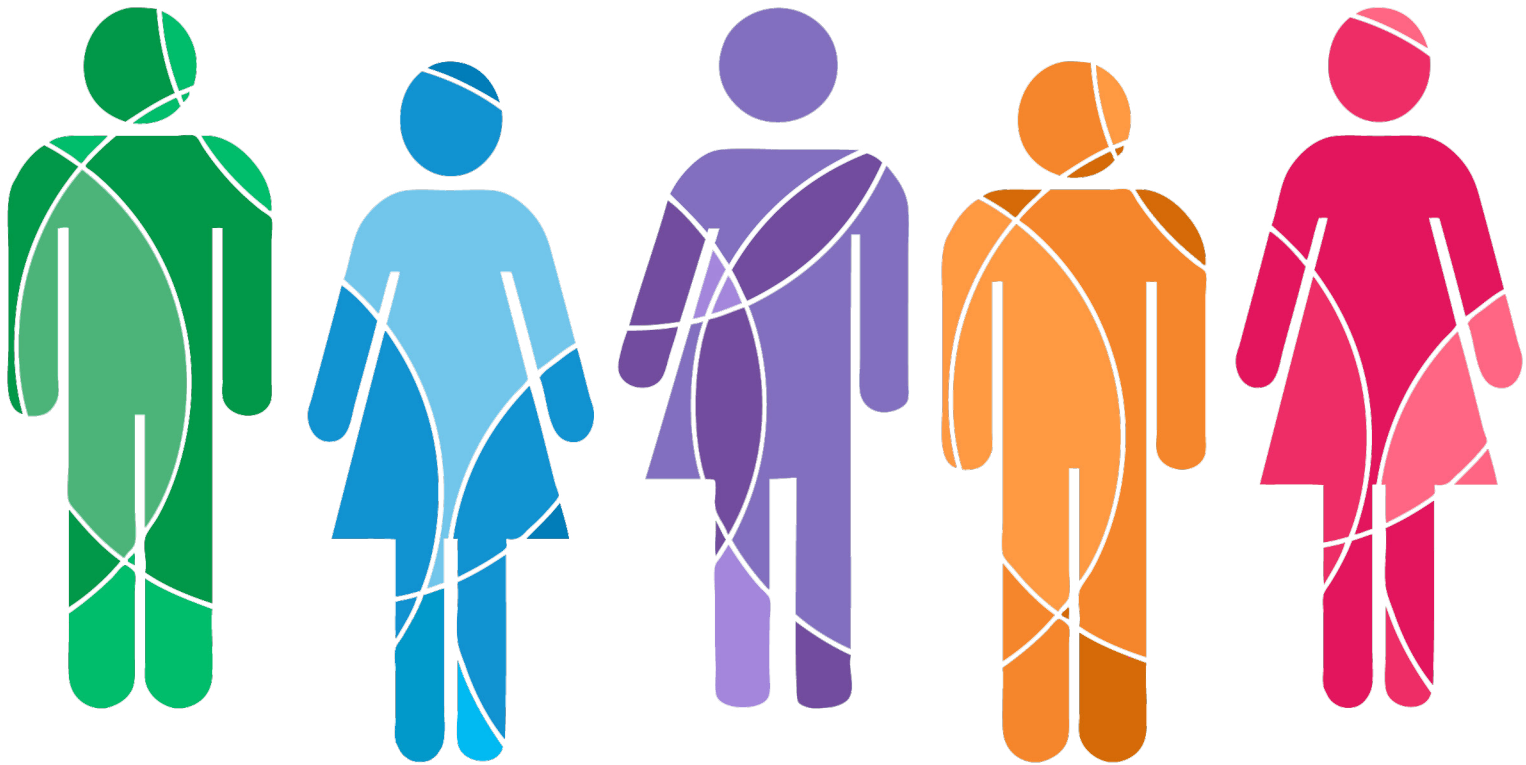


Gender Equality Action Plan

2021-25



Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of this land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire, and their enduring relationship with country. The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years.

Council values their living culture and practices and their right to self-determination. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders, past, present, and future.

Table of Contents

CEO Statement	3
Introduction and background	4
Diversity and inclusion statement.....	4
1.0 Gender Audit Results and Analysis	5
1.1 Workplace Gender Audit (WGA) data collection and methodology	5
1.2 Gender Audit Results	6
1.3 Key Insights.....	10
1.3.1 Gender composition and diversity	10
1.3.2 Gender composition of governing body	10
1.3.3 Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender	11
1.3.4 Sexual harassment in the workplace	13
1.3.5 Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace	14
1.3.6 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	14
1.3.7 Gendered segregation within the workplace	15
2.0 Meaningful consultation and engagement.....	16
3.0 Case for Change.....	18
3.1 EGSC gender equality journey.....	19
3.2 Links to Freedom from Violence and Women’s Charter	20
3.3 Links to Council Plan 2021-25	21
3.4 Links to the Workforce Plan (WFP) 2021-25	21
3.5 Council programs, committees and documents	22
4.0 Strategies and measures 2021-25	24
5.0 Strategic Resource Plan	27
5.1 Executive Leadership Team commitment.....	27
5.2 Roles and responsibilities	27
5.3 Training and development.....	28
5.4 Resources and support.....	29
6.0 Measuring progress.....	30
6.1 GEAP Implementation Summary	30
Appendices	31
Appendix 1 – Data collection assumptions and methodology	31
Appendix 2 – Detailed consultation and engagement plan	31
Appendix 3 – Strategic resourcing and enablers	33

Chief Executive Officer statement

I am proud to present our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021-25 and lead the Council as this important work is commenced.

To date, Council has strived to provide a welcoming and inclusive workplace focused on providing its leaders and staff with the support and resources required to feel safe and respected at work. As a Council, we have a responsibility to lead and support change within both the organisation and the wider community.

Through participating in this audit, we have been able to identify and celebrate what we are positively doing well, along with understanding where we can do better to improve equality within the workplace. We are committed to learning and adapting on this change journey to ensure we see real and sustainable change for our women and gender diverse staff.

The implementation of our GEAP is our opportunity to be transparent around our commitment. It ensures that our organisation will continue to work together to support each other in providing a safe, respectful and equitable workplace. Remembering we all have a role to play in making the changes required.

I am very excited to continue to be on this journey and to do the work required to support a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Anthony Basford – Chief Executive Officer



Introduction and background

This Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) is one of several Council deliverables that promote and deliver positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and meeting its obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (the Act). This action plan considers and addresses the outcomes from the baseline Workplace Gender Audit (WGA) completed by Council in 2021. Through consultation with staff and subject matter experts, key opportunities were identified, and subsequent improvement actions and measures agreed.

Council will implement this action plan over the next four years with progress reporting being delivered every 2 years. The next WGA due for completion in 2025 will allow Council to measure the success and effectiveness of this action plan in delivering positive progress towards achieving workplace gender equality.



Diversity and inclusion statement

As identified in Council's Workforce Plan, East Gippsland Shire Council is committed to promoting and supporting diversity in the workplace and recognises that our success depends upon our people with their diverse views, abilities, skills, languages, cultures, and backgrounds, as well as differences in race, religion and/or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

We respect, value, and encourage diversity in the workplace. We are an inclusive organisation that values fairness, respect, equity, and diversity consistent with our policies and the Gender Equality Act 2020.

This document, its content and intent has been developed in good faith. We are committed to transparency, openness and honesty as we develop and implement the strategic objectives and priority actions within this plan. We understand this is an ongoing process of review, reflection and improvement.

We encourage and welcome feedback.

1.0

Gender audit results and analysis

1.1

Workplace Gender Audit (WGA) data collection and methodology

Both workforce data and employee experience data contributed to the WGA. Where available, workforce data has been extracted from Council's human resources and payroll systems and has been used to populate the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector's (the Commission) reporting template.

Employee experience data was gained from 233 staff (39%) who participated in the People Matter Survey (the survey) for Local Government 2021. This data will be used to complement the workforce data and help to paint our current state.

All data has been de-identified and summarised to enable reporting against the Commission's WGA measures that make up the 7 workplace gender equality indicators.

For more additional information regarding data collection, assumptions and methodology see Appendix 1.



1.2 Gender Audit Results

Workplace Gender Audit Results 2021		
Indicator	Workforce data	Employee experience data
1. Gender composition of the workforce	Overall Composition of 504 employees:  55% women  45% men (data only available on binary gender identities) Employment Basis Full-time: 43% women, 57% men Part-time: 67% women, 33% men Casual: 72% women, 28% men Reporting Level from the CEO ELT (0 and -1): 40% women, 60% men Managers (-2): 62.5% women, 37.5% men Coordinators (-3): 52% women, 48% men Officers (-4): 55% women, 45% men Intersectionality: Age 15-24 years 52% women, 48% men 25-34 years 64% women, 36% men 35-44 years 58% women, 42% men 45-54 years 64% women, 36% men 55-64 years 51% women, 49% men 65+ years 29% women, 71% men	Of the 233 survey respondents: 48% women 44% men 1% prefer to define their own gender 6% preferred not to say Intersectionality: 7% with disability 88% straight 1% gay or lesbian 1% use their own term 1% bisexual 1% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (1.5% from our internal data collected post February 2018). 9% speak a language other than English with their family or in the community 9% cultural identity other than or in addition to Australian. 4% country of birth outside of Australia.

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed with the following statements, by gender:

*There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/genders – **62% women, 74% men***

*There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different age groups – **61% women, 81% men***

*There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – **52% women, 78% men***

*There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ – **46% women, 50% men***

*There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees from varied cultural backgrounds – **60% women, 76% men***

*There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees with disability – **43% women, 61% men***

Indicator	Workforce data	Employee experience data																														
2. Gender composition of governing body	N/A	N/A																														
3. Pay equity	Overall organisational gender pay gaps: <table><tr><th>Reporting Level</th><th>Median Base</th><th>Median Total</th><th>Mean Base</th><th>Mean Total</th></tr><tr><td>All Employees</td><td>-7.1%</td><td>-1.9%</td><td>-1.0%</td><td>0.5%</td></tr><tr><td>(-1) General Managers</td><td>1.0%</td><td>1.0%</td><td>1.0%</td><td>1.0%</td></tr><tr><td>(-2) Managers</td><td>0.7%</td><td>0.9%</td><td>0.7%</td><td>-0.1%</td></tr><tr><td>(-3) Coordinators</td><td>3.4%</td><td>5.9%</td><td>4.2%</td><td>3.4%</td></tr><tr><td>(-4) Officers</td><td>-3.1%</td><td>-0.5%</td><td>-3.9%</td><td>-1.5%</td></tr></table>		Reporting Level	Median Base	Median Total	Mean Base	Mean Total	All Employees	-7.1%	-1.9%	-1.0%	0.5%	(-1) General Managers	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	(-2) Managers	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	-0.1%	(-3) Coordinators	3.4%	5.9%	4.2%	3.4%	(-4) Officers	-3.1%	-0.5%	-3.9%	-1.5%
Reporting Level	Median Base	Median Total	Mean Base	Mean Total																												
All Employees	-7.1%	-1.9%	-1.0%	0.5%																												
(-1) General Managers	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%																												
(-2) Managers	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	-0.1%																												
(-3) Coordinators	3.4%	5.9%	4.2%	3.4%																												
(-4) Officers	-3.1%	-0.5%	-3.9%	-1.5%																												
4. Sexual harassment	Number of formal sexual harassment complaints made: Zero formal complaints	Percentage of survey respondents in the organisation who experienced sexual harassment, by gender (calculated by subtracting the percentage of survey respondents who selected “No, I have not experienced any of the above [sexual harassment] behaviours” from 100%) 4% all 6% women, 3% men																														

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed with the following statements, by gender:

*I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work—***67% women, 83% men**

*My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination—***58% women, 81% men**

*My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours—***74% women, 86% men**

Indicator	Workforce data	Employee experience data
5. Recruitment and promotion	Overall gender composition of: Recruitments 54% women, 46% men Promotions 30% women, 70% men Higher duties 34% women, 66% men Internal secondments 70% women, 30% men Exits 56% women, 44% men Career development opportunities 57% women, 43% men	Percentage of survey respondents who agreed with the following statements, by gender: <i>My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit</i> 45% women, 61% men <i>I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation</i> 41% women, 55% men <i>Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i> 65% women, 82% men <i>Being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i> <i>Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i> 60% women, 73% men <i>Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i> 61% women, 82% men <i>Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i> 45% women, 64% men <i>Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation</i> 62% women, 76% men
6. Leave and flexibility	Proportion of the workforce using formal flexible working arrangements 29% Proportion of the workforce using formal flexible working arrangements, by gender 60% women, 40% men Gender composition of people in the organisation who have taken parental leave 64% women, 36% men Number of people who exited the organisation during parental leave, by gender 1 woman Gender composition of people in the organisation who have taken carer's leave 50% women, 50% men	Percentage of survey respondents who agreed with the following statements, by gender: <i>My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave</i> 76% women, 88% men <i>I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration</i> 70% women, 83% men <i>My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender</i> 66% women, 85% men

Indicator	Workforce data	
7. Gendered segregation	Gender composition of ANZSCO code major groups in the organisation:	
	1 - Managers (35)	43% 57%
	2 - Professionals (91)	66% 34%
	3 - Technical and Trade (25)	16% 84%
	4 - Community and Personal Service (67)	67% 33%
	5 - Clerical and Administrative (135)	85% 15%
	6 - Sales (2)	100%
	7 - Machinery Operators and Drivers (15)	7% 93%
	8 - Labourers (134)	25% 75%
Women Men		(number of staff allocated based on ANZSCO assignment)

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed with the following statements, by gender:

My organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language —**Women 70%, Men 84%**

In my workgroup work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender —**Women 80%, Men 87%**

1.3

Key insights

The focus of the GEAP is to continue to improve workplace gender equality, the following summary highlights areas where the audit identified as an organisation we are currently doing well.



Balance

Balanced workforce that covers all reporting levels and basis of employment



Pay

No significant difference in average annualised pay between men and women



Culture

Majority of staff feel respected and culturally safe at work



Conditions

One third of eligible workforce on flexible working arrangement

Whilst very proud of these results, our audit demonstrated opportunities for improvement. Additional insights are captured below along with our improvement strategies in section 4.

1.3.1

Gender composition and diversity

Council has historically collected bi-gender (man or woman) employee data, along with age and more recently Aboriginality. This bi-gender data indicates that Council has a relatively gender balanced workforce with both women and men being represented in all reporting levels and basis of employment. However, based on the demographic summary of the 233 employees who participated in the People Matter Survey, it is clear that internal data does not fully capture and reflect the diversity of the workforce and that **an opportunity exists to improve the understanding of our organisational diversity through improving our data capture.**

Survey results indicated that the majority of staff feel respected and culturally safe at work.

However, they further indicated that staff are unsure of the culture within the organisation in relation to employees who identify as LGBTIQ+ (47% favourable / 49% neutral or unsure / 4% unfavourable) and to those employees with disability (51% favourable / 43% neutral or unsure / 6% unfavourable). **An opportunity exists to improve diversity inclusion, culture and awareness, specifically around sexuality and disability.**

1.3.2

Gender composition of governing body

This data is not formally collected or held by Council. A survey was administered to the 9 Councillors requesting this information. Gender data collected will be submitted to the Commission, however results are unable to be published due to the small group size (sample size $n < 10$).

1.3.3

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

The gender pay gap (GPG) measures the difference between the average earnings of women and men across the entire workforce. It is an internationally established measure of women's position in the economy in comparison to men. The gender pay gap is the result of the social and economic factors that combine to reduce women's earning capacity over their lifetime (WGEA, 2021).¹

The gender pay gap is calculated by analysing remuneration data of all employees and following the standard gender pay gap formula of:

$$\text{GPG} = 100\% \times \frac{\text{MALE AVERAGE EARNINGS} - \text{FEMALE AVERAGE EARNINGS}}{\text{MALE AVERAGE EARNINGS}}$$

A gender pay gap that is positive means the average salaries of men are greater than women by that percentage.

Based on mean average annualised earnings there is a neutral gender pay gap within Council, ranging from -1% for annualised base salaries and +0.5% for total annual remuneration (includes allowances).

The mean average annualised base salary for the total workforce is \$74,086. With the average annualised base salary for women slightly higher at \$74,425 and slightly lower for men at \$73,676.

The median average has also been used to analyse remuneration as it represents the typical data and avoids the influence of outliers (irregular extreme values). The median in this instance, reflects the distribution of gender composition across the workforce. The median annualised base salary for the total workforce and women is the same at \$66,533 which is higher than the median of \$62,102 for men, resulting in a median gender pay gap of -7.1%.

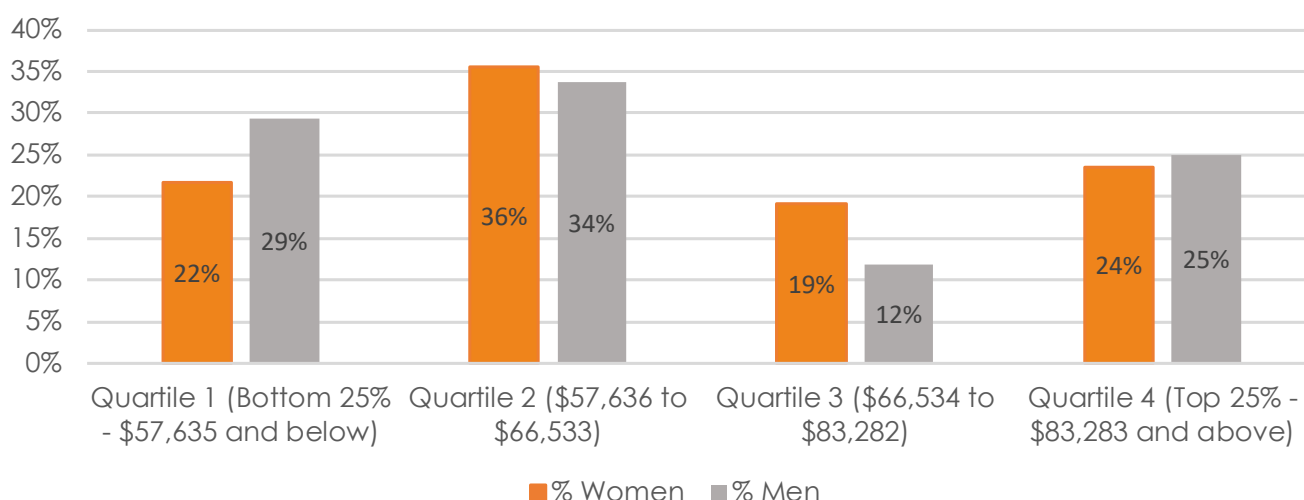
The absence of large variations in the data can be attributed to role pay banding as set within the Council's Enterprise Agreement. Therefore, the mean average is a fair indicator when comparing pay.

When categorised by reporting level the largest median gender pay gap was identified in the Coordinators and Manager direct reports level, with a median annualised base salary pay gap 3.4% that increases to 5.9% for median total remuneration. The overall range of salaries is similar; however, more women are receiving remuneration within the lower end of the range compared to men. This may be influenced by length of tenure, where the average length of tenure for men above the median is 11.6 years, and the average for women is 8.8 years. Also 6 women below the median are on secondment from other roles compared to only 2 men which could also account for more women being in the lower pay band for this reporting level.

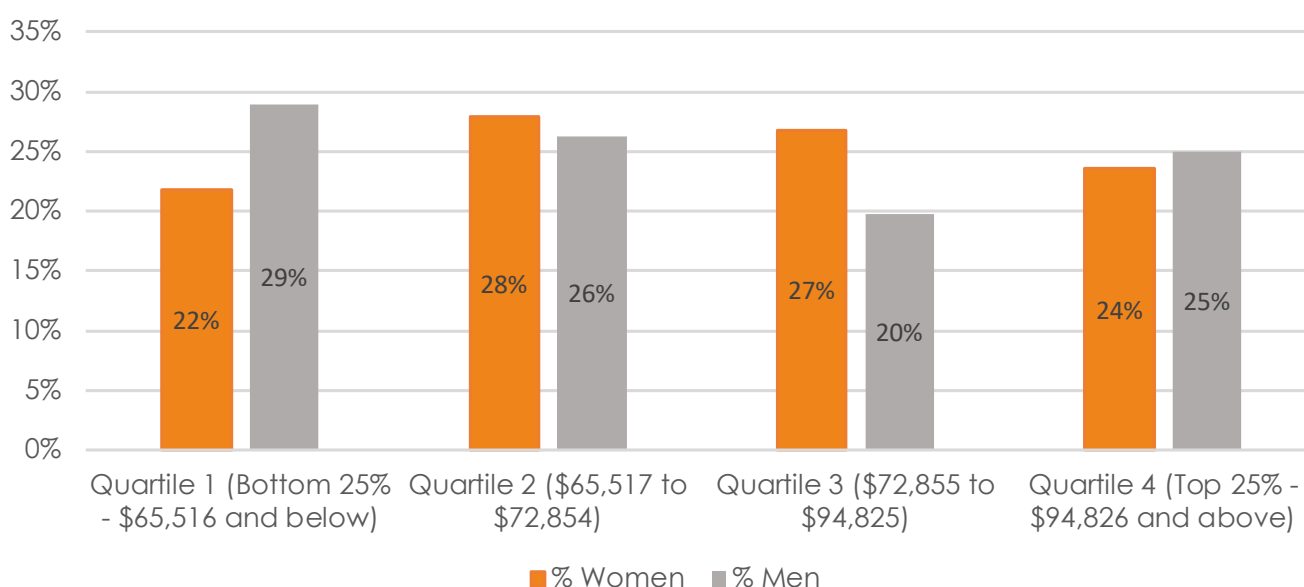
46% of the workforce are women officers employed at level -4. The median base salary pay gap of -3.1% is influenced by the high number of women occupying higher paid roles in this reporting level and subsequently

¹ WGEA 2021. Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Available at www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap

Distribution of Women and Men Annualised Base Salaries Across Pay Quartiles



Distribution of Women and Men Annualised Total Remuneration Across Pay Quartiles



The pay quartile graphs show the proportion of both men and women within the organisation for each pay quartile. For both annualised base salary and total remuneration, there is a noticeably higher proportion of women being employed in the third pay quartile compared with a higher proportion of men employed in the first pay quartile.

At officer level, there were 7 ANZSCO¹ (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) roles identified where the average annualised base salary gender pay gap was >10%. These roles were further investigated, and it was determined that either the pays sat within equal range or that within the role classification there was a supervisor's remuneration driving the pay gap.

An opportunity exists to continue monitor and review pay banding across roles.

1 ANZSCO 2021. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Available at <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/anzsco-australian-and-new-zealand-standard-classification-occupations/latest-release>

1.3.4

Sexual harassment in the workplace

EGSC is committed to eliminating sexual harassment from the workplace. For the reporting period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, there were no formal incidence of sexual harassment reported.

However, during the last 12 months, 4% of the PM survey respondents had experienced sexual harassment behaviours including:

- o Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended (in either a group or one on one situation); and,
- o Intrusive questions about your private life or comments about your physical appearance.

Of the 4% of respondents that had experienced sexual harassment behaviours, they did not submit a formal complaint primarily due to not feeling it would make a difference (40%) and that it could have negative consequences for their career or reputation (40%).

16% of PM survey respondents do not feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviours and do not believe the organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying harassment and discrimination.

In the recently completed VAGO¹ Sexual Harassment in Local Government Audit survey, 21 individuals indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment in the prior 12 months with incidents occurring between 1 and 5 times.

Sexual harassment was recorded as mainly occurring in the workplace, but also occurred at council meetings and social events. The prevalence was not restricted to traditional power-based inequalities, which suggest that perpetrators of sexual harassment are across all levels of responsibility. Actions captured to address this report will be re-enforced through this GEAP.

An opportunity exists for Council to take steps to ensure all staff are aware of the organisation's expectations around workplace behaviours, in particular sexual harassment, to better communicate reporting options and support available to staff.

1 VAGO 2020. Victorian Auditor-General's Office. Available at <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/sexual-harassment-local-government?section=>

1.3.5

Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Of 171 new employees recruited in FY21, 54% were women, employed across all classifications and basis of employment. This is consistent with the organisation's overall gender composition.

Survey data supports there is no strong gender bias in recruitment and promotions.

However, both organisational and survey data suggests there is opportunity to improve promotional practices and opportunities for women, in particular equal chances at promotions and to develop further understanding of opportunities for those with disability.

Exit data was also consistent with the organisation's gender composition with 56% women and 44% men. There were both women and men representing all age ranges of employee recruits and exits.

15% of the total workforce participated in professional development training (Professional development activities were defined by the Commission and included for Council employees that participated in formal higher education or the professional development program).

57% of all participants were women. 74% of participants were from reporting level -3 and above, with 40% of all participants from reporting level -3 employed on a full-time ongoing basis.

Survey data indicates that there is opportunity to improve opportunities available to staff to develop their skills and experience.

1.3.6

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

29% of the workforce are on a formal flexible work arrangement (35% not including casuals).

65% of survey respondents indicated they have a flexible work arrangement.

Of those on a formal flexible work arrangement 60% were women and 40% were men. These numbers demonstrate that the flexible work provisions already captured within our Council's Enterprise Agreement are well accessed and supported.

61% of PM survey respondents have caring responsibilities. Of those that accessed carer's leave, 50% were women and 50% men. Most survey measures received lower favourable responses from those that cared for elderly or people with medical conditions and to the contrary most measures received higher favourable responses from those that cared for children across all age ranges.

Survey responses indicate there is still opportunity to ensure flexible work arrangements and caring responsibilities do not create barriers for success and that they are given due consideration across the organisation.

1.3.7

Gendered segregation within the workplace

Role categorisation against the 8 major ANZSCO roles showed noticeably more women occupying clerical, administration, community and professional roles and more men in technical, trade, machine operating and labour roles. Of the overall ANZSCO role categories identified and assigned in this baseline analysis that have 4 or more positions available, 76% have both women and men employees.

There is an opportunity to validate the ANZSCO classification assignment further and to review roles that exist within EGSC that are filled exclusively by one gender.



More than 74% of survey respondents felt respected and culturally safe at work and had not experienced negative behaviours.

2.0

Meaningful consultation and engagement

Since the Act went live in March 2021, Council has been promoting awareness and understanding of Council's obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020. A detailed communication and engagement plan was developed to ensure all staff were informed and able to be involved in the process and journey ahead. This involved:

- Emails from the CEO to all staff
- Information and fact sheets posted on staff intranet
- Articles and messages in the staff monthly newsletter
- Senior Leadership engagement
- Staff Consultative Committee (SCC) engagement
- Staff Union and Representative Group engagement
- Team presentations and feedback surveys
- Councillor briefings
- Online information sessions



Along with the regular progress updates and information being shared about progress towards the development of the GEAP, there were two primary rounds of consultation and engagement completed as per the requirements outlined by the Commission. The first round focused on reporting the results of the WGA and understanding the opportunities presented, the second round focused on developing and agreeing on proposed strategies and actions (see Appendix 2 for detailed consultation and engagement plan).

A detailed report on the results of the WGA was presented to the Executive Leadership Team for understanding and review. A high-level summary information pack was then delivered to multiple internal stakeholder groups including Councillors, union representatives, Senior Leadership, Staff Consultative Committee (SCC) and Coordinator teams. The information was further used by Coordinators to engage their teams on the results and invite discussion and feedback via a survey.

Additional engagement and information sessions were offered through several online sessions, along with engagement sessions with outdoors staff on steps to take around workplace segregation and flexible work options.

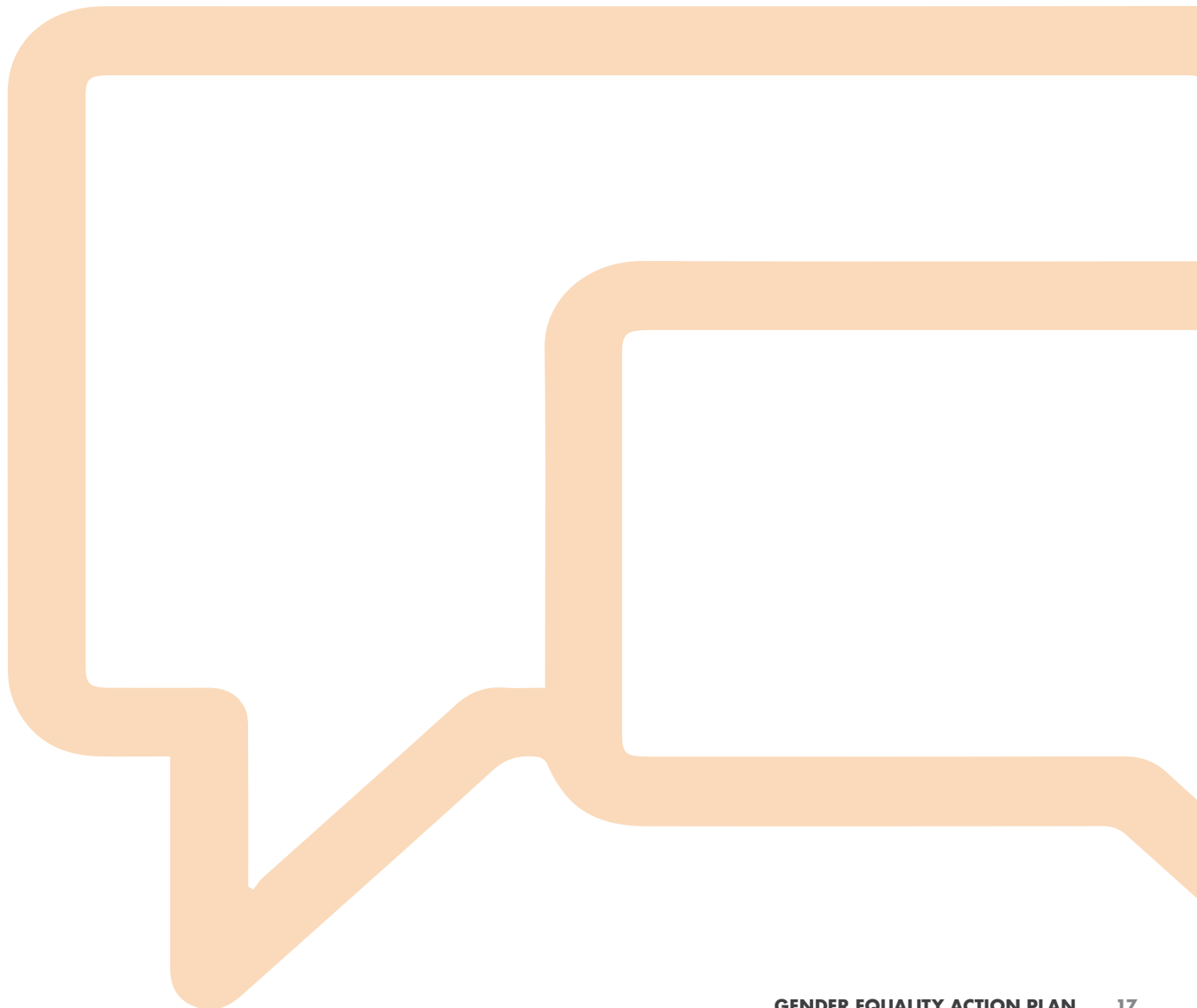
The high-level summary information pack was also shared with external stakeholder groups to gain their perspective and feedback on the WGA results and opportunities they presented for the organisation. These subject matter experts were Gippsland Woman's Health (GWH) and representatives of the East Gippsland Partners in Violence Prevention (EGPVP) network.

The initial opportunities identified in the results summary were used to develop workshops to address specific opportunities. A working group of staff representatives participated in 2 workshops focused on 'Making the Link - Creating Organisation Culture'. These workshops were facilitated by GWH in partnership with Council's Community Programs and Organisation Development teams. The workshop objectives were to educate, support and start to develop internal leaders for driving gender equality within our organisation. The joint concept of 'making the link' and 'creating organisation culture' was acknowledged as an important connection and first step toward making positive change in the understanding and promotion of gender equality in the workplace. The team acknowledged their role and sphere of influence and made personal pledges on what they could immediately do to support gender equality and drive positive change in the organisation's culture.

The working group participated in several further workshops focused on developing strategies and actions to address the opportunities identified as priorities for improving gender equality within the organisation. These proposed strategies were then presented to key internal stakeholder groups and then circulated to all staff to invite feedback.

Feedback on the strategies and actions were collated and incorporated into this GEAP report which was further distributed amongst Senior Leadership and Councillors for information and comment prior to finalisation.

Throughout the GEAP development journey staff were kept informed via regular posts on Council's intranet and articles in the monthly staff newsletter. Hard copy fact sheets were also made available for distribution and display in outdoor worker common areas and tearooms.



3.0

Case for change

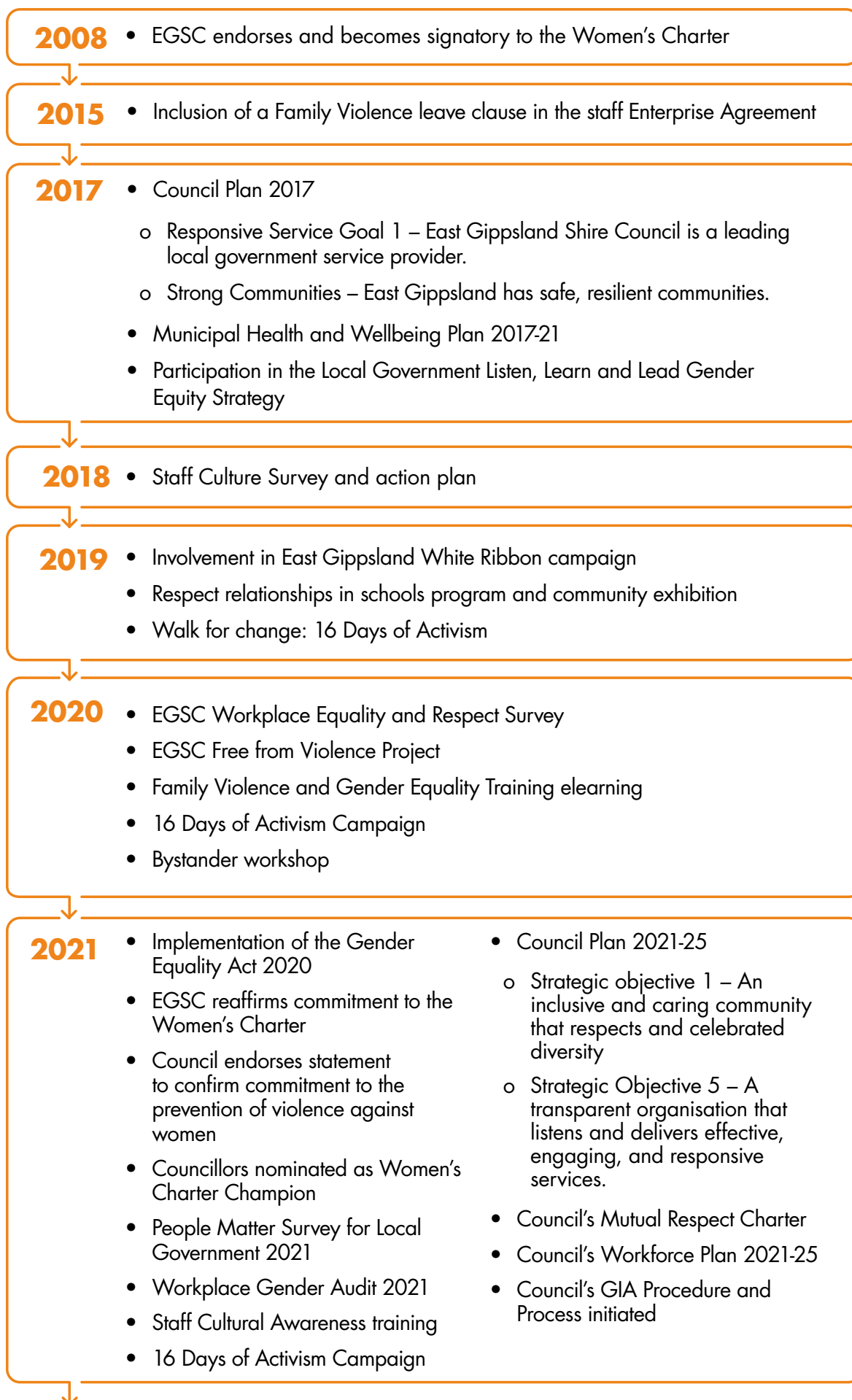
Council has historically participated in and supported local community initiatives to promote gender equality. The GEAP will compliment this work and also spearhead efforts internally providing a platform to further support its internal workforce. As an employer of over 500 people, Council has the opportunity to work to these standards and lead by example by taking genuine steps to improve gender equality outcomes in workplaces and the community as one of the primary preventers of violence against women.

Further, as a key stakeholder, funder (through grants programs), advocate, and service provider, Council has many touch points across the community through which clear and consistent messages can have a positive impact in shifting community norms – that violence against women is unacceptable in our community. The endorsement of a position on this issue is a key action Council can take to publicly and explicitly demonstrate commitment to the values and behaviours that will contribute to shifting rates of violence against women in our community.

Council embraces the Gender Equality Principles outlined in section 6 of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, keeping them core in the development of this GEAP and other Council initiatives aimed at creating a more inclusive and respectful workplace.

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

3.1 EGSC gender equality journey



3.2

Links to Freedom from Violence and Women's Charter

Council has undertaken internally focused work to review the drivers of violence against women and identify opportunities to make improvement. As a large workplace Council is well positioned to influence and set expectations regarding what is acceptable across workplace conditions, culture, support structures, commitment and daily practices.

Council recently reaffirmed commitment to the Victorian Local Government (VLGA) Women's Charter, stating that Council will continue to **'support the VLGA campaign to increase women's participation in local government as Citizens, Candidates and Councillors'**. Along with nominating two Councillors as charter champions.

Council has also acknowledged a commitment to the prevention of violence against women through endorsing the following statement:

'East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the prevalence and impact of violence against women in our community, and regards all forms of violence against women as unacceptable. Council will lead by example as an employer, service provider, advocate, funder and key stakeholder by acting in a manner that demonstrates relationships built on respect and by providing opportunities that are gender-equitable and non-discriminatory'.

Council's Enterprise Agreement recognises that family violence is a serious issue in our society generally, and in our communities, and that Council can play a role in supporting staff experiencing family violence.



3.3

Links to Council Plan 2021-25

Council Vision 2021-25

East Gippsland is an inclusive and innovative community that values our natural environment, puts community at the centre of Council decision-making and creates the conditions in which communities can thrive.

The GEAP will action the delivery of several Council Plan 2021-25 objectives and strategies:

Strategic Objective 1: An inclusive and caring community that respects and celebrates diversity

Strategies to support strategic objective:

- 1.1 Council strives to provide equitable access to their services, support and facilities
- 1.5 Strong working relationships are further developed with Aboriginal people and organisations
- 1.6 Council is culturally and linguistically inclusive and celebrates diversity

Strategic Objective 5: A transparent organisation that listens and delivers effective, engaging, and responsive services

Strategies to support strategic objective:

- 5.3 Communities are engaged in decision-making and support is provided to develop local solutions to local issues
- 5.6 Council attracts, develops, and retains an inclusive workforce to deliver services and priorities

3.4

Links to the Workforce Plan (WFP) 2021-25

Opportunities identified through the WGA link to the WFP, and together will help us build our capacity as an organisation to deliver on the Council Plan. The GEAP compliments the WFP strategies of strengthening culture and embedding leadership and specifically addresses objective 3 to 'create an inclusive workforce, encouraging wellbeing and embracing diversity'. Previously identified as being delivered through these priority actions:

- 3.1 Develop a Gender Equality Action Plan, and
- 3.2 Implement actions from the Gender Equality Action Plan.



3.5

Council programs, committees and documents

Mutual Respect Charter

On 5 October 2021, Council adopted a Mutual Respect Charter to support a key principle of providing a safe and respectful workplace. It is based on the principle of mutual respect and cooperation. The Charter sets out a shared responsibility for:

1. Safe workplace expectations for our staff in dealing with the community and our customers.
2. Our commitment to serving the community and what people can expect when interacting with Council and its staff.



Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

The aim of Council's plan, Well Placed for Wellbeing 2021-25, is to improve health and wellbeing of all East Gippsland communities. It includes 5 priority outcomes that have been identified through conversations with our community and health partners:

1. **Liveable** - East Gippslanders have healthy, accessible, safe and sustainable natural and built environments.
2. **Healthy and Well** - East Gippslanders are socially, emotionally, mentally and physically health and well.
3. **Safe and Secure** - East Gippsland individuals, families and communities are safe and inclusive.
4. **Connected to Culture and Community** - East Gippslanders are resilient, culturally connected and able to adapt to change.
5. **Able to Participate** - All East Gippslanders have access to economic and educational opportunities. We want an East Gippsland where families are free from abuse and violence, and communities are safe for people of all ages, cultures and abilities.

Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)

The Disability Advisory Committee provides advice on things that matter to people with a disability in East Gippsland Shire. It seeks to maximise the contribution being made by Council and its partners by working with a common agenda to create a more inclusive and accessible East Gippsland.

Relevant Council policies and procedures

- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Resolution Procedure
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Staff Leave Policy
- Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Staff Recruitment and Selection Procedures
- Unacceptable Behaviour by a Member of the Public Procedure
- East Gippsland Shire Council Enterprise Agreement No 5
- Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure

Supporting Council documents and charters

- Council Plan 2021-25
- Workforce Plan 2021-25
- Municipal health and wellbeing plan – Well placed for Wellbeing 2021-25
- Disability Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
- Council's Mutual Respect Charter
- Victorian Local Government (VLGA) Women's Charter (signee)

4.0

Strategies and measures 2021-25

Opportunities identified through the WGA link to the WFP, and together will help build capacity as an organisation to deliver on the Council Plan. The gender equality indicators and associated strategies can be shown to correlate with the WFP strategies:

Workforce Plan Strategy 1 – strengthen culture • GE indicator 1 - gender composition • GE indicator 3 – equal pay • GE indicator 4 – sexual harassment • GE indicator 5 – leave and flexible work	Workforce Plan Strategy 2 – build capacity • GE indicator 6 – recruitment and promotions • GE indicator 7 – workplace segregation	Workforce Plan Strategy 3 – embed leadership • GE indicator 6 – recruitment and promotions
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The following strategies will be implanted in response to Council's WGA 2021:

Workplace Gender Equality Indicator	Strategies and Measures	Timeframe
1. Gender composition of the workforce	• Strive to maintain overall workforce gender balance of 40:40:20. <i>*(gender balance of 40 percent women, 40 percent men, and 20 percent of any gender)</i> • Further strive to achieve 40:40:20* gender balance target across each reporting level within 5 years. • Encourage balanced gender member ratios across Council committees, working groups and other key representative groups. • Improve understanding of our workforce's diversity by improving applicant and internal employee personal information data collection and management. • Develop and implement a safe and inclusive workplace training framework to increase awareness, support positive culture, inclusion and gender equality. • Support the integration of the Gender Equality Working Group into the Staff Consultative Committee to provide further opportunity for support and positive engagement. • Develop staff representatives and Contact Officers to be internal leaders on gender equality and inclusion.	• Measured annually • Jun 2025 • Jun 2025 • Sep 2022 • Jul 2023 • Apr 2022 • Dec 2022

Workplace Gender Equality Indicator	Strategies and Measures	Timeframe
2. Gender composition of governing body	• N/A	• N/A
3. Pay equity	• Continue to apply award agreement as per Employee Enterprise Agreement banding criteria. • Review and audit as part of ongoing reporting requirements	• Measured annually • Measured annually
4. Sexual harassment	• Develop a separate Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy - Procedure to set clear expectations and provide staff with tools and knowledge required to support them. • Rollout new Prevention of Sexual Harassment policy to all current and new staff, along with specific Sexual Harassment Training (to be included as part of Safe and Inclusive Workplace Training). • Develop staff representatives and Contact Officers to be confidential support officers available within the organisation. • Investigate third party anonymous reporting options for sexual harassment (and potentially other issues).	• Jun 2022 • Oct 2022 • Dec 2022 • Jun 2023
5. Recruitment and promotion	• Review recruitment processes to attract gender diversity in candidates, (specifically job titles and job descriptions) and to promote Council's commitment as a welcoming and inclusive employer who supports and promotes flexible work arrangements. • Promote internal career development pathways and provide further support and focus on performance review and development plan outcomes. • Review and invigorate Council's emerging leaders and succession planning process to consider gender equality. • Promote specific cohorts to perform higher duties or cover acting of Executive Leadership roles. • Develop quarterly reporting process on employee exit interviews • Continue to engage staff to help understand barriers to staff fulfilling training and development needs by updating staff culture survey questions.	• Dec 2022 • Mar 2023 • Jun 2023 • Measured annually • Jun 2024 • Jun 2022
6. Leave and flexibility	• Continue to promote and support leave and flexible work entitlements as per relevant clauses in the East Gippsland Shire Enterprise Agreement. • Develop understanding of how to provide realistic flexible work options and support processes (accessible, preferable and available) for senior leaders.	• Sep 2022 • Mar 2024

Workplace Gender Equality Indicator	Strategies and Measures	Timeframe
7. Gendered segregation	- Pursue traineeship and scholarship arrangements to support more diverse entry into all roles. - Complete a business unit review, validation and alignment exercise of the baseline Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) coding completed. - Establish an ongoing process of capturing and maintaining the ANZSCO codes for Council roles in internal systems and position descriptions. <i>As per Indicator 5, Review recruitment processes to attract gender diversity in candidates, (specifically job titles and job descriptions and to promote Council's commitment as a welcoming and inclusive employer who supports and promotes flexible work arrangements.</i>	- Sep 2022 - Dec 2022 - Jun 2023

The 40:40:20 gender balance target was adopted from researching emerging best practice:

- Local Government Professionals Australia is pushing for a gender balance of 40 per cent women, 40 per cent men, and 20 per cent of any gender in local government leadership roles by 2025.¹
- 40:40 Vision - a new initiative led by HESTA to bolster gender equality in the ASX200 by 2030. Supporting partners include Chief Executive Women, the Australian Council of Superannuation Investors (ACSI), Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), and the 30% Club.²

The implementation of a safe and inclusive workplace training framework will not only increase awareness, support positive culture, inclusion and gender equality, but will also assist in addressing intersectional gender inequality in the workplace.

A detailed action plan has been developed to support the delivery of these measures over the next 4 years. The action plan includes specific information on accountability, targets and timelines for completion. This action plan will be used for reporting progress and completion of the key strategies identified.

¹ Local Government Sets Gender Targets 2021. Local Government Professionals. Available at <https://lgprofessionalsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LOCAL-GOVERNMENT-SETS-GENDER-TARGET.pdf>

² 40:40 Vision 2021. HESTA (online). Available at <https://www.hesta.com.au/4040Vision>

5.0 Strategic Resource Plan

5.1 Executive Leadership Team commitment

As the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for East Gippsland Shire Council we acknowledge and thank the whole of organisation collaboration and input in producing our Gender Equality Action Plan, it represents our Council and our journey.

As both leaders and representatives within the organisation, we are excited to be taking this step in improving our workplace gender equality. We recognise that budget and resourcing are required to successfully achieve our GEAP strategies and will remain committed to providing the support required to ensure they are delivered over the life of the plan.

Members of Council's Strategic Leadership Group are committed to taking ownership and delivering on the agreed strategies and actions.

5.2 Roles and responsibilities

The following table outlines the resourcing and responsibilities for roles within the organisation for the delivery of the GEAP. Please see Appendix 3 for a detailed RACI model.

Role	Responsibilities	Position	Forecasted commitment
Governance	Support and promote Council's values and commitment to taking positive action towards gender equality	Councillors	As required in Council meetings and role delivery
Project Sponsors	Provide strategic direction, vision and resourcing to support the implementation of the GEAP Paves the way for change Approve deliverables	ELT	As required in ELT meetings and daily role delivery
Project Owner	Accountable for producing the GEAP Accountable for ensuring appropriate resources are provided to develop the GEAP Responsible for ensuring the GEAP is implemented, monitored and reported on	PPC Manager	2.5% 1hr per week
Project Coordinator	Provide direction and support for the completion of the GEAP Assist the GE Officer in the development of a strategic roadmap for the GEAP Identify issues that may affect delivery and outcomes	Organisation Development Coordinator	5% 2hrs per week

Role	Responsibilities	Position	Forecasted commitment
GE Project lead	Facilitate completion of the WGA and support action development through staff consultation and engagement. Facilitate and monitor the completion and implementation of the GEAP. Provide progress reporting. Lead education and awareness around the GEAP. Facilitate workplace initiatives to support gender equality. Deliver on organisational development GEAP actions.	Organisation Gender Equality Officer	70% 28hrs per week
Action Owners	Take ownership of actions within their Business Unit and support their completion. Provide resources within their Business Unit to complete assigned actions.	SLG / Managers	1.25% 2hr per month
	Be responsible for completing assigned actions, updates and relevant progress reporting as outlined in the GEAP.	Action Owners	Action dependent Approx. 2.5% 1hr per week
GE Working Group / Staff Consultative Committee	Support the Project lead in campaign delivery. Support staff as internal gender equality ambassadors.	Council staff	1.25% 2hr per month
Peer Support	All staff to take ownership of their sphere of influence and responsibility for their own behaviours and actions in driving positive change.	Council Staff	Nil – incorporated into daily behaviours and role delivery

5.3 Training and development

To enable all of Council staff to become leaders in gender equality all staff have been invited and encouraged to participate in Active Bystander and Making the Link Training which has commenced delivery in December 2021 and will continue until end of June 2022. Appendix 3 provides detail on other relevant staff training provided.

Team development and building (GE Lead and Working Group Members)

Working Group members have further participated in a tailored Making the Link Training program provided by GWH; Making the Link - Creating Organisation Culture Change. This training provides further development in understanding your sphere of influence and how you can take personal responsibility for creating positive change in gender equality.

Working Group members will be encouraged and supported to meet regularly to discuss progress of the GEAP and other organisational culture initiatives.

The GE Project Lead will be encouraged and supported to participate in gender equality working groups, local government diversity and inclusion networks and training provided by leaders in GE as promoted by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Local Government Professionals (LGPro) among others.

5.4

Resources and support

There is currently one FTE position, currently Organisation Development Project Officer, dedicated to overseeing Council's delivery of obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020. The position is currently a limited tenure role until February 2023.

Beyond 2023 Council would like to seek funding support from the State Government for a dedicated ongoing role to support us with the direction and work required to deliver on our GEAP and other gender equality obligations.

Gender Equality Officer – Project Lead 1 FTE

- 50% Delivering the GEAP, monitoring and reporting
- 20% Organisational projects supporting D&I culture & awareness
- 10% Supporting GIAs
- 10% GE, D&I training and development, CoP, forum participation
- 10% Role administrative tasks

Gender Equality Officer Resourcing Timeline



**There are currently challenges in filling the FTE position due to local availability of an experienced resource. In the interim, the responsible tasks for this role are being completed by the Organisation Development Coordinator.*

6.0

Measuring progress

Council understands that it is critical to undertake regular monitoring of our progress, our achievements and our employees ongoing experience. A detailed action plan has been developed to support the delivery of the strategies over the next 4 years and includes specific information on accountability, measures, targets and timelines for completion.

At the commencement of financial year 2022/23, all strategies, actions and measures will be uploaded into Council's Pulse Performance Reporting Management System to enable quarterly progress reporting of the GEAP. Quarterly reports are reviewed by the ELT. Actions assigned to roles will form part of Council's 6 monthly performance review process.

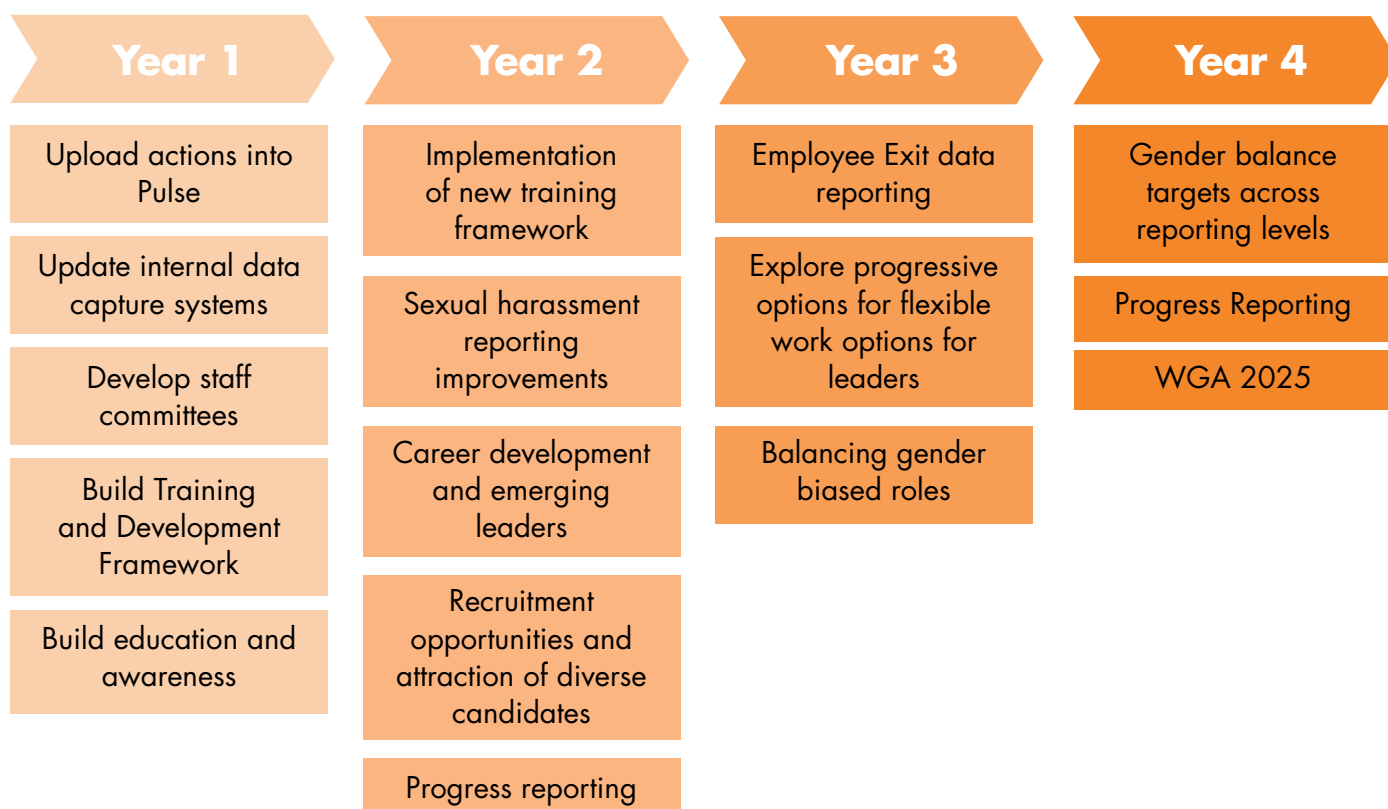
As we progress in implementing and realising our GEAP, significant milestone achievements will be communicated timely with all staff along with an annual progress update on all actions.

We will continue to administer our biannual Staff Culture survey that will support in providing a pulse check on our employees' experience until repeat of the People Matter Survey in 2025.

Bi-annual progress reporting on our strategies will be provided on to the Gender Equality Commission outlining the success of the implementation of Council's GEAP, along with highlighting any concerns or roadblocks that may have been experienced in its implementation.

6.1

GEAP Implementation Summary



Appendices

Appendix 1 – Data collection assumptions and methodology

As defined by the Commission, Council's first Workplace Gender Audit is based on gender-disaggregated data as at 30 June 2021 and represented across reporting levels from the CEO (0=CEO, -1=ELT, -2=Managers, -3=Coordinators / Manager direct reports, -4=Officers) and Employment type (Full-time, part-time and casual).

If available, the workplace gender audit must also be based on data about Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation. Council was able to include workforce age data and provide some information on Aboriginality which has only been collected since February 2018. To maintain privacy and confidentiality standards, EGSC is unable to share gender disaggregated data on Aboriginality due to the small representative group size (sample size $n < 10$).

As directed by the Commission, only casual employees that worked during the last pay period of FY21 have been included in this audit. Limited tenure roles form part of the audit, including the 6-month Working for Victoria placements which may strongly influence the data.

During our onboarding process Council has collected new employees' gender as sex responses (male/female). For purposes of this reporting it has been presumed that all female responses correlate with woman and all male responses correlate with man. There were no options for 'other' gender or 'prefer not to say'. This is being rectified to enable future reporting to correctly identify employee's gender rather than sex and allow staff the option to select 'other' or not disclose.

Appendix 2 – Detailed consultation and engagement plan

Stakeholders	Round 1	Desired output	Round 2	Desired output
Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) & Coordinators	16/09/21 – 1.5hrs Present WGA & PM Survey results via PowerPoint pack. Facilitate initial discussions around results and opportunities.	Understand what stakeholders think is important, Identify key themes &/or opportunities *OneNote will be shared to capture ongoing feedback	13/01/22 – 0.5hrs Present draft actions.	Gain input and feedback on draft actions, seek agreement and prioritisation. Ensure nothing missed.
Staff Consultative Committee (SCC) & Union Representatives	16/09/21 – 45min Present WGA & PM Survey results via PowerPoint pack. Facilitate initial discussions around results and opportunities.	Understand what stakeholders think is important, identify key themes &/or opportunities *OneNote will be shared to capture ongoing feedback	19/01/22 – 1hr Present draft actions.	Gain input and feedback on draft actions, seek agreement and prioritisation. Ensure nothing missed.
Councillor Briefing	21/09/21 – 45min Present WGA & PM Survey results via PowerPoint pack. Facilitate initial discussions around results and opportunities.	Capture any feedback, concerns and recommendations from Council. Ensure Council onboard with	01/03/22 – 30min Present agreed actions and draft GEAP.	Ensure Council onboard with actions and nothing missed.

Stakeholders	Round 1	Desired output	Round 2	Desired output
Staff Information sessions - online	05/10/21 – 07/10/21 3 x 30min dial-in sessions to provide any interested staff with more information on the WGA results	Feedback and understanding from staff on what they think is important, identify key themes &/or opportunities		
Staff Information sessions – in person at works depot	21/10/21 – 30min 30min information session at the works depot to discuss key themes identified from the WGA	Feedback and understanding from staff on what they think is important, identify key themes &/or opportunities		
Staff Workshops – internal volunteer working group	27/10/21 – 2hrs 09/12/21 – 1hr 2 workshops facilitated by GWH. Making the Link: Creating Organisation Culture Change. Introducing and developing skills on culture change and change theory. Facilitate initial discussions around organisation culture change opportunities. Worked through understanding sphere of influence and individual actions	Workshop participants gain improved awareness and understanding of culture change within organisations and their sphere of influence. Understand what stakeholders think the important next steps are around achieving organisational culture change.	25/11/21 – 2.5hrs 20/12/21 – 1.5hr Brainstorm solutions against each of the GE Indicators. Review and define draft strategies and action	Improvement themes identified, agreed and understood. Gain input and feedback on next steps and what actions team can take to drive positive change
Staff Intranet and publications	WGA & PM Survey results via PowerPoint pack shared with all staff via email, staff Intranet, AXIS and staff newsletter. Feedback was requested via a survey.	Feedback and understanding from staff on what they think is important, identify key themes &/or opportunities	Draft Strategies and action were shared via PowerPoint pack. shared with all staff via email, staff Intranet, AXIS and staff newsletter. Feedback was requested	Gain input and feedback on draft actions. Ensure nothing missed.
External SME Workshops EGPVP network	27/10/21 – 1hr Present WGA & PM Survey results via PowerPoint pack.	Gain feedback from SMEs on results, opportunities and proposed actions.	Emailed external SMEs draft GEAP requesting feedback.	Gain input and feedback on draft GEAP. Ensure nothing missed.

Appendix 3 – Strategic resourcing and enablers

GEAP implementation RACI

The following table highlights roles and responsibilities and engagement activities required for the successful completion and implementation of the GEAP as per the RACI model; Responsible, Accountable, Consult and Inform.

Activity	Roles					
	ELT	SLG	Action Owner	PPC	GE Officer	All Staff
Provide strategic direction for organisation in achieving GEAP	A, R	C	I	C	I	I
Ensure resourcing and execution of actions	A	R	I	R	I	I
Completing actions	I	A	R	A*	C	I
Monitor action delivery	I	C	C	A	R	I
Progress Reporting	I	C	C	A	R	I
Ongoing communications and awareness	C	C	I	A	R	C

Staff formal training and awareness

Ongoing	Cultural Awareness Training	New starters & biannual	All Staff
Ongoing	Workplace Bullying and Harassment Training Module	New starters & biannual	All Staff
Ongoing	Prevention of Sexual Harassment Training	New starters & biannual	All Staff
Ongoing	Prevention of Sexual Harassment Training for Managers	New starters & biannual	Line Managers
2021-22	Making the Link GE Training (5 series)	Initial 5 series	All Staff
2021-22	Active Bystander Training	Initial 5 series	All Staff
2022 and ongoing	Prevention of Sexual Harassment Training Module (updated version)	New starters & biannual	All Staff
Forecast commence mid-2023	Safe and Inclusive Workplace Training – multiple modules to include Sexual Harassment Training, Inclusion and Discrimination, Positive Behaviours and forward-facing enablers.	New starters & biannual, module requirements pending	All Staff

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