



Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity Leadership Statement







Why gender equity?

Every person has fundamental human rights. We recognise the dignity and worth of each person, and the equal rights of men, women and all people.

We recognise that gender inequality is a problem in Australia, and the Greater Bendigo community. Discrimination, sexism and other disadvantages affect health and life outcomes, and continue to be found where people live, learn, work and play.

Gender inequality is unfair, unjust and unacceptable.

Addressing it is critical to preventing violence against women, recognising and respecting the value of all people, and delivering the social and economic benefits that arise from communities that are safe, fair and just for everyone.

Gender equity is everyone's business and is a shared responsibility.

As a Coalition, we stand together and commit to advancing gender equity in Greater Bendigo, for the benefit of everyone in our community.

About gender equity

Gender equity is the process of being fair to everyone, whether they identify as female, male or gender diverse.

Gender equity recognises that within all communities, people of different genders have varying benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities. To ensure fairness, strategies are needed to respond to historical and existing social structures and create an equal playing field.

Gender equity leads to gender equality, where there are equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all. With gender equity, the community will be healthier; all peoples' needs will be considered in decision making, policy development and in leadership, and violence against women and children will be reduced. Gender equity is good for the whole community.

Gender inequality drives violence against women

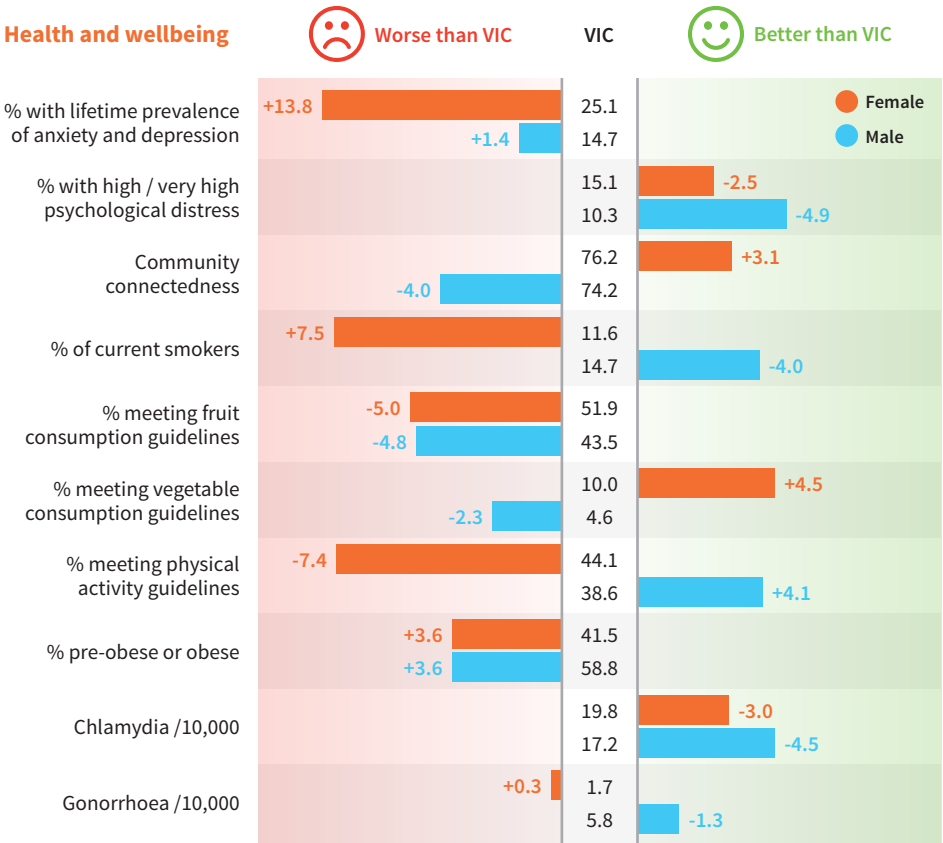
Gender inequality is the key determinant of violence against women and children. Research from Our Watch¹ tells us that the following actions will prevent violence:

- Challenging condoning of violence against women
- Promoting women’s independence and decision making
- Challenging gender stereotypes and roles
- Strengthening positive, equal and respectful relationships
- Promoting and normalising gender equality in public and private life

Across the Greater Bendigo community, gender inequality is currently present when looking at outcomes in health, education, work and community participation. Our community also experiences above average levels of some types of violence against women².

Outcomes by gender in Greater Bendigo

The following data for Greater Bendigo demonstrates how life is experienced differently dependent on gender.



1. Our Watch is a body established to drive nationwide change in the culture, behaviours and power imbalances that lead to violence against women and their children.
2. Rates of Intimate partner violence, family violence and sexual offences.

Participation

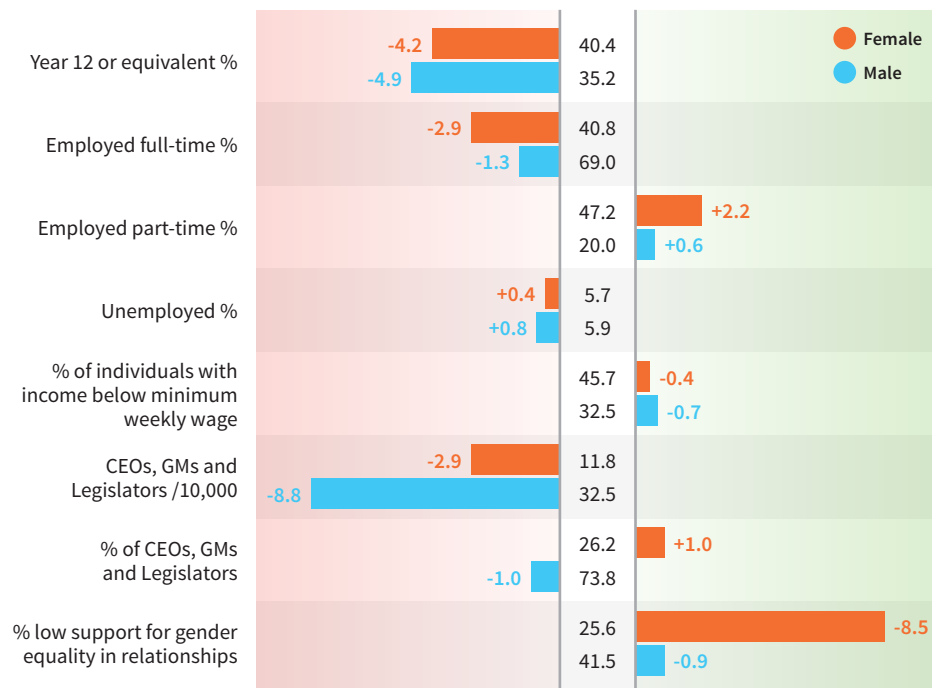


Worse than VIC

VIC



Better than VIC



Safety

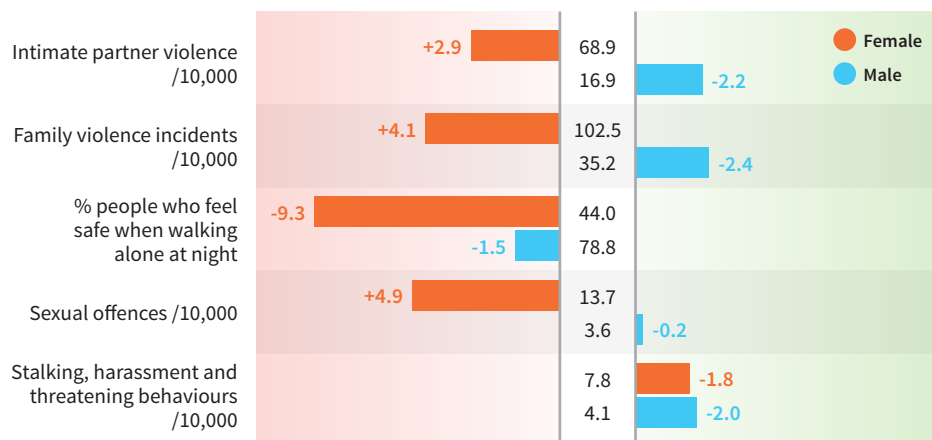


Worse than VIC

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Better than VIC



Source: Victorian Women's Health Atlas, victorianwomenshealthatlas.net.au, accessed February 5, 2019.



Gender Equity Coalition

Our purpose

Our Coalition is made up of individuals, groups and organisations who are committed to leading actions that promote gender equity across our community. We will share learnings and jointly develop and progress initiatives.

As a Coalition we demonstrate our commitment to improving gender equity by:

- Advocating for and leading change
- Building knowledge and understanding across our community
- Modelling the principles and approaches within our own areas of influence
- Developing and implementing policies and programs
- Encouraging others to join us in our efforts
- Monitoring and evaluating our outcomes
- Reporting our progress back to one another and our community
- Celebrating our achievements

Our vision

A community where all people are respected, safe to participate in all aspects of community life and have equitable access to the resources they need to succeed in achieving their aspirations, whilst living in a community that is free from violence against women.

Our principles for action

- Be courageous and take active leadership
- Work with our community, building on its strengths
- Recognise the compounding impact of all forms of discrimination and disadvantage e.g. culture, age, disability, geographic, socio-economic
- Use evidence-based, inter-sectoral approaches
- Experiment and learn
- Be prepared to speak up and be a voice promoting gender equality in our community

Our priority together

The Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity was formed after a forum in March 2018 held on International Women's Day. As a group we have decided to initially focus our joint efforts on building more gender equitable workplaces within our community. We have adopted the Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect toolkit to guide our work. In addition we have formed a number of working groups focused on:

- Recruitment
- Training
- Staff attitude measurement
- Evaluation

The aim is to learn together and develop new ways of working that can be evaluated and continuously improved.

Gender equality

Gender equality is the outcome we are seeking. When the Greater Bendigo community has gender equality:

- Women and children will live free from violence
- Community governance structures will be gender equitable
- Marketing campaigns, books and films will not stereotype women, men or people who are gender diverse
- Women, men and people who are gender diverse will participate equally in sport and/or the arts and have access to the same facilities and opportunities
- The built environment will be welcoming and safe
- Representation at all levels within our workplaces will reflect the gender diversity of our community
- There will be equal pay for equal roles and responsibilities
- Career development and promotion opportunities will be offered equally
- Flexible working arrangements will be available and taken up equally regardless of gender
- There will be no traditional job stereotypes
- Learning and development programs will not promote gender stereotypes
- Career expectations will be gender neutral
- Caring responsibilities will be shared equally
- People of all ages will support gender equity

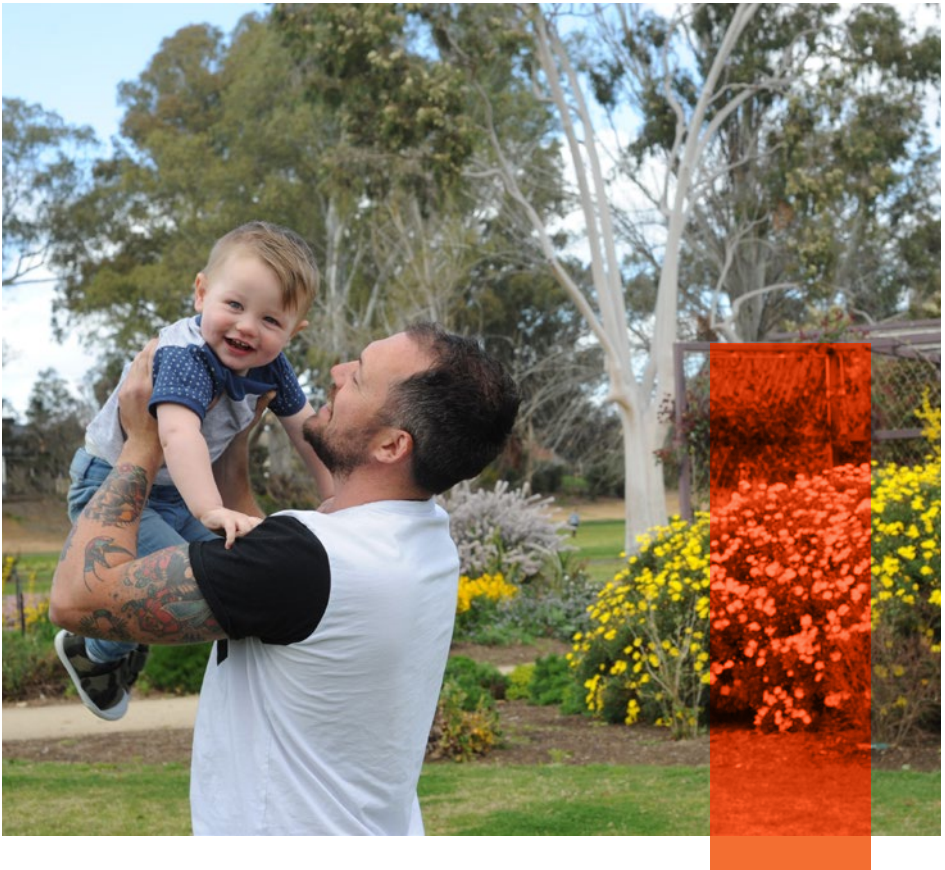
Framework for action

Achieving gender equity requires action in settings such as:

- Workplaces
- Families / households
- Community groups
- Sports and recreation
- Arts and culture
- Health and community services
- Early learning centres, schools, TAFE and universities
- Emergency services
- Media

Actions may include:

- Leadership
- Policy development and implementation
- Building knowledge, skills and understanding
- Creating supportive environments
- Marketing and communications



Current members

Our current members include:

- AFL Central Victoria
- Annie North Inc.
- Bendigo and Adelaide Bank
- Bendigo Community Health
- Bendigo Health
- Centre for Non Violence
- City of Greater Bendigo
- Country Fire Authority
- Department of Education and Training – Regional Office
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning – Regional Office
- Department of Health and Human Services – Regional Office
- Goldfields Library
- Loddon Campaspe Centre Against Sexual Assault
- Women’s Health Loddon Mallee
- North Central Catchment Management Authority
- La Trobe University – Bendigo campus
- Sports Focus
- VicPol Bendigo

We welcome new members including businesses, community groups, sports clubs and others interested in advancing gender equity.

Key terms

Equity



Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful in life. It is about recognising people have different needs, and directing support to greatest need. It is also about addressing the rules, policies or behaviours that cause inequities.

Equality

Equality is the outcome we are seeking, where economic, social and political rights are better protected, and where there are fewer barriers to contribution and participation. When everyone has an equal playing field, opportunities, power and resources will be more equally distributed. Equality will be achieved by treating people equitably, according to their needs.

Gender

Gender does not mean ‘sex’ or ‘women’. It refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that society considers appropriate for men, women and people who are gender diverse. From birth, our social and cultural environment communicates messages that create and sustain gender stereotypes, which can influence us in ways we are not even aware of, across our lifetime. The Coalition recognises that gender identity is a spectrum and is non-binary.

Current initiatives

Listed below are some of the current initiatives being delivered across Greater Bendigo.

- Compass Women's Leadership Program
- Women in Fire (encouraging women to take on roles in bushfire response)
- Diversity and Inclusion Training
- Women in Agriculture
- Chicks in Sticks Networking
- Professionals empowering women
- Teenage Mums Support Group
- Women.ise – Network events, leadership program
- Bendigo Thunder – Women's AFL
- Respectful Relationships in schools
- Central Victorian Football League – Women's AFL
- Breast Feeding Friendly Workplace
- Flexible Working Arrangements
- Act@Work
- Bystander Training
- Rainbow Fox children's book
- Family Violence Leave
- The Rural Challenge Gender Equality Leadership Program
- Athena SWAN program – advancing careers in STEMM for women
- Greater Bendigo Against Family Violence Network (16 days of activism against gender-based violence)
- Engaging Men in Gender Equality Project



Want to learn more?

Work on achieving gender equity is growing. Here are a few places to start to learn more:

- Our Watch – www.ourwatch.org.au
- Women’s Health Loddon Mallee – www.whlm.org.au
- Office for Women – www.vic.gov.au/women
- Municipal Association of Victoria – www.mav.asn.au/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/social-community/gender-equality
- HeForShe, United Nations – www.heforshe.org/en/movement

Support

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit 1800RESPECT.org.au.

In an emergency, call 000.

For more information about a service in your state or local area download the DAISY App in the App Store or Google Play.

For women

1800RESPECT – Sexual assault and family violence counselling service – 1800 737 732 (24 hours) or visit www.1800respect.org.au

Safe steps Family Violence Response – Telephone counselling and referral to safe accommodation – 1800 015 188 (24 hours) – www.safesteps.org.au

Centre for Non Violence – Support and referral for women and children experiencing family violence – 1800 884 038 – www.cnv.org.au

For children and young people

Kids Helpline, up to 25 years – Telephone counselling for any reason – 1800 55 1800 (24 hours) – www.kidshelpline.com.au

For men

Men’s Referral Service – Men’s family violence telephone counselling, information and referral service – 1300 766 691 – www.ntv.org.au



For more information please phone **03 5434 6000**.

www.bendigo.vic.gov.au



CITY OF GREATER
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