BAW BAW SHIRE COUNCIL

2026 Gender Equality Progress Report

May 2026

Introduction

At Baw Baw Shire Council, we are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and supported to succeed.

In accordance with the the Gender Equality Act 2020, the Council delivered its Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-25 and are required to submit periodic progress reports to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector.

The plan is Council's stepping-stone to promoting and improving equality and creating an understanding that builds empathy within our workplace.

We are pleased to report that significant progress has been made against our planned strategies and we commit to continue this important work through the development of our next GEAP, thereby embedding the change we set out to achieve when we first started.

Total number of employees

Total employees..... **456**

Total FTE..... **340.54**

Response rate to employee experience survey..... **48%**

Location..... **Regional**

Attestation completed by

Sally Jones, Acting Chief Executive Officer, 24 April 2026.

No exemptions of Gender Impact Assessments apply.

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Please note:

This document is a designed version of the official Progress Report submitted to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector. The official report has been completed using the Commission's approved template.

Gender impact assessments

We applied 9 gender impact assessments across programs, polices and services which have a direct and significant impact on our community. The following table outlines the policies, programs and services which were subject to a gender impact assessment, as well as the actions taken as a result.

Council Plan

Subject: Plan **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
Every Council, on election, is required by the Local Government Act to develop a Council Plan for the term of their election. The document outlines Council's strategic direction, objectives, and major initiatives over a four-year period.	Yes	N/A	Key Actions completed: 1. GIA Team reviewed and provided feedback on the Deliberative Engagement Plan. 2. Research and recommend panel demographic target for Gippsland LGBTQIA+ population proportion. 3. Discuss childcare options in engagement plan. Although childcare options were not available, the GIA team supported having two Saturday face-to-face events, as this may be more feasible for adults with dependents as opposed to night sessions. 4. Addition of objective into the Deliberative Engagement project plan: "Council has legislated and leadership responsibilities to promote gender equality and address gender inequality through the policies, programs, or services it delivers." 5. Requested that the introductory session for the community panel includes setting an expectation for safety and inclusion, as well as using it as a leadership opportunity to highlight Council's commitment to gender equality. 6. Creation of a 'conversation pack' to aid engagement with people from minority communities. Delivery of two conversations relating to people living with disability. 7. Secured additional time in the project plan for panel to read and digest the information pack. 8. Requested additional project mitigation strategy – 'Develop survey questions that allow for data disaggregation', for the risk 'appropriate data is not gathered for the required Gender Impact Assessment.'	Intersectionality was specifically considered during recruitment of community panel members, each applicant's diversity characteristics where assessed and informed recruitment to ensure a reflective representation of the diversity in our wider community. Although we were able to disaggregate community survey data and analyse by demographic, we did not have the capability or resourcing to analyse intersectional perspectives.

Child Safe Policy

Subject: Policy **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
This includes a Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and outlines how Child Safety is managed in BBSC to reduce risk and meet our legislative and compliance obligations.	Yes	N/A	The free translation and interpreter contact details were included in the policy for people who may require them.	The Equity Assessment took an intersectional lens much like the Child Safe Standards do, we considered intersectionalities which singularly or combined make someone more vulnerable. Some considerations were First Nations, Sexuality, Gender, Age, Mental and Physical Abilities, Education and Literacy Level, Cultural Background, Religious Background, Household Income, Family Makeup and history, Community Connectedness, and Locality.

Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan

Subject: Plan **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a strategic document that guides the work Council does to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of our community.	Yes	N/A	1. Included upfront statement about the inclusion of trans and non-binary people. Although limited gender diversity data exists, it is valuable in stating that Council's intention is that its strategies and actions are provided for all people. 2. Included comprehensive statistics on family violence rates, particularly in the Baw Baw region, to inform targeted interventions. 3. Identified specific strategies to increase participation across demographics. 4. Increased the number of specific measures that track participation across demographics. 5. Identified opportunity to apply a diversity and inclusion lens over Council's Community Grants Program (which outside the scope of this GIA).	The group completing the GIA did not just look at gender but also considered other factors like place of residence, cultural diversity, income and carer status.

Municipal Extreme Heat Plan

Subject: Plan **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
The plan details actions for community to take in the event of extreme heat/heatwaves. It was prepared in response to a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee determination that Extreme Heat is a significant hazard within Baw Baw Shire.	Yes	N/A	Solutions to Extreme Heat were not just based around access to air-conditioned spaces but included cheap or free, local actions that can be taken to provide relief.	People most at risk during Extreme Heat include those who are older (65+), who are younger (<5), those with low socioeconomic backgrounds, those with medical concerns and those with disabilities. Women and Gender Diverse people, especially those who choose or are required to cover themselves are also high risk during extreme heat days. They were also considered as part of the review, to ensure the plan was able to support those at most risk of the emergency.

Dates and Occasions of Celebration and Significance Policy

Subject: Policy **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
The Policy and Assessment Framework provide a process and supporting framework to guide Council's strategic approach to dates and occasions of significance. Prioritisation of dates and occasions of significance via a tiered approach and assessment framework allows for the recognition of our diverse community, ensures a strategic approach to Council's investment and enables the appropriate allocation of resources and achieving the best outcomes for the community.	Yes	N/A	A direct contact approach was adopted to actively engage with any relevant groups, including young people, the elderly, people living with a disability, people of faith, people who identify as LGBTIQA+, education agencies, new arrivals to Australia and citizens, people with a CALD background of all genders. This was achieved through direct engagement, a broad range of promotion (hard copy print, online, in person) and easy to understand language, with the aim to increase the reach, awareness and participation within the community.	Intersectionality was not addressed in this GIA, which broadly considered the diversity of communities but not how gender interacts with other forms of disadvantage.

Domestic Animal Management Plan

Subject: Plan **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
The Domestic Animals Act 1994 places a statutory obligation on Councils to adopt a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years. The DAMP provides Council with a strategic approach and actions to promote responsible pet ownership, ensure the welfare of dogs and cats in the community and the protection of the community and the environment from nuisance dogs and cats.	Yes	N/A	1. Affordability – the DAMP does not propose additional fees or charges. 2. Accessibility - the information about DAMP and all requirements, services and initiatives were in accessible formats for all residents to access, including in-person engagement, online surveys and targeted engagement.	Intersectionality which makes people more vulnerable was considered, such as gender, cultural and/or religious background and gender based economic challenges.

Asset Plan

Subject: Plan **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
The Asset Plan is around how Council plan to manage their infrastructure assets.	Yes	N/A	In general - Use more data and statistics relevant to diversity to support decision making.	Data disaggregation was useful for the development of Council's Priorities and Strategies.

Financial Plan

Subject: Plan **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
Every Council is required under the Local Government Act to adopt a Financial Plan that supports its Council Plan. The Financial Plan	Yes	N/A	As a result of the Gender Impact Assessment, actions were taken including strengthening how the Plan demonstrates Council's financial sustainability, helping the community better understand	Intersectionality was considered through the recruitment of a representative community panel for the deliberative

outlines how Council will sustainably manage its financial resources to deliver services, fund infrastructure, and achieve its strategic objectives over a ten-year period, ensuring long term financial stability and accountability to the community.			how resources are managed and prioritised. A one-page summary of the Financial Plan was also developed to make key information more accessible, supporting broader understanding and engagement across the community. These actions help reduce barriers to access, promote transparency, and support more informed participation in financial decision making for people of all genders.	engagement process that informed the Council Plan, which in turn underpins the Financial Plan. Panel recruitment assessed a range of diversity characteristics to ensure broad and reflective community representation. While survey data was disaggregated by demographic characteristics, limitations in capability and resourcing meant that deeper analysis of intersectional impacts was not possible at this time.

Governance Rules

Subject: Plan **Status:** Up for review

Description	Was action taken?	If no, why?	Describe the action	How was intersectionality considered?
The Governance Rules are a policy that determines how Council Meetings are run and how the community can participate. The purpose of the GIA was to consider Community Participation at Council Meetings and identify structural barriers that could prevent participation in Council Meetings.	Yes	N/A	1. The Council Meeting information on the website was updated to make the language more accessible. 2. Remote participation at Council Meetings was enabled for community members who sought approval to submit remotely. 3. Council introduced a visual aid for anyone who cannot hear a bell or may prefer a visual cue who is submitting to Council. 4. Council introduced a concierge service for submitters who may need extra assistance or guidance by formalising existing processes.	Intersectionality was considered, by considering access to private vehicles and geographic location, considered CALD communities and participants requiring access to TIS services, the needs of hearing or vision impaired individuals, accessibility requirements, caring responsibilities and representation of intersectionality within the Chamber itself.

Progress against the indicators

1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

Progress data

Critical performance measures

Gender composition of the duty holder organisation:

- 2023: Women 56.8%, Men 43.0%, Self-described 0.3%
- 2025: Women 56.7%, Men 43.0%, Self-described 0.2%

Gender composition of part time workers in the duty holder organisation:

- 2023: Women 34.6%, Men 14.2% Self-described 0.0%
- 2025: Women 35.2%, Men 14.1%, Self-described 0.0%

Gender composition of senior leaders in the duty holder organisation:

- 2023: Women 37.5%, Men 62.5%, Self-described 0.0%
- 2025: Women 54.2%, Men 45.8%, Self-described 0.0%

Has progress been made?

Yes

How the data demonstrates progress

The data shows a continued shift toward a more balanced workforce gender composition between 2023 and 2025. Overall representation remained steady, with only marginal movement across gender groups:

- Women decreased slightly from 56.8% to 56.7%,
- Men held steady at 43.0%, and
- People of Self-Described gender decreased from 0.3% to 0.2%.

The 2023 Progress Report noted a 3% decline in Women representation from 2021, signalling an ongoing trend toward greater balance across the organisation's workforce.

Between 2023 and 2025, part time employment patterns also shifted modestly, supporting broader workforce flexibility:

- Women increased from 34.6% to 35.2%
- Men decreased from 14.2% to 14.1%

The most significant progress is reflected at the senior leadership level, where gender representation changed markedly:

- Women increased from 37.5% to 54.2%
- Men decreased from 62.5% to 45.8%

Together, these results highlight strong and meaningful progress, particularly through the substantial increase in women holding senior leadership positions which an important indicator of improved equity in decision making and leadership pathways.

2. Gender composition of the governing body

Progress data

Critical performance measures

Gender composition of the duty holder organisation's governing body:

- 2023: Women 42.9%, Men 57.1%, Self-described 0.0%
- 2025: Women 44.4%, Men 55.6%, Self-described 0.0%

Has progress been made?

Yes

How the data demonstrates progress

Between 2023 and 2025, the gender composition of our governing body showed gradual but positive movement toward greater balance:

- Women increased from 42.9% to 44.4%
- Men decreased from 57.1% to 55.6%

While these shifts are modest, they reflect a broader national trend. Historically, council governing bodies in Australia have been predominantly Men; however, recent election patterns indicate a steady and ongoing rise in the number of Women elected to local government. This demonstrates meaningful and sustained progress toward more gender balanced representation, contributing to improved diversity in leadership perspectives and decision making.

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

Progress data

Critical performance measures

Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group:
2023:
All categories – Women 3.4%, Self-Described 21.3%
Managers – 22.8%
Professionals – 2.7%
Technicians & Trade Workers – 0.4%
Community & Personal Service Workers – Women 10.3%, Self Described 26.7%
Clerical & Administrative Workers – 1.0%
Sales Workers – N/A
Machinery Operators & Drivers – N/A
Labourers – 6.2%

2025:
All categories – Women 5.6%, Self-Described 7.8%
Managers – 20.9%
Professionals – 0.6%
Technicians & Trade Workers – 14.1%
Community & Personal Service Workers – 15.6%, Self Described 17.3%
Clerical & Administrative Workers – -3.4%
Sales Workers – N/A
Machinery Operators & Drivers – N/A
Labourers – 4.1%

Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap:

- 2023: 10.8%
- 2025: 27.2%

Supplementary measures

Mean base salary pay gap:

- 2023: Women 5.0%, Self-described 18.3%
- 2025: Women 6.9%, Self-described 11.3%

Median total remuneration pay gap:

- 2023: Women 0.1%, Self-described 12.6%
- 2025: Women 1.3%, Self-described -0.9%

Median base salary pay gap:

- 2023: Women -1.7%, Self-described 7.4%
- 2025: Women 4.4%, Self-described 3.3%

Has progress been made?

Yes

How the data demonstrates progress

Between 2023 and 2025, the overall mean total remuneration gender pay gap increased from 3.4% to 5.6%. This movement should be interpreted in context. Several higher remunerated Women undertook increased overtime during the reporting period, affecting total remuneration outcomes and potentially obscuring underlying base salary parity. In addition, ongoing salary growth continues to compound at higher remuneration levels where men remain more highly represented. As a result, total remuneration figures alone do not fully reflect underlying base pay equity.

Mean base salary outcomes provide further insight. The mean base salary gender pay gap for Women increased from 5.0% to 6.9%, reflecting a widening over the reporting period. This change occurred alongside workforce composition shifts, role movements and progression patterns and does not solely reflect changes in like-for-like pay arrangements. In contrast, the mean base salary pay gap for employees identifying as Self-Described gender reduced substantially from 18.3% to 11.3%, representing an improvement in base salary equity for this cohort, notwithstanding that the gap remains comparatively high and requires continued monitoring.

It should also be noted that through the 2025 gender audit, several roles were reassigned to more appropriate ANZSCO occupation groups, including the reclassification of 11 higher-paid positions into the Managers group. These classification corrections changed the composition of multiple occupational groups and limit the methodological reliability of direct point-to-point comparisons with previous reporting periods. Observed movements should therefore be interpreted with caution as they reflect, in part, improved classification accuracy rather than remuneration change alone.

Managers (20.9%)
A substantial gender pay gap remains at the managerial level, indicating that while Women are increasingly represented in leadership roles, discrepancies persist in remuneration outcomes. This gap may reflect differences in seniority within managerial classifications, tenure, portfolio complexity, or negotiated starting salaries. Continued focus on consistent role evaluation and remuneration governance is required to address this disparity.

The mean total remuneration gender pay gap for senior leaders increased from 10.8% in 2023 to 27.2% in 2025. This indicates a widening difference in average total remuneration outcomes at the senior leadership level over the reporting period. Strategies to address these results will be of focus for the next Gender Equality Action Plan.

Professionals (0.6%)
The gender pay gap among professionals is very small, indicating near pay equity for work of equal value within this occupational group. This suggests effective classification practices and relatively consistent remuneration outcomes across genders.

Technicians and Trade Workers (14.1%)
A pronounced gender pay gap exists within this group. This occupational category remains historically male-dominated and may reflect concentration of Men in higher-graded, specialist, or allowance-attracting roles. This result reinforces the need for targeted strategies to address gender segregation, progression pathways, and job valuation in technical roles.

Community and Personal Service Workers (Women 15.6%, Self-described 17.3%)
The data shows notable pay gaps for both Women and employees identifying as Self-Described gender. These outcomes are consistent with challenges commonly associated with care-based roles, including higher prevalence of part-time work, caring responsibilities, and fewer progression opportunities. The elevated gap for gender diverse employees may also reflect small cohort sizes and concentration within lower-paid roles.

Clerical and Administrative Workers (-3.4%)
A negative gender pay gap indicates that, on average, Women earn more than Men within this occupational group. This may be influenced by longer tenure, higher classification levels, or incumbency patterns among Women in these roles, and indicates gender pay gap progress and relatively strong pay equity outcomes.

Labourers (4.1%)
The gender pay gap among labourers is relatively low but remains in favour of Men. While closer to parity than several other occupational groups, continued monitoring is important, particularly given the historically gender-segregated nature of these roles.

Analysis of 2025 outcomes highlights mixed remuneration patterns across occupation groups. Pay gaps remain pronounced within managerial and technical roles, reflecting differences in seniority, tenure and occupational segregation, while near pay parity has been achieved among professionals and clerical and administrative workers.

4. Sexual harassment in the workplace

Progress data

Critical performance measures

Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment:

- 2023:3%
- 2025:5%

Number of formal reports of sexual harassment:

- 2023: 0
- 2025: 0

Supplementary measures

Participants who said they reported sexual harassment:

- 2023: 0
- 2025: 0

Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint:

- 2023: N/A
- 2025: “I didn’t think it was serious enough” 82%, “I didn’t think it would make a difference” 55%

Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint:

- 2023: N/A
- 2025: N/A

Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint:

- 2023: N/A
- 2025: N/A

Has progress been made?

Yes

How the data demonstrates progress

Data from the People Matter Survey indicates a modest increase in employee experience of sexual harassment behaviours and low confidence in reporting channels. It is notable that no formal sexual harassment complaints were submitted to People & Culture; however, several incidents were raised informally and addressed through informal resolution processes, which demonstrates progress.

To address these results and support progress, Council's *Speak Up* campaign was launched in 2025 following the People Matter Survey, to build awareness of behaviour expectations across the organisation and provide additional support and reporting channels. This was supported by a new standalone Sexual Harassment Policy and refresh of the internal Contact Officer network. The campaign introduced an external anonymous reporting service *Your Call*, which is intended to provide another avenue for employees to report inappropriate behaviour and increase confidence in reporting processes.

5. Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Progress data

Critical performance measures

Gender composition of recruited employees:

- 2023: Women 59%, Men 40%, Self-Described 1.0%
- 2025: Women 54.8%, Men 45.2%

Gender composition of employees who were promoted:

Permanent promotions

- 2023: Women 52%, Men 48%
- 2025: Women 70%, Men 30%

Higher duties

- 2023: Women 45%, Men 55%
- 2025: Women 45%, Men 54%, Self-Described 0.81%

Secondments:

- 2023: Women 56%, Men 44%
- 2025: Women 65%, Men 35%

Perceptions of recruitment, by gender:

- 2023: I believe the recruitment processes in my organisation are fair – 65%
- 2025: I believe recruitment processes are fair – Women 69%, Men 65%.

Perceptions of promotion, by gender:

- 2023: I believe the recruitment processes in my organisation are fair – 53%.
- 2025: I believe promotion processes are fair – Women 45%, Men 53%.

Has progress been made?

Yes

How the data demonstrates progress

We are seeing continued progress toward a more balanced gender composition among recruited employees, reflected in a modest increase in the proportion of Men appointed in 2025. This shift suggests improved reach and appeal of recruitment opportunities across gender groups, supporting a more diverse applicant pipeline.

There has been significant advancement in permanent promotions for Women, with an 18% increase since 2023. This demonstrates meaningful improvement in career progression pathways and signals that organisational efforts to remove barriers and promote equitable development opportunities are having a tangible impact.

Higher duties opportunities have remained stable between 2023 and 2025, with Women continuing to account for 45% of higher duties arrangements. Men made up 54% in 2025, and a small proportion (0.81%) of employees identifying as Self-Described gender. Overall, this reflects a relatively balanced allocation of higher duties opportunities across genders over the reporting period.

We are also seeing a strong upward shift in secondment opportunities for Women, who accounted for 65% of secondments in 2025. This trend indicates growing representation of Women in project-based or stretch assignments, which are often critical stepping-stones to broader organisational exposure and capability building.

While the data shows progress toward gender balance in recruitment and promotional opportunities, perceptions of the fairness of promotions remain the lowest-performing area in the People Matter Survey across all cohorts, with favourable responses declining from 53% in 2023 to 47% in 2025. This sentiment was most pronounced among respondents identifying as Women, those who did not disclose their gender, or who described their gender using other terms. Additionally, respondents aged 25–34 reported less favourable results compared with other age groups.

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

Progress data

Critical performance measures

Average weeks of parental leave, by gender:

- 2023: Women 45.7, Men 5.1
- 2025: Women 22.2, Men 7.9

Uptake of flexible work, by gender:

- 2023: Women 9.2%, Men 6.9%, Self-Described N/A
- 2025: Women 9.2%, Men 8.4%, Self-Described 100%

Perceptions of flexible work culture, by gender:

- 2023: Women 97.6%, Men 81.6%
- 2025: Women 92.6%, Men 92.5%, Self-Described N/A

Supplementary measures

Gender composition of parental leave takers:

- 2023: Women 60%, Men 40%
- 2025: Women 54.2%, Men 45.8%

Gender gap in carer's leave:

- 2023: Women 22%, Men 26.7%
- 2025: Women 1.4%, Men 6.7%

Has progress been made?

Yes

How the data demonstrates progress

Between 2023 and 2025, we observed a significant positive shift in both parental leave uptake and flexible work utilisation, particularly among Men. Average weeks of parental leave taken by Men increased from 5.1 to 7.9 weeks, reflecting growing confidence and normalisation of shared caring responsibilities. During the same period, Women's average parental leave decreased from 45.7 to 22.2 weeks, indicating a more balanced distribution of care across genders.

This shift demonstrates that organisational efforts to promote flexibility, broaden the definition of caring responsibilities, and reduce stigma associated with Men taking parental leave are having meaningful impact. Employees of all genders are increasingly empowered to access the leave they need to support their families.

Consistent with these trends, the gender composition of parental leave takers also became more balanced over the period. Women represented 60% of parental leave takers in 2023, decreasing to 54.2% in 2025, while Men increased from 40% to 45.8%. This shift reinforces the broader movement toward shared caring responsibilities and reflects growing confidence among Men in accessing parental leave.

Between 2023 and 2025, uptake of flexible work arrangements remained stable for Women at 9.2%, while increasing for Men from 6.9% to 8.4%, indicating growing acceptance and utilisation of flexible work by Men. In 2025, all employees identifying as Self-Described gender reported using flexible work arrangements, highlighting the critical role flexibility plays in supporting inclusion for gender diverse employees. Overall, these trends suggest a gradual narrowing of gender differences in access to and use of flexible working arrangements, alongside increasing normalisation across the workforce.

Between 2023 and 2025, perceptions regarding requests for flexible work arrangements shifted notably. Among Women, this perception declined from 97.6% to 92.6%, while among Men it increased substantially from 81.6% to 92.5%. As a result, the gap between Men and Women narrowed significantly over the period.

Collectively, these trends reflect strong progress toward a more gender balanced, inclusive, and adaptable workplace, where flexibility is accessible, encouraged, and embedded into everyday work practices, and where all employees feel supported to balance work and caring responsibilities.

These improvements are further reinforced by the People Matter Survey results, which recorded the highest favourable responses to-date regarding flexibility and support for balancing work and caring responsibilities.

7. Gendered segregation within the workplace

Progress data

Critical performance measures

Occupational gender segregation:

- 2023:

All occupations: Women 56.6%, Men 43.1%

Managers: Women 41%, Men 59%

Professionals: Women 63%, Men 37%

Technicians & Trades Workers: Women 34%, Men 56%

Community & Personal Service Workers: Women 77%, Men 15% Self-Described 8%

Clerical & Administrative Workers: Women 86%, Men 14%

Labourers: Women 30%, Men 70%

- 2025:

All occupations: Women 56.7%, Men 43%

Managers Women 45%, Men 55%

Professionals: Women 61%, Men 39%

Technicians & Trades Workers: Women 16%, Men 84%

Community & Personal Service Workers: Women 70%, Men 20%, Self-Described 10%

Clerical & Administrative Workers: Women 85%, Men 15%

Labourers: Women 35%, Men 65%

Has progress been made?

Yes

How the data demonstrates progress

Between 2023 and 2025, the overall gender composition across all occupations remained stable, with women representing 56.6% in 2023 and 56.7% in 2025, and men representing 43.1% and 43% respectively.

Through the gender audit report process, several positions previously allocated ANZCO codes within the technicians and trade workers, administration & clerical and professionals groups, have been reassigned to more appropriate aligning occupation groups. As a result of these classification corrections, the composition of these occupational groups has changed between reporting periods. Accordingly, a direct point-to-point comparison with the previous progress report is not considered methodologically reliable.

The 2025 occupational profile shows varying levels of gender representation across role categories, broadly reflecting typical patterns of occupational gender segregation. Managers are approaching greater balance, with Women representing 45% of roles and Men 55%, while Professional roles also show a relatively balanced profile, with Women comprising 61% of this group.

In contrast, technicians and trades workers remain predominantly Men (84%), reflecting ongoing gender concentration in technical occupations. Clerical and administrative workers continue to be highly dominated by Women comprising 85% of roles, while community and personal service workers are also predominantly Women (70%), alongside representation from Men (20%) and employees identifying as Self-Described gender (10%). Among Labourers, Men account for 65% of roles, indicating continued gendered dominance.

Factors limiting and contributing to progress

Indicator	Did any of the *factors listed limit or contribute to your progress?	Explain how any factor(s) limited or contributed to your progress	List the strategies implemented that contributed to or aligned with the indicator
Gender composition of all levels of the workforce	The organisation's operational priorities and competing operational obligations	Council's People & Culture Business Partnering model, introduced in 2024 provides support to leaders on all people matters including workforce planning, job design and recruitment and employee development. Regular and ongoing education and advice is provided to explain flexibility options, and we have seen an increase in job share opportunities and part time coordinator level positions. Strong focus on deliberate employee engagement providing diverse representation of employee cohorts the opportunity of participating on working groups and key initiatives. Examples include the Employee Consultative Committee and Our Equal Local Government Project Focus Group. Ongoing annual community events including International Women's Day. Existing HR metrics reporting has been expanded to include gender equality metrics. Council's first GEAP was ambitious, with more than 50 strategies. While the majority of actions progressed or were completed, some initiatives remained incomplete due to resource constraints, competing operational priorities and broader organisational and legislatively driven demands.	Educate leaders on benefit of part time/job share arrangements in leadership and senior professional positions, with a focus on improving the number of part time women who are offered higher duties and secondment opportunities. People leaders to consider and create part time/job share opportunities in senior positions Focused support for women and gender diverse individuals to participate in targeted development opportunities. Biennial report to Executive team RE gender composition in senior and leadership positions within the organisation.
Gender composition of the governing body	None	Several changes have been implemented with the current Councillor group to better support those with caring responsibilities, including scheduling meetings during the day, keeping meetings shorter in duration, and avoiding meetings during school holidays.	Our 2021-25 GEAP did not include any strategies directly supporting this Indicator.
Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender	The organisation's operational priorities and competing operational obligations	Council successfully implemented a third-party remuneration benchmarking system and supporting process to assess pay against industry standards. The system utilises a consistent matrix of responsibility and capability mapping to benchmark salary ranges. This applied a review approach leveraging vacancy-driven role changes and broader business	Robust analysis of remuneration across comparable roles, rather than reporting level to CEO.

		cycle triggers. Benchmarking was completed for all senior leadership roles, from Executive Managers to Coordinators. In 2024 the organisation developed and embedded a Capability Framework into the employee Performance Review and Development Program. In 2025 a position assessment tool for Officer level position was introduced which assesses hiring manager expectations of role-specific skills and capabilities against classified position descriptions, identifying any misalignment in responsibilities or classification. Due to the volume of work required implementation is being phased, on position attrition. While this extends the overall timeline, it provides a structured approach to progressively identify and address discrepancies, including roles that may not meet the principle of equal pay for equal work.	Develop a matrix to scope appropriate responsibilities and applicable equitable remuneration for leadership positions.
Sexual harassment in the workplace	The organisation's resources The organisation's operational priorities and competing operational obligations	The organisation continues its *Our Growing Culture* journey, focused on making Baw Baw an amazing place to work, grow and succeed. This work is underpinned by six cultural commitments that articulate expected *above-the-line* and *below-the-line* behaviours, strengthening a consistent, values-driven organisational culture and supporting progress against this indicator. In 2024 Council participated in the *Our Equal Local Government (OELG)* project, a regional partnership led by Gippsland Women's Health in collaboration with all Gippsland councils. The project, funded by WorkSafe and in response to the VAGO Sexual Harassment Survey Findings sought to raise awareness of, and reduce, work-related gendered violence through collective action and shared leadership across the region. In 2025 our Interim Chief Executive Officer launched the *Speak Up* campaign, an initiative demonstrating Council's ongoing commitment to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace. Complementing this work, Council has implemented a standalone Sexual Harassment Policy with plans to continue strengthening internal policies focusing on disrespectful workplace behaviours. These frameworks establish clear behavioural expectations, reporting pathways, and accountability mechanisms, ensuring our practices align with relevant legislation and sector best practice. The *Speak Up* campaign complements our policies by providing awareness resources for employees and leaders, and by enhancing our reporting mechanisms. This includes the introduction of *Your Call*, an independent, anonymous reporting platform that enhances employee	Provide Courageous Conversations training on a cyclical basis. Provide Cultural Diversity training to all members of the organisation on a cyclical basis. Ensure policies, procedures and training explicitly cover sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination from the public. Regularly communicating to customers and staff that the council does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination from the public. Communicate a culture of respect in the Council by ensuring leaders model respectful behaviour at all times and communicate to staff at least annually that Council does not tolerate sexual harassment, bullying nor discrimination. Collect information about the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying at least once every two years (conducting surveys, reviewing complaints information). Introduce a standalone sexual harassment policy that aligns with Vic Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's guideline: preventing and responding to

		confidence in raising concerns about any form of inappropriate workplace behaviour, including sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, or gendered violence. Together, these initiatives position Council as a proactive and accountable leader in addressing gendered violence and sexual harassment in local government, while aligning with state-wide priorities for workplace safety and gender equality. Equal employment opportunity training at induction is ongoing. While organisational awareness of sexual harassment and other inappropriate workplace behaviours has increased, progress in embedding consistent refresher training has been constrained. Mandatory eLearning modules were launched in April 2022, however organisational maturity and prioritisation of learning and development has remained low, with completion often competing against operational workloads and requiring stronger, more consistent leader-led accountability to drive participation. Limited People & Culture resourcing also restricted the capacity to monitor completion, follow up noncompliance and provide timely support. In addition, the online assessment component proved challenging for some employees, with repeated attempts required to meet the pass criteria, creating frustration and further reducing engagement. As a result, a decision was made to pause the online training and instead focus on more effective, in person active bystander training delivered over the course of the first GEAP. Councillor induction is delivered at the commencement of each Council term to reinforce roles and responsibilities, supporting the prevention of sexual harassment and other inappropriate behaviours in both the workplace and the community.	workplace sexual harassment – complying with EOA 2010 and Vic Public Sector Commission's model policy for prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace. Review complaint procedures to ensure they include informing the complainant of the outcome and guidance on how investigators can support reluctant complainants. Encourage reporting of inappropriate behaviour by promoting formal and informal complaint channels and allowing anonymous complaints. Improve training and promotion of Contact Officers within the organisation. Use VAGO Sexual Harassment Survey findings to identify and act on risk factors for Council employees and workplaces. Continue ongoing equal opportunity initiatives including equal opportunity induction and training, promotion of flexible working conditions and application of equal opportunity policy. Improve record keeping of sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination complaints. Ensure councillors are informed of their internal and external options for sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination support and complaints; including EAP, code of conduct dispute resolution and external complaint bodies.
Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace	The practicability and cost to the organisation of making progress	A review of Council's Performance Review and Development Program enabled us to include prompts for leaders to discuss workload with part time employees. Existing recruitment processes and guides made it simple to improve accessibility through campaigns and onboarding questions were updated to capture gender equality experiences through the recruitment process.	Part time roles to be reviewed during PR&D process, ensuring that workload is relevant to the time commitment available. Amend Recruitment Policy to allow consideration of internal applicants for promotion, prior to advertising externally.

		Interview panel training was delivered in Years 1 and 2 but subsequently ceased due to facilitator availability constraints and limited organisational capacity and capability to sustain delivery. System limitations have constrained progress on the strategy to de-identify candidate information during recruitment. This approach is not feasible as a manual process given the high volume of applications. External market testing with senior recruitment agencies confirmed that de-identification is not standard industry practice, further limiting the viability of this initiative. Internal recruitment advertising policy was updated for secondments (appointments exceeding three months) to require only a CV and expression of interest, rather than a full application. In addition, the hybrid working model enhanced flexibility and supported a broader range of employee needs. A more targeted approach to understanding barriers will be carried forward to the next GEAP.	Amend Recruitment Policy to remove Key Selection Criteria requirements. Review recruitment processes and guides to ensure inclusive language is used throughout campaigns. Amend Onboarding and Exit Interviews questions to capture gender equality experiences. Provide training to eliminate discrimination and unconscious bias in selection process for recruitment and promotion processes. Consider ability to undertake a de-identification process for recruitment shortlisting to minimise discrimination and unconscious bias based on gender, age, ethnicity etc. Where possible, address hidden barriers to advancement and work proactively to improve opportunities for underrepresented groups.
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	None.	Additional family friendly and leave provisions were flagged for consideration in 2025 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) negotiations, following significant improvements in 2022 EBA. The introduction of a refreshed Employee Value Proposition positioned workplace flexibility as a key pillar, central to the organisation's strategy for talent attraction, retention and employee experience. Promotion of leave provisions through Business Partnering model and supporting initiatives has contributed to positive behavioural change, including an increase in male employees accessing parental leave.	Promote carer's leave benefits to de-stigmatise men taking parental leave and/or having caring responsibilities for children or family. Maintain Council's strong support of employee's requiring family violence leave through promotion and consideration of improved benefits during the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. Leverage Council's ability to provide flexible work arrangements as a key attraction and retention strategy.
Gendered segregation within the workplace	The nature and circumstances of the organisation, including any barriers to making progress	While there has been an increase in the appointment of Women in town planning roles, including at the leadership level, gender imbalance persists across all historically gender-segregated roles, particularly in engineering, where the majority of positions continue to be held by Men. Further initiatives to address these imbalances will be considered as part of the next GEAP. We have seen an increase in Women taking on STEM positions and will continue to work towards a greater gender balance.	Annual reporting on gender ratios with consideration given to opportunities to bridge gender gaps within individual teams. Maintain gender balance in Finance positions and Town Planning positions, given the low ratios of women traditionally in STEM positions.

*Factors:

a. the size of the organisation, including the number of employees
b. the nature and circumstances of the organisation, including any barriers to making progress
c. requirements that apply to the organisation under any other Act, including an Act of the Commonwealth
d. the organisation's resources
e. the organisation's operational priorities and competing operational obligations
f. the practicability and cost to the organisation of making progress; and
g. genuine attempts made by the organisation to make progress.

Incomplete strategies

The following section provides an explanation of incomplete strategies:

Incomplete strategies	
Introduce mandatory training on sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination (or improve existing training) for all staff and Councillors at least once every two years, covers safe strategies for bystander interventions.	While organisational awareness of sexual harassment and inappropriate workplace behaviours has increased through the *Speak Up* campaign, progress in embedding consistent training has been constrained. Mandatory eLearning introduced in 2022 saw limited uptake due to low organisational maturity, competing operational priorities, and insufficient leader-led accountability, compounded by limited People & Culture resourcing to monitor and enforce participation compliance. Challenges with the online assessment component also reduced engagement. As a result, delivery shifted to more effective, in-person active bystander training over the course of the GEAP. This strategy will be carried over to the next GEAP.
Review Remuneration policy and establish a remuneration matrix to support equity in banding allocation upon commencement.	The Remuneration Framework, including matrix was drafted following Employee Value Proposition but not finalised due to competing priorities. This strategy will be carried over to the next GEAP.
Explore option for separate breastfeeding and Prayer rooms, equitably available at all work sites.	Exploration is in scope of Workplace Strategy project, an initiative which aims to optimise office spaces to support organisational growth, enable agile and collaborative work, and use resources efficiently. Delays have been experienced due to employee turnover, additional building infrastructure requirements and competing organisational priorities. This strategy will be included in the scope of the Workplace Strategy project.
Maintain gender balance in Finance positions and Town Planning positions, given the low ratios of women traditionally in STEM positions.	While we are seeing an increase in Women taking on STEM positions, in reflection a more suitable approach could have been a broader strategy addressing gender segregation across roles, rather than a maintenance focus. Achieving balance in historically gendered positions is challenging when appointments are made on merit, highlighting the need for strategic initiatives that encourage diversity while maintaining equitable selection processes.
Develop a plan to maintain compliance with the six minimum standards of positive duty Council has as a Victorian employer and public body.	Several completed GEAP strategies support the positive duty standards including the new Sexual Harassment Policy, *Speak Up* campaign, refresh of our Contact Officer network and ongoing staff communications. A formal plan to maintain compliance will be developed in the 2026 Workforce Plan.
Conduct targeted recruitment campaigns in departments with historically gender segregated roles, e.g 1. Community Infrastructure (male imbalance), 2. Community Services (female imbalance).	There is a tendency to engage temporary agency staff to meet urgent workforce needs in community infrastructure. Notably, there has been an increase in Women occupying outdoor maintenance roles. Following the outsourcing of aged care support in 2022, turnover has remained low among the few remaining positions in community services.
Working group established to inform career barriers and strategies to improve opportunities for women, with a particular focus on women working part time/flexible hours, moving into leadership positions and returning to the workforce.	Due to competing organisational priorities, this strategy will be incorporated into the planning of the next GEAP.

Achievements, challenges and learnings

We are proud of the following key achievements which have contributed to our progress:

- Over 50 strategies were committed to, with significant outcomes achieved against most initiatives.
- People Matter Survey results exceeding our industry benchmarks in all major categories.
- Participated in the OELG Project strengthened connections with other Gippsland councils and enabled the delivery of our tailored *Speak Up* campaign and the introduction of *Your Call*, while also facilitating the sharing of GIAs across the region.
- Strong foundations built to support gender and diversity assessment requirements.

We experienced the following challenges and learnings through the implementation of our plan:

- Committing to over 50 strategies made it difficult to prioritise and deliver on all, with competing organisational and legislative driven priorities.
- Some strategies were written as maintenance strategies, when the foundational work was not in place.
- Some strategies were targeted to specific cohorts; however, adopting a more inclusive, intersectional approach, while retaining targeted actions where needed, would have maximised overall impact.
- Limited employee demographic data to help inform intersecting experiences and supporting initiatives.
- Lower uptake of People Matter Survey participation, despite a strong supporting communications campaign.

Resourcing allocation

How many staff members/FTE were allocated to implementing the strategies?
This was shared across several positions within the organisation, estimated at 0.8 FTE.

Who implemented the strategies in your GEAP? What roles they performed and at what level?
The People & Culture Manager played a strategic role in prioritising the implementation of GEAP strategies and scoping of initiatives the OELG Project. People & Culture team representatives including Organisation Development Advisor, Business Partners and Coordinators led the implementation of the majority of GEAP strategies, as well as the People Matter Survey, with periodic reporting to the Executive Leadership team. Community awareness initiatives were led by the Connected Communities team. The Communications team supported campaign promotion and key messaging to employees. Leaders across the organisation supported survey and promotional campaign messaging. Leaders and Officers coordinated gender impact assessments and reporting processes.

Was financial, technological, physical and/or time resourcing adequate?

Council made a significant commitment when developing the 2021-25 GEAP, making significant progress of over 50 strategies. This was resource intensive and challenging against competing organisational and legislative priorities and capacity of internal resources.

If not, how will your organisation address this in your next GEAP?
In the next GEAP, this will be addressed by proposing a realistic and achievable set of strategies that consider financial and resourcing constraints, with clear ownership and commitment across all teams established prior to final sign-off.