



Whitehorse
Manningham
Libraries
open for discovery



2026 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries

Organisation name:	Whitehorse Manningham Libraries
Total number of employees (and full time equivalent FTE), as at 30 June 2025 Total employees and Total FTE	Total Employees: 123 Total FTE: 75.33
Location (metropolitan, regional or rural. If other, please specify)	Metropolitan Regional Library Corporation

Attestation by head of organisation

I confirm that:

- ☒ I am the head of organisation (CEO or equivalent)
- ☒ I have reviewed and approved the submission of this gender equality action plan (GEAP) on behalf of my organisation (as named above), and I attest that the implementation of the GEAP will be adequately resourced as required under the Gender Equality Act (2020).

Any comments?	The GEAP will be achieved with resourcing accommodated in the Whitehorse Corporation adopted annual budgets.
Name	Sally Both
Role title	Chief Executive Officer
Signed	
Date	28/04/2026

SECTION 1: Use insights from your previous gender equality work

This is the first time Whitehorse Manningham Libraries (WML) have submitted a GEAP.

We gained valuable insights through the data-gathering phase and have identified opportunities to strengthen our approach for future audits. This audit highlighted several data gaps, and we will work to broaden the range of information collected to improve the quality and depth of our intersectionality data.

SECTION 2: Processes, record keeping and governance

All documents in relation to the establishment of the GEAP are stored securely within the Whitehorse Manningham Libraries records management system, Content Manager (CM). Files have security controls to ensure they can only be accessed by those who are authorised to do so. Version control will be applied to any key documents, with all previous versions able to be seen.

Documents and information distributed to employees will also be made available via the intranet. A dedicated Gender Equality page has been established on the intranet to ensure all staff know where to find this information.

Reporting on the GEAP will become part of our quarterly reporting processes. Any progress that has been made will be recorded into a template which will be stored on CM. Progress will also be reported to employees on a regular basis through the monthly staff newsletter. The regular reports will also be available to all staff on the intranet.

The established lines of authority and accountability are as follows:

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for the implementation of the GEAP and will delegate authority to appropriate personnel to assist in the achievement of goals. The CEO will inform the Library Board of any issues that may arise from the implementation of the GEAP and will provide reports on progress.

The Manager Corporate Services will be accountable for providing the CEO with regular updates on the implementation of the GEAP and will ensure resourcing is allocated to meet the Gender Equality Act 2020 obligations.

The GEAP working group will meet on an ad-hoc basis to discuss any issues that may arise from implementation of the GEAP. The Manager Corporate Services will be responsible for convening this group when appropriate.

SECTION 3: Leadership commitment

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries' leadership team is committed to driving meaningful and sustained progress towards gender equality. Our governing body (Library Board) has been briefed on our obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 through a series of presentations, including an address by Dr Vincent, ensuring a shared understanding of both requirements and opportunities.

The Chief Executive Officer has played an active role in shaping the Gender Equality Action Plan. WML also continues to work closely with our member councils to deliver programs and services that are inclusive, accessible and reflective of the diverse communities we serve.

The Library Board has been updated on progress against the Gender Equality Act 2020 reporting requirements and has expressed support for the work undertaken to date. While this commitment is clear, the organisation has been required to deliver much of this work within existing resourcing levels.

Recognising the importance of strong systems to support gender equality outcomes, WML has committed to improving the tools and processes used to gather and analyse audit data. It has been recommended that

WML investigates an upgrade to its HR systems to enable more efficient reporting, greater transparency for employees, and improved access to intersectional data. A modern HR platform would also streamline processes relating to flexible work arrangements and purchased leave, strengthening both our compliance and our employee experience.

SECTION 4: Confirm consultation groups

You must consult with your...	Confirm yes or no	If no, why not?
Governing body (if your organisation has one)	Yes	The Library Board have been consulted in the development of the GEAP.
Employees	Yes	
Employee representatives, including relevant trade unions Consultative Committee (majority are union representatives)	Yes	Consultative Committee has been included in consultation and union organiser has been able to attend meetings when available.
You might consult with...	Confirm yes or no	Please describe additional people and/or groups
Other relevant people Occupational Health and Safety Committee	Yes	This group is comprised of elected health and Safety Representatives throughout the organisation.
Branch Management Team	Yes	Branch managers and team leaders throughout the organisation. This group meets on a monthly basis.
Wellbeing Team	Yes	A team from all levels of the organisation dedicated to improving the wellbeing of WML employees through a series of actions throughout the year. They are a group who are genuinely interested in positive outcomes for staff.
Equal Opportunity Officers	Yes	WML has three dedicated Equal Opportunity Officers. They were included in the consultation phase and given an opportunity to be part of the GEAP working group. Two participated in the working group.
GEAP working group	Yes	A multi-level group of interested employees, representing peers and providing additional insights in the development of the GEAP.

SECTION 5: Document your consultation process

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries undertook a comprehensive consultation process to inform the development of the Gender Equality Action Plan. Presentations outlining the findings from the *People Matter Survey* and the Workplace Gender Audit were delivered across the organisation as an introduction to the GEAP development process. These sessions also provided staff with the opportunity to register their interest in joining the GEAP Working Group.

Presentations were delivered to the Consultative Committee, Senior Management Team, Branch Management Team, Equal Opportunity Officers, Wellbeing Team and to Branch Teams by request. Each session concluded with time for questions, feedback and observations. Participants were also able to contact the presenter afterwards if they did not feel comfortable speaking within a group setting.

A Gender Equality page was set up on the staff intranet to hold information relevant to WML's obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020. Audit results were made available on the staff intranet to ensure transparency and broad access to information.

Expressions of interest were subsequently sought for participation in the GEAP Working Group. The group was convened by the Manager Corporate Services, who also acts as the primary contact for the Commission. Staff participating in the working group were released from their regular duties to support their involvement. Meetings were coordinated through email and Microsoft Teams and were held in person wherever possible. Background information and preparatory materials were circulated in advance to ensure members clearly understood the purpose and scope of their role.

The GEAP working group were provided with draft copies of the GEAP as it was developed. Due to the geographic diversity of participants and rostering constraints, the majority of the follow up work was done via email. The draft was refined in accordance with feedback from that group before being circulated through to the Senior Management Team and Branch Management Team for feedback. A draft copy of the key strategies was also sent to the Library Board prior to a briefing session.

The development of the GEAP was a new process for many staff, and particular attention was placed on building a shared understanding of the gender equality principles, the gender pay equity principles, and the importance of applying an intersectional lens throughout the project.

The working group played an active role in shaping and refining the GEAP. Following their input, the findings and a draft Gender Equality Action Plan were presented to the Library Board on 22 April 2026 for review. The presentation was well received by the Board and an opportunity to ask questions was provided. The GEAP was finalised after this session.

SECTION 6: Findings from your consultation

Feedback from consultation sessions indicated that many of the findings were consistent with staff expectations. The area that generated the most discussion was sexual harassment, particularly the gap between anonymous experiences and formal reporting. Staff raised concerns about barriers that may discourage reporting, including a perception that incidents are “not serious enough” to warrant formal action. This mindset can obscure the true extent of behaviours occurring across the organisation, where multiple small incidents collectively indicate a larger cultural issue.

There was also strong awareness that WML’s workforce is predominantly women (over 80%), and that this demographic profile influences workplace dynamics. Libraries have traditionally attracted women due to the availability of flexible working arrangements and roles that accommodate family responsibilities. The literacy-focused nature of library work has also shaped the types of applicants who are historically drawn to these roles. WML data was consistent with industry workforce trends – ABS statistics indicate that 80% of all librarians are female, with a median age of 50 and 87% of library technicians are female, with a median age of 52.

Intersectionality data was identified as an area requiring improvement. Staff expressed the importance of collecting more comprehensive information while ensuring that employees do not feel that their privacy is being compromised. The *People Matter Survey* was acknowledged as the safest and most effective avenue for capturing anonymous intersectional data. Consultation groups suggested that future surveys are accompanied with more detailed explanations of why the data is important to encourage greater participation. It was felt that this may not be as difficult the next time around as staff will be more aware of the purpose of the survey.

Some consultation groups also expressed concern that only 51% of employees (66 staff members) completed the *People Matter Survey*. Although this response rate exceeded the industry average, participants were still cautious about drawing conclusions from a limited sample size. In addition, some results did not align with employee experience data collected from other internal surveys over the past two years, prompting further discussion about data consistency and interpretation.

Consider the gender equality and the gender pay equity principles, and intersectionality

SECTION 7: Consider the gender equality principles

The gender equality principles were introduced to the GEAP Working Group prior to its first meeting to ensure members were familiar with their purpose and how they should inform decision-making. Working Group members were asked to apply these principles throughout their review and during the development of strategic recommendations, ensuring the GEAP genuinely reflects the intent of the Gender Equality Act 2020.

WML's commitment to equal pay for equal work is embedded in the organisation's structured classification framework, which provides transparent and consistent role levels. Clear position descriptions and Band Level remuneration is applied to all roles in the organisation, with the exception of the Chief Executive Officer.

In considering the principle of reducing unconscious bias, we have developed objectives focused on strengthening recruitment and selection processes. These improvements aim to support fairer, more consistent and evidence-based decision-making at all stages of the employee lifecycle.

The principle of transparent employment and pay practices has informed one of the GEAP's key strategic actions: exploring the implementation of an online HR system. An online HR system will enhance employee self-service, improve access to employment information, and streamline processes such as flexible working arrangement requests. It is also expected to provide a more confidential and secure mechanism for reporting issues, including sexual harassment. If this is not achievable within the Corporation's resourcing, a review of current HR practices to identify process improvements that can be made will be carried out.

WML recognises that advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community. Developing this GEAP demonstrates the organisation's commitment to working collectively across teams, leadership groups and with member councils, to uphold and embed the gender equality principles in practice.

These principles directly align with, and reinforce, WML's organisational values:

- **Respect** – treating all employees fairly and ensuring every person feels valued through equitable systems and inclusive practices.
- **Collaboration** – working together across all levels of the organisation to develop actions that advance gender equality and improve workplace culture.
- **Integrity** – applying transparency, fairness and accountability in employment practices, decision-making and reporting.
- **Curiosity** – seeking to understand gendered experiences, exploring data insights, and continuously improving through learning and reflection.
- **Agility** – adapting systems, processes and approaches to better respond to gender equality obligations and the changing needs of our workforce.

In this way, the gender equality principles are embedded not only in the GEAP but also in the everyday behaviours and values that guide how WML operates. All position descriptions and performance standards are aligned against these principles and are reported on for each employee in their annual performance reviews.

SECTION 8: Consider the gender pay equity principles

A core gender pay equity principle is ensuring equal pay for work of equal or comparable value. WML upholds this principle through a transparent and clearly defined classification structure outlined in the WMRLC Enterprise Agreement. All positions (excluding the CEO) are appointed and remunerated according to this framework, ensuring consistency, fairness and clarity for both current and prospective employees. To further strengthen pay transparency and support equitable access to employment information, one of the key strategies within the GEAP is the exploration of an enhanced HR self-service system, or an improvement to current systems. It is envisaged improvements would provide employees with easier access to remuneration, classification and employment-related information, supporting clearer understanding of role requirements, pay structures and entitlements. While these resources are currently available to employees via a dedicated intranet page, a review may highlight opportunities to improve how they are shared.

SECTION 9: Consider intersectionality

We recognise that gender inequality can be compounded by other attributes including age, disability, Aboriginality, cultural and linguistic background, parent/carer status, sexual orientation and gender identity. In our GEAP WML has developed strategies that aim to:

- Improve voluntary collection of intersectional data with robust privacy settings
- Use *People Matter* and pulse surveys to capture intersectional experience
- Ensure recruitment, flexible work and development pathways are inclusive and accessible; and
- Apply an intersectional lens to policy reviews and GIAs to identify and remove unintended barriers.

WML recognises that due to intersectional data gaps, it has been difficult to consider the impact other attributes may have had on gender equality throughout the organisation. Improving the collection of intersectional data is one of the key themes and strategies throughout this GEAP and it is our intention that our future plans will be informed by increased data in this area.

This is also the first time WML have developed a GEAP and as such we do not have any data to make comparisons with that may highlight intersectional barriers.



Making a case for change:

SECTION 10: Make a case for change and create a vision

Throughout the consultation process, the question of why gender equality is important to them as individuals was put to them. Participants were also asked why it should be important to WML as an organisation. The following have been identified as being important to all:

- Gender equality is considered to be a basic human right
- Equality benefits all of society
- The quote attributed to Martin Luther King Jnr “No one is free until we are all free” encapsulated the spirit and vision for equality
- Being accountable – doing something to contribute to gender equality rather than just ‘saying it’.

WML acknowledges there are areas where we can do better and the GEAP addresses what we would like to concentrate on improving over the four year period. Our hope is that the GEAP will assist WML to deliver outcomes that reflect the high standards expected by our community and also be an employer of choice whereby we are able to attract and retain talented staff.

Community surveys have indicated that WML is a trusted and valued organisation. Libraries, in general, are widely regarded as trusted organisations that serve the community with professionalism, fairness, and integrity. In keeping with this role, our workforce is committed to fostering a culture of gender equality and mutual respect, ensuring all employees feel safe, valued, and supported in their work.

Following on from a GEAP workshop the following vision statement for WML has been developed:

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries is an inclusive, equitable and diverse workplace where everyone feels respected, valued and able to contribute their best.



Analysing your data to identify forms of gender inequality AND developing your strategies:

SECTION 11: Identifying underlying causes of gender inequality

Our GEAP identifies the rate of formal sexual harassment reporting as the most significant area for improvement. Reporting rates are currently low, with feedback indicating that employees may hesitate to come forward due to concerns about confidentiality, fears that their concerns may be dismissed, or perceptions that behaviours are not serious enough to warrant reporting. The lack of intersectional data further limits our ability to understand whether certain groups are disproportionately affected or less confident in seeking support. Employees with intersecting identities may experience additional or compounding barriers.

The way in which we respond to sexual harassment incidents has also been highlighted as an area that requires an extensive review. Follow up procedures need to be established and communicated to all staff. Currently we have no mechanism for determining if a complainant has been satisfied with the response and if there is a need for further follow-up. We also need to establish clearer support services for those who are impacted by sexual harassment – both for our employees and members of our community. This has also been recognised in WML’s psychosocial hazard and risk register and will form part of our treatment plans.

Creating an environment in which all employees feel safe, supported, and confident to speak up is therefore a key priority for this reporting period.

SECTION 12: Analysing your data and documenting your strategies

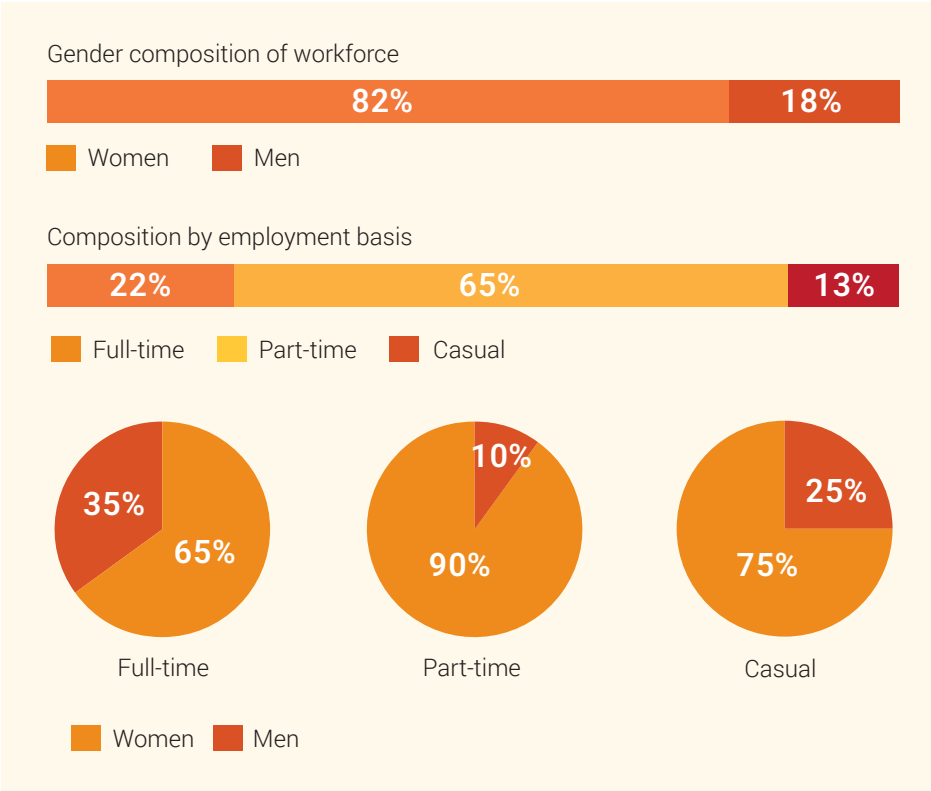
Indicator 1: Gender composition of all levels of the workforce

Critical performance measures:

Gender composition of the duty holder organisation in 2025: 82.4% Women; 17.6% Men

Gender composition of part-time workers in the duty holder organisation in 2025: 70.4% of women in the organisation work in a part-time capacity; 38.1% of men in the organisation work in a part-time capacity.

Gender composition of senior leaders in the duty holder organisation in 2025: 66.7% Women; 33.3% Men



The Workplace Gender Audit identified several structural and systemic gender equality issues at Whitehorse Manningham Libraries. The workforce is composed of 82.4% women and 17.6% men, with a large proportion of part-time and casual positions. While this aligns with industry trends, where approximately 80% of librarians and 87% of library technicians are women, the gendered distribution of roles still creates some workforce challenges.

Women are slightly under-represented in senior leadership positions relative to their overall representation across the organisation. Structural barriers contributing to this imbalance may include limited part-time options at senior levels and the scheduling complexities inherent in customer-facing library roles. These factors may reduce opportunities for career progression for employees with caring responsibilities, who are predominantly women.

The gender composition of the workforce, combined with the prevalence of part-time and casual employment, also presents risks relating to job security, career mobility and earning capacity. Part-time and casual roles are generally associated with reduced access to higher-paid opportunities, limited pathways to promotion, and less stability; factors that disproportionately affect women and contribute to long-term economic inequality.

These findings indicate that while WML’s gender profile reflects sector-wide patterns, there are underlying structural issues that can reinforce gendered norms in the workforce and limit pathways to leadership, secure employment and equitable career development.

Setting metrics

Critical performance measures:

Critical performance measure
Gender composition of the duty holder organisation.
Gender composition of part-time workers in the duty holder organisation.
Gender composition of senior leaders in the duty holder organisation.

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline	Related to other indicators?
Review recruitment processes and make any appropriate changes to encourage a greater diversity of applicants; for example ensuring gender neutral language and diverse images are used in advertising. Eg. Culture, age, sex, religion	Corporate services	2026-2027; ongoing	Indicators 5 & 7
Audit roles and redesign where feasible to support part-time / job share roles at all levels, including leadership roles. For appropriate roles, explicitly include in advertising, options such as job share and hybrid working models.	Corporate services and Senior Management Team	2026-2030	Indicators 5, 6 & 7

Indicator 2: Gender composition of the governing body

Critical performance measures:

Gender composition of the duty holder organisation's governing body in 2025: 62.5% Women; 37.5% Men

The gender composition of the Library Board varies from year to year due to the way appointments are made through the member councils. During the reporting period, the Library Board was chaired by a woman. However, this position is not fixed and is influenced by the gender composition of councillors and Council appointed directors and community representatives from Whitehorse City Council and Manningham City Council. As Board members are appointed externally, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries has limited ability to influence or adjust the gender balance of the governing body.

Library Board members serve in a voluntary capacity. Council appointed directors and Councillors participate as part of their broader roles within their respective councils, and the two community representatives also serve without remuneration. All Board appointments are made by the member councils rather than through WML's internal processes.

WML recognises the importance of diverse representation in governance. Ongoing engagement with member councils aims to ensure that gender equality principles are understood and considered as part of future appointment processes.

Setting metrics

Critical performance measures:

Critical performance measure
Gender composition of the duty holder organisation's governing body.
Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap.
Additional measures (optional)
Intersectional data such as age, race and disability status where available.

Targets

Target not appropriate – appointment decisions are made externally

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline	Related to other indicators?
Through the CEO provide member councils and the Library Board with an annual briefing on the GEAP	CEO	2026-2030	Indicator 1
Provide a recommendation to the member Councils that consideration is given to the gender-balance and intersectional diversity of Board appointments.	CEO	2026-2030	Indicator 1
Review Community Representative Guidelines to consider Board diversity.	CEO	2029	Indicator 1

Indicator 3: Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender

Critical performance measures:

Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group in 2025: - 2.4% gender pay gap for women.
Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap in 2025: Insufficient number to provide meaningful data.

Supplementary measures:

Mean base salary pay gap in 2025: - 2.9% pay gap for women

Women Men



The Workplace Gender Audit shows that WML does not have a gender pay gap favouring men across most levels of the organisation. The exception is at the professional level, where a 6.9% gender pay gap in favour of men was identified. This gap appears to be influenced by workforce segmentation: although men make up a small proportion of the overall workforce, they are more likely to be employed in professional and specialist roles, while women are more concentrated in entry-level or lower-banded positions.

All roles at WML, except for the Chief Executive Officer, are remunerated under the structured local government banding system in the WMRLC Enterprise Agreement. Employees progress incrementally within their band regardless of gender, which provides transparency and consistency. However, segmentation across the workforce means women are less represented in higher-banded professional positions, which can contribute to pay disparities at specific levels even where the underlying classification system is equitable.

Intersectional analysis is limited by the availability and completeness of demographic data. The lack of robust intersectional data makes it difficult to determine whether particular groups of women, for example women from culturally diverse backgrounds, women with disability, or younger and older women, experience additional or compounding barriers to accessing higher-paid roles or progressing within the organisation. Improving the depth and quality of intersectionality data will strengthen WML's ability to identify where pay gaps may disproportionately affect specific cohorts.

As this is WML's first gender audit, the current findings offer an initial benchmark rather than a trend analysis. Enhanced intersectional data intersectional data collection will also allow WML to better understand how different groups experience pay equity across the organisation.

Setting metrics

Critical performance measures

Critical performance measure
Mean total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation group.
Mean total remuneration senior leader gender pay gap.

Supplementary measure
Mean base salary pay gap.
Median total remuneration pay gap.
Median base salary pay gap.

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline	Related to other indicators?
Continue to offer secondment opportunities to staff to increase skills and earning capacity.	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Indicators 5 & 6
Review data for comparisons in the next reporting period.	Corporate Services	2027-2028	Indicator 5

Indicator 4: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Critical performance measures:

Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment in 2025: 0 (data unavailable)

Number of formal reports of sexual harassment in 2025: 15

Supplementary measures:

Participants who said they reported sexual harassment in 2025: data unavailable

Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint in 2025: data unavailable

Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint in 2025: data unavailable

Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint in 2025: data unavailable

Whilst data was not officially available on a range of sexual harassment areas, of concern were the 16% of respondents to the **People Matter Survey** who indicated they had experienced sexual harassment within the workplace over that 12- month period. In all instances these were not officially reported.

The audit findings clearly indicate that WML needs to strengthen its approach to reporting and responding to sexual harassment. The current incident reporting process, designed as a general mechanism for all types of incidents, does not adequately capture sexual harassment data and does not provide consistent or robust follow-up procedures. This limits the organisation's ability to identify patterns, support affected employees, and address underlying risks.

WML does not currently have a dedicated sexual harassment policy or standalone reporting procedures. Instead, staff rely on the Equal Opportunity Policy, Code of Conduct, and the Workplace Bullying, Violence and Aggression Policy when seeking guidance. The audit highlighted that these documents do not provide the clarity, visibility or actionable processes required to support staff who experience or witness sexual harassment. A key recommendation is therefore the development of a comprehensive Sexual Harassment Policy that outlines clear reporting channels, confidentiality protections, support pathways, and roles and responsibilities.

The audit also identified a gap in follow-up mechanisms for incidents involving members of the public. These incidents are recorded, but there is no embedded process to ensure that employees receive timely support, debriefing, or ongoing monitoring of impacts. Consultation feedback indicates that staff may not always feel adequately supported after experiencing public-facing harassment, and this represents a significant area for improvement in terms of both safety and psychological wellbeing. WML have also acknowledged this in our

work that is currently being done on psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Of particular concern are the survey responses from employees who indicated that they did not report sexual harassment because they felt the behaviour was not “serious enough,” or believed that “nothing would change.” These responses point to cultural and structural barriers that reduce confidence in reporting processes and risk normalising inappropriate behaviour. Addressing these barriers will be critical to creating a workplace where all employees feel safe, supported, and empowered to speak up.

Setting metrics

Critical performance measures:

Critical performance measure
Anonymous experience rate of sexual harassment.
Number of formal reports of sexual harassment.
Supplementary measure
Participants who said they reported sexual harassment.
Reasons for not making a formal sexual harassment complaint.
Satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaint.
Satisfaction with handling of formal workplace sexual harassment complaint.
Additional measure (optional)
Employee experience data

Targets:

- Close the gap between anonymous experiences indicated in employee experience data and formal reporting through improved confidential options.
- Improvement in employee’s satisfaction with handling of workplace sexual harassment complaints.

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline	Related to other indicators?
Development and implementation of a dedicated Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy, including clear procedures for reporting options. Clear guidelines around what constitutes a report and how this data is collected.	Corporate Services; Consultative Committee	Dec 2026	Indicator 6
Development of guidelines for staff to assist them in identifying what sexual harassment is and how to report. Publish easy to read flowcharts on the intranet.	Corporate Services	2027-2028	Indicator 5
Increase the likelihood that employees would take action when they see sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying through campaigns, policies, role modelling, training, and providing support to bystanders and whistle-blowers.	Senior Management Team and Branch Management Team	Ongoing	Indicator 6

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline	Related to other indicators?
Provide a reporting mechanism that is separate from the current incident reporting form.	Corporate Services	2027-2028	Indicator 6
Introduce a reporting mechanism that enables employees to report anonymously for experiences of sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.	Corporate Services	2027-2028	Indicator 6
Deliver training for all staff and managers on standards of behaviour, bystander action and reporting pathways.	Corporate Services	2027-2028	Indicators 5 & 6
Increase visibility of EO Contact Officers by highlighting their roles and responsibilities through awareness training and staff newsletters.	Corporate Services & EO Contact Officers	Ongoing	Indicators 5 & 6
Introduce after-care protocols for incidents involving the public, including branch level debrief and follow up where appropriate. Record satisfaction levels of response.	Corporate Services, OH&S Committee	2027-2028, ongoing	Indicator 6
Prominently display and communicate Workplace Code of Conduct and complaints procedure for sexual harassment and clearly outline definitions and reporting requirements in workplace areas and on the intranet.	Branch Management Team	Ongoing	Indicator 6
Develop public behaviour expectations information in other languages.	Marketing and Communications	2027-2028	

Indicator 5: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace

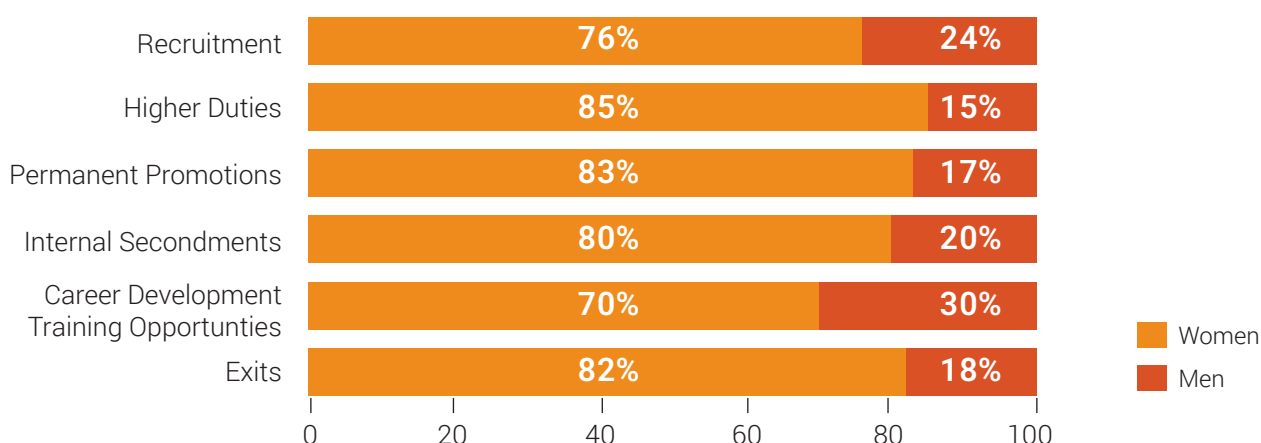
Critical performance measures:

Gender composition of recruited employees in 2025: 76.5% Women; 23.5% Men

Gender composition of employees who were promoted in 2025: 83.3% Women; 16.7% Men

Perceptions of recruitment, by gender in 2025: 66.1% Women felt it was fair; no data available for men

Perceptions of promotion, by gender in 2025: 57.1% Women felt was fair; no data available for men



Recruitment and promotion outcomes at WML generally reflect the gender composition of the applicant pool, which is strongly female-dominant. In 2025, 76.5% of recruited employees and 83.3% of promoted employees were women. While these outcomes are consistent with the broader gender profile of the organisation, the survey data indicates that women's perceptions of fairness in recruitment (66%) and promotion (57%) are significantly lower than desired. This highlights opportunities to strengthen transparency, communication and support throughout the employee lifecycle.

Consultation identified several barriers that may impact women's confidence in recruitment and promotion processes, including qualification requirements for specialised professional roles, limited availability of flexible options at leadership levels, and the rostering complexities inherent in customer-facing library environments. These structural constraints can disproportionately affect employees with caring responsibilities and may limit equitable access to advancement opportunities.

A limitation in the current analysis is the absence of robust intersectional data. Without this, WML cannot fully identify whether particular groups, such as women from culturally diverse backgrounds, women with disability, or younger or older women, experience additional or compounding barriers in recruitment or career progression. Strengthening the collection of intersectional workforce data will be essential to improving the organisation's ability to design targeted and equitable strategies.

Overall, the findings indicate that while recruitment and promotion outcomes broadly mirror the gender profile of the workforce, there is a need to enhance transparency, feedback, and support mechanisms.

Setting metrics

Critical performance measures:

Critical performance measure
Gender composition of recruited employees.
Gender composition of employees who were promoted.
Perceptions of recruitment, by gender.
Perceptions of promotion, by gender.

Targets:

- Improved perception ratings for recruitment and promotion.
- Increase percentage of employee participation in People Matter Survey from 51%.

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline	Related to other indicators?
Demonstrate a supportive culture for career development by providing training, secondments and opportunities for upskilling.	Branch Services, Corporate Services	2026 – 2030; ongoing	Indicators 3 & 6
Publish a clear selection process guide and provide structured feedback to all internal applicants. Offer coaching for development plans where appropriate.	Corporate Services	2026 – 2030; ongoing	Indicator 6
Pilot skills-based assessments and recognition of prior experience to broaden candidate pools where qualifications alone may not attract diverse applications.	Corporate Services	2027-2028	Indicators 1 & 6
Use balanced interview panels wherever practicable; record panel composition and any real or perceived conflicts of interests	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Indicator 6
Continue to consistently apply gender neutral language in position descriptions and advertisements.	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Indicators 1 & 6

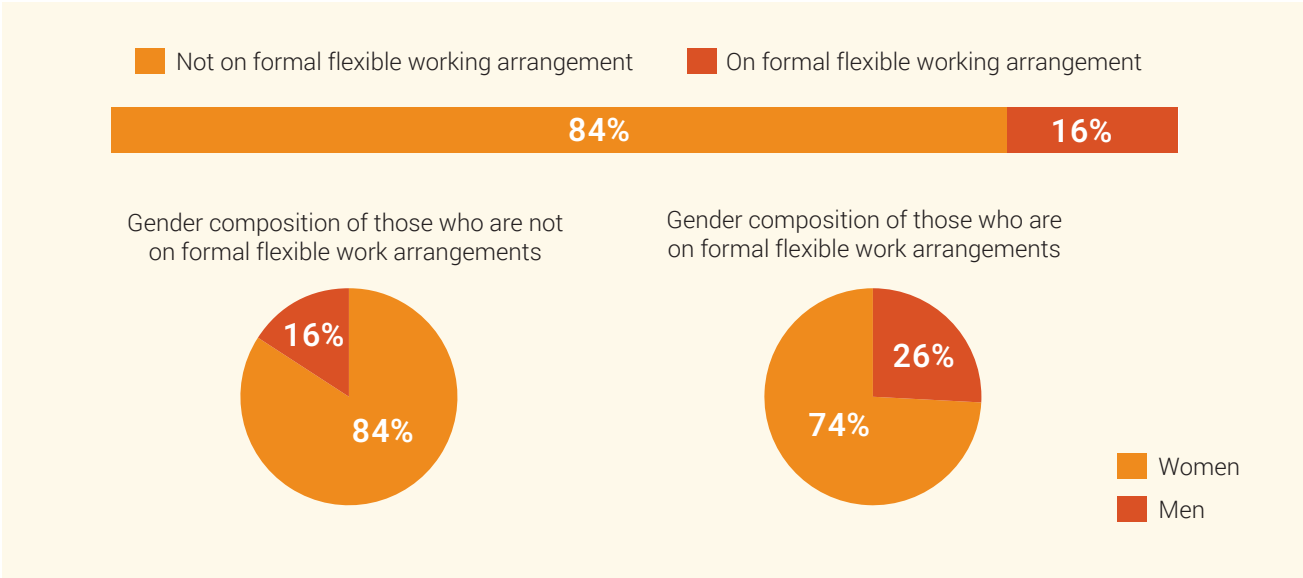
Indicator 6: Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to: family violence leave, flexible working arrangements, and working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities

Critical performance measures:

Average weeks of parental leave, by gender in 2025: No data available
Uptake of flexible work, by gender in 2025: The proportion of employees on a formal flexible work arrangement was 20.2% of women and 26.9% of men
Perceptions of flexible work culture, by gender in 2025: 58.9% of women believed requests would be given due consideration. There is no perception data available for men.

Supplementary measures:

Gender composition of parental leave takers in 2025: Data unavailable
Gender gap in carer's leave in 2025: 40.4% of women took carers leave and 34.6% of men



In 2025, WML’s data on the use of parental leave and workplace flexibility shows mixed results and several gaps that limit our understanding of gendered experiences. Due to the definitions of reporting on parental leave, no data is currently available on the average weeks of parental leave taken or the gender composition of parental leave takers. The uptake of flexible work arrangements provides some insight into how employees access and experience flexibility at WML.

Formal flexible work arrangements were used by 20.2% of women and 26.9% of men, indicating that men currently utilise formal flexibility at slightly higher rates. Carer’s leave, however, showed a different pattern, with 40.4% of women using carer’s leave compared with 34.6% of men, reflecting ongoing gendered expectations around caring responsibilities.

Perceptions of flexible work culture also show room for improvement. The *People Matter Survey* indicated that 58.9% of women reported confidence that flexible work requests would be given due consideration, and no corresponding perception data is available for men. This suggests that women may experience greater uncertainty or barriers when seeking flexible work options.

Qualitative insights highlight barriers such as onsite service delivery requirements and perceived limited visibility of available flexible work options. Together, these findings show that while flexibility is being utilised

across genders, confidence in the system and the ability to apply for or access arrangements equitably is not yet consistent. To strengthen gender equality in workplace flexibility, WML will prioritise improving data completeness, building visibility and clarity around flexible work options, and embedding consistent decision-making processes for flexibility requests.

Setting metrics

Critical performance measures:

Critical performance measure
Average weeks of parental leave, by gender.
Uptake of flexible work, by gender.
Perceptions of flexible work culture, by gender.
Supplementary measure
Gender composition of parental leave takers.
Gender gap in carer's leave.

Target:

Improved perception levels of flexible work culture.

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline	Related to other indicators?
Ensure access to information around flexible work options is easily accessible and understood by supervisors and employees. Information should include guidance on eligibility requirements and available options.	Corporate Services	2027-2028; ongoing	Indicator 5
Promote shared-care parental leave and flexible options for all genders; showcase real staff stories.	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Indicator 3
Consider increased parental leave entitlement for secondary carer in the next cycle of Enterprise Agreement bargaining.	CEO	2028	Indicator 3
Establish a dedicated leave policy which outlines available leave options and the relevant associated procedures.	Corporate Services	2028	Indicator 5
Establish a dedicated intranet page to provide access to information on all flexible work and leave options in the one place.	Corporate Services	2027	Indicator 5

Indicator 7: Gendered segregation within the workplace

Critical performance measures:

Occupational gender segregation in 2025:

Managers: 66.7% women, 33.3% men

Professionals: 87% women, 13% men

Technicians: 75% women, 25% men

Clerical (Customer Service) and Admin: 80.9% women, 19.1% men

In 2025, WML’s workforce continued to reflect a long-standing trend within the library sector: a significantly gender-skewed workforce dominated by women. With more than 80% of employees identifying as women, occupational gender segregation is evident across all major job groups.

These figures demonstrate that women make up the majority of employees across all segments of the organisation. This pattern aligns with broader sectoral trends, where libraries have historically offered employment pathways that appeal to women, including flexible hours, varied part-time and casual opportunities, and roles centred on community service.

The overall distribution masks more pronounced gender segregation within certain functional areas. For example, all employees in the ICT department are men, while all Corporate Services, Finance, and HR employees are women.

Shifting these patterns is challenging, particularly as the applicant pool for most roles continues to be overwhelmingly women. WML maintains a strong, merit-based recruitment approach, meaning occupational gender segregation cannot be addressed through preferential hiring, and instead requires longer-term strategies focused on attraction and visibility of non-traditional career pathways.

An intersectional review of workforce data shows that gender is not the only area of imbalance. The workforce is also skewed towards older age cohorts, influenced in part by long tenure and low turnover. Data relating to cultural identity and place of birth has not been historically collected, creating a gap in understanding how gendered segregation may intersect with cultural background, language, or migrant experience. Addressing this data gap will be a priority before the next audit cycle to ensure a more complete understanding of workforce diversity.

Gender segregation intersects with pay equity considerations. Clerical and administration roles, traditionally lower-paid sectors, are filled predominantly by women at WML, mirroring national trends. This reinforces the importance of monitoring classification structures, progression opportunities, and the value placed on work historically performed by women.

Through the GEAP, WML will continue to identify strategies to broaden the diversity of applicant pools, reduce structural barriers to non-traditional career paths, and strengthen data collection practices to support an intersectional approach to gender equality.

Setting metrics

Critical performance measures:
Occupational gender segregation.

Target:
New intersectional workforce data fields introduced into HR systems by 2028.

Strategies

Strategy	Responsible	Timeline	Related to other indicators?
Build an intersectional workforce dataset through the introduction of voluntary, secure collection of cultural identity, country of birth, language(s), disability status and caring responsibilities at recruitment and during periodic staff updates.	Corporate Services	2027-2029	Indicators 1, 5 & 6

Resourcing your GEAP

SECTION 13: Identifying current and required resources

Resourcing and Implementation

Implementation of the GEAP will be accommodated within existing annual budgets for employee costs and staff development, with the following exception.

The implementation of an online Human Resources Information System (HRIS) to improve organisational capacity for data collection, online flexible work requests, and sexual harassment reporting will require additional resourcing. A fully costed business case will be developed to support funding advocacy to the member Councils. The additional resourcing required is estimated to be up to \$120,000 for initial implementation, with ongoing costs of approximately \$15,000 per annum.

If additional resourcing cannot be secured within the life cycle of the GEAP, current data collection and reporting methods will be reviewed, and practical improvements will be implemented within existing resources. Any investment made in an HRIS is anticipated to be offset over time through efficiencies gained in the streamlining of data collection, reporting, and workforce management processes.

Resources Supporting GEAP Delivery

The following resources and roles will support the delivery of GEAP strategies:

- **Corporate Services:** The Manager Corporate Services and Coordinator Operations Support will be responsible for delivering strategies related to the development of policies, guidelines, and reporting processes.
- **Staff Consultative Committee:** The Committee will be involved in the review of policies and procedures. This group meets regularly, and relevant GEAP strategies will be included as standing or scheduled agenda items.
- **Leadership and Finance Support:** The CEO and Manager Finance will assist by providing financial guidance and ensuring appropriate resourcing is available to support key GEAP initiatives.
- **Training and Development:** Training requirements will be included in the annual staff development plan, with appropriate resourcing allocated to support GEAP objectives. This will be coordinated by the Coordinator Operations Support.
- **Technology Infrastructure:** Existing intranet technology infrastructure is sufficient to support GEAP delivery, and any required changes can be accommodated within current resources.
- **GEAP Working Group:** Resources will be made available to support the GEAP working group to meet on an ad-hoc basis to monitor progress and implementation.
- **Integrated Planning:** Where appropriate, GEAP strategies will be incorporated into other organisational policies and treatment plans to support efficient use of resources, including psychosocial risk management and occupational health and safety risk management.
- **Recruitment Processes:** Reviews of vacancies, advertising, and position descriptions are already part of WML's existing resourcing structure and can be accommodated within current arrangements.
- **Employment Conditions:** Any proposed changes to employment conditions, such as parental leave provisions, will be considered through the Enterprise Bargaining process.

Priority Focus

The priority for this GEAP cycle is to achieve measurable improvements in sexual harassment reporting mechanisms and related procedures. Adequate resourcing is available within current organisational structures to support this priority.

SECTION 14: Developing a resourcing plan

Overall coordination of the GEAP has been incorporated into the role responsibilities and annual workplan of the Manager Corporate Services. Operational support will be provided by the Coordinator Operations Support, with specific GEAP-related actions assigned through their annual workplan. Payroll and finance staff may also support data collection and reporting requirements as needed. These activities will be undertaken within existing roles and ordinary hours of work, with prioritisation applied where required to support GEAP deliverables.

WML has established a GEAP Working Group, coordinated by the Manager Corporate Services, to support implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the Plan. Participation, actions, and outcomes of the Working Group will be documented through meeting minutes and other appropriate records.

GEAP strategies requiring staff training and development will be integrated into the annual staff development plan. Training delivery, participation rates, and feedback will be recorded in line with WML's established practices. Sufficient resourcing is available within current training and development arrangements to support these activities.

Employee costs and staff development budgets are monitored and reported on a monthly basis by the Manager Finance. Any emerging resource constraints or budgetary pressures that may impact delivery of key GEAP strategies will be identified early, escalated as necessary, and addressed through appropriate management action. Any resource impacts affecting GEAP implementation will be documented and reported.

An annual GEAP progress report will be provided to the Library Board. Where resourcing challenges arise that may affect the achievement of GEAP priorities, these issues will be clearly articulated within the reporting framework to inform governance oversight and strategic decisionmaking.

Any other additions or comments (optional)

It should be noted that the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) requires existing regional library corporations to be wound up by June 2031. While the Member Councils are currently in the process of determining the future governance model for their library services, no decision has been made on the timing and how this may impact WML during the life of this GEAP.

