

DRAFT Gender Equity Framework

Executive Summary

Monash Council has had a longstanding commitment to, and leadership role in, promoting gender equity in our community and workplace. Council has made a conscious decision to focus on 'gender equity' because this concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a way that rectifies gender related imbalances. Gender equity leads to gender equality, where there are equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women, men and gender diverse people.

This new Framework is building on Council's inaugural *Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020* which strengthened our structures, partnerships and community capacity.

In this Framework, Council seeks to reinforce its commitment to gender equity and include the latest research, community consultation, considerations of intersectionality, and integration with new policies, plans, and legislation that have evolved since 2015, including the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

This Framework sets out six principles to guide the implementation of this Framework:

1. Intersectionality
2. Multiple settings
3. Leadership
4. Advocacy
5. Research and engagement
6. Partnerships

The Framework acknowledges the historical disadvantages faced by women¹ and seeks to address them through understanding the current research around gender equity and the prevention of violence against women and family violence. The Framework will also incorporate the views of our community and their priorities for this key policy area.

The Framework sets out a policy statement, principles, and eight recommendations which will ensure Council continues to exceed its obligations both to our community, and to the Victorian government under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. The individual actions that we undertake, and accompanying evaluation indicators, will be embedded within the *Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025*, and gender equity will be included in the Council Plan and, over time, in wider Council day to day work and practices.

Policy Statement

Monash Council is committed to promoting gender equity in our community and ensuring that everyone enjoys the same opportunities, rights and respect, regardless of their gender.

Council will:

- actively encourage everyone's full and equal participation in community life, regardless of gender, and work towards creating a safer and more inclusive community; and

¹ Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) s 6 (9)

- take an intersectional approach to promoting gender equity wherever possible, acknowledging that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination on the basis of race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity.

Council acknowledges:

- that women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender²;
- that gender equity is not about treating everyone the same but recognises people's different needs and power related to their gender;
- the link between gender inequality and the prevention of violence against women and family violence; and
- gender equality benefits everyone, and is a human right.

Framework Recommendations

The Framework itself does not include specific actions, rather the following are the key recommendations for Council, to guide its approach to gender equity. Council should:

1. Embed actions that promote gender equity and prevent violence against women and family violence in the *Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025* to ensure integration and alignment with other parts of Council, and include gender equity within the Council Plan and Vision and other key documents.
2. Continue to utilise the diverse skills and experiences within the Gender Equity Advisory Committee (GEAC), and seek opportunities to combine consultation with other advisory committees and community for an intersectional approach to our work.
3. Ensure that gender equity is a focus for the whole of Council. Prioritise actions in – but do not limit them to – the five settings that our community has told us are most important to them, which are: Health, family and community organisations; Education and care settings for children and young people; Sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces; Public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities; and Universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions.
4. Continue to acknowledge and publicise the link between gender inequality and the prevention of violence against women and family violence. Make it clear how our work in gender equity aligns with the goal to prevent violence against women and family violence.
5. Increase community knowledge of existing service providers working in gender equity and prevention of violence against women and family violence. Work to shift any negative community attitudes through greater understanding.
6. Provide training for Council staff and Councillors in gender equity and prevention of violence against women and family violence. Work with internal staff on Council's Gender Impact Assessments, Gender Equality Action Plan, and other *Gender Equality Act 2020* requirements.

² Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) s6(9)

7. Embed Gender Impact Assessments in Council processes so that they become 'business as usual' across Council on all policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the community. This includes asking for gender-disaggregated data as a standard minimum during consultation, and intersectional data where supported by research and allowed under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.
8. Continue to work with new and existing partners to seek out initiatives and funding opportunities as they arise to support our work.

DRAFT

Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Policy Statement.....	1
Framework Recommendations.....	2
Purpose of this Framework.....	5
Guiding Principles	5
What is Gender Equity?	6
What do we know about gender inequality in Monash?	6
How do we address gender inequality?.....	8
What has our Monash community told us about gender equity?.....	11
What is Monash already doing to promote gender equity?	11
Framework Context	14
Glossary.....	17
Existing resources and policies	18

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Purpose of this Framework

The purpose of this Framework is to guide Council's approach to promoting gender equity in all facets of its work but with a particular emphasis on the work with our community. It builds on Council's inaugural *Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020* and sets out the way in which our gender equity work aligns with other key Council plans, as well as with the requirements of the Victorian Government's *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Council acknowledges that women have historically experienced disadvantage, discrimination and violence on the basis of sex and gender. In order to balance this, Councils and other service providers need to consider the potential impact on people of different genders when designing policies, programs and services for our community.

Gender equity leads to gender equality. Gender equality is a human right, and a leading health priority as it has a significant impact on society. Gender inequality in itself has significant economic and social costs, as well as being a precondition to violence against women and family violence.

As the level of government closest to the community, Council is well placed to address gender inequality because of the wide range of services and programs that we provide. We connect with members of our community from the time they are born (through our Maternal and Child Health Service) through their growth (in playgroups, kindergartens, sports clubs, and Youth services) and at different life stages (parenting and Positive Ageing programs). As a result we are in a position to work with our community and have a meaningful impact on gender equity and build capacity across different settings.

This Framework also clearly articulates that, as a large employer, Council has a role in ensuring it leads by example and that Council is a workplace that encourages and promotes gender equity internally.

Guiding Principles

The following principles will be used to guide Council's intent and implementation of this framework:

- 1. Intersectionality:** We are aware that gender inequality does not impact all people in the same way. Gender intersects with other experiences of discrimination and disadvantage due to characteristics such as race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity.
- 2. Multiple settings:** We will work with the community where different people live, learn, work and play, to build the capacity of as many people as possible.
- 3. Leadership:** We will lead by example to create a more gender equitable workforce, and give our staff the skills to help promote gender equity within the organisation and for our community.
- 4. Advocacy:** We will provide a voice for our community, ensuring that people know where they can go to seek help or advice. We will advocate for gender equity and the prevention of violence against women and family violence, and celebrate and share successes.
- 5. Research and engagement:** We will build on our existing knowledge base, ensuring that we understand how people of different genders experience our services and community so we know how we can best support them. We are committed to ensuring our policies, practices and allocation of funds are at all times evidence-led, to the greatest extent possible.

6. **Partnerships:** We value our partners and will continue to work with community and other organisations to promote gender equity in Monash.

What is Gender Equity?

Gender equity is the process of being fair to people of all genders. Gender equity recognises that within all communities, women, men and gender diverse people have different needs, access to power, resources and responsibilities. To ensure fairness, strategies must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that has prevented an equal playing field. Gender equity leads to gender equality, where there are equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of people of all genders.

This means that gender equity is not about treating everyone the same, but recognises people's different needs and power related to their gender, and works to address these differences to rectify gender related imbalances.³

[insert image demonstrating equity vs equality]

We also need to consider *intersectionality*, which is the concept that alongside gender inequality, other forms of discrimination or disadvantage may exist related to race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity. When people experience two or more intersecting forms of discrimination or disadvantage, this discrimination or disadvantage can be compounded. For example, a young woman who also has a disability may face different barriers to an older woman who identifies as bisexual. There is therefore no 'one size fits all' answer to solving gender inequality.

[insert intersectionality image]

Gender inequality affects everyone, not just women, and traditional stereotypes cause harm to us all. For example, long held notions around caring and work mean that, just as women may be expected to do more unpaid childcare and caring, men may experience discrimination when they attempt to take time off paid work to take on caring roles.

Gender inequality is a precondition of violence against women, and therefore in order to prevent this violence we need to address gender inequality. Women who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage are at greater risk of violence and have greater difficulty accessing support.⁴

What do we know about gender inequality in Monash?

Gender inequality can be seen in almost every part of our lives – from work and finances, to sport and education. We know that there are significant differences in physical and mental health outcomes for men, women and gender diverse people. For example:

³ Safe and Strong, Victorian Gender Equality Strategy

⁴ Safe and Strong

- On average, Australian women earn \$242.90 less per week than men⁵ and retire with just under half the superannuation savings of men⁶.
- 50% of women report experiencing sex discrimination due to pregnancy, parental leave, or return to work.⁷
- Unpaid care is disproportionately undertaken by women;⁸
- The Victorian participation rate in sport for females is nearly half of that for males⁹
- Boys receive 11% more pocket money and 8 times more attention in classrooms than girls¹⁰
- 1 in 3 Australian women over 15 has experienced physical violence, however only 40% of the Monash community¹¹ agreed that it is common in our community¹²
- Women from culturally diverse communities face additional barriers to education and employment as a result of language barriers, racism and discrimination, lack of culturally responsive services, lack of access to information about their rights, separation from family and other support networks, and insecure visa status.¹³
- Women with disabilities are more likely to experience family violence and sexual assault compared with men with disabilities or women without disabilities.¹⁴
- Trans and gender diverse people are more likely to experience mental illness, verbal and physical abuse, cyberbullying, and social exclusion.¹⁵
- In 2015 around 76% of suicides were by men.¹⁶
- Fewer people in Monash support gender equality in relationships when compared to the rest of Victorians.¹⁷
- Nearly 20% of people in Monash reported that they have experienced discrimination in their local community based on their gender. The overwhelming majority of people who felt they had experienced discrimination – over 80% - were women.¹⁸

⁵ Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2020), Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics, retrieved 2/3/21, www.wgea.gov.au/data/fact-sheets/australias-gender-pay-gap-statistics

⁶ Hetherington, D. & Smith, J. (2017) Not So Super, For Women: Superannuation and Women's Retirement Outcomes, retrieved 9/6/20, percapita.org.au/our_work/not-so-super-for-women/

⁷ Australian Human Rights Commission (2012), Working Without Fear – Results of the Sexual Harassment National Telephone Survey 2012, Australian Human Rights Commission, Sydney retrieved 10/8/17 www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/sexualharassment/survey/SHSR_2012%20Web%20Version%20Final.pdf

⁸ Safe and Strong

⁹ VicHealth, (2018), Sport participation in Victoria Research Summary Part 1, retrieved 2/2/21, www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/victorian-participation-in-organised-sport

¹⁰ State Government of Victoria (2016), Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy, retrieved 9/6/20, www.vic.gov.au/our-gender-equality-strategy

¹¹ 40% of respondents to the 2021 community consultation survey for the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

¹² Of respondents to the 2021 community consultation survey for the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

¹³ Safe and Strong

¹⁴ Safe and Strong

¹⁵ Safe and Strong

¹⁶ Safe and Strong

¹⁷ Vic Health (2016), Monash LGA Profile, VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015 Results retrieved 10/8/17 www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/VHIndicators/Middle%20metro/Vic161_Monash_indicator_v5.pdf?la=en

¹⁸ 2021 community consultation survey for the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

Case study: Promoting Gender Equity in Sport

We know that women and girls participate in club sport at lower rates than men and boys – as players and in leadership roles. In fact, nearly half of all Victorian women feel sports clubs are intimidating. We also know that increased female participation benefits women and girls, and clubs.

Council was keen to understand what were the barriers to women and girls taking part in sport in Monash, so in 2019 and 2020 we took part in a gender equality in sport pilot program funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria. Council wanted to support clubs to challenge gender stereotypes, and increase women's participation as players and leaders.

To better understand the challenges, we undertook focus groups with men and women, leaders and players, from nearly 20 clubs. This consultation informed us that it's not infrastructure, but **club culture** that's the key. We heard that women often do not get the same access to new sports equipment at their clubs, or do not have access to qualified coaching or other staff. Therefore while they often pay the same membership fees as the men, they do not get the same return on their investment. We also heard that women would appreciate more flexible training and meeting times; social or casual membership options; and a zero tolerance approach to inappropriate language and behaviour that is modelled from the top down.

And if we take an intersectional approach, we see that other personal attributes can compound disadvantage in sport. For example, women from culturally diverse backgrounds have some of the lowest levels of participation in sport of any cohort, and people who identify as LGBTIQ+ often do not feel they can be themselves at their clubs. Our Community Ambassadors and partner organisations assisted us develop tips for clubs who want to do more around diversity and inclusion. These actions included having a welcoming officer, promoting the benefits of sport, translating information into languages other than English, displaying Rainbow posters and using correct pronouns. Having diversity and inclusion policies or embedding into club governance is also critical. Clubs that really listened to their women and girls realised they were far more successful in recruiting and retaining them at the club.

How do we address gender inequality?

There have been some significant pieces of work undertaken in Australia, and Victoria more specifically, in the five years since our *Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020* was written. This has given us a greater understanding of the ways in which we can address gender inequality in our community. While not an exhaustive list, a snapshot of some of the key approaches, particularly from Our Watch's '*Change the Story*' Framework and the Victorian Government's '*Safe and Strong*' Strategy, which are summarised here.

Embedding in legislation and governance

Any techniques to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women need to be supported by complementary political and institutional strategies, including public policy, legislation and regulation.¹⁹ Formal mechanisms such as policies and legislation can help to reinforce other gender equity strategies and messaging. Council therefore considers it important that we continue to have a clear policy statement on gender equity, which is contained in this Framework.

¹⁹ Our Watch, *Change the Story*, p. 41.

Gender lens or Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)

Our Watch explains that an essential action to reduce the gendered drivers of violence against women is to “establish and maintain processes to assess all public policy for its impact on women. Include an analysis of any differential impact on different groups of women to achieve a truly inclusive gender equality.”²⁰ The importance of a gender lens is also recognised within Safe and Strong, and Council has been informally applying this ‘gender lens’ to policies, programs and services for some time, including our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. This requirement has now been legislated in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, as Councils are now obliged to conduct a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) on all policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact upon the public.

Employment practices and model behaviour

As a large employer Council can have a big impact on its own workforce and set an example for others by promoting gender equality internally. The Victorian government advocates gender auditing within organisations, creating flexible work arrangements, and paid parental leave.²¹ Some of this – such as the Workplace Gender Audit with regard to gender equality indicators and Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) - is now built into our obligations in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. Council is committed to gender equality in the workplace and meeting its obligations under the Act as well as Council’s own aspirations to create a workplace that supports a culture of diversity, inclusion and equity.

Advocacy

It is important that all levels of government are working together to promote gender equality. Just as the Victorian Government seeks to advocate to the Commonwealth²², Council has a role in advocating for change and working with our counterparts in other local governments within Victoria, as well as the state government. Advocacy within the community is important as well, and to be effective can include skills training and capacity building for organisations, and/or leadership programs for individuals.²³ Council prefers to work from a strengths-based perspective, emphasising and valuing people’s skills, knowledge, connection, and potential and empowering them to make change.

Different settings

Gender inequalities can be found in all sorts of places and organisations. In order to address this, it is important to try to engage people in different ‘settings’ – that is, where people live, work, learn, socialise, and play.²⁴ Because of the range of work that Council undertakes, in different areas of life and across different ages, we are well placed to work with people to promote gender equity in a range of settings. This might include direct programs that we run in our playgroups, libraries, Monash Gallery of Art or Active Monash’s services, or in the physical infrastructure that we help maintain such as our sports facilities or civic spaces. It also includes working with partner organisations such as our faith communities, schools, Monash University, and sports clubs.

²⁰ Our Watch, *Change the Story*, p. 33.

²¹ *Safe and Strong*, p. 12.

²² *Safe and Strong*, p. 12.

²³ Our Watch, *Change the Story*, p. 43.

²⁴ Our Watch, *Change the Story*, p. 38.

Engage men and boys

Gender inequality affects men, women and gender diverse people. It is not just an issue for women. This means that men need to be involved in making change, which will benefit everyone. This can include challenging gender roles and stereotypes, which restrict everyone.²⁵ It is important that in all our gender equity work, Council seeks to work with our male allies.

Promote broader social equality

There is a link between broader social equality, and gender equality. According to the Victorian government, “countries that maintain greater equality between men and women also experience a range of social benefits, including increased social cohesion, connectivity and greater health and wellbeing.”²⁶

The probability of violence against women is higher when the consequences of gender inequality intersect with the impact of other forms of inequality and discrimination, such as racism, discrimination against people with disabilities or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.²⁷ We need to ensure that our work is inclusive and has an intersectional focus, and work to reduce other forms of discrimination as well.

Challenge gender stereotypes and strengthen equal and respectful relationships

Gender stereotypes affect people of all genders, and are a key driver of violence against women and family violence. Gender stereotypes start in childhood, so it is important to help people of all ages challenge these.²⁸ We also need to promote equal and respectful relationships between people of all genders. Due to the breadth and depth of Council’s roles, we can support the community to do this in a range of ways. For example, we can work with sports clubs to challenge the notion of whether there are some sports that girls or boys can’t play; or partner with others to deliver the whole-of-school approach to Respectful Relationships in our schools.

Promote and normalise gender equity

Council has a role to play in ensuring everyone is supported to participate in public life. This includes decision-making, and ensuring our policies are assessed for their gendered impacts (such as through Gender Impact Assessments). Council has formalised this process by amending our council reports to have a dedicated GIA section in all reports, and through our Gender Equity Advisory Committee.

Resourcing

Gender equality brings economic benefit to our communities and to organisations. For example, companies with at least 30 per cent women in leadership positions are 15 per cent more profitable.²⁹ However, in order to reap not just economic but also social benefits, we need to invest enough resources in strategies to promote and improve gender equity. This allows us not just to undertake programs and actions, but to give us the ability to properly monitor and evaluate our work.³⁰

²⁵ Our Watch, Change the Story, p. 34.

²⁶ Safe and Strong, p. 8.

²⁷ Our Watch, Change the Story, p. 28.

²⁸ Our Watch, Change the Story, p. 33.

²⁹ Safe and Strong, p. 7.

³⁰ Our Watch, Change the Story, p. 53.

We need to ensure that gender equity work is appropriately resourced. While some of this can be funded directly by Council, it is important that we work with our partners and also seek out grants and other opportunities to assist us in this.

What has our Monash community told us about gender equity?

Through our 2021 community consultation for Council’s new Monash Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025, we understand from respondents to our survey that:

- Nearly two in ten (20%) had experienced discrimination on the basis of their gender, and over 80% of those people were women;
- In the top six priorities for health and wellbeing were ‘addressing all forms of discrimination (including gender-based discrimination)’, with four out of ten respondents (41%) selecting this and ‘preventing family violence and violence against women’, with four in ten (42%) also selecting this.
- There is a strong understanding (69%) that doctors can provide services for family violence support; however fewer people knew about 1800RESPECT (58%) and Council (40%) as places you could get support.

Through this consultation, respondents from our community also told us that our priorities settings in supporting Gender Equity should be:

Ranking	Priority area	% of all respondents
1	Health, family and community organisations	65
2	Education and care settings for children and young people	59
3	Sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces	48
4	Public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities	46
5	Universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions	25
6	Monash Council as a workplace	23
7	The arts	11
8	Faith-based contexts	11
9	Did not respond	4

What is Monash already doing to promote gender equity?

Monash Council was one of the first local governments in Victoria to formally adopt a Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan as well as employ a full time Gender Equity officer. Over the years Council has built on our governance and programs to promote gender equity and some of our key pieces of work include:

Gender Equity Advisory Committee

Monash Council established a Gender Equity Advisory Committee (GEAC) in 2015. This committee has representation from Councillors, community members and organisations from the Monash Community. This Committee provides Council with advice on improving gender equity within the Monash community, actively encouraging women’s full and equal participation in community life, and implementation of Council’s *A Health and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021* and the Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020. Key achievements of the GEAC have been writing a submission on the Gender Equality Bill, providing a gender lens on Council’s policies and delivering advocacy

campaigns such as 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence. It is envisaged that the Gender Equity Advisory Committee will continue to play an important role in the implementation of this Gender Equity Framework.

Monash Council as a workplace

Monash Council has taken a range of steps to improve its own internal gender equity policies. In 2020 Council formed a Gender Equity Internal Steering Committee which is chaired by our CEO and is made up of 10 representatives (employees and managers) from across all Council Divisions. The role of this Committee is to embed gender equity and drive change across the organisation, through cross-sectional collaboration.

Council has also introduced a range of other initiatives which can assist in promoting gender equity, including a Flexible Work policy, and 20 days of family violence leave within our current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. In 2021 Council provided staff with training around the importance of gender pronouns and introduced a voluntary (opt-in) process for staff to include their pronouns on their email signatures.

The arts

Council has been working to embed gender equity into its arts and events programs. This includes The Monash Gallery of Art (MGA) promoting gender equity in its collections, programming, communications and events, as well as on its committees and advisory structures. The MGA also conducted an audit to understand how many female and male artists were engaged and the financial compensation for those artists. During the 2021 Clayton Festival, a photographic collection called *Caregivers* was displayed, showing portraits of people (many of whom are women) in Monash who care for others and promoting the important role of this often unpaid work. We have also received funding to install 'Pathways to Equality', a public art mural with messages of gender equity in Ashwood/Chadstone.

Education and care settings for children and young people

In 2019, Council developed 'Playing Fair', a program to build inclusive playgroups. The program seeks to address the gap in sustainable primary prevention initiatives in the Early Years sector. It has now been piloted with six playgroup facilitators and volunteers in Monash, and indirectly reached 1400 families enrolled in those playgroups. Playgroups provide critical social connection opportunities for mothers, fathers, grandparents and carers to actively promote children's social and physical development, and link people to a range of health, social and educational services. Using the enormous reach of playgroup settings, Playing Fair targets the critical first life stage of children when gender stereotypes begin. Unlike kindergartens or long day-care centres, parents and carers are required to be present at playgroups and engage in play with their children. The training modules focus on how to create quality playgroup environments defined by inclusivity, positive, equal and respectful relationships, for all who attend. Playing Fair is being embedded into recruitment and professional development for playgroup facilitators.

The Young Women's Leadership Program developed by Youth Services has been running since 2016 and has had over 150 Graduates of the Program. The program provides a structured approach to increase young women's skills, confidence and leadership opportunities in a peer learning environment. Young women reported increases in their confidence to apply for opportunities such as successful applications for scholarships to study university abroad, becoming community leaders/ambassadors and multiple educational and career opportunities. The program received VicHealth funding in 2019 to assist two other Victorian Councils roll out the successful program. In

2020, a Young Men's Leadership Program was developed and piloted which covers leadership, public speaking, financial independence, friendships and relationships. The program also explores the topics of masculinity, social pressures to conform and emotional regulation.

Council's libraries also developed a booklist to help promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes through picture books for children. This booklist gives information about why gender stereotypes are harmful, how we can break them down, and the ways that these play out in books and television for children. It also gives recommendations for books that challenge these stereotypes.

Sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces

Council was one of a select group of organisations to pilot a gender equity in sport program through Sport and Recreation Victoria. Our program, Community Leaders United By Sport (CLUBS), worked with community members of sports clubs to understand the barriers and opportunities to promote gender equity in clubs (see case study). Council also developed an holistic audit tool called Welcoming and Inclusive Sports Facilities, which included auditing all our pavilions for a range of accessibility inclusion issues including gender based considerations. These included safety, toilets and change rooms, sanitary bins, etc, and then committed to using that data to improve facilities going forward. Active Monash has been initiating a range of gender equity measures such as:

- Including gender equity criteria that clubs need to meet, within its new Active Monash Sports Club Framework;
- Developing the draft Active Monash Recreation Opportunities Strategy;
- Women's only swim programs;
- Taking part in This Girl Can – Victoria activities and training; and
- Holding its first ever Active Monash Pride Night in 2021 including making non-binary change rooms available.

Public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities

Council has undertaken a range of gender equity initiatives in public spaces. The Place Making team and Community Safety Officer have audited and upgraded public places like Eaton Mall, the Warrigal Road underpass, Holmesglen Pedestrian and Bike path, and the Thomas Street laneway. This work helped to ensure the areas are better lit, activated, and feel safer.

We have partnered with organisations like Women's Health East and Monash University to undertake Gender Equity Walks and be part of the YourGround initiative to better understand where in Monash women and gender diverse people feel safe and unsafe, to help guide our future infrastructure upgrades. Additionally in our public spaces such as libraries, we provide booklists and events including moving screenings to encourage gender equity. We are also progressively upgrading the infrastructure in our sporting pavilions to make them welcoming and inclusive for all.

Universities, TAFEs and other tertiary institutions

As Holmesglen TAFE and Monash University sit within our municipality, Monash has a large number of young people living, studying, and working here. Council has a close working relationship with Monash University, partnering on various projects including CLUBS, YourGround, and student leadership opportunities.

Faith-based contexts

Monash Council was project lead in the in the *Inner East Faith Communities Unite for Safety and Respect project* funded by Women's Health East. The collaborative project involving Whitehorse,

Manningham, Monash and Boroondara Councils and Interfaith Networks ran from April to July 2019. It was an opportunity for the interfaith networks of the four Councils to come together to discuss the reality of family violence in our community, and to learn what we can all do to promote equitable and safe relationships.

Health, family and community organisations

Council recognises the importance of partnerships and continues to work with a number of community organisations on gender equity. We have a strong relationship with Women's Health East, and are part of their 'Together For Equality and Respect' (TFER) platform along with other organisations in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. We have also partnered with organisations such as Link Health and Community on a range of programs and services including the Generating Equality and Respect (GEAR) program, and our CLUBS program. Council also supports the Ashwood Chadstone Family Violence Working Group including key initiatives such as the Clothesline Project and Pathways to Equality mural.

Framework Context

There has been considerable growth in the policy landscape, particularly in Victoria since Council's first Gender Equity Strategy, including the *Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2015*. Council's gender equity work is undertaken within a context of work at a national, Victorian, and regional/local level. Our Gender Equity Framework 2021-2025 has been written with this context in mind to ensure consistency and best practice. We outline some notable points below in brief, but full reference to these documents can be found in the 'Existing resources and policies' section below.

National

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* attempts to bring together the efforts of governments across the nation to make a real and sustained reduction in the levels of violence against women. It coordinates action across jurisdictions and seeks to look to the long term, build respectful relationships, and work to increase gender equality to prevent violence from occurring in the first place.

The National Plan contains four three-year Action Plans, and currently the Fourth Action Plan 2019-2022 has five national priorities which are the focus areas for government:

1. Primary prevention is key
2. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children
3. Respect, listen and respond to the diverse experience and knowledge of women and their children affected by violence
4. Respond to sexual violence and sexual harassment
5. Improve support and service system responses.

Victorian

Royal Commission into Family Violence

Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence was completed in 2015 and made 227 recommendations to reduce the impact of family violence in our community. As of November 2020, 167 of those recommendations have been implemented by the Victorian government.

Recommendation 202 was 'consider how local council performance measures can encourage family

violence prevention'. A number of priorities of the Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020-2023 have a relationship to the work of Council, including the way in which we conduct research and evaluation, as well as our focus on primary prevention.

Free from Violence

Free from Violence is Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and violence against women. It sets out in great detail how the State Government will seek to change behaviours and attitudes over time. Free from Violence acknowledges the role of local government and seeks to build partnerships and coordinate prevention efforts.

Safe and Strong: a Victorian Gender Equality Strategy

Safe and Strong provides a vision in which "all Victorians live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities, and are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. All Victorians recognise that gender equality is essential to economic prosperity and that gender inequality has a significant economic cost. Victoria leads the way in gender equality with sustained, enduring and measurable action." Safe and Strong sets out a range of State government actions, outcomes, indicators and targets including working with local government on equitable treatment for men and women in the provision of and access to sporting infrastructure and facilities.

Gender Equality Act 2020

This Act commenced on 31 March 2021 and requires defined entities, including Councils, to:

- Develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan, which includes:
 - Results of a workplace gender audit
 - Strategies for achieving workplace gender equality
- Publicly report on their progress in relation to workplace gender equality
- Promote gender equality in policies, programs and services that impact the public; and
- Undertake a gender impact assessment when developing or reviewing any policy of, or program or service provided that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

The Act also requires organisations to consider intersectionality; that is, other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience due to other characteristics such as: race; Aboriginality; religion; ethnicity; disability; age; sexual orientation; and/or gender identity.

Regional and local

Best Practice Guide for gender equity in local government

Local Government Victoria have produced this guide which discusses how councils can increase the representation of women councillors, train their staff (in gender equity, unconscious bias, and bystander action), and review organisation culture and policies. Council is also part of the Municipal Association of Victoria's 'Gender Equality and Preventing Violence Against Women and all forms of Gender-based Violence Network'. This group of council officers and community partners works together to progress the task of leading communities in this work, and promoting best practice. Monash Council is currently a representative for the Eastern Region on the Network Executive Group.

Together for Equality and Respect

Together for Equality and Respect (TFER) is a platform for organisations (including Monash Council) in the Eastern Metropolitan Region to prioritise and work together on the primary prevention of men's violence against women. The TFER Action Plan 2017-2021 coordinates collective action and

provides six objectives. There is also a TFER Evaluation Framework which sits alongside it and outlines shared commitments for evaluation.

Health and Wellbeing Plan

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* requires Councils to develop a Municipal public health and wellbeing plan every four years, within 12 months of each general election of the Council. The next municipal public health and wellbeing plan is due in October 2021.

Each plan explains and demonstrates the significant role of Monash Council in improving the health and wellbeing of people who live, work, study and play in the municipality. When looking to the health and wellbeing of Monash residents this plan defines the purpose of Councils work and what it strives to achieve.

From 2017, Council's Gender Equity actions and evaluation were embedded within the Municipal Health Plan. The Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 (draft) contains gender equity actions and indicators including specific actions required by the Victorian government on gender equity and prevention of violence against women.

DRAFT

Glossary

Gender: the socially learned roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and change over time.

Gender diverse: generally refers to a range of genders expressed in different ways. There are many terms used by gender diverse people to describe themselves. Language in this space is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.³¹

Gender equality: The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

Gender equity: Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.

Gender Impact assessment: (GIA): a way of thinking about a policy, program or service and how it may affect people differently, particularly people of different genders. Applying a GIA assists Council to amend our policies, programs and services to better meet the needs of our community. It is also a legislative requirement under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* for those policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public.

Intersectionality: is a concept that acknowledges that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity.

Sex: The biological characteristics related to sexual reproduction (including anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes) that are used to define humans as male or female.

³¹ LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide

Existing resources and policies

Council resources

Monash Council, 2017: *A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021*, access at: <https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/About-Us/Council/Publications/A-Healthy-and-Resilient-Monash-Integrated-Plan-2017-2021>

Monash Council, 2021: *Active Monash Sports Club Framework 2022-2027*, access at <https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/About-Us/Council/Have-Your-Say/Active-Monash-Sports-Club-Framework?BestBetMatch=active%20monash%20sports%20club%20framework|d8865bd5-ecb1-446c-b18c-bc80693b2153|0e9e7276-c437-4539-8213-057dfdc15aaf|en-AU>

Monash Council: *Gender Equity Advisory Committee*, access at <https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/About-Us/Council/Committees/Gender-Equity-Advisory-Committee>

Monash Council, 2015: *Gender Equity Strategy*, access at <https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/about-us/council/publications/monash-city-council-gender-equity-strategy-2015-2020.pdf>

Other resources

Australian Government: *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, access at <https://www.dss.gov.au/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>

Gender Equality Act 2020, access at <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/gender-equality-act-2020>

Municipal Association of Victoria: *Gender Equality and Preventing Violence Against Women and all forms of Gender-Based Violence*, access at <https://www.mav.asn.au/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/social-community/gender-equality/pvaw-network>

Women's Health East: *Together For Equality and Respect Action Plan 2017-2021*, access at <https://whe.org.au/tfer/>

Our Watch, 2015: *Change the Story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, access at <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/change-the-story-a-shared-framework-for-the-primary-prevention-of-violence-against-women-and-their-children-in-australia>

Victorian Government: *Gender Equality in Local Government*, access at <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/gender-equity>

Victorian Government: *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, access at <https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality>

Victorian Government: *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence*, access at <https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence>

Victorian Government, 2015: *Royal Commission into Family Violence*, access at <https://www.vic.gov.au/about-royal-commission-family-violence>