

Gender equity in local government

Research Companion

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for Local Government Victoria



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

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for Local Government Victoria, August 2017

Published July 2018



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Definitions

Adapted from Women’s Health in the North, Gender Analysis overview.¹

‘Gender equity’ refers to the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men.

‘Gender equality’ is the outcome reached through gender equity. It is the equal participation and the equal valuing of women, men, girls and boys in all aspects of public and private life.

Abbreviations

ALGWA	Australian Local Government Women’s Association
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, and Intersex
LGPro	Local Government Professionals
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
PVAW	Prevention of Violence Against Women
VLGA	Victorian Local Governance Association



Chapter 1: The case for change

Overview

In this chapter, we outline the case for change in improving gender equity across the Victorian local government sector.

Background

Victoria's first Gender Equality Strategy, *Safe and Strong*, makes the clear case for a safe and equal society.² The Strategy demonstrates that we need to take firm action to address the barriers that act as disincentives to the full participation of women in our economy and community.

The Victorian Gender Equality Strategy lists five areas that build the case for change, reform and action in gender equality. This is because:

- gender equality prevents violence against women and girls
- gender equality provides economic benefit through a boost to GDP
- the costs of gender inequality are high for individuals, communities and businesses
- gender equality is a human right
- gender equality delivers social benefits for all community members.

The importance of gender equity to Local Government

The case for change is strong across Victoria's local government sector. Seventy-nine municipal councils make a significant contribution to the Victorian economy, employing over 45,000 people, spending more than \$8 billion on service delivery and \$2 billion on infrastructure annually and managing over \$90 billion in public assets.³

Councils range in size from small rural councils such as the Borough of Queenscliffe with a population of 3,069 people, to the rapidly growing Wyndham City council on the suburban fringe of Melbourne, which serves more than 220,468 residents.

Local government as a workforce and agent of the community, is obligated to present equal opportunities for all and so local government is well positioned to lead on gender equity, inclusion and diversity. Achieving gender equity is important for workplaces – its fair, it's just, it's good for everyone's wellbeing and the economic performance of Australia.

With seventy-nine council workplaces that are often the largest employer in their town or region, local government can provide opportunities to women of all backgrounds and abilities. With forty-seven of the seventy-nine Victorian local governments located in rural and remote areas, local government often presents the only professional career path or employment opportunities available to women living in more isolated areas.⁴

All councils have a common need for collaboration between the elected representatives (councillors) and administration (council staff) to provide a variety of services to their communities and enforce various state and local laws across their municipalities. Services provided to diverse communities include planning, building, roads and parking management, health and community services, waste management, animal management, sport, recreation and culture, local laws, and emergency management.

The pace of change towards gender equality has been slow in Victorian local government. While women are gaining in terms of political representation, male councillors (62%) still outnumber female councillors (38%). Local Government Victoria (LGV) reports that in 2017, even though the local government workforce is just over 60% female, only 34% of women occupy director roles and 39% of women occupy manager roles. At the most senior level of council staff, in August 2017 women still only make up 16.5% of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) across councils.

To increase the level of female CEOs employed across the sector, councillors also need to be mindful of the cultural and behavioural reputation of their council, to ensure they become an employer of choice with access to the best available talent. Best practice in recruitment of CEOs by councillors, is discussed further in this document.

Reflecting a diverse community

Local government is the level of government closest to the people. Therefore, local councils are uniquely placed to reflect community diversity in the profile of elected representatives and the backgrounds of council officers. Together, councils can model and drive positive policy, programs and workplace reforms that build a fairer and more inclusive community for all. Organisations that take a strategic approach to embedding gender equality

principles and practices are often able to support broader diversity objectives by becoming more inclusive of diverse people from different age groups, cultural backgrounds, disability status, gender, Indigenous backgrounds, religions, sexual orientation and gender identity.

According to the Gender Equity in Local Government Partnership:⁵

“Local government plays an important role in creating and supporting environments that enable community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. Reducing gender inequity for women is a key strategy in achieving this goal, as it allows for a more just, inclusive and fair society for both women and men”

Legislative imperative

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)* section 24 and the *Local Government Act 1989* (Sections 3c and 3d) requires councils to act as “representative, informed and responsible decision makers in the interests of their communities.” This means responding to the interests and needs of both women and men across all aspects of council activity.

Councils are also bound by legislation, such as the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which aim to eliminate discrimination and sexual harassment and promote greater equity in the community. Finally, compliance with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires councils to uphold human rights, including the rights of women, as an essential component of a democratic, equitable and inclusive society.⁶

The business case

Many Australian organisations have articulated the business case for gender equality. KPMG (*KPMG Enterprise’s 2017 ASX 300+ Report*) analysed 664 companies and found companies with females on their boards have achieved higher revenue growth, profitability and shareholder returns than those without.⁷ Gender Worx, (a division of *Insync Surveys*) summarised Australian and international studies that documented the significant return on investment for companies with improved gender diversity.⁸ They noted a European Commission study which found ‘58% of companies with diversity programs reported increased productivity and 62% identified increased attraction and retention of talent as a major advantage of a company focus on gender diversity’. Returns also included ‘branding benefits as companies that increase their gender representation are viewed as socially progressive’.

The Gender Equality Project at the Centre for Ethical Leadership (CEL) details a number of benefits to organisations. These benefits are in six main areas: Economic Growth, Organisational Financial and Market Performance, Risk Management/Corporate Governance, Corporate Social Responsibility and Culture, Leadership Team Performance and Motivation, and Better Utilization of Human Assets. *Recruit Smarter*, is a Victorian Government initiative to target unconscious bias in recruitment processes and defines this bias as occurring when ‘when unintentional assumptions are made about job applicants based on features such as their age, gender, culture, religion or other background.’ *Recruit Smarter* quotes recent research conducted by management consulting firm McKinsey & Company which found that organisations in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their national industry medians. Other research has shown that teams with a wide spread of diversity outperform more homogeneous teams.⁹

At a national level, the Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) suggests that a high level, organisational and leadership commitment to gender equality has the potential to increase business performance and competitive advantage.¹⁰ This is achieved through a combination of enhancements in nine areas including productivity, customer or client service, innovation, agility and risk management with the measure and benefits depicted in Table 1:



Table 1 Business benefits for gender equity (Adapted from WGEA)

Measure	Benefits
Customers	<p>A workforce which is as diverse as its customers can more effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and anticipate customer needs, which enables proactive tailoring of customer solutions, services, advice and information • Personalise communications and interactions, develop deeper connections, and engage more meaningfully with customers.
Market share	<p>Attracting and retaining new business in target market segments can be influenced by perceptions in relation to factors such as ethical conduct, corporate responsibility or citizenship, and commitment to equality and diversity.</p>
Talent	<p>Talent and capability is not found in one particular demographic. To ensure an organisation has access to the best available talent and is able to retain this, it will need to progressively become an employer of choice for existing and potential employees of all backgrounds.</p> <p>Rapidly changing workforce demographics (a shrinking, ageing and more female workforce) mean organisations will increasingly be challenged in the search for talent unless they are able to draw from, and retain, candidates from diverse backgrounds.</p>
Performance	<p>Research and organisational experience indicate diverse teams consistently outperform homogeneous teams and produce stronger (business) outcomes – provided an inclusive culture operates, where all ideas or contributions are valued and considered.</p> <p>Employees at all levels who are valued and included, irrespective (or because) of their individual differences, and who can ‘be themselves’ at work are typically more engaged, motivated and therefore productive.</p> <p>Co-workers who understand and respect individual differences collaborate more effectively and with less conflict.</p>
Innovation	<p>Developing innovative solutions to customer needs, creative exploitation of technology and continuous process improvement may help sustain competitive advantage.</p> <p>Diverse and inclusive teams are more innovative because they have a wider set of experiences, approaches and resources to draw upon.</p> <p>Enabling people to constructively challenge established approaches and conventional thinking provides the basis for experimentation and managed risk-taking.</p>
Agility	<p>Flexible teams are typically more adaptive and responsive to rapid changes in business conditions and priorities because they already communicate, collaborate and deliver results in ways which are far less restricted by time and location, and which exploit technology to full advantage.</p>
Risk	<p>Diverse teams that operate inclusively can manage and mitigate risk more effectively by avoiding suboptimal decision-making associated with ‘group-think’.</p>

Measure	Benefits
Community	Communities and their individual constituents are increasingly influential (and may also be customers). A workforce that represents and is connected to local communities and their values is better able to anticipate and meet their expectations; this can help foster a positive disposition towards an organisation when business outcomes have community impact.
Other stakeholders	<p>Diversity, particularly gender equality at leadership levels, is subject to increased scrutiny and strengthened legislation. The effect will include greater exposure of the gender diversity of talent pipelines to leadership levels.</p> <p>An organisation’s reputation and brand will continue to be relevant in relation to government, regulators, shareholders, investors, analysts, contractors, suppliers and partners. Progress in equality, diversity and inclusion can help an organisation position itself as a business that is well managed (including in relation to risk), and authentically ‘lives’ its culture and values.</p>

The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) lists 10 reasons why gender equity is important in local government:¹¹

- Ninety per cent of General Managers come from 50% of the talent pool.
- In industry, women on boards translate into better organisational performance – why not in local government?
- Workforce planning needs to address future skills shortages now.
- Local government should model best practice to the community.
- Gender equity in local government reflects that which is found in the community it supports and represents.
- Local Government Managers Australia has set gender equity targets for 2020 (whereby women are 40% of councillors, 35% mayors, and 30% are senior staff).
- Addressing gender equity issues reflects best practice in contemporary workplaces.
- Positive gender equity policies make your council a more competitive employer.
- Gender equity in an organisation brings a more balanced perspective and approach to problem solving.

Chapter 1: summary

The business case for addressing gender inequality through the implementation of gender equity plans in businesses and organisations is a strong, well-researched case with a clear evidence base. The main arguments for addressing gender inequality in local government are because there will be organisational improvements in:

- economic growth
- organisational financial and market performance
- risk management/corporate governance
- corporate social responsibility and culture
- leadership, team performance and motivation
- better utilization of human resources.

Chapter 2: Policy context and the role of councils in gender equity in Victoria

2.1 Gender equity

Overview

This chapter explores the background of gender inequity and its impact on people from diverse backgrounds. The current state of inequality and some positive developments will be described in more detail, along with how local government can make progress for all women.

Background

Women and men make up an equal proportion of our community; however, inequity for women remains and continues to impact women's capacity to fully and equally participate in community life. According to VicHealth rigid gender stereotypes and an unequal balance of power between men and women can result in men experiencing greater elements of control, which in turn can lead to violence against women.¹² There are long-term health, economic and social impacts not just for women, but also for their families and community as a result of an unequal society.

- The Workplace Gender Equality Agency highlights gender inequality key facts (as of August 2016) as follows:¹³
- The workforce participation rate for women is 59.3%, and for men is 70.4%.
- Australian women on average earn 16% less than men in similar positions.
- Women are disproportionately under-represented in leadership and management positions with only 23.4% of directors in the ASX 200 being women (Jan 2016).
- Women have half the superannuation savings than men in retirement and are more likely to be on the aged pension.
- Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to preventable death, disability and illness for women aged between 15-44.
- One in three women will experience violence in their lives, and one in five will experience sexual violence.
- Compared to men, women spend almost triple the number of hours per week caring for children.

- In addition, the average Australian woman has to work an extra 66 days a year to earn the same pay as the average man.¹⁴

The Human Rights Commission have also identified several positive developments occurring with recent progress such as:

- The ASX 200 listed companies' representation of women on boards has more than doubled from 2010-2014.
- 90% of Australians believe that men should be as involved in parenting as women.
- Since 2013, the inclusion of domestic violence clauses in workplace agreements is becoming more common. In 2017, more than one million Australian workers can take leave and enjoy other protections because of award conditions.¹⁵

Gender inequality has different impacts

Gender inequality can result in multiple levels of disadvantage and discrimination for different groups of people, including Aboriginal women, women from diverse backgrounds and women with disabilities. Gender inequality can further marginalise and disadvantage women from diverse backgrounds including: women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, women of diverse sexualities and women from low paid occupations and industries.

The intersection of gender inequality and disadvantage presents significant challenges on the ability of women from diverse backgrounds to fully enjoy their human rights as noted by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.¹⁶ The way inequality is connected and continuously shaped and reinforced by a range of factors is known as intersectionality.¹⁷

Gender inequality and the impacts on Australia's most vulnerable can be summarised as:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women – often lack access to education, health care, face disproportionately high rates of poverty and are subjected to higher rates of violence.¹⁸

Culturally diverse – women from diverse backgrounds are more likely to experience discrimination and racism and find it more difficult to find work due to lack of Australian work experience, networks, language difficulties, service support and having their skills or qualifications recognised.¹⁹

Rural and regional – one third of Australian women live in rural and remote areas. The cost of accessing services is five times more than those from the cities. Women are at risk of poorer health outcomes and have greater vulnerability to family violence.²⁰

Women with disabilities – nearly one in five women in Victoria has a disability. Women with disabilities are raped and abused at a rate of at least two times greater than non-disabled women. Statistics indicate that 90% of women with intellectual disabilities have been sexually abused²¹

Primary carers of young children (most often women) – are more likely to experience workplace discrimination, be made redundant, restructured, dismissed or their contract not renewed because of pregnancy, parental leave or return to work.²²

Trans and gender diverse people – are more likely to experience mental illness, abuse and social exclusion and may hide their gender identity. Violence against women identifying as lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex within relationships often goes unacknowledged by national anti-violence strategies.²³

The Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) points out that men can benefit from gender inequality²⁴ They suggest that even if not intended or wanted, men receive benefits and advantages because of gender inequality. The Diversity Council suggests this can manifest in the following examples:

- male job applicants and staff are evaluated more positively than women
- men’s views are given more credibility
- male leaders gain advantage of stereotypical associations between masculinity and leadership (‘think manager, think man’).

“It can be hard to ‘see’ that our achievements and those of others may be in part due to unearned benefits. Yet, because we are so used to these inequalities, men (and people from other privileged groups) may think that their achievements are only due to their efforts and skills – and not also to unearned advantages in an unequal system.”

–Men Make a Difference: How to Engage Men on Gender Equality (DCA)²⁵

In addition, the Victorian Government describes how traditional stereotypes can also be difficult for men when they choose career paths, caring responsibilities or activities traditionally reserved for women.²⁶ Workplace practice may be unsupportive and a barrier to men wanting to take on more parental responsibilities making it difficult for men as fathers. The discrimination and pressure to be ‘manly’ can adversely impact on men’s health and wellbeing leading to poorer mental health, increased rates of risky and violent behaviour, higher rates of suicide and men often lack the social networks that can provide support. It is important that gender equality initiatives involve women and men as active and equal partners.

“If men could do one thing to advance gender equality, it would be to make visible their caring responsibilities”

–Elizabeth Broderick AO, former Sex Discrimination Commissioner



Case Study

VLGA: Encouraging Aboriginal women to run as candidates in local council elections

The VLGA has undertaken several initiatives to reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members about opportunities to stand for election in local government and be involved as candidates for the 2012 and 2016 election campaigns. This case study focuses on activities in the lead up to the 2016 elections.

The 2016 GoWomenLG project delivered by the VLGA, included a focus to increase the number and diversity of women candidates at the 2016 elections and provided support for Aboriginal women interested in local government. Outputs included delivery of a culturally appropriate training program focussing on Aboriginal women. This involved partnering with Oxfam Australia Straight Talk Program, a community organisation with appropriate credentials and networks with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Victoria.

In 2016, the VLGA also designed and presented a two-day 'local government masterclass' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. *Your Community, Country and Council* was held with the support of Darebin City Council and built on the VLGA Think Women for Local Government 2012 program. Sixteen women participated in the masterclass. The VLGA reported that "feedback about the experience was very positive and resulted in a significant expansion of the numbers of women reached and/or supported by the Project". The project found that:

- There is understanding and interest among a slowly growing network of Indigenous women about the opportunity to stand for their councils.
- Successful initiatives must be culturally appropriate and require additional resources.
- Relationships are critical to success.
- Project participation may not have always resulted in women being elected but it did open up other leadership opportunities.

In August 2016, the VLGA partnered with YWCA Victoria and Indigenous partner organisation, the Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group, with support from East Gippsland and Wellington Shire councils, to hold a gathering of Aboriginal women in East Gippsland. The focus was on developing awareness and capacity for leadership opportunities in the region, including leadership in local government in addition to the women's leadership within their own communities.

The VLGA reports that much of the information about women's diversity as candidates or elected councillors relies on anecdotal data as no numeric data is currently collected about gender and/or CALD background. In the 2016 elections, the VLGA reports that a number of CALD women and three known Indigenous women stood as candidates.



In 2013, the VLGA crowd funded a short film, with co-contributions from 11 councils and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. The twenty-minute film - *Your Community, Country and Council: Aboriginal women run for election* - featured interviews with women who had stood, and other senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men who support their people's participation in local governments. See: <http://bit.ly/2B011RE>

Electoral trends from 2000-2016

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) has monitored data on women's participation in local government since 2000. Data from the most recent VLGA Participation of Women in Local Government Fact Sheet (2016) is collated in Table 2.²⁷

Table 2 Trends of women's participation in local government 2000-2016

Measure	Levels of Women (2000)	Levels of Women (2016)
Elected women councillors	157	243
	26.6%	38%
Women mayors	15	32
	19%	40%
Councils with more than 40% women councillors	9	32
	12%	41%
All male councils	5 (2001)	0
	6%	
Sole women councils	24	13
	30.7%	17%

On every measure, women's participation as elected members in local government has improved over the past sixteen years with progress in reaching gender parity in elected councillors in Victoria. Progress has been made to improve the gender balance of elected representatives since 2000 when only 27% of councillors were women, compared to 38% in 2017. These results are still well below the 51% of women in the population in the communities which local councils serve.

The movement towards gender equality for women and men as elected representatives is equivalent to an absolute rate of approximately one per cent increase per year. It is likely that this gain reflects the efforts of peak bodies and the State Government to address the gender imbalance, through targeted projects that have focused on addressing gender inequality. These include:

- 1996-2013: Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC) which established the Victorian Local Government

Women's Charter with MAV and VLGA that focused on gender equity, diversity and active citizenship.

- 2012: VLGA delivered the program, Think Women for Local Government, which led to an increase of women councillors from below 30% to 34% and recorded for the first time every council had at least one-woman councillor.
- 2016: VLGA GoWomenLG project was granted \$55,000 by the Victorian Government to specifically provide resources and networking opportunities for women considering standing for election in 2016.
- Initiatives by ALGWA Victorian branch such as bursaries, conferences, mentoring programs and networking activities.
- MAV 2016 Stand For Council campaigns.
- Twenty-one years of the Victorian Women's Charter (68 councils as of March 2015).

Many of these projects are further explored throughout this document. The current rate of progress for women elected to council equates to approximately a four per cent increase a term. Based on this linear growth of one per cent increase a year (in absolute terms), and analysing the previous eight years of data, it is projected that women could hold 42% of councillor positions at the 2020 local government elections, 46% at the 2024 elections and 50% of councillor positions by the 2028 elections, as shown in Figure 2.

It must be noted that this rate relies on the assumption that specific support and resources from government and peak bodies will continue to be provided and that in turn will encourage more women to run, as has occurred in the past three elections. Given that assumption, it is estimated that women could reach 50% of elected roles by 2028.

Victorian gender equality targets

As part of the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy, the Victorian Government has committed to clear targets and quotas for women's representation to ensure that "all Victorians are visible, have an equal voice and occupy decision making roles not only at work, but in communities, sport, media and the arts". The Government has set a target of 50% women councillors and mayors in local government by 2025, which is in effect for the 2024 council election cycle.²⁸ It is clear that in order to reach a 50:50/male:female councillor target three years sooner than the projected target, additional resources will need to be directed into the sector to continue to encourage and support women to run and then be successfully elected.

Isolation of women leaders is an issue

Analysis of Victorian local government data shows an increase in one-woman-only councils in recent years, which is an area that can be addressed in future to improve gender equality outcomes. Since 2007, each election cycle there has been an average of 11 councils having only one female elected. These figures have been relatively stable, but increased in 2016 to 13 councils (15%) with only one-woman councillor elected (Appendix Figure 4).

It is important to monitor this trend as it has been shown that gender-diverse boards (and councils by implication) have a positive impact on various measures of organisational performance, especially when boards include a critical mass of women above one third.

"Companies with more women board directors outperformed those with the least on three financial measures: return on equity (53 percent higher), return on sales (42 percent higher), and return on invested capital (66 percent higher). Stronger-than-average results prevailed at companies with three or more women on their corporate boards."

– Catalyst Information Centre; Why Diversity Matters.²⁹

International studies continue to show that boards need a critical mass of about 30% women to outperform all-male boards. The research translated into a 'magic number' of about three women as a tipping point, based on average board size.³⁰ Despite the increase in one-woman-only councils, in the 2016 elections, almost half of local government councils (36 councils) recorded more than 40% women councillors. (Appendix: Figure 5).

As noted in the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy, the relatively large number of one-woman-only councils is likely due to the fact that "at all levels of government, business and community, women face a range of barriers to gaining leadership positions. These include unconscious bias, poor recruitment practices, male-dominated industries and poor workplace cultures. Research also suggests that women are often held to a higher standard than men in application processes".³¹

Trends in female CEOs over time

There has been little progress on the number of women appointees to CEO roles across local government since amalgamation in the mid-1990s. In fact, the representation has never been greater than seventeen out of the seventy-nine councils. From 2007 to August 2017, the number of female CEOs of councils increased five per cent (11.4% in 2007 to 16.5 % in 2017).³² LGPro, the peak body for council employees, recognises that this figure fails to reflect the large representation of women in the wider local government workforce and the significant number of females at senior management levels in local government.³³ Suggestions for strategies to address this issue are outlined further in these guidelines.

Case Study

Yarra Ranges Council - holistic workforce approach to gender equity

Background

Yarra Ranges Council has made a significant commitment to create a workplace where opportunity is equal for women and men and this ethos penetrates across the organisation. From the CEO down, across senior leadership and middle management and officer level, staff are informed and dedicated to changing the behaviours and attitudes around gender equity.

“Yarra Ranges is committed to systemically addressing gender equity. An equitable workplace will see all our people having equal opportunity to offer their full scope of capabilities to contribute to our advancement”

–Glenn Patterson, CEO, Yarra Ranges Council

The aim is to build a workplace and culture where employees support, promote and improve gender equity with the wider goal of preventing violence against women and their children in the Yarra Ranges community.

Implementation

The following are some of the areas where Yarra Ranges Council have implemented an organisational wide commitment to gender equity:

- developed a Gender Equity Action Plan including an organisational statement of commitment
- employed a dedicated Gender Equity Officer to help drive the initiative across the organisation
- updated policies to include gender equity such as the Health and Wellbeing Plan and Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- established a Gender Equity Working Group, a Champion for Change Network, Women’s Network and Diversity Committee
- delivered a Corporate Leadership Team workshop to increase commitment to gender equity which includes reporting to the Senior Leadership Team to track progress on gender indicators
- delivered gender equity training in corporate induction, GE for leaders, GE and Bystander Workshop Train the Trainer program
- delivered an International Women’s Day Program
- human resources reviewed existing policies, procedures and practice and to build a more flexible workplace
- A *Walk in my Shoes* supports exchange of skills and experiences to diversify areas of work dominated by one sex.

Yarra Ranges Council also considered gender equity in sport and recreation, local services and community projects including:

- a sports club gender audit survey by the Recreation and Active Living Team, in partnership with Knox and Maroondah City Councils
- the Gender Equity, Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) local network maps local services and focuses on women’s leadership
- making sporting facilities more accessible to women and girls
- employing a Recreation Inclusion Officer
- training on gender equity to be included in the annual grants training workshops to support community groups to develop gender equity initiatives and attract grants for implementation.

How local government can advance gender equality

Gender equity can be improved at the elected councillor level and at an organisational level both through the leadership and activities of councillors and the CEO and an organisational cultural change. Dr Martin Parkinson, Secretary of the Australian Government's Treasury, said in a 2014 speech that there is not one obvious solution to gender diversity, "but a range of subtle cultural, attitudinal and behavioural issues that will take time and persistence to change." He went on to say, "everything we're doing is fundamentally about changing attitudes and behaviours, not about changing structures".³⁴

Many local councils are taking steps to advance gender equity by adopting strategies to increase the representation of female councillors and create equitable employment conditions and cultural change. They do so by initially assessing the extent of their activities and then comparing to best practice in the field of gender equity strategy in the sector.

For local councils considering ways of addressing gender inequality, a good start is the WGEA Gender Strategy Toolkit and considering other best practice strategies from Commonwealth, state and local governments as detailed in the Resources of these guidelines.³⁵

Across the local government sector in Victoria, there are dedicated councils and individuals working to champion gender equality within their organisation and community. Often in partnership with councillors and other community organisations, many councils are working hard to create the conditions and cultures that enable both women and men to thrive.

Chapter 2 summary

As a major employer and community agent, local government has great capacity to lead on gender equity and many local councils across Victoria are working to promote gender equity in workplace practices and community services. While the number of women being elected to councils is steadily increasing, the efforts cannot stop to increase women's participation because there are still too many one-woman only councils and a relatively low level of female CEOs across the sector.

The current state of gender inequality across Australian society and workplaces, can have a negative impact on women's ability to participate fully and equally in community life and on their long-term wellbeing:

- women are still disadvantaged in the workplace
- gender inequity can have devastating impacts on women, their families and the broader community
- some women face multiple levels of disadvantage and discrimination.



Chapter 3: Elected councillors

3.1 Training and education

Overview

This chapter outlines the range of professional development and leadership training opportunities available to Victorian councillors. There are many opportunities to extend professional development through training that can educate and support councillors to improve gender equity outcomes in a council. Examples such as corporate training in unconscious bias and other training in diversity are discussed.

Background

Across the 79 Victorian councils there are 637 Victorian councillors who have a range of educational levels and experience. The latest available councillor census conducted by MAV (2017) found that the majority of councillors are male and above 46 years of age with 56–65 years old the most common age group.³⁶ Most councillors were self-employed or worked for a private company as managers or professionals. Increasingly, since 2006 when this data was first collected, more and more councillors have completed a post-high school qualification. In 2013, just under one third of councillors had not finished high school or had only completed year 12. On the other hand, well over half of female councillors had an undergraduate or post-graduate qualification. Education levels were significantly higher in women councillors compared with men.

To date, information has not been collected on the extent of training and professional development that female councillors may have undertaken in their role and there is no requirement for a councillor to undertake any training over her four-year term. There are opportunities to improve councillors' knowledge on issues such as financial management, leadership, governance and local government topics such as planning and this training is currently delivered through a range of educational options. The information provided below highlights such opportunities currently available to the sector.

Councillor professional development 2017

Councillors can access reimbursement for specific professional and development training in accordance with Section 75 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and each council's specific reimbursement policy. Each council policy specifies how council will

reimburse councillors for necessary out of pocket expenses incurred during the conference/seminar attendance

Examples of councillor professional development opportunities include:

- The MAV offers programs to "assist councillors in their roles and provide skills and shared experiences that enhance a councillor's learning and understanding."³⁷
- MAV supports councillors to acquire qualifications in a nationally accredited course through a Graduate Diploma of Management program or the Diploma of Local Government and, in conjunction with Swinburne University.
- The Company Directors Course offered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) is endorsed by MAV and focuses on compliance, governance, financial skills and risk management. AICD also offers 'Governance essentials for local government' as a council in-house program of four half-day courses.³⁸
- The Executive Colloquium offered through Cranlana, offers groups of 20 leaders the opportunity to learn more about and discuss good governance and ethical decision-making.³⁹
- The VLGA offers the Leading The Agenda series, which "hosts eminent speakers in governance and democracy, and the broader context in which local government operates". These forums are intended to provide information and promote discussion about topical matters impacting on the local government and community sectors.⁴⁰
- In March 2017, the ALGWA's Victorian branch launched the 2017 ALGWA Vic Mentoring Program. Funded from a \$20,000 grant from the Victorian Government, ALGWA Vic provides a formal mentoring program to encourage and support women elected to their local councils for 20 matched mentors and mentees.⁴¹
- Other training opportunities include the MAV Councillor Development Weekend, the MAV Mayoral Program, and the VLGA Essentials for Mayors Weekend.
- The Institute of Community Directors Australia, through Our Community also run training in governance and other relevant training for not-for-profits, community groups and board members such as a Certificate IV in Governance.⁴²

Why is training and development in gender equity important to Local Government?

There are opportunities to provide professional development that can educate and support councillors in areas that may improve gender equity outcomes in a council. These include:

- gender Equity Lens training and Respectful Relationships workshop
- mentoring or coaching program for women councillors
- training on 'gendered ideas about leadership'
- unconscious bias in recruitment
- bystander training.

Data from Male Champions of Change indicates that senior support for gender equality is effective. Hence, mayors and councillors, as elected community leaders, have an opportunity to demonstrate visible leadership and commitment to gender equality in councils and in the community. As stated by Anna Speedie, Mayor of Wodonga, the challenge can be significant and training and development is needed to overcome them.

"It can be hard as a woman. You have to be a bit tough. I was a single mum when I first got on to council and it was a big challenge to juggle parenting a three-year-old with full-time work and council responsibilities. At the last election, I approached several women who I thought would be fantastic councillors — incredibly smart, with great careers and families, but they were reluctant. While being called names like 'girlie' isn't usually part of the landscape any more, politics can be a very robust, male-dominated environment and they didn't want to subject themselves to that. I'm not sure that men have the same barrier to overcome."

—Mayor Anna Speedie, fourth term on Wodonga City Council (From the Weekly Times, Madam Mayor: Change in the chamber, March 8, 2017⁴³)

Gender Equity Training

Currently, there appears to be limited examples of councillor-specific training on gender equity, inclusiveness and diversity; however, a 2015 MAV survey found that 71% of councils were interested to undertake gender equity training to assist progress in work to promote gender equity and prevention of violence against women.

In addition, there are potential opportunities for councillors to participate with council staff when there is organisational training focussed

on developing gender inclusive workplaces and preventing violence against women. As detailed in Chapter 4, there is also training provided for workplaces on gender equity, bystander training and unconscious bias. Examples include: Bystander Trainer or Respectful Relationships workshops or the VicHealth resources developed in conjunction with Monash City Council and Link Health and Community on Generating Equality And Respect (GEAR), which includes training on applying a gender lens in the workplace and supporting gender equity in the workplace.⁴⁴

Taking a local lead

Councillors should be encouraged to use self-assessment tools, such as the Women's Health in the North checklist, the Gender Equity Organisational Assessment.⁴⁵ This document aims to assist "managers, executive staff, human resources teams and other policy and planning staff to assess whether current workplace approaches and practices are gender sensitive and to measure subsequent change". The checklist could also be used by councillors to identify strengths and gaps in service delivery or as an advocacy tool to promote ways for a council to become gender sensitive.

Mentoring and coaching programs for female councillors

The ALGWA Victorian branch provides a mentoring program for women councillors. Leadership Victoria also offers a three-day Women and Leadership program, plus an additional service of one-on-one coaching for women leaders.⁴⁶

In addition, there are several private coaches and professional mentors providing services to the local government sector, which councillors can access. Coaching is accepted as legitimate and helpful professional support for council CEOs and senior staff in most councils and is employed by some councillors.

Unconscious bias training

Unconscious bias in recruitment can influence hiring practices, placing some applicants at a disadvantage and this is likely to be a factor in the low numbers of female CEOs in local government (see further discussion in section below). There is an opportunity for councillors to undertake training in unconscious bias as part of their responsibilities in recruiting CEOs.

Research has shown that when boards of directors are made up of mostly men who unconsciously engage in such bias, more men than women will continue to be hired and promoted.

Box 1: Common biases affecting recruitment

Affinity/Ingroup bias may lead recruiters to prioritise candidates who are similar to them or someone they know and enjoy working with

Confirmation bias is the tendency to focus on information that confirms initial impressions of a candidate

Groupthink can occur when members of a recruitment panel feel pressure to conform with the decision of other panel members and may suppress their own opinions so as not to disturb the perceived group consensus

Halo effect may lead recruiters to focus on salient pieces of information and this may influence the perception of other elements of a candidate's application

Status quo bias can occur when recruiters opt for the 'safer' choice of recruiting a candidate that is similar to previously hired candidates, than the riskier option of hiring a candidate with different characteristics and/or background

Taken from: Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Going blind to see more clearly*⁴⁷

Research undertaken by the Victorian state government and the Centre for Ethical Leadership found that women who seek leadership roles experience unconscious bias:

*"Women who aspire to leadership and other male dominated occupations carry a heavy and hidden handicap due to unconscious bias. Compared to their male peers, women are rated down irrespective of whether they behave in a stereotypically masculine or stereotypically feminine way."*⁴⁸

The Victorian Government initiative, Recruit Smarter, was developed with the Centre for Ethical Leadership (CEL) with twenty-nine partner organisations.⁴⁹ A pilot program trials different approaches to address unconscious bias in recruitment processes. The initiative describes unconscious bias as occurring when "unintentional assumptions are made about job applicants based on features such as their age, gender, culture, religion or other background". The goal of this work is to improve hiring practices and contribute to a fairer playing field for all Victorian job applicants. The results of the pilot will be analysed by CEL and form the basis for recommendations for best practice for the sectors involved and may be of interest to local government.

Google Inc. has developed a free on-line training program on addressing unconscious bias.⁵⁰ The company has also made freely available their Train the Trainer notes and the slideshow can be adapted for different workplaces (see tools).

Using inclusive language is also important for councillors in terms of supporting diverse and inclusive workplaces. The Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) has developed a Words At Work campaign for workplaces to show how inclusive language can improve workplace culture and drive productivity.⁵¹ Tools and training from this campaign are available to councillors.

How local government can advance gender equality in training and professional development

Although there is an abundance of available leadership training of all kinds in the sector, few of them examine leadership as a gendered concept.

There are three areas where councillors can take a lead such as taking the Panel Pledge, which encourages leaders to 'take a stand on the invisibility of women in forums'. Councils can also apply the Boards for Balance leadership self-assessment tool and assessing their own level of unconscious bias through a simple online tool.

In detail, these three areas include:

- The Panel Pledge. As leaders in their community, councillors are also often invited to panels, conferences and events as part of their professional development. At these events, there are opportunities for councillors to draw from the good practice case studies put forward by the Male Champions of Change, Gender Balance at Every Forum; and the Panel Pledge.⁵² This could be at events and conferences or even internal briefing sessions in council.

- Mayors, councillors and CEOs can 'lead from the top' and model gender inclusive behaviour. The Chief Executive Women and Australian Institute of Company Director (AICD) AICD Boards for Balance initiative builds on the 'Leadership Shadow model', created by the Male Champions of Change (MCC) and Chief Executive Women (CEW) in 2014.⁵³ This best practice Leadership Shadow model suggests actions and behaviours that board members (and hence councillors) could take to support progress within their council on gender equality. It also recommends questions that can be asked as self-evaluation or feedback if councillors wish to measure performance in this area. The tool could be applied to guide councillors to consider their leadership shadow across four aspects of leadership: what we say; how we act; what we prioritise; and how we measure.
- Diversity Australia offers diversity training to increase participant's cultural awareness, knowledge, and communication.⁵⁴ Diversity Australia currently provide training to several councils Australia-wide on the following topics:
 - > diversity
 - > inclusion
 - > unconscious bias
 - > Equal Employment Opportunity
 - > gender equity and sensitivity.

3.2 Gender-based recruitment; elected councillors

Overview

This section discusses the case for encouraging women candidates to stand as candidates in local government elections, as well as the support available to women councillors as elected members. Strategies to increase the number of women running as candidates in Australia and internationally, are also canvassed.

Background

The case for encouraging women to stand for local government is based on an understanding that women have a right to equal citizenship and equal representation, at all levels of government.

"Women's rights are human rights."

–Hillary Clinton, United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1995

Further, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women notes that women have traditionally been excluded from power and decision-making processes and that "equal access of men and women to power, decision-making and leadership at all levels is a necessary precondition for the proper functioning of democracy. Equal participation of men and women in political affairs makes governments more representative of the composition of society; it makes them more accountable and transparent, and ensures that the interests of women are considered in policy-making".⁵⁵

In 1920, Mary Rogers was first elected to Richmond City Council, Victoria. Since then, the number of women on local councils has slowly been climbing. The most recent Victorian council elections had (October 2016) of 78 local governments holding elections for 637 councillor positions, in which 243 of the elected councillors identified as female.

The need to encourage women candidates for local government

Local government is the sphere of government closest to the people where women make up 51% of the population. As outlined in The Case for Change, increasing the number of women in leadership roles is likely to bring many benefits to local councils and the communities they serve.

As an example, the improved ability for women to represent other women, and issues in the community that the majority of male councillors may not



identify with or see as important. (For instance, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) reports that women account for 92% of primary carers for children with a disability and 70% of primary carers for parents.⁵⁶ Also, as more women are elected, issues such as access to childcare or flexible working hours may more likely be advanced and this will benefit all parents. The HRC also reports that women spend twice as many hours each week looking after children compared to fathers, while childcare provides important support for women councillors.

In politics, legislatures with more women enjoy greater legitimacy for their decisions.⁵⁷ More women councillors enable a council to expand access to community networks which in turn assists with community consultation and helps when building support for change in constituencies, particularly when engaging on difficult change. An increased number of women councillors also benefits communities by drawing on a wider range of talents, skills, and qualifications, and strengthens overall democratic participation.

As discussed in the Women's Charter below, a fundamental principle of democracy is that women must be a voice in making decisions that affect their lives. Equal representation is a key tenant of active citizenship where political participation is acknowledged as a human right. Specific programs aimed at encouraging women to nominate as candidates have been shown as necessary to address invisible barriers or existing prejudices preventing women from stepping up to leadership roles.

More women councillors act as role models to girls, teenagers and young women regarding different models of leadership. The increased visibility of women leaders also encourages other women to consider standing for council. A critical mass of elected women (often recognised as being above 30% representation) can encourage other women to stand by providing role models and potential candidates think "if she can do it, so can I".

Election to local government can be an important avenue for women seeking to pursue parliamentary careers. In the 44th Commonwealth Parliament, 12 female senators and members previously had experience in local government.⁵⁸

Programs to encourage women to stand for local government in Victoria

The Victorian Women's Charter

The Victorian Women's Participation in Local Government (WPILG) Coalition was established in 1996 as a non-party political partnership of local government peak bodies, community and philanthropic organisations, women councillors and individual women to equal participation of women and men in local government in Victoria. The WPILG coalition, together with the VLGA and MAV launched the Victorian Women's Charter in 1997- a seminal document that motivated gender equity discussions in the local government sector over the following two decades. A key initiative of the Charter was to support women to run as candidates in local council elections. With a focus on gender equity, diversity and active citizenship, the Charter was a milestone document in encouraging councils to pledge to "work with the community to increase the numbers and participation of women in public life, so that decision-making more clearly represents and reflects the interests and demographics of communities".⁵⁹

In 2013, as the work for gender equity in local government became stronger, the Coalition handed the guardianship of the Charter to the peak bodies in Victorian local government, the MAV and the VLGA. The Office for the Prevention of Violence Against Women has recently funded VLGA to implement a Charter 21 Project state-wide. To date, the VLGA reports that 68 of Victoria's 79 local councils have endorsed the Charter, with many creating action plans to ensure that councils implement the three principles of gender equity, diversity and active citizenship.⁶⁰

VLGA initiatives

At the 2008 local government elections, the percentage of women councillors dropped for the first time since 2000 (from 30% to just under 30%). The VLGA observed that "although such a drop may appear insignificant, in fact the rate of progress on women's participation had been growing steadily but in very small increments since 1997."⁶¹ The VLGA observed that it was also the first time since 1999 that there had been no state-wide project in the lead up to an election with a focus on encouraging women's participation, showing that when programs ceased, the rate of women's participation went backwards. Consequently, the VLGA sought funding from the Victorian State Government to fund the Think Women for Local Government 2012 Project. Activities included workshops, community forums, resources, social media and media activity across

Victoria with a range of partners. The project evaluation found that well over 2000 women across Victoria participated in these activities.

Following the Think Women for Local Government program, at the 2012 elections, the percentage of women councillors increased from below 30% to 34% and no councils were managed by all-male councillor teams. As a result, it was the first time that every Victorian was represented by a local government with at least one female councillor. Prior to the 2016 elections, the VLGA was again funded by the State Government to deliver the GoWomenLG project, with support from local councils, community organisations and individuals aimed at encouraging more women to run as candidates in the council elections.⁶² This campaign aimed to increase the number and diversity of women candidates at the 2016 local government elections - in particular, support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women interested in local government and support for women of migrant and refugee communities. Project activities included workshops, forums, resources and social media and one-on-one contact by phone and email. VLGA reports that approximately 2000 women across Victoria participated in these activities.

Additional resources produced for women candidates and councillors by the VLGA are further outlined in this document under Resources for women candidates and elected councillors. This includes the fifth edition of *A Gender Agenda – a kit for women who want to run for local government or assist others to stand* which was updated and produced in hard copy and as an e-book on line.⁶³ Also, the VLGA has the online resource *Now You're a Councillor; a kit for newly elected women councillors* (3rd edition) which provides advice and support for elected women councillors.⁶⁴

MAV initiatives

In 2016, MAV ran the *Stand For Council* campaign, which planned to deliver more than seventy candidates and community information sessions as part of the campaign. Councils were also supported by printed and on-line resources by MAV, including a Citizen to Councillor booklet, Stand For Council website and Facebook group.⁶⁵

ALGWA initiatives

The Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) was created in October 1951 as a non-party political organisation aimed at supporting women's participation in local government, both as councillors and officers. It has long been a strong, national force to encourage greater participation of women in local government. In November 2001, ALGWA published the National Framework for Women in Local Government, which explored the issues effecting women's participation in local government in Australia. The framework was reviewed in 2006 and re-launched as The National Framework for Women in Local Government: The Way Forward.⁶⁶

In 2010, the Year of Women in Local Government, the ALGWA, Local Government Managers Australia and other partners collaborated to increase the number of women in local government who are elected representatives, mayors, CEOs and GMs, as well as other senior staff.⁶⁷ This was established in 2009, and revised in 2014 as per Table 3. The 50:50 Vision: Councils for gender equity program aims "to increase the participation of women in Australian local government so that Councils more accurately reflect their communities".⁶⁸ Under the 50:50 Vision program, ALGWA established a national accreditation and awards program to recognise the efforts of councils to ensure gender equity within their workplace.⁶⁹ Councils apply for accreditation at three levels starting with Bronze, then Silver and Gold, which enable councils to be recognised for their contribution to gender equity and be seen as a 'Gender Equity Employer of Choice'.

Table 3: ALGWA Vision 50:50 National goals for the participation of women in Local Government (2014):

Group	National levels of women (as of May 2014)	Ten-year goal of women (2020)
Elected Women	30.4%	40%
Women Mayors	23.7%	35%

ALGWA's aim for these awards was to:

- Encourage councils across Australia to address gender equity issues within the organisation and among their elected representatives.
- Include all councils, regardless of their size, location and progress on gender equity.
- Enable accredited councils to "make it easier for you to attract, recruit and retain workers based on their abilities, skills and knowledge in a consistently fair workplace which offers and promotes work opportunities for all."

Between 2010 and 2015, eleven Victorian councils were awarded a Bronze level accreditation, which is the entry level for the program. This level of accreditation requires councils to:

- conduct an audit of staff/representative gender ratios
- provide a council endorsed statement of commitment to address gender equity issues
- outline at least one project the organisation will undertake or has undertaken to address gender equity issues
- nominate a 50:50 Vision champion within the organisation.

How local government can advance recruitment of women to local government

Encouraging women to run as candidates; what does it take?

Over the past decade in Victoria there has been a gradual, although small, increase in the number of women elected at each election (with the exception being the 2008 election). To increase participation, campaigns to encourage women to stand for council need to be well funded and commence supporting women to stand in the years prior to an election.

Following the Think Women LG project in 2012, the VLGA made 30 recommendations to increase the spread, number and diversity of women candidates running for elections.⁷⁰ These recommendations remain relevant today and are adapted from the report and summarised in Table 4:

Targets

The Victorian Government Gender Equality Strategy has set a target for 50% women councillors and mayors by the year 2025, the year following the projected election of 2024.⁷¹ The South Australian State Government has also set a target of 50% of women candidates in state local and federal government elections, known as 'Target 29' in the South Australian Strategic Plan.⁷²

Use of quotas internationally

Quotas for women parliamentarians are an accepted form of affirmative action in many countries, designed to address the slow pace of change in the participation of women in political institutions. Over the past two decades, quotas have been increasingly used internationally, as a tool for advancing the political participation of women in government at all levels. Research undertaken by the Parliament of Australia (Dr Joy McCann) found that quotas for women provided a number or percentage of places to be occupied by women and that quotas have been implemented in over half the world's democracies.⁷³ McCann's research also provides a detailed list of the argument for and against quotas. Research shows that targets and quotas increase the number of women elected, but may be more effective when there are enforcement mechanisms in place.⁷⁴ The greatest increases in women's parliamentary representation have occurred in those countries where quotas are in use.

In 2015, the Labor Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten supported new gender equality goals to ensure women make up 50 per cent of the party's MPs by 2025.⁷⁵ In 2016, the Liberal Party's federal executive signed off on a 10-year plan to increase the number of women politicians.⁷⁶ However, the level of women parliamentarians at a Federal level remains low compared with similar democracies such as New Zealand. Following the 2016 Federal election, the total number of women in the 45th Australian Parliament rose slightly from 30% (69 women) to 32% (73 women).⁷⁷ Australia's comparative ranking for women in national parliaments declined from 15th position in 1999 to 49th in 2017.⁷⁸

The Federal parliament serves as an example of how women's participation at an elected level can decline or stagnate when there are no programs that directly encourage women to stand for election, or quotas or targets in place. It serves as a warning of what could happen at a local government level without specific programs to encourage women to run as candidates and provide support when elected.

An American example

The USA based organisation She Should Run, is dedicated to expanding the talent pool of future elected female leaders. It is a movement that aims to "create a culture that inspires women and girls to aspire towards public leadership. We believe that women of all backgrounds should have an equal shot at elected leadership and that our country will benefit from having a government with varied perspectives and experiences".⁷⁹ The main initiatives include the 'Ask a Woman to Run' program to encourage and support women to stand for election and the 'She Should Run Incubator', an online support program.

Table 4: Recommendations to increase women’s participation in local government (VLGA 2012)

Continue to run regional forums and workshops
Seek out and encourage women ‘leaders’ in the community to stand
Work with women’s service and business networks
Collaborate with Victorian Regional Community Leadership Programs
Focus on media stories of women’s experiences in local government, and build online presence
Continue the VWIRC focused workshops for culturally and linguistically diverse women
Seek support and/or funding for workshop and resources for Indigenous women leaders, and encourage Aboriginal women to stand
Discuss with VEC the possibility of collecting data on CALD and Aboriginal candidates
Promote and update resources including A Gender Agenda and Now You Are a Councillor as online resources.
Review the Think Women for Local Government website and social media resources
Scan successful initiatives to increase women’s participation from other countries.
Document and promote how successful council have become more ‘women friendly’
Review need for further explanation of the referencing system and information on how to deal with negative campaigning,
Expand information on campaign fundraising
Piloting a mentoring program for new and aspiring women councillors
Develop a local government capability framework
Recognise ‘champion’ local governments who institute best practice in programs and initiatives, which encourage more women to participate in elections.
Promote a State-wide context to increasing women’s participation
Initiate, build and activate local and state-wide partnership
Work with supportive media to run a media campaign and a media profile for women in local government

Case Study on a woman councillor in local government

VLGA documentary film *50:50 by 2025* highlights diverse women candidates and includes stories from women candidates in the 2016 election.⁸³

Provide pathways for community women to gain experience on council boards and committees

Local councils have many community committees that act in advisory roles to council. Participation on these committees provides an insight into the services provided by council, committee governance requirements and an opportunity to meet councillors and senior staff. Committee involvement is a potential pathway for women interested to stand as a candidate for local council in future elections. Council staff and councillors can become better informed on how to attract and retain women committee members through the Victorian Government resource, *Change Our Game: Guidelines for the recruitment and retention of women in leadership roles*, a toolkit for Victorian sport.⁸⁰

When positions are advertised for community members to apply for a council committee, councils can test the advertisement for the presence of masculine-coded language by using the Gender De-coder for Job Ads.⁸¹ This site claims to be “a quick way to check whether a job advert has the kind of subtle linguistic gender-coding that has this discouraging effect”.

Women are also encouraged to register with the Victorian Government Get On Board website to be considered for appointment to public sector board roles. Participation on a board is a valuable experience for potential council candidates.

A key objective of the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan 2016 is to increase Aboriginal representation in local government elections and participation in council decision making.⁸² The plan acknowledges:

Self-determination will not immediately resolve all the challenges facing Aboriginal communities, but international best practice shows that empowering Aboriginal communities to make decisions about their own futures is an essential step.

–Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan 2016 (page 11)

Action 5 of the plan states ‘Local Government Victoria will provide funding for programs that encourage Aboriginal women to nominate as candidates in 2020 local government elections’ (page 18). The Plan commits to further funding to the VLGA as a lead agency to progress this action and will provide pathways forward for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women candidates leading up to 2020 elections. Aboriginal women are also encouraged to build their skills and experience in governance through Aboriginal Victoria’s Governance and Sector Support program as a pathway for considering running for council.

3.3 Gender-based recruitment; female CEOs

Overview

This section explores opportunities to promote and increase the number of women Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) to local councils, so that local governments can continue to access the full talent pool of women and men in this role. Councillor training, recruitment approaches and strategies to recruit women into CEO role are discussed.

Background

The number of women in CEO roles in local government is disproportionately low compared to the overall number of women in the workforce and the general population. In Victorian local government, as of August 2017, there are 13 female CEOs across the seventy-nine councils. This has barely shifted from 2000 when there were 11 female CEOs in local government.

These statistics may reflect gender discrimination in the recruitment decision-making processes of CEOs because of unconscious cognitive biases of both councillors and recruitment agencies. Diversity Australia defines unconscious bias as ‘unconscious or hidden beliefs, attitudes and biases beyond our regular perceptions of ourselves and others’.⁸⁴

The problem is well-recognised across the sector and in 2016, the LGPro board developed several recommendations as part of their submission to the Victorian Government on ‘Addressing

Representation of Women at CEO Level in Local Government'; a vision for the local government workforce with improved representation of women and greater gender balance.⁸⁵

While many councils have policies requiring equal opportunity for staff in recruitment, and proactive policies and programs designed to encourage women into senior roles in their organisations, to date there has been limited guidance or training for councillors on how to address the low levels of women appointed as CEOs.

What are the issues?

The Business Council of Australia notes that unintentional gender bias and poor recruitment procedures are most likely to impede merit-based progress of women to the CEO level within the context of Australian company boards. This bias is also likely to be a factor in the continuing low levels of appointment of women CEOs by councillors, to local government in Victoria.

As part of advocacy efforts to the Victorian government, LGPro presented a paper to the Ministerial Women's Roundtable in October 2016 about increasing the number of women in CEO roles.⁸⁶ According to the LGPro paper, the issues affecting the representation of women in local government are:

- There has been little progress in the representation of women appointed to senior management roles in LG in the past 15 years.
- There is a quality pool of women candidates who do not apply for the available roles.
- The conduct of councillors is a deterrent to women applying for senior and CEO roles in the sector flexibility in workplaces assists women but the barriers are high, particularly the demands for evening work.
- The issues in rural settings exacerbate these conditions.
- Merit is not a barrier to recruiting senior women, but cultural, political and structural barriers remain despite targeted efforts.

"It is our strong belief that direct and indirect bias is a significant factor in the CEO appointment process and that unless this is addressed it is unreasonable to expect sustainable change."

*–LGPro Addressing Representation of Women at CEO Level in Local Government*⁸⁷

This statement is supported by the organisation Chief Executive Women who found that "many studies confirm that we are drawn to those who think, look and act like us. This is a problem for women working in male dominated environments where there are deeply held beliefs and norms about who is suitable for leadership'. A 'male-dominated environment' is typical of most councils in Victoria, where the MAV census has found the average elected councillor is a 56-65 years old, self-employed white male who may have finished year 12 but less likely than female councillors to have an undergraduate or post-graduate qualification.⁸⁸

In addition to the 'deeply held beliefs' about leadership that are likely to pervade council chambers, the census data on the employment status of councillors shows that many councillors may have little training in modern workplace recruitment processes. This lack of experience may be an issue, as councillors are ultimately responsible for employing the most senior employee of their council; the CEO, in a role that requires him/her to manage hundreds of staff and handle multi-million-dollar organisational budgets. This gap in knowledge and experience, can be an opportunity for training councillors in recruitment as LGPro suggests that "there would be merit in not only mandating training for those Councillors involved in CEO recruitment and performance management, but also considering establishing a panel of independent advisors to sit on selection panels for every CEO role. Their role would be as an adviser, to ensure that selection is undertaken based on merit alone. Decision making would remain in the power of the Council."

In preparing these Guidelines, several CEOs and recruitment agencies were approached for their thoughts and advice on how to address the low numbers of female CEOs in local government (see below). A key point was made that even before the recruitment commences, councillors need to be aware of the importance of their organisational culture, as elected councillors, because their group behaviour is likely to be influential on the attraction (or otherwise) of female candidates. Councillors must then be aware of strategies to implement to minimise the potential for inherent biases in the critical stages of recruitment, selection, retention and managing the CEO. This includes being open to the potential for training on recruitment and addressing unconscious bias and seeking the support and guidance of an adviser through the process.

On a positive note, LGPro also notes that the increased “Gender balance in Local Government’s elected members is likely to be a factor leading to increased willingness to consider diversity in CEO candidate pools”. Research undertaken by the Australian Local Government Women’s Association (ALGWA) shows that states with the highest percentages of female councillors also have higher percentages of female CEOs.⁸⁹

Board training programs on recruitment

The Business Council of Australia commissioned work to identify the best practices in recruitment, appointment and promotion processes that would enhance the number of women in senior executive roles. The research has resulted in a comprehensive research report titled *Increasing the Number of Women in Senior Executive Positions: Improving Recruitment, Selection and Retention Practices*. As a result of this research, a series of ten best practice checklists have been developed to guide organisations gender equity and can be a useful guide for local government.⁹⁰

The report suggests several potential actions that boards should consider supporting greater gender diversity both on their own boards and in the executive ranks of the companies they lead. These recommended actions are applicable to councils, particularly in the area of training programs as described below:

Training programs for boards and their company senior management teams address:

- the value of diversity and inclusive leadership
- the identification of unconscious and conscious biases within the board and the company
- awareness of the impact of gendered values and behaviours – including stereotyping and double-bind judgements against women for displaying stereotypic female or male traits – on a company’s performance and achievement of gender diversity goals

- the benefits to a company of understanding different leadership styles and their value, and leading in different situations and contexts
- how to identify, think through, have discussions and make decisions about talent, development, merit, performance and successions
- how to interview potential board members, chief executives and senior management roles
- how to envisage and feel comfortable with a woman as CEO, or CEO successor, when assessing female candidates for CEO or senior team roles

Best practice in recruitment for local government

In preparing these Guidelines, discussions were held with key stakeholder groups involved in the recruitment of CEOs in local government. This included; several recruitment agencies working in the local government sector; councillors who had recently employed female CEOs; male and female CEOs currently employed in the sector. The aim of these discussions was to identify best practices in recruitment, appointment and promotion processes that would enhance the number of women in CEO roles in local government. These discussions are summarised in four steps on the following page:



Box 2: Suggested approach for councillors for good practice in CEO recruitment

Advice for councillors on implementing good practice in CEO recruitment

Step 1: Plan

- In scoping out the position description, consider asking Staff (senior leadership team) what qualities they would like to see in a newly appointed CEO (Baw Baw approach 2017) and/or conducting community consultation (Darebin approach 2017)
- When developing the brief for a recruitment agency, consider agencies with a gender diversity policy, a demonstrated pro-active approach to attracting diverse candidates and a track record of placing women into CEO roles
- Involve all councillors in selecting the recruitment agency
- Consider inviting an independent, respected and confidential person to observe the recruitment process for governance purposes and someone who could also assist councillors to address any unconscious bias.
- Be aware that potential candidates will also be doing their homework on your council. Many may be searching your news history and social media to ascertain the functionality of your council and observe councillors' behaviour, collaborative approach to decision making and the council culture. You are being interviewed too.
- Consider potential for councillors to undertake pre-recruitment training in the identification of unconscious and conscious biases and in modern recruitment processes.

Step 2: Recruit

- Seek the recruiter's advice on how to craft an advertisement and job description that is inclusive and uses family friendly language that is attractive to diverse candidates (e.g. from corporates, not for profits in addition to local or state government experience)
- Request a diverse long and short list. For example, 50:50 men/women or 40:40 with 20% flux

Step 3: Interview

- Involve the recruiter in developing the draft interview questions and invite him/her to the interview process to observe as councillors ask the questions (as well as the independent, expert adviser)
- Listen to expert advice of recruiter on addressing your own unconscious bias in interview process. He/she will guide you on what is and what isn't appropriate to ask.

Step 4: Place and support

- Once councillors have decided on the successful candidate, councillors then negotiate the employment contract, develop the KPIs and set the goals for professional development as part of the employment package.
- Consider working with your recruitment agency to seek assistance in developing the KPIs for the six and twelve-month performance review cycles. Gender Equity goals and targets can be part of a new CEOs KPIs
- For an additional fee, many recruitment agencies can also provide transition support for the new CEO and sit down with the Mayor and CEO at one, three and six months to assist with fine-tuning KPIs and addressing any issues that arise in the transition process.
- Consider the potential for coaching and mentoring professional development support for new placements for six or twelve months

Note: This guide is produced as a result of discussions with key stakeholders involved in the recruitment of local government CEOs which included; councillors who had recently employed female CEOs; male and female CEOs currently employed in the sector and recruitment staff from a range of recruitment agencies working in the local government sector which included; McArthur, Davidson, Jo Fisher Executive, SACS consulting, Transearch International

3.4 Culture and policies for women councillors

Overview

This section explores how an inclusive and flexible workplace culture in council can improve gender equity. Examples of policies to support councillors in their role are explored, such as financial reimbursement for childcare.

Background

The workplace policies for councillors are different to staff, and include specific policies for professional development, childcare reimbursement and travel allowances. Under the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), councillors are entitled to resources and facilities support, and reimbursement of expenses, related to their duties as a councillor. The level of councillor and mayoral allowance and reimbursement of expenses is set by individual councils.

Policies for councillors

Council may develop their allowance and reimbursement of expenses policies in recognition of the support councillors require to serve, engage and act in the best interests of the community. Specifically, Recognition and Support, the Victorian Government's Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources, prescribes a "minimum toolkit" for expenses, support and resources for councillors.

Case Study: Maribyrnong City Council approach to gender equity

Maribyrnong City Council is a leader in promoting gender equity and preventing violence against women in the western region of Melbourne. In 2012, council adopted a Gender Equity Strategy, which aimed to strengthen the integration of council business to enable a gender-respectful and equitable environment, and to enable diverse women's full civic participation (social, cultural, economic and political life). Maribyrnong City Council ensures programs and services to promote gender respect and equity, start with the mayor and councillors modelling respectful behaviour. In 2016, five of the seven councillors elected were women.

a) Maribyrnong takes a stand to address inappropriate contact with councillors

In 2015, in response to an increase in threatening online abuse Maribyrnong City councillor Sarah Carter took the matter to police. The Council also addressed the situation by noting on Facebook and its council website, that the council stands for gender respect and equity.⁹¹ Maribyrnong City Council added a statement on its website that reads:

Contacting Councillors

Maribyrnong City Council supports its community making contact with Councillors to discuss matters of interest or concern. However, Council takes a firm stance of no tolerance towards any abusive or defamatory communication with Councillors.

Case Study:
Maribyrnong City Council approach to gender equity (continued)

If a member of the public communicates with Councillors in an inappropriate way, Council will contact the relevant authorities

b) Maribyrnong City Council Care Councillor Support and Expenses Policy

All councils are required to establish their own expenses policy regarding the requirements of the Act. Maribyrnong City Council encourages equity in participation and access. The extract below outlines Maribyrnong City Council childcare policy, which is quite extensive and covers childcare for children 0-15 years inclusive and other forms of care needed to support immediate family members.⁹²

Figure 1 Maribyrnong City Council Councillor Support and Expenses Policy October 2013

2.1 Child Care/Family

Council will reimburse the out of pocket carer (child and family) expenses incurred by Councillors in the course of carrying out their duties (where they are the primary care giver) and when they attend:

- Ordinary and Special Council Meetings or Committees of Council
- Formal briefing sessions and planning forums
- Civic or ceremonial functions convened by the Council or the Mayor
- Meetings scheduled by the Council or the Mayor
- Meetings necessary for the Councillor to exercise a delegation given by Council
- Their Ward Meetings
- A meeting, function or other official role as a representative of the Council or Mayor
- Meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which the Councillor has been appointed Council delegate or is authorised by Council except where the body reimburses relevant child care expenses incurred by the Councillor
- Conferences, study tours/official visits (domestic and overseas), training sessions and functions in the capacity as Councillor
- Community forums, meetings with officers or other meetings and events attended in the course of their duties as a Councillor.

Council will reimburse the Councillor for carer expenses paid to:

- An accredited child care/attendant care provider; or
- A person providing care who does not:
 - > Have a familial or like relationship with the Councillor; or
 - > Reside either permanently or temporarily with the Councillor; or
 - > Have a relationship with the Councillor or his or her partner such that it would be inappropriate for Council to reimburse monies paid to the care provider.

Case Study: Maribyrnong City Council approach to gender equity *(continued)*

c) Maribyrnong City Council family friendly policies support councillors; the experience of Cr Mia McGregor

Cr McGregor, elected to Maribyrnong City Council in 2016, is also the sole parent and primary carer of her two young children and reports that the childcare policies of Maribyrnong City Council have been an instrumental support in her role as councillor:

"In the beginning when I was thinking for running for council I knew it was going to be very hard as there was three and a half years waiting list at the local childcare centre at the time. However, Councillor Catherine Cumming who had been Mayor and is a mother of five kids, advised me that yes, it was possible to be both a mother and a councillor as Maribyrnong Council has a policy that reimburses councillors for their child care expenses".



Cr McGregor refers to the Maribyrnong City Council councillor support and expenses policy that means Council will reimburse her out of pocket carer expenses incurred by Councillors while carrying out their duties.

"As a newly elected, first time councillor, I have been able to engage suitable childcare for when I am on official council business. It meets the needs of me and my children including the flexibility to meet the potentially late hours of council meetings. I would not be able to do this job without it. At the moment, I'm usually out for four nights of the seven, for an average of four hours and it can be anything between sixteen to twenty-four hours a week".

Cr McGregor also acknowledges the role of others in council who go out of their way to accommodate her needs and support her in her multiple roles.

"In addition to the child care reimbursement, my CEO is also incredibly keen to support councillors in whatever needs they have to do the job such as re-scheduling meetings to be held at more accommodating times. Our Mayor, Cr Catherine Cumming is also great at modelling work-life balance which is invaluable. I wouldn't have run if I didn't have her as a role model of how to juggle it all as a mother and a councillor."

For male and female councillors who juggle the demands of caring for children, reimbursing childcare expenses provides valuable support for parents who are councillors.

"The benefit of being able to do this job as a sole parent has been life changing for me. There are very few jobs that allow me to be so flexible around my children. I am so grateful that the council has got the structures and policies in place to enable me to do this".

(Photo supplied by Cr McGregor)

Local Government Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity Program

The Local Government Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity Program for Victorian councils is based on the successful Male Champions of Change Program and has been developed by the Victorian Government.⁹³

The Program objectives are to:

- develop a deeper level of insight into the barriers to gender equity that need to be tackled within councils
- inform the development or enhancement of gender equity actions
- share learning and insights, and identify opportunities for sector wide actions where combining efforts will lead to a greater impact.

The program requires council CEOs to “demonstrate a strong commitment and personal engagement so that they develop a deep understanding of the personal experiences of staff and the impacts of gender inequality on both women and men in their organisations”. There are currently 31 councils taking part in the Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity Program. Upon completion, further strategies will be developed to extend the Program reach, possibly to elected councillors.

Why are culture and policies for women councillors important to Local Government?

Many Victorian councils have demonstrated strong leadership in advancing gender equity and diversity in their organisations and local communities. Often this is led by the CEO and sometimes by councillors. Mayors and councillors are responsible for creating their own culture as a team of elected officials that are required to govern in the best interests of the community. As leaders in their community, councillors can work together to create a culture that is inclusive of gender and diversity, even including desired behaviours to address inequality in their Councillor Code of Conduct. Other areas where councillors can address cultural change include opportunities for:

- The mayor as the leader, to be active in speaking about valuing females and males equally, promoting the same rights, opportunities and rewards across the organisation including women’s equal participation in decision-making and access to resources, professional development and opportunities to attend meetings or act as the mayor’s delegate.
- Councillors to make it their business to be involved in awareness-raising communication across organisation about gender inequality, sexism, discrimination, unconscious bias and promote respectful relationships.
- Councillors to undertake training to recognise and address unconscious gender bias in workplace decision-making and practice.
- Leadership training for women.
- Councillors to take the lead on developing a gender equality strategy in consultation with staff.
- The mayor and councillors to review hiring and promotion policies and practices to attract and retain quality female CEOs.
- Mayor and councillors to develop a plan to attract and encourage more women to run as candidates in future election campaigns.



3.5 Leadership development for councillors

Overview

This section outlines the range of leadership development opportunities available to Victorian councillors in peak bodies and other service organisations.

Background

Leadership development for councillors is an important aspect of councillors' professional development. Training and education for leaders can assist new and experienced councillors to develop their understanding of community and government expectations of councillors and council. It also helps councillors to better respond to opportunities and deal with the challenges of their role. However, there is no obligation for councillors to undertake training of any kind over their four-year term.

Councillors have access to a professional development budget. MAV and VLGA run training and development programs and events for mayors and councillors. In addition, other organisations and service providers run leadership programs, colloquiums, fellowships and programs suitable for councillors' leadership development.

Leadership programs for Councillors in Victoria

Peak Bodies offer a range of professional development programs for councillors which include:

- MAV Diploma of Local Government and the Graduate Diploma of Management. MAV also offers the MAV Councillor Development Weekend and the MAV Mayoral Program.
- The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) offers the Company Directors Course and 'Governance essentials for local government' program.
- Cranlana offers the Executive Colloquium.⁹⁴
- VLGA offers the Leading The Agenda series, the Essentials for Mayors Weekend and biannual catch up for mayors.⁹⁵
- Australian Local Government Women's Association, Victoria offers a mentoring program.

Other Leadership Development opportunities available to Victorian Councillors include:

- Leadership Victoria offers the Williamson Leadership Program, Women's Leadership Program and Leadership for Not For Profits.⁹⁶

- Centre for Ethical Leadership offers the Ethical Leadership Program.
- Many rural councillors are either participants of, or alumni of Rural Community Leadership Programs.⁹⁷ In 2017, there are ten Community Leadership Programs throughout regional Victoria including:
 - > Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program
 - > Fairley Leadership (Goulburn Murray)
 - > Gippsland Community Leadership Program
 - > Leaders for Geelong
 - > Leadership Ballarat and Western Region
 - > Leadership Great South Coast
 - > Leadership Wimmera
 - > Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program
 - > Northern Mallee Leaders
 - > Rivers and Ranges Community Leadership Program
- The Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP) is rural Australia's national leadership development program delivered by the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation.⁹⁸
- McArthur Local Government Fellowship funds a current Victorian councillor to undertake international research and study of a policy area of significance to the local government sector. Since 2010, three women and three men have been awarded the Fellowship.⁹⁹
- The Churchill Fellowship supports international travel to conduct research.¹⁰⁰
- The Victorian Government offers the Joan Kirner Young and Emerging Women Leaders program.¹⁰¹
- The University of Melbourne (Ormond College) offers a training program in Diversity, Leadership Skills, Unconscious, Knowledge, Bias and Mitigating Factors.

How local government can advance leadership development

On average, MAV reports that at each election cycle, there is approximately a 50% turnover in councillors. This results in more than 300 new councillors coming into the sector every term and all have varied professional development needs. Continuous professional development over a councillor's term helps build competence in all aspects of their role. Through regular professional development, councillors can become aware of practices, projects

and initiatives across the sector that can be shared and applied in individual councils.

There is an opportunity for councillors to build their knowledge, skills and understanding of gender equity by learning from other councils and organisations that have implemented good practice in gender equality projects, strategy and initiatives. Specific professional development for councillors around gender equity will ensure councillors maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills needed to deliver a professional service to customers, community members and stakeholders.

3.6 Advocacy and promotion, women councillors

Overview

Councils have a role in advocating for and promoting women as leaders. This chapter explores the importance to communities and organisations and provides examples of ways councils can promote female leadership in local government and communities.

Background

Many councils throughout Victoria have developed strong programs to advocate gender equality and promote action to address inequality. This involves councillors, CEOs and council staff working together as change makers to advance gender equity.

Programs that support women as candidates in council elections are an important way to promote active citizenship for women. Opportunities to 'hear the voice' of elected women councillors in the media and at events, also assists in providing role models for women considering furthering their leadership ambitions as councillors.

All councillors can promote the potential for women to stand for council. If women are to hold 50% of elected councillor roles, cultural change must happen across Victoria so that women's capacity to lead is recognised and accepted.

The importance of promoting women councillors as leaders

Research has found that many people identify with representation of effective leadership as an 'old, white, male'. Often known as the "Think Manager, Think Man" theory, research by the London Business School suggests that "it occurs because the traits we typically associate with leaders – forceful, dominant, strong, competent or even heroic – are stereotypically associated with men. By contrast, there are fewer qualities stereotypically associated with women that we also associate with leadership, such as being a good communicator".¹⁰²

In Australia, this is reflected in the analysis 2017 data on CEOs and chairs at Australia's largest 200 companies by economist Conrad Liveris.¹⁰³

"To be a captain of Australian business you are 40% more likely to be named Peter or John than to be female. Straight, white, able-bodied men aged 40-69 years, which represents the majority of Australian leadership, are 8.4% of the population."

– Conrad Liveris.

The importance of this finding for local government is that a community bias towards male leadership can mean that citizens fail to see themselves as leaders (if female) or recognise women's leadership potential. Hence, the importance of promoting women mayors and councillors as leaders through strategies that seek to address the pre-existing expectations and unconscious bias people may have about 'what is a good leader'. Making women visible as leaders, leads to more women associating female councillors and mayors as community leaders.

As more women enter local government, women councillors will bear less of gender-based scrutiny of being a public figure. As women are surrounded with more visible examples of female leadership in local government, aspiring to standing for council could seem like a tangible and achievable goal. The benefit of promoting women in public office is described by the late Joan Kirner:

"To have been the first woman Premier of Victoria was not only a great opportunity but also a great chance to say to the young women of Victoria, Liberal or Labor, 'You can do it, too.'"

Case Study:**Media - Women in charge in regional Victoria: the new generation of country mayors**

Darren Gray The AGE, December 18, 2016¹⁰⁵

Anna Speedie remembers rushing into meetings as a first-term councillor still learning the ropes, young child in tow, to discuss urgent council business. Finding childcare without much notice was challenging, and her daughter became familiar with the workings of council. So much so, that when the local newspaper published photos of the council line-up, the youngster asked: "Where am I mum?" She recalls: "We had a couple of urgent meetings for commercial reasons on Christmas Eve, and I remember my daughter sitting at the table colouring in. "The first 11 years on council I worked full-time. When I first got onto council my daughter wasn't quite three, so the juggle of full-time work, 20-plus hours of council a week, and managing a family – and for a lot of that time I was a single mum – well, you find a lot of hours in the day," she says.

Fast forward more than a decade and Cr Speedie has been recently re-elected Mayor of Wodonga. Last week she was elected chair of Regional Cities Victoria, a group representing 10 of the biggest municipalities in country Victoria. The 45-year-old is now part of a significant changing of the guard in regional Victoria. More women are being elected as councillors and more are reaching the position of mayor.

Six of the 10 councils in the RCV now have a female mayor, and a seventh, Geelong – whose council was dismissed this year – has a female administrator.

The RCV councils with a female mayor are Bendigo (Margaret O'Rourke), Ballarat (Samantha McIntosh), Horsham (Pam Clarke), Latrobe (Kellie O'Callaghan), Wodonga (Anna Speedie) and Warrnambool (Kylie Gaston). Kathy Alexander is administrator in Geelong. Yet just a few years ago, the picture was very different. Cr Speedie and Wodonga CEO Patience Harrington together form the city's first female joint leadership. "I think it's fantastic," Cr Speedie says, of the ascension of women to top posts. "It's such a significant shift."

For Margaret O'Rourke, the rise to mayor was swift. Just two months ago the Bendigo businesswoman was one of a number of people standing for election. She was elected to council and mayor along with a majority of other female councillors. "It's the first time in Bendigo's history that we've got more women than men on council," she says. And she believes it is an "extremely important" shift. "It's that diversity around the table," she says. "I think women bring a different skill-set, simply because of their gender."

In the state's west, Warrnambool City Council might have just two women on its seven-member council, but one of them, former restaurateur Kylie Gaston was recently re-elected mayor. Like other mayors, she has been to many school assemblies recently. "I think it is good for girls to see some female role-models," she says. Cr Gaston is Warrnambool's 71st mayor, but only the fourth female mayor in the city's history. "What is interesting is that three [women] have been mayor in the last decade," she says.

Ballarat mayor Samantha McIntosh adds that in Ballarat "we don't have a big portrait of a female mayor, [but] there are spectacular paintings and representations of male leading figures". The city may need to get new portraits painted, or photographed, because both its CEO and mayor are women. "It seems as if there has been a change in the number of women elected across the state," Cr McIntosh says. "If young girls see women in leadership roles, they can see they also can do. It's an attitude that needs to be instilled early in life," she says.

In Horsham, businesswoman Pam Clarke is serving her second stint as mayor, while 22-year-old Alethea Sedgman is the council's youngest-ever councillor. "She's a wonderful example to young women in the community that they can be leaders," Cr Clarke says of her colleague. She says it is "really important" that women understand that they have the ability to do whatever they want, and achieve whatever they want.

Advocacy and promotion for women councillors in local government

Over the past two decades, since the inception of the Victorian Women's Charter, various programs encouraging women to stand for council elections have been instrumental in raising the awareness of women on how they can be active citizens in local government. It has been shown that specific resources directed at women make a difference when it comes to promoting the opportunities in local government. When these programs are not part of an election cycle, the numbers of women standing as candidates and the number elected, decline.

Women councillors and mayors are often role models in communities, particularly those from diverse backgrounds including multicultural (CALD), LGBTI, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, youth or rural areas. It can be a powerful inspiration for women from diverse communities to see 'someone like me' as a councillor. The VLGA have produced a number of documentaries and short films on diverse women candidates including the 2014 documentary 'Your Community, Country and Council - Aboriginal women run for election'.¹⁰⁴ In this short film, Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men leaders share stories about standing as a local government candidate.

While women councillors are still in the minority, the election of a record number of women mayors in 2016 was an opportunity to promote female active citizenship across Victoria and this was reported positively, including in the *Weekly Times*, Victoria's largest rural newspaper and in *The Age*.

Councillors reaching out to potential female candidates

Once elected, women have an opportunity to encourage other women to run for election. Many councillors have related stories where they decided to stand for election after first talking to a councillor. This is particularly important for women, who may lack the confidence to stand for council. Having the support from a current councillor who says; 'you can do it' can make the difference between whether to stand or not.

This is particularly important when reaching out to diverse women who may be underrepresented in local government. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, young women or women from CALD backgrounds. Councillors can actively invite Aboriginal women and men to get involved in their councils as citizens on committee and as potential candidates. A useful resource for local councils to work more closely with Aboriginal

communities is the Maggolee website.¹⁰⁶ Other pathways include Councils own Reconciliation Action Plans, partnerships with MAV, VLGA and LGPro and the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan 2016.

Promote women on council committees

Our Community, an organisation that supports not-for profits, has outlined key actions for board members to encourage increased female representation on boards.¹⁰⁷ Several of these tips, can be adapted for current councillors wanting to encourage community members to consider standing for council.

The advice recommends:

Spread the word – use your networks

- Put your networks into action to promote the benefits to other women.
- Talk to any woman you think may be interested in what you're doing and why you're doing it. Tell them about the benefits.
- Tell women about the support that's available to get elected and to undertake the role.
- Point out the talents that women have and how these can be used to strengthen the community.
- Ask women if they would like further information and refer them to resources.

Offer your services as a mentor

Offer support, advice and encouragement – and there is no better person to fulfil this role than someone who has been through the process, knows the ups and downs and, more importantly, has some idea how to overcome any obstacles that might arise.

Promoting women's visibility as leaders in the local government sector

There are opportunities to lift women's visibility as subject matter experts, leaders and spokespersons through annual women mayors' gatherings, conference panels and boards.

Since 2010, the VLGA and ALGWA have hosted an annual women mayor's event where women mayors can come together and celebrate their achievements, swap stories and build strategic partnerships. The 2017 event was held at Parliament House in Melbourne and hosted by Danielle Green MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria, Tourism and Major Events with an address by the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal Affairs, The Hon Natalie Hutchins.¹⁰⁸

Both MAV and VLGA have reported that they have worked to increase gender balance in speakers and presenters for training they provide to the sector. This includes annual conferences such as the MAV Councillor Development Weekend and the VLGA Mayors Weekend.

Victorian Women's Trust launched *Here She Is*, in 2013 as an on-line directory of successful women with a range of backgrounds, disciplines, and professional expertise including women in local government. This directory lists women councillors and mayors who are interested to appear as keynote speakers and presenters at major conferences, events or in the media.

In 2017 both peak bodies in local government had female presidents, which were Councillor Mary Laliou MAV President and Councillor Marg Attley, VLGA President. Both women are often called on to comment on local government issues to the media and are strong role models throughout the sector of female leadership. In addition, Councillor Coral Ross is national president of the Australian Local Government Women's Association.

Many women councillors also maintain active social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram depicting images and snapshots of life as women councillors. This is an effective way to reach the approximately 80% of Australians who use social media every day.¹⁰⁹

3.7 Resources for elected councillors and female candidates

Overview

This section outlines the resources available for women who seek to run as council candidates as and the support available once elected.

Background

The data on candidates for Victorian elections over the past decade indicates that when women run for local council they are more likely than their male counterparts to be elected. However, the main reason why women are underrepresented as councillors is due to women's lower rate of nomination. This is referred to in research as the 'ambition gap'. Women also are also less likely to run without being invited and encouraged to think about standing.

Research shows that women are more likely to rate themselves as unqualified to hold public office, even while considering a man of the same experience to be qualified.

—Professor Helen Sullivan, Director, Melbourne School of Government¹¹⁰

In Victoria, over the past two decades several programs and resources have supported female candidates and councillors. From 1996, with the establishment of the Victorian Women's Participation in Local Government (WPILG) Coalition and together with the VLGA and MAV there was a move to specifically encourage women to run as candidates in the Victorian local government elections.

Current programs to support candidates and elected councillors

VLGA programs

In 2012, the VLGA was funded by the Victorian State Government to deliver the Think Women for Local Government project. Activities included workshops, community forums, resources, social media and media activity across Victoria with a range of partners and over 2000 women participated in these activities.¹¹¹ Subsequently, the percentage of women councillors increased from below 30% to 34%, and no councils were managed by all male councillor teams.

In 2014, VLGA produced a twenty-minute YouTube documentary called *Your Community, Country and Council - Aboriginal women run for election*. The film featured Senator Nova Peris OAM who shared stories and advice from women of Victoria's Aboriginal communities, and discussed the why, how and when of standing as a local government candidate.¹¹²

In 2016, the VLGA was funded by the State Government to run the GoWomenLG project to encourage women candidates in the October 2016 council elections. Over the year leading up to the elections, the project ran approximately forty events with various local councils across nine regions and additional events with community groups and partners with over 2100 participants.¹¹³

Additional resources produced for women by the VLGA include *A Gender Agenda*, a kit for women who want to stand for local government and those who want to assist others to stand and *Now You're a Councillor*; a kit for newly elected women councillors (3rd Edition).

At the 2016 local government elections, twelve councillors identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) were elected to councils across Victoria.¹¹⁴

MAV programs

In 2016, MAV ran the Stand For Council campaign which, although not directed specifically at women, provided resources to councils across the state to encourage people to consider running for council.

MAV resources included the Citizen to Councillor booklet, which stated in the introduction that “Women are particularly encouraged, as they are highly qualified to take up civic life, with their community, caring and work experiences. There will be many other candidates with diverse backgrounds who also have much to contribute”.¹¹⁵ Other resources included a Stand For Council website and related Facebook group with campaign tips, video and other information.

Mentoring programs

Mentoring programs can be useful for candidates and councillors to provide support and guidance in setting and delivering goals in a formal and sometimes combative political environment. In 2016, ALGWA Victoria ran a mentoring program which matched ten newly elected councillors with more experienced women councillors and former councillors. In addition, Women on Boards have offered a mentoring program (My Mentor) since 2010. This program could be tailored to suit women councillors seeking a professional mentoring program and claims to

“adhere to the principle that there is no one-size-fits all approach in mentoring, with each partnership carefully matched and the approach tailored to the specific needs of each mentee”.

Evidence since the early 2000’s shows that when the State Government and peak bodies in Victoria, collaborate to support state-wide programs to encourage women candidates, gradual progress in the number of women elected occurs steadily. In the 2008 elections, no such program existed and the numbers of women candidates and elected women went backwards. Since then, gains were made in 2012 elections when 33% of candidates were women and 34% of elected councillors were women. In 2016, when women candidates increased to 34% we saw elected women increase to 38% of councillors.

There is an untapped pool of women who may not think about running and this potentially offers opportunity to expand the reach and spread of women standing in the next elections. Growing partnerships with organisations where women are active seems a promising goal. For example, the Gippsland Women’s Health promoted and lead regional activities with the GoWomenLG 2016 Project, which encouraged women to consider candidacy and resulted in a record number of women candidates across the region.

Case Study: Women inspiring candidates - Ballarat mayor Samantha McIntosh

Before becoming mayor, the Stawell-raised businesswoman was the marketing manager for a pathology organisation with offices spread across several states. “I don’t think there would be many women who would step into leadership roles feeling wholly confident, but it’s the words of wisdom, the advice and support from others that gives you the confidence to succeed,” she says. “My Dad died when I was little so I grew up in a family very much led by females, with a mum who worked, who led a business. “When you grow up in that environment, you know there’s no limit on what you can achieve. But still, when you step into this space and are surrounded by so many men, it’s a bit daunting.” Samantha says while the changes she has seen have been positive, there is still a long way to go. “The Ballarat council might be a great example of women putting their hand up, but when I attend a Central Highlands mayors’ meeting, I’m the only woman there,” she says.

“Fifty-one per cent of our community is female and it’s so important their voice is represented in local government, and that happens most naturally — and effectively — with a gender-balanced council. “Of course, there should be merit-based selection, but as a community we need to ensure women are in a position to discover and use their potential and we in leadership roles need to be available and to inspire the younger generation so they know what can be achieved.

“As much as there has been change, and it has been great change, we need to keep the foot on the pedal.” From the Weekly Times Madam mayor; Change in the chamber; March 8, 2017 ¹¹⁶

Chapter 3 summary: elected councillors

A range of programs from peak bodies have been successful in encouraging women to stand as candidates in local government elections, even though women appear to be more reluctant than men to put themselves forward as candidates for election. However, to reach the State Government target of 50:50 men/women by 2025, consistent effort is needed, particularly through:

- programs that support women from diverse backgrounds to nominate for council
- provision of educational and training opportunities for councillors to build leadership skills and improve understanding of gender equity issues
- mayors and councillors leading a council culture that is encouraging for women candidates and supportive of female councillors.
- development of flexible policies on work hours and carer responsibilities
- advocating for female leadership and promoting local government councillors as role models of women's leadership.

In addition, councillors must manage an ongoing, positive working relationship with, and employ, the chief executive officer of the organisation. The level of female CEOs in the sector remains low, despite an increase in women in senior management roles across local governments. The recruitment process undertaken by councillors, needs to address unconscious bias in the assessment of female candidates for the CEO role and a best practice process is outlined based on suggestions from several recruitment agencies.

Case Study: Resourcing women candidates – Ms Linda Bennett, Victorian Local Governance Association VLGA



We have realised that stories are the most inspiring thing to encourage interested women to think about the possibility of running for council. This single fact hasn't changed over the years. So, when we run events where women councillors tell their stories and the pathways they took to local government, this can be very powerful. We have taken this approach through the films with Aboriginal women telling their stories in 2014 and more recently diverse women from backgrounds such as CALD, youth or identifying as LGBTI. When women councillors talk to potential candidates they can give hints about running and allow potential candidates to see women 'who could be me' tell their story of pathway to

local government and how they got elected. This is a key theme through the resources we have created for the VLGA led projects. Linda Bennett, VLGA Women's Policy Officer 2000-2017.

Example of advertising for a joint information session between VLGA and Women's Health East, 2016, <http://whe.org.au/2016/02/09/go-women-lg-in-the-east/>

Chapter 4: Local government administration

4.1 Workplace training and education

Overview

In this chapter, we will explore the opportunities available to local government to train and educate staff to increase understanding of gender equity issues and make a difference at an individual and organisational level. This chapter covers planning, training, education and the formal and informal methods that can support learning and change.

Background

Creating gender-equitable workplaces across local government will require a planned effort to build and sustain workforce capacity. Through the provision of a whole-of-workforce approach to training, information provision, events and communication, it has been shown that the workplace can tackle some of the entrenched attitudes, stereotypes behaviours and bias. A mix of informal and formal training exposes staff to the underlying factors and outcomes of gender inequality. The Centre for Ethical Leadership (CEL) reports that at an individual level, training can change attitudes and practices, increase skills and confidence, improve gender diversity and strengthen advocacy. At an organisation level, programs can create champions and generate a multiplier effect that embeds knowledge on gender equity into the workplace. Training can also create the sustainable foundation for advocacy and policy change.¹¹⁷

The CEL research identifies tackling unconscious bias as an important strategy for organisational efforts to improve gender equity, diversity and inclusion. Beliefs about women can be based on out-dated and inaccurate stereotypes. Until this bias is addressed, women will continue to be disadvantaged.

Training as an active bystander, provides skills in safely calling out sexism and racism when observed. VicHealth found in a recent survey that one third of respondents had witnessed sexism towards a woman in the last twelve months. Most respondents wanted to say something but were hesitant. This finding is likely to be replicated across workplaces and communities. Active bystander training can provide people with the confidence to address sexism and racism when it occurs, which in turn supports improved gender equity.¹¹⁸

Local government is a workplace with a large circle of influence and leader in the prevention of violence against women. The knowledge gained in the workplace influences wider change as employees take up their family and community roles.

Good Practice in local government

Across Victoria, many local councils have initiated workplace initiatives in gender equity. Councils have worked with community groups to develop tools and resources, provide training and education programs and develop videos, campaigns and events, which can be used and replicated across the sector and beyond. (See Table 6 Summary of council gender equity initiatives on council websites, June 2017). The following are examples of good practice across the sector.

Training

The award winning, Generating Equality and Respect by City of Monash, Link Health and Community and VicHealth provides resources to guide action and key tools for local government. This guide recommends applying a gender lens in the workplace as a guide to support organisations to review structures, systems and services that may create inequity in decision making, service provision, cause or lead to discrimination or reinforce harmful stereotypes. The project partners have also produced a guide to staff training on gender equity and the prevention of violence against women guide provides templates, resources and steps through four key training areas - assessing needs, developing a plan, delivering training and evaluation¹¹⁹

Many councils have also undertaken formal training as per the following examples:

- Greater Geelong and Yarra City Councils provide gender equity and prevention of men's violence against women training. This provides an opportunity to explore and gain and understanding of gender, inequities and the frameworks and legislation that inform this work and the role of local government.
- Yarra City Council also provides a train the trainer program.
- Darebin City Council provides gender analysis training where staff are trained to use a gender analysis tool across each area of council business.
- Yarra Ranges Council offers a normalising gender conversation.

- Yarra City Council provides unconscious bias training to assist both men and women to be aware and understand their biases and look for strategies that deny unconscious bias.
- Moreland City Council ran Bystander Training – Creating awareness around workplace behaviours for improved gender equity and then provide tangible skills in how to be an active bystander when those behaviours are not being upheld can make an important contribution to engaging the workforce in gender equity.

There are also several outstanding examples of informal education and programs that focus on awareness raising around gender equality. These include:

- Past the Stereotypes videos – a series of three clips that challenge entrenched gender stereotype – Yarra Ranges Council, Maroondah City Council and Knox City Council.
- 16 Days of activism, White Ribbon, International elimination of violence against women and Take Action Go Orange – 25th Nov. – Maribyrnong City Council promotes an annual calendar of events for council and the community and at least twenty-nine Victorian councils took part in activities during this period.
- International Women’s Day Celebration – no less than 16 councils across Victoria took the opportunity to host events and programs that celebrate women and raise awareness around gender in 2017.
- Horsham Rural City council working with Women’s Health Grampians on Wimmera Councils Act@Work project involving four other local governments. This involved a ‘workplace culture change program to increase knowledge about sexism, discrimination and violence against women by taking action at the organisational level and by developing skills of individuals to take action to intervene safely and effectively’.¹²⁰

Survey activities

A survey to understand attitudes in council can provide direction to support training, education and workforce development planning. As an example, the 2009 VicHealth National Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women Survey, provided an understanding of factors leading to the formation of attitudes on violence against women and a baseline on which to improve.¹²¹ This survey was applied to measure workforce pre and post attitudes as Baw Baw Shire Council in partnership with Gippsland Women’s Health Services conducted in 2013 and 2015.¹²²

Other activities

The MAV provides resources supportive of training and education to address gender inequality at the organisational level (they have also just produced a gender equity Strategy). This includes:

- gender equity employment practice training program to address training gaps in Victorian councils
- a Promising Portal with links to relevant programs across local government with links to projects by ten Victorian councils which advance gender equity. Four of these projects relate to training and education and will be replicable across councils:
 - > Port Phillip City Council developed an E Learning portal
 - > Latrobe City Council received funding for a Gender Analysis Toolkit
 - > Nillumbik Shire Council are developing a Gender Equity in HR Tool.
 - > Horsham Rural City Council Act@Work project includes Bystander training and awareness raising.

Pathways to move forward on training and education

Based on the examples discussed, the following tips may assist councils to develop a gender equity training program:

- Delegate responsibility for implementing the training and education program to a key officer.
- Don’t train for training sake. Training is an important part of workplace gender equity when its strategic and evidenced based. Remember - Assess, Plan, Deliver, Evaluate.
- Consider undertaking a workplace attitudes survey that can be based on the National Community Attitudes Survey (VicHealth) to understand needs.
- Collaborate with other councils and agencies such as women’s health agencies across Victoria that have been leading the way in the development of projects, programs, training and the development of local and regional networks to implement training.
- Consider providing training on:
 - > gender equity
 - > unconscious bias
 - > active bystander.

- Identify ways to educate and inform staff on an informal basis. For example:
 - > develop a 'roadshow' for use in team meetings, which presents the specific business case for gender equality relevant to the business unit or teams work to provide an informal and safe space for discussion.
 - > offer initiatives that create understanding on personal leadership styles to engage staff in a conversation about style and preferences encouraging senior staff to work through initiatives as a team development which can support a more inclusive environment where people are respected and valued e.g. Myers Briggs, Enneagram.
 - > CEO led sessions throughout the year can provide an opportune time to provide clear messages about gender equity and work occurring in the organisation and the expected behaviours of all staff.
- Each year providing a program of events and key messages to support informal learning and capacity building. For example:
 - > celebrating International Women's Day
 - > promoting stories in weekly newsletters
 - > place posters around the office with key messages and imagery of respect, equality, diversity.
- Implement workplace campaigns using reliable information like Make the Link Campaign.

Examples external to local government

Act@work by Women's Health Grampians (WHG) is a whole-of-organisation approach that seeks to address the underlying causes of violence against women with the aims of challenging community attitudes and practices. The program has included Active Bystanders training and has involved over 2700 people.¹²³

Respectful Relationships Education is a Victorian Government initiative to promote gender equality and equal and respectful relationships at different levels, changing the structures, norms, and practices for students, staff and families. The resource list developed for the teaching of Respectful Relationships can be used to provide training, education and awareness raising.¹²⁴

AECOM is a Workplace Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice and offers an in-house University which is an online learning centre with over 5,000 courses available to employees and includes materials that specifically address gender diversity issues, such as 'Importance of Flexibility

in the Workplace', 'Diverse Recruitment Process: Hiring & Unconscious Bias' and 'Guarding Against Interviewing Biases' courses.¹²⁵

The Centre for Ethical Leadership Gender Equality project, offers training in unconscious bias and develops and implements workplace policies and procedures on gender equity.

The International Women's Day Festival at The Queen Victoria Centre is a large-scale weeklong event that provides a series of keynote presentations, workshops and exhibitions to celebrate and raise awareness of equality and women.¹²⁶

4.2 Recruitment in local government

Overview

In this section, we explore the opportunities to promote and increase the number of women in senior roles in local government. Recruitment techniques, the role of quotas and targets and strategies to recruit women into non-traditional roles will be reviewed.

Background

The number of women in senior positions in local government is disproportionately low compared to the overall number of women in the workforce and the general population. In Australia, women represent 15% of CEOs and 27% of key management positions in non-public businesses with 25% of businesses having no women at all in key management roles.¹²⁷

Although women don't apply for senior level roles at the same rate as men, when they do apply, they have a greater chance of getting the job. Therefore, understanding and addressing the barriers that prevent women from applying is important.¹²⁸

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) describes the barriers for promoting and recruiting women to senior and executive roles. This includes 'unconscious bias', or implicit social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. The BCA suggests that the barriers for women begin when considering the content of job advertisements, then move to the unconscious biases in favour of a male gendered concept of merit based assessment that exists in workplaces, and onto the perspective and/or bias of recruiters or the brief provided to recruitment agencies. The barriers also include lack of mentoring for women and access to informal networks, gender stereotypes, differences between the performance evaluation of women and men and the inflexibility of workplaces.¹²⁹

Solutions posed by the BCA include:

- workplace transformation with the removal of barriers, policy and process changes and flexibility
- training and mentoring of women
- a workplace culture that attracts and supports women
- workplaces that they are embedded within strong, sustained and de-gendered talent identification, performance feedback, development and succession planning processes.

Chief Executive Officers play a vital role in increasing the number of women in senior positions and in the development of the talent pipeline through public declarations of intent, investing personal capital, role modelling, storytelling and setting targets. The 2016 Progress Report from the Male Champions of Change provides further examples of how 15 major Australian employer organisations have made progress towards achieving equality for women in the workplace, led by male CEOs.¹³⁰

As discussed, LGV's gender analysis revealed that, while women account for the majority of council staff (60.9%) this is not reflected in senior management roles. Of the 277 directors in local government, only 34% of women hold positions with most in community service type roles. In August 2017, with 13 female CEOs across the seventy-nine councils, councils' efforts to recruit and elevate women to senior management, executive and CEO roles is at a critical point. Recruitment, selection and retention of women in all roles being important, and the data highlights the need to increase the numbers of women in senior management, executive and CEO roles and in more diverse roles.

Various techniques have been implemented to address the unconscious bias and inequity in the number of women in senior management across Australia. These include: blind recruitment; gender based recruitment; establishing, monitoring and reporting of quotas and targets; and work to encourage and support women into non-traditional roles.

Examples external to local government

The Victorian Gender Equity Strategy, *Safe and Strong*, provides a guide to local government of the measures and targets to be established in the public sector and how this translates. *Safe and Strong* states that it will introduce:

- auditing
- flexible workplace arrangements in all roles with justification of 'if not why not'

- annual reporting of gender equality
- targets that build on the commitment for 50% women in executive roles with flexibility in all roles.¹³¹

The Business Council of Australia commissioned work to identify the best practices in recruitment, appointment and promotion processes that would enhance the number of women in senior executive roles. The research has resulted in a comprehensive research report titled *Increasing the Number of Women in Senior Executive Positions: Improving Recruitment, Selection and Retention Practices*. As a result of this research, a series of ten best practice checklists have been developed to guide organisations gender equity and can be a useful guide for local government.¹³²

Blind recruitment

'Blind' recruitment is a process that de-identifies job applications for a position, as part of a recruitment approach that aims to help promote diversity in an organisation. The practice withholds names and other identifying features from recruitment assessment panels. The aim is to address gender or other discrimination in hiring and promotion, especially when discrimination can be difficult to overcome where it arises from unconscious cognitive biases. When these biases are internalised, people undertaking recruitment may be unaware that their decision-making processes are affected. The theory is that 'blind' recruitment may address any unconscious biases.

Blind recruitment gained fame in the 1980s when American symphony orchestras attempted to overcome biases in hiring by introducing a screen during auditions to conceal the identity of the musician from the jury evaluating the performance. A study found that the use of blind auditions had a major impact on gender bias in orchestras, increasing the likelihood of female musicians being selected by 25-40%. In 2015, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) introduced blind recruiting and found this practice more than doubled the number of women senior executives.¹³³

However, the data remains inconclusive as to whether blind recruitment is a suitable process to apply in Victorian local government, as a strategy to increase women in senior roles. It is unknown if its introduction may have unintended consequences and instead lead to a decrease in affirmative employment action for women. Recently, the Australian Government conducted research into 'blind' recruitment in the Australian Public Service (APS) and found that "the existing evidence on the effects of de-identifying job applications is limited and mixed"¹³⁴

In June 2017, Commonwealth public service leaders were told to 'pause on blind recruitment trials' after a detailed study found the opposite effect: that de-identifying candidates reduced the likelihood of women being selected for the shortlist.¹³⁵

"We should hit pause and be very cautious about introducing this as a way of improving diversity, as it can have the opposite effect,"

–Professor Hiscox.¹³⁶

The results from the APS trial found that, "on the whole, public servants engage in positive discrimination towards female and minority candidates. De-identification of CVs in such a context has the effect of decreasing the number of female and minority candidates shortlisted for executive level APS positions." It is unknown if blind recruitment has an impact on councillors in terms of their recruitment of CEOs, but anecdotally, discussions with recruitment agencies suggest many councillors (particularly younger and female councillors) are positive about employing female CEOs.

In Victoria, the Victorian Government is working in partnership with more than 30 organisations (including MAV) to run the *Recruit Smarter* pilot program, which is seeking to avoid biases during the recruitment process and will assess which personal details should be de-identified during application process.¹³⁷ When completed, it is planned that the results of the pilot will inform a suite of strategies, including (but not limited to) the development of evidence-based training materials and a best practice guide for the sectors involved.¹³⁸

Gender Based Recruitment

VicHealth has commenced a research project to address unconscious bias in recruitment through the analysis of job advertisements. This work acknowledges that gendered wording in job advertising exists and sustains gender inequity. The research will provide recommendations of use for local government recruitment programs in the future.¹³⁹

There are resources, websites and apps now available to assist with 'gender de-coding' in job advertisements. The tools use a list of gendered coded words and provide immediate feedback on masculine and feminine coded words that can then be addressed e.g. Gender De-Coder, Words at Work Guide to inclusive language.

Office for Women South Australia's Guidelines for Gender Neutral Booklet is an excellent guide of evidence and resources to improve gender based recruitment (see Resources).

STEM

Encouraging women into non-traditional roles such as science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) is an important consideration for local government. Local government, along with all workplaces, faces the challenges of a knowledge-based economy and the opportunity to recruit and retain women in the more traditional roles of engineering, IT and planning. There are opportunities to assist female STEM graduates gain valuable workplace experience and then transition into senior management careers within council.

The 'Women in Engineering' program is a Chevron Australia initiative to increase the number of women in engineering roles in Western Australia. The program seeks to provide women with the skills and confidence to pursue engineering careers in the oil and gas and resources sector through providing a supportive environment where the participants gain insights into engineering from a female perspective, with access to industry mentors and successful female engineers and provides a financial reward for top students. The program increased women in engineering pathway by 50% since 2009.¹⁴⁰

Quotas and targets

There is substantial evidence that setting targets and tracking progress is essential to successful gender diversity in the workplace. Setting targets of 50% women for recruitment shortlisting and across the workforce could be considered along with measures that are integrated into performance planning and management. The Business Council of Australia asserts that monitoring and reporting is required so that the achievement of targets is a significant component of CEO and senior management team performance targets.¹⁴¹

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency encourages organisations to set realistic voluntary targets that consider their circumstances to attract and retain the best talent and improve organisational performance. The Agency has developed a target-setting tool to assist employers set voluntary targets within their organisation.

Good Practice in local government

Boards and Committees

Every year, councils develop and manage special committees of council, advisory committees and working parties. This practice presents an opportunity to achieve 50/50 representation. In addition to increasing representation of women on council committees, working for equality will provide foundation skills and development for women as a platform for networking and career advancement.

These committees may also provide budgets for professional development.

There is also an opportunity for these committees to take a gendered lens over their decision-making such as improving gender equality in municipal-wide place names, equality in Australia Day awards and gender balance on sport and recreation committees of management.

Pathways to move forward on recruitment

Based on the research and examples discussed in the Companion document, there are a number of suggested actions councils can take to improve gender balance in recruitment. These include:

- aim for a workplace that is inclusive, diverse and flexible
- revise council's recruitment policy to ensure the organisation's gender equity position is articulated and clear
- set targets and quotas of 50/50 for all stages of recruitment of staff and council committee members. Consider establishing this as key performance indicator (KPI) in organisation plans and as KPIs in the CEOs and senior staff work plans
- HR and recruitment staff are trained in addressing gender equity
- if employing recruitment agencies, review agreements to ensure best practice in gender based recruitment is adhered to
- address unconscious bias in recruitment proactively through improving workplace understanding of bias
- write position descriptions and job advertisements using language that is gender natural and inclusive. (See the Diversity Councils Words at Work guide)
- ensure council's marketing and advertising is attractive to a diverse audience. This includes website, social media and other material such as annual report is diverse and inclusive in imagery and language.
- develop data-gathering mechanisms to track gender composition of each key recruitment stage and ensure data is used to continually to inform and improve practice
- use best practice job interview process and selection such as the Australian Human Rights Commission Recruitment Guidelines¹⁴²
- establish work placements, secondments, sponsoring and mentoring programs to connect the workplace and senior staff with women including those from STEM backgrounds to support a pipeline of talent and the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce.

4.3 Organisation culture and employment policies

Overview

In this section, we explore how an organisational culture and employment policies can establish and contribute to an environment which is more welcoming and accepting of gender and diversity. We will show how consistently applied policies provide a strong foundation for gender equity and lead to a workplace culture that is positive, inclusive and accepting.

Background

The Victorian local government sector is a significant contributor to the Victorian economy, employing over 55,000 people, spending more than \$7 billion on service delivery and \$2 billion on infrastructure annually and managing over \$70 billion in public assets. A gender inclusive culture in local government may consider gender equity in procurement, budgeting, policy and planning as avenues to drive incremental change in local government. There is significant scope for the sector to place a gender lens over employment, operations and expenditure and change organisational culture to make a significant difference to women.

According to the City of Monash Generating Equality and Respect project, there are three key areas of focus for supporting gender equality in the workplace:

- build a supportive workplace culture
- build staff capacity to understand and act to support gender equity
- embed gender equity into organisational systems.¹⁴³

These are explored further, as the main principles driving cultural change.

Driving cultural change

Achieving gender equity requires more than ending discriminatory practices at a legislative level. Elizabeth Broderick, Australia's former Sex Discrimination Commissioner has said that to achieve sustainable gender equality, an organisation's culture will also need to foster inclusive attitudes, values and behaviours that support gender equity. Broderick uses the term 'gender asbestos' to describe the discriminatory attitudes, stereotypes and toxins that are hidden and embedded in the walls, cultures and mindsets of many organisations.¹⁴⁴

Achieving gender equity will require significant cultural and systemic change. Embedding a person/s in an organisation with responsibilities for gender equity is recognised as crucial to creating an enabling environment and facilitating change as well as the endorsement and support of senior management.

Structural change will be required to make progress. Elements of success include ensuring a gender equality person is employed, or a reference committee is established, which creates an enabling environment along with the endorsement and support of senior management. If a committee is established, it is an opportune time to model gender equity with a balanced and diverse representation.¹⁴⁵

Employment policies covering the major areas of workplace conduct ensure an organisation is efficient, consistent and business like. Policies can also provide for greater levels of flexibility to support parents and those experiencing family violence, and provide inclusive, diverse and gender equitable workplaces.

Flexibility in the workplace means taking a different approach to traditional ways of working and can include job redesign, hours of work, location and patterns. The National Employment Standards and the *Fair Work Act 2009* include provisions that encourage workplace flexibility and anti-discrimination legislation also imposes a legal requirement for employers to carefully consider flexible working arrangements. These provisions help employees maintain a work/life balance and can help employers improve the productivity and efficiency of their business. Workplace flexibility is a vital component and key enabler of gender equitable workplaces.¹⁴⁶

The Hays Gender Diversity Report 2017 states that 'de-gendering gender diversity by offering and accepting equally parental leave and flexible working options without career consequences for women and men could improve female representation in the workplace'.¹⁴⁷ The Hays survey of 842 Australians revealed that 81% felt parental leave and more shared child rearing responsibilities would help break down unconscious biases and improve gender diversity in the workplace.

Another area where gender differences are apparent is the persistent gap between male and female pay where, among full-time workers, women earn 84% of a man's pay on average, resulting in a full-time gender pay gap of 16% (ABS 2017). Resources are available to assist local government to ensure equal pay for equal work in like-for-like roles within their organisations.¹⁴⁸

Examples external to local government

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency has developed a series of resources to assist with strategic workforce flexibility and support for caring and supportive family responsibilities. WGEA describes workplace flexibility as becoming an imperative for organisations across Australia as they begin to recognise it as a key enabler of gender equality.¹⁴⁹ As an example, the Australian Government Gender Equality Procurement Principles provide a guide for workplaces who wish to deal with suppliers who are supportive of gender equality and who comply with the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (see Resources).

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia's 'Opening the Door for Gender Diversity' program incorporates mandatory and in-depth unconscious bias training for all senior leaders, a rigorous talent review process, and a progressive approach to building a flexible workplace for women and men that are claimed to increase employee engagement and customer satisfaction levels. The programs include: formal flexible work options and leave programs, a maternity leave register, career breaks, additional purchased leave, and childcare centres.¹⁵⁰

PepsiCo Australia New Zealand announced early in 2017 that they have increased paid parental leave to 16 weeks to demonstrate their support for working families within the company, in addition to increasing secondary carer leave from one to two weeks.¹⁵¹ This is reported as part of the company's efforts to champion workplace diversity and inclusion. Another program allows women on maternity leave to continue to access training and development and career counselling while they are on leave, so that there is not a gap in skills when they return to work and/or the ability to apply for more senior roles.

Google Inc identified that the resignation rates of women were twice that of all employees and that young mothers were the most likely to resign. As such, Google improved their maternity and paternity plan by increasing benefits, which Google reports has resulted in mothers now no more likely than any other employee to leave.¹⁵² This example highlights the importance of collecting qualitative and quantitative data to inform policy development so that changes can be made to reflect workforce needs and improve outcomes for women.

The Australian Government's Department of Human Services publicly display their commitment to workplace diversity and inclusion through encouraging applicants from all backgrounds and stating requests for modifications and adjustments to the workplace can be requested. People with disabilities have access to the RecruitAbility scheme, which aims to build the confidence and ability of candidates.¹⁵³

Reviewing the *Complementary Models for Change developed through the RMIT Promising Practice in Workplace* research projects can provide guidance to organisations in promoting gender equity and respect and the prevention of men’s violence against women and gender equity. The model is outlined in Table 5: Complementary models for change, presents key focus areas and provide examples of activities and who to target to enable whole of organisational attitude, behaviour, culture, practice, structure, policy and procedural change.

Gender equity planning, ensures a structured, strategic and systematic approach and using a planning toolkit or checklist can support better planning and better outcomes. Several tools are available to assist workplace including the Victorian Women’s Charter Checklist and Action Plan, Workplace Gender Equality Agency Gender Strategy Toolkit, Gender Equality and Respect tools or event accreditation processes like WGEA Citation, 50:50 Vision or the White Ribbon Accreditation can provide guidance and progress.

Good practice in local government

The award winning, Generating Equality and Respect project by City of Monash and Link Health, provides resources to guide action and key tools for local government to advance gender equity including the *Applying a gender lens in the workplace guide*, and *Supporting gender equity in the workplace*.

In August 2017, the City of Melbourne announced that its newly endorsed Enterprise Agreement provided increased flexible family leave for men and women. The Enterprise Agreement provided all employees access to new gender-neutral parental leave arrangements which included: 20 weeks paid leave for primary carers; 20 weeks paid leave for secondary carers who support their partner’s return to work; full superannuation during paid and unpaid leave for the first 12 months (removing unfair 12-month exclusion periods before accessing these benefits). CEO Ben Rimmer, stated “best of all, these provisions apply to all kinds of parenting! The new Enterprise Agreement embraces the fact the families come in all shapes and sizes. It’s the right thing to do because it means employees can chart a path at home that best suits their circumstances.” (See full details in Appendix 3; Case Study 1, City of Melbourne)

Table 5 Complementary models for change

Promotion Gender Equity and Respect	
Area of focus	Examples
Attitudes/Norms	<p>Awareness-raising communications across organisation about the foundations and causes of gender inequality, sexism, discrimination, unconscious gender bias and promoting respectful relationships.</p> <p>Leadership active in speaking about valuing females and males equally, promoting the same rights, opportunities and rewards across the organisation including women’s equal participation in decision-making and pay structures</p>
Behaviours/Informal cultures/Practices	<p>Managers are trained to recognise and address unconscious gender bias in workplace decision-making and practice.</p> <p>Leadership training for women to encourage and promote women in leadership positions</p>
Structures/Formal Policies/Procedures	<p>Reporting to Workplace Gender Equality Agency.</p> <p>Building a gender equality strategy in consultation with staff.</p> <p>Review of hiring and promotion policies and practices to attract and retain quality women employees.</p>

Case Study: Surf Coast Shire family violence leave clause in enterprise bargaining agreement

In 2010, with support and guidance from the Australian Services Union, the Surf Coast Shire Council inserted a family domestic violence leave clause into their enterprise bargaining agreement. The Fair work Commission recognised this clause as productive and innovative and it now covers millions of Australians across the country.¹⁵⁴ In 2017, MAV President Councillor Mary Lalios confirmed “seventy-eight councils have incorporated a family violence leave clause in their enterprise bargaining agreements, with negotiations underway for the remaining council. At least 25 councils also have a dedicated strategy in place for local actions to prevent violence against women, and a further 18 councils have created their own gender equity policy.”¹⁵⁵

Pathways to progress organisational culture and employment policies

Based on the discussion with peak bodies, council staff and research on good practice across the sector, there are several pathways councils can take to advance gender equity in administration. These are:

- Develop a Gender Equity Committee or ensure a person or committee oversees the advancement of workplace gender equity.
- Place a gender lens over all areas of council business including budgets, polices, procurement and services to understand current practice and outcomes for women and look for opportunities to transform policy and/or practice to increase investment in women.
- Implement a Procurement Policy following WGEA procurement principles.
- Incorporate gender considerations into council’s emergency management policy, planning, decision-making and service delivery by considering the MAV Emergency Management Strategy case studies.¹⁵⁶
- Develop a Gender Equity/Diversity Plan including quotas and targets. Embed action KPIs into the CEO and senior managers position descriptions and work plans.
- Review or introduce workplace policies that support gender equity, flexible-working arrangements and encourage shared caring responsibilities amongst men and women.
- Ensure a quality family violence clause is included in the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) and look at how the EBA can be expanded to ensure greater workplace equity and flexibility including parental leave and equal pay for equivalent work.
- Consider becoming an accredited workplace with the WGEA Citation or 50:50 Vision to publicly recognise your workplace efforts and promote accountability.

4.4 Leadership development

Overview

In this section, we will explore leadership development of women in council organisations in more detail, the rationale as well as the current and future opportunities for the sector.

Background

Leadership development for council officers is an important aspect of professional development, particularly in creating a ‘pipeline’ of female talent and retaining and progressing the careers of women in local government. Efforts to develop women’s leadership skills and advance women in leadership roles is important to support local councils in their efforts to achieve gender equality. Women need to see other women leading to see it can be done and to build confidence through role models. As Marie Wilson, Founder and President Emeritus of The White House Project said, “You can’t be what you can’t see”¹⁵⁷

The current underrepresentation of women CEOs and women in senior leadership roles across the sector, will require a sustained effort and consistent focus to balance gender representation at all levels in the future. An important pathway to improving women’s leadership capacity is through access to professional and leadership development opportunities.

Good Practice in local government

Peak bodies such as LGPro, MAV and the VLGA hold training and development programs and events to develop the skills of staff. Other organisations and service providers run leadership programs, colloquiums, fellowships and programs suitable for officer’s leadership development. Individual councils also provide leadership development opportunities, such as mentoring programs, sponsorship, secondments, reward and recognition programs, and conference attendance.

LGPro offers a range of leadership and professional development programs for the local government sector including programs that aim to provide gender balance and opportunities for women.¹⁵⁸ Their programs include:

- *XLP* – an annual 6-month program exclusively for 24 senior local government executives – CEOs, Directors, Senior Managers and aspiring CEOs with a 50/50 target of men and women.
- *Emerging Leaders* – an annual 12-month program for leaders and aspiring leaders.
- *Mastering Management* – an annual 6-month program for Managers to take their career to the next level.
- *Mentoring* – for mentees and mentors this program connects those seeking professional development with those willing to share their knowledge over a 9-month period. These programs are designed to provide insights into the many and varied opportunities that exist in local government.
- *Ignite* – for those with limited experience in managing and leading people to develop the necessary competencies for success this program is over 4 months and is targeted at supervisors, team leaders and coordinators.
- Other programs, workshops, networks, awards, conferences, special interest groups and events occur once or more each year around good decision making, thinking career and leadership, introduction to local government, CEO Forums, regional forums, young professionals network, aged and disability awards, planners conference.
- Women’s Professional Development Forum and Network Dinner is an annual one day and night event that addresses issues, challenges and opportunities facing women in local government.

LGPro also work to provide opportunities to lift women’s visibility as subject matter experts, leaders and spokespersons. The LGPro Board is elected by the local government members every three years and comprises of ten people. The current board has seven women and three men and the President and Vice President are women.

The MAV Prevention of Men’s Violence Against Women Network is an inclusive group of local government officers working together to lead and support communities to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. The Network promotes local government as a leader in this area, provides skill development and mentoring opportunities, encourages local government partnerships with communities, organisations and other levels of government.

Each year peak bodies and agencies offer scholarships and awards with a focus on women in local government and advancing involvement and continued contribution to the sector and community. These include:

- The Sally Issacs Award recognises a significant contribution to the community by a young woman under 35 years old each year in the form of a \$10,000 educational scholarship (not just those employed in local government). This is a prestigious award and a prominent feature of the annual LGPro annual Women’s Networking Dinner.
- The Rural Women’s Conference Scholarship allows three women working in small rural Councils to attend the LGPro Women’s Network Dinner.
- The annual LGPro Excellence Awards provides an opportunity to celebrate local government excellence in services, projects and staff and shines a light on leadership.
- The Darebin City Council has initiated a Women Leadership Program, which brings together women in leadership roles who wish to work with women to enhance their leadership skills.

Pathways to move forward on leadership development

Based on a review of programs across the sector, there are a number of actions local government could incorporate into council policies to encourage leadership development of female staff. These include:

- identify all leadership and professional development opportunities available and establish an annual program
- develop a pathway for access to the leadership and professional development opportunities such as expressions of interest or target recruitment
- establish leadership and professional development budgets and targets to ensure a number of women every year have access to high quality programs
- look at the establishment of mentoring, sponsorship and secondment opportunities to complement external programs and to build and expand the program reach
- provide regular opportunities for women to present at executive and council meetings to raise their visibility as subject matter experts and provide mentoring and support to build these skills
- identify other opportunities each year that build women’s visibility as subject matter experts leaders and spokespersons, such as involvement on committees, boards and networks, submitting papers to conferences and publications and nominating for awards.

4.5 Internal reporting on gender equity

Overview

In this section, we will explore gender reporting and the resources and tools available to support organisational advancement. We will also look at future frameworks for public sector reporting and opportunities to use existing mechanisms to benchmark and monitor organisational progress.

Background

Due to increasing recognition in the community that gender equality impacts all Australians, there is an increased expectation on business to manage, measure and report gender impacts.¹⁵⁹

“Investing in women is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.”

–Secretary-General United Nations Ban Ki-Moon, IWD, 2009

The Victorian Gender Equality Strategy describes the future introduction of gender reporting by the public sector.¹⁶⁰ This proposed reporting framework provides a consistent starting point for local government internal reporting. The five focus areas proposed to assess gender equality and report on progress are:

- gender pay gap
- uptake of flexible work
- gender equality in recruitment and promotion
- access to training and development
- a target of 50% women in executive roles.

Local government is accountable to the workforce and the broader community and so, reporting on a safe, equitable and respectful workplace and organisation is important. WGEA advises that collecting and reporting on workforce data on gender representation provides an ability to identify gender equality barriers and opportunities, provides the chance to reflect on performance and act.¹⁶¹

Reporting requirements also prompt companies to ask questions about how they can address and eradicate the gender pay gap.

“Shining a light on what men and women are paid at every level, as well as monitoring the percentage of women at every level, is proven to speed up progress. Transparent reporting of pay at every level will tackle the ‘glass pyramid’ that stifles potential and productivity in business.”

–Ann Francke, chief executive of the Chartered Management Institute¹⁶²

Examples external to local government

Local government can look to several key agencies and resources as a starting point for examples of ways to undertake internal reporting on gender equity. Once established, councils can then aim to commence more significant accreditation and reporting commitment as a leader on gender equity.

The following information provides an overview of the tools and resources available to local government:

- The Workplace Gender Strategy Toolkit provides a strategic and systematic approach to addressing gender equity in the workplace, particularly for organisations aiming to adopt best practice or become WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality.¹⁶³
- The WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality Citation is a good practice recognition program to support, recognise and promote workplace commitment to gender equality. The citation is viewed as a baseline feature of well-managed and leading organisations and organisations can assess eligibility to become part of the program.¹⁶⁴
- The Guidelines for Gender Balance Reporting and Performance have been developed to improve gender balance reporting.¹⁶⁵
- Women’s Health in the North provides resources to support a ‘whole of organisational approach’ to gender equity through the analysis, planning and assessment.¹⁶⁶
- White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation is awarded to organisations that demonstrated effective leadership, resource allocation, communication, HR policy development and training to create a safer and more respectful workplace.¹⁶⁷
- The Women’s Charter Checklist tool.
- 5050 Vision Councils for Gender Equity.

Good Practice in local government

Victorian councils continue to make progress on gender equity including planning, accreditation and reporting. In June 2017, a desktop analysis of the websites of seventy-nine council was undertaken (see Appendix). The summary of initiatives is in Table 6.

The City of Yarra Gender Equity Strategy 2016–21 refers to several different reporting measures to ensure actions are completed and to measure the impact of the strategy including: reporting annually on the plans progress, workforce data report, and measures to be undertaken, reported and highlighted to staff. In the 2015/16 Annual Report, Yarra City Council reported their progress on gender equity as the appointment of a dedicated Gender Equity Policy Advisor, endorsement of a 40% target by 2020 for women in leadership positions, development of a parental leave policy and toolkit and increased awareness of staff on family violence.¹⁶⁸

The Darebin City Council's Women's Equity Strategy outlines its commitment to monitor and measure the short and longer-term outcomes and impacts of their strategy. Monitoring will be supported through the council's annual reporting cycle across each department and through the annual report to Council and community.¹⁶⁹

Pathway to advance internal reporting on gender equity.

Based on a review of programs across the sector, there are many actions local government could incorporate into council policies to commence and maintain programs to assess, review and report on gender equity initiatives. These include:

- set organisational targets and embed the responsibilities to achieve targets across all areas of council to support collaboration on creating and inclusive workplace
- establish a reporting framework (see tools in Resources)
- be open and transparent about the organisation's progress on gender equity and communicate progress through existing communication mechanisms
- reflect on progress and discuss with key staff across the organisations and use data and information to continuously improve efforts
- consider assessing your organisations suitability for acceptance into the WGEA Employer of Choice Gender Equality Citation or ALGWA 50:50 Vision program as an acknowledgement of your council's leadership on gender equity.

Table 6: Summary of council gender equity initiatives on council websites, June 2017

Summary	Number	Per cent
Signatory to the Women's Charter	68	86%
50:50 Bronze award	11	14%
Gender Equity strategies on website	9	11%
PVAW strategies	16	20%
Participated in White Ribbon Day events	29	37%
White Ribbon Accredited workplaces	3	4%
Reported participation in International Women's day activities	16	20%
Involved in MAV gender projects	10	13%
Have a diversity plan/strategy on website	7	9%

4.6 Advocacy and promotion

Overview

In this section, we will explore how advocacy and communication can advance gender equity efforts within an organisation and the broader community. Tools, resources and good practice examples which promote gender equity are discussed.

Background

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) describes 'systems advocacy' as strategy and action through 'a long-term approach to change policy and practice at the local, national or international level that can impact on the situation for groups of individuals who share similar problems'.¹⁷⁰

The advocacy and promotion of action for gender equity is further described by UN Women as 'any action that speaks in favour of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others'. This includes activities such as lobbying, educating, training, rallying, research, events, campaigns, grant seeking, multimedia messaging, awards and organising committees or working parties.

A key factor for success in implementing gender equity initiatives throughout an organisation is when senior leadership becomes responsible for taking the time and effort to communicate with employees of all levels why gender diversity is important and what action the organisation is taking. However, it is also recognised that advocacy can come from any level of an organisation or community and can be formal or informal in nature.

"The full empowerment of women and gender equality are the 'silver bullet' to achieve development goals. To have women fully empowered and enjoying equal rights it's the right thing to do and it's the smart thing to do."

*Former NZ Prime Minister Helen Clarke*¹⁷¹

Individual local governments, as representatives of their community, have great capacity to organise advocacy campaigns on behalf of their community. Examples include the local government sector's work on issues affecting communities broadly, such as prevention of violence against women and gender equity. Many councils put forward submissions to the recent Victorian Government Gender Equality Strategy Consultation Paper, reflecting a great interest in this topic across the sector.

Local government also has a requirement to inform the community about actions they are undertaking and to create a safe, equal and inclusive workplace.

Examples external to local government

National organisations

In 2016, a total of 106 national organisations met the very high standard required to receive the WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation from diverse fields including transport, engineering, manufacturing, banking, education, insurance and law.¹⁷²

Speaking at the announcement of the awardees of the 2016 WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation, the agency's director Libby Lyons said "WGEA data shows there is progress towards gender equality in Australian workplaces, but it is too slow. It is only through more employers taking the initiative to promote gender equality in the workplace that we will see the pace of change pick up. Employers increasingly recognise that equal participation by women and men at all levels of an organisation is good for workplace culture and performance,"

An example of one of the financial organisations successful in achieving WGEA Employer of Choice is Westpac Bank who claim they are *"the first bank to publicly commit to achieving an aspirational target of 50% of our leadership roles to be held by women by 2017"*.

Westpac has a program and a dedicated website describing their achievements and initiatives in gender equity, a suite of policies, training and development and leadership action and a unit specifically dedicated to the success and development of Australian Women; the Ruby Connection.¹⁷³

Male Champions of Change

Male Champions of Change (MCC) works with influential leaders to redefine men's role on addressing gender inequality and supports influential male leaders to support women and drive progressive actions. They describe it as applying good business, change management and collective leadership to gender equality challenges. Recent action includes tackling important issues around merit-based recruitment, setting real targets, workplace flexibility, addressing pregnancy discrimination and a pledge. This program is adaptable to different contexts.¹⁷⁴

Diversity Council of Australia

When considering advocacy and promotion of gender equity initiatives, the Diversity Council of Australia asserts that men can play a major role in addressing gender inequality and advocating for change.

“While engaging men is not a ‘magic bullet’, men are part of the problem of inequality so they need to be part of the solution. We have to find more effective ways to encourage men to work in partnership with women to create the necessary change. Importantly, men need to understand they will benefit from equality as well as women.”

–DCA CEO Lisa Annese

Released in June 2017, the Diversity Council of Australia’s report on Men Make a Difference: Engaging Men on Gender Equality, outlined ten recommendations for organisations to adopt a more effective approach to engaging men to achieve gender equality at work and enlist their support in promotion and advocacy.¹⁷⁵ The ten recommendations include:

1. Get the foundation right – ensure gender equality initiatives involve women and men as active and equal partners.
2. Get the framing right – treat gender equality as a business issue, not a women’s issue.
3. Go wide – make visible and target all key gender equality areas (i.e. paid work, power and decision making, financial security, personal safety, interpersonal work relationships, caring, and community involvement).
4. Get the messaging right – to appeal to men as well as women.
5. Engage diverse men – including men in different organisational roles and levels, and with a variety of demographic backgrounds (e.g. ages, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations).
6. Educate about how to lead change effectively – by resourcing initiatives, being visible and persistent, and “walking the talk.”
7. Make the connection between work and home – by implementing initiatives that encourage gender equality in caregiving.
8. Make the connection between work and communities – by framing gender inequality as a societal or community problem.
9. Build individuals’ gender confidence and capability – by providing opportunities for both men and women to change their mindsets, assumptions, and behaviours.
10. Encourage men and women to challenge and change gender-biased organisational policies and practices.

Good Practice in local government

Charter

The Victorian Local Government Women’s Charter remains a leading tool for advocacy and promotion. When signed publicly, the Charter commits councils to support the principles and is a great way to begin action.

The City of Monash reports that their Gender Equity and Respect toolkit refers to the importance of information sessions, events and clear communication and messages. Information sessions and events publicly demonstrate an organisation’s commitment to gender equity and help to engage the workforce and communication and messaging is vital to raise awareness and build staff capacity.¹⁷⁶

Awards

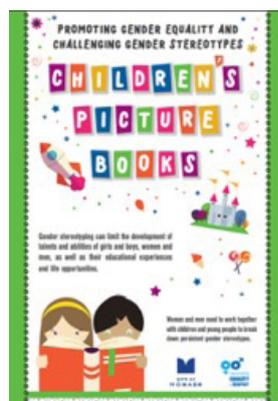
Some councils and industry bodies have created specific awards to encourage and support women. These include:

- ALGWA Victorian Bursary Award – to encourage and assist women in the Local Government sector in furthering their education.
- The City of Greater Shepparton’s Women’s Charter Alliance Advisory Committee Award is an annual award to recognise an individual or group that have made a positive difference to women in the community.
- City of Greater Dandenong Sports Award – recognise the exceptional contribution made by women and men in local clubs, teams and individuals, whose outstanding work has made a positive contribution to the Greater Dandenong sporting community.
- Surf Coasts Seniors Awards – recognising the outstanding achievements of citizens over 65 years of age.
- LGPro Sally Isaac Award – recognises a woman under 35 who demonstrated achievements that have improved community life.
- Women’s Honour Roll – is a State Government initiative that occurs each year to acknowledge and celebrate outstanding achievements of Victorian Women.
- Davidson Top 50 Public Sector Women – to acknowledge inspiration women leaders working in the Victorian public sector. The aim is to also to highlight the recipients work and to create role models for other females in the sector.¹⁷⁷
- Rural Women’s Award – emerging women leaders who have the desire, commitment and leadership potential to make a greater contribution to primary industries and rural communities.¹⁷⁸

Case Study: City of Monash – Libraries promote gender equity

Background

Monash City Council has a strong and long-term commitment to the prevention of violence against women and the promotion of gender equity, as demonstrated through the development of a Gender Equity Strategy (2015-2020) and the establishment of a Gender Equity Advisory Committee.



Monash City Council's libraries are key to promoting gender equity through a range of services, programs and engagement initiatives. Council's Libraries are central to improving the learning opportunities, community attitudes and social inclusion of our community. It is important to challenge gender stereotypes in literature to ensure children's aspirations are not limited by traditional ideas about what girls and boys and women and men can do.

Through internal partnerships, Monash City Council developed the picture booklist 'Promoting gender equality and challenging gender stereotypes children's picture books'. This booklist provided parents, teachers and carers with a range of stories about the interests and achievements of girls, boys, women, men and people who identify as diverse genders.¹⁷⁹ The books vary in age appropriateness from approximately two years to ten years.

Children's picture books can be used to encourage discussions, broaden thinking and directly challenge harmful gender stereotypes. Gender stereotyping can limit the development of talents and abilities of girls and boys, women and men, as well as their educational experiences and life opportunities. The books selected for the checklist, support an awareness of the wide variety of gender expressions that exist within, as well as between, the sexes.

Implementation

Through the development and distribution of the booklist, the outcomes from the project have been:

- All the picture books on the booklist are stocked across all seven library sites, neighbourhood houses, early year services and family day care services in the City of Monash.
- 2500 booklists and 270 posters printed and displayed through libraries, maternal and child health services and early years services and relevant networks.
- The booklist has been widely promoted and shared through local government and preventing violence against women networks.
- During the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign (2016), each library branch had a story time dedicated to the campaign and librarians read picture books which challenged gender stereotypes and/or promoted gender equality from the booklist.

Another initiative through the library service for gender equity, has been to introduce weekend and weeknight event story times to strengthen men's engagement in the story time sessions. These sessions have attracted more males than mid-week daytime sessions. Data on the gender breakdown of adults attending the story time sessions with children has shown that the additional session times have been effective in engaging more men in the library.

The libraries also ensure that women's and men's voices are equally promoted when conducting themed book promotions in library branches. Examples include:

- Displays where the authors and subject matter are evenly divided between male and female, e.g. Remembrance Day display had books written by males, and females and the subject matter was soldiers, nurses and how their families coped with their absence or maiming or deaths. Display of inspirational women for International Women's Day and LGBTI resources as part of their Valentine's Day display.
- Fiction displays have an equal balance of male and female authors.
- The display for the Melbourne Comedy Festival includes an equal representation of books by male and female comedians.

Women's events

Many councils manage events to celebrate and support women and/or promote events such as 16 Days of activism, white ribbon, International elimination of violence against women and Take Action Go Orange – 25th Nov. – Maribyrnong Council promotes an annual calendar of events for council and the community. Many councils across Victoria also take the opportunity to host events and programs on International Women's Day that celebrate women and raise awareness around gender.

Pathways to progress advocacy and communications

Based on the best practice examples discussed and the research undertaken for these guidelines, there are suggested pathways local governments can take to progress advocacy and communication around addressing gender inequality. These include:

- Endorse the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter and make a public commitment to act to advance gender equity, diversity and active citizenship.
- Use the UN Women - Women's Empowerment Principles to guide work.¹⁸⁰
- They offer five key points to promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy:
 - > Lead by example – showcase company commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment
 - > Leverage influence - advocate for gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to promote inclusion
 - > Collaborate - Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls
 - > Promote and recognize women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities and ensure sufficient representation of women in any community consultation
 - > Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support company commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights
- Develop a whole-of-organisation communications and marketing strategy to guide communications around gender equity. This may include:
 - > public endorsement and display of the Women's Charter
 - > awards or nominations of women to awards celebrating women's achievements
 - > web paged dedicated to gender equity, councils action and progress
 - > promotion of events
 - > gender reporting in annual report
 - > media releases on women's achievements
 - > images used in multimedia are balanced and inclusive
 - > promote positive role models in council and community
 - > promote male advocates to uphold key messages around preventing violence against women.
- Develop an annual calendar of women's cultural and campaign events - Nov 25th period for 16 Days of activism/white ribbon and/or International elimination of violence against women, March 8th International Women's Day Events.
- Consider implementing the City Of Monash Booklist 'Promoting gender equality and challenging gender stereotypes children's picture books' through municipal libraries
- Keep up to date with all information through portals such as the new MAV Gender Equity Promising Practice portal: <http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equality/Pages/default.aspx>
- Do an audit of existing council owned or managed land and facilities and events and identify the percentage of male and female named facility and events. Set a plan to identify local women champions and places and events to be named. Ensure more places and events are named after local women. This is a great way to publicly acknowledge local women's achievements.
- Consider the Diversity Council of Australia's recommendations on Engaging Men when developing gender equity plans.
- Consider a campaign such as Make the Link campaign material, which is available online and may be used to promote key messages across local government workplaces.
- Awards provide an opportunity to shine the light on excellence. So, consider finding opportunities to acknowledge women through nominations for the host of industry awards. Also, if a council hosts an award such as the Business Awards, ensure women make up 50% of the judging panel, that promotion material language has broad appeal and is distributed through established women's networks, women only categories, and guest speakers have broad representation.

4.7 Local government gender equity projects and initiatives

Overview

In this section, we will explore a number of local government gender equity projects and initiatives. Case studies highlight the interesting and varied approaches to gender equity across the sector.

Background

When local councils partner with other organisations in their community, they can play a greater role in advancing gender equity. Community partnerships can be vital to the success of local government sector gender equity initiatives and greater efforts to increase partnership programs should be sought. Often partnerships that start out as Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) initiatives build into gender equity projects. Working with regional community health organisations can provide fertile ground for collaboration on gender equity initiatives. Important examples of local council gender equity community projects are discussed below.

Case Study: Preventing Violence against women

Peak Body; MAV Preventing Violence against Women

Through support from the State Government, MAV provides funding grants for local government to engage and lead community action plans for the prevention of violence against women. The Local Government Preventing Violence Against Women Grants Program (2016–2017) delivered one-off grants for short-term projects in six metropolitan and four rural and regional councils in Victoria, with an additional eleven councils being formal partners to the projects, as shown in Table 7.¹⁸¹

These projects were tailored for the community and their findings provide applicable tools, guidelines and learnings for other local governments. Each project aimed to prevent violence against women and embed the principals of gender equity within their own unique communities, while also developing formal resources to share with other councils to use.¹⁸² The project findings and resources are available on the Promising Practices portal through MAV.

Table 7: The ten projects funded by MAV in 2016 for the Preventing Violence Against Women Grants Program

Council	Project
Ballarat City Council	Strengthening the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community by Preventing Violence Against Women
Darebin City Council	Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years
Frankston City Council	Baby Makes 3 Ante-Natal Pilot
Horsham Rural City Council	Act@Work
Latrobe City Council	Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Rural Challenge
Maroondah City Council	Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together
Nillumbik Shire Council	Gender Equity in HR Tool
Port Phillip City Council	Local Government E-Learning Project
Whittlesea City Council	Gender Equitable Design of Community Facilities

Case Study: Preventing Violence against women (*continued*)

Community Partnership for Primary Prevention Program

The Community Partnership for Primary Prevention Program is another example of an impactful community approach to PVAW. The Victorian Government 2015-2016 State Budget allocated over \$2.65 million for the program, which provided grants for a number of partnerships “between businesses, schools, workplaces and community setting to plan for, coordinate and drive local community action for the primary prevention of family violence”.¹⁸³ Local government authorities are eligible to apply for the annual funding grants, alongside a number of other organisations in communities, with the aim of creating partnerships in local areas with a shared plan for action that is tailored to the needs of the community it serves. This community-based approach to violence prevention highlights the grass roots function that local councils in Victoria can have and the importance of cross-sector partnerships in tackling family violence.

Case Study: Communities partnerships with community health organisations

‘Paving the Way’ – Gippsland Women’s Health in partnership with Baw Baw and Wellington councils



In 2013, Gippsland Women’s Health teamed up with Baw Baw Shire Council and Wellington Shire Council to undertake the ‘Paving the Way’ workplace project to prevent men’s violence against women. This project focused on “increasing an organisations capacity to achieve gender equitable access to workplace resources and opportunities, respond to and support employees experiencing family violence and create a workplace environment that does not tolerate attitudinal support for men’s violence against women”.¹⁸⁴

Baw Baw Shire Council and Wellington Shire Council have since undertaken various activities under the ‘Paving the Way’ banner and with Gippsland Women’s Health.¹⁸⁵

These projects include but are not limited to the following:

- > Family violence and Workplace Training for both councils
- > Mentors in Violence Prevention Training for Baw Baw Shire Council staff and Our Watch Issue members
- > A Gender Equity Audit at Baw Baw Shire Council
- > Masters Research Project on “staff perceptions of barriers and enablers to becoming involved in workplace based initiatives to end men’s violence against women and children” in both councils.

The Paving the Way initiative highlights an important rural partnership between local councils and a community health organisation. This partnership improved both council’s ability to effectively carry out PVAW and other gender equity initiatives in their communities. According to Gippsland Women’s Health, the Paving the Way approach to workplace gender equity is “the first step in enabling local governments to work within their wider sphere of influence (local community) in preventing violence against women”.¹⁸⁶

WHGNE: Enabling Women Leadership Program

In 2016, Women’s Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE), in partnership with Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV), ran the *Enabling Women Leadership Program* in Victoria’s North East.¹⁸⁷ Developed by WDV, Enabling Women is a community leadership program that empowers women with disabilities to have a voice about issues that relate to them and other women with disabilities.

Case Study: Communities partnerships with community health organisations *(continued)*

The program ran one day a week for six weeks followed by a graduation celebration. Over forty women of all abilities living in North East Victoria, participated in the program in one or more ways. Thirteen women who identified with a disability, successfully completed the leadership program in 2016.¹⁸⁸ Benalla Rural City and the Rural City of Wangaratta, alongside other regional organisations, assisted with the planning and delivery of the *Enabling Women Leadership Program* in Victoria.

This community partnership assisted Women's Health Goulburn North East with knowledge transfer, delivery support and in-kind contributions to the program. This case study demonstrates the importance of council partnerships with health organisations in advancing gender equity for women with disabilities in their community.

Gippsland Women's Health: Stand up and be Counted



In early 2016, Gippsland Women's Health (GWH) partnered with Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) as part of the GoWomenLG2016 campaign to facilitate a café series at five of the six local Councils across Gippsland, to address gender imbalance in local government. The events aimed to encourage women's participation in local government and to inspire them to nominate at the October 2016 Council elections. The key objective was to increase women's knowledge about candidacy for local government and to improve engagement between women and local government.

A series of evening events with speakers and panels were held in local cafes across five Gippsland municipalities.

Over 100 women attended, with approximately five percent indicating their intention to nominate in 2016. Other participants expressed an interest in nominating in future years.

Case Study: Gender equity initiatives

State Government funding for Listen, Learn and Lead

The Local Government Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity Program is a Local Government Victoria initiative to support councils in advancing gender equity. The aim of the program is "to identify and implement strategies and actions to improve outcomes for women in leadership positions in council", through gender equity sector-wide actions.¹⁸⁹ The program was based on a pilot with four local councils across Victoria and further information on the outcomes of these projects is available from Local Government Victoria.

City of Yarra: Female icons on pedestrian crossing traffic lights

In March 2016, ahead of International Women's Day, the City of Yarra council introduced a Vic Roads approved trial of ten female silhouettes on pedestrian crossing lights in their municipality, as a program to address gender bias on their streets. The unique pedestrian signals were designed as a tribute to the first woman elected to local government Councillor Mary Rogers (elected 1920), and was the first time in Australia an image of a female signalled the crossing of a road.

The Equal Crossings initiative was designed by the Committee for Melbourne's Future Focus Group and aimed to promote gender equality. Speaking at the announcement of the trial, Brendan Pauwels, Director of metropolitan projects at VicRoads, said "*the Mary Rogers initiative was an acknowledgment of the role local government have in road projects*".¹⁹⁰

Chapter 4 summary: Local government administration

The number of women in senior positions in local government, is disproportionately low compared to the overall number of women in the workforce. Recruiting more women into senior roles requires a planned effort with KPIs included in the CEOs annual performance plan. To drive improvement will take policy changes, training of key staff, and the consistent use of gender-neutral language in job advertising, targets, monitoring and continuous efforts and improvement.

As the level of government closest to the people, local government is well placed to advance gender equity in collaboration with community and other partners in the sector as well inspire changes in the community. Actions can be focused on:

- directly addressing gender equity within an organisation, or alternatively, taking a subtler approach can still be influential including female categories in existing awards, diversity in communications material, supporting events that empower and celebrate women each year or ensuring diversity in books available at libraries are ways to make small changes that deliver impact
- supporting community partnerships to advance gender equity in local government, particularly with community health organisations
- supporting partnerships with peak bodies and state government as a catalyst for assisting councils to develop gender equity projects.
- training and education to ensure that gender equity is integrated into existing systems and addresses sexist attitudes, stereotypes, behaviours and bias that are fundamental to gender inequality, such as unconscious bias and bystander training
- developing women's leadership capability to produce a pipeline of female talent, ready to take on higher-level roles is critical to organisational success
- implementing a process of monitoring and reporting on gender inequality to ensure a greater level of accountability, which translates to actions to address identified problems.

Appendices



Appendix 1:

Current local government statistics

Overview

When viewing trends in the statistics of women elected to Victorian local councils, Victoria has seen a steady increase in both the number of female candidates running for council and the election of women over the last three elections. Women are also being elected in higher numbers to leadership roles, such as presidents of peak bodies and as mayors. Close to half of Victorian councils now have a critical mass of 40% or more women councillors although the rate of progress is slower at the administrative level with just 16.5% of CEOs being female.

Introduction

Since council amalgamations in 1994, women have increasingly been elected to Victorian local councils. The progress is slower when reviewing data on the number of women employed at senior management levels in local government. The numbers of female CEOs have barely shifted in the past decade and remains at approximately 16.5%.¹⁹¹

Women's elections to councils correlates with concerted efforts by the Victorian state Government, peak bodies and Victorian councillor organisations to provide resources to encourage women to run for council, and the provision of support and training for elected councillors. Notably in Victoria, this includes the sector-wide collaboration behind targeted, well-resourced initiatives such as the Victorian Women's Charter, Think Women for Local Government (VLGA), Stand for Council (MAV), GO Women LG (VLGA), Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) 50:50 Vision and the Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition which are further explored in these guidelines.

Current Victorian local government gender statistics

Elected Representatives, gender statistics 2017

In each election over the past decade, the data shows an increasing number of citizens running as candidates and a growing proportion of these are women. In 2016, 725 female candidates ran for 637 vacancies in Victoria's local council elections.¹⁹² This result meant an additional sixty-three more women candidates compared to the 2012 elections which in turn, recorded an additional fifty-six women candidates compared to the 2008 elections. Overall, the number of wards and un-subdivided municipalities where women stood increased slightly (80% to 81%). There was also approximately a 50%

changeover between new and retiring/unsuccessful councillors across the state.

In the October 2016 elections, several records for women's representation in Victorian Local Government elections were broken. These included:

- A record number of women candidates standing for council - 725 women candidates compared to 662 in 2012. This represents a rounded percentage increase of 10%.
- A record number of 243 women councillors out of a total of 637 councillors elected, resulting in a record 38% of female councillors across Victoria.
- Following the election, a record thirty-two (40%) women Mayors were elected and nineteen (24%) women Deputy Mayors in seventy-eight councils.
- Fifteen councils recorded a majority of women councillors, compared with six the previous term.
- Thirty-six councils (46%) now have 40% or more women councillors
- Eighteen councils (23%) had at least 50% women councillors. (In the 2012 elections only twelve councils (16%) had 50% or more women councillors).

In addition, the 2016 council elections were the second council term in a row that every council elected at least one female councillor.

"We've seen a small but steady rise in the number of women councillors getting elected, with 122 women councillors recently elected to represent rural and regional communities. Thirty-five per cent of all current non-metropolitan councillors are women, an increase from the 2012 council elections when 32% of all rural and regional councillors were women."

–Rob Spence, Chief Executive, MAV

At the beginning of 2017, the three peak-body organisations in Victorian local government have women Presidents or Chairs: Councillor Mary Lajos President MAV, Councillor Marg Attley President VLGA and Rebecca McKenzie, President LGPro. The VLGA also has a female CEO (Kathryn Arndt).

However, it must be noted that despite the slow gains in female representation these gains are precarious and can fall backwards on key indicators as follows:

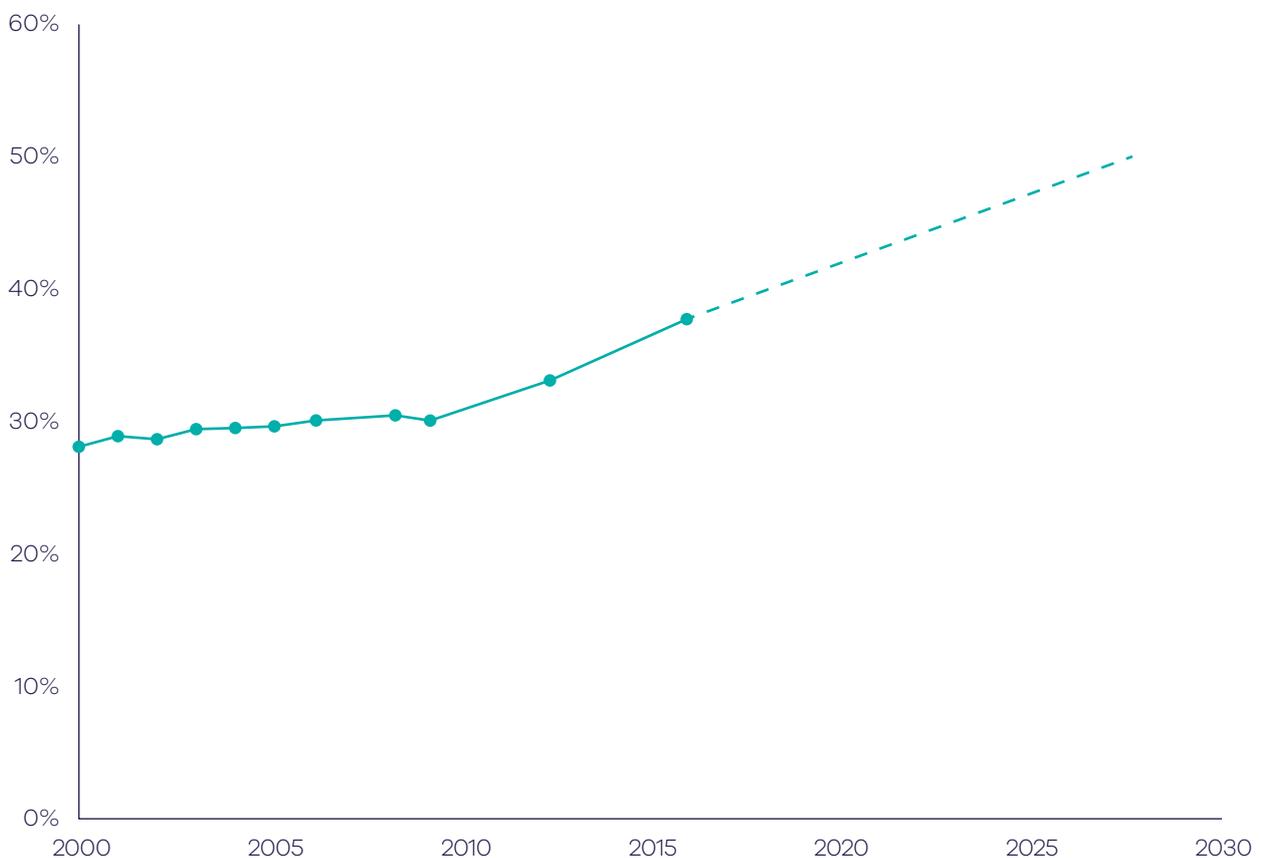
- In the most recent elections, thirteen councils (15%) elected only one female councillor, which was up from ten councils in the 2012 elections.
- In addition, there was no significant increase the number of electorates (wards) where women stood.
- Nineteen per cent of wards and un-subdivided municipalities still have no female candidates

- There are currently very low levels of women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, elected as councillors. As a result, the gender and diversity of candidates and of councillors still does not yet reflect that of the community in most local government councils

Women’s election to local councils

Since the 2008 council elections, the long-term trend of more participation by women in local government has seen a steady increase in election of women to Victorian local councils by approximately one per cent per year, or four per cent each election cycle since the 2008 elections. Based on this linear growth of one per cent increase a year (in absolute terms), and analysing the previous eight years of data, the trajectory projects that women could hold 50% of councillor positions by the 2028 elections, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Percent of women councillors over time to 2016, and projected to 2028



The decline of all-male councils

In the past 16 years, as the number of female councillors elected has increased, there has been a corresponding decline in the number of all-male

councils that have no female councillors elected. For the past two elections (2012 and 2016) every council in Victoria has had at least one female councillor elected as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Percentage of Victorian councils with no women elected

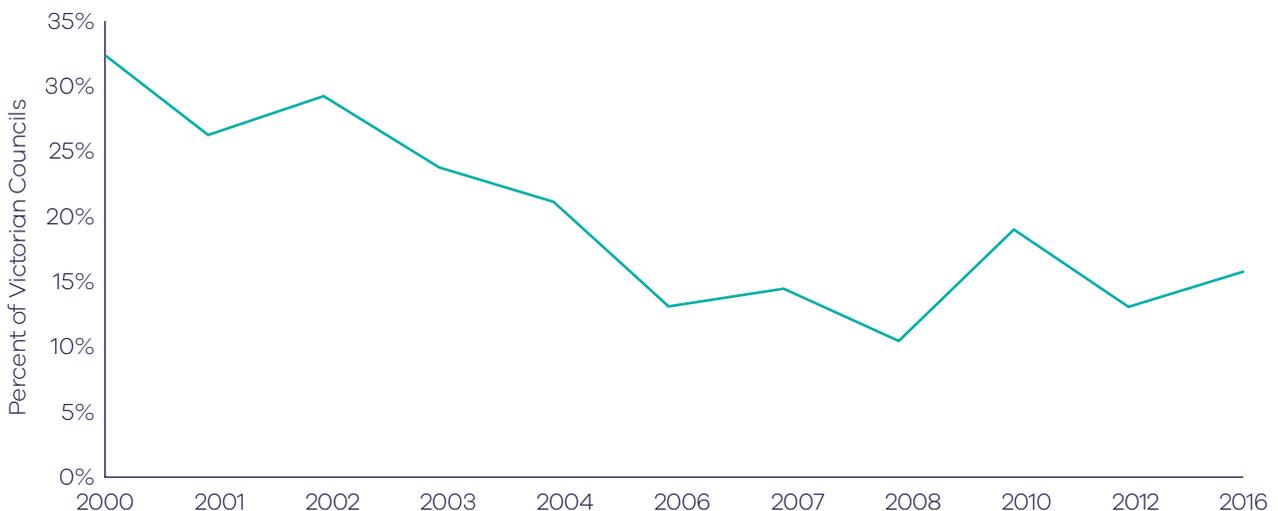


Councils with only one-woman councillor elected

Similarly, as the number of female councillors elected has increased, the number of 'one woman only' councils has also decreased. However, since the 2007

elections, there have been on average 11 councils across the state that have only one female elected and these figures seen to be stable, if not slightly increasing in recent elections where 13 councils (15%) still have only one-woman councillor (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Victorian Councils with only one female councillor elected



A critical mass of female councillors

Research conducted by the Wellesley Centers for Women, when a third or more of a board or committee is female, a critical mass for retention of members and for good governance seems to be achieved.¹⁹³

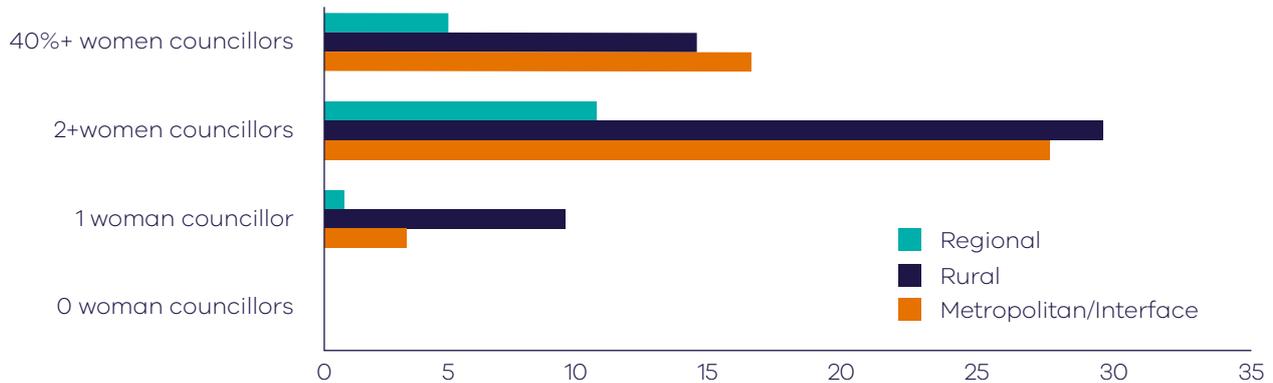
The research found:

“The benefits of having women on a corporate board are more likely to be realised when three or more women serve on a board. While even one woman can make a positive contribution, and

having two women is generally an improvement, corporations with three or more women on their boards tend to benefit the most from women’s contributions...because a critical mass of three or more women is needed for fully benefiting from women’s input”.

In 2017, it is important to recognise the gains made in increasing the number of women on councils overall. Following the 2016 elections, almost half of local government councils (36 councils) recorded more than 40% women councillors as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Councils with 40% or more women councillors

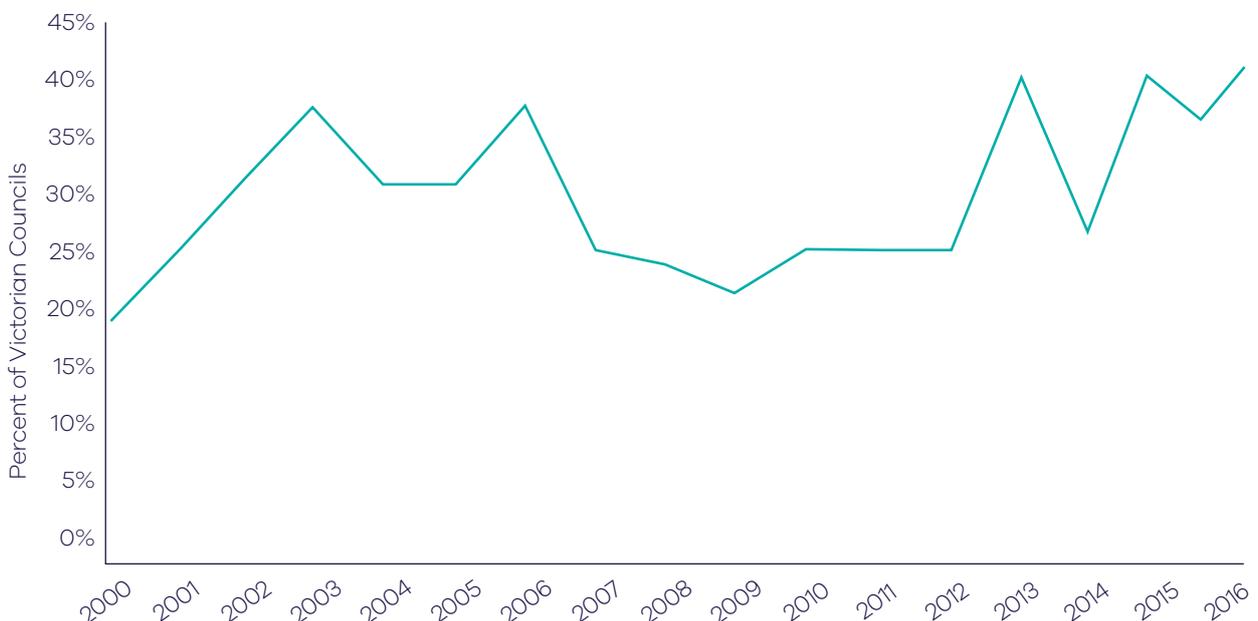


Election of women mayors

The number of women mayors elected by their fellow councillors has reached an all-time high in 2016, at 40% of councils, which is double the 20%

recorded in 2009. As shown in Figure 6, this measure can fluctuate significantly from year to year, but is rising steadily as more women are elected to local government in Victoria.

Figure 6 Women mayors elected to Victorian councils



Council staff, gender statistics 2017

In 2017, LGV's gender analysis revealed that, while women account for the majority of council staff (60.9%), this was not reflected in Council Chambers and senior management roles. Only 34% of women held director role and 39% of manager roles.¹⁹⁴

Of 277 directors in local government, female directors tended to lead more female dominated units, such as community services and human resources units, rather than the more male dominated, technical units in councils, such as infrastructure and amenity units.¹⁹⁵ As of August 2017, Victoria had 13 female CEOs, just under 16.5% of total CEOs in Victorian local government. This shows little progress from 2013/14 data from the Victorian Grants Commission, which reported, "whilst women make up the significant majority of the 47,000-strong workforce (61%), only 18% of council chief executive officers are women".¹⁹⁶ In March 2016, MAV reported that almost 20% of CEO positions and approximately 23% of senior executive positions were held by women, but by July 2017 this figure had dropped.

These statistics may reflect gender discrimination in the recruitment decision-making processes of CEOs as a result of unconscious cognitive biases of both councillors and recruitment agencies. An example of how this affects the recruitment responses is provided by Hayes who compares the response of to the CVs of 'Simon' with 'Susan'.

Diversity Australia defines unconscious bias as 'unconscious or hidden beliefs, attitudes and biases beyond our regular perceptions of ourselves and others'.¹⁹⁷

In 2016, LGPro surveyed local government councils to gather data on the representation of women in senior roles to present to the first Ministerial Women's Roundtable in October 2016.¹⁹⁸ Encouragingly, data examining executive recruitment of women between 2013-2016 found that women at all levels were appointed at a higher rate than the percentage of females shortlisted or applying for positions. The LGPro data is adapted in Table 8 below:

National local government gender statistics

Victorian local government rates are slightly higher across all indicators on the equivalent gender equality measures compared with the national workforce (Table 9).¹⁹⁹ A desktop study of local government websites across Australia was undertaken to compare data on the number of women councillors elected to each state and territory. Table 10 provides a comparison on the percentage of women elected to councils as CEOs and mayors.

Table 8 Executive recruitment of women in local government 2013-2016

Group	Per cent of women applicants	Per cent of women shortlisted	Per cent of women appointed
CEO	14.7	21.8	26.31
Directors and General Managers	25.15	35.36	43.13
Managers	26.30	41.41	47.61

Table 9 National gender workplace statistics compared with Victorian local government (August 2017)

Measure (Per cent women)	Australian National Workforce (WGEA - 2016)	Victorian Local Government 2017
Chair of the Board (Mayor)	14.2%	40%
Directorships (Councillors)	23.6%	38%
CEOs	15.4%	16.5%
Key management or EMT	27.4%	34%
All male key management teams	25.1%	Unknown
No women on ASX 200 Board (no women on a council)	10.0%	0%
Per cent of female employees	46.2%	55%

Table 10 State and Territory comparisons of women in local government

State/Territory	Per cent female elected councillors	Per cent female elected as Mayor	Per cent female Council CEOs
NT	40%	35%	30%
VIC	38%	40%	16.5%
QLD	33%	21%	15.6%
WA	33%	29%	9%
SA	30%	20%	12%
TAS	30%	33%	6.9%
NSW	27%	19%	11%

Summary

Statistics collected on the representation of women in Victorian local government show:

- A steady increase in the number of women candidates running for election and an absolute increase in women elected of approximately one per cent per year, or four per cent per election cycle in the past three elections
- The number of female mayors has increased, the number of all-male councils declined to zero and the number of councils with a critical mass of female councillors (above 40%) has increased to 46% in 2017
- The number of female CEOs remains low at approximately 16.5% (as of August 2017)

Appendix 2: Gender equity and diversity legislation and strategy

Overview

In this section, we will explore the legislative framework and strategies that support gender equity in all tiers of government in Australia. This will include an overview and assessment of existing gender equity and diversity legislation and strategy, including international legislation, and will suggest how local government can use legislation and strategy to improve internal gender representation.

Background

According to an Australian Parliament Library Research Paper, women are currently under-represented in Commonwealth, state and local government in Victoria.²⁰⁰ Thus, achieving gender equity is a shared responsibility between all three levels of government. Former Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick argues that legislation and strategy are useful tools for advancing the representation of women in senior leadership.²⁰¹ Legislation and strategies are important in advancing gender equity in all tiers of government and local government can use these tools to improve internal gender representation.

Legislation refers to law that is enacted by a legislative body and can be an important instrument for advancing women's rights domestically and internationally. While legislation is integral to achieving equal rights for men and women, as the City of Melbourne observes, "women appear to have all the same legal rights as men yet in very important ways women still do not have the same opportunities".²⁰² Broderick further supports this argument, stating, "I think it's fair to say that while Australia does have some strong laws and policies that aim to protect and promote women's human rights and fundamental freedoms, there are definitely some significant gaps and room for improvement."²⁰³ In other words, developments in gender equity legislation are not matching up with the day-to-day experiences of women. Therefore, it is important for local government to consider advancing gender equity through both legislation and strategy.

Strategy is broadly defined as a plan of action that is designed to achieve a specific aim. Local government can play a key role in designing long-term strategies or action plans for advancing gender equity, as seen in Yarra City Council's Gender Equity Strategy 2016 – 2021.²⁰⁴ An overview and assessment of existing gender equity and diversity legislation and strategy employed in all levels of government, as well as international legislation, is key to analysing

where there may be opportunities for improvement in local government in Victoria.

Gender equity and diversity legislation in Commonwealth and State government

The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* made it illegal for a person to discriminate "on the basis of sex, marital (or relationship) status, pregnancy and potential pregnancy".²⁰⁵ The Australian Human Rights Commission contends that this legislation has impacted upon community attitudes and has helped to advance gender equity in Australia.²⁰⁶ Legislation plays a crucial role in the advancement of gender equity.

Examples of influential gender equity legislation in the Commonwealth and Victorian State Government are below:

- **The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:** A Victorian law that "sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria...including the right be treated equally "and requires public authorities to "act consistently with the human rights in the Charter".²⁰⁷
- **The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012:** This Act aims to improve gender equality in the workplace through promoting equal remuneration, recognising the barriers of discrimination in employment and improving the productivity of Australian businesses.²⁰⁸
- **The Equal Opportunity Act 2010:** A Victorian law that further encourages the "identification and elimination of discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation and their causes, and to promote and facilitate the progressive realisation of equality."²⁰⁹
- **The Family Violence Protection Amendment Act 2014:** This Act aims to prevent and reduce family violence in Victoria by maximising safety for victims and promoting accountability of perpetrators. The Act helps to protect women and children suffering family violence and promote the fair and equal treatment of all Victorians.²¹⁰

- **The Fair Work Act 2009:** A Commonwealth Government Act that promotes fair, safe and equitable workplace relations. For example, this is achieved by “enabling fairness and representation at work and the prevention of discrimination by recognising the right to freedom of association and the right to be represented.”²¹¹

International conventions and declarations

As outlined by the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Commonwealth Government is subject to a range of international conventions and declarations that aim to improve gender equity both domestically and internationally.²¹² Conventions are legally binding under international law while declarations are not, although they can still hold a certain degree of power over government actions.

Examples of Australia’s international conventions, declarations and agendas for women’s rights and gender equity are below:

- **United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 2008:** An international human rights treaty between countries that have committed to strengthening women’s human rights through fair, equitable and non-discriminatory “policies, laws, organisations, structures and attitudes” in society²¹³
- **UN Women: Commission on the Status of Women (CSW):** An intergovernmental body dedicated to promoting gender equality by engaging with international member states that commit to further action on women’s equality and empowerment.²¹⁴ The Australian Government negotiates in the CSW annual sessions and in March 2017 adopted the Agreed Conclusions at the 61st CWS session in New York²¹⁵
- **G20 workforce participation target:** The Group of 20 (G20) have agreed to implement a number of measures aimed at reducing the “gender gap in workforce participation by 25% by 2025”.²¹⁶ As part of the G20, the Australian Government has committed to improving gender equity in its national workforce²¹⁷
- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325):** The Australian Government has produced a National Action Plan to implement the UNSCR 1325, a resolution that prompts governments to “integrate a gender perspective into peace and security effort, protect women’s and girls’ human rights... and promote women’s participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution”²¹⁸
- **2030 Sustainable Development Goals:** The Australian Government has actively participated in international discussions to design and implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, Goal 5 sets out to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030²¹⁹

While this national and international legislation has played an important role in shifting societal attitudes and outcomes for women in Australia, Elizabeth Broderick argues that formal equality has not yet been delivered through legislation.²²⁰

“Many women do not currently have the resources to pursue legal action or adequate legal representation or advocacy in tribunals and other decision-making forums. Human rights legislation should therefore be accompanied by improved access to legal representation and advocacy”.

–Elizabeth Broderick, Former Sex Discrimination Commissioner

Gender equity and diversity strategies in Commonwealth, State and local government

The Australian Commonwealth, State and local government in Victoria have implemented a wide range of gender equity strategies in recent years to improve the representation of women in the workforce, board positions, executive leadership and in government. Assessing these strategies is key to understanding what works in the field.

Commonwealth government strategies

Two examples of best practice Commonwealth gender equity strategies are below:

Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) Gender Strategy Toolkit

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) has developed a best practice Gender Strategy Toolkit that “enables organisations to diagnose performance, set goals and build a comprehensive gender equality strategy”.²²¹ This toolkit is considered a highly influential resource for local councils that aim to advance gender equity, as it outlines twelve essential workplace gender equity focus areas and guidance on strategy-setting and change management.²²²

Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-19

In 2016, the Commonwealth Government’s report, *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–19*, sets out five actions for increasing gender equity and diversity in the Australian Public Service (APS).²²³ The actions

aim to drive a supportive and enabling workplace culture, achieve gender equity in APS leadership, embed gender equality in employment practices, increase the take-up of flexible work arrangements for men and women while measuring and evaluating all initiatives.²²⁴ Drawing upon WGEA research, the APS Gender Equality Strategy is a comprehensive report that can be used to guide local government gender equity strategy.

State government strategies

Victorian Government Gender Equality Strategy

The 2016 Gender Equality Strategy sets out a framework for advancing gender equality in Victoria. The robust strategy is informed by domestic and global case studies of what works in gender equality, community consultation and findings from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Our Watch and other relevant agencies. The Victorian Government Gender Equality Strategy is useful to local government because it outlines key actions for advancing gender equity, such as introducing gender audits and targets to achieve equity in employment.²²⁵

Local government strategies

A number of local councils are paving the way for gender equality in Victoria. Their strategies combine a mix of mechanisms and focus areas for achieving gender equity, both internally through greater representation of women councillors, and externally, through targeted 'Gender Lens' initiatives in the community.

Links

- The WGEA Gender Strategy Toolkit: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Gender_Strategy_Toolkit.pdf
- The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Implementation Guide for the Commonwealth Government's Gender Equality Strategy: <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/gender-equality-strategy/implementation-strategy>
- Women on government boards, 'BoardLinks' database: <http://www.boardlinks.gov.au/>

Case Study: Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges Councils 'A Gender Lens for Leisure'

The 'A Gender Lens for Leisure' project, undertaken by the Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Council is a leading example of local government gender equity initiatives. The project was funded by the Office of Women's Policy as part of The Preventing Violence against Women in Our Community (PVAWC) initiative. From 2011- 2014, the Gender Lens project explored the mechanisms that Victorian councils could use to achieve gender equity in community sport and recreation offerings. One of the mechanisms identified was explored in-depth: applying a gender lens to council policies and planning documentation.

A document analysis found that most corporate plans failed to deal specifically with gender equity and lacked gender-based strategies relating to recreation issues, such as 'resources and financial priority' and 'sports/organisation/club development'. The project produced a suite of recommendations designed to ensure the Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Council could take a systemic 'Gender Lens' approach to their sport and leisure offerings to create safe and equitable facilitates for women in their communities. While the project was targeted and specific in its aim, the joint venture from these councils highlights how varied gender equity initiatives can be at a local community/government level.²²⁶

Appendix 3: Case Studies Six Guiding Principles of Lead, Celebrate, Emulate, Target, Integrate and Measure

Introduction

Across Victoria, many rural, regional and metropolitan local governments are developing and implementing gender equity initiatives that provide leading examples for other councils to follow in addressing gender inequality. This section explores several local government case studies in gender equity initiatives, that are seen to represent 'good practice' in the field reflecting one or more of the six guiding principles – lead, celebrate, emulate, target, integrate and measure.

1. Lead: councils play an important local leadership role in achieving gender equity Background

Case Study: City of Melbourne's Workplace policy and planning and Enterprise Agreement

This case study explores how workplace policy and planning can drive gender equity initiatives across an organisation, including the provision of generous, flexible family leave conditions in an Enterprise Agreement. It also provides an example of male leadership by the CEO as a driver in cultural change in the workplace.



Background

In June 2012, the City of Melbourne (CoM) became a White Ribbon City and the following year adopted the strategy; We Need to Talk: Preventing Violence Against Women Strategy 2013-16.²²⁷ The strategy listed 49 actions that took account of council's role in making a municipality safe and inclusive by considering culture, urban design, partnerships and service delivery. The Strategy listed a range of actions councils can take to tackle violence in the workplace, in the home and in the community. Initially, an audit of policies, procedures, services and programs led to an assessment of areas for improvement, which then led to a policy framework and staff training. In 2017, the CoM is developing an organisational Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Gender Action Plan.

Implementation

In 2014, the City of Melbourne (CoM) undertook a gender equity audit of internal policies, procedures, services and programs to identify areas for improvement. They then developed a Gender Equity to Prevent Violence Against Women framework including:

Two high level policies:

- Gender Equity Policy
- PVAW Policy

Three policies and procedures developed to support the two high level policies:

- Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure
- PVAW Bystander Action Policy and Procedure
- Response to Family Violence Policy and Procedure

Case Study: City of Melbourne's Workplace policy and planning and Enterprise Agreement (cont.)

As part of this strategy CoM provided training to relevant staff on gender awareness and how to use and apply a gender equity audit tool in the design of places and spaces.

In 2015, CEO Ben Rimmer joined Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Male Champions of Change and held a series of roundtable discussions with female staff across the organisation to better understand their needs. This led to the development of a Work Flexibility Policy, Unconscious Bias training and the promotion of gender balance within the Executive Leadership Team. As demonstrated in this example, when a male CEO takes a lead role in addressing gender equality, this enables him to champion organisational-wide change.

In August 2017, the City of Melbourne announced that its newly endorsed Enterprise Agreement (EA) provided increased flexible family leave for men and women.²²⁸ The EA is summarised in Table 11.

Table 11 Summary of gender equity initiatives in the 2016 City of Melbourne Enterprise Agreement

Superannuation	
Standard 9.5%	✓
Additional annual superannuation contribution for women	\$500
Parental leave (primary carer)	
Paid primary carer leave	20 weeks
Superannuation payments at 9.5% paid to Primary Carers on any period of paid and unpaid parental leave for the first 12 months following the birth/adoption of the child	✓
Pre-natal leave – 20 hours paid leave for pregnancy related medical appointments and partner up to 5 hours to attend pregnancy related medical appointments	✓
Recognise unpaid parental leave during the first 12 months so that it accrues towards Long Service Leave for the primary carer	✓
New employees who have yet to accrue 12 months of service are provided with automatic access to paid parental leave of 6 weeks which will increase based on months of service on a pro-rata basis, up to the full entitlement at 12 months	✓
Existing employees who have returned to work after parental leave and who have yet to accrue 12 months of service are provided with automatic access to paid parental leave of 6 weeks which will increase based on months of service on a pro-rata basis, up to the full entitlement at 12 months	✓
Parental leave (secondary carer)	
Paid secondary carer leave	3 weeks
Additional paid secondary carer leave if primary carer returns to work (leave must be used within 18 months of birth/adoption of child)	17 weeks
More flexibility in how the secondary carer leave can be taken (3 weeks can be taken in one week blocks at any point during first three months of birth/adoption) and up to 17 weeks within the first 18 months from birth/adoption	✓
Paid Adoption leave	20 weeks on return to work
Pre-adoption leave of 2 days paid leave for adoption related appointments	✓

Family Violence support	
Up to 20 days paid leave per annum for employees experiencing Family Violence	20 days
Up to 5 days paid leave for employees needing to care for an immediate family member who is experiencing family violence	✓
Up to 5 days paid leave for employees needing to care for a household member who is experiencing family violence	✓
Range of individual support measures	✓

2. Celebrate: acknowledge good practice and positive role models

Case study: Maribyrnong City Council 'Women of the West'

This case study depicts a local council using art to portray 'ordinary' women from their municipality in a positive way that challenges stereotypes and gives voice to stories of diverse women. The film, Women of the West, celebrates a range of positive role models in their community.

Background



Maribyrnong City Council is committed to a community where opportunities for success are equally available to women and where the thoughts, ideas and opinions of women and girls are heard and respected and their choices and goals in life are celebrated and supported. The film is part of council's wider gender equity strategy that provides programs, initiatives and services from council that promote gender respect and equity with the community, our western region partners and within Council.

Implementation

Maribyrnong City Council embarked on the Women of the West, a film and photography project to celebrate and showcase the lives and contributions of twelve local women and girls. Local artist, Suzie Blake, was engaged to reflect the rich tapestry of the women's in a series of stylised portraits and short documentary style films.

Published in July 2016, the Maribyrnong City Council website explains the film further:

The films and portraits aim to show women in a range of locations within the City of Maribyrnong. In the portraits, the women are the central focus but it is impossible to ignore her surroundings. She is alone in the space, but interestingly she 'owns' it. This strong type of representation of women in imagery contrast with how women are often portrayed in media. Each portrait is taken in different surroundings, signifying an element of each women's experience of everyday equality. The films aim to showcase the diversity, stories, achievements, vibrancy and leadership of local women across four facets of community life- art, sport, work and family and community.

The films and portraits also took the opportunity to gently challenge some gender stereotypes showing authentic representations of women and women participating and succeeding in sports and work roles traditionally available only to men. Film and photography, like all art, is a powerful tool for social change. It plays an important role in reflecting and challenging social norms and beliefs and, in this case, is a celebration of women's often under-valued contribution to community.

To view the Women of the West films, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5M_oZpt9IM/

3. Emulate: highlight good practice activities and practices, share and extend them

Case Study: The Baw Baw Shire Gender Equity Action Plan

This case study explores how a large rural council began their gender equity initiatives in partnership with a local community health organisation and a focus on preventing men's violence against women. They then built on this experience, to advance organisational conversations and actions to further gender equality. A useful starting practice was having the courage to undertake an initial audit to inform and drive gender equity initiatives across an organisation.

Background

In 2013, Baw Baw Shire was the first workplace to undertake the Gippsland Women's Health 'Paving the Way' project based on preventing men's violence against women. Since then Baw Baw Shire Council has continued the momentum and developed a number of gender equality initiatives.²²⁹



Since that time, the Council reports that the organisation has raised awareness and knowledge of this important issue both internally and with their wider community. Through various activities and training such as 'active bystander' and 'community conversations', participants have been educated, equipped and empowered

to make a difference in preventing violence. Council was recognised for its work towards gender equity, receiving the Bronze National Award & Accreditation for the 5050 Vision; councils for gender equality; a national accreditation and awards program which encourages councils across Australia to address gender equity issues within the organisation and among their elected representatives.

Implementation

The council has continued awareness of the issue both internally and externally and has an organisational committee and a community committee focussing on gender equity and prevention of violence against women.

In 2015 a gender audit was undertaken and focussed on gender representation, employment opportunities and staff perceptions in the council and assisted in informing the inaugural Baw Baw Shire Gender Equity Action Plan. The Gender Equity Action Plan aims to build organisational capacity and increase gender equity in the workplace through seven key objectives. These are: governance, capacity building, culture, remuneration and career opportunity, working conditions, health and safety workplace and customer experience. Each objective comprises a list of strategies, actions, responsibilities and timelines for reaching the gender equity targets.

Developing training programs to ensure organisational knowledge on gender equity is ongoing and includes training for Councillors and staff in leadership roles and updating e-learning Equal Opportunity (EO) training in order to eliminate gender stereotypes in the organisation. These are some of many strategies and actions employed to reach the Council's seven objectives by 2018.²³⁰

The resulting equity action plan sits within Council's internal functions and is overseen and delivered by Council's employees which works to keep gender equity and the prevention of gender-based violence an ongoing feature of workplace culture at Baw Baw Shire Council.

4. Target: understand gender equity barriers and opportunities; identify actions to implement

Case Study: Moreland City Council gives women more time on sports fields

This case study explores how Moreland City Council has been able to identify barriers to women's participation in sport and then used its control over sports fields to encourage clubs to give more girls a go. Council actions included allocating the best sports grounds to the clubs that actively encouraged and included women and girls in all facets of their club.

Background

Moreland City Council has more than 50 sports grounds, most of which are used for soccer, AFL and cricket. Back in 2009, only 8% of people using Moreland's grounds for organised sporting activities were female. In 2011, the council developed an Active Women and Girls Strategy, to 'promote a healthy lifestyle and increase the participation of sports activities in the community particularly amongst women and girls.'²³¹

Council also adopted an Affirmative Action Policy to increase participation rates of women and girls at local sports and recreation facilities. Moreland identified that clubs needed to take a proactive approach to redressing the gender imbalance across a range of sports and recreation activities. The result was the development of a policy, which tied ground allocation to female participation.

Implementation

Each Moreland sports organisation is now required to develop programs that increase the participation, health and wellbeing of women and girls through a range of initiatives. These requirements better ensure the diverse needs of women and girls are considered and that sports clubs prioritise the recruitment, development and retention of women and girls in leadership roles in their organisation. The council has also invested significantly in facility upgrades and improving park lighting and other features that make sporting environments more welcoming and help women to feel safer getting to and from practice at night.

In the first three years, the proportion of women using Moreland's sports grounds rose to 15%, and in 2016 was 22% – an astonishing 161% increase in female participation. And it's not just women for whom the playing field is being levelled. Clubs with teams or programs for juniors are also more likely to get their grounds allocations, as are clubs that provide opportunities for people with disabilities and people from diverse cultures. The initiative also promoted some male-dominated clubs to make the effort to link up with clubs offering sports more traditionally popular with women. One club now boasts AFL football, cricket, netball, softball and little athletics under the one umbrella. The initiative recently earned Moreland City Council the VicHealth Local Government Initiative of the Year Award at the prestigious 2016 VicSport Awards.

"The positive effects of incentivising women's participation in Moreland's sports clubs reaches beyond the playing field. It touches on deep social issues of gender equality and positive family relationships,"

*–Moreland Mayor Helen Davidson, 2017.*²³²

See: Change the Game; https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=33&v=iCFC6SAcspc
(Photo: <https://www.womenshealth.com.au/article/women-in-sport/afl-womens-expansion-2019>)

5. Integrate: embed a holistic approach to advancing gender equity at the community level so that it can inform council plans and strategies from the beginning

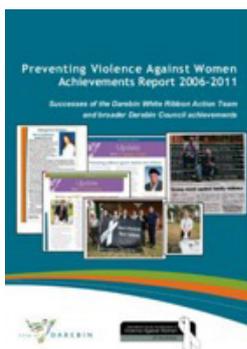
Case Study: City of Darebin – Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2015 – 2017

This case study highlights the wide range of actions councils can take to prevent violence and advance gender equity at a community level. The City of Darebin's Preventing Violence Against Women Action (PVAW) Plan 2015-2017 which is a strategic document that compliments the council's existing plans and strategies. Darebin have taken a holistic approach to gender equity which involves more than just an 'Action Plan', and demonstrate a genuine commitment to integrate a wide range of gender equity and PVAW initiatives in their community.

Background

Darebin City Council has a long-standing commitment to gender equity and preventing violence against women in its community. Some of the work achieved since 2008, includes:

- Establishment of the Darebin's White Ribbon Action Team
- Development of Darebin's workplace family violence policy
- Endorsement of the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter 2008
- Endorsement of Darebin's first Women's Equity Strategy 2012-2015 and associated Gender Equity and Preventing Violence Against Women Annual Action Plan
- Endorsement of Building a Respectful Community – Preventing Violence Against Women – A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011-2016
- Investment in funding a dedicated Preventing Violence Against Women Officer
- Implementation of a workplace program to prevent violence against women
- Council's submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence



The scope and diversity of these initiatives is demonstrative of Darebin's holistic approach to gender equity in its community. Darebin's Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2015-2017 compliments this strong commitment to gender equity.

Implementation

In 2013/14 there were 1,685 reported incidences of family violence in Darebin, and of these reported incidents, children were present at approximately 25%. Darebin's Prevent Violence Against Women Action Plan was implemented in the period of July 2015 to July 2017. The action plan took a settings-based approach that recognised the gendered-nature of violence against women and worked to tackle the root cause of the issue through several objectives:

- Objective 1: To reduce and prevent violence against women in Council as a workplace
- Objective 2: To ensure Darebin Council services, programs and policies are gender equitable, actively encourage women's full and equal participation and are inclusive of strategies preventing violence against women and children
- Objective 3: To develop and maintain collaborative activities at the regional level to address prevention of violence against women²³³

The council set measurable targets to address each objective in their action plan. For example, Darebin council made a commitment to both measure and increase staff understanding of the family violence policy and participation in family violence initiatives annually. The Council continues to monitor and evaluate this Action Plan on an annual basis to measure outcomes and impacts.

6. Measure: capture the difference council is making, refine policies and activities to keep advancing gender equity

Case study: Whittlesea Council – using feedback to refine the Gender Equity Strategy

Monitoring and evaluation are important ways to capture progress and assess where changes may need to be made. Whittlesea have found that a regular process of consultation around their gender equity strategy was necessary to include middle-level managers to ensure that reporting requirements were practical, feasible, SMART and included in business plans.

Background



In 2014 the Whittlesea Council implemented a Gender Equity Strategy, which “articulates Council’s priorities for advancing gender equity across the organisation and achieving the vision for a community that is inclusive, respectful, fair and safe for people of all genders. The City of Whittlesea recognises that addressing gender inequity is crucial to achieve better health and social wellbeing; improved organisational performance; and the prevention of violence against women”.²³⁴

Implementation

Now into its third year of implementation, Amy Clarke, Social Policy and Projects Officer with the City of Whittlesea reports that council has recently made some changes to the monitoring, reporting and embedding of the Gender Equity Strategy. She reports that during a review and update of the Action Plan in 2016, several issues were identified, which led to a refinement of the policy. This review noted:

- Some actions needed refining. While much had been achieved, many actions remaining in the plan were too broad in their description – their intention was clear but not the specifics of what was actually to be done. This made it difficult to ‘tick off’ on those actions.
- Managers need more involvement. While the Gender Equity Working Group (GEWG) could think strategically and generate ideas about the potential next steps in gender equity for the organisation, we needed input and discussion with the managers responsible to better understand their work areas and ensure actions were feasible and supported.
- Reporting requirements were onerous. With many action plans and strategies circulating around Council, governed by different bodies or departments, Managers were finding reporting requirements increasingly onerous. A more centralised approach would be beneficial and so the following steps were taken:

From the ideas generated by the working group, potential actions or changes were drafted and the officer responsible for the Strategy then met with the responsible managers to discuss relevance and feasibility. Adjustments to actions were made where needed. This helped foster greater understanding and ownership of gender equity actions across the organisation.

Given the organisation-wide nature of the Strategy, any actions from 2017/18 onwards are now included under the ‘Corporate Links’ section of Departmental Business Plans. All reporting will then be coordinated through centralised Corporate Planning processes. This frees up capacity of the officer responsible for the Strategy to drive its implementation through capacity building and other mechanisms. Engagement with Corporate Planning also provided valuable input into the refinement of actions, ensuring they were all ‘SMART’ measures – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely.

While ongoing monitoring and refinement has meant that some of the more ‘aspirational ideas’ may not have made it into the current plan (either for lack of capacity or will), Amy Clarke reports “they will remain as ideas to work towards once council has identified the steps and capacity building required to implement these ideas”.

(Photo: Whittlesea Council Gender Equity; <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/news-publications/plans-strategies-and-policies/gender-equity-strategy/>)

Appendix 4: Additional Resources

State Government initiatives

- Victorian Gender Equity Strategy; Safe and Strong - <http://bit.ly/2hcdF5j>
- Local Government Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity Program - <http://bit.ly/2D3VPQ7>
- Recruit Smarter - <http://bit.ly/1PhsvG7>
- Joan Kirner young and emerging leaders program - <https://www.vic.gov.au/women/women-s-leadership/joan-kirner-young-and-emerging-women-leaders.html>
- The Women's Board Leadership Program - <http://bit.ly/2ru6Qj4>
- Victorian Women's Honour Roll - <http://bit.ly/2pN7vyN>
- Women's Register - [victorian women's honour roll 2017](http://victorian.women.s.honour.roll.2017)
- The Community Partnerships for Primary Prevention Grants Program - <https://www.vic.gov.au/women/preventing-family-violence-and-violence-against-women/community-partnerships-for-primary-prevention-grants.html>
- Know Your Council - <http://bit.ly/1lu3ARK>
- Good Governance Guide - <http://bit.ly/2D2NhZ8>
- Change Our Game - <http://bit.ly/2mgl9Hb>
- Victorian Opportunity and Equal Rights Commission - <http://bit.ly/1YcgUHT>

Contact list of partners

- LGV - <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/>
- MAV - <http://www.mav.asn.au/>
- VLGA - <http://www.vlga.org.au/>
- ALGWA - www.algwa.com.au/
- LGPro - <http://lgpro.com/>
- VicHealth - <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/>
- DCA - <https://www.dca.org.au/>
- WGEA - <https://www.wgea.gov.au/>
- Our Watch - <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/>
- WHV - <http://whv.org.au/>
- Victorian Opportunity and Equal Rights commission - <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/>

Detailed list of chapter resources and research papers and links to useful tools

1. The case for change

- Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity program - Local Government Victoria - <http://bit.ly/2D3VPQ7>
- 50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity Program - <http://bit.ly/2DoeTp0>
- Recruit Smarter. Includes stories of the impact of unconscious bias - <http://bit.ly/1PhsvG7>
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Gender strategy toolkit 2014 - <http://bit.ly/2mvN6Ml>
- Centre for Ethical Leadership, Business Case for Diversity 2012, arguments and evidence - <https://cel.edu.au/our-research/building-a-business-case-for-gender-diversity>

2.1 Gender Equity

- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health -resources, research and training - <http://bit.ly/LqxGnx>
- Diversity Council Australia, Men Make a Difference: How to Engage Men on Gender Equality - <http://bit.ly/2rmaVqo>
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance - information on inclusion of Aboriginal women - <http://bit.ly/2mtvBfC>
- Women with Disabilities Victoria – A peak agency that provides resources, research and workforce development programs - <http://bit.ly/1RaeANW>
- ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs offer a range of services to assist employers, sporting organisations and service providers with all aspects of LGBTI inclusion - <http://bit.ly/2jrfy2Z>

2.2 Local Government and gender equity

- MAV Gender Equality information portal - <http://bit.ly/2FssKLR>
- Victorian Local Government Women's Charter resource materials - <http://bit.ly/2CSRFXk>
- Yarra Ranges Council Gender Equity Plan - <http://bit.ly/2mtW7p3>

Chapter 3: Elected councillors

3.1 Training and education

- A gender equity lens 'check list'; WHIN Gender Equity Organisational Assessment WHIN - <http://www.whin.org.au/resources/resources-for-gender-equity/>

Diversity Council Australia #WordsAtWork campaign - tools to create discussion

- This video - <http://bit.ly/1sxLW3g>
- Online self-assessment – test your own unconscious bias - <http://bit.ly/2D4NCu8>
- The Harvard Implicit Association Test - <http://bit.ly/2qW3U3T>
- Male Champions of Change; Gender Balance at every forum, Panel Pledge - <http://bit.ly/2azoQBf>
- Boards for Balance: Your Leadership Shadow - <http://bit.ly/2D1oOmX>

Google workplace; unconscious bias training

- Video - <http://bit.ly/2qWOYT1>
- Train-the-trainer on Unconscious Bias - <http://bit.ly/1S8HShQ>

3.2 Gender-based recruitment; elected councillors

- MAV Stand For Council - <http://edit.mav.asn.au/about-local-government/stand-for-council/Pages/default.aspx>
- VLGA Women in Local Government - <http://bit.ly/2DjMmkt>
- ALGWA 50:50 Vision - <http://bit.ly/2DjMaSh>
- Good Governance Guide - <http://bit.ly/2D2NhZ8>
- She Should Run - <http://bit.ly/2gCsT23>
- Victorian Government Get On Board - <http://bit.ly/1dLGVwi>
- Aboriginal Victoria's Governance and Sector Support program - <http://bit.ly/2D6cYYy>
- A Gender Agenda - <http://bit.ly/2qWMXpV>
- Now You Are a Councillor: <http://bit.ly/2mjEiZ9>

3.3 Culture and policies for women councillors

- Information Guide; Mayor and Councillor Entitlements reimbursement of expenses and provision of resources and facilities support for Victorian Mayors and Councillors Nov 2008 - <http://www.glenelg.vic.gov.au/files/councilpolicymayorandcouncillorentitlementspolicy.pdf>
- Good Governance Guide - <http://bit.ly/2D2NhZ8>
- Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity Program for Victorian Councils - <http://bit.ly/2Exl75x>

3.4 Leadership development for councillors

- MAV Training - <https://www.mav.asn.au/events>
- Cranlana colloquium - <http://bit.ly/2r0xjKi>
- VLGA Training - <http://bit.ly/2D7gOKU>
- Leadership Victoria programs - <http://bit.ly/1mZXckC>
- Centre for Ethical Leadership program - <http://bit.ly/2hsit93>
- Victorian Rural and Regional Community Leadership Programs - <http://bit.ly/2FvJ2DM>
- The ARLP - <http://bit.ly/1eLDSUO>
- McArthur Fellowship MAV - <http://edit.mav.asn.au/events/awards-scholarships/Pages/local-government-fellowship.aspx>
- Churchill Fellowship - <http://bit.ly/1NUBo81>
- Victorian Government Joan Kirner Young and Emerging Women Leaders program - <http://bit.ly/2lQ0rM9>
- Victorian Government Women's Board Leadership Program - <http://bit.ly/2ru6Qj4>

3.5 Advocacy and promotion, women councillors

- *Here She Is* speaking register Victorian Women's Trust - <http://bit.ly/2qXXuAX>
- Your Community, Country and Council - Aboriginal women run for election, VLGA - <http://bit.ly/2D3gkfH>
- Doing your bit - how you can help get more women on boards - <http://bit.ly/2ATBHKp>
- Maggolee; a resource for local councils to work more closely with Aboriginal communities - <http://bit.ly/2mjBEm4>

3.6 Resources for elected councillors and female candidates

- A Gender Agenda is now in its 5th edition - <http://bit.ly/2qWMXpV>
- GoWomenLG - <http://bit.ly/2D3ZVqB>
- Now You're A Councillor resource is available on a website - <http://bit.ly/2mjEiZ9>
- Your Community, Country and Council - Aboriginal women run for election VLGA - <http://bit.ly/2EzIXh4>
- Snapshots from candidates in 2016 Victorian Election Campaign:
Mel Van Dyk - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4gxkjiEkJM>
Georgia Webster - <http://bit.ly/2qVZFoL>
Nga Hoskin - <http://bit.ly/2D6FNEq>
Jacquie Janceva and Margaret Giudice - <http://bit.ly/2Fu2lYs>
- More Women for Local Government Facebook, moderated by VLGA - <http://bit.ly/2ExljBS>
- Citizen to Councillor - http://www.glenelg.vic.gov.au/files/Citizen_to_Councillor_booklet_-_2016.pdf
- Stand For Council Facebook - <http://bit.ly/2qZrBrO>
- Women Can Stand for Council, ALGWA Tasmanian Branch - <http://bit.ly/2mxZR9l>
- Tips on campaigning for Local Government, Tasmanian Government - <http://bit.ly/2DoctXM>
- Tasmanian Government Women in Local Government; You Can Make a Difference Working with the Media - <http://bit.ly/2Ftim6A>
- ALGWA South Australia Taking up the Challenge - <http://bit.ly/2Fvlgam>

- Queensland Government So you want to be a Councillor or Mayor? Information for prospective candidates in Queensland local government elections - <http://bit.ly/2DmbBCM>
- New South Wales Office of Local Government Stand for your Council - <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/becoming-a-councillor.pdf>

Chapter 4 Local government administration

4.1 Workplace training and education

Planning

- Monash City Councils – Generating Equity and Respect - <http://bit.ly/2FvwOei>
- Port Phillip City Council - E Learning portal - <http://bit.ly/2mulWWf>
- Latrobe City Council with Gippsland Women’s Health - Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit, an easy-to-use toolkit to assist councils in analysing and responding to gender inequality in the delivery of events, information, programs, projects and services - <http://bit.ly/2gkVrhM>

Training

- Gender Equity
 - > Diversity Australia - <http://bit.ly/2qVZ9HI>
 - > Workplace Gender Equality Agency, on line course What is workplace Gender Equality? - <http://bit.ly/2Fvi7Dk>
- Unconscious bias
 - > Centre for Ethical Leadership - <https://cel.edu.au>
 - > ANU online courses - <http://www.anu.edu.au/study/study-options>
 - > Diversity Australia - <http://bit.ly/2D2y7mu>
- Bystander
 - > Vichealth - <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au>
- Family Violence Sector training
 - > Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria - <http://bit.ly/1m7tXKa>
 - > The Lookout - <http://bit.ly/2Ez907V>
- Horsham Rural City council with Women’s Health Grampians, Wimmera Councils Act@Work, includes Bystander training and awareness raising - <http://bit.ly/2EyPU1l>

Education and campaigns

- Yarra Ranges Council, Maroondah City Council and Knox City Council – See Past the Stereotypes video series - <http://bit.ly/2mtW7p3>
- City of Maribyrnong’s Annual Calendar of Events to celebrate women - <https://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Community/Festivals-and-Activations>
- Resources to support the teaching of Respectful Relationships provides lists of links to key information - <http://bit.ly/2mko1CZ>
- Bystander Toolkit - <http://bit.ly/2EzorND>
- Make the Link Campaign - <http://bit.ly/2D1hx6B>
- Know the Line - <http://bit.ly/2DoihjX>
- VicHealth National Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women Survey - <http://bit.ly/1IOBBAz>

Events

- Community Conversations can be used to put gender equity on the workplace and community agenda - <http://bit.ly/2uxhGaU>
- International Day to end violence /16 Days of Activism - <http://bit.ly/1sXAk2J>

- White Ribbon - <http://bit.ly/2fpIHrq>
- International Women's Day - <https://www.internationalwomensday.com>

Relevant Contacts

- Women's health services across Victoria - <http://bit.ly/2FuCvZW>

4.2 Recruitment

- Gender Equity Employment Analysis Tool, Nillumbik Shire Council and Banyule City Council; a user-friendly equity tool that helps to identify barriers to achieving gender equity within the workplace and to audit employment practices and systems - <http://bit.ly/2qSxCqs>
- The Business Council of Australia 10 checklists - Increasing the Number of Women in Senior Executive Positions: Improving Recruitment, Selection and Retention Practices - <http://bit.ly/2D3bgYF>
- Victorian Government Recruit Smarter - <http://bit.ly/1PhsvG7>
- Words at Work – Diversity Council of Australia - <http://bit.ly/2mucCRX>
- Gender De-coder - <http://bit.ly/1bwqiUt>
- Workplace Gender Equity Agency – guidelines and tools for setting targets - <http://bit.ly/2Fthdfi>
- Human Rights Commission Recruitment Guidelines - <http://bit.ly/2mticEm>
- Change our Game. Guidelines for the recruitment & retention of women in leadership roles - <http://bit.ly/2mk7fnC>

4.3 Organisation Culture and Employment Policies

- Workplace Gender Equity Agency:
Strategic Approach to Flexibility Resources - <http://bit.ly/1YpMQJe>
Citation - <http://bit.ly/2qSfTiA>
Strategy Toolkit - <http://bit.ly/2mvN6MI>
Procurement - <http://bit.ly/2D7e72M>
- Port Phillip City Council - E Learning portal - <http://bit.ly/2mulWWf>
- Promising Practices in Workplace and Organisational Approaches for the Prevention of Violence Against Women RMIT for Our Watch - <http://bit.ly/2D1kgNn>
- Victorian Women's Charter Checklist and Action Plans - <http://bit.ly/2CSRFxk>
- City of Monash:
Gender Equity and Respect Applying a gender lens in the workplace - <http://bit.ly/2qWmgI9>
Supporting gender equity in the workplace - <http://bit.ly/2EA7dzw>
- Workplace Gender Equality Procurement Principles - <http://bit.ly/2mmjShR>
- Whittlesea Council; Gender equity design guidelines for community facilities - <http://bit.ly/2fJ9BNk>
- WhittleseaOur Watch Putting prevention into practice toolkit - <http://bit.ly/2vHHnlg>
- MAV Emergency Management Gender Policies - <http://www.mav.asn.au/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/emergency-management/gender-and-emergency-management>
- Closing the Gender Pay Gap – Male Champions of Change - <http://bit.ly/2CUUR4x>

4.4 Leadership Development

- LGPro Leadership Programs - https://www.lgpro.com/LGPro/Professional%20Development/Programs/Executive_Leaders_Program/LGPro/Professional_Development/Programs/Executive_Leadership_Program.aspx?hkey=52f3a606-ae7f-4ffe-84a7-37ef83204fc1
- LGPro – Annual Women's Conference and Networking Dinner - https://www.lgpro.com/LGPro/Professional_Development/Events/Women_s_Network_Dinner/Womens_Network_Dinner.aspx?hkey=02573824-5a6b-46fb-a762-6a99545a922e&WebsiteKey=3ff4b40c-184a-4a4e-9798-274595e3f801
- MAV PVAW Network - <http://bit.ly/2D6S38z>
- Sally Isaac Memorial Scholarship - <https://sallyisaacfund.com>

- LGPro – Rural Women’s Professional Development Scholarship - https://www.lgpro.com/LGPro/Professional%20Development/Events/Womens_Professional_Development_Forum/Rural_Womens_Scholarships/LGPro/Professional_Development/Events/Womens_Professional_Development__Forum_Folder/Rural_Womens_Scholarship.aspx?hkey=0f198b6f-ca62-4d02-8e39-381f3412848f
- LGPro - Awards of Excellence - https://www.lgpro.com/LGPro/Awards/Awards_for_Excellence/LGPro/Awards/Awards_for_Excellence.aspx?hkey=34a34649-71ea-490b-a76f-039b278ae152
- LGPro Board Advocacy - https://www.lgpro.com/LGPro/Representation/Advocacy_Home/LGPro/Advocacy/Advocacy_Home.aspx?hkey=f8de571a-e07b-4d87-90dc-509e28e53032

4.5 Internal reporting on gender equity

Reporting and accreditation

- Workplace Gender Equality Agency Citation eligibility assessment guide - <http://bit.ly/2D6uNHe>
- Governance Institute of Australia. Guidelines for gender balance performance and reporting Australia - <https://www.asx.com.au/documents/asx-compliance/guidelines-for-gender-balance-performance-and-reporting-australia.pdf>
- White Ribbon Accreditation Program - <http://bit.ly/2gFeS7Q>
- Victorian Women’s Charter - <http://bit.ly/2CSRFXk>
- 5050 Vision Councils for Gender Equity Accreditation Program - <http://bit.ly/2FtolrR>

Targets

- Workplace Gender Equality Agency Setting Gender Targets - <http://bit.ly/2btMyV7>

Assessment and Analysis Toolkits

- WGEA Gender Strategy Toolkit - <http://bit.ly/2mvN6Ml>
- Northern Region Organisational Assessment Tool - <http://bit.ly/2FspQ9R>

4.6 Advocacy and promotion of gender equality

Charter

- Victorian Local Government Women’s Charter, Checklists and evaluation - <http://bit.ly/2AQOopn>

Good Practice; corporate

- Westpac - <http://bit.ly/2lCgrpP>

Advocacy

- Melbourne City Councils Guide to Reporting Sexist Advertising - <http://bit.ly/2D471vi>
- Male Champions of Change - <http://bit.ly/2qXjiqc>
- Engaging Men – Diversity Council of Australia - <http://bit.ly/2rmaVqo>

Victorian Government Equality Strategy Consultation Paper Submissions

- MAV - <http://www.mav.asn.au/news-resources/news/2016/mar/gender-equity-strategy-submission-29mar16>
- Melbourne City Council - <http://bit.ly/2EADFln>

Toolkit

- Gender Equity and Respect Toolkit - <http://bit.ly/2EA7dzw>
- Our Watch; Putting Prevention into Practice (section 8 Developing a media and communications plan) - <http://bit.ly/2vHHnlq>
- Monash and LinkHealth: Applying a Gender Lens in the Workplace Tool Kit - <http://bit.ly/2mm6R85>

Awards

- Women's Honour Roll - <http://bit.ly/2mtTmFK>
- Davidsons Top 50 Public Sector Women - <http://bit.ly/2pcYP5b>
- Rural Women's Award - <http://bit.ly/1qVjFhK>
- ALGWA – Annual Bursary Study Award - <http://bit.ly/2D4NprV>
- City of Greater Shepparton Women's Charter Alliance Annual Awards - <http://bit.ly/2qTmZDD>
- Australia Day Awards - <http://bit.ly/2DmVchj>
- Local Government Awards - <http://bit.ly/2D45N3a>
- Business Awards – for examples see: <http://bit.ly/2hebL6j> and <http://bit.ly/2D2uhtA>
- Sports Awards - <http://bit.ly/2DIA4lj>
- Sally Isaac Award - https://www.lgpro.com/LGPro/Awards/Sally_Isaac_Award/LGPro/Awards/Sally_Isaac_Award.aspx?hkey=64449b1f-c6df-43a5-8e73-84b608d08a02

Awareness raising and campaigns

- Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Council – See Past the Stereotypes video series - <http://bit.ly/2mtW7p3>
- City of Maribyrnong's Annual Calendar of Events to celebrate women - <https://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/festivalcity/Festivals>
- Resources to support the teaching of Respectful Relationships provides lists of links to key information - <http://bit.ly/2mko1CZ>
- Make the Link Campaign - <http://bit.ly/2D1hx6B>
- Know the Line - <http://bit.ly/2DoihjX>

Events

- Community Conversations - <http://bit.ly/2uxhGaU>
- International Day to end violence /16 Days of Activism - <http://bit.ly/1sXAk2J>
- White Ribbon Day - <http://bit.ly/2fpIHrq>
- International Women's Day - <http://bit.ly/1XkV07k>

4.7 Examples of local government gender equity projects and initiatives

- Local Government Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity Program Webinar - <http://bit.ly/2mvGI7C>
- Gippsland Women's Health Paving the Way - <http://bit.ly/2ATvHBn>
- MAV Promising Practice Portal: Includes
 - > Ballarat City Council; Strengthening the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community by Preventing Violence Against Women
 - > Darebin City Council; Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years
 - > Frankston City Council; Baby Makes 3 Ante-Natal Pilot
 - > Horsham Rural City Council; Act@Work
 - > Latrobe City Council; Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit
 - > Macedon Ranges Shire Council; Rural Challenge
 - > Maroondah City Council; Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together
 - > Nillumbik Shire Council; Gender Equity in HR Tool
 - > Port Phillip City Council; Local Government E-Learning Project
 - > City of Whittlesea; Gender equity in design guidelines - https://www.mav.asn.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/7306/Whittlesea-City-Council-Gender-Equity-in-Design-Guidelines.pdf

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