



**Hobsons Bay**  
CITY COUNCIL

# Gender Equity

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Policy Statement

May 2014



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#### Acknowledgements

This discussion paper was compiled by the Hobsons Bay Strategy and Advocacy Department. For further information contact the Hobsons Bay City Council on 9932 1000 [www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au)

The Council acknowledges the people of Yalukit Wilum of the Boon Wurrung Country that makes up the Greater Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of these municipal lands.

The Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

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# Glossary of Terms

In line with the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Council recognises that “terminology can have a profound impact on a person’s identity, self-worth and inherent dignity. The use of inclusive and acceptable terminology empowers individuals and enables visibility of important issues.”<sup>1</sup>

When talking about gender equity many terms can arise. Below is a list of frequently used terms and their meaning.

For the purpose of this policy statement, when discussing gender equity the Council also includes the gender diverse community. Many of the definitions for gender equity only include men and women. In this case the Council have adapted the definitions to also include gender diverse people, alterations made to references are indicated in brackets.

**Gender** refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. A person’s gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011).

**Gender diverse** is used to recognise people who do not fall within the traditional binary notions of sex and gender (male and female). This may include people who identify as a gender different to their birth sex or as neither male nor female. Some cultures may have their own terms for gender identities outside male and female (Australian Commonwealth Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender).

**Gender equality** means that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women, men [and gender diverse] are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women, men [and gender diverse people], have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on [their gender] (UNESCO, 2000).

**Gender equity** means fairness of treatment for women, men [and gender diverse], according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities (*ABC Of Women Worker’s Rights And Gender Equality*, ILO, Geneva, 2000, p.48.) (UNESCO, 2000).

**Gender expression** refers to the way in which a person externally expresses their gender or how they are perceived by others (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011).

**Gender identity** refers to a person’s deeply held internal and individual sense of gender [and what they choose to identify with] (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/section-3-note-terminology-addressing-sexual-orientation-and-sex-and-or-gender-identity>

**Gender stereotypes** refers to behaviours and patterns of behaviour that are traditionally perceived as either male, female [or gender diverse]. For example women are considered by most societies as maternal and caregivers and men as providers (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011).

**Intersex** refers to people who have genetic, hormonal or physical characteristics that are not exclusively 'male' or 'female'. A person who is intersex may identify as male, female, intersex or as being of indeterminate sex (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011).

**Sex** refers to a person's biological characteristics. A person's sex is usually described as being male or female. Some people may not be exclusively male or female (the term 'intersex' is explained above). Some people identify as neither male nor female (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011).

**Sex disaggregated data** is data that is collected and presented separately for men, women [and gender diverse] (UNESCO, 2003).

**Social norms** consist of rules of conduct and models of behaviour expected by a society or social group. They are rooted in the customs, traditions and value systems that gradually develop in a society or social group (VicHealth, 2007).

**Trans[gender]** is a general term for a person whose gender identity is different to their sex at birth. A trans[gender] person may take steps to live permanently in their nominated sex with or without medical treatment (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011).

# Policy statement

“Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to a safe and just community, where every girl, boy, woman, man and gender diverse person is included and valued – where equal and respectful relationships and opportunities for meaningful participation are supported and celebrated.”

## Purpose of the policy statement

The purpose of the Gender Equity Policy Statement is to guide and support the Council in addressing the social determinants of health through using gender equity analysis. The policy statement aims to clearly outline the role of the Council in addressing these determinants, achieving an equitable community for all women, men and gender diverse people.

The Council has the capacity to influence many of the social determinants for health through its role in social and strategic planning, environmental management, economic development, urban design, community service provision and internal human resource management policies and procedures. While the Council has been undertaking gender equity strategies for some time, the policy statement will act as the umbrella for this work. It will also set the direction for future work, influencing key areas through applying a gender analysis, assessing the difference in outcomes and opportunities in the lives of women, men and gender diverse people.

## Guiding principles

The following fundamental principles guide the Council's gender equity work through the implementation of the policy statement. These principles are intrinsically linked to the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013–2017 and the Council Plan 2013-2017.

1. **Human rights and social justice;**
2. **Equitable access** for all;
3. **Partnerships** with the community, service providers and other levels of government;
4. **Innovation** proactively striving for continuous improvement;
5. **Listen and engage** with all girls, boys, women, men, and gender diverse people to ensure all community needs are heard and respected.

# Background

In 2012 Hobsons Bay City Council adopted the recommendations from the discussion paper “Improving Gender Equity in Hobsons Bay.” The key recommendation of this paper was for the Council to develop a gender equity policy statement that clearly articulates the Council’s intent in relation to gender equity.

Gender equity recognises that within all communities, women, men and gender diverse people have different needs, benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities. Gender equity is the process of being fair to women, men and the gender diverse by recognising diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all (Gender Equity in Local Government Partnership, 2012).

Local governments, being the closest level of government to the community, have a key role in creating gender equitable communities and are legislated to do so under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)*, the *Local Government Act 1999*, the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, and the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Gender Equity in Local Government Partnership, 2012). Gender is also a key social determinant of health identified within the Hobsons Bay Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 and the Council Plan 2013-2017.

## Defining the issue

The difference between gender and sex is an important issue to understand when defining gender equity.

Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that differ between men and women. Intersex refers to those whose biological sex cannot be classified as clearly male or female (Organisation Intersex International Australia Limited, 2013).

Gender on the other hand, refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. A person’s gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011).

The Council acknowledges that gender is not a binary system of only women and men; rather it exists on a gender spectrum as a continuum, which accounts for the variety and endless differences in how people identify and define their gender (Women’s Health Victoria, 2011).

Gender equity recognises that within all communities, women, men and gender diverse people have different needs, benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities. Gender equity is the process of being fair to women, men and gender diverse individuals by recognising diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all (Gender Equity in Local Government Partnership, 2012).

## Why is gender equity important?

Violence against women is seen as the worst outcome of gender inequity and is the leading contributor to preventable death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15 to 44, more than that of cardiovascular disease and diabetes (VicHealth, 2012). It is understood that the adherence to rigid gender stereotypes and an unequal balance of power between men and women and can result in men experiencing greater elements of control, both physical and psychological, which in turn can lead to violence against women. Research suggests that gender diverse people face similar rates of physical violence due to gender inequities, however further research needs to be conducted to further understand this (Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, 2007).

Achieving gender equity improves the economic and social environment (OECD, 2012). The Grattan Institute has found that a 6 per cent increase in the female workforce equates to adding a potential \$25 billion to the Australian Economy (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2014). In addition when looking at the social elements, enabling gender equity positively impacts the community and the entire family unit, especially those of children.

## Gendered Profile of Hobsons Bay

Women, men and gender diverse people have different health and wellbeing needs. In addition, the unequal status of women in our community can cause many to experience significant disadvantage, impacting on their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing (Women's Health West, 2013).

Through applying a gender analysis to the social determinants of health in Hobsons Bay the Council is able to understand the differences experienced by women, men and gender diverse people, assisting the Council to meet the needs of the community. At present there is limited information collected for gender diverse people therefore the data below is restricted to female and male.

### Socio-Economic Status

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) is an index of disadvantage that brings together a range of data including unemployment, low education, and low skills into an overall score of advantage. Hobsons Bay has an overall score of 1002, below the Victorian average of 1010 and ranked ninth most disadvantaged local government area in Metropolitan Melbourne. The SEIFA index is important to take into consideration when planning and prioritising areas of higher need.

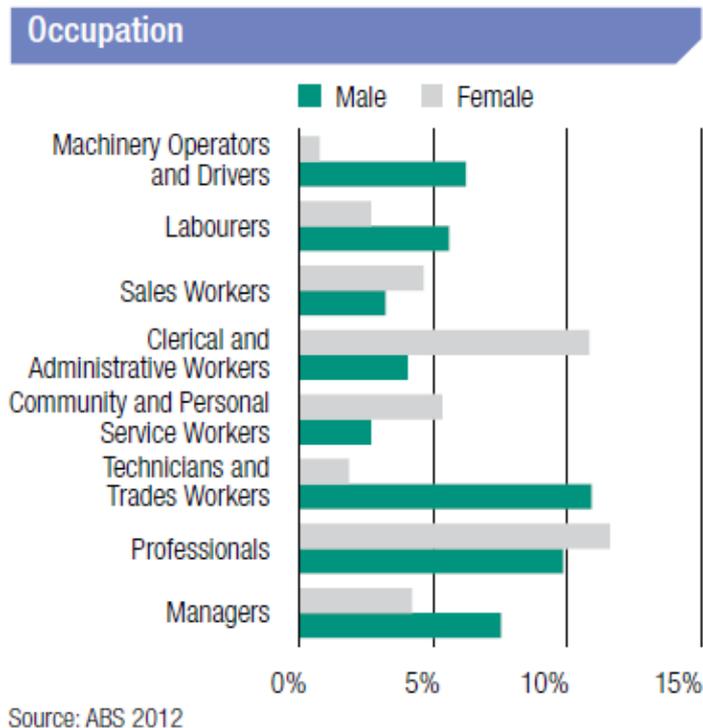
Table 1. SEIFA for Hobsons Bay (Profile.id, 2013)

| Area                                 | 2011 index     |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Laverton                             | 891.0          |
| Altona North                         | 910.0          |
| Brooklyn                             | 947.0          |
| Altona Meadows                       | 981.0          |
| <b>Hobsons Bay City</b>              | <b>1,002.0</b> |
| Altona - Seaholme                    | 1,019.0        |
| Greater Melbourne                    | 1,020.0        |
| Spotswood - South Kingsville         | 1,024.0        |
| Seabrook                             | 1,031.0        |
| Newport West                         | 1,044.0        |
| Williamstown North - The Rifle Range | 1,058.0        |
| Williamstown                         | 1,062.0        |
| Newport East                         | 1,087.0        |

### Income and Employment

Within Hobsons Bay, 39 per cent (16,341) of men are employed full time compared to 22 per cent of women (9,263). Of those employed, 18 per cent of women are employed part time compared to 9 per cent of men (ABS, 2012). There are a higher percentage of women in Hobsons Bay that report being the primary carer of their own children. These women may choose to spend some time away from the workforce followed by periods of part-time employment. Because the current superannuation system is linked to paid work, it overwhelmingly disadvantages women who are more likely to move in and out of paid work to care for family members. These factors contribute to the gender gap in retirement savings with the average superannuation payout for women in Australia being a third of the payout for men (\$37,000 compared with \$110, 000). This can lead to women being at higher risk of living their final years in poverty (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012).

Women also have a higher percentage of unpaid house work hours and hours providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability compared to men (ABS, 2012). As the table below indicates, the majority of males in Hobsons Bay are working as technicians and trade workers followed by professionals and managers. The majority of females are working as professionals (this has increased markedly since 2006) or clerical and administrative workers.



## Education

The percentage of completion for year 12 or equivalent is very similar between men and women (40 per cent and 42 per cent respectively) (ABS, 2012). When looking at higher education, women in Hobsons Bay are more likely than men to have degrees, diplomas and graduate certificates, whereas 17 per cent of men (7,211) have attained certificate level qualifications compared to only 8 per cent of women (3,234) (ABS, 2012). Even though women have a higher education, as the employment data above indicates, this is not resulting in higher managerial positions or having a significant impact on differences within employment as professionals.

## Housing

High costs of housing can lead to financial stress for individuals and families, limiting the ability to afford essential items such as food, transport, education and health care. Research indicates the supply of affordable rental housing in Hobsons Bay is becoming increasingly limited. In June 2013, there were only 43 rental properties, or 6.8 per cent of total rentals, that were affordable for low income households. This compares to the 208 rental properties that were affordable a decade ago. At the 2011 Census, just over 22 per cent of low income renters in Hobsons Bay, or 2,324 households, were in housing stress, paying more than 30 per cent of their income in rent. Single parent families are also at high risk with 439 single parent families in Hobsons Bay experiencing housing stress.

Given that women in Hobsons Bay have lower individual weekly incomes than men, there is a higher risk for women to face financial stress due to housing costs, which could result in insecure tenure (*cited in* (Women's Health West, 2013). Furthermore, 82 per cent of single parent families (3,066) are headed by women compared to 18 per cent headed by men (656) (ABS, 2012).

## Transport

When transport (active and public modes) is accessible, affordable, safe, reliable and well connected, it increases the communities' ability to be able to engage in and access

essentials such as: education, employment, health services, community and social events, and recreation.

In Hobsons Bay, 34.3 per cent of women have experienced difficulties in utilising transport in the past 12 months (*cited in* (Women's Health West, 2013). It is acknowledged that how people use transport is often influenced by gender. Men are more likely to have access to a car and women are more likely to use public transport. In addition the perception of safety between genders can differ. Women's perception of safety can be decreased when infrastructure is poorly maintained, there is limited activation of space, and lighting is poor. Due to gender differences and the positive impact access to transport has on individuals and families, it is essential to ensure gender is considered when planning for transport within Hobsons Bay (Women's Health West, 2013).

## Health and Safety

When looking at sexual and reproductive health and family planning, women in Hobsons Bay have a higher teenage fertility rate and lower rates of contraception usage to avoid pregnancy when compared to Victorian and the Western Region. In addition, less than half (38.5 per cent) of sexually active adolescents in Hobsons Bay practice safe sex with a condom, which is the lowest proportion reported for the Western Metropolitan Region (*cited in* (Women's Health West, 2013).

In 2011 there were 267 notifications of Chlamydia, an increase of 31.5 per cent over three years (2009-2011). The participation rate for pap screening among women in Hobsons Bay aged 20-24 years was 40.4 per cent, substantially less than the Victorian average of 60 per cent (*cited in* (Women's Health West, 2013).

Victoria Police data reveals that reported family violence rates have increased in Hobsons Bay from 630.8 per 100,000 in 2010-2011 rising to 920.7 in 2012-2013 (Victoria Police, 2014). Hobsons Bay remains lower than the North West Metropolitan Region of 1051.7 and the Victorian Regional average of 1071.0 per 100,000. These figures however do not include family violence incidents not reported to police and is therefore likely to be an underestimate.

The perception of safety and feeling safe in society is equally important for women and men. In Hobsons Bay only 55.7 per cent of all females reported feeling "safe" or "very safe" walking alone at night in their local area (compared to 64 per cent of males) (*cited in* (Women's Health West, 2013).

## Culture

Hobsons Bay is a diverse community with approximately 31 per cent of residents born overseas (ABS, 2012). There are over 100 different languages spoken in Hobsons Bay with 29 per cent of residents speaking a language other than English at home and 22 per cent of residents who speak another language at home reported having low levels of English or not being unable to speak English at all (ABS, 2012).

Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds face additional barriers to equal economic and social participation, including language skills and lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and experience. As a result women from CALD backgrounds can face a greater level of discrimination on the basis of both race and gender.

# Role of local government

As the closest level of government to the community Hobsons Bay City Council has the capacity to influence gender equity through its social and strategic planning, environmental management, economic development, urban design, community service provision and internal human resource management policies and procedures.

In 2012 the Local Government Partnership identified six ways local governments can advance gender equity through using a gender analysis. These include the following areas:

## 1. Infrastructure

Infrastructure has a significant impact on our communities, creating inclusion, participation and social connections, therefore it needs to be planned, designed, and maintained to ensure it is accessible, relevant and welcoming for all.

## 2. Land use planning and design

The way places and spaces are designed has an impact on their usage; understanding the different ways that women and men utilise and perceive space, helps to foster a healthy, socially inclusive community.

## 3. Promotion of women in leadership

Local government is able, and legally obliged through the Victorian Charter of Human Rights, to encourage and foster women's leadership, ensuring consultations, engagement opportunities and civic participation to enable and support an equal representation of women and men.

## 4. Workplaces

Local government is a key employer in the community. Supporting a fairer and more flexible workplace is essential for gender equity, positioning local government as an employer of choice, and overall improvement to business.

## 5. Sports and recreation

Local government is responsible for a range of recreation centres as well as open space, parks, and playgrounds. Sport and recreation provides great physical and emotional benefits as well as community benefits such as community connections, social inclusion and activation of space. Women and girls are still underrepresented in key sporting roles such as coaching, referees and leadership as well as participation, therefore it is imperative that gender is included in all planning, design and maintenance of sport and recreation. In addition sports and recreation must consider the needs of gender diverse people, encouraging participation on an inclusive basis.

## 6. Access to services

Local governments provide a range of services for the community. Successful service provision relies on understanding the needs of different genders, and different barriers and constraints they experience as a result.

# Strategic directions

Hobsons Bay City Council has been working in the gender equity arena for a number of years, already being a signatory to the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter and an active member of Preventing Violence Together – the regional prevention of violence against women strategy. Along with this, the Council actively promotes gender equity and preventing violence against women, and has established a Women's Advisory Committee, women's mentoring programs and Inspirational Women Awards. In addition, at the time of writing this policy statement, the majority of councillors were women, and 50 per cent of directors were women. The Council has also worked to create a family friendly workplace with opportunities for flexible working conditions for women and men, including family violence leave, and parental leave. As part of the Council's commitment to strengthen its capacity to address the issues affecting its Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intersex, Queer, (GLBTIQ) communities, the Council has also established a GLBTIQ Advisory Committee. These achievements have put the Council in a good position to further advance gender equity within the organisation and the community, inclusive of all genders.

The strategic directions outlined below will guide the current and future work of Hobsons Bay City Council towards further progressing gender equity.

## 1. Workplaces and organisational development

*The Council will create a gender equitable workplace, becoming a leading organisation that is innovative, proactive and strives for continuous improvement.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Providing opportunities and setting measureable targets for the number of women in management and senior management levels.
- ii) Continuing the commitment to flexible workforce arrangements, including flexible parental leave and support for working from home, along with places to cater for breastfeeding, children's space, and the provision of baby change tables in unisex toilets.
- iii) Supporting people across the organisation to champion and role model gender equity e.g. men taking parental leave and using children's spaces.
- iv) Ensuring position descriptions articulate how the role includes/links with considerations of gender equity.
- v) Delivering internal staff training, to ensure staff understand what gender equity is, why it is important, and what it means within their role.
- vi) Continuing to ensure that pay equity is achieved between women, men and gender diverse individuals.
- vii) Reviewing roles within the organisations to understand gender balances and work towards supporting opportunities to strengthen gender equity within traditional dominant gender roles such as Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Engineering.

## 2. Access to services

*The Council will strive to ensure services provided are gender equitable, breaking down barriers to access.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Committing to a standard protocol of sex-disaggregated reporting in policy (where data is available) and services to help understand the different barriers, usage and needs that girls, boys, women, men, and the gender diverse face.

- ii) Ensuring health services and prevention strategies are equitable across all genders.
- iii) Ensuring the Council services are inclusive of all genders.
- iv) Building an understanding of gender equity amongst staff delivering services within the community and how services can be strengthened to be inclusive of all.
- v) Ensuring staff have an understanding of violence against women, and support to deal with cases should they present through service delivery.

### **3. Partnerships and Advocacy**

*The Council will work in partnership with key stakeholders in the region and the state to support and foster a gender equitable community.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Continuing to actively participate in regional committees such as Preventing Violence Together and Municipal Association of Victoria Preventing Violence Against Women Network.
- ii) Continuing to strengthen partnerships with local and regional organisations.
- iii) Incorporating gender equity throughout the key priority areas in the Council's Advocacy Strategy.
- iv) Continuing to ensure gender is a key determinant addressed by the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Community Wellbeing Leadership Coalition.
- v) Continue to work with all of the Council's advisory committees to ensure that the Council is responsive to the needs of the community.

### **4. Communications**

*The Council will support and champion gender equity within media and communications.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Ensuring the Council's media releases are gender equitable, equally promoting women, men and gender diverse people within our community.
- ii) Working with local media to promote gender equitable reporting via entering work into awards such as the Eliminating Violence Against (EVA) Women media awards.
- iii) Ensuring the Council promote and raise awareness of gender equity throughout the community via events, through networks and partnerships, and communication tools such as social media, the website, and newsletters.
- iv) Ensuring the Council events have an equal representation of gender diversity (e.g. gender diverse speakers).

### **5. Economic Development**

*The Council will aim to support the development of gender equitable economic development across the municipality.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Supporting and building small business capacity among women.
- ii) Promoting local businesses that are implementing gender equitable practices (e.g. leadership opportunities for women, creating family friendly workplaces.)
- iii) Including a gender equitable analysis within the Council's Economic Strategy.

## **6. Promotion of women in leadership**

*The Council will enable women and girls within the community to actively participate and be supported as valued community leaders.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Continuing to support women's representation on Council.
- ii) Reviewing the Council committees to ensure there is an equal gender representation on each, unless specifically identified as a gendered committee.
- iii) Continuing a women's mentoring program for community members, especially young women, and staff.
- iv) Strengthening links and partnerships with a diverse range of women leaders within the community to further enable and support diverse leadership.
- v) Ensuring consultations with community members enable women's participation through minimising barriers such as holding events at an appropriate time of day, in an accessible venue, accessible via transport, and child friendly.

## **7. Sport and recreation**

*The Council will work towards ensuring sport and recreation opportunities (passive and active) are provided in a gender equitable manner.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Research and identify opportunities to support gender equitable approaches to sport and recreation provided by the Council e.g. Infrastructure provided, lease arrangements, and gender equity incentives.
- ii) Exploring opportunities for women and girls and gender diverse people to participate in sport and recreation; encouraging the promotion of female teams and leaders of all genders within clubs.
- iii) Ensuring that all genders are equally consulted during consultation periods (for example holding information sessions at different times to allow both working and non working members of the community an opportunity to be engaged).

## **8. Libraries, community centres, arts, events and cultural activities**

*The Council will promote and enable a gender equitable community through programs, events and learning opportunities.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Promoting gender equitable books, especially for children and young people.
- ii) Continuing to deliver gender equitable activities, events and community programs.
- iii) Ensuring there is an equal representation of genders in arts and cultural events (e.g. gender balance of art curators).
- iv) Continuing to provide venues that are accessible for all and including elements such as childcare facilities and baby change rooms.

## **9. Buildings and Community Infrastructure**

*The Council will ensure all new buildings and infrastructure are gender equitable as well as work towards increasing gender equity elements within existing infrastructure.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Ensuring that all genders are equally consulted during consultation periods (for example holding information sessions at different times to allow both working and non working members of the community an opportunity to be engaged).
- ii) Including Universal Design principles in the development of any new Council building, major retrofits, and public urban spaces.

## **10. Land use planning and design**

*The Council will ensure land use planning and design include gender equity as a forefront to planning.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Using sex disaggregated data in research when looking at community land use needs.
- ii) When major developments are proposed, undertaking gender analysis of surrounding services and facilities e.g. child care, baby change facilities, public toilets, public transport, education and employment opportunities, affordable housing, footpaths, and lighting.
- iii) Ensuring that all genders are equally consulted during consultation periods (for example holding information sessions at different times to allow both working and non working members of the community an opportunity to be engaged).
- iv) Incorporating the use of Universal Design, 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' (CPTED) and 'Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria' within design principles for changes to the built and urban realm.

## **11. Local Laws**

*The Council will endeavour to deliver local laws that promote gender equity and reduce violence against women.*

The Council will do this via strategies such as:

- i) Providing training to local laws staff around preventing violence against women and gender diverse people and how local laws can support this.
- ii) Reviewing current local laws and ensuring gender equity is integrated and gender differences recognised throughout.

# Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the policy statement will be the responsibility of all departments across the Council.

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy statement will be an ongoing process. The Council is committed to incorporating evaluation into its work and ensuring continuous improvement. Gender equity is still a relatively new field for local governments, and while Victoria is leading the way, new data and further opportunities to progress this work are continuously evolving. The Council will endeavour to include these changes in practices throughout the life of the gender equity policy statement. In addition the statement will be evaluated across four years which will indicate the Council's progress as well as the identification of any new directions for local government including new policies and legislation.

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