

Mornington Peninsula Shire

# Gender Equality Strategy

*Preventing violence against women and their  
children*

**2020 – 2030**



**MORNINGTON  
PENINSULA**  
*Shire*

## Acknowledgements

### Acknowledgment of Country

Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges and pays respect to the Boon Wurrung/Bunurong people, the traditional custodians of these lands and waters.



### Our Community

The Shire is grateful to the many community members, service providers /key stakeholders and staff who participated in engagement activities. Their information and ideas shared have been strongly considered in the development of this Strategy.

## Mayor's statement

It gives me great pleasure to present Mornington Peninsula Shire's first *Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2030*, which provides a prevention framework to guide the work needed to prevent violence against women and their children, and increase gender equality, over the next decade.

The Shire has a long-standing commitment to preventing violence against women through the 2014 Family Violence Statement of Commitment and the *Prevention of Family Violence Implementation Plan 2015 – 2018*. The Shire's commitment is also recognised in initiatives in the *Council Plan 2017-2021* and the *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*. The Shire acknowledges its leadership role in addressing gender inequities as a large employer, advocate, service provider and leader.

In 2015 The Royal Commission into Family Violence concluded that 'family violence is a gendered crime' and that ending violence against women and their children requires addressing gender inequality in all its forms – in the workplace, school yards, in media and on sporting fields.

This strategy acknowledges that violence in all forms is unacceptable, regardless of gender, however most victims of family violence are women (95%). The Strategy emphasises the importance of a whole of community approach in preventing violence against women and their children through implementing objectives, strategies and key actions across six settings, to increase gender equality where we live, work, learn and play.

The Strategy has been developed based on engagement with the community, collaboration with key stakeholders, the review of the Prevention of Family Violence Plan and evidence informed best practice.

I encourage everyone to work together on this significant social issue so all people across the Mornington Peninsula can live in an inclusive, safe and respectful environment regardless of gender.

**Councillor David Gill, Mayor  
Mornington Peninsula Shire**

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## Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
LGA	Local Government Area
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PVAW	Prevention of Violence Against Women
PVT	Preventing Violence Together
RCFV	Royal Commission into Family Violence
WHISE	Women’s Health In the South-East

# 1. Introduction

Gender equity between men and women is a principle that lies at the heart of a fair and productive society. Mornington Peninsula Shire has a long history of working to promote gender equity and prevention of violence against women (PVAW). Moving forward, this Gender Equality Strategy provides a framework for delivery of Mornington Peninsula Shire's policy and actions aimed at improving gender equity and reducing violence against women and children within the Shire workforce, within our community and through design and delivery of Shire services and programs.

Violence against women and their children is now recognised to be a serious and widespread problem in Australia, with enormous individual and community impacts and social costs. This is a significant social problem that is also ultimately preventable.

Research is now well-established demonstrating that the key determinant of violence against women and their children is the persisting inequities between men and women and the unequal distribution of power between men and women. In 2015, the Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV) concluded that 'family violence is a gendered crime' and that ending violence against women and their children requires addressing gender inequality in all its forms – in the workplace, school yards, on television screens and on sporting fields.

Family Violence has traditionally focussed on men perpetrating violence against women however we acknowledge the understanding of gender is evolving. When this document refers to 'woman/women' or 'man/men' it refers to female and male identifying people; this can also include transgender, cisgender and others who identify themselves within this spectrum of gender identity of female or male. Gender non-binary people do not necessarily identify with female or male genders, or view gender in a binary manner. Research is being undertaken in the sector to understand primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTIQ+ communities as this understanding develops, this Strategy's action plan will further explore the risk factors for family violence specific to the LGBTIQ+ community.

As the level of government closest to the community, Victoria's Councils have been mandated under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act to create healthy, safe and inclusive communities since the early 2000s. This has been further reinforced by the Victorian Government Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2015 (RCFV), with a key outcome being that Councils are now required to 'report on the measures they propose to take to reduce family violence and respond to the needs of victims.'<sup>1</sup>

In recognition of the Shire's commitment the Council Plan 2017-2021 and the Public Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21 have committed to a major initiative to 'Support and implement preventative and awareness programs to support families and impact on rates of family violence'. The Shire is also a member and signatory to Preventing Violence Together (PVT), the Southern Metropolitan's Regional Partnership and Strategy that guides the primary prevention of men's violence against women across Melbourne's South East and is involved in a number of advisory and working groups associated with the partnership. The Shire has now committed to the development of this Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan. The purpose of the Strategy is to guide the Shire's work to continue promoting gender equity and inclusion for everyone in the Mornington Peninsula community and outline the steps that Council will take to meet the recommendations for Local Government from the RCFV. The Strategy will be both internally and externally focused. It is intended that the Strategy and Action Plan will build internal capacity to promote and embed gender equitable practice and PVAW in policies, programs and services, as well as working in partnership with service providers and

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<sup>1</sup> Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. 2017. Final Report. Victorian Government, Melbourne.

other key stakeholders with the intent of making a significant contribution to achieving gender equity across the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

## Statement of Commitment for the prevention of family violence

In 24 November 2014, the Shire made a Statement of Commitment for the prevention of family violence:

*The Mornington Peninsula Shire community is a safe place and acts to eliminate violence in all of its forms.*

*The Shire commits to work for the prevention of family violence through the following actions:*

- 1. To work with key stakeholders through relevant forums, including the Peninsula Model, to ensure the Mornington Peninsula is a safe place;*
- 2. To encourage respectful relationships between all members of the community and promote the rights of everyone to live in peace and free from family violence;*
- 3. To provide opportunities for all women, men and children to participate equally in all spheres of public and private life;*
- 4. To develop and implement a coordinated action plan with relevant partners to assist in the prevention of family violence that promotes health and wellbeing.*

## 2. Guiding Principles

The seven guiding principles that will underpin all work undertaken through this Strategy and Action Plan are aligned with the *Preventing Violence Together Regional Strategy*, (Southern Metropolitan's Regional Partnership and Strategy), the Mornington Peninsula Shire Gender Equality Strategy will:

- Adopt a primary prevention approach to eliminating violence against women and their children
- Recognise the underlying cause of violence against women as gender inequality
- Be inclusive and equitable
- Be informed by a human rights approach
- Utilise a collaborative and participatory approach
- Be evidence informed
- Work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to achieve collective impact.

## 3. Our Community

The Mornington Peninsula Shire consists of more than forty towns and villages, approximately 60 kilometres south of Melbourne, with much of the population living near the coast. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Shire has an estimated resident population of 163,151 as well as a part-time population of approximately 50,000, who spend part of the week, or holidays, in the local government area (LGA). This represents an increase of the estimated resident population of more than 10,000 people since the 2011 Census.

The median age of a Mornington Peninsula resident at the 2016 Census was 46 years; 8.6 years older than the Australian average of 37.4 years. Some 5,308 people in Mornington Peninsula are aged over 85 with 23.6% of the population aged over 65.

Further, the Shire has a significantly higher proportion of older women compared to the Greater Melbourne population with this being discernible from age 45 onwards. Women over the age of 65 represent 12.9% of the Shire's population while men account for 10.7 per cent. At age 85, women represent 2% of the population (3,217) and men 1.3% (2,091).

The Shire has a significant number of lone person households - 25 per cent of households (compared to 22 per cent for Greater Melbourne) or 15,552 people living alone. Sole household members tend to be more isolated than people living in couple households (with or without children), other families, or group households.

The Shire is home to 8,469 residents who require assistance with daily activities. At the 2016 census, 5,072 of those people are aged 65 and above.

There are more than 1,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the Mornington Peninsula, with approximately half aged less than 30 years. Despite some improvements in health and wellbeing outcomes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still face significant social disadvantages and health inequalities in comparison to the broader population<sup>2</sup>:

- The life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is an average of 15 years below that of non-Indigenous people
- Less than 1% of 25-44 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a tertiary qualification
- Single parent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are more than double that of the broader population
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face housing insecurity is at least three times higher than other residents due to renting, financial stress and family circumstances
- The unemployment rate is 12% compared to 5% of non-Indigenous people.

#### 4. Gender inequality and violence against women and their children

Gender inequality affects all Victorians in a myriad of ways, including but not limited to:

- Gender stereotypes shaping children's sense of self understanding, becoming reflected in their behaviour, study choices, ambitions, and views about relationships
- The under-representation of women in senior leadership positions
- Persistence of the gender pay gap despite equality in post-secondary and tertiary education.

We know that:

- Women do three times the amount of unpaid work than men.
- Women's' average full-time total remuneration across all industries and occupations is 21.3% less than men.<sup>3</sup>
- Men take home \$25,717/year more than women (on average).<sup>4</sup>
- From 2017-18, gender balance has remained static at senior levels with female CEOs only 17.1% and female representation on Boards at 25.8%.<sup>5</sup>
- More than 80% of single parent families are headed by women.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://profile.id.com.au/mornington-peninsula>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2017-18-gender-equality-scorecard\\_0.pdf](https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2017-18-gender-equality-scorecard_0.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

Statistics demonstrate the prevalence and severity of violence against women:

- On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner.
- 1 in 3 Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15.
- 1 in 5 Australian women has experienced sexual violence.
- 1 in 6 Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence by current or former partner.
- 1 in 4 Australian women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.
- Australian women are nearly three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.
- Australian women are almost four times more likely than men to be hospitalised after being assaulted by their spouse or partner.
- Women with disabilities in residential, institutional and service settings frequently experience sustained and multiple episodes of violence particularly sexual violence. More than a quarter of rape cases reported by females in Australia are perpetrated against women with disabilities. Ninety per cent of Australian women with an intellectual disability have been subjected to sexual abuse, with more than two-thirds (68%) having been sexually abused before they turn 18 years of age.<sup>6</sup>
- Women are more than twice as likely as men to have experienced fear or anxiety due to violence from a former partner.
- More than two-thirds (68%) of mothers who had children in their care when they experienced violence from their previous partner said their children had seen or heard the violence.
- Almost one in 10 women (9.4%) have experienced violence by a stranger since the age of 15.
- Young women (18 – 24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.
- There is growing evidence that women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women report experiencing violence in the previous 12 months at 3.1 times the rate of non-Indigenous women.
- In 2014–15, Indigenous women were 32 times as likely to be hospitalised due to gender-based violence as non-Indigenous women.
- Victoria Police reported 1,867 family violence incidents on the Mornington Peninsula in 2017-2018.<sup>7</sup>
- Analysis has shown that only 25% of referrals to family violence services in the Southern Metro Region come from Victoria Police.<sup>8</sup>

Who is most affected:

Family violence occurs throughout the social spectrum. Its impacts can be devastating regardless of postcode, 'class' or background: Family Violence does not discriminate in terms of race, or social or economic status.

"International evidence is equivocal on socio-economic status as a contributing factor to the occurrence of family violence. However, what we do know is that different forms of inequality and discrimination can lead to social and economic disadvantage. The effect of this is that when socio-economic disadvantage intersects with other forms of disadvantage, discrimination and inequality, the risk of violence increases."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Frohmader C, Dowse L, Didi A. *Preventing Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities: Integrating A Human Rights Perspective*. Women With Disabilities Australia (WVDA January 2015). Available: [http://wwda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Think-Piece\\_WVD.pdf](http://wwda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Think-Piece_WVD.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Victoria Police - July 2013 to June 2018, Crime Statistics Agency. Available: <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/family-violence-data-portal/family-violence-data-dashboard/victoria-police>

<sup>8</sup> Hutcheson E. 2017. Family Violence in the Southern Metropolitan Region – a data analysis. Available: <https://southsafe.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Family-Violence-in-the-SMR-Summary-Document-v3.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.rcfv.com.au/MediaLibraries/RCFamilyViolence/Reports/RCFV\\_Full\\_Report\\_Interactive.pdf](http://www.rcfv.com.au/MediaLibraries/RCFamilyViolence/Reports/RCFV_Full_Report_Interactive.pdf)

## 5.1 What about violence against men?

All violence is unacceptable regardless of the sex of the victim or perpetrator, but there are distinct gendered patterns in the perpetration and impact of violence. For example, both women and men are more likely to experience violence at the hands of men, with around 95% of all victims of violence in Australia reporting a male perpetrator.<sup>10</sup>

While men are more likely to experience violence by other men in public places, women are more likely to experience violence from men they know, often in the home.<sup>11</sup> The overwhelming majority of acts of domestic violence and sexual assault are perpetrated by men against women, and this violence is likely to have more severe impacts on female than male victims.

Recognising the gendered patterns of violence doesn't negate the experiences of male victims, but it does point to the need for an approach that looks honestly at what the research is telling us. This Strategy addresses the gendered dynamics of violence. Promoting gender equality and respectful and non-violent relationships benefits the whole community, including men.

## 5.2 Elder Abuse

Elder abuse and adolescent violence against parents are part of a broader term of Family violence referring to not only violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members.

Elder abuse is unique as it can also occur outside of the family context (for example, in aged care) and be perpetrated by friends and non-family members trusted by the older person, and it may include abusive behaviour by staff and other residents.

The driver underlying the social condition of elder abuse is ageism, the way people are treated differently as they age. Negative attitudes associated with ageing mean that it can be seen as a time of decline, loss and vulnerability. Whereas the underlying driver for violence against women and their children is gender inequality.

While elder abuse is a form of family violence and the reforms in this area will assist older women and men, many of the prevention and intervention measures needed to address the issue must also consider the unique contexts within which elder abuse occurs and the desires of older people. The prevention measures will be documented within the Shire's Positive Ageing Strategy. *Source: Seniors Rights Victoria – Elder Abuse as Family Violence*

## 5. Our framework and approach

The emergence of research, policy and practice designed to prevent violence against women has strengthened since the RCFV in 2015. The National organisation, OurWatch, supported by all States and Territories, has released a framework for shared action called, *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*. This framework includes identification of the drivers of violence against women which are set out in the framework (Figure 1) below.

(Figure 1) shows the four identified drivers of violence against women associated with four essential actions to prevent violence. These drivers and essential actions provide a framework for actions taken through this Strategy.

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<sup>10</sup> Diemer, K. 2015. ABS Personal Safety Survey: Additional analysis on relationship and sex of perpetrator. Documents and working papers. Research on violence against women and children, University of Melbourne.

<sup>11</sup> ABS 2017. Personal Safety, Australia, 2016, ABS cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra: ABS.

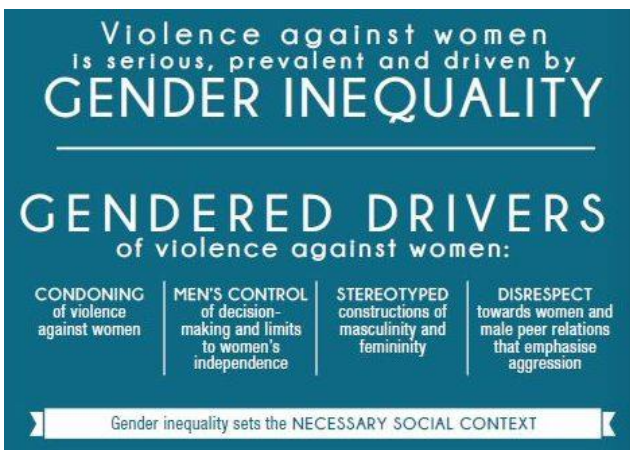


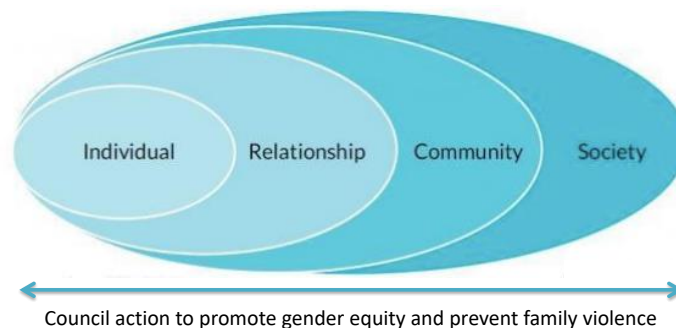
Figure 1: Source: OurWatch, 2016. Change the Story. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework>

There are recognised contributing factors to violence against women and their children. In particular, the association between alcohol and drug use and violence against women and children has been shown to be significant. Research has consistently shown that alcohol and drug misuse are risk factors for both victims and perpetrators of family violence.<sup>12</sup>

Other risk factors include social issues such as financial stress including gambling, unemployment, housing insecurity and household overcrowding, but the drivers behind those contributing factors are shown in Figure 1. Research identifies gender inequality as the root cause of violence against women.

Gender-based violence has multiple causes and actions can be taken at different levels or spheres of social life. This is best conceptualised in a socio-ecological model (2) which positions individual behaviours in their social context.

Figure 2: Socio-Ecological Model



The model illustrates that local government actions can be targeted at these different levels, for example:

- The individual level relates to Council services that have direct contact with residents such as Maternal and Child Health Services and Local Laws teams;
- The Relationship level relates to those settings and programs that seek to promote healthy relationships and gender equity such as the *Baby Makes 3* program for new parents and Respectful Relationships and Safe Schools programs for children and adolescents. These programs are about promoting safety and equality among the next generation and equipping them with the skills to form healthy and respectful relationships in adulthood.
- The Community level relates to the settings such as schools, sporting venues, workplaces and neighbourhoods in which social relationships occur.

<sup>12</sup> WHISE and Family Life. 2019. Family Violence in the Mornington Peninsula. A review of available data on the challenges and drivers of family violence in the region.

- The Societal level relates to health, economic and social policies which drive community attitudes and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity.

Violence against women and their children happens because women are targeted for violence but some women face higher risks. This is called intersectionality which *OurWatch* explains as:

- The multiple forms of discrimination and oppression which affect women who are subsequently affected by the drivers of violence more frequently and more severely than other women,
- Women with disabilities, homeless women, women with mental illness, women who are pregnant,<sup>13</sup> and Aboriginal women experience higher rates of violence, and
- The increased probability of these groups being targeted for violence.

## 6. Policy Context

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008) section 24 and the Local Government Act 1989 (Sections 3c and 3d) requires Councils to act as “representative, informed and responsible decision makers in the interests of their communities.” This means responding to the interests and needs of both women and men across all aspects of Shire activity.

The Shire is also bound by legislation including the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and Sex Discrimination Act 1984, which aim to eliminate discrimination and sexual harassment and promote greater equity in the community. Finally, compliance with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 requires councils to uphold human rights, including the rights of women, as an essential component of a democratic, equitable and inclusive society.

The Shire’s Gender Equality Strategy is aligned with Commonwealth, State and Local Governments and Regional Partnership efforts to improve gender equality and prevent violence against women and their children (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Policy alignment**

<b>Federal</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Regional</b>
National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 and fourth Action Plan: Moving Ahead 2019-2022	OurWatch Five Year Strategic Plan 2014-2019  OurWatch <i>Change The Story- A Shared Framework for the Prevention of Violence Against Women</i> <sup>14</sup>	<i>Free From Violence: Victoria’s Prevention Strategy 2016</i>  <i>10-year plan, Ending family violence: Victoria’s plan for change 2016</i>  <i>Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy</i>	Preventing Violence Together: <i>A Strategy for the Southern Metropolitan Region</i> 2016 - 2021

<sup>13</sup> Campo M. 2015. Domestic and family violence in pregnancy and early parenthood: overview and emerging interventions

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/domestic-and-family-violence-pregnancy-and-early-parenthood>

<sup>14</sup> *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (Our Watch et al. 2015)

Mornington Peninsula Shire Policy					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Plan 2017-21 - <i>Our Peninsula 2021</i> vision – ‘To value, protect and improve the unique characteristics of the Mornington Peninsula community’ - Valuing our unique peninsula.’</li> <li>• Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21 – <i>Our Health and Wellbeing 2021</i> vision – ‘To protect and promote the health and wellbeing of the Mornington Peninsula community’.</li> </ul>					
MPS Gender Equality Strategy 2020 – 2030					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mornington Peninsula Shire Family Violence Statement of Commitment</li> </ul>					
The Victorian Government Gender Equity Strategy: Key Settings					
Education and Training	Work and Economic Security	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Leadership and representation	Sport and Recreation	Media, Arts and Culture

Other policies that this strategy will relate to include the Disability Inclusion Plan 2018-2022 and plans that are currently under development: Positive Ageing Strategy 2013-2018, Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-21, Climate Change Plan, Early Years Plan and Arts and Culture Plan.

## 7. Council’s leadership role

In 2015, the Victorian Government established the Royal Commission into Family Violence in acknowledgement of the seriousness of family violence and its consequences for individuals, families and communities. The government has accepted all 227 recommendations and committed to their implementation. Of those, two directly relate to local government:

- Recommendation 94: Local government will be required to report on measures it proposes to take on reducing family violence and responding to needs of victims. This has occurred through amendments to section 26 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic).
- Recommendation 202: Local council performance measures are used to encourage local council activities designed to prevent family violence and to assess the outcomes of any services they provide to victims and perpetrators of family violence (by 1 July 2018).

The Victorian Government now requires Councils to report on how they will respond to the needs of victims, so alongside primary prevention actions, the Strategy will include measures to strengthen Council’s response to violence against women: The Scope of this Strategy then, includes

**Primary Prevention:** Preventing violence against women and their children from happening in the first place

**Secondary Prevention:** Early intervention with individuals, families, groups where risk of violence is identified

**Tertiary Prevention:** Responding or intervening where violence has occurred.

Mornington Peninsula Shire can make a difference because its reach across the community where people live, work, learn and play, from birth to older adults, is unrivalled. As a large employer, advocate, service provider and leader, the Shire has the capacity to influence many of the determinants of health and wellbeing, including gender. The Shire is visible and accessible to our local community and as an arm of government, have a democratic mandate to lead and implement change. The Shire provides a range of community services, public

spaces, community facilities and public infrastructure, which a gender lens can be applied to and can be used as a platform to influence change.

The Shire is already working to prevent violence against women in practical ways through our role in:

- Local leadership
- Policy and planning
- Developing facilities and creating safe public environments
- Community strengthening
- Communications and provider of information
- As an employer and procurer.

By role modelling gender equity, supportive work environments and a zero-tolerance approach to violence against women and their children, we can create a shift in culture and lead by example, sending a strong message to partners, stakeholders and the community. Existing local government mechanisms, structures, networks, partnerships, relationships and infrastructure can be accessed to generate a whole of community approach to promoting gender equity.

Local governments are also large workplaces within the municipality. As such they can drive workplace change to improve gender equity, provide flexible and supportive working environments for men and women and create opportunities to support women in leadership.

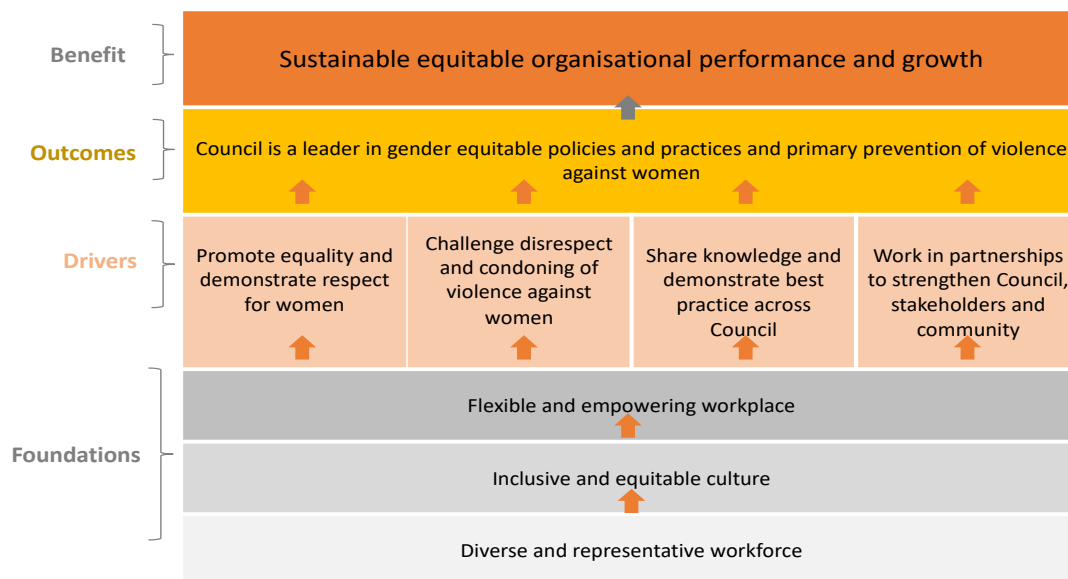
Figure 4 provides the logic for gender equity in Council as an organisation. Gender equity in the workplace will be achieved when Council is able to articulate the benefits to the organisation and simultaneously is seen as a gender equity leader for its community. The desired outcome is that all employees are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of whether they are a woman or a man.

Addressing gender inequities within organisations does not happen without deliberate actions, and like any other business issue, a strategic and systematic approach is required. Figure 4 works through the logic of achieving a sustainable, equitable organisation from sound foundations, through to the drivers on which actions for gender equity are taken, to the outcomes in which Council is positioner as a leader, to the overall benefits for the organisation, that is, a workplace which is genuinely and sustainably equitable to both women and men. It takes time to work from foundations through to the outcomes and organisational benefits. The work requires actions that are mutually reinforcing, in partnership with stakeholders and communities.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> [http://greater-shepparton.com.au/assets/files/documents/our\\_council/council\\_documents/Gender\\_Equity\\_Strategy\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2018-2020.PDF](http://greater-shepparton.com.au/assets/files/documents/our_council/council_documents/Gender_Equity_Strategy_Action_Plan_2018-2020.PDF)

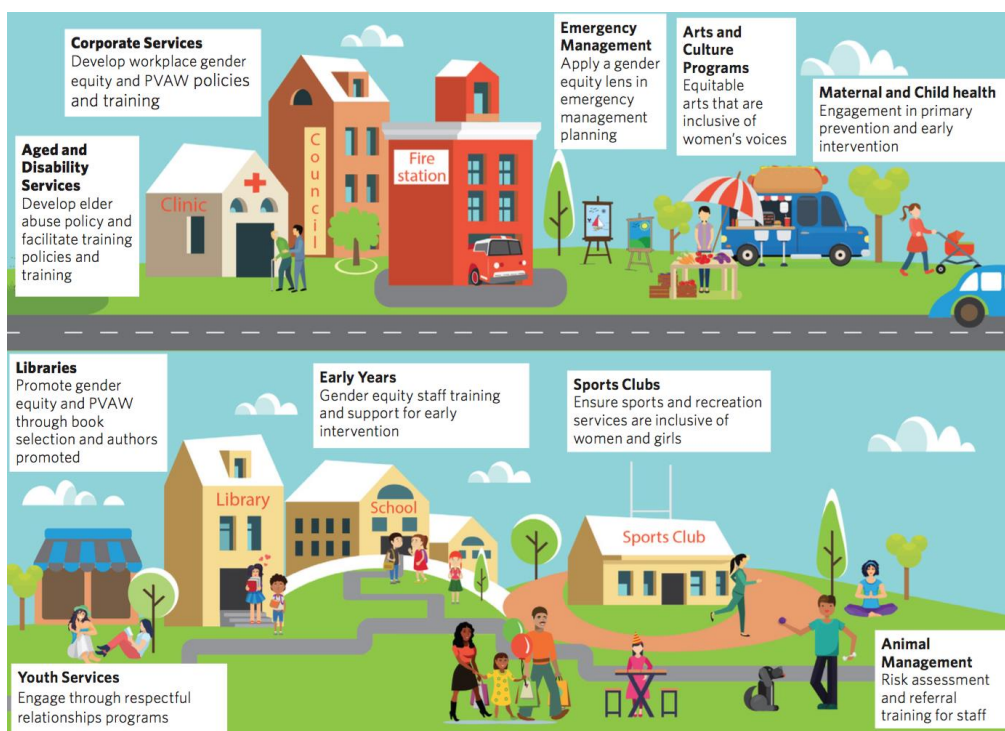
**Figure 4: The logic for gender equity in Council as an organisation**



The reach of local government across the community is unrivalled. Local government connects people in the spaces where they live, work, learn and play from birth to old age.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 5 illustrates the reach of gender equity work across Council from Corporate Services, Health and Wellbeing, Maternal and Child Health, Early Years, Youth Services, Sport and Recreation, Libraries, Arts and Culture, Emergency Management, through to Animal Management and Local Laws. These are all settings where gender equity and PVAW actions can be applied, using the approach illustrated in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Councils’ reach for PVAW programs across the community**



<sup>16</sup> [https://www.mav.asn.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/7233/Evaluation-of-the-role-of-local-government-in-preventing-violence-against-woman-summary-June-2017.pdf](https://www.mav.asn.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/7233/Evaluation-of-the-role-of-local-government-in-preventing-violence-against-woman-summary-June-2017.pdf)

## 8. What has the Shire achieved to date?

Mornington Peninsula Shire has demonstrated commitment to gender equity and preventing violence against women for many years. Progress has centred on the Shire's Prevention of Family Violence Implementation Plan 2015-2017, achievements include:

- Gender equity training for staff
- Annual White Ribbon Day events
- Participation in the 16 Days of Activism campaign
- Shire's Access and Equity Policy and a coordinated policy framework for the delivery of accessible and equitable council services
- Annual International Women's Day events
- Specific funding secured for *Baby Makes 3* program in partnership with Carrington Health aimed at building healthy and respectful relationships between new parents
- Council has also begun the process to develop a Family Violence Collective Impact Project with Family Life and
- As an organisation the Shire is committed to continuing to be a leader in embedding gender equity considerations into the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) including supporting staff with family violence leave entitlements (20 days per year), super top up for all women and an increase in secondary carers leave from two weeks to seven weeks. The Shire also benchmarked key leaderships roles in terms of pay parity and gender diversity.

Mornington Peninsula Shire is a member and signatory to *Preventing Violence Together* (PVT), led by Women's Health in the South East (WHISE), the Southern Metropolitan Regional Strategy that guides the primary prevention of men's violence against women and children in Melbourne's South-East. Through the regional partnership, the Shire is involved in a number of advisory and working groups associated with the partnership. Coordination, organisational capacity building and partnerships are key to maximising the impact of the partnership's efforts, rather than disparate initiatives, one-off projects and short-term funding.

## 9. Stakeholder engagement

Over a three-month period from March – May 2019, the Shire undertook a range of engagement activities to inform the development of the Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan, reaching more than 500 people.

Community members and stakeholders had the opportunity to provide feedback via the following:

1. Two internal workshops
2. Community feedback postcards
3. An online anonymous community survey

The feedback obtained during the engagement phase included sharing ideas on actions to prevent gender inequality and promote inclusiveness across the Mornington Peninsula Shire and the role that each stakeholder plays in achieving this.

Previous community consultation undertaken by the Shire in 2016 asked survey respondents to rank a range of factors "to make my community happier and healthier" of importance to them. Of 12 different factors,

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<sup>17</sup> [https://www.mav.asn.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/7233/Evaluation-of-the-role-of-local-government-in-preventing-violence-against-woman-summary-June-2017.pdf](https://www.mav.asn.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/7233/Evaluation-of-the-role-of-local-government-in-preventing-violence-against-woman-summary-June-2017.pdf)

“preventing violence” was ranked second highest, only slightly after “access to health and support services”. 94% of respondents said that preventing violence was important, with 83% saying it was very important.

### Internal workshops

The internal workshops were well attended and provided feedback through a focus on four settings:

- Media, Arts and Culture
- Workplaces and Business
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing/Neighbourhoods, Community and Open Space
- Sport and Recreation

The key ideas put forward by participants in the workshops were consistent and demonstrated awareness of the importance of Council’s work in promoting gender equity through leadership, reducing gender stereotypes and increasing diversity and opportunities for women across the organisation as well as also through community programs (Table 1).

**Table 1: Themes from internal workshop feedback – Opportunities to strengthen gender equity work**

<b>Media, Arts and Culture</b>	<b>Workplaces and Business</b>	<b>Health, Safety and Wellbeing/Neighbourhoods, Community and Open Space</b>	<b>Sport and Recreation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of a range of opportunities to promote gender equity through the Arts and Culture programs and grants</li> <li>• Promote local women in history including recognition of Aboriginal and TSI women in places of significant cultural heritage</li> <li>• Utilise Peninsula Wide publication to feature regular stories promoting gender equality to community</li> <li>• Develop and promote case studies of gender equity work being achieved at the Shire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local businesses to develop gender equal policies and practices</li> <li>• The Shire to embed gender equality in the workplace, applying a gender lens to policies, processes and programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for community education to raise awareness on gender equity and link to violence against women and children. A whole of population approach with a focus on men and boys.</li> <li>• Support delivery of respectful relationships education in schools and other settings</li> <li>• Continue to deliver Baby Makes 3, a respectful relationships program for first time parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to increase opportunities for female participation in sport and recreation</li> <li>• Continue to embed gender equity guidelines into the development of sport and recreation facilities</li> </ul>

## Feedback postcards

Postcards were distributed across the Shire initially on International Women's Day on 8 March 2019 and were available until the end of April 2019. The postcards sought responses to two statements and two questions:

- What I wish for the women in my life.
- What does gender equity mean to me?
- What I wish for all women.
- What are the barriers to achieving this?

Postcards were available at Council offices and locations with front-line services. 88 people returned completed postcards. Analysis of their responses shows common and consistent themes. In order of frequency, the respondents wrote about the following issues:

- 87 responses were about equality, removing barriers, equal pay/wages for equal work, awareness about inequality, equal/shared responsibilities, women's independence.
- 48 responses nominated freedom of choice/to live a life of their choosing and as they wish, freedom from oppression/discrimination/sexual exploitation/domestic violence/sexual harassment, freedom to express themselves and not be treated as objects, freedom to wear what they like, to feel happy/for happiness, to be free and safe in the world and to be strong.
- 18 responses were about the need for respect/dignity/choices – for choices to be safe, to have a voice/to be heard and to be treated with dignity, as equals; to have choice over what happens to one's body.
- 9 comments were about the importance of affordable and accessible childcare to enable women to have jobs and opportunities.
- Many other comments related to norms – entrenched social norms, 'patriarchal culture'/'old stuffy attitudes' embedded in social structures, harmful gender norms and stereotypes, and sexism that lead to women having fewer opportunities and lower participation, 'for it to be the norm to be a working mum in a leadership role'.

## Community Survey

A Mornington Peninsula Shire survey was distributed electronically in April-May 2019.

- 348 residents or workers in the Shire responded.
- 82% were female, 14% were male and the remainder were non-binary or chose not to say.
- 7% of respondents identified as LGBTIQ
- 9% had a disability
- 1% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- There was good distribution of responses across all areas of the Mornington Peninsula.

People were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: *'All men and women are respected equally in our community.'*

- 49% disagreed with this statement, and 19% strongly disagreed, meaning a total of 68% of respondents disagreed with the statement.
- Only 21% agreed with the statement, including 8% who strongly agreed.

Respondents were also asked to identify what they thought were the main causes of violence against women. The most frequent response was "abuse of alcohol" (75% of respondents), followed by "anger management issues" (71%). Three of the key drivers of violence against women were then identified with "rigid gender roles and stereotypes" (64%), "unequal power across genders" (63%) and gender inequality (62%). These findings indicate that action needs to be done in community education about understanding the key drivers of violence against women.

The survey also asked people to prioritise a range of actions they would you like to see Mornington Peninsula Shire undertake to increase gender equality. Responses ranked in order at below in Table 2.

**Table 2: Community views about actions that Mornington Peninsula Shire should undertake**

Deliver initiatives that promote respectful relationships (e.g. for young people or new parents).	85%
Create opportunities for women in leadership roles (informal or formal at home, community or work).	81%
Promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes to all groups (early years, young people, families, older people) and across communities (e.g. LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, people with disability)	78%
Consider gender equality and increasing women’s participation when undertaking infrastructure planning for sport and recreation / community facilities and in neighbourhoods.	74%
Encourage and promote a gender balance at Council-led committees, events, programs and among staff and Councillors.	73%
Promote gender equality through training and support in community organisations and local businesses.	72%
Encourage the use of gender inclusive language and content in social media, newspaper articles etc.	63%
Deliver initiatives in libraries, neighbourhood houses and community centres that promote gender equality and encourage women’s participation.	62%
Create opportunities for promoting gender equality and women’s achievements through arts and culture platforms (e.g. theatre performances, art exhibitions, women performers).	57%

The Community Survey provides a good foundation of baseline data to inform the Action Plan that will accompany this Strategy. The survey can be repeated at intervals across the life of this Strategy to measure progress. Overall, the themes identified by stakeholders through the different engagement methods are consistent.

## 10. Priority settings for action, objectives and strategies

The Victorian Government Gender Equity Strategy emphasises that gender equity is the responsibility of not just Government but everyone - individuals, families, communities, work places, businesses, sporting associations, as well as media and the arts to build a culture of respect and equality for all. The Shire is using the six key priority settings for action of the Victorian Gender Equity Strategy because they also align with the structure of Council’s work:

Key Setting 1	Education and Training
Key Setting 2	Work and Economic Security
Key Setting 3	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Key Setting 4	Leadership and Representation
Key Setting 5	Sport and Recreation
Key Setting 6	Media Arts and Culture

## Key Setting 1: Education and Training

Women in Australia have made significant strides towards education equality with men. Young Australians are transitioning from school to a world of work demanding new skills and experience. Young males outnumber females in apprenticeships by about 5 to 1, while about 3 out of 5 trainees were female. Participation in a traineeship is made harder by living in non-metropolitan or rural areas.<sup>18</sup> The Mornington Peninsula Shire has a higher proportion of older women than other areas of Melbourne for whom education and training would help them to retain paid employment.

### Alignment to Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan:

Theme - Our Prosperity

Community Outcome – Employment, Education and training opportunities exists within the Mornington Peninsula for all residents.

Health and wellbeing action – Support and deliver services, programs and events that encourage lifelong learning through libraries, neighbourhood houses, community centres and other local facilities.

<b>Objective:</b>
<b>Promote and support opportunities for women and girls to participate in lifelong learning across all areas of education and training.</b>
<b>Strategies:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) for girls and women</li><li>• Promote the value of lifelong learning with a focus on challenging gender norms</li><li>• Support and promote gender equity initiatives in Libraries, Community Centres and Early Years Settings</li><li>• Support delivery of gender equity awareness training</li></ul>

## Key Setting 2: Work and Economic Security

Workplace gender equality is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of gender. Women experience less secure employment and lower rates of participation in the workforce than men, continue to earn less than men, are less likely to advance their careers as far as men, and accumulate less retirement or superannuation savings. Workplace flexibility is recognised as a key enabler of gender equity. It is important that employers to take a strategic approach to workplace flexibility and support for caring and family responsibilities.

### Alignment to Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing plan:

Theme – Our Prosperity

Community Outcome – The Mornington Peninsula economy is sustainable, diverse and successful.

Health and Wellbeing Action – Support local industries to facilitate employment and training opportunities for all.

<b>Objective:</b>
Promote the benefits of women’s participation in paid and unpaid work, valuing the contribution this adds to the economy, and the protective factor of women’s economic security.
<b>Strategies:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support local business to employ a diverse workforce</li><li>• Apply a Gender Lens to Shire policies, programs and services</li><li>• Ensure gender equality in the Shire workplace (recruitment, training, promotion, leave)</li></ul>

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<sup>18</sup> [https://www.isay.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/181870/LSAY\\_BriefingReport19\\_2317.pdf](https://www.isay.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/181870/LSAY_BriefingReport19_2317.pdf)

### Key Setting 3: Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Gender inequity is the main driver of violence against women which in turn, is the biggest cause of poor health among women causing poor mental health and injury. Tackling the inequities that arise from men's control of decisions, male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women are therefore, the most important health issues for women.

#### Alignment to Council Plan and health and Wellbeing plan:

Theme - Our Wellbeing

Community Outcome – A healthy, happy, inclusive and active community

Health and Wellbeing Action - Ensure inclusive processes that promote gender and sexual diversity and equality across all placed based settings

<b>Objective:</b>
Promote and support safe and inclusive environments where all people are equally respected and free from violence regardless of their gender.
<b>Strategies:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Harness the advocacy of men and boys in promoting gender equality</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support community to lead action and raise awareness of gender equality and the link to prevention of violence against women</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embed universal design and gender equity design guidelines into infrastructure planning for community facilities</li></ul>

### Key Setting 4: Leadership and Representation

Council is mandated to provide leadership in gender equitable work practices and in gender equity for the whole community. Council is responsible for providing an organisational culture that is welcoming, inclusive and respectful of women, that strives for equal opportunity and builds the skill and confidence. Council will be a leader in the advancement of women's leadership opportunities at all levels across the organisation.

#### Alignment to Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing plan:

Theme - Our Wellbeing

Community Outcome – A healthy, happy, inclusive and active community

Health and Wellbeing Action -Support efforts to address gender-based discrimination and encourage equitable involvement in decision making roles.

<b>Objectives:</b>
Demonstrate leadership in promoting gender equity and inclusion; challenging stereotypes and creating opportunities for women in leadership roles.
<b>Strategies:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop initiatives to increase the participation of women at political and community levels</li><li>• Support initiatives that promote the participation of women in leadership roles and non-traditional roles</li></ul>

## Key Setting 5: Sport and Recreation

Women and girls have much lower rates of participation in organised sport and active recreation than men and boys. Increasing the participation of women and girls in organised sport and active recreation is a key to women's health and wellbeing by creating gender equitable policies, club cultures and facilities to encourage females who are inactive to become active more regularly through sport and recreation. Council has opportunities to raise the profile of female sport and active recreation, and to be a champion for female participation, as part of Victoria's long-term plan to get more Victorians living healthier and happier lives.

### Alignment to Council Plan:

Theme – Our Place

Community Outcome – Inclusive, functional and accessible places

Health and Wellbeing actions –

Ensure buildings and facilities are designed to include considerations for women.

Support sport and recreation settings to encourage women's participation and challenge harmful gender stereotypes

<b>Objective:</b>
Increase opportunities for women to participate in sport and recreation and promote and celebrate their achievements
<b>Strategies:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to embed universal design and gender equity design guidelines into the development of sport and recreation facilities</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote and celebrate girl's and women's achievements in sport and recreation</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support initiatives that promote women's representation in Sporting Clubs at all levels</li></ul>

## Key Setting 6: Media Arts and Culture

Media, Arts and Culture are valuable mediums for challenging social norms pertaining to violence against women and gender inequality. The equal representation of women in media, the arts and celebrations of culture provide platforms to provoke thinking and stimulate conversations about gender inequity. The media and arts are platforms to showcase the achievements, experiences, diversity and leadership of women and girls who live, work, study or play in the Mornington Peninsula Shire. Social media plays an important role and has the ability to shape culture within societies. The positive and negative impacts, such as cyber bullying needs to be considered. Participation in arts and cultural activities, as well as being appointed to positions of influence on boards and committees, provide opportunity for individuals or communities to come together to explore issues of concern, such as gender inequity and violence against women.

### Alignment to Council Plan:

Theme – Our Wellbeing

Community Outcome – A healthy, happy, inclusive and active community

Health and Wellbeing Actions

Use media and social media platforms to celebrate the achievements and contributions of women and their families.

Work with Arts and Culture settings to support the delivery of events and initiatives that enable representation and participation of women and their families.

<b>Objective:</b>
Promote and create opportunities for increasing women’s participation and achievements in media arts and culture across the Peninsula
<b>Strategies:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure gender balance, and challenge gender norms and stereotypes in promotional and media campaigns (could also include signage and other public infrastructure)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply a gender lens to arts and culture funding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review support for gender equity in Media Arts and Culture across our communities and plan for more equal representation where there are gaps</li> </ul>

## 11. How will the Strategy and Action Plan be implemented, monitored and reviewed?

Oversight of the Strategy and Action Plan will sit with the Shire’s Health and Wellbeing Committee who will be responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing this Plan, ensuring the objectives are translated into measurable actions that make our communities more inclusive and gender equitable. This will be achieved through internal co-operation, and through partnerships with local service providers, community groups and other levels of government.

The Plan will be reported on using existing reporting processes for the Shire’s Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. This includes quarterly and annual reports that provide an update on progress made towards achieving the objectives under each key priority area. These reports assist the community to understand this progress and provide an update on challenges being considered by Council. This will be achieved through:

1. **An annual action plan** with roles, responsibilities and budget allocated accordingly
2. A report on the annual action plan provided to Council **prior to the budget process** each year
3. Progress on Strategy implementation included annually in the **Council Annual Report**.

## Appendix A: Glossary

**Cisgender** – is a term for people whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

**Collective impact** – a collaboration framework that engages across sectors and groups who share a common interest to address a complex social issue in a given community.

**Drivers** – the underlying causes that are required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life, but which must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

**Domestic violence** – refers to acts of violence that occur in domestic settings between two people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse. See also family violence.

**Emotional/psychological violence** – can include a range of controlling behaviours such as control of finances, isolation from family and friends, continual humiliation, threats against children or being threatened with injury or death.

**Equity** – the quality of being fair and impartial.

**Family violence** – is a broader term than domestic violence, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members including elder abuse and adolescent violence against parents. Family violence includes violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful. In Indigenous communities, family violence is often the preferred term as it encapsulates the broader issue of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships, as well as intergenerational issues.

**Framework** – the conceptual structure underlying and supporting an approach to a specific objective, in this case, the prevention of violence against women and their children. A framework is typically made up of interrelated component parts or elements, all of which need to be in place to achieve the objective.

**Gender** – the socially learnt 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 can change over time.

**Gender balance** – the equal representation of women and men.

**Gender based violence** – violence that is specifically ‘directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately’.

**Gender equality** – involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. It is about recognising diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all and therefore often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.

**Gender equity** – equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes between people of different genders.

**Gender equity design guidelines** – providing guidance on how to apply a gender equity lens in the design phases to build a new community facility or in the redevelopment of existing facilities.

**Gender identity** – a person’s deeply held internal and individual sense of their gender in how they define themselves in relation to masculine and feminine characteristics.

**Gender inequality** – the unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity, and value afforded to men and women in a society due to prevailing gendered norms and structures.

**Gender roles** – the functions and responsibilities expected to be fulfilled by women and men, girls and boys in a given society.

**Gendered drivers** – the specific elements or expressions of gender inequality that are most strongly linked to violence against women. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life. The gendered drivers are the underlying causes required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

**Gendered norms** – consist of a set of dominant beliefs and rules of conduct which are determined by a society or social group in relation to the types of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from boys and girls, men and women.

**Intersectionality:** Gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or age, can interact on multiple levels to create overlapping forms of discrimination and power imbalances which compounds the risk of experiencing violence.

**Intimate partner violence** – any behaviour by a man or a woman within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages, domestic partnerships, familial relations, or people who share accommodation) that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship. This is the most common form of violence against women.

**LGBTIQ+** - lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer/questioning + community members

**Non-binary** – is a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine, identities that are outside the gender binary.

**Reinforcing factors** – factors which become significant within the context of the drivers of violence. These factors do not predict or drive violence against women in and of themselves, however when they interact with the drivers they can increase the frequency or severity of violence. See also drivers.

**Settings** – environments in which people live, work, learn, socialise and play.

**Sex** – the biological and physical characteristics used to define humans as male or female.

**Sexism** – discrimination based on gender, and the attitudes, stereotypes and cultural elements that promote this discrimination.

**Sexual violence** – sexual activity that happens where consent is not obtained or freely given. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any unwanted sexual activity, such as touching, sexual harassment and intimidation, forced marriage, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape.

**Socio-ecological model** – is a feature of public health and is used to demonstrate how violence is a product of multiple, interacting components and social factors. The model conceptualises how the drivers of violence manifest across the personal, community and social level and illustrates the value of implementing multiple mutually reinforcing strategies across these levels.

**Social norms** – rules of conduct and models of behaviour expected by a society or social group. They are grounded in the customs, traditions and value systems that develop over time in a society or social group.

**Structural discrimination and disadvantage** – the norms, policies and systems present within politics, the legal system, education, workplaces and healthcare that are intended to be neutral but in effect present obstacles to groups or individuals in achieving the same rights and opportunities available to the majority of the population.

**Systemic social inequalities** – a pattern of discrimination that is reflected within social norms and reinforced through law, education, the economy, healthcare and politics and results in privileging certain groups and individuals over others.

**Transgender** – a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex. Some transgender people who desire medical assistance to transition from one sex to another identify as transsexual.

**Violence against women** – any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others) that are gender based. See also gender based violence.