BAW BAW SHIRE COUNCIL

Gender Equality Action Plan

2026 – 2029

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1.

Introduction
CEO statement.

I am proud to present Baw Baw Shire Council's 2026–29 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). This builds on a strong foundation for gender equality across our organisation and acknowledges the progress of our journey toward meaningful and sustained change.

Since our first GEAP, we have made significant progress informed by a workforce data audit and employee feedback. This next plan builds on those achievements while strengthening our focus on areas where continued improvement is needed. At Baw Baw Shire Council, we are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and supported to succeed. This GEAP extends our previous strategies and aligns them with the evolving experiences of our workforce.Importantly, this plan recognises that gender equality cannot be addressed in isolation. We have placed a stronger emphasis on diversity and intersectionality, acknowledging that people experience inequality in different ways depending on their identities and lived experiences. By recognising these experiences, we can create more inclusive and equitable outcomes for our people.

As a Council, we have a responsibility to lead by example and reflect the diversity of the community we serve. The implementation of this GEAP will continue to strengthen our workplace culture and ensure our organisation remains inclusive, equitable and responsive to the needs of our employees and community.

I look forward to continuing this important work with our people as we build on our progress and embed lasting change across Baw Baw Shire Council.

Sally Jones
Acting Chief Executive Officer
April 2026

2.

Our vision for our GEAP.

Our Vision is for all employees to be treated equally, feeling safe and respected in their working environment, irrespective of individual gender identities.

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

3.

Case for change.

Progressing gender equality in the workplace requires ongoing commitment to identifying and addressing the structural, cultural and procedural factors that influence employee experiences and opportunities.

Analysis of workforce data, employee feedback and organisational practices has highlighted areas where progress has been made, as well as opportunities to further strengthen equitable outcomes across the organisation.

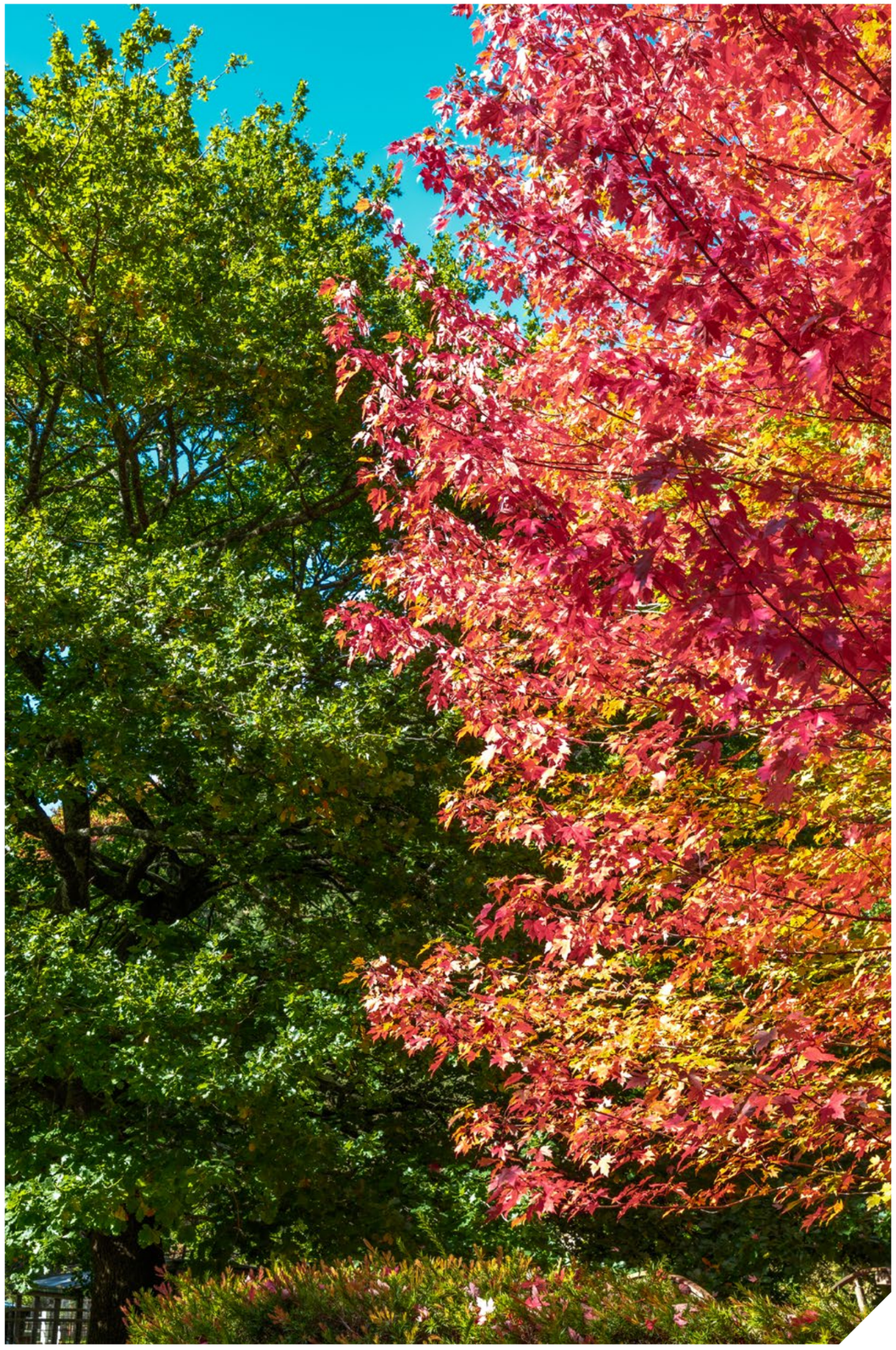
3. Case for change.

Insights from the People Matter Survey and workforce audit indicate that while many employees experience a positive and inclusive workplace, barriers can still exist in areas such as career progression and the consistency and transparency of recruitment and promotion processes. These challenges can be more pronounced for employees who experience intersecting forms of disadvantage, including employees with disabilities, carers, or those from diverse cultural backgrounds. Addressing these issues requires a deliberate and coordinated approach that strengthens organisational capability, improves processes and promotes inclusive workplace behaviours.

Consultation with employees, working group representatives, union representatives and our leaders demonstrated strong support for continuing to build on progress achieved through previous gender equality initiatives. Feedback emphasised the importance of focusing on practical actions that strengthen leadership capability, improve employee awareness and understanding of gender equality, and embed fair and consistent decision-making across the employee lifecycle. Participants also highlighted the importance of ensuring that policies and workplace practices support diverse and intersecting employee experiences.

The development of this GEAP prioritises building on the organisational foundations laid in the first GEAP. This includes strengthening recruitment and promotion integrity, increasing awareness of expectations of acceptable workplace behaviours, improving access to flexible work arrangements and embedding an intersectional approach to workplace inclusion. Education and capability-building initiatives will support employees and leaders to apply these principles consistently in their day-to-day decision-making.

By maturing these foundational elements, the organisation will be better positioned to achieve sustainable progress in gender equality. Strengthening internal capability, improving transparency and embedding inclusive practices will support more equitable outcomes for employees and create the conditions needed to introduce more robust monitoring and measurable targets in future GEAP cycles.



4.

Progress report overview.

Our previous plan comprised over 50 strategies which was a significant undertaking, and we're very pleased on progress made, as highlighted in the report.

4. Progress report overview.

We have made significant progress since our last GEAP with the following highlights:

A continuing trend indicating greater balance in gender composition across the workforce and Councillor group.

An increase in senior leadership positions being held by Women.

An increase of part time Women taking on higher duties and secondment opportunities.

An increased uptake in flexible work arrangements and parental leave among both Men and Women.

Contemporary leave approach in our new Enterprise Agreement including kinship care, changed certified leave requirements and additional cultural leave availability.

Deliberate employee engagement providing diverse representation of employee cohorts on working groups and key initiatives e.g. Employee Consultative Committee, Contact Officer network.

Removal of key selection criteria requirements at application, simplification of qualifying questions and advertising guidance to remove barriers.

Introduction of Capability & Classification Framework to support role design and consistent remuneration benchmarking analysis.

Greater satisfaction with support for personal learning and development.

Introduction of Speak Up program, Your Call external reporting, refresh of Contact Officer network and key supporting policies.

Delivery of staff and community events and awareness programs supporting diversity and inclusion within our community.

Introduction of Gender Impact Assessment tools to support planning of strategies, policies and services which have a direct impact on the community.

5.

Developing our next GEAP.

Key insights:

An organisational Working Group was established to guide the GEAP's initial development. Drawing on survey and audit findings, the group identified key problem statements and generated proposed strategies to strengthen equality, diversity, and inclusion.

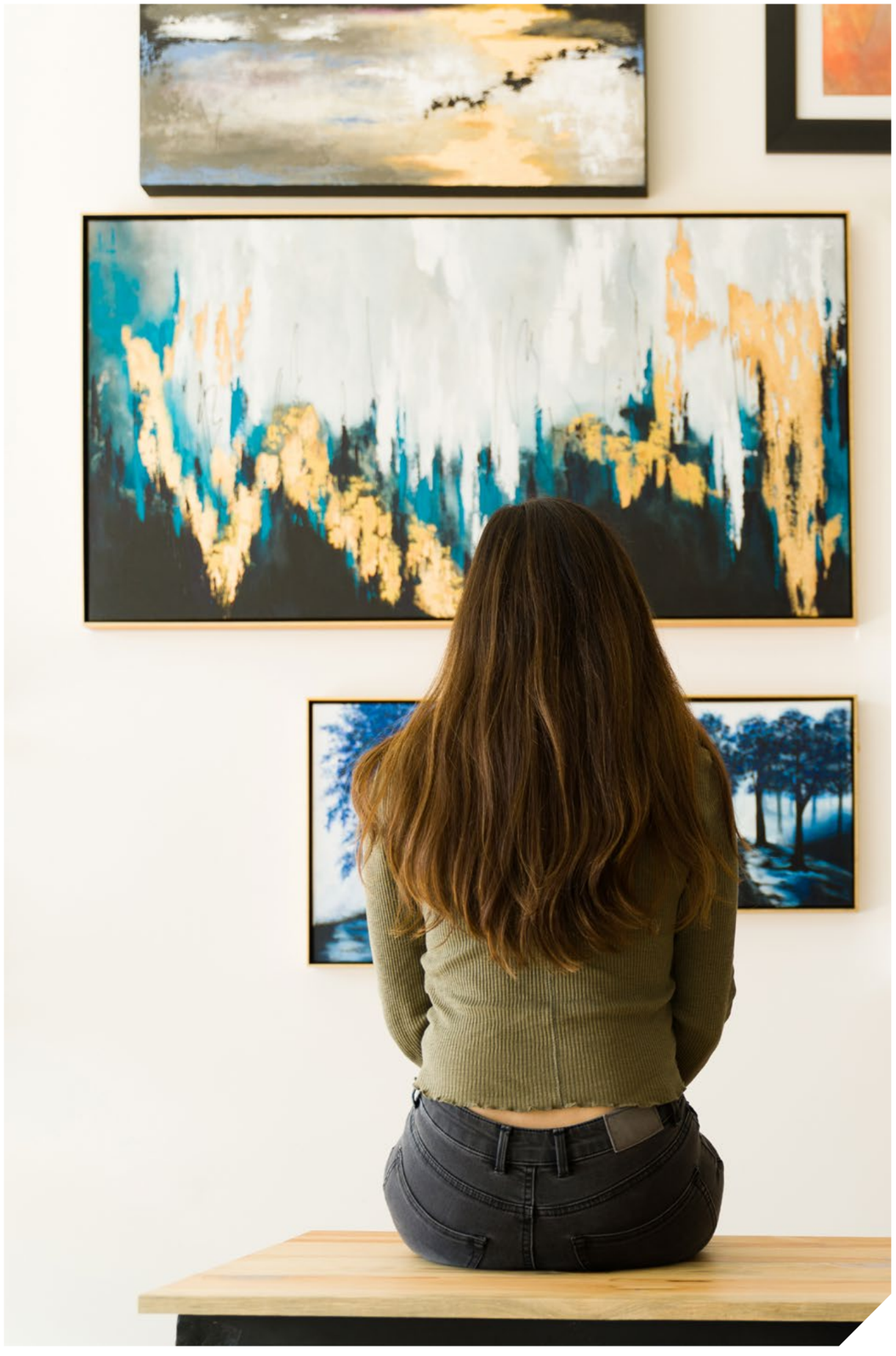
Our Guiding Principles:

Our next GEAP will be a focused, evidence-informed plan that builds on progress, addresses priority gaps, and embeds intersectional thinking through achievable, accountable actions.

Focus areas for the 2026-29 GEAP

EDUCATION	Continued education and awareness programs to encourage respectful workplace behaviours and safe reporting channels.
POLICY IMPROVEMENT	Improve policy and processes supporting inclusive access to internal promotional opportunities.
FLEXIBLE WORKING	Greater promotion of flexible working arrangements and parental leave provisions.
LEADERSHIP RESOURCES	Leadership induction resources to provide a consistent understanding of employee behaviour expectations, supporting increased accountability and capability development to address behaviours that don't align to the expectations, performance and development frameworks and the value of day-to-day conversations (among other important topics).
ACCOUNTABILITY	Training for all interview panel members to develop skills in preventing discrimination and unconscious bias during recruitment decisions.
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Review learning and development funding allocations across the organisation and assess equitable access.
EQUIALITY INITIATIVES	An opportunity to gather additional demographic information from employees to support evidence-based gender equality initiatives and service planning.
ALIGNMENT	Ensure alignment with key Council strategies, plans, and related projects, including the Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan.

Some existing strategies from the current GEAP have been carried forward and refined to build on progress and respond to current needs.



6.

Workforce Gender Audit Results.

Key insights:

Conducting Council's Gender Audit process included the consideration of the 2025 People Matter Survey results, Gender Audit results and insights from key enabling teams which were essential in understanding our data story.

6. Workforce gender audit results.

The audit process demonstrated an encouraging perspective of Council's employee experience, continuing to trend well above the average for other Victorian Local Government agencies in all indicator categories, particularly in support for workplace flexibility. With nearly half of our employees completing the People Matter Survey, findings noted:

- 88% of team members believe Council encourages respectful behaviours.
- 87% feel culturally safe at work.
- 91% of team members believe that Council uses inclusive images and language.
- 88% of team members are confident that Council would support them in the event of Family Violence.
- 93% of team members believe their direct manager supports working flexibly.

We are incredibly proud of our results overall and have identified opportunities for improvement that have helped shape the focus of our new GEAP.

OVERVIEW

Employees **509** — 57% / 43%

Fulltime: **63%**

26% work part time — 77% / 23%

Ongoing roles **54%** are held by women

48% of senior leaders are female — an increase of 6%

44% of the workforce are males, — an increase of 2%

23% BBSC part time workforce — compared to statewide 31.8% *(2024: ABS)*

Councillor group comprises **5 men & 4 women**

Current Mayor, Deputy Mayor roles held by women, roles previously held by men

AGE

The majority of employees are aged **44 years or younger**

The largest cohort of employees in the **35-44 age bracket (27%)**

DIVERSITY

23% of employees have a cultural identity other than "Australian"

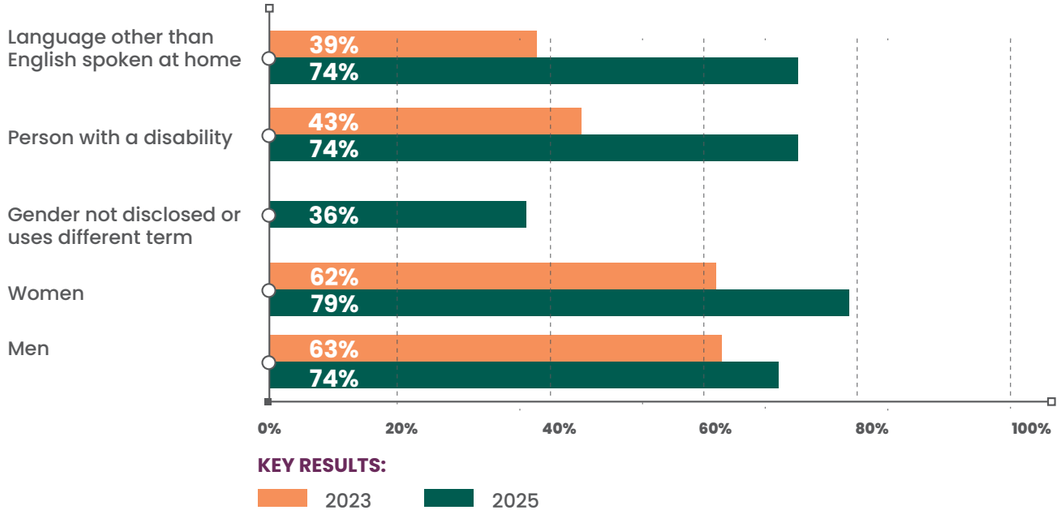
Two employees identify as being of Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander descent

Gender composition of 283 women, 225 males and one self-described employee

Learning and development

Satisfaction with learning and development support has significantly increased across all areas of the organisation, which may be reflective of the investment in leadership and development programs.

I am satisfied with the way my learning and development needs have been addressed in the last 12 months



Flexible work, family and caring responsibilities

Council continues to demonstrate strong support relating to requests for flexible working arrangements, with consistently high satisfaction scores ranging in the high 80th to 90th percentiles across all employee cohorts. This sentiment is consistent with the volume of flexible work arrangements across the organisation.

91% favourable employee responses

7% higher than other councils

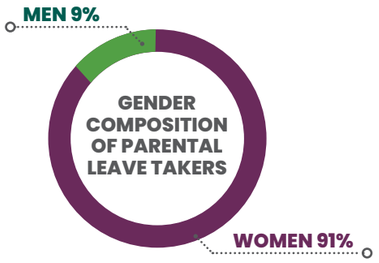
46 Employee FWAs

10% of workforce. Increase from 40 in 2023

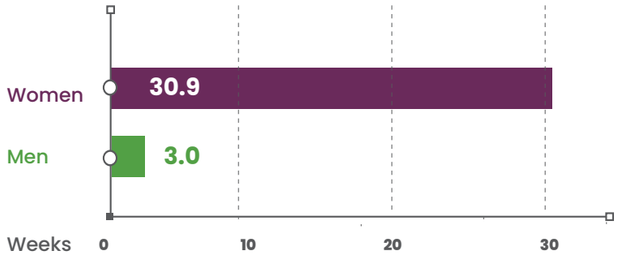
8.4% of men on FWAs

11.5% of women on FWAs

Parental Leave



Average weeks of parental leave taken

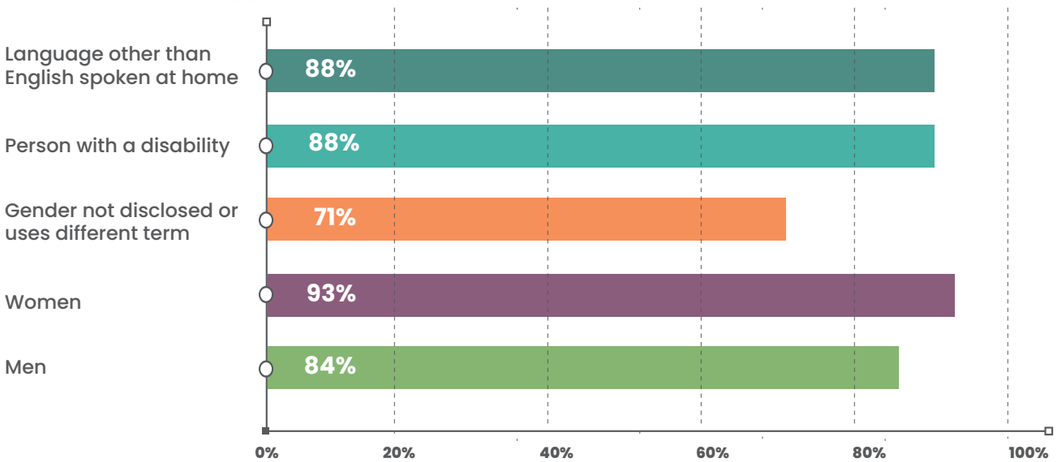


Since 2021 an increase in Men accessing paid parental leave and an increase in access to unpaid parental leave.

Family Violence

The majority of our team members know that if they required family violence leave, Council would support them in this. Acknowledging and protecting women and children from family violence is a key driver of the Gender Equality Act, so this result is a great indicator that we are moving in the right direction. However a modest decrease in favourable responses from Men has been identified and is worth exploring to ensure they understand available supports.

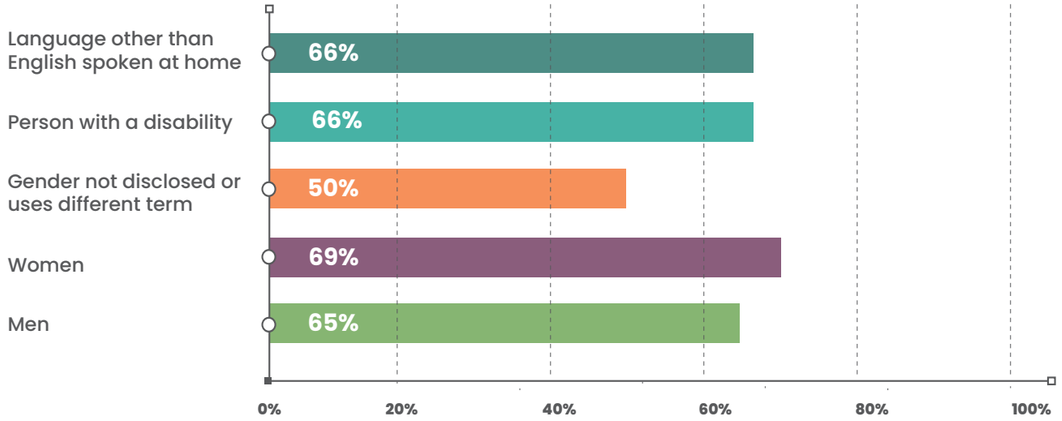
Baw Baw would support me if I needed to take family violence leave



Promotion opportunities and barriers to success

We have seen a decline in favourable responses relating to promotion processes and opportunities, with strong neutral ratings highlighting an area of focus for the new GEAP.

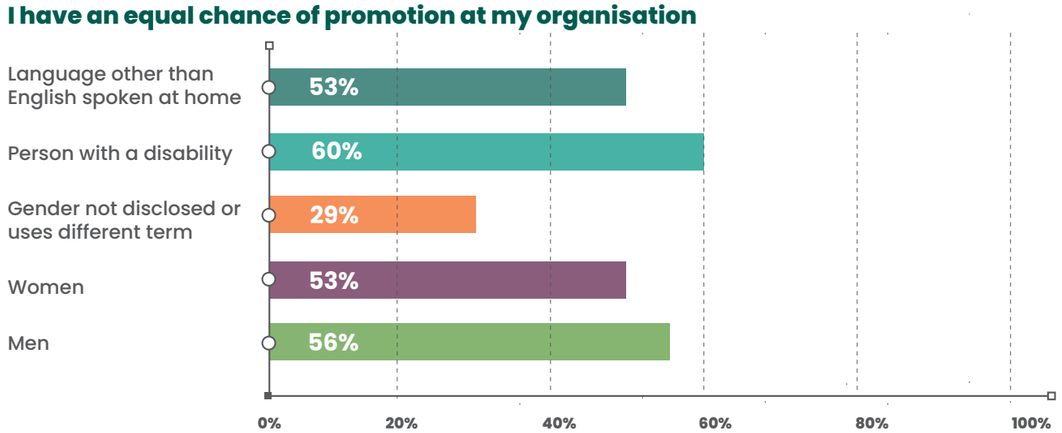
I believe the promotional processes in my organisation are fair



Different cohorts showed less favourable responses regarding their perceived equal opportunity for promotion. This feedback was consistent with perceptions on our recruitment processes.

The survey included questions about barriers to employee success. Less favourable results were reported among respondents identifying as Women, those whose gender was either not disclosed or described using a different term. Less favourable results were also reported among respondents aged 25–34 compared to other age cohorts.

I have an equal chance of promotion at my organisation



Recruitment and promotion practices

Of the **30** promotions | **21** were women | **65%** of secondments were women

Since 2021 a significant increase of part time women taking on higher duties/ secondments.

74% of men believed recruitment and promotion was fair compared to **56%** of women "Experienced one or more barriers to success" Lower favourable responses PMS

Of the **234** higher duties opportunities, **55%** were held by men

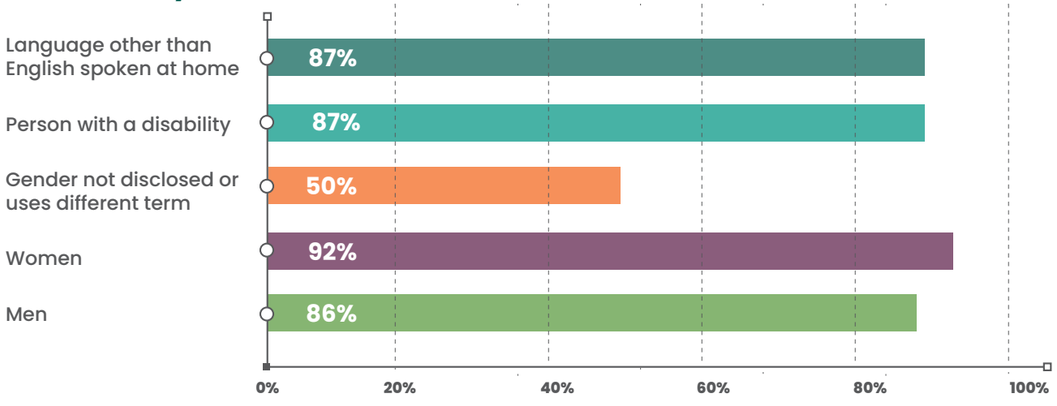
123 employees undertook higher duties.
It's often the same people acting over different periods.

Council is committed to improving recruitment and promotion integrity through development of equitable and transparent processes as highligthed in our new GEAP strategies.

Inclusion

Results relating to inclusion and safety have mostly improved since 2023, however there has been a modest decline in cultural safety from our CALD community: 94 to 87% favourable responses.

I feel culturally safe at work



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

MEAN BASE SALARY PAY GAP

5.5% 2021 | **4.4%** 2025

SENIOR LEADER TOTAL REM PAY GAP

10.8% 2021 | **27.2%** 2025

Of the top 10 most highly remunerated employees, **10%** were women | Of the top 25, **32%** were women

The mean base salary gender pay gap reduced from demonstrating progress toward improved pay equity. This reduction may reflect greater consistency in base salary setting and strengthened remuneration governance. While a gap remains, the downward trend indicates positive movement toward more equitable outcomes across genders.

The mean total remuneration gender pay gap for senior leaders increased. 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.

Council has committed to training and education for leaders to better recognise when higher salary should be awarded, based on skills and experience, rather than a potentially protracted negotiation and unconscious bias, as well as exploring the value of embedding policy and structure around starting levels to ensure more equality in salaries.

Safety and workplace behaviours

While survey results relating to cultural inclusion have improved since 2023, employee feedback indicates that some employees continue to experience behaviours that do not align with organisational values and expectations. Although no formal sexual harassment complaints were reported, feedback suggests that confidence in reporting inappropriate workplace behaviours remains low among both employees and witnesses, indicating a need to further strengthen reporting pathways and employee awareness of available supports.

Analysis indicates that incidents were perpetrated by both colleagues and members of the public. As such, Council's focus will continue to include education, training, awareness initiatives and the promotion of available support and reporting services to strengthen prevention, encourage reporting and support affected employees.

Since the 2025 survey, we have implemented a range of actions to improve workplace safety, strengthen reporting confidence, and address inappropriate workplace behaviours:

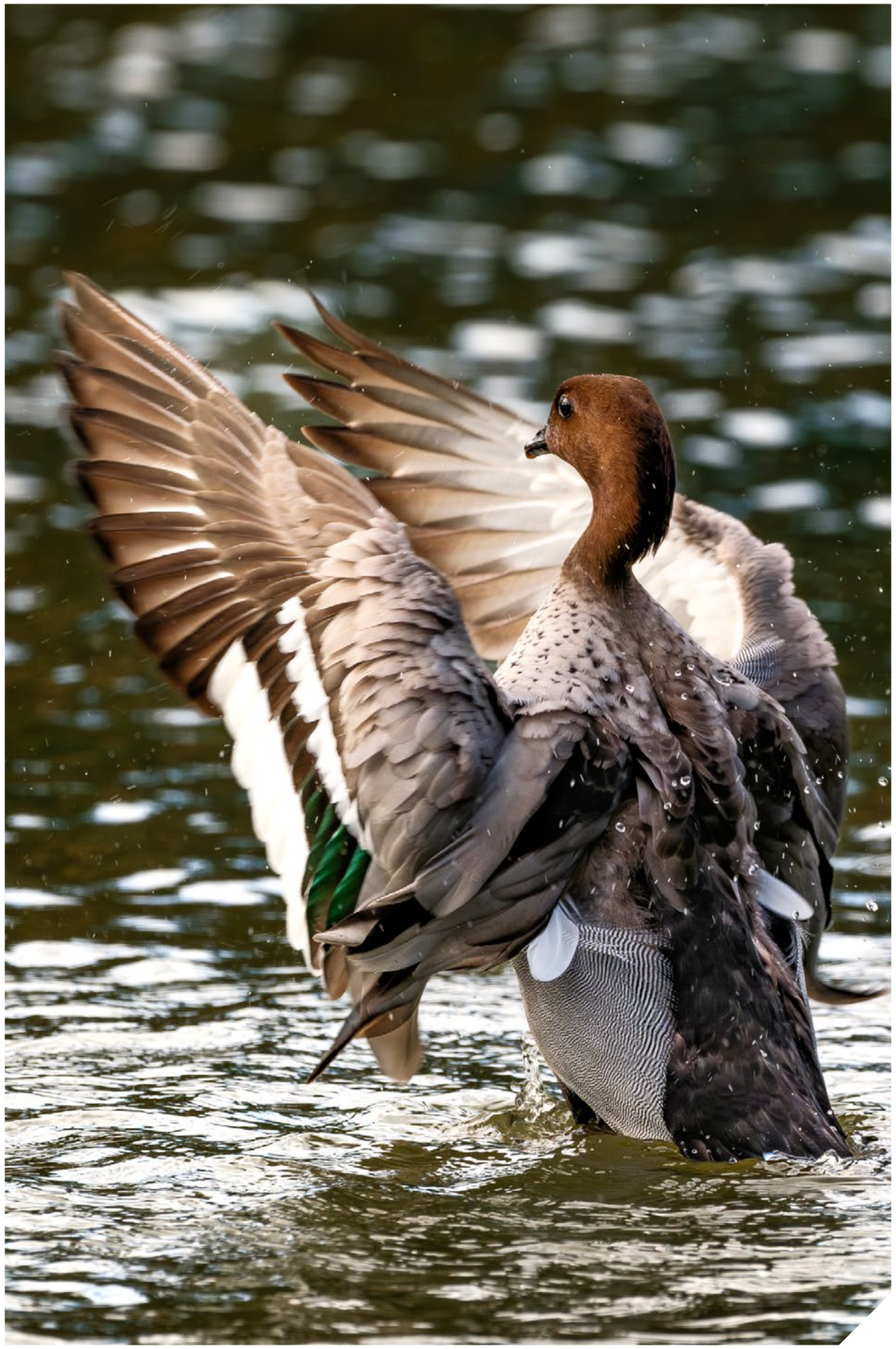
SPEAK UP

- In July-25 we launched the Speak Up campaign which centres around our commitment to fostering a culture where everyone feels safe, valued, and heard.
- Developed a new Sexual Harassment Policy, including information on reporting channels and support services available.

yourcall

- Introduced external reporting service Your Call, providing employees with an anonymous channel to report inappropriate workplace behaviours.
- Refreshed our internal network of Contact Officers, who act as a first point of contact for employees experiencing alleged cases of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or other workplace concerns, offering confidential guidance and referral to appropriate support services or complaint processes.

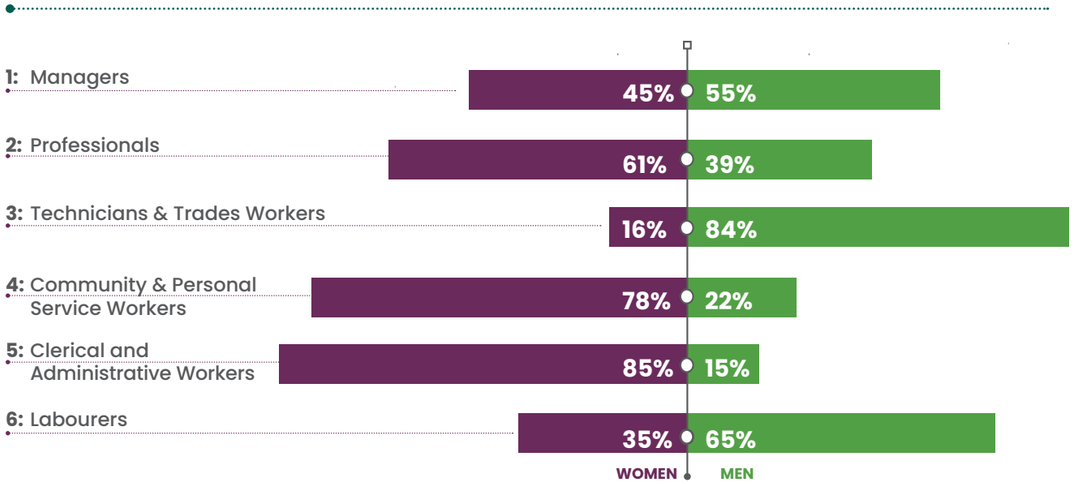
While Council's results relating to bullying and sexual harassment compare favourably to industry benchmarks, this remains a priority area for the organisation.



Gendered segregation in the workplace

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 while Professional roles also show a relatively balanced profile.

In contrast, Technicians and Trades Workers remain predominantly Men, reflecting ongoing gender concentration in technical occupations. Clerical and Administrative Workers continue to be highly dominated by Women while Community and Personal Service Workers are also predominantly Women. Among Labourers, Men account for 65% of roles, indicating continued gendered dominance.



Men dominate technical, trades and labouring roles, women dominate community services and administration, while manager and professional roles are more evenly distributed

Gender Equality Principles and Gender Equity Pay Principles

The Gender Equality Principles and Gender Pay Equity Principles were embedded through the development of the GEAP. When the working group was established, a set of overarching guiding principles was developed to support a shared approach to the work, including the Gender Equality Principles and Gender Pay Equity Principles.

At the first working group meeting members were introduced to the guiding principles and provided supporting information in advance of the next workshop to ensure a shared understanding of the GEAP development objectives and working group expectations. This preparation helped ensure that these principles remained central to discussions and decision-making throughout the process.

The principles guided the review workforce data,

- analysing employee experience insights
- developing the problem statements that informed the proposed strategies which strengthen recruitment and promotion integrity
- build leadership capability
- address potential barriers impacting equitable career progression.

In particular, gender pay equity was identified as a high priority area by the working group. When exploring potential strategies, members directly referenced the Gender Pay Equity Principles to shape ideas and ensure proposed strategies would support fair and equitable outcomes across the organisation. Applying these principles helped guide discussion toward initiatives that strengthen recruitment and promotion integrity, build leadership capability, and address potential barriers impacting equitable career progression. Furthermore, the organisation committed to using the Gender Equity Pay Principles to guide development of the Remuneration Framework, a strategy included within the GEAP.

Overall, the guiding principles supported a consistent and transparent approach to strategy development, ensuring that gender equality considerations were actively integrated into the problem identification, design and prioritisation of strategies within the GEAP.

Intersectional Considerations

Intersectional experiences was a key consideration in the development of the GEAP and was embedded throughout the analysis, strategy design, and consultation process.

Our overarching guiding principles highlighted the importance of an intersectional approach when developing our GEAP. Messaging was reinforced at the beginning of each working group workshop to intersectional experiences remained central to discussions. This helped maintain a consistent focus on how inequality can be experienced differently depending on other aspects of identity.

The working group itself included representatives from diverse areas of the organisation, including employees with intersecting identities and experiences. Members were encouraged to share perspectives from their lived and professional experiences, which helped inform the development of the problem statements and highlighted where organisational practices may impact employees differently. These insights supported the identification of strategies aimed at improving equity and inclusion across a range of employee experiences.

To support broader understanding, intersectionality was clearly defined within consultation materials, including practical workplace examples to help employees understand how intersecting forms of disadvantage can affect workplace experiences and opportunities. Employees were also able to provide feedback through an anonymous online form, which allowed individuals to share personal insights or suggestions about how the proposed strategies could better address intersecting experiences.

The presentation of employee experience insights featured an intersectional lens, using reporting filters across different identity characteristics to highlight areas requiring attention. These insights were shared with all employees and central to working group strategy development discussions.

Consultation for the GEAP aligned with the Disability Action Plan consultation. Early feedback from this process informed the development of GEAP strategies that support safer, more inclusive work environments for employees with disabilities, ensuring alignment between the two plans.

Looking ahead, the organisation recognises that improving the collection and analysis of demographic data will strengthen the ability to identify and address intersectional gender inequality. This GEAP includes a commitment to explore opportunities to collect additional voluntary employee demographic data and to strengthen collaboration with relevant employee groups. This will support more targeted initiatives and ensure future actions continue to respond to the diverse experiences of employees across the organisation.

7.

How our plan was developed.

Development of the GEAP was informed by a structured engagement and consultation process designed to ensure diverse perspectives across the organisation were reflected.

7. How the plan was developed.

1. **Establishing the working group**

   A voluntary expression of interest was sought to form a working group representing all levels of the organisation, with the aim of achieving gender balance, to contribute diverse and intersectional perspectives to help inform the GEAP. The working group played a central role in shaping the plan, contributing insights about workplace culture, intersecting experiences, operational realities and opportunities to improve gender equality outcomes.

2. **Analysis of data, identification of themes and problem statements**

   The working group began by reviewing key sources of organisational data from the workforce audit and outcomes from the People Matter Survey. Through a series of workshops, the group analysed this information to identify key themes and areas of concern, which were translated into a set of evidence-based problem statements.

3. **Development of strategies**

   These problem statements guided the co-design of proposed strategies and actions for the GEAP, ensuring they were both data-informed, grounded in employee experience with a strong lens on intersectionality. The group also undertook a prioritisation exercise to rank the Gender Equality Indicators by level of importance, with the aim of identifying the top three high-impact areas, informing strategy prioritisation, and supporting implementation planning.

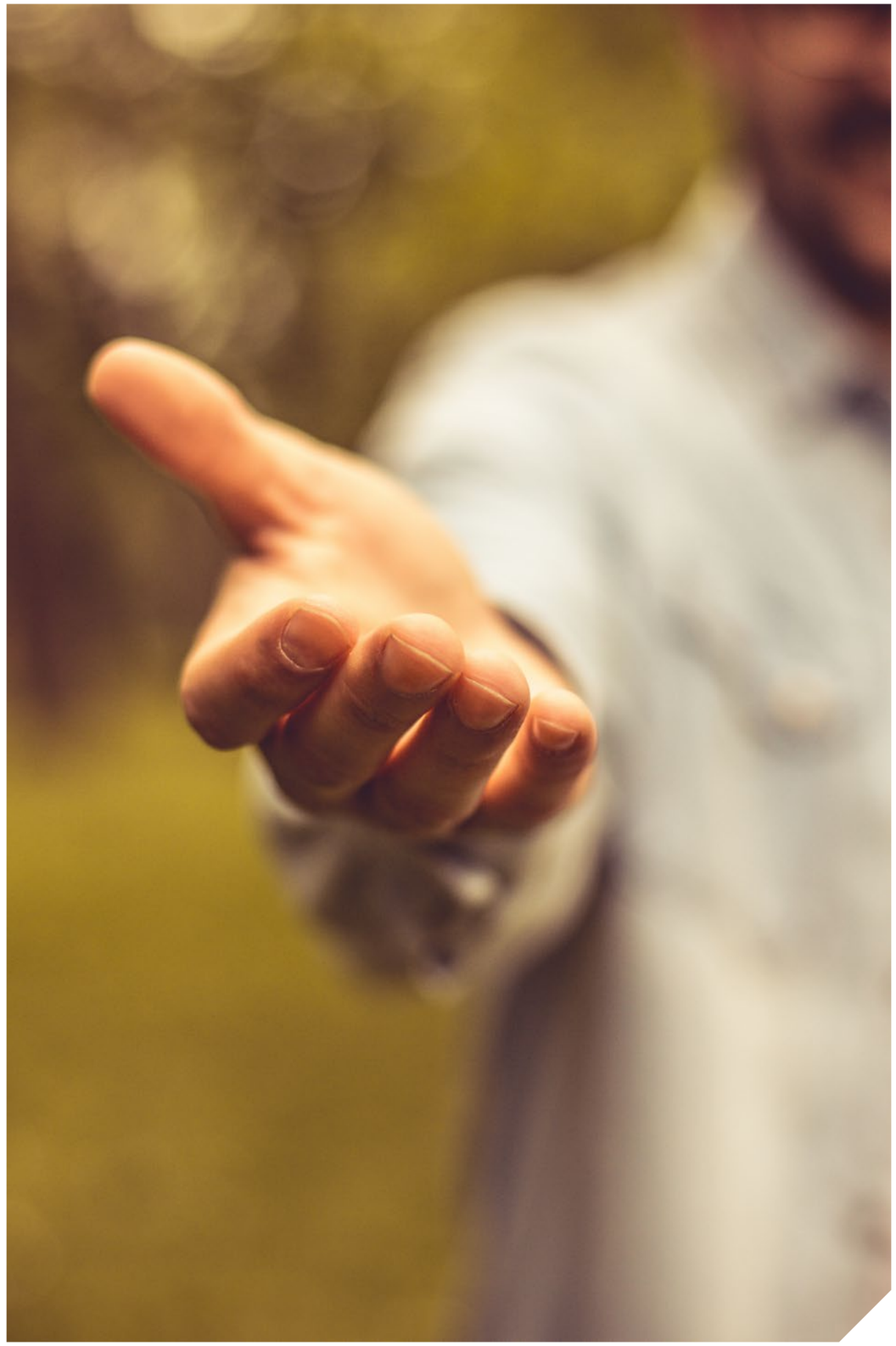
4. **Consultation with our workforce**

   The draft set of strategies was finessed by the People & Culture team and shared for broader consultation across the organisation, including a summary of audit results. A two-week consultation period occurred, supported through the Employee Consultative Committee (ECC). ECC representatives received a briefing on the proposed strategies along with online resources to support team discussions and presentations within their work areas. Employees were invited to review the findings from the workforce data and employee experience insights and provide feedback on the proposed strategies, through ECC representatives and working group members. An anonymous online form was available, enabling employees to share individual experiences of intersectionality and provide suggestions on how the proposed strategies could be strengthened to better support diverse and intersecting identities. Union representatives and Councillors were also provided with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft strategies.

5. **Finalisation and endorsement of strategies**

   Following the consultation period, all feedback was collated and reviewed by the People and Culture team and Working Group, with adjustments applied to proposed strategies and supporting measures identified. Acknowledgement of feedback updated strategies were shared through internal communication channels.

   The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) were briefed on audit findings and consulted on the proposed strategies. A feasibility assessment was undertaken to ensure proposed actions were achievable, appropriately resourced and aligned with organisational priorities. ELT feedback was shared through internal communication channels, highlighting their support for strategies, key priority areas and acknowledging feedback obtained through the consultation period. The refined GEAP was then prepared for endorsement by ELT, ahead of CEO approval and attestation.



8.

Baw Baw strategies

8. Baw Baw strategies.

Indicator 1. Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

Analysis of our data showed:

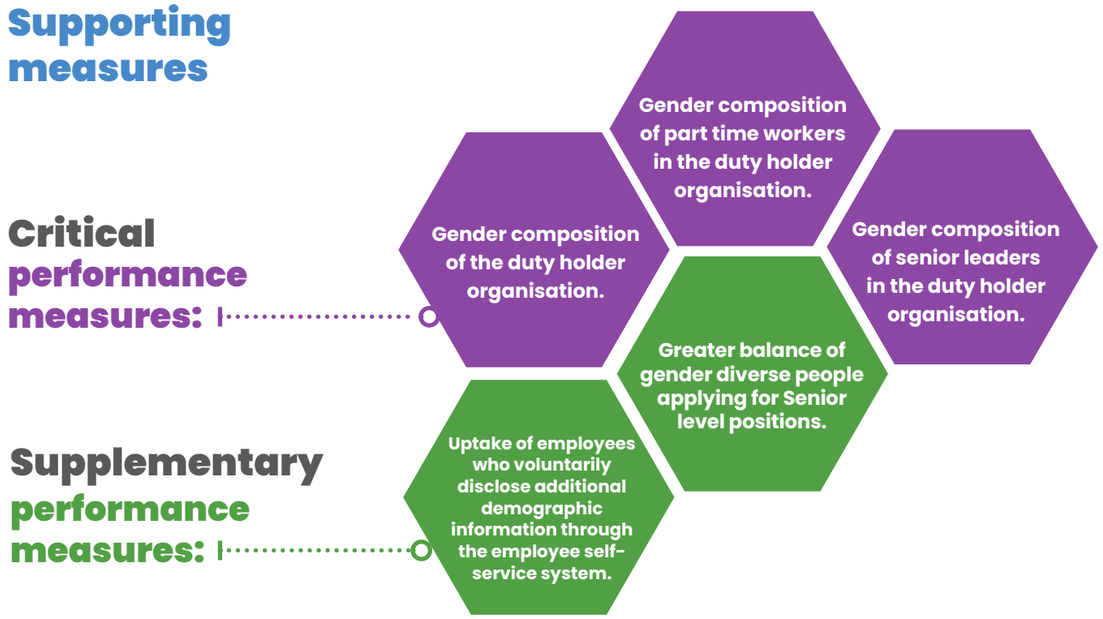
1. Overall gender representation across the workforce is relatively balanced, however Women remain under-represented in executive leadership roles, highlighting a key opportunity in leadership diversity.
2. The availability of part-time roles, together with systemic barriers experienced by employees with intersecting identities, constrain workforce participation and equitable access to employment and progression opportunities.
3. Accessibility to employee demographic data limits intersectional analysis and consultation, reducing the organisation's ability to identify and address compounded forms of disadvantage and increases the risk of broad, non-targeted actions.

Strategies

1.1 Develop and implement a talent attraction and retention strategy that embeds flexible working arrangements for senior roles, with the aim of increasing workforce diversity and removing structural barriers to participation.

1.2 Explore the opportunity to report on the uptake of part-time and flexible roles by gender and classification level to identify trends and inform targeted actions.

1.3 Utilise CiAnywhere to capture and report on expanded employee demographic data to support evidence-based gender equality initiatives.



8. Baw Baw strategies.

Indicator 2. Gender composition of governing bodies

Analysis of our data showed:

Gender representation on Council is currently balanced. We have the opportunity to continue to leverage diverse and intersecting views to inform council decision making.

Strategies

2.1 Ongoing delivery of relevant and current gender equality training through Councillor induction program.

2.2 Delivery of annual refresher training for all Councillors on respectful workplace behaviours and bystander responsibilities, including real-life impacts and awareness of protections.

Supporting measures

Critical performance measures:

- Gender composition of the duty holder organisation's governing body.

Supplementary performance measures:

- Successful delivery of annual refresher training within each 12 month period.
- 100% attendance rate at induction training.

8. Baw Baw strategies.

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

Analysis of our data showed:

1. While Women hold a relatively even representation across senior leadership roles, Men continue to disproportionately occupy the most senior and highest-paid positions. This concentration of men in top-tier roles contributes to persistent gender pay inequity at the upper end of the organisation.
2. Research indicates gender-based differences in remuneration outcomes are further influenced by negotiation practices, with men more likely to negotiate higher commencing salaries, while women are less likely to do so. These dynamics contribute to ongoing pay disparities that compound over time.
3. Women are more likely to hold primary caring responsibilities and, as a result, are more likely to access part-time or casual employment. Structural barriers related to role design, access to flexible work, and progression pathways continue to limit equitable access to senior and higher-remunerated roles, contributing to persistent gender-based pay gaps.

Strategies

3.1 Ongoing implementation of the Capability and Classification process to review like-for-like roles, identify pay gaps, ensure the principle of equal pay for equal work is applied, and address any classification or remuneration inconsistencies.

3.2 Develop and implement a remuneration framework to ensure offer and pay decisions are equitable and not influenced by gender or inconsistent negotiation practices.

3.3 Review and strengthen recruitment, assessment, and selection practices to ensure that requests for flexible working are not perceived as barriers to appointment, or as factors influencing salary negotiation outcomes.

Supporting measures

Critical performance measures:

- Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group.
- Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap.

Supplementary performance measures:

- Compliance to the remuneration framework relating to over-award payments and banding commencement.

8. Baw Baw strategies.

Indicator 4. Sexual harassment in the workplace and other disrespectful behaviours

Analysis of our data showed:

1. Indicators of sexual harassment and other disrespectful behaviours has increased.
2. Staff confidence in reporting remains low. This indicates ongoing barriers to early reporting and resolution, posing risks to psychological safety and overall employee wellbeing.
3. Limited employee understanding of expected workplace behaviours, sexual harassment, and gender diversity may contribute to the normalisation of harmful or inappropriate interactions. These issues disproportionately affect women and gender-diverse employees and undermine a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace culture.

Strategies

4.1 Delivery of annual refresher training for all employees and Councillors on sexual harassment, respectful workplace behaviours and bystander responsibilities, including real-life impacts and awareness of protections.

4.2 Establish a leadership induction toolkit to ensure leaders understand expectations of a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, including guidance on how to respond to observed behaviours.

4.3 Ongoing communication of Speak Up campaign and integration of reporting options into staff induction program.*

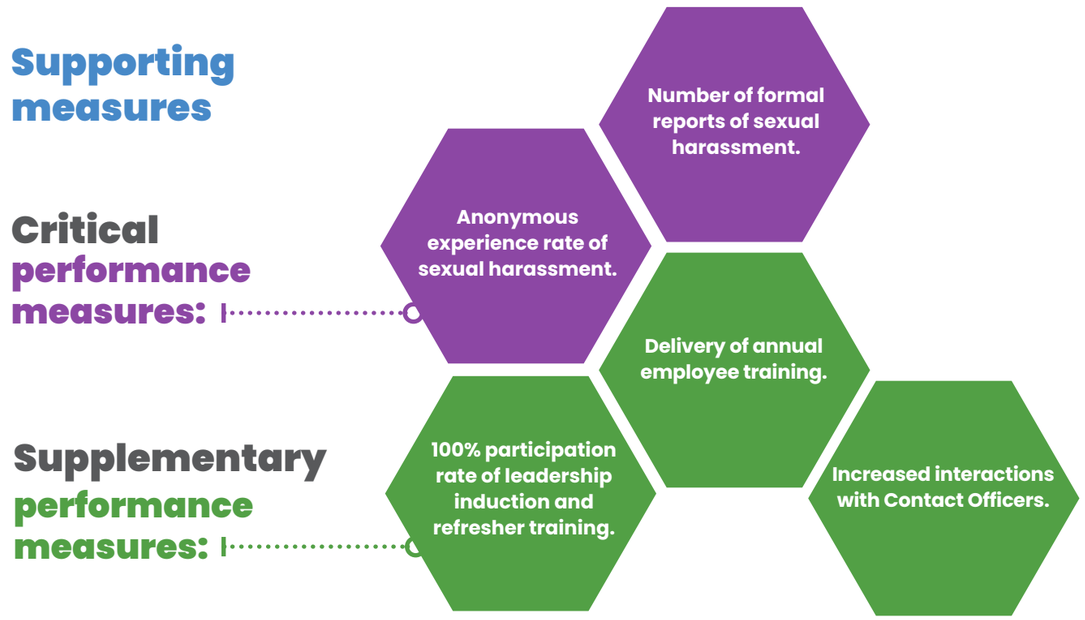
4.4 Periodic P&C review of formal and informal employee reporting with findings reported to ELT.

4.5 Enhance promotion of Contact Officers and the support they provide.

4.6 Offer quarterly Contact Officer activities to provide ongoing development of skills to encourage reporting and provide support to employees.

4.7 Explore diversity awareness training options, including opportunities for targeted programs (e.g. disability-focused training).**

Supporting measures



* Aligns with Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan (Action Plan).

** Exploring alignment with Disability Action Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan.

8. Baw Baw strategies.

Indicator 5. Recruitment and promotion practices

Analysis of our data showed:

1. The organisation continues to face challenges attracting candidates to roles traditionally dominated by one gender. This limits workforce diversity, reinforces occupational segregation, and reduces access to opportunities for both women and men across a broader range of roles.
2. Limited visibility of internal talent and unclear mobility or succession pathways among hiring managers hinders internal promotion and career development, increasing reliance on external consultants and agency staff. This disproportionately affects employees from under-represented genders, impacting progression and retention outcomes.
3. Higher duties and secondment opportunities generally achieve reasonable gender balance, current policies give hiring leaders significant discretion, which can create inequitable access to developmental opportunities and unintentionally reinforce existing imbalances in career advancement.

Strategies

5.1 Review and update recruitment and promotion policies and guidelines to ensure transparent, equitable and inclusive practices.

5.2 Establish a centralised internal Expression of Interest (EOI) board on the staff intranet to improve transparency and ensure equal access to internal opportunities.

5.3 Deliver regular training for hiring leaders and selection panel members on discrimination prevention and unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion decisions.

5.4 Monitor and identify non-compliance with the recruitment and promotion policy or process and address trends and themes.

5.5 Explore with industry partners opportunities to identify and remove barriers and to develop proactive recruitment strategies for roles that are traditionally gender-segregated.

5.6 Review and strengthen the Performance Review and Development (PRD) process to support diverse development pathways beyond leadership roles.

5.7 Explore a mentoring program focused on supporting and developing emerging leaders to foster a safe environment for employees to learn about progressing into senior leadership roles.

Supporting measures

Critical performance measures:

Supplementary performance measures:

8. Baw Baw strategies.

Indicator 6. Leave and flexible working arrangements

Analysis of our data showed:

1. The assessment of flexible work requests is decentralised, and variable leadership knowledge of the Working Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) legislation contributes to inconsistent decision-making across teams. This creates uncertainty for staff, undermines confidence in equitable access, and limits the effectiveness of flexible work as a driver of gender equality.
2. Lower uptake of flexible work arrangements and parental leave by men indicates the persistence of gendered norms around care and work responsibilities. These patterns reinforce traditional gender roles and constrain progress toward shared caring responsibilities and more equitable participation across the workforce.
3. In addition, limited data on career development and learning and development (L&D) participation restricts the organisation's ability to assess whether employees have equitable access to growth, capability building, and progression opportunities. This limits evidence-based decision-making and the identification of potential disparities in development outcomes.

Strategies

6.1 Launch a communication campaign promoting flexible working options and application processes, including real-life case studies, and track engagement through readership metrics and flexible work arrangement uptake.

6.2 Introduce FWA engagement metrics for regular reporting to ELT.

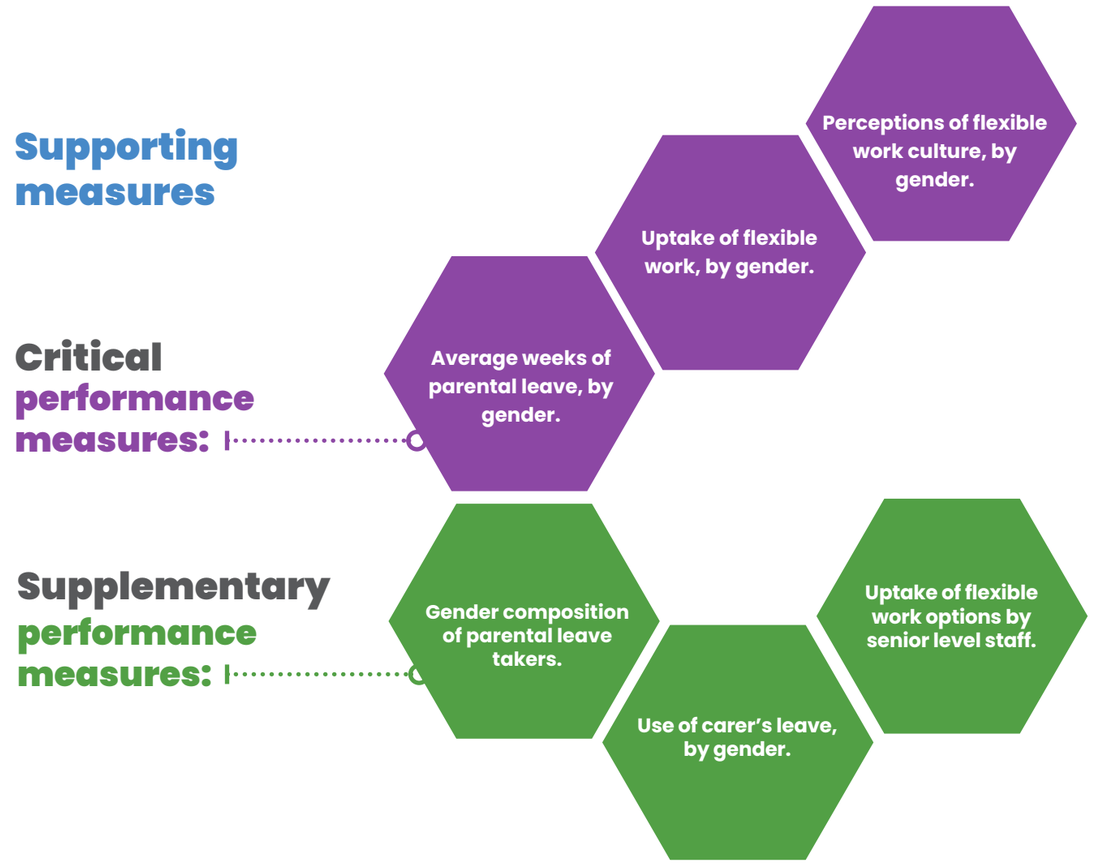
6.3 Deliver an annual mandatory refresher for all people leaders on flexible work decision-making and bias-free assessment.

6.4 Review learning and development funding allocations to ensure equitable access across all roles, levels and employee groups, including part-time employees.

6.5 Capture and report career development data to meet GEAP reporting requirements.

6.6 Promote 'Keep in Touch Days', add guidance to the Leadership Induction Toolkit, and identify appropriate ways for employees on extended leave to access key communications.

6.7 Explore a mentoring program focused on supporting and developing emerging leaders to foster a safe environment for employees to learn about progressing into senior leadership roles.



8. Baw Baw strategies.

Indicator 7. Gendered segregation within the workplace

Analysis of our data showed:

1. Current policy and processes guide the appoint of candidates based on merit. Inconsistencies in panel member knowledge and education regarding unconscious bias and skills-based assessment, unintentionally influence recruitment outcomes.
2. Gendered patterns in workforce composition persist, with men disproportionately represented in STEM and technical roles and women concentrated in administrative and support roles, providing an opportunity for targeted talent and attraction strategies to ensure greater balance of candidate composition.
3. Employees with intersecting identities may experience compounded barriers across recruitment, progression, access to flexible work, and leadership opportunities. Without deliberate, inclusive systems and practices, these barriers can reinforce existing gender and diversity inequities across the employee lifecycle.

Strategies

7.1 Strengthen practical tools and prompts to support consistent and intentional consideration of equity and intersectionality across project and service planning, policy development, workforce planning and people management practices.

7.2 Provide short, targeted learning resources for people leaders to build capability in recognising and addressing intersectional bias in decision-making.

7.3 Conduct periodic audits of employment applications across intersectional characteristics, to identify application trends and inform recruitment strategies aimed at attracting balanced candidate pools.

Supporting measures

Critical performance measures:

- Occupational gender segregation.

Supplementary performance measures:

- Number of training and information sessions delivered.

9.

Leadership and resourcing.

The leadership team plays a critical role in the success of our next GEAP. They are responsible for ongoing messaging to support initiatives, engaging in regular conversations with teams, and fostering a respectful workplace culture.

The GEAP will be resourced primarily through the People & Culture team, who will lead the delivery and coordination of most strategies aligned to the working group's agreed priority areas. Strategy ownership will be distributed across relevant business units, with each initiative assigned to accountable departments confirmed during the development phase to ensure clarity and ownership.

Implementation will follow a staged, multi-year approach, influenced by our key priority areas. Year 1 will focus on policy review, capability building and support resources. Year 2 will prioritise embedding practices, scaling initiatives, and strengthening accountability across teams. Year 3 will focus on evaluation, continuous improvement, and sustaining outcomes.

10.

Monitoring and measurement.

Progress will continue to be measured through the obligatory bi-annual reporting requirements to the Gender Equality Commission and through a number of additional avenues captured within our strategies.

In addition a centralised dashboard will provide transparent, organisation-wide visibility of milestones, metrics, and performance against targets. This will enable regular monitoring, support timely adjustments, and ensure the GEAP remains on track to deliver measurable impact, while keeping our organisation informed of our progress.