



CITY OF
MONASH

MONASH GENDER EQUITY FRAMEWORK





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Policy Statement	4
Framework Recommendations	6
Purpose of this Framework	8
Framework Language	8
Guiding Principles	9
What is Gender Equity?	10
What do we know about gender inequality in Monash?	11
How do we address gender inequality?	14
What has our Monash community told us about gender equity?	17
What is Monash already doing to promote gender equity?	19
Framework Context	22
Framework Glossary	24
Existing resources and policies	25

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Monash acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong People, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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, along with relevant intersecting characteristics, particularly sex, 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 area. This update particularly seeks to build on Council's Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020 to: reinforce its commitment to gender equity; incorporate the latest research, community consultation, and considerations of intersectionality; and incorporate new policies, plans, and legislation that have been enacted and evolved since 2015, including the Gender Equality Act 2020.

This Framework sets out six principles to guide the implementation:

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

The Gender Equity Framework acknowledges the historical disadvantages faced by women on the basis of sex and gender¹ and seeks to address them through understanding the current

research around gender equity and the prevention of discrimination and violence against women, including but not limited to family violence. It also incorporates the views of our community and their priorities for this key policy area.

This document sets out a policy statement, principles, and eight recommendations that aim to ensure that Council continues to exceed its obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020. The individual actions we undertake and their accompanying evaluation indicators will be work conducted as part of the Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. Gender equity is also included in the Council Plan as relevant to achieving the Council Plan's strategic objectives. Over time, gender equity will also be formally incorporated as a relevant consideration in Council's wider day-to-day work and practices by conducting Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) on new and revised policies, programs and services.

POLICY STATEMENT

Monash Council is committed to promoting gender equity in our community and our organisation, and ensuring that people of all genders enjoy the same opportunities, rights and respect.

Council will:

- Actively encourage everyone's full and equal participation in community life, and work towards creating a safer and more inclusive community
- Take an intersectional approach to promoting gender equity wherever possible, acknowledging that gender inequality may be compounded by forms of disadvantage or discrimination on the basis of sex and gender, as well as age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent), religion, sex, and/or sexual orientation.



Council acknowledges:

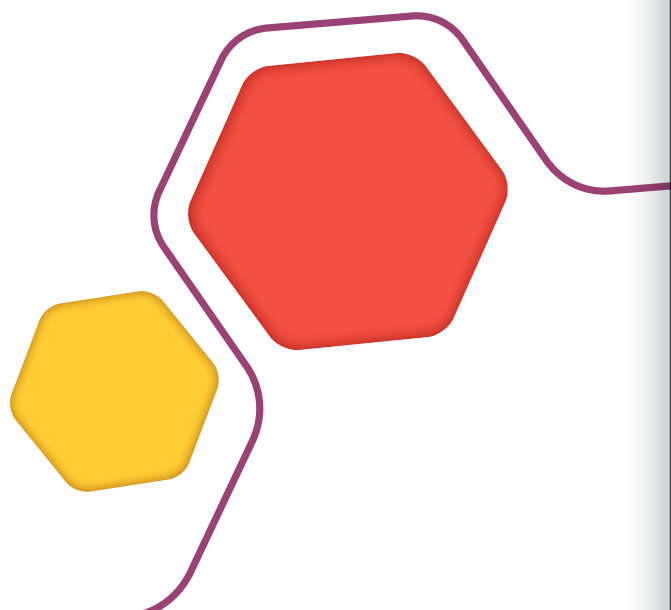
- That women and gender diverse people have historically experienced, and continue to experience, discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender²
- That gender equity is not about treating everyone the same but recognises people's different needs and power related to their sex and gender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

² Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) s 6(9)

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:

1. Continue to embed actions that promote gender equity and prevent violence against women and family violence in future iterations of the Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan and Council Plan, to ensure integration and alignment with other parts of Council.
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 the community to support 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. Pilot new and strengthen existing intersectional gender equity activities, particularly in relevant language/s with our multicultural and faith-based communities, and for our LGBTIQ+ communities, people with a disability, and young people and older community members.
5. 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.
6. Increase community knowledge of new and existing service providers for violence against women and family violence assistance and support.
7. 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 requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020.
8. 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.
9. Continue to work with new and existing partners to implement this Framework, and to seek out initiatives and funding opportunities as they arise to support our work.





PURPOSE OF THIS FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this Framework is to guide Council's approach to promoting gender equality 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 sexes and 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.

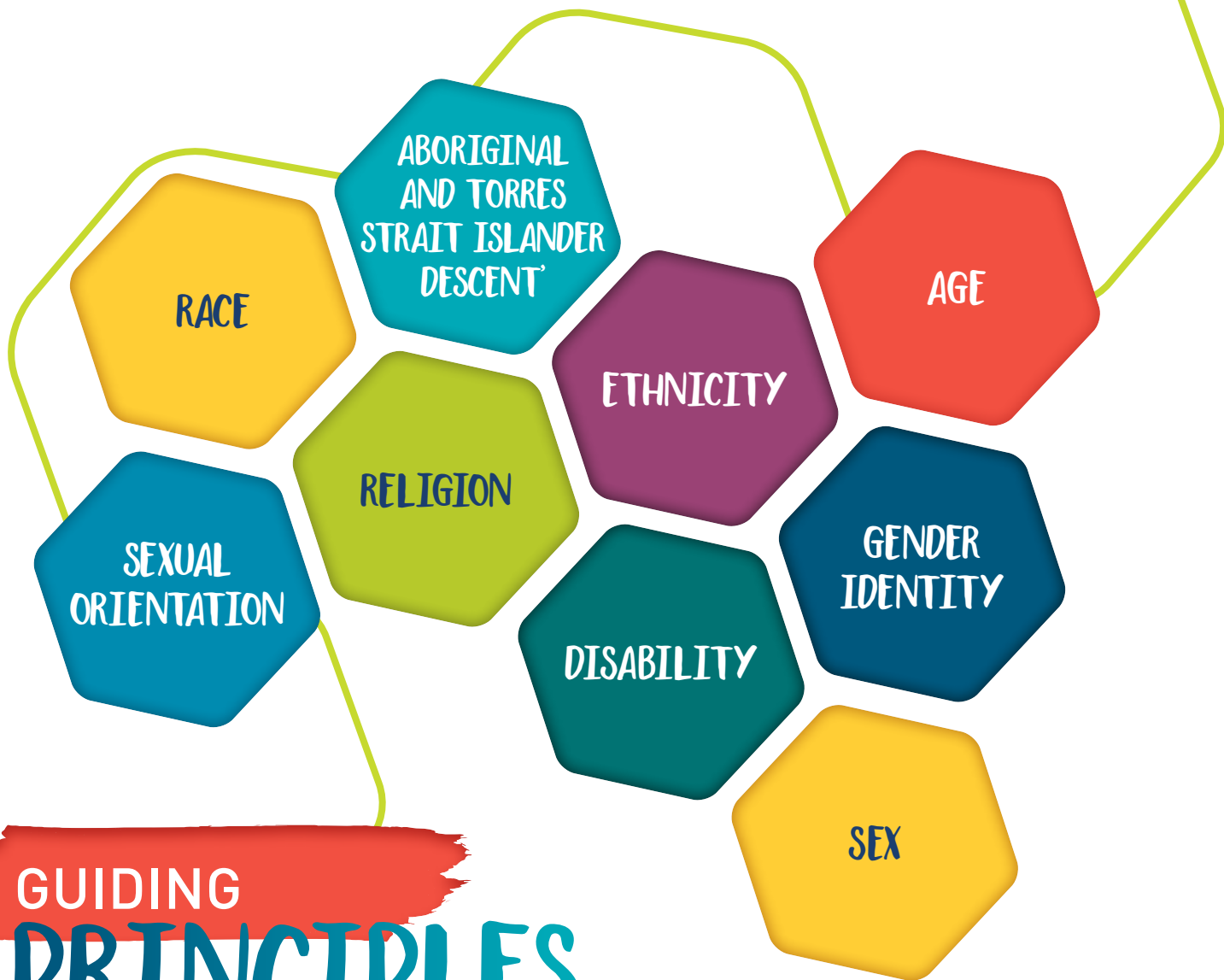
This Framework also clearly articulates that, as a large employer, Council has a role in ensuring it leads by example and that Council is a workplace that encourages and promotes gender equity internally.

FRAMEWORK LANGUAGE

As language in this space evolves and changes, people may respond to terms differently. In this Framework, Council acknowledges that the category of women is a socially constructed one, and part of a binary system of sex and gender categories that does not represent the gender diversity of the population. The Framework's definition of a 'woman' includes anyone who identifies as a woman or female, which includes cisgender, trans women and others who identify themselves within the gender identity of a woman.³ Similarly when referring to a 'man' it refers to male identifying people, which includes cisgender, trans men and others who identify themselves within the gender identity of a man. In this Framework we also use the term 'gender diverse people', who may identify as non-binary,

trans, agender, genderqueer, genderfluid or with any other term⁴

Council uses the language 'violence against women' to be consistent with Victoria's Free from Violence Framework, and Our Watch's Change the Story (second edition). This is in acknowledgement of the international use of this language (for example by the United Nations) and of the fact that women make up the overwhelming majority of victims of family and domestic violence and sexual violence. Council acknowledges that LGBTIQ+ communities experience similar levels of violence, perpetuated by similar drivers of violence as violence against women.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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

1. **Intersectionality:** We will acknowledge that gender inequality does not impact all people in the same way. Sex and gender intersect with other experiences of discrimination and disadvantage due to characteristics such as age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent), religion, and/or sexual orientation.
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 gender equitable workforce and give our staff and councillors the skills to help promote gender equity within the organisation and for our community.
4. **Advocacy:** We will amplify the voices of our community. We will ensure that people know where they can go to seek help or advice and will advocate for gender equity and the prevention of violence against women and family violence.
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 evidenced, 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, which have prevented a level playing field. Gender equity leads to gender equality, where there are equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for people of all genders.

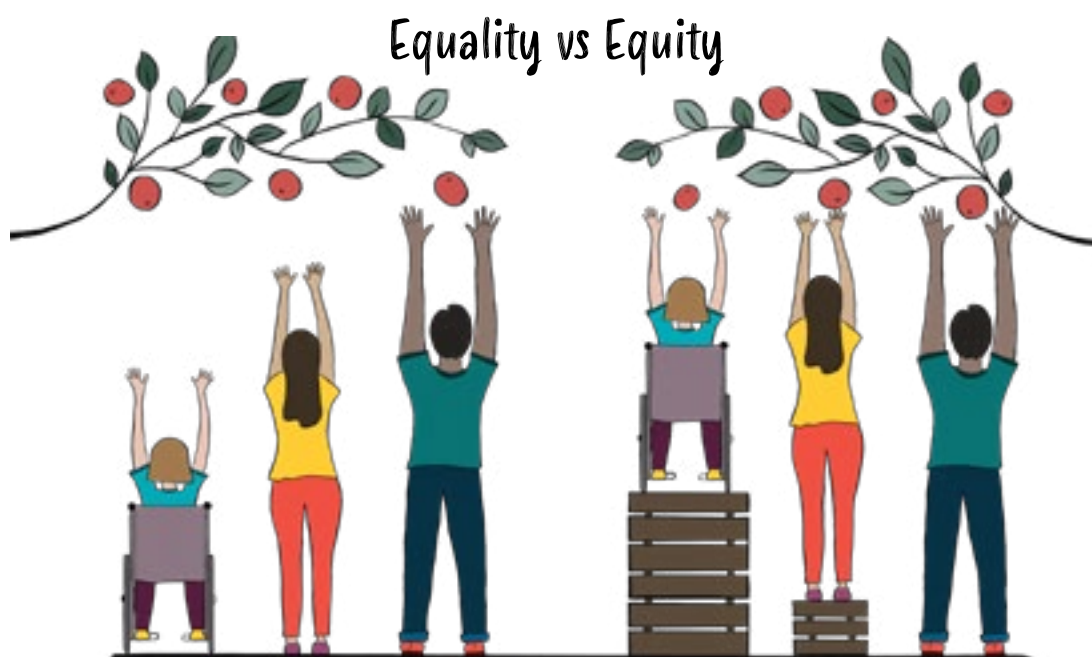
This means that gender equity is not about treating everyone the same but recognising people's different needs and power related to their sex and gender and working to address these differences to rectify sex- and gender-related imbalances.⁵

We also need to consider intersectionality, which is the concept that, alongside gender inequality on the basis of sex and gender, other forms of discrimination or disadvantage may exist related to age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent), religion,

and/or sexual orientation. 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.

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.⁶



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 women, men, and gender diverse people. For example:

- On average, Australian women earn \$242.90 less per week than men ⁷ and retire with just under half the superannuation savings of men.⁸
- 50% of women report experiencing sex discrimination due to pregnancy, parental leave, or in relation to returning to work.⁹
- Unpaid care is disproportionately undertaken by women.¹⁰
- The Victorian participation rate in sport for females is nearly half of that for males.¹¹
- Boys receive 11% more pocket money and 8 times more attention in classrooms than girls.¹²
- 1 in 3 Australian women over 15 has experienced physical violence, however only 40% of the Monash community¹³ agreed that violence against women is common in our community.¹⁴
- Women from culturally diverse communities face additional barriers to education and employment as a result of language barriers, racism, and other forms of discrimination and disadvantage, including lack of culturally responsive services, lack of access to information about their rights, separation from family and other support networks, and insecure visa status.¹⁵
- Women with disabilities are more likely to experience family violence and sexual assault compared with men with disabilities or women without disabilities.¹⁶
- Trans and gender diverse people are more likely to experience mental illness, verbal and physical abuse, cyberbullying, and social exclusion than the general population.¹⁷
- Among young Australians aged 12 to 24 years there are three male deaths to every female death, with accidents and suicide accounting for most of this difference. In 2015 around 76% of completed suicides were by men.¹⁸
- Fewer people in Monash support gender equality in relationships when compared to the rest of Victorians.¹⁹
- 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.²⁰

⁷ Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2020), Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics, retrieved 2/3/21, www.wgea.gov.au/data/fact-sheets/australia-gender-pay-gap-statistics

⁸ 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/

⁹ 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

¹⁰ Safe and Strong

¹¹ 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

¹² 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

¹³ 40% of respondents to the 2021 community consultation survey for the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

¹⁴ Of respondents to the 2021 community consultation survey for the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

¹⁵ Safe and Strong

¹⁶ Safe and Strong

¹⁷ Safe and Strong

¹⁸ Safe and Strong

¹⁹ 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

²⁰ 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 – both 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, as well as clubs.

Council was keen to understand what the barriers were 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 both 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 is not infrastructure but club culture that is 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, modelled from the top down, to inappropriate language and behaviour.

Taking an intersectional approach, we see that other personal attributes can also 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 to 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 and embedding these 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 on this 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. A snapshot of some of the key approaches, particularly from Our Watch's 'Change the Story' Framework (second edition) and the Victorian Government's 'Safe and Strong' Strategy, 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.²¹ 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.

Gender lens or Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)

Our Watch explains that an essential action to address the social context that gives rise to violence against women is to "establish, maintain and report publicly on processes to assess all public policy for its impact on women and gender equality, including analysing differential impacts on different groups of women, and use this gender analysis to inform the development of policy that benefits women and promotes gender equality."²³ This is sometimes called putting a 'gender lens' over policies. The importance of this 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/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.²³ 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.



²¹ Our Watch, *Change the Story* (second edition), p. 66.

²² Our Watch, *Change the Story* (second edition), p. 64.

²³ *Safe and Strong*, p. 12.

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 Commonwealth²⁴, 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 direct participation programs that engage people at individual, relationship or group level to build knowledge and skills such as increased understanding of sexist and gendered norms, attitudes and behaviours, and their skills to address these through ‘bystander actions’, as well as building organisational capacity to support and contribute to such bystander action.²⁵ 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.²⁶ Because of the range of work that Council undertakes, in different areas of community life and across different ages and communities, 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, the 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.

Engage men and boys

Gender inequality affects women, men, and gender diverse people. It is not just an issue for women. This means that men need to be involved in making change. This will benefit everyone. This can include supporting men and boys in developing healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships.²⁷ 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.”²⁸

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 and colonialism, discrimination against people with disabilities, or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.²⁹ We need to ensure that our work is inclusive and has an intersectional focus, and work to reduce other forms of discrimination as well.

²⁴ *Safe and Strong*, p.12

²⁵ *Our Watch, Change the Story (second edition)*, p.81

²⁶ *Our Watch, Change the Story (second edition)*, p.61

²⁷ *Our Watch, Change the Story (second edition)*, p.63

²⁸ *Safe and Strong*, p.8

²⁹ *Our Watch, Change the Story (second edition)*, p.47

Challenge gender stereotypes and strengthen equal and respectful relationships

Gender stereotypes affect people of all sexes and genders and are a key driver of violence against women and family violence. Gender stereotypes become embedded in childhood, so it is important to help people of all ages challenge these.³⁰ We also need to promote equal and respectful relationships between people of all sexes and 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 cannot play or partner with others to deliver a whole-of-school approach to the Respectful Relationships program in our schools.

Promote and normalise gender equity

Council has a role to play in ensuring everyone is supported to participate in public life, which includes decision-making and consideration of the gendered impacts of particular policies (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, as well as through our Gender Equity Advisory Committee, which includes community members.

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.³¹ 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.³²

We need to ensure that gender equity work is appropriately resourced, including but not limited to through Council's annual budgeting process. It is also important that we work with our partners and seek out grants and other opportunities to assist us in this.



³⁰ *Our Watch, Change the Story (second edition), p. 76.*

³¹ *Safe and Strong, p. 7.*

³² *Our Watch, Change the Story (second edition), p. 109.*

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 that:

- Nearly two in ten (20%) people have experienced discrimination on the basis of their gender, and more than 80% of those people are women
- The community's top six priorities for health and wellbeing include 'addressing all forms of discrimination (including gender-based discrimination)', with more than four in ten respondents (41%) selecting this, and 'preventing family violence and violence against women', with more than four in ten respondents (42%) also selecting this
- There is a strong understanding among nearly seven in ten respondents (69%) that doctors can provide services for family violence support, however, fewer people knew about 1800RESPECT (58%) and Council (40%) as places from which you could get support.

Through this consultation, respondents from our community also told us that our priority 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
6	Universities, TAFEs, and other tertiary education institutions	25
7	Monash Council as a workplace	23
8	The arts	11
9	Faith-based contexts	11



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 the following:

Gender Equity Advisory Committee

Monash Council established a Gender Equity Advisory Committee (GEAC) in 2015. This committee has representation from Councillors, as well as community members and organisations from the Monash community. GEAC 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 Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020. Key achievements of GEAC's have included 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 GEAC 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 the 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 that 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 artists of different genders 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 in Monash (many of them women) who care for others and promoting the important role this overwhelmingly unpaid work plays. 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 more than 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 scholarships to study at universities abroad, community leadership/ambassadorial opportunities, and multiple other educational and career opportunities. The program received VicHealth funding in 2019 to assist Monash and two other Victorian Councils to roll out the successful program. In 2020, a Young Men's Leadership Program was developed and piloted. It 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, and so on. Council then committed to using that data to improve facilities going forward. In this vein, 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 Active Monash Recreation Opportunities Strategy
- Delivering women-only swim programs
- Taking part in This Girl Can – Victoria activities and training
- Holding its first ever Active Monash Pride Night in 2021 including making non-binary change rooms available.

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.

Faith-based contexts

Monash Council was project lead 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.

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 upgrades have taken place in 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 movie 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.

FRAMEWORK CONTEXT

There has been considerable growth in the policy landscape in this area, 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 in building respectful relationships and working 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 experiences 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 September 2021, 204 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 Victorian 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 of women and men 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
- Undertake a gender impact assessment when developing or reviewing any policy 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 characteristics other than sex and gender, such as: age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent), religion, and/or sexual orientation.

Regional and local

Best Practice Guide for Gender Equity in Local Government

The Local Government Victoria produced Best Practice Guide³³ for Gender Equity in Local Government discusses how councils can increase the representation of women councillors, train their staff (in gender equity, unconscious bias, and bystander action), and review organisational 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 (EMR) to prioritise and work together on the primary prevention of men's violence against women. The TFER Strategy 2021-25 coordinates collective action and sets a strategic framework for the EMR. There is also a TFER Evaluation Framework that 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 Gender Equity Framework is closely aligned to Council's recently adopted Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025, with a gender lens having been applied in its development.

The 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 Council's 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 contains gender equity actions and indicators, including specific actions required by the Victorian government on gender equity and prevention of violence against women.



³³ Local Government Victoria, *Best Practice Guide for Gender Equity in Local Government*, https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0025/166831/Gender-Equity-in-Local-Government-Best-Practice-Guide.docx

FRAMEWORK GLOSSARY

Cisgender: a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth³⁴

Gender: the socially imposed and learned roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for women and men. Gender defines femininity and masculinity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and change over time, however, feminine gender norms have traditionally been imposed on women on the basis of their (female) sex.

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.³⁵

Gender equality: Equality of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of and for 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 sex or gender.

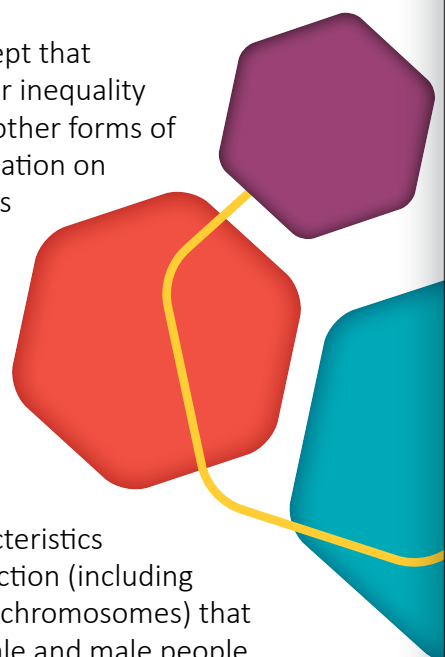
Gender equity: Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of sex and gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their sex and gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies sex- and gender-related imbalances. Gender Impact assessment: (GIA): a way of considering a policy, program, or service and

how it may affect people differently on the basis of their sex and gender. 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: a concept that acknowledges that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent), religion, and/or sexual orientation.

Sex: The biological characteristics related to sexual reproduction (including anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes) that distinguish between female and male people. As noted above, feminine gender norms have traditionally been imposed on women on the basis of their (female) sex.

Transgender: an umbrella term for people who identify differently to the sex they were assigned at birth.



³⁴ Women's Health East, *Step Up: A guide for practice from the voices of LGBTIQ young people*

³⁵ LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide

Existing resources and policies

Council resources

Monash Council, 2017. A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021. Access at: www.monash.vic.gov.au/health-plan

Monash Council, 2021: Active Monash Sports Club Framework 2022-2027. Access at: www.monash.vic.gov.au/sports-club-framework

Monash Council Gender Equity Advisory Committee. Access at: www.monash.vic.gov.au/gender-equity-committee

Monash Council, 2015: Gender Equity Strategy. Access at: 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: 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: 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: 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: 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: 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: www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/gender-equity

Victorian Government. Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy. Access at: www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality

Victorian Government. Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence. Access at: www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence

Victorian Government, 2015. Royal Commission into Family Violence. Access at: www.vic.gov.au/about-royal-commission-family-violence



CITY OF
MONASH

Monash Civic Centre | 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley, 3150 | 8.30am to 5.15pm | Monday to Friday
Oakleigh Service Centre | 3 Atherton Road, Oakleigh, 3166 | 8.30am to 5.15pm | Monday to Friday
9518 3555 | www.monash.vic.gov.au | mail@monash.vic.gov.au
National Relay Service (for people with hearing or speech impairments) 1800 555 660

Language Assist

普通话	9321 5485	Ελληνικά	9321 5482	廣東話	9321 5481	සිංහල	7005 3002	Italiano	9321 5483
हिंदी	7005 3000	Việt Ngữ	9321 5487	தமிழ்	7005 3003	한국어	9321 5484	Bahasa Indonesia	7005 3001