

2026 Progress report for: ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL

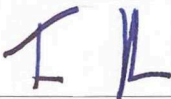
Cover page

Organisation name	ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL
Total number of employees (and full-time equivalent FTE), as at 30 June 2025	Total employees: 198 Total FTE: 132.9
Response rate to employee experience survey	22%
Contextual information	
Location (metropolitan, regional or rural. If other, please specify)	SMALL RURAL

Attestation by head of organisation (required)

I confirm that:

- ☒ I am the head of organisation (CEO or equivalent).
- ☒ I have reviewed and approved the submission of this progress report on behalf of my organisation (as named above). I attest to providing truthful and accurate information.
- ☒ I attest that my organisation has completed all relevant gender impact assessments under the Gender Equality Act 2020, or I have explained why not in the comment box below.

Any comments?	
Name	DR. TIM HARRISON
Role title	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Signed	
Date	13-01-2026.

Step 1: Reporting on gender impact assessments (GIAs)

Section 1.1 Confirming GIA exemptions (required)

If you have not listed any GIAs, please choose one or more permitted reason:

- ☐ Reporting on the GIA(s) would make the progress report an exempt document. This is within the meaning of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.
- ☐ Reporting on the GIA(s) would result in a disclosure prohibited by a different Act.
- ☐ Reporting on the GIA(s) would reveal confidential information.
- ☐ Your organisation had no policies, programs or services requiring a GIA. This is under the parameters of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.
- ☒ None of these apply (go to 1.2).

Section 1.2 Describing policies, programs and services subject to a GIA (required and recommended)

Ref #	A: Title (required)	B: Subject (required)	C: Description of the policy, program or service (required)	D: Status (required)	E: Description of gendered impacts (recommended)
1.	Ararat City Tennis Lighting, Access & Facilities upgrade project	Program	This project will upgrade the lighting, access and facilities at the Ararat City Tennis Club to make it safer, more accessible and more welcoming for everyone. Improved lighting will support safe use during early mornings and evenings, while better access and updated facilities will help more people of all ages and abilities enjoy the club and get involved in local tennis.	New	- Safety at night: better lighting can help women, girls and gender-diverse people feel safer when using the club during early mornings or evenings, times when poor lighting can make people feel unsafe or discourage them from playing altogether. - Participation opportunities: Good lighting and accessible pathways can help more parents or carers (often women) feel comfortable letting kids participate in training or games outside daylight hours. - Accessibility for all: Improved access (like safe pathways, ramps or better parking) can benefit our older community, pregnant people, and people with prams or mobility needs — groups who may otherwise avoid using the facilities. - Encouraging female and diverse participation: Sports clubs are sometimes still male-dominated spaces. Safer, more welcoming, well-lit facilities can help attract and retain more women, girls and gender-diverse people as players, volunteers, or spectators.
2.	Audit & Risk Committee Charter	Policy	The Audit and Risk Committee Charter sets out how Council's Audit and Risk Committee operates. It explains the Committee's role in overseeing financial management, risk governance, and compliance to help Council make sound, transparent decisions. The Charter outlines the responsibilities of Committee members and supports good practice, accountability and strong internal controls across Council's activities.	Up for review	The Audit and Risk Committee Charter is not a policy, for public use. However, we recognised that membership and participation should reflect equity, diversity and inclusion principles — so the Committee is representative and accessible for qualified people of all genders and backgrounds — something that the policy lacked.
3.	Child Safety Policy & Procedure	Policy	The policy endorses Council's strong commitment to the safety and well-being of all children and young people. It sets out clear child safeguarding practices to prevent abuse and harm, while providing guidance and a framework for all employees.	Up for review	We recognised that children and young people experience safety and wellbeing differently based on their gender identities and roles. For example, girls, boys, and gender-diverse children may face distinct risks and types of abuse.

				Councillors, contractors, and volunteers to actively create and maintain a child-safe culture.		By emphasising diversity and inclusion, the policy works to ensure all children—regardless of gender—feel valued, respected, and equally protected. It helps create a safe space where gender-based vulnerabilities are acknowledged and addressed, promoting equitable access to support and resources for every child.
4.	Council Plan 2025-2029	Program		The Council Plan sets the strategic direction and objectives of the Council, and strategies to achieve these for the next four years. The Council Plan also includes indicators for monitoring the achievement of these objectives and descriptions of initiatives and priorities for services, infrastructure and amenity.	New	Impacts considered include: - How different genders access and use Council services, facilities and spaces. - The impacts of caring responsibilities, which often fall more heavily on women, on access to community services, transport and infrastructure. - How Council decisions can help address barriers to economic participation for women and gender-diverse people. - Making sure all genders have an equal voice in shaping local priorities.
5.	Financial Hardship Policy	Policy		The purpose of this policy is to provide Council with a framework to provide financial relief to ratepayers who need assistance to pay their rate arrears within a practical, reasonable time frame. The policy aims to provide ratepayers with a clear and transparent understanding of options and assistance available if facing financial hardship.	New	Financial stress affects people differently depending on their gender roles, responsibilities and life circumstances. - Caring roles: Women are more likely to be single parents or primary carers for children or family members, which can increase their risk of financial hardship. - Family violence: Women experiencing family violence may rely on the policy to stay connected to their home and community while they get back on their feet. - Access barriers: Complex application processes or stigma around asking for help can be harder for women juggling multiple responsibilities, and for gender-diverse people who may not feel safe or supported. - Economic inequality: Women generally have lower average incomes and less financial security than men, which can mean they are more likely to need hardship support — especially during job loss or unexpected life events. Recognising these impacts helps Council make sure the policy is flexible, easy to access and supportive for everyone — so that no one misses out on help because of their gender or caring role.
6.	Tatayoon Oval Upgrade Project	Program		The Tatayoon Oval experiences significant drainage issues and a dilapidated irrigation system. The oval requires an unsustainable amount of volunteer effort and regular community financial contributions to maintain to required standards. This project will upgrade the drainage and irrigation systems and resurface the oval.	New	While the upgrade focuses on drainage, irrigation and resurfacing, these improvements can still have important gendered impacts by supporting better and more consistent playing conditions for everyone. - Encouraging participation: A well-maintained oval benefits all players, including women, girls, and gender-diverse people, by providing a safer, higher-quality surface for training and games. - Reducing injury risks: Improved turf conditions help lower the chance of injuries, which is important for encouraging ongoing participation across all genders and ages. - Supporting inclusive sport: Better playing conditions can help sustain local women's and junior teams who often face limited resources, supporting broader community involvement.

					Maximising usability: a durable and resilient playing surface can withstand increased use without deterioration, allowing more teams and community groups to access the oval safely and consistently. While the upgrade doesn't change facilities directly, it still plays a role in promoting safe and equitable access to quality sports opportunities for everyone.
7.	Rates Collection Policy	Policy	The purpose of the policy is to provide Council with a framework for the collection and administration of rates and charges. The policy aims to provide ratepayers with a clear and transparent understanding of options and assistance available for the repayment of rates and charges.	New	- Financial vulnerability: Women, especially single mothers, elderly women living alone, and those experiencing family violence, may face greater challenges in paying rates on time due to lower incomes or unstable financial situations. - Caring responsibilities: Women often juggle multiple caring roles, which can affect their capacity to manage rate payments, particularly if they are the primary household managers. - Access to information and support: Communication about rate payments and hardship options may not always reach or be accessible to all genders equally, potentially disadvantaging those less familiar with financial systems or who have less time to engage. - Risk of penalty: If the policy's enforcement is inflexible, it can disproportionately affect women facing hardship, potentially leading to additional financial stress or loss of housing security

Section 1.3 Describing actions taken as a result of a GIA (required and recommended)

Ref #	F: Were actions taken as a result of the GIA? (required)	G: Describe the actions taken as a result of the GIA in order to: - Meet the needs of people of different genders; and/or - Promote gender equality; and/or - Address gender inequality. If you did not take action, write N/A here and explain why in (H). (required)	H: If you did not take action, explain why. If you did take action, describe it in (G) and write N/A here. (required)	I: Describe: How and why intersectionality was considered (or not) (required)	J: Describe any actions taken specifically designed to address intersectional inequalities (compounded gender inequalities)? (recommended)
1.	Yes (go to column G)	To meet the needs of CALD community members, people with disabilities, older people, and all genders, Council: - Installed brighter, uniform lighting to improve visibility and safety. - Upgraded paths with smooth, even surfaces and gentle gradients for easier navigation. - Added ramps and clear circulation areas to enhance accessibility. - Ensured entrances and key areas are well-lit and clearly marked, supporting wayfinding and a welcoming environment for all users.	n/a	We considered how improved lighting and better access paths benefited not just women and girls, but also older people, people with disabilities, and culturally diverse community members — all of whom faced unique barriers to using the tennis facilities. This ensured the project supports equitable access and a welcoming environment for everyone.	Council has implemented actions that recognise the ways gender inequalities intersect with age, disability, and cultural background to create compounded barriers to participation in sport. Specifically: - Inclusive infrastructure upgrades: Brighter lighting, smooth paths, ramps, and clearly marked entrances improve safety and accessibility for women, girls, and gender-diverse people who may also be older, have a disability, or come from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. - Enhanced participation opportunities: By reducing physical and safety barriers, these upgrades support ongoing engagement in tennis for multiple groups who may otherwise face compounded disadvantages.

					- Promoting equitable access: The improvements ensure that facilities are welcoming and usable by everyone, acknowledging that some participants may experience multiple, overlapping barriers to inclusion. Through these actions, Council has worked to reduce intersectional inequalities, ensuring that upgrades benefit not only women and girls but also those who face additional challenges due to age, ability, or cultural background. - Ensured committee membership encourages diversity across gender, age, cultural background, and disability to bring a range of perspectives to governance. - Promoted inclusive recruitment and selection processes to avoid bias and barriers that might exclude gender-diverse or minority candidates.
2.	Yes (go to column G)	- Prepared a clear and concise statement committing to gender balance and diversity in Committee membership and oversight, acknowledging support for Council's compliance with the Gender Equality Act 2020 - Shared the draft section with relevant internal stakeholders (Governance team, Legal, Executive) for feedback. - Inserted the approved gender equality section into the existing Audit and Risk Committee Charter document. - Notified current and future Committee members about the new gender equality commitment. - Encouraged inclusive recruitment and awareness in Committee operations aligned with the new clause.	n/a	The GIA acknowledged intersectionality by recognising that people's experiences of governance and risk oversight can be influenced by multiple factors beyond gender alone, including age, cultural background, disability, and gender identity. While the Charter mainly guides internal Council governance, considering intersectionality ensures that diverse voices and perspectives are included in committee membership and decision-making processes. This helps promote equitable representation and prevents unintended exclusion of underrepresented groups. By factoring in intersectional identities, the GIA supports a more inclusive and effective governance framework that reflects the diversity of the community Council serves.	- The GIA includes a commitment to creating culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and young people, recognising their unique rights and experiences. - It explicitly acknowledges and supports the needs of children and young people with disabilities, ensuring information and reporting pathways are accessible. - It recognises the importance of being inclusive and respectful of children and young people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and gender diverse. - Staff and volunteers are required to undertake training that covers cultural safety, inclusion, and awareness of how multiple forms of disadvantage can increase a child's risk of harm or being unheard. - Guidance and procedures encourage staff to consider
3.	Yes (go to column G)	- Updated the policy - to recognise gender diversity and intersectional risks explicitly. - Improved communication and awareness - by developing child-friendly, inclusive materials. - Strengthened data and monitoring - by setting up systems to collect anonymised child safety data. - Supported the policy with staff training.	n/a	An intersectional approach was taken because we know that children and young people don't all have the same experiences or risks. Factors like gender, cultural background, disability, sexual orientation, or being part of an Aboriginal community can combine to create extra barriers or vulnerabilities. The policy recognises that some children and young people face multiple layers of disadvantage or discrimination that can increase their risk of harm or make it harder to speak up or get help. By considering these overlapping factors, the policy sets clear expectations for inclusive practices, culturally safe environments, accessible communication, and staff awareness training — so that all children and young people feel safe, valued and supported, regardless of their background or identity.	- The policy includes a commitment to creating culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and young people, recognising their unique rights and experiences. - It explicitly acknowledges and supports the needs of children and young people with disabilities, ensuring information and reporting pathways are accessible. - It recognises the importance of being inclusive and respectful of children and young people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and gender diverse. - Staff and volunteers are required to undertake training that covers cultural safety, inclusion, and awareness of how multiple forms of disadvantage can increase a child's risk of harm or being unheard. - Guidance and procedures encourage staff to consider

4.	No (go to column H)	n/a	The community feedback on the Council Plan 2025-29 confirmed that it does not discriminate or is likely to result in gender inequality	When we reviewed the Council Plan through a Gender Impact Assessment, we considered intersectionality by looking at how the Plan's priorities and goals could affect people differently depending on their gender, cultural background, age, disability, income, or other factors that can overlap to create extra barriers. As part of this community feedback was sought and reviewed. The feedback showed that the Council Plan's focus areas are broad and inclusive and are not likely to discriminate or result in gender inequality or compounded disadvantage. Based on this, it was agreed that while intersectionality was considered in the assessment, no additional actions were required at this stage because the Plan itself is designed to benefit the whole community equitably.	While the community feedback indicated the Council Plan is unlikely to create gender inequality or compounded disadvantage, some practical steps were still taken to ensure intersectional needs remain front of mind: - Inclusive language was used throughout the Plan to reflect the diversity of the community and acknowledge different lived experiences. - The Plan commits to actions and priorities that promote equitable access to services, facilities and opportunities for all people, regardless of gender, culture, age, ability or background. - Community engagement processes for the Plan were designed to reach a wide range of voices, including people who might face multiple barriers to participation. - Ongoing monitoring and review of the Plan will continue to consider gendered and intersectional impacts as actions are delivered over time. These steps help make sure the Council Plan stays fair, responsive and inclusive — even if the initial assessment found a low risk of inequality.	language, communication styles, and different cultural or family dynamics when supporting children and responding to concerns.
5.	Yes (go to column G)	1. Made the policy and forms easier to understand and use — updated the wording, translated information, and offered different ways to apply (online, phone, in person). Trained staff to handle applications with care. 2. Gave staff training on gender equality and cultural safety — so they are confident, respectful, and ready to help everyone who comes to them.	n/a	We know financial stress doesn't affect everyone the same way. Gender often overlaps with other factors like caring responsibilities, family violence, cultural background, disability, age or visa status — all of which can compound hardship. When reviewing the policy, we looked at how these overlapping factors could make it harder for some people to access support, ask for help or stay on top of their rates. This included considering the experiences of single mothers, carers, women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, older women, and people with limited English or digital skills.	- Flexible payment options and tailored support pathways were strengthened, so people with caring responsibilities, survivors of family violence, or those juggling multiple low-paid jobs can get help that fits their circumstances. - Staff were given clearer guidance to handle conversations about hardship with sensitivity — including how to identify when other factors, like family violence, may be at play. - Community partnerships and outreach were included to help reach people who may not usually engage with Council directly — like migrant women, refugees or people with limited networks.	

6.	No (go to column H)	n/a	No gendered risks were identified.	We looked at how the condition and usability of the oval might impact who feels comfortable and able to participate. For example, safe, well-maintained playing surfaces benefit everyone but are especially important for encouraging participation by women and girls, older players, and junior players who might otherwise be excluded if facilities are in poor condition. While the project scope is limited to surface and irrigation works, the assessment recognised that improved playing conditions can help reduce barriers for groups who already face multiple challenges to participating in community sport, supporting fairer access and inclusion.	- The resurfacing was designed to improve safety and playability for all user groups, with an emphasis on creating an even, well-drained surface that supports players of different ages, skill levels and physical abilities. - Planning and delivery included engaging with local clubs to make sure the upgrades benefit junior teams and women's teams — groups that can be more affected by poor facilities or unsafe playing conditions. - Consideration was given to how improved playing conditions can encourage broader community use, supporting participation by people who may have previously felt excluded or unable to use the oval safely — for example, older community members or women returning to sport.	- The policy was updated to strengthen hardship provisions, so people with complex circumstances can access flexible payment plans and support that suit their needs. - Plain language was prioritised to help people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds understand their rights and options. - Clear referral pathways were reinforced so staff can connect ratepayers to additional support if needed. - Staff training was emphasised so frontline teams know how to handle hardship discussions with care, confidentiality and an understanding of how gender and other factors can affect someone's ability to pay.
7.	Yes (go to column G)	1. Flexible Payment Options & Clear Communication: Trained frontline staff to provide clear, consistent information and to handle payment and hardship enquiries with care and empathy.	n/a	Gender can overlap with other factors like age, income level, caring responsibilities, disability, cultural background, or visa status — all of which can make managing household bills more challenging. In reviewing the policy, we looked at how these overlapping factors can compound financial stress. For example, single mothers, older women, people from migrant or refugee backgrounds, or those living with disability may face extra barriers to understanding their options, accessing support or negotiating payment plans. By considering intersectionality, we were able to check that the policy's processes — like payment arrangements, hardship assistance and communication — are clear, flexible and accessible to people with diverse needs and life experiences. This helps make sure the approach to rates collection is fair, supportive and doesn't unintentionally worsen financial disadvantage for those already facing multiple challenges.	- The policy was updated to strengthen hardship provisions, so people with complex circumstances can access flexible payment plans and support that suit their needs. - Plain language was prioritised to help people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds understand their rights and options. - Clear referral pathways were reinforced so staff can connect ratepayers to additional support if needed. - Staff training was emphasised so frontline teams know how to handle hardship discussions with care, confidentiality and an understanding of how gender and other factors can affect someone's ability to pay.	- The policy was updated to strengthen hardship provisions, so people with complex circumstances can access flexible payment plans and support that suit their needs. - Plain language was prioritised to help people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds understand their rights and options. - Clear referral pathways were reinforced so staff can connect ratepayers to additional support if needed. - Staff training was emphasised so frontline teams know how to handle hardship discussions with care, confidentiality and an understanding of how gender and other factors can affect someone's ability to pay.

Step 2: Reporting on progress against the indicators

Section 2.1 Describing progress against the workplace gender equality indicators (required and recommended)

K: Indicator	L: Progress data (required)	M: Additional progress data (recommended)	N: Has progress been made? (required)	O: Explain how the data does (or does not) demonstrate progress. (required)
1	Critical performance measures Gender composition of the duty holder organisation: 2021: 51% (W), 49% (M) 2023: 42.8% (W), 57.2% (M) 2025: 49.03% (W), 50.97% (M), 0.65% (SD) Gender composition of part-time workers in the duty holder organisation: 2021: 30.2% (W), 7.8% (M) 2023: 36.6% (W), 8.4% (M) 2025: 32.9% (W), 1.3% (M) Gender composition of senior leaders in the duty holder organisation: 2021: 61.1% (W), 38.8% (M) 2023: 57.9% (W), 42.1% (M) 2025: 60% (W), 40% (M)	Including data from 2021 was more difficult when analysing the gender composition of senior leaders, as the reporting template used that year differed from the formats used in 2023 and 2025.	Yes	Overall, the data shows positive movement towards a more balanced workforce. After women's representation dipped in 2023 (42.8% women, 57.2% men), the 2025 results bring us back close to parity with 49.03% women, 50.97% men, and 0.65% self-described, which also reflects progress in recognising gender diversity across the organisation. At the senior leadership level, women have consistently held a strong share of roles (61.1% in 2021, 57.9% in 2023, and 60% in 2025), showing stability and inclusivity in leadership representation. Part-time work tells a slightly different story. While women's participation increased between 2021 and 2023, it dropped to 32.9% in 2025, and men's participation fell sharply to just 1.3%. This indicates that part-time and flexible work continues to be largely taken up by women, which reflects ongoing gendered patterns in the workplace.
2	Critical performance measures Gender composition of the duty holder organisation's governing body: 2021: 28.6% = W, 71.4% = M 2023: 28.6% = W, 71.4% = M 2025: 30% = W, 70% = M	While Council cannot directly undertake recruitment or promotional campaigns for increasing female representation, it continues to monitor the gender composition closely and supports equitable processes within its governance framework. Council remains committed to transparency and will continue to report on this indicator annually, providing a clear picture of progress despite the challenges inherent in influencing elected body demographics.	Yes	The gender composition of the organisation's governing body has remained relatively stable, with women representing 29% of members in 2021 and 2023, increasing to 30% in 2025. While this shift is modest, it represents a positive step towards greater inclusivity. It is important to note that the governing body comprises only seven councillors, all of whom are elected by the community. This limits Council's ability to directly influence candidate diversity, meaning changes in gender balance are shaped largely by broader social and political factors beyond Council's direct control. That said, Council recognises the important role it can play in influencing longer-term change. Through the initiatives we deliver internally and across our projects, programs, and services, Council can help shape community attitudes, promote inclusion, and support greater participation and leadership by women over time. The continued engagement and representation of women within the governing body provides a strong foundation on which future progress can build and sits alongside Council's broader commitment to advancing gender equality wherever it is within our control to do so.
3	Critical performance measures Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group: 2001: 1.17.5% (b/w M&W) 2. 1.2% (b/w M&W) 3. no data 4. 1.6% (b/w M&W) 5. 2.2% (b/w M&W) 6. no data 7. no data 8. 3.2% (b/w M&W) - Total: 2.79% 2023: 1.14.75% (b/w M&W) 2. 4.8% (b/w M&W) 3. no data 4. -35.16% (b/w M&W)	In addition to the pay gap figures, the organisation has taken several steps that support progress under Indicator 3. A comprehensive gender pay audit has been undertaken during the reporting period to identify pay disparities and inform targeted actions to close gaps. Several job evaluation reviews have been completed to ensure roles are classified and remunerated fairly and consistently. Flexible work options have also been expanded to support equitable access to career	Yes	The data for Indicator 3 shows there has been some progress towards reducing the gender pay gap, while also highlighting areas where disparities persist and further action is required. Across the supplementary measures, the median base salary and median total remuneration pay gaps between women and men have narrowed over time. By 2023 and 2025, these gaps are close to zero and, in some cases, favour women. This suggests that, at the middle of the pay distribution, pay equity outcomes are improving and that initiatives such as pay audits, classification reviews, and more consistent remuneration practices may be having a positive impact for the broader workforce. The mean base salary pay gap has also reduced since 2021, shifting from a positive gap to a small negative gap by 2025. While fluctuations remain, this indicates progress in addressing broader structural pay differences across roles and classifications. A positive development in this reporting period is the inclusion of self-described and "prefer not to say" gender categories, which enables Council to begin capturing more intersectional pay equity data. As this data has only recently been collected, meaningful comparison over time is not yet possible. However, its inclusion establishes a baseline for future reporting and will allow Council to better understand and monitor pay outcomes for employees of all gender identities going forward.

	5. 14.79% (b/w M&W) 6. no data 7. 3.3% (b/w M&W) 8. 8.83% (b/w M&W) All occupations: -2.18% 2025: 1.9.2% (b/w M&W) 2. 2.8% (b/w M&W) 3. 20.7% (b/w M&W); -23.56% (b/w M&S) 4. -2.2% (b/w M&W) 5. -14.56% (b/w M&W) 6. no data 7. no data 8. -10.7% (b/w M&W) All occupations: 1.34% (b/w M&W) -16.25 (b/w M&S) Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap: 2021: 12.07% 2023: 16.27% 2025: 24.12% Supplementary measures Mean base salary pay gap: 2021: 1.67% (b/w M&W) 2023: -3.46% (b/w M&W) 2025: -0.64% (b/w M&W) Median total remuneration pay gap: 2021: -21.02% (b/w M&S) 2023: -2.46% (b/w M&W) 2025: -0.72% (b/w M&W) Median base salary pay gap: 2021: -27.77% (b/w M&S) 2023: 4.98% (b/w M&W) 2025: -2.11% (b/w M&W) 2025: -2.10% (b/w M&W) 2025: -31.41% (b/w M&S)	progression and pay outcomes, particularly for employees with caring responsibilities. In addition, changes to the organisational structure have created clearer pathways for advancement and more transparent salary banding.		At the same time, the data highlights ongoing challenges. Mean total remuneration pay gaps vary across occupation groups, and the senior leader gender pay gap has increased, rising from 12.07% in 2021 to 24.12% in 2025. This suggests that pay equity improvements have not yet been realised at the most senior levels, where higher salaries and discretionary components can widen gaps. The available data also indicates that self-described employees experience significant negative pay gaps compared to men, reinforcing the importance of continuing to build robust, intersectional datasets and applying targeted actions as this information becomes more reliable over time.
4	Critical performance measures Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment: 2021: 8% (W); 0% (M) 2023: 5.3% (W); 3.8% (M) 2025: 0% Number of formal reports of sexual harassment: 2021: 0 2023: 0 2025: 1 (M) Supplementary measures Participants who said they reported sexual harassment: 2021: insufficient data 2023: insufficient data 2025: insufficient data Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint: 2021: insufficient data 2023: insufficient data 2025: insufficient data Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint:	Although no formal complaints have been received, the organisation continues to reinforce a clear zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Policies and procedures are in place to support a safe workplace, and staff are regularly reminded of their rights and responsibilities through induction and ongoing compliance training focused on preventing and responding to sexual harassment. In addition, the organisation actively participates in broader awareness and prevention initiatives, such as the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign, to promote respect and gender equality across the workplace and the wider community.	No	The available data for Indicator 4 shows that no formal reports of sexual harassment were received in either 2023 or 2021. While at face value this could suggest a workplace free from sexual harassment, the absence of anonymous experience data and the lack of supplementary information mean that it is not possible to reliably conclude that no incidents occurred. It is widely recognised that underreporting is common with workplace sexual harassment, often due to concerns about confidentiality, fear of repercussions, or a lack of confidence in reporting processes. Without anonymous experience data or feedback on barriers to reporting, there is limited evidence to demonstrate whether the absence of complaints reflects a genuinely safe workplace culture or a reluctance to report. In this context, the data does not currently demonstrate clear progress. Instead, it underlines the need for improved mechanisms to measure and encourage safe reporting and to ensure that all staff feel confident that complaints will be handled appropriately and sensitively.

	2021: insufficient data 2023: insufficient data 2025: insufficient data Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint: 2021: no data 2023: no data 2025: 100%	Council is also a member of the CoRE Alliance, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to collective action on gender equity and the prevention of violence and harassment in all its forms.			
5	Critical performance measures Gender composition of recruited employees: 2021: 58.54% W, 41.46% M 2023: 44.44% W, 55.56% M 2025: 53.66% W, 46.34% M Gender composition of employees who were promoted: 2021: 50% W, 50% M 2023: 54.17% W, 45.83% M 2025: 52.94% W, 47.06% M Perceptions of recruitment, by gender: 2021: 56% W, 50% M 2023: 68.4% W, 38.5% M 2025: 70% W, 47.4% M Perceptions of promotion, by gender: 2021: 56% W, 50% M 2023: 60.5% W, 35% M 2025: 56.7% W, 2.36% M	Job advertisements now use more inclusive, gender-neutral language and highlight flexibility, helping attract a broader and more diverse range of candidates.	Yes		Overall, there has been some progress. Recruitment has moved toward gender balance and women have consistently represented more than half of promotions since 2023. However, perception data shows mixed results, with women reporting more positive views while men's confidence declined and a notable proportion of staff choosing 'prefer not to say.' The lack of 2025 perception data also make it difficult to fully assess longer-term change.
6	Critical performance measures Average weeks of parental leave, by gender: 2021: 25.33 (W), 2 (M), 2 (SD) 2023: 51 (W), 4 (M) 2025: 11 (W) Uptake of flexible work, by gender: 2021: 12.26% (W), 4.90% (M) 2023: 23.93% (W), 16.15% (M) 2025: 22.3% (W), 13.39% (M) Perceptions of flexible work culture, by gender: 2021: 78% Women, 86% Men 2023: 89.5% (W), 61.5% (M) 2025: 80% (W), 78.9% (M) Supplementary measures Gender composition of parental leave takers: 2021 42.86% (W), 28.57% (M), 28.57% (SD) 2023: 66.67% (W), 33.33% (M) 2025: 100% (W) Gender gap in carer's leave: 2021: no data 2023: no data 2025: 21.49% (W), 22.32% (M)	In addition to quantitative measures, Council has made progress through policy improvements, increased manager capability, and growing cultural acceptance of flexible work across genders. While some data sets are still emerging, particularly for self-described employees, the availability of new measures such as carer's leave data in 2025 establishes a stronger baseline for future reporting. Together, these indicators suggest that progress is occurring not only in uptake, but also in the systems and culture that support more equitable caring and flexible work outcomes.	Yes		The data shows mixed but encouraging progress in relation to parental leave, flexible work, and workplace culture, while also highlighting areas where gendered patterns continue. Uptake of flexible work arrangements has increased significantly for both women and men since 2021. Women's uptake rose from 12.26% in 2021 to over 22% in 2025, while men's uptake increased from 4.90% to 13.39% over the same period. Although women continue to access flexible work at higher rates, the narrowing gap between genders suggests growing acceptance of flexibility for all employees and a gradual shift away from flexibility being seen as primarily a women's issue. Perceptions of a supportive flexible work culture have also become more balanced over time. In 2021, men reported higher positive perceptions than women. By 2023, women's perceptions increased significantly while men's declined, and by 2025 perceptions were closely aligned (80% women, 78.9% men). This convergence suggests progress towards a more consistent and shared experience of flexible work across genders. Parental leave data presents a more complex picture. While the gender composition of parental leave takers remains predominantly women, particularly in 2025, earlier data shows that men and self-described employees have accessed parental leave in previous reporting periods. Average weeks of parental leave taken by men increased between 2021 and 2023, indicating some movement towards more shared caring responsibilities. However, the 2025 data reflects low overall uptake and highlights the continued concentration of parental leave among women. The availability of carer's leave data in 2025 for the first time represents progress in itself. The relatively similar usage rates between women and men suggest that caring responsibilities outside of parental leave may be more evenly shared, although this is an area that will benefit from continued monitoring over time. Overall, the data demonstrates clear progress in the normalisation and uptake of flexible work across genders and more balanced perceptions of flexible work culture. At the same time, parental leave continues to reflect traditional gender patterns, indicating the need for ongoing action to encourage and support more equitable sharing of caring responsibilities.
7	Critical performance measures Occupational gender segregation: 2021: 1.55.56% (W), 44.44% (M) 2.75% (W), 25% (M) 3.3.57% (W), 96.43% (M) 4.68.52% (W), 31.48% (M)	Council has policies and practices in place to support equal employment opportunities. We review position descriptions to make sure they're written in gender-neutral language, and we	Yes		The occupational gender segregation data demonstrates both progress and continuing challenges. Overall workforce composition moved back towards parity in 2025 after an imbalance in 2023, suggesting improvement at an organisational level. The inclusion of self-described gender data in 2025 also represents progress in capturing more inclusive workforce information and establishing a baseline for future reporting. At an occupation-group level, some traditionally gender-segregated areas show signs of improvement, including increased gender diversity and movement towards more balanced representation. These shifts align

	5. 88.10% (W), 11.90% (M) 6. no data 7. 100% (M) 8. 11.11% (W), 88.89% (M) All occupations: 50.96% (W), 49.04% (M) 2023: 1. 40% (W), 60% (M) 2. 68.97% (W), 31.03 (M) 3. 100% (M) 4. 73.68% (W), 26.32% (M) 5. 92.58% (W), 7.41% (M) 6. no data 7. 16.67% (W), 83.33% (M) 8. 13.73% (W), 86.27% (M) All occupations: 42.77% (W), 57.23% (M) 2025: 1. 50% (W), 50% (M) 2. 72.73% (W), 27.27% (M) 3. 19.05% (W), 76.19% (M), 4.76% (SD) 4. 68.75% (W), 31.25 (M) 5. 88% (W), 12% (M) 6. no data 7. 100% (M) 8. 14.29% (W), 85.71% (M) All occupations: 49.03% (W), 50.32% (M), 0.65 (SD)	provide training for selection panels to reduce the risk of unconscious bias. We also continue to offer flexible working options, which can help broaden the appeal of different roles to a wider range of people. While these measures alone won't remove all the structural barriers that shape occupational choices, they do help create fairer opportunities and a more supportive culture for change over time.	with Council's actions under the GEAP, such as inclusive recruitment practices, review of position descriptions and advertising, and efforts to promote broader career pathways. However, several occupation groups remain strongly gender-segregated, particularly in roles that have historically attracted predominantly women or men. This highlights the need for continued, targeted action through workforce planning, attraction strategies, and long-term capability development to reduce occupational segregation over time. Together, the data shows that while progress is being made, sustained effort will be required to achieve more equitable gender representation across all occupation groups.
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*Indicators (column K)

- Gender composition of all levels of the workforce
- Gender composition of the governing body
- Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
- Sexual harassment in the workplace
- Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace
- 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
- Gendered segregation within the workplace

Section 2.2 Describing factors limiting and contributing to progress (required)

P: Indicator	Q: Did any of the factors listed below limit or contribute to your progress?*(required)	R: Explain how any factor(s) limited or contributed to your progress. If 'none' is selected, write N/A and move to (S)	S: List the strategies implemented that contributed to or aligned with the indicator. (required)
1	☐ None ☒ a ☒ b ☐ c ☒ d ☒ e ☐ f ☒ g	a. As a small rural council, our total workforce is relatively small (our FTE is currently only 132.94), so even a few staff changes can noticeably affect our overall gender composition figures each year. b. Some roles, particularly in outdoor, technical or traditionally male-dominated fields, continue to attract more men than women, which impacts our ability to maintain an even gender balance across the whole organisation. d. Budget constraints mean limited funding is available to support dedicated gender equality programs beyond core workforce management activities. e. With a small HR team and limited staff dedicated to diversity and inclusion, ongoing operational demands can restrict the time and focus available to progress gender equity work. Additionally, regulatory compliance and mandatory reporting requirements take priority, which can limit capacity for voluntary or proactive initiatives. g. Despite these challenges, Council continue to make genuine efforts to maintain fair and transparent recruitment, offer flexible work arrangements where possible, and monitor our workforce data to identify areas for improvement.	- We maintain fair and transparent recruitment processes, with position descriptions checked prior to advertising to make sure they use inclusive, gender-neutral wording. - We offer flexible working arrangements wherever possible — including part-time work, flexible start and finish times, work from home, 9-day fortnight, and job-sharing — to help attract and retain a diverse mix of staff. - Our senior staff and selection panels receive training and guidance on how to recognise and reduce unconscious bias when recruiting and promoting staff. - Human Resources regularly monitor workforce data to keep track of trends and identify any areas where improvements might be needed. - Staff have equal access to training and development opportunities, so everyone has a fair chance to build skills and move into leadership roles if they choose.

2	☐ None ☒ a ☒ b ☒ c ☒ d ☐ e ☐ f ☒ g	b. The make-up of the governing body is determined by the community through Local Government elections, which limits Council's direct influence over the gender balance of elected members. c. Council must comply with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>, which sets out the democratic process for elections and does not allow Councils to directly encourage or endorse candidates. d. Within available resources, Council focuses on providing clear information about the role of Councillors and supporting all elected members once they take office. g. Council makes genuine efforts to maintain an inclusive and respectful environment that supports the participation and retention of Councillors of all genders.	• We ensure that clear, transparent information about the role and responsibilities of councillors is available to the community to support informed participation in local elections. • We promote an inclusive and respectful workplace culture to help support all councillors once elected. • We monitor and publicly report the gender composition of the governing body to remain accountable and transparent. • We provide induction, training and ongoing professional development opportunities for councillors to help build capability and confidence for all members, regardless of gender. • We maintain policies and codes of conduct that set clear expectations around respectful behaviour and equal participation in decision-making. Because councils are limited in what they can do to directly influence who stands for election, these actions focus on creating an environment that supports diversity once people are elected and makes council a safe and respectful place for everyone to contribute.	• We ensure that clear, transparent information about the role and responsibilities of councillors is available to the community to support informed participation in local elections. • We promote an inclusive and respectful workplace culture to help support all councillors once elected. • We monitor and publicly report the gender composition of the governing body to remain accountable and transparent. • We provide induction, training and ongoing professional development opportunities for councillors to help build capability and confidence for all members, regardless of gender. • We maintain policies and codes of conduct that set clear expectations around respectful behaviour and equal participation in decision-making. Because councils are limited in what they can do to directly influence who stands for election, these actions focus on creating an environment that supports diversity once people are elected and makes council a safe and respectful place for everyone to contribute.
3	☐ None ☒ a ☒ b ☐ c ☒ d ☒ e ☐ f ☒ g	a. As a small rural council, a few senior or specialist roles can have a noticeable impact on average pay data when these positions are filled by one gender more than another. b. Some roles that attract higher salaries (such as senior leadership or specialist technical positions) have historically attracted more male applicants, which can influence the pay gap. d. Council operates within limited resources but continues to ensure that salaries and classifications are set fairly and consistently through established industrial agreements and job evaluation processes. e. Operational demands and regulatory compliance obligations often take precedence, limiting the ability to implement additional pay equity initiatives. g. Council has genuine processes in place to ensure employees are paid correctly for their role and classification and continues to monitor pay equity through regular workforce and pay audits.	• Maintained a consistent classification and grading structure to ensure pay is set fairly for comparable work. • Undertaken periodic pay audits to identify any pay differences between genders and ensure compliance with industrial agreements. • Reviewed position descriptions and role classifications to make sure they are applied equitably and reflect the work performed. • Provided access to flexible work arrangements and leave entitlements (such as carers leave) to help support equal workforce participation. • Ensured managers and HR staff are aware of equal pay principles when negotiating new roles or backfilling positions.	• Maintained a consistent classification and grading structure to ensure pay is set fairly for comparable work. • Undertaken periodic pay audits to identify any pay differences between genders and ensure compliance with industrial agreements. • Reviewed position descriptions and role classifications to make sure they are applied equitably and reflect the work performed. • Provided access to flexible work arrangements and leave entitlements (such as carers leave) to help support equal workforce participation. • Ensured managers and HR staff are aware of equal pay principles when negotiating new roles or backfilling positions.
4	☐ None ☒ a ☒ b ☐ c ☒ d ☒ e ☐ f ☒ g	a. As a small rural council, our workforce size means the number of formal complaints can be very low or none at all, which makes it harder to draw clear conclusions about actual experiences of sexual harassment. b. In smaller workplaces and close-knit rural communities, people may feel reluctant to make a formal complaint due to concerns about confidentiality or impacts on working relationships. d. Within available resources, Council continues to provide staff training and support systems but recognises that extra measures to collect anonymous experience data or run more frequent surveys may not always be feasible. e. Delivering core services and managing workforce needs in a small council setting often requires prioritising day-to-day operations over expanding anonymous surveys or additional harassment prevention initiatives. Regulatory compliance and mandatory training are maintained despite these constraints. g. Council has clear policies in place, provides regular compliance training, participates in awareness campaigns like the 16 Days of Activism, and is a member of the CoRE Alliance, showing genuine commitment to a safe and respectful workplace.	• Maintained a clear zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, communicated through induction, training, and staff policies. • Delivered regular compliance training to staff and leaders about appropriate workplace behaviour and reporting options. • Provided confidential pathways for staff to raise concerns or make a complaint, supported by trained HR staff and managers. • Participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign to help raise awareness and promote a culture of respect and equality. • Maintained membership of the CoRE Alliance to strengthen Council's commitment to preventing gender-based violence and harassment and to share best practice with other organisations.	• Maintained a clear zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, communicated through induction, training, and staff policies. • Delivered regular compliance training to staff and leaders about appropriate workplace behaviour and reporting options. • Provided confidential pathways for staff to raise concerns or make a complaint, supported by trained HR staff and managers. • Participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign to help raise awareness and promote a culture of respect and equality. • Maintained membership of the CoRE Alliance to strengthen Council's commitment to preventing gender-based violence and harassment and to share best practice with other organisations.
5	☐ None ☒ a ☒ b ☐ c ☒ d ☒ e ☐ f ☒ g	a. As a small rural council, the number of roles available for recruitment and promotion is limited each year, so one or two appointments can have a noticeable impact on gender trends. b. Some specialised roles can attract applicants predominantly from one gender, which can limit the gender balance within certain teams or levels. d. A small HR team means recruitment and promotion activities must be balanced carefully with other operational tasks, limiting scope for additional outreach or targeted diversity recruitment efforts. e. Recruitment activities compete with other pressing operational tasks, and limited HR resources mean that while fair and merit-based processes are followed, the capacity for additional outreach or targeted recruitment efforts is constrained. g. Genuine steps are taken to ensure recruitment and promotion decisions are fair, transparent and based on merit, and to remove any unintentional bias from our processes.	• Position descriptions are reviewed to ensure they use inclusive, gender-neutral language and are clear about the requirements of the role. • Selection panels are always made up of more than one person, and panel members are briefed on equal employment opportunity and unconscious bias. • Recruitment and promotion decisions are based on merit, with clear, consistent selection criteria and processes in place. • Workforce data is monitored to track gender trends in recruitment and promotion outcomes. • Flexible working options are promoted as part of recruitment to help attract a wider, more diverse range of applicants.	• Position descriptions are reviewed to ensure they use inclusive, gender-neutral language and are clear about the requirements of the role. • Selection panels are always made up of more than one person, and panel members are briefed on equal employment opportunity and unconscious bias. • Recruitment and promotion decisions are based on merit, with clear, consistent selection criteria and processes in place. • Workforce data is monitored to track gender trends in recruitment and promotion outcomes. • Flexible working options are promoted as part of recruitment to help attract a wider, more diverse range of applicants.

6	☐ None ☒ a ☒ b ☐ c ☒ d ☒ e ☐ f ☒ g	a. As a small rural council, the overall number of staff taking up leave or flexible work can vary each year, and small changes can affect the figures noticeably. b. Some roles, especially in outdoor or customer-facing services, can be harder to deliver flexibly, which can limit uptake in certain areas. d. Resourcing constraints, especially in a small workforce, can make it challenging to offer flexible arrangements in every situation, but Council does its best to accommodate requests where practical. e. Operational needs, particularly in roles that require onsite presence or continuous service delivery, can limit the availability or uptake of flexible work arrangements. Balancing service continuity with flexible work requests requires ongoing attention amid competing priorities. g. Council makes genuine efforts to support staff to balance work and personal responsibilities by providing access to carers leave, parental leave, and a range of flexible working options.	- Flexible work options such as part-time work, flexible hours, and working from home (where suitable) are offered and promoted to staff. - Carers leave, parental leave and other relevant leave entitlements are available in line with industrial agreements and legislation. - Information about leave and flexible work options is included in induction and staff resources, so employees are aware of their entitlements. - Managers are encouraged to support flexible work requests wherever operationally reasonable and to discuss options openly with staff. - Workforce data is monitored to help track who is using flexible work and leave, so any trends or barriers can be better understood.
7	☐ None ☒ a ☒ b ☐ c ☒ d ☒ e ☐ f ☒ g	a. As a small rural council, the number of roles in each occupation group is limited, so changes in just one or two positions can make the gender split look significantly different year to year. b. Some roles, such as outdoor maintenance, civil works, and technical services, have traditionally attracted more men, while administration and caring roles tend to attract more women. This makes it challenging to balance occupational gender segregation in some work areas. d. Limited HR capacity and budget restrict the ability to undertake large-scale initiatives to attract underrepresented genders into certain occupational areas. e. Traditional gender roles in some occupations remain entrenched, and operational demands can restrict efforts to attract underrepresented genders to certain fields. Limited staffing and budget resources also mean large-scale initiatives to address occupational segregation are challenging to implement. g. Genuine steps are taken to ensure recruitment is fair and open to everyone, and that role descriptions and selection processes do not reinforce traditional gender divides.	- Position descriptions are reviewed to ensure they use inclusive, gender-neutral language, with selection criteria based on skills and requirements, not assumptions about who may traditionally do the job. - Recruitment panels receive guidance on equal employment opportunity and how to avoid unconscious bias during shortlisting and interviews. - Where possible, flexible work options are offered to make a wider range of roles more accessible to a broader range of applicants. - Workforce data is reviewed to monitor trends in occupational gender segregation and identify any areas where more focus may be needed. - Council maintains fair and transparent recruitment processes and promotes equal opportunity for all applicants.

*Factors (column Q):

- a. the size of the organisation, including the number of employees
- b. the nature and circumstances of the organisation, including any barriers to making progress
- c. requirements that apply to the organisation under any other Act, including an Act of the Commonwealth
- d. the organisation's resources
- e. the organisation's operational priorities and competing operational obligations
- f. the practicability and cost to the organisation of making progress; and
- g. genuine attempts made by the organisation to make progress.

Step 3: Reporting on GEAP strategies

Section 3.1 Explaining incomplete strategies (if any) (required)

Indicator One:

- a. Be community leaders by demonstrating and promoting inclusiveness and diversity. Although a formal program to actively promote these stories more widely has not yet been fully rolled out, the intent of this strategy is already being realised in practice. For example, we have had female outdoor workers in roles that are typically male-dominated, including a female truck driver – who has since moved on. Another female outdoor team member has completed a Bachelor of Business and has progressed into a leadership role, now managing the depot.

These real examples show that diverse pathways and role models do exist within our workforce. We recognise there is more we can do to formally highlight and celebrate these stories so others can see what's possible — and this remains an ongoing focus as resourcing and time allow.

Indicator Four:

- b. An inclusive workplace where we learn from each other, don't make excuses for others demonstrating negative behaviours, start the conversation about respectful workplace behaviours, and start speaking up when we witness bad behaviour no matter the setting or context we will all use respectful language and behaviours. This strategy hasn't been fully embedded yet in a consistent way across the whole organisation and continues to be ongoing. We do make genuine efforts to set clear expectations for respectful behaviour though. We have policies in place, we act quickly when issues come up, and we talk about workplace behaviour through training and informal conversations. While these conversations do happen, we know there's still more we can do to make them a normal part of how we work every day. We're continuing to encourage our managers and teams to talk openly about what respectful behaviour looks like, and to call out poor behaviour when they see it. Over time, we want this to feel like business as usual — not just something we talk about once a year, but part of how we work together every day.

Indicator Seven:

- b. Be an affirmative action employer to achieve a more diverse and balanced workforce. While this goal hasn't been fully embedded through formal programs yet, we are taking steps that point us in the right direction. As a small rural council with limited recruitment opportunities each year, it can take time to shift workforce balance in a visible way. Added to that, our team size and day-to-day operational pressures mean there's not always the capacity to design targeted initiatives on top of existing recruitment processes. That said, diversity and inclusion remain central to how we recruit. We carefully review position descriptions for inclusive language, ensure selection panels are fair and balanced, and remain open to candidates with a range of skills and experiences — not just traditional pathways.

Section 3.2 Describing achievements, challenges and learnings (recommended)

1. Noteworthy strategies:

One of our most successful actions has been building connections with local schools to help young people see the diversity of careers in local government. We've taken part in initiatives like the Crazy Ideas College, run career afternoons at secondary schools, and increased the number of work experience placements we have on offer. We've also hosted interns and PhD students, which has helped broaden awareness of the different pathways and roles available — including for students who might not have seen themselves working in local government before.

Another standout has been challenging gender stereotypes by encouraging and celebrating diversity across all roles. We've supported women into traditionally male-dominated outdoor roles, with some going on to further study and leadership positions, showing that 'you can't be what you can't see' really does matter in practice.

We've also made strong progress in supporting staff to seek the flexibility they need. We now have more staff utilising working from home arrangements, using varied start and finish times to fit around family responsibilities, and we've even introduced a four-day week option — helping people balance work and life in a way that supports gender equality in practical, everyday ways.

2. Success factors:

One of the biggest factors in our progress has been keeping things realistic and practical for the size of our council. Instead of trying to do everything at once, we've focused on small, achievable actions that fit with how we work — like building strong connections with local schools, creating more flexible work options, and making sure our policies and recruitment stay current and inclusive.

Having real examples to point to has also helped keep the momentum going. When students see the range of jobs here through work experience or internships, or when staff see that flexible work is genuinely supported — like different start and finish times or a four-day week — it shows we mean what we say. Support from our leaders and a willingness from staff to try new ways of working have made a big difference in turning ideas into action.

3. Challenges:

One of our main challenges is that, as a small rural council, we don't always have the time or resources to roll out every idea as fully or as quickly as we'd like. Some actions that require dedicated planning, promotion, or additional staff capacity can take longer to implement alongside our day-to-day work.

It can also be difficult to show significant change quickly when our workforce is small and staff numbers remain fairly stable from year to year. Making regular conversations about respectful behaviour and gender equality feel normal takes time, and it can take even longer to challenge the underlying attitudes, old hierarchies, and resistance that sometimes surface. Managing this change involves careful planning, clear communication, and ongoing engagement to ensure staff understand why the changes matter and feel supported in adapting to them. Despite these challenges, we remain committed to fostering a culture where respectful, inclusive behaviour is expected, and where outdated norms are actively addressed.

4. Learnings:

One thing we've learnt is that small, practical steps really do add up over time, especially for a Council our size. When actions are realistic and fit in with how we already work, they're more likely to stick and have an impact. We've also seen how powerful real examples can be — when people see someone stepping into a different kind of role or using flexible work options, it helps shift old ways of thinking.

We know it's not just about ticking a box or having a one-off conversation. Respectful behaviour and gender equality need to be part of our everyday work and language. It's not about softening the message — it's about landing it, and language is important. We've learnt that changing attitudes and deep-rooted structures takes time, so being patient and consistent is key for us. In the meantime, we'll keep building on what's working and look for practical ways to keep moving forward in a way that makes sense for our organisation and community.

Section 3.3 Providing other updates on implementation (recommended)

We've taken the Commission's Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) template and developed it into a simple, easy-to-use application on our Council's intranet. The goal was to make it straightforward for staff to factor gender considerations into their everyday work — whether they're planning projects, reviewing policies, or making operational decisions. By turning the template into an interactive app, we've tried to remove any guesswork and make the process as clear and practical as possible, so it fits easily into busy workdays.

Section 3.4 Describing resourcing allocation (required)

During the reporting period, Council employed a Gender Equality Officer (0.36 FTE). Unfortunately, this officer has since resigned, and a suitable replacement has not yet been appointed. Prior to their departure, the Gender Equality Officer, in collaboration with the IT team and the HR Lead, played a key role in developing the GIA app for Council's intranet, providing staff with easy access to gender impact assessment tools.

The HR Lead dedicated substantial time to coordinating Council-wide unconscious bias training, managing the challenges and feedback arising from the sessions, and implementing a range of other strategies to advance gender equality. These initiatives included conducting pay audits, reviewing Council policies and the website to ensure gender-neutral language and imagery, engaging with youth, enhancing recruitment practices, and updating and promoting the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Notably, this critical work was undertaken in addition to the officers' primary duties, and, until their resignation, the Gender Equality Officer actively contributed to these initiatives. To date, Council has successfully advanced these important strategies without additional financial resourcing, which demonstrates our strong organisational commitment to gender equality.

Any other additions or comments (optional)

Council has made steady progress in embedding gender equality across our operations and culture. That said, the resignation of our Gender Equality Officer has made it a real challenge to move some initiatives forward as quickly as we'd like.

Our staff and leadership have been committed, and a lot has been achieved through dedication and teamwork. However, additional funding and dedicated resources would make a huge difference in helping us implement our GEAP strategies more effectively and sustainably.

We know gender equality is an ongoing priority, and with the right support and resources, we're confident we can keep the momentum going and achieve even better outcomes.

