

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2021 - 2025



MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL



Acknowledgment of Country

Mitchell Shire Council acknowledges the Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Mitchell Shire.

We pay our respect to their rich cultures and to Elders, past, present, and emerging, as well as other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live, work and play in the area.



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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

I am very pleased to present Mitchell Shire Councils Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025 to our workforce and community.



Developing a Gender Equality Action Plan (the Plan) has helped us understand what we are doing well, where we can make improvements and how we can work collectively to provide a workplace where all employees enjoy and have access to the same rights, resources and opportunities.

This Plan builds upon prevention of violence against women and gender equality work through our Listen, Learn and Lead Program, Social Justice Framework 2017- 2021, Free Mitchell From Violence Project, International Women's Day celebrations, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaigns, participation on the Goulburn Family Violence Executive

Committee and development of the Goulburn Family Violence Strategic Plan, and more recently, applying an intersectional gender lens to both our Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025 and COVID-19 Community Recovery Plan.

Council is committed to gender equality principles and this plan sets out clear strategies and actions to achieve a more gender equitable organisation. We know gender inequality can be compounded by other factors that make up a person's identity such as age, race, ethnicity, religion, ability or sexuality, so we have also applied an intersectional lens to this plan and carefully considered how we can make changes to reduce barriers for people who may face overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

In consultation with our workforce, governing bodies and partners at Women's Health Goulburn North East, our Plan outlines a whole-of-council approach to improve gender equality in our organisation. Additionally, we also know that through leadership, role modelling and consideration of gender equality principles in our policies, programs and services we can positively impact gender equality more broadly across the Shire.

This Plan has been endorsed by our Gender Equality Action Group and Executive Leadership Team and will be delivered collaboratively across all levels of Council. I encourage everyone to work together on this Plan, collectively, our actions can accelerate gender equality within our workplace and shape a safe and equal future for our growing communities.



Brett Luxford
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

February 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Mitchell Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025* is an internal Council document that aims to accelerate gender equality initiatives and outcomes within the organisation and contribute to the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence over the long term in our communities.

The Plan has been developed over several stages, commencing with a gender equality workplace audit. The results of the workplace gender audit were analysed by our partners at Women's Health Goulburn North East and used in consultation sessions with Councillors, governing bodies and employees to collaboratively develop tailored strategies to improve gender equality at Mitchell Shire Council. All strategies in the Plan were informed by the State Government's *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy, Local Government Act 2020, Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 and Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (second edition)*. The plan also aligns with the direction of *Mitchell Shires Council Plan 2021-2025, Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025, Life Stages Strategy, COVID-19 Community Recovery Plan and Community Vision 2050*.

A cross-functional working group was established in June 2021 to guide the development and consultation of this Plan. This group, the Gender Equality Action Group, is made up of key influences from all directorates and levels of Council. Alongside partners at Women's Health Goulburn North East, the Gender Equality Action Group will oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Plan over the next three years.



Youth councillors participating in a Youth Forum.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Gender equality	Is defined as the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender ¹ .
Gender equity	Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances ¹ .
Gender Lens	Carefully and deliberately examining all the implications of our work in terms of gender.
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 ² .
LGBTIAQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, Asexual, Queer and questioning ³ .
Intersectionality	The ways in which different parts of a person's identity can make it more likely for them to experience overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation due to gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, ability or sexuality. When we use an intersectional lens, this means we are considering how the different factors of a person's identity might impact them.

BASELINE AUDIT ANALYSIS

In June 2021, Mitchell Shire Council conducted a gender equality workplace audit, collecting gender-disaggregated data from internal human resource systems and collecting responses from 142 employees (33% of the total workforce) in the 2021 People Matter Survey. The seven-workplace gender equality indicators⁴, as listed below represent the key areas where workplace gender inequality persists and where we can make progress and improvements toward a more gender equal workplace:

- > gender pay equity
- > gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- > gender composition of governing bodies
- > workplace sexual harassment
- > recruitment and promotion
- > gendered work segregation
- > leave and flexibility

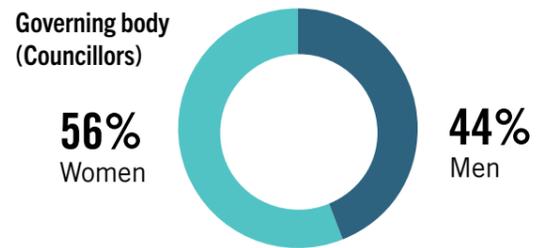
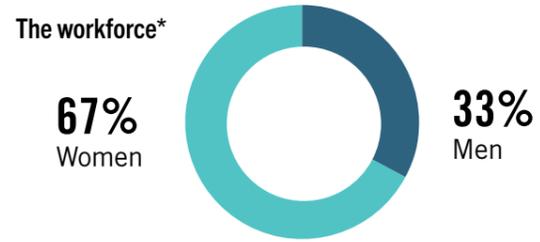
The following pages summarise the audit findings mapped against the gender equality indicators.



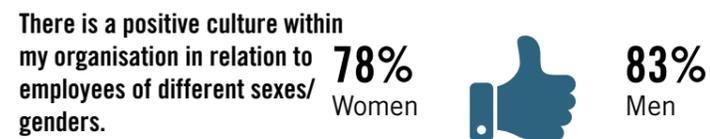
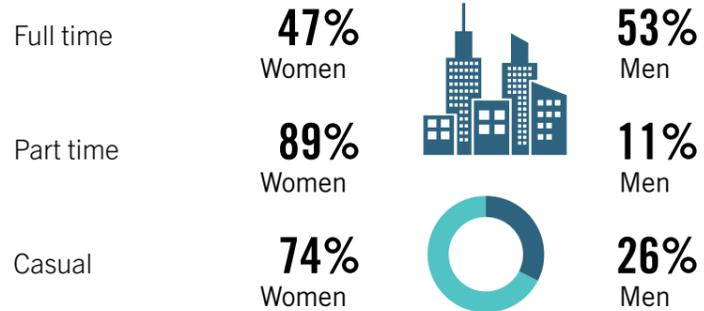
Youth Council Clothes Swap event at Wallan.

Mitchell Shire Council Gender Audit Data and Survey Responses - June 2021

Gender Composition



Overall of the workforce by employment basis



Pay Equity

The minus symbol means the gap is in favour of women at Mitchell Shire Council. The national pay gap is 13.8% in favour of men (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2022).

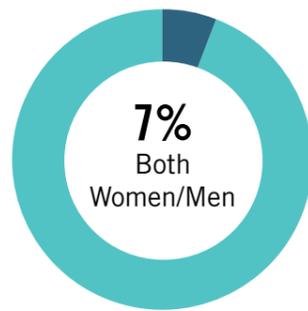


Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination

Formal complaints

0

Percentage of survey respondents in the organisation who experienced sexual harassment, by gender (calculated by subtracting the percentage of survey respondents who selected "No, I have not experienced any of the above [sexual harassment] behaviours" from 100%) =

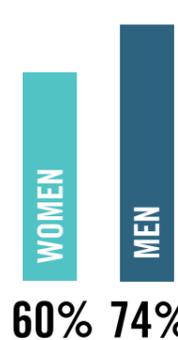


Percentage of survey respondents who agreed with the following statements, by gender:

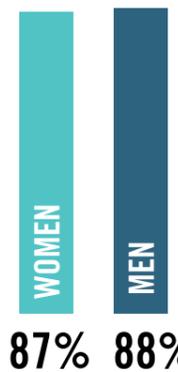
I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at work



My organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination



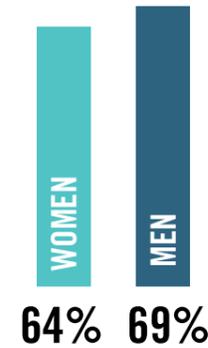
My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours



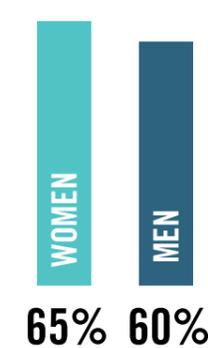
Recruitment and Promotion

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed with the following statements, by gender:

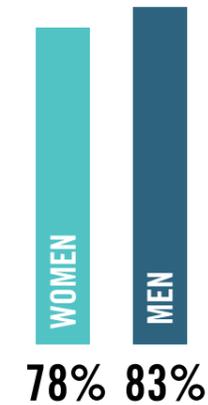
My organisation makes fair recruitment and promotion decisions, based on merit



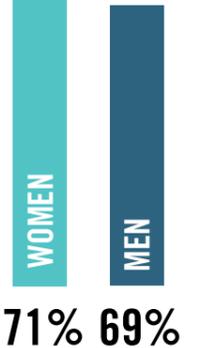
I feel I have an equal chance at promotion in my organisation



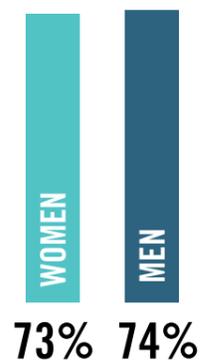
Gender is not a barrier to success in my organisation



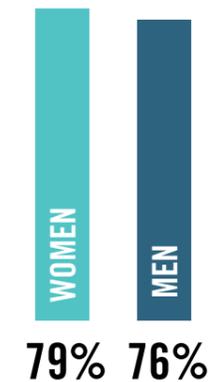
Being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is not a barrier to success in my organisation



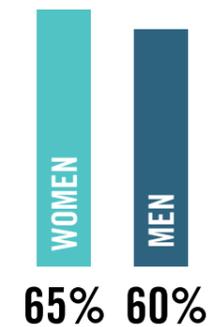
Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation



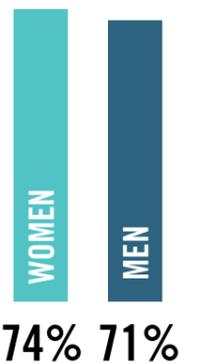
Sexual orientation is not a barrier to success in my organisation



Disability is not a barrier to success in my organisation



Age is not a barrier to success in my organisation



Leave and Flexibility



Proportion of the workforce using formal flexible working arrangements
Proportion of the workforce using formal flexible working arrangements, by gender
Gender composition of people in the organisation who have taken parental leave

** Data for the above three questions was not available time of collection. Data capturing will be updated for future reporting.

Number of people who exited the organisation during parental leave, by gender

0

Leave and Flexibility

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed with the following statements, by gender:

My organisation would support me if I needed to take family violence leave



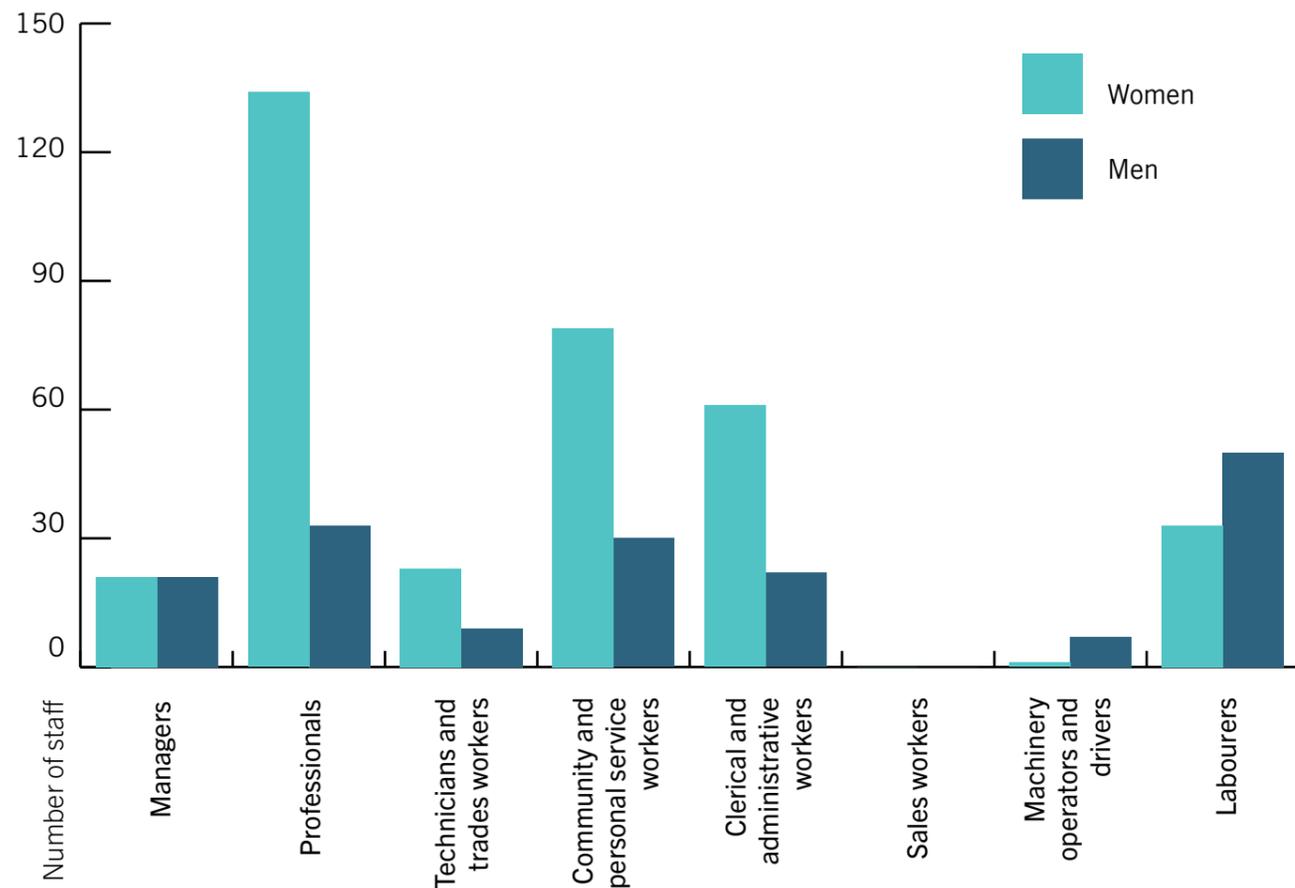
I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration

My organisation supports employees with family or other caring responsibilities, regardless of gender



Gendered Segregation

Gender composition of ANZSCO major occupation groups in the organisation:



* Gender Identify data is collected at time of recruitment. Workforce data and employee experience data collected June 2021. Survey responses: People Matter Survey June 2021.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation activities to support the development of Mitchell Shire's Gender Equality Action Plan 2021- 2025 occurred over thirteen online sessions during the month of February 2022. A total of 111 people participated in the consultations, and of these, 92 were internal employees. Consultation activities engaged a diverse range of employees across all three Council directorates as well as Councillors, partners from Women's Health Goulburn North East and representatives from unions including the Australian Services Union, Australian Education Union Victorian branch and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation. Consultation activities allowed for anonymous contribution. Sessions were facilitated by the Gender Equality, Health and Wellbeing Officer with support from Gender Equality Action Group members.

Feedback informed the development of strategies, measures and actions to promote and progress gender equality within the organisation. Before, during and after the sessions, participants were provided pathways and contact details of Mitchell Shire Councils Family Violence Officer, Employee Assistance Program, Family Violence Resources Guide, Family Violence Leave Policy and links to national, state and regional family violence referral services.



Broadford Living and Learning Centre International Women's Day event 2022.

CASE FOR CHANGE

Gender equality is a human right and a necessity in achieving social justice. Mitchell Shire Council has an important role in removing structural and systemic barriers both within our organisation and more broadly in the policies, programs and the services we deliver, particularly for those experiencing intersectional gender inequality. Improving gender equality and considering intersectional principals will increase the economic, social and wellbeing outcomes of our employees⁵ and support us in creating safer and healthier communities⁶.

As the level of government closest to our community there is a unique opportunity to positively influence and improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of our community across the life stages. Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (second edition) outlines unequivocal evidence that violence against women is both a symptom and a cause of gender inequality, and that violence is not inevitable, but rather the product of social, cultural, political and economic factors⁷. Mitchell Shire experiences the 11th highest incident rate for family violence across Local Government Areas in Victoria⁸. If the township of Seymour were a Local Government Area, it would have the highest family violence incident rate in the state⁸.

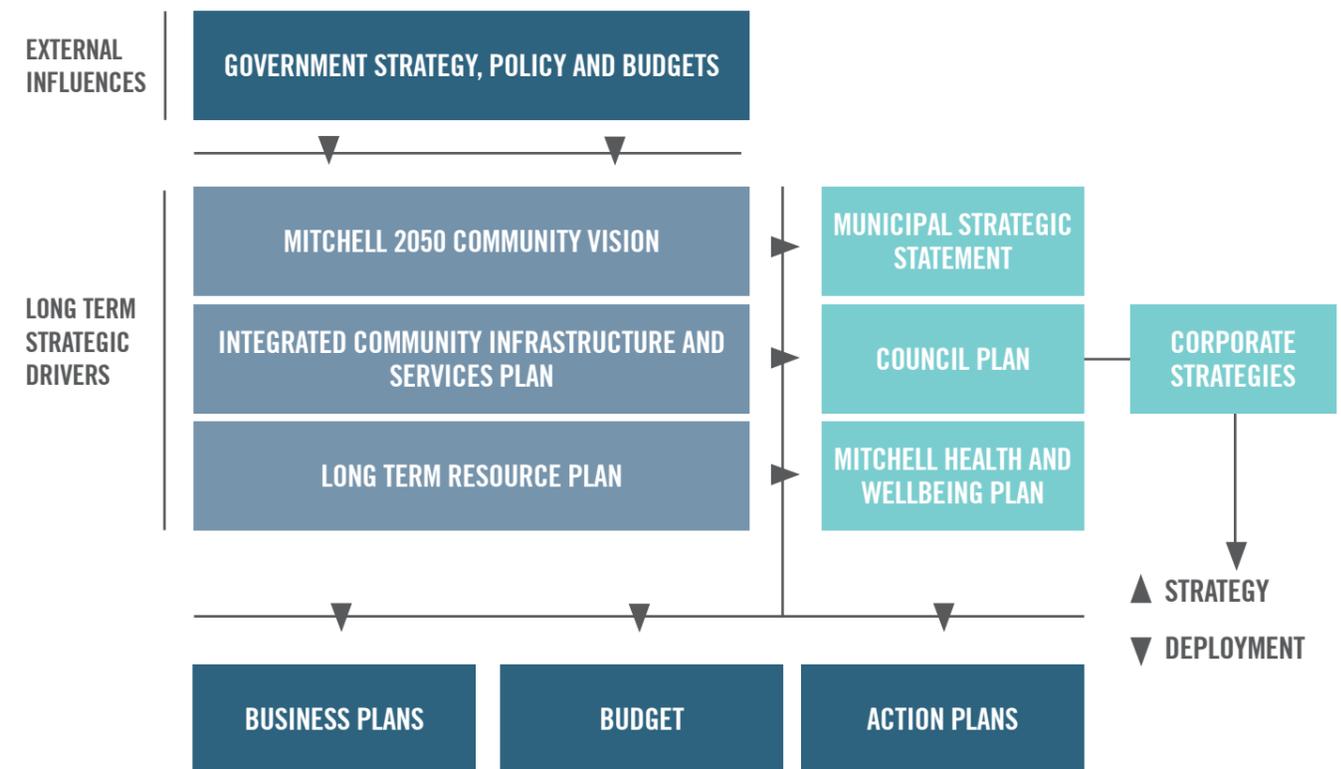
Violence in our communities is complex, but it's also preventable. Through education, awareness, primary prevention initiatives and internal actions we can improve our structural and systemic environments and change the social conditions that produce and drive this violence.



PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Our priorities, strategies and actions were developed in consultation with Mitchell's Gender Equality Action Group, Council's governing bodies and a cross section of employees across the organisation. To complement our understanding of intersectional gender inequality within our organisation, responses from our Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025, Community Vision 2050 and feedback from our Listen, Learn and Lead Gender Equity Program (2017) as well as recommendations from our Respect and Equality for All: Prevention in Action training (2020) were also considered.

We also analysed best practice guidelines and sought the expertise of our long-term partners at Women's Health Goulburn North East to support our longer-term organisational approach. The Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 - 2025 will sit alongside our Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025 and Council Plan 2021 - 2025. Whilst the Plan is an internal document, applying Gender Impact Assessments to policies, programs and services that directly and significantly impact the public will influence our communities more broadly.



COMMUNITY VISION

The *Local Government Act 2020* has created a once in a generational opportunity for councils to work closely and deeply with their community to build a shared vision they can all be proud of. It is the key piece of work that unlocks how the council will position itself to respond to the community's expectations for the future.

Importantly the Community Vision acts as a medium for the community to have continued conversations with Council ensuring the Vision, themes and aspirations of the community are kept in check.

The Mitchell 2050 Community Vision is a high-level plan that captures the long-term aspirations of the community. The 2050 Vision is driven, developed, and owned by the Mitchell community, with Council as the facilitator in the development process.

The Mitchell 2050 Community Vision has been built upon 6 key themes which arose through a range of consultations which took place with the community over April and May 2021.

The themes are reflected on at various points within the Health and Wellbeing Plan which provides the community with the opportunity to see the line of site between the two documents.

The Health and Wellbeing Plan is informed by the following 6 Community Vision Themes:



2050 YOUR VISION



THEME 1 VIBRANT COMMUNITIES



THEME 2 WORKING, LEARNING AND TOURISM



THEME 3 TRAVELLING AND GETTING AROUND



THEME 4 SHAPING NEIGHBOURHOODS



THEME 5 NATURE AND PARKS



THEME 6 CLIMATE ACTION

While the community's primary aspiration for the future is:



“We are a healthy, vibrant and connected community that values nature, diversity and innovation.”

OUR COUNCIL PLAN OBJECTIVES

ASPIRATION

As we grow, we will be leaders in protecting the environment and preserving the country feel and liveability of our unique communities, with visionary planning for a connected, prosperous, safe, and healthy future.

OVERARCHING DRIVERS

Financial sustainability, climate change, population growth, pandemic response and recovery.

THEMES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

COUNCIL	NATURE	BUILT ENVIRONMENT	COMMUNITY
Council is accountable to, engaged with, and respected by our community.	Our natural environment is protected, cared for and enhanced.	Our history is protected and embraced, our present is enriched, and our future is well planned to retain our country-feel.	Our communities are welcoming, engaged, prosperous, safe and healthy.

KEY PRIORITIES

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Understand our unique communities' needs and aspirations through meaningful engagement and open dialogue. > Demonstrate strong leadership and good governance. > Use evidence to provide a level of service to all residents across the Shire in order to align with the aspirations as identified in the Community Vision 2050. > Transparently share information and challenges, and celebrate successes with the community. > Build an agile, innovative, and financially sustainable organisation that delivers on the needs and priorities of our communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Establish Council as a recognised leader in sustainable environmental management. > Protect, enhance, and connect landscapes and increase the extent, variety, and quality of the natural habitat. > Facilitate waste minimisation, resource reuse and recovery over disposal. > Provide open spaces that serve the diverse needs of all our community. > Develop partnerships to implement shared innovative solutions to environmental issues. > Show leadership to prevent or mitigate the increasing impacts of climate related weather events on our communities and environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Respect our past and preserve our heritage structures and sites. > Plan and advocate for growth that is respectful of the unique and special nature of our communities. > Better connect the Shire through improved roads, public transport, trails, and paths. > Plan and partner to deliver open spaces, community facilities, recreation and aquatics facilities where needed. > Plan, partner, and advocate for the timely delivery of infrastructure to meet the increasing service needs of all our communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Facilitate the development of programs, groups and events that strengthen social cohesion, resilience, and safety. > Build strong relationships with our first nations people and their supporting organisations. > Advocate for, and collaborate with partners for improved accessibility for a broader range of services in the Shire. > Grow visitation and tourism product through investment attraction, partnerships, and promotion of our natural, cultural and heritage attractions and events. > Enhance health and wellbeing outcomes through collaboration with community and partners. > Support COVID recovery for employers and community. |
|--|---|---|---|

STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

Gender Equality Priorities



OUR VISION FOR GENDER EQUALITY:

Mitchell Shire Council's workplace has systems, structures and a culture that promotes equality and supports all people with the opportunities and resources they need to succeed.

THREE PRIORITIES EMERGED FROM CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES TO INFORM THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN, THEY ARE:

PRIORITY 1 Mitchell Shire Council will implement an organisational approach to promote intersectional gender equality to improve the health, wellbeing, social and economic outcomes of our employees and community.

- > Embed intersectional gender equality principles across all levels of council

PRIORITY 2 Mitchell Shire Council will identify and reduce systemic causes of gender inequality in our workplace and provide opportunities that support people to succeed.

Four gender equality indicators under this priority include:

- > gender pay equity
- > gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- > gender composition of governing bodies
- > gendered work segregation

PRIORITY 3 Mitchell Shire Council will role model inclusive cultures and foster safe, encouraging environments.

Three gender equality indicators under this priority include:

- > workplace sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination
- > recruitment and promotion
- > leave and flexibility

Objectives and strategies for each of these priorities, along with the responsibility and resources we need are outlined in the tables below. *Note that strategies will be embedded into Council structures, systems and processes following completion on the year they commence.

PRIORITY 1

Mitchell Shire Council will implement an organisational approach to promote intersectional gender equality to improve the health, wellbeing, social and economic outcomes of our employees and community.

EMBED INTERSECTIONAL GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF COUNCIL.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
1.1. Increase knowledge and commitment to gender equality across all levels of council.	1.1.1. Develop and review inclusive components in our internal communication branding, intranet, website and style guide and promote intersectional gender equality with key messaging, opportunities, and updates shared by Executive Leadership Team (ELT).	2023	Executive Leadership Team Communications	Gender equality style guide, webpage and intranet sites developed. Gender equality added as standing agenda item in all employees newsletter.
	1.1.2. Diversify members on internal Gender Equality Action Group through development of an Expression of Interest (EOI) and Terms of Reference (ToR) that encourages intersectional applicants and flexible participation. Minimum quota of 60% women to reflect the makeup of the organisation (at time of first Gender Audit in 2021).	2022	Gender Equality Action Group	Number and diversity profile of program participants as provided by participants in EOI form. Agendas/ minutes Number of participants (including diversity data)
	1.1.3. Participate in the trial and review of Women's Health Goulburn North East Learning Management System for self-paced learning on gender equality and investigate opportunities to embed into council Learning Management Systems.	2023	Women's Health Goulburn North East Learning and Development	Number and diversity profile of participants in trial Modules in Learning Management System
	1.1.4. Deliver intersectional gender equality and Gender Impact Assessment Training for Senior Leadership Team and broader organisation.	2022	Learning and Development HR Services, Gender Equality Action Group Women's Health Goulburn North East	Number of training sessions delivered. Number and diversity profile of participants. Change in attitudinal data (report from WHGNE)
	1.1.5. Deliver prevention of violence initiatives as referenced in the Council Plan 2021- 2025 and Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021- 2025.	2022	Whole of council Gender Equality Action Group	Yearly action plan Traffic Light Report

PRIORITY 1

EMBED INTERSECTIONAL GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF COUNCIL.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
1.2. Create systems that ensure an intersectional gender equality lens is applied to council programs, policies and services.	1.2.1. Establish a GIA (Gender Impact Assessment) practical implementation group with positions that deliver work aligning with the six Community Vision 2050 themes. Develop a train the trainer model to ensure an intersectional gender equality lens is applied to new policies, plans and services that directly and significantly impact the public, as well as those up for review.	2022	Governance Gender Equality Action Group Senior Leadership Team	Practical implementation group established Train the trainer model developed GIA register developed
	1.2.2. Include a Gender Impact Assessment checklist into current governance checklists, Council reports and service plans.	2023	Governance Gender Equality Action Group Senior Leadership Team	Establish triggers to apply GIA Policy Document Framework and GIA toolkit/checklist developed.

Equality for everyone in all aspects of employment.

Current employees are given every opportunity to succeed and progress in the organisation.

Consultation feedback from internal employees, 2022.

PRIORITY 2

Mitchell Shire Council will identify and reduce systemic causes of gender inequality in our workplace and provide opportunities that support people to succeed.

EQUAL REMUNERATION FOR WORK OF EQUAL OR COMPARABLE VALUE ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE, IRRESPECTIVE OF GENDER.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
2.1. Investigate and review remuneration at Level -3 (Coordinator) and -4 (Team Leader) to minimise pay gaps.	2.1.1. Review remuneration differences between roles with a focus on gender segregation and identify the nature and extent of any salary gaps. Based on this analysis, take appropriate action to remove any identified pay gap within the next four years.	2023	Manager People and Culture HR Services	Review undertaken using Workplace Gender Equality Agency: Guide to gender pay equality Guide ⁹ and pay gap minimised.
	2.1.2. Review responsibilities, risk, and skill requirements to ascertain whether remuneration is appropriate.	2024	Manager People and Culture HR Services	Remuneration review completed.
	2.1.3. Review step and starting salaries to understand whether negotiations or market forces are impacting the pay gap and can be addressed.	2024	Manager People and Culture HR Services	Review undertaken and recommendations developed.
2.2. Investigate and review employment status across all levels of the workforce.	2.2.1. Review and conduct consultation to understand causes of gender distribution of full time, part time and casual employees to understand issues, causes and discrepancies.	2022	Manager People and Culture HR Services	Review undertaken and report with recommendations developed. Actions implemented in 2023 and 2024 following report.

PRIORITY 2

GENDER COMPOSITION OF ALL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
2.3. Incorporate an intersectional gender equality lens to onboarding, work placement and promotion practices.	2.3.1. Review onboarding documents for new employees to ensure inclusive statements, imagery and intersectional gender equality data is provided.	2023	Learning and Development HR Services	Onboarding documents for new employees reviewed.
	2.3.2. Review forms, surveys and mechanisms that capture employee data every two years and encourage current employees to update their gender, preferred pronouns and other intersectional data. Provide clarification on the definition of family (ensuring this includes relatives) and living with a disability (including visible and invisible disabilities and mental health).	2023	Learning and Development HR Services	Forms, surveys and mechanisms reviewed.
	2.3.3. Review signature template to encourage addition of preferred pronouns, flexible working options and statement that supports inclusion.	2022	Communications Gender Equality Action Group	New signature developed. Audit of updated signature.
2.4. Develop pathways for women and gender diverse people to take on leadership opportunities and roles.	2.4.1. Identify and implement advancement strategies, including mentoring, scholarships, development and education pathways and secondment opportunities for employees.	2023	Senior Management Team Learning and Development HR Services	Number and diversity profile of participants taking up opportunities.

Be an organisation where women aspire to lead.

Encourage people to take on roles and responsibilities in the organisation that they may not have previously considered.

Consultation feedback from internal employees, 2022.

PRIORITY 2

GENDER COMPOSITION OF GOVERNING BODIES.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
2.5. Support women and diverse community members to take on leadership opportunities.	2.5.1. Identify and provide opportunities for MAV/VEC/LGA to facilitate tailored leadership workshops for potential Councillor candidates across all three wards, encouraging young women and women from diverse backgrounds to participate.	2023	Learning and Development HR Services	Number of workshops delivered. Number and diversity profile of workshop participants.
	2.5.2. Investigate opportunities and willingness for current female identifying councillors to provide support to emerging female identifying leaders.	2023	Councillors Governance	Capacity and willingness of Councillors to provide support to emerging leaders determined.
2.6. Increase Councillor knowledge of intersectional gender equality principles.	2.6.1. Deliver gender equality and intersectionality training to Councillors and offer to Youth Councillors.	2022	Executive Leadership Team Learning and Development HR Services Gender Equality Action Group	Application process reviewed. Number and diversity profile of members tracked bi-annually.
2.7. Encourage environments that support intersectional participation on all council advisory and volunteer committees.	2.7.1. Review ToRs and EOI information for prospective advisory groups and volunteer committees ensuring inclusive statements and imagery.	2023	Senior Leadership Team Governance Gender Equality Action Group	Application process reviewed. Number and diversity profile of members tracked bi-annually.

PRIORITY 2

GENDERED SEGREGATION WITHIN THE WORKPLACE.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
2.8. Build capacity of workforce to understand the impacts of gender, intersectionality and gender stereotypes.	2.8.1. Deliver internal training on the impact of gender stereotypes and structures to support understanding of the underlying causes of gendered segregation of occupations within the workplace.	2022	HR Services Learning and Development Communications Gender Equality Action Group	Number of training workshops delivered. Number and diversity profile of participants in training.
	2.8.2. Review workplaces to ensure they are inclusive of different genders and intersectional needs, including appropriate facilities, equipment and uniforms. Focus on accessibility for people living with disabilities and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.	2025	HR Services	Review of intersectional needs and recommendations provided and implemented. Number and diversity profile of participants consulted to inform recommendations.
	2.8.3. Hold focus groups with highly gendered teams to understand barriers to increasing diversity and team specific actions to reduce these barriers.	2024	HR Services Gender Equality Action Group	Number and diversity profile of participants in focus groups. Recommendations developed.
2.9. Investigate talent pipelines with respect to gender and other forms of diversity and develop strategies and provide opportunities to increase diversity in gender segregated roles.	2.9.1. Work and consult with local secondary colleges and Local Learning and Employment Networks to identify and encourage diverse local employment opportunities for work experience, structured workplace learning and student placement within council, with a focus on gender segregated areas of the workforce and more diverse entry into non-traditional career pathways.	2023	Manager Life Stages HR Services Economic Development Communications Gender Equality Action Group	Number and diversity profile of participants undertaking work experience, structured workplace learning and student placement within council.
	2.9.2. Increase the number of women and men within specific teams to promote diversity within highly gendered areas of the workforce: Targets – men in kindergarten – increase to 5% representation by 2024 Women in Parks and Gardens – increase to 30% representation by 2024 Women in engineering – increase to 30% representation by 2024	2024	Gender Equality Action Group HR Services Senior Leadership Team	Number and diversity profile of teams tracked annually.
	2.9.3. Undertake further analysis of Council's workforce data to clarify the nature and extent of gender segregation in work areas and develop strategies to increase diversity, where appropriate.	2023	Gender Equality Action Group HR Services Senior Leadership Team	Desktop analysis and review of workforce data with report shared to Gender Equality Action Group.
	2.9.4. Review Targeted Employment Pathway Strategies from other councils and investigate opportunities to deliver in the context of Mitchell.	2023	Gender Equality Action Group	Desktop review of council strategies, with report and recommendations delivered to Gender Equality Action Group.

PRIORITY 3

Mitchell Shire Council will role model inclusive cultures and foster safe, encouraging environments.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE, BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
3.1. Review policies and procedures surrounding sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying and pathways on how to raise issues and complaints.	3.1.1. Develop an internal awareness campaign, including a flowchart to support employees knowledge of sexual harassment, bullying and complaint mechanisms with individual teams to deliver the campaign based on their structure and access to online recourses.	2023	Learning and Development HR Services Senior Management Team Gender Equality Action Group	Flowchart developed and shared in all employees newsletter. Number of teams that delivered campaign.
	3.1.2. Identify dedicated officers within the Human Resources team to support sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying complaints. Where possible, aim for a gender balance in dedicated officers to support comfort of employees making reports.	2022	Manager People and Culture HR Services	Dedicated support officers identified. Communications shared as part of internal awareness campaign.
	3.1.3. Explore an anonymous confidential reporting line and feedback loop to share how issues are being dealt with appropriately and effectively.	2024	Manager People and Culture HR Services	Feasibility of feedback loop and anonymous confidential reporting line investigated.
	3.1.4. Deliver training on sexual harassment, bullying and complaint mechanisms to all employees with a focus on employees' comfort and confidence to raise issues and complaints.	2024	Learning and Development HR Services Gender Equality Action Group	Number of training session delivered. Number and diversity profile of participants.
3.2. Investigate bullying behaviours.	3.2.1. Conduct a pulse survey: > to understand current awareness levels of bullying, harassment and discrimination by gender and department > to assess employee confidence in the organisation's ability to effectively deal with allegations of bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination > review if behaviour is concentrated to a particular area.	2024	Manager People and Culture HR Services	Pulse survey conducted and results analysed.
	3.2.2. Review who within the organisation has undergone training on bullying, discrimination and/or sexual harassment, and consider if training be refreshed or renewed with a focus on leadership/management.	2024	Manager People and Culture HR Services	Review undertaken and report provided to Gender Equality Action Group with recommendations.
	3.2.3. Investigate opportunities to deliver phase two of the Listen, Learn and Lead program to understand the perceptions of culture and prevalence of bullying.	2024	Learning and Development HR Services	Review and report to Gender Equality Action Group

PRIORITY 3

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE, BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
3.3. Increase awareness and understanding of pathways for bystander action on sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.	3.3.1. Share education recourses on bystander action on sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination in the workplace through internal communication channels.	2024	Learning and Development Executive Leadership Team Communications	Profile in gender equality standing agenda item in all employees newsletter at least once per year.
	3.3.2. Deliver training on bystander action and intervention on sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination in the workplace for all employees, including online Active Bystander module from Women's Health Goulburn North East Learning Management System.	2024	Learning and Development HR Services Women's Health Goulburn North East	Training sessions delivered Number and diversity profile of participants.

Gender is not a barrier to success, job fulfillment, or safety at work.

I honestly wish for everyone to be happy and feel supported at work.

Consultation feedback from internal employees, 2022.

PRIORITY 3

RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION PRACTICES IN THE WORKPLACE.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
3.4. Review recruitment processes for bias and review employment advertising to attract greater gender diversity.	3.4.1. Review and develop template to ensure job advertisements have plain language, inclusive statements, imagery and advertise flexible working options.	2022	HR Services Communications	Review of current job advertisements completed and template developed.
	3.4.2. Ensure diversity on interview panels and work samples rather than relying on CV's and behavioural interview questions and review the shortlisting process to mitigate bias.	2023	HR services Manager People and Culture	Diversity profile of panellists. Review Recruitment and Selection Policy.
	3.4.3. Begin collecting demographic data on employees and job applicants beyond gender for analysis purposes.	2023	HR services Manager People and Culture	Diversity profile of job applicants collected.
	3.4.4. Review recruitment practices to mitigate bias and deliver unconscious bias training.	2023	HR services Manager People and Culture	Recruitment practices reviewed. Number of training session delivered. Number and diversity profile of participants.
	3.4.5. Review Recruitment and Selection Policy to ensure that gendered desegregated data is recorded and ensure as far as possible, that every shortlist is gender diverse and if shortlist is not diverse, identify and document reasons.	2024	Gender Equality Action Group HR Services Senior Leadership Team	Review Recruitment and Selection Policy. Shortlist report register.
	3.4.6. Map the stories and career pathways of senior leaders in the organisation to better understand challenges and opportunities to progress.	2024	HR Services Gender Equality Action Group	Report and recommendations. Number and diversity profile of participants consulted.
	3.4.7. Showcase and celebrate women in leadership and non-traditional roles at events such as International Women's Day and internal communications.	2023	Senior Leadership Team Communications Gender Equality Action Group	Number of activities/events delivered.
	3.4.8. Showcase men in non-traditional roles in communications.	2023	Senior Leadership Team Communications	Profile in gender equality standing agenda item in all employees newsletter at least once per year.
3.5. Review formal flexible working arrangements and leadership opportunities.	3.5.1. Review internal data capturing systems to ensure they can capture proportion of the workforce using formal flexible working arrangements by gender and gender composition of people who have taken parental leave.	2022	HR Services Manager People and Culture	Review completed and data captured for progress reporting period.
	3.5.2. Communicate a transparent process for secondment and acting opportunities and encourage employees to take on roles responsibilities they may not have previously considered.	2023	Senior Management Team HR Services	Number and diversity profile of people taking secondment and acting opportunities.

PRIORITY 3

LEAVE AND FLEXIBILITY.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES AND MEASURES	YEAR	RESPONSIBLY AND RESOURCING	PROCESS INDICATOR
3.6. Foster a culture of flexible working arrangements and utilisation of leave.	3.6.1. Hold targeted workshops with both indoor and outdoor teams to explore why men in the organisation feel having caring responsibilities is a barrier to success to better understand the perceptions and solutions around this.	2024	HR services	Number of consultation sessions. Number of men consulted. Recommendations developed.
	3.6.2. Profile internal employees using flexible working arrangements, carers, family, parental leave and leave for self-care through internal communications.	2023	Learning and development HR services	Profile in gender equality standing agenda item in all employees newsletter at least once per year.
	3.6.3. Conduct consultation with women and gender diverse people at Levels -4 (Team Leader) and -5 (Officer) focussing on what they see as key barriers to their career progression with a focus on flexibility and work hours. Additional focus on women and gender diverse people in predominantly male teams.	2024	HR Services Gender Equality Action Group	Number of consultation sessions. Number of women and gender diverse participants consulted.
	3.6.4. Set a policy for all roles to be offered on a flexible basis by default (or 'if not, why not' basis).	2022	Organisational Performance	Register of job descriptions.
3.7. Build awareness of family violence resources, supports and leave policies.	3.7.1. Review the Mitchell Shire Family Violence Resource Guide to ensure it aligns with best practice and includes information about how to report disclosures or suspicions of family violence within the community.	2023	Learning and development HR services Gender Equality Action Group	Updated Mitchell Shire Family Violence Resource Guide profiled in gender equality standing agenda item in all employees newsletter at least once per year.
	3.7.2. Deliver training for managers, HR and other key employees on how to support and respond to an employee experiencing family violence.	2024	Learning and development HR services	Number of training session delivered. Number and diversity profile of participants.

LEADERSHIP AND RESOURCING

Strategic resource plan

Executive Leadership Commitment



Leadership and resourcing of Mitchells Gender Equality Action Plan have been outlined in ‘Responsibly and resourcing’ column in the above tables.

STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN

A minimum operation budget of \$15000 per financial year will support activities such as training and facilitation of targeted workshops.

Employees undertaking training related to Plan will be allocated time to undertake any pre-training activities, attend training and complete pre- and post-training surveys and evaluations. This will support our Partnership Agreement with Women’s Health Goulburn North East to track attitudinal changes over time and tailor training to individual teams.

Our four-year workforce plan has allocated a Gender Equality, Health and Wellbeing Officer to lead the implementation of the Plan, alongside the Gender Equality Action Group. Gender Equality

Action Group members are allocated time each month to support and deliver cross functional work across Mitchell’s three directorates to promote and progress gender equality initiatives and report on Plan actions.

To support the implementation of Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) a practical implementation group with positions that deliver work aligning with the six Community Vision 2050 themes will also be established. Each member will be supported by the Gender Equality, Health and Wellbeing Officer, Gender Equality Action Group and experts at Women’s Health Goulburn North East to undertake a minimum of one GIA in 2022, with a view to develop a train the trainer model in 2022 and beyond.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT:

The Executive Leadership team is committed to intersectional gender equality principles and the vision, objectives and actions set out in the Gender Equality Action Plan 2021- 2025. The Executive Leadership Team will champion all initiatives in the Plan to support a whole-of-

organisational approach to improving gender equality. Together, we commit to building a more equitable organisation and shaping gender equitable communities for a better future for all those who live, work and play in Mitchell.

Brett Luxford
Chief Executive Officer

Mary Agostino
Director Advocacy and Communities

Suzane Becker
Director Economy, Growth and Infrastructure

Laurie Ellis
Director Organisational Performance

MEASURING PROGRESS

REFERENCES

The progress of the Plan will be tracked by the Gender Equality Action Group annually, in collaboration with the Gender Equality, Health and Wellbeing Officer, Governance and Human Resources teams.

A report will be shared with the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors that includes a traffic light report of all yearly actions and register of Gender Impact Assessments completed.

Progress reports to The Commission for Gender Equality in relation to strategies and measures will be tracked by the Gender Equality, Health and Wellbeing Officer with support from the Gender Equality Action Group.



REFERENCES

1. Victoria State Government, *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, 2016.
2. Australian Human Rights Commission, *Addressing sexual orientation and sex and/or gender identity discrimination*, 2011.
3. Victorian State Government, *LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide*, 2021.
4. Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, *Workplace gender equality indicators*, 2021.
5. Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Workplace gender equality: the business case*, 2018.
6. Victorian State Government, *The benefits of gender equality*, 2021.
7. Our Watch, *Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed.)*, 2021.
8. Crime Statistics Agency, *Police Incidents per 100,000 people year ending March 2021*.
9. Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Guide to gender pay equality*, 2016.



Local Police and Youth Services Team raise awareness for 16 Days of Activism Campaign.

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