



**WEST
WIMMERA
SHIRE COUNCIL**



**Gender Equality Action Plan
2021-2025**

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Introduction and message from the CEO

West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to creating a gender equitable, safe, and respectful environment for all employees. The focus of this Gender Equality Action Plan is to provide an integrated whole-of-Council approach to increase gender equality within West Wimmera Shire.

Council is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and Human Rights. West Wimmera Shire Council's Equal Employment Opportunity policy strives to maintain a working environment free from discrimination. Equal Opportunity is embedded in Council's recruitment actions, both internal and external. Selection of individuals for employment, promotion or advancement, training and staff development are based on personal merit in fair and open competition according to the skills, qualifications, knowledge, and efficiency relevant to the position involved.

All Council staff are required to complete Equal Opportunity training every 3 years, verified during annual staff reviews. Employees are encouraged to raise equal opportunity issues or grievances with any manager, director, chief executive officer or senior officer as they arise.

The Gender Equality Act 2020 commenced on 31 March 2021 and aims to improve workplace gender equality. West Wimmera Shire Council sees this as more than a statutory requirement and recognises the value of diversity within both its workforce and its community. Council continues to be a member of the CoRE (Communities of Respect and Equality) Alliance, a partnership of organisations, businesses, clubs and groups who share a vision for safe, equal, and respectful communities in the Grampians region. Council has maintained this membership since 2016.



David Bezuidenhout
Chief Executive Officer



Development of Gender Equality Action Plan (Consultation)

Council undertook a workplace gender audit based on data as at 30 June 2021, which was submitted to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (the Commission) in December. The audit included workforce and employee experience data collected from payroll information and the People Matter Survey (PMS).

The PMS included questions developed in consultation with the Commission to deliver data to meet Gender Equality Act reporting obligations. Council actively promoted and facilitated the survey, by displaying posters around Council worksites with QR codes and running information sessions with work groups.

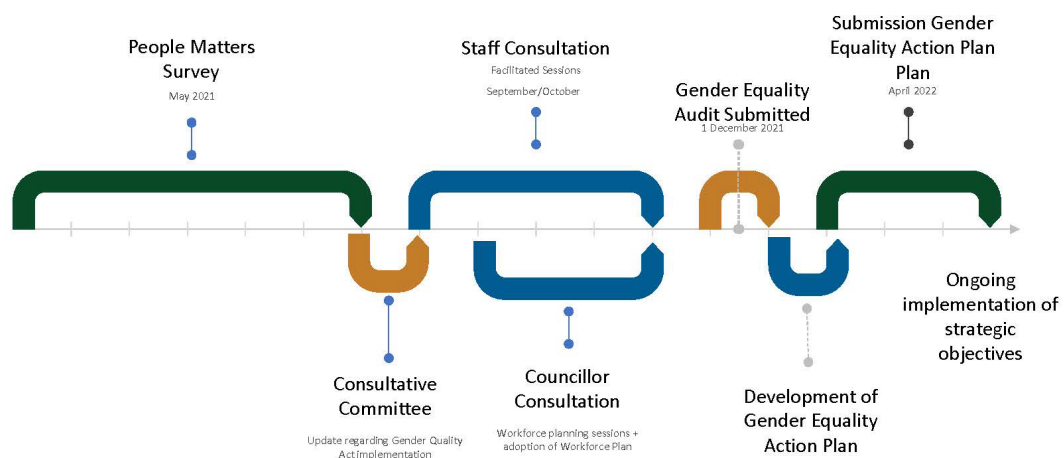
Council had a survey response rate of 27%, and a majority of respondents were women (56%).

As part of the development of this Plan, Council conducted consultation sessions facilitated by an external consultant. This took place on Teams for indoor staff, and in person for outdoor staff in small groups.

During the consultation sessions the survey results were “tested” for familiarity, and the groups were asked open-ended questions regarding the survey results and organisational culture. Responses were recorded during the session, displayed on the screen. Following the sessions, the discussion was summarised and provided back to each work group to review with the opportunity to provide further comment.

Our consultation process reflects the requirements set out in the Victorian Gender Equality Act (2020). Council consulted with, and sought input into, the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan from Councillors as its governing body, employees, and relevant trade unions and/or their employee representatives.

Consultation Process





Results of Audit (Case for change)

The audit collected data on the following gender equality indicators:

- Gender composition of all levels of the workforce
- Gender composition of governing bodies
- Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
- Sexual harassment
- Recruitment and promotion practices
- Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements for those with family or caring responsibilities
- Gendered segregation within the workplace

The results of data relating to each indicator are each considered in this section, though Council's ability to collect data relating to some of the indicators was limited. Council does not currently collect intersectional data such as disability status, sexual orientation, cultural identity or religion and did not have comprehensive records of staff gender and had to collect this information in a Census-style survey. This has now been incorporated in the onboarding process (staff are able to nominate female, male, prefer not to say, or self-described). Existing staff expressed significant resistance to divulging the other intersectional data types.

As a small workforce, indicators may render groups too small to maintain confidentiality and uphold data security principles, even with data generalisation. Similarly, the PMS response rates, while close to the sector-wide average of 32%, were likely impacted due to limited access to devices to undertake the survey on, and no way to undertake the survey that was not digital. Some staff expressed a lack of confidence in the digital survey platform.

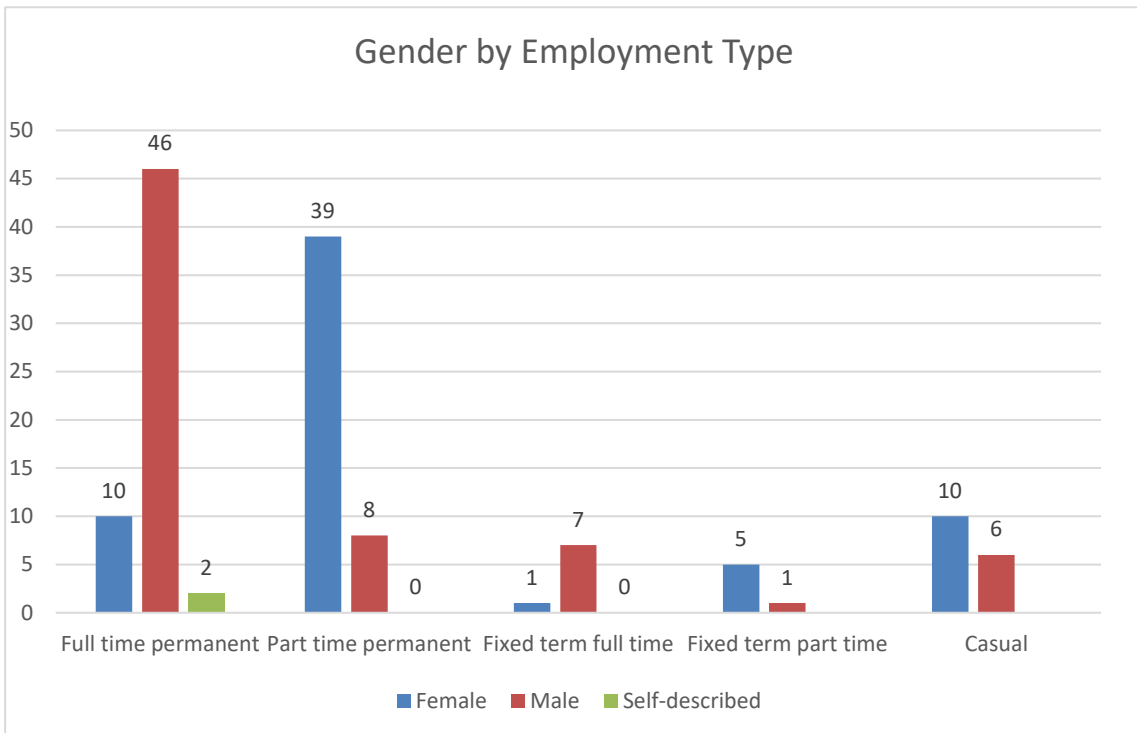
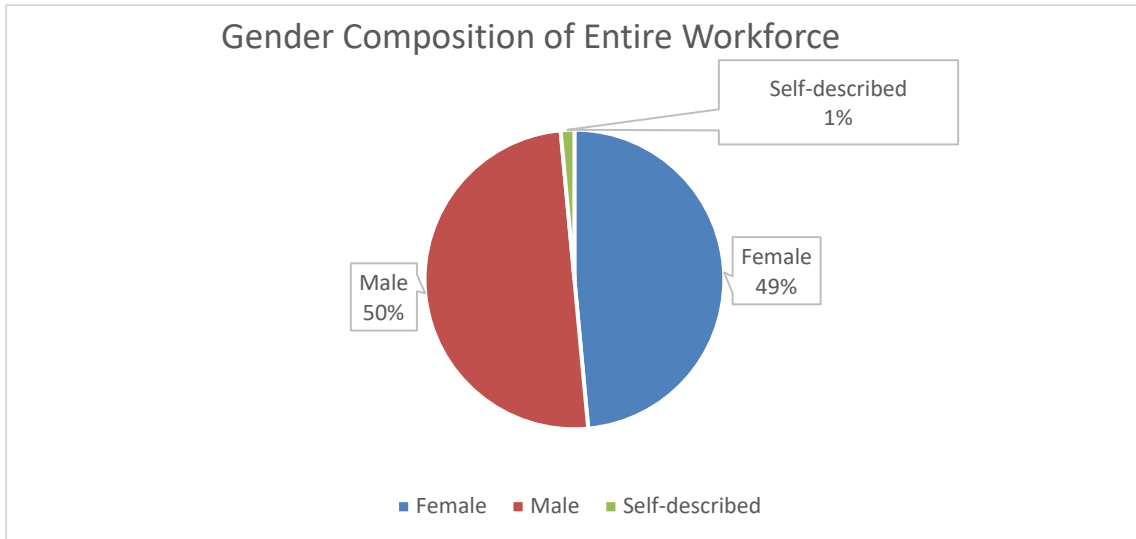
As per the Commission's advice, Council considers the results of the 2021 audit a 'baseline' assessment of its workplace gender equality and a starting point for future assessment and improvement, and a point to measure progress against.

Council is committed the gender equality principles set out by the Act:

- (1) 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.
- (2) Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- (3) Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- (4) Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
- (5) Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- (6) Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- (7) 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.
- (8) Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.
- (9) Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
- (10) Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equity.



Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

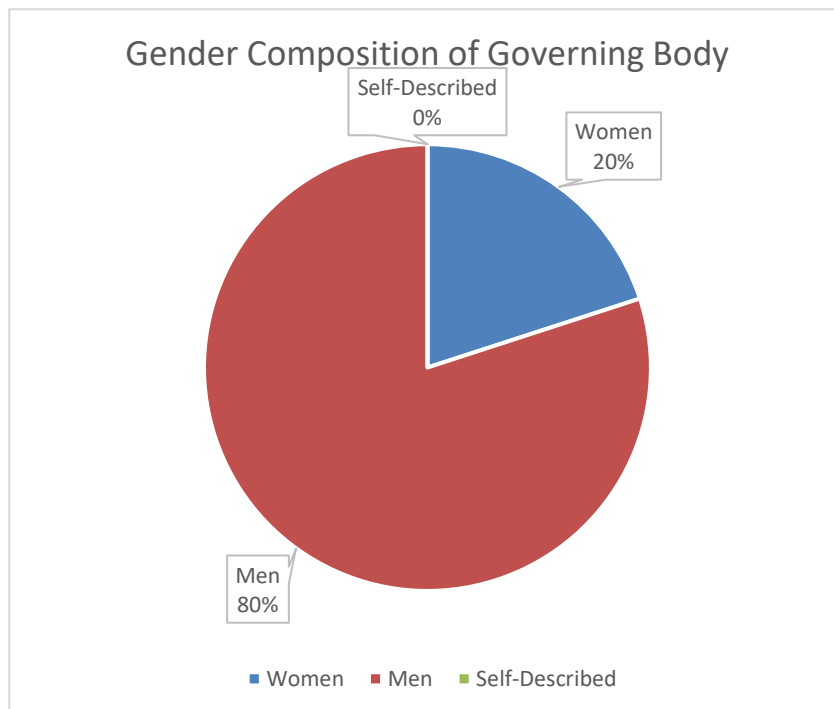


Council's overall breakdown of gender is close to equal, however when considered by employment type, women occupy the majority of part-time roles, and less than one fifth of full-time roles in the organisation.



Indicator 2: Gender composition of the governing body

West Wimmera Shire Council's governing body is a group of five elected members (Councillors), serving a four-year term. The current gender composition (below) differs from the composition of the organisation overall, which is considerably more balanced in terms of gender. According to Victorian Public Service (VPS) [data](#) 55% of members on major public sector boards are women. A predominantly male Council is historically consistent trend for West Wimmera and whilst the current Mayor is male, Council has elected a female Mayor at least five times in the past. The challenge that Council faces is attracting females to run for Council so as to represent the female constituents and the issues that they face within the Shire.





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

Median base salary: The full time annualised salary specified in the relevant employee agreement for the individual, excluding superannuation, annualised to a complete pay year and calculated at 1 FTE.

Median base salary by employment type:

Employment basis	Median		Median	
	Annualised base salary		Total remuneration	
	Pay gap as %		Pay gap as %	
	Women	Self-Described	Women	Self-Described
ALL	-7.0%	3.4%	15.0%	5.1%
Full-time permanent/ongoing	-30.5%	3.4%	-29.6%	6.4%
Full-time contract (fixed-term)	40.0%		32.5%	
Part-time permanent/ongoing	-17.1%		-14.9%	
Part-time contract (fixed-term)	20.9%		49.3%	
Casual	0.0%		-1.0%	

Total remuneration: base salary plus all bonuses, allowances, superannuation and other payments.

Mean total remuneration pay gap by employment type:

Employment basis	Mean		Mean	
	Annualised base salary		Total remuneration	
	Pay gap as %		Pay gap as %	
	Women	Self-Described	Women	Self-Described
ALL	0.0%	16.2%	13.2%	6.4%
Full-time permanent/ongoing	-21.9%	13.0%	-19.8%	12.9%
Full-time contract (fixed-term)	43.6%		36.3%	
Part-time permanent/ongoing	-13.2%		-17.4%	
Part-time contract (fixed-term)	8.1%		36.1%	
Casual	5.5%		4.6%	



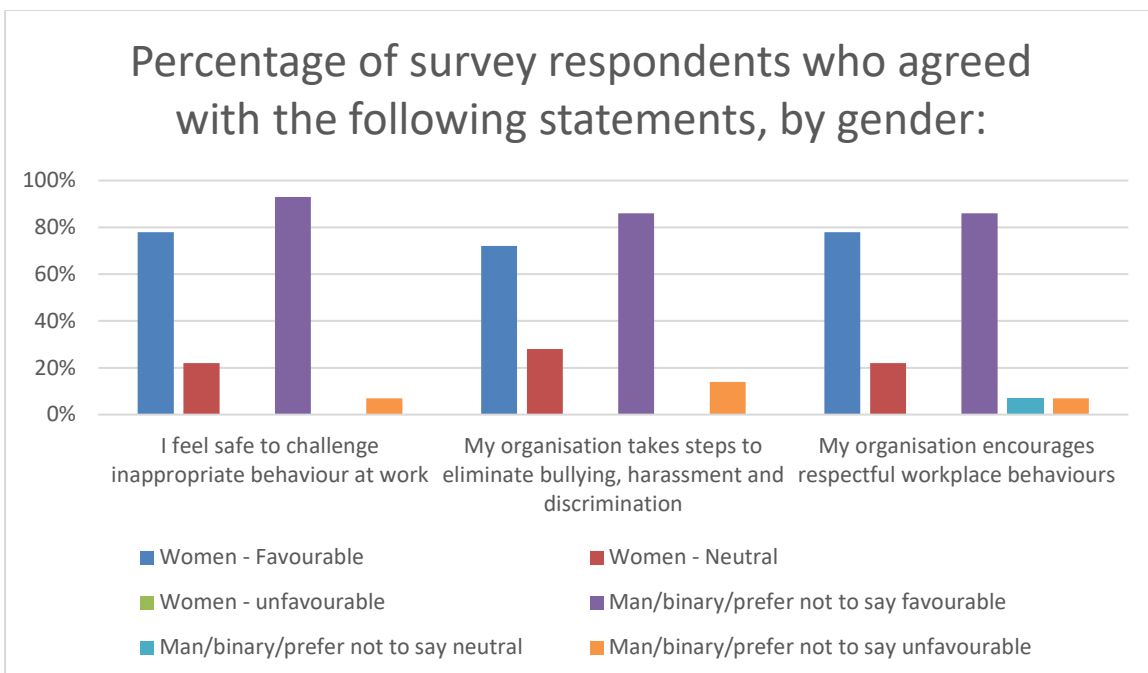
Median and mean annualised base salary and total remuneration pay gap by classification level:

Classification by reporting level to CEO/head of business i) enter 0 for the CEO; ii) enter -1 for the level below CEO; and continue until all people are captured	Median Annualised base salary		Median Total remuneration		Mean Annualised base salary		Mean Total remuneration	
	Pay gap as %		Pay gap as %		Pay gap as %		Pay gap as %	
	Women	Self-Described	Women	Self-Described	Women	Self-Described	Women	Self-Described
0								
-1	37.1%		26.1%		37.1%		26.1%	
-2	29.5%		40.1%		19.6%		27.0%	
-3	-5.0%		4.0%		-7.3%		3.9%	
-4	2.8%	0.0%	42.9%	2.1%	0.8%	2.5%	26.3%	-7.6%



Indicator 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace

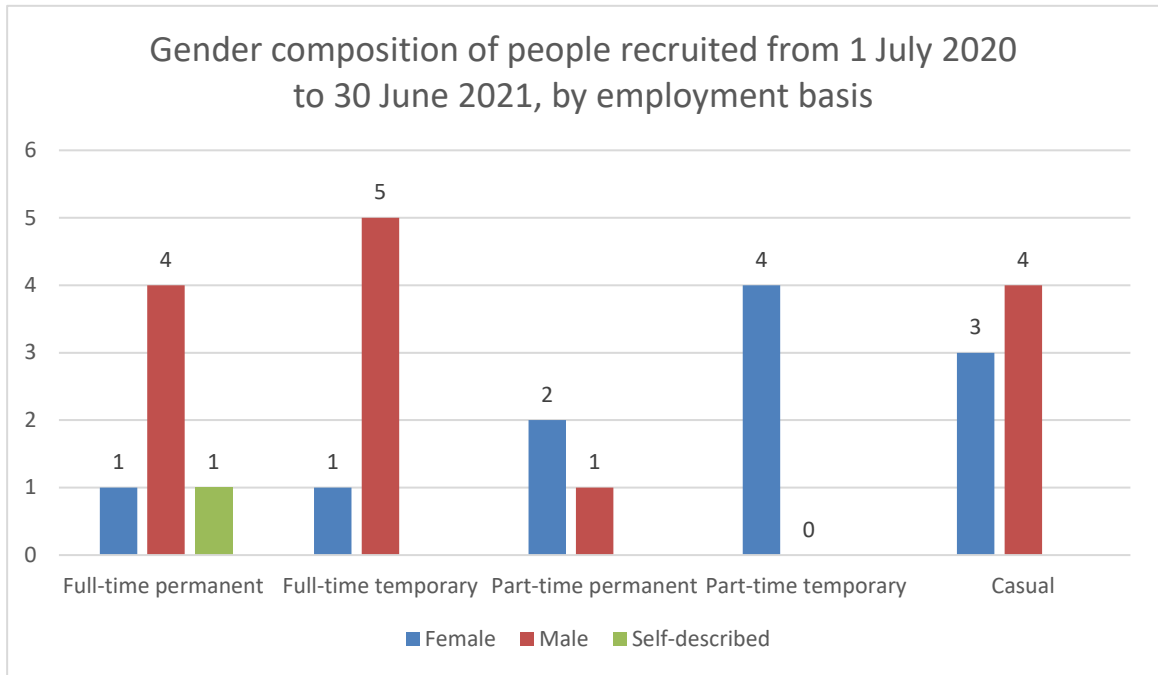
There were no formal sexual harassment complaints made in the reporting period. The PMS results also indicated generally favourable responses regarding the organisation’s approach and response to inappropriate workplace behaviours. More than 75% of respondents across genders responded favorably to feeling safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work.





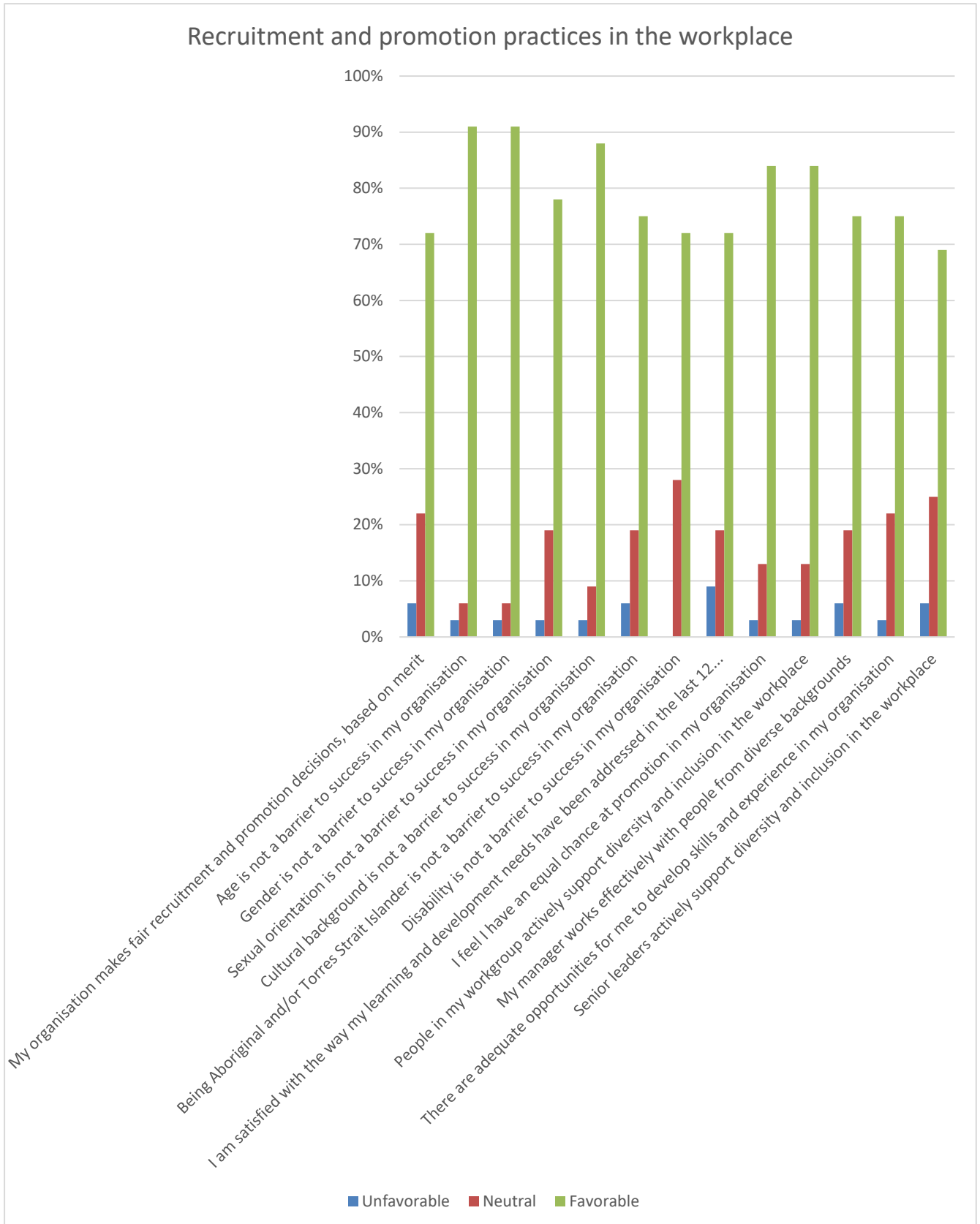
Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Council's recruitment data in the reporting period 1 July 2020-30 June 2021 shows that during that time a greater number of men than women were recruited overall, and that men made up the vast majority of full time positions filled.





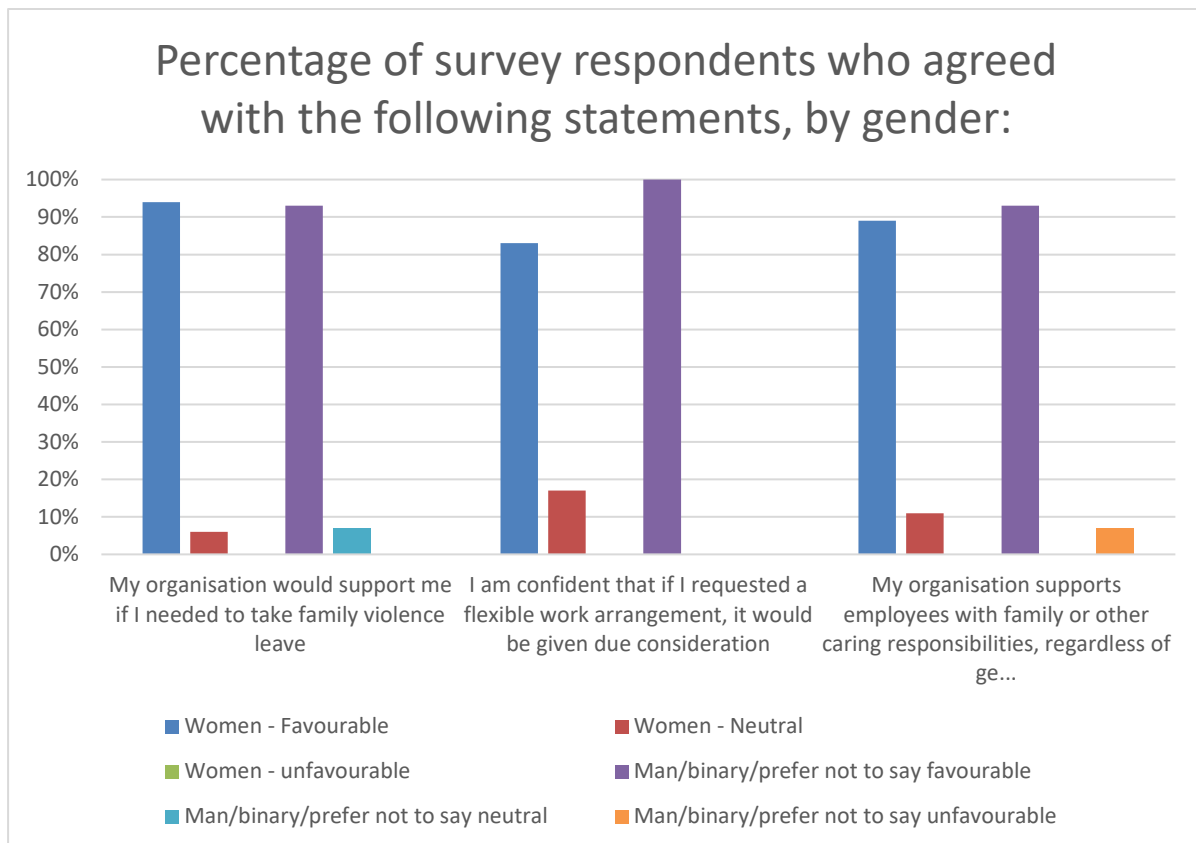
The People Matters Survey returned generally favourable responses regarding recruitment and promotion practices and generally higher percentage of favourable results than councils overall.





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

Organisational data regarding utilisation of flexible working arrangement or uptake of family violence leave cannot be provided at this time due the size of the data set and data privacy. Data from the PMS was generally favourable regarding organisational support for accessing flexibility or family violence support.

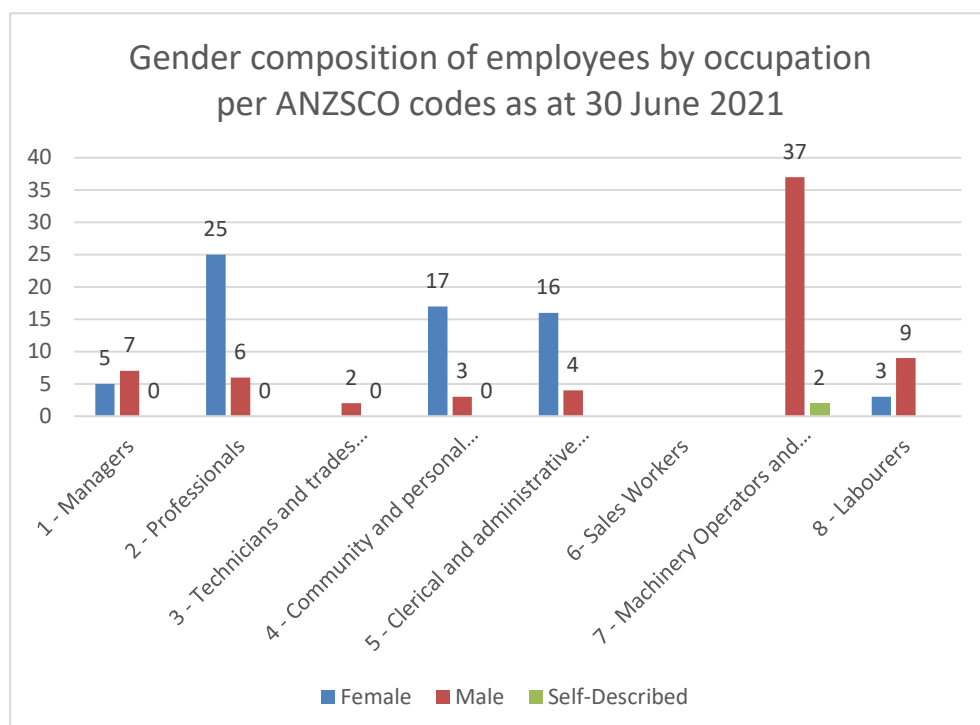
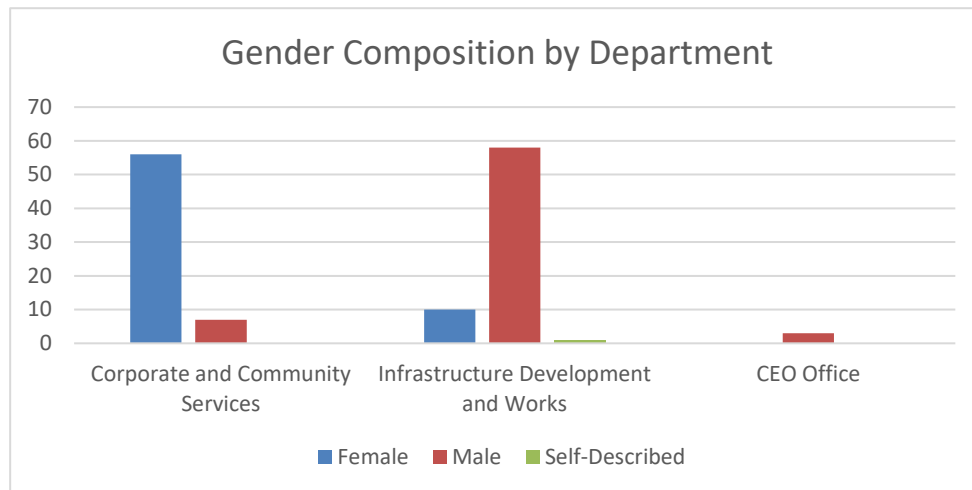


Note: Man/Binary/Prefer not to say grouped for anonymity



Indicator 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace

While Council demographics depict a remarkably even gender split overall, at a departmental level it's evident that the Corporate and Community Directorate is predominately made up of women, and the Infrastructure Development and Works Directorate predominately men. This data supports the long-standing trend of plant operation roles being occupied largely by men and administrative functions having higher proportions of female staff, and is further supported by the gender composition of staff as per the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZCO) codes.





Key actions and strategic objectives

Priority	Indicator	Action:	Measurement:
Priority 1 West Wimmera Shire Council will actively develop an environment where everyone is welcomed and supported	6. Leave and flexibility	Support flexible working arrangements (where possible) to allow staff to manage caring and family responsibilities	Compare uptake of flexible work arrangements with baseline of audit on a biannual basis.
	7. Gendered work segregation	Maintain CoRE (Communities of Respect and Equality) alliance membership and actively participate in programs and training.	Report to executive leadership any training or programs (June 2023).
Priority 2 West Wimmera Shire Council will have inclusive and equitable recruitment processes to achieve a gender-balanced workforce with pay equity, while also being representative of local demographics	7. Gendered work segregation	Promote/encourage recruitment of males to community support work and females to works teams.	Increase in number of males in HACC team and females to outdoor staff (June 2023).
	5. Recruitment and promotion practices	Unconscious bias training for staff participating in interview panels/informing recruitment decisions.	Report to executive leadership any training or programs (June 2023).
	2. Gender Composition of Governing Body	Council will actively promote inclusive candidate information sessions ahead of the next election cycle.	Gender composition of next elected governing body (November 2024).
Priority 3 West Wimmera Shire Council has zero tolerance for sexism, discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment with mechanisms in place so that all staff are able to recognise, address and respond to it	4. Sexual harassment in the workplace	Develop an anonymous platform for staff to securely report instances of sexual harassment	Survey of staff awareness of platform (June 2023)
	4. Sexual harassment in the workplace	Promote awareness of external channels for staff to raise issues, should they not wish to access internal channels.	Internal training (June 2023).

Strategic Resourcing Statement

West Wimmera Shire Council is in a position to be a champion of change. We aim to create a safe and inclusive environment where everyone is valued for who they are and what they have to offer. Council will be guided by the gender equality principles outlined in the Act and will develop this plan accordingly. We will continue to report on statistics of participation and experiences of our staff.



Council's Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 aims to promote gender equality within our workforce and improve outcomes for people of all genders.

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), Council is required to ensure adequate resources are invested to implement its GEAP. Properly resourcing the implementation of the GEAP is critical to delivering on our commitments to staff and meeting our obligation under the Act to make reasonable and material progress towards workplace gender equality.

The delivery of this plan will be overseen by the Corporate and Community Services Directorate and resourced through the Governance and Human Resources teams.

Several actions identified in the GEAP include participation of employees from across the business in activities to raise awareness, knowledge, and skill development.

A significant number of actions within the GEAP will be delivered by our Human Resources team. If required, Council will make budgetary adjustments to meet commitments set out in this GEAP.