



WELLINGTON  
SHIRE COUNCIL

# Gender Equality Progress Reporting 2023

## Background

Council's first Gender Equality Action Plan and workplace gender audit were submitted to the Commission for Gender in the Public Sector (the Commission) in March 2022.

Council is required to report on progress on seven workplace indicators:

1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce
2. Gender composition of governing bodies (Councillors)
3. Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
4. Sexual harassment in the workplace
5. Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace
6. Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to:
  - Family violence leave
  - Flexible working arrangements
  - Working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
7. Gendered segregation within the workplace

This 2-year progress report and related analysis on comparisons between 2021 and 2023 comes from a variety of sources:

- Employee Experience survey data 2021 and 2023 data (Including People Matter survey 2023)
- Workplace gender audits conducted 30 June 2021 and June 2023
- Gender Equality Action Plan actions progress reporting
- Number of Gender Impact Assessments (GIA's) conducted that made a difference to gender inequality

## Overview

See below for a high-level overview of Council's progress as at June 2023. Further detail is provided in the following tables.

### Gender Impact Assessments (GIA's)

3 GIA's were completed between 2021 and 2023, with 3 resulting in positive action towards gender equality.

Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

- 5 actions completed
- 13 actions in progress
- 8 actions not started
- 4 actions on-going

### Workplace Gender Equality Indicators

Progress has been made on 3 of the 7 indicators.

Workplace Gender Audit

Data has been provided to the Commission and will be available on their Insights Portal along with comparison data for other defined entities, including other Victorian councils.

## Gender Impact Assessments (GIA's)

	Subject	Description	Status	Confirm if actions taken	Describe if actions taken
<b>Enterprise Agreement No.11</b>	Policy	Enterprise Agreement - bargaining agreement outlining the minimum entitlements for Wellington Shire Council staff	For review	Yes	Definition of primary and secondary carers updated to be more gender inclusive by removing pronouns and references to traditional gender roles (e.g. that women can apply for primary carer leave, men can apply for secondary carers leave). Definition was updated to align to national definition as used by Centrelink and other government departments in the context of government paid parental leave applications and family care reimbursements and subsidies.
<b>Flexible work arrangements</b>	Policy	Policy outlines flexible work provisions including working from home	For review	Yes	Provisions extended to allow staff to work more flexibly between office and home, by increasing the permitted days per month (which means eligible staff can work from home more than they work in office). This additional flexibility may assist staff with family and caring responsibilities to better balance their work and personal life without reliance on individual arrangements. We acknowledge that not all positions are eligible to work remotely, for operational reasons.

<p><b>Aqua Enregy Redevelopment</b></p>	<p>Policy</p>	<p>Redevelopment proposal of Council owned facility, Aqua Energy, as a water-based recreation facility</p>	<p>New</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Proposal for upgrades includes removal of gendered bathrooms, and greater accessibility for those with a disability, aged etc. Further to this was recommended that further GIA's be conducted to services to be provided in the new facility. Another action is to look into funding opportunities that can be linked to Gender positive outcomes.</p>
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## Strategies and measures progress

Strategies and Measures	Status	Status Description
<b>Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce</b>		
1.1 Develop our gender equality baseline and promote gender equality in our senior leadership team by 2025.	Not started	CEO and Corporate Management Team (CMT) to set and discuss baseline gender equality targets for Wellington Shire Council and what this will look like into the future.
1.2 Corporate leadership team to consider and as appropriate, create opportunities for senior leaders to have access to part time work including promoting potential for role share arrangements.	Ongoing	This is being considered in policy and recruitment training updates with hiring panel members and managers and is an ongoing item.
1.3 Focus on improving the number of women who work part time being offered higher duties and secondment opportunities by educating hiring managers on benefit of part time/job share arrangements in leadership and senior professional positions.	In progress	This is being drafted into relevant policies to encourage managers to consider non-traditional staffing solutions.
1.4 Create a dashboard for reporting gender and diversity data insights to collect, monitor and report workplace profile data/demographics and employee perceptions regarding diversity and inclusion (D&I) and Gender Equality.	Not started	This item has not yet started as it is dependent on the implementation of a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) which can automate employee profile data for a dashboard. A new HRIS has been scoped and selected and will be implemented in late 2024.

### Indicator 2 : Gender composition of governing bodies

2.1 Support a 50/50 gender representation in our governing body for our Council by 2025 in line with the targets set by the Minister for Local Government.	In progress	New Council election process to commence in 2024 with a new group of Councillors to commence later in the year.
2.2 Encourage Councillors to build their skills and knowledge of gender equality by receiving training every two years focused on developing a gender inclusive workplace and preventing violence against women.	In progress	Research into appropriate training opportunities is currently underway and intends to be rolled out to Councillors in 2024/2025 in line with new elected Councillor cohort. Current plan is to provide training to the new Councillors in May 2025 with support from Gippsland Women's Health and/or GenderWorks.
<b>3. Equal remuneration &amp; gender pay irrespective of gender</b>		
3.1 Commit to pay superannuation on parental leave.	Complete	This has been completed -superannuation is paid on employer-funded paid parental leave.
3.2 Develop a matrix to scope appropriate responsibilities and applicable equitable remuneration for leadership positions to be conducted annually.	Not started	We're yet to commence crafting a framework to clearly define the responsibilities and salaries for leadership roles. The hold-up is due to our anticipation of the release of our capability framework in 2024. This framework is crucial as it ensures that the skills required for leadership positions align with the corresponding compensation, fostering fairness and uniformity within our organisation. Once the capability framework becomes available, we'll kick off the implementation of Strategy 3.2.

<p>3.3 Conduct pay equity analysis within our organisation on individual and job grade level to identify pay-gaps or inequities and take remedial action. Annual reporting to be provided of pay equity analysis to the Executive Leadership Team on achievements, gaps and recommendations (note - this may be rolled up into the wider diversity and inclusion (D&amp;I)/Gender Equality reporting). (Annually)</p>	<p>Not started</p>	<p>As above, this report will be aligned with competencies mapped in the Capability Framework to be implemented in 2024.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4. Sexual harassment in the workplace</b></p>		
<p>4.1 Maintain and improve face to face training on sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination, safe strategies for bystander interventions so that at minimum all staff and Councillors attend at least once every two years. Online training refresher to be completed annually for all staff.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>This item has been completed but is considered an ongoing body of work. We are committed to providing 'respectful workplace' training for all staff and Councillors at least every second year, covering bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and bystander intervention topics, and an online module on these topics every 12 months. The first cycle of this practice has been completed and will continue.</p>
<p>4.2 Create a safe environment to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work and work to eliminate all forms of inappropriate workplace behaviour by introducing an anonymous reporting tool to help with creating an environment where staff feel safe and heard.</p>	<p>Not started</p>	<p>This has not been started as we are waiting on the implementation of our new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) system. This project is planned to commence later in the year. Updates to our Workplace Bullying and Harassment online training will occur in line with this. Suggestions have been made to aligning the launch of this process with our biannual face to face training in April 2025.</p>
<p>4.3 Roll out a "Speak up" or "Call it out" campaign to promote and encourage staff to report inappropriate workplace behaviour.</p>	<p>Not started</p>	<p>This has not been started as we are waiting on the implementation of our new Human</p>



		<p>Resources Information System (HRIS) system. This project is planned to commence later in the year. Updates to our Workplace Bullying and Harassment online training will occur in line with this. Suggestions have been made to aligning the launch of this process with our biannual face to face training in April 2025.</p>
<p>4.4 Regularly communicating to customers and staff that the council does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination from the public.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>This is incorporated into policies and staff training, and backed up in practice by supports given to protect staff from vulnerable situations (such as hiring additional security during expected disruption times at public work sites) and to support staff when incidents do occur (such as through crisis management with our Employee Assistance Provider). Repeat offenders are banned from premises by Victoria Police, and staff are aware of these interventions and supports.</p>
<p>4.5 Provide more specialised training for customer facing staff regarding managing inappropriate behaviour from members of the public.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>This has been completed. In 2023, all customer/public-facing staff were invited to attend a session called "verbal judo" which specialises in navigating difficult situations and de-escalating conflict through communication techniques. In addition to this we ran several workshops with key staff in community facing roles for "Dealing with the tough stuff" with Pragmatic thinking. These workshops dive deep into the science of human behaviour and delivers both practical and pragmatic strategies for managing difficult conversations in the</p>

		workplace. Our Port of Sale and customer service teams also completed De-escalation training for covid conversations training. Our School Crossing Supervisors also completed De-escalation training.
<b>5. Support for flexible working conditions</b>		
5.1 Leaders commit to supporting a more positive culture towards workplace flexibility and to make flexible roles common practice at all levels of the organisation to support work life integration for all, including those with caring or family responsibilities.	In progress	Our Workplace Flexibility Policy was updated last year from the 1st June 2023. We have increased work from home (WFH) days which were lifted from 8 days per month to 12 days per month (non-cumulative). We also continue to offer a wide range of flexible working arrangements including 48/52's, Rostered Days Off (RDO's) and individual flexible arrangements.
5.2 Promote Council's workplace flexibility policy which allows eligible staff to decide whether they want to work from home, 8 days per month.	Complete	This has been completed and in 2023, the existing policy extended to provide an opportunity for appropriate staff to work from home up to 12 days per month (3 days per week).
5.3 Leverage Council's offering to provide flexible work arrangements as a key attraction and retention strategy to attract top talent. Promote Wellington Shire Council's flexible work practices internally and on our website. Ensure all job ads and position descriptions promote flexible working when attracting and recruiting new talent into the organisation.	Complete	This has been completed.

## 6. Recruitment & promotion practices in the workplace

6.1 Develop a strategic plan to attract, develop and retain people from diverse backgrounds based on baseline diversity and inclusion (D&I) insights and which support Wellington Shire Council's goals and aspirations. Overlay with an intersectional lens.

Not started

Flagged to be aligned with updates to Council's Workforce Plan.

## 7. Gendered segregation within the workplace

7.1. Apply a development lens and provide leadership and decision-making opportunities for women and under-represented groups, with support through personal development planning.

In progress

In November 2023 we sponsored 8 women from different areas of Council to attend the LGPRO (Local Government Professionals) Women's Professional Development Day and Gala Dinner for women in local government.

In 2024 our learning and development team are actively looking are more initiatives that focus on development opportunities for women and other underrepresented groups at Council. A working group for our T4 committee which focuses on the Coordinator and Team leader levels of leadership are developing a program that will meet our needs at this level of the organisation.

7.2 Encourage greater gender representation across areas of under-representation including for people who work part-time and through our secondment and higher duties opportunities. Educate leaders that 'best fit for the team' and secondments are not necessarily the most obvious choice or highest scoring interview candidate.

In progress

Updates have been made to our Replacement of Absences Policy. Further changes to be considered to highlight opportunities for job share arrangements and inclusion for part-time staff to have opportunities for higher duties or secondments.

		Recruitment training for managers is planned in alignment with the launch of our new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) in mid-2024. The training will include content to educate leaders to incorporate more inclusive recruitment practices.
7.3 Pursue traineeship and apprenticeship arrangements to support more diverse entry into non-traditional career pathways, with on a focus on under-represented groups, including people living with disability, and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Ongoing	Currently we have a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) agreement with GLaWAC (Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Aboriginal Corporation) to host a shared Traineeship of an Indigenous On-Country Officer. The aim of the program is to enhance Aboriginal capabilities through meaningful employment and training through traineeships and recruitment with Wellington Shire as a partner agency. This will enable diverse and long-term career pathways for the Aboriginal community.
<b>8. Inclusive culture</b>		
8.1 Senior Leaders actively support delivery of actions from the GEAP which will have a significant impact on their business area of responsibility.	Ongoing	This is ongoing and delivered through leadership representation on the Gender Equality Committee, the completion of Gender Impact Assessments, and consultation with staff.
8.2 Encourage positive culture where staff feel safe to voice considered contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences by improving psychological safety within teams through inclusive workplace training for all staff and leaders.	In progress	Psychological safety training to be rolled out in alignment with the new Victorian Government Workplace Health and Safety Guidelines. Informal plans to commence training for Leadership and Corporate Management Team (CMT) are forecast to occur in 2024/2025.

8.3 Increase awareness across the organisation of how we all can help build a positive and inclusive culture for people from all backgrounds including people who identify as LGBTIQ+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander via cultural awareness training with GLaWAC and specialist disability awareness training.

In progress

#### **Disability Awareness**

Disability Awareness eLearning module purchased and in the process of being rolled out to all staff as an optional training module. We also have face to face workshops planned for March with "Let's Talk Disability" who are a specialised training provider with facilitators with "lived experience". Training will be rolled out to our executive and leadership teams as well as our Leisure Services Staff and Gender Equality Committee.

We also have an internal staff member who is completing "Train the Trainer" to facilitate internal sessions with staff on "Hidden Disabilities" in either late 2024 or 2025.

#### **LGBTIQ+**

Our Communities team is currently working towards receiving a Rainbow Tick accreditation for our Council. We would like to align our proposed training with Gippsland Pride with the other recommendations that may come up as part of the Rainbow-Ready audit. At this stage we have planned for training to occur in June 2024 in alignment with Pride Month and the results of the audit/accreditation process. There will be training options for our CEO, executive, leadership and Gender Equality Committee. We are also potentially looking at limited optional sessions that open to all staff book into based on their interest.

		<p><b>Cultural Awareness</b> In May 2022 our Parks and Gardens team all attended Cultural Awareness Sessions with GLaWAC (Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation) to support the commencement of an indigenous Trainee working within their team.</p> <p>We have a face to face "All Cultures Awareness Training" planned for delivery in June 2025 for all staff.</p>
<b>9. Data reporting, governance and policies</b>		
9.1 Leadership to complete inclusive leadership training to empower leaders to be advocates for gender equality and diversity and inclusion in the workplace and community.	In progress	Research into appropriate training opportunities is currently underway and intends to be rolled out to leaders in 2024.
9.2 Assess WSC people policies and practices across the employee life cycle with a diversity and inclusion (D&I) lens. This is applicable to performance management and retention strategies, promotion, talent identification, talent management, succession planning, remuneration, professional development, recognition and end-of-employment procedures and practices.	In progress	This is being completed as policies are being updated.
9.3 Strengthen existing people policies and practices by implementing recommendations to embed diversity and inclusion (D&I) principles.	Ongoing	Conduct a comprehensive review of current policies, practices, and procedures including recruitment, hiring, promotion, training, compensation, and retention. Analyse demographic data to identify areas where there may be gaps or disparities in

		representation and inclusion. A major update of our Recruitment Policy has been completed with a Gender Impact Assessment completed. A broader more comprehensive review needs to be completed, which is forecast to occur in 2025.
9.4 Update Council position descriptions to include a statement on gender equality, diversity and inclusion.	In progress	A large project which commenced in October 2023 is underway to review our position description templates and their content. This is a large project which will be ongoing throughout 2024. Finalised position description changes are forecast to be completed by mid-2025.
9.5 Build on and further develop demographic data systems to better reflect the cultural make up of our organisation.	In progress	We have updated our new employee personal detail form to capture demographic/intersectional data and are building our new Human Resources Management System (HRIS) to make it easier to gather and store this data confidentially.
9.6 Amend onboarding and exit Interviews questions to capture gender equality experiences.	In progress	Planned for completion in late 2024 following updates required after implementation of our new Human Resources Information System (HRIS).