resources to effectively respond to, and act on behalf of, our communities.

To ensure gender equality is given a continued and consistent emphasis, we have embedded measures to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of our activities towards achieving gender equality.

I encourage all employees to read this important Plan and consider how you can contribute to the achievement of our objective to achieve gender equality at Moira Shire Council.

Clare Keenan
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

Moira Shire Council (“Council”) is committed to ensuring that everyone – men, women and gender diverse people – have equal opportunities and are respected and supported to reach their full potential.

The *Gender Equity Act 2020* supports and mandates that Local Councils are to develop relevant action plans to support gender equality in the workplace. This will include seeking and reporting in relevant data, which will be used to develop actions that are appropriate to Councils workforce, and subsequently, the broader community.

This will be Councils first Gender Equality Action Plan and it will set the platform for future plans.

What Is Gender Equality

Gender equality means equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes for people of different genders. It also includes other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience due to other characteristics, such as race or ethnic group, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* came into effect in March 2021 and requires each Council to address its obligations to promote gender equality in the workplace and also consider gender equality in the policies, programs and services that impact our community. The act requires Councils to:

- Promote gender equality;
- Conduct a workplace Gender Audit;
- Develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan;
- Conduct Gender Impact Assessments when developing or reviewing policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public;
- Report to the Gender Equality Commission every two years.

In addition to the requirements under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Local Government Act 2020* also requires a Councils to develop a workforce plan every four years which must include measures relating to gender equality. By developing a Gender Equality Action Plan, Council is also meeting its requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*. Our first Workforce Plan was approved in December 2021.

Legislative Timeline



What we've already done

The Gender Equality Action Plan and objectives builds upon previous equality commitments and initiatives of the Moira Shire Council ("Council") including:

Our Values



Our strategic documents

- Council Plan 2021 – 2025
- Municipal Wellbeing for All Ages Strategy 2021-2025
- Disability Access & Inclusion Plan 2017-2021
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2020-2026
- Child Safe Policy

Moira Shire Council also:

1. Became signatory on Women's Health Goulburn North East's Respect & Equity for All;
2. Developed the Preventing Family and Gendered Violence Subcommittee (subcommittee of the Safety Committee); and
3. Participates in regional and state Gender Equity networks and community of practice.
4. Participates in campaigns such as:
 - 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence
 - Your Ground Research Project
 - International Women's Day
 - Cultural Diversity Week
 - Reconciliation Week
 - Naidoc Week

The Gender Equality Action Plan

Developing this Gender Equality Action Plan is Council's next step in becoming more gender equitable. This Gender Equality Action Plan has been designed to meet the immediate needs of our staff and community, as well as looking to the future to develop a long term strategy.

This Gender Equality Action Plan was formulated from results of the 2019 Equity Ready Project, Workplace Gender Audit (including data from the Employee Experience Survey) and consultation with staff and their representatives.

This Gender Equality Action Plan will also meet Council's obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. These include gathering data and evidence on current workplace climate, developing this Gender Equality Action Plan and its actions to improve gender equality in the workplace, and measuring and tracking data to report on progress of these actions.

Engagement Process

2019 Equity Ready Project

Council undertook an Equity Ready Project which included consultation with staff and a gender audit in 2019. This project aimed to understand Council's strengths and opportunities for improvement in relation to promotion of gender equality as the foundation for prevention of domestic violence. The audit included analysis of gender balance within the workplace (whole workplace, departments, leadership positions and recruitment) and the use of parental leave. The consultations included:

- Workplace Equality & Respect Survey;
- Consultation with the Employee Consultative Committee (ECC) on the Workplace Equality & Respect Workplace Self-Assessment Tool; and
- Staff feedback at the Gender Equity Breakfast and Luncheon events.

The steps that have been taken to get us to this point include:

- Identifying staff to lead the work internally.
- Making sure that key staff understand violence against women and how workplaces can prevent it.
- Securing genuine commitment from leaders.
- Ensuring workplaces can respond to staff who experience violence.
- Consulting with staff and their representative.
- Collecting data.

Engagement with our Governing Body (Councillors)

Our Councillors have been consulted with throughout the Equity Ready Project and supported the strategic aims of the project which were instrumental to the development of this Action Plan. Our Councillors have also been updated on the requirements of the implementation of the Act.

The engagement with our Councillors will be ongoing and will include:

- Receiving updates on the key achievements of this Action Plan.
- Involvement in reviews of the Action Plan.
- Inviting Councillors to attend workshops and training sessions focused around Gender Equality.

Our Councillors have also made a commitment in the Moira Shire Council Plan 2021-2025, under Strategic Objective Pillar 1: Welcoming and Inclusive Place to ensure that Gender Equality is embedded in Council policy and decision making which will ensure that Council continues to have strategic oversight of the progress and achievements made in this area.

2021 Workplace Gender Audit

Employee engagement for the Workplace Gender Audit was undertaken by Women's Health Goulburn Northeast on behalf of Council in July 2021. The Employee Experience Survey was completed in July 2021 with 78 responses received. The survey was a safe and anonymous way for staff to have their say on their experience as an employee on topics such as gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, bullying, discrimination, and sexual harassment. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the survey was open for a two-week period. Participation was via an online survey, for those employees with access to a computer, and a paper-based survey was made available with reply paid envelopes to those who did not have access to a computer. The responses from the survey were collated and analysed to ensure employee confidentiality.

The Workforce Reporting Template was compiled in November 2021 with 261 employee profiles against the seven gender equality indicators.

In January 2022, Women's Health Goulburn Northeast provided Council with the Workplace Gender Audit which identified gaps, areas for improvement and made recommendations to be used for further consultation. The recommendations have been considered and form the basis of the Gender Equality Action Plan. A full copy of the Workplace Gender Audit is attached at Appendix A.

Case for change

The Gender Equality Action Plan outlines a range of actions which will be undertaken over the next four years. To ensure there is oversight with implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan, Councils current Gender Equality Steering / Working Committee will expand and be known as the Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Committee.

The following gender equality principles of the Victorian *Gender Equality Act 2020*, have guided the preparation of the Gender Equality Action Plan:

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

These principles are supported by the workplace gender equality indicators of:

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

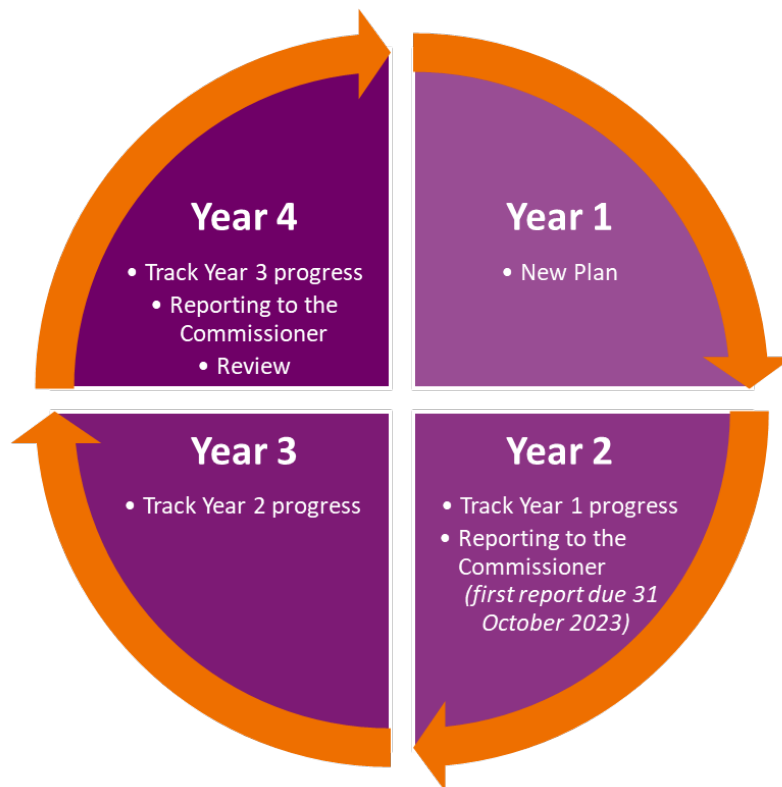
Our vision for Moira Shire Council is to have a whole of organisation integrated and sustainable approach that sees gender equality principles and intersectional factors embedded in the culture by 2025.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Gender Equality Action Plan outlines a range of actions which will be undertaken over the next four years. To ensure there is oversight with implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan, Councils current Gender Equality Steering / Working Committee will expand and be known as the Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Committee.

The Gender Equality Action Plan will be reviewed annually by the GEDI Committee. Progress updates will be reported to the Executive Leadership Team and shared with staff quarterly.

Council is also required to submit reporting to the Commission for Gender Equality every two years, with the first reporting due by 31 October 2023 and the plan to be reviewed every four years.



Resourcing our Action Plan

Council will commit the necessary resources to implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Gender Equality Action Plan.

The GEDI Committee will consist of key influencers from a range of departments across the organisation and at all levels. Council has recently sought expressions of interest from all staff to actively participate in this Committee and their first priority will be to develop a Terms of Reference outlining how the Gender Equality Action Plan will be resourced and implemented, including timeframes and who will be responsible.

Our Action Plan

Action Area 1:

Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

	Action	How
1.1	Review all stages of the current recruitment and selection processes to identify any subtle gender biases in job advertisements, interview processes, and performance reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure the writing of job descriptions use gender inclusive wording. – Ensure flexible working arrangements are made clear in job descriptions so that potential recruits with responsibilities outside of paid employment are not deterred from applying. – Where appropriate, alter key selection criteria to be inclusive of relatable experience rather than exact experience. – Include interview question on corporate values – Include responsibility for the promotion of gender equity in senior leadership position descriptions. – Include gender equity in Council orientation days. – Identify opportunities to encourage older workers to apply for roles.
1.2	Deliver mandatory unconscious bias training for all employees who are responsible for recruitment and promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engage an external facilitator to conduct unconscious bias training to all employees involved in recruitment and promotion.
1.3	Embed systems to collect and report on intersectional data at the HR level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify and implement a system to collect and report of intersectional data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the workforce composition.
1.4	Provide regular opportunities for women to present at executive and council meetings to raise their visibility as subject matter experts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify professional development opportunities to build the skills of women in the workforce that will increase representation of women in leadership and the retention of women employees.

	Action	How
1.5	Develop a Moira Shire Council Cultural Safety Action Plan in consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a Cultural Safety Action Plan, to make clear our expectation of a workplace culture that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people and seeks to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the workforce. – Conduct education around working with Indigenous Australians.
1.6	Investigate robust frameworks to embed LGBTIQ+ inclusivity across the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct a workplace inclusivity audit – Aspire to celebrate days of significance to the LGBTIQ+ community – Investigate and explore the journey of achieving Rainbow Tick accreditation – Investigate and explore support for LGBTIQ+ councillor candidates through Rainbow Local Government mentoring opportunities.
1.7	Incorporate gender equality in programs, policies and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public as these are reviewed or developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop an internal procedure for the development and review of policies, incorporating a step for conducting gender impact assessments. – Incorporate a Gender Impact Assessment process into our Project Management Framework. – Incorporate Gender Impact considerations to the Budget Bid process. – Continue education throughout the organisation about when and why GIA's are needed (through staff newsletter, intranet, all staff emails). – Review the Gender Impact Assessment form and refine for different levels of assessment that may be required.
1.8	Provide gender impact reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Updating Council Report templates to incorporate a section on Gender Equality to ensure transparency on Council decisions.

Action Area 2:
Gender composition of governing bodies

	Action	How
2.1	Reinvigorate council's endorsement of the Women's Charter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reaffirm commitment to the Victorian Government's Women's Charter – Appoint Charter Champions – Seek to make the Charter a standing item on the council agenda to promote Council's commitment to gender equality, diversity, and women's active citizenship.
2.2	Plan and host leadership and pre-election workshops for women, young people, and diverse candidates well in advance of the election.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Seek to partner with networks and organisations, such as the University of Melbourne's Pathways to Politics for Women program or the Victorian Governance Association's Local Women Leading Change program, to encourage diverse candidates.
2.3	Tap into new and existing networks such as local First Nations organisations and groups, diverse cultural groups, and networks of young people to promote participation and engagement in local council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Circulate upcoming council election information to local Aboriginal organisations – Invite Aboriginal people to participate in information sessions about standing for council elections and hold targeted information sessions with local organisations. – Encourage candidates from local multicultural communities, – Investigate a partnership with organisations like Rainbow Votes who can provide support in promoting council elections and encouraging LGBTIQ+ candidates to run for local government.

Action Area 3:

Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender

	Action	How
3.1	Conduct further analysis on the gender pay gap within the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Investigate and further analyse the data in relation to the gender pay gap to understand what, if any action needs to be taken.
3.2	Promote gender equity in enterprise agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Encourage people of all genders to be included in enterprise agreement negotiations.– To support gender equity broadly and to improve the gender pay gap, consider these key points during negotiation:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Changes made to entitlements related to leave, parental leave, flexible working arrangements, childcare, learning and development, job design and career development➤ More options to be explored for part-time employees to increase hours and job opportunities?

Action Area 4:
Sexual harassment in the workplace

	Action	How
4.1	Regularly communicate clearly with staff and councillors about respectful workplace behaviour, rights in the workplace and where to find workplace policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Induction processes should include mandatory familiarisation with all workplace policies, including sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination. – Annual training should be provided to staff – Communication should be through quarterly promotion in the staff newsletter
4.2	Implement mandatory annual sexual harassment training for all staff, so that they know what constitutes sexual harassment and what to do if they witness or experience sexual harassment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sexual harassment training should be a mandatory part of induction for all employees including those holding casual, part-time and contract roles. If possible, this training should not be a self-directed online course, but a facilitated session to encourage more open discussion and provide opportunity for leaders to demonstrate their commitment to prevention. – Monitor training uptake and keep comprehensive attendance records.
4.3	Provide tailored training to all managers and HR staff on managing and responding to disclosures of sexual harassment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct training on the handling of incidences of sexual harassment to build confidence and ability to respond effectively. – Consider how managers and HR staff can extend this support whilst staff are working remotely, in the workplace or a combination of both.
4.4	Review and update existing sexual harassment policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create a stand-alone sexual harassment policy that clearly communicates zero-tolerance to instances of sexual harassment, be inclusive of online interactions, that sexual harassment is unlawful under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, outline formal and informal processes for resolving complaints, and internal and external support options available for victims.
4.5	Review and update the sexual harassment complaint pathway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create a best-practice process that gives the complainant the flexibility to choose the complaint pathway that is best for them. These pathways can include self-managed, anonymous, informal, formal, or external and should include online and office-based options to ensure it is accessible to all staff, regardless of their work location.
4.6	Deliver bystander action training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct bystander action training to improve employee confidence in speaking up when they witness or experience sexual harassment or other negative workplace behaviours and promote a respectful workplace culture.

Action Area 5:
Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

	Action	How
5.1	Encourage diversity across the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Actively encourage diverse candidates into sectors of the organisation where they are underrepresented. – Explore partnering with local networks such as neighbourhood houses, disability organisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and LGBTIQ+ groups. – Seek tailored advice and support from specialised organisations for encouraging and retaining diverse applicants.
5.2	Investigate current recruitment processes to identify specific areas for improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Obtain feedback from applicants through the recruitment process to uncover barriers and issues that may be faced by underrepresented groups to help improve the process for future applicants.
5.3	Monitor the composition of recruitment panels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Monitor the recruitment procedure to ensure panels include people of all genders and women from non-traditional and leadership roles to increase the likelihood of objective assessment and diverse perspectives being heard during the selection process.
5.4	Conduct exit interviews with all employees exiting the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure exit interviews are conducted with all employees to help identify key reasons for employees leaving the organisation and provide opportunities to improve equity in employee retention.
5.5	Review the provision of equitable professional development and learning opportunities for all employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue the availability of professional development and training for all employees and the upkeep of gender-disaggregated records of participation in such opportunities.

Action Area 6:

Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities

	Action	How
6.1	Regularly communicate clearly to employees of all genders about where to find workplace policies and how to access them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Use various methods to communicate and promote flexible workplace policies.– New recruits should be informed of these policies and encouraged to utilise them.– Communication should be through quarterly promotion in the staff newsletter
6.2	Assess which jobs can be worked with flexible working practices, can be job shared, or can be worked part-time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Consider implementing creative solutions to flexible work in non-traditional types of roles.– Review information provided to potential candidates about flexible working practices at Council, including information on the website.
6.3	Review and update family violence leave practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Promote family violence leave, available support and how to access services.– Make supervisors aware of employee entitlements in relation to family violence.
6.4	Investigate barriers to success and promotion in the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Conduct consultation with employees around staff members perceiving flexible working and having caring and family responsibilities as barriers to success.
6.5	Implement targets for the uptake of flexible working arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Explore and seek to implement targets for flexible working arrangements to help normalise and make the uptake of these arrangements accessible to all employees.

Action Area 7:
Gendered segregation within the workforce

	Action	How
7.1	Investigate new talent pipelines with respect to gender and other forms of diversity for roles where women and men are traditionally overrepresented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explore creating new partnerships with specialised organisations and education providers, such as STEM women.
7.2	Assess the environment within gender-segregated areas of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consider whether there are changerooms and bathrooms fitted with sanitary bins available for people of all genders when working in the outdoor crew, or if gender-neutral and varying uniform options are available.
7.3	Review and update workplace bullying policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review the current policy to make sure it includes a commitment to providing employees with a healthy and safe working environment. It should also outline the standard of behaviour expected of all employees, including examples of what is and what is not workplace bullying, definitions of workplace bullying, process related to reporting and responding, how complainant confidentiality will be maintained, a commitment to zero tolerance to bullying in the workplace, and where to get more information. The policy should also include a statement of how it applies in connection with work and work-related events and activities and online communication. – This policy should be promoted regularly, through different channels and included in induction processes.
7.4	Review and update workplace discrimination policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review the current policy to make sure it includes a strong statement of the organisation's position on anti-discrimination, a clear definition of discrimination, legal obligations of the organisation, a statement about employee and employer responsibilities in preventing discrimination, and information on how and where to seek help. – This policy should be promoted regularly, through different channels and included in induction processes.
7.5	Review and update bullying and discrimination complaint pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A best practice process is one where complainants have the flexibility to choose the complaint pathway that is best for them, and that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.
7.6	Promote leadership opportunities for gender diverse people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Partner with organisations like Women and Leadership Australia or the Australian Local Government Women's Association, some of whom offer scholarships for women in management roles in local government to participate in leadership courses.

Appendix A - Workplace Gender Audit



MOIRA SHIRE COUNCIL

Workplace gender audit

A REPORT BY
WOMEN'S HEALTH
GOULBURN NORTH EAST

Executive Summary

This report details the analysis of Moira Shire Council's Gender Equality workplace audit and Employee Experience Survey. It also includes a set of recommendations based on the findings, structured against each of the [gender equality indicators](#) under the Gender Equality Act 2020.

1. Gender composition of the workforce

The composition of the workforce at Moira Shire indicates that men are overrepresented in senior roles and are more likely than women to hold general manager or manager roles. Women are more likely to be employed in a middle management role as a team leader. Both a large proportion of men and women make up the employee level, however women are overwhelmingly more likely to be employed on a part-time or casual basis.

There is limited intersectional HR data available for analysis.

Employee responses about workplace culture were mostly positive. However, women were more likely than men to agree that there was a positive workplace culture overall. Respondents were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that there was a positive workplace culture for employees from different cohorts. In relation to age, only 60% of male respondents agreed that the workplace culture was positive, whereas 83% of female respondents agreed. A similar disparity in results was seen when asking about employees' experiences of workplace culture based on their sex/gender with only 57% of male respondents agreeing with this, whilst 84% of female respondents were in agreement.

In other categories, 51% of female respondents and 46% of male respondents agreed there was a positive workplace culture for employees who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Positive workplace culture results for employees who identified as from the LGBTQIA+ community and for employees living with a disability were the same. 65% of female respondents and 57% of male respondents agreed that the workplace culture was positive for these cohorts. Further investigation is required to determine whether employees from these cohorts actually experience positive workplace culture themselves, as these results are based on the whole respondent sample.

Recommendations:

- Review all stages of the current recruitment and selection processes to identify any subtle gender biases in job advertisements, interview processes, and performance reviews.
- Plan and deliver mandatory unconscious bias training for all employees who are responsible for recruitment and promotion.
- Embed systems to collect and report on intersectional data at the HR level.
- Provide regular opportunities for women to present at executive and council meetings, to raise their visibility as subject matter experts.
- Develop a Moira Shire Council Cultural Safety Action Plan in consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and employees.
- Investigate robust frameworks to embed LGBTQIA+ inclusivity across the organisation.

2. Gender composition of governing bodies

The governing body of Moira Shire Council is made up of predominately men, most of whom are over the age of 65 years. All members of the governing body are aged 55 years or over. No other intersectional data is available.

Recommendations:

- Reinvigorate Council's endorsement of the Women's Charter.
- Plan and host leadership and pre-election workshops for women, young people, and diverse candidates well in advance of a local election.
- Tap into new and existing networks such as local First Nations organisations and groups, diverse cultural groups, and networks of young people to promote participation and engagement in local council.

3. Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparative value

A gender pay gap (GPG) in favour of men currently exists at Moira Shire across the organisation as a whole, and at each level of the workforce, except when comparing the median total remuneration at the manager level (-2). The overall median gender pay gap is 12.4%, which is lower than the national average (mean) of 14.2%. This is unsurprising as the gender pay gap favours full-time working men over full-time working women in every industry and occupational category in Australia.¹

The largest gender pay gap exists at levels -6 (employee level), and -3 (coordinator level). At the employee level the GPG is 10.5% This is because most men at this level have salaries that are higher than those of women employed at this level. At the coordinator level (-3), the GPG is 10.1%. At this level, nine of the top ten highest paid roles are all held by men. It is also mostly men employed at this level, with women being paid less overall.

Recommendations:

- Conduct further analysis on the gender pay gap within the organisation.
- Promote gender equity in enterprise agreements.
- Advocate for changes to the Award rates to reduce the pay gap between gender-segregated workforces.
- Promote leadership opportunities for women.

4. Sexual harassment in the workplace

There have been no formal complaints made about sexual harassment in the past 12 months. However, data from the Employee Experience Survey (78 respondents) indicates that in the past 12 months, many employees had witnessed sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination directed at a colleague. In the same 12 months, some women (14%) had personally experienced sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made them feel offended. For those who personally experienced sexual harassment, the most common reason they gave for not making a formal complaint was that they 'didn't think it would make a difference' (80% of respondents).

When it comes to speaking up when witnessing inappropriate behaviour, around half of employees feel safe to do so, with more men feeling safe than women in this scenario (49% women, 60% men). As for organisational responsibility, almost half of men (47%) respondents agreed that Moira Shire Council does not take steps to eliminate bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

Recommendations:

- Regularly and clearly communicate with staff and councillors about respectful workplace behaviour, rights in the workplace and where to find workplace policies.
- Implement mandatory annual sexual harassment training for all staff, so that they know what constitutes sexual harassment and what to do if they witness or experience sexual harassment.
- Provide tailored training to all managers and HR staff on managing and responding to disclosures of sexual harassment.
- Review and update existing sexual harassment policy, if a stand-alone policy does not exist, develop one.
- Review and update the sexual harassment complaint pathway.
- Deliver bystander action training to all staff.

5. Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

The past 12 months indicate gender-balanced recruitment as half of all new recruits were women and half were men. Of newly recruited women and men, overwhelmingly they were recruited into the least senior roles (-6). A small number of men and women were recruited into mid-level roles (-3 and -4). Most of these recruits, both men and women, were aged 25-44 years.

Of those exiting the workforce in the previous 12 months, 68% were women, a large proportion of whom were exiting from lower-level roles (61%). Men also largely exited from lower-level roles with 62% of the men who exited being from the employee (-6) category.

Women exited the workforce at all ages; 24% were aged between 35-44 years, 15% were aged between 25-34 years, and another 15% were aged between 35-44 years. Most men who exited were aged 25-34 (10%) or 55 years and over (15%).

Employee Experience data indicates that for women at Moira Shire, some perceive age (21%), gender (12%) and disability (12%) as barriers to success. For men, the most commonly perceived barrier to success is sexual orientation (10%). As intersectional data is currently not collected at the HR level, it is difficult to determine whether some of these barriers are perceptions only or are actually present within the organisation.

Some employees indicated that they felt they do not have an equal chance at promotion in the organisation (23% women, 30% men) and that they were not satisfied with the way their learning and development needs had been addressed in the past 12 months (19% women, 27% men).

Recommendations:

- Establish recruitment targets for women and gender-diverse people.
- Investigate current recruitment processes to identify specific areas for improvement.
- Monitor the composition of recruitment panels.
- Reassess which jobs can be worked with flexible working practices, can be job shared, or can be worked part-time.
- Conduct exit interviews with all employees exiting the workforce.
- Investigate further the provision of equitable professional development and learning opportunities for all employees.

6. Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities.

There are slightly more women than men (57% women, 43% men) who hold formal flexible working arrangements at Moira Shire Council. Interestingly, some employees (21% women, 17% men) perceived the utilisation of flexible working arrangements as a barrier to success in the organisation, which may partially explain why some employees have not taken up flexible work. Other commonly perceived barriers to success were caring responsibilities (17% women, 23% men) and family responsibilities (23% men, 23% women).

No men took any form of parental leave in the past 12 months, be that paid or unpaid. A small number of employees had utilised family violence leave in the past 12 months and most agreed if they needed to take it, that the organisation would support them (77% women, 70% men).

Recommendations:

- Regularly communicate clearly to employees of all genders about where to find workplace policies and how to access them.
- Reassess which jobs can be worked with flexible working practices, can be job shared, or can be worked part-time.
- Review and update family violence leave policy.
- Investigate barriers to success in the organisation further.
- Implement targets for the uptake of flexible working arrangements.

7. Gendered segregation within the workplace

Gendered segregation of the workforce at Moira Shire Council is not unexpected, as gender segregation across occupations in Australia, the UK and the rest of the OECD has remained persistent over the last 20 years.² Women are overrepresented in the roles of health professionals, clerical and administrative workers, midwifery, and nursing professionals. Men are overrepresented in labouring roles, skilled animal, and horticultural workers (e.g., gardeners), technicians and trades workers, planning, surveying, and engineering, and specialist managing roles.

Recommendations:

- Investigate new talent pipelines with respect to gender and other forms of diversity for roles where women and men are traditionally overrepresented.
- Assess the environment within gender-segregated areas of the organisation.
- Review and update workplace bullying policy.
- Review and update workplace discrimination policy.
- Review and update bullying and discrimination complaint pathways.

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Introduction

This report details the analysis of Moira Shire Council's Gender Equality workplace audit and Employee Experience Survey. It also includes a set of recommendations based on the findings, structured against each of the gender equality indicators under the Gender Equality Act 2020. The findings and the recommendations can be used to inform areas for further staff consultation, as Moira Shire Council prepares a [Gender Equality Action Plan \(GEAP\)](#).

Methods for conducting the Employee Experience Survey

The Employee Experience survey was administered by Women's Health Goulburn Northeast on behalf of Moira Shire Council in July 2021. The survey was a safe and anonymous way for staff to have their say on their experience as an employee on topics such as gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, bullying, discrimination, and sexual harassment. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the survey was open for a two-week period. Participation was via an online survey, for those employees with access to a computer, and a paper-based survey was made available with reply paid envelopes to those who did not have access to a computer.

The responses from the survey have been collated and analysed to ensure employee confidentiality. The analysis will be used to help Moira Shire Council identify gaps, areas for improvement and challenges that can be addressed to improve workplace culture.

General analysis notes – Employee Experience Survey

The survey was attempted in part by 98 respondents and completed in full by 78 respondents. To ensure a complete dataset, the following data analysis is limited to those survey respondents who completed the survey in full. Based on 78 respondents, this provides a response rate of 29%, which is comparable to the average of local councils who completed the People Matters Survey in 2021.

According to the [practice note](#) issued by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (CGEPS), and to ensure employee confidentiality, responses have only been disaggregated for demographic characteristics held by ten or more employees. For example, as the number of respondents who identified as ‘self-described’ gender is less than ten, all survey responses that are disaggregated by gender are disaggregated by man and woman only. The same applies for other demographic data such as disability and sexual orientation, and as a result there is limited intersectional data throughout this analysis. In addition, no more than two demographic variables have been analysed to create a demographic group. For example, responses have been combined for gender and age group, but not by combining gender, age group and disability status.

Similar protocols inform the analysis and reporting of responses from respondents who have experienced bullying, discrimination, or sexual harassment. To protect the confidentiality of those respondents, questions related to these experiences are only reported on in this analysis without demographic disaggregation and only reported if ten or more respondents have experienced the behaviour. For example, for those respondents who reported that they had experienced discrimination, their responses about the type and frequency of discrimination experienced were not disaggregated by any demographic variables.

Where a small number of respondents have answered ‘don’t know’ and when doing so would not misrepresent the data, these responses have been aggregated with respondents who answered, ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

As per guidance from the CGEPS, text responses have been analysed for potentially identifying information. Where found, they have been removed and the responses are reported in a separate document.

Throughout the report, employees are referred to by their classification numbers. Please see Table 1 for classification by reporting level to CEO and Moira Shire Council terminology for these same levels.

Classification by reporting level to CEO/head of business	Employee Level (Moira Shire Council terminology)
0	Chief Executive Officer
-1	General Manager
-2	Manager
-3	Coordinator
-4	Team Leader
-5	Leading Hand
-6	Employee

Table 1: Workforce levels

General demographics – Employee Experience Survey

- Just over half of respondents described their gender as ‘woman’ (55% of respondents) and 38% described their gender as ‘man’.
- Most respondents were aged 45-54 years (35% women and 33% of men respondents), followed by the age bracket 35-44 years (33% of women and 10% of men respondents) and 55-64 years (9% of women and 33% of men respondents).
- Most respondents identified as ‘Australian’ (79% of respondents) and most were born in Australia (86% of respondents).
- The most common religion among respondents was ‘no religion’ (53% of respondents), followed by Christianity (33% of respondents).
- When asked to report on their highest level of education, most respondents reported ‘Certificates III or IV level’ (24% of respondents), followed by ‘Advanced Diploma or Diploma level’ (19% of respondents).
- Fifty per cent of respondents reported having caring responsibilities. Of these respondents, most reported that they have responsibility for caring for ‘child(ren) of primary school age’ (62% of respondents) and/or ‘child(ren) of secondary school age’ (44% of respondents).
- Most survey respondents reported working ‘full-time’ (79% of respondents) and in an ‘ongoing’ capacity (78% of respondents).
- The most reported salary bracket of respondents was \$75,000-84,999 (23% of respondents), followed by \$65,000-74,999 (17% of respondents)
- Most respondents reported that they did not manage ‘one or more employees’ (69% of respondents). 18 per cent reported that they manage ‘one or more employees, but not other managers’ and 13% reported that they managed ‘one or more employees, and other managers.
- Most respondents reported working at Moira Shire Council for between ‘10 to less than 20 years’ (29% of respondents), followed by ‘5 to less than 10 years’ (22% of respondents), ‘2 to less than 5 years’ (15% of respondents) and ‘less than 1 year’ (13% of respondents).

Results by Gender Equality Indicator

The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector recommends that strategies and measures developed in response to the results from your workplace audit (your GEAP) be grouped according to the workplace gender equality indicators. These indicators are:

- Gender composition of all levels of the workforce
- Gender composition of governing bodies
- Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
- Sexual harassment in the workplace
- Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace
- Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities
- Gendered segregation within the workplace

As such, the results of the workforce audit have also been grouped according to the workplace gender equality indicators, as set out in the [WGA Employee Experience Survey Questions v2.0](#).

In addition to the Employee Experience questions set out by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, WHGNE included four questions from the Moira Shire Workplace Equality Survey administered in 2019, for comparison purposes. Responses to these questions are available in [Appendix 1](#).

1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

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.

Overall, the workforce at Moira Shire Council is gender balanced - 48% of employees are women and 52% are men. However, as shown in Table 2, a gender imbalance becomes apparent when the levels of the workforce are examined more closely.

Workforce level	Women	Men
Levels -1 and -2	21.4%	78.6%
Levels -3 and -4	45.8%	54.2%
Levels -5 and -6	52.1%	47.9%

Table 2: Composition of all levels of the workforce, by gender

HR data indicates that men are overrepresented in senior roles and are more likely than women to hold general manager or manager roles (level -1 and level -2). At this level, of the fourteen positions, 79% of roles are held by men and 21% are held by women. This is indicative of the gender imbalance within higher level roles, and leadership positions. From CEO to level 3 within the workforce, men account for 80% of the positions. This workforce gender composition is quite common across local government, as

well as across all industries of the Australian workforce, where women are underrepresented in key decision-making roles.²

There are complex factors that contribute to this including gender stereotypes about what makes a good leader and the types of work that men and women are expected to undertake, the accessibility of flexible working arrangements, women taking time out of the workforce for family responsibilities and unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion. Many of these factors are addressed in the recommendations throughout this report.

Unsurprisingly, part-time, and casual roles are much more likely to be held by women than men. At Moira Shire Council, 72% of these roles are held by women. For the small number of men who hold part time and casual roles, they are as crossing supervisors or recycling or rubbish collectors, where it is the nature of the work that dictates the part-time hours, rather than the role being offered part-time. For women, most part-time and casual employees hold roles as crossing supervisors, office clerks, and midwives.

The time that women spend on unpaid care work is linked to their increased likelihood of working in part-time or casual roles. Also, it is more common for roles in traditionally female-dominated sectors to be offered on a part-time or casual basis than those in male-dominated sectors. Often, working in part-time roles leads to a reduction in promotion opportunities, less security, less responsibility, and limited career options as a result.³ This combines with reduced overall income and superannuation income to privilege men over women.

An overrepresentation of men in higher-paying, leadership roles and in full-time work also contributes to the gender pay gap, which is discussed further in [section 3](#).

In the Employee Experience Survey, the workforce was asked about workplace culture. Particularly about workplace culture relating to population groups who are often underrepresented and discriminated against in the workplace. As shown in Table 3, across the board men were less likely than women to agree that there was a positive workplace culture regarding employees who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (51% women, 46% of men agreed), employees of different genders/sexes (84% women, 57% men), age groups (83% women, 60% men), employees who are LGBTIQ+ (65% women, 57% men) and employees with a disability (65% women, 57% men).

There is a positive workplace culture regarding employees who are:		
	Women (%)	Men (%)
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	51	46
Different genders/sexes	84	57
Different age groups	83	60
LGBTIQ+	65	57
Living with a disability	65	57

Table 3: Level of agreement with the statement, 'There is a positive workplace culture regarding employees who are....', by gender

There is limited intersectional HR data available for analysis, which means it is difficult to examine further the impact of workplace culture on these population groups. However, exploring the Employee Experience data further, 7% of men identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 10% preferred

not to say – which may be due to perceptions about the workplace culture regarding Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. Research from a national study found that 78% of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees agree that it is important for them to identify as Indigenous within their workplace, but that it can be complicated. Often, Indigenous employees face discrimination and racism, as well as carry a high cultural load, where they are expected to educate others about their culture.⁴

For men, the level of agreeance with the statement that there is a positive workplace culture towards employees of different sexes and genders reduced as did seniority in the organisation, with men in managerial or leadership positions more likely to agree with this statement. Sometimes this can be due to men feeling affirmative actions towards gender equality ‘have gone too far’, unfairly discriminating against them for their gender. A similar pattern emerges with the level of agreeance about positive workplace culture towards employees with a disability, where men in least senior roles were more likely to strongly disagree with this statement. However, for respondents of all genders who identify as having a disability, 80% agreed that there was a positive workplace culture towards employees with a disability – which is an important distinction.

When asked about their sexual orientation, 8% of respondents preferred not to say. For many LGBTIQ+ people, they choose to hide their private lives at work for fear of discrimination, homophobia and fear of the impact coming ‘out’ might have on their ability to progress within the organisation.⁵

As shown in Table 4, HR data related to employee age bracket indicates the highest proportion of women employees are in the age brackets 35-44 years (29% of women) and 45-54 years (30% of women). The age bracket with the highest proportion of men employees are 55-64 years (34% of men) and 45-54 years (24% of men). This raises several questions that could be explored further:

- Are women hitting the ‘glass ceiling’ and leaving the organisation earlier than men?
- Are they taking parental leave to have children and choosing not to return?
- Are inflexible working arrangements a barrier to their success?
- Are men promoted more often and therefore more likely to stay with the organisation as they age?
- Are men in older age brackets more likely to be hired than women in the same age brackets?

Age range (years)	Women (%)	Men (%)
15-24	0	3
25-34	19	12
35-44	29	22
45-54	30	24
55-64	15	34
65+	7	11
Total	100	100

Table 4: Employee age range, by gender

Recommendations

- **Review all stages of the current recruitment and selection processes to identify any subtle gender biases in job advertisements, interview processes, and performance reviews.**
This includes the writing of job descriptions to ensure that they use gender inclusive wording. Make

sure flexible working arrangements are made clear in job descriptions so that potential recruits with responsibilities outside of paid employment are not deterred from applying.⁶ In performance reviews, different language is often used to evaluate the work of people of different genders, where women are more likely to receive vague, inconsistent, or negative feedback than men, which can have a significant impact on women's career progress. Additionally, stereotypical beliefs that women are less committed to their work or need to be protected from overwork limits women's exposure to the career development opportunities necessary to advance to senior leadership roles.

- **Deliver mandatory unconscious bias training for all employees who are responsible for recruitment and promotion.**
Gender biases affect women applicants at all stages of the recruitment process, from gender coded words that are used in job descriptions, to the way they are perceived in job interviews, and penalties for salary negotiations. Unconscious bias training educates those involved in the recruitment process about how to recognise and mitigate biases and their impact on recruitment. It is important to maintain updated registers of which staff have completed this training and offer it to all incoming staff with recruitment responsibility.
- **Embed systems to collect and report on intersectional data at the HR level.**
This will support Moira Shire Council in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the workforce composition, as well as any barriers to success in the organisation, in addition to the gender and age of employees.
- **Provide regular opportunities for women to present at executive and council meetings to raise their visibility as subject matter experts.**
This should align with the provision of professional development opportunities to build the skills of women in the workforce and will support an increase in representation of women in leadership and the retention of women employees.
- **Develop a Moira Shire Council Cultural Safety Action Plan in consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and employees.**
There are principles for this work set out in the [Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan](#). This Action Plan sets out a framework to help councils improve relationships with Aboriginal communities, promote reconciliation, and engage Aboriginal people in planning, decision-making, employment, programs, and services, as well as shares good practice from across the state. By developing a Cultural Safety Action Plan, the organisation will make clear its expectation of a workplace culture that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people, and the organisation will be well placed to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the workforce.
- **Investigate robust frameworks to embed LGBTIQ+ inclusivity across the organisation.**
There are a number of ways that Moira Shire Council could do this – including by conducting a workplace inclusivity audit, establishing an LGBTIQ+ committee, celebrating days of significance to the LGBTIQ+ community, embarking on the journey of [Rainbow Tick](#) accreditation, and supporting LGBTIQ+ councillor candidates through [Rainbow Local Government](#) mentoring opportunities.

2. Gender composition of governing bodies

Boards, councils, committees of management and other governing bodies make important decisions about finances and strategy. It is important that governing bodies have diverse voices at the table. The Victorian Government has made a commitment that at least 50% of all new appointments to courts and paid government boards will be women. Consistently collecting and reporting on this data will help ensure more gender-balanced boardrooms.

The governing body of Moira Shire Council is made up of predominately men, most of whom are over the age of 65 years. All members of the governing body are aged 55 years or over. No other intersectional data is available.

Although women make up 51% of the population of Victoria, they are underrepresented in leadership and elected councillor positions across the state.⁷ Across local governments of Goulburn Valley and North East Victoria, 5 of the 12 local councils have a female majority, and Moira Shire currently sits at 22% women.⁸ This underrepresentation is attributed to complex factors including a lack of women role-models, and gendered differences in commitments for paid and unpaid work.⁷ However, research shows that when women stand for council, they are just as likely as men to be elected, however they often don't stand for election.⁷

Recommendations

- **Reinvigorate council's endorsement of the Women's Charter.**

Moira Shire Council has long been a signatory to the Victorian Government's Women's Charter. Reaffirming commitment to the charter via this [template](#), reappointing Charter Champions, and making the Charter a standing item on the council agenda will promote Moira Shire Council's commitment to gender equality, diversity, and women's active citizenship.

- **Plan and host leadership and pre-election workshops for women, young people, and diverse candidates well in advance of the election.**

There are a number of networks and organisations that Moira Shire could partner with to encourage diverse candidates, such as the University of Melbourne's [Pathways to Politics for Women program](#). or the [Victorian Governance Association's Local Women Leading Change program](#).

- **Tap into new and existing networks such as local First Nations organisations and groups, diverse cultural groups, and networks of young people to promote participation and engagement in local council.**

To encourage more diverse council representation, Moira Shire Council can circulate upcoming council election information to local Aboriginal organisations, invite Aboriginal people to participate in information sessions about standing for council elections and hold targeted information sessions with local organisations. The same strategy can be used for encouraging candidates from local multicultural communities. Organisations like [Rainbow Votes](#) can provide support in promoting council elections and encouraging LGBTIQ+ candidates to run for local government.

3. Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender

Please note: The following section contains sensitive data related to the salaries of Moira Shire Council employees. Take care when sharing this information so that individual employees remain unidentifiable.

The gender pay gap (GPG) is persistent in Victoria and, as of November 2019, stands at 9.6%.⁹ In the Victorian public sector, the gender pay gap is 10%. 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 work to identify the underlying causes.

The GPG can be calculated in two ways. The average (mean) gender pay gap is calculated as follows:⁹

$$\text{GPG} = 100\% * \frac{\text{Male Average Earnings} - \text{Female Average Earnings}}{\text{Male Average Earnings}}$$

The median GPG is calculated by listing the salaries of men and the salaries of women, in order of largest to smallest and comparing the difference between the middle-listed salary of both genders.⁹ The median GPG is a useful measure where there are outliers. This could occur in the case where a large salary is earned by a woman CEO, making it appear that there is no GPG at all, because this calculation is not affected by such exceptions. A GPG above 0 (positive GPG) means that there is a GPG in favour of men.⁹

A GPG currently exists at Moira Shire Council across the organisation as a whole and at each level of the workforce in favour of men, except when comparing the median total remuneration at the manager level (-2). The overall median gender pay gap is 12.4%, which is lower than the Australian national average (mean) of 14.2%. This is unsurprising as the gender pay gap favours full-time working men over full-time working women in every industry and occupational category in Australia.⁹

Gender Pay Gap by level

As shown in Table 5, at Moira Shire Council, the largest gender pay gap exists at level -6 (employee level) and level -3 (coordinator level).

Level	Mean GPG	Median GPG
-1	1.4%	1.4%
-2	1.8%	-0.1%
-3	6.1%	10.1%
-4	1.7%	0.4%
-5		
-6	19.2%	10.5%

Table 5: Gender Pay Gap (GPG) by workforce level

At the senior management level (-1) the mean GPG is 1.4% and the median is 1.4%. This relatively small GPG is because the sample size is small, and the salaries are quite equal across genders.

At the management level (-2) the mean GPG 1.8% and the median is -0.1%. At this level, 82% of the positions are occupied by men, illustrating a less comparable picture of salary comparisons. On the whole, the statistics indicate that the salary ranges within this cohort are comparable.

At the coordinator level (-3) the mean GPG is 6.1% and the median is 10.1%. At this level, nine out of the top ten salaries are held by men in traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as construction and engineering, and of the lowest salaries, nine out of ten are held by women in traditionally female-dominated sectors, such as office support roles and marketing. The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) codes indicate that the top-paying roles at this level are those which are traditionally male-dominated and attract higher salaries, such as urban planning and engineering. The lowest paying roles at this level are those which are traditionally female dominated, such as office clerks and liaison officers.

At the team leader level (-4) the mean GPG is 1.7% and the median is 0.4%. 64% of the workforce in this category are women, 36% are men. Again, this illustrates a trend towards parity, yet maintains a gender pay gap in favour of men.

At the leading hand level (-5) there are no women employed, and therefore no analysis of a gender pay gap cannot be completed. The absence of any women employed in leading hand positions warrants further investigation to better understand this gap, and is an opportunity to review recruitment practices and strategies to attract women into these roles.

At the employee level (-6) the mean GPG is 19.2% and the median is 10.5%. This level is the largest sample of employees to draw inferences from and shows the largest gender pay gap. 62% of the full-time employees at this level are men. In comparison 73% of part-time or casual employees at this level are women. Overrepresentation of men at this level holding full-time positions, and a disproportionate number of women in part-time and casual roles means overall remuneration is less for women. Also contributing to this is the traditionally female held roles, which make up a generous proportion of this employee level, being awarded less remuneration than traditional male roles at this level.

Gender Pay Gap by other factors

In addition to the GPG at various levels of the organisation, it is possible to analyse GPG data according to conditions of employment, such as full-time, part-time, ongoing, and fixed-term contracts, as well as across employee age ranges. However, it is not possible to analyse the data according to other intersectional factors such as disability or Aboriginality, as this data is currently not collected at the HR level. There is a GPG in favour of men for employees on part-time (fixed term) contracts, which sits at a mean of 66.1%. This exists because there are only a small number of employees on this type of contract, and the highest salaries are held by men whilst the lowest are held by women.

The highest GPG according to employee age range is at the 65+ years age range, where the median GPG is 68.4% and at the 35-44 years age range, where the median GPG is 18.7%. At the 65+ year age range, the significant GPG is due to men in this age range holding eight of the top ten salaries and women in the same age range holding seven of the lowest ten salaries, when filtered for age. At the 35-44 years age range, seventeen of the twenty lowest salaries are held by women, which influences the GPG.

Analysing the Gender Pay Gap

The GPG by level of the organisation is driven by complex factors, including cumulative effects of like-for-like gender pay gaps, cumulative effects of pay inequality, the impact of long-term leave, more women in support roles and men in operational roles, discrimination, and unconscious bias.⁵

The [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) recommends employing the justifiable and explainable test when analysing a GPG within an organisation. Discovering that Moira Shire Council has a GPG does not necessarily mean that it is being discriminatory, but it does mean that these gaps need to be analysed and investigated to determine whether they are explainable and, if so, justifiable.¹⁰

Explaining the gap

There are a number of factors that drive pay outcomes including market rates, performance, experience, education, tenure and geography.¹⁰ If factors such as these don't explain the gap, it might be due to discrimination. If a gap can be explained by these factors, you should still ask if it is justifiable.¹⁰ There will be instances where explainable gaps are not justifiable gaps.

Justifying the gap

While it is often straightforward to explain why gender pay gaps have occurred, it is harder to justify why gender pay gaps persist.¹⁰ If you have evidence to confirm that gaps are justified based on job demands, test your evidence in the following scenarios:

- Imagine that you are explaining to a female employee and a male employee undertaking equal or comparable roles why one overall salary is less than the other. To convince the lower paid person to accept that conscious or unconscious discrimination has not taken place will require justification.¹⁰
- Apply the 'Wikileaks' test. If the organisation's payroll was on public display, could you provide satisfactory evidence to support your gender equality commitment?¹⁰

Employers may find it difficult to justify gender pay gaps even though they may be able to explain them. Where an employer cannot justify a gender pay gap, for example, by the history of women's and men's individual performance within a role, attempts should be made to rectify the gap.¹⁰

Recommendations

- **Conduct further analysis on the gender pay gap within the organisation.**
By implementing many of the other recommendations in this report, including actions to promote leadership opportunities for women and recruiting people of all genders into traditionally segregated areas of the organisation, the gender pay gap will gradually be reduced.
- **Promote gender equity in enterprise agreements.**
Ensure that people of all genders are included in enterprise agreement negotiations. To support gender equity broadly and to improve the gender pay gap, there are some key points to consider during negotiation:
 - Can changes be made to entitlements related to leave, parental leave, flexible working arrangements, childcare, learning and development, job design and career development?¹¹

- Can there be more and higher levels of classification in sectors or roles where there is an overrepresentation of women?¹¹
 - Are there consistent salary advancement steps within a job band/grade when comparing sectors and roles that are highly gender segregated?¹¹
 - Are there more options to be explored for part-time employees to increase hours and job opportunities?¹¹
- **Advocate for changes to the Award rates to reduce the pay gap between gender-segregated workforces.**

Some of the drivers of the gender pay gap are outside of the realm of Moira Shire Council, such as the traditionally higher salaries awarded for sectors that have higher rates of employees who are men and traditionally lower salaries awarded to sectors where more women are employed. Hence, advocating for changes to Award rates may go some way to reducing the gender pay gap within the organisation.

4. Sexual harassment in the workplace

Sexual harassment in the workplace is common in Australia, including in Victoria. It causes financial, psychological, and physical harm to victim survivors. It also has a significant economic cost to organisations and to the community. Often, victim survivors do not 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.¹² 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.

There have been no formal complaints made about sexual harassment in the past 12 months. However, Employee Experience data indicates that in the past 12 months, some employees had witnessed sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination directed at a colleague (Table 6). Specifically, sexual harassment of a colleague had been witnessed by 9% of women respondents and 3% of men respondents, bullying of a colleague had been witnessed by 28% women respondents and 37% of men respondents, and discrimination of a colleague had been witnessed by 23% of women respondents and 20% of men respondents.

During the last 12 months in your current organisation, have you witnessed any of the following negative behaviours at work?	Women (%)	Men (%)	All respondents (%)	Local government average (all genders) (%)¹³
Bullying of a colleague	28	37	33	17
Discrimination against a colleague	23	20	24	8
Sexual harassment of a colleague	9	3	10	1
Violence or aggression against a colleague	20	7	5	3
No, I haven't witnessed any of these behaviours	56	60	55	78

Table 6: Responses to question, 'During the last 12 months in your current organization, have you witnessed any of the following negative behaviours at work?', by gender

On further investigation, sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination against colleagues was most likely to be witnessed by those employees without management responsibilities. However, some employees in senior management roles reported witnessing bullying of a colleague (40% of respondents with senior management responsibilities). Respondents who had witnessed any of these negative behaviours were asked how they responded to the incident, almost half spoke to the person who experienced the behaviour (46% of respondents), many told Human Resources (37% of respondents), and some told a manager (31% of respondents). This is a great indication that many employees feel safe to engage in bystander action and provide support to their fellow colleagues. Examined closer, and disaggregated by gender, it is apparent that men feel more comfortable speaking to managers and Human Resources and that women feel more comfortable speaking to individuals involved in the incident (Figure 1).

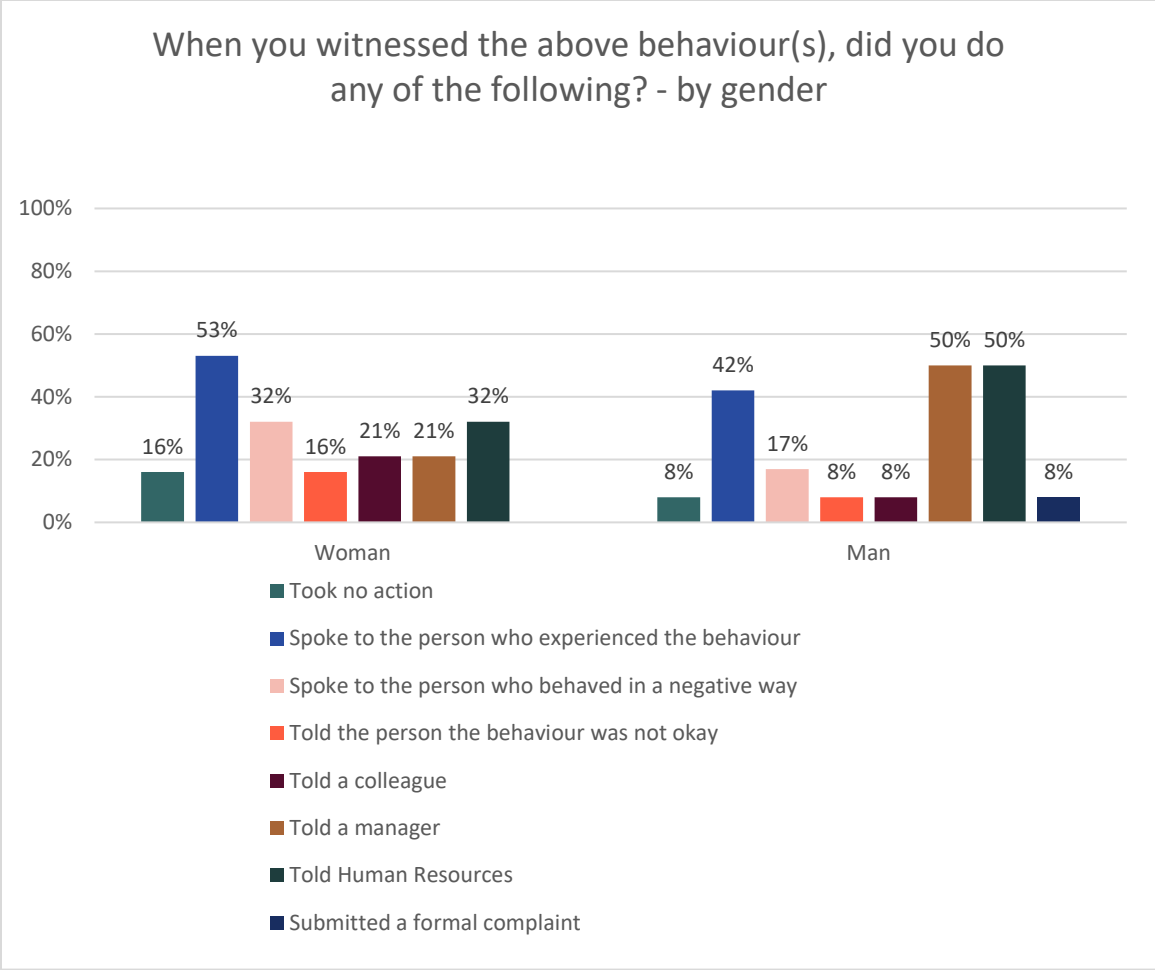


Figure 1: Responses to the question, 'When you witnessed the above behaviour(s), did you do any of the following?', by gender

In the same 12 months, some women (14%) had personally experienced sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made them feel offended. No men reported experiencing sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made them feel offended. For those respondents who had experienced any type of sexual harassment, they mostly reported that it happened less than once a month (70% of respondents). When the behaviour happened to them, some respondents reported the incident to Human Resources (Figure 2). However, none of these reports translated to formal complaints.

For those who personally experienced sexual harassment, the most common reason they gave for not making a formal complaint was that they 'didn't think it would make a difference' (80% of respondents). This is quite common across Australian workplaces, as research shows that less than 17% of people who had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace had made a formal report or complaint and most commonly because they think that they will be perceived as overreacting.¹² Broadly, employees most likely to experience sexual harassment in the workplace are young workers, those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ workers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.¹² Establishing a sound zero tolerance sexual harassment policy and a complainant-led reporting

pathway, as well as regularly communicating with employees about what sexual harassment can look like will support a safer workplace culture.

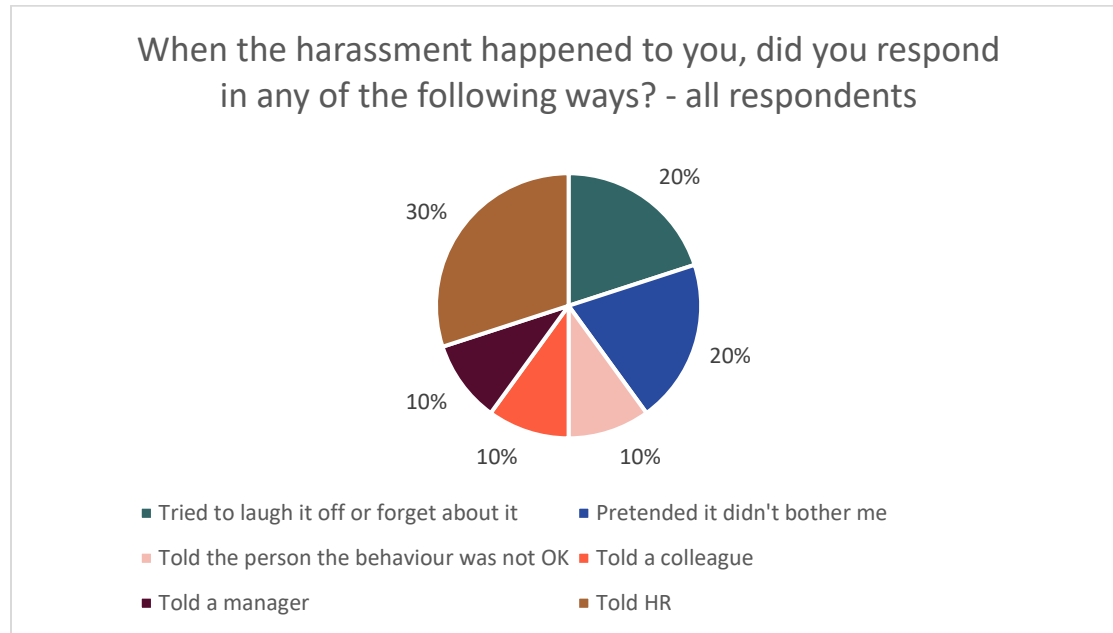


Figure 2: Responses to the question, 'When the harassment happened to you, did you respond in any of the following ways', all respondents

When it comes to speaking up when witnessing inappropriate behaviour, around half of respondents feel safe to do so, with more men feeling safe than women in this scenario (49% women, 60% men).

As for organizational responsibility, almost half of men respondents (47%) disagreed with the statement 'my organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination' (Figures 3 and 4). This is quite a substantial proportion of respondents and, on closer investigation, more common among men without management responsibilities. In fact, 67% of men at this level disagreed that the organization takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment, and discrimination. This is a finding that could be investigated further in the staff consultation stage, by undertaking facilitated discussions that seek to unpack the perceptions and reasoning behind responses to this statement.

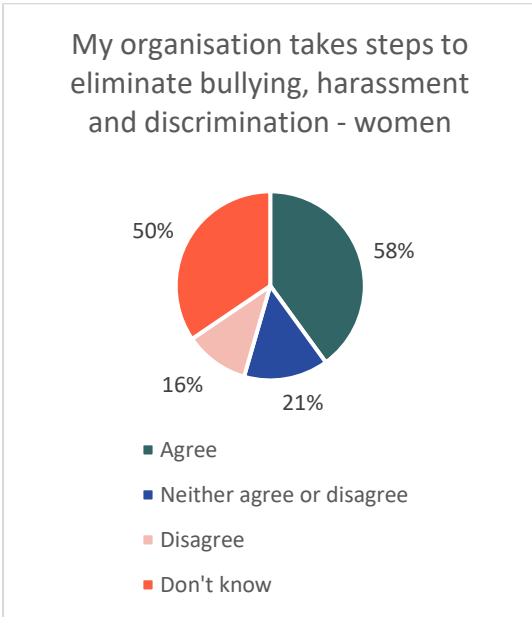


Figure 3: Level of agreement with the statement, 'My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination', women

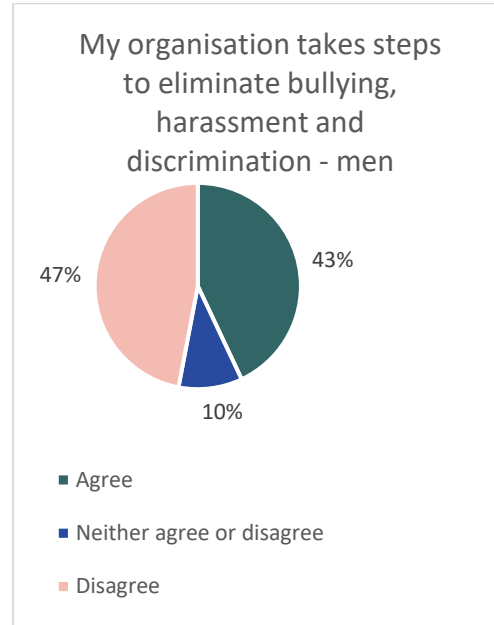


Figure 4: Level of agreement with the statement, 'My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination', men

Recommendations

- Regularly communicate clearly with staff and councillors about respectful workplace behaviour, rights in the workplace and where to find workplace policies.**

If possible, this communication should come from leaders in the organisation, who also role-model appropriate behaviour, both online and in-person interactions. Induction processes should include mandatory familiarisation with all workplace policies, including sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- Implement mandatory annual sexual harassment training for all staff, so that they know what constitutes sexual harassment and what to do if they witness or experience sexual harassment.**

Sexual harassment training should be a mandatory part of induction for all employees including those holding casual, part-time and contract roles. If possible, this training should not be a self-directed online course, but a facilitated session to encourage more open discussion and provide opportunity for leaders to demonstrate their commitment to prevention. Monitor training uptake and keep comprehensive attendance records.
- Provide tailored training to all managers and HR staff on managing and responding to disclosures of sexual harassment.**

This will support those responsible for handling incidences of sexual harassment in building their confidence and ability to respond effectively. Consider how managers and HR staff can extend this support whilst staff are working remotely, in the workplace or a combination of both.

- **Review and update existing sexual harassment policy.**
A stand-alone sexual harassment policy should clearly communicate zero-tolerance to instances of sexual harassment, be inclusive of online interactions, that sexual harassment is unlawful under the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#), outline formal and informal processes for resolving complaints, and internal and external support options available for victims.
- **Review and update the sexual harassment complaint pathway.**
A best-practice process gives the complainant the flexibility to choose the complaint pathway that is best for them. These pathways can include self-managed, anonymous, informal, formal, or external and should include online and office-based options to ensure it is accessible to all staff, regardless of their work location. For more information on these pathways visit [Section 4. of the VAGO report on sexual harassment in local government.](#)
- **Deliver bystander action training.**
Bystander action training can improve employee confidence in speaking up when they witness or experience sexual harassment or other negative workplace behaviours and promotes respectful workplace culture.

5. Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

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 equitable opportunities.

The past 12 months indicate gender-balanced recruitment as half of all new recruits were women and half were men. Both men and women were recruited into mid-level roles (-3 and -4) and into the least senior roles (-5 and -6). This is unsurprising, as the gender composition of the workforce indicates that there is a high concentration of women employees in mid-level roles (-3 and -4), and there is a high concentration of men in the least senior roles (-5 and -6).

Of those exiting the workforce in the previous 12 months, most were women (68%). Of the total number of women exiting the workforce, most were aged between 35-44 years (24%). It is unsurprising that most women exiting the organisation are exiting from roles at level -6, as this is where many women are employed. It is important not to forget the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on women at work; women have reported a lack of boundaries between work and home, an increased workload, and less optimism than men about their career.¹⁴ A 2021 study found that around 60% of women reported planning on leaving their current job within two years.¹⁴ Women are juggling extra responsibilities such as home-schooling children, in addition to undertaking the majority of unpaid domestic work.¹⁴ Recent statistics show that in the local government area of Moira Shire, 28.2% of women complete 15+ hours of unpaid domestic work per week, compared to just 10.2% of men.¹⁵ This is likely to have impacted women's ability to stay in the workforce.

Of the total number of men who exited the workforce 10% were aged 25-34 years and 15% were 55 years and over. Meanwhile, most male recruits were aged 25-44 years. It is likely that men aged 65 years and over were exiting the workforce due to retirement, but the high proportion of young men exiting could be explored further through exit interviews.

The collection of intersectional data at the HR level will support a more complex analysis of this data.

All permanent promotions offered during the past 12 months were offered to women employees. Of those awarded higher duties in the same period, just over half were awarded to men (56% of employees awarded higher duties). The Employee Experience data adds some context to these statistics. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, some employees indicated that they felt they did not have an equal chance at promotion in the organisation (23% women, 30% men). Men were less likely to agree with this statement as level of seniority in the organisation decreased - 50% of men without management responsibilities disagreed with this statement.

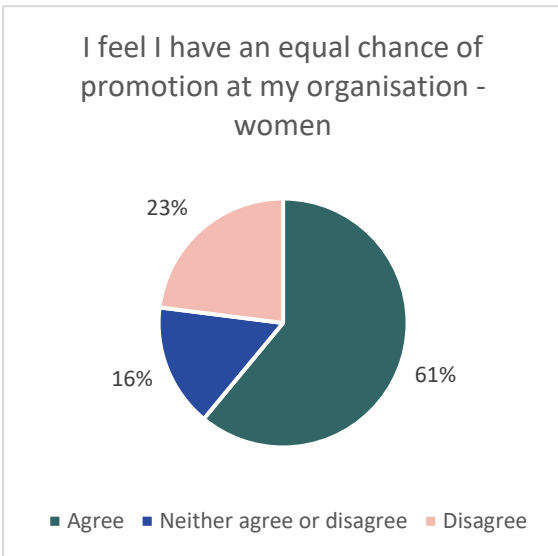


Figure 5: Level of agreement with the statement 'I feel I have an equal chance of promotion at my organisation', women

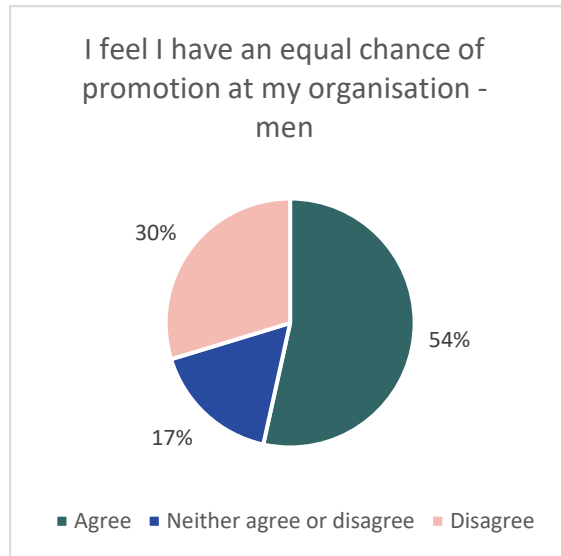


Figure 6: Level of agreement with the statement, 'I feel I have an equal chance of promotion at my organisation', men

When asked whether the organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit, 40% of men disagreed (Figures 7 and 8). A closer analysis of this data indicates that 61% of men without management responsibilities disagreed with this statement. Sometimes these types of responses can be a result of men feeling that women or people from minority groups are prioritised for promotion, to increase the diversity of the workforce.

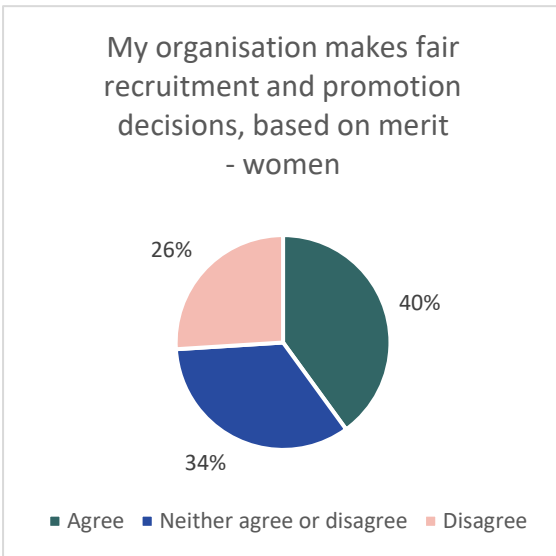


Figure 7: Level of agreement with the statement, 'My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit', women

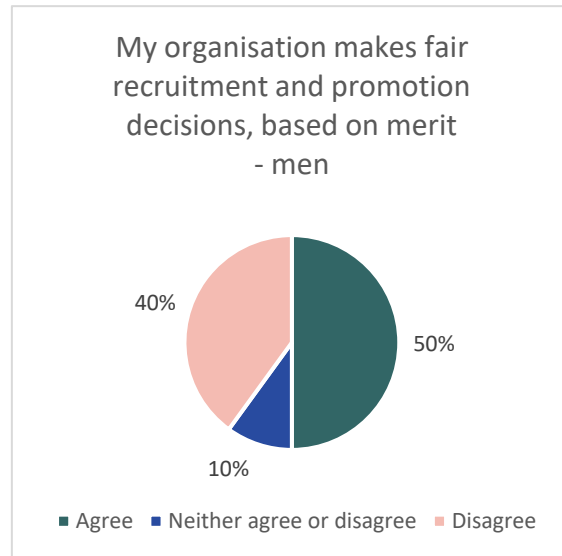


Figure 8: Level of agreement with the statement, 'My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit', men

There is no HR data on the gender composition of employees who had completed career development training in the past 12 months. However, Employee Experience data indicates that some employees were not satisfied with the way their learning and development needs had been addressed in the past 12 months (19% women, 27% men). Men in management roles were more likely to be satisfied than those who were not in management roles. It would be worth investigating further the types of learning and development needs that employees at all levels of the organisation have, and creating opportunities to meet these needs.

Employees were also asked about their perceptions of barriers to success at Moira Shire Council. For women, the most commonly perceived barriers were age (21% of women) (Figures 9 and 10), gender (12% of women) and disability (12% of women). Age is an intersectional factor that can be investigated further, as HR data is available. At the age range 45-54 years, women make up 54% of the workforce, at the age range 55-64 years, women make up 29% of the workforce, and at 65+ years, women make up 37.5% of the workforce. This is a barrier worth investigating further.

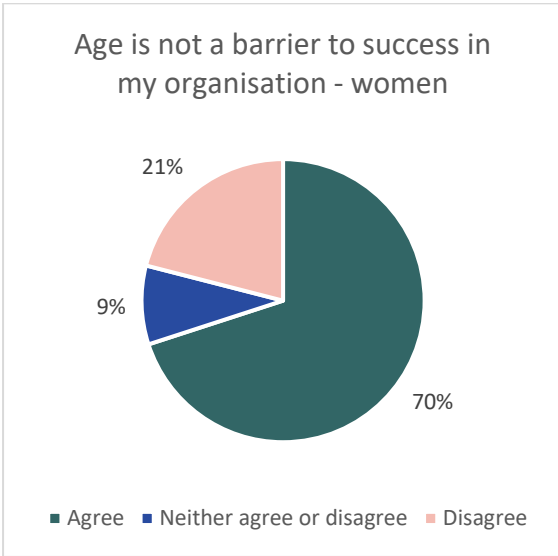


Figure 9: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation', women

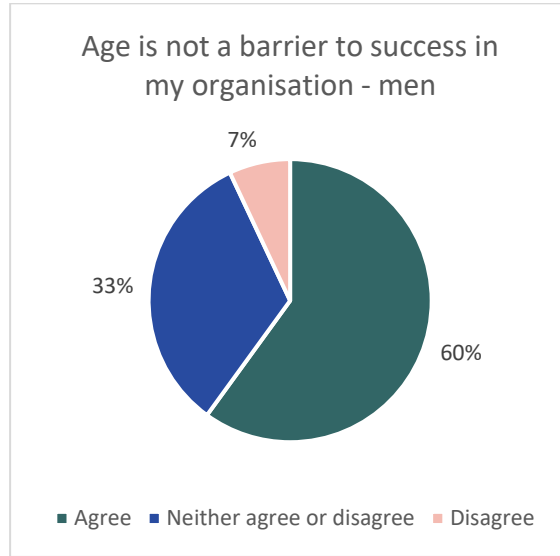


Figure 10: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation', men

Women with disabilities face numerous barriers in the workplace related to discrimination, which may be on the basis of gender or disability, low levels of awareness rights at work, difficulty in accessing flexible working arrangements, health issues, and difficulty in negotiating reasonable adjustments/accommodation in the workplace.¹⁶ Of note is that 20% of employees who reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace in the past 12 months, said that they were denied flexible working arrangements or other adjustments.

For men, the most commonly perceived barrier to success was sexual orientation (67%) (Figures 11 and 12). As intersectional data is currently not collected at the HR level, it is difficult to determine whether this barrier is a perception only or if it is actually present within the organisation.

As men hold the majority of leadership roles within Moira Shire Council, it indicates that gender may be a barrier to success for women within the organisation. Actioning some of the recommendations in this report will go promote gender equitable recruitment and promotion practices that will address gender as a barrier to success.

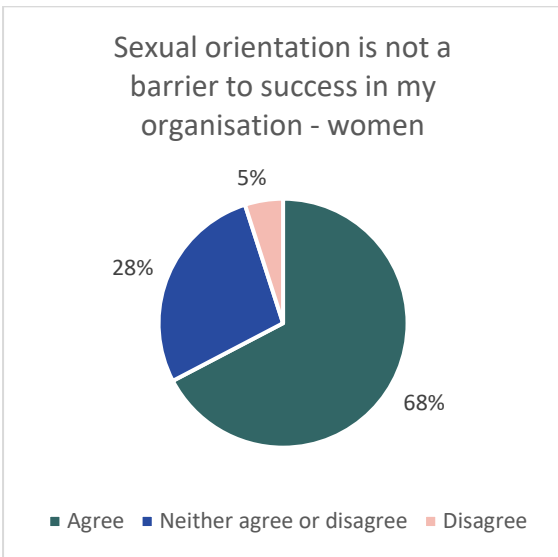


Figure 11: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation', women

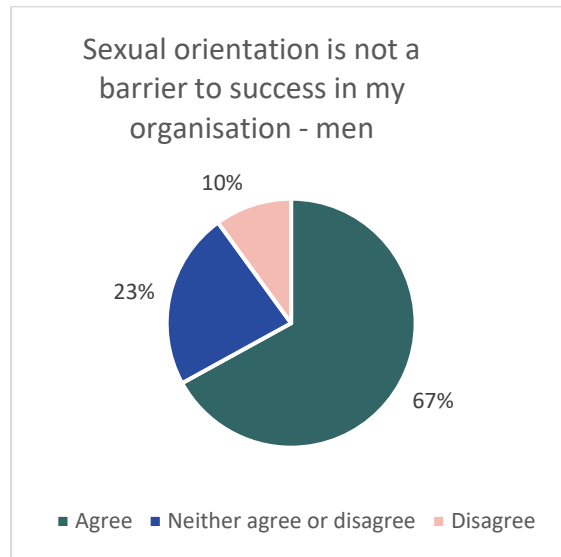


Figure 12: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation', men

Recommendations

- Establish recruitment targets for women and gender-diverse people,** particularly in roles or levels of the organisation where they are underrepresented, such as leadership roles. Actively encourage diverse candidates into sectors of the organisation where they are underrepresented. Partner with local networks such as neighbourhood houses, disability organisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and LGBTIQ+ groups. State-wide specialised organisations like Women with Disabilities Victoria and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, can provide tailored advice and support for encouraging and retaining diverse applicants.
- Investigate current recruitment processes to identify specific areas for improvement.** By obtaining feedback from applicants at each stage of the process, it is possible to uncover barriers and issues that may be faced by underrepresented groups. This feedback can help to improve the recruitment process for future applicants. If an applicant requests feedback on their application, ensure it is provided, so that they can improve their skills for future applications.
- Monitor the composition of recruitment panels.** The panel should include people of all genders and women from non-traditional and leadership roles. This will increase the likelihood of objective assessment and diverse perspectives being heard during the selection process. It can also offer a more positive experience for applicants.
- Conduct exit interviews with all employees exiting the workforce.** Alongside intersectional HR data, this will help to identify key reasons for leaving the

organisation and provide opportunities to improve equity in employee retention.

- **Investigate further the provision of equitable professional development and learning opportunities for all employees.**

This could be through workplace surveys or focus groups. Findings from this investigation will help to identify targeted strategies for meeting the needs of employees of all genders. Important things to consider include the availability of professional development and training for full-time and part-time employees and the upkeep of gender-disaggregated records of participation in such opportunities.

6. Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities

Flexible working arrangements and leave entitlements including parental leave help Victorians of all genders to 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 periods of parental leave. On average women do nearly twice as much unpaid work as men.¹⁵

It is 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.

There are slightly more women than men (52% women, 48% men) who hold formal flexible working arrangements at Moira Shire Council. There is at least one employee holding a flexible working arrangement at each level of the organisation, except at the leading hand level (level -5). It is evident that, at the senior leadership level, employees are utilising a range of flexible working arrangements. Surprisingly, men are using a wider range of options than women at the same level. This is an indication that men who are senior leaders are role-modelling the uptake of flexible working, which can impact on the uptake at less senior levels of the organisation.

When analysed alongside Employee Experience data, perceptions of flexible working arrangements differed across genders. Around 38% of women respondents in middle-manager roles thought that using flexible working arrangements was a barrier to success in the organisation. Contrastingly, no men at this level of the organisation thought that using flexible working arrangements was a barrier to success. It is difficult to say whether respondents were answering this question regarding their own success in the organisation or referring to the success of others. Further investigation is needed to determine whether this is a perception, or whether it exists as a barrier within the organisation.

When asked about other barriers to success in the organisation, respondents commonly disagreed that having family responsibilities was not a barrier to success (17% women, 23% men), as shown in Figures 13 and 14. An equal proportion of men and women (23% of women, 23% of men) disagreed that having caring responsibilities was not a barrier to success, as shown in Figures 15 and 16. This is interesting and is worth exploring further in employee consultation to understand what employees of different genders consider to be the difference in caring versus family responsibilities. Further consultation in this area might also bring up different needs for each and suggestions for what Moira Shire Council can do to better support people of all genders with caring and family responsibilities. This can be considered with reference to the gender-disaggregated caring responsibilities of employees in Table 7, which indicates women have greater and more diverse caring responsibilities than men employees.

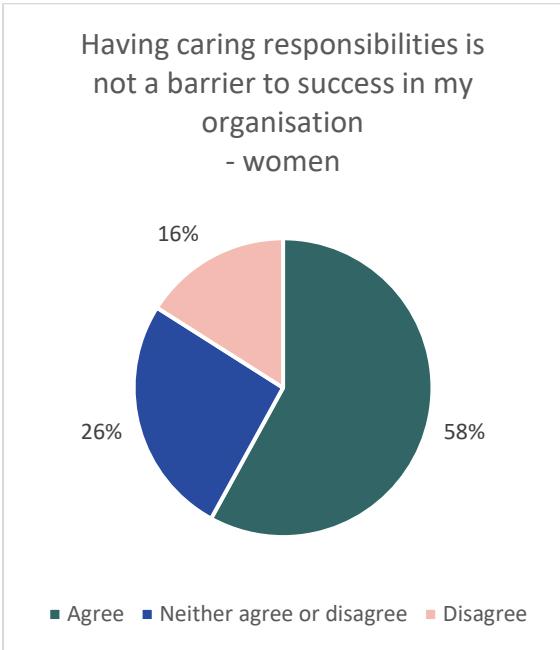


Figure 13: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation', women

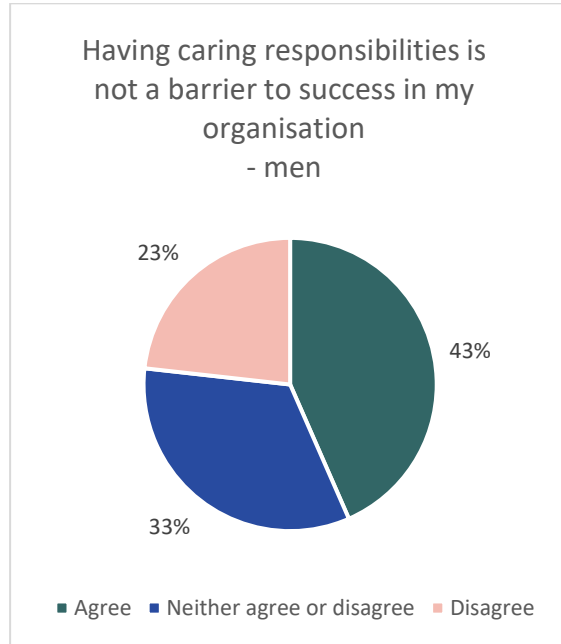


Figure 14: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation', men

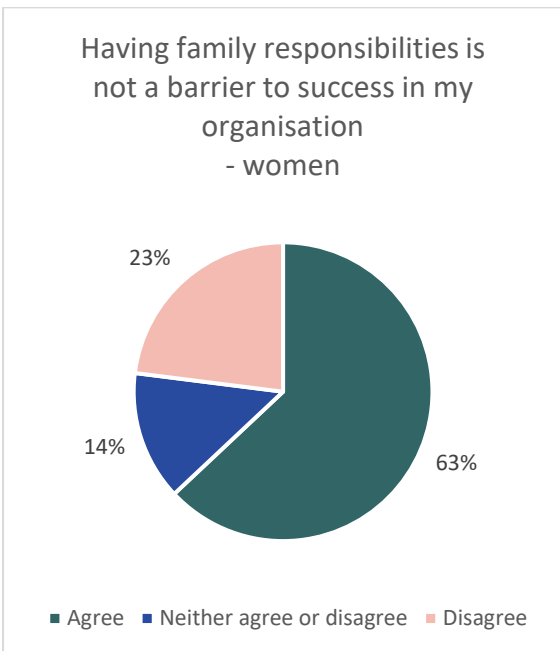


Figure 15: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Having family responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation', women

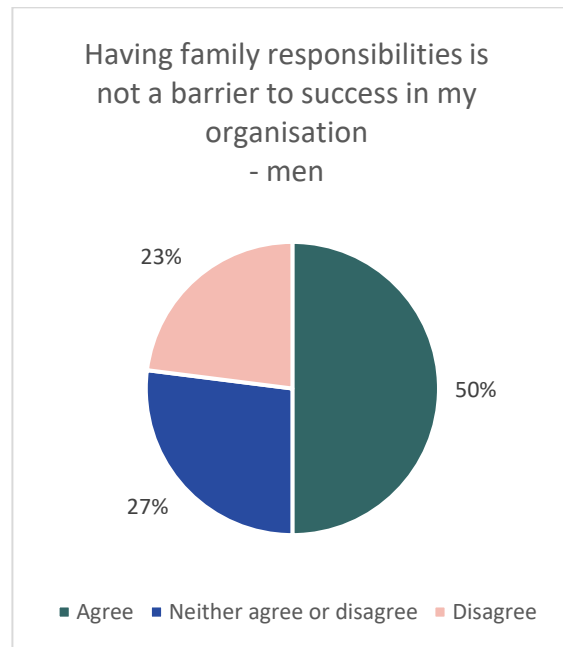


Figure 16: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Having family responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation', men

Do you have responsibility for caring for any of the following people?	Women (%)	Men (%)
Child(ren) younger than preschool age	7	10
Child(ren) of preschool age	5	0
Child(ren) primary school age	37	23
Child(ren) secondary school age	23	20
Person(s) with a disability	5	0
Person(s) with a medical condition	5	0
Person(s) with a mental illness	2	3
Frail or aged person(s)	7	13
None of the above	4	5
Prefer not to say	2	7

Table 7: Responses to question, 'Do you have responsibility for caring for any of the following people?', by gender

Positively, most women (77% of women respondents) agreed that they had access to the flexibility they needed to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities (Figures 17 and 18). This proportion was slightly lower for men, with 63% agreeing with the statement. Men in non-management roles were more likely to disagree with this statement, which may indicate a lack of flexible working arrangements available for men at this level, who are often working in non-office or desk-based roles. See Table 8 for a gendered breakdown of flexible working arrangements utilised by respondents.

Do you use any of the following flexible working arrangements?	Women (%)	Men (%)
Shift swap	5	3
Working more hours over fewer days	9	7
Flexible start and finish times	35	20
Working from an alternative location	14	14
Part-time	21	10
Job-sharing	2	0
Study leave	7	3
Purchased leave	5	7
Using leave	7	7
Other	5	7
I do not use any of these flexible working arrangements	37	53

Table 8: Responses to the question, 'Do you use any of the following flexible working arrangements?', by gender

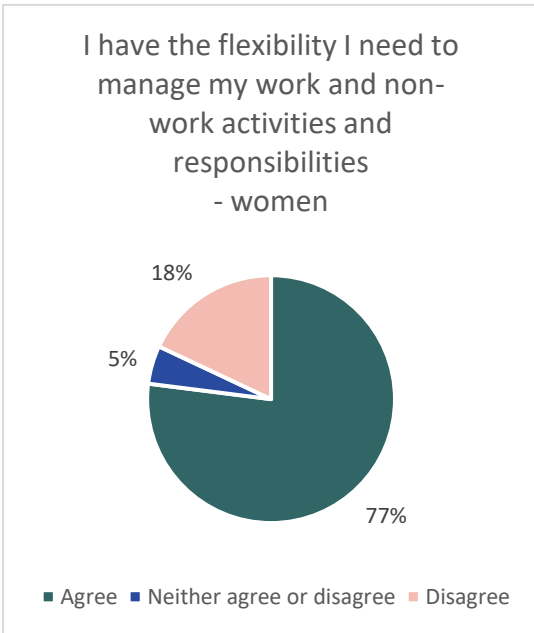


Figure 17: Level of agreement with the statement, 'I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and non-work activities and responsibilities', women

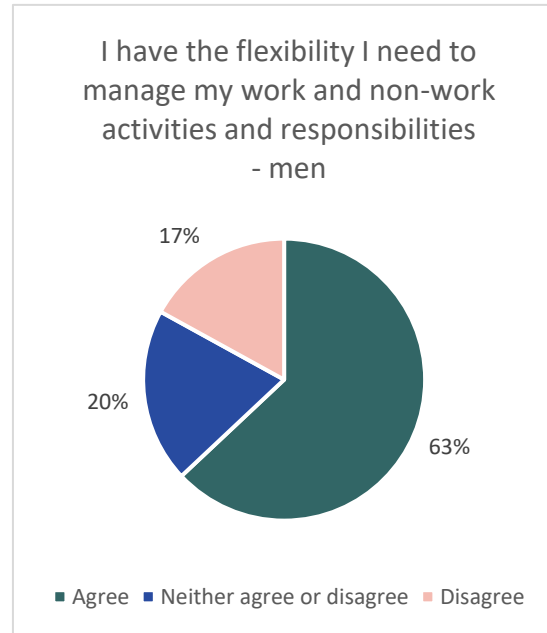


Figure 18: Level of agreement with the statement, 'I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and non-work activities and responsibilities', men

Parental leave was utilised by a total of nine employees in the past 12 months, and 33% of employees who did so were men. It is quite common for men to be unaware of their parental leave entitlements in the workplace, and this could be a contributing factor to the uptake of parental leave for men. Additionally, a workplace culture where they feel caring and family responsibilities may be a barrier to their success in the organisation may discourage men for utilising such arrangements.

Carer's leave

Carer's leave was accessed by both men and women employees, with 27% of women having taken carer's leave in the past twelve months. In comparison 20% of men had utilised carer's leave. This is consistent with stereotypical roles within relationships, whereby women are prescribed by gender as the primary carers for children, family members, and to support others.

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.

A small number of employees had utilised family violence leave in the past 12 months. Most respondents agreed if they needed to take it, that the organisation would support them (77% women, 70% men). However, as shown in Figures 19 and 20, some employees 'neither agreed nor disagreed', 'disagreed' or 'didn't know' if the organisation would support them if they needed to take family violence leave (total of 23% women, 30% of men).

One in four (23%) Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner since the age of 15 and one in four (23%) Australian women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.¹⁷ Based on these statistics; it is highly likely that there are additional employees at Moira Shire Council experiencing family violence. It is important that all employees feel supported to take family violence leave if they need to, and as such, relevant policies and procedures should be promoted to raise awareness and understanding of family violence as a workplace issue.

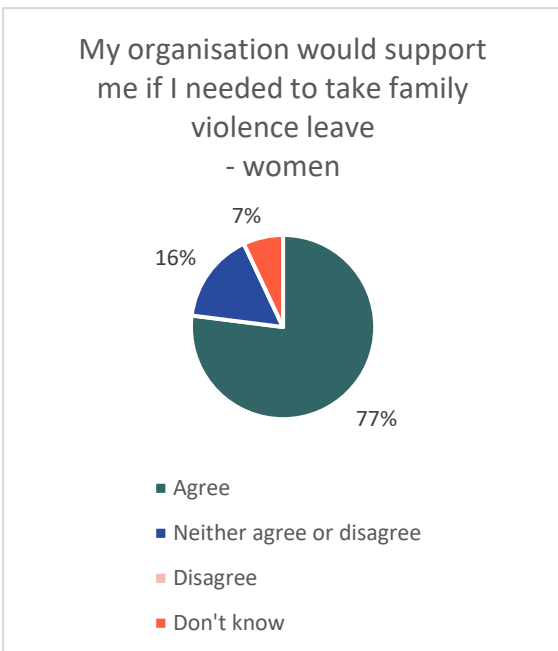


Figure 19: Level of agreement with the statement, 'My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave', women

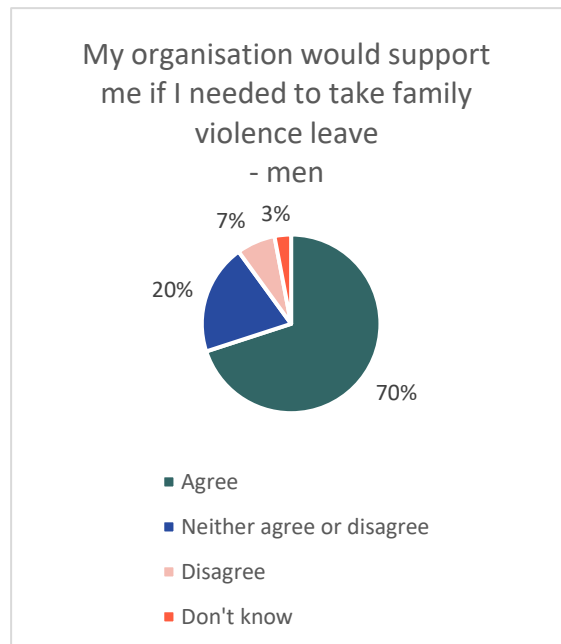


Figure 20: Level of agreement with the statement, 'My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave', men

Recommendations

- **Regularly communicate clearly to employees of all genders about where to find workplace policies and how to access them.**

If possible, this communication should come from leaders in the organisation. Organisational leaders, particularly men, who often are underrepresented in the uptake of flexible work arrangements should also role-model the utilisation of these flexible terms of work, use parental leave and model using working arrangements that support family and caring responsibilities. New recruits should also be informed of these policies and encouraged to utilise them.

- **Reassess which jobs can be worked with flexible working practices, can be job shared, or can be worked part-time.**

Often roles that have flexible working arrangements are desk-based jobs which are predominantly held by women. It is a perception that the demand for flexible work is only driven by people with childcare responsibilities. However, employees of different demographics may have different requirements for flexible work, such as study, to save on travel costs to and from work, environmental concerns, social and other interests outside of paid work. Flexible work, especially in roles where it is not traditionally offered can greatly increase the recruitment pool, especially in engaging older workers. Moira Shire Council should consider implementing creative solutions to flexible work in non-traditional types of roles.

- **Review and update family violence leave policy.**

Policies that do not include comprehensive information may deter employees for utilising family violence leave, particularly when the policy is unclear about the handling of confidential employee disclosures, mandatory reporting and any adverse reaction the employee may face where work performance is affected by family violence. Best practice inclusions can be found at [Victorian Government's Supporting staff: family violence leave policy considerations](#).

- **Investigate barriers to success in the organisation further.**

Although some staff members, particularly men, perceive flexible working and having caring and family responsibilities as barriers to success, it's not possible to ascertain from the data whether this barrier exists in the organisation or if it is a perceived barrier. Further in-depth consultation with employees around this topic will help to understand how employees witness or experience these barriers and may help to develop employee-led solutions.

- **Implement gender targets for the uptake of flexible working arrangements.**

Access to flexible working is linked to increased productivity, ability to attract and retain employees, improved employee well-being, and an increase proportion of women in leadership. Men are less likely than women to access flexible working and when they do, are more likely to suffer discrimination or be perceived as less dedicated to their work.¹⁷ Targets will help to normalise and make the uptake of these arrangements accessible to all employees.

7. Gendered segregation within the workplace

Gendered segregation of the workforce at Moira Shire Council is not unexpected, as gender segregation across occupations in Australia, the UK and the rest of the OECD has remained persistent over the last 20 years.² Women are overrepresented in the roles of health professionals, clerical and administrative workers, midwifery, and nursing professionals. Men are overrepresented in labouring roles, skilled animal, and horticultural workers (e.g., gardeners), technicians and trades workers, planning, surveying and engineering, and specialist managing roles. See Figure 21 for further information.

This gendered segregation is driven by gendered norms and stereotypes about the types of work that are appropriate for men and women, as well as structural factors including access to flexible working arrangements in particular roles. Gendered workforce segregation reinforces gender inequality and widens the pay gap, as the average pay is lower in industries and occupations dominated by women. On the other hand, a diverse workforce goes some way to address gendered stereotypes, promotes gender equality, and reduces the gender pay gap.

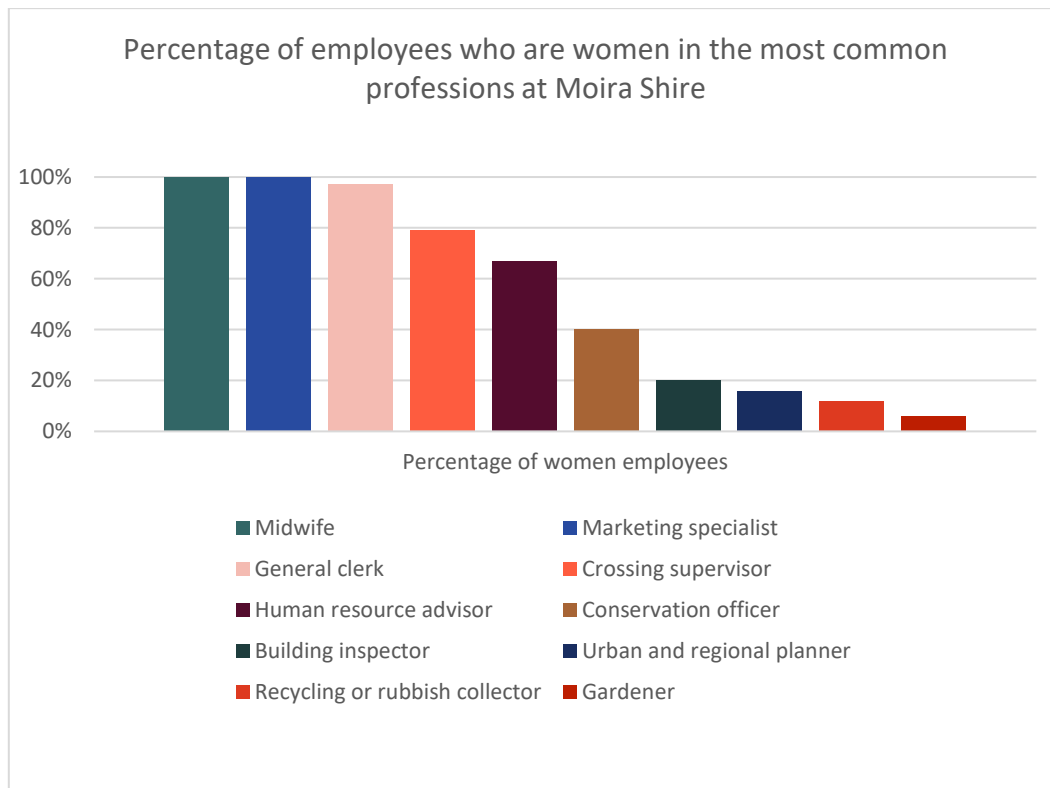


Figure 21: Percentage of women in the most common professions at Moira Shire

Under this indicator in the Employee Experience Survey, employees were asked about their personal experience of bullying and discrimination in the workplace. Almost 24% of women and 27% of men said they had personally experienced bullying in the past 12 months. This means of all respondents, when not disaggregated by gender, 26% had reported personally experiencing bullying – compared to an average of 16% across local government organisations in Victoria.¹³ The most common form of bullying experienced was incivility, such as talking down to others, making demeaning remarks or not listening to somebody (60% of respondents), followed by exclusion or isolation (55% of respondents) and

withholding essential information for the employee to do their job (40% of respondents). When asked who perpetrated the bullying, most respondents indicated it was a senior manager (40% of respondents) or a colleague (35% of respondents). Positively, many employees who had experienced bullying reported it to Human Resources (45% of respondents). However, none of these complaints to HR translated to formal complaints, with the most common reason cited “I believed there would be negative consequences for my reputation (e.g., that I would be blamed or not believed or thought to be overreacting)” (65% of respondents).

Workplace bullying can impact on employee health and wellbeing, as well as productivity. Bullying can be influenced by many factors including work stressors, different leadership or management styles, and poor workplace relationships.⁹ The finding that some employees indicated bullying is perpetrated by senior managers is of concern to Moira Shire Council. Demonstrated senior management commitment in identifying, preventing, and responding to workplace bullying is one of the key factors for preventing unreasonable behaviour and managing psychological risks.¹⁸ Effective leaders should model the values of Moira Shire Council and set standards for workplace behaviour through their own conduct, sending a clear message to employees that the organisation does not tolerate unreasonable behaviour.

A small number of respondents indicated they had personally experienced discrimination in the past 12 months (13% of respondents), and some indicated they weren't sure if they had experienced discrimination (10%). Most respondents who reported a personal experience of discrimination indicated that the discrimination did not fit into any of the categories provided in the Employee Experience Survey. Employees being unsure whether they have been discriminated against or not may indicate a lack of clarity around what constitutes discrimination in the workplace. Clear and consistent messaging around workplace policies will support employees in understanding their right to work free of discrimination.

Recommendations

- **Investigate new talent pipelines with respect to gender and other forms of diversity for roles where women and men are traditionally overrepresented.**
This may involve creating new partnerships with specialised organisations and education providers, such as [Women Driving Transport at Wodonga TAFE](#) and [STEM women](#).
- **Assess the environment within gender-segregated areas of the organisation.**
For example, it is useful to consider whether there are changerooms and bathrooms fitted with sanitary bins available for people of all genders when working in the outdoor crew, or if gender-neutral and varying uniform options are available.
- **Review and update workplace bullying policy.**
If a stand-alone bullying policy does not exist, develop one. The policy should include commitment to providing employees with a healthy and safe working environment. It should also outline the standard of behaviour expected of all employees, including examples of what is and what is not workplace bullying, definitions of workplace bullying, processes related to reporting and responding, how complainant confidentiality will be maintained, a commitment to zero tolerance to bullying in the workplace, and where to get more information. The policy should also include a statement of how it applies in connection with work and work-related

events and activities and online communication. This policy should be promoted regularly, through different channels and included in induction processes.

- **Review and update workplace discrimination policy.**

If a stand-alone discrimination policy does not exist, develop one. The policy should include a strong statement of the organisation's position on anti-discrimination, a clear definition of discrimination, legal obligations of the organisation, a statement about employee and employer responsibilities in preventing discrimination, and information on how and where to seek help. This policy should be promoted regularly, through different channels and included in induction processes.

- **Review and update bullying and discrimination complaint pathways.**

A best practice process is one where complainants have the flexibility to choose the complaint pathway that is best for them, and that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.

- **Promote leadership opportunities for women.**

Partner with organisations like [Women and Leadership Australia](#) or the [Australian Local Government Women's Association](#), some of whom offer scholarships for women in management roles in local government to participate in leadership courses. The promotion of opportunities like this needs to be supported by an authorising environment where women are supported and celebrated for their achievements.

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Appendix 1: Additional questions from Employee Experience Survey

Level of agreement	Women (%)	Men (%)	All respondents (%)
Strongly agree	58	37	47
Agree	30	43	37
Neither agree or disagree	9	13	12
Disagree	0	3	1
Strongly disagree	2	3	3
Don't know	0	0	0

Table 9: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Local government has an important role to play in promoting gender equality', by gender

Level of agreement	Women (%)	Men (%)	All respondents (%)
Strongly agree	16	20	17
Agree	44	43	42
Neither agree or disagree	23	20	26
Disagree	12	13	11
Strongly disagree	0	0	0
Don't know	5	3	4

Table 10: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Our leaders publicly promote the organisation's support for gender equality', by gender

Level of agreement	Women (%)	Men (%)	All respondents (%)
Strongly agree	12	7	9
Agree	35	23	28
Neither agree or disagree	26	30	29
Disagree	21	33	26
Strongly disagree	5	3	4
Don't know	2	3	4

Table 11: Level of agreement with the statement, 'Gender inequality is the root cause of violence against women', by gender

Level of agreement	Women (%)	Men (%)	All respondents (%)
Strongly agree	5	3	5
Agree	37	20	29
Neither agree or disagree	14	23	19
Disagree	30	33	30

Strongly disagree	14	13	14
Don't know	0	7	3

Table 12: Level of agreement with the statement, 'In the workplace, staff are stereotyped into 'female' and 'male' roles', by gender

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