



Gender Equity Strategy 2016 – 2021

Forward



Imagine. A world where women and girls stand equally with men and boys, and take up all of life's opportunities without fear, harm, discrimination or disadvantage.¹

I am proud to present Yarra's Gender Equity Strategy 2016 – 2021.

Yarra is committed to providing a workplace where all employees can access and enjoy the same rights, responsibilities, resources and opportunities; and can bring their unique selves to the workplace. This important strategy, developed for all our staff and capturing their ideas and experiences, is one which will help us to achieve that.

As seen in our Council Plan, and many of our plans and strategies, Yarra has strong social justice principles and ethics which guide our strategic thinking. We acknowledge the important role local government plays in supporting respectful, just and fair communities and workplaces. And we are proud to be recognised as a leader in whole of organisation and community approaches to achieving gender equity and the prevention of violence against women.

This strategy builds upon the fabulous work that has come before it, through the Gender Equity Strategy 2013 – 2016 and the Gender Equity Committee which first formed in 2011. Women make up over 50% of our community and workforce and they contribute so much to the fabric of both, but they continue to face barriers and challenges at all stages of their lives. While we still have work to do, we have come a long way and I want to sincerely thank all of those who have worked to create change here at Yarra and beyond.

As with its predecessor, this strategy has been unanimously endorsed by the leadership team and is supported by officers and leaders across Council. I look forward to seeing more fabulous outcomes as we continue creating and celebrating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

VJ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VJ' or similar, with a horizontal line underneath.

CEO, Yarra City Council

¹From Victorian Women's Trust website, May 2016

Contents

Why gender equity?	4
Vision	5
Background	6
The new strategy	7
Consultation and key themes	8
Accountability and reporting	8
Action plan	9

Why gender equity?



Equality and equity are not the same thing. Equality is where we give everyone the same thing no matter what. The problem with this is that some people face more barriers, so the outcomes may not be equal. Equity recognises that people experience different barriers and therefore have different needs to enable them to achieve the same outcomes.

The picture above illustrates the difference.

Gender equality is about treating everyone the same and ensuring that women and men have access to, and can enjoy, the same benefits, resources and other responsibilities.²

Gender equity, however, recognises that men and women have different life experiences, levels of power and access to decision-making, so different approaches are needed to provide equitable outcomes for all.

This strategy outlines Council's clear commitment to a workplace where men and women are treated equally and are provided opportunities that encourage and support their professional development, growth and leadership.

Please note: This document refers to gender as a binary concept which we recognise may exclude some people. This strategy should be considered as one which seeks to develop an organisational culture which is inclusive of all staff and their diverse and individual needs.

²Workplace Gender Equality Agency, The Business Case for Gender Equality Research paper, March 2013

Vision

Our vision is for an organisation which positively and proactively demonstrates a gender-inclusive culture that encourages leadership, participation and contribution from a diverse workforce.

This strategy also aligns with the following Council plans:

- *Municipal Public Health Plan 2013 – 2017*
- *Yarra Council Plan 2013 – 2017*
- *Employee Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2015 – 2017*
- *Culture Strategy (due January 2017).*

THE GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY ALIGNS WITH OUR COUNCIL VALUES

RESPECT

Yarra is committed to providing a fair, just and respectful workplace, where all employees are treated equally and with respect at all times, regardless of gender – both internally and in the community.

TEAMWORK

At Yarra, we share a commitment to a professional organisational culture through the collaborative approaches we take in the workplace.

INTEGRITY

As an organisation we have a high level of professionalism and authenticity both internally and in the community, to ensure we achieve equal outcomes for all.

INNOVATION

Council is committed to providing creative and proactive initiatives to ensure gender equity is clearly embedded and showcased at all levels of the organisation.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We apply a gender lens to all our work and ensure we capture accurate data and provide regular reports to the organisation.

SUSTAINABILITY

Yarra's commitment is to build a gender inclusive culture that supports everyone now and into the future.

Background

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Around the world discrimination favouring men contributes to poor representation of women in business and government leadership. In this context, Australia continues to fall behind in terms of gender equality.

The World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report* highlights the globally high rates of women in education and training and how this does not convert to increased labour market participation of women. Since 2006 Australia has ranked first for educational attainment, but only fourteenth for economic participation and opportunity.

Overall Australia ranks 23 out of 134 countries, dropping three places since the last report and six places since 2007. According to the *Global Gender Gap Report*, the three main areas that need to be addressed to achieve gender equity in Australia are: pay equity, women's leadership and violence against women.³

NATIONALLY

Despite comprising more than half of all Commonwealth public servants, women make up only 37% of the senior executive level. Women are also significantly under-represented in parliament and executive government, comprising less than one-third of all parliamentarians and one-fifth of all ministers. Similarly, they comprise one-third of members on Australian government boards and committees. Not surprisingly, the gender pay gap in Australia is between 17 and 24%.⁴

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government is a major employer in Australia, providing around 178,000 positions, approximately 10% of the public sector workforce.⁵

The representation of women both as elected representatives and at management level has remained largely unchanged for the past 20 years. In 2010, the number of women serving as elected councillors in Australia was 27%, while only 20% of senior council managers and 5% of CEOs were women.⁶ In Victoria, 34% of elected councillors are women, and each of the state's 76 Councils now have female councillors, the first time this has ever occurred.⁷

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

In 2010, Yarra committed to developing an Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Program. This initiative was based on the Federal Government's gender equality reporting requirements for private companies with 100 or more employees. While these reporting guidelines are not mandatory for public sector organisations, Council felt that this was an important opportunity to demonstrate leadership in addressing gender inequality and providing a respectful workplace for all staff.

The 2013 – 2016 Gender Equity Strategy was developed following an internal consultation process, which asked staff to share their views and experiences in relation to issues including respect, access to opportunities and leadership roles, based on gender.

This strategy resulted in a range of fantastic outcomes including:

- Executive endorsement of a target for women in leadership roles at Yarra of 40% by 2020
- development of the Parental Leave Policy and Toolkit
- development of a Family Violence Leave Policy and contact officers program.

The next strategy will build upon the innovative outcomes already achieved. Council is committed to leading innovative change and to provide effective and sustainable workplace practices to ensure gender equity is achievable for all staff.

³ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report*

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends paper on Women in Leadership, December 2012

⁵ Representation of women in Australian parliaments 2014, Parliament of Australia website. www.aph.gov.au

⁶ Participation of women in Local Government Coalition Fact Sheet, December 2012

⁷ Participation of women in Local Government Coalition Fact Sheet, December 2015

The new strategy

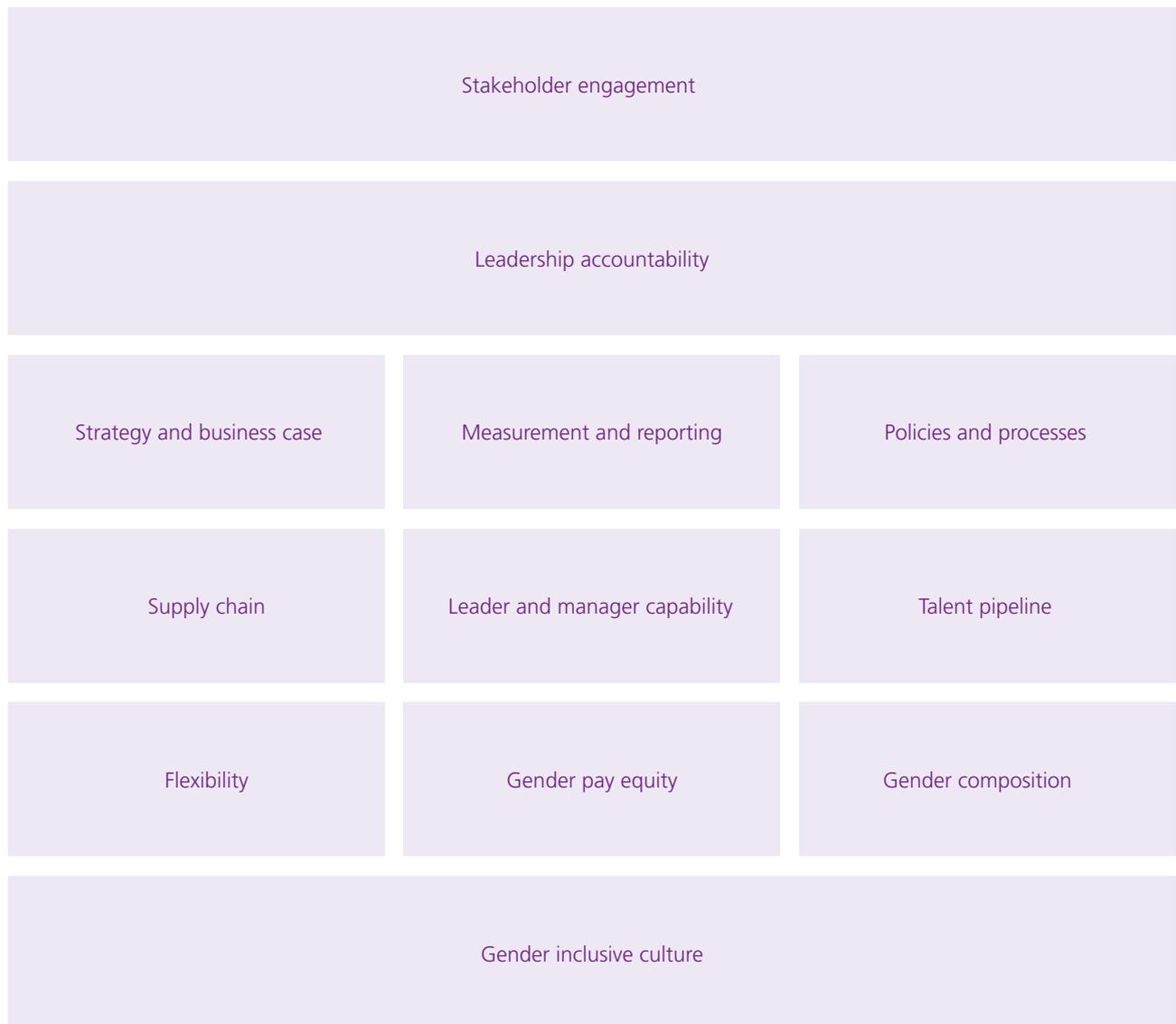
An evaluation of the existing strategy and a review of best practice models informed the development of the new strategy which aims to strengthen the outcomes moving forward.

YARRA'S GENDER EQUITY CHANGE MODEL

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is the Australian Government statutory agency responsible for promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces.

Yarra City Council has adopted the WGEA best practice Gender Equity Change Model as part of this strategy. This framework aligns Yarra's initiatives with a best practice approach to achieving gender equity. It comprises 12 interconnected focus areas.⁸

This model ensures that Yarra is providing a holistic and targeted approach to addressing gender equity in the workplace and ensuring that all the relevant reporting, planning and cultural change is occurring within a strategic framework.



⁸ Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Gender Strategy Toolkit, www.wgea.gov.au

Consultation and key themes

The new strategy was developed based on outcomes and learning from the previous strategy and two key consultation methods:

A. Gender Equity Survey 2016

In June 2016, all staff were invited to share their stories and experiences through an internal staff survey. The survey asked staff to rate their perceptions or attitudes to a range of gender equity topics including flexible work, leadership opportunities and respectful relationships in the workplace. Staff were also encouraged to provide their recommendations for the next gender equity strategy.

In total 159 responses were received from across Council and these informed the development of the new strategy. These responses showed that staff were broadly supportive of the work of Council to achieve gender equity.

The key themes outlined in the Gender Equity Survey were:

- leadership – the need to support more women in senior leadership roles and development opportunities
- flexibility – flexible work options are important for all staff, through the different stages of their lives
- consistency – the need for opportunities to be offered equitably to all staff.

B. Consultation with senior leaders

Meetings were held with leaders from across 19 branches who were invited to identify relevant gender equity initiatives aligned to their strategic goals, which could be incorporated into the new strategy.

Accountability and reporting

Accountability is critical to the success of any strategy. Each action is allocated to a specific branch which will be responsible for implementation and reporting on the outcomes. A number of different reporting measures will be used to ensure actions are completed and to measure the impact of the strategy.

These include:

- an annual report to Executive on the agreed actions and impact of the strategy
- a detailed workforce data report presented to Executive annually
- specific actions to be reported and measured in Interplan
- highlights will be shared with staff across Council via internal communications.

Action plan

The action plan provides a three year strategic approach to achieving a gender inclusive culture at Yarra. Actions are attributed to the 12 focus areas outlined above and demonstrate a comprehensive approach to addressing the cultural and organisational change needed to ensure Yarra is a gender inclusive workplace into the future.

The action plan will be overseen by the Gender Equity Policy Advisor, who will work in partnership with key advocates across the organisation to achieve the actions identified through the consultation process. At the end of the first three years, the action plan will be reviewed and a new plan developed for the final two years of the strategy.

No.	What are we trying to achieve?	How are we going to get there?	Due	Lead
Flexibility				
1	Increasing take-up and commitment to Yarra's flexible work policy.	Develop an online flexible work resource – available to all staff on the intranet. Launch the flexible work resource to all staff and managers with key messages highlighted. Provide quarterly reports to Executive and SMT on the numbers of staff accessing and applying for flexible work options.	Year 1	People and Culture
2	Improve support for staff when returning from extended leave, such as parental leave.	Develop a 'return to work' resource for staff, their teams and managers, as they return to work following extended leave (eg. parental leave). Resource located on the intranet, and promoted internally.	Year 1	People and Culture
Gender composition				
3	Increase the number of women in leadership positions across all divisions and senior leadership positions by 2020.	Endorse and pilot a divisional target to increase the number of women in leadership positions by 2020.	Year 1	Corporate, Business and Finance
Gender inclusive culture				
4	Male advocates promote key messages around preventing violence against women.	Annual White Ribbon Day internal event led by men. White ribbons and wristbands available for sale at all customer service centres, libraries and recreation centres – all funds raised to be donated to a local family violence support service.	Years 1, 2 and 3	Executive

Action plan (continued)

No.	What are we trying to achieve?	How are we going to get there?	Due	Lead
5	Increase external opportunities to address gender stereotypes,	Investigate opportunities for more pedestrian lights with female images in Yarra (pending advice from VicRoads). Investigate opportunities for naming new streets and other places in Yarra after prominent Yarra female leaders (subject to requirements outlined in the Victorian Government Geographic Names Guidelines 2010).	Years 1, 2 and 3	Planning and Place Making/City Works & Assets
6	Promote and celebrate women of Yarra (staff and community members) and their achievements and significant contributions to the workplace and community.	Coordinate Council's annual International Women's Day initiatives.	Years 1, 2 and 3	People and Culture/Advocacy and Engagement

Gender pay equity

7	Address discrepancies on pay and entitlements for women and men.	Undertake a comprehensive yearly pay and entitlements audit and provide a report to Executive. Develop strategies to ensure consistent remuneration processes in the future.	Years 1, 2 and 3	People and Culture
---	------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------	--------------------

Leadership accountability

8	Ensure strong, visible leadership commitment around gender equity.	Develop KPIs for managers' position descriptions that provide a clear obligation to uphold and advocate for gender equity in all areas of their work and leadership.	Year 1	People and Culture
---	--------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------	--------------------

Leader and manager capability

9	Supporting pathways and skill development opportunities for emerging women leaders at Yarra.	Research existing leadership programs for women and develop a tailored succession planning model for staff to pilot at Yarra. Continue to support and develop Yarra's mentoring program – proposing a target of 40% female mentors in the program, to align with the leadership target. Develop a Yarra acting/secondment role policy and a related procedure to be endorsed by Executive. Acting/secondment role policy to be promoted and communicated across the organisation and reviewed on an annual basis.	Year 1 - 2	People and Culture
---	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	--------------------

No.	What are we trying to achieve?	How are we going to get there?	Due	Lead
10	Increase understanding of unconscious bias and gender equity.	<p>Unconscious bias training to be provided to the leadership group.</p> <p>Following a review and evaluation of unconscious bias training, this module is to be included in the organisation's training essentials calendar.</p> <p>A gender equity 'train the trainer' model to be researched and developed internally, with a pilot implemented in Year 1, evaluated and incorporated into the training calendar.</p>	Years 1, 2 and 3	People and Culture

Policies and processes

11	Ensure staff understand, and can access, support around gender equity related matters.	<p>Develop a gender equity policy and procedure resource for Yarra.</p> <p>Promote this resource across the organisation via internal communications channels.</p>	Years 1	People and Culture
12	Gender issues are considered in all policy, planning and service delivery.	<p>Undertake a review of current gender analysis resources that are available.</p> <p>Community Partnerships team to develop and pilot a Yarra resource that can be implemented across the organisation.</p> <p>The pilot to be reviewed and presented to Executive, with the final model to be launched and promoted internally.</p> <p>The tool will then be used to assess current organisational policies – with regular reporting provided to the Group Manager, People, Culture and Community.</p> <p>A policy review schedule to be developed and implemented across the organisation, coordinated by the People and Culture branch.</p>	Year 1	People and Culture and Community

Action plan (continued)

No.	What are we trying to achieve?	How are we going to get there?	Due	Lead
13	Reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women in the workplace and the community.	Oversee the implementation of key internal and external family violence actions, as part of Yarra's continued and ongoing commitment to the prevention of violence against women – through Yarra's role as a leader in the community, as a service provider and as an employer. Develop and seek organisational endorsement of a draft family violence organisational statement, to support Council's commitment as a leader in local government in the family violence sector.	Years 1, 2 and 3	Community Wellbeing
14	Promote positive messages that address and challenge gender stereotypes and promote positive messages and role models for young people.	Develop children and adult library book lists that challenge and highlight gender stereotypes and promote gender equality and respectful relationships. Promote female writers and ensure their stories are shared, through initiatives such as the Stella Prize. Ensure that Yarra Libraries have key events for women profiled and promoted, including International Women's Day.	Years 1, 2 and 3	Community Wellbeing
15	Increase housing opportunities for women at risk in Yarra.	Explore opportunities to work in partnership with Yarra's Affordable Housing Strategy to advocate and support women at risk in Yarra. Groups may include, for example, women with identified housing needs, such as women experiencing family violence and female artists, and other relevant groups as appropriate.	Year 2	Community Wellbeing
16	Raise the profile of prominent women in Yarra.	Profile women of influence in Yarra, for example, women from the arts sector and other groups as appropriate.	Year 1	Community Wellbeing
17	Embed accountability for gender equity across the organisation. Ensure that all staff have gender equity objectives included in all aspects of their Performance Development and Review process (PDR) – and that these are reviewed, discussed and reported on as part of the annual process.	Develop relevant gender equity questions for inclusion in all elements of the staff PDR process, including the PDR discussion, review and final reports. Ensure these are included as part of all future position descriptions and align with the relevant manager's gender equity KPIs. Review and report annually to Executive on these objectives and provide feedback and update as needed.	Year 1	People and Culture

No.	What are we trying to achieve?	How are we going to get there?	Due	Lead
18	Raise the organisational awareness and understanding of respectful relationships and their impact on organisational culture.	Explore the opportunity to pilot respectful relationships messages as part of a communication initiative via youth services policies, programs and service delivery. Work with the Engagement and Inclusion team to develop these messages.	Year 2	Community Wellbeing
19	Increase female representation in traditionally male dominated work areas.	Review and update the Yarra recruitment toolkit to include resources for male-dominated workplaces (based on current best practice models), to encourage women to apply. Pilot this resource with two areas of Council – IS/Finance and the Depot. Explore opportunities with local tertiary institutions to develop programs to encourage women into male-dominated workplaces.	Year 2	City Works and Assets
20	Support best practice process in the recruitment and retention stages of the employment cycle.	Develop a resource which outlines important gender considerations in relation to three key employment stages: 1. recruitment 2. retention 3. promotion This resource is to be launched and promoted across the organisation. Research the development of a Yarra recruitment website which is the 'one stop shop' for all internal and external recruitment, leadership and training policies, procedures and information. Explore the opportunity to pilot a de-identified recruitment application process for all internal and external applications.	Years 1, 2 and 3	People and Culture

Action plan (continued)

No.	What are we trying to achieve?	How are we going to get there?	Due	Lead
-----	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----	------

Measurement and reporting

21	Improve data collection and reporting around gender equity issues.	Source and report annually to Executive with relevant gender specific human resources workforce data, to inform where improvements are occurring and also outline areas for review.	Years 1 and 2	People and Culture
----	--------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------	--------------------

Stakeholder engagement

22	Promote the key focus areas, actions and structure of the new Gender Equity Strategy.	Strategy launched and promoted at key leadership meetings, including SMT+.	August 2016	Executive
23	Increase awareness of and engage with gender equity issues and projects.	<p>Develop an internal communications plan to support and promote the implementation of the Gender Equity Strategy.</p> <p>Convene Yarra's Gender Equity Strategy advocates to work on key projects, as part of the strategy implementation.</p> <p>Develop internal training/information sessions for different life stages – for example managing young children, supporting ageing family members, transition to retirement.</p> <p>Explore relevant opportunities to provide input into the employee lifecycle initiatives.</p> <p>Develop a Yarra Gender Equity Statement to be launched and utilised across all relevant internal and external communications – including email signatures, social media, key policies and events.</p>	Year 1	Advocacy and Engagement
24	Strengthen positive and diverse imagery and messaging of men and women in the workplace, within internal and external communications.	<p>Stock photos updated to include positive images of women and men, including non-stereotypical images in the workplace and community, and highlight gender equitable and respectful workplaces, for all future internal and external Council communications.</p> <p>Advocacy and Engagement team to provide communications related actions, which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • media messaging • language protocols around gender and women and stereotypes. <p>Develop an organisational resource to then be promoted and utilised across the organisation.</p>		

No.	What are we trying to achieve?	How are we going to get there?	Due	Lead
-----	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----	------

Strategy and business case

25	Engage with local service providers on the prevention of violence against women (PVAW) and gender equity issues.	<p>Complete the actions identified in Council's Northern Region Prevention of Violence Against Women Strategy Report 2013 – 2016.</p> <p>Continue to support, endorse and work collaboratively with the Northern Region PVAW Network, local and regional prevention of violence against women initiatives.</p> <p>Explore other opportunities to develop partnerships with local organisations to develop community-based communication strategies to highlight respectful relationship and gender inclusive cultures.</p>	Years 1, 2 and 3	People and Culture
----	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------	--------------------

Supply chain

26	Increase consideration of gender around all Council's procurement processes.	Work with the Engagement and Inclusion team to oversee the Employee Diversity and Inclusion Strategy commitments as part of the Procurement strategy.	Year 1	Governance
----	------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------	------------

Talent pipeline

27	Ensure a gender-balanced process in all aspects of recruitment, panels, committees and leadership opportunities via secondment and acting positions.	Develop and implement an 'if not, why not' Yarra policy commitment in relation to all aspects of recruitment and leadership opportunities for women.	Year 1	People and Culture
----	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------	--------------------

YARRA CITY COUNCIL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Yarra City Council supports flexible and accessible working arrangements for all.

This includes people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse people, young people, older people, women and people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer.

We draw pride and strength from our diversity, remain open to new approaches and actively foster an inclusive workplace that celebrates the contribution made by all our people.



Yarra City Council
PO Box 168
Richmond VIC 3121

T (03) 9205 5555

F (03) 8417 6666

Interpreter Services (03) 9280 1940

TTY 133 677 then (03) 9205 5555

E info@yarracity.vic.gov.au

W www.yarracity.vic.gov.au

August 2016