

SOUTHERN  
GRAMPIANS  
SHIRE COUNCIL

# GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN



Southern Grampians  
SHIRE COUNCIL

Greater  
Hamilton  
ONE PLACE. MANY POSSIBILITIES





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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Land Owners

Southern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung and Bunganditj people, the traditional custodians of the lands where we live and work. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. Southern Grampians Shire Council is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.





# INTRODUCTION

Southern Grampians Shire Council recognises that improving gender equality is an important issue and has developed the Council's first Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), which will guide actions for the period 2021-25.

Gender Equality Action Plans are required under Section 10 of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and must include:

- + The results of the workplace gender audit (a combination of employee experience data and workforce data).
- + Strategies and measures for promoting gender equality in the workplace (based on the results of the workplace gender audit).

The Action Plan must:

- + Take into account the Gender Equality principles
- + Consult with the governing body (the Council)

This GEAP will provide an integrated whole-of-Council approach to increase gender equality within the Southern Grampians Shire Council by outlining the Council's priorities to address gender equality.

A project group comprised of Executive Leadership Team, Governance and Human Resource Team members guided the development of this Plan. This included collaboration with the Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West group in 2020. As part of this regional work group, Council received advice and guidance on the

implementation of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and the process for consultation and development of the accompanying plan.

The GEAP was developed through extensive staff and Councillor consultation. Over seventy staff participated in the consultation activities which included information sessions and feedback forums. The draft plan was circulated to all staff and Councillors for review and comment, with the feedback received shaping the final document.

In addition, a review and analysis of relevant documents and data was undertaken, including employee experience data, workforce data, objectives of the Council Plan and the Workforce Plan.

We recognise that the gender equality journey will be one of continuous learning and improvement. Based on the data collected, Southern Grampians Shire Council is scoring above the Local Government industry average in a number of areas as listed in the table below. We also acknowledge these initial results provide an opportunity for improvement and the actions in this plan demonstrate our commitment to this.

The GEAP has been informed by the requirements outlined in the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## PEOPLE MATTERS SURVEY RESPONSES

Strongly Agree & Agree

Have <b>not</b> experienced bullying in the last 12 months	76%
Have <b>not</b> experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	85%
Respondents agree that their organisation would support them if they needed to take family violence leave	89%
Respondents agree that their organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language	83%
Respondents agree that their organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours	88%
Respondents agree that they feel culturally safe at work	79%
Respondents agree that having family responsibilities is not a barrier to their success in the organisation	76%
Respondents agree that they are confident that if they requested a flexible work arrangement it would be given due consideration	80%
Respondents agree that they have the flexibility they need to manage their work and non-work activities and responsibilities	82%
Respondents agree that their organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender	88%
Respondents agree that people in their workgroup actively support diversity and inclusion in the workplace	81%
Respondents disagree that people in their workgroup often reject others for being different	75%



# KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

## Gender Equality

means equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes between persons of different genders.

## Gender Equality Principles

Section 6 of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* states the Gender Equality Principles include:

1. All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
2. Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
3. Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
4. Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria.
5. Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
6. Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
7. All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.
8. Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of

Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.

9. Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
10. Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

## Sex

refers to a person's biological characteristics. A person's sex is usually described as being male or female. Some people may not be exclusively male or female, which is referred to as intersex. Some people identify as neither male nor female.

## Gender

refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. A person's gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex.

## Intersectional

refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. These aspects can include gender, Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation. This amplifies barriers to services, increases the risk of social isolation, and exacerbates social and economic disadvantage, including housing insecurity.

# PRIORITIES FOR THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Using the results from staff consultation and workforce data, and analysing best practice guides to address gender equality in the workplace, three priorities with supporting strategies have been developed.

The priorities over the next four years are:

1. Education and Training
2. Recruitment and Promotion
3. Integration of Gender Equality across Council Policies, Programs and Services

## Future goals

This is the inaugural Gender Equality Action Plan for Council. As part of our commitment to gender equality in our organisation we have identified further goals that, although not included in this plan, we will be collectively working towards in the future. These goals include:

- + Continual commitment to providing strong leadership; in future the organisation will be in a position to encourage and support community organisations to adopt the gender equality principles
- + Be an innovative and ground-breaking organisation recognised for our gender equality initiatives and culture
- + Recognise and encourage staff involvement in days of activism
- + Foster a culture of empowerment and gender equality through education without the need for gender balance targets and quotas.



# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**NOTE:** The ticks are indicators of when the initiative will commence or be delivered. The majority of actions will be ongoing in nature.

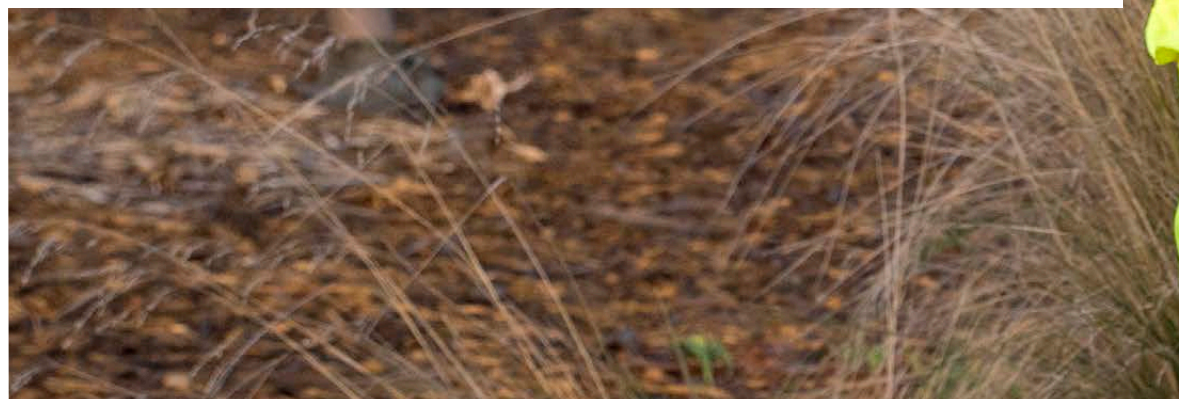
Strategy	Action	Timeline				Responsible Department	Process Indicator
		21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25		
Address sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying in the workplace	Raise staff awareness on sexual harassment prevention, reporting and support as follow up from the VAGO sexual harassment survey		✓			ELT SLT Organisational Development	Increase in staff awareness in how to report discrimination, bullying and harassment through external training and measure effectiveness through workplace audits and surveys.
	Provide transparent and easy to understand policies and procedures to enable staff to make complaints and address concerns		✓			Organisational Development	The number of formal complaints submitted by staff initially increases, as opposed to staff choosing not to make a complaint.  Outcome to be compared to industry statistics.
	Improve staff satisfaction rates relating to how complaints are handled			✓		Senior Leadership Team	Managers and supervisors are trained and equipped to better facilitate and handle complaints relating to sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.

Strategy	Action	Timeline				Responsible Department	Process Indicator
		21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25		
Increase training for people managers in the gender equality and gender impact assessment space	Coordinate gender equality training for Senior Leadership Team		✓			Organisational Development	Executive, Senior Leadership Team and selected Coordinators to undertake Gender Impact Assessment training.
	Identify further training needs for staff and Councillors to upskill gender equality techniques and knowledge			✓		Organisational Development	Consult with Senior Leadership Team and develop a training needs analysis for wider organisation.  Facilitate separate and specific training for Councillors.
Increase staff confidence that those who report improper conduct will be protected from reprisal	Evaluation of training and education initiatives and programs across Council. Promotion of policy and procedure.				✓	Organisational Development	Collate the number of reports formally received and monitored via staff surveying to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and initiatives.
Increase awareness around the disparities experienced by the LGBTI community and foster a culture of support and acceptance	Partner with an LGBTI organisation to provide initial and ongoing training to raise awareness.  Style guides available for staff who wish to include LGBTI language and pronouns in email signatures and other correspondence.				✓	Community Relations	Staff cohort are more knowledgeable, and comfortable with LGBTI disparities and language use. Staff feel safe and supported in the workplace and community.



# RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

Strategy	Action	Timeline				Responsible Department	Process Indicator
		21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25		
Integrate gender equality into recruitment and promotion practices	Develop diversity and gender mechanisms to ensure equal representation on recruitment panels where possible		✓			Organisational Development	Gender equality measures are incorporated into the Recruitment Policy and Procedure.
	All Position Descriptions to include gender equality as a corporate responsibility			✓		Organisational Development	Position description review and inclusion of the gender equality statement.
Create pathways for leadership roles	Ensure leadership programs are equally accessible for all staff in the organisation				✓	Senior Leadership Team	Gender balance with leadership training opportunities across the organisation.



Strategy	Action	Timeline				Responsible Department	Process Indicator
		21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25		
Understand the factors resulting in separations from the organisation by implementing a structured exit process	Review exit interviews and enforce undertaking them			✓		Organisational Development	Exit process developed and implemented. Use exit interview data to improve processes and work conditions.  Exit information discussed opening with Senior Leadership team for culture improvement and growth.
Foster relationships with relevant external bodies to create partnerships and access to subject matter experts					✓	Senior Leadership Team	Formal partnerships with Women's health and wellbeing Barwon South West and other local organisations.





# INTEGRATION OF GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS COUNCIL POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Strategy	Action	Timeline				Responsible Department	Process Indicator
		21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25		
Build a commitment to gender equality at all levels of Council	Develop a Southern Grampians Shire Council Policy that includes a gender equality statement		✓			Organisational Development	Policy and statement developed and endorsed by Executive Leadership Team
	Incorporate Gender Equality into the Staff Consultative Committee agenda to provide members of staff an opportunity to actively progress and influence Gender Equality across the organisation		✓			Staff Consultative Committee	The Staff Consultative Committee provides oversight on this plan as a recurring agenda item for meetings. The committee reports on progress to the Executive and Senior Leadership teams via CAMMS (interplan) annually.
	Run an Expression of Interest process, seeking champions from within the organisation that are confident in completing GIAs and promoting gender equity and diverse workplaces			✓		Staff Consultative Committee	Champions are identified and Promoted to staff throughout the organisation.
	Incorporate an understanding of gender equality, LGBTI awareness, sexual harassment and violence prevention culture into the induction for staff, contractors and volunteers				✓	Organisational Development	Incorporated into induction process

Strategy	Action	Timeline				Responsible Department	Process Indicator
		21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25		
Ensure gender equitable workplace arrangements are available and used	Ensure Gender Impact Assessments are undertaken when reviewing Council policies, programs and services, Enterprise Bargaining Agreements and integrate equitable measures where possible		✓			Executive and Senior Leadership Teams	Make gender equitable amendments to policies, programs and services being reviewed and developed
	Promote flexible working arrangements for all staff, including real life examples via internal communications and good news stories			✓		Executive and Senior Leadership Teams	Monitor flexible working arrangement trends and whether there is an increase in participation.
Continue to consider equality, diversity and inclusiveness in written and visual publications	Publications are representative of all including the use of gender neutral language.				✓	Community Relations	Diverse and inclusive publications are delivered over the period this plan covers and is evaluated in the final year.
Continue to improve data collection relating to Gender Equality	Review mechanisms for collection of equality data to allow for a more comprehensive data set		✓			Organisational Development	Increase data set held by Council relating to issues faced by staff relating to equality, diversity and inclusiveness. Data held securely by the HR/ Governance Department.
	Continue to include equality questions in the staff surveys, trending this information over the duration of this action plan		✓			Organisational Development	Questions incorporated into the staff survey



# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is important that the efforts of Council are monitored and evaluated to identify the level of positive change being achieved.

The Action Plan will intersect with the following Council documents:

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Workforce Development Plan 2021-2025
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Recruitment Policy

The actions will be monitored through the process indicators outlined in the Action Plan and will measure how well the actions have been implemented or adopted. The process will be monitored through CAMMS (Interplan) quarterly, reviewed annually and a progress report presented to the Executive Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team and Audit and Risk Committee annually.

The following table outlines how the key elements Council will measure track change towards advancing gender equality in the organisation and in design and delivery of Council’s services and programs.

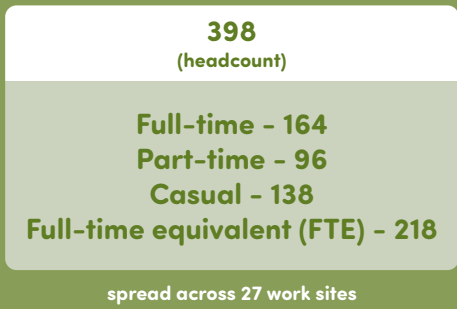
What are we going to measure?	Priorities	Strategies	Action
Timeframe	4 years	4 years	Annually
Reporting	ELT Report	ELT Report	ELT Report, SLT and ARC Annually

# APPENDIX WORKPLACE GENDER AUDIT

## ORGANISATION



### Employees



### Employment



### Rookie rate



### Gender

#### Executive Team



#### Managers



#### Supervisors/Team Leaders/Coordinators



#### Other Staff



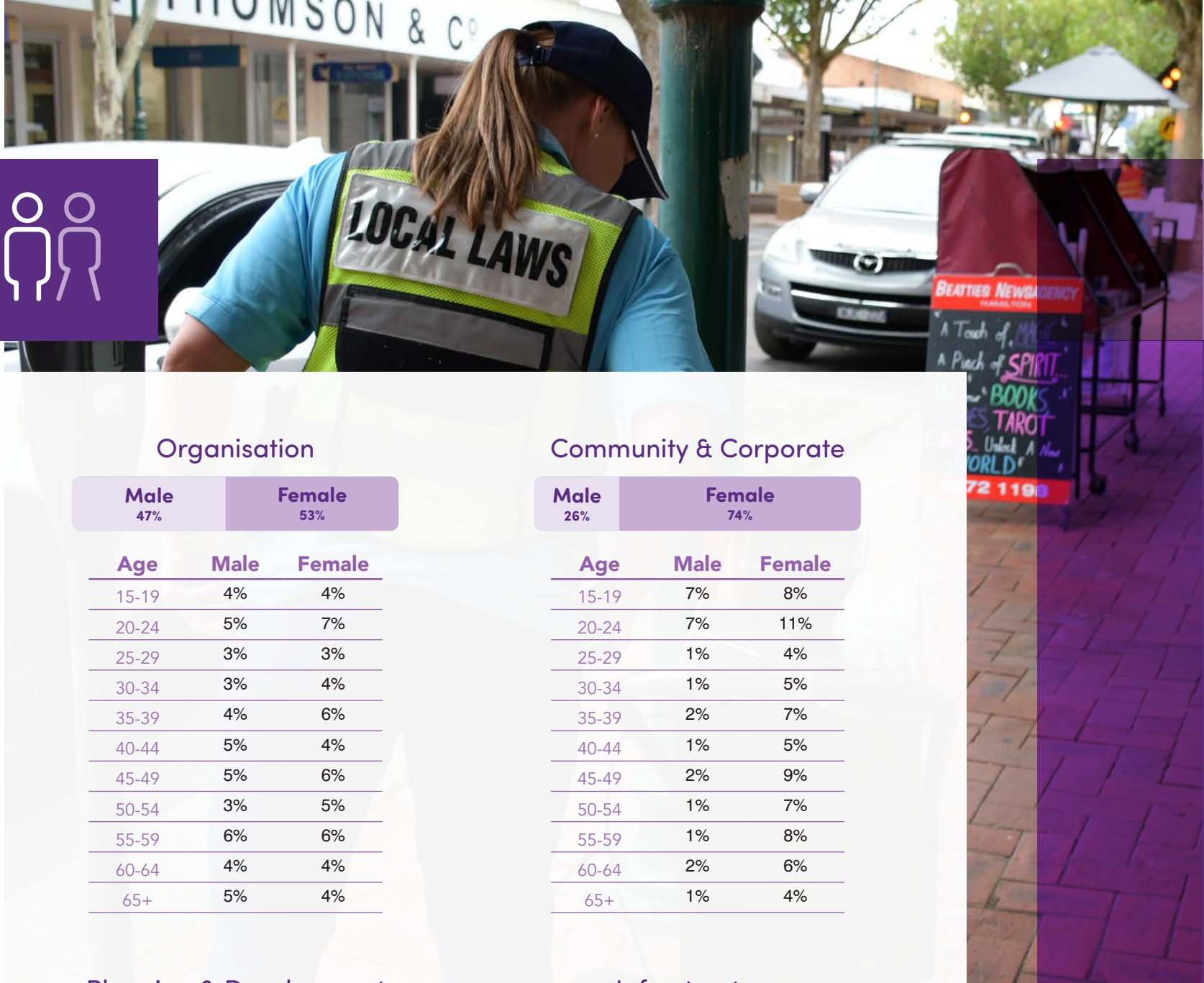
### Volunteers - 154



### Hours per week







Organisation

	Male 47%	Female 53%
Age	Male	Female
15-19	4%	4%
20-24	5%	7%
25-29	3%	3%
30-34	3%	4%
35-39	4%	6%
40-44	5%	4%
45-49	5%	6%
50-54	3%	5%
55-59	6%	6%
60-64	4%	4%
65+	5%	4%

Community & Corporate

	Male 26%	Female 74%
Age	Male	Female
15-19	7%	8%
20-24	7%	11%
25-29	1%	4%
30-34	1%	5%
35-39	2%	7%
40-44	1%	5%
45-49	2%	9%
50-54	1%	7%
55-59	1%	8%
60-64	2%	6%
65+	1%	4%

Planning & Development

	Male 36%	Female 64%
Age	Male	Female
15-19	0%	3%
20-24	4%	7%
25-29	4%	4%
30-34	3%	5%
35-39	4%	9%
40-44	6%	7%
45-49	3%	4%
50-54	1%	4%
55-59	1%	5%
60-64	3%	7%
65+	7%	9%

Infrastructure

	Male 87%	Female 13%
Age	Male	Female
15-19	0%	0%
20-24	3%	1%
25-29	8%	1%
30-34	5%	0%
35-39	8%	2%
40-44	11%	1%
45-49	10%	3%
50-54	8%	2%
55-59	15%	2%
60-64	10%	0%
65+	9%	1%

TURNOVER  
RATE



10%

Organisation

(% of employees who resigned in previous 12 months excluding casuals)

Community & Corporate

(% of employees who resigned in previous 12 months excluding casuals)

51%

- Corporate & Community - 4%
- Organisational Development - 9%
- Leisure Services - 9%
- Information Technology - 17%
- Community Services - 61%

Planning & Development

(% of employees who resigned in previous 12 months excluding casuals)

20%

- Art Gallery - 11%
- Building - 11%
- Performing Arts Centre - 22%
- Planning & Regulatory - 56%

Infrastructure

(% of employees who resigned in previous 12 months excluding casuals)

29%

- Fleet - 8%
- Waste - 8%
- Parks & Gardens - 15%
- Assets - 30%
- Works - 31%





## EMPLOYEES



### Organisation

Median age is 44

17% are over 60

29% are over 55

37% are over 50

### Community & Corporate

Median age is 38

12% are over 60

21% are over 55

30% are over 50

IT - 2%  
Community & Corporate - 2%  
Community Relations - 5%  
Organisational Development - 8%  
Finance - 8%  
Library - 10%  
HILAC - 18%  
Community Services - 47%

### Planning & Development

Median age is 46

27% are over 60

34% are over 55

39% are over 50

Economic Development - 3%  
Art Gallery - 3%  
Building - 7%  
Futures - 7%  
Performing Arts Centre - 20%  
Tourism - 27%  
Planning & Regulatory - 33%

### Infrastructure

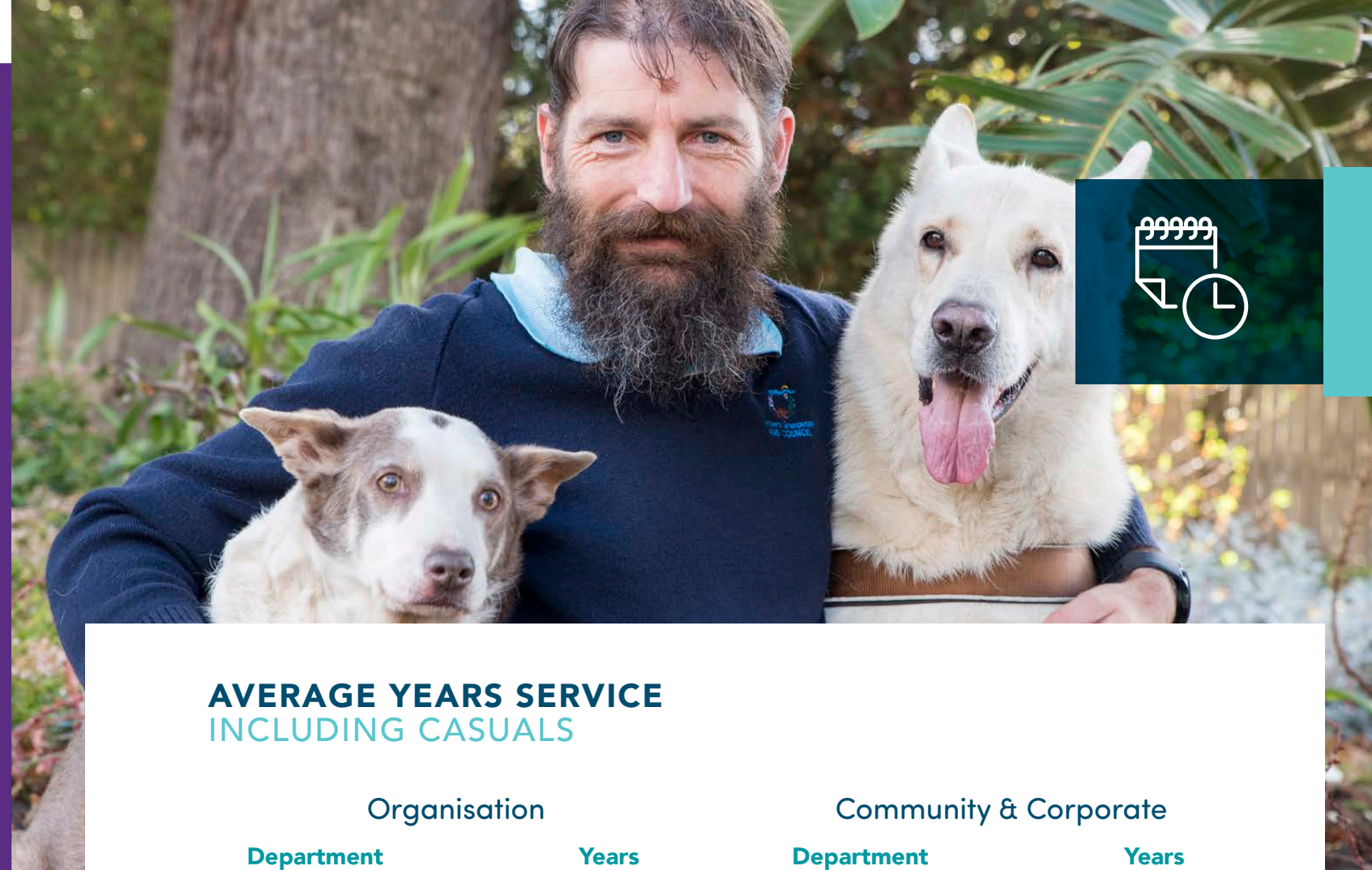
Median age is 48

20% are over 60

39% are over 55

47% are over 50

Infrastructure - 2%  
Assets - 2%  
Aerodrome - 2%  
HRLX - 4%  
Engineering - 4%  
Fleet - 4%  
Works - 6%  
Facilities Maintenance - 6%  
West Sector - 6%  
Construction - 9%  
Parks & Gardens - 11%  
East Sector - 12%  
Central Sector - 15%  
Waste Management - 17%



## AVERAGE YEARS SERVICE INCLUDING CASUALS

### Organisation

Department	Years
Chief Executive Office	3.13
Community & Corporate	5.99
Planning & Development	9.57
Infrastructure	8.48

### Community & Corporate

Department	Years
Community Services	8.46
Organisational Development	8.05
Finance	9.81
Community Relations	7.94
Leisure	3.78
Information Services	4.75
Library	6.72
Community & Corporate	3.95

### Infrastructure

Department	Years
Works	10.67
Assets	11.12
HRLX	8.83
Engineering	3.75
Fleet	6.7
Facilities Management	6.30
Parks & Gardens	7.99
Waste Management	8.84
East Sector	10.64
West Sector	6.93
Central Sector	9.80
Aerodrome	8.5
Infrastructure	1.20
Construction	9.83

### Planning & Development

Department	Years
Building	1.91
Art Gallery	8.43
Tourism	14.39
Performing Arts Centre	7.60
Planning & Regulatory	3.98
Local Laws	11.72
Environmental Health	7.12
Emergency Management	22
Environment & Sustainability	0.27
Futures	12.00



2021-25

For further information  
or to provide feedback on  
this Plan, please contact:

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