2026 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) for: Mildura Rural City Council

Cover page

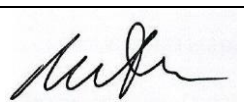
Organisation name	Mildura Rural City Council
Total number of employees (and full-time equivalent FTE), as at 30 June 2025	Total employees: **620** Total FTE: **463**
Location (metropolitan, regional or rural. If other, please specify)	Rural

Attestation by head of organisation

I confirm that:

☒ I am the head of organisation (CEO or equivalent)

☒ I have reviewed and approved the submission of this gender equality action plan (GEAP) on behalf of my organisation (as named above), and I attest that the implementation of the GEAP will be adequately resourced as required under the Gender Equality Act (2020).

Comments	As Chief Executive Officer of Mildura Rural City Council, I am proud to endorse our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), which outlines Council's ongoing commitment to advancing gender equality across our workplace and the broader community we serve. Mildura Rural City Council employs more than 600 staff and delivers a diverse range of services to approximately 57,000 residents. As a significant regional employer and community leader, we recognise our responsibility to foster a workplace where all employees are treated with dignity and respect, have equitable access to opportunities, and can thrive both professionally and personally. The Gender Equality Act 2020 provides an important framework for Victorian public sector organisations to take meaningful and measurable action towards workplace gender equality. This Gender Equality Action Plan sets out the actions Council will undertake to strengthen gender equality outcomes for our employees and to build a workplace culture that is inclusive, safe and supportive for all. While we acknowledge the progress that has been made, we also recognise that achieving gender equality requires ongoing commitment, accountability and investment. Council is committed to adequately resourcing the implementation of this plan and embedding gender equality considerations into our decision-making, leadership practices, policies and services. By continuing to champion gender equality within our organisation, we can create positive and lasting change for our workforce, our community and future generations.
Name	Martin Hawson
Role title	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Signed	
Date	12 October 2026

A) Planning your GEAP

Section 1: Use insights from your previous gender equality work

The team at Mildura Rural City Council continue our commitment to gender equality with a focus on embedding this work across all branches and work of our Council. We acknowledge the significant community impact our Preventing Violence through Sport Program and Equity and Inclusion in Sport Program has achieved over the past three and a half years, delivering training and information to sporting clubs and notably a continuation of the lead project position to ongoing 0.75 FTE.

The additional funding from the Free from Family Violence project has also had a significant impact on our success. Key outcomes include our newly endorsed Gender Equality & Preventing Family Violence Strategy[1], strengthened training program and the film - Mallee Woman: sharing stories, shaping equality[2] (https://youtu.be/xH039ekMKVo). These key projects have achieved ongoing resources and momentum for our collective gender equality work. In June 2025 Council committed to 0.58 FTE ongoing to support the delivery of the Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence Strategy.

Our ongoing White Ribbon accreditation, the pilot Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Staff Network and our strong collaborations with the community, including – Gender Equality Action Sunraysia illustrate our learning from the first four years of our first GEAP. The White Ribbon training is mandatory for all staff and is a strong reminder of our commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to family violence. In 2025 we worked closely with GenderWorks to review and improve this training to include preventing sexual harassment in support of key indicator 4. Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Staff Network enable us to hear directly from staff about what works and ways we can do things differently that facilitates our aims for this GEAP, particularly in relation to preventing sexual harassment, non-traditional roles at Council, our reporting processes and the impact our training program has.

Our team is also strongly focused on collecting, analysing and using our workforce data with rigour and intent, to both highlight gaps in our work and success but also to illustrate success, such as our positive gender pay gap. We have modified and improved our data capturing processes and have a higher level of understanding of what data needs to be captured and the level of evidence required for baseline-to-organisational change reporting.

Our commitment and ongoing work to gender equality was recognised at a State Level being nominated as a finalist in the Gender Equality Council Champion in the inaugural Mary Rogers Awards. Our work was as also recognised at the MAV Lab Awards as a finalist in three categories for gender equality awards.

Section 2: Processes, record keeping and governance

Our internal systems for monitoring and driving our gender equality work is led by our People team. We have ensured that multiple people have the capacity to manage our reporting data collection process and enable the GEAP actions to be completed and reviewed. We have updated our data records systems to enable us to collect and record the level of data the *Gender Equality Act 2020* required. While we have implemented improvements within the limitations of our current system, we are now progressing to upgrading our HR System that will provide enhanced data capability and significantly strengthen our reporting mechanisms.

We have identified several process improvements to be implemented in our four-year Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence Strategy including process mapping, reporting and records management.

We have a Gender Equality Act Implementation Working Group that meets bi-monthly to monitor our progress with forward planning for actions and reporting obligations. This working group brings together a diverse mix of staff including:

- General Managers
- Coordinators / Team Leaders
- Specialist Staff
- General Staff who have volunteered to join the working group to assist in championing gender equality initiatives.

This blend of leadership across all levels of the organisation drives the organisations commitment to promoting gender equality within our workplace and community. The working group is designed to ensure that leaders are actively involved in the decision-making process while also connecting with staff who hold this work and are passionate about our organisation's commitment to promoting gender equality across our workplace and community. This approach helps embed gender equality into business as usual.

Our newly convened, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Staff Network pilot also contributes to the process of monitoring and completing our GEAP work, with members of this staff network building on their own commitment to further their training and expertise in the area of gender equality, intersectionality and becoming Gender Impact Assessment champions over the timeframe of this four-year GEAP.

We have also established an action owner group to oversee the implementation of our four-year Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence Strategy who meet twice yearly to ensure implementation is on track.

Section 3: Leadership commitment

Mildura Rural City Council has a long-standing commitment to gender equality with a specific early focus on the primary prevention of family violence. Since 2016 we have been a White Ribbon accredited workplace, which has involved sustained conversations organisation-wide training and ongoing awareness building across our workforce. Through this work, we have strengthened our collective understanding of the drivers of gender inequality and family violence and built the capability of staff to integrate gender equality principles into everyday practice. This foundation has positioned Council to embed gender equality as core business and to continue maturing our approach under the *Gender Equality Act 2020.*

[1] Council Plans & Strategies
[2] Innovation Case Study: Mallee Women: Sharing Stories, Shaping Equality | MAV website

Gender Equality is firmly embedded in our organisational strategic framework including in our:

- **Community Vision** which values, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and a community where “people feel safe”.
- **Council Plan 2025-2029**, which continues our stated position from the previous plan that shows strong commitment to preventing family violence. By highlighting our leadership and commitment to preventing family violence in our Council Plan we acknowledge the distressingly high rates of family violence in our local government area.

To address this the Council Plan states:

Gender equality to prevent family violence
Family violence remains a significant issue in our community. It stops those affected from fully participating in our region, while also impacting individuals, families, workplaces, the wider community and economy. We recognise that improving gender equality is key to preventing family violence, and making our community safer, healthy and more prosperous. We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of violence and believe raising awareness and supporting respectful relationships will lead to change and put an end to family violence. We are committed to people enjoying the same opportunities, rights and obligations, and will continue to work towards a whole of community Gender Equality and Primary Prevention of Family Violence Strategy”.

Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 which identifies the following actions:

- Bring local stakeholders and networks together to define shared goals and collective action to promote gender equality and prevent family and gender-based violence in our community.

- Actively seek out and connect with organisations, clubs and community groups in the Mildura Local Government Area to provide opportunities to build workforce capacity and support them to contribute to the primary prevention of violence against women

- Undertake Gender Impact Assessments on community infrastructure projects to identify and address different impacts on women, men and gender diverse people.

- Develop and implement a new Gender Equality Action Plan, aligning Council’s work with obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020.

- Retain White Ribbon Workplace accreditation, supporting organisational commitment to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

- Deliver the Gender and Equity Inclusion in Sport Program, promoting inclusive participation and addressing gender barriers in sporting environments.

Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence Strategy 2025-2029
The Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence Strategy 2025–2029 is a Council endorsed strategy that sets out how Council will embed gender equality across its organisation and work to prevent family violence. It recognises that gender inequality is a key driver of family violence and focuses on changing the systems, policies and everyday practices that shape attitudes, power and safety.

The strategy takes a whole of organisation and primary prevention approach, supported by partnerships with community organisations and an intersectional lens that recognises people experience inequality and violence differently. Its purpose is, through the 28 identified actions, develop a workforce that is committed to preventing family violence, embed gender equality in policies, processes and systems, work with partners to create a community free from discrimination and violence.

Other ongoing leadership commitment is demonstrated through

- White Ribbon Workplace accreditation.

- Our dedicated Gender Equality Portfolio Councillor. This portfolio has been in place for over 5-years and is unique within Victorian Councils. It illustrates how our Council is committed at the highest level to embed gender equality at all levels of our organisation, our work and our collective approach in continuing to build on our existing gender equality success.

- We have been successful in receiving numerous funding opportunities for gender equality work including the Free from Family Violence in local government program, both in the 2022-2025 and the pilot program in 2018. Our Gendering in a New Era program working with sporting clubs across the Mildura community and Regional Arts Victoria “Put Her Name On It” funding. These are excellent examples of how Council has actioned our gender equality commitment and ways that we show leadership in our community for this work in both our strategic actions and our everyday work.

B) Consult on your audit results and strategies

Section 4: Confirm consultation groups

You must consult with your…	Confirm yes or no	If no, why not?
Governing body (if your organisation has one)	YES	
Employees	YES	
Employee representatives, including relevant trade unions	YES	
You might consult with…	**Confirm yes or no**	**Please describe additional people and/or groups**
Other relevant people	YES	Gender Equity Action Sunraysia (GEAS) members – GEAS is a grassroots community movement to achieve gender equity in Sunraysia.

Section 5: Document your consultation process

We appointed Gender Equality Regional Consultancy to again lead our consultation sessions. This provider has a long history of working with Mildura Rural City Council and their return improved the confidence and engagement of our staff to share ideas and feedback with a known and trusted consultant.

Consultation sessions were offered both face-to-face and online with the aim of hearing from as many staff, Councillors and relevant people as possible. A 90-minute workshop was held with each of the following groups:

- Strategic Leadership Team
- Team Leaders, Coordinators and Supervisors
- Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Network
- Joint Consultative Committee
- Equal Opportunity Committee
- Gender Equity Action Sunraysia
- Gender Equality Portfolio Councillor
- Employee Relations Officer

Each in-person consultation session began with an overview of the Gender Equality Act 2020, the timelines for reporting and highlighted the ongoing nature of our obligations under the Act. Results from the People Matter Survey were shared and key data from our workplace audit was highlighted to provide staff and leaders with context for the workshop. Each workshop highlighted the seven key indicators that will shape our GEAP with the aim of strengthening the focus on the scope of these indicators and making the most of the 90-minute sessions. For positive messaging and to encourage engagement, the sessions reviewed and acknowledged the success of the current Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) with staff highlighting several projects including; Developing the first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Staff Network; Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence Strategy 2025-2029; White Ribbon accreditation; Updated Sexual Harassment Policy development and feedback; Reviewed and updated training program – including GenderWorks and Bree Gorman Consulting; Fair access Roadmap and Community of Practice for local sporting clubs; Respect Mallee Campaign and the Nichols Point Pavilion upgrade to provide access for women and girls. The workshops were designed for small group discussions and focused specifically on solutions – what Council could do differently or better to improve processes and outcomes that many staff highlighted were of concern.

A detailed consultation report outlined the key themes across each consultation session and actions staff and leaders felt would contribute positively to gender equality and equity more broadly across the organisation. This report collated all written comments from staff and leaders and then provided a thematic analysis with recommendations for actions that will translate into our new GEAP.

Section 6: Findings from your consultation

Working in small groups was an effective consultation method for detailed and meaningful conversations and responses to issues that staff and leaders felt are critical to address in our next GEAP. The feedback and discussions were analysed by Gender Equality Regional Consulting and the following recommendations are the key outcomes from the consultation process:

- Access to data and research is a significant barrier – collecting good Intersectional data, using different types of engagement methods, not relying only on survey. What other research and reports are available in similar organisations and contexts.
- Intersectional data overview and guidelines for external consultants who may lack knowledge about the Mildura community to develop a baseline understanding and then to monitor and understand change over time.
- Equal Opportunity Committee - suggested a review of the process and how reports from the committee are received and actioned.
- Transparency in sharing of data that outlines organisational responses to both formal and informal reporting of bullying, harassment and discrimination that could be used as a measure of success and accountability – sharing outcomes for substantiated and not-substantiated reports could improve staff confidence in reporting and the process outcomes.
- Reporting process and impact for leadership, customers and colleagues is different, with staff noting that if for example, sexual harassment was experienced from a customer or contractor (PMS People Matters Survey – 30% for customers – the visitor information centre and library was noted as a site of common negative experiences).
- The reporting process is not clear enough for staff to know where else they can report concerns when the issue is with their supervisor/coordinator and how protected are they to do this? An external reporting body is critical next step to address gaps in staff reporting. External Reporting System – there was universal and strong agreement from staff that Council should investigate an external reporting option for staff
- More profiles and stories of successful career building and role shifting for staff at Council would be an effective way of demonstrating ways that diverse staff are able to sustain careers in Council.
- A review of the past five years of Exit Interview data, focusing on the existing equity questions would provide insights for improvement.
- Strongly recommended that a wide and detailed review of the staff satisfaction and usage of the EAP program be completed as part of the next GEAP.
- Review the representation, satisfaction and effectiveness/reach of the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee.
- Review disability alignment with Gender Impact Assessment process and outcomes.
- Provide disability inclusion training – “beyond ramps and handrails” to 10% of MRCC staff each year.
- Investigate opportunities to work with disability support services to provide employment pathways.
- Implement a ‘Women in Leadership’ program to ensure women and Councillors continue to thrive and engage in leadership positions.

- Increase Traineeships for diversity and inclusion, with targets set for each Branch and review the experiences and success of this program over the next GEAP four-year period.

- Review training program, survey staff satisfaction and efficacy of training options and engagement.

C) Consider the gender equality and the gender pay equity principles, and intersectionality

Section 7: Consider the gender equality principles

Mildura Rural City Council has taken the gender equality principles into account throughout the development of this GEAP, grounding our approach in the realities of our local context. Our community continues to experience some of the highest rates of family violence in Victoria. Our long-term advocacy, leadership and resourcing of primary prevention of violence against women and family violence initiatives align strongly with principles 1, 2 & 3.

Council has embedded gender equality as a community value in successive Council Plans and endorsed our first Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence Strategy in 2025. This demonstrates our alignment with Principles 5 and 10 and our willingness to adopt targeted measures to address entrenched inequality.

Our ongoing collaborations with the Mildura community and grassroots groups, including Gender Equity Action Sunraysia, reflects our links to principles 6, 7 and 8. These partnerships apply an intersectional approach, ensuring all local voices are included in efforts to disrupt stereotypes through protest and community-based events that challenge gendered norms and promote respect and safety for everyone.

Council's ongoing and resourced position that facilitates our Gender Equity in Sport program is another example of Council's links to all gender equality principles. In our rural community, sport is fundamental. This program works directly with local clubs to strengthen safety, increase equitable participation, improve training and responses to harmful behaviours, and support structural changes that prevent inequality. The program's strong community reach is why Council continues to fund the position and demonstrates ongoing commitment to the gender equality prin ciples.

The consultation process reinforced that gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence. Local data from the Women's Health Atlas, showing family violence rates in the Mildura LGA are more than double the Victorian average. This was used to ground discussions in principles 1, 3 and 5. This evidence-based approach helped address resistance and reinforced Council's role as a leader, community connector, service provider and employer.

Family Violence - Rate (per 10,000)

Time Period	**Mildura**		Loddon Mallee Region Estimate		Victoria State Estimate		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	All
2024	**291.72**	**102.86**	**159.4**	**55.1**	**134.6**	**45.9**	**90.2**

[3]

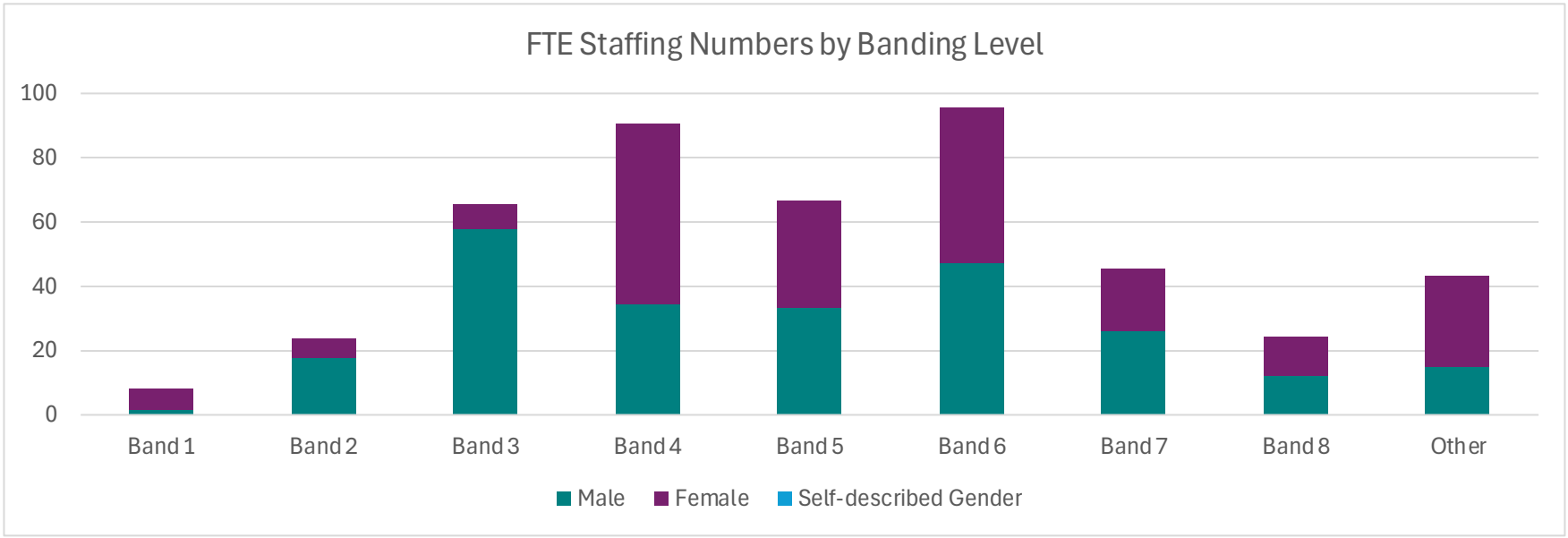
Our review of Council's training program will include a strengthened focus on Intersectional inclusion, through renewing our efforts to use Gender Impact Assessments as a mechanism for change, aligning our GEAP actions to principle 8 and 9. We also believe that expanding and strengthening our work in completing Gender Impact Assessments will increase our gender equality work with more people and project across M ildura, benefiting the whole community and thereby aligning to principles 4, 6 and 7.

Section 8: Consider the gender pay equity principles

Council operates within a structured banding framework where remuneration is determined according to duties performed / responsibility of roles (principle a) rather than the individuals occupying them. With remuneration based on position, the opportunity for pay disparities between genders employed in the same position is removed. As a result, observed changes in pay gap outcomes are attributable primarily to workforce composition rather than to differential pay practices. Council's median total remuneration pay gap for 2025 was 5.6%

[3] Victorian Women's Health Atlas

Staff Classification Levels



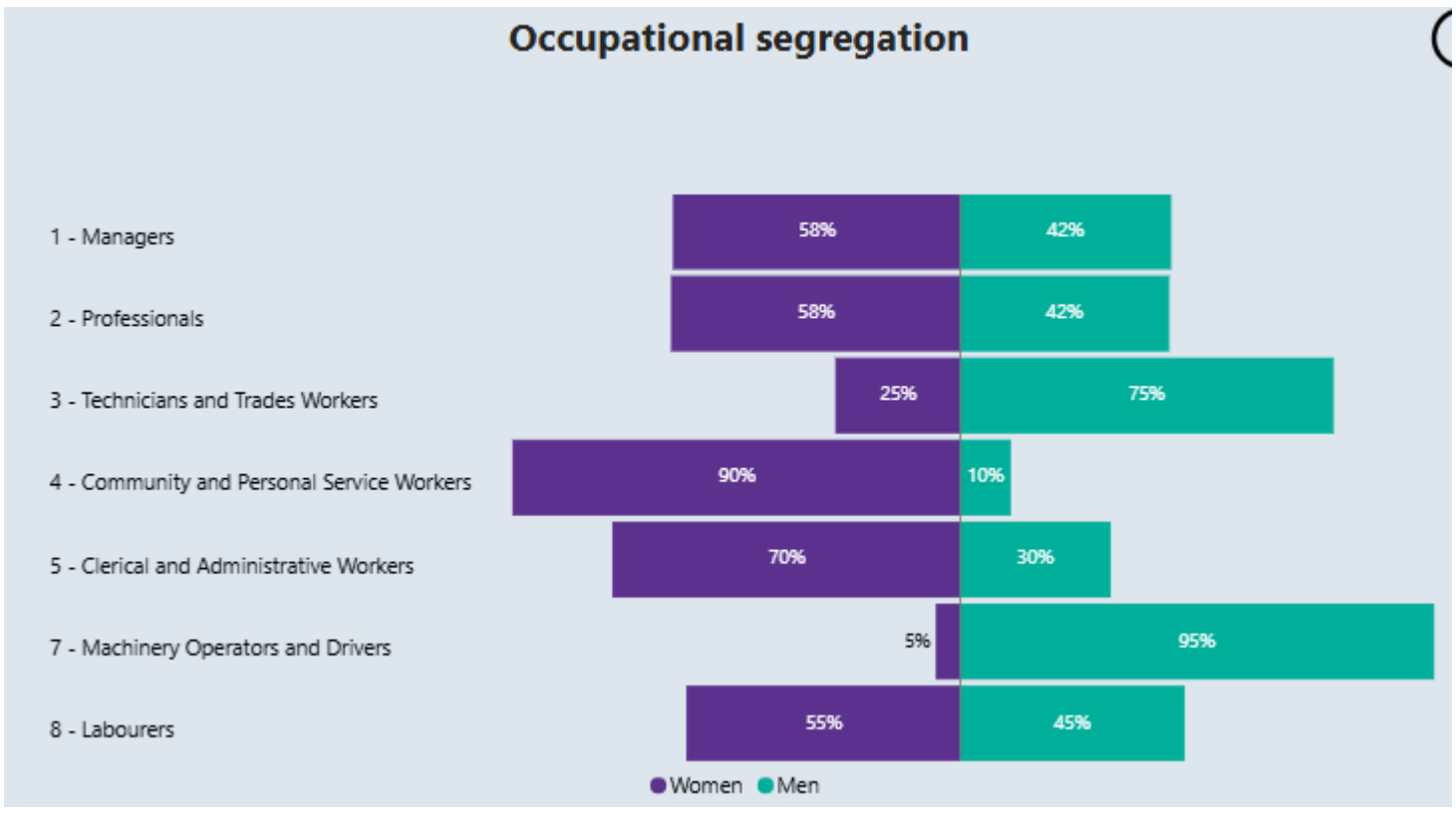
Positions are classified from Band 1 to 8 with a select number of roles falling outside this structure. (ie Senior Officers and staff who operate under the Nurses (ANMF – Victorian Local Government Award). Noting Council has a higher female representation rate within the workplace, the bandings with slanted gender representation can predominantly be attributed to traditional gendered roles falling at that band.

Following the WGEA[4] report on *Women's economic security in retirement* (2020), it is well established that women are more likely to undertake primary responsibility for unpaid care work and to work part-time and in lower paid roles. As a result, women's average superannuation account balances are 17.4% lower than those of men. Council's workforce data reflects this broader structural pattern which is why we now have superannuation paid on unpaid parental leave for up to 12 months. At Mildura Rural City Council our focus on gender pay equity includes examining the gender composition across all levels and employment types. This includes Part-Time Ongoing (PTO) roles where, of the 135 employees currently engaged in PTO positions, the majority (109) are women. This distribution highlights how gendered patterns of work, rather than pay rates within roles, contribute to gendered economic disadvantage over time.

Although PTO employment remains predominantly held by women at Council; there has been a meaningful improvement in gender distribution. Male participation in part-time roles has increased from 5.6% in 2023 to 8.1% in 2025, an increase of 2.5% over the period. While this indicates encouraging progress toward normalising flexible work across genders, part-time work continues to be highly feminised and remains an area for ongoing focus. Leadership representation remains a key organisational strength. Women make up the majority of senior leaders (59% in 2025), demonstrating sustained gender balance at decision-making levels. This reflects the impact of organisational changes following the 2023 restructure, which expanded leadership opportunities. Of the additional leadership roles created, the majority were filled by women, supporting a strong female leadership pipeline.

To respond to different patterns of work/life, including unpaid and/or caring work, Council has embedded flexible working arrangements as standard practice. This positively impacts our gender pay gap by recognising the historic and traditionally disproportionate level of care work women undertake. Our data shows that flexible working arrangements has increased the capacity of women to take up senior roles while balancing their family commitments. Greater flexibility in part-time and non-standard work arrangements enables women to work at Mildura Rural City Council, including women who were previously unable to access Council roles due to inflexible hours. By supporting part-time work, job sharing and flexible rostering, Council is reducing structural barriers related to caring responsibilities and is improving women's participation and retention in the workforce. We have 137 Formal Flexible Work Arrangements in place – 91 women and 46 men.

Our GEAP will also strongly focus on addressing high level gendered segregated roles across our organisation. This aligns with Principle b – that employment and pay practices are free from bias and discrimination, including the effects of unconscious bias and assumptions based on gender. We have identified occupations that demonstrate significant gendered segregation and will prioritise these areas to encourage greater participation in non-traditional roles, which respond to Principle b:



[4] Women's_economic_security_in_retirement.pdf

By selecting a focus area within occupational groups that have significant trends of gender segregation, we have established a starting point for targeted actions over this four-year GEAP. These actions will aim to encourage, support and enable women, gender diverse people and men to take up non-traditional roles. We will draw on the experiences of our DEI Staff Network, Equal Opportunity Committee and other staff and partners to develop a collective response to the social/gendered stereotypes in alignment with Principle e & f.

	Women	Men
Professionals		
Librarian, Library Technician:	23	4
Community & Personal Services		
School Crossing Supervisors	29	5
Clerical & Administration		
Personal Assistant, General Clerk, Call or Contact Centre Operator	39	6
Machinery Operators & Drivers		
Earthmoving, Grader, Paving Plant, Truck Drivers	0	40
Technicians & Trades Workers		
Motor Mechanic	0	5
Labourers		
Gardener, Garden Labourer	3	32

Our GEAP also includes continued unconscious bias training in recruitment, delivered to all members of our recruitment panels (Principle b and d).

Section 9: Consider intersectionality

Mildura Rural City Council has a strong training program that includes gender equality which incorporates introductory understanding of Intersectional inclusion. Input was gathered through consultation with staff across different roles and levels within Council, as well as external community and service organisations representing diverse experiences, including Aboriginal community members, people with disability, multicultural communities, LGBTIQA+ groups, youth, and family violence prevention partners. This engagement helped ensure the GEAP reflects a broad range of perspectives and lived experiences.

Our GEAP will continue to deliver staff training that introduces intersectionality and to also build on this to include more local government and regional examples of ways intersectional approaches are vital to achieving diversity, equity and inclusion that is representative of our broader Mildura community. In this GEAP we aim for more of our staff to understand the importance of taking an intersectional approach and be confident to apply this thinking to their everyday work. Strengthening our Gender Impact Assessment process and completion is a vital mechanism for achieving this applied intersectional approach.

Incorporating an intersectional approach is critical to all Council work that requires us to deliver services to all members of our community. Mildura has a richly diverse community, data from the 2023 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Development Victoria and REMPLAN indicated 4.6% of our community are from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, while 9.4% were born overseas and 12.3% speak a language other than English at home, 6% live under the poverty line and 7.5% of our community need daily assistance with everyday task. Our huge geographic space is a feature of community life with Mildura LGA covering 10% of the whole state, meaning that our community travels huge distances for services and social connection. We note that we do not have data that represents our LGBTIQA+ community. This data provides some insight into intersectional depth and scope for our community and our GEAP aims to strengthen our understanding of our community and continue to align our services and actions with this deeper knowledge of our community.

As was highlighted in our GEAP consultation sessions, access to data and research is a significant barrier – collecting good intersectional data, using different types of engagement methods, not relying only on survey is vital to build a clearer understanding of intersectionality across the community. We tend to rely on single data points for Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and gender but we aim to combine this awareness with a more rigorous application of Intersectionality that takes into account the layers of disadvantage experiences by some members of our community in different contexts. One way we will do this is to provide clear direction in our procurement process and appointing consultants that outline our requirements for Intersectional data, providing guidelines for external consultants who may lack knowledge about the Mildura community to develop a baseline understanding and then to monitor and understand change over time using an intersectional approach.

D) Making a case for change

Section 10: Make a case for change and create a vision

Our Council Plan directly addresses our Case for Change that for the Mildura Rural City Council is a longstanding commitment and action towards gender equality. We have highlighted as our 'Community Values' preventing family violence:

Gender equality to prevent family violence
Family violence remains a significant issue in our community. It stops those affected from fully participating in our region, while also impacting individuals, families, workplaces, the wider community and economy. We recognise that improving gender equality is key to preventing family violence, and making our community safer, healthy and more prosperous. We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of violence and believe raising awareness and supporting respectful relationships will lead to change and put an end to family violence. We are committed to people enjoying the same opportunities, rights and obligations, and will continue to work towards a whole of community Gender Equality and Primary Prevention of Family Violence Strategy".

The extremely high rates of family violence in the Mildura LGA was and continues to be, the basis for our Case for Change. Our Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence Strategy states that:

"We are deeply shocked and saddened by the persistently high rates of family violence that continue to impact our residents. This is a reality that we are determined to confront and take positive action towards change. We believe that every individual in our community has the fundamental right to live safely, to thrive with equal access to resources and opportunities, and have the power to shape their own future in a society free from violence and discrimination. Gender equality is at the heart of our strategy, and we recognise its crucial role in preventing family violence. Gender equality benefits everyone, not just women and girls, and is a shared responsibility that is everyone's business. Through our strong connections with service organisations, community groups and residents, we are uniquely positioned to lead the way in driving meaningful action that fosters a safer, more inclusive community for all".

Our Vision
We aim to end family violence in our community by working towards gender equality, where all members of our diverse community are respected and safe.

E) Analysing your data to identify forms of gender inequality AND developing your strategies

Section 11: Identifying underlying causes of gender inequality

While we acknowledge our ongoing success and commitment to gender equality, we also acknowledge the local and social context within which we do this work. Mildura has intergenerational levels of disadvantage and family violence rates that result in ongoing gender inequality and impact on our everyday work. We nominate our geographic isolation as a critical underlying cause of gender inequality, with restrictions on access to services, educational and career pathways and expertise in gender equality that relates closely to our local community experience. A reliance on external consultants is an example of the local context for our organisation. Our high levels of gendered segregation in occupations reflects our conservative community and our isolation where recruitment of staff is limited by the size of our city and the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff. We have highlighted six themed areas to focus our efforts on reducing the gendered norms attached to the role as we know this relates to the gender pay gap, equity in access to flexible work and other career pathways.

We suggest that our organisation does not always closely reflect the depth of diversity that our community shares which can restrict our intersectional approach, including in communication, engagement, priorities and measuring success. We acknowledge that limitations in internal representation can impact on which programs we deliver and the ways we are able to work with and deliver for under-represented members of our community. New members of our community from multicultural backgrounds for example may not have the social, cultural and economic capital to engage with and make the most of the services that our Council provide, thereby maintaining underlying causes of both gender inequality and intersectional inequity.

Section 12: Analysing your data and documenting your strategies

Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

Describing the problem (see step 2)

Analyse audit data (	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of the duty holder organisation in 2025: • MRCC Audit Data: 620 staff; 284 men – 336 women – 0 - self-described gender • When analysing gender composition within our workforce, we identified areas where there is significant gender segregation and have chosen to focus on six themed areas Gender composition of part time workers in the duty holder organisation in 2025: • Our audit data highlights high rates of women in part-time work - Part-Time Ongoing (PTO) – 135 staff – 109 of these are women, 0 - self-described gender. Gender composition of senior leaders in the duty holder organisation in 2025: • We are pleased to report that the gender composition of senior leaders is very even with 59% Women and 41% being men at this level.

Setting metrics (see step 6)

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of the duty holder organisation. • A reduction in gender segregation in the six themed areas over four year GEAP. Gender composition of part time workers in the duty holder organisation. • Levels of satisfaction of part-time employees with earning capacity and career progression, by gender (baseline to be established). Gender composition of senior leaders in the duty holder organisation. • Maintain 50/50 gender equity in representation at leadership levels, -1, and -2

Strategies (see step 6)

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Review traineeships across the organisation with a focus on the 6 themed areas with significant gender segregation	Manager People	2028	
Engage with part-time workers on satisfaction with their arrangement in terms of earning capacity and career progression.	Manager People	2028	
Deliver one women in leadership profile – diverse pathways and logistics of leading	Manager Communications	2026, 2027, 2028, 2029	

Indicator 2: Gender composition of the governing body

Describing the problem (see step 2)

Analyse audit data	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of the duty holder organisation's governing body in 2025: We believe Mildura Rural City Council leads the state with women in the majority of Councillor positions: June 2021 – 6 men & 3 women, 0 - self-described gender June 2025 – 4 men & 4 women, 1 - self-described gender Our Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and the previous Mayor are women, and we have a long-standing Gender Equality Portfolio also lead by a woman. This data and strong women representation on Council demonstrates our excellent position of women in leadership roles as Councillors. This result is despite the ongoing challenges that women continue to experience in both running for Council and in serving as a Councillor. We have anecdotal evidence and experience with a previous female candidate in the 2020 campaign and former Mildura Deputy Mayor in 2022 to remind us that our work in encouraging more women to stand for local government elections and to be able to serve safely and as respected members of Council is ongoing.

Setting metrics (see step 6)

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of the duty holder organisation's governing body. • 50/50 balance of men and women standing for local government elections in the next council election to be held in October 2028. • Survey 50% of attendees at 'Women Standing for Local Government' event. • Survey 60% of current/previous Councillors on inclusion, safety and support experiences.

Strategies (see step 6)

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Implement a targeted candidate readiness and awareness program to encourage women and gender-diverse people to consider standing for council elections: resource - partner with VLGA or ALGWA to promote information sessions through diverse and inclusive channels.	Manager Governance	2028	
Actively promote diverse councillor role models and lived experiences through council communications ahead of election periods.	Manager Governance	2028	
Deliver one annual profile re Women's experiences of being a Councillor including diverse pathways and the logistics of leading.	Manager Communications	2027, 2028	

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

Describing the problem (see step 2)

Analyse audit data

Critical performance measures:
Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group in 2025:

3.1 Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation groups

Occupation groups	Women	
	2023	2025
1 - Managers	32.3 %	15.4 %
2 - Professionals	4.3 %	-0.5 %
3 - Technicians and Trades Workers	2.0 %	10.7 %
4 - Community and Personal Service Workers	22.3 %	2.1 %
5 - Clerical and Administrative Workers	13.5 %	15.8 %
6 - Sales Workers	***	***
7 - Machinery Operators and Drivers	2.6 %	-27.6 %
8 - Labourers	6.6 %	6.8 %
All occupations	**3.9 %**	**2.7 %**

From 2023 to 2025 progress was made in reducing the mean total remuneration gender pay gap overall across all occupations. Changes have been observed in pay gap outcomes and are attributable to primarily workforce composition rather than differential pay practices.

Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap in 2025:

	2023	2025	% change
Women	10.2 %	16.8 %	6.6 %
Self-described	***	***	N/A

*** means data is unavailable for this result

Between 2023 and 2025, the gender pay gap (average total earnings) between a women and men increased from 10.2% to 16.8% at senior leader level.

Supplementary measures:
Mean base salary pay gap in 2025: -0.3%
Median total remuneration pay gap in 2025: 5.6%
Median base salary pay gap in 2025: -4.8%

Setting metrics (see step 6)

Measures

Critical performance measures:
Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group.

- Reduce gender occupation pay gap by 5% for each eight occupation groups (ANZSCO Occupation 1-digit code).

Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap.

- Reduce leadership gender pay gap by 5%

Strategies (see step 6)

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Review and report to ELT on the gender pay gap for Occupation Groups	Manager People	2029	

Indicator 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Describing the problem (see step 2)

Analyse audit data	**Critical performance measures:** Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment in 2025: 9% as indicated in our 2025 People Matters Survey results. Number of formal reports of sexual harassment in 2025: 0 We also note that in the 2023 People Matters Survey, 7% of our staff responded that they had experienced sexual harassment however, no formal complaints were received. **Supplementary measures:** Participants who said they reported sexual harassment in 2025: 0 Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint in 2025: • 45% didn't think it was serious enough • 30% believed there would be negative consequences for their careers • 25% didn't think it would make a difference • 15% didn't need to because they made the harassment stop **Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint in 2025:** No complaints made however, staff shared very low levels of satisfaction in reporting process, confidentiality, trust and outcomes for reporting throughout the consultation sessions. **Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint in 2025:** n/a

Setting metrics (see step 6)

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment. • Align anonymous reporting of experiences of sexual harassment to below or on par with People Matters Survey comparator group. Number of formal reports of sexual harassment. • Review and report on external reporting mechanism • Implement an external reporting mechanism • Review and report on EAP staff satisfaction **Supplementary measures:** Participants who said they reported sexual harassment. Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint. Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint. Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint. • Include sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination question in all Exit Interviews • Analysis 12-months data from implemented external reporting mechanism.

Strategies (see step 6)

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Review and improve understanding and preventing sexual harassment training for all staff at induction	Manager People	2027	
Deliver understanding, preventing and reporting sexual harassment training to all senior leaders	Manager People	2027	
Recommend and implement an external reporting mechanism	Manager People	2027	
Review staff satisfaction of EAP services	Manager People	2026	
Report annually to the CEO on reported experiences of sexual harassment	Manager People	2026, 2027, 2028, 2029	

Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

Describing the problem (see step 2)

Analyse audit data	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of recruited employees in 2025: 110 new staff recruited, 54 men and 56 women Gender composition of employees who were promoted in 2025: 5 men; 13 women Perceptions of recruitment, by gender in 2025: 65% of People Matters Survey responses indicated - I believe the recruitment processes in my organisation are fair. Our remote location can impact on recruitment processes with fewer applicants and costly relocations required. Perceptions of promotion, by gender in 2025: 53% of People Matters Survey responses shows - I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation and 61% of People Matters Survey responses indicate - I am satisfied with the opportunities to progress in my organisation; less than half, 45% said they believe the promotion processes in my organisation are fair. To support promotion and career pathways at Mildura Rural City Council we offered higher duties and training, the data shows that more women than men engaged in these activities Career Development Training – 77 women and 54 Men; Higher Duties (112) – 66 women and 46 men.

Setting metrics (see step 6)

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Gender composition of recruited employees. • Continue to monitor gender equity in applications received with focus on segregated occupations. Gender composition of employees who were promoted. • More than double the total women were promoted than men during the reporting period which also illustrates our higher level of women in our workforce. • We will measure staff satisfaction with the fairness of the promotions process. • We will also measure staff turnover in key positions that have high rates of turnover to highlight gaps in recruitment practices. Perceptions of recruitment, by gender. • Include question in Exit Interviews and analyse feedback data over time. Perceptions of promotion, by gender. • Include question in Exit Interviews and analyse feedback data over time.

Strategies (see step 6)

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Include perceptions of recruitment and promotion in all Exit Interviews	Manager People	2026	
Report and analyse perception of recruitment and promotion from Exit Interview and report to ELT.	Manager People	2026, 2027, 2028 2029	
Investigate and implement capability of the new HR system to capture professional development.	Manager People	2028	
Review of staff leadership and development program, including staff training program and policy to ensure inclusion to all staff and varying levels and genders.	Manager People	2028	
Remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres strait islander participation in our workforce	Manager People	2026, 2027, 2028 2029	

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

Describing the problem (see step 2)

Analyse audit data	**Critical performance measures:** Parental leave uptake increased between 2023 and 2025 across gender groups. On average, women's parental leave increased from 23.5 weeks in 2023 to 26.6 weeks in 2025, indicating a continued reliance on women taking extended parental leave. Men also increased their average leave taken, from two weeks to three weeks over the same period, showing a modest but positive shift toward greater participation in parental leave. Data for people of self-described gender was unavailable in both 2023 and 2025, and therefore trends for this group cannot be reported at this time. This gap aligns with national data from WGEA that shows men are still only accounting for 17% of primary carer parental leave taken. **Uptake of flexible work, by gender in 2025:** We have 137 Formal Flexible Work Arrangements in place – 91 women and 46 men; This includes 52 people using flexible start/finish times; 76 working from home. The proportion of women on a formal flexible work arrangement decreased from 30.8% in 2023 to 24.5% in 2025. However, informal and ad hoc arrangements were present but not reported in this data. Similarly, the proportion of men using formal flexible work arrangements fell from 16.0% to 13.9% over the same period. These changes indicate a reduction in the uptake of formal flexible work arrangements for both women and men during this timeframe. **Perceptions of flexible work culture, by gender in 2025:** 81% of People Matters Survey respondents stated that "I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration" and 85% noted that "My direct line manager supports working flexibly" **Supplementary measures:** Gender composition of parental leave takers in 2025: 9 men and 10 women. Gender gap in carer's leave in 2025: 78 men accessed carer's leave – 147 women access carer's leave The proportion of women who took carer's leave increased slightly, from 37.5% in 2023 to 39.5% in 2025. In contrast, the proportion of men taking carer's leave declined over the same period, decreasing from 34.5% to 23.5%. These trends indicate a growing gender gap in carer's leave uptake, with women increasingly more likely than men to take on caring responsibilities.

Setting metrics (see step 6)

Measures	**Critical performance measures:** Average weeks of parental leave, by gender. • Men to increase taking parental leave from three to six weeks. Uptake of flexible work, by gender. • 10% increase in men using flexible working arrangements **Supplementary measures:** Gender composition of parental leave takers. • Increase in men taking parental leave. Gender gap in carer's leave. • Increase to men accessing carer's leave.

Strategies (see step 6)

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Monitor the rate of men's take-up of parental leave, across all occupations	Manager People	2026, 2027, 2028 2029	
Normalise fatherhood in the workplace by encouraging and supporting men's use of flexible working arrangements for caring and family responsibilities.	Manager People	2026, 2027, 2028 2029	
Review EBA provisions for men taking primary parental leave to align with national best practice.[5]	Manager People	2029	

[5] Parental Leave for Men | Supporting men as fathers in the workplace

Indicator 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace

Describing the problem (see step 2)

Analyse audit data

Critical performance measures:
Occupational gender segregation in 2025 – Themed Areas:

	Women	Men
Professionals		
Librarian, Library Technician:	23	4
Community & Personal Services		
School Crossing Supervisors	29	5
Clerical & Administration		
Personal Assistant, General Clerk, Call or Contact Centre Operator	39	6
Machinery Operators & Drivers		
Earthmoving, Grader, Paving Plant, Truck Drivers	0	40
Technicians & Trades Workers		
Motor Mechanic	0	5
Labourers		
Gardener, Garden Labourer	3	32

Analysis of occupational position groups identified six themed areas with significant gender segregation. These themed areas are based on positions where one gender is substantially over-represented, as illustrated above.

Setting metrics (see step 6)

Measures

Critical performance measures:

Occupational gender segregation.

- In the six themed areas identified above, increase gender representation in non traditional roles.

Additional measures (optional):

- Increase Intersectional inclusion by 10% across the identified ANZSCO code levels where significant gender segregation has been identified

Strategies (see step 6)

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Case Studies of Success – profile two Council staff members working in non-traditional roles per year.	Manager Communications	2026, 2027, 2028 2029	Indicator 1
Conduct a Focus Group/Workshop with staff in non-traditional roles to address concerns and listen to staff suggestions of improvements and creating safe workplace culture.	Manager People	2028	Indicator 1

Additional areas of focus (optional):

Describing the problem (see step 2)

Analyse audit data	Improve our internal capacity to request and record Intersectional data. We have gaps in our data that include cultural identity, Disability status, religion, age, sexual orientation which limits our ability to respond to any gaps we have across our workforce and to highlight the richly diverse team of staff that work in our organisation.

Setting metrics (see step 6)

Measures	**Performance measures:** Include additional Intersectional data from all staff as part of existing whole-of-organisation survey mechanisms. **Additional measures (optional):**

Strategies (see step 6)

Strategy	Responsible (recommended)	Timeline (recommended)	Related to other indicators? (recommended)
Review questions in whole-of-organisation survey (Alignment & Engagement Survey).	Manager People	2027	
Investigate capacity and opportunities to capture intersectional data in new HR system for all staff.	Manager People	2027	

F) Resourcing your GEAP

Section 13: Identifying current and required resources (recommended)

The implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan at Mildura Rural City Council is led by Council General Manager Corporate Performance, Manager of People, Human Resources Coordinator and Human Resources Project Officer who coordinate the GEAP actions.

Workload FTE is collectively 1.0 across the organisation. A Gender Equality Consultant from Gender Equality Regional Consulting was appointed to develop the GEAP including data analysis and consultation.

Gender Equality Act Implementation Working Group
To monitor and drive GEAP implementation, the working group meets monthly and connects key leadership and team members directly involved in implementing the MRCC GEAP. Members of the working group are General Managers, including the Gender Manager of Corporate Performance chairing this working group.

Free from Family Violence LGA Project (Finalised in June 2025)
The Gender Equality Free from Violence Senior Advisor role was co-shared and contributed to building gender equality capability across the organisation through internal workshops, Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) planning, and the development and delivery of Councils first Gender Equality Strategy.
The Gender Equality Free from Violence Senior Advisor had evolved into the position of Gender Equality Officer that continues to deliver gender equality initiatives across the organisation (0.6 FTE) and the Sports Equity and Inclusion Project Officer (0.75 FTE), which is now an ongoing role.

MRCC are partners in Women's Health Loddon Mallee's Collective Action for Respect and Equality (CARE) which shares resources and advice.

GEAP Resource	**Cost**
FTE 1.0	$150,000
Gender Equality Regional Consulting	$22,500
Gender Equality Training/Workshops	$10,000
White Ribbon Accreditation	$20,800 over three years

Successful resourcing of our GEAP
Overall, the resourcing of our GEAP has been sufficient with gaps in continuity and specific skills of our team which we are addressing through increased training and by establishing an internal DEI Staff Network.

Section 14: Developing a resourcing plan

The People and Community Partnership branches continue to manage the GEAP process allocating workload from three staff members to collectively monitor and deliver actions and report directly to the Gender Equality Act Implementation Committee.

Staff from the Community Partnerships branch contribute their expertise in delivering key elements aligned to this GEAP, including support to Gender Impact Assessments, delivering the DE&I Staff Network, membership of the Gender Equality Act Implementation Committee and delivering critical elements of our training program.

We have again appointed Gender Equality Regional Consulting as our consultant to deliver in-person consultation sessions, submit a comprehensive report on the key themes from the consultation process and to draft our Progress Report and new GEAP. This consultation cost is $22,500.

We have resourced both gender equality training and Intersectionality in Action training that directly supports the delivery of this GEAP.

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