

# Gender Equality Action Plan (2021–2025)



## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners:

Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land – the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community. We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.



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## **1. Message of commitment from our CEO**

I am pleased to present Horsham Rural City Council's inaugural Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). The GEAP 2021-2025 outlines the strategies and actions that we will take to promote gender equality in our workplace and builds upon our previous and ongoing work to advance gender equality, including our involvement with the CoRE (Communities of Respect and Equality) alliance and the Act@Work program.

Horsham Rural City Council can play a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and is therefore committed to supporting gender equity within the organisation and in the design and delivery of Council services and programs. Council aims to ensure fairness for all people, so that everyone in our organisation and in the Horsham community can enjoy the same opportunities, rights and respect, regardless of their gender. Council recognises the importance of gender equality and the organisation has endorsed this through the first Horsham Rural City Council GEAP, which will guide future actions towards gender equality throughout the workplace over the next four years.

The GEAP 2021-2025 was developed through consultation with staff reference groups and committees, the Leadership Team and Councillors, union representatives, Women's Health Grampians and the Gender Equality Act Advisor. The GEAP identifies specific timelines, progress measures and responsibilities relating to targeted actions that align with and address each gender equality indicator.

We commit to providing resources to help us to achieve these actions in the specified time frames, and will report upon progress towards these actions on a quarterly basis. It is our intention that this commitment will help move Horsham Rural City Council towards our organisational vision for gender equality, "to create a safe, equal and fair workplace where all people, regardless of gender and diversity of background, can access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities."

**Sunil Bhalla**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Horsham Rural City Council**

## 2. Background

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Victoria) (the Act) commenced on 31 March 2021 and is the first and only legislation in Australia that requires public sector organisations to make progress towards improving gender equality. The main purposes of the Act are to require the public sector, Councils and universities to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality, through Gender Equality Action Plans, and to promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services, through Gender Impact Assessments.

Under section 10 (1) of the Act, defined entities must prepare a Gender Equality Action Plan that includes the results of the Workplace Gender Audit and strategies and measures for promoting gender equality in the workplace, based on the results of the workplace gender audit. In preparing the Gender Equality Action Plan, defined entities must also take into account the gender equality principles, consult with the governing body of the entity, the employees, employee representatives and any other relevant person and ensure that adequate resources are allocated to developing and implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan.

The Workplace Gender Audit, undertaken prior to developing a Gender Equality Action Plan, must assess the state and nature of gender inequality in the workplace of the defined entity as at 30 June in the Gender Equality Action Plan reporting year to which the audit relates. The Workplace Gender Audit must have regard to the workplace gender equality indicators, any gender equality targets or gender equality quotas prescribed in relation to the entity and the disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of any other factors, in addition to gender inequality.

Under section 19 (1) of the Act, defined entities must also prepare a progress report and submit it to the Commissioner on or before 31 October in every second year after submitting a Gender Equality Action Plan. The progress report must report on progress in relation to the measures and strategies set out in the Gender Equality Action Plan and demonstrate advancement in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators. The progress report must also report on any gender impact assessments undertaken within the relevant period by identifying the policies, programs or services that were the subject of the assessments and reporting on the actions taken in response to these assessments. In submitting the progress report, defined entities must display "reasonable and material" progress towards its gender equality targets.

The requirements under the Gender Equality Act are also closely aligned with those in the *Local Government Act 2020*. Under the Local Government Act, the CEO must develop and maintain a workforce plan that, amongst other things, sets out measures to seek to ensure gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness. The Workforce Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan are complementary and interrelated documents which cross-reference each other at various points.

## 3. Introduction

### 3.1. Purpose of the Gender Equality Action Plan

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women, men and gender diverse people. Gender equity recognises that within all communities, women, men and gender diverse people have historically had different benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities. To ensure fairness between people of different gender, strategies that promote gender equity may be necessary to compensate for historical and social disadvantages.

The Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–2025 represents Horsham Rural City Council's commitment to ensuring fairness between people of different genders. Implementing these gender equality strategies will assist towards gender equity, where there are equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and gender diverse people.

### 3.2. Principles

#### 3.2.1. Guiding Gender Equality Act Principals

- All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness;
- Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender;
- Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice;
- Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria;
- Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls;
- Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community;
- All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices;
- Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes;
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage based on sex and gender; and
- Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

### 3.3. Our Organisational Vision and Values

Through an internal consultation process, the organisation has developed a vision and set of values that is actively promoted and integrated into operations. The organisational vision and values are an integral driver of organisational culture.



# Our Organisational VISION

A progressive and innovative organisation, delivering high quality and sustainable services

# Our Organisational VALUES



**F**



**A**



**I**



**R**

**WE VALUE**

**FLEXIBILITY**

We are adaptable to changing circumstances

**MY BEHAVIOUR**

- I am willing to embrace new ideas and ways of doing things
- I am committed to finding a way to make it happen
- I seek opportunities for ongoing learning and continuous improvement
- I am willing to compromise for a better outcome

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

We are responsible for our behaviour and actions

**MY BEHAVIOUR**

- I lead by example
- I take ownership of my actions and decisions
- I perform my role with pride
- I deliver what I promise

**INTEGRITY**

We are ethical, transparent and honest in our conduct

**MY BEHAVIOUR**

- I do the right thing
- I always bring my best self to work
- I communicate openly and directly
- I act in the best interests of the community

**RESPECT**

We value diversity and appreciate others and will not tolerate sexual or other forms of harassment

**MY BEHAVIOUR**

- I treat others the way I expect to be treated
- I care for the people I work with
- I am inclusive and treat everyone equally
- I consider other views to gain a shared understanding



### **3.4. Sources of information**

HRCC's Gender Equality Action Plan draws upon a range of information sources to ensure that the strategies and actions associated with the plan are measurable and relevant to the organisation. In section 4. Where are we now?, the context behind each strategy is discussed with reference to the relevant source of information. This link will also be clearly visible in section 9. Our Gender Equality Action Plan.

The sources of information relevant to HRCC's 2021–2025 Gender Equality Action Plan include:

#### **3.4.1. Workplace Gender Audit**

The initial workplace gender audit aims to establish baseline data on gender equality, so that the organisation can identify critical gaps and areas of improvement to address in the GEAP. This baseline data also enables the organisation to monitor and assess progress made in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators, including whether strategies and actions are effective.

#### **3.4.2. People Matter Survey**

The People Matter survey is the annual Victorian Public Sector survey of staff. The 2021 survey asked specific questions relating to gender equality, including around equal employment opportunity, career development, diversity and inclusion, flexible working, and cultural safety, as a means to collect information relevant to the Workplace Gender Audit and Gender Equality Action Plan.

The number of respondents (83) in relation to the total number of staff (270) was relatively low (31%), with an apparent bias towards white collar staff. Given this, and the lack of reporting history, the use of the data from the People Matter survey for the purposes of the Gender Equality Action Plan is somewhat limited.

#### **3.4.3. 2021 Organisational Culture & Satisfaction Survey**

The 2021 Horsham Rural City Council Organisational Staff Survey was conducted on behalf of the organisation by the University of South Australia. The 2021 survey is the first of two surveys over three years. The survey questions were asked around staff perceptions of organisational culture, organisational climate, citizenship behaviors and psychological capital, and how people of different gender, age and tenure (and other factors) experience these differently.

The survey was completed in May 2021 and the [comprehensive report of results](#) provided in August 2021. A total of 148 of (approximately) 270 staff members completing the survey, indicating a response rate of 55%. This gives acceptable power and accuracy to the survey results as it represents a notable proportion of staff.

#### **3.4.4. Employee Reference Group**

HRCC's Gender Equality Act employee reference group, or working group, was developed to provide a central point of reference for staff consultation. All employees at HRCC were invited to join the reference group and 11 staff, with representatives from each of the three Directorates at HRCC, formed the final group.

Three 1-hour reference group meetings were held to discuss the results of the Workplace Gender Audit and the People Matter survey, whilst additional written feedback and input was also received from the group.

#### **3.4.5. Gender Equality Act Advisor**

The Gender Equality Act Advisor was employed through Women's Health Grampians to work collectively, alongside other local defined entities, in a cluster model to support the implementation of the Gender Equality Act requirements. As part of the agreement, the Gender Equality Act Advisor worked with HRCC from May 2021 to December 2021 and provided approximately 8 hours of support each fortnight to the organisation.

The Gender Equality Advisor assisted with the analysis of the Workplace Gender Audit and People Matter survey data, led Gender Impact Assessment training for the benefit of staff and has provided ongoing direction and support to our Gender Equality Act requirements. Furthermore, the Gender Equality Act Advisor assisted the process of developing and reviewing the strategies and actions that make up our Gender Equality Action Plan.

#### **3.4.6. VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report**

As part of the performance audit *Sexual Harassment in Local Government*, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) conducted a sector-wide survey. A total of 75 of 79 Victorian local Councils, including Horsham Rural City Council, participated in the voluntary survey.

44 respondents (25 men and 19 women) from HRCC completed the survey in 2020. Given this relatively low response rate, the use of the HRCC VAGO survey data for the purposes of the Gender Equality Action Plan is somewhat limited.

#### **3.4.7. Workforce Plan**

Under section 46(4) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Chief Executive Officer must—

- (a) develop and maintain a workforce plan that—
  - (i) describes the organisational structure of the Council
  - (ii) specifies the projected staffing requirements for a period of at least 4 years
  - (iii) sets out measures to seek to ensure gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness.

In developing and maintaining a workforce plan, the Chief Executive Officer must also have regard to the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. In this way, the Gender Equality Action Plan and the Workforce Plan are linked by legislation and as such cross-reference each other at various points. A number of the strategies and actions in the Gender Equality Action Plan also appear in the Workforce Plan, which is intended as a means to streamline actions and set out the aligned objectives of these two documents.

#### **3.4.8. Aged Experience Survey**

The ageing workforce insights project and corresponding staff survey was conducted by the School of Psychology, University of Queensland, to examine wellbeing and engagement at work amongst younger and older cohorts of employees. The project examined what workplace features contribute to older employees feeling stereotyped, and whether feeling stereotyped leads to poorer job attitudes.

Though only 27 participants from HRCC completed the survey, the end report outlined broad mitigation strategies, based on the common themes found across the project and applicable to all participating local government organisations, to address age-related stereotyping and its consequences.

#### **3.4.9. HRCC Enterprise Bargaining Agreement**

The terms and conditions of employment for almost all Council staff are contained in the Council's Enterprise Agreement, which has been tested and certified by the Fair Work Commission. Employees can be involved in the bargaining/renewal process by representing themselves or nominating a representative (such as a union or other person to bargain on their behalf).

The current version of the agreement (No. 9) commenced on 5 February 2020 and nominally concludes on 30th June 2022.

## 4. Where are we now?

### 4.1. Indicator 1. Gender composition of all levels of the organisation.

#### 4.1.1. National and State Context

Women are under-represented in key decision-making roles across almost all industries in the Australian workforce. While women make up half of the employees in the 2019-20 Women's Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) dataset (50.5%), women comprise only:

- 32.5% of key management positions;
- 28.1% of directors;
- 18.3% of CEOs; and
- 14.6% of board chairs.

Approximately 73% of women in Australia aged 15-64 engage in, or seek, paid work each week. While this is higher than the 64% average across the OECD, women in Australia are more likely to work part-time than women in other advanced economies, with 37% of employed women in Australia working fewer than 30 hours per week, compared to the OECD average of 25%.

Australian men and women have very different reasons for working part-time; the main reason women work part-time is to care for children, while the main reason men work part-time is to study. Australian women do on average two hours more unpaid work per day than men, while men do about two hours more paid work. Further to this, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately increased the amount of unpaid work that women are doing, with remote learning and the loss of formal and informal childcare and household support services leading to a large rise in unpaid work during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

#### 4.1.2. Grampians Region Context

Across the Grampians region, women make up 27% of CEOs, general managers and legislators, while across Victoria this is 26%. A review of general directors at Grampians region councils found that 71% were men, compared to 29% women. As of September 2021, only two of the 11 Councils in the Grampians region employ a female CEO.

While women in the Grampians region are more likely to complete year 12 and university than men, this is not translating into equal employment and leadership opportunities. Unconscious bias during recruitment and promotion and a lack of flexible working arrangements in leadership roles, amongst other factors, can exclude women from these positions.

Men in the Grampians region are more than twice as likely to work in full time employment, while women are more than twice as likely to work in part time employment. Stereotypes and cultural norms associated with work and caring roles limit the ability of men and women to access the employment that best suits them.

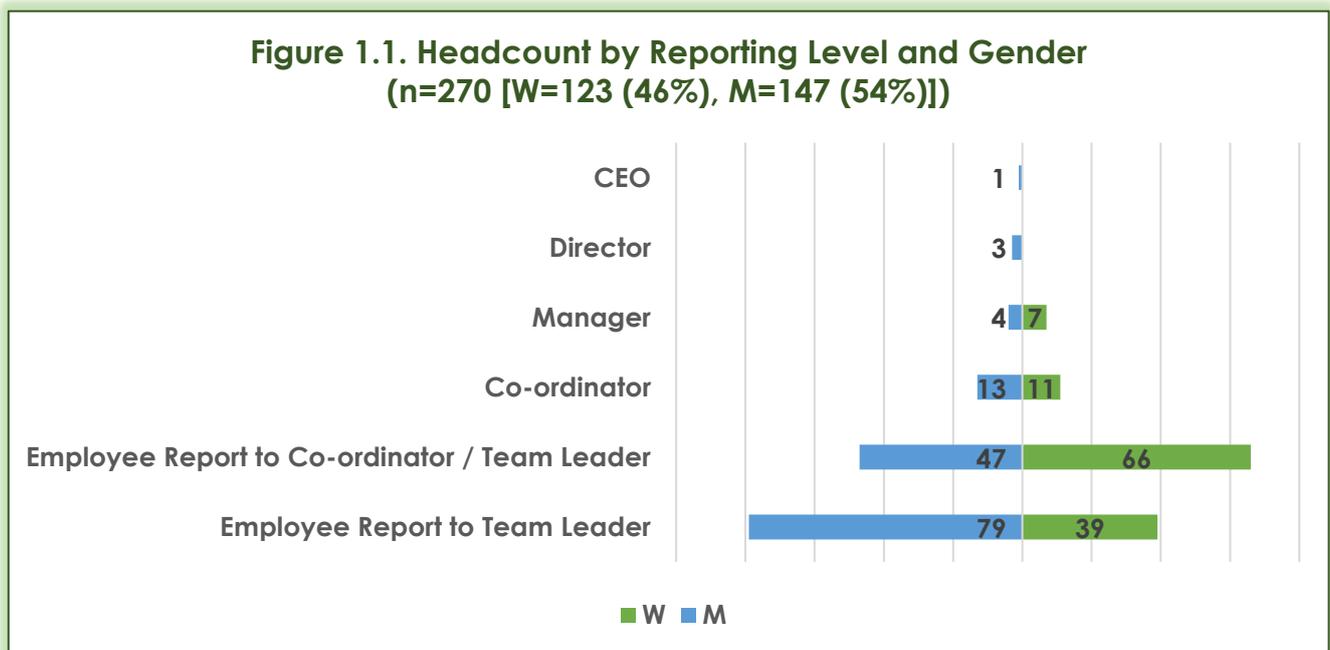
At the 2016 Census, 48.8% of the local government area population were males, while 51.2% were females. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.5 percent of the local government area population, while 87.7 percent of the population were born in Australia. England, India, Philippines, New Zealand and Italy were the most common countries of birth outside of Australia.

### 4.1.3. Horsham Rural City Council Organisational Context

#### 4.1.3.1. Workplace Gender Audit Observations

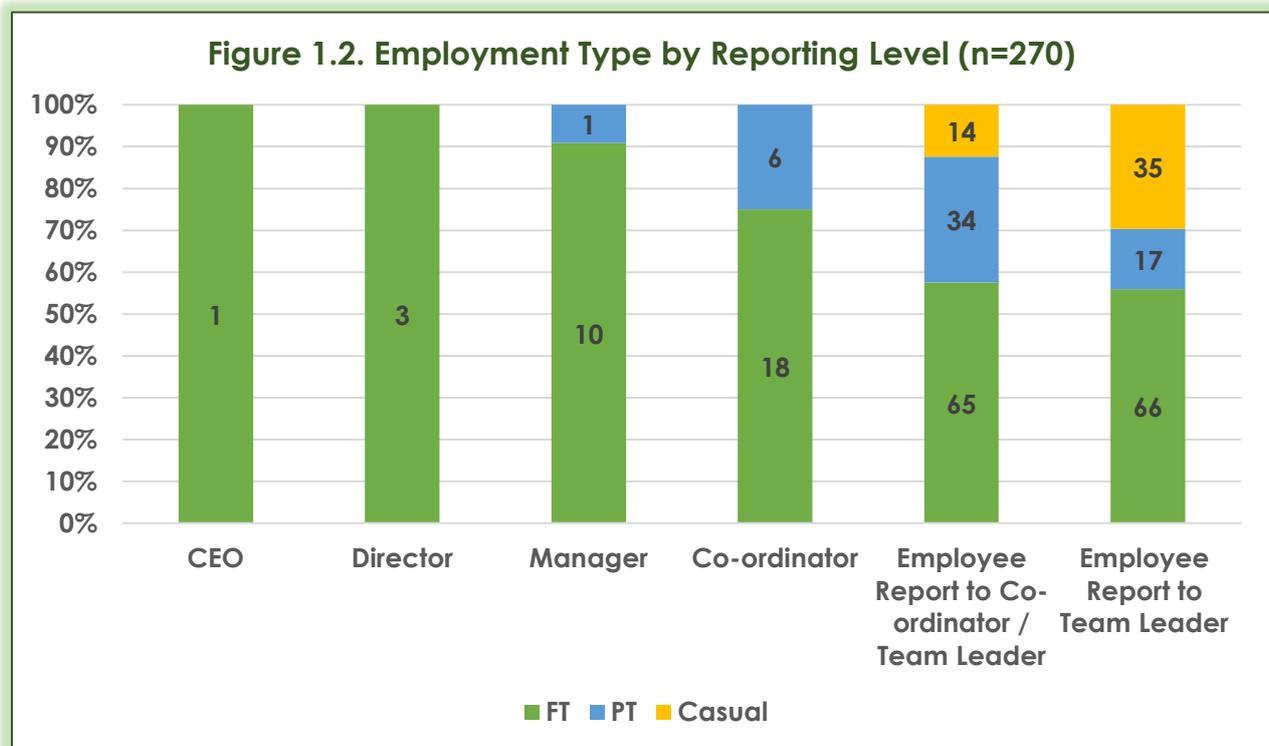
##### 4.1.3.1.1. Gender imbalance throughout reporting levels:

As shown in Figure 1.1<sup>1</sup>, there are no women in the top two levels of the organisation (Level 0 and Level – 1), while historically there has only ever been 1 female Director at HRCC. In the lower reporting levels, 31% of women working at HRCC are in the “Employee Report to Team Leader” (Level – 5) category, as opposed to 53% of men.



<sup>1</sup> While in 2020-21 HRCC would regularly have nine Department Managers (-2 Reporting Level), on the Workplace Gender Audit date of reference (30 June 2021), one Manager (-2) was on long service leave and one temporary Project Director was considered to be on an equivalent reporting level to a Manager (-2). Both of these employees were included as Managers (-2) in the Workplace Gender Audit dataset. The headcount of employees at this reporting level (-2) is therefore 11 for the sake of this report.

Figure 1.2 shows how full time positions at HRCC are more common (as a percentage of all positions in a given reporting level), the higher the reporting level. In acknowledging that women are more likely to work part-time, both across Australia and at HRCC, this factor may present a barrier for women in accessing leadership opportunities at HRCC.



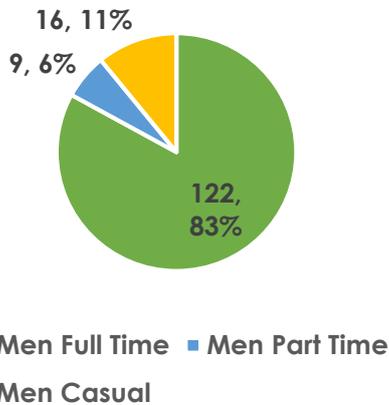
**Strategies:**

- 1.1. Create opportunities to support women in leadership.
- 1.2. Create opportunities to support women in operational roles.

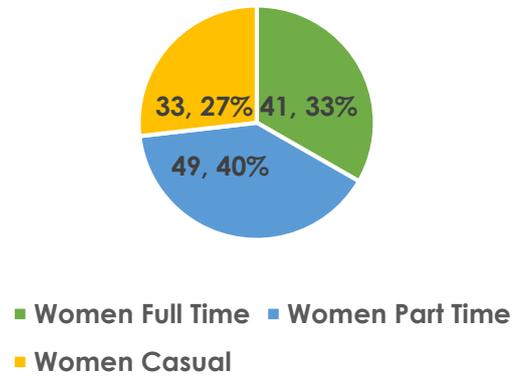
**4.1.3.1.2. Gender differences in employment arrangements:**

83% of men at HRCC work full time (Figure 1.3.), compared to 33% of women (Figure 1.4.), making men 2.59 times more likely to work full time than women at HRCC. Conversely, 40% of women at HRCC work part time (Figure 1.4.), compared to 6% of men (Figure 1.3.), making women 6.67 times more likely to work part time than men at HRCC. HRCC also employs 49 casual employees, 67% (33) of whom are women.

**Figure 1.3. Employment Arrangement Men (n=147)**



**Figure 1.4. Employment Arrangement Women (n=123)**



**Strategies:**

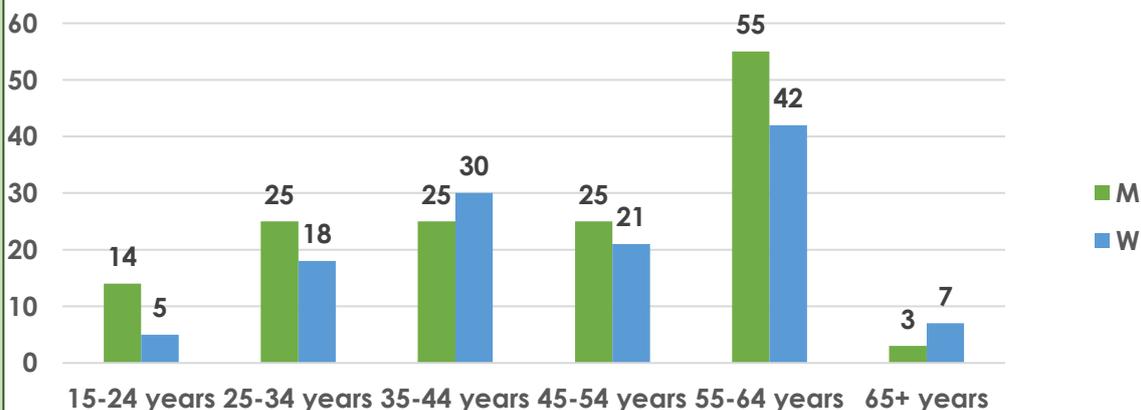
- **1.3. Address gender stereotypes regarding employment arrangements i.e. full-time, part-time and casual.**

**4.1.3.1.3. Intersectional analysis and data gaps:**

At present, HRCC does not collect intersectional data (other than age) from its employees and does not have a HR system with the capacity to store employee profile information. This limits the intersectional analysis that can be conducted in the 2021 Workplace Gender Audit and corresponding Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025.

From the intersectional data that HRCC has collected (relating to age), 35% of HRCC employees are in the 55-64 year old age bracket, which signifies an ageing workforce.

**Figure 1.5. Headcount by Gender & Age (n=270)**



## Strategies:

- **1.4. Develop data collection mechanisms to enable HRCC to identify, report upon and address intersectional disadvantage.**
- **1.5. Plan for and manage HRCC's ageing workforce.**

### 4.1.3.2. People Matter Survey

#### 4.1.3.2.1. Intersectional analysis

83 staff completed the 2021 People Matter survey (around 31% of all staff). Of HRCC's 83 respondents:

- 2.41% indicated they were from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island background.
- 6.02% identified as a person with a disability.
- 2.41% described their gender as non-binary or use a different term to man/woman.
- 1.2% described their sexual orientation as bisexual, 2.41% as gay or lesbian, 1.2% as pansexual, 83.13% as heterosexual and 1.2% use a different term (while 10.84% responded 'prefer not to say').
- 78.31% described their cultural identity as Australian, 2.41% as Central Asian, 2.41% as English, Irish, Scottish and/or Welsh, 7.23% European, 1.2% New Zealander and 1.2% Pacific Islander (while 13.25% responded 'prefer not to say').
- 1.2% described their religion as Buddhism, 31.33% as Christianity, 1.2% as Hinduism, 48.19% as 'no religion' and 1.2% as 'other' (while 16.87% responded 'prefer not to say').

Though HRCC has historically not collected intersectional data, it is clear that, from the limited sample size of 83 People Matter Survey respondents, HRCC has a diverse workforce.

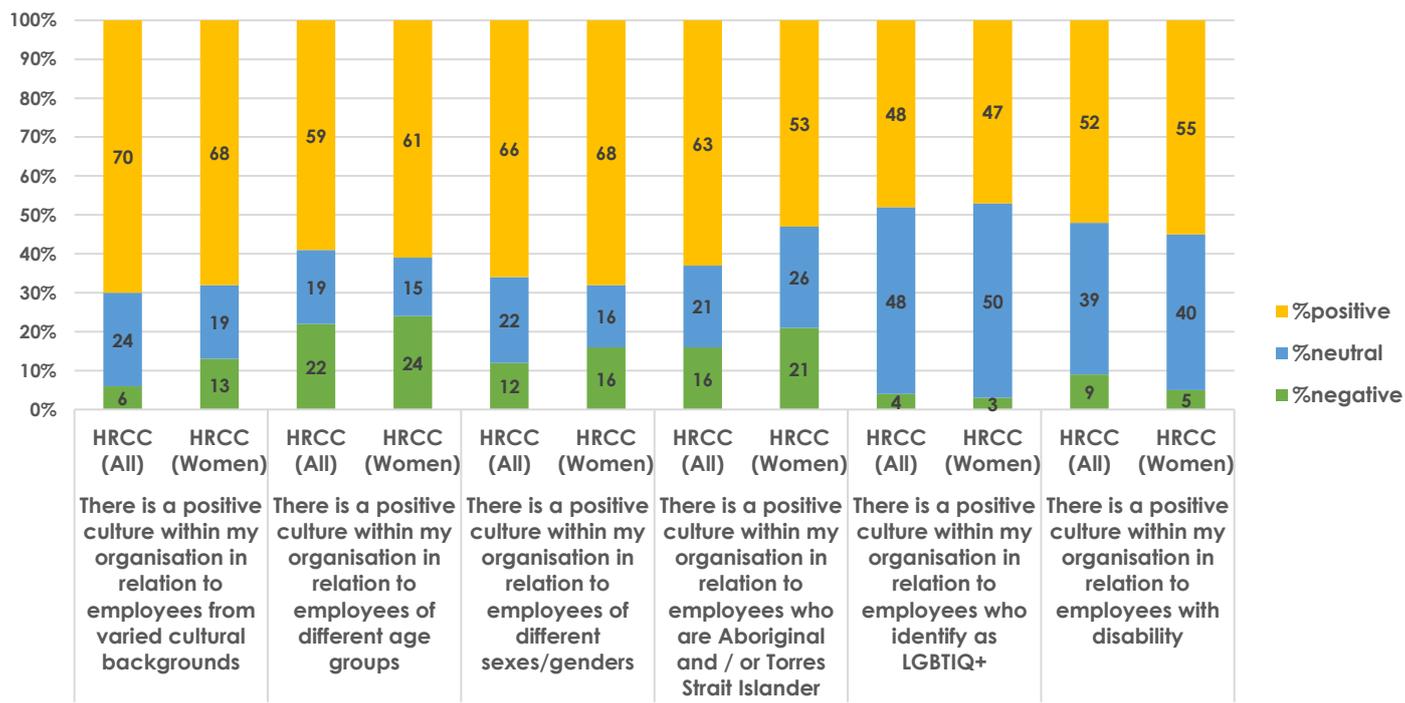
## Strategies

- **1.4. Develop data collection mechanisms to enable HRCC to identify, report upon and address intersectional disadvantage.**
- **1.6. Promote HRCC as an inclusive organisation that reflects the diverse community it serves.**

#### 4.1.3.2.2. Organisational culture towards employees from diverse backgrounds

HRCC did not have a high, positive response rate in regards to People Matter Survey (PMS) gender composition questions, especially in relation to organisational culture regarding employees with a disability or who identify as LGBTIQ+. While HRCC has quite a diverse workforce (as shown in 4.1.3.2.1), PMS results indicate that a relatively high proportion of respondents do not experience a positive organisational culture around diversity.

**Figure 1.6. PMS Results (n=83)**



## Strategies

- **1.6. Promote HRCC as an inclusive organisation that reflects the diverse community it serves.**

### 4.1.3.3. Other information sources:

#### 4.1.3.3.1. 2021 Organisational Culture & Satisfaction Survey

HRCC's **2021 Organisational Culture & Satisfaction report** indicated that longer-tenured staff (defined as staff with more than 3-4 years of service) experienced lower perceptions of organisational climate, culture and satisfaction. This bi-annual survey provides a valuable source of information for HRCC and can be utilised to understand staff experiences disaggregated by gender, age, tenure, and work area.

## Strategies

- **1.7. Understand staff perceptions of:**
  - **organisational culture**
  - **organisational climate**
  - **organisational citizenship behaviours**
  - **psychological capital****and how people of different gender, age and tenure (and other factors) experience these differently.**

#### **4.1.3.4. Consultation – what we heard:**

##### **4.1.3.4.1. Employee Reference Group**

Over three meetings, HRCC's employee reference group discussed various issues surrounding Indicator 1, including:

- the need to consult part-time and casual staff to understand if underemployment is an issue at HRCC
- the need to consult full-time staff, who at HRCC are typically men, to understand if they would like to work fewer hours, or if the workplace culture at HRCC supports men to pursue part time work.

The reference group also discussed how employees in the 5th reporting level (Employee Report to Team Leader), which are typically more operational roles and quite removed from management, are often therefore more empowered in their roles than in other reporting levels. As women are less represented in this reporting level, it was suggested that this may lead to the disempowerment of women and the escalation of gender inequality at HRCC.

#### **Strategies**

The reference group discussions led to the inclusion of some specific actions around staff consultations and assisting women into operational roles, which fall within broader strategies **1.2. Create opportunities to support women in operational roles** and **1.3. Address gender stereotypes regarding employment basis i.e. full-time, part-time and casual.**

#### **4.2. Indicator 2. Gender composition of governing bodies.**

##### **4.2.1. National and State context:**

Across Victoria, women make up 43.8% of Councillors, while 47% of Mayors are women. Of the 76 Victorian Councils that went to election in 2020, 47 have achieved either gender parity or a majority of women Councillors (61.8%).

##### **4.2.2. Grampians region context:**

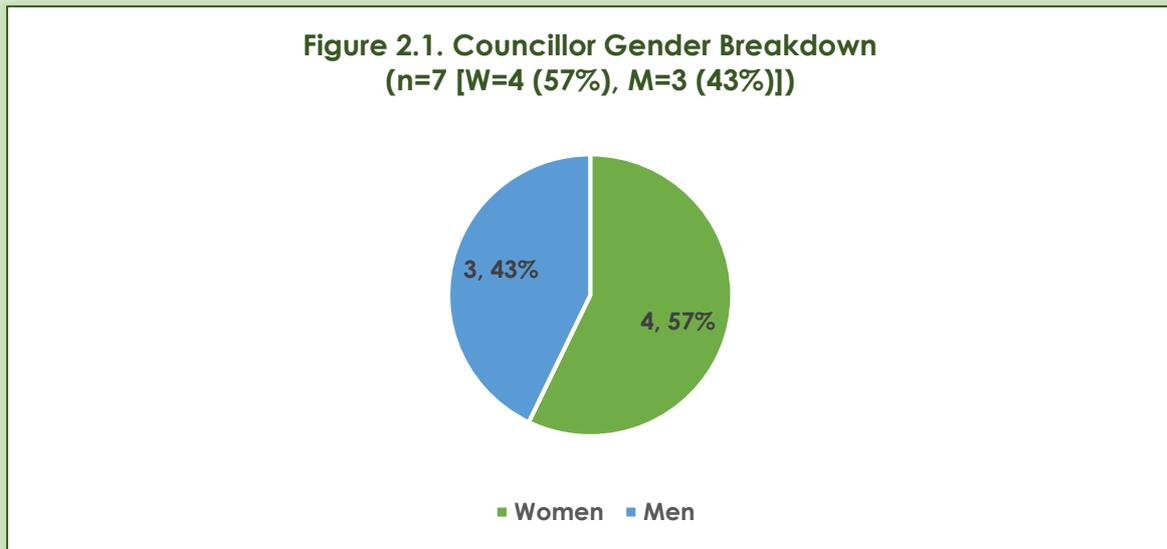
As of the 2020 elections, 55% (6 of 11) of Grampians region Councils had achieved either gender parity or a majority women Council. As at September 2021, however, only 36% of all Councillors in the Grampians region were women and only 36% of Mayors (4 of 11) were women.

### 4.2.3. Horsham Rural City Council Organisational Context

#### 4.2.3.1. Workplace Gender Audit Observations

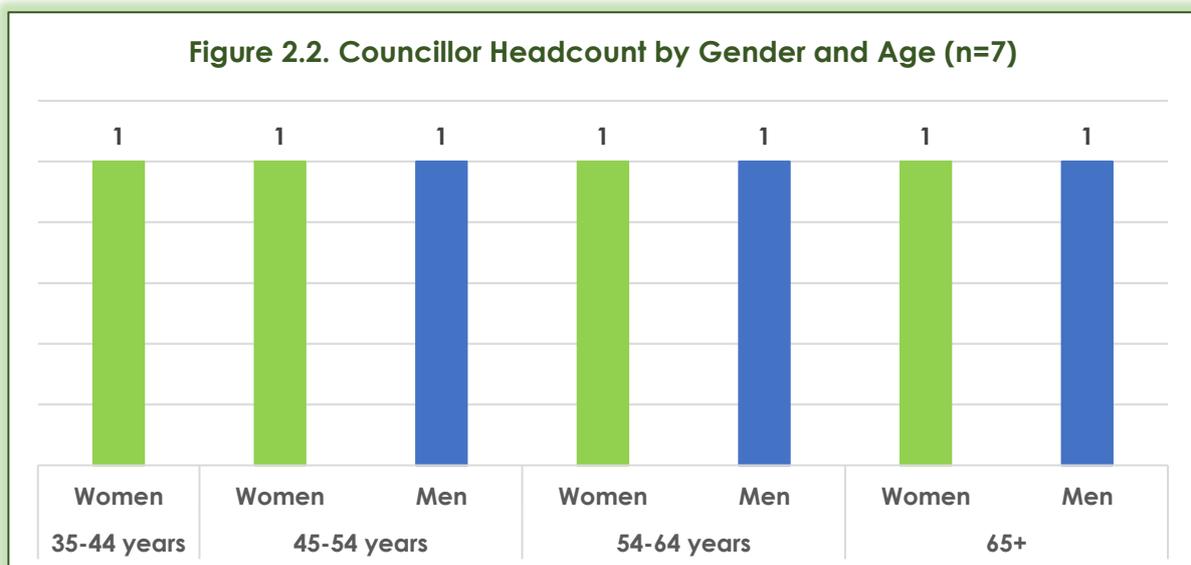
##### 4.2.3.1.1. Council Gender breakdown

Horsham Rural City Council's governing body is made up of 7 Councillors, including Mayor Robyn Gulline. All councillors were elected to Council in 2020. As shown in Figure 2.1., Council is made up of 4 women and 3 men.



##### 4.2.3.1.2. Intersectionality analysis

HRCC has a balance of men and women Councillors from the 45-54 year age group and upwards (Figure 2.2.). There are no Councillors in the 15-24 year or 25-34 year age groups.



**Strategies:**

- **2.1. Promote opportunities for all community members, regardless of age, gender or other factors, to be involved with Council.**

**4.2.3.2. Consultation – what we heard**

**4.2.3.2.1. Employee Reference Group**

The employee reference group acknowledged the need for, and benefits of, diverse leadership and Councillors.

The reference group identified the Young Councillors program as an initiative that Council is currently facilitating, and needs to continue to support and promote, to encourage the interest of young community members in Council. The reference group suggested that Council should also explore other opportunities to encourage the interest (in Council) of other diverse groups and identify and remove the barriers that they may face in accessing Council.

**Strategies:**

The reference group discussions informed the development of specific actions associated with indicator 2, including those relating to strategy **2.1. Promote opportunities for all community members, regardless of age, gender or other factors, to be involved with Council.**

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

**4.3.1. National and State context:**

The gender pay gap in Australia, the difference between the full-time equivalent rates of pay for men and women, currently sits at 14 percent in favour of men (that is, across Australia, women are paid 14% less than men). While it has narrowed slightly over the past decade, at current rates of progress it is estimated that Australia will not achieve pay equity until 2046.

There is also a large discrepancy in superannuation savings between men and women. Research from the Association of Superannuation Funds Australia estimated that in 2015-16, men approaching retirement had on average approximately 42% more superannuation than women.

The Gender Equity Insights Report for 2017 stated that not all pay gaps favour men, with part-time women employees across Australia earning, on average, 7.8% more than men. While the gender pay gap for part-time workers overall is in favour of women, this pattern reverses at senior levels. For part-time managers, women earn on average 27.1% less than men.

The gender pay gap for Victorian public sector employees is 9.3% for the non-casual workforce. The pay gap is a result of the distribution of women and men across pay bands and roles.

#### **4.3.2. Grampians Region context:**

A report published by Women's Health Grampians in 2018 found that in the Grampians region:

- Women receive significantly lower superannuation than men and are more likely to face poverty in older age.
- 89.6% of women with a disability earn below the minimum weekly wage.
- Women complete significantly more unpaid domestic work and unpaid child care than men. This in turn has an impact on women's capacity to work and earn an income outside the home.
- Gender stereotypes limit the opportunities of both women and men.

#### **4.3.3. Horsham Rural City Council Organisational Context**

##### **4.3.3.1. Workplace Gender Audit Observations**

###### **4.3.3.1.1. Gender pay gap**

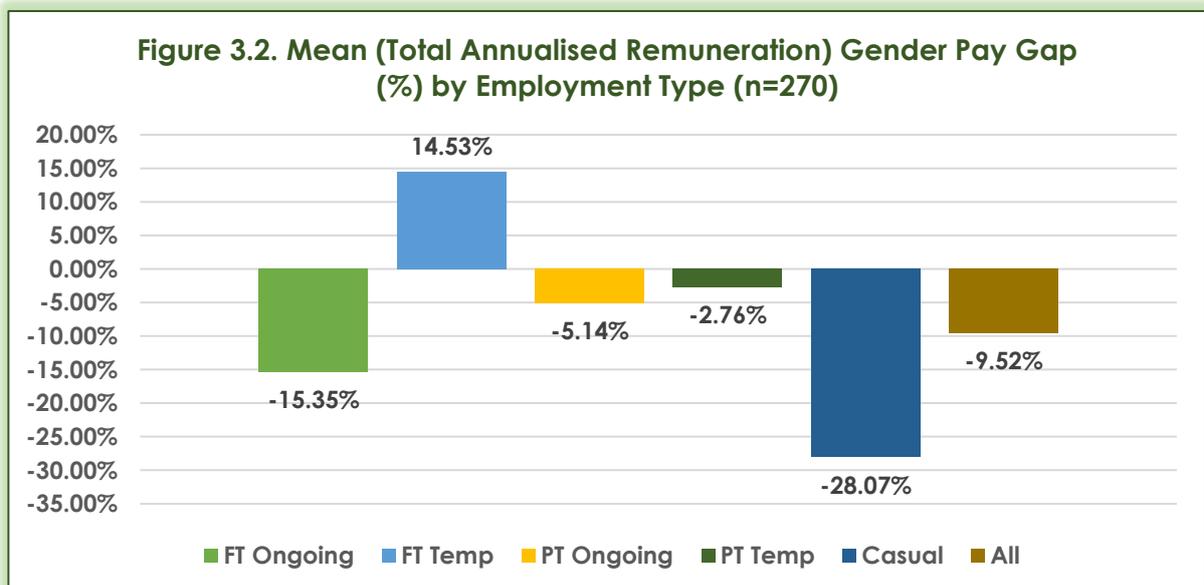
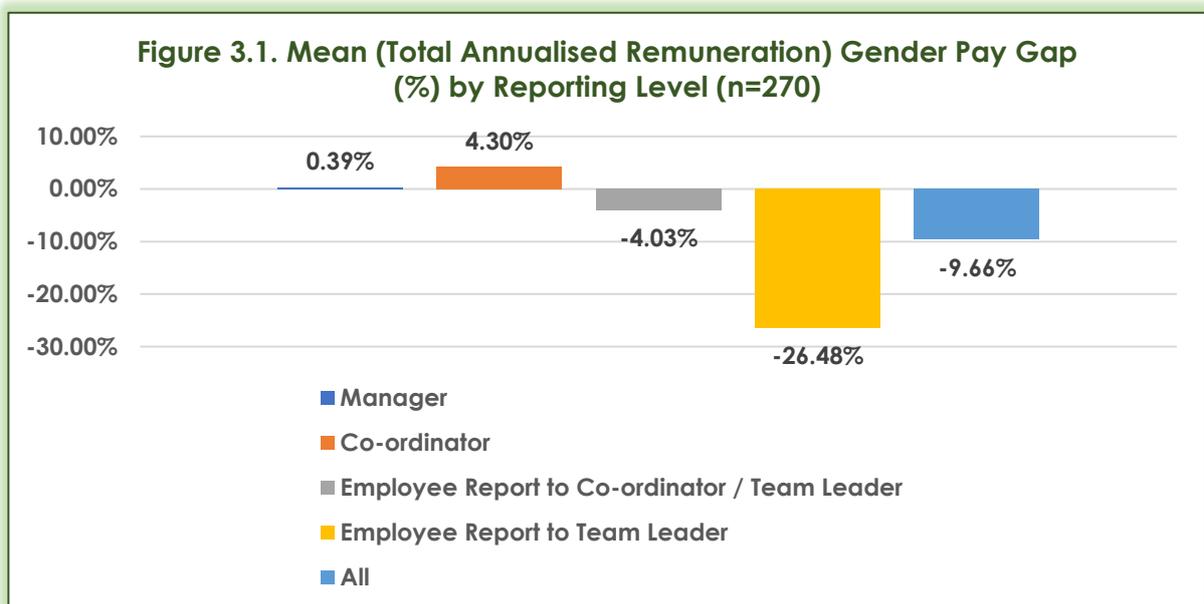
The gender pay gap is calculated as:  $(\text{Male Average Remuneration} - \text{Female Average Remuneration}) / (\text{Male Average Remuneration})$ . A positive statistic indicates that men have a higher average full time equivalent rate of pay than women, while a negative result indicates that men have a lower average full time equivalent rate of pay than women. Remuneration figures are annualised to a complete pay year and calculated at 1.0 FTE. For example, if a person is hired to a position where the FTE salary is \$50,000 per annum, regardless of the actual time worked (whether part-time/full-time or over a 6 or 12 month period), remuneration is \$50,000.

Council offers a variety of employment opportunities at a range of skill and pay levels, classified through a banding system contained in the enterprise agreement. The median annualised base salary pay gap across all staff is 15.8% in favour of women, while the median total annualised total remuneration is 15.6% in favour of women.

Mean total annualised remuneration was considered to be the most useful metric to represent gender pay differences at HRCC, and so the data references and figures below utilise this statistic, as opposed to the median and/or base salary numbers. Using the mean total annualised remuneration across all staff at HRCC, women, on average, earn 9.66% more than men (Figure 3.1). This is well above the average of 11.2% (in favour of men) for the public sector in Victoria.

On average, men at HRCC earn more at the Co-ordinator (-3) reporting level, while women earn more, on average, in the lower (-4 and -5) reporting levels (Figure 3.1). Men and women Managers at HRCC are essentially paid the same amount, on average.

Men in fulltime-temporary employment at HRCC earn more than women, while women earn more, on average, across all other employment bases (Figure 3.2.).

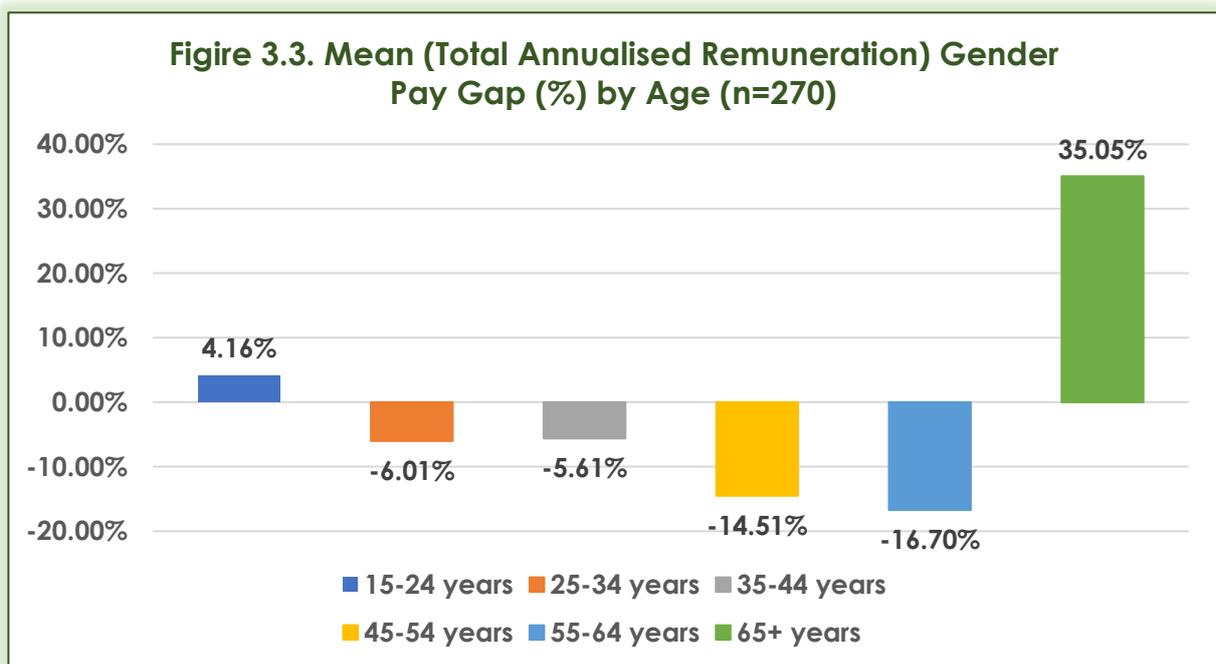


**Strategies**

- **3.1. Ensure compliance with EBA Clause 14: Equal Pay for Equal Work across the Organisation.**

**4.3.3.1.2. Intersectionality analysis**

On average, men at HRCC earn more than women in the 15-24 year old and 65+ year age group, while women earn more in all other age groups (Figure 3.3.).



**Strategies**

- **3.1. Ensure compliance with EBA Clause 14: Equal Pay for Equal Work across the Organisation.**

**4.3.3.2. Other information sources**

**4.3.3.2.1. HRCC Enterprise Bargaining Agreement**

*Clause 14: Equal Pay For Equal Work Across The Organisation* of HRCC's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement states: "As wages and conditions are reviewed across the organisation and any discrepancies from the principle of equal pay for work of equal value are identified, then wages and conditions shall be equalised by movement to the highest standard in the Council so there shall be no disadvantage suffered by an individual identified in the review. Any cost associated with this shall be borne by the core of the Council."

Clause 14: Equal Pay For Equal Work Across The Organisation of HRCC's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement is considered to address the gender pay equity principles: *establishing equal pay for work of equal or comparable value; freedom from bias or discrimination; transparency and accessibility; sustainability; and participation and engagement.* While the EBA does not explicitly address the gender pay equity principle *relationship between paid and unpaid work*, specific actions relating to Indicator 1 and Indicator 6 assess and address issues of underemployment, gender stereotypes and processes around care-giving at HRCC.

## Strategies

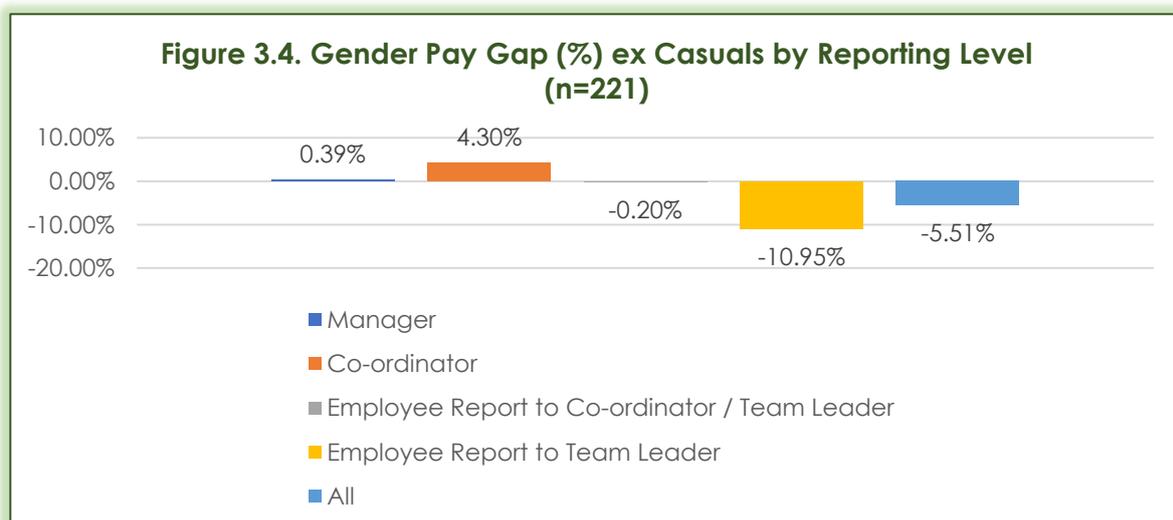
- **3.1. Ensure compliance with EBA Clause 14: Equal Pay for Equal Work across the Organisation.**

### 4.3.3.3. Consultation – what we heard

#### 4.3.3.3.1. Employee Reference Group

The employee reference group suggested that differences in pay between men and women at HRCC were likely due to the gender segregation between work groups, work type and occupation. The general consensus of the employee reference group was that HRCC employees receive equal pay for like-for-like work.

The reference group discussed how the Employee Report to Team Leader (-5) level of the organisation, which has the most significant pay gap in favour of women, is a reflection of the highly trained female workforce in this reporting level, including Council's Maternal & Child Health Nurses and Immunisation Nurses. HRCC's casual staff, which comprises 67% women, are exclusively in the Employee Report to Co-ordinator/Team Leader (-4) and Employee Report to Team Leader (-5) reporting levels, thus contributing to the pay gap (in favour of women) in these reporting levels. Figure 3.4 shows how the pay gap in the (-4) and (-5) reporting levels, as well as the pay gap for all staff, changes when excluding casual staff (as compared with Figure 3.1).



## Strategies

While no specific strategies targeting Indicator 3 arose from the employee reference group meetings, discussions around pay equity led into ideas and strategies around other indicators, including Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion and Indicator 7: Gender segregation within the workforce. The reference group discussed various topics associated with these indicators which could contribute to pay inequity, including unconscious discrimination and bias in recruitment decisions; women and men working in different industries and different jobs; female-dominated industries and jobs attracting lower wages; lack of workplace flexibility to accommodate caring and other responsibilities, especially in senior roles; high rates of part-time work for women; and women's disproportionate share of unpaid caring and domestic work. These issues are addressed in the actions and strategies associated with other indicators.

### **4.4. Indicator 4. Workplace sexual harassment.**

#### **4.4.1. National and State Context**

In 2020 VAGO conducted a sector-wide survey into sexual harassment in local government. A total of 75 of 79 Victorian local Councils, including Horsham Rural City Council, participated in the voluntary survey, with 9,939 responses received.

The 2020 VAGO report into Sexual Harassment in Local Government found 28% of surveyed council employees and Councillors experienced sexual harassment at work in the 12 months prior to June 2020. Employees across all roles and reporting levels experience sexual harassment, however based on the VAGO report, those at greater risk were:

- lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) persons (48% experienced sexual harassment)
- young women aged between 18 and 34 (42% experienced sexual harassment)
- people with disability (41% experienced sexual harassment).

The VAGO report defines sexual harassment as "any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written." The types of behaviours which the VAGO report categorised as sexual harassment included:

- intrusive questions
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes
- staring or leering
- sexually explicit email/text
- inappropriate physical contact
- sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of body
- sexually explicit posts or messages on social media
- unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing
- sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts.

## 4.4.2. Horsham Rural City Council Organisational Context

### 4.4.2.1. Workplace Gender Audit Observations

#### 4.4.2.1.1. Official complaints record

While HRCC had only one official sexual harassment complaint reported throughout 2020-21, the People Matter Survey results and VAGO organisation report show that sexual harassment is prevalent at HRCC. This fact has led to the inclusion of specific actions in the GEAP that aim to improve complaints procedures and understand the nature of sexual harassment at HRCC.

#### Strategies

- **4.1. Understand the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the workplace**

### 4.4.2.2. People Matter Survey Results

#### 4.4.2.2.1. Sexual harassment at HRCC

HRCC's People Matter Survey results showed that 12% of respondents have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the last 12 months. Of those who had experienced sexual harassment, 30% experienced sexual harassment once a week; 20% once a month; and 50% less than once a month.

40% of those who experienced sexual harassment pretended it didn't bother them; 30% tried to laugh it off or forget about it; 30% told the person the behaviour was not okay; 30% told a colleague; and 20% avoided the person by staying away from them.

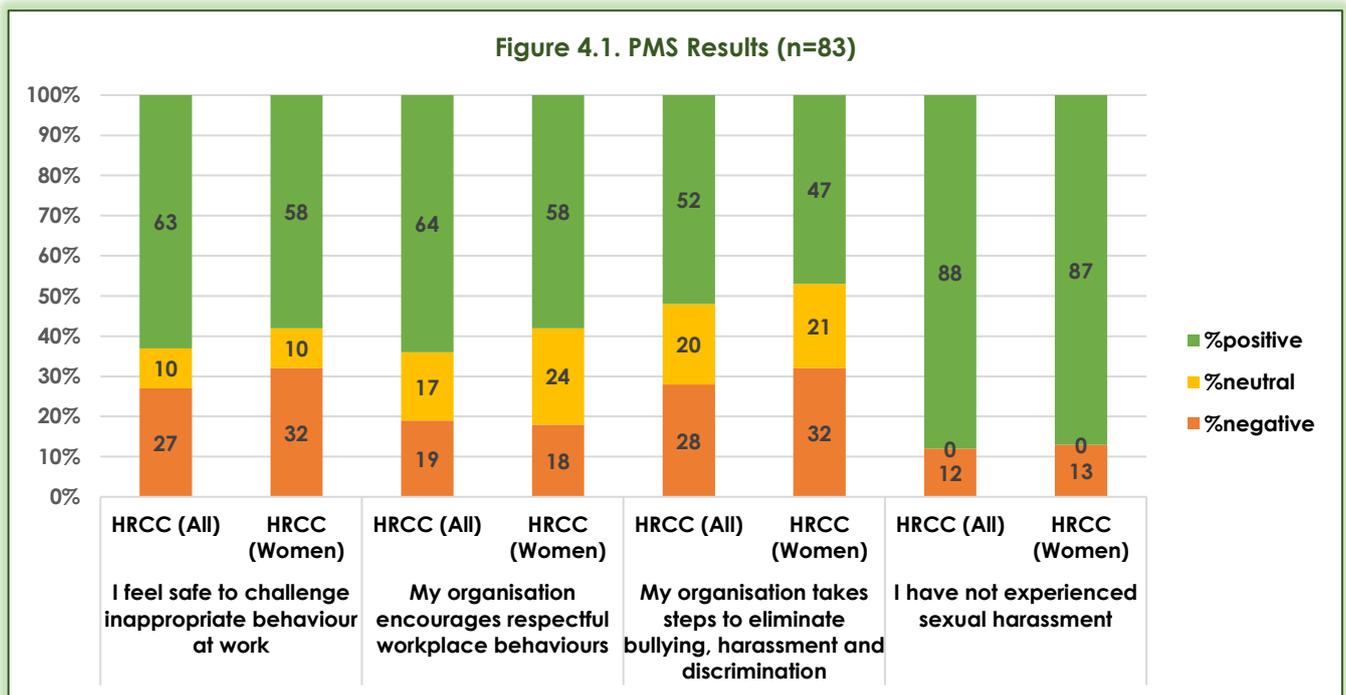
Of those who had experienced sexual harassment and did not submit a formal complaint, 50% did not submit a formal complaint because they didn't think it was serious enough; 40% because they didn't think it would make a difference; 30% because they believed it would be negative for their career; 30% because they believed there would be negative consequences for their reputation; 20% because they thought the complaint process would be embarrassing or difficult; 10% because they didn't feel safe to report the incident; and 10% because they were advised not to.

#### Strategies

- **4.2. Develop a culture that does not tolerate harassment and encourages reporting of inappropriate behaviour.**

#### 4.4.2.2. Organisational culture around harassment, discrimination and bullying

Figure 4.1 shows that HRCC did not have high positive response rates to questions relating to workplace sexual harassment, especially around challenging inappropriate behaviours and organisational actions. 27% of all respondents, and 32% of female respondents, responded negatively when asked if they feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work. 28% of all respondents, and 32% of female respondents, responded negatively when asked if they believed the organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination.



#### 4.4.2.3. Other information sources

##### 4.4.2.3.1. VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report

HRCC had 44 individual respondents to the 2020 VAGO sexual harassment survey, including 25 men and 19 women. HRCC’s survey results show that, of the 44 respondents, 41% had experienced sexual harassment, though 0% of respondents made a formal complaint. 50% of respondents who did not make a complaint said they didn’t think the behaviour was serious enough.

83% of respondents at HRCC experienced sexual harassment during day-to-day work and 39% of respondents who experienced sexual harassment said it had a negative impact on them. Of concern, only 70% of respondents believe that Council takes sexual harassment seriously.

Amongst a list of 11 recommendations, VAGO also advised that HRCC address the risk of sexual harassment by members of the public, as to address a broader theme, across all councils, which was identified within the sexual harassment in local government audit.

### Strategies

- **4.3. Address the risk of sexual harassment by members of the public.**
- **4.4. Communicate a culture of respect at Council.**

#### 4.4.2.4. Consultation – what we heard

##### 4.4.2.4.1. Employee Reference Group

The Gender Equality Act employee reference group identified the need to undertake further consultation with staff to fully understand the sexual harassment problem at HRCC. While surveys and complaints records are a good resource for high level, quantitative information, it was suggested that more personal consultations with staff, conducted in a safe environment, would further enhance the organisation's ability to understand the issue.

The reference group suggested that conversations around what kind of behaviours are acceptable should be incorporated into existing team meetings and conversations. Initiatives that build the capacity of employees to challenge inappropriate behaviour, such as providing basic 'cues' to employees to speak up and targeted bystander training, were suggested and discussed as means to improve the organisational culture around sexual harassment.

The choices that employees make not to make formal complaints was also discussed at the reference group meetings, with suggestions that the organisational culture around "whistle-blowers" is not protective. The People Matter survey results support this sentiment, with 30% of respondents reporting that they did not make a complaint because of fears that it would impact their career and reputation.

### Strategies

The employee reference group contributed to the development of specific actions relating to strategies **4.1. Understand the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the workplace** and **4.2. Develop a culture that does not tolerate harassment and encourages reporting of inappropriate behaviour**, specifically around staff consultations, training and formal and informal reporting channels.

## **4.5. Indicator 5. Recruitment and promotion.**

### **4.5.1. National and State Context**

Gender bias and gender stereotypes influence recruitment, promotion and career progression practices across the world, meaning that women or people from a diverse background may not have access to the same career opportunities as men. Other forms of disadvantage and discrimination, such as that based on disability or age, can also limit career opportunities for women and other people from different backgrounds.

Gender-coded wording in job advertisements may dissuade women from applying for some jobs and may reinforce stereotypes about which genders are more suited to certain roles. Conversely, male applicants may also be disadvantaged when applying for roles in female-dominated occupations and industries.

### **4.5.2. Grampians Region context**

While women in the Grampians region are more likely to complete year 12 and university than men, this is not translating into equal employment and leadership opportunities. Unconscious bias during recruitment and promotion and a lack of flexible working arrangements in leadership roles can exclude women from these positions.

### **4.5.3. Horsham Rural City Council Organisational Context**

#### **4.5.3.1. Workplace Gender Audit Observations**

##### **4.5.3.1.1. Recruitment practices**

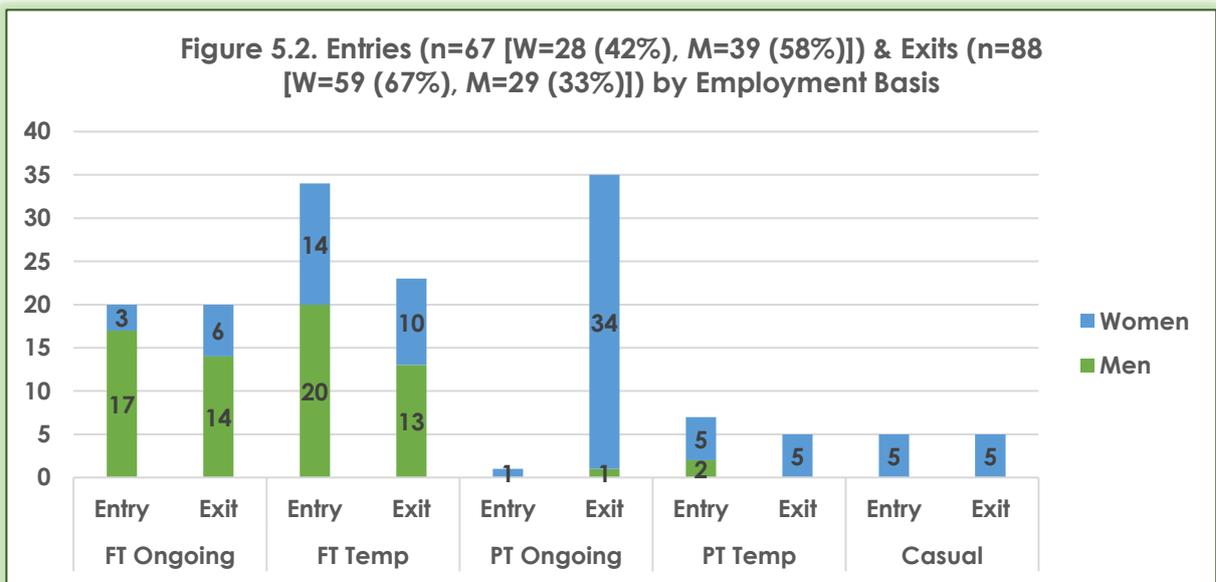
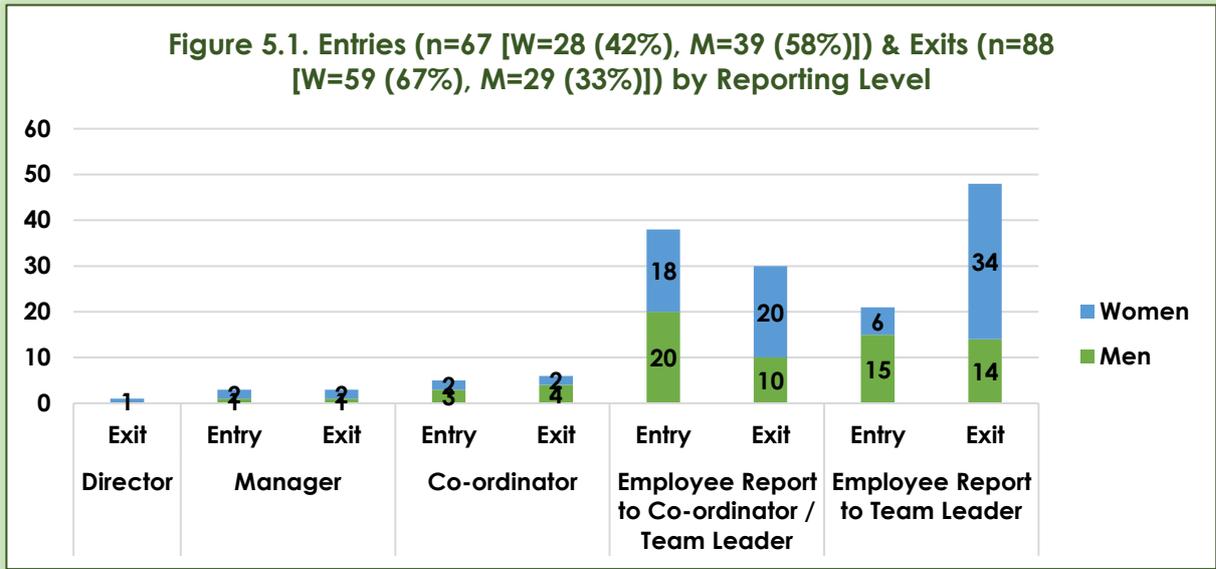
28 women and 39 men started working at the organisation during 2020-21, while 59 women and 29 men exited the organisation.

HRCC's Home Support Team, which consisted of 34 women and 1 man (majority employed on a part-time basis), exited the organisation at the end of 2020 after HRCC stopped providing the home support service to the community. The Home Support Team exit contributes significantly to the inflated exit numbers in the -5 reporting level, and somewhat to the -4 reporting level (Figure 5.1.) and PTO employment basis (Figure 5.2.).

HRCC employed 27.8 temporary FTE (headcount = 31 [14 women, 17 men]) through the Working for Victoria program<sup>2</sup> throughout 2020-21, 6.21 FTE (headcount = 9 [5 women, 4 men]) of whom were still working at Council as of 30 June 2021. The WFV program contributes to the inflated temporary employee numbers (FT Temp and PT Temp) in Figure 5.2.

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<sup>2</sup> In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Horsham Rural City Council successfully applied to the Victorian State Government for a number of additional, fixed term (6-month) positions under the "Working for Victoria" program. This initiative aimed to help Victorians, including people who had lost their jobs as a result of coronavirus, find paid work to support our community.



## Strategies

- **5.1. Equal and fair recruitment and promotion practices.**

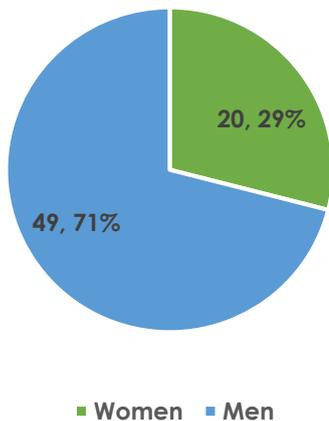
### 4.5.3.1.2. Promotion practices

71% of (temporary) higher duties completed throughout 2020-21 at HRCC were undertaken by men (Figure 5.3), while 80% of permanent promotions within HRCC throughout 2020-21 were awarded to men (Figure 5.4.).

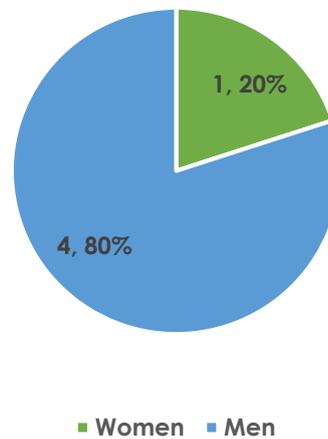
Further analysis in Figure 5.5 shows that of the 49 higher duties opportunities which were completed by men, 39 of those came within the Infrastructure directorate which is 89% made up of men (12 women:99 men). Similarly, the 4 permanent promotions who were men came within the Infrastructure directorate, while the 1 woman permanent promotion came from the Communities and Place directorate which is 72% made up of women (80 women:31 men)

While this analysis provides some explanation as to why the higher duties and permanent promotion numbers are so heavily weighted towards men, it also reaffirms the gender segregation that exists at HRCC, which strategies and actions relating to Indicator 7 will aim to address.

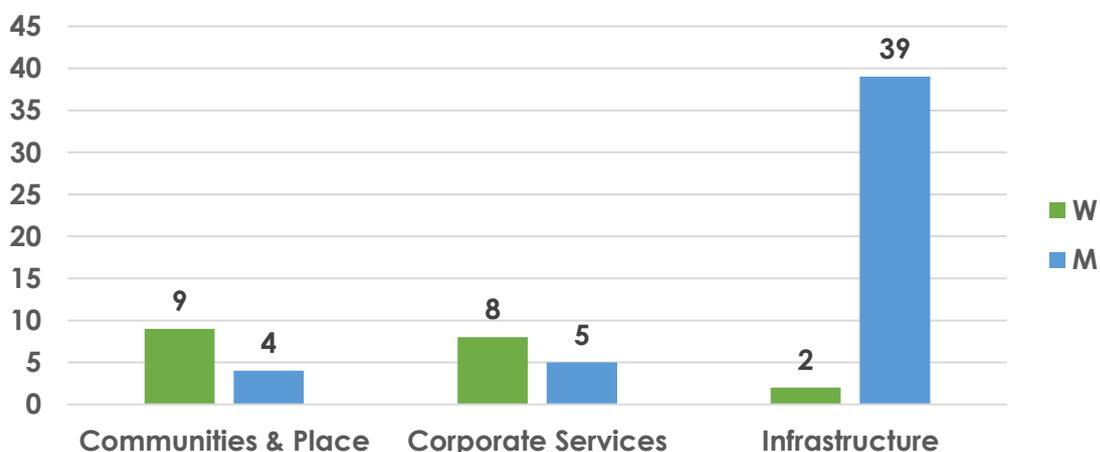
**Figure 5.3. Higher Duties Headcount (n=69)**



**Figure 5.4. Permanent Promotions (n=5)**



**Figure 5.5. Higher Duties by Directorate (n=69 [W=20 (29%), M=49 (71%)])**



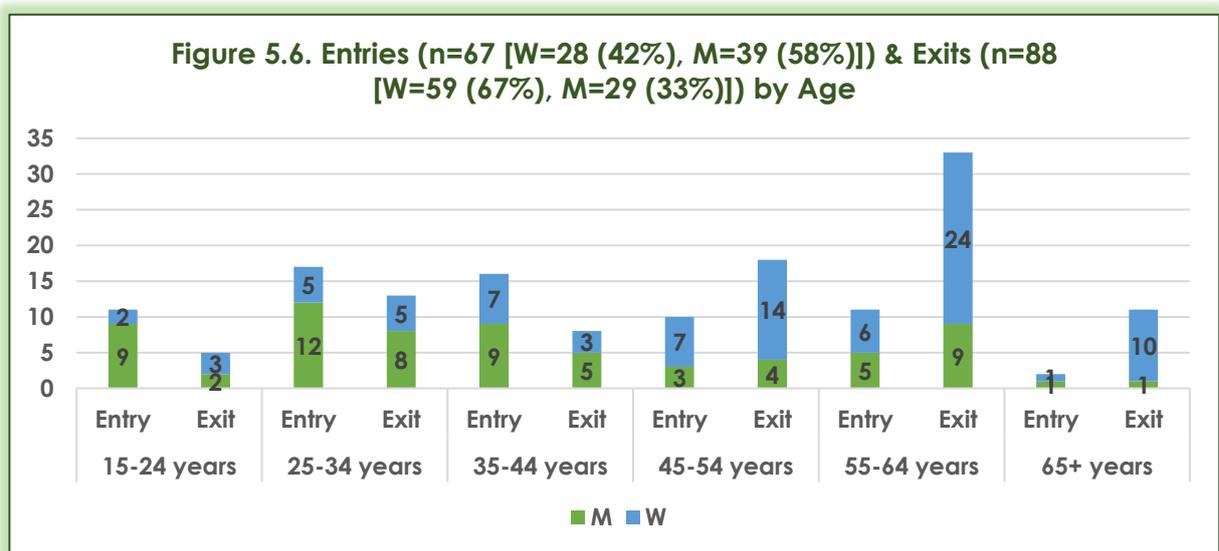
**Strategies**

- **5.1. Equal and fair recruitment and promotion practices.**

**4.5.3.1.3. Intersectional analysis**

The Home Support Team consisted of 34 women (1 aged 25-34 years, 7 aged 45-54 years, 20 aged 55-64 years and 6 aged 65+ years) and one man (1 aged 65+ years).

Men had higher entrant numbers than women in the 15-24 year, 25-34 year and 35-44 year age groups, while women had higher entrant numbers in the 45-54 year and 55-64 year age groups. The 65+ year group had an even number of male and female entrants. In general across 2020-21, younger entrants to the organisation were more likely to be men, while older entrants were more likely to be women.



**Strategies**

- **5.2. Attract and retain a diverse workforce**
- **5.4. Improve youth employment opportunities**

**4.5.3.1.4. Data collection around recruitment and promotion practices**

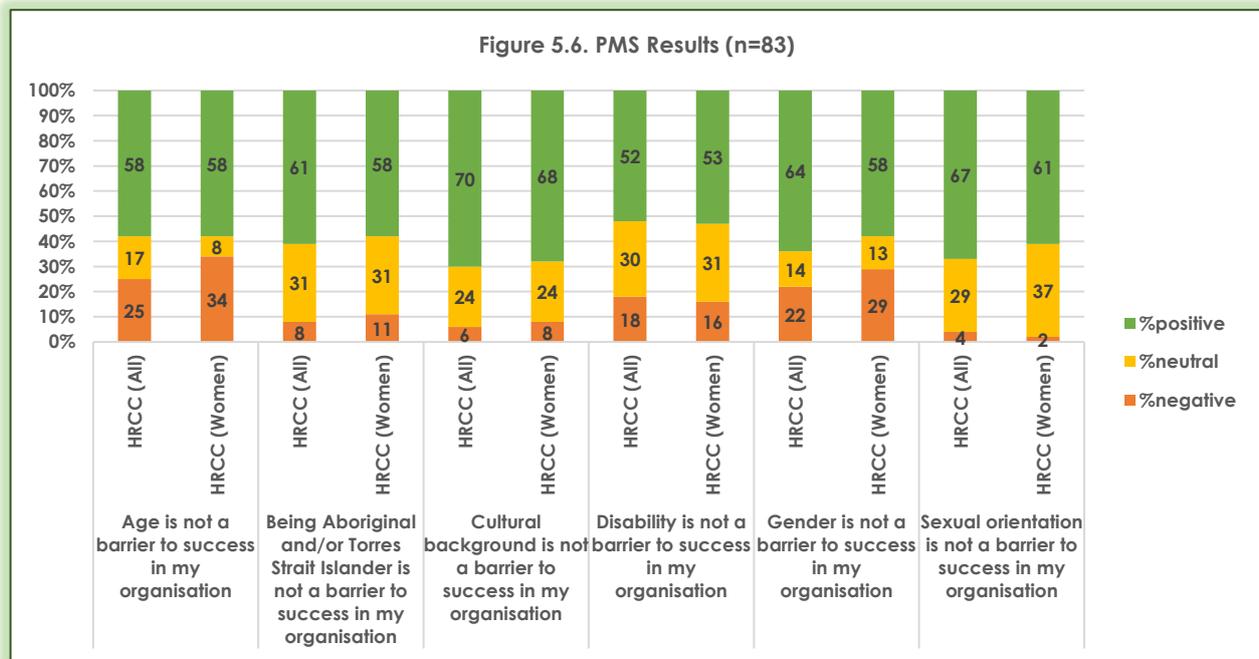
While HRCC does collect and have access to information regarding recruitment (i.e. number of applicants), and higher duties and promotions, it does not formally store this information in a centralised location or review this information.

**Strategies**

- **5.5. Improve data collection around recruitment and promotion practices.**

### 4.5.3.2. People Matter Survey Results

Responses to the People Matter survey indicate that age and gender are barriers to success at HRCC, particularly for women. Aboriginality and disability were also identified as barriers to success.



### Strategies

- **5.2. Attract and retain a diverse workforce.**
- **5.3. Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities.**

### 4.5.3.3. Consultation – what we heard

#### 4.5.3.3.1. Employee Reference Group

Discussions during the third reference group meeting were framed around the question: *Does HRCC's recruitment process promote fair and equal opportunities between people of different genders (or other factors e.g. age)?* The reference group identified the need for further education around unconscious bias and training for selection panels and the need to review position descriptions and advertising to ensure that these encourage all people to apply, including through promoting the flexible work arrangements which Council currently offers and reviewing the language which is used in position descriptions.

The turn-over of staff was discussed at the reference group meetings, however no significant conclusions were drawn from the gender audit data. The Home Support Team departure and the WFV Program were considered 'special events' that skew the employee turnover numbers, which were perceived as, overall, 'healthy' for the organisation.

It was suggested that people's decision to not apply for higher duties may be because additional work is not realistic or possible when other responsibilities are still expected. Furthermore, it was suggested that, as Managers and Directors may work and send emails between 7am – 10pm, seven days a week, many people (including women with family responsibilities) may be dissuaded by this workload and rationally choose not to apply for or accept higher duty responsibilities.

### **Strategies**

The employee group conversations led to specific actions relating to reviewing recruitment practices and position descriptions and ensuring that selection panels are making fair decisions. Employee reference group discussions also helped form actions relating to promoting workplace flexibility, as a means to attract more applicants and a more diverse applicant pool. These actions pertain to strategies **5.1. Equal and fair recruitment and promotion practices** and **5.2. Attract and retain a diverse workforce**.

#### **4.6. Indicator 6. Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities**

##### **4.6.1. National and State Context**

Australia currently has one of the least generous parental leave schemes in the developed world, especially for fathers. In 2017-18, less than 0.5% of parents using the scheme were men, one of the lowest proportions in the OECD.

Current gender norms in Australia restrict men's choice. As an example, large numbers of men in Australia feel constrained against taking parental leave, as doing so is against expectations of their employers and peers. This has numerous effects on both men and women. For women, greater sharing of childcare is one of the best ways to improve women's economic security and capacity to themselves remain in or enter the workforce, while for men, fathers who take 'dad' leave have a lower risk of early death than other men.

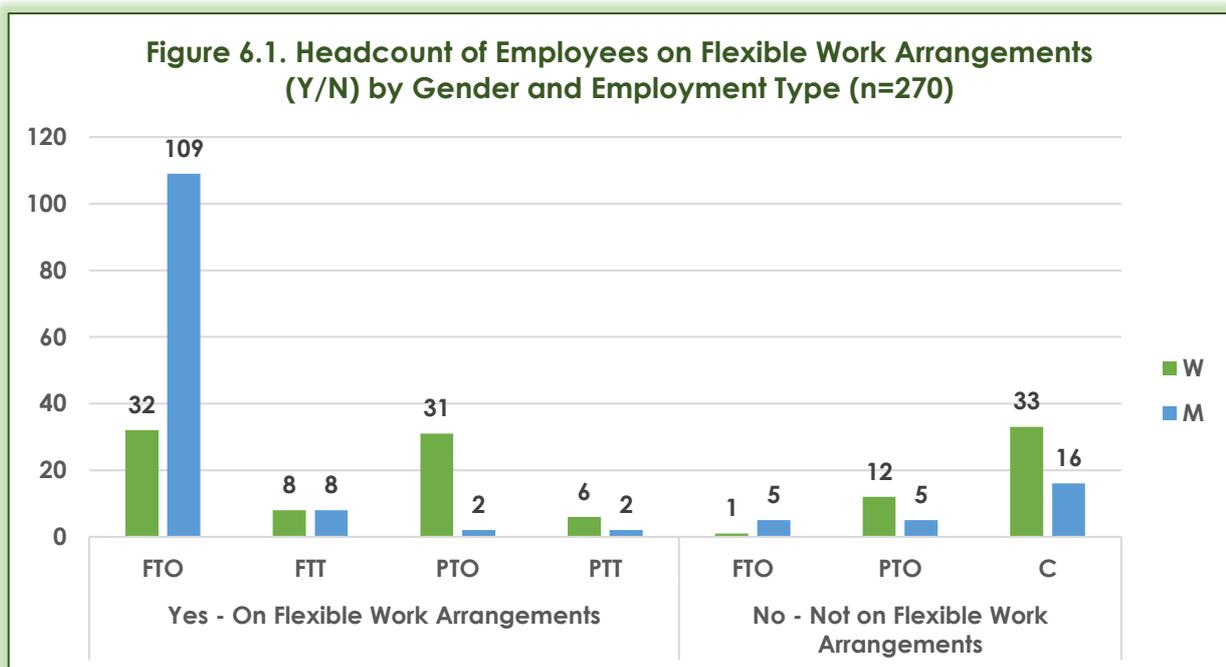
## 4.6.2. Horsham Rural City Council Organisational Context

### 4.6.2.1. Workplace Gender Audit Observations

#### 4.6.2.1.1. Flexible work arrangements and data collection

In 2020-21, 73.3% of HRCC's workforce accessed at least one form of flexible work arrangement<sup>3</sup>, including 63% of women and 82% of men (Figure 6.1.). The majority of the 72 staff who were considered not to have accessed any flexible work arrangements were HRCC's 'front-line' staff, including hospitality staff, school-crossing supervisors and immunisation nurses. HRCC's 49 casual staff were considered to not have accessed flexible work arrangements as casual work was not listed as a flexible work arrangement in the reporting template, though the nature of this employment type is inherently 'flexible'.

HRCC has access to, but does not actively review, information relating to flexible work arrangements other than remote working. For this reason it is not possible to determine why staff have requested or chosen flexible work arrangements (other than remote working).



<sup>3</sup> Flexible work arrangements identified at HRCC include:

- More hours over fewer days
- Flexible start/finish time
- Remote working (excluding COVID-19 remote working)
- Part-time
- Study leave
- Purchased leave

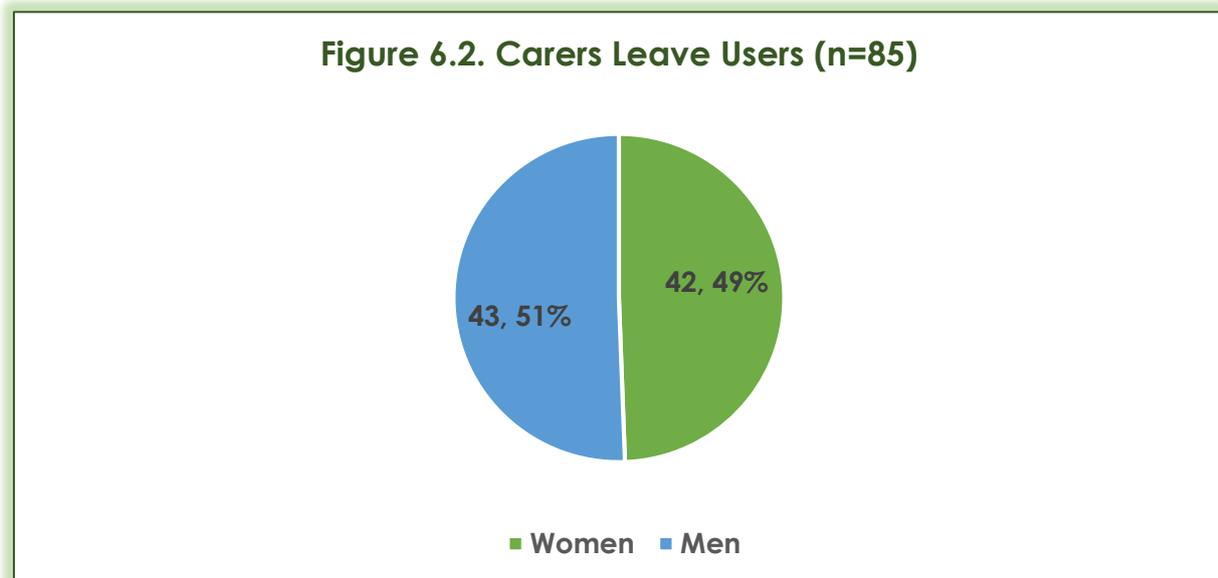
**Strategies**

- **6.1. Address unconscious bias against employees on flexible work arrangements or with caring responsibilities.**
- **6.2. Improve data collection around flexible work arrangements and caring responsibilities.**

**4.6.2.1.2. Parental and Carer's leave users**

Figure 6.2. shows that 31% (85) of HRCC employees accessed some type of carer's leave throughout 2020-21, including an even spread of men and women.

Over FY 2020-21, HRCC had a total of five staff, including two women and three men, who took paid parental leave, while three staff, two women and one man, took unpaid parental leave. No HRCC staff left the organisation whilst on parental leave.



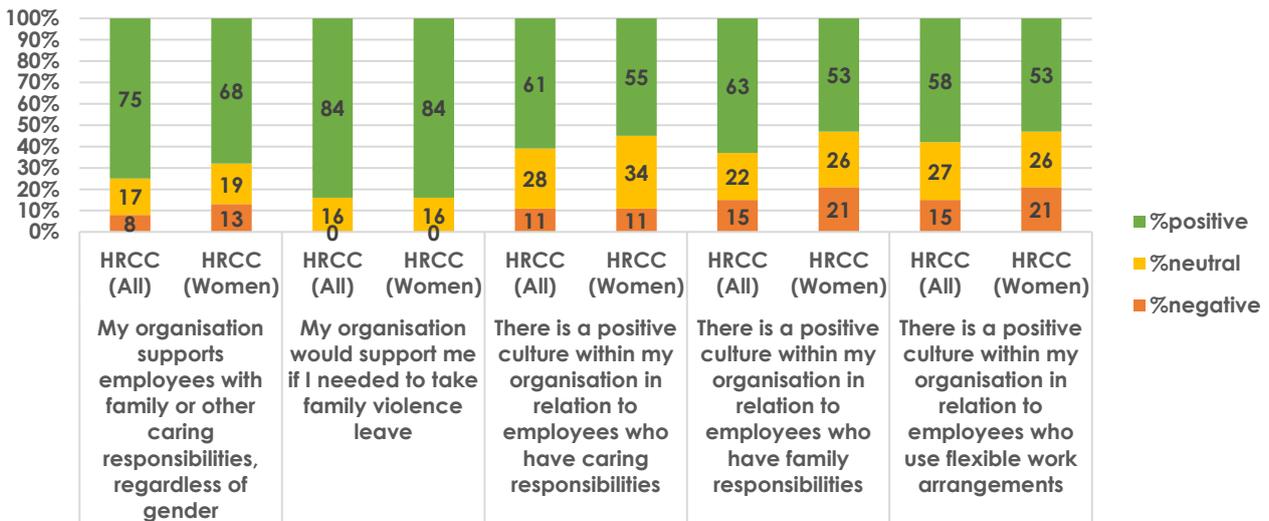
**Strategies**

- **6.3. Re-establish a culture that supports and encourages staff to take leave.**

**4.6.2.2. People Matter Survey Results**

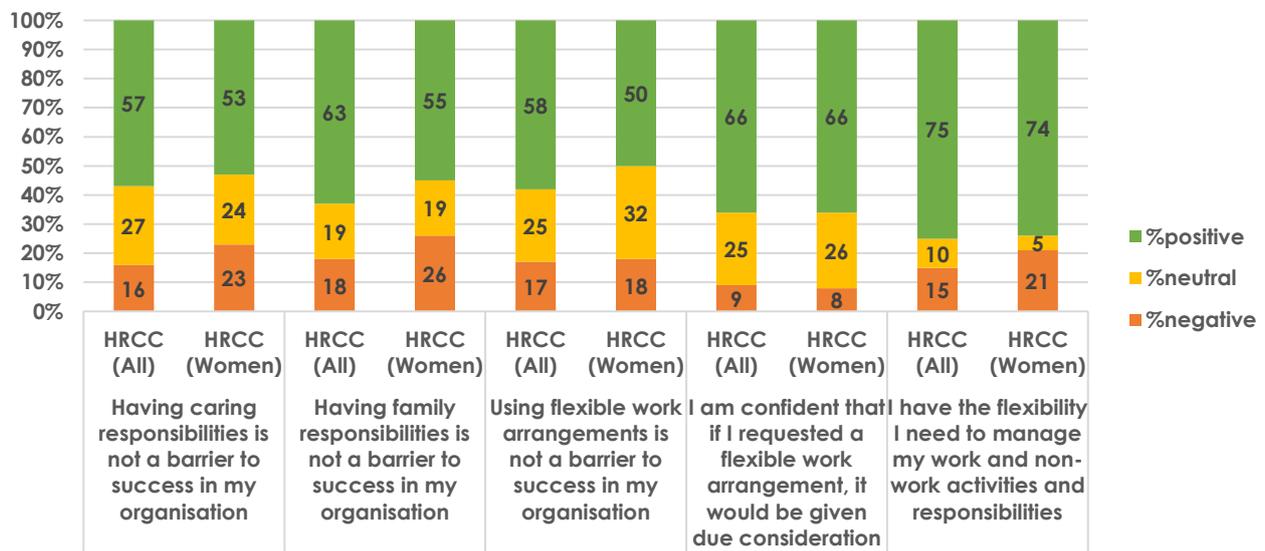
Figure 6.3. shows that 15% of all People Matter Survey respondents, including 21% of female respondents, indicated that HRCC does not have a positive culture around employees who use flexible work arrangements or those who have family responsibilities, while 11% of respondents indicated that HRCC does not have a positive culture in relation to employees with caring responsibilities.

**Figure 6.3. PMS Results (n=83)**



Caring responsibilities (16% of responses), family responsibilities (18%) and flexible work arrangements (17%) were identified as barriers to success at HRCC, with women more likely to identify these terms and arrangements as barriers to success than men (Figure 6.4).

**Figure 6.4. PMS Results (n=83)**



### Strategies

- **6.1. Address unconscious bias against employees on flexible work arrangements or with caring responsibilities.**
- **6.3. Re-establish a culture that supports and encourages staff to take leave.**

#### **4.6.2.3. Consultation – what we heard**

##### **4.6.2.3.1. Employee Reference Group**

The employee reference group discussed unconscious bias against employees with caring responsibilities, giving examples of biases which have occurred during recruitment processes and during the work from home application process. The group also discussed how some existing processes and expectations, for example timesheets and the traditional 9am–5pm expectations, discourage flexible working and unconsciously discriminate against people who work outside of normal business hours (for example, women with caring responsibilities). It was suggested that timesheets and the EBA should reflect that people work their 7.6 hours (for full-time staff) over the space of a whole day, rather than strictly between 8am and 6pm. The need to normalise part-time and job share arrangements, for both men and women, was also raised.

#### **Strategies**

The reference group discussions led to specific actions relating to strategies **6.1. Address unconscious bias against employees on flexible work arrangements or with caring responsibilities** and **6.3. Re-establish a culture that supports and encourages staff to take leave.**

#### **4.7. Indicator 7. Gender segregation within the workplace**

##### **4.7.1. National and State Context**

The Australian labour market is highly segregated, both in terms of how women and men participate (i.e. full-time or part-time) and the occupations, organisations and industries that women and men work in.

As a means to measure gender segregation in the workplace, the ANZSCO codes provides a classification system for occupations drawn from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations Version 1.3 that systematically codes occupations/industries using a six digit number (under 7 broader categories). Recording staff against an ANZSCO classification identifies the occupation mix of the workforce and allows for the identification and analysis of gender segregation within the workforce. The ANZSCO structure are also used by the ABS to produce labour market statistics by occupation.

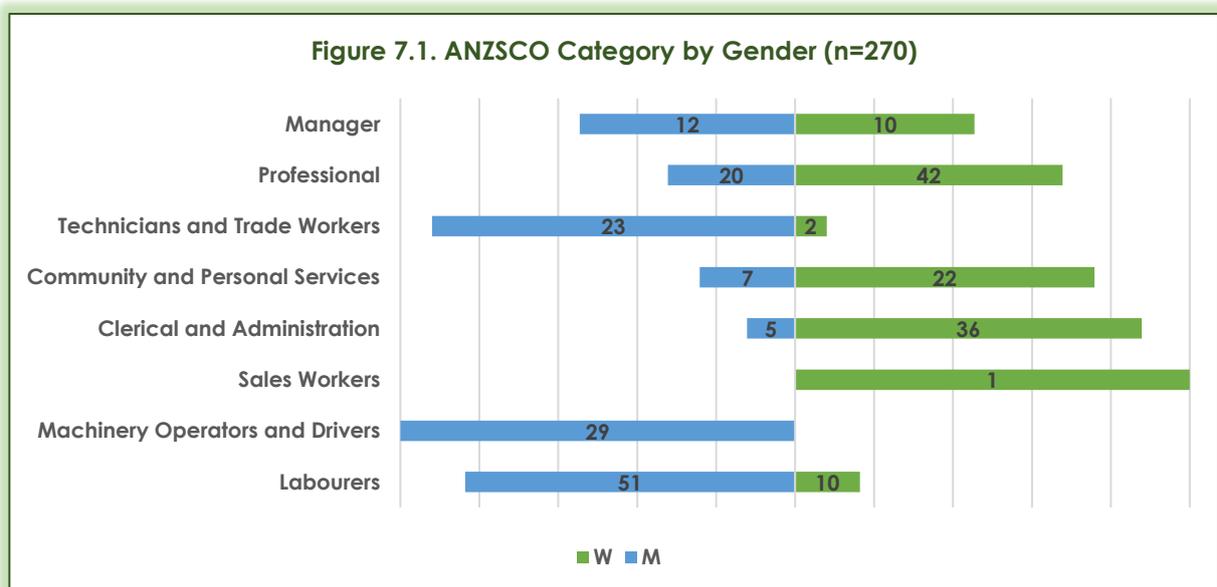
Using the ANZSCO categories, across Australia it is evident that women are much more likely to be employed in administrative and community and personal service occupations, and dominate industries such as health care, social assistance and education and training. Men on the other hand are more likely to be employed in managerial roles, as technician and trades workers, labourers and machinery operators and drivers.

## 4.7.2. Horsham Rural City Council Organisational Context

### 4.7.2.1. Workplace Gender Audit Findings

#### 4.7.2.1.1. ANZSCO Category

In line with 'gender norms' across Australia, men at HRCC are more likely to work in an occupation categorised as Labourers, Machinery Operators and Drivers, Technicians and Trade Workers, while women dominate the Community and Personal Services and Clerical and Administration categories. The Manager category is quite even in terms of gender, however, as discussed in Indicator 1, HRCC lacks female representation in senior leadership positions (Figure 1.1.). At HRCC, women are more prevalent in the Professional category, which includes immunisation and maternal child health nurses (Figure 7.1.).



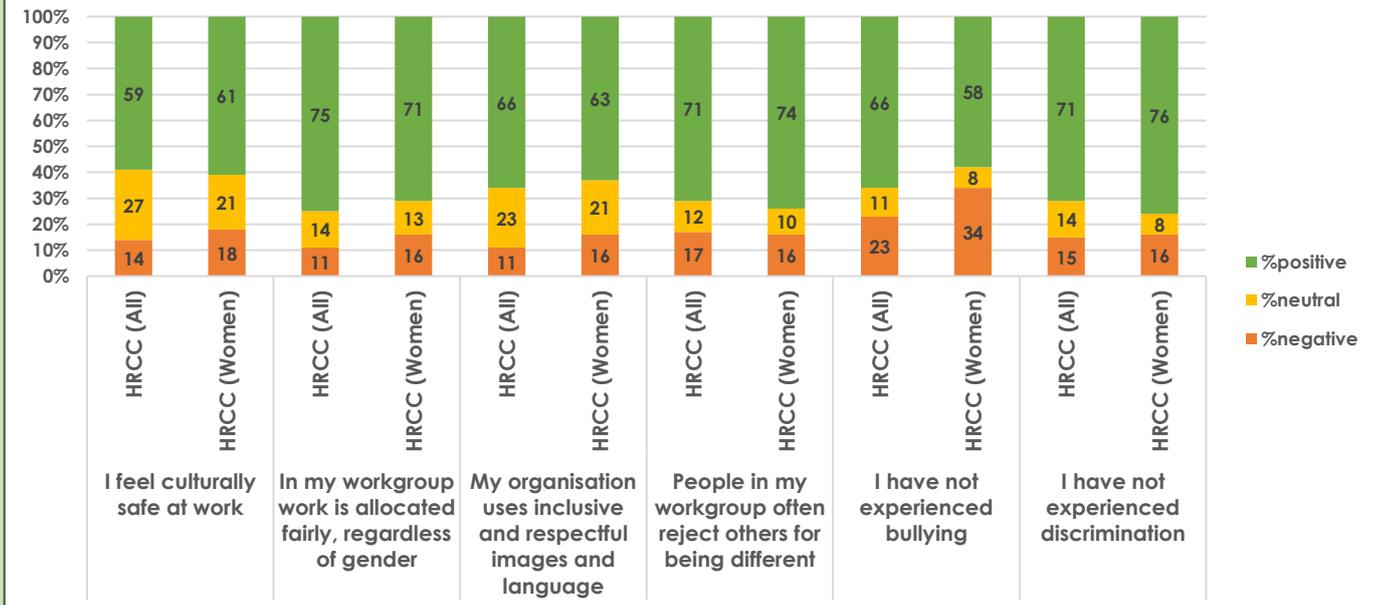
### Strategies

- **7.1. Actively explore and support initiatives to improve diversity within teams.**

### 4.7.2.2. People Matter Survey Results

17% of respondents indicated that people are rejected for being different in their work group, while 15% had experienced discrimination. 14% of respondents, including 18% of female respondents, reported that they do not feel culturally safe at work (Figure 7.2.).

Figure 7.2. PMS Results (n=83)



## Strategies

- **7.1. Actively explore and support initiatives to improve diversity within teams.**
- **7.2. Improve general knowledge around the Gender Equality Act, gender segregation within occupations and the workplace, and the impact that gender stereotypes can have.**

### 4.7.2.3. Consultation – what we heard

#### 4.7.2.3.1. Employee Reference Group

The employee reference group suggested that HRCC should place a greater emphasis on equality and diversity in position descriptions, advertising and promotions (for example, ensuring that photographs of people reflect a diversity in personnel and backgrounds). It was suggested that in doing this, people of all genders would be more inclined to join the organisation and to apply for roles/teams that are typically occupied by one gender. The employee group also suggested that gender dedicated secondments or traineeships to roles or areas of the organisation typically dominated by one gender could help build diversity within teams.

As a practical solution to gender segregation, it was suggested that different teams should be based at the Depot to improve diversity within workspaces, acknowledging that the Operations team that is based at the Depot is almost exclusively made up of men. It was suggested that doing so would 'normalise' women working in that space and challenge the perception that the depot is 'male only'. This would also provide support to female staff in the location and would be helpful when other women are employed in this area.

Discussion around Indicator 7 linked to several items that were discussed regarding Indicator 5 (recruitment and promotion), including recruitment practices. Indicator 5 and Indicator 7 are inherently linked, in that recruitment practices that consider, accommodate and prioritise diversity will reduce gender segregation across the organisation. It is anticipated then that strategies and actions outlined under Indicator 5 will contribute to reducing gender segregation at HRCC under Indicator 7.

### **Strategies**

The employee group discussions led to specific actions relating to strategies **7.1. Actively explore and support initiatives to improve diversity within teams** and **7.2. Improve general knowledge around the Gender Equality Act, gender segregation within occupations and the workplace, and the impact that gender stereotypes can have.**

## 5. Our Vision for Gender Equality

### 5.1. Our Gender Equality journey

#### 5.1.1. CoRE

HRCC is a member of the CoRE (Communities of Respect and Equality) Alliance and supports the framework developed by CoRE to prevent violence against women and their children. CoRE, formed in 2016, is an alliance of organisations, businesses, clubs and groups that are committed to creating safe, equal and respectful communities in the Grampians region. CoRE is based on the belief that the reach and influence across society of its wide and diverse partnership will help to drive cultural change, reduce barriers to gender equality and re-frame cultural norms and acceptable behaviour – important steps in preventing violence against women and children.

As a CoRE member, Horsham Rural City Council commits to the **CoRE Strategy for preventing violence against women and their children in the Grampians region.**

#### 5.1.2. Act@Work

In 2017-18, Horsham Rural City Council participated in the Act@Work program, an organisation-wide program designed by Women's Health Grampians to enable workplaces to provide appropriate support to women experiencing violence, while also addressing the underlying causes of violence to prevent it occurring, both in the workplace and in our broader community.

The Act@Work program provided staff and management with greater knowledge of what causes violence against women and children, and empowered staff with skills to challenge attitudes, language and behaviours that reinforce or enable violence against women and children.

While the formal Act@Work program has concluded, the principles and messages from the program remain foremost at our organisation and are embedded in our Employee Code of Conduct.

#### 5.1.3. Existing strategies and measures relating to gender equality

##### 5.1.3.1. Sexual Harassment Policy

Horsham Rural City Council is committed to providing a safe, flexible and respectful environment for Councillors, staff and clients that is free from all forms of sexual harassment. As outlined in its organisational values, Council will not tolerate sexual or other forms of harassment.

The sexual harassment policy addresses compliance with relevant legal procedure and legislation and sets out the legal responsibilities and obligations for Councillors, Council employees and clients.

#### **5.1.3.2. Equal Opportunity Policy**

Horsham Rural City Council is committed to ensuring the principles of fairness and equal opportunity are applied throughout the workplace and has embedded the values of flexibility, accountability, integrity and respect into the organisation.

The purpose of the Equal Opportunity Policy is to demonstrate Council's intention to promote diversity in the workplace and eliminate discrimination and harassment.

#### **5.1.3.3. Workplace Domestic and Family Violence Policy**

Horsham Rural City Council is committed to supporting employees who experience domestic and family violence and providing a workplace environment that promotes flexibility at the time of need.

The purpose of the Workplace Family Violence Policy is to provide a framework to support employees who experience domestic and family violence, and to guide the response of managers within Horsham Rural City Council to employees whose health and work life is affected by domestic and family violence.

#### **5.1.3.4. Reconciliation Action Plan**

Horsham Rural City Council's vision for reconciliation is to create an improved understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, hopes and future aspirations through fostering strong, respectful, inclusive and meaningful relationships within our communities.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan includes specific actions, deliverables, responsibilities and timelines pertaining to three key areas: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

#### **5.1.3.5. HRCC Enterprise Agreement**

##### **5.1.3.5.1. Primary care-giver leave**

Employees eligible to take parental/adoption/permanent care leave in accordance with HRCC's Enterprise Agreement or the National Employment Standards, and who comply with appropriate notification and other arrangements, will be entitled to a maximum of sixteen weeks leave paid by Council at the normal rate of pay.

##### **5.1.3.5.2. Secondary care-giver leave**

Employees eligible to take secondary parental/adoption/permanent care leave in accordance with HRCC's Enterprise Agreement or the National Employment Standards, and who comply with appropriate notification and other arrangements, will be entitled to a maximum of four weeks leave paid by Council at the normal rate of pay.

### **5.1.3.5.3. Equal pay for equal work across the organisation**

*As wages and conditions are reviewed across the organisation and any discrepancies from the principle of "equal pay for work of equal value" are identified, then wages and conditions shall be equalised by movement to the highest standard in the Council so there shall be no disadvantage suffered by an individual identified in the review. Any cost associated with this shall be borne by the core of the Council.*

## **5.2. The case for change**

Horsham Rural City Council's Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025, through a series of strategies and actions, aims to address (at least in our organisation and community) the discrimination and disadvantage that women and other people of diverse backgrounds have historically experienced based on sex and gender. While the actions and strategies outlined have a focus on women, we acknowledge that gender equality is a fundamental human right and a precondition to social justice that benefits all people, regardless of gender.

Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls, and societies with greater gender equality have lower rates of violence towards women and children and better social, economic and health outcomes for women. At present, the Grampians region experiences high rates of family violence and in more than half the Local Government Areas in the Grampians region, the family violence incidence rates are above the state average. Furthermore, the risk of violence and disadvantage is even higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with a disability and LGBTIQ+ people. We recognise that gender inequality and the risk of violence is compounded by other forms of intersectional disadvantage and acknowledge that special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls. Though addressing this problem is a shared responsibility, as the level of government closest to the community we are uniquely placed to play a strong leadership role in counteracting intersectional disadvantage, advancing gender equality and preventing violence against women and girls.

Through our commitment to reducing gender inequality in our organisation and the community we serve, we aim to progress towards a safe and equal society where all people, regardless of gender, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities; are treated with dignity, respect and fairness; are free to develop their personal abilities and pursue their professional careers; and can make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.

### **5.2.1. The business case for gender equality**

Achieving gender equality is not only 'fair' and 'the right thing to do,' but is also linked to improving productivity and economic outcomes; increasing organisational performance and wellbeing of staff; enhancing the organisation's ability to attract and retain talent; and enhancing our organisational reputation and the ability to engage with the diverse community that we represent.

### 5.3. HRCC's long term vision for Gender Equality

*Our organisational vision for gender equality is to create a safe, equal and fair workplace where all people, regardless of gender and diversity of background, can access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities.*

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## 6. Our Gender Equality Action Plan

### 6.1. Strategies and Actions

#### 1. Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

**Objective: HRCC actively supports women, men and gender diverse people to succeed and access employment that is right for them; recognising the social and structural barriers that women and people of diverse backgrounds currently face.**

Strategy	Action	Progress Indicator	Action Origin	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1.1. Create opportunities to support women in leadership.</b>	1.1.1. Implement opportunities to consult with staff to identify and address barriers, known or anecdotal, that may prevent women from applying for senior leadership positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of staff consulted (#).</li> <li>Barriers identified and documented in progress report (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	December 2022	People & Culture
	1.1.2. Consult with leadership to understand the willingness of the organisation to explore flexible working arrangements at senior levels of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive leadership consultation undertaken (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	June 2022	People & Culture
	1.1.3. Support and promote opportunities for women to participate in the annual leadership training program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of annual female participants in the leadership program (#).</li> </ul>	Workforce Gender Audit	June 2022, June 2023 (ongoing)	People & Culture

<b>1.2.</b> <b>Create opportunities to support women and people from diverse backgrounds in operational roles.</b>	<b>1.2.1.</b> Identify and support opportunities for women and people from diverse backgrounds to fill apprentice/trainee roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of women/diverse-background apprentices/trainees (#).</li> <li>• Ratio of gender in 5th reporting levels (men: women: self-described).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	June 2022, June 2023 (ongoing)	People & Culture
	<b>1.2.2.</b> Identify and implement mentorship opportunities for apprentices and trainees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of official mentor/mentee relationships built (#).</li> </ul>	Gender Equality Act Advisor	June 2023 (ongoing)	Various
<b>1.3.</b> <b>Address gender stereotypes regarding employment arrangements i.e. full-time, part-time and casual.</b>	<b>1.3.1.</b> Review position descriptions and advertisements for new positions and, where relevant, reaffirm commitment to flexible work arrangements relating to employment basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new position descriptions reviewed (Y/N).</li> <li>• Consideration for flexible work potential is given in all advertisements (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	June 2022 (ongoing)	People & Culture
	<b>1.3.2.</b> Identify and implement opportunities to consult with part-time and casual staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess for underemployment</li> <li>• Identify barriers that prevent women from working more hours if they want to.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of part-time and casual staff consulted (#).</li> <li>• Results identified and documented in progress report (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	December 2022	People & Culture
	<b>1.3.3.</b> Identify and implement opportunities to consult with full time staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess for preferences for part-time/flexible arrangements</li> <li>• assess whether the workplace culture at HRCC supports men to work part time/flexibly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of full time staff consulted (#).</li> <li>• Results identified and documented in progress report (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	December 2022	People & Culture

<b>1.4. Develop data collection mechanisms to enable HRCC to identify, report upon and address intersectional disadvantage based on attributes such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aboriginality</b></li> <li>• <b>disability</b></li> <li>• <b>ethnicity and race</b></li> <li>• <b>gender identity</b></li> <li>• <b>religion</b></li> <li>• <b>sexual orientation</b></li> </ul> <b>in future iterations of the Workplace Gender Audit and Gender Equality Action Plan.</b>	<b>1.4.1.</b> Implement a new HR information system with the capability to capture and store intersectional data and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR system has capability to capture and store intersectional data and information (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workforce Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture
	<b>1.4.2.</b> Create a voluntary intersectional data disclosure form and establish an internal process for collecting information and storing the form and adding information to the relevant fields in the new HR system, with consideration to the privacy of the individual and HRCC's Information Privacy Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intersectional data disclosure form developed (Y/N).</li> <li>• Process for storing intersectional data in new HR system is developed (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workforce Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture
	<b>1.4.3.</b> Identify when and how data will be collected from current staff (e.g. staff reviews) and commence distribution of the voluntary intersectional data disclosure form and data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intersectional data is collected from all current staff willing to complete the form (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workforce Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture
	<b>1.4.4.</b> Include the voluntary intersectional data disclosure form in the new staff on-boarding documents package.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intersectional data disclosure form is included in on-boarding documents package (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workforce Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture
	<b>1.4.5.</b> Regularly report gender and employee profile, by department, to executive team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six-monthly report to executive team (ongoing).</li> </ul>	Workforce Gender Audit	December 2022 (ongoing)	People & Culture

<b>1.5.</b> <b>Plan for and manage HRCC's ageing workforce.</b>	1.5.1. Review insights from the "Ageing Workforce Survey" and commit to and implement the suggested actions which arise from the survey results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions from the 'Ageing Workforce Survey' are reviewed and (where relevant) implemented (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Experience Survey	December 2022	People & Culture
	1.5.2. Commit to the relevant actions outlined in the Workforce Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions from the Workforce plan, specifically relating to gender equity and HRCC's ageing workforce, are implemented (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	December 2022, December 2023 (ongoing)	Various
<b>1.6.</b> <b>Promote HRCC as an inclusive organisation that reflects the diverse community it serves.</b>	1.6.1. Develop a statement on HRCC's diversity aspiration and communicate this statement via the Intranet, Council website and other social media platforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity aspiration statement created (Y/N).</li> <li>• Diversity aspiration statement communicated (Ongoing).</li> </ul>	People Matter Survey	June 2022	Community Relations & Advocacy
	1.6.2. Engage a training provider to provide LGBTIQ+ inclusivity training to customer facing HRCC staff and add this to HRCC's training calendar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of staff attending LGBTIQ+ inclusivity training (#).</li> </ul>	People Matter Survey	June 2023	People & Culture
	1.6.3. Continue to engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training provider to facilitate this training, ensure that all new staff complete this training and add this to HRCC's annual training calendar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff have completed Cultural Awareness training (Y/N).</li> </ul>	People Matter Survey	June 2022 (Ongoing)	People & Culture

	1.6.4. Review advertising and promotion materials to ensure that they reflect a diverse range of people and backgrounds (for example: photographs on fliers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Gender-lens” applied to all new advertising and promotion materials (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	December 2022	Community Relations & Advocacy
<b>1.7. Understand staff perceptions of:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisational culture</li> <li>• organisational climate</li> <li>• organisational citizenship behaviours</li> <li>• psychological capital</li> </ul> <b>and how people of different gender, age and tenure (and other factors) experience these differently.</b>	1.7.1. Communicate and promote the bi-annual Organisational Culture & Satisfaction Survey to meet target 60% response rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey response rate (%).</li> </ul>	Organisational Culture and Satisfaction Survey	June 2023	People & Culture
	1.7.2. Consult with staff who record lower than average perceptions of organisational culture, organisational climate etc. in the bi-annual Organisational Culture & Satisfaction Survey, including staff who have been with Council for 5+ years (who in the 2021 survey, as a group, recorded lower than average perceptions of these indicators).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of staff consulted (#).</li> <li>• Results identified and documented in progress report (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Organisational Culture and Satisfaction Survey	June 2022	People & Culture

## 2. Gender composition of governing bodies

**Objective: HRCC's Councillors reflect the diverse community that it serves.**

Strategy	Action	Progress Indicator	Action Origin	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>2.1. Promote opportunities for all community members, regardless of age, gender or other factors, to be involved with Council.</b>	2.1.1. Identify and support opportunities for young community members to be involved in Council through the Young Councillors program.	• Number of applicants and participants in the Young Councillors program (#).	Employee Reference Group	June 2023 (ongoing)	Youth Services Planning & Engagement Officer
	2.1.2. Identify and address barriers that diverse applicants may face in nominating for Council.	• Number of applicants from diverse backgrounds (#).	Workplace Gender Audit	June 2025 (ongoing)	Governance & Information

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

**Objective: HRCC employees receive equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender.**

Strategy	Action	Progress Indicator	Action Origin	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3.1. Ensure compliance with EBA Clause 14: Equal Pay for Equal Work Across the Organisation.</b>	3.1.1. Ensure compliance with EBA Clause 14: Equal Pay for Equal Work Across the Organisation.	• Gender pay gap results in Gender Audit (%).	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement	June 2023 (ongoing)	People & Culture

#### 4. Workplace sexual harassment

**Objective: HRCC is committed to preventing, and will not tolerate, any form of intimidation, bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment.**

Strategy	Action	Progress Indicator	Action Origin	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>4.1. Understand the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the workplace.</b>	4.1.1. Collect information about the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting the annual People Matter survey to meet target 60% response rate.</li> <li>• reviewing complaints information quarterly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey response rate (%).</li> <li>• Complaints information reviewed bi-annually (Y/N).</li> </ul>	VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report	June 2022, Sept 2022 etc. (Ongoing)	People & Culture
	4.1.2. Improve record keeping of sexual harassment complaints by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keeping complete records of all interactions relating to a complaint</li> <li>• documenting decisions to not investigate complaints or to stop investigations, including the rationale for the decision and the name and role of decision-makers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document all sexual harassment complaints, as outlined (Y/N).</li> </ul>	VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report	December 2022	People & Culture
	4.1.3. Identify and implement opportunities to undertake deeper and more personal consultation with staff, in order to gather qualitative information to complement the quantitative data collected through formal complaints and surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of staff consulted (#).</li> <li>• Results identified and documented in 2023 progress report (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	December 2022	People & Culture

<b>4.2. Develop a culture that does not tolerate harassment and encourages reporting of inappropriate behaviour.</b>	<p>4.2.1. Promote formal and informal complaints channels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in staff awareness in how to report sexual harassment, measured through People Matter Survey (%).</li> </ul>	<p>VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report</p> <p>Employee Reference Group</p>	<p>September 2022 (ongoing)</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture</p> <p>Contact Officers</p>
	<p>4.2.2. Introduce mandatory training on sexual harassment, so that at a minimum it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• includes face-to-face or live online sessions for all staff at least once every two years (in addition to online modules)</li> <li>• covers safe strategies for bystander interventions</li> <li>• improves understanding of what constitutes sexual harassments</li> <li>• is tailored to the Council's policies, procedures and workplace risk factors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff complete training, as described, every two years (Y/N).</li> </ul>	<p>VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report</p> <p>Employee Reference Group</p>	<p>June 2022 (ongoing)</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture</p>
	<p>4.2.3. Review complaint procedure to ensure it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is victim centric</li> <li>• Includes a requirement to inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint</li> <li>• Includes guidance on how investigators can support reluctant complainants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaint procedure reviewed (Y/N).</li> </ul>	<p>VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report</p> <p>Employee Reference Group</p> <p>Gender Equality Act Advisor</p>	<p>June 2022</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture</p>

<b>4.3.</b> <b>Address the risk of sexual harassment by members of the public.</b>	4.3.1. Ensure sexual harassment policies, procedures and training explicitly cover sexual harassment from the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexual harassment policies, procedures and training explicitly cover sexual harassment from the public (Y/N).</li> </ul>	VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report	June 2022	People & Culture
	4.3.2. Regularly communicate to customers and staff that the Council does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment from the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are reminded of and directed to Council's Sexual Harassment Policy once per year through the P&amp;C Newsletter or the CEO's Tuesday Top Topics email (Y/N).</li> <li>External communications periodically remind the public that staff must be respected and able to work free from harassment.</li> </ul>	VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report	June 2022 (Ongoing)	People & Culture  CEOCRAT
<b>4.4.</b> <b>Communicate a culture of respect at Council.</b>	4.4.1. Leadership communication to all staff at least once annually that the Council does not tolerate sexual or other forms of harassment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Team communicate to all staff annually that the Council does not tolerate sexual or other forms of harassment (Y/N).</li> </ul>	VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report	June 2022 (Ongoing)	Executive Management Team
	4.4.2. Develop a stand-alone Sexual Harassment Policy that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexual Harassment Policy is developed as outlined (Y/N).</li> </ul>	VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local	June 2022	People & Culture

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aligns with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Guideline</li> <li>• includes clear links to relevant Council policies and procedures</li> <li>• it is victim centric</li> <li>• covers the applicability of Council policies to different roles and workplace settings, including Councillors, customer-facing staff and members of the public</li> <li>• is searchable on Council intranet sites and available in hard copy to all staff.</li> </ul>		<p>Government Report</p> <p>Gender Equality Act Advisor</p>		
	<p>4.4.3. Ensure Councillors receive training on sexual harassment at least twice per Council term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Councillors complete training, as outlined, twice per Council term (Y/N)</li> </ul>	<p>VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government Report</p>	<p>June 2022 (Ongoing)</p>	<p>Executive Assistant to CEO and Councillors</p> <p>People &amp; Culture</p>
	<p>4.4.4. Update the staff induction package to include information about the values of the workplace as active bystanders to sexism, discrimination and violence against women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff induction package updated (Y/N).</li> </ul>	<p>Employee Reference Group</p>	<p>June 2022</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture</p>

### 5. Recruitment and promotion

**Objective: Recruitment, selection and promotion activities at HRCC are:**

- ♦ conducted with fairness, credibility and consistency ♦ based on merit ♦ aimed at achieving an efficient and diverse workforce
- ♦ conducted with respect to all legal requirements and fundamental expectations, including the Equal Opportunity Act

Strategy	Action	Progress Indicator	Action Origin	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5.1. Equal and fair recruitment and promotion practices.</b>	5.1.1. Complete a Gender Impact Assessment on HRCC recruitment practices and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIA completed (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	December 2022	People & Culture
	5.1.2. Ensure that all interview panels include at least one trained People & Culture representative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All interviews include P&amp;C representative (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	June 2022 (ongoing)	People & Culture
	5.1.3. Ensure that all members of an interview panel have completed online training around unconscious bias.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All interview panel members have completed unconscious bias training (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	June 2022 (ongoing)	People & Culture
	5.1.4. Refine the 'Plain English' nature of position descriptions to ensure clear understanding of roles, positions, duties, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new position descriptions provided in 'Plain English.' (Y/N)</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	December 2022	People & Culture

<p><b>5.2.</b> <b>Attract and retain a diverse workforce, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• women and gender diverse people</li> <li>• people with caring responsibilities</li> <li>• people young and old</li> <li>• people local and afar, regardless of marital or other status.</li> </ul>	<p>5.2.1. Promote and develop workforce benefits and conditions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flexible working arrangements</li> <li>• job-share opportunities</li> <li>• working from home opportunities</li> <li>• career development planning</li> <li>• professional development opportunities through staff communications and position descriptions and advertisements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in staff perceptions of flexible work arrangements and fair recruitment and promotion practices, measured through the People Matter survey (%).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	June 2022 (ongoing)	People & Culture
	<p>5.2.2. Communicate and promote exit interview questionnaires to exiting staff to provide HRCC with information regarding reasons for exit and future retention strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exit interview completion rate (%).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	June 2022 (ongoing)	People & Culture
	<p>5.2.3. Ensure exit interview questionnaire captures gender and diversity information to allow for analysis of disaggregated exit/retention data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exit interview questionnaire collects gender and intersectional information (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Gender Equality Act Advisor	June 2022	People & Culture
	<p>5.2.4. Normalise flexible work arrangements and challenge employment-arrangement stereotypes by requiring recruiting officers/Managers to justify why a newly created/filled role cannot be filled by someone on flexible work arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justification for recruitment form includes question requiring rationale for not offering flexible work arrangements (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Gender Equality Act Advisor	June 2022	People & Culture

<b>5.3. Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities.</b>	5.3.1. Finalise the appointment of dedicated positions for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander apprentice/trainees (2 positions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of ATSI apprentice/trainee positions filled (#).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	June 2022	People & Culture
	5.3.2. Investigate opportunities within Council to increase and improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment rate for ATSI people at HRCC (%).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	December 2022	People & Culture
	5.3.3. Explore and develop employment targets and recruitment strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment rate for ATSI people at HRCC (%).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	December 2022	People & Culture
<b>5.4. Improve youth employment opportunities.</b>	5.4.1. Strengthen and build upon partnerships with local employment services providers to advance the recruitment and engagement of young apprentices and trainees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of apprentice/trainee positions filled (#).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	June 2022	People & Culture

<b>5.5. Improve data collection around recruitment and promotion practices.</b>	<b>5.5.1.</b> Implement a new HR information system with the capability to capture and store information regarding recruitment and promotion activities in a centralised location, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent promotions (decision, decision maker, options considered etc.)</li> <li>• Higher duties (decision, decision maker, options considered, details of delegations etc.)</li> <li>• Personal development training.</li> <li>• Recruitment (number and gender of applicants, shortlist, time vacant etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR system has capability to capture and store recruitment and promotion information (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workplace Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture
	<b>5.5.2.</b> Develop a process for collecting and storing recruitment and promotion data and adding this into the HR information system and commence this process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and promotion data is stored in HR information system (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workplace Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture

**6. Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities**

**Objective: HRCC supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, acknowledges the benefits of flexible work arrangements, to both the organisation and the individual, and supports employees who experience domestic or family violence.**

Strategy	Action	Progress Indicator	Action Origin	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>6.1. Address unconscious bias against employees on flexible work arrangements or with caring responsibilities.</b>	6.1.1. Review the formal WFH application process to ensure it does not unintentionally discriminate against employees with caring responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WFH application process reviewed (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	June 2022	Department Managers  People & Culture
	6.1.2. Review processes, policies and procedures to ensure they do not unintentionally discriminate against employees on flexible work arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIA is completed on policies and procedures which may be deemed to compound gender inequality (Ongoing).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group	December 2022 (ongoing)	People & Culture  Governance & Information
	6.1.3. Review and communicate family violence leave policies and processes to ensure they are victim-centric.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed family violence policy and communicated through P&amp;C newsletter at least once annually. (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workplace Gender Audit	June 2022	People & Culture  Governance & Information

<b>6.2.</b> <b>Improve data collection around flexible work arrangements and caring responsibilities.</b>	6.2.1. Implement a new HR information system with the capability to capture and store flexible work arrangement (by type) and caring responsibility information in a centralised location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR established to capture and store flexible work/care information (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workplace Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture
	6.2.2. Advocate for and improve data collection around carers/medical leave, to ensure that carer/medical leave can be categorised by leave type e.g. family-care, child-care etc., and this information is stored in a centralised location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR system established to capture and store categorised leave information (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workplace Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture
	6.2.3. Develop a process for collecting and storing flexible work, leave and caring responsibility information and adding this into the HR information system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible work, leave and care responsibility data is stored in HR information system (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workplace Gender Audit	December 2022	People & Culture
<b>6.3.</b> <b>Re-establish a culture that supports and encourages staff to take leave.</b>	6.3.1. Regularly communicate to staff the importance of using leave, in the interests of personal and family health, wellbeing and satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formally communicated in team meetings, at least once annually (Y/N).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	June 2022 (Ongoing)	Department Managers  Co-ordinators  People & Culture
	6.3.2. Ensure parental leave policies do not discourage a men from applying for parental leave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review leave arrangements and procedure.</li> </ul>	People Matter Survey	June 2022	People & Culture  Governance & Information

**7. Gendered segregation within the workplace**

**Objective: HRCC embraces, supports and acknowledges the benefits of diversity in its employees and work groups.**

Strategy	Action	Progress Indicator	Action Origin	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Actively explore and support initiatives to improve diversity within teams.</b>	7.1.1. Analyse the March 2021 cross-department training program survey results and explore opportunities (e.g. training/secondments/etc.) to facilitate placement in the respondents work area of choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of opportunities for cross-department training facilitated (#).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	September 2022	People & Culture
	7.1.2. Explore opportunities to target specific cohorts as part of recruitment and secondment arrangements to increase diversity within teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender ratio of departments/teams (men: women: self-described), measured through the workplace gender audit.</li> </ul>	Workplace Gender Audit	December 2022 (Ongoing)	People & Culture

	7.1.3. Establish traineeships to support more diverse entry into non-traditional career pathways (for example: supporting women to work in the Operations team).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of female apprentices/trainees (#).</li> </ul>	Employee Reference Group  Gender Equality Act Advisor	December 2022	People & Culture
	7.1.4. Recruit male and female Contact Officers at the depot (and around the organisation) and ensure a gender balance in the pool of Contact Officers to reduce barriers to accessing Contact Officer assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender ratio of contact officers (men: women: self-described).</li> </ul>	Workforce Plan	June 2022	People & Culture
<b>7.2. Improve general knowledge around the Gender Equality Act, gender segregation within occupations and the workplace, and the impact that gender stereotypes can have.</b>	7.2.1. Ensure that all Executives, Managers and Co-ordinators have completed the <i>Women's Health Victoria Introduction to Gender Equality</i> online module.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives, Managers, Co-ordinators and Team Leaders have completed this online module (Y/N).</li> </ul>	People Matter Survey	June 2022	People & Culture  Executives, Managers and Co-ordinators.
	7.2.2. Explore training opportunities provided by Women's Health Grampians to help improve staff awareness of gender inequality and the Gender Equality Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of attendees at WHG gender equality-related training sessions (#).</li> <li>• Number of training sessions offered to staff (#).</li> </ul>	Gender Equality Act Advisor	June 2023	People & Culture

## 7. Tracking progress and reporting

Strategy	Action	Progress Indicator	Timeline	Responsibility
1. <b>Track and report upon progress against GEAP actions and measures.</b>	1.1. Keep an achievement register to assist with progress reporting and communicate progress against GEAP to employees and employee representatives on a quarterly basis.	Achievement register developed and progress is reported to employees and employee representatives quarterly (Y/N).	June 2022 (Ongoing)	People & Culture
	1.2. Report upon progress against actions and measures outlined in GEAP to EMT and Councillors on a quarterly basis.	Progress reported to EMT and Council quarterly (Y/N).	June 2022 (Ongoing)	People & Culture
2. <b>Review and refresh the GEAP.</b>	2.1. Develop and submit the progress report to the Commissioner.	Progress report submitted to the Commissioner (Y/N).	October 2023	People & Culture
	2.2. Complete second Workplace Gender Audit.	Workplace Gender Audit completed (Y/N).	June 2025	People & Culture
	2.3. Submit second GEAP.	GEAP submitted to the Commissioner (Y/N).	October 2025	People & Culture  CEO