

Cardinia Shire Council

# Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025



Prepared by:

**Cardinia Shire Council**  
People and Culture Team

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## **Acknowledgments**

Cardinia Shire Council recognises and values the Boonwurrung, Bunurong and Wurundjeri tribes as the original inhabitants of the land that makes up Cardinia Shire.

Cardinia Shire's name is derived from the Boonwurrung or Wadawurrung word 'Kar-din-yarr', meaning 'look to the rising sun' or 'close to the sunrise'. Council's logo, which includes a motif of the rising sun, reflects this meaning.

Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges the right of Aboriginal, and indeed all Australians, to live according to their values and customs, subject to the law.

Council is committed to developing and strengthening relationships through reconciliation. Council supports the reconciliation process, which promotes mutual respect and understanding of the Aboriginal peoples and of all ethnic groups and their history and culture in our community.

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## **Message from our CEO**

I am delighted to present to you Cardinia Shire's Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025. Cardinia Shire has a proud history of promotion of gender equality both in the community through various initiatives and programs, but also within our workforce by our actions. Cardinia has a large female representation across all levels of our workforce.

I am proud of our activity based working environment and flexible mindset that enables such high gender diversity. I am also particularly proud of our workforce for its open-minded approach to gender-based issues. This mindset has seen Cardinia Shire awarded White Ribbon accreditation over a number of years in addition to the many wonderful community-based programs and initiatives.

The Gender Equality Act and subsequent requirement for a Gender Equality Action Plan has given Cardinia an opportunity to focus the needs of our current workforce and improvements that need to and should be made in the gender equality space.

Cardinia, whilst having a very strong culture of gender equality, still has several areas for improvement and we acknowledge these areas and believe that the recommendations and opportunities in this report will assist us greatly in achieving these improvements. The Gender Equality Action Plan aligns with Cardinia's other strategic plans, including our Strategic Workforce Plan and the Our Ways cultural change program.

I am really looking forward to the implementation of this action plan and the benefits and opportunities that will arise from it.

**Carol Jeffs**

## **Our leadership commitment**

### **Our Workplace**

#### ***Leadership commitment statement***

Addressing unequal expectations, pressures and treatment of people based on gender in our workplace.

#### ***Our vision***

We recognise that gender equality is a fundamental human right. We will be an equitable workplace where our team members are valued, respected and given equal opportunity regardless of their gender identity.

These values will be reflected in the services we deliver and our culture. We will work together as one team to ensure our services and programs are accessible, equitable and inclusive for all community members.

#### ***Barriers to achieving this vision***

Ingrained stereotypical and outdated views about gender roles in our organisation may lead to inequality. This bias is often unintentional and the result of a lack of education and awareness.

We recognise that our workplace is made up of employees with different life experiences, views, and ideas about gender equality. This can sometimes include unconscious bias that results in inequality in our policies, practices, systems, and structures.

We recognise that women may not be seen as valuable due to gender stereotypes. As a result, women are more likely to suffer harassment or inequality.

#### ***Solutions and call to action***

We will strive to provide a gender equitable workplace for all employees. This will be reflected in our service delivery by ensuring our services and programs are accessible, equitable and inclusive for all community members.

We will create opportunities for women, girls, and gender diverse people in our community to have a voice and inform our decision making.

We will build the gender equality capacity of our workplace and challenge any policies, practices systems or structures that may hinder equality.

We are committed to gender equality and will strive to lead by example in creating a fair and equal workplace for all.

## Legislative framework

The Gender Equality Act 2020 (the 'Act') commenced on 31 March 2021.

The aim of the Act is to improve Gender Equality in the Victorian public sector, universities, and local councils. Cardinia Shire Council (Cardinia) is required to undertake workplace gender audits, gender impact assessments, and develop a gender equality action plan to ensure positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and promote gender equality in policies, programs, and services.

The specific obligations from the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (the 'Commission') on Cardinia are:

- develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), which includes:
  - results of a workplace gender audit
  - strategies for achieving workplace gender equality
- publicly report on their progress in relation to workplace gender equality
- promote gender equality in policies, programs and services that impact the public
- complete gender impact assessments that directly and significantly impacts the public and consider how Cardinia's work affects different people in our community.
- The Act aims to promote gender equality by:
  - Requiring the Victorian public sector, local councils and universities to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality.
  - Requiring these organisations to consider and promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services.
- Establishing the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner to provide education, support implementation and enforce compliance.

The objectives of the Act are to:

- promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women
- support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services in workplaces and communities
- recognise that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes
- redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence, and accommodate persons of different genders by way of structural change
- enhance economic and social participation by persons of different genders
- further promote the right to equality set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Cardinia Shire is committed to the implementation of the Act and the promotion of its objectives. We will strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for our community and workforce in all that we do.

## **Who we are**

- 61% of our workforce is female
- Our female workforce ranges from 20 years of age through to 77 years of age
- Our female workforce:
  - 44% work part time
  - 38% work full time
  - 12% are casuals
  - 5% are contractors
- Our Band 5 and 6 workers have the largest proportion of female representation
- Women make up 60% of our senior managers and managers
- The majority of women are classified as 'indoor workers' with only 4% working outdoors.



## **Developing the Plan**

The Gender Equality Action Plan has been developed in conjunction with a variety of relevant employee representatives and governing bodies.

These have included our Councillors, Senior Leadership Team, members of the Staff Relations Consultative Committee, members of the Respect and Equality Committee and a cross section of leaders and employees.

A Gender Equality Action Plan Working Group was formed via an expression of interest selection process, which resulted in a diverse cross section of the organisation who were tasked with bringing this plan together on behalf of the entire Cardinia Shire workforce.

For the duration of the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan the Working Group has met on a weekly basis, following specific Terms of Reference to ensure good governance of the development process and the potential impacts of the Gender Equality Action Plan on the organisation and its people.

A variety of surveys, one-on-one sessions and groups meetings have been conducted by the Gender Equality Action Plan Working Group members to provide context to the data obtained in the Workplace Gender Audit. This engagement process has also provided a forum for story-telling by many in our workforce thus adding further layers of understanding to the development of our Gender Equality Action Plan, its actions and the desired outcomes.

Following on from the submission of the Gender Equality Action Plan to the Commissioner, a communications and engagement plan will be finalised to promote Cardinia's Gender Equality Action Plan to all employees and engage the entire organisation to undertake the stated actions and work towards achieving gender equality

## Workplace gender audit

### Indicators

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires Cardinia Shire to regularly collect and report data on gender equality in the workplace by undertaking workplace gender audits.

This data assists us in understanding where change is needed and what level of change is required over time.

The current audit data along with results from staff surveys being the People Matter Survey 2021 and the Our Voice Survey 2022, have provided valuable information to help develop this Gender Equality Action Plan.

The Commission required information be gathered in relation to the following indicators:

- Gender Composition of the Workforce
- Gender Composition of Governing Body
- Pay Equity
- Sexual Harassment
- Recruitment and Promotion
- Leave and Flexibility
- Gendered Segregation

Details of the audit results relating to these indicators can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

### What we found

The findings of the Workplace Gender Audit have provided Cardinia with a number of focus areas on which we can improve gender equality in our workplace.

What we found was:

- 61% of our workforce identify as female with the majority of our female workforce working in a part-time or casual capacity. This is reflected in our governing bodies with 4 out of 9 councillors and 3 out of 5 executive leaders being female (as at 30 June 2021).
- Overall, there is a gender pay gap of 23.8% at Cardinia when taking into account all employment types and annual salaries. The impact of the large proportion of female part-time and casual employees contributes significantly to this variance.
- Upon further investigation, we found that on an hourly rate basis, Cardinia's female workforce is paid at a higher hourly rate but work significantly less hours than our male workforce.

This finding was also underscored in the parental leave findings with women continuing to take the majority of parental leave and caring responsibilities.

- More women than men were recruited to Cardinia in the financial year to 30 June 2021, although this recruitment was mainly to the part-time and casual workforce.
- Through this audit we also found that Cardinia's female workforce is still predominantly located in traditionally conventional work areas.

The ANZSCO categorisation shows that Cardinia's female workforce overwhelmingly are indoor, office-based workers with low to mid-level qualifications, working 4 – 5 levels below the Chief Executive Officer.

- The audit indicated a desire for self-improvement and opportunity identification by the female workforce with a surprising result of a high number of internal secondments undertaken by our female workforce compared to our male workforce.
- A high number of the female workforce at Cardinia agreed that this is a positive and safe workplace. There were some anomalies noted between internal data and the results of the People Matter Survey.

In the financial year to 30 June 2021 there were no formal sexual harassment claims made at Cardinia. The People Matter Survey however, recorded that 11% of female respondents had experienced some form of sexual harassment. This anomaly will be investigated as an action of this plan.

## Intersectionality

Cardinia Shire has submitted data to the Commission in all areas indicated with the exception of some areas of intersectional data.

Cardinia recognises the concept of intersectionality and understands that disadvantage, or discrimination do not exist independently, but intersect and overlap with gender inequality, magnifying the severity and frequency of the impacts while also raising barriers to support. Cardinia understands the impact that intersectional disadvantage or discrimination can have on a workforce and wider community.

One of the actions outlined in this report is to identify how we can best obtain intersectional data whilst supporting and maintaining the privacy of our workforce. Achieving this aim will allow us to better understand our workforce and work towards removing any disadvantage or discrimination.

Overall, the Workplace Gender Audit has provided Cardinia Shire with a number of focus areas for improvement.

A full analysis of the audit was undertaken and the recommendations from this analysis have been endorsed by Cardinia Shire's Senior Leadership Team and have the support of Cardinia Shire's Councillors.

These recommendations and focus areas along with the data gathered at the audit stage form the basis for this action plan.

## **Working towards change**

### **Our vision for gender equality**

Our Leadership Commitment outlines our vision for gender equality in our Workforce. We recognise that gender equality is a fundamental human right.

We will be an equitable workplace where our team members are valued, respected and given equal opportunity regardless of their gender identity.

These values will be reflected in the services we deliver and our culture. We will work together as one team to ensure our services and programs are accessible, equitable and inclusive for all community members.

### **Our gender equality priorities**

- Priority 1: A diverse workforce that is active at all levels of council
- Priority 2: A workplace that actively promotes gender equality and challenges conventional thinking
- Priority 3: Gender equality impacts are to be considered in all policies and processes

### **Where we are now**

Cardinia is in the enviable position of already having a workforce with a high rate of gender equality participation and awareness.

The workforce and workplaces at Cardinia are conducive to promotion of gender equality and diversity.

There is already a strong culture of fairness and respect driving many of the decisions and day-to-day actions of the workforce. Some of Cardinia's existing programs and initiatives include:

- Early adopter of family violence leave within our Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
- Contact officer program – peer-to-peer support program
- Well established Respect and Equality Committee
- White Ribbon Accreditation
- Collective impact programs addressing family violence
- Partnership with Waste Contractors to promote Cardinia Shire's participation in collective impact programs addressing family violence in the community on waste vehicles
- Trainee program focussing on improving female representation in non-traditional roles
- Waste Contractors – recruitment program targeting women, and training new drivers
- Parent Groups that welcome all genders
- Leadership Fundamentals Program for female leaders
- Supporting parental leave /flexible work for both parents via Enterprise Bargaining Agreement clauses
- Women in Sport promotion

## **Focus areas and actions**

In working towards achieving Cardinia's vision for gender equality in the workplace, we will focus on our stated priorities and several areas of concern that analysis of the Workplace Gender Audit highlighted.

These areas of concern, and priorities have been endorsed by Cardinia's Senior Leadership Team and have the support of Cardinia Shire's Councillors. These focus areas are:

- Employment security
- Gender pay gap
- Sexual Harassment at Cardinia
- Business Intelligence & Data Gaps
- Unconscious Bias

The Workplace Gender Audit identified issues in these focus areas. To better understand these issues at Cardinia and ensure meaningful change can occur we will undertake the following actions.

## **Sexual harassment at Cardinia**

### ***Background***

In 1984 the federal government introduced the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 which specifically prohibited workplace sexual harassment. This same year the Sex Discrimination Commissioner was established who identified the elimination of workplace sexual harassment as a key priority.

In 2018, following significant high-profile cases that spawned the #metoo and #letherspeak movements, Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins launched a significant inquiry into the prevalence, nature and reporting of sexual harassment in Australian Workplaces.

This inquiry resulted in the 'Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment' report which contained extensive data on workplace sexual harassment and provided 54 recommendations aimed primarily at federal government.

The results of the survey were significant and contributed to the public's increased sense of urgency in demanding organisations better address workplace sexual harassment.

The variable nature of reporting of sexual harassment at Cardinia is an area of concern. Whilst no formal complaints were registered in the year to 30 June 2021, there were two staff surveys undertaken which identified a significant amount of harassment activity is perceived to be occurring.

The fact that this activity is being reported at surveys but not progressing to a formal process within the workplace is concerning and requires attention.

### ***Sexual harassment and gender equality***

Commissioner Jenkins commented throughout the report that gender inequality in the workplace is a key driver of workplace sexual harassment. The report asserts that any progress towards workplace gender equality is progress towards minimising workplace sexual harassment.

"A key factor that drives sexual harassment of all people, regardless of their gender, are norms, practices and structures in society that shape (and are shaped by) gender inequality. Studies have consistently found that men who experienced sexual harassment are more likely to be targeted by other men than by women, and that men are most often sexually harassed when they are considered to have violated traditional masculine social norms" Respect@Work

The data and recommendations from Respect@ Work provide a broad set of aims for Cardinia to consider in addressing the manner in which it prevents and responds to sexual harassment.

### **RESPECT@WORK key findings**

26% of Australian Workers had experienced workplace sexual harassment in the previous 12 months.

- 39% Women and 26% Men had experienced workplace sexual harassment in previous 5 years.
- 79% of workplace sexual harassment is perpetrated by men.
- Most male sexual harassment victims were sexually harassed by other men.

Other factors indicating an increased chance of experiencing sexual harassment;

- Age (under 30 years)
- LGBTIQ+
- Aboriginal / Torres Straight Island
- Disability
- CALD workers
- People in 'precarious' or 'insecure' work.

### **Victorian Auditor General's Office Survey**

In June 2020 the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) conducted a survey of Victorian Local Governments (LG's) to ascertain the prevalence of sexual harassment in local government. 75 of 79 Council's participated.

The report was presented to Councils in December 2020.

The report showed that for all the policy, protection, and governance that local government is known for, employees of local government are actually more likely to experience sexual harassment than the average Australian worker (when considering the data from Respect@Work).

### **VAGO Sexual Harassment Survey key findings**

- 28% experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months
- 90% happened during day-to-day work
- 2% made a formal complaint

Other factors indicating an increased chance of sexual harassment;

- Young women (42% of women aged between 18-34)
- LGBTIQ+
- People with disability

The VAGO results confirm that Local Government Employees are not an exception to being sexually harassed at work. The findings are corroborated by much of the Respect@Work report concerning the likely victims and perpetrators.

### **VAGO key findings for Cardinia**

- 38% of Cardinia employees responded to the survey (state average of 24%).
- 208 employees responded with 119 female and 83 male.
- 22% experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months
- 90% of employees know where to find the policy regarding sexual harassment
- 94% of employees know where to get help if they or their co-worker experiences sexual harassment
- 88% of employees know how to make a formal complaint

### **People Matter survey**

In August 2021 a smaller survey (30% response rate) was provided to Cardinia employees and included some questions regarding sexual harassment.

The data from this survey corroborated VAGO's results and confirmed that significant contributing factors to being at risk of sexual harassment included:

- Employees in non-ongoing contracts were almost twice as likely to be sexually harassed
- Those between 15-34 years are nearly twice as likely to be sexually harassed than those who are 35-54 years.
- Women at Cardinia are at least three times as likely to be sexually harassed than men.

### **Our Voice survey**

- 38% of Cardinia employees responded to the survey (state average of 24%).
- 208 employees responded with 119 female and 83 male
- 22% experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months
- 90% of employees know where to find the policy regarding sexual harassment
- 94% of employees know where to get help if they or their co-worker experiences sexual harassment
- 88% of employees know how to make a formal complaint



## **Recommendations and opportunities**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>Respect@Work Recommendations: Recommendations from Respect@Work were not aimed at local government, however there are some 'in principle' actions Cardinia can take in support of the report that would contribute to the GEAP.</p>			
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Commission conduct a nationally representative survey every four years, funded by the Australian Government, that:</p> <p>a. provides data on sexual harassment, including the prevalence, nature, reporting, impacts of and responses to sexual harassment in the workplace, and identifies trends over time</p> <p>b. provides detailed industry data which allows analysis across and within industries is accessible and adequately captures experiences of sexual harassment across all population groups, including people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p>	<p>Ensure any additional data and information from future reports are relayed to Cardinia employees as a part of regular training</p>	<p>Now - Ongoing</p>	<p>Learning &amp; Organisational Development</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> All Australian governments have gender equality strategies that address sexual harassment and that recognise sexual harassment is driven by gender inequality and is a form of gender-based violence.</p>	<p>Ensure workplace sexual harassment is included in future gender equality strategies.</p> <p>In recognising that sexual harassment is driven by gender inequality (and is a form of gender-based violence) bring workplace sexual harassment prevention into the scope of the Respect and Equality Committee.</p>	<p>Now - Ongoing</p>	<p>Respect &amp; Equality Committee</p>

**Recommendations and opportunities (cont.)**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>Recommendation 29: Introduce a ‘stop sexual harassment order’ equivalent to the ‘stop bullying order’ into the Fair Work Act. This should be designed to facilitate the order’s restorative aim. (Adopted by federal government in September 2021)</p>	<p>Amend existing Respectful Workplace Behaviours training to include the Fair Work Commission’s ability to intervene in alleged cases of workplace sexual harassment. Inform Contact Officers of changes and provide appropriate training for them to inform impacted employees of additional avenues.</p>	<p>2022/2023</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture  Learning &amp; Organisational Development</p>
<p>Recommendation 30: Amend Section 387 of the Fair Work Act to clarify that sexual harassment can be conduct amounting to a valid reason for dismissal in determining whether a dismissal was harsh, unjust or unreasonable. (Adopted by federal government in September 2021)</p>	<p>Incorporate changes into Disciplinary Process training that will be provided to all leaders from June 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture</p>
<p>Recommendation 31: Amend the definition of ‘serious misconduct’ in the Fair Work Regulations to include sexual harassment. (Adopted by federal government in September 2021)</p>	<p>Amend existing Respectful Workplace Behaviours and Disciplinary Process training to include sexual harassment as a reason for summary dismissal. Completed: Cardinia’s internal policies and training regarding conduct has been amended to include sexual harassment as ‘serious misconduct’.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	

**Recommendations and opportunities (cont.)**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>VAGO Recommendations: VAGO provided broad recommendations for local government. No formal commitment was made by Cardinia to adopt these recommendations, however in revisiting them there are clear actions that can be taken to contribute to the GEAP.</p>			
<p>Use findings from the Victorian Auditor-General's 2020 Sexual Harassment in Local Government survey to identify and act on risk factors for council employees and workplaces.</p> <p>The data from previous surveys show that younger women at Cardinia on insecure contracts are most likely to be victims of sexual harassment</p>	<p>These findings were discussed in organisation-wide training delivered in 2021 to 80% of employees.</p> <p>Training recommencing in 2022 for new employees and rest of organisation will include these results.</p> <p>Future Respectful Workplace Behaviours Training should be prioritised to be delivered to casual employees and teams in which younger women frequently work.</p> <p>Contact Officer Program reviewed and amended to address casual employees' concerns</p>	<p>Now (implemented) - Ongoing</p> <p>2022 onwards</p> <p>2022 - 2023</p>	<p>Learning &amp; Organisational Development</p>
<p>Collect information about the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment at least once every two years by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conducting workplace surveys</li> <li>• reviewing complaints information</li> </ul>	<p>Review of complaints information every two years and provide survey to all employees Contact Officer Program amended to record nature of complaints in 6 monthly meeting with Contact Officers. Any incidents of sexual harassment complaints should be recorded and reviewed (with appropriate privacy considerations).</p>	<p>2022 onwards</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture / Respect &amp; Equality Committee</p>

**Recommendations and opportunities (cont.)**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>Address the risk of sexual harassment by members of the public by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring sexual harassment policies, procedures and training explicitly cover sexual harassment from the public</li> <li>regularly communicating to customers and staff that the council does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment from the public</li> </ul>	<p>Increase communication to employees around the message that ‘Cardinia does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment’.</p> <p>Communicate a culture of respect in the council by ensuring leaders model respectful behaviour at all times.</p>	<p>Now - ongoing</p>	<p>Communications &amp; Engagement / Customer &amp; Service Improvement</p>
<p>Introduce mandatory training on sexual harassment, or improve existing training, so that at a minimum it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>includes face-to-face or live online sessions for all staff and councillors at least once every two years (in addition to online modules)</li> <li>covers safe strategies for bystander interventions</li> <li>is tailored to the council's policies, procedures and workplace risk factors</li> </ul>	<p>Increase training scope to include Councillors and ensure casuals are included and prioritised for future sessions.</p> <p>Provide bystander intervention training to Contact Officers</p> <p><i>Adopted (ongoing through Respectful Workplace Behaviours Training). This training also included bystander intervention (although minimal information).</i></p>	<p>2022 - 2023</p>	<p>Governance / Learning &amp; Organisational Development</p>

**Recommendations and opportunities (cont.)**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>Encourage reporting of inappropriate behaviour by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting formal and informal complaint channels</li> <li>• allowing for anonymous complaints</li> </ul> <p><i>Partially complete (Ongoing). Managing Workplace Complaints and Grievances Procedure outlines formal and informal options available to employees to resolve grievances.</i></p>	<p>Amend Contact Officer training to include more information and resources on responding to reports of sexual harassment.</p> <p>Strengthen Contact Officer program to include employees from all business units to encourage reporting of behaviour.</p> <p>Communicate Contact Officer Program educational material throughout organisation with a focus on availability to casual and female employees.</p>	<p>Now - Ongoing</p>	<p>All Managers / Learning &amp; Organisational Development</p>
<p>Improve record keeping of sexual harassment complaints by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping complete records of all interactions relating to complaints</li> <li>• Documenting decisions to not investigate complaints or to stop investigations, including the rationale for the decision and the name and role of decision makers</li> </ul>	<p>People and Culture leadership monitor and maintain a secure 'Case Management' folder with appropriate records and documentation concerning interactions, decisions, and rationale</p>	<p>Now – Ongoing</p>	<p>Risk, Health &amp; Safety / People &amp; Culture</p>

**Recommendations and opportunities (cont.)**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>Managing Workplace Complaints and Grievances Procedure clarifies that complainants are to be informed of outcomes Training to be provided to Councillors should be consistent with that of employees (except around internal policy processes that aren't relevant)</p>	<p>Review complaint procedures to ensure they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a requirement to inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint</li> <li>• guidance on how investigators can support reluctant complainants</li> </ul> <p>Ensure councillors receive training on sexual harassment at least twice per council term Ensure councillors are informed of their internal and external options for sexual harassment support and complaints, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the council's employee assistance program</li> <li>• Councillor Code of Conduct dispute resolution processes</li> <li>• external complaint bodies</li> </ul>	<p>Now - Ongoing</p>	<p>Governance / People &amp; Culture</p>

## **Employment security**

Cardinia Shire is proud of its ability to offer a flexible workplace that enables its employees to balance their work and life be it family, friends or other important factors that contribute to each individual employees overall health and wellbeing.

We know that 56% of Cardinia's workforce is in part-time employment and that women constitute 42% of all full-time employees and 76% of all part-time employees.

The national average according to the Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency women constitute 38.0% of all full-time employees and 67.6% of all part-time employees.

Whilst participation rates for female employment at Cardinia is very good and in many cases above the national averages, the fact that women are overrepresented in part-time and limited tenure employment compared to their male counterparts here is an area of concern.

Lack of employment security for women has been linked to poorer economic stability for women, poorer attitudes towards women in the workplace and perpetuation of gender stereotypes both in the workplace and in society. We also know that part-time employment impacts the gender pay gap and has the potential to limit opportunities for career development.

Cardinia Shire has also identified a very high level of female participation in the secondments program here, particularly amongst our mid-level workforces.

This potentially indicates there is a high level of desire for career development and personal improvement.

**Recommendations and opportunities**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
Identify causal factors at Cardinia for high level of female part-time and limited tenure	Survey part-time workforce to ascertain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify why, or if, there is a preference for part-time and casual employment</li> <li>• Identify attitudes to work and any perceived barriers by employees especially:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible work arrangements</li> <li>• If working part-time is a choice or due to lack of other options</li> <li>• Impact of part-time employment on individual employees economic stability and personal wellbeing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Now (currently underway)	Organisational Development
Develop actions to improve development opportunities for the part-time workforce	Further investigate the high level of female secondments Understand the drivers for secondments and higher duties by managers and link to the strategic workforce plan actions if appropriate Review training program in light of above findings	2023 onwards	Organisational Development



## Gender pay gap

The Workplace Gender Audit demonstrated that Cardinia’s workforce whilst demonstrating a high rate of female participation, is still tending towards employment of women in traditional roles, often lower paying and part-time roles.

This approach to recruitment has in part contributed to the pay gap between men and women at Cardinia being 23.8% favourable to men.

We know that the average hourly rate for the female workforce at Cardinia is approximately 12% greater than their male counterparts however we also know that the average FTE/hours worked for a women at Cardinia is 0.65 FTE/24.8 hrs per week whilst the average for their male counterpart is 0.86 FTE/32.8 hrs per week. Based on average hourly rates at Cardinia, this equates to a pay gap of circa \$180 per week or \$8,800 per annum favourable to men.

The Commission for Gender Equality states on its website that the ‘gender pay gap in Victoria and as at November 2019 stands at 9.6%. In the Victorian public sector it is 10%’.

At Cardinia, the large part time female workforce has resulted in a large pay gap across the organisation which has contributed significantly to this reported pay gap.

## Recommendations and opportunities

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
Undertake further investigation to identify like-for-like gender-based pay comparisons to validate gender pay gap data	Develop actions to address anomalies, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertised vs Agreed salary M/F</li> <li>• Band variance between M/F</li> </ul>	Underway	Organisational Development
	Further investigate and develop strategies to combat gendered recruitment practices and perception of worth in salary allocation.	Late-2022 onwards	Organisational Development / People & Culture

## **Business intelligence and data gaps**

The inability to obtain complete and adequate data as part of the Workplace Gender Audit exercise was a significant inhibitor to providing a full picture of the gender and diversity impacts on Cardinia’s workforce.

Data related to employee diversity (outside of gender and age) is generally only captured during surveys and not is available as part of the payroll, recruitment or HR systems.

## **Recommendations and opportunities**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Identify data reporting gaps and develop actions to obtain this data for reporting purposes ensuring appropriate privacy and data security practices are adhered to.	Undertake an intersectional data gap analysis and review the integrated approach to diversity and inclusion in data sets.	Late 2022 onwards	Organisational Development
	Work towards gathering intersectional data whilst ensuring privacy and integrity.	Mid-2022 onwards	Organisational Development
	Review and update recruitment data gathering to focus on gendered approach recruitment and retention.	Late 2022 onwards	People & Culture
	Ensure gender and intersectional data is considered in all relevant improvements to data system improvements and integration initiatives.	Late 2022 onwards	Organisational Development
	Ensure ethical data collection and use.	Now - ongoing	Organisational Development

## Unconscious bias

Unconscious bias is defined as inherent beliefs, assumptions or attitudes that exist in our subconscious. We act on these biases often without realising it in our day-to-day decision making and the impacts of these biases on our decision making can be profound for many in our workplace and the community.

At Cardinia we know that we have a very high level of gender equality awareness however the recent Workplace Gender Audit revealed that many of workforce continue to work in gender stereotypical roles. There are potentially a number of reasons for this being the case.

In some instances there are simply no applicants from a particular gender for certain roles and this can be traced back to the fact that there are a paucity of certain genders in university or TAFE courses and other feeder sectors that link into local government roles.

What we do not know is this impact of unconscious bias on decision making across Cardinia's workforce. This is not simply a gender-based issue, it also impacts our workforce from various cultural backgrounds and age groups.

There is anecdotal evidence of the potential for unconscious bias at Cardinia when it comes to gender bias and stereotypes. As examples, traditional female areas such as communications, human resources and administrative support are overwhelmingly the domain of women. On the other hand, truck drivers, other manual and trade-based work, IT and engineering type roles are still dominated by men.

Whilst this may be a consequence of many factors, such as a lack of applicants from a particular gender, it may also mean that unconscious bias is at play and that women may not have equal access to the same career opportunities as men.

This also means that men who may wish to enter traditionally female dominated roles or work part time and take a greater role in the family life often feel they are unable to do so.

Research has shown a lot of unconscious bias training is ineffective. Raising awareness of unconscious bias and improving structures and systems related to hiring and promotions is more likely to result in changing behaviours.

**Recommendations and opportunities**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
Develop strategies to combat and raise awareness of unconscious bias in all aspects of the workplace.	Continue with current strategy and plan gender events well in advance.  Engage our workforce and community at the earliest possible opportunity in the planning and promotion of these events	Late-2022	Learning & Organisational Development
	Survey staff specifically to get an understanding of employee perception of what unconscious bias is in their minds and where they see this occurring in the workplace. Conduct a follow up survey in late 2022 and compare results with Mar-May. Use this data to develop and evolve strategies to combat unconscious bias in the workplace.	Now - Ongoing	Learning & Organisational Development
	Curate “Lunch and Learn – storytelling sessions” with a focus on gender equality experiences	Now - Ongoing	Learning & Organisational Development
	Ensure engagement with schools to showcasing women in leadership in local government and our gender equality work	Late 2022 onwards	To be advised
	Tailor the gender impact assessment process to meet with needs of the workforce when development internally focussed strategies, policies and processes with an aim of mitigating unconscious bias.	Mid-2022 inwards	Organisational Development

**Recommendations and opportunities (cont.)**

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
	Utilise the existing traineeship program to encourage gender equality in non-traditional work groups.	2023 onwards	People & Culture / All leaders
Develop strategies to encourage more men to work flexibly and take leave to care for children, others and themselves	Develop and promote intranet pages covering parental leave availability – So you’re going to be a parent, what support is available, examples of leave types and case studies of staff members.	Late 2022 onwards	Health & Wellbeing
	Include understanding and managing unconscious bias in management training	Late 2022 onwards	Organisational Development
	Peer support network as part of health and wellbeing program	Late 2022 onwards	Health & Wellbeing

## Next steps

The submission of the Gender Equality Plan for Cardinia is just the beginning of a process of assessing our systems and structures and where needed, changing them to become an organisation that is more inclusive and diverse.

Ensuring we have diverse voices at the table in all decision-making forums and during consultation process will be critical to the successful implementation of this Action Plan.

Ongoing engagement and consultation via the Future of Work organisational cultural change program will improve understanding of the cultural impacts of gender equality.

It will also help us to improve our awareness and attitudes towards intersectionality, and LGBTQI+ colleagues.

Cardinia aspires to a having a reputation for cultural safety, where all are welcome thus creating a truly great place to work

<b>December 2021</b>	Submitted first Workplace Gender Audit Data to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.
<b>31 March 2022</b>	Submit Gender Equality Action Plan to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.
<b>April 2022</b>	Promote submitted Gender Equality Action Plan to the workforce. Commence implantation of Gender Equality Action Plan.
<b>2022-2025</b>	October 2023: Submit progress report June 2025: Capture data for workplace gender audit.
<b>2025 - 2027</b>	October 2025: Submit a second Gender Equality Action Plan and Progress report. October 2027: Submit third progress report.

## Appendix 1

### Indicator 1 - Gender composition of the workforce

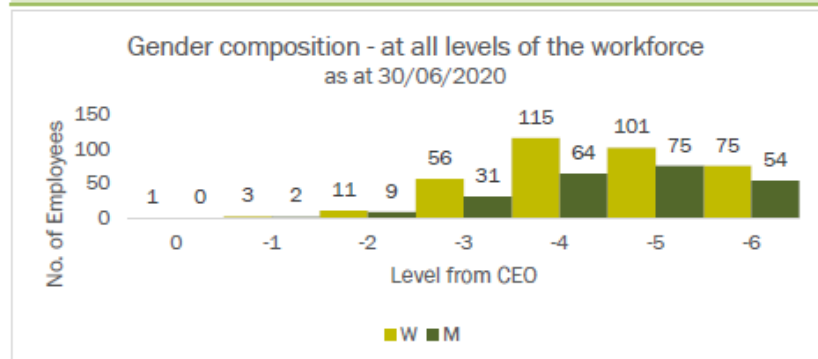
#### Workforce Data

##### Overall gender composition of the workforce

- 1 362 women or 61% of the total workforce
- 2 235 men or 39% of the total workforce

##### Overall gender composition of the workforce, by employment basis

	Women		Men	
	Headcount	Percentage	Headcount	Percentage
Full-time Ongoing	110	42%	154	58%
Full-time Limited	36	47%	40	53%
<b>Tenure</b>				
Part-time Ongoing	142	86%	23	14%
Part-time Limited	27	87%	4	13%
<b>Tenure</b>				
Casual	47	77%	14	3%



#### Employee Experience Data

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

*There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees of different sexes/ genders*

Men:	70%
Women:	88%
Other:	47%

There is a positive culture within my organisation in relation to employees:	Man	Other	Woman
from varied cultural backgrounds	70%	47%	88%
of different age groups	75%	26%	75%
of different sexes/genders	73%	42%	81%
who are Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander	52%	37%	67%
who identify as LGBTIQ+	60%	47%	81%
with disability	63%	42%	67%

## Indicator 2 – Gender composition of governing body

Gender composition of the governing body - 9 councillors at Cardinia Shire Council 5 are men and 4 are women or 56% to 44% gender representation amongst Cardinia councillors.

## Indicator 3 – Pay equity

Overall organisational gender pay gaps

		Variance			
		Women	Men	\$	%
<b>Median</b>	Annualised	\$62,269	\$70,298	\$8,029	11.4%
	Total Remuneration	\$68,496	\$77,328	\$8,832	11.4%
<b>Mean</b>	Annualised	\$56,958	\$74,772	\$17,814	23.8%
	Total Remuneration	\$62,653	\$82,249	\$19,596	23.8%

## Indicator 4 - Sexual harassment

- Number of formal sexual harassment complaints made: 0
- Percentage of survey respondents in the organisation who experienced sexual harassment, by gender:
 

Men:	3%
Other:	11%
Women:	11%

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

	Men	Other	Women
My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours	76%	47%	86%
My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination	57%	37%	67%
I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work	67%	32%	64%

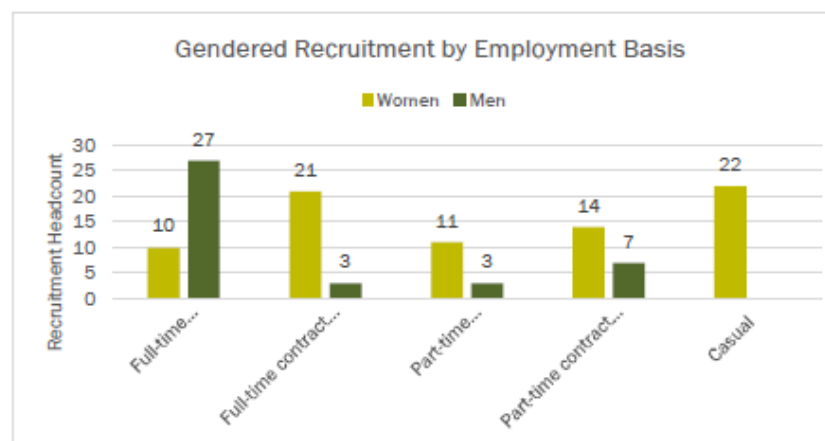


## Indicator 5 – Recruitment and promotion

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

	Man	Other	Woman
Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation	67%	42%	66%
Being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in my organisation	62%	42%	69%
Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation	76%	53%	83%
Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation	65%	53%	63%
Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation	71%	47%	80%
Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation	70%	42%	77%
My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit	51%	16%	54%
I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation	48%	11%	54%

Internal Secondments	Women	Men
<b>Total Secondments</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>85</b>
Level from CEO		
-1	6	2
-2	2	17
-3	51	22
-4	157	31
-5	112	11
-6	3	2



## Indicator 6 – Leave and flexibility

- |   |                   |  |
|---|-------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of the workforce using formal flexible working arrangements</li> </ul>            | Data not recorded | Gender composition of people in the organisation who have taken parental leave |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of the workforce using formal flexible working arrangements, by gender</li> </ul> | Data not recorded |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people who exited the organisation during parental leave, by gender</li> </ul>     | 0                 |  |



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

	Man	Other	Woman
My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave	81%	89%	93%
I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration	75%	47%	80%
My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender	83%	47%	83%
Having caring responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation	70%	21%	59%
Having family responsibilities is not a barrier to success in my organisation	70%	26%	64%
I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and non-work activities and responsibilities	79%	63%	80%
Using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success in my organisation	70%	16%	58%

## Indicator 7 – Gendered segregation

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

	Men	Other	Women
My organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language	79%	42%	72%
In my workgroup work is allocated fairly, regardless of gender	76%	37%	86%

Gender composition of ANZSCO code major groups in the organisation:

Major Group	Sub-Major Group	Women	Men
1	Managers	27	31
2	Professionals	138	54
3	Technicians & Trade Workers	4	19
4	Community & Personal Service Workers	22	6
5	Clerical & Administrative Workers	79	23
6	Sales Workers	0	0
7	Machinery Operators	1	23
8	Labourers	91	79



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