

6.1.3 Notice of Motion 1064 - Gender Equity & Equality Update

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Recommendation(s)

That Council stays informed of Cardinia's commitment and progress towards Gender Equity and Equality within the organisation and the community in general.

Attachments

Nil

Executive Summary

The People and Culture team continues working towards implementation of the Gender Equality Act while delivering organisation-wide training.

Internal committees continue to progress gender actions.

Background

People and Culture Update

Gender Equality Act 2020

The Gender Equality Act 2020 commenced on 31 March 2021. The aim of the Act is to improve Gender Equality in the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils.

In October 2021 Cardinia will be required to create its first Gender Equality Action Plan. While much of this data is already available, Cardinia is required to commence conducting *Gender Impact Assessments* as well as a survey to contribute to the action plan.

Gender Impact Assessments

These are required for any new policy, program or service that directly & significantly impacts the public. These assessments consider how Cardinia's work affects different people in our community. People and Culture is currently working with IT/Governance to have these assessments introduced at the report level in '*Doc Assembler*' (report writing software) so consideration can be given at the early stages of project renewal/proposal.

Training is being created for those who will be required to complete these assessments. Discussions are being held with the Community Engagement and Infrastructure teams to explore the best method to build capability and capacity amongst staff to implement these assessments.

Gender Survey

Cardinia has engaged the Victorian Public Service Commission to obtain the survey requirements of the Gender Audit that will contribute to the Gender Equality Action Plan.

The gender survey forms part of the annual 'People Matter Survey' with additional questions this year contributing to the data required for our Gender Audit.

This survey also looks into workplace behaviours and cultures and provides an anonymous platform for all employees to provide feedback on their experiences at Cardinia. The survey was distributed to all staff on 31st May and closes in the first week of July (running for an extra week this year due to COVID). Results will be available in late July. Results will be interesting to compare those received in December 2020 from the VAGO survey into the prevalence of sexual harassment at Cardinia. These results can contribute in deciding direction and actions for future training/policies.

Respectful Workplaces Training

Over 80% of employees have now attended face-to-face training in the last few months (with 100% to be completed after current COVID restrictions lift).

This training is normally delivered by external facilitators and is a requirement under the Local Government Act. This year it was created and delivered by the People and Culture team. Content such as bullying, harassment and conflict of interest are requirements of this training. This year the training was expanded to include relevant issues such as unconscious bias in discrimination, bystander intervention and the recommendations handed down by Victorian Auditor General's Office in light of the sexual harassment survey.

(VAGO) Sexual Harassment Survey Working Group

Following on from the Victorian Auditor General Office's report on sexual harassment in local government survey, Cardinia has joined a working group to assist the implementation of VAGO's recommendations.

This group is represented by People and Culture employees from 20 Victorian councils and meets fortnightly with the purpose to learn from one another, explore best practice approaches and to ultimately implement a well-considered and thought-out response to the VAGO Sexual Harassment report and recommendations.

Committee Update

White Ribbon Night (Day)

An event in partnership with Aligned Leisure and Outlook. This will happen in July and will feature a 'Voices of Children' video (Children of Cardinia sharing their views on Gender Equality).

Together We Can Round Table

This committee met on 1st June with some interested, female identifying, staff members to design and develop a 'Women Mentoring Women Program'. This program will support women in the community to have financial efficacy. Another aim is to assist women to recognise and choose healthy, respectful relationships in all areas of their life.

YourGround

Cardinia Shire joined the YourGround Project which is currently underway. YourGround is a digital mapping platform that will advance knowledge of safety in public space for women and gender-diverse people. In the context of social changes brought about by COVID-19, this research seeks to document these changes to public and recreational spaces through the perceptions and 'lived experiences' of women and gender-diverse people. Community members are invited to interact with a live map of their geographical area and make comment about safety for women and gender diverse people in specific locations across the Shire.

Policy Implications

The Gender Equality Commission has informed defined entities that the new Local Government Act 2020 includes a requirement to develop a workforce plan every four years. The workforce plan must include measures relating to gender equality.

A Gender Equality Action Plan that meets the requirements of the Gender Equality Act, will also meet the requirements of the Local Government Act. Complying with the gender equality requirements of the Local Government Act will not satisfy the requirements of the Gender Equality Act.

Section 26 (2)(ba) of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act requires councils to specify (in their municipal public health and wellbeing plan (Cardinia Shire Liveability Plan) measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community.

Other influential gender equity legislation in the Commonwealth and Victorian State Government is:

- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- The Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- The Fair Work Act 2009

Relevance to Council Plan

1.1 Our People - Access to a variety of services for all

- 1.1.1 Continually review services to ensure those provided by Council meet community needs.
- 1.1.2 Routinely review overall community needs for services and either deliver or advocate for others to provide services to meet those needs.

1.4 Our People - Improved health and wellbeing for all

- 1.4.3 Routinely investigate community health and wellbeing issues to inform Council's planning and activities.

1.6 Our People - Increased awareness of safety

- 1.6.1 Work with the Police, Victorian Government and the community to improve safety in homes, businesses, public places and roads.

2.4 Our Community - Improved health and wellbeing of our residents

- 2.4.1 Increase the communities understanding of health issues and options to help them make appropriate decisions.

4.4 Our Economy - A local economy supporting the improved health and wellbeing of our communities

- 4.4.1 Lead by example as a health promoting workplace.

5.2 Our Governance - Open governance

- 5.2.2 Govern and make decisions in the best interests of the Cardinia Shire community.

Climate Emergency Consideration

There are no conditions attached to this report.

Consultation/Communication

This report has been developed with the cooperation and collaboration of teams across Council and designated groups such as the Respect and Equity Committee

Financial and Resource Implications

Council was required to pay approximately \$1500 to the Victorian Public Service Commission to undertake the employee People Matter Survey.

Conclusion

Cardinia has undertaken several projects to promote and progress towards Gender Equality. Cardinia will continue to do so through various projects that will positively impact Cardinia's employees as well as its residents.