



Acknowledgement of Country

Wyndham City Council recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Custodians of the lands on which Australia was founded.

Council acknowledges the Wadawurrung, Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which Wyndham City is being built.

For tens of thousands of years, the Werribee River has been a significant meeting place for Aboriginal people to build community, exchange resources, and share responsibility for its lands.

Council pays respect to the wisdom and diversity of past and present Elders who sustained economies in which all enjoyed their rightful place and equitable outcomes. The **Towards Equality** policy statement seeks to uphold the continuing rights of Aboriginal peoples in this place to determine a future in which their children and this land flourishes. It expresses Council's commitment to foster equal and inclusive partnerships so that all may thrive in this place.

Acknowledgement of victim survivors of family violence

We acknowledge the victim survivors of family violence. We acknowledge their resilience and courage. We stand beside them. We will work together with the broader community to build a society free from violence.



Foreword from the Mayor

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Wyndham's **Towards Equality** Policy Statement.

Gender equality is a basic human right, that benefits everyone. Communities with greater gender equality have been shown to have greater levels of social cohesion, higher levels of social connection, improved health and wellbeing and lower rates of violence.

Violence against women is a key social problem that significantly impacts the health and wellbeing of everyone in our community. The psychological, physical, economic and social impacts are serious, lifelong and profound for those who have experienced violence.

As Mayor, I am extremely proud of Our Council's long-standing commitment to promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women. This is Council's first policy statement and provides the strategic direction to further drive our work towards a gender equitable organisation and community.

Local government can play a critical role in promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women. **Towards Equality** is for women, men, and gender diverse people across all ages and life stages and strives to break down gender-based discrimination and promote a community in which everyone feels equally valued, respected and has equal opportunity.

Our **Towards Equality** vision is that Wyndham is a safe and inclusive community where all people, regardless of their gender, have equal

access to power, resources and opportunities and are treated with dignity, respect and fairness, in a life free from all forms of violence. It is underpinned by the following goals:

- To work together with community to build a City that is healthy, strong and inclusive of all
- For Wyndham City Council to be gender equitable, safe, inclusive and a leader in equality.
- Gender based violence is reduced and our response is strengthened.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the former Chair of the Safer Communities Portfolio, Cr. Kim McAliney, who has championed the cause of gender equity over a number of years during her time on Council.

Thank you to the Safer Communities Portfolio and Gender Equity Sub-Committee for their guidance and input. Thanks also to the Council staff and community and partners who have contributed to its development.

Your voices, comments and feedback have been crucial to the development of this significant vision for change for our community. By working together, we can all collectively contribute to a gender equitable community and organisation.

Councillor
Josh Gilligan - Mayor



Foreword from the Chief Executive Officer

Let us imagine a world where women and girls can stand equally with men and boys and take up all of life's opportunities without fear, harm, discrimination or disadvantage (Victorian Women's Trust, May 2016)

As CEO of one of the largest employers in Wyndham and where a high number of our staff are residents, I am extremely proud of Wyndham **Towards Equality** Policy Statement.

Wyndham is committed to providing a workplace where all employees can access the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities and resources regardless of their gender. **Towards Equality** has been developed by our staff in partnership with our community.

We acknowledge that as a local government, we play an important role in promoting and supporting respectful, fair and just workplaces and communities. We will continue to show leadership in achieving gender equality and in the prevention of violence against women.

Women make up over 50% of our community and workforce and they contribute so much to the fabric of both, but they continue to face barriers and challenges at all stages of their lives.

Towards Equality has been endorsed by Council's leadership team and has the support of our staff. I welcome the opportunity to continue our work in creating and celebrating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Kelly Grigsby
Chief Executive Officer




Thank you to the many staff, service providers and community members who contributed to the development of Towards Equality. Particular thanks go to the members of the Safer Communities Portfolio and Gender Equity Sub-Committee who have played a crucial role in guiding the development of this document.



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Our Vision for Wyndham is that it is a safe, inclusive community where all people, regardless of their gender, have equal access to resources, power and opportunities, are treated with dignity, respect and fairness, in a life free from all forms of violence.



Wyndham 2040

The Wyndham 2040 Vision and Wyndham City Plan 2017-2021 articulate Wyndham's vision for the future. To realise our vision, we will build strong partnerships with the community to foster a better shared understanding of the needs of the diverse people and places that make up Wyndham.

The Wyndham City Plan outlines Council's strategic priorities. It is built on the themes of the Community Plan and articulates a vision for a healthy, liveable city that:

- Is future focused and plans for sustainable development
- Embraces diversity and is welcoming and inclusive
- Consists of connected, vibrant neighbourhoods that provide for the community's cultural, economic, social and recreational needs
- Encourages a healthy and active lifestyle
- Supports the diverse educational needs of the community
- Empowers the community to lead

Towards Equality is strategically aligned with the Wyndham City Plan and Wyndham 2014 Vision. They emphasise how we can support and develop connected, passionate, healthy, family-friendly communities and address the drivers of gender-based violence.

Strategy 4.2.2 of the Wyndham City Plan clearly articulates that:

"Council will foster confidence and positive community outcomes by working with the State Government to improve crime prevention; increase awareness and access to services that tackle family violence, gender equity; and help prevent other social violence injury in order to improve the health, wellbeing and overall lives of Wyndham's vulnerable citizens."

Towards Equality's three goals align with two key themes within the City Plan:

Community and wellbeing

Goal 1: To work together with community to build a city that is healthy, strong and inclusive of all.

Goal 3: Gender-based violence is reduced and our response is strengthened.

Leadership and participation

Goal 2: For Wyndham City Council to be gender equitable, safe, inclusive and a leader in equality.



Overview - A Vision for Equality

Gender equality is a basic human right. Everyone has the right to enjoy their lives without discrimination and with access to the same opportunities.

Wyndham City Council (Wyndham City) has developed **Towards Equality** to support the achievement of our vision of a safe, inclusive community where all people, regardless of their gender, have equal access to, resources, power and opportunities, are treated with dignity, respect and fairness, in a life free from all forms of violence.

This policy statement asserts Council's commitment to break down gender-based discrimination and build a Wyndham community where everyone feels valued, respected and has equal opportunity.

It's based on six key guiding principles: that gender equality;

- is a human right
- benefits everyone: men, women, boys, girls and people who are gender diverse
- enables full economic participation and yields economic benefits
- promotes a healthy and strong community
- helps prevent violence against women and girls
- is a goal that can only be achieved over time through working in partnership with the community and organisations that are drivers of change.

Towards Equality incorporates the latest research and best practice and is informed by relevant Commonwealth and State strategic frameworks as well as the Gender Equality Legislation that was passed in Victoria in February 2020¹. There is also strong alignment with *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* that supports a state-wide delivery approach in preventing violence against women through gender equality.²

Towards Equality and its associated **2020-2021 Action Plan**, sets out how we will achieve our vision and establishes actions that Council will take to build an inclusive, connected city by inspiring the community, strengthening our internal priorities and challenging outdated ways of thinking.

To deliver the vision across all areas of Council and the community, **Towards Equality** is aligned to the four themes of the Wyndham City Plan 2017-2021.³

It also aims to deliver three interconnected and critical, evidence-based outcomes:

- Strengthen community health and wellbeing
- Improve organisational performance
- Prevent gender-based violence.

Towards Equality and a one year **2020-2021 Action Plan** has been developed following extensive community, partner agencies and staff consultation. Following the implementation of the one-year Action Plan, a four-year Action Plan will be developed to commence by October 2021 to align with the requirements of the Victorian Gender Equality Legislation. This will be informed by additional consultation and engagement.



Towards Equality - Gender Equity and Gender Equality

Gender equity and gender equality are not the same.

Gender equality is when everyone, regardless of their gender, has equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities. It does not mean that women, men and gender-diverse people are the same; rather that their behaviours, aspirations and needs are equally valued.

Gender equity is the process of achieving gender equality. It involves the idea that:

“People have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances”.⁴

Gender equity is defined by the World Health Organization as:

“... the different needs, preferences and interests of women and men. This may mean that different treatment is needed to ensure equality of opportunity ... and considering the realities of women’s and men’s lives.”⁵

This definition acknowledges that women, men and gender diverse people do not exist on a level playing field and it may be necessary to give some people different access to resources and support. This is true for everyone, since women, men and gender-diverse people generally experience their health, wellbeing and safety differently.⁶

Gender

Gender refers to the characteristics that a society typically associates with being male or female. Gender varies from society to society and can change. Most people are born either male or female, although the way they are expected to behave is usually set by culture, religious beliefs and society.

Not everyone follows these expectations. Some people face discrimination because they don’t ‘fit’ society’s expectations. For example, gender diverse people may challenge normalised ideas of gender. Gender diverse is an umbrella term that includes people whose gender identity is different from what society expects. It includes people who do not identify as male or female.

Our Role

Councils are responsible for monitoring the long-term and cumulative effects of decisions to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for their communities, under the Victorian Local Government Act (1989).

Councils implement policies, regulations and programs set by other tiers of government. In Victoria local governments now have a legislative requirement that will support our strong and clear vision of an equitable Wyndham through the Victorian Gender Equality Act that was passed in February 2020.

The Victorian Gender Equality Act aims to improve workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils. It will also lead to better results for the Victorian Community through improved policies, programs and services.⁷

As each municipality is different, councils also have an electoral mandate to develop regulations, local laws and services that address the unique needs of their community.

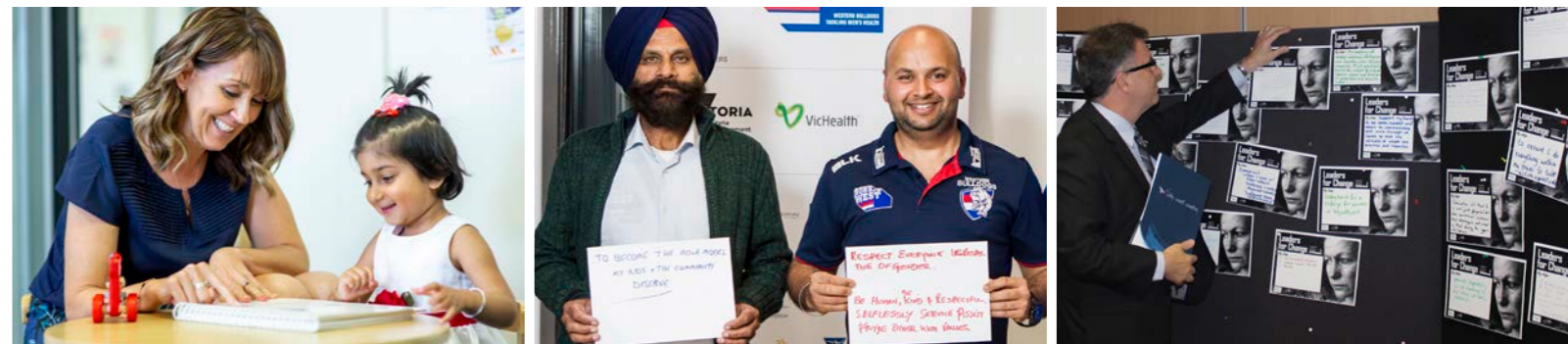
In practice our role can support actions that promote gender equality in many ways, including:

- Encouraging and advocating for change among our many community and organisational partners
- Ensuring our services and facilities are inclusive of all genders and welcome everyone equally
- Brokering change through our role as one of Wyndham’s largest employers
- Taking action to ensure our own workplace is gender-equitable and free of discrimination
- Planning, designing and building community spaces and facilities that encourage and promote gender equality
- Advocating for systemic change across all levels of government, private and community sectors and sporting and volunteering groups
- Showing strong leadership in the prevention of gender-based violence by brokering partnerships between community groups and welfare organisations.



Achieving our Vision of Equality

Gender equality is a basic human right. Everyone, regardless of their gender, has the right to enjoy their lives without being limited by stereotypes and discrimination. Gender equality can improve health and wellbeing and enable people to fully engage in public life. It also reduces the likelihood of gender-based violence and improves organisational performance.



Our Vision

Wyndham is a safe and inclusive community where all people, regardless of their gender, have equal access to resources, power and opportunities, are treated with dignity, respect and fairness, in a life free from all forms of violence.

Our Goals

Our commitment to achieving an equitable Wyndham will be achieved by implementing our Action Plan to support our goals and objectives:

Goal 1

To work together with community to build a City that is healthy, strong and inclusive of all.

Objectives

- 1.1 Leadership roles are acknowledged, celebrated and expanded for everyone.
- 1.2 Participation in all roles and activities is not limited by gender.
- 1.3 Council works in partnership with its diverse communities to raise awareness and understanding of gender equity, and reduce barriers to civic, economic and social participation.
- 1.4 Places and spaces in Wyndham are inclusive, welcoming and safe for everyone.

Goal 2

For Wyndham City Council to be gender equitable, safe, inclusive and a leader in equality.

Objectives

- 2.1 Council demonstrates a systemic and organisational wide approach to achieving gender equity with inclusive policies, practices and culture.
- 2.2 Council services are inclusive and responsive to gender identity.
- 2.3 Council leads by example and advocates the benefits of gender equity to the community and beyond.

Goal 3

Gender based violence is reduced and our response strengthened.

Objectives

- 3.1 Communities and Council staff are empowered to identify and respond to gender-based violence.
- 3.2 Services and programs to prevent gender-based violence and provide support when it occurs are increased and strengthened.
- 3.3 Awareness of the drivers of violence are increased, and respectful relationships championed.
- 3.4 Partnerships are established for change and challenging harmful norms and stereotypes.



A Local Perspective - City of Wyndham

The City of Wyndham is located on the western edge of Melbourne, between the metropolitan areas of Melbourne and Geelong.

Wyndham is currently home to almost 290,000 people and in the last decade has experienced the largest and fastest growth of all Victorian municipalities. It is anticipated this trend will continue with estimates the residential population is set to exceed 500,000 people by 2041 – larger than Canberra is today.

Wyndham is a large and diverse community, both geographically and demographically. As a meeting place for people of the Kulin nations, Wyndham has a rich and diverse Aboriginal cultural heritage. Recent patterns of migration have resulted in Wyndham becoming one of the most culturally diverse cities in Victoria.

Wyndham is experiencing growth across all age groups. In 2020, a quarter of the population is under the age of 15 – the highest proportion in all Victoria. In 2019, 4,974 babies were born to Wyndham parents, which is around 95 babies born every week. Families with young children will continue to make up a high proportion of the Wyndham population in the future. Although, currently over-65 year olds form a relatively modest part of the Wyndham population, it is forecast to be the fastest growing age group in Wyndham between 2020 and 2035.⁸



Wyndham Gender Profile

The table below gives an overview of the gender profile in Wyndham and helps build the local case for change to focus on gender equality.

All information in the table relates to Wyndham specific data unless otherwise stated.

Employment	<p>More men 15 years and over were employed (67.5%) than women (53.2%).⁹ Women are twice as likely to be employed part-time.¹⁰</p> <p>A larger proportion of employed men are managers (12.9%) compared with women (8.1%).¹¹</p>
Income	<p>On average, men earn higher incomes than women, in part due to employment status, industry of employment and profession. In 2016, almost three quarters of women (72%) earned less than \$1,000 per week, compared to 51% of men.¹²</p> <p>Women perform significantly higher levels of unpaid domestic work than men with the majority of Wyndham residents performing 30 or more hours of unpaid domestic work per week being female (85%). Of those contributing less than 5 hours per week to unpaid domestic work 64.9% were male and 35.1% were female.¹³</p>
Caring responsibility	<p>Women provide 1.5 times more care for people with a disability and twice the amount of unpaid care for children (their own and other's peoples).¹⁴</p>

Households	<p>Women headed 84% of single parent households in 2014.¹⁵</p> <p>76% of residents who were aged over 75 years and living alone were women.¹⁶</p>
Family Violence	<p>Wyndham had the fourth highest number of family violence incidents of all Victorian municipalities from July 2018 to June 2019, with an increase of 19.2% from the previous year.</p> <p>Between the years ending July 2015 and June 2019, the number of family violence incidents in Wyndham increased by 32.2% which is almost twice that for Victoria in the same period (16.6%).¹⁷</p> <p>Females are over 4 times more likely to be affected by family violence than males (in 2019, 2622 females were affected by family violence compared to 681 men).¹⁸</p>
Perception of safety	<p>Females tend to feel less safe at night than males, with 57.8% of males and 28.7% of females reporting feeling safe.¹⁹</p>
Health	<p>Men have lower levels of life expectancy and overall report poorer health status than women.²⁰</p> <p>Females are more likely to see a GP or specialist than males.²¹ Depression and anxiety were more prevalent in females than males in 2017. In Australia, men are 3 times more likely than women to die from self-harm.²² Men are 1.5 times more likely to consume risky levels of alcohol.²³</p>



5 OF WYNDHAM'S LAST
 11 MAYORS
 WERE WOMEN



Wyndham City Gender Profile

Wyndham City is one of the largest employers in Wyndham. We strive to be the region's employer of choice by developing and growing our employees' strengths and abilities and ensuring that everyone enjoys the benefits of a fair, flexible and equitable workplace.

Although there is always more to achieve, we believe we have a positive 'gender equity story' to tell. For example, as of February 2020:

- Council employs more women than men
- 59% of leadership positions (team leader and above) are filled by women
- 72% of the executive leadership team are women
- The Chief Executive Officer is a woman

Policies and procedures have also been updated to improve gender equity. They include:

- Appointment of an inclusion officer to improve gender equity
- Appointment of a pathways to employment role to reduce return-to-work barriers for primary carers

- Establishment of gender-representative interview panels
- Inclusion of gender equity trained staff in enterprise bargaining discussions
- Introduction of family violence leave provisions for all staff
- Consideration of gender impact and inclusive language across workplace policies.
- Strategies developed to attract a greater gender balance throughout workforce, through traineeships, work experience and partnering with learning institutions to promote council as an employer of choice.

There remain challenges that we are committed to addressing. These include ensuring our data and reporting are gender-inclusive, addressing gender pay gaps, determining what barriers exist in departments with high levels of gender segregation and reducing real or perceived barriers to participation.

Wyndham City Workforce Gender by Employment Type

	Total	Male	Female
Full-time	868	409	458
Part-time	669	81	588



The Voice of Our Community and Staff

Towards Equality was developed following significant community, agency and staff consultation. The feedback has been crucial to the development of the policy.

Some of the themes that emerged from consultations included that:

- Council should become the benchmark for all local governments across Victoria.
- Council should take a transformative role and ‘walk the talk’ of gender equity.
- Gender equity should be integrated into all Council’s structures and processes.
- Changes should be sustainable, flexible and long-term.
- Men should be involved as agents of change.
- The outcomes from the Royal Commission into Family Violence should be part of the framework.
- A rigorous evidence base is essential in leading change.
- We should celebrate gender diversity across our operations.
- Pay and leadership gaps should be addressed.
- Council has a role in increasing knowledge and training on gender equity throughout the community.
- There should be a framework for assessment and evaluation of progress.
- Wyndham needs to create environments where women and gender-diverse people feel safe and welcome.
- There is an urgent need to reduce gender-based violence.

“I want to live in a city where gender equity is no longer an issue but a reality”.
(Female 20, Hoppers Crossing)

“Let’s set the benchmark for all Councils in Victoria”
(Female, 30, Council Staff)

“Creation of a fairer, more respectful and safer society”.
(Female, 40, Tarneit)

“That people of all genders find Wyndham a welcoming accepting and equitable place to live, work and enjoy’.
(Male, 45, Point Cook)

“Educate everyone about the importance of gender equity and the consequences of not having this”.
(Female, 20, Werribee)

“To make sure my daughters can speak and say no to violence against men”.
(Male, 50, Wyndham Vale)

“Create safer avenues for women to express their attitudes and concerns”.
(Female, 50, Hoppers Crossing)

“To be a place where no one plays the role of silent bystander”.
(Male, 45, Council Staff)

“To ensure the women in my life are safe and free from domestic violence”.
(Male, 47, Williams Landing)

The Case For Change



ON AVERAGE
MEN EARN
20.8%




MORE THAN WOMEN PER
YEAR, WITH MEN TAKING HOME
\$25,679 MORE A YEAR²⁴

WOMEN NEED
TO WORK AN
ADDITIONAL

59 DAYS
ON AVERAGE

TO EARN THE
SAME ANNUAL
INCOME AS MEN²⁵



IN 2019, ONLY...

29.7%

OF DIRECTORS ON
ASX200 BOARDS
WERE FEMALE²⁶

6%

OF CEOS
IN ASX200-LISTED
COMPANIES ARE
FEMALE²⁷

37%

OF AUSTRALIAN
FEDERAL
PARLIAMENTARIANS
ARE FEMALE²⁸

IN 2020, AUSTRALIA
HAS RANKED



OVERALL ON THE
GLOBAL GENDER INDEX



DROPPING FROM
A RANKING OF
15 IN 2006²⁹

64%



OF VICTORIAN WOMEN
HAVE EXPERIENCED
BULLYING, HARASSMENT
OR VIOLENCE IN THEIR
WORKPLACE³⁰



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IS
IS THE GREATEST HEALTH RISK FACTOR
FOR WOMEN 25-44 YEARS
(GREATER THAN SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND OBESITY)³¹

1 IN 3
LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE FROM A
PARTNER, EX-PARTNER OR FAMILY MEMBER^x
THESE NUMBERS ARE EVEN HIGHER FOR INTERSEX,
TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE³²

ON AVERAGE
1 WOMAN
A WEEK



IS KILLED BY HER
INTIMATE PARTNER³³

APPROXIMATELY
1 IN 5



WOMEN HAS
EXPERIENCED
SEXUAL VIOLENCE³⁴

APPROXIMATELY
95%

OF ALL VICTIMS OF
VIOLENCE (MALE AND
FEMALE) IN AUSTRALIA
REPORT THAT THE
PERPETRATOR
WAS MALE³⁵




ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER WOMEN ARE
32 TIMES MORE LIKELY

TO BE HOSPITALISED THAN NON-INDIGENOUS
WOMEN DUE TO FAMILY-VIOLENCE³⁶

CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE ARE MORE
VULNERABLE TO FAMILY, DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL
VIOLENCE, PARTICULARLY: CHILDREN, YOUNG
WOMEN, OLDER AUSTRALIANS, PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES, PEOPLE FROM CALD BACKGROUNDS,
LGBTIQ PEOPLE, PEOPLE IN RURAL AND
REMOTE AUSTRALIA, SOCIOECONOMICALLY
DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE³⁷

65%

OF WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCE
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE
WITH CHILDREN IN THEIR CARE,
REPORT THE CHILDREN HAD SEEN
OR HEARD THE VIOLENCE³⁸

NATIONALLY
IN 2017-2018
ABOUT  **75,500** WOMEN
 **41,600** CHILDREN
 **6,900** MEN

SOUGHT SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES
DUE TO FAMILY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE³⁹

MEN ARE
1.5 TIMES
MORE LIKELY
TO CONSUME RISKY
LEVELS OF ALCOHOL⁴⁰

MEN ARE
3 TIMES
MORE LIKELY
TO DIE FROM
SELF-HARM⁴¹

MEN REPORT
HIGHER
LEVELS
OF LONELINESS
THAN WOMEN⁴²



The Case For Change

Strengthening community health and wellbeing

Gender is a key determinant of health and wellbeing. Whether you are born male, female or gender diverse can significantly affect your life opportunities.

Gender inequality results in a range of poor outcomes for people of all genders. Women and gender diverse people experience higher rates of mental ill health and are more likely to be economically disadvantaged. Transgender and gender diverse people aged 18 and over are almost three times more likely to be diagnosed with depression in their lifetime. People who are gender diverse can feel they need to hide their gender when accessing services, in employment and social settings. Disparities in pay and leadership opportunities for women result in lost opportunity at both an individual and national level. It's estimated that the GDP would be boosted by 11% if Australia's gender employment gap was addressed and by 20% if the productivity gap were addressed. Although women are attaining higher levels of education this is still not being translated into equal participation in the workforce or equal earnings. Gendered perceptions of safety impact health and wellbeing. Women are less likely to feel safe walking alone which may reduce their engagement in public life.⁴³

Gender inequality effects men too. Across the globe men experience a health gap which means they have worse health outcomes than women. Gender norms can encourage some men to engage in violent or risky behaviours that lead to higher rates of injuries and death. Men are less likely to seek help when struggling with emotional pain or relationship problems. Men account for 75% of deaths from suicide. Men can also experience barriers to their ability to take on a carer's role through stereotyped perceptions and lack of access to structural support such as parental leave.

Gender also intersects with other forms of disadvantage such as sexuality, disability, class, race and age which can create greater levels of disadvantage for men and women.⁴⁴ For example, Aboriginal women, pregnant women and gender diverse people are more at risk of gender-based violence.

Communities with greater gender equality have been shown to have improved health and wellbeing with greater levels of social cohesion, lower rates of anti-social behaviour and violence and higher levels of social connection. Addressing gender equality can reduce disadvantage, improve physical

Our Goal is to work together with community to build a City that is healthy, strong and inclusive of all.

and mental health and wellbeing, reduce barriers to economic participation and access to financial resources and reduce health inequalities across diverse communities.⁴⁵

Council is committed to building a healthy and strong community. To view this through the lens of gender equality both enhances our understanding and our response.

Driving organisational excellence

"An organisation's performance is determined by the human capital that it possesses and its ability to use this resource efficiently. Ensuring the healthy development and appropriate use of half of the world's available talent pool thus has a vast bearing on how competitive a country may become or how efficient a company may be".⁴⁶

Leading contemporary organisations model gender equity. Greater gender diversity in leadership and decision-making roles lead to enhanced success and reputation. Improving gender equity has been shown to lead to improved productivity and economic growth and increased organisational performance. From a workforce perspective, it has been demonstrated to enhance an organisation's ability to attract talent and retain employees. Improving gender equity across our own operations will create larger pools of quality applicants, improve productivity and performance and increase our connection with our community. It will significantly strengthen our positive culture.

As one of the largest employers in the City of Wyndham, Council has both a great opportunity and responsibility to be a leader in this space.

Our goal is for Wyndham City Council to be gender equitable, safe, inclusive and a leader in equality.



Preventing violence against women and children

Violence can be experienced by anybody; women, men, children and people who are gender diverse. ALL forms of violence are unacceptable. Different kinds of violence have different causes and effects.

The majority of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and family violence in Australia is perpetrated by men against women. Although violence against women is a gendered problem it is not inevitable, and it is preventable. The evidence base is unequivocal that by

“taking action to redress the gendered drivers of violence against women, namely gender inequality, we can predict the occurrence of violence and work to prevent it.”⁴⁷

The four key drivers of gender-based violence and therefore the focus for change are:

- Not condoning aggression or violence against women
- Rebalancing control of decision making between men and women, that limits women’s independence in public and private life

- Addressing rigid gender roles and stereotypes such as constructions of masculinity and femininity
- Addressing male behaviours that disrespect or are aggressive towards women.⁴⁸

Violence against women is often experienced in combination with other forms of structural inequality and discrimination. Examining the intersect of discrimination and inequality such as racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and the ongoing impacts of colonisation alongside gender inequality is necessary to address and prevent violence against all women⁴⁹.

Communities with greater gender equality typically demonstrate lower rates of intimate partner and sexual violence. Council can play a crucial role in the prevention of violence in our community.

Our goal is to reduce gender-based violence and strengthen our response.



Implementation

A 2020-2021 Action Plan has been developed to support the implementation of Towards Equality in its first year. The plan commits to an initial range of actions that Council can undertake with the community and across the organisation to work towards our vision of an equitable Wyndham.

This action plan has been based on evidence and data gained from the development process and is in alignment with contemporary practice. Council will report on its progress in achieving the actions on the plan's completion in October 2021 along with a 6 month progress report.

The 12month action plan is the first phase of implementation and will also lay the foundation for Council to meet the requirements of the Victorian Gender Equality legislation which will commence on 31 March 2021. It will require Councils to develop a four-year Gender Equality Plan to be reported to Government every 2 years.⁵⁰

The Towards Equality document will provide the policy framework for the development of the four-year action plan. This will be further strengthened through undertaking additional community engagement and consultation at that time.

A background paper is also available which includes further information on the legislation, strategies and evidence from which this work is built, together with more detail on outcomes from the consultation process to date. This is available at www.wyndham.vic.gov.au





**Goal 1:
To work together with community to build a City
that is healthy, strong and inclusive of all.**

Objective 1.1	Actions	Impacts
Leadership roles are acknowledged, celebrated and expanded for everyone.	1.1.1 Develop and implement actions to recognise and celebrate the leadership achievements of women and girls in the community.	• Women's leadership is celebrated, promoted and normalised.
	1.1.2 Work closely with whole of community including, sports clubs, local businesses and community groups to increase leadership of women and gender-diverse people across all levels.	• Improve awareness of unconscious biases. • Render communities more inclusive through greater leadership opportunities and diversity.
	1.1.3 Partner and support leadership programs that assist women and gender-diverse people to transition into leadership positions.	• Increase the leadership capacity of women and gender-diverse people.
Objective 1.2	Actions	Impacts
Participation in all roles and activities is not limited by gender.	1.2.1 Encourage the engagement of all parents in all Council programs that relate to children, for example MCH, youth programs.	• Normalise and increase all parents' participation in child-related progress.
	1.2.2 Facilitate work with organisations and communities to improve understanding of how healthier masculinities can achieve health and wellbeing outcomes for all.	• Improve the health and wellbeing of all. • Involve men in the change process.
Objective 1.3	Actions	Impacts
Council works in partnership with its diverse communities to raise awareness and understanding of gender equality and reduce barriers to civic, economic and social participation.	1.3.1 Support work with women to build their business capacity and financial literacy.	• Advance women's business and financial literacies.
	1.3.2 Promote and support businesses with gender equitable practices through Council communications channels.	• Promote business gender equity practices. • Emphasise Council's support of gender equality.
	1.3.3 Support and partner with newly arrived migrant communities and organisations to increase women's social and economic participation.	• Advance migrant women's business and economic capacity and social, civic participation.
	1.3.4 Promote opportunities for women and gender diverse people that supports and increases their civic participation.	• Increased civic participation of women and gender diverse people on Council and committees
Objective 1.4	Actions	Impacts
Places and spaces in Wyndham are inclusive, welcoming and safe for everyone.	1.4.1 Partner with training providers to run gender equality training (including family violence, bystander and unconscious bias training) for sports clubs to help make their clubs more inclusive.	• Normalise women's participation in sport and shift the framing of sport as male-coded.
	1.4.2 Identify actual and perceived safety concerns for women, girls and gender-diverse people across Council places and spaces and take remedial action, including relevant education and communication.	• Highlight and reduce perceived and actual safety concerns among women, girls and gender-diverse people.
	1.4.3 Apply a gender equality lens to all urban planning to ensure that all genders are equitably considered.	• Ensure all genders are considered in urban planning.

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Goal 2: For Wyndham City Council to be gender equitable, safe, inclusive and a leader in equality.

Objective 2.1	Actions	Impacts
Council demonstrates a systemic and organisational wide approach to achieving gender equality with inclusive policies, practices and culture.	2.1.1 Continue to monitor gender and diversity across the workforce and address significant discrepancies.	• Increase understanding of progress in gender diversity across the workforce
	2.1.2 Provide training and mentoring opportunities for staff to apply for secondments in areas where there is not gender balance.	• Improved gender balance and pathways to leadership across the workforce.
	2.1.3 Explore how gender equality can be supported within our social procurement process.	• Encourage our suppliers to practise gender equity.
	2.1.4 Ensure our recruitment practices and communications emphasise that Council is a gender-equitable employer to attract talented people.	• Improve talent and diversity among Council staff.
	2.1.5 Review and improve workplace practices and policies to support a range of flexible workplace options and encourage their uptake, including men accessing parental/carers leave.	• Improve workplace flexibility access for all staff.
	2.1.6 Develop strategies to include staff on parental leave to ensure they continue to feel engaged, included and informed about their workplace and to help facilitate early planning for return to work.	• Make transition back to work more equitable and seamless.
	2.1.7 Track workplace resignations and identify trends, especially in relation to parental/carers leave.	• Identify gendered barriers to workplace participation.
Objective 2.2	Actions	Impacts
Council services are inclusive and responsive to gender identity.	2.2.1 Consider the needs of gender-diverse people in all Council programs that relate to children (for example kindergartens, youth programs).	• Normalise and increase gender-diverse people's participation in child-related programs.
	2.2.2 Continue to offer and promote books, toys, resources and programs that promote gender equality and respectful relationships within libraries, MCH and other Council departments that deal directly with children and young people.	• Disrupt and challenge gender stereotypes.
Objective 2.3	Actions	Impacts
Council leads by example and advocates the benefits of gender equality to the community and beyond.	2.3.1 Support work with women to build their business capacity and financial literacy.	• Raise community awareness to enable women's participation.
	2.3.2 Promote and support businesses with gender equitable practices through Council communications channels.	• Share best practice examples of gender equity • Raise awareness of gender inequality and the drivers of violence against women and support campaigns that seek to improve gender equality.

Goal 3: Gender-based violence is reduced and our response strengthened.

Objective 3.1	Actions	Impacts
Communities and Council staff are empowered to identify and respond to gender-based violence.	3.1.1 Support diverse communities to identify where gender inequity exists within their communities and support them to develop and implement responses, they deem appropriate.	• Develop new ways to tackle gender inequality by empowering local communities.
	3.1.2 Pilot family violence training to assist in identifying and responding to gender based violence.	• Equip staff to identify gender-based violence risk factors and respond.
	3.1.3 Monitor the implementation of the family violence leave provisions for staff.	• Leave is available and is accessed. • Support workplace outcomes for staff experiencing gender-based violence.
Objective 3.2	Actions	Impacts
Services and programs to prevent gender-based violence and provide support when it occurs are increased and strengthened.	3.2.1 Continue to advocate for improved services in Wyndham to deal with the effects of gender-based violence.	• Improve support services for people experiencing gender-based violence.
	3.2.2 Advocate for more policy, program and funding support for primary prevention of gender-based violence.	• Increase funding for primary prevention strategies for gender-based violence.
Objective 3.3	Actions	Impacts
Awareness of the drivers of gender-based violence are increased and respectful relationships championed.	3.3.1 Pursue opportunities to deliver respectful relationships workshops within the community.	• Increase knowledge of the interconnections between respect, gender equality and gender-based violence.
	3.3.2 Partner with communities and specialist organisations to co-design activities to increase awareness and reduce incidence of gender-based violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, refugee, LGBTIQ+, women with disabilities and gender-diverse communities.	• Raise awareness of the intersectional nature of gender-based violence among high-risk communities.
Objective 3.4	Actions	Impacts
Partnerships are established for change and challenging harmful norms and stereotypes.	3.4.1 Partner with family violence organisations to co-design and deliver gender equality, family violence, bystander and unconscious bias training to staff.	• Improve capacity and confidence of staff to understand the benefits of gender equity.
	3.4.2 Support and partner with men and men's groups to prevent violence against women and become champions of change.	• Improve men's and boys' health and wellbeing. • Include men in the change process. • Demonstrate that gender equality affects all genders.

Appendix 1

This document was developed with the support and guidance of the Safer Communities Portfolio. The Safer Communities Portfolio Committee was established to focus on the safety of Wyndham residents and to explore and improve perceptions of community safety in Wyndham. Its representatives include key agencies such as Victoria Police and WEstJustice, and a number of community members.

A Gender Equity Sub-Committee of the Safer Communities Portfolio was also established to steer this project. This included representatives from related Council Portfolio Committees., and a number of relevant Council staff. The members were:

- Cr Kim McAliney (Former Chair) - Safer Communities Portfolio
- Cr Mia Shaw (Family Friendly Portfolio)
- Trish Crossin (Safer Communities Portfolio - Community Member)
- Richard Dove (Cultural Diversity Portfolio - Wyndham Community Education Centre)
- Victor Bilous (Safer Communities Portfolio - Odyssey House)
- Elly Taylor (Safer Communities Portfolio - formerly of Women's Health West)
- Louise Falconer (Women's Health West)
- Monique Hurley (formerly of WEstJustice)
- Lesley Rogan (Wyndham City)
- Megan Jenner (Wyndham City)

Glossary

All Genders

All gender expressions, including masculine, feminine, trans[gender], non-binary and gender diverse.

Domestic Violence

Violent, aggressive, intimidatory or controlling behaviour towards a person with whom the offender cohabits e.g. family member, co-tenant.

Family Violence

Violent, aggressive, intimidatory or controlling behaviour towards a partner or other family member that takes place in the home.

Gender

The socially constructed norms, behaviours, roles and characteristics that a society assigns to women (femininity) and men (masculinity).

Gender Balance

Equal representation of women and men.

Gender Based Violence

Violence perpetrated against someone (usually a woman) because of their sex. Includes family and domestic violence.

Gender Diverse

Umbrella term describing gender identities that do not conform with masculine or feminine expressions. Gender-diverse people may identify with one or more genders or no gender at all.

Gender Diversity

The equitable or fair representation of people of different genders. Includes men, women and gender-diverse people.

Gender Equality

The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean all genders will become the same, but their rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on gender.

Gender Equity

The provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. Recognises that people may have different needs and power and these differences should be identified and addressed to rectify gender-related imbalances.

Gender Equity Lens

The careful and deliberate review of organisational operations to determine if they impact women, men and gender-diverse people differently. The word lens describes a way of looking that takes account of all genders' different needs.

Gender Equity Strategy

Document that sets out how we will achieve gender equality across our organisation and the community.

Gender Pay Gap

The relative difference in the earnings of men and women.

Intersectionality

The complex and interconnected way that different levels of disadvantage and discrimination (eg. sexism, racism etc.) accumulate or overlap.

LGBTIQ+

An evolving sexuality acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (or questioning), asexual and other terms including non-binary.

Non-binary Gender

People who do not identify as distinctly male or female. May include people who embody elements of both masculinity and femininity or who identify as transgender.

Normalise

Social processes in which actions and ideas become seen as natural in everyday life.

Transgender

Umbrella term for anyone whose gender identity, expression or behaviour does not conform to society's typical association with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Unconscious bias

A bias that people and organisations are unaware exists. It happens automatically and is triggered by making assessments based on our own backgrounds, experience and cultures.

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