

2026 gender equality action plan (GEAP) for: Northern Grampians Shire Council

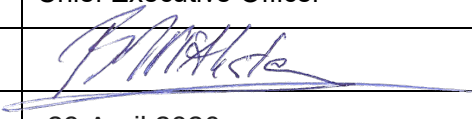
Cover page

Organisation name	Northern Grampians Shire Council
Total number of employees (and full time equivalent FTE), as at 30 June 2025	Total employees: 278 Total FTE: 200.41
Location (metropolitan, regional or rural. If other, please specify)	Rural

Attestation by head of organisation

I confirm that:

- ☒ I am the head of organisation (CEO or equivalent)
- ☒ I have reviewed and approved the submission of this gender equality action plan (GEAP) on behalf of my organisation (as named above), and I attest that the implementation of the GEAP will be adequately resourced as required under the Gender Equality Act (2020).

Comments	As a small rural council, we play an important role in creating a workplace and community where everyone is treated fairly and has equal opportunity. We are guided by the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)</i> and remain committed to embedding its principles into everything we do. Since our first Gender Equality Action Plan, we have seen encouraging progress. Our audit results show positive outcomes, across all seven indicators. These results reflect the collective effort of our people and a growing culture of inclusion. Our 2026–2029 GEAP focuses on building on this progress by addressing remaining barriers and strengthening our approach to intersectional gender equality. This means considering the different experiences of people based on factors such as age, disability, cultural background, and gender identity, and ensuring these perspectives are reflected in our policies and decisions. We will continue to support initiatives that promote respect, inclusion, and awareness across our organisation and the wider community. Gender equality strengthens our organisation and helps us better serve our community. I thank everyone who has contributed to this work and look forward to continuing this progress together. I support this Gender Equality Action Plan 2026–2029 and am committed to its implementation.
Name	Brent McAlister
Role title	Chief Executive Officer
Signed	
Date	29 April 2026

Section 1: Use insights from your previous gender equality work

Council's first GEAP and 2026 progress reporting cycle have highlighted the value of embedding gender equality work into core governance, people practices and service design, while also strengthening the evidence base for decision-making. Key learnings from implementing the 2022 GEAP and completing the 2026 Progress Report include:

- Data quality and consistency matters. Improvements to workforce data capture at recruitment, induction and exit have strengthened our ability to identify trends and target actions. We also noted where small cohort sizes and survey confidentiality thresholds limit gender-disaggregated results, reinforcing the need to use multiple data sources and to interpret year-to-year changes carefully.
- Leadership accountability supports progress. Making gender equality “business as usual” through leadership KPIs and mandatory training helped lift awareness and shared responsibility across the organisation.
- Progress is uneven across indicators and requires targeted strategies. While we saw improvements in senior leadership gender composition and reductions in the senior leader pay gap, results varied by occupation group and some indicators were constrained by limited data availability (for example, sexual harassment measures where survey thresholds were not met).
- Resourcing and competing operational priorities shape the pace of change. Our experience reinforced the need to prioritise actions with the greatest impact, to integrate them into existing processes, and to monitor progress regularly so strategies can be adjusted.

Section 2: Processes, record keeping and governance

Council has established practical governance, record keeping and reporting processes to support GEAP development and implementation. These include:

- Oversight through the People and Culture function, with coordination led by the Manager People and Culture and supported by relevant managers for actions that sit within their work areas.
- Use of the Commission's templates and guidance to ensure all required components are addressed, including consultation requirements, consideration of principles and intersectionality, and the inclusion of the workplace audit results and minimum measures.
- Record keeping for consultation activities (who was consulted, how, when and what feedback was received), to support transparency and future evaluation.
- Strengthened data collection points (recruitment, induction and exit) to support more consistent gender-disaggregated reporting over time, and to assist with analysis of occupational segregation, flexible work and progression pathways.
- Integration of GEAP monitoring into existing reporting forums (for example, leadership updates led by People and Culture), with an emphasis on tracking progress against the measures and adjusting strategies if progress is not reasonable and material.
- Council will submit this GEAP to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in line with the Act's requirements.
- Following acceptance, Council will publish the GEAP on its website and make it available to employees and the community, including in alternative formats on request.

Section 3: Leadership commitment

Northern Grampians Shire Council is committed to building a workplace where people of all genders have equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes. We recognise that gender equality strengthens our organisation, improves decision-making and service delivery, and contributes to safer and more inclusive communities.

As Chief Executive Officer, I support the implementation of this Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) for 2026–2029 and affirm that Council will work to make reasonable and material progress against each of the workplace gender equality indicators under the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*. Council will continue to embed gender equality into our governance and people practices, including leadership accountability, workforce capability building and continuous improvement in data and reporting.

We acknowledge that some gender equality issues require sustained effort over time, particularly in a rural local government context with a relatively small workforce and occupational mix. This GEAP sets out clear actions to address priority areas identified in our workplace gender audit and progress reporting, including leadership representation, pay equity drivers in some cohorts, recruitment and promotion confidence, workplace safety, flexible work and caring responsibilities, and gender segregation.

I thank our employees, employee representatives and Councillors for their engagement in developing this plan and for their ongoing commitment to achieving gender equality at Council.

B) Consult on your audit results and strategies

Section 4: Confirm consultation groups

You must consult with your...	Confirm yes or no	If no, why not?
Governing body (if your organisation has one)	Yes	
Employees	Yes	
Employee representatives, including relevant trade unions	Yes	
You might consult with...	Confirm yes or no	Please describe additional people and/or groups
Other relevant people	Yes	Volunteers and contractors were invited to participate

Section 5: Document your consultation process

Councillors were actively engaged in the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). To facilitate their participation and gather valuable input, information regarding the GEAP was distributed specifically to Councillors through their weekly newsletter. This ensured that the communication was targeted and relevant to their roles and responsibilities. Within the newsletter, Councillors were invited to complete a survey designed to solicit their feedback and suggestions. Their responses contributed directly to shaping the GEAP, ensuring the plan reflected the perspectives of elected representatives.

Employees, employee representatives, volunteers, and contractors were also included in the consultation process for the GEAP. Information about the plan and the opportunity to provide input was communicated through the fortnightly staff newsletter, which serves as a key channel for organisational updates. Recipients were invited to participate in a survey, allowing them to share feedback and suggestions relating to the development of the GEAP. This broad approach ensured that a wide range of voices from across the organisation, including those of volunteers and contractors, were heard and considered in the drafting of the plan.

Section 6: Findings from your consultation

Consultation feedback reinforced that Council should maintain momentum on gender equality while improving communication, visibility and practical supports. Key themes included:

Confidence and transparency in people processes: Staff and Councillors emphasised the importance of recruitment and promotion processes being clearly communicated and consistently applied, including how acting/higher duties opportunities are offered and how decisions are made.

Leadership and development: Feedback supported a stronger focus on leadership pathways and capability building, including accessible opportunities for development and networking, and actions to support representation of women in senior leadership roles.

Safe and respectful workplace: Participants highlighted the need for ongoing awareness and training about expected behaviours, reporting options and support pathways to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and broader unacceptable behaviour.

Flexible work and caring: Consultation supported continuing to normalise flexible work for all genders (where operationally feasible), promoting leave and support entitlements, and ensuring managers have tools to implement flexibility fairly across different work areas.

Data and intersectionality: Feedback noted the value of stronger data collection (including voluntary, privacy-respecting demographic information) to better understand and respond to the experiences of people with intersecting attributes and to address potential barriers for diverse groups.

C) Consider the gender equality and the gender pay equity principles, and intersectionality

Section 7: Consider the gender equality principles

In developing this GEAP, Council considered the gender equality principles in section 6 of the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*. These principles recognise that gender equality is a human right and a precondition for social justice; that it benefits everyone; that it supports improved economic, social and health outcomes; and that it is essential to preventing family violence and other forms of gendered violence. The principles also reinforce the need to challenge gender stereotypes and to treat gender equality as a shared responsibility.

We applied these principles by using our workplace gender audit and progress reporting to identify where gender inequality exists (or may exist), consulting with Councillors, employees and employee representatives on priorities and strategies, and focusing on actions that are proportionate to our size and context as a rural local government employer. We have also prioritised actions that support a safe and respectful workplace and that improve equal access to opportunities, including leadership pathways, recruitment and promotion practices, and flexible work arrangements.

Council will continue to embed these principles into our governance and continuous improvement approach, including regular monitoring of measures, clear leadership accountability, and adjustments to strategies where progress is not reasonable and material.

Section 8: Consider the gender pay equity principles

Council developed this GEAP in alignment with the gender pay equity principles outlined in the Gender Equality Regulations 2020. These principles promote equal pay for work of equal or comparable value, the removal of bias and discrimination in employment and remuneration practices, and greater transparency in how pay decisions are made.

Findings from our 2025 workplace gender audit and 2026 progress report indicate that pay equity outcomes are not consistent across all groups. While there has been a notable improvement in the mean total remuneration gender pay gap for senior leaders (decreasing from 20.7% in 2023 to 6.3% in 2025), the overall pay gap across the organisation increased slightly from 6.8% to 7.8%, with variation across different occupation groups. This is despite Council applying standardised role classifications across all levels - from senior leadership through to operational roles - to minimise direct pay inequity.

This variation reflects broader workforce composition factors rather than differences in pay for the same role. For example, gender imbalances in higher-paid or senior roles, differences in part-time versus full-time work patterns, and variations in tenure or progression can all influence overall remuneration outcomes. As a result, even with consistent classification structures, differences in how employees are distributed across roles and conditions can contribute to a measurable gender pay gap.

To maintain alignment with pay equity principles, Council will continue its established approach of applying standardised classification structures to all roles across the organisation. These classifications ensure that remuneration is based on the inherent requirements, responsibilities, and value of each role - rather than the individual - thereby preventing gender-based pay disparities for like or comparable work. Council remains committed to ensuring all remuneration practices are fair, consistent, and transparent, supported by clearly defined pay scales, documented decision-making processes, and accessible information for employees about how remuneration is determined and reviewed.

Council also recognises that workforce trends can influence overall pay gap outcomes. In particular, the increased uptake of flexible working arrangements has enabled more employees, particularly women, to reduce working hours to better balance work and family responsibilities. This is a positive outcome that reflects Council's commitment to supporting working parents and fostering a flexible, inclusive workplace. While these choices may influence overall remuneration averages, they should not be interpreted as inequity, but rather as evidence of a workplace culture that supports work-life balance and employee wellbeing.

Council will continue to embed gender considerations into key processes such as annual remuneration reviews and policy updates, and will use gender-disaggregated data where available to monitor trends and ensure equity is maintained over time.

Section 9: Consider intersectionality

Council recognises that gender inequality can be compounded by other attributes and experiences such as age, disability, Aboriginality, cultural and linguistic background, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, caring responsibilities and socioeconomic status. Council considered intersectionality when interpreting our workplace gender audit and employee experience information, and when designing strategies intended to be inclusive and accessible across different work areas.

As a small rural council with a relatively small workforce, some data breakdowns are limited by confidentiality thresholds and small cohort sizes (for example, People Matter Survey gender breakdowns for some measures). Council also acknowledges that some intersectional demographic information is not consistently captured in workforce systems, which limits our ability to analyse outcomes for people with intersecting attributes.

To address this, this GEAP includes actions to improve the quality and inclusiveness of data collection over time (in ways that are voluntary, privacy-respecting and culturally safe), and to use multiple information sources (audit data, employee experience results, feedback channels and consultation) to identify barriers and guide improvements. Our strategies also focus on reducing bias in recruitment and promotion, strengthening flexible work culture, and improving workplace safety and reporting pathways - actions intended to benefit employees experiencing compounded disadvantage as well as the broader workforce.

D) Making a case for change

Section 10: Make a case for change and create a vision

Gender equality matters at Northern Grampians Shire Council because it supports a safe, respectful and high-performing workplace where everyone can contribute and thrive. As a local government employer and service provider, our workforce diversity and inclusion also influences the way we make decisions, design services and engage with our community. Achieving gender equality improves fairness and wellbeing for employees, strengthens organisational capability, and contributes to better outcomes for the people we serve.

Our workplace gender audit and progress reporting provide an evidence base for action. They show areas of progress (including improvements in women's representation in senior leadership and reductions in the senior leader pay gap) and areas requiring further focus (including uneven pay gap results across occupation groups, confidence in recruitment and promotion processes, the need to maintain strong prevention and response to workplace sexual harassment, and persistent occupational segregation in some roles). We also recognise the importance of ensuring flexible work and caring-related supports are accessible and equitable across different work areas, and that gender equality work is supported by strong governance and appropriate resourcing.

Our vision is a workplace where people of all genders have equal access to opportunities, resources and decision-making; where pay and progression are fair and transparent; where flexibility and caring responsibilities are supported without stigma; and where everyone feels safe and respected at work. Over 2026–2029, we will embed gender equality into our policies, practices and culture, monitor progress against the required measures, and adjust our approach to ensure we make reasonable and material progress against each workplace gender equality indicator.

E) Analysing your data to identify forms of gender inequality AND developing your strategies

Section 11: Identifying underlying causes of gender inequality

Council's audit and progress reporting results suggest that gender inequality (and progress towards gender equality) is shaped by a set of interconnected organisational factors. Key underlying causes and contextual drivers include: Workforce size and volatility: As a relatively small organisation, percentage movements can change materially year to year due to small numbers (for example, promotions, parental leave takers and formal complaints). This can mask or amplify trends and requires careful interpretation over time. Occupational mix and role requirements: Council's mix of office-based and operational roles influences gender composition, segregation and pay outcomes. Some roles have specific technical/trade requirements or operational conditions that shape applicant pools, overtime/allowance patterns and the practicability of some flexible arrangements. Operational priorities and resourcing constraints: Competing service delivery obligations and constrained resourcing affect the pace at which initiatives can be developed, implemented and embedded (for example, deeper pay driver analysis, targeted attraction initiatives, or consistent organisation-wide communication about processes). Data availability and confidentiality thresholds: The 2025 People Matter Survey response rate and minimum reporting thresholds mean some gender breakdowns are suppressed. This limits visibility for some measures (including some sexual harassment measures by gender) and reinforces the need for multiple data sources and improved data capture over time (including self-described gender where possible). These underlying causes inform the design of this GEAP. Council has prioritised strategies that strengthen governance and accountability, improve transparency and consistency in people practices, enhance respectful workplace prevention and response, support flexible work in operationally feasible ways, and improve workforce data and monitoring - so that actions can be adjusted if progress is not reasonable and material.

Section 12: Analysing your data and documenting your strategies

Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

Describing the problem

Analyse audit data	Council's workforce gender composition in 2025 shows women comprise 60.1% of the workforce and men 39.9%. Part-time work is predominantly undertaken by women (women 80.9%, men 19.1%). Senior leadership composition shows women at 42.9% and men at 57.1%. Compared with 2023, women's representation increased in the overall workforce (56.8% to 60.1%) and in senior leadership (41.2% to 42.9%), indicating incremental progress. However, women remain under-represented in senior leadership relative to their overall workforce participation, and part-time work continues to be gendered, which can influence access to development opportunities, progression and higher-earning roles. Council also recognises that occupational mix in a regional council context can shape gender composition across levels and work areas. This GEAP therefore focuses on strengthening leadership pathways, ensuring equitable access to development and acting opportunities, and supporting flexible work in ways that do not limit progression.
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Setting metrics

Measures	Critical performance measures: - Gender composition of the duty holder organisation. - Gender composition of part time workers in the duty holder organisation. - Gender composition of senior leaders in the duty holder organisation.
Target/s (recommended)	By 30 June 2029, Council aims to: - Increase women's representation in senior leadership roles to at least 45% (from 42.9% in 2025), subject to workforce size and role availability. - Increase men's share of part-time roles to at least 22% (from 19.1% in 2025) to support more equitable uptake of flexibility across genders. - Maintain overall workforce gender composition within a 40–60 range (noting this may fluctuate due to small workforce size and recruitment cycles).

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Implement transparent leadership and development pathways by: - Advertising acting/higher duties opportunities (where practicable) and clarifying selection criteria. - Offering targeted leadership development and mentoring to support a diverse pipeline for leadership roles.	Manager People and Culture	2026–2029 (design in 2026; implement and review annually)	5, 7
Strengthen gender-balanced access to flexible work by: - Promoting flexible work options for all genders (where operationally feasible), including in operational work areas. - Supporting managers with guidance to assess requests consistently and fairly.	Manager People and Culture / Relevant Managers	2026–2029 (ongoing; annual review)	6
Improve workforce data and monitoring by: - Continuing to strengthen data capture at recruitment, induction and exit. - Reporting annually to leadership on gender composition at key levels and any emerging risks.	Manager People and Culture	2026–2029 (ongoing; annual reporting)	All indicators

Indicator 2: Gender composition of the governing body

Describing the problem

Analyse audit data	Critical performance measures: Council’s governing body gender composition in 2025 was reported as women 71.4% and men 28.6% (self-described 0.0%). This represents a substantial change from 2023 (women 28.6%, men 71.4%). As a local government entity, Council has limited direct control over governing body composition because Councillors are democratically elected. Despite this, Council can support equitable access to participation by ensuring that governance processes, meeting arrangements and information about candidacy and participation do not create unnecessary barriers for any gender, including people with caring responsibilities or other intersecting barriers.
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Setting metrics

Measures	Critical performance measures: 1. Gender composition of the duty holder organisation’s governing body.
Target/s (recommended)	Council will monitor governing body gender composition as reported in the workplace gender audit. Where within Council’s influence, we will aim to remove practical barriers to participation (for example, meeting accessibility and scheduling), noting that election outcomes are not controlled by Council.

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Review the accessibility of Council briefings and meetings by assessing timing, location, hybrid/remote options and support arrangements (where available) to mitigate barriers to participation.	Manager Governance	2026 (review) then implement as feasible 2026–2029	6
Support community awareness and equitable participation initiatives (for example, sharing information about nomination requirements and supporting sector-led programs that encourage diverse candidates).	Coordinator Communications and Coordinator Governance	Prior to future election cycles (as applicable) and ongoing	2

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

Describing the problem

Analyse audit data	Critical performance measures: Council's workplace gender audit shows that pay equity outcomes vary across cohorts. In 2025, the mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap was 6.3% (down from 20.7% in 2023), indicating improvement at the senior leadership level. However, the overall mean total remuneration pay gap across all occupations was 7.8% (up from 6.8% in 2023), and occupation-group results were mixed, with some groups showing increased gaps. This variation reflects broader workforce composition factors rather than differences in pay for the same role. For example, gender imbalances in higher-paid or senior roles, differences in part-time versus full-time work patterns, and variations in tenure or progression can all influence overall remuneration outcomes. As a result, even with consistent classification structures, differences in how employees are distributed across roles and conditions can contribute to a measurable gender pay gap. To maintain alignment with pay equity principles, Council will continue its established approach of applying standardised classification structures to all roles across the organisation. These classifications ensure that remuneration is based on the inherent requirements, responsibilities, and value of each role - rather than the individual - thereby preventing gender-based pay disparities for like or comparable work. Council remains committed to ensuring all remuneration practices are fair, consistent, and transparent, supported by clearly defined pay scales, documented decision-making processes, and accessible information for employees about how remuneration is determined and reviewed. Council also recognises that workforce trends can influence overall pay gap outcomes. In particular, the increased uptake of flexible working arrangements has enabled more employees, particularly women, to reduce working hours to better balance work and family responsibilities. This is a positive outcome that reflects Council's commitment to supporting working parents and fostering a flexible, inclusive workplace. While these choices may influence overall remuneration averages, they should not be interpreted as inequity, but rather as evidence of a workplace culture that supports work-life balance and employee wellbeing. Council will continue to embed gender considerations into key processes such as annual remuneration reviews and policy updates, and will use gender-disaggregated data where available to monitor trends and ensure equity is maintained over time.
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Setting metrics

Measures	Critical performance measures: Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group. Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap. Supplementary measures: Mean base salary pay gap. Median total remuneration pay gap. Median base salary pay gap.
Target/s	By 30 June 2029, Council aims to: • Reduce the mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap to 5% or less (from 6.3% in 2025). • Maintain the overall mean total remuneration gender pay gap across all occupations at 7% or less, subject to workforce composition and industrial settings. Targets will be reviewed annually in light of workforce size, cohort volatility and the drivers identified through analysis.

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Strengthen gender equity in recruitment and progression • Review recruitment, selection and promotion processes to identify and address any potential gender bias. • Ensure diverse selection panels and consistent assessment criteria are applied across all roles.	Manager People and Culture	2026 (review and update approach) then ongoing 2026–2029 (apply to all recruitment and promotion activity; annual monitoring)	5, 1, 7
Embed gender considerations into workforce planning • Incorporate gender analysis into workforce planning, restructuring and organisational design decisions. • Assess the potential gender impact of new roles, changes to responsibilities, and workforce distribution.	Manager People and Culture	2026 (embed into workforce planning templates) then ongoing 2026–2029 (apply as changes occur; annual review)	1, 5, 6, 7

Indicator 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Describing the problem

Analyse audit data	Council's 2025 results show an anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment (People Matter Survey) of 2.5% for all respondents, down from 4.5% in 2023. Gender breakdowns for 2025 are not reportable, reflecting minimum reporting thresholds and the small survey response base. The workplace gender audit recorded 1 formal sexual harassment complaint in 2025 (complainant: woman; respondent: man; handled internally). Low numbers can fluctuate year to year and should be interpreted cautiously given the known risk of underreporting. Together, these results reinforce the need to maintain strong prevention measures, clear expected behaviours, accessible reporting pathways and consistent, trauma-informed responses.
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Setting metrics

Measures	Critical performance measures: 1. Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment. 2. Number of formal reports of sexual harassment. Supplementary measures: 1. Participants who said they reported sexual harassment. 2. Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint. 3. Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint. 4. Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint.
Target/s (recommended)	By 30 June 2029, Council aims to: • Maintain the anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment (all respondents) at 2.5% or lower. • Maintain clear reporting pathways and timely response processes, with annual review of formal report numbers and response learnings (noting formal report counts are expected to be low and may fluctuate).

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Maintain a strong prevention approach by delivering respectful workplace and sexual harassment awareness education for all employees and tailored guidance for managers on their responsibilities.	Manager People and Culture	2026–2029	6
Strengthen reporting confidence and response consistency by: • Communicating reporting options (formal and informal) and available supports. • Reviewing the handling of any reports to identify improvement actions (while maintaining confidentiality).	Manager People and Culture / Executive Leadership Team	2026–2029	4
Improve the quality of evidence for monitoring sexual harassment by encouraging employee experience survey participation and monitoring confidentiality thresholds, so gender-disaggregated reporting is available where possible (constraints acknowledged).	Manager People and Culture	2026–2029	All indicators

Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Describing the problem

Analyse audit data	Critical performance measures: Recruitment outcomes show women comprised the majority of recruits in both years (59.4% in 2023; 63.0% in 2025). Promotion outcomes shifted, with women receiving a smaller share of promotions in 2025 (75.0% in 2023; 58.8% in 2025) and men receiving a larger share (25.0% to 41.2%). Employee perceptions show mixed results. For women and men, perceptions of recruitment fairness increased (women 70.0% to 85.2%; men 75.0% to 91.3%) and perceptions of promotion fairness increased (women 54.0% to 72.2%; men 61.1% to 78.3%). However, overall perceptions for all respondents declined for recruitment (86.4% to 62.9%) and promotion (72.8% to 47.1%). In addition, the proportion of respondents agreeing they have an equal chance at promotion increased (51.1% to 70.4%). These results indicate the need to strengthen confidence and consistency in recruitment and promotion processes across the organisation, including clearer communication about how decisions are made, and ongoing monitoring of recruitment and promotion outcomes by gender.
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Setting metrics (see [step 6](#))

Measures	Critical performance measures: 1. Gender composition of recruited employees. 2. Gender composition of employees who were promoted. 3. Perceptions of recruitment, by gender. 4. Perceptions of promotion, by gender.
Target/s	By 30 June 2029, Council aims to: • Increase all-respondent perceptions of recruitment fairness to at least 70% (from 62.9% in 2025). • Increase all-respondent perceptions of promotion fairness to at least 60% (from 47.1% in 2025). • Maintain equal chance at promotion” at 70% or higher (70.4% in 2025).

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Improve transparency and consistency of recruitment by standardising selection processes (for example, structured interview guides and clearer documentation of decisions) and communicating the process to candidates.	Manager People and Culture / Hiring Managers	2026 (develop) then ongoing 2026–2029	1, 7
Improve transparency of promotion and acting opportunities by clarifying criteria, advertising opportunities where practicable, and providing constructive feedback to applicants to support development.	Manager People and Culture / Executive Leadership Team	2026–2029 (implement and review annually)	1, 3

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

Describing the problem

Analyse audit data	Critical performance measures: Council's audit results show that the average weeks of parental leave taken decreased between 2023 and 2025 for both women (49.5 to 33.8 weeks) and men (4.7 to 3.4 weeks). Measured uptake of flexible work arrangements decreased for both women (40.8% to 34.3%) and men (38.6% to 32.1%). At the same time, perceptions of flexible work culture strengthened. Agreement that a flexible work request would be given due consideration increased for women (90.0% to 94.4%) and men (69.4% to 87.0%). For all respondents, confidence that a flexible work request would be given due consideration increased from 80.7% (2023) to 91.4% (2025), and agreement that direct line managers support working flexibly increased from 79.0% to 84.3%. Perceived organisational support for accessing family violence leave also increased (89.8% to 93.8%). In the 2025 People Matter Survey, 74.1% of respondents reported using at least one flexible work arrangement. These results suggest that while flexible work culture and confidence are improving, there may be barriers to formal uptake and utilisation for some roles or work areas, particularly where service delivery requirements limit practicability. This GEAP therefore focuses on supporting equitable, operationally feasible flexible work practices and improving understanding of uptake and barriers through monitoring.
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Setting metrics

Measures	Critical performance measures: - Average weeks of parental leave, by gender. - Uptake of flexible work, by gender. - Perceptions of flexible work culture, by gender. Supplementary measures: - Gender composition of parental leave takers. - Gender gap in carer's leave.
Target/s	By 30 June 2029, Council aims to: - Maintain “due consideration of flexible work request” at 90% or higher for all respondents (91.4% in 2025). - Increase measured uptake of flexible work arrangements to at least 36% for women (from 34.3% in 2025) and 34% for men (from 32.1% in 2025), noting operational constraints may affect outcomes. - Maintain perceived organisational support for accessing family violence leave at 93% or higher (93.8% in 2025).

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Strengthen consistent, operationally feasible flexible work decision-making by providing managers with guidance and tools to assess requests fairly across different work areas, including examples for operational roles where practicable.	Manager People and Culture / Relevant Managers	2026 (develop) then ongoing 2026–2029	1
Maintain awareness of family violence leave and caring-related supports by communicating entitlements, access pathways and support options, including manager guidance on responding appropriately and confidentially.	Manager People and Culture	2026–2029	4

Indicator 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace

Describing the problem

Analyse audit data	Critical performance measures: Council's occupational gender segregation results show that gender balance varies substantially by occupation group. Between 2023 and 2025, women's representation increased in some traditionally male-dominated groups, including Technicians and Trades Workers (10.7% to 19.0%) and Labourers (13.2% to 26.7%). However, segregation remains pronounced in some groups. Machinery Operators and Drivers remained 100% men in both 2023 and 2025. Women's representation decreased in Professionals (75.3% to 67.6%) and was broadly stable among Managers (41.7% to 41.2%). These results indicate a need for sustained, targeted attraction and development strategies, particularly in occupation groups that remain highly gender segregated, while also maintaining progress in areas where representation is improving.
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Setting metrics

Measures	Critical performance measures: 1. Occupational gender segregation.
Target/s	By 30 June 2029, Council aims to: • Increase women's representation among Technicians and Trades Workers to at least 22% (from 19.0% in 2025). • Increase women's representation among Labourers to at least 30% (from 26.7% in 2025). • Reduce extreme segregation in Machinery Operators and Drivers by taking at least one targeted attraction or pathway action during 2026–2029 (noting workforce size and vacancy availability).

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Improve visibility in recruitment • Ensure all job advertisements include inclusive, gender-neutral language and a statement encouraging applications from underrepresented genders.	Manager People and Culture / Hiring Managers	2026–2029	5
Build awareness with hiring managers • Provide guidance to hiring managers on considering gender balance when recruiting.	Manager People and Culture / Relevant Managers	2026–2029	5
Include gender balance as a consideration in recruitment • Ensure that hiring managers consider gender balance when forming interview panels and shortlists, where practical.	Manager People and Culture	2026–2029	5

F) Resourcing your GEAP

Section 13: Identifying current and required resources

On 30 June 2025, our primary resource responsible for delivering the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) resigned from their position. This departure significantly impacted our GEAP implementation capacity. Due to the unavailability of grant funding and the broader financial constraints currently faced by Council, we have been unable to recruit a replacement for this crucial role.

As an interim measure, the Manager People and Culture has taken on all responsibilities related to the GEAP. While this arrangement has ensured continuity in the short term, it is not a viable or sustainable solution over the long run. The additional workload risks limiting our ability to make meaningful progress across all GEAP action items and could impede our capacity to achieve the intended outcomes.

To adequately resource the GEAP and ensure the delivery of the identified strategies and actions, our assessment indicates the need for a permanent, part-time (0.5 FTE) Project Officer position. Establishing this role is essential to coordinate and drive the implementation of the GEAP, enabling us to achieve real and measurable outcomes in workplace gender equality.

Section 14: Developing a resourcing plan

To ensure the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) is adequately resourced, Council has allocated responsibility for coordination and monitoring to the Manager People and Culture, with delivery shared across relevant managers and work areas depending on the action. GEAP development has been resourced through existing People and Culture capacity.

Our assessment indicates that a dedicated, permanent part-time (0.5 FTE) Project Officer role would materially strengthen Council's capacity to deliver the GEAP, particularly to coordinate actions, maintain momentum, improve data and reporting, and support consistent implementation across work areas. Council will consider options to fund and establish this role as part of budget planning and workforce prioritisation processes, recognising current financial constraints.

Council will monitor resourcing effectiveness through quarterly internal check-ins led by People and Culture (tracking delivery of strategies, progress against measures and any implementation barriers). Resourcing needs will be reviewed annually (or sooner if required) and adjusted through normal governance and budget processes to ensure Council can make reasonable and material progress across all workplace gender equality indicators.

Establishing the Project Officer position will enable focused attention on the GEAP, facilitating the achievement of real and measurable outcomes. The effectiveness of this role will be monitored through the delivery of measurable results in workplace gender equality, ensuring that the resourcing strategy contributes directly to the success of the GEAP throughout its life cycle.

GEAP implementation timeline (2026–2029) – consolidated view

This consolidated timeline summarises when key GEAP strategies will be designed, delivered and reviewed across 2026–2029. It complements the indicator-specific tables above and highlights where strategies support multiple workplace gender equality indicators.

Strategy (from indicator tables)	Responsible	2026 (design / establish)	2027 (rollout / embed)	2028 (monitor / improve)	2029 (review / prepare next cycle)	Indicator(s)
Implement transparent leadership and development pathways (advertising acting/higher duties where practicable; clarify selection criteria; targeted leadership development and mentoring).	Manager People and Culture	Design approach; confirm criteria and communications; identify development/mentoring options.	Implement and embed; review annually.	Annual monitoring and improvements.	End-of-plan review and update for next GEAP.	1 (related: 5, 7)
Strengthen gender-balanced access to flexible work (promote flexible work options for all genders where operationally feasible; manager guidance for fair and consistent decisions).	Manager People and Culture / Relevant Managers	Refresh guidance and communications; identify operational examples.	Embed practice; annual review.	Monitor uptake and address barriers.	Evaluate impact and update approach for next cycle.	1 (related: 6)
Improve workforce data and monitoring (strengthen data capture at recruitment, induction and exit; report annually to leadership on gender composition and emerging risks).	Manager People and Culture	Confirm data gaps and collection points; establish reporting cadence and accountabilities.	Report and refine; respond to emerging risks.	Continue annual reporting; improve data quality over time.	Consolidate lessons learned to inform next GEAP and audit cycle.	1 (related: all indicators)
Review the accessibility of Council briefings and meetings (assess timing, location, hybrid/remote options and support arrangements where available) to mitigate barriers to participation.	Manager Governance	Conduct review and document actions.	Implement feasible changes; monitor feedback.	Ongoing monitoring and adjustments.	Review effectiveness and carry forward improvements.	2 (related: 6)
Support community awareness and equitable participation initiatives (share information about nomination requirements; support sector-led programs encouraging diverse candidates).	Coordinator Communications and Coordinator Governance	Plan approach and communications; align to relevant election cycle(s) as applicable.	Deliver activities as applicable; monitor feedback.	Continue as applicable; capture learnings.	Review effectiveness and incorporate improvements.	2
Strengthen gender equity in recruitment and progression (review recruitment, selection and promotion processes to identify and address potential gender bias; ensure diverse selection panels and	Manager People and Culture	Review process, templates and guidance; confirm minimum expectations for panels and criteria.	Embed updated process; support managers; track uptake.	Monitor outcomes and refine.	Evaluate impact and update for next cycle.	3 (related: 5, 1, 7)

consistent assessment criteria).						
Embed gender considerations into workforce planning (incorporate gender analysis into workforce planning, restructuring and organisational design decisions; assess gender impacts of new roles and changes).	Manager People and Culture	Embed into workforce planning/ restructure templates; confirm review checkpoints.	Apply in relevant planning and change activity; document decisions.	Review lessons learned and improve approach.	Consolidate learnings to inform next cycle.	3 (related: 1, 5, 6, 7)
Maintain a strong prevention approach (deliver respectful workplace and sexual harassment awareness education for all employees; tailored manager guidance).	Manager People and Culture	Schedule/plan delivery; confirm content and reporting pathways information.	Deliver at least annually; track completion.	Continue annual delivery; refresh content.	Evaluate and update for next cycle.	4 (related: 6)
Strengthen reporting confidence and response consistency (communicate reporting options and supports; review handling of any reports to identify improvement actions while maintaining confidentiality).	Manager People and Culture / Executive Leadership Team	Set communications schedule; confirm supports and escalation pathways.	Deliver communications; annual review of learnings.	Continue; implement improvements identified.	Review approach and embed into next plan.	4
Improve the quality of evidence for monitoring sexual harassment (encourage employee experience survey participation; monitor confidentiality thresholds to enable gender-disaggregated reporting where possible).	Manager People and Culture	Plan participation approach aligned to survey cycle.	Monitor thresholds and act where feasible.	Continue annually.	Consolidate learnings for next GEAP.	4 (related: all indicators)
Improve transparency and consistency of recruitment (standardise selection processes and communicate process to candidates).	Manager People and Culture / Hiring Managers	Develop tools (e.g., structured interview guides) and decision documentation templates.	Roll out and embed recruitment activity.	Monitor feedback and improve.	Refresh tools on learnings.	5 (related: 1, 7)
Improve transparency of promotion and acting opportunities (clarify criteria; advertise opportunities where practicable; provide constructive feedback to applicants).	Manager People and Culture / Executive Leadership Team	Confirm approach and communications.	Implement and review annually.	Monitor perceptions and outcomes.	End-of-plan review and refresh.	5 (related: 1, 3)
Strengthen consistent, operationally feasible flexible work decision-making (provide managers guidance and tools; include	Manager People and Culture / Relevant Managers	Develop toolkit/guidance and communicate availability.	Embed use; update based on feedback.	Monitor consistency and outcomes.	Review and refresh.	6 (related: 1)

examples for operational roles where practicable).						
Maintain awareness of family violence leave and caring-related supports (communicate entitlements and pathways; manager guidance on confidential response).	Manager People and Culture	Update communication materials and manager guidance.	Annual communications.	Continue annually.	Review and update for next plan.	6 (related: 4)
Improve visibility in recruitment (ensure job advertisements include inclusive, gender-neutral language and encourage applications from underrepresented genders).	Manager People and Culture / Hiring Managers	Apply improvements to all job ads and templates.	Continue for all recruitment.	Review and refine language and channels.	Summarise learnings for next cycle.	7 (related: 5)
Build awareness with hiring managers (provide guidance to hiring managers on considering gender balance when recruiting).	Manager People and Culture / Relevant Managers	Develop guidance and deliver briefings.	Embed into recruitment practice.	Monitor and refresh content.	Review and update.	7 (related: 5)
Include gender balance as a consideration in recruitment (consider gender balance when forming interview panels and shortlists where practical).	Manager People and Culture	Confirm expectations and reinforce with hiring managers.	Apply in recruitment activity.	Monitor and refine approach.	Review outcomes and update for next plan.	7 (related: 5)