



Council Policy

Gender Equality Policy

Department/Unit	People, Communications & Governance	First Implemented	21 December 2021	Review Date	December 2029
Origin	Coordinator People and Culture	Reviewed	November 2025	Version	2
Authorising Officer	Endorsement by Council	Effective From	16 December 2025	Records Reference	E513/E153 3

Purpose/Objective

The purpose of the Gender Equality Policy is to provide a foundation for positive action to support and affirm Mansfield Shire Council's (Council's) commitment to Gender Equality and Council's Gender Equality Action Plan, consistent with its obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

The policy aims to raise awareness of Gender Equality of Council employees, contracted employees, volunteers and Councillors and their responsibilities towards achieving and maintaining Gender Equality in all aspects of Council and its community. This includes the promotion of Gender Equality in Council policies, programmes and services that impact the public.

Gender Equality leads to improvement of organisational culture and productivity and the reduction of violence towards men or women.

The intended outcome is a gender equitable, inclusive, and safe workplace and community.

This policy can be read in conjunction with Council's Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all Council Councillors, employees, volunteers, and contracted employees.

Policy Statement

Council will develop deliberate strategies and measures to promote gender equality within its workplaces and communities. Council recognises that inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage and discrimination. These compounding factors may include (but are not limited to) race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, being culturally and linguistically diverse and/or being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

Council is privileged to attract and maintain a diverse workforce. We bring a wealth of skills, experiences and ideas to best serve the Mansfield Shire community. We work together toward an equitable workplace, where all voices are respected.

Council acknowledges that an equitable workplace, characterised by respectful relationships can:

- ▶ Positively influence health and wellbeing of employees
- ▶ Contribute to job satisfaction and productivity; and
- ▶ Reduce absenteeism, conflict and staff turnover.

Gender inequity and unequal relationships between men and women are the underlying drivers of violence, which has significant impact at the individual, family, workplace, and community level.

Strategies will be implemented to enhance flexible working arrangements which enable all employees the ability to combine paid work and meet their individual needs and family or caring responsibilities.

Initiatives to promote gender equity and challenge gender norms will be implemented at all levels across the organisation and included in Council's Gender Equality Action Plan.

Initiatives include:

- ▶ Employee training and development activities
- ▶ Audits and reviews to examine pay and conditions, and diversity in roles
- ▶ Review of staff participation in professional development and career advancement opportunities
- ▶ Review of staff recruitment, performance management, mentoring and retention
- ▶ Review of Council policies and procedures to support of gender equality
- ▶ Review of internal and external communication materials
- ▶ Promotion of parental leave options to both men and women
- ▶ Flexible working arrangements for employees
- ▶ Breastfeeding facilities and supportive arrangements
- ▶ Assessment of resource allocation; and
- ▶ Action to address identified issues.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Bystander Action	Action taken by a person or persons not directly involved in an incident to identify, speak out about or seek to engage others in responding to specific incidents or behaviours, attitudes, practices, or policies that are sexist, discriminatory, and violent or reinforce unhelpful gender stereotypes.
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.
Council	Mansfield Shire Council.
Equity	The process of being fair and just. It is not about giving everyone an equal amount. Equity is centered on recognising diversity and disadvantage and distributing resources based on need to address disadvantages to produce equal outcomes.
Gender	Socially learnt roles, behaviours and activities and attributes that any given society constructs to define masculinity and femininity. Gender interacts with but is different from sex. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.
Gender Diversity	Gender diversity describes how people may express or identify their gender differently from prescribed gender norms.
Gender Equality	The outcome reached through addressing gender inequities. Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal opportunities to participate in all spheres of public and private life.
Gender Stereotypes	Simplistic generalisations about the gender attributes, behaviours, and roles traditionally attributed to male or female sexes.
Gender Norms	A set of beliefs and rules of conduct which are considered the types of behaviours, interests and attitudes expected from boys and girls, men and women.
Groupthink	An emphasis on group unanimity at the expense of critical thinking and measured decision-making.
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer. The plus sign represents other sexual and gender identities that are not included in the LGBTIQ description.
Employee	An employee, contracted employee, volunteer or student on work experience.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Executive Management Team	▶ Championing this policy, both internally and with external parties and stakeholders. ▶ Promote the adoption of the Gender Equality Policy and Council's commitment to gender equality internally, as well as advocacy for gender equality more broadly across the community. ▶ Take a leadership role across the organisation in raising awareness about issues of gender equality, gender inequity, sexism, harassment, discrimination and violence against women. ▶ Model appropriate behaviour based on Council values.
Managers and Leaders	▶ Actively promote and implement this policy and advocate for gender equality, gender equity and prevention of violence against women. ▶ Model appropriate behaviour based on the Council values. ▶ Take reports of sexism harassment, discrimination, violence or any other form of unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour seriously and immediately address and action these reports. ▶ Take a leadership role across the organisation in raising awareness about issues of gender equality, gender inequity, sexism, harassment, discrimination, and violence against women. ▶ Support staff who take bystander action.
Employees	▶ Be responsible for making themselves familiar with this policy and other relevant policies and procedures. ▶ Model appropriate behaviour based on the Council values. ▶ Are open to learning about, and actively participate in organisational training regarding gender equality and inequality and the prevention of violence against women. ▶ Attend and participate in all required training relevant to this policy. ▶ Use language and images that promote equal and respectful relationships and do not reinforce gender norms or gender stereotypes in all aspects of work. ▶ Where relevant, consider gender, accessibility and the needs of those from CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples or Indigenous Australians and LGBTIQ+ communities in project and program design and delivery. ▶ Take bystander action if they see or hear about sexism, harassment,

Role	Responsibilities
	discrimination, violence or any other form of unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour. Support their colleagues who disclose an experience of sexism, harassment, discrimination, violence, or any other form of unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour. ▶ Report any instances of victimisation, bullying, harassment, or intimidation to their Manager immediately.

The People, Communications and Governance Directorate is the owner of this policy. Any reviews of this Policy must be made in consultation with the People, Communications and Governance Manager.

References

- ▶ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- ▶ *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- ▶ *Victorian Local Government Women's Charter 1997 (Vic)*
- ▶ *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- ▶ *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
- ▶ *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- ▶ *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- ▶ *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)*
- ▶ *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*
- ▶ *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- ▶ *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*
- ▶ *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*
- ▶ Victorian Government's LGBTIQ Inclusive Language Guide
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Disciplinary Policy
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Employee Code of Conduct
- ▶ Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Recruitment and Selection Policy
- ▶ Victorian Local Governance Association Toolkit for Local Government

Gender Impact Assessment

The Gender Equality Policy has considered the Gender Equality Act 2020 in its preparation but is not relevant to its content. The Gender Equality Policy has been assessed as not requiring a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA).

Implementation

This Policy is effective from 16 December 2025.

Review Date

This Policy is to be reviewed by December 2029.

Authorisation to Implement Policy

Signed: _____

Councillor

Witnessed: _____

Chief Executive Officer

Approval dated: 16 December 2025

Mansfield Shire Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this Policy at any time.