



Baw Baw Shire Council

GENDER EQUITY ACTION PLAN

2016



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CEO Foreword

The Baw Baw Shire Gender Equity Action Plan represents the culmination of a two year project partnership between Baw Baw Shire Council, and Gippsland Women's Health.

During this time, Council has made significant strides towards the prevention of violence against women, through workforce education, internal policy development, bystander training, community events, formation of a community action group and the completion of the organisations first gender equity audit.

Current Australian research has found that communities and governments can prevent violence against women before it occurs through encouraging gender respectful and equitable expectations and behaviours.

Through the Gender Equity Action Plan, the organisation is making a sustainable commitment to increasing gender equality in the workplace, through encouraging a culture of respect, and inviting our workforce to '*Challenge the boundaries, be the difference!*'

Vision and Values

A core value of Council is respect. As staff embody this value within the workplace, in their dealings with the public and each other, the organisation continues to progress towards our vision for a gender equitable workplace.

It is Council's vision to provide a workplace where all staff are treated equitably, given equal opportunities and provided the same high level of respect regardless of gender or other personal characteristics.

Accountability

All employees, volunteers and contractors have the right to be treated with dignity and respect whilst working for Council. It is therefore the responsibility of each employee, regardless of their gender, to be sensitive to the issue of inequality at work and their impact on others, and to actively demonstrate respect and inclusion across the organisation.

Objectives

1. **Governance** - Policies and processes are reviewed and developed to ensure gender equity is at their core
2. **Capacity** – Build capacity within the organisation to empower all staff with the knowledge and skills to create a gender equitable workplace
3. **Culture** - Council's commitment to gender equity is reflected in all organisational behaviours.

4. **Remuneration and Career Opportunity** – Pay and professional development and employment opportunities are offered with fairness and equity for both women and men across the organisation
5. **Working conditions** - Assist employees to meet personal responsibilities whilst remaining actively engaged in their work.
6. **Health and Safety** - Workplace risk is identified and managed to ensure a healthy and safe space for all employees
7. **Customer Experience** - The organisation establishes and maintains a reputation for respect and gendered inclusion within the community.

Gender Equity – In context

The level of female representation in local government is low – both in elected representation and within the organisations that serve their communities directly, and advocate for them to other tiers of government.

There is an argument that organisations who do not reflect the communities in which they operate cannot hope to represent them, but the business case for gender equity goes much deeper than that.

It is obviously not enough to promote gender equity because it's the right thing to do. Good governance is at the heart of everything local government does, and councils need compelling business reasons to divert resources into programs that promote gender equity, and to justify the programs in terms of leadership and governance.

Below illustrates the context in which this plan has been formed, taking into account a range of existing drivers, including significant legislative influences, local government sector initiatives, community and organisation strategic directions and internal policy and program.

Collectively, it is this context that forms the business case for gender equity at Baw Baw Shire Council.

LEGISLATION

Workplace Gender Equity Act 2012, Sex Discrimination Act, Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, and Equal Opportunities Act.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

MAV Womens Charter, and 50/50 Vision - Gender Equity in Councils.

COMMUNITY AND ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY

Baw Baw Shire Council Plan, and Baw Baw Shire Council Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

INTERNAL POLICY AND PROGRAMS

Baw Baw Shire Council Gender Equity Action Plan, Baw Baw Shire Council Staff Code of Conduct, and Baw Baw Shire Council Equal Opportunity Policy.

Objective 1: Governance

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	2016	2017
Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive endorsement and promotion of the Gender Equity Action Plan across the organisation 	Executive Leadership Team (ELT)		
Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a Steering Committee to oversee implementation and to serve as an advisory group for arising equity issues 	ELT / HR		
Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council aspires to equal gender representation on all Councils Advisory Committees 	Governance		
Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Human Resources (HR) reporting to include data on employee demographics by gender, trending this information over the duration of this action plan 	HR		
Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add measures against action items contained in the action plan to Interplan, and reported against on a quarterly basis 	Strategic and Community Planning / HR		
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure gender equity is specifically identified within Councils Equal Opportunity, Code of Conduct and Human Rights policies and related documents and practices 	HR		
Workforce Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a policy to provide traineeships / apprenticeships / training targeted at employees who have demonstrated aptitude for work in a field that is not traditional to their gender 	A Project Improvement Group		

Objective 2: Capacity Building

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	2016	2017
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an experiential training program to ensure current organisational gender equity knowledge is maintained Offer training to all Councillors and staff in leadership roles to reinforce Councils commitment to gender equity Update e-learning Equal Opportunity (EO) training package to remove gender stereotypes and identify offline opportunities to reinforce EO learning 	HR		
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders to actively encourage staff participation in gender equity training 	JLT		
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a Gender Equity award to the annual recognition, to encourage and acknowledge good practice 	ELT / Awards Committee		
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate budget and resources for future activities to support delivery against the gender equity action plan 	ELT		
Collective Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Position Descriptions (PD's) to include gender equity as a corporate responsibility 	HR		
Collective Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster relationships with relevant external bodies to create partnerships and access to subject matter experts 	Strategic & Community Planning / HR		
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain commitment to gender representation on recruitment panels Introduce gender balanced shortlists for temp agency referrals 	Agencies		

Objective 3: Culture

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	2016	2017
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote widely the corporate value of respect, including gender equity in its definition 	All staff		
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership across all departments to demonstrate commitment to gender equality through their workplace behaviours 	Joint Leadership Team (JLT)		
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish articles and resources to staff that encourage identification and reflection on personal gender bias and values, and provide guidance for the respectful challenging of negative status quo in the workplace 	Communications		
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to include equity questions in the staff perceptions quarterly survey, trending this information over the duration of this action plan 	ELT / HR		
Public commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a summary of the action plan, and any related gender equity information available on Councils website and intranet and maintain/promote periodically 	Communications / Strategic & Community Planning / HR		
Workplace tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver specific induction to all new staff to develop their understanding of gender equity and violence prevention culture 	HR		
Workplace tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor shared workplace tasks (for example, kitchen tidying, meeting preparation) to ensure no unconsciously biased workplace behaviours 	Supervisors		

Objective 4: Remuneration and Career Opportunity

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	2016	2017
Pay Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and report on pay equity (based on position/organisational hierarchy) annually, developing appropriate actions to address any inequitable trends 	Payroll		
Employee Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly HR reporting to include data on employee development approvals by gender, trending this information over the duration of this action plan Expansion of the mentoring program to encourage equitable access (for example, integration of WorkCover recipients and returning parents) 	HR		
Internal Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include gender diversity as selection criteria when allocating secondment opportunities Quarterly HR reporting to include data on internal mobility by gender, trending this information over the duration of this action plan 	JLT / HR		

Objective 5: Working Conditions

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	2016	2017
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly HR reporting to include data on flexible work approvals by gender, trending this information over the duration of this action plan Actively promote flexible working options to all staff, acknowledging the importance of a range of caring responsibilities 	HR		
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research job design options with a view to encouraging men to take up flexible work agreements 	A Project Improvement Group		
Office Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and promote work areas suitable for breastfeeding and/or working with children in the workplace (for example, Family and Children's Services or Civic) 	Family and Children's Services / HR		

Objective 6: Healthy and Safe Workplace

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	2016	2017
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review OHS policy and practices to manage gendered workplace risks (for example, pregnant women, night lighting, working alone) Include gender equality on the organisational risk register and identify controls to mitigate impacts 	Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Risk		
Employee Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop protocols for debriefing and supporting employees who experience or witness violence Quarterly Employee Assistance Program (EAP) reporting to include data on family violence disclosures/referrals, trending this information over the duration of this action plan 	Employee Assistance Provider		
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include a standard agenda item at OHS meetings to discuss gender equity issues 	OHS and Risk		

Objective 7: Customer Experience

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	2016	2017
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a guidelines for community engagement activities to ensure gendered barriers participation are considered and addressed 	Strategic and Community Planning		
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a standard for all Council-owned facilities based on equitable gender access 	Facilities Coordinator		
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise resource allocation for gender disadvantaged facilities (for example, improve netball change rooms) Clearly link outcomes of this action plan with outcomes of the Municipal Public Health Plan to ensure a consistent approach to violence prevention 	Strategic and Community Planning / HR		
Role modelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When representing Council in public, preparing speeches or preparing correspondence, employees are encouraged to use appropriate language that avoids gendered minimising or stereotyping. Guidelines to be developed. 	Communications		
Media and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All material produced by Council to depict gender sensitive symbols, images, language and examples Images of Council workforce for publication use should depict men and women in non-gender stereotyped roles. 	Communications		