

Gender Equality Action Plan 2026-2030

JUNE 2026

ALPINE SHIRE COUNCIL

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Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

Alpine Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, live, and play. We recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities of all First Nations cultures across Australia and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Gender Equality Statement of Commitment

Alpine Shire Council is committed to improving the lives of women, girls, and people of diverse genders.

We demonstrate a strong and ongoing commitment to advancing gender equality in line with the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic). Council's Executive team actively champion a workplace culture that is inclusive, respectful, and equitable for people of all genders.

This commitment is reflected in the integration of gender equality principles into Council's vision and values, strategic planning, decision-making, and everyday operations. Our leaders set the tone from the top by promoting gender equitable policies, supporting flexible work practices, and ensuring that recruitment, promotion, and professional development opportunities are fair and transparent.

Through regular reporting and monitoring, they ensure progress is tracked and areas for improvement are addressed. Importantly, Council's leadership fosters an environment where employees feel safe to raise concerns and contribute ideas, supporting a culture of continuous improvement.

Engagement with employees, community, and key stakeholders further strengthens Council's approach, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard and considered. Leaders acknowledge their role in driving change not only within the organisation but also across the broader community.

Through leadership, accountability, and a clear commitment to action, Council is dedicated to embedding respect through gender equality as a core organisational value and delivering positive, lasting outcomes for all.

Introduction

The Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2026–2030 will support Alpine Shire Council to take a unified approach to embedding intersectional gender equity across our workplace, including among Councillors. It will help us meet our obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic) (the Act), as well as other relevant equal opportunity and diversity legislation and frameworks.

Gender equality aligns with our values

Gender equality is an important part of how we live our values at Council:

- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Respect
- Empowerment

The GEAP 2026–2030 was developed through the collection and analysis of evidence, including a gender equality audit, staff survey, staff consultations, and research. It provides a summary of our gender equality achievements to date, as well as an understanding of the barriers to gender equality, diversity, and inclusion at Council. It also identifies actions and measures to address these barriers and support a more equitable workplace for all staff.

Working within the available evidence base and broader policy context, the GEAP 2026–2030 will be delivered in alignment with gender equality indicators and will be reviewed annually to include new opportunities.

The GEAP 2026–2030 will build on and support several of Council's existing initiatives, while also providing a foundation for the development of new initiatives. Education and development of our people is key to the success of the GEAP 2026–2030. We aim to empower all staff to become advocates for gender equality and encourage every department and team to actively contribute to its implementation.

Case for change

We are building a workplace that reflects the diversity, strength, and spirit of our Council community.

Advancing gender equality enables us to harness the full capabilities and perspectives of our people. By ensuring every employee has fair and equitable access to opportunities and feels empowered to contribute, lead, and grow, we create a culture where everyone can thrive.

Our commitment goes beyond fairness – it's about embedding equality into how we work and shaping an organisation where inclusion drives innovation and better outcomes.

Guided by our values of Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, and Empowerment, we will:

- Empower voices that have been underrepresented;
- Act with respect to create a safe and inclusive environment;
- Spark innovation by embracing different perspectives;
- Foster collaboration that brings people together; and
- Uphold accountability for meaningful and measurable change.

This is how we strengthen our organisation, become an employer of choice, and deliver better outcomes for our community.

Developed for our staff and informed by their ideas, experiences, and perspectives, the GEAP 2026–2030 provides a practical framework to help Council achieve greater gender equality. The principles of the Act have guided data collection, analysis of data, and the development of the strategies and measures outlined in the GEAP 2026–2030. These principles align with Council's values, strategic framework, and the approach to decision making that guides our workplace.

Together, the GEAP 2026–2030 provides a shared direction for creating a workplace where everyone is respected, valued, supported, and able to participate and thrive.

The principles

The principles underpinning this work come from the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic):

- All Victorians should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources, and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Gender equality benefits all Victorians regardless of gender.
- Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
- Gender equality brings significant economic, social, and health benefits for Victoria.
- Gender equality is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.
- All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers, and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles, or prejudices.
- Gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other attributes.
- Women have historically experienced discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of sex and gender.
- Special measures may be necessary to achieve gender equality.

Alpine Shire Council context

History of gender equality work at Council

Council's first GEAP laid important groundwork, and revealed where ambitions outpaced systems and resourcing. This new GEAP deliberately builds on those lessons. It retains the original focus on leadership commitment, accountability, intersectionality, and communication, and anchors them in what has shifted positively since 2021 – stronger gender balance (with women and men each representing at least 40% of employees), gender parity across chief executive officer (CEO), Director, and Manager roles, improved flexible work culture, more transparent recruitment and promotion practices, and a maturing gender impact assessment (GIA) program that is influencing key strategic documents and community-facing services.

At the same time, progress reporting has highlighted ongoing challenges: manual workforce data systems and limited People and Culture capacity, widening gender pay gaps in some occupational groups and at senior levels, mixed implementation of earlier actions (for example, unfinished work on data infrastructure, some leader training, and physical environment auditing), and uneven leadership capability and staff experience across teams.

The GEAP 2026–2030 responds by narrowing and sequencing effort rather than simply repeating earlier commitments. It consolidates successful first-cycle strategies – such as leadership parity, flexible work, and strengthened recruitment practices – into a more explicit focus on inclusive leadership and psychological safety, so that positive patterns in gender representation translate into consistently inclusive, day-to-day experiences for staff of all genders and backgrounds.

It also pragmatically reframes the original accountability and intersectional data ambitions into lighter-touch, achievable steps, such as a concise annual workforce snapshot using existing systems, targeted pay equity reviews where gaps are largest, and confidentiality-safe monitoring of parental, carers, and family violence leave.

In doing so, the GEAP 2026–2030 positions Council to make meaningful and measurable progress on each indicator within a lean resource and regional labour-market context, while gradually building the data, capability, and culture foundations needed for deeper intersectional gender equality work in future cycles.

Intersectionality

Alpine Shire Council recognises that gender inequality does not operate in isolation and may be compounded by other forms of exclusion, disadvantage, or discrimination, including Aboriginality, age, disability, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, caring responsibilities, and socio-economic status. Audit and survey data indicate that while the workforce is predominantly cisgender and Anglo-Celtic, there is also a smaller but important cohort of LGBTIQA+ employees, staff born overseas, employees with disability, and staff with caring responsibilities whose experiences may differ from the dominant norm.

Council has adopted its inaugural Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2026–2029, which includes actions that prioritise both community and workforce inclusion. Intersectionality is an emerging focus for Council, and the GEAP 2026–2030 takes a practical, phased approach that reflects current data and capacity. In this cycle, Council will:

- strengthen use of existing People Matter, workforce, and culture survey data to share insights about workforce composition through a diversity and inclusion lens;
- identify notable differences in experience across gender and other attributes where sample sizes allow;
- embed intersectional examples into inclusive leadership and councillor development content; and
- ensure that monitoring of leave, flexibility, safety, and career pathways considers diverse experiences, as far as confidentiality permits.

These steps will help normalise intersectional thinking in day-to-day decisions and lay the groundwork for more sophisticated intersectional data collection, analysis, and strategy in future GEAP cycles.

Workplace Gender Audit highlights

Findings from the Workplace Gender Audit include:

Indicator 1 – Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

	Women	Men	People who self-describe
Gender composition of the organisation in 2025	59.3%	40.7%	0%
Gender composition of part time workers in the organisation in 2025	39%	16.7%	0%
Gender composition of senior leaders in the organisation in 2025	50%	50%	0%

Council enters this GEAP 2026–2030 period with a strong foundation on gender balance and a clearer picture of who makes up its workforce. In 2023, women made up 58.4% of employees and men 41.6%; by 2025 this had shifted slightly to 59.3% women and 40.7% men, with no employees self-describing their gender in either year. Women's representation in senior leadership has increased from one third (33.3%) of senior leaders in 2023 to 50% in 2025, so that women and men are now equally represented across CEO, Director, and Manager roles.

Part-time work remains more common for women (42.2% in 2023 and 39% in 2025) than for men (21.9% and 16.7%), and part-time arrangements have decreased for both groups, with implications for how caring responsibilities and flexibility are managed in practice.

The People Matter (PM) survey insights show that the workforce is predominantly cisgender, Australian-born, and culturally Anglo-Celtic, with a smaller but important cohort of LGBTIQA+ employees (13-14%), staff born overseas (about 12- 13%), and employees with disability and caring responsibilities.

Based on the PM and culture survey insights (Dattner Group, August 2025), staff report high levels of support for work-life balance (75%), strong comfort in discussing work-related challenges with their leader (80%), and most staff agree that the workplace is inclusive of diverse perspectives and backgrounds (around 71%). Sitting alongside this, constructive feedback, consistent systems, and visible action on feedback are not yet experienced evenly across teams and locations. These patterns can affect psychological safety and a sense of belonging for people whose identities or experiences sit outside the dominant norm.

Overall, this highlighted opportunity for the GEAP 2026–2030: consolidate and sustain gender-balanced leadership, address structural and cultural barriers for staff of all genders and backgrounds, and ensure that future growth in leadership and flexible work reflects the diversity of Council's workforce and community.

To do this in a lean context, Council will focus on strengthening inclusive leadership and psychological safety and developing simple, sustainable workforce insights that can inform decisions over time.

Indicator 2 – Gender composition of governing bodies

	Women	**Men**	**People who self-describe**
Gender composition of the organisation's governing body (Councillors) in 2025	14.3%	85.7%	0%

In 2023, Council's governing body had a relatively balanced gender profile, with three of seven Councillors (42.9%) women and four (57.1%) men, and no Councillors self-describing their gender. By 2025, following the October 2024 elections, women's representation shifted to one of seven Councillors (14.3%) and men's to six of seven (85.7%), again with no Councillors self-describing their gender. The current Mayor is the sole female Councillor, which continues a positive pattern of women being elected and chosen for the most senior civic role, even where the overall governing body is male-dominated. These patterns matter because diverse civic leadership helps ensure decisions reflect the lived experiences of women, men, and gender diverse people on issues such as safety, community wellbeing, infrastructure, and the visitor economy.

Council is already investing in a broader culture and values journey, with the Council Plan 2025-2029 and incorporated Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan prioritising transparent leadership, community participation, and gender equity, including prevention of gender-based violence. However, demographic information about Councillors beyond binary gender is limited, and capability building on the Gender Equality Act is still emerging. This presents an opportunity to align governance with the organisation's cultural aspirations by improving demographic insights in a way that protects confidentiality, strengthening Councillors' understanding of gender equality and intersectionality, and using Council's platforms and partnerships to encourage diverse candidates to consider standing for election.

Indicator 3 – Gender pay gap

Occupation group	**Mean total remuneration gender pay gap in 2025**
Managers	29.7%
Professionals	-3.4%
Technicians and trades workers	20.9%
Clerical and administrative workers	5.1%

Labourers	5.3%
All occupations	4.2%
Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap in 2025	21.9%
Supplementary measures	
Mean base salary pay gap in 2025	3.4%
Median total remuneration pay gap in 2025	7.9% W
Median base salary pay gap in 2025	4.7% W

Council's pay equity data presents a mixed picture. The mean total remuneration gender pay gap across all occupations increased from 2.5% in 2023 to 4.2% in 2025. In 2025, mean total remuneration gaps by occupation group were: managers 29.7%, professionals -3.4% (favouring women), technicians and trades workers 20.9%, community and personal service workers 4.0%, clerical and administrative workers 5.1%, and labourers 5.3%.

The mean total remuneration gender pay gap for senior leaders increased substantially from 9.9% in 2023 to 21.9% in 2025, despite the senior leadership cohort reaching 50:50 gender representation over the same period.

Supplementary measures show the mean base salary pay gap increasing from 1.8% to 3.4%, the median total remuneration gap rising from 6.7% to 7.9%, and the median base salary gap improving slightly from 5.9% to 4.7%.

These results indicate that Council has important foundations in place – such as an Enterprise Agreement covering roles up to Manager level, role banding, and more transparent recruitment and professional development plan (PDP) processes.

Data also suggested that factors such as occupational segregation, allowances, and loadings, higher-duties arrangements and starting salary decisions are contributing to gaps in some groups, notably technicians/trades and senior leaders. For Managers and Directors, remuneration is set using industry-based benchmarking rather than enterprise agreement (EA) coverage. This benchmarking provides a helpful reference; however, culture survey insights highlight the need for clearer, shared governance about how benchmarks are applied, how decisions are documented, and how potential bias is mitigated, in a context where staff are seeking more consistent systems and fairness.

In our new GEAP 2026–2030, Council has opportunity to build on its strengths by first strengthening capability in the small group of people who make and advise on pay decisions, then co-designing an approach to senior remuneration that is tailored to Council's context and conducting regular (for example, annual), focused pay equity reviews.

Indicator 4 – Sexual harassment in the workplace

	Women	Men	People who self-describe
Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment in 2025	0%	0%	0%
Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment in 2025	0%	0%	0%
Number of formal reports of sexual harassment in 2025	0%	0%	0%

Supplementary measures:

	Women	Men	People who self-describe
Participants who said they reported sexual harassment in 2025	0%	0%	0%
Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint in 2025	N/A		
Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint in 2025	N/A		
Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint in 2025	N/A		

Audit data shows that there were no formal sexual harassment complaints recorded in 2023 or 2025 for any gender. In the 2023 PM survey, 6.4% of women anonymously reported experiencing sexual harassment, while no men reported experience; in 2025, no anonymous experiences of sexual harassment were reported by employees of any gender.

PM survey results show generally positive perceptions of culture, with:

- 72% of women and 79% of men agreeing that the organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours;
- 62% of women and 75% of men agreeing that Council takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment, and discrimination; and

- 76% of women and 79% of men overall indicating they feel safe to call out inappropriate behaviour at work.

These results point to real strengths in Council's culture, leadership intent, and the work underway through the culture strategy, leadership development, and wellbeing programs. At the same time, the combination of zero formal complaints, low anonymous reporting, and differences in leadership experience, capability, and practice across teams suggests there may still be a risk of under-reporting or uncertainty about how and when to raise concerns, especially in a small, close-knit workforce.

In this context, Council has the opportunity to build on a constructive base by making reporting and support options clearer, strengthening leaders' ability to respond in a person-centred and trauma-informed way, and using light-touch monitoring to ensure any issues that do arise are visible and can be addressed early.

Indicator 5 – Recruitment and promotion practices

	Women	**Men**	**People who self-describe**
Gender composition of recruited employees in 2025	60.7%	39.3%	0%
Gender composition of employees who were promoted in 2025	50%	50%	0%
Perceptions of recruitment, by gender in 2025: **In response to the People Matter (PM) survey question, 'I believe the recruitment processes in my organisation are fair', respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed**	68%	60.7%	0%
Perceptions of promotion, by gender in 2025: **In response to the PM survey question, 'I believe the promotion processes in my organisation are fair', respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed**	46%	46.4%	0%

In 2023, women represented 65% of recruited employees and men 35%; in 2025, women comprised 60.7% of recruits and men 39.3%, with no recruits self-describing their gender in either year. In 2025, available promotion data shows that 50% of promotions went to women and 50% to men.

These results suggest that Council's policies and practices – such as transparent recruitment and selection processes, diverse panels, and enhanced PDPs – are helping to mitigate bias and remove barriers to opportunity, supporting gender-balanced outcomes within the realities of a regional labour market.

The PM survey results show that perceptions of recruitment fairness remain relatively high but have declined slightly, with the proportion of women who strongly agree or agree that recruitment processes are fair decreasing from 76.6% in 2023 to 68% in 2025, and men's perceptions remaining around 60-61% over the reporting period.

Perceptions of promotion fairness are lower and more stable, with around 46-47% of women agreeing in 2023 – 2025 and 46.4% of men agreeing in 2025.

Culture survey feedback also highlights some opportunities to strengthen systems – for example, making recruitment and promotion processes feel more consistent, improving visibility of how decisions are made and communicated, and using PDPs and development conversations more consistently across teams – alongside building leadership capability and responding more visibly to staff input.

In a small organisation where many opportunities and decisions are visible, the way roles are advertised, how processes are run, and how decisions are communicated are important signals of fairness. For the GEAP 2026–2030, the opportunity now is to build on a sound policy base by strengthening transparency and feedback in recruitment and promotion, maintaining gender-balanced practices through light-touch review, and strengthening the visibility of internal career pathways.

Indicator 6 – Leave and flexible working arrangements

	Women	**Men**	**People who self-describe**
Average weeks of parental leave, by gender in 2025	System data indicates that no parental leave was taken during the reporting period.		
Uptake of flexible work, by gender in 2025	11.4%	14.6%	0%
Perceptions of flexible work culture, by gender in 2025: **In response to the PM survey question, 'I am confident that if I requested a flexible work arrangement, it would be given due consideration', respondents Strongly**	88%	85.7%	0%

Agreed/Agreed			
Gender composition of parental leave takers in 2025	System data indicates that no parental leave was taken during the reporting period.		
Gender gap in carer's leave in 2025	System data N/A.		

Flexible work data shows that Council has made strong progress in building a culture that supports diverse working arrangements. In 2025, uptake of flexible work was 11.4% for women and 14.6% for men. The PM survey results show high and improving confidence that flexible work requests would be given due consideration, increasing from 80.9% to 88% for women and from 83.3% to 85.7% for men between 2023 and 2025. Over the same period, system data indicates that no employees of any gender took parental leave, and audit data for carers leave and gender gaps in carers leave is recorded as not available. Council has strengthened its EA provisions to include enhanced flexible work and family violence leave entitlements, and provides information about support services, the Right to Disconnect, and wellbeing via internal and external channels.

These results indicate that Council's flexible work policies and leadership behaviours are positively experienced by many staff, consistent with culture survey findings that 75% of staff feel work-life balance is supported. At the same time, the absence of recorded parental leave, limited structured data on carers and family violence leave, and qualitative feedback from the PM survey about workload pressures and staff working above their position descriptions suggest that experiences are not uniform across the organisation.

In a small community with a high proportion of families, an ageing population, and more than 300 reported family violence incidents in 2024 – with a higher representation of women involved[1] – there is an opportunity to gently improve visibility of leave and support usage, while maintaining strict confidentiality, so that staff of all genders and life stages can confidently access the arrangements they need.

Indicator 7 – Gendered segregation within the workplace

Occupational gender segregation in 2025

	Women	**Men**	**People who self-describe**
Managers	66.7%	33.3%	0%
Professionals	68.9%	31.1%	0%
Technicians and trades workers	10.7%	89.3%	0%

[1] Alpine Shire Council 2025–2029, *Community Vision, Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–29*, Alpine Shire Council, Bright, viewed 25 March 2026, Alpine Shire Council Plan | Alpine Shire Council

Community and personal service workers	94.4%	5.6%	0%
Clerical and administrative workers	91.9%	8.1%	0%
Labourers	35.3%	64.7%	0%
All occupations	59.3%	40.7%	

Council has made incremental progress on Indicator 7 over the 2023 – 2025 reporting period by:

- maintaining a stable overall gender composition (59.3% women in 2025, up slightly from 58.4% in 2023) with no self-described employees; and
- increasing women's representation in key non-traditional areas such as managers (+3.1% to 66.7% in 2025) and labourers (+7.3% to 35.3% in 2025).

This progress has been supported by the early achievements of the GEAP 2021–2025 in attracting more women to traditionally male outdoor roles.

Alongside these gains, there is ongoing gender segregation in technicians/trades workers roles (with 10.7% women's representation in 2025), female under-representation in outdoor leadership, and an over-representation of women in clerical and administrative roles (91.9% in 2025), and among community and personal services workers (94.4% in 2025).

In the GEAP 2026–2030 period, there is an opportunity to build on Council's existing momentum by more intentionally diversifying gender composition in highly segregated roles. This includes prioritising diversity in recruitment for key occupations (for example trades, outdoor leadership, and clerical/community roles), creating practical exposure and development opportunities across occupations through acting, project, secondment, and shadowing arrangements, and incorporating simple occupational gender breakdowns into workforce and culture planning so that the senior leadership team can focus on a small number of priority teams each year.

Using existing systems such as Employment Hero and current spreadsheet processes to track progress, these low-cost, practical actions will support women into outdoor and technical roles, men into community and administrative roles, and strengthen leadership pathways in outdoor and field-based roles.

GEAP Development Process

To refresh the GEAP 2026–2030, Council invited all staff to two 90-minute online consultation sessions facilitated by external diversity, equity, and inclusion consultancy Diversity Partners. The sessions shared key insights from the Gender Equality Audit and recent PM survey, provided an update on progress since the first GEAP, and tested draft strategies against employees' experiences and priorities. Participants were asked what mattered most to them and their teams, what questions or suggestions they had, and whether anything was missing from the proposed actions.

Employees were encouraged to reflect on how gender and other factors – such as cultural background, age, disability, caring responsibilities, and family circumstances – shape workplace experiences, supporting an intersectional lens. Employees could contribute verbally during the sessions or provide anonymous feedback via a QR code, so that people could participate in ways that felt comfortable and safe. Approximately 20 employees from a range of roles and levels, including the CEO, took part in the consultation sessions, with women representing over 80% of attendees and varying levels of familiarity with obligations under the Act. Feedback from these consultations directly informed the refinement and sequencing of GEAP strategies, helping to ensure the plan is grounded in day-to-day realities and supports everyone to thrive.

As part of the broader consultation process, Council also wrote to the two unions with whom it has contact – the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) and the Australian Services Union (ASU) – providing an overview of audit insights, progress reporting and GEAP preparation, and inviting them to review and provide input. In addition, Council published the draft GEAP 2026–2030 on the staff intranet and invited employees to complete a short online survey to provide quantitative and optional written feedback on its priorities, actions, and focus areas. This feedback was incorporated into further refinements of the GEAP 2026–2030 before it was finalised and presented to Council for consultation and information sharing.

The CEO and Executive team were actively involved in shaping the GEAP 2026–2030 process and were formally consulted in April 2026, providing feedback, input, and approval before the plan was presented to Councillors in a briefing session. Following Council consultation, the GEAP 2026–2030 was submitted to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector on 1 May 2026.

Consultation findings

Employee consultation on the draft GEAP 2026–2030 confirmed strong support for the overall direction and actions, including explicit endorsement from the CEO from both a resourcing and management perspective. The CEO also highlighted the under-representation of men in the sessions and the importance of engaging men as partners in gender equality so that all voices are heard. Employees particularly supported initiatives focused on inclusive leadership, safer reporting cultures, flexible work and caring responsibilities, governance through a diverse working group, and strengthened learning on family violence leave, and sexual and gender-based harassment.

Employees also identified opportunities to strengthen the GEAP 2026–2030 by embedding a clearer intersectional lens, enhancing supports for menstrual and menopausal health, building gender equality expectations into PDPs and procurement, and improving return-to-work

support. Feedback highlighted the importance of psychological safety, trusted and potentially external complaint pathways, and avoiding language that downplays the significance of gender equality work, all of which informed the refinement and sequencing of GEAP strategies.

Slido feedback showed that employees see clear value in the GEAP and that many of the proposed strategies resonated with their day-to-day experience, validating the overall focus and structure of the GEAP 2026–2030.

Employees particularly endorsed actions relating to inclusive leadership, working group governance, safer reporting cultures, flexible work, and caring responsibilities, and expanded learning on family violence leave, and sexual and gender-based harassment.

Employees also identified opportunities to strengthen the GEAP 2026–2030, for example by:

- Embedding a more explicit intersectional lens (including disability, culture, age, and caring roles) across language and actions.
- Increasing community engagement on barriers to standing as a Councillor, including timing of meetings, caring flexibility, and understanding the nomination process.
- Building gender equality expectations into PDP processes, procurement (for contractors and consultants), and return-to-work support following extended leave.

Participants highlighted the importance of psychological safety and trusted complaint pathways, as well as continuing to share information on what sexual and gender-based harassment looks like, and how to report concerns.

The consultation affirmed the value of a diverse, broadly representative GEAP 2026–2030 working group, and of development opportunities such as shadowing to support progression and break down gendered role expectations in leadership. These insights have directly informed the refinement, sequencing, and emphasis of GEAP strategies and specific actions.

Gender Equality Action Plan Framework

The principles for gender equality, together with the findings from Council's gender audit and consultation, have informed the priorities, focus areas, and actions outlined in this plan.

Achieving gender equality is a shared responsibility across the organisation. All areas of the Council will contribute to delivering the actions in this plan and advancing the identified priority areas.

Progress will be monitored regularly to ensure the actions are making meaningful difference. Every six months, progress reports will be provided to the Gender Equity and Inclusion Working Group and Executive team to track implementation, identify opportunities for improvement, and assess the impact of this work.

Every two years, Council will publicly report on its progress to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector.

Gender Equality Action Plan 2026 – 2030

Indicator 1: Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

Strategies	Lead	Timeline	Relation to other indicators
Develop inclusive leadership and fair decision-making capability at all levels (inclusive leadership learning and development): Deliver an annual practical session (or equivalent modular program) for all people leaders, focused on building inclusive leadership capability. The session will cover: • inclusive leadership principles and behaviours; • diversity of identity, experience, and thinking; • intersectionality; • psychological safety; • bias in people decisions; • supporting flexible work and caring responsibilities; • responding to sexual harassment and family violence concerns; and • transparent communication of recruitment and promotion decisions. Ask each leader to agree to two to three visible team practices (e.g. how feedback is given, how acting opportunities are offered, and how meetings run), and include these in PDPs and team norms.	People and Governance	Year 2 and as required	3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Build gender equality data and insights for improved decision-making: Build gender equality data and insights to inform decision-making by developing a workforce snapshot once a year – or at least twice per GEAP cycle (mid-cycle and end-cycle). The snapshot will draw on existing systems to show: • gender representation by level, directorate, and occupation; • employment type (PT/FT); • recruitment, development (including acting opportunities), and promotion trends; and • People Matter respondent demographics to reflect workforce diversity. Present findings to the CEO and Directors and agree on two to three follow-up actions to address identified focus areas.	People and Governance	Year 2 and annually ongoing	5, 6, 7
Integrate gender and diversity into existing culture work: Use existing culture/values and workplace health and safety (WHS) forums to periodically highlight how gender balance and diverse representation support safety, service quality, and community outcomes.	Executive	Year 1 and ongoing	3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Establish a Gender Equity and Inclusion Working Group: Establish a Gender Equity and Inclusion Working Group – led by the People and Culture Coordinator and supported by a Terms of Reference – to champion initiatives and support the implementation of the GEAP 2026–2030.	People and Governance	Year 1 and ongoing	

Indicator 2: Gender composition of the governing body

Strategies	Lead	Timeline	Relation to other indicators
Embed gender equality and diverse community needs into Councillor development and decision-making: Provide a concise annual briefing (for example, as part of Councillor induction and/or ongoing development) on the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic), local gender and intersectional data, and one to two gender impact assessment (GIA) case studies, linked to the Council Plan 2025–2029 and incorporated Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.	People and Governance	Year 1 and annually ongoing	
Introduce a once-per term voluntary Councillor demographic snapshot: At the start of each Council term (or when feasible this cycle), invite Councillors to complete a confidential demographic questionnaire (including gender identity and other diversity dimensions) to inform understanding of representation; report only in de-identified, high-level form.	People and Governance	Year 2 and Year 4	
Embed diverse candidature messages into existing communications: When Council is already communicating about elections, civic leadership, or community participation, weave in messages and stories that encourage women and people from diverse backgrounds to consider standing.	People and Governance	Year 2 and ongoing	

Indicator 3: Gender pay gap

Strategies	Lead	Timeline	Relation to other indicators
Establish and embed a senior remuneration and benchmarking framework: Work with the CEO and Directors to agree a framework for Manager/Director remuneration (e.g. when and how benchmarks are applied, documentation requirements, review points, and basic equity checks). Document and embed this framework into existing remuneration processes.	People and Governance	Year 1 and annually ongoing	1, 4, 5, 6, 7
Build practical pay equity capability in People and Culture, Finance and leaders: Include a practical module in learning and development opportunities for those who recommend or approve pay, using Alpine Shire Council examples to show how to spot common pay gap drivers (allowances, higher duties, starting salaries) and apply the agreed framework.	Corporate	Year 2 and Year 4	1, 4, 5, 6, 7
Conduct a focused, periodic pay equity review using existing data: Use existing payroll/audit data to conduct a basic pay equity review focusing on 2-3 priority groups (e.g. Managers and Technicians/Trades). Summarise findings for the Leadership Team with 2-3 realistic actions (e.g. tightening higher-duties arrangements, reviewing particular allowances) to implement within current resourcing.	Corporate	Year 2 and ongoing	1, 4, 5, 6, 7

Indicator 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Strategies	Lead	Timeline	Relation to other indicators
Make reporting and support pathways clear and visible: Develop an accessible guide explaining: what sexual harassment and related behaviours are, informal and formal ways to raise concerns, and available internal and external supports. Make it visible for both indoor and outdoor workers (e.g. intranet, noticeboards, and team meetings).	People and Governance	Year 1	1, 6
Build trauma-informed response capability into inclusive leadership learning and development options: Include scenario-based content in inclusive leadership learning and development options on responding to disclosures of sexual harassment and related harms: ensuring safety, confidentiality, documentation, and referral to People and Culture/support services.	People and Governance	Year 2 and Year 4	1, 5, 6, 7
Strengthen light-touch monitoring, follow-up, and learning: Use current WHS/incident or conduct registers to record de-identified information about sexual harassment and similar behaviours. Once a year, prepare a brief, high-level summary for the CEO/Directors focused on patterns, lessons, and prevention/early intervention (no individual details). Introduce a brief, voluntary check-in with complainants to understand their satisfaction with how their formal complaint was handled and capture de-identified insights to inform continuous improvement.	People and Governance	Year 2 and ongoing	1, 6

Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices

Strategies	Lead	Timeline	Relation to other indicators
Strengthen transparency and feedback in recruitment and promotion: As part of Inclusive Leadership learning and development options, give leaders simple tools (templates, key messages) to explain selection decisions and provide constructive feedback to unsuccessful candidates. Reinforce expectations that leaders will routinely provide brief feedback and discuss development next steps.	People and Governance	Year 1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
Maintain gender-balanced practices through light-touch review: Review a sample of recruitment and promotion processes (for example, five to 10 cases) for gender patterns and process consistency. Share high-level findings and any changes (for example tweaks to advertising, panel composition, and shortlisting) with staff via existing channels.	People and Governance	Every second year, from 2028 onwards	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
Strengthen visibility of internal career pathways: Use existing PDP discussions, staff forums, and internal communications to highlight examples of internal moves and promotions across different workgroups and genders, particularly from outdoor and operational roles into leadership or new areas.	People and Governance	Year 2 and ongoing	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

Indicator 6: Leave and flexible working arrangements

Strategies	Lead	Timeline	Relation to other indicators
Improve visibility of leave usage while maintaining strict confidentiality: Prepare de-identified, gender-disaggregated data on parental leave (if any), carers leave, and family violence leave using existing systems, ensuring individuals cannot be identified in a small workforce. Use this data only at a high level (for example, for senior leader discussion and planning) and avoid internal circulation where confidentiality might be at risk.	People and Governance	Year 1 and ongoing	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
Normalise shared caring and leave uptake for all genders: Periodically include short stories or examples in existing internal comms (for example, culture updates, and wellbeing messages) that show staff of different genders and roles using flexible work and carers leave – including everyday use of carers leave for child, elder, and disability-related care. Ensure information about entitlements (including family violence leave) is easy to find and is clearly signposted.	Managers (with support from People and Governance)	Year 2 and ongoing	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
Support managers to respond confidently to caring and safety needs: In Inclusive Leadership learning and development options, provide brief guidance and examples on: handling flexible work requests, supporting staff returning from leave, and responding to family violence disclosures (aligned with existing policies and EAP/support services).	People and Governance	Year 2	1, 4, 5, 7

Indicator 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace

Strategies	Lead	Timeline	Relation to other indicators
Prioritise diversity in recruitment for key segregated roles: When recruiting into highly gender-segregated areas (for example trades, outdoor leadership, and clerical or community roles), use gender-inclusive language, imagery and advertising channels, and highlight flexibility and development opportunities while maintaining a merit-based approach. Track shortlisting and appointment outcomes through existing systems to monitor progress.	People and Governance	Year 2 and ongoing	1, 3, 5
Create practical exposure and development opportunities across occupations: Where feasible, use acting, project, secondment, and shadowing arrangements to give staff the opportunity to experience non-traditional roles (for example women in outdoor or technical roles; men in community or administrative roles) and support progression into supervisory and leadership positions where interest and capability align. Capture participation and outcomes in the workforce snapshot.	Executive	Year 1 and ongoing	1, 3, 5
Include occupational gender data in workforce and culture planning Incorporate high-level occupational gender data (from the workforce snapshot) into existing workforce and culture planning discussions, so that decisions about role design, recruitment, and development consciously consider gender patterns.	CEO	Year 1	1, 3, 5

Timeline

There is much to celebrate about the work already underway at Council, including the activities that are effectively supporting workplace gender equality. At the same time, there is more work to do.

The work ahead is structured around the seven workplace gender equality indicators, with strategies to be sequenced over time to drive meaningful and sustainable change across the organisation. This approach is depicted in the timeline below.

Year 1 2026 – 2027	**Year 2** 2027 – 2028	**Year 3** 2028 – 2029	**Year 4** 2029 – 2030
Build awareness and capability Raising cross-organisational awareness of the GEAP 2026–2030 and building the capability to deliver meaningful actions.	**Build on what works and strengthen systems** Building on existing strengths and creating new structures, systems, and processes where required.	**Embed and strengthen organisation-wide action** Strengthening whole-of-organisation commitment, collaboration, and action to drive sustained progress.	**Sustain, evaluate and demonstrate results** Maintaining momentum, measuring progress and outcomes, and evaluating and reporting on achievements and areas for continued improvement.

Strategic Resource Plan

Council will resource the delivery of its GEAP 2026–2030 through a coordinated, whole-of-organisation approach over the life of the plan.

The People and Governance function will lead planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and continuous improvement, with support from key functional areas including the Engagement and Communications team, the Corporate department, and the Executive team.

The Gender Equity and Inclusion Working Group will champion initiatives, support implementation, and promote organisation-wide engagement with the GEAP 2026–2030. The Executive team will provide strategic oversight and ensure alignment with organisational priorities.

Implementation will be supported through existing operational capacity, with additional resources allocated to priority actions where required. GEAP responsibilities will be embedded within the People Strategy, annual functional workplans, and relevant individual People and Governance team PDPs to support accountability and delivery.

Council will regularly review resourcing through GEAP progress reporting, the People Strategy, team workplans, PDPs, and the annual budget process. Feedback from responsible officers, the Gender Equity and Inclusion Working Group and CEO will inform adjustments where capacity gaps or emerging needs are identified.

Progress and resourcing effectiveness will be assessed against GEAP 2026–2030 actions, outcomes, and gender equality indicators, ensuring resources remain aligned with priorities and support sustained progress throughout the life of the plan.

ALPINE
SHIRE COUNCIL

VISIT US

Online
alpineshire.vic.gov.au

In person
2 Churchill Avenue
Bright VIC 3741

Monday to Friday
9am to 5pm

CONTACT US

Over the phone
(03) 5755 0555

Via email
info@alpineshire.vic.gov.au

By post
PO Box 139
Bright VIC 3741

ACCESSIBILITY

Teletypewriter (TTY) users
phone 133 677 then ask
for 03 5755 0555

@alpineshirecouncil

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