



CUMBERLAND  
CITY COUNCIL

# Gender Equity Strategy

2026-2030

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# Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

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Cumberland City Council acknowledges the Darug Nation and People as Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA) is situated and pays respect to Aboriginal Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia.

Cumberland City Council also acknowledges other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples living in the Cumberland Local Government Area and reaffirms that we will work closely with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to advance reconciliation within the area.



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# Message from the Mayor

Cumberland is at its best when every person has the opportunity to thrive. Yet we know that gender inequality continues to shape people's experiences — from unequal access to leadership roles to the persistent gender pay gap that affects women across Australia.

Our community deserves better.

Promoting gender equity in Cumberland will strengthen the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and the wider community. It is an essential part of creating a fair, safe and welcoming place for everyone, no matter their background. When people of all genders have equal opportunities to participate at home, at work, in community life and in leadership, our social and cultural connections grow stronger. Improving gender equity also brings important economic benefits, helping local businesses, our community, and the broader economy to thrive.

This Gender Equity Strategy reflects our commitment to creating a fairer, safer, and more inclusive Cumberland, where people of all genders can participate fully in work, family, and civic life. By addressing the barriers that hold people back and championing equal opportunity, we strengthen not only individuals but the entire community.

Together, we can build a future where equity is not an aspiration but a lived reality for everyone.





# General Manager's Commitment

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Local Government has evolved from large bureaucratic organisations that focus on delivering roads, rates, and rubbish. While these services are still central to our core service delivery model, Local Government in broad terms deals with more contemporary emerging policy issues such as immigration, homelessness, international affairs, and cultural events.

To deliver these services and implement complex policy, diversity and gender equity must be embraced by the very organisation which delivers these services for and on behalf of the community. In the simplest of terms, one gender must not make decisions for the whole.

Gender equity is a community issue, a leadership issue, and a fairness issue. Our whole organisation thrives when all voices are considered equal.

Embracing this principle and committing to implementing strategies such as this will ensure that Cumberland City Council is a direct reflection of the community it serves.



**Welcome**  
*Belong*  
**Succeed**



# Why a Gender Equity Strategy?

## *Purpose and Scope*

The Cumberland Gender Equity Strategy provides a clear direction for Council over the next four years to improve outcomes for women and girls across the local government area of Cumberland. It is underpinned by the principal belief that all residents, regardless of gender, should be treated with respect and have equal access to opportunities in all aspects of life.

While gender encompasses a range of identities – including being a man, woman, non-binary, gender fluid or a combination of these – the Cumberland Gender Equity Strategy focuses specifically on the experiences of women and girls living and working in Cumberland. It seeks to identify and address barriers that exist in accessing opportunities, decision-making power and career progression.

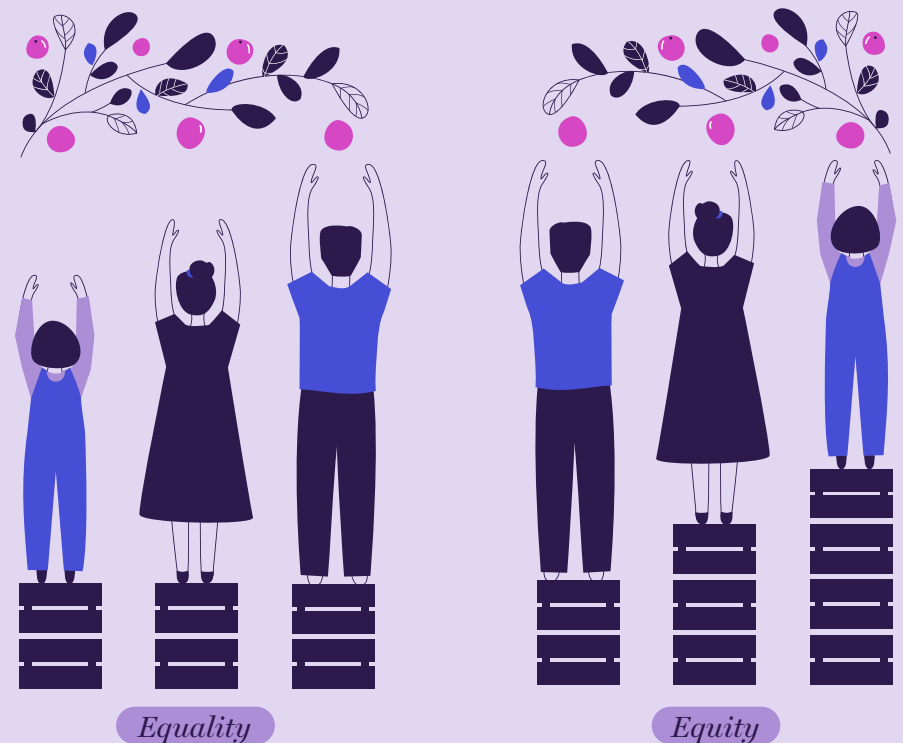
## *Strategic Priorities*

To promote leadership and accountability in achieving gender equity, the Strategy focuses on the following key priorities:

- Supporting economic security for all, regardless of gender, throughout their working lives and into retirement.
- Ensuring Council, as an employer, provides equal opportunities for all employees and fosters an organisational culture that supports gender equity and respect.
- Empowering the community to foster safety, respect, and inclusion.
- Embedding gender equity principles into decision making, resource allocation, planning, policy and service delivery to address and eliminate gender inequalities.
- Embedding the Gender Equity Strategy into Council's planning and reporting frameworks to ensure its priorities are reflected in projects and programs.

## *What we mean by gender equity*

Gender equity refers to the provision of fairness and justice regardless of gender, ensuring everyone has equal opportunities, resources and rights. It involves recognising and addressing different needs, preferences, and interests of all genders to achieve fairness in outcomes. It means that some people might be given extra resources and opportunity to achieve equal outcomes with others.





## Guiding Principles

In developing the Gender Equity Strategy, Council is guided by a set of foundational principles that reflect our commitment to creating an inclusive, respectful, and equitable environment for all. These principles shape our approach, inform our actions, and ensure accountability across our organisation.

### 1. Human Rights

Council recognises gender equity as a fundamental human right. The Strategy is grounded in the principles of fairness, dignity, and equal opportunity, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender can participate fully and safely in our community.

### 2. Intersectionality

Council acknowledges that gender does not exist in isolation. Council's approach considers how gender intersects with other aspects of identity such as culture to understand and address experiences of disadvantage or discrimination.

### 3. Evidence-Based Practice

Council's Strategy is informed by current research, data, and lived experience. The organisation commits to using evidence to identify gaps, measure progress, and continuously improve.

### 4. Accountability and Transparency

Council is committed to embedding gender equity into policies, practices, and culture. This includes setting measurable goals, reporting on progress, and ensuring accountability at all levels.

### 5. Collaboration and Co-Design

Council values the voices of community, staff, and stakeholders. The Strategy is shaped through inclusive consultation and co-design processes that ensure diverse perspectives are heard and respected.

### 6. Systemic Change

Rather than focusing solely on individual behaviour, the Strategy aims to address the structural and cultural drivers of gender inequity by prioritising prevention and education.

## Legislation and Policy Drivers For Gender Equity

From international agencies to national and state governments, gender equity has become a focus for policy development and action across international, national and state levels as seen below:

| LEVEL                | POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND LEGISLATION   |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>International</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Nations Sustainable Development Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SDG 5: Gender equality</li> <li>- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth</li> <li>- SDG 10: Reduced inequalities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</li> <li>• (1979) – ratified by Australia in 1983</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Australia</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)</li> <li>• Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</li> <li>• Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)</li> <li>• Workplace Gender Equality (Gender Equality Standards) Instrument 2023</li> <li>• Workplace Gender Equality (Matters in relation to Gender Equality Indicators) Instrument 2023</li> <li>• Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</li> <li>• Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</li> <li>• Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</li> <li>• Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality 2024</li> </ul> |
| <b>NSW</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and Amendments (NSW)</li> <li>• Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</li> <li>• Carers Recognition Act 2010 (NSW)</li> <li>• NSW Women's Strategy 2023-2026</li> <li>• NSW Women's Health Framework</li> <li>• NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy 2022-2027</li> <li>• Her Sport Her Way 2019-2023</li> <li>• Multicultural NSW Strategic Plan</li> <li>• NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027</li> <li>• Women in Trades Strategy: Trade Pathways Program 2021-2024</li> </ul>                                       |



# Cumberland Key Research Findings



Population

# 252,399



## REFUGEES AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

Cumberland has the highest number of people seeking asylum in NSW. Over the past 25 years, over 20,000 refugees have settled in the Cumberland area.

## LANGUAGE

### 74%

speak a language other than English at home

### 14%

express they do not speak English well or not at all

Around  
**150**

different languages are spoken

## TOP LANGUAGES

### 14%

Arabic

### 7%

Mandarin

### 4%

Nepali

### 4%

Cantonese

### 3%

Tamil

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

### 53%

of populations born overseas

### 9%

India

### 7%

China

### 5%

Lebanon

### 4%

Nepal

### 3%

Afghanistan

## EDUCATION

### 58%

of people aged over 15 years have completed Year 12 or equivalent

## DISABILITY

### 5.8%

12,503

of residents reported needing help in their day to day lives due to severe or profound disability

## CARERS

### 11.2%

19,249

carers provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age



# Women and Girls in Cumberland

Cumberland is home to over 113,000 women and girls and this number is expected to grow to over 161,000 by 2046, representing an increase of approximately 47,000 women and girls.

About 28,000 of the new residents will be of working age, ranging from young adults starting their careers to those nearing retirement. This means Cumberland will have more working-aged women, creating a strong opportunity to boost women's participation in the workforce. (source: ABS Census, 2021)



## EDUCATION

61%

have completed Year 12



43%

of them do not have formal qualifications



## EMPLOYMENT

45%

earn low incomes (less than \$500 per week) compared to men

5%

earn a higher income (more than \$2,000 per week) than men.

49%

work full time

36%

work part time



## UNPAID DOMESTIC WORK / CARER:

Women do significantly more unpaid work than men, including childcare, domestic work and caring for people with disability, health conditions or old age.

27%

of women over 15 years of age did more than 15 hours of housework each week compared to 9% of men

26.7%

of women over 15 years of age provided unpaid care to children. Of these 24,286 women, 3,617 were caring for children other than their own.

7.9%

of women engage in formal volunteer roles compared to 6.5% men

## HEALTH

Women are more likely to require assistance due to disability or other long-term health conditions than men. 22% of the population reported at least one long-term health condition.

Top health conditions for women living in Cumberland are:

7.1%

Arthritis

6.8%

Asthma

5.2%

Mental Health

5.1%

Diabetes



# Barriers to Gender Equity in Cumberland based on Community Feedback



## Gender Norms & Cultural Expectations

*"Social expectations and cultural norms restrict women's career choices and advancement."*



## Lack of Workplace Flexibility

*"Limited access to flexible work arrangements and remote options."*



## Childcare & Family Responsibilities

*"High childcare costs and caregiving duties create barriers to workforce participation."*



## Limited Access to Skills & Qualifications

*"Cost, time, and language barriers prevent women from upskilling or meeting job requirements."*



## Safety & Transport Challenges

*"Concerns about personal safety and lack of transport options reduce employment opportunities."*



# What Informed this Strategy?

This Gender Equity Strategy was informed by community voices, evidence-based research, workforce data, legislative frameworks and Council's organisational policies and guiding strategies. It recognises the broader social and economic benefits of advancing equity and inclusion. Developed through a commitment to ethical and inclusive engagement, the Strategy reflects Council's ambition to lead local government advocacy for gender equity. This Strategy was designed to respond to the unique diversity and evolving needs of the Cumberland community.

## *Council Policies & Strategies:*

Council has a range of workplace policies that supports diversity, equality and inclusion through the employee lifecycle, providing frameworks, guidance, building safe and respectful workplaces.

- Access & Equity Policy
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Career Break Guideline
- Child Protection Policy
- Children and Families Strategy 2019 – 2023
- Community Engagement Policy
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Community Facilities Strategy 2019 – 2029
- Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan 2019 – 2029
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)
- Domestic and Family Violence Action Plan 2023 – 2025
- Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan
- Flexible Work Arrangements Policy
- Guiding Principles for our Education and Care Services
- Leave Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Smart Places Strategy
- Cumberland City Youth Strategy 2022 – 2026

## *External Resources:*

### **Cred Consulting. (2024) Gender Equity in Cumberland City Study**

[Unpublished report]. Cumberland City Council

### **NSW Government. (2023). NSW Women's Strategy 2023–2026**

Retrieved from: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/women-nsw/nsw-womens-strategy-2023-2026>

### **Australian Government. (2024). Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality**

Retrieved from: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/working-women-strategy-gender-equality>

### **Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2024). Gender Pay Gap Data Explorer**

Retrieved from: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/Data-Explorer>

### **NSW Government. (2024). Gender Equality Action Plans – NSW Treasury, Department of Customer Service, NSW Health, DCJ, Department of Education.**

Retrieved from: NSW Gender Equality Action Plans | NSW Government

### **Western Sydney University & Thrive Refugee Enterprise. (2024). Enhancing Women Refugee Entrepreneurship: Identifying Barriers and Support Mechanisms**

Retrieved from: [https://www.thriverefugeeenterprise.org.au/s/Enhancing-Women-Refugee-Entrepreneurship\\_Concise-Copy-v2-1-1.pdf](https://www.thriverefugeeenterprise.org.au/s/Enhancing-Women-Refugee-Entrepreneurship_Concise-Copy-v2-1-1.pdf)

### **Unlocking Women's Potential: Labour Force Participation in Western Sydney.** / Itaoui,

Rhonda; Smith, Angela; Huppatz, Kate E. Penrith, N.S.W.: Western Sydney University, 2024. 142 p.



### Spotlight on legislation: Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is a Commonwealth government agency established by the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (the Act)*.

The purpose of the Act and its two Legislative Instruments, the Workplace Gender Equality (Gender Equality Standards) Instrument 2023 and the Workplace Gender Equality (Matters in relation to Gender Equality Indicators) Instrument 2023, is to:

- promote and improve gender equality (including equal remuneration between women and men) in employment and in the workplace
- support employers to remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce
- promote, amongst employers, the elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender in relation to employment matters (including in relation to family and caring responsibilities)
- foster workplace consultation between employers and employees on issues concerning gender equality in employment and in the workplace
- improve the productivity and competitiveness of Australian business through the advancement of gender equality in employment and in the workplace.

The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Australia) requires employers with 100 or more employees to report annually against six gender equality indicators. These include:

- GE1: gender composition of the workforce
- GE2: gender composition of governing bodies of relevant employers
- GE3: equal remuneration between women and men
- GE4: availability and utility of employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements for employees and to working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
- GE5: consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace
- GE6: sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination.

### Spotlight on legislation: Local Government Act 1993 No. 30

The purposes of this Act are as follows:

- to provide the legal framework for the system of local government for New South Wales,
- to set out the responsibilities and powers of councils, Councillors and other persons and bodies that constitute the system of local government,
- to provide for governing bodies of councils that are democratically elected,
- to facilitate engagement with the local community by councils, Councillors and other persons and bodies that constitute the system of local government,
- to provide for a system of local government that is accountable to the community and that is sustainable, flexible and effective.

The objects under Part 4: Section 344 are:

- to eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, marital or domestic status and disability in councils, and
- to promote equal employment opportunity for women, members of racial minorities and persons with disabilities in councils.



# Engaging Community

Council's Gender Equity Strategy is grounded in the Core Values, Code of Ethics and Spectrum created by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). Council is committed to ensuring transparent, inclusive and ethical engagement. Through the phases of planning, Council's approach explored genuine opportunities for influence and participation at varying levels, ranging from informing stakeholders about gender data, consulting around solutions, involving underrepresented communities in share decision processes to collaborating and empowering champions to advance gender equity in Cumberland.

Engagement activities were tailored to identify and understand the experiences of women and girls living or working in Cumberland to assess whether equal opportunities, decision making powers and responsibilities exists in entering, staying and advancing in the workforce.

## *Who was Consulted*

- People who live, work, study or visit Cumberland
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Internal Council Committee
- Children, young people, students, families, retirees and mature aged residents
- Culturally diverse and vulnerable communities
- Service Providers, not-for-profit, non-government and government organisations
- Voluntary groups



## *How the Community was Engaged*

To shape our Gender Equity Strategy, Council used a variety of engagement methods. These approaches ensured that diverse voices across Cumberland were heard, from community leaders and residents to service providers and council volunteers and staff. By combining creative visioning exercises with surveys, conversations, and interactive activities, meaningful insights were gathered that directly informed the Strategy.

- Survey method: Council staff were asked to complete a series of questions to understand the demographics, diversity and inclusion of the organisation. The Engagement Survey was completed by 520 employees and provided valuable anonymous and deidentified data.
- Focused conversation method: Consultation with community sector stakeholders, social enterprises, government and non-government services attended by 15 professionals working in the Cumberland area. Discussions were around designing programs with the objective to empower women, build skills and employment pathways.
- Full circle method: Consultation with Community Sector professionals at the CCEN (Cumberland Community Exchange Network) attended by 54 professionals
- Dotmocracy method: Inviting community residents at the Back to Guildford Festival to share their thoughts on community priorities by adding dots to collective actions recognising priorities for the area. 146 community residents participated in the activity.
- Focused group method: Local women who live work or volunteer in the Cumberland LGA attended a focus group, the 15 attendees were Cumberland residents, school parents and Council volunteers.
- Affinity method: At Cumberland's International Women's Day, 91 participants were invited to respond to key questions by writing their thoughts on sticky notes. This collective input was then grouped to identify common themes and shared priorities.



# Community Voices and Insights

*"Sometimes there is NO progression. In 11 years, I've had 1 promotion."*

Cumberland Volunteer

*"There is stereotyping and assumptions – for example a brown woman doesn't know Aussie culture – and it's determined that you won't fit into the work culture during interviews before even entering the role."*

Cumberland Resident

*"In places like Westmead, there are huge waiting lists for after school care which means you need to find a job that allows you to drop and pick your child."*

Cumberland Resident

*"When work is not flexible, you have to choose between being a parent and working."*

Local Parent

*"It's hard to find job skills development or trainings other than English classes in the Cumberland area."*

Cumberland Resident

*"Even if you get a job you love, it's always the women's responsibility to take care of your child, when they are sick or attend extra-curricular activities."*

Cumberland Resident



*"Council events are a great opportunity for residents to meet different services. During refugee week, I found out about carer gateway programs, and I had no idea it existed for me."*

Cumberland Resident



*"There's no one to help or support me to go for an interview."*

Local Parent

*"Break in careers from maternity leave punishes women for taking that time off. You pay for it because it is so difficult finding a job after that break."*

Local Parent

*"Executive level roles do not come with flexible work arrangements so it excludes many from leadership opportunities."*

Local Professional

*"Programs where women support women. We understand each other and are naturally drawn to a mentor at work who we can connect with that has gone through similar experiences."*

Cumberland Resident

*"Nobody discriminates based on being a woman, but it's factors around the job that limit you from applying to certain roles. As a woman, you have to coordinate and consider so many factors before even applying for a job."*

Cumberland Resident

*"Unless you are in a mentorship program, it's hard to find someone to guide you and encourage you to apply for opportunities to advance."*

Cumberland Resident

*"Your physical appearance is a barrier. You may be the only Muslim person wearing a hijab. The way you dress has to fit with your "work culture", which can be challenging if you are more conservative or don't have access to buy more fashionable clothes."*

Cumberland Resident

*"You are hired into more low-level roles like administration or cleaning because employers profile you culturally, assuming that those from certain hardworking cultures have stronger work ethics and you end up working twice as hard as coworkers."*

Cumberland Resident



*"Some industries like IT, you can't come back after a long break because you are not skilled anymore."*

Local Parent



# ACTION PLAN



Accelerate action by  
*providing women with  
access to quality  
education and training*

**PRIORITY AREA 1:  
Education**



# PRIORITY AREA 1: Education

## Aim:

To improve outcomes for women by strengthening service coordination, enhancing service delivery, and increasing access to essential resources and support systems.

| Strategy   | Action  |
|--|---|
| <p>1.1<br/>Improve access to information and local services.</p>                           | <p>1.1a Collaborate with local service providers to distribute information and raise awareness about equal pay rights, the gender pay gap, family support services, education and care options and other relevant resources in language.</p> <p>1.1b Strengthen community knowledge and understanding by challenging harmful gender norms and promoting respectful, inclusive attitudes and behaviours among men.</p> <p>1.1c Provide free or low-cost training designed to equip women with the relevant skills to enter, remain and thrive in the workforce.</p> <p>1.1d Support language and vocational training initiatives that empower women from culturally and racially marginalised communities, enhancing their social and economic participation.</p>  |
| <p>1.2<br/>Empower women through specialised industry support to bridge training gaps.</p> | <p>1.2a Expand pathways for women to establish their own businesses by leveraging existing skills and fostering economic independence through tailored entrepreneurial support.</p> <p>1.2b Deliver targeted programs and resources for women pursuing careers in specialised industries where significant gaps exist such as information technology, chemistry, engineering and aviation.</p> <p>1.2c Develop structured mentorship initiatives connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders to provide guidance, support and professional networking opportunities.</p> <p>1.2d Collaborate with education pathways to inspire and support young women in exploring and pursuing careers in specialised and traditionally underrepresented fields.</p> <p>1.2e Promote and enhance the participation, retention and advancement of women and girls in STEM education and career pathways through inclusive programs and targeted outreach.</p> |



**PRIORITY AREA 2:  
Employment**



## PRIORITY AREA 2: Employment

### Aim:

To expand economic opportunities and promote sustainable advancement of women through targeted support, capacity building and inclusive workforce participation

| Strategy  | Action  |
|---|---|
| 2.1<br>Foster innovative partnerships among local services and government bodies to improve the outcomes of women from culturally and racially marginalized communities.        | 2.1a Enhance women’s participation in employment programs to connect them with relevant career resources.<br>2.1b Promote the economic empowerment of refugee women by identifying and supporting entrepreneurship opportunities that build on existing skills and foster financial independence.   |
| 2.2<br>Strengthen financial literacy through accessible and evidence-based initiatives that build women’s financial confidence, capability and long-term economic independence. | 2.2a Collaborate with local service providers to deliver comprehensive financial literacy programs covering budgeting, saving, investing and retirement planning.<br>2.2b Integrate digital tools and platforms to improve access to financial literacy resources, including online modules, mobile apps and virtual sessions.  |
| 2.3<br>Enhance women’s workforce readiness and career progression through skills development, mentoring, and employment support.  | 2.3a Design and promote training programs aligned with high-demand industries to equip women with relevant skills.<br>2.3b Identify opportunities for women to participate in mentorships, internships, and apprenticeships that support career progression and industry exposure.<br>2.3c Provide practical employment support including resume development, interview preparation and job search strategies tailored to individual needs. |



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CUMBERLAND  
WOMEN  
HEALTH CENTRE  
Ph: 9689 30

Accelerate action by  
*helping women  
make informed decisions  
about their health*

**PRIORITY AREA 3:  
Health & Wellbeing**



## PRIORITY AREA 3: Health & Wellbeing

### Aim:

To promote and protect the health, wellbeing and safety of women through inclusive, responsive and community driven initiatives

| Strategy   | Action  |
|--|---|
| 3.1<br>Strengthen community health programs to improve access to information.  | 3.1a Enhance access to health screenings, preventative care and educational resources collaboratively with local service providers.<br>3.1b Deliver culturally responsive health programs that address the needs of women from culturally and racially marginalised communities.<br>3.1c Support school based programs that foster gender equality, respect for women, and encourage healthy relationships among young men. |
| 3.2<br>Create safe, inclusive and empowering environments that strengthen community connection and a sense of belonging. | 3.2a Provide practical self-defense and safety training designed to build confidence and enhance safety.<br>3.2b Implement initiatives that improve safety in public spaces through inclusive urban design principles, improved lighting, and community education.<br>3.2c Develop and promote campaigns that celebrate, strengthen and amplify the visibility and contributions of women across the community.             |



**PRIORITY AREA 4:  
Social Cohesion**



## PRIORITY AREA 4: Social Cohesion

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### Aim:

To strengthen community belonging by fostering connection, understanding and meaningful interactions within the community.

| Strategy   | Action   |
|--|--|
| 4.1<br>Address and challenge cultural biases and attitudes that exist within the community | 4.1a Facilitate intercultural dialogue and to build empathy and foster mutual understanding.<br>4.1b Deliver community education campaigns promoting cultural awareness, using storytelling, local media and social platforms to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions.<br>4.1c Support schools to access programs addressing unconscious bias, racism, and discrimination.<br>4.1d Celebrate and amplify the contributions of women, recognizing their role in driving social, cultural and economic change. |



Accelerate action by  
*empowering women  
in trades*

**PRIORITY AREA 5:  
Whole Organisation Approach**



# PRIORITY AREA 5: Whole of Organisation Approach

## Aim:

To cultivate an organisational culture that actively promotes gender equity by identifying and addressing systemic barriers and embedding a culture of inclusion.

| Strategy   | Action  |
|--|---|
| 5.1<br>Integrate Gender Equity into organisational systems and decision making | 5.1a Identify and consider gender impacts when planning, designing, monitoring and evaluating Council policies, programs, assets and services to ensure equitable outcomes.<br>5.1b Deliver and promote workplace training to increase staff understanding of gender bias, the gender pay gap and unconscious bias.<br>5.1c Promote access to existing workplace supports and entitlements especially policies around carers leave, parental leave and flexible work arrangements to build a more informed and equitable work culture.<br>5.1d Develop an internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, reflective of lived experiences, to amplify underrepresented voices and identify gaps in policy and practice. |
| 5.2<br>Cultivate Career Development Pathways                                   | 5.2a Establish an internal women's mentorship initiative to inform workplace development, support career advancement and foster the opportunities for emerging female leaders.<br>5.2b Reduce barriers for women participating in targeted leadership development programs equipping them with skills, confidence and networks needed to pursue senior and executive roles.<br>5.2c Collaborate with external organisations, industry specialists and educational institutions to provide women with access to professional development opportunities, scholarships and industry recognised certifications.   |
| 5.3<br>Support Women's Health and Wellbeing                                    | 5.3a Review and enhance work environments to ensure they are inclusive of neurodivergent needs, fostering opportunities for connection, mentorship and belonging.<br>5.3b Provide information that promotes the awareness of women's health needs across all life stages including menstrual health, pregnancy, perimenopause, and menopause.   |



## Council plays a key role in advancing gender equity on the ground.

Council must support equal employment opportunities for women and foster workplaces that are inclusive and free from discrimination. Yet the responsibility for Council goes well beyond the organisation. As the most accessible tier of government, Council is in a powerful position to build awareness of gender equity, design inclusive spaces and services, collaborate with local partners, and champion residents and the wider community.

Council's Workforce:

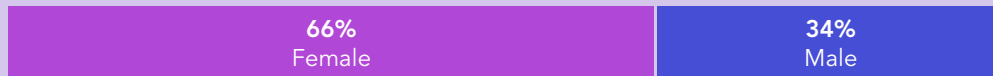
There is a total of 1,040 staff at Council. There is a higher proportion of women staff, representing 53.4% of employees.



Male employees are twice as likely to apply for and receive promotions at Council. Of those reported, 65% are men and 35% are women.



66% of employees using formal flexible work options are women, compared to 34% who are men.



### 75%

of employees agree that discrimination is not tolerated at Council and staff treat each other with respect.

Most employees, including 69% of women and non-binary employees agree that Council provides sufficient flexible work arrangements to meet their needs.

### 50%

of women agree there are enough opportunities to progress their career working at Council.





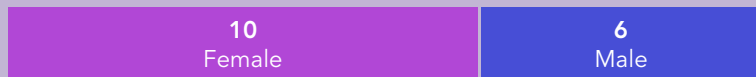
## Carers Leave

9,873 hours of carers leave taken in the 2024-2025 financial year.



## Parental Leave

16 applications - Male applicants are eligible for 2-week concurrent parental leave.



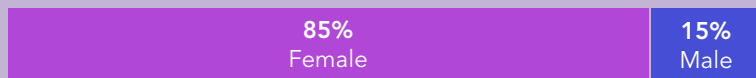
## Working Arrangements

Female employees are more likely to use formal flexible working arrangements at Council. Employee data shows a higher proportion of female employees in casual and part time permanent roles, this may be due to caring responsibilities.

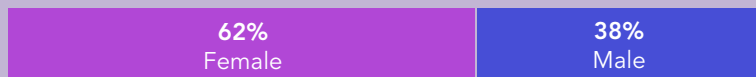
### Full time Staff



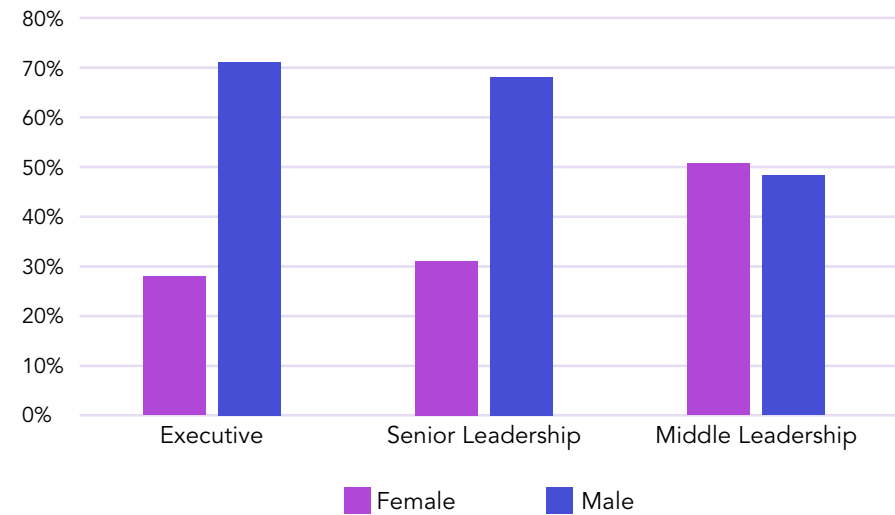
### Part Time Staff



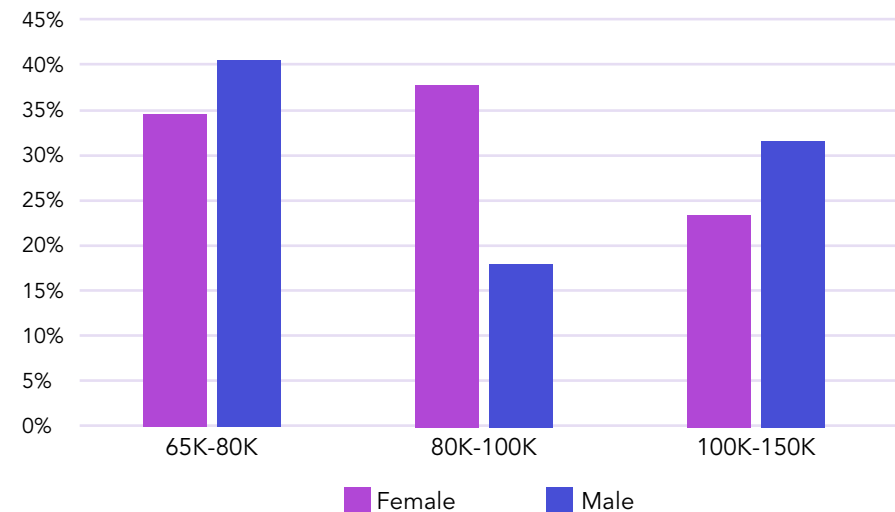
### Casual Staff



## Staffing Level by Gender



## Remuneration by Gender





# An Organisational Lens on the Gender Pay Gap

Women and girls often face systemic barriers when entering and advancing in the workforce. These challenges could include biases in hiring practices, limited access to certain industries, pay gaps, workplace discrimination, and inflexible work arrangements. These issues affect women and other racially marginalised groups.

## *Defining the Average Gender Pay Gap:*

The average gender pay gap is a good measure of the collective difference in the salaries of a group. As the average is skewed by high and low salaries, it will show if earnings are particularly concentrated for one gender, for example, more men in higher earning positions.

The WGEA calculates Council's average gender pay gap is 4.6%

## *Defining the Median Gender Pay Gap:*

The median is not skewed by high or low salaries. This means it gives a good picture of typical earnings that exist within an organisation.

At Council, the median for female staff is 10.9%, with a \$46.38 female median to \$41.84 male median. This is largely due the majority of outdoor workers being male, with a lower pay rate for this type of work.

Overall, at Council, a higher proportion of males are at the top end of the pay scale, of the staff earning over \$150k annually 72% are males. Conversely, 63% of male staff earn under \$65k annually.

The WGEA calculates Council's median gender pay gap at 10.9%.

The main disparity across the organisation occurs in leadership positions with higher proportions of men in both executive and senior leadership, while middle leadership appears proportionate.

More men than women have applied for and received promotions at Council. Of those promoted, 65% are men and 35% are women. This disparity may be influenced by several intersecting factors:

- **Confidence:** Research shows that women are often less likely to put themselves forward for promotions unless they meet all criteria while men may apply even if they only meet some.
- **Flexible work:** Women may be more likely to work in part time or flexible roles, due to caring responsibilities which can limit visibility and access to leadership pathways.
- **Caring responsibilities:** Women do significantly more unpaid work than men, including childcare, domestic work and caring for family with disability, health conditions or old age.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Gendered health factors such as reproductive health, mental load and burnout can affect women's capacity to pursue higher responsibilities.





# Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategy

The Gender Equity Strategy actions will be incorporated into Council’s Delivery Program and Operation Plan.

Progress on the implementation of the actions will be regularly monitored and reported as part of Council’s annual reporting. At the end of the Strategy term, 2026 - 2030 the Strategy will be evaluated against the projected outcomes identified in the following table. These outcomes will act as performance indicators.

| Priorities   | Outcome Measurements   | Data Sources  |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <p>Strengthening service delivery, and increasing access to essential support systems</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased collaboration between local services &amp; stakeholders to deliver coordinated education initiatives</li> <li>Increased number of women engaged in education and career development through coordinated initiatives</li> <li>Establishing more innovative partnerships that lead to increased participation of women in career development opportunities</li> </ul>                           | <p>Community Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>Council Data</p> <p>Sector Data</p> |
| <p><b>EMPLOYMENT</b></p> <p>Promoting targeted support, capacity building and inclusive workforce participation</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of partnerships established with local services and community organisations</li> <li>Higher levels of participation by women in education, employment and support initiatives</li> <li>Maintain high satisfaction ratings among participants as measured through feedback and evaluation tools</li> <li>Demonstrated increase in confidence and improved financial literacy</li> </ul> | <p>Council Data</p> <p>Economic Profile Data</p>                            |
| <p><b>HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b></p> <p>Advancing women’s access to health, wellbeing and safety through inclusive and responsive initiatives</p>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of women accessing health screenings</li> <li>Improvement in perceived safety in public spaces as reported through community feedback</li> <li>Participation rates of women and girls in sports and recreation programs</li> <li>Strengthened support pathways resulting in increased referrals to services</li> </ul>   | <p>Council Data</p> <p>Community Satisfaction Survey</p>                    |
| <p><b>SOCIAL COHESION</b></p> <p>Addressing systemic challenges that exist from cultural attitudes, stigmas and bias</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive shifts in community attitudes reporting increased cultural awareness around gender bias</li> <li>Increased number of schools and service providers implementing anti-bias education</li> <li>Increased visibility and recognition of local women’s contributions across diverse sectors</li> </ul>   | <p>Council Data</p> <p>Community Satisfaction Survey</p>                    |
| <p><b>WHOLE OF ORGANISATION APPROACH</b></p> <p>Demonstrating a sustained commitment to equity through practices that positively influence organisational culture.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased staff awareness reported through the completion of workplace training</li> <li>Implementation of updated workplace policies to advance an equitable work culture</li> <li>Increased number of women stepping into leadership roles across the organisation</li> <li>Enhanced work environments to support neurodivergent and physiological needs</li> </ul>                                   | <p>Council Survey</p>   |



CUMBERLAND  
CITY COUNCIL

## DRAFT Gender Equity Strategy 2026-2035

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