



Ten ways local government can advance gender equity

Why gender matters

The fact sheets, *Ten ways local government can advance gender equity*, are part of a resource package designed to build the capacity for local governments to consider gender equity in their planning, policy and service delivery.

Local government plays an important role in creating and supporting environments that enable community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. Reducing gender inequity for women is a key strategy in achieving this goal, as it allows for a more just, inclusive and fair society for both women and men. The fact sheets include practical information and practice examples of ways local government can advance gender equity for women.

The ten fact sheets are:

1. Why gender matters
2. Gender analysis
3. Infrastructure
4. Land use planning and design
5. Promoting women in leadership
6. Workplaces
7. Sports and recreation
8. Access to services
9. Key concepts and definitions
10. Further resources

What is gender?

'Gender' refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and attributes assigned to women, men, girls and boys.¹ Unlike the biological characteristics and differences between women and men known as sex, gender roles are socially learnt, differ among cultures and change over time. While it would appear that women and men have all the same formal opportunities, gender inequity causes many women to experience significant disadvantage, impacting on their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.² To ensure that community needs are considered and responded to in the most informed and appropriate way, it is essential to consider gender when developing local government policy, planning and service delivery.

What is gender equity?

Gender equity is an important social justice goal. The concept recognises that within all communities, women and men have different benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities.³ Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men by recognising diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all. A gender equity approach therefore acknowledges that different strategies are often necessary for women and men.

Why is it important for local government to consider gender?

Local government has a critical role in creating and supporting environments that enable everyone in our community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

This role is legislated under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008) section 24* and the *Local Government Act 1999 (3c) (3d)*, which mandates councils to act as representative, informed and responsible decision makers in the interests of their communities.⁴ This means responding to the interests and needs of both women and men across all aspects of council activity. Councils are also bound by legislation such as the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which aim to eliminate discrimination and sexual harassment and promote greater equity in our community. Finally, compliance with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires councils to uphold human rights, including the rights of women, as an essential component of a democratic, equitable and inclusive society. Achieving gender equity requires our elected political representatives to drive and champion policy, program and workplace reforms that build a fairer community for all.

The Victorian Local Government Women's Charter highlights the need for increased women's participation in key decision making roles through three principles: gender equity, diversity and active citizenship. In Victoria, 63 of the 79 local s have endorsed the Charter, with many councils developing action

plans to support the development of these objectives. The Charter is consistent with state, national and international protocols which highlight equal rights and opportunities as central to good governance.^{8,9}

How can local government advance gender equity?

There are a number of ways councils can advance gender equity. Strategies include integrating a gender equity strategy into council's core business that enables mapping and analysis of the potential impact of council policies and programs on women and men.

A gender analysis examines the differences in women and men's lives, including those that lead to social and economic inequity for women, and applies this understanding to decision-making, policy development and service delivery. Overcoming gender inequity requires councillors, staff and organisations as a whole, to acknowledge difference and disadvantage and to challenge the stereotypes and attitudes that can lead to discrimination and marginalisation.

¹ Please note the Ten ways local government can advance gender equity fact sheets will for the most part refer to women and men. When considering gender it is also important to take into account the needs of girls and boys to ensure that planning, policy and service development and delivery is not blind to the differing and diverse needs of children.

² E. Broderick, C. Goldie and E. Rosenman, Gender equality blueprint 2010, Australian Human Rights Commission, Sydney, 2010

³ World Health Organisation, Mainstreaming gender equity in health: the need to move forward, WHO regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2002.

⁴ Victorian Local Government Act 1989: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/lga1989182/s3c.html

⁵ VicHealth, The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease caused by Intimate Partner Violence, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, 2004.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008, *How Australians Use Their Time, 2006*, cat. no. 4153.0. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/detailspage/4153.02006>

⁷ ABS Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, February 2010, Catalogue No 2302.2

⁸ Local, State and International Protocols acknowledged by the Charter include:

- the Declaration on the Role of Australian Local Government (1997), <http://www.alga.asn.au/?ID=55>
- the Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government (1998) the Victorian Code of Good Governance (2000) <http://www.vlga.org.au/Resources/Library/GoodGovernanceGuide.aspx>
- the National Framework for Women in Local Government in 2007, http://www.algwa.net.au/files/VLJXY6QUTT/ALGWA_The_Way_Forward.pdf
- Victorian Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter 2006, http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/

Gender inequity facts

FACT: Freedom from violence is a human right. Yet for many women and girls this right is violated. Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor of preventable death, disability and illness for Victorian women aged 15–44.⁵

FACT: Women spend almost triple the amount of hours per week caring for children when compared with men.⁶

FACT: Australian women on average earn 18% less than men in similar positions, which is equivalent to 82 cents to every dollar. The average amount of superannuation savings for men aged 25–64 years was \$69,050 compared to \$35,520 for women.⁷





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Gender analysis

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What is gender analysis?

Gender analysis, also known as gender reporting, is a method of assessing difference in the lives of women and men and the impacts that policies, programs and services have on particular groups of women and men. A gender analysis takes into account the diversity among women and men by considering variables such as socio-economic status, age, family structure, ability and cultural and linguistic background. The World Health Organisation defines gender analysis as

... a dynamic process that assesses the impact a policy, program or project has on diverse women and men and informs actions to address inequalities that arise from the different roles of women and men or the unequal power relations between them¹

Gender analysis is a key tool that enables us to consider whether or not a policy, program or project is producing equitable outcomes for diverse groups of women and men.

Why is a gender analysis important for local government?

Evidence shows that when it comes to health and wellbeing gender does matter. The World Health Organisation recognises gender as a social determinant of health. Women's health is therefore an important matter for council to take action on.² Gender analysis is now recognised at all levels of Australian government as part of comprehensive policy, programs and service planning and delivery. It can be undertaken by an organisation at a point in time for a specific project or more globally for strategic, service and operational matters.

Gender analysis is important as it ensures that policies, programs and services are not unfairly disadvantaging women or men. It is necessary to undertake a gender analysis in order to:

- Prompt the thorough examination of an issue
- Achieve better health outcomes for women and men
- Identify and redress inequity and disadvantage
- Develop targeted programs and policies that assess and reduce barriers and negative impacts and increase participation and engagement of all community members including women
- Ensure local government services are relevant to the needs of the community through the provision of measurable, evidence-based data for women and men.

Gender analysis provides a mechanism to support officers to analyse, research, evaluate and understand the different needs, capacities and experiences of women and men in their municipality and therefore support sound decision-making. Councils that are informed by a strong, accurate evidence base can ensure positive outcomes for their community.

¹ World Health Organisation, 2002, *Gender analysis in Health, A review of selected tools*, Department of Gender and Women's Health, WHO, Switzerland.

² Women's Health Matters: From Policy to Practice, *10 Point Plan for Victorian Women's Health 2006–2010*, Women's Health Association of Victoria: Melbourne, 2006.

³ S. Dyson, *Gender and Diversity: A Workbook for an Equity Approach to Practice*. Women's Health in the South East: Frankston, 2001.

How can local government undertake a gender analysis?

The following five questions are important to consider when looking at how gender relates to a policy, program or service.

- 1. How does it affect women? How does it affect men?**
To help build this picture, use sex-disaggregated data and consult with women's groups and organisations.
- 2. How will you ensure that the specific needs of women and men are considered?**
Examine whether specific policies or programs are required and look at modifying existing practice to ensure it is gender equitable.
- 3. How will diverse groups of women and men be included?**
Gather data, research and feedback from community members who identify as having a disability, being gay, lesbian, transgender or intersex, from a culturally and linguistically diverse background or from a lower socio-economic background.
- 4. How might your own values, biases and assumptions affect the process?**
Consider whether you have specific beliefs about women and men's role in society and how this could impact on your decision-making.
- 5. How does the policy, program or service perpetuate or overcome existing stereotypes and gender inequities?**
Reflect on whether there are measures in place to rectify gender inequities to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities, and are equally valued and respected.





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Infrastructure

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Local government's role in infrastructure

Local government provides a wide range of essential infrastructure. This includes the construction and maintenance of local roads, lighting, bridges, footpaths, drainage and waste disposal. Local government is responsible for vital social infrastructure and community facilities, such as community centres, arts and cultural facilities, playgrounds, maternal and child health centres, parks, libraries and recreation facilities. These facilities play a significant role in providing opportunities for community inclusion, participation and social connection.

Why is gender relevant to infrastructure?

The provision, design and maintenance of infrastructure within our municipalities has a significant impact on the way people use public spaces and community facilities and how they interact with their community.

Planning and designing community infrastructure that is responsive to and respectful of the needs of women and men means analysing how public spaces are used and creating ways to make them more inclusive. This involves investigating who uses community infrastructure, when and for how long, as well as which community groups don't use a particular space and why.

Infrastructure that is poorly maintained can impact on people's use of public spaces, as well as their perceptions of safety. Factors such as poor lighting, graffiti, low levels of natural surveillance, rubbish and cracked footpaths can affect the real and perceived safety of both women and men.

However, there can be particularly negative impacts on women and girls' use of community infrastructure. For example, if path access to a community facility is poorly lit during the evening, women's participation could decline due to safety concerns including increased risk of assault. A well-lit pathway increases visibility and safety.

In addition to the built environment, the operation of community facilities also impacts on women's sense of safety, comfort and subsequent use of these facilities. For instance, the types of programs offered, opening hours, staff composition and the visuals displayed within a facility can have as much of an effect on women's use of services as factors in the built environment. For example, sporting clubs that have sexist posters in their club rooms can create barriers for women and girls' access and participation.

How can local government ensure that infrastructure is gender equitable?

To ensure that all members of our community are able to participate fully in community life, it is essential that community infrastructure is designed, maintained and programmed to be inclusive. Council infrastructure needs to be usable, welcoming, relevant and safe for everyone.

Simple ways to ensure that infrastructure is gender equitable include:

- Conduct an audit of council facilities to determine whether the needs of women and men are being met.
- Ensure any community consultation that is undertaken to assess community infrastructure or facilities involves women, including women who currently use the facility as well as those who do not.
- Include gender analysis as part of regular council maintenance process.
- Ensure that 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' principles are used in all infrastructure design.
- Ensure that staffing and programs at community facilities cater for women and men.
- Use sex-disaggregated data and research to inform infrastructure development.
- Consider ways to utilise council infrastructure, including buildings, sports grounds and vehicles. Facilities can play a very public role in supporting gender equity and preventing violence against women.

Examples

1. In 2008, Maribyrnong City Council conducted an audit of eleven of its facilities to assess how safe and welcoming these facilities were for women. The assessments were completed using a Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) Assessment Tool, which was specifically designed for this assessment. A number of recommendations were made for each facility. The assessment tool is available at: <http://www.mav.asn.au>
2. The Darebin Leisure Services Strategy 2010–2014 includes five actions that support greater inclusion and participation of women.

A case study of women's transport needs

Research suggests that women and men use public transport differently, which is linked to their employment patterns and family and household responsibilities. Women are less likely to have access to a car and are more likely to walk and use public transport. When travelling on public transport, women are often carrying shopping and accompanied by small children. Women collecting children from school and childcare usually travel outside of peak hour and across towns and cities. However, most public transport is designed for people who travel in and out of city and town centres, at peak hour and without children, prams and shopping. In recent years there has been increasing recognition that a gender analysis of transport infrastructure is necessary so that the differing transport needs of men and women can be met.





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Land use planning and design

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Local government's role in land use planning and design

Land use planning refers to how spaces are designed and used and the planning policies and processes that shape conditions in which people live, work and play. Local councils make many land use planning decisions that affect their municipality, such as public transport infrastructure, the size of shopping centres, the location of parks, bike paths and new roads. Every municipality has its own planning scheme, which sets out policies and provisions for the use, development and protection of land for an area. As such, local government plays an important role in creating well designed environments that all members of the community can enjoy. Such places are accessible, environmentally sustainable, affordable and safe for everyone. They enhance the cultural, social, physical and environmental diversity of a region and help foster healthy, socially inclusive communities.

Why is gender relevant to land use planning and design?

Planning policies and processes can unintentionally exclude or discriminate against groups in our community. Planning policy can ignore the fact that women and men use public space differently. It has been argued that urban and suburban spaces support stereotypically male activities and planning methodologies reflect a male dominated society.

Given the relationship between gender, space and power, the form and function of the built environment can make a difference to women and men's use of a space and should not be overlooked.¹

For example, women consistently express greater fears for their personal safety in urban environments than do men.² However, built environments are often developed with little consideration of women's needs. Utilising the 'Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria' is therefore important as well designed and maintained urban environments are essential to improve safety and perceptions of safety for women in our community.

Planners and practitioners involved in land use planning and design are becoming increasingly sensitive to gender perspectives in response to the past tendency to exclude the experiences of women in urban space when defining, interpreting and acting upon planning issues. Planning courses are now including subjects such as gender and planning that aim to explore, examine, analyse and challenge conventional planning thought and practice from a gender perspective.³

How can local government advance gender equitable land use planning and design?

Opportunities for local government to consider gender inequity and effectively integrate gender into land use planning and design include:

- **Improve the understanding of gender equity and how it relates to planning and design.** Undertake a gender audit on existing policies and strategies and consider where there are gaps. For example, women generally seek a home that is located within proximity to services, family networks, public transport, educational opportunities and employment. When developing housing it is important to understand these considerations.⁴
- **Improve knowledge on the ways that consideration of gender can influence building requirements.** For example, building design and assessment should consider location and access, childcare, baby changing facilities, public toilets, lighting and accessible facilities.
- **Develop and implement gender impact assessments.** This will assist decision making and input into the planning scheme, and will involve considering who is affected and how, as well as how planning will impact on a given group in the community including women, men, youth or older residents.

¹ G. Burgess, *Planning and the Gender Equity Duty – Why Does Gender Matter?* University of Cambridge: Cambridge, 2008.

² Women's Design Service: <http://www.wds.org.uk/index.htm>

³ W. Bell, *Women's and Community Safety*, Bell Planning Associates: South Australia, 1998.

⁴ Women's Planning Network, *WPN Research Project Toolkit for Affordable Housing for Women*, Women's Planning Network: Carlton, 2006.

⁵ Women's Design Service: http://wds.org.uk/www/pub_current.htm

- **Plan for appropriate data collection and research.** Use sex-disaggregated data and research to highlight the different experiences and needs of females and males in relation to land use and design. Doing so will identify and respond to the potential experiences of both sexes when undertaking planning decisions. This will better ensure that local government knows the community it is designing for, both now, and into the future.
- **Ensure consultation includes gender equity considerations.** This could involve recruiting a group of local women to go on a 'walkabout' around the city or site with planners and designers at the early planning stage or project scoping. Their views could be included in the designer's planning brief and ongoing consultations. Consultation with a women's advisory committee and reference groups is another important way of ensuring that land use planning and design is responsive to the needs of women in the community.

A Case Study of Safety in Public Urban Space

The Women's Design Service's Making Safer Places Project worked with groups of women to produce safety audits on local parks. Better lighting and maintenance of clear sight lines by cutting back vegetation was a common recommendation. Women also suggested giving pedestrians priority over traffic, and in particular removing pedestrian subways. Clear signage was also considered important from a safety perspective, while the presence of CCTV made women feel that an area was unsafe. The most important factor contributing to women's sense of safety was the presence of other people. One way to attract a wide range of people to a public urban space is to make it beautiful – a concept rarely considered in the context of community safety and wellbeing.⁵





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Promoting women in leadership

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Why focus on women and leadership?

A gender analysis of who has the capacity and opportunity to contribute to community decision-making highlights that women are often absent or under-represented in leadership roles and positions of power. Despite making up 45 per cent of the Australian workforce, women are significantly under-represented in senior leadership and management positions. In an effort to strengthen the representation of women at decision-making levels, the Australian Government has set a target of achieving a 40 per cent representation of women on federal government boards by 2015.

Increasing the representation of women in leadership positions will help challenge and shift workplace cultures and provide women with a greater capacity to participate in the development and implementation of legislation, policies and services that affect their lives. Women's voices and perspectives need to be sought and respected in order to ensure that policy, planning and decision-making best reflects the diversity of the community. Without processes that are specifically designed to increase women's involvement in decision-making, women will continue to be excluded from leadership positions in the community, government and business sectors.

Why should local government promote women's leadership?

Local government is in a unique position to encourage and foster women's leadership and decision-making, and ensure that women have equal representation. Local government is legally obliged to comply with the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. This includes Section 18, which specifically refers to the right for all persons to take part in public life. Local government therefore has a responsibility to work towards enabling the full participation of all women within their municipality in all aspects of community and public life.

How can local government promote women's leadership?

Local governments can strengthen women's leadership both within their organisation and through their work with the community. There are many supporting frameworks that local government can implement. The following is a list of suggested activities which has been adapted from the Victorian Women's Charter Checklist:^{1,2}

- Endorse the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter³
- Review women's representation on council and council committees and establish annual targets and timelines for achieving gender equity
- Designate a council committee with responsibility for increasing women's participation or create a women's portfolio to be led by a councillor and resourced and supported by council officers
- Establish and resource a mentoring program for newly elected women councillors, senior women executives and women officers
- Establish links and partnerships with women leaders and representatives from Aboriginal groups and agencies, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, women with a disability and same sex-attracted women, to encourage their participation and leadership
- Ensure that diverse groups of women have the opportunity to participate on council and community decision-making bodies by identifying and rectifying any exclusion barriers. For example, meeting times, lack of childcare, inaccessible venues or lack of transportation.

¹ Department of Human Services, *Facts and Figures: Key Facts About Victorian Women*, accessed at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/key-facts-and-figures-about-victorias-women> (retrieved 14.6.12)

² Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition. April 2010. *Women's Charter Checklist*. Victorian Government, Department of Planning and Community Development, accessed at: <http://www.vlga.org.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/WPILGC/Charter%20Ideas%20Checklist.pdf>

³ Initiated by the Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition, endorsed by the Minister for Local Government, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association

Gender inequity facts

FACT: Despite comprising slightly more than half of the Victorian population, only 25% of mayors and 29.8% of local government councillors are women

FACT: In the Victorian state parliament cabinet only 4 of the 22 Ministers appointed by the Baillieu government are women²

FACT: Currently, less than 30 per cent of Victorian councillors are women. Six councils have no female representation, and in 14 councils there is only one female representative.

Examples of local governments working to promote women in leadership

Darebin City Council has established the Darebin Women's Advisory Committee to provide advice and strategic direction on issues affecting women back to council. This committee is made up of community members with councillor representation.

Darebin Council also supports an internal Women's Leadership and Equity Group made up of staff to inform workplace development, gender equity and leadership opportunities for women.

City of Port Phillip (CoPP) has developed a Gender Equity Action Plan which identified CoPP as an employer of choice for women, with women totalling more than 50% of staff and councillors. Three of the five Senior Executive Team, including the CEO, are women and four of seven councillors are women. This trend continues to be reflected across leadership roles within council.

Yarra City Council presents an annual award on International Women's Day to recognise and honour the work of a woman council officer.





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Workplaces

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Why focus on gender equity in the workplace?

Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in women's paid employment. However, workplace attitudes and assumptions that lead to discrimination and unequal outcomes between women and men continue. For example, a major contributor to unequal outcomes between women and men is the gender wage gap. Australian women currently earn approximately 82 cents to every dollar men earn, and the gender pay gap has widened over the last four years.¹ A 2009 report commissioned by the federal government found that in addition to fairness and equity there are strong economic imperatives for rectifying the pay gap between women and men, as it costs the Australian economy \$93 billion per year.² Another common reason that women and a growing number of men struggle to stay in work is because employees who have family and caring responsibilities are not adequately supported through flexible work arrangements.³ Even when flexible workplace provisions are available unsupportive workplace cultures prevent many workers – particularly men – from accessing such entitlements.⁴

Why should local government work to create a gender equitable workplace?

Local government employs a wide range of professionals from those working in planning, health and community services, sports and leisure, infrastructure and human resources, among various other professions.

Supporting fair and more flexible workplaces is essential in advancing gender equity and in positioning local government as an employer of choice. In practice, this means that both women and men are provided with family friendly employment conditions, job quality, pay equity, satisfaction with hours worked and career progression. Flexible workplace initiatives have been found to increase employee productivity and improve recruitment and retention of staff.⁶ Flexible workplace arrangements also support good health among employees, which is essential to workplace productivity.

How can local government promote gender equity in the workplace?

There are numerous ways local government can advance workplace reform and organisational cultural change in an effort to build a fair, flexible and gender equitable workplace. These include:

- Invest in workplace innovation and job redesign to strengthen opportunities for women to take on leadership and management roles
- Set measurable targets for the number of women at management and senior executive roles

Local government innovation to advance gender equity in the workplace

Family violence is a leading cause of homelessness and poverty for Victorian women and children, as violence in the home has a significant impact on women's employment status. Recognising this, the Surf Coast Shire has incorporated a clause in their Enterprise Agreement that provides employees experiencing family violence with additional paid leave and occupational health and safety measures, including safety planning.¹¹

- Work to achieve pay equity between women and men and put in place measures that promote greater transparency in relation to pay rates and individual contracts
- Ensure that women and men working at all levels of council can access flexible workplace arrangements, such as flexi-time, part-time work, job sharing and working from home options
- Provide fathers and other supporting parents with a minimum of two weeks' paid leave following the birth of a baby to enable them to be involved in caring for their child
- Support employees returning to work after parental leave, such as provisions that allow women to return to part-time employment, private workplace areas for employees to breastfeed or express milk at work
- Identify and support men working in senior roles to champion gender equity in the workplace through leading by example and accessing flexible work arrangements.

Gender inequity facts

FACT: In a week where 3.2 million employees provided unpaid care to someone, only 15 per cent used flexible working arrangements to do so⁷

FACT: Lower income earners (less than \$30,000 pa) are more likely to require greater job flexibility when compared to middle and higher income earners⁸

FACT: Women are more likely than men to work under minimum employment conditions and be employed in low-paid, casual and part-time work⁹

FACT: One in five women will experience sexual harassment in the workplace in their lifetime, which remains a barrier for many women participating in paid work.¹⁰

Superannuation and Women

- In 09/10 the average account balance for women was \$40,000. Men? Over \$71,000
- A woman taking a five year break at 27 to have children has \$91,400 less superannuation than a man
- A woman who retires at 67 needs 13% more in retirement than a man because she is likely to live longer
- About two in five women have no superannuation compared with one in four men
- Average superannuation payouts for women are less than half that received by men – \$63,000 compared with \$136,000.⁵

¹ ABS. Average Weekly Earnings, November 2010, Cat No. 6306, 2010.

² R. Cassells, Y. Vodyattama, R. Miranti & J. McNamara. *The Impact of a Sustained Gender Wage Gap on the Australian Economy*, Commonwealth of Australian: Canberra, 2009.

³ Australian Human Rights Commission. *Gender Equality Blueprint*, Australian Human Rights Commission: Sydney, 2010

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ R. Clare, *The Age Pension, Superannuation and Australian Retirement Incomes*, 2009, p. 22. Available at <http://www.superannuation.asn.au/policy/reports-2007-09>

⁶ L. Long, *Creating a Flexible Workplace*, Society for Human Resource Management, 2008.

⁷ ABS. Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia, April to July 2007, Catalogue No. 6361.0, 2007.

⁸ Newspoll Market Research, *Out of Hours Care Study*, 2008.

⁹ ABS. 'Table 03: Labour Force Status by Sex', Labour Force Australia, Catalogue No 6202.0, 2008.

¹⁰ Australian Human Rights Commission. *Sexual Harassment: Serious Business Results of the 2008 Sexual Harassment National Telephone Survey*, 2008, p. 1. Available at http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sexualharassment/serious_business

¹¹ J. Kun, 'The ASU's Family Violence Clause: Making Family Violence a Workplace Issues', *Parity*, vol. 23, issue 10, December 2010.



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Sports and recreation

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Local government's role in sport and recreation

Local government is responsible for a range of community sports and recreation facilities and services, particularly in relation to open space areas, parks, sports ovals and recreation centres.

Councils own and manage facilities for organised sporting events, such as sporting ovals, tennis and basketball courts and pavilions, as well as facilities for other recreational activities including community events.

Councils also manage local recreation centres, which include swimming pools, gyms and facilities for group and individual fitness programs, as well as providing onsite childcare facilities. When these spaces are safe, welcoming and inclusive, they provide opportunities for community participation and social connection.

Why is gender relevant to sport and recreation?

There are many benefits to participation in sport and recreation activities. Aside from the physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits, evidence shows that participation in sport fosters increased self-esteem, a strong sense of belonging and facilitates social inclusion and community integration.

There are still low rates of participation of women and girls in all aspects of sport. Women remain underrepresented at all levels of coaching, officiating and leadership.¹

Increasing the involvement of women and girls in sporting clubs and recreation activities also challenges gender norms and provides opportunities for women's and girl's leadership and achievement.²

Reinforcing rules of good conduct through gender equity in junior sport may well flow on to other aspects of life. Sports clubs can enforce equal numbers of women coaches and coaching assistants in their programs. Junior sporting leagues could also look at encouraging equal numbers of boys and girls in teams.³

Gender has an impact on all aspects of participation in sports and recreation activities, so it is important for local governments to consider the needs of women and girls from a planning, design, and community use perspective. Design considerations and access to sports and recreation facilities also plays a role in providing access for women and girls, as many facilities still lack the infrastructure that provides suitable access to women and girls as players, supporters, coaches, umpires and committee members. For example, change rooms that are available for a visiting female team or female umpires.

How can local government promote gender equity in sport and recreation?

In order to increase women and girls participation in sports and recreation activities, community spaces need to be safe and welcoming to all members of the community. Local government has a role to play in ensuring that sporting clubs and recreation facilities engage with a range of strategies aimed at creating inclusive sporting environments.

- Councils can promote and support the participation of women and girls as part of all sport and recreation programs and policies
- Undertake an audit of the current sports and recreation programs at council, and identify opportunities to further support programs and teams for women and girls

¹ Australian Sports Commission (2003) *Towards Better Sport: Good practices for women and girls in sport*. Australian Sports Commission.

² UN Division on the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007) *Women 2000 and Beyond: Women, Gender, Equality and Sport*.

³ Taken from Active Women and Girls Strategy, Moreland Council, Male Sport is ruining our boys. Associate Professor John Fitzgerald, Executive Manager of VicHealth, The Age article, May 15 2009.

⁴ Moreland Active Women and Girls Strategy, Vol 4, available at: www.moreland.vic.gov.au.

- Review the current projects and policies that promote and encourage equal participation of women and girls, for example:
 - Moreland City Council's Active Women and Girls Strategy
 - Yarra City Council's Equitable Access to Sports Facilities Audit Tool
 - Fair Game Respect Matters (VicHealth Program)
 - Everybody Wins (VicHealth initiative).
- Convene an internal working group to review current work around equal participation for women and girls, and develop an organisational approach to addressing gender inequity in sports participation
- Provide gender equity training to outline how clubs can build capacity around women in governance, coaching and general participation roles
- Provide relevant infrastructure to improve venues and encourage female involvement.

Prioritising women and girls in sport activities

Moreland City Council has developed an Active Women and Girls Strategy, to 'promote a healthy lifestyle and increase the participation of sports activities in the community particularly amongst women and girls.'⁴

Council has also adopted an Affirmative Action Policy to increase participation rates of women and girls at local sports and recreation facilities.

Moreland identified that clubs needed to take a proactive approach to redressing the gender imbalance across a range of sports and recreation activities.

Each Moreland sports organisation is required to develop programs that increase the participation, health and wellbeing of women and girls through a range of initiatives. These requirements better ensure the diverse needs of women and girls are taken into account and that sports clubs prioritise the recruitment, development and retention of women and girls in leadership roles in their organisation.





Ten ways local government can advance gender equity

Access to services

The fact sheets, *Ten ways local government can advance gender equity*, are part of a resource package designed to build the capacity for local governments to consider gender equity in their planning, policy and service delivery.

Local government plays an important role in creating and supporting environments that enable community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. Reducing gender inequity for women is a key strategy in achieving this goal, as it allows for a more just, inclusive and fair society for both women and men. The fact sheets include practical information and practice examples of ways local government can advance gender equity for women.

The ten fact sheets are:

1. Why gender matters
2. Gender analysis
3. Infrastructure
4. Land use planning and design
5. Promoting women in leadership
6. Workplaces
7. Sports and recreation
8. Access to services
9. Key concepts and definitions
10. Further resources

Council's role in access to services

Local government is an important tier of government, and has a significant impact on the lives of all Victorians. Councils spend over \$4 billion annually to provide a wide range of services and facilities to the communities in their municipality. They work in partnership with the local community, state and federal government, and a wide array of other agencies, to deliver these services.

Local government is responsible for over \$40 billion worth of assets and infrastructure¹ including roads, bridges, drains, town halls, libraries recreation centres, community centres, kindergartens, childcare centres and sports pavilions. Local government also provides a comprehensive range of community services including property, economic, human, recreational and cultural services. Councils have a role in enforcing state and local laws for environment, public health, traffic, land use planning and animal management. Local governments regularly review all these activities to ensure they are providing best practice for their communities.

An important consideration with regard to service planning is flexibility to ensure that services meet the diverse needs and capacities of the citizens who will be accessing them.

Why is gender relevant to access to local government services?

Women and men are not homogenous groups. Age, ability, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, socio economic status and literacy all impact people's ability to access and use services. Women and men may experience different barriers and constraints with regard to accessing services including the above.

Within aged and disability care, for instance, the gender profile of the home support workforce has a direct impact on the capacity of the service to meet community needs. Male and female clients have different needs and require a workforce that reflects this. A gender and diversity lens is crucial for designing services so that they meet the needs of all individuals in our community and promote inclusion and equity.

How can local government advance gender equity through services?

- Recognise that gender is diverse and includes individuals of all ages, abilities, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religious and cultural backgrounds and sexual orientation
- Identify relevant gender reporting resources that take into account the above and implement and adopt these as part of council's regular policy planning, development and service delivery process.
- Undertake gender reporting training for all staff involved in policy, planning and service delivery to enable staff to be aware of and address the various barriers and constraints to service access for women and men.
- Ensure that gender equity is a standard consideration when developing or updating all council community planning documentation
- Provide council reports on the significance and impact of gender equity across all areas of council's work.

Services Case Studies

Not taking gender equity into account when planning services can have service consequences for women. For example, mixed sex wards in psychiatric hospitals have resulted in many vulnerable female patients being assaulted and/or abused.²

Women and children do seek housing support through council services, particularly when fleeing family violence situations. If gender is not taken into account these women and their families can be even further disadvantaged and placed at risk.

City of Whittlesea is one of a number of councils who have changed hours of service operation in Maternal Child Health to accommodate the needs of working families and encourage shared parenting responsibility.

¹ Taken from Dept Victorian Communities website: www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment

² Taken from Victorian Women and Mental Health Network, *Nowhere to be Safe Report*, April 2008.





Ten ways local government can advance gender equity

Key concepts and definitions

The fact sheets, *Ten ways local government can advance gender equity*, are part of a resource package designed to build the capacity for local governments to consider gender equity in their planning, policy and service delivery.

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8. Access to services
9. Key concepts and definitions
10. Further resources

In order to undertake a gendered approach, it is important to understand the following key concepts and terms.

Gender

The term 'gender' refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and attributes that society considers appropriate for women and men. Unlike the biological characteristics and differences between women and men known as sex, gender roles are socially learnt, differ among cultures and change over time.

Gender equity

Gender equity is an important social justice goal. The concept recognises that within all communities, women and men have different benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities.¹ Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men by recognising diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all. A gender equity approach therefore acknowledges that it is often necessary to have different strategies for women and men.

Gender equality

Gender equality means equal participation of women and men in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equality is about society giving equal value to the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles they play. The experience of inequality is by no means confined to women. Differences occur between both sexes on questions of race, sexuality, class, age, disability and geography. But on key questions of economic security, health, wellbeing and political participation – within and across cultures – women more commonly experience greater disadvantage and discrimination relative to men.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis is a method of assessing difference in the lives of women and men and the impacts that policies, programs and services may have. Implementing gender analysis therefore provides more equitable access for both groups, by also taking into account variables such as socio-economic status, age, family structure, ability and cultural and linguistic background.

Gender sensitive

A policy, program or service that recognises that women and men are constrained in different and often unequal ways as potential participants and beneficiaries.

Gender blind

A policy, program, project or service that ignores gender and therefore incorporates biases that may be in favour of existing unequal relations.

¹ World Health Organisation, *Mainstreaming gender equity in health: the need to move forward*, WHO regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2002.

² United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm>



Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a process that ensures:

... that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities – policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.²

Sex disaggregated data

Information that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for females and males, girls and boys in order to identify, understand and respond to issues as experienced by both sexes.





Ten ways local government can advance gender equity

Further resources

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10. Further resources

Whether your council is beginning to consider gender or is well advanced in creating a just, inclusive and fair community, there is a wide range of resources available to support this work.

International Policy Frameworks

- Ministry of Women's Health Affairs. 1996. *The Full Picture, Guidelines for Gender Analysis*. Government of New Zealand: Wellington. <http://www.mwa.govt.nz/news-and-pubs/publications/gender.html>
- Women's Health Bureau. 2003. *Exploring Concepts of Gender and Health*. Health Canada: Ontario.

National Policy Frameworks

- Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Government. 2010. *National Women's Health Policy 2010*. Commonwealth of Australia: Australia. <http://www.health.gov.au/womenshealthpolicy>
- Australian Human Rights Commission. 2010. *Gender Equality Blueprint 2010*. Australian Human Rights Commission: Sydney. http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/publication/blueprint
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. 2011. *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*. Commonwealth of Australia: Australia. http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/nationalplan/Documents/national_plan.pdf

- YMCA Australia. 2011. *CEDAW Action Plan for Women in Australia*. Women's Legal Service: Australia. <http://ywca.org.au/sites/ywca.org.au/files/CEDAW%20Action%20Plan%20final.pdf>
- Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Government. 2009. *National Male Health Policy*. Commonwealth of Australia: Australia. <http://www.health.gov.au/malehealthpolicy>

Victorian State Policy Frameworks

- Women's Health Association Victoria (WHAV). 2011. *10 Point Plan For Victorian Women's Health 2010-2014*. WHAV: Victoria. http://whv.org.au/static/files/assets/f1ba9bb2/10_point_plan_2010-2014.pdf
- Office of Women's Policy: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/our-organisation/organisational-structure/our-divisions/industry,-workforce-and-strategy-division/office-of-womens-policy>

Gender Analysis Lens/Tools

- Department of Human Services. 2008. *Gender and Diversity Lens for Health and Human Services: Victorian Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy Stage Two: 2006-2010*. Government of Victoria: Melbourne. <http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Gender-and-Diversity-Lens-for-Health-and-Human-Services->
- Dyson, Sue. 2001. *Gender and Diversity: A Workbook for an Equity Approach to Practice*. Women's Health in the South East: Frankston.
- Women's Health West. 2002. *A Gender Agenda: Planning for an Inclusive and Diverse Community*. Women's Health West: Footscray.
- Keleher, Helen. 2009. *Policy Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming*. Department of Health Social Science, Monash University: Melbourne.
- Women's Health in the North, Gender Analysis Toolkit, <http://www.whin.org.au/resources/training-a-community-education.html>

Leadership and participation

- Listening to Women: Women's Participation in Local Decision Making (Women's Planning Network) http://www.wpn.org.au/researchresource/participationindecisionmaking/WP_listentowomentxt.pdf
- Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition publications, resources and website: http://www.vlga.org.au/About_Us/Supported_Networks/Women_s_Participation_in_Local_Government_Coalition__WPILGC_.aspx
- Australian Local Government Women's Association website: http://www.algwa.net.au/html/s01_home/home.asp
- Victorian Local Government Women's Charter: <http://www.vlga.org.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/WPILGC/Charter%20Ideas%20Checklist.pdf>

Women's Health Services

Victoria has nine regional and three state-wide women's health services, which specialise in women's health, gender equity, and health equity between women. Women's health services have an array of resources that can be used by local councils including toolkits, research and statistical information about the social profile and health status of women in their municipality. Women's health services are key partners in supporting local government to build a community that is just, inclusive and fair.

- Women's Health Victoria <http://whv.org.au/>
- Women with Disabilities Victoria <http://www.wdv.org.au/>
- The Royal Women's Hospital <http://www.thewomens.org.au/>
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health <http://www.mcwh.com.au/>
- Women's Health West <http://www.whwest.org.au/>
- Women's Health in the North <http://www.whin.org.au/>
- Women's Health East <http://www.whe.org.au/>
- Women's Health in the South East <http://www.whise.org.au/>
- Women's Health Grampians <http://www.whg.org.au/>
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee <http://www.whlm.org.au/>
- Women's Health Goulburn North East <http://www.whealth.com.au/>
- Gippsland Women's Health Service <http://www.gwhealth.asn.au/>

Other

- **Crime prevention through design** – Safer design guidelines for Victoria. Department of Sustainability and Design and Crime Prevention Victoria. http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/41231/Safer_Design_Guidelines.pdf
- **Gender Equity resources** – The Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV) gender equity webpage provides gender equity resources for local governments and includes, gender equity statistics, local government case studies and prevention of violence against women data and information. <http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equity/Pages/default.aspx>

Partners

This project has been developed in collaboration with the following organisations:

- Yarra City Council
- Darebin City Council
- Moreland City Council
- Whittlesea City Council
- Women's Health East
- Women's Health in the North
- VicHealth
- Office of Women's Policy
- Knox City Council
- Maribyrnong City Council
- Hume City Council
- Port Phillip City Council
- Women's Health West
- Women's Health Grampians
- Municipal Association of Victoria

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