



# **GENDER EQUALITY POLICY**

***(Version 1.0)***

Name Policy	This Document is Uncontrolled when Printed	Responsible Officer: CEO	
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## Gender Equality Policy

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## Gender Equality Guidelines

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## 1. Objective

This policy and guidelines has been developed to promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women through the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services in the workplace and community

## 2. Definitions

<b>YSC</b>	Yarriambiack Shire Council
<b>Act</b>	<i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>
<b>Commissioner</b>	The Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner appointed under section 29 of the Act.
<b>Gender Equality</b>	Means equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes between persons of different genders e.g. women, men and trans
<b>Gender Equity</b>	Means fairness of treatment of women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities.
<b>Gender Equality Action Plan</b>	A Gender Equality Action Plan referred to in Section 10 of the Act, and includes a report or document taken to be a Gender Equality Action Plan under section 13 of the Act
<b>Gender Equality Action Plan reporting year</b>	Means the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021</li> <li>• Each subsequent 4<sup>th</sup> year - 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Targets</b>	Targets (objectives set) relating to the workplace gender equality indicators
<b>Quotas</b>	Quotas relating to the workplace gender equality indicators
<b>Gender Lens</b>	A tool used to intentionally examine and highlight issues of gender
<b>Gender stereotypes</b>	Simplistic generalisations about the gender attributes, differences and roles.
<b>Trans and gender diverse</b>	Transgender (often shortened to 'trans') refers to a person whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not align with their sex assigned at birth.

## 3. Responsibility

The Department of Business Strategy and Performance is responsible for implementing the policy and guidelines.

This policy and guidelines applies to all employees including fulltime, part-time, casual or fixed term (including apprentices or trainees) employees of the Yarriambiack Shire Council (YSC).

#### 4. Policy Statement and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to encourage YSC employees to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and to promote gender equality in policies, programs and services.

This Policy and Guidelines covers:

- a) The gender equality principles;
- b) Indicators that must be addressed to gauge progress on achieving gender equity; and
- c) The procedures to provide a clear understanding of the Acts reporting requirements.

#### 5. Gender Equality Principles

YSC is committed to implementing initiatives and changing behaviours to support the following Principles to increase gender equality:

- a) 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.
- b) Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- c) Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- d) Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
- e) Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- f) Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- g) All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.
- h) 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.
- i) Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
- j) Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

#### 6. Gender Equality Indicators

YSC will utilise the following indicators to measure gender-related changes over a period of time:

- a) Gender composition of all levels of the workforce and governing bodies such as Community Asset committees.
- b) Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
- c) Levels of sexual harassment in the workplace
- d) Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace
- e) Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to; family violence leave, flexible working arrangements, working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities, gendered segregation within the workplace and any other prescribed matters.

## 7. Benefits of a workplace Gender Equality Policy

A formal workplace gender equality Policy can assist an organisation to:

- a) Provide internal guidance on how the YSC aims to integrate a gender perspective and women's human rights throughout policy formation, program development and activity implementation.
- b) Provide both women and men access to equal opportunities and outcomes, including equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value.
- c) Remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce.
- d) Provide full and genuine access to positions, including to leadership roles for women and men.
- e) Eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender particularly in relation to family and caring responsibilities for both women and men.

<b>Benefits of Gender Equality in the Workplace (Internal)</b>	<b>Benefits of Gender Equality (Economic, Social &amp; Environmental)</b>
Improved productivity	Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls
Increased growth and innovation	It's good for the economy
Diversity of views	It makes our communities safer and healthier
More flexible working	Improves freedom and strengthens families
A more stable workforce	Reduces poverty
Better quality of life for employees	

## 8. The Victorian Local Government Women's Charter and Gender Equality

Local Government of Victoria recognised the need for increased women's participation in the key decision making forums in the community and in democratic governance, and therefore, on behalf of communities, support the following Local Government Women's Charter principles:

### 8.1 Gender Equity

That women and men have an equal right to be representatives in local governments, committees and decision-making positions.

### 8.2 Diversity

The inclusion of different experiences and perspectives in local governments and community decision-making strengthens local democratic governance and helps build cohesive communities. Councils and communities encourage and welcome the participation of all women.

### 8.3 Active Citizenship

Local Governments will work with the community to increase the numbers and participation of women in public life, so that decision-making more clearly represents and reflects the interests and demographics of communities.

The Victorian Local Government Women's Charter principles and actions provide a lens through which to focus on women's involvement in local government decision-making and increasing opportunities for women's participation at all levels of civic life.

YSC became a signatory to the Victorian Local Governments Women’s Charter in support of gender equality in 2011 and remains an active member.

### 9. Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance

YSC is a ‘CoRE’ Alliance member committed to the undertaking of action both internally and externally to promote gender equity, equality and prevention of violence against women.

As members, Council is provided access to resources such as Gender Lens Checklists to assist in program planning (including implementation and evaluation) and Gender Audit Tools for identifying ‘opportunities’ and ‘areas for improvement’.

These tools have been made available to workplaces that support gender equality and to assist in the development of Gender Equality Action Plans to improve policies, programs and service delivery to communities.

### 10. References

- *Employee Code of Conduct*
- *Human Resource Policy and Guidelines Manual*
- *Information Privacy policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act (2010)*
- *Human Rights Charter*
- *Victorian Local Government Women’s Charter*
- *Victorian Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter 2006.*

Council Approved Policy

<b>Policy Adopted:</b>	Ordinary Meeting 21 October 2020	Minute Book Page 164
<b>Policy Reviewed:</b>	Ordinary Meeting [date]	Minute Book Page [number]

## Gender Equality Guidelines

### 11. Objective

Council, in developing policies, programs and delivering services to the public, or have a direct and/or significant impact on the public must consider, promote and take necessary and proportionate action towards achieving gender equality.

### 12. Responsibility

Council's Extended Leadership Team (includes CEO, Directors and Managers) are responsible for the implementation and action of procedures to ensure compliance, reporting and timelines are met.

### 13. Method

The following steps outline the processes required by YSC to meet the compliance of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

#### 13.1 Step 1- Gender Equality Impact Assessment

YSC must undertake a gender impact assessment when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

The assessment must incorporate the process and format used to undertake the impact assessment and include the following:

- a) Assess the effects that the policy, program or service may have on persons of different genders; and
- b) State how the policy, program or service will be developed or varied in order to:
  - (i) meet the needs of persons of different genders; and
  - (ii) address gender inequality; and
  - (iii) promote gender equality; and
- c) If practicable, take into account that gender inequality may be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of any of the following:
  - (i) Aboriginality;
  - (ii) age;
  - (iii) disability;
  - (iv) ethnicity;
  - (v) gender identity;
  - (vi) race;
  - (vii) religion;
  - (viii) sexual orientation.

#### 13.2 Step 2 - Workplace Gender Equality Audit

YSC must undertake a workplace gender audit before developing a Gender Equality Action Plan. The audit must assess the state and nature of gender inequality as at 30 June in the Gender Equality Action Plan report year to which the audit relates, having regard to the following:

- a) Workplace gender equality indicators:
  - (i) gender composition of all levels of the workforce
  - (ii) gender composition of governing bodies

- (iii) equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
  - (iv) sexual harassment in the workplace
  - (v) recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace
  - (vi) availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to:
    - family violence leave; and
    - flexible working arrangements; and
    - working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
  - (vii) gendered segregation within the workplace
  - (viii) any other prescribed matters.
- b) Any gender equality targets or gender equality quotas set
- c) The disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of any of the following in addition to gender inequality-
- (i) Aboriginality;
  - (ii) age;
  - (iii) disability;
  - (iv) ethnicity;
  - (v) gender identity;
  - (vi) race;
  - (vii) religion;
  - (viii) sexual orientation;
- d) Any other matters that the YSC considers relevant
- e) Must incorporate the process and format used to undertake the audit
- f) Gender-disaggregated data; and
- g) If available, data about Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation.

The following factors must be taken into account in determining whether Council has made reasonable and material progress in relation to the above Gender Equality Indicators:

- a) The size of Council and number of employees
- b) The nature and circumstances of Council, including any barriers to making progress
- c) Requirements that apply to Council under any other Act
- d) Council's resources
- e) Council's operational priorities and operational obligations
- f) The practicability and cost to Council of making progress
- g) Genuine attempts made by Council to make progress.



### 13.3 Step 3 - Preparing a Gender Equality Action Plan

In preparing the YSC Gender Equality Action Plan, Council must take into account the gender equality principles, consult with Council (made up of the Councillors), employees and any other relevant stakeholders.

The YSC Extended Leadership Team must prepare and include the following:

- a) Results of the workplace gender audit
- b) Strategies (actions) and measures for promoting and improving gender equality.

Council must allocate adequate resources to the development and implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan.

### 13.4 Step 4 - Publication & Submission of Plan

Council must submit a Gender Equality Action Plan to the Commissioner on or before the 31 October in each Gender Equality Action Plan reporting year.

Within a reasonable time after submitting the Gender Equality Action Plan Council must publish the plan on its website and notify Council and Employees.

The Gender Equality Action Plan is only accepted if the following criteria is met and the Commission is satisfied:

- a) The report or document includes the matters set out in step 3.
- b) The report or document has been prepared no more than 12 months before the Start of the Gender Equality Action Plan reporting year.
- c) The Gender Equality Action Plan has been published on Council's website and Council and Employees have been notified of the publication.

If the Gender Equality Action Plan requires an amendment the plan will need to be resubmitted to the Commissioner and again, publish the amended plan on Council's website and notify Council and employees.

### 13.5 Step 5 – Gender Equality Progress Reports

Council must submit a progress report to the Commissioner on or before 31 October in every second year after submitting a Gender Equality Action Plan.

The progress report must in relation to any gender impact assessment undertaken by Council within the relevant period-

- a) identify the policy, program or service that was the subject of the assessment and report on:
  - (i) how the policy, program or service was varied in order to meet the needs of different genders
  - (ii) how it addressed gender inequality
  - (iii) promote gender equality.
- b) Report on Council's progress within the relevant period in relation to the strategies and measures set out in the Plan.
- c) Demonstrate Council's progress in relation to the indicators and meeting of targets and quotas.
- d) Must incorporate the process and format used to undertake the progress report.

*\*Council must not identify or report on a policy, program or service that includes information that would be an exempt document under the FOI Act 1982 or any other provision of another enactment or relating to confidential information.*

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## 14. Compliance

The Commission may issue a compliance notice to Council if the Commission reasonably believes that Council has failed to comply with the Act.

## 15. Flowchart & Timelines

