

Gender Equality Action Plan

2022 - 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

Campaspe Shire Council (Council) is a large regional municipality in northern Victoria, directly north of Bendigo in the Loddon Mallee region. It is one of 79 local government authorities within the state of Victoria.

Council provides a diverse range of services, facilities and projects to its communities and employs a workforce of approximately 500 people (335 FTE) to support the delivery of these services, facilities, and projects.

Council is required to meet a range of legislative obligations under the Local Government Act 2020 and the Gender Equality Act 2020, including the preparation of a Workforce Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan.

A Workforce Plan, required under the Local Government Act 2020, has been completed and approved by the Chief Executive Officer. This plan is available on Council's website.

This is Council's first Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) and outlines a range of actions that have been informed by the results of the workplace gender audit and feedback from staff who participated in staff consultation and engagement sessions led by an external facilitator, details of which can be found in section 5 and 6 of this document.

The actions identified within this plan work in parallel with the focus areas identified in Council's Workforce Plan. Together these actions are aimed at building a more respectful, inclusive culture that supports diversity and empowers staff to be part of the cultural change, with a view to achieving equal opportunity and participation for all.

1.1 Gender Equality

"Gender inequality is not experienced in the same way by all women and men. Different dimensions of identity, including race, geography, sexuality, and disability can intersect and influence individual experiences and outcomes at work. Systemic discrimination and bias – both conscious and unconscious – can create inequalities at every stage of the employment cycle."

(Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) at <https://www.wgea.gov.au/gender-equality-and-diversity>).

Section 6(8) of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* describes gender inequality as being compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender entity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes. This concept is referred to as **"intersectional gender inequality" or "intersectionality"**.

2. STRATEGIES AND MEASURES – 2022 TO 2025

From the data collected in the workplace gender audit including the People Matter Survey and the suggestions put forward by staff during the staff consultation and engagement sessions, the following action plan identifies the priority areas for implementation to advance gender equality at Campaspe Shire Council.

Indicator	Objective	Action	Measure	Timeframe	Who
Gender composition of governing bodies	Leadership roles	Showcase community leadership roles and the contributions made of diverse leaders in community newsletters.	A minimum of three (3) community leaders promoted per annum.	Commence 2023	EMG / Comms
	Training	Provide training for elected members on gender equality and unconscious bias.	100% of elected members attend training.	2022 / 2023 / biennially	Governance
Gender composition at all workforce levels	Gender Equality Action Group	Establish a cross functional, gender diverse Gender Equality Action Group who will be responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting implementation and monitoring of the GEAP. Actively promoting gender equality across the organisation. Ensuring gender equality is considered in all activities, policies and procedures. 	Group established and meets a minimum four times per year.	June 2022	EMG

Indicator	Objective	Action	Measure	Timeframe	Who
Gender composition at all workforce levels	Data collection	Review all data collection forms for consistency and develop an information collection statement to outline why the data is being collected and how it will be used.	Information collection statement developed and in use. Forms updated to reflect consistency.	2022 / 2023	MHR & Management
	Inclusive language in all Council communications.	Ensure all Council documents and communications consider diversity and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review council publications of last 12 months. Identify areas of improvement and incorporate into future publications. 	2022 2023 / 2024	Management / MHR / Comms
	Position and role descriptions	<p>As a vacancy occurs, critically review each position description to identify those that may have more than one role in them, and whether there are part time or other flexible work arrangements that would suit the role.</p> <p>Ensure advertising highlights those positions where flexible work arrangements would be considered.</p>	<p>Minimum of 5% of vacant positions modified as suitable to incorporate flexible work arrangements.</p> <p>Standard wording developed and evidenced being used in advertising.</p>	2022 / Ongoing	Hiring Manager / MHR

Indicator	Objective	Action	Measure	Timeframe	Who
Recruitment and promotion	Increase attraction and recruitment of diverse applicants.	When advertising vacant roles, ensure media encompasses a balance of gender and intersectionality.	Standard developed and implemented.	2022 / 2023 / Ongoing	MHR
Recruitment and promotion	Increase attraction and recruitment of diverse applicants.	Analyse existing data to establish a gender and intersectional profile of candidates applying for roles with Council including the total number of applicants, the number of applicants possessing the required qualifications, numbers shortlisted, interviewed and appointed, as a baseline.	Baseline data reported to EMG.	December 2022	MHR
		Commence monitoring of recruitment at all levels by gender and intersectionality and analyse after 12 months to identify any areas for improvement or further training.	Monitoring on quarterly basis and presented to EMG.	March 2023 / Ongoing	MHR
		Ensure recruitment practices and communications emphasise that Council is an equal opportunity employer and encourages people to be part of an organisation that promotes a diverse and safe environment.	Standardised wording incorporated into all recruitment practices and communications.	2022 / Ongoing	MHR

Indicator	Objective	Action	Measure	Timeframe	Who
Gender impact assessment and review	Improve use of Gender impact assessment tools	Finalise and promote the gender impact assessment tool.	Tool finalised, approved and distributed to key staff.	2022	MHR / Management
		Deliver training to supervisors and key staff responsible for the conduct and implementation of gender impact assessments.	100% of identified staff completed training.	2022/2023 / Ongoing	Management / MHR
Gender Pay Equity	Review and implement gender equality policy and practices across the organisation.	Ensure Council provides a work environment that is inclusive of gender and intersectionality and that new and existing staff are supported.	Improvement in the cultural diversity indicators compared to the 2021 results of People Matter Survey.	2023 / Ongoing	Management / Leadership / GEAP Action Group
		Provide a workplace where staff are encouraged and feel confident to actively participate in meetings and forums.	Participation and attendance rates increase for meetings and forums.	2022 / Ongoing	Management / Leadership
	Increase gender and intersectionality awareness and support	Develop, implement, and ensure staff awareness of intersectionality.	Improvement in the cultural diversity indicators compared to the 2021 results of People Matter Survey.	2023 / Ongoing	MRH / MCD / GEAP Action Group
		Review and improve accessibility to Council offices.	Actions identified for future funding and implementation.	2023	Management / GMC

Indicator	Objective	Action	Measure	Timeframe	Who
		Review Council's work flexibility policies and practices including benchmarking with other Councils in the region.	Policy reviewed, feedback sought, and policy finalised and distributed.	2023	MHR / EMG
		Promote alternative flexible work arrangements and the parameters that need to be met for the arrangements to be accessed.	Evidence of promotion of flexible work arrangements in staff newsletters, intranet, email communications and at staff meetings.	Commence 2022	MHR / Comms
Gender Pay Equity	Review and implement gender equality policy and practices across the organisation. Increase gender and intersectionality awareness and support.	Review the approval processes and parameters to reduce the barriers for employees to access flexible work arrangements. Make application consistent by development of a communication and advocacy campaign on flexible workplace practices.	Policy reviewed and implemented.	2023 / Ongoing	EMG
Workplace Sexual Harassment	Training and reporting	Management team to reinforce the Employee Code of Conduct, including a zero-tolerance bullying and sexual harassment policy.	Communication messages evidence reinforcement of Employee Code of Conduct.	2022 / Ongoing	EMG / Leadership

Indicator	Objective	Action	Measure	Timeframe	Who
Workplace Sexual Harassment	Training and reporting	Provide improved training for managers and supervisors on handling complaints about inappropriate behaviour and the process they should follow.	100% of identified managers and supervisors completed training.	2022 / 2024 (biennially)	MHR / TC
		Ensure managers and staff undertake face to face training addressing issues such as unconscious bias.	100% of identified managers and supervisors completed training.	2023 / biennially ongoing	MHR / TC
		Explore the availability of an external provider who can provide staff with an independent contact to discuss issues and receive guidance on pathways to report inappropriate behaviour. Service may also include support for the employee during any subsequent process.	Proposal to Management based on findings of available external provider(s).	2022/2023	GMC / MHR

EMG = Executive Management Group; CEO = Chief Executive Officer; GMC = General Manager Corporate; MHR = Manager Human Resources; Comms = Communications; MCD = Manager Community Development; TC = Training Coordinator.

3. LEADERSHIP AND RESOURCING

3.1 Leadership commitment to gender equality

The Campaspe Management Team commits to embedding this Plan, devoting appropriate resources to its implementation, monitoring, reporting, and evaluating, and supporting leaders to deliver the key actions. We will continue to pursue and report on statistics of participation and experiences of our staff.

3.2 GEAP working group

Council will establish a cross functional, gender diverse Gender Equality Action Group who will comprise employees, employee representatives and management, who will be responsible for:

- Actively promoting gender equality across the organisation.
- Ensure gender equality is incorporated into all activities, policies and procedures and other council documents.
- Assisting with the delivery of the actions of this plan.

As well as participating in the delivery of actions of this plan, a further role of the Gender Equality Action Group is to operate as key influencers and advocates for gender equality within both their immediate work area and across the organisation. These key personnel will play a crucial role in assisting Council to successfully achieve gender equity in all facets of our business. Feedback from this group will inform the activities and progress of this action plan.

4. MEASURING PROGRESS

4.1 Biennial reporting

In accordance with the requirements of section 19(1)(a) of the Act, Council will report on progress of the actions of this Plan every two years to the Commission for Gender Equality for the Public Sector. The first report will be submitted in 2024.

4.2 Annual progress

The progress and measurement of the actions of the plan will be reported to Council on an annual basis.

4.3 Internal communications on progress of the action plan

The progress of the actions will be reported to Council via briefing sessions and to staff through internal communication networks including but not limited to the staff intranet (Campaspe Central), monthly staff newsletter (ShireWire), emails and at meetings. Reporting back to staff will occur as milestones are reached and at least six monthly.

5. CASE FOR CHANGE

5.1 Preparation of the GEAP

When preparing this Action Plan Council considered the principles of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

The overarching principles of “*access to equal power, resources, and opportunities and to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness*” regardless of gender have strongly influenced the development of this action plan.

While historically women have experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender, Council is mindful of the inequalities experienced by males, particularly those with caring responsibilities, and other forms of inequality that may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage.

In preparing this action plan Council's focus has been on fairness and equity for all employees in all aspects of their experience at work.

5.2 Business case for gender equality

Research suggests that organisations that respect and value the diversity brought by both women and men are better able to attract and retain high performers and improve operational performance.

It is not, however, simply about having token women (or men). Gender equality is achieved when people can access and enjoy the same rewards, resources, and opportunities regardless of whether they are a woman or a man. The aim is to achieve broadly equal outcomes for women and men, but not necessarily the same outcome for all individuals.

While Australia has made significant progress towards gender equality in recent decades, women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to advance their careers as far as men and are more likely to spend their final years in poverty. At the same time, men find it more difficult to access flexible working arrangements than women.

Fostering a workforce that promotes gender equality can help to:

- Attract the best employees – a council which is as attractive to women as it is to men will have access to the entire talent pool and is more likely to have a competitive advantage in attracting the best talent available.
- Reduce cost of staff turnover - both women and men are more likely to remain with an organisation where there is a proactive diversity ‘climate’ as they perceive a concrete payoff to themselves by staying in an organisation they view as fair. Evidence indicates that organisations that foster gender diversity will support retention of staff, thereby reducing employee turnover expense.

- Enhance organisational performance - Studies suggest that promoting gender equality is often associated with better organisational and financial performance. Well managed, diversity brings together varied perspectives, produces a more holistic analysis of the issues, and may invoke greater effort, leading to improved decision-making.
- Minimise legal risks – strategies that promote workplace gender equality by reducing sex discrimination and harassment may minimise risk of financial and reputational loss, as well as reduce the negative impact discriminatory behaviour has on Council's performance.
- Enhance reputation by promoting gender diversity which can help attract and retain the best employees. Having a reputation for promoting gender equality will also enhance Council's image and reputation in the wider community.

Engage men – while Council's workforce is relatively gender balanced, we need to be mindful that men with children increasingly have partners in the workforce and fathers are increasingly seeing their role not simply as breadwinners but also being more actively involved with their children. Men play a pivotal role in promoting gender diversity and must be engaged in leading organisational change and actions.

5.3 Council Values

The following organisational values set the foundations and expectations for how employees treat each other and perform their roles.

Respect	Customer Focus	Accountability	Teamwork	Continuous Improvement
We embrace each individuals' unique talents and value diverse life and work styles. We operate in a spirit of cooperation and value human dignity.	We listen to our customers and deliver services which meet their demonstrated needs. We focus on customer relationships that build trust, confidence, and loyalty. We are responsible for both external and internal customer satisfaction.	We conduct our business in accordance with the highest standards of professional behaviour and ethics. We are open, honest, and ethical in all our interactions with employees, clients, customers, vendors and the public. We are responsible for and take ownership of our actions.	We listen to and respect each other whilst working together to achieve mutually beneficial results. We help one another, value one another's views and make our work environment fun and enjoyable. We are not afraid to stand alone, especially when it is the right thing to do.	We work with enthusiasm and intellect and are driven to build upon what has already been achieved. We improve productivity, processes and ourselves through measurement, analysis, and review.

5.4 History of Gender Equality work at Campaspe

Prior to the introduction of the Gender Equality legislation Council worked to achieve White Ribbon Accreditation on two occasions. As part of this accreditation Council developed a Gender Equity Policy and provided training to all staff.

While Council no longer seeks accreditation with White Ribbon Australia Council continues to support the following programs.

5.4.1 The Gender Equitable Campaspe Co-design Project

The Campaspe Primary Care Partnership Integrated Health Promotion team (Echuca Regional Health, Kyabram District Health Service, Campaspe Shire Council, Women's Health Loddon Mallee, and Campaspe Primary Care Partnership) conducted research with community members to understand their lived experiences of gender equality and inequality, their beliefs, values and attitudes and their hopes for a more equitable society in Campaspe.

A co-design approach was taken involving in-depth interviews and workshops resulting in the development of strategies to address gender inequality that are feasible, appropriate, and acceptable to community. Workshops were held with Council's Youth Advisory Group and employees.

The four strategies developed are:

1. Supporting people in the workplace to utilise policies and entitlements enabling men and women to balance their career and home life through an integrated program of workplace auditing and education.
2. Gender equity and bystander training to role models and people to influence enabling alignment with and endorsement of young people's views.
3. Delivery of a social marketing and communications strategy specifically for Campaspe to support people to call out gender inequality in a confident and unified way.
4. Identify opportunities to deliver a program to support healthy masculinities for men and boys in schools, sports clubs, and workplaces across Campaspe.

5.4.2 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

An annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day. Council supports the campaign and works collaboratively with Campaspe Family Violence Action Group members to deliver education and awareness campaigns. The Campaspe Community Children's Centre and Rochester and District Child Care Centre were involved in the campaign too looking at strengthening the early years sector's knowledge through gender equity and unconscious bias training, identifying and responding to family violence training and implementation of the City of Darebin's "Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years" model at two trial sites in Campaspe.

5.4.3 Balance for Better

An innovative scholarship program offering financial support to women in the Campaspe and Murray regions whose career path is challenging stereotypes and making important inroads towards true gender equity.

5.4.4 International Women's Day

A global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. Significant activity is witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievements or rally for women's equality.

5.4.5 Campaspe Family Violence Action Group

The Campaspe Family Violence Action Group exists to drive greater integration and coordination of local services – both universal and specialist – for those experiencing family violence in Campaspe; and to prevent family violence before it occurs through evidence-based action on gender inequality in settings across the community.

Priorities of the group:

1. Facilitate a Campaspe that:
 - Promotes organisations and communities to be gender equitable in their practices,
 - Promotes equal and respectful relationships,
 - Understands the gendered dynamics of family violence,
 - Promotes and values women's equal participation in public and private life
2. A service system with the capacity to respond to all who experience family violence in Campaspe that will be achieved by:
 - Working together to align to shared language, a common understanding of family violence, frameworks, and tools of the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM), agencies will commit to supporting each in this process.

5.5 Legislative framework

To ensure public sector entities take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality, the *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires all councils to develop a Gender Equality Action Plan every four years.

The objectives of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (the Act) are to:

- (a) promote, encourage, and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women.
- (b) support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, and delivery of services in workplaces and communities.

- (c) recognise that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other attributes.
- (d) redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice, and violence, and accommodate persons of different genders by way of structural change.
- (e) enhance economic and social participation by persons of different genders; and
- (f) further promote the right to equality set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The *Act* requires Campaspe Shire Council (Council) to complete a gender impact assessment which must:

- Assess the effects that the policy, program, or service may have on people of different genders.
- Explain how the policy, program or service will be changed to better support all genders and promote gender equality.
- Where practical, apply an intersectional approach to consider how gender inequality may be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience because of other factors such as age, disability, or ethnicity.

In addition the *Act* also requires Council to prepare a Gender Equality Action Plan that includes the following:

- Results of the workplace gender audit, and
- Strategies and measures for promoting gender equality in the workplace, based on the results of the workplace gender audit.

In preparing the Gender Equality Action Plan Council must *“take into account the gender equality principles and consult with employees, employee representatives and any other relevant person.”*

Finally, Council must ensure adequate resources are allocated to developing and implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan.

5.6 Connection with other Council Plans

In 2019 Council adopted its fourth Access and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2026 demonstrating Council’s *“commitment to equal participation for people in our community”*. The strategy is provided as a *“roadmap to a more accessible and supportive”* community that includes *“the built environments, the social, economic and natural environments.”*

The strategy provides the following snapshot of the community profile:

- 21.3% of people have a permanent disability and another 6% have a temporary disability.
- 2.4% of the population identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 6.3% of the population are born overseas and 22.8% were from a non-English speaking background.

The Access and Inclusion Strategy identifies several communities of priority within the municipality and an action plan has been developed to further progress inclusion and address barriers faced by those communities of priority and impact their equal participation.

The communities of priority are:

- Youth
- People identifying as LGBTIQ+
- People with mental illness
- Older people
- Culturally diverse communities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- People with social disadvantage
- Women
- People with a disability

The Strategy is supported by an Action Plan that is monitored and reported on to Council and the community.

When developing the Gender Equality Action Plan, the Access and Inclusion Action Plan has been considered.

5.7 Gender Equity Policy

Council's Gender Equity Policy, adopted in 2019 and which is currently under review aims to ensure Council as a workplace provides equitable opportunities for its male and female employees and maintains an organisational culture which supports gender equity.

5.8 Respect and Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedure

The focus of Council's Respect and Equal Opportunity Policy is a safe workplace for all employees. The policy articulates Council's commitment to appropriate training in equal opportunity for all employees which is conducted on an annual basis and that all recruitment activities are conducted in a fair and equitable manner. This is further supported by the Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

Council's Respect and Equal Opportunity Procedure requires all employees to be respectful of the rights of others, and to promote diversity, inclusion, safety, and equal opportunity.

The procedure describes the various protected attributes and articulates possible actions for discriminatory, bullying or harassing behaviour.

5.9 Training provided

The following table identifies the training delivered to employees as part of Council's learning and development program, that supports raising awareness of inclusion obligations.

Training delivered	Target	Year
Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training	Managers	2017
eSafety Woman - empowering women to take control online Domestic Violence Response Training How to Manage Workplace Behaviours Respect in the Workplace	All staff	2018/19
Prevention of Violence Against Women - White Ribbon Creating Value Through Diversity and Inclusion Family Violence Awareness Anti-discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Custodians of Culture Promoting Equality and Respect Identifying & Responding to Family Violence Embedding Aboriginal Perspectives in Early Childhood Combating Occupational Violence & Aggression Dealing With Challenging Behaviour LGBTIQ Inclusive Practice PD Stand Up Bystander Training	Managers All staff All staff Managers Select staff Managers/Supervisors Managers/Supervisors	2019
Law at Work – Antidiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Employment Law for Managers-General Protections Gender Equality and Respect Unconscious bias and gender equality	All staff Managers All staff	2020/21

Training provided has been to individual employees via Council's electronic learning system as well as face to face for groups of employees. The target audiences for the face to face have been to management level with much of the e-learning being disseminated to non-manager/supervisor employees.

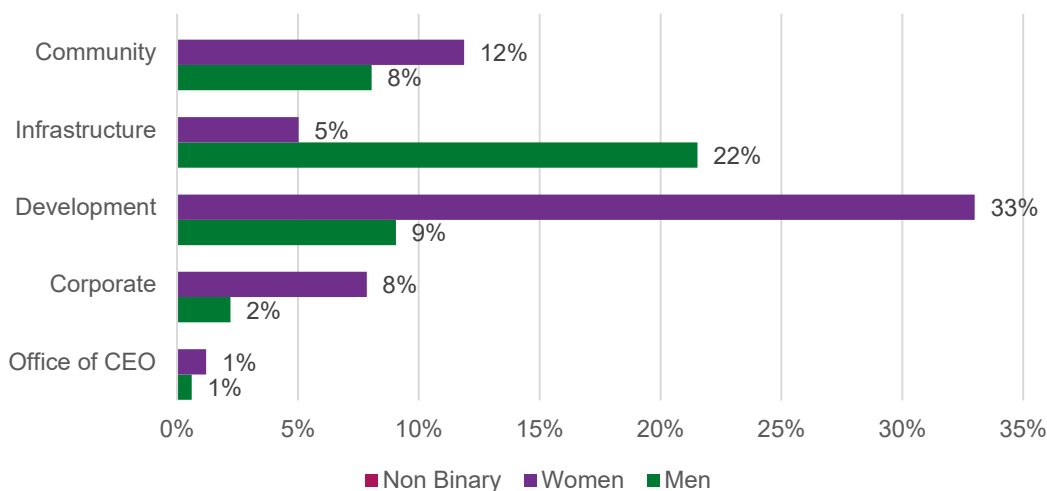
6. BASELINE AUDIT ANALYSIS

The following information provides the results of Campaspe Shire Council's workplace gender audit which comprises data as at the 30 June 2021 as well as an overview of the employee experience survey results, obtained through the People Matter Survey conducted in May 2021.

Council operates with 335 full time equivalent (FTE) staff. At June 30 2021 this was made up of 291 females (58%) and 206 males. (41%). The following information provides a breakdown of that gender composition by work division, salary band and length of service.

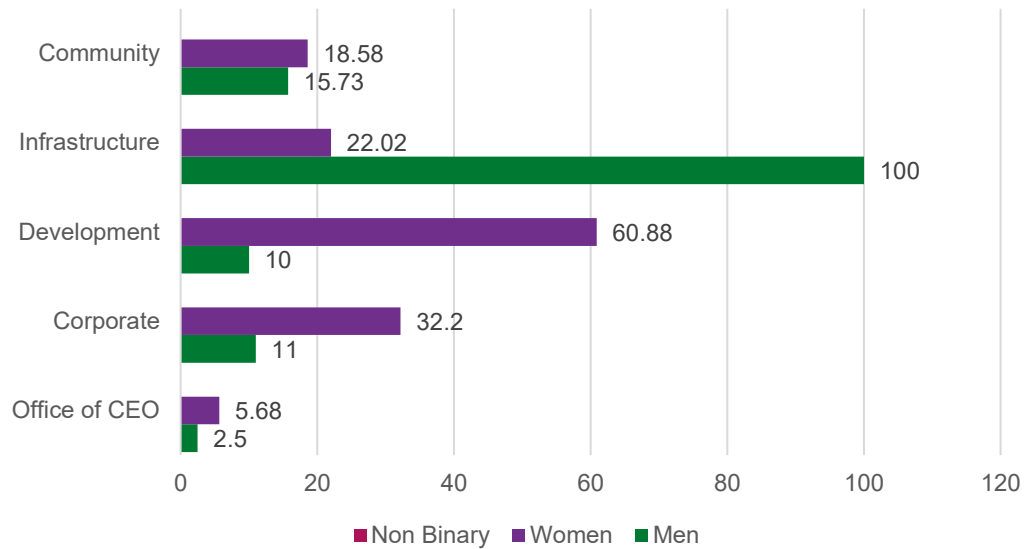
6.1 Workforce Data to 30 June 2021

6.1.1 Gender by Division (Headcount)



Of note from the graph above is that 33% of Council's workforce are females in the Development Division. This Division comprises childcare, libraries and community services roles which tend to be filled predominantly by females, although we have recently employed some males to some of these roles. The 22% of males in Infrastructure again is credited to the higher number of males in our outdoor workforce, specifically roads and construction and parks and gardens, although again females are being recruited to some of these roles.

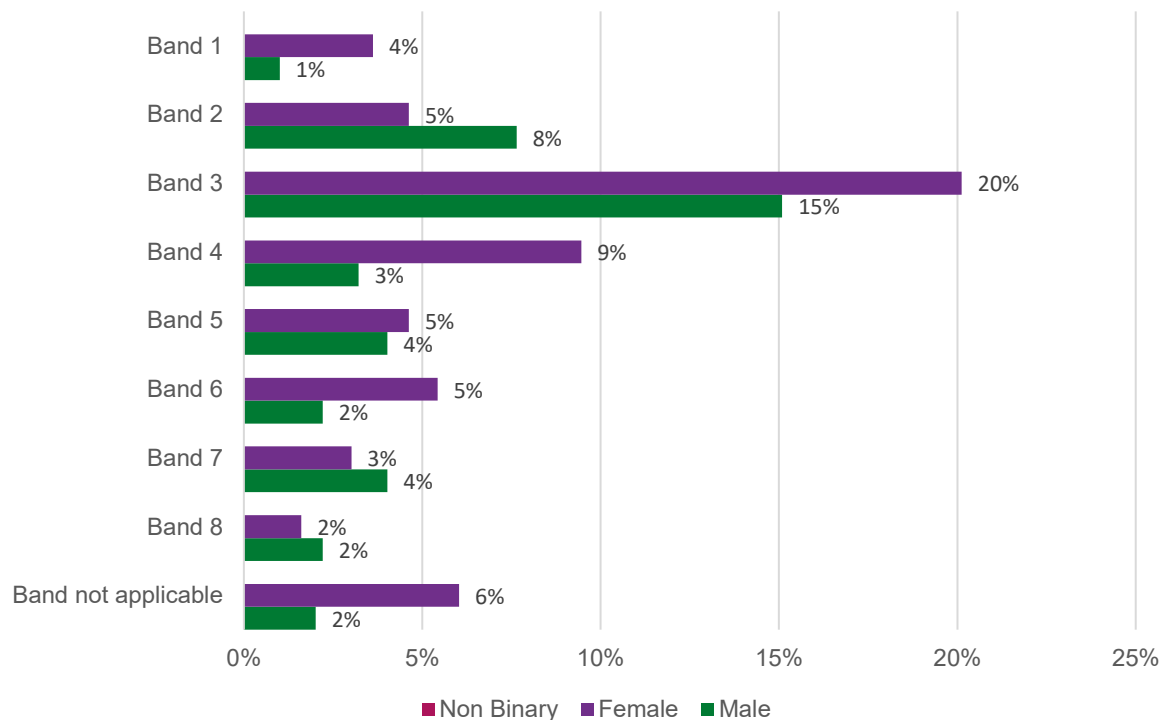
6.1.2 Gender by Division – FTE



In the graph above it is of note that there are significantly more males in the Infrastructure Division which can be attributed to roles mainly in construction and parks and gardens, although we do have a number of females in the parks and gardens teams. The higher number of females in the Development Division can be attributed to an increased number of part time roles which provide more flexibility for and are therefore more appealing as well as the nature of the roles which lends them to more flexible working options.

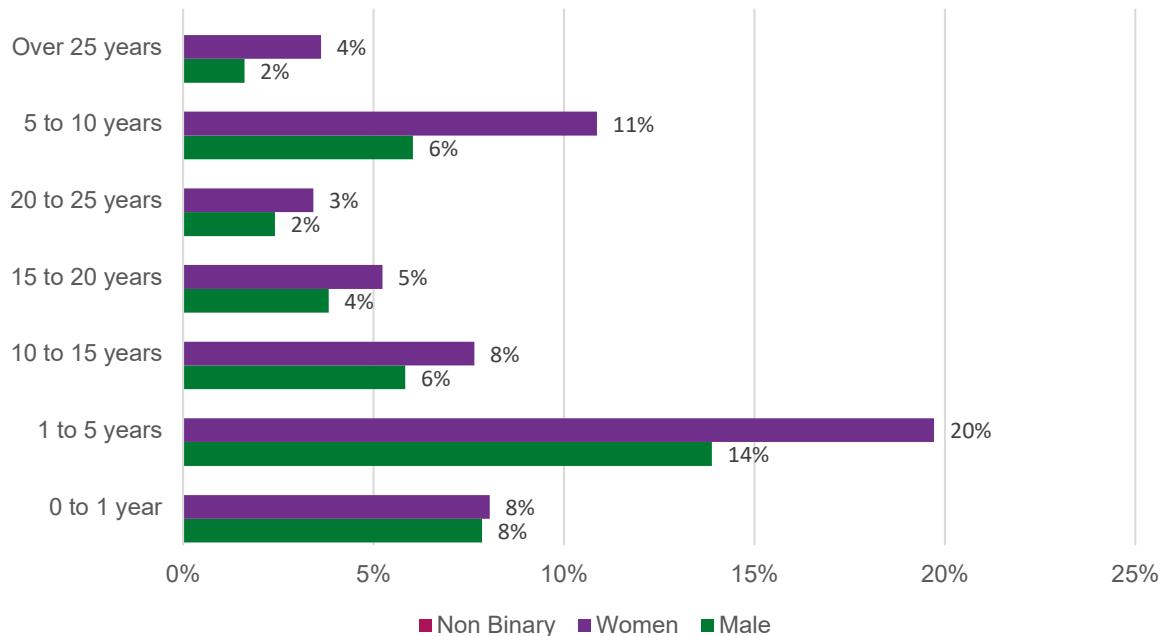
6.1.3 Gender by band classification

Based on number of employees, below are their classifications



- Of employees at Band 3, 100 are female and 75 are male. Employees at this level work mainly in construction, maintenance, parks and gardens, aquatics and leisure, early childhood teachers and library employees.
- Bands 4,5, and 6 and employees on contract comprise 150 females and 88 males.
- Classification of 'Band not applicable' incorporates maternal and child health nurses, employees on contract and senior officers.

6.1.4 Length of Service



Close to 50% of Council's workforce has a length of service 5 years or less. Consistently females are represented across all length of service cohorts and are in greater numbers than men.

6.1.5 People Supervisors by Classification



Council employs a total of 79 employees in supervisory positions. The graph above shows the breakdown of gender of those 79 employees based on their classification level.

- The composition of roles of female supervisors at Band 6 includes positions whose incumbents manage commercial operations, information management and manage childcare centres.
- The Band 7 positions include finance, community health, recreation, customer service and environmental health.

6.1.6 Recruitment

The following snapshot provides a gender breakdown of employees recruited during the 2020/21 financial year by work division and type of employment.

	Casual	Fixed Term		Permanent		Total
Division and Gender/Type of Employment		Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	
CEO Office				1	1	2
Female				1	1	2
Corporate	1	1	1	1	2	6
Female	1	1	1		2	5
Male				1		1
Development	24		1	6	2	33
Female	17		1	1	2	21
Male	7			5		12
Infrastructure	2	10		17	1	30
Female		3		1	1	5
Male	2	7		16		25
Community	10		1	1		12
Female	6		1			7
Male	4			1		5
Total	37	11	3	26	6	83

While overall, the gender of new employees is balanced there remains a higher representation of males being recruited to the Infrastructure Division and a higher representation of females being recruited to the Development Division based on the nature of roles performed within these respective areas as previously outlined in Section 6.1.1.

6.2 Employee Experience Survey

Campaspe Shire Council participated in the People Matter Survey conducted by the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) between May and June 2021 and this survey was made available to all Council employees.

The survey collected information on employee's experience regarding equal employment opportunity, career development, diversity and inclusion, flexible working arrangements, and cultural safety within the organisation.

The People Matter Survey was initially made available to all employees from Monday 31 May 2021 to Friday 25 June 2021 via a general link which was made available in the intranet, with QR codes at all worksites and via emails.

To increase awareness and encourage participation Council took the following promotion activities:

- **Shire Wire publication**, employees were informed of the purpose of the survey, what would happen with the information, how privacy would be handled, channels to access the survey and who to contact if they had any questions about it.
- **Intranet promotion** in the form of a continuous banner on the introduction screen of Campaspe Central (intranet) with a link to access the survey.
- **Email reminders** from the CEO and respective General Managers, reiterating the importance of participation.
- **Extension of the close date** which was broadly communicated via the intranet and CEO email which provided employees with a further week to participate, until 2 July 2021.
- **Postcards with QR codes** were sent to all of Council's work locations, to allow employees who do not have regular and easy access to other devices or channels, opportunity to participate via their mobile phones.

6.2.1 Workplace gender equality indicators

When completing the survey employees were asked to respond to a range of statements which were grouped under the following five workplace gender equality indicators.

1. Gender composition – employees were asked to respond to statements around the workplace culture within the organisation based on employees of different age groups, genders, sexual orientation, culture, who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or with a disability.
2. Gendered work segregation – employees were asked to respond to statements about the organisations use of inclusive and respectful images and language as well as cultural safety, diversity, allocation of work, bullying and discrimination.

3. Recruitment and promotion – employees were asked to respond to statements on recruitment and promotion decisions, barriers to success within the organisation, chance of promotion and learning and development opportunities.
4. Leave and flexibility – employees were asked to respond to statements on the availability and use of flexible work arrangements and the culture of the organisation in support employees with family and caring responsibilities.
5. Workplace sexual harassment – employees were asked to respond to statements on respectful workplace behaviours and the response to bullying, harassment, discrimination and other inappropriate behaviour at work.

At the time of the People Matter survey, Council had 510 employees that were invited to participate in the survey and participation rates are based on this number of staff.

It is also important to note, that the number of employees includes Council's casual workforce, who represent 40% of Council's total employees. Participation of these employees in the survey may be impacted if they were not actively working during the survey period.

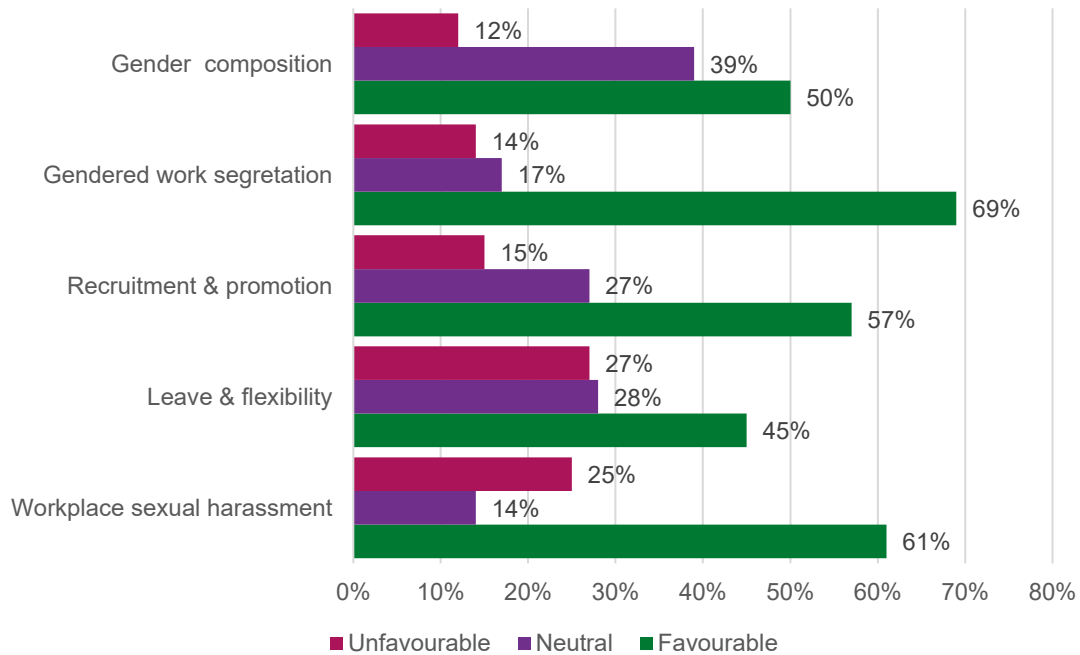
At the close of the survey a total of 160 respondents completed the survey, recording a participation rate of 31%, just below the average local government participation rate of 32%.

Employees were asked to respond to a range of statements and the results are presented based on those responses using the terms favourable, unfavourable or neutral.

Following is an overview of the results of the surveys.

- **Favourable** results refer to the number of employees who agreed with a positive statement or did not experience the negative behaviours.
- **Unfavourable** results refer to the number of employees who disagreed with a positive statement or did experience the negative behaviours.
- **Neutral** results refer to the number of employees who neither agreed or disagreed or selected 'don't know' or were 'unsure whether they experienced the negative behaviour'.

6.2.1 Overview



The favourable results for all the workplace gender equality indicators when compared against the benchmark for Victorian Local Government are lower by 11 to 28%. The Victorian Local Government Benchmark is the overall result for the 72 Victorian councils that participated in the People Matter Survey.

While the favourable results are lower than the benchmark, of note in the above results is the number of staff who have responded with a neutral response.

6.2.2 Negative behaviours

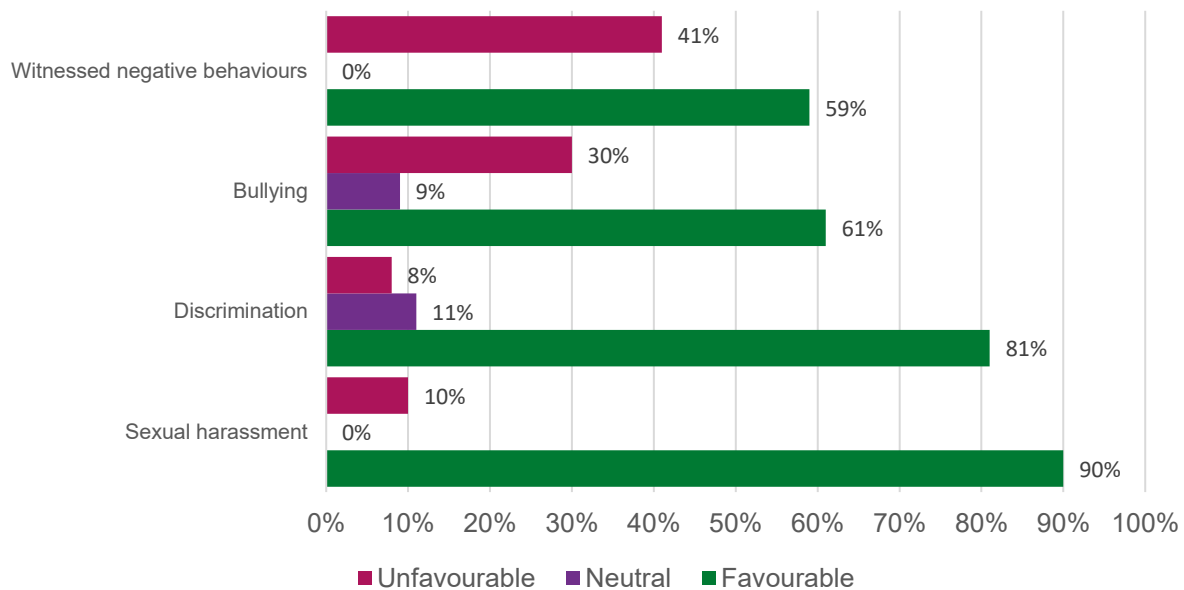
These results relate to the number of employees that did or did not experience the negative behaviour or witnessed the negative behaviour at work in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The terms favourable, unfavourable, or neutral for this part of the survey have the following meanings.

- **Favourable** results refer to the number of employees who did not experience the negative behaviour.
- **Unfavourable** results refer to the number of employees who did experience the negative behaviour.
- **Neutral** results refer to the number of employees who were unsure whether they had experienced the negative behaviour.

The favourable results for the negative behaviours of sexual harassment and discrimination when compared against the benchmark for Victorian Local Government are lower by 3 %. The favourable results for the negative behaviour of bullying when compared against the benchmark for Victorian Local Government is lower by 17%.

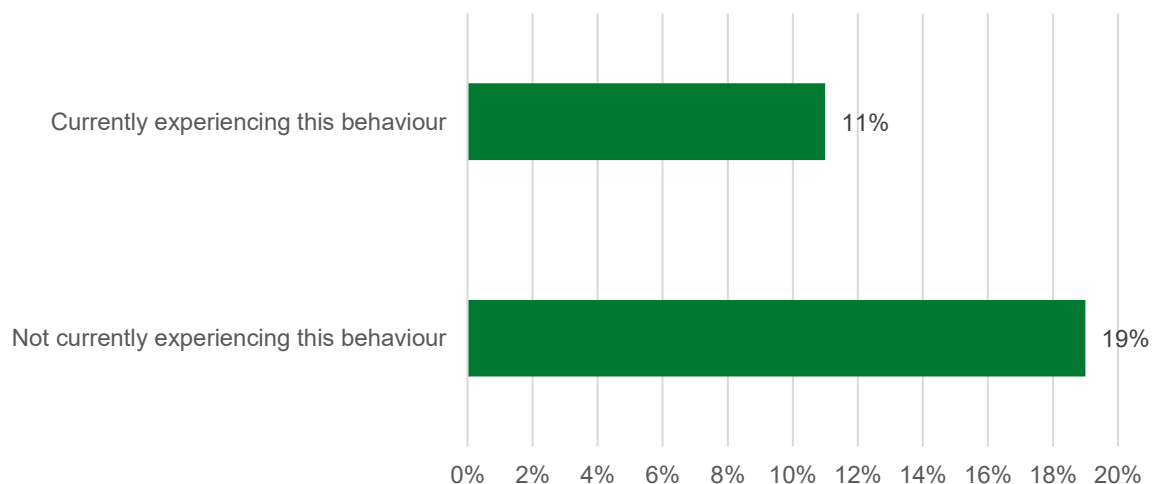
The Victorian Local Government Benchmark is the overall result for the 72 Victorian councils that participated in the People Matter Survey.



NOTE: While some survey respondents indicated they had witnessed or experienced negative behaviours, for the period being reported, Council received one formal complaint. While the formal complaint does not represent what is being reflected in the survey, what is unclear is how the behaviour has been reported within the organisation and how it has been dealt with, if at all.

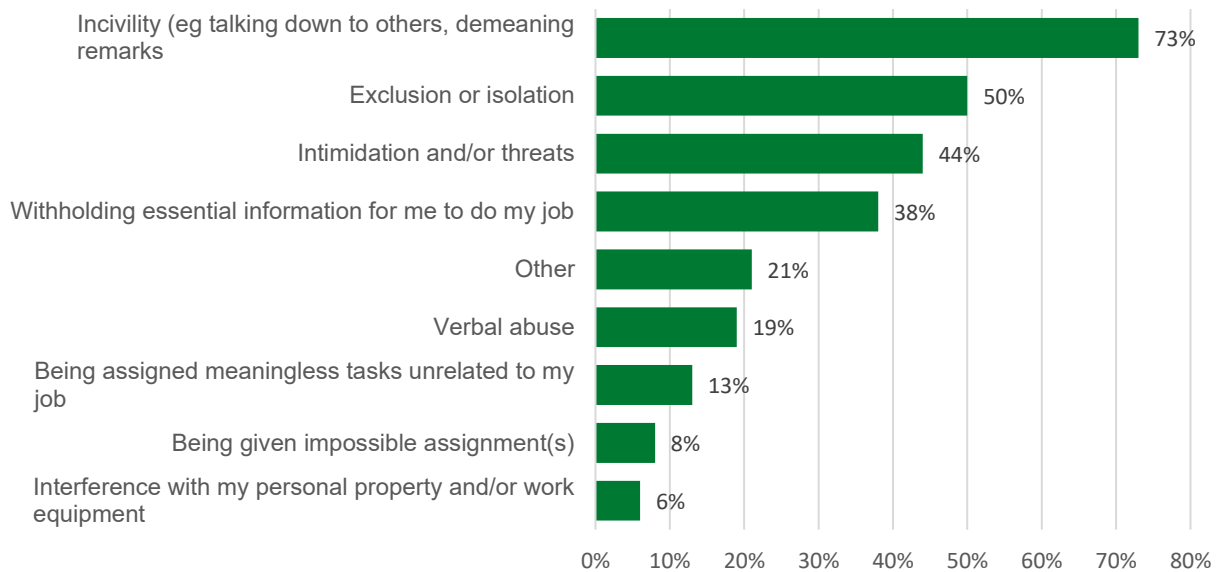
6.2.3 Bullying

Employees who indicated on the survey that they did experience bullying at work in the 12 months prior to the survey were asked additional questions to understand whether the bullying was currently being experienced at Campaspe Shire Council and the type of bullying experienced.



The graph above shows the breakdown in percentage of the 30% of employees who responded that they had witnessed or experienced bullying behaviours as indicated in the graph at 6.3.2 above.

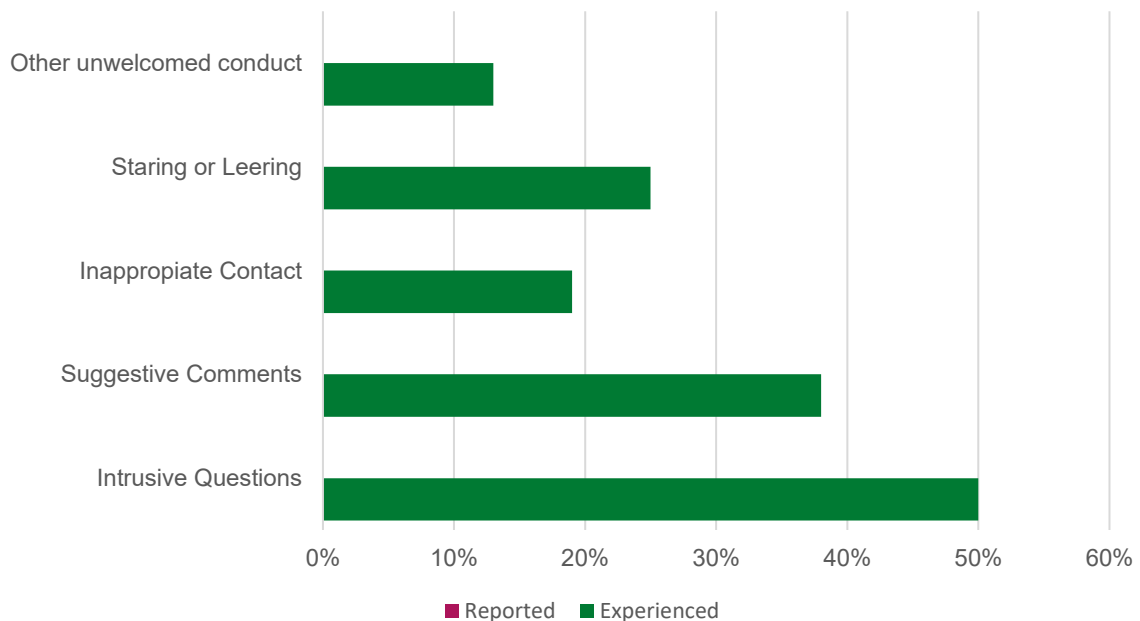
When asked to identify the types of bullying behaviours experienced, employees were able to select multiple types of behaviour.



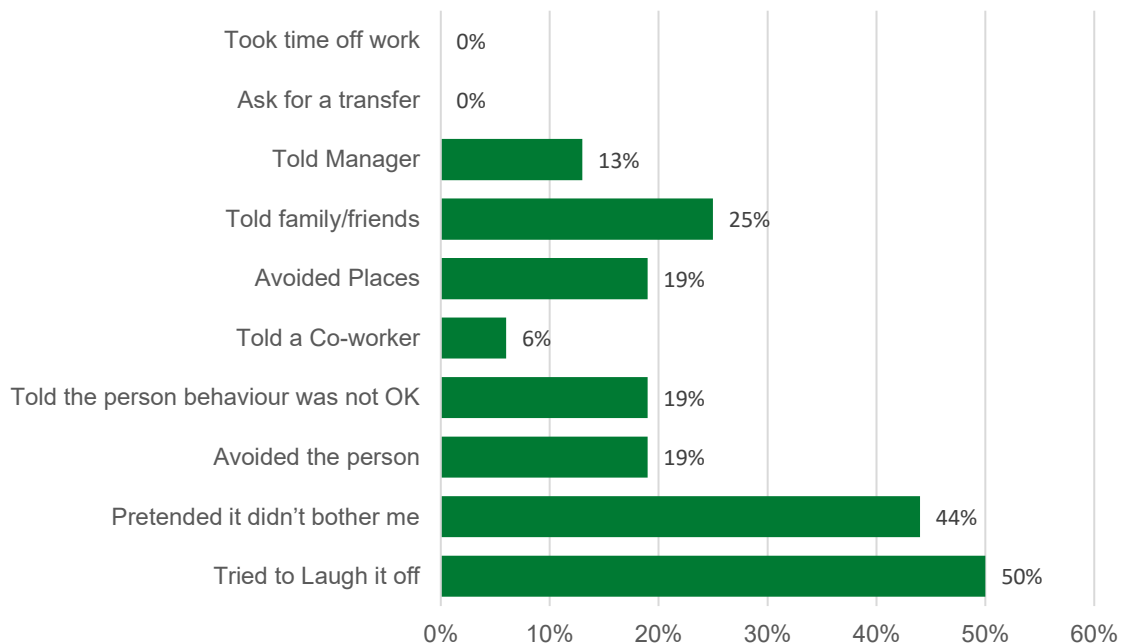
The graph above shows the breakdown in percentage of the 30% of employees who responded that they had witnessed or experienced bullying behaviours as indicated in the graph at 6.3.2 above

6.2.4 Sexual Harassment

10% of employees indicated on the survey that they did experience sexual harassment at work in the 12 months prior to the survey. Respondents were therefore asked additional questions to understand the type of sexual harassment behaviours experienced.



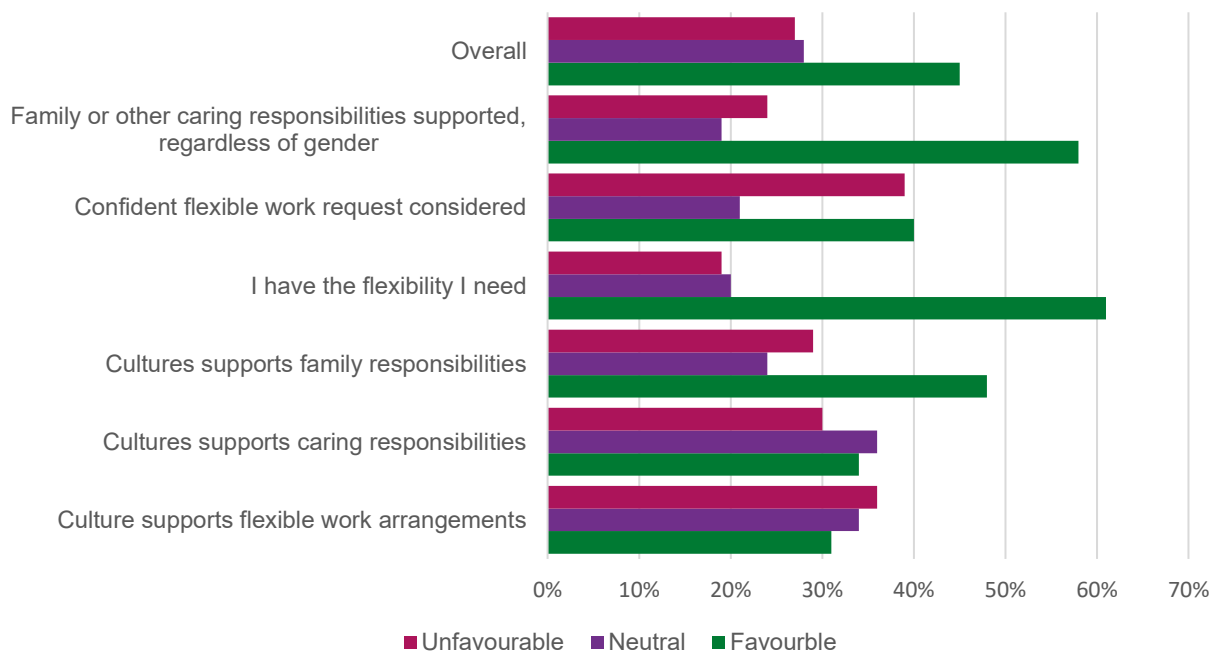
Employees who experienced sexual harassment were also asked if they responded in any of the following ways.



These results were consistent with the results Campaspe Shire Council received through the Victorian Auditor General's Officer report on Sexual Harassment in Local Government conducted in June 2020 and released in December 2020.

6.2.5 Flexible Work Arrangements

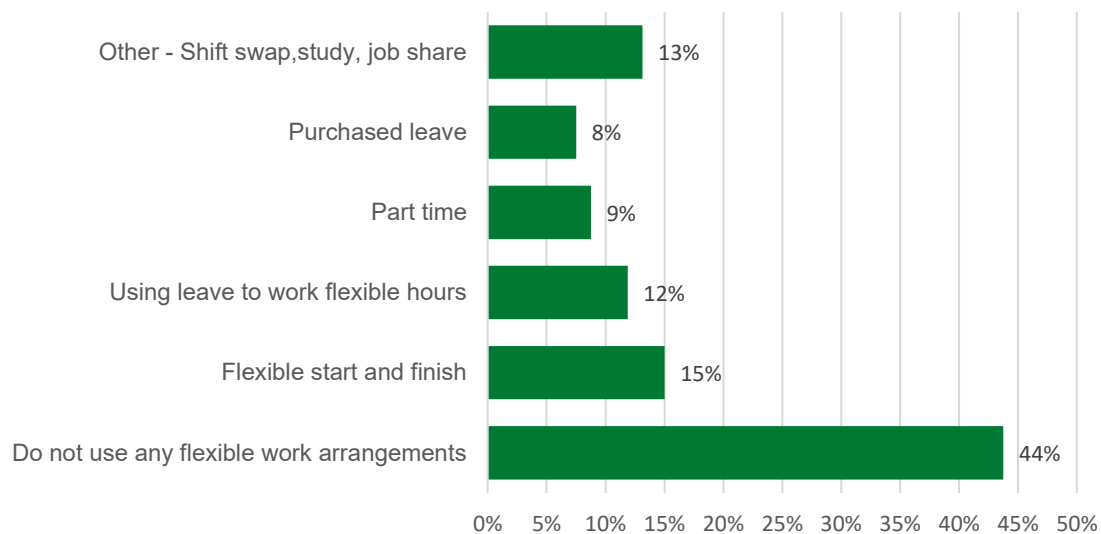
Employees were asked to consider whether the organisational culture would support flexible work arrangements.



The terms favourable, unfavourable, or neutral for this part of the survey have the following meanings.

- **Favourable** results refer to the percentage of employees who agreed with the positive statement
- **Unfavourable** results refer to the percentage of employees who did not agree with the positive statement.
- **Neutral** results refer to the percentage of employees who neither agreed nor disagreed with the positive statement.

Employees were also asked if they used any of the following flexible work arrangements.



6.4 Data Gaps

Campaspe Shire incorporates three Traditional Owner Groups: Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung; and Yorta Yorta. Council's workforce has extremely low numbers of employees who have disclosed that they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Council also has low numbers of staff who disclose nationality other than Australian and therefore are unable to be identified in this report. Further very little data in respect to ethnicity is available. Although Council seeks this information employees have not been forthcoming. This may also relate to a lack of understanding of the difference between ethnicity and nationality.

Disclosing identifying information such as ethnicity or gender upon commencement of employment with Council is voluntary and requires confidence in both the organisation and broader community that disclosing this information will not lead to any negative experiences or discrimination.

Council is aware that we need to create a culture that respects and celebrates diversity and inclusion which may lead to greater disclosure and increased data collection.

7. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

In February 2022 Council engaged a consultant to:

- Review and analyse the data from the workplace gender equality data with a view to identifying key themes and points for exploration.
- Conduct staff and management focus group sessions, and
- Provide a report identifying key outcomes and identifying opportunities for improvement.

It was expected that the engagement would also explore:

- incidents of bullying and sexual harassment, the barriers to reporting, alternative options to facilitate increased reporting of incidents and suggestions to build a culture free of bullying and sexual harassment.
- staff recognition expectations, meaning and options.
- Identify options and initiatives for inclusion in the Gender Equality Action Plan.

A Project Reference Group (PRG) was established, comprising 4 representatives from a cross section of the organisation, and led by the General Manage Corporate. This group was responsible for:

- Reviewing the summary analysis of the surveys.
- Approving the key questions and methodology for the focus groups, and
- Reviewing the draft final report from JOST&Co.

A plain language communication statement was sent individually to all employees that outlined the engagement of the consultant, their project brief, how they could participate, support if required and how and when feedback would be disseminated.

Following this communication, all staff were sent a personal invitation to attend a focus group. As numbers for the groups were restricted, initial options for staff were limited. Staff who responded seeking an alternative session were contacted later in the week with further options for groups that were not at capacity.

The focus groups, conducted at various locations in the municipality, during the week of 14 February 2022, were designed to explore the results of all three surveys seeking a greater understanding of the employee experience and how these results are informed (i.e. experienced, observed or perceived).

Participants in the focus groups were asked to identify actions using a start, stop, continue methodology to inform both the Gender Equality Action Plan and the Workforce Plan.

14 face-to-face focus groups, 1 one-to-one session for half a day, and a virtual session for those employees who could not attend any of the sessions the previous week, were conducted by the consultant.

Attendance rates were less than survey response rates at a total of 115 employees (23% of the workforce).

Employee representatives, including union delegates and Health and Safety Representatives, were offered an opportunity to meet with the consultant in a separate session however none of the invitees accepted the invitation.

A consultation session was held with Councillors and five elected members participated in this session. Council briefings have also been provided along the development process.

7.1 Overview of focus group attendance

Number of employees invited	486
Number of employees absent on leave etc	13
Confirmed attendance of all groups offered	130
Employees who declined invitation	41

7.2 Key findings / themes from employee consultation

The following were notable themes of the employee consultation sessions run by the consultant.

- Council is an integral workplace in the community – one that fosters teamwork, provides income and friendships.
- A perception that leadership is not visible or accessible and not trusting of staff.
- Anecdotal awareness that the failure to report or call out negative behaviours relates to a mistrust of Council processes together with a fear of speaking up. Historical / longstanding mistrust based on an historical breach of confidentiality over 9 years ago, may have influenced the current results.

The following were employee ideas generated from the focus groups.

STOP	START	CONTINUE
Only offering online training	Zero tolerance of bullying	Checking in and supporting each other
Ignoring requests for feedback	Consistent mechanisms/procedures	Team gatherings
Blaming others for culture issues	Listening to, and action on concerns raised	Respect other cultures and beliefs
Saying 'it is too hard'	Taking accountability for own role	Educate, listen, include
Taking credit for others work	Lead by example	
Forgetting people who do a good job	Celebrating employee differences	
Rewarding staff who are actually doing their role	Communicate and measure progress	
Being closed minded	Unconscious bias training	
	Taking action for poor behaviour	
	Consistency between departments	
	Improve communication to all staff	
	Improvement to flexible work options.	